



Youth and young farmers' workshop

Brussels, 11-12 December 2013

Group 13

Integration of foreigners in rural areas

Funded by the



ENRD *Connecting Rural Europe*
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

Main issues and challenges identified

- ✓ **Lack of earlier experience.** The topic is relevant since in many countries there is much geographical mobility (of both EU and non-EU citizens) not only to cities but also to rural areas. LAGs are facing the situation in rural areas but sometimes they do not have much experience in integrating migrants.
- ✓ **Fear and non-acceptance.** Local people in rural areas may mistrust and fear foreigners or may not welcome the different ethnic groups. There can be a lack of acceptance among both young and older age groups.
- ✓ **Underutilised resources and lost potential.** Rural areas tend to have small and older populations. The arrival of younger foreigners could be a solution to reviving and developing quality of life for both local residents and newcomers.
- ✓ **Legal issues.** The foreigners who stay for seasonal work do not often have residence permits.
- ✓ **Reaching out.** Local organisations engaged in integration do not have specific data about migrants.



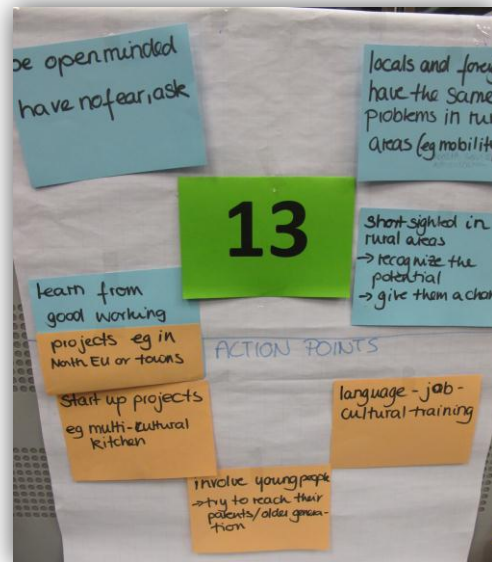
Main obstacles identified and support needed

- ✓ **Activities engaging foreigners and locals:**
 - Support greater access to services and integration.
 - Focus on shifting negative attitudes so that the migrants' potential contribution to local development is recognised and appreciated.
- ✓ **Language and culture.** Access to language courses is key to greater integration of migrants.
- ✓ **Access to working examples and practices.** Bigger cities and Northern European countries have good integration practices. For example, language courses can be offered together with acquaintance on civic matters (i.e. local legislation), or local culture.
- ✓ **Reaching out.** The service providers can offer their services through organisations, churches and schools.
- ✓ **Enhance communication and engagement.** Activities involving local residents and migrants, for instance, festive and cultural activities, help to allay negative attitudes towards outsiders.

- ✓ **Children.** Focus on engaging with children and young people from newly-arrived as a way to encourage integration - "young people have no fear to engage and communicate with those that are different from them!"
- ✓ **Offer targeted support.** Start-up projects and financing opportunities could target specific immigrant groups.

Lessons learnt

- ✓ Become more open minded and be able to see the potential that foreigners can bring is of crucial importance.
- ✓ Rural areas have less immigrants and more seasonal workers.
- ✓ Local and foreigners face the same quality of life challenges in rural areas; therefore they can join forces in resolving them.



Possible actions

- ✓ Interaction among groups is crucial: engage the whole community in joint festive activities involving exchanges on culture, cuisine, etc.
- ✓ Good practices on the topic exist in big cities – study and adapt these to the rural level.
- ✓ Involve young children and youth through schools to engage in community activities, and to encourage their families to do likewise.
- ✓ Engage local people in providing language lessons to foreigners.