

SoEngage - Engaging farmers in social farming Project N°: 2018-1-UK01-KA202-047975 Co-funded by  
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Care Farming  
National Report

# POLAND



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## 1. Farming overview

One of the challenges for contemporary Poland is the unfavorable demographic trend which includes a significant increase in the number of older people in society. Poland is the fastest ageing country in the European Union (Report European Commission, 2017). The ageing society is a problem that is increasingly being undertaken by many researchers, e.g. Sempik, J. et al. (2010), Press. UK. et al. (2009), Hassinka J. et al. (2014), Balińska A. and Wojcieszak M. (2017), Kalinowski S., Kozera-Kowalska M. (2017, Król (2017) stressed that the elderly are untapped human capital. Their activation and presentation of interesting and attractive proposals for self-realization are important. It is also necessary to design specific social security models for rural areas for this group of people. Welfare farms may be an answer to this aspect and are created in the area of multifunctional agriculture; the form of such management is part of social farming due to the specificity of activity (Wojcieszak, 2018). Social farming, also known as green care or farming for health is an innovative approach integrating social services into the trend of multifunctional agriculture. Social farming faces a wide range of problems of contemporary civilization and responds to the social challenges implicated by social stratification, ageing, development of civilization-related diseases, including mental disorders and addictions, increasing pathologies, social dysfunctions and problems on the labor market. Farms, especially small with their unique attitudes, technical potential and usually having free social capital gain a new chance to fulfil functions complementing global educational, social or health care systems. There is a specified potential for social farming concerning the demography situation and actual social care system, agricultural sector and trends in rural entrepreneurship development in Poland (Kmita-Dziasek, 2017). "More and more often, social agriculture is provided as one of the alternatives to classical agriculture, especially in European Union countries. The interest in such activity is the result of growing awareness and understanding of the role of agriculture and rural resources. According to the forecasts of the Central Statistical Office (2018), the population of Poland will be only 37.9 million in 2020, and only 36 million people in 2035. The information contained in numerous statistical studies indicates that in addition to the systematic decline in the population in Poland, there is also progressive ageing of the population. In the face of these changes, it was noticed that rural areas have enormous

potential that can be used and which the elderly, single people, children and the youth can take advantage of. farmers wanting to obtain non-agricultural income undertake entrepreneurial activities. One of such enterprises is establishing welfare farms. The main reasons for the development of care services provided on the basis of farms in rural and suburban areas may be the demand for care services and the search for new sources of income by farms. At the same time, it should be noted that the emergence of care farms in rural areas affect two aspects, i.e. the problem of an ageing population and multifunctional rural development (Wojcieszak, 2018).

## 2. National policy in the field of social farming

In Poland, the first welfare farms were created as part of the project entitled “*Zielona opieka — gospodarstwa opiekuńcze w woj. kujawsko-pomorskim*” (Green care: welfare farms in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship). The project is currently being implemented by public institutions, i.e. *Kujawsko-Pomorski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Minikowie* (Kuyavian-Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Center in Minikowo) in partnership with *Bory Tucholskie*, the Local Action Group, as part of the Regional Operational Program of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship for the years 2014–2020. As part of the project, fifteen welfare farms were created in five districts: Świecie, Mogilno, Brodnica, Wąbrzeźno and Tuchola. These welfare farms provide care for 156 people (as at the end of 2018). The project involves developing care in small groups; currently, they are 5-person groups. Home care is provided to dependent persons by a qualified carer and volunteer, from Monday to Friday, 8 hours a day. Farms will provide: basic care, organizing the time of the persons under care, minimum one hot meal and access to drinks and small meals, as well as access to newspapers and books (Wojcieszak, 2018). Implementation of the idea of care farms in Poland is a big challenge, which is connected with the need to search for appropriate legal and organizational forms for this type of entities, the need to determine the sources of their financing and the manner of operation. Therefore, the National Rural Network (KSOW) is currently implementing the project "Care farms - development of social services in rural areas", which is implemented by the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Kraków Branch. As part of the project, 16 voivodship seminars were organised, during which stakeholders of the process of creating care farms could see what conditions and criteria should be met in order to set up such an

