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The European Education Project “Becoming a Change Agent for Rural Citizenship: A Qualification Programme for Rural Areas in Europe”

Demographic and socio-economic changes as well as changes in agricultural structure increasingly pose a challenge for rural areas in Europe. In order to stand their ground in competition with urban regions, local politics and administration rely more and more on involving citizens in local development processes with the help of new strategies for participation and engagement.

Against this background, the project Becoming a Change Agent for Rural Citizenship aims at elaborating an education concept for citizens, politicians and public administration which enables mutual learning among these actor groups, which includes their own training demands and extends capacities on political participation and civic engagement. The project addresses members of staff of local authorities, communal councilors as well as active citizens in rural areas of Baden-Württemberg and different European member states.



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This publication reflects the views only of finep and the Academy of Rural Affairs Baden-Württemberg; the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

European Partners of the Conference



Agora Central Europe,
Czech Republic
www.agora-ce.cz



Balkan Assist Association,
Bulgaria
www.balkanassist.bg



Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut, Estland
www.jti.ee



Monte Desenvolvimento Alentejo
Central, Portugal
www.monte-ace.pt

In Baden-Württemberg the project is supported by:



Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs,
Family, Women and Senior
Citizens Baden-Württemberg;
State Network Civic Engagement
www.sm.baden-wuerttemberg.de



Ministry of Rural Areas and
Consumer Protection Baden-
Württemberg
www.mlr.baden-wuerttemberg.de

finep

finep is the lead agency in the European education project “Becoming a Change Agent for Rural Citizenship - A Qualification Programme for Rural Areas in Europe”.

finep is a non-profit project and consulting organization working in the area of sustainable development with a focus on the thematic fields local democracy, environmental policy and development policy. To this end finep develops and implements its own projects.

In addition to its own project work, finep makes available its know-how in process consultation, facilitation, trainings, education concepts and other areas to local authorities and organizations.
www.finep.org

Academy of Rural Affairs Baden-Württemberg

The Academy of Rural Affairs Baden-Württemberg is an institution of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Consumer Protection. Functioning as an information center and dialogue-oriented forum, it contributes to strengthening rural areas in Baden-Württemberg. It focuses on events and projects on contemporary issues of rural areas.
www.alr-bw.de



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Conference | 24 April 2013
Stuttgart, Sängershalle

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Forum for international
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European Dialogue on Participation and Civic Engagement in Rural Areas

Nowadays, citizen participation and civic engagement assume an important role within local authorities of Baden-Württemberg. In order to empower smaller municipalities being able to stand their ground in the competition with urban areas and to provide a needs-oriented infrastructure to all age groups, this involvement of citizens in the conception of local development processes will further gain importance.

The question of how to engage civil society in shaping rural development on local and regional level in view of the realignment of EU-support programmes unites many actors in European rural areas. Therefore, an increased expertise of citizens, politics and administration with regard to participation and fostering engagement poses an important building block for the Citizens' Community of the future.

The conference serves as a platform

- to discuss and evaluate the results of a status-quo-analysis on qualification needs adopted to the requirements of small municipalities from different perspectives,
- to identify common challenges and perspectives for the Citizens' Community in rural areas in dialogue with partners from Europe,
- to become acquainted with methods and ways of engaging citizens in regional and local development processes,
- to discuss the significance of political education for local and regional development.

You are cordially invited to attend!

Programme

Facilitation: Dr. Susanne Bonn, Academy of Rural Affairs Baden-Württemberg

10.00 Welcome

Petra Schmettow, finep, Esslingen

10.15 On the path to more participation and engagement in small municipalities: What can different actors still learn (from each other)?

Results from interviews with representatives of politics, citizenry and local administration

Petra Schmettow, finep, Esslingen

The perception of citizens

Regine Geyer, Working Group "Traffic and Parking", Munderkingen

The perception of local administration

Wolfgang Gaber, Chairman of Village Council, Ertingen-Binzwanen

Discussion

11.15 Coffee break

11.35 The perception of local politics

Mayor Michael Stütz, Königsbronn

The perception of external facilitators

Vojtech Cerny, Agora Central Europe, Czech Republic

Discussion

12.20 Presentation of the topics of the parallel working groups in the afternoon

12.30 Lunch break

13.45 Workshop 1: From the local to the regional perspective: challenges for citizen participation in regional development processes

Key-note speeches

Adelheid Schnitzler, Biosphere Reserve Swabian Alb, Münsingen

Inácia Lopes Rebocho, Monte ACE, Portugal

Workshop 2: "Who is afraid of the Wisdom Council?" A chance for more civic engagement in rural areas

Key-note speech

Dr. Angela Postel, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family, Women and Senior Citizens Baden-Württemberg, Department Civic Engagement

Workshop 3: Common challenges and perspectives for participation and civic engagement in rural areas of Europe

Key-note speeches with examples from Estonia and Bulgaria

Sulev Valdmaa, Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut, Estonia

Slaveia Hristova, Balkan Assist Association, Bulgaria

15.00 Coffee break

15.20 Reports from the workshops

15.45 Closing panel: Building blocks for a Citizens' Community in rural areas

Vojtech Cerny, Agora Central Europe, Czech Republic

Dr. Angela Postel, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family, Women and Senior Citizens Baden-Württemberg, Department Civic Engagement

Petra Schmettow, finep, Esslingen

Johannes Stingl, Association of Small Municipalities

Mayor Michael Stütz, Königsbronn

16.30 End of conference

Simultaneous interpretation from German into English and vice versa will be provided

Venue

Sängerhalle, Lindenschulstraße 29, 70327 Stuttgart

Costs

Participation is free of charge.

Target groups

Representatives of the following institutions and fields: Representatives and members of staff of local authorities and rural districts, local administration, associations and other interested persons

Hosts

Academy of Rural Affairs Baden-Württemberg, finep

Registration

Becoming a Change Agent for Rural Citizenship Conference on 24 April 2013, Sängershalle Stuttgart

SURNAME, FIRSTNAME	
INSTITUTION	
STREET	
POST CODE, PLACE	
TELEPHONE	TELEFAX
EMAIL	
SIGNATURE	

Please send me information on future events via email .

Organisation

Registration: We kindly request your registration until **17 April 2013**. Registrations are binding and will be considered in the order of receipt. With the confirmation of registration you will receive directions how to get to Sängershalle, Stuttgart.

Data protection: The personal data that are necessary for the organization of this conference will be processed electronically. A list of participants will be generated. With your registration you indicate your acceptance of this.

