

New Neighbours

Reconciliation of Work and Family Life in Rural Areas in Europe

*Report of the conference, 14th and 15th of June,
Wageningse Berg, Wageningen, the Netherlands*

Maaïke Wijngaard
Helma van de Voort



landbouw, natuur en
voedselkwaliteit

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Productie Expertisecentrum LNV
Bedrijfsvoering/Vormgeving en Presentatie
Bezoekadres : Horapark, Bennekomseweg 41
Postadres : Postbus 482, 6710 BL Ede
Telefoon : 0318 822500
Fax : 0318 822550
E-mail : Balie@minlnv.nl

Foreword

This is the report of the conference on Reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas in Europe, held on the 14th and 15th of June, at the conference centre 'The Wageningese Berg', at Wageningen, The Netherlands.

We hope you enjoy reading this report.

On behalf of the project group New Neighbours,
Petra Welboren
Douwe Holwerda
Helma van de Voort

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1 Conference programme

Sunday 13th of June

Arrival

Monday 14th of June

8.30h	Registration
9.50h	Introduction by Mr Tarsy Lössbroek
10.00h	Welcome by chairman Mr Kees de Ruiter , Director of the Department of Rural affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands
	Speech by Mrs Fay Devonic , Head of Unit Equality for men and women of DG Employment and Social Affairs (EU), Brussels, Belgium
10.30h	Mr Nicola Crosta Administrator Territorial Reviews Division OECD, Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development, France <i>Combining work and family life in Europe's countryside, an overview</i>
11.30h	Prof Dr Kees de Hoog Professor in Family Sociology and Family Policy (special chair) at Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands <i>Reconciliation of work and family life. Successful strategies for increasing household income by changing the division of labour between spouses in The Netherlands</i>
12.10h	Lunch
13.30h	First round parallel sessions Information market simultaneously with parallel sessions Parallel sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>The work-family balance for couples in Europe</i> Leader: Mrs Annet Jager, STOAS Research, The Netherlands<i>Bottom up works: promising new tools in the picture</i> Leader: Mr Henk Kieft, Agronomist ETC Ecoculture, The Netherlands<i>How to get around in rural areas?</i> Leader: Mrs Erna van der Wiel and Mrs Cathrien de Pater, National Reference Centre for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, The Netherlands<i>Small entrepreneurs in rural areas</i> Leader: Mrs Odile Plan, director GREP (Groupe de Recherche pour l'Education et la Prospective), France
14.45h	Coffee
15.15h	Second round parallel sessions
16.30h	Leaving to dinner place
17.00h	Informal get-together
19.00h	Dinner

Tuesday 15th of June

9.00h	Welcome by Mr Kees de Ruiter
9.30h	First round parallel sessions
	Parallel sessions
	1. <i>Innovative job creation in rural areas</i> Leader: Mrs Sigrid Wölfing, tamen, private company working in rural development, Brandenbrug, Germany.
	2. <i>At your services</i> Leader: Mrs Kristiina Liinajarja, The agriculture faculty of Mustiala Häme Polytechnic, college of higher education, Finland.
	3. <i>Infrastructure: the back bone of rural areas</i> Leader: Mrs Janet Heeran, South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. (SKDP), rural development organisation, Southwest Ireland
	4. <i>Women at work</i> Leader: Dr Bettina Bock, lecturer and assistant professor at the Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands
	5. <i>Notes from new EU-member countries</i> Leader: Mr Viktor Topiarz and Mr Ainars Skrastins, Dronten Professional Agricultural University, The Netherlands
	6. <i>What is learnt early, is learnt well</i> Leader: Mrs Wietske van Dijk, Dronten Professional Agricultural University, The Netherlands
10.45h	Coffee
11.15h	Second round parallel sessions
14.15h	Gallery
15.45h	Coffee
16.15h	Collective workshop
16.45h	Introduction of recommendations
17.00h	Forum discussion
17.45h	Speech by Prof Dr Cees Veerman, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, The Netherlands
18.00h	Informal get-together

2 Speech by Fay Devonic, Head of Unit Equality for men and women of DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission

2.1 Curriculum Vitae: Fay Devonic

Has a degree in law (licence en droit) – University of Strasbourg, France, and attended the Europa-Institut in Saarbrücken and is an Official of the European Commission in Brussels since 1974.

Started in the Legal Service, then joined the Directorate-general for Employment and Social affairs in 1976 with functions such as Assistant to the Director-general, Head of Unit for Coordination, Head of Unit External Relations and International organisations, Head of Unit for International cooperation, Head of Unit of the Sectorial social dialogue, Relations with ILO and Social clauses.

Since May 2003 Head of Unit "Equality for Men and Women" in Directorate G "Horizontal and International Issues".

2.2 Abstract of the speech by Fay Devonic

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaty. Over the years this principle has been reinforced by legislation. In addition, the Commission has developed strategies, instruments and tools. One example is the dual approach consisting of a balanced combination of specific measures in favour of the under-represented sex, and gender mainstreaming. Another example is a series of Action Programmes to finance trans-national initiatives on gender equality. The main theme for projects in 2002 was Reconciliation of work and family life.

Despite positive developments in the last few years, substantial differences still exist between women and men in working life as well as in the society. Many women, leave the labour market, or do not enter it at all, because lack of adequate, affordable childcare and care facilities for other dependants. Women and men living in the rural areas experience specific difficulties in this regard and new policies need to be developed.

To meet the Union's goal of full employment, social cohesion, long-term economic growth, and sustainable development in a knowledge-based society, policies for the reconciliation of work and family life in its broader sense, for both women and men are essential. This includes care services for children and other dependants, parental leave, flexible working patterns, job sharing, part-time work, and balanced sharing of domestic tasks and family responsibilities between men and women.

The Structural Funds and in particular the European Social Fund, which supports the European Employment Strategy in the Member States is an important instrument that

finances measures aiming at reconciliation of work and family life. The European Regional Development Fund is also financing projects aimed at improving living and environmental conditions in local and urban areas.

2.3 Speech by Fay Devonic, Monday 14th of June



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DG

Horizontal and international issues
Equality for women and men

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address this conference on "New neighbours- Reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas in Europe". The theme of the conference promises a very exciting day since the issue of reconciling work and family life for both women and men is central to gender equality policies. I look forward to hearing the results of your project and your views on the implementation of the project findings.

From the very beginning equality between women and men has been a fundamental principle of the European Union. It is enshrined in the Treaty, which identifies amongst its objectives the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men.

Over the years this principle has been reinforced by legislation. Directives on equal pay, maternity leave and parental leave, equal treatment of women at work and in the area of social security are just some examples of European rules that directly influence our daily life. The significance of this legislation has been important and contributed to the progress women have made in the workplace and in society in the last five decades.

In addition, the Commission has adopted a dual approach aimed at efficiently promoting equality between women and men. This consists of a balanced combination of specific measures in favour of the under-represented sex, along with gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming means that gender equality is integrated in all policies such as: employment, social inclusion, education, research and also in agriculture and rural development policies, which this project clearly shows.

The Commission has also adopted in the last 20 years a series of Action Programmes to finance trans-national initiatives on gender equality. As you may know, the current equality programme (for the period 2001-2005) is the fifth EU programme for the promotion of equality between women and men. The main theme for projects in 2002 was Reconciliation of work and family life.

Apart from this project, another 17 on this topic are funded under the programme. A few focus on the role of men, and men as fathers, but most have a broader approach on strategies and best practices for a better work/life balance. We anticipate with interest the results of the projects as an important contribution to policy developments in this area.

Women's active participation in the labour market and the elimination of gender gaps in all spheres of life are key elements to reach the Union's aim of full employment, social cohesion, long-term economic growth, and sustainable development in a knowledge-based society.

The Lisbon Council fixed a target for the European Union to achieve at least 60% female employment rate and 70% employment rate for both women and men - by

2010. These targets can only be reached if there is an even firmer commitment by Member States to implement policies to boost women's employment. The current economic slowdown and an ageing society demand further efforts by the EU and the Member States to maintain the sustainability of the social model -- that is to say to be able to retire with an adequate pension and give future generations the same rights and possibilities that we enjoy.

To meet these challenges the Union must focus on policies for the reconciliation of work and family life in its broader sense, for both women and men. We need care services for children and other dependants, parental leave, flexible working patterns, job sharing, part-time work, and balanced sharing of domestic tasks and family responsibilities between men and women.

EU Heads of State and Government have set a concrete target for childcare supply: 90% of children between the age of three and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age by 2010.

Offering affordable, high-quality care services opens up access to paid employment and thus alleviates the risk of poverty. Maintaining employment status and social security rights, in particular pension rights, during parental leave and for part-time work also meets this dual purpose: making work pay and alleviating poverty.

There are still too many people, mainly women, leaving the labour market, or not entering it at all, because childcare and other care facilities are not available, are too expensive, or not adequate, for instance in terms of the hours they offer.

People living in the rural areas experience specific difficulties in this regard and new policies need to be developed. This is why this project is important.

However, positive trends are already evident in Europe, in particular as regards women's active participation in the labour market. Let me give you some facts:

- In the past few years, women have closed the educational gender gaps and they represent the majority of graduates in the European Union (55%), to be precise
- Women's employment rate has steadily increased. It now stands at close to 56%, compared to less than 50% in the first half of the 1990s. In rural areas women account for 37% of the working population in the agricultural sector and they play an important role as regards the revitalisation of rural areas.
- Women have taken up 7 million jobs out of the 11 million created in Europe over the period 1997-2002.
- Overall, since 1997, the employment rate gender gap has declined by almost 2%.

Despite these positive developments, substantial differences still exist between women and men, for example in unemployment, pay, sectors of education and work and career patterns. As an example I can mention that in scarcely populated areas (which is the main part of rural areas), in the age group 25-34, men account for 13 per cent of the work force whereas women in the same age group account for only 9 per cent. The situation is almost the same for women and men 35-44 years old.

In recent years, Europe has seen a tremendous improvement in the educational level of its citizens. Although women are outstripping men in enrolment to university and increasingly achieve qualifications that are adequate for a career in the labour market, their potential is not fully used.

Men are twice as likely as women to be in managerial positions and over three times as likely to be senior managers.

Women also continue to assume the main responsibility for the family, the care of children and other dependants.

This unequal division of paid work in the labour market and non-paid work within the household remains one of the main obstacles for women pursuing a career. Women with small children (under 6 years old) have almost 13 percentage points lower employment rates than women without children. On the contrary, men with small children work longer hours than men without children (on a difference of almost 10 percentage points).

Career breaks, women's predominance in low paid sectors and part-time jobs, the persistence of gender pay gaps - all these contribute to the difficulties women face when trying to fully realize their potential in the labour market. The pay gap is still on

average 16% in the European Union. It is even higher than this in the private sector, where it reaches 24%!

It is evident that society will benefit from an increased participation of women in the labour market. Policies to reconcile work and family life are crucial in this respect.

But, as in all stories, there is always a condition for success. In this case the condition is that policies to reconcile work and family life need to be addressed not only to women, but also - and especially - to men. This is recognised in some Member States where initiatives to encourage fathers to take parental leave are being implemented, for example through a right to leave on a part-time or a split basis or through a specific right to paternity leave.

In Member States where both women and men have a right to paid parental leave and where affordable care facilities are available, women's employment rate is almost the same as men's, this is the case for example in Finland and Sweden.

The real challenge is to make reconciliation policies a man's issue!

The Structural Funds and in particular the European Social Fund, which supports the European Employment Strategy in the Member States finances measures aiming at reconciliation of work and family life. I can mention for example that in Italy, Germany and Austria, about 10% of the total spending of ESF for the period 2000-2006 will be spent to promote women's access to employment and childcare facilities.

There are also a number of projects financed by the European Regional Development Fund aimed at improving living and environmental conditions in local and urban areas. The promotion of new forms of labour participation, issues of mobility, access to services and security have strong repercussion in the lives of women and men.

There are also examples of gender mainstreaming and specific actions targeting women in rural development measures included in Objective 1 programmes and in the Community initiative Leader + programme, both financed by the European Agriculture Guarantee and guidance Fund – Guarantee. Some examples include taking into account gender in the selection of rural development projects or including in the rural development programmes specific measures (such as support to diversification of agricultural activities, crafts, rural tourism) targeted to women in rural areas. These were presented on the first of June during the first meeting of the newly established High Level Group on gender mainstreaming in the structural funds, which is a network of Member States representatives responsible for the management of the Structural Funds at national level.

Monitoring development is also important. To that end the Commission is working on the development of gender statistics and indicators, like for instance in the field of care facilities for children and other dependants and the pay gap. We are also developing comparable data on how women and men use their time. The first results for 13 countries will be published in a pocket book next month.

As I have tried to demonstrate today, there is no simple solution or any specific measure for reconciling work and family life, rather a combination of several initiatives and instruments. All actors at all levels have a role to play.

Projects like the one we'll be hearing about today explore new ways of better reconciling work and family life and are pivotal in bringing about much needed change. On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the Netherlands, the organisers of this conference and the project's promoters for their commitment in promoting gender equality in their respective countries and in the European Union.

I look forward to an even closer collaboration with the Netherlands during the forthcoming six month when you will take the lead as the Presidency of the European Union.

Thank you

3 Speech by Nicola Crosta, Administrator Territorial Reviews Division, Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD

3.1 Abstract speech by Nicola Crosta

Combining work and family life in Europe's countryside: an overview

Globalisation, changes in the public financing of the agriculture sector and the emergence of important non-farm niche markets put rural regions in direct competition and confront them with new threats and opportunities. Changes do not affect only markets and economic actors but question the role of institutions, private actors and the civil society in rural development. Moreover, processes of administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation put more emphasis to the capacity of local actors and renewed horizontal and vertical relations. These developments throw into stark relief the necessity to re-think rural development policies and devise new strategies capable of capturing the diversity of rural areas and respond timely to their new challenges. Policy makers increasingly recognise the importance for Nation's as a whole and for rural areas in particular, of adopting appropriate "family-friendly policies" capable of fostering an efficient utilisation of the workforce, improving the quality of life and responding to demographic challenges.

The presentation focuses on 3 main issues: 1) the main trends affecting OECD and EU rural areas; 2) the rationale for family-friendly policies in rural areas; 3) the limits of traditional sectoral policies and the need for a territorial approach and appropriate multi-level governance mechanisms to improve public policy design and delivery.

3.2 Speech by Nicola Crosta, Monday 14th of June



Reconciliation of work and family life
in rural areas

Wageningen, June 2004

- 1) the policy objective
- 2) the context
- 3) policies and governance

Why should we care?

- family
- economy

The slide is divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is white with a green header bar. It contains the title 'Reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas' and a photograph of a young child in a suit and tie, looking at a document. The OECD logo is in the bottom left, and the text 'Wageningen, June 2004' is in the bottom right. The middle section has a blue background with a white vertical bar on the right. It lists three points: '1) the policy objective', '2) the context', and '3) policies and governance'. The OECD logo is in the bottom right. The bottom section has a blue background with a green header bar. It asks 'Why should we care?' and lists two points: '➤ family' and '➤ economy'. The OECD logo is in the bottom right.

Several policies involved, differing from one Country to another ...

Resources vary, as well as policy approaches...

- employer provided family benefits
- tax/benefit systems
- access to affordable childcare
- other important issues
(leave, working hours, school hours, shops opening h., tele-working, etc.)

successes...

...and failures.

