



EXAMPLE 2: Working together to improve quality of life

The 'Quality of Life through Proximity' project ('Lebensqualität durch Nähe – LQN') is working to ensure that basic services and local supplies are available in rural areas, addressing the principal challenges of rural demographic change and the current economic climate. More and more grocery stores, banks and post offices are withdrawing from rural areas, too burdened by the economic pressures of high maintenance costs and low purchasing power. The participating LAGs from Germany and Austria hope to find solutions to maintain or even improve the quality of life in their areas.

The LQN cooperation project aims to support local communities with the development of innovative and integrated activities which deliver all inclusive services and provide a supply of local food. The project will become sustainable as it directly targets the needs of communities, encourages the participation of committed local people and draws support from the transnational cooperation dimension. The sharing of new ideas, the fresh impetus that comes with working with new partners and the consideration of examples of innovative practice are expected to help develop new approaches to service delivery.

"The partner regions discovered they have very similar problems and therefore they wanted to cooperate to support each other with the development and implementation of solutions", says Ingrid Engelhart, the LQN project coordinator of the German lead partner LAG Nordschwarzwald.

Visits of partner regions focused on flagship projects aimed at safe-guarding quality of life in rural areas. Transnational training courses, held in both the Austrian and German partner regions, comprised six modules and a final symposium. Thereafter, participants developed solutions adapted to their own specific local needs. For example, elderly people will now have a dedicated point of contact if they need help, innovative forms of housing and care which include regular meetings, recreational dates and day care for people with dementia are being established, and centres providing local food and other essential goods, coupled with public and private services, social and medical care, communicative and cultural services are being trialled.

The development strategies of the partnering LAGs all share a focus on securing the quality of life by maintaining the supply of basic services and needs. "Through cooperation we have identified an innovative concept and hopefully a long-term solution for how to economically operate a shop in one of our villages, despite the low purchasing power of its population", explains Andreas Schilcher, manager of the LEADER Region Nationalpark Kalkalpen, one of the Austrian partner LAGs.

Given such positive experiences the participating LAGs want to cooperate in other projects. Among them is the plan to jointly initiate and implement innovative, 'barrier-free' forms of living for elderly people, including a care option, thus stimulating village revival and renewal.

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Haben Sie Interesse daran, Ihre aktuellen Produkte mit aufnehmen zu lassen oder haben Sie noch Fragen dazu, dann kontaktieren Sie Margit und Martin Schöttle, per Tel. (07053) 6570 oder per E-Mail an info@martinschoettle.de

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