



FARM' IN

INCLUSION THROUGH
SOCIAL FARMING



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3.8 Community and territorial engagement

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Presentation Overview

- Key elements for a sustainable communities
- SF community and territorial engagement
- Some examples

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations approved **Agenda 2030** for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), divided into 169 targets to be reached by 2030.

The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere

People are the fundamental keys to achieve the Planet's goals combating:

- **climate change**
- **reducing poverty or inequality**
- **long-term economic sustainability**



It is therefore necessary to initiate a real and deep transformation of **producing, consuming and living together.**

Mandala of sustainable local project

For achieve the SDGs is essential to build communities that are:

- **Inclusive:** they bring all dimensions of society and all groups of people—including the marginalized and vulnerable—into their markets, their services, and their development;
- **Resilient:** they are well prepared for natural disasters, which are increasing in intensity and frequency due to climate change;
- **Competitive:** can stay productive and generate jobs for members of the community;
- **Environmentally sustainable** in terms of cleanliness and efficiency



Key factors to create network in rural area



A

accessibility: Limit and reverse the process of abandoning the territory in favor of the accessibility of rural areas (local food economy)



integration: Integrate the different actors of the supply chain and the strategies of agricultural, tourist and rural development (filière)



cooperation: Supporting the area's supply chains of excellence through cooperation initiatives (Community Led Local Development)



fair growth: Build projects that promote growth characterized by social and environmental equity (social farming and smart village)



share capital: Strengthen networking relations between local actors through exchanges between different actors and through relations between private and public institutions(farmer networks)

Key factors to create network in rural area

...balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability

1 Increase productivity, employment and value addition in food systems



- **food** is safety, safe and available to everyone

2 Protect and enhance natural resources



- natural resources are managed in a way that maintains **ecosystem functions** to support current and future human needs

3 Improve livelihoods and foster inclusive economic growth



- **farmers** actively participate in, and benefit from:
 - economic development
 - have adequate employment conditions
 - work in a fair price environment

4 Enhance the resilience of people, communities and ecosystems



- Women, men and communities:
 - live in **food security**
 - have control over their **livelihoods**
 - get an **equitable access** to **resources**

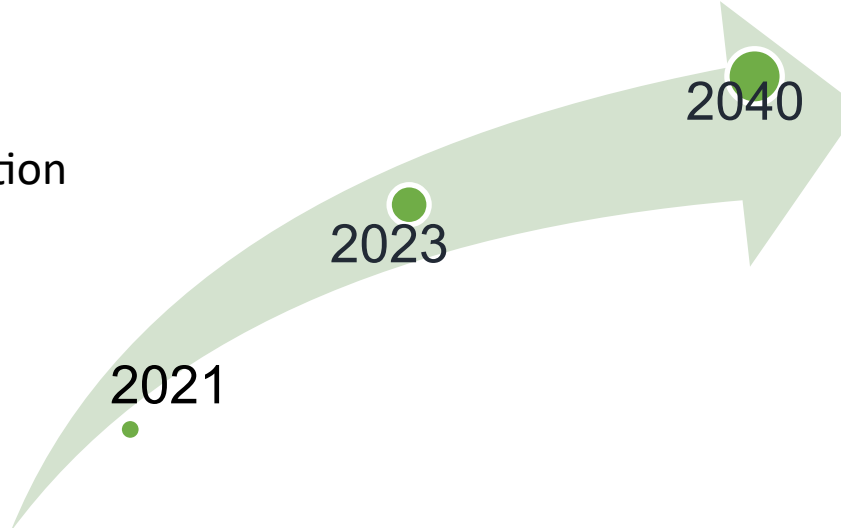
5 Adapt governance to new challenges



- **involve farmers and other food system** actors in agricultural policy framework

A vision for rural areas towards 2040

The Commission identifies four areas of intervention (FARO INITIATIVES) aimed at making rural areas



- **STRONGER:** by raising awareness among rural communities, improving access to services and facilitating social innovation;
- **CONNECTED:** by improving connectivity both in terms of transport and digital access;
- **RESILIENT:** by preserving natural resources and greening agricultural activities to combat climate change while ensuring social resilience through access to diversified training and employment opportunities;
- **PROSPEROUS:** by diversifying economic activities and improving the added value of agricultural and agri-food activities and agri-tourism.

