SOCIAL WORK IN FARMING

Teaching material about client groups and their involvement in Social Farming

So Far TEAM

Social Farming
in Higher Education
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Social Work in Farming –Teaching material about client groups and their involvement in social farming (SoFarTEAM)

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Project coordination:
Claudia Schneider and Lenka Kovacova
(Thüringer Ökoherz e.V.)
www.oekoherz.de

Editors:
Michael Harth and Lisa Essich

Authors:
Tomáš Chovanec, Marjolein Elings, Lisa Essich, Michael Harth, Eliška Hudcová, Lenka Kovacova, Aisling Moroney, Jan Moudrý, Michal Pařízek, Claudia Schneider, Brian Smyth, David Urban, Claudia Vogel

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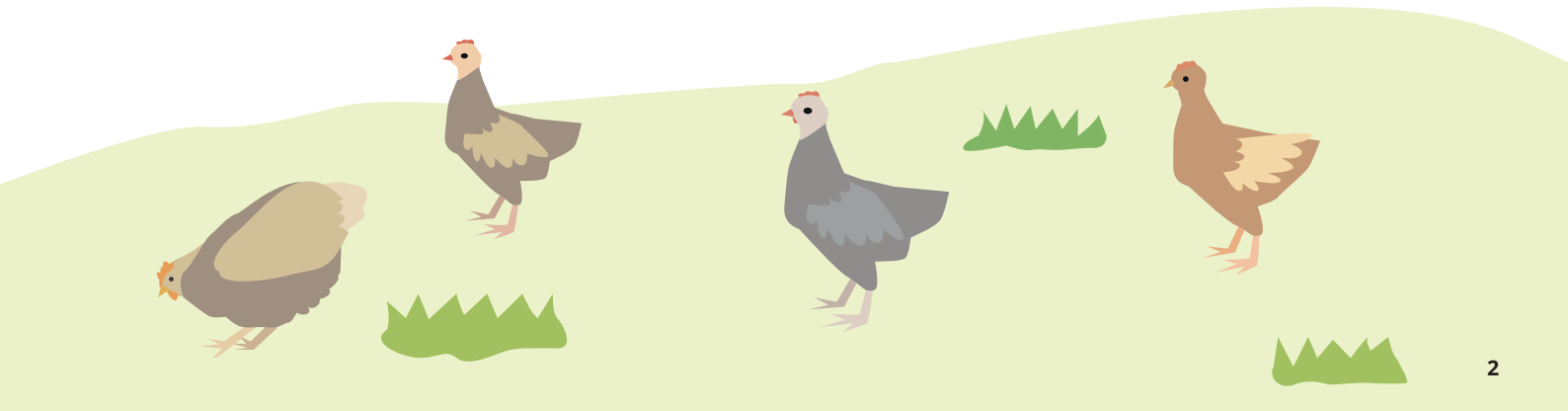


The following partner institutions are involved in the project "Social Work in Farming – Teaching material about client groups and their involvement in social farming" (SoFarTEAM) and actively collaborated in the creation of this publication:

Jabok – Institute of Social Pedagogy and Theology
Czech Republic
www.jabok.cz

Leitrim Development Company
Ireland
www.ldco.ie

Hochschule Neubrandenburg,
Germany
www.hs-nb.de

University of South Bohemia,
Czech Republic
www.jcu.cz

Thüringer Ökoherz e.V.,
Germany
www.oekoherz.de

Wageningen University & Research
Agrosystems Research
The Netherlands
www.wur.nl

PREFACE & READERS GUIDE

Social farming is an innovative form of agriculture that combines farming with social work at the local level. Although social farming combines a wide range of activities, it has two elements in common: the activities take place in an agricultural or garden setting and it is aimed at people who experience particular challenges in life, either temporarily or permanently. The topic of social farming itself is very broad and includes a mix of many different fields. Agriculture and social work are also very complex activities that encompass a variety of sub-disciplines. The combination of these two areas, which form a unique entity of social agriculture, greatly expands the range of issues that can potentially be addressed.

One of the most important frameworks through which we can examine social farming and through we can understand and improve practice is to look at the **different client or target groups** which typically participate in social farming. While the core offering may be the same and people will experience many benefits and outcomes in common, there are clearly differences between the support needs, activities, approach required, challenges, etc. in working with different groups. For the purposes of this Project and textbook, seven key targets groups are identified: people with mental health challenges; people with physical disabilities; people with intellectual disabilities; older people; youth; refugees; and people in recovery from addiction.

While a growing number of Higher Education institutions throughout Europe have discovered social farming as a concept and are delivering general materials on social farming, no teaching material on working with specific target groups has been available until now. **The ERASMUS+ Project Social Work in Farming - Teaching material about client groups and their involvement in social farming (SoFarTEAM)** fills this gap and will improve the higher education offering in this field.

Through interviews and participant observation, the Project has gathered extensive learning and insight from experienced social farmers and support workers in health, social care etc. on working with specific target groups. It combines this with the latest academic research and learning and the expertise of the Project partners to arrive at this **textbook** which addresses a range of important questions. What are the specific characteristics and needs of individual targets groups? How can the participants benefit from their time on the farm? How can farmers make the best use of their particular agricultural environment to promote the development of their participants? What activities and approach work best with each target group? What the challenges which may be experienced in working with specific groups and how can conflicts be addressed? What can farmers expect from the collaboration? In addition to the chapters on specific target groups there are a number of more general or **cross-cutting chapters** which cover topics such as an Introduction to Social Farming, Social Farming Theories, Requirements for Social Farming and Social Farming in Practice.

To link theory and practice, the results of the interviews and participant observation are central and are also found in **direct quotations, case studies and observations** which appear throughout the text. To reinforce the learning, suggested assignments are included at the end of the chapters for students to complete after working through the chapters. In addition to this textbook, **Power Point slides** have been created for the individual chapters to support the teaching of the content. Taken together, valuable and accessible teaching material is now available to teachers and students of relevant courses in a range

of disciplines. The collected teaching materials, the Research Report, and a handbook for social farmers can be found at sofaredu.eu.

READERS GUIDE TO THE TEXTBOOK

This textbook is intended to be used flexibly and by a range of students/readers from a range of backgrounds – health, social care and education but also agriculture, landscape and resource management, environmental studies, etc. Readers may wish to study the entire textbook or only chapters of particular relevance to them. So for example, if you were a student interested in working with young people, you will obviously be most interested in the specific chapter on youth (Section 10) but would also benefit hugely from reading some or all of the more general chapters, especially Chapters 1, 4 and 12 for example. Below is a brief guide to each chapter which should enable you to navigate the textbook in a way that is most beneficial for you and your requirements.

Chapter 1 provides a broad introduction to social farming. It gives readers with limited familiarity a basic understanding of the concept, of the scale of the sector and of its place in wider developments and in both green care and health and social care generally.

Chapter 2 provides an *introduction* to the effects and benefits of working on social farms for different target groups. While these are also discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5-11, it is useful for readers to gain an early insight into what these differences might be and an understanding of why a differentiated approach is valuable.

Chapter 3 introduces the most influential theories and ideas underpinning the concept and practice of social farming.

Chapter 4 brings the reader from theory to practice and sets out the requirements of working with people generally in social farming and where relevant, with specific target groups. Elements explored include operating structure, motivations, educational background and competencies and creating the right farm environment. This chapter is relevant to all target groups and readers.

Chapters 5 to 11 take the seven key target groups in turn and explore in detail elements such as general characteristics, particular benefits of social farming for this target group, other services available to this group, optimal approach(es) and activities, possible behavioural references and challenges and other material which may be particularly relevant for a specific target group. There is some repetition across the seven chapters in relation to some elements (benefits, for example). This is necessary because while some readers may be interested in all target groups, others will only read one or two which are relevant to them and it is important that each chapter be as comprehensive as possible.

Chapter 12 is an overarching chapter on social farming in practice, relevant to all target groups and readers. It looks at general farming activities, communication and conflict management and inclusion of participants in marketing of agricultural products.

Chapter 13 explores the topic of social entrepreneurship in social farming and is most relevant to students/readers coming from an agriculture background, and to existing and potential social farmers.

LIST OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Marjolein Elings

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Have a broad understanding of the social farming sector and its connection with health and social care.
- Describe different ways (discourses/frameworks) in which social farms are embedded and developed in different European countries.
- Understand the place of social farming in the context of nature-based approaches in human health and social care (Green care).

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

1.1 SOCIAL FARMING: AN INTRODUCTION

'Social farms are social enterprises that combine health care and social services with farming. These farms open their yards to people in need of a meaningful day activity or sheltered workplace in a green environment.'

We see that the number of social farms in Europe is growing. For instance, in the Netherlands there are more than 1300 social farms, Flanders has around 1000 social farms, while in Italy the number of social farms is estimated at around 3,000 (Briers et al., 2021). Also in other European countries such as Ireland, Germany and England we see a growth in the number of social farms (Elings et al., 2022). The table below shows data collected from the EU project Green4C. Of course, this is a limited picture because only countries from this project are included.

In Europe we see that different terms are used to define working with vulnerable people in agriculture (Elings et al., 2022). In the SoFarTEAM-project we use the term social farming (or social agriculture) to refer to all activities that make use of the agricultural context to provide care and social services (Di Iacovo and O'Connor, 2009). Social farming includes institutions (e.g., hospitals, care institutions or schools) that offer green or agricultural activities to people with special needs but also family farms that have expanded their business to include care activities (PROFARM, 2017). Social farming activities are those where the care and support of vulnerable people is combined with agricultural production (Mammadova et al., 2021). In addition, social farming is also a form of multifunctional agriculture in which farmers combine their agricultural production with other services such as care, recreation and farm sales, thereby creating added value through

additional jobs, promoting community networks and making the countryside more attractive (Bassi et al., 2016; Borgi et al., 2019). In this textbook we will use the term social farming and social farm to refer to all activities where farming and working with people come together.

Table 1: Numbers of social farms in the Netherlands, Flanders, Italy, Austria und Ireland.

Country/ Region	Number of social farms represented by main national/regional association(s) (around 2020)	Estimated number of social farms at national/regional level (around 2020)
Netherlands	850	1300
Flanders (Belgium)	979	1000
Italy	228 (social farms officially recognized by the Italian regional governments)	3000
Austria	536	699
Ireland	175	195

Source: Briers et al., 2012

Definition Social Farming

Therefore, we cannot speak about the social farm. We see big differences between the development of the social farming sector in different countries and also what these social farms look like in practice (Elings, 2022). To give an idea: a social farm in the Netherlands can be a small-scale family farm that has started offering small-scale day care to 2-3 people per than but there are also social farms in the Netherlands that have their own health care recognition and could be described as small care institutions on farms. An in-depth overview of the development of social farming can be found at Briers et al. (2021) and Elings et al. (2022).

Work on the social farm

Source: Marjolein Elings

Target groups served by social farms

Social farms direct their services towards a variety of target groups. For instance people with learning difficulties, people with mental-ill health or older people with dementia. But also youngsters that dropped out of school, people suffering from a burn-out or people with addiction problems come and work at the farm.

Activities and care provided by social farms

Looking at the activities and care provided by farms, we also see a varied picture. Most often participants come to the farm for a meaningful day-activity or a sheltered work place (sheltered in the sense of supervised). In some cases, participants can also go to a social farm for therapy, labour-reintegration, to live on the farm for a while or the farm gives relatives respite care. The people who participate, often have diverse reasons why, temporarily, they cannot participate in the regular workforce; or why they require respite care. An example of respite care provision, are farms that give care to children with autism problems at the weekends. This gives the parents the opportunity to pay more attention to their other children or to do something else.

Mix of target groups

Usually, a mix of target groups come to a social farm. Research shows that some target groups go well together and can actually learn from each other. For instance, the co-operation between older people with dementia and children or people with mental-ill health and people with Down's syndrome appears to be a good combination. A participants explains:

"Vincent is someone from Heimerstein (institution for people with Down syndrome). When I see one of them the heaviness, tiredness or anger subsides and I feel happier, lighter and more playful. They have, without knowing it, given me a lot! [...] The Heimersteiners are much more in the here and now. I always have to try my best to please everyone.They are the way they are and we love them."

(Baars et al., 2008)

"I actually felt more at ease with the Heimersteiners than with normal people [...] I also have that with children, then you feel less judged. [...] I also like to take care of them and I can also help them with work in some areas. That gives me a sense of self-confidence."

(Baars et al., 2008)

Participants can help each other in the work, interacting with other participants gives them self-reflection.

'A social farm has a natural emphasis on empowerment, participating in society and support of informal networks of participants.'

Employees working on social farms

The social farms differ from one another not only in the target group they serve, but also in their staff. Depending on the target group, the number of participants and the type of social farm, the guidance is in the hands of the farmer (f/m), hired agriculture or social workers, social or care professionals from a health care institution who come along with participants.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL FARMING SECTOR

Social farming builds on the concept of a more inclusive agricultural sector and in some countries is also linked to more sustainable production such as organic farming (Di Iacovo, 2020; Foti et al., 2013; Elings et al., 2022). In addition, we see in countries such as the Netherlands that the concept also ties in with developments in healthcare. In the 1990s, the idea of socialisation of care emerged to include more closely people with disabilities in society. Care provided on social farms is in line with this policy (Elings, 2012). But utilizing nature or agriculture in providing care for people is timeless.

Middle Ages: First therapeutic outside spaces

We know that in the Middle Ages prisons, hospitals and monasteries often had different areas which we would now classify as 'therapeutic outside spaces' (Sempik, 2010). One of the oldest and most famous care farming programmes was founded around 1350 in Gheel, Flanders (Roosen, 2007). In a rural environment, care was offered to people in need. They worked alongside families from the village as part of a daily routine and structure in which agricultural was an important part. The program in Gheel is one of

the first examples of what we would now call a therapeutic living and working community. Still vulnerable people can be part of the program in Gheel.

Previous century: Therapeutic living and working communities

In the mid-20th century, more therapeutic living and working communities were founded. In these communities' nature was considered as an important element in therapy. In Ireland and Great Britain especially, these therapeutic communities caught on quickly through the influence of the *Camphill movement*. Camphill is a special pedagogy movement that was founded in 1939 and has an anthroposophical basic. The Camphill communities offer mentally as well physically challenged people the opportunity to live and work together with co-workers and family. In Great Britain during the '50s and '60s, many gardening projects were founded aimed at people with disabilities. In these projects, mentors and therapists offer gardening as a specific day activity. In the Netherlands, we also saw a development of therapeutic communities where people with learning difficulties or mental-ill health received shelter and support. These communities often started out as a small-scale project with clear ideals (Ketelaars, 2001). They were usually founded in protest against the big health care institutions (Elings, 2012). In the fifties and sixties, attitudes changed about the fact that clients in care facilities such as (psychiatric) hospitals worked in the gardens or farms. It was considered unethical to let them take part in these activities without being paid. This caused most of these projects to be stopped.

Garden and farm projects in hospitals disappeared because these were regarded unethical

In recent years, the interest in the relationship between nature, green environments and health has increased (Sempik et al., 2010). One of the most important researchers who focused on the relationship between green space and health was American professor Robert Ulrich. He discovered that after hospital surgery, patients with a view of greenery recovered faster than those who looked out on a brick wall (Ulrich, 1984).

If we look at the development of the agricultural sector, we see that from the 1950s onwards, European farms generally became increasingly industrialized through specialization. At that time farmers need to decide whether they wanted to intensify their business (Elings, et al., 2022). Some farmers did not want to continue on the path of intensification and opted for multifunctional agriculture of which social farming is a form. This way, they could remain autonomous and earn an income in a different way (Meerburg et al., 2009). However Briers et al. (2021) in their study assert that the history of social agriculture is mainly linked to the national context. For example, in Italy, social cooperation started agricultural activities after psychiatric institutions closed down in 1978 in response to the Basaglia Law (Briers et al. 2021). And in the UK and Ireland the Camphill movement has strongly influenced the development of the social farming sector (Di Iacovo and O'Connor, 2009).

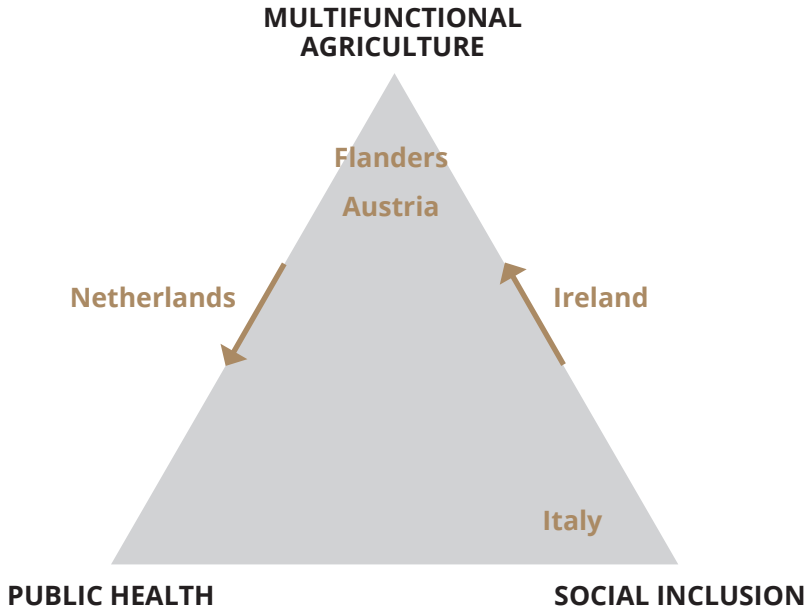
Different frameworks/ discourses in social farming

In Europe, social farming is organised in different ways, based on how it is created and framed in different countries (Briers et al., 2021). Literature shows that there are three main frameworks, also called discourses. Dessein et al. (2013) talk about a multifunctional agriculture framework in which social farming is one of the multifunctional activities of a farm and thus contributes to economic and social sustainability. According to the public health framework, social farms mainly offer activities that fall under the provision of health promotion, rehabilitation and therapy. And finally, based on the social in-

clusion framework, social farming activities contribute to the reintegration of vulnerable people into society by offering activities on the farm (Dessein et al., 2013). The way social farming is 'framed' influences the way social farming is organised in European countries.

Social farming in Germany, Austria and the UK seems to be organised more on the basis of public health framing. In Italy, social farming activities are mainly organised from a social inclusion framework and the multifunctional agricultural framework is dominant in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and Norway (Dessein et al., 2013). The below figure shows these different discourses.

Figure 1: The different discourses in the social farming sector



Source: Briers et al., 2021

We can say that in countries in which the multifunctional agriculture discourse is dominant social farming is one of the multifunctional activities of a farm. Social farming takes place on private or family farms and combines commercial farming and care activities. The farmers or their family members are the supervisors and they are paid for the care and social services they offer. The farmer is most of the time not a health care professional or and doesn't usually have an education in health care (Briers et al., 2021). In countries in which the public health framework is dominant we see that social farming activities refers to activities that fall under health promotion, rehabilitation, and therapy. The focus of these social farms is on the care and social services. It can be institutional farms (e.g. hospital gardens) or a private farmer that provides their green environment. This green environment is seen as therapeutic for people with special needs. The farmer has no role in the supervision of the participants. The supervisors are health care or social work professionals. These professionals are formally employed and receive wages. Farmers might receive payment for providing the farm setting. And last in countries in which the social inclusion framework is dominant we see that social farming contributes to reintegration of vulnerable people in society by offering activities on the farm. The social farms are private farms, co-operatives or institutional farms and the

supervision is in the hands of the farmer or social services. Participants are often paid and sometimes also the farmer gets a payment (Briers et al., 2021).

Financial support for social farmers

We see that because of different systems and discourses, some countries are further ahead in developing the social farming sector. Although all EU countries are embedded in European policy and funding opportunities, we see that social farming financing shows that different welfare models influence the way in which social farming is financed across Europe. If we look at the case of the development of the social farming sector in the Netherlands we see some key milestones. The first one is the start of the National Support Centre. The Centre was supported by both ministries of Agriculture and of Health Care and Well-being. Both ministries were supportive of social farming because care on farms ensured that participants received care in the community in addition, social farms brought agriculture closer to society and created more contact between citizens and agriculture (Elings, 2012). The Centre had the task to support starting and existing care farmers and also created a website which gave an overview of the location of social farms and the target groups they supported. The support centre also played an important role in lobbying and policy. A further milestone came in 2003 when the use of personal budgets by clients increased and they could choose care or day care at a social farm. Clients could make a direct contract with the farmer about their day activity. In 2005 because of the Liberalization of long-term health care in the Netherlands, social farms were accepted as formal care institutions and could have a direct contract with the government to provide care.

Professionalization of the social farming sector

In 2007, the financial support of the ministries for the National Support Centre stopped but in 2010, care farmers in the Netherlands united themselves into the National Federation of Care farmers. We can see that the various milestones have caused the number of care farms in the Netherlands to grow from 75 in 1998 to more than 1,300 today (2023). We also see that the annual revenues of the care farming sector in The Netherlands increased from 11.3 million euros in 2011 to 88.6 million in 2018. This means that the average revenue of a social farm in the Netherlands is around 200.000 euros per year (Briers, et al. 2021). Due to this strong growth in the sector, a need arose for professionalization.

In 2000, a quality assessment system was put in place by the then National Support-centre, and revised on multiple occasions. In the revisions of 2011, a lot of emphasis was put on the opinions of the client and on the question as to what extent the care farm fits into their needs. How satisfied are they with the opportunities and their own roles and tasks on the farm? Member care farmers receive an independent audit from the federation every 3 years. If they meet the requirements, they receive the Federation's 'Kwaliteit laat je zien' (In English: Quality shows) certificate. We see not only the Netherlands but also other countries in Europe taking this professionalisation step. Several countries have an organisation that supports the social farming sector such as Social Farming Ireland, the Support Centre Groene Zorg in Flanders or Green Care in Austria. Several of these organisations also have a quality mark for their member social farmers (Briers et al., 2021; Elings, et al.; 2022).

1.3 THE PLACE OF SOCIAL FARMING IN THE WIDER PICTURE OF GREEN CARE

Social farming in the context of other green care activities

Offering social services and care on farms is one of the forms of green care that exist. Green care is the umbrella term for activities that relate to health promotion, therapy or care in a natural environment. Green care can be providing care on a farm for people suffering from addiction, but it can also include wilderness therapy for young people or lunch walks in the park for office workers. We would like to introduce the broaden term of green care because it gives a bigger picture. The mechanisms behind these different activities, that are responsible for their effects, often overlap. That makes studies in green care also of interest for the social farming sector.

The figure below shows how social farming relates to the other green care activities. It demonstrates that care farming not only offers care or day activity, but also is represented as an intervention that can contribute to health promotion, therapy and labour rehabilitation.

In this figure, the researchers make a distinction in activities where participants are present in nature but don't make very active use of natural elements (experiencing natural environment). One example is a group of office workers who during their lunch break go for a walk in the park. By walking in the park, people recover from stress, but they don't have direct interaction with nature.

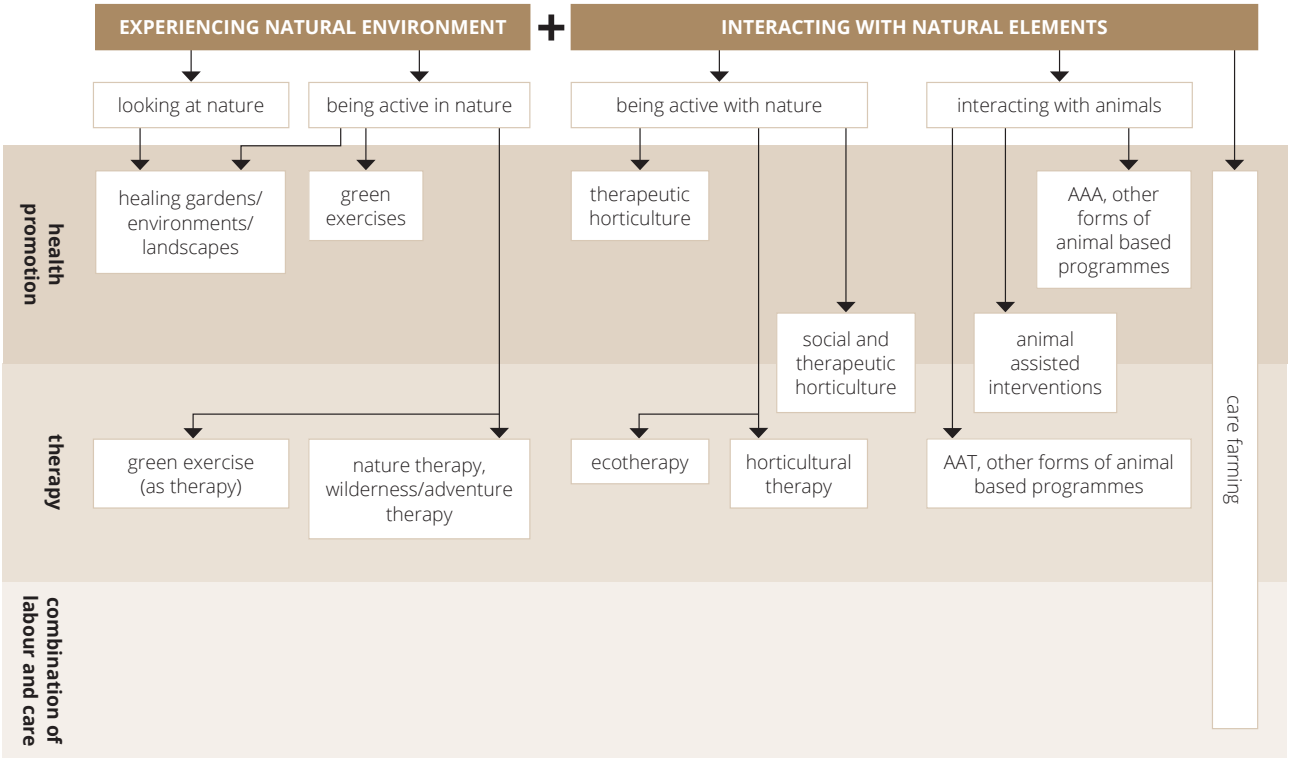
Interacting with natural elements

The opposite is true for some activities where there is interaction with nature (interacting with natural elements), such as cultivating vegetables in a garden. Working in the garden is then a means for people to develop a work routine.

Interaction with animals

Participants can also interact with animals. There is a distinction made by the creators of this model between, on the one hand, having the animal as a means for therapeutic purposes, such as in equine therapy, therapy with horses. This is called animal-assisted therapy. If on the other hand the aim is to just bring a client of a social service or healthcare institution into contact with animals, then we speak of animal-assisted intervention. An example of this is the pets' corner in some nursing homes where the older people can care for or cuddle pets.

Figure 2: Overview of green care activities and the relationship with nature



Source: Adjustment of: Haubenhofer et al., 2010

Experiencing natural environment

The figure clearly presents whether an activity contributes to health improvement (health promotion), treatment (therapy) or work rehabilitation. On social farms there are activities present where participants can be both passively and actively involved with nature. These activities can offer a contribution to health promotion, therapy or work rehabilitation of the participants and therefore contribute to their general quality of life (Sempik et al., 2010).

1.4 DEVELOPMENTS IN HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The services that social farms offer are in line with different developments in health care and social services. The last three decades we see two main developments that fit well with the care and services provided at social farms. That is the movement of community care and empowerment. In the sections below, we very briefly discuss a number of movements in healthcare.

Being part of society

Socialization of care

Socialization means that people are stimulated and enabled to participate in society (De Wilde, 2002). It is essentially about supporting people with needs to live independently among other citizens for as long as possible and providing them with care and support in the neighbourhood.

Policy of decentralisation

This movement took shape in the 1980s. Government policy was to offer decentralised care outside the walls of care institutions. The development of 'socialisation of care' goes a step further and is based on the premise of starting from people's capabilities rather than their limitations. People are addressed on what they are good at, what they can do and what they can grow into. It also takes a different view of having a disability because people can also learn from their limitations. This is why the expertise of people with disabilities is increasingly sought and used (Van Haaster et al., 2010). We know from several studies on social farms that social farmers tend to look at participants' abilities rather than their impossibilities. The farm environment is a rich environment with various activities, which often makes it easy to connect with participants' interests and development wishes (Elings, 2011).

Community care

Community care

Community care has as a goal that people with a disability can lead a life that is as normal as possible. They do not only receive support from co-workers and care facilities, but also from other parties within society (Bouduin, 2002). The principle of community care is care in the community and care by the community. We see that what the social farm offers fits also very well with the movement of community care. Care on the farm is often provided by the farmer or his or her family members in an environment that is informal and not a care context just part of the community and society. Besides the participants, the farm also welcomes other visitors such as people from the village, visitors to the shop or the vet (Elings, 2011).

Rehabilitation approach

Rehabilitation approach

Rehabilitation is about improving the functioning of the participant in different areas of life. That can be achieved by making participants more skilful and adjusting their environment in a way that they are functional with their own ability (Van Weeghel, 1995). Rehabilitation is a movement that aims to create possibilities for people with chronic mental-ill health and other types of disadvantages. The goal is that persons can participate fully in society and that society accept them.

There exist different rehabilitation approaches. They each emphasize that the participants play an important role in their own rehabilitation and that a long-term approach is essential. In the last few years an idea has taken hold that rehabilitation programmes should primarily be aimed at strengthening the natural tendency of participants to grow. The approach is then not so much teaching skills or making the environment suitable, as supporting and stimulating the recovery process of the clients themselves (Boevink, 2006). Aside from areas of life residency and social contact, rehabilitation focuses mainly on work and useful daily activity from the perspective that these activities enhance health promotion (Van Weeghel, 2005).

Empowerment and self-reliance

Recovery approach

People with mental-ill health all have their own experiences and needs. These experiences and needs should be to the forefront in guiding people. This is the starting point of the recovery approach. This approach was introduced and developed by participant and consumer organisations in the USA (Chamberlin, 1997). Participants indicate that hope, empowerment and deployment and use of their own experiences are key terms for their recovery and through recovery self-reliance.

Working with pigs (in this case with the KuneKune pig breed)

Source: Marjolein Elings

In the late 1990's, this concept was introduced in the Netherlands (Boevink et al., 2006; Deegan, 2001). Interest in the approach increased greatly over the years. This was caused, in part, by the activities of the team Herstel-Empowerment-Ervaringsdeskundigheid (Recovery-Empowerment-Experience), the HEE-team. The HEE-team's goal was supporting people with serious and enduring mental health problems to get themselves out of a position that they experienced as inferior. They learned to speak up for themselves as equals with respect to their social workers. The HEE-team also stimulated the mental health sector to use the recovery oriented care approach. This form of care focuses on:

- Focusing on the life story and the experience of the participants alongside their medical history
- Strengthening the control and freedom of choice of the participants (empowerment)

- Developing, formalizing and implementing the participant's own effort and experience

- Involving participants in their own care

Boevink (2005) argues that for the recovery of participants, it is important that social workers get to know participants in their normal lives. Social workers should not insist on a 'treatment' relationship but pursue a relationship focused on collaboration and equality. Participants report that they find it important that social workers are not prejudiced and that they listen to them, accept them and are a committed partner in dialogue. The recognition that recovery is possible is central, just like the recognition of the value of support from the environment and informal networks and the emphasis on the relationship between participant and social worker.

To conclude: How do social farms contribute to the above approaches?

Social farms offer participants many of the essential elements of the approaches described above. On a social farm, there is a natural emphasis on participants' empowerment, integration into society and support from informal networks (Hassink et al., 2011). The starting point on a social farm is to be involved in ordinary work (Hassink, 2009). Participants are given a workplace in an informal non-care setting. It is an environment they perceive as less stigmatising. There is an emphasis on participant's abilities rather than their limitations. The focus on the individual and being part of the farmer's life, their family and the wider community, leads to empowerment and to socially embedded care (Elings, 2011). Farm-based care is often small-scale. This makes it possible to look at the needs of individual participants. The tasks offered to participants are mainly based on their individual capabilities (Hassink, et al., 2011).

1.5 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. How would you describe a social farm to your friends? In what way are social farms different from other farms or social health-care services?

2. Which target groups used the services of social farms? Which target group(s) do you think could also benefit from working on a social farm and why?

3. In what way do social farms fit under the umbrella concept of Green Care?

4. Can you indicate in which way social farms are embedded in the Dutch policy and health-care system and which factors have led to this?

5. How, in your opinion would the social farming sector ideally be organised? And why?

6. If you look at your own country, how could social farming be embedded in specific sectors?

7. How could we embed social farming in a country where social farming does not exist or is still under development?

8. From an European perspective, what could be the innovations in the social farming sector?

9. On social farms in the Netherlands often different target groups work together. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages? Which target groups do you think work well together?

10. Could social farming be combined with or integrated into other sectors (like: agriculture, health-care, education, welfare or tourism) and in what way?

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2 BENEFITS AND EFFECTS OF WORKING ON SOCIAL FARMS FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

Marjolein Elings

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- List the benefits for participants of working on social farms (using the examples of young people with behavioural problems, of people with mental-ill health and addiction history, and older people with dementia).
- List the effects for participants of working on social farms (using the examples of young people with behavioural problems, of people with mental-ill health and addiction history, and older people with dementia).
- Describe the key qualities of social farms.

Social farms are open to different target groups. By target group we mean in the following people with health-related problems or living in a challenging life circumstance. Each target group requires specific care services, activities, and guidance. In recent years, several studies have been conducted on the benefits and effects of working on social farms for participants. In this chapter, basic qualities and impacts of social farming are presented on the basis of selected target groups.

2.1 BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Benefits of social farms for young people with behavioural problems

The last couple of years a growing number of (vulnerable) youth can turn to social farms for help and social services. These youth social farms provide care to children and young people aged 2 to 18. Some have special programmes for young children with ADHD or autism problems. Other farms offer crisis care for young people who need to be placed out of home for a certain period of time (Elings, 2011).

Young people with behavioural problems are often stuck in the family situation (arguments and aggression, running away behaviour), at school or work (they no longer go to school or work) or have the wrong friends and no positive fulfilment of their leisure time (drugs, crime) (Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010).

Clarity and safety

The daily recurring activities on the farm and the tranquillity exuded by a rural setting provide young people with the structure, clarity, and safety they need to develop positively. Structure comes almost naturally on the farm, where in another (care) setting this must be created more. It helps the young person to pick up the threads of their life in a safe environment.

On the farm, the youngsters tell they are experiencing less aggression than within a school or an institution. There, the young people come into more contact with other problem youths, which increases the likelihood of conflict (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010; Hassink et al., 2011).

Stability of supervision

The farmer or his/her family members are always present. When the young people come out of school, they can tell their story. At regular youth care institutions, they often have to deal with changing supervisors. They each have their own norms and values, and their own methods and ideas. This can be particularly difficult for young people who are looking for clarity and structure (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010; Hassink et al., 2011).

Farmer and farmer's family can be a role model

The farmer can be a role model for young people struggling with their identity. Generally speaking, the farmer is proud of their farm and what they have achieved. Farming is their identity. This radiates from them. The farmer is a professional and the young person can learn from them. Experience shows that Moroccan adolescents who find a place to work on the farm more easily attribute authority to the farmer than to a supervisor in youth care (Hassink, et al., 2011). The farmer's family can also serve as a role model. Youth care workers mention the importance of the family for young people (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010). Young people themselves indicate that they value the contact with the farmer's family.

Working together creates an atmosphere of equality

On the farm, the young person works with the farmer. He is part of the life of the farmer's family. This creates an atmosphere of equality. Through this working together and sometimes living together, the farmer and the young person build a personal relationship. Youth care farmers indicate that they find it normal to talk about their own lives and experiences while working. In regular youth care, people still sometimes warn against this: an overly personal relationship is not professional and can lead to disappointment.

Young people working together in the field (albeit with music headphones)

Source: Findewege e.V.

Farmers indicate that they have the freedom to do things their way, and therefore sometimes dare to take more risks. They thus seek out the limits of the young people a bit more, which can encourage the young people's sense of responsibility (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010). Previous research in youth care shows that young people find the attention of supervisors, listening, being taken seriously, being open and honest, trust and doing ordinary things together to be very important (Meerdink, 1999).

The farmer generally does not focus on the young person's problem, but rather on what the young person can do. This creates positive attention. Young people themselves experience that on the farm they have the role of an employee and not of a client. They can learn to experience that they have qualities and that they can practice them.

Learning in real life

On a farm, there is no need to create artificial situations for young people to learn something. Youth care workers point out that a farm is real life. Young people who are alienated from society can experience re-engagement on the farm. Going 'back to basics' is a good alternative to alienation. The farm is also an environment full of life processes (animals being born and dying, the cycle of the seasons, caring) that can give young people insight into their own lives (Hassink et al., 2011).

Matching interests

Young people who drop out of school often find lessons at school too abstract. Taking care of animals and plants on the farm is very concrete: it is clear why it has to be done and animals react immediately. This stimulates the young person's responsibility.

Young people often need an environment that is 'not finished' and that they can fill in themselves. The farm provides this environment, also allowing young people to use their own creativity. Boys find it in particular fun to 'tinker with things' or do other craft work. On the farm, there is often natural space for this kind of activity.

Outside their usual environment

An advantage of staying on a farm is that it is often literally and figuratively far away from the environment where a young person comes from and got into trouble. As a result, they are less tempted to 'take the wrong turn again' (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010; Hassink et al., 2011).

Benefits of social farms for people with mental-ill health and/or recovering from addiction

People with mental-ill health or addiction problems come to the social farm for various reasons. In many cases, they work at the social farm to have a meaningful way of spending time, giving structure and rhythm to their week. Usually, the underlying purpose of these activities is resocialisation, rehabilitation or recovery. Some participants from this target group work on the farm as part of an occupational reintegration programme with the ultimate goal of moving on to (regular) employment. In the research discussed below, no distinction was made between participants with mental-ill health and those with addiction problems. Research shows that about 70% of participants from addiction care also have mental-ill health problems and thus a dual diagnosis (Elings, 2011).

Useful work and distraction

Scientific studies on people with mental-ill health or addiction problems point to special qualities for these target groups, as shown in the following (see Elings et al., 2011, Baars et al., 2008). Working on the farm can help participants with an addiction problem to get rid of their addiction by allowing them to focus their thoughts elsewhere. They have a purpose during the day they are on the farm and do not have to sit at home or hang out on the street. On the street or at home, there is a temptation to think about drugs or alcohol. Participants with mental-ill health also find that work distracts them from their illness. While working, they are less likely to think about their problems.

Having a job offers participants with addition problems the opportunity to leave their old world behind. It is often difficult for them to leave the old 'circle of friends' behind. They can now ward them off at night by saying that they have to go back to work early in the morning and therefore have no time. Having work thus acts as an important stick (Elings et al., 2011). The tasks on a farm are often varied, which allows participants to try a range of activities. It helps them to reflect on what interests and qualities they have (Elings, et al., 2011).

Structure and routine

Often times the participants have spent a long time at home, in a clinic or facility, doing very little. For them, it is pleasant to be working again and to have daily goals. Working on the farm allows participants to rebuild a routine. Supervisors see that the determination and the motivation of participants increase. Participants also live up to their agreements, which leads them to doing more work. Caring for the animals, especially, stimulates their sense of responsibility (Elings, et al., 2011).

Different environment

The farm offers participants a different environment from what they are used to. Many of them come from the city. They indicate that in the city there are continuous stimuli. On the farm, there is peace and quiet, participants experience the seasons much more than in the city, for example. They unwind and find space to reflect on themselves (Elings, et al., 2011).

Social community

For both participants with mental-ill health as for the people with addiction problems, the farm is a safe training ground between their illness or addiction and the step to regular or voluntary work or to society in general. They report that it is enjoyable to be part of a community: the farmer's family, supervisors and colleagues on the farm. They practice making social contacts this way. Also, on the farm, they come into contact not only with peers but with different people who are present or visit the farm (Elings at al., 2011).

Small-scale

Addiction care counsellors report that, in their experience, participants have a larger tendency to show off in larger groups. This behaviour often leads to aggression or use of inappropriate language. On social farms, the groups are often small, which leads to such behaviour being less common. Supervisors also report that the jobs on the farm foster a 'we'-feeling: the feeling of accomplishing something together (Elings, et al., 2011).

Attitude of the farmer and supervisors

The appreciation of the farmer(s) and supervisors make participants feel confident and welcome. This appreciation is enhanced because the farmer opens up his farm, they are welcome and accepted as they are. This acceptance by 'normal' people is greatly appreciated by the participants. They are often seen as outcasts by society and feel respected by the farmer (Elings, et al., 2011)

Benefits of social farms for older people with dementia

We see that a growing number of older people with dementia visit social farms. Most of these social farms mainly provide day care for this target group. Some also offer more intensive forms of support, such as assisted living. Care for older people on farms is characterized by its small scale in comparison with regular day-care facilities. The provision of care on farms for older people with dementia means an increase in the number of options where they can go for care. This enhances the freedom of choice they and their informal care takers have. Day care on farms seems to appeal especially to men, more so than regular day care.

Small scale

A study conducted by the Trimbos-mental health institute and EMGO Institute (VU medical centre) (2007) reveals that small-scale care has a positive effect on older people with dementia. This target group needs a trusted and recognisable living environment with a homely atmosphere. A social farm offers such an environment. The small scale does sometimes make it more difficult to attract expert staff.

Normal life

Older people experience staying on a farm as normal life. They are involved in daily activities that they were used to doing at home, such as light cleaning tasks and cooking together. There is less space for these normal aspects in regular care facilities. There, food, for example, is catered by a central kitchen.

There is still a stigma attached to caregiving amongst many older people. The social farm can be an option for some who are reluctant to attend day care to still participate in a day activity programme.

2.2 EFFECTS OF THE SOCIAL FARMING ENVIRONMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Effects of the social farming environment for young people with bahavioral problems

Some studies show that social farming can have a positive impact on young people with behavioural problems. A research of Hassink et al. (2010) studied the effect of individual farm-based live-work programs for youngsters. Over five years, about 100 young people have completed a farm-based program. In this program a young person lives in a residential unit on the farm which he or she has to maintain. The youngster works on the farm and uses dinner with the farmer's family. For the rest he lives on his/her own. At the start of this program almost all interviewed young people have poor contact with parents, often have no daytime activities in the form of school or work and no proper leisure activities. They show behavioural problems, use drugs, and have contacts with the police. Their self-confidence is low. The study followed the youngsters after a year-long rehabilitation programme within which six months took place on the farm and six months at home with a specific support.

It was checked whether the participating young people themselves saw an improvement in the points that are characteristic of 'experiential learning': their daily functioning, self-esteem and self-determination, self-perceived problem behaviour, coping with problems and stressful events and with violent thoughts and feelings. Supervisors of the youth care institution reported how the young people scored on contact with their own family, participation in school or work, place of residence, police contacts, debts, use of leisure time, alcohol and drug use, well-being, behavioural problems and self-esteem.

The questionnaires were administered at the start and end of the farm program, and at the end of the post-farm program. Data from norm groups served as a reference for the outcomes.

Decrease in problem behaviour

The questionnaires completed by the young people themselves show that the farm program has a positive effect on their problem behaviour and self-esteem (see below table). These positive effects remain visible even one year after finishing the farm program. The effects on coping (coping behaviour) are smaller. Self-determination does not change significantly.

Table 2: Changes after experiential learning on the youth care farm
(%PG indicates the percentage of young people with those problems)

Aspect		Start	Finish
	N	%PG	%PG
Problematic Behaviour			
Internalisation	53	32	8
Externalisation	53	45	15
Self-esteem	48	21	4

Note: Internalising behaviour is behaviour focusing inward, expressing itself as anxiety, depression, withdrawal and physical manifestations. Externalising behaviour is outward focused behaviour, such as aggression, rebellion, in-subordination and rage.

Source: Hassink et al., 2011

For both the young people following an individual residential programme and those receiving temporary accommodation on the farm, behavioural problems decrease. The programme also leads to an improvement in the young person's contact with their own family, self-esteem and well-being. In many situations, things also improve at school or the young person picks up work or school again. For the older young people, we also see a strong decrease in the use of drugs.

The supervisors of the youth care institution indicate that through the farm-based programme, there are significant improvements in family contact, school dropout or work, police contact, drug use, leisure time fulfilment, well-being, behavioural problems, and self-confidence (table X). After the post-programme, these improvements do level off somewhat but the percentage of young people using drugs, having police contact or behavioural problems is, however, significantly lower than at the start of the programme (Hassink et al., 2011).

Table 3: Changes by performance-indicators
(% points to the percentage of these youths with a positive score on the indicator)

Performance-Indicator	Start (%)	Finish (%)	Follow up program (%)
Good contact with father	12	58	73
Good contact with mother	33	83	81
Daytime activity	14	88	87
Good use of leisure time	5	51	58
Wellbeing	16	80	81
Self-confidence	9	83	81
No police contact	22	95	81
No drugs	12	80	50
No behavioural problems	3	50	46

Source: Hassink et al., 2011

Less aggression and conflicts

Young people report that on the farm they experience less stimulation and less aggression compared to a regular youth care facility or at school. Also, there are fewer conflicts. In regular facilities, they mostly have contact with other young people who have difficulties. There, the chances of conflicts arising are greater.

Respite care and prevention of more intensive care

Due to the accessible shelter provided by the farm, the need for more intensive care at a later stage can be prevented. With juveniles that receive day- weekend- or guest shelter on the farm, there is also mention of powerful unburdening of the home situation (respite care) (Platform Jeugdzorgboerderijen, 2010).

Effects of the social farming environment for people with mental-ill health and/or recovering addiction

There are few studies that have examined the impact of a social farming environment for people with mental-ill health or addiction problems. One of them focuses on possible improvements concerning quality of life, social and mental functioning and dietary intake (Elings et al., 2011). The results of this study show in general that participants who have worked for one year on the farm are very satisfied with the supervision received. They give the farm work and activities a score of 8.2 out of 10 and the supervision a score of 8.3 (Elings, et al., 2011). From interviews with over 50 participants, social farmers and supervisors the following effects of working on a social farm emerged:

Improved physical condition

Participants feel fitter, build muscle strength and regain energy. For those with an addiction problem, not using drugs anymore allows their bodies to recover.

Increased appetite

Working on the farm improves appetite. This is particularly important for participants from addiction care, as they often neglect themselves for short or longer periods. On the farm, a clear structure of coffee, lunch and tea is provided. Thus, participants rebuild a normal structure in their diet. This is reinforced by participants cooking together on some of the social farms. Working outdoors also stimulates the appetite.

Getting more things done

Participants have to get used to the rhythm of work on the farm, but afterwards supervisors see that they become more productive. They learn to work on their own, make choices and distribute their energy better so they can keep up the work throughout the day.

Unwind

Participants say they unwind on the farm. It offers them a safe environment with plenty of space. The physical work in the open air ensures that they go home tired and satisfied and therefore sleep better.

Increased self-esteem and self-respect

Participants' self-esteem and self-respect increase because of working on the farm. Appreciation and acceptance by the farmer and supervisors as well as achieving positive results through the work contribute to this. The feeling of being useful and seeing a positive result from the work gives participants an enhanced sense of self-respect and self-esteem. They have a certain goal in mind. The fact that the outside world such as family and friends look at them differently also contributes to this (Elings et al., 2011).

Supervisors see participants' behaviour change. Supervisors in addiction care also know participants from the user rooms or social boarding houses. They see participants becoming more social and showing more solidarity at the farm. Participants encourage each other to come to the farm. This is a huge difference from the self-centred attitude that supervisors usually see among participants at the user rooms or boarding houses. On the farm, participants also use different language and talk about different topics. They are more considerate of each other and have neater manners.

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Perseverance increases the longer participants work on the farm. They learn to get up on time and keep appointments and gain positive work experience. As participants are assigned certain tasks, they develop their sense of responsibility. Taking care of the animals and crops increases commitment.

Increased perseverance, commitment and responsibility

The results of this study shows that participants with mental-ill health and/or addiction problems feel fitter and more useful when they work on a social farm. It is mainly the combination of different factors that makes farms different from other work or day activity projects. For many participants, the social farm seems to be an enjoyable and safe stop between their illness and/or addiction and society in general and regular (voluntary) work, in particular.

Effects of the social farm environment for older people with dementia

The effects of a stay on social farms for elderly people with dementia were among others analysed by De Bruin (2009). The study compared the development of elderly people with dementia on social farms with elderly with dementia in regular day care facilities. Following added value of social farms for older people (with dementia) can be highlighted:

Nutrition

An important point of attention in dealing with older people (with dementia) is the quantity of food and drink that they consume. Research shows that 1 out of 4 hospital patients, 1 out of 5 participants in homecare and 1 out of 6 patients in nursing- and residential care centres are in a poor nutritional state (*The Dutch prevalence measurement of care problems*, 2005). Many older patients with dementia run the risk of being underfed and experiencing undesirable weight loss. The research of De Bruin (2009) reveals that older dementia patients who participate in day care on a social farm have a higher intake of energy, carbohydrates, and fluid than their peers in regular day care. Their stay on a farm ensures a significantly better nutritional status. Day care on a social farm can have a significant impact on prevention of dehydration, undesirable weight loss and malnutrition.

Varied activities

Social farms offer older people a more varied day program. This program is tailored to suit the normal, familiar rhythm of the life of older people. The activities on offer can be undertaken individually or in groups, whilst many activities in regular day care facilities are mostly undertaken with the entire group. Older people on social farms are also more often in the open air.

More social contacts

Many older people with dementia get out of their homes less and less often and thus lose their social contacts. On the farm, they regain new contacts. The older people more easily build a bond of trust with the farmer and farmer's family. On some farms, older people also encounter people from the village. For example, the farmer takes them along when he or she goes shopping (Hassink et al., 2007).

Physical condition

Activities at social farms, such as feeding the animals, raking leaves, generally take more physical effort than those at regular day care. Such activities are also more continuous. Examples include gardening, walking, and helping to prepare meals. Older people at

social farms feel more incentive and are stimulated to participate and stay active, which helps them maintain their physical fitness. Jan Auke Walburg (2010) says in his book 'Jong van geest' (Young at heart) that several studies indicate that physical exercise reduces the risk of dementia.

As conclusion social farms provide for older people with dementia a more varied program than regular day care. The stay on the farm stimulates their intake of food and fluid. No significant differences were noted in other domains of the research among patients on social farms and in regular day care. This could be due to the limited number of respondents. In addition, there are interesting differences between the older people who attend social farms (often married and relatively younger men) and those who go to regular day care (often widowed women) (De Bruin, 2009).

2.3 KEY QUALITIES OF SOCIAL FARMS

The examples listed above show that social farms have some characteristic features or elements that have a positive impact on participants' health and quality of life. Derived from various interviews with participants, social farmers and supervisors and diverse studies, the following four key qualities of a social farm can be identified:

- personal engagement of the social farmer and supervisors
- social community
- useful and diverse activities
- green environment

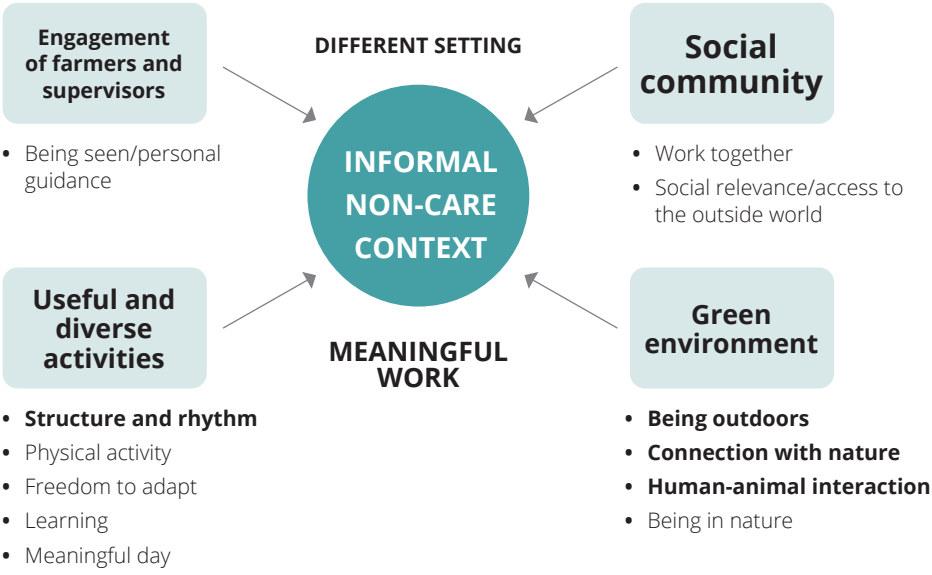
These qualities ensure that the social farm give the participants a non-care and informal context that is different than from other regular health and social services (Hassink et al., 2007; Elings, 2011). The figure below gives an overview of these qualities.