- gender wage gap
- careers progression
- lone parents households
- family development

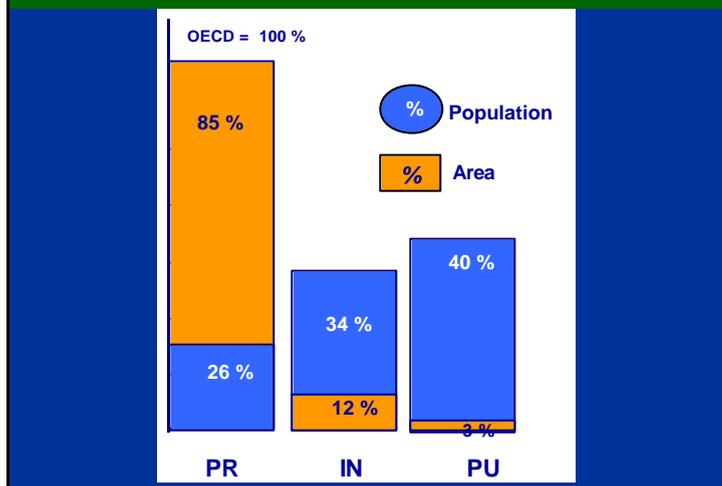
Family-friendly policies

“are those policies that facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life by fostering adequacy of family resources and child development, that facilitate parental choice about work and care, and promote gender equality in employment opportunities”

+
“rural”

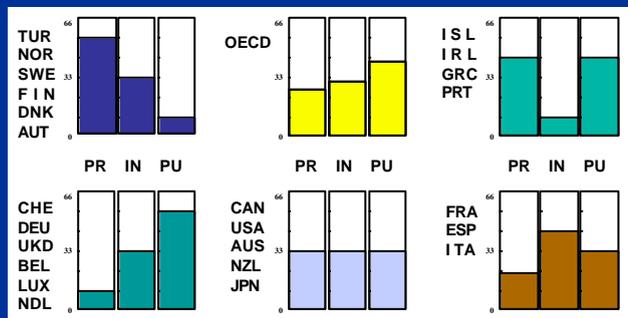
What is 'rural' ?

The weight of rural



Settlement Patterns: *population by type of region*

(PR = Predominantly Rural, IN = Intermediate, PU = Predominantly Urbanized)



Is rural synonymous with decline?

Is rural synonymous with agriculture?

the boiling frog

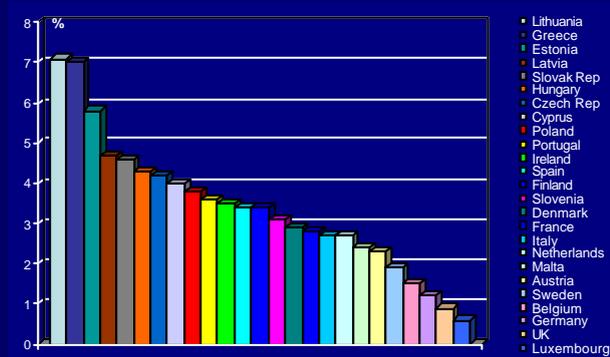
Rural is not synonymous of decline.

Factors of rural 'success'

- oil...
- large public investments
- SMEs
- tourism

Rural is not synonymous of agriculture.

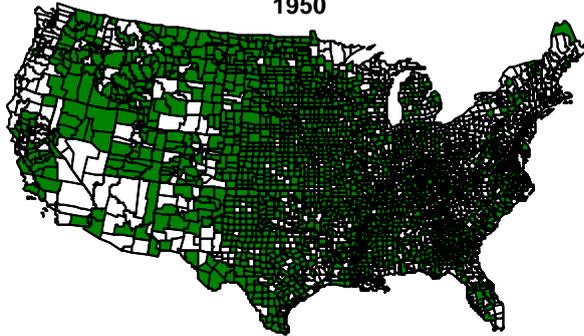
Share of agriculture in GVA, %



The paradox of EU rural policy...
...and of US rural policy...

Agriculture dominated the rural economy...

1950

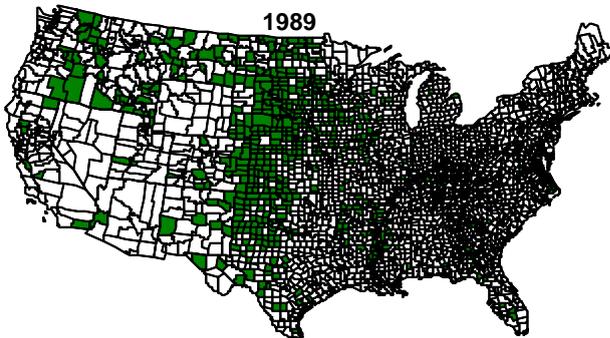


Center for the Study of Rural America, FRBKC

...but no longer.

**Fewer than one in four rural counties counts agriculture
as the leading source of income.**

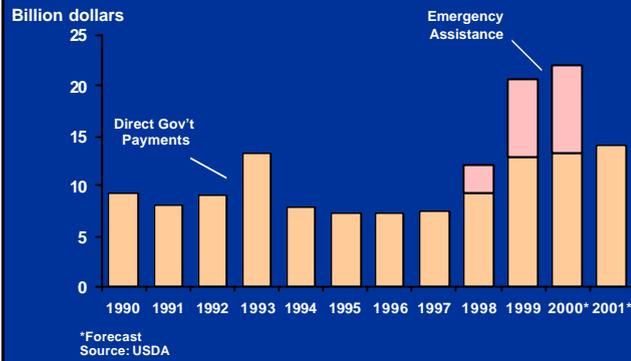
1989



Center for the Study of Rural America, FRBKC

...the paradox of EU rural policy, and of US rural policy...

U.S. Government farm payments



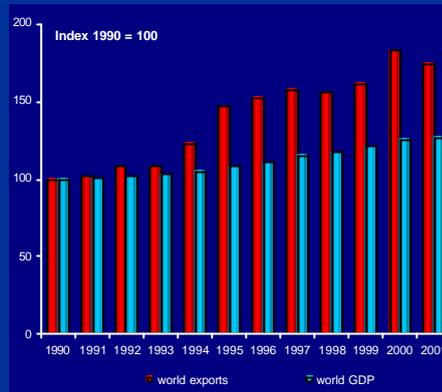
Policy design: understanding the framework conditions

A COMPLEX PICTURE,
REQUIRES AN APPROPRIATE
APPROACH

Major trends impacting on rural regions...

- globalisation
- decentralisation processes
- EU enlargement and CAP reform

... and of goods



- increases in trade and competition
- greater flows of goods, money, information and people
- growth in services

Major trends impacting on rural regions...

- globalisation
- decentralisation processes
- EU enlargement and CAP reform

Major trends impacting on rural regions...

Agricultural policies in OECD = 300 billion USD

Problems:

- they don't deliver quality, environment, safety
- block international trade negotiations
- not enough resources...

Major trends impacting on rural regions...



- changes in supply and demand from rural areas
- changes in supply and demand from urban areas

...and on rural households

- availability and type of work will change
- family types and behaviours
- public policy

... some key rural drivers

- settlement patterns
- migration trends
- increasing mobility

Settlement patterns: the UK...



...and Sweden



Netherlands

GRONINGEN	Groningen	105
FRIESLAND	Leeuwarden	84
DRENTHE	Deventer	110
OVERIJSEL	Nijmegen	81
GELDERLAND	Arnhem	52
FLEVOLAND	Lelystad	39
UTRECHT	Utrecht	30
NOORD-HOLLAND	Amsterdam	00
ZUID-HOLLAND	Rotterdam	00
ZEELAND	Vlissingen	55
NOORD-BRABANT	Eindhoven	51
LIMBURG	Maastricht	62

Norway

Vestfold	Larvik	76
Telemark	Rinde	133
Aust-Agder	Arendal	222
Vest-Agder	Kristiansand	280
Rogaland	Stavanger	420
Hordaland	Bergen	380
Sogn & Fjordane	Alesund	414
Møre & Romsdal	Molde	482
Sør-Trøndelag	Trondheim	407
Nord-Trøndelag	Namsos	521
Nordland	Bodo	991
Troms	Tromsø	1,111

Migration trends: overflow from town to countryside...



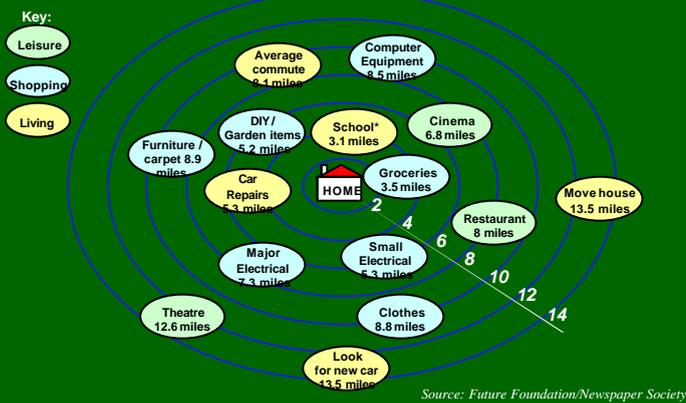
Example:

In the UK, between 1981 and 2001 the population of rural districts grew by 11%, that of urban districts by 2%

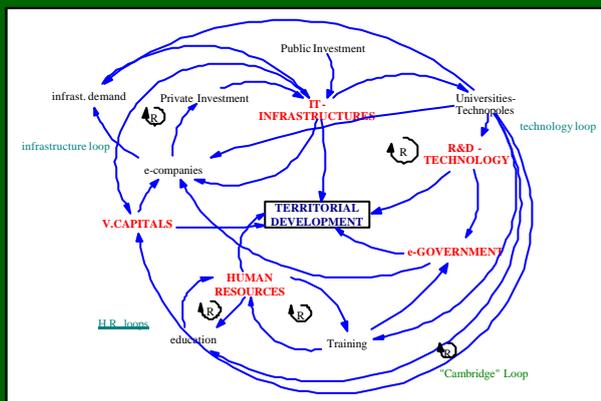
...or rural out-migration

Increasing mobility of people...

Average number of miles travelled (urban and rural people)



No room for simple recipes



Policy Implementation and rural governance

Enhancing coordination/participation

*"Every alleged example of local implementation of central policy, if it results in significant social transformation, is in fact a process of **social discovery**"*

Stiglitz, 1999 Bonn speech.

Rural governance and knowledge

- need for effective horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms

Several examples, some key elements...

Rural governance and knowledge

Finding the correct mix of bottom-up approaches...

- local partnership/ownership
- empowerment of actors
- flexibility of tools / targeting
- capacity to innovate
- *high additionality*

Rural governance and knowledge

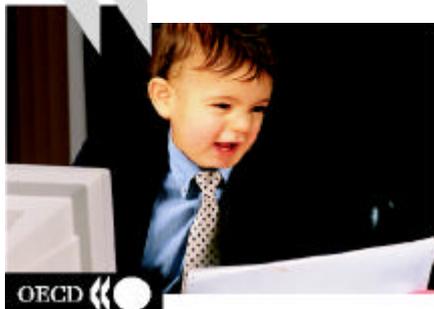
...and top-down approaches:

- clear rules
- articulated nat. policies
- effective monitoring
- dialogue on outcomes not on rules
- removing barriers
- introducing incentives to co-operate
- promoting cross-fertilization

Summing up

- 1) important policy objective
- 2) changing context
- 3) need to adapt policies and governance

Reconciliation of work and family life
in rural areas



OECD

Wageningen, June 2004

4 Speech by Kees de Hoog, Professor in Family Sociology and Family Policy (special chair) at Wageningen University and Research Centre

4.1 Curriculum Vitae: Kees de Hoog

Dr. Kees de Hoog is gezinssocioloog en sociaal-demograaf. Hij is als bijzonder hoogleraar gezinssociologie en gezinsbeleid (Nederlandse Gezinsraad) en als universitair hoofddocent (UHD) verbonden aan de leerstoelgroep Sociologie van Consumenten en Huishoudens van de Wageningen Universiteit. Hij publiceerde in nationale en internationale tijdschriften over uiteenlopende gezinssociologische en demografische onderwerpen (onder andere over partnerkeuze, gezinsbeleid, huishoudensontwikkelingen, consumptiepatronen en armoede in gezinnen). Daarnaast schrijft hij, voor een breed publiek, in kranten en weekbladen over (gezins)sociologische onderwerpen.

Hij is lid geweest van de wetenschappelijke raad van NWO (1985-1988) en van het 'European Family Observatory' van de Europese Unie (1988-1993). Hij is wetenschappelijk adviseur van de Nederlandse Gezinsraad en lid van de wetenschappelijke begeleidingscommissie van 'The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study' (NKPS). Als senior-onderzoeker van de Mansholt Graduate School houdt hij zich onder andere bezig met levensstijlen en consumptie.

Kees de Hoog received his MSc in social sciences (sociology, social demography and sociology of public administration) in 1970 from the Utrecht University and his Ph.D. (mate selection) in 1982 from the Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Since 1970 he joined the Wageningen University as Junior Scientist and later on as Senior Scientist in the Department of Sociology. In 1979 he became Assistant Professor in the Department of Household Studies. In 1984 he was Visiting Professor at the University of Texas at Tyler (USA). Since 1986 he is Associate Professor at he Wageningen University and since August 2002 he is professor family sociology and family policy (The Netherlands Family Council) at the Wageningen University. He is specialized in sociology of the family, family policy and social demography. His expertise includes families, households, lifestyles and consumer patterns. He got research grants of the Queen Juliana Foundation, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Cultural Affairs, the Netherlands Family Council, the RaboBank Foundation and the Ministry of Agricultural Affairs. He was a member of the Scientific Research Council of the Netherlands (ZWO), and of the Family Observatory of the European Union. He is scientific advisor of the Netherlands Family Council and he is a member of the scientific commission of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study. He participates as an invited expert in international forums. He published many articles in international and national scientific journals.

4.2 Abstract speech by Kees de Hoog

Reconciliation of work and family life. Successful strategies for increasing household income by changing the division of labour between the spouses in The Netherlands

By C. de Hoog and J.A.C. van Ophem

Abstract

Most farming firms are family farms. Men and women are not only husbands and wives, but also business partners. Within the traditional farm family, and not only there, family life and work are combined. The family and the farming firm can be seen as interwoven subsystems. But times are changing. The women's place in family and society changed. The household domain is also changing. Farm families are not the frontrunners, but new positions and opportunities are clear.

In this paper we present the strategies farming families will follow to increase their household income. It is an example of new positions and changing opportunities. Farm families may pursue one, or a combination, of four main strategies to increase or keep up their household income. The first is to economise on household expenses. The group choosing this option is known as the traditional survivors. The second strategy, that of the short-term farmers, is to economise on farming expenditure. The third strategy to improve household income involves diversification and a shift in the division of labour (rural entrepreneurs). The fourth and final strategy is to seek off-farm employment while maintaining the farm holding (urbanised country dwellers).

In order to measure the success of these strategies, four indicators were defined capturing the quality of life of farming families. They were: the incidence of poverty, the households' ability to manage on their income, their satisfaction with the level of farming income, and their satisfaction with overall household income. A corpus of data from 1999 on 512 Dutch farming families was used.

The traditional survivor and short-term farmer strategies both proved unsuccessful, while the results of the third strategy, that of the rural entrepreneur, were neither positive nor negative. The strategy of the urbanised country dweller would seem to be the most promising.

For the interpretation of the results, it must be noted that the Netherlands is a highly urbanised country with a well-developed infrastructure, in which it is relatively easy to combine farming with outside gainful activities. The results have several implications for farming families in similar regions. One is that entrepreneurs will survive, but not necessarily in farming. Another is that the roles of the spouses in farming families or families combining farming and non-farming activities seem to be changing, with the husband in paid employment and the wife taking over the running of the farm. The most successful strategy (that of the urbanised country dwellers) is overlooked by agricultural policy-makers (Agricultural Ministry, farmers' organisations, Brussels). One of the reasons for this lack of interest is that this strategy tends to be pursued by the smaller farms. Another may be that it runs largely contrary to policy-makers' ideas for improving farming income through specialisation (production for niche markets), larger-scale production and nature protection and conservation.

In the paper we pay also attention to other facts and factors. We give information about social problems of farm families under stress and about the position of children. The time is over that a boy in the nuclear family (or sometimes a girl) will be always the 'new' farmer.