A vision for rural areas towards 2040

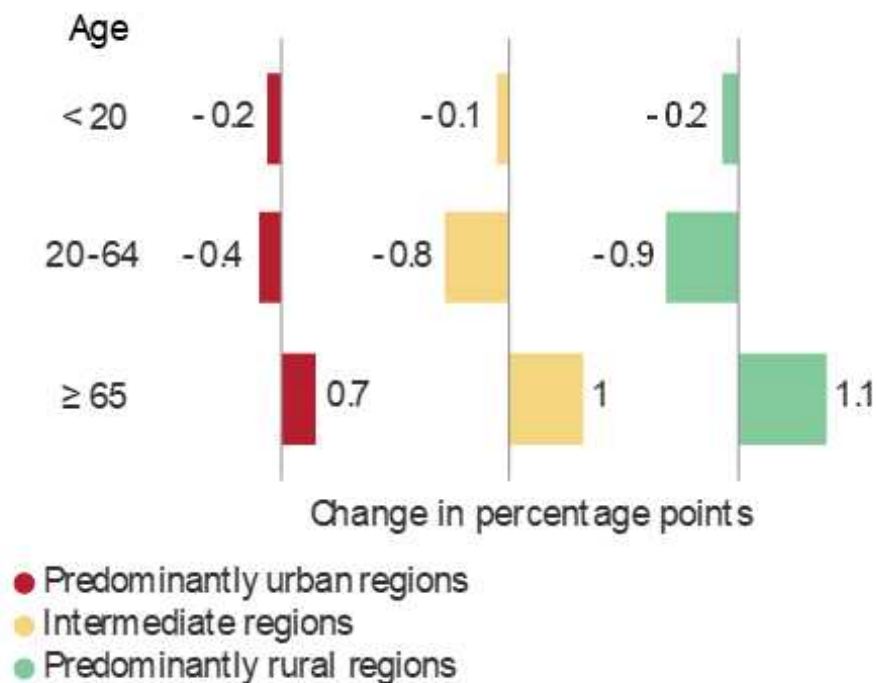
This vision recognizes the crucial role of rural areas in food production, resource management, and cultural heritage, while also acknowledging the challenges they face, such as population decline and aging. The vision is supported by a **Rural Pact** and an **EU Rural Action Plan**, which aim to translate the vision into tangible actions





Stronger rural areas

Change in population share in p.p. by age group 2019-2022 by urban-rural typology



Ageing rural regions

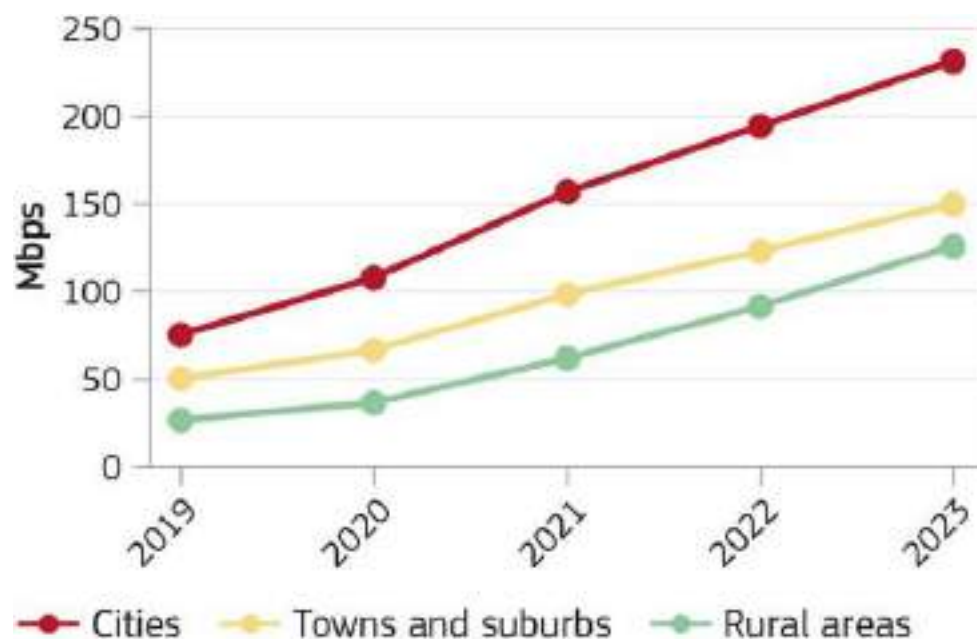
The population over 65 in rural regions has increased by 1.1 pp (0.84 million) while the younger and working age population cohorts decreased. The average EU population age is increasing, but **rural regions are ageing faster**, due to lower natural growth and net migration.