institution. The next project implemented in Poland is Care in a homestead - care farms in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship. The project is implemented by the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo as part of the Regional Operational Programme of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship for 2014-2020. As part of the project, care farms will be set up in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, providing day care for dependent persons (in total they will provide 75 places). The carers and the volunteers supporting them will have appropriate qualifications (a course for 25 people is provided within the project). In the preparation and implementation of care activities, they will be supported by advisers, which will enable them to maintain an appropriate standard of service and to expand and diversify their offer. Farm operations will start in February 2019 and last until August 2020. The charges will be able to use them 5 days a week, 8 hours a day, in groups of 4-8 people, each for a period of 6 months (in total 225 people will use the care and activation services). They will be provided with care, meals, an organised way of spending time, activities, moreover, staying in a group will allow them to continue to participate in the life of the local community and to establish and maintain new contacts. In addition to regular visits by a psychologist, if necessary, they will be provided with legal advice, as well as the opportunity to participate in trips, e.g. to a cinema, museum, other farms. There will also be a Senior Citizenship - an interdisciplinary fitness and memory competition.

### **3. Review of health and social protection policies and practices**

Social policy is the activity of the state and other entities aimed at supporting citizens in meeting their various needs. Society policy is a wider concept than social policy, which consists of providing citizens with legal and financial guarantees in connection with the occurrence of the so-called typical social risks. The scope of the subject is much richer. Society policy entities, ie social institutions (formal and informal) and social groups that contribute to shaping and implementing social policy, in Poland are divided into three sectors. The first sector consists of public entities, programming and implementing a state policy, financed from public funds. The second is the market sector. It consists mainly of entities operating in a variety of legal forms, operating on a commercial basis (for profit), participating in the process of satisfying the needs of society, sometimes obtaining public funds. In turn, the last sector, also known as non-governmental or civic, create very diverse

entities - functioning in various legal forms, pursuing diverse goals, covering areas of very different sizes and satisfying the needs and interests of very different communities. A characteristic feature of these entities is non-profit activity, voluntary membership and formal independence from public authorities. In Poland, the idea of welfare farms is very young, however, the Polish authorities show and implement programs conducive to securing the elderly. According to the Act on social assistance, the Polish authorities implement a policy of providing care services. There are several programs and types of services provided under the Act that can be distinguished. The first type of services provided is 'services provided in flats'. This measure is based on the fact that people living in private apartments and having difficulties with self-catering to their needs can obtain - under the Social Assistance Act - assistance in the form of care services and specialist care services. In Poland, according to legal regulations, these services include hygienic care, assistance in satisfying everyday life needs and ensuring contact of the person with the environment. Specialized care services are mainly provided to people with special health needs due to their health and disability. There are the following types: learning and developing the skills necessary for independent living, providing support for the healing process or rehabilitation. Care services are provided by carers employed by the entity performing this task. The Act does not provide clear information on the age at which people are to be provided with care services. The criterion for granting them is dependence (the need to get help from other people) and the lack of possibility to get help from the family. Care services are benefits independent of income (the income depends on the number of fees paid by the ward). Temporary and daily stay institutions are further public centers guaranteeing the provision of care services. These institutions include daily help houses, multifunctional social service centers, Daytime Homes and Clubs "WIGOR / Senior +". The first type, which is the day social welfare homes in Poland, are support centers in the social welfare system, which are intended primarily for the elderly. Their running belongs to the tasks of the commune, ie to the smallest territorial unit in Poland. According to the data of the Central Statistical Office in Poland, in 2013 there were 226 daytime help houses across the country (including 192 run by the local government and 34 run by other entities), which means that one such institution was located in 11 communes. Over 19,000 people benefited from this type of facilities, of which 90% were people using outlets run by municipalities. Daily help houses employed nearly 2,000 in 2013. What is important, according to the law, for daytime help houses, there were no standards for

