



AgriSkills

Innovative Skills Transfer for the Development of Agricultural Entrepreneurs
Project №: 2018-1-DE02-KA204-005173



National Report – Romania

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1. Background Information on Employment, Population and Importance of Agriculture in Romania

1.1. Land area, population density and percentage of population in the target group in Romania

Romania has: an area of 238.397 km²; a population of 19,530,631 people (2018) (*Population on 1 January*), i.e. a population density of 81.92 inhabitants/km²; a percentage of population in the target group of 10.6% (2018) (*Population by age group*).

1.2. Unemployment in Romania, overall and in the target group

15,027,000 persons aged 15-74; 9,120,000 economically active persons; 5,907,000 economically inactive persons; 8,671,000 employed persons; 6,390,000 employees; 1,573 self-employed persons; 708,000 family workers; 449,000 unemployed persons (2.98%) (*Labour Market in Romania, 2017*).

Table 1. EU Labour Force Survey 2018: percentage unemployment for the total population and for persons 15-24 years old in the European Union (EU), in Romania and the individual macro-regions and regions

| | Unemployment rates 2018 (%) | | Unemployment rates 2016 (%) | Unemployment rates urban/rural 2016 (%) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | Total | 15-24 years old | | |
| EU | 8.6 | 18.7 | | |
| ROMANIA | 2.5 | 4.6 | 5.9 | |
| MACROREGION ONE | 2.1 | | 4.7 | 3.9 / 5.7 |
| MACROREGION TWO | 2.4 | | 4.8 | 6.0 / 3.9 |
| MACROREGION THREE | 3.2 | | 7.0 | 6.3 / 8.2 |
| MACROREGION FOUR | 3.2 | | 7.6 | 6.3 / 7.2 |

According to the EU Labour Force Survey, unemployment in Romania in 2018 was low (2.5%) compared to overall unemployment in the EU (8.6%) across all age groups, as well as unemployment in the target population (aged 15-24) (4.96%) (*Harmonised unemployment by sex - age group 15-24*).

1.3. Agriculture in Romania

Agricultural land area: 14,800,000 ha; total number of agricultural holdings (3,422,000); total output value of these agricultural holdings overall (128,000,000 Eur); the total value added of agriculture to Romania Gross Domestic Product: 4.06% in 2016 (*Romania: GDP share of agriculture*).

Table 2. Area, number and output value of agricultural holdings in 2018 for Romania and the individual regions

| Geographic area | Number of holdings | Total agricultural land (ha) | Total output value (euro) | Average output per holding (euro) |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Romania | 3.422.000 | 14.800.000 ha | 128.000.000 | 37.4 |
| Bucharest-Ilfov Region | | 104,877 | | |
| Centre Region | | 1,869,370 | | |
| North-East Region | | 2,122,735 | | |
| North-West | | 2,070,817 | | |
| South Muntenia Region | | 1,965,301 | | |
| South-East Dobrogea | | 2,324,779 | | |
| South-West Oltenia | | 1,797,633 | | |
| West | | 1,868,417 | | |

Sources: Statistical Factsheet Romania, May 2018; Raport de expertiză. Domeniul 12. Ocuparea și utilizarea terenurilor.

1.4. Employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture in Romania

The total number of persons leading an agricultural holding in Romania in 2015: 1,021,614.

Table 3. Number of agricultural entrepreneurs/directors of agricultural holdings in 2013 for Romania by age group and gender

| Age group | Total number | Percentage of total | Number male* | Number female* |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 15-24 | 171,960 | 4.74 | | |
| 25-34 | | | | |
| 35-44 | 504,810 | 13.90 | | |
| 45-54 | 614,550 | 16.94 | | |
| 55-64 | 851,230 | 23.45 | | |
| 65+ | 1,487,110 | 40.97 | | |
| Total | 3,629,660 | 100 | 468,130 | 3,161,530 |

