

# RURAL NETWORKING IN ACTION



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## RURAL NETWORKING IN ACTION

Networking – and rural development networking is a prime example of this – is first and foremost about people. It is about coming together, developing new ways of thinking and operating, and building something new, together; something that is bigger than the sum of its individual parts; and something that benefits rural communities everywhere.

On the occasion of networX – the largest ever gathering of the European rural networking community to be organised under the 2014-2020 programming period – we want to salute the human spirit of networking and mark 10 years of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).

This book highlights rural networking through the eyes of young people, as they are the ones who will determine the future development of Europe's countryside. It also illustrates how networks support **RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, THE ENVIRONMENT, RURAL HERITAGE** and **VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITIES** – areas where the impact of rural networking is unmistakable.

We hope you enjoy this snapshot of rural life and agree that networking must be at the heart of rural development: working together to create attractive rural areas for generations to come.

The ENRD Contact Point

# RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*“Without young people desiring to live in rural areas there cannot be any sustainable rural development.”*

*“Utan unga människor, som vill och önskar bo på landsbygden, kan landsbygdsutvecklingen aldrig bli hållbar.”*

Hans-Olof Stålgren,  
Swedish National Rural Network






*“The main thing with cooperation is that there is a really good energy between the actors working together. If this is not the case, then you can forget the project.”*

*“Entscheidend für die Zusammenarbeit ist, dass die Chemie zwischen den Beteiligten stimmt. Andernfalls können Sie das Projekt gleich vergessen.”*

Anke Wehmeyer,  
German National Rural Network



*“The most important lesson learned was about networking in times of crisis such as this. It generates new ideas and it gives comfort and hope because, as we all say, there is strength in numbers.”*

*“Το πιο σημαντικό δίδαγμα αφορούσε στη σημασία της δικτύωσης σε περιόδους κρίσης όπως στη παρούσα φάση. Παράγει νέες ιδέες, δίνει παρηγόρια και ελπίδα επειδή, όπως λέμε όλοι, υπάρχει δύναμη όταν λειτουργείς ως ομάδα.”*

Anastasios M. Perimenis,  
ETAL S.A. Local Development Company  
for Lesvos Island, Greece



*“In many instances these enterprises were up and running before the Rural Development funding came on stream and it was seen as an opportunity to expand, but for many others the investment helped them on their first crucial step to purchasing equipment or investing in technology which helped mobilise ideas.”*

Teresa Canavan,  
Rural Network for Northern Ireland

*“We can really learn from each other. That’s why I think it’s important to connect with people as much as possible... to inspire each other and to make change happen, together.”*

*“We kunnen echt van elkaar leren. Daarom denk ik dat het belangrijk is dat mensen zoveel mogelijk verbindingen maken... om elkaar te inspireren en samen verandering tot stand te brengen.”*


Dirk-Jan Kloet,  
Young farmer and rural entrepreneur, the Netherlands





*“The role of the NRNs in rural proofing is to show the human stories behind the quantitative evidence, to get the passion raised, so that people can understand the real impact of the policy on rural communities.”*

James Elliott,  
England Network Support Unit, UK

A photograph showing two men in profile, looking at a piece of irrigation equipment. The man in the foreground is wearing a dark polo shirt, and the man behind him is wearing a white t-shirt. They are standing in a field with large green plants and a stone wall. The equipment is a metal box with a transparent front panel, revealing internal components. A black cable is connected to the side of the box. The background shows a clear sky and more vegetation.

