

Summary

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Group 2: Nordic Rural Youth in Change?

In this working group, the focus was on rural youth and the changes associated with their lives. The first session concentrated on sustainability themes and examined, among other issues, the significance of rural settings, particularly the school and the home, in the lives of young people in rural areas.

The presentations emphasized that rural life should be approached beyond the level of individuals such as young people and teachers and instead considered through broader relational processes. In Päivi Armila's presentation, this was compellingly captured with the concept of "village dynamics". We also reflected on the kind of space that is constructed for rural youth within their everyday environments of growing up.

In the second session of the working group, we examined the concept of a meaningful farm work life as well as the need for relative ethics when doing research in small rural communities. With regard to the first theme, the discussion addressed, for example, how migrant labor is manifested in the Swedish context and how farmers' sensitive engagement with animals relates to market demands and technological change.

The latter presentation focused on three ethical dimensions: normative, relative, and reactive ethics. Within the group, we further reflected on the researcher's role in situations where a young participant might wish to meet again or to disclose a difficult matter in confidence. We concluded that the researcher is also a human being; however, it is particularly important to discuss and negotiate ethical issues within the research team. Moreover, in small rural communities where people are familiar with one another, ethical challenges can become intensified across all three dimensions of ethics.