



Competition

“Brilliant Ideas for Better Village Life through Learning”

Call for entries

RuraLEARN warmly invites you to submit an entry into its international Competition which seeks to spotlight “Brilliant Ideas for Better Village Life through Learning”.

Is this for you?

This call is addressed to learners, teachers, educational institutions and learning initiatives operating in rural areas in Europe. It aims to attract the attention and participation of anyone who may be realising and/or promoting lifelong learning in their local rural settings, in the widest sense, including pre-school, school and higher education, vocational training, adult education, as well informal learning outside the conventional educational establishments.

What is this about?

We ask pioneers and actors of lifelong learning in rural communities to share with us what they consider as their best practices and achievements, and in particular those stories of success with a positive impact on the local community, and generally on ‘rural development’. Beside those whose efforts have already borne fruit, we also encourage the participation of visionaries who are elaborating ideas and starting new initiatives.

Why?

We believe that learners and teachers in rural Europe, from all levels of education and all forms of learning, are a critical factor for the initiation of innovation and the take-up of a lifelong learning culture in rural communities. All the same, they may often feel isolated or marginalised, with little chance for outreach and invitation of support for their aspirations. This competition offers a unique opportunity for making their voice heard and their brilliant but overlooked ideas visible. At the same time, through this competition ideas and best practices can be shared and exchanged, in a way that eventually everyone learns through the other’s experiences.



Entry submission

Entries to the competition may normally be submitted by groups of learners and/or teachers. Duly justified entries by individuals may also be accepted without prejudice.

An entry application has to be submitted by the 30th of April 2007, at info@ruralearn.eu. This will be a description of up to two A4 pages summarising the contesting idea, its scope, background, and assets. The form to be filled in for this is attached at the end of this document, and available electronically at www.ruralearn.eu.

Then the full portfolio for each entry will be due by the 7th of May 2007. This may consist of documents, pictures, slide presentations, videos, links to websites, and or any other appropriate format. The selection of format and combination of media will be made freely by the contestants, so that the idea and its potential are best represented. However, the following restrictions should be respected:

- *Documents*: 5 A4 pages maximum (not counting the entry application form)
- *Pictures outside documents*: 10 maximum
- *Presentations*: 15 slides maximum
- *Videos*: 2 minutes maximum.

Normally portfolios ought to be submitted via email, at info@ruralearn.eu. However, alternative options may become available if necessary, after agreement between the contestant and the organizers.

All submissions will be acknowledged.

Evaluation

All entries will be evaluated by the RuraLEARN Jury in terms of:

- Vision
- Innovation and imagination
- Clear thinking and planning (objectives and their putting into practice)
- Potential and added value for the involved individuals
- Potential and added value for the local community
- Distinctive 'rural development' character
- Quality of presentation.

All contestants will be informed about the result of the evaluation by the 14th of May 2007.



Public presentation and final selection

The twenty best entries will be given the opportunity of presentation through the web at www.ruralearn.eu, Europe-wide publicity, as well as advice about possibilities for funding, further development and networking with other initiatives.

The six best entries will be invited to make an open presentation to the public during the RuraLEARN events on the island of Chios, Greece, on 24-27 June 2007. More information on these events is available in the following pages.

These six finalists will be given the opportunity to present their idea to the public and the Jury, and the three best entries will be selected.

Winners will be presented with their prizes during a special ceremony, on the last day of the events.

Publication

Summaries of a selection of entries may be published in the RuraLEARN book of proceedings in summer 2007, as well as being presented as best-practice examples in a report to the European Commission on the state-of-the-art and challenges in rural learning (both publications with ISBN).

Important dates

- Submission of entry application: **30th April 2007**
- Submission of full portfolio: **7th May 2007**
- Results of the evaluation: **14th May 2007**
- Final selection and winner presentation: **24th – 27th June 2007** (Chios, Greece).

Language

The official languages of the competition are English and Greek.

Notification of interest

Those interested in taking part in the competition should contact the organisers in the first instance at info@ruralearn.eu in order to reserve their place, and follow the procedure described above.



Further information

The RuraLEARN cluster of events

The RuraLEARN competition is connected with a wider cluster of public events that will be organised on the island of Chios, Greece, between the 24th and the 27th of June 2007. Beside the winners' final selection and presentation ceremony, the events also include an international conference and seminar workshops, as well as an open-access exhibition fair. Participation in the events is free of charge.

The **international conference** will bring together academics, agents of applied research, and field practitioners from Europe and beyond who investigate ways of promoting lifelong learning, in the widest sense, in rural communities and geographically disadvantaged areas. Conference participants will present the outcomes of their applied projects or academic endeavours, share their experiences from this work, and discuss towards drawing common conclusions and formulating recommendations for the future. Speakers will include renowned international academics and EU representatives.

The **seminar workshops** will delve deeper into major areas of the rural learning theme, such as school education, higher education, vocational education and training, adult education, technology-supported learning, etc. The workshops will emphasize practical issues, aiming mainly to make stakeholders in rural and remote areas aware of the opportunities offered by contemporary technology and policies in the field of education and lifelong learning.

