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Fund for
European Aid
to the Most Deprived

FEAD's contribution to sustainable social inclusion:

Thematic Dossier 1

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The creation of a FEAD Network

In June 2016, the European Commission hosted a two-day conference to launch the **FEAD Network**, a community of practice consisting of actors involved management and delivery of activities funded through FEAD¹. It comprises representatives from the Managing Authorities across the participating EU Member States; partner organisations and EU level NGOS, such as the Red Cross, Caritas, Salvation Army, Food Banks, Eurodiaconia, etc. FEANTSA, FEBA, Eurodiaconia, etc.); and, European Commission representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

The Network was created in order to facilitate the sharing knowledge between relevant actors and stakeholders and subsequently find synergies to break the vicious circle of poverty and deprivation. Face-to-face Network Meetings are organised throughout the year to discuss key themes and topics of interest. In 2016, three Network Meetings were organised under the umbrella theme 'sustainable social inclusion' and centred around the following topics:

1. Accompanying measures (OP1): challenges, solutions and good practices²
2. Social inclusion measures (OP2): challenges, solutions and good practices³
3. Synergies between ESF and FEAD: challenges, solutions and good practices⁴

To facilitate further discussion outside the Network Meetings, an online **Yammer** platform⁵ was created where individuals could come together; discuss key issues and share information and expertise. In 2016, for instance, 'live chats' were organised on Yammer following the Network Meetings allowing individuals who were not present at the events to pose their questions to speakers from the meeting. Knowledge was also disseminated through a case study catalogue, made up of 28 FEAD-related initiatives.⁶



¹ For more information, see the conference report: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15804&langId=en>

² See the First Network Meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16446&langId=en>.

³ See the Second Network Meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16447&langId=en>

⁴ See the Third Network Meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16610&langId=en>

⁵ <https://www.yammer.com/feadnetwork/>

⁶ See the Case study catalogue of 2016 here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7947&furtherPubs=yes>

1.2 Purpose of the thematic dossier

At the Network Meetings in 2016, participants discussed the contribution of FEAD to the further social inclusion of end recipients. They explored the manner in which FEAD funding could be used to fund social inclusion measures that complement the provision of food and material assistance, as well as ways in which FEAD funding can directly be used to support the social inclusion of Europe's most deprived. One of the key conclusions was that FEAD can effectively operate as an entry point for social service providers and therefore channel individuals to other support services. Building on this, the third Network Meeting explored the ways in which FEAD can complement existing ESF initiatives, and the ways in which such synergies can lead to sustainable social inclusion.

Through this thematic dossier, the [key learning outcomes](#) from the various Network discussions on 'sustainable social inclusion' are presented. It explores the manner in which the provision of food and material assistance can be complemented with relevant social inclusion measures, whether in the form of accompanying measures or initiatives funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). It additionally underlines the importance of seeing temporary food support as an entry point for more sustainable support in beneficiaries' transition out of poverty, as well as exploring the manner in which FEAD can be used to directly support the social inclusion of some of the hardest-to-reach vulnerable individuals in Europe. It ultimately seeks to offer insight and inspiration to FEAD Network members, as well as to other actors operating in the realm of poverty alleviation and social inclusion, to support the implementation of future initiatives.

1.3 Structure of the thematic dossier

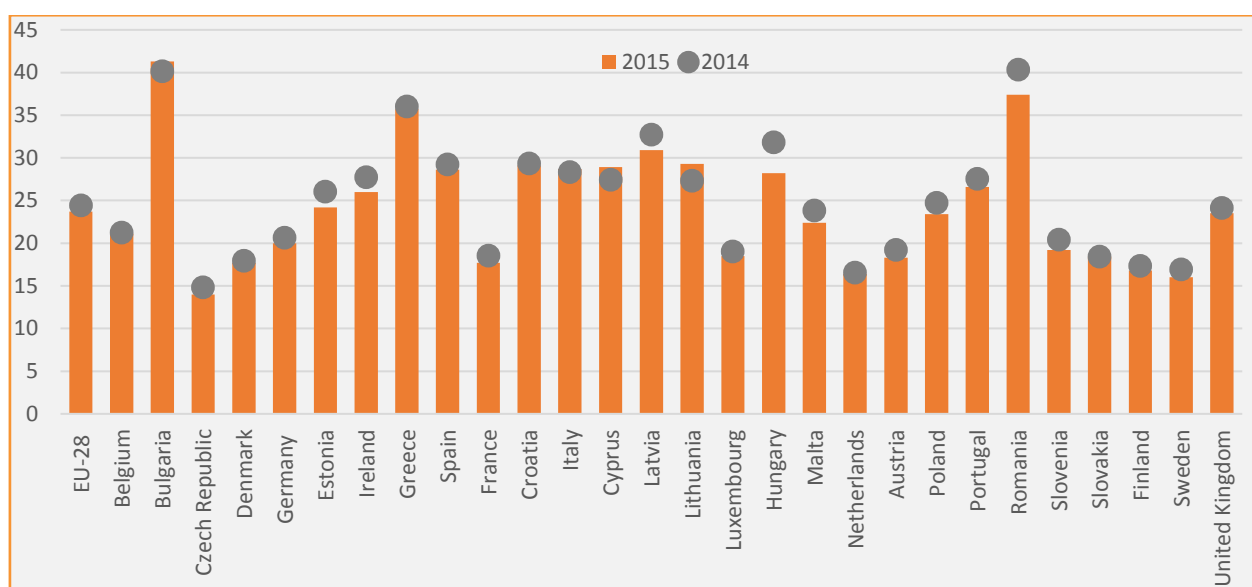
This dossier presents key lessons learned from the discussions of the various Network Meetings and discussions on the online Yammer exchange platform. Chapter 2 presents a brief overview of the Fund. Chapter 3 explores the manner in which the distribution of food assistance can serve as an entry point for further support measures, through the introduction of "accompanying measures". Chapter 4 discusses the FEAD-funded measures that focus exclusively on non-material assistance and the manner in which they foster the social inclusion of the most deprived individuals in Europe. Chapter 5 focuses on the sustainability of the social inclusion measures and explores the ways in which FEAD support can complement initiatives funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The final chapter draws some key conclusions that arose from discussions among the FEAD Network, and touches upon some considerations for future discussions.

