

STREUTALALLIANZ

rhönerleben

The Streutalallianz e. V.

**A communal alliance in the
north-western part of Bavaria**



Impressum

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Welcome to the Streutalallianz!

The surrounding conditions for the development of small cities and rural villages have changed dramatically in the recent decades. This change will continue rapidly in the next years.

The far-reaching structural change has a huge impact in the agricultural sector and the consequences of the demographic change can be seen everywhere. More houses are getting abandoned especially in the centers of the municipalities and young people often emigrate to other regions but mainly cities. Thus, the skilled labor shortage in the region of the *Streutalallianz* is increasing.

The development of the rural areas in Bavaria is based on many factors, e. g. the growing social and political concentration in congested areas or the cancelation of club activities and associations. The most important factor lies in the competition between cities and regions for governmental financial aid.

There are two ways to handle this situation: To resign or to take action and work for a better future for the *Streu Valley*.

Since 2014 our eleven local authorities have been working together to found the communal alliance: *Streutalallianz e. V.* They partnered with the *Amt für Ländliche Entwicklung Unterfranken (ALE Ufr., Office of Rural Development Lower Franconia)* and the *Regierung von Unterfranken (Reg. Ufr., Government of Lower Franconia)* to establish the *Integriertes Ländliches Entwicklungskonzept (ILEK, Integrated Rural Development Concept)*.

With the concept finalized, the real work has started because the planned projects have to be implemented in the whole region. Now we, the eleven local authorities, have to work together to provide even more efficient structures and to solve our problems. We all

know that we have our work cut out for us but we love to design our future so we may live here as long as we wish. Our eleven local authorities are pleased to hear your ideas on future projects.

With this booklet we like to introduce you to our *communal alliance* the *Streutalallianz e. V.* On the following pages you can learn in depth about our mayors and their cities and villages, how the *Streutalallianz e. V.* was started, and the *Integrated Rural Development Concept* (cf. chapter 4). After that we will tell you more about our projects and our ideas for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Link". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin Link

Chairman of the *Streutalallianz e. V.* and
1st Mayor of Stockheim

The Alliance Management

Nearly every communal alliance in Lower Franconia has a management to plan and implement new projects in the region of the communal alliance and so does the *Streutalallianz e. V.* Since January 2019, the *Streutalallianz e. V.* has been a registered association and since May 2019 the alliance has its own manager: Gertraud Kokula. She has a Master's Degree in Science of Applied Anthropogeography.

The manager plans and starts the projects of the *Integrated Rural Development Concept* and realizes new ideas. She is always in touch with the chairman (cf. Figure 1), with the other mayors and of course with the general public. Networking is one of the manager's most important tasks. She is part of different think tanks to target new projects (cf. chapter 5.5).



Figure 1 Alliance Manager Gertraud Kokula and chairman Martin Link are always working together (Photo: Georg Stock).

