

Promoting Social Inclusion in the Romanian Rural Space

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Abstract. Professional training courses can contribute to the integration of social vulnerable groups, reducing poverty, especially in rural areas. The assessment of the interest for attending such courses was done by analyzing the official reports of the AM POS DRU and by investigating a sample of women from the North West and the North East Development Regions. The results of the survey show an increase of the social inclusion in rural areas at national level, but insufficient in relation to the proposed objectives. In the two regions, women's interest to attend such courses is high, being particularly associated with the young and middle-aged and average income. The priority domains identified by the women included in the sample are agriculture in the North East Region and promotion of traditional products in the North West Region. Sustainable development of rural areas requires both professional training of the inhabitants of these areas, as well as capitalizing on local resources and entrepreneurship development.

Keywords: social inclusion, rural space, Romania, vulnerable groups, professional training

Introduction. Studies regarding poverty in Romania indicate that the main predictors of the poverty risk in rural areas are the unemployment rate and education (Paraschiv, 2008). Therefore, emerges the need to support vulnerable social groups, particularly in this area of residence. Among the main objectives of the Strategy "Europe 2020" is the eradication of poverty, by reducing the number of poor people by at least 20 million and increasing the employment rate of persons between 20 and 64 years old at a percentage of 75% (European Commission, 2013). These objectives can be achieved through the economic and social cohesion Policy.

Aims and objectives. In order to increase the performance of programs through which these policies are implemented during the 2014-2020 programming period, an assessment of the results achieved so far is needed. The study aims to analyze the way in which participation in training courses contributed to increasing social inclusion, especially among rural women.

Materials and methods. The research involved two phases - an analysis of the annual Report of the implementation of POS DRU conducted by AM (AM POS DRU, 2011) and an analysis of the data collected in the rural areas of NW and NE development Regions within the project "An integrated intervention in order to strengthen the social entrepreneurship of vulnerable women" (Moldovan-Teselios and Pocol, 2012). The target group of the project was investigated, the sample being composed of 39 persons from the NW Region and 33 persons from the NE Region. The questionnaires were applied from July to August 2011.

Results and Discussion. According to the POS DRU 2011 Implementation Report, the number of persons who attended integrated professional development training programs in rural areas was 23 661. Among them, 12 586 were women. Although these figures indicate a positive evolution of social inclusion in rural areas, the proposed target is still achieved only

below 30%. The inclusion of vulnerable women in training programs in the NW and NE Regions began by identifying the intentions and aspirations of these women concerning a future initiative of professional development. Thus, the interest to attend professional development training courses was over 55%, being associated with young and average age and average income (Fig. 1). Based on these results (Tab. 1), courses were organized in areas such as: collection, packaging and marketing of agricultural products, collection, processing (refrigerating) and distribution of berries, financing, management and accounting of the social enterprise, production and distribution of traditional food products, hosting support services for ecoactive tourism, greenhouses of vegetables and flowers.

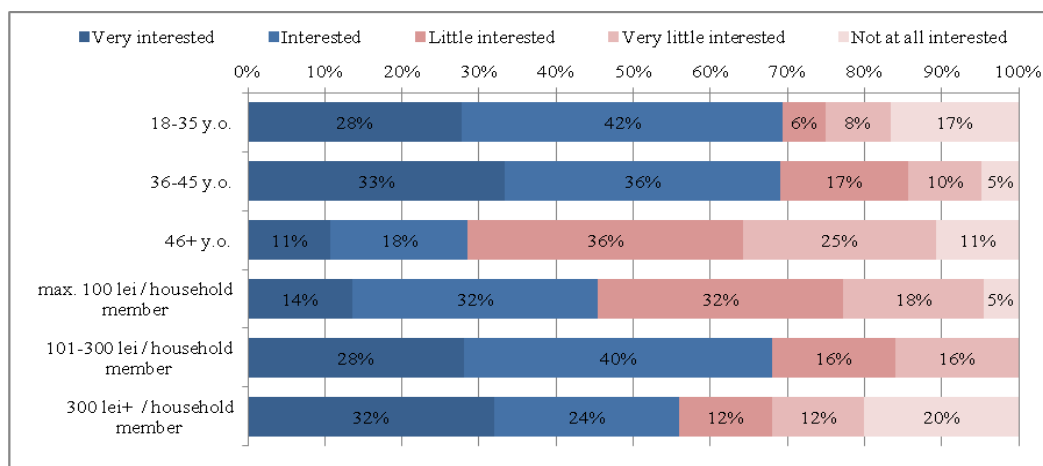


Fig. 1. The interest to attend professional development training courses in the NW and NE Region

Tab. 1

The difference between NW and NE Region concerning the interest for training courses

		18-35 y.o.	36-45 y.o.	46+ y.o.	max. 100 lei/hh memb.	101-300 lei/hh memb.	300 lei+/hh memb.
NW Region	Very interested, interested	100%	100%	31%	67%	74%	82%
	Little, very little or not at all interested	0%	0%	69%	33%	26%	18%
NE Region	Very interested, interested	67%	71%	25%	31%	67%	0%
	Little, very little or not at all interested	33%	29%	75%	69%	33%	100%

Conclusion

Vulnerable women participating in these training courses showed an entrepreneurial behaviour higher than the national average of about 10%. The fact that over three quarters of these women are decided regarding the field of activity indicates furthermore their degree of determination. The dominant aspects are valuing the agricultural potential in the NE Region and the traditional food products in the NW Region.

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