



European
Commission



Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Diverse approaches to supporting Europe's most deprived

FEAD case studies

2017

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Foreword

I am very pleased to present the FEAD Network's 2017 case study catalogue with a selection of examples of how the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) is implemented across the European Union.

The crisis had a devastating impact on our society, throwing too many people into poverty. Between 2009 and 2012, nearly one quarter of the EU population were at risk of poverty and social exclusion and approximately 8.8% lived in conditions of severe material deprivation. Only this year the share of people suffering from poverty has returned to its 2008 level but it still remains too high with around 119 million people affected.

Our Europe 2020 target is to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty. To help achieve that goal, the European Union earmarked €3.8 billion for FEAD for the period 2014 - 2020. Moreover, EU Member States are contributing at least 15% in national co-financing to their respective national FEAD programmes. From the data currently available, we can see that the Fund is on the right track to alleviate the worst forms of poverty in the EU: over 15 million people are estimated to have benefitted from FEAD support in 2016 and over 900,000 tonnes of food co-financed by FEAD were distributed to those that are most in need during the first two years.

As this new Fund is gradually rolled out across Europe, it is important that all the actors involved – and even more importantly those hoping to become involved - in FEAD are able to learn from each other and exchange experiences. To facilitate this mutual learning process, the Commission supported the development of the "FEAD Network", a platform where stakeholders involved with FEAD are able to interact.



This community of practice brings together stakeholders such as Managing authorities (MAs), partner organisations, other local, regional and national actors, European Commission representatives, EU level partner organisations, the wider EU community, as well as academic and research organisations. They are encouraged to share tools, ideas and resources that can help with the delivery of FEAD-funded initiatives.

As Member States are free to determine how they deliver assistance, there is wide variety in the kinds of initiatives funded across the EU. This catalogue provides a snapshot of some of those. It builds on the exchanges in the FEAD Network and includes a number of FEAD case studies presented at the FEAD Network events throughout 2017. The case studies highlight the experiences of both Managing Authorities and partner organisations in working with FEAD, as well as ways in which FEAD can complement initiatives undertaken through the European Social Fund.

We are all working towards the same goal: helping Europe's most deprived in their transition out of poverty. I hope that you find these examples inspiring for your own work and I strongly encourage you to get in touch with the organisations featured in this catalogue if you see potential for collaboration or exchange of expertise and experience.

Marianne Thyssen

*European Commissioner for Employment,
social affairs, skills and labour mobility*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Thyssen', positioned over a background of faint, repeating words like 'POOR', 'DONATION', 'GIVING', and 'COMMUNITY'.



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Belgium - Mons Borinage Urban Relay with the City of Mons Food Bank

The SOREAL Platform (Solidarité Réseau Alimentaire - Solidarity Food Network)

WHY?

In Belgium, there is an increasing demand for food aid, as well as an increasing need to fight food waste. Despite this, local food aid organisations that mainly work with volunteers generally **don't have the capacity** to collect large quantities of unsold, yet still in-date food, for redistribution at designated points.

WHAT?

The SOREAL project aims to tackle this issue by acting as a **bridge between food suppliers and food aid organisations**. The project **collects unsold food products** and swiftly distributes them to 10 local food organisations that assist the most deprived people in the region. Redistributed food is subsequently used in the distributed food parcels, to prepare meals in reception centres, as well as in workshops or meals made by professional chefs.

The main objectives of the project are to fight food waste and enhance cooperation between food suppliers and food aid organisations at a local level. The company also seeks to raise public awareness of anti-waste policies and the importance of maintaining a healthy, balanced diet.

SOREAL promotes the idea that meals are a good time for socialising and sharing, through the organisation of activities like "solidarity meals" where food from food parcels is prepared and eaten in a group. In doing so, the project hopes to create an enjoyable experience for people who would not usually eat in a restaurant. The objective of these shared meals is to enhance the self-esteem of those taking part and make food culture accessible to all.

In carrying out this work, the SOREAL project also aims to act as a stepping stone for long-term unemployed people by providing them with the opportunity to gain work experience in fields related to logistics and handling.

Through this initiative, over 100 tonnes of food has been saved and redistributed to Belgium's most deprived areas, reaching more than 5,000 individuals.

WHO?

The project was initiated by the **Mons Borinage Urban Relay** in partnership with the **City of Mons Food Bank** (Hainut Occidental), as well as local public welfare centres and local food aid organisations. Over 15 commercial partners are now involved, alongside 10 local food aid organisations and multiple local public centres for social welfare and municipalities. The numerous project partners offer a number of skills and resources that the project can draw on, which reduces the need for additional investment.

The effective collaboration and communication between the different partners involved is one of the key strengths and successes of the project.

HOW?

In order to realise its objective, the SOREAL project first negotiates with local commercial partners and local food aid organisations regarding the food that will be collected and redistributed. Following this, **trained teams collect and distribute the food**, six days a week.

Once collected, the food is weighed, stored and labelled so it can be traced. Where possible, products are frozen to prolong their quality. The food is then distributed to local food aid organisations according to their needs and the number of people they support. The reasons for this is to ensure the food is distributed fairly and to minimise food waste at all stages of the chain.

The products are delivered every morning to the organisations who have a food package distribution or meal preparation scheduled for that day.

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Images © Nele Bossuyt & Barbara Cerrato, 2017

Belgium - Federal Public Service for Social Integration, Anti-Poverty and Social Economy

Taste tests to improve the public procurement of pre-prepared food

WHY?

By organising taste tests, the Belgian Managing Authority aimed to include more **flavoursome and appealing pre-prepared meals** in the FEAD food parcels. This initiative was a response to three particular challenges encountered in FEAD's food distribution in previous years:

- Firstly, food parcels were packaged in a manner that was not attractive to end recipients, who felt that this exposed them to **stigmatisation**.
- Secondly, multiple partner organisations reported complaints from end recipients about the taste of the food, particularly when it contained meat. Sourcing long-lasting pre-prepared food products that were also palatable to end recipients was a challenge.
- Thirdly, in efforts to improve the quality of food offerings in the FEAD food parcels, the Managing Authority actively sought to link FEAD funding with Belgian sustainable development policies. However, this led to another notable challenge, because organic food is considerably more expensive than non-organic alternatives. Moreover, end recipients thought the healthy food options were not particularly tasty or visually appealing.

WHAT?

Following a consultation with the stakeholders, **taste and laboratory tests** were added to the procurement procedures to ensure the quality of the proposed food products. In previous procurement rounds, price was the only selection criterion and tenderers could be less motivated to invest in the taste, quality or appearance of the product.

Procurement selection now includes a point-based system with two selection criteria: 60% of the total score is based on price, while the other 40% is based on taste tests and visual presentation of the proposed products. For the taste tests, tenderers are asked to submit at least 10 samples of their proposed product along with their offer.

WHO?

The purchase of food is managed by the Managing Authority - the Belgian Federal Public Service (FPS) for Social Integration, anti-Poverty and Social Economy. FEAD partner organisations are represented in the taste panel.

HOW?

The Managing Authority organised taste tests with an independent taste panel composed of representatives from partner organisations, experts in healthy and sustainable food, and experienced experts in poverty and social exclusion who themselves had often benefited from food aid in the past. During the tests **the independent panel** was asked to evaluate each sample on the following criteria: taste, smell and visual appeal. The testers were asked to rate each of these categories on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being very bad and 5 being very good). The sample that received the highest score got the most points at the taste test.

Beyond scoring based on price and taste tests, the samples submitted by tenderers were also sent to a laboratory to verify compliance with the technical specifications asked in the tender documents. The laboratory tests included percentage of meat, type of meat, and fat content. Samples that did not comply with the specifications were excluded.

The taste tests were first held in September 2017. Products selected following these tests will be distributed in 2018. Based on positive responses from the independent panel during the tests, the Managing Authority is confident that the prepared food to be distributed in 2018 will be received well by the end recipients.

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Bulgaria - Agency for Social Assistance

Combining food distribution with counselling and information distribution

WHY?

Alongside the distribution of food parcels, Bulgaria's FEAD programme offers a variety of **accompanying measures** to support end recipients in their transition out of poverty and social exclusion. Recognising that while helping fulfil end recipients' basic needs is important, it is equally important that end recipients are encouraged to actively take steps towards re-entry into social life. As a result, partner organisations see the provision of food as an entry point to offering further support services to vulnerable individuals in need.

WHAT?

FEAD funding is used to provide food and information to recipients through a holistic 'whole person' approach. The Agency for Social Assistance purchased food products and the Bulgarian Red Cross distributed individual food parcels to eligible end recipients (approximately 300,000 parcels in total). FEAD funding is also used to provide warm meals to approximately 8,300 end recipients in 2015, 34,000 end recipients in 2016-2017, and it is expected to provide food to 39,000 more end recipients between 2018 and 2019.

Food parcels are distributed at designated distribution centres where end recipients can also **receive information and tailored counselling and support** from representatives of local partner organisations. Information on relevant social services is shared on posters and signs across the centre as well as on distributed leaflets and brochures.

When distributing food parcels, partner organisations provide guidance on welfare provision to end recipients and when particular problems or urgent needs are identified they can be guided to Social Assistance Directorates. Notably, the majority of individuals were **referred to social services financed by the European Social Fund (ESF)** (e.g. personal assistants, day care centres), while others were provided with other social services in the community.

Social services can include guidance on education services as well as health-related issues such as access to healthcare and rehabilitation, psychological support or information on health insurance rights. End recipients can also be guided to programmes in which they are supported in finding employment, or can receive help in navigating the national social security system.

WHO?

End recipients who are entitled to receive FEAD support are determined by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy following an analysis of individuals and their families. Eligible recipients include individuals or families with low income, the elderly, isolated and lonely residents, the homeless, and people affected by natural disasters and accidents. While the **Bulgarian Red Cross** oversees the distribution of food packages, warm meals are provided by local municipalities who guide the end recipients to local organisations for individualised (often ESF-funded) advice and support.

HOW?

Partner organisations are responsible for the distribution of the FEAD-funded food parcels to end recipients. While doing so, volunteers and social workers engage with end recipients in an informal manner and gauge if they have any particular needs or require additional support. They can provide guidance and advice verbally, either through **group meetings or individual counselling sessions** as well as disseminating information through leaflets, brochures and posters. Written documents can include information on opportunities and services available from the ESF, nutrition, healthcare issues such as diabetes and heart disease management, budget management and safety. There is additionally a sign at each distribution centre directing end recipients to the Social Assistance Directorates for further social assistance, consultations or services.

The project is monitored through end recipient feedback forms, including on the complementary measures implemented by partner organisations.

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Croatia – City of Virovitica, Virovitica-Podravina County

Grow Up Equally (Odrastimo jednako)

WHY?

In 2014, the Croatian Bureau of Statistics estimated that approximately 21.1% of children and minors were living in poverty. In 2016, the Ministry for Social Policy and Youth reported that there were 30,941 children in Croatia living in households dependent on income from a government subsidy (called a 'minimal fee') provided by the state through the Centre for Social Care. FEAD funding is used through the Grow Up Equally project to target schools in Virovitica-Podravina County. This project aims to address child poverty – specifically inequality in childhood nutrition.

WHAT?

FEAD funding is used to distribute food to children who are in, or at risk of, poverty in primary schools. The project provides a daily meal for 195 children in primary schools in the county of Virovitica-Podravina. Ultimately, it seeks to **prevent the social exclusion** of vulnerable groups and reduce the risk of poverty among children by 1% in 2017. It also actively strives to **raise public awareness** within the local community about childhood nutrition and the basic, essential needs in order for children to lead healthy lives.

To date, the project has resulted in a 10% increase in the number of children participating in school nutrition programmes and a 5% decrease in the number of undernourished children compared to the previous school year, and has raised awareness about nutritional standards and dietary health among schoolchildren.



Reducing inequality has always been a focal point of my administration. With this project we aim to secure healthy meals to schoolchildren in need and reduce the risk of poverty.”

Ivica Kirin, Mayor of Virovitica

WHO?

