



**FEAD Community  
Thematic Seminar on  
“An integrated approach to  
support beneficiaries towards  
their social inclusion. Creating  
synergies between FEAD and  
other funds”**

Online, 29-30 April 2021

Synthesis report



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*FEAD Community: Thematic Seminar on “An integrated approach to support beneficiaries towards their social inclusion. Creating synergies between FEAD and other funds”*

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## 1 Introduction

The Thematic Seminar on 'An integrated approach to support beneficiaries<sup>1</sup> towards their social inclusion. Creating synergies between FEAD and other funds' was the third mutual learning event<sup>2</sup> of a cycle of capacity-building activities planned within the FEAD Community during the transition period (2020-2021) and aiming at improving the delivery of the [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived \(FEAD\)](#) at national, regional and local level. The Seminar, hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Economy, brought together local, regional and national stakeholders involved in the implementation of the FEAD, including: managing authorities, intermediate bodies, beneficiaries and partner organisations providing support, members of advisory or monitoring committees, independent experts, civil society organisations and representatives from the European Commission.

The 2008 economic crisis and the current Covid-19 pandemic have pushed FEAD programmes to adapt their processes and actions to tackle the emerging social needs, which have proven to be increasingly varied and interconnected. Experiences across Member States have shown that integrated and coordinated support, in particular at local level, entail better targeted interventions to tackle social exclusion.

Member States experiences have been reinforced by the Action Plan<sup>3</sup> of the European Pillar of Social Rights presented by the European Commission in March 2021 which emphasises the need of further developing an 'integrated approach' to support individuals during all stages of their life and to address multiple causes of poverty and social exclusion. The 'integrated approach' was also recommended by the Europe 2020 Strategy, and also included in several Country-Specific Recommendations to Member States as part of the European Semester, stressing the need of implementing a such approach. Looking ahead, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will provide specific support to Member States to achieve a more social Europe, reinforcing the policy areas of employment, education and social inclusion.

This report reflects on the discussions held during the plenary sessions and the parallel break-out groups, focussing on how to design and implement integrated approaches<sup>4</sup> to support the social inclusion of end recipients, maximising potential synergies with other initiatives and funding sources. It also outlines examples of effective partnerships working between public, private and third sector organisations that could be transferred or inspire actors in other countries.

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this report, the term 'beneficiary' is used synonymously with 'end recipient', meaning an individual receiving food aid and other support funded through the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived (FEAD). Organisations receiving funding from FEAD to deliver food aid and other supporting measures are termed as partner organisations.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about the First Annual Conference of the FEAD Community and the FEAD Thematic Seminar on New beneficiaries of FEAD-funded measures and new practices implemented during the Covid-19 crisis:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1797&furtherEvents=yes>

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<sup>3</sup> The Action Plan comprises EU actions as well as setting 3 headline targets for the EU to be achieved by 2030: 1) At least 78% of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment 2) At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year; 3) The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million. European Commission (2021), The **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**. Page 5. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en)

<sup>4</sup> In the context of this seminar, two aspects of the 'integrated approach' were considered, as a policy response and the way it is operationalised. A key element is the adoption of an 'integrated approach', which starts from a multidimensional concept of poverty and therefore addresses people's needs from a broad perspective.

## **2 Background and purpose of the Seminar**

The FEAD Community is an open membership network for all those who are working to reduce poverty in European countries, and using directly or indirectly the FEAD. It is a space for members to share good practices and encourage new ideas and to discuss how to provide non-financial assistance to the most deprived in Europe.

The Thematic Seminar focused on how to design and implement integrated approaches to support the social inclusion of end recipients, maximising potential synergies with other initiatives and funding sources. It provided participants the opportunity to share their experiences and to explore further the capacity of relevant stakeholders across Europe to build partnerships with other public and private (non-profit) organisations to provide better targeted interventions and meet the various needs of end recipients in a more holistic way.