furnishing rooms, employment or service standards. Decisions on the criteria for admission to the DDP and the rules of payment for the use of their services are taken by the commune self-government bodies. The stay in DDP lasts 8 hours - on weekdays. The range of services provided is very diverse. Houses implementing the poorest program are limited to providing 2 meals a day, sharing press, watching TV and possibly occupational therapy classes (crocheting, drawing). Houses with an extensive program offer: physical rehabilitation, access to the library meals, access to press and television, readings, joint ventures to cultural events, trips, a rich program of occupational therapy. Another type of facility is multi-functional centers of social services. On the basis of the provisions on social assistance in Poland, there are only a few such centers whose recipients of services are the elderly. The offer of centers includes various types of services, i.e. from educational and cultural services, rehabilitation services, occupational therapy, support services, hairdressing, laundry, bathing through legal counseling or interest circles. The third type of squares as part of the daily stay are Day Houses and Clubs "WIGOR / Senior +". The idea of this program is that the program provides for the possibility of creating local government units of two types of daytime outlets for the elderly: the Daily House or Club. A characteristic feature of these institutions is that they have a different range of services offered. Financial support from the state budget under the program is to hit in particular "local government units characterized by low income or the high percentage of seniors in the total population and lack of social assistance infrastructure for the provision of care services and specialist care services for older people outside their place of residence. In Poland, apart from the institutions of daily residence in Poland, one can also distinguish permanent residence centers for the elderly. This type of institution includes: social welfare homes, family homes, long-term care institutions in the health care system and protected and assisted housing. In Poland, social welfare homes (abbreviated as DPS), are divided into 7 basic types, i.e. for chronically ill people, for elderly people, for adults with intellectual disabilities, for chronically mentally ill people, for physically handicapped people for children and adolescents. intellectually disabled and for people addicted to alcohol. DPS may be run by churches, local government units, religious associations, foundations and associations as well as other legal entities and natural persons. Business activity in the field is to provide round-the-clock care for people with disabilities, chronically ill or elderly. In turn, family help houses (in short RDP) are a relatively new idea and a poorly developed form of a stationary institution for the elderly. There may be between three and eight people in the

facility. In Poland, RDS is divided into two types: for people who need support due to their age (home for the elderly) and for people who need support because of disability. Long-term care institutions in the health care system are mainly stationary in Poland. Its main beneficiaries are the elderly. They operate not only as social welfare institutions but also in the health care system. These facilities include nursing and care facilities as well as care and treatment centers. In both cases, these facilities may have a general or psychiatric profile. They provide stationary and non-hospital health benefits. They consist in the care and rehabilitation of patients who do not require hospitalization, provide them with medicines and medical devices, whereabouts and food, health education of patients and their families and prepare patients for self-care and self-care at home. A protected apartment is classified as non-monetary social assistance services. The clients residing in it receive help from the specialists to allow them to maintain their independence or to prepare for independent living. A sheltered apartment can be maintained by each social assistance organizational unit or public benefit organization. A stay in this type of apartment can be granted to a person who, due to age, difficult life situation, disability or illness, needs support in functioning in everyday life, but does not require 24-hour care in the scope provided by the unit.

In Poland there are many different forms of social support for disabled people, older ones in their place of residence. The variety of practiced forms of support is significant, but not sufficient. A good situation in terms of "saturation" of the local environment with the institutions of environmental support for the elderly is in cities. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of such facilities and care in rural areas. In general, the scale of environmental support in the countryside is not satisfactory. Most older people remain without specialist care. The state of social infrastructure in the countryside, which is used to provide support services and organize activities of older people, is unsatisfactory. What is important is the lack of specialized staff to work with older people. Therefore, an important program that operates on the territory of Poland is "Opieka 75+" is being implemented from January 2018. The program has been launched for people aged 75 and over. Its purpose is to increase access to care services, including specialist ones. Under the program, municipalities providing care services alone and with a maximum number of 60,000 residents can benefit from co-financing for the provision of such services. By the end of September 2018, 384 municipalities joined the program, over 2.2 thousand municipalities under the program. the most dignified age of seniors.



