



Scholarship Programme 2024

Insights & Reflections

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inhalt

Summary Report - Insights and Reflections:	3
Voice of Alps, ALB - Ksenia, UKR.....	3
Report from the host, Voice of Alps, Albania	3
Report from the trainee, Kseniia from Ukraine:.....	3
cob Building with Earth, GR - Mara, IT	3
Report from the host, cob, Building with Earth, Greece	3
Report from the trainee, Mara from Italy:	4
Dupa Gard, RO - Antonio, IT	4
Report from the trainee, Antonio from Italy:	4
Obelisk Farm, LV - Marc & Blaine, DE & ZA	5
Report from the host, Obelisk Farm, Lativa	5
Report from the trainees, Marc from Germany & Blaine from South Africa:	5
Porto di terra, IT - Jessica, LV	5
Report from the host, Port die terra, Italy	5
Report from the trainee, Jessica, Lativa	6
Conclusion:	7
Access to Land.....	7
Gender Issues	7
Intergenerational Aspects.....	7

Summary Report - Insights and Reflections:

This summary focuses on the participants' experiences regarding key topics: access to land, intergenerational cooperation, and gender issues. Following this, a synthesis of these key topics is provided.

For detailed reports from hosts and trainees, please visit our [website](#)

Voice of Alps, ALB - Ksenia, UKR

17.06.2024 - 01.07.2024



Report from the host, Voice of Alps, Albania

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** There is no explicit mention of intergenerational cooperation, but the NGO focuses on rural development and environmental protection, which often involves multiple generations in community engagement.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** The report does not directly address access to land issues. However, it describes sustainable rural development and the use of local natural resources, which are related to land management.
- **Gender Aspects:** The report does not discuss gender equality or women's roles in land ownership or business.

Report from the trainee, Kseniia from Ukraine:

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The report notes that it is common for parents to start a business, which their children then continue. The NGO where the scholarship took place is an example of this.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** Traditionally, most agricultural land and farms in Albania belonged to men, but the balance is now shifting. It is no longer unusual for women to own farms, small-scale agricultural production, or businesses like hotels.
- **Gender Aspects:** The author initially expected gender equality to be worse in Albania based on stereotypes but found that significant efforts are being made to promote it. The NGO involved in the scholarship program is actively working on gender equality initiatives.

cob Building with Earth, GR – Mara, IT

20.06.2024 - 20.09.2024



Report from the host, cob, Building with Earth, Greece

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The project fostered intergenerational cooperation by engaging elderly villagers, young volunteers, and Erasmus participants in sustainability initiatives. The café renovation project in the village also aimed to break age barriers in a rural setting where most inhabitants are over 50.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** COB's regenerative farming initiative focused on introducing sustainable agricultural practices to local farmers, who were initially skeptical about

organic farming. Outreach efforts aimed to bridge the gap between traditional monoculture farming and more sustainable alternatives, using the café as a space to showcase organic produce.

- **Gender Aspects:** The café renovation project was designed to challenge traditional gender roles in the village, where public spaces were historically male-dominated. Activities such as cinema nights, sewing workshops, and soap-making sessions were organised to create a welcoming environment for women, providing them with a space for social engagement and learning new skills.

This report offers strong insights into how these themes were addressed in a rural eco-community setting.

Report from the trainee, Mara from Italy:

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The COB farm's café project in Nessonas aims to bring together different generations, as the village has an aging population. The presence of young volunteers also encourages interaction between age groups.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** COB Farm is engaging with local farmers to promote sustainable agricultural practices. Many local farmers rely on intensive chemical-based farming and are skeptical about organic or regenerative approaches, so COB is working to build connections and offer support.
- **Gender Aspects:** The café project also focuses on gender inclusion, as traditional gender roles in the village limit women's access to public spaces. COB is working to create a safe, inclusive space for women through activities like cinema nights, sewing workshops, and soap-making sessions.

Dupa Gard, RO – Antonio, IT

29.06.2024 - 15.07.2024



Report from the trainee, Antonio from Italy:

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The participant observed the transmission of cultural knowledge and traditions between generations, particularly through Cristina's family, where traditional Romanian bread-making and self-sufficient farming practices were passed down from mother to daughter. The scholarship event at the local school also facilitated discussions on rural development, involving both young people and experienced community members.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** The project was deeply connected to permaculture and sustainable agriculture, emphasising the use of local resources to ensure self-sufficiency. The participant learned about traditional and modern ecological farming techniques, including crop rotation and land management strategies, from both local farmers and international experts.
- **Gender Aspects:** The report highlights the presence of female entrepreneurs in Transylvania, including women managing businesses, farms, and community initiatives. The participant noted that many women are actively involved in food production, local commerce, and cultural preservation. Additionally, the newly elected female mayor represents a shift toward greater female participation in local governance.

Obelisk Farm, LV – Marc & Blaine, DE & ZA

20.08.2024 - 20.09.2024



Report from the host, Obelisk Farm, Lativa

This report does not explicitly mention intergenerational aspects, access to land, or gender aspects. It primarily focuses on the traineeship experience, detailing the skills learned in hemp cultivation, processing, and product development. There is a brief mention of interactions with the local community, but no direct reference to intergenerational collaboration, land access issues, or gender-related topics.

Report from the trainees, Marc from Germany & Blaine from South Africa:

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The report discusses rural development and the role of younger generations in revitalising rural areas. There is a focus on how to attract and retain young people in agriculture through innovation and sustainability, as well as examples of younger people engaging in farming.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** While the report primarily focuses on hemp cultivation, it also discusses sustainable farming practices, crop rotation, and soil management. There is an emphasis on maintaining land fertility and making eco-friendly agriculture viable, which relates to land access and responsible land use.
- **Gender Aspects:** The report acknowledges that farming is traditionally male-dominated but highlights a female farmer and mother of four who is inspiring other women to enter the agricultural sector. It also raises questions about the challenges women face in farming and how they can be encouraged to participate more actively.