2. THE ROLE OF FEAD IN SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE INCLUSION

2.1 FEAD: an overview

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) was introduced in 2014⁷ and aims to support Member States in their fight against poverty and social exclusion. FEAD was introduced at a time when almost a quarter of the EU population was still at risk of poverty or social exclusion.⁸ The figure below shows the percentage of individuals at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2014 and 2015. While the rate decreased in this period across several Member States and the EU-28 as a whole, the European Commission recognised that more work needed to be done and has therefore placed the issue of poverty and social inclusion at the heart of a range of policy initiatives including the Europe 2020 Strategy⁹ and the European Pillar of Social Rights.¹⁰

Figure 1. The at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate in the EU-28, 2014 and 2015 (%)



Source: Adapted from Eurostat, 2015 ([ilc_peps01](#))

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0223>

⁸ Eurostat defines the 'at-risk-of-poverty rate' as the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.

⁹ Communication from the Commission – Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth ([COM\(2010\) 2020 final](#)).

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Establishing a European Pillar of Social Rights ([COM/2017/0250 final](#))

The European Commission has earmarked EUR 3.8 billion for the period 2014-2020 for FEAD activities. The Fund is specifically targeted at the most deprived and disadvantaged people in Europe. Whilst the scope of the Fund is broad in terms of its potential target groups, Member States may also use the funding to help specific groups that would benefit from targeted support to overcome complex barriers to social inclusion. Sweden, for example, places a particular emphasis on supporting mobile EU citizens, whilst in the Netherlands FEAD-funded support targets older and retired people.

FEAD is delivered via two types of Operational Programmes (OPs). OP I focuses on the provision of food and/or basic material assistance, while OP II looks beyond more basic needs towards the social inclusion of the most deprived individuals. Whilst OP I typically covers the provision of food, clothing and hygiene items for example, projects funded under OP II can include more holistically focused activities such as psychological counselling, language classes, healthcare advice or computer literacy classes.

2.2 How does FEAD contribute to social inclusion within the EU?

While it is recognised that one policy initiative cannot singlehandedly address the issue of poverty and social exclusion across Europe, it can still make a significant contribution to the sustainable social inclusion of Europe's most deprived individuals, particularly when combined with initiatives funded through other national or EU sources (e.g. the European Social Fund - ESF). FEAD can be seen as an entry point for support services, as it targets the most deprived and hardest-to-reach vulnerable individuals living across the EU. These individuals are generally not reached by regular national and EU support systems, and are thus less likely to sustainably find their way back into mainstream social life. As FEAD actively seeks to support these individuals, other actors can capitalise on partner organisations' networks and potentially tap into their list of beneficiaries when offering further support.

Questions regarding FEAD's contribution to the social inclusion of the most vulnerable and "hard-to-reach" individuals dominated the discussions among stakeholders in the FEAD Network throughout 2016. Questions included:

- In what way can the provision of food and material aid serve as an entry point for social service providers in supporting individuals in their transition out of poverty?
- In what way do the FEAD social inclusion measures fill a gap left by mainstream national social service providers and other European funds?
- In what way can synergies between FEAD and ESF initiatives ensure the sustainability of social inclusion measures?

These questions were elaborately discussed throughout 2016 during the various FEAD Network Meetings as well as the online Yammer discussions. The key outcomes of these discussions will be presented in the chapters below.



3. USING THE PROVISION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE AS AN ENTRY POINT TO INCLUSION

3.1 Accompanying measures under OP I

All Member States that have selected to implement activities via Operational Programme I (OP I) are encouraged to additionally offer 'accompanying measures' in the delivery of their services. As defined in the FEAD Regulation¹¹: "*accompanying measures' means activities provided in addition to the distribution of food and/or basic material assistance with the aim of alleviating social exclusion and/or tackling social emergencies in a more empowering and sustainable way, for example guidance on a balanced diet and budget management advice.*" While it is not mandatory to do so, Member States are able to allocate a maximum **flat rate of 5 %** of their budgets to fund additional measures alongside the provision of food and material aid. Recognising the importance of complementing the provision of food and material assistance, Member States across the EU have introduced accompanying measures in the delivery of FEAD aid. Some of the key types of assistance are presented below.

3.2 Accompanying measures in practice

FEAD provides support to the most deprived and disadvantaged people in the EU. Its recipients include a wide range of target groups for whom deprivation is a multifaceted experience across multiple aspects of their lives. Given the multiple issues faced, a range of initiatives can be undertaken to provide support in addressing particular challenges. These can include the provision of counselling services, referrals to relevant social service providers, skills-development initiatives or awareness-raising measures.

3.2.1. Counselling services

Receiving a food parcel at a distribution or social centre can be an ideal moment for social workers and volunteers to engage with end recipients in an informal manner. Particularly when end recipients are repeat clients in a particular centre, it gives social workers the opportunity to get to know them and establish a relationship of mutual trust. As a result, end recipients may feel comfortable enough to share their personal troubles, giving social workers the opportunity to offer advice on how to tackle particular issues and challenges.

