

Women in Rural Areas: Challenges and Opportunities



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Presentation Overview

- Hub Organisation
- Hub Context
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Good or Smart Practice
- Recommendations?

Hub Organisation

The image displays four logos for rural development organizations. On the left is the logo for COPA COGECOA, featuring an orange bar above the text 'copa*cogeca' and 'european farmers european agri-cooperatives' below. In the center is the logo for the European Network for Rural Development, which includes a stylized grid of colored squares and stars above the text. To the right is the logo for the National Rural Network, consisting of a colorful star-like shape above the text. At the bottom is the logo for rural network ni, featuring a stylized group of people above the text and the website address 'www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk'.

copa*cogeca
european farmers european agri-cooperatives

European Network for Rural Development

National Rural Network

rural network ni
www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

Women in Rural Areas: A Changing Rural

Rural areas are undergoing major transformation in terms of ...

Economy

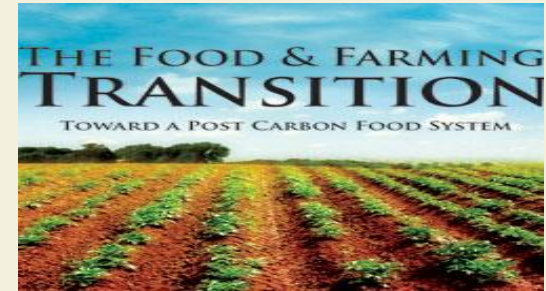
- Agricultural restructuring; service industries; tourism....

Society

- Depopulation; counterurbanisation; new rural dwellers; commuting; issues of access and mobility; isolation; deprivation; poor service provision, immigration.....

Environment

- Climate change – biodiversity..... water and food issues.....



Rural Europe.....

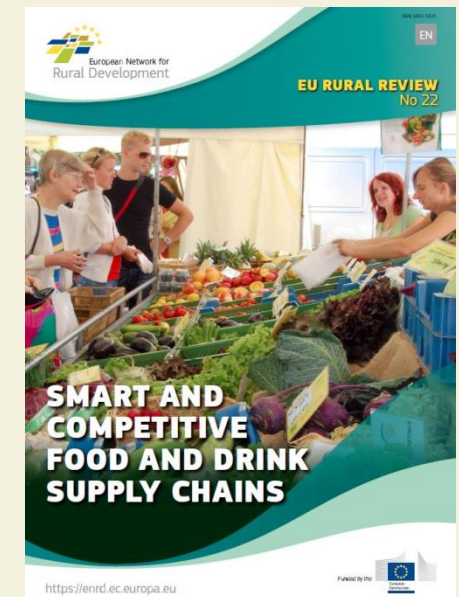
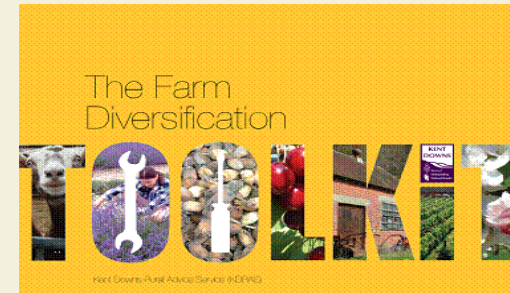
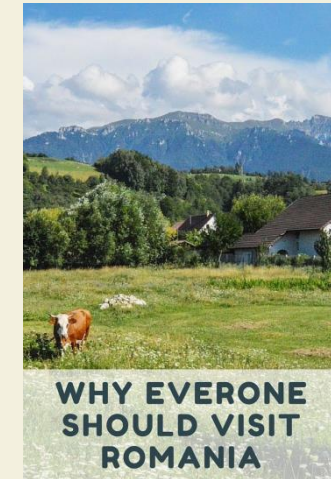
Restructured agricultural society

- Not only areas of production, but also consumption and conservation

Alternative uses of rural space

- Multifunctional, Diversification, tourism.....

Re-configuration of rural employment



So....Where do Women in Changing Rural Areas Fit.....



Women make up slightly more than **50%** of EU population

Represent slightly less than 50% of the total working age population in the rural areas of the EU

Across EU - gender segregation of the labour market = women are more likely to be concentrated in lower paid employment, and less senior roles.



