

Case Study 1: Strengthening Social Work in Municipalities in the LAG Frýdlantsko-Beskydy Area

Abstract



The case study focuses on the activity of *strengthening the performance of social work in the municipalities of the local action group (LAG) Frýdlantsko-Beskydy*. The project and its selected activity address the issues of social exclusion and social isolation. The LAG territory is made up of rural villages in remote parts of the region, which makes access to social services challenging. The project has increased awareness and activated local municipalities and, thanks to the newly created position of a field social worker, made it possible to address deficiencies in the availability of social services. As a result, community planning is now being implemented as part of the cooperation of local municipalities, allowing for better responses to the needs of smaller remote municipalities thanks to the knowledge of the LAG.

Case Study Subject

The main vision of the project was to support informal carers, socially excluded people and people at risk of social exclusion in their natural social environment. The selected activity aims to **increase awareness, coordination and networking of local municipalities, the Municipality with Extended Power (MEP) Department of Social Affairs and social service providers through field social work**. Strengthening social work and cooperation of local actors should lead to the stabilization of the target group.

LAG Frýdlantsko-Beskydy and its partners

The project is being implemented by **LAG Frýdlantsko-Beskydy**, located in the Moravian-Silesian Region and covering 13 municipalities. The organization **Andělé Stromu Života p.s.** is a partner with a financial contribution within the framework of Key Activity 1. Cooperation with **municipal authorities in the LAG territory and with the Department of Social Affairs of the Frýdlant nad Ostravicí MEP** is crucial for the activity selected for *Case Study 1*.



Example of good practice – defining needs in the region

The need for this intervention arose from a **field survey, organized by the LAG** in January 2022. The needs had been monitored before the project was prepared, which made it possible to reflect specific findings and set an appropriate focus of the project. Representatives of municipalities, social service providers and the public were involved in the survey. The joint



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definition of needs is an example of the use of the LEADER principle in practice, where incentives are obtained from the bottom up with the involvement of local actors.

The target group of the project's key activity focused on social work consists **of people at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded people**. Thanks to the field social worker, the target group received direct help, which in some cases improved their situation. There was an increase in awareness and trust of the target group. It was also possible to arrange relevant social services thanks to networking in the area, which contributed to their more efficient use and connection to people in need from the target group. The benefits for the target group are also summarized in the diagram below.

		
Improvement of the life situation of the target group thanks to individual support provided by a social worker.	Enhancing awareness and trust among the target group.	More effective use of available social services thanks to the mediation of relevant social services by a social worker.

THE ADDED VALUE OF CLLD

- **Identification of the main needs based on a bottom-up approach** and launching community planning at the level of smaller municipalities. This approach made it possible to cover the needs of small municipalities in the social area, which would otherwise be considered rather marginally in the MEP community planning.



"I think that it is the LAG that helps us a lot with first-level municipalities. They have better established relationships with the mayors of smaller municipalities. Thanks to community planning, we have also managed to involve smaller municipalities in the development of social services."

- MEP Employee

- **Activation and interconnection of actors from various sectors**, including entrepreneurs, representatives of municipalities and schools, or associations. The specific result of the interconnection is organization of public events, the support of local brands and the improvement of communication within the provision of social services in the area. The LAG also has the advantage of knowing local actors and their needs.



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- ▶ Support for the development of the local community and social capital through actions and motivational programs for the public, where community leaders and individuals who can apply their talent, knowledge, or skills in the community are given opportunities, while also creating connections within the community.
- Important factors in the success of the implemented project are knowledge of the **environment and the needs of the** area, or **good communication and cooperation between** local actors.
- The experience and proactivity of the LAG social worker **is also important**, when it is a new position in the organization. The worker plays an important role for representatives of municipalities and target groups.
- x On the contrary, representatives of the MAS team initially found the insufficiently specific definition of the role and activities of the MAS social worker beyond the framework of Act 108 on social services to be problematic. MAS does not operate a registered social service, so it is important to properly establish and anchor the job position. Within this project, it was possible to secure a worker with previous experience in the field and knowledge of the local context. It is also important to communicate the position to NGOs and other stakeholders who may perceive the newly created position as competition, and conversely, to demonstrate the benefits and complementarities of assistance for the benefit of clients/target groups.