There are various ways in which social workers or volunteers can offer support to individual FEAD beneficiaries, and the type of support offered depends on several factors. Volunteers, for instance, may not feel equipped to address complex issues, while professional social workers have often received the relevant training to do so. As a result, NGOs that employ trained social workers may be able to offer more in-house counselling and support services, while NGOs with a high proportion of volunteers may prefer to signpost end recipients to other relevant service providers. Alternatively, NGOs can provide training opportunities for their volunteers in order to prepare them for working with individuals who may be distrustful and sceptical of social support providers.

An example of a project that offers in-house counselling services as well as referring individuals to relevant social service providers following the provision of food assistance is the [LEAP project](#)¹² in Malta

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0223>

¹² For more information on the LEAP project, see: www.fsws.gov.mt

The LEAP Project (Malta)

Through the LEAP Project, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services offers personalised support to families and uses its elaborate network to direct families to the relevant social service providers (e.g. housing authorities, social security services, labour market intermediaries, education pathways, childcare facilities, after school programmes, etc.). With the consent of the families, LEAP Project staff spend approximately an hour with the families by carrying out home visits, which are then used to put together a family profile. A SWOT analysis of the family is conducted to help see which channels are to be followed to effectively help families out of poverty. For instance, some individuals may need support in finding employment while others require healthcare services or support in finding suitable housing (A SWOT analysis generally takes approximately 30 minutes, depending on the complexity of the family).

A social mentor is assigned to every family to build a relationship with its members. The joint work carried out by the social mentor (supported by a multidisciplinary team) and the family members eventually lead to the identification of present and emerging needs. Following this process, an agreed care plan is created to address the needs of the family through a holistic approach. The personalised strategy takes into account the needs of each family member, in order to ensure that they offer support to the family as a whole. There is regular follow-up contact between the family and their mentor (through visits and telephone calls) to make sure that families are following through with the steps laid out in their personalised plan.

Source: FEAD Case study catalogue 2016¹³

3.2.2. Referral to relevant social service providers

As partner organisations do not always have the capacity to offer a range of social services in-house, they often prefer to rely on the expertise of other organisations by referring end recipients to other relevant social service providers. In doing so, they ensure that end recipients receive the professional, high-quality support needed to overcome the multitude of challenges that they face in their transition out of poverty and social exclusion.

A review of the FEAD annual implementation reports of 2014-15 has confirmed that the provision of information and referral to relevant services is one of the more popular types of accompanying measures on offer. An example of an organisation who offers such support services is [Caritas Slovenia](#)¹⁴. At the first Network Meeting, they explained that they have been distributing food since 2006, while simultaneously offering accompanying measures. Caritas volunteers engage with end recipients and offer a listening ear. It was felt that this was one of the more challenging parts of the process as end recipients are generally hesitant to open up and share their stories. However, volunteers are gradually able to increase the length of the conversations as individuals return to the food distribution points, allowing the volunteers to assess the end recipients' needs and refer them to relevant social services.

Social workers and volunteers can also use the point in time when food is distributed as an occasion to invite end recipients to workshops and seminars in order to raise awareness of particular issues. In Finland, for instance, the [Finnish Central Association for Mental Health \(Mielenterveyden Keskusliitto\)](#)¹⁵ raises awareness of mental illness issues and existing services for rehabilitation through the distribution of leaflets at FEAD food distribution points, encouraging participants to visit their information centres as well as attending self-help groups organised by local organisations.

¹³ See the Case study catalogue of 2016 here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7947&furtherPubs=yes>

¹⁴ For more information on this initiative, see: <http://www.karitas.si/>

¹⁵ For more information on this initiative, see: <http://mtkl.fi/>

3.2.3. Skills development

FEAD end recipients are often (long-term) unemployed people that have been socially excluded for extended periods of time. They can face particular barriers in (re-)entering the social domain, including the labour market. Barriers can include a lack of language proficiency, the non-validation or lack of skills and qualifications, a lack of necessary documentation or a physical or mental disability. In order to help end recipients overcome these barriers, and potentially find their way back to the labour market, partner organisations can offer accompanying measures that support the development of particular skills. In organising such measures, partner organisations not only stimulate the development of relevant life and practical skills, but they also stimulate the social participation of end recipients.

An example of a project in which skills development is key is the [Culinarily Strong](#)¹⁶ project in Poland.

Culinarily Strong (Poland)

This project was launched by the Federation of Polish Food Banks to actively engage and inform FEAD food aid recipients. Partner organisations had highlighted that there was a clear need for additional support for end recipients, as they frequently lacked nutritional awareness as well as the independent skills to prepare food. As a result, food was often wasted and end recipients were not eating healthy, balanced meals. It was additionally noted that activities were needed to encourage end recipients to leave their homes as they frequently experience loneliness or depression due to a lack of social interaction. Mothers with small children, for instance, are often limited to dealing with household duties, and would benefit from a break from the daily routine and an opportunity to meet other individuals in similar situations, experiencing similar issues.

Culinary workshops are carried out by the Federation of Polish Food Banks and 32 affiliated food banks. They are organised throughout the country and generally take place in the kitchens at local welfare centres, social centres or NGO premises. Workshops last approximately three hours and generally include up to 20 individuals. The workshops are open to a range of participants, including homeless people and families. Workshops for families, children and youth are deemed the most popular. In 2015, the composition of the participants of the workshops was as follows: 40 388 (53 %) unemployed, 9 506 (13 %) people with disabilities, 3 044 at-risk individuals, 2 937 (4 %) homeless, and 23 547 (31 %) other participants.