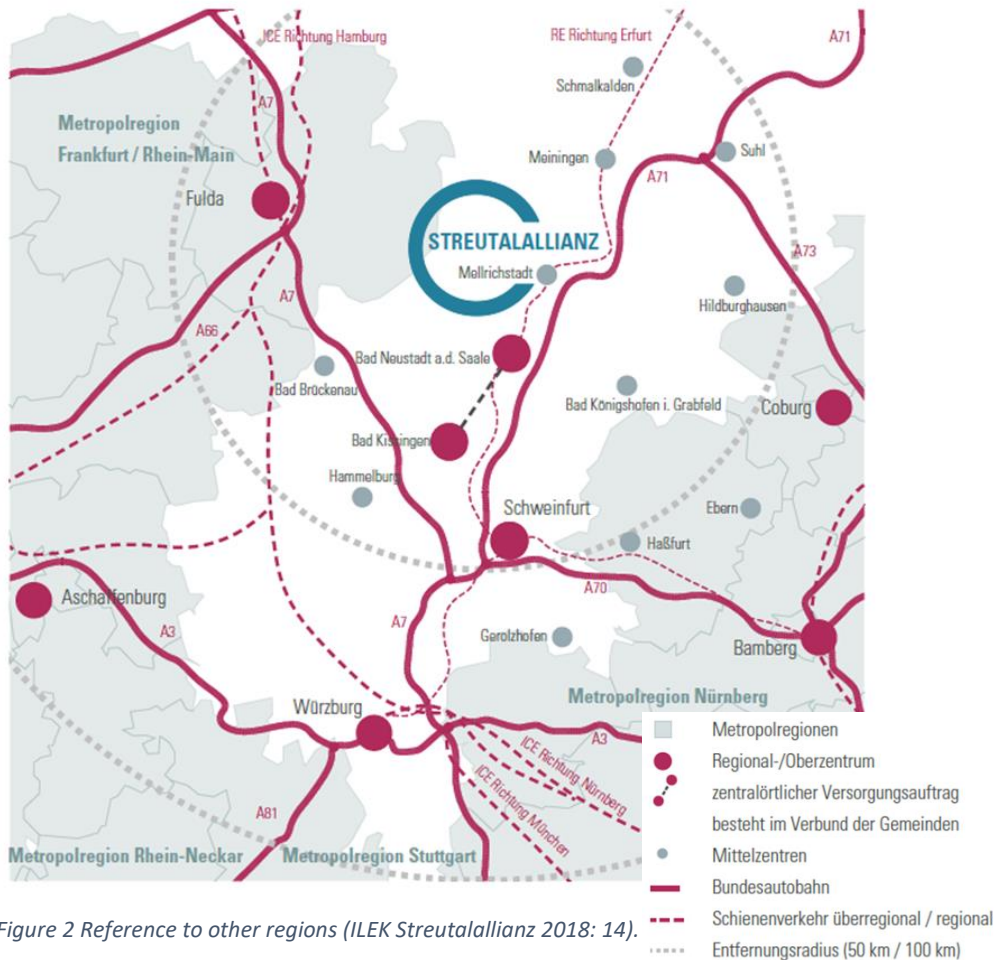
Gertraud Kokula

M. Sc. Applied Anthropogeography
Manager of the *Streutalallianz e. V.*

1. The Streu Valley

To understand the reason why the mayors of the *Streutalallianz* are working together you need some background knowledge. We will introduce you to the location and give you some facts.

1.1. The Streu Valley – The Location



Since 2014 the following eleven local authorities have been partnering up for the *Communal Alliance Streutalallianz e. V.*:

- Bastheim (cf. chapter 2.1)
- City of Fladungen (cf. chapter 2.2)
- Hausen (cf. chapter 2.3)
- Hendungen (cf. chapter 2.4)
- City of Mellrichstadt (cf. chapter 2.5)
- Nordheim v. d. Rhön (cf. chapter 2.6)
- Oberstreu (cf. chapter 2.7)
- City of Ostheim v. d. Rhön (cf. chapter 2.8)
- Sondheim v. d. Rhön (cf. chapter 2.9)
- Stockheim (cf. chapter 2.10)
- Willmars (cf. chapter 2.11)

All of these municipalities are located in the north western part of the Free State of Bavaria and follow the river *Streu* which is the namesake of the *Streutalallianz*. Most of them belong to the Bavarian part of the secondary mountain *Rhön Mountains*. This is also a popular hiking and mountain bike destination. All members of the *Streutalallianz* are located in the administrative district of Rhön-Grabfeld. The Population of all of Rhön-Grabfeld is 79.521 (30th June 2020). The *Streutalallianz* is center-gated to the *Autobahn 71* (red line) and the *ICE* (German express train, red dotted line). Thanks to this infrastructure, people from other regions can visit the *Streu Valley* within 30 to 60 minutes (cf. Figure 2).

The inner dotted gray circle is a 50 km radius around the *Streutalallianz*. You can reach all destinations within 30 minutes or less in this circle, e. g. the theater city Meiningen in the Free State of Thuringia, the Kreuzberg – a famous tourism highlight and originally a place of

pilgrimage – and the cities Fulda (Hessen) and Schweinfurt with their universities and advanced technical colleges.

The outer dotted gray circle is a 100 km radius around the *Streutalallianz*. In this region you can visit for example the historic cities of Aschaffenburg, Würzburg with its Residence or Nuremberg with the emperor castle. The latter two cities also have universities.

Besides Hendungen and parts of the city of Mellrichstadt and Oberstreu every member of the *Streutalallianz* is located in the [UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Rhön](#). Here you can also find the *Star Park Rhön*. Because of the relatively sparse population, visitors can see the star-filled sky. The *Star Park* is an award for regions with almost natural night landscapes. The members of the *Streutalallianz* reduce light pollution as far as possible.

The highlights are the city of Fladungen as the oldest local authority in Rhön-Grabfeld, first mentioned in 789 AD. Near the [Franconian Open Air Museum](#) in Fladungen you can also ride the historic steam locomotive, the [Rhönzüge](#), and visit Nordheim v. d. Rhön, Ostheim v. d. Rhön, Stockheim and Mellrichstadt (cf. Figure 3).



Figure 3 The historic steam locomotive, the *Rhönzüge*, in the train station of the city of Ostheim (Photo: Grafik Design 25, Joachim Schüler).

