





Austria
France

Topic:
Mobility

Achievement:
Resilience through
Mobility Cross- Sectoral
Pioneers

Sector:
All CCS and Cross-
sectoral

From Small Farm to Open Creative Hub: The Model of FarmLab

At FarmLab, a hybrid rural organisation in Austria, farming, creative education, and collaboration come together in a circular approach that blends traditional crafts, digital fabrication, and sustainability. During their exchange with the Mountain Makers, learning emerged through doing, exchange, and reflection on common challenges. The experience reinforced the notion of rural areas as spaces of innovation.



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Challenge

Rural cultural organisations often face isolation, limited resources, and difficulties sustaining long-term activity while remaining connected to wider networks. The Mountain Makers sought practical ways to strengthen their rural creative ecosystem, deepen community engagement, and expand internationally without losing their local identity or values.

Solution

Through a five-day peer-learning exchange at FarmLab in Austria, the Mountain Makers immersed themselves in a hybrid model combining farming, creative education, craftsmanship, digital fabrication, and sustainability. By participating in daily work, shared routines, and strategic discussions, they explored transferable approaches for community-building, circular practices, and regenerative rural development.

Impact

The exchange shifted the Mountain Makers' perspective from local action to participation in a broader European network of rural creative hubs. It generated concrete programme ideas, strengthened international connections, and reinforced the role of rural areas as spaces of innovation. For both organisations, the experience deepened trust, encouraged reflection, and laid the groundwork for long-term collaboration.

Milestones & Learnings

Immersive exchange integrated visitors into FarmLab's daily life and seasonal rhythms.

Participants engaged in hands-on activities including farm work, repairs, upcycling, and food processing.

Learned practical, low-cost solutions such as DIY infrastructure and material reuse.

Explored hybrid models combining agriculture, creativity, education, and sustainability.

Visited another rural creative initiative, Kunst am Hof, expanding networking opportunities.

Identified transferable practices around trust-building, community participation, and circular resource use.

Plans emerged for future collaborations, return visits, and Erasmus+ partnerships.

Key Takeaways

- Hands-on, situated learning can be more effective than formal workshops, especially in resource-constrained rural contexts.
- Low-cost, DIY, and circular solutions are highly transferable across rural regions.
- Peer exchanges work best when they foster participation, trust, and shared labour, not just knowledge transfer.
- Rural creative organisations benefit greatly from European networks and mobility tools without losing local grounding.
- Concrete outcomes (e.g. Rural Hacks, pilot residencies) are most successful when rooted in lived experience rather than abstract planning.
- Long-term sustainability in rural cultural work is built through people, relationships, and continuity, not one-off projects.

Learn more about the [Makers des Montagnes](#) and [FarmLab](#).



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