

## **Annex II**

### ***Cases description***



#### ***Social/Care Farming in Slovenia*** **State of the Art for "So Far" project** ***(Social Services in Multifunctional Farms)*** **EU FPVI**

Name of authors: Katja Vandal, Irena Fister, Sonja Munih,  
Tomaž Ferluga

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Organisations:

University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical faculty, Department  
of Agronomy

1000 Ljubljana, Jamnikarjeva 101

**E-mail:** [katja.vadnal@bf.uni-lj.si](mailto:katja.vadnal@bf.uni-lj.si)

Centre for Protection and Care Koper  
6000 Koper, Ulica 15. maja 8

**E-mail:** [vdckp@siol.net](mailto:vdckp@siol.net)

Goat-breeding Farm "Brdca"

6240 Kozina, Vrhopolje

**E-mail:** [tomaz.ferluga@volja.net](mailto:tomaz.ferluga@volja.net)

## Name of Project

### *The Inclusion of the Clients of the Koper Centre for Protection and Care in the Farming Activities on Goat-breeding Farm "Brdca"*

<b>Project holder (brief profile)</b>	Centre for Protection and Care Koper Special welfare institution
<b>Address</b>	6000 Koper, Ulica 15. maja 8
<b>Tel.</b>	00 386 5 62 62 851
<b>Fax.</b>	00 386 5 62 75 601
<b>e-mail</b>	vdckp@siol.net
<b>Web-site</b>	<a href="http://www.vdc-koper.si">http://www.vdc-koper.si</a>



#### Some key-words

- Social care
- Agriculture
- Inclusion
- Sustainability
- Occupational activity
- Farming
- Supplementary on-farm activity

#### Brief overview (special features of the project)

Inclusion of the clients of the Koper Centre for Protection and Care in farming activities on the Goat-breeding farm "Brdca" is basically a pilot project of the enthusiasts, who were interested in social farming. It has started in 2003 as way to study feasibility of social farming in Slovenia and is running as yet. But its future is threatened by lack of institutional support. The evaluation of the project from the all three relevant stakeholder – the professionals and management of the institution, the clients and the farmer – is favourable, proving that if properly prepared, planned, executed and monitoring social farming can be a realistic scenario on behalf of all involved. Yet, the active stakeholders learned another lecture: the institutional environment (local community and relevant central authorities) do not support such type of multi-actor and multi-disciplinary innovations in the field of social welfare and rural development.

## Background

The National Program of Social Care up to year 2010 is aimed to pluralize this sector: that means a diversification of the programmes and the providers, backed by public-private partnership. In this context an inclusion of the farms into a newly forming net of social care become a relevant issue.

Agricultural production (gardening, vegetable, mushroom, herbs productions, animal breeding, therapeutic riding, etc.) are becoming an important component of the occupational and therapeutic activities for the persons with special needs. On the other hand, agriculture is still an industry that can provide enough simple or easy works, in particular in case of the low-inputs technologies (ecological/organic farming). Therefore, a provision of social services for the persons with special needs as a supplementary on-farm activity would increase the rehabilitation and therapeutic potential of agriculture with regard to the principles of normalisation/inclusion. The users will be included in everyday real on-farm processes, that makes possible to adjust operation to client's abilities and other characteristics, and they will work in a common social environment. Furthermore, social farming allows a farmer to realize positive externalities of agriculture directly and to diversify income sources and target markets.

## The concept

### The aims

The project is aimed to:

- Broadening the possibilities for all the interested users, as working groups can rotate
- Gaining new experiences, inclusion in a social environment, diversification of social interactions
- Strengthening a cooperation between the units of the Centre
- Development of the organisation, based upon the elements of mutual support and assistance within a working group
- To enable the users to work in an environment that corresponds to their interests
- To evolve the proficiencies and skills, self-dependence, endurance, positive self-image, taking responsibility, positive attitude to work, habits of work, taking care for own safety and for safety of the co-workers
- Putting foreign experiences into the Slovene practice.



**Planning of daily activities**

*"What shall we do today?"*

*Farmer*

*"To return ladder?"*

*Roman*

*"Yes, but the neighbour is not at home today.*

*It will not be polite not to thanks her for a ladder. I think that to day is day form mending a stockade.*

*We shall return a ladder after that. What do you think about that?"*

*Framer*



**Mending a stockade**



**Evaluation of stockade mending**

## Structure of the interests

### *The users*

The users long for the changes. They wish to experience something new out of the Centre. They are desirous to get to know new places and new people. They like to work outside, in nature. They like animals and they wish to get opportunity to take care for them. They are keen to use tools and machines. They expect a higher remuneration for their work.

### *The professionals*

As some of the users are expressing their lively and permanent interest in a nature, in animals and plants, as well as in working manually in the open air, it is reasonable to provide them with the adequate opportunities. The users have to have an opportunity to gain new skills and proficiencies, as well as to take an active airing. Through on-farm work they are included in a normal social environment. At the same time such activity will contribute to better cooperation between the units of the Centre.