Our paper can be seen as a case study, but we are sure that it also can be viewed as an illustration of the reconciliation of work and family in other rural areas in Europe.

4.3 Speech by Kees de Hoog, Monday 14th of June

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In the paper we pay also attention to other facts and factors. We give information about social problems of farm families under stress and about the position of their children. The time is over that a boy in farm family (or sometimes a girl) always will be the 'new' farmer.

Our paper can be seen as a case study, but we are sure that it also can be viewed as an illustration of the reconciliation of work and family in other rural areas in Europe.

Introduction

Socially and economically, large parts of the Dutch countryside are doing well. The number of affluent urbanites leaving the hustle and bustle of the city for a quiet life in the country is growing every year. For many well-off pensioners and double-income

households, the country has replaced upmarket city districts and commuter towns as the place to live (Van der Ploeg et al., 2002). This influx of newcomers has had significant effects on life patterns and lifestyles in many rural areas. A village with a day-care centre and other domestic services to combine work and family is no longer a novelty. Newcomers with children impose higher standards on the village school. Local shops, businesses and farming families are also profiting from the newcomers. The countryside is not only changing by the influx of new comers. The farming families, the traditional inhabitants of the countryside, are also changing. In general these families are following, sometimes at some distance, the mean stream of family changes. More than a decade ago Zwart (1990, 231) described this process as follows: " Since the fifties, nuclear families have gradually loosened the close ties with their relatives, the church and the neighbourhood in a process which is generally described as family nuclearisation and individualisation.. Nuclear families of successive generations nowadays [the 90s] have their separate living arrangements, even though they remain working together on the same farm. Families have closed, in the sense they tolerate less interference in family matters from relatives, neighbours and church. Farmers and farmers' wives are more strongly oriented toward the world beyond their own community than their counterparts thirty years ago."

There other general changes. Women of today, included the farmers' wives, have a better education than there mothers and grandmothers. Women and men have more personal freedom and less control from the social environment (Zwart, 1990). But not everything in the garden is lovely, for farming families the economic situation have not been doing so well. At the end of the nineties, nearly 45% of farming families earned less than the social minimum (i.e. <EUR 19,169) from core farming activities (Van Everdingen et al., 1999).¹ The picture was not universal. Greenhouse farmers were in a relatively favourable position: approximately 20% of families in this sector had a farming income below the poverty line, compared with more than 50% of crop farmers (Van Cooten et al., 2000). This unfavourable farming climate is reflected in the declining number of working farms. In 1995 there were 113,300, in 2000 the number had dropped to 97,500, and according to the latest agricultural survey by the Dutch Central Statistical Bureau, numbers declined even further in 2002 to 89,600.² Leaving hobby farmers and the smallest farms aside, the Netherlands now has 67,400 working farms, as opposed to 84,800 in 1995.³ But shutting up shop is not the only strategy that farmers and their families have adopted to improve their financial situation.

A look at total family income in 1999 reveals that approximately 23% of farming families had an income below the social minimum (Vinkers and De Hoog, 2000). The income position of farming families did not improve between 2000 and 2003 (De Bont and Van der Knijff, 2003). In 2003 the economic situation in the various agricultural sectors presented the following picture: Dutch poultry farmers were hard hit by an epidemic of fowl pest in 2002, while dairy farmers, the largest group, saw their income fall as a result of low milk prices. For crop farmers the situation improved somewhat compared to 2002 as drought pushed up prices. In horticulture, the picture varied, with potted plants doing reasonably well, whereas mushroom growers were faced with extremely low prices (Landbouw-Economisch Instituut, 2003).

This article discusses the strategies that farming families, particularly the spouses, have adopted to increase their income, and examines which are the most successful. The focus is especially on the differences in the division of labour between men and women. The data was taken from a 1999 Dutch study into poverty among farming families (Vinkers and De Hoog, 2000). In the concluding section, we discuss the need to integrate successful survival strategies adopted by farming families into national and international agricultural policy.

Data

At the initiative of three agricultural pressure groups, a study was conducted into the incidence and perception of poverty among Dutch farming families. One of the key questions was which strategies these families pursued to increase their income and avoid poverty. The data used was from the 1998 *Landbouwtelling* agricultural survey, and was based on farm size and type. The field study consisted in a written questionnaire. The final number of usable surveys analysed was 514 (a 23% response).

Hobby farmers and other very small farms were excluded from the study, as were the very largest farms. The latter because many of them were no longer family businesses. In the respondent group, the smaller dairy farms proved to be underrepresented, whereas the smaller farms in general were slightly over represented. Non-response, generally very high in the Netherlands, was to a great extent due to contaminated data from the *Landbouwtelling* agricultural survey.⁴ It proved that 30% of commercial farms had ceased altogether or shifted to hobby farming and that the agricultural survey not always reflected these changes (Vinkers and De Hoog, 2000). Another 30% of non-respondents were too busy to fill out questionnaires or believed they had already participated in too many agricultural surveys. It is unclear why the remaining 40 % of non-respondents refused to participate.

The average age of the male and female respondents was 47 and 45, respectively. Of the households surveyed, 89% were families with children and 'empty nests', and 11% were single persons. As regards the respondents' highest level of completed education, 42% of the men had had primary education, 40% secondary education and 9% vocational higher education or a university degree. For the women, these figures were 38%, 52% and 9%, respectively (Vinkers and De Hoog, 2000).

Survival strategies

On the basis of the empirical data from the study by Vinkers and De Hoog (2000) of how farming families perceive poverty, four main survival strategies may be distinguished. It must be noted that some families combine strategies, particularly those aimed at cutting back spending. But retrenchment is not the only strategy adopted: many farming families seek to effectively increase their farming or family income. Another important factor is that, as lifestyle reflects consumption patterns (Bourdieu, 1979; Sobel, 1981), the nature of the strategy or strategies pursued is, in our opinion, connected with lifestyle preferences. Spending patterns are an indication of a person or family's lifestyle preferences, and from a family's consumption pattern a distinct and recognisable picture of their lifestyle emerges.

The first strategy, which is not exclusive to farming families, is to economise on household expenses (Van Ophem, 1988). Subscriptions and memberships are cancelled, large purchases postponed, and attempts are made to cut down on the grocery bills. Families go on holiday less or not at all. The people pursuing this strategy may be characterised as traditional survivors, because it is a pattern prevalent in other, non-farming households in periods of economic decline (Goossens et al., 1900). The traditional survivors' lifestyle is sober: a life of thrift that may lead to social exclusion because the family members can no longer afford to participate in social activities and events.

The second survival strategy is to cut down on farm operating expenditure: machine and farmhouse maintenance is postponed and business insurance policies are cancelled. Investment comes to a standstill. The farming families adopting this strategy are known as the short-term survivors, because such cutbacks only help in the short term. This strategy is feasible only if the reduction in farming income is incidental and temporary. That we still characterise this strategy as a lifestyle is because the people pursuing it are prepared to put up with economies that may have a visible effect on their surroundings: a neglected yard and ditto looking farmhouse, machinery that is starting to show defects.

The third strategy is change and diversification into other activities, agricultural or otherwise. Examples of the first are shifts in production, e.g. from traditional to organic, or diversification into non-core farming activities, e.g. selling home-made cheese. But change and diversification are not necessarily related to farming. The figures show that many Dutch farmers have diversified into non-farming activities such as running a campsite or providing caravan storage. Some 1,200 farms operate tourist accommodation in the form of a small campsite or B&B, 900 farms have agro-tourism facilities, 1,900 farms store caravans or boats, or provide stabling for horses and ponies. Three thousand farms sell agricultural produce, and there are 200 'care farms', where people with mental problems receive care (Schnabel, 2001). This group, the families who try to improve their household income by diversification, we have termed the rural entrepreneurs. They use their know-how and rural location to keep their farming businesses afloat.

The fourth and final strategy for steering clear of poverty is for one or both spouses to work outside the farm, combining farming with a full- or part-time job. The families taking this course we have termed the urbanised country dwellers. Their lifestyle resembles the emancipated lifestyle of many urban families with two partners working outside the home. This lifestyle is also common among the newcomers to the countryside, among whom there are many double-income households. But it is a great shift away from the traditional division of labour in farming families (Bock, 2002). Traditionally, both spouses worked on the farm, with the man as chief worker and the woman as co-worker. The strategy of the urbanised country dwellers also affects the way farms are run. As this study shows, off-farm work is not restricted to women: men also work outside the farm. And with a husband who is absent all or part of the working week, the wife assumes responsibility for running the farm. Her position may then well change from traditional farmer's wife to rural entrepreneur with shared responsibilities.

Results

Our analysis shows that overall household income (i.e. farming and other sources of income) was below the social minimum in 23% of farming households. For households where either or both spouses worked outside the farm for more than 25 hours per week, the figure was 7%, compared to 18% of households where they worked outside the farm less than 25 hours per week. Of households where neither spouse held an outside job, 29% had a family income below the social minimum. Ten per cent of the respondent households indicated that they were unable or barely able to make ends meet, whereas 36% indicated that they could manage easily. The remaining respondents (54%) indicated that they could get by more or less easily on their household income. Respondents were also asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent), their level of satisfaction with their farming income and living situation. Fifty-three per cent considered their farming income insufficient (average rating 5; standard deviation 2.4). Yet only 15% rated their own living situation 'insufficient', with an average rating of 7 (standard deviation 1.6). The data is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Four aspects of farming families' quality of life

Aspect	Incidence	N
Below objective subsistence level	23%	510
Managing on their income:		
- Barely or not at all	10%	
- Getting by	54%	
- Easily	36%	510
Satisfaction with level of farming income:		
- Scale poor/excellent	0/10	
- Average/standard deviation	5.0/2.4	
- 5 or less	53%	488
Perception of own living situation:		
- Scale: poor/excellent	0/10	
- Average/standard deviation	7/1.6	
- 5 or less	15 %	490

There is a strong correlation between these four aspects. Respondents who rated their farming income highly, tended to do the same for their living situation (Pearson's R^2 : 0.40). Also, there was a negative correlation between a) an income below the poverty line and the ability to get by on one's income; and b) satisfaction with farming income and perceived living situation.

Several multivariate analyses were made to identify the relations between the survival strategies adopted and their success in lifting families above the social

minimum. Multivariate analyses were also made to discover the impact of these strategies on the other three life quality aspects, i.e. managing on one's income, satisfaction with farming income and satisfaction with one's own living situation. For these analyses, we used a model described in De Hoog and Van Ophem (2003).

Table 2 The relation between paid employment outside the home and income position relative to the social minimum*

Variable	Social minimum(%)	N
Total	23	510
Neither spouse works outside the farm	29	310
Either or both spouses work outside the farm less than 25 hours per week	18	99
Either or both spouses work outside the farm more than 25 hours per week	7	101

* CHAID solution, pseudo R²: 0.16

As table 2 shows, off-farm employment is the only effective strategy for earning an income above the social minimum. That means that the urbanised country dwellers pursue the best strategy for avoiding or ending poverty. The other three strategies appear to be unsuccessful.

Table 3 Outcomes of the regression analysis (beta coefficients) of three aspects of farming families' quality of life

Lifestyle/other explicative variables	Satisfaction with farming income* ¹	Perception of living situation* ²	Ability to manage on income* ³
Urbanised country dwellers	-0,12		
Traditional survivors	-0,26	-0,21	-0,31
Short-term survivors			-0,25
Rural entrepreneurs			
Experience of sectoral problems	-0,14		
Respondent level of education	-0,12		
Respondent stress	-0,19	-0,28	-0,15
Adjusted R ²	0,26	0,19	0,34
F Value	32,9	53,4	76,2
N	466	467	441

Key

*¹ The following variables were excluded from the equation: farm size and type, respondents' age, number of children, farm business limitations, short-term survivors.

*² The following variables were excluded from the equation: farm size and type, respondents' age and level of education, number of children, farm business limitations, short-term survivors, urbanised country dwellers and rural entrepreneurs.

*³ The following variables were excluded from the equation: farm size and type, respondents' age and level of education, number of children, farm business limitations, experience of sectoral problems, urbanised country dwellers and rural entrepreneurs.

Table 3 confirms the urbanised country dwellers' success in ending or avoiding poverty. The analysis shows that outside employment is a successful strategy driven by dissatisfaction with the level of farming income. The table also shows that traditional survivors not only rated their farming income as insufficient, but were also dissatisfied with their living situation. Nor did their retrenchment strategy enable them to get by on their income. The short-term survivors' strategy proved unsuccessful as well. These respondents did not judge their living situation and their farming income as better or worse than the other groups. They were negative about their ability to manage on their household income. The rural entrepreneurs present a neutral picture. Their scores on all four aspects, i.e. including the social minimum, were neither positive nor negative. Respondents pursuing this strategy did not judge their farming income, their ability to manage on their income or their living situation any more or less favourably than the other groups. This lifestyle also proved to have no effect on respondents' chances to rise above or fall below the social minimum.

Family problems

In the paragraphs before, an analysis has been presented of strategies farm families follow to increase their household income. Poverty and the economic situation affects other domains of family life as well, like the number of farm take-overs and the well-being of the families.

In our survey 18% of the parents said that they have a successor in their family. But 43% of the husbands and wives are not sure if their son, or sometimes their daughter, will be the new farmer and even 40% of the farm families is sure that the future of their children is not the farm firm. Van der Veen et al. (2002, 28) concluded that in the 1990s the Dutch agricultural population, like all populations in the European Union, is ageing. In this period the absolute number of young farmers (below the age of 35) showed a reduction of 34% and the percentage of farmers older than 65 has grown from 15 to 19 %. The situation is not unique. In other member states of the European Union (15 members) the percentages of young farmers are decreasing and of old farmers are increasing. Only in Germany the percentage of young farmers increased a little bit in the 90's (from 15% to 16%) (Van der Veen et al., 2002).

To take over the farm firm by a child is a complex social, juridical, demographic and economic process. A process that also differs across Europe. But in our opinion the most important reason why a decreasing number of parents and their children say that they don't see a future in the farm firm has a financial reason. It is also a cultural change. A change within the farming families and a change which important influence on daily life at the country side in the near future.

The financial situation has other consequences for daily life. A majority of all farm families, even the families who have a living far above the poverty line, has one or more social and mental problems. This is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Problems of husband and wives of farm families in general in % (more answers possible).

Problems	Men	Women
Rules and restrictions	65	38
Stress and other mental problems	55	47
Poor social and family life	25	19
The future of the farm firm	22	15
Powerlessness	21	14
Bad contact with family, friends and others	17	13
Always thinking of financial problems	10	5

A majority of the men and a very large majority of the women mention rules and restrictions and on the other hand stress and other mental problems as factors which create problems in daily life. The other problems have a lower incidence. They are mentioned by about 10 to about 20 per cent of the respondents. Only 10 per cent of the men and 5 per cent of the women are always thinking of their financial problems. Most striking result of table 4 is that about 50 percent of husbands and wives are confronted with stress and other mental problems. A considerable part of both men and women has bad social relations with: in view of the results of items as poor social

and family life and bad contact with family friends and other. In a considerable part of the farm families signs of deprivation are visible.

Conclusions

We have seen that the traditional survivors' strategy to economise on household expenses does not help them to rise above subsistence level, and that their lifestyle is characterised by frugality and few demands on the quality of daily life. The strategy to economise on farming expenditure also proves unsuccessful in helping farming families rise above subsistence level. In addition, it must be noted that this strategy may cause problems for families if farming income remains low over a longer period. Our analysis shows that gainful outside employment is the most successful survival strategy, because it systematically increases the family income of the group that pursues it, the urbanised country dwellers. Some interesting aspects of this strategy merit attention, e.g. the fact that more men than women were in paid employment outside the farm, 129 and 93 respectively. The men's average working week was also longer, 28 hours, as opposed to 19 hours for the women. This data points to a shift in the division of labour in this group: while the farmer focuses on paid employment outside the farm, his wife (or unmarried partner) takes over the running of the farm. This survival strategy has been adopted primarily by the smaller, non-marginal farms. That is only to be expected, because this type of farm does not take up all of the spouses' time, so that they have time to spare for paid outside employment. A third aspect to be taken into consideration is the labour market. If farmers are to work outside the farm, there must be jobs on offer in their area. This prerequisite makes it virtually impossible for farmers in isolated regions to pursue this strategy. In this respect, the Dutch situation is favourable. In a country with a very high population density (466 people per square kilometre) and a highly developed infrastructure, there is usually paid employment to be found near the farm. A fourth aspect is the long working day; combining farming with an outside job involves long hours even on relatively small farms. Another question is whether aging farmers will be able to continue combining the two kinds of work.

