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## Support for social and community development



on behalf of



**European Commission**  
**DG Employment, Social Affairs**  
**and Equal Opportunities**





## Introduction

This main goal of the policy measure is to enhance social and community development in depressed areas, on the basis of locally-based social development initiatives or projects designed and implemented by local public and private (not for profit) stakeholders.

The purpose of this paper is:

- to sketch the socio economic context and present the content and organisational setting of the measure, as well as its result so far (Part 1);
- to point out its main link with objectives of the EU social inclusion policy (Part 2); and
- to raise issues for discussion that are relevant for similar social inclusion policies in other member States (Part 3).

## Part 1. The measure under review

### *1.1 Background*

Over the last decades – and especially since the country became a member of the EU in 1986 - Portugal has experienced a rapid economic growth and the society underwent major changes. Progress took place, such as rising employment, increase in real wages and income, and improvement of the social well-being of the inhabitants. For example life expectancy increased by 8 years since the mid 1970s and the infant mortality rate declined from 20% to 5% from 1980 to 2000); the poverty rate decreased from 25% (1998 ) to 21%.

Such trends – as well as the convergence of the economy towards the EU average – have been halted since 2001, with an economic slowdown and rising unemployment (from 4 to 7%), leaving a significant gap in per capita incomes and a important public deficit. Compared to other EU countries and to the EU average, the active population has less formal education and poor access to training opportunities, which explains the low labour productivity. Inequality in income distribution (as measured by the income quintile ratio) was higher in Portugal (6.5%) than anywhere else in the 15 EU in 2001.

The situation regarding poverty and social exclusion remains worrying. According to income data and according to standard definitions, in 2001 21% of the population was exposed to the risk of poverty and 15% on a persistent basis.



However, the social representation of poverty (as measured by Eurobarometer) gave a quite different picture: 66% of the population considered themselves as poor, 50% reported poverty „visibility“ in the local neighbourhood and 51 % experienced financial difficulties. As opposed to most EU 15 countries, causes of poverty are perceived in Portugal as „personal“ ( such as laziness or bad luck) for 48% rather than „social“ (injustice or inevitability) (43%). (Gallie and Paugham. 2002). A strong dissymmetrical development has taken place between coastal urbanised or tourist areas and more rural depopulated ones. Populations suffering from poverty and social exclusion are geographically highly concentrated in remote rural communities and very distressed urban areas.

Groups such as children, young people, immigrants, homeless, as well as women are more vulnerable. Women have notably low income levels, which is a significant factor for the feminisation of poverty in Portugal.

Portugal depends upon non-monetary resources in order to assess life conditions of the population, unlikely some other European countries. In 2000, 13,5% of the total amount of families' incomes came from non-monetary incomes (such as self-consumption, in-kind salaries, non-monetary transfers, etc.). Despite the improvement of individual and collective conditions with consequences at the level of basic infrastructures, in 2001 around 300,000 families (8% of the total amount) were living in houses without the minimum acceptable standards. In addition to these features, in Portugal drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases represent an important source of poverty and social exclusion. In 2001, Portugal had the highest rate of AIDS within the EU 15 context.

Poverty and social exclusion take two forms (Almeida et al 1992) :

- „Old forms“ specially in remote rural areas where families live with very low income and ageing people with a very poor pension scheme, where traditional family and community safety nets are weak. Compared to most other EU countries, poverty is viewed in Portugal as an inherited condition by 53 % of the population.
- The „new poverty“ is that of those who have been excluded or marginalized from the economic growth and the modernisation process either because they are poorly educated/unskilled, victims of industrial restructuring, or belong to the recent inflows of immigrants from Portuguese speaking African countries, Brazil and Eastern Europe, often living in poor housing conditions ( shanty towns, undeclared housing or unsanitary dwelling). 28 %of the population (far less than most others EU countries) perceive poverty as „new „.



The reality of poverty and social exclusion in Portugal was addressed very recently in a survey where the territorial features were combined with dimensions of deprivation, disqualification and "disaffiliation". Six types of territories were defined: 1) territories moderately inclusive, 2) differentiated territories with a touristic basis, 3) mixed territories, 4) ageing and depopulated territories, 5) industrial territories with low level of qualifications and, 6) ageing and economically depressed territories. On the basis of this survey, the general (and specific) picture of the country is very worrying due to the extent of impoverished territories and territories at risk of impoverishment. A visible dividing line between the seaside part (more inclusive and attractive) and the interior, where ageing, depopulation and economic stagnation play an important role (*Tipificação das Situações de Exclusão em Portugal Continental*, January 2005).

## 1.2 Policy interventions

Due to the shortcomings of the social protection system, the rate of people at risk of poverty is not reduced notably by social transfers excluding pensions (by 6% from 27 to 21% in 1999). Portugal has a recent social protection system based on centralised public social services and large private organisations (non profit and mainly connected with social intervention of the catholic church).

However over the last decade, large progress has been made. Social protection expenditures increased at a yearly average of 7% from 1990 to 2002 and represent in 2001 24 % of GDP and a per capita in PPS close to 4000 Euros (EU 15 average : 5700 Euros). The governments have implemented vast reforms of social security, health and education systems and adopted a new Labour Code. The value of the minimum retirement pension has been increased. And the public gets better access to information about their social rights.

National programmes related to social development have been launched, such as :

- national anti poverty programme since 1990, complemented by INTEGRAR and recently reorganised under the PROGRIDE programme
- a minimum income programme (RMG or RSI) has been introduced in 1996 and generalised in 1997
- „social market“ of employment
- employment promotion measures
- life long education and training
- „life employment“ programme
- Social Network (since 2000).



Most of the projects implemented under the measure under review are co-funded by these schemes.

These national programmes have been structured and considerably reinforced within EU-oriented strategic policies and programmes, namely the National Action Plans (NAP) for social inclusion and employment and the Regional Development Programme; they are largely co-funded by the ESF, within the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Social Development (OPETDS).

