



PRIDE of PLACE

POLICY BRIEF

# PRIDE OF PLACE: A CURRICULUM TO (RE)CONNECT AND ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ENGAGED WITH THEIR RURAL AREAS

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Details of the full report, the school curriculum and other documents are accessible from the project website: [www.prideofplace.eu](http://www.prideofplace.eu)

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## What is Pride of Place?

In general psychology, pride is considered to be a positive emotion consisting in good feelings associated to one's own identity and self-esteem. People are proud of something they do and achieve ("authentic" pride). But they can also be proud of something they are, or of some achievement of external entities they associate to their identity, such as groups and teams they belong to ("hubristic" pride).

Coherently, Pride of Place (PoP) is the positive emotion that people can have for the place they identify or associate themselves with, both from a cognitive point of view (e.g., a place that I recognize as part of my identity) and from an emotional point of view (e.g., a place I am attached to). Even though only a few studies have investigated this issue, it is likely that PoP too could have both an "authentic" and a "hubristic" facet.

## What are the consequences of PoP?

Pride is strongly linked to individual self-esteem and it is strongly associated to feelings of personal well-being. People who feel proud of their place are thus found to be more self-confident and to experience a higher level of well-being overall.

From a community point of view, PoP has positive effects since people who are proud of their places are usually more motivated to protect the place they are attached to and to act in order to improve it. For instance, residents with high PoP will be more willing to contribute to local voluntary associations or more willing to take action if something threatens the neighbourhood (e.g., a new unwanted project). Proud inhabitants will be more willing to enact pro-environmental behaviours and conservation behaviours, especially when these result in an immediate and visible improvement of the local environmental quality.

However, it should be considered that PoP's strong emphasis on the individual's self-esteem, to its extreme effects, could lead to antisocial and narcissistic attitudes of the individuals who would favour their source of PoP, denigrating or even aggressing other individuals, groups, and places they do not belong to. It is thus important to encourage a PoP that, while highlighting the positive features and the uniqueness

## When do people develop PoP?

of the promoted place, still fosters the inclusion and the enrichment of diversity and exchange with other people and places.

According to Ryan's and Deci's Self-Determination Theory<sup>1</sup> (SDT) people have three basic needs that everyone, in all situations, has to constantly fulfill for his/her psychological well-being: *autonomy, relatedness and competence*. These needs are considered as universal and innate, and seen in humanity across time, gender and culture. We feel good when we are with people, in situations, in job conditions, in places that enable us to satisfy these three needs.

When referring to a place, the *relatedness* need can refer to building coherent relationships with others who live in the place, and/or with the place itself. *Autonomy* can relate to the need for self-efficacy, where people feel a need to be able to act toward their place, modify it, change it, maintain it. The need for *competence* relates to the desire to feel capable in mastering certain skills that are needed or useful in that place. Creating a place that enables psychological need satisfaction may encourage people and local residents to become proud or to remain proud of that place. It may also motivate people to stay in that place and to undertake activities to improve and maintain it.

***Therefore, in the context of person-place relationships, if these three psychological needs are satisfied, the chances of acquiring and maintaining PoP increase.***

## How to ease the creation of PoP?

Overall, several studies suggest that PoP can develop through place making and appropriation: people need to be able to contribute to a place—either by modifying its features, customising, or modifying the place through different actions in order to establish a relationship with it. PoP is often found to be associated to places where people perform specific activities, such as keeping fa-

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1 Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *American Psychologist*, 11.

miliar ties, that they feel to be important for their identity, self-esteem, and for enhancing a positive sense of pride.

Places with a strong social and cultural significance are more likely than other places to elicit PoP. In this sense, cultural heritage, in its tangible and non-tangible aspects is likely to be a source of capital for the development of PoP. Cultural heritage can be broadly defined as the function of verbal or nonverbal traditions created by people living in a given place, as the function of production methods, social life, dialects and local language, rituals, festivals and the transfer of behaviours or tangible abstract items to future generations as a result of different experiences.

Cultural heritage has been classified by UNESCO<sup>2</sup> into tangible and intangible items. Tangible cultural heritage refers to buildings and historic places, monuments, artefacts; and objects which bear significance to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture; while intangible cultural heritage includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. According to UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage involves past heritage but also contemporary rural and urban practices of diverse cultural groups.

Cultural heritage can be a relevant source of hubristic pride, while authentic pride can be better enhanced by involving people in place making and place change. For instance, people might be proud of a place because of a relevant historical event that took place there (hubristic pride) and/or because youngsters are involved in decision making and actions for the betterment of the place (authentic pride)

2 UNESCO. *What is meant by “cultural heritage”?*, viewed on 5 July 2020. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/unesco-database-of-national-cultural-heritage-laws/frequently-asked-questions/definition-of-the-cultural-heritage/>





## Why is Pride of Place relevant for rural areas?

Social reputation is also an important factor for enhancing pride of place. For example, living in a place that is well-known and has a positive reputation may incentivize people to feel proud of that place and may also contribute to the establishment of an affective bond with the place. Consider, for instance, the European Capital City label and funding which has helped to promote specific cities in Europe.

