

EAPN participated in the creation and development of the FEAD Network.

In the past year EAPN has participated in the creation and development of the [FEAD Network](#) through engaging its members and partners in the [online platform](#) hosting the network and facilitating group works in the three network meetings organized in Brussels between September and the end of November. In the second Network meeting, dedicated to **Social Inclusion Measures under Operational Programmes type II**, Fintan Farrell, acting director of EAPN, gave one of the opening speeches and set the framework for discussions by putting forward elements that should be at the centre of a social inclusion approach. The FEAD Network is managed by ECORYS.

### **Three FEAD Network Meetings organised in 2016**

#### **What is the FEAD Network?**

It is an open membership community for people providing assistance to the ‘most deprived’ in Europe. This includes EU level NGOs and EU institutions, organisations interested in or delivering FEAD-funded activities and national Managing Authorities. The FEAD Network brings together those working to reduce some of the worst forms of poverty in European countries. It aims to provide a space for good practice to be shared and encourages new ideas for how to provide non-financial assistance to the most deprived persons in the EU.

The FEAD Network interacts virtually through the [online platform](#) hosted on yammer and through face-to-face meetings, both activities being crucial for the growth and development of the network. The three face-to-face meetings organized in Brussels in 2016, between September and the end of November provided a space for different stakeholders involved in delivering the FEAD programme to discuss and raise awareness of FEAD-related topics. The exchanges between members were continued during live chats organized on Yammer where exchanges with the guest speakers and other new members were continued.

#### **The first FEAD Network Meeting**

On 26 September 2016, ECORYS, on behalf of the European Commission organised the first Network meeting in which the EU-wide network of actors involved in FEAD came together to discuss issues related to the accompanying measures. The meeting, entitled Sustainable integration: Challenges, solutions and good practices from the accompanying measures under [Operational programme type I](#) (OP I) brought together 90 delegates from different member states representing a wide range of stakeholders, including: Managing authorities (MAs); partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU level partner organisations; the wider EU community, as well as academic and research organisations.

The meeting was focused on discussing specific issues, good examples and obstacles faced in the organization of accompanying measures in FEAD in countries that opted for an OP I, in order to help Europe’s most deprived take their first steps out of poverty, it is recognised that more has to be done than providing only food or material assistance. As a result, Member States have to accompany the provision of food and basic material assistance with measures to promote the social inclusion of the end recipients.

The examples and practices presented during the meeting were from Belgium, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovenia and Spain. They showed that accompanying measures can take very different forms among which provision of information and referring of beneficiaries to relevant social services; training and counseling services to improve financial literacy and assist in debt mediation; information about maintaining a healthy and balanced diet; supporting access to health and education services and psychological counseling support and individual empowerment. The examples also pointed at the fact that the organization and implementation of accompanying measures requires different types of resources and most importantly the support of networks of volunteers and of local communities.

The meeting ended with a participatory session that provided participants with an open space to discuss the main challenges, solutions and success factors in implementing accompanying measures. EAPN has contributed to the design and facilitation of the participatory session.

The full report of the meeting is available on [Yammer](#).

### **The second FEAD Network meeting**

On 18 October 2016, ECORYS on behalf of the European Commission organised the second Network meeting in which the EU-wide network of actors involved in the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) came together to discuss Social inclusion measures under [Operational Programme type II](#) (OP II). 56 delegates, attended the event, including representatives from a range of stakeholders: Managing authorities (MAs); partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU level partner organisations; the wider EU community, as well as academic and research organisations.

The meeting had three main parts – an opening session discussing key elements of social inclusion approaches that set the framework for the discussion and analysis for the second part of the meeting that showcased projects funded by FEAD in Germany, Denmark, Holland and Sweden – the four countries that have chosen OP II. The third and last part of the meeting used the “World Café” methodology and enabled participants to discuss and exchange their views on **integrated approaches for addressing poverty and deprivation**.

At the second meeting EAPN played a role in designing and facilitating group work during the third part of the meeting but most importantly contributed to the opening session and laid the ground for the discussion on social inclusion. Fintan Farrell, acting director of EAPN outlined four elements that are key to having a social inclusion approach. He emphasized that projects organized and funded through FEAD should be a hook for social inclusion and not an end in themselves and they should be contact points for people who are in vulnerable situations to help them become included in mainstream programmes.

The four key elements of a social inclusion approach as outlined by Fintan are:

- 1) Reaching out processes to engage people who are experiencing exclusion.