This project is carried out by two primary schools in the City of Virovitica, namely the Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Primary School and Vladimir Nazor Primary School. Both of these primary schools have several district schools under their authority, therefore the project ultimately supports children across eight district level schools.

HOW?

Primary schools are able to provide a daily meal to recipient children every day throughout the school year. The project is run by the **City of Virovitica** in close partnership with primary schools across the county. Public procurement is organised through the city administration, while school staff are responsible for the preparation of the food and ensuring that the meals are of high nutritional value.

Recipients of support through this initiative are determined through a set of criteria. These criteria include falling under one of the following categories:

- children of single parents whose parent is unemployed or has minimum statutory benefits,
- a family of three or more dependants with children in education (i.e. children in primary school, high school, college and/or university),
- children from families receiving social assistance,
- children of unemployed parents,
- children with developmental difficulties,
- children without parental care (i.e. children who live in foster families),
- children of the Roma minority.

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Croatia – Osijek branch of the Croatian Red Cross

Humanitarian Package for Slavonia 1 (Humanitarni paket za Slavoniju 1)

WHY?

Slavonia and Baranja are two counties located in the region of Slavonia in Eastern Croatia. Slavonia is one of the **poorest regions in the European Union**. It has the lowest GDP, highest unemployment rate, and the lowest average salaries in Croatia; as a result, the region has one of the highest poverty levels. The region has a development index below 75% of the country's average, with a large share of displaced and Roma populations, groups that are largely living in precarious and disadvantaged circumstances. The region is predominantly rural, isolated and poorly connected with the urban centres due to poor infrastructure and irregular and costly public transport. As a result, the Croatian Red Cross in Osijek, the main city in the region of Slavonia, actively seeks to provide support to the city's most deprived and vulnerable citizens.

WHAT?

The aim of this project is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to **alleviate material deprivation** through the distribution of food parcels and basic material assistance, and secondly, it aims to contribute to the **social inclusion** of individuals, giving them a feeling of security and dignity, and in general, to improve their quality of life. The target population of this support are disadvantaged and vulnerable people, including:

- social assistance recipients;
- elderly individuals (over the age of 65) with an average monthly means-tested income;
- single parents with a total household income lower than the minimum wage in Croatia;
- families with three or more children with a total household income lower than the average wage in Croatia; and, especially
- single people or families in which one or more are employed but have not received a salary for over 4 months.

The project **distributes food parcels** on a quarterly basis and has delivered basic material goods twice during its duration. Both packages contain carefully selected items and are either handed out at distribution points or delivered to homes, depending on the area of intended coverage.



Taking action starts with satisfaction of basic needs.”

WHO?

The project is led by the Croatian Red Cross city branch organisation of **the Red Cross of Osijek** with 17 partners and associates from other Red Cross branches across Croatia, 4 full-time project employees, 80 regular employees that participate in different activities on an as-needed basis, and 250 volunteers. Additionally, partners work in cooperation and maintain regular contact with self-government units, social welfare centres, the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, and other organisations implementing FEAD projects within the project area.

The project also actively **campaigns within the community for food and material donations to complement the support from FEAD**. Campaigns are specifically targeted at schools and major shopping centres, where food donations are collected. To date, eleven partner organisations have participated in the campaigns.

In terms of accompanying measures, the project partakes **in basic hygiene promotion** in which posters have been designed, printed and displayed at the distribution points. Family cookbooks have also been created, designed, printed and distributed, which contained 30 easy-to-make and well-balanced recipes adapted to different age groups. Partners have also been **trained to teach household budget management** to end recipients. As of now, 14 lessons for over 350 end recipients have been conducted. As an informal project activity, the project advises end recipients on how to gain access to the welfare system.

HOW?

The project reaches the most marginalised end recipients by **using the pre-existing networks of its many partners and associates** (for example the wide network of the Red Cross branches) that have already been providing assistance and aid to the most deprived and isolated groups in society.

The project also provides numerous activities which aim to fulfil people's basic needs holistically through the provision of food and material goods, education and support. By addressing end users holistically, the project has positioned itself as a key actor in the region to which people in need can turn for help. It is estimated that project activities have reached some 22,000 people.

Among other successes, the project has enhanced the **networking activity of relevant government institutions, local institutions and other organisations and Red Cross branches** operating in the project area. By doing so, the project helps to establish long-term relationships that are crucial to ensuring all the end recipients' needs are met: from identifying the needs of disadvantaged populations to ensuring these needs are met in a coordinated fashion, and making necessary policies that allow for long-term improvements in addressing people's basic needs.

For more information regarding the project, contact **Ana Mutnjaković, Project Manager** via:
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Czech Republic - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

School lunches for disadvantaged children

WHY?

In the Czech Republic, the cost, composition and nutritional value of school meals are regulated by law. School meals are offered to all children between the ages of 3 and 15, and are provided in schools and kindergartens through canteens around midday. The cost of school meals is broken up into three parts: one part is paid by the State, the other by the municipalities or regional authorities and the third part by parents. Some children, however, are unable to benefit from these meals as their parents **can't afford their contribution**. This is particularly true for larger families, who often struggle to cover the costs of several children simultaneously.

The Czech FEAD Managing Authority decided to support these children, believing them to be one of the most vulnerable groups within the Czech population. Moreover, childhood experiences have an **impact on future development** and habits that children adopt at a young age – and the problems they encounter – can shape their futures.

WHAT?

The 'School lunches for disadvantaged children' programme **covers the cost of school lunches** for children whose parents can't cover the costs of their portion for school meals. It seeks to provide food at schools and nurseries not just to ensure children receive sufficient levels of nutrition, but also to contribute to their social development – all based on the ethos that investing in children now means preventing problems in the future.

Teachers and school staff working with children who are benefiting from the programme have confirmed its positive impact. The supported children are showing **better physical and mental health**, and their subsequent school attendance levels are improving. Children are also learning new **social habits** associated with sharing a meal with others, becoming part of a group of classmates, making new friends and are more likely to stay at school for afternoon extracurricular activities.

WHO?

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, also the Czech FEAD Managing Authority, is responsible for the scheme, while regional authorities are responsible for its execution.

Another key positive outcome has been that some schools have been able to **open up channels of communication with parents** who hadn't been involved with the school before.

The 2016-2017 academic year is the second year of the programme's implementation and school lunches are being provided to more than 3,000 children across 4 regions in the Czech Republic. In 2017-2018, the project is expected to be able to provide school meals to nearly 10,000 children and it's anticipated that this number will continue to grow with each future school year. The Managing Authority hopes that the project will eventually become a state-funded scheme.

HOW?

Children in need of assistance are identified anonymously through labour offices that are responsible for the administration of welfare benefits such as food assistance. Parents who already receive these benefits are subsequently given the option to take part in the programme. If they decide to do so, the regional authority provides the funding for their child's school lunches directly to the child's school.

A key success of the project has been its ability to **avoid stigmatising the children and families receiving support** by providing funds through regional authorities and channelling them directly to the schools.

For more information on this programme, contact **Robert Jan Hřebíček**
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Finland – Konginkangas Church Congregation

Connecting people by providing porridge for breakfast (Seuris Porridge)

WHY?

Konginkangas is a sparsely populated village in central Finland, with approximately 1,200 inhabitants. Situated over 10 kilometres from the main road, residents live far apart from one another and not all residents have cars. Konginkangas only has one shop, one petrol station, and there are no communal places to meet. As a result, **loneliness and isolation** are considered a significant issue in the area, especially in the cold winter months when snow and ice restrict the movement of residents.

The village population is ageing and many people either are unemployed or have a low income. The village has no organisations, charities or social services specialised in supporting local people with economic difficulties, mental health issues and other health-related issues such as substance abuse.

WHAT?

To tackle the issue of social isolation and loneliness, in 2010, the congregation of Konginkangas Church introduced the concept of a **communal morning table**. They developed a programme called Seuris Porridge. Seuris is a shortened form of the word Seurakunta, which means “congregation” in Finnish. Seuris Porridge is a weekly meeting place where people from the community are invited to share a breakfast of porridge and discuss any issues that they are facing.

Despite the **lack of communal facilities** in the area, there is a parish house in the middle of the village which serves as a venue for the project and provides end recipients with an opportunity to meet, discuss their issues and access resources to help deal with everyday challenges. Notably, the venue is accessible for people with restricted mobility (e.g. wheelchair users).

COMMUNITY
 VOLUNTEER
 SUPPORT
 MONEY
 ASSISTANCE
 RESOU
 SUP
 RELIE
 LOVE LIFE FRIE

WHO?

The Seuris Porridge programme is a non-discriminatory opportunity for anybody in Konginkangas to ask for advice and anyone is welcome to attend. Attendees range from young children to elderly people approaching 100 years of age. Seuris Porridge is run by volunteers from the **Konginkangas Church Congregation**, which is part of the larger Äänekoski church.

Initially, the porridge breakfast was announced in the church magazine, but the initiative is now well established and the community is aware of its existence. Over the course of 2016, the initiative provided over 3,000 meals to end recipients.

HOW?

Since 2015, FEAD funding has been used to purchase the porridge that is served once a week on Monday mornings at the parish house. The house is centrally located and accessible for many Konginkangas residents. Porridge is distributed and eaten at a communal table in order to encourage people to eat, drink, spend time together and share stories. The communal format of the meal is designed to **promote equality** and **challenge prejudices**. Alongside the distribution of porridge, the project also provides food parcels for end recipients to take home which are also funded by FEAD.

The preparation and distribution of the porridge is done by volunteers, who also engage with the end recipients and discuss any particular issues that they are facing and may potentially need support with. A deacon of the parish attends each breakfast session **to provide additional advice** on referrals to healthcare providers, rehabilitation services or other social services.

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France - Secours Populaire Français

“Solidarity Reception Centres” (PASS) and “Solidarity Self-Service” (LSS)

WHY?

Secours Populaire Français (SPF) aims to tackle different forms of social exclusion in a **holistic way**, taking into account the economic, social and family circumstances of their end recipients. The work of the organisation focuses on helping people who are experiencing poverty to become actively involved in addressing their situation.

WHAT?

Food assistance is a gateway through which other issues can also be identified and addressed. Two particular services – the “Solidarity Reception Centres” (PASS) and “Solidarity Self-Service” (LSS) – are at the heart of this approach. The PASS are places where people (families as well as individuals) can receive help and enjoy an atmosphere where they are welcomed and respected. Alongside these permanent reception centres, SPF has also established a mobile outreach service in order to respond to the specific needs of homeless people and those living in rural areas. The LSS provides food support, as well as clothes, cleaning products, cultural items (e.g. books and CDs) and home equipment.

SPF aims to work in true partnership with end recipients, with whom volunteers aim to develop **mutually trusting relationships** based on equality. This approach enables volunteers to work closely with end recipients, develop a better understanding of the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives, and jointly find the best ways to address them.

WHO?

The Solidarity Reception Centres (PASS) and Solidarity Self-Service (LSS) are run and managed by staff and volunteers from Secours Populaire Français.

HOW?

At the PASS, end recipients take part in a confidential interview in which they discuss their personal and household circumstances. Following the interview, they have the opportunity to access assistance offered by the LSS where they can also discuss their particular needs with volunteers. Time is specifically set aside to welcome and listen to end recipients, and to create a **welcoming environment**.

As opposed to a traditional system based on the distribution of food parcels, the LSS gives end recipients the opportunity to actively choose products they need and the food they prefer. This is considered a critical way to respect and preserve their dignity.

End recipients can also attend workshops to learn how to become volunteers; of 80,000 volunteers currently working with SPF, between 15-20% were initially end recipients themselves. As volunteers, former end recipients can demonstrate their initiative, take responsibility and strengthen their network of contacts, all of which are key components for successful social integration. Becoming volunteers also helps them to develop their professional skills and to regain their sense of self-confidence and self-esteem.

For more information on this initiative, contact Sébastien Thollott, Supervisor of the Departmental Committee of SPF in Lyon via:

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Germany - Diakonisches Werk an der Saar and the Arbeiterwohlfahrt Landesverband Saarland

Mobile counselling service – EULE.mobil

WHY?