As the seminar was hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Economy, particular attention was paid to the measures introduced in Spain to offer a more integrated and personalised provision of services to end recipients, namely the Personalised Assistance Model implemented by the Spanish Red Cross, the 'Social-labour Inclusion Project' from BANCOSOL and the FEAD Roundtable for coordination of the Local Authority of Fuenlabrada. Participants also had the opportunity to identify and discuss innovative, promising or good practices from other Member States<sup>5</sup>, and also to look ahead towards the new programming period 2021-2027 and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

In Spain, the Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (UAFSE) belongs to the Ministry of Employment and Social Economy and it is the responsible body for managing FEAD for the programming period 2014-2020. Spain is one of the main recipients of the FEAD across Member States. In 2020, FEAD funded a food supply of approximately EUR 563 million and 1.5 million people have been beneficiaries of food aid in Spain; this reveals the great challenge of attending to those basic needs, while also aiming to achieve a lasting social integration for these people.

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only exposed and worsened pre-existing inequalities but also introduced new ones. Specific target groups, such as low-skilled, low-paid and temporary workers, women, people with mental health issues or young people have been particularly hit by the Covid-19 crisis. The high at-risk and poverty rates still looming from the 2008 crisis could increase due to the pandemic, bringing up new challenges and needs.

To address the increasingly complex social needs, the European Commission has continuously encourage Member States to develop holistic responses to tackle social exclusion. Starting with the 2008 Recommendation on Active Inclusion which proposed a triple focus (i.e. income support, inclusive labour markets and access to high-quality services). More recently the 2019 'European Green Deal' reiterated the 'integrated approach' already recommended by the Europe 2020 Strategy to address existing inequalities, high rates of severe poverty, and material deprivation that already existed prior to the Covid-19 crisis. The Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights presented by the European Commission in March 2021, however, has emphasised and reinforced the need of further developing an 'integrated approach' to support individuals during all stages of their life and to address multiple causes of poverty and social exclusion. The ultimate goal is to contribute to reaching the three

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<sup>5</sup> Thematic Background paper: Towards a comprehensive, personalised, timely and continuous intervention, supported by a constructive cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders involved, Graciela Malgesini Rey, 2021.

headline targets of the Action Plan.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, within the European Semester, several Country-Specific Recommendations to Member States stressed the need of implementing an 'integrated approach'.<sup>7</sup>

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will provide resources to Member States for the social and economic recovery after the Covid-19 crisis and to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. In particular, the specific objective of the ESF+ is to support Member States in the policy areas of employment, education and social inclusion in achieving a more social Europe. Focus is placed on improving and promoting equal access to employment, also through activation measures for all jobseekers, and furthering social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>8</sup>

The Thematic Seminar also focused on the capacity of relevant stakeholders across Europe to build partnerships with other public and private (non-profit) organisations to meet the various needs of end recipients. Existing challenges, such as lacking resources, lacking leadership, top-down approaches, insufficient skills of professionals or the risk of duplication of tasks or competition for funds, highlight the need to further develop more personalised as well as coordinated support measures during the programming period of the ESF+.

To achieve a truly integrated approach to supporting the social inclusion of end-recipients in the next programming period 2021-2027, it will be crucial to build upon the successful elements of the current period, address current challenges and take advantage of the full potential offered by the ESF+.

### **3 Key elements of integrated approaches**

An 'integrated approach' starts from an understanding of the barriers that individuals face and addresses them from a broad perspective. It relies on the collaboration and coordination of multiple stakeholders - public authorities, civil society organisations and social partners - to provide a more holistic response to end recipients' needs.

Until now, FEAD has been an instrument to fight poverty through food and material aid. However, experiences from the ground have shown that FEAD food and emergency assistance can also act as a 'hook' to engage end recipients on other types of support to aid their social inclusion.

