



AgriSkills

Innovative Skills Transfer for the Development of Agricultural Entrepreneurs
Project N°: 2018-1-DE02-KA204-005173



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EU Report

Background Research

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1 Project Overview

The AgriSkills project intends to develop and improve the level of key competencies and skills among young unemployed adults (aged 15-29) in rural areas and areas with a high concentration of young, unemployed adults, with the purpose of helping them find employment or develop their own businesses in agriculture-related fields.

In some partner countries, inmates and those recently released from prison facilities will also be targeted, due the fact that agriculture skills can be a great help in reintegration.

This project also intends to support skills that will help young adults create their own profitable businesses by providing them training materials related to business and entrepreneurship

Each partner in the AgriSkills project will conduct their own investigation of the competency profile of the target population in their respective countries. In particular, we will assess the level of knowledge the target group has about various agricultural areas such as: organic farming, apiculture, agritourism, horticulture, viticulture, and fish farming.

After identifying the training needs of the youths from rural areas, the AgriSkills partnership will develop innovative teaching materials. In addition to agricultural skills, this project will develop modules to support the development of ICT, entrepreneurial and social skills, based on the results of the needs analysis for each partner country.

1.1 Project Goals

Specific objectives of the AgriSkills project are:

- To raise the employability level of young adults from rural and remote areas and areas with high concentrations of young unemployed adults;
- To bridge the gap between agricultural labor market needs and the lack of knowledge and competences of young adults;
- To provide personalized training to young adults, according to the needs identified at the national level;
- To help keep the young adult rural population employed and prevent further migration to big cities;
- To maintain and improve economic activity in rural areas and preserve and improve upon traditional means of livelihood;
- To support a more competitive labor market in the European agricultural sector;
- To improve the living conditions of young adults by offering guidance and support to the target group in developing their own businesses, thus increasing their income potential;
- To use the AgriSkills partnership's networks to disseminate the project's products in order to attract the interest of policy makers, stakeholders, and potential beneficiaries, and thus, to have a high impact at the European level;
- To transfer not only agricultural skills to young adults, but also ICT skills, entrepreneurial and social skills, with the purpose of supporting them in creating their own business;
- To offer reintegration support for the young adults recently released from prison

1.2 Project Partners

1.2.1 Lead Partner - TUM – Technical University of Munich – Chair of Economics of Horticulture and Landscaping - Germany

The TUM is highly ranked internationally and is recognized as one of the best universities in both Germany and Europe, and among the top 100 worldwide. The 13 faculties and the key research institutions of the TUM are spread across three main campuses in Bavaria: Munich, Garching and Weihenstephan, with several other sites including in Heilbronn in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

The Chair of Economics of Horticulture and Landscaping is part of both the School of Management and the School of Life Sciences Weihenstephan, and is located in the oldest city in Bavaria with a rich architectural and cultural history. The School of Life Sciences is building a unique bridge between management and technology studies within an international teaching environment. The School of Life Sciences Weihenstephan developed out of a long history of agricultural and brewing science and finds itself in a core position to address many of the core challenges of the 21st century.

The Chair looks at questions of economics and management as choices in a world of multiple alternatives and scarce resources. Human ingenuity, research, and development, as well as innovation and adaptation processes contribute to the development of new resources and alternative ways of action. Accordingly, we analyze questions of management tasks and economic choices within horticulture, landscaping, and the broader frame of agriculture and societal institutions. We care about developing actionable knowledge rooted in rigorous and authentic scientific research, and believe in collaboration across disciplinary boundaries. Our methodological spectrum ranges from qualitative through quantitative approaches.

1.2.2 CPIP – Comunitatea pentru Invatarea Permanenta - Romania

CPIP is a non-profit, non-governmental, private organization active in educational, social and agricultural fields.

CPIP provides information and advice for career guidance, training of trainers, development of educational and formative alternative programs, counselling and training, labour market integration and empowerment of people living in rural areas, minorities, immigrants, disadvantaged groups, and gender equality mainstreaming.

The main objectives of CPIPs work are

- Contracting research projects at local, regional, national, and international levels;
- Developing social, educational, and agricultural research;
- Ensuring a proper environment for the educational and social development of all community members;
- Increasing community educational institution awareness and involvement and creating links with all social actors;
- Initiating, developing, and supporting educational campaigns;
- Organizing courses, training seminars, expert workshops, and other events with the active involvement of national and international institutions and experts;
- Promoting the culture and practice of lifelong learning;

- Supporting lifelong learning through national and international activities.