Source: *Agricultural holdings by age of holder; Family labour force.*

The number of persons leading an agricultural holding < 35: 158,380 (2013) (*Agricultural holdings by age of holder*); age group of the majority of holders (and directors) of agricultural holdings (40.97%) were persons 65 years old or older (Table 3); total number of labourers reported to be active in agricultural holdings: 1,587,650 (*Farm indicators by agricultural area, type of farm, standard output, legal form and NUTS 2 regions*); number of persons employed in permanent (non-seasonal) jobs in agriculture (Table 5): 6,577,930 (*Farm labour force*); number of employees between the ages of 15 and 34: 171,960 (*Agricultural holdings by age of holder*).

Table 4. Number of persons working in agriculture in 2018 for Romania by specialization of agricultural holding and labour type

| Specialization* | Number of holdings | Total land (ha) | Total labour | Seasonal labour | Permanent labour | Family labour |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Totals | 1,587,650 | | 6,577,930 | | 89,800 | 6,488,130 |

Sources: *Agricultural holdings by age of holder; Farm indicators by agricultural area, type of farm, standard output, legal form and NUTS 2 regions; Farm labour force.*

1.5. Training and education opportunities in agriculture in Romania

Below are the different pathways young persons can take to obtain skills and enter employment in agriculture after completing primary school and gymnasium: number of degree programs offered at universities and universities of applied sciences in Romania in 2019: UASVM Bucharest – 70; UASVM Cluj-Napoca – 54; UASVM Iasi – 21; UASVM Timisoara – 32; number of persons enrolled in apprenticeships in agricultural fields in Romania in 2015: 21.3% of persons employed in all enterprises; number of persons enrolled in agriculture-related degree programs in universities and universities of applied sciences in Romania in 2016: UASVM Bucharest – 12,469; UASVM Cluj-Napoca – 5,858; UASVM Iasi – 4,616; UASVM Timisoara – 4,755; number of educational institutions with agriculture-related study programmes or apprenticeships: 56 agricultural high-schools with 12 specialisations in agriculture (2010). The share of people aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received formal or non-formal education and training in the four weeks preceding the EU Labour Force Survey in 2018 was a provisional 1%. One percentage of males and 0.9% of females aged 25 to 64 stated that they received formal or non-formal education and training in the four weeks preceding the Survey (*Adult participation in learning by sex*). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer to the question 'participation in education and training'. Adult learning covers formal and non-formal learning activities — both general and vocational — undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training.

2. AgriSkills Online Survey

2.1. Methods

As per the project proposal, 25 individual responses were solicited from individuals in each country who either currently employ agricultural workers or advise/educate young persons about how to find work.

A list of potential respondents was collected from employers/educators known to the project partners. An email was sent to explain the goals and methods of the AgriSkills project and to request participation. Upon receipt of a positive response, another email was sent with a link to the online questionnaire.

2.2. Characterization of respondents

Twenty-five respondents who either currently employ agricultural workers or advise and/or educate young persons about how to get employed were asked to answer Question 1, *What is your primary role in dealing with unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas?*

Table 7. Role of respondent in dealing with unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas

| | n | Percentage |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Potential employer | 11 | 44.0 |
| Educator | 9 | 36.0 |
| Employer | 3 | 12.0 |
| Public employment agency | 1 | 4.0 |
| Cultural referent | 1 | 4.0 |
| Private employment agency | 0 | 0.0 |

Two groups of respondents were identified: “employers” (potential employer, employer, public employment agency) (60%), and “educators” (educator, cultural referent) (40%).