The identification of groups we work with is very important and we should very consciously identify which groups in the society are in the most vulnerable situations and are experiencing high levels of poverty, and target these groups to engage. These groups have fell through the system and somehow have not been able to get back in. This is why it is important to have the support of the communities they belong to, which can be geographic communities or communities of interest – people who share particular needs and are in particular situations –

such as homeless people, migrants, single parents, Roma and Travelers. We can use information from statistics to try and identify these groups but often they do not appear in statistics so we need to work with intermediaries on the ground that know the reality and are able to reach these groups.

- 2) Ways of working
  - a) We need to develop a partnership approach – people who experience the problems have essential information, analysis, and reflection skills to be able to help us decide what are the best actions to undertake. We should work with the group and not for the group and recognize the intelligence of the people that we work with.
  - b) We have to analyse the needs together with the group because some of the needs may be obvious but others are less obvious and these needs may not be personal but they may be needs of the community, they maybe feel isolated in the school communities, having transport difficulties or health problems. We should work with the groups to identify what the real needs and issues are for them and take that as the starting point for the programmes or projects we develop.
  - c) Use collective social analysis as through this process people get from their feeling of isolation, and bearing responsibilities for their problems to understanding that they can be actors who can contribute to transforming the society and politics that are creating these problems. People begin to develop a collective analysis of the situation they are in and understand that their problems are not caused by personal failures but by structural failures. We should take an empowering approach to social inclusion.
- 3) Inclusion in the mainstream programmes – we should try to ensure that the way we work engages people in the mainstream programmes and tries to connect them to these programmes. We have to identify what blocks their access to mainstream programmes, overcome the blockages together with them and involve them in these programmes. We should see this as a good opportunity to rethink the mainstream programmes because there are factors in these programmes that exclude people, so we need to identify those factors and the programmes need to be adapted and changed and be more inclusive and engaging of the different actors. The mainstream programmes should be available to everybody.
- 4) There has to be progress because you cannot keep the engagement of people without progress. It is not possible to have progress in all of the areas and this is where the needs assessment is very important. It is important to prioritise some areas based on the needs assessment and try to get some progress on that, otherwise, people who already spend a lot of their energy on survival issues will stop investing in and giving their energy to these processes.

The meeting ended with a participatory session where participants discussed existing or potential links between FEAD actions relating to social inclusion and other national or non-governmental initiatives. The discussions underlined that FEAD pushes the partnership principle on the ground; for example, in both Germany and the Netherlands, it is obligatory to cooperate with local municipalities. Participants highlighted that local networks are crucial for implementing FEAD activities (e.g. by associating NGOs working with the most disadvantaged groups), but also that there is a need to link also both to national level organisations and initiatives and to the EU level.

The full report of the meeting is available on [Yammer](#).

### **The third FEAD Network Meeting**

On 7 October 2016, ECORYS on behalf of the European Commission organised the third Network meeting in which the EU-wide network of actors involved in FEAD came together to discuss issues related to the creation of synergies between FEAD and the European Social Fund (ESF). A hundred delegates from across the European Union attended the event, representing a wide range of stakeholders: Managing Authorities (MAs); partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations; the wider EU community, as well as academic and research organisations.

The focus of the third meeting was building up synergies between the two funding programmes and maximizing the impact of the two funding programmes. The meeting started off the discussions on potential synergies between FEAD and ESF with presentations and analysis of examples from Italy, Malta, France, Poland and Croatia. They represented a good basis for the participative workshops held in the last part of the meeting where participants discussions were centred around three questions: What are success criteria for the links between FEAD and the ESF?; What are limiting factors for synergies between the two funds?; and What could be done to improve such links?

The following proposals were made by participants to **improve the links** between FEAD and ESF, participants suggested:

- Creating a common strategy definition so that they are integrated
- Ensuring a coherent link to public national funds as well as EU funds
- Creating a common guidelines and monitoring system
- Regular dialogue between stakeholders at all levels (including end recipients)
- Linking the funds at a regulatory level, e.g. by enforcing that a certain percentage of ESF beneficiaries should be FEAD end recipients
- Initiating awareness-raising activities to discuss the two programmes and their commonalities
- Training the staff in the two Managing Authorities in order to make them aware of the two funds
- Sharing more information at regional level about FEAD with ESF stakeholders.
- Support development of capacities of partner organisations with technical assistance

The full report of the meeting is available on [Yammer](#).