The main activities undertaken by CPIP to meet these objectives include training, counselling, facilitating the integration of disadvantaged people and of people from rural and remote areas into the labour market, counselling as a part of adult educator's work; strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and fighting discrimination; providing gender sensitive education; and gender mainstreaming.

1.2.3 DEFOIN - Spain

DEFOIN – Career Development and Integration was founded in 2009 with the idea of promoting the training for employment and insertion of employed and unemployed workers. At a time of the economic crisis, addressing the skill requirements of workers was a crucial task.

DEFOIN has extensive experience in the comprehensive management of training plans, as well as specific solutions tailored to the need of design, management and delivery of continuing and occupational training for businesses as well as employed and unemployed workers.

DEFOIN manages plans to offer training aimed at both employed and unemployed, as well as training demand by companies. We also have a network of over 180 collaborating centres scattered all over the country and accredited to conduct training leading to the award of certificates of professionalism in different professional areas.

1.2.4 ARID – Association for the Regional Initiatives Development - Poland

ARID is a private non-governmental organization based on the promotion and development of the idea of lifelong learning. The scope of ARID's activities covers a variety of topics. ARID specializes in vocational training (VET) but also, in accordance with the idea of lifelong learning, conducts training for adults. In the dynamically changing modern world, it is necessary to constantly improve your qualifications, develop skills and expand your knowledge. The activities carried out by the ARID meet these needs by organizing many different trainings, lectures and courses. The employees and trainers working in ARID are highly qualified staff in terms of both education and professional skills. In addition, ARID cooperates with numerous professionals (e.g., beekeepers, teachers, farmers, agricultural advisers, social workers, prison employees, tutors of disabled people, etc.) as well as public and private institutions from various branches (e.g., universities, research institutes, prison inspectorate, agricultural advisory centers, schools for disabled children, etc.).

Since several years ARID actively participates in various international schemes, through a well-established network of partners abroad, based on intense past experience. ARID cooperates with more than 50 international organizations from Europe and also from the U.S. and South America.

ARID has participated in several international multilateral projects. Those projects were implemented in the frame of life long learning programmes, like Grundtvig Multilateral Project and Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation. Since 2014 and ongoing, ARID is working in Erasmus+ Programme projects.

1.2.5 New Edu, n.o - Slovakia

New Edu, n.o. is a non-profit organization from the Nitra region in Slovakia. Its employees cooperate with institutions involved in formal and non-formal education not only in Slovakia, but in many countries across Europe and with in the United States of America, China and Vietnam.

Experts of New Edu have applied experience from very active participation in entrepreneurship education and relevant networking. It offers vocational training solutions and services from the identification of training needs through the development model of education, technical design and content creation to the realization of the educational process or the training and evaluation of a learning process and its participants.

Moreover, through their activities (knowledge, network, advice, training, workshops) and close cooperation with the universities and vocational schools in the Nitra region they are actively helping students and other young entrepreneurs firmly establish their start-up businesses and to help them maximize their growth.

The learning activities provided by New Edu integrate authorized content, based on the latest knowledge, modern learning management systems and last but not least over 20 years teaching experience gained not only in Slovakia but also in other European Union countries, Asia and the United States. Its experienced team of professionals provide innovative learning solutions for entrepreneurship and business companies as well educational institutions. Their activities are based on innovative practices and tools of eLearning and blended learning, which support modern and creative learning process. Employees of New Edu have extensive experience with learning end education processes not only at Slovak education institutions on different levels of studies but also in other European and world countries.

1.2.6 COMU – Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University - Turkey

COMU – Established in 1992, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University is one of the leading universities in Turkey with its nearly 44.000 students and qualified academic and administrative staff. In the diversity of its students, its global outlook, and its outstanding research, the COMU is also a university of compelling change. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University's remarkable global appeal continues to grow with 13 faculties, 4 institutes, 8 colleges, 12 vocational high schools, 26 research and application centers and a research hospital. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University is an international university with the values of academic freedom, dynamism, transparency, flexibility and innovation. Our main objective is to increase our impact from a local to a global level. In order to achieve this, the COMU is increasing its academic and social activities by hosting national and international congresses, trying to meet international academic standards and developing high quality international strategic partnerships.

One of the major strengths of the COMU is the academic staff, committed to excellence in teaching and research in a dynamic and creative academic environment. In this respect, COMU is trying to provide academic freedom for its academicians' strategic academic development. COMU offers a very wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Teaching is carried out through academic departments and interdisciplinary institutes, and in partnership with internationally renowned higher education institutions. Each year, following National University Entrance Examination students with higher scores are applying to COMU. With its beautiful view over the Dardanelles Strait, COMU has one of the most beautiful modern and safe campuses in Turkey. Throughout the academic year, students can enjoy art exhibitions, concerts, cinema and theatre and sports events as well as a variety of social and academic activities. The University also grants financial assistance to those in need.

