

Rural citizenship speaks

Rural Proofing against the “deceived” Spain



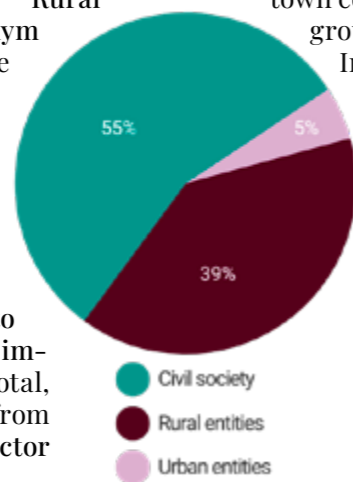
Proposals from civil society, companies, third sector and public administrations to elevate the rural at the international level

The Rural Proofing or Rural Guarantee Mechanism emerges as a methodology to reverse the trend of depopulation, thanks to the promotion of the review of regulations and policies from a rural perspective.

Spain has set a precedent at the European level by incorporating Rural Proofing into the Law 27/2022, of December 20, on the institutionalization of the evaluation of public policies in the General State Administration. This Public Policy Evaluation Law, approved in December 2022, includes an Additional Provision which includes the impulse that the government will offer for the implementation of the Rural Proofing.

The Spanish Network for Rural Development (REDR for its acronym in Spanish) has been supporting the mainstreaming of rural areas in policies, strategies and regulations for decades.

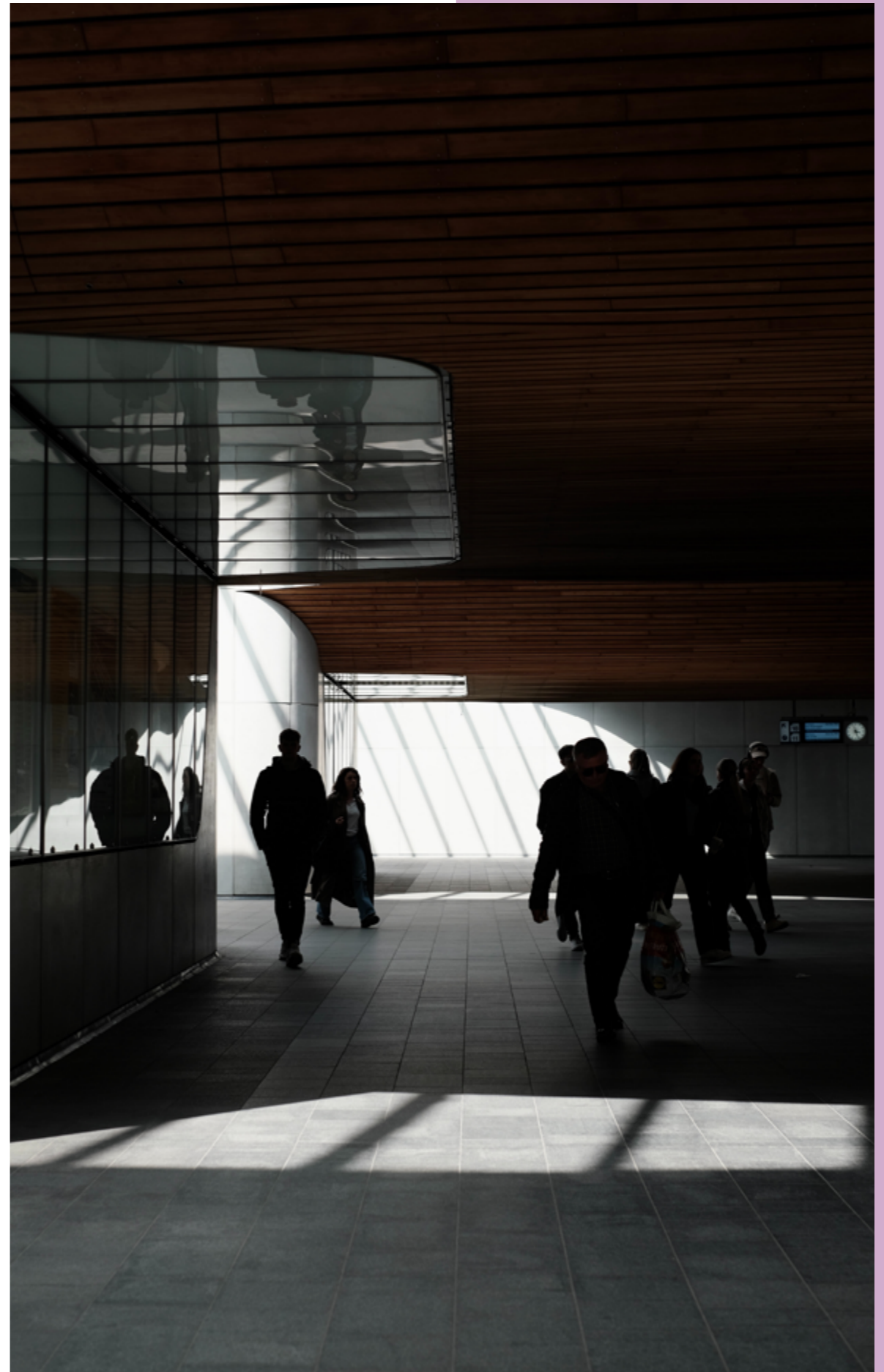
This year REDR has conducted a public consultation to identify the main demands and proposals of rural population, called "Listening to the population: testimonies for the implementation of Rural Proofing". In total, REDR received 166 contributions from civil society, companies, the third sector and public administrations.



