

Mapping Report on Challenges



ROMANIA



**Improving Farmers' Wellbeing
through Social Innovation**

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1.

Introduction

This paper is part of a larger Horizon 2020 Thematic Network entitled 'FARMWELL' that aims at mapping social innovations in farming and making these social innovations more accessible for farmers and the larger community, with the prime purpose of improving the overall wellbeing of individual farmers, farming households and the larger rural community. With this purpose in mind, six European countries (Belgium, Greece, Romania, Poland, Italy and Hungary) have systematically mapped the main social challenges they are being confronted with. Based on this mapping exercise, a set of social challenges has been selected for deeper elaboration and analysis. In addition, a set of social innovations has been mapped that aims at improving the wellbeing of individual farmers, farming households and rural communities.

This research which took place in the first half of 2021 is meant to provide a systematic evidence base, upon which social innovations in farming can be analysed further on their effectiveness and made more accessible through innovate communication.



In addition, all six papers should enable a productive exchange of ideas and insights between different European countries and partners involved in the FARMWELL project.

This paper presents a case-study on ROMANIA. After this introduction, PART 2 'Methodology/data gathering' will present the main methodological steps undertaken in mapping and analysing social challenges and innovations in the country. PART 3 'Description of main challenges' will provide a general introduction to the main challenges Romania is being confronted. In part 4 'Analysis of selected theme(s) in social challenges', a limited number of social challenges is being selected and delved into in a systematic manner and based in primary data gathering. Part 5 then gives a concise summary of the main arguments and insight being put forward in the paper. The paper is finally concluded with a table that provides 15 important social challenges in Romania that have the explicit aim of improving the overall wellbeing of individual farmers, farming households and rural communities.

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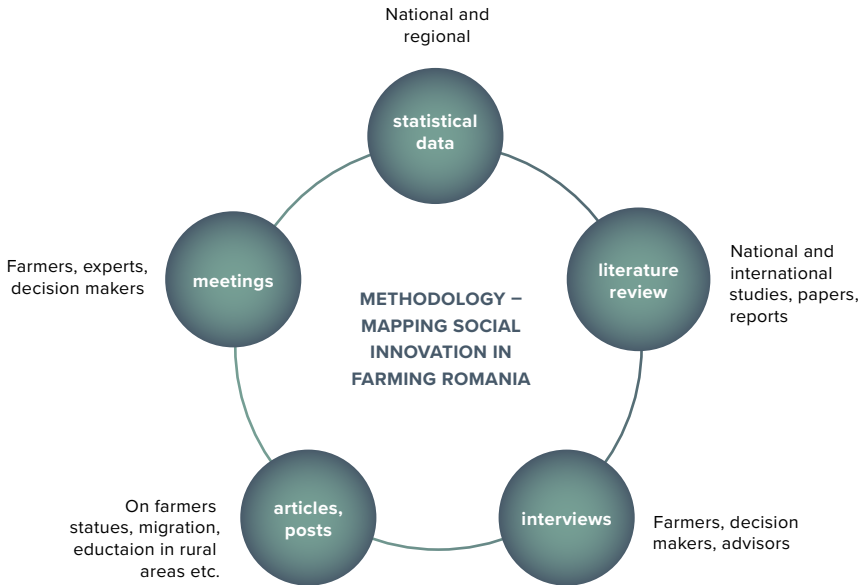
Methodology/ data gathering



For the development of the D2.3 deliverable, a combination of methods was applied, consisting in the collection and investigation of statistical data (both national level and Eurostat), literature review, meetings with farmers, local decision makers and advisors, interviews with farmers and other relevant stakeholders. A series of articles, especially concerning poverty, migration, social statutes of farmers, and the level of education level in rural areas, have also been considered for grounding rationales and trends.

The first element of the mapping consisted in desk research – collecting the statistical data and information available at national level and as much as possible at local level (NUTS1 – regional and NUTS2 – County level). Both partners contributed to fulfilling this task – HCC at national level, ATB – at local level. As a second step of the mapping, HCC has reviewed the relevant literature, studies, reports developed by national or international entities.

Figure 1: Methodology – national mapping



Thirdly, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted – 6 with farmers, 4 with local decision makers and 2 with experts; 1 sociologist and 1 social assistance representative (see Annex I). The interviews aimed at completing the information gathered through the literature review, and to validate the desk-research findings around social challenges and innovations.

Important feedback and qualitative input for both assessing the social challenges and mapping the social innovations, was provided via practice group (PG) (WP1) in Brasov, especially in the territory covered by Tinutul Barsei Association Local Action Group (LAG).

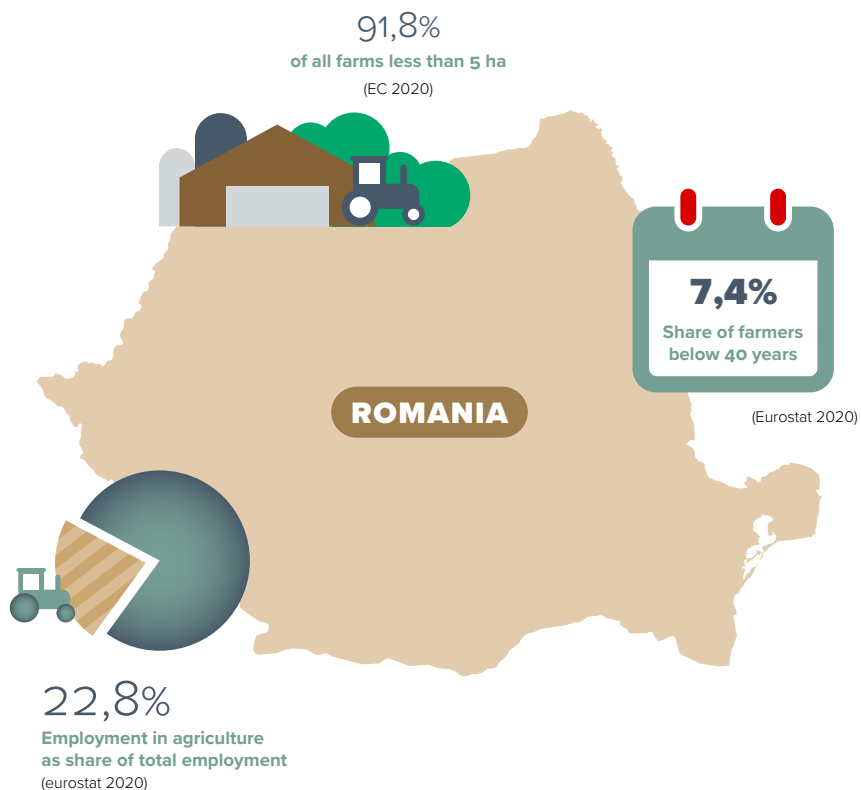
The PG was structured around two themes – **young (small) farmers and their communities**, and women and their role in farming communities – and was made up by farmers, advisors, local decision makers, and other relevant stakeholders (women associations, educational NGOs, teachers etc). Throughout the meetings of the PG, the findings at national level were analyzed adjusted, and validated at local level, the PG covering 4 farming communities, with different degrees of being marginalised.

Out of 58.990 inhabitants covered by the Tinutul Barsei Association LAG, the FARMWELL project will touch directly 15.773 inhabitants (a third) through the representatives and engagement of relevant stakeholders. The selection of the communities was done based on the following parameters: number of existing farmers, acreage of farming land impacted by socio-demographic transformations, as well as initiatives of women or young people in the farming community or local governance which led to community development and to various forms of social innovations. A special focus was given to impact of **migration of at least one member of the family upon the wellbeing of members (especially children and young people) from small farm-holdings**, and upon small farming communities, and to **the degree of poverty, low household income and low farm productivity**.

The partnership with the Local Action Group Tinutul Barsei was done bearing in mind that, in Romania, LAGs represent the “local-governing cell” available (in different intensity) in most of the farming communities, forming a network (one of the very few functional ones) of LAGs at the national level. The partnership with Tinutul Barsei Association (LAG) aims at connecting with and disseminating the findings to other LAGs and increasing the impact of the Farmwell project data, especially around the analysed territory.

3.

Description of main social challenges – national level



3.1 Major figures for the country and for the farming sector

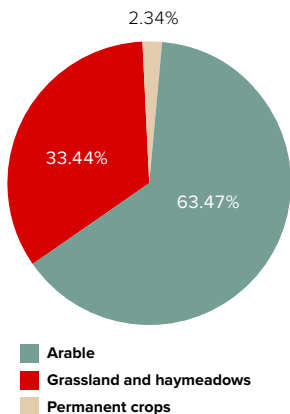
Agriculture is a very important sector for the Romanian economy. Unlike most European Union countries, agriculture has been and continues to be a sector of prime importance in Romania, both through its contribution to the economy and the share of the employed population.

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The contribution of agriculture, forestry and fish farming to the formation of the Gross Domestic Product is around 6% of GDP. In the EU Member States, it is around 1,7%.

According to the most recent analysis (2020) done for the new National Strategic Plan for Romania, with a total area of 238.397 km² and a population of 19.414.458 inhabitants registered in 2019, Romania (RO) is on the 9th place in the EU28 in terms of land surface (5,33%). The occupation and the use of land is closely interdependent with the relief units present on the territory of the country. Romania enjoys a very varied relief (28% of mountains, 42% of hills and plateaus and 30% of plains), which leads to a diversity of land use possibilities. The geographical distribution of the relief is reflected in an uneven territorial distribution of the types of land. Romania has a surface area of 23.839.071 hectares. Of this land mass, more than 61% is classified as arable land.

Figure 2: The structure by categories of agricultural land use in 2016



Source: Eurostat

Administratively, in 2019, the territory of Romania is represented by 319 urban localities and 2862 communes (NUTS5). The **rural area** thus occupies an area of **207.633 km²** (87,09% of the total land mass). In 2019, the **rural population** represents 8.959.096 (**46,14%**) of the Romanian population.

The utilized agricultural area (UAA) registers a decrease in 2016 by 6% to **12,502 million ha**, compared to 2010.

The largest share is held by arable land (63,47%), followed by pastures and hayfields (33,44%) and permanent crops (2,34%).

Between 2010 and 2016 the number of farms has decreased with 11,3%, to a total number of 3,422.030 agricultural holdings (2016 – Eurostat), representing 32,7% of total agricultural holdings in the EU28. The decrease has continued as illustrated by the preliminary results of the most recent agriculture census (2021), showing a total number of **3.226.000** agricultural holdings.

The agricultural land exploitation structure in Romania, has gradually but surely, changed during the past 15 years, maintaining the same fragmentation and extreme polarity and major impediments to the growth of the sector’s competitiveness.

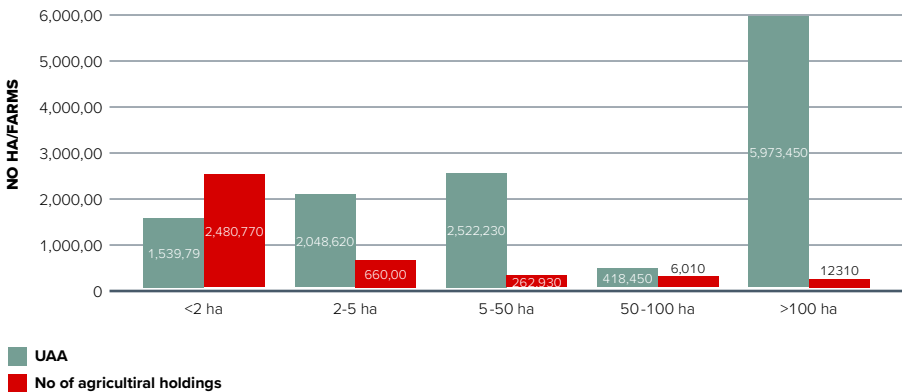
The defining characteristics of Romanian agriculture are:

- I) its highly polarised structure,** and
- II) the huge number of small-scale farms.**

In 2019 there were a total of 3.14 million farms (**91,8% of the total farms**) with a size less than 5 ha – of which 44% were managed by farmers over 65 years old and only 3% by farmers less than 35 years old (EC, 2020), most of them not eligible for EU subsidies.