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, FEAD programming has evolved, introducing changes and new actions to address the emerging and changing needs of end recipients. Partner organisations have also identified new profiles of people in need of the FEAD support (e.g. workers who have been furloughed, students who lost summer jobs or scholarships, monoparental families, freelancers, workers without an employment contract, etc.) and of new needs to be addressed (e.g. psychological support, need for

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<sup>6</sup> The Action Plan comprises EU actions as well as setting 3 headline targets for the EU to be achieved by 2030: 1) At least 78% of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment 2) At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year; 3) The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million. European Commission (2021), **The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**. Page 5. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en)

<sup>7</sup> The European Semester will be temporarily adapted to coordinate it with the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en).

<sup>8</sup> Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Article 4, Source: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs\\_autres\\_institutions/commission\\_europeenne/com/2018/0382/COM\\_COM\(2018\)0382\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2018/0382/COM_COM(2018)0382_EN.pdf)



information)<sup>9</sup>. Experience shows that the provision of accompanying measures, in addition to food and material aid, may entail other types of support that end recipients require. Their problems are often interconnected, therefore a more holistic approach to tackle their different needs has proven crucial in their social integration.

The following elements have been highlighted by participants at the seminar as key to develop and implement integrated approaches:

- **Person-centred interventions** focusing on individuals and households levels. Successful approaches are very much centred on listening and responding to the individual needs of the end recipient and their households. Through accompanying measures, FEAD projects can complement and lead to other types of support.. People who are socially excluded may face many different barriers, such as material deprivation, health problems or no access to care services. A personalised needs assessment of the individual (and their household) is key to develop the right trajectory or pathway to properly targeted interventions. For instance in Portugal, NGOs are sub-contracted by the Institute of Social Security to support the national policy concerning the provision of social services. NGOs carry out visits to families in a deprived situation to make individual intervention plans for each member of the family. During the assessment, end recipients are engaged in co-designing and determining the support they need. Solutions are developed in close collaboration with the end recipients rather than going through a top-down approach. Involving the target group allows for a more efficient design of support, builds trust with the end recipients and helps them to take control over their own lives. For instance, the Personalised Intervention Plan implemented by the Spanish Red Cross, directly involves the individual in designing their own intervention plan, based on the following aspects of everyday life: employment, social life, health, environment, family, economic situation and personal aspects. The empowerment of end recipients to make their own choices, brings an element of trust and enhances their engagement and motivation through the process. The process is based on a sequence of comprehensive, timely and continuous actions tailored to the individual.
- **Multi-level and targeted interventions.** Often, FEAD-funded programmes are the first 'entry point' for end recipients. Linked to this, it is important to highlight the added value of the FEAD in reaching out to those who are often 'outside the system'. For instance, in Slovenia and Hungary, when a person receives food aid, this generally comes with additional information and advice about other available programmes (including support funded through other sources). Furthermore, the local community has increasingly played an important role in supporting managing authorities. Often NGOs have more direct contact with end recipients, their local knowledge and the trust they gain from communities are crucial to support the design and implementation of appropriate and well-targeted intervention policies. Therefore, building inclusive partnerships combining different expertise and experiences helps develop better suited solutions and reduces the risk of fragmented or duplicated provision. For example, in Sweden FEAD projects made it possible for the organisation Rescue Mission and the city of Gothenburg to cooperate and

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<sup>9</sup> Thematic Seminar on "New beneficiaries of FEAD-funded measures and new practices implemented during the Covid-19 crisis" Thematic Seminar on "New beneficiaries of FEAD-funded measures and new practices implemented during the Covid-19 crisis", 2-3 February 2021, Synthesis report.

network. This facilitated a joined and coordinated response allowing for the needed flexibility and adaptation to identify and reach the target group (e.g. people in a situation of homelessness).