Survey participation

Among the rural entities, Local Action Groups, town councils, associations, companies, libraries, grouped rural centers, etc. participated. In relation to the urban entities, the answers were provided by town councils, associations, foundations and companies.

This document sets out the main challenges and proposals shared in the consultation, classified into the main problems detected: agri-food production, employment and entrepreneurship, access to health services, digitalization and connectivity, transport, housing and access to educational and cultural services.



Production, processing and commercialization of the agri-food sector

CHALLENGES

Adapt the regulations for agri-food production and transformation in rural areas (sanitary controls, transportation, establishment qualification, etc).

To promote the sale and local consumption of local agricultural and livestock products.

PROPOSALS

1. To identify and classify agri-food production in Spain, the EU and at international level.
2. To compare existing agri-food production, processing and sales requirements between countries and the EU.
3. To map good practices for the promotion of artisanal agri-food production in rural areas through regulations and legislation.
4. To encourage innovative initiatives that promote direct sales and local consumption.
5. To promote inter-territorial and transnational cooperation for experience exchange.

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The rural environment should be provided with a logistic center for local agricultural and livestock products. Our territory is very far from Granada or even Murcia. We are more than an hour and a half from some municipalities in the area (as in the case of Huéscar), but if we had our own food products center nearby, it would help us to avoid trips to large supermarkets. For now we are doing it in a more voluntary way to have this service (citizen networks of local consumption).