With its academic and student oriented strategic view, the COMU aims to be one of the most **The importance of the agricultural sector in the European Union and the home countries of the partners involved in the Ariskills project**

2 Background on agriculture and unemployment in the EU

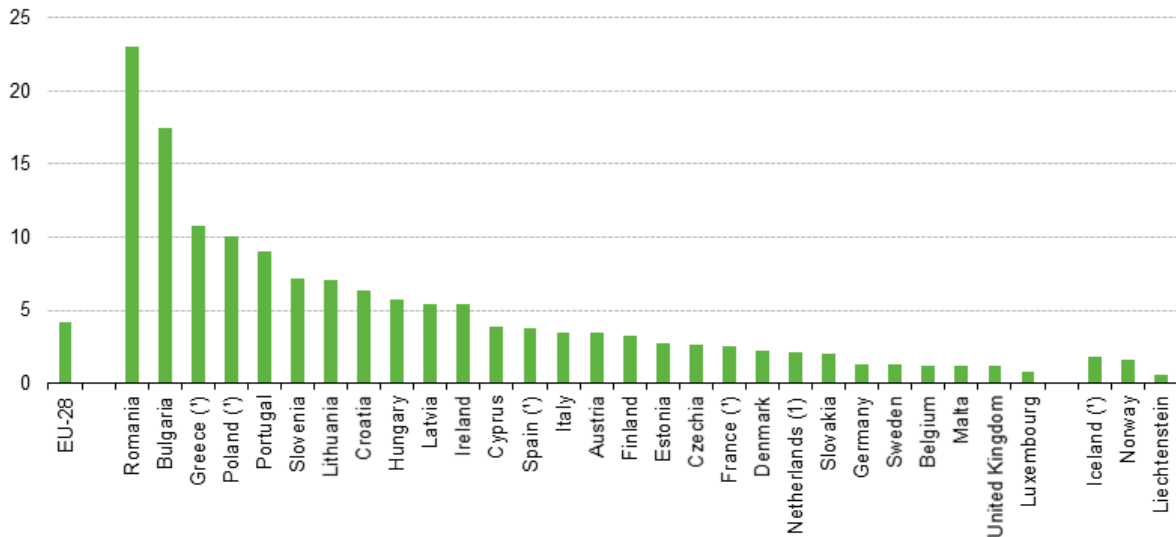
This section presents recent facts and figures regarding the current state of agriculture, agricultural employment and unemployment in the EU, with a special focus on the countries in which the AgriSkills project partners are active. Agriculture in the EU faces many issues and is expected to fulfil many, sometimes conflicting, goals, including mitigating climate change and restructuring production and distribution to minimize its impacts on food production and security, and serving as an economic engine to revitalize rural areas (Eurostat., 2018). According to the Eurostat regional yearbook 2018 (Eurostat, 2018), “Around 40% of the EU’s land is farmed” (p.166). Of the 10.8 million farms identified by the survey in 2013, 33.5% were located in Romania, 13.2% in Poland, 8.9% in Spain (Eurostat, 2018, p. 167). Thus, the Agriskills project is active in countries containing well over half of the farms in the EU. According to EU Commission (2018). Despite the large area of land dedicated to agriculture, the economic contribution of agriculture and related industries is very low. “The primary sector (agriculture, forestry and fishery) represented 1.5% of GVA in the EU-28 in 2016. This proportion has remained roughly stable since 2008” (EU Commission. 2018). Still, agriculture in some European regions produces much higher value added than in others. For example, the standard output per farm in many regions in Germany and one region in Slovakia averaged over 200,000 EURO, ranking among the most economically important farms in the EU (Eurostat, 2016). By contrast, the average output of farms in all regions of Romania, five Spanish regions and 11 out of 16 regions in Poland was less than 25,000 EUROS (Eurostat, 2016). This suggests that finding ways to make agriculture-related fields yield more value added is a key goal, both in making agriculture attractive to new entrants and in supporting rural areas.

2.1 Employment in agriculture in the EU

Approximately 9.7 million people are estimated to have been employed in agriculture in the EU in 2016 (Eurostat, 2019). These numbers vary among various countries, with Romania having the highest percentage of employed people working in agriculture (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of employed population employed in agricultural operations in the EU by country

Employment in agriculture, 2016
(% of total employment)



(*) 2015 data instead of 2016.