- **Multidisciplinary teams** are key in supporting individuals facing multiple barriers. They enable the provision of well-rounded support, helping individuals not only to get access to provision of food and material assistance but also to social protection and social inclusion benefits or services. Particular attention was devoted to one-stop-shops as an example of a user-focused approach where assessment and services are offered to end recipients under one single roof. In Malta, for example, the 'LEAP Centres' offer multiple services, including the provision of information, professional advice, support on housing, education and other services in collaboration with major stakeholders (such as the Water and Energy Agency, Education and Employment institutions, the Social Security Department, the Housing Authority, the national Literacy Agency). On the other hand, one-stop-shops need to be combined with outreach measures in order to provide adequate and appropriate support, in particular, in terms of reaching out to the most vulnerable groups. The ESF-funded LEAP project, which is now mainstreamed into a new fully nationally funded Agency, reaches out to the most deprived through FEAD-funded projects. For accompanying measures to be effective and better targeted, it is essential to put in place a system of profiling that can help to identify the actual causes of poverty to be tackled at individual level. In addition, multilingual and multicultural teams are also crucial in providing support to specific target groups as highlighted by the ANIMA project in Germany where providers are trained in intercultural awareness to help them understand the cultural background of the beneficiaries. Overall, building capacity and skills within the different teams involved plays an important role in delivering efficient interventions.
- **Inclusive partnership and coordination among different stakeholders.** Experiences from the ground showed that having a shared commitment with a clear division of roles and responsibilities, and fluent communication between the different actors involved are key factors to develop an integrated approach. Partnering can play an important role in promoting flexibility, preventing the duplication of efforts and avoiding working in silos. The closer the cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders, the greater efficiency to respond to end-recipients' needs. An inspiring example of partnerships is the cooperation networks established in Germany between municipalities and NGO's with expertise in specific target groups or sectors.

The delivery of integrated approaches will be determined by every Member State organisation and circumstances. Integrated approaches can take different forms and levels of integration, such as One-Stop-Shops, social community teams and case management. From a practical point of view, these approaches can be supported by tools such as digital interactive databases that can contribute to better coordination and synergies. Examples of different types of integrated approaches implemented across Member States are illustrated in the following sections.

## 4 Creating synergies and implementing integrated approaches

### 4.1 Main advantages and challenges

Poverty is a complex and multifaceted concept and target groups often have different needs that can only be tackled by different institutions/organisations. Integrated approaches contribute to address the different needs of an individual in a flexible and holistic way, placing the individual at the centre. This goes beyond the provision of material assistance and covers other types of needs of the individuals (e.g. social inclusion). Integrated approaches contribute to avoiding duplication of assistance and services, thus making the provision more effective for the user. Personalised and tailored services are delivered by organisations active at the grassroots level, as they usually have a deeper understanding of the specific situations of the end recipients. For instance, the presence of different cultural backgrounds among the beneficiaries, might influence the perception that they have of the institutions. When potential recipients do not trust the institutions (e.g. the police), it may be difficult to motivate them to accept the support and to become actively involved in the process of improving their own situation. Building trust with the end recipients is extremely important, and can be facilitated by working with organisations that are already known and trusted by the end recipients. In this regard, participants agreed that capacity-building of partner organisations dealing with vulnerable groups is extremely important. For instance Slovenia is planning to specifically focus on the soft skills of the volunteers and also train them on psychological guidance.

While receiving services from different institutions/organisations, it is helpful for the end recipients to have a single contact person guiding them through the services available and making sure that their needs are addressed. A contact is also important when working with multiple partners, not only in securing the flow and effectiveness of the agreed individual interventions but also in helping the individual to navigate their way through the services and support available. This means that this single contact plays a role in monitoring the entire process from the beginning to the end of the intervention.

An example of an integrated approach is provided by the Spanish Red Cross' Person-centered Care Model.

#### **The Person-centered Care Model - Red Cross, Spain**

Since 2010, the Red Cross follows a person-centred model, placing the person at the heart of their humanitarian commitment. This approach improves the complementarity between the services available and empowers recipients to take charge of their own development process.

