

# PADIMA

Policies Against Depopulation In Mountain Areas

*A brighter future for young people in mountain areas*

This brochure presents several strategies to increase the attractiveness of mountain territories for young people. Key actions related to **education and training**, **territorial marketing** and **economic diversification** are being exposed.



PADIMA is a project cofinanced by:



This brochure offers general advice for creating better conditions to maintain young people in mountain areas, to encourage them to move back once they have finished their studies and/or to attract new ones, which do not have their origin in mountain territories, to move and to live here.

Through young people we understand people aged 14-30 .

This brochure is designed at the attention of:

- Elected people at local, regional and national level
- Administrative stakeholders involved in designing public policies.

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Picture: Liv Wilson, Norway



## Are mountains attractive for young people?

In 2010, 17% of the European population lived in mountain areas, which represented some 188 million inhabitants. Looking at the age of inhabitants in 7 mountain areas (see the map beside), we noticed that almost all the municipalities surveyed have a lower share of young people than both the regional and the national averages.



We wanted to find out if these young people are interested to continue living (or coming back once they have finished their studies- for those who moved for school reasons) to mountain areas. Some 1000 young people aged 14-19 have been interviewed in the 7 study areas (in the 1st semester of 2010). It came out that **young people are quite positive about living and working in mountain regions.**

Young people are quite keen about living in a beautiful scenery, surrounded by family and friends (main reasons for those who want to live in mountain areas).

However, due to the time-distance to schools and universities or the lack of diversified education opportunities at the local and regional level, many young pupils leave home at the age of 14-16. Young people, and in particular women, are the category of people who leave the most mountain areas.

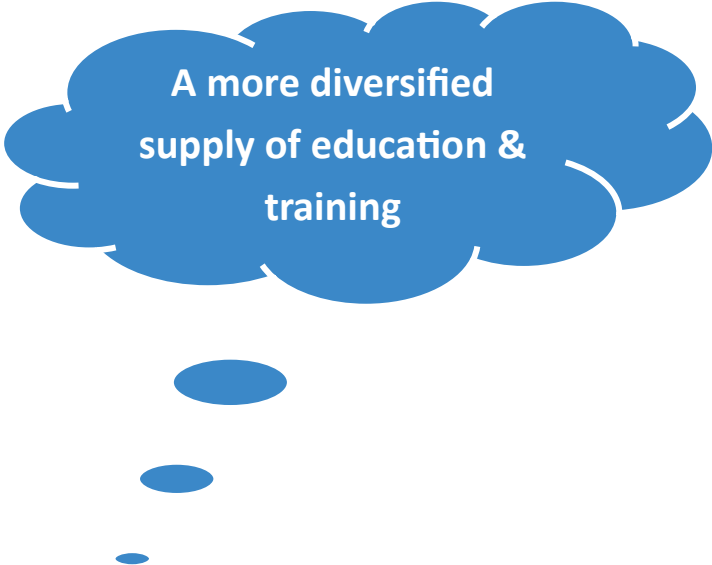
**We need to take action!** Some regions around Europe already did, and they can already report positive results!



## *What needs to be done?*

In brief, we recommend each region to consider the following strategic objectives when comes to young people:

- **prevent selective out-migration** of young people
- **provide** young people locally with **the education they desire** so that they do not leave for their studies
- **ensure that young people are fully aware of the career opportunities** the area can offer, so that they come back in case they leave
- **use the education system as a vehicle** to prepare young people to enter and develop the local economy
- **promote quality of life** as a reason to live in mountain areas
- **seek to attract students from other areas** which would eventually stay afterwards.



## A more diversified supply of education & training

Do you have the impression that **the education offer** in your area is **diverse enough**? Is it **replying today to young people expectations**? Or to **business needs of competences**?