Powerful Market Source:
81% purchaser of consumer goods and 82% of food.
Main decision maker in the home.....

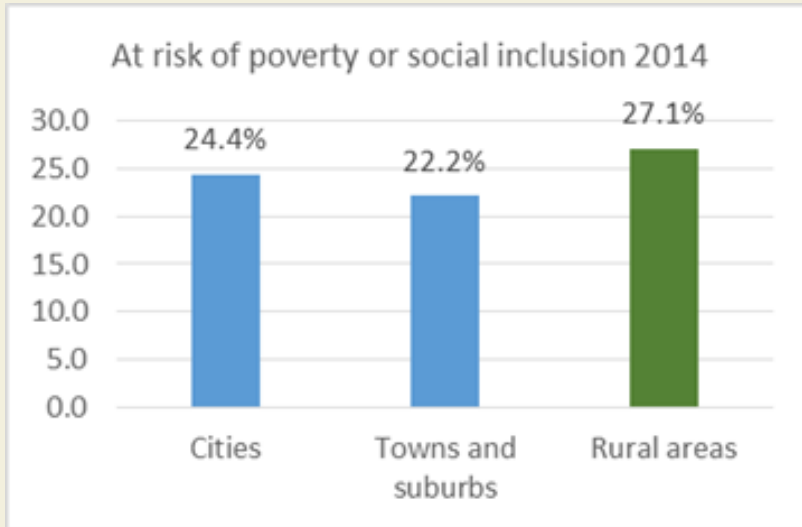
Despite investment in education, women are paid 16% less than men per hour. They are more likely to work part-time - to put their careers on hold to care for others. Consequently, the gender gap in pensions stands at 41.1%.

Education, age and life cycle stage factors affecting women's labour market situation. Share of self-employed women in the EU differs considerably across countries.

(Directorate-General for Internal Policies, EU, 2015)

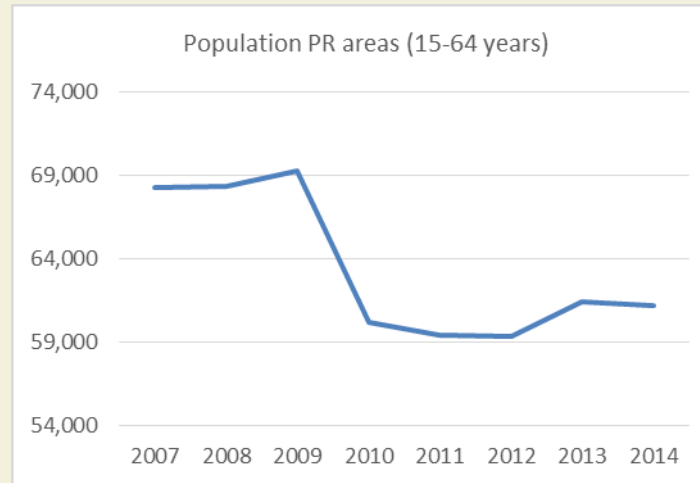
Challenges Facing Everyone in Rural Areas.....

Poverty and Social Exclusion



BUT.....

Demographic Change



Rural areas in the oldest Member States are also home to a larger share of old people

Services/ Facilities



Rural Women Face Additional Challenges....

▪ General:

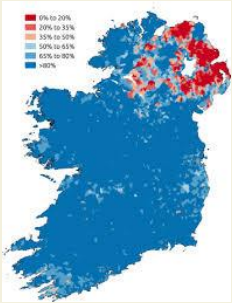
- Childcare (family dependent – low levels of public childcare provision)
- Educational and training opportunities
- Traditional and idealistic ideology (particularly in farming - masculine industry)



▪ Employment

- EU - women more likely concentrated in lower paid employment - less senior roles – poor quality jobs
- Employment rates for women lower in the EU-12 (65.6%) than in the EU-15 (70.1%) – lower than in urban areas
- Lack of employment opportunities (particularly in line with qualifications)
- Difficulties accessing finance for business development (Directorate-General for Internal Policies, EU, 2015).