In Germany, people in poverty are defined as those who receive welfare benefits. As a result, mobile EU citizens who are living in poverty and deprivation tend to fall through the cracks, as they do not receive welfare benefits. The mobile EU citizens supported through this project generally do not have the necessary documentation or knowledge of the system to sufficiently navigate their way through it. They are also hindered by a lack of German language skills, and are therefore not able to adequately communicate with civil servants at the respective public administration offices or with counsellors of the regular assistance system. Consequently, they have been identified as the most deprived persons, targeted by the FEAD in Germany. EULE.mobil seeks to support this particular vulnerable group and guide them in accessing the counselling and support services in the regular assistance system.

WHAT?

EULE.Mobil is a **mobile counselling service**, operational in Saarbrücken, whereby multilingual social counsellors act as a bridge between support services and the most deprived EU mobile citizens, including homeless people. Social workers employ two methods for identifying and reaching out to end recipients. Firstly, they run two offices in particularly deprived areas in the city. These centres have **regular consultation hours** in accessible areas, which helps to ensure that potential end recipients are aware of where they can receive support. Word-of-mouth referrals are one of the key ways that end recipients find out about the project. Secondly, **social workers also take to the streets** to known dwellings of homeless people across the city, in order to speak with potential aid recipients directly.

WHO?

The project is delivered jointly by two organisations: the **Diakonisches Werk an der Saar** and the **Arbeiterwohlfahrt Landesverband Saarland**.

HOW?

The EULE.Mobil social workers liaise directly with end recipients and support them by referring them to other service providers. The social workers accompany end recipients throughout the support process. This allows them to **develop a relationship based on trust** with end recipients, leading to more sustainable integration into the German social security system.

The project has been successful due to its **language coverage** and the fact that it is easily accessible (both in terms of location and consultation hours). The fact that the project team covers a broad range of languages (e.g. Bulgarian, Croatian, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Romany and Spanish) allows project workers to reach out to a higher number of end recipients within these communities.

In addition, having a **strong network of actors** around the organisation has been key for providing participants with integrated support to help them enter the existing range of support and counselling services in the regular assistance system, for example language courses or medical counselling. Children of EU immigrants will be brought into early education and social care services such as child day-care facilities or other pre-school or leisure-time offers. In addition, the network of actors provides links to other service providers that address a range of related needs, including psychological help, free medical assistance, and entrance into homeless shelters and temporary housing.

For further information on this initiative, please contact Jochen Schmidt (Diakonisches Werk an der Saar) or Markus Elser (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Landesverband Saarland) via:

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Germany - Youth Office Berlin Neukölln, AspE e.V., Kleiner Fratz GmbH and Nachbarschaftsheim Neukölln e.V

“EU FIT IN” - European Family Integration in Neukölln

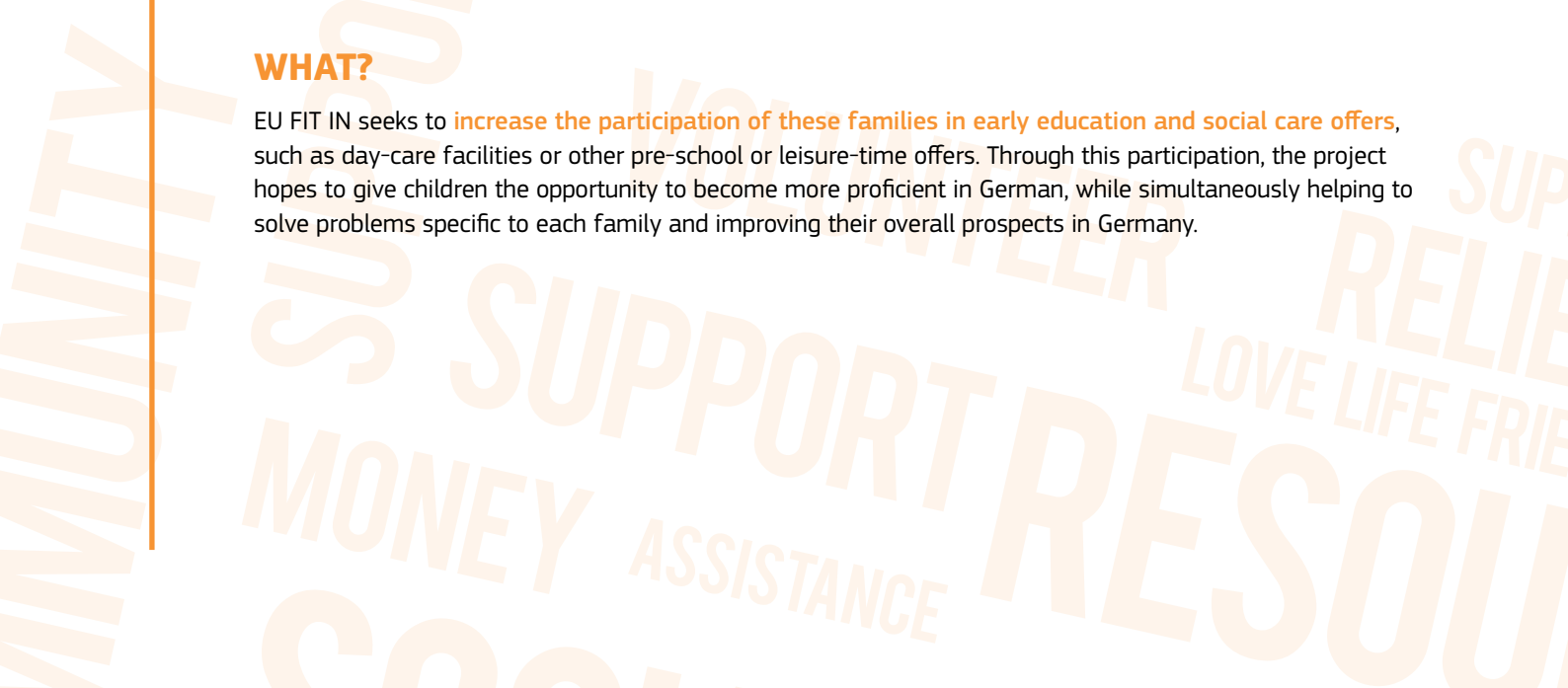
WHY?

The District office of Neukölln in Berlin has been focusing on the social inclusion of newly arrived EU citizens from south-east Europe since 2011. Building on this experience, the District Office decided to launch a project in 2016 that focused on supporting newly arrived families from south-east Europe with children of kindergarten age. The project was based on the belief that a **long-term integration strategy** starts from childhood and that early support to families that are new to the country generates better results.

The “EU FIT IN” project specifically aims to **help families who settle in the Neukölln area of Berlin and are experiencing deprivation and social exclusion**. These families are mainly from Romania and Bulgaria, are often large and tend to live in precarious housing conditions. They experience high levels of stress, have low-income jobs, low levels of education, and limited awareness about how to raise their children in German society. They can also lack German language skills and find it difficult to access – or have a low knowledge of – educational and care-related programmes and offers.

WHAT?

EU FIT IN seeks to **increase the participation of these families in early education and social care offers**, such as day-care facilities or other pre-school or leisure-time offers. Through this participation, the project hopes to give children the opportunity to become more proficient in German, while simultaneously helping to solve problems specific to each family and improving their overall prospects in Germany.



WHO?

The project is an initiative of the District Office of Berlin Neukölln and it is implemented by the Youth Department through a collaboration with three partner organisations active at local level: AspE e.V., Kleiner Fratz GmbH and Nachbarschaftsheim Neukölln e.V.

HOW?

In order to achieve its objectives, the project works with several local organisations that have extensive expertise in the field of social care. Social workers and volunteers in these organisations have sufficient linguistic proficiency, as well as access to and experience with the target group, and are therefore well-placed to **bridge the gap between families and social service providers**.

Each partner organisation covers a particular area of Neukölln and provides a range of services. Activities implemented include:

- providing **advice and assistance** to help identify the right services;
- supporting families with any **administrative obligations** (e.g. medical examinations prior to access to day care);
- providing support during the **acclimatisation period**;
- **mediating** between parents and carers;
- **counselling**.

Specific events are also organised for parents to encourage families to come together and socialise, create a network, and discuss topics and difficulties.

For more information on this initiative, contact Project Manager Anne Eilers-Hellmich via:

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Greece - National Institute of Labour and Human Resources

The distribution of fresh foods to end recipients

WHY?

The Greek FEAD operational programme allocates a significant share of available funding to the provision of food assistance. While dry foods and canned goods are generally easier to distribute, as they are easier to store, transport and distribute, the Greek Managing Authority has opted to distribute fresh foods as well. These are included in the FEAD-funded food parcels for a number of reasons. Firstly, fresh produce has a **high nutritional value**. It subsequently also stimulates the development of healthy nutritional habits among beneficiaries ensuring that they lead **healthier, balanced lifestyles**. Thirdly, it promotes the fact that the EU cares about people in extreme poverty, as well as promoting awareness of poverty within local communities and lastly it sensitises and promote awareness of poverty among food suppliers.

WHAT?

The food distribution includes fresh produce that is common to Greek cuisine and food culture. This includes poultry, beef, pork, lamb, turkey in slices, fresh vegetables and fruit, (e.g. apples, oranges, cabbage, grapes, tangerines, aubergines, potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, onions, and cucumbers), cheese (feta cheese and yellow cheese), eggs, etc. All the products are packed in specific quantities by the suppliers, in line with **hygiene and food safety requirements**, and distributed according to the rules set down by the contracting authorities, which can be national or local.

HOW?

Products are distributed either as centralised or decentralised supplies. For centralised supplies, the public procurement procedure is carried out nationally by the FEAD Managing Authority, which also organises the distribution by the supplier to responsible municipalities and regions (then distributing to local partner organisations). In the case of decentralised supplies, municipalities and/or regional authorities are directly responsible for the procurement of the products and their distribution to the local organisations that are in direct contact with those in need.

WHO?

For centralised supplies, public procurement is conducted by the General Secretariat of Commerce and Consumer's Protection and the execution of the contracts by the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources, which is the Managing Authority of FEAD. For decentralised supplies, both the procurement and the implementation of the contracts are conducted by the 57 partner organisations FEAD in Greece. The head of each partner organisation is always a municipality or a region, which works in collaboration with NGOs and other organisations.

In both cases, for each product, technical specifications are annexed to the text of the public procurement call, defining the rules for the distribution of food and for the completion of the necessary quality controls. These are implemented both:

- Before the delivery from the suppliers by the Hellenic food Authority or by private laboratories on products' samples. Checks are also carried out by the Department of Health;
- During the delivery to the partner organisations, by an Acceptance Committee (these are macroscopic checks on aspects such as colour, smell etc.).

Given the nature of the products, specific rules need to be followed throughout the process of distribution. **Refrigeration is necessary both during transportation and storage**, distribution to end recipients needs to be timely.

Distribution normally starts the same day as the delivery from the supplier, or at most the day after. End recipients are informed in advance by the local authority by text message, phone call, letters or public announcements, and normally have a three-day period in which to collect their food. After this time, undistributed products are delivered to soup kitchens or other structures that prepare meals for homeless people or for people in extreme poverty, who are part of the FEAD target group in Greece.