2.3. Interpretation of Responses

2.3.1. Respondents views on the most relevant agricultural areas for new labour and business entrants in Romania.

One of the main goals of this project output was determining the most important agricultural fields in each partner country on which to focus training materials. Towards this goal, respondents were asked to choose the three most important agricultural areas in their country from a list of seven areas identified by the project partners. An additional free text field was provided so that respondents could identify fields that they felt were important that were not covered by the options provided (Q3), *Which three agricultural topics do you think are the most relevant in your area for providing training to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas? (A maximum of three answers can be selected)*

Table 8. Respondents views on the most relevant agricultural areas for new labour and business entrants in Romania

| | n | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Apiculture | 18 | 72.0 |
| Horticulture | 16 | 64.0 |
| Organic agriculture | 15 | 60.0 |
| Agritourism | 12 | 48.0 |
| Social farming | 6 | 24.0 |
| Fish farming | 5 | 20.0 |
| Solidarity agriculture | 3 | 12.0 |

Our respondents have chosen **Apiculture** (72%), **Horticulture** (64%) and **Organic Agriculture** (60%) as *the three most relevant agricultural topics in our area for providing training to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas*. Their choices could be explained as follows:

Apiculture (72%) is a high-income, trendy (consumers are increasingly aware of the benefits of using honey and other beehive products), traditional agricultural practice (the Dacians, our ancestors, practiced it more than 2,000 years ago) that can benefit from the relief and climate conditions of our rural area (plains and hills in a temperate-continental climate with Mediterranean influences) where they grow cereals, vegetables and fruit-trees. In 2017, Romania was on the first place in the European

Union for honey production, benefiting of 10% of the EU allocated funds, according to the centralized data at European level. According to the **National Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 period**, beekeeping is a priority sector. There is also a **National Beekeeping Programme 2014-2016** - technical assistance services for bee-keepers and beekeepers' groups, prophylactic activities and activities for combating the varroosis, beehive purchasing, transhumance rationalization, assistance measures for laboratories analysing the physical and chemical characteristics of honey and assistance measures for increasing the number of bees on the national territory. **Horticulture (64%) is a second high-income, trendy (consumers are increasingly aware of the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables on a daily basis) agricultural practice that can benefit from the relief and climate conditions of our rural area (plains and hills in a temperate-continental climate with Mediterranean influences):** vegetable crop production increased from **172,600 ha (2010)** to 176,780 ha (2011) and 172,970 ha (2012), and then decreased to 168,430 ha (2013), 152,150 ha (2014), 153,130 ha (2015), 144,230 ha (2016), 141,810 ha (2017) and **140,590 ha (2019)** (*Crop production in national humidity, Fresh vegetables (including melons) and strawberries*). According to the **National Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 period**, horticulture also is a priority sector. **Organic Agriculture (60%) is a third high-income, trendy (consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of eating organic foods) agricultural practice that can benefit from the relief and climate conditions of our rural area (plains and hills in a temperate-continental climate with Mediterranean influences) where they grow both plants and animals in organic environments:** unfortunately, the number of organic operators (agricultural producers) constantly decreased from **15,280 (2012)**, to 14,553 (2013), 14,151 (2014), 11,812 (2015), 10,083 (2016) and **7,908 (2017)** (*Organic operators by status of the registration process*). Organic farming is a key measure which will directly target the protection, conservation and responsible use of biodiversity, soil and water via the maintenance of traditional extensive farming practices, greatly reduced use of agrochemical inputs and introduction / maintenance of organic farm management practices. (*National Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 period*) Conversion to and / or maintenance of organic farming benefits from compensatory payments in Romania. **Agritourism (48%)** ranks only fourth because persons living in the rural area are not fully aware of the benefits of practicing this type of tourism yet. **Social Farming (24%)** is still in its infancy – there is a very small number of social farms in our county (Timis County) – and farmers have no knowledge about this type of farming or about its benefits. **Fish Farming (20%)** could be an option if rural young persons had money to buy lakes and breed carps, for instance: aquaculture production had its ups and downs: 12,496 t live weight (2008), 13,131 t (2009), 8,781.43 t (2010), 8,353.27 t (2011), 10,004.69 t (2012), 10,146.78 t (2013), 10,676.97 t (2014), 11,015.77 t (2015), and 12,585.48 t (2016) (*Production from aquaculture excluding hatcheries and nurseries*). **Solidarity Agriculture (SA) (12%)** could be an option when designating “farmer-managed” and “shareholder/subscriber” types of SA, while, when designating “farmer cooperative and “farmer-shareholder cooperative”, it would be rejected because Romanian farmers have bad memories of “cooperatives”. Though some of our respondents rated **Social Farming** and **Solidarity Agriculture**, we believe, based on surveys made for other projects, that they do not really know what these concepts mean.