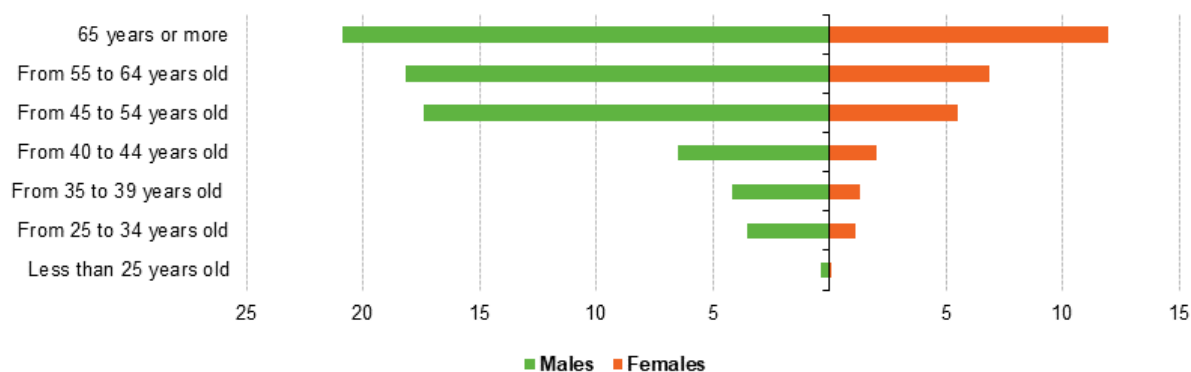
Source: Eurostat (online data code: nama_10_a64_e)

Many jobs in agriculture are part-time and seasonal. Most of those who work full-time are actually farm managers, and the majority of these are both male and 45 years old or old (Figure 2). Thus, the agricultural labor force in the EU as well as agricultural business owners and managers are aging, pointing to the need to rapidly incorporate more young people into the field of agriculture in the EU in order to ensure this sector continues to exist.

Figure 2. Age classes of farm managers in the EU by gender in 2016

Age classes of farm managers, by gender, EU-28, 2016

(% of all farm managers)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ef_m_farmang)

2.2 Unemployment rates in the European Union and the home countries of the partners involved in the Agriskills project.

Unemployment in the European Union also varies a great deal from country to country (Table 1), however, at the EU level and in all of the countries involved in the Agriskills project, unemployment rates among young people (age 15-24) are higher than that of the general population (Table 1).

Table 1. Total unemployment rates in 2016 (in %) and rates for the target population (people from 15-24 years old) for the European Union (EU) and each of the countries involved in the Agriskills project

	Unemployment rates (%)	
	Total	15-24 years old
EU	8.6	18.7
GERMANY	4.1	7.1
SPAIN	19.6	44.4
POLAND	6.2	17.7
ROMANIA	5.9	20.6
SLOVAKIA	9.7	22.2
TURKEY	10.9	19.5

Source: EU Labour Force Survey, 2016.

2.3 Characteristics of the population in rural areas of the EU

As one of the primary goals of the Agriskills project is to support young people in rural areas in finding job opportunities in agriculture, it is important to understand the current situation of the population in these areas. Rural areas are defined by EU policy as local administrative units (LAU) where more than 50% of the population lives in areas not defined as urban centers or urban

clusters. – i.e. have less than 300 inhabitants per 1 square kilometer (European Union, 2019). Based on this definition, approximately 44% of the EU is rural (European Union, 2018).

2.4 Education

There are differences in education levels between rural areas and urban areas. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) recognizes nine levels of education – from 0 (early childhood education) to 8 (doctoral or equivalent) (OECD, 2015). While rural areas still have the lowest percentage of inhabitants with tertiary levels of education (levels 5-8), they have the highest percentage of the population with only low levels of education (0-2) or upper secondary and post-secondary education (levels 3 and 4) (European Union, 2018). This suggests that educational materials developed by the AgriSkills project should take into account these low levels of education in terms of the language used and the complexity of the information provided. Support for rural areas has become a key element of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU (CAP). Each country has the opportunity to develop its own rural development programs. In order for these programs to function, however, the necessary skill sets must be present in rural areas, and the populations they target must be educated on how to access the resources provided them.

2.5 IT Technology

Given the relatively low level of education of the rural population, it is necessary to assess whether they have the technological skills and access to the technology needed for online learning. The overall percentage of households in the EU with internet access at home is 79% (European Union, 2018). In Spain, Slovakia, Poland and Germany, over 70% of households have home internet access, while Romania lacks behind at just over 60% (European Union, 2018).

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