According to the recent EC review of Social Protection and Social Inclusion, „a tradition of centralism and bureaucracy has produced (in Portugal), a lack of administrative capacity for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and set up appropriate information – including budgetary – system and a poor culture of participation“ (point confirmed in the Evaluation report p 13). Among the challenges ahead, are mentioned „the need to improve such administrative capacities, to strengthen the inter-ministerial monitoring committee as an important tool for the mainstreaming of social inclusion, to develop the participation of social partners and continue the effort to mobilise the civic society by implementing an effective partnership-basis approach“ (Joint report, 2005) which is at the core of the measure under review.

### *1.3 Presentation of the measure under peer review.*

The measure 5.1 of the OPETDS „Support to social and community development „ is structured under 2 sub measures, namely :

- **Social network for development** (5.1.1) set up in 2000, is described as „a forum where actions are gathered and combined by all local actors who wish to participate in combating poverty and social exclusion“. Its aim is to promote community awareness of social problems and activate local solutions through optimisation of both external and local resources. It has a strong „instrumental and methodological content, which emphasises co-operation among local stakeholders within partnerships, designing a local action plan based on diagnosis, project integration, and training of development agents and social workers. It leads to the establishment, at the municipal level (camara municipal), of a „social council“ and at the sub municipal level (freguesia or neighbourhood) of a „social commission“, defined as „partnership in which local authorities play a central role „.



The following principles are mentioned as references and foundations of the programme:

- a. Integration – economic and social dimensions; individuals, groups and society;
  - b. articulation – common aims
  - c. subsidiarity – close relation with local population and problems and local initiatives as collective, local, regional and national responsibility.
  - d. innovation – through multidisciplinary, inter-institutional and de-bureaucratized approaches and,
  - e. participation – active involvement of all local actors, but mainly the most disadvantaged groups, on social interventions.
- **Social and community development** (5.1.2) is a complementary measure aimed at promoting participative and integrated local social initiatives – „upwards“ or „upstream“ to vocational training and employment – and creating the „local conditions for social and economic progress“ and „social inclusion opportunities“. It is based on enhancing the personal and social skills of the population, mobilising local resources and other capacities and potentials, as well as intervention from development agents and social workers. It emphasises training of all these stakeholders, participation, empowerment and involvement of the population and specially of potential beneficiaries, in social and citizenship actions. It is closely related to other more „downstream“ measures such as 5.3 on vocational training.

There is an expected link between both submeasures based on continuity and or complementarity. They seem to have been planned with a bilateral intention of mutual influence. Thus, the creation of the Social Network can take advantage of the initiatives for promoting community action and participation, the improving of individual and social skills and training and qualification for community development agents. The Social Network can also contribute to continuation of these actions and at the same time build a more collaborative and participative ambience. The submeasures are structured into several types of actions ( 2 for sub measure 1 and 3 for sub measure 2), whose names and main characteristics are the following:



### Sub measure 5.1.1.: Social network for development

Action type	Name	Examples of eligible actions	Targets/beneficiaries
<b>Action 5.1.1.1</b>	Activation and consolidation of local partnerships	Support to local actors and partnerships, local diagnosis and surveys, information offices, technical support for designing and implementing local action plans, etc	Local actors, partnerships, „networks of local solidarity“
<b>Action 5.1.1.2</b>	Training and qualification of social development workers or agents	Short training sessions (on information, awareness) and longer ones ( animation, project design, etc) and social worker professional training.	Development agents, social workers, local leaders and volunteers

### Sub measure 5.1.2 : Social and community development

Action type	Name	Examples of eligible actions	Targets/beneficiaries
<b>Action 5.1.2.1</b>	Promotion of participation and community action	Diagnosis, survey, planning, monitoring, animation, project management support, etc (related to concrete social projects)	Local communities in run down urban and suburban areas and impoverished rural areas where social exclusion prevails
<b>Action 5.1.2.2</b>	Improving personal and social skills and capacities.	Adult education, education for health, home economics, vocational training, citizen involvement, psycho-social support	People, with priority to young people aged 15 and over, at risk, and adults , unemployed or minimum income recipients) and families.
<b>Action 5.1.2.3</b>	Training and qualification of community development workers.	Professional training and retraining	Development agents and social workers

The measures have a number of characteristics in common, while some others are specific to the sub measures. Among the common characteristics are that the eligible regions are all of Portugal except the Lisbon and Vale do Tejo region, and the Azores and Madeira islands. The groups targeted are disadvantaged persons, families or groups, depressed local communities. Organisations eligible for submitting project applications are public (local authorities, local branch of social administration) and private not for profit organisations. The projects can have a duration of maximum 2 years.



Specific characteristics:	Sub measure 5.1.1	Sub measure 5.1.2
Start in	2000	2001
Main targets	Local communities Development agents	Area, local communities and disadvantaged persons, families and groups
Projects applications and criteria	Local social plans or organisations (partnership, council, commission)	Can combine to 2 to 3 actions; they are reviewed by the technical staff of the OP and fully financed on the basis of <b>selection</b> criteria such as being an integrated project, development of partnership networks, promoting participation, creating the conditions for sustainability of the intervention.
Financial resources	8.264.118 Euros (2001-03) of which 62.5% funded by ESF 10 000 Euros per initiative	67.446.637 Euros
Technical, administrative and financial management	ISSS (Institute for Social Security and Solidarity)	Special unit of the OPETDS in charge of the implementation of axis 5
Special link with other measure	Minimum Income Programme	Measure 5.3 Social and employment inclusion of disadvantaged groups
Indicators and quantitative objective	163 new municipalities involved. Training of 1260 social development workers	200 000 persons to be involved from 2003 to 2005

Projects are selected on the basis of a set of criteria and scoring, referring to:

- the applicant organisation: involvement in previous projects and management capacity and experience;
- the project's relevance in linking between objectives and baseline situation and local needs, between project content and methodology suggested. Some other criteria are mentioned such as equality of opportunities between men and women, information society or environmental awareness.

#### On implementation:

Each sub measure has a different implementation mechanism.

- Sub measure 5.1.1 ( social network) is implemented by a specific public organisation the Institute for Solidarity and Social Security,(ISSS) under a contractual arrangement with the OP management Unit. ISSS select applications, provide technical assistance and monitoring as well as financial management. The mechanism seems to be a „global grant“, introduced with the major reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 but used to a limited extent in mainstream programmes under the CSF and in Community Initia-



tives. Sub measure 2 is directly managed by the special unit in charge of axis 5 with regional representative.

