

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	Local action group Vallis Colapis
PIC number:	947901752
Project name and acronym:	<i>Connecting Rural Europe: Networking and development in small towns</i> Rural EU

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP4
Event name:	National event: rural youth focus group (Croatia)
Type:	Focus group
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	Duga Resa, Croatia
Date(s):	29.4.2025.
Website(s) (if any):	https://leader.vallis-colapis.hr/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=44
Participants	
Female:	15
Male:	10

Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Croatia]:	25		
From country 2 [xx]:			
Total number of participants:	25	From total number of countries:	1

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The focus group brought together young people from Duga Resa and its surroundings, aged 18 to 30, to discuss the key challenges and opportunities facing rural youth today. Participants were divided into four smaller groups to ensure active participation and more in-depth discussion. Two experienced facilitators led the activities, using non-formal education methods and a participatory approach to create an open, inclusive, and dynamic environment.

Methods Used:

- **World Café:** Small group rotations allowed participants to discuss each theme in depth, ensuring everyone contributed ideas and perspectives.
- **Brainstorming and Visual Mapping:** Participants used flipcharts and sticky notes to visually map out challenges and solutions, making the process interactive and engaging.
- **Open Forum:** At the end, all groups came together to present their findings and collectively discuss main takeaways.

Main Conclusions:

- **Political Participation:** Rural youth feel underrepresented in decision-making but are eager for more opportunities to engage in local governance.
- **Social Engagement:** There is a strong willingness among young people to organize and participate in community activities, but they lack adequate support and resources.
- **Employment:** Limited job opportunities and lack of career guidance are major concerns, leading to migration to urban areas.
- **Revitalization:** Youth see themselves as relevant stakeholders in revitalizing rural areas, especially by promoting new ways of living and countering depopulation.
- **Access Issues:** Gaps in access to education, culture, public spaces, and reliable transportation were highlighted as significant barriers to well-being and development.
- **Mental Health:** Isolation and lack of support services negatively affect mental health, emphasizing the need for more accessible resources. There is also a stigma concerning mental health issues that stops young people to seek support and additional guidance with the ultimate goal of wellbeing.
- **Inclusion:** Participants stressed the importance of integrating migrants and connecting young people from different backgrounds to build a more vibrant and inclusive community.
- **Climate and Resources:** Concerns about climate change and sustainable access to natural resources, such as water, were raised as priorities for future action.

Through interactive discussions, brainstorming sessions, and group work, participants identified the main challenges they face, shared their experiences, and proposed solutions that could be relevant both locally and across the EU. The participatory and inclusive format ensured that every voice was heard, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment among the rural youth involved. The focus group concluded with a strong sense

of motivation and a list of actionable ideas that will be shared with local authorities, ensuring that the voices of rural youth are heard and considered in future initiatives.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).