Based on the results of a summer workshop at ArtMill in the Czech Republic in 2011 funded by the EU, this paper explores the potential of international artists and students coming together and crossing language and cultural barriers to create new works of art, and it’s impact on the local region. The EU Youth in Action program is intended to not only inspire youth to learn and explore other cultures, but also works as "soft diplomacy" in building much needed civil society foundations in rural regions that were formerly part of the Soviet Bloc. Our youth programs at ArtMill engage these critical issues in a unique, experiential environment that embrace "vita activa" and "vita contemplativa" [Arendt].

This paper documents a one week program, "Bohemian Workshops", that brought university level art, architecture and design students from five different countries together, to make new works with "master" artists from various cultures. Final projects were shown at ArtMill’s gallery in the local town, and shared with the public and middle-school children of the region. Each of the projects, ranging from hand made artists’ books bound in the Turkish tradition, to animated films from the Norwegians, is examined in terms of 1) their influence on the local population, 2) the effect of ArtMill and the Czech countryside on the young artists, and finally, 3) lasting results on creative output gathered from a follow up survey three years later.

Keywords: "rural", "culture", "sustainability", "art"