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# YERAME

**Youth Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas in Mediterranean Countries**



**WP2: YOUTH RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP GUIDE**

**D2.1: National Guide on successful  
experiences in youth entrepreneurship**



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## - Introduction

Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas of Mediterranean countries is a topic of great importance due to its potential to drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve the overall well-being of rural communities. Mediterranean countries, with their diverse cultures, landscapes, and economies, offer unique opportunities and challenges for young entrepreneurs looking to establish businesses in rural areas.

Below is a detailed presentation of the activities developed in the context of WP2, in terms of depicting national successful experiences of young entrepreneurship in the participating Mediterranean countries, in the framework of the YERAME project "Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas of Mediterranean countries".

YERAME aims to increase the capacity of young people located in rural areas, to provide learning opportunities by focusing on the entrepreneurial skills of organizations working with the aforementioned target group. As a result, the project is oriented towards enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of young people in rural areas of the Mediterranean, targeted to promoting the creation of sustainable businesses that are not fully dependent on tourism and therefore can address the desertification that these areas are experiencing. Six Mediterranean countries, Greece, Spain, Italy, Egypt, Palestine and Tunisia, have formed a partnership in terms of YERAME, and contributed to its work and activities.

As part of the research process, countries were asked to develop and implement a 20-question, multiple-choice and open-ended questionnaire to better explore and understand the needs of rural life and development. The most important variables of the survey were the number of respondents, as well as their country of origin. The respondents per country, their responses, as well as comments deriving from examining their answers, are summarized below. As a short introduction to the national findings, the Greek questionnaire involved 32 participants of different backgrounds and educational levels, while the Italian participation reached 16. From Spain and Palestine, we had 25 and 30 participants respectively, while from Egypt we had 80 participants. The questionnaire was reproduced in each



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language separately and distributed to all participants for better and easier handling. The results by country are presented in detail in the following chapters, with the responses and percentages representing each country and organization.



# 1. Questionnaire Results

## 1.1 Greece

### Introduction

Youth entrepreneurship in Greece has been gaining attention as a means to address high youth unemployment rates and stimulate economic growth. The challenges and opportunities for youth entrepreneurship in Greece are influenced by its unique economic, cultural, and social landscape.

In recent years, Greece has taken steps to support youth entrepreneurship through various programs, grants, and initiatives. While challenges remain, there is a growing recognition of the potential of young entrepreneurs to contribute to the country's economic recovery and development.

Continuing, we provide and elaborate further on the findings based on the questionnaire responses from Greek participants. The consortium had to first agree on the questions, in terms of number and allocated topic, before deciding on the format we would use to produce the graphics and unifying all the results.

The total number of answers ought to be collected through this survey, in order to achieve validity and objectivity is 32. All partners have focused great efforts towards achieving that goal. Nevertheless, the obstacles we had to overcome were various, since it appears quite difficult for people to engage and answer long questionnaires and surveys online, since the culture of immediacy is spreading. The process of the questionnaire dissemination commenced with thorough stakeholders' database that was developed for this project a few months ago as a baseline or starting point.

The process of researching for institutions, organizations and individuals that support or are interested in entrepreneurship has enabled us to grow the stakeholders' networks and has improved the dissemination impact of the project greatly.



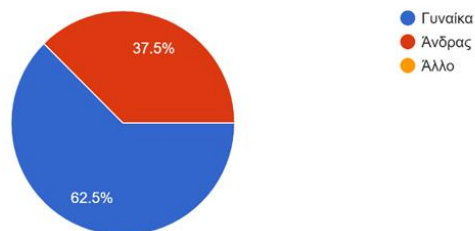
## Questionnaire's results

### 1. E-mail address.

In the first question we gathered participants' email addresses to be able to contact them for future research and to inform them about training and mentoring opportunities within the project and beyond.

### 2. What is your gender?

2. Φύλο:  
32 responses



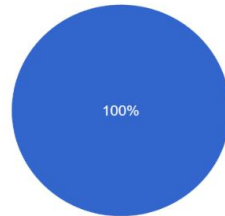
- 20 participants out of 32 have identified themselves as women (62.5%) and 12 participants as men (37.5%), indicating that women appeared significantly more interested in taking part to the survey.

### 3. In which country are you currently located?

- 100% of the 32 participants answering the questionnaire are located in Greece.



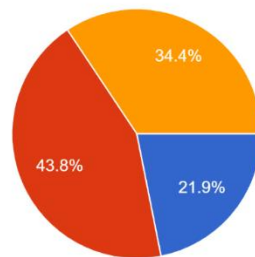
3. Σε ποια χώρα βρίσκεστε αυτήν τη στιγμή;  
32 responses



- Ελλάδα
- Ισπανία
- Τυνησία
- Παλαιστίνη
- Ιταλία
- Αίγυπτο
- Άλλο

#### 4. What's your age?

4. Ποια είναι η ηλικία σου;  
32 responses



- 17-25
- 26-30
- Άνω των 30

- 7 participants out of 32 are between 17 and 25 years old which represents 21.9% of the target and another 14 participants are between 26 and 30 years old another 43.8%.
- Although the survey was targeted at under 30s, we have received 11 answers from participants over 30 years old which represents 34.4% of the answers.
- All these factors highlight the fact that in Greece, young people opt for entrepreneurship after the age of 30, due to economically mostly reasons.

#### 5. What is your highest level of education?





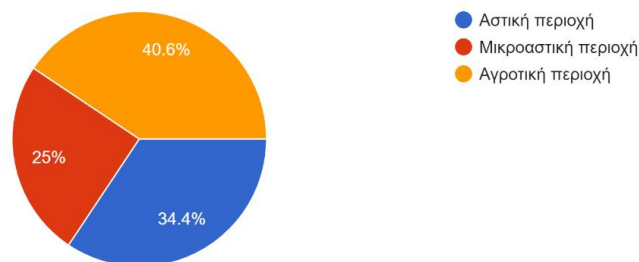
5. Ποιο είναι το υψηλότερο επίπεδο σπουδών σας;  
32 responses



- 19 out of the 32 people that answered the questionnaire have higher education studies, this represents 59.4% of the participants.
- 7 people have vocational or technical training 21.9% of the total
- 6 people have secondary studies which represent 18.8% of the participants.
- The aforementioned responses indicate the fact that in Greece, the majority of young people have opted for higher education studies, or higher, highlighting the advanced educational level.

## 6. In which of the following areas do you reside?

6. Σε ποια από τις παρακάτω περιοχές μένετε;  
32 responses



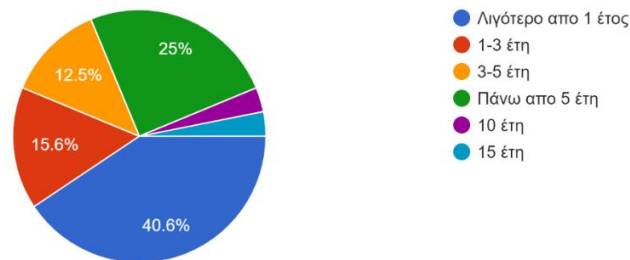
- 40.6% of the participants, 13 people, live in rural areas.
- 8 of them (25%) in suburban areas.



- 11 people 34.4% in an urban city area.
- More generally in Greece, there's a much higher rate of entrepreneurship initiatives and supporting systems in urban areas, fact that is correlated to the educational offers that are mostly located in cities. That's why this project is targeted especially in rural areas.

## 7. How long have you been involved in entrepreneurship in a rural area?

7. Πόσο καιρό είστε αφοσιωμένοι στην επιχειρηματικότητα σε μια αγροτική περιοχή;  
32 responses

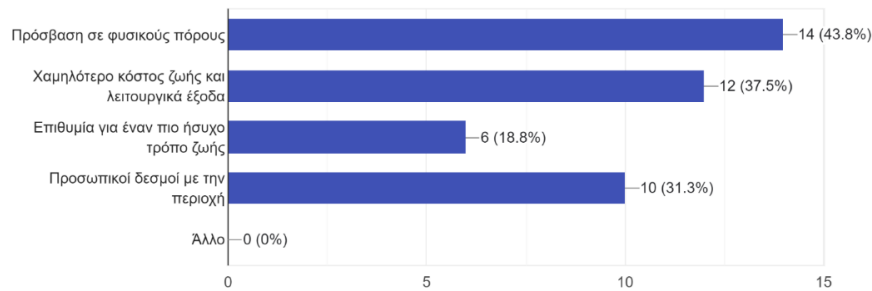


- 13 participants (40.6%) have been involved for less than 1 year
- 5 of them (15.6%) between 1 and 3 years and another 4 people (12.5%) over 3 years.
- 8 participants (25%) have been involved in entrepreneurship in rural area for over 5 years.
- 1 participant (3.1%) has been involved in entrepreneurship in rural area for 10 years and 1 participant (3.1%) for 15 years.
- The duration of youth entrepreneurship in Greece can vary widely depending on factors such as the type of business, industry, market conditions, and the entrepreneur's goals. The most frequently met phase is the **startup phase (6 months - 2 years)**: this is the initial phase where the young entrepreneur develops their business idea, conducts market research, creates a business plan, secures funding, and establishes the business. This phase can typically take anywhere from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the complexity of the business and the entrepreneur's readiness.



## 8. What motivated you to set up your business in a rural area?

8. Τι σας παρακίνησε να δημιουργήσετε την επιχείρησή σας σε μια αγροτική περιοχή;  
32 responses



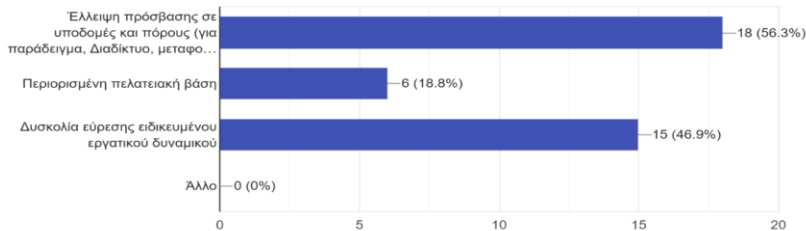
- Access to natural resources: 14 participants (43.8%)
- Lower cost of living and operating expenses: 12 participants (37.5%)
- Desire for a quieter lifestyle: 6 participants (18.8%)
- Personal ties to the area: 10 participants (31.3%)
- Other (please specify) (0%)
- Some motivations that urge young people to choose rural areas are the following: passion for community development, connection to the nature, untapped market opportunities, reduced costs, access to natural resources, quality of life, diversification of economy, preservation of tradition, land and space availability and government incentives.
- Overall, the motivation to start a business in a rural area can be a deeply personal and multifaceted decision. Entrepreneurs weigh various factors, including their values, goals, lifestyle preferences, and the unique opportunities that a rural setting presents.

## 9. Have you faced any challenges related to the location of your business in a rural area? If so, what were they?



9. Έχετε αντιμετωπίσει προκλήσεις σχετικά με την τοποθεσία της εταιρείας σας σε μια αγροτική περιοχή; Αν ναι, τι ήταν;

32 responses

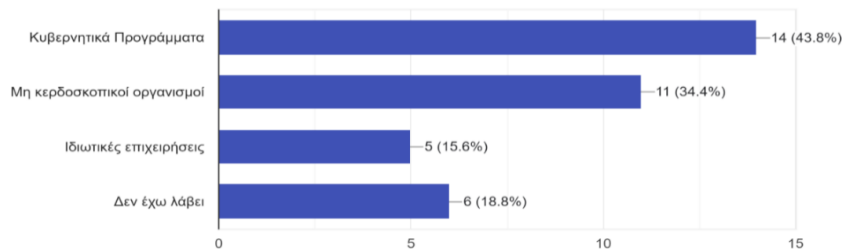


- Lack of access to infrastructure and resources (e.g., internet, transportation, utilities): 18 participants (56.3%)
  - Limited customer base: 6 participants (18.8%)
  - Difficulty finding skilled labor: 15 participants (46.9%)
  - Other (please specify): (0%)
- Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas faces a range of challenges that can impact the success and sustainability of ventures. These challenges can be particularly pronounced due to the specific characteristics of rural environments. Following, you can find a list of some common challenges for youth entrepreneurship in rural areas: limited access to resources, limited market size and reach, isolation and networking, skill gaps, limited access to education and training, infrastructure challenges, access to funding, depopulation and brain drain, and seasonal challenges.

**10. Have you received any training or support for entrepreneurship in a rural area? If yes, from whom and to what extent has it been effective?**



10. Έχετε λάβει κάποιο είδος εκπαίδευσης ή υποστήριξης για να αναλάβετε μια επιχείρηση σε μια αγροτική περιοχή; Εάν ναι, ποιανού και σε ποιο βαθμό ήταν αποτελεσματική;  
32 responses

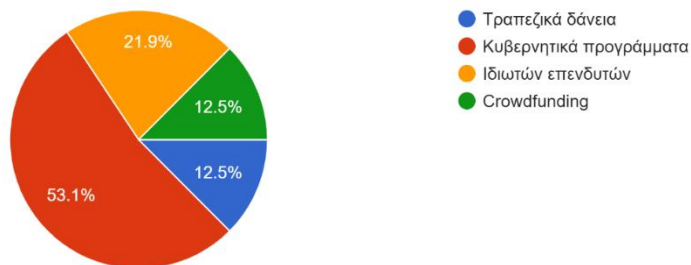


- Government programs 14 (43.8%)
- Non-profit organizations 11 (34.4%)
- Private companies 5 (15.6%)
- Not applicable 6 (18.8%)

Unfortunately, a small percentage of participants have received public funding from the participants. Another reasonable proportion, however, has not received any funding or assistance.

## 11. Have you had financial support for your business in a rural area?

11. Είχατε οικονομική υποστήριξη για την επιχείρησή σας σε αγροτική περιοχή;  
32 responses



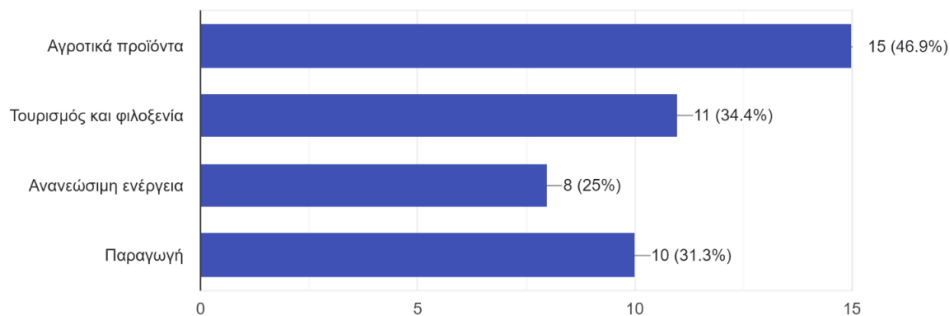
- Bank loans 4 participants (12.5%)
- Government programs 17 participants (53.1%)
- Private investors 7 participants (21.9%)
- Crowdfunding 4 participants (12.5%)



- Only 17 have received financial support from the government and 4 participants have received either bank loans or private investors. Securing funding for startups can be particularly difficult in rural areas where financial institutions might be more risk-averse or unfamiliar with innovative business models.

## 12. What kind of market opportunities exist in rural areas?

12. Τι είδους ευκαιρίες αγοράς υπάρχουν στις αγροτικές περιοχές;  
32 responses

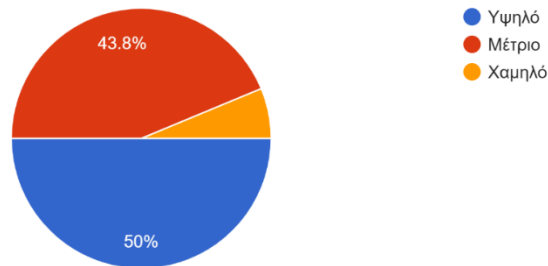


- Agricultural products 15 (46.9%)
- Tourism and hospitality 11 (34.4%)
- Renewable energy 8 (25%)
- Manufacturing 10 (31.3%)
- The majority of participants found tourism and hospitality as the main field for rural entrepreneurship in Greece. Here are some additional market opportunities to consider: agritourism and local experiences, cultural crafts, organic and specialty foods, eco-friendly accommodation, health and wellness retreats, outdoor activities, renewable energy projects, local handicrafts and artisanal products, wine and olive oil tourism, and local events and festivals.



### 13. What is the level of competition for businesses in rural areas?

13. Ποιο είναι το επίπεδο ανταγωνισμού για τις επιχειρήσεις στις αγροτικές περιοχές;  
32 responses

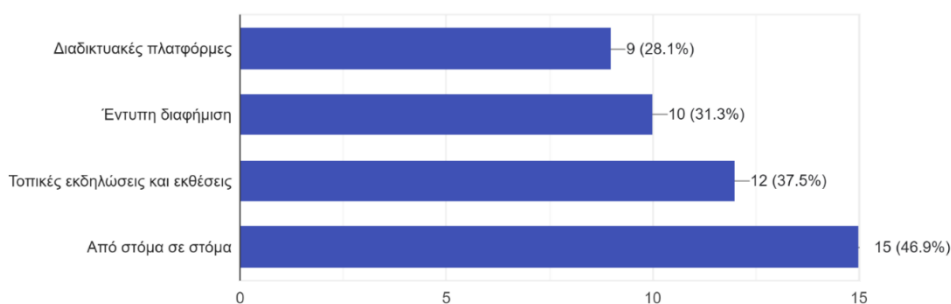


- High 16 people (50%)
- Moderate 14 people (43.8%)
- Low 2 (6.3%)
- 50% of participants believe the competition level is high and only 6.3% perceive it is low.

While rural areas in Greece might offer unique market opportunities, they can also be characterized by high levels of competition, particularly as more entrepreneurs recognize the potential of these regions. While high competition can pose challenges, it's important to remember that it's not necessarily a negative factor. It can indicate that there is demand and potential in the market.

### 14. How do you reach your customers in a rural area?

14. Πώς προσεγγίζετε τους πελάτες σας σε μια αγροτική περιοχή;  
32 responses



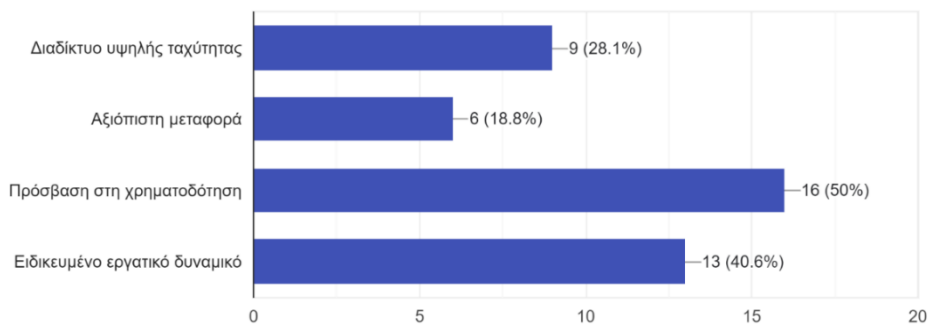


- Online platforms 9 (28.1%)
- Print advertising 10 (31.3%)
- Local events and fairs 12 (37.5%)
- Word of mouth 15 (46.9%)
- The preferred channel to reach customers are local events and fairs and word of mouth be the predominant mode of transmission information.
- Reaching customers in a rural area can be a unique challenge due to the dispersed population and potential limitations in infrastructure. However, with the right strategies and approaches, you can effectively connect with and engage your target audience. Remember that building a presence in a rural area requires patience, consistency, and a genuine commitment to serving the community. It's important to listen to feedback, adapt your strategies based on local insights, and be open to learning from the unique dynamics of the area.

## 15. What kind of infrastructure or resources are lacking in rural areas to support entrepreneurship?

15. Τι είδους υποδομές ή πόροι λείπουν στις αγροτικές περιοχές για τη στήριξη της επιχειρηματικότητας;

32 responses



- High-speed internet 9 (28.1%)
- Reliable transportation 6 (18.8%)
- Access to financing 16 (50%)



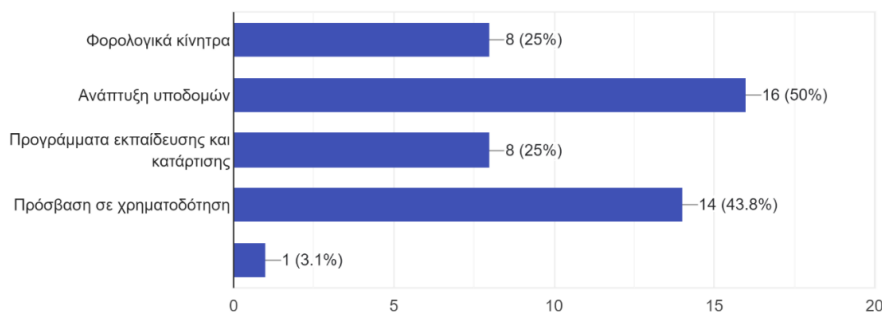


- Skilled labor 13 (40.6%)
- The lack of infrastructure and resources in rural areas can pose significant challenges for entrepreneurs and businesses. However, with strategic planning and creative solutions, you can navigate these challenges and find ways to operate and succeed in spite of limited resources. While challenges related to infrastructure and resources can be daunting, they also offer opportunities for innovative solutions and community collaboration. By being adaptable, resourceful, and committed to your business's success, you can make a positive impact on both your business and the rural area in which you operate.

## 16. What kind of government policy or assistance would you like to see to support entrepreneurship in rural areas?

16. Τι είδους κυβερνητική πολιτική ή βοήθεια θα θέλατε να δείτε για την υποστήριξη της επιχειρηματικότητας στις αγροτικές περιοχές;

32 responses



- Tax incentives 8 (25%)
- Infrastructure development 16 (50%)
- Education and training programs 8 (25%)
- Access to financing 14 (43.8%)
- Other 1 (3.1%)
- Governments often recognize the importance of promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and improve the overall well-being of these communities. As

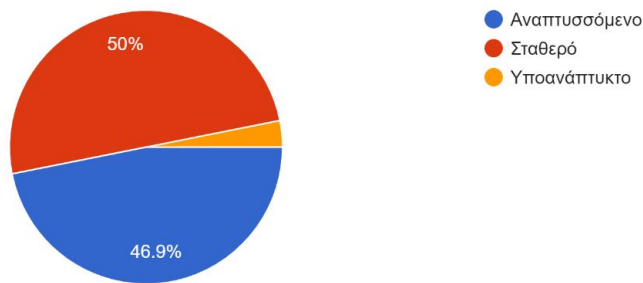


a result, they may offer various forms of support to encourage and facilitate entrepreneurial activities. Some commonly met types of governmental support are: financial incentives, training and education, infrastructure development, business development services, market access and promotion, regulatory and administrative support, export assistance and rural development funds.