Women in Agriculture: Irish Study



- **2010 Irish Census** - 27% of the agricultural workforce in Ireland - female.
- Over 70,000 females, 15,099 = farm holders, 40,787 spouses to farm holders, 12,321 family members of the farm holder and 2,067 were non family farm workers.
- Collectively contributed 36,554 Average Work Units (AWU) on family farms = 22% of total AWUs.
- A significant contribution to Irish agricultural economy.
- 2000 to 2010 - number of spouses contributing AWUs to family farms showed an increase of 1%, whereas AWUs supplied by land holder's decreased by 3%.
- This indicates a relative increase in the level of 'spousal' contribution to labour input on farms.

(National Rural Network, 2013)



Women in Agriculture: Challenges

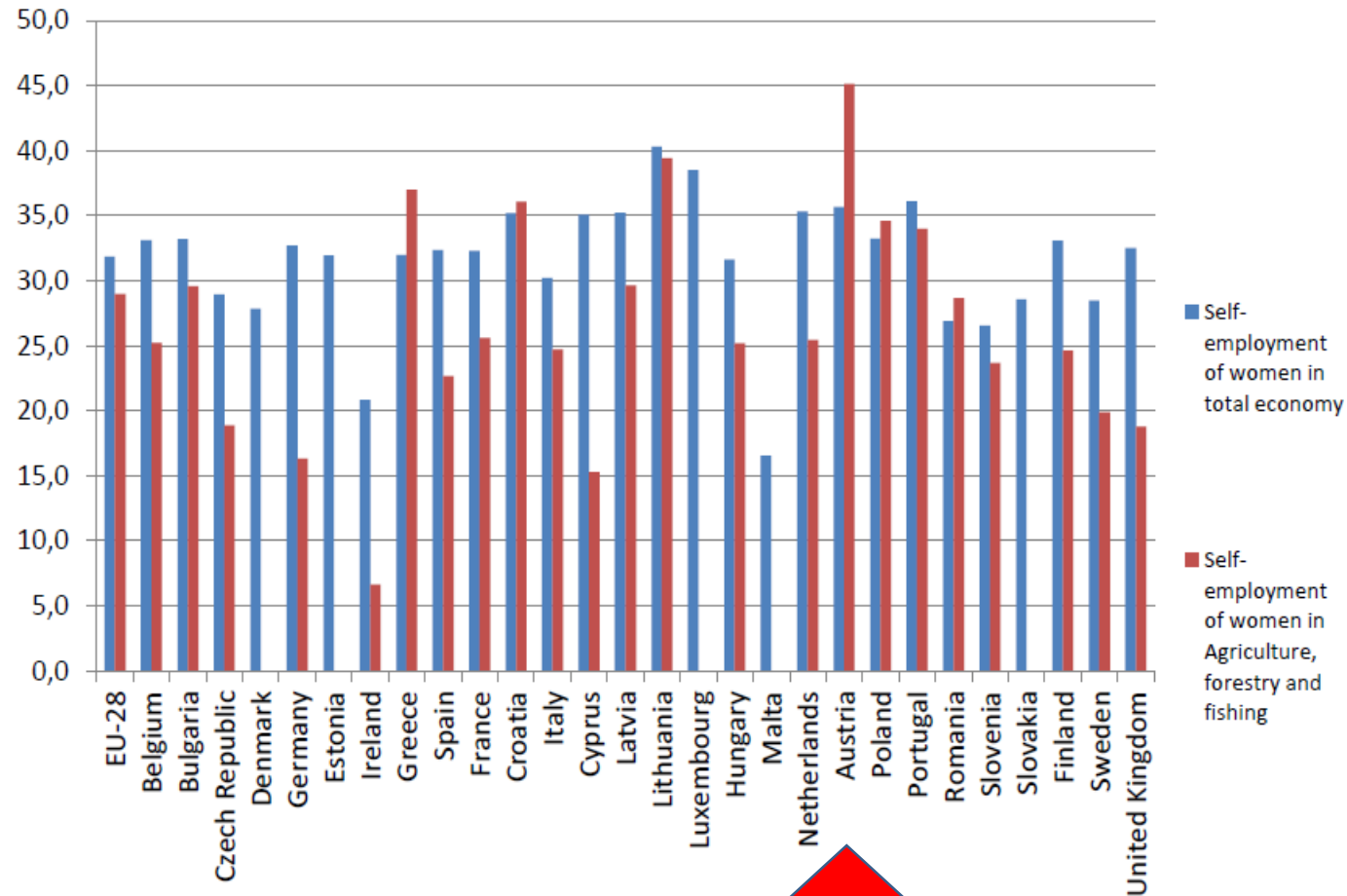
- Entry to farming unlike other occupations
- 78% are the spouse of the holder
- Holder/owner is the public face of farming
- CAP payments go to holder/owner
- Training, knowledge transfer mainly directed at the holder
- Agricultural organisations – male dominated

