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Proyecto **AGARE** **ALTERNATIVE GREEN AREAS FOR RURAL EUROPE**

Second International event: 5th-6th October, Oviedo, Spain
Conference & presentation of the circular economy Action Plan and Debate

WORKGROUP: DEPOPULATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Day: 5th October 2021

Venue: Asturian Federation of Town Halls and Municipalities.

Plaza de Riego 5-6, Oviedo, Spain.

Timetable: 15.30 – 17.30h

Participants:

Experts

- Jaime Izquierdo Vallina Comisionado para el Reto Demográfico del Gobierno de Asturias
- Fernando García Mendez Fundación Edes coordinador del Programa "Vuelve al Pueblo "
- Antonio Rodríguez, presidente de la Asociación de Moal

AGARE partners:

- Viktoria Diedrich, HochVier
- Michael Jahn, HochVier
- Stefani Marionova, Institute Perspectives
- Sherif Kunch, Institute Perspectives
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In addition, a total of 25 representatives of public and private organisations and project partners participated in the online group.

Questions for debate:

- What causes depopulation?
- ¿Which is the extent of local development?
- ¿How can politics and citizens action help to repopulate rural áreas?

Key Ideas and conclusions:

Depopulation of rural areas is a common ground within the whole Asturia (and Spain) although it has been a late but very intense and fast process.

The attraction, in services, employment opportunities and leisure of the urban areas have played an important role in this process together with low attraction of rural areas for the development of women, a key element to mitigate the loss of population and, as far as possible, initiate restocking policies. This is even clearer in the case of those women who are more educated by the type of jobs that may exist in rural areas.

Cost of services provided to small rural populations is higher, from a monetary point of view, than in urban areas (especially in Asturias with a very complicated orography and disseminated population) but the cost-benefit analysis should not be the only one to be taken into account when thinking of providing services to this areas.

Local development is a long process that must lead to a better quality of life. We must move from the "consumption of the landscape" to the "necessity of the landscape" and to guide the local development to a vision with a different perspective on it; the creation of self-sufficient energy communities and a local business system.



Depopulation and Local development workshop activities

In this sense, local development for the 21st century must have an holistic approach, where transport and communications infrastructures are crucial, but also aspects related to provision of all kinds of services: social care, culture, education, health, leisure ... It should also be inclusive and endogenous, based on territorial potential and taking into account all aspects of development: economic, social and environmental.



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Key ideas:

- Concept of "bringing services to people" and not "people to services". Here new technologies play an important role.
- It is extremely important for rural areas to be aware of its own potentials, adapting them to new uses and even attracting people from outside to bring us new visions and solutions.
- Women as key element in repopulations politics.

We must foster the idea of bringing services to the people and developing initiatives and protocols to welcome and integrate people who come from urban to rural areas.