### 17. How do you see the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas?

17. Πώς βλέπετε το μέλλον της επιχειρηματικότητας στις αγροτικές περιοχές;

32 responses

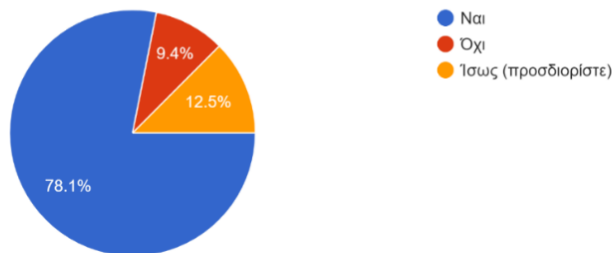


- Growing 15 (46.9%)
- Stable 16 (50%)
- Declining 1 (3.1%)
- The majority of participants perceive that rural entrepreneurship will be growing in the upcoming years, which indicates the fact that young people perceive the future from an optimistic point of view.



## 18. Would you recommend to others to set up businesses in rural areas? If yes, why?

18 Θα συνιστούσατε σε άλλους ανθρώπους τη δημιουργία επιχειρήσεων σε αγροτικές περιοχές;  
Εάν ναι, γιατί;  
32 responses



All participants had a positive or neutral answer to this question. Only 3 of the participants answered that they would not be in favor of setting up a business in a rural area. From the questionnaire we have collected 15 responses to the question whether they would recommend the creation of an operation in a rural area and why. The answers were:

- I believe that we have seen in recent years that there is entrepreneurship in rural areas
- Expanding businesses outside urban areas to bring rural communities back to life
- Difficult industry, takes time and resources to succeed
- An emerging sector and for tourism purposes beyond livelihood
- It's not easy but there is a shift to rural areas because of urbanization so it definitely has a future
- It depends on the business
- Because agriculture is developed in Greece.
- Work depends on the weather
- It is a difficult industry, whoever chooses it will have to dedicate time to succeed
- It is a new way of engaging and developing the local community and economy.
- Tourism in Greece is one of the main economic motives that one can engage in.
- Rural life in Greece can offer promising results and great profits. Proper education and information are always sufficient.
- The agricultural sector is constantly growing with the right infrastructure



- I would recommend it highly. However, it takes effort and time to grow the business.
- Agrotourism is a good opportunity for development in our country

**19. What type of business or industry do you think has the most potential for growth in rural areas?**

- factories
- With agricultural and agricultural related products
- Farms, guest houses
- tourism- hospitality-rooms
- I can't choose one
- manufacturing trade and tourism
- With agricultural products or agricultural services
- With agricultural services
- juice/composting factory
- Shops selling organic products
- Agri-tourism and involvement in it on a larger scale.
- Tourism is profitable and exploitable to a large extent. It is likely that the development of agri-tourism would have the greatest potential for growth.

Many answers have to do with dealing with tourism and rural life. Rural tourism is a large part of the answers and choices of the participants. More than 50% of the participants chose to propose tourism and its applications. Tourism often emerges as one of the biggest markets in rural areas due to a combination of factors that make these regions attractive to visitors. While tourism presents significant opportunities, it's important for rural communities to balance economic growth with the preservation of their natural and cultural assets. Sustainable tourism practices can ensure that tourism benefits both the local economy and the environment, leading to long-term success for rural areas as desirable travel destinations.



**20. Are there any additional comments or information you would like to provide on the topic of entrepreneurship in rural areas?**

- I have no comment
- No
- Urgent need for funding in Greece with high-cost coverage of setting up such a business as the Greek economy cannot support entrepreneurs
- No
- No



## Conclusion

- **Gender**

There is a higher percentage of women who answered the questionnaire and are interested in being involved in this project, even though the total number of collected responses is not that high in order for it to be perceived as a representative sample.

- **Age**

43.5% of the participants were between 26 and 30 years old. However, there were also some participants over 30. This indicates the need of young people for new activities and new professional opportunities. The creation of businesses in rural areas, although not yet widespread, tends to grow steadily and encouragingly. The decision for young people in Greece to opt for entrepreneurship after the age of 30 can be influenced by a combination of economic, social, and personal factors. Some of them are the following: economic uncertainty, financial security, job market experience, personal maturity, access to resources, skill development, and existence of support systems.

- **Education**

The educational level of most respondents to the questionnaire was higher education and university education. At least a percentage responded to secondary or technical education. The educational level factor indicates that the respondents opt for academic development and skills enhancement.

- **Area/ Location**

More generally in Greece there's a much higher rate of entrepreneurship initiatives and supporting systems in urban areas. Young people often choose urban areas for starting their businesses due to a combination of factors that these environments offer. Some of the reasons behind that option are the following: access to markets, infrastructure, access to resources, and networking opportunities.

- **Experience**



Around 40% had less than one year's employment with entrepreneurship in rural areas. However, an encouraging 25% had an employment of more than 5 years. Since it has been noted that young people in Greece opt for entrepreneurship after the age of 30 most of the time, having less than one year's experience is justified.

- **Motivation**

Access to natural resources was the biggest motivator for most, followed by the fact of lower cost of living and expenditure. A small percentage, only 6 individuals, chose the quiet way of life offered or the rural occupation and life, while others were bound by personal ties to the area. Some motivations that urge young people to choose rural areas are the following: passion for community development, connection to the nature, untapped market opportunities, reduced costs, access to natural resources, quality of life, diversification of economy, preservation of tradition, land and space availability and government incentives.

Overall, the motivation to start a business in a rural area can be a deeply personal and multifaceted decision. Entrepreneurs weigh various factors, including their values, goals, lifestyle preferences, and the unique opportunities that a rural setting presents.

- **Challenges**

Young entrepreneurs in rural areas of Greece face specific challenges that can be distinct from those in urban settings. These challenges can impact their ability to start and grow successful businesses.

The main challenges and difficulties encountered by most participants are the lack of access to resources, and many have difficulties in finding qualified staff. Several face problems with customer responsiveness and the acquisition of their products. Some other examples could be the seasonal variations, the limited access to resources, the market size and reach, the regulatory hurdles, the limited networking opportunities as well as the limited customer base.

- **Entrepreneurship Training**

Over 43% have received training or funding from a public or non-profit organization. The remaining percentage, which is more or less equal, leaves us with the question if these opportunities exist in a variety,



and are available and accessible to all, and the interested parties have to be more thoroughly informed, or if these opportunities are scarce.

- **Financial support**

More than half of the participants have received government funding from government programs. A small percentage received financial support from private entities and investors, while an equal percentage was split between bank loans and crowd funding. In Greece, a phenomenon that is frequently met, is the funding with private means, most of the times deriving from family savings, especially since in a high percentage the enterprises are inherited.

- **Market opportunities**

A large proportion of respondents found the agricultural products and tourism sectors to be the most developed. Others chose production and renewable energy sources. Here are some additional market opportunities to consider: agritourism and local experiences, cultural crafts, organic and specialty foods, eco-friendly accommodation, health and wellness retreats, outdoor activities, local handicrafts and artisanal products, wine and olive oil tourism, and local events and festivals.

- **Competition**

The perceived competition level is high. While rural areas in Greece might offer unique market opportunities, they can also be characterized by high levels of competition, particularly as more entrepreneurs recognize the potential of these regions. While high competition can pose challenges, it's important to remember that it's not necessarily a negative factor. It can indicate that there is demand and potential in the market.

- **Dissemination**

The preferred method of dissemination and communication is word of mouth. Local events and exhibitions play a weak role in the dissemination of information, while the printed form no longer plays a major role in the dissemination and economic empowerment of medium and small enterprises. Reaching customers in a rural area can be a unique challenge due to the dispersed population and potential limitations in infrastructure. However, with the right strategies and approaches, you can effectively connect with and engage your target





audience. Remember that building a presence in a rural area requires patience, consistency, and a genuine commitment to serving the community. It's important to listen to feedback, adapt your strategies based on local insights, and be open to learning from the unique dynamics of the area.

- **Barriers**

The main obstacles faced by those involved in agricultural activities are access to finance and finding qualified staff. Reliable transport and a high-speed, clear internet play an important role. For business owners and entrepreneurs, the absence of infrastructure and resources in rural locations can present serious difficulties. However, you may overcome these obstacles and find ways to function and be successful despite having few resources with strategic planning and original ideas. Although infrastructural and resource problems can be overwhelming, they also present chances for creative solutions and cross-community cooperation. You may have a beneficial effect on your company and the rural community in which you operate by being flexible, resourceful, and dedicated to the success of your firm.

- **Policy assistance support**

Infrastructure development and access to finance are the two most common requests that stakeholders would like to see fulfilled. A large percentage would also like to see more education and training programs or better tax incentives. Governments frequently understand how crucial it is to encourage entrepreneurship in rural areas in order to boost economic growth, create jobs, and enhance these communities' general quality of life. They might therefore provide a range of assistance to promote and enable entrepreneurial activities. Financial incentives, education and training programs, infrastructure improvements, services for business development, market access and promotion, administrative and regulatory support, export aid, and subsidies for rural development are a few examples of the forms of government support that are frequently provided.

- **Future of Entrepreneurship**

Most views revolve around the fact that the development of rural life will remain stagnant, there is an encouraging percentage that argues that it will be growing in the coming year. The findings of the survey indicated the fact that young people choose to face the future ahead of them with optimism.



- **Remendability of entrepreneurship**

In particular, most participants stated that they would recommend to other people to set up a business in rural areas, while few participants stated that they would most probably not recommend to other people to set up a business in rural areas. The fact that the majority of answers were positive is indeed an encouraging factor.

- **Potential for growth**

The most eligible type of development and activity reported in the questionnaire is agricultural products and services. Rural tourism and guesthouses in rural areas can also have a positive influence on the development and implementation of a more ecological way of life.

It is important, if not imperative, that local communities and government authorities support such businesses and try by all means to fund and support them. There is significant potential for growth in entrepreneurship in rural areas in Greece. While rural regions face challenges, they also offer unique opportunities that can contribute to the development of a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

To fully unlock the potential for growth in rural entrepreneurship, it's crucial for governments, communities, and stakeholders to collaborate in providing access to education, training, funding, infrastructure, and support services. A holistic approach that recognizes the uniqueness of rural contexts and encourages innovation can lead to sustainable economic development and improved livelihoods in these areas.



## 1.2 Italy

### Introduction

Youth entrepreneurship in Italy has gained traction in recent years as young people are increasingly interested in pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions. Italy, with its rich history and diverse economic landscape, presents both opportunities and challenges for young entrepreneurs.

Overall, youth entrepreneurship in Italy is on the rise, driven by a mix of innovative ideas, determination, and growing support from the government and various stakeholders. With continued efforts to address challenges and foster a supportive ecosystem, Italy's young entrepreneurs have the potential to make significant contributions to the country's economic development.

To reach the entrepreneurs for completing the questionnaire, Coldiretti was contacted (which is the National Confederation of direct farmers and the main agricultural organization at a national level) and more than 50 Sicilian farms were contacted directly in addition to the dissemination to personal contacts who they deal with rural entrepreneurship in the southern areas of Italy (mainly Sicily), the territory where CEIPES is based.

Before summarizing the main findings of this research, it is necessary to provide contextual data of the specific national panorama of Italy and the Mediterranean area, namely Sicily and south Italy, where CEIPES is based.

### The Italian context

The involvement of young people in the agricultural sector is an objective of the European common agricultural policy and this is also true for Italy. While the youth unemployment rate reaches very high levels, large parts of the territory are affected by depopulation, population aging and the contraction of agricultural activity, creating social and economic imbalances and land abandonment, with serious environmental consequences as well. In carrying out an analysis on young people in agriculture it is important to start from some considerations of a demographic and social nature concerning the evolution of the population and lifestyles in Italy.

The first consideration concerns the demographic aspect: Italy is the population with the highest median age and with the highest dependency index of the elderly in Europe.

Rural areas are facing a range of challenges in addition to demographic ageing: low-income levels, the presence of a digital divide with urban areas and the growing impact of climate change on agricultural income. Unfortunately, for rural areas as a whole, the data for Italy are not positive: in the last 20 years the number of people living in rural areas has progressively decreased and in particular in just ten years the number of young people has collapsed (- 44%) which, on the other hand, in urban or intermediate areas remained more or less unchanged or recorded very small declines.

The rural territories of Italy, however, are distinguished from those of most other countries, including European ones, by the presence of a widespread and multiple heritage of cultural, historical, artistic, environmental and landscape factors, on the correct exploitation of which often depends or it could depend on the economic and social fabric itself.

The Italian youth population is in sharp decline and the problems affecting the new generations are greater than those faced by peers from other European countries. In Italy, the concept of "young" has undergone an evolution over time, with an increasingly forward movement of the age range of the reference population, also due to significant social changes, such as the extension of the time dedicated to study, the delay in entering the world of work and economic independence and therefore the prolonged stay in the family of origin.

From a geographical point of view, over 50% of young people employed in agriculture are found in Southern Italy, an area where the incidence of young people on the total number of agricultural workers is also higher than the national average (31.6% compared to an average of 29.8%). Due to the geographical location of CEIPES, most of the entrepreneurs who took part in the survey on youth entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean areas work in Sicily, the southernmost region of Italy. Sicily and Puglia are the two regions with the highest number of agricultural workers under 41 and alone hold almost 28% of the national total.

In Italy, the data for the last five years show a growth in the number of agricultural enterprises managed by entrepreneurs under the age of 35 - the so-called "youth enterprises" - which rose from 55,321 in 2017 to 56,172 at the end of 2021; in Sicily, again at the end of 2021, there were 6,880 youth businesses.

Policies in support of rural entrepreneurship also confirm the tendency to incorporate individuals up to 40 years of age into the group of "young people". Even among those who participated in the research carried out by disseminating a questionnaire, the percentage of over 30s was over 65%.

In applying the European Funds foreseen within the EAFRD – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to the peripheral level, the Sicily Region has developed its own Rural Development Program

(PSR) which consists of 21 Measures to support rural entrepreneurship. Measure 6 and in particular Sub-measure 6.1 is called "Aid to start up entrepreneurial activities for young farmers".

The objectives of this sub-measure are:

1. Promote financial support to young farmers setting up a business for the first time and thus promote youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector and in rural areas;
2. Rejuvenate the agricultural entrepreneurial sector;
3. Support youth employment;
4. Encourage the diffusion of innovation

The beneficiaries of the Measure can be people no older than forty years of age at the time of submitting the application, who possess adequate professional qualifications and skills and who are setting up for the first time in an agricultural holding as head of the holding. The measure provides for support for new settlements for a total of 40,000 euros in non-refundable funds.

As will be seen from the results of the survey carried out, there is still a lot to be done to encourage the establishment of new rural businesses managed by young entrepreneurs, also due to the administrative and bureaucratic difficulties of disbursing community funds at the regional and peripheral level. Among the great challenges, then, there are those of making infrastructure and internet access more efficient and strengthening training programs.

## **Questionnaire's Results**

The disseminated questionnaire had the objective of learning, among other things, directly from young rural farmers, their experiences, the challenges they face, the reasons that prompted them to start an agricultural activity in their territory.

The questionnaire was disseminated to more than 50 local rural companies and through the Coldiretti network (the main national network of rural companies) as well as direct contacts of CEIPES engaged in agricultural and breeding activities.

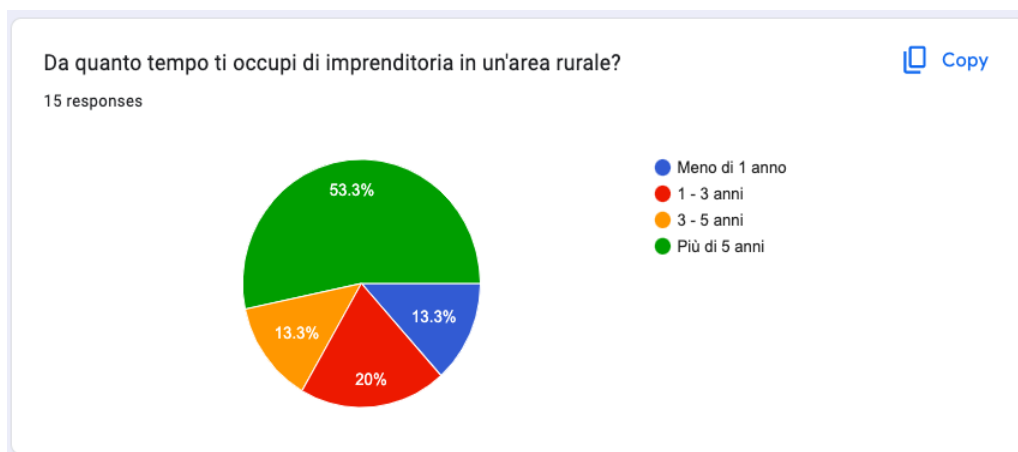


16 rural men and women entrepreneurs responded, all from Italy.

6% of participants are over 30 years old and 32% are between 26 and 30 years old.

50% of the respondents stated that they were men, 43% women and the remainder indicated the answer option "Other" in relation to gender.

In relation to the time spent in an entrepreneurial activity in a rural area, 53% answered "for more than 5 years", 20% from "one to 3 years", 13% "from 3 to 5 years" and 13% for "less than a year".



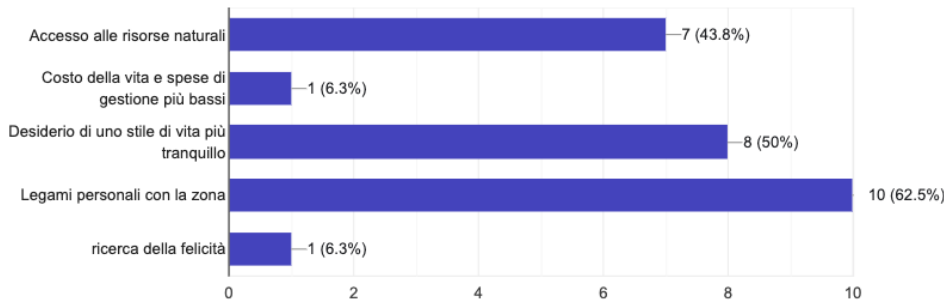
- When asked "what prompted you to start a business in a rural area", most of the respondents (62%) answered "the personal ties with the area", 50% "the desire for a more peaceful lifestyle", 43% "access to natural resources", 6% "the lowest cost of living" and another 6% "the pursuit of happiness". Given the answers, it is indicated that the reasons that motivated young people to start a business in a rural area in Italy are mostly personal, such as connection to the area, or desire for a more peaceful lifestyle, rather than economic.



Cosa ti ha spinto ad avviare un'attività in un'area rurale?

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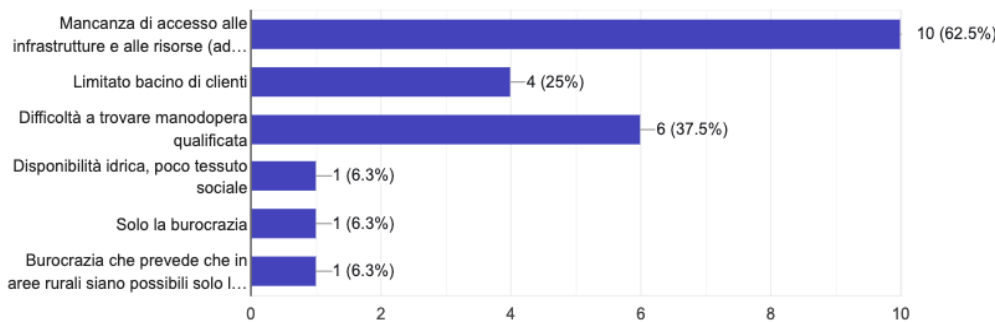
16 responses



- When asked what challenges you faced related to the location of your business, respondents answered mostly (62%) “lack of access to infrastructure and resources”, then “difficulty in finding skilled labor” (37.5%), “a limited customer base” (25%) and 6.3% responded to “the scarce supply of water and the cumbersome bureaucracy for accessing funds”. As deriving from the responses, the challenges that trouble young entrepreneurs in Italy are mostly technical and bureaucratic, rather than personal.

Hai affrontato delle sfide legate all'ubicazione della tua attività in un'area rurale? Se sì, quali sono state? Copy

16 responses



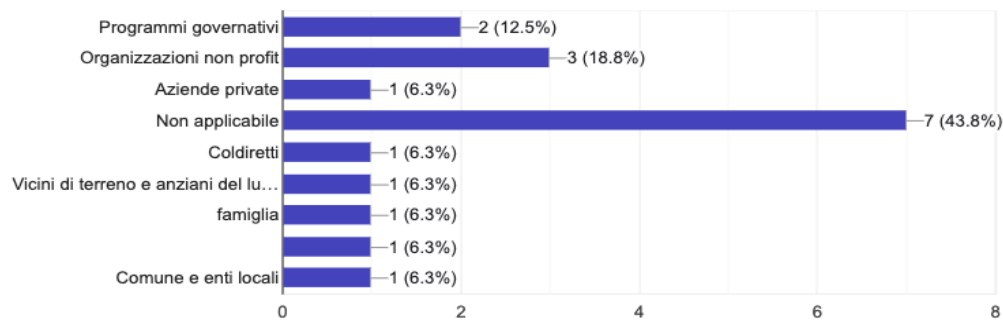
- When asked whether and by whom respondents have received training, most answered that they had not received any (43.8%), those who did have been recipients of “government programs” (12.5 %)



and “by non-profit organizations” (18.8%). One interviewee received it from Coldiretti, one from family members, one from local elders and one from the Municipality. The received answers to this question highlight a two-fold challenge: firstly, there is the possibility that training programs exist, but are not that well-known to the public, or are mostly accessible in the urban centers, while on the other hand there is an also high possibility that relevant training programs are very scarce.

Ha ricevuto formazione o supporto per l'imprenditorialità in un'area rurale? Se sì, da chi?

16 responses



- In relation to the effectiveness of the training received, most of the respondents (35.7%) answered on “average”, followed by “very little” (28.6%) and then 14.3% answered “enough” and “very much”. Only one respondent answered “very little”. The given answers witness the fact that the majority of the offered training programs that the respondents have attended do not cover their needs, and do not meet their expectations.

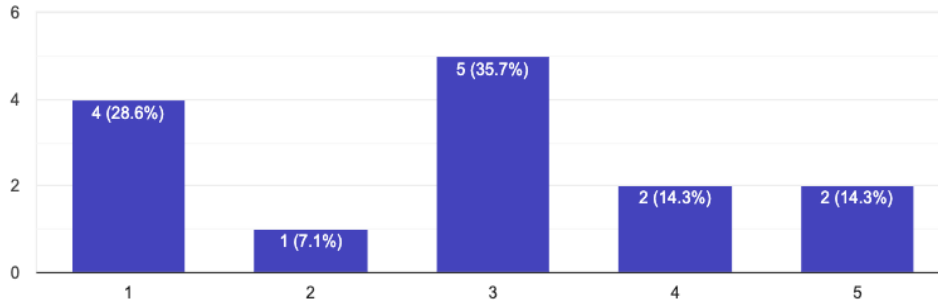




Quanto è stata efficace questa formazione?



