SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT – FOCUS ON CULTURE AND NATURE

Lifelong Learning Programme

An ECVET-aligned vocational training programme for existing delivery in village venues in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom

Green Village

Exploring Sustainable Aspects of Village Life in Europe

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Green Village partnership is led by ***Grampus Heritage & Training*** from the United Kingdom, with a range of partners with the skills, knowledge and experience to get to grips with the European-wide problem of rural decline and decay; ***Devetaki Plateau Association*** (Bulgaria), ***Hylates / Kato Drys Community Council*** (Cyprus), ***Biuldungsstätte Dübener Heide Naturpark*** (Germany), ***Náttúrustofa Vestjarða – NAVE*** (Iceland), ***Sylviron Limited*** (Ireland), ***CNR-IVALSA*** (Italy), ***Satul Verde Association*** (Romania) and ***Ipel Eko s.p.o.l*** (Slovakia). A 'Third-Country' partner ***Manyatta Youth*** from Kenya were also a partner and gave valuable insights to 'Green Village' with an East African perspective.

The 'Green Village' (GV) project (ref:) was supported by the European Unions '*Leonardo da Vinci – Multilateral Development of Innovation Programme*', which is part of the *'Lifelong Learning Programme'* (LLP). The creation of curriculum focused on 4 key areas for sustainable rural development….

RURAL FOOD

RURAL ENERGY

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

WOOD PRODUCTS

…..and 2 more key areas that are more overarching and transversal….

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

OUR SUSTAINABLE ANCESTORS

.....a final area is ACCESS TO RURAL RESEARCH, a web-based resource that puts science into VET.

ECVET FOR GREEN VILLAGE

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and where appropriate, accumulation of an individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points and a transfer and accumulation process.

In October 2012, initial discussions were held with the Agricultural University of Iceland – a network partner of Green Village partner, NAVE. They offered help in applying ECVET and also giving accreditation to Green Village curriculum.

In January 2013, through Grampus Heritage, the Green Village partnership completed a request for technical assistance regarding ECVET to the UK LLP National Agency, ECORYS. Over the last 4 months of the project, we were assigned an ECVET technical expert in order to apply the principles of ECVET to the emerging Green Village curriculum.

The implementation of ECVET has two broad objectives:

To support mobility of European citizens

To facilitate lifelong learning

The Green Village partnership shares these objectives. The over-riding purpose of Green Village is to create curriculum that effectively transfers between countries the best and most appropriate skills and processes that offer true sustainability in villages.

For our purpose the only drawback of ECVET is that it does not give credit to home-based students and learners….. ECVET credits are only achieved through mobilisation. We registered our partnerships concerns and we hope that ECVET can be applied to local students and learners in the new generation LLP post 2014

The Green Village partnership strongly supports mobility; between all partners, we have mobilised through the LLP over 5,000 individuals since 1997. ECVET is expected to improve the possibilities for recognition of learning outcomes and thus to enable people to build on what they have learned abroad, in a different education and training institution or in different situations, including village venues. In other words, thanks to ECVET, it should become easier to fully integrate mobility into learners' learning pathways and to make visible and recognised what they have learned abroad. We work with college partners to achieve this. The success of ECVET will depend on the development of mutual trust among competent institutions.

ECVET is based on a set of technical components that are all underpinned by the use of learning outcomes. We have therefore developed the 7 units of Green Village curriculum through the use of learning outcomes. Each unit has alternative content to enable delivery in more than one European state.

Curriculum Template

Course title:

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT – FOCUS ON CULTURE AND NATURE

Abstract:

All over Europe, villages are in decline; infrastructure crumbles, cultural landscape breaks down and young people leave to the nearest town or city. Despite this, villages often have great potential – they are a repository for useful traditional skills; they are surrounded by farm land where much of our food is grown; they often have a rich cultural tradition combined with visual attractiveness; they can be a haven for wildlife and have great biodiversity.

In order for a village or countryside area to be sustainable, it must be a place with balance and there is a need for jobs without sacrificing culture, nature and social well-being.

This vocational course recognises four pillars that together might equal ”sustainable rural development’, they are....

Environmental Sustainability – it could be measured by the low amount of carbon released by the people living there and the processes and products they carry out and make. We can also use biodiversity as a measure or ’rarity’ or ’typicality’ of species

Cultural Sustainability – do the people tell stories, sing, dance, make music? Do they go to a place of worship? Do they make their houses and streets look attractive? Do they respect the past but have the potential to add something new to ’culture? All these things might be considered.