For further information on this project, please contact Eleni Lambritzki of the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources via:

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Greece - National Institute of Labour and Human Resources

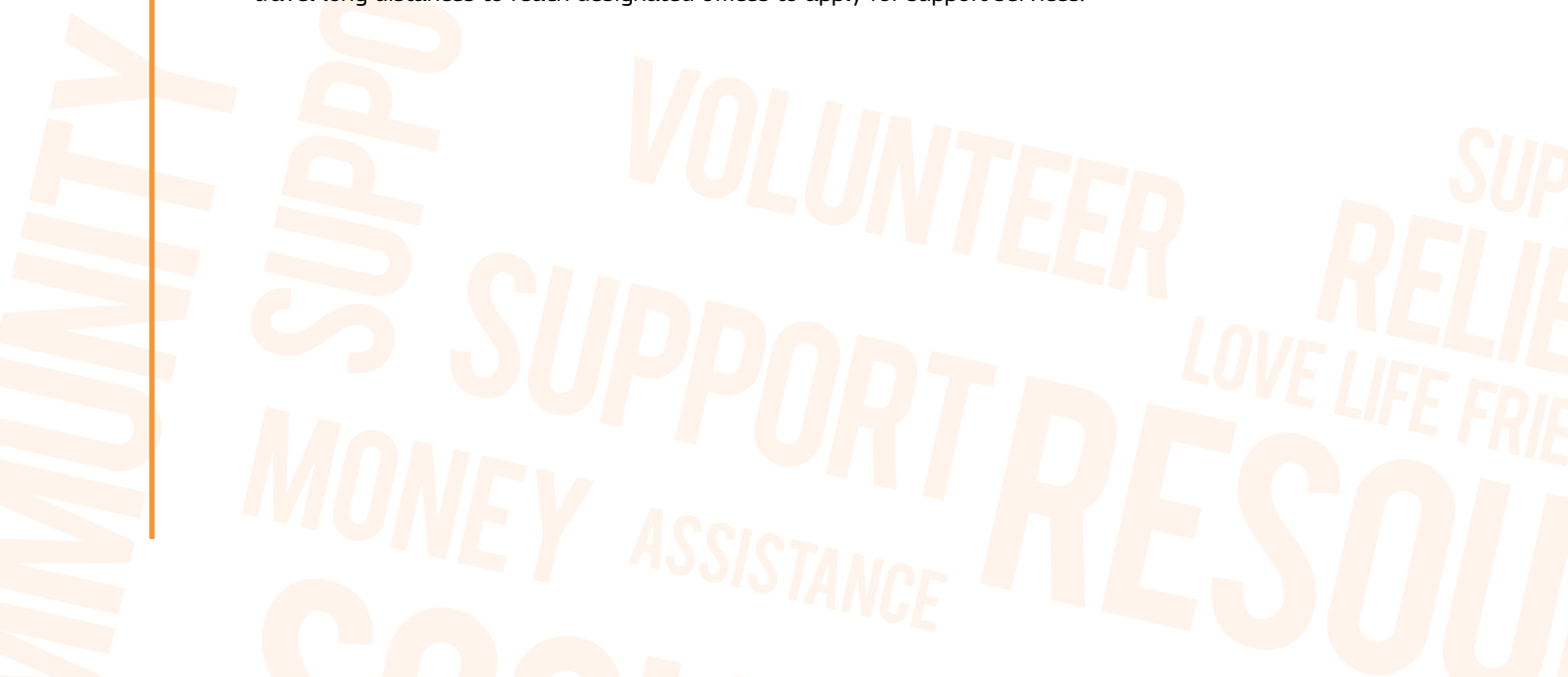
Reaching out to a range of beneficiaries in a geographically challenging environment

WHY?

When the system for distributing food and identifying FEAD end recipients in Greece was developed, the geography of the country was taken into account – particularly the large number of remote, mountainous areas and islands, which are difficult to reach. The system was therefore designed to reach these regions and the people living there effectively, while avoiding any discrimination.

WHAT?

A ministerial decision from the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity established that FEAD end recipients would be selected on the basis of economic criteria, combining income and assets. In order to help identify and reach end recipients living in remote areas, it was furthermore decided that access to FEAD assistance would be handled through an **online application** in order to ensure that individuals did not need to travel long distances to reach designated offices to apply for support services.



WHO?

The identification of the end recipients was carried out by the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (which is the FEAD Managing Authority in Greece) in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. Moreover, there are 57 FEAD partner organisations active in the country that are distributing food as well as offering accompanying measures. The food distribution scheme reaches about 400,000 people in Greece.

HOW?

A major information campaign was run by the FEAD Managing Authority, together with municipalities and regional authorities, which are partner organisations of FEAD in Greece. This campaign was designed to inform the public about how to participate in FEAD food assistance and when the application period would be launched.

In order to support potential end recipients who didn't have access to the internet, local hotspots were created in each municipality for about one month, with **trained personnel** available to support applicants throughout the application period.

At the end of this period, all submitted applications were crosschecked by the Ministry of Finance against fiscal data to identify the eligible applicants. A list of end recipients was produced including detailed data on age, sex, origin and the composition of the applicant's household, which was transmitted to partner organisations.

A notable success of this system lay in the fact that the availability of such detailed information upon application allowed each partner organisation to **tailor accompanying measures** and to organise food distribution to address the needs of the end recipients and their household. To support individuals in remote areas or elderly people who could not travel to distribution points, for instance, national services such as "Home Assistance" were available to distribute food directly to end recipients. During the distribution period of, it was reported that approximately 15% of end recipients received their food through other means than collection at the designated distribution points.

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Ireland – Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection and FoodCloud Hubs

National Food Distribution

WHY?

In Ireland, as in other EU Member States, there is an increasing amount of food being wasted and ending up in landfills, while at the same time a significant proportion of the population struggles to put food on the table every day. As a result, the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, the Irish Managing Authority, sought to tailor their FEAD services to support vulnerable families through the provision of food assistance, while simultaneously addressing the issue of food waste.

WHAT?

FoodCloud Hubs has developed a unique solution to tackling food waste, by **connecting businesses with large volumes of surplus food to charities** that distribute food aid in communities across Ireland. FoodCloud Hubs is the main partner organisation that provides food assistance under the FEAD programme in Ireland, particularly because it has a physical presence across different parts of Ireland. It is responsible for the procurement and storage of FEAD food products, and also for coordinating the collection of products from other local partner organisations (community-based charities) from the hubs in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

130 charities across Ireland distribute FEAD-funded food to their end recipients. These charities operate in a range of areas, including homeless services, family resource centres, food banks, youth programmes and senior citizens' associations. Distribution commenced in July 2016 and in 2016, approximately 112,000 food parcels and 266,000 meals were distributed, reaching around 55,000 individuals.

“

The chef calls it 'happy food' because the kitchen not only provides a place for people to eat a good meal, it also provides a place where people can interact and make new friends. It is good for their confidence, self-esteem and mental health, especially for single men.”

Michelle, St Clare's Hospitality Kitchen

WHO?

The Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection manage FEAD in Ireland and are always looking to approve new local partner organisations to distribute food to those in need in their communities.

FoodCloud Hubs has a team of 14 full-time staff (partially funded through a Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection programme to reach out to specific disadvantaged groups or individuals particularly removed from the labour market). The team also includes 7 part-time staff that were sourced through a community work placement scheme for the long-term unemployed, and 10 volunteers.

HOW?

Following consultation with a range of charities in Ireland, the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection selected 23 food products for distribution. These foods are non-perishable, and easy to transport and store. Notably, the products selected allow recipients to prepare a **complete meal for one person** or family and/or to prepare food despite only having basic cooking utensils.

The food products are procured directly by FoodCloud Hubs following a tender process structured to maximise value for money for the programme. The contracts with suppliers allow flexibility in ordering so that FoodCloud Hubs can adapt to charities' needs as they change over the course of the year. Food is redistributed to charities throughout Ireland, while also providing access to a variety of quality surplus products, resulting in considerable savings on food costs for the charities involved. Donating businesses benefit through **reduced waste disposal costs** and by making a meaningful and practical contribution to society.

The charities select products that they require from the product list and confirm how often they want to collect the food. They can tailor their collections on a monthly or quarterly basis and take advantage of food that has been gathered as part of FoodCloud Hub's food surplus intervention.

The charities either include the products within food parcels or use them in meals prepared as part of their service. The content and frequency of the food parcels and meals are tailored to the needs of the end recipient by each individual charity. The overall reduction in partner organisations' food bills have enabled them to redirect their funding into other support areas.

New products are due to be introduced from 2018 following a consultation process with the project's charity partners.

For further information about the project or to apply to become a local partner organisation, please contact **Ronan Harney** of the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection via:

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Italy – Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Working together to improve FEAD implementation

WHY?

The Italian Managing Authority actively seeks to preserve and build upon previous experiences with the distribution of food aid resulting from work under the EU's previous Food Distribution programme for the Most Deprived Persons (MDP). In order to do this, they invite key partners to come together in **consultative meetings** to make future plans for programme implementation and exchange best practice. In addition to these meetings, the Italian MA hosts a **National Working Group for Operational Coordination** which is a separate opportunity for partner organisations to come together. Whilst the consultative meeting is an opportunity to hear and express different points of view, the National Working Group focus on a series to more concrete objectives for the implementation and improvement of the programme.

WHAT?

A consultative meeting is held annually (usually in December) and involves the partner organisations and all the stakeholders who are both directly and indirectly involved with FEAD. They can exchange ideas and experiences in relation to the programme in the form of a round table style discussion. Meetings are an opportunity to **exchange information** related to the FEAD programme in Italy as well as a time to evaluate the implementation of the programme and monitor related activities, such as food distribution and accompanying measures.

The partner organisations are the key actors that determine the success of the programme, particularly in light of the new social task related to the development of the accompanying measures, so it is vital that they play a significant role in these discussions.

WHO?

The annual consultative meetings include the partner organisations as well as NGOs working in the field of poverty and deprivation such as Fio.PSD and Cilap. Local authorities, social partners, Ministries of Agriculture and Education also attend, with AGEA (Agricultural Agency) acting as an intermediate body.

The national Working Group for Operational Coordination, involves the Managing Authority, AGEA, representatives from the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, the national partner organisations (including Associazione Banco Alimentare, Associazione Sempre insieme per la Pace, Banco delle Opere di Carità, Caritas, Comunità di S. Egidio, Croce Rossa, Fondazione Banco Alimentare).

In addition, several meetings are held for a National Working Group for Operational Coordination. In contrast to the more loosely structured nature of the consultation meetings with partner organisations, National Working Group meetings have more **concrete objectives**, including for example defining the food product basket, improving the quality of FEAD funded products, as well as improving distribution arrangements, food packages, modes of communication and/or accompanying measures. The meeting is designed to foster a sense of “shared management” system between the Italian Managing Authority and partner organisations who are directly involved with FEAD.

HOW?

Both meetings are opportunities for the Italian Managing Authority and key stakeholders (i.e. partner organisations, ministry representatives etc.) to meet and exchange views on the programme overall and how to improve its implementation in Italy.

In 2016 the National Working Group for Operational Coordination held 3 meetings and a further 4 meetings in 2017. Through the meetings held in 2017, the Italian Managing Authority has defined a new set of criteria for selecting partner organisations involved in FEAD and for identifying end recipients. These criteria were developed over the course of several National Working Group meetings, which were an important way to gauge the views of a number of different actors.

For more information on the project, contact Ms. Cristina Berliri or Ms. Patrizia De Felici via:

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Italy – The Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People (Fio.PSD)

Housing First Network Italy (NHFI)

WHY?

The number of homeless people and those living in poor housing conditions has increased dramatically over the last several years in Italy. According to a survey carried out by the Italian Institute for Statistics (Istat) in 158 municipalities¹ in November–December 2014, around 50 724 people were homeless. This represented an increase of 3,071 compared with an initial survey of 158 Italian municipalities carried out in 2011. The length of time that people were homeless also increased compared to 2011, with the proportion of those who had been homeless for more than four years rising from 16% in 2011 to 21.4% in 2014².

WHAT?

To tackle this issue, the Housing First Network Italy (NHFI) was established in March 2014 with support from the Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People (*Federazione Italiana degli Organismi per le Persone Senza Dimora - Fio.PsD*). The Fio PSD helped the NHFI to successfully apply for funding from various different sources, including FEAD and the ESF, and the project has also received donations from other sources such as the Catholic Church.

The NHFI complements the government's larger **#HomelessZero** campaign, which aims to influence public opinion about homelessness and promote the development of projects aimed at reducing the number of homeless people across the country. Fio.PSD has developed communication materials for this campaign to promote the work of NHFI (e.g. promotional videos including national and international stars, such as Richard Gere).

