



European
Commission

ESF EVALUATIONS 2014-2018



SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion operations are complex and highly diverse. They target some of European societies' **most vulnerable members**. Most projects help people find employment or improve skills such as reading and writing. ESF support also covers information campaigns and development of social services and social enterprises.

By the end of 2018, nearly **6.2 million** persons had participated in ESF social-inclusion actions. Women made up 52% of all participations. Participants in social inclusion projects may face one or multiple disadvantages: 53% of participants have experienced long-term unemployment, and 54% were low skilled. Many are from migrant or marginalised communities such as Roma (28%); 16% of participants are disabled. Through participating in ESF projects on social inclusion, nearly **700,000 individuals have found employment**, with nearly 400,000 achieving a qualification. In the current programming period these thematic objective operations are financed by 145 operational programs covering all Member States and regions. They account for a total planned expenditure (including EU and national co-financing) of approximately EUR 31.3 billion. This corresponds to about one quarter of total ESF funding which is more than the required earmarking.

The evaluation of European Social Fund support for social inclusion shows that:

- 1** In addition to **securing employment and training**, benefits of participation also include **increased confidence, better soft skills, and higher self-esteem**. All of these are essential to improving the wellbeing of marginalised and vulnerable people;
- 2** **Long-term, personalised support for participants is crucial** to ensuring their needs are met. Increased investment in services is one of the main prerequisites for consistently positive outcomes;
- 3** Projects which **engage all stakeholders** obtain better results.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

Italy: Milan project uses citizens' ideas to transform communities

Citizens' participation and volunteerism are increasingly essential for building a collective response to the coronavirus pandemic. A Milanese project aims to harness the power of activism in order to transform some of the city's most disadvantaged areas. Co-financed by the ESF, 'Neighbourhood School' encourages social action – using extraordinary ideas to construct concrete, sustainable and effective projects.

Citizens and groups who want to help others and improve their community life can apply for grants up to EUR 25 000 to develop their skills and experience. The Municipality of Milan has already selected 60 proposals – including a social bakery enterprise, a project aimed at building a collective cultural memory and a language support service for immigrants.

Learn more



More info



[Link to the Staff Working Document:](#)



[Link to study and country factsheets:](#)

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