

Chapter 8: Rural development programmes and their impact on youth integration

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Introduction

With structural adjustment and integration of agriculture into the rural economy the concern for the development of rural areas in general has risen considerably over the last decades. Rural policy is no more primarily about agriculture but has to address specifically all different economic sectors and actors in the area. With fundamental changes in the market structures and relations, programmes targeted at specific rural areas cannot neglect the emerging interrelations to other areas. Hence a rural policy has to address directly its insertion into the regional framework and its relation to regional policy.

In recent years concern about social exclusion processes has reached also rural areas. Rising unemployment and the limited opportunities for young people have turned the attention of policy analysis to this social group. This chapter focuses on the assessment of rural development policies in the EU as they affect young people. To this end, the paper starts with a presentation of the policy background and its evaluation, particularly with regard to its rising priority over the last EU-reforms. It continues with the investigation of a series of exemplary cases of policy measures and initiatives specifically addressing young people in rural development. In some cases a direct reference to young people's attitudes as expressed in the interviews with regard to awareness and assessment of rural policies and local initiatives is given. The concluding third section draws on evaluation studies on rural development programmes with regard to youth participation and explores the scope for future strengthening of respective activities and inclusion of young people concerns in rural development programmes.

1. Rural development policy

Before assessing the impact of rural development policies on young people's integration into social and economic life in rural areas we have to outline the policy background. Rural policy has received over recent years increasing political attention although there remain quite divergent views on the different concepts to be used and policy processes to serve the target of integration of sector approaches. The rural approach, albeit often alluded to as being similar to agricultural development, is in its core a territorial approach, applying regional policy measures for specific regions, the rural areas. Hence the following short introductory presentation focuses on both (a) the various policies with distinctive territorial dimensions and impact on rural areas

and (b) rural development policy as addressed by EU policy reform and targeted at through EU agricultural policy via establishing a "second pillar" to Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Regional policy's history – basic foundations of rural policy

In many countries of Western Europe regional and rural policy are closely interrelated and a sharp distinction between the two policy concepts cannot be drawn easily. It is therefore interesting to present here some remarks on the background of broader territorial schemes as expressed under the term regional policy.

In countries of Western Europe regional policy was introduced during the 1920s as a reaction to the strengthening of spatial disparities and the emergence of the first depressed regions, induced by sectoral crises (Artobolevskiy 1997, p. 32). All over the period since then social objectives have been the most important ones for regional policy. Though it was not officially established in all west European countries, in most countries key words depicting the main problems and regions of a country had been created by the start of the 1960s (e.g. Mezzogiorno in Italy, Northern peripheral areas in Scandinavia, mountain regions). Many of these regional problem areas implicitly had a strong rural bias since large regional support areas covered regions with deeply rural characteristics. With rising criticism of regional policy in the 1970s and 1980s focus shifted towards policy priorities for increasing economic efficiency of the country. In many developed countries this led to a partial curtailment of regional policy and a reorientation from social to economic objectives.

It was only in the 1980s that the European structural policy which had previously just complemented national policies developed into a substantial Community structural policy. With the start of the reform of the Structural Funds the investment and volume had to correspond to the following 3 regional priority objectives since 1 January 1989:

Objective 1: promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind

Objective 2: converting the regions or parts of regions seriously affected by industrial decline

Objective 5b: facilitating the development and structural adjustment of rural areas

The second reform of Structural Funds in 1993 confirmed the approach taken and EU-commitment for regional policy has been deepened continuously over the 1990s. Moreover, the Cohesion Fund, established with the Maastricht Treaty, has provided since 1993 an additional instrument to support the 4 lagging EU-countries Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal in the preparation for the Monetary Union, and simultaneously to the economic growth process. With the EU-accession of the Scandinavian countries Finland and Sweden the situation of sparsely populated areas was acknowledged as a distinct problem pattern and led to a further regional priority objective:

Objective 6: development and structural adjustment of regions with an extremely low population density

In the last decade the EU-measures to strengthen the cohesion and structures in less-developed regions have gained a substantive portion of the EU-budget. Since the second half of the 1990s the four Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund together account for one third of the EU-budget which means about 0.5% of the yearly GDP of the EU-countries (Europäische Kommission 1996, p. 89). The four Structural Funds are:

- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- The European Social Fund (ESF)
- The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)
- The Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG)

Besides the European Union has two more major financial instruments to implement its structural policies, the Cohesion Fund and loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) which are both based on a project-financing approach and are governed by their own specific rules.

The major part is covered by the first four instruments which operate within an *integrated programming* framework according to a set of principles defined in implementing regulations. The outline of the objectives of the first programming period (1989-1993) have been prolonged, in general, for the second period. The programmes of this second period (1994-1999) have addressed specific regional problems under the above mentioned objectives and focused their activities on objective 1 areas, accounting for almost 68% of total resources.

At that period the population covered by the regional objectives amounted to 51% of the EU total. Some 55% of the total resources went to 16% of the EU population in four countries – Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal – mostly delivered through objective 1 programmes. During the second programming period (1994-1999) the regional scope and intensity has been increased, particularly in objective 2 and objective 5b regions.

In addition to the mainstream programmes there were separate Community Initiative programmes to support transnational, cross-border and inter-regional actions organised under 13 different themes, including the LEADER (and INTERREG) programme which focus on innovative actions in rural areas and building a European network of rural actors. In addition, a small proportion of total resources, some 1%, is reserved for technical assistance, pilot projects and innovative measures.

As recent analyses by the European Commission (1999a) pointed out there is now evidence available for actual convergence of lagging regions: From 1986 to 1996 GDP per head of the 10 poorest regions increased from 41% of the EU average to 50%, and in the 25 poorest regions it rose from 52% to 59%. This trend can also be seen at the national level, as GDP per head in the four Cohesion countries went up from 65% of the EU average to 75%, and, according to forecasts, to 77% in 1999. These regional shifts have a direct impact on rural areas, although the actual performance of regions is quite diverse. Depending on the territorial level of analysis further in-depth studies and inter-regional comparisons are needed to provide an advanced assessment on the impact for (specific) rural areas.

In many respects the reform of the EU Structural Funds in 1988 was accompanied by the rise of the debate on the "The Future of Rural Society". Through the commission paper under this title (CEC 1988) rural policy gained momentum as a specific European issue. Its underlying concept contributed to trigger the ensuing discussion addressing a much wider scope of functions for rural areas than had been considered before. The concept of an integrated approach for rural development programmes were reflected especially under the objective 5b-programmes but also in the objective 1 areas. With the ongoing discussions of the subject both the funds of the regional programmes enlarged (compare 1st and 2nd period of Structural Funds programmes) and new initiatives developed.

The most interesting element of Structural Funds from the conceptual point of view is the Community Initiative LEADER (Liaison entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale). It aimed at establishing local action groups, raising their awareness for rural development action and initiating this long-termed learning process. As the focus is on innovative actions and methods an important element is seen in the networking function of this Community Initiative.

The link between agricultural structural policy and a broader territorial approach was deepened for the regions targeted during the former periods by Objective 1 and 5b (and later 6) of the Structural Funds. Incorporating all actions envisaged under the different Structural Funds into a single programming schedule, pointed to the rising role of rural areas for the aim of "economic and social cohesion". It is in particular some of the remote rural areas which suffer under the most weak economic performances.

Although the regional objectives of the structural funds directly addressed rural features particularly in the case of objective 5b ("The economic diversification of fragile rural areas") rural areas occur under all regional categories of structural funds. The greatest relevance for rural areas has therefore not been bound to objective 5b-areas but is attributed to the great share of rural areas in objective 1 regions.

The assessment of economic development of rural areas in the EU in general is therefore largely related to the lagging regions in objective 1-areas: As has been mentioned previously there is evidence for convergence, as shown by figures for the poorest regions. However, at the same time disparities at the regional and particularly local levels persist (in particular, comparing poorest and richest regions) and call for ongoing Structural Funds programmes.

With Agenda 2000 reform the Structural Funds programmes have been concentrated. The territorial and programme concentration intended to reach particularly regions and people most in need of support and to avoid overlapping activities. Moreover, the period for Structural Funds programmes has been extended to seven years (2000 – 2006) which should allow to achieve longer-term targeting of the programmes through the continued commitment for objective areas. Actually the share of EU population covered by the regional objectives has been decreased to about 41% (and for national support areas to 35%). The objectives of the Structural Funds have been reduced to the three following ones:

Objective 1: Development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind

Objective 2: Economic and social conversion of areas facing structural difficulties

Objective 3: Adaptation and modernisation of policies and systems of education, training and employment

Also the Community Initiatives have been restructured and limited to the four prime Initiatives INTERREG, LEADER+, URBAN and EQUAL. For rural development policy it seems important to have an Initiative like LEADER+ with a large scope for innovative actions, networking activities and, what is essential for the future perspectives, relying on a structure which allows an experimental character in its measures.

The actual rural development policy of the EU can therefore not be assessed easily by analysing one type of programme, but has to include elements from the following different EU-programmes, inter-linkages between these programmes, and further territorial actions provided by other programmes:

- Objective 2 areas (new), particularly those parts focusing on problem of rural areas
- LEADER+ programmes
- Rural Development Plans, according to Reg. (EC) 1257/1999.