Source: Eurostat (online data table: urt_pjangrp3), JRC calculations based on the provisional population census grid 2021



Connected rural areas

Evolution of broadband download speed by degree of urbanisation



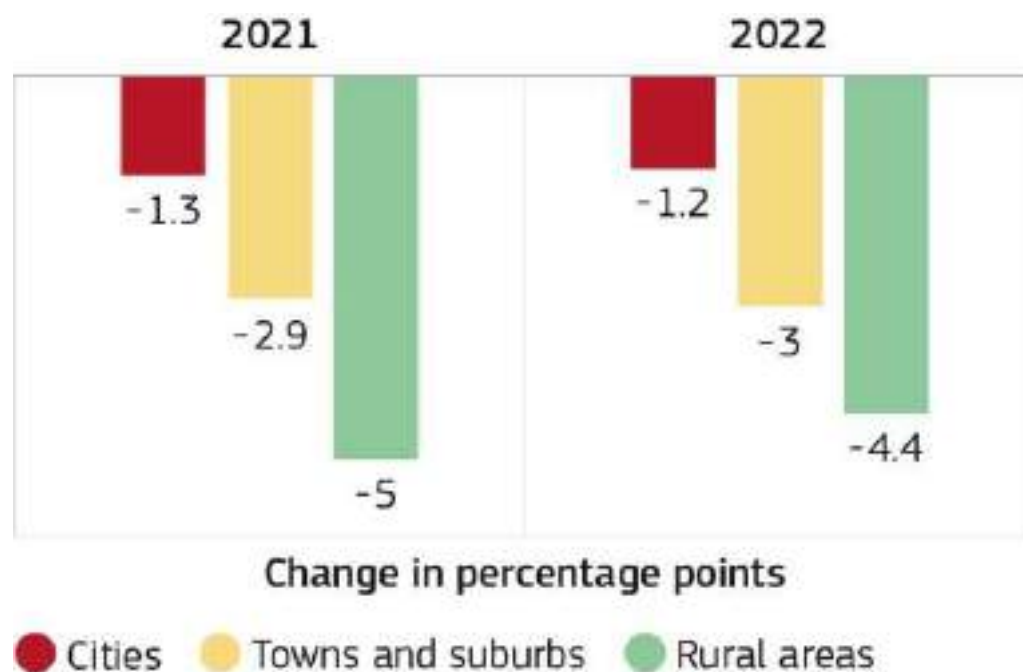
Improving digital connectivity

Broadband data shows that the **situation has substantially improved in rural areas**. However, the average downloading speed in rural areas is still far below urban areas.

