

RURASL

is a knowledge alliance between different European higher education institutions (HEI) and rural partners that aims at setting up and implementing a framework for an integrated transnational approach of academic teaching and learning and thus contribute to the development of rural areas. This is achieved through an innovative methodology that not only meets the needs of these communities and increases innovation in these areas, but also leads to closer community-HEI partnerships.

Service Learning (SL)

An educational approach that combines learning objectives with community service in order to provide new educational standards for students by tackling real-life needs in their community.

Social

Entrepreneurship (SE)

Recognizes social problems and uses entrepreneurial principles to create and organise innovative ways to promote social change

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The consortium wants to create a rural SL and a teaching model that combine the strengths of SL strategy with SE and that could be implemented worldwide.

RURASL

SERVICE LEARNING FOR THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Welcome to the electronic newsletter of RURASL project where both public and stakeholders will be able to find information about the project's progress on a regular basis. We invite you to join our wide group of service-learning promoters and to send us collected feedback.



RURASL 3.0



The logo of the project represents the partnership between higher education institutions (HEI) and rural communities. The inspiration for creating the logo was the "Coroça", "Caroça" or "Croça", a straw robe that was used by Portuguese and Spanish shepherds to protect them against the cold and the rain.

RURASL project started in January 2019 and will finish at the end of December 2021. During these three years, RURASL wants to develop the core skills and entrepreneurial potentialities of the rural community (for which such development is not easily accessible), as well as improve the quality of education leading to sustainable development and promote HEI-community partnerships in rural areas through an innovative SL methodology. RURASL is directed at enhancing the relevance of HEI as their students aim to fulfil a service that is in line with the demands of businesses and social needs in rural areas; setting up a virtual Hub with a broad network of academic and rural stakeholders that will offer teaching and learning content (dedicated transnational academic modules with courses on SL and SE, community training materials and digital collaborative & learning tools) as well as promoting interactions between HEI and rural community stakeholders.

WHO ARE WE?

Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo - Portugal

University College of Teacher Education Vienna - Austria

University of Zagreb - Croatia

Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University - The Netherlands

Strasczeg Center for Entrepreneurship - Germany

Autonomous University of Madrid - Spain

Vytautas Magnus University – Lithuania

University of Bologna - Italy

Rural Partners

AJDeão - Portugal

LAG 5 - Croatia

LAG Ammersee - Germany

Kaunas district LAG – Lithuania

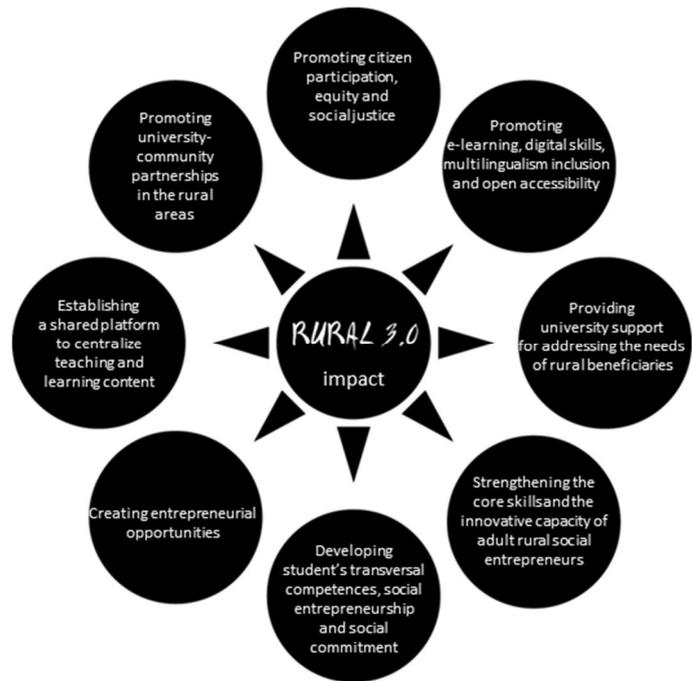
Galsinma - Spain

Stichting Schutsluis Alblasserdam - The Netherlands

Plenum - Austria

LAG L'Altra Romagna - Italy

LAG = Local Action Group



We held the kick-off meeting in Zagreb, at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, on February 18th and 19th, where we met for the first time. There were 21 representatives altogether from 8 partner countries, each one of them with distinct rural SE and rural SL experiences, as well as different educational systems and specific community needs.

The meeting started with a welcome address by the Vice Dean for Research and External Affairs and Associate Professor of Sociology, Dragan Bagić, and by the International Projects Officer, Iva Čaleta Pleša. During the two-day meeting, we went through all the project tasks and existing concerns. We have planned the first project assignment Work Package (WP) 1: *Investigation of stakeholders' needs, rural social entrepreneurship, and rural service-learning education*. The next meeting will take place in Vienna, Austria on September 9th-10th, 2019.