Figure 3: Key qualities of social farms

Source: Adapted from Hassink et al., 2011; Elings, 2012

In the SoFarTEAM-project we also conducted multiple interviews with social farmers from Ireland, Germany, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. From these interviews, the following valuable elements of the social farming environment emerged. More details about these valuable elements can be read in the specific chapters on target groups in this textbook or in the first report of the SoFarTEAM-Project (2023). In the coming paragraphs the key qualities are described separately.

Figure 4: Valuable elements (the more significant the bullet, the more often social farmers and supervisors discussed this element).



Source: Hassink et al., 2011 and supplemented by the outcomes of the SoFarTEAM project

2.3.1 Relation between social farmer-supervisor and participant

The relationship between a social worker/supervisor and participant is an important theme in research on treatment and healthcare. For instance, Bachelor and Horvath (1999) cite empathy, understanding, commitment, warmth, and friendship as the most determining factors for successful treatment and client satisfaction. According to Leyssen (2007), sincere and authentic interest, empathy and authenticity are very important in the contact between caregiver and participant. Impact studies on the treatment of patients shows that the therapeutic relationship and the extent to which the patient can actively participate in treatment is very decisive for a positive outcome (Verhaeghe, 2010). A review of various effect studies shows that 30% of the effect of treatment is caused by the relationship between therapist and client (Ketelaars et al., 2001; Bohart, 2000; Lambart, 1992).

From the different studies it becomes clear that on social farms, the relationship between participant and social farmer also appears to be important. In interviews, participants indicated that they appreciate the farmer in his role as a non-care professional. Little research has yet been done on the role of non-professionals in supporting participants. Research shows that volunteers were valued by people with chronic psychiatric problems as good listeners, reliable, friendly, respectful, and supportive. Participants

themselves have fewer stereotypes about non-professionals and are therefore more willing to cooperate (Piat et al., 2006; Walter & Petr, 2006).

From the different studies on social farms, it becomes clear that the participants see the social farmer as a role model who, with his or her knowledge about the farm, brings the participants along in the supervision and is an authority. Because the participants are included in the farmer's family and work together, a different relationship also develops (Elings, 2012).

2.3.2 The farm as a social community

Working on a farm ensures that participants are part of a social community consisting of other participants, the farmer, the farmer's family, and other co-workers. The farm itself is again part of a larger community. By being part of this social farm community, participants learn social skills, make new contacts, and feel part of society. Social relationships are essential for human beings. Sociologist Durkheim (1951) argues that people receive a certain role when they belong to a community and maintain connections with others. This role (or roles) defines their identity and the extent to which they feel socially integrated. In addition to physical protection, relationships provide emotional protection (Schachter, 1959).

The social exchange theory (Vaux, 1998) proposes that social relationships are important because of their reciprocity. People complement each other and are a valuable resource for one another. Additionally, developmental psychology places importance on safe and stable bonding relationships. Weiss (1973) suggests six fundamental interpersonal requirements that, to a certain extent, are fulfilled within relationships: emotional attachment (attachment), being embedded in a social network (social integration), being confirmed by others (reassurance of worth), having a reliable alliance (reliable alliance), receiving advice, information, and protection (guidance) and the need to be able to care for another (opportunity for nurturance). According to Weiss, inability to meet these requirements can lead to psychological difficulties. Research reveals that safety and positive relationships reduce stress and speed up recovery process (Caplan, 1974; Eriksen, 1994; Kulik & Mahler, 1989; Winefield, et al., 1992).

2.3.3 Meaningful daytime activities and work

Participants mention that working on the farm gives them the feeling that they do something useful and that the farmer and his family are waiting for them. The activities and work and the farm environment distract them from their problems and thoughts. Working on a farm is often a totally different environment for people where they can gain new competences or get to know what kind of work or activities they like to do. Because of the diversity of activities, it is possible to match participants' capacity, interest and development needs (Elings, 2011).

Having a useful daily occupation or work has a positive influence on the physical as well as psychological well-being of people (Bartley, 1994; Cable, et al., 2008). In their studies, Van Weeghel (1995) and Boardman (2003) mention that work gives people structure, an identity, and an opportunity to develop themselves. It broadens their horizon, provides social contacts, and gives them the feeling of belonging. Work is forcing people to be active, offering them the opportunity to become physically tired. In general, this leads to better physical health.

Positive influence of having a useful daily occupation on physical and psychological well-being

Of course, not every work situation has such a positive outcome. People generally judge their work as being positive if it is useful and if it has sufficient variation. Kielhofner (2002) notes that people have a desire to be usefully occupied. Useful and meaningful activities provide structure and rhythm in life. In addition, such activities stimulate and improve the development of physical and social skills. This gives people the feeling of being competent and knowledgeable.

Christiansen and others (2005) developed a model that shows that people derive identity and a sense of meaningfulness from everyday activities. This person-environment-occupation-performance (PEOP) model consists of four elements:

- Person: the intrinsic factors of the person
- Environment: the environmental factors
- Occupation: the thing a person likes to do
- Performance: the way someone does it

By building up meaningful and successful experiences, one can become more self-assured and develop a feeling of independence and being knowledgeable. These characteristics are necessary to deal with other challenges (Christiansen et al., 2005).

2.3.4 Green environment

One of the most fundamental characteristics of social farm is the contact with nature. Quite a lot of study are done about the relationship between nature and health. In general, those studies show that a green environment reduces feelings of fear and anger. It improves people's attention span and concentration and a green environment leads to a lower heart rate and lower blood pressure (Elings, 2011).

A green environment and especially a farm environment with different activities can stimulate physical activity as shows above presented study by De Bruin (2009) about older people with dementia on social farms. The important benefit of social farming is participating in the complex process comprising growing vegetables and fruits which then participants prepare into meals together, and they eat these meals together.

People with mental-ill health say that working in green environment relief them from stress and negative thoughts and that the farm environment is non judging. For instance, animals do not judge people (Elings et al., 2011). For quite a lot of people a farm environment is a totally different environment than they are used to. In studies people

say that on the farm they make more use of their senses than in the city where there are already a lot of stimuli and they get overstimulated (Elings et al., 2011).

Multiple studies provide strong indications that looking at pictures of nature as well as taking walks in nature improves the mood of people. Feelings of fear and anger are reduced while positive feelings are enhanced (Hartig, 2003; Ulrich, 1991; Hartig, 1991). The restorative effects happen both in natural spaces as well as in urban areas (such as parks and water-rich environments) and in natural forests.

Better concentration

Studies indicate that having contact with nature has a significantly positive effect on people's attention span and concentration. If people have a view of nature from their homes or if they have plants in their offices, it improves their cognitive functioning (Van den Berg, 2003). Studies by Kuo and Sullivan (2001) provide a similar picture. They undertook research in a low-income suburb of Chicago with identical apartment blocks. Their study revealed that having a view with more green improved the concentration of residents which in turn led to less aggression among them.

Faster recovery

Several researchers have studied the effects of watching nature videos and concluded that it leads to a lower heart rate, a lower blood pressure and less facial tension (Laumann, 2003). Hartig (2003) studied the body's responses of people when they were walking. This study showed that people's bodies are restored when they walked in a natural area; whilst when walking in an urban area, their blood pressure rose.

Healthier through exercise

Contact with nature can positively influence the health of people because it stimulates them to be physically active (Dutch Health Advisory Board, 2004). Currently, there aren't sufficient studies that focus on the connection between the physical environment and exercise. However, there are studies that focus on the environmental factors that stimulate exercise (Sallis, et al., 1998). These studies, in general, reveal that a natural environment is more valued than an urban environment. Thus, the Health Advisory Board states that a natural environment is more inviting for exercise and therefore stimulates longer periods of exercise. As mentioned earlier, a farm environment where animals and plants have to be cared for causes people to move more naturally and automatically (De Bruin, 2009; Elings, 2011).

2.4 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Can you explain what the beneficial elements of social farms are for youngsters with behavioural problems?

2. Why do you think it is important for young people to have permanent supervisors?

3. What are the key elements on a social farm for people recovering from addiction? In what way does being part of a social community have a different effect for them than for people with mental-ill health? Describe the differences.

4. Can you indicate what makes working on a social farm affect physical well-being for different target groups? In this, don't just address physical activity but also include nutrition in your story.

5. Why exactly do you think social farms are more popular for older males with dementia than regular day care facilities?

6. What are the four key qualities of social farms? Which of these four do you think in your opinion is most important for participants and why?

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3 SOCIAL FARMING THEORIES

David Urban

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Be knowledgeable of selected theories on which the field of social farming is based.
- Know the possibilities of using selected theories in practice from reading examples of inspiring practice.
- Gain respect for the different needs of participants on the farm.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings are part of nature, and this relationship between humans and nature is a natural consequence of gradual human evolution. From a historical point of view, people lived (and in some places on the Earth, they still live) in close contact with nature for the longest period of their existence. Nature determined people's daily and year-round rhythm and lifestyle. It decided the time for sowing, cultivating the soil, harvesting, and resting. A more fundamental change came only in the last industrialized era when cities and urban agglomerations were (and are) being settled. Roughly half of humankind lives there, and this number is still growing. Homo sapiens, as an animal species, developed in a natural space dominated by mountains, forests, and animals, not in concrete agglomerations. Nature is vital to our life and studies show that we need it to be able to function (Brabencová et a., 2020).

In this chapter, we will focus on selected theories on which the field of social farming is based. In the following text, we will describe the essential grounds for the individual theoretical concepts while also showing how the respective grounds can be applied in social farming.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

One of the theories underpinning social farming is the concept of empowerment and participation which goes back to Brazilian social pedagogue and philosopher Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which builds on the theory of critical adult education. The concept of empowerment was popularized in the mid-1970s through the publication *Black Empowerment. Social work in oppressed communities* by Barbara B. Solomon (1976). Together with the concept of active participation, these theories assume that active participation in problem solving creates stronger motivation and respect for the results of work and that through participation in problem solving, people also acquire skills, abilities and habits that they can use in the next time in a similar situation.

At the same time, it strengthens his/her self-confidence and determination to solve things (Šťastná, 2019). Dooris and Heritage (2013) present several definitions of empowerment and argue that at the core of the concept is the notion of power, defined as the ability to control the factors that determine our lives. Šťastná further states that the two concepts (participation and empowerment) are intertwined in practice. The concept of empowerment, participation and the recovery approach were also alluded to in the introductory chapter.

By working on a social farm, people can take on different activities. This promotes not only their skills, but their self-confidence

As an example of the use of the concept of empowerment and active participation in the practice of social farming, we can mention the involvement of participants in the care of livestock (e.g. sheep, chickens) or the care of vegetable beds and greenhouses. In a residential service for people with disabilities integrating farming activities studied as part of the SoFarTEAM project, one of the participants was responsible for taking care of several sheep (herding, feeding, providing fencing, etc.) He took this task very seriously; for example, when he had to leave the facility to go home for the weekend, he would worry about which of the other clients he would hand over the care of the sheep to, so that he could be sure that they would be cared for responsibly. At the same time, he mentioned that the task was very significant and important, and in particular noted the benefits of keeping sheep in the form of wool and meat. It was clear from his comments that he very much appreciated the task and was happy to participate in the running of the house (social service) in this way.

The great advantage of working on a farm is the variety of activities and the fact that performance is not the only measure. People can do different types of work and different activities and develop themselves. In doing so, they also acquire a lot of new skills and competences that can be useful for them in later life.

3.3 MAN IN THE ENVIRONMENT - THE SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

The subject of the ecological model, which can also be mentioned in relation to social farming framework, is the relationship and contacts between the individual and its environment, with constant and mutual interaction and influence. When working, it is necessary to consider and reflect not only the problems and weaknesses, but also the qualities and strengths that can lead to the so-called resilience, i.e. indomitability (Matoušek et al, 2012).

We are surrounded by the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem

The social-ecological model emphasizes interconnectedness and interdependence, and five basic systems can be named that surround the man and influence each other. These are: the *microsystem* (consisting of the person's immediate environment); the *mesosystem* (the relationships between the microsystems - family and school, peers and family, etc.); the *exosystem* (the individual is not an active participant, but is influenced by events in the exosystem - e.g. the parents' work environment influences the child's life in many aspects); the *macrosystem* (the person as a member of society, including ethical, cultural, religious and other norms); and finally the *chronosystem* (capturing changes over time from the perspective of the individual and his environment) (Matoušek et al, 2013).

Life and work on a farm bring with it a number of examples and situations where interactions occur. Thus, in many examples we can find the fulfilment of the basic elements of the systems mentioned above. For example, work and the necessary daily routine (caring for animals and crops - sowing and harvesting at a given time) ground people in a place and time, or give space to observe the changes that occur on the farm during the year. With respect to the different seasons, it is possible to see and notice how the crops grow, ripen, the time of harvest and the processing of the products, thus interacting within the chronosystem. Also, the actual farm environment and life on the farm, such as the events, the necessary cooperation and often dependence on the work of others - puts the individual in the context of the exosystem.

Caring for animals (in this case with sheep)

Source: Martin Matěj

The experience of participating in the processes can be very important, i.e. seeing and participating in the journey of the produce from "farm to table" – and not having the food served straight away, but knowing that before I can eat the product (tomato, onion, garlic, etc.) it had to be planted, watered, harvested, etc.

Working on the farm fosters a connection to food

The macrosystem is important in the farm environment, as many farms also operate within a community life, in which people are forced to comply with established rules and norms - both in terms of coexistence and, for example, in terms of their approach to farm work. Thus, life on the farm has a great social significance. It allows participants to

enter a different and new world, which can be significant for participants from different residential services. On the farm they have the space to meet different people, activities, situations, thanks to which they also gain new topics and stories that they can further share with other participants and family members.

Clients also become part of the local community through the farm - the farm can also be a space for selling products to the general public within the village or place where it operates, or products can be sold at various farmers' markets, which can give participants additional contact with the outside world. The fact that the participants are also in a different environment than where they normally are (home, residential service, health facilities) can have a positive and significant effect. The farm is also an environment where the focus is not on the participants' disability or problem, but on what they can do and how they can manage.

The farm focuses on the participant's abilities, not their limitations

3.4 HUMANISM IN SOCIAL WORK

In the framework of the person-oriented approach it is important that the helping workers strive for congruence and genuineness in the relationship with the client. Although this approach comes from the social work sphere, it complies very well in connection with social farming. The support workers should act in accordance with their experience, and should act as a real person in the relationship with the participant - it is about sharing the relationship. The support worker's approach should also be non-judgmental and non-directive; active listening and authentic friendship are important (Nykl, 2012, Matoušek et al., 2012).

Active listening and an authentic relationship on the part of the supervisor are important

Genuineness, interest in joint efforts, acceptance of experience and working methods from youth; all these are areas that can be practiced with participants, for example, in the joint care of the garden or flower beds in a home for the older people. The workers often use the individual seasons of the year, and these are followed up by individual activities. Elements of social farming are thus combined with elements of reminiscence therapy. For example, with Easter it is possible to create a space for the participants to talk about how the holiday in their youth took place, what flowers were most often in bloom at that time and what their scent was. This creates a space for possible sharing of memories and experiences and for listening.

The farm work promotes the well-being of the participants through meaningfulness and appreciation

Working on the farm can also give different target groups (e.g. people with mental health challenges, etc.) the space to open up and share their innermost issues that they would otherwise find difficult to talk about. This may be due to the fact that the activities on the farm ground people, bringing up different stories and themes, and in the telling and sharing of these stories and themes, more and more conversations can be opened up.

Working on the farm can make it easier for participants to open up and talk about their problems

3.5 EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS AND LOGOTHERAPY OF V. E. FRANKL

Existential analysis and logotherapy are based on the idea that the basic human need is the will to meaning, and that if this need is not fulfilled, psychological, somatic and other problems can arise. Meaning is found primarily through the realisation of values. V.F. Frankl, the author of the logotherapy approach, divides values into *creative* values (these are most often realised through work, and what matters is not the type of work, but the way it is performed - with commitment, without interest, honestly, dishonestly, etc.); *experiential* values (experiences related to the perception of nature, art, relationships); and finally *attitudinal* values (Matoušek, 2012)

Within the SoFarTEAM Project, participants positively evaluated the possibility of working in the garden, which they saw as meaningful and useful. The dimension of 'usefulness' was highlighted repeatedly, with participants reporting that they could see the fruits of their labour over time when they could harvest the vegetables they grew (tomatoes, onions, garlic, herbs), which they would then use in the kitchen to prepare meals. This work was all the more meaningful to them when they received appreciation and recognition from other participants for how well they took care of the beds and garden and how tasty the vegetables they grew were.

Meaningfulness of work is therefore one of the important aspects of farm work, where on the farm the different activities are linked - caring for the animals/garden, the benefits (eggs, meat, milk, etc.) and the joy (plants growing, looking and smelling nice) of the work. This makes the work on the farm meaningful and there is no need to invent other activities and activities.

We can see a certain parallel here with the creative value mentioned by Frankl, where praise and recognition was subsequently a motivation to work in the garden with more commitment and interest. This positive experience motivated other participants to get involved in the garden when they saw the importance and benefit. And if Frankl's other value mentioned, the experiential value, is the experience connected with the perception of nature, the concept of social farming is an appropriate approach.

3.6 VALIDATION THERAPY

Validation therapy is an approach developed and put into practice by American gerontologist and social worker Naomi Feil. It is an approach that is used when working with disoriented older participants (Procházková, 2012). Yet, it can be well used in social farming approaches.

The role of validation is to confirm to the person that their feelings are genuine and that the caregiver acknowledges them (see also the chapter on older people in social farming).

Disoriented persons – the cause of which is very often old age dementia, in which memory is disturbed, thinking is impaired and short-term memory fades quickly, etc.

– are often unhappy about their situation, and they are unable to react emotionally (crying, despair, aggression) to the situations they find themselves in. The role of validation is then not to refute the state of the disoriented person, but to confirm to them that their feelings are real and that I, as a caring person, acknowledge them. (Pokorná & Sukupová, 2014)

Validation therapy is based on several fundamental principles, one of which is that things from the present (colours, sounds, smells, tastes) can trigger memories from the past (Procházková, 2012). Clients then return to the past, where they were needed and productive persons (Pokorná & Sukupová, 2014).

Within the concept of social farming a number of elements can be used to fulfil the above validation principle. An example is herb gardens, where the smell of the herbs grown can evoke memories. In connection with this, it is also possible to develop a discussion with the participants about the preparation of the dishes for which the herbs were used and the occasions on which the dishes were served (celebrations, holidays). Alternatively, for example, some dishes can be cooked/baked in connection with occupational therapy, where other senses - taste and smell - can be used.

It is also possible to use activities such as replanting flowers or planting (peas, radishes, tomatoes, etc.), to open conversations with the participants about how they carried out the activities, how they took care of the garden, etc.

3.7 ATTENTION RESTORATION THEORY

This theory describes the general benefits the person gains from the nature. It states that being in nature relaxes a person and improves concentration and attention. The idea assumes, that we distinguish two types of attention - intentional and involuntary. Intentional attention induces mental fatigue. In contrast, involuntary attention brings regeneration – watching a blooming meadow, mountain peaks bathed in the sunset, a butterfly flying from flower to flower. Fascination with natural phenomena creates room for pleasure and, at the same time, provokes involuntary attention. Thanks to this, intentional attention is also restored, and regeneration occurs (Brabencová et al.,2020).

This theory was developed and popularised by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan in the late 1980s. These authors state, that there are four cognitive states, or states of attention, along the way to restoration: a) Clearer head, or concentration: In this stage, the thoughts, concerns, worries, and residual bits of information from whatever was demanding one's attention are allowed to pass through the mind and fade away.); b) Mental fatigue recovery: The real restoration begins; after a task or activity that requires focused and directed attention, it is easy to feel depleted and drained. The mental fatigue recovery stage allows that directed attention to recover and be restored to normal levels; c) Soft fascination, or interest: Allows the individual to be gently distracted and engaged in a low-stimulation activity, which reduces the internal noise and provides a quiet internal space to relax; and d) Reflection and restoration: In the final stage, evoked by spending a long period of time in an environment that meets all four of the

requirements of a restorative environment, the individual is able to relax, restore their attention, and reflect on their life (Kaplan, 1995).

Potential areas of application of this theory are shown as part of the research carried out in three separate areas. In terms of mental fatigue, spending time in nature can help us restore our attention, especially after depleting that attention. In the area of *stress recovery* studies have shown that just having some green space around one's home can help protect people from the negative health impacts of stress and particularly stressful life events. Those with a high amount of green space around their home were less affected by a stressful life event and reported greater perceived mental health than those with little or no green space nearby. Finally in the case of ADHD, results from studies suggest that simply spending a little more time in nature can ease the symptoms of ADHD for children and young adults who meet with these challenges (Ackerman, 2018).

3.8 BIOPHILIA HYPOTHESIS

The biophilia hypothesis suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life

Biophilia hypothesis includes the claim that, as a consequence of evolution, humans have an innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes (Gullone, 2000) and to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. The term biophilia was used by Erich Fromm in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973), which described biophilia as "the passionate love of life and of all that is alive." The term was later used by American biologist Edward O. Wilson in his work Biophilia (1984), which proposed that the tendency of humans to focus on and to affiliate with nature and other life-forms has, in part, a genetic basis.

According to the hypothesis of biophilia, contact with nature can simultaneously arouse both positive and negative emotions in us. An example can be our behaviour towards snakes or spiders when we instinctively approach with increased caution to them. The theory claims that every contact with nature is beneficial for humans (Brabencová et al., 2020).

3.9 STRESS REDUCTION: NATURE PROVIDES FASTER RECOVERY

Researcher Roger Ulrich (1991) bases his studies on a biological / evolutionary principle. He argues that human evolution took place in a natural environment. Those who responded positively to the natural environment and recovered quickly from stress were evolutionarily at an advantage. He arrived at this hypothesis after his famous hospital experiment where patients who looked out on greenery recovered earlier than those who had a view of a brick wall. In another study, he found that after watching a stressful crime move, people's heart rates recovered faster after watching a video with nature images, than after watching a video with traffic images on it (Ulrich, 1983).

This overview of theories, which is based on social work and other approaches, brings awareness of what conceptual frameworks we draw on in social farming. It would be

possible to mention others related to agriculture systems, social and solidarity economy, civil society and others. The choice of theories mainly based on social work comes from the goals set by the SoFarTEAM project, which is primarily dedicated to supporting people from disadvantaged social groups. We believe that other theories would of course also be applicable.

3.10 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Which of the descried approaches (theories) would you choose when working with people with drug addiction history? Discuss in pairs and present your opinions.

2. When working with participants on social farms, is there ever a time to opt for more directive approaches and control? Justify your answer and give examples.

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4 REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL FARMS

Lisa Essich

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- understand the motives for which farmers start in social farming.
- know the different organizational models of social farming.
- see what the personal requirements are that a social farmer should have.
- describe which professional competences are necessary for social farming.
- understand which adaptations are necessary to start a social farm.

Social farming is linked to certain requirements that the farm and the farmer or social worker must fulfil. These relate on the one hand to the social farmer, who must have a certain educational background, but must also be personally suitable and motivated. Finally, depending on the target group, different structural requirements have to be considered. The following chapter explains which requirements apply to social farming.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

4.1 OPERATING STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The requirements depend on the form of organization

The offers in the social farming are varied and can be selected individually and according to the personnel conditions. The participants can work on the farm - a few hours a day in day care or in permanent residence with their own apartment on the farm for several months or years. The range of services and the scope of services that the farm finally decides to offer depends to a large extent on the farm's resources: Free labour capacity, structural conditions, family conditions and much more. Depending on the conditions, farms can either act as independent providers of social services or cooperate with a social institution, which then takes over the therapeutic care.

There is a discernible tendency for organic farms in particular to opt for social farming as a means of diversification. It can also be particularly worthwhile for small-structured farms to enter social farming. Through special marketing strategies or other economic characteristics, it is possible for them to prevail over the competitive pressure of large farms. The conversion of one's own farm to social farming should pay off, but should not be based solely on financial motives. In most cases, the financial support is not attractive enough for this. For some types of services, there is no subsidy at all. A certain economic stability is therefore the basic prerequisite, especially to be able to cover the investments at the beginning.

4.2 MOTIVATION

The motivation to enter social farming is diverse. It depends on whether it is work integration and sheltered workshops or rather rehabilitation and occupational therapy. When it touches residential year-round care social farming arises as a new offer in their lives. It is different care provided than in a regular social facility.

Bringing people, nature and animals in harmony with each other

Close idea linked to this is to bring people, nature and animals in harmony with each other because of the proved benefits of nature to humankind. Even if social farming can generate income and relieve the workforce, purely monetary approaches are rather rare. In addition to pure economic efficiency, inclusion, mutual responsibility, and social commitment should be criteria for entry into social agriculture.

In this kind of an alternative facility the employees spend much more time with participants and have more freedom in planning things. The regime is not as strict as in ordinary facilities.

Social Entrepreneurship

Other motivation can be to turn social service into social entrepreneurship and to employ people with different disabilities and do something profitable and with an added value. It is also about gaining new skills and responsibilities for the care of animals and acquiring basic work habits.

"I was interested in an extra source of income for the farm but as I was trained and started to do it, I got pleasure from it, you know the company, seeing people coming on to the farm. Me taking time to stop and explain what I was doing, it can give you a whole new interest in what you are doing. You got a whole new interest in your stock for example."

It also arrives that the motivation grew up from the need of long-term restoration of the rural environment where gardens and fields have been badly degraded in the past. Social farming is the way to enhance natural parts of rural areas and create a good environment for visitors, tourists and customers. Social farming arises as a civil duty as some respondents assert. It is a commitment for keeping the rural areas viable, to support the biodiversity and to integrate vulnerable people in the same time.

In this regard a motivation such as self-sufficiency in food, conservation of the landscape and organic farming operations developed naturally into integration people from challenged environments. The social element logically belongs to the concept of agroecology.

"We have deliberately chosen both gardens in the past because one of the main goals of our organization is to revitalize the rural environment. Thus, we gradually started to build both gardens with the aim of employing our clients to whom we provide social services and persons with disabilities from the surrounding villages."

In most cases, the farmers' desire to make a contribution to society is at the forefront. For example, employing people with disabilities in agriculture is a step toward greater inclusion and participation in society. Previous interests with corresponding qualifications in the social sector are also a frequent motivating factor. The use of vacant buildings can also be a reason to take a closer look at social agriculture and, for example, to introduce offers in the area of senior living.

4.3 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PERSONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Personal requirements

The right motivation is a first major prerequisite for getting started in social farming. However, farmers who want to introduce care services must also have certain knowledge and social skills. Basically, the right attitude towards the target group and the affinity for working with people is the most indispensable. This also applies in relation to the existing (farm) employees, but also family members on the farm. On a farm that is new to social farming, the staff is most likely to have training in the agricultural field. In order to instruct and guide the participants in the work, additional professionals from the social sector must be present. The list of skills and competences of social farmers and support workers is exhaustive. These competencies relate to the personality of the farmer as well as his or her expertise. This chapter gives an overview of the required human resources and is intended to help farmers to reflect on themselves.

In-depth knowledge and experience in social work

As the term Social Farming already indicates the persons most likely active in this field are people from the primary sector such as farmers or gardeners as well as persons of social and educational work (e.g. social workers). Working with the participants requires in-depth knowledge and experience in social work so that farmers are usually supported by specialists from social work. The collaboration and joint work organization of these various professional groups ultimately determine the success of a care farm. The required personnel and time and the necessary qualification of the supervisor varies from farm to farm and depends on the type of care farm, the target group and the number of participants. Participants who use day care offers usually have lower demands on care and support and the professional training of the care farmer is less relevant. Determining the target group and their area of responsibility already requires detailed knowledge of the participants needs and their own resources. Basically the farmer needs a high level of commitment, motivation and social competence (Limbrunner, Löwenhaupt, Sambale, & Heider, 2014).

Pedagogical skills and leadership qualities

It is expected that the farmer, in addition to the usual agricultural knowledge in production, business administration and marketing, has pedagogical skills and leadership qualities, that he can meaningfully plan, coordinate and delegate work and that he avoids excessive and insufficient demands on his employees. He should be able to create a good working atmosphere. Despite these special managerial skills, the engagements of farm managers in social farming do not result in high income effects (Hermanowski, 2006).

The work of the participants should be planned conscientiously and with the involvement of all family members and employees. At least one educator or social worker should at least part-times be on site in order to be able to guide the participants with the appropriate profession. It is advisable to decouple the educational work from the agricultural processes. The social workers are then responsible for the participants, but not for the fact that the agricultural activities themselves are done (Baumbach-Knopf, Luft, & Krüger, 2018). The farmers must be aware that there can be delays in the operational process when the participants are on the farm, as their care takes a lot of time. This increases the required work capacities, which must be taken into account in the division of work. Depending on the target group, it is possible that the participants lack the cognitive or physical abilities to operate demanding machines. Technical and extensive activities, such as the cultivation of vegetables and fruits, are therefore advantageous for the participants and the operational process.

As with most socially oriented farms, there is a conflict of interest between social and agricultural tasks. Due to the relatively hard-working and adaptive client group of people with addictions, the limits do not seem to be as great as in companies that integrate people with severe disabilities. A manager at Hof Fleckenbühl describes this conflict of interest as follows:

"The connection between agriculture and addiction support is good for addiction support and bad for agriculture. (...) That I am doing agriculture here with a whole bunch of unskilled people. (...) This is no longer idealized agriculture, where you pull the hoe into the field. Rather, we already do a large part of it with machines, with complicated and expensive machines that should actually only be operated by trained specialists. Of course, we also have a large part of manual labor, we still have it in our stables that we muck by hand. So we can also use unskilled people. But agriculture is already complex, management and crop rotation planning, it all takes several years ... it's not an easy job. If I tell someone, go back there and chop the weeds, that's the implementation, we also do that with unskilled workers. But the whole of agriculture has to be organized differently in order for it to be successful in the long term. That is the difficulty for agriculture."

(van Elsen, et al., 2012)

The most important thing is that a team of supervisors on a social farm complement each other in qualities. In a way that they can help each other but also learn from each other and evenly important that different supervisors with their own qualities can ensure that participants always find a match with one of the supervisors.

4.4 KEY COMPETENCES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL FARMERS AND EMPLOYEES

Experience shows that the implementation of support and nursing services on a farm usually takes longer than originally expected due to administrative hurdles. From the first concrete action onwards, it often takes six months before the participants actually come to the farm (Handbook for Dutch Care Farmers). The farm structure usually changes significantly, which can be a challenge for agricultural employees. All employees who are in contact with the participants need certain social skills for working with the respective target group.

Empathy

With any target group, it is important to be able to empathize. If you for in-stance look at supervising refugees, it is sometimes difficult to understand their side of the story because supervisors have not often been in situations of war and violence. Directly linked to this is the ability to be open to people and, in the case of refugees, to other cultures and their stories.

Being open

The farmers who would like to convert their farm must, above all, be open. They must be open to new ideas, new concepts and also be prepared to take the steps. And these steps are not easy. There are a lot of requirements to fulfil, a lot to organize.

"It is far more important to be empathetic and to be communicative than educated."

(supervisor of youth)

A high degree of patience is very important in everyday work with participants. Depending on the participants, it may take a little longer to explain a task.

"One of the main competencies that we are good at when managing our clients in the workplace is patience, and patience again."

(supervisor of people with an intellectual disability)

"Patience, kindness, gentleness. You are not trying to shape anybody into what they aren't. Intuition is very important. You have to work with the elements, different weather, etc."

(people with intellectual disability)

The workers must be able to handle higher level of pressure and stress. It is important to be persistent and stable, otherwise you will soon run into yourself as the respondents indicated.

"I am authentic with all my life experiences, as I stand here, with all my weaknesses and strengths, with all my stories. And I don't mince words. Do you want me to talk to them in some way? That is life as it is lived."

(supervisor of youth)

The authenticity also means the willingness to meet oneself, to be transparent and open.

Authenticity is important working with every target group

"You have to be grounded in yourself first of all. If people are coming, if you have things on your mind, park them. You have to be as present as you can be. Just be very aware, is there anything lying around like a rake that could hurt someone. But after that, be yourself and let them be themselves as much as possible."

(people with intellectual disability)

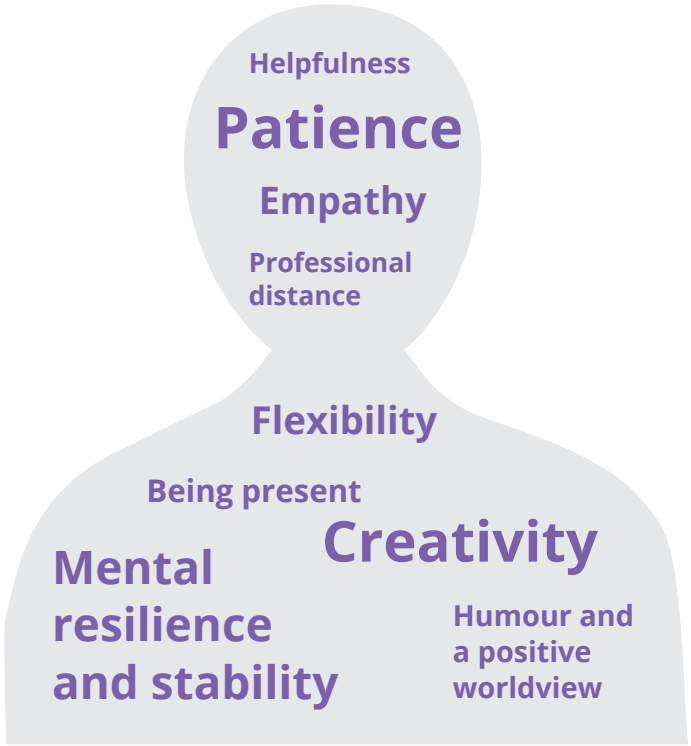
Having an open mind is very important. An open mind toward participants but also toward new ideas and plans. This is related to the flexibility. As one of the social farmers tells:

"Flexibility in the sense that I can't expect something. Every day is different because a person feels different. Therefore I always have to have a plan B. I can't standardize anything. And what is working at this moment can completely fail the next time."

Flexibility

Respondents who work with people with mental health problems indicate that flexibility is an important characteristic.

Figure 5: Key competencies of social farmers (according to SoFarTEAM Research)



4.5 FARM ENVIRONMENT

4.5.1 Modifications

A farm is not automatically suitable to serve participants. In most cases, modifications have to be made when starting a new project. These adaptations depend on the target group, the type of offer and the number of participants. Modifications of the working environment in social farming can also be based on current legislation, which defines organizational and technical measures for the employment of people with disabilities whereby the legislations in the different EU countries differ. The modifications serve to ensure easier movement and orientation of social farming participants in the farm premises, including its buildings, and last but not least to increase the safety of the environment.

The work environment can be considered the place where the employee occurs during the work process and performs work activities required by technology or procedure, including adjustment, repairs, cleaning and maintenance. The employer is obliged to provide technical and organizational measures for the employee who is a person with a disability, in particular the necessary adjustment of working conditions, adjustment of workplaces, establishment of sheltered jobs, training or apprenticeship of these employees and increasing their qualifications in their regular employment. Each type of disability requires slightly different environmental modifications. Most adjustments concern people with physical, visual and hearing impairments, in other cases the adjustments to the environment are very individual (Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, 2016).

The degree of adjustment varies according to the specific target group, in general the biggest changes are required for people with physical disabilities and people with reduced mobility.

When working with people with physical disabilities or older people buildings must have barrier-free access to areas that are used for contact and work with participants. Barrier-free, curb height, ramp slope, slope and path width must be addressed; the width of entrances, doors and their opening; handrails, railings, fences and enclosures, their safety and permeability; surface and colour differentiation of important elements on the farm. If there are stairs in the building, it is possible to bypass them (ramps, lift or lifting equipment). Premises intended for work, corridors, staircases and other communications must have the specified dimensions and surface and must be equipped for the activities performed there. Floors and floor coverings should be non-slip and barrier-free. The usability of toilets is a major barrier to integration for people with disabilities. It must be possible to operate switches, pushbuttons, toilet flushers, emergency switches, etc. from an unlimited range. The ideal height for this is 85 cm which will ensure accessibility for wheelchair users (Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, 2016).

"We built a ramp for wheelchairs, we built toilets, we expanded the alleys. We have reduced the comfort of the animals, but increased them for people with disabilities. Thanks to barrier-free adaptations, children from schools and kindergartens, families with children and prams began to come to us. We were able to integrate children with disabilities into the equestrian club."

The orientation in the building should be easy to understand and adapted to take into account the needs of people with sensory impairments. Visually impaired people should be able to receive information through tangible and acoustic means. It is possible to supplement acoustic information with visual information for hearing-impaired people. The rooms must be well lit. The marking should be in a contrasting colour. Graphic and pictograms are better and faster to understand.

Adjustments may need to be made when working with people who have a physical impairment. This includes a barrier-free toilet.

Source: Image Lanz-Andy/Pixabay

A suitable break and recreation room as well as sanitary facilities are necessary in every form of offer and with every target group. There are also further required facilities that every social farm should have. With an increasing number of participants, a canteen or similar large-scale catering facilities may be necessary. In the case of work with children and young people, the operation also requires an appropriate infrastructure. On the one hand, a proximity to the corresponding kindergarten or the respective school is advantageous. Furthermore, a connection to the public transport system or an independent driving service is necessary in order to guarantee accessibility and thus the utilization of the project. Basically, a demarcation between the areas and spaces designed for the

social offer and the rest of the premises is necessary or helpful, depending on the target group, in order to keep the risk of accidents to a minimum. When integrating people with disabilities, additional conversions may be necessary in order to enable freedom from barriers and independence as far as possible in the case of physical limitations.

Required facilities

- break room for rest and meals
- toilets and showers
- outdoor rest areas (benches, ideally in shady places)
- accommodations
- parking

In the context of work with older people and assisted living, proximity to an infrastructurally well-equipped place, which has appropriate medical, cultural and supply-technical offers, is very advantageous. A connection to the public transport system or the establishment of a driving service or functioning supply system is also beneficial in this context. If the participants live and spend the night on the Care Farm, at least bedrooms, but depending on the target group also individual apartments with appropriate equipment, such as a kitchen for self-catering, are necessary. Internet or other media access can also be a useful addition for certain target groups. These conversion measures can represent a high investment, which should not be disregarded when deciding on social farming.

4.5.2 Safety Measures

If these requirements are met, the greatest possible occupational safety must be ensured in the future employment areas of the participants. Basically, the participants must be thoroughly instructed in their work area and supervised according to their abilities. The participants must feel safe on the job - both technically and physically, as well as psychologically, because this is the only way to create a feeling of participation. The framework conditions must be right so that participants can learn new things, work independently and perhaps even take responsibility for an area of activity.

Participants benefit from working with animals. Certain safety rules are necessary - for the protection of the participants, but also for the protection of the animals.

Source: Thüringer Ökoherz e.V.

At the beginning, the introduction to the farm includes information about when and where the participants are allowed to be on the farm. There must be clear rules about what is allowed on the farm, but also in the immediate vicinity. This also includes, for example, making it clear to participants that they are not allowed to be out on the farm alone in the evening or at night, because they can expose themselves to serious dangers without supervision. In certain cases, special hygiene standards must also be met for the employment of clients in order not to expose them to health risks and to guarantee the smooth running of operations. This is especially necessary in the field of work with animals and kindergarten pedagogy (Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, 2016).

With regard to the technical safety of the farm, compliance with the legal provisions on safety, health and animal welfare is a basic requirement, which may be sufficient depending on the target group. However, much attention must always be paid to safety in stables and buildings. This includes, for example, storing hazardous materials properly, but also locking up machinery that participants might use without authorization and, for example, not leaving the key in the tractor. It is quite possible that the participants will also operate machines and tools. Before doing so, however, it must be thoroughly checked whether the participant is capable of handling and working with them responsibly. If there are machines and tools that are not suitable for working with the participants, this must be clearly pointed out. Work objects and tools used by the worker during his work must be placed at the workplace clearly, within reach and in proper order. The shape and surface material of all objects must allow easy cleaning and do not endanger the health of workers.

Safe work is multi-layered: also the right work clothing is important, such as sun protection or gloves.

Source: Martin Matej

Of course, the participant must also have the legal authority to operate certain machines, e.g. a tractor driver's license or chainsaw license.

"It is necessary to be careful that participants do not get into an uncomfortable situation at a time when they have garden tools - spades, shovels."

"We don't use any special tools or any modified tools within our operation, and it's generally the same tools and equipment that are in the normal farming environment elsewhere on the farm."

4.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. What are the different requirements that a social farmer or social worker must fulfil?
2. How do the requirements vary depending on the target group?
3. What are the personal requirements for farmers who want to introduce care services in social farming?
4. What are some factors that determine the necessary modifications for a farm in social farming?

5. What are some of the most common adjustments needed for people with physical disabilities in the farm environment?

6. What facilities are necessary for every form of social farming offer and target group?

APPLYING THE LEARNING

Ms. Smith operates a farm with a focus on vegetable production. The farm covers a total of 50 hectares of arable land and currently employs 3 people. Ms. Smith plans to open a facility on the farm for seniors who are no longer able or willing to live alone due to their physical condition. The seniors will be housed on the farm and will be able to perform light tasks as needed in order to actively participate in farm life.

1. What benefits could have both parties by integrating older people into the farm?

2. What do you think, which construction requirements need to be created on the farm to accommodate seniors?

3. Research what the legal and insurance issues are in your country when setting up this type of accommodation

4. What activities might be suitable for seniors to participate in farm life?

5. What funding options could be considered for the establishment of such accommodation?

6. What requirements would have to be met in order to operate such a facility, and what competencies should the facility's employees have in order to provide appropriate care for seniors?

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5 OLDER PEOPLE

Claudia Vogel

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Students have the capacity to communicate information on the group of older people, especially on older people living with dementia, older people in need for long-term care and older people living alone.
- Students have the capacity to describe, analyse and evaluate different aspects of social farming for the group of older people, such as activities by the hour, day-care facilities and assisted living communities.
- Students have the capacity to describe, analyse and evaluate varying perspectives and interests of farmer families, health professionals, older people and family carers as well as stakeholders such as insurance companies.
- Students understand the phenomenon of ageism and are able to assess measures against age discrimination.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

5.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP OLDER PEOPLE

The major characteristic of the group of older people is that they are in a stage of life that is defined as free from the need to do paid work. Instead, older people generally receive pensions. Historically, the phase of retirement as a separate stage of life is a comparatively new phenomenon. It only came into life with the introduction of state pension schemes as well as with the increasing longevity. It is only in the second half of the 20th century that the life stage of retirement became a matter of expectation in the life courses of the majority of the population. Without pension schemes, the majority of older people had to keep on working for pay as long as they were able to do so. In case of invalidity they had to rely on family support. In modern societies, the transition into retirement can be regarded as the beginning of old age, with statutory retirement ages in state pension schemes varying widely (OECD 2019).

While the phase of retirement is free of the need to do paid work, this does not mean that older people do not work. Besides continuing to do some forms of paid work, often self-employed, the disengagement from paid employment in the retirement phase allows more participation in unpaid work, either within the family (e.g. looking after grandchildren or tending those in need of care) or within the community (e.g. volunteering in various fields such as sports, politics, culture or religion). The birth cohorts who are

Some older people still work during their Retirement.

about to enter retirement and old age in Europe today have been born in the 1950s and 1960s. These birth cohorts are often referred to as 'boomers' because the cohorts are very large compared to both earlier and later born cohorts. The attitudes and needs of 'boomers' in old age might differ from those of older people who have been born earlier, that is in the 1930s and 1940s. It is anticipated that they might be more open to alternative ways of living in old age.

Heterogeneity of old age

The terms 'third age' and 'fourth age' are used to differentiate between a stage of life characterized as an era of activity or personal fulfilment and a final stage of dependency, frailty and decrepitude (Gilleard and Higgs 2014). It is not possible to assign an age limit e.g. for the beginning of frailty and dementia, as there are huge interindividual differences in the ageing process with a great variability between human beings. However, needs for long-term care are correlated with chronological age: the older people get, the more likely it is that they need support.

Social Inequality

In addition, both these phases of old and very old age are characterised by a huge heterogeneity among older people, e.g. in terms of socio-economic indicators such as income and health status, but also in psychological indicators such as cognitive development and well-being. Furthermore, there is a large degree of social inequality within the group of older people, with differences between rich and poor, between those with good health and those with poor health, and between those living with a family versus those living alone, e.g. after the death of husband or wife or because they remained childless. Not all older people are a target group for Social Work but those with specific characteristics - for example older people who are affected by loneliness and social isolation, by illness or by disability, and by poverty - may be.

Making jam in community

Source: Bauernhof-WG Marienrachdorf

Older people as target group for social farming

In modern welfare states, there has been an increase in financial and health resources among older people in the last decades, strengthening the trend towards active ageing. Active ageing is a policy framework of the World Health Organization (WHO), with facilitation of active ageing described as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (WHO 2002). In this context, social farming might contribute to an increase in the quality of life of some older individuals. There are three groups for whom the concept of social farming may be especially relevant: 1) older people living with dementia; 2) older people in need of long-term care; and 3) people who are looking for alternative housing concepts for old age that are less expensive and that provide more social contacts than living alone in a private dwelling, and that might provide some sort of social support in case of occurring frailty and a potential future need for long-term care. There is obviously some overlap between these three groups.

5.1.1 Older people living with dementia

Older people living with dementia are a group that is a target group of social farming already in many countries such as Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. About 7.8 million people are affected by dementia in the European Union today (Alzheimer Europe 2022). In Germany alone, for example, more than 1.6 million people are living with dementia, most of whom are aged 75 years and above (Alzheimer Europe 2022). The prevalence of dementia is age-correlated (see Table 1): About 12 percent of the population aged 80 to 84 and about 22 percent of the population aged 85 to 89 live with dementia in Europe. In the age group 90 years and older, the share is 41 percent, and it is much higher among older women than among older men.

Table 4: Individuals living with dementia (European Union 2018) prevalence in percent

	All	Male	Female
60-64	0.6	0.2	0.9
65-69	1.3	1.1	1.5
70-74	3.3	3.1	3.4
75-79	8.0	7.0	8.9
80-84	12.1	10.7	13.1
85-89	21.9	16.3	24.9
90+	40.8	29.7	44.8

Source: Alzheimer Europe 2022

Dementia is a progressive mental illness characterised by memory loss, loss of orientation, confusion and difficulties in communication, and by behavioural symptoms such as aggression and delusion, with symptoms starting mild and getting more severe over time (Alzheimer Europe 2022). In addition, dementia symptoms and depressive disor-

ders are often found to be combined among affected older people: more rarely the same holds for anxiety disorders and dementia. It is possible to live with dementia for several years with a good quality of life, and although there is no cure, there are ways to slow down the progression and to treat some symptoms. Many authors see high potential in social farming in this regard (De Bruin et al. 2017).

The organisation Alzheimer Europe (2022) names the following early and late symptoms of Alzheimer dementia, the most widespread form of dementia besides other types of dementia such as dementia with Lewy Bodies and vascular dementia:

"Early signs of Alzheimer's dementia include short-term memory loss, feeling disoriented and misplacing items. Initially, people with Alzheimer's dementia can find complex tasks challenging, and may find it hard to organise and express their thoughts. It should, however, be borne in mind that some of the changes in mood and behaviour may be linked to communication difficulties and could also be natural responses to difficult situations, disabling structures, lack of appropriate support and unhelpful attitudes rather than to the condition itself.

As Alzheimer's dementia develops, symptoms become more noticeable and can interfere more with day-to-day life. Memory loss and difficulties with language and communication become more severe. People may experience confusion, changes in personality and mood and difficulties with practical tasks such as dressing and washing. People with advanced Alzheimer's dementia often have, in addition, difficulty walking, sitting and, eventually, swallowing. Alzheimer's dementia is a terminal condition, although the rate of progression varies widely between individuals."

(Alzheimer Europe (2022))

When the symptoms get more severe, more and more help is needed to keep up daily activities and to avoid mobility impairments, injuries and frustration. Caring for older people living with dementia is time-consuming and especially demanding for family carers, relatives and friends. Measures for older people with dementia are needed that help the individuals living with dementia, but also the family carers. Day-care, for example, provides some relief for both the older person and the family carer, at least for some hours a day.

5.1.2 Older people with a (potential future) need of long-term care

The group of older people with a need of long-term care is difficult to quantify, because, in many cases, older family members need and receive gradually more and more support. It is difficult to name a starting date of a need for support or care, as the limitations in activities of daily living worsen slowly but surely. Typical limitations in activities of daily living include activities such as eating, as well as shopping and managing finances.

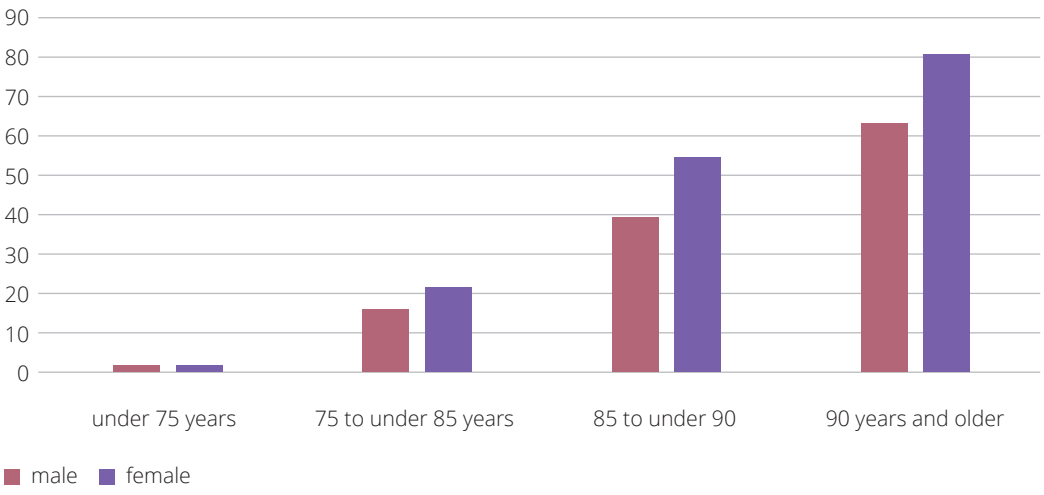
Counting only those older people in need for long-term care who receive allowances from the long-term care insurance because the need for care has been officially certified already, in Germany alone, about 4.1 million people are in need of long-term care, with a tendency to increase (Statistisches Bundesamt 2022). Dementia is just one among other indicators to identify the need for long-term care. Again, as many impairments are age-correlated, with increasing age, older people are more likely to be in need of long-term care (see Table 2). In very old age the care needs might be more intensified and more time-consuming, and may in some cases involve 24/7 care. Furthermore, women in old age are much more likely to be in need of long-term care than men in old age (see graph 1). First, more women survive into old age, because the life expectancy of women is higher than of men in most countries in the world. Second, the share of women aged 90 years and above who are in need of long-term care is, at 81%, much higher than of men in this age group (64%), because women in this age group are also more likely to live alone.

Table 5: Individuals in need of long-term care (Germany 2019) prevalence in absolute numbers

	All	Male	Female
under 75 years	1,323,750	677,698	646,052
75 to under 85 years	1,402,556	509,127	893,429
85 to under 90 years	773,091	225,949	547,142
90 years and older	628,208	142,723	485,485

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt 2022

Figure 6: Individuals in need of long-term care (Germany 2019) prevalence in percent



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt 2022

In Germany, three quarters of those in need of long-term care are living in private households and are being cared for by family carers. In the vast majority of cases, daughters or wives are the responsible relatives, sometimes combined with the help of ambulant services or migrant care workers. Only about one quarter of people in need of long-term care live in care homes. In other European countries, long-term care generally relies less on families in combination with ambulant nursing services and more on the public provision of help in ambulant arrangements as well as in residential care homes. In countries with a stronger welfare state provision of care for the elderly population such as the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, green care farming is much more widespread than in countries with a stronger family orientation in care provision for older individuals, such as Germany and Austria (De Bruin et al. 2021).

Multifunctional agriculture, public health and social inclusion

5.1.3 Older people who are living alone

Social farming has the potential to offer housing options in the form of assisted living for retired people who are interested in living in a community instead of living alone, and who might need help with some every-day tasks in the future. Retirees engaged in volunteer work might also be interested in living on a farm. This might become even more attractive in times of increasing costs for housing, costs that are increasingly outstripping incomes from pensions in the last couple of years. Also, there is a trend towards living alone in old age in many western welfare states (for Germany e.g. Statistisches Bundesamt 2021). However, Busch reports in a study from 2020: "There is hardly any empirical material on SSF [SSF means social services on farms] concerning *old people* who do not have dementia" (Busch 2020: 67; italic highlight in the original publication).