What has been said above, seems to be even more relevant to this period. The host of measures for rural areas have to be seen within Objective 1-programmes, and horizontal programmes (like Objective 3); moreover, other Community Initiatives, like INTERREG and partly also EQUAL, as well as local action group work, e.g. local AGENDA 21 and environment actions is of utmost concern to rural development. Having outlined the wide field of actions

impacting on rural development it becomes clear that such a wide concept is not captured by the actual policy but lends itself heavily to the discussion of territorial development policy. It seems, however, promising that over the last years the preparation of the European Spatial Development Perspective - ESDP (CEC 1999b) has shown the readiness for addressing such viewpoints at a European level and, particularly, the high relevance of rural issues and its territorial implications on the agenda.

Evolution of EU Policies for Rural Development

Most EU documents state that the main means of support for rural areas of the European Union was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and this still remains the case to some extent. This reflects also public opinion where rural is still strongly equated with agriculture or, at least, is seen as primarily agriculture driven.

The distribution of CAP aid within the farming community, in general, does not address territorial aspects and is often described as being quite regressive: "the main beneficiaries have not been the smaller farmers and poorer regions but the larger farmers and more prosperous agricultural regions" (Lowe et al. 1999, p. 57). The original EC member states were not concerned with regional inequalities and only the British Government saw regional assistance as a counterweight to CAP spending, and in 1975 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Less Favoured Areas (LFA) scheme were set up. The LFA programme authorised member states to pay financial compensation to farmers operating in mountains and other "less favoured areas" in order to ensure the continuation of farming, thereby maintaining a minimum population level, or conserving the countryside. The programme operated very early through direct income payments to farmers and directly indicated through its aims the tight inter-relationship of agriculture and environment, particularly in such areas. However, from the introduction of LFA support to the appreciation of its impact on environmental performance under Agenda 2000 decisions was a rather long way (Dax and Hellegers 2000). At first, possibilities of support were broadened through the introduction of "integrated development programmes" (in 1979), particularly shaped to the need of Southern European countries through the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (in 1985). After the commission paper on "The Future of Rural Society" in 1988 rural development has been seen largely on the way to be stronger integrated into Structural Funds programmes (see above). The designated "rural areas" under objective 5b and the LEADER Initiative are strong indication of this. The LFA scheme was drawn into the new Objective 5a combining together the horizontal measures for the improvement of agricultural structures. With the starting of the discussion of Agenda 2000 proposal, particularly induced by the Cork Declaration in 1996, discussion on the future of agricultural support and rural development policy and its relationship broke out. The outcome can be seen as a compromise between two opposite viewpoints: It attaches rural development more closely to agricultural administration and regulations, but on the other hand allows for some continuation of the concept of rural development going beyond agriculture. Yet, one can

raise doubts about the opportunities for rural policies under these circumstances. These doubts relate both to the scope of activities being eligible or implemented as well as to the contents, e.g. with relation to its integrative capacity (c.f. Dax 1999, Lowe and Brouwer 2000).

Taking account of the broader concept of rural development within e.g. Structural Funds programmes it can by no means anymore be equated with agriculture or agriculture related development. Still many core documents (CEC 1997) and the Regulation 1257/1999 adhere to the "old" view including rural development within agricultural policy. The concept of the "second pillar" of EU agricultural policy being provided by rural development also takes the agrarian viewpoint as starting point.

Integration approach of rural development

However, there is concern and discussion on the widening of the concept, including the difficulties of acceptability in society and implementation in administration structures (e.g. Buckwell et al. 1997). In many different fields the interest for rural specificity has evolved and lead to intensified debate. This concerns both the territorial dimension, and in particular regional policy which has extended its field of interest to local development processes and the interactions between different parts of the territory, in particular rural and urban areas. Besides the insertion of the discussion in the conceptualisation and implementation of the new Structural funds programmes for the period 2000 – 2006 these issues have been outlined and agreed upon in the European Spatial Development Programme (ESDP, EC 1999). Other policies, like environment, tourism, traffic etc. have to deal with their territorial impacts, and hence an assessment of the rural dimension. This wide concept has been particularly discussed over the last decade within OECD which tried to develop a common framework to provide orientation for the diverse national approaches towards advancing in the direction of a comprehensive rural policy in the interest of the society as well as rural people. Analysing the challenge of rural policy with a territorial perspective which allowed for recognition of individual place specific needs and underlined the importance of exchange with other areas, this phase of OECD work on rural development provided momentum to the international debate and strongly influenced the understanding of EU development of rural areas as well. Both the conceptual framework (OECD 1993) and the implications of the diversity of rural areas (OECD 1996a) could underline that rural areas are not doomed to failure but that policy actually matters.

Whereas previously actions for rural development had focused on its backwardness and were restricted mainly to the agricultural sector, empirical studies at the international level have confirmed that there is no uniform development trajectory. In particular, this means that rurality in itself does not automatically mean lagging economic development. In particular OECD (1996b) has revealed through the establishment of a territorially disaggregated data set that for a series of countries employment increase (in the 1980s, and some recent data suggest also for the 1990s) was higher in rural than in urban regions. The argument was taken up largely in the

international discussion. In many documents issued by the EU the large diversity of conditions and trends in rural areas is pointed out now (e.g. CEC 1997).

This heterogeneity of performance of rural areas cannot be explained sufficiently by standard economic theory. It appears that in many cases intangible aspects are the most important in "making the difference" (OECD 1998, p. 12f.). Thus the reason for (economic) success does not just lie with physical capital but often must be sought in human capital (the ability of people to participate in the economy) and social capital (the capacity of communities to organise themselves). Hence the aim of rural policies consists in far more than simply compensating disadvantaged areas/people. It is realised that it is central to *initiate development processes* and to focus on the institutional framework for relevant initiatives. In such a context the contribution of the LEADER initiative, albeit small from its financial resources, might be crucial for the kind of discussion and processes required to overcome regional inertia which was prevailing in many rural areas. Its innovative character and its intention to foster inter-regional co-operation seems to be at the core of the development process. From its outset it has combined these elements with the notion of "bottom-up" approach, including a wide variety of local stakeholders and interests.

With regard to our topic we have to focus again on the role of young people in this process. There is no doubt that overall aims are not directed, or even mentioning young people as a target group. However, as we will show later, recently there is quite a distinct acknowledgement of young people in that process. Nevertheless we will have to approach the question by analysing the contents of programmes and by widening the scope of analysis in order to include measures impacting on young people. The next section therefore will concentrate on an overview of programmes and measures, and point to the specific features concerning young people or the treatment of young people in the programmes, in general.

2. Young people in rural development - experiences from case studies

The following presentation of the role of young people in rural development attempts to take a closer view on existing measures in rural development programmes, particularly in the regions and countries of the seven study areas of this project. It is intended to provide through this overview some insight into the situation and potential for youth specific formulation of measures and processes. Whereas the context of the Austrian study area Murau is analysed in greater detail, with the aim to explore also potential scope in a wider range of measures, only a selection of specific measures and programmes which seem due to some of its features of particular interest have been addressed for the other study areas.

2.1 Rural development and other policies in study area Murau, Austria

In the district of Murau and in its neighbouring districts Knittelfeld and Judenburg which form together the NUTS III region Upper Styria West there are a lot of measures addressing, explicitly or implicitly, the development of rural areas. During the Structural Funds period 1995-1999 (for Austria, due to EU-accession in 1995) the district of Murau belonged to the objective 5b area and, for the period 2000-2006, just *partly* belongs to objective 2 (new). The objective 5b programme aimed at stimulating economic development of and enabling structural adjustments in rural areas. Three spheres of action were chosen in the Single programming Document (SPD) as priorities for measures in Styria (Dax and Oedl-Wieser 1995, pp.21ff.):

- Diversification, adjustment and adaptation of farming activities, co-funded by EAGGF - Guidance, aiming at intensifying links between farming and other local businesses and the orientation of agricultural production according to market needs considering economical, environmental and social aspects (ÖROK 1999, p 11). Six measures have been carried out in this sub-programme with the most important emphasising on supporting the use of regional potential of raw material, achieving added-value for forestry, preservation and improvement of rural areas, training and educational qualification, etc. (ÖROK 1999, p.58).
- Development and diversification in non-farming sectors, co-funded by ERDF: The emphasis has been laid on creating positive premises for investments in tourism, environmental issues, modernising and structural improvements as well as attracting firms to create and secure job opportunities outside farming (ÖROK 1999, p.11). Eleven measures have been carried out in Styria emphasising on modernising industry and business, marketing of tourism, and research (ÖROK 1999, p.58).
- Development of human resources, co-funded by ESF, aiming at the reintegration of unemployed people into the labour market, especially through employment projects and qualification measures aimed at the needs of (the local) labour market. Under the five measures of this sub-programme the training and educational measures for unemployed

people have been the most important. Measures with "youth dimension" are mainly found under this category (ÖROK 1999, p.59).

The new objective 2 programme has not yet started to approve projects due to the scattered location of programme areas (arising from delimitation at the municipal level) in some parts of Austria, and particularly in the district Murau, one has to envisage that the regional dimension will be weakened for the benefit of more sectoral enterprise support. To maintain the regional aspects, it will become more important to utilise the opportunity of LEADER+ programme to include areas outside EU-target areas and thus follow a more distinct regional approach. It has to be mentioned in this context that the LEADER II programme has not been located in the study area of Murau. As there are now a great number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) proposals for LEADER+ programme which exceeds the maximum of LAGs to be selected for Styria (and Austria as well) there are still significant obstacles for the LAG Murau to be approved for inclusion in the new programme (decision to be expected in early 2001).