- Sub measure 5.1.2 is implemented by a special management unit for Axis 5 measures which is located within the Employment and Professional Training Institute. It is in charge of the selection of the applications and the follow-up of selected projects. At the regional level there exists a de-localised team dealing with the technical analysis of the applications; it can clarify aspects and help applicants with information, advice and financial aspects.

Social Security administration is expected to have an important and strategic role in both sub-measures and it is acting within a central mission of Social security policy. The rehabilitation of social and human environment at the local and a coordination with local initiatives within local development plan, that is the basic contribution expected from Social Network. In addition Social Security can help to identify the priority groups and public and to build up synergies with some other existing programmes (such as the Programme of Guaranteed Minimum Income) and projects.

#### *1.4 Results so far : Outcomes, achievements and results*

Since the sub **measure 5.1.1.** was promoted in 2000 until 2004, 173 municipalities have been involved and the number of development workers trained reached 172 % of the objective. The lower rate of implementation is in the Southern Region of Algarve, in all the other regions the average rate of implementation is equal or higher than 60%. At the organic level in all cases a Local Commission was implemented (CLAS), however it was difficult to create territorial lower level committees (CSF or CSIF). The total amount of agents involved is around 8824 and the number of formalised partners is around 5905. The sector of not for profit organisations represents more than 1/3 of the total amount of involved agents in the programme.

The local agents questioned on the subject of the programme considered the following aspects as positive:

- the promotion of strategic local partnerships
- the implementation of local social diagnostics and related definition of strategic aims and intervention priorities
- involvement of a large range of local agents in various phases of the process.



On the other hand some weak aspects of the programme were underlined as well:

- it was inadequate in relation to the organisational and institutional dominant culture
- fragile institutional and political relevance towards the programme
- weak legal support to the programme
- insufficiency of the financial resources to develop all necessary activities.

Since 2003, 2000 projects have been financed under sub measure 5.1.2 and 400 local organisations were involved. This sub measure has been subject in 2003 to an assessment of 97 projects by Quaternaire Portugal and an in-depth evaluation based on a sample of 20 projects by Centro de Estudos Territoriais (CET) based on interviews with 161 stakeholders from managers to beneficiaries. (See annex). Some of the findings are reproduced in the following table.

*A few characteristics of the projects :*

Projects duration (sample of 97)	Less than 1 year (13%), from 1 to 2 years (69%) and more than 2 years (18%)
Groups of beneficiaries (20 case studies; most projects are multi groups)	Children (5 projects); Young people (9); women(8); Ageing(2); families (7); unemployed (7); minimum income (7); farmers (4); immigrants (2); whole community (13); local partnerships( 6) technicians/development workers (8).
On the „communities“	Of the 20 case studies, 11 cover the territory of a municipality, ( <i>concelho</i> ), which in Portugal are quite large, 7 cover several ones and 3 cover sub municipal areas ( <i>freguesia</i> );
Types of action/ projects (each of the 20 project develop several actions)	Diagnosis of the local area/community (10); skills upgrading : adults(17) and young people (9); out of school activities for children and teenagers (9); community „animation“ and awareness actions (18); communities information tools (10); networks and partnerships building (7); community facilities and equipment(12); networks of development workers/technicians (4); capacity building of development workers/technicians (7); capacity building of local authorities staff (13); psycho sociological support (8); socio educational actions (8).
Partners involved	Local authorities (18); schools(12); health centres/hospitals (7); employment agencies(12); local social security offices (14); other public agencies (5); IPSS Social security administration (12); associations and other NGOs (10); companies or associations of managers(10); regional public bodies (6).



Some other findings:

*On the managing organisations of projects :*

- They are closely related to one or several national (INTEGRAR, 44%, minimum income 40%, and anti poverty programme, 39% ) or EU programmes (other measures of Operational Programme (OP), EQUAL, LEADER+) and are partly financed by the OP;
- Staff varies from 2 to 20 members: 75% with high education degree, 61% are less than 35 years old and 58% are women.
- Projects are integrated in so far as they include 2 actions (35%) or 3 actions (49%).

*Managing organisations view points:*

The priority results expected from these local actions were:

- development of personal, social and professional skills and capacities ;
- improvement of employment situation and social cohesion;
- more participation and improved citizenship.

Impacts on beneficiaries : Visible impacts of 91% of actions; higher impacts were on:

- personal development and improvement of self image;
- better access to information
- growing capacity for job search
- development of professional skills.

Impacts on organisation capacities: higher impacts have been on:

- increasing capacities of staff (technicians)
- higher capacities to work within partnerships
- new methods of work and planning tools
- increase training capacities.

Impacts on communities are visible for 84% of actions; higher impacts are on:

- Empowerment and participation of the local population
- Consolidation of existing partnerships
- Setting up of new partnerships.



Major difficulties were related to:

- project management : especially payment delays, project approval delays and the heavy burden and time consuming aspects of administrative and financial requirements
- Participants in training actions: lack of motivation, access and distance to facilities, breaking the rules on training conditions
- action sustainability: this is only secured for 35% of them; continuity will required new or other programme funding.

*Sustainability of the projects:*

- In the sub-measure 5.1.1. projects were continued, mainly due to the support of local authorities.
- In sub measure 5.1.2, the evaluation report concluded that pf the projects run during the first cycle (2000-2003) 19 projects were continued and 36 weren't. The projects that could not guarantee their continuity mentioned that they would need new applications, financial support, cooperation with public entities and/or to be involved in diverse partnerships. Success of projects that continue is explained by the existence of local partnerships, their own resources, support of local authorities and local public services, namely Social Security Departments. In the ongoing second cycle of the programme around 300 projects have been registered and will be working for periods of 2 or 3 years.

On the basis of the evaluation of the sub-measure 5.1.2., three basic changes were introduced:

- the duration of the projects from 2 to 3 years (when necessary)
- a distinction between projects according to their main aim: project for socio-economic diagnostics, for implementation of interventions and/or for consolidation
- a closer link with Social Network, due to the fact of their common ground and shared aims.