Source: FEAD Case study catalogue 2016¹⁷

¹⁶ For more information on the Culinarily strong project, see: www.bankizywnosci.pl/

¹⁷ See the Case study catalogue of 2016 here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7947&furtherPubs=yes>

3.3 Key lessons learned from the FEAD Network discussions

During the first FEAD Network Meeting¹⁸, the Network reflected on the way that the provision of food and material aid serves as an entry point for social service providers in supporting individuals in their transition out of poverty. The main challenges, solutions and steps for future action regarding the implementation of accompanying measures are summarised below.

Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of trained volunteers • The size and heterogeneity of the target group • A lack of cooperation with NGOs offering similar services • A lack of clarity regarding the definition of accompanying measures • Avoiding the stigmatisation of end recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking beyond the 5 % flat rate for financing accompanying measures • Creating a network of social service providers • Raising awareness regarding the available services (e.g. through an info point or helpdesk) • Creating better links with ESF initiatives • Adopting a personal approach to the provision of accompanying measures • Actively involving end recipients throughout the process of offering support
Concrete steps to be taken by practitioners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a mapping exercise of the social service providers at local, regional and national level • Actively train volunteers to encourage their involvement in offering accompanying measures • Collect and disseminate ESF measures to see which initiatives can complement FEAD activities • Disseminate the knowledge gained from the Network Meeting and online Yammer discussions with relevant partners as well as the national Managing Authorities. 	

¹⁸ For more information on the first FEAD Network Meeting, see the meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16446&langId=en>.

In its discussions, the FEAD Network noted that accompanying measures are a good way to support individuals out of poverty, as they provide volunteers and social workers with a first opportunity to engage in particular with notably hard-to-reach individuals. While it was recognised that the provision of such measures was desirable, the FEAD Network noted some inherent challenges.

Firstly, the heterogeneity of the target groups presents a challenge as a variety of support services need to be on offer to be able to address all the specificities. FEAD end recipients include individuals dependent on psychotropic substances (e.g. alcohol and drugs), the long-term unemployed, the socially excluded, older people, minority groups, at-risk families, individuals with financial difficulties, as well as individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds. Consequently, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to address all their needs simultaneously. To counter this, it is imperative that links are made between FEAD partner organisations and other social service providers. It was also underlined that stronger ties should be made between FEAD and ESF projects, as FEAD end recipients could potentially be channelled into programmes funded through the ESF.

Participants underline however that there is generally not enough awareness of the services provided by other actors in the field. To ensure complementarity (and avoid the duplication of activities), networks of social service providers could be set up. This was done, for instance, by the Belgian Managing Authority, the [Federal Public Service for Social Integration](#) (FPS SI), which collaborates with the public social welfare centres (OCMW/CPAS), food banks and partner organisations through regular meetings and consultations.

Another challenge is the lack of trained volunteers within NGOs. The FEAD target group includes individuals who are generally distrustful of social service providers and public institutions. As a result, they can be difficult to work with and engage. Training for volunteers would better equip them to deal with challenging situations, as well as making them more aware of all the possibilities available for individuals. While certain organisations already provide extensive training for their volunteers (e.g. [Red Cross Italy](#)¹⁹), this is more challenging for the smaller NGOs who have less resources available. Finally, if NGOs seek to gain end recipients' trust and sustainably assist them in their transition out of poverty, it is important to include and empower them as much as possible throughout the process. This includes regular discussions, where possible including end recipients as mentors and volunteers in project delivery.

¹⁹ For more information, see the First Network Meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16446&langId=en>

4. USING FEAD FUNDING DIRECTLY TO SUPPORT SOCIAL INCLUSION

4.1 What are the aims of Operational Programme (OP) II?

Under the FEAD Regulation, Member States are given the discretion of choosing to focus their resources on either the provision of food and material assistance, or non-material factors that contribute to the fight against poverty and deprivation. Specifically, as defined in the FEAD Regulation, OP II “... means an operational programme supporting the activities outside active labour market measures, consisting in non-financial, non-material assistance, aimed at the social inclusion of the most deprived persons”.²⁰ The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Denmark have all adopted this operational programme, meaning that they place particular emphasis on promoting the social inclusion of selected marginalised groups. The way that they have opted to provide non-material assistance differs, as each Member State has decided on particular target groups to support, tailoring the support services according to the groups' needs. The different approaches to non-material FEAD support are presented below.

4.2 Using FEAD to support social inclusion: key project examples

The four countries opting to implement FEAD under OP II have adopted a range of projects aimed at advancing the social inclusion of Europe's most deprived people. Despite the common overarching aim, these countries have utilised the funding in different ways that reflect the particular needs in different country contexts. They have opted to support particular target groups and employ different strategies to support their most deprived individuals fight social exclusion.

For the **Netherlands**, the utilisation of FEAD funding for social inclusion measures presented an opportunity to support socially excluded individuals who generally fall outside the mainstream support structure. Entry (or re-entry) into the labour market is seen as one of the main ways to achieve social inclusion; however, this is only possible for socially excluded individuals that are still able to find employment. Consequently, the Netherlands focuses its efforts on the social inclusion of older people with a low disposable income.

Elderly in the Community (The Netherlands)

Due to a national desire to avoid the fragmentation of EU budgets, FEAD funds in the Netherlands are dedicated to one project: **Elderly in the Community**. Through this project a range of activities are organised in libraries across the country. The purpose of these activities is to help socially excluded elderly people overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation and reintegrate them into social life. At these activities, elderly people can find out about what kind of local support is available, strengthen their social network and enhance their basic skills, all of which helps them to feel less socially excluded. The programme ensures that the most deprived persons are monitored by support organisations or municipalities. Activities such as shared cultural activities and the organisation of short training courses are financed by FEAD.

