

## Discussion Brief

*WORKING DRAFT*

# Supporting jobs & employment for social inclusion and demographic change

## Context

Rural areas, and disadvantaged rural communities in particular, need new jobs and employment opportunities to secure adequate standards of living for themselves and their families. Unemployment and poverty are at the base of social exclusion and for this reason social development is hardly possible without parallel economic development.

Unemployment and lower wages are issues, which afflict some specific groups such as migrants, Roma people, women, and young people to a greater degree than others. Therefore, there is a strong need for policies and strategies that contribute to creating and matching skills with the local labour market demand.

## Methods & examples

### Employment, training and involvement of young people

Young people in rural areas suffer from high unemployment. The recent economic crisis has shown that unemployment falls most heavily on younger groups and especially those with low educational attainment<sup>1</sup>. The situation is worse in rural areas where participation in pre-school education as well as participation in advanced education and learning is significantly lower than in urban areas.

Therefore, specific targeted actions are needed to create new work opportunities for young people, thus keeping them in rural areas and helping to overcome the aging of rural population. Initiatives at the local level (e.g. supported by LEADER projects) have contributed strongly to improving the socio-economic situation of young people. One example, is South East Cork Area Development ([SECAD](#)<sup>2</sup>) in Ireland that developed a long-term integrated strategy, with a strong labour market activation component.

The recent [European Solidarity Corps](#)<sup>3</sup> (ESC) initiative of the European Union aims to engage young people in solidarity volunteering activities or solidarity jobs for 2-12 months. Several of these activities are related to rural areas and agricultural activities. Through the ESC, interested young people are matched with relevant organisations. Volunteers are expected to be involved in activities related to environmental protection, nature conservation and restoration of natural areas and ecosystems.

### Women and entrepreneurship

Although recent research suggests that there has been a significant increase in the employment of women in rural areas; unemployment rates for women in rural areas, as well as in intermediate areas, still remain higher than those for women in urban areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Eurofound, “Young people not in employment, education and training –characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe”, 2012

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.secad.ie/>

<sup>3</sup> See also: [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en) and [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15\\_social-inclusion\\_esc\\_frizon-somogyi.pdf](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15_social-inclusion_esc_frizon-somogyi.pdf)

Common employment issues for women in rural areas are lack of suitable employment opportunities, depreciation of women's employment, employment availability in a restricted variety of sectors, and lower wages. Compounding these issues are limited childcare facilities, inadequate public transport, poor broadband, a lack of promotion and inadequate vocational training. Such challenges surrounding rural employment often lead rural women to find new solutions in self-employment, entrepreneurship and innovative practices, either on-farm or 'beyond the farm gate'.

The recent ENRD factsheet on 'The role of women in rural areas'<sup>4</sup> describes a range of successful practices, including RDP, NRN support and other national and European initiatives that aim at supporting women's entrepreneurship in rural areas<sup>5</sup>.

### Employment and training for Roma people

A large part of the Roma population (especially in those Member States that have high Roma population) live in rural areas. Roma are at high risk of poverty and social exclusion. Many communities are confronted with low educational status and unemployment<sup>6</sup>. Specific initiatives, such as the Rátatouille project<sup>7</sup> in Hungary aim at improving the employment situation of Roma communities living in rural areas.

### Matching skills of migrants and refugees with local labour market demand

The recent migrants' crisis put the integration of migrants and refugees in the spotlight. One of the challenges of integrating migrants and refugees into local communities is finding or creating suitable employment for them<sup>8</sup>. This involves matching their (often unique) skills with demand on the local labour markets (including the agricultural and fisheries sectors). For instance, the Austrian Thematic Group on migrants and refugees is now working to identify good practices on 'occupation and work' which is identified as one of the main issues that the group is addressing.<sup>9</sup> The Thematic Group also aims to support the job orientation for asylum seekers (assessing competences, mentoring programmes, etc.).

## Getting involved in the discussion

The ENRD Contact Point aims to generate discussion and exchange about useful approaches among interested stakeholders and improve the RDP implementation. **How is 'overcoming unemployment in rural areas' relevant in the context of your Member State and/or your work?**

### Get involved in the discussion - Tell your ideas through Viima

- What are the specific issues that arise in your Member State/ regional context?
- Are there any practical challenges that you are facing? What are the specific examples that you have?

Read the other Social inclusion discussion briefs on 'Supporting basic needs'; 'Supporting jobs & employment'; 'Supporting social cohesion & strengthening local community' and 'Social proofing'.

<sup>4</sup> See recent ENRD factsheet on 'The role of women in rural areas':

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15\\_factsheet\\_women.pdf](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15_factsheet_women.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See for instance: <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/> and/or <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/posts/farming-connect%E2%80%99s-women-agriculture-forum-2017%E2%80%A6inspiring-motivating-empowering>

<sup>6</sup> See factsheet on 'Social inclusion of Roma through LEADER/CLLD'

<sup>7</sup> See more: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15\\_social-inclusion\\_proratouille\\_kassai.pdf](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15_social-inclusion_proratouille_kassai.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See for instance: <https://www.ruralnetwork.scot/news-and-events/news/views-refugee-integration-strategy-wanted>

<sup>9</sup> See more: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15\\_social-inclusion\\_austria\\_fischer.pdf](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w15_social-inclusion_austria_fischer.pdf)