The recipients go through a standardised evaluation process that analyses different aspects of their life through a questionnaire (i.e. their economic situation, their family, their personal conditions, their health, their environment, their employment and their social life). The questionnaire identifies the vulnerabilities that the recipients are experiencing, as well as their skills. Based on the results of the evaluation, a multidisciplinary team prepares a personalised intervention plan (PIP) in consultation with the individual, with measurable objectives to achieve.

A reference person from the organisation accompanies each recipient during the entire process, in order to adapt it *in itinere* and offer the best solutions.

When the Red Cross lacks the capacity or the resources to address specific needs, the individual is signposted towards specific local bodies, authorities or organisations.

Adopting an integrated approach also contributes to the transparency of the assistance provided to end recipients by each institution/organisation and facilitates the communication and exchange of information and know-how. For instance, in the Labour Inclusion Project of Bancosol, the cooperation between the food distribution organisations, social services and the companies provides information both on the situation and needs of the users, as well as possible opportunities in the labour market.

### **Labour Inclusion, a Food Bank model - Bancosol, Spain**

The Social and Labour Inclusion project was launched in 2014. The project targets people receiving food (end recipients of FEAD-funded food aid FEAD) and/or at risk of social exclusion and aims at promoting their labour activation.

The project is based on the following principles:

- Career guidance
- Corporate collaboration
- Training courses with work placements in companies
- Direct labour intermediation

The model is based on coordination between:

- Food distribution organisations (e.g. charitable organisations) and municipal and council social services, which are responsible for referring beneficiaries to the project;
- Companies: through partnership agreements with socially responsible companies who offer work placements.

The project is implemented through a participatory methodology that detects both the training needs of end recipients and potential employment opportunities in the local labour market.

The coordination with food distribution organisations is essential to gain a more in-depth understanding of people's needs and contributes to the support needed to address the barriers for their inclusion into the labour market.

While cooperation between the main stakeholders is crucial for implementing integrated approaches and addressing the needs of end recipients, organisations, in particular the smaller ones, are often overwhelmed with their own regular tasks and find it difficult to invest time and resources to cooperate with others. Moreover, in some cases there are tensions between the municipalities and NGOs or competition between the different NGOs to access funding. In order to manage these complex relationships, roles and responsibilities should be well defined. In Germany, partners in large-scale FEAD-funded projects invite external moderators/coaches to their network meetings to ensure that the discussions are open and smooth.

## **4.2 Fostering integrated approaches in collaboration with other funds**

A number of Member States have experience of coordination between FEAD and ESF, as the target groups are often overlapping. Counsellors working in FEAD-funded projects can, for instance, direct beneficiaries towards projects or services funded through the ESF (e.g. health checks, information about employment), in order to facilitate the access of people to the services they need. In this regard, it is important to ensure the inclusion of different groups in need and in providing them with

additional services (e.g. multilingual support). This is in particular the case for practitioners working with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the initiatives, combining FEAD with national funding is a useful strategy. An example was provided by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services in Malta, that was created on the basis of the experience of the ESF-funded LEAP Project and uses both FEAD and national funding.

#### **LEAP ESF Project - Malta**

The main objective of the ESF-funded LEAP project was to eradicate poverty reaching out to the most vulnerable in the society through empowerment with education, employment and welfare services. The activities of the LEAP project aimed at strengthening social capital to promote social mobility through collaboration and mentoring, as well as networking within the social welfare organisations among the different organisations involved. The LEAP project started to operate in each community in each region and produced a network directory of all stakeholders in all locations.

When the funding from the ESF finished, the project was mainstreamed into a fully nationally funded agency within the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, focusing specifically on community work and reaching out to the most deprived, mainly supported via the FEAD and national funding.

The LEAP Project and projects financed by FEAD have introduced an innovative way to look at tackling poverty, strengthening the cooperation and synergies with over 90 stakeholders (e.g. education and employment institutions, housing authorities, banks) in Malta. This cooperation is crucial for the profiling system of beneficiaries and for delivering accompanying measures to families in need.