In the 7 study areas the supply tends to be too general, or too much oriented towards traditional 'mountain' sectors like agriculture, wood, tourism or industry, while **young people manifest today an interest for 'modern' sectors**, like ICT or services. The enterprises in mountain areas working in these "modern sectors" report having difficulties in recruiting skilled staff. Is this your case as well? **Then you should take action!**

- **Diversify the supply of education and vocational training available proposing a larger offer of specialisations, better adapted to young people's expectations**
- **"Relocate" branches of university or specialisations in the rural and mountain areas**
- **Use the Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) to provide access to specific courses via distance learning and foster business creation by young people**
- **Provide education opportunities in coherence with local businesses' job offers and with regional specificities**

## How to do it in practice?

### **A larger offer of specialisations, better adapted to young people's expectations**

Schools, universities and training institutes in the mountain areas need to offer education in a much bigger variety of sectors, as this will permit to a number of young people who leave now to be educated locally and to work later, locally.



*The province of Teruel, in Spain, is a front runner in that respect, with several initiatives developed in the field of training and education. We mention here the creation of classes in car maintenance, electricity, management and computing at the Secondary School “Southern Aragon” that are of great interest for many young people and permit them to work locally.*

*More info: PADIMA: Good Practice (GP) 1, Work Package (WP) 1*

**More branches of university or specialisations in the rural and mountain areas!**

Universities tend to be increasingly concentrated in big agglomerations and to provide ‘place-blind’ education. It is the exact contrary that we must seek to increase mountain attractiveness: **open and maintain centres of academic excellence working in close relation with the realities and specificities of mountain environment and economy.**



*In the province of Teruel, for example, a training class has been created for young curators and restorers, to work on Paleontological issues directly on site. More info: PADIMA, Good Practice 5, WP1.*



*Hedmark County, Norway, developed several branches of higher education in different fields (engineering, nature and cultural tourism, law, finance) but with specialisation on nursing, care and creative use of the ICT in kinder gardens.*

*Location: the Small municipalities of the Mountain Region in Hedmark and Sør-Trøndelag Counties (Fjellregionen) : Tynset, Røros and Trøndelag. More info: PADIMA, Good Practice 38 WP1.*

**Offer access to a wide variety of specific courses via distance learning!**

ICTs have a great potential to shrink distances between potential students, teachers and contents. This is massively important, at education level as well as business creation level.



*In 2002, Dalarna University started to offer distance learning for county residents with the objective of permitting them to learn without leaving their social environment. What started with 5 courses and a nursing programme became today the rule at Dalarna University: all programmes and courses in the area that do not require practice during the class (but also health and social care) are offered today via internet based learning. Students from 62 countries attend the course.*

More info: PADIMA, Good Practice 21 WP1



Do you feel a **better match between the offer of jobs available and the training offered** is needed? In the study areas we have noted that young people can have a distorted image of some economic sectors or are poorly informed about job opportunities in their region. **There is a need to connect well the enterprises' needs with the education and training sector** and to enhance **communication between businesses and schools**. Several partners have taken action in that respect and you can get inspired from them!

Picture: MONTALBÁN training center (TERUEL)



*It is the case of Buskerud County who organised a joint platform for wood enterprises and young pupils (GP 33 WP1): wood industry representatives have presented their profession and interested young pupils to the sector by letting them design and produce their own little furniture. The practical exercise attracted 30 applications for new internships/jobs from pupils who were not initially planning to work in wood/crafts. The meetings have been repeated several times and within the partnership, this initiative attracted the interest of several regions (province of Torino, UCCIMAC, Dalmarna and ERSAF).*

**Communicate positively  
about your region!**

Beyond the improvement of the offer of education and training, retaining young people or attracting young migrants also depends on the capacity of the territory to **communicate positive values** to young people. **They must be proud of their area of origin and/or convinced they have opportunities awaiting them. So target them with appropriate messages!**

To try to reach this objective, we believe the following key actions are of utmost importance:

- **Raise young people's awareness on education and career prospects in the area**
- **Improve and promote quality of life in areas that are important for young people**
- **Promote positive achievements of people from the area: make young people proud of their area**



## How to do it in practice?

**Since school, inform pupils about the job offers available in the area and about the needs of enterprises.**

*This is successfully done in Hedmark, where the regional youth enterprise organisation (Ungt Entreprenørskap) creates networking opportunities directly between high school pupils and regional enterprises in order to inform the pupils about job opportunities in the area.*

*This way, when they grow older, they will know what jobs they can find in the region.*

More info: PADIMA GP 37 WP1.