The users, who are more self-dependant, more resourceful and do not need a permanent assistance of a professional are the first to be included in the project. While working on farm a safety of the clients has to be assured. Only simple tools are to be used. The clients have to get a healthy hot meal.

### *The management of the Centre*

- Performing permanent education in an operative way and adjusting it to the individual need/abilities of the users
- A possibility to broaden the occupational activities and choices
- To train the users for higher self-dependence, to support their personal development and to improve their self-esteem
- To provide the users an opportunity to experience living and working in a different environment
- The inclusion of the users in a social environment that help them to enrich their social capital and to gain new knowledge and skills, that they can use elsewhere
- To accustom the users to cooperate with others, to organize themselves, as well as to help themselves and the others.

### *The farmer*

The farmer has two groups of aims. The first one is oriented to the users:

- To provide the users with a safe working environment and adequate, meaningful occupations accordingly to their interests without the strict requests in terms of productiveness and efficiency
- To enable the users to practice recreational activities.

The second one is derived from his vision on future development of his farm:

- To learn and to practice working with the mentally disabled
- To increase the economic vitality of the farm by its transformation into a care-farm for mentally disabled.

## The performance design

The users and the farmer are planning daily activities while having morning tea or juice. All the work tasks are written into a diary, that the farmer is obliged to keep.

The users are encouraged to suggest activities. The farmer and the users evaluate the suggestions in terms of their practicability and include them in a daily plan.

The users are coming on the farm 4-5 times per week and stay 4-5 hours per day.

The users changed into overalls. The farmer gives an initial instruction and demonstrates working procedure. The users are working along with the farmer. They perform simple operations independently.

The professionals from the Centre attend the users during the first few visits to assist the farmer at the first encounter with the moderate mentally disabled users, as well as to assist the users at their first steps on the farm.

The farm-works of the users are:

- Regular works with animals (cleaning the stable and its surroundings, trimming and feeding the animals)
- Seasonal regular works (maintaining grasslands and forests, preparing firewood)
- Seasonal periodical works (picking herbs and acorns)
- Of-season activities (mending stockades, maintaining a football ground, recreation)
- Housekeeping (preparing lunch, tidying a cloakroom).

After work the users wash themselves and changed their clothing. Then they help the farmer at preparing and serving a meal.

The farmer and the users check the tasks they have fulfilled and compare the outcome with planned one. The tasks that remain undone or unfinished are put into a plan for the next visit. The relations between the farmer and the users should be at ease.

The farmer should be aware of the Codex of ethical principles of social work.

The first evaluation is to be carried out after 3 months, while the final evaluation is to be at the end of the year.

## The realisation

The users were working on the farm from the beginning of May to the end of October. They work on farm twice per week, on Friday and on Thursday, from 9.30 to 12.30. Working group consisted of four users. Three of them were from the Unit Ilirska Bistrica and one from the Unit Divača. The users got to the farm by the Centre's car and were accompanied by a professional.

The Centre provided overalls, tools and first aid kit. The users were vaccinated against tick fever. The farmer provided a proper cloakroom and bathroom, as well as hot meal.

The professionals in charge of the Units had very intensive contacts with the farmer and they were present on farm, especially at the beginning.

The users worked along with the farmer at first, and independently later. The working activities were:

- Getting animals from and back to the stable, tidying-up the stable and the stable-yard, feeding and watering the animals, taking care of chicken flock
- Mending the stockades
- Maintenance of grassland, mowing a football ground
- Fruit picking
- Preparing firewood

- Helping at barn construction
- Picking the herbs, mushrooms, preparing juices, pickles
- Maintenance of a duck pond
- Recreational activities.

## The evaluation

### *The professional evaluation*

The users adjusted to a new environment quickly and established good, relaxed and friendly relation with the farmer. They learned basic contents of work on daily base and regularly got opportunity to alter a plan with their ideas and suggestions. They took an active role in the evaluation procedure during the activities, as well as at the end of a working day.

The users came to know the surroundings, names of places and special characteristics of the different parts of the farm. They learned about the land use. Through taking care of animals they learned why the particular operation has to be carried out in a particular place and at the particular time.

They distribute the working tasks between them according to their preferences and abilities. While working they learned to cooperate and to help each other.

The occupations were neither monotonous nor profit oriented. They were sufficiently diversified, providing enough small and simple operations with the meaningful, useful and attractive aims.

Phasic and final evaluations showed that the goals of the project have been met. The new contents and activities, as well choices were available for the users. They got an opportunity for the experience-based learning, for keeping their knowledge, habits and skills, as well as for strengthening their social contacts. Their quality of life and psychophysical conditions improved significantly.

The total costs of the project are high due to travelling expenses and farmer's fee. Therefore, to carry on the project additional funds are needed as regular funding of the Centre does not allow such a "luxury".

### *The users' evaluation*

Everything that was good and pleasant they sum up through followed phrases:

- It is good to work in nature
  - Everything was good, except the heat<sup>1)</sup>
  - We helped each other
  - We got acquainted to Tomaž and others
  - I am quite content with everything. No critique.
- They stressed the things they did not like:
- It was hot and it was very hard to work.
  - The pay was rather low. The fee has to be higher.