2.3.2. Potential Barriers to meeting goals of AgriSkills project. The goal of the AgriSkills project is to create training materials that will serve to support the target population in gaining knowledge and developing skills that will help them obtain employment in existing agricultural holdings or establish new businesses related to agriculture. To better achieve this goal, we sought information from respondents with regard to potential barriers in reaching the target population, and making careers in agricultural attractive to members of the target group. Respondents were asked to rate the barriers to reaching the target population on a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important) (Q2, *What are the biggest barriers you face in reaching unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas (members of target group)? Please rate from 1 (least important) to 5 (very important).*

Table 9. Mean values for rating (from 1 - least important to 5 - most important) of biggest barriers in reaching the target population for all respondents and for each of two subgroups of respondents - employers and educators (N = total number of responses received)

| | N | Mean | | |
|---|----|-------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Total | Employers | Educators |
| Ignorance of members of target group with regard to potential aid/support from government | 25 | 4.28 | 4.06 | 4.50 |
| Fewer work opportunities in rural areas than in urban areas | 25 | 3.98 | 4.06 | 3.90 |
| Mental barriers among the target group to applying for work | 25 | 3.98 | 3.86 | 4.10 |
| Lack of knowledge/skills with regarding to applying for a new job | 25 | 3.95 | 4.20 | 3.70 |
| Social exclusion of members of the target group | 25 | 3.91 | 3.73 | 4.10 |
| Unwillingness of potential employers to hire members of target groups | 25 | 3.88 | 3.66 | 4.10 |
| Lack of papers/proper documents among members of target group | 25 | 3.33 | 3.66 | 2.80 |
| Lack of basic work ethics among members of the target group | 25 | 3.15 | 3.20 | 3.10 |
| Lack of databases (or access to databases) containing information about the target group | 25 | 3.11 | 2.93 | 3.30 |
| Alcohol or other substance abuse issues among members of the target group | 25 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| Mental or physical health problems among members of the target group | 25 | 1.95 | 2.00 | 1.90 |

“Employers” ranked higher “Lack of knowledge/skills with regarding to applying for a new job” (4.20 vs 3.70), “Fewer work opportunities in rural areas than in urban areas” (4.06 vs 3.90), “Lack of papers/proper documents among members of target group” (3.66 vs 2.80), “Lack of basic work ethics among members of the target group” (3.20 vs 3.10), and “Mental or physical health problems among members of the target group” (2.00 vs 1.90) than “educators”, which proves a good knowledge of the issues specific to the target group. In exchange, “educators” ranked higher “Ignorance of members of target group with regard to potential aid/support from government” (4.50 vs 4.06), “Social exclusion of members of the target group” (4.10 vs 3.73), “Mental barriers among the target group to applying for work” (4.10 vs 3.86), “Unwillingness of potential employers to hire members of target groups” (4.10 vs 3.66), and “Lack of databases (or access to databases) containing information about the target group” (3.30 vs 2.93) than “employers”, which points to a better knowledge of less technical issues specific to the target group.

