

EWRC2018 – Workshop 11WS118

Local development strategies: retaining and attracting talents in the regions

Session summary and conclusions

The session started with opening addresses by **Haris Martinos**, Secretary-General of LDnet and **Maria João Botelho**, President of ELARD stressing the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences and the value of the CLLD/Leader approach.

The moderator, **Maria João Rauch**, LDnet board member, outlined the challenges facing localities and regions; problems of vitality and competition, and an inadequate understanding of the values and aspirations of the ‘millennials’ and the even younger ‘generation Z’. She also highlighted good practices around a collaborative approach, co-creation and sharing.

It was followed by the presentation of the strategy for Alto Minho (Portugal) by **José Maria Costa**, CIM President, and **Ana Paula Xavier**, Technical Coordinator of the LAG ADRIMINHO. The ‘Alto Minho 2020’ strategy and global action plan were approved in 2015 and comprise nine action programmes, whose implementation is gradually transforming Alto Minho from traditional region of emigration to one of the more sustainable regions in Europe. The region is also covered by two Leader LAGs and one FLAG pursuing a multi-fund approach and aiming to create an environment that is ‘a good place to live in’.

The Swedish case of the Landsbyggare project (Changing Perspectives: Attracting People to the Countryside) was presented by **Urszula Budzich-Tabor**, FARNET and LDnet Vice-President, on behalf of **Marion Eckardt**, Vice-President of ELARD. Its strategy is to change the views on entrepreneurship in rural areas and create an attractive place that draws in capital and skilled and driven people, by supporting skills development, providing inspiration and creating a positive perception of the area through opinion articles, social media, etc. The project is run by Höga Kusten LAG since March 2018 and has already attracted two entrepreneurs to the area.

The experience of the Tartu County Youth Fund (Estonia) was presented by **Kristiina Tammets**, Vice-President of ELARD. The Fund promotes entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial mindset. It enables young people to obtain funding for their own initiatives. It has been running since 2010 and has supported more than 100 small projects implemented by youngsters, covering a wide spectrum of activities - youth camps, festivals, training, business ideas development, etc. The Fund is very special and popular because it allows youngsters starting from 12 years old to get support for their ideas.

Katalin Kolosy, AEIDL and LDnet board member, offered a broader perspective on innovative methods for attracting talent and youth, including types of EU funding support available, and a series of points emerging from the specific experiences covered in previous presentations.

Open interaction with the audience followed, using SLID.O, with live comments and questions from the floor, and responses from the speakers. This debate covered various related topics, such as remote working/mobile jobs, identity of the territory, territorial marketing, and targeted approaches.

Take away message

- Target audiences are the young people themselves but also the people accompanying and helping their talents to unleash;
- Key issue of 'changing perceptions' to shift mindsets;
- Local attractiveness is not restricted to an economic challenge (i.e. from business incubator to fablabs and co-working places);
- It is greatly facilitated by digital tools and connectivity, but not only;
- Attracting new talents brings together policy measures on CLLD and Social Innovation;
- EU funds support the sharing of practice and networking of small-scale initiatives.