Teresa María G. J.
48 years old
GDR Altiplano de Granada

Natalia D. A. G.
47 years old
Villamiel, Cáceres

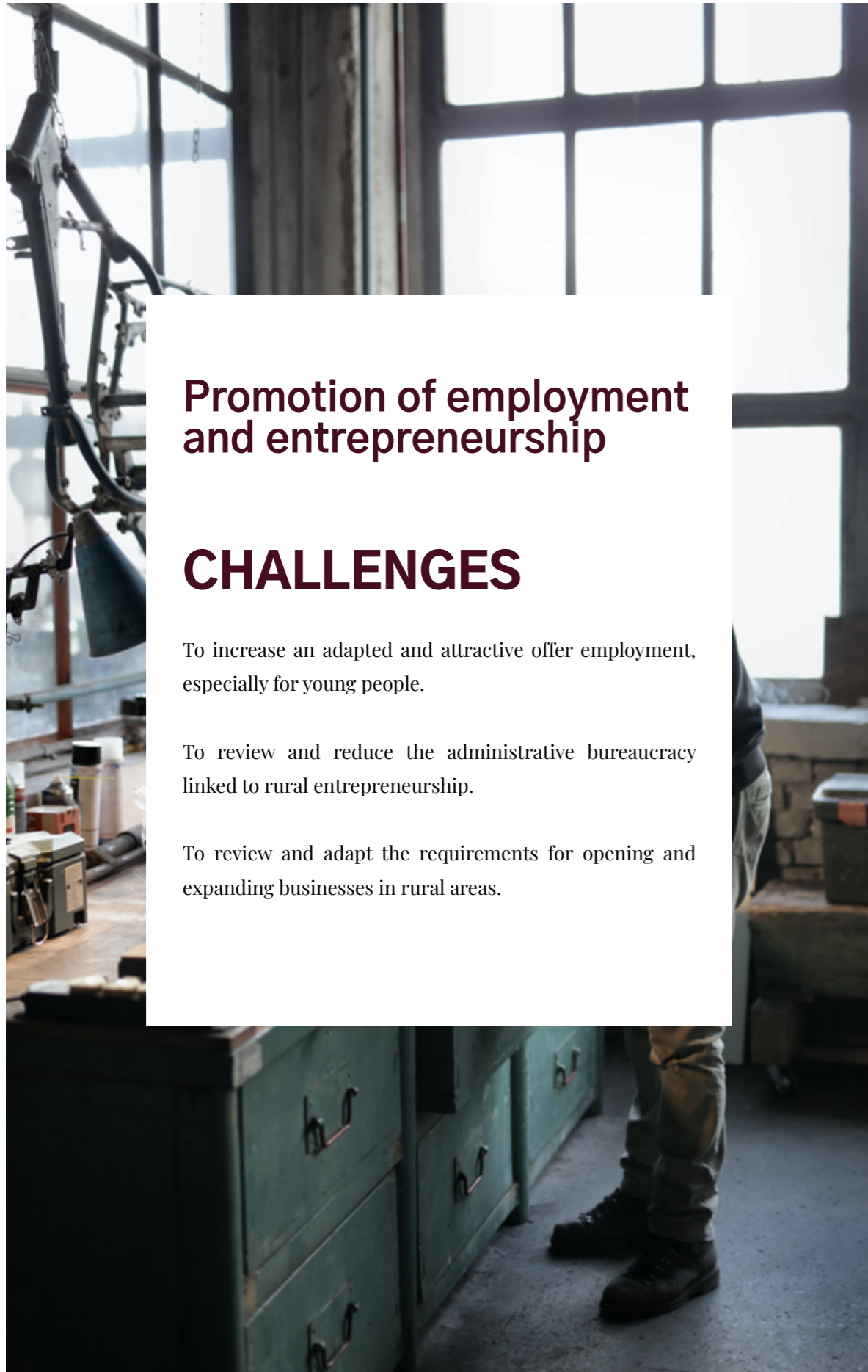
The requirements requested for the opening of a rural food craft coworking are excessive and hinder the implementation of product processing activities in food crafts in rural areas, it resembles large industries and we are required a lot for small and medium productions that we do. In many cases, this prevents us from being able to transform in our territory and generate added value there. We have to go to the cities or to big industries to transform, losing the added value of our raw material.

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I advise entrepreneurs and I consider that the necessary requirements for small agri-food businesses complementary to rural houses (such as making jams, pâtés...) are unfeasible in rural areas. They are asked the same as an agri-food industry.

Carmen A. L.
Comarca Comunidad de Teruel



Promotion of employment and entrepreneurship

CHALLENGES

To increase an adapted and attractive offer employment, especially for young people.

To review and reduce the administrative bureaucracy linked to rural entrepreneurship.

To review and adapt the requirements for opening and expanding businesses in rural areas.

PROPOSALS

1. To carry out a comparison of market niches in Spain, the EU and internationally.
2. Promote inter-territorial and international cooperation for the exchange of good practices.
3. To make a comparison of the requirements for opening a business in Spain, the EU and at international level.
4. Promote rural youth employment (through dialogue tables, youth employment creation programs, etc.).

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The legislation of different *concellos* are very old and inconsistent regulations for the opening of establishments. For example, in a place I opened, I was obliged to have a bathroom for every 100 square meters. The premises were 520 square meters... you can imagine! Barbaric expenses. Nowadays it is difficult to open a business due to the lack of up-to-date regulations.

Amelia G.
52 years old
Sardiñeiro, A Coruña

Ismael T. S.
30 years old
Magallón, Zaragoza

The profits generated by a business in a rural area will generally be lower than those generated by the same business in an urban area, simply because of potential customers. It would be necessary to support the operation of these businesses and tax breaks for the hiring of personnel.

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Bureaucratic red tape and administrative requirements can be more complex and time-consuming in rural areas, making it more difficult for new ventures to establish and grow. Licensing, permitting or registration procedures can be more complicated and costly, which can discourage rural entrepreneurship. It is essential to promote a more streamlined and simplified bureaucracy, adapted to the peculiarities of rural areas, in order to foster development and continue to promote the socio-economic growth of these territories.