Respondents were then asked to choose the three most important barriers to members of the target group starting a new business in agricultural fields (from a list of seven) (Q7, *What do you see as the three most important barriers for unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas wishing to start their own agriculture-related business in the area where you work? (A maximum of three answers can be selected)*)

Table 10. Most important barriers to members of the target group starting a new business in agricultural fields – absolute number (n) and percentage of total responses given

| | n | Percentage |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Lack of start-up money or access to credit | 18 | 72.0 |
| Low level of basic education | 18 | 72.0 |
| Lack of business management skills | 14 | 56.0 |
| Lack of access to formal education in agriculture-related occupations | 11 | 44.0 |
| Lack of personal communication skills | 5 | 20.0 |
| Lack of technological skills | 5 | 20.0 |
| Lack of language or literacy skills in local language | 1 | 4.0 |

The three most important barriers for unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas wishing to start their own agriculture-related business in our area were “Lack of start-up money or access to credit” and “Low level of basic education”- chosen by 18 respondents each (i.e., 72.0%) – and “Lack of business management skills” – chosen by 14 respondents (i.e., 56.0%). The other

four “barriers” range below 50%: “Lack of access to formal education in agriculture-related occupations”, chosen by 11 respondents (44.0%), “Lack of personal communication skills” and “Lack of technological skills” chosen by 5 respondents each (20.0%), and “Lack of language or literacy skills in local language”, chosen by only one respondent (4.0%).

Respondents were given a list of four potential means for reaching the target audience, and asked to choose the most effective ones (Q9, *What is the most effective means of communicating information about job and training opportunities to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in the rural areas where you work?*)

Table 11. Respondents views of the most effective means of reaching target population - absolute number (n) and percentage of total responses

| | n | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Email | 8 | 32.0 |
| Social media | 8 | 32.0 |
| Events (job fairs, workshops) | 7 | 28.0 |
| Websites | 2 | 8.0 |

“Email” (“messages distributed by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network” – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) and “Social media” (“websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking” – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) were both chosen by the same number of respondents (8, i.e. 32.0%) as the most effective means of communicating information about job and training opportunities to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in the rural areas where we work. Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter are the most common social media in Romania. “Events”, such as job fairs or workshops, ranked right after “Email” and “Social media” (28.0%), while “Websites” ranked last, being chosen by only 2 respondents (8.0%).

When asked what factors would make training and subsequent job opportunities in agriculture attractive to the target group, respondents were given five choices and asked to choose the two most important (Q10), *What two factors are most important in making job and/or business creation opportunities in agriculture-related businesses attractive to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in your country? (A maximum of two answers can be selected)*

Table 12. Respondents views on the two most important factors in making work in agriculture attractive to target group - absolute number (n) and percentage of total responses.

| | n | Percentage |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Potential to earn money | 23 | 92.0 |
| Social status associated with job | 10 | 40.0 |
| Geographic location of place of employment | 8 | 32.0 |
| Opportunities for further career development | 6 | 24.0 |
| Nature of work environment (e.g., office, factory, farm, forest) | 2 | 8.0 |

There are seven dimensions (and 68 indicators) of the **quality of employment** according to the UNECE framework (*Quality of Employment*): Safety and ethics of employment; Income and benefits from employment; Working hours and balancing work and non-work life; Security of employment and social protection; Social dialogue; Skills development and training; and Workplace relationships and work motivation. *The two most important factors in making job and/or business creation opportunities in agriculture-related businesses attractive to unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in Romania* are “Potential to earn money” (92%) (the equivalent of the 2nd dimension of the **quality of employment**, “Income and benefits from employment”), and “Social status associated with job” (40%). The other three factors are considered less important: “Geographic location of the work place” (32%), “Opportunities for further career development” (24%), and “Nature of work environment” (8%).

2.3.3. Respondents' views on key skills for which the AgriSkills project should provide training materials.

In addition to providing general knowledge about the specific most relevant agricultural topics in the relevant countries, the AgriSkills project seeks to provide the target population with the **necessary soft skills** and technological skills. To assess the skills most lacking in the target population of each member country, respondents were provided with a list of seven soft skills, and asked to choose the three they felt to be most important for preparing the target population to become employees and entrepreneurs in agricultural fields (Q5), *What are the three most important soft skills that are lacking among unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in your country? (A maximum of three answers can be selected)*

