

# What can LEADER/CLLD and other bottom-up initiatives do?

## LEADER/CLLD & networking supporting social inclusion in rural areas

Bottom-up territorial approaches such as LEADER and other forms of Community Led Local Development (CLLD) can play an important role in dealing with problems of poverty and social inclusion in rural areas. In particular, LEADER can help to identify specific problems at the local level, address these through tailor-made measures, and link together the various actors required to provide more effective solutions.

### INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion was often not an inherent objective of LEADER strategies and/or projects, although they achieved social inclusion effects. This stems from the fact that the original focus of LEADER was territorial rather than human development, with the LEADER strategy focusing on the development of deprived areas rather than the inclusion of deprived people. LAGs often concentrated on working with the most active people in their areas to create jobs and improve the overall quality of life rather than trying to help the most marginalised groups. The latter was a positive, albeit usually not principal, consequence of LEADER.

In the 2014-2020 policy framework, a new approach to local development has been introduced through CLLD, which opens up new, direct opportunities to deal with social inclusion. In particular, the European Social Fund will now be supporting CLLD in certain Member States.

LEADER focused on the development of deprived areas rather than the inclusion of deprived people.

To seize these opportunities a number of considerations need to be taken into account:

- ✓ Excluded groups need to be represented on the partnerships and be fully involved in developing the strategy.
- ✓ Project selection criteria and procedures need to be developed to ensure disadvantaged groups have fair access.
- ✓ There must be targeted investment in capacity building and animation.
- ✓ The LAG should use its own activities to create linkages with other support agencies and help build integrated support itineraries.
- ✓ LAG goals and targets need to be set in a way that reflect the real needs and capacities of vulnerable groups.

### The social inclusion challenges of rural areas

Population change, poor education, weak labour markets, remoteness and low population density are the main causes of poverty and social exclusion in rural areas. The interaction of these determinants can produce a vicious circle in which poverty and social exclusion become entrenched.

#### Social indicators in the EU

##### Poor education

Only 18.4% of the population had tertiary education qualifications in rural areas, compared to 33.2% in cities and 23.2% in towns and suburbs.

##### Weak labour market

The unemployment rate in thinly-populated areas (EU-27) over the period 2008 to 2012 increased from 7% to almost 11%.

##### Demographic change

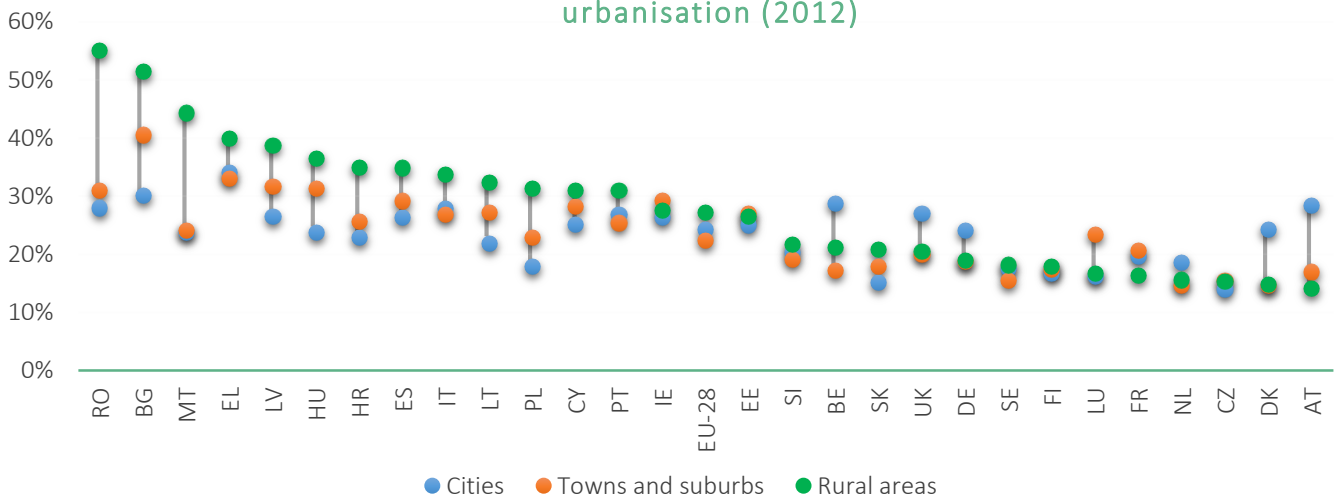
61 million people aged 15-64 years lived in predominantly rural areas, down from 68 million in 2008. People over 65 increased by 28% since 2005. The arrival of economic migrants and asylum seekers.

##### Remoteness and low density

12.2% of the total population faced high difficulty in accessing public transport in rural areas, as opposed to 5.7% in towns and suburbs and 2.3% in cities. Low population density makes services more expensive.



## People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) by degree of urbanisation (2012)



Source: Eurostat <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupDownloads.do>

## The contribution of LEADER to social inclusion challenges

Considerable experience has been accumulated through LEADER, in response to the four challenges described:

### ✓ *Social integration through labour market inclusion*

Some LEADER projects provided examples on achieving inclusion through employment initiatives and/or prepared the ground for future labour market inclusion. Among others, LEADER activities concerned the development of skills or the analysis of labour supply and demand (including the analysis of the needs of disadvantaged groups and how these can be matched with labour market demand).