Ángel S.R.
GAL Valles Pasiegos,
Cantabria



Access to health services

CHALLENGES

Strengthen proximity health care.

Promote innovative solutions for patient care, adapted to the different rural realities.

Support greater services for the accompaniment and protection of the elderly.

PROPOSALS

1. To compare the proximity of health services (primary care and specialized care services) between regions and countries of the EU and internationally.
2. To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of implementing digital care in certain health services (through testing or sandbox).
3. To identify and test innovative health access initiatives in Spain, the EU and at international level.
4. To design innovative pilot projects that ensure active aging of the elderly and facilitate their access to health services.

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We only have a pediatrician 2 times a week and sometimes not even that. Video assistance with pediatrics would be a good option to at least have someone to consult if there are no serious issues. Pharmacies or medicine cabinets are also a scarce commodity. In my town, although there are two pharmacies, there is no emergency pharmacy and, if you need it urgently, you have to go to Aranda de Duero, 50 km away go and return (if you have a car, of course).

Isabel B. C.
46 years old
Roa de Duero, Burgos

Francisco R. A.
CRA Ría del Eo

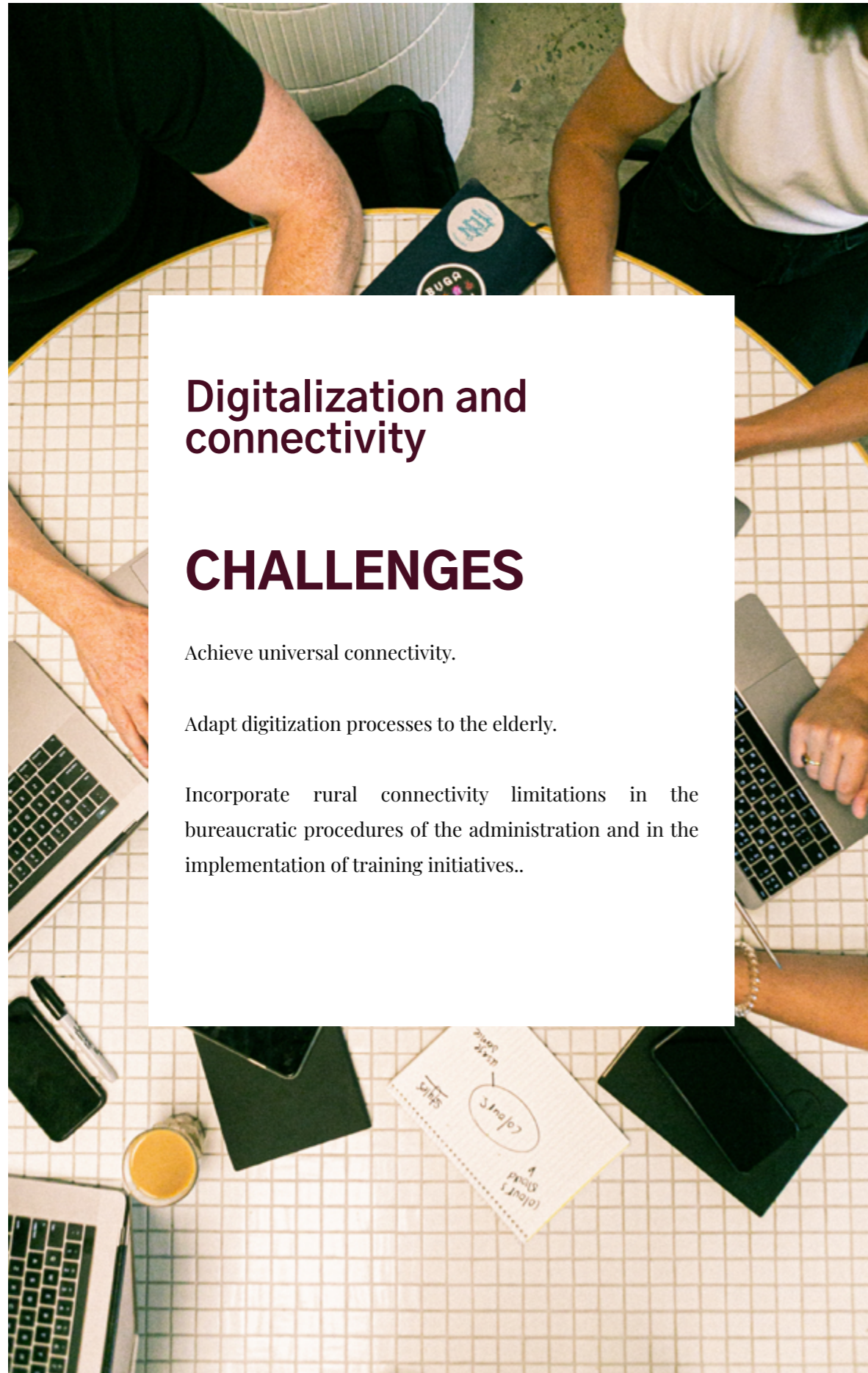
The lack of adequate means and facilities to be able to carry out our work in the same conditions as in urban areas. In line with this, invest in the improvement of all public facilities located in rural areas, whether they be educational centres, doctors' surgeries, etc.

