



Social inclusion for vibrant fishing communities



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Foreword

This guide aims to help FLAGs identify and effectively address social exclusion in fisheries areas. It is intended primarily for **Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) managers and board members** as well as **local actors** involved in social activities. It could also be of help to managing authorities and national networks that are supporting FLAGs in dealing with social inclusion issues.

The **introduction** provides an overview of the **social exclusion issues** faced by fisheries communities and explains the **reasons** why FLAGs should try to address them. It also presents information about **additional sources of funding** for social inclusion that FLAGs could access and a few **examples** of using these funds.

Introduction..... p. 4

Parts A and B consist of **practical factsheets**, which show different types of social inclusion issues and provide recommendations and tips on how FLAGs could address them, as well as examples of FLAG activities in this area.

The factsheets in *Part A* cover four types of issues typically found in FLAG areas:

- > the need to find **alternative/complementary livelihoods** in fisheries communities,
- > **generational renewal** in the fisheries sector,
- > inclusion of **vulnerable groups** in fisheries communities,
- > integrating **migrants and refugees**.

Factsheet A1. Alternative/complementary livelihoods in fisheries communities..... p. 10

Factsheet A2. Generational renewal p. 15

Factsheet A3. Inclusion of vulnerable groups in fisheries communities p. 19

Factsheet A4. Integrating migrants and refugees p. 25

In *Part B*, the factsheets focus on solutions addressing a number of different issues in FLAG areas, in particular:

- > linking social inclusion to **enterprise**, including social enterprise,
- > building **strategic partnerships** with other actors,
- > integrating social inclusion in **animation and operating procedures** of the FLAG.

Factsheet B1. Linking social inclusion to enterprise p. 31

Factsheet B2. Building strategic partnerships with other actors p. 34

Factsheet B3. Fostering social inclusion in the animation and operating procedures of the FLAG p. 37

Most of the examples and recommendations in this guide were presented during the FARNET seminar on “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities”, which took place in Jurmala (Latvia) on 22-24 March 2017. We would like to **express our thanks to all the people who contributed this information**.



Introduction

Social inclusion in fisheries areas

1. What do we mean by social inclusion in the context of fisheries areas?

Social inclusion can be understood as the process of improving the terms by which individuals and groups take part in society¹. Some individuals or groups face barriers that prevent them from participating fully in society: in other words, they are at a risk of being “excluded”. For example, people in extreme poverty who cannot enjoy the same fruits of society as others, the unemployed who cannot participate actively in the labour market, or ethnic/religious minorities who may face language barriers or discrimination. Social inclusion means making sure that these groups are not left behind.

In European social policy, initially the focus was primarily on getting people out of poverty, but over time a more multi-dimensional approach has developed, addressing various forms of discrimination and focusing on such issues as disability, ageing, youth, and more recently, migrants and refugees. This has been accompanied by a change in perspective in terms of how EU funds are used to address social issues: while initially they were seen purely in terms of “transfers” to those in need, now they are understood as “investments”, which ultimately bring benefits to the whole of society.

Bringing a certain group out of exclusion does not necessarily mean redistributing money: sometimes it is more important to give people a voice, a chance to contribute to decision-making, or to create an opportunity for them to be of service to the local community.

2. What kind of challenges are being faced in FLAG areas?

Fisheries areas across Europe are facing a number of challenges linked with social exclusion², such as:

- **demographic change**, ageing of fisheries communities, outmigration of young people;
- **low levels of education**, lack of **skills** (e.g. marketing, management skills needed to set up new businesses);
- **weak labour markets**, with few job opportunities outside the fisheries sector (if there are jobs, they are often poorly paid and/or seasonal);
- **marginalisation of primary production**;
- some areas along the southern borders of the EU have also been severely affected by a **massive influx of refugees**.

Not all fisheries areas are affected in the same way by these challenges: for instance, FLAG areas near big cities or touristic centres may have more job opportunities outside the fisheries sector than more remote areas, although these jobs are not always easily accessible to members of the fishing community.

Many fisheries areas may also have to struggle with the consequences of the **reform of the Common Fisheries Policy** (CFP), for example, with the obligation to land the whole catch and its impacts on the profitability of some types of fisheries.

1 See <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/social-inclusion>, see also Joint Report by the European Commission and the European Council on social inclusion http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/final_joint_inclusion_report_2003_en.pdf

2 These challenges have been identified by FLAGs in preparation for the FARNET seminar “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities” in March 2017.

3. Why should FLAGs deal with these challenges?

FLAGs have an important role to play in trying to improve the well-being of the whole fisheries community. When considering how to achieve this, and what role social inclusion can play in the FLAG strategy, and as underscored by the participants of the **FARNET social inclusion seminar** of March 2017, it is good to remember that:

- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is an inclusion-based approach, where the quality of the partnership plays a key role in ensuring the success of the local strategy³. This approach is based on the principle that all members of the community, including the most disadvantaged, have something to contribute to the area's development (new ways of looking at problems, ideas for new projects...). Any member that does not participate means that his or her potential contribution is lost.
- Exclusion can happen to almost anybody: people can become sick or disabled due to accidents, they can lose their jobs or homes as a result of a crisis. If community members know that they will not be left alone in such situations, that there will be someone to help them, their quality of life and commitment to the FLAG area will be much higher;
- Inclusive communities, where linkages are forged between different groups, have higher levels of social capital and are therefore more resilient (better able to deal with shocks and crisis situations)⁴;
- Leaving behind certain segments of the community and increasing income gaps can lead to a whole series of negative consequences such as feelings of insecurity, a rise in crime levels, degradation of certain parts of the area, etc⁵.



These are just a few arguments that should be considered by FLAGs when designing their social inclusion activities. FLAGs should also bear in mind that CLLD is a particularly useful tool for addressing social inclusion – which is provided for in Art. 63.1 of the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** (EMFF). This includes the following objectives, which can have an important social inclusion impact:

- creating jobs at all stages of the fisheries supply chain;
- attracting young people into the fisheries sector;
- supporting life-long learning and job creation outside of the fisheries sector;
- promoting social well-being;
- strengthening the role of communities;
- strengthening the governance of local fisheries resources.

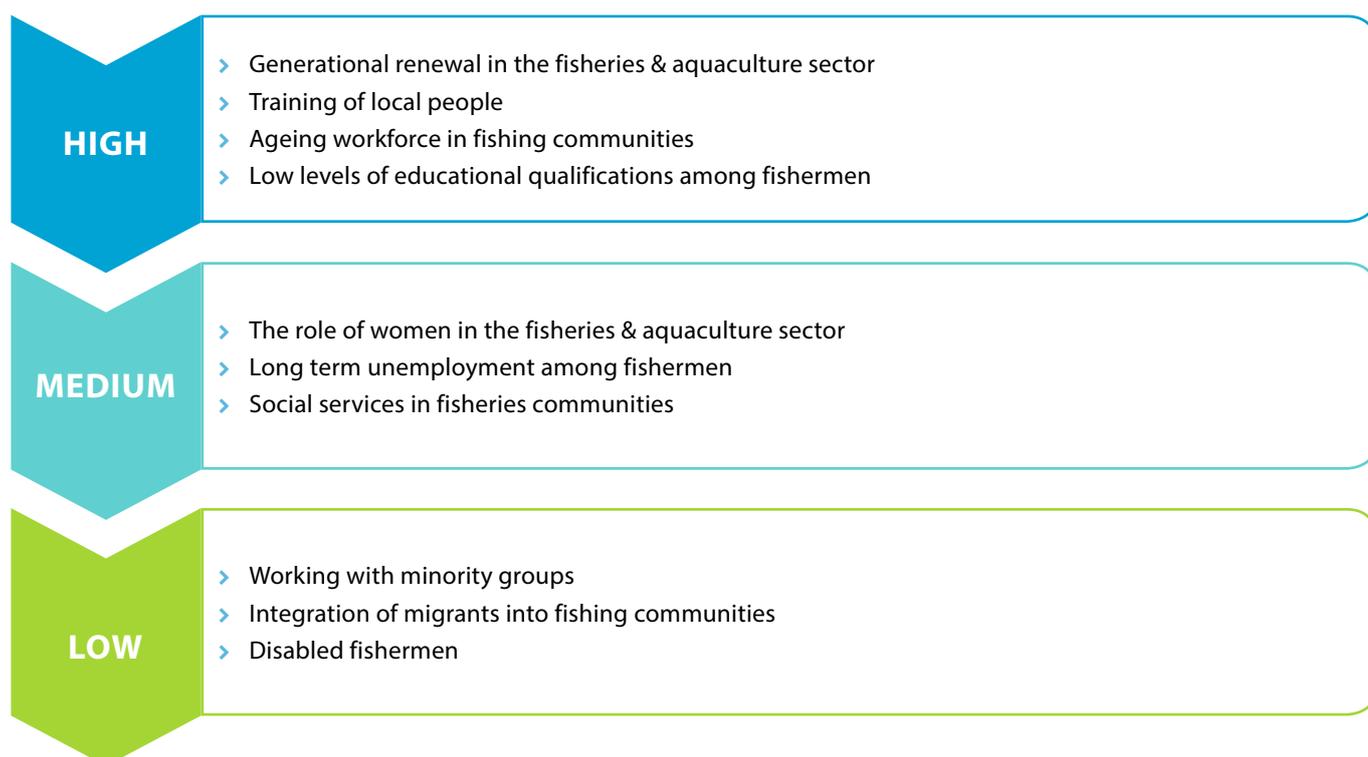
3 See definition of CLLD in the CLLD guidance: 'CLLD is a method for involving partners at local level including the civil society and local economic actors in designing and implementing local integrated strategies that help their areas make a transition to a more sustainable future.'
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_community_local_development.pdf

4 Recent studies show, for instance, the key role that social capital and networks play in adaptation to climate change and disaster recovery, see <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764214550299>

5 See for instance O'Mahony, Paul, 'Punishing Poverty and Personal Adversity' in Bacik I. and O'Connell M. eds. *Crime and Poverty in Ireland* (1998) (Dublin: Round Hall Sweet and Maxwell), pp. 49–67

In preparation for the [FARNET social inclusion seminar](#) in March 2017, FLAGs applying to participate had to answer several questions concerning their social inclusion activities. Approximately 70% of the responding FLAGs (122) have social organisations as members of the partnership, while 36% have allocated between 10% and 30% of their total budget to projects dealing with social inclusion.