## Part 2. Place of the measure under review into the European context and policies.

### 2.1 The measure within the EU strategy on social inclusion

The NAPs Social exclusion for Portugal – both 2001 and 2003 – are very much in line with the objectives of the EU action programme for combating social exclusion. According to the Joint report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, „the 2003-2005 NAP is a fairly straight continuation of the overall strategy presented in 2001 and contains little innovation. Both NAPs present a rather broad list of principles, strategic aims and priorities, and wide panoply of instruments, but falls short of identifying sources of funding and budgets for the main measures. For this reason it is difficult to establish what the true priorities are and how the strategic objectives tie in with the interpretation of the measures“. (p 85.). The ESF contributes with about 16% of the resources allocated to Portugal for the implementation of the objectives in the field of social inclusion.

The measure under review is both a key measure and the flagship for „good practices“ of the NAPs Social inclusion. This is specially true for the sub measure 5.1.1 Social Network „which is to be extended and stepped up in order to mobilise all stakeholders“.

The measure under review is part 5.1 of the OPETDS of the Community Support Framework III, which is the major instrument for the implementation of the:

- NAPs Social Exclusion where it is in line with two of the four main objectives of the EU social inclusion strategy.
- EES and the National Action Plans for Employment
- Regional Development Programme (RDP)

OPETDS	NAPs Social exclusion	NAPs Employment	Regional development programme
<b>Measure 5.1 Support to social and community development</b>	<p><b>Objective 3</b> Support to most vulnerable groups and areas and more specifically 3 c Development of comprehensive action in favour of areas marked by social exclusion.</p> <p><b>Objective 4</b> Mobilisation of all relevant stakeholders with reference to 4.a, on participation and involvement of beneficiaries, 4.b related to the decentralisation and the role of local authorities and 4.c on the promotion of dialogue and participation, partnerships and citizens involvement at local level. Both sub measures are given as examples of good practice in the NAP 2003-2005.</p>	<b>Directive 9</b> Special groups facing problem of access to labour market	<b>Area 1</b> Promotion of citizenship for employment and social cohesion



This measure belongs to one of the 5 axis of the OPETDS „Fostering social development“ (axis 5) whose main aim is to create a network of facilities to support socially disadvantaged groups. The other 4 axis refer to training and transition to work (1), life-long learning (2), modernisation of the public administration (3) and employment / training policies (4).

Axis 5 includes 6 measures, the first one being the measure under review (5.1). The other 5 measures focus on social and professional inclusion of disabled persons (5.2) and disadvantaged groups (5.3); inclusion within the „social market of employment“ (social enterprises) (5.4), development of co-operatives (5.5) and development of service facilities (5.6)

This measure is in line with other European Commission policies such as:

- Fostering local employment development, based on local partnership and local action plans within the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Community Initiative EQUAL.
- Promoting the so called „third system“, the social economy sector and social enterprises;
- Promotion of co-operation between public organisation and NGOs (communication on „building a stronger partnership“ (2000) and promotion of associations and foundations (1998).

## *2.2 The territorial dimension of social inclusion.*

The EU strategy on social inclusion – as is the case for the EES – makes two different references to sub national „territories“.

- Targeting actions on specific distressed urban and rural localities or regions (objective 3c), which requires previous identification of these areas. This is not the case of this measure.
- Objective 4, on „mobilisation of all actors“ which refers to decentralisation and involvement of local actors such as:
  - The different stakeholders, invited to co-operate and operate within partnerships, acting as „implementers“ of national or EU programmes and/or as designers of local strategies or action plans and as managers of local projects;
  - The population, the citizens and the potential beneficiaries invited to „participate“ and to become „empowered“.

This approach is at the core of this measure which refers to „community or local development“.



The specificity of this measure is that it is exploring the relationship between social exclusion and local/community development. What is called „community development“ in some countries ( UK, Ireland, as well as in the USA and Canada) and refers to local communities, has been defined in Continental Europe as „local development“. It can be assumed that the reference to „communities“ in this measure largely refers to „localities“. This peer review could be an opportunity to address the issue of the contribution that local/community development can make to combat social exclusion and promote social development. Although the issue has been extensively discussed within the EES and was subject of a large consultation (in 2002) and several communications by the EC, it is not much the case within the social inclusion strategy. Several members states (such as Ireland and the UK) with a strong tradition of community development have national programmes related to it, and other members states promote social inclusion at the local level – especially within urban renewal policies of most distressed neighbourhoods – but there has been a general tendency (at least until recently) for community/local development and national anti poverty and social inclusion debates and policies, to run on parallel and separate tracks.

### *2.3 Economic vs social development.*

Evidence from many case studies and local economic surveys show that decay, unemployment, poverty and exclusion are a consequence of economic structuring and decline or of a „collapse of the economic base“. They conclude that the rebuilding of a new „economic base“, firms relocation and formation and the promotion of economic development initiatives are a precondition for employment (re)development and for reversing, preventing and solving most social problems. This is not the assumption of the measure under review which emphasizes that improving social conditions is rather a precondition for economic and employment development and (re)integration into work. Even if the Lisbon strategy is comprehensive and articulates economic, employment and social dimensions, the EU strategy on social inclusion (Joint report on social inclusion, 2004, p.5) seems to endorse this approach in pointing out that, specially for less advanced EU members states, priority given to social investment may boost education, employment and competitiveness. The peer review may offer an opportunity to clarify links, at this community level, between social and economic dimensions and between macro structural problems which may be the major cause of social exclusion and area-based initiatives.



#### *2.4 From theory to practice*

Promoting local and community development as an instrument of social cohesion refers to an „investors approach“ of „those who want to achieve social justice by redistributing opportunities“. (Other approaches are promoted by „deregulators who would use insecurity as the spur to change“ and „levelers who plan to achieve security by redistributing income“).. (Commission on Social Justice, UK, 1994).

The measure under review and equivalent ones in other EU countries refer to a large semantic field of notions with a rich content, which are at the core of the EU social inclusion policy and are used and shared by policy makers, researchers and practitioners in EU Members states: social inclusion (which replaces the „anti poverty“ approach in the early 90’s), social capital, empowerment, participation, sustainability, citizenship, partnership, strategic action plan, etc. These notions operate as „generative metaphors“ (new frame of reference and processes and new incentive for action), but may seem to grassroots people as theoretical, rhetorical and idealistic. There is a gap between the dense content of these notions, which are „produced at the top“ and disseminated „top down“, and how to make them operational within specific local communities and from a bottom-up perspective. Based on the experience of these area-based measures, lessons could be learned on how to turn these principles or policy instruments into practices and local actions implemented by coalitions of local actors.