The regional proposal worked out for the planning period 2000-2006 addresses the strength of wood production in the region as the core issue and asset for LEADER+ activities. Expressions like "wood world Murau" and "land of (specific high alpine) pine trees" intend to coin regional identity for action under the programme. A range of projects will be encouraged focusing on issues such as "increasing people's awareness" of local community action and "developing adventure tourism". It is also intended by the regional management authorities to involve young people by incorporating schools into implementing processes of projects.

With the LEADER+ programme, at least mentioning young people as one target group among others, a base for an active integration is provided. However, given the regional institutional framework and recalling the views expressed by the young people in the individual interviews and group discussions (Dax et al. 2000) there are tremendous barriers to actually increasing participation of young people in the region. Nevertheless, as will be shown later, there is rising concern about the issue and a core group of local actors is committed to work for youth integration at different levels.

Regional programme structure

Following the application of the objective 5b programme and other rural development measures in the region some experience in rural development work has been achieved. In the survey the main priority activities are presented under the summarising label "wood world Murau" (Figure 1). This presentation gives an overview of the priority measures carried out actually in the district of Murau and groups together projects and measures under specific thematic headings. The perspectives underlying have been elaborated along work on the so called regional development model, co-ordinated by the EU regional management Office (in the years 1998 and 1999) and have been approved by the planning advisory board in June 1999. Its main

intention was the formulation of objectives with regard to the economic, social and cultural development of Murau and the preparation for (future) allocation of financial aid (Chance 1999, p.3).

The framework structure which can be seen as a further step to underpin the position of the EU Regional Management Upper Styria West as the turntable of the regional development is supposed to comprise all projects prepared and carried out in the district of Murau. Although figure 1 is not exhaustive on all the measures and the single projects (see further differentiation later in this report) it shows quite clearly where the priority has been laid and will be for future projects in the region.

One of the most important leading themes concerns the stimulation of the economic situation including the wood processing branch in Murau, which will be linked to the educational initiative: Local education and training offers will be oriented according to the needs of the labour market (business development/qualification/education). A further project theme concerns the linkage of the region by a four-lane highway to the national road system. It is seen as one of the most important prerequisites for improving access and the economic competitiveness of the region (public transport/traffic).

The development of summer tourism all over the region (Murtal) and the aim to become the second most important skiing region of Styria is an other priority. The choice of Murau/Kreischberg to be the venue of the Snowboard world championship in 2003 will not only help to realise this plan but also to address young people to take part (tourism development).

As Murau does have a high percentage of people still engaged in farming there are many projects emphasizing diversification and multifunctional issues (agriculture and forestry). Cultural and art projects seemed to be important, too, but primarily mainstream driven and tourism-oriented. However, even under cultural and art projects very few projects can be found showing a "youth dimension" (art and culture).

A further desegregation of EAGGF projects funded under objective 5b programme shows that these are mainly to be summarised under "Village development". 11 out of 35 municipalities have taken up such initiatives. Especially the development of tourism facilities of the kind "holidays on farms" are of importance as this might provide farmers with an additional source of income. The second priority of this part of the programme is the implementation of the "forestry management communities" which provide farmers with a chance to secure additional income. Especially young farmers to be trained wood workers seem to appreciate this training courses as they provide an additional job opportunity outside farming. Young farmers interviewed confirmed the importance of having an income which makes them independent from parents (c.f. focus group 1). The third type of EAGGF measures concerns diversification of farmers

towards tourism. About 800 out of 1600 farms and about 2/3 of farms offering "holidays on farms" have been involved in objective 5b-projects. About 80 jobs have been created and secured especially in relation to diversification of farms, and a budget of about 300 Mio. ATS has been spent on the projects whereby half of the budget consisted of money from EU Funds.

Rural development programmes and young people

Many of the relevant measures for rural development relate to employment policy (like NAP programme) which are taken into account specifically by the thematic report of the German partner of this project. Therefore we limited information on such issues and did not analyse in-depth those measures. To sort out the overlap was not as easy because most of the measures or projects carried out in the district of Murau with a potential youth dimension focused to some extent on young people's integration into labour market. Following the framework structure shown in figure 1, we were specifically looking for measures addressing young people explicitly as target groups, or addressing young people through the contents of projects (attractiveness of courses, education, innovation etc.). We also looked at possible impacts of these measures to improve the situation of young people in the study area. Following the conclusions in the national report we took four notions, namely education, employment, participation and mobility which are seen to be decisive for young people's integration and tried to link them with selected measures. The selection of measures esteemed useful for our theme is presented in figure 2.

"The main priorities and measures of the past rural development programme hardly reflected the needs and aspirations of young people nor have these been taken into account substantially in the planning process. To the young people interviewed such policy programmes are not relevant which means that they have hardly been confronted with the policies and that youth relevant parts of the programme could not be communicated as options to young people of the area. On the contrary, young people do not feel understood or appropriately taken into account in local initiatives. As has been mentioned, they deplore the small number of young people (after school age) which hinders building greater commitment strength involving them as local actors" (Dax et al. 2000, p.8).

The visible lack of youth projects might derive from the fact that no need for such projects is experienced and expressed by young people, local actors and communities. It has been repeatedly suggested by young people and local experts that the situation looks different in other neighbouring districts (focus groups 1 and 2). This probably might be derived from *the predominance of local traditional structures which are still working very well* and reduce aspirations for change. On the other hand, young people interviewed criticised the lack of willingness of adults and the local/regional representatives to listen and understand young people's desire for participation in a more 'youth adequate' way.

Recent youth specific initiatives

In addition to the above presented measures *directly youth oriented programmes* should be analysed in the following. The focus on young people is explicit here, but the rural dimension, in general, is more weak. However, analysing recent initiatives one finds that territorial issues are

seen increasingly as an important element and some of the measures concentrate on the rural dimension.

The most impressive youth future programme, called *nex:it*, has been started by the Land of Styria since May 2000. It encourages young people aged 15-25 and non-profit-organisations addressing young people as beneficiaries or target group to submit innovative projects for financial aid. The total budget of the programme amounts to 50 Mio. ATS. The call for proposals is quite open and criteria for project eligibility are limited to address young people and to present proposals with "new" approaches/initiatives (*nex:it* 2000).

About 500 projects have been submitted (by the deadline, June 2000) and up to October 2000 a number of 152 (out of 300 intentional) have been approved. Most of the projects are submitted by youth representatives and youth groups. It is not very surprising that most of the projects approved are based in Graz, the capital of Styria, and its neighbouring district Graz-surroundings as shown in figure 3. At least 20% of the projects comprise more than one region (NUTS III), including a group of 10 projects which will concern the whole of Styria. Only a small number of six projects are located in Upper Styria West of which four in our study area Murau (see figure 5). Although the quantitative distribution of projects can not be taken as an indication for the participation the small number of activities proposed in the study area reveals the level of awareness for youth involvement.

Projects submitted under *nex:it* relate to five categories, namely Sense of Community, Art & Fun, TEC-Future, Action of Music, and Clean World. As figure 4 shows most of the projects can be attributed to the category Sense of Community (57 out of 152) emphasising young people's participation, communication and disadvantaged young people. 41 projects belong to Art & Fun comprising actions like workshops, literature and story telling workshops which will be presented through internet, fashion shows, film productions and acting, photography workshops, events, and sport activities. These projects are mainly aimed at participation of young people and integration of young migrants. TEC projects address issues concerning new technology and account for almost 20%. They comprise creation of online magazines provided by and for young people, internet platforms with information and discussions forums, youth radio and TV programmes produced by young people, training courses in radio, TV, and video technologies, and e-commerce, etc. Projects under Action of Music account for 18%, and 4% of projects belong to Clean World. Action of Music projects are mainly focused on the development of youth culture by supporting music bands, music workshops and organisation of music events. Under Clean World projects young people are trained to become "attorneys of nature", or go into matters such as fair trade and solar energy use.

As the response to *nex:it* has been quite high it becomes obvious that an enormous dynamic development can be set off by providing the 'right' framework conditions for activities. Providing

easily accessible structures with few bureaucratic restrictions is as important as providing financial aid to ease potential participants to join in, especially if no adequate structure exists. The programme reveals also that the scope for experimental activities is taken up by various groups of young people and could be further developed. The fact that many projects comprise more than one district or region can be seen as a positive indication with regard to the persisting difficulties for co-operation among municipalities, regions, etc. The orientation on larger areas reflects the need for linkages between territorial units. Actions of this kind might contribute to break up existing barriers and improve co-operation activities and encourage others to follow.

Selected youth projects in Styria

In recent years national employment policy and the Job Service Agency in Austria increased the emphasis on measures aiming at preventing youth unemployment. As actual unemployment among young people is not yet very problematic in Austria the focus was laid on placement of school leavers and measures which support young people in their transition phase towards integration into the labour market (AMS 1999, p 10). Measures focusing on the improvement of placement are in line with the guidelines of NAP (National Action Plan) which aims at halving the rate of long term unemployment of young people. Qualification measures had been the most important strategy in 1999 with about 66% of budget spent on it. This group of measures comprises vocational career planning, preparation courses and job finding activities such as job coaching which have been extended at the expense of standard educational and vocational training (AMS 1999, p 17). Employment measures such as "labour market oriented projects" with a high degree of direct responsibility of participants account for 25% of the budget spent in 1999.