Although it would seem that the non-core, diversified activities undertaken by the rural entrepreneurs generally do not increase their household income to any great extent, diversification is nevertheless common. Some of these sidelines are detrimental to the quality of life in the countryside: on or near some farms whole 'agricultural industries' have arisen, with rather undesirable consequences. Another issue is that diversification generally requires a (sometimes substantial) initial outlay, which may take some time to start yielding returns. This may be one reason why our study shows no evidence that diversification leads to an increase in household income.

The outcomes of this study are of interest to policy-makers. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality understandably concerns itself with farming incomes, as is evident from the Memorandum on Farmers' Incomes presented to the Dutch Lower House in 2000. In it the Minister observed that: "For the farmers concerned, it is admittedly a very difficult choice whether to continue investing in the farming business, to wind it down or give up farming altogether". No mention was made of non-farming alternatives. Government policy has so far been aimed at serving niche markets through agricultural activities, expansion, nature conservation, and in the past few years, organic production.

In his report on the future of farming in the Netherlands Schnabel (2001) quotes the Minister:

Farming is an economic activity. The Dutch farmer should not be a peasant working the land primarily to produce food for his family and selling only the surplus, but a farmer specialising in the kind of agricultural production that, under the given climatological and geographical circumstances, provides the best opportunity of a good market position.

The above quotations show that policy makers ignore the differences in rural lifestyles and farmers' survival strategies and also the social and mental consequences of poverty in farm families. In view of the importance of outside employment for farmers

and their wives (the reconciliation of work and family) , we conclude, without in any way denying the need for a certain level of farm profitability, that the urbanised country dwellers have proven especially able to increase their household income by means of non-farming activities. They follow what is going in urban areas. It is relevant policy makers in the European Union create the general conditions for farm families to combine work in and outside the farm for both husbands and wives. It enforces the quality of family life at the countryside.

Our analysis also shows that the so-called 'peasants' in particular have managed to survive by being flexible and creative. The prevailing view at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, but also among farmers' organisations and Brussels policy-makers, is that 'farmers' are the backbone of a sound agricultural policy. The question is whether this view is correct. Our data shows that, in terms of survival strategies, the 'farmers' are not doing better than the 'peasants'.

Notes

- ¹ In 1998 the 'social minimum' (subsistence level) for farming households was calculated at EUR 19,169 (NLG 42,172). This sum breaks down as follows: supplementary benefit level EUR 11,188 (NLG 24,613), health insurance EUR 2,182 (NLG 4,800), disability insurance EUR 3,227 (NLG 7,100), tax adjustments EUR 2,572 (NLG 5,659).
- ² Central Statistical Bureau, several Dutch agricultural surveys.
- ³ Press release from the *Landbouw-Economisch Instituut*, 2003. For the farm information network, the Institute for Agricultural Economics uses a threshold value of 16 nge, i.e. 16 Dutch units of measurement. These units indicate standards per head of livestock (for animal husbandry) or per hectare (for crop farms) in order to enable comparison between widely different types of farms.
- ⁴ Van der Ploeg (1999) has calculated that the Netherlands had approximately 50,000 farms. This figure tallies with our findings on the contamination of the corpus of data from the 1998 agricultural survey.

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About the authors

Dr Kees de Hoog is Full Professor of Family Sociology and Family Policy Studies with the Economics of Consumers and Households Group of Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands. E-mail: Kees.deHoog@wur.nl

Dr Johan van Ophem is Assistant Professor with the Economics of Consumers and Households Group at Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands. E-mail: Johan.VanOphem@wur.nl

5 Workshop 1, Monday : The Work and family balance for couples in Europe, by Mrs Annet Jager, STOAS Research

The session contains a presentation of and a discussion about the results of a comparative analysis on combination pressure in six European countries. What differences are there between the countries? How many people feel a more than moderate combination pressure? What are the differences between men and women by combination pressure? Does a social policy context, which facilitates the balance between work and care via family friendly policy, lead to less combination pressure?

5.1 Introduction

Monday 14th of June
Leader: Mrs Annet Jager

Today all kinds of people are busy or feel hurried. Men and women in Europe seem to be confronted increasingly with conflicting claims from work and the private sphere. The aim of this session is to give more insight into the ways men and women experience the multiple claims on their time and to understand the differences between European countries therein. We focus on the experienced balance between work and care, defined as '*combination pressure*', as a specific aspect of time pressure in modern society.

To what extent do men and women in couples experience combination pressure and how does this vary among several Western and Eastern European countries? Are we able to draw a sharp line in the experienced work-family balance between the eastern part and the western part of Europe?

Expectations are formulated at the individual level (work and home related factors) and at the institutional level. The effects of the work situation, - especially focused on flexibilisation -(e.g. working hours, working overtime on different times, control people have over their working hours, working schedule, working flexitime, type of contract), and the household situation (e.g. responsibility for domestic tasks, having children, working hours of the partner, agreement within the household) on combination pressure are analysed. Further attention is given to the interaction of the different time patterns of the work and household situation on the perceived balance. In explaining differences between countries we focus on cultural, economic and socio-political factors in specific aspects as social policy directed to family affairs, social policy directed to flexible working arrangements and gender equality.

In analysing these questions we use (survey) data gathered in 2001 within the research programme 'Households, Work and Flexibility', financed by the European Union (see www.hwf.at). Six countries are included in the analyses; Sweden, Netherlands, UK, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech Republic (N=1000-2000 respondents for each country). The aim of this project was to look at flexibility policies in each country and the types of flexibility that actually occurred there. Another task was to study family roles, the gender division of labour and work-family conflict in households in order to understand how far flexibility could help or hinder integration of home and work. Annet Jager was project leader of the HWF project in the Netherlands.

5.2 Report

Monday 14th of June

Leader: Mrs. Annet Jager

Report by Viktor Topiarz

Introduction

In this workshop an overview is provided on the work-family balance for couples in some areas in Europe, by comparing three western European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom) and three central-eastern European countries (Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia). The issue is analyzed on two different levels, each with specific sections. At the individual level there are three sections, such as the working situation, the home situation and the interaction effect. The country context level is based on social policy concerning family affairs, flexibility and private solutions, and gender ideology. Some examples of the research were given, as well as a research questionnaire to be filled in by participants.

Key words: combination pressure, flexibilisation, work situation, home situation

The presentation started by a short introduction of the research-project. The aim of the project was to look at flexibility policies in each country and the types of flexibility that actually occurred there.

A questionnaire with four basic questions was given to the participants of the workshop to be answered. After that, several topics were discussed. First the discussion was on combination pressure for men and women in Europe. Comparing data from all countries, it can be concluded that only in the United Kingdom and in Slovenia there are differences in the experience of combination pressure. In Slovenia, mostly women feel to be under higher pressure than men, while on the other hand in the United Kingdom the men feel to be under higher pressure.

Pressure of working hours was measured in all of the countries. Results in the Netherlands led to the conclusion that long working hours put high pressure on both men and women sharing households. The number of working hours is even the most important covariate for women. In Sweden the number of working hours is the main cause for pressure for women. In the United Kingdom and Slovenia long working hours imply higher pressure for both men and women. The Czech Republic and Hungary gave rather different results; long working hours cause higher pressure for men.

Looking at the household situation, analysis reveals that partner's hours in paid work do not affect men's experienced balance in work and care but they do matter for women especially in the Netherlands. In Hungary the presence of children in the household does not have an effect on the experienced combination pressure neither for men, nor – surprisingly - for women.

Conclusions and discussion

It can be concluded that people with higher education experience the highest pressure in relative terms. In the case of the Czech Republic and Hungary older people are relatively more in balance than younger men and women.

Statement made in the workshop: “ Part time job = half salary combined with full time job”.

6 Workshop 2, Monday: Bottom up works – promising new tools in the picture, by Henk Kieft, ETC Ecoculture

Bottom up approaches are becoming more and more common. But working bottom up should not be seen as a panacea. What ingredients will make a bottom up approach successful, what ingredients make it a disaster? Focus will be on the links between local initiatives and policy-processes at different levels. What can we learn from programs such as Leader+ and Countryside Exchange as it comes to mainstreaming and up scaling of good ideas?

6.1 Introduction

Monday 14th of June

Leader: Mr Henk Kieft, h.kieft@etcnl.nl
www.leaderplus.nl

Bottom up approaches are becoming more and more common. But working bottom up should not be seen as a panacea. What ingredients will make a bottom up approach successful, what ingredients make it a disaster? Focus will be on the links between local initiatives and policy processes at different levels. What can we learn from programs such as Leader+ and Countryside Exchange as it comes to mainstreaming and up scaling of good ideas?

Programme

Introduction by Mr Henk Kieft, Agronomist ETC Ecoculture

He will elaborate on the principles of working bottom up. Special attention shall be paid to dilemmas and challenges with respect to:

Area based strategies

Multilevel governance

Needed shifts and changes in attitude and culture

Formal versus participative democracy

Role of public and private initiatives

Is it about network or movements?

Are we speaking of exchange or change-policies?

Discussion with the group

Closing

Every-one is invited to make his own postcard with recommendations from Wageningen New Neighbours conference.

We will share and formulate recommendations together and address them to specific target groups.

6.2 Report

Monday 14th of June

Leader: Mr Henk Kieft (ETC Ecoculture, Leusden)

Report by Dineke van Zwieten

Introduction by Mr Henk Kieft

In his introduction Mr. Kieft paid attention to the essence of working bottom up:

- Betting on the local/regional capitals
- Local responsibility for own area
- Public private partnership
- Co-investment in time, experience and money
- Subsidiarity: from discourse to practice, but how.

He noticed that sometimes we think we use the same definition of participation but that is often not the case. He showed several dimensions of participation using the participation ladder of Publication – Information – Consultation - Interactive policy – Participation - Co-creation.

Two tools were presented: Leader+ and Countryside Exchange

For more information about Leader+, see www.leaderplus.nl

Countryside exchange: A group of eight international experts, invited by a local NGO, visit an area where people have a leading question or problem. Together they try to answer or solve the problem. The method contributes to the development of local leadership and helps building new relationships.

Than Mr. Kieft focussed on several dilemmas with regard to working bottom up

- Area policy = many ⇔ sector wise = few, we are talking of complex processes, more guidance is needed
- Crucial cooperation between government levels? ⇔ position game governments on the theatre!
- Slow democratic decision ⇔ local initiatives: now and here, a cultural clash takes place
- Formal democracy: Thorbecke 1848, old state system ⇔ participatory democracy: educated citizens?
- Public funds / public concern ⇔ private initiative / private investment
- Rural network: exchange of information ⇔ rural movement: change, to influence policies
- Minds shift administration? ⇔ local responsibility?
- Small scale experience ⇔ up scalable with large funds and large power, Now 1 percent of the structural funds is allocated through Leader+, it is a small amount, you can allow people to play with it and allow failures and mistakes. But what if a considerable amount of the structural funds is spent in this way? Can the system handle this?

References from Mr. Nicola Crosta and Mr. Rob Meijers

- We don't need to convince or reinforce the rural development experts about working bottom up. We need to convince politicians, policymakers and macro economists.... We need to quantify the results and show evidence about the financial outcomes.
- Central governments have a sectoral mentality, this doesn't fit with the cross-sectoral approaches needed for area-based policy. Sectoral and top down approaches are not capable of capturing the complexity of society. The fact that everyone need to share part of their power is also part of the problem.
- The use of the word "mainstreaming" is a bit dangerous. Not many people are familiar with the term and understand the meaning. So there is chance that mainstreaming Leader+ will be dropped from the political agenda.
- Which lobbies in favour of change can be identified, think for example of the tourism sector and consumers.

We know a lot about the conditions how bottom up approaches will work, an important step which lies before is: what are the conditions to start things up, what is

the mind set of people who start a local initiative. People get mobilised when they suffer of bad living conditions or when they perceive policy threats. And more important: the mind set of civil servants. They have to change: think more integral instead of sectoral, think more bottom up instead of top down.

Result of discussion with the group

We shared the core issues that need attention and priority according to everyone's personal view.

A general impression of issues:

- Importance of connecting social discovery and a system of learning processes
- Mainstreaming is important
- Empowerment
- You can't offer answers to people who don't have questions
- Process money
- Introduction of intermediaries, brokers, village advisors or facilitators at local level
- What is learned from projects, dissemination of project results at local level is important. In practice there is ample reservation of time and budget for this kind of activities.

To summarize; working bottom up is about:

- Confidence in people
- Doing your duty
- Delivering services
- Taking risks
- Sharing power

Necessary changes:

- A mind shift of civil servants at all government levels towards local initiatives and working bottom up processes
- Breaking walls between sectors and departments at all levels
- Taking into account the diversity of actors involved
- Data to make transnational comparison with regard to the economic situation and changes in social well being. Data are also evidence for macro economists to convince them that bottom up works

Supporting conditions for bottom up processes:

- village facilitators
- process money => to get people organised
- flexible subsidy system

7 Workshop 3, Monday: How to get around in rural areas, by Erna van der Wiel and Cathrien de Pater, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food-quality, the Netherlands

Long distances, poor quality of road infrastructure, lack of private and public transport facilities: all are aspects concerning the mobility in rural areas and they influence the possibilities to combine work and family life. In this session we will focus on the bottlenecks and solutions for mobility problems in rural areas.

7.1 Introduction

Monday 14th of June

Leader: Mrs Erna van der Wiel and Mrs Cathrien de Pater

BACKGROUND

Purpose of the workshop: to generate recommendations for improving mobility in rural areas.

Background: Mobility in rural areas is a relatively unexplored theme of which little is known. On the one hand, services tend to concentrate more and more in larger and often multi-functional centres while transport services such as buses in the countryside are cutting down timetables and increasing prices. On the other hand there are a number of initiatives to bring services to the rural population, such as library buses and specialised school bus services. To list the problems and trends and identify 'pros' and 'cons' for the two types of situations, we have chosen for a workshop with a creative and exploring approach.

THE WORKSHOP

After an introductory round and a warming-up by David Mol the subject you will be requested to participate in a so-called 'Arena Debate'. The debate has two rounds. In each round, you will be divided in two groups, each of which represents a group of stakeholders. You will discuss the problem from your respective point of view. The aim is not to 'win' the debate but to come up with 'pros' and 'cons' for each scenario on which you do not necessarily have to agree. In a concluding round, you will be asked to name the most important 'pros' and 'cons'.