Community

"Social farming with the older people is focused on the areas assisted living and care. In an ageing society, social farming is an excellent way of creating new and individualized services for senior citizens. It is an innovative approach to combat social isolation of older people. For older people, very often being at a farm is associated with positive childhood memories, home, and being in touch with nature. There are various activities like felting, cooking or weeding where they can contribute with their skills. Those activities appeal to all senses."

(Schneider 2021: 56)

5.2 SOCIAL FARMING DISCOURSES AND BENEFITS

Three discourses of social farming relevant for the group of older people can be identified according to Bock and Oosting (2010): multifunctional agriculture, public health and social inclusion. Starting with the discourse of multifunctional agriculture, green care "is perceived as part of the agricultural sector and one of the new sources of farm income" (Bock and Oosting 2010: 17) with a farmer family providing a care setting for older people "on a small scale, with personal attention and individual care" (Bock and Oosting 2010: 18). This approach seems to be more attractive to older people than institutional care settings in large nursing homes because it resembles a family care setting. The additional income for the farmer family might originate from insurances like

health or long-term care insurances depending on the specific welfare state regulations in each country.

The discourse of public health frames social farming as part of health promotion activities in a natural environment, with goals like "health restoration and protection, disease prevention and health promotion" (Bock and Oosting 2010: 19–20). For example, being on a farm stimulates physical activity and appetite, as well as the emotional benefit from caring for animals and plants, all important aspects among older clients. Such green care activities are either located at health care institutions or on private farms, but always under the responsibility of health professionals (see Bock and Oosting 2010: 20). Services, again, might be financed by health or long-term care insurances. Additional income sources for farmers might originate from renting rooms or meadows or providing animals for activities with older persons.

The discourse of social inclusion focuses on involvement of marginalised groups, often in a voluntary work setting in urban agriculture, but also in some rural areas known for their beauty and attractiveness for tourism. Generally, social inclusion focuses on improving self-esteem and increasing feelings of belong and contribution: "The goal is to re-establish the habit of working, build up knowledge and skills and build self-esteem" (Bock and Oosting 2010: 22). For older individuals who have retired, there is still a need to have a daily routine, a need to participate in social activities and a need to feel still needed and to be perceived as a full member of society. There is also a chance to enable social contacts that might be stimulating especially in the exchange between different generations. Furthermore, Bock and Oosting mention the aspects of "offering a home and a sense of belonging to those living on the margins of society" such as lonely older people (Bock and Oosting 2010: 22). As green farming activities are often organised by the voluntary sector, however, there is no formal income provided for farmer families who engage older volunteers.

Well-being and Quality of Life

There are some empirical findings available on the benefits of social farming for older people, for example from various studies about how social farming can help to improve well-being of older people with dementia. De Boer et al. (2017) found in a comparison of green care farms, regular small-scale living facilities and traditional nursing homes in the Netherlands that the quality of life of the residents of green care farms was higher than of the residents in traditional nursing home settings, especially in respect to positive affect, social relations and having something to do. However, no differences were found in comparison to regular small-scale living facilities. In addition, differences showed only for quality of life, but not for quality of care, which was comparably good across all three settings.

Busch (2020: 78) has studied social services for older people on farms in Germany. Her findings are that the quality of life of older people living on a farm depends mainly on the kind of personal appreciation and communication with the farmer and his family. In addition, she observed: "In total, it became evident that the needs of old people differ significantly according to their personality and biography. While some enjoy idleness in their retirement, others seek a variety of activities. The seniors particularly appreciated if the farmers gave them the choice of activities without persuading them to do anything.

However, most of the seniors did not participate in agricultural activities. Sometimes they were prevented doing so by their physical or mental status, sometimes by a lack of possibility, and in some cases, due to a lack of interest" (Busch 2020: 78).

5.3 SOCIAL FARMING SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Various services are offered on farms for older people living with dementia and their family carers, relatives and friends, for example (De Bruin et al. 2019):

Activities by the hour: This can be a joint lunch, tours on the farm for people with dementia and their caretakers, or therapy like horticultural or garden therapy or animal-assisted intervention therapy. Services like therapy have to be provided by qualified staff trained as therapists.

Day-care facilities for people with dementia: In some countries like Norway and the Netherlands (Nowak et al. 2015), day-care facilities for people with dementia exist to a larger extent on farms. They are now also developing in countries such as Germany where the need for day-care facilities is huge (Busch 2020: 74).

Assisted living communities: An increasing number of assisted living communities can be observed "where – by concept – a self-organized group of seniors in need of care (up to 12) employs a nursing service and a housekeeper so that someone is available in the flat 24 hours a day" (Busch 2020: 74). Funding is available to a certain amount from the long-term care insurance. As with the day-care facilities, the farmer family provides outdoor and indoor spaces in the first place and rooms can be provided for rent to the communities.

On-site living: Busch names altogether 28 farms in Germany with offers for seniors as the main target group (Busch 2020: 75). In principle, they can be distinguished in either providing leisure activities such as guided tours on farms plus provision of day care and meals or providing accommodation. These latter on-site living possibilities are to be divided again into three categories:

- "First, there are projects for living as an independent community, with individual flats and commonly shared rooms [...]. Here seniors mostly move in at an early point in their retirement. There is no question of care at this time, which changes [...]

- The second type of living opportunities involves additional services [...]. Seniors rent a room but also have the possibility to order meals, cleaning, shopping assistance, chauffeur or delivery services.

- A third model of living on farms involve offers for people in need of care [...]. On one of the surveyed farms in Germany, the (female) members of the farm family trained in geriatric nursing and established a care facility. In other places, the farmer's role is that of a landlord, who gives room to an assisted living community" (Busch 2020: 75-76).

The purpose of these diverse approaches is to reach a high level of autonomy, dignity and quality of life for people way into their old age and right up until death. The interventions support older individuals in several domains of participation such as household management, achieving an active life according to one's capacities, and participation in a community.

"Farming offers various ways of working with the older people. Farm buildings can be rebuilt into flats or rooms suitable for senior citizens. Senior-focused flats at a farm can be the basis for assisted living in the countryside or nature. Some farms only rent out rooms for assisted living. Others might offer care service or special programs like animal-assisted intervention or gardening therapy targeting seniors and people with age-related diseases. From offers for visiting groups from retirement homes or senior clubs via day care offers, through to green care farms providing 24-h nursing home care for people with dementia, various options are possible. In many countries, legal conditions for establishing a care facility or nursing home are very strict (e.g. building law, care by skilled personnel). Activities that involve care and not just company can only be delivered by specially trained personnel. Very often a farm will cooperate with a care provider and might only provide space at the farm for nursing facilities. For working with older people, knowledge about age-related diseases is necessary. Especially for organizing activities for people with dementia or Alzheimer special knowledge is needed. Farming activities need to match the interests and skills of senior citizens. Education about plants and growing methods adapted for older people and also knowledge about dietary requests of this client group is necessary. Further, future social farmers need to know how to rebuild the farm to be senior-friendly and barrier-free (e.g. raised beds that are wheelchair accessible, accessible barns, disabled toilet)."

(Schneider 2021: 56)

Long-term commitment of farmer families

These examples give an impression how the process of ageing, with a retirement phase of many years, sometimes decades, demands stable and enduring solutions for housing in old age. Older people are usually interested in solutions where they can stay in familiar surroundings, even if their health deteriorates and even in cases that they might be eventually in need of long-term care. It is important to find trustworthy and reliable solutions for both the farmers and their families as well as for the older people involved, because it is not possible to forecast how long an older tenant will stay. It is very important to discuss all eventualities in advance. These might include what happens in case of immobility? Is it possible to use a wheeled walker or a wheelchair on the farm, are stairlifts available? What happens in case of a long-term care need? Are doctors within reach, are hospice services available, can the older person stay on the farm, is there an ambulant care service, or will it be necessary to move into a residential nursing home? The latter is a solution that the older person might want to avoid, because security to remain in a familiar community is a wish that has motivated the move to a social farm in the first

place. Housing solutions are long-term commitments that might even affect the retirement of the farmer families themselves. Other services as activities by the hour are more flexible and can also be offered on a more short-term basis.

Working together with animals (in this case with alpaca)

Source: Bauernhof-WG Marienrachdorf

All such services for older people with special needs are demanding for the farmer families, because they have to invest a high commitment and to spend many hours in either providing social support themselves or coordinating the interests of various stakeholders such as the older people, their relatives, their general practitioner, their dentist, various other medical specialists, the employees from a nursing services, the local authorities and so on and so forth and to organise innovative solutions (De Boer et al. 2021). In addition, there are a lot of requirements to fulfil for care facilities, e.g. for fire protection, depending on the specific laws in each country.

Busch (2020) describes in her study that the interviewed farmers "seem to have a certain kind of pioneering spirit and are used to searching for innovative ideas. Previous entrepreneurial experiences out of the farming sector helped them to know how to cooperate, use social networks, or which strategies of marketing might fit. Skills like getting information on their own let them overcome obstacles, as nearly none of them found advisory bodies in the beginning" (Busch 2020: 78).

Of course, it is possible to find some people who are already retired and still interested in volunteer work on a social farm or in founding an association to provide care for older people in the community (Civic Aid Societies etc.). Volunteer work by older people might be in the farming sector, e.g. helping as a seasonal worker with the harvest, or in the social sector, e.g. spending time with people with dementia. However, older people are self-determined adults and their contributions have to be individually negotiated according to their preferences. People who live with dementia or frailty might contribute as well, e.g. to activities like preparing meals or herding animals on pasture, but they also have to be guarded from falls and injuries as they are more vulnerable than others. Fall prevention and barrier-free accessibility are of course important issues for indoor

and outdoor space in caring facilities. The following quote from the SoFarTEAM project illustrates this connection in a special way:

"The older people are only involved voluntarily. Some people never worked with the animals directly. However, they might enjoy the company of the animals. Sometimes the farmer takes one of the animals to the joint living room of the inhabitants or their bedrooms so that all inhabitants can enjoy the animal contact. The breeding machine is placed in the living room for example and the inhabitants are able to observe the hatching of chicks."

5.4 BEHAVIOURAL REFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

People in old age are adult people with the same basic needs that all of us have: we need a suitable diet, suitable housing, activities, acceptance, social interaction and autonomy. In case of mental or physical illness and chronic diseases, we need help and support. Age-related losses such as changes in health and physical capacities, death of family members and friends, and a decline in cognitive processing might not be avoided completely, but they can be delayed. Some might be even reversible, and coping mechanisms can be applied. As older people experience the last stages of their lives, it is important that arrangements provide reliability and protection till death.

All adults are different and bring their individual biographies and experiences with them. Individual preferences have to be respected and it is essential to respect the autonomy of older people, even if they are impaired to some degree. What they can do autonomously should be done by themselves without help of others, even if they need more time to do so. This might also help to strengthen remaining capacities.

Older people are grown-up and responsible for their behaviour. In the case of advanced dementia, additional protection measures might be necessary (such as door alarms to protect people from elopement during dormancy) to avoid danger, accidents and injuries, because dementia does not only affect the memory, but also can bring a loss in orientation and a want to wander.

Due to their cognitive impairment, people living with dementia are often overstrained and frustrated. Sometimes, they react with anger, shame, or retreat into depression, and in some situations, they might even develop aggressive behaviour. In the interaction with people affected by dementia, it is important to allow time and create reliability, to involve and motivate the individuals, but also to take care for yourself as a main carer (Bundesgesundheitsministerium 2019: p 41). On the one hand, approaches like the validation therapy follow the idea that it is more positive to enter the reality of the person with dementia than to force the person back into our reality:

"In this way empathy is developed with the person, building trust and a sense of security. This in turn reduces anxiety. Many families and carers report increased benefits for themselves, as well as for the person with dementia, from a reduced number of conflicts and a less stressful environment."

(Dementia Australia 2022)

On the other hand, it is important to avoid:

- Confrontation;
- To restrain the person with dementia;
- Provoking the person with dementia by teasing or laughing;
- Punishing the person with dementia.

5.5 APPROACH NEEDED WHEN WORKING WITH THIS GROUP

Communication

Farmer families engaging in nursing care have to have a willingness to communicate and to coordinate and to involve themselves in social activities with older people living on a social farm. They should also be open to dimensions such as ethical and spiritual needs. Older people, equally, have to be open and willing to communicate, as there is, as in many families and communities, some probability to experience generational conflicts. Individuals with different years of birth might have different values, different views and different preferences, e.g. concerning what makes a good meal and a good living. It might be helpful if the farmer family itself consists of two or more generations, which seems to be rather the exception than the rule.

Social backgrounds

Older people come from various social backgrounds. In modern welfare states, often only a minority will have had a childhood on a farm, with more and more people growing up in urban areas, having mostly blue-collar or white-collar jobs during their working life. There is also a huge variation in income. While individuals with high old age pensions have wider possibilities to find housing and services in old age, there is especially a need for older single persons with low incomes or for older persons who live in poverty to find alternative housing. Therefore the cost of social farming accommodation needs to be at a level that is affordable and attractive for interested older people.

Older women as target group

In addition, the needs of older men and older women might differ to some degree. First of all, much more older women are in need of long-term care and are looking for a place to stay in old age then older men. This is due to the fact that women have a higher life expectancy in most countries around the world. Therefore, women are also more likely to lose a husband or a partner in old age than men, one of the reasons why older women, especially widows, are more affected by social isolation and loneliness in very old age (Vogel, Wettstein and Tesch-Römer 2019: p. 36). In contrast, married older men live most often in a two-person-household and if they are in need for long-term care, care is usually provided by the wife in the first instance. Very often when a widow shows

symptoms of dementia or frailty, no husband is available to provide care. Furthermore, older women are more prone to live with dementia and to experience severe limitations in activities of daily living than older men. Therefore, social farming services should be designed to be particularly suitable for older women or for couples.

Overall, social farming for the group of people living with dementia or older people with a need for long-term care has to avoid ageism, that is discrimination against people on the basis of their age. Negative stereotypes and prejudices are often assigned to the group of older people but older individuals can often realise their full potential to contribute to the community in a social farming setting. To avoid ageism becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy we have to ask ourselves what our views on ageing are and what we expect from others in the future, when we are old. Older people neither want to be pitied nor patronized. Social farming provides the chance to newly negotiate and answer the question: how do we want to live our lives?

5.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Why is the quality of life in old age expected to be higher when living on a farm than when living alone? Please discuss two different aspects of quality of life at least.

2. Which behaviour is characteristic for people with dementia? Please give at least three examples and explain them briefly.

3. For farmer families, inviting older people to live on the farm implies long-term commitment. Please discuss different reasons to justify this assumption.

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6 PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Aisling Moroney

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Name and have a broad understanding of the range of mental health disorders/challenges.
- Describe the benefits of social farming for this target group.
- Describe the overall approach and the key activities which are most effective and beneficial when working with this target group.
- Describe the possible behavioural references and key challenges of working with this target and good practice in managing these challenges.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

6.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

In simple terms, mental illnesses are health conditions involving **significant changes in emotion, thinking or behaviour**, or a combination of these. It is associated with distress of the individual and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities. It does not discriminate and can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, nationality, income, social status, religion or background. Some are mild and only interfere with in limited ways with normal life – and indeed most people with mental ill-health function reasonably well in their daily lives – while others will be more severe or incapacitating and may require intervention and external supports.

The prevalence of mental health difficulties is growing and is associated with negative impacts

The prevalence of mental health difficulties is significant and growing at international level (WHO, 2017; Frankish et al., 2018). Mental illness is now a leading cause of disability in the developed world (WHO, 2017) and is associated with a number of social problems, with economic costs in terms of lost productivity and more fundamentally, with a range of negative impacts on individuals, families and communities. It is estimated that up to 1 in 4 people will experience some level of mental illness at some point in their lives (WHO, 2017) and this is both a private issue for individuals and a public health issue for governments and wider society.

The two most widely established systems of psychiatric classification are the Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification for Diseases (ICD). For our purposes in this text book, we will utilise the ICD framework as it is the official international classification system, created by the World Health Organisation. The most common mental health disorders amongst those accessing social

farming, and where relevant, the symptoms/typical behaviours associated with these, are described in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Types of Mental Disorder with associated symptoms and behaviours.

Classification of Mental Health Disorder	Symptoms and typical behaviours
Mood Disorders, also known as affective or depressive disorders	**Depression**, where the person experiences a constant low mood and feelings of profound sadness and has lost interest in activities, events and so on that they previously enjoyed. Depression can be long-lasting or recurrent. People will often experience disturbed sleep or appetite and have multiple physical complaints with no apparent physical cause which may also impact energy levels and vitality. **Bi-polar disorder** where the person experiences unusual changes in their mood, energy levels, levels of activity and ability to engage with normal daily life. Periods of high mood are known as manic phases and can be associated with bouts of creativity but also overactivity and inflated self-esteem. Depressive phases can bring on low mood with similar impacts to those already discussed above.
Anxiety or fear related disorders	**Generalised anxiety disorder** (GAD). This is disproportionate worry/anxiety about a range of often everyday situations in a way that disrupts daily living and that can cause a range of physical symptoms, including restlessness, fatigue, trouble sleeping, tense muscles, etc. **Panic disorders** in which people experience regular panic attacks or feelings of panic of varied levels of severity, often accompanied by a range of physical symptoms (such as shortness of breath, chest pain, palpitations, dizziness, shaking, nausea, etc.). **Phobias**, including: social phobia which is sometimes known as social anxiety; simple phobias centred on specific objects or scenarios (e.g. fear of a particular animal); and agoraphobia which is a fear of situations in which getting away may be difficult (e.g., being a passenger in a moving vehicle). **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** where the person experiences constant stressful thoughts and a powerful urge to perform repetitive tasks such as hand-washing. **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** which can occur after a person experiences or witnesses a deeply stressful or traumatic event or series of events/scenarios.
Neurodevelopmental Disorders	The term applies to a group of disorders of early onset that affect both cognitive and social communicative development and which have a chronic course with impairment generally lasting into adulthood. In the ICD-11, the category 'neurodevelopmental disorders' includes disorders of intellectual development (considered and discussed as a separate and distinct client group of social farming); developmental speech or language disorders; and autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). People with ASD and ADHD in particular are amongst the people most likely to benefit from social farming supports.
Schizophrenia and other psychoses	Psychoses, including schizophrenia, are characterized by distortions in thinking, perception, emotions, language, sense of self and behaviour. Common psychotic experiences include hallucinations (hearing, seeing or feeling things that are not there) and delusions (fixed false beliefs or suspicions that are firmly held even when there is evidence to the contrary).
Personality Disorders	In simple terms, these are the type of mental health problems where the persons attitudes, beliefs and behaviours cause them long-standing difficulties in their lives and in their relationships with others.

Classification of Mental Health Disorder	Symptoms and typical behaviours
'Burnout'	Burn-out is included in the ICD-11 as an occupational phenomenon though **not** as a medical condition. It is defined as a syndrome resulting from chronic stress (from workplace or otherwise) which has not been successfully managed. It is associated with feelings of energy depletion, increased mental distance from job or others, feelings of negativity or cynicism, reduced efficacy.
Disorders due to substance use or addictive behaviours	People presenting with such challenges are discussed as a separate client group in this textbook about social farming.

6.2. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

The same general benefits of Social Farming which have been identified across all target groups also apply to people with mental health challenges but the following benefits are particularly important and notable.

a) The positive effects of time in nature.

A range of international studies draw attention to the role of nature-based interventions such as social farming in promoting mental wellbeing. The notion that time in nature can be restorative and nurturing is central to a number of influential theories which have emerged to valorise the relationship of man with nature, including the Biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) and the Attention Restoration Theory (ART) (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The Biophilia hypothesis suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life, that negative consequences potentially follow from a separation from nature and that a wide range of positive outcomes are associated with seeing or spending time in green spaces. Studies have demonstrated outcomes such as faster healing times after illness, reduced stress levels, improved physical health, and cognitive and psychological benefits in individuals and in populations as a whole (Taylor et al., 2001; Grahn and Stiggsdotter, 2003; Hartig and Staats, 2006). 'Doing green' i.e. hands-on activity in nature, rather than just 'seeing green' has a particularly important role to play in enhancing human health and well-being, particularly for those who have been dis-enfranchised or who have experienced trauma.

Nature-based interventions can promote mental wellbeing

'Doing green': Hands-on activity in nature can help ground people with mental illness

Dutch research has shown that really getting down to work and literally putting your hands in the earth can help ground people with mental-ill health problems. In this way, the social farm gives them peace of mind. The focus is less on their problems and they can take a step towards recovery (Elings, M. et al, 2011). Similarly, Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989) hypothesises that interaction with nature has the capacity to renew our attention, our energy and our sense of ourselves. Social farming has the potential to provide some key components of a restorative environment including the opportunity to 'be away' from one's usual thoughts and concerns, the chance to have one's attention held but in a way which doesn't require intense thought and the experience of being immersed in the environment.

Value of the quietness and sense of space and peace

"Nature is working on us all the time anyway. Social Farming facilitates this."

"Nature is transcendent, human connection is transcendent."

"It creates a context for experience. For those with mental health challenges, there is a timelessness to it like the sea, it has it an effect. You feel small but in a good way. It brings us out of ourselves. We are part of the everyday miracles of nature."

According to Elsey (2016), the process of non-taxing engagement allows the mind to relax, thereby "reducing the constant bombardment of worries and concerns that are such a feature of mental ill-health". Di Iacovo and O'Connor (eds.) (2009) draw attention to the value of the quietness and sense of space and peace associated with the farm environment with far less stimulus than more urban areas. The results of studies by Gonzalez et al. (2011) on the impact of a therapeutic horticulture intervention show statistically significant increases in attentional capacity and statistically significant declines in depression levels, stress levels and perceived rumination amongst participants both directly following the intervention and in three-month follow up assessments.

Participants enjoying the lake, being together in nature

Source: Social Farming Ireland

"It gives a sense of place, this is a very special relaxing place and I hope people feel the same way and can really relax here. You get away from mechanical noise."

A number of studies (Loue et al., 2014; Pedersen et al., 2016) draw attention to the new or renewed sense of connection with nature which social farming facilitates and nurtures and the benefits of this connection to participants. Loue et al. (2014) refer to the benefits associated with direct observation of and connection to **biological cycles**,

such as those of plant growth while Pedersen et al. (2016) report on themes such as excitement about and absorption in the growth process throughout the season emerging in discussions with participants.

"People get to see and be part of the full cycle of things, from planting, to weeding, to harvesting to eating."

Equally, the time on the farm can provide a space and a place where death as a natural part of life can be experienced and reflected upon, in a way that can be difficult to do in wider society. For example, in an interview, one farmer speaking of one of the young participants observed; *"The death of the mother goat was also a link to her own situation... because in real life it is also difficult when you miss your mother."* The opportunity which social farming usually provides to work alongside and care for animals has been shown to be highly beneficial. A number of research studies focused on animal-assisted interventions have reported declines in levels of anxiety and depression and improvements in client self-efficacy (Berget et al., 2008; Berget et al., 2011; Pedersen et al., 2011). In their meta-study on the role of farm animals in providing care at social farms, Hassink et al. (2017) identified a wide range of benefits including: feelings of closeness, warmth and calmness; the opportunity to have positive physical contact with another living creature; fresh experience of the basic elements of life; distraction from worries and difficulties; and being physically active in very natural, implicit way.

To work alongside and care for animals can be beneficial.

Source: Eliška Hudcová

"I said to my donkey the other day "You are my social farming asset!". The donkey and the dogs are great to have around. The donkeys are very calm."

b) Opportunities for meaningful activity

A large body of literature highlights the general benefits of occupation in mental health (Haertl and Miyuki 2006; Lim et al., 2007). An option such as social farming has a role to play in providing meaningful activity in the context of the placement itself but also in providing opportunities for skill acquisition, confidence building, productivity and feelings of meaning and purpose, which may progress participants towards further training, supported employment, part-time employment or in some cases, full mainstream employment (Iancu, 2013).

Meaningful activities show participants that they are needed and that their work is valuable

There is a particular value attached to the kind of activities undertaken and the modes of working on a farm which is about more than 'filling time'. A number of studies refer to social farming as providing inherently fulfilling and occupying tasks (Hassink et al., 2010; Gorman, 2017). The care and welfare for the environment, for plants and animals inherent to activities on social farms provide opportunities for participants to feel they are needed, that something is expected of them, that they are doing responsible and socially valuable work and that there is a result attached to what they do (Gorman, 2017; Pedersen et al., 2012).

"It's meaningful work that needs to be done, we're not making it up, it's not contrived. And unlike other work experience, we aim for full participation."

"They are good strong 'macho' practical jobs you are doing which for men is very important especially."

Research also shows that this feeling of being part of something, of carrying out 'natural labour' also tends to encourage participants to pay attention to daily routines (time-keeping, reliability, etc.) and to be motivated to continue (Pedersen et al., 2016).

c) Skills acquisition and gaining positive experiences

Hassink et al. (2010) have referred to social farming as an empowerment oriented and strengths-based intervention. The skills acquired in social farming are inherently practical and valuable and allow participants to gain the self-efficacy that comes from learning and implementing these skills, bringing a sense of confidence, purpose and hopefulness which is vital to mental health recovery (Elsey, 2016; Pedersen et al. 2012).

The skills acquired enable participants to gain self-efficacy, which provides a sense of self-confidence, purpose, and hope

"It is giving people a sense of control and accomplishment and building their self-esteem. They achieve, it is as simple as that."

"One of the participants went and did the outdoor training course [in local town]. She got confidence from the social farming to do it and we were able to help her with the project she had to do as part of the course."

Pedersen et al. (2016) note that compared to other work experience opportunities, there is huge variation in the work tasks that can be carried out on a farm, allowing for continual adaptation and flexibility. A number of studies (Iancu et al., 2014. Pedersen et al., 2014) draw attention to the multiple opportunities the average farm provides to switch between activities according to interests, levels of functioning, mood on the day, etc. It also provides for a process of discovery of what people can already do and where their skills lie:

"You can discover things about people, capacities they have. One chap it turned out he was a mechanic and he helped fix my tractor. He just came alive when he was doing his thing."

"People were in a space where they could be real. It gives them a framework outside of their normal setting and it's like, they could see where they were at. I see them being surprised by themselves. A job would be way too much but this is sort of in between."

Linked to this is the opportunity the farm presents for participants to have positive experiences again, for things to succeed for them. For example, that they plant pumpkin seeds and at the end there is a big pumpkin or that the calf they have fed grows and thrives. Many people who are experiencing mental health challenges may have been through a long period in which a lot of things didn't work out, and it can be these positive experiences that can help their self-confidence and self-belief to grow.

d) Social connection and building of social skills

At a very simple level, taking part in a social farming placement immediately expands the social network of the participant as they meet the farmer/the farmer's family, other participants and other people who may go on the farm such as other farm workers, the vet, neighbours, etc. Iancu et al. (2014) argue that the social farming placement can allow people to in some cases 'break the circle of isolation'. Di Iacovo and O'Connor (eds.) (2009) found that participants in their Europe-wide study found that they were approached as 'normal' people rather than being seen as patients and experienced respect without prejudice. Service-users in the Di Iacovo and O'Connor (eds.) study also mention the personal relationship with the farmer and his/her concern for them as an important quality of the social farming experience. The warmth and ease of the relationships can encourage people to speak openly about their lives; the positive things but also the challenges.

Chat around the kitchen table

Source: Social Farming Ireland

"People do open up. The occupational therapists often comment that the participants talk about things on the farm they never hear them talking about, things like their background, their family, etc."

"I went to some of the participants graduation from a course at the local college. It is nice to go to something which is important to the participants. It was wonderful, I got to meet their famillies"

These two participants also referred on a number of occasions to their own mental health struggles, if not necessarily using that wording. One referred to himself as having lost 'a farm and a marriage to drink' while another spoke about becoming 'unwell' at a certain stage in his life . There was an ease to these references to their own issues which is indicative of the non-judgemental and warm atmosphere created by [the social farmer] and indeed amongst the participants themselves.

– Extract from Participant Observation by researcher on social farm.

This sense of social connection extends into the extended farm family and the wider community. This is particularly the case in residential social farms where people stay for extended periods of time.

"We do something off-farm or different one of the placement days. We have done canoeing, we had a party here with local musicians and friends, we did a river clean up which had a real feel good factor too; we had a local friend come and do a felting workshop which went brilliantly. We have local people and friends and a community to draw on."

"The wider community aspect is very important. We'll have neighbours call in all time. There is a local man works on the farm with me and I always make sure he is there when the lads come."

"Because it is a village, everyone knows the farm and they know the clients. If they think someone is in danger they call us. [...] I think people also find it important that they belong to something, not only the farm but also outside."

A further important component of the social farming model is the group nature of activities and the opportunities this provides to create connections and relationships between members of the group and a broader sense of community. Hassink et al. (2010) reported on how one of their participants with severe mental illness indicated that in their everyday life they were alone, but when attending the care farm, they found themselves part of a community where they felt accepted, safe and respected. A study by Gonzalez et al. (2011) found that levels of group cohesiveness correlated positively with improvements in mental health and perceived stress and a majority of participants in their study reported a higher level of social activity after the intervention.

"That's one of the big outcomes; participants are yacking away to one another and bonding and sharing information that's useful. We do see improved social skills, people's ability to interact with us and others."

"You see people supporting one another, SF provides a space for that to happen. If one is stronger or knows more about something."

As Elsey (2016) has noted, working on the farm provides a non-threatening opportunity for social interaction, where focus on the work on the farm means connections are not the focus on the activity but rather a (happy) by-product. As she notes, this takes the pressure off social interactions, with attention no longer solely on the individual – as might be case in more clinical settings – but on working side by side on the task at hand. This opportunity is particularly valuable for those who experience social anxiety. Studies also show that the team work inherent to social farming builds trusting relationships amongst all parties.

"Trust is very important. When I am fencing, I am holding the post while they are driving it in. That is a very big thing that they know I trust them not to hurt me."

"One of the recent participants has started asking can the support worker stay behind in the farm yard while we go off and do jobs. That's really good progress for this person."

A further benefit of social farming is that it gives people something to talk about with people in their lives outside the social farm so the social benefits extend beyond the farm.

e) Physical health and well-being

The farm environment provides significant opportunity for a wide variety of physical activities and movements; walking around the farm, often on hills and on uneven surfaces, bending, stretching, digging, forking, lifting, etc. which can develop the physical fitness, strength and agility of participants. As Elsey (2016) notes, this is physical activity that is performed for a useful purpose, out in the fresh air and almost unconsciously, all of which is more natural and perhaps more likely to appeal than formal interventions which are labelled 'exercise'. A further benefit of social farming to all social farming participants may be improved sleeping patterns. Elsey (2016) suggests that farm-based activity can give a particular sense of satisfaction and of 'positive tiredness' which in turn promotes relaxation and sleep. Participants in research undertaken on Irish social farms (SOFI, 2019a, 2019b) spoke of the simple pleasure of being physically tired at the end of the day from having done something instead of being tired from inactivity. A number of participants in the SOFI research also spoke of an increased awareness of the importance and value of healthier and home-cooked food and of changes to their own eating habits outside of the placement days.

Physical activity on the farm can promote physical fitness, as well as strength, agility and lead to improved sleep patterns

"The change can be quite visible. With the current participant on the first day, I thought he would fall asleep standing up but that's no longer the case. It's because he wasn't in a good routine, he was up all night. But now with coming here, he was to go to bed at a decent time. It's broken the cycle. He says himself he feels fitter and now that he is, he wants to do more exercise. Also people are encouraged to eat better and try new things, more nutritious things. The fresh air and exercise is so good for people."

The opportunity to do physical labour was a key benefit for a large number of participants in research undertaken by Social Farming Ireland amongst participants with mental health difficulties (SOFI, 2019). In some cases, this was due to strong interest in and preference for physical work, and in others, an awareness that much of their daily life was overly sedentary because they weren't working or in a daily routine.

Building strength and fitness through ordinary farm activities

Source: Social Farming Ireland

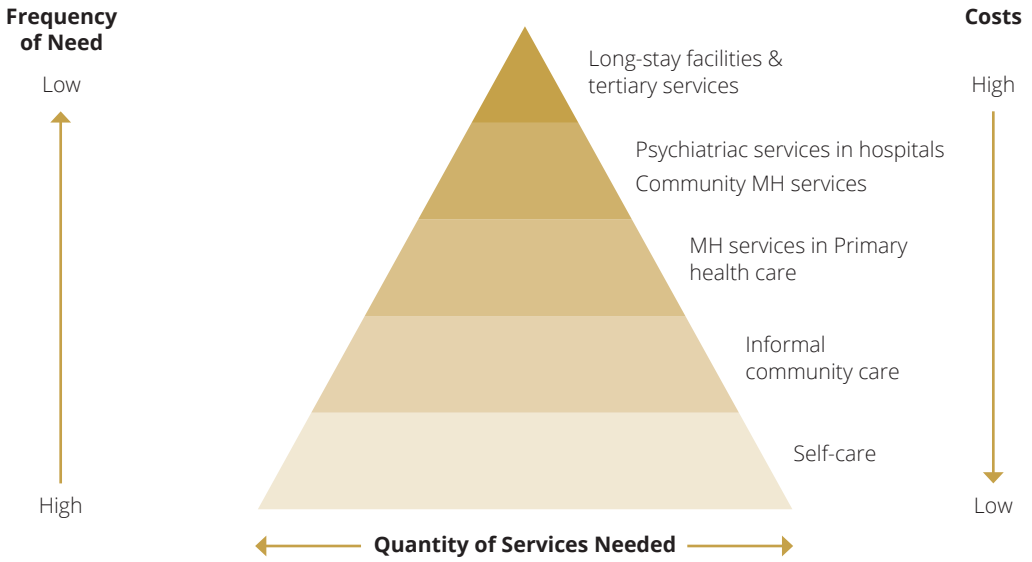
"Physical work can be good when there is a lot going on in the head. For example, when people hear voices and when other realities are very strong. Sometimes I have the impression that such a simple physical activity brings a bit of peace. It brings peace to the mind."

6.3 SOCIAL FARMING IN PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

6.3.1 Existing services that support this target group and links to social farming

As noted in the European Commission Access to Mental Health Care in Europe Consensus Paper (2016), there is a broad consensus on the need to shift from the model of care based on the traditional large psychiatric institutions to modern comprehensive community-based models of care, including acute inpatient units in general hospitals. They note that community-based services – which would support interventions such as social farming – are associated with greater user satisfaction, better participation in social life, increased met needs and adherence to treatment. However, both this paper and the Mental Health Atlas for the WHO European Region (2017) found that very uneven progress has been made on this. To give just two indicators, mental hospitals – many of them very large institutions – continue to provide most inpatient services, especially in central and eastern Europe and the mental health workforce in Europe as elsewhere is still overwhelmingly weighted towards nurses and psychiatrists rather than occupational therapists, social workers, etc. More broadly, according to the World Health Organisation (2022), health systems have not adequately responded to the burden of mental disorders, with a wide gap between the need for treatment and its provision all over the world. Within this broad context of inadequate and uneven service provision, the following are the kind of services which ideally support this target group, adapted from the WHO multi-level model of mental health services which uses a pyramid framework.

Figure 7: Multi-Level of Model of Mental Health Care Provision (adapted from WHO Service Organisation Pyramid for an Optimal Mix of Services for Mental Health)



Source: WHO, 2009

Self-care and informal community care

People *may* have the opportunity to access social farming at most levels within this pyramid although the services closest to the top of the pyramid are the most likely to access it. The most significant and accessible part of mental health care happens outside of formal service provision and involves self-care and informal community care, including from community organisations, mental health charities, peer support groups and support from family, friends, neighbours, etc. At this level, people may spend time on farms or access other nature based or green therapies such as community gardens, forest walks, etc. using their own resources, community networks, etc.

Primary health care

The next level, where more formal support services become available, is in the area of primary health care (i.e. general community health facilities including general practitioners, public health nurses, etc.). In some countries, it may be possible for people to access community-based options such as social farming from this level of service provision via social prescribing, use of health insurance, etc.

The next levels of service provision available to people are more specialised

The next levels of service provision available to people are more specialised and include psychiatric services in hospitals, long-stay facilities, specialist psychiatric facilities and Community Mental Health Services. Community Mental Health Services – which includes networks of community facilities, community residential services, day services, supports from multidisciplinary teams including occupational therapists, social workers etc.as well as the more traditional professions, etc. – are usually the most natural source from which social farming placements and other more person-centred interventions are organised and supported. There is significant variation across Europe in the extent to which different health and social care systems have the capacity in terms of funding, systems, organisational culture, staffing, etc. to support such innovative actions.

Apart from intervention from mental health services, other broader supports which may be available to people with a mental health condition include income support, disability payments, supported employment opportunities, sheltered employment and sheltered/social housing.

6.3.2 Activity of particular relevance and value to this target group

Process of discovery

As with other groups who engage with Social Farming, the early stages of being on the farm should involve a process of discovery – for both the person and the farmer/staff – as to what participant's preferences, skills, interests and challenges are. Farmers in the SoFarTEAM research shared their perspective on this discovery process:

"We see on the first day what people are capable of, what they can do and can't do and what they like and take it from there. You try and make sure everyone gets to do a bit of what they really like."

"There are some things I do which gives me an idea of people's ability and concentration early on. Sowing seeds is a good one because it requires concentration and fine motor skills."

An individual and flexible approach is a key success factor of Social farming

Social farms are characterised by a high degree of flexibility, variety and choice in terms of what people can do, what they can focus on, or even the intensity with which they can work. All of this allows for a very individual and flexible approach which is absolutely key to the success of Social farming for people with mental health challenges, as these extracts from interviews with social farmers demonstrate:

"In principle, an individual approach has long proven successful, which is mainly due to the specific diagnoses and the real abilities and skills of our clients or employees. Further support is also in the amount of working hours, where we try to set an adequate amount of working hours for our employees in relation to their real skills and abilities or we are willing and able to adapt these working hours flexibly and perhaps reduce working hours for a limited period of time."

"A participant who was bouncing with energy I gave the job to weed the tall weeds while a participant who was anxious I gave the job to weed the small weeds because that movement is smaller."

"So I divide into gross and fine motorists, for example, there are the people who passionately like to wheelbarrow back and forth and muck out or move soil or something or [names participant] digs and works in a foil tunnel and transplants compost. That's the kind of stuff he likes to do and then there are the others who are passionate about pricking out or working anything on a small scale in the microcosm. Manageable and beautiful. And then there's those who love animals and actually need that. So that depends more on temperament and inclination … ".

In line with this individual and flexible approach, there is no ONE fixed 'set' of activities on a social farm that are of particular relevance or value to this target group. Indeed to have such a thing would be to negate what makes social farming special. It is more so about supporting individuals on individual farms to discover what they are good at, inspired by and interested in. However, the following are the key components of a day at the social farm which are of particular relevance to this target group:

a) Getting close to nature

As noted in Section 6.2 above, being out in nature may be particularly beneficial for those who struggle with their mental health. Having time in every day where there are opportunities to connect with the soil, plants, woodlands, animals, and with the cycles of life and the seasons are important in grounding people and connecting them with the essentials of life.

"In the past we lived much more with the seasons now summers are as long as winters because we have light and central heating. As a result, we miss the rhythm of the seasons, e.g. that you withdraw in winter. The vineyard helps participants to get back into this rhythm."

"People really like to stand in the field and let the animals come to them, giving the time for that [is important]".

The farmer or staff also need to pay attention to what an individual might need at a particular time.

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Side by side, getting hands in the soil

Source: Social Farming Ireland

"When people are too much in their heads, I say: go and weed with your hands instead of with the hoe, because then you are closer to the soil."

"The soil is very important; I always encourage people to get their hands in it."

"When things are not going well, they can [go and] cuddle a goat or a horse."

b) Providing meaningful and necessary tasks

It is important that the activities and tasks carried out on the farm are real and meaningful and that the participants can have genuine feelings of accomplishment at the end of the day and that they are contributing to something bigger than themselves:

"They realise the value of being out in the fresh air which is so good for the soul, to keep busy, to have a feeling at the end of the day of a day well spent."

"Feeding animals, clearing sheds, tree planting, fencing, seed-sowing, planting, power-washing (everyone loves it), chipping wood. Something very satisfying about it. You can see the job done."

"[...]social relevance, working together and doing something bigger than my own immediate needs and satisfaction."

The farm will always be a mix of routine tasks which must be done each day and new projects or tasks but it is important that participants can see and feel that they are growing in capacity and confidence over time.

"Important to do key tasks every day because then they can see their own learning and progression. There is a confidence that; 'it's time to do the nuts now' and they know how many we need. That is the nature of it, repetition."

There is also however the need to stretch people to meet the needs of the farm, which increases their sense of competence and confidence:

"So the activities are selected on the one hand so that they fit the person's situation. On the other hand, they are chosen according to what needs to be done. For example, splitting wood, sawing wood, we've already done all that. And I just see what works with this person and make offers ... There are people for whom it's really good if they can exercise. They need simple, manageable tasks that work without much explanation, without having to think too much. So they just need to power through."

"Knowing how to push people and how much to push. The animals are a great means of getting people out of their comfort zone. Oftentimes, people are capable of so much more than they have been doing. The doing things alongside other people, in the real world is very valuable."

Equally, where appropriate, it is important to include tasks which may challenge people and include an element of risk.

"Things that are slightly risky but still safe, like the wood chipper. You are always doing it in a controlled way but it is good for people and a very human thing to want."

c) Providing structure and rhythm

People struggling with mental ill health, and particularly those who are previously unemployed, can often lack structure and routine which can be detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing. As noted by a number of farmers/support workers, participants may arrive with unhelpful patterns (or indeed none):

"... support the participants in their approach to normal life by offering them structure, despite all the mistrust that he brings with him. People come with a self-structure that they cannot trust, nothing is reliable. And that takes, and may well need six months, until they are here."

"Another problem at the beginning is the setting with medication so that the participants can cope with a normal everyday life. The medication setting is also very important so that, for example, the residents have the same sleeping and working hours and do not disturb each other's rhythms. In the beginning it's all about rhythm."

Source: Eliška Hudcová

"So you actually resonate with what is real life. Especially the daily routine with the animals, letting the ducks and geese out early and putting them back to bed in the evening. And that gives structure and a framework that is not rigid, but is alive and where you have encounters."

It is important that the time spent on the farm has a kind of reliable rhythm according to the seasons, the time of day, the tasks needing to be done, all of which will encourage better habits in the participants both on and off the farm.

d) Activities and approaches which encourage sharing, friendship and teamwork

In the first instance, the very act of working together on shared tasks encourages conversation and connection and cooperation around the task or what is happening live on the farm. This availability of topics can be a very good and non-confrontational way to get people to 'open up' who might be reserved or lacking in social skills or confidence:

"If someone arrives here and is not so talkative this changes when they start working in the garden because then they have a theme to talk about and makes the first contact here."

"Thanks to the work in the garden, good relationships between clients are supported. This also encourage cooperation."

"Some animals also function as a low-threshold friendship for clients. The clients then dare to share things that they find important in life, for example."

"Overall, I think that the best atmosphere between the beneficiaries is in the field, in the barn or in the garden. So when people are dealing with each other. Then they don't have time to interpret each other 'obliquely'.

Where appropriate, participants should be encouraged to work in pairs or in groups around a particular task, such as weeding a patch of ground or moving some animals or even using a piece of equipment together: one farmer noted how valuable a two-handed post driver for fencing was for encouraging team work. There may be cases where it is appropriate for the farmer to leave participants to themselves and provide a space for them to connect without the farmer as mediator:

"It can work well to give people a bit of space, to step out of the picture to let the participants interact among themselves."

Creating a warm and fun atmosphere for people with mental health challenges is crucial in encourage in building friendships and real connections with other people, something which may be missing in their life otherwise. The shared work/activities are key to that but so too are other opportunities to gather and have fun such as mealtimes, tea/coffee breaks, celebrating someone's birthday, feast days, etc.

"[...] and of course friendship! It's a community where you get to know people, where friendship forms. Some of them met here, they spend a lot of time together. They do everything together. And friendship develop not only among the residents but also among staff and residents."

"Every person brings a story and together you could write books about what you experience."

"It is very important for us that people feel at home in a family-like setting. So yes, for some people it does feel like family because they often have no one else to share it with."

"Fun activities around the holidays, just having fun together. I think for participants it adds value to their lives. Their world is generally small, they interact with the public here and get to know more people."

6.3.3 Approach when working with this target group

The key principles applicable to working with all target groups - treating everyone as an individual, orienting one's approach accordingly, working with people 'where they are at' - should underpin everything. But the following are particularly important when working with people with mental health challenges:

a) Being present, grounded and intuitive

While also relevant for other target groups, it is particularly important that the farmers/ support workers feel grounded and mentally in a good place themselves. In this way they can better support the participants:

"If I'm not in a good mood myself, if I'm not well sorted, that's transmitted, they notice that. It's very subtle."

"It's the effortlessness and being in the present that gets results. It's that sense of connection that you get with people and that can only happen if you are reasonably relaxed and grounded."

"You need empathy and interest in any case. And then you also have to have patience and be able to be calm and not shy away from conflict. You need a certain stability or you have to look for the background where you can get help to evaluate that."

It is also very important to remain very aware and able to intuit what is happening with people on a given day so that you can respond appropriately:

"You observe people all the time and see their body language. We are very aware, some of that from the canoeing [this social farmer is also a canoeing instructor] because you are meeting people all the time and gently instructing them. So you can intuit when they are tired or you need to switch to something else."

"With this target group it is important to be present and well connected to participants. Not to push on them and try do thinks too hard. The effortlessness and simplicity are key."

Connecting with the cow and the land, staying grounded

Source: Social Farming Ireland

b) Treat people as people

While the social farmer or staff on the social farm will know that the person has mental health challenges, it is crucial to first see the person as a person and not as their disorder:

"That is quite clear that I work in a non-psychiatric context, that I do not see the deficit. Even the people who live here, who meet these people, don't see the mental illness first. They are quite blank minded. They see the person first."

"You have to know about people's issues and then forget about it."

"One of the things that social farming can offer is that they don't know the person at the beginning – unlike the service who only know them in one way. Farmers can really have a sense that they can flourish and have potential. If we can keep that in mind, that belief in itself can bring people on. You are creating a space for people to flourish because you assume that you can. They feel amazing when they do."

This extends to seeing the person as someone with something to give also and encouraging a two-way relationship:

"We also get something from them – I got a new recipe for brown bread from one of the participants which was wonderful. People have something to give which is really important."

It also extends to respecting people enough to raise an issue with their behaviour or conduct on the farm:

"You have to accept that things will not be done perfectly or that things might happen like people stepping on beds but knowing when to say 'that's not ok' and this is what we need to do. It's about respecting them enough as a human being, you're not allowing them to literally walk all over the place, it would be patronising to do so."

One of the most valuable features of social farming is that demarcations or hierarchies are not obvious in terms of clothing or appearance, it is simply people working alongside one another in a shared place:

"Everyone comes as he comes. You do not have to wear working clothes not the supervisors do. In that way you do not see the difference between supervisors, participants or volunteers. We do it together and that is the atmosphere we want to create."

Just a group of men standing together looking out at the rain. You cannot tell who is the farmer and who is the participant and that is very important

Source: Social Farming Ireland

c) Role Modelling

With this target group, there are sometimes issues with a lack of self-care around diet, exercise, use of substances and personal care/hygiene. At a minimum, the time spent on the farm should provide the opportunity for people to eat good wholesome food, have a good structure and routine, and have a break from some of the more unhelpful habits (e.g. not eating proper meals or staying in bed very late in the morning).

"I believe that they get to eat. That must be said quite clearly. They appreciate a regular meal. Some people just don't cook. Of course they don't. Sometimes they have no possibility to cook at all."

Farmers can also encourage people to be aware of body posture and to increase their own self-awareness of how to get out of their head and into their body.

"Awareness of body and how you are standing. Every fifteen minutes or every ten plants you're planted stand still for a moment. How do I feel? Connecting with yourself."

The time spent on the farm and around the farmers and staff can provide every-day example and modelling of self-care without the need to 'lecture' people. It can also help to (gently) break or challenge poor habits which may have developed which will be of benefit 'off farm'. For example, the farmer could say 'I feel so hot and dirty after all that work today, it is so nice to have a shower afterwards. It is important that people working on the farm are aware of this aspect of their role in relation to participants and in some way, led by example.

"... cooking lunch, including writing up recipes for people to take home; people can take ingredients away to cook at home."

"You can provide good modelling in terms of personal hygiene, hand-washing etc. because lack of self- care can be an issue."

"They also like the interaction with us, with G [other social farmer] especially. I think they find him quite inspiring as a person and it might inspire them to make some changes."

d) Creating a sense of belonging

It is very important that the participants in social farming with mental health challenges feel that they matter, that they are not alone, and that they are missed when they are not around.

"Standard if someone is not there then he is missed [...] we will call: what is going on? Why do we miss you? Short lines and see how we can help someone."

"[important that] they feel that they are not alone in their problems or in their lives and that they are surrounded by the environment of our gardens and the presence of other clients and employees."

6.4 PARTICULAR SKILLS AND STRENGTHS OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Social farming is in line with a strengths-based approach to mental health recovery

Each individual who participates in social farming is a whole person and is not and should not be defined solely by their diagnosis or by a perceived deficit. One of the key features of social farming is its capacity to uncover, draw out and build upon people's strengths and areas of competence. It is an ability – rather than disability – focused intervention and is in line with a strengths-based approach to mental health recovery where every individual is seen to have a unique set of strengths and abilities which they can use to recover from or to live a more fulfilling life with their mental health condition(s). In addition, some of the specific mental health conditions described in Section 6.1 above are also associated with positive and valuable characteristics, including:

Particular Skills and Strengths Associated with Specific Mental Health Conditions

- In general, people who have experienced their own mental health struggles may be more empathetic and supportive of others and understanding of how hard life can be. They may also display resilience and fortitude in their commitment to their own journey of recovery.
- Bipolar disorder is strongly linked with creativity and high energy levels and capacity.
- People with ADHD may also have high-energy levels and be very productive if suitably channelled. They are also often 'out-of-the box thinkers' and have a disinhibited manner which can lead to breakthroughs and creative approaches to getting things done.
- People with ASD may become knowledgeable about and very proficient at subjects or activities which spark their interest (e.g. machinery, care of animals). They may also be very structured and rational and can contribute well to planning and developing activities on the farm.
- People with anxiety disorders may be more diligent and detail oriented and more hyperaware of themes and patterns.
- People with 'burnout' may have a high capacity in carrying out tasks and activities and being prone to perfectionism, will usually have high standards in the quality of the work that they do.

6.5 POSSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL REFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

There are particular challenges which can be associated with working with this target group. Some are common across the range of mental health disorders, while others may be specific to particular disorders.

a) Lack of motivation and engagement

Particularly amongst participants with depressive disorders, there is often a lack of motivation, of self-confidence and of enthusiasm which may affect the capacity of people to participate fully and energetically in social farming activities even if physically present and fit. People may also often experience disturbed sleep or appetite and have multiple physical complaints with no apparent physical cause which may further impact energy levels and vitality. Medication may also affect people's energy levels. Attendance at and commitment to social farming may also be influenced by mood; this is the target group where attendance can be lowest and where not turning up is relatively common. This is usually regardless of the quality of the experience or the qualities of the social farmer.

The suggestions which arose for dealing with this lack of motivation and energy include lowering expectations, not taking people's attitude personally and accepting people where they are but also working to build people's interest and engagement.

Lack of motivation is common and should not be taken personally

"In any case, one should not set one's expectations too high about what will be finished or what will happen. Actually, the product of the work with mentally ill people is the work itself. So if a lot comes out of it, that's very nice, but it shouldn't shock you if it doesn't happen. And then it takes time and calm to instruct well, to instruct well in the longer term, until everyone has understood what to do."

"They also like the interaction with us, with G [other social farmer] especially. I think they find him quite inspiring as a person and it might inspire them to make some changes."

"You just have to accept that people are going to zone out and try to bring them back, don't panic about it. You can't take it personally if they do."

"I have also learned that people can behave in a certain way because they have to and it's become a pattern. But we can gently challenge and change that pattern."

b) Anxiety and social anxiety

Participants with anxiety disorders in particular – but also participants with other mental health challenges – may experience anxiety about this new environment which they are experiencing, about the situations which may arise and about their own capacity

to handle things. The good practices mentioned in previous sections – such as taking time for people to ease themselves into the environment, ensuring connection with nature, plants and animals, working at a pace that suits people, allowing people time to themselves – are all key to ensuring that people are supported to manage, and ideally overcome their anxieties associated with being on the social farm.

c) Over-exuberance/over-activity

For people with bi-polar disorder, periods of high mood are known as manic phases and can be associated with bouts of creativity but also overactivity and inflated self-esteem. These must be carefully managed while on the social farm to ensure the welfare and safety of everyone and to minimise the impact on other participants.

d) Aggressive or overtly challenging behaviours

In a small number of cases, participants may show aggression towards the farmer, staff or other people on the farm. As with other issues which may arise, the key is to remain alert to the person's mood, to respond to each individual as an individual, to not panic and to not take the aggression personally or to see it as being directed to oneself; it is almost always a function of the persons mental health disorder.