14 responses

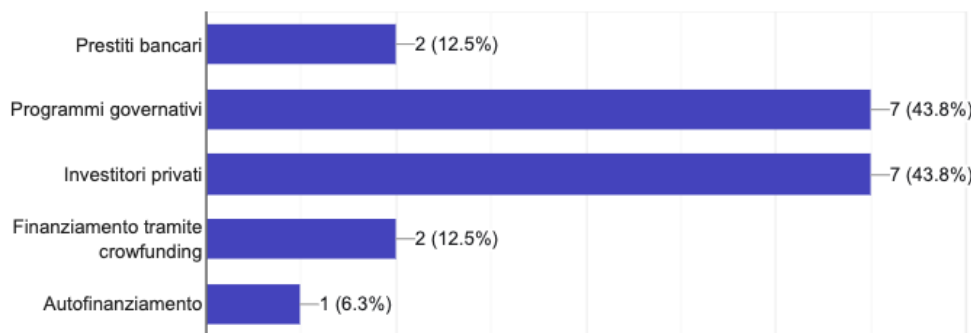


- For the methods of accessing finance, most of the respondents indicated “government programs” and “private investors” (43.8%). 12.5% answered “bank loans” and the same percentage indicated “financing through crowdfunding”. Only one respondent indicated “self-financing”. Following the same pattern, the majority of the respondents opted for governmental and state offers, or private investments from business angels, rather than crowdfunding and self-financing.

Come accedi ai finanziamenti per la tua attività in un'area rurale?



16 responses



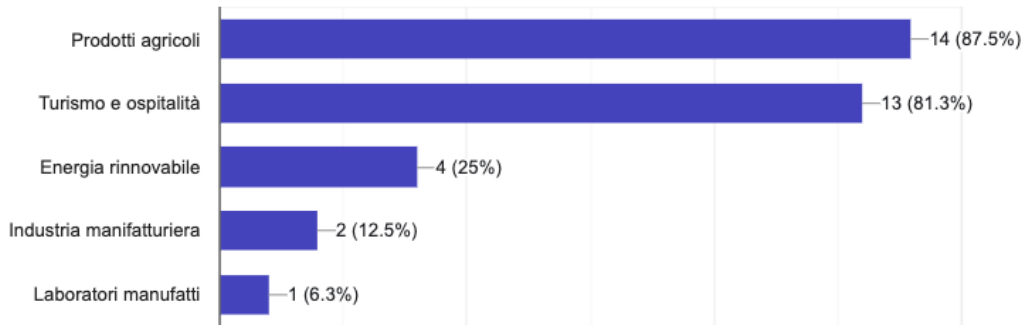
- Given the opinion of the respondents, the main market opportunities available in rural areas are mainly “agricultural products” (according to 87.5% of the respondents), followed by those related to “tourism and hospitality” (81.3%), “renewable energy” (identified by 25%), followed by “manufacturing industry” (12.5%). Only one respondent answered “manufactured laboratories”.



### Che tipo di opportunità di mercato sono disponibili nelle aree rurali?



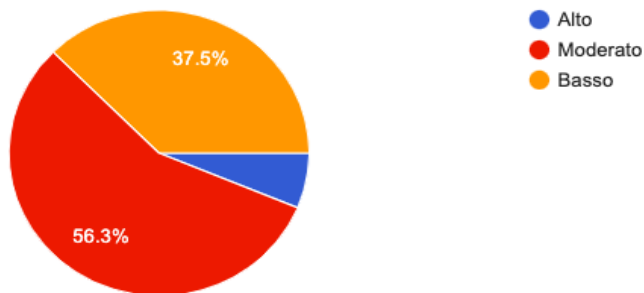
16 responses



The level of competition for businesses in rural areas is considered “moderate” for 56.3% of respondents while for the remainder it is considered “low”. Only one respondent indicated the level of competition as “high”. Competition in rural areas in Italy might be relatively low compared to urban areas due to a combination of factors related to demographics, market dynamics, and economic conditions.

### Qual è il livello di concorrenza per le imprese nelle aree rurali?

16 responses



- Most of the respondents reach their customers thanks to “online platforms” (80%) followed by “word of mouth” (66.7%), “thanks to local events and fairs” (26.7%) and only 6.7% thanks to “local

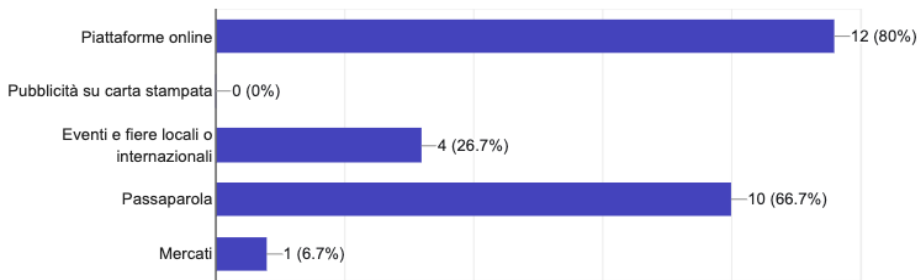


markets”. A very encouraging factor is that the use of technology is widely spread even in the rural areas in Italy, and it assists in maximizing the reach of young entrepreneurs and their achievements.

Come raggiungi i tuoi clienti in un'area rurale?



15 responses

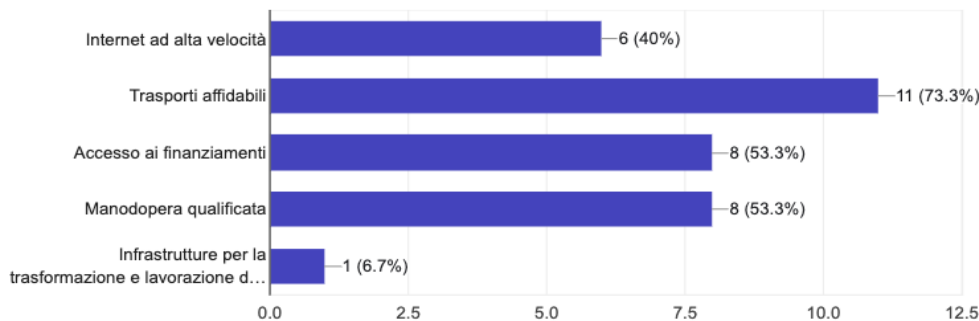


- The infrastructure considered most deficient is related to “transport and its reliability” (73.3%), followed by “access to finance” (53.3%) and “skilled labor” (53.3%). “High-speed internet” is also a scarce resource (40% answered like this). One respondent identified the “presence of industries for the transformation of raw materials” as a missing resource.

Che tipo di infrastrutture o risorse mancano nelle aree rurali per sostenere l'imprenditorialità?



15 responses



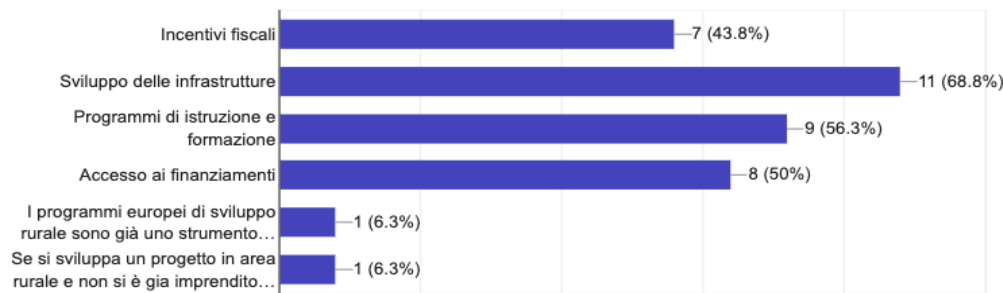


- When asked what type of policy or government support in general entrepreneurs would like to see more investment, the majority answered “infrastructure development” (68.8%), followed by “training and education programs” (53.3%), “access to finance” (50%). Two respondents underlined the difficulty of accessing funding also, where existing, due to the inefficiency of the regional system for disbursing funds. The Italian government recognizes the importance of promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas to stimulate economic development, create jobs, and enhance the overall well-being of rural communities. As a result, there are various governmental initiatives and programs aimed at supporting entrepreneurs in rural areas. Here are some examples of governmental support for entrepreneurs in rural areas in Italy: Rural Development Programs, National Rural Network, Rural Development Plans, Subsidies and Grants, Agri-food initiatives, Rural Business Incubators, Cooperative Initiatives and digital infrastructure.

Che tipo di politica o di supporto governativo vorresti vedere per sostenere l'imprenditorialità nelle aree rurali?



16 responses



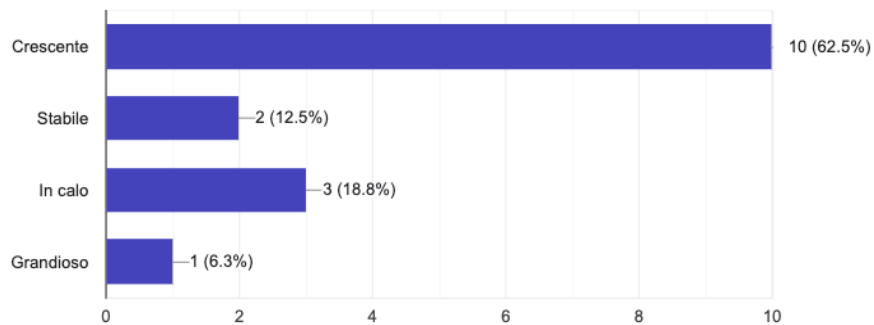
- Most of the entrepreneurs interviewed see the future of rural entrepreneurship as “growing” (62%5%), 3 respondents believe it is “declining”, 2 “stable” and one “great”. Moving towards the same direction as the responses from Greece, Italian respondents seem to be rather optimistic for the future of rural entrepreneurship, meaning that they hope for more young people to opt for that, and more attention to be drawn, both from the state, and from the customers.



Come vedi il futuro dell'imprenditoria nelle aree rurali?

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16 responses

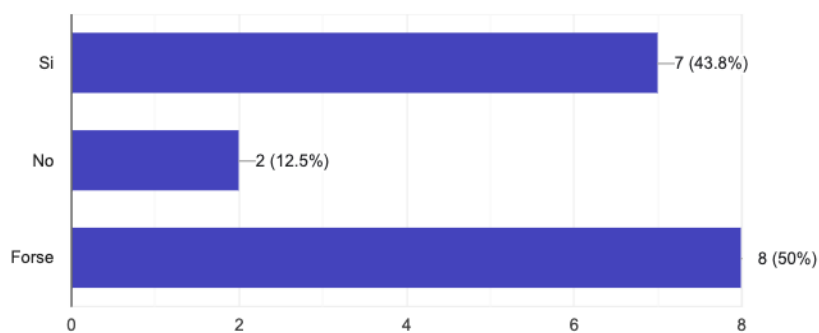


- When asked whether respondents would recommend others to undertake rural entrepreneurial activities, the majority answered "maybe" (50%), followed by "yes" for 43.8% and "no" for 12.5%. The respondents appear quite satisfied, so that they recommend to others to opt for rural entrepreneurship, meaning that, given their opinion, it is a rising economy with opportunities.

Consigliaresti ad altri l'imprenditorialità nelle aree rurali?

Copy

16 responses



- Those who would recommend a business venture in rural areas were asked why. The answers were as follows:



- Because it is an activity with a low environmental impact, for the quality of life and for the quality of the resources that can be accessed.
- Because it is a lifestyle choice especially in areas with low population density.
- To increase the degree of sociability in rural areas and therefore be able to benefit all.
- Because the future is moving towards the decentralization of services and resources.
- Because you experience new trends, low competitiveness and therefore you have the opportunity to excel.
- Because there are good opportunities, it's a rewarding job, and one that allows you to live in contact with nature.



## Conclusions

The responses to the online questionnaire, interviews and desk research revealed the following findings:

- Small producers adopt cooperation, networking and mutual aid as their main resource and strategy. This method compensates for the shortcomings and typical difficulties encountered by entrepreneurs in rural areas (such as the lack of infrastructure, the slowness of the bureaucratic machine and in Sicily and Southern Italy, more than in other areas of the country, the water supply). The connection with other entrepreneurial realities requires a great effort, but it is essential.
- Supporting European policies are considered essential for the survival of many small and medium-sized businesses. At the same time, however, the system of distribution of Community funds, in the Sicily Region, encounters the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the bureaucratic and administrative machinery which causes years to pass from the presentation of a project to the actual disbursement of funds. This is a strong discouragement to undertake rural entrepreneurial activities in these areas. In Italy in general, as the data of the Court of Auditors (2018) report, access to credit for young people represents a very significant problem, in fact for the under 40s this obstacle is encountered by 57% of young farmers (against 33 % of the rest of Europe).
- All the activities that can increase citizens' awareness of the value of setting up small, local, purchasing groups in order to favor the meeting between the producer and the consumer and thus avoid resorting to large distribution chains are important.
- The concept of innovation can go hand in hand with the recovery of ancient traditions. The recovery of ancient grains and seeds, for example, can be an element of innovation and not a leap into the past. The suggested idea is that of retro-innovation.
- Women are still underrepresented on the land, despite the presence of specific funding programs for women in agriculture.
- The possibility of reusing waste products appears replicable and successful. The practice of transforming waste produced in agricultural processes can have an economic and environmental impact in any geographical area assuming the characteristics of a highly reproducible practice.
- Local institutions such as the Region and their functioning represent a limit with respect to the development of a denser network of youth enterprises in the rural areas of Southern Italy. Universities,



on the other hand, are the protagonists of various study and research programs in cooperation with companies, creating a virtuous circle of collaboration with appreciable results for companies and scholars. A successful practice relating to collaborations between institutions and rural enterprises is represented by the Experimental Centers of Granicoltura which conserve seeds and ecotypes allowing their re-planting in the future and creating, in this way, also a memory bank.

- Agroecological practices could be taken even more into account by EU policies.
- Organic agriculture today is more appreciated by people with high levels of education. The figure of the farmer itself is not like that of 50 years ago. Today one cannot be totally a farmer and one cannot be only an entrepreneur. For this reason, education and training, the possibility of continuous and constant learning is necessary.
- From a cultural point of view, the challenge seems to be to restore dignity to peasant cultures, that is, to restore dignity to this knowledge and to make people understand that the countryside is a desirable place. "You can stay there even if you don't just do production, so events and political discussions can be held in the countryside. The countryside must be traveled without just doing agritourism, therefore not just speculative initiatives. In this way the whole system would grow, even ecologically. There would be more care for the common heritage and the territory would become more cared for" <sup>1</sup>.
- Today's young entrepreneurs have higher levels of education and are more trained than the farmers of 40, 50 years ago and tend to aggregate more. The figure of the farmer has changed mainly due to the market and its changes.
- The motivations that drive most young people to devote themselves to a rural entrepreneurial activity are often linked to the possibility of a healthier lifestyle more in contact with nature and a reconnection with the family memory and its territories

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<sup>1</sup>Interview of June 20, 2023, with a rural entrepreneur





- More and more often the ethical-social aspects seem to add (and overlap) to the economic aspects. Today's young people are particularly sensitive to sustainability and, therefore, to the impact that their businesses can have on the environment
- The concept of KM Zero must not be assimilated to the concept of wholesomeness of a product. Many products grown and sold locally may not follow organic and sustainable farming practices.
- High quality training is desired by the majority of young farmers.

In conclusion, rural entrepreneurship among young people in Italy holds both promise and potential. As the landscape of business and innovation evolves, young entrepreneurs are increasingly drawn to the opportunities that rural areas offer. The unique blend of cultural heritage, natural resources, and untapped markets presents a canvas upon which creative and resilient ventures can thrive.

While challenges such as limited access to resources, lower population density, and traditional mindsets exist, they are by no means insurmountable. The Italian government's commitment to rural development, coupled with the growing recognition of the vital role young entrepreneurs play in revitalizing rural economies, paints a positive trajectory for the future.

The convergence of technology, sustainability, and the pursuit of authentic experiences aligns perfectly with the essence of rural entrepreneurship in Italy. With innovative thinking, strategic planning, and unwavering determination, young entrepreneurs are transforming rural areas into hubs of creativity, economic vibrancy, and community renewal. As they bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, these young visionaries are not only shaping their own destinies but also contributing to the cultural and economic renaissance of rural Italy. The journey towards rural entrepreneurship may be challenging, but it is a journey rich with potential and purpose, fueling the dreams of both individuals and communities alike.



## 1.3 Spain

### Introduction

Young entrepreneurship in rural areas in Spain is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon that holds significant promise for the country's rural economies and communities. As Spain grapples with the challenges of population decline in certain regions and seeks to promote sustainable development, young entrepreneurs are emerging as agents of change and growth.

In essence, young entrepreneurship in rural Spain represents a beacon of hope for revitalizing local economies, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable development. With a combination of creativity, government support, and innovative thinking, young entrepreneurs are transforming rural areas into hubs of innovation, resilience, and economic vibrancy.

Following you may find the collected answers from the distributed survey in Spain.

First step of this process was to agree on the questions among the consortium, secondly agreed on the format we wanted to use to obtain graphics and unified all the results.

This questionnaire has been shared among Defoin's national networks by email and WhatsApp. We have also published relevant posts on our social media networks to achieve the maximum impact. The EU Department team at Defoin has also used personal channels to reach the target.

The dissemination process has started with the stakeholders' database that was created for this project a few months ago as a baseline or starting point.

The process of researching for institutions, organizations and individuals that support or are interested in entrepreneurship has enabled us to grow the stakeholders' networks and has improved the dissemination impact of the project greatly. From 70 stakeholders that we started with we have now 110, so we have increased our database of relevant stakeholders by 64%.

We estimate we have created around 10 posts about the project and the questionnaire on social media networks, we have sent over 120 emails, and sent information on whatsapp and phone to over 50 people.

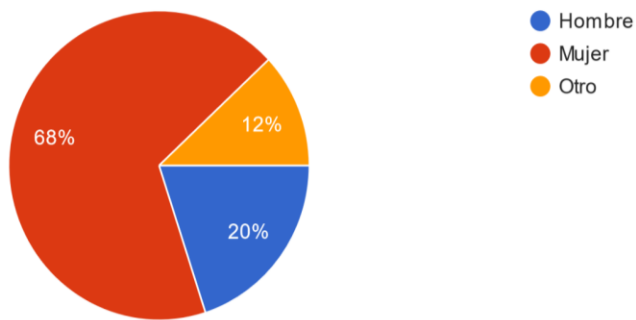
We estimate that with this work we have reach at least over 200 people that are now aware of the project.

## Questionnaire Results

### 1. E-mail address.

In the first question we gathered participants' email addresses to be able to contact them for future research and to inform them about training and mentoring opportunities within the project and beyond.

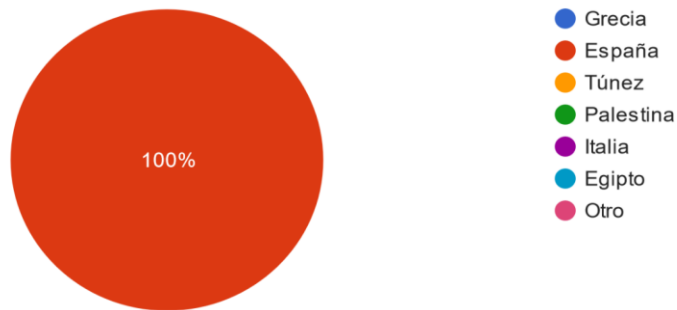
### 2. What is your gender?



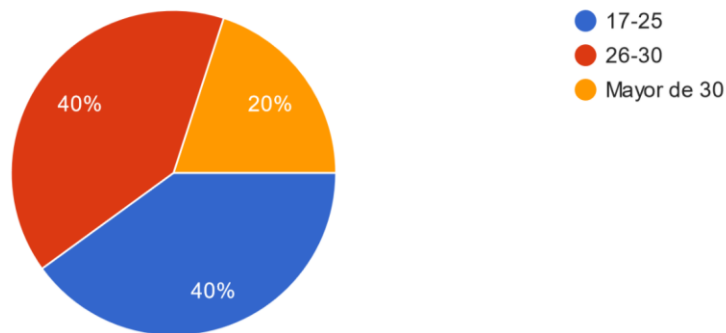
17 participants out of 25 have identified themselves as women (68%), 5 participants as men (20%) and 3 as other (12%). Given that the majority of the respondents were women, we reach the conclusion that women appeared to have a greater interest in the survey and the project in general, and were eager to participate in the survey.

### 3-In which country are you currently located?

100% of the 25 participants answering the questionnaire are located in Spain.



#### 4-What's your age?



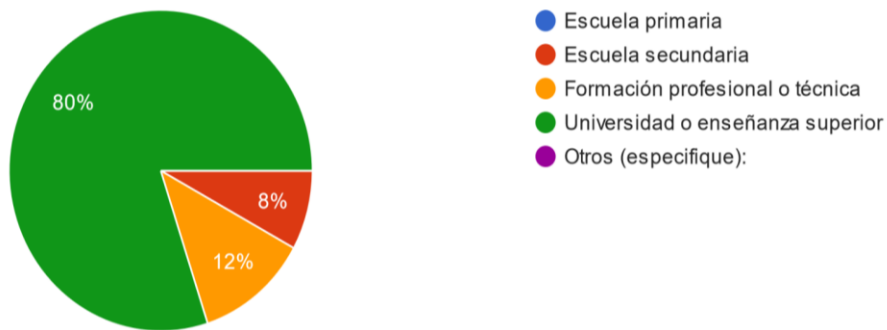
10 participants out of 25 are between 17 and 25 years old which represents 40% of the target and another 10 participants are between 26 and 30 years old another 40%.

Although the survey was targeted at under 30s, we have received 5 answers from participants over 30 years old which represents 20 % of the answers.

An encouraging factor for the younger generation is that in Spain, young people appear to opt for entrepreneurship from a quite young age, most possibly right after completing their higher education responsibilities, at the ages of 17-25, or 26-30, meaning that possibilities exist, and are given, to young people with potential.