An open-access exhibition and performance event, the **fair** will disseminate the concepts of RuraLEARN to the wider public. This is an excellent opportunity for projects, institutions and individuals to present the outcomes of their work and promote their innovative ideas, as well as an opportunity for networking and exchange between agents active in the fields of lifelong learning and rural development.

Conceptual context

Rural development traditionally forms an important pillar of EU's policies and an issue of increasing priority for many European countries. Despite the decline of the primary sector of economy over the last years, rural production is an important aspect of European economy, and rural communities form a proportion of the overall EU population that cannot be neglected. However, the viability of rural areas needs more than agriculture alone. Rural development policies need to place agriculture in a broader context taking into account



protection of the rural environment, quality of produced food, increasing competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, enhanced quality of life in rural areas, and, eventually, attractiveness of rural areas to young farmers and new residents.

The role that **learning and education**, in all their forms, can play in this direction is crucial: better educated rural citizens of all ages and backgrounds, with ample life-long learning opportunities and access to the contemporary resources of the Information Society and the Knowledge Economy, can resist to urbanisation, protect the natural and human resources of the countryside, understand the new challenges for rural Europe and respond to them with new initiatives, flexibility and adaptability. In face of this evident need for the promotion of '**rural learning**', **all levels of education**, from primary to tertiary, **all forms of learning**, from formal to informal, from conventional professional training to open and distance learning, have to respond in a coherent and creative fashion. What is more, for rural learning, just as for rural development more generally, a strengthened bottom-up approach is needed, which can better tune rural learning programmes to local needs.

Other opportunities for your participation

Other possibilities for your participation in the RuraLEARN events include the presentation of papers in the conference and workshops, and the presentation of projects and/or innovative ideas to the wider public, in the framework of the rural learning fair. Please visit www.ruralearn.eu and contact the organisers at info@ruralearn.eu for further details. It is advisable to register your interest in these events well in advance.

Location

The events will be organized on the Greek island of Chios, and hosted mainly by the rural community of Mesta, a small medieval castle-village at the southwest end of the island. The local old school building is being transformed into a Rural Learning Hub, equipped with satellite broadband internet, offering opportunities for lifelong learning, creativity and expression to all villagers, and particularly to the young generations. It is in this traditional school building, in idyllic Mediterranean rural settings, that a big part of the events will take place.

There are frequent daily flights connecting Chios with Athens, as well as some good-quality sea travel options. Organisers will happily provide participants with travel advice and help in arranging accommodation. The programme will include a number of special social events and excursions to local sites of interest.

Please note that under certain conditions travel and subsistence costs of invited individuals may be covered. Please contact the organisers for further details at info@ruralearn.eu.



More on the choice of location

The Greek island of Chios is a mainly rural, geographically disadvantaged, less developed piece of insular land at the south-eastern fringe of the European Union, which however presents a tremendous developmental potential and a challenge for sustainable development initiatives. By choosing this remote and rural setting for the organization of its public events, RuraLEARN seeks to directly exemplify the challenges faced by Europe's rural communities in terms of development and inclusion, as well as the relevant opportunities that lifelong learning presents for Europeans of all ages in rural and geographically disadvantaged areas.

The events will be mainly hosted by the people of Mesta. Geographical isolation has kept this village far from many of the influences of modern urban life, as can be clearly seen, for example, in its architecture: Mesta is nowadays maybe the only still inhabited medieval castle-village in Greece, with a small, but economically active population. The cultural heritage of the area, with features unique in Greece and the world (medieval architecture, cultivation of mastic, rich traditions, et al.), and its strategic position in the Aegean Archipelago leave ample space for innovative initiatives for sustainable rural development, which however are still almost non-existent due to the lack of local social capital, a lack indeed of informed citizens. The local Learning and Culture Association of Mesta has practically responded to this deficiency through visionary planning and concrete lifelong learning initiatives for local people of all ages.



The organisers

The RuraLEARN events are co-organised by:

- Ellinogermaniki Agogi, Greece (coordinator)
- University of the Aegean, Financial and Management Engineering Department, Greece
- Learning and Culture Association of Mesta, Greece
- University of Barcelona, Spain
- Institute for Future Studies, Austria
- TEHNE - Centre for Development and Innovation in Education, Romania

Further information

On the internet: www.ruralearn.eu

Via email: info@ruralearn.eu

Contact person: Mr Pavlos Koulouris, Ellinogermaniki Agogi,

pkoulouris@ea.gr, tel. +30 2108176794, fax +30 2106032554



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RuraLEARN Competition

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Entry Application Form

Title

The participants

Names, functions

Type of contestants

- Group of learners
- Group of educators
- Group of learners and educators
- Individual entry. Justify: _____

Type/level of learning/education involved

- Pre-school
- School
- Higher education
- Vocational training
- Adult education
- Informal learning outside the conventional educational establishments
- Other: _____



The idea

- Idea already applied
- Visionary entry

Vision and scope

Background

Objectives and their putting into practice

Best or unique assets, why this idea is 'best'

Keywords: innovation, imagination, planning, potential and added value for the involved individuals and for the local community, 'rural development' character