

Seminar Highlights

FARNET TRANSNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FLAGS
JŪRMALA, LATVIA, 21 – 23 MARCH 2017

Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities



Organisers: FARNET, at the initiative of the European Commission

Hosts: Latvian Ministry of Agriculture, with the help of the [Laukiem and Jūrai FLAG](#)

Participants: Almost 100 FLAG representatives from all 20 Member States implementing fisheries CLLD

Demographic changes, ageing workforce, lower education levels, weak labour markets, marginalisation of primary production sectors are some of the causes of poverty and social exclusion in fisheries and aquaculture areas. To this must be added the socio-economic consequences of the implementation of the CFP. The interaction of these determinants can produce a vicious cycle in which poverty and social exclusion become entrenched in fisheries communities.

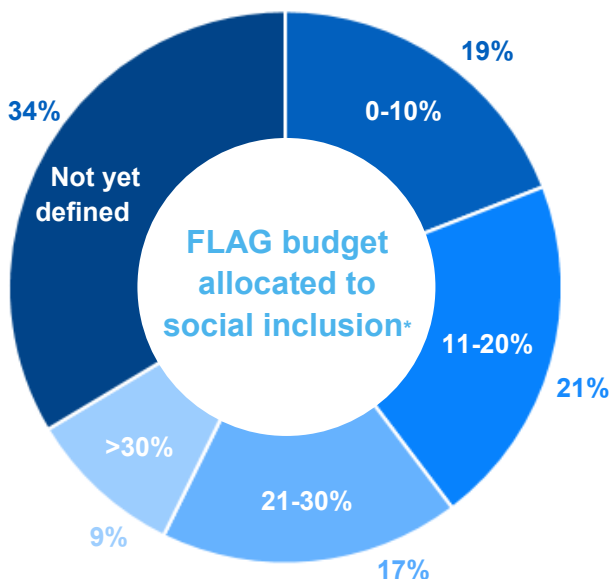
CLLD and other bottom-up territorial approaches can play an important role in tackling social inclusion issues by helping to identify specific problems at local level, address these through tailor-made measures, and link together the various actors required to provide the most effective solutions.

In order to achieve broad social inclusion, community members need to be part of a functioning society in which their cultural and economic activities flourish. Socially inclusive communities are more resilient and better able to respond to challenges.

FLAGS can be facilitators of change.

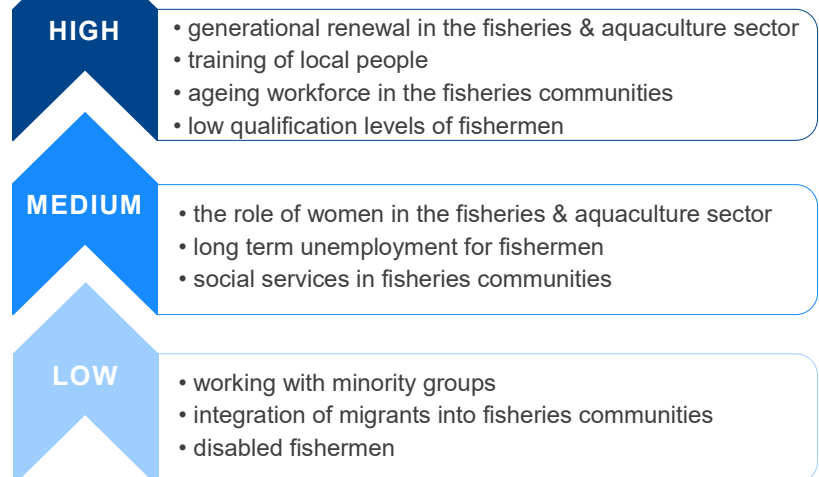
FLAGS have a responsibility to change mindsets.

OVERVIEW



*Based on registration data from 112 FLAGS

Aspects of social inclusion most important to FLAGS*



*Ranking given by applicants to the seminar on pre-defined topics

The importance of an inclusive society for fisheries communities – making the best use of the ESI Funds

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The [European Structural and Investment Funds](#) (ESIF), of which the EMFF is an integral part, offer various possibilities and ways to address social inclusion. FLAGs offer a platform for a broad range of actors to be heard and to be able to take part in defining the social priorities and actions to be taken within the FLAG's area. They can also play an important coordinating role between the different funds and organisations required for integration in fisheries and aquaculture areas.