¹ The census of services was conducted for 158 Italian municipalities that were selected for the study based on their representative demographic sizes. The selection included all municipalities with more than 70,000 inhabitants – 81 municipalities, including 12 metropolitan municipalities – provincial capitals with more than 30,000 inhabitants – 37 municipalities – and all municipalities, again with at least 30,000 inhabitants, in the first tier of municipalities with more than 250,000 inhabitants – 40 municipalities.

² ISTAT (2015). The Homeless. Istat. Available via: http://www.istat.it/en/files/2016/06/EN_The-Homeless.pdf?title=The+homeless+++3+Jun+2016+++EN_The+Homeless.pdf

WHO?

The overall coordination of the NHFI is led by Fio.PSD, a not-for-profit organisation promoting advocacy actions and research activities in the homelessness sector. The organisation has offices located in 10 regions across Italy, and consists of around 40 volunteers working alongside around 110 social workers that represent over 51 public and private organisations (NGOs, regional authorities, etc.).

HOW?

Under the coordination of the Fio.PSD, the NHFI currently operates in 20 cities across the country. The network supports regional governments and municipalities with progressively **reintegrating marginalised and vulnerable groups** of people into society, which is achieved by helping them to find a home and, ultimately to regain full financial autonomy.

From 2014–2016, 90 houses were made available and 187 people provided with homes. In addition, 35 rehabilitation projects were set up through which 556 homeless individuals received support with finding a home. Many of these projects also offer assistance to individuals and families in the form of group training or counselling sessions to help them deal with personal problems such as financial, health or family issues, and drugs or alcohol addiction.

The ESF and FEAD both help to fund Housing First in Italy; 20% of the ESF is reserved for fighting poverty and social inclusion³ and in Italy goes towards assisting homelessness services, training for social workers and training and employment support for people who are homeless⁴. FEAD complements this assistance by funding material support, including clothes and starter kits for housing including for example cooking utensils⁵.

³ Busch-Geertsema, Volker (2016) Housing First: Synthesis Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁴ Avonto, Cristina (2017) EU Funds. Case Study: Italy [Powerpoint Slides]. Available via: http://www.feantsa.org/download/feantsa-policy-conference-2017_cristina3204849372380334736.pdf

⁵ Feantsa (2016) Homelessness in Italy. Available via: http://www.feantsa.org/download/italy-cfsh-oct-2016-fi_nal2191711820796232205.pdf

For further information, please contact
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Lithuania – Maistobankas

Volunteer recruitment, engagement and training

WHY?

Maistobankas is a Lithuanian charity and support fund that is committed to supporting vulnerable people. A large part of its work consists of distributing 60-70,000 FEAD food parcels across 20 municipalities. Given the scale of these activities and limited financial resources, the organisation relies on its **strong volunteer presence** at every stage of the supply chain to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

Volunteer support is required across different areas, from unloading food in warehouses to sending food supplies to hundreds of distribution points across the country, and finally distributing the parcels to end recipients and providing them with accompanying measures. While employed staff oversee the operations in the supply chain, volunteers are responsible for loading and distributing food in some of the biggest cities in which Maistobankas operates. In smaller towns, local social workers also support with distribution activities. As volunteers play such a crucial role in the work of Maistobankas, it is imperative that the organisation manages its volunteer network effectively through active recruitment and engagement.

WHAT?

To ensure that Maistobankas has sufficient support in its daily activities, it undertakes a range of regular recruitment tasks to expand its network of volunteers. Specific activities to recruit volunteers include advertising via social media and other communication channels, including outdoor advertisements (e.g. in bus stops). In addition, Maistobankas staff reach out to teachers and other educators to let them know about volunteer opportunities, encouraging them to spread the message within schools and universities. Maistobankas also publicises opportunities to volunteer in social care institutions and other socially oriented organisations.

Aside from volunteer induction and training, financial resources are reserved for activities to motivate and help engage and retain volunteers. These include, for example, **volunteer gatherings and occasional gifts**. A further incentive is that the **cost of transportation** to food distribution points is covered for some volunteers.

WHO?

Paid staff are employed to oversee volunteer management (i.e. engagement, recruitment, induction, motivation activities). Experienced volunteers are also critical in offering on-the-job training to newer recruits.

HOW?

Recruiting and training new volunteers is time consuming, as is the engagement of existing volunteers, so dedicated staff are employed in the bigger distribution branches who spend most of their time managing volunteers.

Once people register to volunteer, Maistobankas offers them training to ensure that they are readily able to provide the support services to end recipients. Their training comprises three main steps:

1. All volunteers are invited to a **new volunteers meeting** where they are given an introductory presentation. In the presentation, they are introduced to the activities and all the ways they can get involved in Maistobankas, which includes partaking in various stages in the distribution of FEAD-funded food.
2. **Written material** outlining the overall supply chain is shared before each distribution to help give volunteers an overview of the activities in which they are involved.
3. **On-the-job training** by experienced volunteers is provided throughout the volunteering process.

The food distribution team always consists of approximately 2-4 volunteers (the size of the team depends on the number of recipients at each distribution point), one of whom will be an experienced volunteer. This volunteer is responsible for assigning roles to the other volunteers, as well as training new volunteers as they work. Volunteers are required to meet half an hour before the distribution takes place so that this process of delegation and initial training can happen.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Dovilė Kovalskytė from Maistobankas via:

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Website: <https://www.maistobankas.lt/>



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Lithuania – Samaritan Community of Marijampolė Region

Food Support IV (Parama maisto produktais IV)

WHY?

Long-term unemployment can trigger **demotivation and loss in self-confidence** as individuals struggle to re-enter the labour market. In some cases individuals lose the habit of working on a schedule and being responsible for specific duties, which subsequently leads to a vicious cycle into poverty and social exclusion. The Lithuanian Samaritan Community of the Marijampolė Region (SCMR) actively seeks to support people that have been unable to secure employment by leading them out of **social isolation**. The food support IV project supports individuals who live in economically precarious situations, and receive monthly incomes below 153 euros, or in exceptional cases whose income is below 204 euros (e.g. disability, serious illness, accident, etc.). Generally these individuals are those who for many reasons struggle to find employment.

WHAT?

The main objective of Food Support IV is to support individuals in need by providing food products and help them to exit social isolation by increasing their confidence and helping them gain a relevant skill-set that can ultimately support their **reintegration into working life**. The SCMR seeks to achieve this by **involving end recipients in the various aspects of FEAD support services through volunteering**. This includes contributing to the organisation of FEAD food and material storage, distribution and delivery. By involving them in this process, the SCMR hopes to help end recipients regain confidence, social links and relevant work experience. The SCMR additionally offers complementary accompanying measures including hygiene and healthy lifestyle lessons and a space for children to complete homework, draw, or simply relax.

WHO?

There are 63 partner organisations in Lithuania, of which 60 are municipalities. Notably the three non-municipal partners are the Lithuanian Red Cross, the Lithuanian Foodbank Federation and lastly, the **Samaritan Community of the Marijampolė Region**. All these organisations distribute FEAD-funded food parcels and offer accompanying measures.

HOW?

A canteen is run by the SCMR where end recipients are invited to receive a daily warm meal. This **canteen serves as the main point of contact** for the target groups and allows SCMR staff to approach end recipients and potentially discuss ways in which they could be supported to overcome the challenges that are keeping them in a situation of poverty and social exclusion. At this stage, staff encourages end recipients to participate in the FEAD distribution process as volunteers. One of the key challenges for staff is the initial engagement with end recipients as most of them express initial hesitancy to become involved in a volunteer capacity. SCMR staff explains to potentially interested end recipients that there are **childcare facilities** on the premises, as well as that volunteers will be able to participate in a range of lessons and activities.

To date, over 50 end recipients have been engaged in volunteer activities, with ten of these end recipients volunteering on a longer-term basis as part of the SCMR team.

Each team member is allocated specific tasks and duties. Feedback from end recipients shows that they appreciate the importance of the work that they deliver which has provided them with renewed self-confidence, motivation and willingness to socialise and get back into the workforce.

For more information, please contact
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Malta – Foundation for Social Welfare Services

Collaboration between stakeholders to effectively offer accompanying measures

WHY?

In Malta, there is the strong belief that providing food and material assistance is a good entry point into other forms of social support. It is consequently considered a key success of FEAD that it does not solely focus on the delivery of food packages, but also offers an individualised approach to identifying the particular needs of each household through an elaborate profiling process. Through this process, the Partner Organisation (PO) actively seeks to identify the needs of the FEAD end recipients and subsequently contacts other national stakeholders and national authorities to ensure that tailored support can be offered.

As many FEAD end recipients are **families with young children**, support is targeted to three specific categories, including:

1. Households in receipt of non-contributory means tested benefits with two or more children below the age of 16;
2. Households with two or more children below the age of 16 with an income not exceeding 80% of the National Minimum Wage;
3. Households with two or more children below the age of 16 with an income under the National Minimum Wage.

These target groups are considered to include those most at risk of social exclusion, therefore the FEAD PO actively seeks to offer support services tailored and dedicated to their specific needs by building partnerships with relevant support services.

Recognising that **education is key to tackling social exclusion**, as well as offering young people an opportunity-filled future, the PO actively sought to build partnerships with relevant stakeholders to offer educational support to children living in families with low level of education. They strengthened their partnership with the National Literacy agency and the Ministry for Education and Employment in order to design and implement tailored initiatives.

WHAT?

Families receiving FEAD food assistance at distribution centres are asked if they would be interested in taking part in a **survey** to build a profile of all members of their household. Details are collected during home visits by consenting families. Survey questions relate to individuals' levels of education, their interest in continuing education, their main sources and level of income, the household status and whether psychosocial support is needed.



When we collaborate we manage to reach further and be more effective.”

PO, Foundation for Social Welfare Services

WHO?

Activities are carried out with close collaboration between the FSWS and the NLA. Over 50 personnel, both volunteers and employees, contribute towards the project.

Following the assessments, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), which acts as the project's partner organisation, contacts other national stakeholders, such as the National Literacy Agency (NLA), to **mobilise their services** and address the needs identified during profiling by linking the participants to potential initiatives.

During the profiling process, the FSWS assesses whether assistance with literacy would be helpful for families. In such cases, the families are referred to appropriate service providers (including the NLA) who provide books for home use and offer advice to parents about how to read with their children accordingly. Parents are also provided with information about national-level support that they might not have previously been aware of, including financial assistance to buy school uniforms. In addition, donated books are distributed to families to encourage them to begin building up a library at home.

FEAD food distribution is seen as a gateway to addressing the additional needs of some families, successfully linking up targeted services with people who may not have accessed them otherwise. The FSWS has referred over 200 families to the NLA so far and more families are expected to follow suit in the future.

Furthermore, a list of 2,000 families with older children between the ages of 4-16 years old has been compiled thanks to collaborative work between the FEAD programme and the NLA. Aside from providing more direct educational support to advance social inclusion, this initiative also creates opportunities for parents and carers to spend more quality time with their children, through reading and playing educational games with them.

HOW?

The FSWS is a public entity within the Ministry for Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity. Effective collaboration between the FSWS and the NLA has been crucial for the provision of suitably tailored support. **Collaboration** between key services and stakeholders has allowed them to combine different instruments to better reach out to low income families with children that are in need of more targeted educational support. The NLA, for instance, has provided books for the initiative, while the Ministry for Education has provided free uniforms and lunches.