Source: Rural observatory, broadband speed fixed networks

Resilient rural areas

NEET (15-29) gender gap analysis in pp. by degree of urbanisation



Closing the gender gap

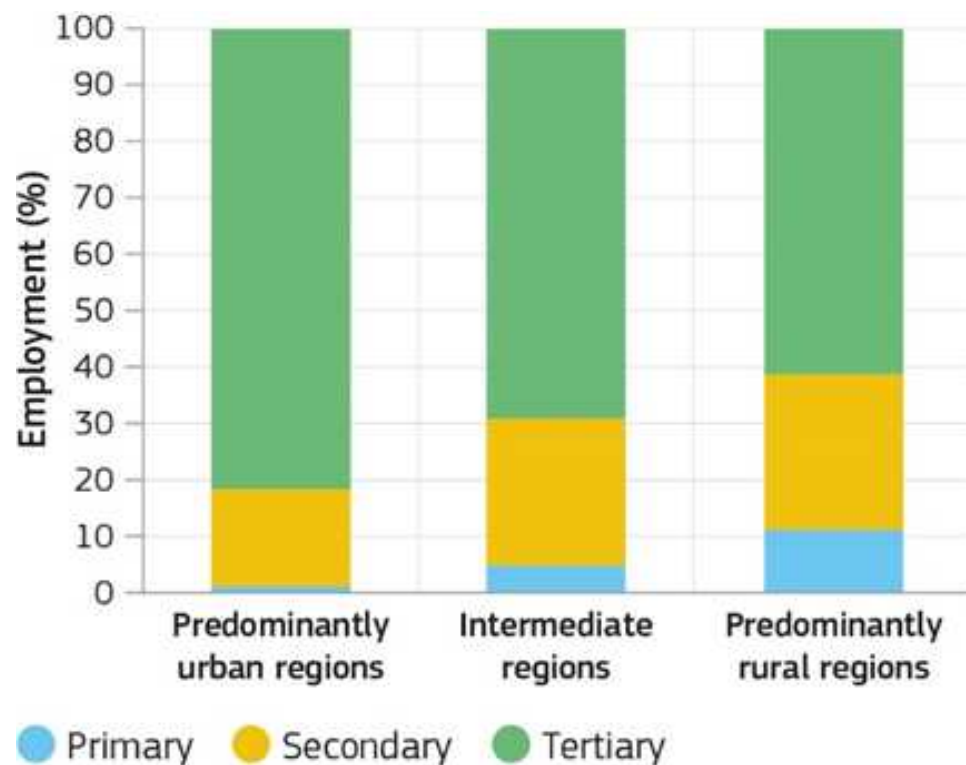
Rural areas have the highest share (12.6%) of young people aged 15–29 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET). Even if the situation has improved, the NEET rate for young women in rural areas in 2022 was 14.9% compared to 10.5% for males (4.4 pp. gender gap). The **NEET rate for young women in rural areas is the highest compared to the other territories (2022).**

Source: Eurostat (online data table: *edat_lfse_29*)



Prosperous rural areas

Employment by economic sector in 2021 by urban-rural typology



A diversified rural economy

The **primary sector in rural regions remains** important (11% of employment compared to 1% in urban and 5% in intermediate regions); however, the **secondary and tertiary sectors play a dominant role**, with a slight decrease of the primary sector (-1% between 2018 and 2021).

Source: Eurostat (online data table: nama_10r_3empers).

SF community and territorial engagement



Social Farming is based on

- involving people in farm's activity
- carrying out valuable and meaningful activities
- developing social connections and relationships, both of which combine to deepen its impact further

SF connect society with farming and farming with society.

Community engagement

This includes:

- **Local partnerships** with NGOs, schools, social cooperatives, and health services
- **Volunteer involvement** from the public
- **Awareness campaigns** to build support and reduce stigma
- **Shared decision-making** that includes farmers, participants, and stakeholders
- **Agriculture and the Health Sector:** in many countries (i.e Ireland) , agriculture is integrated with public health and social services.

Used in sheltered workshops, geriatric hospitals, and mental health facilities.
Acts as a tool for therapy, rehabilitation, and personal development.

Territorial engagement

This focuses on embedding social farming into regional strategies:

- **Policy support** at municipal, provincial, or national levels
- **Land use planning** that prioritizes inclusive and sustainable farming
- **Economic development** by promoting local food systems and agro-tourism
- **Networking** among farms and organizations in a specific region to share resources and best practices

Territorial engagement



The “**relational**” character constitutes a characteristic element of social agriculture: relationships with local actors, with social-health services in the area, with other AS realities for an exchange of practices, professionalism, experiences, ideas, services, etc



Networks are complex because of the type of agreements and especially because of the plurality of actors involved



AS realities enter into **agreements simultaneously** with different categories of actors (from 2 to 9 agreements)

Inclusion in the community

Inclusion of SF activities is explicit both within the experiences and in the context in which the reality is embedded.