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Although in theory Spaniards have the same rights, in rural areas we feel abandoned. We are the “deceived Spain”.

María Jesús L.
54 years old
Medina de Pomar,
Burgos



Digitalization and connectivity

CHALLENGES

Achieve universal connectivity.

Adapt digitization processes to the elderly.

Incorporate rural connectivity limitations in the bureaucratic procedures of the administration and in the implementation of training initiatives..

PROPOSALS

1. To generate an exhaustive list of municipalities and counties without Internet access.
2. Define the main barriers to the implementation of universal connectivity, beyond the criteria of economic profitability. For example: mountainous regions, geographic isolation, etc.
3. Identify and analyze the potential replication of good practices of universal connectivity in rural areas.
4. Plan the implementation of successful pilot projects to guarantee universal Internet access.

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Nowadays, most of the bureaucratic procedures are carried out through the Internet, assuming that everyone has access to it and the knowledge to use it, when this is not the reality and much less so in rural and remote rural areas.

Paula M. H.
43 years old
León

José M^a C. O.
Municipality of
Mediana de Voltoya,
Ávila

The progressive digitalization of all bureaucratic procedures in the village is hampered by the lack of a stable Internet connection and the lack of digital education of the population due to their advanced age.

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No matter how hard they try to say that there is no digital divide, there is still a lot of rural territory with huge deficiencies in connectivity issues. For example, to pay a tax, make a transfer or attach a document on your computer, you need a verification code that arrives on your cell phone. It is necessary that the mobile operator and the Internet operator are the same to be able to do it from home. There are times when you have to take the car and travel to get the verification code and pray that your computer session is not cancelled. That is not equality.

Blanca M.
Molino de Alcuneza
S.L.

Transport

CHALLENGES

Promote greater rural and urban-rural connections of quality public transport.

Adapt transport subsidies/ economic aids to rural realities.

PROPOSALS

1. Generate an exhaustive list of remote and isolated municipalities in terms of public transport.
2. To implement national, regional and local programs that guarantee transportation between towns and between cities and towns (extension of frequencies, routes, stops, etc.).
3. Study the establishment of subsidies/bonuses for rural families when the use of private transport is obligatory due to the lack of public transport (analyzing its viability through working groups with civil society and actors involved at local, regional and national levels).

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Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about transport vouchers for both bus (with significant reductions in price) and train (which become free). In either case, in my municipality there are practically no people who can benefit from them, and neither in the region, because the public transport network that may have existed in the past has been completely dismantled. The provincial capital (Lugo) is completely disconnected from the rest of the urban areas by rail. **The right to mobility is strongly conditioned to private transport.**

Elena P. B.
30 years old
Xermade, Lugo

Paloma L. J.
60 years old
Campillo de Ranas,
Guadalajara

Before it was necessary to have a vehicle to go anywhere. There was only public transportation twice a week and you had to call. Now the situation has changed a bit; if you need transportation you can call a company that is financed by a public fund and for a small fee, they take you wherever you need to go within the province of Guadalajara. This service is from Monday to Friday and a minibus comes to pick you up.

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Free public transportation for young people did not take into account rural areas, since in many areas it does not exist and they could not benefit from it.

Sergio B. M.
25 years old
Atzeneta del Maestrat,
Castellón

Housing

CHALLENGES

Identify abandoned homes in rural areas.

Increase the percentage of developable land in rural areas in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Promote the purchase and rental of available housing, especially for young people, through grants and subsidies.

