



Youth and young farmers' workshop

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Group 3 – Development in disadvantaged areas

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Main issues and challenges identified

Starting a farm business in disadvantaged areas is usually not easy, and for young farmers it can become even more challenging.

Among the issues faced:

- The lack of land especially on islands, which prevents young farmers from expanding their farms and production.
- There are many difficulties in making agriculture in disadvantaged areas a profitable business, such as:
 - Higher costs, especially transport costs, making it difficult to be competitive in the market.
 - Producers in disadvantaged areas have limited local market opportunities and thus fewer occasions to benefit from short supply chains.
 - Problems accessing EU funding due to the small size of the farms, which can be far below the minimum eligibility criteria.

Main obstacles identified

The main obstacles identified for young farmers who want to start a business in disadvantaged areas refer mainly to **bureaucracy** and **attractiveness of the areas** (as places where to start a business), expressed in terms of lack of services and opportunities offered.

In relation to **bureaucracy** it was highlighted that:

- ✓ In disadvantaged areas bureaucracy is often higher than in other areas, especially in places with natural reserves.
- ✓ As most farms in disadvantaged areas are quite small, the capacity to handle such bureaucracy is insufficient.



In terms of **attractiveness** it was pointed out that disadvantaged parts are often associated with:

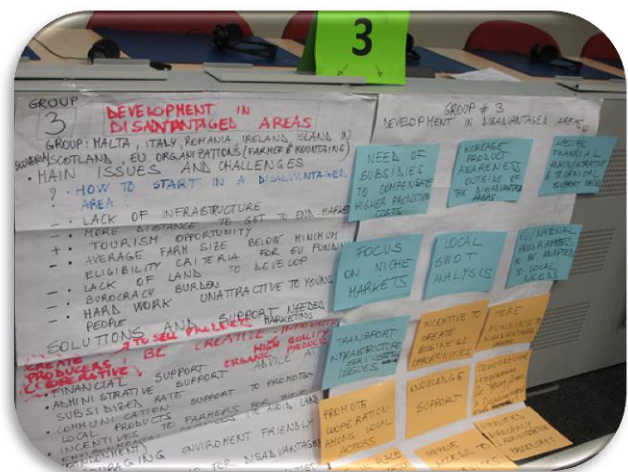
- ✓ Poor infrastructure networks, such as roads, irrigation systems, access to electricity, etc.
- ✓ Insufficient access to services, such as health, schools, leisure services, etc. which could otherwise help retain and attract people to the area.
- ✓ Low percentage of young people who, given the poor access to services, want to live and work there.

Opportunity: how to convert the disadvantages into advantages for tourism activity?

Support needed

- ✓ Young farmers in disadvantaged areas need financial, technical and administrative support from public institutions. They should be encouraged to create new products and implement new activities, and supported to do this. Moreover, they should also be supported to provide environmental services, public goods and maintain and improve local infrastructure.
- ✓ Young farmers in disadvantaged areas need to be innovative and creative in order to solve issues and offer products that can compete in the marketplace. Support is needed on:

- Labelling improving and increasing investment in marketing activities.
- Creating a specific label for products coming from disadvantaged areas. This could help the young farmers to obtain a better price and to find a market for their products.



- ✓ Increasing the offer of high quality and healthy as well as regional products.
- ✓ Communication activities should be improved to inform local populations about the importance and benefits for the local community of consuming local products.
- ✓ Administrative and bureaucracy issues could be solved by cooperatives, farmer's organisations or producer organisations which could also help to sell products commonly and be stronger in the market.

- ✓ In disadvantaged areas, sometimes the farming is not enough to survive, that's why alternative jobs should be ensured to complement agricultural activities and the need of profit.

Some lessons arising from participants' experiences

Political/legal/financial issues

- ✓ Higher production costs need to be compensated with subsidies.
- ✓ Disadvantaged areas need specific financial, administrative and technical support.
- ✓ EU/national programmes need to be adapted to the local needs of young farmers.

Marketing

- ✓ A focus on niche markets is necessary.
- ✓ The awareness of disadvantaged areas' products should be broadly increased.
- ✓ Disadvantaged areas should also be seen as opportunities for young people (farming, tourism...)

Youth in disadvantaged areas

- ✓ It is important to know what the real needs of rural youth are; SWOT analysis on local needs should be developed.
- ✓ Infrastructure and access to services should be improved in disadvantaged areas to make these areas attractive to young farmers and other young people.

Possible action points

- ✓ Better distribution and more funding for disadvantaged areas in the future politics.
- ✓ Creation of diversification opportunities for young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage them to stay.
- ✓ Improve access to services to promote the establishment of youth and young families in the disadvantaged areas.
- ✓ Provide incentives to develop disadvantaged areas and make them more attractive to youth.
- ✓ Simplify administrative procedures that allow young people to access to funds.
- ✓ Promote cooperation between youth and local actors.
- ✓ Support knowledge exchange between youth and create transnational exchange schemes for youth and young farmers in disadvantaged areas.