Some of the labour market projects in Styria are described here as they particularly address the needs for specific rural areas. They can be understood as part of an integrated programme for rural development.

In Styria the focus of measures offered to young people is to ease their way into the labour market. In contrast to measures with a simple structure there have been some more challenging programmes developed which cope with the complexity of problems young people are facing when looking for a job. Such projects take a comprehensive approach by offering a tool box comprising not only educational and vocational training, but also psychological and social support which might include also measures helping young people coming to terms with daily routine.

In Figure 6 selected projects addressing this complexity are presented as examples, particularly as they relate to rural areas or to approaches and methods which might be useful in the rural development context. The first two examples concentrate exclusively on young women in rural areas. As we discovered in the national analysis, young women feel especially restricted in their

choice of vocational education and professional career in the region. They are closely tied to the local/regional offer which is strongly shaped along traditional and narrow lines. The two described examples "Mafalda" and "now@" try to meet the needs of young women to enhance their choices and opportunities in vocational aspects on the one hand, and, on the other hand, strengthen their self-confidence and self-assertion as women.

The other two examples are chosen between a range of labour market oriented projects. The projects show great efforts to meet young people needs but reveals at the same time the importance of (great) sensitivity with regard to social and cultural environmental aspects.

Mafalda is an organisation originally located in Graz addressing girls and young women. It offers qualification courses, professional and psychological consulting and leisure time activities. The awareness that women are still facing discrimination especially in the countryside has led to the project "Mafalda goes countryside" which was started in 1998. The intention is to improve general conditions for girls and young women and to increase sensitivity of the local society. Up to 1999 about 150 events had been organised in co-operation with schools, youth centres and consultation offices in various places all over the rural area of Styria. It is intended to intensify these activities because response to the offer was beyond capacity provided (Mafalda, 2000).

Now@, established in 1996, is an initiative acting as an intermediary between women seeking a job and local firms in Graz and the surrounding district. Five projects are carried out so far of which the "Mobile InternetCafe for women" has already been mentioned above. "The regional centre of vocational management" is a further project addressing women who want to get a foothold in technical jobs. It offers not only comprehensive training courses but also individual career planning, a technological workshop, etc. As a further eight districts have implemented similar projects and are establishing regional centres of vocational management it could probably be seen as the start of a successful strategy covering a greater part of rural areas in Styria (Now@, 1999).

"Young people" belongs to the group of labour market oriented projects with a high degree of direct responsibility of young people mentioned above. The project was started in 1995 and lasted until 1997 to cope with unemployment among young people in the district of Bruck/Mur. The first course organised was a two-weeks course and was attended by 77 young people aged 15-25, mainly school leavers and mainly young women. Organisers had to learn through the drop-out rate immediately after starting the seminars (about 22%) that the programme did not respond adequately to the needs of young people. In particular it has been referred to "*young people's physiological and psychological deficits*" (Young people 1997) which means that a number of factors in the preparation for participation in such schemes has to be taken into account. Some of them relate to the personal psychological and social situation, others even to

health constitution of participants. Many participants used the project for securing an apprenticeship by being consulted in the right way or at least having the chance of a practical training. As young participants increasingly asked for personal consulting this led to an unexpected financial increase on the consulting budget whereas the budget for qualification training was not utilised fully (Young people 1997, p.6). During the course many young people couldn't cope with the projects requirements of finding their own way and doing work on his/herself. 56% of participants had secured a permanent job after the measure of whom 70% already got the job while they had been attending the course. Many of the participants have been asked too much with respect to self-organisation under this project which was partly due to the low age of participants. The experience from the difficulties arising from the complex influences on labour market integration seen from this project have been used for conceptualising the following activity.

In January 1999 a project called "**Mürztal 2000**" has been implemented by two districts focusing on young unemployed people and providing qualification modules to ease their way into the labour market. At the same time awareness of unemployment among young people should be increased which should give rise to a network comprising local actors, firms, the job centre, regional development organisations, etc. The project offers different qualification modules where young people can join in at any time. The qualification modules are accompanied by the activities of the enterprise contact platform and the "socio-pedagogical consulting centre". The platform should enable participants to get contact to potential employers and vocational training placements. The social centre's objective is to accompany the participants and to particularly support young people who have psychological and social problems. It is also the aim of this centre to raise the awareness of young people for the need of an active personal involvement and the request to take up responsibility for personal future.

As the interim report (Mürztal 2000, p 18) revealed, the drop-out rate was considerably high. More than half of participants left the measure before it finished. Half of these young people left because they had got a job, half of them had other reasons such as lack of ability to join the measure or personal reasons caused by their social environment. Moreover the evaluation showed that participants were more inclined to take up social professions than anticipated or intended, and, unfortunately, it turned out that there has been no improvement in relation to gender biased job selection. The aim to have more women in non-traditional jobs could not be achieved. The failure in achieving the objectives can be partly attributed to the short term of the project and points to additional efforts required relating to information and raising awareness.

2.2 Exemplary cases from other study areas

Experiences from case studies

All over the seven study areas it became clear that young people have not been a significant priority group of rural development programmes, if regarded as relevant at all. The missing attention towards youth issues in the programmes has been reflected by the statements of young people interviewed in the project. Participation in general was interpreted as a critical and somewhat awkward issue by young people and information on both national and EU policies was rather low. The multitude of measures on rural development which has increased over the last years due to the Structural Funds programmes and a general increase in the importance of territorial approaches have been performed without any significant awareness of these among the young. Yet, such programmes have always included as one important aim the aspiration to counteract out-migration from rural areas via these programmes. Only a few activities in our study areas, (but including all the EU measures, e.g. LEADER Community Initiative, objective 5b programmes and other territorial programmes) have directly addressed young people. That is why we have included in our analysis also horizontal measures which did reflect this issue already somewhat earlier.

We have gone into greater detail for Austria, as information could be made available for the study area and the provincial situation with regard to youth specific programmes. Our focus was to show that it is not primarily an issue of the detailed objectives towards youth policy which brings about respective activities, but the commitment and participatory elements in the rural society as a whole. Whereas specific labour market youth measures have been developed during recent reorientation and harmonisation of EU labour market policy only recently a series of innovative actions going beyond labour market aspects are available to young people or got some public relevance. This would seem to be a starting point for future inclusion in rural development programmes.

The situation in the other study areas was not presented in such detail and, in general, has been exemplified by one youth measure per study area which might serve in our opinion as reference with regard to the issues tackled or the methods used. Measures described range from:

- the cooperative work linking training and employment actors in a French rural context,
- the training of a youth theatre in Kainuu in Finland,
- the international collaboration of customer service training, based in Finland (and Scotland),

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- the New Deal programme for Young People in the UK with a specific programme for musicians, but no clear assessment on its specificity for rural areas,
- to a *YOUTH START* funded programme in Ireland (Mol an Óige), concentrating on in-school and out-of-school activities for those “at risk” of leaving the system.

Similar activities could be mentioned from the study area in Portugal, where LEADER activities tend to revive old local traditions of handicraft and look for young people participating in such schemes or, in an other interesting project, raising children’s awareness of local development by having them draw how they perceive their area and how they would like it to evolve (ADICES, AEIDL 1997). Likewise in the German study area, corresponding to its socio-economic characteristics, labour market measures with relation to young people prevail.

When looking beyond our study areas there are some few relevant additional examples available:

- It seems that in several countries some LAGs had a specific focus on youth development (e.g. in France, LAG Périgord Noir and LAG Bugey, LAG Bazois-corbigeois and LAG Dinan Sud; in Germany LAGs in the regions of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Niedersachsen; in Ireland in Cavan-Monaghan and in the UK in the Oswestry Hills - AEIDL 2000b), all these activities specifically targeting at young people and bringing together local agencies working with young people.
- Moreover the FAO work on increasing the involvement of young men and women in rural development as a strategy for rural development in the CEECs presented some interesting case studies. All of them relate to comprehensive territorial work applying a cross-sectoral approach. In particular, positive experiences from Portugal, Slovenia and Northern Ireland are presented there (FAO 1998).

Although the cases examined seek to address the great variety of fields of actions and aspects of youth development, all of them share the general objectives of either addressing aspects of integration of young people in the rural context or raising awareness of the community and young people about their importance to the community and encouraging them to participate actively in local development initiatives.

France

Centre de Ressources

The organisation of the Centre de ressources is a vivid example of the importance of intermediary agencies which fulfil tasks of networking activities of people in the region, both vertically and horizontally. The emphasis is put here on matching education offer and demand

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at the local and regional level. The example shows also that quite different funding has supported activities and contributed to human resource development and employment creation in a deeply rural area.

In France the basic ideas were to create a "House of employment and training" with a structure related to local needs and also to create a "Centre de Ressources", corresponding to the LEADER concept. Like there it was intended to offer innovative training and support actions to local firms.

The aim is to have a structure which is a link between different local economic and training actors. The decision for establishing such a structure came from the Communautés de Communes de Villaines la Juhel (the so called CCV), part of the study area Mayenne (the following case presentation is based on the context report of the French team, Auclair and Vanoni 1999). The CCV is an association of 11 municipalities in order to develop common actions and programmes. Therefore the Centre de Ressources is considered a public service offered by the CCV to the inhabitants of the different municipalities concerned.