Table 13. Most important soft skills according to respondents - absolute number (n) and percentage of total responses

| | n | Percentage |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Communication, e.g., with relevant stakeholders | 19 | 76.0 |
| Critical thinking skills | 16 | 64.0 |
| Negotiation skills | 16 | 64.0 |
| Conflict resolution skills | 12 | 48.0 |
| Teamwork | 11 | 44.0 |
| Time management skills | 9 | 36.0 |
| Cooperation with other | 3 | 12.0 |

Nineteen respondents (76%) chose "Communication skills" as the most important soft skill for the target population. "Critical thinking" ("the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) and "Negotiation" ("discussion aimed at reaching an agreement" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) skills were chosen by the same number of respondents (16, i.e. 64%). Less than half of respondents 12, i.e. 48%) chose "Conflict resolution" ("intervention aimed at alleviating or eliminating discord through conciliation" – cf. *Business Dictionary*) skills, while other 11 respondents (44.0%) chose "Teamwork" ("the combined action of a group, especially when effective and efficient" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) skills. "Time management" ("the ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) skills were chosen by 9 respondents (36.0%), while "Cooperation" ("the action or process of working together to the same end" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) skills were chosen by only 3 respondents (12.0%).

Respondents were also asked to choose **the most important technological training need** from a possible list of four (Q6), *What is the most important technological training needed by unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in your country?*

Table 14. Most important technical skills according to respondents - absolute number (n) and percentage of total responses

| | n | Percentage |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Basic computing skills | 17 | 70.8 |
| Use of social media | 5 | 20.8 |
| Website creation | 2 | 8.3 |
| Email list-serve creation and maintenance | 0 | 0.0 |

Seventeen of 25 respondents (70.8%) considered "**Basic computer skills**" ("understanding the basic notions of computer manipulation; managing computer files, word processing, using spreadsheets and databases; creating presentations; finding information and communicating using computers; and being aware of social and ethical implications of Internet use" – cf. *Basic Computer Skills*) the most important technological training needed by unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in Romania. Five of them (20.8%) considered "Use of social media" ("websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking" – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*) important. Other two (8.3%) chose "Website creation" ("a set of related web pages located

under a single domain name” – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*). No respondent chose “Email list-serve creation and maintenance” (“an electronic mailing list” – cf. *Oxford Dictionaries*).

Respondents were asked to rate (from 1 – least important to 5 – most important) specific business management skills training options (from a possible list of 10) (Q8, *What are the most important business management skill training needs for unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas in your country? Please rate from 1 (least important) to 5 (very important)*)

Table 15. Mean values of importance of business management skills of all respondents and two subgroups

| | N | Mean | | |
|--|----|-------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Total | Employers | Educators |
| Financial plan development | 25 | 4.35 | 4.20 | 4.50 |
| Business strategy development | 25 | 4.20 | 4.40 | 4.00 |
| Production plan development | 25 | 4.15 | 3.60 | 4.70 |
| Marketing plan development | 25 | 3.91 | 3.73 | 4.10 |
| Business mission statement development | 25 | 3.73 | 3.86 | 3.60 |
| Risk evaluation and management | 25 | 3.70 | 3.00 | 4.40 |
| Product inventory | 25 | 3.43 | 3.06 | 3.80 |
| Human resource management | 24 | 3.27 | 3.14 | 3.40 |
| Input inventory and ordering | 25 | 3.16 | 2.53 | 3.80 |
| Financial record keeping and reporting | 25 | 3.08 | 3.26 | 2.90 |

The highest rated skills identified by the “employers” were “Business strategy development” (4.40 vs 4.00), “Business mission statement development” (3.86 vs 3.60), and “Financial record keeping and reporting” (3.26 vs 2.90). “Educators” chose “Production plan development” (4.70 vs 3.60), “Financial plan development” (4.50 vs 4.20), “Risk evaluation and management” (4.40 vs 3.00), “Marketing plan development” (4.10 vs 3.73), “Input inventory and ordering” (3.80 vs 2.53), “Product inventory” (3.80 vs 3.06), “Human resource management” (3.40 vs 3.14).