Figure 3: Structure of agricultural holdings on physical classes

Source: Eurostat



The reforms of the agricultural sector in Romania after the fall of communist regime (characterized by a centralised system), have primarily aimed at a land consolidation process, with the land being restored to the former owners. In the last 30 years, the production of the main traditional crops has registered a significant decline – especially essential crops such as fruits (-41%), wheat (-5%), barley (-56%), medicinal plants (-93,6%), or potatoes (-41,3%), while some crops, supported by subsidies have increased – see table below.

Main agricultural crops in Romania – Trends 1990 (after the communist regime) – 2019:

Table 1: Main crops in Romania – Own calculation on the basis of data from Farm Structure Survey and Agricultural Census data base

Source: National Statistical Institute¹

MAIN CROPS	Year 1990	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Change
	Hectare	Hectare	Hectare	Hectare	Hectare	Hectare	%
Wheat and rye	2.297.658	2.116.194	2.148.192	2.062.505	2.126.417	2.177.726	-5,22
Barley	650.131	266.941	295.996	268.826	250.797	285.065	-56,15
Hop	2.346	225	257	227	255	252	-89,26
Oat	144.289	174.113	170.347	165.757	161.484	161.188	11,71
Corn grain	2.466.735	2.605.165	2.580.975	2.402.082	2.439.842	2.678.504	8,58
Sorghum	5.195	13.486	9.160	13.993	15.929	15.712	202,44
Rice	39.887	11.106	9.435	9.125	8.251	7.427	-81,38
Grain legumes	129.485	44.694	59.331	119.300	133.408	115.974	-10,43
Oily plants	654.723	1.514.683	1.629.484	1.766.340	1.815.002	1.800.132	174,95
Sugar beet	162.675	26.596	24.924	28.204	25.723	22.729	-86,03
Tobacco	16.805	745	926	801	916	897	-94,66
Medicinal aromatic plants	27.378	3.211	4.395	3.193	1.781	1.745	-93,63
Potatoes	289.614	191.773	182.239	167.424	169.304	170.063	-41,28
Vegetables – total	216.009	239.494	228.124	224.571	226.328	227.720	5,42
Orchards on fruit	230.795	138.502	137.514	138.999	137.263	135.102	-41,46
Greenhouse area	1.843	323	316	250	233	206	-88,82

¹ National Statistical Institute, 2021, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

From 1990 to 2015 and then up to 2019, livestock has massively decreased: above all pigs, bovine, equidae, poultry and sheep – see the table below. The number of sheep and bee families has increased in 2019 compared to 1990 and 2015.

Table 2: Main Livestock type in Romania – Own calculation on the basis of data from Farm Structure Survey and Agricultural Census data base

Source: National Statistical Institute²

LIVESTOCK TYPE	Year 1990	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Change
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	%
Bovine	5.380.780	2.092.414	2.049.713	2.011.128	1.977.232	1.923.283	-64,26
Pigs	12.003.384	4.926.928	4.707.719	4.406.014	3.925.283	3.834.136	-68,06
Sheep	14.061.864	9.809.512	9.875.483	9.981.859	10.176.400	10.358.699	-26,33
Goats	1.004.810	1.440.151	1.483.146	1.503.270	1.539.317	1.594.862	58,72
Equidae	670.000	503.466	519.906	480.740	447.791	406.702	-39,30
Poultry	121.378.539	78.648.098	75.689.854	73.288.712	73.993.010	75.364.575	-37,91
Bees	1.091.300	1.392.846	1.437.394	1.602.453	1.689.500	1.843.026	68,88

The average size of a farm remained low: 3,65 ha UAA / farm and increased by only 0,15 ha UAA / farm compared to 2010. This is 4,5 times smaller compared to the EU 28 average of 16,6 ha OR / farm. Regarding the average size related to the areas requested for EU direct payments, in 2016, this is 10,18 ha / farm, while in 2019 the average area is 12,24 ha / farm.

The processing industry has mostly collapsed as individual (small) farms do not have the economic power to add value to raw production. These changes are reflected in the import/export balance of food products in 2018, the main products / categories of exported products are: wheat, corn, sunflower seeds, cigarettes and rapeseed, and those imported are: pork, bakery products, pastries and biscuits, food, chocolate and animal feed.

The area under vines cultivated with grafted vines registers an upward trend annually, with an increase of 2,4% in 2018 compared to 2014, following the implementation of support measures notified through the National Support Programs in the wine sector, mainly the measure of restructuring / reconversion of vineyards.

² National Statistical Institute, 2021, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

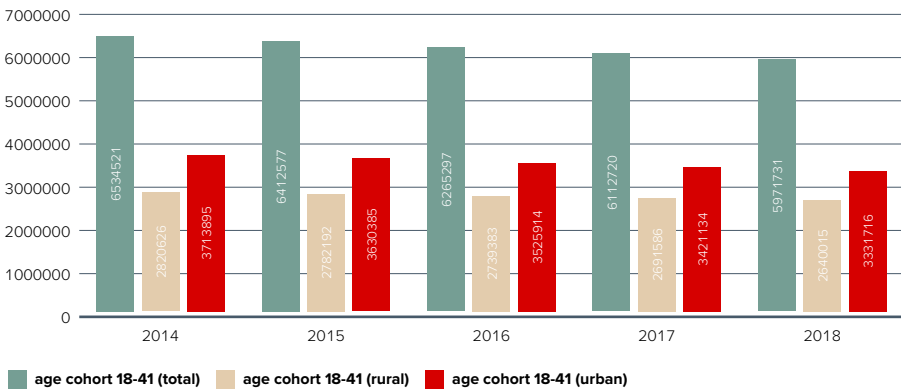
3.2 Overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the farming population

Romania’s population shrank from 22.8 to 19.47 million between 2000 and 2019 and is expected to keep falling. The shrinking quantity of labour is not compensated for by greater labour force participation, which—with an overall rate of 68,8% and 60,2% for women in 2017—is one of the lowest in the EU³.

The farming population has been dramatically affected by this phenomenon. Rural areas recorded a considerable decrease of the young population (0-17 years), respectively by 5,55% in 2018 compared to 2014. In terms of the working age population (18-41 years), the decrease is even stronger with 6,4% fewer young people in rural areas in 2018 compared to 2014.

Figure 4: The evolution of the age group 18-45 years by areas of residence 2014 – 2018

Source: INS



The population in rural areas between 42 and 65 years of age increased (by almost 2% in the reference period), and people over 65 years of age register a sharp increase by 2,28% by 2018. In 2016, the ratio between the number of farm managers under 40 was 7,45% and reflects the ageing of the sector’s workforce, which is more pronounced than in the EU28. This illustrates the phenomenon of population decline and ageing of

³ World Bank. 2018. *From Uneven Growth to Inclusive Development: Romania’s Path to Shared Prosperity*. Systematic Country Diagnostics. Washington, DC: World Bank.

the rural population, partly explained by the low interest of young people to settle in rural areas (Eurostat and INS).

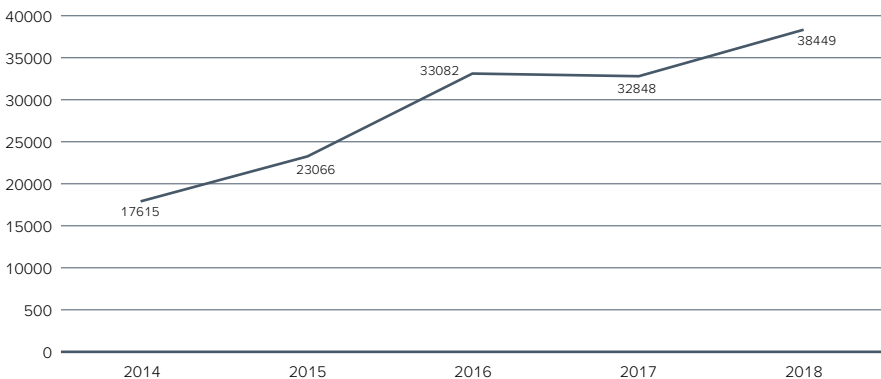
The **temporary emigration of young people (leaving for the first time) aged between 20 and 39 years increased by 21,38% in the last 4 years, while the permanent emigration (already left the country) of young people of the same age category increased by 54% from 2014 to 2018**. These data reflect the lack of interest of young people to return to the country. In the mountainous areas, the demographic decline becomes even more accentuated as economic activities are abandoned – especially farming – which increases labour migration and the exacerbation of the phenomenon of poverty.

Rural areas recorded a considerable decrease of the young population.

Regarding the distribution of the labour force in rural areas by sex, similar to the EU 28, men predominate in Romania (74,4%). Most farmers work their land individually (49,8%). The labor force employed in agriculture sector is only 4,5% of the actual working population, which is reflected in a low level of productivity as well. In 2016, the ratio between the number of farm managers under 40 was 7,45% and reflects the aging of the sector's workforce. Employment in the primary sector (agricultural, forestry and fisheries activities) decreased by 6,3 percent in the last 5 years (from 29,3% to 23%).

Figure 5: Distribution of permanent emigrants in the age group 20-39 years

Source: INS



In 2016, only 2,8% of farm managers graduated from agricultural education (basic education), out of which 0,4% graduated an agricultural university, compared to EU level 28 (31,6% basic and full education) while 96,7 % of Romanian managers had only practical agricultural experience, compared to the EU 28 average of 68,3%. Regarding the **training of young farm managers** (under 35 years old) in 2016, 3,2% completed basic education 0,9% complete full education and 89,6% had *only practical experience* agricultural.

The data provided by the paying agency, shows that after Romania's accession to EU, an increase of the uptake of financial support by new entrants' farmers who are interested to be more professionalized in farm management. There is also a clear trend of land consolidation, by decreasing the number of farms. This phenomenon however is impacting greatly the dynamic of the farming communities, increasing anxiety among farmers who don't succeed to adapt or to feel supported in making a transition to better livelihood.

3.3 Overview of the socio-economic characteristics of the farming population and evolution of farming

GDP per capita (EUR 5,880) for rural regions in Romania is 30% of the EU average (EUR 19,302) for rural regions, and 29% of compared with the GDP level generated in Romania's urban areas (EUR 20,221). 46% of the rural population is estimated to be at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion – compared to an average of 24% for rural regions in the EU-27 and 19% for cities in Romania.

The average disposable **income for a member of the household in urban areas is 1.9 times higher than in rural areas** and this is mainly the result of low agricultural productivity, especially for small subsistence farms which are predominantly in rural areas. Explanations for this include ageing, insufficient educational support, low level of investment in upgrading the farms and adding value to products.

From the point of view of the form of legal organisation, in 2016, **0,8% of the total number of agricultural holdings had legal personality, 98,8% were organized as individual agricultural holdings** (individuals, authorized individuals, and individual enterprises), **and 0,4% as family businesses.**

Most of the agricultural holdings in Romania register a **low level of economic development. In 2016, in the category <8.000 euro SO, there are**

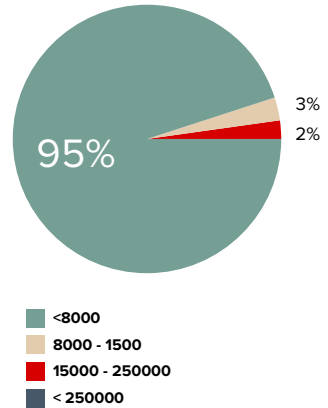
3.236.060 holdings (94,57% of the total number of holdings), of which 2.333.210 are part of the category < 2.000 euro SO.