Since the *Streu Valley* is a paradise for hikers and cyclists, e. g. e-bikers or mountain bikers, you can start your

tour from any municipality of the *Streutalallianz*. You can also join the local hiking clubs, the *Rhönklub Zweigvereine*, for hiking tours in the *Streu Valley*, they offer short and long tours. In Ostheim v. d. Rhön you can find the premium hiking trail *The Ostheimer*. Here you have a great view over the city and to the *Lichtenburg* (cf. Figure 18). In Mellrichstadt and Ostheim v. d. Rhön flow trails have been opened and in Hendungen there will be soon a Pump track (cf. Figure 4).



Figure 4 The newly opened Flow Trail in Mellrichstadt is loved by all generations (Photo: Daniel Gruschenko, Aktives Mellrichstadt).



Figure 5 The mayors exploring the new water playground with the Kneipp water-treading basin in Bastheim (Photo: G. Kokula).

In nearly every municipality there are so-called *Kneippbecken* which are water-treading basins (cf. Figure 5). This is a relaxing break to your sportive activities as you explore the region. The [Keltentour](#) introduces you to almost the entire region at once. It is a 63 km long bike trail that shows relicts from the Celtic settlement in the *Streu Valley* from 2,800 years ago. On this trip you can spot Celtic tumuli, e. g. in Sondheim v. d. Rhön, Stetten or Oberstreu. The city of Os-theim v. d. Rhön offers evening walks from the city hall to its tumuli every Friday in summer (cf. Figure 6). In Bastheim and Mittelstreu, a part of Oberstreu, you can see ringforts.



Figure 6 Tumuli in Ostheim v. d. Rhön (Photo: Streutalallianz e. V.)

But the main attractions are the local festivals taking place throughout the year. In Hausen is the *Apple Market* where you can buy old

and rare branches of kinds of apples (cf. Figure 13). If you love to eat, the *Sausage Market* in Ostheim v. d. Rhön is perfect. Lake parties take place in Neustädtles, a part of Nordheim v. d. Rhön, during summer, or Frickenhausen (cf. Figure 7), a part of the city of Mellrichstadt. In winter you can warm up at the *Frostbeulen-Party* in Willmars (*Frost Boil Party*).



Figure 7 Lake Party at the Frickenhäuser Lake in Mellrichstadt (Photo: Aktives Mellrichstadt).

But the merriest time in the *Streutalallianz* is the carnival time, also known as *Fasching* in the *Streu Valley* which is a last dance before lent (cf. Figure 8).



Figure 8 The dancing carnival guard from Bastheim performing at the Prunksitzung in Bastheim (Photo: Ba-Ka-Ge, Christian Lochner).

1.2. The Streutalallianz e. V.

Eleven local authorities are partnering up in a communal alliance. They call themselves *Streutalallianz e. V.* The mayors present their villages and cities in *chapter 2* of this booklet. There are three cities and nine villages.

Name sake for the *Streutalallianz* is the stream *Streu* in the valley where most of the members are found. There are 19,753 inhabitants living in the *Streutalallianz* (30th June 2020) which is nearly a fourth of the whole population of the administrative district of Rhön-Grabfeld. The age distribution of Rhön-Grabfeld is as follows (cf. BAYERISCHES LANDESAMT FÜR STATISTIK 2020):

- < 40 years: 32.4 %
- 40 years - 60 years: 23.1 %
- 61 years - 75 years: 15.1 %
- > 75 years: 9.0 %

The population structure of the *Streutalallianz* is comparable to Rhön-Grabfeld. Just a small percentage of the inhabitants are under 40 years old which leads to several problems for the region. These issues will be explained in chapter 3.

The *Streutalallianz* is located in a rural area and is part of the *LEADER-Region Rhön-Grabfeld*. There are multiple concepts offered to increase the use of the public transport system, e. g. *BusTaxi*, *Azubi Shuttle*, 365 €-bus ticket for seniors; however, the private car is used most frequently in the region (cf. [Rhön-Grabfeld ÖPNV](#), call date 16.08.2021).

The eleven municipalities have been working together for over seven years, and the *Streutalallianz* has been a registered association since January 2019. The *Streutalallianz* has a management since May 2019 which handles planning and starting projects, with the first alliance manager being Gertraud Kokula.

2. The Mayors and the Local Authorities



Figure 9 The mayors and the local authorities - from left to right (back): Michael Schnupp (1st Mayor of City of Fladungen), Reimund Voß (2nd Vice Chairman and 1st Mayor of Willmars), Michael Kuhn (Baudirektor, ALE Ufr.), Stefan Kießner (1st Mayor of Oberstreu), Steffen Malzer (1st Mayor of City of Ostheim v. d. Rhön) and Thomas Fischer (1st Vice chairman and 1st Mayor of Nordheim v. d. Rhön).