Picture: MaterialBanken, Norway

**Inform about the specificities and advantages of training and education provided locally.**

*In region Dalarna this is part of the regional strategy to promote the territory. Dalarna branding strategy included a specific programme dedicated to young people, “Contact 3” where amongst other things the education and training offer available in the different municipalities was highlighted.*

More info: PADIMA GP8 WP2.



## A bit more leisure and culture...

Young people in general and women in particular need a wider cultural horizon and are more likely to leave if the offer of cultural activities is too poor. In such conditions, local and regional institutions need to **develop a rich offer of leisure time activities, both cultural & sportive**. This can be achieved for example via better organisation of institutions in charge of cultural activities.



PADIMA seminar on territorial marketing, Trøysill, Norway

*In Buskerud County, 3 mountain municipalities decided to pool all their cultural activities and institutions together in order to develop new activities: the common museum was consolidated, a stronger marketing campaign was developed using a new brand “the Valley of Artists” and various courses were developed for actors involved in promotional activities (GP 25 WP2).*

## ... and local ambassadors!

In your marketing campaigns are you thinking about the young people living already in the area?

We believe **more potential exists** locally and regionally to look for **successful “regional ambassadors”** and raise the confidence of young people in their capacity to have a successful life in mountain areas.



*We have one example coming from Hedmark, Norway, (GP4, WP2) where the regional authorities have used in the marketing campaign “local heroes”, successful young entrepreneurs, as a teaser for new comers and indicator of the dynamism and opportunities in the area. The message communicated was:*

In our region, the heroes are those who create jobs!

More entrepreneurs & a more diversified economy

Last but not least, to stay in mountain areas, young people need to find jobs. Only a small majority of the pupils interviewed is optimistic about work opportunities when they finish upper secondary school. The respondents **do not point out the tourism or the classical industry as the sector with most possibilities** for them and would rather have wider opportunities.

**So, how to facilitate young people integration in the economic sector?**

- Support the recruitment of young people in local businesses
- Foster young people creativity, encourage entrepreneurship and simplify the business creation process



## How to do it in practice?

**Matching businesses' needs with the local offer education of training**, considerably eases the recruitment. In addition, some actions can be beneficial like **the development of a complete and well-advertised platform** of available jobs. Businesses should be involved in them and advertise their positions easily.



*Dalarna Region has established in 2009 a regional platform for cooperation between education providers, industries and labour market partners in order to improve the match between the education and labour market requirements (good practice 23 – WP1). The competences platform ensures that education institutes deliver the classes needed by main employers and avoid a skills shortage in the area.*

Foster young people **creativity**,  
**encourage entrepreneurship**  
and **simplify the business crea-**  
**tion process.**