FLAGs were also asked to indicate which aspects of social inclusion were most important for their areas. Their answers, ranked according to their levels of importance for FLAGs, are presented in the graph below:



4. How to link FLAG support with other activities and other funding sources

As mentioned above (section 3), some social inclusion activities can be funded through Union Priority 4 (CLLD) of the EMFF. However, FLAGs can also access other sources of funding. Many FLAGs already operate as development agencies with a broader scope of action, and can initiate and implement a wide range of social inclusion activities in their areas. This can happen in one of the following ways⁶:

- > The FLAG can implement a multi-funded strategy, combining several European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds. In such cases, in addition to EMFF funding, the FLAG can also access some or all of the following: the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), where CLLD is also implemented (as LEADER). The combination of Funds that the FLAG can access will depend on its local strategy, the experience and background of the FLAG (or its lead partner organisation), as well as on the approach taken by the relevant managing authority in the Member State or region in which the FLAG operates.
- > The FLAG can implement a single-fund strategy, financed only from the EMFF, but in addition, it can also apply for funding from other sources, on a project-by-project basis. Some Member States or regions have calls that are open to entities such as FLAG to apply for funding from the ESF or ERDF. Sometimes these calls are restricted to LAGs and FLAGs.

Applying to these other sources will not only help the FLAG to get more funding for social inclusion than would have been possible with the EMFF alone, but also to establish contact with other types of partners (e.g. experienced NGOs or public agencies dealing with social issues) and to build up its reputation as an important player in social inclusion.

However, when applying to other sources of funding, FLAGs must take care not to lose their EMFF identity and the close links with the fisheries sector. There are likely to be a number of organisations capable of implementing social inclusion projects funded by the ESF or FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived). However, they may not have the same reach or credibility in fisheries communities as FLAGs,

and therefore may leave out a significant part of their target group. FLAGs have the advantage of having this connection with fisheries community, as well as capacity to access and manage additional funding.

The most relevant sources of funding for FLAGs interested in social inclusion are:

The **European Social Fund (ESF)**⁷

The ESF has a two-pronged approach to dealing with social exclusion. Certain ESF projects work directly with people at risk, through training, counselling and improving job opportunities. Others tackle public perception and social systems, raising awareness of the effects of prejudice and improving public services. ESF support for social inclusion focuses on four priorities: fighting marginalisation, promoting social enterprise, supporting local partnerships, and inclusive approaches.

There is great potential for the ESF to support employment and social inclusion elements of local strategies. The Operational Programmes (OPs) of the ESF can be managed at national or regional levels, often jointly with the ERDF. FLAGs should identify the managing authority (MA) of the OP most relevant for their area and find a priority most appropriate to their need in order to get funding for training programmes or other social inclusion activities.

Compared to 2007-2013, ESF funding for social inclusion has doubled in the 2014-2020 period, reaching 25% of the total ESF budget. Information about applying and support available should be addressed to the relevant (national or regional) Managing Authorities.

> **More info**

The **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)**⁸

This fund supports actions to provide material assistance to the most deprived. On the basis of FEAD programmes approved by the European Commission, national authorities then decide on the delivery mechanisms, working through partner organisations such as NGOs. FEAD can help people to take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion by addressing their most basic needs, a precondition for them being able to get a job or follow a training course such as those supported by the ESF. While FLAGs will normally not

6 For more information about combining different EU funds, see FARNET Guide 10 "Starting CLLD implementation in practice": https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/library/guide/farnet-guide-10-starting-clld-implementation-practice_en

7 <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp?langId=en>

8 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

have been selected as a partner organisation, they might see opportunities to link up with the organisations in charge. In case a FLAG would want to become a partner organisation and be more actively involved in distributing FEAD support, it should link up with the relevant national authority.

> [More info](#)

A recently published FEAD brochure⁹ presents 28 case studies from initiatives supported across the EU. These cover issues such as the organisation of food and material assistance schemes, accompanying measures and social inclusion initiatives, as well as the manner in which FEAD initiatives can potentially complement other EU-funded programmes, for example in the case of communities seeking support to deal with the massive influx of migrants/refugees.

5. Examples: Linking the needs of fisheries areas to mainstream opportunities



Tapping into the ESF to finance training

An interesting example on using the potential of the ESF to support local development in a fisheries area can be found in the *North Sardinia FLAG area (IT)*. The FLAG became aware of an opportunity to respond to an ESF call for the Sardinia region, which was opened to projects aimed at improving the skills pathways of long-term unemployed people who had previously worked, or could potentially work, in the fisheries or aquaculture sectors. The FLAG successfully presented a project, which was made up of the following elements:

1. an analysis of related training needs in the area;
2. the development of a support package including training modules, job placement services and support for start-ups.

The FLAG developed this project in partnership with local training agencies and in cooperation with municipalities, fishing cooperatives, nature parks and marine protected areas.

> [More info](#)



Funding support for entrepreneurship

A similar initiative was taken by the **Morenka FLAG** in Poland, which operates in a remote area, with high levels of poverty and unemployment. Morenka is a monofund FLAG, but even at the stage of preparing the local development strategy, the local partners realised they would not be able to tackle all the local challenges with just the EMFF, especially the low levels of entrepreneurship and high unemployment among the local population.

They decided, therefore, to look for partners with experience in social inclusion, such as the Polish Economic Society, local governments, social support offices and job offices, in order to develop a project that would contribute to creating jobs for unemployed persons in fisheries communities. This partnership successfully applied for funding from the regional authorities responsible for the ESF.

> [More info](#)



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

Addressing specific social inclusion issues



Part A

This part is composed of 4 factsheets dealing with specific social inclusion contexts (issues, target groups) that a FLAG may have to address in the course of developing and implementing its local strategy.

Alternative/complementary livelihoods for fisheries communities



1. Why is it important for FLAGs to support alternative/complementary livelihoods in fisheries communities?

Fishing and aquaculture communities are faced with a variety of socio-economic challenges. These challenges can be intrinsic, linked to the characteristics of the territories and the communities, or they can be driven by external factors such as fuel prices or policy changes.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the key legislative package for EU fisheries and one that naturally impacts (positively or negatively) on all fishing communities. The recent CFP reform introduced some important new elements that will challenge the adaptive capacity of local communities in the short to medium term, including:

- > the landing obligation, which will ultimately require all catches of quota species to be retained on-board and landed;
- > the need for stocks to reach exploitation levels not exceeding their maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2020.

These two key measures present important challenges for fishing communities, but they also offer potential opportunities for these communities in the long term. Other new features such as the move towards more regionalisation of decision-making, increased support for aquaculture, and a more targeted approach to fisheries subsidies, provide additional socio-economic opportunities for fishing communities.

Extrinsic challenges combine with the specific social challenges faced by many fishing and aquaculture communities around Europe: recruitment issues leading to an ageing work force, while some areas also suffer from depopulation and remoteness from the centres of economic growth. These challenges may be particularly difficult to confront for fishing communities sometimes seen as conservative and inward looking, relying on a strong identity, a high degree of specialisation and traditions.

New elements from the Common Fisheries Policy	Social aspects of fishing communities
Landing obligation	Ageing workforce
Drive towards MSY	Lack of interest from young people
Regionalisation	Specialisation
Aquaculture	Isolation
Targeted funding	Traditions

In this context, the development of **alternative/complementary livelihoods** to provide additional sources of income is one possible strategy for fishing and aquaculture communities to tackle some of these challenges.

2. What can FLAGs do to address needs?

FLAGs, with their integrated and multi-sectoral approach, are well positioned to support fishing and aquaculture communities in identifying and developing new types of activities. Some of these alternative/complementary activities can be closely linked to the fisheries value chain (for example, improved marketing of the local catch), while others are more removed, such as those linked to the local tourism or hospitality sector (restaurants, accommodation etc.). Social inclusion initiatives can also be a source of alternative/complementary activities. The specific traditions, skills and knowledge of fishermen can be used to develop new activities aimed at reaching out to those segments of the community that might otherwise be forgotten in the local economic development agenda.

The possible sources of alternative/complementary livelihoods cover a very wide field of activities, many of which have been covered already by a specific FARNET guide, notably:

- > diversification of fisheries areas;
- > fisheries and tourism;
- > marketing the local catch;
- > green growth in EU fisheries areas¹⁰.

The examples selected below are those that were presented at the FARNET seminar on social inclusion. They have been selected for their success in empowering local fishing communities to develop alternative livelihoods and for their links to the social inclusion agenda.