From left to right (front): Michael Kraus (1st Mayor of City of Mellrichstadt), Friedolin Link (1st Mayor of Hausen), Martin Link (Chairman and 1st Mayor of Stockheim), Ursula Schneider (Manager of the LEADER-Region Rhön-Grabfeld), Florian Liening-Ewert (1st Mayor of Hendungen), Tobias Seufert (1st Mayor of Bastheim), Gertraud Kokula (alliance manager) and Thilo Wehner (1st Mayor of Sondheim v. d. Rhön) (Photo: Georg Stock).

Since 2014 the eleven local authorities of the *Streu Valley* have been working together (cf. Figure 9). On the following pages the mayors of the *Streutalallianz* will introduce themselves and their municipalities in depth (cf. Figure 10). All the information on the population is from 30th June 2020 (cf. BAYERISCHES LANDESAMT FÜR STATISTIK (2020)).

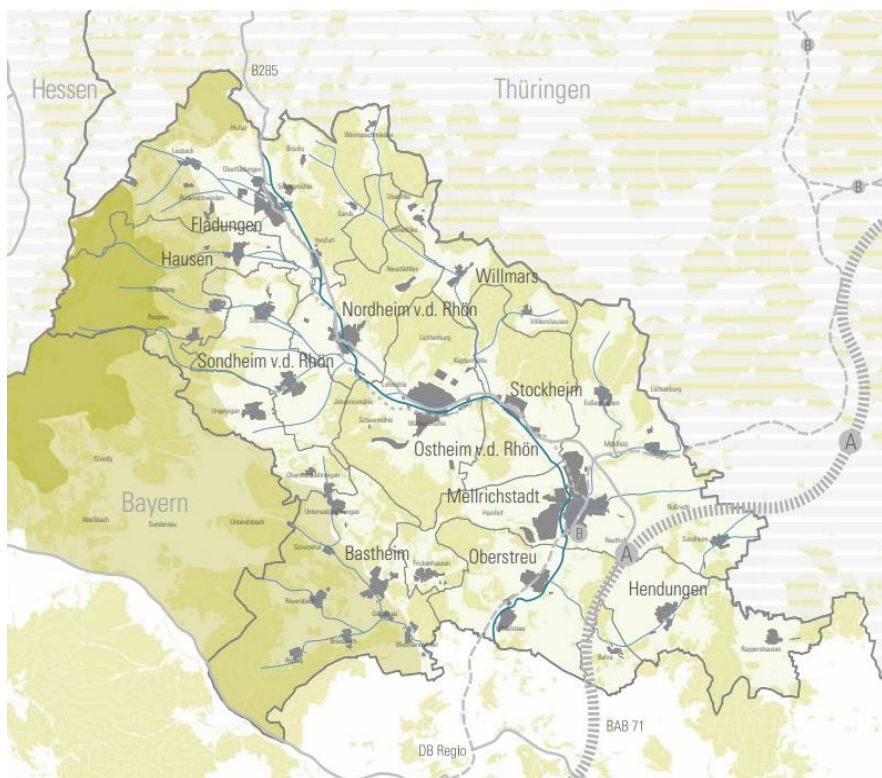


Figure 10 The 11 municipalities of the Streutalallianz e. V. (ILEK Streutalallianz 2018: 14).

2.1. Bastheim



“We want to build on our ancestors’ safe base of our villages in order to create a safe future for our children.”

Tobias Seufert, Mayor of Bastheim since 2020.

Figure 11 Cultural center and museum Kloster Wechterswinkel (Photo: Sophia Moh).



- Population: 2,092
- Land area: 41.74 km²
- Districts
 - Bastheim
 - Braidbach
 - Geckenau
 - Reyersbach
 - Rödles
 - Simonshof
 - Unterwaldbehrungen
 - Wechterswinkel
- Highlight: Cultural center and museum Kloster Wechterswinkel

2.2. City of Fladungen



“A living museum.”

Michael Schnupp, Mayor of the city of Fladungen since 2020.



Figure 12 Panorama of the city of Fladungen (Photo: Matthias Dargel)

- Population: 2,211
- Land area: 46.36 km²
- Districts:
 - Fladungen
 - Brüchs
 - Heufurt
 - Leubach
 - Oberfladungen
 - Rüdenschwinden
 - Sands
 - Weimarschmieden
- Highlight: historical city center, Franconian Open-Air Museum Fladungen



2.3. Hausen



“A model village – a future for the nature and new chances for the people.”

Friedolin Link, Mayor of Hausen since 1984.