2.3.4. Respondents views on the most important subgroups that should be targeted by AgriSkills training materials and activities. So that we can better target the most important groups when disseminating the training materials developed by the AgriSkills project, we sought information as to the most likely subgroups within the target population in individual countries. Respondents were provided with a list of ten subgroups of potential beneficiaries of the training materials to be developed by the AgriSkills project (Q4, *What would you say are the most important groups among unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas that could benefit from training materials developed by our project within the area where you work? Please rate from 1 (least important) to 5 (very important)*)

Table 16. Most important subgroups among the target population to tailor training materials towards

| | N | Mean | | |
|---|----|-------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Total | Employers | Educators |
| Young persons neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) | 24 | 4.17 | 4.14 | 4.20 |
| Young employees in agriculture-related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs | 25 | 4.16 | 4.13 | 4.20 |
| Young employees in non-agricultural related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs | 24 | 4.12 | 4.14 | 4.10 |
| Young farmers (rent or own agricultural land or operations and currently involved in production) | 25 | 4.06 | 3.93 | 4.20 |
| Persons over the compulsory age for formal education not currently employed still enrolled in formal education programs | 24 | 3.32 | 3.64 | 3.00 |
| Former prison inmates | 25 | 2.71 | 2.13 | 3.30 |
| Individuals with disabilities | 25 | 2.38 | 2.06 | 2.70 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|------|------|-------------|
| Individuals with a history of substance abuse | 25 | 2.16 | 1.53 | 2.80 |
| Recent migrants from outside the EU | 25 | 1.93 | 1.66 | 2.20 |
| Recent migrants from within the EU | 25 | 1.88 | 1.66 | 2.10 |

In this case, “employers” rated higher “Young employees in non-agricultural related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs” (4.14 vs 4.10), and “Persons over the compulsory age for formal education not currently employed still enrolled in formal education programs” (3.64 vs 3.00). “Educators” rated higher “Young farmers (rent or own agricultural land or operations and currently involved in production)” (4.20 vs 3.93), “Young persons neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs)” (4.20 vs 4.14), “Young employees in agriculture-related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs” (4.20 vs 4.13), “Former prison inmates” (3.30 vs 2.13), “Individuals with a history of substance abuse” (2.80 vs 1.53), “Individuals with disabilities” (2.70 vs 2.06), “Recent migrants from outside the EU” (2.20 vs 1.66), and “Recent migrants from within the EU” (2.10 vs 1.66).

3. Summary and Recommendations

“Most farmers in Romania, especially those who own small and medium-sized holdings, do not have the proper knowledge in the field of management methods, modern production technologies and standards, especially for livestock and horticulture, focusing mainly on traditional practical experience. Also, the level of awareness, skills and knowledge about modern and innovative methods of processing and marketing agricultural products, including in the context of short supply chains, is insufficient to meet market demands and EU standards.” (*National Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 period*)

3.1. Respondents views on the most relevant agricultural areas for new labour and business entrants in Romania (Q3)

In response to Q3, of the 25 respondents, 18 (72%) chose **Apiculture**, 16 (64%) chose **Horticulture**, and 15 (60%) chose **Organic Agriculture**. These choices fit the soil and climate conditions in our area as well as the trends on the market of agricultural produce. The 12 (48%) options for **Agritourism** point to the potential of Romanian agriculture and should be taken into account for further developments. As for **Social farming** (24%), **Fish farming** (20%), and **Solidarity agriculture** (12), they are still little known and/or understood and they should also be taken into account for further developments.

