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## Erasmus+ project Communities Communication: a bridge of inter-generational understanding in European low density urban areas

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### Abstract:

Building on the concept of legitimation crisis (Habermas, 1973) and the consistency of “general will” (Rousseau, 1789), this paper identifies and challenges key policies to address the issue of youth unemployment in low density urban areas. According to Eurostat we have a percentage of youth unemployment of 48.9% in Greece, 30% in Portugal, 48.3% in Spain, 21.7% in Romania and 13.1% in Estonia. Most studies and reports on youth unemployment focus on school-to-work or training-to-work transitions without addressing the relevance of a strong, communicative and connected community (Dietrich, 2012). Additionally, in Europe, an increased rural-urban migration does not seem to be a sustainable solution, but a geographical shifting of the problem (Henning, 2017).

The ability to communicate and to convey a message using words or other signs of social interaction (Saussure, 1916) is essential to strengthen a community and should not be overlooked by policy makers and social innovators. Young people struggle to feel included in local communities and interact permanently with a digital ‘urbanised’ reality. Thus, merging the language used by young and older generations could bring significant impact to the development of low-density urban areas and reduce the necessity of rural-urban migration.

Comm.Comm is an Erasmus+ strategic partnership in the field of youth innovation, which aims to conduct a pilot on how digital communication, social media and digital skills can be integrated in local communities to improve youth employment rates. In the context of a

European digital single market, giving local communities the right tools to facilitate communication with younger generations can play a key role on developing critical thinking and encouraging the settlement of young people outside the urban fringes.

Cooperating with local schools and local administration units, the project brings together 5 NGO's to put in practice an innovative methodology in developing common languages for cross-generational communication in low-density urban areas. It uses non-formal education methods, open-knowledge and project-based learning to achieve consistent results. The results of the pilot will set the path for a joint action in Europe to empower communities and reduce the digital gap between different generations.

**Key words:** Communication; Communities; Youth employment; Digital Literacy; Intergenerational dialogue

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