The food package is the first contact with most deprived individuals.

## **5 Building effective public-private partnerships and synergies with other funds**

### **5.1 Main challenges and possible solutions**

Bringing together a range of actors from the public, private and civil society organisations can lead to more effective approaches being developed. Nevertheless, it takes time and effort to build an effective relationship.

One of the main challenges is the element of competition between FEAD partner organisations. Organisational grants and funding for the 'seeding phase' can help reduce competition. The 'seeding phase' typically refers to identification of the needs (which can also minimise duplication of services), through qualitative research and field work. This phase can also entail the development of pilot projects which can, in turn, address risk-averseness of project partners and funders. While the current FEAD regulation does not currently allow for complete flexibility in relation to allocating funds to this stage of the process, the new ESF+ regulation will provide more opportunities in this regard.

Another aspect that can hinder the development of public-private partnerships is related to skills and capacity required especially for smaller organisations. In this regard, umbrella organisations, such as national federations of NGOs, can play a major role in building capacity and providing quality training. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that adequate financial resources are allocated to management

and administration of projects. Similarly, the provision of organisational infrastructure, such as digital tools, is key to reinforce coordination and networking at local level.

Digital databases can increase the organisational capacity and simplify procedures in order to enable effective collaboration. However, information sharing has certain limitations, especially in relation to data protection regulations. To address some of these barriers, agreeing common methodologies and guidance for the actors/organisations involved can facilitate the process.

An example of effective systematisation of information using digital databases is the experience of the Local Authority of Fuenlabrada in Spain.

#### **Local Authority of Fuenlabrada, Spain**

The FEAD services facilitated by the local authority in Fuenlabrada are based on a strong associative model. The collaboration between public institutions and NGOs is well established and dynamic. Social services and distribution organisations in Fuenlabrada assist almost 1,500 FEAD beneficiaries with food aid.

To enable more effective collaboration between different actors involved, the local authority systemised the relevant information about end recipients' case files into an electronic database. Among other benefits, the database allows relevant stakeholders to follow the trajectory of end recipients, assess their cases more efficiently, quantify the demand and avoid duplications.

The end recipients of FEAD-funded support submit their application to the authority who then refer them to social services. After the applications are received, an initial data screening is carried out to divide up the processes among the social services centres, distinguishing if it is an applicant who is coming for the first time or if they already have a file. Once the checks have been completed by the social workers, the users' data is entered into the database.

Partnering can also play an important role in preventing the duplication of efforts and avoiding working in silos. In Spain, the 'Social-Labour Inclusion Project' implemented by Bancosol (Food Bank of the Costa del Sol in Spain) has created synergies with other initiatives and funding sources to develop the project and promote labour activation of end recipients of FEAD-funded food aid. Crucially, partnering contributes to the identification and provision of services that cannot be delivered by an organisation working alone.

## **5.2 Stakeholders collaboration**

Collaboration is crucial in building effective partnerships between public bodies and private organisations. All stakeholders concerned must have a shared commitment, be transparent and share relevant information. In order to ensure a beneficial cooperation that can lead to productive activities, it is fundamental to have inclusive partnerships supported by regular communication and meetings. For example, the FEAD roundtable set up by the Local Authority of Fuenlabrada in Spain offers a coordination space with quarterly meetings between social services and the FEAD distribution organisations. Stakeholders need to be involved from the start, have clear roles and responsibilities to carry out their tasks in a complementary and harmonising manner. Partnerships could also be built on an informal basis as this can increase trust and promote cooperation at different levels and areas.

One inspiring example of stakeholder collaboration is the cooperation networks established in Germany between municipalities and NGOs with expertise with certain target groups.

### **ANIMA project, Mannheim, Germany**

The purpose of the project is to foster social integration of disadvantaged migrant groups through access to established social support structures. The concept of the project involves a holistic approach, underpinned by mutual trust with end recipients.