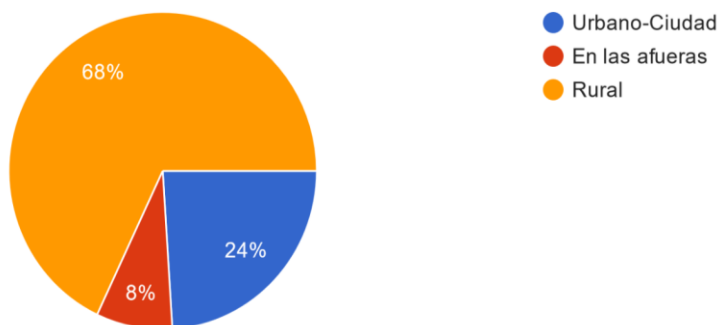


### 5. What is your highest level of education?



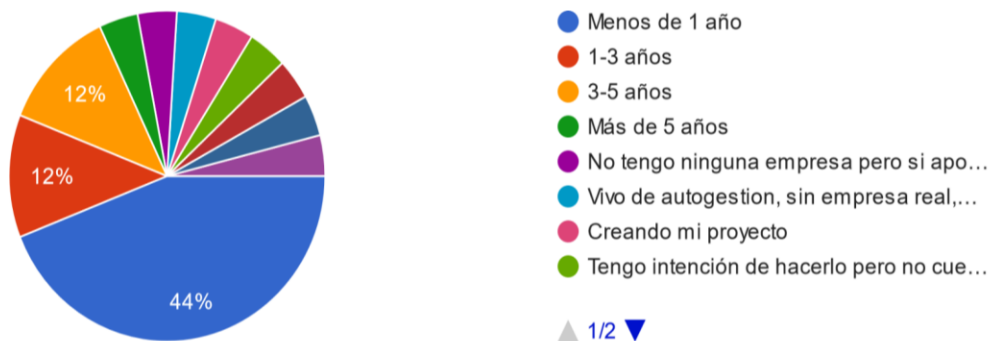
20 out of the 25 people that answered the questionnaire have higher education studies, this represents 80% of the participants. 3 people have vocational educational training 12% of the total and 2 people have only secondary studies which represent 8% of the Spanish participants. Based on the provided answers, the majority of the Spanish respondents have opted for higher education, meaning that they have pursued an academic path before, or during, their entrepreneurial steps.

### 6-In which of the following areas do you live?



68% of the participants, 17 people, live in rural areas 2 of them (8%) suburban and 6 people 24% in an urban city area. In general, in Spain there's a much higher rate of entrepreneurship initiatives and supporting systems in urban areas. That's why we have focused this project in rural areas. In contradiction with Greece and Italy, Spain appears to support rural entrepreneurship in a more practical and efficient way, and young people seem to take advantage of these initiatives.

### 7. How long have you been involved in entrepreneurship in a rural area?



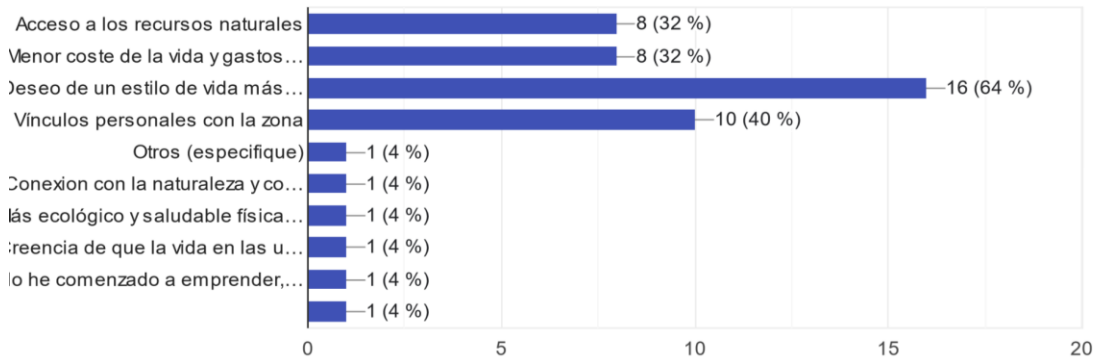
11 participants (44%) have been involved for less than 1 year, 3 of them (12%) between 1 and 3 years and another 3 people (12%) over 3 years. 1 participant (4%) has been involved in entrepreneurship in rural area for over 5 years.

The other 7 participants (28%) have not started yet but are involved in entrepreneurship initiatives or associations or are currently developing or starting to develop the project.

Given the responses, it is demonstrated that the majority of the responses are quite 'new' when it comes to entrepreneurship, meaning that most probably they are going through their startup phase, and collecting experience.



## 8. What motivated you to set up your business in a rural area?



Access to natural resources 8 participants (32%)

Lower cost of living and operating expenses 8 participants (32%)

Desire for a quieter lifestyle 16 participants (64%)

Personal ties to the area 10 participants (40%)

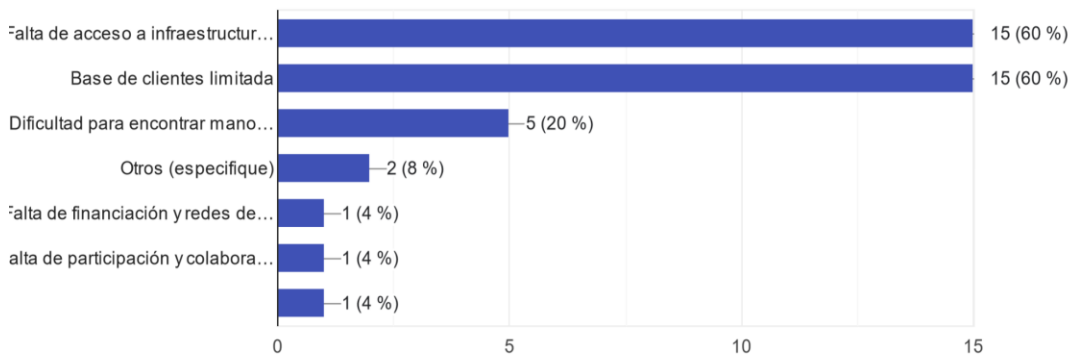
Other (please specify)

From the participants that choose also “other as an answer”

- Connection with nature and with myself, coherence with life.
- Greener and healthier physically and emotionally.
- Belief that urban living is unsustainable.
- I have not started entrepreneurship, but I would like to start.



**9. Have you faced any challenges related to the location of your business in a rural area? If so, what were they?**



Lack of access to infrastructure and resources (e.g., internet, transportation, utilities) 15 participants (60%)

Limited customer base 15 participants (60%)

Difficulty finding skilled labor 5 participants (20%)

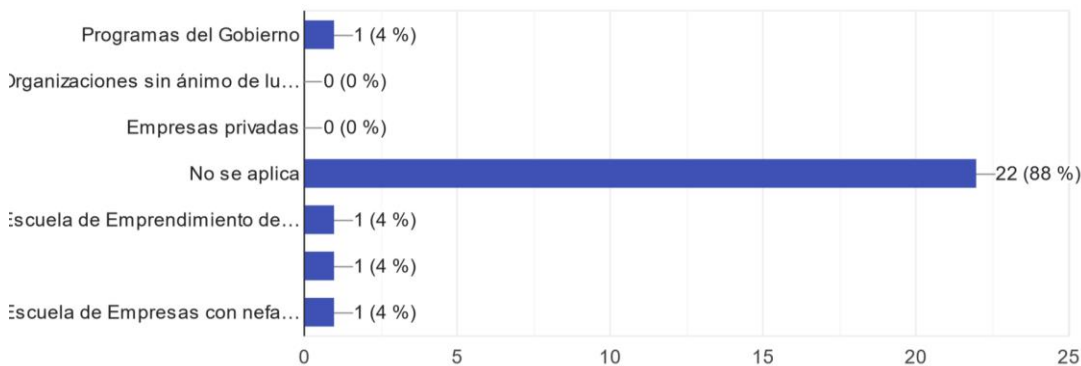
Other (please specify) 2 participants choose other for the following reasons:

- Lack of funding and support/assistance networks
- Lack of participation and collaboration





**10. Have you received any training or support for entrepreneurship in a rural area? If yes, from whom and to what extent has it been effective?**



Government programs 1 (4%)

Non-profit organizations 0 (0%)

Private companies 0 (0%)

Not applicable 22 (88%)

- UAH School of Entrepreneurship 1 (4%)
- Business school with poor counselling.1 (4%)

It appears as a harsh reality that 22 participants out of 25 have received no training or support at all and 1 of them mentioned they have very poor counseling so over 90% of participants had either none or bad support to start an entrepreneurial initiative.

Only 2 participants had training and support, 1 from a government program and the other from a School of Entrepreneurship Program of a University.

Following the same pattern as the two previous countries, we are face-to-face with the same dilemma. In other words, we are dealing with two possible scenarios: on the one hand, there are available trainings, and support systems, that are not so well-known, or maybe are located to urban areas, and the interested parties have to

put extra effort in order for them to be up-to-date and keep up with the current opportunities, while on the other hand, the training opportunities and support systems in Spain are poor, and not accessible to all.

### 11. Have you had financial support for your business in a rural area?



Bank loans 3 participants (12%)

Government programs 4 participants (16%)

Private investors 1 participants (4%)

Crowdfunding 0 participants (0%)

No 6 participants (24%)

No- N/a 10 participants (40%)

Investment by collaborating partners 1 participants (4%)

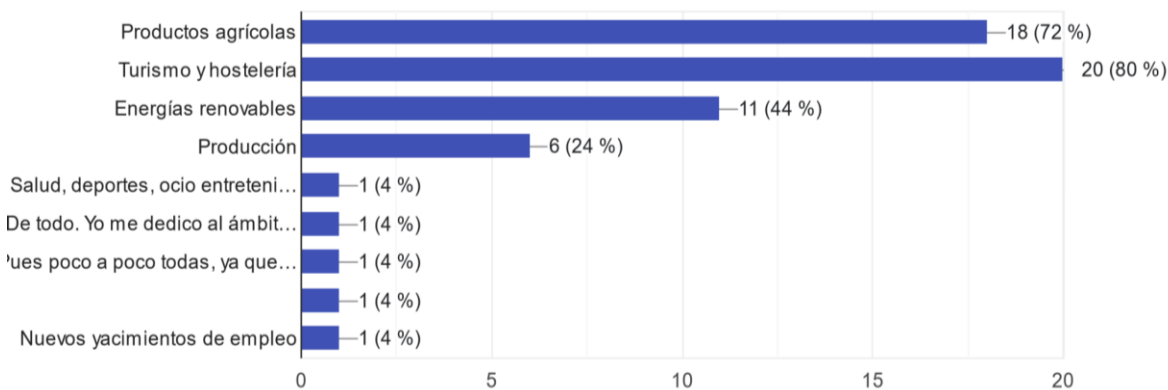
16 participants (64%) have received no financial support. Only 4 have received financial support from the government (16%) and 6 participants have received either bank loans or private investors.

It's important for young entrepreneurs in rural areas to research and stay updated on the various financial support programs available in their specific regions. These programs can significantly alleviate some of the financial challenges associated with starting and running a business in rural Spain. Local chambers of



commerce, economic development agencies, and government websites are valuable sources of information about available support.

## 12. What kind of market opportunities exist in rural areas?



Agricultural products 18 (72%)

Tourism and hospitality 20 (80%)

Renewable energy 11 (44%)

Manufacturing 6 (24%)

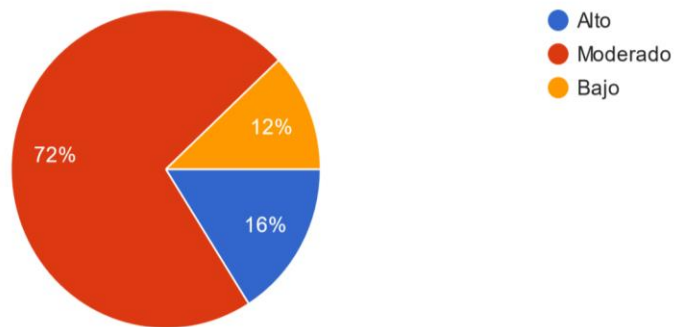
Other:

- Health, sports, leisure, entertainment and human relations 1 (4%)
- All sorts of things. I work in the socio-educational field 1 (4%)
- Well, little by little all of them, as there is an exodus 1 (4%)
- New fields of employment 1 (4%)

The majority of participants found tourism and hospitality as the main field for rural entrepreneurship in Spain, leaving minimum space for other market opportunities as health, sports, leisure, and manufacturing.



### 13. What is the level of competition for businesses in rural areas?



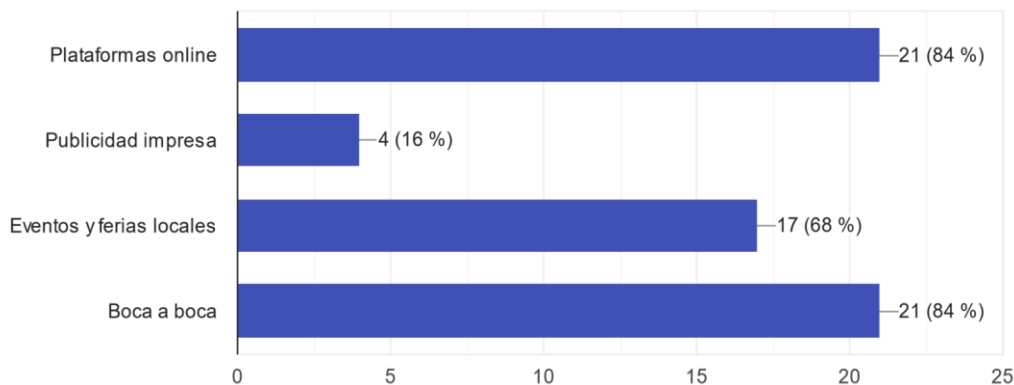
High 4 people (16%)

Moderate 18 people (72%)

Low 3 (12%)

18 % of participants believe the competition level is moderate, only 4% perceive it is high. And 3 % of the participants think that is low.

### 14. How do you reach your customers in a rural area?



Online platforms 21 (84%)

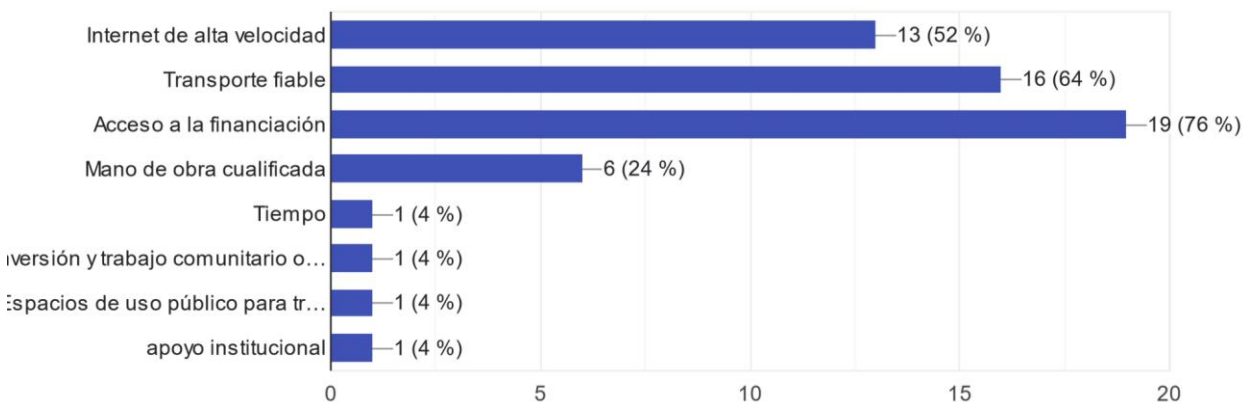
Print advertising 4 (16%)

Local events and fairs 17 (68%)

Word of mouth 21 (84%)

The preferred channel to reach customers are online platforms and word of mouth followed closely by local events and fairs. Print advertising is probably nowadays less effective. The aforementioned indicates the wide spread of the use of technology even in the rural areas, which also makes the dissemination options more sustainable, since online form is opted for rather than printed material.

### 15. What kind of infrastructure or resources are lacking in rural areas to support entrepreneurship?



High-speed internet 13 (52%)

Reliable transportation 16 (64%)

Access to financing 19 (76%)

Skilled labor 6 (24%)

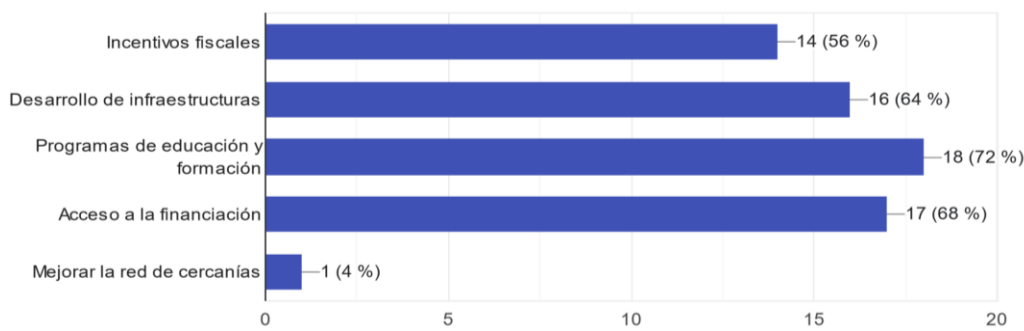
Other:

- Time 1 (4%)
- Investment and community/collaborative work to address the development of all areas and businesses, not just our own. 1 (4%)



- Public and/or cheap Coworking spaces 1 (4%)
- Institutional support 1 (4%)

**16. What kind of government policy or assistance would you like to see to support entrepreneurship in rural areas?**



Tax incentives 14 (56%)

Infrastructure development 16 (64%)

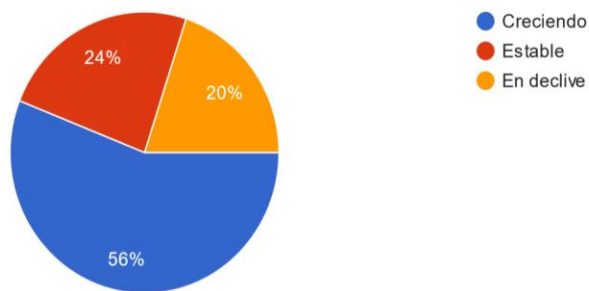
Education and training programs 18 (72%)

Access to financing 17 (68%)

Other:

- improving the rail network 1 (4%)

**17. How do you see the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas?**





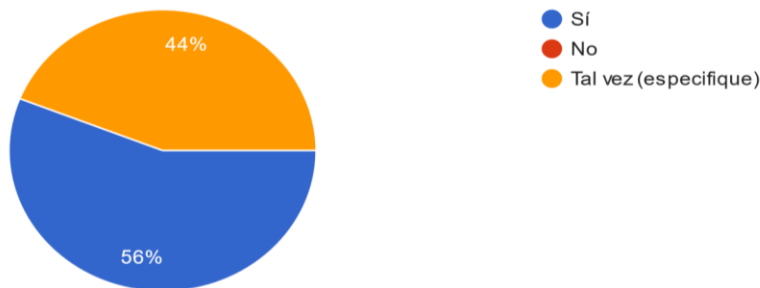
Growing 14 (56%)

Stable 6 (24%)

Declining 5 (20%)

The majority of participants perceive that rural entrepreneurship will be growing in the upcoming years, 6 participants think it is stable so it will maintain similar levels and 5 participants believe it will decline. Towards the same direction, young entrepreneurs in Spain seem to be quite optimistic for the future of rural entrepreneurship, meaning that they believe that the opportunities will increase, and more people will also choose that path.

### 18. Would you recommend to others to set up businesses in rural areas? If yes, why?



All participants had a positive or neutral answer to this question. None of them answered that they wouldn't recommend to others to set up a business in rural areas.

As we can see 14 participants (56%) confirmed they would recommend and 11 of them answered maybe.

We present below the reasons they have gave us:

- Depending on the sector and the company they would like to set up.
- It is a way for us to bring all the products and exploit the potential of these areas to the city. In this way, we would also be able to give visibility and boost a sector that is increasingly losing recognition and value.



- It seems that in the cities, they have more outlets.
- I would recommend them if you have a lot of links with people in rural areas and you know that it is a place where you want to live even if you don't make much money, because if you want to make a lot of money and set up several branches of the company in different places, I don't think you should start setting it up in a rural area.
- I don't think it is essential for everyone to have a business.
- It depends on the business.
- To offer a better quality of life to your workers.
- In collapsed societies and in view of the lack of resources, the proximity to resources, communications, teleworking and new ways of consuming and creating or starting up businesses facilitates this entrepreneurship.
- It is very easy to start a business in Madrid, where you have access to all the resources, training, fairs... However, in rural areas, you have to have double the motivation and daily effort to go ahead; not only because of the structural difficulties, but also because at a social level, sometimes, it is not so accepted until they see profitability.
- Because you have to keep the rural areas alive and because the contact with the environment and the people around you are very real.
- In order to cover the greatest needs of the inhabitants of that area.
- To improve their quality of life and that of those around them, creating a synergy.
- More and more of us are moving to rural areas, there are still unmet needs and to get out of this spiral, entrepreneurship is necessary.
- I would recommend, above all, not to idealize.
- I think it is necessary to decentralize all business activity from the cities. The countryside is alive, as are all the people who live in it. Why should we have to go to the city every time we want something?
- It depends on the size of that rural area you are in and the market you are dealing with (neighborhood and community interests...).
- It can be a good opportunity, but I think there are more risks than doing it in a city.
- Potential niche markets in these areas.





- Our differences are our strengths, we have unique endogenous resources.

**19. What type of business or industry do you think has the most potential for growth in rural areas?**

- Depends on the place
- Tourist, adventure activities, disconnection, gastronomy, etc.
- Agricultural industry.
- Food or Tourism.
- Hostelry and tourism.
- Social.
- Tourism.
- In Spain, rural tourism, more oriented towards young people, especially to counteract depopulation. Young people would gain because they find a quiet place where they can work and make a living and the village increases its population, and "updates" the activities and the target public to which it is directed.
- Agriculture, tourism, sports and education
- Tourism
- Handicrafts
- Service sector
- Complicated to answer that... It depends on the location.
- Whatever can meet the specific needs of those particular areas, and is accessible to local people.
- Training, environmental and manufacturing
- Tourism (at least in my area).
- Tourism and bio/ecological products.
- Tourism, as more and more people are looking for the typical tranquility of these areas.
- Renewable energy.



12 out of 19 answered tourism, 3 that it depends on the location and then we have agriculture, training and handicrafts as the perceived potential successful fields for entrepreneurship in rural areas.

**20. Are there any additional comments or information you would like to provide on the topic of entrepreneurship in rural areas?**

- I really like not the companies, but the associations that go from village to village or that move around a region, uniting people from different towns to make projects and move the place forward.
- It is very difficult to start a business.
- I do encourage the establishment of companies or services in rural areas because they will have a smaller but loyal number of customers, due to the lack of supply in the area.
- I would like to start a business in rural areas to recover and restore our cultural and natural heritage and to continue building spaces where we can improve our way of life and our environment.
- I think that there is little information, at a general level, in universities about the possibility of entrepreneurship. When a person talks about "entrepreneurship", it is always assumed that a company will be created and we must educate the new generations that entrepreneurship begins in our lives; that is to say, a good entrepreneur must be an entrepreneur in his or her life in order to be able to carry it out in his or her profession. The search for passion, for dreams, is often reduced to the mere capitalism of being able to have enough to live on, and students are dehumanized. If you are from a rural area, you know that you will find work in the big city, so you decide to move. Why don't we turn the tables from the grassroots, from education, making rural areas a real possibility in the minds of the new generations?
- It would be ideal to promote businesses that are not only related to tourism... Promote other areas of growth in the villages that will benefit those who live there all year round.