Source: <https://www.kujawsko-pomorskie.pl/informacje-prasowe/32170-region-przyjazny-seniorom>, dostęp 22.03.2019 r.

The second project implemented in the countryside is "Active and healthy senior farmer", which is implemented by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund in the whole of Poland. His idea is to develop a comprehensive system of care and rehabilitation of elderly people from rural areas. It is directed to elderly people from rural areas covered by the system of agricultural social insurance. The project is part of the "Healthier Society" strategic project, included in the Human and Social Capital area in the Strategy for Responsible Development (Wojcieszak, 2018). In response to the demand for care services, another project was created titled "" Care in the homestead - nursing homes in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship ". Currently, the charges are being recruited for the aforementioned project.

## **B. Social Farming participants overview/ Przegląd uczestników gospodarstw społecznych**

Care homes can provide services for very different groups requiring support. The experience of Western countries indicates that therapy carried out on farms can have a positive impact, among others for: the elderly, requiring care, therapy, rehabilitation, integration activities due to age, people with disabilities, with various types of disabilities, eg related to mobility difficulties, people with mental illness, people struggling with addictions, people requiring social reintegration, e.g. due to leaving the prison, long-term unemployment. In Poland, care facilities are the main recipients of these services are the elderly.

## **C. Number of farms , type of farms and profile of farmers delivering Social Farming**

The challenge of today is the issue of care and support for dependent people due to their age, disability and illness. There is a growing need to support care for dependents and a wide range of environmental services (care and assistance), as well as support for families and real caregivers in their care and educational role. These activities should be directed primarily at activities related to social integration. On the one hand, it is important to provide care, therapeutic or educational support to people in need of special support (eg. disabled people), and secondly, to relieve and enable professional activation of dependent people currently burdened with caring responsibilities for dependent persons (children, adults with disabilities,

parents) . An important role in this regard is the day care facilities that can be successfully created also on the basis of agricultural holdings. According to European experience care farms could provide a various care services for the wide range of target groups: mentally disabled people (Król, 2018).

There are currently 15 care farms in Poland that are concentrated in the voivodship Kujawsko-Pomorskie. Each nursing home is characterized by properly adapted technical infrastructure to ensure the safety of the elderly. Farms have kitchen gardens with diversified vegetation, and they have often created unique sensory paths, places for practicing physical activity, and provide additional activities to activate older people. Interestingly, seniors very willingly use additional services provided on farms, eg herbal workshops, aromatherapy, etc. The beneficiaries use for 5 days a week, 8 hours a day, in groups of 4-8 people, each for a period of 6 months (in total, care services - 225 people will benefit). In addition, for the seniors, in addition to providing care, meals are prepared, an organized way of spending time, classes. An important aspect is also that being in the group will allow them to continue to participate in the life of the local community and to establish and cultivate new contacts. In addition to regular visits of a psychologist, if necessary, seniors are provided with legal advice, as well as the opportunity to participate in trips, for example, to the cinema, museum, other farm.

**FIGURE 1.** Care farm in project *Green care*: welfare farms in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship



### Description of the scope of services

On farms day care is provided Monday to Friday, from 8.00 to 16.00. There is always a large garden and meadow surrounded by farms with rich and varied vegetation, as well as sensory paths created. Within the farms, the residents are provided with various activities according to their preferences, expectations and possibilities. Houses surrounded by gardens enable comfortable rest. The farms are located in a quiet environment, in the vicinity of forests and meadows, which is conducive to the organization of workshops and outdoor activities. Often next to the houses there is a cowshed where cows, pigs, calves, hens, ducks, geese and rabbits are kept. Dogs and cats also keep their guests' associations. A wide range of farms allows you to run a number of different workshops, e.g. from field to table - in spring, preparing and sowing flowers, vegetables and herbs on the vegetables. Common weeding, watering, care. In summer harvesting and joint processing of harvested vegetables and fruit from orchards. Another proposal are florist workshops. The group is based on materials growing on the farm. Another proposal is culinary workshops or handicraft workshops: embroidery, ribbon embroidery, decoupage, macramé braids, flowers from Italian tissue paper, wickerwork or making baskets from rattan, improve manual skills and motivate to act. An important aspect is also the provision of outdoor activities for seniors. The attractive location of the farms encourages long walks, and what is more efficient, the charges can take part in exercises with elements of fitness and zumba.

