Welcoming new populations and developing activities in rural areas: a need leading to specific policies

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Regional Council of Limousin
Policies against depopulation in mountain areas

Limousin in Europe
Policies against depopulation in mountain areas

- Northwestern edge of the Massif Central (from 90m to 1000 m)
- Varied climate and hilly relief in some parts of the Region: consequences on the means of communication, transportation ...
1/ A strong demographic decline
- In 1999, the population of Limousin was about 711,000 inhabitants.
- Loss of 275,000 inhabitants between 1891 and 1999, i.e. ¼ of the population.
- The average age is 4 years higher than in the rest of France.
- The average natural deficit is 2,800 people a year.

2/ However, the territory is attractive and welcoming
A positive net migration since the 1960s.
Between 1990-1999: 10,000 people a year moved to Limousin.

This is why the Limousin Region has been implementing a specific « welcome policy » for new inhabitants since 1999. This welcome policy is still ongoing and has proved its efficiency: in 2005, Limousin was the 6th most attractive Region in France.

Projection towards 2040: 812,100 inhabitants or more than 10.2 % of population increase (due to the migratory balance).
A welcome policy based on operational activities

The Limousin ‘welcome policy’ is a package of operational tools based on **3 strategic thrusts:**

1/ **Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement** (regional approach and tools)

2/ **Encouraging the emergence and structuration of welcome facilities**

3/ **Knowing and analysing migration trends**
1/ Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement

Approach and regional tools

Establishing steps in the settlement process

Attracting new people

Facilitating their settlement

Facilitating their integration

Detection and communication tools

Monitoring and follow-up tools

- PEC/Prov’emploi
- Op’en Limousin...
- AFPA
- Website (in construction)
- Demain TV
- Esprit village
- Installation-campus.fr

- ‘Construire son projet en Limousin’
- ‘Savoir-faire et découverte’

- ‘RDV en Limousin’
- ‘Logements passerelle’
- ‘Objectif création’
- ‘DIVA’

- Support for setting-up
- Follow-up after the creation of a new activity
Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement

Profile of ‘neo-limousin’ inhabitants

Project promoters (creation or takeover of a business):

- in situation of personal and/or professional change (re-training)
- (mostly) residents of great urban centres,
- 35-50 years old,
- open-minded,
- attached to family,
- in search for independence,
- Eager to value a professional or personal experience to have success of the second half of their life.

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1/ Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement

Example of 'detection tool': Prov'emploi – job fair in Paris

A fair for jobs and projects outside the capital city

The annual event for Parisians wishing to settle down in other Regions.

Responses to their expectations :
- job offers,
- creation and takeover of businesses,
- discovery of the territories,
- assistance and advice on the setting-up ...

A joint presence of businesses, territories, support structures and the media

Outcomes in 2010 :
- 100 contacts with people eager to settle down in Limousin, most of them being job-seeking managers as well as some project promoters (creation and/or takeover of businesses).
- Enhancement of the visibility and fame of Limousin, especially in Paris

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1/ Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement

Another example of ‘detection tool’: the website Op’en Limousin

- A platform of qualified offers to take over a new business
- A partnership-based approach: Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Crafts, SAFER (agricultural real estate), ‘Limousin welcome network’.
- A double target: ‘influencers’ and project promoters.
- An experimental operation which was well-received by the stakeholders.
1/ Attracting new inhabitants and facilitating their settlement

An example of ‘monitoring tool’: ‘Savoir faire et découverte’ (Know-how & discovery)

The association ‘Savoir-faire et découverte’ has a countrywide coverage and coordinates a network of more than 180 professionals (craftsmen, farmers, artists) spread across 6 French Regions.

These professionals are qualified for organizing 3-days job-shadowing sessions (‘test-métiers’) in which project promoters can participate in order to discover a new job. This aims at facilitating the transfer of knowledge, as well as ecologically responsible jobs through ‘learning-by-doing’.

- A strong involvement of territories
- 30 qualified trainers in 2010
- 15 other trainers are being qualified for the current year
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2/ Encouraging the emergence and structuration of welcome facilities

The Region supports volunteer territories technically, methodologically and financially so that they implement a welcome policy at local level:

The ‘Pôle Local d’Accueil’ (PLA) (‘Local Welcome Centre’)

The PLA are coordinated by volunteer territories with a strategy, an organization and:

- a specific coordination,
- targeted actions,
- a contractual framework between the Region and the territory, based on technical specifications
2/ Encouraging the emergence and structuration of welcome facilities

**Missions of the Pôle Local d'Accueil**

- Accompanying the project promoters in professional and family initiatives in connection with the socio-economic partners
- Building the offer of professional and residential installation
- Sensitizing local actors to the need to welcome new residents
- Detecting project promoters on the territory...