## **Conclusion**

### **- Gender**

As deriving from the collected responses, there seems to be a higher percentage of women that answered the questionnaire and are interested to take on this journey.

### **- Age**

Based on the findings of the survey, 80% of the participants are under 30. There's a high interest among young people to create initiatives. However, we have realized during the research that in Spain there's a high percentage of young adults that start entrepreneurship initiatives over 30, indeed between 30 and 35 years old is one of the most popular age ranges to start businesses. Most of the national programs to support entrepreneurship initiatives include people up to 35 years old.

### **- Education**

Profiles of entrepreneurs are in majority with a higher level of education and most of them have university studies.

Some of them also have Vocational Educational Studies. Only some of them have secondary studies but it's likely that they will continue studying.

### **- Area/ Location**

In general, in Spain, likewise any other European country there's a much higher rate of entrepreneurship initiatives and supporting systems in urban areas. There's an expressed need to support these initiatives focused in rural areas, in order for them to be accessible to a higher percentage of interested parties.

### **- Experience**

Half of the participants have less than 3 years of experience. And nearly 30% have not started yet.

We have in general profile with low experience. Young entrepreneurs often lack experience due to a combination of factors inherent to their age and life stage. While young entrepreneurs might lack traditional experience, they often bring fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, adaptability, and a willingness to learn. Many



successful entrepreneurs have achieved their goals by leveraging their unique strengths and embracing continuous learning and growth. Over time, they can gain experience through trial and error, seeking advice from mentors, and immersing themselves in their chosen fields.

- **Motivation**

More intrapersonal reasons/ factors such as personal relations or looking for a quiet lifestyle or better quality of life have been considered as reasons to start a business or initiative in rural areas. Participants also mentioned the connection with nature and themselves, coherence with life, a healthier lifestyle physically and emotionally and the belief that urban living is unsustainable.

External access to natural resources and lower cost of living are also motivators but less important for participants apparently.

- **Challenges**

Among the main challenges foreseen Lack of support, infrastructure, lack of funding, limited customers and participation or insufficient cooperation and supporting systems

- **Entrepreneurship Training**

Over 90% of participants had either none or bad training support to start an entrepreneurial initiative.

There's a need of accessible training on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship training in Spain is diverse and comprehensive, with various programs and resources available to support aspiring entrepreneurs at different stages of their journey. These training initiatives are designed to equip individuals with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to start, manage, and grow successful businesses. Overall, entrepreneurship training in Spain is a multifaceted ecosystem that caters to the needs of diverse entrepreneurs. From formal education to hands-on mentorship and practical resources, these training opportunities play a crucial role in fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial culture in the country. Still, the aforementioned opportunities seem to be available only in urban areas, excluding rural participants.

- **Financial support**

Over half of the participants have received no financial support, only 14% received some funding from government; the more accessible funding seems to be bank loans and private investors that are viable only for few people.

Therefore, sustainable, accessible and more flexible programs for financial support are needed at a national level. Financial support for young entrepreneurs in rural areas in Spain is crucial for encouraging economic growth, fostering innovation, and revitalizing rural communities. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations provide various forms of financial assistance to empower young entrepreneurs to start and develop their businesses.

It's important for young entrepreneurs in rural areas to research and connect with relevant local, regional, and national authorities to learn about available financial support options. These programs can significantly alleviate financial barriers and provide the necessary resources to turn entrepreneurial dreams into thriving rural businesses.

#### - **Market opportunities**

The majority of participants found tourism and hospitality as the main field for rural entrepreneurship in Spain. There's a Need to widen the market niche and think out of the box.

Rural areas in Spain offer a range of market opportunities that can be harnessed by entrepreneurs to create sustainable and thriving businesses. These opportunities are often influenced by the unique characteristics, resources, and needs of rural communities.

By tapping into these market opportunities and tailoring their offerings to the specific characteristics of rural Spain, entrepreneurs can contribute to the growth and revitalization of rural communities while also meeting the needs and preferences of consumers.

#### - **Competition**

The perceived competition level is moderate.

The moderate level of competition in rural entrepreneurship in Spain can be attributed to a combination of factors specific to rural areas. While competition exists, certain characteristics of rural settings tend to mitigate intense competition compared to more urban environments. It's important to note that while moderate



competition might provide advantages for some entrepreneurs, it can also indicate market challenges. Finding the right balance between competition and a healthy business ecosystem is essential for sustainable rural entrepreneurship. Additionally, the landscape can evolve, and new entrepreneurs entering rural markets could potentially increase competition over time.

- **Dissemination**

The preferred channel to reach customers are online platforms and word of mouth followed closely by local events and fairs. Print advertising is probably nowadays less effective.

- **Barriers**

Main identified barriers are lack of access to funding, reliable transportation and high-speed internet in this order. Community investment, time, institutional support and coworking spaces are seen as possible solutions to these infrastructural barriers.

- **Policy assistance support**

Training and financial support are the key main points to improve entrepreneurial initiatives followed by infrastructure investment and VAT incentives.

- **Future of Entrepreneurship**

There is a hopeful opinion that entrepreneurship in rural areas will be in general growing in the upcoming years.

- **Remendability of entrepreneurship**

In general, all participants considered it is recommendable to encourage entrepreneurship, of course taking into account a suitable profile of the person, the location and field, to have or build a great network. It's also mentioned the importance of encouraging rural entrepreneurship for environmental and social sustainable reasons.

- **Potential for growth**



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63% believe the greater potential for growth is in the tourism field, but also agriculture, training, handicrafts and renewal energies have been mentioned. It would be ideal to promote businesses that are not only related to tourism... Promote other areas of growth in the villages that will benefit those who live there all year round. Necessity to support networks and cooperation among villages to strengthen their capacity and incentivize sustainability of rural tourism.

We would like to end with on the of participant's question:

*“Why don't we turn the tables from the grassroots, from education, making rural areas a real possibility in the minds of the new generations?”*

## 1.4 Palestine

### Introduction

Young entrepreneurship in rural areas in Palestine faces unique challenges and opportunities within the context of the region's political, economic, and social circumstances. While the challenges are significant, young entrepreneurs in rural Palestine are finding ways to leverage their skills, creativity, and determination to drive positive change in their communities.

Young entrepreneurs in rural Palestine are not only striving for personal success but also contributing to community development and resilience. Their initiatives create jobs, enhance local economies, and empower communities, helping to counter the economic challenges faced in the region.

Coming up next, we present the results obtained with the answer from Palestinian participants that have completed the questionnaire.

This questionnaire has been shared with (32) civil society organizations and (11) incubators via email and WhatsApp. The organization has also posted some relevant posts on their Facebook page.

The communication has started with the stakeholder's database that was created for this project a few months ago as a baseline or starting point.

The process of researching for institutions, organizations and individuals that support or are interested in entrepreneurship has enabled us to grow the stakeholders' networks and has improved the dissemination impact of the project greatly. From 50 stakeholders that we started with we have now 100, so we have increased our database of relevant stakeholders by 59%.

We estimate we have created around 8 posts about the project and the questionnaire on social media networks, we have sent over 100 emails, and sent information on WhatsApp and phone to over 50 people.

We estimate that with this work we have reach at least over 150 people that are now aware of the project.



## Questionnaire Results

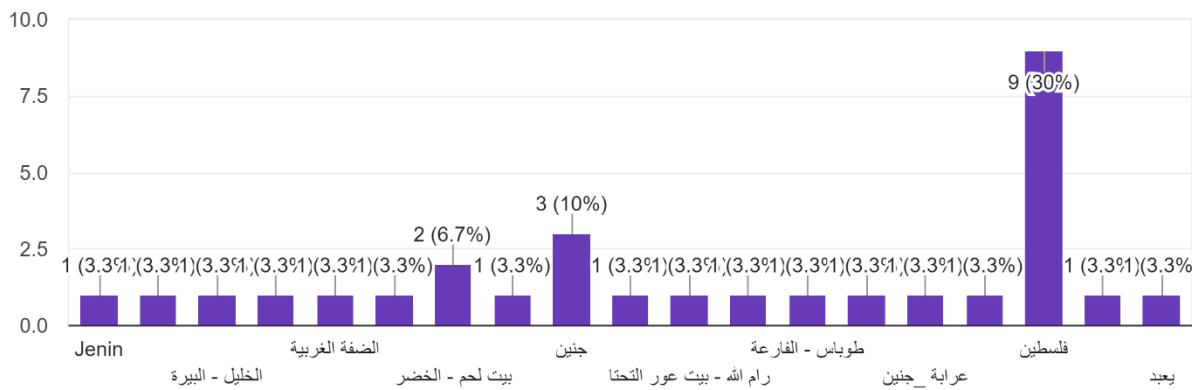
### 1. E-mail address.

In the first question we gathered participants' email addresses to be able to contact them for future research and to inform them about training and mentoring opportunities within the project and beyond.

### 2-In which country are you currently located?

فلسطين، جنين ، اليامون

30 responses

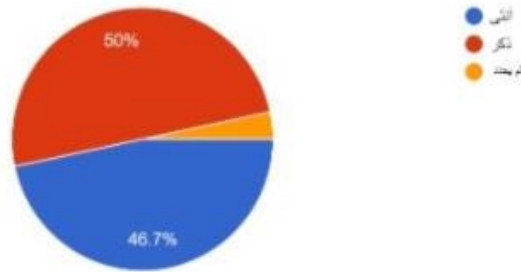


100% of the 30 participants answering the questionnaire are located in Palestine, participants are from different towns in the north, middle and south of the West Bank in Palestine.



### 3. What is your gender?

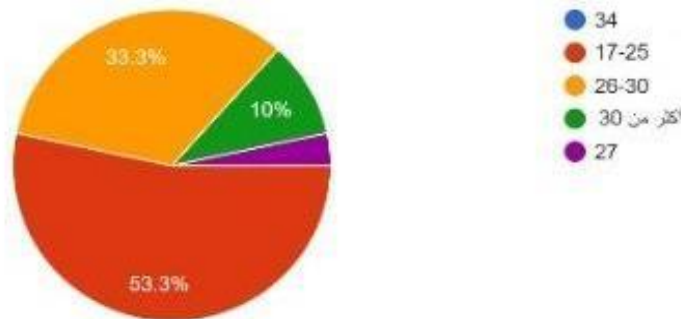
ما هو جنسك  
30 responses



15 participants out of 30 have identified themselves as men (50%), 14 participants as women (46.7%) and one participant as other (3.3). In contradiction with the answers from the surveys in the aforementioned countries, in Palestine both men and women appeared to have an interest in the survey and the project equally.

### 4-What's your age?

ما هو عمرك؟  
30 responses



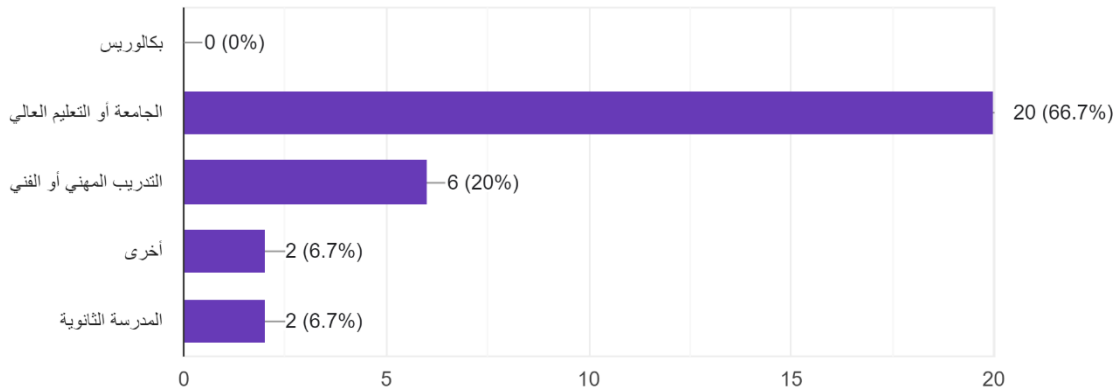
16 participants out of 30 are between 17 and 25 years old which represents (53.3%) of the target and another 11 participants are between 26 and 30 years old another (36.6%). And (10%) of participants more than 30. As it derives from the collected answers the majority of young entrepreneurs in Palestine belong at the age groups of 17-25, and 26-30.



## 5. What is your highest level of education?

ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي تم إكماله؟

30 responses

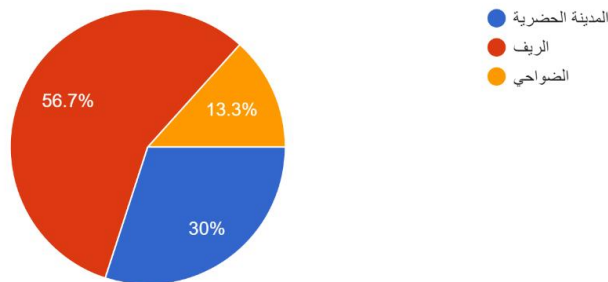


20 out of the 30 people that answered the questionnaire have higher education studies, this represents 66.7% of the participants. 6 people have vocational educational training 20% of the total and 2 people have only secondary studies which represent 6.7% of the Palestinian participants. In addition to two people who answered the question (other) without specifying the academic degree, 6.7% of the total.

## 6-In which of the following areas do you live?

في أي من المناطق التالية تعيش؟

30 responses



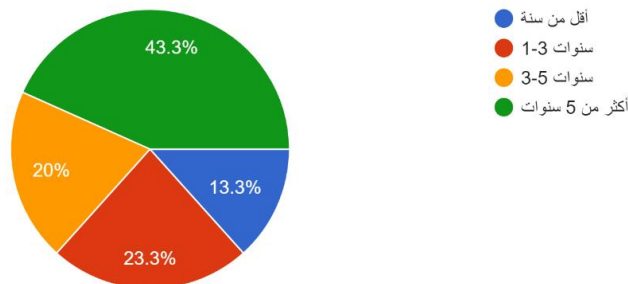


(56.7%) of the participants, 17 people, live in rural areas 4 of them (13.3%) suburban and 9 people (30%) in an urban city area. Based on the answers, an optimistic factor is that the majority of the respondents reside in rural areas, and most probably base their activities there.

## 7. How long have you been involved in entrepreneurship in a rural area?

منذ متى وأنت تشارك في ريادة الأعمال في منطقة ريفية؟

30 responses



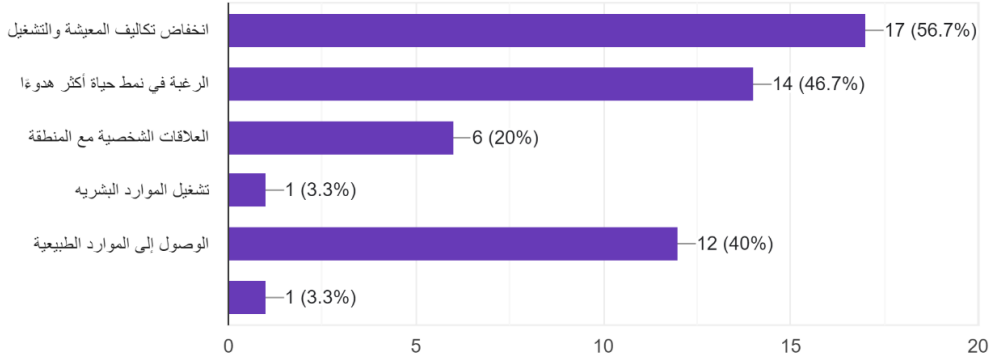
4 participants (13.3%) have been involved for less than 1 year, 7 of them (23.3%) between 1 and 3 years and another 6 people (20%) over 3 years. 13 participant (43.3%) has been involved in entrepreneurship in rural area for over 5 years. In contradiction with the findings that have been so far presented, in Palestine the majority of the respondents seem to have more than 5 years of experience, and given the fact that their maximum age is 30, we can reach the conclusion that they have started their entrepreneurial career at a young age.

## 8. What motivated you to set up your business in a rural area?



ما الذي دفعك لبدء مشروعك التجاري في منطقة ريفية؟

30 responses



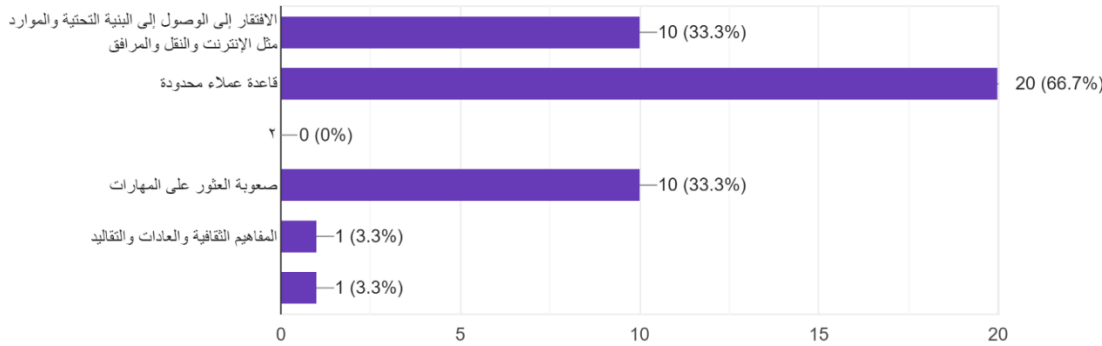
Lower cost of living and operating expenses 17 participants (56.7%), Desire for a quieter lifestyle 14 participants (46.7%), Personal ties to the area 10 participants (40%), Operation of human resources 1 participants (3.3%), Access to natural resources 12 participants (40%). In addition to one person who answered the question (other) without specifying it (3.3%) of the total. Following the same path, the main reasons that motivate young people to locate their activities in rural areas is the lower cost of living and operational expenses, a quieter lifestyle, and access to natural resources. Concluding, the reasons are mainly economical and personal.

**9. Have you faced any challenges related to the location of your business in a rural area? If so, what were they?**



هل واجهت أي تحديات تتعلق بموقع عملك في منطقة ريفية؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، فماذا؟

30 responses

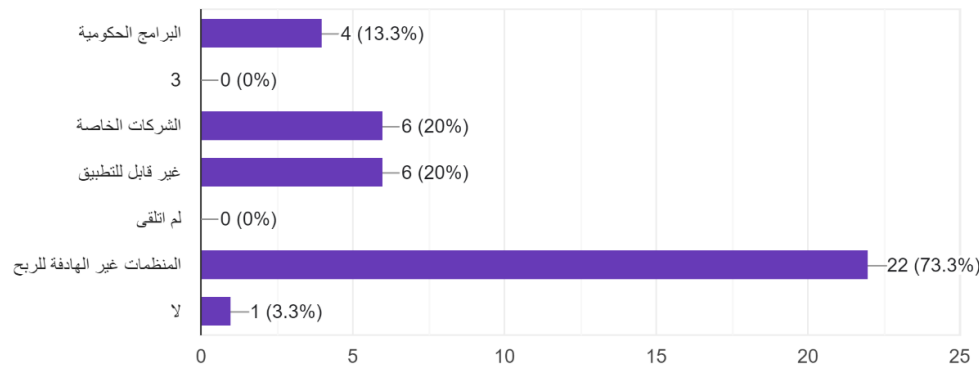


The challenges that the respondents recorded as the most frequently met are the lack of access to infrastructure and resources (e.g., internet, transportation, utilities): 10 participants (33.3%), limited customer base: 20 participants (66.7%), difficulty finding skills: 10 participants (33.3), cultural dimensions, customs and traditions: one of the participants (3.3%), in addition to one person who answered the question (other) without specifying it (3.3%) of the total.

## 10. Have you received any training or support for entrepreneurship in a rural area? If yes, from whom and to what extent has it been effective?

هل تلقيت أي تدريب أو دعم لريادة الأعمال في منطقة ريفية؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، فمن من وما مدى فعاليته؟

30 responses

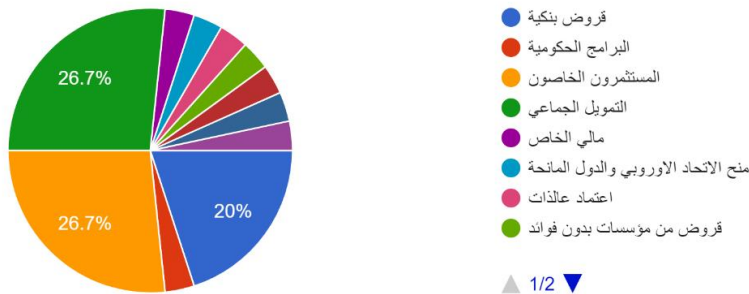


The training and support that was received by the participants had the following forms: government programs: 4 (13.3%), private companies: 6 (20%), not applicable: 6 (20%), non-profit organizations: 22 (73.3%), and one participant out of 30 has received no training or support (3.3%).

## 11. Have you had financial support for your business in a rural area?

كيف تحصل على تمويل لعملك في منطقة ريفية؟

30 responses



Bank loans 6 participants (20%)

Government programs one of the participants (3.3%)

Private investors 8 participants (26.7%)

Crowd funding 8 participants (26.7%)

Other:

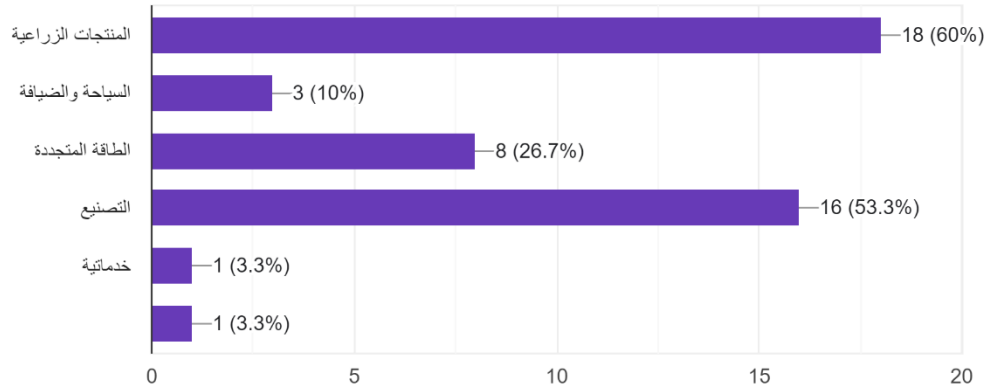
- Grants of the European Union and donor countries one of the participants (3.3%)
- Adoption of proceeds one of the participants (3.3%)
- Interest-free loans from institutions one of the participants (3.3%)
- My own money one of the participants (3.3%)
- Personal support one of the participants (3.3%)
- Family and Friends one of the participants (3.3%)
- Supporting institutions one of the participants (3.3%)

## 12. What kind of market opportunities exist in rural areas?



ما نوع فرص السوق المتاحة في المناطق الريفية؟

30 responses



Agricultural products 18 (60%)

Tourism and hospitality 3 (10%)

Renewable energy 8 (26.7%)

Manufacturing 16 (53.3%)

Other:

- The services

The majority of participants found agricultural products as the main field for rural entrepreneurship in Palestine.