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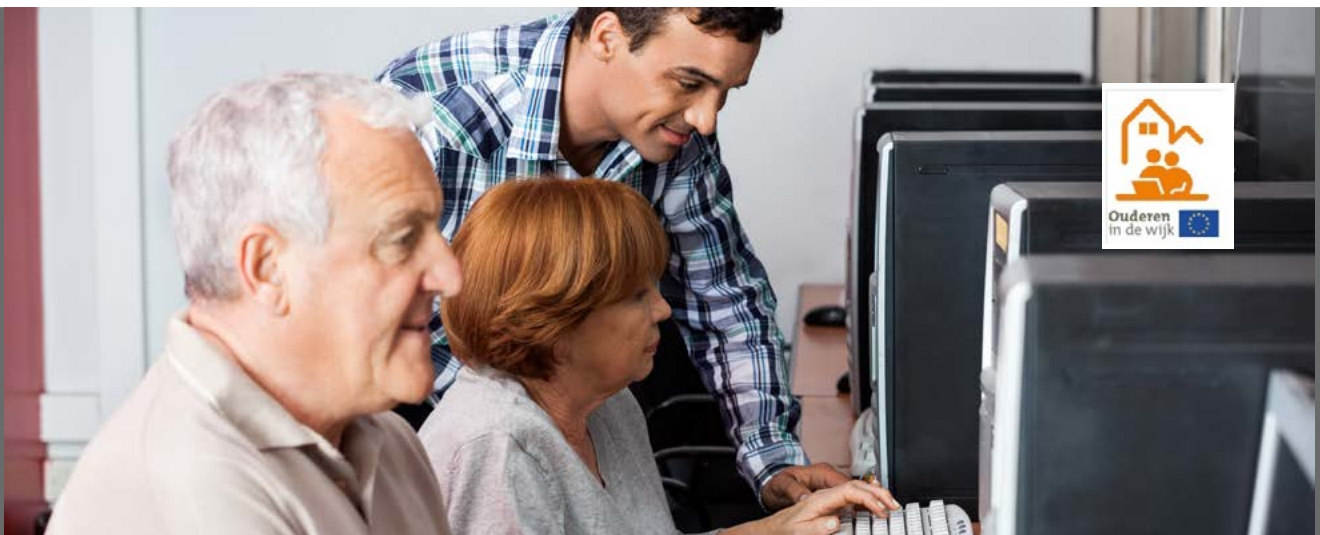
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Netherlands – Libraries in Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam in cooperation with the Mira Media foundation

Living & Learning - Elderly in the Neighbourhood

WHY?

In 2010, it was estimated that almost 700 000 elderly people in the Netherlands were considered vulnerable (this constitutes over a quarter of the total elderly population). These people have low incomes, poor health conditions, and are socially excluded or at risk of becoming so.

Elderly people with a migrant background are particularly **at risk of poverty and social exclusion** as they are often poorly educated, do not speak Dutch proficiently and entitled to little pension money. These elderly individuals generally also have insufficient (digital) skills in order to improve their situations on their own. Moreover, as they are no longer part of the workforce they fall outside any employment-oriented policies.

The gradual **ageing of the population** is expected to continue over the coming years and the Dutch FEAD Managing Authority is seeking to tackle the consequences through the Living & Learning – Elderly in the Neighbourhood (L&L) programme. As the proportion of vulnerable elderly people is highest in the four largest municipalities in the Netherlands (Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam), the Managing Authority decided to focus the project in these areas.

WHAT?

Through the L&L programme, libraries in the four target areas seek to support vulnerable elderly people by encouraging them to **become more socially active** and **take part in activities**. There are currently already a range of projects and initiatives offered by NGOs and social services, such as computer courses and coffee mornings, and the L&L programme therefore seeks to connect elderly people to these ongoing projects. As a result, the programme acts as a **bridge between isolated elderly people and the projects and initiatives on offer**.

While the core elements of the L&L programme are the same in every neighbourhood, the way it's executed can differ depending on the character and composition of the city or area. The aim is to help 5,000 vulnerable elderly people to strengthen their social networks and improve their social interaction between 2016 and 2020. As of 2016, 281 elderly people had participated in the various activities organised.



I'm retired after having worked for 42 years... I came here via a friend of Hassan, in order to meet other people and learn new things. If I didn't come here, I'd just stay inside and I wouldn't hear anything about the world outside."

Visitor to one of the coffee mornings at 'Coffee with Hassan'

WHO?

The project is an initiative of **Mira Media**, a foundation that focuses on intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Mira Media helps to encourage citizens to take more of an active role, together with libraries in the four main Dutch municipalities.

HOW?

The programme started officially in April 2016 and will run until 2023. It includes FEAD funding to the amount of €4.4 million. As of January 2017, the project has been initiated in two vulnerable neighbourhoods in the four cities.

The programme is coordinated by a **central programme office** with one full-time employee. This employee's tasks include managing the programme, facilitating the local project partners, monitoring progress, maintaining contact with the subsidiary and ensuring the continuity of the project. On the local level, **four libraries** are in charge of implementing the programme and, where necessary, they make cooperation agreements with local partners.

To ensure the success of the project, project staff work with **a broad network of providers** of courses in particular skills (e.g. digital skills, language development or mathematics), as well as activities for particular groups (e.g. through neighbourhood or migrant associations) and municipal services.

For more information on the programme, contact Ed Klute of Mira Media via:

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Poland – Caritas Polska

Unusual Easter Workshops

WHY?

Children with complex **social and psychological needs**, as well as those from families experiencing financial difficulties, are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion. These children are often led to feel different from other children, partly because they have fewer opportunities to participate in similar activities. Differences become even more obvious during the holidays when they see other children engaging in fun traditional activities that they themselves do not have the chance to experience.

WHAT?

An “unusual” Easter workshop is organised as an accompanying measure for children receiving FEAD support from the Socio-therapeutic Community Centre. These children generally live in, or are at risk of, poverty and social exclusion and face various social and psychological challenges. The aim of the workshop is to both address and lower the risk of social exclusion by engaging children in activities that allow them to feel that they are participating “normally” in society.

During a four-hour workshop, the children **partake in typical Easter traditions** such as preparing traditional Easter dishes, playing Easter-themed games, painting eggs and receiving gifts. The first Unusual Easter Workshop took place on 11 April 2017 and was attended by 40 children, four staff members, three volunteers and six guests.

Upon receiving positive feedback from both the children and the project representatives, Caritas Poland is striving to organise another unusual workshop around another festival. As a result, there is a plan to organise a similar workshop in the Socio-therapeutic Community Centre before Christmas.

WHO?

The initiative was led by Caritas Poland, an NGO that has been providing support for those in need both within Poland and abroad for 27 years. It operates in partnership with Caritas of the Diocese of Warszawa-Praga and the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice in Warsaw.

HOW?

One of the key successes of this initiative is the **partnership** between Caritas Poland and the Socio-therapeutic Community Centre that is run by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice in Warsaw. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (the FEAD Managing Authority), the National Support Centre for Agriculture and Caritas Diecezji Warszawsko-Praskiej (the Diocese of Warszawa-Praga) have also been involved.

Through the involvement of individuals from organisations at all levels, an opportunity was created for FEAD management to better understand the practical implications of FEAD funding in Poland, as well as the challenges that partner organisations face.

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Poland – Polish Committee of Social Welfare

Educational workshops alongside food distribution for vulnerable people

WHY?

The project aims to provide systematic support to vulnerable individuals facing economic challenges and/or social exclusion, including the homeless, individuals with disabilities, migrants or those who have a particularly low income (1,268 PLN for a single person and 1,028 PLN for each person in a household). While the Polish Committee of Social Welfare, one of the four national level partner organisations in Poland, recognises the importance of distributing food and preventing malnourishment among vulnerable people, it also recognises the necessity of offering **additional measures to promote end recipients' social inclusion**. By doing so, it can encourage end recipients to take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion. That is why alongside food distribution under FEAD, **workshops and one-off seasonal events** are organised at which end recipients have a chance to engage with other people (both social workers and other end recipients) in an informal manner.

WHAT?

Meals or food packages are distributed in homeless shelters and community centres, which are located in bigger cities as well as smaller communities. People who are eligible for support should not be more than 30 kilometres from the distribution point.

At these locations, end recipients can also participate in **educational workshops on a range of topics**, including household budgeting, housekeeping, food waste prevention and meal preparation using FEAD-provided ingredients. The topics of the workshops are designed together with the staff working at the social service centres, who are familiar with the specific needs of the end recipients. Seasonal events are also organised for end recipients for occasions like Christmas, Easter and other holidays. The Committee of Social Welfare works with specialised volunteers but also employs full-time workers to run the workshops. Through these workshops, end recipients can not only receive food, but also engage in a number of social activities.



Definitely [a] side effect... is stimulating social activity of the social groups which are at risk of exclusion. Empowerment of the charity organisations and support and development of NGOs, also creating intercommunication, is a crucial element of the project."

Polish Committee of Social Welfare

WHO?

Food distribution and educational workshops are handled by the Committee employees, volunteers and Committee social volunteer workers. In total, there are 100 paid Committee employees and over 200 volunteers involved in the project.

HOW?

The project has created its own distribution network comprising 42 regional warehouses, as well as more than 300 local warehouses and distribution points. This distribution network is made up of premises belonging to the project organisers as well as many locations offered by local authorities for a low price or even free of charge. Warehouse staff and volunteers are specially trained. In 2016, a total of 1,779 educational workshops with 31,639 participants were organised. Of these workshop participants, 1,324 were homeless and 6,902 had a disability.

The workshops are ongoing and are scheduled according to end recipients' needs and number. There are posters to promote the workshops at every distribution point as well as at local social service centres. There is also information about them on the Committee's branch websites.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Michał Jakonowicz, the FEAD Country Coordinator at the Polish Committee of Social Welfare via:

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Slovakia – Greek Catholic Charity Prešov

Provision of hot meals with accompanying measures as a means of addressing food deprivation

WHY?

The aim of the project is to support homeless people in Prešov, a city in Eastern Slovakia. Homeless individuals are particularly vulnerable and experience significant hardship due to the cold, especially in winter. The Greek Catholic Charity in Prešov provides warm, healthy meals to homeless individuals to help them during these colder months.

WHAT?

The hot meals comprise soup, a piece of bread and a hot non-alcoholic drink. The charity provides them five times a week from October to April each year, helping to not only satisfy hunger, but also encourage people to come to a social centre where they can access additional support and counselling services. When the soup is distributed, a therapist is also present to respond to the needs of end recipients.

Through the project, the Greek Catholic Charity has been able to **provide nutritious meals**, that include both meat and fresh vegetables, meaning that homeless people get a tasty and rich meal in the winter.

To monitor the number of meals served, a register is kept by the charity. Over a six month period the number of portions distributed increased from **30 – 40** to **120 meals per day**. This reflects a threefold increase and that the project is providing a much needed service.

WHO?

Project activities are carried out by **employed staff** as well as **students**. The project is managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the FEAD Managing Authority in Slovakia, and is implemented by the Greek Catholic Charity Prešov.

HOW?

The Greek Catholic Charity is a partner organisation in Slovakia and works closely with the FEAD Managing Authority in the delivery of the project. The charity identifies the end recipients of the project and provides the meals. It doesn't limit support to individuals living on the streets, but also helps other individuals whose basic living needs are not being met. Besides a **lack of accommodation**, this may also include **limited access to regular meals** or an **inadequate amount of clothing**. However, priority is given to helping those living on the street and those who do not receive social assistance from public social services (e.g. through shelters or emergency housing).

One of the key strengths of the project is that the provision of a hot meal serves as an entry point for people to access further support services and inclusion activities like community support centre or local monthly newspaper distribution. Over the duration of the project, homeless people started to return to the centre on a regular and even daily basis, allowing social workers to engage with them more consistently and offer support where needed. This reaffirms the belief that food is a **good entry point** for social workers when it comes to helping vulnerable individuals escape poverty and social exclusion.

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Slovakia – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Linking FEAD end recipients to social workers

WHY?

There are generally a range of social issues that contribute to the social exclusion of deprived individuals. In Slovakia, as in other countries, **food can act as a gateway** to address additional social issues. As a result, food parcels are distributed in the hope that they will not only provide basic products to those in need, but that end recipients will also have a chance to learn about and access other relevant support services. Counselling and general advice are offered alongside the provision of food aid, as a way to help individuals to address these challenges.

WHAT?