¹⁰ Those guides are all available online in various languages on the FARNET website https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/library/guide/farnet-guides-1-10_en



“Blue Care” services in fisheries areas

The Blue Care project was inspired by the concept of Green Care¹¹, which uses nature and the (rural) environment to offer health related services. Contact with nature can have positive health benefits and can be used for therapeutic purposes. Green care projects were first implemented in rural areas and have become an alternative or complementary activity for some farmers.

The Blue Care project, supported by the **Ostrobothnia FLAG** in Finland, is looking at the possibilities to adapt this concept to coastal areas, and more specifically, to see whether fishermen could also provide care-type services as an alternative/complementary activity. Fishermen have an image in many societies as being the last “hunter/gatherers” and as a profession close to nature. This image could be used to develop blue care services.

The project objectives are to:

- > develop models of blue care services fishermen could provide;
- > develop the required connections between the service providers (fishermen) and possible customers (municipalities, social services...);
- > promote blue care services;
- > evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

More specifically the project aims to develop blue care models for:

- > supporting children and young people at risk of marginalisation (learning difficulties, socially deprived families...);
- > supporting the long term unemployed and other groups with occupational challenges (those suffering from burnout, former drug abusers, etc.) to reconnect with the labour market;
- > supporting and rehabilitating persons with mental or physical disabilities;
- > improving general health and wellbeing at work by organising nature based company events.



11 More information on green care can be found in the following report http://www.agrarumweltpaedagogik.ac.at/cms/upload/bilder/green_care_a_conceptual_framework.pdf



Developing complementary activities for and increasing the visibility of local women

In the Costa da Morte (Coast of Death) area of Galicia (Spain), shellfish gathering and repairing nets are two activities mostly carried out by women.

These women are faced with several challenges:

- > the seasonality of their activities, which means their income is only secured for part of the year;
- > a lack of knowledge and skills to tap into alternative activities linked to the local tourism sector;
- > a lack of recognition of their profession within the sector and territory.

Together with the existing associations of *mariscadoras* (shellfish gatherers) and *rederas* (net menders), the **Costa da Morte FLAG** has, therefore, developed a training course focused on:

- > providing these women with the required knowledge to develop activities linked with tourism;
- > raising the confidence of these women and their interest in such activities;
- > supporting the development of new activities.

The first such training had a total of 20 participants, 13 of whom went on to get involved in tourism related activities. The new activities developed include:

- > creating a range of products based on discarded fishing ropes/nets, such as necklaces, bracelets, bags, keyrings, etc. (an activity already successfully developed in a few FLAGs);
- > developing guided tours of the shellfish gathering activities;
- > securing agreements with travel agencies to take part in integrated maritime based tourism packages;
- > securing agreements with local town houses and tourist boards to take part in tourist promotion activities (see www.traveltocostadamorte.com).

This training boosted the self-confidence of the women who took part in it, by helping them to better understand their place and role in the territory, and it attracted the attention of other similar groups of women who contacted the FLAG seeking support to develop related projects.

> [More info](#)



3. Outline “action plan” – working group example¹²

Target group	Fishermen
Objective	Diversify sources of income, increase role in community
Action proposed	Non-fishing activities using own boat (example from Italy where fishermen are involved in placing marker buoys for sailing regattas)
Key barriers	Dual licensing need (for fishing and for other activities)? Lack of necessary skills Balancing time-schedule + seasonality Port regulations Extra equipment needed (safety...)
What can the FLAG do to address them?	Help fishermen to understand relevant rules and regulations Support local governance process to allow for new activities Support pilot projects to try out different solutions Organise training/skills workshops Help with advance planning Finance new investments
Expected outputs	Fishermen trained and supported in the development of their new activities
Expected results	Alternative/complementary activities developed for fishermen
Expected impacts	Diversification of sources of income A more dynamic profession/territory Improved position of the fisheries sector in the territory



TIPS

- Alternative/complementary activities do not necessarily happen by themselves. The FLAG might have to plant the seeds to see activities emerging, as in the case of the shellfish gatherers. Training and awareness raising activities are sometimes required to activate certain parts of the community.
- Fishermen possess unique local ecological knowledge (LEK), which can be transformed into new livelihoods such as ecotourism (see a successful [example from Portugal](#)).

¹² Based on material developed in working groups during the FARNET seminar “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities”, Jūrmala (Latvia), 21-23 March 2017

Generational Renewal

An ageing workforce is a growing challenge for the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Europe, and for many FLAGs, attracting younger people into the sector is a strategic priority. In order to do this, FLAGs firstly have to study the underlying reasons for the lack of young entrants to the sector, and then design activities that can help counter the barriers identified.

Depending on the area and type of fisheries, some of the most common reasons cited by young people¹³ include:

- > a lack of awareness of fishing/aquaculture as a career option;
- > the poor image of the fisheries sector;
- > tough working conditions;
- > anti-social working hours;
- > high start-up costs;
- > poor pay;
- > lack of fishing possibilities or licenses in the most lucrative segments of the market;
- > uncertainty about future fishing opportunities.

1. Why is it important to attract young people to the fisheries and aquaculture sector?

Ageing population and outmigration

Many communities in which fisheries and aquaculture traditionally played an important role are experiencing an ageing population and outmigration of the young, seeking jobs and career opportunities in bigger cities. By facilitating access to careers in fisheries and aquaculture, FLAGs can help to create local, secure employment opportunities for young people, thereby making fisheries areas more viable places to live and work.

Keeping the sector rooted in the community

In an increasingly globalised world, communities risk losing control of their fisheries resources and the know-how to exploit them if the younger generation does not enter the business, learning the trade and maintaining ownership of fisheries assets at local level. FLAGs can help communities to hold on to this valuable resource.

Securing a sustainable future for the sector

If fisheries and aquaculture are to survive as significant economic activities, the sector will need workers – but it will also need to evolve in response to a changing context: environmental obligations, increasing competition, stricter health and safety regulations, and evolving customer demands. By attracting more young people into the sector, FLAGs can help it become more flexible and forward looking, drawing on the new ideas that the younger generation inevitably brings. Ultimately, this can only contribute to creating a more dynamic and resilient fisheries and aquaculture sector.

13 Issues raised in the discussion during the FARNET seminar “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities”, Jürjala, March 2017

2. What can FLAGs do to improve generational renewal?

Identify the specific barriers to entry

Different areas face different challenges in terms of attracting young people into fishing and aquaculture. These may be related to the effectiveness of the national or regional systems designed to train and help young people enter the sector or to the public image of fisheries and aquaculture at national and local level. The type and profitability of local fisheries and/or aquaculture will also determine the desirability of related jobs. For example, small-scale coastal fishing is, in many areas, associated with low profitability and poor reliability. Offshore trawling is seen as hard work, while certain types of aquaculture are more often associated with innovation and a better work/life balance, making it sometimes more attractive to the younger generation.

In order to really understand the local barriers, FLAGs should study the different factors preventing or discouraging young people from embarking on a career in fisheries and aquaculture. Only when this context is fully understood will FLAGs be able to design actions to combat ageing in the fisheries workforce.

Promote fisheries as a respected career

One of the issues that most FLAGs are likely to have to tackle is improving the image of the sector. In order to do this, FLAGs will need to ensure that the local population is aware of the existence and importance of the fisheries sector, and the skills and knowledge involved in running a successful fisheries business while dispelling doubts about income levels generated by fishing. The aim should be to present fishing/aquaculture as a respected and attractive career option; be it due to the outdoor lifestyle the sector offers, its close link to nature, the growing popularity of fish as a fashionable and healthy food, or the opportunities for more innovative working arrangements, including linking production to direct sales or tourism.

Foster skills acquisition

FLAGs can also be instrumental in supporting projects that ensure young people obtain the necessary skills and qualifications to enter and add value to the fisheries and aquaculture sector. This might entail identifying those most interested in a career in fisheries, as well as funding specially designed training programmes or apprenticeship schemes. In some countries, however, the qualification path to a job in fisheries and aquaculture is heavily regulated and FLAGs should build links with the relevant organisations to complement existing provisions, for example by encouraging greater uptake of training opportunities.

Succession planning and start-ups

Whatever the training provisions, an extremely important consideration for FLAGs to bear in mind is the transition from “learning to earning” – and in particular to running one’s own business. FLAGs can help to ensure that this transition is well planned and that young people receive the support they need, either to initiate a new business or take-over an existing one. FLAGs can also actively encourage business transfer from retiring fishermen, raising awareness among the older generation of the benefits of handing over their fishing boat or aquaculture farm, rather than simply “shutting up shop”.

Funding solutions for young entrants

As mentioned above, the costs of entering the fisheries and aquaculture sector can be prohibitive for most young people. FLAGs can provide direct grants to young fishers and to other would-be entrepreneurs in the sector. Depending on the ambitions of the individuals concerned, they can also help young people apply for funds from **other measures of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** if such support has been foreseen at national or regional level. Some Member States, for example, make funds available under Article 31 of the EMFF, which provides start-up support for young fishers. Beyond public funding, **micro-credit schemes** and close relationships with banks could also help to make credit more accessible to young people wishing to start or operate a fisheries business.



Attracting young people to oyster farming

The **Arcachon FLAG** (France) financed a project to raise awareness in schools of oyster farming as a career. Led by the regional shellfish committee, the project involved organising school trips to local oyster farms to see how oysters are grown, learn about the work, and taste the final product. In the first year, 183 pupils from 13 different schools visited oyster farms in the area and the project is ongoing. The FLAG also plans further educational activities as well as similar project to promote local fishing activities.