The programme will be as follows:

13.30-13.40/ 15.00-15.10	Brief Introductory Round
13.40-13.55/ 15.10-15.25	Introduction into the subject by David Mol, Day-planning Project Bureau (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)
13.55/14.15/ 15.25-15.45	Arena Debate in two groups on Variant A Result: 'pros' and 'cons' of Variant A
14.15-14.35/	Arena Debate in two groups on Variant B

15.45-16.05	Result: 'pros' and 'cons' of Variant B
14.35-14.45/ 16.05-16.15	selection of priority 'pros' and 'cons'

7.2 Report

Monday 14th of June

Leader: Mrs Erna van der Wiel and Mrs Cathrien de Pater

Report by Ainars Skrastins

The workshop is opened by Mr David Mol, *Project Bureau (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)*. In his introduction he emphasised, that mobility in rural areas is still an important issue because about 6 million people are living in rural areas. Meanwhile the public transport is cutting the time schedules and increasing the prices, because during day time only few passengers use the public bus, while in the morning and after 5:00 p.m. the buses are almost full. The questions are what to do and how to do it? There are two possibilities:

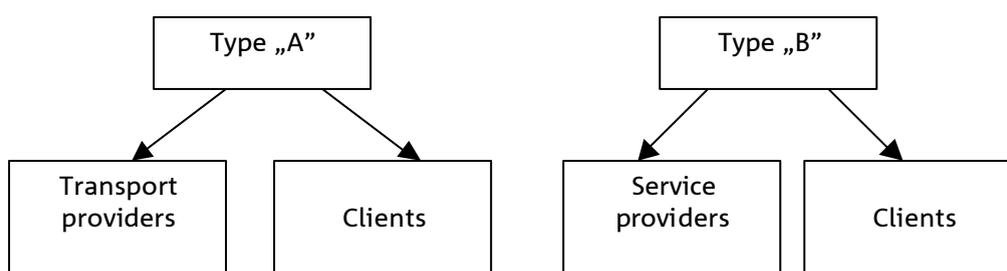
- A. Centralised option – people go to centres to get their services.
- B. Decentralised option – Services are delivered at the country side.

In the past the decentralised system was a successful solution which works well enough. There were small supermarkets, banks, doctors, post offices moving around in rural areas. There were buses that picked up children to go to school and delivered them back at 6:00 p.m.. But it was expensive and unprofitable.

Mr David Mol also mentioned the results of his research on the question: do you need public transport in rural areas? Women answered they don't need public transport because they can get by car whenever they need to go. But be aware, that not everybody has a car!

The decentralised option could have a future, according to David Mol, and this is the option where the money will be directed to. Up till now, known problems are with working time (mainly 7:00 till 17:00) which is deficient. Organizational investments are also important.

During the workshop participants were divided in 2 groups to discuss previous mentioned mobility types A and B:



Results of the discussions of type “A” – centralised option:

- It is important to identify the precise needs of the client groups before setting up or fine-tuning a system. Round-table conversations with clients and potential providers work better than a big survey
- Central facility buildings are highly valued because they offer more possibilities for services to young children and other specified target groups. However, centralized multifunctional facilities do not offer a solution for mobility problems.
- ICT was considered efficient but was also suspected of contributing to the isolation of country inhabitants.

- The establishment of central facilities requires investments and the running of them requires recurrent costs. However, the combination of various facilities in one building could enhance the viability of such a project.
- An interesting case of small-scale entrepreneurship was the provision of a private car to one person who then was obliged to offer transport services to his/her co-villagers. Sometimes the car was subsidized by the government, in another case the employer provided the car.

Results of the discussions of type “B” – decentralised option:

- The development of mobile decentralized services appears to be a rather expensive option in comparison with centralized facilities.
- It was found that mobile services often did not reach the target groups at home in the daytime. Only those services were used which were not needed on a daily basis, such as a library, shoe repair and dentist. It was suggested that frequently needed services would stay in a village for at least a week, but this met strong resistance from the providers’ group.
- The necessity of subsidies for certain decentralized services to deprived groups was recognized but the modality of these subsidies was a point of discussion. Some favored private entrepreneurship for service providers, some favored to subsidizing not the service but the access to the service for these groups. No open-ended subsidies were favored. Which yielded lots of demands but no fitting solutions.
- Public transport systems such as buses are only needed by specified target groups such as disabled, elderly, low-income groups, and sometimes, youth.
- One solution mentioned was to schedule extra services on a needs basis of an already existing school bus system. This system operates on a private basis in SW Ireland.
- Another solution mentioned was free transport for elderly, also in Ireland.
- Especially schools were often mentioned as cases where basic transport needs were provided to small villages, also in thinly populated areas. Therefore, many different solutions were mentioned including schools offering transport systems for their students. Also medical care was considered to be necessary at a decentralized level.

Conclusion

Whether to choose between centralized or decentralized options for transport systems in rural areas depends on the weighing of different factors, such as: attention for specific needs of socially disadvantaged groups, efficiency, and minimized environmental pollution. In other words: People, Planet and Profit!

8 Workshop 4, Monday: Small entrepreneurs in rural areas, Odile Plan, GREP

8.1 Introduction in English



Monday 14th of June
Leader: Mrs Odile Plan

Intervention d'Odile Plan, GREP France, commanditée par le Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires Rurales

How can we reconcile work and family life in rural areas?

Based on the example of Italian initiatives, the concept of Town Time Offices dawned here and there. In France, we have Offices in Rennes, Poitiers, Saint-Denis and Belfort. These actions are led by the municipalities in partnership with local services: in the fields of transport, caring, shops, public services and civil society representatives. The question is: is it possible to settle Town Time Offices in rural areas?

Another more general question is: how can we get an operational participation of the inhabitants on the theme of time? How can we stop men and women from suffering from their time? How can we help them to become aware, analyse and become masters of their time and so become a good respondent taking part in the debates and capable of solid propositions?

Some of the actions lead by the French Ministry of Agriculture may help us find answers to these two questions: these actions are on the reconciliation of work and family times in very small rural enterprises: independent workers, family enterprises, married couples' enterprises, small companies with various statutes, with or without a small amount of employees.

Usually, the connection problems between the different times of life are hardly ever analysed and this absence may be the source of work, family and couple problems.

And now, let me present the project : Articulating life times in rural enterprises

In France, very small enterprises are now the main sources of job and activity creation in rural areas. Traditionally, these very small enterprises whether the activity is

handicraft, agricultural or service oriented, are the places where professional, personal and family spheres mingle.
In the same way as the family pattern, these organizations are subject to economic and social changes and like any other enterprise they are the object of many tensions.

First of all, the evolution of lifestyles between town and countryside is standardized. The reduction of working time, the new demands for services, the yearning for spare time and vacation are requirements which very small enterprises have trouble absorbing.

Followed by the opening to European and Worldwide markets that impose a strong competition, a modernization of the means of production and a quicker response to markets.

Lastly, we must remember the specifics of very small rural enterprises. They have a relation to space, which is different than that of their urban colleagues. The distances need to be adapted and organized in a particular way: transports and travelling must be integrated into the organization of the work as well as in the relations with scattered and sometimes rare customers.

All these constraints force them to manage complex situations: in this case, reconciling the practice of a job, conducting an enterprise, social and professional responsibilities, family life, leisure, etc.

This complexity, if not adequately dealt with, fragilises and menaces the existence of these very small enterprises, while they participate in the economic and social vitality of territories.

Finally, let us point out what we now know; there is no existing professional organization nor representative for very small enterprises and their employees. This shortage leads to inefficiency within the services proposed to the very small enterprises as well as to their employees.

In order to face these various tensions, better reconcile the various professional and personal stakes and reinforce their economic development, the project proposes the production of an analysis of the different life times in these enterprises, with all the professional workers so as to reconcile professional and personal spheres.

The object is to create tools that will be integrated within the practices of these professionals keeping in mind the improvement of the working organization in these very small enterprises, the qualifications of the employees working there, the strengthening of the exiting jobs and a support for couples and families.

This approach must be done by craftsmen, farmers, liberal professionals and enterprise responsible, as well as all those who work in these enterprises: managers, husbands and wives, family assistants, partners, employees, voluntaries, men and women.

But it is also necessary for the professionals who support them: counsellors, trainers, technicians, animators, and development agents. These tools must help very small enterprises at every step of their existence: the creation and setting up phase, the adjustment and development phase and finally the transfer and handing over phase.

Time Offices in rural areas should develop inspired by Town Time Offices and, in the same time, help transform professionals of every small enterprise into participative interlocutors.

The aims are, at the same time, to qualify the workers of very small enterprises, to allow them to master their time, to improve the quality of work and family life, to prepare them to become good interlocutors for the installation of rural area Time Offices. In this way, these aims participate in a more harmonized development of rural areas with a particular attention given to equal opportunities between men and women.

In these very small enterprises, personal and professional times are often mixed and one of the aims of the project is to analyse these times in order to better underline the different lengths of time, the values, the segmentations and terms.

The public in charge of this work are counsellors, trainers, development agents that support these enterprises during their creation, their development and their handing over.

In this analysis of time, the comparison between men and women is completely integrated.

The aim is the knowledge of the workers in the very small enterprises of the different time lengths dedicated to each activity, of the values given to each of these activities (professional and personal), and a better organization of time for a better running of the enterprise, of the couple, of the family: an organizational competence that allows to better target professional, domestic or relational knowledge.

The public aimed at by this project is situated on three levels:

The workers of very small enterprises, men and women coming from the fields of crafts, agriculture, commerce, services but also liberal professions.

Supporters and coaches for whom new counselling practices must be integrated.

Territorial communities and potential territory partners, for the last period of the project, with the objective of creating a Time Office in rural areas.

The objective is to work directly on the question of time and so the distribution of time between men and women and the bounds between personal and professional times, in this particular case.

Big and middle-sized enterprises have the possibility of working on their analysis of time.

They do so using their human resources' service as an intermediary. The propositions in relation with the reconciliation of social times proposed by the leaders are presented, discussed and corrected by the workers' representatives. This type of social dialogue doesn't exist in very small enterprises and even less so in couples' enterprises. The present project's objective is the invention of a dialogue adapted to this type of enterprise. One of the main innovations of this project will be to level with the absence of workers' representatives since they are very few with the experience of a Time Office on territories, scene of dialogue and reconciliation.

8.2 Introduction in French



Monday 14th of June
Leader: Mrs Odile Plan

Intervention d'Odile Plan, GREP France, commanditée par le Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires Rurales

Comment concilier activité professionnelle et vie familiale en zone rurale ?

À l'exemple des invitations italiennes, des bureaux des temps des villes sont nés ici ou là : en France, il y a Rennes, Poitiers, Saint-Denis, Belfort... Ces actions sont menées par les municipalités, en partenariat avec les services locaux : transport, caring, commerces, services publics, et représentant de la société civile.

La question qui se pose est : est-il possible de mettre en place des « bureaux des temps » en milieu rural ?

Une autre question est plus générale : Comment, sur le thème du temps, avoir une participation opérationnelle des habitants ? Comment faire pour que les femmes et les hommes ne subissent plus leur temps, mais en prennent conscience, l'analysent, en deviennent maîtres et ainsi deviennent des interlocuteurs valables, acteurs dans les débats et capables de positions concrètes.

Certaines actions conduites à l'initiative du ministère de l'Agriculture en France pourront nous aider à répondre à ces deux questions : Ce sont des actions qui portent sur la conciliation des temps professionnels et personnels dans les très petites entreprises familiales, de couples, petites sociétés de différents statuts, sans ou avec très peu de salariés.

En général les problèmes d'articulation entre les différents temps de vies y sont peu analysés, et cette absence peut être source de dysfonctionnements professionnels familiaux et de couple.

Je vais vous présenter les travaux que nous sommes en train de mettre en place, qui sont la base d'un projet EQUAL que le GREP vient de déposer, avec l'aval du Ministère de l'Agriculture : Articulation des Temps de Vie dans les Entreprises Rurales (ARTEVER).

Les T.P.E. (très petites entreprises) sont actuellement les principales créatrices d'emploi et d'activités dans les territoires ruraux. Traditionnellement, ces TPE, qu'elles soient artisanales, agricoles ou de service, sont des lieux où se mélangent les sphères professionnelles, personnelles et familiales –

Cette organisation, découlant d'un modèle familial est soumise aux mutations économiques et sociales et, comme toutes les entreprises, est l'objet de nombreuses tensions.

En premier lieu, les évolutions des modes de vie entre villes et campagnes s'homogénéisent. La réduction du temps de travail, les nouvelles demandes de services, l'aspiration aux loisirs et aux vacances sont autant d'exigences que les TPE intègrent difficilement.

C'est ensuite l'ouverture des marchés européens et mondiaux qui impose une concurrence accrue, une modernisation des moyens de production et une réactivité aux marchés toujours plus vive.

Il faut enfin rappeler la spécificité des TPE rurales, qui gèrent un rapport à l'espace différent de leurs homologues urbaines. Les distances nécessitent une adaptation et une organisation particulières : transports et déplacements sont à intégrer dans l'organisation du travail ainsi que dans le rapport à une clientèle dispersée et parfois rare.

L'ensemble de ces contraintes oblige les personnes à gérer des situations complexes : il s'agit en effet de concilier l'exercice du métier, la conduite de l'entreprise, ses responsabilités sociales et professionnelles, sa vie de famille, son temps personnel... Cette complexité, si elle n'est pas correctement assumée, fragilise et menace l'existence de ces TPE alors que celles-ci, nous le savons, participent à la vitalité économique et sociale des territoires.

Enfin signalons un déficit d'organisation professionnelle et de représentation tant du côté des responsables de TPE que du côté de leurs salariés. Ce déficit entraîne des carences dans les services proposés aux TPE comme à leurs salariés.

Pour permettre de faire face à ces diverses tensions, de mieux concilier les divers enjeux professionnels et personnels et de renforcer leur viabilité économique, le projet propose de travailler sur une analyse des différents temps de vie dans ces entreprises, avec tous les acteurs, afin d'aller vers une meilleure conciliation des sphères professionnelles et privées.

L'objectif est de construire des outils intégrables dans les pratiques de ces professionnels en vue d'améliorer l'organisation du travail dans ces TPE, les qualifications des personnes y travaillant, de consolider les emplois existants et aussi les couples et les familles.

Cette approche doit être faite par les artisans, les agriculteurs, les professionnels libéraux, les responsables de TPE, ainsi que tous ceux qui travaillent dans ces entreprises : chefs d'entreprise, conjoints, aides familiaux, associés, salariés, bénévoles, hommes et femmes... Mais c'est également une nécessité pour les professionnels qui les accompagnent : conseillers, consulaires, formateurs, techniciens, animateurs, agents de développement... Ces outils doivent accompagner les TPE aux différents moments de leurs existences : la phase de création et d'installation, celle de son adaptation et de son développement et enfin celle de la cession et de transmission...

Cette démarche, dans un même mouvement, doit rendre les professionnels des TPE et leurs accompagnateurs en mesure d'être des interlocuteurs participatifs dans la mise en place de « bureaux des temps en milieu rural », comme cela devrait se développer, en s'inspirant des bureaux des temps des villes .

Les Objectifs sont à la fois la qualification des actifs des TPE, une meilleure maîtrise de leur temps, une amélioration de la qualité de vie familiale et personnelle, une préparation d'interlocuteurs valables pour la mise en place de bureaux des temps rural, participant ainsi à un développement plus harmonieux des territoires ruraux, avec une attention particulière sur l'égalité des chances entre les femmes et les hommes.

Dans ces TPE, les temps personnels et professionnels sont souvent mêlés et l'un des objectifs du projet est d'analyser ces temps pour mieux en souligner leurs différentes durées, les valeurs, les segmentations et modalités.

Les publics en charge de ce travail sont des conseillers, formateurs, agents de développement qui accompagnent ces entreprises dans leur création, leur développement, leur transmission...

Dans cette analyse des temps, la comparaison homme- femme est totalement intégrée. On vise la connaissance par les actifs de la TPE des durées consacrées à chaque activité, des valeurs données à chacune de ces activités (professionnelle et personnelle), et une meilleure organisation des temps pour un meilleur fonctionnement de l'entreprise, du couple, de la famille : un savoir faire organisationnel qui permette de mieux cibler les savoirs faire professionnels, domestiques ou relationnels nécessaires.

Les publics visés par le projet se situent à trois niveaux :

Les actifs des TPE rurales, hommes et femmes de l'artisanat, du commerce, des services et de l'agriculture, mais aussi des professions libérales (

Les publics des accompagnateurs et des relais (...) pour lesquels il s'agit d'intégrer de nouvelles pratiques de conseil.