To effectively address the needs of each individual, the project is based on close cooperation between the Integration Bureau within the City of Mannheim, local district management, and the faith-based organisations Diakonie and Caritas. The municipal networks involve core actors within the city administration, including departments for education, social support, registration, youth, security and order, as well as external authorities such as health insurance companies, public housing, language schools, charities, family counselling.

Main lessons learned from the cooperation between Mannheim and NGOs include:

- Coordinated efforts of the actors are time-consuming, require additional personnel;
- Different interests and aspects of the cooperation can be accounted for through the participative process;
- Extra value is added to the single project steps (setting up consulting sites, joint personnel training, accumulating a stable client base);
- It is important to effectively channel the decision-making process, be transparent and fair;
- Comparable, reliable data-management and project evaluation are essential.

To enable effective collaboration, stakeholders need to be involved and committed from the beginning of the partnership and establish clear roles and responsibilities to carry out their tasks in a complementary and harmonising manner.

The City of Gothenburg, for instance, developed an example of successful cooperation with the regional authorities regarding schooling, shelters and healthcare, based on a long-time private-public partnership.

### **City of Gothenburg, Sweden**

The City of Gothenburg is running FEAD-funded projects supporting social inclusion with a focus on health promotion and awareness-raising, mainly targeted to newly-arrived EU citizens living in poverty and social exclusion, mostly from Bulgaria and Romania.

During the pandemic, the 'Po Drom' project operated by the Rescue mission organisation formed a network cooperation with the municipality social services and another FEAD-funded project 'Better Health' I and II, to inform their target group about health measures during the pandemic and facilitate access to quarantine shelter in case of disease.

At a common location, the project provides access to basic hygiene, showers, washers, etc., counselling and links with medical services. There are also activities related to women's health, gender equality, nutrition, vaccination and disease prevention. Their common goal has also been informing the region on how to design measures to combat the epidemic and roll-out vaccinations to vulnerable groups, such as homeless EU-citizens among others.

## **6 Conclusions**

ESF+ merges the previous European Social Fund (ESF), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)<sup>10</sup>, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)<sup>11</sup> and the EaSI programme<sup>12</sup>. This merger is expected to streamline and simplify existing rules across the different funds and contribute to increased opportunities for synergies between the strands of the new programming. This new architecture can also be expected to make it easier for funding beneficiaries and partner organisations to access funding, combine different types of measures and simplify funding management.

Designing and implementing integrated approaches requires the collaboration of multiple stakeholders as well as efforts in building effective and inclusive partnerships. To this end, building the capacity of the stakeholders involved and making the necessary resources available is crucial. Similarly, the provision of collaborative tools and resources to avoid unhelpful competition is key to reinforce networking at local level. Furthermore, inclusive partnerships, reflecting the local context, can harness local knowledge and build trust with the target groups; this can help 'bring the fund closer to the end recipients'.

By integrating FEAD and the ESF, a stronger focus on social inclusion will be pursued, strengthening the goal of investing in people. That should facilitate the combination of provision of food and material assistance with accompanying measures to support social inclusion and possibly labour market integration. Approaches based on profiling, tailored integration and systematic follow up have proven particularly effective.

One of the important successes of FEAD has been supporting effective outreach to those individuals often outside the system and not accessing any support, thus acting as a first point of entry for their social integration. Modes of delivery, including the growing use of e-vouchers, need to be carefully reflected in this regard, to ensure that contact of social and case workers with potential and existing recipients of support is facilitated and maintained.

Accompanying measures can be seen as a bridge towards the support offered within the ESF+. In the new programming period, accompanying measures will allow end recipients to benefit from better and enhanced support. The current FEAD programming period should contribute to the strategic vision of ensuring complementarity and synergies between the different objectives to deliver on achieving inclusive societies, eradicating poverty and delivering on the objective of the European Pillar of Social rights.

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<sup>10</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176>

<sup>11</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

<sup>12</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=en>