Two of them are ready to continue to work at the farm. Other two refuse this due to "low pay".<sup>2)</sup>

1) The temperatures were 30 °C and more.

2) The question of the fees paid to the clients for their occupational activities in a controversial issue among the professionals, as its concept and role are not defined yet.

### ***The farmer's evaluation***

The relations between the farmer and the users are of the major importance. The users have very different views of a farmer. The first see him as an authority, the second as someone, who is in need for help, the third as the farmer, etc. It is very difficult to accept all these different figures. Yet, a farmer has to accept them along with the different degrees of disability of the users.

To be in good terms with the users is essential. A farmer has to be attentive to all the users. They have to feel at home. Therefore, a number of the users and a degree of their disability matter. One care-taker can take care of 5 or more users with mild degree of mental disability. Yet, one user with moderate degree of mental disability asks for additional helper. In case of the clients with moderate or profound degree of mental disability a farmer should work with two clients. The question is, if this is possible on the financial ground.

Among the four users, who were working on the farm, three of them came from one Unit of the Centre, and one from another Unit of the Centre. There were no tensions or conflicts between them. But the first three users were functioning as a slightly separate group.

The users took work very seriously and they were very diligent. The permanent motivating is crucial. The operation has to be stressed as an important one even in case of the simplest work. In case of collective work, the accomplishments were "celebrated" and documented (photographed).

The working plan for a day (the activities, the responsibilities) was agreed while taking morning tea at the beginning of each working day. The planned activities were written into a textbook. At the end of the day their fulfilment was checked.

The consultations with the professionals from the Units of the Centre were carried out regularly. Once per month all together (the farmer, the professionals and the users) made an evaluation of the course of the programme.

Working on the farm took place as an occupational activity. Therefore it was not productive oriented, but followed the specific structure and rhythm. Along with a farm-work the users took part in "thematic days", such as Elder day (picking up elder blossoms and preparing snacks and juices from them) Lime Day (picking up and preparing lime blossoms for drying, preparing lime tea), Sport Day, etc.

The Goat-breeding farm Brdca is carrying out the pedagogical activities for the pupils of the primary schools as an on-farm supplementary activity for several years. Two workshops are available: "What keeps a little sheep worm" and "Let's visit a goatling". There is an ambition to diversify a provision of the on-farm services to the social ones. Therefore, there is an interest to adjust farm to the users with special needs in term of working. The incomes from agricultural production and from services are expected to be at a ratio of 50 %: 50 %.

### **The impacts of the on-farm activity on the user**

The user was born in the year 1974 into single parent family. Because of injury at birth his development was very slow. During his childhood he frequently fell ill with soar throat and pneumonia. He attended a special school for 10 years and he lived in an institution for all these years. He spent the weekends and the holidays with his mother in his native town in the central region of Slovenia. His grandparents played a very important role in his life.

After leaving school his mother decided to include him into one of the centres for protection and care in the region of Primorska. At first he was in all-day care at the Strunjan Centre Elvira Vatovec. He worked in the Sheltered workshop Divača. He is included into the Koper Centre of Protection and Care From the beginning of the year 2002.

The user is rather agitated. Occasionally he looks anxious, but he does not express his anxiety verbally. Each situation that makes him feel less safe upsets him. He makes contacts with the other users. Yet, he approaches only the tranquil persons. He is longing and looking for the contacts with the employees. He chooses a particular person and expresses his preference to the person by approaching to and moving off. He speaks comprehensibly but in the very short sentences. He talks only about the issues that matter to him.

He is only periodically and for a short period of time willing to take part in the activities that take place within the Centre, although he is observing and following the events. He is reluctant to take part in the static activities (making artefacts), but he enjoys gardening and being outside. He likes to walk, to play basketball, to swim – everything that is not static and what suits to his requirements.

All the dynamic activities make him very happy and satisfied. This was the main reason to include him in the project on the Goat-breeding farm Brdca. He likes to work on the farm and expresses his satisfaction verbally and non-verbally. He became very attached to the farmer, but less to his co-workers. He takes very good care about his overall and tools, and is never late for the departure to the farm. After coming back to the Centre he talks about what he was working, seeing and experiencing. While working he needs the guidelines and support. He is able to carry out simple operations independently.

After few months working on the farm, the evaluation proved this type of occupation as a very suitable complementary activity for the user. It meets his desire for physical activity and his strong preferences to the nature. He feels very comfortable in natural environment. He has an opportunity to observe the animals and learns about their needs, he is getting to know and to carry out the new works, meets other people and makes, although shyly, new social contacts. Work makes him feel important and useful.

## Prospects

The evaluation of all the stakeholders was in favour of the project. Therefore, they decided to carry it on. As economic performance of the project is quite poor, the Centre applied for many different tenders in the field of social services at the local and the national level, but without any success. This indicates that there is still a profound underestimation of the innovative potentials of social farming. Without an institutional support the public-private partnership of the Koper Centre for Protection and Care and the Goat-breeding farm Brdca is threaten.



**Cutting a firewood**



**Getting in a firewood**

***"Everything was OK. No critique. Roman***