Figure 13 View of the nature trail for historical kinds of apples and the church in Hausen in the background (Photo: Municipality of Hausen)



- Population: 672
- Land area: 24.21 km²
- Districts
 - Hausen
 - Roth
- Highlight: nature trail for historic kinds of apples

2.4. Hendungen



“Young and bold in half-timbered houses.”

Florian Liening-Ewert, Mayor of Hendungen since 2014.



Figure 14 View of Hendungen (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt)

- Population: 867
- Land area: 22.85 km²
- Districts:
 - Hendungen
 - Rappershausen
- Highlight: half-timbered houses, country house used by school classes for short visits with (mountain) bike sports center



2.5. City of Mellrichstadt



“A modern city within historical city walls.”

Michael Kraus, Mayor of the city of Mellrichstadt since 2020.



Figure 15 The historic city wall and the church St. Kilian in Mellrichstadt (Photo: Streutalallianz e. V.)



- Population: 5,524
- Land area: 55.99 km²
- Districts:
 - Mellrichstadt
 - Bahra
 - Frickenhausen
 - Eußenhausen
 - Mühlfeld
 - Sondheim
 - Roßrieth
- Highlight: Historic city with small castles

2.6. Nordheim v. d. Rhön



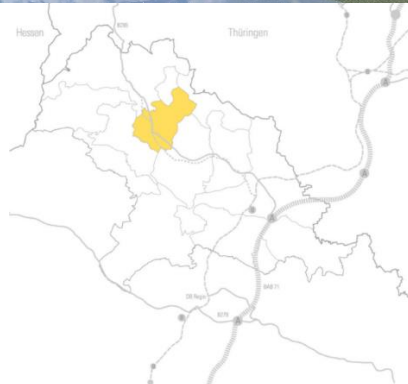
“Preserve, construct, and consolidate the village – together with Nordheim v. d. Rhön.”

Thomas Fischer, Mayor of Nordheim v. d. Rhön since 2008.

Figure 16 Castle of Soden in Neustädtles, a part of Nordheim v. d. Rhön (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt).



- Population: 1,099
- Land area: 16.61 km²
- Districts:
 - Nordheim v. d. Rhön
 - Neustädtles
- Highlight: fortified church, historical Tithe House and town hall



2.7. Oberstreu



„A mild flow but a strong performance!“

Stefan Kießner, Mayor of Oberstreu since 2020.

Figure 17 The historical church Gaden (fortress church) in Oberstreu (Photo: Municipality of Oberstreu).



- Population: 1,475
- Land area: 22.62 km²
- Districts:
 - Oberstreu
 - Mittelstreu
- Highlight: historical church Gaden (fortress church)

2.8. City of Ostheim v. d. Rhön



"Pearl of the *Streu*",

Steffen Malzer, Mayor of the city of Ostheim v. d. Rhön since 2020.



Figure 18 From the premium hiking trail "The Ostheimer" you have a perfect view of the city of Ostheim v. d. Rhön (Photo: Streutalallianz e. V.)

- Population: 3,290
- Land area: 40.83 km²
- Districts:
 - Ostheim v. d. Rhön
 - Oberwaldbehrungen
 - Urspringen
- Highlight: castle of Lichtenburg, the *sausage market*, fortress church, premium hiking trail *The Ostheimer*



2.9. Sondheim v. d. Rhön



“Nature – culture – likeable and a sincere welcome!”,
Thilo Wehner, Mayor of Sondheim v. d. Rhön since 2014.

Figure 19 Not just for religious people - the bible garden in Sondheim v. d. Rhön (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt).



- Population: 919
- Land area: 18.58 km²
- Districts:
 - Sondheim v. d. Rhön
 - Stetten
- Highlight: Castle of Sondheim, bible garden, half-timbered houses, Celtic tumuli

2.10. Stockheim



“Living where other people spend their vacation”

Martin Link, Mayor of Stockheim since 2008.



Figure 20 Stockheim (Rhön) and his neighbored cities and villages from above (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt).

- Population: 1,068
- Land area: 19.65 km²
- Districts: Stockheim
- Highlights: historical Tithe House and town hall, craft-works market



2.11. Willmars



"Full of *joie de vivre* and involvement with issues of the municipality."

Reimund Voß, Mayor of Willmars since 2002.

Figure 21 The historic center of Willmars (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt).



- Population: 575
- Land area: 12.18 km²
- Districts:
 - Willmars
 - Filke
 - Völkershausen
- Highlights: historic center, historic watchtower *Mauerschädel*

3. How It Started

3.1. Similar Problems

So why are the eleven local authorities working together? They are all confronted with similar questions and challenges. As you already know, the population is growing older in general. It is called the *Demographic Change*. But at the same time young people often emigrate to other regions, mainly cities e. g. Würzburg or Schweinfurt. This leads to a shortage of skilled labor in the Streu region, and more houses are abandoned in the centers of the communes. Simultaneously, new houses are built at the edge of the towns, creating a *donut effect*.