"There are people who have to be approached head-on, and there are people who have to be approached indirectly and carefully, and you have to find that out first. And in the beginning, there is sometimes also a bit of a fight, and you have to bear that with composure."

"It was more like I was under stress or something. Or I had to realise that when someone stood me up, they weren't doing it because they wanted to annoy me, but because it was part of their illness. I had to learn not to take it personally."

"With a person, I also have to get to know these conversations that he constantly has with himself, which sometimes also seem aggressive. In the course of time I have developed a sensitivity for the fact that this can be a sign that he is angry, frustrated about something, that he is hungry. But that has nothing to do with agriculture in particular."

In cases of significant aggression or anger, ensuring the safety of all of the people on the farm – that that there is no access to tools, implements, machinery, etc. which could harm to self or others – is crucial as is specific training for farmers in dealing with episodes which may occur.

People with personality disorders may have difficulties and challenges in relationships with others, including the farmer and others on the social farm: an understanding of this and ability to manage it is important. In these cases, it may be useful to have a mutual trial period at the beginning of the time on the farm. If it turns out that the person does

not fit in so well with the group and/or the farmer or other staff, then another place can be found for him or her.

e) Panic attacks or panicked responses

Social farmers would need to be aware of the triggers (if any) were particular to this person and to be aware of symptoms of a panic attack and how best to support the person if they were having one. This is similar to the advice for people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is covered in some detail in the chapter on Refugees. Generally, social farming is always a balancing act between what you need to know about a participant in advance in order to support them effectively and ensure the safety and welfare of everyone and the very important principle of meeting someone as a person first and foremost with no bias or pre-conceived notions of what they will be like.

f) Phobias

Social farmers would need to be aware of any triggers or challenging scenarios which may exist on the farm (e.g. being in an enclosed space, handling animals, etc.) and seek to manage, to minimise exposure to them or to remove them, depending on which will be the best option for an individual participant.

g) Behaviours associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Some of the most important behaviours to be aware of in the social farming context for people with ASD include: difficulty interpreting what others are thinking or feeling and trouble interpreting facial expressions, body language, or social cues; some difficulties regulating emotion; tendency to engage in repetitive or routine behaviours; wanting to participate in only a restricted range of activities; strict consistency to daily routines; and exhibiting strong, special interests. In such cases, good practice can lie in, for example channelling people's particular interests in a positive way and giving them key responsibilities (for example, for feeding the chickens or power-hosing the yard) or ensuring they have the opportunity to use their skills in planning and keeping to routines. One farm in the Netherlands has developed a 'cool card' system where each activity the participant has to do is divided into several sub-tasks, with each new sub-task on a new card which can be saved/flipped when the task is completed.

For clients with ADHD, some of the most important behaviours to be aware of in the social farming context include: impulsiveness, disorganisation and problems prioritising, managing multiple tasks, etc.; poor concentration; excessive activity or restlessness; low frustration tolerance; frequent mood swings; and trouble coping with stress. If suitably channelled, people with ADHD may have high-energy levels and an ability to 'get things done' quickly and should be supported and encouraged to do so where appropriate. They may also have fresh and creative ideas to contribute as to how things are done and opportunities should be provided to draw these out and act on them. They may also benefit from being sent to figure out and do a task on their own and to feed back their learning and insight to the farmer.

6.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe four elements of a social farm that can be important for the development of people with mental health challenges.

2. Take two common mental health disorders and describe what behavioural references the social farmer might need to be particularly aware of if people with these disorders were to engage in social farming.

3. Taking one of these disorders, describe four specific activities on a typical social farm which you think would be particularly beneficial for people and give a brief reason for your answer.

4. Write three 'DOs' and three 'DON'Ts' that a social farmer should be aware of in their approach to working with people with mental health challenges. Which behaviou

APPLYING THE LEARNING

Below are two case studies, of Anna and Christopher, both potential participants in social farming. In answering the questions at the end of each question, you will be using the learning from this module to imagine how social farming can work for 'real-life' participants who must remain the key focus at all times.

Anna is aged 35, lives in a small town in a rural area and worked for many years in the nearest city as a public servant in a customer-facing role. She is single and lives alone and has always been an introverted and quiet person. Following a serious incident at work one year ago in which she was physically attacked by a member of the public, she has been signed off work. She is recovered physically more or less but feels very unsure of herself and has had a number of panic attacks. She experiences significant anxiety, including social anxiety and has become quite isolated from her friends and wider social circle. She is very reliant on her immediate family who live nearby for support and social interaction. She loves gardening and that is the one thing she has is very happy to do even now. Her doctor has suggested that she might benefit from spending time on a social farm, which will be covered by her health insurance. She is unsure whether she will ever return to her previous role but would like to take the first steps to going back to employment and a fuller life.

1. What could Anna gain from spending time on a social farm?

2. What kind of activities do you think she might benefit from and enjoy the most?

3. What could she bring to the social farm?

4. What kind of a social farm do you think would suit Anna the most?

5. What approach do you think the social farmer should take to working with Anna, taking into account her background and skills and her particular mental health challenges.

6. How could this placement contribute to Anna's journey back to employment and a fuller life?

Christopher is 68 and worked in a very physical job as a general operative for a local municipal authority from when he left school when he was 16 until he retired 5 years ago. His wife who he had been married to for 37 years died four years ago after a long illness and his grown up children live in the capital city three hours away. He lives alone in a house in a new housing estate in a large town that he and his wife had down-sized to when their children moved out. Most of the people in the estate are young families with whom he doesn't have much in common. He feels quite lonely and isolated and is having trouble motivating himself to get out the house and to meet his old friends, who now live quite far away. He goes for a walk most days when he feels up to it but walking around the housing estates and town is not that appealing to him and he can feel himself getting unfit. He experienced two episodes of clinical depression in the last two years and is a client of the Community Mental Health team.

1. What are the potential benefits/outcomes of a social farming placement for Christopher?

2. What kind of activities do you think Christopher might benefit from and enjoy the most?

3. What could he bring to the social farm?

4. What kind of a social farm do you think would suit Christopher the most?

5. What approach do you think the social farmer should take to working Christopher, taking into account his background and skills and his particular mental health challenges.

6. What would you wish for Christopher from his time spent on a social farm?

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7 PEOPLE IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

Michael Harth

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- name general characteristics and needs of people recovering from drug addiction.
- understand the benefits of social farming for this target group.
- describe paths and processes of participants from impairment to social farming.
- comprehend possible behavioural references of people recovering from drug addiction and related challenges.
- identify peculiarities of this target group in the context of social farming.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

7.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is important to develop an understanding of addiction

To understand the involvement of people recovering from an addiction in social farming, it is - in addition to develop an understanding and a detailed study of the person in general (family background, educational history, participants social life, etc.) - also important to develop an understanding of drug addiction. Therefore, it is necessary to know the diagnosis and medical history of the participants as well in order to assess which of them can be integrated into agricultural or other activities. For this reason, the following first clarifies what drug addiction means and which addictive substances are in the foreground.

Addiction is indeed a disease of the body and brain and not a mental disorder or lifestyle choice

Often time's addiction is still viewed as a "choice" by much of society. The consensus of the professional community is that addiction is indeed a disease of the body and brain and not a mental disorder or lifestyle choice. However, underlying discriminatory attitudes against addicts still prevail in society. Long-standing beliefs about addicts emerged hundreds of years ago before we had the technology to fully understand the brain and how it reacts to addictive substances. Instead, people saw only the external behaviour of addicts and assumed they could simply "stop" using drugs if they wanted to. For someone who has not dealt with addiction, it is difficult to comprehend the inability to control an action. This, coupled with an unfortunately common desire to judge others means it is easy to accept that they are simply "weaker" (Stanbrook 2012).

7.1.1 Causes and effects of addiction

The causes but also the effects of addiction are manifold. Physical (biological, genetic), psychological and social factors, among others, play an important role in the development and maintenance of an addiction. All "substance-related" addictive disorders cause a psychological and a physical addiction, which mutually intensify each other in their interaction.

Control through a „drug memory"

The addictive disease is understood as a learned reaction that is controlled by a "drug memory". According to the latest scientific findings, addictive substances activate various messenger substances, especially the messenger substance dopamine, in a specific area of the brain. In the limbic system, which is responsible for pain, emotional behaviour and especially our well-being, drugs cause an increased release of the messenger substances. It is assumed that this mediates the reward effect felt by the addicted patient. This increased release puts people in a mood they desire. These positive feelings in turn reinforce the behaviour to the extent that the person wants to hold on to this state permanently.

The fact that addictive disorders occur more frequently within a family indicates that both genes and the home environment have an influence on the development of a dependence syndrome. If the parents also show a lack of role model character (through negative presented behaviour), the risk of addiction increases.

Figure 8: The triad of causes for drug addiction

ADDICTION

1. Psychoactive substance (drug)	2. Person (set)	3. Social environment and society (setting)
• pharmacological properties • mode of consumption • frequency of use • duration of use • consumption dose	• Age, sex, constitution • Early childhood development • Family history • Attitudes, self-worth • Problem-solving skills • Stress management strategies • Ability to enjoy and love • Dealing with feelings • Evaluation of the drug	• family, friends • school/professional situation • social status, financial situation • leisure activities • social evaluation of the drug • advertising and fashion influences • legislation, consumption habits • availability, mobility • religion, economy

Source: Kielholz and Ladewig 1973

Peer pressure promotes the entry into an addiction

Availability is an important factor in first use and continued use

In addition to these various biological and familial aspects, social influences also play a role in the development of addiction. Addiction occurs to a comparable extent in all social classes. However, there are differences in the respective school systems. For example, children at secondary schools come into contact with tobacco and other substances more often and earlier. Availability is an important factor in first use and continued use. As a rule, access – especially to illicit drugs – is easier in the city than in rural areas. Especially among young people, peer pressure promotes the entry into an addiction. Often, the lack of recognition or popularity and insecurity is covered up or suppressed with the respective drugs. If the person concerned gains more prestige within the group by taking drugs, the drug becomes more and more important, the consumption increases, and the path to addiction begins (Batra and Bilke-Hentsch 2021).

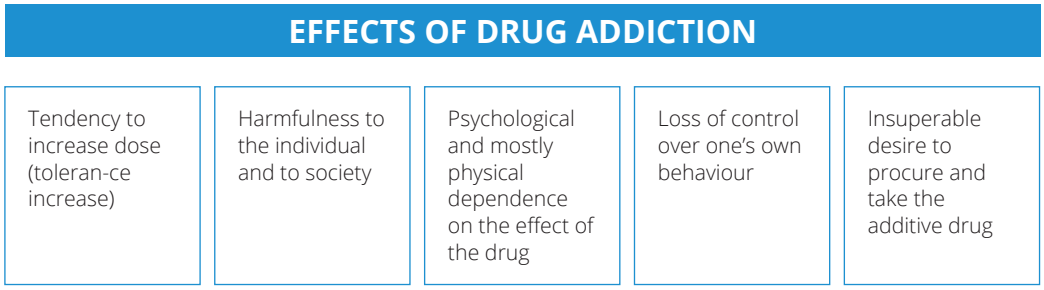
There are various theories of the development of addiction, especially psychological, biological and sociological explanations. Often, multi-factorial concepts are aimed at, such as the triad of causes for the development of drug addiction (Kielholz and Ladewig 1973), which combines the factors human, means and milieu (see the previous figure). Research that is more recent point out that the identified influencing factors are not to be considered as individual causes, but are in a dynamic relationship of interaction.

The triad of causes for the development of drug addiction combines the factors human, means and milieu

The resulting social consequences such as debts, unemployment, criminalisation, loss of old friends, quarrels and even violence in the family have an impact on society as a whole. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines addiction as "a state of periodic or chronic intoxication caused by the repeated use of a "natural or synthetic drug". The figure below shows the most important effects of drug addiction:

Addiction is defined by the WHO as a state of periodic or chronic intoxication caused by the repeated use of a natural or synthetic drug

Figure 9: Effects of drug addiction



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a dependency syndrome should be diagnosed if three or more of the following symptoms are met simultaneously during the last twelve months:

Diagnosis of a dependency syndrome

- Strong and occasionally overpowering desire or a kind of compulsion to procure and take psychotropic substances.
- Decreased control over the onset, termination and amount of drug use.
- Physical withdrawal syndromes at termination or reduction of consumption.
- Evidence of drug tolerance, meaning higher doses are required to achieve the same effect.
- Increasing focus of behaviour on the drugs, respectively: substance consumption, i.e., compulsion or greed for taking the substance (also referred to as craving); and progressive neglect of other interests.
- Continued consumption despite negative consequences, such as liver damage due to excessive drinking, depressive mood, etc.

7.1.2 Classification of addiction

ICD classification

In an international context, people recovering from an addiction are classified according to the ICD classification ("International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems"). The ICD code is a globally recognized system that uniformly identifies medical diagnoses. The ICD-10 version of 2019 is covered in the chapter "Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use (F10-F19) "a wide variety of disorders that differ in severity and clinical form but that are all attributable to the use of one or more psychoactive substances, which may or may not have been prescribed medically."

These include the following mental and behavioural disorders due to use of (WHO 2021):

- alcohol (ICD F10)
- opioids (ICD F11)
- cannabinoids (ICD F12)
- sedatives or hypnotics (ICD F13)
- cocaine (ICD F14)
- other stimulants, including caffeine (ICD F15)
- hallucinogens (ICD F16)
- tobacco (ICD F17)
- volatile solvents (ICD F18)
- multiple drugs and other psychoactive substances (ICD F19)

A distinction is made between substance-related and substance-free addiction

Addiction is generally classified in a substance-related and substance-free respectively behavioural addiction (see table 7). The abuse of non-dependence-producing substances (ICD F55) is regulated exclusively. In some cases, eating disorders are also understood as substance-related dependencies. Strictly speaking, the term "dependence" refers only to substance-related dependencies, so far there are no official diagnostic criteria for eating disorders. In the future, the topic of "gaming disorder" will be taken into account within the framework of the ICD (from 2022), because behavioural disorders are becoming increasingly important.

Table 7: Classification of addiction

Substance-related addiction	Substance-free forms of addiction
• Alcohol • Tobacco • Medicines: painkillers, sleep and sedatives • Illegal drugs: cannabis (except TBC and some countries), LSD, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, speed, heroin/ opium, crystal meth	• Gambling: slot machines, sports betting, lotteries and scratch cards, roulette, poker, card games, casino games • Eating disorders: Anorexia (diminished appetite), Bulimia (Overeating followed by self-induces vomiting or purging), binge eating disorder (compulsive overeating) • Other diagnostic subcategories of eating disorders: disorder with avoidance or restriction of food intake as well as further feeding or eating disorders

In the following are examples of effects of drug use due to stimulating, sedative and hallucinogenic substances (with reference to Kunze 2007). It becomes obvious that different drugs cause very different symptoms.

Stimulants such as cocaine, crack or amphetamines have a stimulating effect and mobilise them to a special extent (also known as "upper") (see the next figure). The main representatives are amphetamine ("speed"), its derivatives (e.g., "ecstasy"), methamphetamine ("crystal meth") and cocaine. Cocaine and methamphetamine in particular have a strong dependency potential with pronounced withdrawal syndromes and long-term damage.

Figure 10: Effects caused by taking cocaine, crack and amphetamine

COCAINE, CRACK OR AMPHETA-MINE

Psychostimulants are composed of psychoactive substances with different che-mical structures, which have a sympathomimetic intoxication effect.

- Sympathomimetic syndrome is a constellation of symptoms caused by overs-timulation of the sympathetic nervous system (part of the autonomic ner-vous system).

The sympathetic system primarily addresses bodily functions, which make the body more willing to perform and lead to an increased reduction of energy reser-ves.

- With intoxication, the sympathetic overstimulation can lead to agitation (a pathological restlessness, in which violent and hasty movements of the pa-tient occur), cardiac arrhythmias and cerebral seizures.

Sedative or sedative substances (opioids, morphine, heroin, cannabis) lead to states of relaxation, letting go and "beaming away". These include narcotics belonging to the group of drugs (see next figure). Narcotics belong to the group of centrally effective drugs and substances, which are regulated and controlled by the state respectively by the drug and health authorities. This primarily serves to prevent abuse and protect the population from undesirable effects and dependencies. (Batra & Bilke-Hentsch, 2021)

Figure 11: Effects caused by taking narcotics

NARCOTICS

Certain narcotics - for example, many potent hallucinogens, also known as psycho-tropic substances, are prohibited or may only be used for medical or scientific purposes with a derogation from the authorities.

- Psychotropic substances cause changes in thinking and perception and can cause a greatly altered perception of reality. Typical dosage forms include tab-lets, capsules, drops, transdermal patches and injection preparations.

Hallucinogens are a set of psychoactive substances with similar effects, such as LSD or magic mushrooms. Hallucinogens often lead to a fascination of inner images and an intense connection to (sometimes very violent) emotions (see the figure below). (Kunze 2006, Scherbaum 2019).

Figure 12: Substances for hallucinogens

HALLUCINOGENS

- There are hallucinogenic plants such as the fly agaric or psilocybin-containing fungi.
- Hallucinogenic effects also arise through the consumption of the Mexican magic sage Salvia Divinorum or the Hawaiian wood rose.
- Also hallucinogenic is the peyote cactus with the active ingredient mescaline or a brew of ayahuasca, which contains the active ingredient DMT.
- Certain nightshade plants such as hollyhock, angel's trumpet, henbane or belladonna also produce hallucinogenic effects, but can be slightly over-dosed and thus have a lethal effect
- Other hallucinogens are artificially produced. Examples include the active ingredient PCP, also known as "angel dust," or the anesthetic ketamine, which produces hallucinogenic effects in low doses.
- One of the most well-known artificially produced hallucinogens is LSD. The basic substance comes from the ergot, a fungus that infests cereal ears

7.2. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING FOR PEOPLE IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

In general, social farming can have a positive impact on participants' well-being. It enables people, which originally do not come from a farm to participate in the rhythms of the day and year, in gardening and working with farm animals. In particular, for people in recovering from an addiction the farm and family environment are important aspects that brings the sense to their lives and the hope to belong somewhere.

Social Farming enables people to participate in the rhythms of the day and year

Case studies show that the meaningful work on the farm is one of the most important elements. It is about making things, for example, growing vegetables and using them to make a meal. The farm activities create a chain of connected activities. As a participant you feed the chickens, the chickens lay an egg, you pick the eggs and from that egg, you make an omelette for lunch. In this way, the activities are connected and there is logic in it for participants. On the farm, the activities are always useful and no activities need to be invented. This gives meaning to the work of the participants. In turn, the participants are proud of what they achieve and do on the farm (see the case example below).

The farm provides a chain of connected and meaningful activities

With regard to physical wellbeing, social farmers and supervisors report that eating and preparing dinner together with healthy food from their own garden can have an important positive effect for people recovering from an addiction or mental health problems. Being on the farm and having good food gets them to think about their own diet. In addition, a majority of the social farmers speak about being part of a community, family or social structure that is very important for the participants. Common meeting points or places seem particularly important, e.g. canteen, where they have lunch together or a fireplace, where all the people come together. The social farmers indicate that the farm is a special environment, a safe environment where participants can come without judgement and are not be judged for their limitations. It is a place where people feel welcome.

A joint dinner with healthy food can do the target group a lot of good

He was used to be judged because of his addictions and his visible tattoos. And here was someone who didn't judge him and who accepted him. He had done nine residentials and this was the best he ever done in his life and got the most from it."

CASE EXAMPLE: Special suitability of farming as a field of work for people recovering from drug addiction

The farmer Uwe Weimar of Hof Fleckenbühl knows from his own experience that there is a synergistic relationship between agriculture and addiction support, as he describes below:

"For addiction services, for the individual, working in agriculture is very good, (...) (because) the people who work in agriculture stay for a very long time. It's good for an addict to have grounding work. So that he really has the dirt under his fingernails, that he is doing an occupation, a physical work in the fresh air is very good for the soul and the recovery of an addict. In comparison, immediately starting a screen job or standing in a cellar and assemble things, that (...) is not so good for a person's soul.

The other point is that the moment you work with animals, for example, you also get responsibility for them. When you feed calves or muck out pigs. And that by taking responsibility for the animals, you also learn to take responsibility again for one's own life. (...) Regular routine, healthy and honest work, also getting up early, regular daily routine, (...) (healthy distraction).

We say also, you get sober with your hands. (...) If you have your hands in the sink, you can't hold beer bottles. So get sober with your hands. Working here is part of our program. (...) The new people get pretty busy. The don't get off work at 5 p.m. and then sit around by themselves. There is a complete program for them, so that they sit around alone as little as possible and then get bad ideas."

Source: van Elsen et al. 2012

7.3 SOCIAL FARMING IN PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

7.3.1 The start on the farm

Once they have arrived at the farm, the participants first have to orient themselves. It is a new environment, under certain circumstances they have never been on a farm. In the first days, there could be a lot of confusion. It is common for participants to have a very disturbed rhythm, for example sleep-wake rhythm, and vital functions may be completely out of balance.

There might be a lot of insecurities once the participants arrive at the Social Farm

"There is preliminary information about the participants and then preliminary interviews, a job interview so to speak. There we try to classify the participants according to their illness and determine personal inclinations. Basically, all newcomers should get a taste of all work areas."

"You can only encourage people to do things but you can't make them do it. People are going back into a different environment with maybe the wrong influences and friends. So you do your best but you can't take it hard if things go back for them."

Farmer and social worker at Hiram Haus near Berlin. In the background, one can see a vegetable patch and the therapy horse.

Source: Michael Harth

Newcomers need time to deal with the new environment and the people on the farm. As a rule, introductory talks take place at the beginning, the participants are shown the different areas of the farm and possible activities (see fig. 7 and 8) and rules are explained.

The main goal is to give people a structure, an experience of themselves. To learn to have a relationship with someone as well. For some clients, the goal is to gain employment and learn a specific skill, e.g. to obtain a driving licence.

The main goal is to give the participants a structure

"We call ourselves reintegration, but that's utopia, that's an idea. Maybe 5% will make it back to work. The improvement is due to not getting worse. Sometimes you have to bake small rolls."

"First and foremost, the structured daily routine: getting up, getting dressed and not becoming acidic or even lonely. We promote and support so that the people here can pursue their own goals. This can be the goal, for example, of sorting a 25 kg sack of potatoes and weighing them on your own, determining the varieties on your own and then working on the first labour market with the farmer."

For people with a history of drug addiction, it is always necessary to take very small steps to avoid the risk of relapse. Routine and a daily structured programme are important.

It is always necessary to take very small steps to avoid the risk of relapse

Working equipment and appliances in a cattle barn

Source: Michael Harth

7.3.2 Activities of particular relevance and value for this target group

As far as work is concerned, it always depends on the individual assessment of what each participant can do. All activities involving a lot of manual labour are preferable.

The main goal is to give the participants a structure

"In my experience, for example, participants with Korsakov's syndrome need the same work over and over again, such as routine work in the agricultural sector. This is stabilizing for this group of participants, as Korsakov sufferers have major problems with memory, especially with short-term memory. On the other hand, there are constantly changing tasks in vegetable growing, which in turn are suitable for other participants - who are looking for more variety and like the challenge."

Popular and easy tasks on a farm especially for people in recovering from drug addiction could be the following activities (based on interviews with social workers/farmers in the project SoFarTEAM):

- Flower work
- Gardening (see fig. 8)
- Potato clearing
- Sorting and packing
- Straw & hay harvest
- Work in the greenhouse and with vegetables
- Animal care in general
- Feeding and checking
- Keeping chicken
- Collecting Colorado beetles

Garden area with vegetables and salad at Hiram Haus (Germany), who work with people recovering from addiction

Source: Michael Harth

7.4 POSSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL REFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

Addiction disorders ranging from alcohol and drugs to more modern behavioural addictions in the areas of gambling, excessive buying and addiction to social media, gaming, etc can negatively affect people's thinking and self-knowledge. Relatives often experience this suffering for years and are often unable to cope with the situation that their addicted partner, father, mother or child sees the world with different eyes. It often seems as if the world is upside down and the addict lives in a completely different reality that is hardly comprehensible to outsiders.

People recovering from addiction some behavioural patterns in common. In principle, feelings of pleasure are created, such as intoxication experiences and increased feelings of recognition or self-esteem. At the same time, feelings of discomfort are avoided, for example by reducing tension, escaping from reality, or regulating emotions (controlling one's own feelings).

The following behavioural expressions are characteristic for people recovering from addiction (Dilling, Mombour, & Schmidt, 2015):

- **Strong desire:** desire or compulsion to consume a substance or to do something over and over again. This desire can be strong even when there is no physical dependence.

- **Loss of control:** Addicts can hardly control when, how long and in what quantity they consume an addictive drug.

- **Abstinence:** An addicted person can often not do without his drug even if the addiction already has serious health or social consequences.

- **Tolerance formation:** body and mind get used to the drug. People who get into an addiction need more and more of their drug to achieve the desired effect.

- **Drug withdrawal symptoms:** In the case of substance dependence, withdrawal symptoms such as sweating, freezing and trembling as well as severe pain in the limbs, sleeping disorders, hallucinations, seizures and circulatory collapse can occur. Behavioural addictions include nervousness and aggression.

- **Withdrawal from social life:** Those trapped in an addiction lose interest in other occupations. Hobbies, social contacts and work are often neglected in favour of addiction.

- **Feelings of guilt:** Also, typical characteristics of an addiction are feelings of guilt after consumption and concealment of addictive behaviour, right up to denial.

The following characteristics can be often be found amongst people with addiction issues:

- High sensitivity
- Strong self-insecurity/ easily offended
- Distrust
- Limitation of affect control / lack of affect expression
- Excessive emotional dependence and attachment to caregivers and partners
- Great desire for delimitation and self-abandonment
- Negatively experienced or barely existing body reference
- Ambiguity and diffusion regarding the meaning of life and goals
- Unstructured inner experience of time, as well as time organization

However, the same characteristics can also be found in many people who do not develop any addiction problems throughout their lives. The only significant sign of the addict is the lack of control over a drug or in relation to other substance-free forms of addiction (e.g. gambling). The term loss of control is not an absolute size or category, since even extremely chronic addicts still have phases and elements of control capacity. (Gross 2016)

Figure 13: Measures to detect signs of self-destructive behaviour of people recovering from addiction

In the everyday life of social farming, it is important to recognize early on whether the participant expresses self-destructive behaviour or runs the risk of doing so. To detect such signs, the measures shown in the previous figure are necessary. It should be noted that the application of the measures depends on the type of farm. For example, farms that are not directly linked to institutions in the health/social care field often do not have the possibility to conduct urine tests. A successful treatment of addiction is strongly dependent on the image that a therapist make himself of his clientele, i.e. professional competence and openness coupled with an adequate proximity and distance behaviour are important requirements.

It is important to identify early on if the participant is engaging in self-destructive behaviour or is at risk of doing so

7.4.1 Particular strengths and challenges

People in recovery from addiction can be integrated into social farms in many ways. As with non-addicts, addicts individually have special abilities and strengths that need to be promoted. From a therapeutic point of view, addicts have a good chance of success in social farming, while it is important to find out in which areas they can live out their skills and strengths. For this reason, it is not generally possible to infer specific abilities and strengths of people recovering from addiction. Thus, activities in the group can be positive for one participant; while for the other individual tasks are better. For this reason, the purview must always be individually coordinated, whereby initial support should always be provided.

For addicts, it should be noted that they often have problems building relationships. However, through good guidance, patience, expertise and trust, addicts also manage to establish a bond with the people on the farm or with the farm animals. A frequently positive argument of participants is that animals do not disappoint them, they are "honest". Therefore, working with animals has a significant added benefit. This perspective

People in recovery from addiction often have problems building relationships

means a clear change of perspective for students of agricultural sciences, as farm animals are not considered exclusively for the production of meat, milk and eggs. The challenge here is certainly the reliability in fulfilling tasks (for example feeding animals), whereby pedagogical skills can contribute to an increased motivation. Since addicts often have only short periods of concentration, support by leaflets/instructions, contact persons or constant repetition could be helpful.

As a rule, people in recovery from addiction get a specific medication, which may restrict one or the other in participant's behaviour and their performance on the farm.

"Another problem at the beginning is the setting with medication so that the participants can cope with a normal everyday life. The medication setting is also very important so that, for example, the residents have the same sleeping and working hours and do not disturb each other's rhythms. In the beginning it's all about rhythm."

Keeping professional distance

In the interviews in the context of the project SoFarTEAM, professional distance is mentioned several times but in different ways. On the one hand, respondents mention that a certain professional distance is important and that they also learn this during their training. On the other hand, the distance is important of terms of long-term self-sustainability, care and the provision of quality companionship and care. The distance is thus important if the worker does not want to let her/himself absorbed by all the problems and crises of the participants.

"In the event of a conflict, one should always hold discussions, preferably with the caregiver, the occupational therapist and the participant (in a three-way conversation). The conversation then deals with the current personal situation of the participants, for example questions such as "What do you need right now?" Or "What do you need right now in your life, how can you best support them?". It often turns out that the conflicts are caused less by agricultural activities than by living together with other residents. Basically, you can find out relatively quickly whether participants are more suitable for fine motor work (for example dictating cabbage) or for gross motor work (for example cutting hedges). If participants only overslept or do not get out of bed before ten in the morning, then they are rather unsuitable for agriculture."

7.4.2 Understanding of gender roles

When determining target groups in addiction support and prevention, it is reasonable to follow the classic socio-ecological criteria such as status, milieu, region, etc. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that gender is also to be seen as an important differentiator and must be included in the interventional planning. Until now, this aspect has been conceptually underdeveloped and only implemented in niches, although recent health and risk research has generally shown that the burdens and development problems differ from one gender to another. (Helfferich 1994)

Women and addictive disorder

Women are more likely to choose substances that are considered relatively harmless and inconspicuous to consume in an appropriate way, such as light cigarettes, painkillers, sleeping pills and sedatives, light alcoholic beverages (such as sparkling wine, beer, alcopops and cannabis). The consumption of alcohol by women is also generally more invisible and secretive, meaning that women drink much less often in public, so that the problem is not as visible here as when men drink alcohol.

Many women develop more passive and emotional conflict resolution strategies, that is, they try to personalize their conflicts and resolve them more inconspicuously, individually and in a socially accepted way. They internalize conflicts more and more often turn their aggressions against their own person. Consumption should therefore primarily contribute to maintaining functional and adaptable capacity, compensating for low self-esteem and coping with trauma. The substances also have the function of manipulating the body and its weight (appetite suppressants, laxatives, "smoking makes you slim"). In part, they also serve the purpose of delimitation and giving oneself permission in order to be able to do what is considered impossible (e.g. aggressiveness). Studies on the incidence of eating disorders show that only one percent of all eating disorders worldwide affect men. In contrast, there is a high prevalence (frequency) of eating disorders in women especially in occupational groups where social pressure is particularly high, such as competitive athletes, models and dancers. (Eisenbach-Stangl et al. 2005)

Men and addictive disorder

Men, on the other hand, much more often choose dangerous substances that quickly lead to intoxication: strong tobacco, hard alcohol, potentially lethal drugs such as heroin, cocaine. The feelings of increased drive, grandiosity, and transcendence experienced in intoxication correspond to the stereotypical dynamics of masculinity. The drugs serve as a means to increase performance, to experience risk, to test limits, and have a special meaning for male initiation rites, but are also used to deny problems, to endure feelings of weakness and helplessness and overcome fears.

The consumer expectations of men also relate to the preservation of status and power, especially through unrestrained violence. As a reaction to addiction, women often experience guilt and shame, while men react with a feeling of inferiority and increased self-blame. (Eisenbach-Stangl et al., 2005)

As a benchmark for measuring good integration on the farm (degree of integration), the respective effects of social farming in individual cases can be used, such as increasing the willingness to change, signs of stabilization, adherence to a daily structure, health-conscious behaviour or abstinence motivation. The successful completion of professional tasks by the participants also provides information about successful integration.

7.5 EXISTING SERVICES THAT SUPPORT THIS TARGET GROUP

People who suffer from a drug addiction often have a long path of therapeutic measures behind them before they come to the social farm. People with addictions receive

support in a variety of ways, such as counselling and treatment, assistance with phasing out, but also measures to reduce damage.

There are a wide range of counselling and treatment options for getting out of addiction. Survival aids or measures to reduce damage, such as the exchange of syringes, stabilise the health and social situation of the addict. This is a necessary condition for a later exit from addiction. The next figure shows important measures for treating addictive behaviour.

Figure 14: Treatment approaches for drug addiction

Furthermore, there are prevention measures and legal regulations to reduce supply. By informing about the dangers of drug or drug use, it is hoped to reduce harmful consumption or addiction. An important element of drug and addiction policy is legal regulation restricting the supply of addictive substances and drugs. These include, for example, anti-smoking laws, the Youth Protection Act and narcotics laws.

Many and very different actors are involved in the implementation of addiction and drug policy. In order to the affected people to be effectively helped, the best possible coordination, in which all social forces are involved, is needed. People recovering from addiction or their relatives can contact the following institutions (Krebs et al 2021):

- Specialist clinics for alcohol, medicine and drug addiction and substance-free forms of addiction

- Adaptation facilities (after cessation treatment or rehabilitation, for reintegration into society or the labour market) such as social farms
- Socio-therapeutic facilities, assisted living
- Day clinics (all-day outpatient rehabilitation)
- Outpatient treatment and advisory centres
- Self-help groups for affected persons
- Support groups for relatives
- Online offers

However, the administrative burden of social institutions or other public authorities should not be underestimated. (Henkel 2018)

7.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Which behavioural expressions are supposed to be characteristic for people in recovery from addiction? Name at least three and explain them briefly.

2. Look at the following quotes from the SoFarTEAM research and discuss them with your fellow students in terms of the characteristics and behaviours patterns presented in chapter 7.4 . What do you think the participants mean by these statements?

"The work is very important in taking people out of themselves and helping them forget their troubles."

"Just being out there and being quiet and taking in the beautiful view, that's mindfulness."

"There is something meditative about the kind of work involved on a farm"

"For some it's like a fairy tale, the green grass and the views, compared to the environment they are used to."

3. Which of the following behavioural expressions are not supposed to be typical characteristic for people in recovery from addiction?

- Loss of control
- Exercise of extreme sports
- Feelings of guilt
- Strong Desire
- Good in building relationships

4. Why could the activity on a social farm help people in recovery from addiction to overcome the addiction? Discuss opportunities and risks!

7.7 CASE STUDY

Therapeutic self-help community for addicts Fleckenbühl

Due to the diversity of addictive diseases associated with the individual personality of the addict, it is almost impossible to make general statements regarding the integration of addicts in social farms. This is why the case study "Fleckenbühl" is presented below, with special attention being paid to how the addict can benefit from the social farming and what therapeutic effects can result from it.

Hof Fleckenbühl is located in Cölbe-Schönstadt near Marburg in the federal state Hessen. It is an inpatient therapeutic self-help community for addicts, which has been supporting people with its self-developed self-help concept since 1984 to acquire the necessary skills to live drug-free. Currently, about 120 adults and 12 children live on the farm.

The self-help concept

The focus of the self-help concept is the realisation that the affected persons themselves are the actual experts for the problem (here: addiction). They know the difficult life situations from their own experience and are very familiar with the possibilities of problem solving. It is assumed that addicts are not helplessly ill. All those affected are able to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to lead a sober and satisfied life. Thus, there are no therapists or psychologists on the farm. In discussion circles - the so-called "games" - problems that individuals have with themselves or others are discussed.

The mission statement in addiction aid is: Creating perspectives - living drug-free

We Fleckenbühler want to create the best possible conditions with our community for people with addiction problems who want to live drug-free and self-determined. We achieve this by accepting immediately, unbureaucratically and without preconditions every addict who seeks help from us and by offering him a protected space in our consistently sober and non-violent community in which he can face his addictive problems.

We are convinced that every addict is able to acquire the necessary competences and abilities to lead a sober, self-determined life. We live and work together and we want to support activating the self-help of each individual. We support each member in his or her skills and professional prospects.

We show the society that former addicts can again play an active and productive role in public life, in business and in culture. Based on the past addiction experiences of our members and based on a sincere interest in the people coming to us, we encourage each individual to confront himself and thus to find his own way to sobriety. We will give him all the time he needs.

About two-thirds of the addicts on Fleckenbühl are drug addicts, about one-third are alcohol addicts. An essential characteristic of the therapeutic community is that no one is forced to stay in Fleckenbühl.

The farm

Farm Fleckenbühl is an organic farm affiliated to the Demeter Association. 250 hectares of agricultural land, including 170 hectares of arable land and 80 hectares of permanent grassland. 70 dairy cows (German Red Pied - Holstein-Friesian), 50 young cattle, 10 feeder cattle and 30 dairy goats are kept on the farm.

Hof Fleckenbühl

Source: Comander Pirx auf www.die-fleckenbühler.de

One third of the milk goes to the Upländer farmer dairy. Grain and milk are processed in the farm's own bakery and cheese factory in the traditional craft to the high-quality Fleckenbühler farm products. The products are sold in the farm's brasserie and farm shop, as well as in the bakery café and in an organic bistro in Frankfurt am Main.

Social farming

The guiding principle of the farm is social farming within the Fleckenbühler addiction aid, i.e., the inclusion of humans, animals, plants and soil in the farm organism and the further development of agricultural sustainability strategies. About 20 addicts from the Fleckenbühler addiction aid are regularly integrated into agricultural activities. On the farm, you can also train as a farmer.

The organisation on the farm is deliberately hierarchically structured to ensure the necessary structure for addicts. The longer an addict successfully lives on the farm from a therapeutic point of view, the more responsibility he assumes in the company but also towards other addicts.

Experience reports from addicts of the farm Fleckenbühl show that farming can contribute to the overcoming of addiction. For the addicts, it seems helpful to have a "grounding" job. Physical work in the fresh air with soil, plants and animals can contribute to a healthy distraction from addiction. This includes a regular daily routine, such as getting up early and orienting yourself to the daily rhythms in agriculture (such as feeding or milking times). Responsibility for farm animals, for example when feeding calves or mucking out hog houses, also contributes to the recovery of addicts. From the point of view of addicts, it can be stated in principle that "rural areas help, urban spaces attract." An addict expresses his experiences at Fleckenbühl as follows: *"The first year the sun in the field burned out my booze from the brain. Rhythm, observing nature, seeing plants grow, being tired in the evening - that has put me back in a good direction."*

Imagine the following situation:

- The Fleckenbühl farm works with people in recovery from addiction.
- The people in recovery from addiction are seen as members of a community.
- In order to facilitate coexistence on the farm, rules should be introduced which apply to everyone and which lead to expulsion in case of disregard.

Your task: Decide on three important rules for Fleckenbühl, which you would introduce as fixed and presupposing rules by living together. Discuss your decision in the group.

Required information (will be provided by the lecturer in the course)

- Profile of the social farm
- Brochure about the project
- Video (YouTube)
- Further information material (e.g. article in newspaper)

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8 REFUGEES AND OTHER FORCED DISPLACED PEOPLE

Claudia Schneider

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- describe the general characteristics and needs of refugees /displaced people.
- explain the benefits of social farming for this target group.
- understand opportunities, pathways and processes of participants in social farming.
- recognise possible behavioural references and challenges of this target group.
- Identify peculiarities of this target group in the context of social farming.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

Source: Eliška Hudcová

8.1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political Refugees and forced displaced people

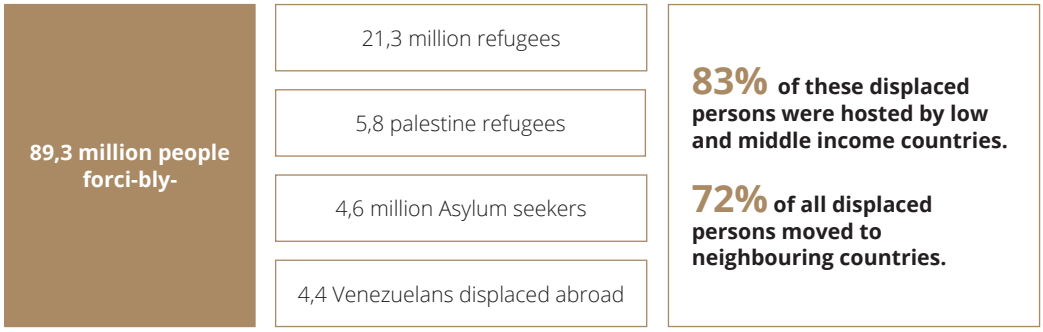
Millions of people around the world are on the run. To support people that have to escape from their home is a global challenge that people on all continents have to deal with.

A refugee is a person that is persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. [A refugee is a person, that] is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951).

The term refugee is political agreed on by international law and leads to special rights for a person that falls in the category of refugee. However, the reasons for escaping from the native country are much broader than described by the 1951 Refugee Convention. Therefore, the term forced migration or forced displacement includes also other factors than race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. People that are leaving their country due to ecological disasters, climate change or hopelessness because of the economic situation of their country are not refugees acknowledged by international law. However, they have left their native countries because of a set of circumstances that might even be life-threatening.

Mostly political upheavals go hand in hand with violent conflict, economic distress and human rights abuses. Therefore, there are growing difficulties in distinguishing between people who have escaped their countries for political reasons (official refugees) and people that have left their countries due to economic distress. This is why the term "asylum seekers" became more important as it describes a person, whose status has not been determined yet (Turton, 2003).

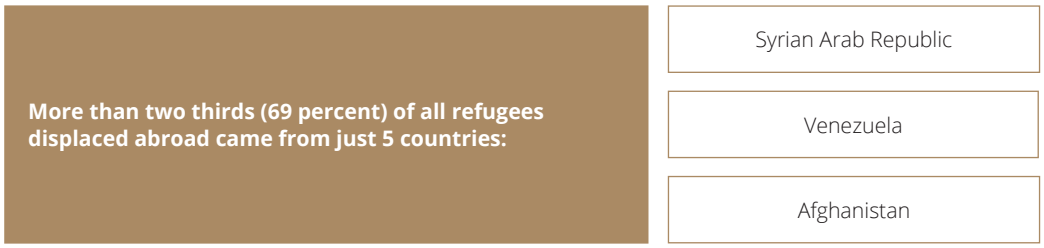
Figure 15: Forced displacement in 2021



Source: UNHCR 2021

Forced displacement happens for various reasons. People come from various cultural or religious backgrounds and have various educational and social backgrounds, gender and age. This means that this target group is highly heterogeneous. There is no general recipe about what forced displaced persons like and need.

Figure 16: Nationality of refugees



In 2021 most first-time asylum applicants in Europe came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (European Commission, 2022). In 2022 a war started in the middle of Europe. Thereby, many European countries facing refugee streams from Ukraine. In the long term, the results summarized here can hopefully support some of these refugees as well.

8.2. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING

Social farming is an offer that might support some forced displaced persons depending on their interests and needs. In other cases, it simply might not be the right choice.

Link to familiar activities and build on agricultural skills

In farming, people can in many cases link to familiar activities. Currently, many refugees come from rural areas or have a small-scale farming background (e.g. refugees from Afghanistan, Ukraine). The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) recognizes that there is a strong link between refugees and farming: "Many refugees originate from rural areas and hold valuable agricultural skills as crop producers, livestock keepers or fishermen. Given the right support and assets, they have the potential to not only feed themselves and their families but enter lucrative markets and prosper. They could contribute to local economic development, benefiting refugees and host communities alike." (UNHCR, 2022). Among the people that escaped to Europe, you will find many who are very willing to learn new skills and are also eager to learn the language of the hosting country.

In 2021 eight farmers and social workers that have realized social farming projects with refugees already have been interviewed to prepare this teaching material.

The interviews prove that refugees can benefit from social farming in various ways. Mostly, the benefits are the same as when it comes to other target groups of social farming. However, some factors are unique:

Figure 17: Benefits of social farming for refugees

Language learning

Social farming offers a very good opportunity for informal language learning. All interview partners stressed that language barriers are one of the main challenges while working with people coming from other countries. Simultaneously, they stressed that learning the language of the country they are escaping to is an important goal for most refugees. Social farming is an amazing way of learning the language of the new home country informally.

"The farm provides an opportunity to learn English in a very natural setting, pick up words from seeing things, pointing to things. And in terms of language acquisition, it's certainly my preference to learning in a classroom. For learning language, it's so much easier to be able to see and smell it in terms of learning."

BEST PRACTICE: The therapeutic garden of the University of agrarian and environmental pedagogy – Vienna (Austria)

The University of Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy in Vienna runs a therapeutic garden. In 2018 and 2019 activities with 10 refugees were realized at the garden.

The main goal of the project was language learning and training about gardening.

Refugees came twice a week to the garden where a garden therapist supported and assisted them.

The people involved learned various gardening skills. This should enable them to work in the gardening or farming sector later if they were interested in such an opportunity. They were involved in all kind of gardening activities, e.g. raking of leaves, constructing insect hotels, and preserving food.

An important part of the project was language learning. The people learned new vocabulary while working in the garden and were also supported in language courses given by volunteers. The focus of the language course was "garden vocabulary".

The refugees also worked jointly with other target groups of the therapeutic garden (e.g. people with a mental disorders). Also, they came in contact with the students of the University and other Austrian citizens. Therefore, social inclusion was an important part of the project as well. (B. Strutzmann, personal communication, 3rd of June 2022).

Refugees at work in the vegetable garden

Source: Bettina Strutzmann

To earn money is a major goal of many people that were forced to migrate or that have had to escape from war. Earning money is important because debts might be caused by fleeing from their countries. People want to build up their existence in their new home country. Very often they need to send money to their families that still live in their home countries. Earning money and having a paid job is of huge importance for many refugees. This factor is of such high importance that social farming should pay more attention to it: how can vocational training, employment and seasonal work be realized in a way that fits the need of refugees? (E.g. How can social farming focus on paid work and simultaneously consider challenges like language barriers, mental health issues caused by a traumatic experience, cultural differences, and bureaucratic obstacles?).

Paid work

Work in social farming is also meaningful because it leads to new skills and competencies. This might generally be learning about the soil or organic agriculture or specifically riding a horse or it might be an informal way of learning mathematics or the language of the receiving country. Learning can happen step by step and with less pressure than in ordinary vocational training. Ideally, it leads to paid work as a result.

New skills and competencies

"Social Farming opened up their prospects. Shortly after, one of them got a job on a local mushroom farm. Without Social Farming I don't think he would have thought about doing that."

"We pruned pollard willows, we pruned fruit trees, we harvested fruits, but we tried to make it a bit more constructive so that we didn't overwhelm everyone straight away. And we worked four to five hours a day."

BEST PRACTICE: The Swiss Farmers´ Union supports refugees in farming

In 2015, the Swiss Farmers' Union launched a three-year pilot project to support employment in the farming sector.

The refugees and temporarily admitted persons were allowed to work on Swiss farms and generate income. In turn, the public sector would be relieved financially in the area of social expenditures.

The assignments within the pilot project in 2015-17 lasted between three and twelve months. The cooperating farms paid the refugees the agricultural minimum wage.

30 working places were filled on 17 different farms (mixed, vegetables, fruit). 24 participants completed the work assignment. 14 of them received a job offer from the farm, which 10 people also accepted. Another seven people found another job in agriculture or another branch.

The final evaluation report states that the farms where the assignments could be completed were very satisfied with the participants. The farm managers noted progress in language and professional learning, that social and self-competence increased, and that the participants were motivated and reliable.

Cultural Exchange

Cultural exchange is something both sides (the farmer as well as the person from another country that comes to the farm) benefit from. It is an important part of the social aspect of social farming. The interviewed farmers and social workers emphasized that it was of high value for them to learn about war and to appreciate their own peaceful life, and their prosperity more. Mutual exchange of traditions, religious beliefs, traditions and food is an interesting and enriching part of social farming with people coming from other countries. Social farming is an amazing opportunity of learning about another culture and to learn about values.

"And then you hear a story from someone who really came from Syria. And sometimes the war experiences he reported about were traumatic. Sometimes I think: Oh God, how well we are doing here" and how grateful we can be that we live in such a peaceful environment."

"But the fact that it's a lived experience is so valuable. People will pick things up. Gaining cultural knowledge can only be experienced by being in the environment. For example, participants learned about seasonal events and traditions, e.g. Halloween and Christmas which are of significant cultural value and importance in Ireland but in the home/family setting."

BEST PRACTICE: Social Farming with Syrian Refugees in the West of Ireland

Oliver and Anna Dixon are organic farmers operating a medium-sized enterprise in County Galway in the West of Ireland. Olive inherited the farm from his father and has farmed his whole life. They predominately operate an organic suckler to beef enterprise but there is also some woodland on the farm and a small kitchen garden and polytunnel with vegetables, fruit and herbs. Both Anna and Oliver also work part-time with natural therapies from a purpose-built office at the farm. Oliver is a biodynamic psychotherapist, Anna is an acupuncturist and also an artist and teacher. The farm is in a very quiet and peaceful environment with both indoor and outdoor activities to suit the changeable weather. Amongst the activities available on the farm are cattle herding, livestock husbandry, organic gardening activities, tree pruning, hedge cutting, stone wall maintenance, fencing, general farm maintenance and firewood stacking.

Beginning in 2018, two Syrian refugees living locally spent 25 weeks on the Dixons farm doing social farming one day per week. The placement emerged from the engagement between the Social Farming Ireland Regional Development Officer and the support worker who was at the time employed by South West Mayo Development Company to work on the Syrian Resettlement Programme. The two gentlemen were both farmers in Syria and it was felt that social farming could be a means to support their integration into the local area in the comfortable and (somewhat) familiar surroundings of the farm.

An interpreter was provided on the first day to ensure that there was good initial understanding around health and safety, the layout of the farm etc. However, after that, everyone communicated through farming and using Google Translate. The time on the farm provided very valuable everyday language learning for the participants. Their vocabulary increased in a very natural way and setting, as they picked up words from seeing things, pointing to things, asking questions, etc. They were also able to gain everyday insight into and knowledge of ordinary family and home life, cultural norms, etc. The participants and their families were invited over during the Christmas season. Social farming also provided an opportunity to adapt to the Irish climate and the kind of clothes and footwear needed for living in such a wet country.

Social farming proved to be a very good source of integration for these men and in different ways. The younger gentleman got a job on a mushroom farm after his social farming placement: the increased confidence, language skills and comfort levels around Irish farming culture contributing to his ability to avail of this opportunity. The older farmer is at retirement age and social farming provided an opportunity to get out of the house and do something which he enjoys. Both men got to know more people - the social farmers most obviously, but also their family and neighbours, people like the vet and the post-

man and other people around the town. When Oliver would pick them up or drop them off at the supermarket in town, he was able to introduce them to people he bumped into in a very natural way. Social farming also contributed to breaking down barriers in the local community between newly arrived refugees and the people living in the local community.

Knowledge sharing and reciprocity were an inherent part of this placement. For example, one of the Syrian farmers had olive trees back home and was an expert pruner. He was able to take the lead on pruning the previously somewhat neglected apple trees on the farm – a job which needed to be done – and passed on this knowledge to Oliver. They were able to share and compare their own experiences of farming in very different climactic conditions, for example: how animals are fed and cared for or what is involved in organic farming. This ability to contribute was very important to these participants who had lost their livelihoods and access to farm work along with everything else. They are unable to return to their own home farms and had spent a considerable period of time in a refugee camp in Lebanon before coming to Ireland. Other mental health benefits of social farming included having an opportunity to be in a quiet, safe, peaceful and therapeutic space amongst kind and welcoming people. This time on the farm was one very valuable part of an overall package of supports which were provided to Syrian families who settled in this rural community at the time.

Author: Aisling Moroney

Social farming also means learning from each other. For example pruning the trees

Source: Leitrim Development Company

Language learning, the high importance of paid work and cultural exchange are unique when it comes to working with refugees. Other attributes of social farming are not new and surprising. These benefits of social farming can be seen in the work with most other target groups as well:

Meaningful activities

Social farming provides opportunities for positive reinforcement and positive appreciation. There is a wide range of work from physically demanding work to manual work to craft work to domestic work which people can participate in. The social farmers interviewed to prepare this teaching material reported that refugees were involved in activities like harvesting strawberries, grapes, apricots, apples or potatoes or they helped to build insect hotels.