[> More info](#)



Master-apprentice programme for young fishermen

The **South Finland / Etelä-Suomi FLAG** (Finland) identified a need to support aspiring fishermen to gain hands-on experience and to start running their own businesses. It worked with the local fishermen's association and the regional and national authorities to design a programme that responded to this demand. As a result, young apprentices were selected and paired with experienced fishermen who they worked alongside for a period of one year. Each apprentice established their own training objectives and reported monthly on progress, in return for a small salary. Fifteen young people were trained in the first two years, 12 of whom are now fishing professionally.

[> More info](#)



Other fisheries-related employment opportunities

A number of FLAGs have supported projects to help young people find employment in onshore activities related to the fisheries sector, such as seafood catering. The **Cornwall and Isles of Scilly FLAG** (UK), for example, worked with local employment and social centres to target unemployed young people interested in obtaining a job in commercial fisheries or seafood catering. The course on seafood catering attracted 12 participants, ten of whom went on to find work as a result.

[> More info](#)



3. Outline “action plan” – working group example¹⁴

Target group	Young people (school leavers and job seekers)
Objective	Increase in the number of young people working in fisheries
Key barriers	Lack of awareness of fisheries as a career option Poor image of the fisheries sector Tough working conditions and anti-social hours High start-up costs and poor pay
Potential activities to address them	Analysis of the barriers in the area to entering fisheries Awareness-raising activities in schools and career offices, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Local fishing activities and products › Local aquaculture activities and products › Seafood gastronomy › Processing techniques › The fisheries supply chain Training, guidance, apprenticeships and exchanges with other areas Support for business transfers Support for fisheries start-ups and adding value activities
Timeline	Ongoing throughout the programming period
Expected outputs	Young people trained Young people assisted to develop viable business plans Young people supported financially to start work in the fisheries sector
Expected results	Young people entering the fisheries sector
Expected impacts	Lowering of the age profile of the fisheries workforce



- › Work closely with schools, career centres and other strategic partners.
- › Ensure an effective progression strategy is in place following apprenticeships, to ensure a successful passage to professional activity.
- › Build links between fisheries and the tourism and other innovative sectors in order to improve the attractiveness of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

¹⁴ Based on material developed in working groups during the FARNET seminar “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities”, Jūrmala (Latvia), 21-23 March 2017

Inclusion of vulnerable groups in fisheries communities

To strive for socially inclusive fisheries community, FLAGs need to make sure that no member of the community is left out. In all communities, there are some members that are naturally active: they regularly come to meetings, articulate their needs, submit projects for funding, and make sure their interests are taken into account. There is a risk, however, that FLAG activities will only respond to these members, forgetting others who – for various reasons – may be less active but may nevertheless have important needs and something valuable to contribute. It requires a special effort by the FLAG to get these other community members involved.

Groups that the FLAG may need to pay special attention to include¹⁵:

- the **long-term unemployed**, who have particular difficulties in entering or re-entering the labour market. They often appear unattractive to employers given their lack of track record and experience, and may find it difficult to adapt to working life after long periods unemployment;
- **people with physical or mental disabilities** (including disabled or injured fishermen), whose skills may be undervalued or who may face physical or mental constraints to undertaking regular jobs;
- **women**, who constitute about half of the local population, and offer a wealth of knowledge and experience. However, in areas where activities such as fishing traditionally required physical strength, women are still sometimes confined to working in the home or carrying out tasks not recognised as work (administration, boat provisions);
- **young people**, whose ideas are sometimes disregarded or criticised as not sufficiently mature, but with whom the community must engage if they are going to live locally (instead of moving out) and contribute economically to the area;
- the **elderly**, an increasingly large section of society, who can be a source of knowledge that should be capitalised on, but are often perceived as less dynamic and more expensive than younger people;
- **minorities** (ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc.), who account for an increasing section of Europe's workforce, but who may face cultural and language barriers, poor recognition of qualifications, as well as racial discrimination.



This list is never going to be complete: the main characteristic of a group at risk of exclusion is that it is easily overlooked or forgotten! Every area will have groups that require special efforts if they are to fully participate in the life of the community and in local development activities.

There are various reasons why these groups find it difficult to fully participate in the development of fisheries area, and FLAGs must clearly understand these reasons. They typically include:

- **lack of skills** – not only skills needed to find employment, but very often basic skills needed in everyday life, such as managing a family budget or reading and understanding administrative documents;
- **lack of resources** – financial resources, but also often material resources (a decent place to live, means of transportation) or physical resources (strength, health...);
- **lack of contacts** – very often people are excluded because they don't have a network of neighbours, friends, relatives, contacts they can rely on for help (often on a reciprocal basis);
- **a sense of helplessness** – people at risk of exclusion do not believe that their voice counts; very often they don't take part in the political life (elections) or in community development activities, such as discussions about the local strategy.

¹⁵ These groups were identified in preparation to and during the FARNET seminar "Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities", Jūrmala, March 2017

1. Why is it important for FLAGs to consider vulnerable groups?

Integrated character of the FLAG

The FLAG is very often the only organisation that can look at the fisheries community as a whole (not through a single sectoral lens) and, therefore, to identify and take account of the needs of vulnerable groups.

The FLAG has the right tools

The FLAG has tools to address the needs of vulnerable groups. If the key need is skills, the FLAG can provide training and capacity building. If the key barrier is lack of resources, the FLAG can find ways to provide financial support or provide in-kind services that would facilitate the participation of vulnerable groups. FLAGs are particularly well placed to provide networking support and help overcome feelings of powerlessness by making sure that representatives of vulnerable groups participate in, and can influence, decision-making on the local strategy and project selection.

Vulnerable groups can contribute to FLAG work

The inclusion of vulnerable groups can also bring important benefits to the FLAG and the community. Representatives of these groups can often contribute significantly to the design and implementation of the local strategy, for instance as volunteers. They often have special skills or knowledge (for instance, retired fishermen) and sometimes they bring an entirely new perspective to the discussion, thus making it possible to find innovative solutions to local challenges.

2. What can FLAGs do to address the needs of vulnerable groups?

Strategy development, implementation and evaluation

It is very important that vulnerable groups are considered from the very beginning of the FLAG activities – the **preparation of the local strategy**. People at risk of exclusion usually don't come to meetings, respond to surveys or come forward with their ideas, so the partnership must make a special effort to make sure their voice is taken into account. Such participation is in itself the first step in terms of dealing with exclusion, and activities and projects designed with the participation of vulnerable groups will have a greater chance of success. This involvement should also continue throughout the whole process of **strategy implementation and evaluation**, especially if the FLAG is serious about achieving its targets in terms of social inclusion.

Some of the methods that FLAGs can use to make sure these most vulnerable groups take part in strategy development include:

- › using organisations which work with these groups as relays to inform about meetings, surveys etc.; schools can also be important relays;
- › using representatives of potentially excluded groups, who already know the FLAG, as “ambassadors” who help to involve others;
- › facilitating participation in meetings through support of volunteers (for some groups the volunteers may need special training, e.g. sign language etc.);
- › ensuring the presence of experienced, impartial facilitators who can make sure that participants from vulnerable groups can express their needs/ideas;
- › using random sampling of citizens for interviews & surveys to make sure vulnerable groups are adequately represented.

In some cases it may be necessary to have in the community a person who will play the role of reaching out to the vulnerable groups and bringing together different actors in the area to support them – this was the case of a LAG in Finland who employed a dedicated “integration coordinator” to help welcome migrants and refugees¹⁶.

16 https://www.punkalaidun.fi/sivu.tmpl?sivu_id=9366

Project development support

Some groups can be **beneficiaries of projects** co-financed by the FLAG – for instance, women setting up their own business activities or a group of young people organising a community event. The FLAG should bear in mind that vulnerable groups may need more guidance, and sometimes intensive coaching, to prepare and carry out their projects. Supporting projects implemented by groups at risk of exclusion is an important element of achieving the social objectives of the FLAG strategy.

However, there are some groups less capable of implementing projects on their own, even with intensive support from the FLAG. In such cases, the FLAG should try to find a **partner**, such as a local NGO, which has experience in dealing with a given target group. The FLAG could, for example, support such an organisation to develop and implement a project focusing on the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or the elderly. Such an organisation should, however, ensure a strong involvement of vulnerable groups in the implementation of the project, not as “passive” beneficiaries but as owners and co-creators. FLAG selection criteria for projects could also encourage project promoters to employ people from specific groups by giving extra points to those committing to such as undertaking. An example of inclusive project development support targeting vulnerable groups is presented in [Factsheet B3](#).

Facilitating access to funding

Projects dealing with vulnerable groups may have difficulties competing with other actors in the area (for instance, focusing on business development). If the FLAG is seriously aiming to reach those groups, it should consider **earmarking** a part of its budget for such projects, as well as making sure their benefits are clearly identified at the project evaluation stage. This could be achieved by having representatives of vulnerable groups as members of the **decision-making body** or by special **project selection criteria** ([see more information in Factsheet B3](#)).

Facilitating networking

As mentioned, vulnerable groups are often excluded because they have no networks to support them. The FLAG can initiate or support activities to address this, for instance providing specific groups (e.g. women, elderly, unemployed) with **opportunities to meet and network** with each other or with people and organisations that can help them. This requires having a good understanding of the needs and expectations of the groups at risk, finding an appropriate format for such networking meetings and, possibly, other special arrangements (for instance, providing volunteer to help with transport, providing care facilities for single mothers, etc.).