This leads to an expensive infrastructure: Streets, electricity, and water pipes have to be built for the newly developed areas. At the same time the municipalities have to renew the already existing infrastructure in the centers of their villages and cities. Huge supermarkets and discount grocery stores are opened at the edge of the towns; this can lead to problems for smaller shops in the centers. New concepts have to be developed.

Since there are fewer children compared to 20 years before, some of the elementary schools had to be closed down. Whereas they could walk from their homes a few years ago, they now have to ride the bus to elementary schools in the neighboring villages or cities.

But the biggest problem for the eleven local authorities is that government aid is shrinking year after year. The municipalities have to work together to receive government aid or to start big projects, e.g. the *Kernwegenetzkonzept* (a concept for the most used agriculture roads, cf. chapter 5.3).

3.2. The Solution

To afford big projects the eleven local authorities in the *Streu Valley* started to work together in 2014. They focus their strength and knowledge. The municipalities get governmental help from the *Amt für Ländliche Entwicklung Unterfranken (ALE Ufr., Office of Rural Development Lower Franconia)* and the *Regierung von Unterfranken (Reg. Ufr., Government of Lower Franconia)*. With their expertise the members of the *Streutalallianz* can analyze the structure, problems and future projects to solve them.

The government agencies offer the members of the *Streutalallianz* several government aid programs to support their inhabitants to reconstruct abandoned houses or start new projects to help the region.

The communal alliance started the *Integriertes Ländliches Entwicklungskonzept (short ILEK, Integrated Rural Development Concept)*. You will find out more about it in chapter 4.

After that the municipalities focused their efforts to register the *Streutalallianz* as an association. The alliance management, with Gertraud Kokula as the first manager, is in charge of planning the ILEK projects and initiating new projects, depending on short term need. Together with chairman Martin Link she maps and targets the projects head-on.

4. The Integrated Rural Development Concept



Figure 22 The cover of the ILEK Streutalallianz e. V

From the beginning on, all eleven mayors knew that they would be confronted with several problems in the present and also in the future. So they wanted to know how they can act on these issues properly. In the following years the mayors established the *Integriertes Ländliches Entwicklungskonzept (ILEK)*, the *Integrated Rural Development Concept* (cf. Figure 22).

This concept shows the problems, e. g. demographic change, and the benefits, e. g. the beautiful nature and the vacation destination of the secondary mountains, of the *Streu region* at the moment and how the municipalities could build on their success in the future.

It shows the future problems of the region with projections, e. g. the increasing rate of abandoned houses, fewer children and more elderly people, and the infrastructure that gets more expensive every year.

To combat this, the concept gives advice for solutions and projects. There are projects divided into six main topics for the whole region so that the mayors can work together or on individual projects for each local authority. The municipalities strengthen the whole *Streutalallianz* with their own successful ventures. In chapter 5 we will introduce you to a few projects.

The six main topics are (cf. Figure 23):

1. Economy and Jobs (blue), e. g. helping the local shops in Corona lockdowns to advertise
2. Living, Brownfield Development (red), overall appearance of the locality, e. g. municipal financial support program for the public to renovate abandoned houses or a free overlook from an architect.
3. Services for the Public (orange), e. g. medicine, public transportation, youth vitalization (cf. chapter 5.1), education.
4. Culture and Identity (yellow), e. g. local traditional celebrations, chronic of the *Streutalallianz*.
5. Tourism and Local Recreation (light green), e. g. advertising the *Streu Valley* as a hiking and biking destination for tourists and locals.
6. Agriculture, Forestry and Climate (dark green), e. g. *Kernwegenetzkonzept* (cf. chapter 5.3), new projects for increasing the use of the public transportation system.



Figure 23 The 6 main topics of the ILEK Streutalallianz e. V. (2019).

5. Projects

In this chapter we will present a small selection of the projects that have already been implemented in the *Streutalallianz*.

5.1. Vitalizing the Youth

To the mayors the youth is the most important part of their alliance work because they need their help to realize more projects in the future.



Figure 24 The chairman of the Streutalallianz Martin Link (left corner) and manager of the alliance Gertraud Kokula are helped by the three head masters Achim Libischer (Udo-Lindenber-Mittelschule), Ulrich Kluge (Ignaz-Reder-Realschule) and Robert Jäger (Martin-Pollich-Gymnasium) for organizing the survey. The picture shows pupils of the Udo-Lindenber-Mittelschule who participated in the survey (Photo: Anja Behringer, Main Post 10.07.2019).