As with the case of other target groups of social farming, farming work is meaningful as it is also an opportunity to help someone else. People and their work were appreciated and respected. In some cases, farmers that had to escape from their homeland could re-establish farming in Europe. They were able to contribute with their skills and found a common ground and commonality while working with farmers in Europe. In any case, refugees involved in social farming projects were able to create something. They could do something with their hands and learn something new. Simultaneously, it allowed people to be proud of what they achieved (learning a new skill, building something with their hands) or overcoming fear (for example being close to a big animal like cattle.)

"The best thing about our work, and I'm including all agriculture here, is that we see something. We see growth, we see our daily success, so what we've done, whether we're working a furrow or hoeing a vegetable patch. Also the people who live here: We're part of agriculture, after all. I see what I have worked."

"It is not like in a normal company, where you're under much more time pressure [...] That's not the way it is with us, but rather more accompaniment and the work is seen as a positive reinforcer. And it is not only absolutely result-oriented on the gardening, but there is also a result-orientation, namely that the person gets along well, that he has a delimited work area, which he also manages on the day if possible. And in the best case, there is also positive appreciation."

BEST PRACTICE: Refugees in Green and Landscape Care in Germany - A Contribution to Integration in "Green Professions"

In the frame of a joint project, two German environmental foundations "Allianz Umweltstiftung" (Allianz Environmental Foundation) and "Stiftung für Mensch und Umwelt" (Foundation for People and the Environment) cooperated to provide training in landscape care. The project aimed at qualifying refugees through an internship. This training should support the participants in finding a job in a green profession afterwards.

In the beginning, partner organisations were sought, initial contacts were made with refugee accommodation and discussions were held with social organisations.

Participants were employed in the framework of a labour employment measure in green and landscape care activities.

The working week from Monday to Friday was divided into practical work and the refugees also received German lessons during the period of employment.

The participants were supervised in two different facilities: technical services of the city of Ludwigsburg (Technische Dienste der Stadt Ludwigsburg) and Nature conservation Berlin-Malchow, Berlin-Lichtenberg (Naturschutz Berlin-Malchow, Berlin-Lichtenberg).

In Ludwigsburg, the participants worked jointly with town staff. They were involved in activities in the area of tree care services, landscape gardening and landscape conservation (e.g. pruning of trees, weeding, cleaning of ponds, raking of leaves, working with a string trimmer, and planting).

In Berlin-Lichtenberg participants were supervised by employees of an association for ecological conservation. Depending on the season, participants were involved in activities like biotope protection, reparation of tools and exhibits used in environmental education (e.g. trimming of pasture fences, sensing tree population, raking of hay, harvesting of fruits, construction of insect nesting aids, fixing of bird nesting boxes, supporting of information bouches and public relations)

Even though none of the refugees from the two places of employment in Ludwigsburg and Berlin-Malchow was able to obtain a job in the primary job market immediately, they all learned a lot in practice, theory and language (Hemmer, 2018).

Guided tour at the garden of the nature farm

Source: Naturschutz Berlin-Malchow

Choice

Choice is an important factor in social farming. Social farming offers various jobs, activities, and work outdoors and might offer something that fits almost everyone's interests and competencies. But of course, social farming is not for everybody. Because not everybody likes to live in the countryside and likes to work in agriculture. This is important to recognize. Social farming offers should always be voluntary.

"We have a certain amount of freedom. Some tasks are fine-motoric, where you can stick things with your fingers. And there are also heavy physical activities. You can differentiate a little bit. But at the end of the day, it's a gardening job either way and if someone wants to sit at a desk, then this is not the right place for them."

"What I always see with us, but that has nothing to do with the refugees, but in general, we have the opportunity to offer a very wide range of work, from physically demanding work to manual work to filigree work. Different physical skills are needed here."

Healing through nature/mental well being

Gardening is a medium that can help people to arrive in a new country. Connecting with plants and animals, being in contact with the earth, gives them a break in nature and a place to rest and recuperate. This might even help to recover from trauma.

Social farming also gives people the opportunity to muck out and let off steam physically. A person can strain his/her body. He/she is tired in the evening and might sleep better.

"For people gardening is the most profound, grounded in the truest sense of the word, and therefore also the best medium for people who want to arrive. It doesn't matter if they're coming from a mental health facility and they're trying to get their feet back on the ground or if they're coming from another country. It's a good medium to hit home. And then in conjunction with people having lunch together and so on. It's definitely a great opportunity for refugees and for the other people who work here."

"When I go to the farm and I pet a horse and put its head in my arm and I can just saddle it up. And then I get on the horse and then I just go for a ride. That's something really great."

Social inclusion

Social farming is an offer at an authentic place outside of refugee accommodation or a special facility. Many social farming projects emphasize that it is important for refugees to be part of a family or a family-like community. Things like eating jointly at a kitchen table or working together are of high value. Social interactions with other employees, visitors of the farm or the local community are of high value. People involved in social farming projects didn't just get to know the farmer but also the people the farmer knows in the local community. Social farmers reported often that young refugees also came to meet a girl.

"So psychologically and socially I think animals, plants, people, this daily contact is absolutely important. If someone sits in the quiet chamber and always only 'eats files', or processes files, sorry that was a wrong expression now, then he will not be socially empathetic and will also not be able to show this social empathy."

BEST PRACTICE: Urban Agriculture - "ANNALINDE" Intercultural Garden (Germany)

ANNALINDE is a social enterprise that runs urban agriculture projects in Leipzig (Germany). It runs a community garden in the city.

In 2017 an Intercultural Garden started in the ANNALINDE Community Garden. The Intercultural Garden was established as a fixed format in the ANNALINDE community garden with its weekly appointments and thus enriched the entire garden community. Soon there was a lively exchange between all participants and both the participants of the intercultural garden and the entire garden community enjoyed taking part in each other's garden days.

In addition to gardening, crafting and building, one focus was on joint harvesting, cooking and eating together in the summer kitchen. Here different recipes from the different countries of origin of gardeners and different methods of refining or conserving of agricultural products were tried out.

Through the cooperation with numerous institutions in the immediate neighbourhood, the project Intercultural Garden and thus the entire community garden could become even more firmly anchored in the neighbourhood during the two-year project period.

To enable the community cohesion also over the winter months, winter meetings were offered. Here, the topic of "access to work & training", cultural aspects as well as the personal exchange of experiences were given more attention (ANNALINDE, 2018).

Urban and intercultural gardening in Leipzig, Germany

Source: Annalinde Leipzig

8.3. ON THE WAY TO SOCIAL FARMING

So far, only a few examples of farming projects for refugees do exist. There is no single path that can be described here. Mostly, social farming projects succeeded because of idealistic and passionate people that wanted to support refugees or asylum seekers that arrived in their community. In practice, social farming projects for refugees can focus on various goals and depending on the goal look very differently.

Social farming for refugees mostly results from the commitment of people who are willing to help

Vocational Training and integration in the first labour market

Often the goal of the social farming project is vocational training and integration in the first labour market. In this case, the social farming project might have the form of a farming training program or internship that considers the special needs of refugees. If the project focuses on the social inclusion of young unaccompanied minors it might come in form of a farming foster family. If the project is about giving day structure it might come in form of a day care centre which provides care in the horticulture field.

Volunteers and activists

Generally, some special features characterize social offers for refugees: Support for refugees is often realized by volunteers and activists, that operate outside tangential relations with official structures as provided by states and international organizations. In 2015 (the start of the so-called refugee crisis in Europe) many solidarity initiatives were launched in Europe. Especially the "Refugees Welcome" movement characterizes support for refugees in Europe. Very often, these large-scale mobilisations were connected to and articulated with, practical local initiatives in support of refugees (Feinschmidt/Cantat, 2018).

The role of activism complemented the role, which state agencies, international organisations or national NGOs have in supporting refugees. (Feinschmidt/Cantat, 2018). In addition, some social farming initiatives can be observed that are rather part of informal refugee support, civic engagement and volunteer initiatives. Farmers invited refugees to their homes and took up positions for refugees and refugee support (see ABL, 2022). Grassroots movements like the Greek Solidary fields gave displaced people access to land so that they can grow their food and organize themselves (King, 2022).

However, there is also the field of refugee social work, which is organized by traditional social service providers. Depending on the country and the legal residence of a person, a refugee might benefit from various programs for supporting other client groups of social work (e.g. youth aid, a homeless charity, and support for unemployed people). Besides, special programs for language learning, education and social interaction for refugees exist. However, especially those refugees that have no residence permit might have limited access to official support programs.

BEST PRACTICE: Welcome guide in the landscape gardening sector in Germany

The German Garden, Landscape and Sports Ground Construction Association (Bundesverband Garten-, Landschafts- und Sportplatzbau e.V.) employs welcome guides since 2016. They support refugees that like to gain access to the gardening and landscaping labour market. They also act as contacts for companies. Mladan Belic is the welcome guide responsible for the federated states Hesse and Thuringia.

Mr. Belic, how long have you been working as a welcome guide?

Mladan Belic: I have been working for the German Garden, Landscape and Sports Ground Construction Association since May 2022. As a welcome guide I am responsible for the regional association of Hesse-Thuringia. Before I came to Hesse, I was in Brandenburg, and worked there for 3 years as a production manager in a fruit-growing company. I come from agriculture; I studied fruit and viticulture in Serbia. After that I was in Austria, where I attended a German course and studied crop science. Then I found a job in Germany, in a fruit-growing company. The team there was very diverse; the employees came from Poland, Italy, Hungary, Turkey and Croatia. And I was from Serbia.

And what is your motivation to work as a welcome guide in the field of landscape gardening?

Mladan Belic: On the way from Serbia to Germany, I met many different people. We have helped each other and shared experiences and information with each other. Therefore, I know how important it is to get support and I would like to help.

People face many organizational challenges after arriving in a foreign country, they are confronted with many official procedures and administrative processes that are unfamiliar to them. In addition, you have to master this in a foreign language. In the beginning, you don't know all the steps that have to be taken. For example, you first need a cell phone number and an address. Then come all the things that are important to be in this system, such as a tax number and insurance. Only when this is settled can you start talking about employment.

Sometimes people who come to Germany think, "The first thing I need is a job." I myself come from Serbia and first I needed a residence permit and a work permit. Afghanistan and Ukraine are also non-EU countries. Different rules apply to them.

How do you support refugees?

Mladan Belic: We present what activities and career paths there are in landscaping. I explain the prerequisites and help with the first steps. It is also important to talk about possible difficulties so as not to disappoint expectations. You have to know that in landscaping we are always outside. There is often bad weather or heat. It can be physically exhausting. At the same time, there are many opportunities for career advancement in this industry: You can just take a job, but you can also do an apprenticeship, follow it up with a master's degree, and so on. That's good both for refugees who want to stay here but also for everyone else who is looking for jobs with a secure future.

Are many people interested or have most refugees never heard of landscape gardening?

Mladan Belic: There are different situations. For example, I am currently accompanying a man from Afghanistan who knows a lot about landscaping and wants to work in this industry.

Of course, also many have not yet heard of landscaping. That's why we visit vocational schools and job fairs, where we present the opportunities they have with us. Landscape gardening is a mixture of several professions; here you can work with wood, metal, concrete and with stones, but also with plants and different machines. There are many possibilities. Most of the time, young people are more interested after hearing a few stories, and seeing a few pictures or videos about landscape gardening. What I find particularly good and interesting is that more and more women are now interested in landscaping.

And how can you support the companies that are open to this?

Mladan Belic: There are companies, which on the one hand, only need German-speaking specialists and no helpers or trainees and on the other hand, which can also employ helpers who have little or no knowledge of the German language. Therefore, we must first know what the company needs, and then we can find suitable employees. We can also support refugees with documents, residence permits or work permits, which I also see as indirect help for the companies.

We recommend that companies that want to hire refugees exchange information with other companies that already employ people from other countries. At the same time, there are support programs that we can also recommend. Through these, refugees are supported in Germany, especially in learning the language.

We also like to use a picture dictionary about landscape gardening. Important terms about landscape gardening are illustrated there and linked to audio files as pronunciation aids. This is very helpful for companies where refugees work who do not yet speak German.

There is also a "Job and Career" category on our website. There you can enter your location if you are looking for an apprenticeship or a job and can find companies nearby. You can also see what the company specializes in. This page is also very helpful for migrants and refugees.

Interviewee: Claudia Schneider

Source: M. Belic, personal communication, 27. July 2022

8.4. POSSIBLE RISKS AND CHALLENGES

When we talk about possible behavioural challenges, it is first important to look at every case individually. Forced migration happens for various reasons, people come from various regions of the world, come with various cultural and religious backgrounds, do have various biographies, gender and ages. Therefore, there are no generalisations that can be made.

A farmer that trains young people for several years and has been training young refugees stated:

"The refugees are not at all more difficult. On the contrary, as a rule, let's say 80 per cent try to really integrate them and make extreme efforts [...] So there were no particular challenges, except maybe the language."

In addition, other farmers that have been interviewed to develop this teaching material could not observe any specific behavioural challenges.

Others reported that working with a youngster coming from another cultural background was challenging. This was explained also by a double identity crisis that these people might face. A young refugee has a double identity crisis: The youth identity crisis and the cultural identity crisis. This leads to questions like "Do I belong here? Do I have a mission here?"

Young refugees coming from a conflict area or war zone might have grown up without moral orientation. They may also have experienced violence and a lack of social order (Schneider, 2017). Female refugees might have experienced sexual violence (Steffens, 2016).

Very often refugees experienced violence, loss of their loved ones and other traumatic events during the war, disaster or flight. This does not mean that every refugee is suffering from post-traumatic-stress-disorder, but it means that many of them are emotionally challenged by their experience (Schneider et. al, 2020).

Those who have fled may have post-traumatic stress disorder

"They just have trouble sleeping at night. They cannot think of anything but this horrible scene in the homeland. And then they need eight hours a day, sometimes only 6, or 10, or 9, whatever, where they can be comfortable. So, they can physically relieve themselves."

8.5.1 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Traumatization is not cured without help and support. This is very challenging as there is usually a lack of trauma therapists who speak the same language as the person who has fled to Europe (Schneider, 2017).

In many cases, the reaction to the traumatic experience only occurs years later. This means that a person that seems to be stable might suddenly struggle (Schneider, 2017).

However, a farmer is not a trained therapist. He/she needs to know her/his limits by job qualification. He/she should be able to recognize when medical or therapeutic advice is necessary. Therefore, a social farmer should know indications of traumatization so that she/he can conduct specialists if necessary. In the box below some of the key features and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are described.

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an acute, chronic, or delayed reactions to traumatic events such as military combat, assault, or natural disaster. It can be characterized by:

- An anxiety disorder precipitated by an experience of intense fear or horror while exposed to a traumatic (especially life-threatening) event. The disorder is characterized by intrusive recurring thoughts or images of the traumatic event; avoidance of anything associated with the event; a state of hyperarousal and diminished emotional responsiveness.
- An anxiety disorder that develops in reaction to physical injury or severe mental or emotional distress, such as military combat, violent assault, natural disaster, or other life-threatening events.
- PTSD starts at different times for different people. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. Other people develop new or more severe signs months or even years later.
- It can cause problems like
  - flashbacks, or feeling like the event is happening again
  - trouble sleeping or nightmares
  - feeling alone
  - angry outbursts
  - feeling worried, guilty or sad

Source: 2022 ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code F43.10

Social farming might however be an opportunity for decreasing the mental health effects a traumatic experience might have. A person can stabilize as they become more resilient. (Deutscher Bundestag, 2017) argue that this can happen based on factors such as a positive attitude, strong self-esteem, a meaningful everyday life, religiosity, regular school or work, a structured day and week, social contacts, personal responsibility, education and success at school. Many of these protective factors are typical features of social farming. Being involved in social farming means participating in useful activities, education and structured day activities, where every human is accepted with his/her special needs, skills and wishes (Schneider, 2017).

Social farming activities might decrease the mental health effects of traumatic experience

8.4.2 External challenges/risks

Bureaucratic obstacles

If you want to initiate a social farming project with people that were forced to leave their home country, external challenges might be more difficult to overcome than dealing with behavioural challenges. Bureaucratic obstacles are often high. Unclear residence status is an additional burden for someone that has to escape ("Do I have a future in this country?") It might also come with unclear funding regulations and difficulties in obtaining a work permit.

Prejudice against refugees

Prejudice against refugees within the staff or the surrounding village is another obstacle. Therefore, it is important to take a clear position in supporting refugees.

Transportation

A social farming project might also face difficulties when it comes to transportation (How to get to a rural area without a car or a driving license?).

"Transport is a big challenge, people can't drive when they get here and there's the expense of getting a car on the road. Most refugees live in urban centers and most of the farms are in the countryside naturally enough ... . If you have a farmer who will do transport it's great. Because that's also learning time, it's time to get to know one another, it's a good opportunity to talk side by side, not so pressurized."

"In advance nothing had been legally clarified. The refugees had no status at all here, they had to go to the Senate Administration every day and report there somehow. The financing was unclear, i.e. how the refugees would be financed and supported. And at that time we jumped in at the deep end with the foundation and almost took on all the responsibility ourselves because the state was not yet set up for this. And then, in principle, we really did a model project."

Conflict management

The expert interviews with social farmers also helped to collect some tips for conflict management for social farming initiatives with forced displaced persons. As you can see most of the advice can be transferred to other target groups of social farming as well.

Figure 18: Tips for conflict management

Forgive some-one after something bad has happened	Have a daily exchange with your headman	Pay attention to harmony
Know about each other's religion	Limit the target group you work with (e.g. by age or educational background)	Support tra-iners by involving volunteers
Pay attention to the social aspect (not only to work)	Take a firm stand if co-workers have prejudice against refugees	Get to know the story of the other person, get to know his/ her culture

"You first have to understand under what kind of living conditions he grew up. That took a lot of time. First, we talked a lot about Syria. We also looked at where he lived, and what was it like? I had to find myself again and again in this role: What's it like? I dealt a lot with the culture, with Islamism, etc. And then you also understand why people are like that."

8.5. PARTICULARITIES

Working with refugees in social farming means working with various cultures, languages and traditions.

Social workers or farmers that want to be involved in social farming with refugees do need intercultural competencies and need to be sensitive to the story of people that experienced forced displacement (Schneider et. al, 2020).

Many refugees like to be connected to their culture of origin. This means being able to speak their mother language, eat familiar food, practice religion or stay in contact with friends and family (Schneider, 2017).

Therefore culture- and religion-specific knowledge is needed. For example, if social farming projects involve Muslims, knowledge about Islamic culture is advantageous (e.g. What does the fasting month Ramadan mean for doing heavy work in the fields?). Some cultures also involve antipathies against some animals. However, not every refugee is also a religious person. It is crucial to see the person and not stereotype people according to their status as refugees.

Behaving 'differently' might of course have nothing to do with a cultural difference but with the feelings the displaced person has to deal with. People that like to work with refugees need to be aware of the impact of flight and loss in the life of this target group (Schneider, 2017). Many refugees have to deal with grief and the guilt of the survivor.

They have invariably lost their home, friends, job and their sense of normality. They might have fears for the welfare of friends and family or fear deportation.

"He had a very different cultural background. And that was also a completely new field for me. In the Islamic-influenced world, you have completely different roles. And he had, for example, this role of the firstborn. The firstborn man has a completely different status. And his whole life was very contrary to what we do here. For him it was a big issue: How can I get on in this culture? Where is my identity? How can I relate to this new culture without totally questioning my existence? And without being ashamed of it? [...] And it was really challenging to first look at what kind of culture he brings with him and how can I understand this culture?"

Understanding of gender roles

As refugees do come from various countries, and have various cultural and religious backgrounds, there is no common understanding of gender roles. Gender roles even vary within one country and might depend on family background, social status, etc. Women might prefer to work with female farmers and social workers or they might not have the opportunity to become involved in social farming due to childcare or other family responsibilities.

When different cultures come together, it is likely that there will be different understandings and expectations of gender roles. Also, the experience of war, flight and life before being a refugee varies between gender. Women especially might have faced victimisation, exploitation and sexual abuse, even after the flight (e.g. in refugee camps) (Wigget, 2014) while men may have been engaged in combat

The most important thing is not to stereotype a person based on his or her origin. The best advice is to be curious and to ask: How have you done this at home? Are you a religious person and what is your religion? How do you understand gender roles?

"Gender brings its challenges, with both men and women. As a female support worker, some men would find it difficult to take instruction or be asked to do things by a woman (i.e. female social farmer). A lot of the women are of child-bearing years, would have small children at home, maybe breastfeeding, the husband wouldn't necessarily take over to let the woman go so that would exclude them. Women tend to engage better in female-led activities. If I was to bring a woman to a social farming project and she was going to be spending half a day on her own on the farm with the male farmer or potentially with another man, her husband would not agree to something like that. Also, with children after school hours, women would be expected to do 90% of the homework and cooking and cleaning so they just wouldn't be available. There's a skill set and a knowledge that's there and is such a huge untapped potential, but there is a patriarchal structure there that will take time to overcome."

"At the beginning, he found it difficult to understand our culture. We are all like a big family here. And of course the girls rushed up to him and hugged him. And Ibrahim first stood there like a wall and thought: "Why are these women hugging me? But that simply changed in the course of time. And then he really accepted it totally well and felt absolutely comfortable here."

To handle with language barriers

Learning the language of the country a refugee is now living in is one of the main challenges for every displaced person. All social farming projects that have been interviewed to prepare this teaching material reported that language barriers are a challenge you have to tackle. When a project focuses on employment and training it is especially important that people already have some knowledge about the new language.

Some refugees are not used to teacher-centred teaching. They might be illiterate, are not able to attend a formal language course due to legal or financial reasons or find it difficult to focus at school due to mental health issues that are very common among forced displaced persons.

In all these cases, social farming is a good way to engage in informal language learning. You learn a new language by working with other people and by interacting with them. Informal language learning varies a lot from attending a formal language course. While a language course focuses on using grammar the right way, for a displaced person it is more important to communicate content. New words and expressions are picked up in daily situations. Some great tools support volunteers in informal language teaching and communication without a common language.

Further literature about language learning:

Training modules for gardeners about language learning as a tool of integration - How to communicate with groups without a common language: https://learning.ugain.eu/?lang=de (in English, German, Swedish and Spanish)

Tips and tricks for communication without a common language at the farm- https://bio-thueringen.de/publikationen/leitfaden-unbegleitete-minderjaehrige-fluechtlinge-in-der-sozialen-landwirtschaft/ (German language)

"We also oriented ourselves very much in terms of language, because some of them couldn't speak German at all, and they couldn't speak English either. And then we tried to work with aids. We wrote everywhere down what tools are available and hung phrases in the construction trailer to communicate a bit."

8.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. What are the specific benefits from social farming for refugees? Please explain three of them in more detail.

2. What can be possible challenges that social farmer can face while working with this target group? And which solutions can be considered?

3. Work in groups: Read the best practice examples from the text and discuss how these examples can be inspiring for your further focus in your studies or your practical work in field of agriculture and/or social work

Getting to know your target group – a practical example from Kaunas University of Applied Science

The Kauno Kolegija (Kaunas University of Applied Sciences, Lithuania) organised in 2018 a one-week Intensive course "Healing greenery" focusing on the target group of refugees.

Some of the leading questions asked during this course were for example: Healing gardens? What is that? What kind of spice herbs refugees would love to grow at the Refugees' Reception Centre in Rukla? What does it mean to be a refugee?

Looking for answers to those and many other questions, working in multidisciplinary and international groups preparing Green Care areas projects were the main activities. Students attended lectures, visited the Refugees' Reception Centre in Rukla (Lithuania) and interviewed refugees and staff of the Centre as well as were working on drawings of areas. Final projects were presented at the Centre too (Kaunas University of Applied Science, 2018).

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9 PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Aisling Moroney

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe what intellectual disability is and understand the implications of the level of severity on communication and language, basic skills and supports needed.
- Describe the benefits of social farming for this target group.
- Describe the overall approach and the key activities which are most effective and beneficial when working with this target group in a farm environment.
- Describe the possible behavioural references and key challenges of working with this target group and good practice in managing these challenges.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

9.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

While there is no single definition of Intellectual Disability, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) all include as criteria a **significant impairment in general cognitive functioning, social skills and adaptative behaviour.** Intellectual disability **is identified during the developmental years** (i.e. childhood to adolescence) but has **life-long implications for an individual's capacity, functioning and development across multiple domains.** (Patel et al., 2018).

Significant impairment is characterised as performance that is two or more standard deviations below the mean based on normed, individually administered standardized tests of cognitive and adaptive function. The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria include deficits in intellectual functions such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience. Deficits in adaptive function meanwhile affect communication, social participation, and independent living activities. Developmental disabilities result in substantial functional limitations in three or more areas of major life activity, including self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

Some mental health, neurodevelopmental, medical and physical conditions frequently co-occur in individuals with intellectual disability, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder and depression and anxiety disorders. Of particular prevalence and importance is **dual diagnosis** (DD) which refers to the coexistence of intellectual disability (ID) and psychiatric disorder. Psychiatric disorders afflict approximately 19% of the general population, the prevalence is double this (approximately 40%) among persons with ID. In cases of dual diagnosis, the impact on the individual, their family, caregivers and the services that support them can be significant. (Werner & Stawski (2012). A range of studies have also found that although life expectancy of people with intellectual disabilities has increased substantially in recent decades, on the whole, they have **poorer health, greater health needs, and shorter lives than the general population.** Amongst the most prominent of the additional health issues associated with Intellectual Disability - many of which are of direct relevance to the supports provided to them as a client group on social farms - include a substantially higher incidence of epilepsy than in the general population, very high incidences of vision and hearing impairment, a greater likelihood of being either underweight or obese and of having a poor diet, poor levels of physical activity, fitness and agility, greater incidence of diabetes and cardio-vascular disease, and high incidences of gastro-intestinal problems.

Assessment of the severity of intellectual disability is usually made using standardised testing, combined with clinical findings and judgement. There are generally understood to be **four broad levels of severity** which are described in Table 10.1 below drawn from Patel et. al (2018). As can be imagined, an awareness of and understanding of these levels of severity is critical to those developing Social Farming supports. The level of severity will have an impact on factors such as, for example, the physical capacity of participants to engage in activities, the ability to understand instructions, fine and/or gross motor skills, social skills and capacity to communicate, and most crucially, the supports they will need to participate and to maximise the benefits they experience from Social Farming.

The level of severity of intellectual disability will have a significant impact on the kind of supports needed to participate in social farming

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Table 8: Levels of Severity of Intellectual Disability and Associated Impacts

Severity	Communication & language	Basic skills	Supports needed
Mild	Difficulty in the acquisition and comprehension of complex language concepts and low academic ability. Able to do simple multiplications/divisions; write simple letters, lists, etc.	Most can do basic self-care, home activities. Able to complete a basic job application; have basic independent job skills (arrive on time, stay at task, interact with co-workers); use public transportation.	Support as needed basis, episodic or short-term Can achieve relatively independent living and employment as adults with appropriate support
Moderate	Language and capacity for acquisition of academic skills of persons affected vary but are generally limited to basic skills. Abilities include: sight-word reading; copy address from card to job application; match written number to number of items	Some may master basic self-care, and home activities. Abilities include: some independence in self-care; housekeeping with supervision or cue cards; meal preparation, job skills learned with much repetition; use public transportation with some supervision	Most require consistent support in order to achieve independent living and employment as adults
Severe	Very limited language and capacity for acquisition of academic skills	May also have motor impairments. Require daily support in and supervision. Some may acquire basic self-care skills with intensive training	Regular, consistent, lifetime support in school, work or home activities. Care dependent.
Profound	Very limited communication abilities. Capacity for acquisition of academic skills is restricted to basic concrete skills	May also have motor and sensory impairments. Require daily support and supervision	High intensity support needed, across all environments. Limitations of self-care, continence, communication, and mobility; may need complete custodial or nursing care. Care dependent.

9.2 BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The same general benefits of Social Farming which have been identified across target groups also apply to people with intellectual disabilities but the following benefits are particularly important and notable.

a) Personal and skills development

Speaking specifically of participants with intellectual disabilities, Elings (2012) refers to social farms as places where clients are engaged on the basis of their potential, while Rotheram et al. (2017) refer to social farms as a 'space of capability'. The skills acquired in Social Farming are inherently practical and valuable and allow participants to gain the self-efficacy that comes from learning and implementing these skills, bringing a sense of confidence and purpose (Elsey, 2016; Pedersen et al. 2012). Kaley et al. (2018) make some notable observations about the style of learning on a typical social farm. In their

study, they observed that engaging in farm activities encouraged participants to move their bodies in new and different ways and suggest that performing rhythmic or repetitive movements, such as digging, weeding or stacking logs helped participants to embody and retain these skills. They describe this as 'learning through movement' rather than verbal instruction and this is perceived to be particularly important and valuable for people with intellectual disabilities, who may prefer outdoor-based forms of learning which enable them to retain the knowledge and skills learnt, compared to learning in a traditional classroom environment.

Farms are a 'space of capability' where skills are uncovered, learned and developed

Pedersen et al. (2016) note that compared to many other work experience opportunities, there is huge variation in the tasks that can be carried out on a farm, allowing for continual adaptation and flexibility. Studies by Iancu et al. (2014) and Pedersen et al. (2016) draw attention to the multiple opportunities the average farm provides to choose and to switch between activities according to interests, levels of functioning, mood on the day, etc. As Rotherham et al. (2017) note, this allows clients of varying intellectual and physical capabilities to exercise choice, independence, mastery and autonomy, all of which were associated with positive wellbeing by the participants in their study. These factors contributed to personal development as the clients realised their abilities and it was evident that being able to take responsibility for tasks was important to participants. As Kaley et al. (2018) note, as time goes on, participants can also begin to refine the skills they have learnt and embody those activities which they preferred or were particularly good at. There is also strong scope within the social farming context for independent activity for some participants. The participants in Rotherham et al.'s (2017) study expressed a sense of achievement and confidence after being left alone to complete tasks independently.

Participant gathers tomatoes

Source: Social Farming Ireland

b) Social connection and friendship

Social connection is the heart and soul of social farming

A range of studies (Gilmore and Cuskelly, 2014; Rotherham et al., 2017; Kaley et al., 2018) suggest that the social networks of people with a learning disability are often limited and that they often experience loneliness and social, spatial and cultural exclusion in their everyday lives. At a simple level, taking part in a Social Farming placement immediately expands the social network of participants with intellectual disabilities as they meet the farmer/the farm family, other participants and other people who may be on the farm such as other farm workers, the vet, neighbours, etc. (Elings, 2012). This creates a local community of people who participants may naturally meet and chat with outside of the farm also, at, for example, local football matches, or the market or the cattle mart (Elings, 2004). At a somewhat deeper level, social farms can provide, as both Rotherham et al. and Kaley's studies suggest, an environment for people with an intellectual disability to develop meaningful relationships and real friendships. Kaley et al. (2018) note that some of the participants who took part in their study said that care farming had helped them to make friends, and some had even begun to spend time with friends they had made on farms doing other things, like going to the cinema, going to the pub or attending local football matches. Social Farming in these cases provided participants with new opportunities to form meaningful adult relationships, which was described as having a significant impact on wellbeing and as facilitating feelings of belonging and social inclusion.

"Or they talk to each other about their films. The clients also talk about their problems to each other. That is important. It's a center of life and it's not just work. It is more than work."

"A big part of the day is to have the meal together, if possible outside. We had a music session every time people came here with some singing and I play the guitar."

A further important component of the Social Farming model is the group nature of activities and the opportunities this provides to create connections and relationships between members of the group and a broader sense of community; social farms are what Rotherham et al. (2017) refer to as an integrative space. Their study amongst Social Farming participants with intellectual disabilities found that social farms are a collective space of social inclusion that, although outside the mainstream, are providing an alternative collective space as day centres close or shift focus. This idea of community emerged as a highly-valued aspect by service-users in the Di Iacovo and O'Connor (2009) study also; service-users indicated that they felt safe and at home in the group and that they were accepted for who they were. Rotherham et al. (2017) also noted that this 'working alongside' reduces the social barriers that normally affect the ability of people with learning disabilities to participate in society and everyday activities.

"The wider community aspect of it is very important. We will have neighbours call in all the time. There is a local man works on the farm with me and I always make sure he is there when the lads come. He always asks Val [a participant who has been coming a long time] 'What do you think of that Val?' knowing he can't answer him as he is non-verbal. But they communicate through farming and it's no problem at all."

In this context, there is particular value in supporting people living in institutions or assisted living to go 'out' and away to ordinary or more commercial farms. There they will get to have a separate working life, meet a new group of people and grow and develop as people separate from the people they live with or who they already know.

c) Connection to nature

The farm provides a live and very real natural environment

Loue et al. (2014) refer to the benefits associated with direct observation of and connection to biological cycles, such as those of plant growth, while Pedersen et al. (2016) report on themes such as excitement about and absorption in the growth process throughout the season emerging in discussions with participants. A number of other studies refer to the positive benefits of *caring* for plants, thereby contributing to producing something which has a direct and observable legacy (Iancu et al., 2014; Blood and Cacciatore, 2014). One of the participants in Iancu et al.'s study (2014), for example, described how impressed he was to see that the trees he pruned grew fruit as a result of his care. Kaley et al. (2018) found that for participants with intellectual disabilities, spending time with farm animals, touching them, feeding them and generally caring for them, helped some people feel calmer or less anxious and provided people with a sense of reassurance, stability and security through the routines this necessitated. The fact that animals are non-judgemental, incapable of perceiving people as different or 'less than' can also be a hugely positive experience for people.

"There are times when I look at A [participant] and I think, what is he seeing? I think he is seeing things I'm not seeing. Nature is around him, nature is chatting and he responds to it. I think the people who come to me are more connected to the elements than we are."

Participant enjoys the sights and smells of plants

Source: Social Farming Ireland

d) Meaningful activity

A number of studies refer to social farming as providing inherently fulfilling and occupying tasks (Hassink et al., 2010, Gorman, 2019), while Bock and Oosting (2010) theorised that the real work being carried out on farms might be an important source of value for participants. The care and welfare for the environment, for plants and animals inherent to activities on social farms provide opportunities for participants to feel they are needed, that they are doing responsible and socially valuable work and that there is a result attached to what they do (Gorman, 2019; Pedersen et al., 2012).

"The meaningful work bit is very important. That's the thing that it really brings and where the gap is for lots of people. People may have really active lives outside of their service but the real, meaningful work, there is so much to be gained from it. People can see the reason for what they're doing, can see the end result. Something like feeding the animals, they need to eat and the participants help with that."

"Perhaps what our clients value most is that they can grow their own vegetables or anything else here that they directly consume, or it is a situation where they take the produce to the department and show it off, either to the staff or to other clients. That's probably one of the biggest benefits that we see in this context and we see unambiguous feedback from clients in terms of various positive emotional expressions."

While social farms do not usually provide paid employment for participants, they often refer to it as 'work' or a 'job' (Rotherham et al., 2017). As noted by Kaley et al. (2018) the regularly performed tasks and the repeated farm routines gave participants in their study the freedom to perform their new identities as farm workers, without fear of discrimination or unwanted surveillance. The findings from Rotherham et al.'s study suggest that for most participants, social farms provide a secure and protected space of work where people with a learning disability are valued as part of the farm team. It is a space where participants are able to find self-fulfilment in their work without the risk of exclusion or feeling 'less than' the other people. The participants in their study were able to develop their skills and abilities in a safe *and secure environment, where they felt accepted and understood. The contribution to* growing food – one of the fundamentals of life – seems to be particularly important to people with intellectual disabilities.

"You can see what you achieved. You can look at a ridge and said we did that today. They don't miss one bit of that, they know where they stood, what they did. Food is what we have got to do. It's very fundamental."

The kind of activities which are available on social farms and the physical nature of the work can especially be more appealing for men with intellectual disabilities than the standard day centre activities. Social farming provides a real opportunity to do the kind of work that is perceived to be 'manly' and that their male peers might be doing. Equally, research amongst male participants with intellectual disabilities in Ireland (SoFI, 2019) found that an important dimension of social farming was the opportunity to spend time and to work alongside other men, especially in cases where the social farmer was male.

Social farming may be particularly appealing to men compared to some of the other supports on offer

e) Improved physical health and well-being

Physical inactivity is one of the key lifestyle factors in causing ill health and increased risk of chronic diseases in people with intellectual disabilities (Emerson and Baines, 2011). As Kaley et al. (2018) note, Social Farming engages users in a range of activities which have the potential to improve or enhance physical health and well-being. They suggest that activities such as feeding and caring for animals, maintenance, gardening, etc. require more physical effort than activities offered at regular day centres, thus improving the fitness, agility and strength of the participants over the course of their Social Farming experience. Some of the participants in Kaley et al.'s study (2018) reported feeling fitter and stronger and more able to carry out exercise such as walking and cycling in their everyday life, which demonstrates how farming activities can confer wider health benefits outside the farm setting.

Social farms provide opportunities to exercise without even noticing

Lifting hay on the farm

Source: Social Farming Ireland

9.3 SOCIAL FARMING IN PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

9.3.1 Existing Services Supporting this Target Group

In most jurisdictions, there has been a significant shift in thinking and in public policy on intellectual disability in the last thirty years in particular which has in turn influenced service delivery. This can be broadly characterised as **a shift from the medical model of provision to a social model** which aims to be more person-centred, inclusive and community based in its approach. This shift is underpinned by a range of international and national level policies and plans which both reflect and contribute to changing expectations and practices. Amongst the key drivers of this have been the normalisation movement initiated by Wolfensberger in the 1970s - which asserted that people with disabilities have the right to and have the opportunity of living their lives as close to normal in community based, mainstream settings – and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which reaffirmed the right of every person with a disability to self-determination, autonomy, equality and dignity.

This shift in public policy and increasingly in practice is also driven by broader social and cultural movements for change, by increased expectations for quality of life for people with disabilities and increasingly, by demands from people with disabilities themselves and their families/advocates for greater autonomy, independence and choice. Arising out of the social model of care is the increased focus, particularly within the area of autism, on a neurodiversity model of care, where developmental disability is accepted as a valued part of human neurologic diversity. This is a challenge to prevailing views of neurological diversity as inherently pathological, instead asserting that neurological differences should be recognized and respected and that support systems (such as inclusion-focused services, accommodations, communication and assistive technolo-

gies, occupational training, and independent living support) should allow those who are neuro-divergent to live their lives as they are rather than conforming to a notional ideal.

There has been positive, if uneven progress in moving from a medical to a more social model of disability.

However, within this broadly positive trajectory in terms of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities to self-determination, autonomy, equality and to live a full and 'normal' life, there is are significant variations in the progress in making this a reality and in changing how services are delivered. As noted by Patel et al. (2018) the setting within which services are delivered to persons with intellectual disability, the cost of caring for persons with intellectual disability and how the services and healthcare are funded vary across countries because of differences in healthcare systems and one can add, healthcare budgets. The range of supports currently available vary both across different countries and in the extent to which they can be said to deliver on fully meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Key actors in service provision for people with intellectual disabilities include the state, non-governmental organisations, charities working with people with intellectual disabilities, advocacy groups, families, etc., the relative importance of each varying from one country/culture to next. The kinds of supports available to people with intellectual disabilities are described in Box 10.1. People can access social farming supports from within many of these options, though **the most likely pathways to social farming where the person is going 'out' to a social farm come from people within day services, residential services and from people using their own individual budget.** In the Netherlands, some of these social or care farms have indeed become established mini health care institutions. Some social farms are in effect a kind of sheltered workshop; this may be particularly the case in Germany, for example. Some institutional or community settings for people with an intellectual disability may place farming, growing, etc. at the core of what they do so people are accessing social farming as part of their everyday life where they live and work.

Box 10.1 Types of Care/support available to people with intellectual disabilities

- **Informal care and support** which comes predominately from within the family structure. This is particularly common within some of the central and Eastern European post-communist countries.
- Care and support within an **institutional/congregated setting** with variable levels of opportunity for independence, person-centred supports and activities, etc. A recent report on this transition from institutional to community settings across 27 EU member states (Šiška & Beadle-Brown, 2020) noted that in many countries, persons with intellectual disabilities and complex needs are most likely to still live in institutional or congregated settings.
- **Residential support but within a de-congregated setting** either fully independently or more commonly, sharing a house with a small number of other people with intellectual disabilities in an ordinary community. This approach has been pursued vigorously, if unevenly, in Ireland in the last decade.

- Sheltered workshops, to including traditional sheltered workshops which are long-term permanent places of employment for people whose disabilities preclude them from entering the open labour market and transitional sheltered workshops which aim to provide people with disabilities with the support and skills needed to access non-sheltered employment.

- **Supported employment**, where employers are subsidised to provide employment for people with intellectual disabilities.

- **Non-residential day services** which provide a range of supports to service users including education and training, support for volunteer work or supported employment, opportunities to socialise, opportunities to participate in community activities, etc.

- **Personal assistance services** which can facilitate independent living at home and assistance with activities of daily living, in the workplace or in education. This may be provided in the person's own home or that of their family. The US, the UK, Denmark, Norway and Sweden are considered at the forefront of this type of support.

- Linked to the above, in some countries, the allocation of **individualised budgets** to people with disabilities is increasingly common, enabling the person to choose themselves (with supports) which activities, supports, etc. they wish to access.

9.3.2 Activity of particular relevance and value to this target group

Everyone who comes to a social farm is first and foremost an individual and should be treated as such

As with any participant in social farming, each person with intellectual disability should be treated as an individual, with their own set of skills, interests, strengths, challenges and weaknesses. As noted in Section 10.1, the severity of the intellectual disability will also have a significant impact on physical capacity, the level of supports needed the ability to understand instructions, fine and/or gross motor skills, social skills and capacity to communicate and the level of support needed to participate in social farming. As with other groups who engage with Social Farming, the early stages of being on the farm should involve a process of discovery – for both the person and the farmer/staff – as to what participant's preferences, skills, interests and challenges are. Research amongst social farmers and people working with people with intellectual disabilities who have accessed social farming supports would suggest that overall, activity on the social farm should encompass an evolving mix of activities which balances the needs of the participants and the needs of the farm but with the former predominating.

a) Ordinary – and meaningful – farm tasks

The basic, necessary farm tasks - the things that *need* to be done – should form the core of the time on the farm; checking livestock, feeding animals, weeding, sowing, harvesting, sweeping, tidying, etc. On a farm, activities don't need to be invented and are inherently meaningful and useful. As noted in Section 10.2 above, the feeling of contributing to necessary work is valuable in building self-esteem and confidence and in giving people a sense of pride, meaning and purpose.

Tasks on farms are full of meaning, they need to be done

"Every day we start with the basic farming jobs, checking the life stock and that but after that it depends what the lad's choices would be. It's good that everyone understands there's things that NEED to be done and then we can go on from there."

"[...] having a working day. You leave the facility early in the morning, go to work and then return at a later time [...] you have something to tell."

"For the clients, working on a care farm means contributing to something greater. Everything they do has a meaning. It makes them feel important, useful and needed."

Here again, the 'real' or commercial farm can be differentiated from the more institutionalised care farm in providing arguably a more authentic and meaningful experience where there are commercial realities which have to be managed.

"When we leased the farm, we still had to set everything up. We then consciously chose to become a real agricultural company because we think that is important. The work that comes from it makes people feel needed, everyone feels the necessity of the work. We want to be meaningful to people."

b) Activities with clear outputs/results

In working with this target group, activities which have a clear, even visual output is very important in building people's sense of motivation and achievement.

"Everything that concerns harvesting usually works very well. I always find that very nice. Because the work you put in beforehand can be seen in the finished product, which is harvested, lying in a box and weighed. Sorting, weighing, harvesting, transporting, these are things that are really very easy to motivate to. That's fun for everyone. You can see what you've done. These are things that work very well."

"I think they like to see the results of their work. For example, P cuts the nettles with a scythe and then he boasts how much nettles he cut and he is happy about his work. To see the results of their work is extremely important in their case as they often consider themselves inferior, valueless or deficient."

"Mowing the lawn, mowing work. In general, work where you can really see that you have done something. So a visual thing where you say, 'Oh, I finished here and I'm happy. I worked that bed.' Or 'I have harvested this piece'. Or 'that tree, I harvested that' or something like that."

c) Activities which are connected to one another

In addition to discrete farm tasks, it is important to create a **chain of connected activities** and to draw attention to these connections. For example, the participants sow the seeds, weed and tend to the vegetables, harvest the vegetables and then help to cook them in the kitchen and finally eat the vegetables. They are involved in and contributing to the full cycle in a way which would be difficult to replicate in another setting.

d) Real access to animals and nature

For many participants in social farming from this target group, real and up-close interaction with and care for animals and other aspects of the natural environment may be one of the most important and valuable aspects of their time on the farm and should be facilitated and encouraged where possible. Some participants will have fears and anxieties around animals but social farming can in many cases provide a space and a place where these can be allayed and gently overcome. It is very common over the course of only a number of weeks for people to go from, for example, being afraid of chickens, to walking around holding one in their arms.

"Well the horse was really popular among our clients. It truly was a kind of a therapy. We had a client who used to warm herself up while leaning to the horse. Their temperature is really high."

"Acquisition of animals (hens, rabbits) is considered both for the benefit and for the fact that some clients like animals. It calms them to be in their presence, caressing them, for example."

"You have to give time and space in the day to just 'be' with nature."

Participants with chicken

Source: Social Farming Ireland

e) Activities which allow for positive risk-taking

It is common for the daily lives of people with intellectual disabilities to be characterised by a culture of risk minimisation and paternalism, whether within their own family or in a service environment. In contrast, the live environment of the farm is one where people should be supported to take risks, to extend themselves and to build capacity in a positive way and at an appropriate level. Equally, the sense of freedom and space which the farm environment can provide relative to some other more institutional or clinical environments is valuable and should be cultivated.

"They need the outdoor work, the exercise. They don't want to stay in the room and always sit and do the same work for weeks and months. They want to have a change."

"They especially like going to forest and working there … In the forest they also like it because it is full of action, we often burn branches there and that is what they like. Well, especially our male clients. They do not really enjoy planting trees, but other forest works they do enjoy.

Linked to this is the opportunity social farming can provide for people to access machinery where this is a particular interest for them.

The opportunity to take risks is an important feature of social farming – getting the balance right is an ongoing task

"The machines are important because everyone likes to use as much technology as possible…. Most clients like to work with machines They also want to be a little bit in the centre through this. 'I can handle technology'. This is very important. 'I can already do more than others. I'm the one who can handle a lawn mower, the power saw, the chain saw, or even the tractor or our lawn tractor. Or at least I'm the one who sits on it.' That's important. Machines are important."

The challenge of balancing the need for safety and the need to allow people to experience farm life as fully as possible is highlighted in this extract from observation carried out by a researcher on a social farm in Ireland:

> "These social farmers are very safety conscious and one of their main criteria for the success of the day is that everyone goes home safe and uninjured. There was, for example, a discussion between the farmers one of the days as to whether it was too slippy to walk up the farm in the rain and it was clear that they would nearly always err on the side of caution. While this is important, there is a balance to be struck and that people – and particularly people with intellectual disabilities who are often very 'minded' by their families – should also have the opportunity to take appropriate risks and to operate as fully as possible in a live environment. One of the participants in particular is physically highly capable, works part time, etc. but according to the support worker, has a family which is particularly protective of him. Ideally the farm might provide a counterpoint to that and build his confidence further but may not do so to the extent that it could."

This need for balance is also highlighted in an interview with a social farmer in the Netherlands:

"You need diplomas to be allowed to use working materials. This is often a problem for us, because if you have certain jobs that require working equipment that requires a diploma, then these jobs don't get done. We do try to see what is possible, for example, by buying smaller machines. For example, to drive a tractor, you need a tractor driving license, which many participants do not have. But for driving a small tractor mower, an ordinary driving license is sufficient. But it's a pity, because it's precisely the use of these machines that many of the participants find so cool and which makes the care farm different from other care farms."

This case also highlights the creative approach farmers sometimes need to take – this time using deliberately using machinery which participants can use without a diploma – to ensure that participants can develop and have a satisfying time at the farm. In some cases, participants can even be supported to obtain the correct certification which will further expand their opportunities to contribute and to move towards mainstream employment, as in this case from the Netherlands also:

"In principle, only the work supervisors work on the tractors and the machinery, but now that the participants often live here for a longer period of time, they can also get certificates for this. If a participant has a certificate, agreements can be made. For example, there is now a participant who has a driving licence and delivers orders. That fits in with his objective of growing towards paid and independent work. "

f) Activities with a strong social dimension

Social farming should always provide plenty of natural opportunities for social interaction and conversation while carrying out activities. Beginning with a gathering in the morning, social farmers/staff should also create and nurture opportunities for fun and friendship building while having meals, celebrations and in the 'in-between' times. The wider farm family and the neighbours and wider community can – and where possible, should – be part of this also.

Farmer's children and participants having fun together

Source: Social Farming Ireland

"Fun activities around the holidays, just having fun together. I think for participants it adds value to their lives. Their world is generally small, they interact with the public here and get to know more people."

"And they have an environment here where they feel as comfortable as possible and where work is not only in the foreground, where leisure activities also take place. Or everyone says, "Okay, we'll go to the swimming pool or we'll go lick an ice cream or something." Certain excursions are also made from time to time. Or we just play cards or today is a rainy day, "okay, let's take it easy." And that's also part of it."

g) Activities which engage with the 'outside' world

Of particular value to this target group – and especially those who are in a residential service – is the opportunity to be out there in the world, both observing and being part of commercial activities. In some cases, this could simply involve going to look at or purchase supplies or machinery, or to engage in events in the local community like markets, marts, festivals, etc. In other social farms – particularly those where people go on a daily or residential basis – it can be an inherent part of the participant's activity on the farm:

"[...] the fact that it is a running company, that gives you a real working experience. The clients have contact with customers and other visitors."

"The employees can also stand out or prove and show themselves, because we also have contacts with the outside world. We deliver the goods. And they like that. That you drive to the shop, show yourself. And when customers come to our garden, they enjoy serving the customers."

h) Activities which encourage natural physical activity

Encouraging natural physical activity throughout the day should be built into the social farming experience; walking to feed the animals, walking up and down hills and on uneven surfaces, bending, stretching, digging, forking, lifting, etc. Happily, this can be done without drawing attention to the intention of improving the physical fitness, strength and agility of participants: it is simply what is done as part of carrying out necessary farm tasks.

People with intellectual disabilities often live quite sedentary lives – social farming should challenge this in a very natural way

"One of the great things about social farming is that everything is happening in the background, like exercise without having to be named and labelled as such. That is the beauty of it."

"Here it starts with a walk uphill to the vineyard, then you've already had quite a physical effort. That's just the start of the day. [...] the vineyard makes them experience the seasons again."

"The physical work was all new to them but noticed at the end of the 10 weeks their concentration and ability to work had really improved."

9.3.3 Approach needed when working with this target group

a) Treat people as individuals

The target group of people with intellectual disabilities encompasses people with a very wide range of abilities, needs, challenges and potential. Treating each person who arrives at the farm as an individual is the foundation of providing supports which will deliver a rewarding experience and positive outcomes for participants. These extracts from interviews with social farmers highlight the range of capacities but also the approach of experienced social farmers in managing and mediating between these different capacities. It also highlights the value of supporting someone to find their niche, of nurturing it and giving the person ownership of that area of activity (e.g. Peter is in charge of the chickens, Marie waters the plants in the polytunnel)

"It varies greatly how quickly individual disabled people learn the job. Some learn relatively quickly, are very practically gifted, for others it takes longer. But there is actually a niche for everyone somewhere, where he is really good."

"The work in the fields or in our stables is very individual and very different, depending on how much the respective employee needs to be supported. We sometimes have people who, after brief instruction, take on a task completely independently: mucking out the barn, planting a vegetable patch, feeding ducks or geese. These jobs are only seasonal, not year-round. But if you distribute such tasks, and we have employees who can do this well on their own, without much guidance, then this also runs through a whole week without them needing further guidance. Of course, there is also the completely different case where employees have to or want to join the farmer in all the time. And then we are almost always with this person."

"You should make a special offer for each client, at least as far as the nursery is concerned. So one client is more the technician. Of course, you always try to offer a job where he has to work with the machines. The next one is more the one who wants to and can sell. Others always need simple jobs. Depending on the impairments that the person has."

b) Allow opportunity for people to develop and grow on the farm

People will come to social farming with their own knowledge and experience – and will build more from their time on the farm. It is important that there is acknowledgement of this and that participants are given the opportunity to contribute their ideas as well as their labour.