Developing the capacity of women from the fisheries sector

The **Bajo Nalón FLAG** area (Spain) has a long tradition of artisanal fish production, but over the last 20 years most of the area's canning companies have disappeared due to the decline of the traditional fishing fleet. As a result, the employees of these businesses, mainly women (wives and daughters of fishermen) lost their jobs. Many of them suffered long-term unemployment as there were few other job opportunities in the area.

The FLAG launched a support programme, which included training and mentoring for women in business management (legal, administrative, marketing), administrative and financial guidance, as well as small start-up grants for businesses managed by women, and cooperation with municipalities to help organise facilities for such businesses.

The project is still in progress, but already some businesses are emerging, such as a catering company set up by a professional fisherman and his mother. The FLAG provides on-going support to these emerging initiatives, as well as regular business training for women. Such support will not only help to ensure a more stable income for these women, but also to add value to traditional fisheries products and preserve traditional activities that could otherwise be lost.

[> More info](#)



The area of the Croatian Plodovi mora FLAG covers various islands, which together account for 60% of Croatian mariculture and 49% of the total catch. The area has a long tradition in fishing-related business. Employees of fish processing plants are almost exclusively women. Income from the fishing sector is highly variable, however, and there are few other job opportunities locally, so the islands are suffering from depopulation.

The FLAG, which is only starting its operations, is planning to prioritise projects that target groups with special needs. It aims to build on activities already started by some municipalities, such as projects to encourage and train women to take up fishing and/or mending nets. The FLAG will support professional training and invest in a healthier and safer workspace and equipment for the fish processing sector. It will also provide support to fishing businesses for promotion and advertising. There will be a strong focus on supporting existing and start-up women entrepreneurs.

[> More info](#)





Creating innovative jobs for the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities

Fishermen from the Côte basque – Sud Landes FLAG area in France have long been aware of the importance of removing old nets, wire, plastic etc. from the sea. Some old fishing gear that was in good condition has even been shipped to developing countries. Building on this tradition, the FLAG intends to set up a project to recycle old fishing gear, offering new services for fishing professionals in disassembling used nets and other gear, and at the same time creating jobs for the long-term unemployed and disabled persons.

The collection, sorting and disassembling of used gear will be carried out by a FLAG partner, the ADELI Association, which has experience in providing sheltered employment to socially excluded people (it employs about 50 people, of which 40 were long-term unemployed). Training to disassemble and sort nets, ropes, floats etc. will be provided with the help of someone from the fishing industry (e.g. a retired or disabled fisherman); the products will be sold for further processing (e.g. to create clothing, shoes, skateboards etc.).

[> More info](#)



The Spanish Mariña-Ortegal FLAG has supported a project initiated by an association of disabled persons, to reuse difficult to degrade plastic from the fisheries sector using sustainable recycling techniques. The project aims to help the fisheries sector cut the cost of plastic packaging by as much as 65%, while also reducing the environmental impact of waste, and providing employment opportunities for people with labour market integration problems.

A practical training course funded by the FLAG provided participants with the necessary skills in plastic recycling. Of the 12 participants, seven had intellectual disabilities and three had mental disorders. Four participants were women and four were long-term unemployed. Eight of the trainees are now employed and have a sense of purpose, while also being able to contribute to the costs of their day care. Those with mental disabilities work under close supervision and benefit from the professional support necessary (psychologists and physiotherapists).

[> More info](#)



3. Outline “action plan” – working group example¹⁷

Target group	Women
Objective	Increased participation in fisheries activity
Key barriers	Target group dispersed across the territory Lack of associations Lack of necessary skills Not easy to enter the fisheries profession
What can the FLAG do to address them?	Involving women’s organisation in the FLAG (decision-making body) Support to fisheries businesses to create employment for women (special financing line) Maximum aid intensity for projects involving families of fishermen Business training for women Training courses for women in processing fisheries products
When?	Look for communication channels and encourage women to come up with new ideas – early on Continued support throughout all the implementation stages



TIPS

- Remember that groups at risk of exclusion are often those groups which are most easily forgotten. Keep looking for groups that don’t participate. Try to find out why and actively **reach out** to them!
- **Work with organisations** that have experience with socially excluded groups. They will be able to help the FLAG identify their real needs and respond to them effectively.
- When dealing with vulnerable groups, the most important thing is to **listen!** Keep an open mind and do not try to impose preconceived ideas. Three questions to ask them:
 - ✓ What do you want?
 - ✓ What do you need in order to achieve it?
 - ✓ What can the FLAG do to help?
- Remember that needs do not always originate from an economic problem, they can also come from issues associated with cultural mindsets. Be ready to challenge these mindsets.
- Never try to do something **for** excluded groups, but always work **with** them and help them become more independent!

¹⁷ Based on material developed in working groups during the FARNET seminar “Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities”, Jūrmala (Latvia), 21-23 March 2017

Integrating migrants and refugees

The recent refugee crisis, but also other migratory flows, have changed the population structure in a significant number of fishing and aquaculture areas, as well as in many other areas across Europe. It is important here to distinguish migrants (people who make a conscious decision to move to another country to seek a better life) from refugees (people forced to leave their country because of persecutions or war). In Europe, some countries (e.g. Greece, Italy) are mostly entry points for refugees, while others (Germany, Sweden) receive large numbers of people who would like to stay there for the long term.

Migrants and refugees can be an important target group for social inclusion activities in fishing and aquaculture communities. Although in many places the arrival of migrants or refugees can be initially seen as a threat, migration can be an opportunity, especially for areas experiencing depopulation and structural change. The challenge in such cases is to get to the point where migrants can actively contribute to improving the local socio-economic situation. In their role as local development agents, FLAGs have a potential role to play in supporting both the arrival and the integration of migrants in their areas.

1. Why is it important for the FLAG to think about migrants and refugees?

The issue of migrants and refugees does not concern all FLAG areas, and can have different degrees of importance in those areas that are affected. Some FLAG areas, especially in the Mediterranean (such as in Greece, Italy and Spain), are strongly affected by the arrival of refugees from Africa or Syria, while other areas have established camps for asylum seekers, especially in the countries receiving a higher number of refugees. There are also FLAG areas with important fishing industries (such as in Scotland or Spain), which have been the destination of migrant workers, to cope with the labour shortages. These migrant communities do not only consist of third-country nationals, but also include nationals from other EU Member States.



One should differentiate between **migrant workers** and **refugees** living in the FLAG area.

As regards the influx of refugees, the coastal areas where they arrive can have immediate needs in terms of **infrastructure and welcoming services**, while areas giving medium or long term shelter to refugees have needs related to the **integration** of these new inhabitants.

As for any other minority group, the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the socio-economic life of the area is critical. Although the FLAG strategies might not foresee specific actions for the inclusion of migrants and refugees, the **FLAG can be the link between the needs of the fisheries sector and the social development activities carried out in the area.**

Some good reasons for FLAGs to engage with issues related to migrants and refugees:

- › migration presents an opportunity for local development in areas experiencing depopulation: migrant families can help to keep local schools, shops, healthcare and other services in the area;
- › some migrants have (or can learn) skills of relevance to the fishing industry;
- › many needs cannot be adequately met by public authorities: FLAGs can play a role here in terms of engaging with NGOs and other stakeholders;
- › integration is a long-term process and can be adapted to long-term strategic goals. FLAGs can revise their strategy if needed.

2. How can FLAGs support the inclusion of migrants and refugees in fisheries communities?

While infrastructural needs are generally catered for by the State, NGOs assist in terms of managing the arrival process and supporting the integration of migrants. FLAGs can help to engage with civil society and the local population due to the multi-sectoral nature of the FLAG partnership. In this respect, FLAGs can play a role similar to social NGOs, providing help based on small-scale community action.

According to the different phases of the migration process, different actors are typically involved in the following ways¹⁸:

Phase	Activity	Actors	Potential role of the FLAG
'Receiving' the migrants	Shelter, food, clothes	Public entities with support of the local population	Less important; in some areas FLAGs can try to coordinate activities of different actors
Asylum process	Cultural and language introduction	Civil society, NGOs	FLAG becomes more important as a facilitator for volunteers and NGOs
	Welcome to the fisheries community (village, town)	Some local actors already initiate activities to support integration (advice, language training etc.)	As above
	Schooling for the children	Municipality/State	No formal role of the FLAG
After receiving permanent residential status	Language school (adults)	Municipality/State	FLAGs can initiate some community action but it is mostly a task of the public administration
	Permanent housing	Municipality/State, NGOs	Less important
	Business training		FLAG as an important mediator between migrants and local businesses

There are some important aspects to be taken into account as regards the efficiency of integration actions:

- Good information-sharing between the FLAG and other relevant actors active in the field of migrants/refugees, including the relevant public authorities, is a key factor for success.
- The participation of the FLAG is usually triggered by those who are more actively involved in its operations: the FLAG manager, the board members, members of the decision-making body. They might have already been approached by social NGOs seeking possible cooperation. Active FLAG board members might have to take the lead as project developers, taking some responsibility and making sure that ideas become projects.
- Integration is a two-way process, requiring commitments from both the new entrants and the host area. The migrants must, therefore, be motivated to participate in the proposed integration actions.
- Emphasis should be put on the quality of the integration actions, maximising the impact on the ground.

¹⁸ Based on material presented by the Swedish Rural Network and developed in the working group on migrants and refugees during the FARNET seminar "Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities", Jūrmala (Latvia), 21-23 March 2017

- Integration of migrants/refugees should be part of a larger social integration plan, with a cross-sectorial approach, and the support of main actors in the community (e.g. employment, education, healthcare...). This will avoid competition between locals and migrants/refugees.
- Integration should be seen from a social inclusion perspective, with a clear need to involve everyone in the integration process. Volunteers and role models are important stakeholders in this process.