#### *2.5 From centralised welfare state to decentralised /local welfare society*

The measure, as well as other ones which have been subject to peer reviews (such as Citizens Support Networks model in Finland, the metropolitan policy in Sweden and activation policy in the Nederland), and developed in other countries (Local development social inclusion programme in Ireland or Local strategy partnership in the UK), offer new forms of local or community based welfare provision generated by local public or private organisations operating in cooperation within partnerships and involving citizens and beneficiaries. These schemes are not only rooting social development within communities; they are building local social infrastructure and they pave the way of a „local welfare system“ which looks like more a „local welfare society“ than a „local welfare state“. According to some these new roles of local and civil society



organisations correspond to changing conceptions of an „activating“ state that seeks to encourage societal actors to compensate for withdrawing social welfare provision. Or it is a reaction to new modes of governance evolving in the network society which are based on bargaining rather than pure hierarchical or market coordination.

An important aim of the review could be to test the hypothesis as to whether the combination of characteristics present in this community-based approach and welfare mix can provide an effective and efficient response to social inclusion and, later, to employment for groups disadvantaged in society and in the labour market.

Such a view point is reflecting a number of policy considerations on social inclusion which point out the weakness of mainstream, top-down policies in reaching the most vulnerable and isolated groups and local communities. Accepted reasons for these weaknesses include administrative and procedural complexities, lack of presence of organisations, targets of public policies too ambitious for most vulnerable groups (e.g training, qualification and job outcomes) and higher risks associated with projects targeted to these groups.

But reversing the approach and promoting a bottom up approach may be questioned. Community development is not a panacea and cannot achieve social inclusion by itself.

Lessons from experience show that local social development strategies are more productive if they fit within a long term government or EU strategy to combat social exclusion which include income redistribution and social transfers and the provision of work through an intermediary or second labour market to compensate for the failure of the market economy to generate enough jobs.



### Part 3. Topics and issues for discussion

#### 3.1 *Local community as a springboard or a process and instrument of social development and social inclusion*

##### **Defining, targeting and involving disadvantaged local communities.**

The specificity of this measure is to address social exclusion problems through community development activation. Disadvantaged communities are the overarching theme and main target.

A first issue worth of discussion is related to the **definition and identification of such communities** as conditions of implementation of this measure and its funded projects and of equivalent programmes in peer countries.

In many countries, more distressed areas and neighbourhoods have been identified and prioritised on the basis of indicators in order to better target programmes at these areas. Defining priority areas may have had negative impacts in stigmatising territories and people living there. But these analyses have helped to define the baseline conditions, understand factors of their decay, define and address priority social needs of the most vulnerable groups, design and focus action plans or projects and assess outcome and impacts. The extent of the territory and population covered may well have consequences on the impact of each supported project and of the whole measure. The measure under review does not seem to have made a *ex ante* definition and identification of priority distressed communities within the regions eligible. (the whole country except the Lisbon area and Islands). A diagnosis of local conditions has to be presented in the project application.

The evaluation report of this measure shows that a majority of projects are based on the territory of a municipality (*camara municipal*) and for a few or a smaller territory - part of a municipality (*freguesia*) or urban neighbourhood. But a local community is not only a simple administrative unit. It can be as well:

- a body of people bound by some recognised characteristics;
- a social entity with commonality of social problems
- an area where a local stakeholder can cooperate and build network and partnership,
- a place where people share a common interest and associate for a common cause and action,
- an area of implementation and delivery of social service or a public programme,



- a simple environment within which actions are planned and implemented, etc.

It is possible that these different views or realities may impact the way the measure and the projects financed are designed and implemented. And the views of the programme managers do not necessarily correspond to those of the local stakeholders. The discussion at the Peer Review meeting can help to clarify these issues.

The fact that deprived and poor communities and its marginalized and poor inhabitants are asked **to mobilise and be involved**, tap local resources, design a strategy and plan, and organise into a partnership, can be seen as a major challenge for local development agents and project managers as well as for managers of the measure or similar programmes.

This approach raises the dilemma of „communities resolving their own problems or socio economic problems which are beyond their control“ and may assume that poverty and deprivation lay most of the blame on the victims, that socially excluded people or groups suffer from „social pathologies“ and develop ways of adapting to their conditions or to a „cycle of deprivation, neglecting the responsibility of the economic forces and of the „rich and powerful“. The question, which may be subject to discussion, is if too much responsibility is not being placed on them for tackling their social problems and delivering solutions.

### **Building community capacities for social development**

Most of the projects and actions financed under this measure are focused on this topic and refer to different types of „capacities“, or „capabilities“ - which are close to „social capital“ components. It is based on the assumption that the accumulation of these capacities and the assessment and mobilisation of „community strengths“ are a prerequisite for social development. These capacities refer to

- building local partnership (5.1.1.1) and setting up a coalition of local stakeholders both public (local authorities and local branch of public administration) and private (non profit organisations) actors willing to co-operate;
- providing and handling development tools, in term of information and data, diagnosis, survey, design of local strategic/action social plan, project management, evaluation methods, (5.1.2.1)



- training and upgrading „development agents“ and (5.1.1.2 and 3) which may have different profiles and functions : local leaders ( possibly both elected and voluntary), local officers and social development workers On the latter, Measure 5.1 1 and 5.1.2 refer to two profiles and potential different roles: „social development agents or workers“ and „community development agents“, which may be worth defining.
- participation of disadvantaged people and beneficiaries, and awareness and involvement of citizens, in order to „empower“ them.

Experiences from many countries and research on local and community development show that this process of accumulation of social capital is a difficult process in local communities which are under-equipped in social capital and social facilities and very often highly disorganised. Creating local conditions for social development seems to be quite a challenging process which requires important financial resources – including investments with a very low or long term return for the local community (for example in training development agents and local social workers). Social inclusion cannot be achieved quickly by measures with a short life span and two years funding. The managers of the measure seem to respond to this dilemma by securing continuity between measures and local projects in order to make this process more sustainable. An important question, on which participants to the review could share their experience, is how to insure a continuity and sustainability of these social initiatives. It would also be interesting to share experiences and views on how to monitor and assess such complex and long process of building capacities and how to measure its impacts on social development and inclusion. The evaluation of the sub measure 5.1.2 does not confirm whether such capacities have been built up and will secure future development process and the sustainability of social actions.