In Romania, the **agricultural entrepreneurial income** (the income from the development of agricultural activities) increased constantly, in the period 2007-2018. However, agricultural entrepreneurial income in Romania is very low compared to the EU28 average (30,5% of the EU28 average), which places Romania on the penultimate place among EU countries 28.

These economic figures need to be understood as a consequence of different reforms of the agricultural sector focusing mainly on mainstreaming direct payments, rather than operating structural reforms to empower and prepare (small) farmers to develop farming/agri-food businesses, to increase productivity and added value, to become more resilient and competitive and store the value in family farm businesses (middle rural class). The **number of small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food industry sector decreased by 13%** during 2008-2011, amid the economic crisis, followed by an upward trend in the following years. As a result, in 2018 the number of enterprises were approximately 19% higher compared to 2011. Out of the total number of SMEs, in 2018 the largest share belonged to the manufacturing of bakery products and flour products (58.3%). Other sectors for which there were increases in the period 2008-2018 are: processing and preservation of fruits and vegetables (an increase of 339 units), manufacturing of other food products (eg manufacture of prepared meals) (increase of 240 units)⁴.

Figure 6: Structure of agricultural holdings by size classes (Euro Standard Output)

Source: Eurostat



Most of the agricultural holdings in Romania register a low level of economic development.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, National Strategic Plan for Romania 2020

There is a significant **decrease in the number of enterprises in the manufacturing of milling products** – such as wheat, rye or corn flours, (by 695 units) that used to be run at commune level as private small businesses, ensuring services and income for farming communities, the manufacturing of vegetable and animal oils and fats (by 115 units), the production, processing and preservation of meat and meat products (by 74 units), dairy production (with 63 units).

EU subsidies (direct payments) accessed by farmers have a great impact on the level of welfare of small farmers communities and the continuation of farming. Of the total number of farms registered in 2016 of **3.422.030**, **only 901.507 farms received area based payments (SAPS) for an areas of 9.177.354 ha, continuing to drop to 796.021 applicant farms in 2019, while the area covered increased to 9.748.666 ha**, due to land consolidation.

Table 3: Number of farms under direct payments and no of hectares under payments

Source: The Paying Agency for Agriculture

Year	No of farmers receiving SAPS payments	Surface under payments
2007	1.166.123	8.753.308
2008	1.085.379	8.921.359
2009	1.083.771	9.323.648
2010	1.070.398	9.376.561
2011	1.076.969	10.616.256
2012	1.071.212	9.753.167
2013	1.034.457	9.795.118
2014	1.011.771	9.823.088
2015	944.107	9.160.830
2016	901.507	9.177.354
2017	885.929	9.381.496
2018	869.185	9.477.767
2019	796.021	9.748.666

As the figures from table 4 show, the distribution of payments on farm size and number of hectares under payments shows that, farms between 100 ha – over 1000 ha representing **1,48% of the total number of farms receive 54% of the direct payments**, while **98,5% of farms** – between 5 – 100 ha – **receive 46% of the payments**.

Table 4: Number of farmers and direct payments

Source: The Paying Agency for Agriculture – 2019

Land Use	Without SAPS	Less 5 ha	5-50 ha	50-100 ha	100-300 ha	300-500 ha	500-1000 ha	Over 1000 ha	TOTAL
No. beneficiaries	52.929	607.693	186.778	8.866	8.355	2.094	1.591	879	869.185
Percentage	6,09%	69,92%	21,49%	1,02%	0,96%	0,24%	0,18%	0,10%	100%
Surface area	-	1.419.128	2.309.587	628.862	1.411.651	806.028	1.106.534	1.779.787	9.461.577
Percentage	-	15,00%	24,41%	6,65%	14,92%	8,52%	11,70%	18,81	100%

The fact that less than half of the farming areas are not yet registered and mapped in a cadastre, was **a significant obstacle for accessing the funds for modernizing farms**, but also for stimulating rural entrepreneurship. Land registration into cadastral evidence is a particularly expensive process for small farmers to undertake, despite its positive influence on the economic development of farming communities, adding to competitiveness and growth and overall revitalization/job creation in the countryside.

The data provided by the Paying Agency on the number of farmers receiving EU subsidies from 2007 (Romania's accession to the EU) till 2019, shows how over 12 years, 320.102 farms dropped from being eligible for funding, while the area under payments increased with about 1 million ha (land consolidation)⁵. Some of the new farmers are connected to foreign companies, but nevertheless apply for EU subsidies. This process has led to land grabbing in some parts of the country. It is hereby estimated that **about 40% of the agricultural land in Romania belongs to foreign investors (only 10% outside EU)**, according to a study the European Parliament carried out in 2015⁶. Also, for more on this, see EcoRuralis Association work⁷ and Transitional Institute or the series of websites promoting Romania for easy funding opportunities in agriculture for the investors especially from Western Europe⁸. This makes access to land too expensive

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, PNS, pg 4, https://www.madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/PAC_dupa_2020/2021/analiza_swot_pns-versiunea_III.pdf

⁶ European Parliament, Extend of farmland grabbing in the EU Study, 2015, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540369/IPOL_STU\(2015\)540369_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540369/IPOL_STU(2015)540369_EN.pdf)

⁷ <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Land-Grabbing-in-Romania>; <https://theblacksea.eu/stories/dutch-rabobank-buys-up-land-stolen-from-romanian-farmers/>

⁸ https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/export/sites/trade/files/market_studies/2017_Agriculture_Romania.pdf

for the local farmers and limiting the chances to enter or develop farming activities. This also accelerates the migration of the rural population, because precision farming (using high tech and performant equipment) does not require much labour.

Small businesses and entrepreneurship have struggled also to be competitive and enter value chains because of unpredictable regulations: the fiscal code has been changed 20 times in the last two years. This context creates an environment of economic unpredictability and encourages farmers not to elevate the economic performance, preferring to sell the raw production. The farmers interviewed, especially the young ones, keen to develop agro-food businesses to raise the level of income and quality products, mentioned that the lack of predictability of the fiscal and financial framework represent the main source of stress and frustration, leading often to discouragement and low entrepreneurial skills endowment and an overall low productivity.

Tax corruption, access to financing, the degree of red tape, political instability and inadequate infrastructure are just some of the main weaknesses affecting the further development of entrepreneurship in rural areas. All of these, in the absence of a functional farm advisory system, close to (especially small) farmers, delivering information, knowledge and guidance have been impacting even more significantly the farming communities. Another factor damaging competitiveness is an under-qualified labour force, which has continued to grow.

The impact of labour market developments during the economic crisis can be seen in the deteriorating social conditions and poverty. Very low-income households were hit hardest by the crisis and are finding it more difficult to recover compared to other categories of households. Young people aged between 15 and 24 are among the categories hardest hit, with employment falling from 37% in 1996 to 33% in 2000 and 24% in 2012. This also is the moment when the migration starts increasing and many people (active) from rural areas leaving to work abroad.

Rural poverty and social exclusion are manifested in different ways in Romania – from the poverty of the urban unemployed who returned to family smallholdings to practice subsistence agriculture as a social safety net to that of rural pensioners with low and inadequate pensions, to marginalized communities characterized by generations of low human capital, low formal employment and inadequate housing.

There are also the challenges faced by Roma families which constitute a large, young and extremely poor ethnic minority group in many rural areas and face continued exclusion from markets and services (World Bank, 2014). Adding to that, it is worth

mentioning **the specific phenomenon of the poverty and social disadvantage suffered by communities of small farmers in regions of large-scale intensive agriculture** (Otiman, 2012; Popovici et al., 2018).

The poor condition of **physical infrastructure** and limited access to schools is one of the most critical factors limiting development possibilities in rural Romania, especially in the mountainous areas and less developed regions of the country. Of the 31,639 km of minor village rural roads that are essential for linking many villages to county and national roads, only 7% have been modernized in recent years with the remainder being poorly maintained asphalt or gravel / dirt roads (around 30%). An estimated 25% of villages are inaccessible for long periods of the year due to snow or heavy rain.

Only a third of rural inhabitants have **access to public water and sewerage networks**, but the quality and reliability of water supply and wastewater services are generally poor. The majority of rural households continue to use water pulled / pumped from shallow wells, but in some regions the poor quality of drinking water from shallow wells continues to pose a significant health hazard (e.g. due to nitrate concentrations and microbial contamination).

Large variations in the risk of falling into poverty are also observed between regions. In three out of the eight NUTS2 development regions in Romania, more than 40% of the total population (rural and urban) are at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion – these are the north-east (44.7%), south-west Oltenia (42.2%) and south-east (40.3%)⁹.

The basic **social infrastructure** (health and education systems, finance, and credit provision etc.) are also less developed compared to urban areas. For example, only 7% of the total number of kindergartens registered at national level are in rural areas, whilst the number of rural inhabitants per doctor is estimated to be 1,722 – almost 7 times more than in urban areas.

All this has led to out-migration of a significant number of the farming population, especially of young people. With an estimated 3 to 5 million Romanians living and working abroad, in 2010 Romania ranked as the tenth main country of origin of migration flows in the G20, with highly educated emigrants accounting for 26,6 percent of the total¹⁰.

⁹ All data cited are from the datasheets of the EC Common Context Indicators for Rural Development Programmes (2014-2020): https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/cap-context-indicators-table_2019_en.pdf

¹⁰ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2021, SWOT analysis, National Strategic Plan for Romania, https://www.madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/PAC_dupa_2020/2021/analiza_swot_pns-versiunea_III.pdf

Especially young people in mountainous areas are gradually leaving permanently in search of easier living conditions and higher incomes in urban areas or in other countries.

The cultural identity of the Romanian village is an important source of local development and is characterized by a rich cultural heritage – including many intangible as well as tangible cultural assets. To keep the rural heritage and national identity unchanged and to use them as a local economic development tool, actions for the protection of cultural heritage of local interest, buildings and heritage monuments need to be supported.

3.4 “Rural household” vs “Farm” – a particularity

Many of the social (and economic) challenges mentioned above are rooted into Romania’s transition to the European concepts, like a “frozen in the project” phase – under on-going restructuring, but never finalised. Although embracing the benefits of becoming a member of the EU, Romania’s values were not carefully integrated. The term of **rural household (*gospodărie*)** used to represent the main connection of farming families, implies a certain form of life and consumption in common, but also the source of emotional comfort, strong feeling of belonging and identity, resilience, and connection.

While in the European Union, the most frequently used criteria in defining a household are the following: co-residence (living together in the same house), pooling and sharing the incomes and resources, sharing the expenses and ultimately, existence of family or emotional ties (United Nations, 2007), in Romania, the individual household represents a unit consisting of one or several physical persons, having in general kinship ties, who are living together and share the resources they have, who obtain agricultural products, mainly or exclusively for their own consumption.

“The rural households are complex (social, economic, spiritual) living systems, integrated into a specific environment, the rural environment”. “A household is a production workshop, based on the work of a family group, aiming at meeting its own consumption needs”. H.H. Stahl considered that the archaic peasant household is based on a family nucleus consisting of a married couple and their children and that on the household there is a certain labour division, by age and gender. Vulcănescu said that “meeting the family’s consumption needs (...) provides the peasant family with a greater resilience to crisis” (Bădescu, 2006).