Food parcels are distributed by **accredited social workers** who are able to provide counselling and advice on a variety of topics to those who are interested. In total, there are 202 social workers involved in the current distribution process (113 from Caritas Slovakia, 81 from the Red Cross and 8 from the Charity of Saint Elizabeth; these are the three main partner organisations for the implementation of FEAD in Slovakia). Basic information is available in the form of leaflets that are distributed to end recipients along with the food. Social workers conduct individual or group interviews with end recipients, during which information leaflets are available for end recipients to take away with them. The leaflets contain information about other available services, as well as for example advice on how to store food, healthy eating and managing a family budget.

In many cases the social workers **signpost** end recipients to additional non-FEAD services, if they are in need of more in-depth assistance. For example, these might include ESF projects that provide training and help to access the labour market. In some cases, social workers from ESF financed projects help FEAD funded partner organisations in Slovakia by reaching out to end recipients identified through FEAD, informing them of upcoming distributions and assisting during these. Additional services also include advice on personal bankruptcy and financial counselling, information on accommodation in social facilities as well as general services offered by NGOs in the area.

“ The distribution of food packages is the first step in our work with the end recipients. It helps us to open the door and approach the people in difficult circumstances. And we can start trying to find complex solutions to their complicated life situations.”

Monika Pribelová, Caritas Slovakia

WHO?

Three main partner organisations (the Slovak Red Cross, Caritas Slovakia and the Charity of Saint Elizabeth) are involved in the implementation of FEAD activities in Slovakia. In turn, these main organisations work with more than 30 smaller partners to deliver relevant support and services. A network of accredited social workers distribute the food parcels and provide counselling and advice as part of a **holistic, personalised and professional service**.

The target groups are primarily families with dependent children, retired people and people with a disability in need who receive benefits. Food parcels are distributed either twice or four times a year through a **wide distribution network** of over 2,500 distribution points that reach nearly every town and village in Slovakia. At these distribution points end recipients may also receive advice and wider social support. In 2016, 197,005 food parcels were distributed to end recipients, and for the first half of 2017 this number was 180,742 (distribution done in two rounds).

HOW?

It is hoped that by providing support in a more holistic way, **end recipients' resilience will increase** when it comes to dealing with potential crisis situations. The main advantage of adopting a broader approach is the reduction of the number of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Thanks to the support they receive (in overcoming unemployment, lack of information on available financial support or other social issues), it is hoped that end recipients will be more able to fight poverty and **proactively manage their own life situations**.

The list of end recipients is generated from an up-to-date national administrative database. The compilation of an official national list means that partner organisations are able to reach out to end recipients that they may not have known about before. Their task is to contact the end recipients and notify them when and where their food parcels will be distributed. If the food parcels are unclaimed for whatever reason (around 5% of the cases), the partner organisation can re-distribute them.

For more information on the project, contact **Ivana Štefančíková** at the Slovak Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs via:

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Slovenia – Regional Red Cross Association Ljubljana

The Srečevalnica project

WHY?

Project 'Srečevalnica' was developed in order to offer additional support to individuals who come to the Regional Red Cross Association of Ljubljana for food and material assistance. It was recognised that among those aid recipients there was a significant group of **long-term, unemployed women** and **single mothers**. With this in mind, the Red Cross sought to offer activities that would be of particular interest to this group. The association felt it was important to help the women to expand their social networks, and that the organisation of these activities could contribute to the greater social inclusion of long-term unemployed and excluded people.

WHAT?

Project Srečevalnica started in October 2014 and consists of a range of activities that are organised on a weekly basis. The events, workshops and meetings enable participants to access information and advice, and also support their mental and physical health through exercise and active participation. The activities represent an opportunity to **develop social skills** (e.g. communication skills and increasing confidence), as well as providing support in the development of the **practical skills**. The number of workshops can differ per year as the organisation responds to the demand for particular activities, as well as the resources available.

In 2016, around 200 workshops were carried out covering topics such as sewing, recycling, reusing materials, producing natural housecleaning products and cosmetics, relaxation techniques, etc.

The regular weekly activities provide an opportunity for **lifelong learning** and the expansion and **strengthening of the social networks** of the participants. The number of participants per workshop ranges from 4-16 and the organisation believes it's important to have a manageable size per group. In order to allow parents to participate, a **parallel programme for children** has been developed and activities for children are organised in the same location as the activity for adults.



I never thought that I'd be someone who could stand up and talk to a group of people or even mentor them. But now here I am, sharing my knowledge with others."

An unemployed participant, after taking on the role of a workshop mentor volunteer

WHO?

Project Srečevalnica is run by the local Red Cross branch of Ljubljana. The organisation carries out a range of activities to support the most deprived individuals in the Slovenian capital, including the provision of FEAD-funded material assistance.

HOW?

Project Srečevalnica was initially piloted in one location: the Humanitarian Aid Centre of Regional Red Cross Association of Ljubljana. As the organisers believed it to be important to reach as many people as possible, they expanded the workshops to several locations across the city. Activities are currently organised at eight locations in both the mornings and afternoons.

Notably, in 2016, more than 50 volunteers participated in the implementation of the Srečevalnica project and since 2017, there have been two part-time employees involved in running the project. Volunteers are included in the planning and execution of the project, and actively **receive training opportunities** and **mentoring support** from the Red Cross.

It's important to note that workshop participants are encouraged to take an active role in **defining future workshops**. For example, at one location, participants indicated they were interested in learning how to grow their own vegetables, so the Red Cross hired a plot of land and organised sessions where participants would be taught how to best grow fruits and vegetables.

Where possible, the Red Cross also seeks to **involve participants in running the workshops** as it's felt that such engagement is a good first step to engagement in other areas of their lives. They are therefore encouraged to become volunteers and mentors.

Red Cross staff and volunteers also try to support and mentor participants where needed in order to help them to address any issues in other areas of their lives.

While the Red Cross actively promotes the activities among people and families receiving material aid support, **attracting new participants remains one of the key challenges** of Project Srečevalnica. The Red Cross particularly tries to encourage long-term beneficiaries of support, in order to re-engage them. An emphasis has been placed on making personal contact and directly inviting people to participate in the project's workshops as a personal touch has been found to be more effective than distributing leaflets or displaying posters.

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Images © OZRK Novo Mesto, 2016

Slovenia – Regional Red Cross Association Novo Mesto

Dance and English Workshops

WHY?

Children from underprivileged backgrounds in Slovenia are often not able to participate in after-school classes and workshops, as their families are **unable to pay the required fees**. As a result, they're not given the opportunity to develop particular talents or improve their performance in school through extracurricular school support. The Regional Red Cross Association began supporting these young people in November 2016 by offering **free workshops in dance and English language** for the children of families benefiting from FEAD support.

WHAT?

The English workshop focus in particular on improving English vocabulary through a range of exercises. An emphasis is placed on developing conversational English, and the level and pace of the workshop is adjusted to the needs of the participating individuals.

In the dance workshop, the focus is on learning basic ballet and dance steps as well as simple dance routines. The dances learned are subsequently showcased at events organised by the Regional Red Cross Association Novo Mesto.

COMMUNITY
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RESOURCES
RELIEF
LOVE LIFE FRIENDSHIP



Participants from remote locations do not come regularly, because it is hard to come to the workshops. I do not know if the workshops have an affect on their knowledge, but it is pleasant for them to socialise and be entertained, particularly if the workshops are prepared outside. We try to speak in English.”

English workshop volunteer

WHO?

The workshops are provided by the Regional Red Cross Association Novo Mesto in Slovenia. They are one of the partner organisations supplying FEAD food assistance while simultaneously offering a range of accompanying measures across Slovenia.

HOW?

The English workshops are currently being carried out on Saturday mornings between 09:00 am and 11:00 am on the premises of the Regional Red Cross Association Novo Mesto. They are led by volunteers associated with the Red Cross.

The dance workshops are carried out on Saturday mornings from 9:00 am till 11:00 am, as well as on Friday afternoons from 7:00 pm till 9:00 pm at the dance hall of the Cultural Center Janez Trdina in Novo Mesto. The two different times are offered so that children could potentially attend both the English and dance workshops.

One of the main challenges in the programme is to ensure the **sustainable participation** of children in the workshops. It's been noted that regular attendance is a particularly important part of being able to make sustainable progress within a group.

To date, 12 English workshops have taken place, with an average participation of 7-10 children. There are two volunteers present at each workshop.

With regard to the dance workshops, there was generally one volunteer leading the workshop and 7-10 children participating. So far, 24 dance workshops have been offered.

For more information regarding the project, contact **Mrs. Barbara Ozimek** via:

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Spain - Bancosol Alimentos

A “social report” to identify FEAD end recipients

WHY?

Under the FEAD regulation, Managing Authorities are required to use FEAD funding to support the most deprived individuals residing within the EU. Member States are able to define what ‘most deprived’ means within their national context, however it’s important that there is a **clear set of criteria** of who will be supported using FEAD funding. In Spain a professional assessment is needed in the form of a social report. This report consists of parameters encompassing the overall family situation. Social workers with expertise on the subject matter are the qualified professionals to conduct the assessment and draft the social report.

WHAT?

In order to identify potential end recipients in Spain, a **professional assessment** has been carried out each year since 2015 and an annual “social report” is provided regarding each end recipient. This report explores the family situation of a potential FEAD end recipient and the key social and economic challenges to which they are exposed.

The Foodbank of the Costa del Sol (Bancosol Alimentos) has defined the **criteria for the selection of FEAD end recipients** in collaboration with the Department of Social Rights of the Malaga municipality. These criteria have been shared with all partner organisations that offer FEAD-funded support and each year the partners are asked to produce a list of families that match these criteria and receive (or want to receive) FEAD food assistance.

Bancosol Alimentos then selects families from these lists and liaises with the District Social Service Centres (DSSCs) to validate whether the potential end recipients are already registered with the social services or not. If they aren’t registered, the family is contacted and an appointment is made with the social workers of the

WHO?

Bancosol Alimentos is the foodbank association that covers the Costa del Sol and wider Málaga area. They distribute FEAD food assistance across the districts of Malaga as well as organising the delivery of the social for the end recipients.

centre. During this meeting, the social worker will carry out a socio-economic assessment and will issue a social report that allows the family to potentially benefit from the FEAD support. Following this process, the social report is shared with Bancosol Alimentos and relevant partner organisations.

One of the key benefits of adopting such collaborative approach is that in this way the social services are aware of the situation of all the end recipients and are therefore well-placed to identify the kinds of support needed. It also allows organisations to **avoid duplicating support activities**, such as providing food parcels to a family that is already receiving support by other means.

785 social reports were issued in 2015, another 515 were finalised in 2016 and 142 have been prepared in the first half of 2017.

HOW?

Some Partner Organisations for Food Distribution (POFD) do not have the resources to hire the necessary professional social workers to perform these tasks. Therefore, since 2015, Bancosol Alimentos has used part of the FEAD funds allocated to cover the administrative costs to support these organisations by arranging **experienced social workers with relevant professional backgrounds** for them to draft the social reports – something the foodbank considers crucial. In order to select these social workers, Bancosol Alimentos has signed a **collaboration agreement** with the Official School of Social Workers of Málaga (OSSWM). The foodbank is responsible for selecting and contracting the social workers.

For more information on this initiative, contact **Rocio Monserrate of Bancosol Alimentos** via:

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Sweden – Administration for Allocation of Social Welfare, Gothenburg Municipality

Better Health (Bättre Hälsa)

WHY?

The project aims to help vulnerable, unemployed and homeless women who are European nationals residing in Gothenburg, Malmö or Stockholm. Many people in this situation, and particularly women, suffer from poor health due to a **lack of knowledge about preventative healthcare**. As a result, they may only visit the doctor when their health situation has significantly deteriorated and suffer unnecessarily as a result. Even when vulnerable women are aware of the services available, they may still encounter challenges such as not knowing exactly where to find these services, what services they need and which they are entitled to.

