

ENRD workshop on ‘The role of LEADER/CLLD and networking in supporting social inclusion in rural areas’

Summary Report

Note that thematic factsheets were developed prior to the event on the integration of migrants & refugees, young people and Roma people, as well as on the role of networking and LEADER/CLLD. The factsheets are being updated based on the outcomes of the workshop and are available from the [events webpage](#).



Session 1: Opportunities for improving social inclusion in rural areas

Rural poverty and social inclusion in Europe, Seamus Boland (Irish Rural Link & Economic and Social Committee)

In his keynote speech, Seamus Boland gave an overview on rural development challenges related to social inclusion. He explained that poverty in the EU has three primary elements: homelessness, child poverty and rural poverty. Rural poverty is a harsh poverty, most prevalent in the Eastern Member States.

Rural poverty is also largely ‘invisible’, which makes it easy to be ignored or its existence challenged. Under-employment is a major element of rural poverty (very often ‘part time’ farming). The main indicators [or proxy indicators] of rural poverty are: unemployment; household income; and transport costs.

Seamus advocated, in terms of the rural development policy, that it is vital to improve the environment and at the same time to improve the income of smallholders – and that these things are compatible and mutually enforcing. To reduce poverty, it is vital to use and leverage elements of the rural development funds other than those allocated to the priority of social inclusion.

“How do we leverage that money [allocated to the RDPs] into fighting poverty?”

The World Bank work on Community-Driven Development, Dan Owen (World Bank)

“In CDD the important area is facilitation.”

Dan Owen gave a presentation on the Community-driven Development (CDD) approach of the World Bank (WB). Social inclusion is now very high on the WB’s agenda. It is defined in three spheres: Market; Spaces (empowerment) and; Services. Approximately €40 billion of WB investments are in the Community Driven Development portfolio. The WB invests approx. \$2billion in CDD p.a.

All the WB’s work in CDD has been in rural areas. Only now is the WB turning to social inclusion in urban areas. The WB has many lessons from implementation experience to draw upon. One of the most important is that community based targeting is vital to get results.

Supporting social inclusion through the Rural Development Programmes, Paul Soto, ENRD Contact Point

Paul Soto emphasized the opportunities provided by the Rural Development Programmes, in particular Priority 6 (P6) on ‘Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas’ (15% of the total public expenditure allocated to P6).

“For LEADER, to deal with social inclusion there needs to be a mind shift.”

Paul stressed the important role of LEADER/CLLD and in particular that of multi-funded LAG strategies. Multi-funded approach that includes ESF is planned in 7 Member States. He also highlighted that LEADER should move away from a purely territorial approach towards a territorial *and* people-based approach.

Session 2: Integrated strategies towards social inclusion

The ESF perspective on social inclusion, Vincent Caron (DG Employment)

Vincent Caron presented the framework of social inclusion policies in rural areas, including specific challenges on ‘no specific territorial targeting’ of social inclusion (ESF) policies and ‘lower take-up of active inclusion in rural areas’. The multi-funded approach provides a new opportunity as CLLD is programmed for the first time under ESF. It is important to build up inclusive CLLD strategies and LAGs in all phases: (i) starting from the preparatory phase (using preparatory support, capacity-building, targeting and outreach) through (ii) bringing together relevant partners and promoting participatory methods, to (iii) setting up a more social-friendly evaluation system.

The Human Capital Operational Programme and social inclusion in rural areas of Romania, Elena Iordanescu (Ministry of European Funds)

Elena Iordanescu presented the Operational Programme for Human Capital (2014-2020) in Romania, and how it contributes to the EU strategy. During the current programming period (as compared to the previous one) there are dedicated measures to disadvantaged communities, there is more focus on integrated projects that respond to community needs, and more targeted use of the CLLD instrument. She talked about the situation of Roma in rural areas and how important it is to focus on this target group starting at an early age.

“We included the children in the category of marginalised communities, and we want to involve all the institutions that can use the ESIF funds...”

