



Vital Update

First update of the Vital Rural Area project

February 2011



We proudly present the first update of the Vital Rural Area project. In this update you will find an introduction of various pilot activities. We thank our partners for the excellent input making it able to publish our first Vital Update. We are looking forward to receive new material for the next Vital Update. If you have any further suggestions or ideas for improvement, please contact Jan Walburg. Kind regards, Projectteam Vital

Visit our Policy Forum
May 26th and 27th, 2011
Rinsumageast, The Netherlands

Vital content

- P.1 Skyping for excellent classroom glass fiber**
- P.1 Popular ugly spots in Leiedal Belgium**
- P.2 Teaching module for solar water heating
- P.2 Show continues in Meetjesland
- P.3 People make a village work
- P.3 Rural or cost effective forward thinking?
- P.3 Video conferences instead of hospital visits
- P.4 Sustainability in projects and project management

Skyping for excellent classroom glass fiber

To improve education and access between schools by broadband facilities, the Municipalities of Achtkarspelen and Vejen are exploring possibilities for cooperation.

In Vejen, Denmark, a glass fiber and broadband infrastructure has already been realized and successfully put to practice. Schools benefit from centralized services and improve their education by using ICT. Achtkarspelen, one of the NOFA municipalities in The Netherlands, is taking on this idea. 22 primary schools in the region have started a pilot project to create a glass fiber network. During the pilot in Achtkarspelen children discuss a subject in English using skype and digiboard. The two municipalities intent to share information, knowledge, skills and techniques on this topic. Furthermore, the Rabadeira primary school in Oleiros Spain is interested in participation as well. Cooperation between 3 primary schools is now being investigated.



Children discovering glass fiber cables



Vital website

www.vitalruralarea.eu

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Popular ugly spots in Leiedal Belgium

Whilst the name suggests differently, 'Ugly Spots' is a successful project carried out by Intercommunale Leiedal. The project draws attention to the ugly spots and offers creative thinkers an opportunity to change these. The aim is to increase the popularity of the region and to improve the quality of the public space.



Ugly spot in West Flanders

Through the website (www.lelijkeplekjes.be) citizens from twelve municipalities in West Flanders, and eleven municipalities of the region Kortrijk in Belgium could send in a picture of an ugly area in the region. From 120 entries, the judges chose the 3 ugliest spots. 4 schools will take on the challenge to redesign the ugly spot in an innovative way. Finally, one of the spots will be extensively refurbished. By involving civil society in a creative way the organization hopes to become known by the public and simultaneously add quality to the public space.





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Teaching module for solar water heating

ROC Friese Poort, a school for secondary education, participates in the Vital Rural Area project to enhance networks of knowledge and therewith strengthen small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the technical sector.



Solar water heating

The school is developing a digital teaching module 'Solar water heating' and likes to attract SMEs to use the new techniques. The project has several aims. First of all students can add value to the SMEs. According to the developers of the module many SMEs are reluctant to switch to solar water heating, because they do not have enough product knowledge. Through the teaching module, students and other participants will learn how to get solar water heaters installed and working. Secondly SMEs are able to share knowledge and experience. Distribution of knowledge of solar water heating can ensure that many SMEs change into this sustainable source of energy. Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein is also participating in this renewable energy project. Their module is about earth warmth.

Show continues in Meetjesland

Using postcards, marquees, portraits of locals, and welcome signs, Meetjesland is increasing the popularity of the region.

In comparison to the urbanized Flanders, Meetjesland can be specified as agricultural area where 82% of the region consists of open space.

As a result of the partnership Streekplatform+ Meetjesland, the 14 municipalities of the region Meetjesland, have posted welcome signs along the main access roads. Via the Meetjesland 'discover the region' marquee, events of the region where promoted on festivals. Tourists and visitors of the events received free postcards to send to family and friends to promote the region. In total 2500 cards have been sent. Furthermore, 12 unique portraits of locals with a special message and direction for the region where successfully exhibited in libraries, residential and care centres. On request the exhibition will be continued in 2011.



Public workers posted the welcome signs





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Vital Update



People make a village work

Facilities disappear from villages, the virtual office brings them back!

The Municipality of Achtkarspelen, situated in the Province of Fryslân, The Netherlands, is facing multiple challenges to keep villages livable. Ageing of the population, a decrease in the number of young people, and disappearance of public facilities are only some of them. To increase the vitality of the villages of Achtkarspelen the project 'People make a village work' has been started.