Integration projects cover several different areas – for example, **housing, education, employment, and social and cultural activities**.

Projects supported by FLAGs are still rare, while LEADER LAGs have been implementing migrant integration actions for some time¹⁹. Migrant integration projects supported by LEADER/CLLD in rural areas focus mainly on promoting **dialogue, cultural exchange and tolerance**. They are often linked to **food, gastronomy** and the **practical skills** of the migrants. While there are more examples in the sphere of cultural exchange and welcoming the migrants through physical action, there are fewer initiatives from LAGs aimed at business support.



EXAMPLE

Migrant integration around local fish

Similar to projects already implemented under LEADER/CLLD, the **Ostrobothnia FLAG** in Finland is planning to support a migrant integration project promoted by the local women's association. The association discovered that the migrant community in the FLAG area was consuming fish species that were not so popular with the local population. This led to the idea of bringing migrants and locals together to exchange information on these fish species, including ways to prepare them and recipes. In a second phase of the project, it is planned that the migrants will be educated in local fishing methods and regulations, as many of them are passionate anglers. This is expected to lead to a win-win situation for both the fisheries communities and the migrants, in terms of social integration, cultural exchange and innovation.

> [More info](#)



EXAMPLE

Exploring skills

The 'VERLA' LAG in Lazio (Italy) supported a project called '*Land and Municipalities*' (Terre e Comuni), which provided training and work placements in agriculture for young unemployed people from both migrant and local backgrounds. This was made possible through cooperation with a social enterprise and an existing social network, with LAG support. The project resulted in increased awareness of the migrants situation among the local community. A new association was established, working in close cooperation with a local asylum centre, to provide new opportunities for migrants. This type of project could be transferable to a FLAG area, as the skills of migrants in fishing and food processing could help to address labour shortages and promote economic activity.

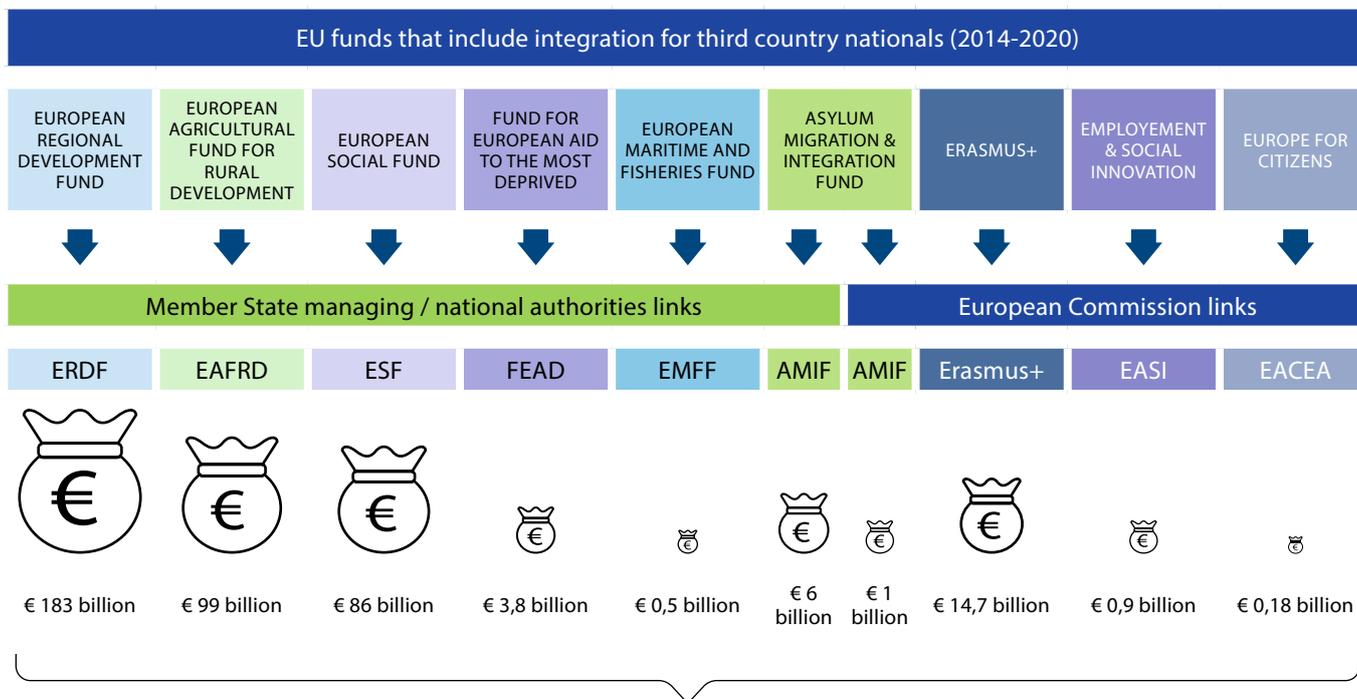
> [More info](#)



19 https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/publi-eafrd-brochure-03-en_2016.pdf

3. European funding opportunities for the integration of migrants and refugees

FLAGs actively contributing to the integration of migrants and refugees can use the ESI Funds or other funding opportunities to support the integration of third country nationals:



BENEFICIARIES



State/federal authorities, regional and local public bodies, NGOs, Red Cross organisations, international public organisations, private and public law companies, education/research organisations

(Source: European Commission, DG HOME)

Two funding instruments merit particular attention in this respect:

- > The **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)**²⁰: This Fund does not directly support the integration of migrants and refugees, but supports actions to provide material assistance to the most deprived. See more information in [Introduction/section 4](#).
- > The **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)**²¹ is a financial instrument for the period 2014 to 2020, which supports national and EU initiatives that promote the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common EU approach to asylum and immigration. Actions to be funded through this instrument are varied and can include the improvement of accommodation and reception services for asylum seekers, education and language training for non-EU nationals, and assistance to vulnerable persons. The largest share of the of the AMIF budget is channelled through national programmes. Beneficiaries can, for example, be local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, humanitarian organisations, private and public companies and education and research organisations.

20 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

21 <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund>



- › Consider the link between migrants in your area and fisheries. Have you thought about the potential opportunities for the community and the local economy?
- › Look for social NGOs in your area that are dealing with migrant arrival and integration, and make sure they are aware of the FLAG activities ([see example in Factsheet B2 on strategic partnership](#)).
- › Think about making use of other ESI Funds and other European or national funding instruments!



Integrating social inclusion in FLAG operations



Part

This part is composed of three factsheets describing potentially useful approaches that can help FLAGs to address social inclusion issues in their areas.

B

Linking social inclusion to enterprise

1. Why support enterprise?

Helping vulnerable groups to become active members of society through employment or other forms of work can be a powerful tool for social inclusion. Hence the need for **enterprise**, understood here as either a “project or undertaking” or a “business activity”²², which may involve remunerated or voluntary activities.

Different types of enterprise can give **purpose and fulfilment** to individual community members, as well as bringing them into **contact with others** and **contributing to the local community** through the provision of specific services or goods. If the enterprise generates revenue, it will also contribute to the **economic wellbeing** and can **reduce dependence** on family, friends and the State.

Public resources may be needed to invest in training and education for specific target groups, to help them become more employable, and facilitate access to apprenticeships or work placements. This factsheet provides ideas and tips for FLAGs wishing to use enterprise as a means of combating the social exclusion of specific target groups.

2. How can FLAGs use enterprise to help vulnerable groups?

FLAGs can support individuals from marginalised groups to set up their own business initiatives, thereby reducing their dependence on third party employment opportunities, while also increasing their resilience and self-reliance. However, these vulnerable groups may not be able to compete on the open market and more imaginative projects might be needed in order to enable them to benefit from entrepreneurship – and for their enterprise to benefit the community! **Social enterprises** can sometimes provide a solution.

Social enterprise combines social goals (such as jobs for vulnerable groups) with business goals. A social enterprise is an “*organisation or initiative that marries the social mission of a non-profit or government programme with the market-driven approach of a business*”²³. In most cases, social enterprises should have the following characteristics:

- › a productive business that provides either goods or services;
- › its social objective is at the core of its mission;
- › limited profits;
- › a participative governance structure.²⁴

Social enterprises often take the legal form of cooperatives or non-profit companies. Sometimes they can also be set up as NGOs (e.g. associations) that can be remunerated for their services. In some Member States, there are special legal forms for social enterprises, defined in national legislation (a typical example is the so-called “social cooperative”, i.e. a cooperative that brings together representatives from vulnerable groups, e.g. long-term unemployed or people with disabilities). These special forms are often exempted from certain types of taxes and/or are given priority in terms of access to public funding. Irrespective of the legal form, the profits from the business activity are, as a rule, used to meet the social objectives.

Developing new social enterprises

FLAGs can support individuals wishing to set up social enterprises, engaging with what might be innovative proposals for addressing local challenges through revenue-generating activities that can help such initiatives remain sustainable over time. FLAG activities might take the form of: **advice and mentoring**, initiatives to integrate excluded groups – or those working with them – into relevant professional **networks and support structures**; and/or financial support through **grants** to start up new social enterprises.

²² Oxford Dictionaries

²³ Social Enterprise Alliance

²⁴ Antoine Saint Denis at the FARNET social inclusion seminar in Jürjala in March 2017

Supporting existing social enterprises

FLAGs can also support existing social enterprises, while ensuring that they tackle identified social problems in the community, for example by: **creating employment** opportunities for specific target groups; developing **skills and capacity** within certain groups; providing **access to credit** for individuals to put business ideas into action; or providing **new services, including technology** to improve quality of life and social cohesion in the fisheries area, etc. FLAGs can provide grants for such initiatives or facilitate access to other funding sources.

