



LIV CONVEGNO - SIDEA



XXV CONVEGNO - SIEA

FIRST JOINT CONFERENCE

**Cooperative strategies and value creation  
in sustainable food supply chain**

13th - 16th September 2017

# Social Farming and Inclusion in EU ESI Funds Programming

**Carmela De Vivo, Michela Ascani, Marco Gaito**

CREA – Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria  
– Centro di ricerca Politiche e Bio-economia



## Context

Increasing quota of population in Europe at risk of poverty/social exclusion due to economic crisis and other factors

**EU 2020 Strategy** - Focus on **fighting against poverty and marginalization**: active inclusion of vulnerable groups in society and labour market; overcoming of discriminations; integration of people with disabilities, ethnical minorities, immigrants

Growing attention dedicated to social inclusion and to social farming (SF) by EU policy and research - **SF** in 2014-2020 programming documents as **tool for social inclusion**; innovative opportunity of service delivery, diversification of agriculture and social inclusion generating benefits for farmers, rural communities and peri-urban areas – **local development tool**

SF in Italy: increase in number of operators – interest at legislative level (National Law, 2015)

# SF and cooperation

SF based on cooperation and integration actors – sectors – territories → instrument of local development, with benefits outside of rural areas; social and organizational innovation addressing social inclusion, farm diversification

New forms of public-private cooperation promoting social inclusion answer to need for alternatives to poor public services related to economic crisis – societal changes - opportunities of social innovation based on public-private partnerships and development of community based services (Bock B., 2016; Hassink J. et al., 2010; Maino F., 2014)

SF as innovative opportunity of diversification of agriculture into social activities and functions, delivering services to direct beneficiaries/local communities/broad population through NETWORKS going beyond local dimension

## Aim of the paper

Evolution of EU policies in the field of social inclusion: novelties in 2014-2020 programming of EU Structural and Investments (ESI) Funds; implementation in Italian programming documents

Focus on social farming (SF) in the theoretical framework of multifunctionality and innovative functions of agriculture

Assumption: cross-cutting approach at EU level to social inclusion policies as policy innovation, generating social innovation

The Italian case: analysis of SF in 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and outcomes; analysis of a LAG experience, case of success in terms of EU Funds integration

## **Policy context – social inclusion in EU**

1990s - Social inclusion on EU agenda: Maastricht Treaty, Structural Funds; European Observatory on policies to combat social exclusion

EU historical approach to social inclusion: cohabitation and balance competitiveness/social

Social inclusion as participation and integration in society at the base of EU policy design (eg. rural development policy – networking, partnership, multi-level governance) - Social inclusion and the logic of cohesion at the base of EU Structural Funds (Shortall S., 2008; Shortall S., Warner M.E., 2010)

2014-2020: reinforced approach to cohesion in EU → common rules for 2014-2020 ESI Funds for better implementation of policy – EU Regulation 1303/2013: partnerships for Member States/Programmes for multi-level governance and open to 3rd sector

Social Investment Package (EC), 2013, stimulating MS to maintain investments in social policy areas

# Policy context – social farming in EU

Emergence of SF in Europe in the last two decades:

- “Farming for Health” community of practices outcomes
- 2013 **EESC** Opinion on SF: “Social Farming: green care and social and health policies” – need for a common definition, criteria – need of support and regulatory framework for SF by EU and national/regional authorities - **recommended coordination of EU national and regional policies relevant to SF**
- Role in Europe 2020 Strategy identifying social integration as objective for intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth
- In EU political debate SF as **opportunity to affirm a sustainable and innovative model of agriculture and participated welfare**
- 2014-2020 programming documents explicitly point out SF as **tool for addressing social inclusion and targeting Europe 2020 goals**

# Theoretical framework

SF as complex body of practices integrating various activities into farming and promoting, among others, social inclusion

SF in the scientific debate as: innovative, multi-actor, multidisciplinary - opportunity of service delivery and diversification of agriculture (O'Connor D. et al., 2010), generating social inclusion in rural and peri-urban areas - society as a whole (Bock B., 2016; García-Llorente M. et al., 2016)

Multi-actor, multidisciplinary approach to different levels of problems (economic, social) in EU territories – potential contribution to new pathways of change - **alternative way for delivering innovative and effective social services** - effects on individuals, farmers, local communities (O'Connor D. et al., 2010; Lanfranchi et al., 2015)

**(New) social function of agriculture in the framework of multifunctionality** (Dessein J. et al., 2013; Lanfranchi M. et al., 2015; Scuderi A., et al., 2014; Zasada I., 2011). SF can: broaden multifunctional agriculture creating new markets for farmers; stimulate inclusive development (Di Iacovo F., O'Connor D., 2009)

# SF and social inclusion in EU 2014-2020 cohesion policy

Attention to social inclusion/fight against poverty translated into EU regulatory framework (objectives, tools, modes of intervention)