"Men own 90 per cent of all farmland in Ireland which shows a significant imbalance in property ownership between men and women - you wouldn't see this imbalance in any other occupation but it exists in farming."

(Watson, 2014).

Rural Business Development: Women's Role

Figure 2: Self-employment of women in the EU-28, 2014, %



Source: Eurostat

- Entering **self-employment/ setting up SME** - women at forefront of innovation and diversification.
- Women developing **agri-tourism activities, artisanal food and drinks production, craft enterprises, telecommunication and caring services.**
- Women added advantage of an awareness and knowledge of local needs, and special interpersonal and communication skills (Directorate-General for Internal Policies, EU, 2015).

Innovative Practices of Women in Rural Areas



Margaret Farrelly – O'Egg

- 1980s – Present
- 150 free range hen
- 160,000 and 32 staff

**Traditional Home Craft Revival
Gayle Hegarty – Co. Tyrone**



**Scottish Rural Network –
Women in Agriculture
Event**

“Women are the backbone of rural areas; playing a key role, particularly in on-farm diversification and agro-tourism, on top of the farms production role” (Joe Healy, IFA, 2016).

ACORNS Project



- Female entrepreneurial business start-up business course
- Objective to encourage a stronger level of enterprise development in rural areas by seeking out and assisting start-up female entrepreneurs living in rural areas to grow and develop their business.



“The ACORNS programme has been instrumental in me making hard decisions for the business, in terms of expansion. It gave the opportunity to learn from experiences of other early stage entrepreneurs.”
[Aileen Barron, Green Acre Marketing](#)

Key Issues: Sustainability and Development of Rural Areas

- Employment key element of the **EU's Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**.
- Increasing the **rate of employment** can help to reduce poverty and thereby improve economic, social and territorial cohesion.
- Reaching an **employment rate of 75%** of the population aged 20-64 is one of the five headline targets to be achieved over the coming decade, including through the **greater involvement of women**.
- **Rural areas are crucial** for the attainment of the Europe 2020 headline target (Directorate-General for Internal Policies, EU, 2015).



How can this be achieved through the Rural Development Programme?

Recommendations: Women's Committee of Copa - for CAP



- Encourage and support women's farmers participation in the **decision-making processes**.
- Support **women organisations**.
- Encourage and support **access to finance**.
- Encourage and support **entrepreneurial initiatives and networks**.
- Support secure social protection measures based in equal rights for men and women.

- Promote the **concept of multi-functionality**
- Support for projects and advice to create **innovative agricultural activities** in rural areas
- Promote and improve **education, vocational training and new skills**.
- Develop **information databases** and networks at Member States level

How?

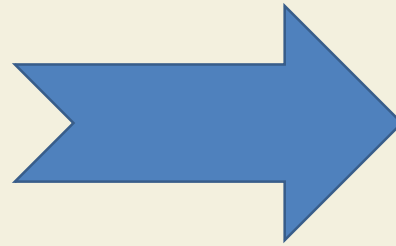


How can EU Rural and Regional Development Policies advance the issues facing rural women?

1. What is your experience of women entrepreneurship in rural areas?
2. What challenges and opportunities do you believe women in rural areas face as they attempt to engage in employment, innovation or entrepreneurial activities?
3. Do you have examples of initiatives put in place in your country that show how women faced challenges or embraced opportunities?



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



**Europe Investing
in Women in
Rural Areas**



Thank You

Any Questions?