



Prepare Partnership for Rural Europe

## Webinar on rural trends 27.11.2020 at 9.30 CET

Gent Imeraj



### **Presentation: A story from my home area – The plum beyond the wall**

It is dedicated to my father's life - one of the intellectuals who made the transition, from a long family tree in an old house, to the city and now he is a presenter in most of the scientific symposiums about the Nikaj Mertur valley, his homeland - almost completely abandoned from people. In 10 years, the population has shrunk 10 times (from around 3000 to less than 300 people). An area of great historical value (one of the first tribes in the Northern Alps of Albania), home of rare & endemic species (flora and fauna), has remained plain due to the massive exodus of intellectuals. The questions to be addressed are: Do these people need to leave to live? Where does this taught behaviour come from? Is there time to change?

### **Speaker:**

Gent is currently a 2nd year master student of Electronic and Communication Engineering. He works as a teaching assistant and researcher at EPOKA University in Tirana, Albania. For 4 years, he has continuously worked in the sector of civil society, where he is the administrator of the network "Albanian Alps Alliance". Through it, Gent has coordinated 5 projects, with a total length of 4 years, tackling issues of rural development, with focus on social-environmental and economic issues. Gent stands for the feature that: *if it is a sincere explanation, mixed with a hand of emotions, then they will remember it.*

### **Josefina Syssner**



**Presentation:** The presentation starts out from a reflection on depopulating and shrinking areas in Northern Europe. It displays the potential of demographic adaptation policies to manage depopulation, that is, policy programs aiming at managing depopulation through adaptation, rather than through growth policies intended to foster population growth. The presentation concludes that local governments in shrinking areas ought to develop *local adaptation policies*. These policies, however, also need to be subjected to critical analysis.

### **Speaker:**

Dr. Josefina Syssner is a Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor of Human Geography in the Local Government Studies, and Head of department for Department of Culture and society at Linköping University. Her research interests are in the political issues, strategies and processes linked to local and regional development, and demographic adaptation.



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### Alistair Adam Hernández



**Presentation: Resilient rural communities - How to shape change successfully in the European periphery?** In the context of social, economic and ecological change, villages in Europe face major challenges. Despite these developments, there are villages in remote regions, which, in the face of adverse circumstances, are successfully adapting to change processes and developing in a positive manner. During his PhD research, the author looks through the lens of “resilience” into three outstanding village communities in Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom. What does it mean to be a resilient village and what characteristics does it possess as a complex social system? Can resilience in rural communities be managed and fostered and, if so, how? These and other questions will be discussed during the webinar.

#### Speaker

Alistair

Adam Hernández is from Tenerife, Canary Islands (ES). He specializes in rural and regional development as well as in business and economic promotion. After finalising his master studies (2012) in Göttingen (DE) he worked as a LEADER and rural development project manager and later (since 2016) as a research associate in spatial studies. He currently researches the challenges of basic service provision in rural areas at the Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association in Hannover.

### Robert Hall



#### **Presentation: "Communities, the European Green Deal and the climate emergency facing rural Europe"**

The presentation will cover threats and opportunities of the climate emergency and the EC's response, the European Green Deal, and what this could mean for life in Europe's rural communities.

#### Speaker

Originally from California (USA), Robert immigrated to Sweden in the 1980's during his studies in international relations and economics. He later went on to complete an Intl MSc in environmental engineering and sustainable infrastructure. Since the 1980s Robert has worked for the Swedish government, UN, EC and OSCE in a number of countries mainly in international development cooperation, internationalisation of education and strengthening democratic institutions. He is currently an elected member of the regional 'parliament' on Gotland and has been active in the ecovillage movement since 2008 when Suderbyn Permaculture Ecovillage, which he co-founded, joined Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) Europe where he served two terms on its Council and was elected president in 2015. From 2014-15 he served as GEN-Europe managing director and since 2015 has served on the GEN international board. Robert was involved in the foundation of ECOLISE from 2013-15 and served as president from 2017-2019.



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### **Hanna Lakkala**



#### **Presentation: Is ruralisation becoming a trend in the covid context?**

In Finland, as in many other countries, we have during the pandemic witnessed people moving from cities to rural areas, or spending more time in their cottages. Is ruralization becoming a new trend or is it just wishful thinking? In addition to COVID19, what kind of megatrends, trends and weak signals may support this possible new trend, and how could rural areas seize the opportunity and attract more people from urban areas?

#### **Speaker**

Hanna Lakkala works as project manager and specialist at Finland Futures Research Centre of University of Turku. She is a futurist and geographer currently living in the Arctic Circle of Finland and focusing on regional development projects and foresight in the Arctic context. She has previously worked e.g. with foresight processes and sustainable development in food and agriculture and energy sectors in Latin America and Southeast Asia.

### **Linda Randall**



#### **Presentation: Digital innovation and rural areas: where do I fit in?**

Digitalisation offers great potential for equal access to opportunity, regardless of where people live. But how can we make these opportunities a reality? This presentation will dig in to the human aspect of the digital transition, discussing several aspects that are important in making this digital promise a reality for rural areas.

#### **Speaker**

Linda Randall is a Research Fellow at Nordregio, an international research center for regional development and planning. Her main research interest is the impact of digital technologies on society, particularly in a regional development context.

**Hannu Haapala & Liisa Pesonen - FinAgEng, Finland**



**Presentation: Rural technologies at your service?**

Rural technologies help rural citizens in everyday life to cope with their challenges. Applications of technology provide means to communicate, perform the business and interact with the related value networks. Digital technologies and infrastructures enable positive rural development since they attract smart businesses and educated individuals.

In the presentation, examples of profitable uses of rural technologies are presented. Trends in rural technology are outlined.

*Hannu E. S. Haapala*

**Education:**

Doctor of Science in Agricultural Engineering, University of Helsinki  
Specialization on Precision Agriculture / Smart Farming and rural innovation studies.

**Career:**

Researcher in Finnish Academy of Sciences  
Professor of Agrotechnology at University of Helsinki  
Research Professor / Director in MTT (Agrifood Research Finland)  
Research Director at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences  
CEO at ProAgria Advisory Services  
CEO at Agrinnotech  
Vice President in EurAgEng  
President in ENGAGE, the strategic network of EurAgEng  
President of FinAgEng

*Liisa Pesonen*

**Education**

Master of Science in Agricultural Engineering, University of Helsinki  
Specialization on farm information management and digitalization of farms.

**Career**

Researcher at University of Helsinki  
Senior scientist at MTT AgriFood Research Finland  
Senior scientist at Luke Natural Resources Institute Finland  
Vice president of FinAgEng