Building support for social enterprise among other actors in the community

Another important role of the FLAG is to build a **broad coalition of actors** in support of social enterprise. Social businesses active in the FLAG area cannot be viable in the long run without good cooperation with other businesses or stakeholders that can purchase goods and services from them or enter into joint projects. Good collaboration with the public sector is also of crucial importance, especially in terms of benefiting from **public procurement** (when municipalities, schools and other public sector entities decide to purchase goods or services from social enterprises). See more information about building a strategic partnership for social inclusion in [Factsheet B2](#).

Finding new economic models that benefit the community is a powerful way of creating change in a system which often marginalises more vulnerable groups. FLAGs should stay alert to opportunities for driving such change.



Supporting work for the disabled

Many people with disabilities find it difficult to find work, even though they may sometimes have unique skills. The French **Marennes Oléron FLAG** supported a local association (the *Navicule Bleue*) to create a social enterprise to help injured or disabled fishermen to be re-integrated into the labour market.

The social enterprise offers services such as net mending and the maintenance of fishing boats to fisheries professionals. It has the legal form of a cooperative and provides full-time employment for six people. Thanks to initial funding from the FLAG and other public actors, ongoing support from the social security system, and awareness among its customers of its social mission, it now operates as a viable business.

Based on this experience, two more social enterprises, operating as non-profit associations, are now providing sheltered work to people with more severe disabilities and to the long-term unemployed (in total 95 FTEs), have been created in the area. The model has also been successfully transferred to other FLAG areas, such as Arcachon.

[> More info](#)





FLAGs have a responsibility to look for solutions to local problems, even when it appears that there are many barriers or that change is not possible. This is where **social innovation** comes in, and social enterprise can be one form of social innovation. It implies doing new things, doing things differently and doing things through new partnerships. For this, FLAGs need to be ready to challenge existing systems and to make them work better for the *whole* community. Here are a few tips:

- > Engage critically and creatively with the existing regulatory context – the novelty of some ideas may imply the need for flexibility in relation to rules, often developed for a different context – but even regulations can be changed!
- > Secure public support, which is essential if innovative ideas are to be realised.
- > Social enterprise can be challenging and complex, find the right project promoters: experience, motivation and persistence all count!
- > Set achievable goals within a realistic timescale (focus on small steps so progress can be visible and belief in the final outcome maintained...)
- > Change takes time – make sure your business plan is bullet proof and has planned adequately for the period before any financial gain is realised.

Building strategic partnerships with other actors

1. Why is strategic partnership needed to address social inclusion?

FLAGs are, by their very nature, partnerships of different actors and they are generally aware of the need to work with different organisations and institutions in their area in order to achieve their strategic objectives. Therefore, FLAGs for whom social inclusion is an important issue will naturally try to look for other actors in, and outside, their area who can help them deal with the needs of vulnerable groups.

However, establishing partnerships to deal with social inclusion can be a particularly complex task and FLAGs should be aware of the following aspects:

- social inclusion is a very long-term process and cannot be addressed with a few isolated projects. Therefore, when looking for partners, the FLAG should keep in mind that it is going to be a long-term relationship, which may well go beyond the period of strategy implementation;
- vulnerable groups have very diverse needs, and organisations that help them tend to be highly specialised, so the FLAG may have to deal with different partners for different target groups (for instance, one organisation dealing with youth, another with the elderly, and another helping people with disabilities); moreover, these partners are not likely to identify with the fisheries area and they may not have the same territorial coverage as the FLAG;
- some of the key partners could be located outside the FLAG area. For example, research institutions that have in-depth knowledge of social issues, or highly specialised organisations that deal with a specific target group at national or regional level;
- many partners dealing with vulnerable groups have very little knowledge of the fisheries community and its specific social problems, and they may find it difficult to understand the FLAG's role in social inclusion; it may take a while for the social organisations and the FLAG to build trust and speak the same language;
- for most FLAGs, only a small proportion of their budget will be dedicated to social inclusion and FLAGs wishing to address certain social issues more comprehensively may need to look for other funds; it is important to build good relations with other social actors in the area, so that FLAG is not seen as competitor for the same funding sources.

The FLAG should, at the outset, try to identify and map the key partners in terms of dealing with vulnerable groups in the fisheries area, and establish a working relationship with them as soon as possible.

2. How can partner organisations help the FLAG?

Organisations dealing with social inclusion can play a wide range of roles: they can help the FLAG in designing its social inclusion activities; they can act as project promoters or as facilitators, helping actors from the vulnerable groups to implement projects. They can also help with fundraising or with monitoring and evaluation.

Strategy design and decision-making: ensuring a voice for excluded groups

As has been mentioned in [Factsheet A3](#), it is not easy to ensure the involvement of groups at risk of exclusion in the process of designing the local strategy. However, it is very important that their needs and ideas are taken into account. The FLAG should look for organisations that have experience of working with such groups and can help to ensure that representatives of vulnerable groups participate in discussions on the strategy. Such organisations may also suggest appropriate criteria for selecting social inclusion-related projects and indicate which members of vulnerable groups have the greatest potential to take part in the decision-making processes or structures of the FLAG.

Implementing projects

Some organisations can develop and implement projects that address key social inclusion issues, and submit them for FLAG funding. It is important to ensure that the project promoter is an organisation that has experience and knowledge of the vulnerable group, as well as the necessary project management capacity. The FLAG should also make sure that the target group has a say in how the project is designed and implemented.

Some members of the vulnerable groups can be project promoters themselves, but it is always good to ensure that they have access to high quality advice and capacity building. FLAGs may partner with organisations that can help with this, providing support with business planning, management, marketing or accounting to beneficiaries when they start their own businesses.

Facilitating access to additional funding

Some organisations experienced in social issues may be partners with which the FLAG can apply for funding from sources other than the EMFF – such as the ESF. Such organisations may already have experience in managing social inclusion projects and established contacts in the authorities responsible for funding such projects.

Organisations specialising in the provision of funding for social inclusion can also be important partners. This might include micro-finance institutions providing loans and/or guarantees for small-scale entrepreneurs, including those from vulnerable groups, who may not be able to access regular financial services. In some countries or regions public authorities also provide funding for social enterprise in the form of grants, loans or guarantees.

Monitoring and evaluation

Organisations dealing with social matters usually have tools and methods to analyse progress towards social inclusion goals. The FLAG should use this knowledge to put in place monitoring and evaluation systems of its own social inclusion activities. Certain organisations may have knowledge of participatory assessment methods, which can also help the FLAG to get the opinions of its vulnerable groups in the evaluation process.



Teaming up with other organisations to obtain ESF funding

The Polish **Slowinska FLAG** has identified high levels of poverty, exclusion and low levels of social entrepreneurship as some of the key issues for its area. The FLAG has decided to address them by developing the social economy. Funding for such social economy initiatives was made available by the Pomeranian region, but several partners had to team up in order to achieve the required outreach and critical mass.

The FLAG has created a long-term partnership with two other actors: the Slupia Basin LAG and the Centre for Civic Initiatives (each of them covering one part of the project area, and pooling their expertise). Together, these three organisations obtained a grant of nearly €3 million from the ESF and have started to implement a project to provide advice, training and financial support to entities (NGOs, local government, social enterprises, church organisations etc.) that develop social economy projects. Information activities, support for partnership building, and the establishment of a school for social economy leaders are also envisaged. It is expected that the project will help 450 people to get out of social exclusion and create 150 permanent jobs.



[> More info](#)



EXAMPLE

Collaborating with financial actors

Accessing credit is always easier for wealthier individuals and businesses who, theoretically, present less risk to the lender. For those struggling to make a decent living or whose revenue streams are unpredictable (such as fishermen), obtaining a bank loan to start a business can be extremely difficult. With this in mind, the **East Sardinia FLAG** has worked with a private credit institution to set up a rotating fund to make micro-credit more accessible to small enterprises, including fisheries cooperatives, which might otherwise experience difficulties in accessing loans. The credit institution provides loans of up to €25,000, with the FLAG offering a tailored support service.

FARNET Good Practice



EXAMPLE

Identifying partners, creating working groups

When the FLAG is starting to work on social inclusion, it would be important to see first which actors are already working with a given target group. In Austria the LEADER groups “Vöckla-Ager” and “Traunstein Region” started their work on cultural integration migrants by a survey of work and resources already devoted to “intercultural” issues by SMEs, municipalities, social organisations and other relevant organisations in the region. They were surprised to find how many private individuals and groups were already working with migrants. In a similar project in Germany, having identified a large number of partners potentially interested in the issue of migrants, the LAG Oberallgäu (Germany) has decided to set up several working groups to coordinate different activities and act as “steering groups” of the inclusion process. The LAG has also supported the creation of an online platform which provides information about services and good practices in support of migrants.



> More info



TIPS

- > Remember, building a long-time relationship requires time and effort. Invite potential partners to FLAG events and – where relevant – to attend meetings of the decision-making bodies, to allow them to understand the objectives and workings of the FLAG. See also if this arrangement can be reciprocal (e.g. if someone from the FLAG can take part in meetings of the partner organisations).
- > The formal scope of activities of an organisation can be less important; what matters is that it really focuses on social inclusion. In some areas, the local chamber of commerce or local church can be important actors in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.
- > In some FLAG areas there may be very few actors interested in social inclusion. The FLAG might have to support the establishment of a new organisation (for instance, an association of fishermen’s wives), with which it can then cooperate.