Using cultural heritage as an asset to facilitate participation in local initiatives and projects can contribute to social inclusiveness which can help people satisfy their psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence, and incentivize them to be proud of their places.

Rural areas are usually places that are unique in many ways: they often present abundant heritage, such as special landscape features, and an abundance of local traditions, ranging from culinary (local foods and drinks), to language, to arts (music, dance), to job traditions (linked to local natural or commercial resources). From a social point of view, rural areas are also often associated to strong social bonds and tight communities. This seems to imply that people living in rural areas can have a strong PoP and thus be very involved and active in their community and willing to live there and to contribute to its livelihood.

However, the reality we face shows that, at the global level, and particularly in Europe, rural areas are threatened by depopulation, and people living there, especially younger people, tend to move to urban centres.

The goal of this project is to contrast this tendency by means of an increase in youth PoP, in order to motivate them to keep living in the rural areas, or to come back there after having moved to town for their education and job training.

**The goal of this project is to challenge this tendency by encouraging a healthy PoP in young people, that is, by motivating them to remain in rural areas and to attract them to move back in case they have moved away for educational and job-related purposes.**

## How does Pride of Place fit into the political agendas?

Promoting PoP among young people is especially relevant for rural areas in the upcoming decades. Sustainable, inclusive and vibrant rural societies are on many important political agendas at national, European and global level. At least three main policy frameworks can be identified to where PoP and this Erasmus+ project make a contribution to.

The United Nations have set 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup> (SDG) that aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure health and prosperity for all. Rural areas, which cover most of the planet's surface, have an important role in this. In protecting the ecosystems and its biodiversity, a well-established psychological and emotional connection with the local place could be a good starting point. A healthy Pride of Place contributes to exactly that.

The new Common Agricultural Policy<sup>4</sup> (CAP) of the European Union for the period 2021-2027 aims to develop and maintain rural areas and landscapes across the EU. The CAP policy is based on nine objectives that will ensure access to a high-quality and strong agricultural sector and it recognises the importance of the rural community in which most farmers thrive. Two of the objectives are, for example, focused on developing and maintaining vibrant rural areas and preserving landscapes and their biodiversity. A well-established psychological connection with the rural places is fundamental for achieving these objectives as will be outlined in this report.

The European Youth Strategy<sup>5</sup> (2021-2027) that was informed by the Structured Dialogues held with youth in 2017-2018 is based on 11 Youth Goals. The EU Youth Strategy focusses on three core areas: engagement, connection, and empowerment of young people. Through this strategy the EU aims to realise the vision of young people for their future. PoP particularly contributes to Youth goal 6, 'Moving Rural Youth Forward'. This Goal focuses on making rural areas more attractive for young people to remain in and on creating a more positive im-

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3 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

4 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en)

5 [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en)

**How to  
improve  
youth's PoP in  
rural areas? A  
curriculum on  
local heritage,  
uniqueness  
and PoP.**

age of rural areas, both for their residents and to attract tourism and investment. One of the solutions proposed by the young people was to revive rural traditions and heritage in a youth friendly way. The PoP project has aimed to do exactly this: engage, connect and empower young people with their rural areas to increase its livelihood, image and opportunities.

In order to tackle depopulation in rural areas, this project seeks to increase younger people's PoP, with a view to motivate them to remain or to return to the rural area in their adult age. To reach this aim, this research project proposes the implementation of a school curriculum in schools located in rural areas.

Depending on the local specificities, a different set of subjects can be included and different kinds of activities can be run, taking into account contextual factors (age and number of the pupils, availability of material and facilities, and specific features of the local place related to its heritage, etc). The project includes a set of modules that each teacher can use to organize her/his own lessons. The modules are based on the "Inquiry Based Education" technique, thus encouraging the use of participatory learning activities, and of practical and non-formal education.

The curriculum is innovative and makes use of the "Inquiry Based Education" approach. In this form of social learning, the students start an inquiry into the uniqueness of the place. By investigating PoP in this way, the student-centred learning approach can increase both students' levels of Pride of Place and their 21<sup>st</sup> century competences (e.g. creativity, critical thinking, self-directed learning, communication). This scientifically tested approach is different from the traditional education approach, thus requiring partly different competences from the teachers. Consequently, a newly developed teacher training will be offered to teachers to support them in their new role, focussed on acquiring these said competences.

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