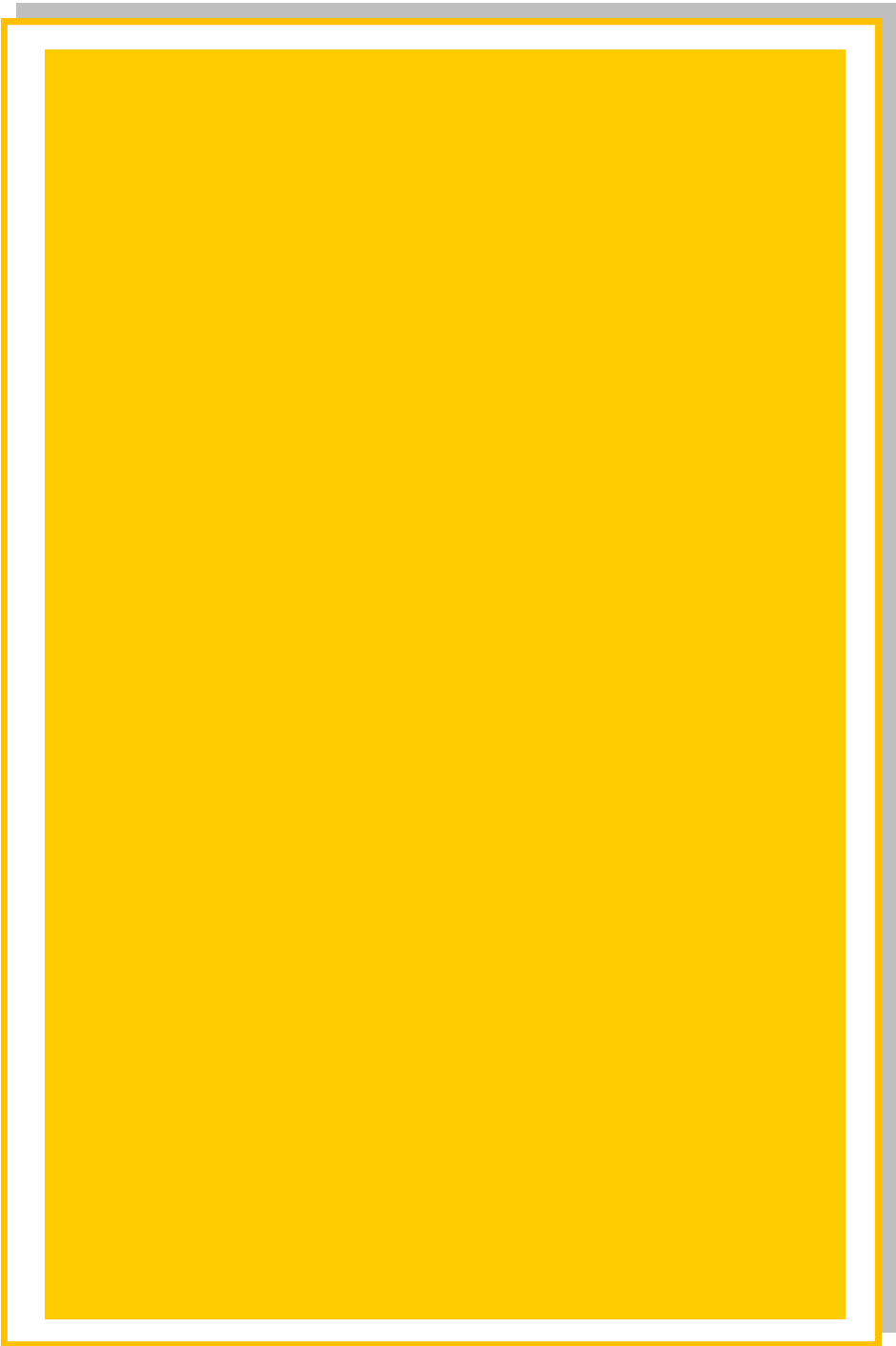


*In Hedmark the initiative SANN (School, employment, local environment, innovation) (GP39 WP1) developed by the county and the Kop-pang High School, focuses on giving students in the first year of high school the opportunity to reflect and to create products in work related situation, not only in an educational environment. Students can do short internships with a specific innovation related objective. The programme is running since 2002 and has had a big success both in terms of involvement of young pupils (+200% growth) and teachers, but also by increasing pupils' self-confidence and capacities.*



660 kW machines, San Just wind energy parc,  
Teruel, Spain,





## More information

This brochure is a digest of the final report of PADIMA ***Strategies to increase the attractiveness of mountain areas: how to approach depopulation in an integrated manner?***

The report, together with more information on this subject can be found on the website [www.padima.org](http://www.padima.org).