²⁰ Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0223>

In **Sweden**, FEAD-funded projects operating under OP II focus particularly on social orientation and health promotion. The target group supported through FEAD in Sweden is newly-arrived and mobile EU citizens. These individuals generally arrive in Sweden with little knowledge of the Swedish public system, and are subsequently ill-equipped to navigate the various social services on offer. As EU citizens, but non-Swedish nationals, they additionally fall outside the scope of a range of national support structures. Partner organisations thus seek to help raise awareness of social and health-related issues, so as to ease their transition into Swedish society. Several examples of initiatives funded through FEAD are presented below.

Supporting the social orientation and promotion of health among newly-arrived and mobile EU citizens (Sweden)

The Swedish 'Digniti Omnia – Better Life for All' project²¹ addresses the needs of this specific target group in a holistic way. A range of activities are offered which are designed to help newly-arrived and mobile EU citizens acquire useful skills, such as digital literacy (e.g. how to use email and Skype), Swedish language skills and knowledge of their personal rights as EU citizens. In doing so, they aim to help beneficiaries integrate into the Swedish social domain, by increasing their employability as well as their ability to navigate the national social system.

Another effective Swedish initiative has been the operation of **Pro Dom mobile teams**²² overseen by the Gothenburg Rescue Mission, through which outreach teams actively go out into the streets to identify and reach out to homeless (particularly Roma) people and offer psychosocial and legal counselling, as well as language courses. This is a particularly interesting example, as it is an initiative whereby social workers reach out to some of the 'hardest-to-reach' vulnerable individuals living in Sweden. These individuals generally do not actively seek out help by visiting social centres. Social workers found that engaging with these beneficiaries in environments where they feel safe helps increase the chance that they will actively seek to address the issues that have led to their social exclusion.

Lastly, the **FRISK** project²³ is an initiative aimed at helping mobile EU citizens, focusing particularly on raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health and infectious diseases. It was found that the target group was generally unaware of the hazards of engaging in unprotected sexual activity, nor were they aware of the preventative measures that could be taken by beneficiaries themselves. To raise awareness on these issues, Doctors of the World Sweden organises both individual and group counselling sessions, as well as workshops.

The target group supported through FEAD in **Denmark** is homeless people (particularly mobile EU/EEA citizens). Recognising that this is a notoriously hard-to-reach group of individuals, who are particularly wary of public institutions and social services, Denmark has opted to fund two projects which aim to help homeless people gain access to social services.

²¹ For more information on this project, see: <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/vaxjo/digniti-omnia>

²² For more information on this project, see: <http://www.raddningsmissionen.se/english>

²³ For more information on this project, see: <http://lakareivarlden.se/>

Supporting Denmark's homeless population through FEAD (Denmark)

Project **UDENFOR**²⁴ is operational in Copenhagen and Aarhus, and offers homeless people access to a locker room where they can safely leave their belongings in storage boxes. At this facility, they also have the opportunity to talk with volunteers who can offer advice on finding employment, food, access to healthcare, administrative support etc. The project also offers opportunities for temporary employment in the locker room facility, as well as within a project café run in Aarhus. Counselling services and training sessions are available to support the social inclusion of homeless people. It is estimated that the project delivers over 100 multilingual counselling sessions per week and can provide beds for 40 individuals.

Offering similar services is the **Compass Project**.²⁵ Organised by Kirkens Korshær, a multilingual outreach team helps homeless people navigate their way through regular social services through counselling services. They additionally offer emergency shelters and the use of lockers.

Lastly, the **German** Operational Programme aims to support the social inclusion of three target groups: mobile EU citizens, their children, and homeless people. The projects funded through FEAD focus their activities on acting as a bridge between the target group and social service providers.

Building a bridge between social service providers and vulnerable target groups (Germany)

The first project aimed at bridging the gap between homeless people and available assistance is the **StreetBer** project²⁶ implemented by the Gangway Association in Berlin. The project aims to reach groups of homeless people who are particularly hard to reach for social workers. These may include people who have lost their homes due to the gentrification of regenerated business districts, newly-arrived EU citizens, sex workers or people struggling with addiction. The multilingual outreach workers operate in multiple locations across Berlin, including parks, streets and other public areas. The counselling provided by the project itself is short term, after which end recipients are referred to other established groups and institutions.

Similarly, the **ACASA** project²⁷ in Dortmund supports mobile EU citizens in their integration into the German administrative system. The project team gives guidance on topics relevant to the end recipients, including how to access German courses, health insurance and counselling on immigration, pregnancy and residence. Staff refer end recipients to other support services and accompany people to these services where necessary.

Some initiatives, such as **Frostschutzengel Plus**²⁸, focus on specific kinds of social counselling. This project noted that the provision of food, medical services and overnight shelter was not sufficient to comprehensively lift people out of poverty. For this reason, the project focuses on opening up communication channels between the target group and existing state health and social care providers in order to best help them to improve their health and degree of social inclusion.