The very first project in 2019 was a survey among over 500 students from the *Streu Valley* and the interpretation of its outcome (cf. Figure 24). More than a third of all participating teenagers want to

move away after school and most of them don't want to come back. Another third is undecided and only the last third wants to stay in the region when they are grown up, but it still depends on the job situation (cf. KOKULA 2019).

The pupils expressed the wishes of wanting to be included in future projects and of more activities for teenagers, not just for small children (10 years or younger) or seniors (60 years and older).



Figure 25 Chairman Martin Link, Alliance Manager Gertraud Kokula and the children of the art competition at the award ceremony in Mellrichstadt in July 2021 (Photo: Georg Stock).

In the following years the *Streutalallianz* started different projects to appeal to the younger generation, e. g. *Probierbäumchen* in 2019 as, explained on the following pages, or the art competition in 2021.

Because of the Corona situation in 2020 and the first half of 2021 the pupils in Bavaria weren't allowed to visit their schools and had to be home-schooled. The children couldn't meet their friends and have fun with them. Thereupon the *Streutalallianz* started an art competition for all children under 18 years in the *Streu Valley*, asking them to draw their favorite place or activity in the *Streu Valley* so that they can reconnect with the region and remember the place where they are always welcome. This was a huge hit because over 90 children from all municipalities participated in the competition. Every child and every teenager got a prize – a gift bag with a gift card for the local shops, stuffed animals, or local specialties.

All of the pictures were so beautiful that the *Streutalallianz* decided to host two vernissages to show them off: one in the city of Mellrichstadt, and another one few days later in the city of Fladungen, so everyone could see the works of art (cf. Figures 25, 26). This was a perfect situation to market the *Streutalallianz* to a huge audience in multiple population groups. All the prizes were provided by the eleven local authorities and local companies (cf. chapter 5.6)



Figure 26 Four of the alliance's mayors, the alliance manager, and the participants of the art competition at the award ceremony in Fladungen in July 2021 (Photo: Franziska Sauer).

5.2. Public Relations

The *Streutalallianz* informs the public of its activities nearly every two weeks or at least once a month through the regional newspaper, leisure time magazines or the social media of our partners. Through this, locals and tourists can learn more about our projects or that they can always suggest new ideas. The alliance offers free post cards and stickers to send to friends and family. This is a cost efficient way to advertise the region (cf. Figure 27).



Figure 27 The advertisement products of the Streutalallianz e. V.
(Photo: Streutalallianz e. V.)

5.3. The Kernwegenetzkonzept

This is a highlight that was originally started in the administrative district of Lower Franconia and was co-developed by the *Office of Rural Development Lower Franconia (ALE Ufr.)* because of the far-reaching structural change plan has a huge impact on the agricultural sector. The *Kernwegenetzkonzept* is a concept which shows the most frequently used agricultural roads for the present and the future in the communal alliances, e. g. in the *Streutalallianz*. It tells the local authorities which roads should be reconstructed immediately, in the near future or in ten years. To establish this concept, not just the municipalities of the own communal alliance have to work together but all the neighbored alliances and sometimes even the local authorities of other states, too (cf. Figure 28). The *Kernwegenetzkonzept* is part of the *ILEK* branch of agriculture, forestry and climate.



Figure 28 The finished Kernwegenetzkonzept! (left to right: manager Gertraud Kokula, 1st deputy chairman Thomas Fischer, Baudirektor Michael Kuhn of ALE Ufr., chairman Martin Link, Josefine Liebenberg and Alexander Heinz of BBV LandSiedlung, Photo: Georg Stock).

5.4. Tourism and Local Recreation

Since the *Streu region* is located in the hiking and biking destination Rhön, the management designed an interactive tourism map with the theme *water*. It shows all the official hiking and biking roads in the *Streutalallianz*, where the *Kneipp* water-treating basins, and historic places are located. But this is just a small selection. The map can be found on the [website](#) of the *Streutalallianz*.



Figure 29 Chairman Martin Link and manager Gertraud Kokula together with municipal worker Michael Ludwig present the first *Probierbäumchen* in their region (Photo: Georg Stock).

On the sidelines of the local hiking and biking trails there are communal fruit trees. Originally, you were able to buy the fruit off each tree. But for a few years now the interest has been sinking. So, the mayors started the project *Probierbäumchen*. The fruit from the trees which are signed as *Probierbäumchen* can be taken for free (cf. Figure 29). The label shows the Streutalallianz logo and the contact

details with a QR-code. More detailed information about the *Streutalallianz* is provided on their home page. The passersby get to know the *Streutalallianz* through this project.