Social Sustainability – are families intact or fragmented? Do the young people leave and only old people remain? Are the people friendly and welcoming or introverted and remote? Are the people happy, contented, satisfied? Are there social meeting places?.... a pub, a church, a village hall, a coffee shop?

Economic Sustainability – the most attractive village in Europe is not sustainable if the people are financially destitute; there has to be a buoyant economy and real jobs. We could say that this is the most important thing.... the culture, nature and sociality will follow..... we must be careful; wealthy people living in polluted landscapes and as slaves to material considerations, indulging in a ’throw-away’ economy, cannot truly reflect rural sustainability.

The course was constructed through a ’Development of Innovation’ project ’Green Village’, with partners from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. There was a ’third country’ input from Kenya. The course consists of 4 modules, with a further 3 ’bolt-on’ higher level modules, as follows....

Modules 1, 2, 3 & 4 (focused vocational / ‘Initial Vocational Training’ (IVT) are entitled

1. **Rural Food**
2. **Rural Energy**
3. **Sustainable Building**
4. **Wood Products**

For each module, the learner selects 1 element from 3 to 4 options.....

Module title:	**Element**
Module 1 : Rural Food	Village Food
	Utilising Wild Food
	Food from Landscape

Module title:	**Element**

Module 2 : Rural Energy	
	Hydroelectric & Geothermal Power
	Heating & Cooking with Wood
	Understanding Solar Power

Module title:	**Element**
Module 3 : Sustainable Building	Adobe Brick Making
	Traditional Lime Burning
	Reconstructing Built Heritage
	Sustainable Village Hall (available Sept. 2013)

Module title:	**Element**
Module 4 : Wood Products	Fencing Without Wire
	Mobile Chainsaw Milling
	Village Charcoal
	Wood Tar Production

For the international partnership and for the ongoing ethos of Green Village, it is important that all 4 of the above modules can be delivered in each of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom

Modules 5, 6 and 7 are technical vocational / 'Continuing Vocational Training' (CVT) / 'People in the Labour Market' (PLM) and 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD); they are also transversal, spanning themes and disciplines, they are entitled,,,

5. **Empowering Communities**
6. **Our Sustainable Ancestors**
7. **Access to Rural Research**

For each module, the learner selects 1 element from 3 to 4 options.....

Module title:	**Element**

Module 5 : Empowering Communities	Village Fashion Show/Photoshoot
	Village Forum
	Exploring Village Textiles
	Historical Re-enactment (available Sept.2013)

Module title:	**Element**
Module 6 :Our Sustainable Ancestors	Community Archaeological Survey
	Community Archaeological Excavation
	Applying Ancient Skills

Learning Resource:	**Subject areas**
Access to Rural Research	Carbon Lifecycle Analysis
	Work Study / including animal logging
	Energy Efficiency

Again, for the international partnership and for the ongoing ethos of Green Village, it is important both of these higher level modules can be delivered in each of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. Additionally, the 'Learning Resource' can have some training elements delivered in Italy.

A 'Transfer of Innovation' (TOI) project to multiply and extend the topics, applications, country venues and impact of 'Green Village' is already underway and a further application is under consideration.

Training provider(s)/trainer team:

The training providers are the Green Village partners, as follows:-

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In the future, we intend that the training course can also be delivered in Kenya….

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Each partner employs local rural people as trainers, demonstrators and mentors; this is part of the ethos of 'Green Village'.

Presentation period:

For Modules 1, 2, 3 and 4, 160 contact hours are required. Each Module is a ’stand-alone’ qualification.

For the higher level, Modules 5, 6, a further 80 contact hours are required. Each Module is a ’stand-alone’ qualification.

The two blocks of Modules can be viewed as 2 separate courses with a progression pathway linking them.

Duration:

The course(s) is most usually delivered through mobility. At the time of writing, this mobility forms a key feature of the European Union’s ’Lifelong Learning Programme’ (LLP). Mobility can be achieved through, ’Leonardo da Vinci’, ’Erasmus’, ’Grundtvig’. A mobility period of 4 weeks (20 learning days) is required to complete the full course (Modules 1, 2, 3 and 4 – IVT). In addition to the learning days, learners complete an e-learning foundation module prior to commencing mobility.

The higher level Modules require a mobility period of 2 weeks (10 learning days); it will be quite usual for learners to complete one module during a one- week mobility – in the case of a ’Leonardo da Vinci – VETPRO’ placement for ’Continuous Professional Development’ (CPD) or a ’Grundtvig’ Adult Learner placement.