²⁴ For more information on this project, see: <http://www.udenfor.dk/>

²⁵ For more information on this project, see: www.kirkenskorshaer.dk

²⁶ For more information on this project, see: <http://gangway.de/team/erwachsene/streetber-gangway-streetwork-und-beratung/>

²⁷ For more information on this project, see: <http://www.diakoniedortmund.de/migration-und-integration/eu-zuwanderung/acasa-in-dortmund.html>

²⁸ For more information on this project, see: <http://gebewo.de/frostschutzengel-plus>

4.3 Key lessons learned from the FEAD Network discussions

Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying people who are not supported by mainstream support services and identifying their particular needs Linking up end recipients with the appropriate support services Viewing end recipients as active partners rather than 'clients' Avoiding the stigmatisation of end recipients when attempting to access support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting comprehensive needs assessments in order to identify effective measures for the social inclusion of different target groups Actively involving end recipients throughout the process of offering support by establishing trusting relationships with social workers Raising awareness regarding available services and self-care (e.g. through outreach work and the involvement of multilingual social workers/volunteers) Accompanying end recipients to appointments

A number of lessons have emerged through discussions within the FEAD Network, particularly during the second FEAD Network Meeting on "Social inclusion measures under OP II".²⁹ Discussions highlighted for example that it was of vital importance to effectively identify the target group that would be supported through the social inclusion measures. As mentioned previously, the FEAD Regulation is particularly flexible as it gives Member States the discretion to identify which target groups they consider to be most deprived and in need of additional support through FEAD funding. The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany each identified groups that fall outside standard support systems and thus require additional help.

It was emphasised that individuals reached through FEAD funding generally face multiple barriers to social inclusion. They may experience long-term social exclusion (as is the case with older people in the Netherlands or homeless people in Denmark, Sweden and Germany) or fall outside the remit of standard social services (such as the mobile EU citizens targeted in Sweden and Germany). The complex nature of their social exclusion means that it is important that social workers take a personalised approach to counselling services.

²⁹ For more information on the key learning outcomes of the second FEAD Network Meeting, see the meeting report: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16447&langId=en>.

In relation to this point, discussions within the FEAD Network also recognised the importance of building partnerships with end recipients based on trust and mutual understanding, rather than regarding them as passive clients. The social inclusion of individuals is more sustainable if end recipients play an active role in addressing their own situation. This can be achieved through active efforts on the part of social workers to build trusting relationships with their clients. It is of particular importance, for instance, to overcome language barriers, as in many cases the target group are unable to register with relevant social services as their lack of language proficiency makes them unable to navigate the system. Identifying and reaching out to individuals potentially in need of support can therefore be aided by a multilingual outreach team.

It is also essential to ensure non-discrimination in support services, given that marginalised groups may be reluctant to access formal health or social care services due to a fear of stigmatisation or prejudice. FEAD-funded projects can help to mediate this problem by providing end recipients with information on the available support services and advice on how to maintain their personal health, and by accompanying end recipients to appointments.



5. ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FEAD-FUNDED SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES

5.1 Complementarity between FEAD and the ESF

FEAD allows partner organisations to support Europe's most deprived people in addressing some of their most basic and immediate needs. Addressing these needs is important in fostering their further social inclusion, as individuals are in a position to secure a training or employment opportunity if their basic needs are not met. The ESF Regulation indicates that the *“ESF should improve employment opportunities, strengthen social inclusion, fight poverty, promote education, skills and life-long learning and develop active, comprehensive and sustainable inclusion policies”*. In doing so, *“the ESF shall benefit people, including disadvantaged people such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, marginalised communities and people of all ages facing poverty and social exclusion”*.³⁰

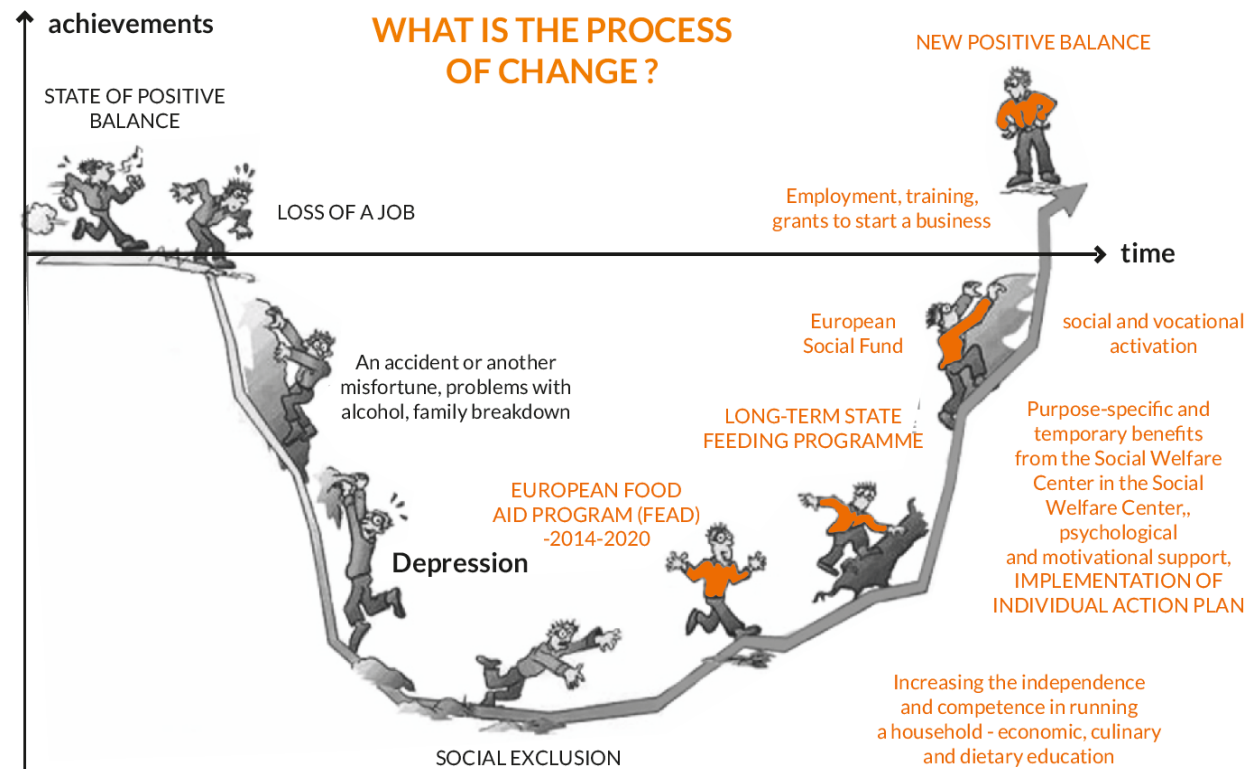
As the ESF seeks to help disadvantaged groups find their way back to the labour market, potential project participants can be accessed by working closely with FEAD-funded activities. This concept is underlined in the FEAD Regulation³¹, where it is stated that when implementing FEAD it *“should be ensured that the Fund complements actions that are funded under the ESF as social inclusion activities, while exclusively supporting the most deprived persons”*. Importantly, it is emphasised that the funds should not overlap, in that the objective of FEAD social inclusion measures is to support the most deprived individuals of Europe (and thus those that fall outside the scope of other national and EU funds).

