



EAFRD-funded projects

Centre for Social Inclusion



Establishment and equipping of the Centre for Social Inclusion in the territory of Napoca Poroilissum LAG

Creating opportunities for rural youth.

LAG Napoca Poroilissum set up a social inclusion centre in the village of Gilău to offer young people a space to interact and participate in various activities and events.

The centre was furnished with tables, chairs and modern technological equipment, such as laptops and interactive whiteboards.

In addition, the LAG purchased a minibus of 8+1 seats to facilitate young people's access to events organised at the Centre or in nearby cities.



Location

Cluj county (Romania)

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P6 - Social Inclusion and Economic Development

Measure

M19 - LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 620 502

EAFRD 88 931

Private 16 833

Erasmus+, POCU/HCOP (Human Capital Operational Programme)

1 514 738

Project duration

2019 - 2021

Project promoter

Asociația Grupul de Acțiune Locală Napoca Poroilissum

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Results

250 people participated in the activities organised in the social inclusion centre and benefited from integrated social services, such as social counselling and information provision, health education, healthy lifestyle and parental education. Several events have taken place at the Centre in Gilău.

40 young people benefited from educational, social and recreational services.

125 people benefited from vocational guidance and counselling services; 32 of them were then employed and/or integrated into the labour market.

98 people participated in a social entrepreneurship course; 30 of them submitted business plans and 8 obtained funding to implement their projects.

Children and young people from the territory participated in two camps to combat discrimination and four workshops to promote community involvement.

The LAG organised working visits for young people to the University of Agronomy in Cluj, and in turn, hosted a visit by some young people from the JaIM association in France.

Several LAGs in Romania have shown an interest in this intervention model.

The centre was the first step to addressing the main issues faced by young people in their area: poverty, lack of development opportunities and difficulty to imagine a future in their home villages. Following this project, the LAG developed other projects focused on youth, including an Erasmus+ project.

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Context

Romania is one of the top seven Member States with high depopulation in rural areas, acknowledged in the following links: <https://bit.ly/3B2qLwF>; <https://bit.ly/3R5A3Oq>; <https://bit.ly/3KxjWWO>. Additionally, the National Statistics show a declining rural population from the census (performed every 10 years). In LAG Napoca Porolissum, some villages (Mărișel, Mănăstireni and Mărgău) lost up to 40 % of their populations. Râșca village lost 40.9 % of their population, which also aged significantly by 10.38 % due to migration of young people.

Unemployment data are not comprehensive, due both to the Covid-19 crisis and the fact they only include those who receive state aid – which often does not include all unemployed persons in rural areas.

Young people in these rural areas face poverty and lack development opportunities as well as opportunities to participate in decision-making processes in their communities. The pandemic also highlighted the gap between urban and rural areas, e.g. with regard to education. Children and young people in rural areas did not have access to online education at home due to gaps in technological infrastructure provision.

Programmes are needed to address youth's needs and keep youngsters active in their communities so that migrating to cities is not the only opportunity for them.

The Napoca Porolissum LAG recognises youth are key to improving rural areas. The LAG has been working with young people since the beginning of the organisation. Until 2020, the LAG could count on a group of young people ready to get involved on various topics, but they also realised that many young people did not participate and even left the area due to the lack of opportunities.

Objectives

With this project, Napoca Porolissum aimed to facilitate minority and vulnerable groups' access to integrated social services by setting up a social inclusion centre in a rural area. Once established, such a centre would offer young people a space to interact and participate in various activities and events.

The LAG aimed to help young people in rural areas develop, discover their voice, find their purpose and – most importantly – get involved in the development of the communities where they live, turning them into a place to stay.

The LAG considered the centre to be a first step in addressing the main issues faced by young people in their area: poverty, lack of development opportunities and the difficulty to imagine a future in their home villages.

Activities

The project is multi-funded, from EAFRD, Erasmus+ and the Operational Programme Human Capital. Thus, synergy with other EU strategies is ensured.

The project allowed a centre for social inclusion to be opened in the village of Gilău, furnished with tables, chairs and modern technological equipment, such as laptops and interactive whiteboards. The space is rented, renewed once every two years.

In addition, the LAG purchased a minibus of 8+1 seats to facilitate access for young people to events organised at the Centre or in nearby cities like Huedin or Cluj.

The centre is still open to young people and regularly organises activities. The minibus is still available.

While implementing the project, the LAG realised that the issues faced by rural youth need to be addressed from several perspectives: providing services for young people, professional guidance and empowerment were the next logical steps. The project made the LAG understand that change occurs over time, through repeated interventions in several directions.

Main results

Following the opening of the social inclusion centre and during the project period, 250 people participated in the activities and benefited from integrated social services, mostly carried out at the centre's premises. Services included social counselling and information provision, health education, healthy lifestyle and parental education. Several events have taken place at the Centre in Gilău.

40 young people benefited from the educational, social and recreational services provided.

125 people benefited from vocational guidance and counselling services; 32 of them were then employed and/or integrated into the labour market.

98 people participated in a social entrepreneurship course; 30 of them submitted business plans and eight obtained funding to implement their projects.

Children and young people from the LAG territory participated in two camps to combat discrimination and four workshops to promote community involvement.

The LAG organised working visits for young people to the University of Agronomy in Cluj, and in turn, hosted a visit by some young people from the JaIM association in France.

Several LAGs in Romania have shown an interest in this intervention model: GAL Delta Dunării, GAL Tecuci, GAL MVC, GAL Lider Bistrița Năsăud, GAL Lunca Joasă a Siretului. Thus, the LAG team can transfer its experience to other organisations interested in developing similar projects.

The project achieved much more than what was initially planned. When the centre was set up, the LAG implemented four other projects focused on young people that complement the services offered through the inclusion centre. The other projects provide educational, social and recreational services, combat academic drop-out, facilitate the transition from education to labour market through counselling and career guidance, and develop 'Rural Youth Parliaments', the latter in the framework of an Erasmus+ project involving partners from Finland and Lithuania.

Key lessons

The opening of a Centre for Social Inclusion is only an example of the infrastructure needed to reduce the gap between rural and urban opportunities for young people. The creation of Rural Parliaments in collaboration with partners from other countries provides an example of how rural areas may empower young people, extending the model of intervention at European level. The problems faced by young people in rural areas may not be the same in every European country, but the example of some may be helpful to others.

Young people in rural areas are not included in programmes that empower them and give them a voice because efforts are often directed towards more stringent needs. Rural Youth Parliaments are an innovative tool and together with the LEADER method, they may solve many of the problems faced by rural areas, given young people are the best solution for building a future that belongs to them anyway.

Additional sources of information

[Facebook](#)

[Video 1 - Social Inclusion in LAG Napoca Porolissum Territory](#)

[Video 2 - Rural Youth Parliament @Kickoff Meeting Romania](#)

This project has been categorised under 'Socially inclusive & innovative futures' by the nominating National Rural Network