**Participation and empowerment** of beneficiaries and community members are a crucial issue on which this measure and equivalent programmes in some other peer review countries have gathered a rich experience to be shared. It is central to the contribution local or community development can make in dealing with social inclusion. However the following points have to be remembered:

- There is a tendency to overestimate people’s desire, willingness and time for participation and evidence shows that if many people feel that they should be consulted, only a tiny minority is prepared to become engaged in actions.



- People and groups involved in local projects and networks may not necessarily be those who are the most excluded and representative of the area and conflict of interest should not be ignored.
- How do local people become involved – spontaneously, through local publicity, encouragement by committed social workers, etc. – and how does one create confidence and skills often lacking in order to work collectively and to sustain ongoing community involvement ?
- How can participation „empower“ those who have been involved in such very different respects ( as information recipients, as audience of local events, as trainees either in formal training or in-action training, as users of a social service, as receiving psychological support, etc.) or playing different roles (beneficiaries vs volunteers, “clients“ vs decision makers, etc) and how operate the various learning and empowerment processes operate?

Likewise, empowerment, socialisation or inclusion may have a quite different meaning and intensity when local people involved in these projects are invited to be consulted in the definition of objectives and in the design of action plans or when they are involved in action concerning their daily life. This point raises the need to identify, define and count „**beneficiaries**“ and „**participants**“ in order to assess project impacts on them. As shown in the evaluation report of the 20 case studies, the notion is unclear and summing up the total number of beneficiaries is misleading, because it refers to very different criteria: the whole population (for example for recipients of information leaflets or potential users of a one stop shop) or members of a small group (for example, social work trainees). What is the experience of peer countries on defining and assessing impacts of social initiatives and projects on participants and beneficiaries? Additionally, it would be interesting to know – and share views on – if such a community-based approach close to people, and equivalent schemes, have improved the outreach process to persons in need and have contributed to involving beneficiaries, usually not reached until now or excluded from other programmes and ESF funding.

**Partnership** is another important component and innovation of this measure and mechanisms of implementation of area-based projects. However in this measure (5.1.2 at least), projects applications are not made by a pre defined local partnership (as it is the case for the CIP Equal and Leader and in other countries), but by a leading local organisation which promises to cooperate with other local organisations. The scope of this cooperation and the formal or



informal nature of these local partnerships, their visibility and the roles of the partners should be clarified in order to better understand the role and the value added by such coalitions of local stakeholders and their additional impacts on local projects and actions. Because most peer countries share experience in promoting local partnerships they are invited to exchange their views on this issue.

### **The various forms and modes of integration of actions/projects at the community level**

As is the case in many peer countries and in ESF funded programmes, this measure – as well as projects and actions funded – are defined as „integrated“ and this „integrated approach“ is presented as key innovative feature. Such integration may have different forms and content which need to be clarified and defined in order to have a clear and common understanding of objectives and processes.

These measures refer to **social integration**, defined as social inclusion or a more cohesive and well off community. It is based on the assumption that such integration is the outcome of a step by step **integration pathway**. This is clear for disadvantaged persons, where the process goes from early stages of inclusion such as personal development, socialisation, gaining confidence and self esteem and so on, through service supports (guidance, counselling, basic training, etc), to vocational training, preparation to work, employability and access to secondary or primary labour markets.

The measure under review is focussed on social initiatives and rarely refers to employability and access and integration into the labour market, seen as premature and „downstream“ in the integration pathway. However the coordination between „upstream“ sequences of social or general training actions (addressed by the measure) and some other vocational training and employment-oriented action addressed by other OP measures (5.2), seem to be an important issue for measures and projects.

Such a step-by-step **integration pathway** is as well a collective process valuable for a distressed community as a whole. It is related to the issue mentioned above of building capacities, seen both as a prerequisite and as a basic ingredient for designing and implementing local action plan and projects which will address social problems of the community.

The measure refers as well to other forms of integration between different sub measures (and different „action models“ of sub measure 5.2) or between actions which are targeted on people/families, on special socio demographic



groups, on communities at large or on development /social workers. Sub-measure 5.2 points out the necessary coordination or integration between training oriented and non-training oriented actions, as far as a clear distinction is made for management purposes.

A further issue is related to the double targeting of a measure like the one under review and the links – or integration – between the needs of a distressed area (where non disadvantaged people living there can participate as well and be mobilised) and the needs of disadvantaged groups, people and families who live in and are concentrated there.

Finally another type of integration may be mentioned between the various actors ( within partnerships) and actions and specially between those which finance the process or expertise (information, surveys, strategic planning, development agent training, etc.) and those which address acute social issues.

## **Topic 2. Management of a decentralised or area/community-based measure**

The management of such measures or other area-based programmes is quite complex and based on multiple criteria (integrated, multiple stakeholders, adjusted to local context or targeted at specific groups, and so on). Also gaps may exist between authorities' perspectives and the interests of grassroots people.

### **Quality of local projects and their selection**

The quality of applications and the proportion of projects rejected (and subject to further improvement) are important features of this measure and equivalent decentralised programmes. Projects financed by such decentralised programmes and implemented by independent organisations require a careful selection process based on specific and multiple criteria. A general review of main characteristics of these local project applications and of selection processes could be subject to a broad discussion in order to get views from other countries on these issues.

### **Implementing mechanism**

This measure and equivalent decentralised programmes have been designed to better reach more disadvantaged groups and people in order to bring solutions close to them and to the heart of disadvantaged communities. Presentation



and discussion of delivery mechanisms –in term of managing organisation, role of partners, accompaniment support to projects, grant and budgetary management procedures used by managing organisation, monitoring system by the OP management unit, etc.) could be interesting in order to know if they are appropriate for local or community development and if they allow greater flexibility to local conditions, greater autonomy in decision-making by local managing bodies and decentralised delivery, while providing transparency, accountability and control of public funds allocated to projects. An additional question refers to the relative amount (as a % of the total grant) of running costs of each of both mechanisms.