Les collectivités territoriales et partenaires territoriaux potentiels, pour la dernière période du projet, avec l'objectif de la création d'un bureau des temps en milieu rural. L'objectif est de travailler directement sur la question des temps et donc sur la répartition du temps entre les hommes et les femmes, les limites entre le personnel et le professionnel dans ce cas particulier.

Les grandes entreprises et les PME ont la possibilité de travailler sur l'analyse des temps. Elles le font par l'intermédiaire de leur service de gestion des ressources humaines. Les propositions relatives à la conciliation des temps sociaux proposés par les directions sont présentées, discutées et amendées par les représentants des salariés. Ce type de dialogue social n'existe pas au sein des TPE, et moins encore chez le couple entrepreneur. Le présent projet se donne pour objet d'inventer un dialogue adapté à ce type d'entreprise. Pour palier l'absence de représentation des salariés due à leur faible nombre, l'expérimentation sur quelques territoires d'un bureau des temps, lieu de dialogue et de conciliation, représentera une des principales innovations de ce projet.

9 Workshop 1, Tuesday : Innovative job creation in rural areas, Mrs Sigrid Wölfing, tamen, Germany

Talking about reconciliation of work and family life, presumes that men and women have jobs. This is not always the case. In some situations unemployment and lack of suitable jobs is a huge problem in rural areas. In this session we will focus on the opportunities of (small scale) entrepreneurship and flexibility of work.

9.1 Introduction

Tuesday 15th of June
Leader: Mrs Sigrid Wölfing

Talking about reconciliation of work and family life presumes, that men and women have jobs, which is not always the case. Unemployment and lack of suitable jobs is a huge problem, not only for financial reasons, but also for social life and self-esteem. Often, this is a vicious circle: lacking childminding facilities or insufficient services for elderly and handicapped members of the family hinder specially women, to set up their own activity or to apply for a full-day job.

So we have to think not only about improvement of care facilities, but also about appropriate and flexible forms to generate additional income and to get “out of the house”.

This can be the creation of a small business or a (part-time) job outside the house.

In the workshop we’ll discuss along three main topics:

flexible forms of work normally fulfil the needs of the employer: can they also facilitate reconciliation of work and family life? Can flexible work provide necessary job security for families? Are co-operations and network-building possibilities to provide flexibility on the one hand and security and continuity on the other hand? support with small money often is more appropriate than big projects. what are the advantages of small money projects and do they really provide necessary flexibility and sustainability?

May intermediates such as village advisors help to overcome the restraints, big projects and their regulations bring along? May they help to create useful networks? which role do informal networks based on trust and interdependence play?

9.2 Report

Tuesday 15th of June
Leader: Mrs Sigrid Wölfing
Report by Bas van der Sijs

Talking about reconciliation of work and family life presumes, that men and women have jobs, which is not always the case. Unemployment and lack of suitable jobs is a

huge problem, not only for financial reasons, but also for social life and self-esteem. Often, this is a vicious circle: lacking childminding facilities or insufficient services for elderly and handicapped members of the family hinder specially women, to set up their own activity or to apply for a full-day job. Women need to have work (economic need) because the man doesn't earn enough money for the whole family. The old nine-to-five-model doesn't work anymore in rural areas.

So we have to think not only about improvement of care facilities, but also about appropriate and flexible forms to generate additional income and to get "out of the house".

This can be the creation of a small business or a (part-time) job outside the house.

In the workshop we discussed three main topics:

- Flexible forms of work normally fulfil the needs of the employer: can they also facilitate reconciliation of work and family life? Can flexible work provide necessary job security for families? Are co-operations and network-building possibilities to provide flexibility on the one hand and security and continuity on the other hand?
- Support with small money often is more appropriate than big projects. What are the advantages of small money projects and do they really provide necessary flexibility and sustainability?
- May intermediaries such as village advisors help to overcome the restraints, big projects and their regulations bring along? May they help to create useful networks? Which role do informal networks based on trust and interdependence play?

Statements:

- 1 Flexible organisation of work and individual business creation supports the reconciliation of work and family.

BUT: is this first of all result of changing needs of the enterprises, it is often linked with insecure jobs, inappropriate working times, bad payment and self exploitation?

Recommendations of the workshop partners:

- Create flexible rules and regulations for starting enterprises.
- Balanced distance work should be promoted.
- Flexible opening hours when the client needs it.
- Intermediate levels between government and enterprises.
- Take into account decision-making process in households.
- Teaching young people in schools in entrepreneurship in existing work organisations. There should be incentives (and not only financial ones) for people to start their own business.
- Intermediary actor to reconcile needs of enterprises and employees.
- Information and education of employers (social responsibility).
- Organise good mentoring service and training before starting an enterprise
- Realistic goals.
- For women a real debate: in or out the house?
- ICT for remote areas.

- 2 Increase the support with small money, without bureaucracy, give responsibility to the local level.

BUT: Does this really help to set up sustainable and reliable structures? Don't we generate new insecurity and self exploitation?

Recommendations of the workshop partners:

- Strengthen the local level.
- Help to sustain self-initiative: collective, cooperative and local.
- Intermediary actors support for small initiatives.

- Coaching and mentoring for those who start a new enterprise.
 - Mental change in the heads of the policy makers.
 - Change the rules
 - More transparent and user-friendly regulations, not in the basic level.
- 3 Informal networks based on trust and interdependence are crucial in combining work and family life.

BUT: Care for children, elderly and handicapped persons requires professionalism, a minimum of technical equipment and reliability?

Recommendations of the workshop partners:

- For flexible work you need the informal network for evenings and weekends.
- In rural areas we need small scale initiatives. Combine small scale services by introducing intermediate organisations.
- Don't consider professional services as the only solution.
- Take into account the children's needs.
- Form of care services should be an issue of public debate.
- Policy about development of care services should be developed including the participation of parents.

10 Workshop 2, Tuesday: At your services, Mrs Kristiina Liinaharja, Mustiala Häma Polytechnic, Finland

Different kinds of services relieve the pressure of combining work with family life. Services like care facilities for children, elderly and handicapped, shops, schools, health services, libraries, post offices, commercial services, etc. These services and the availability and attainableness of these services are in many regions under pressure. This has an impact on the social vitality of a region.

10.1 Report

Tuesday 15th of June
Leader: Mrs Kristiina Liinaharja
Report by Loek Treep

Introduction

The workshop has been given by Kristiina Liinaharja, half of her working-time village advisor in Finland and half of her working-time involved in the project New Neighbours. The program was a mixture of information and social drama executed by the participants themselves. The sessions were held on the hotel-terrace because of the magnificent weather. There were totally 25 participants.

Welcome and warming up.

By imagining a chair as the rural services, the participants took a position and were asked to answer on their ideas about rural services. What are their hopes, their doubts, their wishes and their visions? Shortly what is your personal relationship with rural services? Two by two they discussed their ideas.

Information from the project New Neighbours

The most practices from the New Neighbours project show the importance of the following aspects about rural services:

- Availability
- Attainability (distance, price)
- Adequacy

The most important aspect is: Who's going to pay the bill. There is the experience that there is always money for the things you really want.

In the rural development you can distinguish rural services standards like:

- Some pressure
- Obvious public services (sometimes new implementation is necessary)
- Additional (new sources of jobs, sharing work and family life in a different way)

Vulnerability is very important. The existence of one school in a rural area is often more important than the existence of another school in an urban area.

Clustering gives often solutions, for example: sharing expenses and combining strengths

A practical case from Finland. Pirttikosken is an isolated village in a large forested part of Finland. The area is situated in several different districts and communities. Parents had to send their children to one of the three local authority centres. The distance to a

centre could be 80-100 km. It is quite understandable that this solution was not realistic. This difficult administrative situation caused a need for children's day care in the village itself. The local authorities advised to set up a commercial children's day care centre. Because of the financial risk of missing social assistance by dismissing the employees of the commercial day care this advice was not realistic. The village advisor gave information about social economy and the new Finnish co-operative law. So the Pirttikoski Family Service Co-operation was set up and the children's care centre was available at an acceptable distance and acceptable for the employees. In the beginning the local authorities did not co-operate and were frustrating even the co-operative day care. But that is over now and at this moment the local authority even buys day care service from the cooperative children's day care.

For processes in rural areas you need:

- Things to be done
 - People who are willing to do it
 - and by informing them about the co-operative systems it can be done
- People have to see the need and feel the will to push the limits.

Lessons we learn are:

- Count on the unexpected (there is always something unforeseen happening - use it!)
- Mix unobvious parties (for example ICT-schools in former monasteries)
- Do not kill the maestros (use the "wild ideas" and the frontrunners)

A applicable quote from Ghandi:

Wise people learn from each other;
Average people learn from their mistakes;
Stupid people learn nothing, because they already know everything.

Social drama

The participants were asked to think about their wishes for the rural areas in their own situations. To illustrate their thoughts and wishes photographs were used. In groups consisting of 4 or 5 persons collages, based on their individual choices, were made.

Themes of the collages:

- The bridge as a metaphor for connections between the various aspects in the rural areas (the younger and elder people; work and free-time etc.)
- The life in the rural areas is good and keep it attractive
- There is a focus on rules and regulations. Make possibilities for experiments and put away the things that hinder
- Different people have different needs, like: care, a local shop, schools, churches
- The European rural area is burning. There should be more (political) attention for the problems of the rural area such as new political developments, more work, looking for local solutions etc

Afterwards the collage-groups expressed themselves like living statues, moving statues and other improvisations. The expression- themes were those of the collages.

Some observations of the expressions:

- Co-operate with tied hands
- Undo the knots
- Instead of talking, do something and make a bridge
- Take another point of view to remark the bridge
- Combine peoples strength
- Combine experiences and co-operate with others
- Cross borders
- Enjoy the good urban life
- Extinguish the fire in the European rural area.

The participants enjoyed very much this workshop and were very enthusiastic because the combination of information exchange and social drama techniques.

11 Workshop 3, Tuesday: Infrastructure: the back bone of rural areas, Mrs Janet Heeran, South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. (SKDP), Southwest Ireland

For reconciliation some infrastructural elements are important, like community centres, infrastructure for ICT, transport means. Most of these elements are missing in rural areas.

What do these elements mean for reconciliation and how can they be obtained?

11.1 Introduction

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mrs Janet Heeran

The purpose of this workshop is to create recommendations about best practice regarding infrastructure in rural areas.

For the purposes of this workshop, infrastructure is defined as:

Houses, Buildings, Meeting Places

Information and Communication Technologies (internet, WiFi etc)

Transport

Roads, Canals, Rivers (supporting transport)

Planning/zoning legislation

The New Neighbours project highlighted the central role that infrastructure plays in supporting rural living and work/life balance. For example, in France, the rural Transport Scheme is used to bring people to their place of employment. Otherwise, rural people without cars or access to public transport would not have the opportunity to gain employment.

During this active workshop, you will be encouraged to share examples of problem and solutions associated with infrastructure in your area.

11.2 Report

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mrs Janet Heeran

Report by Thamar Kok

Infrastructure affects work and family balance in rural areas. In this workshop recommendations are made about facilitating good infrastructure. The workshop discussions are held in relation to the main aspects of infrastructure. Which are as follows:



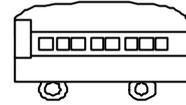
Roads/Canals
Rivers (supporting transport)



Houses/Buildings/
Meeting places



Planning/
Zoning legislation



Transport



ICT

Recommendations on



The physical infrastructure should accommodate several and even sometimes conflicting needs in the area. These needs have to be analysed; like needs related to work, to school (safe routes for children going to school) and to leisure. It should be looked upon if combined use is possible and desirable to fulfil the needs. Solutions can be found in creative and efficient use of existing, sometimes old (relicts of), paths, roads, railways and waterways. More efficient use of existing roads may be possible by making use of time maps. Also the financing should be considered upon. It may perhaps be possible to redirect different budgets; for example non profitable routes that are subsidised by profitable ones.

Recommendations on:



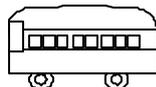
Integral thinking is needed. For example by making use of multifunctional buildings for small scale facilities and services. In this way efficiency in services, knowledge, costs and used space (m²) can be created. Examples of multifunctionality are for example use as social meeting places, broad schools (childcare, sports education, etc). Existing buildings as well as new ones can be used. Some problems that may arise involve responsibility, legislation for use of existing buildings and constructing new building in the rural area, and learning how to work together. The use of holiday/second houses should be linked to investment/ expenditure in the rural areas.

Recommendations on:



Planning at a local level has to be demand driven by including village counsels. A good balance in the population structure should be taken into account. This means a good mixture of existing population and newcomers but also of young and old people. It can be stimulated by planning permission for the local needs.

Recommendations on



The transport of both humans and goods have to be seen in synergy. Remember that transport has social aspects like meeting others. In order to continue transporting possibilities of new solutions for transport can be conceived like taxis and small buses

Recommendations on:



Depending on the problems in the area it should be decided in which way ICT is used. The EU should recommend that national governments provide government services via the internet, the money saved should be invested in providing ICT in rural areas.

Overall recommendations:

To facilitate a good infrastructure decisions should be made at a local level rather than a national or European level.

The local demand should be leading in finding solutions. (demand driven) - use an interactive approach.

Flexibility in rules and legislation is needed

Be creative in finding solutions.

Stimulating private initiative/responsibility

Take into account that processes to facilitate infrastructure take time.

12 Workshop 4, Tuesday: Women at work, Dr Bettina Bock, Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands

One of the major problems in the European countryside is the lack of job opportunities for women. When there are no suitable jobs the question arises: can I create my own work and become a self-employed woman, an entrepreneur? This session will focus on the perspectives and problems related to small-scale female entrepreneurship. Can entrepreneurship solve the problems of reconciliation and in which way? What are the consequences for individual women, and what are the costs and benefits for society?

12.1 Introduction

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mrs Bettina Bock (Wageningen Agricultural University) and Mrs Joos Geerts (entrepreneur, E-wayout)

Programme:

- Short introduction to the content of the workshop
- Introduction by Dr Bettina Bock
Mrs Bock will elaborate on issues of female entrepreneurship from a theoretical point of view
- Reference made by Mrs Joos Geerts, entrepreneur
Mrs Geerts will reflect on the issue of female entrepreneurship from a practical point of view. She has a lot of experience being a working mother and entrepreneur, running a business (secretariat service using ICT solutions) in the rural areas of Brabant (the Netherlands)
- Questions and discussion
Policymakers have high expectations of the potential role of small scale entrepreneurship as a driving force in the rural economy. Are these expectations realistic or maybe too high? And what kind of policies are needed to facilitate entrepreneurship in rural areas? This will be the issue in our discussion.
- Closing
We will share and formulate recommendations on this specific topic.

Leader: Bettine.Bock@wur.nl

Referent: Joos.Geerts@e-wayout.nl
www.e-wayout.nl

12.2 Report

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mrs Bettina Bock (Wageningen Agricultural University) and Mrs Joos Geerts (entrepreneur, E-wayout)

Report by Mrs Dineke van Zwieten

Introduction by Dr Bettina Bock

Mrs Bock elaborated on issues of female entrepreneurship from a theoretical point of view.

European statistics show with regard to women and work in rural areas that generally more women are unemployed than men. But: there are huge differences between rural areas and huge differences between rural women.

Problems with female employment in rural areas are related to:

- the geographical level: the remoteness and isolation of areas cause problems concerning the availability and accessibility of jobs and services;
- the cultural level: there is still a traditional gender contract with men working as a breadwinner and women taking care of children and others in need of care;
- the structural level: 'masculine' labour market, lack of public transport and other services;
- the individual level: women have the main responsibility for children.

These constraints are interrelated.