3.2. Respondents’ views on potential barriers to meeting goals of AgriSkills project (Q2, Q7, Q9, Q10)

In response to Q2, “Ignorance of members of target group with regard to potential aid/support from government” (4.28 points out of 5) ranked higher by “educators”, followed by “Fewer work opportunities in rural areas than in urban areas”, ranked higher by “employers”, and “Mental barriers among the target group to applying for work”, ranked higher by “educators” (3.98 points out of 5 each), and “Lack of knowledge/skills with regarding to applying for a new job”, ranked higher by “employers” (3.95 points out of 5). This shows that “employers” (who also ranked higher “Lack of papers/proper documents among members of target group” and “Lack of basic work ethics among members of the target group”) are well aware of the barriers in reaching unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged persons aged 15-24 in rural areas, while “educators” have a better understanding of “social” barriers (they also ranked first “Social exclusion of members of the target group” and “Unwillingness of potential employers to hire members of target groups”). The two groups agreed most on “Alcohol or other substance abuse issues among members of the target group” (no difference) and least on “Lack of knowledge/skills with regarding to applying for a new job” (a difference of 0.50 points out of 5). In response to Q7, respondents chose “Lack of start-up money or access to credit” and “Low level of basic education”, chosen by 18 respondents each (i.e., 72.0%), and “Lack of business management skills”, chosen by 14 respondents (i.e., 56.0%). These barriers correspond to the economic and educational statuses of our rural population. In response to Q9, respondents identified not one, but two means of communicating information about job and training opportunities: “email” and “social media” (32%

each), closely followed by “events” (28%). “Email” and “social media” should, therefore, be further exploited as effective means of communication. In response to Q10, 23 respondents (92%) chose “Potential to earn money” and 10 (40%) chose “Social status associated with job”, which shows that the second factor is half as important as the first factor. This confirms the statistics regarding economic and social status of Romanian rural youth and their need for high-quality employment.

3.3. Respondents’ views on key skills for which the AgriSkills project should provide training materials (Q5, Q6, Q8)

In response to Q5, 19 (76%) respondents chose “Communication skills”, and 16 (64%) chose both “Critical thinking skills” and “Negotiation skills” – choices in agreement with specific requirements of agribusiness and not only. Though not among the first three important soft skills, “Conflict resolution”, “Teamwork”, and “Time management” skills were chosen by 12 respondents (48%), 11 respondents (44%) and 9 respondents (36%), respectively. In response to Q6, 17 respondents (70.8%) chose “Basic computer skills”, thus acknowledging the importance of IT in our everyday life. “Website creation” was chosen by only 2 respondents (8.3%), maybe because it is the domain of IT specialists, while “Email list-serve creation and maintenance” was not chosen by any respondent probably because the respondents did not know what that is. “Basic computer skills” should be part of the training of our target group. In response to Q8, our respondents chose “Financial plan development” (4.35 points out of 5), “Business strategy development” (4.20 points out of 5), and “Production plan development” (4.15 points out of 5). The two groups agreed most on “Business mission statement development” and “Human resource management” (a difference of 0.26 each, i.e. 3.86 vs 3.60 and 3.14 vs 3.40, respectively) and least on “Risk evaluation and management” (a difference of 1.40, i.e. 4.40 vs 3.00). There is no difference in the issues approached by both groups since they are management- and marketing-related issues.

3.4. Respondents views on the most important subgroups that should be targeted by AgriSkills training materials and activities (Q4)

In response to Q4, our respondents chose “Young persons neither in employment nor in education and training” (4.17 points out of 5), “Young employees in agriculture-related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs” (4.16 points out of 5), “Young employees in non-agricultural related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs” (4.12 points out of 5), and “Young farmers (rent or own agricultural land or operations and currently involved in production)” (4.06 points out of 5). One group (“Persons over the compulsory age for formal education not currently employed still enrolled in formal education programs”) scored between 3 and 4 points, three groups (“Former prison inmates”, “Individuals with disabilities”, “Individuals with a history of substance abuse”) scored between 2 and 3 points, and two groups (“Recent migrants from outside the EU” and “Recent migrants from within the EU”) scored between 1 and 2 points. The two groups agreed most on “Young employees in non-agricultural related occupations who are no longer enrolled in formal educational programs” (a difference of only 0.04, i.e. 4.14 vs 4.10) and least on “Former prison inmates” (a difference of 1.17, i.e. 2.13 vs 3.30).

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