*“The NRN brings stakeholders together in a neutral space to identify the various pieces of the jigsaw, until the full picture becomes visible to all.”*

*“NRN samlar intressenter i en neutral plattform för att identifiera olika pusselbitar tills hela bilden blir synlig för alla.”*

Maria Gustafsson,  
Swedish National Rural Network



*“By working together,  
we as smaller businesses  
can enjoy the benefits that  
a bigger enterprise has.”*

*“Lavorando insieme, noi  
aziende più piccole possiamo  
godere dei benefici che ha  
un'impresa più grande.”*

Andrea Loche,  
EAFRD funding beneficiary, Italy

# ENVIRONMENT



*“Our rural areas strongly depend on youth.”*

*“Maaseutumme on riippuvainen nuorista.”*

Sofia Nikka,  
Kolari municipality, Finland



*“Working together prevents us from ‘reinventing the wheel’ – each municipality doesn’t have to do everything. One can start and become an expert and share its knowledge with the rest.”*

*“Att samarbeta hindrar oss från att ständigt ‘uppfinna hjulet’ – varje by och samhälle behöver inte göra allting själva. Någon startar med en utmaning och blir duktig, till och med expert på det, och kan sedan dela med sig av kunskapen till de andra.”*

Madeleine Blusi,  
IMPROVE Project coordinator, Sweden

*“It’s that sense of perspective that actually reminds us that we live in a global environment, not just our own little Scottish bubble.”*

Sarah Millar,  
Soil Association Scotland, UK





*“Biodiversity monitoring taught me to see my fields and meadows in a different, more ecological way.”*

*“Das Biodiversitäts-Monitoring hat mich gelehrt, meine Felder und Wiesen auf andere, ökologischere Weise wahrzunehmen.”*

Sandra Lerner,  
Rosenhof Farm and Rural Development Programme beneficiary, Austria



*“Transnational cooperation is important to us because meeting other LAGs, exchanging ideas and sharing challenges, means we can work together to solve problems – or even find someone with a solution already! Seeing our area through other people’s eyes builds confidence in what we can achieve.”*

*“Współpraca międzynarodowa jest dla nas ważna, ponieważ spotykając się z innymi LGD, wymieniając pomysły i dzieląc się wyzwaniami, oznacza, że możemy wspólnie pracować nad rozwiązaniem problemów – lub nawet znaleźć już kogoś, kto ma rozwiązanie! Oglądanie naszego obszaru oczami innych ludzi buduje zaufanie do tego, co możemy osiągnąć.”*

Małgorzata Sliczna,  
LAG Stowarzyzenie Lokalna Group,  
Działnia Dolina Stobrawy, Poland



*“It’s about quality of life: rural development helps people to live better in their own communities.”*

*“Estamos a falar de qualidade de vida: o desenvolvimento rural ajuda as pessoas a viver melhor nas suas próprias comunidades.”*

Luis Chaves,  
Minha Terra – Portuguese  
Federation of Local  
Development Associations