The anthropologist Eric Wolf considered that “the peasant does not put an enterprise into operation in an economic sense, he manages a household, not a business”. “The peasant within the household is simultaneously a production and consumption unit”. “Between the peasant household and the capitalist enterprise there is a difference in structure. The capitalist enterprise revolves around money, as a fundamental element, while the *peasant household base is the family group*” (Bădescu, 2011).

“The backbone of the Romanian people, of the Romanian nation and contemporary state, was based on the peasant household, which meant *continuity and tradition*, and mainly spatial infrastructure specific to the rural area, which has generated agri-food resources for the entire population” (Bohateruț in Popescu and Istudor, 2017).

“The agricultural holdings without legal status, of individual household farm type are specific to the traditional peasant household”, these being “the pivot of Romanian rural society by overlapping with the households of the population from the rural area” (Bohateruț in Popescu and Istudor, 2017).

The main characteristic of rural households is that it is not fully subject to the modern economic laws, being rather governed by a series of less quantifiable principles (traditions, customs, traditional cultural patterns, etc.), which protected it in times of crisis, of transition, yet hindered it from technological, informational, economic, and social progress.¹¹

3.5 Main social challenges of the farming communities

“Traveling around Romania, one sees two countries: one urban, dynamic, and integrated within the EU; the other rural, poor and somewhat stuck in the past.” This was a remark in the World Bank report (2018) and an observation in the *Systematic Country Diagnostic for Romania*, assessing the obstacles to and opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth in Romania and the benefits of integration into EU¹². Romania has developed significantly since the collapse of the former communist regime in late 1989, but it continues to face formidable challenges, including wide

¹¹ Chițea, Lorena Florentina; Dona, Ion (2017): Defining aspects concerning the rural household and the sustainable socio-economic development in Romania, In: Agrarian Economy and Rural Development – Realities and Perspectives for Romania. 8th Edition of the International Symposium, November 2017, Bucharest, The Research Institute for Agricultural Economy and Rural Development (ICEADR), Bucharest, pp. 92-99

¹² <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/06/05/romania-thriving-cities-rural-poverty-and-a-trust-deficit/>

disparities in access to economic opportunities and in the prevalence of poverty across regions and between urban and rural areas.

In fact, many of the **social challenges of the farming communities reside in economic challenges**. The simple reality is that rural Romania – although richly endowed with natural resources – continues to be plagued by poverty and a huge gap in living / social standards between rural and urban areas.

Rural poverty in Romania has been well documented by research studies since the 1990s and these have most recently been reviewed in a background study (Tesliuc et al., 2015) for the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015-2020 (MLFSPE, 2015). These studies have repeatedly confirmed that poverty in Romania is not only an individual or family phenomenon, but it is also geographical and tends to be concentrated in “marginalized rural areas” within which the poverty is ‘transmitted’ from one generation to another – it therefore tends to be highly persistent and very challenging to address. An estimated **80% of all rural people living in poverty in Romania are in such persistent poverty**.

Extremely poor families face multiple constraints in addition to monetary poverty, including long-term adult unemployment or joblessness, poor child nutrition, a high risk of child neglect and/or abuse (associated with alcohol abuse), poor parenting practices, young or single parenthood, unstable marriages, poor health or disability, low school attendance or dropout, poor or no housing, domestic violence, petty crime, and discrimination. There are also problems of low aspirations, low self-esteem, and learned helplessness. Therefore, families in extreme poverty represent a particular challenge, not just in terms of skills and physical capital but also in terms of psychological issues. All these factors affect the quality of life in rural areas, hamper economic development, increase out-migration and exacerbate health and environmental problems.

More detailed insights into the mapping of “**marginalised rural areas**” in Romania are provided in World Bank (2016)¹³.

¹³ More detailed insights into the mapping of “marginalised rural areas” in Romania are provided in World Bank (2016) <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/290551467995789441/pdf/103191-WP-P147269-Box394856B-PUBLIC-Background-Study-EN.pdf>

3.5.1 Loss of identity and erosion of social status

Romania's accession to the EU has impacted greatly the nature of rural communities, shifting abruptly from a general and deeply accepted term of "peasant" into "farmer". The most widespread and socially accepted term is "peasant" – a terminology mostly used by sociologist when analysing rural dynamics. The ongoing transition to harmonize rural areas with the EU framework, has seriously eroded the fiber of rural communities.

Katy Fox, offering important insights into the process of reshaping the livelihoods of farmers and semi-subsistence producers in a globalised world in her investigation "**Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania**" understands the term 'peasant' as a 'source of significant economic difference' (Fox: 41). The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is hereby analysed in terms of policies, elites, and livelihood possibilities for the peasants. The Romanian peasantry (related to the subsistence farms and peasant households) is hereby confronted with the "intelligible, efficient, standardized and commensurable" vision of the EU model.

The author shows how restructuring local and national markets led to the **acceleration of commercialization of large-scale agriculture and to the exclusion of small-scale producers** – trends reflected in the statistical data mentioned above. This exclusion resulted in questioning the logics of the market and feelings of devaluation of the 'traditional peasant' identities, which are strongly interconnected with animal husbandry and home production in general. **Peasants became losers and winners**, or persons 'made in socialism' and persons 'made in capitalism' and not feeling valued for keeping the villages alive, for providing certain public services such as the mosaic landscapes they produce through traditional extensive grazing. Another tool contributing to **devaluation and loss of identity** is the EU policy of direct payments. The entire procedure of implementing the policy created a cartographic illusion (moving from land as territory, which is a "sensuous reality", to land as a map) and suggested an absolutely agentive model of personhood¹⁴. The procedure created local tensions and enhanced divides within villages – peasants versus experts.

Integration, although bringing many benefits, did not give all rural inhabitants the ability to participate as smaller producers. Information about programmes was

¹⁴ Monica Vasile, 2013, Katy Fox – Book review, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264590176_Peasants_into_European_farmers_EU_integration_in_the_Carpathian_Mountains_of_Romania_by_Fox_Katy_Book_review

meant to be diffused through institutions that did not have the capacity to do so and, moreover, it were the peasants who were then blamed for their supposed unawareness. Training activities did not take into consideration local ideas of work. And finally, welfare reproduces stereotypes of progress, productivity, specialization, and efficiency, although these stereotypes do not correlate with the people's idea of a good life. Quite to the contrary, such ideals proved to incite increasing polarization. However, as the peasants did not fit into these neoliberal logics, most lost their orientation, generating a feeling of unrooted/unbelonging. Their real lives unfold more ambivalently, and life projects are based on hopes and possibilities¹⁵.

During the meetings and interviews organised for this report, we sensed this tension between the young generations of producers and the elders, between the focus on modernising the farms vs modernising the community as a source of frustration and anxiety, low self-esteem and low level of motivation or vision.

3.5.2 Poor access to education and to lifelong learning

Investment in education remains one of the lowest in the EU (3.7% of GDP). This gap is particularly relevant at pre-primary and primary levels of education which are key to preventing early school leaving at village level, ensuring equal opportunities and tackling **inequalities later in life**. Year by year, there has been an increase in **early school leaving**, and this is significantly higher in rural areas (27,1%). The context is not helped by the fact that the number of teachers available in farming communities is significantly reduced and not all the time very well trained to cope with challenging situations imposed by the social conditions of children in rural areas.

The economic crisis from 2009-2012 and falling living standards that followed have affected particularly the rural areas, have led to increasing rates of **early school leaving** in both rural and urban areas, particularly in secondary and vocational education, but also in post-secondary education. Looking at data accumulated between 2007 and 2012, drop-out rates for primary and secondary school (10-14 years old) education rose by around 9%, rates for secondary school (14-18 years old) rose by around 19% and rates for post-secondary education rose by around 28%¹⁶.

Starting with 2013 around 28% of young people dropped out of school, which will affect their ability to join the labour market. Lack of experience will be exacerbated by lack of proper education, and these two factors will substantially reduce the likelihood of young people in rural areas finding decent jobs.

¹⁵ Idem 12

¹⁶ Enache Steluța Georgeta (2015), EESC study "*The economic and social situation in Romania*", pp 6-7

On the another hand, **the political environment and full recognition of diplomas are among the most important obstacles to return and work in Romania**¹⁷ for the ones who want to come back. The obstacles reflect institutional requirements. Romania lags behind in several dimensions of governance compared with EU27 (World Governance Indicators 2016), mainly in terms of control of corruption and government effectiveness. This showcases the **need for improving the institutional environment to make Romania more attractive for the high-skilled labor force studying and working abroad.**

Vocational training/retraining programmes need to be recalibrated to ensure that they are more effective and seen as a link between education and employment, that could help farmers to adapt, become more resilient and thus reduce the level of stress and anxiety in front of new situations. Romania ranked last in 2016 in terms of adult participation in lifelong learning, with only 7 percent of the population between 25 and 64 years participating in education and training, compared with the EU28 average of 16,6 percent. Social reconversion is not supported by the offer of vocational trainings which could help farmers to learn how to farm or produce better and more professionally (farmers interviewed expressed the willingness to learn how to add value to their products), new skills (including entrepreneurial or non-farming ones – such as tourism and guiding, crafts etc), adapt to new situations (including adapting to climate change effects – more resistant crops, renewable energy options etc). Women especially would benefit of vocational training, to encourage them to become more active and earn more money.

To prevent school dropout among the most disadvantaged children, in the school year 2017/2018, approx. 360,000 children from preschool, primary and lower secondary education receive school materials.

3.5.3 Low household-income level

Income inequality remains well above the EU average. As shown in the Social Scoreboard accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights, the income of the top 20% of the population exceeds by 6,5 times the incomes of the bottom 20% (EU: 5.1) (Eurostat). High income inequality levels are experienced particularly within the working-age population, and can be attributed more to the poorer being relatively poorer rather than the richer getting relatively richer. The rate of in-work poverty is five

¹⁷ World Bank, 2018, Romania – Systematic Country Diagnostic Report – Migration, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBBackground-NoteMigration.pdf>

times higher for low-educated workers than for university graduates. Men are more exposed to this risk than women.

However, women are twice as likely as men to be inactive¹⁸, generating a feeling of being undervalued and not socially recognized as being important. In farming communities, 12% of respondents of a World Vision survey¹⁹ said that women who work cannot care for their children as well as non-working women, 36% believe that women do not need to be valued both personally and professionally, so some choose to take care of the household and not become active; 16% think that men cannot take care of children as well as women; and 16% believe that men can manage businesses better than women.

The situation is particularly critical for young and middle-aged women whose inactivity rate is 5 pps above the EU average, mainly due to personal and family responsibilities, which makes life in the rural areas as being difficult and unattractive. This is primarily due to low participation of children aged 0-3 in formal childcare (15,7% in 2017). The lack of efficient measures to promote an early return of women to the labor market further aggravates the situation. The inactivity rates of women aged 25-49 are 24.7% for RO and 19.7% for the EU (Q3-2018, Eurostat data).²⁰ The self-esteem and sense of purpose of women in farming communities are strongly affected by inactivity, many choosing to leave the country and work abroad to provide their children and family with additional income.

3.5.4 Out-Migration

As illustrated earlier in this mapping paper, migration in Romania has reached an alarmingly high level. Importantly, the spatial distribution of migration positively correlates with the distribution of social exclusion risks. The areas most affected by external migration are the more remote and densely populated ones, lacking a large and dynamic urban center as in the case of Subcarpathian Moldova (Suceava, Neamt, Bacau, Vrancea) as well as Satu-Mare, Maramures and Bistrita²¹. These regions are predominantly rural, with small and medium sized cities not having the economic capacity to absorb the excess labor force (World Bank 2017). According to the World

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en

¹⁹ The research sample included 2,186 households, from 65 of the villages in which WVR carries or has carried out its activities. We collected information from 2,186 adults and 2,258 children aged between 7 and 18 years old. The data collected has been analyzed comparatively for the period 2012 – 2018.

²⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en

²¹ World Bank, Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic – Migration – Background notes, 2018, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCD-BackgroundNoteMigration.pdf>

Bank, in 2019, remittances totaled 7.2 billion dollars, representing 3% of Romania's GDP. Most of the money was invested to modernize the houses or to buy properties.

Parental migration when the child is left in the country of origin may have **long-term implications for his development and future life**. Children of migrant parents in farming communities may be **psychologically harmed, be less involved in school activities**, and more involved in work tasks. There are several qualitative studies documenting these effects in the case of Romanian children (see UNICEF 2008 for details). Increased divorce rates and decreased birth rates are also associated with migration, especially for communities vulnerable to marginalization or exclusion (Sandu 2009).

A study dated in 2019²², analysing the impact over the 11-15 years old children, reveals that in Romania, parents' migration is linked to more serious health problems and to an increased likelihood of suffering from depression. Also, research indicates that living in a migratory household is less harmful for boys, with girls more likely to suffer depression as a result of parents' migration. **Left-behind children from rural areas are significantly more likely to have health problems** than those from urban areas. Children from the urban sample are significantly less likely to be bullied at school.

Migrating parents in rural areas are vulnerable because of the high percentage of low-skilled labor²³. This leads them to work in low paid jobs. It also decreases their capacity to integrate into the Romanian labor market when returning, because of the lack of jobs on the local labor market and low wages (Vasile 2014, Eurofound 2012). Moreover, their working conditions are in many cases below the standards of the destination country, especially in construction or agriculture (Vasile 2014), even if they are legal workers. This leads to burn-out, feeling undervalued, dissatisfied and without a sense of achievement. Also, the migration of the active working populations (age 30-45) is leading to gaps between generations, the elders left behind feeling insecure about who they can rely on in times of need.

Participation in education is lower for children with both parents working or living abroad. Age and having one or both parents working or living abroad are predictors of the participation rate in education (World Bank 2015). **Children are more likely to leave school** if they are in primary school or if they are older than 15, the minimum legal age for working. The impact also varies, depending on the migration

²² Alina Botezat, Friedhelm Pfeiffer, *The impact of parental labour migration on left-behind children's educational and psychosocial outcomes: Evidence from Romania*, 2019, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y_J6-BQZDk_UdYZ9vZmYvPLIMgDymID2/view

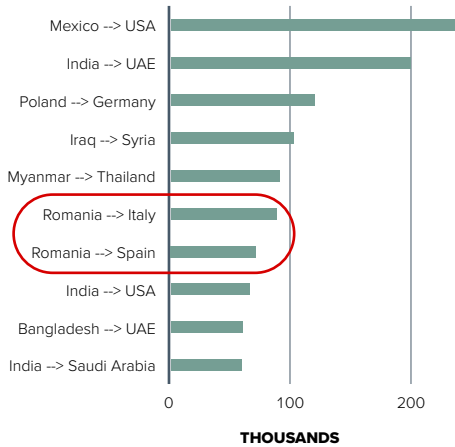
²³ Idem 24

status. If one parent is working or living abroad while the other remains at home with the child, the participation rate marginally increases. If both parents work abroad, children, lacking parental guidance, are more likely to abandon school. In this case, the participation rate drops by an average of 15 percent, with the highest decrease registered for children older than 15.

Between 2000 and 2010 the Romanian migration abroad tripled, from about 1,1 million to about 3,4 million, showcasing not only the impact of EU accession but also the magnitude of the phenomenon, leading to social and economic implications. In the same vein, between 2006 and 2007 the number of Romanians residing in Italy and Spain doubled, from about 800 thousand in 2006 to about 1,75 million in 2007 (Suciu 2010). The magnitude and the short time span of the increase raised the risks of marginalization and exclusion for children with one or both parents working abroad (UNICEF 2008) and had negative implications for the labor market.²⁴

Figure 7: Top ten bilateral migration corridors of international migration 2000-2010

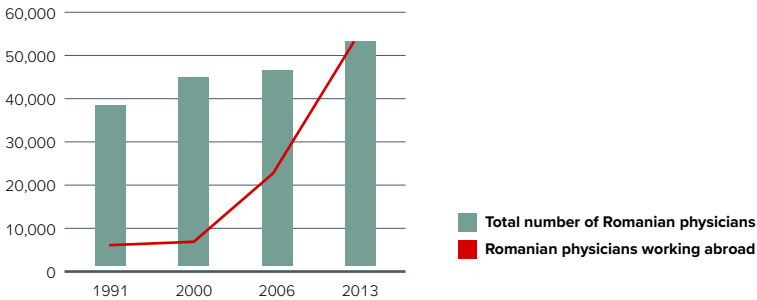
(Source: United Nation – 2015)



²⁴ Idem 25

Figure 8

Source: National Institute of Statistics, OECD, Eurostat, WHO, Bharava et al (2010)



Romania registered one of the largest increases of high-skilled emigration into the G20 countries in the 2000s. Romania is the tenth main country of origin in terms of migration flows in the G20, according to the OECD²⁵. In terms of high-skilled immigration into the G20 countries, Romania recorded the largest increase in the first decade of this century (about 492,000 persons in 2010–11). The number of highly educated female migrants more than doubled between 2000–01 and 2010–11, whereas the increase has been lower for men.

The number of physicians working abroad exceeded 14 thousand as of 2013, representing more than 26 percent of the total number of Romanian physicians. Between 1991 and 2013 the outflow of physicians increased nine times. The figures reflect an increasing deficit of medical specialist which its more evident if we take into account that between 2000 and 2013 the number of physicians working in Romania increased by 18 percent while those working abroad increased by more than 650 percent²⁶. **Rural communities have been mostly impacted by this deficit and reduced access to health services.** The absolute values also indicate the magnitude of the outflows, with the number of physicians working abroad in EU countries almost tripling in a span of 7 years, from 2007 to 2013.

²⁵ Chiswick B., Hatton T. (2003), "International Migration and the Integration of Labor Markets", in Bordo M.D., Taylor A. M., Williamson J.G. (eds.) Globalization in Historical Perspective, University of Chicago Press, 65-120

²⁶ Chiswick B., Hatton T. (2003), "International Migration and the Integration of Labor Markets", in Bordo M.D., Taylor A. M., Williamson J.G. (eds.) Globalization in Historical Perspective, University of Chicago Press, 65-120

3.5.5 Health and nutrition

Romania has among the lowest life expectancies in the EU. This reflects unhealthy behaviours, but also socioeconomic inequalities as well as substantial deficiencies in health service delivery.

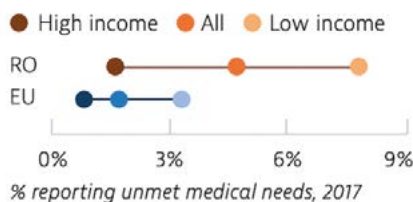
Besides financial costs, the unequal distribution of health facilities and health workers poses barriers to accessing care, especially for those living in rural areas.

The Social Health Insurance system provides a comprehensive benefit package – however, about 11% of the population **remains uninsured**, particularly from rural communities and is entitled to only a minimal basket of services²⁷. Key challenges for the health system include fixing the imbalance between primary care and hospital care, and tackling the growing shortages of health professionals.

Most health spending is publicly funded (79%), but the share of out-of-pocket expenditure (around 20%) can be substantial, particularly for vulnerable people. Most out-of-pocket spending is on pharmaceuticals. Besides financial costs, the unequal distribution of health facilities and health workers poses barriers to accessing care, especially for those living in rural areas. Current gaps in population coverage for social health insurance also leave certain groups exposed, such as people without an identity card (affecting the Roma population disproportionately), people without income who are not registered for social benefits, or those in the informal economy who do not declare their incomes²⁸.

Figure 9: State of Health in the EU – Romania

Country Health Profile 2019, OECD



²⁷ World Bank, Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic – Migration – Background notes, 2018, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBackgroundNoteMigration.pdf>

²⁸ Idem 27

In terms of accessibility and availability of health services, a substantial proportion of the population reports unmet needs for medical care; moreover, there are significant regional, ethnic and income-related disparities in access. People in rural areas, those from marginalised communities, and lower socioeconomic groups all face greater barriers to care. This pattern is repeated in the uneven distribution of doctors, with access challenges exacerbated by poor transport infrastructure.

The health and nutrition of the child in the rural environment still presents a series of problems, in relation to both hygiene and food quality, and the permanent access to medical services. Deficient hygiene creates a series of problems in the rural environment, which can affect the health of children, especially when it comes to households without sanitary facilities (indoor bathroom, toilet and current water), which usually are also poorer. About 20% of the children in the households without indoor toilet or current water do not wash their hands after using the toilet.

In the rural environment, child's nutrition deteriorated compared to previous years, in terms of quality and quantity, about two thirds of the families being forced, in the past year, to buy cheaper (71%) or fewer (61%) products, due to financial constraints. Even though the financial situation of households has improved during the past six years, 9% of the children in the rural environment eat 2 meals per day only sometimes, 2% never do, 6% sometimes go to bed hungry, while 3% always do, 5% only sometimes have enough food to eat, and 3% never have enough food, in 5% of the cases the family never has enough income to buy what they need (including clothing and footwear). Access to primary health care improved within the past 8 years in the Romanian rural environment, 81% of the respondents declaring that in 2018 the doctor is present always on working days, compared to 65% recorded in 2014. However, 3,5% declare that the doctor is present in the commune only once a week or even less, and 2% say there is not doctor in the locality, which makes their access to primary health care not permanent, and delaying the treatment and diagnosis of their various diseases.

However, 3,5% declare that the doctor is present in the commune only once a week or even less, and 2% say there is not doctor in the locality, which makes their access to primary health care not permanent, and delaying the treatment and diagnosis of their various diseases.

When it comes to pregnant women, access to healthcare remains faulty, as during their pregnancy 6% of them were not examined

once by their family doctor, 9% haven't had any tests, 14% haven't had any ultrasounds, and 20% were not subjected to any gynecological exam during their pregnancy. The importance of medical examinations during the child's first two years of life is not known in the rural environment.

For this reason, in 16% of the households with children aged 0 to 2, the family doctor hasn't performed any visits during the child's first 2 years of life, while the community nurses have failed to visit 45% of them. 10% of the mothers have not given their children vitamin D products during the child's first 2 years, (0-18 years old) and 37% of the 0-2 years old children didn't receive anaemia prevention supplements.

3.5.6 Impoverishment

Poverty is the red line, connecting the vicious circle of social challenges in Romania. In 2018, the head of the European Commission office in Romania declared that "Romania still displays **a paradox of social inequality and poverty**, while the country's economic growth stays above the European Union average. Tellingly, one in two Romanian children face poverty risks".²⁹

According to the 2019 edition of the European Semester one in three Romanians are still at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Despite a decline of 2 pps compared to 2016, monetary poverty is one of the highest in the EU, affecting 23.6% of the total population in 2017.

41,7% of children are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Poverty and social exclusion levels in rural areas are more than twice as high as those in cities. Causes of poverty include inactivity, low educational attainment, intergenerational transmission of poverty and lack of inter-regional mobility. At 18,1% in 2017, the rate of early leavers from education and training (ages 18-24) remains one of the highest in the EU. In rural areas the rate of poverty is 27,1% and among the Roma 77%³⁰, 38,7% of children up to 15 years old are functionally illiterate³¹.