The Centre de Ressources addresses the whole population and not only young people, although young people constitute an important part of the people who visit the Centre. The main actions of the Centre de ressources relate to information provision/exchange: the Centre offers information mainly about training and employment by providing a documentation room, collaboration with the National Job Centre (notice board), collaboration with the "Missions locales" and the "Permanences d'accueil, d'information et d'orientation" (PAIO) which is located in the capital of Mayenne. An agent of PAIO comes several days a week in the premises of the Centre de Ressources and provides assistance to young people from 16 to 25 years.

The agents of the Centre provide on one hand collaboration with local firms and employers through regular visits to local firms in order to identify their needs, in terms of training for the employees or in terms of qualification requirements for future employees. On the other hand, the Centre organises the training offer by contacting different training institutions and adapted training offers to the local needs. Thus the Centre de Ressources can act as a link between training institutions, local firms, and trainees.

Additional support is given, e.g. through assistance to unemployed: A club of job searchers established in 1997 is linked to the National Job Centre. It is a new service which is part of a wider national program with the aim of offering individual or collective support to unemployed people, and to help them define a professional project, write letters and CVs.

There is also support available to help people to create their own business. They organise a virtual firm and then organise a training course on the basis of this firm, which is used as a pedagogical example. This club is part of a national network that counts 150 other similar clubs.

Very recently the director of the Centre was working together with the agents of the "Pays du Haut Maine et Pail" which is another local development structure representing the collaboration of 4 overlapping co-operative activities of municipalities in the area (CCV and three others). The common aim is to attract firms and employers into the area, the Pays being in charge of the economic development, and the Centre being in charge of the training aspects.

Organisation and budget of the Centre de Ressources: The Centre's benefit is a public service which is mainly financed by the Communautés de Communes. At the beginning there was financial aid from Leader I to buy a building. Nowadays financial aid is available for some of the training courses from ADAPT programmes and ESF funds, and premises used in training courses will be rented as the need arises.

Evaluation: The structures of the Centre de Ressources induces a strong dependency on the local governments, and therefore on the local politicians, especially the President of the Communautés de Communes; though up till recently the director (a woman) had quite a large autonomy to develop new projects. There has not been carried out any specific assessment concerning the Centre de Ressources, but the interviews taken with different local actors and young people by the French team confirmed the very good opinion people have concerning this structure.

Finland

The Youth Theatre's training week in Kainuu

One of the few examples of cultural activities is the youth theatre's training. This project is located in Kainuu the study area of Finland and addresses young people aged 12-25. It is conducted by the LAG Organisation "Kainuu Businesswomen LEADER II" and funded by Leader II. During the course young people study theatre production in a number of forms. Course participants come from all round the Kainuu region and also from other regions in Northern Finland (AEIDL 1999).

Welcome Host – learning customer service. SHEP

The SHEP training programme is an international project of the study area which is run together with Scottish Ross & Cromarty Enterprise (Scotland-Highlands and Islands) and Savo Amazon LEADER, an other Finnish LEADER area.

Pupils from the Reisjärvi and Haukivuori senior secondary schools attend a customer service course and will be trained on themes concerning customer service with an international aspect. The basic aim is to teach young people the importance of good customer service, the development of tourist environment, as well as marketing and teamwork in tourist industry. A course was held in January 2000 at the local hotel-restaurant and holiday centre. It consisted of three days of theory and two days of practice, and during the course students learned the basics of tourism and customer service in both Finnish and English (AEIDL 1999).

United Kingdom

The New Deal

The New Deal is a key part of the Government's Welfare to Work strategy. The New Deal programmes have been set up since 1998 with the aim to improve job opportunities for people out of work. It gives job seekers aged 18-25, 25 plus and those with disabilities an opportunity to develop their potential, gain skills and experience, and find work. There are six main New Deal programmes, varying in a number of ways: size of target group, key aims and objectives, eligibility rules, conditions of involvement, type of support offered, etc. (Millar 2000). With regard to our theme the New Deal programme for Young People (NDYP) is presented as elements of the programme are affecting performance in rural areas.

The New Deal for Young people is targeted on 18 to 24 year-olds who have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JAS) for at least six months. The measure is compulsory, and includes a "gateway" period of advice and support followed by four options: subsidised employment, full-time education and training, voluntary work, environmental work (Miller 2000). Recently, a specific programme, the New Deal for Musicians under the NDYP was designed and developed with the help of the music industry. It is intended to help young musicians who are eligible for NDYP and who are seeking a career in the music industry (Jowell 2000).

Evaluation of NDYP

By February 2000 just under 440,000 young people had been through the NDYP and in total about half of them had found jobs (Millar 2000). Of these, about 146,000 lasted 13 weeks or more and this is about 34% of all participants, lower for women (31%) and ethnic minorities (27%). Millar assumes that "about half of these people who had found work through NDYP would probably have done so anyway". It is projected that about 250,000 young men and women will find work over the four years planned for the programme which should make this programme almost self-financing over that time.

As Millar (2000) assumes in her research on the New Deal programmes, the response to participation in programmes were positive, because "participation boosted confidence, enhanced job-seeking and improved skills". In contrast, young people interviewed in the sample

of this research project by the UK Team seemed to have more negative than positive impressions on the New Deal programme (Shucksmith et al. 2000, p.50-56). It was perceived by those interviewed that the primary motives of the government behind the scheme was to get people into the programme so that the unemployment figure, in statistical terms, would fall (Shucksmith et al. 2000, p 53) although this may have been a hangover from the previous government's Youth Training Scheme. Young people also criticised the compulsory element of the programmes linked to benefit loss in case of refusal (Shucksmith et al. 2000, p.52). In general compulsion has been assessed to be more favourable for certain groups such as young people and long-term unemployed than for others (older workers, lone parents, disabled people, and partners) (Millar 2000). Experience has shown that participation in voluntary programmes was low, although it was not only due to the fact that people were choosing not to take part. The personal advisers approach has had a positive impact on both participants and providers and might probably be one component which could increase voluntary participation.

As an important output of the evaluation it can be mentioned that sometimes people felt a large gap between the individual assessment and the fixed requirements to be followed. As "Labour market programmes seemed to be more effective for those already closest to employment", Millar (2000) noticed that the New Deal programme will have to work harder in order to reach especially those groups of people with multiple disadvantages and special needs. Further refinements to achieve this have recently been introduced.

Similar critiques have been raised by young people interviewed in the Angus study area. In particular, they felt that employers voluntarily seized the opportunity to take advantage of the cheap labour force offered by the programme (voluntary work, environmental work). Some interviewees had the impression that participation in New Deal measures was received negatively by potential employers and that difficulties to break this vicious circle still persist (Shucksmith et al. 2000, p.52).

Ireland

Mol an Óige

In Ireland a high percentage of young people still cease education at the age of 15 years (or less). The early drop-out rate in the study area of Connemara is about 38 per cent, somewhat higher than the national level with 26%. Mol an Óige was a four year YOUTHSTART funded project in Co. Tipperary, (January 1996 – March 2000), which addressed the 10-19 year-olds at risk of failing in school by developing and testing innovative approaches to the issues relating to educational disadvantage (Mol an Óige 2000, p 1).

The concept of "Collaborative Action Planning" was adopted in Mol an Óige project as a strategy for tackling early school leaving. Analysing its performance at school level, teachers

and school management have been allowed to critically evaluate school practices in relation to young people “at risk” of leaving the school and to respond in a flexible way to the needs of them (MacGrath et al. 2000, p.40).

Evaluation results in relation to the project Mol an Óige reveal some additional key approaches, and operational features are considered significant in enhancing educational provision and participation (MacGrath et al. 2000, p.40).

- Educational provision and development should incorporate schools, pupils, communities, parents, community development agencies, youth work organisation and statutory bodies. This will provide considerable potential for resource provision and commitment to success through shared project ownership.
- Developing support for young people in terms of their intellectual and emotional needs. New measures in-school and out-of-school are needed to develop the interests and commitment of young people especially of those “at risk” of leaving the system. Personal development of skills which enhance self-esteem and assertiveness, leadership strategies, learning support and career counselling are examples of in-school measures. Community action projects, where young people are actively involved in local community development initiatives is an example of out-of-school activity which might enhance participation of young people generally and, hence, their educational participation.
- Initiating mentoring support for pupils by non-teachers. Mentors act as positive role models, and provide advice and assistance to youth at a number of levels.

The Irish government will spend 28.4 million IrL over the next three years to provide schools throughout the country with resources to tackle early school leaving. Initiatives such as Mol an Óige could serve as “models of good practice in enabling schools and communities to deal effectively with education disadvantage” and provide an idea how measures could be implemented in practice (MacGrath et al. 2000, p.39).

3. Perspectives for increasing involvement of young people in rural development

The low awareness of youth as a target group of rural development is reflected by the singularity expressed in case studies presented in the previous section. Few regions took the option to include youth workers in their territorial approaches nor to take the viewpoint that future orientation has to be based on youth development. Consequently, evaluation studies did not pay any attention to the issue either, whether it was evaluation of regional programmes (objective 1, objective 5b) or of Community Initiatives (LEADER) the issue of raising participation was evaluated by referring only to the dimension of overall participation of local and regional actors, with no specific consideration of young people.