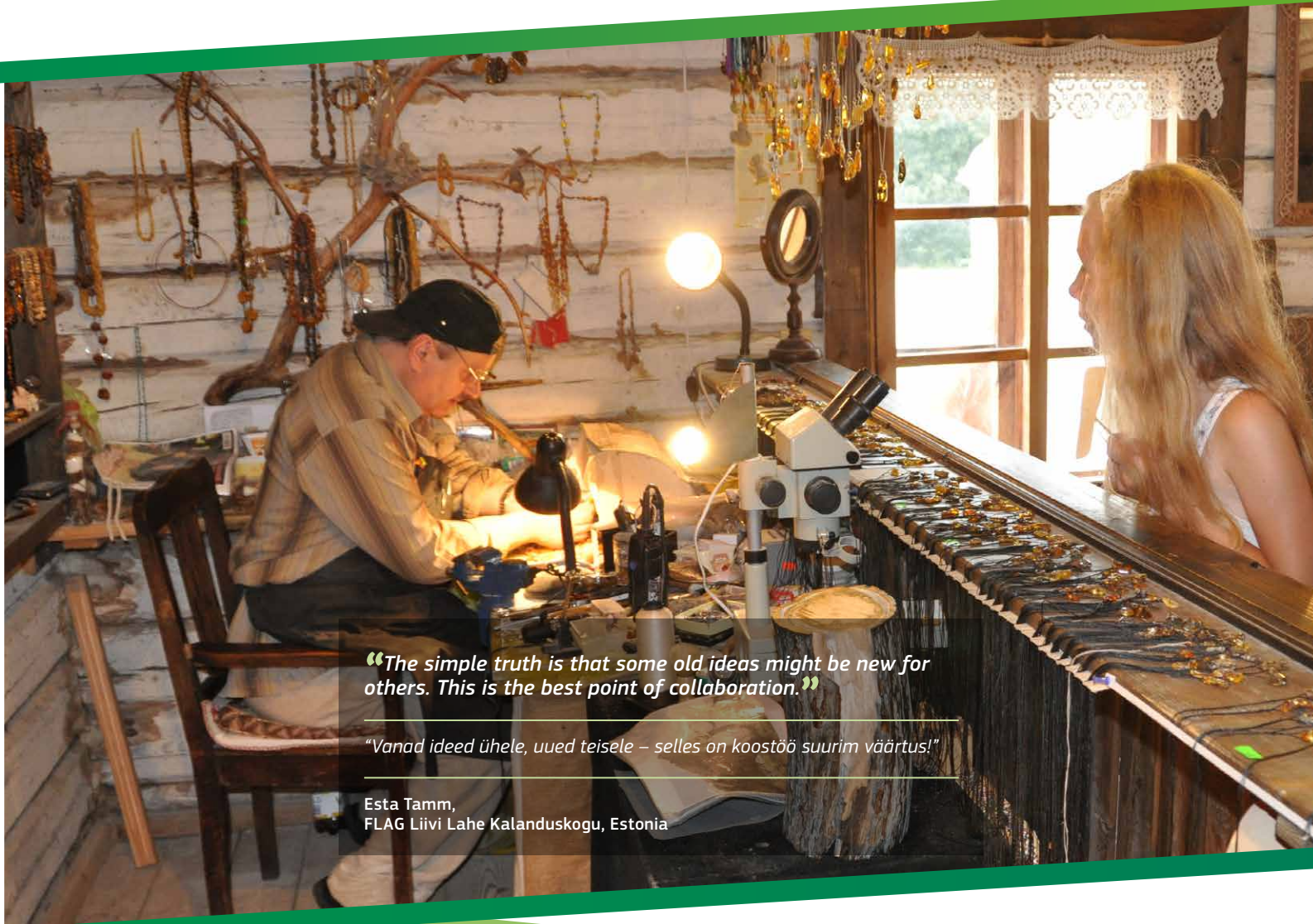


# RURAL HERITAGE



*“Whether they are actively farming, supporting the family farm, running a rural enterprise or involved in local community enterprises, women play an active role in sustaining our rural communities.”*

Northern Ireland  
Rural Network



*“The simple truth is that some old ideas might be new for others. This is the best point of collaboration.”*

*“Vanad ideed ühele, uued teisele – selles on koostöö suurim väärtus!”*

Esta Tamm,  
FLAG Liivi Lahe Kalanduskogu, Estonia

*“To have personal and informal contact is important to solve problems and get common ideas.”*

*“Det er vigtigt at have personlige og uformelle kontakter for at løse problemer og for at få fælles ideer.”*

Morten Priesholm,  
LAG Danish Small Islands –  
Smaoernes Aktionsgruppe, Denmark



*“Cooperation is about being open-minded! It is very important to see what the others do. We have to cooperate, we need to remain open towards the others, that is Europe!”*

*“La coopération est une question d'ouverture d'esprit! Il est très important de regarder ce que font les autres. Nous devons coopérer et rester ouverts aux autres, c'est ça, l'esprit européen!”*

Hélène Cabanes,  
LAG Confluences autour du Verdon, France

*“Bringing people together is not always easy, but it gives you so much energy it’s worth it!”*

*“Att få människor att samlas och enas är inte alltid så enkelt, men det ger så mycket energi att det är värt jobbet!”*

Disa Angbratt,  
Suderbyn resident, Sweden





*“Getting feedback about our work from such a diverse group of people was very beneficial for our future activities. The main message I took was that it is crucial we collaborate, share ideas, knowledge and resources on local, regional and European levels. It is very important we use existing resources and ecosystems and build on those.”*

