



Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title *Equal opportunities in rural development*

Theme *Knowledge exchange; Training; Cooperation*

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Partners *The Federal Ministry for Agriculture; Zita Küng, a trainer for equal opportunities; Leader LAGs*

Period *2011 + 2012* Resources *Approx. EUR 100.000*

Geo-location *Several federal provinces ("Länder")*

Beneficiaries *Managing authorities, LAG managers and LAG members, women in Leader-regions,*

Background

Rural development in Austria is predominantly represented by men over 40 years old. Since 2010 one main emphasis of the Austrian NSU has been to highlight the importance of equal opportunities, especially for women and young people, and their participation in rural development. Therefore in 2010 a national working group was initiated to discuss and develop suitable measures. After 4 meetings the working group presented a catalogue of measures to the Austrian Rural Development Steering Committee, which decided to implement them through the NSU. The proposals of the working group were to deliver:

- Six training courses for managing authorities at provincial level and other people involved in implementation of the Austrian rural development program. The title was "Equal Opportunities in Rural Development"
- An annual rural development award "Innovation Award for Equal Opportunities in Rural Regions"
- Three workshops or impulse forum on "Regional Development From Women's Perspectives"
- Focus on the topic in the annual NSU conference and LEADER Network Meeting
- Articles in the "ausblicke" – the magazine of the NSU
- Ongoing work on the youth and rural development agenda

The training course and the workshops were held for all provinces in 2011, submission for the rural development award started in March 2012, and the annual conference including the awarding of the prize will be in November 2012. In 2012 a national working group has also been established focusing on youth and rural development.

Main activities

The main activities were the creation of a National Working Group which analysed and discussed the situation, developing suitable measures which were then presented to the Rural Development Steering Committee. Of these measures the first to be completed was the training course on "Equal Opportunities in Rural Development" for managing authorities at provincial level and all administration staff with a decision making role that are involved in Leader funding. The course was designed and delivered by Zita Küng, who is an international expert, and the content included current concepts and approaches to equal opportunities, role models and clichés, hidden costs and benefits and – very valuable to all participants – working on examples given from the daily work of the participants. All in all there were 120 participants over six courses and the group showed a perfect gender balance.

- These training sessions support participants in assessing aspects of equal opportunities in projects as well as integrating it as a strategic topic for upcoming developments.
- The annual RD-award 2012 "Innovation Award for Equal Opportunities in Rural Regions" is dedicated to the topic "Equal Opportunities" and aims to award projects in the field of women, youth and other equal opportunities. The awards will take place in November at the Austrian NSU conference.





- The workshops and impulse forum aimed to learn more about women's views on their region, networking and experience exchange and inspiring regional projects. The impulse-fora took place in 2011 and showed very good results with 7 LAGs participating including 80 women and some men. Some of these regions have since developed very lively follow-up activities.
- The topic of the annual NSU conference is "Equal Opportunities in Rural Regions" with presentations, working groups and the award ceremony for the "Innovation Award for Equal Opportunities in Rural Regions"
- Several articles have appeared in "ausblicke" – the magazine of the NSU
- A national youth and rural development working group began in 2012

Main results/benefits

The impulse forums were used as platforms where women discussed their current roles within the regional development system, barriers for participation, resources that they could provide and refining topics that they would like to work on. These activities have already made an impact with women in some LAG areas organising themselves and starting to run similar forum on a regular basis.

Contribution of the NSU

The NSU raised the importance of the topic for future regional development, was involved in all steps of the "EQ-Work-Package" and integrated it in their regular working programme. The NSU also moderated the National working groups and the impulse forum, organised the training sessions, the award and the national ceremony.

Contribution of the partners

Working group: Several partners at national level contributed to the working group.

Training courses: the Federal Ministry and the Managing Authorities of all federal provinces put much emphasis on communication and contributed by inviting participants, marketing the course and supporting some organisational details. Participation in the training course was strongly recommended by the Ministry and the PVLs.

Impulse forum: the LAGs marketed the forum, contacted target groups and helped to organise the event. They also supported follow-up activities and raised awareness of the issue at their committees.

Success factors

Key success factors where:

- Recognition of Equal Opportunities as a strategic topic in the rural development programme
- Joint development of measures in the national working group over a short period of time
- Fast implementation of the measures
- Mixture of measures that show short-time results and measures with long-term results
- Measures very suitable to the needs of the target group
- Support of the NSU – stable working resources and a person in charge
- Strong commitment of the Federal Ministry

Additional information

More information (available only in German):

Rural development-award 2012: "Innovation Award Equal Opportunities in Rural Regions"

<http://www.netzwerk-land.at/lepreis2012/innovationspreis-fuer-chancengleichheit-le-wettbewerb-2012>