The Gothenburg Municipality feels that every woman in Sweden should have sufficient access to medical care, particularly in relation to pregnancy and contraception. Many of these women have only had abortions as a contraceptive method, which could be bad for the health. The programme consequently strives to ensure that vulnerable women in Sweden become aware of their rights, to decide over their own body and health by talking to them and letting them know where they can access the help they require.

WHAT?

The *Bättre Hälsa* initiative organises a range of activities to help women acquire knowledge on personal health. The women supported through the project are generally vulnerable, homeless women that make their money by begging on the streets. They face myriad issues while living on the streets, and are generally unaware of the manner in which health issues can be prevented or treated. *Bättre Hälsa* therefore provides information on looking after your teeth, contraception, pregnancy, caring for your feet, mental health and how to reduce stress.

The aim is to **empower** these women by increasing their knowledge of how their bodies work and how to manage their health. The project seeks to ensure that they will then be better equipped to make decisions about their health and subsequently access the right services for their needs when appropriate, as well as transfer this knowledge back to their children and communities.



I like to talk to her [the gynaecologist] because I feel that I can ask her about everything and she explains [to] me until I understand what she says. I think this project is good for us. We need this.”

End recipient in Stockholm

WHO?

A project leader in each city that the project operates in (Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm) plans and arranges the activities in collaboration with the staff from participating NGOs. At each activity they make sure that there is someone there who is fluent in the language of the women from the target group (most frequently this is Romanian) and translators are paid for their time.

To ensure that the information given is as accurate as possible, the project makes sure that a person with specific knowledge of the topic is present at all information activities. Healthcare professionals are paid for their time, although in some cases they choose to participate on a voluntary basis.

HOW?

Bättre Hälsa arranges information activities in places that the target group are already used to visiting. This can include spaces provided by non-profit organisations such as shelters, day centres or information centres. In order to reach the vulnerable women and motivate them to come along to the activities, *Bättre Hälsa* staff work together with other non-profit organisations and talk with women on the street as well. Partner organisations from the non-profit sector include: *Bräcke Diakoni*, *Västra Götaland - Care Centre for the Homeless*, *Frälsningsarmén* in Gothenburg and Stockholm County, *Räddningsmissionen* (Rescue Mission) in Göteborg, *Stadsmissionen*/Crossroads in Stockholm and Malmö, *Convictus* in Stockholm, Swedish church in Stockholm, *Filadelfia church* in Stockholm, *Läkare I världen* (Doctors of the World) in Stockholm, *RFSU* (National Association for Sexual Information).

Bättre Hälsa also arranges special events, including celebrations for Easter and Women's Day. On these occasions, staff talk with the women about different traditions and holidays from across cultures.

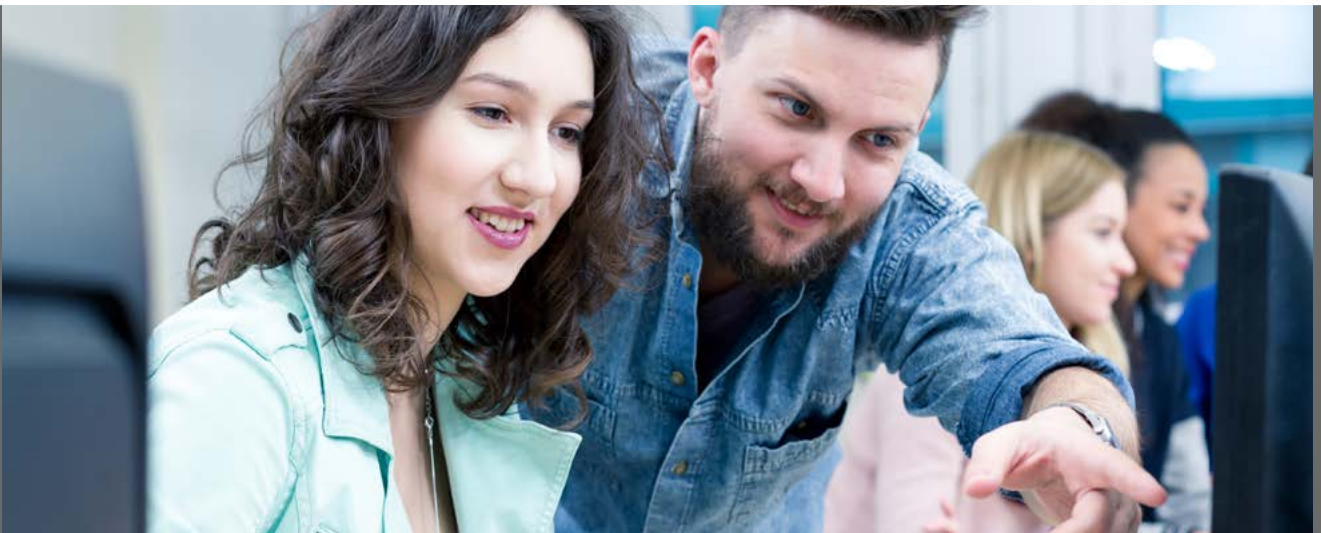
The project provides advice on particular products to treat health conditions (e.g. creams for skin conditions) and lets the women know where they can buy them. It also provides information on where they can find food, shelter and clothes, as well as where they can shower and wash their clothes, where to find Swedish lessons and how to increase their chances of employment (e.g. through getting help with the job search). When doctors visit the project, they sometimes bring different contraceptives with them that the women can see first hand in order to become familiar with them. As many of the women that engage with the project are unable to read, project staff draw or show images or films on the issues they are discussing.

Importantly, project workers ensure that information is always given during discussions with the women. The project recognises the **importance of listening to the women** and answering any questions they may have. Through engaging directly with women, staff have been able to identify their most acute health needs, and decide upon particular activities together with the women involved.

The success of the project has been linked to a number of factors, including its effective cooperation with non-profit organisations, the inclusion of the target group in defining the best way to provide information and involving staff that speak the women's languages and have some cultural knowledge of the target group. The project is around halfway through and has so far reached around 350 women.

For more information regarding the project, contact **Maud Wiilardsson Engstrom** via:

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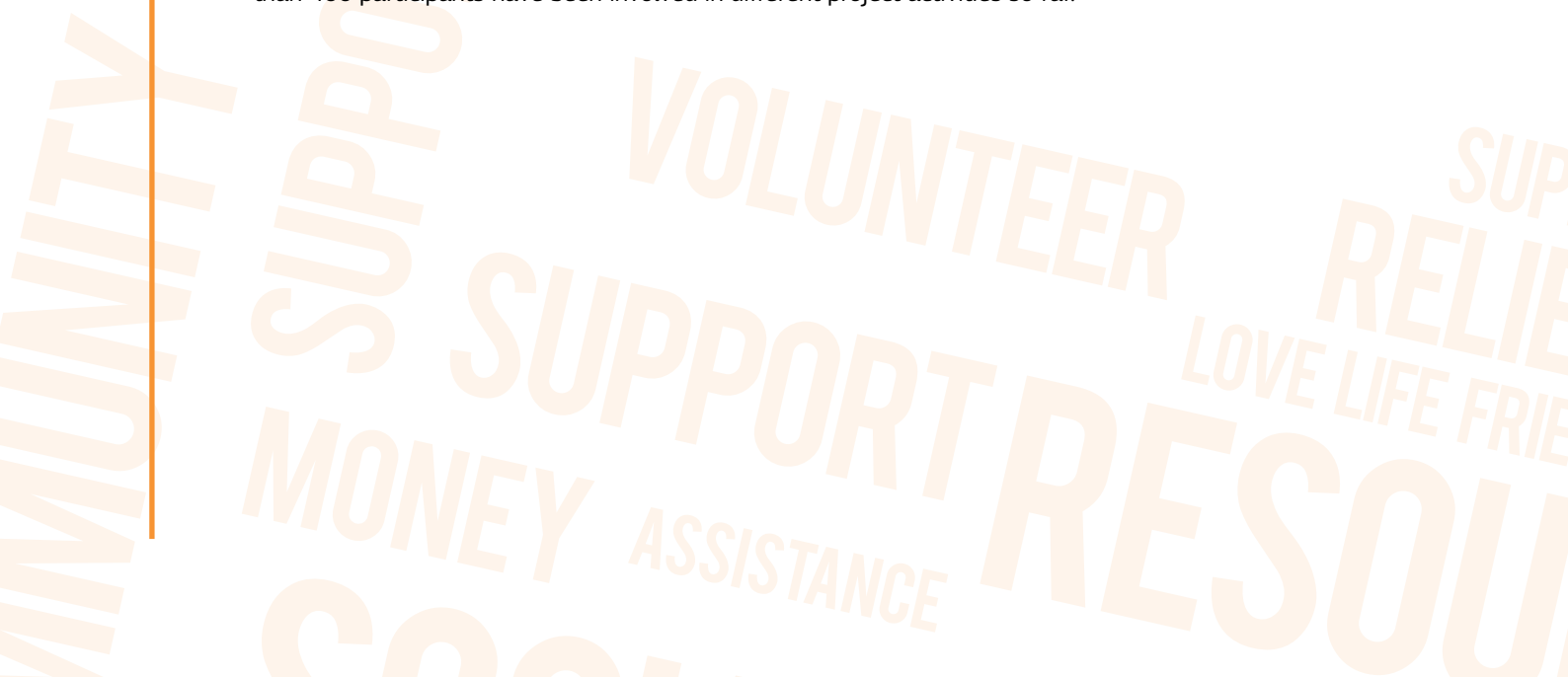
Digniti Omnia

WHY?

Many EU citizens come to Sweden in order to support their families back home. However, some of these people are poor, homeless and have little or no education. As a result, many are in a state of vulnerability and deprivation.

WHAT?

The aim of Digniti Omnia is the **self-empowerment and social inclusion** of vulnerable EU citizens. The project offers a variety of activities around the country that work to improve literacy levels, knowledge of life in Sweden or the EU (such as civil rights), digital competencies and knowledge of preventative care (such as CPR [basic life support] courses). The Church of Sweden may combine different sources of funding to address the needs of the target group, as the church also provides free meals and a place to safely wash and shower. More than 400 participants have been involved in different project activities so far.



WHO?

The project began in October 2015 and comprises five major partners: the Diocese of Västerås, as the lead partner, the parishes of Karlstad, Växjö and Umeå, and a social innovation NGO named Macken. However, there is no central 'geographic hub' as activities are held in different areas of Sweden. Overall, eight people work full-time on the project, with approximately 20 project volunteers and an additional 10-15 volunteers from the target group themselves. Furthermore, some volunteers that work in shelters also help with project activities as well. The project also includes the target group when developing its activities. In this way, **vulnerable EU citizens have an input** into what the activities are and how they are delivered. This inclusion can come in various forms, such as a consultation or an evaluation activity..

HOW?

Digniti Omnia is in an ideal position to offer these activities and services as several of the parishes and organisations involved in the project are already providing shelter and other support to vulnerable people. They have developed a positive standing among the target group and as a result, people often seek out help from the project.

The project operates with the understanding that an individual's **basic needs must be addressed holistically** and that support must be tailored in order to make a positive change in their lives.

Project activities can be centred around giving information, answering questions and teaching about topics such as preventive healthcare, rights in society and language. For example, in Växjö the FEAD social inclusion activities are carried out mainly in Växjö *Diakonicentrum* (a social meeting centre linked to the Church of Sweden), where there are also food and washing facilities provided for the target group. The project also arranges a language class, taught by someone who had previously been a vulnerable EU citizen themselves, one evening every week.

Digniti Omnia has already had several success stories, such as helping people to move from begging on the street to helping others in similar situations. The project finds it is effective to have **volunteers from the target group** themselves working in the project.

The project is now working on a website, which will be available in December 2018. The website will contain tools and information for both parishes and the target group, such as short videos that teach about personal health.

For more information regarding the project, contact **Fredrik Schirén** via:

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The catalogue is one of several outputs deriving from knowledge-sharing activities of the FEAD Network in 2017. This community of practice has been established by the European Commission to allow all stakeholders and partner organisations to share tools, ideas and resources that can help with the delivery of FEAD-funded initiatives.

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