5.5. Think Tanks

The alliance work is versatile and covers many different topics. So the *Streutalallianz* is part of think tanks, e. g. for tele medicine and for the elderly and people with disability.

The alliance manager coordinates projects in these think tanks or establishes them in the *Streutalallianz*. They come up with new ideas and how to inform the public. The members of the different groups vary and meet every few weeks (cf. Figure 30).



Figure 30 Meeting of the manager (u. l.) Quartiersmanager Strahlungen Volker Elsner, 1st mayor of Schönau Sonja Rahm, Quartiersmanagerin Hohenroth Verena Scheuplein, alliance manager NES-Allianz Hannah Braungart, (l.) Fachkraft für die Walddörfer Senioren Sabine Nasner, Dept. Of Developement for seniors and people with disability Ramona Nürnberger and Veronika Enders, alliance manager (Grabfeldallianz) Silvia Schmitt and Gertraud Kokula (Streutalallianz) (Photo: Fachstelle für Senioren und Menschen mit Behinderung Rhön-Grabfeld).

5.6. Supporting Members

As you already saw in the previous chapter the alliance has many projects to implement. So the *Streutalallianz* welcomes supporting members like local companies, tourist information centers, or even private persons. They support the alliance with monetary or in-kind donations and knowledge which is very helpful when the *Streutalallianz* start new projects. The members take part in the monthly alliance meetings in which different topics and ventures are planned and they give their advice (cf. Figure 31).



Figure 31 The mayors of the Streutalallianz with members of their association at one of their monthly alliance meeting at the Rhön Park Aktiv Resort in Hausen. The Resort is one of the active members. **Left to right (standing):** Friedolin Link (1st Mayor of Hausen), Martin Link (1. Mayor of Stockheim), Dietmar Zink (deputy mayor of Sondheim v. d. Rhön), Michael Kraus (1st Mayor of city of Mellrichstadt), Peter Suckfüll (active member, VR Bank), Ben Baars (active member, Rhön Park Aktiv Resort), Elmar Markert (active member, Streck Bräu), Tobias Seufert (1st Mayor of Bastheim), Thomas Fischer (1st Mayor of Nordheim v. d. Rhön), Bernd Beck (deputy mayor of Oberstreu), Michael Schnupp (1st Mayor of Fladungen), Thomas Krick (association of administrations of Ostheim v. d. Rhön). **Left to right (sitting):** Anja Friedrich (Community of Hausen), Agathe Heuser-Panten (City of Fladungen), Karina Werner (deputy mayor of city of Ostheim v. d. Rhön), Gertraud Kokula (alliance manager Streutalallianz e. V.) and Brigitte Proß (active member, Aktives Mellrichstadt) (Photo: Georg Stock).

6. Ideas for the future

The most important thing is developing the region for the youth. If they aren't interested in the *Streu Valley*, they won't want to come back here when they are grown up. So, the *Streutalallianz* has to retain the cultivated landscape (cf. Figure 32), one of the reasons why the eleven local authorities always want to implement innovative ideas, e. g. tele medicine. The mayors agree that the *Streutalallianz* has to implement projects which were originally planned for bigger cities. This is the only way to bring back people who have already moved to cities.



Figure 32 The *Streutalallianz* from a bird's eye view (Photo: Leska Wunderwelt).

To reach this goal the members of the *Streutalallianz* are interested in the exchange of ideas for rural development with others. Locals

and tourists can come up with new ideas and can present them to the alliance as it was the case with the Probierbäumchen (cf. chapter 5.4).

In the future, the *Streutalallianz* wants to interact more with its locals and guests. It wants to present itself at local festivities, e. g. through games that let you learn more about the work of the Streutalallianz and the *Streu region*.

The eleven mayors of the *Streutalallianz* invite everybody to visit the beautiful *Streu Valley*.

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Figure 3: Grafik Design 25, Joachim Schüler

Figure 4: Daniel Gruschenko, Aktives Mellrichstadt

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Figure 11: Sophia Moh

Figure 12: Matthias Dargel

Figure 13: Municipality of Hausen

Figure 14: Streutalallianz e. V., Leska Wunderwelt

Figure 15: Streutalallianz e. V.

Figure 16: Streutalallianz e. V., Leska Wunderwelt

Figure 17: Municipality of Oberstreu

Figure 18: Streutalallianz e. V.

Figure 19: Streutalallianz e. V., Leska Wunderwelt

Figure 20: Streutalallianz e. V., Leska Wunderwelt

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Figure 28: Streutalallianz e. V., Georg Stock

Figure 29: Streutalallianz e. V., Georg Stock

Figure 30: Fachstelle für Senioren und Menschen mit Behinderung
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Figure 31: Streutalallianz e. V., Georg Stock

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