Each module (1 to 6 inclusive) is completed in 5 learning days / 1 learning week / 40 learning hours. Each module can constitute a stand-alone course.

It will not be usual for any individual learner to complete all 6 modules over a 6-week mobility period.

Venue:

The course and each of its modules is practical and vocational. It is delivered in villages and the countryside is the classroom. With support, any village has the potential to act as a venue. Indoor facilities are in farmhouses, village halls and Municipality offices

Cost:

An objective of ’Green Village’ is to boost the rural economy. Because this course is delivered in 9 countries, costs vary. At the time of writing, the partners have a co-operation agreement to deliver the full course programme (or selected Modules) within the financial framework of the EU’s ’Lifelong Learning Programme’

The target groups:

For Modules 1, 2, 3 and 4, the target group are vocational students. They will be currently completing a vocational course in their own country. Their home institution will most usually be a college or technical high school but they may be enrolled on a foundation degree or on a technical or vocational degree course.

Their subject areas will be those concerned with culture and nature and broadly fall into environmental skills and cultural skills (including the cultural and creative iundustries and applied arts)

For Modules 5 and 6, the target group is still vocational but the level is higher. 'Continuous Vocational Training' (CVT) and 'People in the Labour Market' (PLM) candidates are targeted, as well as 'Vocational Education and Training Professionals' (VETPRO) candidates undergoing CPD and individual Grundtvig Adult Learners who are learning at the appropriate level.

The requirements:

Learners attending any one or all of the 6 modules of 'Sustainable Rural Development – Focus on Culture and Nature' must be prepared to work outdoors as needed and will be using their hands. They will be 'learning by doing'. They should bring appropriate clothing. Tools, equipment and safety clothing will be provided. Learners are advised that a portable lap-top computer can be useful. Learners are encouraged to 'read into the subject'.

Completion of the e-learning foundation module prior to mobility, requires computer access and basic IT skills.

Objectives:

- The overall goal of the course is to raise awareness about rural sustainability – cultural, social, economic and environmental. If learners achieve this raising of awareness it is shown through the assessment process
- In-line with the 'European (VET) Quality Framework' (EQF), all 'Learning Outcomes' are laid down for each module in terms of 'at the end of the course, the learner will be able to..... understand.....demonstrate.....describe....as appropriate.....
- The critical success factors regarding learners, for the course are
  i) Willingness to work in a team
  ii) Respect for the views of others.
  iii) The capacity for inter-generational learning.
  iv) Willingness to think laterally.
  v) Recognition of appropriate technology
  vi) Willingness to mobilise for teaching and learning.

Didactical approaches/teaching methods:

- The course uses social constructivism methods of teaching and learning, drawing out creativity and encouraging discussion and experimentation. Workshops are used and are moderated; they combine elements of demonstration and presentation with practical field work
- The e-learning foundation module is web-based and is delivered remotely. On-line tutoring/mentoring is available.

Structure and topics of the Course:

For all 7 Modules, course structure has common elements. Each module is delivered over a 5-day working period. There are breaks in each day – mid-morning/ lunch / mid-afternoon. A lesson plan follows - it changes with each module but it consists this 'building' approach.

I) Module introduction

Lesson 1 (4 hours)

II) Group discussion on learning goals

III) Outdoor visit

Lesson 2 (4 hours)

i) Demonstration
ii) Learning by doing
iii) Review of progress

Lesson 3 (8 hours)

i) Guided work practice
ii) Review of progress.

Lesson 4 (8 hours)

i) Discussion on innovation
ii) Contemporisation and development
iii) Guided work practice
iv) Review of progress

Lesson 5 (8 hours)

i) Guided work practice
ii) Review of progress

Lesson 6 (4 hours)

i) Work completion
ii) Discussion on acheivement
iii) Peer appraisal

Lesson 7 (4 hours)

i) Presentation / exhibition /forum (to local people & invited audience)
ii) Discussion with local people
iii) Investigate legacy
iv) Assessment and feeback

Resources, literature, media:

Through the Green Village project we have produced resources for the learners to utiulise.....

- Green Village Magazine
- Reports on Work Package 2 ’Exchange of Skills and Knowledge’ formative actions
- Reports on Work Package 3 ’ Learning by Doing’ actions
- Eco-Check report
- Engaging Communities report
- Assembled DVD resources
- Mobility testimonials
- E-learning foundation module

Assessment:

Assessment is through the observation of competences followed by a short presentation by each learner, one-to-one discussion, group discussion, self and peer appraisal

Certification:

This includes...

Certificate of participation,

European mobility pass

ECVET points (through agreement with the learners institution).