The illustration below indicates how individuals fall into social exclusion, and how they can re-integrate the society and find a job with the support of EU-funded support services. It shows that FEAD can serve as an initial point of support, addressing initial basic needs, and that ESF support can subsequently serve to re-integrate individuals into employment and training.

³⁰ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1304>

³¹ Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0223>

Figure 2. Process of change from exclusion to inclusion



Source: Food Bank in the Lublin region of Poland

5.2 Synergies between FEAD and ESF in practice

Since its launch in June 2014, the FEAD Network has discussed unlocking the potential of linking FEAD and ESF funds. While the ESF celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2017 and is thus well established and developed across the EU, FEAD is relatively new, currently in only its third year of operation. There are nevertheless already examples of Managing Authorities and partner organisations that have actively sought to create synergies between the two funds. An example of an EU Member State which is actively seeking to promote the creation of synergies between national initiatives, ESF initiatives and FEAD initiatives is Italy. Its new multilevel governance model is presented below:

Maximising impact: ESF and FEAD programming in Italy

The Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has structurally incorporated the idea that more complementarity between national and EU funds is needed. It has introduced a multilevel governance model in which national and regional governments work together with municipalities to implement social initiatives (particularly those tackling severe material deprivation and homelessness). Through the introduction of the Partnership Agreement in 2014, they are looking to change their approach from providing emergency aid to long-term sustainable governance and in doing so, improving the effectiveness of public services and their interventions. They have dedicated a budgetary envelope of EUR 100 million (shared equally between the ESF and FEAD) for projects that incorporate cooperation among services in implementing social interventions. Social inclusion initiatives and the provision of basic material assistance are required to complement ESF and FEAD initiatives. The first call for proposals was launched in October 2016.

Source: Presentation at the third FEAD Network Meeting³²

By linking FEAD to ESF, partner organisations are able to support some of the harder-to-reach deprived individuals to increase their employability and ultimately find employment. While Italy has opted to predominantly support initiatives for individuals suffering from severe material deprivation and homelessness, other Member States have chosen to support other particular target groups. In the Lublin province of Poland, for instance, the Lubelskie Voivodeship's Self-Help Centre (LOS) has chosen to support individuals with disabilities in developing their skill sets and finding employment. The '[A Change for Tomorrow](#)' initiative is an example of an ESF-FEAD initiative, offering professional training and counselling services to individuals with disabilities as well as supporting them in finding employment (for instance through a three-month paid work placement opportunity). The initiative specifically targets 60 FEAD end recipients with a mild or moderate disability in the province of Lublin.

Another approach to incorporating funding from both the ESF and FEAD can be seen in Croatia, where Red Cross Koprivnica used ESF funds to launch the '[Social Basket](#)' project.³³ They opened a so-called "social shop" (similar to a food bank) in order to distribute food parcels and basic provisions and, in doing so, opened up new social services for the town of Koprivnica. As the ESF funding was coming to an end, the Red Cross looked to other funding sources to ensure continuation of the project. They ultimately secured FEAD funding for this purpose and the project remains operational.

³² See the Third Network Meeting report here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16610&langId=en>

³³ For more information on this initiative, see: www.hck-koprivnica.hr

5.3 Key lessons learned from the FEAD Network discussions

The FEAD Network has consistently underlined that fostering the links between FEAD and ESF is one of the key ways in which the social inclusion of FEAD end recipients could be made more sustainable, allowing the availability of EU-funded support throughout the transition out of social exclusion and poverty. FEAD support is an entry point, while subsequent ESF-funded initiatives provide further support to individuals in their transition out of poverty, for instance by helping them find training and employment opportunities. The key success criteria for synergies between FEAD and ESF, limiting factors and proposals for improvements are outlined below:

Success criteria	Limiting factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective cooperation between the Managing Authorities of the two funds (or even having the same Managing Authority) • Definition of a common national strategy • A focus on long-term rather than short-term planning • Clear definition of the objectives and target groups of the two funds • Carrying out a needs assessment prior to the development of guidelines for the funding programmes • The involvement of the local community and regular consultation with local actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of coordination between actors at all levels as well as the lack of explicit provisions in the two regulations for fostering their links • The concern of double funding due to a lack of an effective monitoring system • Differences in the administrative and bureaucratic requirements of applying for and implementing ESF and FEAD funds can cause confusion among partner organisations • Differences in timing of the two funds (multi-annual vs. annual programmes) • The tendency to work in silos, therefore limiting the cooperation between FEAD and ESF experts • The amount of funding for accompanying measures is not considered sufficient to create synergies
<p>Proposals to improve the links between FEAD and ESF</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a common strategy integrating the two funds, as well as common guidelines and monitoring systems • Hold regular dialogue between stakeholders at all levels (including end recipients) • Link funds at regulatory level (e.g. enforcing that a certain percentage of ESF beneficiaries should be FEAD end recipients) • Train staff in the Managing Authorities to make them more aware of the two funds • Initiate awareness-raising activities to discuss the complementarities of the two funds • Collect and disseminate ESF measures to see which initiatives can complement FEAD activities • Disseminate the knowledge gained from the Network Meeting and online Yammer discussions with relevant partners as well as the national Managing Authorities 	

The main challenges have been highlighted, indicating why there are not yet more examples of clear synergies. Firstly, it was stated that the lack of harmonisation between the FEAD and ESF regulations caused several issues for organisations seeking to implement initiatives. The bureaucratic and

administrative expectations regarding the two funds differ; for instance, this can make it challenging practitioners to understand the requirements for utilising the two funds. Additionally, the differences in timing of the two funds – as FEAD operates on an annual basis, while the ESF works through multi-annual programmes – make it difficult to launch an initiative that aligns simultaneously or consecutively with the time constraints of both funds.

There is also a lack of knowledge (particularly at political level) of the on-the-ground impacts of the two funds. There can be a tendency to work in silos or 'closed shops', thus leading to a lack of cooperation between FEAD and ESF experts. Moreover, it was felt that the lack of an effective monitoring system could potentially lead to double funding.

In order to overcome these challenges, effective cooperation between the Managing Authorities of the funds should be promoted. In certain cases, it can be beneficial if the same Managing Authority oversees both funds. It could also be useful to link the funds at regulatory level, for instance by making it obligatory that a certain percentage of ESF beneficiaries should be FEAD end recipients. Another solution is the development of a common national strategy (as in Italy) to avoid the potential overlap of initiatives and risk of double funding. The common national strategy could be complemented by common guidelines and monitoring systems, so that it is ensured that both funds achieve their objectives as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Lastly, actors should be made more aware of the possibilities of using the Funds. Potential synergies could be discussed at meetings between stakeholders at all levels (including end recipients) and links should be made between the FEAD Network and the networks of actors involved with the ESF. Information regarding FEAD should also be shared among ESF stakeholders at local and regional level.



6. THE FUTURE OF FEAD AS A TOOL TO SUPPORT SOCIAL INCLUSION

6.1 What is FEAD's contribution to social inclusion?

The FEAD Regulation has significant differences from its predecessor, the Food Distribution programme for the Most Deprived Persons (MDP), as it has incorporated the element of social inclusion into its objectives. Both types of FEAD Operational Programme dedicate funds to social inclusion, albeit more under OP II than OP I, illustrating the Commission's perception that the provision of basic food and material assistance can act as a stepping stone to further social inclusion.

FEAD Network members have corroborated this point of view, and have shown that the distribution of food or material parcels indeed offers social workers the opportunity to engage with Europe's most deprived and assist them in their transition out of poverty. One key added value of FEAD is that it is aimed at Europe's most deprived and therefore **targets individuals who generally fall outside the mainstream national and European social inclusion initiatives**. OP I initiatives use food and material distribution as an entry point, and subsequently use accompanying measures to support individuals further. OP II initiatives, on the other hand, aim specifically at some of the harder-to-reach target groups and actively seek to integrate them into mainstream national support services.

While FEAD is still relatively new and many of its initiatives are still in their infancy, the FEAD Network is already acknowledging the potential for linking FEAD-funded initiatives with other national and EU initiatives. In particular, the link with ESF initiatives was seen as beneficial as it would allow end recipients to be supported both with their basic needs, but also at a later stage in helping them find education, training and employment opportunities. Creating synergies between FEAD and ESF is seen as an important objective over the coming years, as stronger links would not only ensure more efficient use of European funds, but also ultimately help end recipients sustainably achieve inclusion in everyday social life.

6.2 Future issues to be addressed by the FEAD Network

With these lessons in mind, the FEAD Network continues to actively explore and find solutions to some of the complexities of supporting the most deprived people in their transition out of poverty. The **heterogeneous nature of the target group** presents one of the key challenges in FEAD delivery, and consequently has been placed at the centre of discussions among the FEAD Network in 2017. In order to sustainably support individuals in their social inclusion, the Network recognised that it was imperative that partner organisations took into account all the particularities hindering their transition out of poverty.

The variety within target groups means that individualised support services are needed, particularly in light of the fact that FEAD end recipients generally experience a range of issues simultaneously. In order to sustainably support individuals out of poverty, social workers need to adopt a holistic approach and address each element of their deprivation. In doing so, they will ensure that individuals are less likely to fall back into their previous way of life and slide back into poverty and social exclusion. This presents a challenge, however, as under OP I, the budget for accompanying measures is relatively limited (a 5 % flat rate). Consequently, partner organisations are limited in the variety of support measures that they can offer. They also often work with volunteers, who are not generally trained to address the multiple issues faced by the individuals concerned. Similarly, for OP II initiatives, the heterogeneity of the target groups means that social workers need to be trained and equipped to understand the complexity of each particular individual. These challenges are actively being addressed during the five Network Meetings in 2017 as well as the online Yammer discussions.