Session 3: Integrated strategies towards social inclusion

The session on 'integrated local strategies' was introduced by two examples from the local level:

- [LAG-managed social inclusion programmes in Ireland](#), Ian Dempsey (West Cork Development Partnership)
- [The experience of multi-funded LAG strategies and the case of care farms in Tuchola region \(Poland\)](#), Ryszard Kaminski (Kujawsko – Pomorski Advisory Centre)

Short discussions around tables aimed to identify further examples from participants around some key areas, including:

- Involving excluded groups in strategy planning
- Setting selection criteria for LAGs and projects
- Targeting marginalised groups through LAG strategies
- The practice of local coaches and coordinators
- Studies/ needs analysis on marginalised groups
- Coordination between LAGs and stakeholder organisations
- Setting targets/ measuring success of integration
- Coordination of funds

Examples identified through the discussion were recorded by ENRD Contact Point colleagues and are followed-up and built in the updated factsheets on social inclusion, to be uploaded on the event's website (http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/en-rd-events-and-meetings/Social-inclusion-workshop_20160317).

Session 4: Working groups on specific marginalised groups

During this session 4 working groups were organised focusing on specific marginalised groups:

- migrants & refugees
- young people
- Roma people
- Women

Each working group included [presentations](#) on specific examples. Further examples were identified and recorded during the workshops and will be integrated in the updated factsheets on migrants & refugees, young people, Roma people and women.

Session 5: How networks can contribute to enhancing social inclusion

The session was introduced by three networking examples on:

- [The role of the Swedish National Rural Network in supporting social inclusion](#), Nils Lagerroth and Asha Ismail Mohamud (Swedish National Rural Network)
- [Learning Network on Poverty and Vulnerability](#), Alexander Spriet (Flemish Rural Network)
- [Monitoring the quality of CLLD interventions targeting Roma](#), Ruus Dijksterhuis (ERGO Network)

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion of experts from all levels (representing LAG, MA, NRN, stakeholder organisation, European Commission). Some of the key ideas and messages from the discussion are presented below.

What can be done at EU and national level to enable social inclusion and how to enable flexibility?

We should help identify indicators that would enable capturing the effects of actions targeted at social inclusion. We could build upon the experience of the ESF who has more practice in this field as well as EU organisations that represent socially excluded target groups. The work done by the ERGO network is very important and the monitoring system they elaborated to capture the effects of CLLD on social inclusion of Roma could also be of interest .

Another challenge is to engage in social inclusion processes all the actors that are not necessarily usual stakeholders of LAGs. Specialised NGOs could play a role here in helping LAGs in reaching out to those groups. They could also help LAGs build their capacity in dealing with those issues.

The LEADER system should be seen as a catalyst, as an opportunity to involve all relevant participants. Starting from the MAs who can do some targeting to the ground and opinion makers to promote some key ideas. Then there are the NGOs who know the people who can have an influence and then the LAG itself that has some capacity and knowledge.

Karolina Jasinska-Mühleck, DG AGRI

How the MA can adjust to address emerging issues like the refugee crisis?

To us the bottom up approach is first an issue of the LAGs, but one example on what we can do as MAs, is simplification, as there are too many national rules (some of which should be abolished). The EU legislation already provides a very strong set of rules. As an MA we are a mirror because we work in close collaboration with the MA of ESF and of ERDF. So we have a strong impact into the funding rules. So we can change the rules and in this way we can create some opportunities for some NGOs.

Gabor Spuller (MA, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany)

How can NRNs support the process of social inclusion?

One of the things that came out of the LEADER conference last week was a cry for help from LAGs to us a network to help them to reach hard-to-reach groups because LEADER tends to be run by the usual suspects. So we are looking at the framework that will facilitate LAGs to access these groups.

Alistair Prior (NRN, Scotland)

What do you think that LAGs needs to be better able to respond?

With LEADER you work with the most active people, the most enthusiastic. But you have to find the others who are not in your network. So a learning network at national level and then repeated at regional level would help to allow you to find them. There is already a lot going on this topic but not on LEADER. LEADER has a lot of potential to be used.

Mireille Groot Koerkamp (LAG, The Netherlands)

How can you better link with stakeholders and what do you need for that?