### Targeting young disadvantaged people (Scotland)

Voluntary Action Okney implemented the 'CONNECT' LEADER project that focused on providing one-to-one, tailored personal and skills development. The aim of these activities was to ensure that young unemployed people gain the confidence, skills and commitment that enable

them to move on to the more formal programmes offered by partner agencies. CONNECT worked with referrals from several job centres, skills development and social service local organisations. As a consequence, young people gained skills and some of them managed to obtain employment after a work placement.

### Clydeside Community Initiatives (CCI, Scotland)

Clydeside Community Initiatives (CCI) is a social enterprise that received LEADER support to assist young people experiencing difficulties and adults with mental health problems to improve their social inclusion. The project offered the opportunity to these target groups to develop vocational and social skills as well as self-confidence, self-esteem and independence by participating in commercial landscaping, woodwork and horticulture activities.

### Benefits of LEADER

- ✓ Tailor made, personalised approach to skills development
- ✓ Advice on the financial possibilities for business creation
- ✓ Support based on knowledge of local labour market challenges (e.g. unemployment, barriers to entry) and opportunities (demand)
- ✓ Targeting different groups according to their characteristics



© European Union 2013

## ✓ Basic services in rural areas

LEADER has supported initiatives that facilitate the access to services (health, education, leisure) especially for groups with limited mobility (old people, disabled). The set-up and support to social care facilities and services has been at the heart of LEADER as a means to promote the integration of disabled people. They include childcare and care farming or green care for disabled or elderly people.

### Community development and social inclusion in Wallonia (Belgium)

The Walloon LAGs have coordinated a number of social initiatives targeting disadvantaged people. They include a transport service operated by volunteers to drive adults and children in areas without access to public transport or a transport service for elderly people with limited mobility.

#### LEADER value added:

Offering access to services and leisure for disadvantaged groups due to remoteness, age or lack of proximity services

### Mobile home care services for elderly and disabled people (Portugal)

The provision of mobile support services to elderly and disabled people in rural areas in the Sousel region has been possible because of the involvement of local organisations that understand the limitations and the needs of these target groups. In one case, a new service was introduced to enable old or disabled people to travel or receive support at home. In the other case, an existing mobile service for the provision of home care was improved. In both cases, it was an initiative of local organisations (local community development group, local action group).

#### Key success factor:

Involvement of local organisations with a deep understanding of local problems

### Social farming for social inclusion (Austria)

The Brueckler farm centre offers green care activities to people with various disabilities. The activities are designed to be flexible so they can adapt to the specific needs of individual clients. Green care on the farm helps people with disabilities gain confidence and acquire inter-personal skills.



© MMM/Mavi Contum Oy

### House Care Net-Work in Tielts Region (Flanders, Belgium)

The project responds to the lack of coordination of different service providers in rural areas with a view to provide effective housing services to disadvantaged people living in these areas. The project improved coordination between the four social companies in the house care field as well as between them and local authorities and citizens and provided housing assistance to people with special needs.

#### Key success factor:

Cooperation/networking of local governments, social services and social companies

### Transitional care support in rural areas (Spain)

A social inclusion centre in Galicia supports disabled people through a transitional process to become more autonomous. The support provided includes adapted accommodation, educational facilities and outdoor recreational space.

A similar project entitled 'Social innovation circles' was implemented by the network of social organisations working with disabled in two Spanish regions (Castilla y León and La Rioja). It addressed the issue of remoteness and accessibility through the development of a package of services for disabled people and the promotion of their social participation.

#### Key success factors:

- ✓ Care services adapted to the individual needs of the disabled in a friendly environment
- ✓ Cooperation of public and private sector partners and social entities working with disabled people
- ✓ Testing different approaches to come up with tailor made responses



## ✓ *Integration of immigrants, refugees & ethnic minorities through social and cultural activities*

LEADER has supported the social integration through community building activities targeted at immigrants, refugees and ethnic minorities (mainly Roma). Local intermediaries/ integration coaches often play a key role to connect with marginalised groups and their organisations. Furthermore, a common aim of these projects is to build capacity within local stakeholder organisations to strengthen their participation in relevant projects and programmes.

### Integration Pact (Luxemburg)

The purpose is to promote a proactive integration policy by supporting municipalities, associations and local institutions to strengthen their initiatives in this field. These encourage integration by creating places of exchange and intercultural encounters for the reconciliation of people from different cultures within the Miselerland region. This activity included also a Competition "Integration Couch 2012-2013". This project received the King Baudouin Foundation prize.

The provision of leisure and meeting spaces for immigrants is a first step towards their social integration

### Circle in the multi-ethnic city of Lucera (Italy)

The 'Circle' in the multi-ethnic city of Lucera (in the area Lucerino) is an open meeting place for Italian and foreign citizens to improve mutual understanding and multicultural exchange. Training courses were organised, which aimed at improving the knowledge of the Italian language, elements of basic computer and Italian culture, starting from education to law to the local way of life, customs and traditions of the area.

The integrated approach concerns both individuals and their territory



© European Union 2013

## Points for further reflection

LEADER demonstrates that it is possible to contribute to social inclusion in rural areas through bottom-up initiatives. However, to be more effective a series of questions need to be answered, including:

- ☐ How to reach out and involve disadvantaged and minority groups while simultaneously building the support of the rest of the community?
- ☐ How to draw in the skills in mentoring, community development, capacity building that are required for disadvantaged groups to develop their own projects?
- ☐ How to justify investments of time and resources which do not necessarily yield immediate results in terms of jobs?
- ☐ How to move out of the Leader "comfort zone" and support more effective local joined up approaches by different service providers?