The success of such decentralised measure and locally implemented projects by an **independent organisation** depends on the management and organisational capacity of those local organisations running the projects. Most of them have previous experience in this field and this experience is often a criteria for their selection. It would be interesting to know if evaluation studies give evidence that they have improved their ability to do so as well as their knowledge, skills and systems. If we assume that very few local organisations have got such capacities to manage local projects, the question is how to improve them and build these management skills.

Running such a decentralised measure may as well raise issues of **“strategic oversight”**: referring to the management from the central unit, extraction of the issue arising and the taking of the lessons arising from the local project back into the management of the measure.

Some of the challenges of managing such decentralised measures seem to be:

- How to combine central initiatives with local energies, taking into account the fragile experience of strategic local policy in many communities;
- How to overcome fragmentation of the existing diverse programmes or measures, some of them acting in/for the same population and with similar aims and how to turn a collection of initiatives into coherent policy?

### **The role of local actors: local authorities, non profit organisations and local branches of social administration**

Decentralised social schemes, such as the Portuguese measure, in which local projects are an important element to address social problems, have consolidated



and legitimised the intervention of local actors. In spite of the different national context and traditions - it is useful to review such new roles and functions, on the base of common peer countries experiences.

**Local authorities** are playing an increasing role in the social policy field. The „social network“ sub measure under review has succeeded in setting up permanent social infrastructures at the municipal level: Local Council for Social Development (CLASD) and Social Commissions (CSF) at the sub municipal (freguesia) level. A few questions could be raised in order to better understand these new functions:

- Have these local social units been involved as applicants and implementers of projects under sub measure 5.2 ? (the 20 cases studies evaluation make very few references to these structures).
- Do municipalities have the capacities, staff and financial resources to properly manage projects and make such initiatives sustainable ?
- Do they have the will and abilities to cooperate with private actors and local branches of public social services such as social security, health and social care.

The private welfare, emerging from local communities and from the third sector in the form of welfare society or welfare-mixes, is becoming a crucial complement of public welfare. Private **non profit organisations** (such as religious organisations) have always played an important role in responding to social issues in Portugal. Often they became centralised and set up local subsidiaries. Such a measure involves these organisation but, apparently also, a new generation of community-based and multi-actors associations such as „associations for local development“ or civil society intermediate organisations running „social enterprises“ and producing social services. The question of the capacity – and means to acquire it – of these local NGOs to design, run, manage and assess complex and integrated projects or social enterprises delivering social services (while often shifting from voluntary to professional work), needs to be discussed and transnational experience shared.

Welfare state – as it is the case in many other EU members states – is often described as hierarchical and bureaucratic (NAP's SE 2003-2005, Chapter 6, Best practices p.78, French version). However, the regional and local branches of social administrations (social protection and security, health care, pension, social housing, etc.) play a major role in addressing social exclusion at community level. A lot depends on the abilities of their officers to involve benefi-



ciaries and to perform as partners within these local social coordinating unit and within projects funded under this measure.

The strategic importance of partnership for future social development requires knowing if these **local partners** have widened their views, changed their attitudes, enriched their experience with target groups, strengthened their links between them, established lasting relations with disadvantaged people or groups, increased their experience and their contacts and changed their perspective regarding social issues in their community.

Finally it is assumed that an approach such as this measure and equivalent ones in other countries, represents a mutual learning experience which has reinforced the legitimacy of local stakeholders and the recognition of local initiatives in tackling social issues. In communities with a poor tradition of „associativity“ and co-operation it may have enriched experience, improved perception of working as a group or within networks and broadened their horizon.

### **Assessing outcomes, results and impacts**

A final point is related to **evaluation** of these project-based schemes, whose results, extracted from samples of projects, are difficult to aggregate. Such evaluation should differentiate the three levels of actions:

- policy context and the programme (or its axis on social development with general goals);
- the measure under review; in relation to its aims and objectives
- local projects in relation to its specific objectives, in term of outcome, results and local impacts.

Also an attempt should be made to assess the different types of impacts in relation to:

- building community capacities;
- training and developing opportunities for disadvantaged people or families
- developing pathways for the social inclusion of excluded persons
- tackling the severe situation of exclusion
- putting services in place
- capacities of local organisation to manage projects.



Exchanging views and experiences on how such evaluation can be designed and conducted will help to gain an comprehensive view of the real impact on the social inclusion of decentralised and area based measures, such as the one under review.

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**ANNEX: Examples of local projects (sub measure 5.1.2)**

Project name and main topic	Leading organization (+ main partner)	Area and population	Main objective	Number and examples of specific actions	Period in month	Staff FTE	Budget Euros	Participants/beneficiaries
RAIZ: Support network for children at risk	Private (catholic) social organization (local branch running a home care for children) + local public social services.	3 neighbourhoods of a city 15 800 inhab.	Set up a community network in order to prevent and avoid children placement into home care institutions	Community support services to families with problems Survey of factors of risks Community magazine on education and health Awareness campaign and multicultural forum on these issues Citizen week on youth issues Advice and training for women and mothers	24	4	180 000	14 000
GIESTA Social development of a community	Private association for local development (+ local authority)	Part of a rural municipality 800 inhab.	„Animation“ of the community; Provide social skills for an active life at different stage of life	26 actions, such as: Awareness workshops and initiatives on local heritage, environment, training volunteers. Sports and cultural activities, Adult education (NTIC) Local events and leisure activities Local web site	12	2	54 000	4 500
PESSOA ACTIVA Social integration of women	Women association	A municipality 17 600 inhab.	Improve personal and social skills Social inclusion within the community	Information and animation unit Adult education session( health, home management, environment, citizenship, use of Euro, equality of opportunities) Local events, cultural activities	14	3	147 000	540