### 13. What is the level of competition for businesses in rural areas?



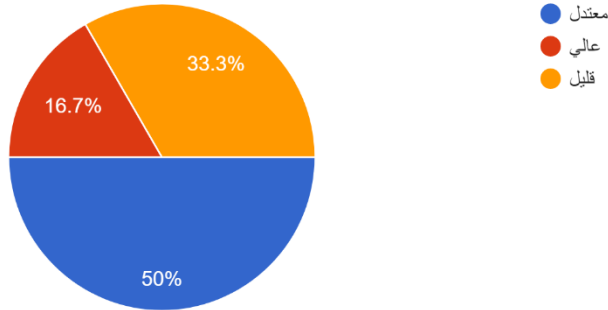


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ما هو مستوى المنافسة للشركات في المناطق الريفية؟

30 responses



High 5 people (16.7%)

Moderate 15 people (50%)

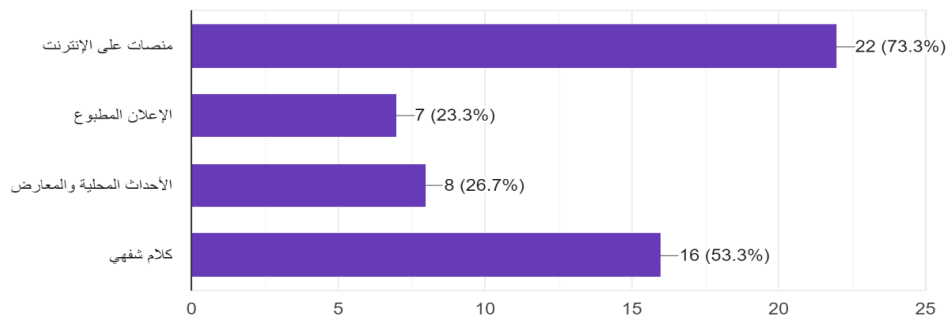
Low 10 (33.3%)

50 % of participants believe the competition level is moderate, only 16.7% perceive it is high. And 33.3 % of the participants think that is low. As per the received answers, entrepreneurship in rural areas in Palestine is not perceived as a highly competitive area, since most of the responses opted for moderate, or low.

#### 14. How do you reach your customers in a rural area?

كيف تتواصل مع العملاء في المناطق الريفية؟

30 responses



Online platforms 22 (73.3%)

Print advertising 7 (23.3%)

Local events and exhibitions 8 (26.7%)

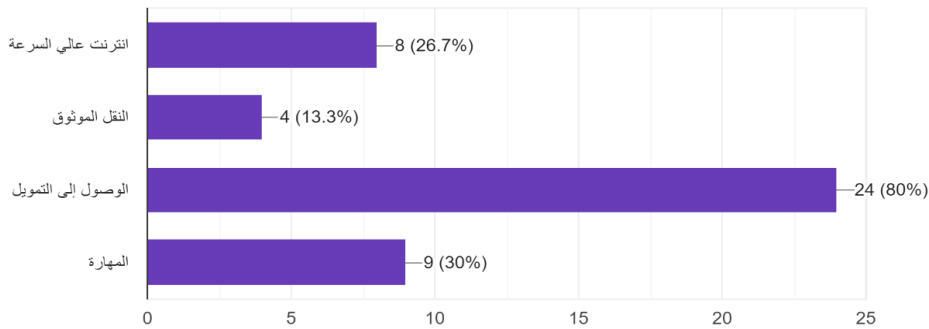
Verbal 16 (53.3%)

The preferred channel to reach customers are online platforms and verbal face-to-face followed closely by local events. Print advertising is probably nowadays less effective. Given the answers, online platforms are the dominant medium of dissemination and communication in Palestine, followed by personalized communication, targeted mostly to actions in a local level.

## 15. What kind of infrastructure or resources are lacking in rural areas to support entrepreneurship?

ما نوع البنية التحتية أو الموارد التي تفتقر إلى المناطق الريفية لدعم ريادة الأعمال؟

30 responses



The resources that the participants identified as the most important to be provided in order to achieve better results while practicing their activities are: high-speed internet: 8 (26.7%), reliable transportation: 4 (13.3%), access to financing: 24 (80%), and skilled labor: 9 (30%).

## 16. What kind of government policy or assistance would you like to see to support entrepreneurship in rural areas?

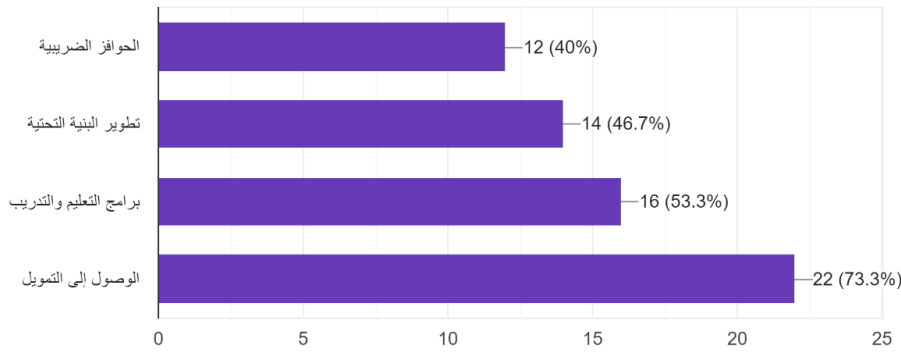


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ما نوع السياسات أو الدعم الحكومي الذي تود رؤيته لدعم ريادة الأعمال في المناطق الريفية؟

30 responses

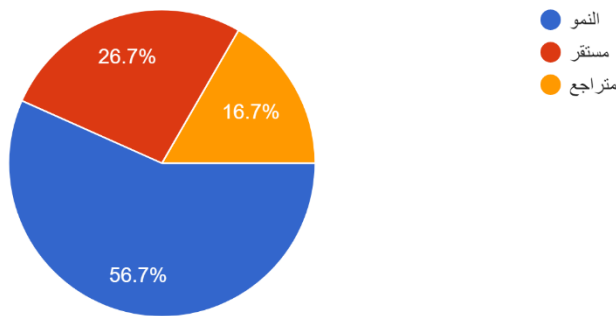


Concerning governmental support, in the forms of assistance or policy-making, the respondents opted for the following actions: tax incentives: 12 (40%), infrastructure development: 14 (46.7%), education and training programs: 16 (53.3%), and finally, access to financing: 22 (73.3%).

## 17. How do you see the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas?

كيف ترى مستقبل ريادة الأعمال في المناطق الريفية؟

30 responses



Growing 17 (56.7%)

Stable 8 (26.7%)

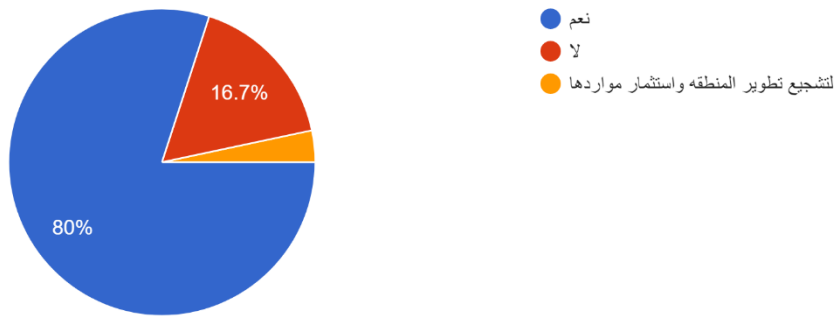
Declining 5 (16.7%)

The majority of participants perceive that rural entrepreneurship will be growing in the upcoming years, 8 participants think it is stable so it will maintain similar levels and 5 participants believe it will decline.

## 18 Would you recommend to others to set up businesses in rural areas? If yes, why?

هل ستنتهي على رواد الأعمال في المناطق الريفية للأخريين؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، لماذا؟

30 responses



Yes: 24 (80%)

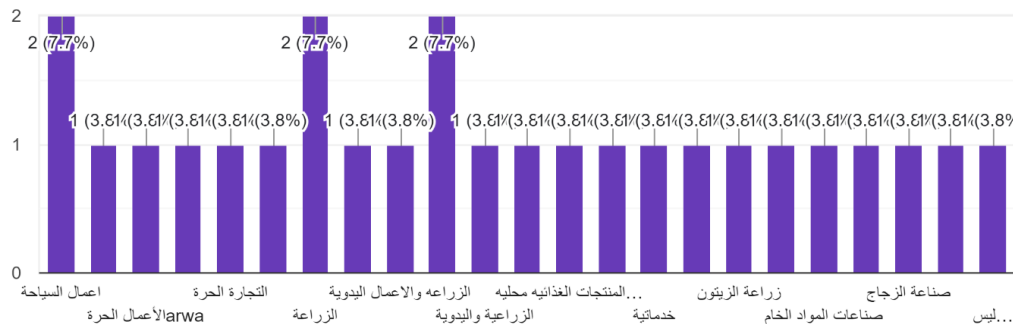
No: 5 (16.7)

Encouraging the development of the region and investing its resources: 1 (3.3)

## 19. What type of business or industry do you think has the most potential for growth in rural areas?

ما نوع الأعمال أو الصناعة التي تعتقد أنها تتمتع بأكبر إمكانات للنمو في المناطق الريفية؟

26 responses





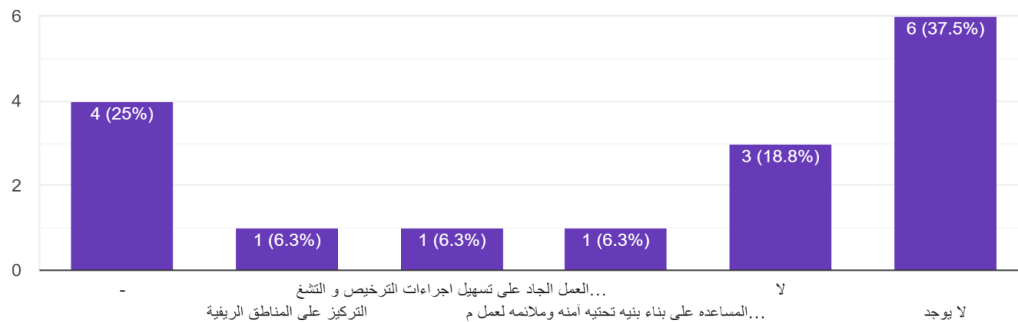
- Tourist
- Agriculture
- Handicrafts
- Service sector
- Trade
- Free business
- E-Commerce
- Agricultural technology
- Industrial business
- Food business
- Wild plants
- Services
- Olive cultivation
- Raw material industry
- Glass industry

One of the participants did not answer this question due to lack of knowledge on the topic.

## 20. Are there any additional comments or information you would like to provide on the topic of entrepreneurship in rural areas?

هل هناك تعليقات أو ملاحظات إضافية ترغب في تقديمها حول موضوع ريادة الأعمال في المناطق الريفية؟

16 responses



- Paying attention to the development of rural areas.



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- Encouraging policies, simplifying registration procedures, supporting employment policies in rural areas.
- Building a safe and appropriate infrastructure for small and medium businesses.
- Investing the natural resources of the region.
- Integration of women into the labor market.

## Conclusion

### - **Gender**

Given the provided answers, there is equal interest in this questionnaire between males and females.

### - **Education**

The profiles of the young entrepreneurs who responded to the questionnaire are in majority of a higher level of education and most of them have university studies. Some of them also have followed Vocational Educational Studies. Only some of them have secondary studies.

### - **Area/ Location**

In general, in Palestine there's a much higher rate of entrepreneurship initiatives and supporting systems in urban areas. There's an expressed need to support these initiatives focused in rural areas and an urban city area.

### - **Experience**

Analyzing the aforementioned results, 43.3% of the participants have more than 5 years of experience, percentage that is quite high and optimistic. And nearly 13.3% of the respondents have not started their entrepreneurial pathway yet.

### - **Motivation**

Low costs of living and operation and the search for a peaceful lifestyle have been cited as reasons for starting a business or initiative in rural areas. Interpersonal relationships are also motivators, but they seemed to be less important for participants.

### - **Challenges**

Among the main challenges foreseen is the lack of support, the lack of infrastructure and resources, lack of funding, and access to limited customers.



- **Entrepreneurship Training**

Based on the survey findings, 73.3% of the participants received training through non-profit organizations. Given that fact, it is obvious that there is a need of accessible training on entrepreneurship, and that training should also be available in rural areas, and not only metropolitan areas.

- **Financial support**

Regarding reception of financial support, the participants seem to rely on funding mostly from private investors, crowd funding and bank loans, while only 3.3% received funding from the government, indicating the fact that the state should act more proactively in that area, and upgrade their level of assistance.

- **Market opportunities**

Market opportunities in rural areas in Palestine are shaped by the region's unique socio-political context, natural resources, and cultural heritage. Despite challenges, there are several potential avenues for entrepreneurial endeavors that can contribute to economic growth and community development.

The majority of participants found agricultural products as the main field for rural entrepreneurship in Palestine.

- **Competition**

The perceived competition level on behalf of the respondents is moderate, or even low.

- **Dissemination**

The preferred channel to reach customers are online platforms and verbal method followed by local events and fairs. It is important to engage with local communities by participating in events, markets, and fairs to showcase your products or services. Print advertising is probably nowadays less effective.

- **Barriers**



Young entrepreneurship in rural areas in Palestine faces a range of barriers that can hinder the development and growth of businesses. These challenges are often influenced by the region's unique socio-economic and political context.

Main identified barriers are lack of access to finance, low speed internet, skilled labor and transportation.

#### - **Policy assistance support**

Policy assistance is crucial for fostering young entrepreneurship in rural areas in Palestine. Well-designed policies can address the unique challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and create an enabling environment for their businesses to thrive.

Financial support and training are the key main points to improve entrepreneurial initiatives followed by infrastructure investment and VAT incentives.

#### - **Future of Entrepreneurship**

There is great optimism by the participants that entrepreneurship in rural areas will be in growing in the upcoming years.

The future of entrepreneurship in rural areas in Palestine holds significant potential for positive change and development, despite the challenges that the region faces. With the right strategies, policies, and support, rural entrepreneurship can play a crucial role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and improving the overall well-being of rural communities.

#### - **Dependability of entrepreneurship**

In general, all participants considered it is recommendable to encourage entrepreneurship, it's also mentioned the importance encouraging the development of the rural area and investing its resources.

#### - **Potential for growth**

Participants believe that growth potential in rural areas lies in agricultural products (60%), renewable energy (26.7%), manufacturing (53.3%), and finally, tourism and hospitality (10%).



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The holistic impact of youth entrepreneurship extends beyond economic metrics. It resonates within the fabric of Palestinian communities, fostering a spirit of collaboration, unity, and empowerment. Through their ventures, young entrepreneurs are fostering a sense of ownership, inspiring others to take charge of their destinies, and sparking a new era of innovation that draws upon the heritage and resilience of Palestine's rural roots.

As these young individuals continue to pioneer change, it is imperative that they receive the support and recognition they deserve. Policies that foster a nurturing environment, access to funding, mentorship, and skill development can amplify their impact and contribute to the sustainable growth of rural Palestine. From agri-tourism to technological startups, the horizon of possibilities is expansive, fueled by the aspirations of a new generation determined to cultivate a brighter future for their beloved homeland.



## 1.5 Egypt

### Introduction

Youth entrepreneurship in the rural areas of Egypt stands as a dynamic force of transformation, driving economic growth and revitalizing the heartland of the nation. As the country's agricultural and cultural heritage interweaves with modern innovation, young Egyptians are increasingly harnessing their talents and aspirations to carve out a distinct entrepreneurial landscape in rural regions. Amidst the backdrop of Egypt's rich history and diverse geography, this surge of youthful entrepreneurial energy is reshaping traditional sectors, creating novel opportunities, and breathing new life into communities that have long been the backbone of the nation's identity.

In this exploration of youth entrepreneurship in rural Egypt, we delve into the unique challenges and prospects that define this emerging trend. From navigating limited resources and infrastructural barriers to capitalizing on the global digital age, young entrepreneurs are crafting innovative solutions that blend tradition with modernity. We examine the policy frameworks, support systems, and local dynamics that shape the entrepreneurial journey in Egypt's rural settings. Moreover, we shed light on the transformative power of these initiatives, not only as catalysts for economic growth but also as agents of social empowerment, community engagement, and sustainable development.

Taking into consideration that YERAME's purpose is to contribute to the development of sustainable and inclusive economies and create a brighter future for entrepreneurs and rural areas, the collection of data during the survey has been conducted through the questionnaire to cover the challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs, their needs and aspirations, and the support services available to them so that the collected data will be analyzed to identify common challenges and needs among rural entrepreneurs and to develop effective strategies to address these challenges through conducting a mapping of good practices in managing rural entrepreneurship projects.



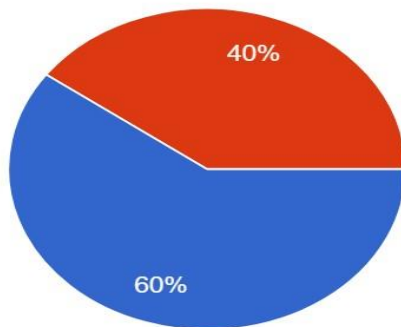
The survey has been completed by a targeted group of entrepreneurs of an age group from 18 to 30 years old and entrepreneurs who live in rural areas and have ideas, experiences in entrepreneurship or have already established their start-ups on the real ground.

We have disseminated the survey through sending invitations and social media promotion and we have shared it on different online platforms, through a timeframe between May 26 and June 15 2023.

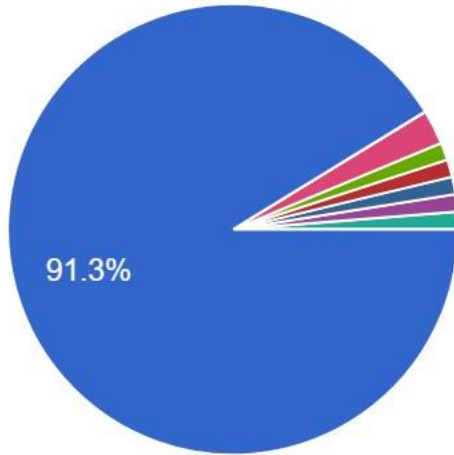
We have received about 80 responses, among which 52.5% of the responses have been from entrepreneurs in rural areas and during which, we have received responses from experienced youth entrepreneurs who have had their start-ups already so that we could gather data from a large variety of entrepreneurs based on actual experiences.

## Questionnaire Results

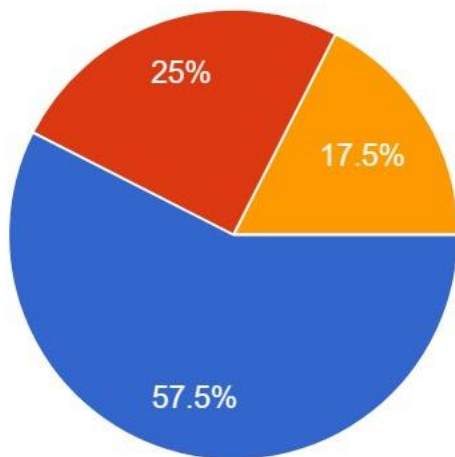
Below you may find a graphical depiction of the collected answers, accompanied by comments and conclusions:



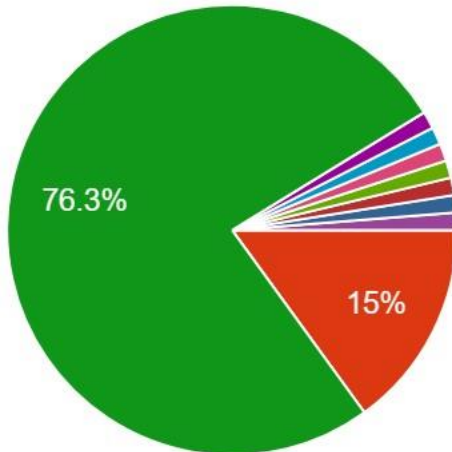
Gender: 60% female and 40 % male responses.



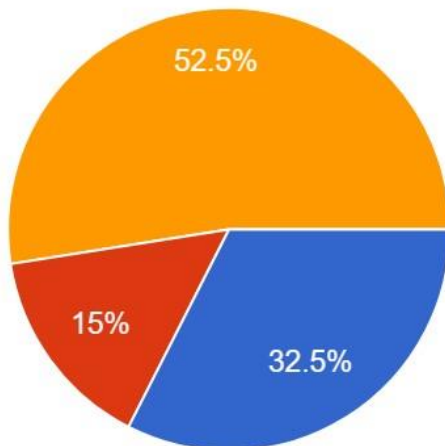
Country of residence: Mostly Egypt as 91.3% live in Egypt, while 2.5% live in Algeria, 1.2% live in Morocco or other places.



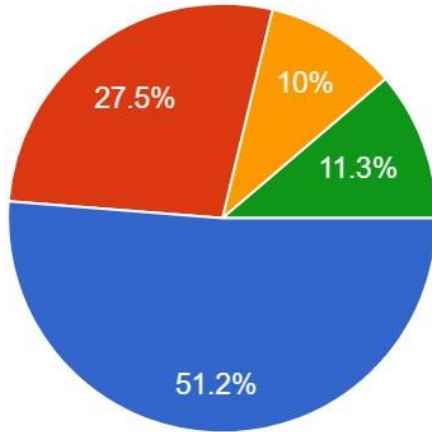
Age Group: The survey has been completed by 57.5% of youth in the age group between 17 to 25, 17.5% of youth of more than 30 years old and 25% of youth between 26 and 30 years old. In that case, the majority of respondents belongs to the age group of 17 to 25, bringing us to the conclusion that young entrepreneurs in Egypt start their venture processes at a young age.