Facilitate the implementation of reforms and improvements of available housing.

PROPOSALS

1. To elaborate a homogeneous national catalog of available housing in rural areas.
2. To create a system that facilitates and accompanies homeowners in the sale and rental of their homes.
3. To incentivize the purchase of housing in rural areas (through new housing, especially for young people).
4. Promote new constructions and subsidized housing in rural areas.
5. To facilitate the implementation of reforms and rehabilitation of rural housing (through the detection of regulatory limits and a consensus proposal to make the requirements more flexible).

For the purchase of housing it is not taken into account that it is much more complicated to buy housing in these municipalities with very old houses, which have burdens of not updating papers (cadastrals, etc.) and old housing. Obtaining mortgages is complicated by not meeting the initial barometers of the banks. It should be taken into account that many purchases are associated with the recovery of cultural and/or natural heritage. The banks in the villages are very close, but their rates come from outside and sometimes it is complicated for them to adapt them to the needs we have. Although they want to help in this line we do not enter in their parameters made from an urban vision. We are forced to take a conventional apartment or house, more associated to the cities..

Teresa María G. J.
48 years old
GDR Altiplano de
Granada

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Marta P. H.
45 years old
La Mata de los
Olmos, Teruel

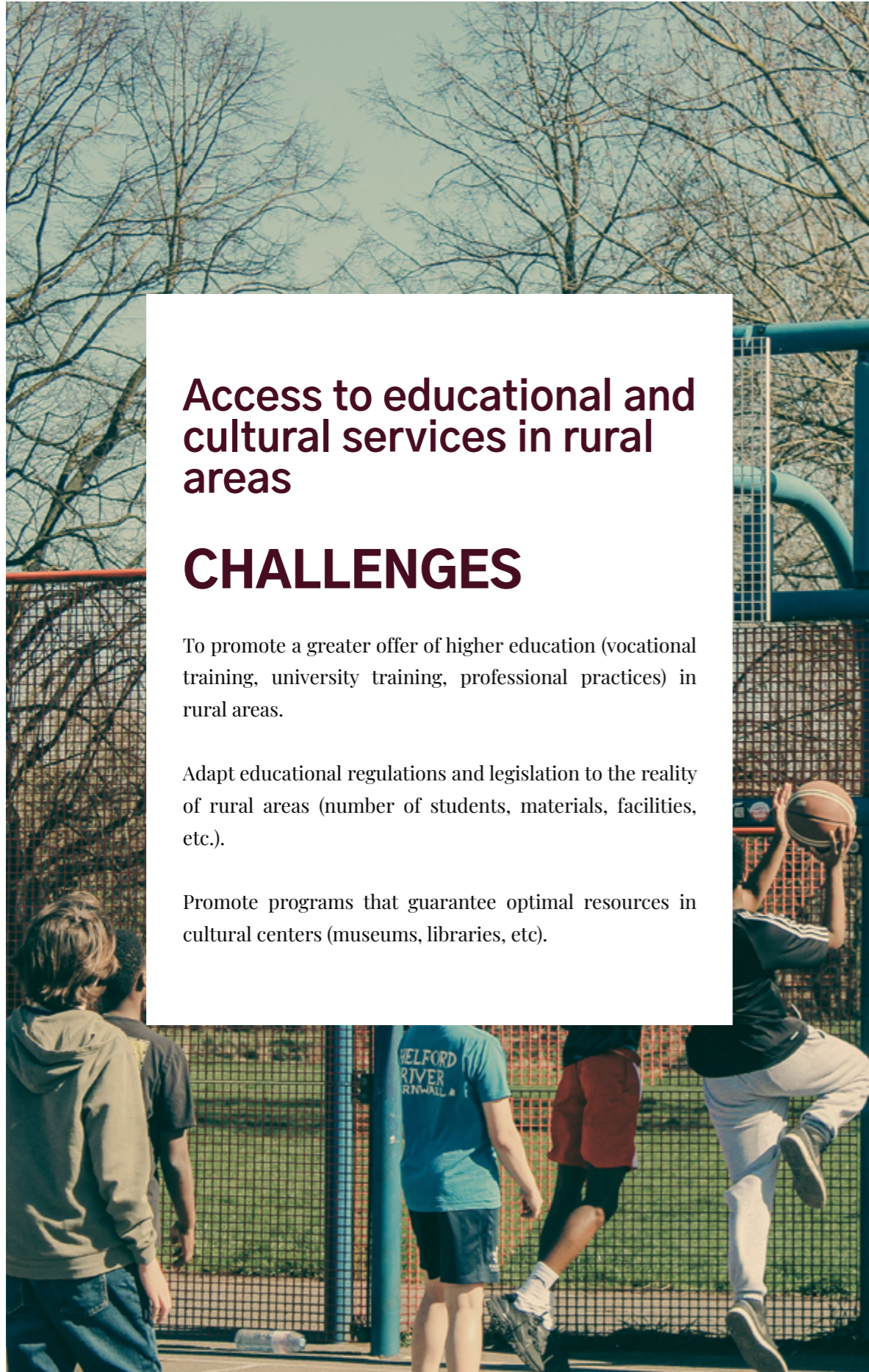
I would like to point out that there are very serious difficulties: the housing problem is real and makes it impossible for many people to stay in the towns, as well as the reconciliation of family and work. It is difficult and complicated to be able to live in a town, even paying the same taxes as others.