- ESI Funds **EU Regulations (2013) created conditions to foster SF practices in EU territories**
- **Partnership Agreement (PA) for Italy:** link economic- social policies; logic of integration of ESI Funds. Ob. 9 «Promoting social inclusion, fighting poverty and discrimination»; **promotion of social inclusion through: active inclusion, job placement, improving social/health services, reinforcing social economy**
- Attention to SF by **ESF:** connection agriculture, social/health services, training sector. Italian Inclusion National Operational Programme (20% of ESF resources) → coordination with EAFRD for SF interventions is relevant



## **SF and social inclusion in EU 2014-2020 cohesion policy – EAFRD and rural development policy**

- EAFRD 2007-2013: SF as instrument of diversification of farms with social activities – Axis 3 Measures
- 2014-2020: **agricultural firms increasingly called to provide environmental and social services for civil society - growing relevance of **social functions of agriculture****
- EAFRD 2014-2020: «social inclusion, reduction of poverty and economic development in rural areas» one of 6 Priorities of rural development policy → specific Measures in RDPs, dedicated funding and implementing modalities
- Opportunity of coordination with ESF is relevant

# Social inclusion and fight against poverty in EU policy

**EU 2020 Strategy – one of 5 objectives: fighting against poverty and marginalization**

**EU ESI Funds Regulations – cohesion policy legislative framework**

**1303/2013: Common Provisions (CPR Regulation)** – Partnerships open to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector components

1301/2013: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – support to social infrastructures

1304/2013: European Social Fund (ESF) – support to disadvantaged people, people facing poverty and social exclusion, actors in social economy

1305/2013: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) – support to Social farming

**Partnership Agreement (PA)** – ESI Funds national programmign instrument. Definition of strategy and priorities for pursuing Europe 2020 goals. Thematic objective 9: «Promoting social inclusion, fighting poverty and discrimination»

**Operational Programmes (OP) and Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)**

# Specific focus: analysis of SF and inclusion in Italian 2014-2020 RDPs

SF context in Italy: increasing demand for functions/services related to agriculture – growing potential for offer of socio-educational/welfare services in farms - coherence with EU cohesion policy

**Analysis by RRN (2016) on SF in 21 Italian RDPs and acknowledgements: social role of agriculture, need of diversification into offer of welfare services**

Measures addressing SF in 20/21 RDPs – great variability:

- 16.9 (14 RDPs) – specific support to cooperation of actors (farms, private, 3rd sector) providing social services (welfare, therapeutic, educational/training, job placement, etc.), innovative and targeted. **Cooperative form of diversification; cooperation for SF**
- 6.4 (20 RDPs) – Diversification into non agricultural activities
- 7.4 (13 RDPs) – offer of welfare service by public actors – potential link with SF

*SF as: opportunity for social inclusion; instrument of social and economic development in rural areas, → social innovation enabling agriculture to become instrument of welfare - benefits for farmers and rural communities*

# **SULCIS LAG and the use of EU Funds for social inclusion**

- “Agrisociale” project: start-up (2011) and development of a participatory bottom-up process focused on social inclusion aimed at identifying needs coming from the territory/SF actors and role
- SF integrated project based on RDP measure 321 – focus on theme social and occupational inclusion of vulnerable groups (disabilities)
- Network system for SF: LAG public call and selection of municipalities; municipalities public call and selection of farms and social cooperatives offering SF services – Result of participatory process: 5 municipalities, 3 social cooperatives, 4 agricultural farms
- Further development of other local and transnational activities overcoming 2007-2013 and inclusion of 16.9 in LAG Local Development Plan

# SULCIS LAG and the use of EU Funds for social inclusion

- Best practice on agriculture for social inclusion in 2007-2013 (social farming principles), also stimulating local economy and creating relationships and networks
- Best practice in integration of EU Funds for social inclusion
- Promotion of processes of territorial cohesion answering need of inclusion and citizenship
- Growing of knowledge and human capital in the area involved in innovative forms of governance, welfare and policies
- *SF as multifunctional activity and innovative services*

## Concluding remarks

- SF as instrument of active inclusion and development
- Promotion of a network logic in SF: cooperation with social/health institutions and with synergic support of EU Funds contributes to social inclusion and represents a **social/organizational innovation**
- Promotion of a network logic among Funds/policies: proper coordination of Funds allows implementation of complex and effective interventions - synergies among policies, actors, territories
- Potential of integrated use and coordination of policies and Funds as policy innovation generating social innovation

- Development opportunity for SF in Italy given by the issue of National Law (2015)
- Spreading of SF practices and attention by EU policy and regulatory framework and research not fully supported by complete legislative and operative framework

## Future research:

- Analysis on the complex of RDPs calls in order to evaluate correspondence between provisions for SF and social inclusion in targeted measures and effective implementation and relevance of funding
- Need of investigating farmers attitude and needs concerning new functions of agriculture, in particular social ones



LIV CONVEGNO - SIEA



XXV CONVEGNO - SIEA

FIRST JOINT CONFERENCE  
**Cooperative strategies and value creation  
in sustainable food supply chain**

13th - 16th September 2017

Thanks for your attention!

[michela.ascani@crea.gov.it](mailto:michela.ascani@crea.gov.it)