As insight of young people interviewed into the specific policy programmes is limited statements with regard to rural development programmes and measures can be traced only with considerable difficulties. To a large extent they are included in views expressed on the general policy framework and their estimation of the relevant local actors. As the interviews arguments therefore are less focused on rural development programmes there is no section under this chapter dealing with the voices of young people. However, much of the analysis and interpretative work with regard to policy assessment in the seven "national reports" of this project and statements of young people quoted in chapter 6 are very relevant for rural development issues as well.

Experience from programmes

Although a series of evaluation studies has focused on this very issue, of raising involvement of local people and increasing representation of relevant groups of local society, youth was hardly mentioned as such a group in these studies. For the scope of our analysis we only took into account those evaluation reports made available recently at EU-level, and those carried out for the Austrian programmes. In core, this refers to intermediate evaluations of Objective 5b programmes, carried out around the years 1997 and 1998. Moreover reference is made to the general assessment of the regional programmes of the first two Structural Funds periods (Europäischer Rechnungshof 1998) and the EU evaluation of the LEADER I outcome (Dethier et al. 1999). The thrust of evaluation studies for rural development programmes had to fulfil requirements concerning the quantitative assessment of programmes' progress. The financial performance, aspects of coherence and effectiveness, quantitative impacts and issues of efficiency have been the focus of the evaluations prepared for objective 5b programmes for some countries, and most of these commissioned by the European Commission DG VI; UK (PACEC 1998), Finland (Malinen et al. 1997), Ireland (Brendan Kearney and Associates 2000, on LEADER II Community Initiative), Germany (Tissen and Schrader 1998), Spain (Isla and Soy 1998) and Italy.

In addition to its main quantitative outline these evaluations did stress a number of more qualitative issues which have an impact on the issue of how to handle young people's involvement in rural development. In particular the following aspects emerged:

- The great variety of projects and the request of complementarity with other Community, sectoral, national and regional policies, in some regions created confusion and increased costly bureaucracy, pointing to a need to increase integration of the different initiatives (PACEC 1998). This uncertainty about orientation in the programmes available is particularly pertinent for those groups of local population less acquainted with institutional regulations and lower experience of participation. A substantial number of young people can be counted among these groups and, as our interviews confirmed, don't feel attracted by the confusing sets of regulations and "rules" for participation.
- Overall there was a high degree of synergy between the EC funds and national measures, particularly with regard to Objective 5b programmes and LEADER II. Problems cited relate primarily to "limited integration in administration procedures and limited information flows" (PACEC 1998, p. 50). "An improved co-operation and co-ordination of actions supported by the structural funds involved for the purpose of reaching synergy effects is particularly important on the local level" (Tissen and Schrader 1998, p.XV). It will be important for the implementation of future programmes to maintain the high level of synergy achieved and, where possible, to enhance programmes' functioning by increased distribution of information. With regard to young people it is extremely important to regularly address this aspect and to question the meaningfulness of information available. Young people interviewed had a tendency to feel informed only superficially and to be not directly addressed by information and public discourse.
- Although the programmes evaluated have induced a wave of assessment of regional strengths and weaknesses and local actors' involvement, evaluations suggest that local activity should be stimulated further and options to increase awareness and consequently improve co-operation with different sectors through programmes should be used (PACEC 1998, p. 57).
- Developing skills is a priority chosen in almost all rural development programmes. In countries with high levels of education achieved also in rural areas one has to adapt carefully new training programmes to local and regional needs. For example, Finland is indeed producing an especially good all-round educated population, but there are certain needs within the objective 5b regions at the intermediate and higher levels (Malinen et al. 1997, p. 23 f.). It is assessed there "that there is a requirement for experimental work and ESF financing is very well suited to that task". This statement is underlined by experience from many programmes and reflected in the presentation of selected projects in the

previous chapter. Moreover, it is complained that linkages between training and other actions have been weak in the past and evaluations point out a move towards closer interaction in the future (Isla and Soy, p. 73).

- It has not been feasible to approach each issue of problems for all the regions. The priorities on the aspects to analyse, the methodological estimates and the content differ from region to region and thus synthesis reports could not deal with some interesting issues (Isla and Soy 1998, p. 70). It therefore becomes important for future programmes to highlight youth participation as a potential field of activity for rural (and territorial) development programmes.
- The desegregation of the actions and measures at the local level is of major interest for the analysis of the programme's impacts. In fact, the consideration of, exclusively, the overall impacts could disguise important and significant territorial disparities (Isla and Soy 1998, p. 7f.) which seems particularly relevant for the situation of remote rural areas, e.g. in mountain regions as can be seen for the Austrian study area.
- Although it is well known, and has been extensively explained, one has to respect that there is a considerable trade-off between innovativeness of projects and programme implementation. In general, traditional measures are easier to apply and show greater rates of accomplishment (Isla and Soy 1998, p. 71). One is also inclined to see a preference for more harmonic regional strategies taken by responsible administrative institutions at all levels. This tendency has the implication to neglect the needs and ideas of local populations not included in core participant groups or primary stakeholders. Young people's aspirations tend to be seen as immature and provocative and hardly fit into a more traditional, harmonic approach.
- In many contexts the central role of intermediary agencies and the specific tasks of Local Action Groups (under the LEADER Initiative) have been addressed (e.g. ÖROK 1998 and 1999). It arises from the wide-spread European experience that local development is not a mere local task but has to be achieved in co-operation with regional and national authorities. The long-term commitment of "facilitators" can not be over estimated as a crucial element for enhancing participation and ensuring outcome of programmes (see also Shortall and Shucksmith 1998).

A more comparative work is available through the EU-wide ex-post evaluation of the LEADER I Community Initiative (1989 – 1993). This evaluation, conducted by the Commission, was realised by independent experts, including around 60 experts from 12 countries. The final report published in March 1999 (Dethier et al. 1999) allows a thorough insight into the achievements of the first generation of LEADER programmes and also can serve as starting reference for

evaluation of rural development programmes with more complex methods. Although the work was based on a number of quantitative techniques the report has drawn in its conclusion the attention towards the importance of a more qualitative evaluation approach.

In many aspects LEADER I was a pilot scheme and can be “considered as provider of a precious stock of knowledge about rural Europe utilised for a better targeting of rural policy actions” (Dethier et al. 1999, p. 166). The demonstration effect that was an objective of LEADER did influence rural policy ideas and led to a “reconsideration of traditional delivery systems for rural development support” (Dethier et al. 1999, p. 179) also at national and regional levels.

However, the lessons learned for rural policy are not always clear-cut. Although the experience of LEADER initiatives was highly appreciated, particularly in Southern Member States and in Ireland where LAGs were significant in number, the innovative aspects of LEADER “did not really affect the implementation of mainstream rural policy” (Dethier et al. 1999, p.179). Even when in LEADER II the number of LAGs has risen substantially and implementation affected a number of areas almost five times greater than in the first period the link to mainstream policies remained weak. There is scope to investigate the lack in the transfer of experiences to general rural policy.

Some of the obstacles might be seen in the fact that an experimental programme induces processes which need time. Positive returns become visible only in the long run and a minimum degree of continuity is needed. Moreover core aspects of the LEADER programme, such as the participatory approach, innovation or networking have been less relevant within the framework of LEADER I and contributed marginally to its value added. In the evaluation report it has been assessed “as a weakness that should be strengthened” (Dethier et al. 1999, p. 180). Indeed it appears that meanwhile much greater priority has been laid on networking and participation, to be explored in more detail in chapter 7 and 9.

The evaluation report, of course, does not refer directly to young people as actors or as a target group in rural development. However, the important impact which is seen in the better qualification of human resources through training activities and the emphasis put on questions and issues that different stakeholders may have in terms of information needs indicate fields particularly relevant to young people. Moreover, the LAGs are categorised as being a) dominated by the local public administration, b) by private interests and c) by a well balanced situation between public and private interests.

Even in the last case, variables such as democratic participation of the population and the territorial diagnosis were largely missing. The report continues: “This finding should not be taken as an indication of irrelevance of these aspects but the contrary: when they were applied the

results were indeed impressive.” (Dethier et al. 1999, p. 173). In addition it is made clear that representation of local actors should be extended (to more than just one interest group) and LAGs should not remain the single specific focus of activity but insure also the inclusion of other innovative actors.

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Youth integration – an emerging requirement of rural programmes

It is particularly in the Irish context that rural policy has dealt extensively with the problem of social exclusion, even addressing the issue directly in its national rural development plan. The ex-post evaluation for LEADER II in Ireland also has elaborated quite straightforward proposals that situations of social disadvantage or exclusion have to be checked by LEADER groups and the “youth sector should also be given specific recognition” (Brendan Kearney and Associates 2000, p.59f.).

This notion has already entered into the official requirements for LEADER+ programmes for the period 2000 – 2006. The guidelines for the Community Initiative set out in the requirements for the development strategy (Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 2000, para 14.2(a)) that young people (and women) provide useful inputs to the development of rural areas and therefore strategies have to look for better employment chances for these target groups. The criteria for selecting pilot programmes have to reflect this Community priority. Moreover under para 14.2(b) it is referred to the socio-economic situation of the area and an approach is required which does not reduce options for future generations. The inclusion of young people as a distinctive target group thus is a clear reference that from now on a closer examination of the role of young people in the rural development process will take place.

Obviously, this shift in priority of EU requirements has not been translated into the spirit of the bulk of the new programmes which had to be conceptualised before the guidelines have been published. Yet, young people have to be mentioned now explicitly as target groups and potential local actors.