Policymakers make several assumptions with regard to (female) entrepreneurship. The big underlying assumption is that entrepreneurship is the solution for a lot of problems:

- 1) It is good for the vitality of rural areas and quality of life: Self employment is a solution when there is a lack of employment. New enterprises create jobs and new services.
- 2) It is good for women: Being your own boss means:
 - a) need for commuting;
 - b) organise your own work and schedules;
 - c) flexibility for combining work and care;
 - d) flexibility for combining farm and enterprise;
 - e) follow personal preferences and talents;
 - f) be independent and do it your own way.
- 3) Rural women especially are well-equipped for entrepreneurship: They have spare time left; they are at home anyway; they like dealing with people; they are good in offering services.

The big question arises: Is this really the case?

Reference made by Mrs Joos Geerts, entrepreneur

Mrs Geerts elaborated on issues of female entrepreneurship from a practical point of view. She has a lot of experience being a working mother and entrepreneur, running a business (secretariat service using ICT solutions) in the rural areas of Brabant, the Netherlands. (for more information, see www.e-wayout.nl)

Mrs Geerts told the story of the starting and expansion of her company. She reflected on the different problems and perspectives she faced in the different phases concerning:

- working with women employees: she has chosen explicitly to work with women only, giving them the opportunity to combine work and care;
- looking for niches in the market and the marketing policy;
- improvement of the product: problems related to the releasing of the new transcription technique because of the innovative aspects of it (the technique in itself and the broader concept);
- financing of the business and the frustrating experiences with getting subsidies;
- moving to a new office: also located in the countryside because of the lower housing costs and the availability of employees.

Results of discussion and recommendations

Interventions at the different distinguished levels are needed to improve the situation for female entrepreneurship in the rural areas.

Geographical level

Availability of affordable childcare facilities helps.

Structural level

Change the breadwinner tax system.

Develop a subsidy system fitting needs of female entrepreneurs.

Facilitate networks for female entrepreneurs across sectors.

Remove constraints in spatial plans and thereby offering possibilities to start small scale enterprises in the rural areas.

Cultural level

Changes are needed in the dominant model; fulltime work for men is under discussion, and reconciliation as a men's issue too.

Promote egalitarian gender contracts, for example image creation in the media regarding men's and women's work

Individual level

Husbands prove to be an important obstacle for women when they want to become a entrepreneur. Women need to discuss with their husband at the kitchen table for suitable solutions. When there is an economic need it is easier to convince the husband.....

Women need moral support to build up self-confidence, especially in the starting up phase, because women face aversive surroundings (husband, family, friends and advisors).

Offer training on demand, tailor-made for developing entrepreneurial skills of female entrepreneurs.

12.3 Sheets

Workshop 4: Women at work

New neighbours conference, 14-16 June 2004
Bettina Bock, Dineke van Zwieten, Joos Geerts



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Theme for today:
Women, work and rural entrepreneurship

Programme:
Intro into problems and promises of work & entrepreneurship
Response by rural entrepreneur: The practice of everyday life
Discussion and questions
Attempt to formulate policy recommendations

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Women and work in rural areas

- Generally more women unemployed than men
- But:
- huge differences between rural areas:
- huge differences between rural women

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Women's unemployment in 1999 by degree of urbanization

	Urban	Inter-mediate	Rural
EU	11	10	12
Finland	9	14	14
Germany	9	8	12
Netherlands	4	6	6
Ireland	5		6
Greece	20	17	12
Italy	17	15	18
Portugal	6	4	6
Hungary*	11		11



EU Rural regions with low female unemployment rates, 2001

	Female unemployment rate		Total unemployment rate	
	1998	2001	1998	2001
Niederbayern (D)	5	4	5	4
Ionia Nisia (GR)	6	7	4	7
S-E Ireland	7	3	8	3
Trentino-A. Adige (I)	5	4	4	3
Centro (P)	3	5	3	4
Aland (FIN)	3	1	3	1
Smaland (SE)	7	4	7	4



EU rural regions with high female unemployment rates, 2001

	Female unemployment rate		Total unemployment rate	
	1998	2001	1998	2001
Dessau (D)	26	20	22	17
Stereia Ellada (GR)	22	22	13	13
Sydsverige (SE)	10	7	10	6
Calabria (I)	37	36	27	25
Alentejo (P)	13	8	9	6
Itae-Suomi (FIN)	16	14	17	14

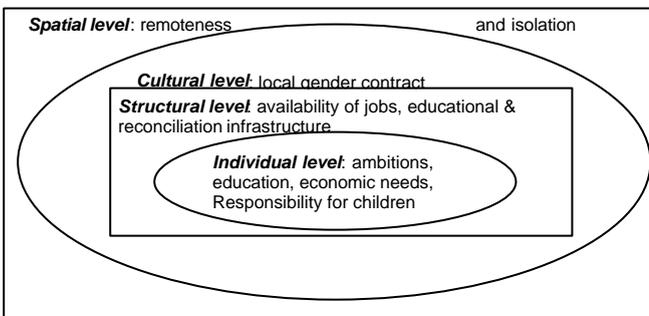


Problems with female employment in rural areas:

geographical level: remoteness and isolation → availability & accessibility
cultural level: traditional gender contract
structural level: 'masculine' labourmarket, lack of public transport and other services
individual level: responsibility children



Constraints are interrelated



New rural entrepreneurs assuring the future of rural Europe



Policymakers: entrepreneurship = solution

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Good for vitality of rural areas and quality of life

Self-employment → lack of employment

New enterprises → more jobs & less unemployment

New enterprises → new services



2. Good for women:

Being your own boss

→ no need for commuting

→ organise your own work and schedules

→ flexibility for combining work & care

→ flexibility for combining farm and enterprise

→ follow personal preferences and talents

→ be independent and do it your own way



3. Rural women are well-equipped for entrepreneurship

They have spare time left

They are at home anyway

They like dealing with people

They are good in offering services



But is that really the case?

- Is entrepreneurship solving women's problems around work and care?
- Is entrepreneurship attractive for rural women?
- Are rural women well equipped for entrepreneurship?

13 Workshop 5, Tuesday: Notes from new EU-member countries, Mr Viktor Topiarz, Mr Ainars Skrastins, Dronten Professional Agricultural University, the Netherlands

Looking at reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas, what are the notes that can be put to this topic from the point of view of Central and East European countries like the Czech Republic and Latvia? It seems that specific attention is needed for employment, care for children, elderly, disabled people and mobility. What are the main obstacles on these fields and what are the solutions? Which recommendations can be drawn from this?

13.1 Introduction

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mr Viktor Topiarz and Mr Ainars Skrastins

Viktor Topiarz from the Czech Republic and Ainars Skrastins from Latvia, shall present you an overview of the situation in their countries especially focused on the rural area. To have a general overview, they will also present short movies in this presentation.

In order to stop talking and start acting they will end their presentations with a number of recommendations about what should be done in their opinion to solve problems in the rural areas of Latvia and the Czech Republic, in other words - what are the first things that need to be done?

Recommendations for Latvia of Ainars are about solutions for unemployment, lack of care facilities and mentality. Concerning this last topic, development and stability need a fitting attitude and mentality; can it be achieved in the coming 15 to 20 years?

Recommendations of Viktor for the Czech Republic are about reduction of unemployment in rural areas, reinforcement of economic background in rural areas and reinforcement of technical infrastructure and facilities. In his opinion the most important thing for this moment is to find a solution for the high rate of unemployment in rural areas and for the way the countryside is left by young people. How can people be motivated to stay in the rural areas?

Viktor and Ainars both composed a number of recommendations which they would like to discuss with you.

13.2 Report

Tuesday 15th of June

Leader: Mr Viktor Topiarz and Mr Ainars Skrastins

Report by Paul Verhagen

Introduction

Looking at the reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas in the new EU-member countries, some recommendations are discussed to solve the problems in rural areas in the Czech Republic and in Latvia.

The main characteristics of the Czech Republic and Latvia are:

	Czech Republic		Latvia	
Area (km ²)	79.000		65.000	
Number of inhabitants (million)	10,3		2,3	
- cities	78 %		68 %	
- rural areas	22 %		32 %	
People	Czech	94 %	Latvian	58 %
	Slovaks	3 %	Russian	29 %
	Romanies	1 %	Belarus	4 %
	Other	2 %	Other	9 %
Religion	Catholics	40 %	Lutheranism	23 %
	Agnostic	40 %	Catholics	23 %
			Russian ort.	11 %

Structure of rural areas and its problems

In *the Czech Republic* the population density in the countryside is lower than 100 inhabitants/km². About 75 % of the total area is rural area and 22 % of all inhabitants live in rural areas. The current problems are the high unemployment, especially among women and the regional disparities in the availability and quality of services and public transport. In future there will be problems with the depopulation of rural areas, with transport infrastructure, with educational structure of the rural population and with a lack of care facilities.

About 3,7 % of the total employment is in agriculture and agricultural employment decreased with 70 % between 1989 and 2001. The rate of unemployment in rural areas is about 10 %, because of the depopulation of rural areas, the aging of rural population and the unfavourable educational structure.

In *Latvia* agriculture, forestry and fishery is about 4,7 % of Gross Domestic Product. The current problem is an undeveloped care service for children, invalids and elderly people.

The rate of unemployment in rural areas is about 9 %, because of the small and self-subsistence farms, lack of transport infrastructure and the unfavourable educational structure.

Care facilities

The future problem with child care facilities in *the Czech Republic* is the closure of kindergartens because of the low population density and the low number of children. Home health care for elderly and handicapped people is provided by government, while care facilities provided by private sector are inadequate in rural areas.

The children care facilities in *Latvia* are children houses, foster families, tutor families and boarding schools. There is a payment by local municipalities.

The care for invalid and handicapped people is done by individual people and by social care centres (multi-functional facilities), but the problems are no job opportunities and lack of money.

Conclusions

To renew the countryside and to solve the problems in rural areas the next recommendations are suggested:

- reduction of unemployment in rural areas (support for small entrepreneurship, for human resource education and opinion leaders, for business incubators and for development of tourism);
- reinforcement of economical background in rural areas (support for regional projects, for consultancy/educational activities and for ecological tourism);

- reinforcement of technical infrastructure and facilities (development of transport services, of social services, of cultural and sport facilities and cleaning disposal);
- the EU-subsidies must be applied in specific sectors and for specific groups of people.

An example of support of young people in *the Czech Republic* is the establishment of a new rural-industrial zone in a former farm cooperation: an entrepreneurial incubator started with the production of energy plants with 200 people.

14 Workshop 6, Tuesday: What is learnt early, is learnt well, Mrs Wietske van Dijk, Dronten Professional Agricultural University, the Netherlands

The reconciliation of work and family life on the educational agenda. Becoming aware of the responsibilities within work and care is not only a women's subject. How can you influence the attitude and social behaviour of young people at this item? How can education contribute to a change of attitude? How do schools pay attention to this item?

14.1 Introduction

Tuesday 15th of June
Leader: Mrs Wietske Van Dijk

In this workshop the accent will be on the theme "work and family life" in higher education.

The objectives of the workshop are:

1. Learn from EU partners: what are the most important issues to be educated from the theme "work and family life" in higher education.
2. Integration of the theme "work and family life" in higher education (courses in Rural Development and other relevant studies)
3. Develop plans for evolve education in European rural development, in co-operation with EU-partners (co-operation on EU-scale by using ICT).
4. Formulate statements that underline the importance of this education and the co-operation on EU level.

Short description:

To make clear to policymakers what we find important in education we would like to invite you to take part in an exercise to evolve ideas for new modules in an example-course. We will present your modules as essentials of our workshop.

The example we work with is the International Rural Innovation and Development course of the Professional Agricultural University in Dronten (The Netherlands). This course is approximately one year and consists of several modules. At the time 39 students of 7 different EU countries participate in this course.

We invite you to be involved with education in rural development, not only other educational institutes but also other organisations are very welcome to take part in the education of our young European rural professionals-to be.

15 Forum discussion

Chairman Kees de Ruiter shortly presents the recommendations from the New Neighbour project. These recommendations have been formulated on the basis of collected material and discussions between the partners.

He also presents two new recommendations he has formulated during the conference, number 11 and 12.

11: Better than to solve problems is to create a world in which those problems don't exist any more.

12: Simplification of regulation is needed but only possible if we are willing to replace present ones for new ones.

The members of the forum are Ester Hortet, Veerle van den Broek and Sigrid Wölfing. Cees Veerman, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, agreed to be one of the participants as well. Unfortunately, due to severe traffic jam, he was not able to arrive in Wageningen in time.

The forum members start by introducing themselves.

Ester Hortet is working for the European Commission at the Agriculture Directorate-General (DG Agri). She works at the unit Coordination of Rural Development. Topics she works on are Leader+, impact of the enlargement, coordination of the structural funds and gender. Ester saw several best practices described in the New Neighbours project that were financed by Leader.

Veerle van den Broek works for the Vrouwen Alliantie (Women's Alliance) – 45 women's organisations are joined in this alliance. One of the projects Veerle has been working on was called 'Women's Business'. This was, amongst other things, about female entrepreneurship in rural areas. Female entrepreneurship is a good idea, she states, especially in rural areas. It gives women more flexibility in their time management.

In this Women's Business-project research was done about the participation of women in the reconstruction process in the rural areas of some parts of the Netherlands. In this process, parts of the Dutch rural areas are being restructured, to reach goals on farming issues, nature conservation, etc. Her reaction on the recommendations will be from this point of view.

Sigrid Wölfing works for an organisation, called tamen. This is the German partner in the New Neighbours project. tamen is a private company working in rural development, with the aim of creating more employment opportunities in Brandenburg, Germany.

The members of the forum will respond on the recommendations as formulated in the New Neighbour project.

Ester Hortet responds on recommendation 1, Breaking walls between different Directorate-General's (DG's), within the European Commission. This is already happening, she says. She gives examples of close cooperation between DG Agri and DG Employment and Social affairs, for example concerning gender mainstreaming in the structural funds. A high level group has started, where best practices are being discussed on the issue of gender mainstreaming. Together, the two DG's and the 25 member states work transversally in gender issues.

Bottom up approaches (recommendation 2) work. The idea is to mainstream the Leader+ approach in the next Rural Development Programme. Some member states already decided to stimulate local action groups themselves, instead of depending on EU funding like Leader. Ireland, Spain and Finland, for example, will start with this, because of good results with their Leader+ projects.

Recommendation 3: flexibility in the rural development programme. Hortet says that subsidiarity is a basic principle within the EU. What can be dealt with at the lowest level, has to be dealt with at this level. For rural development this means that member states themselves choose from a menu of measures. And therefore, member states decide whether they want to spend money on wider rural development issues or not. So the EU gives opportunities through the menu programme, but countries choose themselves. At the moment there is a menu of measures which is divided into three categories:

- restructuring of agriculture
- nature and landscape
- measures for wider rural development.

Projects like the ones financed by Leader, are part of the wider rural development measures.

Only 10% of the total budget goes to wider rural development. The rest is meant for the other two categories.

Sigrid Wölfing.

First, she wants to specify the aspect 'flexibility', mentioned in recommendation number 4. Entrepreneurs are not always very flexible in combining work with family life. For example with tourist activities, one has to provide the service even if children have to be picked up at school at that moment. Flexibility is not good in itself. It has been created in large factories like Volkswagen, to increase production. This is done from the perspective of the producer. But is it always a good idea from the perspective of the employee, Sigrid Wölfing wonders?

Secondly, Wölfing wants to stress the importance of so-called corporate alliances. Alliances between enterprises enable them to share employees. It is a way to bundle opportunities, to keep services in the villages, etc. An important issue thereby is the intermediate agent who organises this alliance. Enterprises don't have time to arrange new alliances between them. You need an intermediate agent to do so. This seems a rather untouchable function, but building networks, getting people organised etc. costs a lot of time and efforts. Often this is not financed. But you definitely need somebody who is paid and skilled to do the job!

Veerle van de Broek

First of all: the recommendations as formulated cover the issue pretty much.

Compliments for that!