Project name and main topic	Leading organisation (+ main partner)	Area and population	Main objective	Number and examples of specific actions	Period in month	Staff FTE	Budget Euros	Participants/beneficiaries
TAIPA Combat social exclusion	Local centre for cultural and education development	A rural municipality 24000 inhab.	Prevent social exclusion through social, cultural and training initiatives	11 actions such as: A resources guide book NTIC centre and training. Art, handicraft and cultural workshops Summer camps for young people Tourism an local product marketing Support to volunteers	15	4,5	145 000	2 300
RAIAR Support to social development	NGO for rural development of rural Algarve	3 municipalities 54 000 inhab.	Set up a network of animation and support to social initiatives. Training development agents Support to farmers	Awareness session for women, young people, seniors and farmers. Training session (development. agents) Local information magazine NTIC Actions against drugs addiction, Support to farmers initiatives Survey of local economy and data base	12	8	228 000	3 650
SARA. Fighting drugs	Regional (public) institute on drugs and addiction.	6 municipality (county) 40 000 inhab. Urban area	Reduce drug uses, prevent AIDS and prostitution	Training of „street teams“ of young local social workers Guide books and booklets, on access to social services and hospital Awareness campaign and workshops (for families, „clients“, communities) Support for cure	25	3	103 000	155
DESENVOLVER Family development	Private association for the development of communities	1 municipality 390 000 inhab Urban and rural/ industrial	Improve living conditions of disadvantaged people Improve their personal and social skills Promote citizenship	12 actions, such as: Identification of disadvantaged families and analysis of their needs; Awareness and training sessions (group dynamics) on health, home economy, child raising, first aid, combat alcoholism, waste recycling, etc.	15	5,5	44 450	430



Project name and main topic	Leading organisation (+ main partner)	Area and population	Main objective	Number and examples of specific actions	Period in month	Staff FTE	Budget Euros	Participants/beneficiaries
O Linho Social and economic inclusion of women	Local authorities	1 municipality 7500 inhab.	Improving living conditions of disadvantaged women Promote craft activities as source of income	Information and awareness on local problems Training „tutors“ for local groups Training on project design and management Training for personal skills and vocational Training on weaving Support to women local initiatives	12	2,5	47 000	16 (?)
Solidaridad Development of the whole community	Local branch of a national catholic social organisation	1 municipality 7500 inhab.	Promote community development	Information, animation, awareness, group discussion on community issues Training of young development workers Support to local association initiatives (tourism, economic, social, environmental) Local events (culture, leisure, social issues)	8	1,5 + 15 trainers	99 000	530 (incomplete)
Mediation for inclusion. (of minimum income recipients)	Regional branch of the Social security centre	3 municipalities 34000 inhab.	Social and professional integration of 100 persons. Increase their capacities and skills	Survey of the target population Socio cultural „animation“ and support to initiatives and local events Information and awareness sessions for local actors officers and social workers; Workshops on NTICs, health, social rights; citizenship Psychological support	24	2	360 000	?
Sem Frontieras Integration of migrants	Catholic organisation of social services for families	1 city/ municipality	Integration of 1717 immigrants (from Eastern Europe, „legalised“ in 2002)	Survey of their problems and needs Psychological and family support Teaching of the Portuguese language Information, internet unit for communication with their home country; Advice for access on job centres Support to migrants association, Information of local officials; development agents and the whole population on immigrants problems	24	2	88 500	600



Project name and main topic	Leading organisation (+ main partner)	Area and population	Main objective	Number and examples of specific actions	Period in month	Staff FTE	Budget Euros	Participants/beneficiaries
Ribacoa Integrated social development	Centre for social integration (public)	3 rural and depopulated municipalities 32.000 inhab.	Social and cultural development of the population and participation	Training sessions for development workers Awareness sessions on health, and social problems such as alcoholism, Training on first aid Meetings with emigrants and other local events Support for local associations and their projects	13	2	149 000	1 121
Exchange of knowledge: Community development	Private association for local development	Municipality of a city 180.000 inhab.	Tap local resources and create opportunities for social inclusion Promote participation and improve social skills	Socio economic diagnosis of the city Local observatory Activities for children ( schooling supports, camps, health care, sports) Psychological support Exchange of knowledge and experiences between age groups Training on internet and NTIC Public library and video Training session for personal skills	23	3	226 000	188 (incomplete)
Village with a future: Sustainable development	Association for environment protection.	1 municipality 8000 inhab.	Promote sustainable development and local products Protection of environment and heritage	Survey of local products ( honey, mushrooms, forestry, etc) Marketing of local products Job club; cultural and social activities Setting up of a local production coop Heritage workshops and local events	16	5	226 000	2 200
Future in your hands: Education and social development	Association for integrated development	1 municipality 8000 inhab	Prevent school drop out Life projects for children and youth and their families	School support for preventing drop out Psychological support to young people and families with problems Training sessions on preparation for/to work Training workshops and sessions for young people on NTIC, electricity, mechanics, handicraft, citizenship, etc) Training on NTIC for women	29	1	65 160	252



Project name and main topic	Leading organisation (+ main partner)	Area and population	Main objective	Number and examples of specific actions	Period in month	Staff FTE	Budget Euros	Participants/beneficiaries
For a better life:	Local authorities and two local associations	1 neighbourhood (with hard drugs, unemployment and crime problems) of a city 800 inhab.	Solving hard social problems Improve image of the area	Survey and action – study of local problems with the population; Forum on local social problems and solutions Socio cultural animation and events Communication campaign on „changing the image“ „One stop shop“ for information, advices and support services	24	2	143 000	2 200
PRO SOCIAL Skills for unemployed	Business organisation	A city 430 000 inhab.	Finding solutions for unemployed people Facilitate their access to labour market Improve skills and living conditions	Internet site for access to training and employment Training of tutors for distance learning and work Awareness sessions on training and skills Training on NTCl and training handbook Setting up of a network of local actors for „social and community development“	27	0,5	95 000	4 600
ELO Social development of children, young people and families	Local branch of a catholic social organisation (+ local public social services)	A rural municipality 9500 inhab.	Education and social integration of children, youth and families Combat school drop out Improve living conditions of poor families	13 actions, such as: Survey of main social problems Psychological support of most difficult cases Advice and support to „life projects“ Education initiatives for children (library, play ground, etc) in cooperation with the schools Awareness session to young mothers Social education for parents (health, home economy, safety, citizenship, parent involvement in education, oral and written communication, NTIC, cooking, etc) Visits to family homes Setting up of a local association for animation Final seminar	23		251 000	20 (?)

Source: Evaluation report. 20 Case studies.