The inclusion of this reference to young people in the guidelines has to be seen as a consequence of the discussion in the 1990s, and for example culminating in the set of principles laid out in the “Cork Declaration”, including the desire to encourage participation in the formulation and delivery of rural policy. However, the time constraints inherent to formulation and strategy conceptualisation for (the former) objective 5b and LEADER programmes act as an important limitation on the scope for EU programmes to foster truly participatory forms of rural development.

The debate on participation in rural development has taken up elements from the policy and programmes on social exclusion. Recently, the often overlooked tendency of young people to out-migrate from rural areas has been addressed and the long-term historic trend has been

assessed as detrimental to rural regeneration in general. The effect of marginalizing young people in rural areas is best reflected by the very limited number of options facing young people there: to remain unemployed or to emigrate (Lowe et al. 1999, p. 40 f.). Although the situation has to be differentiated according to the regional (and local) contexts, and unemployment is not the only problem for young people, one can find supporting information in the interviews of our research project that young people face considerable difficulties with regard to being accepted in the rural society and hence see primarily obstacles when trying to “participate” more intensively in their communities.

Enhancing participation activities

The combination of young people and rural development is, as has been shown, a rather new priority in EU rural policy, and has only been applied up to now in some exemplary cases concentrated in countries with a priority for action against social exclusion. However, when looking at global literature on the issue, it becomes evident that the issue is of much greater magnitude in developing countries. There the economic development and the future perspectives are more directly related to young people as these represent a much greater share of population. Case studies reported from Asia (Reddy 1990, Young India Project 1988, Reinhold 1993, Anwar 1994, Anwar et al. 1994, Anwar et al. 1995), Africa (Guijt et al. 1994) and Latin America (Dirven 1995) reveal the relevance for the territorial development in those areas. The approach has been of similar interest to the Eastern European countries (Pavelka and Stefanov 1985). Moreover case studies on experiences from North and South have developed a set of approaches, known as Deliberative Inclusionary Processes (DIPs) recognising that citizens should play a role in informing and shaping environmental policy (Holmes and Scoones 2000). Experiences from that work could be used for policy formulation targeting at an increasing involvement of young people in rural development.

Lowe et al. (1999) see a wide scope for effective local participation in the economic development and planning of rural areas and regions. There is, however, surprisingly little written about why participation is so important. It is argued that during the 1980s both the assumptions underpinning regional development policies and academic research began to shift. The new paradigm emerging did not any more see rural (and peripheral) areas as just externally-driven locations but paid increased attention to the potential of local actors for endogenous development. The development of rural pilot schemes in Austria, France and Spain at the start of the 1980s particularly centred on accentuating the internal forces of those areas. The development of EU rural policy, and in particular the LEADER initiative, took the same approach and thus has seen participation as a central element in the rural development process. However, later on in the 1990s with increasing experience of different regional cases the assessment made of these programmes underlined the need for widening the group of actors. The domination of traditional institutional structures had the effect that processes of participation evolved more slowly than anticipated, and action remained limited to core representatives of

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local (rural) society in most places (e.g. Dax and Hebertshuber 2000) leading to the discussion of how to achieve inclusion of larger parts of rural populations. As has been shown, recent EU guidelines give scope not just to allow for such considerations but even to require them as an integral part of programme formulation and evaluation.

The shift in discussion can also be seen in contents, as the focus is not any more on reaching consensus but increasingly on addressing conflicting positions of different stakeholders. The rising complexity for the regional work is addressed in many recent practical and theoretical studies (e.g. Bratl 1996, Scheer 1998). The requirements for the integration of young people in this process of enhancing participation activities are similar to those reflected in comprehensive approaches for environmental activities. A Handbook for Good Practice on local community involvement, prepared for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Chanan 1999) gives a number of proposals on extending horizontal and vertical participation. They relate directly to the Structural Funds and rural development programmes.

Lessons which could be drawn from this approach address the different benefits that different people will gain from participation according to their starting point. It is suggested that “for young people, taking part in sports, arts, social clubs or issue groups can be a way of developing a sense of responsibility and gaining recognition of talent” (Chanan 1999, p. 37). As the integration of diverse groups in this process is a long-term objective, a multi-level strategy is needed which would allow for increasingly widening involvement. Participation could therefore be conceived as a pyramid in which all residents of the area have at least one potential entry-point. From “lower” to “higher” levels one could see the following 5 steps (Chanan 1999, p. 38):

- Being a member or user of a community group or voluntary organisation
- Taking a developmental role in a group or organisation
- Helping a group/organisation to cooperate with others
- Helping groups and organisations form a network
- Representing a network or forum in an official scheme

For our theme it appears important to emphasise those forms of participation which reflect the objectives of excluded young people, and young people in general, which include widening the networks of established organisations and giving opportunities to excluded individuals. This last notion allows us to address the issue of limited options, experienced as the core problem for young people in rural areas.

Conclusion: Participation of young people and social development

From the interviews with young people in the seven study areas it has appeared that actual involvement in local rural development is rather limited. It is more expressed by those young people who enjoy closer relationships to local key actors and who are better integrated in social networks. Most young people are hit by the changes in labour market features, rural changes in general (e.g. due to technological and societal changes), regional weak performances and uncertainty about usefulness of acquired skills. The interviews have, however, shown that there is a strong willingness to participate in community development. Conclusions from the analysis of the interviews and the respective literature (FAO 1999, Lowe et al. 1999, Johnson et al. 1998) point to the following main points:

- Young people in rural areas experience limited options for future life chances; the restrictions felt are relevant both for the economic and social spheres.
- Specific groups of young people in rural areas are affected by multiple barriers and special needs which might evolve into a vicious circle, leading to situations of social exclusion.
- Information available to young people on opportunities and life chances is lacking and there is a feeling among young people that their information need is only partly met by authorities. There is a search for a deeper understanding of the usefulness of education, training and transition options.
- Community development that engages with men and women of all ages requires a catalyst, i.e. a facilitator working with all people. One should look to increase the role of professional youth workers trained in interpersonal skills, advocacy and community development.
- Basic requirements for youth participation include capacity development of young people to articulate their needs, make plans and assert their rights, as well as technical assistance.
- The experience from youth future programmes reveals that an enormous dynamic for development can be sparked by providing the 'right' framework conditions for activities. Providing easily accessible structures with few bureaucratic restrictions is as important as providing financial aid to ease participation, especially if none exists.
- It is essential to develop parallel processes with adults and young people, as participation can only develop in a social context open for dialogue between these groups.
- Given the lack of local and regional strategic considerations, there is scope for using LEADER+ (and similar Community Initiatives and innovative programmes) as a pilot action

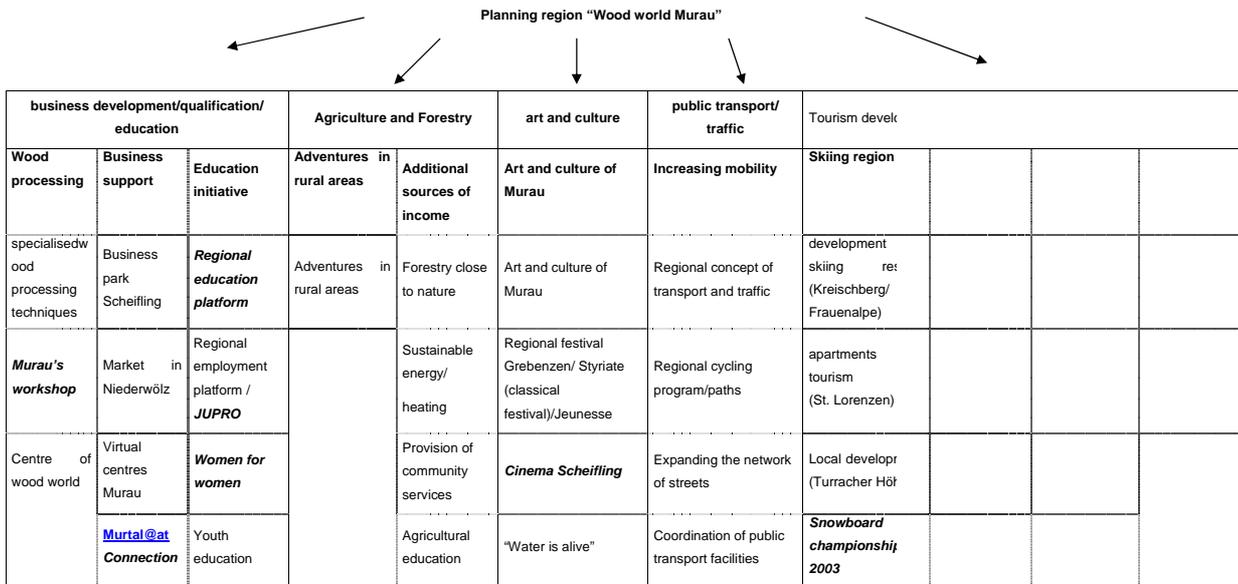
for involving young people in rural development. Such action would address the experimental character as a means to allow creative enhancement of young people's involvement in local action and might serve as useful reference and motivation to participation and programme implementation in other rural regions.

- Economic integration is in general the leading issue when analysing young people's problems in rural areas. However, the social dimension and the inter-relationship between culture and young people's participation must not be overlooked. There is a need to extend emerging experiences of children's and young people's participation (Der Spiegel 2000), especially since such initiatives have strong implications for their subsequent participatory roles as adults.