Desire / idea to change their lives

**ACHIEVEMENT**

- Search for employment
- Creation / takeover of an economic activity

**FORMALISATION/ORIENTATION**

- Search for housing
- Search for services

Family and professional installation on the territory

Professional project

Family project
2/ Encouraging the emergence and structuration of welcome facilities

Example of a specific support measure

Specific actions on the territories:

- Organization of ‘welcome sessions’ for project promoters looking for a location to establish their business.
- The training allows them to work on the ground on their own project and to meet a broad network of partners.

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Knowing and analysing migration trends

- **Partnership with the University of Limoges: a multi-annual financial agreement for research programmes**
  - Geographical dynamics of migrations to Limousin (analysis of flows, profile of migrants, typology of territories)
  - New forms of sociability in rural areas
  - Settlement of Britons

- **Participation in interregional networks at national level to share and capitalize experiences**
  - At interregional level: Convention Massif Central
  - At national level: Collectif Ville Campagne, Réseau Rural...
  - At European level: RUR@CT...
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Budget of the welcome policy

Mobilisation of external fundings for regional actions and structures:

- **Project convention State/Region**: actions of the PLA, promotion, prospecting (2 M € sur 2007 – 2013),

- **Interregional convention for Massif Central** (500 000 € since 2008): PEC, networking of territories, ‘logements passerelles’ (short-term housing for project promoters).

- **EAFRD** (321A): coordination of the PLA (500 000 € in 2007–2013),

- **ERDF** (Regional Operational Programme, measure 39): promotion and communication tools - documentaries, website, etc.
Lessons learnt from the practice

**Difficulties encountered**

- A mobilization of the actors sometimes difficult to obtain
- Need to enhance the transversality of the initiatives
- Networking and exchange of information is sometimes laborious.
- The welcome policy is time-consuming and requires a great effort in terms of mutual understanding, sensitization, demonstration of the complementarity of the actions to the partners.

**Solutions implemented**

- The welcome policy has been built progressively and is still evolving.
- Every month, a meeting of the ‘welcome network’ (Region + territories) is held with external partners, in order to improve the methods and build actions together.
- The experimentation on a territory enables the transposition towards other Regions in view of a transferability.
**Initiating a “positive dynamics”:**
what we can sell / what is attractive / values of the Limousin mountainous areas
- Integrated policy / transversal policy (vertical and horizontal)
- Enables to connect and re-examine traditional policies such as economic development, housing...

**Establishing a ‘new mentality’ in the Limousin population**
Developing a greater ‘welcome attitude’ and ‘welcome culture’

**Changing the image and differentiation of the Region**
Increasing the positioning in territorial marketing

Limousin has been the **first French Region** to build such a policy

+ 2854 inhabitants a year (+0.4%) since 2000 in spite of a still strongly negative rate of natural increase

**Population projection:**
- + 5% in 2031
- + 10.2% in 2040
Success factors for transferring the Good Practice ‘Welcome policy’

- Gradual development of the project: first building the ‘welcome network’ and the ‘welcome tools’, then communicating on the welcome policy and searching for candidates / project promoters.

- Two levels of action → both the regional and local level are the basis of the ‘regional welcome network’
Transferability of the Good Practice to other Regions

Recommendations for the transfer

- Necessary to have a **strong political support** at both local and regional level.

- The project must be **based on partners**.
  
  In each ‘Pôle Local d’Accueil’, multi-partner technical committees are organised to provide collective management of actions.

- **Reactivity** of the network & **capacity** to respond collectively to extremely diverse individual situations that are constantly evolving.

- Monitoring migration trends to **anticipate major trends** and to prepare the tools that will enable the best response.
Transferability of the Good Practice to other Regions

Conditions of collaboration for a transfer

- The Limousin Region would like to exchange information with other Regions regarding the following issues:
  - How to transform the potential of a territory into economic activity?
  - Actions to implement to facilitate the integration of new populations.
  - Publicity & promotion of the territory: how to define the right message?
  - Actions to develop a shared vision of attracting new residents
  - Targeted search for migration candidates
Ongoing transfers
(within the framework of the RUR@CT network)

2009:
Molise (Italy) imported the good practice on its territory by organizing a local governance system based on the welcome policy. Furthermore, Molise created a network with Regions surrounding the Adriatic sea, based on the welcome policy.

2011:
The Regions Andalusia (Spain), Jämtland (Sweden) and Sicily (Italy) participated in a field visit in March 2011, and are about to import the ‘welcome policy’ on their territories.
Thanks for your attention!

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