Fostering social inclusion in the animation and operating procedures of the FLAG

1. What inclusive practices can FLAGs put in place?

If the FLAG has social inclusion as one of the strategic objectives, it should also ensure that its procedures and practices take into account the specificity of vulnerable groups. All the FLAG activities, especially animation and project selection, should be designed in such a way as to facilitate social inclusion. In particular:

- > the **composition of the decision-making body** of the FLAG should be inclusive: this could be achieved, for instance, by setting quotas (minimum number or percentage) for certain types of participants, such as women, young people, the elderly or disabled, in the body that takes decisions on project selection;
- > FLAGs can apply **project selection criteria** that prioritise projects developed and/or implemented by vulnerable groups or addressing their needs (for instance, if the FLAG strategy aims to encourage women or young people to start their own businesses, project selection criteria could provide additional points for applications by these target groups);
- > some FLAGs can develop **specific internal rules** that facilitate access to funding for projects addressing social inclusion – for example, a percentage of FLAG (annual) budget could be earmarked for such projects, or they could benefit from a higher aid intensity compared to other projects;
- > FLAGs can also put in place a wide range of **animation practices** that target vulnerable groups, such as special meetings for certain types of beneficiaries, targeted support to prepare project applications (e.g. for people with disabilities), or even a dedicated contact person in the FLAG.

In addition, some FLAGs actively look for **funding sources complementary to the EMFF**, which could help address key social inclusion issues of the area. These could be public sources, such as the ESF or regional/municipal funds (for example, in Italy, some regional authorities guarantee own contribution if the beneficiary comes from a disadvantaged group), but also private sources from specialised banks or micro-credit institutions (e.g. the East Cantabria FLAG in Spain cooperates with the local bank which provides loans based on the favourable opinion of the FLAG, as well as grant funding for training courses for the unemployed).

2. What issues can such practices help to address?

Empowering and giving a voice to vulnerable groups

One of the key barriers that vulnerable groups face in the context of the activities of the FLAG is the sense of powerlessness and a lack of influence in decisions on the future of the area. Certain groups, such as the long-term unemployed or disabled people, but sometimes also young people or women, feel that their voice does not matter, and tend, therefore, not to take part in discussions about the FLAG strategy, or do not contribute their ideas or develop projects. **Inviting and encouraging representatives of such groups to participate in the decision-making body of the FLAG**, as well as providing capacity building (personal development) that would facilitate such participation, would be an important way of overcoming this barrier. Such representatives could help to ensure that the projects selected for funding really correspond to the needs of the target groups.

Ensuring information and capacity building

FLAGs are responsible for disseminating information about their activities and funding opportunities. However, they should keep in mind that vulnerable groups are not easily reached by typical information campaigns: they may have difficulties accessing the internet, or understanding the complicated legal texts of calls for projects. If the FLAG wants to ensure that these vulnerable groups are aware of the opportunities of FLAG support, it must carry out **targeted information campaigns**, for example, by preparing easy-to-understand instructions, and disseminating information in places where these groups are likely to find it (employment office, the church or a local charity). If the target group includes the elderly or disabled people, information may need to be provided in larger print.

However, FLAGs should not rely only on disseminating written information, as this is not going to be enough to encourage representatives of groups at risk of exclusion to express their needs or develop project proposals. This may require activities such as **information meetings, training and advice** on project development and implementation. Ideally training and advice should be provided by people or organisations familiar with the needs of the target group (for instance, by a local NGO dealing with the long-term unemployed or disabled people).

Facilitating access to funding

Even with targeted information and capacity building, projects developed by vulnerable groups may find it difficult to compete for funding with other beneficiaries – for instance, they may be more cost-intensive or take longer to achieve results. If the FLAG would like to ensure that such projects get a fair chance of being funded, it should develop selection criteria that **prioritise social inclusion**, for example, by awarding additional points to a project if the applicant and/or target group comes from a vulnerable background.

The FLAG may also **earmark a certain part of its budget** for projects addressing social inclusion (for instance, make it one of the priorities or “axes” or the FLAG strategy). If the FLAG is planning to launch a dedicated call for social inclusion projects, it could consider providing a **longer period for preparing applications** – this would allow more time for vulnerable groups to develop their project ideas.

Another way of facilitating access to funding would be to **reduce the amount of match-funding required** from vulnerable beneficiaries, i.e. enabling a higher aid intensity. Of course this should always respect the limits defined by the EU and national rules. For instance, if for a certain type of operation the maximum aid intensity is 60%, then projects involving social inclusion could get the maximum amount, i.e. 60%, whereas other projects might only get 50% or 40% (i.e. the beneficiary would have to contribute 50 or 60% match funding, respectively).



Building linkages with target groups, drawing on LEADER experience

The South FLAG in Cork (Ireland) is a newly established FLAG which started its operations in the 2014-2020 period. Its social inclusion work is informed by the experience of the **South and East Cork Area Development Partnership (SECAD)**. Since its establishment in 1995, SECAD has evolved from an organisation managing a single programme (LEADER) into a platform for delivering a variety of programmes funded from multiple sources, primarily in the broad areas of rural development and social inclusion.

For example, a recent initiative involving the building of a community centre (“My Place”) in a local village, had the objectives of providing meeting space and activities for local youth, many of them suffering from stress, lack of confidence and lack of a space to meet with people their own age. The project initiators involved young people in defining the format and role of the community centre, as well as in the fundraising and promotion of the centre. As a result, young people feel at home in the centre and have developed a strong sense of ownership.



The main focus of the South FLAG’s strategy is economic development, but social inclusion also features strongly, with topics such as:

- › Empowering peripheral coastal communities to educate and organise themselves;
- › Enhancing training and employment opportunities for young people;
- › Promoting the development of skills and life-long learning in coastal communities;
- › Promoting social well-being;
- › Addressing isolation – particularly amongst older single men in coastal areas;
- › Upskilling of fishing families in order to access services.

The South FLAG uses methods developed by SECAD and other FLAG members to involve dispersed fisheries communities, aiming to empower them and encourage stronger participation in local development. This is achieved by using more active fishermen as the FLAG’s “ambassadors” in their villages. The FLAG also collaborates closely with various stakeholders across the area, using their expertise, knowledge and resources to liaise with fisheries communities, making sure there is no overlap but that the activities of different stakeholders and the FLAG itself are complementary.



Finding new ways of reaching out to target groups

The Polish **Opole region FLAG** has identified people under 26 and over 50, as well as women, as the key groups at risk of exclusion. The FLAG has ensured that these groups are represented in the decision-making body responsible for project selection: for example 53% of its members are women.

The FLAG has launched a number of animation activities to ensure the vulnerable groups are involved in various community initiatives. In this inland area most fish farms are owned by men, but there are a few women fishers and the FLAG tries to support them, for example, by organising study visits and educational meetings at a fish farm and processing plant owned by a woman. The information activities carried out by the FLAG use communication channels corresponding to the needs of specific groups, for instance written material adapted to the needs of elderly people.



Young people at risk of exclusion (due to mental difficulties, for example), kids from dysfunctional families living in a children's home, as well as people over 55 are invited to participate in specially targeted angling competitions. The FLAG also organises educational activities for young people, to teach them about the benefits of active recreation (hiking, angling etc.) and healthy eating habits.



Inclusive project development support

A LEADER group in Scotland supported business development, targeting in particular women and migrants in a remote rural area, facilitating access to user-friendly advice without having to travel to the nearest city. The project established a volunteer board of up to ten people from the community, who were willing to share their skills and help others achieve their goals. A locally based Enterprise Coordinator was also appointed. One-to-one support meetings were offered to identify what new entrepreneurs need to get started with the business. This method could be used e.g. to support business development project promoters from a less-favoured neighbourhood in a FLAG area.



[> More info](#)



- > **Don't expect projects addressing social inclusion to just "happen"!** The FLAG needs to provide support from the first idea through the whole project development and selection process. Targeted animation, appropriate selection criteria and procedures are essential.
- > Make sure that **vulnerable groups have a say** in designing rules and criteria that will be used to select projects for funding, and in the selection process itself. But remember, groups at risk of exclusion are usually not well organised – so be ready to invest a lot of time and effort in identifying the right people to represent them.
- > Don't forget that representatives of vulnerable groups may face a lot of barriers when attending meetings; so if you would like them to participate in decision-making bodies, make sure you help them **overcome these barriers** (e.g. single mothers may need someone to look after their children during the meeting, elderly or people with disabilities may need help with transportation etc.).
- > If you have limited capacity to reach out to vulnerable groups of your area, **use stakeholders specialised** in this area to help you.
- > **Be innovative:** vulnerable groups may have different needs that the FLAG can help to address, and in this way get them involved (for example, by offering nutrition advice or developing cooking skills).



Winner of the FARNET photo competition: “What does social inclusion mean to you?”



Photo by Cinzia Gozzo (Venetian FLAG) in honor of 2017 International Women's Day

Maria, 93 years old

This is Maria. She is 93 years old, and, for over 70 years, has been sewing fishing nets with a needle and a thread, all day, every day. Although she is bent over the fishing nets, she doesn't wear glasses and she is still able to ride a bike. Maria lives and works in Caorle (Venice, Italy) with her family, her children and her grandchildren in the fisheries sector.

Note from the photographer: “With this photo I tried to sweeten a predominantly male world and give a place for all those women, mothers, wives and daughters of fishermen who work alongside them but are often invisible.”