In 2014, 72% of families could not provide a minimum acceptable diet to their children under 5 years old³². Poverty and social exclusion levels in rural areas are more than

²⁹ <https://www.romania-insider.com/ec-inequality-poverty-romania>

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-romania_en_0.pdf

³¹ <https://cdn.edupedu.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Rapoarte-Romania-Educata.pdf> , pg 23

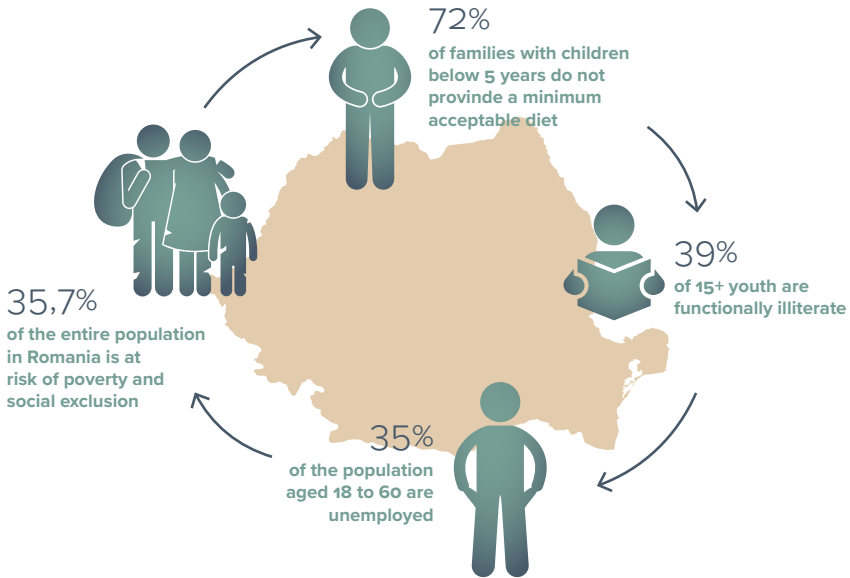
³² World Vision Romania. "“Bread for Tomorrow” Programme – a chance for education for children living in poor communities” 01 November 2016. <https://www.wvi.org/romania/article/bread-tomorrow-programme-chance-education-children-living-poor-communitie>

twice as high as those in cities. The high share of unpaid families from rural areas contributes to this rate. Also, people living in poverty are more likely to develop mental health problems that are more severe, last longer, and have worse outcomes than average.³³

More than 1.5 million people earn under EUR 3 per day (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018)³⁴ and 3.9 million people suffer from severe material deprivation, most of them in rural communities. Opportunities are unequal, in many respects. **High poverty levels are associated with unemployment, low education attainment, high intergenerational transmission of poverty and regional disparities.** Socioeconomic status greatly affects students' performance, deterring sustainable growth in the long-run. The education and care systems are not conducive to sufficiently independent living and to the employability of people with disabilities³⁵.

Figure 10: The vicious cycle of poverty – low house-hold income – outmigration in Romania

Source: World Vision



³³ Kuddo, A. (2012) *Public Employment Services and Activation Policies*. Washington D.C.: World Bank. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALPROTECTION/Resources/SP-Discussion-papers/Labor-Market-DP/1215.pdf>

³⁴ <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/bukarest/14759.pdf>

³⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en

3.6 Social (and economic) needs of farming communities in Romania (literature review and interviews)

- Connect socio-economic analysis developed at national level with the realities on the ground and address poverty, migration and social status of the “farmer” affecting rural communities in Romania.
- Identify ways to engage and involve as many small farmers as possible (not just “copy-paste” to fit the EU framework).
- Registering the properties in the national system of cadaster and improving the manner of grants offering for the small areas, as well as the increase in the level of professional preparation of the farmers by promoting the vocational and agricultural technical schools.
- Protect the farmers leaving farming activities (land consolidation) by orientating them towards non-farming activities for maintaining the villages and communities alive.
- Strengthen targeted activation policies and integrated public services, focusing on those furthest from the labour market.
- Give special priority to education – increase financial allocation and targeted support (allocate 6% of GDP to education instead of the current 3.7%)³⁶.
- Improve access to quality mainstream education, especially for Roma and children in rural areas.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social transfers, particularly for children, and continue social assistance reform.
- Integrated social services should be made available for rural communities;
- Ensure stronger commitment to cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially at grassroots level;
- Promotion of active labour market policies. Development of rural and urban entrepreneurship. Development of social entrepreneurship³⁷
- Creation of a community integrated intervention team.
- Preventing the division of families.

³⁶ Manuela Gazibar and Loredana Giuglea, Inequalities in Romania – a Make Europe Sustainable for All (MESA) report, World Vision Romania, 2019, <https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/13.3.a-report-RO.pdf>

³⁷ European Parliament’s Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Social and employment policies in Romania Study, List of measures included in the anti-poverty package, pp. 75-76, 2019 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626064/IPOL_STU\(2018\)626064_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/626064/IPOL_STU(2018)626064_EN.pdf)

- Deinstitutionalisation and transition towards community care.
- Facilitate knowledge and expertise to improve local governance at village level and undertake measures for building “smart-villages” by integrating social economy;
- Improve the efficiency of the health system, with increased funding and better outpatient care, focusing on rural areas and the most vulnerable.
- The “Leave no one behind” principle should identify and address the causes of vulnerabilities and inequalities and promote respect for human rights³⁸.
- Adopt a holistic “sustainable” approach of the rural development, integrating economic – social – health/environment – education/children inclusive elements, rather than a fragmented one³⁹.
- Ensuring food aid including by creating mobile social canteens, especially in isolated and disadvantaged rural areas.
- Promotion of a national programme based on the model of the project ‘first light’ (photovoltaic panels in isolated rural areas)⁴⁰.

³⁸ Idem 9

³⁹ Chițea, Lorena Florentina; Dona, Ion (2017): Defining aspects concerning the rural household and the sustainable socio-economic development in Romania, In: Agrarian Economy and Rural Development – Realities and Perspectives for Romania. 8th Edition of the International Symposium, 2017

⁴⁰ Idem 10

4.

Analysis of selected themes in social challenges

4.1 Prioritization of the two topics

Following the literature review and the desk research, a list of 15 social challenges have been identified. These challenges have been analyzed, debated, and ranked by a group made up by sociologist, researchers, policy makers, NGOs active in the field of social assistance, support for education and women in rural areas. The respondents were asked to evaluate from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) the identified challenges. The selected challenges were then validated with farmers and local relevant stakeholders during follow-up meetings.

Below is the full list of social challenges and the score which set the prioritization of the most important ones: **Loss of identity and erosion of social status, Poor access to education and to life-long learning, Low household income level, Out-migration and Impoverishment** – being also the ones validated by farmers as affecting mostly their communities.

Table 6: Social Challenges (at national level) related to wellbeing of farmers and of rural communities

no	Social Challenges (at national level)	Ranking	Validation by farmers and other stakeholders
1	Poor access to education and to lifelong learning	3,2	Yes – Cause for low productivity, migration, and low household income
2	Poor physical infrastructure and access to basic services	2,6	Yes
4	Poverty	3,2	Yes – Cause for migration, poor access to education, low income, and better jobs
5	Out-Migration	2,8	Yes – identified as one challenge
6	Early school dropping		
7	Low household income level	3	Yes
8	No functional Farm Advisory Services for small farmers	2,4	-
9	Low connectivity rural-urban	2,5	-
10	Loss of identity and social statue	3	Yes – cause for anxiety, loss of perspective
11	Fragmentation of rural communities – intergenerational gaps	1,8	-
12	Ageing of farmers	2,5	-
13	Anxiety and insecurity due to inadaptation to market pressure and fiscal changes	2,5	Yes – cause for anxiety, loss of perspective, low income
14	Women undervalued in farming communities	2,3	-
15	Health and nutrition	2,5	-

According to the ranking, resulted 5 social challenges scoring above 2,8. Challenge no 1 – Poor access to education and to lifelong learning and challenge no 4 – Poverty obtaining equal score of 3,2. Since poverty is a structural challenge demanding structural interventions, based on interviewing the stakeholders, we decided to further analyse the poor access to education and to lifelong learning. Also, between challenge no 7 – low household income level and challenge no 10 – loss of identity and social statue obtaining same score, the one voted to further analyse is low household income. The two challenges selected are also the ones for which we have identified relevant social innovations as potential solutions and inspirations.

Following the literature review and the desk research, a list of 15 social challenges have been identified. These challenges have been analyzed, debated, and ranked by a group made up by sociologist, researchers, policy makers, NGOs active in the field of social assistance, support for education and women in rural areas.

4.2 Challenge N°1: Poor access to education and to lifelong learning

A. Social challenge identified:

Poor access to education and to lifelong learning

Most of the farming communities are affected by high levels of school dropout. Often, children and young people are too busy with domestic chores to attend school, especially in the absence of easy connections with school facilities.

- **Type of social challenge: Regulation and Policy**
- **Describe the social challenge:** Most of the farming communities are affected by high levels of school dropout. Often, children and young people are too busy with domestic chores to attend school, especially in the absence of easy connections with school facilities. The agricultural high-schools are struggling with keeping together the didactical farms, while the curricula requires significant reviewing for being connected with practice and job requirements.
- **Where does this social challenge manifest itself?** The challenge manifests itself all over the country, especially at primary and gymnasium school. There is a trend of increased farm professionalization around big urban and university centres such as Cluj, Iasi, Timisoara areas, where young people (who can afford) can pursue higher education, especially in agriculture.

B. Impact of social challenge

Inadequate education has a strong effect on unemployment as lack of experience, but is also **reducing the access to funding, to growth and a purpose in life**. For some sectors and some jobs, experience is more valuable than education, while the opposite applies in other sectors. The simple reality is that in Romania there is a fundamental lack of knowledge and training to support **young people to become more confident in taken over the farms or to improve the farm productivity**. Poorly educated people are more likely to be unemployed, and in the long term this will increase the duration of unemployment in farming communities. This greatly affects the ability of those young people to enter or remain active in the labour market, by this, villages turning into “social-economic

traps”, young people deciding to leave for the city or abroad where the range of jobs options. A low level of education in early stages of life turns into rigidity to learn new things and to adapt, in other words to become resilient.

a) Individuals and families:

- **Mental wellbeing:**

A well-trained mind is more capable to cope with challenges, to adapt, to remain flexible when solving problems, to broaden the perspective and stay creative. During interviews and meetings, it was being stressed that a low level of education generates anxiety, stress, and lack of purpose in life.

- **Physical wellbeing:**

Poor education leads to unbalanced lifestyles, especially in rural communities, where the incidence of alcohol and tobacco consumption is higher, with direct impact on the physical wellbeing. Also, poor education results in poorly paid jobs, most of them involving exclusively physical work over the farm, negatively impacting on physical health in very early stages of life.

- **Social wellbeing:**

Low access to proper jobs, reduced chances for growing and prosperity, families feeling trapped into a confined and restricted environment.

b) Farming community and wider rural community

- **Larger societal impacts:**


Poor educated rural communities not aware and become an easy prey for land grabbing and source of unproductive labor. Also, there is a certain understanding in the farming communities that learning finishes when leaving school. Learning is hereby not considered a lifelong process. The model in the society is represented mainly by the ones who succeeded to make money and not necessarily who graduated successfully a school doesn't help either for young people to find school desirable or a condition for a “good life”.

During interviews and meetings, it was being stressed that a low level of education generates anxiety, stress, and lack of purpose in life.

Also, poor education results in poorly paid jobs, most of them involving exclusively physical work over the farm, negatively impacting on physical health in very early stages of life.