Antoine Saint-Denis,
ESF Transnational Platform

"The European policy objectives have moved from tackling social exclusion to promoting social investment. Step by step we have come to 'social investment policies'. But it is about much more than income, it is about giving the people the right tools so that they can feel part of a society that benefits from everyone's contribution, where individual rights are respected."



Marie-Anne Paraskevas,
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

"CLLD is about social inclusion. One of the key elements is empowerment of the community to be able to take part in decisions on social inclusion. The ESF can support the employment and social inclusion elements of community-led development strategies."



Madara Ulande,
Latvian Social Entrepreneurship Association

"Adaption to change in a fast-changing society is really difficult. As communities, we tend to keep to the status quo – do we see change as opportunity or a threat? Social innovation can help to adapt. For this we need people who try to look for new and inclusive solutions to problems and challenges. People who can be Richard Branson and Mother Theresa at the same time."



Gwyn Evans
Cleddau to Coast FLAG, Wales/UK

"It's absolutely vital that the EMFF programme and our local development strategy include not just references to social inclusion, but we make that a centrepiece of what we try to do. We need to reference economic and environmental problems too, but the social inclusion side brings it all together."

Alternative livelihoods for fisheries communities

The implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) confronts many fisheries communities with new challenges that add unto the existing ones. For small-scale fisheries and the population of the fisheries areas, this means that they have to look for supporting alternative or complementary activities to fishing. FLAGs can be a crucial player in finding these solutions, linking the concerns of fisheries communities with the broader development needs of their territory. The participants of the working group analysed and developed useful mitigating inclusive approaches via the FLAGs' work. For example, the Blue Care project of the [Ostrobothnia FLAG](#) in Finland and a [vocational training scheme](#) for starting small touristic businesses and accommodations run by fishermen from the [Costa da Morte FLAG](#) in Galicia show ways of doing this. "You need to encourage alternative activities and diversification. They don't necessarily happen by themselves" (Guillermo Diez, Costa da Morte FLAG).

WORKING GROUP

Ageing workforce and the challenge of generational renewal

Different tools can give FLAGs the capacity to successfully boost generational renewal in a small-scale fisheries community and economy. The [ESKO FLAG](#) from Finland developed the [Master-Apprentice project](#), a combination of an apprenticeship project for young fishers and FLAG support to improve a local fishing business. The [Arcachon Bay - Val de l'Eyre FLAG](#) from France invested efforts in [promoting oyster farming as a career option for the local youth](#). "This kind of action is just a start. Of course it is not enough... You need to look at the interfaces between awareness raising, training and job entry – and you need a good transition from one to another. Those who want training should have appropriate options to acquire knowledge and certification, if needed. Those who are trained should have appropriate options to enter into business. The yearning-learning-earning trajectory should be complete!" (Robert Lukesch, Local Development Expert).

WORKING GROUP

The EMFF can support social integration in a multitude of ways. Indeed, Member States have planned to dedicate more than €65 million of EMFF resources under their EMFF Operational Programmes to support "social" projects (12% of the total number of projects planned for).

- Ilona Jepsena, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries



Inclusive fisheries communities

FLAGs can help marginalized groups of fisheries communities, such as women, whose role often goes unrecognized, and long-term unemployed or disabled fishermen, integrate the local economy. To empower groups with special needs, FLAGs should ensure their involvement from the initial stage of strategy development. Targeted help to members of these groups to develop projects for FLAG funding is crucial. Additionally, helping other organisations develop projects in support of these groups can make a difference, as a project of the Côte Basque FLAG from France showed, where a local NGO for handicapped persons is [creating jobs for the long-term unemployed in recycling fisheries material](#) with the support of the FLAG. The planned support of the Croatian “Plodovi mora” FLAG in [engaging women in economic development](#) by facilitating the networking & peer-to-peer support clearly showed that FLAGs should always work *with*, not *for*, those groups.