"Some really enjoyed the projects we did or even suggested projects. Could be something small, one lad had worked in the garden in the service and he worked with the rose patches and brought them on. Another lad suggested raised bed for the garlic to grow better and it did. A few of the lads had spent a lot of their time working on the farm in the service and it came back to them and we did learn stuff from them. Some of the lads would have been put up for social farming because they had grown up on a farm or worked on the farm service, there is a real recall element to it .. "

In cases where people are attending the social farm over a long period of time, they may come to be involved across all aspects of the operation according to their strengths, talents and preferences, as in the case here:

Wood-working skills being developed on a social farm

Source: Social Farming Ireland

"Our clients are involved in virtually everything within both horticultural operations. They also participate in the management and running of the business (e.g. growing programmes). The work is always distributed with regard to the individual abilities of each client and staff member, especially in light of their particular work limitations resulting from both their diagnosis and their current psychological setting. We often use work assistants to help our clients or staff with routine work activities. In principle, the abilities of the staff clients have long been known and we can plan work for them accordingly. Some clients also operate agricultural equipment (for example, various tractors or loaders)."

This opportunity for growth and development also includes increasing the level of responsibility and sense of duty, purpose and meaning attached to people's work. This may include doing some things which people do not enjoy or which they find boring or difficult but that is all part of living an ordinary and normal life. Social farmers involved in more residential social farms laid particular emphasis on this but it has applicability to any extended social farming placements:

Doing work which is very ordinary and maybe even boring is all part of life on the social farm – and part of life in general

"Thanks to L´Arche and our background we soon understood that it is essential to let our clients experience the meaningfulness of life. And that starts with little things which sometimes are a success, sometimes less … that they are useful, that they may use their skills. Sometimes they fall into depression or they are bored with things or the work here … well, every experience of success costs us something, at least some sweat, it is not entirely for free … so we need to motivate them, we need them to understand that something is a duty."

"We wrote it into our institution project … that the clients may encounter with animals – that it is something not ordinary, something you do not encounter with in sheltered housing and respite care normally. It is something they can manage. They learn to think about other (people), their needs, they learn to feed animals before they eat themselves, they learn to keep watch when it is hot so that the sheep have enough water to drink etc. And the vegetable garden (if cared about as it is nowadays) generates benefits – something we can eat. Then they feel something … not that it would change their lives, but they have the chance to feel something … "

Again, balancing commercial necessity and the need for tasks to be done efficiently with the need to provide worthwhile and meaningful activities is something which must be done continually and thoughtfully on a social farm, as in this example:

"We used to do a lot of hoeing/weeding but now we drive the machine through the rows. What we can do mechanically we try to do to reduce the workload and keep an overview. […] After all, you are also a real company and you try not to put too much pressure on the participants. If the weeds literally grow over your head, it's not nice."

c) Create a relaxed and homely atmosphere

We have already noted the importance of providing space and time for social interaction and relationship building. It is also important to create an overall atmosphere which is relaxed, homely and welcoming. What this means will vary according to type of social farms: clearly the creation of a family-type atmosphere is particularly important on a residential social farm, for example. It will include being in tune with people's moods and wishes on a given day and working around them.

"We definitely try to make sure that the atmosphere is relaxed. The atmosphere at our farm depends very much on how the client actually comes to work and how he or she is, to put it simply, in the mood. At these moments you can already tell to some extent what his work performance will be in the next few hours, because with our clients with their diagnoses you can predict their behaviour relatively well."

While it can be more challenging on social farms which have greater productivity demands, it is also important that participants on social farms from this target group are not put in excessively pressurised or stressful work situations. As noted by one social farmer, this may lead to negative outcomes both the for person *and* for the tasks which need to be completed:

"In general, our clients are very difficult to work under pressure and stress and any deviation towards stress or pressures makes them uncomfortable at work and reduces their concentration and consequently their motivation."

"We've been trying all along to make sure that even working relationships are definitely more informal than formal … For us it is very important that this spirit prevails here, because we also see in it a certain link to work efficiency, the overall motivation of the employees to come to work at all and to do some standard and solid performance."

It is important to focus on contributing to people's quality of life and achievements on a daily basis as there may be challenges in carrying out longer term planning:

"Unfortunately, with our clients, it is not possible to plan their future very well, as they are generally unable to think beyond a week or a month into the future due to their intellectual disability. Rather, at the farm, we try to improve their current life and current functioning so that they can be as aware as possible and take away feelings of peace and well-being and gain job-related skills and emotions. During the interview we talked about the joys and positive emotions of the crops or other achievements that have been made, whether it's in the form of flowers that have been grown and things like that, so we tend to move more along those lines and talk about some future planning goes to the side and it's more the side of the professional staff trying to guide the client in their stay to the best possible quality of life."

d) Be authentic, 'real' and open

The social farmer needs to genuinely meet the person as a person first and foremost, not as a person with a disability. Equally, they need to be grounded and authentic in how they act and approach people:

"I take people at face value. I don't care what difficulties they have because I have learned through my job and life that we all have difficulties and if we can meet in one place and try and make life easier for another and build a relationship that's what it's all about. If a file comes my way about what people prefer, like and don't like, that's helpful but if it states they have this and that disability, I don't care about that. If you know what you need to know to keep people safe and if they have any special needs but after that you don't need to know anything … .some might have cognitive disabilities but they still have 40 or 50 years on the earth and they can tell when someone genuinely sees them as an equal or doesn't. You develop trust based on that, the lads will be quite good at reading people, they've seen all sides of humanity, the good and the bad."

"You have to be grounded in yourself first of all. If people are coming, if you have things on your mind, park them. You have to be as present as you can be. Just be very aware, is there anything lying around like a rake that could hurt someone. But after that, be yourself and let them be themselves as much as possible. Create the space for the cups of tea, they are the little oasis in the working day. The conversations go on, about football or whatever. Just normal conversation. Just be yourself."

Farmers may also need to overcome any tendencies they might have to patronise people or treat them as children:

"You have to be relaxed and not patronising. It can be difficult and it becomes more natural with experience."

Part of this will be an ability to manage and respond to the openness of many participants with intellectual disabilities, who may have fewer social boundaries in terms of saying what they think:

"Generally, it is the same as with all other people. The difference is, that everything is more intense. It is more open, it is actually also more honest, not hidden, but problems come to light relatively openly. Nothing is concealed. It is altogether more honest and more direct."

"We definitely consider the openness of both parties as the main source for a positive atmosphere, where the client of course has the opportunity to share his/her current state, his/her worries, problems, etc., which may affect his/her work performance and generally his/her way of functioning in the workplace. If we know about such a problem, we can take it into account and help the employee in some way, both in his professional life/workplace and in his personal life, which we consider to be a very important advantage, especially for the employee."

This openness can and should work both ways, with the social farmers and/or staff on the social farm often showing and giving more of themselves than might be typical in a work setting. This is particularly applicable to residential social farms or ones where participants have a lengthy connection to the farm:

"Yes, the farmer is a supervisor We call that a group leader. This relationship is certainly there. The farmer who is not a group leader is also more of a colleague. But he does have the say when it comes to heavy machine work. For example, 'Don't reach into the potato sorting machines with your finger.' And of course our farmers or our farmer and our group leaders structure the day. Very few employees are able to create a weekly structure for themselves. So they have to be guided anyway. And then the group leader - employee relationship arises after all."

e) But the farmer is ultimately in charge and in control

That the social farmer is ultimately in control and the leader of the group is necessary for ensuring the safety and welfare of all of the people on the farm and for ensuring that tasks are completed adequately. As with so many aspects of social farming, a balance constantly needs to be struck where people experience the farm as a place of warmth and friendship but also of necessary work, of positive-risk taking but also of potential dangers. The exact approach needed will vary in the first instance according to the needs of the farm and the particular tasks being undertaken.

"Nevertheless, there still has to be a certain boss-employee relationship. Even with this unconventional choice of words. In a certain way, it has to be that way. However, I only emphasize the boss in case of emergency. If a conflict arises, then I take stronger action at that moment and also speak a few serious words. But otherwise we are quite unconventional. Everyone has their own line. It's always such a tightrope walk. You can't let it slide too much. However, if everything goes well, I'm inclined to have more of a friendly relationship and not have to keep saying, "I'm the boss here." The people have to know, and they can't cast doubt on that."

It will also vary depending on which approach which will work best with a particular individual. In some cases, the relationship between the social farmer and the participants is more formal, or more of a boss- worker relationship. In others – often on the same farm – a person will require a different, perhaps more nurturing approach.

"So there are some who rather appreciate this relationship boss - employee or a clear leadership role. In these cases, I give very clear instructions and I am the boss. But there are also others with whom you have to communicate in a completely different way. That's a bit difficult for me to describe. So there are some relationships that are like father - son or father - daughter."

"To sum up, I have a relatively large distance with some employees. I don't talk to them about personal things. They just want to know from me: What work is on today? What's the job of today? And now and then there's a nice chat. That's enough. And others are very close and want to have a close contact. They are very different characters."

The social farmer is also often a kind of role model for people with intellectual disability, someone to look up to and learn from and an awareness of this is important. Research amongst participants in the Netherlands (2012) found that the presence of a 'real' farmer seems to be of great importance to the participants. He is the boss on the farm and has knowledge and skills about what needs to be done. In unexpected situations, which occur regularly, he can therefore act creatively. Participants with intellectual disability often say that they "want to become like farmer Piet".

f) Patience and clarity

Patience and willingness to work with people where they are is fundamental to social farming: patience in getting to know people, patience in carrying out activities alongside participants, patience in dealing with the slower pace which may be needed when working with this target group:

"One of the main competencies that we are good at when managing our clients in the workplace is patience, and patience again."

"Patience, kindness, gentleness. You are not trying to shape anybody into what they aren't. Intuition is very important."

"You need a certain amount of time to get to know every person and you really have to be able to get into contact with them."

" What always worked for me is a low arousal approach, don't push people to do something. You are not there to provide a service to people but to support them to do something. If you try to find out what their needs are, what interests them and you go along with that in a gentle and patient way. A lot of it is observation – you look at them and see where they are in this place and time and see how can you support them and build a relationship with them."

"You can't rush people to finish things, I am happy to work on something as long as they want to … .Of course some jobs have to be done but you take it at their pace, even if it takes 2 or 3 times longer."

Although individual capacity will vary, it is nearly always important when working with this group to offer very clear instructions, to break tasks down into smaller chunks and to repeat and clarify instructions as often as necessary. It is also crucial to demonstrate and *show* how things are done, to work alongside people in carrying out tasks. This description of the process by one social farmer highlights good practice:

"You have to break difficult things down into simple steps. Complex things have to be done one after the other. When you have to do a more complex job, you first try to explain it simply with simple words. And words alone are not enough. You have to show again and again, participate. If the employees have never done a certain job before, then only an explanation is not enough. You have to give practical instructions again and again. If the employees are to do a certain job, e.g. weeding a certain bed, clearing it of weeds, then I have to show them how to do it and join in. When harvesting: Which fruits are ripe? Any questions? Any problems? How is that harvested? And all that has to be not only explained, but also shown. That's pretty important. Not only the word, but action."

Goals should be clear and reachable and tasks should have an end point where people can see and know for themselves that the task is complete (e.g. the wood has all been moved into the shed, this row of vegetables has been watered).

Patience is an essential characteristic in social farming work

"You have to keep setting goals, setting intermediate goals. For example, the row is finished or the bed is finished. Or if I notice that two people have to work on too large an area where they can't see an end, then I have to assign more people to work on the area. If possible, you always have to offer different jobs."

"So there must always be a clear and reachable goal. So this bed or this stretch is to be worked or that is to be harvested or so and so many bowls are to be filled.... And there must be an end foreseeable. And that's so important in the work structure. Machine requirement, that's not necessarily the decisive thing. I think the structures must be recognizable. There must be somewhere, no matter in which area, animal husbandry or vegetable growing, clear structures, clear tasks, clear temporal structures. From then until then is working time, then is break and then is working time again, then is break again. That is important."

While over time, some participants will develop their capacity to work on their own initiative or without supervision, the farmer will in many cases need to accept the necessity of continually motivating and encouraging people.

"If the clients do not want to work or be active I try to persuade them … I recognize it even when they do not say so … they seem melancholic so I try it after a while, I offer a reward … It does not work when I go away and ask them to do this and that. When I return nothing is done. They are not able to work by themselves, well R a bit. If you want them to work, you have to be with them, you have to communicate all the time, give them directions and then it is OK. They are usually happy after they have worked."

"The clients when not encouraged and when not supported they tend not to do anything and they are able to sit somewhere for the whole day. Time is no issue for them and they don´t do anything at all, they just sit."

Working together on a clear task

Source: Social Farming Ireland

9.4 POSSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL REFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

Every person with an intellectual disability is an individual and factors such as people's own personalities, the quality of professional support systems, the family and/or care environment, the cultural norms of the society they live in will all impact behaviour and characteristics. As should be clear from Table 10.1, the level of severity of the intellectual disability will also determine to some extent the capacities, behaviours and ability to communicate of individuals. People with specific syndromes that cause intellectual disability may have personality characteristics associated with that particular syndrome. For example, children with Williams's syndrome *tend* to be notably sociable and outgoing. These traits tend also to be present in people with Down Syndrome. A study on self-perceptions from people with Down Syndrome found that almost 99% of participants reported that they live happy and fulfilling lives, 97% liked who they are and 86% felt they could make friends easily. (Skotko et al., 2011).

However, by definition, all people with an intellectual disability have limited intellectual functioning. These limitations often create some commonly observed difficulties, including impulse control, poor frustration tolerance and poor self-esteem. Wolkorte et al., (2019) note that challenging behaviour can be a common problem among people with ID.

NICE (2015) note that this behaviour often results from the interaction between personal and environmental factors and includes aggression, self-injury, stereotypic behaviour, withdrawal, and disruptive or destructive behaviour. People with a learning disability who also have communication difficulties, autism, sensory impairments, sensory processing difficulties and physical or mental health problems (including dementia) may be more likely to develop behaviour that challenges. The behaviour may appear in only certain environments, and the same behaviour may be considered challenging in some settings or cultures but not in others. NICE (2015) note that some care environments increase the likelihood of behaviour that challenges, including those with limited opportunities for social interaction and meaningful occupation, lack of choice and sensory input or excessive noise. This highlights the role of a positive environment – such as social farming – and high quality supports in moderating behaviour that challenges and more importantly, delivering a better quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities.

Multiple factors are likely to underlie behaviour that challenges. Wolkorte et al., (2019) note that the consensus among healthcare professionals is that interventions should preferably not be focused on reducing the symptoms, but rather focus on the person, behaviour and context through a multicomponent intervention. Interventions could for example be targeted at (a combination of) physical or mental health, personal skills or physical or social environmental factors, to improve quality of life and reduce challenging behaviour. As should be clear by now, support such as social farming can have a role to play in such a multicomponent approach. Below are described the key challenging behaviours or scenarios noted by social farmers and support workers when working with this target group, and the approach taken to managing or overcoming them on the farm.

Social farms can be an environment in which behavioural challenges can be very effectively managed and even moderated

a) Changes in mood

As noted previously, in this target group emotions are usually expressed rather than repressed which of course can be a positive thing. However, mood changes can also be swift and an alertness and sensitivity to this is vital so that things can be dealt with in an appropriate and positive way. Above all, farmers noted the importance of staying calm and in control themselves:

"Had a man a number of years ago, very sensitive. Could go from 0 to 100 in a second. Occasionally another participant can get a bit skittish but he has a support worker with him who can handle at lot of that. You have to stay calm in these scenarios. You have to be able to handle quick shifts in mood and behaviour."

"And that's the way it is: When emotions are there, they are let out. Either by shouting or something is thrown. Joy is also let out right away. Every day is a new challenge."

"And what you always have to keep in any case is calm, even if a situation escalates. If you then become hectic, that's very bad. So even in a situation like that, you have to try to remain as calm as possible."

"To be able to deal properly with these different target groups, you need to have tranquility, regularity and cleanliness [the so called three R's in Dutch]. Tranquility enables you to keep an overview and to recognize when there are too many stimuli. Regularity provides structure and cleanliness makes you clear."

The experience of social farming can also help participants to better regulate their own emotions and can provide learning to deal with difficult situations:

"They learn to deal with emotions and setbacks. They also learn tools that will help them, for example, in an incident where they throw a chair, to think about talking to the supervisor first. That this can prevent them from exploding."

A small number of farmers also note the difficulties of always maintaining their own emotional equilibrium, but in this interesting testimony, the farmer notes that it is not always a bad thing to show strong emotions if both the intent and level of understanding between the parties is good.

"Sometimes I get really angry, because I'm really emotionally involved in the group. I'm not completely outside of it. They have to realize that you get angry. That's sometimes important, to bring these emotions into the group. It's very much about emotions, about feelings, also about how you say something. You can say the worst swear words if you have a certain tone of voice. Then it all works. You really have to look at it that way. So you don't have to look at the individual word, which can sometimes be very crude here. You have to look at this situation or the tone of voice or the environment. Then it takes on a completely different context. It is important to develop a feeling for it: When is it serious and when is it still meant to be funny? You have to learn that first. It takes time. You can't do that right from the start."

Strategies should also be used to manage potentially challenging situations *before* they arise, as highlighted in this case:

"A boy with autism at the farm was always very busy after the lunch break, which often led to conflicts with other participants. The lunch is held with all the participants in a room where it can be quite busy. The farmer thought for the boy that it would be nice to rest in an enclosed space immediately after lunch so that he could unwind before going back to work. The boy thought this was a good idea and so the farmer made a separate room available in which there is a stretcher and the boy has his favourite book."

b) Lack of motivation and work ethic around some tasks

A key challenge on the farm is that inevitably there will be tasks which are perceived to be boring or unpleasant but which *must* to be done both from the point of view of the needs of the farm, the animals, plants etc. and from the perspective of supporting people to live a full and normal life, which necessarily has such elements.

"Not everyone can always do what he wants. Often a lot of manual work is necessary, which is not fun for anyone. Potato beetles to collect for example, or weeding and so on."

Some of the suggestions for managing this include: breaking tasks up into intermediate goals, distributing the unpopular tasks fairly, switching things around as the day progresses, taking longer breaks, working alongside people as they carry out tasks and thereby encouraging them to continue, and making sure that people are working in groups where they otherwise get on and enjoy working together:

People who come have to take responsibility for doing a job for their own sake. You have to make sure they do."

"Sometimes you know that boys are not in the mood and that they will sneak off. Then you move them closer so you can keep an eye on them. You can also appeal to their independence and responsibility: 'You can do this, you can do this because you are so good at it, you could teach the others.' Appealing to talents."

"There are a few tasks that no one likes to do. Then there's a clear plan. It's everyone's turn, for example, to clean a pigsty. Then you take turns. Or weekend duty: Not all employees can work weekends, but some can. We currently have five employees on weekend duty. They take turns. Every Sunday, one of them is on duty."

"Then I always try to put together a troop that harmonizes. That is a crucial factor here. The biggest challenge is to get the people involved so that they enjoy the work to some extent. That doesn't always work."

As with any workplace or gathering of people where tasks are undertaken, a certain level of grumbling and/or reluctance to do things is completely normal and as with so many other challenges – and especially interpersonal conflict – humour and laughter have a role to play in defusing difficult situations:

"Sometimes it helps if you create a funny situation. That is always important. Despite frustration in the group. If you manage to create a funny situation or a joke or something at that moment, or if you don't deal with problems at all, but try to solve the problem with a joke [...] You need to have a feeling for that and everyone has his own methods. I can joke around with some people. That works quite well. And then the others laugh along with me. That loosens up the whole group a bit."

Equally, there may be certain jobs which some participants will, for safety and welfare reasons, never be allowed to undertake. Patience with the repeated requests to do so must be coupled with a firmness which leaves no room for misunderstanding:

"When we work on certain jobs, I make a division as to who takes over and can take over which things. But there are also employees who are not allowed to do certain things, but they would like to, but they are not allowed to. I have to pay attention to that because they can't do it for certain reasons. That's not so nice for those in that case, but I also have to keep telling them, "that's not going to happen." Otherwise, everyone is employed according to their possibilities and abilities."

However even in these cases, adaptations can be made to allow participants to feel part of something without actually undertaking it themselves. For example, they can ride in the tractor alongside the farmer without driving the tractor. Or they can watch the farmer using the wood chopper and help stack the wood after.

c) Conflict or lack of connection between individual participants

As in any other workplace setting, conflict between participants or a simple ability to get on or enjoy one another's company, can arise. A number of farmers noted that with this target group, the capacity to resolve conflict can be limited. Where such a scenario arises, managing this conflict in the moment can involve separating people and assigning them to different tasks, allowing people an opportunity to fully 'vent' their frustration separate to one another and of course remaining calm and neutral oneself:

"It's a common problem here that one person says, 'he's been lazy, hasn't worked much, hasn't done this, hasn't done that.' Then the other one says: 'that's not true. You're just as lazy as I am, or you're lazier than I am.' Then I realize, there's a conflict here. So I would definitely not entrust them with a job together at that moment and would at least separate the two."

"The conflict management concept in our house is called pro-dema: professional de-escalation management. We have a trained trainer at the site who acts as a multiplier and passes this on to the other group leaders, who are trained once a year. That's an incredibly complex structure to learn. I know from my trainer, for example, that he likes to use pro-dema to calm people down. There are several phases: With people who yell at you, there's no point in trying to get them down. You separate them, let them steam out and let them scream for half an hour, and then say: "Good, have you calmed down now? Now look at me again and let's talk about it. What's the problem?" We are all trained in this. All group leaders are trained in this and should be able to apply it."

However, the space and variety of the farm environment – when combined with social farmer's knowledge of the personalities of the participants – allows for preventative measures to be taken so that conflict rarely arises. Key to this is putting people in harmonious sub-groupings, where they are much less likely to have conflict:

"It is important to form small groups, sometimes only groups of two, sometimes groups of three, sometimes groups of four that harmonize with each other. I can't combine everyone with everyone. It does not work. If people don't harmonize with each other and then there's conflict again. I have to recognize that and partly correct it if it doesn't work and then rearrange it again. That's an important thing that I have to pay attention to."

"But actually we have so much space and area in agriculture that you can get out of the way. That is not like this in other group rooms at sheltered workshops. So when our farmer realizes that things are "boiling" between two people, one of them comes along on the tractor and the other one works in the landscaping."

"Sometimes you also look at combinations of people to see if, for example, their characters are a good match. For example, that they can motivate each other. Or I put a trainee or work supervisor in, that often motivates as well. That's human knowledge, you have to find out."

The space available on the farm means people can physically remove themselves from situations and take time out:

"I let Piet count the sheep in the meadow, check if they are all still there. Then he can blow off steam and come back completely calm."

It is also important to create a harmonious atmosphere overall and to minimise stressful scenarios where people feel overly-pressurised and uncomfortable:

"Most of the time, we encounter typical conflict situations like in other workplaces, but in our operations, we try to prevent these situations and moments where the good atmosphere in the workplace can be disrupted in the first place. In general, we avoid stressful situations, and for this reason we do not put any high pressure on employees to be productive. As a result, we generally try to resolve all conflicts either immediately or in cooperation with other professional staff. Throughout the operation of both sites, we strive to make the authority of the managers as natural as possible and to build respect for these employees among our clients and employees from the target group."

9.5 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Explain what is meant by the term 'intellectual' disability.'

2. Describe three key outcomes or developments for people with intellectual disabilities which you would hope to see from spending a period of time participating in social farming.

3. Describe how the social farm environment can be different and more beneficial for people with intellectual disabilities than the usual facilities for this target group such as attending a day centre, remaining in an institutional setting, etc.

4. Write three 'DOs' and three 'DON'Ts' that a social farmer should be aware of in their approach to working with people with an intellectual disability.

Applying the learning Case study of Bluebell Social Farm

The path to the farm

Source: Social Farming Ireland

Bluebell Social Farm is a mixed organic farm situated in a very rural part of Ireland. It is run by a couple, 'Joe' and 'Orla' who are in their 50s and who have three children- one who is away at college and two who still live at home and help out on the farm at weekends and during the summer holidays. There are no employees on the farm. The farm

includes a number of different enterprises, including suckler cows, sheep, poultry, and organic vegetable production both in fields and polytunnels. They also have an extensive area of woodland and place a very strong emphasis on biodiversity and improving the environment of the farm. Orla is a gifted artist and really enjoys teaching art and carrying out craft-based projects. Their own home lies in the centre of the farm and the farm kitchen is the base of operation for both farming generally and social farming. They are both very involved in the local community and are involved in the local football club and the community council. They are also involved in a regional organic farming group and sell their vegetables at a local market at certain times of the year.

The couple only started social farming relatively recently and their first group comprised of three people with mental health challenges who were physically very capable and had a reasonable knowledge of farming. They have been approached by a service in the community which works with three people with intellectual disabilities who have recently moved from a large institution in a large town into their own house 5 kms from the farm. The participants are anxious to get to know people in the community and two of them grew up on a farm. Joe and Orla are nervous about working with this new group as they have no previous experience of working alongside people with intellectual disabilities but they also look forward to supporting these individuals on their farm and in their efforts to build a new life in the community.

1. What specific benefits do you think this group of people could derive from going to Joe and Orla's farm at this time in their lives?

2. Draw up an imagined schedule for a day on a social farm such as this, assuming the participants arrive at 10.00 and leave at 16.00. Include at least eight different activities which this group could possibly undertake on this farm.

3. What challenges do you think Joe and Orla might have in working with this new group?

4. What might be the a) benefits and b) challenges of this group working *alongside* people with mental health challenges if this were to arise.

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10 YOUTH

Michal Pařízek

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Name some of the typical issues young people deal with in contemporary Western society.
- Comprehend what we mean when we talk about the "generalized other" in the context of social farming.
- Comprehend why it is so important to set meaningful tasks and why especially young people need to understand what and why they are doing.
- Name benefits of social farming for young people in following spheres: constituting self, natural environment, skills and taking care.
- Explain the importance of creating a safe, yet challenging environment.
- Explain why it is so important for the farmer and the staff to be authentic of when dealing with young people.
- Name some of the challenges young people may face at social farms.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

10.1 YOUTH AS A DISTINGUISHED TARGET GROUP

Youth – not one homogenous group

Youth are not one homogenous group of people and therefore this chapter focuses largely on the youth (or more precisely on young people) who have different needs or who find it challenging to fit into the society easily. As the result of having issues or problems with socialization these young people have usually been referred to social farms by various authorities. The staff at social farms and the social farming environment should become the key factors in supporting young people to gain self-confidence and to re-socialize. To be more specific, the social farming environment should be a safe place where young people may experience acceptance, find themselves, gain working habits, etc.

10.1.1 Various Definitions of Youth

Youth according to the UN: 15-25 years

The UN´s Department of Economic and Social Affairs defines youth in the following way:

"The UN Secretariat uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably to mean age 15-24 with the understanding that member states and other entities use different

definitions. … YOUTH is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. … 'youth' is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job." (United Nations, 2007)

Youth according to the WHO and UNICEF: 10-29 years

The United Nations are not the only institution dealing systematically with young people and for example UNICEF or WHO often divide young people in the following manner: Adolescent: 10-19, Young People: 10-24, Youth: 15-24. The same group is often called more or less correctly adolescents or teenagers (13-19 years of age) and young adults (20-29 years of age). The definition of young people changes according to the circumstances in the particular society. The factors which have to be taken into consideration include demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings.

Youth rights

Concerning social farming, there are many issues that need to be taken into consideration when working with young people at social farms. The rules and laws of each country strongly influence issues including youth rights such as voting age, legal working age, right to work, student rights, youth suffrage, drinking age, smoking age, gambling age, age of candidacy, age of majority, age of consent, driving age, age of criminal responsibility, and other issues like corporal punishment, military conscription and many others.

10.1.2 General characteristics

Self-concept & self-identity

Youth may be looked upon as a social position which is different in each society. Though the social position may vary a lot, it mostly describes the position between childhood and adulthood. Youth is a period when self-concept is constructed together with the ongoing process of creating the self-identity which has started in early childhood (Thomas, 2003). All of the processes constructing one´s self, are according to G. H. Mead (2005) strongly influenced by significant and generalized others, and also by the peers, lifestyle, gender, culture and other relevant factors. According to G. H. Mead, on any social farm – the staff and the overall environment may become the "generalized other" for the young people who spend a significant amount of time there.

Youth – distinguished group since 1950´s

In the past (prior to the World Wars) people were considered either children or adult. There was no place for youth and the adult life started very early. It was only from the 1950´s onwards with the development of subcultures (such as punk) and later in the 1960-70s with more free or leisure time that society started to distinguish youth as a specific group defined by a certain period of life (Kaplánek, 2012, p. 30). Since 1960s the period of youth has prolonged – it is often considered 12-24 years, though very often only teenagers are referred to as youth.

Differences in approach of social work & social pedagogy

There are many approaches to describing who young people are as a specific group. A different point of view is applied in social work, which largely focuses on those in specific need, to the social-pedagogical point of view which would consider the whole society as their target group. Both of these approaches are being applied in social farming. The goal of social-pedagogical approach is to act preventively and to work not only with people in risk of social pathological behaviour, but also with young people in general. Young people may also become subject of interest of other target groups selected by

SoFarTEAM, yet they may retain the specifics described in the following text; young people may be refugees, they may struggle with their mental health condition, learning or intellectual difficulties, they may be recovering from drug addiction or they may be physically challenged. It is also important to note that poor young people from the developed countries often experience poverty in a different way than people from developing countries. Young people from small villages in a poor region may face different issues than those from big cities, etc.

10.1.3 Who the young people at social farms are

What kind of young people come to social farms?

Young people who come to social farms are mostly referred to the farm by authorities or therapists. The research carried out by the members of SoFarTEAM shows that these young people often come from challenging background without strong bonds (that concerns especially their families), they suffer from depression or other psychological issues, they lack work and responsibility habits and sufficient education. Very often they underestimate themselves, have low self-esteem and have little experience of achievement or success. One of the farmers commented on young people in the following way:

"Lack of initiative may be due to shyness not lack of interest."

"You go in with the basic attitude: people are good. That's already creating a very different framework, rather than: "Oh God, you're highly traumatized, disturbed teenager I have to pay attention to". It's about listening and buildings people's confidence. I truly believe everyone has a story to tell and young people want to tell their story."

Possible improvements in young people´s wellbeing

Boys or young men especially appreciate physical work with clearly visible results. Working in a group with wood, lifting something, working with various tools or building something gives them a feeling of being a (strong) man, being useful etc. The work itself but also the necessary breaks then bring the feeling of belonging somewhere, of having moments of shared experiences, of responsibility in discussing the strategies on how to proceed and so on. If the farmer or the staff who are responsible know how to communicate in appropriate way – offering opportunities or challenges and including young people in some decision-making processes instead of merely directing and ordering, then improvements in the young people´s wellbeing is almost certain.

"Some seek out responsible tasks all by themselves. Most of the people here feed the animals. I think that's great. Or the one continues now at building the fence. They then try it all by themselves and to give them freedom in this without saying 'you must', but only 'you could', that's important."

Preparing wood for the common room fireplace at Villa Vallila

Source: David Urban and Michal Pařízek

10.1.4 The issues young people currently face

Research shows uncertainty & emphasis on creating original identity

In order to illustrate the problems young people face and in order to bring the issues specifically to the European context we present two researches from Great Britain (YMCA Research, 2016) and Belgium (Youth Trend Report – Browsing the Margin, 2017). Both of these reports point at uncertainty of young people concerning their future and the importance of creating their original identity. We consider the following findings a very important clue to understanding the issues young people face and struggle with – if treated with care, we believe that social farms should be able to provide a suitable environment in which many young people can be supported to develop and flourish in the current context.

YMCA Research (2016)

Barriers young people face

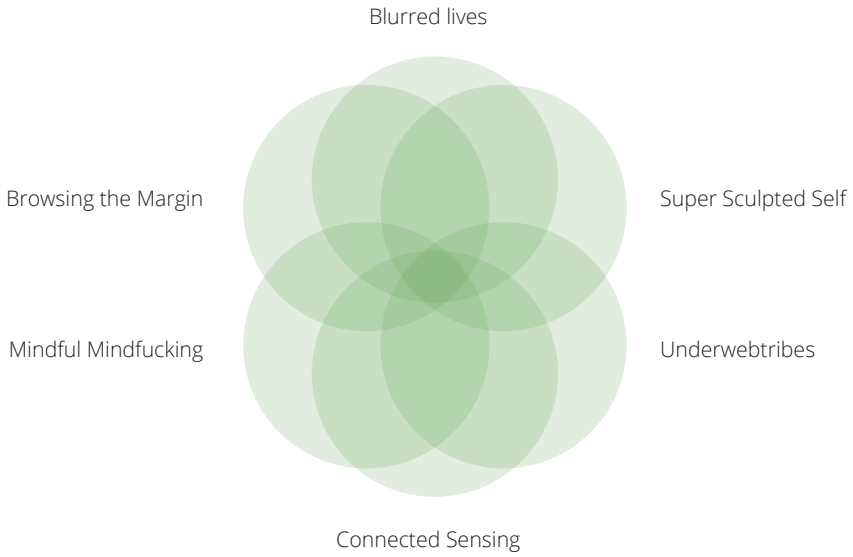
The 2016 YMCA research among Britons aged 16-25 pointed out the challenges young people face today in Great Britain. These challenges include lack of employment opportunities, failure to succeed in education system, issues related to body image, family problems, substance abuse, pressures of materialism, lack of affordable housing, negative stereotyping, and the pressures of 24-hour social networking. (The table with exact figures and extra information is in the appendix.) The research also pinpointed the barriers to overcoming these challenges. Among the most challenging barriers are those where young people cannot help themselves and they need external support to overcome them. These include: being in a low income bracket, lack of education or poor education, health issues (including mental health), lack of employment opportunities, and current government policy. British society does not differ significantly from the rest of the societies in Western and Central Europe and thus the same challenges may apply to most European countries.

Youth Trend Report – Browsing the Margin (2017)

Be original and be recognized

Browsing the Margin is a 2017 youth report which encompasses examples from around the globe. It emphasizes six tendencies among young people. The issues young people face revolve around the urgent need to be original and to be recognized in field of their expertise. In terms of social farming the Youth Trend Report points out issues the farmers or the staff at social farms may not be aware of when dealing with young people. Although every young person is an individuality and all the findings of the Youth Trend Report may not apply to everyone, it is important to know what young people have to deal with in general. The staff at the farm should take the results of this Youth Trend Report into account when dealing with young people and be sensitive especially about issues connected to self-identity and its development.

Figure 19: Youth trend report – Browsing the Margin (2017)



Blurred Lives

- Blurred Lives: Blurred lives are characterized by patchwork identity1, blurred differences between young and old, male or female, work and life. It is the preference for hybrid and diversified over the consistent and homogenous. In the eyes of young people, it is almost shameful when somebody can be defined easily and put in one "box" which also correlates with the tendency to adjust to reference (peer) groups only partially.

Sper Sculpted Self

- Super Sculpted Self: Young people strive to excel at something and they want to be recognized in this particular field. They seek appraisal on social networks. Informal education gains on the importance, especially information, tools or techniques they find on the internet.

Underwebtribes

- Underwebtribes: As subcultures are too narrow to identify with, the importance of underwebtribes grows. Young people gather at social networks, in closed groups

1 Patchwork identity or Patchwork Self is according to David Elkind the result of different attitudes, values, beliefs and habits that do not really connect. It is a tendency to create one´s own identity from various (even widely varied) sources.

and hidden fora where they may find people sharing their views no matter how peculiar they are. Belonging to underwebtribes is characterized by participation in a number of different tribes, not belonging to one tribe only. The society, education and social work especially should respond by creating places where people can meet and be (and feel) themselves.

- Connected Sensing: Young people value craftmanship and tangible practices, they enjoy using all their senses (often coupled with latest technical development) such as hearing and feeling colours, VR experiences, sensing music bodily. They also use these sensations to connect more deeply with themselves, others and with nature. They are not ashamed to show their emotions and vulnerability.

Connected Sensing

- Mindful Mindfucking: Exploration of one´s abilities, perspectives and abilities of the brain often connected to psychoactive substance usage, or breathing techniques helping them to an altered state of mind. Young people test the limits of one´s mind, how body mind and soul relate, and very often they explore what is beyond the boundaries.

Mindful Mindfucking

- Browsing the Margin: Young people revolt against anything that is considered trendy, mainstream is no longer cool. The individual originality may go to extremes and may even reach the level of ugliness. Almost everything is considered relative and thus it is easy to make fun of everything. This may be the result of a long term insecurity within the society.

Browsing the Margin

10.1.5 Self-identity according to G. H. Mead

I & Me – construction of self- according to G. H. Mead

It has already been mentioned that teen-age is the time in which the self of a young person is being constructed. The process of constructing one´s self is according to G. H. Mead (2005) characterized by "I" and "Me" – while "Me" is the social (socially determined) self and "I" (natural) is the response to "Me". Thus "I" is the individual response to attitudes of others while "Me" can be described as the organized set of attitudes of others which an individual assumes. The "I" is self as subject (the knower); the "Me" is self as object (the known).

The "I" reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the "me" and we react to it as an "I".

(Mead & Morris, 2005, p. 174)

Play – significant others & Game – generalized others

George Herbert Mead introduced two stages or in other words periods of life in which the self of any person is constructed. It is also necessary to emphasize that socialization and construction of one´s self is a lifelong social process. The first period called Play takes place in pre-school age in which people are influenced by significant others (mainly by their parents). Later in the school age comes the period called Game characterized by the influence of generalized others.

Taking the attitudes of others toward himself, and crystallizing all these particular attitudes into a single attitude or standpoint which may be called that of the "generalized other".

(Mead & Morris, 2005, p. 90)

Social farm as generalized other

Generalized other may well be the whole environment of a certain place – the ethics of the people who create the place. Thus social farms become the "generalized other" shaping the self of young people who spend some time there. Mere presence at a farm makes a difference and the effect amplifies when young people are engaged in meaningful activities, when they feel accepted and respected and when they participate in (at least some) decision-making processes about themselves.

10.1.6 Youth and the SDGs

Youth and specific Sustainable Development Goals

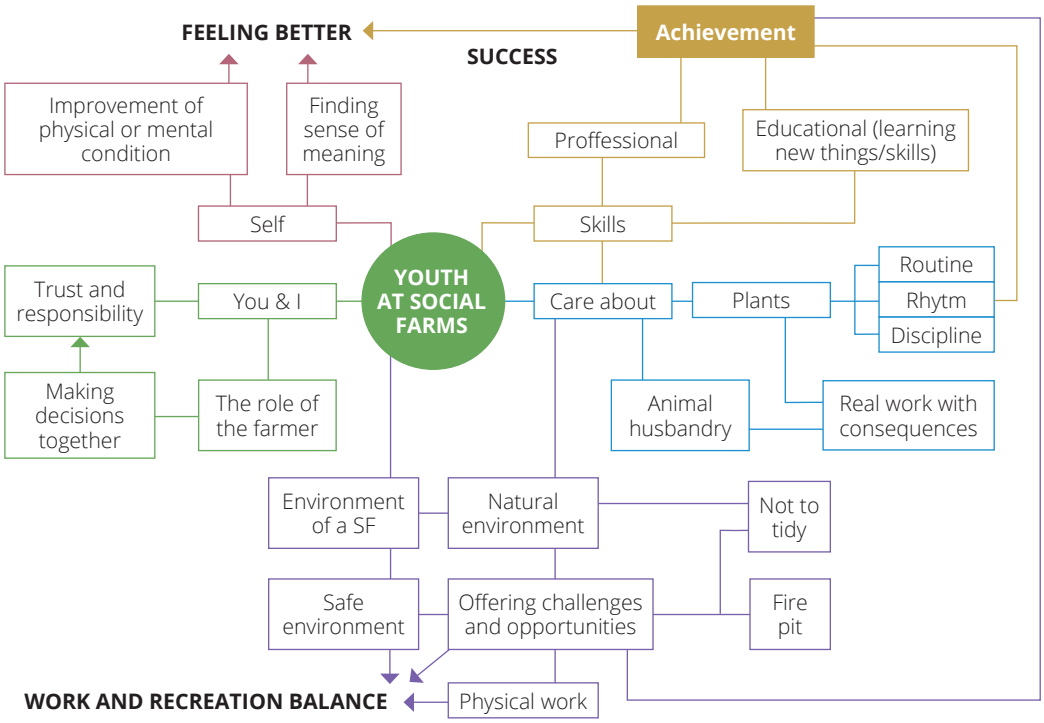
Social farms are a benefit to the whole environment not only socially, but also environmentally. In this way they help to fulfil the agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are also set for the youth within the 2030 Agenda. This agenda focuses on three principles: Human-Rights Based Approach, Leave No One Behind, Gender Equality and Women´s Empowerment. (United Nations, 2021) Among the most pressing issues concerning SDGs and young people are quality education (SDG 4) and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), both of which might be linked with social farms. Needless to say, most of the SDGs are more or less relevant to issues connected to social farming. These SDGs include No poverty (SDG 1), Zero hunger (SDG 2), Good health and well-being (SDG 3), Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), Reduced inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), Climate action (SDG 13), Life below water (SDG 14) and Life on land (SDG 15).

Source: Eliška Hudcová

10.2 BENEFITS FOR THE TARGET GROUP REGARDING TO THEIR NEEDS

Young people may benefit from their stay at social farms in many ways. The following notion map shows the wide variety of processes taking place at social farms:

Figure 20: Notion map (by the author) – benefits of social farming environment for youth



In order not to repeat all the findings of the SoFarTEAM research at social farms this text highlights only the key benefits social farms offer to young people. As they are sent to social farms by authorities or psychologists/therapists, they are often fragile, inexperienced, lacking educational or professional skills, working habits (rhythm, routine, discipline, etc.). At social farms they need to find especially a safe environment, open minded and authentic staff (especially the farmer and his/her family) and it helps very much when they can spend time in connection to the nature. As the SoFarTEAM research among young people proves:

"In any case this is very healing for me. I can clean my head, I have fresh air and even work out a bit. I can do meaningful things and this helps me to have a day structure."

Benefits of social farming

Social farms may offer an environment in which young people may improve their social and occupational skills, they may improve their physical condition and their mental health which leaves a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence. They may have a chance to establish stable relationships and learn new skills, while caring about plants or animals. They may also find the stability in everyday routine and rhythm which helps in building discipline.

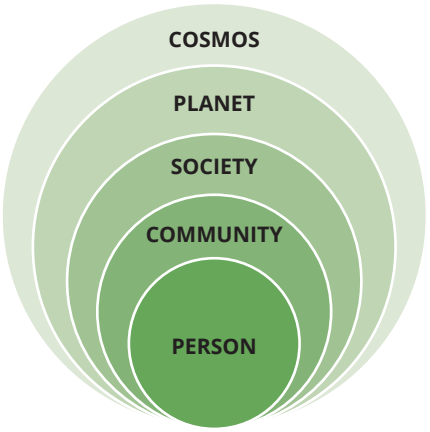
The SoFarTEAM research proves the above-mentioned benefits. One of the farmers summarized it well even though he addressed young people as "children":

"We see the children getting back into their rhythm. They often come from a situation where they spend a lot of time in their room and behind a screen. They really get moving here, physically they get better from that and mentally eventually too."

Finding one´s purpose or sense of life

All these multifaceted aspects of the social farming environment are also connected with finding one´s purpose or even sense of life and they greatly benefit the wellbeing and happiness of young people not only on individual level, but also on the level of the whole community at the social farm. According to holistic education approach, in a long term all these positive change impact not only the local community, but also broader society and in the end the whole world as all the levels (from personal to the whole cosmos) are interconnected as illustrated in Figure 4. (Miller, 2016)

Figure 21: Five levels of wholeness



Source: Miller 2016

Selected aspects influencing personal growth

Young people come to social farms for multiple reasons, but most of the time the goals young people want to reach are set in order to find or to improve:

- Social & occupational skills
- Self-esteem & self-confidence
- Sense of purpose or meaning of life
- Physical & mental health
- Learning to establish and maintain social relationships
- Establishing & developing values
- Wellbeing & happiness in life

If such goals are to be met, the farmer, social workers, staff and all other stakeholders should attempt to create an environment which is safe, yet challenging, all the stakeholders are fully present and authentic in activities and relationships and they create

and they also make sure young people understand what, why and how is being done and that all the activities are meaningful.

Figure 22: Selected aspects influencing personal growth

ENVIRONMENT

Safe, yet challenging environment

PEOPLE

Be fully present & authentic

ACTIVITIES

Participate on something meaningful

The importance of own choices & meaningful work

It is very important for young people to feel that they are in charge, that they can decide for themselves and also that their work will not be in vain. The environment of social farms offers a lot of opportunities to find suitable and meaningful activities – they often connect people together, they connect the young person with animals and it establishes a certain bond with the land and with the soil. In SoFarTEAM research one young person verbalized the importance of participating in meaningful activities connected to the sense of belonging somewhere:

"Here, for the first time I feel good. Here, for the first time I feel like I am a valuable part of the society. In my opinion a sheltered workshop or a dormitory are not about inclusion."

Advantage of SF – no qualification needed & wide variety of work

The advantage of social farms is the wide variety of work young people can do there even without any specialized qualification. It truly is an inclusive environment where everybody can become a valid member of the community. For many young people the social farm might be the starting point towards new perspectives.

Everyday chores at Villa Vallila

Source: David Urban and Michal Pařízek

10.3 CRUCIAL SUCCESS FACTORS WHEN WORKING WITH YOUTH

Safe environment & the importance of relationships

Young people who come to social farms as well as the staff have to observe safety standards and they should not be exposed to dangerous situations. Needless to say, the location of the farm and overall working environment play an important role. These aspects include amount of noise, light, exposure to weather, ergonomics of tools, hardship connected to physical work etc. However, creating a safe environment for young people is primarily about the relationships among people at the particular farms and the long-term climate they create. One of the decisive elements of safe environment is also the psycho-hygiene of the group – conflict management, processes of decision making which lead to individual satisfaction, happiness, wellbeing, but also fitness and overall performance.

10.3.1 Signs of a safe environment

Why there is the need of a safe environment

Safe environment is a crucial success factor when working with anybody. When people (and animals as well) do not feel safe, they spend most of their time securing themselves and trying to establish such an environment in which they do not feel threatened by physical, psychological, social, spiritual or other issues. Farmers and the staff at farms should always make the best in order to promote safe environment, because only in such environment people become open to new impulses and new perspectives, they are ready to learn and to establish healthy relationships. In order to establish and foster safe environment the farmers, social workers and all members of staff at social farms should look for the following signs:

Signs of a safe environment

- Honesty among group members
- Trust among group members (that includes the farmer, social workers, the staff)
- Humour – people laughing and making jokes (but beware of irony and sarcasm)
- Community cohesion
- Community satisfaction
- Safe methods of conflict management
- Concentration on assigned tasks
- Striving to do well as the whole community
- Others

How to foster a safe environment

- From the farmer´s or social/community worker´s perspective
  - Be fully present, be authentic
  - Pay equal attention to all group/community members (showing interest in personal wellbeing, individual help or cooperation)
  - Involving young people in (at least some) decision making processes
  - Become natural authority – being neither parent, teacher nor friend
  - Foster healthy relationships on the farm
  - Care about the community size (the size may vary according to the place or circumstances)

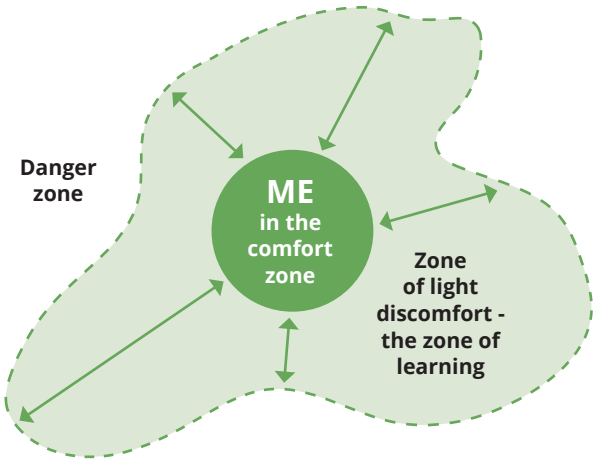
- Farm community
  - Promote community cohesion
  - Foster good quality relationships
  - Make sure all members of the community understand and accept community norms
  - Promote values of the community
  - Promote the value (and benefits) of community membership

10.3.2 Safe, yet challenging environment

Appropriate challenge leads to success

Creating a safe environment not only protects individuals and creates pleasant environment among the people working at the farm, it should also be stimulating, it should challenge young people to strive to perform well, to experience success, to achieve things – to such an extent that is deemed healthy and desirable. Stepping out of the zone of comfort into the zone of light discomfort – the zone of learning is a typical example of the desired challenge. In the zone of comfort the person feels safe yet he or she is not motivated to improve, to try new approaches or things, to use his or her current knowledge and skills to gain new competences. While motivating people to step out of their comfort zone the farmers and social workers should bear in mind that the very same person who is healthy, strong and in good physical condition might be very fragile when it comes to psychical pressure or social interactions. It is crucial to treat (young) people individually and to be attentive to their needs. A suitable challenge almost invites itself to be tackled. While too easy challenges are boring, too difficult challenges might cast the person into the danger zone – a situation in which he or she does not feel safe any longer. The typical reaction to reaching the danger zone is shutting up or in other words turning into one´s own inner self and building a barrier towards the outer world which causes the danger.

Figure 23: Zones of (dis)comfort



10.3.3 Being fully present and authentic

Be present & be authentic

The relationship between the farmer and young people or between social worker (or other members of staff at farms) and young people to a great extent determines the nature of environment at the particular farm as well as the chance of personal growth. Only if the

farmer or social worker know that they are not a parent, teachers or a friend, then young people may grow towards desired goals. But it is not about "playing a role" or "acting like", it is the authenticity of these people and their full presence that triggers the growth.

Be "tuned" on the young people

Michele Irwin and J. P. Miller (2016) in their study point at a simple yet crucial fact – mere presence of the person, being fully in the moment, fully focusing on the relationship, being "tuned" on the young people, being aware of the surrounding environment and framing the present moment in wider circumstances starts the process in which mutual trust and healthy relationship is being created. Here both the farmer/social worker or the young person are learning from each other and the surrounding environment.

10.3.4 Building a relationship

Establishing a relationship

One of the key factors of success when working with all target groups (including young people) is the relationship between young people and the farmer or the staff at the farm. The research called Exploring Communication between Social Workers, Children and Young People (Winter et al., 2016) points out that especially at the beginning, the communication is based on the use of compliments, and the intricate weaving of 'safe' topics of discussion with the more challenging aspects. It also helps to use personal self in establishing the connection with a young person, which is joined with paying attention to the particularities and the personality of the young person.

Various roles the farmer/ social worker should master

Anyone who is trying to establish a working relationship in a farming environment should be prepared to change their position and not to be only the boss or just an employee, but they should embrace the position of a confidante, adviser, messenger, etc. If these aspects are topped with humour, empathy and ability to pose as somebody trustworthy, the success is almost certain. Farmers should assess themselves well in order to find the most suitable target group to work with. It is always easier to overcome obstacles in the architecture of the place, financial or other material issues than battle with (their) self when working with young people. In other words, some farmers will be better when working with young people with low self-esteem or psychical issues whereas others will do well when working with young people with physical issues.

Creating a suitable environment

Building a good relationship and thus fostering communication is not limited only to the personal issues. Other very important factors come to play when working with young people and these factors include the environment of the farm, the amount of bureaucracy they have to deal with, having realistic goals and knowing personal limits (one´s own or those of the staff) etc. Farmers should be encouraged to create suitable places where young people may feel comfortable to open themselves, be it a kind of an office or an informal space. In order to establish a good relationship, they should not let bureaucratic issues spoil the effort, however the farmers should be realistic about the goals they set (and about the expectations they might have) concerning young people.

Fortunately, farmers, social workers or the staff are not entirely responsible for creation of the suitable environment. To a great extent the natural environment of the farm works by itself – the nature causes that people calm down, they get to themselves more easily etc. The SoFarTEAM research proves it to a great extent:

"We also see it as an important part of our therapy that it is in the agricultural processes that clients are in a natural environment, where for example in activities like planting they are able to perceive something from the beginning to the very end. When a seedling is planted, after a certain amount of time, with a certain level of care, the plant grows, the fruit is harvested, and then whatever is cooked from it, etc... The same with animal husbandry."

The importance of a fire pit

One of the important places for young people at farms may be the fire pit. Not only in the way the following quote of a farmer suggests, but the fire draws attention by itself – it has to be cared after, it delivers light and warmth, it fosters the sense of community or belonging somewhere if people stand or sit around. Very often people tent to tell stories or sing song around the fire and that helps to build the relationships and it strengthens the bond with the nature and the particular place.

"An important element here on the social farm is the fire pit. The fire pit is really important to most children. It is a kind of reward for their work and they find it super fun to light it and make soup over it, for example."