### Works performed by seniors



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## **5. Training in Social Farming/related to Social Farming available for farmers**

In Poland, the institution under the name Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów, Branch in Krakow in 2018, implemented a project titled: "A nurturing farm in the development of rural areas - a study trip". The aim of this project was to organize a five-day study trip to the Netherlands and Germany. In addition, it was noted that the aim of the project is to increase the participation of stakeholders in the implementation of the idea of a welfare farm in rural areas through the participation of 20 people in a study trip to selected care homes in rural areas in Germany and the Netherlands in the third quarter of 2018 and dissemination of information on the effects of the trip among people implementing rural development initiatives. In addition, the same institution or Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów Branch in Krakow regularly organizes online trainings. "Welfare farms - a new challenge for rural areas" based on the e-learning platform and thematic training materials made available on the platform to logged-in participants only. In the case of training activities in the care farms, it should be pointed out that within the given farm, in order to ensure the safety of seniors, volunteers are also supported by qualified people who have completed the course of the carer of the elderly and disabled person, interpersonal communication. An important aspect is also the fact that within these farms there are people whose task is to provide appropriate medical requirements. All the time, however, there is still a lack of comprehensive preparation of the farm owner and people who have to work with him to run such facilities. Therefore, it seems reasonable to build an e-learning platform, which will be able to focus people who want to take such an initiative on their farms. In addition, it should be emphasized that people wishing to farm should complete basic courses.

## 6. Future for Social Farming

Green care is a really attractive offer both for seniors, for whom the countryside is a dream place, as well as for farm owners, an example of a good, innovative solution in the area of senior policy. Care farms are a new concept, but successfully implemented already in many European countries and more and more often in Poland. The experience of other countries and studies of Polish experts indicate that the development of social services in rural areas can be an effective way to overcome many negative social and economic phenomena, such as, among others, the following:

- Ageing of the society,
- Insufficient number of care facilities for the elderly,
- High costs of providing care for the elderly and dependent persons,
- Occupational deactivation of carers of the elderly and dependent persons,
- Loneliness of the elderly, connected, among other things, with the emigration of the closest family members,
- Depopulation of rural areas,
- The need to diversify incomes, especially in small farms,
- Unused labour force on agricultural holdings,

The concept of development of welfare farms in Poland assumes close cooperation between farmers, agricultural advisors, non-governmental organisations, state administration and local government units. Creation of a network of social services, the essential part of which will be care farms, will be impossible without cooperation with Local Governments also due to available sources of financing. Therefore, it is crucial to reach all actors in the process with the developed concept of development of care farms and with the knowledge about the possibilities of its implementation. From data of the Central Statistical Office as far as the demographic situation in Poland is concerned, it is clear that the society is ageing. In response to these unfavourable demographic changes, it has been noted that rural areas have the potential to provide care for the elderly. The idea of creating care farms in Poland has recently been introduced in rural areas. It is a new concept, but it is quite important for both caterers and people who want to take advantage of care services. Foreign literature and EU reports

stress the importance of this project as an innovative activity. It can also be said that care farms are an interesting and important agritourism product in terms of providing care. Creation and maintenance of new jobs in rural areas, creation of new employment opportunities for people at a disadvantage on the labour market in rural areas, are just some of the advantages of creating such jobs in rural areas (Wojcieszak, 2018, Kimita-Dziasek 2017).

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