WORKING GROUP

Integration of migrants into fisheries communities

Migrants provide the opportunity for local development in a context of depopulation but their potential skills relevant for the fisheries industry are not yet well recognized. For those FLAGs affected by the refugee crisis or wishing to work on the integration of migrant communities, the [ENRD Contact Point](#) and the [Swedish Rural Network](#) show how LEADER areas are acting in this respect. FLAGs can engage with specialised NGOs, as is the case for the Ostrobothnia FLAG in Finland, which will support [a project to teach migrants about local fishing methods and regulations](#). The FLAG also acts on cultural integration by organising cooking classes and language courses. For fisheries communities, the challenge lies in assessing and incorporating the skills, knowledge and culture of migrant communities and how to best offer efficient and lasting integration and training activities. Though not many migrants are fishermen, many have experience in food production and processing, bringing new experiences and traditions, enriching the community culturally and contributing to its economic development.

WORKING GROUP

Successful social inclusion initiatives and activities carried out by FLAGs can range from providing fishermen and their families with health trainers and nutrition consultants, business training for women to trainings in rescue programmes, youth workshops and intergenerational transfers of skills to language cafés for migrants.



What does social inclusion mean to you?



Giving power to the people
Learning from one another, bringing in new ideas and people with different experiences



Equal rights, equal opportunities
Supporting solidarity, growth of social capital, equality among locals



People need to feel they are contributing to society
Looking beyond fisheries, new partnerships and opportunities



The role of the FLAGs in social inclusion is as diverse as the FLAGs themselves. FLAGs can help not only at local level but around their area of influence, through sharing good practices or involving other types of funding. FLAGs are not the sole actors, so they have to integrate & cooperate with the other actors active in social inclusion in their journey from FARNET to FAIR-NET!

- Dominique Leveil, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Linking social inclusion to enterprise (social enterprise)

FLAGs can ensure social inclusion projects help specific groups to become, and stay, economically active. This might involve supporting them to start their own businesses or find employment, including within social enterprises. This is the case for the [Marennes Oléron FLAG](#) in France, which supports [projects allowing injured or disabled fishermen to re-enter the labour market](#) while remaining in the fisheries sector.

Strategic partnerships for social inclusion in fisheries communities

FLAGs are not specialised in social inclusion and therefore need to collaborate with other organisations. FLAGs have however the ability to draw together fishermen associations, NGOs, women organisations, research centres, universities etc. which can pool their knowledge about the issue to find solutions. The project [Casting Nets for Social Inclusion](#), for example, drew together various parts of the Azorean fisheries communities to work on promoting the role of women in fisheries and to collaborate on youth engagement.

Fostering social inclusion in the work of the FLAG

In order to ensure it is a part of their community's development, FLAGs need to have a proactive attitude towards social inclusion. To achieve results and make a difference, social inclusion needs to be built into the FLAG's strategy so that it is integrated into its activities, including project selection procedures and animation activities – and not left as an afterthought. By way of example, the [Opole FLAG](#) supports activities for people with special needs and also involves women, young people and the elderly in its decision-making body.

MINI PLENARY

- ✓ Reach out for political support: it is key
- ✓ Social enterprise can be complex, identify those with knowledge and expertise in your community
- ✓ Encourage achievable goals with a realistic timeline so that progress is visible
- ✓ Be persistent, don't give up!

MINI PLENARY

- ✓ Promote the goals and activities set out in the strategy and be available for the community to discuss ideas and interests
- ✓ Pay specific attention to the “non” organised part of the community. Everyone is a resource
- ✓ Involve ‘outsiders’, using a bottom-up approach, to help the rural community reflect on its challenges
- ✓ Network with different organisations and interest groups
- ✓ Consider multi-funding to better address specific issues

MINI PLENARY

- ✓ Take advantage of the expertise, knowledge and resources of stakeholders within the FLAG partnership
- ✓ Prioritise social inclusion in project evaluation and selection
- ✓ Ensure partnerships and composition of decision-making bodies are balanced and include representatives of target groups
- ✓ Benefit from umbrella projects – small grants to beneficiaries can be significant for effective social inclusion practices in FLAGs



After receiving over 100 inspiring photo submissions, [eight finalists](#) were chosen for best illustrating social inclusion in fisheries communities. With more than 1000 votes casted, the winning photo was chosen, determining the photo that will be used as a focal point in the next FARNET Guide following the seminar on "Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities".

In first place is a photo of Maria, who, at age 93, has been sewing fishing nets with a needle and a thread for over 70 years. Though bent over the fishing nets, she doesn't need glasses. She lives and works with her family, children and grandchildren in the fisheries sector.



Photo by Cinzia Gozzo in honor of International Women's Day 2017



Photo by the Asturian Rural Development Network



Photo by Gedas Kukanauskas