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There is no housing policy in small municipalities, only social housing or social rental housing is built in the capital or county seats. Builders are not attracted to make small promotions of houses or apartments so that people can have access to housing in conditions in small municipalities. The rehabilitation of the old quarters is not favored either.

Blanca Z. P.
53 years old
Allo, Navarra



Access to educational and cultural services in rural areas

CHALLENGES

To promote a greater offer of higher education (vocational training, university training, professional practices) in rural areas.

Adapt educational regulations and legislation to the reality of rural areas (number of students, materials, facilities, etc.).

Promote programs that guarantee optimal resources in cultural centers (museums, libraries, etc).

PROPOSALS

1. To identify good practices in the provision of cultural services in the EU and at the international level (itinerant services, living museums, etc.).
2. To promote the decentralization of educational centers, universities and higher education centers.
3. Promote international cooperation to identify good international practices that promote educational and cultural decentralization.
4. Promote dialogue between rural and urban museums for the implementation of cooperation programs and joint initiatives.
5. Analyze difficulties and adapt educational regulations and legislation to the rural reality (in coordination with Rural Schools).

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The lack of adaptation of cultural policies and legislation to the rural environment in which a museum is located can have a direct or indirect impact on its ability to attract visitors and fulfill its mission of preserving and promoting the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

Javier R.
Museums of
Mequinenza,
Zaragoza

Evangelina D. B.
CRA Las Viñas,
Fuendejalón,
Zaragoza

I would highlight the problem of the ratio of specialists who attend to the students who are distributed in different locations, not only in different classrooms. In addition, the lack of public transportation makes every outing with the students more expensive or limits their possibilities for extracurricular activities.

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The poor adjustment of regulations to the rural reality results in the centralization of technical library services in the capital of the province. Few real programs on shared management of technical, cultural and educational resources. There is a need for communication and decision-making channels that reflect the specific needs of the rural population in the field of reading promotion and digital and information literacy. Optimization of resources through, for example, a database of available resources as well as technical support to implement these projects in libraries in rural areas with scarce resources.

M. V. G.
Municipal Public
Library

Rural citizenship speaks



About REDR | redr.es

The Spanish Network for Rural Development (REDR for its acronym in Spanish) is a non-profit association, established in 1995, with the objective of promoting an integrated and sustainable rural development model. The Local Action Groups (LAGs/public-private associations of assembly operation), members of REDR, manage Rural Development Programs and Initiatives, through the LEADER methodology framed in the European Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development (EAFRD), throughout Spain.

The REDR currently has about 180 Local Action Groups (LAGs) associated throughout Spain, in which more than 1,500 technicians work and whose action extends to more than 6,000 municipalities throughout Spain. The REDR acts as an interlocutor of its members, the LAGs, before the different administrations: European, State and Regional. At the international level, it develops capacity for dialogue and coordination and generates and promotes alliances within a participatory local development approach in territorial policies at the international level.



Red Española de Desarrollo Rural

Website | redr.es

Email | redr@redr.es

Twitter | [@redespanola](https://twitter.com/redespanola)

Instagram | [@redespanola](https://www.instagram.com/redespanola)

Facebook | [RedEspanolaDesarrolloRural](https://www.facebook.com/RedEspanolaDesarrolloRural)