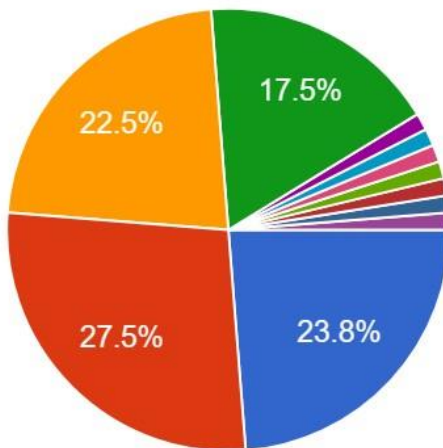
The highest level of education completed: 76.3% finished University or higher education, 15% finished high school while about 1.2 % completed their Master's Degree in Law or Veterinary Medical Sciences, or pre-Master, 1.2% reached an Assistant Research Professor degree and there has been a 1.2% percentage of students who are still studying at university.



As an answer to the question 'In which of the following areas do you live?', 52.5% of the 80 responses have chosen rural areas, 32.5% have chosen the urban city while 15% stated they live in the suburbs.



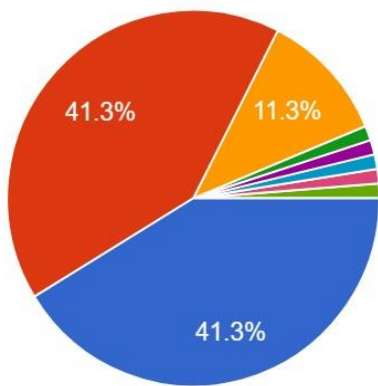
Being asked about the duration ‘How long have you been involved in entrepreneurship in a rural area?’, 51.2% of entrepreneurs have stated they have been involved for less 1 year, 27.5% from 1 to 3 years, 11.3% for more than 5 years while the least percentage of 10% came from those who have been involved for a period between 3 and 5 years. In that case, the majority of respondents claimed that they are at the primary stages of their entrepreneurial career.



When asked about the motive behind starting their own entrepreneurial projects in a rural area, 27.5% of entrepreneurs mentioned it has been due to lower living and operating costs, 23.8% due to access to natural

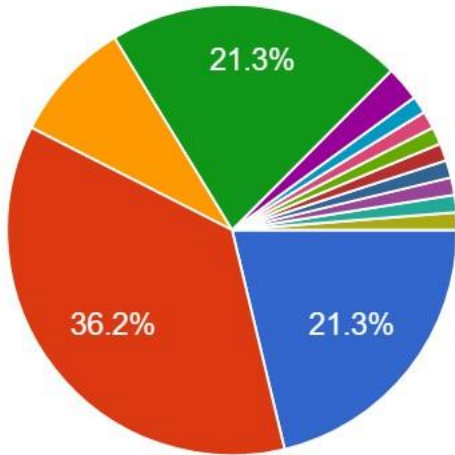


resources, 22.5% chose it because they have wanted a quieter lifestyle, 17.5% for personal relations with the region and other reasons of 1.2%, for each for example just because it has been a good opportunity, because they live there or for supporting the local community and reducing migration from the countryside, for creating a positive impact in society, for reviving the traditional features of each community, as well as spreading awareness of entrepreneurship in these areas. Also 1.2% stated it has been online.

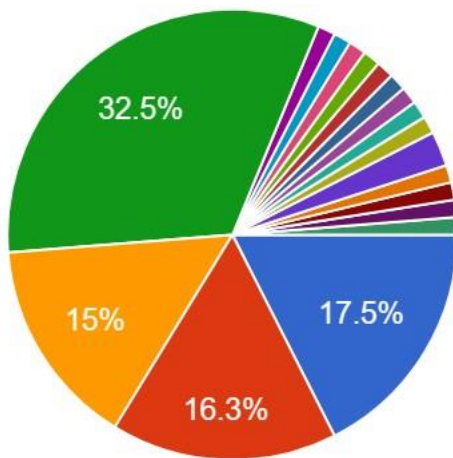


As an answer to the question about whether they faced any challenges related to their work location in a rural area, 41.3% identified the limited customer base, another 41.3% related to the lack of access to infrastructure and resources (e.g. Internet, transportation and utilities), 11.3% chose difficulty finding skilled workers, and other of 1.2% for each, related to obtaining financing at a small interest rate, difficulty accessing support that qualifies an entrepreneur to start work such as preparatory lecture or seminars, modifying the building culture and linking it to heritage features, reviving community identity and environmental participation, or all the above. While others stated there have not been real difficulties hindering the progress.



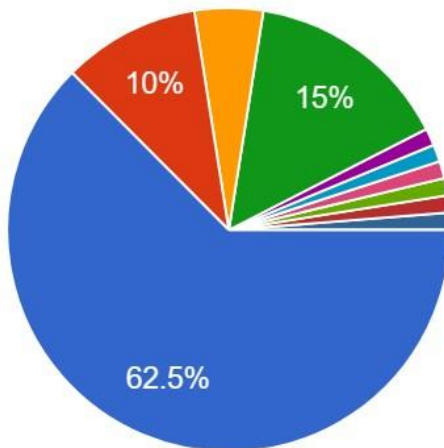


Responding to the question about receiving any training or support for entrepreneurship in a rural area, and if so, by whom and how effective has it been, the answers have been 36.2% from non-profit organizations, 21.3% from governmental programs, while another 21.3% stated it has not been applicable, 8.8% from private companies, 1.2% from Heliopolis University Next food program, the American University in Cairo, or Enterprise Development Agency. 1.2 % chose all the above. On the other hand, 2.5% did not receive any, and 1.2% of each chose 'no' or 'have not received' or 'we do not have entrepreneurship courses', etc.

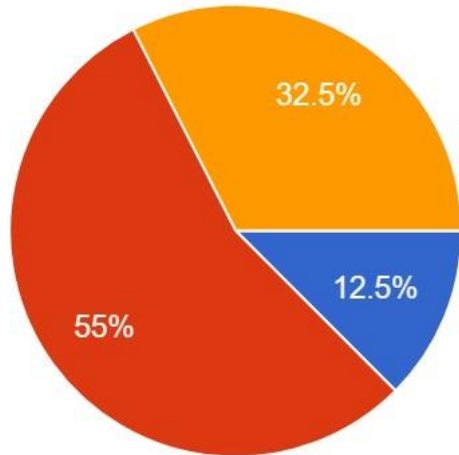




Following, the participants had to respond to the question of ‘How do you obtain financing for your project in a rural area?’ 32.5% received financing from private sector investors, 17.5% from bank loans, 16.3% from governmental programs, 15% from pooled funding, 2.5% of personal financing and also 1.2% for each has been for similar answers such as myself or my own money, 1.2% chose self-financing or financing from an institution. Another 1.2% mentioned grants and awards from business incubators and training programs, 1.2% chose donors and 1.2% stated ‘from profits’, while 1.2% negated that stating it has not been applicable, ‘no funding’, ‘I didn't get any support’ or ‘I did not find a donor’.

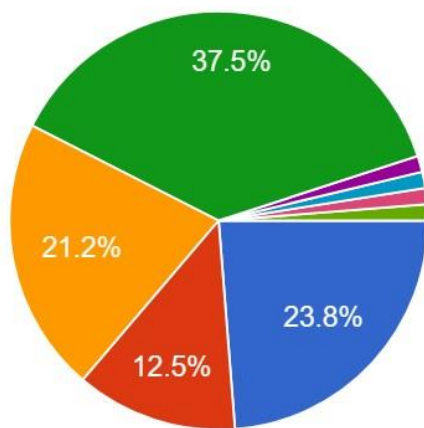


Coming up next, there was the question ‘What kind of market opportunities are available in rural areas?’ The answers have been mainly targeted to agricultural products of 62.5%, a 15% of manufacturing, a 10% of renewable energy, a 5% of tourism and hospitality, and a 1.2% for each of art and design, food, manufacture but not activated, B2B marketplaces, building urban communities and linking them to the environmental identity or recycling palm waste as the raw material is available, so instead of burning it and polluting the environment, it can be used to make products that are environmentally friendly for personal use, restaurants, hotels, and tourist villages because the raw material is abundant and available.



‘What is the level of competition for businesses in rural areas?’

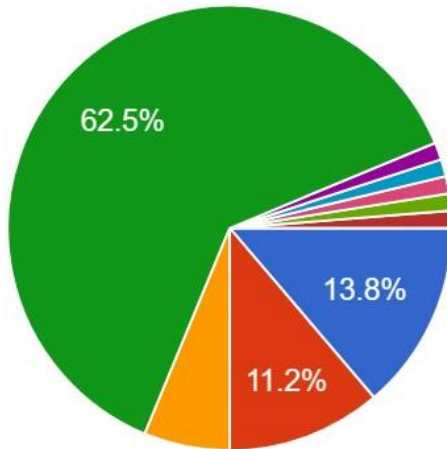
55% have stated it is little, 32.5% have chosen moderate and 12.5% have mentioned it is a high level of competition.



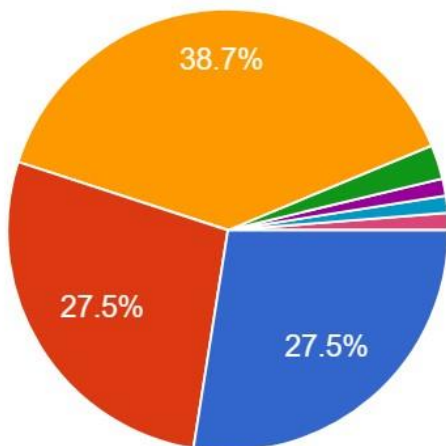
Being asked about the level of competition for businesses in rural areas, answers have been a 37.5% of local events and fairs, a 23.8% of online platforms, a 21.2% of a positive word, a 12.5% of print ads, and a 1.2%



for each of a word of mouth, direct communication, local events and fairs but the rest is of a weak percentage, or the practical application of building facades and converting them into heritage mural paintings.



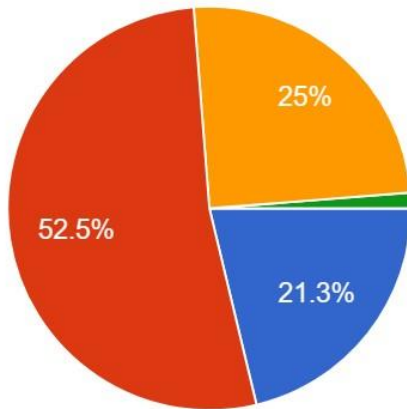
Another question was about the kind of infrastructure or resources that rural areas are lacking to support entrepreneurship, and answers have been a 62.5% for having an access to funding, a 13.8 % of high speed internet, a 11.2% of a reliable means of transportation, a 6.3% of skilled labor, and a 1.2% for each of the following either a means of transportation and paying the deposit to the start-up and spreading culture, adopting project or all of the above.



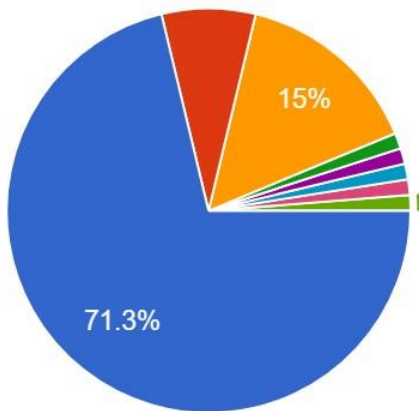
The participants in continuing have been asked about the kind of government policy or support they would like to receive, to support entrepreneurship in rural areas, and the answers have been targeted on 38.7% for receiving funding, 27.5% for upgrading the infrastructure, another 27.5% for education and training programs,



2.5% for tax incentives, and 1.2% for applying environmental and climatic legislation and recommendations or all of the above.



Regarding the participants' perception on how they see the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas, a 52.5% have chosen that they perceive it as 'a growth', a 25% mentioned 'declining', a 21.3% chose 'stable' and a 1.2% stated it is 'moderate'.



Moreover, the participants have been asked if they would recommend entrepreneurship in rural areas to others. And if so, why? Answers have been 71.3% with 'Yes', a 15% with 'May be', a 7.5% with 'No', and a 1.2% for each of the following reasons; 'There are challenges, but so do opportunities', 'Because it is a learning

environment and you can discover new things while market competition can create job opportunities’, ‘To improve the level of income and raise the standard of living during difficult economic conditions’, ‘To revive the spatial connection and improve public taste’, and an answer of a ‘Maybe, due to the difficulty of coping with the situation which increases possibility of failure especially if the idea is new and uncommon which makes it hard to spread’.

Another question was ‘What type of business or industry do you think has the most potential for growth in rural areas?’ and here are samples of the diverse answers we received:

- There are many industries that can grow in rural areas, depending on local conditions and the economic and social needs of the area. However, some industries have more opportunities for growth in rural areas, including:

1. **Agriculture:** Rural areas can benefit from the vast agricultural lands, climate suitable for cultivation, and the available groundwater. It is possible to diversify the crops grown and develop organic farming and sustainability in agricultural production.

2. **Rural tourism:** Where rural areas can exploit the beauty of nature, cultural heritage and local traditions to develop the tourism industry. Visitor excursions, art shows and local festivals can be organized to boost rural tourism.

3. **Craft industries:** Rural areas can benefit from the skills of local artisans and develop traditional craft industries such as textiles, ceramics, leather, wood and metals. These products can be marketed in the domestic and global markets.

4. **Renewable energy:** Rural areas can benefit from renewable energy sources such as solar energy, wind and water, and develop projects to generate renewable energy. New job opportunities and improvement of the economic situation of the region can be created through this industry.

As growth opportunities in these industries can vary from region to region, and it is important to assess local conditions and identify which industries can bring the greatest benefit to the region. Social, environmental and economic issues related to the development of industries in rural areas must also be considered, and



sustainable and equitable development that benefits the local population and preserves the surrounding environment must be ensured.

Moreover, there were a lot of **agriculture and industry** focused ideas, here are some answers:

- Agriculture and Agricultural industrialization
- Everything related to agricultural products, such as extracting oils, perfumes, making handicraft products, drying plants, and more.
- Rural areas are usually surrounded by extensive farmland and enjoy rich natural resources and a climate suitable for farming. Modern technology developments can contribute to increasing agricultural productivity and improving the quality of agricultural products.
- Services that provide solutions to facilitate the citizen's life, and perhaps to suit the interests, we provide solutions and services related to agriculture or livestock raising.
- Dates' packaging projects
- Developing and localizing agricultural inputs (fertilizers, fodder, greenhouses)
- Agricultural marketing of agricultural crops
- Food factories that depend on agriculture
- Agriculture and Livestock + International craftsmanship of natural products such as palm frond carpets
- Agricultural industry
- Rural Farming
- Recycling agricultural and consumer waste, drying tomatoes, making a sauce
- Production of organic fertilizers
- Compost for agricultural and land treatment and human health preservation
- Exploiting green spaces to grow good things in investments and exports of high value instead of cheap traditional crops
- Educational facilities, and Work in agriculture and some innovative and educational ideas.
  
- **Handicrafts**, Vegetable drying, Agriculture, commerce, agricultural manufacturing, Manufacturing and innovation, All kinds of feeds and agricultural fertilizers, agricultural food, Agriculture and livestock.
- Food and grain industry, Industry on electric panels, Big Markets, agricultural products, Trade (physical or electronic), Furniture Industry, Expansion of modern agriculture and complementary industries.



- Industrial handmade, such as kilim work and leather
- Tailoring, raising livestock and selling dairy products
- Honey Apiaries, Poultry farming, Aqua fishing, Handicrafts and furnishings, and drying tomatoes.
- Animal production and agriculture
- Manufacture of detergents and consumables
- Commercial industrial crops, Textile and food industry, Fish farming, manufacture of detergents and consumables, Agriculture and export, and Industry on electric panels
- SMEs, and software houses, Food Industry, Local agricultural products, Agricultural products of aromatic and medicinal herbs.
- Hydroponics and cultivation of mushrooms and mulberry trees for the production of silk

Also, it has been mentioned by many entrepreneurs that potential is **for renewable energy** and **sustainability** as they mentioned:

- Building with environmental and sustainable impact
- Recycling
- Solar energy
- Renewable energy projects, especially providing them to people and companies, in order to reduce the financial burden on them
- Green energy, sustainable development in farming.
- Energy (biogas - solar energy)
- Solar energy projects
- Biofuels

A different perspective has been focused on **tourism**:

- From my point of view, the countryside can be exploited for tourism. The countryside has many natural resources that make it possible to be exploited in this way, in light of the availability of the infrastructure that allows access to the countryside.





One point of view has been mentioned by one of the entrepreneurs that ‘the rural area is full of cadres and workers, but there is no financial support available, and there are no job opportunities for girls and women, except for very few chances.’

Last question has been about any additional comments or observations to make on the topic of entrepreneurship in rural areas, up to 33 responses have been made with observations, such as:

- Yes, there are many ideas among young people in rural areas, and many young people need training and financing to turn these ideas into projects on the ground and make relationships with other entrepreneurs in the market.

- Yes, there are some additional comments and observations that can be made on the topic of rural entrepreneurship:

1. Entrepreneurship in rural areas needs support from the government, financial institutions and NGOs, where financing, technical assistance, training and logistical support can be provided to small and medium rural enterprises.

2. Entrepreneurship in rural areas should be stimulated by encouraging innovation, providing opportunities, improving infrastructure, developing local services, and providing a market for rural entrepreneurs. This can be achieved by providing access to technology, communication, training, developing local networks, and providing job opportunities for unemployed youth in rural areas.

3. Entrepreneurship can be stimulated in rural areas by encouraging community participation and stimulating collaboration between local farmers, artisans and producers. Collaborative initiatives can be developed and local resources exploited to improve employment and income opportunities in rural areas.

4. Entrepreneurship in rural areas should be linked to sustainable development and environmental protection. By developing small and medium enterprises in sectors such as organic agriculture, ecotourism and renewable energy, sustainable development can be achieved in rural areas and the socio-economic status of the local population can be improved.

5. There should be a focus on improving the level of education and training in rural areas, where specialized training courses can be provided in entrepreneurship, marketing, management, design, technology and other skills that enhance the chances of success of small and medium rural enterprises. This can be achieved by

providing the necessary support to educational and training institutions in rural areas and by encouraging learners and youth to participate in education and training programs.

6. Innovation and technology should be encouraged in rural entrepreneurship, where modern technology can be used to improve enterprise management, enhance productivity, diversify products and improve quality. Access to technology can be improved and made more accessible and suitable for small and medium rural projects, such as the use of smart applications and modern software for project management, data analysis and e-marketing.

7. Partnerships between the public and private sectors, academic institutions and the local community should be encouraged in the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, where coordination, cooperation and beneficial exchange of available knowledge, expertise and resources can be achieved. This can be achieved by organizing workshops, forums and conferences that bring together stakeholders and encourage dialogue and cooperation to develop entrepreneurship in rural areas.

In general, entrepreneurship in rural areas needs comprehensive and integrated support that includes social, economic, environmental, educational and technological aspects. When entrepreneurship is developed in rural areas, new opportunities for employment, sustainable development and improvement of life in rural communities can be achieved.

- Providing training and scientific courses that help develop the innovation of optimal utilization of the procession of the rural labor market
  - Rural areas have natural resources that can be converted and reused
  - Our youth aspires to a prosperous future, and we have all the mental capabilities, but unfortunately it is the material capability
  - Interest in the countryside and things that can be made in a rural environment
  - Paying attention to the abundance of introductory trainings for entrepreneurship in the Egyptian countryside
- Financing small projects and supporting youth in the labor market
- You should start with simple projects such as growing mushrooms, herbs, and hydroponics, incorporating fish farms
  - There are many unique ideas through which we may utilize all plant waste in different products and services that are environment and climate friendly. Thank you very much.

- Establishing a one-class school in each village to teach artificial intelligence, even if it is for ten students every year, and providing workspace
- Manufacturing bricks that are environmentally impactful and sustainable
- Please pay attention to entrepreneurship in rural areas
- Increasing entrepreneurship companies in various fields and opportunities for marketing products and financing, as the financial return and income is usually not much for families in the countryside, because most of them work for daily wages and do not have the opportunity to work every day; they are not employees. Therefore, if women have the ability to work inside their houses, they can support their families.

Others raised some personal points:

- How can I get financing to start a rural project?
- I would like someone to reach out to me regarding a pomegranate export project.

## Conclusion

To sum up, based on our findings from the survey done by that tier of entrepreneurs, the main motive behind starting their entrepreneurial projects in rural areas has been either due to lower living and operating costs or having an access to natural resources. Whereas their main challenges have been the lack of resources or financing and the limited number of clients. Many entrepreneurs have received training either from governmental programs or NGOs but there is still a significant number who have not received any courses or trainings and would like to receive entrepreneurship education. In terms of financing, it has been mainly from private investors, governmental programs or loans, etc.

There are a lot of opportunities to invest for in rural areas , as it is a rich environment with a lot of natural resources that enable youth to discover mainly-but not limited to- agriculture, industry and energy projects' opportunities .However, they referred to financing as the main resource that they lack, which takes us to the suggestion that entrepreneurs in rural areas are of a need for more knowledge about the means through which they can make the optimum benefit of the resources they have access to and limit the challenges that they may face in their paths to establish their businesses and work on developing them continuously.



But overall, they mostly share a positive outlook on entrepreneurship in rural areas; they recommend it to other youth and look forward to witnessing a bright future of entrepreneurship in rural areas which gets along very well with YERAME project's objective to contribute to the development of sustainable and inclusive economies in the region and to create a brighter future for youth in rural communities.

## 1.6 Tunisia

### Introduction

Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas of Tunisia heralds a transformative narrative of innovation, resilience, and local empowerment. Nestled within the tapestry of Tunisia's diverse landscapes, rural communities are witnessing the emergence of a new generation of enterprising individuals who are breathing life into traditional sectors and charting novel pathways towards economic growth. Against a backdrop of agricultural heritage and evolving global dynamics, young Tunisian entrepreneurs are harnessing their talents and ambition to redefine the rural narrative, infusing it with modernity, sustainability, and an unwavering commitment to community development.

In this exploration of youth entrepreneurship in rural Tunisia, we delve into the challenges and opportunities that define this dynamic movement. From confronting infrastructural limitations to tapping into digital connectivity, young entrepreneurs are demonstrating their ability to blend age-old practices with cutting-edge technologies. We examine the policy frameworks, support mechanisms, and cultural dynamics that shape the entrepreneurial journey in Tunisia's rural heartlands. Moreover, we shed light on the far-reaching impact of these endeavors, not only as engines of economic progress but also as catalysts for social cohesion, innovation, and the preservation of Tunisian cultural heritage.

In the ever-evolving context of Tunisia's rural landscapes, this discussion celebrates the tenacity, resourcefulness, and ingenuity of young Tunisian entrepreneurs. Their ventures are not just reshaping economic landscapes but also contributing to the holistic development of their communities. Through the



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interplay of innovation and tradition, these young visionaries are not only driving their own success but are also weaving the fabric of a renewed rural narrative that embraces both the past and the future.

The purpose of this survey was to gather insights into entrepreneurship in rural areas of Tunisia.

