

ERASMUS + Joint Master's Curriculum in Rural Community Development – RuralCOM

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About the project

RuralCOM project is initiated by a consortium of five universities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Romania to develop a joint Master's Curriculum of Rural Community Development (RuralCOM). This joint RuralCOM Master's curriculum will be implemented by two Baltic States partners from September 2023, while Lithuanian, Finnish and Romanian partners adapt selected courses/ modules and the e-learning content.

Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) is chosen as an important partner for further networking, lecturing, mobility and collaboration for students' Master thesis work. University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute (UH) is leading the development of the MOOC of Sustainable Rural Social Entrepreneurship for rural community development and ASE leads development of adult learning courses for rural community leaders.

By developing a new joint curriculum on rural community development this RuralCOM project aims to implement joint initiatives together by promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchange of experiences at European level. Rural community development encompasses a range of approaches and activities that aim to improve the welfare and livelihoods of people living in rural areas focusing on rural sociology, tourism, local economy and sustainable environment. Rural community development curriculum/program differs to a great extent from rural development in general. RuralCOM focuses on villages and people, including the sociological aspects of human beings (not only infrastructure and economic aspects).

The overall objective of the RuralCOM project is to support rural community development, social entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability of rural areas. Currently, there are no holistic and integrated rural community development curriculum in Master's level in partner areas. RuralCOM consortium will develop, implement and test a new approach to promote creativity, entrepreneurial thinking and skills for designing innovation in close cooperation with the rural communities in which the universities are embedded.

This will be achieved by three core activities and outputs:

- the new joint Master's curriculum on Rural Community Development (O1)
- RuralCOM e-learning materials and the RuralCOM MOOC (O2)
- continuous and adult learning courses with materials for rural development leaders (O3)

Partners

RuralCOM project is initiated by five universities:

Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), Tartu, Estonia (coordinator)

Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBLU), Jelgava, Latvia

Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Kaunas, Lithuania

Ruralia Institute of Helsinki University (UH), Seinäjoki, Finland

Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE), Bucharest, Romania

Results

➤ *Joint Master's curriculum for Rural Community Development*

The Master programme is organized by Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), Tartu, Estonia & Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBLU), Jelgava, Latvia

➤ *MOOC Sustainable Rural Social Entrepreneurship (5ECTS)*

Learn to use social enterprises in rural development in an international MOOC course: Sustainable Rural Social Entrepreneurship 5 ECTS!

Social enterprises are growing their importance as a tool for the development of rural communities across Europe and beyond. They are used to breaking the vicious circle many rural communities suffer such as: accessibility challenges due to long distance, ageing population, diminishing local services, the outmigration of the young, reductions in public financing, lack of jobs etc. Social enterprises and community-based social enterprises are ways to improve the livelihoods of rural residents. They can be used to create new, easily accessible services for the old and young in rural communities and to create new jobs and business opportunities and diminish social exclusion.

In the MOOC course Sustainable Rural Social Entrepreneurship (5 ECTS) you will learn to:

- Recognize different approaches to local entrepreneurship and the special features of social entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Apply the tools of social entrepreneurship at practical and theoretical level.
- Integrate different approaches in the analysis of rural development.
- Plan, organize and realize the sustainable development of local communities.

Students from all fields of study are welcome to this multidisciplinary course. A keen interest in rural development and social enterprises are required. Knowing the basics of business and entrepreneurship are recommended before starting the course.

MOOC course environment opens on 16 January 2023. **You can complete the course 16 Jan 2023 – 12 May 2023.**

See more at: <https://digicampus.fi/course/search.php?search=Agere+A09>

The course is organized by the University of Helsinki, the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Estonian Universities of Life Science and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies as a part of the Erasmus+ project Joint Master's Curriculum in Rural Community Development (RuralCOM).

Welcome!

➤ *Adult learning courses for rural community development leaders*

Rural Business and Entrepreneurship

The course provides information related to the importance of rural and social entrepreneurship on the development of rural areas. The course is built primarily around a series of case study discussions and business model examples. It'll cover a broad range of topics, such as: rural entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, development of rural communities, non-refundable sources of funding for rural entrepreneurship.

The students will be able to:

- Understand, debate and distinguish definitions, concepts and essential components of rural entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship
- Identify the role of the social entrepreneurship in the development of rural communities
- Identify specific socio-economic conditions and problems facing the rural economy
- Evaluate the situation of rural development based on socio-economic and sectorial indicators
- Understand and analyze the impact of the European support on rural economy
- Study the stage of accessing European funds
- Identify the main European tools to support rural entrepreneurship development, as well as their way of action

Rural Business Diversification (rural non-food business development)

The course provides information related to the importance of rural business diversification on the development of rural areas. The course is built primarily around a series of case study discussions and business model examples. It'll cover a broad range of topics, such as : rural diversification, development of rural communities, non-refundable sources of funding for developing non-agricultural businesses in rural area.

The students will be able to:

- Understand, debate and distinguish definitions, concepts and essential components of rural diversification
- Identify specific socio-economic conditions and problems facing the rural economy
- Evaluate the situation of non-agricultural activities/sectors in rural area
- Understand and analyse the impact of the European support for the development of non-agricultural businesses in rural area
- Study the stage of accessing European funds
- Identify the main European tools to support non-agricultural businesses in rural area, as well as their way of action

Contact Information

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Press Release

Transnational project meeting, Bucharest, the 2nd-3rd of February 2023

See agenda of the meeting