*“Pridobitev povratnih informacij o našem delu od tako raznolike skupine ljudi je bilo zelo koristno za naše prihodnje delovanje. Glavno sporočilo, ki sem ga sprejel, je, da je ključnega pomena sodelovanje, izmenjava idej, znanja in virov na lokalni, regionalni in evropski ravni. Zelo pomembno je, da uporabljamo obstoječe vire in ekosisteme ter jih nadgrajujemo.”*

Emilija Stojmenova,  
Ljubljana University, Slovenia

# VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITIES

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↓ Rural Europe photo competition. © European Union 2013



*“It’s very rewarding work for me because you can see the actual changes. You can make a difference – from children to old people. It’s really about the community. Life itself!”*

*“É um trabalho muito gratificante para mim porque podemos ver as mudanças concretas. Tu podes fazer a diferença - das crianças aos idosos. Isto é a Comunidade. Um projeto de vida!”*

Alexandre Ferraz,  
Trancoso LAG, Portugal



*“We learned teamwork and tolerance, we got to know other cultures, we found our common history, we learned to communicate in a foreign language, and we strengthened the feeling of joint Europe.”*

*“Naučili jsme se týmové spolupráci a toleranci, poznali jsme nejen rozdíly mezi našimi kulturami, ale také naši společnou historii. Naučili jsme se také komunikovat v cizích jazycích a posílili jsme mezi námi ducha spojené Evropy.”*

Kristina Garrido Holmova,  
Rural development expert,  
Czech Republic




*“The network should break down the barriers between the different stakeholders, by facilitating better and easier exchanges between the members.”*

*“Le réseau devrait éliminer les barrières entre les différentes parties prenantes, en permettant des échanges meilleurs et plus faciles entre les membres.”*

Joëlle Silberstein,  
French National Rural Network

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*“The first important step is to talk to people beyond the colleagues you always talk to. Also remember that it is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice. Effective networking starts when you know someone, so first you will need to invest time in just being nice.”*

*“Det första viktiga steget är att tala med människor utanför den krets av kollegor du alltid pratar med. Kom också ihåg att det är trevligt att känna sig viktig men det är viktigare att vara trevlig. Effektivt nätverksarbete startar genom att lära känna några andra, så först av allt behöver du investera tid i att helt enkelt vara trevlig.”*

Marion Eckardt,  
LAG Lokalt Ledd Utveckling Halland, Sweden



*“We learned a great deal from each other through our exchange visits and online meetings and we were then able to apply this new knowledge to our own situations and circumstances.”*

*“Nous avons appris beaucoup les uns des autres dans le cadre de nos visites d'échange et de nos réunions en ligne et nous avons pu appliquer ces nouvelles connaissances à nos situations et circonstances.”*

Charlotte Comare,  
Cultural Representative of  
Pays Vallée du Loir, France



*“Bringing farmers together to work collectively for the good of their shared territory promotes a ‘virtuous circle’ that can lead to other forms of cooperation and cost-effective rural development.”*

*“Far lavorare gli agricoltori insieme per il bene del loro territorio promuove un “circolo virtuoso” che può portare ad altre forme di cooperazione e ad uno sviluppo rurale economicamente vantaggioso.”*

Francesco Vanni,  
Rural development expert, Italy



*“When people feel engaged, they often come up with ideas to improve the project.”*

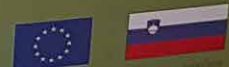
*“Wanneer mensen zich betrokken voelen, komen ze zelfs met ideeën om het project te verbeteren.”*

Marieke Kok,  
Rural development expert,  
the Netherlands

3. Orjaška zlata rozga  
(Solidago gigantea)

5. Enoletna suloletnica  
(Erigeron annuus)

Veliki peljzen  
(Allianthus altissima)





*“The attachment of people to rural regions depends upon the extent to which the integration of different population and age groups are successful and [the extent to which] social exclusion is prevented.”*

Paul Cloke,  
‘Handbook of Rural Studies’

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