INFO

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RURASL

Project Title:
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the Rural Development

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2019 – 2021

Contact:
amoura@ese.ipvc.pt
razvoj@lag5.hr



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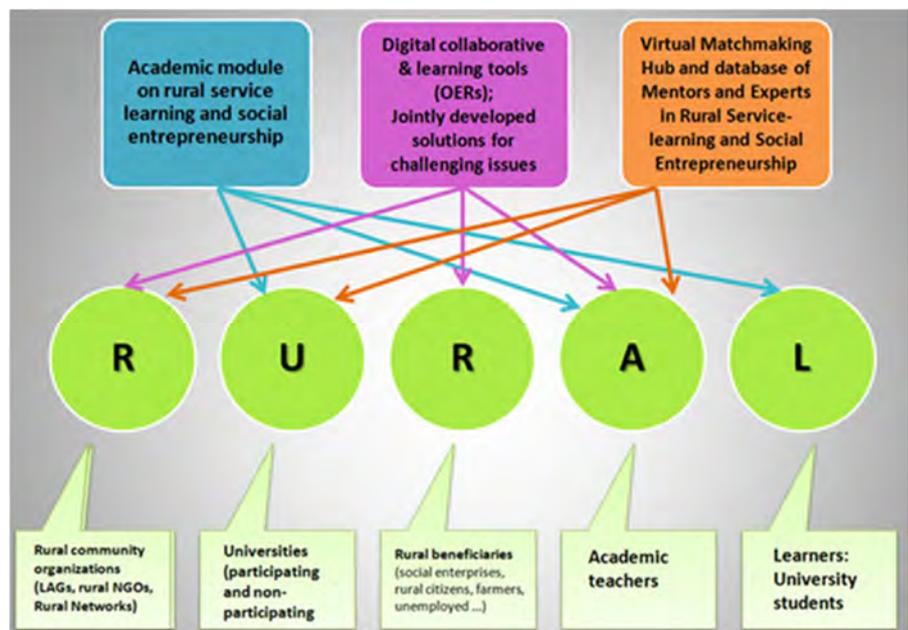
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Our biggest challenge at the beginning of the project was to conduct research under WP 1: Investigation of stakeholders' needs, rural SE, and rural SL education. The preliminary analyses of curricula at the HEI partners and 12 other European HEI, as well as the analysis of possibilities and obstacles for SE in rural areas, revealed the need for a module on rural SL and rural SE as it is currently not provided by any European HEI. With this research, we strive to identify the knowledge and skills needed to pursue rural SE and rural SL, provide an overview of the

rural SL in Europe and abroad in order to produce guidelines for the development of an academic module, as well as find innovative practices in rural SE and rural SL that will underpin the academic and community training and teaching. With the purpose of identifying the needs of students, community partners and their beneficiaries (farmers, unemployed, retired people, rural housewives, rural entrepreneurs, and social businesses) in all participating countries, Dutch partners prepared tailored surveys that were widely distributed among target groups. The implementation of the research took place during April and May 2019. As part of the study, the Faculty for Social Science and Humanities from Zagreb together with the University of Bologna developed a database of rural entities and universities interested in community-HEI partnerships.

<http://theta.ffzg.hr/ruralhub/>



The survey responses were from 186 academic experts, 1303 students, 76 rural partners and more than 200 of their beneficiaries. The resulting set of needs and target competencies will now be matched against existing curricula of HEI partners and other European HEI. This analysis will not only help HEI identify the existing courses that can best respond to the needs of the rural communities, but also reveal gaps in existing curricula that can be filled by this project. Using this knowledge, the HEI project partners will then design the academic module with different courses.

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In March 2019, Associação Juvenil de Deão (Portuguese LAG) organised a big project promotional event in Deão. With this initiative, the local rural partners had the opportunity to get acquainted with the project, its aims and future contributions to the promotion and strengthening of the local identity.



In a social gathering format, this event allowed all local institutions to show what they do best, showing that the associative network in a community is a fundamental pillar in the construction of local and social development of a region, thus contributing to the exercise of democracy and citizenship.



The strength of RURASL project lies in its implications for cultural learning, sustainable rural development and international cooperation.

Professor Anabela Moura, project coordinator, IPVC

Upcoming events

- The 2nd RURASL Consortium Meeting, Vienna, 9 – 10 September 2019. <https://rural.ffzg.unizg.hr/>
- The 2nd European Conference on Service-Learning in Higher Education, Antwerp, 19 - 21 September 2019. <https://ecsl2019.eu/>
- 8th European University-Business Forum, Brussels, 24 – 25 October 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/education/events/8th-university-business-forum_en