



WHAT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES IS ACHIEVED THROUGH LEADER PROGRAMME?

LESSONS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

**Mgr. Veronika Korčeková, MA
Central European University
Department of Public Policy**

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Background information
- Key findings
- Policy recommendations
- Conclusion



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The LEADER programme

- “Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale”/“Links between the rural economy and development actions”
- Special method of integrated rural development funded by the EU
- Local action groups (LAGs) aimed at participatory and bottom-up approach
- *Ideal way to involve youth in rural development?*



researching Banská Bystrica county
in Slovakia



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Situation in Banská Bystrica county:

- Predominantly rural country with mountainous landscape, significant share of young people
- LEADER implemented since 2007
- 5 LAGs representing approx. 662 000 rural inhabitants and 516 municipalities

- Considerable potential for youth involvement, but...



KEY FINDINGS

Even though LAGs and young people want to cooperate, general setting rather suppresses the potential of LAGs to involve local youth in local community life

Persistent structural obstacles:

- Very strict LEADER guidelines
 - Too narrow profile of beneficiaries
 - Limitations on possible youth-related activities
- Strongly centralized administration of funds
- Limited managing capacities of LAGs
- Inadequate opportunities to gain youth-specific training



KEY FINDINGS

- **youth participation in applying for funding through LAGs is insufficient**

- Lack of capital
- Limited business experience
- No experience with project writing

x

- Advantage when applying for funding



KEY FINDINGS

- **youth representation in LAGs decision-making structures is less than 10%**
 - Lack of information and experiences,
 - Regular mobility to school and work



KEY FINDINGS

Positive aspects

- Some involvement in LAG's promotional activities, field trips or exchange stays abroad
- LAGs try to implement additional activities targeting youth/ Best practice LAG Malohont
- Young people are present in LAG management



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening the **autonomy of LAGs** and their technical capacities
- Providing LAGs with an opportunity to define **youth as priority beneficiaries**, ensuring the voluntary basis
- **Supporting youth** to apply for funding by less demanding requirements, training in project writing and provision of initial capital



LESSON LEARNED & CONCLUSION

What involvement in community programmes is achieved through LEADER programme?

- Still space for improvement
- There are significant differences in LEADER settings across EU countries a therefore the answer is complex and context-specific



QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

- Is the LEADER setting in your country supportive to youth involvement?
- Is the LEADER Programme a good way how to encourage young people to get involved in their community life?



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

For further information please contact me at:
veronika.korcekova@gmail.com