10.4 ON THE WAY TO SOCIAL FARMING

The goals determine the environment

This text has already pointed out the wide scope of issues and problems young people at risk may deal with. To address their needs in the most appropriate way, it is crucial to find the social farm with suitable environment. The environment is always closely related to the goals the particular farm pursues and social farmers as well as social workers should be aware of the possible threats springing from the goal-orientations of the particular farm.

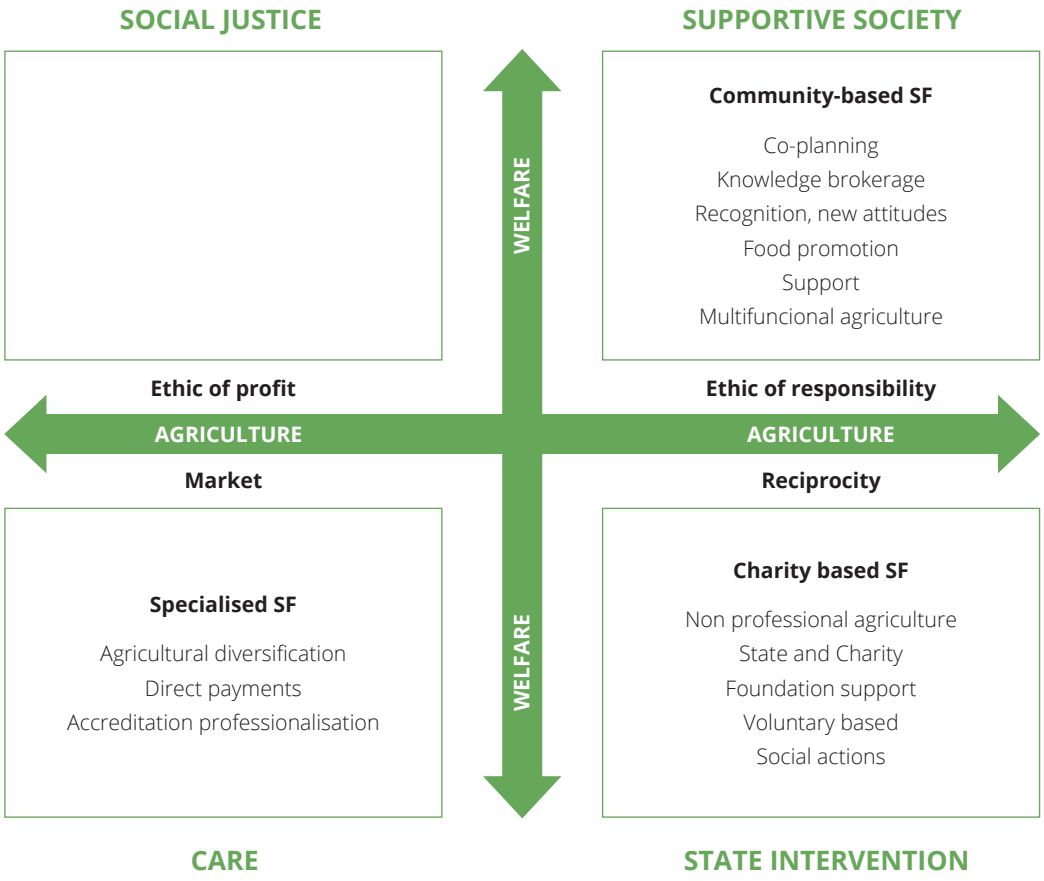
10.4.1 Types of Social Farms and their approaches

Four basic types of social farms

Di Iacovo in his article Social Farming Evolutionary Web: from Public Intervention to Value Co-Production (2020) recognizes four basic types of social farms and places them on two axes – the horizontal axis represents agriculture (ranging from profit oriented to responsibility-oriented agriculture), the vertical axis represents welfare (from care intertwined with the role of state to social justice connected to supportive society):

- Farms oriented towards an ethic of profit embedded in a state-market divide perspective
- Farms oriented towards responsibility and reciprocity (e.g. towards local actors) where the demand for innovative solutions is higher due to funding availability and societal demands
- Farms primarily focused on care services which are heavily dependent on state intervention
- Farms based on ideas of social justice carried out by local communities

Figure 24: Social farming models across Europe: principles, actors, and resource activation



Source: Di Iacovo 2020

The Di Iacovo article shows that there is a great variety among social farms and thus the farming environment varies not only with the locations of a farm, with its size, but especially with the goals pursued. The Di Iacovo´s article suggests four types of farms but it is possible to divide social farms as those focusing on production, social work / social pedagogy, care / rehabilitation and nature friendly agriculture. Young people who come to social farms should be aware of the ultimate goal of the farm. Also, the goals of the farm and of the young person who comes to the farm should not be mutually exclusive.

Goals of a social farm and of the young person should not be mutually exclusive

10.4.2 Existing services that support this target group

Young people, especially those in difficult life situations or those with special needs may use various social, therapeutical or educational services.

Social services mediate assistance in the care of one's own person, providing meals, accommodation, assistance in running a household, care and assistance with bringing up a child, providing information, mediation of contact with social environments, psychotherapy and social therapy, assistance in assuring one's rights and interests.

(MPSV, 2019)

Social services for young people

The services which can be found in most European countries include: social counselling, domiciliary care, personal assistance, respite care, day care centre and week care centre, stays in homes for the people with learning disabilities, protected and supported housing, early intervention services, shelter services, halfway houses, hostels, emergency assistance (including emergency beds), outreach programmes, easy access services, services in contact centres for drug addicts, therapeutic communities, etc.

Figure 25: Social services young people may use

Social services promote development and self-sufficiency

The aim of most of these services is to promote development and self-sufficiency of young people and in the case of addictions, they usually aim at returning the person in his/her own home environment. The services should enable people to lead their own independent lives where possible, and to limit social and health risk associated with the person´s life style. The distribution of these services varies from country to country, but often the services are provided either by the state (by means of appropriate ministry or institution), by regions or municipalities or by non-governmental or non-profit organizations.

Extracurricular activities

Not all young people may need social services, however all of them are affected by the educational system of each state and by the offer of extracurricular activities or interest courses/groups. In many countries, schools or other educational institutions play the vital role not only in formal, but also in non-formal education. They try to engage young

people in school clubs offering various activities in after school time. This is supported by national and international organizations such as Scouts, YMCA, etc. In some countries interest groups are organized by the state-run organizations or other organizations offering leisure-based education focusing on wide scale of courses, activities or (summer) camps. This usually takes place at youth or after-school centres. (MŠMT, 2013)

10.5 CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL FARMING WHEN WORKING WITH YOUTH

Social farms from various points of view

The environment at social farms affects young people holistically which may lead to great results. However, the farming environment is not suitable for everybody – including young people. It has been said in the previous text that the most important issues young people care about include sculpting their self, great care about their appearance (not only physical, but also on social networks), originality etc. Farming environment is perceived as "cool" by only some groups of young people. Young people often put emphasis on different aspects than farmers or social workers. (For example, an important dimension for many young females is whether there are horses on a farm and whether they would have a chance to care for them or even ride them.)

A benefit for some may be a drawback for others – example of cleanliness

As youth is an extremely wide target group it is difficult to make a list of specific challenges. Young people who come to social farms may have problem not only with their socialization, but may possibly have had very negative life experience such as drug abuse, criminal past, lose or absent family bonds, lack of education etc.

Some aspects of social farming that have been introduced as benefits might work exactly in the opposite way for some young people and vice versa. One of the examples might be the fact that the environment at social farms is not too tidy. A certain amount of mess makes some people feel like there is never ending work and attempts to tidy up are futile. A different group of people might perceive the mess in the opposite way – people loosen up and relax as they feel that the environment is not perfect and spotless so they do not have to be uptight and perfect either.

Challenges of social farming environment also include

- Young people need to be helped to understand the true meaning of everyday chores (young people appreciate when they do "real" work which is needed and when they know why the work is important)
- Young people often need role models to follow (yet these role models should never behave like their parents or teachers)
- Young people do not want to leave their established social "bubbles" even though it is often necessary in order to give them a new perspective
- Physical work is sometimes demanding and young people are not used to work physically

- Most of the everyday work at social farms repeats and includes routine and discipline
- Not everybody likes being exposed to various weather conditions throughout the year
- Animal husbandry includes dirty and smelly work

The importance of trust & healthy group dynamics

Many of the mentioned challenges cannot be eliminated and that is the reason why this text lays emphasis on safe environment. If the principles of establishing and maintaining safe environment are observed, then the above-mentioned challenges can be overcome. Most of the challenges present the solution in themselves – once young people are treated as partners, once they understand what, how and why is to be done, once the farmer is authentic and sets an example by means of his/her own behaviour, then young people will be more likely to overcome the obstacles. Physical work may become tiresome and monotonous, if that is the case, the farmer should look for means how to make the work more interesting either by letting young people work with specialized tools, putting trust in them and especially on working on group dynamics. A good farmer (or social worker) knows that even the most boring and tiresome work feels better when the group dynamics are healthy, when there is a humour in the group and when people want to spend time together.

One of the farmers emphasized the importance of trust while the SoFarTEAM carried out its research:

"Trust I would put right at the top. You have to dig deep right into their life"

10.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Name five key issues young people deal with in contemporary western society
2. Describe the typical aspects of a "generalized other" at a social farm
3. Name five key benefits of social farming for young people
4. Describe three challenges young people might face at social farms
5. Describe why the environment at social farms should be safe and at the same time challenging.

Discussion

1. What has to happen so that young people consider a social farm a "cool" place?

2. Why do experienced social farmers like to give newly arrived young men harder physical work such as chopping wood?

3. Search the internet for examples of good practices while working with young people at social farms and discuss what seem to be the key success factors.

4. What are the specific features of working with young people on social farms in comparison with other target groups?

5. Would you agree with the following statement while working with young people at social farms? "A cow is a great boss." Give reasons to your answer.

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Appendix 1: Challenges causing most harm to young people in Britain (2016)

Rank	Issue	Score on Index
1	Lack of employment opportunities	100
2	Failing to succeed within the education system (e.g. not being given support with studies when deeded)	92
3	Issued of body image (e.g. am I too fat? Am I not attractive?)	86
4	Family breakdown (e.g. parents splitting um, siblings leaving home)	81
5	Substance abuse (e.g. regularly taking drugs)	78
6	Pressures of materialism (e.g. being able to afford the latest fashions, or a new iPhone)	76
7	Lack of affordable housing (e.g. rising house prices might mean never owning your own home)	73
8	Negative stereotyping (e.g. all people that are overweight are lazy)	70
9	Issues related to 24hr social networking (e.g. being addicted to checking Facebook)	68
10	Crime (being involved in or a victim of)	49
11	Financial exclusion (e.g. not being able to di an internship because you can't afford it, not being able to do activities with friends due to lack of funds)	49
12	Lack of things to do / leisure opportunities	46
13	Increasingly sedentary lifestyle (e.g. not exercising enough)	38
14	Online access to sites harmful to mental health and well-being (e.g. pro-anorexia sites)	32
15	The policy of austerity	30
16	Sexual health (e.g. the rise of sexuality transmitted)	27
17	Lack of access to training (e.g. apprenticeships, internships, courses, learning and development)	14
18	Worsening environment (e.g. pollution, increased emissions from cars, greenhouse gasses)	14
19	Lack of political voice (e.g. if 18 or over, that their vote is not effective)	5

Source: https://www.ymca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/World-of-Good-report-Central-YMCA.pdf

Appendix 2: The biggest barriers to overcoming the challenges young people face in Great Britain

Rank	Factor	Score on Index
1	Being in a low income bracket	100
2	Lack of /ppor education	82
3	Health issues (including mental health)	76
4	Lack of employment opportunities	76
5	Current Government policy	65
6	Racism	35
7	Lack of a family network	35
8	Friendship issues	24
9	Sexism	18
10	Community problems	18

Source: https://www.ymca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/World-of-Good-report-Central-YMCA.pdf

11 PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Eliška Hudcová

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- describe the general characteristics and performances of physical disabilities.
- recall the basic classification of physical disabilities.
- understand the benefits of social farming for people with physical disabilities.
- recognise possible behavioural references of people with physical disabilities.
- identify different services provided for people with physical disabilities.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

11.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY

There are several ways to conceptualise physical disability

Physical disability is a long-term or permanent disorder of the motor system or other organs, which results in an impairment of movement and affects the whole personality. According to The Social Work Dictionary (Barker, 2003), a disability can be defined as a temporary or permanent reduction in function; the inability to perform some activities that most others can perform, usually due to a physical or mental condition or infirmity. The restrictions in movement and other limitations may influence self-determination and social interaction and can lead to changes in cognition.

Physical disabilities are individual and unique

Depending on the type and cause of the physical disability, a person may be impacted differently. Thus, two people with the same physical disability will not necessarily have the same impairments.

From the **medical perspective**, it is a loss of body part or failure to develop a specific bodily function or functions, whether of movement, sensation, coordination or speech. This point of view presents a list of skills or abilities which the people in question do not have or cannot perform directly due to the disease, trauma or other health condition, which therefore requires sustained medical care provided in the form of individual treatment by professionals. In the model, management of the disability is aimed at "cure", or the individual's adjustment and behavioural change that would lead to an "almost-cure".

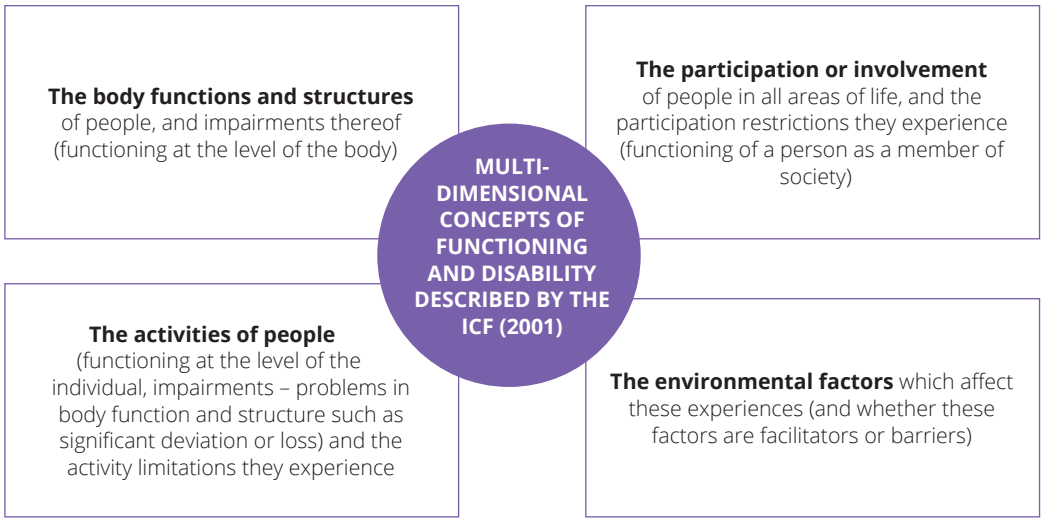
From the **educational perspective**, people with physical disabilities at different age levels are limited in their learning process, social behaviour, verbal communication or psychomotor skills, making participation in social and school life more difficult. The ed-

ucational or pedagogical perspective aims to teach behaviours and practices that manage dysfunctional body parts or a body limited by illness and trauma.

From the so-called **socio-critical perspective**, physical disability depends on how society constructs physical norms. In this model, disability is not an individual attribute but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. The management of the problem requires social action. It is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) approved the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) in 2019 as a framework for describing and organising information on functioning and disability. In the older classification of the World Health Organisation, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) the focus was put on body function, body structures influencing the person's activities, and participation and disability is a term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. This framework is presented in the following figure about multi-dimensional concepts of functioning and disability described by the ICF.

Figure 26: Multi-dimensional concepts of functioning and disability according to the ICF (2001)



The ICF conceptualises a person's level of functioning as a dynamic interaction between their health conditions, environmental factors, and personal factors.[2] The ICF lists the following broad domains of functioning which can be affected:

- Learning and applying knowledge;
- General tasks and demands;
- Communication;
- Mobility;
- Self-care;

2 The ICF: an overview, available from PT6 Working paper (cdc.gov)

- Interpersonal interactions and relationships;
- Community, social and civic life.

Another older model proposed by S.Z. Nagi (1976), in his Disablement Model, concerns the process of disablement with advancing age. It includes four interrelated components, which are:

6. an active pathology describing the biological process of the interruption of normal cellular processes based on degenerative disease, injury/trauma, and infection;

7. impairment which involves structural abnormalities and dysfunction in specific body systems;

8. functional limitations, which means restrictions in fundamental physical and mental actions (e. g. walking at a specific distance);

9. involves the expression of physical or mental limitations in a social context which concerns difficulties in doing activities of daily living (Motl and McAuley, 2010).

This model can be extended by personal (e. g., lifestyle behaviours and psycho-social attributes) and sociocultural (e.g. physical and social environments) variables. The impairments and disabilities are accumulating in the ageing process.

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Physical disability classification

Generally, physical disabilities can be classified according to types, causes, or aetiology, as shown in the table below:

Table 9: Physical disability classification

Type	• Disorders of the motor system • (Long-term) Illnesses • Health impairment
Cause	• Congenital (means that the disorder developed before or during the birth of a child. E.g. congenital defects of skull; cleft skull, palate or spine; cerebral palsy; non-developed limb) • They are acquired (means that the affected persons developed their impairment by external causes at any time during their life) • spinal deformity; injuries – amputations, fractures; consequences of the disease – myopathy, rheumatism)
Aetiology	• Body abnormalities (abnormalities of spine, dislocation of joints) • Physical developmental defects (limb defects, cleft skull, palate of spina bifida) • Injuries (bodily injuries of varying severity with temporary or permanent consequences, amputations) • Consequences of diseases (encephalitis, jaundice, tuberculosis, Lyme borreliosis, cancer etc.) • Cerebral palsy • Long-term and chronic diseases and health impairments (allergies; asthma; eczematous diseases; weakened immunity; oncological diseases; epilepsy; multiple sclerosis; muscular dystrophy) • Prenatal aetiology (the time of disability occurrence is present before the child is born and is associated with diseases the mother acquired during her pregnancy. • Perinatal aetiology (occurs at the time during the birth process. The child born may suffer from a prolonged lack of oxygen due to obstruction of the respiratory tract or injury to the brain during the birth. Also, premature birth may cause the underdeveloped child). • Postnatal aetiology (encompasses time shortly after birth, the child may be involved in an accident, may develop a severe infection or other illnesses that cause impairment after birth).

Source: Slowík, 2007: 99

The next figure describes the most common physical disabilities and their typical behavioural references:

Table 10: Physical disabilities and their typical behavioural references

Cerebral palsy
is the widest group of physical disabilities. Cerebral palsy is mostly caused by pre, peri or post-natal conditions or by brain injuries, infections and degenerative diseases. Different forms of cerebral palsy exist, based on the part of the brain that is damaged.
Spinal cord palsy
is another common condition. It can be caused by many illnesses, but nowadays the most common cause is spinal cord injury due to car accidents and traumas inflicted in so-called adrenalin sports. The health status and motor abilities depend on the level of the spinal cord damage and also on the location of the damage. The closer to the cervical spinal cord the more serious is the health status of the injured person. While permanent damage to the lumbar or sacral part of the spinal cord will cause paraparesis or paraplegia of the lower limbs and damage the sensitivity in lower limbs, the damage of the top part of the cervical spinal cord (segment C1-C4) will most likely lead to tetra paresis or tetraplegia (also known as quadriparesis or quadriplegia) affecting the whole body.
Spinae bifida
is a congenital abnormality with or without damage to the spinal cord or spinal canal. This condition is caused by abnormal closure of the vertebral canal. Neurosurgery is performed at a very early age of the patients. In the case of more severe types of spinae bifida, it results typically in paresis or plegia of the lower limbs and palsy of constrictor muscles. The current prevalence of spina bifida is lower due to foetal screening.
Poliomyelitis
is a viral illness associated with muscular palsy. This disease is caused by a virus, which attacks the spinal cord of children between the ages 2 and 10. Vaccination has been used in most parts of the world.
Muscular dystrophy
is a progressive illness associated with loss of muscular tissue and a decrease in muscular strength. It has a genetic background. The motor abilities of a person gradually deteriorate over time. The process can be slowed down by medication and exercise, but some forms of muscular dystrophy will eventually affect even the vital functions of lung and heart muscles.
Osteogenesis
is another congenital abnormality, which leads to fractures of bones.
Postural defects
are acquired deformations of body posture. The most known are scoliosis and kyphosis. These defects of body postures are associated with abnormal vertebral curvatures. The causes of the defect can be internal or physiological (fast growth, hereditary, nutrition, constitution) and external (environment, lack of movement, premature sitting in infants, long-time sitting, sports specialisations, sleeping on a soft bed).

11.2 BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES TO THEIR NEEDS

Effects reported by the service-users of social farming speak about improvement in their general well-being, their sense of freedom and space, their integration into society, and positive impacts on physical health, mental health and social well-being (Elings and Hassink, 2010).

Many studies prove the beneficial potential of social farms and the connection of people with disability to nature. Elings (2012) describes four areas of benefit/impact of engaging in social farming. These are:

1. social community;
2. attitude and engagement of farmer and care providers;
3. informal non-care context; (helpful and diverse activities);
4. green environment.

Another classification of social farming benefits is proposed by Hemingway et al. (2016). In their study, they use the information from interviews with staff of one care farm. They find that the stay-on-care farm benefits people with a disability in the following ways:

1. the social and physical connections;
2. facilitates learning involving practical activity;
3. develop sensual ability;
4. enhance memory by experience, support joy, adventure and sense of achievement;
5. it facilitates autonomy;
6. leads to a crucial understanding of belonging and being without prejudices.

Based on interviews with social farmers in the SoFarTEAM project, these categories have been developed with several new aspects and for different target groups.

The farm environment has a beneficial effect on the human psyche due to the meaningful and structured work activity with regular daily/seasonal rhythms and a rapidly visible result of work. It mediates contact with nature, which can be a source of stimuli, interest and joy for individuals. Engaging in various farming activities across different target groups reduces feelings of anger, confusion, depression, tension and fatigue. At the same time, it helps individuals with unique challenges to feel better. These benefits are caused by the outside and physical work when inexperienced people acquire new skills and competencies.

In practice, it is not that common to have people with physical disabilities only on social farms. Physical disabilities are predominantly found in combination with other disabilities, most often intellectual disabilities. But as with all other people with disabilities, people with physical disabilities must be treated individually and provided with a safe working environment. This is especially true for the group of people with physical disabilities. With their focus on supporting people, rather than solely on production, social farms are able to make spatial adaptations which are based on the participants' needs

People with physical disabilities must be treated individually and provided with a safe working environment

and type of their physical limitations. The list below shows the elements on social farms often seen when people with physical disabilities participate on the farm.

Spatial arrangements may relate to:

- Raised beds
- Ramps
- Fairly wide roads with a non-slip surface
- Alleys with a low slope due to people in wheelchairs
- Places for relaxation, rest and meeting together
- Barrier-free toilets

"We have an employee who needs a walker. He uses a rollator. He does activities he can do sitting down: for example, planting tomatoes in the greenhouse. He does the work sitting down in the greenhouse. "

For people with physical disabilities, **lower work pressure** plays a vital role as they may naturally have limited capacity to perform work. The tasks are adapted to be the most suitable for participants.

"If someone is diagnosed with a severe spinal injury, we are not naturally motivated to give them physically demanding jobs. So, one source of information for us is the medical records and the objective causes of their ability to work or inability to manage certain activities. Most, we see restrictions on heavy lifting, and clients are on the job for shortened periods."

Peeling onions. Monastery Mariabildhausen and its productive gardens

Source: Author: Eliška Hudcová

Activities that are easy to do and build self-confidence

The social farm provides a flexible setting where work arrangements can be continually adapted and adjusted according to people's individual challenges and capacities. **Rotation of activities, adjusted working hours**, allowing for **team shifts** and for both **individual and team work** are all possible.

Adaption of tools

The tools are adapted not to be heavy, too long or maladapted in any other way. And of course, some tasks are not allowed to be done by personnel who are not trained to handle them, e.g. working with a chainsaw. Sometimes, there are cases when conversely, people with physical disabilities can work with tools that would otherwise be denied to them.

"It is important for boys in a wheelchair that they can chop wood with an axe and feel like "normal" guys."

Accepting Environment

If people with disabilities are born without them and acquire disabilities during their lives, it is difficult to accept this new situation. In this perspective, a social farm is an accepting environment that can provide better understanding and insight. It can be the overall approach of the farmer or the farm community such as empathy, patience, mental resilience and stability, authenticity, open mind, flexibility, presence, humour and optimistic world view, affinity with nature and agriculture and technical skills in agriculture.

"I listen to them, I say my opinion, we are planning work. They can confide in me. I am not from a family. I am not a doctor. I see their world from a different perspective. It can take 30 minutes or 1 hour."

Individual approach

An individual approach has long proven successful, mainly due to the specific diagnoses and participants' actual abilities and skills. Further support is provided in managing the amount of work taking into account their fundamental competencies. Sometimes the group in which a person with a disability works is also essential.

"One of the participants has a physical disability which impedes his ability to undertake some tasks fully, so he spent a lot of time standing back, taking photos, etc. He was encouraged by the farmer and the support worker to get more involved and did so though at a slower pace and less frequently than the other participants." (Quotation from a participatory observation)

Although people with disabilities may be limited in some activities, many can be managed very well. The list below is based on interviews and participatory observations conducted by members of the SoFarTEAM project team during its implementation. These are simple activities and work tasks in which participants feel confident. Of greatest importance is that people enjoy the work they do, and feel that what they do is helpful:

- Wool processing
- Change the water for animals
- Feed the chickens
- Feed the sheep

- Help giving birth to sheep
- Rake the leaves
- Chop the wood
- Feed the rabbits
- Planting
- Harvesting
- Peeling
- Initial cleaning before processing
- Cutting

Smaller flower bed size adapted for more accessible handwork. Biostatek farm in Valeč

Source: Eliška Hudcová

11.3 POSSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL REFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

Every person with a physical disability meets different challenges and needs. Coping with often difficult situation is also reflected in their behaviour, which is therefore necessary to understand.

- They may be reliant on others to provide their care;
- They are not able to work and support themselves financially;
- They lack opportunities for socialisation and civic activation;
- Their engagement in different situations is limited due to equipment such as a wheelchair, which can be embarrassing for others;

- They are restricted in participation in work, housing and intimate relationships;
- They perceive a lower health-related and global quality of life than a reference group.

For a person who was not born with a physical disability, it often takes time to adjust to the emotional and physical challenges their physical disability now poses. They may feel frustrated or even angry that they cannot perform tasks they were used to managing. They may have anxiety about not being able to work while they are recovering. They may even become depressed and feel hopeless about their future. There is sometimes a contradiction between the desires and wishes of a person with a disability and their actual capacities and possibilities. Sometimes, people are oversensitive or egoistic; sometimes, they may take advantage of somebody's goodwill. On the other hand, some are vital and purposeful in dealing with things individually.

Depending on their situation, persons with a physical disability may face particular stressors.

On the farm, they do not experience helplessness, but instead can experience their skills in very practical and useful activities. They learn to participate and cooperate with other people. Instead of thinking only of themselves, they find that animals and plants depend on their work which increases their self-esteem.

The offer of social farming is in its relaxing environment and a very particular and patient approach of the farmer

"The atmosphere on the farm is notably homely, warm and inviting, not just to participants but to all who come on to the farm. This makes it a very relaxing environment for participants who are visibly comfortable in the space. There is a strong ethic of care on this farm, and the emphasis with these groups of people with intellectual and physical disabilities seems quite simple; it is predominately on making sure people have a good day, enjoy themselves and go home safe and safe happy.

The support workers seem to derive a lot of benefit from social farming. Their enjoyment of the day can only benefit the people they work with; as the farmer said; "they go back happier and have more energy for dealing with people."

(Quotation from a participatory observation)

For persons born with a physical disability, there can be a variety of emotions about their situation. Typically, individuals go through periods of mixed or different feelings, such as becoming depressed. Families of a person with a physical disability may also have all kinds of emotions as they deal with the patient's physical care, financial burden, and unanswered questions about the future.

The offer of social farming: For people born with a physical disability, agriculture in general still contains stability in its cyclical nature (seasons repeat, the cycle of life repeats). The social farm contains a variable environment where one can be alone with oneself and in a group. There is plenty of time to observe and to participate in the work. All this can help a person with a disability and at different stages of experiencing their health condition.

"Depending on the person, issues are also dealt with on individual bases. The client has a wide range of staff who he or she can ask for advice, consolation, or to make a complaint. The staff are used to asking about the feelings and moods of the clients. The staff know them well and can tell if somebody is not feeling at their best.

The clients are taken very seriously – they and their meaningful and fulfilling life are the sole purposes of the farm. Still, often the decisions are taken without them, or they can express their opinions or wishes which are always taken into consideration, but they are not definite."

(Quotation from a participant observation)

Their intellectual abilities can be lower, resembling younger children. Children with organic damage to the brain have problems with attention and memory. Many other issues that may develop in educational situations include the following: difficulties with reproduction, perception, differentiation, synthesis, analysis, problems differentiating shape, colour, amount, size, and creating groups. Cerebral palsy is also associated with speech problems and poor vocabulary. The emotional reactions are often not adequate. Children have issues controlling their responses and may develop hyperkinetic movements.

Children with physical disabilities are often limited by deprivation of stimuli and experience

The offer of social farming: staying and working on a social farm allows children to practice fine and gross motor skills in a safe way. They learn new things and have experiences they wouldn't have elsewhere. In social farming, they can practice all their senses, stimulating sensations and creating new experiences that they can integrate with new knowledge.

The insect hotel in the garden promotes sensory integration - a community garden in Záměl

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Young adults with a physical disability, e. g. cerebral palsy are often restricted in daily activities and participation in social roles. They face more difficulties in employment, leisure activities, mobility, and preparing meals and may have less experience with intimate and sexual relationships. Young people with disabilities typically have less opportunity to experience normal teenage activities such as mixed peer contacts and or having small jobs such as babysitting or delivering papers (Roebroeck et al., 2009). Their general quality of life is often influenced by chronic impairment-related pain. This state is also associated with inactivity, poor physical fitness, fatigue and higher levels of depressive and stress symptoms.

In this case, social farming and staying on the farm involves meeting different people and the opportunity to experience a world outside of one's own limitations and meagre perspectives. On the other hand, the period of adolescence is often difficult for every young person, including those without a physical disability. Here, and elsewhere, it is always necessary to proceed very sensitively and individually. Nevertheless, social farming often motivates the exercise of fine and gross motor skills, or at least some natural movement, which generally improves the physical fitness of the individual. For some diseases (asthma, skin diseases), one must be careful where one moves to avoid causing more harm than good.

"In any case, this is very healing for me. I can clean my head, I have fresh air and even work out a bit. I can do meaningful things, which helps me have a day structure."

"Here, for the first time, I feel good. Here, I feel like I am a valuable part of society for the first time.

limited mobility and limited functional skills

One of the most challenging problem of people with a physical handicap is their limited mobility and limited functional skills. The visibility of handicaps is often linked with prejudices and fear of other people despite their average intelligence. These negative attitudes are often associated with adverse social reactions, compassion and aggression. Usually, there is a contradiction between psychological and social independence and complete physical dependence on external care and support. Thus, building a convenient social environment, using supportive tools and providing other personal assistive services are essential to enhance full participation in society. Supports such as social farming allow persons with physical disabilities to experience positive social reactions. In that case, they will avoid the negative interpersonal interactions and challenge basic assumptions about their level of social inclusion. Also, they will be more willing to perform as a valuable part of society and be motivated to show that is their physical handicap which is the challenge.

"The farm itself is a lively place, and neighbours, suppliers, delivery people, etc., will call frequently and have a bit of a chat and interaction with the participants. The end of placement party, which is always held, is another opportunity for the friends and family of the participants to visit the farm and learn more about social farming and for social interaction to happen amongst all the people attending."

(Quotation from a participant observation)

Among the most important goals of supporting a person with a disability is to promote the independence of people with a physical disability, to assist them in living an everyday life as possible. It is crucial to promote self-determination by encouraging them to set goals and helping them achieve those goals. People with physical disabilities need enough time to complete the tasks and are more willing to try to do them themselves. The specific features of social farming activities enable participants to find the time needed to complete their tasks. A social farm leader is aware of not pushing a participant to do something they may not be able to manage. This would only lead to a sense of failure and guilt.

Promoting independence is one of the most important goals

All adult people with physical disabilities should be treated as an adult. This means being respectful, courteous and kind when assisting them. It also means promoting the person's dignity by being mindful of privacy, respecting confidentiality, including their decisions, respecting their rights and valuing their differences. Remember always to see the person and not the disability.

11.4 EXISTING SERVICES THAT SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Like any other adults, people with physical disabilities have basic needs. Human needs, proposed by Barker (2003): include physical aspects (food, shelter, safety, health care and protection); personal fulfilment (education, rest, values, aesthetics, religion, achievement); emotional needs (sense of belonging, mutual care, community); and adequate self-concept (self-confidence, self-esteem and personal identity). Marshall (2012) adds needs such as independence, celebration and mourning, integrity, interdependence, play and spiritual sharing. Unlike other adults, people with physical disabilities may require additional care. The system of care and support covers several perspectives. In the figure below there is a so-called system of complex rehabilitation illustrated, which seeks to address all inputs that can lead to a comprehensive improvement in the functioning of a person with a disability.

Figure 27: The system of complex rehabilitation

Source: Slowík, 2007: 102

Several services are promoting successful social participation for people with physical disabilities

Medical rehabilitation (condition-focused services) was always conceived as the most important in the past. Nowadays, the holistic approach to people with physical disabilities is valued. This includes compensatory tools, such as (electric orthopaedic) wheelchairs, orthopaedic sticks, prostheses, or specially adapted technologies and computers (hardware and software). A medical rehabilitation consists of surgery and operation remedy, cure, physiotherapy, ergotherapy and other hospital-based condition-specific services. This experience is often difficult and traumatic if the hospital care is extended.

A psychological rehabilitation (person-centred services, cognitive-behavioural therapy etc.) strives for possible psychological crisis management connected to the health state change. It deals with challenges linked with the self-image and life orientation of the disabled person. It is offered in the form of individual or group psychotherapy, art therapy, psycho-social competencies training, etc.

A pedagogic rehabilitation aims at schooling, education, and occupation preparation, and at self-sufficiency development and training. It comprises re-education, compensation, individual educational plans development and implementation. At school, pupils can ask for personal assistants in the educational process or adapt the timetable for their needs.

A leisure rehabilitation points to extracurricular activities and opportunities (sport, art, music, culture, life-long education, horticulture, farming activities, etc.). Experiential pedagogy plays an important role in this area. There are environmental pedagogy centres offering farming activities for people with different life challenges.

Work (occupational) rehabilitation includes sheltered workshops for those limited by their impairment in the open labour market. It is offered in the form of permanent or training and transitional workplaces. So-called Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISE) there are particularly important in this field. The people usually work part-time in a friendly environment and get exceptional psycho-social support. Occupational rehabilitation comprises consultancy, labour market research, cooperation with Labour Office, or advocacy. Many social farms operate as work integration social enterprises or as sheltered workshops where meaningful and productive farm work, product processing and selling play an essential role.

The architectural solution in the school, home, work and public environment helps reach positive results when considering the inclusion of people with a physical disability. It encompasses adequate architectural, organisational, personal and material equipment. Then architecture contains an adaptation of toilets, dressing rooms, dinning-halls and other facilities. The EU Accessibility Act, which must be put into practice in all EU countries by 2025, requires that anyone selling goods or providing services must do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability. **In social services**, there is a range of special offers for different situations. Social services often use a multidisciplinary approach to all people needing rehabilitation: early care, professional social counselling, personal assistance services, nursing services, respite services, day-care services, homes for people with a physical disability, sheltered housing, social activation services, social therapeutic workshops, social rehabilitation and outreach ser-

vices. These are carried out in residential, non-residential and outpatient services (care at home).

People with disabilities are entitled to **financial support**. In the Czech Republic, as in most European countries, they are paid from the social security system (disability pension) according to reduced work capacity. Other benefits relate to social services contributions and care allowance. If a disadvantaged person lives in a socially challenging situation, they can apply for state social support benefits and benefits for material needs. When employing a person with a disability, the employer receives financial compensation from the state (75% of wage and other contributions).

These diverse rehabilitation approaches aim to reach a high level of autonomy in the adult life of people with a physical disability. The interventions support them in several participation domains such as getting a job, household management, an active lifestyle, and participation in sports and cultural events.

The children take care of the hen. Art and Ecological Center in Víska

Source: Zuzana Adamová

11.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL FARMING WITH PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Although social farming is generally an overwhelmingly positive intervention for people with anxieties, depression, limited social contacts, limited educational opportunities, lower motor skills and other life challenges, there are also some limitations. For people with a physical disability, staying on a social farm can be harmful in case of severe disability or other health-related issues:

- There can be an allergy or a phobia;
- The work environment may not be well adapted to the type of disability;
- There is a higher risk of an accident at work;
- Sometimes it is a better solution for the farm environment when people with physical disabilities do not work with people with intellectual disabilities. Intellectually healthy people may not fully respect human rights and the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and could misuse them;
- What is stressful for the farmer is much more challenging for the participant.

"In general, our clients are very difficult to work under pressure and stress, and any deviation towards stress or pressures makes them uncomfortable at work and reduces their concentration and consequently their motivation. We definitely consider the openness of both parties as to the main source of a positive atmosphere, where the client, of course, has the opportunity to share their current state, their worries, problems, etc., which may affect their work performance and generally their way of functioning in the workplace. If we know about such a problem, we can take it into account and help the employee in some way, both in his professional life/workplace and in his personal life, which we consider to be a significant advantage, especially for the employee."

When the farm work is well guided, staying on a social farm generally positively impacts subjective well-being and participants' overall satisfaction with life.

Best practice example

The Bludička farmyard is a traditional family farm that has been a social farming base in the eastern Czech Republic for several years. Since 1993, it has been an ordinary private farm, then transformed into an organic farm.

The farmer's family was initially involved in children's education through an equestrian club. Over time, the horses were joined by the endangered breed of the original Wallachian sheep, which the farmers became involved in saving in 1998. A significant breakthrough in the orientation of the farm towards the social dimension came in 2006 after the establishment of cooperation with the Archa Day Centre in Hranice town in Moravia when work on the farm became suitable occupational therapy for the users of this facility. The partnership resulted in the establishment an NGO called Bludička, Civic Association, to create the right conditions for people with disabilities and develop activities for children and youth.

The farmer's wife took over the NGO that started the transformation of the homestead's facilities (barrier-free modifications of the yard and stables, clubhouse with sanitary facilities). They look after sheep, horses, ponies, poultry, pigs, orchard and garden, and the all-important breeding stock. The farmer also makes cheese and processes milk, giving rides to adult riders and providing technical facilities. The complementarity of the two, agricultural and social, brought about the development of other activities. These included contact programmes with animals for children from kindergartens and primary schools, internships for students from the nearby town Nový Jičín Secondary School of Agriculture, internships for university students, cooperation with breeding organisations, events for the public, suburban and residential camps and the development of an equestrian section, hippotherapy for the disabled. The association at this time ran activities focused on sustainable rural tourism, a riding school and other educational and development activities.

In 2017, the farmer's wife met an unemployed woman with physical disabilities. This encounter was the impetus for the launch of the long-planned "Mobile Shepherd" programme, which offers contact with live animals in a place where older people or seriously ill live. The programme includes a small handicraft workshop for working with wool, which became the basis for creating the first sheltered workplace. The experience of employing a person with a disability was so positive that the farmer subsequently decided to embark on the path of social farming, linking the untapped potential of local sheep farming with creating jobs for other disabled people. She employs four people with disabilities as a guide, wool processor, bookbinder and gardener. Employees find fulfilling work in a peaceful, traditional rural environment. Their work involves processing wool into a natural material to create, making wool jewellery, printing books, caring for animals, feeding, cleaning the farm and providing rural tourism services. The work team also travels off the farm to carry out therapeutic activities with the animals in retirement homes, nursing homes, schools and hospices. As part of Christmas events, the company provides animals for the Bethlehem stables or travels to town and village events to showcase rural life.

The homestead forms a single entity that is financially sustainable, partly from its economic activity, partly thanks to supporting from public grants, individual donations and foundation money. The farmer can justify her concept because she can balance the needs of the countryside, respect for nature and agriculture, social necessity and economic and environmental aspects. She has a great sense of community around the farm and knows she must leave.

Safety in our arms - the vision of the social farm Bludička

Source: Radovan Žitník

11.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Name the different concepts of physical disability, determine which best describes the approach of social farming and defend your idea.

2. Work in pairs: Read this short story and decide what services you would recommend to the participant regarding social farming. Use the acquired information from the chapter. You can also use the SWOT analysis to assess different aspects of Marie's life story.

   Marie (33) was born with moderate disabilities. She has cerebral palsy: gait disorders, poor movement coordination, muscle stiffness and speech disorders. Her mother Romana placed her in institutional, residential care after her divorce because she could not manage the care of herself and her daughter. Romana suffered from symptoms of emotional deprivation and experienced significant mental health struggles. When her mother's situation stabilised, she began to have Marie at home during Christmas and summer holidays. These conditions were on the verge of social endurance, but staying in the institute again worsened Marie's mental state. Therefore, her support worker sought a replacement solution in the form of placement in a smaller facility. In the end, they found a way into sheltered housing as an open community in a community house. Marie is used to living in a rural environment and her mental state has stabilised, but she needs physical help to do some daily routine tasks. Marie would like to be more independent, find a paid job and have a life partner, but she cannot without professional help and advice.

3. Work in groups: Reread Marie's life story and imagine she found a safe place to work and relax on a social farm. Draw a farm plan with all the important elements so that Marie feels good there. Describe the individual components.

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12 SOCIAL FARMING IN PRACTICE

Jan Moudrý, Lisa Essich,
Tomas Chovanec

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the challenges of communication, such as the complexity of messages, the precision of wording, cognitive abilities, and the influence of non-verbal and para-verbal communication.
- Develop essential competences for constructive conversation.
- Understand to the suitability of different activities for specific clients.
- Observe and asses the farm environment from the point of view of the possibility of involving different target groups.
- Propose changes in the farm environment, while respecting the agricultural aspects and the needs of the participants.
- Plan activities for different target groups without the need for fundamental changes to the farm environment.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

12.1 FARMING ACTIVITIES

The text introduces the reader to the possibilities of involving the target groups of social farming in agricultural activities and gives examples of modifications and use of the farm environment for this purpose. The aim of the chapter is to characterize and outline activities suitable for participants of social farming farms.

Social farming operates on the basis of linking social work and agricultural activities. *"Agricultural activity or farm work offers many diverse forms of work / activities, which are associated with daily and seasonal natural rhythms, creating commitments and responsibilities over work tasks. Through them, a person gains the ability to self-esteem and self-esteem, which develop in contact and care for plants and animals, are a source of stimulus, interest and joy. During agricultural activities, informal relationships are established with co-workers and other participants, which develop social skills and lead to social inclusion." (Chovanec et al., 2015).*

Social farms aim to employ people who are at risk of social exclusion due to their physical, mental, or social disadvantage, or who have specific needs. This creates both regular and sheltered jobs for participants. The choice of work activities depends on the

abilities and capabilities of specific target groups and individuals. The farmer, in cooperation with the social worker, must properly prepare working conditions suitable for participants and at the same time beneficial from an economic point of view. The better and more detailed the activities in the preparatory phase are planned, the easier their implementation and subsequent management of social agriculture will be. In practice, in some cases, the phase of evaluating the suitability of the entity and possibly the subsequent planning phase is underestimated and neglected.

„A high level of empathy from the farmer leading the team is a prerequisite for the team to function at all. When working with these people, it is necessary to plan far more consistently and think through the various activities in detail - sometimes even on behalf of the employees themselves."

Local conditions, the focus of the farm's production, technical and personnel provision, infrastructure and the company's position with regard to processing and sales opportunities play an important role in planning activities. The size of the holding does not play a significant role in social farming. Nevertheless, the involvement of participants with various types of disadvantages is easiest in small-scale agricultural activities with a high need for manual labour (e.g. growing herbs, root crops, vegetables, processing products and direct sales). We most often encounter social farming on organic, especially biodynamic family farms, where participant integration is easier. From the point of view of the structure of the company, mixed farms with balanced crop and animal production, a more diverse range of production, little dependent on external inputs, are considered optimal. However, too wide a range of production or follow-up activities increases organizational demands, technical equipment costs, and usually reduces production profitability.

Activities in horticulture, crop production and forestry

Very often, companies focused on growing vegetables, either in greenhouses or in the open, are used for social work in agriculture.

„Participants from the free labour market also choose gardening, mainly because they can work outdoors and they mainly want peace and quiet and to be away from the hustle and bustle of work."

Gardening work includes:

- Preparation of seeds and seedlings (sorting, wrapping, pre-germination, reproduction, pre-cultivation of seedlings, potting)
- Preparation of flowerbeds for plantation (engraving, loosening, basic compost fertilization, levelling, demarcation of flowerbeds, measurement of row spacing...)
- Planting, sowing in rows, nests, wide, covering with foil, etc.

- Treatment during vegetation (weed protection, fertilization, irrigation...)
- Harvest preparation (technical equipment, packaging)
- Harvest
- Post-harvest processing of production, storage (cleaning, sorting, drying, packing...)

Work on raised flowerbed
Source: Diakonie Vrchlabí

Most activities can currently be performed mechanized or even automatically. In social horticulture, it is possible in almost all cases to use manual work or simple mechanical devices to secure special machines and equipment in relation to the employed target group of participants. The workplace may also require specific modifications (e.g. to build raised flower beds, holders or storage areas for wheelchair users...).

„Participants do practically everything we can imagine on such a farm. On the other hand, we have our limits, or rather typical jobs that we do not direct our employees to do, such as operating more complex machinery, driving a tractor, setting up or adjusting various machines, etc.

An ecological way of farming provides a whole range of opportunities to combine manual work as a therapeutic activity with a production function. In the crop production of an organic farm, the greatest need for manual labor arises in the cultivation of vegetables (up to 80%) and potatoes (by 30%) by replacing the chemical control of weeds and pests by manual or mechanical treatment. Weed control is also common in the cultivation of field vegetables and other crops, often on larger areas, sometimes with repeated activity

during the growing season. Usually, mechanical cultivation, loosening the soil, hoeing the plants, adding the soil to the plants take place simultaneously. It is important to control the quality of work (differentiation of weeds from crops, distance during unification, method of weed removal).

In the short term, if there is a shortage of workers, instead of hand weeding, loosening and hoeing, techniques (cultivators, bar or net harrows, hoes, rotary cultivators, etc.) can be used to weed out and loosen the soil or apply fertilizers. In the long run, when there is a shortage of workers, the structure of crops needs to be changed (e.g. the lowest labor needs are in growing cereals or perennial forage), production methods (direct sales of primary production instead of processing, processing, packaging and yard sales) and appropriate technique. During seasonal work, there is sometimes an order of magnitude higher labor needs (harvest of fruits, vegetables, potatoes...). For seasonal work, the need for labor is sometimes much higher (harvesting fruit, vegetables, potatoes...). This can be solved by hiring seasonal workers, using services or using the collection of crops by customers as a form of direct sales. On the other hand, **if there is a lack of job opportunities in the garden, in the field, or in the stable, it is advisable to organize further processing and evaluation of the primary raw material** (drying of fruit, preservation, production of wreaths, ornaments...). Establishing cooperation with other farmers and getting involved in their activities during the season or at other times according to the needs and possibilities of both parties is proven. It is always necessary to evaluate the costs, the organizational complexity and the educational-therapeutic effect.

The production focus, technical equipment of the company and the organizational skills of the farmer have a great influence on the need for work

Fewer types of activities are offered when growing fruit or vines and other permanent crops. Nevertheless, they are interesting and suitable for many participants. In the case of fruit trees, lower cultivars (shrubs, small fruits, strawberries) are more suitable, both for the treatment of stands and, above all, for the harvest. When harvesting fruit from taller trees, a platform and other aids are suitable.

Orchard works includes:

- Preparation of planting (measurement of land, fencing, marking out rows and planting clips, preparation of tools and aids, digging pits, preparation and treatment of seedlings, preparation of stakes, compost)
- Planting fruit trees and shrubs
- Treatment during the growing season (protection against weeds and pests, collection of fallen fruit and diseased fruit, mowing the grass, loosening the soil, fertilizing, irrigation...)
- Harvest and post-harvest processing (sorting, fruit cleaning, storage in crates, labelling and storage or distribution)

- Off-season work (land clearing, road preparation, raking leaves, removing branches, repairing tools, making pegs and other tools, making birdhouses, feeders, shelters for small animals and insects)

The work itself is very interesting for many participants, in addition, the observation of birds and other animals has a positive educational and emotional impact. Similarly, growing flowers or medicinal herbs can have a more therapeutic than productive effect (aromatherapy, aesthetic education, health effects ...).

There are numerous suitable activities for participants of the social farm offered also within the care of the forest.

Forest works includes:

- Establishing a forest (clearing the land, preparing seedlings, setting out the plot before planting, preparing tools, fencing...)
- Planting
- Subsequent treatment of forest trees up to the full forest vegetation (mowing the grass, removing unsuitable plants, repairing fences, replenishing of the vegetation)
- Maintenance of mature forest vegetation (pruning, removal of inappropriate plants, construction of feeders for forest animals, monitoring of the state of health of forest vegetation.)
- Felling, manipulation and other processing of wood
- Use of wood in carpentry workshops of social or cooperating companies

Activities in animal husbandry

Livestock breeding brings a number of opportunities for activities for social farm participants. Commonly bred large species (cattle, pigs, horses) may not be suitable for all target groups of participants. Especially for people with disabilities, it is more appropriate to care for smaller and calmer species and breeds, not breeding animals, but rather young, sheep, goats, poultry, rabbits, or bees. Not only the choice of species and breed, but also the type of activities performed must be adapted to the needs and capabilities of the target group.

„Farming is a completely logical choice because it is part of the basic program in our facility, where the clients learn to take their own responsibility when caring for the animals, the participant takes responsibility for the care of the animals, acquires basic work habits and so on.“

Animal husbandry works includes:

- Feed preparation (transportation to animals, mixing, processing, dosing...)
- Feeding and watering animals
- Animal care (cleaning, grooming, performing...)
- Removal of manure, balancing, preparation of manure, treatment of manure, composting of manure, etc.
- Cleaning of stable areas (cleaning, whitewashing, disinfection...)
- Care of pasture areas (repair of fences, fencing, mowing of stubble, dispersal of excrement...)

Observation of animals and direct contact with them is not only a popular activity for most participants, but also has considerable therapeutic effect (animotherapy in general, hippotherapy, canis therapy and many others) and is often practiced on a farm or professionally. The presence of animals on the farm is a welcome source of interest for regular or occasional visitors, especially families with children, pupils and kindergartens. It also fulfils the educational role of social agriculture, bringing nature closer, especially to the inhabitants of cities. Some participants may also take part in presentation and educational activities. This increases their self-confidence, sense of application, usefulness and position in society. Unlike garden, orchard and field work, working with animals is more demanding in terms of attention, concentration, care and safety and hygiene. When working with animals, the transmission of certain diseases or injuries may be more common. The principles of work organization in animal husbandry and working procedures are given in the final part of the chapter.

Therapeutic effect of direct contact with animals

Source: Eliška Hudcová

12.1.1 Processing activities

On social farms, many activities are offered to various target groups of participants in the processing of primary crop production (cleaning, drying, grinding, preservation of vegetables and fruits, jam production, drying and treatment of herbs, production of teas, liqueurs, food supplements...). From animal production, it is the processing of milk (production of cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese), meat, fats, eggs, honey and other raw materials into various food products. Interesting activities are also the processing of by-products into various products from wool, leather, horns).

Direct sales to the customer are suitable for a social enterprise if there is free work capacity and other circumstances help (transport distances, advantageous prices and sales opportunities, use of existing investments, experience, etc.). The greatest need for work arises in the packaging and direct sale of products. With direct sales, the costs of packaging, advertising, telephone, postage and, possibly, transport increase. Larger sales can be expected in larger cities, in places used by tourists or otherwise frequented. Transport distances and associated costs are limiting, especially in the case of daily or frequent delivery of products (milk, vegetables, fresh goods with a short shelf life). In the absence of labour, on the other hand, direct sales can mean a loss. In any case, it is necessary to evaluate the costs of product refining and sales and compare them with the increase in sales. Because sales conditions are very different, it is necessary to proceed individually in each company.