Van den Broek states that everybody says: bottom up is great. But when people come up with little projects, the answer is often: they are too small, or projects do not fit in the existing programmes. For inhabitants the amount of paper work in order to apply for funding is too big, or it takes ages before people get to hear whether or not a proposal for subsidy is accepted. Often this is a frustrating experience. She supports recommendation number 5 (support for small projects) in the sense that she states that individual actors in rural areas need space! It should be possible to get funding for smaller projects as well. She would also argue in favour of process money and assistance at local level. This needs a mind shift for intermediary and civil servants. "Let go of control". Dare to take risks, dare to share power!

Breaking down the walls. This is a good recommendation as well, but looking at the Dutch story: we hardly can do it on national level between sectors or governmental levels. Lets start on the national level, instead of Brussels. In the Netherlands the need for an integrated approach has been pointed out since 1995. Van den Broek states that in the reconstruction process (mentioned earlier), you can see we have not come far with this integrated approach. The aspect of liveability, access to services etc, is not

on the agenda. The main focus in this process is about agriculture and nature. But an integrated approach is very much needed!

Time for questions and remarks:

The audience can put forward some questions and the forum members will answer them.

- A comment: The Carrefour network is mentioned as a network, which is financed by the DG Press and information. It is a network of people who stimulate rural development. However the future of this network is insecure.
- Future of local action groups in the next rural development policy in the CAP; what will happen?
- Why is flexibility bad? (flexibility of working hours)
- Senior web ambassadors
- What is best for children, where do we come then?
- A comment: when you are a multiflexible worker and a mother: it has everything to do with motivation. Whose needs are we talking about?
- Services, do we want the EU to stimulate a service standard?
- Integration of the rural/territorial and the sector programmes, does this include the danger of losing the rural/territorial programme?

Ester Hortet:

- The Leader approach will be continued in the future. The current local action groups will probably continue to exist.
- About the service standard. Ester mentions that, as we have seen during the conference, some of the problems are the same in Europe's countryside. But she doubts if it's a good idea to develop a rural service standard. This can be done at regional level or national level, but not at the level of the EU. It is difficult to harmonize the differences, and she thinks it is not worth doing so.
- Danger of losing rural/territorial programme. At the moment some mechanisms are developed in Brussels to prevent the loss of the rural/territorial program. But, nevertheless, the member states make choices whether they choose for the sectors or wider rural development. And the national lobby is influencing their choices.

Sigrid Wölfing answers some questions, starting with the question about flexible work.

- Children are inflexible, they need structure and routine. Flexible working hours need to be combined with care for children who need a routine; this is not always easy. Furthermore, our society is organised in a 9 to 5 rhythm. If you have different working hours, you have a problem. We should go much further than flexible working hours. Opening hours of shops, public buildings, etc. should be taken into account. In France some experiments with time bureaux take place. These bureaux investigate the time schedule of our society.
- About the intermediates. This is very practical: people who facilitate the start up of the corporate alliance (see State of the art paper Germany, or booklet with 18 best practices). Somebody with a talent to organise the cooperation between others.

Veerle van den Broek asks the chairman whether the Dutch policy for the countryside is an integral policy.

Kees the Ruiter tells that for the Dutch countryside the people, profit and planet dimension has been taken into account. Profit is about agriculture and new economical activities, people is about the social vitality of rural areas. Planet is about spatial planning and nature conservation. This new policy for the rural areas has been presented a little while ago and it is a 'product' of 5 ministries in the Netherlands.

A last general, but wise statement came from the audience:

At the moment one acquires subsidies, one should already start to think about the next step when the project is over. Often this is not the case. And after the subsidy is finished, the thinking starts: what is the next thing we are going to do?? This is too late! 'You can not build a school and don't think about the teachers!'. 'You need a vision about the project and its results'.

16 Speech by Prof Dr Cees Veerman, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands

Speech by Cees Veerman, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, at the New Neighbours congress, Tuesday 15 June in Wageningen.

New Neighbours: it is a pleasing name for a congress. New neighbours mean new faces in your surroundings, new contacts, another way of doing things, new stories and backgrounds. Neighbours are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for script writers of television 'soap' series. But don't worry, I won't try my hand at drama. The subject of today's conference is not 'the new people next door'. The word neighbours is meant figuratively here. The subject is the new relationship between the agriculture and the social sectors. The two sectors have been brought together, making them in a manner speaking each other's new neighbours. Together, these sectors will shape the countryside. This will have consequences for countryside policy. In the Netherlands, we have a new policy agenda for the countryside which stresses the importance of having an untroubled relationship between these new neighbours. At the European level, the ties between DG-AGRI and DG-Employment and Social Affairs have been strengthened. And of course, we have just welcomed ten new Member States into the EU – these are our new neighbours, too. In these countries, too, a sound rural area policy is important: policy that adequately addresses the economic, ecological and social dimensions of the countryside.

In Europe, developments in society are driving the evolution of agriculture policy into a broader rural area policy. People in many rural areas of Europe are moving away from the countryside in search of a better future. The number of farms, too, continues to decline. Meanwhile, however, agricultural production has increasingly become the object of public scrutiny. The public is asking farmers and government alike to justify their decisions. Not only that. Society is also presenting its own conditions for food production which must be taken account of by the whole chain. In other words, the economic dimension of agriculture (profit) is increasingly addressed in relation with the social (people) and ecological (planet) aspects. Profit, planet, people: the triptych so commonly used to define sustainability. An excellent and popular theory. But how can one design policy that does justice to all three aspects in practice? That is the question I would like to discuss with as many parties as possible during the Netherlands' Presidency of the EU. During the Informal Agriculture Council in September, for example. The main theme will be sustainable agriculture in relation to the division of responsibility between public and private parties.

Today, we are focusing on the social dimension of a sustainable countryside: people. It is people who work together to create a living countryside. But how do they do that, and what support do they need from government? Is it enough for farmers to convert their empty barns into attractive bed-and-breakfast accommodation? Or should government provide extra support, perhaps by tackling regional mobility problems? So that people can actually get to their B&B

This is just one example of many that we came across in the New Neighbours project. Partners in the project joined forces to find the factors that determine success and failure in reconciling work and home life in rural settings, in the broadest context of these terms.

The first, general conclusion that we can make is that people in all six countries involved experience difficulties in finding a balance between work and home responsibilities. It is a problem in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Finland, Ireland and Portugal. If there is hardly any work in a particular region, then you have a big problem anyway. Balancing work and home tasks doesn't even enter into the picture then. Regions such as Kerry, in Ireland, and Brandenburg, in Germany, for example are plagued by high unemployment rates. The first priority there must be to create new jobs. In other areas, the problem is lack of care facilities, such as child care and homes for the elderly. Working people then bear a double load of responsibility and work; a gargantuan task that nobody can keep that up in the long run. There are regions, such as in Finland, which do provide facilities but they are too far away for the people who need them. In yet other areas, the geographical distance to care facilities isn't too bad but getting to them is all but impossible. Three countries - Ireland, France and Portugal - reported access and mobility problems in rural areas.

The first conclusion is, that it is not easy for people living in rural areas to balance work and home responsibilities. The second important conclusion is, that in practice it is mostly women who are forced to juggle work and home responsibilities. From that perspective, it is encouraging to see how farmers in France are eligible for paid parental leave, enabling them to hire temporary help to run the farm so that they, too, can do their share of the parenting. Another fine example is the combined child care project for able-bodied and disabled children in Portugal. This particular project is a double winner. First, it provides professional child care for children during the school holidays when their parents have to work. And second, it provides a tangible contribution to the integration of disabled children in the community. The Netherlands has a similar dual-purpose project in which the village supermarket, which would otherwise have closed down for economic reasons, is transformed into a sheltered workplace.

All these examples underline the truth of Commissioner Fischler's words at a major rural development conference in Salzburg last autumn: 'Rural development is about real futures for real rural people.' These examples also demonstrate that it is very important that the European Union, or national governments, support efforts to balance work-home responsibilities. It is clear that we must make policy that allows people to take the future into their own hands. But how do we do that? It is important that we bend our ears to what people have to say. And we must provide a basis of support, so that people can take responsibility for their own lives. It is not up to government to provide for every contingency, as over-regulation can impede promising initiatives. The government's approach must be one of indirect inducement. The next challenge, then, is to balance the economic competitiveness of rural entrepreneurs -- not just farmers -- with ecological sustainability and social vitality. Again: profit, people, planet. All three are essential, although the economic and social dimensions are particularly crucial for a living countryside. These two dimensions are addressed in all of the inspiring projects launched under New Neighbours. In plain English, the economic dimension means enabling people to earn a decent living. Given the chance, people can find creative solutions to high local unemployment. In Germany, for example, there is a project in which farms and small business organisations share their employees, so that these people have full-time work all year round. In Finland, village action committees act as intermediates, bringing together those looking for work and those offering it. The social dimension is mostly about: how will I get where I want to go? How can I avoid social isolation? A good answer, for example, is the call-up bus service for pensioners in the French countryside.

In short, there are plenty of inspiring practical examples. Many of these are grassroots initiatives: small-scale and powered by volunteers. Many were partly dependent on government funding, though primarily to help get the projects underway. Extended government support is not desirable: it is not up to government to take care of people's every need, but to enable people to help themselves. The one aspect that

does need constant attention is the communication between the grassroots initiators and policymakers.

In closing, I would like to thank all the parties to this conference, in particular the Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs. The course set out in the New Neighbours project brings 'profit' and 'people' back to the countryside. And we all know that a good neighbour is worth more than a distant friend.

17 List of participants

Name	Initials	Surname	Organisation
Alcoforado		Joaquim Luís	NRC APPC
Barata		Carlos	NRC APPC
Barros		José	NRC APPC
Bock		Bettina	Wageningen Universiteit en Researchcentrum
Böcker		Christina	Ministerium für, Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit van Frauen
Bolman	B.C.	Bas	WUR, AMC Group
Bosma	N.J.	Nico	Ministerie van LNV, directie Platteland
Brandenburg	W.H.	Willem	PG 018
Broek, van den	V.M.E.	Veerle	Vrouwen Alliantie
Brosnan		Carmel	South Kerry Development Partnership
Brouwer	D.R.	Dicky	Expertisecentrum LNV
Cariou		Yves	Oxymore
Caro		Anne-Cecil	Ecole Superiere d'Agriculture
Collins		Joan	South Kerry Development Partnership
Coobs		Davina	Expertisecentrum LNV
Corkery		Dónall	South Kerry Development Partnership
Coumans	P.Th.	Nell	ELFAC en Vereniging Groot Gezin
Crosta	Mr.	Nicola	Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development
Devonic		Fay	European Commission
Diehl	J.H.	Jürgen	Dorpspunt
Dijk, van	W.	Wietske	Agrotransfer
Dillen, van	J.B.H.	Ans	Expertisecentrum LNV
Dolores	D.M.	Merino	Amfar
Dullaard		Erik Jan	National Reference Centre for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Essen, van	P.	Paul	WUR, AMC Group
Etten, van		Gerda	Provincie Overijssel
Framond, De		Olivier	Ecole Superiere d'Agriculture
Geerts		Joos	E-Wayout
Gils, van	L.A.F.M.	Lambert	Stoas
Gootjes		Grieta	LLTB
Graca Goncalves, da		Maria	NRC APPC
Groen		Alexander	XS 2
Groot, de		Johanna	LTO Commissie Vrouw & Bedrijf
Heeran		Janet	South Kerry Development Partnership

Name	Initials	Surname	Organisation
Heinilä		Hannu	Häme Polytechnic Mustiala
Holwerda		Douwe	Expertisecentrum LNV
Hoog, de	Mr.	Kees	WUR
Hortet		Ester	European Commission
Huijbregts		Mique	Ministerie LNV
Hurný		Ján	Ministry of Construction and Regional Development
Jacobs	C.I.M.	Carolien	WUR, AMC Group
Jager		Annet	STOAS Onderwijs
Jager, de		Lianne	CAH Dronten
Janssen		Theo	Expertisecentrum LNV
Jongsma	M.	Maria	VYVOJ
Joose	C.F.	Kees	KNHM
Kapaan		Ad	Expertisecentrum LNV
Kieft		Henk	ETC
Kok		Thamar	Expertisecentrum LNV
Kok-Hendriks	E.Th.M.	Ellen	DLV Adviesgroep
Koning	C.	Kees	Favor
Koning		Willemien	LTO
Kuippenberg	L.W.J.	Luuk	Telos
Liefting	A.E.	Andrea	WUR, AMC-group
Liinaharja		Kristiina	Häme Polytechnic Mustiala
Lindroos		Jouko	Häme Polytechnic Mustiala
Lof	M.	Maartje	Christelijke Hogeschool Dronten
Lopes Nobrega	L.N.	Lígia	Comissao para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres
Lössbroek		Tarsy	Expertisecentrum LNV
Lyudmyla	K.L.G.	Klyebanova	Pan-Ukraiïän VGO, The National Female
Maathuis		Erwin	Expertisecentrum LNV
Martens	M.	Myrian	Elivio
Meijer		Jaap	
Meijers	R.	Rob	Expertisecentrum LNV
Mol	D.G.W.	David	Dagindeling, Ministerie SZW
Nederstigt	J.M.J.	Jan	WUR, AMC Group
O' Brien		John Joe	South Kerry Development Partnership
Olphen, van	M.G.	Mimi	Projectbureau Kulturhus
Oomen	E.H.	Ellen	Spectrum
Oude Luttikhuis-Merz		Rosemarie	Zijactief Overijssel
Paiva		Teresa	NRC APPC
Papma		Alberte	Ministerie LNV, Directie Platteland
Pater, de		Cathrien	Expertisecentrum LNV
Peeters		Jacqueline	LLTB
Pesman	J.	Jan	CAH Dronten
Plan	Mw.	Odille	GREP
Poppel, van	J.M.H.	Jeanne	Planne Advies & Ontwikkeling
Roemeling	J.	Jannie	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

Name	Initials	Surname	Organisation
Roetman	E.C.	Eric	WUR
Rooij, de	S.J.G.	Sabine	ETC-Leusden
Ruijgrok		Tops	Ministry of Social Affairs
Ruijter, de		Kees	Min LNV, Directie Platteland
Ruijters	M.	Martine	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Schilt		Hermann	Agrotransfer
Sijs, van der		Bas	Expertisecentrum LNV
Skrastins	A.S.	Ainars	
Spaargaren	N.M.	Natasja	Agrotransfer
Spring		Emmet	South Kerry Development Partnership
Staal	A.M.	André	Kleur in het Werk
Steen, van der	M.W.F.	Margit	AETAS Bureau voor leeftijdsvraagstukken, gendes en diversiteit
Steenbekkers	J.H.M.	Anja	SCP
Stevens	mw. P.	Pieke	Stamm
Szolgayova		Elena	Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of Slovak Republic
Temmink	J.M.	Jan	Projectbureau Kulturhus
Topiarz	V.T.	Viktor	
Treep		Loek	Expertisecentrum LNV
Veelen		Arjan	Cah Dronten
Veen	E.J.	Esther	WUR, AMC Group
Veerman		Cees	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Verhagen		Paul	Expertisecentrum LNV
Verhoek		Alie	Expertisecentrum LNV
Vleuten	G.	Glenn	Dorpspunt
Voort, van de		Helma	Expertisecentrum LNV
Vylder, de	R.E.A.	Romain	Landbouwdienst Vlaamse Vertegenwoordiging Ambassade van België
Wee, van der		Daniëlle	Expertisecentrum LNV
Weide, v.d.	L.M.C.	Marloes	ELFAC en Vereniging Groot Gezin
Welboren		Petra	Expertisecentrum LNV
Werrij	P.A.	Foks	Euragri
Wiel, van de		Erna	Expertisecentrum LNV
Wijngaard		Maaike	Expertisecentrum LNV
Wilde, de		Herma	Expertisecentrum LNV
Wölfing		Sigrid	Tamen GmbH
Wong		Richard	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Wünsche		Gudrun	Tamen GmbH
Zundert, van		Corrie	Expertisecentrum LNV
Zwieten, van		Dineke	Expertisecentrum LNV