The mayor and the alderman of the Municipality of Achtkarspelen have recently opened the first support station and virtual office in the village of Twijzelerheide. Within the support station multiple activities in benefit of the inhabitants are housed. Via a screen inhabitants enter the virtual office and are capable to manage their businesses with the municipality, the police, and other public services via an online connection. The virtual office at Twijzelerheide is a pilot which is hosted and housed at the support station.



Opening Virtual Office,
photographer Binne-Louw Katsma

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Rural or cost effective forward thinking?



According to Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin group, Norfolk is a county that can deliver results. He is featured on the homepage www.investinnorfolk.com saying what a good place Norfolk is to do business.

Norfolk, a large, mainly rural, county situated on the coast of the East of England, is considered by UK business people surveyed in 2005, to be 'rural and remote' and not a good place to do business. To challenge these views, Norfolk has redesigned the website. 'Shaping Norfolk's Future', is the business-led partnership which aims to create wealth and jobs in Norfolk. The redesign of its website aimed at business investors from inside and outside the county should help to attract investors.



Richard Branson

Video conferences instead of hospital visits

In Vejen Kommune's Elder Care Centre video conferences are introduced as an alternative to physical meetings.



A pilot started between regional hospitals and the Elder Care Centre. The hospital sends patients home, who are ready to leave the hospital, but afterwards need care and treatment. They receive this care and treatment by video conferences via Skype.

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Sustainability in projects and project management

Projectteamwork is an organization specialized in project management, situated in Heerenveen, The Netherlands. Together with Jan Walburg and Andree Hofer of the Vital Rural Area project team, Projectteamwork arranged a workshop for international students of the University of Groningen.

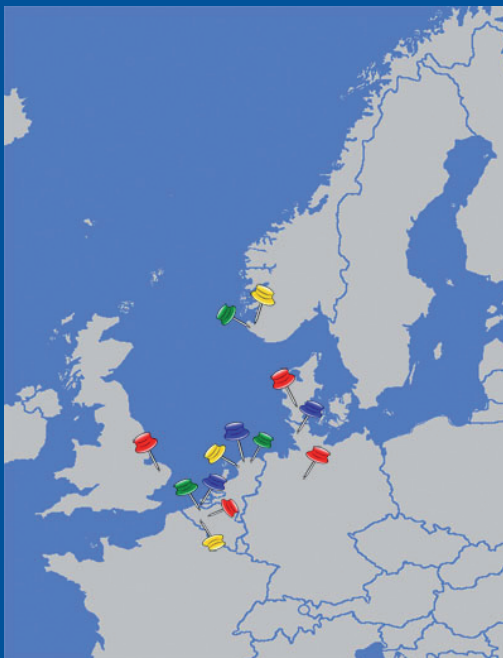
The workshop offered an introduction into sustainable project management. The Vital Rural Area project was presented by Jan Walburg as an (European) example of a sustainable project. As part of the presentation, an online skype connection was realized. Andree Hofer presented himself on the screen from 'the studio' in Dantumadiel. 'The studio' is a centre where knowledge from the universities and colleges is connected with projects in the region. Via the skype connection he explained the students about a new sustainable fertilizer 'rockflour', which may become a new pilot of the Vital Rural Area project. In short, rockflour is pulverized (volcanic) rock, adding minerals to soil. Andree showed the students the actual rockflour with his webcam. Furthermore, the students received an assignment about their vision on the rural area in 2020. They presented their project ideas including a project definition. After all, the workshop was a great success. It can be concluded

that many (international) students are very interested in development of rural areas, sustainability, and have creative ideas on how to conquer future challenges.



Students working on the project assignment

Partners Vital Rural Area project



NOFA, Buitenpost, The Netherlands - lead partner, Norfolk County Council, Norwich, United Kingdom - chair WPI, Streekplatform+ Meetjesland, Eeklo, Belgium - chair WP2, Province of Fryslân, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands - chair WP3, City of Langenhagen, Germany, Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein, Büro Husum, Germany, Vejen Kommune, Denmark, Municipality of Sluis, Oostburg, The Netherlands, Rogaland Fylkeskommune, Stavanger, Norway, Finnøy Kommune, Judaberg, Norway, Friese Poort Bedrijfsopleidingen, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands, Intercommunale Leiedal, Kortrijk, Belgium, Province of West Flanders, Brugge (Sint Andries), Belgium