C. What are the main causes of the problems identified?

- 1 Lack of sufficient financial allocation for education at the national level – 3,7% of GDP is insufficient to address the complexity of needs, especially in remote villages
- 2 Mayors and decision makers are not setting education as a priority for the communities (children don't vote and cannot speak for themselves)
- 3 Lack of communication and collaboration between institutions – agricultural education is underestimated by both Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education, there are insufficient protocols and agreements between the two institutions to develop vocational farming centres
- 4 Lack of connections between research – education – innovation for connecting the curricula with real and practical jobs that are needed in the farming sector
- 5 Poverty – generalized poverty is making a rural family (and community)'s life to focus on survival such as food and shelter and less on education and growth
- 6 Lack of social service close to rural/ farming communities – cantinas providing warm food attached to schools for attracting children and families to attend classes, subventions for miscellaneous necessary for school activities
- 7 No differential approach for the development between rural and urban and funds allocated in consequence
- 8 High level of parents migrating and leaving children behind
- 9 No dedicated measures to address left-behind children by the parents working abroad



D. How do farmers/farming deal with the negative impact on wellbeing?

- There is a generalised anxiety and high stress level among farmers when interacting with institutions or administrative choirs. For instance, some farmers declared that because of the poor understanding of information and legislation, they did not declare incomes from farming and had their bank accounts closed. As a result, they further avoid interacting with public institutions as much as possible.
- Some farmers rely on their more educated peers or indulgent civil servants to help them understand and follow with applications or compliance related to administrative choirs.
- In the absence of a functional farm advisory system, internet is often cited by farmers as being the source of information (less knowledge).

How far are these solutions effective/ineffective?

The way that farmers deal with the low level of education doesn't represent necessarily a solution, but rather a compromise.

How does the farmer attempt to deal with the negative impacts on his/her mental, physical and social problem?

Low level of education is a sensitive subject to be addressed directly or openly in farming communities, especially with children, being regarded as a shame their families are carrying. Relatives of the migrating parents from the farming communities remain mostly as the responsible ones to covering the children and ensuring they attend schools. State institutions are not active in stimulating and ensuring that children go to school.

The most important impact of these innovations is the message they send to the individuals in need, to families and to the overall community – that somebody cares about them and is taking action to support them on such a complex question.

Are there any relevant social innovations present to deal with these social challenges?

- **World Vision** international organisation is offering every year over 200 scholarships to support children from rural communities to graduate high school and aim for higher education.
- The same organization dedicated a programme for fund-raising for ensuring a meal for the children in poor villages, motivating them to attend school.
- A strategic partnership is set up by non-profit or private entities. For instance, **Teach for Romania** implements and funds a programme at national level, recruiting individuals who voluntarily want to become teachers in marginalized villages in Romania, training them to teach and develop after-school programmes to support children not to drop out of school.
- **Edubuzz** is an educational hub project, ensuring an after-school programme to support children to keep up with homework and information in school and assist them in coping with finding a balance between domestical chores, playing and learning. It is set up by two teachers in one of the disadvantaged rural areas in the Brasov region, where early school drop is very high.

How far has the farmer access to these social innovations?

The innovations are not well known by farmers as there is little flow of such information at village level.

What is the impact of these social innovations on the individual farmer/farming family?

The most important impact of these innovations is the message they send to the individuals in need, to families and to the overall community – that somebody cares about them and is taking action to support them on such a complex question. Particularly children from these rural communities are giving a chance to hope and to dream that they can have a bright future, regardless of whether they will continue farming or choose another activity/ job.

The innovations also help farming families to feel less overwhelmed by somebody else providing educational services.

4.3 Challenge N°2: Low household income level

A. Social challenge identified: Low household income level

- **Type of social challenge:**
economic and financial/policy challenge
- **Describe the social challenge:**
Low household income is an economic challenge that is impacting greatly on the state of farmers and their communities' wellbeing. In the 2018 World Vision Romania Child Wellbeing in the rural areas research, **more than half of the rural households (53, 3%) confess that they are facing financial issues**, as their income is placed in the vulnerable category (15,2% define their income as being insufficient to cover their basic necessities, and 38,1% say that their income hardly covers one month). Only over one third (38,3%) are able to manage with the income they have⁴¹. As a result, most of elders in rural communities are forced to carry on working much longer after the pension age in order to supplement their income.
- **Where does this social challenge manifest itself?**
The phenomenon is widespread all over the country, but it's particularly prominent in the poverty polders – region of NE and South and Southeast, where intensive farming is concentrated in bigger farms, but also where the urban-rural connection is more fragmented, and the development of bigger urban centres is lagging behind as well (less job opportunities).
- **Who is affected by this social challenge?**
Farming families with children and young people. Also, women in rural communities are especially vulnerable because they usually spend fewer years in paid employment

Low household income is an economic challenge that is impacting greatly on the state of farmers and their communities' wellbeing.

⁴¹ https://worldvision.ro/media/presa/studii-si-rapoarte/RO_WVR_Child%20Well-being%20Report%20eng.pdf

women in rural communities are especially vulnerable because they usually spend fewer years in paid employment and earn lower wages (thus accumulating smaller pension entitlements).

and earn lower wages (thus accumulating smaller pension entitlements). Also, they often outlive their partners and end up living alone and face higher living costs as a result and thus are at a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, especially with the context of increasingly more expensive costs for utilities (especially energy). Elder farmers are also most affected due to low level of pensions from working in farming. The most vulnerable however are small farmers managing less than 1 ha, who are not eligible to supplement their income with farm subsidies.

B. Impact of social challenge

a) Individual farmers and farming families:

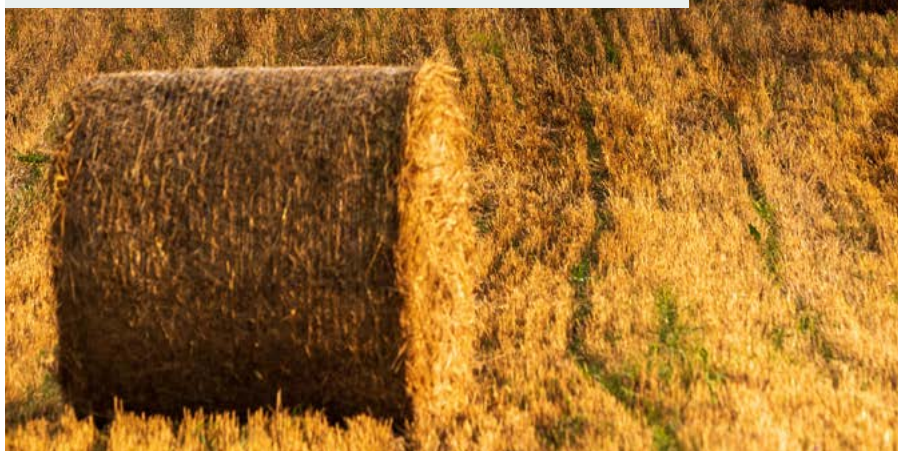
- **Mental wellbeing:**
interviewed farmers, especially men, declared that they do not feel valued and are overwhelmed by worries for the future; anxiety, insecurity.
- **Physical wellbeing:**
farming is mostly based on physical work, exhausting the farmers physically and reducing their chances to stay healthy and active. Farmers interviewed also declared that they delay addressing physical affections due to reduced or less accessible health services.
- **Social wellbeing:**
Women rarely regard themselves as “farmers” or “farm managers” – they declared themselves overwhelmed by supporting farming activities, as well as with domestic chores, due to low income.

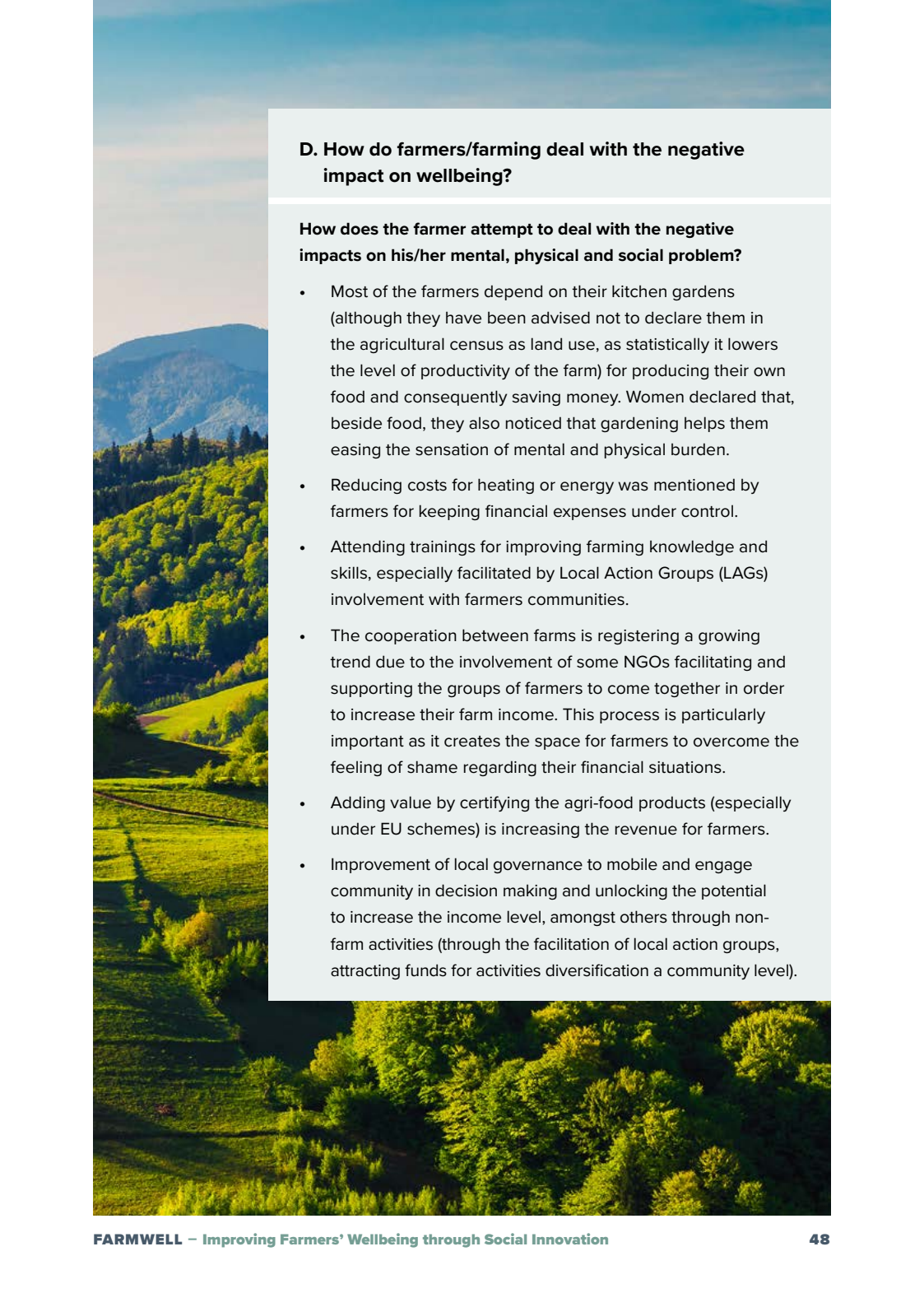
b) Farming community and wider rural community:

Beside impacting the access to education, health services, better job opportunities and low labour productivity low house-hold income is directly affecting the continuation of farming itself, by lacking: i) access to means to modernizing/upgrading farms, ii) cooperation between farms, iii) possibilities to add-value for on-the-farm agri-food products (higher revenues).