Young people have the feeling that adult policies for young people concentrate on education and future employment issues. The views adults commonly hold of children and of the young represent them "as ignorant, irresponsible, immature, incapable, a nuisance and a resource". Such views focus on output driven notions and don't address personal development. "Seeing children as social actors opens up a new and wonderful world in which adults facilitate more than teach and children show that they can do much more than adults thought they could" (Johnson et al. 1998). Such an attitude is reflected in recent activities which seek to enhance participation through actions like "kids voting" in the USA which has been followed by German actors organising "political voting" which influences behaviour of children *and* their parents (Der Spiegel 2000). The recent innovative actions for youth participation has lead to a "youth future programme" in Styria, Austria, as outlined above. Using German experiences it is hoped to raise awareness skills of young people to deal with youth issues and to participate in projects and local actions (Der Standard 2000). Avoiding the dangers of over-simplification of such activities, one might see a wide scope for application of such initiatives, particularly in rural areas. Whereas previous research has focused on exclusion processes in urban areas this project has stressed the rural dimension and pointed to the multiple dimensions of problems in those regions.

Future rural development programmes therefore could become increasingly meaningful by including participatory approaches of young people in their development strategies. With adaptation to the relevant regional context, the recent discourse on social development and participation could be utilised for conceptualising development options for young people. As rural areas are addressed by the LEADER initiative, a programme of a highly experimental character is available which should be seen as an asset and used for more youth specific initiatives. When innovative projects in this field could be developed, this might have wider impacts on overall development of society.

Figure 8.1: Regional measures framework



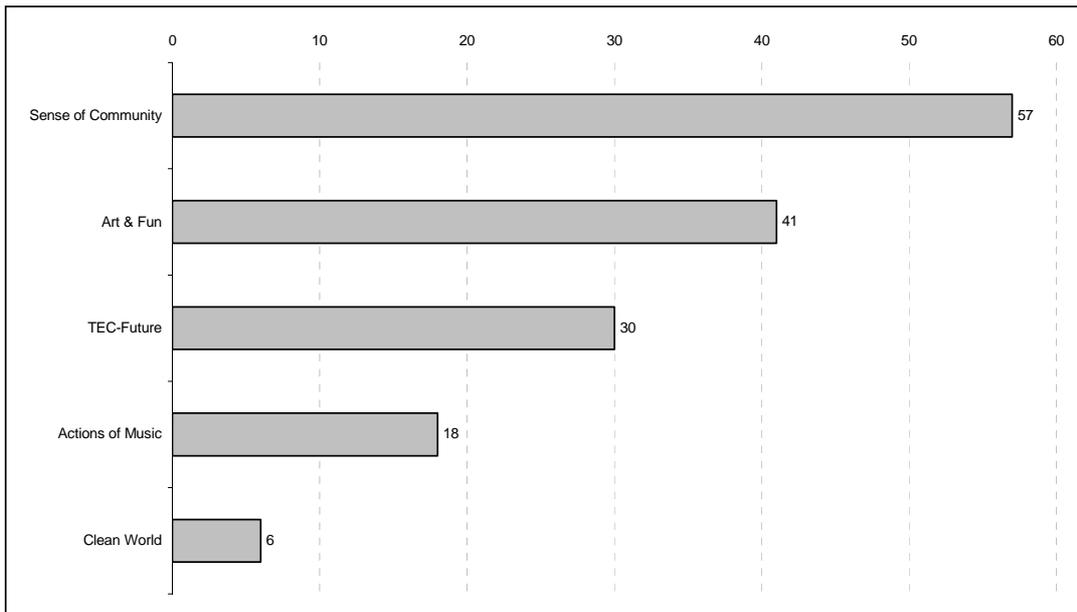
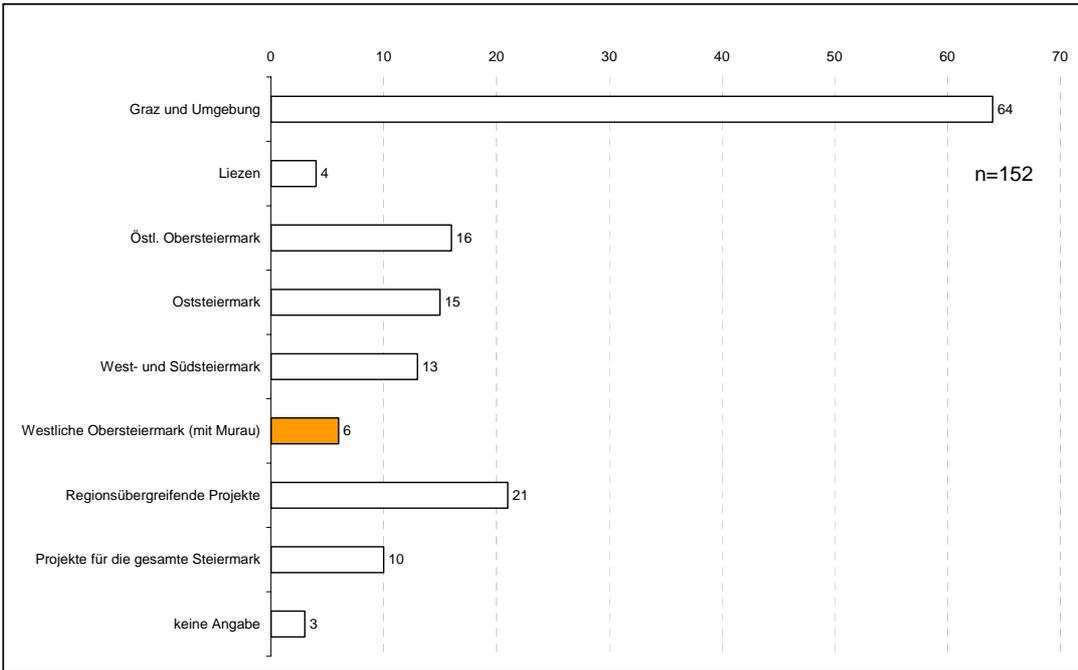
Note: measures in italics are presented in figure 2 (projects of youth impact)

Figure 8.2: Selected measures/projects of youth impact in the study area Murau

Project description (funding sources)	Educati
<p>Murau's workshop: Distribution and Marketing of products: Carpenter's workshop and Higher Commercial School Judenburg (school): Combination of new technology and conventional methods in cooperation with pupils; Development of an distribution channels (ERDF, objective 5b)</p>	X
<p>Connection - Mobile Internet@cafe for women Providing computers for interested communities for one month: internet courses offered to women as private persons and employees in Murau (ESF)</p>	X
<p>Information Guide for Young People/Murau Information about institutions such as official authorities, clubs, etc. and initiatives and cultural entertainment offered through internet and a brochure. Helps young people to establish a network (nex:it, Land Styria etc.)</p>	
<p>Regional Employment Platform Discussion forum to create measures in the frame of the Territorial Employment Plan to increase job chances by educational and vocational training. Young people will be a specific target group (ESF, EQUAL)</p>	
<p>JUPRO 15-25 Application and vocational training of 6 months duration;</p>	

Project description	Educati
(funding sources)	
funded by Land Styria (NAP: Job 2000)	
Women for women	
Innovative and local programs to improve women's job skills. Basic and advanced education and training opportunities, help to secure jobs in non-traditional branches, individual career planning, practical training, etc. (ESF)	
Cinema Scheifling	
Cinema and entertainment centre (Clubbing, events); young people can rent a room for parties (private funding)	
Snow board champion ship 2003	

Figure 8.3: Youth future programme's projects (nex:it, Styria), regional distribution, NUTS III level



Source: nex:it 2000

Figure 8.4: Youth future programme's projects, spheres of action (nex:it, Styria)

Figure 8.5: Youth future projects in Murau

Title	<i>description</i>
Information	Information Guide for Young People/Murau
Guide for	Information about institutions such as official authorities, clubs, etc. and
Young People/	initiatives and cultural entertainment offered through internet and a
Murau	brochure. Helps young people to establish a network.
X-Treme	Recently a new Youth club has been established in Neumarkt in the district of Murau. The youth club arranges music events especially for young people who live there (easy to reach for the young people)
Adventures for you, too	Young addicted people should be helped through adventural projects to manage their day-to-day life (horse riding, painting, spending nights in self-catering flats)
Project N: nature in young people's hand	60 young people out of Styria will be trained to become a competent and committed "attorney of nature"

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Source: nex:it 2000

Figure 8.6: Selected youth projects in Styria

Projects	Educatio
<p>“Mafalda goes countryside” offers courses about self-confidence, self-assertion and self-defence, workshops about “body and sexuality” as well as “new technology” to young women (only).</p>	X
<p>Training course for CNC specialists for women In co-operation with a local firm a training plan has been created which offers women the opportunity to become a CNC specialist. The training activity has been funded by LMS, Land Styria and ESF. In 1999 15 women (12 aged 20-22) participated.</p>	X
<p>“Young people” In 1995 a labour market oriented self-arranging project “Young people” started with 77 young people aged 15-25. The project lasted 14 days and was funded by ESF, Land Styria, and regional municipalities. In co-operation with the Labour Market Service (LMS).</p>	
<p>“Mürztal 2000” A network will be implemented which should secure employment for young people. The project comprises several modules such as clarifying needs, consulting, educational and vocational training, job finding and support to people in work. Funded by NAP, two municipalities are joining the project.</p>	