Porto di terra, IT – Jessica, LV

19.08.2024 - 21.09.2024



Report from the host, Port die terra, Italy

- **Intergenerational Aspects:** The report discusses depopulation and "neo-population" (likely referring to newcomers moving into the area), highlighting changes in the community and land use. It also mentions Jessica's involvement in traditional water management systems and how they function as a common good, indicating an intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices.
- **Access to Land Aspects:** The renewal of the lease for the land where the association is based is mentioned as a significant moment. Additionally, the report discusses land management, agroecology, and fire prevention as key topics addressed during Jessica's training.
- **Gender Aspects:** The association's structure intentionally includes both men and women in leadership and mentorship roles. The president of the association, Laura Maniscalco, is a woman involved in nature tourism and small business development, and she played a key mentoring role during Jessica's internship.

Report from the trainee, Jessica, Lativa

- **Intergenerational Aspects: Aging and depopulation** are explicitly mentioned as challenges in the rural and mountain areas of Sicily, where Porto di Terra is located. The report highlights the **majority of the population being over 50 years old**, making intergenerational cooperation crucial for rural revitalisation.

The organisation aims to **boost intergenerational cooperation**, particularly through **children's education and outdoor kindergarten experiences**. This indicates an effort to engage younger generations and ensure knowledge transfer.

Traditional water management systems (such as old irrigation canals) are maintained by Porto di Terra members, emphasising the preservation of intergenerational knowledge related to sustainable land use.

The **“TransPorto” festival** is designed to create **spaces for intergenerational knowledge exchange and conviviality**, bringing people of different ages together through music, food, and cultural activities.

- **Access to Land Aspects: The renewal of Porto di Terra's land lease for eight more years** is mentioned as a crucial milestone, showing the importance of securing land access for rural initiatives.

Access to land is **one of the key reasons young people were drawn to this rural setting**, as it allows them to experiment with new ways of living and working.

Porto di Terra's members focus on **agroecology and permaculture** to care for the land, ensuring long-term soil health and sustainable food production.

The report discusses **collective land use**, where members have purchased houses and land in proximity to the organisation's headquarters, creating a **shared community model** rather than individual land ownership

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The importance of **non-privatised access to water** is emphasised, with Porto di Terra members actively working to **preserve and clean traditional irrigation systems** to maintain communal water availability.

- **Gender Aspects: Gender balance in leadership** is explicitly mentioned: the **management board consists of men and women in equal numbers**, ensuring a fair distribution of responsibilities.

Women in leadership: The report highlights key female figures, such as **Carlotta Ebbreo and Laura Maniscalco**, who play active roles in the organisation's governance and daily activities.

Women's circles are a regular part of the community's life, offering a **safe space for women to share experiences and support each other**.

The organisation collaborates with **women-led initiatives**, such as **Armònia**, which focuses on nature tourism and economic empowerment.

Jessica's **primary mentor was a woman (Carlotta Ebbreo)**, reinforcing the importance of female leadership in community-based projects.

Conclusion:

The report provides strong examples of **intergenerational knowledge exchange**, **innovative approaches to land access**, and **gender inclusivity in rural development**. Porto di Terra serves as a model for **sustainable rural repopulation**, fostering diversity, cooperation, and environmental stewardship.

Access to Land

- In Albania, land ownership was traditionally male-dominated, but this is changing, with more women owning farms and small businesses.
- In Greece, the COB farm is promoting sustainable agriculture, countering the skepticism of local farmers who rely on intensive chemical farming.
- In Romania, the project emphasised permaculture and sustainable farming, integrating traditional and modern ecological techniques.
- In Latvia, land access was primarily discussed in relation to hemp cultivation, soil management, and sustainable farming practices.
- In Italy, the Porto di Terra initiative highlights collective land use and long-term land security, emphasising agroecology and permaculture. The renewal of their land lease was a key milestone.

Gender Issues

- Albania: Efforts are actively being made to promote gender equality, with NGOs working on initiatives to support women's empowerment.
- Greece: The café project challenged traditional gender roles by creating safe, inclusive public spaces for women, including activities like sewing workshops and soap-making.
- Romania: Women play a significant role in food production, local commerce, and cultural preservation, with a notable increase in female entrepreneurship and political leadership.
- Latvia: While farming is traditionally male-dominated, the report highlights a female farmer inspiring other women to enter the agricultural sector.
- Italy: Porto di Terra ensures gender balance in leadership, collaborates with women-led initiatives, and provides women's circles for support and empowerment.

Intergenerational Aspects

- Albania: It is common for businesses to be passed down through generations. The NGO involved in the scholarship is an example of this.
- Greece: The café renovation project aimed to bridge generational gaps in a village with an aging population, engaging both elderly villagers and young volunteers.

- Romania: Traditional knowledge, such as bread-making and farming, is actively passed down between generations. A local school event facilitated discussions on rural development between youth and experienced community members.
- Latvia: The focus was on attracting young people to farming through innovation and sustainability.
- Italy: Porto di Terra addresses aging and depopulation by involving young people in educational programs and land stewardship. Traditional water management systems are maintained through intergenerational knowledge exchange, and the “TransPorto” festival fosters generational interactions.

This report reflects significant efforts to improve land access, challenge gender inequalities, and encourage intergenerational cooperation in rural settings.