C. What are the main causes of the problems identified?

- 1 Poor rural areas became even poorer in the absence of strong and consistent interventions through national programmes – capitalizing on poverty rather than on growth and progress (a young person coming from a poor family or community is most likely to inherit the debts and lack of access to resources through the parents, increasing his/her vulnerability to poverty and undereducation)
- 2 Lack of strong social services (addressing early school dropout, low farming pension income, health services for addressing mental and physical affections)
- 3 Out-dated agricultural education and vocational training services available for farmers negatively impacting on the professionalization of farms
- 4 No functional farm advisory services close to farmers to improve the farming activities, enhancing their resilience and productivity
- 5 Poor level of association and cooperation between farmers to improve their access to inputs and markets
- 6 A very “thin” layer of rural middle-class – premises of resilient and prosperous (farming) communities
- 7 Transition to concepts that eroded the fiber of rural communities (see Section 3.5.1)





D. How do farmers/farming deal with the negative impact on wellbeing?

How does the farmer attempt to deal with the negative impacts on his/her mental, physical and social problem?

- Most of the farmers depend on their kitchen gardens (although they have been advised not to declare them in the agricultural census as land use, as statistically it lowers the level of productivity of the farm) for producing their own food and consequently saving money. Women declared that, beside food, they also noticed that gardening helps them easing the sensation of mental and physical burden.
- Reducing costs for heating or energy was mentioned by farmers for keeping financial expenses under control.
- Attending trainings for improving farming knowledge and skills, especially facilitated by Local Action Groups (LAGs) involvement with farmers communities.
- The cooperation between farms is registering a growing trend due to the involvement of some NGOs facilitating and supporting the groups of farmers to come together in order to increase their farm income. This process is particularly important as it creates the space for farmers to overcome the feeling of shame regarding their financial situations.
- Adding value by certifying the agri-food products (especially under EU schemes) is increasing the revenue for farmers.
- Improvement of local governance to mobilize and engage community in decision making and unlocking the potential to increase the income level, amongst others through non-farm activities (through the facilitation of local action groups, attracting funds for activities diversification a community level).

How far are these solutions effective/ineffective?

- The above-mentioned points are all effective solutions. However, they are in different stages of development, also depending on the involvement of other institutions involved in farming (NGOs, LAGs, active agricultural directorates).

Are there any relevant social innovations present to deal with these social challenges?

- There is a range of innovations we have identified that could serve as an inspiration for addressing the low household income level:
- **Community Development NGO – Adept Foundation** – farmers engaged in adding value to food products by organizing a community kitchen for processing and packing local products and branding local products
- **Dealul Tarnavelor LAG** – Activate and galvanise the local governance in rural areas by better engagement of different social groups (women, young people). Under the coordination of Local Action Group Dealul Tarnavelor, there have been set up a series of associations of women and young people engaged with bringing educational, medical services closer to the community as a form of multi-level governance in farming communities
- **Milky Way Cooperative** – Engaging young farmers to get associated and increase the profitability of farms and create more certainty for farming activities
- **C'Art Fest** – Encourage young people in farming communities to get engaged with diversifying activities at village level, including cultural activities, raising the attractiveness of rural areas and contribute to increase income

How far has the farmer access to these social innovations?

The innovations are promoted especially via social media, through LAGs or by NGOs. The selected ones are based in the nearby county to Brasov.

What is the impact of these social innovations on the individual farmer/farming family?

All identified innovations have impacted significantly the farmers professionalism (cooperative and adding value to products). They also brought farmers together and activated the community by common efforts to raise the overall level.

5.

Conclusion

As explained in this report, the most striking inequalities affecting farmers communities are related to poverty, low employment and income, and insufficient education. The most affected categories hereby are children, small farmers (1-2 ha) and the population in rural areas, Roma and people with disabilities⁴².

Most social challenges identified are rooted into economic causes and require an integrated approach. Beside economic growth, rural development **should be a strategy to allow a certain group of people, poor men and women from the countryside, to earn for themselves and their children what they need and what they want**. This implies helping the poorest people looking for a living in the rural areas to have access to most of the rural development benefits. In Romania, the group the rural development strategy should concern is represented by over 3 million small farmers. Changes have been produced in the basic infrastructure modernization and explosive growth of new housing estates and the modernization of the old ones, while Romania's agriculture has remained a non-modernized sector, of extensive type, with low average yields per hectare and per animal head, with low efficiency and high share of subsistence farms, with an accelerated demographic ageing of the rural population and lack of diversification of non-agricultural activities.

Rural-urban inequalities regarding development opportunities remain high, despite the measures adopted by authorities for their reduction. These inequalities influence the

⁴² https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en

quality of living and wellbeing of farming communities – children and their families – and affect areas such as: access to basic services (health, education, social protection) and specialized quality services, living conditions (including access to utilities), the level of income and the areas of activity adults work in, leisure opportunities.

At village level, there are not enough people with the skills that the labor market needs and will need in the future. The design of social inclusion policies, the availability of social services and social transfers are still not fully effective at getting people out of poverty and lack an integrated approach combining employment, health and education measures. An integrated approach to prevent early school dropout is still missing.

Migrating rural households seem to face a trade-off. Although these families may improve their economic situation, their children may endure significant emotional costs. It remains an important research question whether the emotional stress experienced by the children left at home caused by parental migration has longer term negative consequences, for example, for emotional stability or other social outcomes, or whether there is also some compensation from higher incomes or better networks.

Support provided through rural development should consider farm development, but also should consider integrated support for farming communities, in the sense that a social dimension should be placed at the heart of the strategies, generating a unitary process and aiming for a **sustainable rural development**.

In the recent years however, there is a trend of intervention at the community level, mostly initiated and developed by non-profit organisations, or public-private partnerships, especially addressing education and farmers' professionalisation.

The design of social inclusion policies, the availability of social services and social transfers are still not fully effective at getting people out of poverty and lack an integrated approach combining employment, health and education measures.

6.

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Annex I:

Social Innovations Table

This annex provides an overview of relevant social innovations and national organizations in farming. This annex follows the same format as the Practice Abstracts that need to be collected in WP3. Main logic is that no double work needs to be done in this regard for national research teams. At this stage, we have identified 6 relevant social innovations which, by dissemination, can contribute to inspire with solutions the challenges in the studied communities and not only.

Title of social innovation	Coordinator (lead partner)	Country	Objective (Which social challenge does the innovation attempt to tackle?)	Activities	Key target group(s)
EDUBUZZ	EduBuzz Association (NGO)	Romania, Brasov	Provide educational support for the communities with school dropping issues	Provide after-school activities for children with missing parents	Children with high risk for school dropping in rural areas
INCREASE THE LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND WOMEN ENGAGEMENT	Dealul Tranvelor LAG	Romania, Mures	Activate and galvanise the local governance in rural areas by better engagement of different social groups (women, young people)	Setting-up small association and active groups of young people (for developing new projects for the communities). Setting up and activate association of women at community level (for addressing medical services, cultural actions)	Young farmers communities Women in farming communities
VOLUNTEERS FOR ARTFEST	Association of volunteers for the ArtFest movement	Romania, Brasov	Encourage young people in farming communities to get engaged with cultural activities	Organise and host cultural activities for farming communities	Young people in farming communities
YOUNG FARMERS ENGAGED IN ADDING VALUE TO FOOD PRODUCTS	Community Development NGO – Adept	Romania, Mures	Increase the added value of local products in small farming communities in order to increase the economic value of farming	Organise a community kitchen for processing and packing local products	Young farmers Women in farming communities
WOMEN IN ACTION	Association of Women	Romania, Brasov	Engaging women in playing a more active role in farming communities by organising food fairs	Organise food fairs for small farming communities, by mobilizing women and encouraging local authorities to support them	Women in farming communities
TOGETHER IS BETTER	Milky Way Cooperative	Romania, Cluj	Engaging young farmers to get associated and increase the profitability of farms and create more certainty for farming activities	Organise and facilitate the association of farmers managing buffalo farms	Young farmers

Annex II:

Stakeholder mapping table Romania

Name of stakeholder	Country	Type of stakeholder		Profile	Key interest	Specific needs
		See abbreviations in CATEGORIES (next) sheet – select up to two & add new column if needed		What is the profile/ key activities/ relevant knowledge that the organisation / individual has in the context of FARMWELL?	What are the key interests that the organisation/ individual has in terms of getting involved in FARMWELL?	What are the specific needs of the organisation in the context of FARMWELL's topics/ concerns? Where could FARMWELL support the organisation.
CODRINA SANDRU	Romania	R		Researcher and professor on sociology with a long experience on documenting the migration phenomenon in the villages around Brasov region	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc.) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc.) Physical and mental condition of old people in farming communities (intergenerational dynamics etc.)
IOANA SERB	Romania	SP		Vocational therapist involved in social integration of foster young people	Extending the NGO portfolio and experience, promoting the methods for social integration	Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc)
SILVIU CATEAN	Romania	FO	F(M)	Farmers association bringing together family farms, promoting traditional products and a better integration of small farmers to the market	Communicating the challenges faced by young farmers in economic realities, representing young farmers' interests	Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc)

Name of stakeholder	Country	Type of stakeholder		Profile	Key interest	Specific needs
GOILĂ DANIEL	Romania	PM	F(M)	Local deputy mayor of Sinca Veche Commune, actively involved in the decision making	Local governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc) Physical and mental condition of old people in farming communities (inter-generational dynamics etc)
CREȚU RAREȘ ALEXANDRU	Romania	PM	F(M)	Local counselor within Cristian commune	Exploring the potential social innovations	Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc)
MARIA SZEKELY	Romania	SP	Other	Responsible with social assistance evidence in Haghig Commune	Better understanding and support of social needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc)
TOLOVICI DIANA	Romania	SP		Responsible for funding and projects implementation at Vulcan townhall Commune	Identification of funding needs, scoping for social innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc)
PERȘOIU CĂTĂLIN	Romania	PM		Mayor of Poiana Marului Commune	Better understanding and support of social needs and adopting social innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc) Physical and mental condition of old people in farming communities (intergenerational dynamics etc)
ARSENE SERGIU	Romania	PM		Mayor of Bod Commune	Better understanding and support of social needs and adopting social innovations to integrate into the future local strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and mental condition of young people in farming communities (sense of belonging, sense of communities, future of farming communities etc) Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc)
POPIOANE DOINA	Romania	SP	F(F)	Farmer	Getting informed and potential development ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of women in farming communities (gender, future of farming communities etc)

Source: Tsiaousi & Partalidou (2020)

Annex III:

Table – Challenges related to wellbeing

Table: Mega Challenges (at national level) that are related to wellbeing SOCIAL-PHYSICAL-MENTAL HEALTH of the farmers and the rural family [1 totally agree – 5 totally disagree]

a/a	Experts – ranking Social Challenges	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Average
1	Poor access to education and to lifelong learning	5	4	2	4	3	3	2	3	4	2	3	3	3,2
2	Poor physical infrastructure and access to basic services	3	2	2	1	3	5	2	2	3	4	2	3	2,6
4	Poverty	5	4	3	4	2	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	3,2
5	Out-Migration	4	3	1	2	4	4	3	2	2	3	3	4	2,8
6	Early school dropping	2	1	2	3	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2,6
7	Low household income level	3	3	3	4	2	4	5	2	3	4	2	2	3
8	No functional Farm Advisory Services for small farmers	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2,4
9	Low connectivity rural-urban	3	2	2	2	3	4	2	3	2	2	3	2	2,5
10	Loss of identity and social statue	3	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	5	2	2	2	3
11	Fragmentation of rural communities – intergenerational gaps	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	1,8
12	Ageing of farmers	2	3	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	1	2	2	2,5
13	Anxiety and insecurity due to inadaptation to market pressure and fiscal changes	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2,5
14	Women undervalued in farming communities	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2,3
15	Health and nutrition	4	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2,5