Equipment for further processing brings higher construction costs, resp. their modifications and equipment

When planning social farming activities, it is often assumed that the range of production and related activities will initially be of a manual nature. **We strive for maximum use of existing construction and machinery investments and their gradual innovation and expansion, especially if we focus on further processing and direct sales of basic production.** The investments include the establishment of a cleaning and sorting line, dryers, peeling equipment, brushing, grinding and packaging of plant products, expansion and distribution of storage facilities for market crops, in animal production and the introduction of the entire technology of cheese, yogurt and other products. When planning investments, it is necessary to determine their minimum need and order of importance in acquisition. It is necessary to evaluate the use of own and the possibility of renting foreign technologies and machines (neighbourhood cooperation or services).

12.1.2 Participants

The modifications serve to ensure easier movement and orientation of social farming participants in the farm premises, including its buildings, and last but not least to increase the safety of the environment. The degree of adjustment varies according to the specific target group, in general the biggest changes are required for people with physical disabilities and people with reduced mobility.

Buildings must have barrier-free access to areas that are used for contact and work with participants. We place disabled workers in jobs that are easily accessible - ideally on the ground floor. Barrier-free, curb height, ramp slope, slope and path width must be

addressed; the width of entrances, doors and their opening; handrails, railings, fences and enclosures, their safety and permeability; surface and colour differentiation of important elements on the farm. If there are stairs in the building, it is possible to bypass them (ramps, lift or lifting equipment). Premises intended for work, corridors, staircases and other communications must have the specified dimensions and surface and must be equipped for the activities performed there. Floors and floor coverings should be non-slip and barrier-free. The usability of toilets is a major barrier to integration for people with disabilities. It must be possible to operate switches, pushbuttons, toilet flushers, emergency switches, etc. from an unlimited range. The ideal height for this is 85 cm which will ensure accessibility for wheelchair users.

„We built a ramp for wheelchairs, we built toilets, we expanded the alleys. Thanks to barrier-free adaptations, children from schools and kindergartens, families with children and prams began to come to us. We were able to integrate children with disabilities into the equestrian club..“

The orientation in the building should be easy to understand and adapted to take into account the needs of people with sensory impairments. Visually impaired people should be able to receive information through tangible and acoustic means. It is possible to supplement acoustic information with visual information for hearing-impaired people. The rooms must be well lit. The marking should be in a contrasting colour. Graphic and pictograms are better and faster to understand.

In addition to the workplace, we must arrange a place where participants will spend time depending on whether they are usually outside with animals, in the field, in the garden, warehouses or stables, in the greenhouse or inside in a processing plant or shop and also whether these spaces are easily accessible and safely. Of course, it depends on the capacity of the people that the farm is able to accommodate and the time of year. The distinction between public and private spaces will need to be addressed; surface treatment for dry and wet weather; day room for rest and meals; changing room; toilets and showers; outdoor rest areas; benches; shady places; water availability; game elements; accommodations; parking. For example, a living room is very important on a social farm, in addition, it often serves as a multifunctional space not only for participants, but also for visits, excursions, training, seminars, overnight stays, etc.

It is not necessary to modify the tools or to provide special tools, when the usual tools could be used by the participants

Work objects and tools used by the worker during his work must be placed at the workplace clearly, within reach and in proper order. The shape and surface material of all objects must allow easy cleaning and do not endanger the health of workers. Work tools and other equipment must suit the employee's abilities, occupational safety conditions, or the individual's disability

„We don't use any special tools or any modified tools within our operation, and it's generally the same tools and equipment that are in the normal farming environment elsewhere on the farm.“

„It is necessary to be careful that participants do not get into an uncomfortable situation at a time when they have garden tools - spades, shovels."

12.1.3 Work procedures and organization of work in animal husbandry

Specific measures apply to working with animals. It is an adjustment of the environment (e.g. henhouses with a modified placement of the door to the laying nests) and at the same time the procedures and measures themselves in individual activities. Here, working procedures are regulated in general and their observance is particularly important when it comes to participants' direct work with animals. Given the positive impact of contact with the animal, as well as its mere presence, it is good that these activities are included in social farming activities as often as possible and, if possible, for all target groups. The specific needs and capabilities of the particular person involved in the activities must always be respected and the suitability of the activities evaluated, as well as the species and breeds of animals with which it may come into contact, or the extent and circumstances under which the contact may take place. In general, the following rules apply to working with animals (based on national law):

- Animals must be handled calmly and not irritated or abused
- The management and introduction of large livestock, with the exception of horses, is carried out by means of a halter fitted with a guide belt, a guide wire or a rod; the guide wire or guide strap must not be wrapped around the arm and no chain must be used for guidance
- When herding large animals, if it is done by means of herding alleys and barriers, the participant/ employee must always be behind the fence or behind the barrier
- Large animals can be accessed only after a voice warning, we always approach a lying animal with increased caution and when treating a sick or injured animal, and where it is known that the animal is dangerous or that is dangerous, it is necessary to provide additional insurance by another person
- Cleaning and tethering of animals are always carried out from the side where there is minimal risk of being pushed or pressed by the animal
- The number of additional staff should be required at the workplace when performing special tasks, such as veterinary procedures, insemination, dehorning, hoofing and forging by a professionally qualified person; when performing special operations on restless animals, means for fixing the animal are used, such as a fixation cage or the administration of a sedative by a professionally qualified person
- Animals whose behaviour endangers the safety of persons or other animals are excluded from breeding; in the case of animals of breeding value, measures must

be taken instead of excluding them which reduce the risk of danger, for example by designating an experienced carer who is sufficiently familiar with the animal's risky behaviour.

12.1.4 Review questions and suggestions for discussion/activity

1. Create short list of activities suitable for the specific target group. Try to implement variable activities related to the plant production, animal production and processing of the agricultural products.

2. Work in small groups/pairs: On selected farm try to identify activities/places, where the participants from specific target groups could be involved, without the need to modify the environment, or with only minor modifications.

3. Work in small groups/pairs: Imagine having unlimited resources. Design the modification of the farm environment so that it enables the involvement of the selected target group in any activities, according to your ideas.

4. Asses and comment the solutions from the previous two steps, prepared by other small groups/pairs.

12.2 COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

We have successful conversations every day without thinking long and hard about it or analysing what was said. On the other hand, it is the situations in which we feel uncomfortable because they have taken a different course that we had originally envisaged that can really challenge us.

When problems arise in human interaction, communication usually plays a decisive role. When talking fails, conflicts can be the result. At the same time, the key to conflict management lies in the way we talk to each other. Constructive conversation is one of the key competences in social work practice and needs to be learned. In order to create a constructive climate for discussion, a high degree of self-observation is necessary, as well as certain behavioural patterns. Active listening and empathy are particularly important, as is the awareness of one's own thoughts and feelings. This chapter will present essential theories on communication and conflict management.

12.2.1 Basics of communication

Communication is one of the most complex and important human skills and does not only consist of passing on factual information. Much more, about two thirds of the exchange in a conversation takes place via the visual or acoustic channel in the form of gestures, posture, facial expressions, intonation or speech melody. *Verbal communication*, i.e. the spoken word, accounts for less than ten percent of the total message that reaches the conversation partner. *Non-verbal communication* through body language,

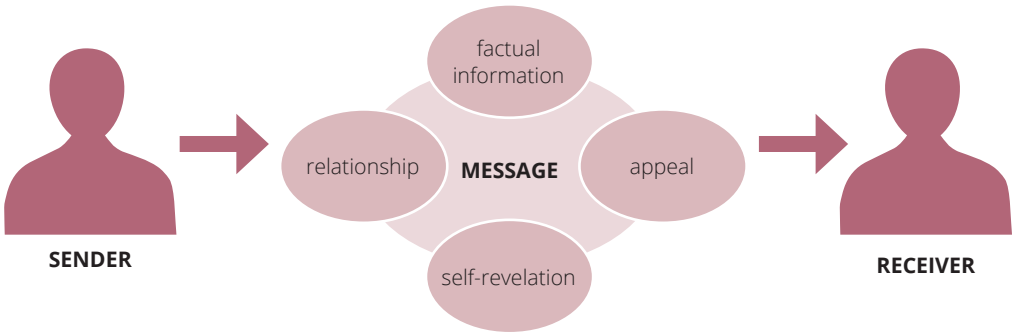
looks, facial expressions and gestures and *para-verbal communication*, i.e. the voice with which we express a message, have a decisive influence. This includes the pitch of the voice, the volume, intonation, the tempo of speech and the melody of speech.

The four-ear-model according to Schulz von Thun

The basic concept of communication can be reduced to a sender and a receiver. The message sent and the message received do not always match. Friedemann Schulz von Thun has devoted himself to the susceptibility of human communication to interference and has found that one and the same message can contain four messages. He distinguishes between four sides of a message: factual content, self-revelation, relationship and appeal. The sender who makes the utterance always communicates on these four levels while the receiver listens with four ears. Which of the four ears is active determines how the statement is understood? Non-verbal and para-verbal communication have an influence on this, as do the framework conditions or the topic of the conversation (Schulz von Thun, 1981).

The factual level includes the facts and the pure content of a statement. The factual content serves to clarify the factual situation and transfer information. This self-revelation of the message is often not clear to the speaker. No matter what one says, one always reveals something about oneself and one's own personality, emotions, values, views and needs. The relationship level is the most influential, because it determines how the factual level is understood and processed. If the relationship level is not clarified, this can prevent fact-oriented communication. With an appeal, the sender makes clear what he or she wants from the receiver. This can be requests, orders, wishes or advice addressed directly to the recipient.

Figure 28: Own figure of The Sender-and-Receiver-Model according to Schulz von Thun (1981)



Example: What the sender might mean

- Factual level: "The stable has not been mucked out yet."
- Self-revelation: "I am falling behind with my tasks because of this."
- Relationship: "I am disappointed because I expected you to take over the task.
- Appeal: "Could you please muck out the stable as soon as possible so we can move on?"

What may come across to the recipient

- Factual level: "The stable has not been mucked out yet."
- Self-revelation: "I am unhappy with the performance."
- Relationship: "This is sloppy work!"
- Appeal: "I expect compensation for my trouble."

This model can be applied to all areas of life where people speak to each other. It illustrates how quickly they can misunderstand each other. In order to prevent conflicts, it is advisable to observe the 4-Ears Model and to follow the following points (Schulz von Thun, 1981):

- Make sure that the language is precise and unambiguous.
- Statements should be free of irony and sarcasm.
- You should formulate a request or wish clearly.
- Hidden hints are taboo and can be understood as passive-aggressive.
- The same applies to subliminal accusations.
- Make sure that the message has been understood correctly.
- If you are unsure, ask actively.

Despite clear communication and unambiguous words, it is not always in the sender's power whether the receiver receives a message as it was intended. This is due, among other things, to the complexity of the message, the precision of the wording, the recipient's cognitive abilities and his or her current state of mind. In addition, there is often so-called non-verbal communication. Para-verbal signals can trigger a disturbing feeling when messages are transmitted or even turn the message into the opposite.

The five axioms according to Paul Watzlawick

Paul Watzlawick developed the five axioms of communication with which human communication can be explained and its paradoxes demonstrated:

1. one cannot not communicate.
2. every communication has a content and relationship aspect.
3. communication is always cause and effect.
4. human communication uses analogue and digital modalities.
5. communication is symmetrical and complementary.

First axiom: You cannot not communicate because all communication (not just with words) is behaviour and just as you cannot not behave, you cannot not communicate.

For example, one might assume that a woman staring at the floor next to you on the train would not communicate. Yet she does, because she is non-verbally communicat-

ing to the others on the train that she does not want any contact (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 2011).

Second axiom: Every communication has a content and a relationship aspect, such that the latter determines the former and is therefore a metacommunication.

The central statement behind this is that every communication contains a content and a relationship aspect. The relational aspect determines the content of what is said or how the content is to be understood. This relationship aspect is rarely explicitly expressed, but can usually be read between the lines. In terms of conflict management, this means that a blocked relationship can hinder a substantive solution to a dispute. The relationship level has to be addressed first so that work can be done meaningfully on the content of what is being said (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 2011).

An example: Paul devalues his colleague Peter's arguments in a discussion at work because he simply does not like him.

The third axiom: The nature of a relationship is conditioned by the punctuation of the communication processes on the part of the partners.

Through frequent interaction between communication partners, characteristic patterns or a structure of their own develop. Every stimulus is followed by a reaction (chain of behaviour). Every stimulus is also communication, as communication is circular.

Example: In the case of two friends, a pattern has developed in which one determines the conversation by talking a lot and the other listens. However, it is not possible to determine whether the determiner has started to determine or the listener has started to listen. Both see themselves as responders. The determiner thinks that he is taking things into his own hands because the other is so passive. The listener thinks that he has no choice but to listen because the other person dominates the conversation (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 2011).

So it happens that one interlocutor blames the other for his or her behaviour. Since communication is circular, it is difficult to identify the origin of the disturbance, similar to a vicious circle.

The fourth axiom: Human communication uses digital and analogue modalities. Digital communications have a complex and logical syntax, but a semantics that is inadequate in the field of relationship. Analogue communications, on the other hand, have this semantic potential but lack the logical syntax necessary for unambiguous communication.

On the analogue level are the para- and extraverbal, non-verbal parts of speech. Digital communication has a complex and logical syntax that enables unambiguous communication. The digital elements mostly convey the content level, the analogue ones the relationship level. Analogue communication is ambiguous and can be decoded in dif-

ferent ways. For example, there are tears of pain and tears of joy (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 2011).

Example: A kiss that a child receives from its parents can mean: "We like you very much!", or also "Please leave us alone now!"

The fifth axiom: "Interpersonal communication processes are either symmetrical or complementary, depending on whether the relationship between the partners is based on equality or difference".

The communication processes depend on whether the relationship between the partners is based on equality or inequality. In complementary relationships, different behaviours complement each other and determine the interaction process. The basis of the relationship is the difference between the partners. Often this difference is expressed in a subordination, i.e. one has the upper hand over the other. A symmetrical form of relationship is characterised by the fact that the partners strive to minimise inequalities among themselves (striving for equality).

- If the communication processes are symmetrical, it is a case of two equally strong partners striving for equality and reduction of differences. One could also call it a "mirror-like behaviour" of the partners.

- If the processes are complementary, there is always a "superior" and an "inferior" partner. The partners complement each other in their behaviour.

A disturbance is present when there is a symmetrical escalation, i.e. the partners try to "outdo" each other. A very rigid complementarity is found in parent-child relationships. The individuals in the parent-child relationship are different, here too there is a primary and a secondary partner. However, this relationship is to be seen in a social and cultural context, it is not a question of linking it with "strong-weak", "good-bad" etc., because one partner does not force the other into his or her position, but they are in a reciprocal relationship, they complement each other. The behaviour of one partner conditions that of the other and vice versa.

This often results in paradoxical demands for action. Either so-called "double messages" occur (e.g. non-verbally expressing something other than what is said) or paradoxical predictions. An example: (A) receives a red and green jumper as a gift from (B). He puts on the red one. (B) assumes that he did not seem to like the green one. If (A) had put on the green one first, the same thing would have happened. No matter what (A) had done, it would have been wrong (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 2011).

12.2.2 Conflict management techniques

Active listening according to Thomas Gordon

Active listening according to Thomas Gordon exceeds attentive listening. It follows the assumption that the sender of a message often encodes the verbal message. The receiv-

er decodes the message through active listening. For example, contradictory statements are pointed out or ambiguities are clarified by asking questions. Active listening also helps the sender to become clear about himself and his message. The interest that the listener thus signals supports the path to conflict resolution (Gordon & Edwards, 1995).

Active listening involves three levels:

1. **door openers:** at the nonverbal and para-verbal level, the receiver signals his or her interest through so-called door openers ("huh," "yes," "wow"), facial expressions and gestures (nodding, eye contact, facial expressions),

2. **paraphrasing/mirroring:** The receiver reproduces the message in his own words. In this way, he shows his counterpart what has been understood. In this way, the other person can correct or add to what was said in good time. In addition, the repetition of what was said leads to the sender of the message being able to think further about what was said. Paraphrasing meets the basic need for acceptance and the interlocutor feels perceived. Paraphrasing is done without own evaluation, comments, advice, remarks and without taking sides.

Example:

Person 1: "Actually, I have been working with my colleague for a long time. But lately he's been criticizing me all the time and complaining about my order or that I talk too loudly. Apparently, I can't do anything right anymore."
Person 2: "As I understand, you have a conflict with your colleague about different ideas of order and ways of working."

3. **empathic listening**: This is where emotional content is verbalized. Special empathy is needed for mirroring resonating feelings of the sender.

Example: "When I hear you like this, you were highly motivated at the beginning and now you feel rather dull."

Active listening shows the sender that he or she is being taken seriously and that the receiver will not be distracted. Fellow human beings appreciate such an attitude. Active listening must be practiced and does not happen on its own.

I-messages

Components of I-messages
- Describing the positive or negative behaviour of the other side.
- Present the feelings or thoughts it triggers.
- Justify why one is pleased with the behaviour or finds it problematic.
- Expressing the desire for reinforcement of the positive behaviour or change in the negative behaviour.

I + factual statement + my needs and feelings + my appeal

I-messages do not mean talking only about oneself, but are a means of presenting criticism not as absolute truth, but as personal feeling. This allows speakers to express negative feelings without building unnecessary tension or causing hurt. I-messages imply that people are talking about themselves and what triggers the behaviour that is problematic from their own perspective. The focus is always on the specific situation. Generalizations ("I always have to do the dishes") are avoided. This gives the other side the opportunity to better assess the impact of their behaviour (Gordon & Edwards, 1995).

Example:

You message: "You're not on time again!"
I-message: "I've been waiting here for you for half an hour and I'm totally annoyed because I have a lot to do. I don't feel taken seriously or respected when you don't keep our appointments."

Instead of going on the defensive, it is more likely that your counterpart will relent and apologize for being late. This steers the conversation away from escalation and toward dialogue. An honest I-message ensures more understanding and willingness to compromise.

Reframing

Through reframing it is possible to give a new meaning or a different significance to an event or a certain situation. To do this, an attempt must be made to look at the situation from a different context. In a new frame, the picture can look completely different and have a different effect. If a problem is reframed, then the same event takes on a new meaning: new reactions and new behaviour become possible. Reframing refers to the process of reinterpreting, adopting a new perspective, a new way of perceiving, a new interpretation (Duve, 2011).

Example:

Person A: "I can never rely on him. Today he talks one way, tomorrow another."
Person B: "Can you describe that in more detail? What situations do you mean exactly?"
In this way, sweeping statements can be toned down and made more concrete.

12.2.3 Role towards participants

The farmer plays an important role in the training and support of the clients, because he/she acts as a role model, especially in educational activities. He ensures that the situation on the farm is completely different from that in a social organization. Thus, a farm represents the identity and personal values and ideas of a farmer. He radiates a sovereignty and authority through his work. On a care farm a different kind of bond is built up as it is in a social organization, where professional distance is even more important. By bonding with the family, for example by sharing meals, a feeling of equality can be built up, which can strengthen the self-confidence of the participants. Professional distance can be defined broadly and individually and can differ greatly depending on the target group.

"I learned at university that you should always keep a professional distance. Always. And now I've realized that it doesn't work. I looked for myself: where are my limits? [...] If there is always a professional distance, never telling about your personal life, never showing your life, than someone never gets to know you. And how than to work properly with young people?"

On the other hand, the distance is important of terms of long-term self-sustainability, care and the provision of quality companionship and care. The distance is thus important if the worker does not want to let her/himself absorbed by all the problems and crises of the participants.

Some supervisors speak of a family, a community that works on the basis of equality. In this respect, we see a difference between the various projects and target groups. The supervisors of young people sometimes talk about a parent-child relationship, but at the end the supervisors are responsible. Others talk about a family or community where parental involvement is less important, but that is often linked to the target group, such as the older people. These nuances are interesting and as a supervisor you have to find your own way.

"It is very important for us that people feel at home in a family-like setting. So yes, for some people it does feel like family because they often have no one else to share it with."

"It is a supportive relationship, not a dependent relationship. We can always leave. The bottom line is that we are partners with the young people."

(youth)

"It depends on what role is needed. For example, a young person just broke up with his girlfriend. Then you don't need a pedagogue who stands up and explains that this is a difficult phase. He needs a buddy to listen to, let him cry on your shoulder and say: it's okay. And then it's not about the fact that he hasn't cleaned the dishes or that his room looks like a pig stable."

Quite a lot of supervisors indicate that they tailor the relationship to the participant. Sometimes this has to do with the target group, but sometimes it also depends on the individual participant. Some of the participants like for instance a classical boss-employee relationship others like a more informal relationship.

"In professional addiction work, one goes over to the German 'Sie', the formal salutation. You do not necessarily have to create closeness through the informal 'du'."

But in most cases, the concept of professional relationship is best summarized in the following quote:

Professional relationship is a broad concept

"Of course, you always try to keep a professional distance. You learn that too, because in the beginning we sometimes gave out our private phone numbers and then people would start to WhatsApp you in the evenings. You have to make sure that work and private life are kept separate and that you remain the professional supervisor who is not always available."

A last small category of social farmers sees their clients as a kind of business partner because clients can choose their own care. Supervisors indicate that the participants are dependent on them but that this is also true the other way round: that the farmers are also dependent on the participants. But the nuance is sometimes just different. In some cases, it's about business, in other cases, supervisors say that you can learn from each other and that you depend on each other.

"I have a relatively large distance with some employees. I don't talk to them about personal things. They just want to know from me: What work is on today? What's the job of today?"

Quite a lot of supervisors indicate that they tailor the relationship to the participant. Sometimes this has to do with the target group, but sometimes it also depends on the individual participant. Some of the participants like for instance a classical boss-employee relationship others like a more informal relationship.

12.2.4 Review Questions and Role Play

1. What is the purpose of the four-ear model, and how does it help us to understand communication more effectively?

2. What are the five axioms according to Paul Watzlawick, and how do they contribute to our understanding of human communication?

3. Explain the first axiom: "One cannot not communicate." Why is it important to acknowledge that all behaviour is a form of communication?

4. How can an understanding of communication models be applied in real-world situations, such as conflict resolution or organizational communication?

5. What is active listening, and why is it important in effective communication?

6. Describe the key principles of active listening according to Thomas Gordon, and explain how they contribute to effective communication.

7. Explain the importance of "I" messages in active listening, and how they can help to build trust and understanding in communication

Role Play

In a role play, learners put themselves in a situation that may have happened to them in real life or use the following situation as a guide to apply the methods in this chapter.

You work in a social farming project that employs people with special needs and gives them meaningful work. However, in your team there is a conflict between two employees who are constantly clashing and spreading bad vibes. The conflicting parties are an older employee who has been working in the project for many years and a young intern who joined recently. The situation affects teamwork and the atmosphere in the project.

Your task is to act as a mediator in this conflict situation and find a solution that satisfies everyone involved. Consider how you can use the four ears model and conflict resolution strategies such as active listening to find a solution.

In your role play, make sure you:

- Understand and respect your neighbor's perspective.
- Communicate openly and make your own needs and expectations clear.
- Seek compromise and work together to find solutions.
- Be creative and suggest alternative approaches or solutions.
- Have constructive and solution-oriented conversations.

Afterwards, evaluate how successfully you used the four ears model and conflict resolution strategies in your role play and what you could do better in the future to resolve agricultural conflicts more effectively.

12.3 INCLUSION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

This chapter deals with marketing with a focus in the context of social farming. First, we introduce the meaning and basic structure of a business plan and the importance of advertising in general. Next, we will describe the possibilities of involving people from the target groups in the sale of farm products, either in a direct form (involving employees in the sale of products) or in an indirect form (emphasis on information distribution through different information channels). At the end of the chapter we will describe the different tools and techniques how marketing can be done in social farming.

12.3.1 Marketing in social farming

If we want to talk about marketing in social farming, it will be necessary to start from a broader set of recommendations in the field of business plan development, which includes a marketing strategy. In this text, however, we will focus mainly on the social

farming aspects of marketing as a tool that can (or should) effectively help us to sell products that have been developed on a social farm with significant input from employees from different target groups.

A second very important source of information for the development of a marketing plan is the general framework of marketing strategies applied in farms, organic farming or other similarly conceived operations. We also conducted guided interviews with representatives of various social farms and here are their attitudes towards selling and trading their produce: "The farm must also be functional in terms of sales and the whole agricultural cycle. Producing vegetables for sale is easy. It is not difficult to ensure sales."

In this context, the concept of social farming will thus form a kind of superstructure that will complement the generally applicable theories and practices in the above-mentioned operations and their specificities, which can be taken into account and accentuated in the marketing plan.

12.3.2 The business plan as the superordinate planning level

The very concept and structure of the business plan (of which the marketing plan is a part) is thus based on long-established and well-developed methods and practices that are generally applied in business. Thus, from the theory of creating a business plan we will take only its basic definition and the reasons why to create it in the first place.

In short, a business plan describes our business future. Business plans are usually prepared in our heads and we have no need to present them in written form. However, this ceases to be true once we decide to implement them.

We present a business plan to investors (or in the form of a project for obtaining a grant) when we do not have sufficient equity capital and need to raise the missing funds from another source.

We can also prepare a business plan for our own use. When drawing it up, we will make it clear what steps we need to take in each area of the business - e.g. how to reach customers, how to differentiate ourselves from competitors, how many employees we will need, etc.

In addition, in the context of social farming, the business plan will include a description of the social aspects related to the employment of disadvantaged people. The basic parameters of the plan itself can be taken from the rules for setting up a social enterprise, in which the social aspect is firmly embedded.

Each business plan has its own structure, which varies according to its specific focus or the sector in which its author decides to operate. This structure is widely known and available from public sources, and many publications have been written about the business plan, and new and new approaches are constantly being developed to adapt the

business plan to specific sectors or to a given type of business. In our case, we will leave this aside for now and focus only on the marketing chapter, which forms an integral part of the business plan.

12.3.3 The marketing plan for the social farm

As with the business plan, we base the marketing plan on its commonly known structure, which is also available from public sources and various templates and examples of marketing plans can be downloaded and adapted for your own use. However, the aim of this text is to highlight the specificity of a social farm using the concept of social farming and how to appropriately implement the social farming aspect in the marketing plan. By this we mean the methods and ways of approaching the products generated by the social farm and how to market them towards potential customers.

Before we start to look at the specifics of marketing for social farming, it is very important to understand, using a very simple example, what we want to do in terms of marketing.

The following example is the best way to do this.

> We have a social farm and put up a sign over the gate that says "3 Hen Farm", that's **ADVERTISING**.
>
> If we put that sign on the back of a donkey and walk it across the square, that's called **PROMOTION**.
>
> If this donkey tramples on the flower beds in front of City Hall, that is **PUBLICITY**.
>
> If we can get the local newspaper to write about it, that's **PUBLIC RELATIONS**.
>
> If we planned all this, that's **MARKETING**.

First and foremost, it will be important to answer the question of how marketing is different from sales.

Sales is trying to get customers to buy goods that the farm has already produced. Marketing seeks to get the farm to produce and sell the goods that the customer wants. It therefore identifies the needs and wants of the customer and tailors its products, their price, the way they are sold, promotion, design, packaging, etc. to these.

People from the target groups of social farms can be involved directly and indirectly, both in sales and marketing. To this text, we will divide the possibilities of their involvement as follows:

- Involving target groups in sales - direct and indirect forms
- Involving target groups in marketing - direct and indirect

Before describing this, it is important to point out that in practice we are unlikely to always be able to find and separate the above categories so clearly. In our case, this division serves primarily to clearly define the different parts that we can see as important components in the sales and marketing plan when developing the final sales or marketing strategy. Partly, we also leave aside the specificity of the individual target groups, which must always be considered when setting up the different ways, degree and intensity of involvement of people from the target groups in sales or marketing. It is always necessary to understand, perceive and respect the limits represented by the individual abilities and skills of the persons from the target groups, which may influence the final form of the methods and way of selling or marketing the products of our farm.

Greenhouse on the farm for people with mild mental or combined disabilities

Source: Eliška Hudcová

12.3.4 Involving target groups in sales

When we talk about the involvement of target groups in sales, we primarily mean that we want to bring the customer (customers should see employees from the target groups at work, perceive their integration in the workplace and see them at work) as close as possible to the employees from the target groups who are employed or otherwise involved in the operation of the farm (direct involvement). Or we want to present to the customer as much as possible the farm environment where people from the target groups are employed or otherwise participate in the operation of the farm (indirect involvement).

In a broader context, the involvement of the target groups in sales often depends on the specific skills and abilities of the employees from the target groups. That depends on

the one hand by the personal prerequisites for sales, not all employees will be able to communicate with customers in the necessary way or are internally predisposed to deal with customers and to cope with the various stressful situations associated with direct sales. For Example (the stress that is typically of long-term functioning on the shop floor, operations with money, ability to function independently, etc. And on the other hand, the need for at least minimal training or provision of experience or education in sales skills necessary to successfully manage the position and function in the workplace.

Direct involvement of target groups in sales

In the case of direct involvement of persons from target groups, we are primarily concerned with the involvement of employees in direct sales activities that the farm normally uses in the distribution of its products. Thus, in this context, it is primarily about the active involvement of employees in the sale of products, where the employee is in direct interaction with the customer. Typically, this involves selling products in a brick-and-mortar shop (if the farmer has one) or employees selling products at the market or other similar events, such as delivery services, etc.

In this way, the customer and target group persons have the opportunity to interact directly with each other, different types of relationships can be formed that can encourage customers to return to the point of sale, and the customer can also gain a broader perspective and context into the employment of target group persons in social farming.

Indirect involvement of target groups in sales

This way of involving people from the target groups in sales relies primarily on the customer being able to see the operation and functioning of the farm on site and in the presence of people from the target group. It is all about giving the customer a first-hand experience and giving them the opportunity to form their own opinion about the operation of the farm and its importance and contribution to society. On the other hand, it gives the customer the opportunity to see how the persons from the target group are specifically involved in the production or other participation in the production of the products. For this reason, among others, outlets are often located directly on farms, so that this interaction between the customer and the farm environment can take place. This aspect can significantly help to ensure that customers ideally return at regular intervals, thus creating a network of stable customers for the farm's products.

Workshop "At the Lamb" applying social farming

Source: Eliška Hudcová

Involving target groups in marketing

When preparing the marketing of a farm, the way in which target groups are involved is a little more abstract than when they are involved in sales. In the context of marketing, we are mainly talking about the so-called added value of products (indirect involvement of people from the target group in marketing). In this approach, we try to attach information about the overall idea and benefits of social farming to the product as part of a comprehensive product information. The aim is thus to give the customer as much information as possible and to motivate them to buy our products for different reasons.

The second form of involving people from the target groups in marketing is to create comprehensive information through different information channels (website, social networks, in reports, videos, printed leaflets, leaflets, etc.) where the farm's activities are presented directly and comprehensively (or in varying degrees of detail). Both of these forms can in principle be intertwined, but the aim is to create a source of information for the customer to support the sale of our products and thus create space for the dissemination of other relevant information.

Direct involvement of target groups in marketing

In the case of direct involvement of target groups in marketing, we primarily assume that the employees themselves or the overall social farming concept of our farm is at the forefront of the marketing campaign. This point of view is primarily represented by a concrete demonstration of the environment, conditions or work of the employees from the target groups to the general public, where we try to reach our customers. The main emphasis is on the active participation of the employees themselves and the demonstration of the real environment in which they work, through various videos, photographs or otherwise mediated experience, for example, through a promotional leaf-

let. This form of marketing has a more sophisticated dimension and it is very important to think about the overall framework of the campaign.

Through the direct involvement of people from the target groups, the farmer can present the concept of social farming and its added value to his product in an appropriate and comprehensible way - from the description of the involvement of people from the target groups in the production to the societal context and benefits of the social farm. All of the above attributes can thus establish a relatively good opportunity for creating a more stable network of loyal customers who will increase the likelihood of regular purchases, which is a relatively good basis for the healthy functioning of the business and the long-term sustainability of the farm in the market [3].

The above can be applied in the following ways in the context of direct involvement of people from target groups in marketing:

Showing the customer the workings of our farm - we can create honest and believable content on our website and possibly our e-shop. We can make video tutorials, shopping guides, short spots or reportage videos directly from the farm or chat with experts who can briefly talk about the benefits of the product and the social benefit aspects of the farm.

Through this type of content, we can gradually build an image as an experienced and reliable retailer and reach a completely different spectrum of customers who respond poorly to traditional advertising formats.

If we already create content, it is advisable to adapt it for different communication platforms such as websites, eshop, Facebook, Instagram, etc. It's always good to strive for regularity and timeliness in our messaging, essentially creating a place where customers can form an opinion about our products before actually buying them.

In general, customers appreciate a superior approach, which in our case can be represented, for example, by open days on the farm, by organising various thematic events on the farm linked to the sale of our products and the presentation of the working environment and conditions of people from the target group, etc.

When communicating with customers, it is also very important to take an interest in their suggestions and to be in contact with them as actively as possible. It is always good to know the attitudes of your customers, whether positive or negative.

3 Inspiration on https://www.bizadmark.com/digital-advertising-organic-products/

The last recommendation (and probably the most difficult) is to create a feeling of exclusivity with the customer. By this we mean, first and foremost, that ideally our customer should buy the product of a social enterprise knowing that it helps beneficial employment or the operation of a farm that is also interested in the wider context of the business, and for this added value our customer is willing and motivated to buy products from us. We can achieve this through a more sophisticated form of social media communication, for example, by so-called exclusive ranges of our products, special production runs, linking with a major company of regional or supra-regional importance, and so on. Or it could also be various forms of loyalty programmes.

Indirect involvement of target groups in marketing

This way of involving target groups in marketing assumes that we can find a believable, credible and sincere so-called added value to our product, which the customer will accept and perhaps be willing to buy the product on the basis of. In principle, this may be a small thing, but it may be decisive for the customer. In our case, the added value can range from simple things such as washing the goods, drying the surplus, making jam instead of radically lowering the price of products. that you would have a hard time selling, to more complicated and complex values such as - how to accentuate the social dimension of our farm and employing people with disabilities, etc. Or in a more neutral form - offering a brochure or recipe card with the raw material, adding information about the farm, and so on.

Options for linking the product to a specific context and link to social farming include:

- placing information on the product itself (a well-known logo or information that the product was produced on a social farm);

- through a leaflet or a tag, where the social farming context is appropriately added;

  - a link on the product (e.g. a QR code) where the customer can get more information, (e.g. a link to Facebook, Instagram or the producer's website)

  - by organising various promotional events, for example at farmers' markets where the social farm product is actively promoted.

Other options

Beyond the above ways of involving people from the target groups in sales or marketing, however, we have some other options to promote the sale of our products using virtually all the tools described in the previous sections of this document. Basically, in the types of collaboration described below, we use sub-segments or tools that we add to existing third-party tools.

In other words, it means that we connect:

to existing marketing strategies of other companies with a similar focus (e.g. farms with the same or similar focus;

or marketing strategies with a wider context and supra-regional relevance (typically CS corporate and large companies)

or affiliation with different types of initiatives such as organic or organic farming.

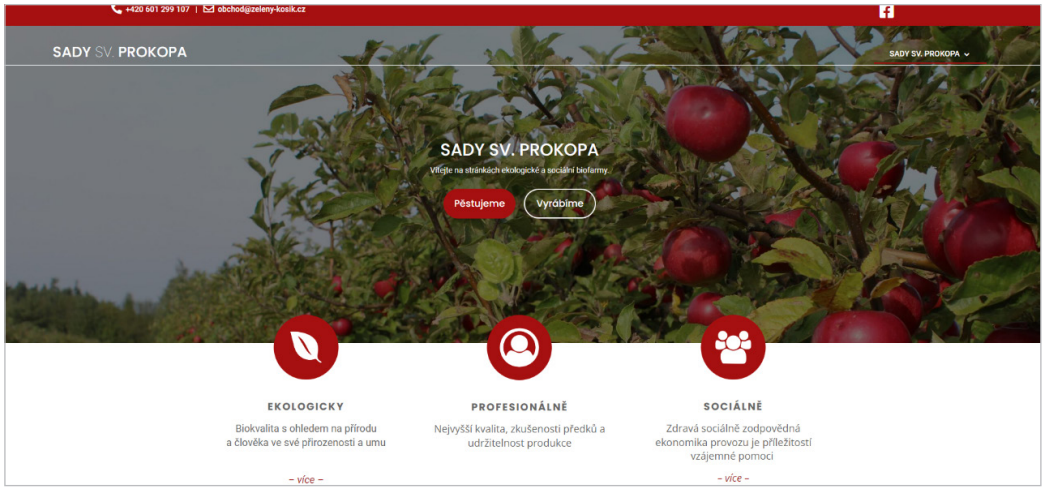
12.3.5 Specific variants of marketing in social farming

The tools proposed below are viewed through the lens of the real situation of the possibilities of enterprises in social farming and consider the limited budgets for marketing activities. The recommendations are therefore formulated without a major increase in investment in marketing activities.

Website

Websites are an essential tool for marketing communication. Organisations that do not have a website should therefore consider creating one. Not having a website or having an outdated one means ignoring customers. Businesses should pay close attention to websites as they are the calling card of their company. Customers must have a reason to go to a website, so when creating one, it would be more than appropriate to answer the question of what the purpose of their website is and whether it fulfils that purpose. A common shortcoming of websites is poor optimization. Nowadays, the search engine algorithm is changing and with it the ranking of websites. If a website is not optimized, or is optimized poorly, it becomes virtually invisible and untraceable. SEO is the methodology of creating and modifying a website in such a way that its content and form are suitable for the search engine algorithm.

Figure 29: Example of a homepage



Source: https://sady-prokopa.cz

E-Shop

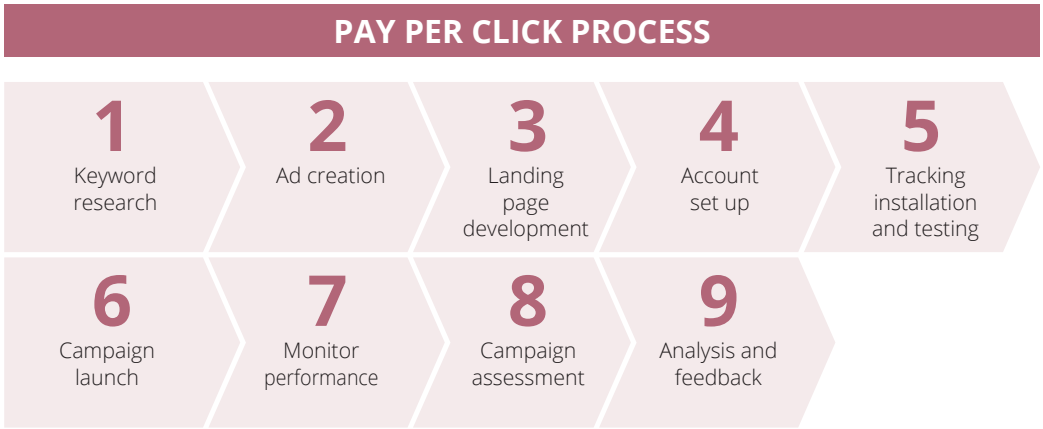
For businesses that already have an e-store, search engine optimization is important. When making the initial decision, it is a good idea to consider the potential of e-commerce for your business. Businesses should look at their e-shop from the user's point of view and make it as easy as possible for them to get to their destination. They should not use uniform product descriptions, but always speak in their own words for a particular product and communicate its added value.

Many customers crave products with a story, this is where there is great potential for social farmers who should communicate why their product is special. The conversion rate can also be improved by using an incentive to trigger or reinforce the motivation to buy. An example of such an incentive could be a time-limited discount or offering an additional product at a discount. An option to make an e-shop more visible is advertising on the Internet.

Pay per Click (PPC)

PPC advertising is a form of display advertising on the Internet that is currently used by businesses, albeit only minimally, and is one of the most well-known forms of Internet advertising. However, its effectiveness is currently declining and there is talk of 'banner blindness'. In contrast, PPC (pay-per-click) advertising, which is related to search and is only shown to people searching for similar content, is growing in importance. It is currently one of the most effective forms of marketing communication on the Internet. It is particularly suitable for businesses that are providing specific services, and these are social farming products.

Figure 30: Schematic of the PPC process



Source: Harrison Mann 2023

Content marketing

Content marketing or content marketing is one of the trends in contemporary marketing communication. This low-cost marketing strategy involves creating custom content that brings value to the customer, while at the same time promoting the product or

brand. Ideally, it should spark debate or further sharing. In the past, it used brochures and printed leaflets as communication channels, for example; today, it is mainly blogs. A blog can be a complement to a website or be placed directly on the company's website. In our case, ordinary employees could also contribute to the blog, which would certainly be interesting for readers. Content marketing also works, among other things, based on reaching customers when they search for a similar service or product on the Internet. A blog could thus also contain, for example, recipes or interesting tutorials.

Newsletter

Another communication tool worth using is the newsletter. A newsletter is basically an email with information that is not of a sales nature. Businesses can use it to renew communication with existing customers. By the nature of its content, a newsletter can remind them of their continuous activities, highlight new achievements or upcoming plans, events, etc. The content of the newsletter can also include, for example, an interesting interview with the employees or founders of the company.

Social Media

The main argument why a business should have a business profile on Facebook, Instagram, etc. is that marketers should be where the customers are. Broadly speaking, there are four basic prerequisites defined for the success of a message on social media: wit, usefulness, immediacy and personal touch. Businesses should therefore communicate mainly up-to-date information that is relevant to their fans. An example of such a post could be information about a new product that is now being offered at an introductory price, a new service or also information about a planned event. Facebook also offers great potential in terms of distributing messages to the target audience. Facebook Ads tools can be used to streamline promotion. This tool allows so-called hypertargeting, i.e. targeting users by age, demographics or interests. On a similar basis, it is also advisable to use Instagram, which is predominantly image-based.

Guerrilla marketing

Another recommendation, which is no longer relevant to the online environment, is to exploit the potential of guerrilla marketing. Guerrilla marketing is an unconventional form of marketing designed to shock and use unconventional media, but it is also feasible on a small budget. Businesses could use guerrilla marketing to draw attention to themselves at their location. An example of a simple form of guerrilla marketing, which is virtually free, could be a message or arrow on the ground outside a shop to catch the attention of passers-by.

Storytelling

The main goal of storytelling in marketing communications is to identify the customer with the brand. This form of communication is based on authenticity and emotion. In the case of social farming businesses, these principles can be put to good use. It is also important to maintain good relations with local journalists. Keep the local media in-

formed of your results and successes, and build a good image for the business. To win the favour of the local public and build awareness of your business.

12.4 REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the previous chapter, we are curious if you can answer the following questions:

1. Describe in general marketing in social farming. What are special features of marketing in social farming?
2. How to involve participants in marketing activities?
3. Which special variants of marketing in social farming do you know?

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13 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR-SHIP IN SOCIAL FARMING

Marjolein Elings

Learning outcomes

After working through this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand and describe what is a social enterprise and entrepreneurship in social farming.
- Describe the key success factors for running a social enterprise in social farming.
- Setting up a business model for a social enterprise case in social farming by using these key success factors.

Note: This chapter includes quotes and original sound from social workers, farmers and participants interviewed during the SoFarTEAM project (in 2021 and 2022). As a rule, these can be recognised by a speech bubble.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the number of social enterprises in the care farming sector has risen sharply. In the Netherlands, we have seen successful examples, but also examples of social enterprises that did not make it after a few years. We were curious to know what makes a social enterprise successful. Social enterprises are independent companies that provide a product or service and have primarily or explicitly a social enterprise.
You can think of a biscuit factory that works with people with a distance from the labour market or a shop where people with mental health challenges make gift items.
When you talk about social enterprises in green spaces, you can think of urban farms that produce food and work with vulnerable people or gardeners who maintain gardens and work with people with mental-ill health.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is by far the most important condition, but it is also an open door. As an entrepreneur, you must have entrepreneurial skills. You must enjoy building-up something and running a business, see and seize opportunities, assess risks and dare to take them, know your way around legislation and regulations and be able to deal with the business side such as drawing up a business plan and annual reports. Make sure that not everything has to be done by you as an entrepreneur. That makes the business very vulnerable. Entrepreneurship also involves delegating work to others. And make sure you have a good back-up in case you are ill or on holiday. When taking on staff, it is important to ask yourself: what do I want to do? And once you have that clear for yourself, look carefully at what qualities you need from your staff.

Another way to make your social enterprise less vulnerable is to make sure that setbacks do not have an immediate fatal impact on your business. For this, you must have the ambition, as an entrepreneur, to grow to a scale where setbacks can be absorbed.

The chapter introduces the nine success factors that came out of a study that was done by Elings, Vijn and Kruit (2017) in which they evaluated different social entrepreneurs. This study was focused on the Dutch situation and only on social enterprises in green or agricultural settings.

Key success factors for a social enterprise in social farming

13.2 KEY FACTORS FOR A GOOD RUNNING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOCIAL FARMING

A good funding mix

A good funding mix is essential for a social enterprise in care farming. Ideally, the financing of the enterprise should consist of a mix of: commercial activities, income from the provision of care and subsidies and possible sponsorship and donations.

Funding mix

Make sure you have the right legal form especially if you want to benefit from subsidies, donations and funds. In the Netherlands, for example, foundations cannot issue shares and therefore have more difficulty attracting external funding. This impedes further growth. A private limited company can attract risk capital but is less suitable for attracting donations and some subsidies.

A good mix ensures that you are less dependent on one source of income and the consequences of changing legislation and regulations with respect to different target groups. Subsidies, sponsorships, donations and crowdfunding ensure that you do not have to finance everything yourself and that can be helpful in the start-up of your social enterprise.

Banks may be reluctant to finance a social enterprise if the entrepreneur has no guaranteed sales or no collateral in the form of land and buildings.

Also, banks are sometimes less familiar with the activities that the company wants to develop. They often do not want to provide capital until others have done so because this increases their confidence in the concept. This makes the importance of grants, sponsorships, donations and crowdfunding even greater.

Diversity of products and services

A diversity of products and services allows you, as an entrepreneur, to spread risks. In the production of fruit and vegetables, for example, you have to deal with weather conditions or diseases and pests that can cause your harvest to fail or be reduced. If one crop fails, you always have other crops to fall back on. The same applies to the market: one year there is more demand for a product than another year. This also makes you, as an entrepreneur, a little less dependent on the whims of the market.

Diversity in products and services

Of course, diversity also has disadvantages. From an efficiency point of view, it seems better to specialize and be the 'best' within a certain segment. The question is whether this also applies to social entrepreneurs.

Social entrepreneurs deal with employees who often come to the company specifically to acquire skills and develop themselves. An environment with varied activities offers more opportunities for this than one where only a few activities are central. When choosing activities but also the target group, it is wise to consider the specific development goals of a certain target group. If your products and services are already fixed, adjust your target group accordingly. For example, activities with a high workload do not suit every target group. For social entrepreneurs in (urban) agriculture or green spaces, it is important to offer work for the target group all year round. Especially in agriculture you see that the peak of activities is during the sowing (spring) and harvesting (autumn) period. In the summer, there is room for other activities besides keeping the crops clean. The greatest challenge lies in the winter period. In addition to preparing for a new growing season, without a greenhouse other activities are needed to provide sufficient work for the employees.

In addition to activities and thus income from food production, activities and income from direct sales, catering or other products or services can also make an important contribution to the financial result of the social enterprise. For example, according to Hans Pijls, entrepreneur of Food for Good, catering is potentially a more lucrative venture than a city garden. He indicates that urban agriculture with only vegetable production can never be commercially viable, at least not in the Netherlands. The land is too expensive, the acreage too small.

Farm shop of a social farm

Source: Marjolein Elings

Different target groups

Target groups

A social enterprise responds to government policy and (often) receives money from the government. This makes the government even more important to a social enterprise than it is to an 'ordinary' enterprise. Legislation and regulations are not static but are subject to change. When making a business plan and the continuity of the social enterprise, take into account changing laws and regulations. Especially in the health care sector, legislation and regulations are dynamic.

A spread in target groups makes you as a social entrepreneur less vulnerable to changes in health care. In recent years in the Netherlands, budgets have been transferred from long-term care to municipalities. A social enterprise that has worked with the target group of people with a distance from the labour market in recent years has seen its income from care fall sharply.

Connecting governments, businesses and citizens to your social enterprise

Connection with government, businesses and citizens

Especially when starting a social enterprise, the award factor is important. For example, the landowner must grant you the location and it is desirable if the municipality is generous in allowing activities that are not initially allowed, such as the sale of products and catering. For the award factor, it is important that you are able to bind authorities to you. Bring your initiative to the attention of officials, politicians and administrators and connect them with it. Make the impact of your enterprise visible. In addition, ask how your initiative fits in with their goals, problems or challenges and what you can do to help them achieve these. Include them in your own challenges and questions, and do not hesitate to ask for advice. Provide regular feedback and invite them to show exactly what you do. The same applies to companies and citizens. Perhaps there are companies that want to sponsor in money or in kind. Citizens who are sympathetic to the objectives of the social enterprise may be willing to provide support. For example, by contributing knowledge, such as legal expertise, or by forming a club of 100 in which citizens can support the social enterprise with money and goods. You can think of raising money for a greenhouse, fruit trees and a special bicycle that can be purchased. Another way citizens can co-finance your social enterprise is by crowdfunding.

Location

Various studies and experiences of social entrepreneurs, especially in urban agriculture, show that finding the right location is very important. These include: suitable piece of land where you can grow products. Land that you prefer to manage yourself or that you can lease for a longer period of time so that you can invest.

If you also want to expand your business with other services such as direct sales, catering, education or recreation, it is also important that you are in the right place. A place where people know how to find you, where there is demand for the products or services you want to offer.

When it comes to logistics, the distribution of your products, it is also good to think about the choice of your location. This also applies to accessibility for the target group. Experience in social farming in the Netherlands shows that if participants are dependent on public transport or transport from the care institution, distance can sometimes be a barrier. If your business is located far from cities or villages, it is often a logistical puzzle to get all the participants to your farm.

Understanding the Health Care sector

Understanding health care sector

In the interviews with successful social entrepreneurs, they said they were struck by how often social entrepreneurs were unaware of the social map in their region or how the care and welfare sector work. In order for your social enterprise to succeed, it is crucial to know how healthcare is organized and how the sector is financed.

Expertise

Expertise

Expertise is important: you know how to produce your products. You are the one with overview and can be a role model for the employees and participants. To survive as a company, you must also be able to deliver a high-quality product or service. This is not possible without understanding the business. The same applies to working with people. Of course, you have to have an affinity with them.

The question is whether, as a social entrepreneur working with various target groups, you need to have completed an education in health care or social work. Opinions differ on this. Research into the working elements of care farms shows that participants, parents, care takers and professionals involved appreciate the non-medical or therapeutic setting and come to the care farm for this. Extra care guidance can be arranged through an institution or there is a staff member with a diploma in care.

Of course, as an entrepreneur, you cannot know everything. So get coaching and/or find good advisors. If the company starts to grow, other competencies are often needed. Try to get these competences on board either by education or employing the right personnel.

Participant plants a back-friendly raised vegetable bed

Source: Marjolein Elings

Passion and perseverance

Passion

Perseverance

It sounds like an open door but the last key success factor is having passion for your products and working with the target group.

The stories of social entrepreneurs show that even when starting a social enterprise, it is always difficult to begin. The first few years of your business will require a lot of perseverance. The entrepreneurs indicate that the balance between hours worked and what you achieve in starting your business leans towards the former. Be aware of this when you start your business. But to end in a positive way: the road and process leads that you develop yourself as an entrepreneur and will get more insight into a good running business.

13.3 CASE STUDY

Below is a case study of Sonja, who wants to take over her parents' business and convert her conventional from to a social farm. In answering the questions Sonja might ask herself, you will be using the learning from this module to imagine how to be a social entrepreneur and successfully run a social farm.

Sonja is living with her husband and 2 young children. She is thinking of taking over her parents' farm and converting this conventional farm to a social farm in the future. Both Sonja and her husband now have a job outside the farm. The farm now consist of a large arable farm focused on 3 crops: sugar beet, potatoes, and onions. If Sonja wants to run her social farm, what questions should Sonja ask herself to come to a good decision? Below are some questions Sonja might ask herself:

1. Which target group would I like to work with?
2. Does working with vulnerable people suit the farm as it is designed today?
3. What activities or services are needed in the area (demand-side)?
4. If I will run a social farm how do I make sure I keep private and work separately and in balance?
5. What activities can I offer people here on my farm?
6. Can people easily reach the farm (logistics)?
7. What kind of person am I? Does entrepreneurship suit me? Which target group would suit me best?
8. How can I make my enterprise economically sound? How can I finance my social farm?
9. What does the social map in the area look like?

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