We have some good examples like Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. But in the end it is a political issue and the main key people are the mayors. The question is whether they have the capacity to engage the Roma, and the tools and skills. We somehow have to find a way to strengthen the community.

Michal Miku (ERGO Network, Czech Republic)

Initial recommendations from the workshop

One of the main objectives of the event was *'to draw recommendations about how to best seize the opportunities for promoting social inclusion in rural areas'*. Some initial recommendations are highlighted below, further ones will be identified in the specific factsheets developed as a result of the event (please visit the [event's webpage](#)).

- **During the preparation phase it is important to make a diagnosis with regard to the main groups facing poverty** to enable project planners and policy makers to understand the composition of the marginalised groups, their characteristics and specific issues/problems that they are facing, and that may be addressed through rural development projects.
- **More strategic targeting of relevant RDP measures on social inclusion.** To make best use of the budget allocated to social inclusion and poverty reduction objectives under Priority 6, it is essential to develop a good targeting framework. Among others, this can be done through LEADER/CLLD (9.5 billion euro; 55% of the 6B local development focus area) or through mobilising the funding for village renewal and basic services (7.2 billion euro, 42% of the 6B local development focus area).
- **Unlock the potential of other RDP priorities and focus areas for social inclusion.** Rural development policy can pursue different goals that are compatible and mutually reinforcing. For instance, by supporting environmental projects in small farms (under Priority 4 on enhancing ecosystems) can have an impact on the environment, while increasing incomes and reducing poverty. Lifelong learning and vocational training (under Priority 1 on knowledge transfer and innovation) can be targeted at disadvantaged groups and hence may contribute to the development of skills and employability.
- **Managing Authorities play a crucial role in enabling the effective use of RDP measures for social inclusion.** Among others Managing Authorities need to be flexible in adjusting the rules and conditions for using RDP measures for social inclusion. For instance, several MAs encouraged LAGs (and followed a flexible approach) with regard to integrating migrants and refugees in light of the recent migrant crisis. Similarly, the selection criteria need to be defined in a way to encourage the real participation of marginalised groups in LAG strategies and RDP projects. Simplification, such as the use of umbrella projects (for reduced administrative burden of small projects) should also be more widely used by MAs.
- **Explore the multi-funding opportunity and links with other policies for social inclusion.** Multi-funding in this current period offers opportunities to combine various policies, in particular the more people-based social policy (and the ESF) and territorially based rural development (the EAFRD). Through the multi-funded approach more integrated local strategies may be promoted.
- **Develop social inclusion specific indicators.** Social inclusion is not evident only in labour market participation. In order to assess the contribution of rural development policy to social inclusion and poverty reduction there is a need to design more specific indicators, including those linked to access to housing, education and health in rural areas, schooling outcomes and school drop-out rates, gender equality, etc.

- **Encourage the change in mind-set in LEADER from a purely territorial approach towards a territorial *and* people-centred approach.** While moving towards a people-centred approach, it is also important to enable initiatives that do not necessarily yield employment or income generation outcomes. Addressing labour markets alone with the aim to create jobs will not suffice. The poor and socially excluded in rural areas need to acquire capabilities that will enable them to obtain income and that are intrinsically important such as skills and self-confidence, access to education and healthcare, etc. Among others the village renewal and basic services measure can be mobilised for such purposes.
- **In order to be effective LAGs need to be more inclusive and to mobilise local people and communities** in both the strategy development and implementation. Support mechanisms such as 'local coordinators' including youth coaches, Roma coordinators, integration coordinators proved highly effective in the local social inclusion context. Capacity-building is important in this context at both the LAG level and the level of local stakeholders.
- **Networks can play a crucial role in unlocking RDP potential to improve social inclusion.** National Rural Networks (and other specialised networks) have an important role in bringing together various stakeholders to facilitate exchange among them with regard to marginalised groups (e.g. in the form of thematic groups). Networks can bring together relevant actors (private, public, NGO) so they can work together and develop solutions and support for social inclusion. NRNs are also front-runners in facilitating exchange and providing training and capacity-building for LAGs.

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