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Expert profiles



Maura Farrell is a full time lecturer and researcher at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her research background is in rural geography with a primary focus on the nature of agricultural change and rural development. Other areas of interest include **rural return migration, rural gender studies, rural social enterprise**, land use, with a particular focus on forestry and family farming. Her research agenda includes both a national and international focus. Maura also works as a rural network specialist, since NUI Galway is part of the consortium that was awarded to run the contract of the National Rural Network of Ireland. She has been involved in wide range of EU projects (including Horizon 2020).



Ali Khan is a Belgian native. His educational background is in economics. Ali always had a keen interest in **tackling poverty and social exclusion**. As a student, Ali engaged in several local volunteer projects with young people of ethnic minority background. Ali worked for the European Foundation Centre where he managed thematic networks of foundations on mostly inclusion related topics, including diversity, integration, Roma inclusion and gender equality. As of November 2017, Ali works for the Open Society Foundations, where he will manage the anti-discrimination and inclusive communities' portfolio in Europe.



Chris Ranford works intensively for local development with a particular focus on **unlocking funding streams to support individuals, businesses, community groups and charities**. Chris has an in-depth understanding of all aspects of local development and its complex processes with a real passion and drive to make a difference and improve quality of life, socially, economically and environmentally. He provides direct support to the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) animating the development of a wide range of projects and partnerships. An interesting aspect of this work is the Social Return on Investment analysis that the FLAG commissioned in order to measure the impact of its animation activities.



Franz Wolfmayr has been working with **community-based services** during his whole professional life. Doing that he was involved in 'de-institutionalisation' processes in Styria (Austria) as well as in other Member States (especially Bulgaria and Hungary). Among others, he has specialist expertise in the development and management of community based services; advantages of social economic enterprises for European societies; implementation of the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by providing social service systems; holistic strategies for employment support systems for disadvantaged groups to live at home at an old age.