In fact, inclusion is a goal that can only be achieved by involving the **different social and economic actors in the area**, who are called upon to include disadvantaged people.

Otherwise, once the process of capacitation (empowerment) is over, people would find themselves in a context that is in any case hardly willing to welcome them, because they are different, have problems, difficult, etc.

The goal of inclusive SF is not to create *happy islands* where disadvantaged people can find themselves, but to affect **communities as a whole** with the dual aim of

Improve the **quality of life** of individuals

Growing **cohesive and welcoming** communities



Educational facilities that integrate learning with direct on-farm experiences

How did they come into being?

In more rural settings to address the need of rural communities to obtain qualified essential services

In urban and peri-urban areas to address the need of families to propose an educational model that facilitates a closer relationship between the individual and natural settings



Respond to the **needs of the area**



Activities carried out for **social purposes** in the productive field



Aimed at a **specific population group** (children 3months - 6 years) for which there is a **shortage of services**



Collaboration between multiple institutional, associationism, entrepreneurship so different professionalism and roles



Uses **agricultural resources**: land and farm facilities



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Experience in Greece

The American Farm School (GREECE)

The educational program is primarily implemented at the School's educational farm, in the woodlands, the aromatic plant fields, and on the lush green paths. Within the unique natural environment of the School, students explore and discover gaining experiences that help them develop their personalities in a well-rounded and balanced manner.

Farm-Based Learning:

- The campus itself is a working farm where students get hands-on experience in agricultural practices such as crop cultivation, livestock management, and environmental sustainability.
- Students engage in practical activities such as caring for animals, managing the farm's organic gardens, and learning about sustainable farming techniques.



[Kindergarten - American Farm School](#)



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Experience in Slovenia

The Viljem Julijan private kindergarten

Located in Šentjur, this private kindergarten has developed **outdoor learning environments and experiential programs focusing on local food production and environmental sustainability**. Supported by the **LEADER program** aim to promote sustainable practices and community engagement among young children.

The activities were:

- 1 - expanding the Viljem Julijan private kindergarten and creating a **pilot training program** on locally produced food, incorporated into the regular curriculum.
- 2 -setting up an **outdoor learning environment** with raised garden beds, solar lights, and eight workshops on food production.
- 3 -establishing similar outdoor space in Dramlje, adding a **community compost bin** and workshops on local food processing and composting.
- 4- focusing on **environmental protection and biodiversity** in Proseniško, offering eight workshops for children



[Nova učna okolja v mestu in na podeželju | Vrtec Viljem Julijan](#)



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Experience in Italy

La Piemontesina

Established in 2006, Agriasilo is a private daycare center in its own right with very special and innovative educational paths focused on returning to nature to contact with the earth the trees the animals and the seasons.

In October 2012, the 3-6 year old section opens, which, in order to give continuity to the great work done previously, aims to be a space in which the child can grow in a natural context in contact with animals and with what the farm environment can offer by directly making experiences that support his curiosity and his desire to learn, according to the principles supported by the latest pedagogies.



[La Piemontesina](#)



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Hubbuffate - ITALY

The project aims to promote and enhance social agriculture and all businesses that practice job placement of disadvantaged people.

Through a circular economy they we create true sustainability, economic but also social, that can improve the quality of life of our communities and promote an idea of development that is as inclusive and sustainable as possible.

Hubbuffate is first and foremost a network project: it involves 23 local farms and social enterprises in the province of Turin, rooted in their respective communities but eager to make more and more people aware of the human capital they cultivate every day through caring for the land and its products.

e-commerce platform: <https://hubbuffate.com/prodotti/>



Conclusion

To achieve the goal of Community and territorial engagement, it is essential to implement not only **some social activities in an agricultural context**, but more importantly to **design a complex system of actions and relationships to connect the internal dimension of SF with the external dimension**.

These elements should be considered by both the people who design and implement SF activities and the policy makers who regulate policies and program support interventions.