We also offer you brochures about::

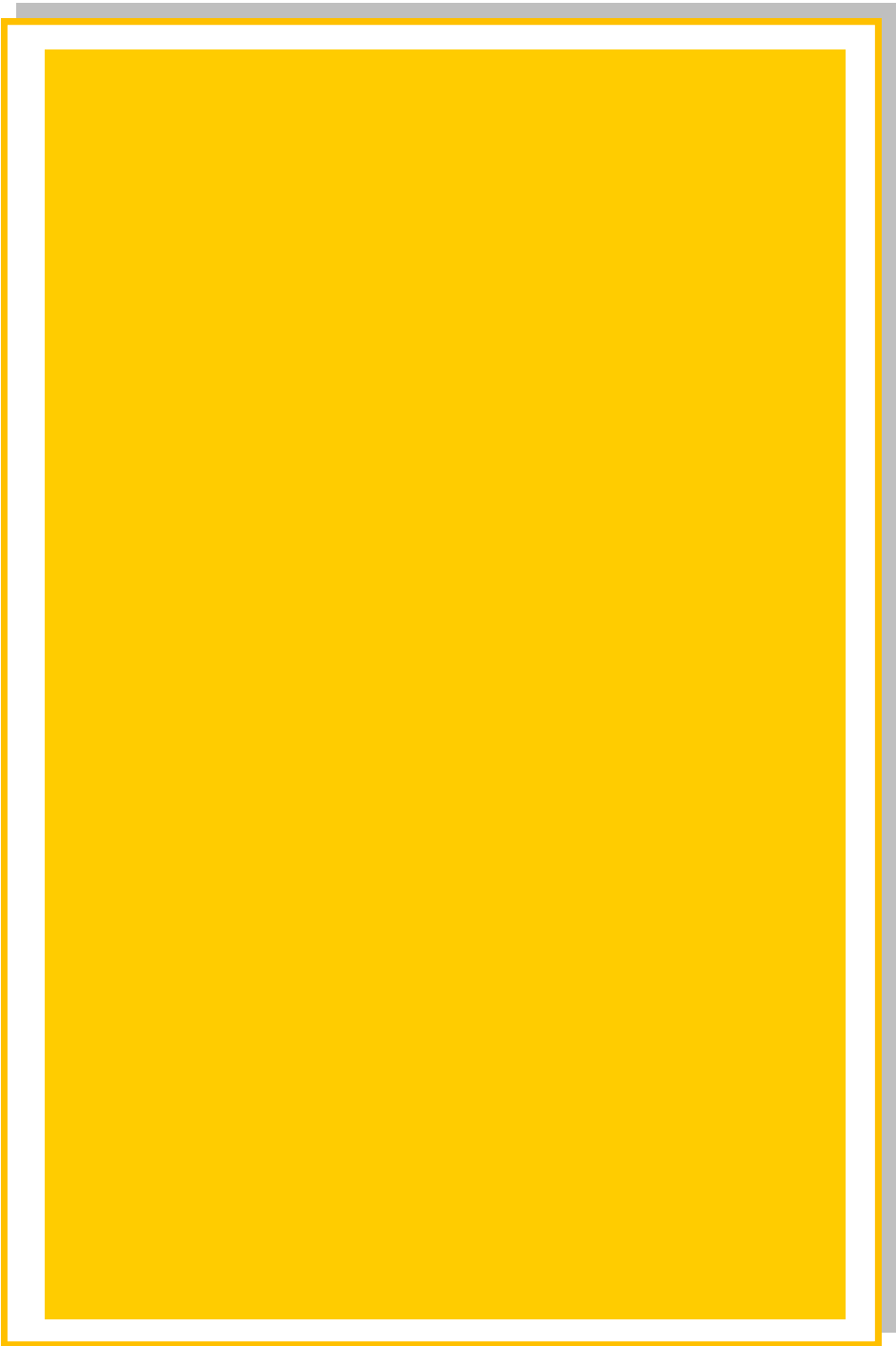
- Increasing mountain attractiveness for working age people
- Increasing mountain attractiveness for retired people

This brochure was developed in the course of the INTERREG IVC project PADIMA (*Policies Against depopulation in mountain areas*).

### Layout:

Emmanuelle Picaud,  
Ancuta Pasca





**Contact:**

Ancuta Pasca  
Communication Officer  
Euromontana  
2, Place du Champ de Mars  
1050 Brussels

**Tel:** +32 2 280 42 83

**Email:**  
padima@euromontana.org



REGION DALARNA

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of EU programmes.