A total of 27 participants responded to the questionnaire, providing valuable information about their gender, age, education level, business location, challenges, opportunities, and future prospects for rural entrepreneurship.

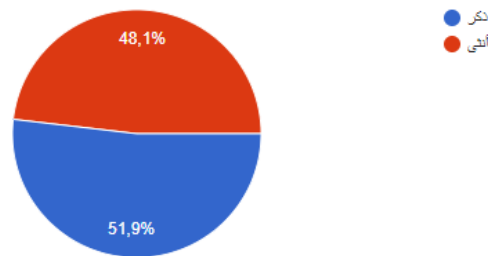
## Questionnaire results

### Key Findings:

#### Gender Distribution:

Male: 14 (51.9%)

Female: 13 (48.1%)



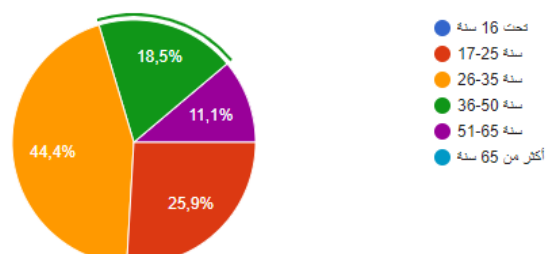
The survey saw relatively equal participation from both male and female entrepreneurs, indicating that rural entrepreneurship is not gender-biased and is accessible to all.

#### Location:

Tunisia: 26 (96.3%)

Spain: 1 (3.7%)

The overwhelming majority of respondents were from Tunisia, reaffirming the focus on understanding the local dynamics and challenges of rural entrepreneurship within the country.





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#### Age Group:

17-25: 7 (25.9%)

26-30: 12 (44.4%)

Over 30: 5 (18.5%)

The survey attracted responses from a diverse age group, with a significant number of young entrepreneurs (aged 17-30), indicating the increasing interest and engagement of the youth in rural entrepreneurial endeavors.

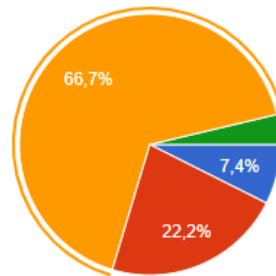
#### Target Audience:

All Categories: 18 (66.7%)

Kids: 1 (3.7%)

People with Limited Resources: 2 (7.4%)

Children and Youth: 6 (22.2%)



● أشخاص ذوي موارد محدودة  
● الأطفال والشباب  
● كل الفئات  
● الأطفال

#### Education Level:

Secondary School: 3 (11.1%)

Vocational or Technical Training: 9 (33.3%)

University or Higher Education: 15 (55.6%)

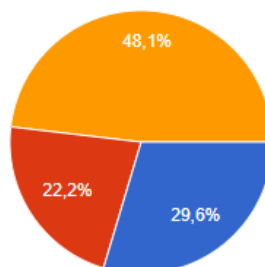
The majority of participants held a higher education degree, reflecting the positive correlation between education and entrepreneurship.

#### Residence Area:

Urban-City: 8 (29.6%)

Suburban: 6 (22.2%)

Rural: 13 (48.1%)



● منطقة حضرية - مدينية  
● ضاحية  
● ريف

A significant portion of respondents lived in rural areas, reaffirming the relevance of the survey to the target population.

#### Years Involved in Rural Entrepreneurship:

Less than 1 year: 7 (25.9%)

1-3 years: 8 (29.6%)

3-5 years: 3 (11.1%)

More than 5 years: 9 (33.3%)

The survey captured insights from entrepreneurs with varying experience levels, from novices to seasoned entrepreneurs, providing a comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced in rural entrepreneurship.

#### Motivation for Starting Business in Rural Area:

Access to Natural Resources: 9 (33.3%)

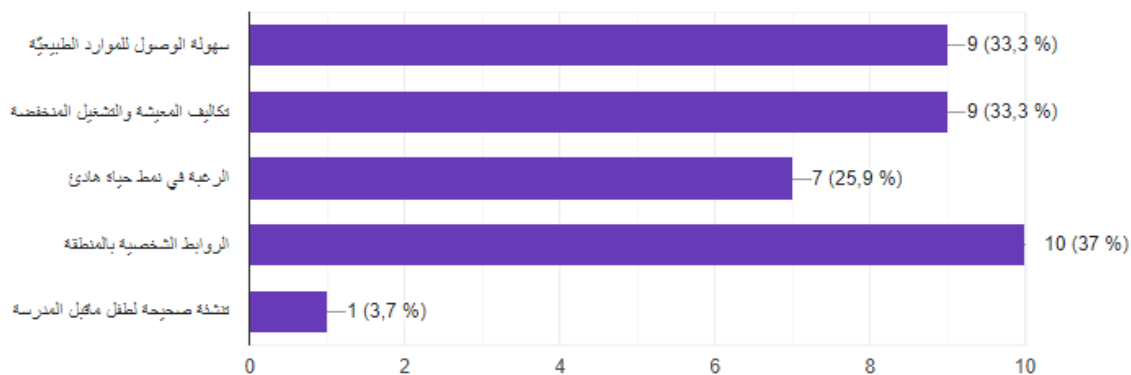
Lower Cost of Living and Operating Expenses: 9 (33.3%)

Desire for a Quieter Lifestyle: 7 (25.9%)

Personal Ties to the Area: 10 (37.0%)

Other reasons: 1 (3.7%)

27 réponses



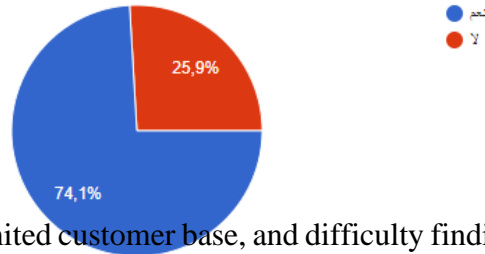


Participants cited diverse motivations, including access to natural resources, cost advantages, personal connections to the area, and lifestyle preferences.

Challenges Faced:

Yes: 20 (74.1%)

No: 7 (25.9%)



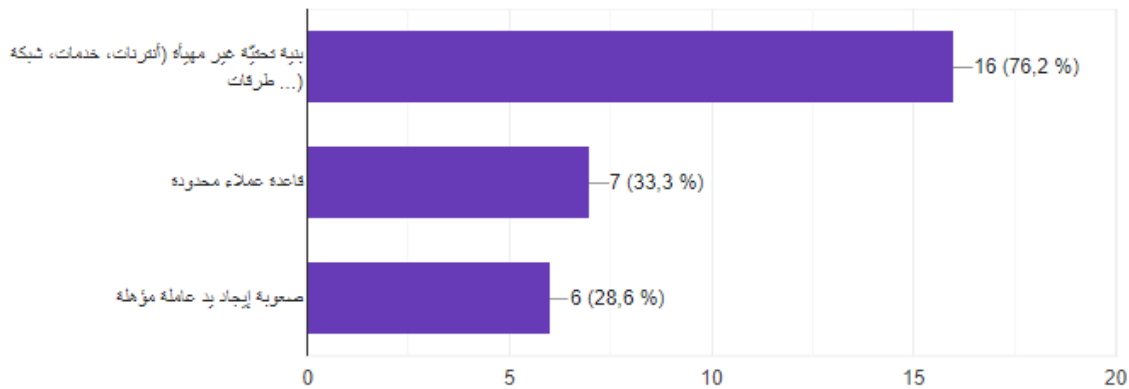
Lack of infrastructure and resources, limited customer base, and difficulty finding skilled labor were identified as the primary challenges faced by entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Main Challenges:

Lack of Access to Infrastructure and Resources: 16 (59.3%)

Limited Customer Base: 7 (25.9%)

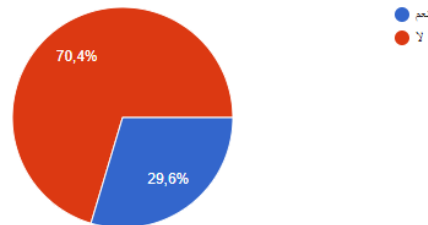
Difficulty Finding Skilled Labor: 6 (22.2%)



Received Training or Support:

Yes: 8 (29.6%)

No: 19 (70.4%)







A significant portion of respondents reported a lack of training or support for rural entrepreneurship, indicating a potential gap in available resources.

**From Whom:**

Government Programs: 1 (3.7%)

Non-profit Organizations: 6 (22.2%)

Private Companies: 2 (7.4%)

**Access to Financing:**

Bank Loans: 3 (11.1%)

Government Programs: 3 (11.1%)

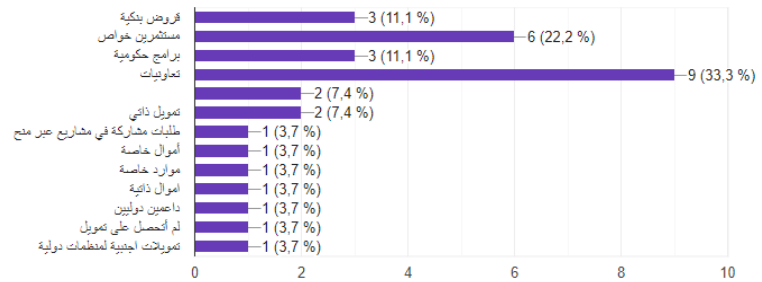
Private Investors: 6 (22.2%)

Crowdfunding: 9 (33.3%)

Auto-financing: 8 (29.6%)

International Donors: 4 (14.8%)

27 réponses



Respondents relied on various sources for financing, with a majority indicating challenges in accessing funds for their rural businesses.

**Market Opportunities in Rural Areas:**

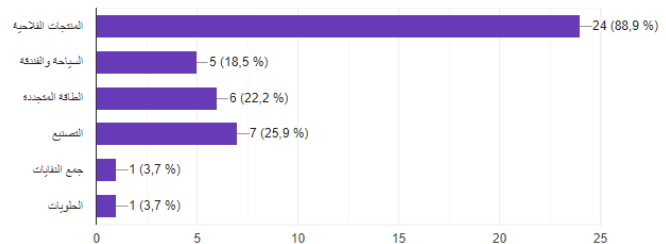
Agricultural Products: 24 (88.9%)

Tourism and Hospitality: 5 (18.5%)

Renewable Energy: 6 (22.2%)

Manufacturing: 7 (25.9%)

Others: 2 (7.4%)



Agricultural products emerged as the dominant market opportunity, reflecting the agricultural nature of many rural regions.

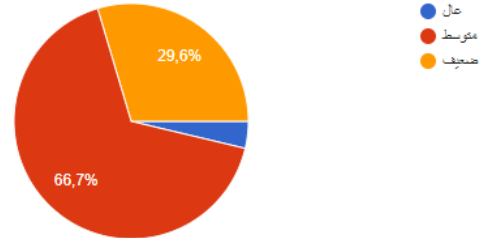


### Level of Competition in Rural Areas:

High: 1 (3.7%)

Moderate: 18 (66.7%)

Low: 8 (29.6%)



The majority of respondents perceived a moderate level of competition in rural areas, presenting opportunities for entrepreneurs to establish themselves.

### Customer Reach:

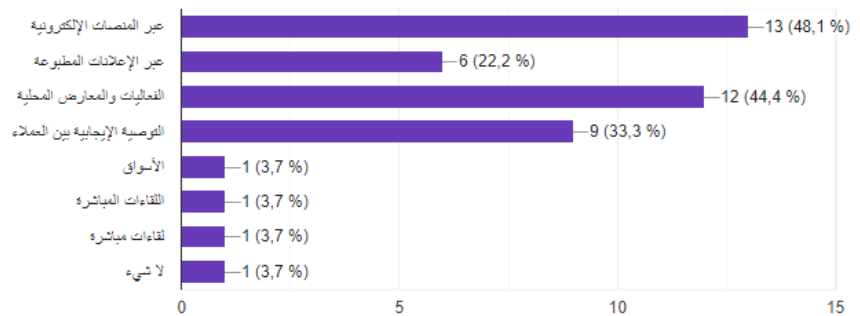
Online Platforms: 13 (48.1%)

Print Advertising: 6 (22.2%)

Local Events and Fairs: 12 (44.4%)

Word of Mouth: 9 (33.3%)

Others: 4 (14.8%)



Online platforms and local events were the primary means for reaching customers in rural areas.

### Lacking Infrastructure/Resources in Rural Areas:

High-speed Internet: 12 (44.4%)

Reliable Transportation: 13 (48.1%)

Access to Financing: 21 (77.8%)

Skilled Labor: 8 (29.6%)

Access to Water: 1 (3.7%)

Worn-out Infrastructure: 1 (3.7%)

High-speed internet, reliable transportation, and access to financing were identified as crucial infrastructure needs to support rural entrepreneurship.

Desired Government Support:

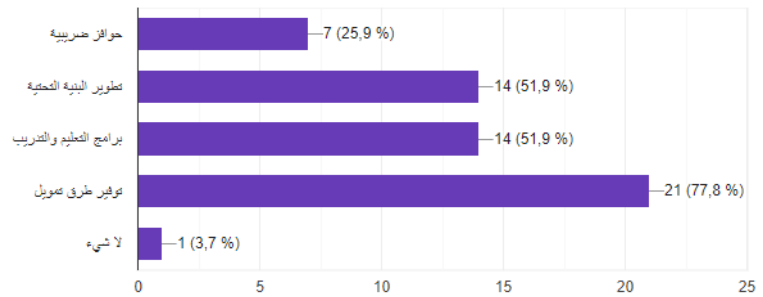
Tax Incentives: 7 (25.9%)

Infrastructure Development: 14 (51.9%)

Education and Training Programs: 14 (51.9%)

Access to Financing: 21 (77.8%)

No Specific Support: 1 (3.7%)



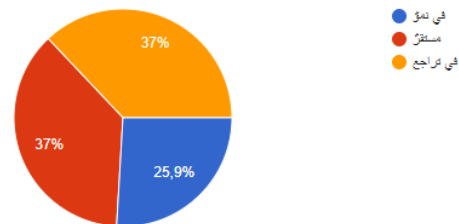
Participants expressed the need for policies focusing on infrastructure development, education, and training programs, and improved access to financing to bolster rural entrepreneurship.

Future of Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas:

Growing: 7 (25.9%)

Stable: 10 (37.0%)

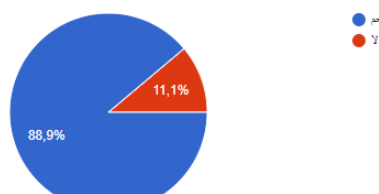
Declining: 10 (37.0%)



Responses on the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas were evenly divided between growing, stable, and declining, indicating diverse opinions and uncertainties about the trajectory.

Would You Recommend Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas?

When asked if they would recommend entrepreneurship in rural areas to others, the majority of respondents (24 out of 27) expressed a positive response, advocating for the establishment of businesses in rural regions. Some of the key reasons provided by the participants include:



**Job Creation:** Many respondents emphasized that entrepreneurship in rural areas could provide much-needed job opportunities for the unemployed youth and residents.

**Youth Empowerment:** Several participants highlighted the importance of supporting young individuals and empowering them to take charge of their economic future through entrepreneurship.

**Decompressing Cities:** Entrepreneurship in rural areas can contribute to reducing the population pressure in urban centers by encouraging economic activities in rural regions.

**Sustainable Development:** Participants recognized the potential of rural areas for sustainable development, harnessing natural and agricultural resources.

**Diverse Opportunities:** Respondents noted that rural areas offer various creative ideas and untapped potential for innovative businesses.

**Linking Isolated Areas to Production Structures:** Some participants saw entrepreneurship as a means to connect remote and isolated areas with productive economic structures.

**Equal Opportunities:** Entrepreneurship in rural areas can contribute to promoting equal opportunities and balanced regional development.

### **Type of Activity with the Greatest Growth Potential in Rural Areas:**

Regarding the type of activity believed to have the greatest growth potential in rural areas, participants shared diverse opinions. Some of the potential activities identified include:

**Agriculture and Agro-Industries:** Participants saw great potential in agricultural-related businesses, such as extracting oils, perfumes, making handicraft products, drying plants, and more.

**Rural Tourism:** Several respondents highlighted the possibilities for rural tourism, capitalizing on the beauty of nature, cultural heritage, and local traditions to attract visitors.

**Craft Industries:** Rural areas were seen as opportunities to develop traditional craft industries, such as textiles, ceramics, leather, woodwork, and metalwork, with products marketed domestically and globally.

**Renewable Energy Projects:** Some participants identified renewable energy projects, especially those providing access to green energy for people and companies, as a promising area for growth.



**Agricultural Activities:** Many responses focused on various agricultural activities, such as farming, agricultural product processing, and the cultivation of specific crops like olives and medicinal plants.

**Cultural and Educational Activities:** A few participants expressed interest in fostering cultural and educational activities in rural areas to promote local heritage and learning opportunities.

**Sports and Training Centers:** Sports and training centers were mentioned as potential avenues for growth in rural areas.

### **How Participants Measure the Success of Their Rural Business:**

The survey inquired about the criteria used by entrepreneurs to measure the success of their rural businesses. While specific answers varied, common indicators included:

**Profitability:** Many participants considered financial success, including revenue generation and profitability, as a key measure of their business's success.

**Impact on Community:** Several respondents highlighted the impact their business had on the local community, such as job creation, improved living standards, and supporting local needs.

**Sustainability:** Some entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of environmentally sustainable practices and their business's contribution to long-term sustainability.

**Customer Satisfaction:** Measuring success based on customer satisfaction and positive feedback was mentioned by a few respondents.

**Innovation and Growth:** Some participants indicated that continuous innovation and steady growth were crucial factors for assessing the success of their rural businesses.

### **Additional Comments or Feedback:**

The final question invited participants to provide any additional comments or feedback on the topic of rural entrepreneurship. As responses varied widely, they covered a range of concerns and suggestions, including the need for better support services, financial aid, and infrastructure development in rural areas. Participants also expressed enthusiasm for nurturing and investing in young entrepreneurs in these regions, emphasizing the potential for positive impact and sustainable development.



## Conclusion

Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas of Tunisia illuminates a promising path towards sustainable development, community revitalization, and economic progress. The stories of young Tunisian entrepreneurs in rural landscapes paint a portrait of determination, creativity, and a deep-rooted connection to their cultural heritage. As they navigate challenges and seize opportunities, these enterprising individuals are proving to be the architects of change, infusing rural Tunisia with innovation, purpose, and hope.

The survey results reveal valuable insights into entrepreneurship in rural areas in Tunisia. Participants expressed interest in rural entrepreneurship and highlighted both challenges and opportunities associated with operating in these areas. They emphasized the importance of government support, access to financing, and infrastructure development to promote sustainable and successful rural entrepreneurship. The majority of respondents were optimistic about the future of entrepreneurship in rural areas, and many recommended it as a way to create jobs, stimulate local economies, and foster sustainable development.

Yet, to fully realize this vision, continued support is vital. Government policies that foster an enabling environment, access to financing, mentorship, and digital literacy training will propel rural youth entrepreneurs forward. International partnerships and collaborations can amplify their reach and influence, ensuring that their endeavors are recognized on a global scale.

In the heart of Tunisia's rural landscapes, a dynamic narrative is unfolding. The journey of rural youth entrepreneurship is more than a collection of success stories; it is a testament to the spirit of resilience, creativity, and determination that defines Tunisia's young generation. As these entrepreneurs continue to carve their paths, they shape not only their own destinies but also the future of rural Tunisia – a future that stands on the foundations of heritage, innovation, and the unwavering belief that change is possible even in the most traditional corners of the nation.



## 2. Conclusion and remarks

The Mediterranean region's rural youth entrepreneurial scene is a tapestry woven with obstacles, chances, and unrealized promise. Young entrepreneurs' businesses serve as beacons of creativity, resiliency, and neighborhood rejuvenation as they traverse a challenging landscape shaped by historical legacies, contemporary aspirations, and global dynamics.

**Status:** The status of youth entrepreneurship in Mediterranean rural areas varies, influenced by economic, social, and political factors unique to each country. While some regions have witnessed a surge in young entrepreneurs embracing technology and sustainable practices, others grapple with limited resources and infrastructural barriers.

**Challenges:** The journey of rural youth entrepreneurs is often marked by challenges that transcend borders. Limited access to funding, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory complexities hinder growth. Political instability, brain drain to urban centers, and generational shifts add further layers of complexity.

**Opportunities:** are abound in the midst of difficulties. Youth entrepreneurs are ideally situated to use local resources, traditional craftsmanship, and cultural legacy to develop novel solutions. Opportunities for development include agritourism, environmentally friendly practices, sustainable agriculture, and handmade goods.

**Barriers:** Rural youth entrepreneurs encounter a variety of challenges. They include restricted market access, poor support systems, insufficient finance, and administrative roadblocks. The difficulties are made more difficult by gender inequality, a lack of educational options, and risk aversion.

**Market Options:** The vast diversity of the Mediterranean fosters a range of market choices. Historical monuments, culinary traditions, and attractive landscapes can all be used to promote agritourism. The demand

for organic products can be satisfied through sustainable agriculture. While artisanal goods suggest cultural authenticity, technological innovation can overcome rural-urban barriers.

**Future:** Youth entrepreneurship has the ability to revolutionize rural communities in the Mediterranean. Young entrepreneurs can get access to mentoring, money, and resources as long as governments prioritize policies that create an enabling environment. Growth will be fueled by international cooperation, internet connectivity, and environmentally friendly practices.

**Some final remarks:**

- **Initiatives in collaboration:** The Mediterranean region has to take coordinated action to address common concerns. Knowledge sharing, collaborative initiatives, and international networks can have a greater influence and expand horizons.
- **Digital transformation:** For young entrepreneurs in rural areas, embracing digital tools is essential. Global markets can be opened up by using e-commerce, digital marketing, and tech-driven solutions.
- **Empowerment through education:** It is crucial to provide young people with thorough entrepreneurial education and training so they can manage challenges and capture opportunities.
- **Gender Equity:** It's critical to address gender inequalities. Young women entrepreneurs' empowerment encourages inclusive and equitable communities in addition to economic prosperity.
- **Sustainability:** Integrating sustainability into business operations reflects current trends, addresses environmental issues, and appeals to ethical consumers.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Culturally-based entrepreneurship promotes a feeling of identity, revives traditions, and draws tourists while offering economic opportunities.





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- **Policy Advocacy:** It is crucial to include local communities, international organizations, and policymakers. Politics that support rural youth entrepreneurship as a source of prosperity can be shaped by advocacy.

Youth entrepreneurship in rural communities provides promise beyond economic prosperity in the Mediterranean's mix of cultures, landscapes, and history. It acts as a catalyst for keeping traditions alive, reviving communities, and kindling optimism, offering a picture of a future where progress and tradition may coexist together.



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