



# Social entrepreneurship as a driver of rural development

**Anastasia Costantini, Diesis Network**

**Urszula Budzich-Tabor and Patricia Martínez Sáez, Rural Pact Support Office**

RPSO Good Practice Webinar "Fostering social entrepreneurship in rural areas through local action"

11 May 2023

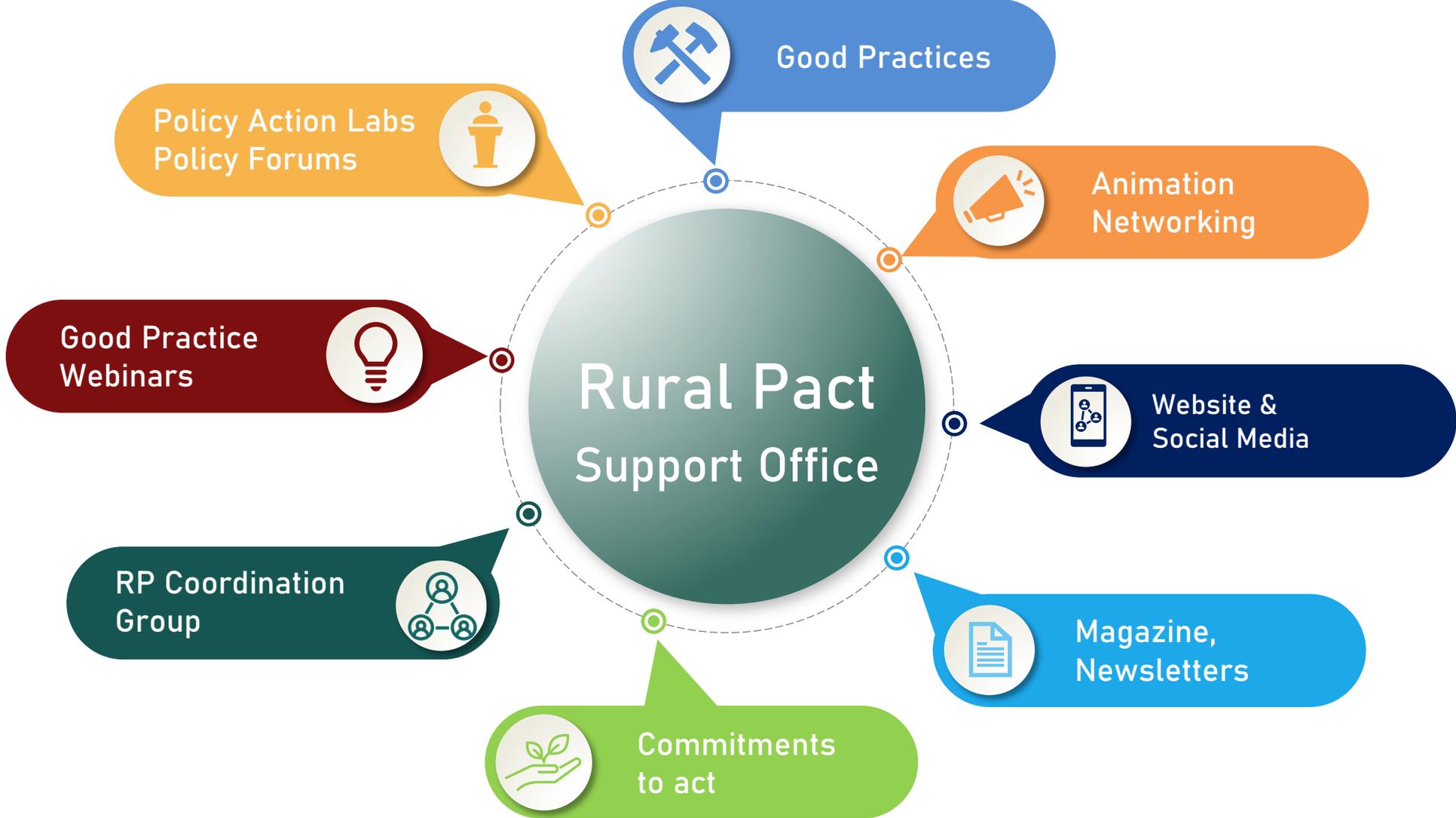


#RuralPact



Funded by  
the European Union

# Our tasks



# Link to social entrepreneurship



## LONG-TERM VISION FOR RURAL AREAS

**10 SHARED GOALS FOR 2040**

**EU Rural Action Plan**

**9 Flagship initiatives**

**6 Horizontal actions**

- 1. Rural Pact**
2. Rural Observatory
3. Rural Proofing
4. EU toolkit for funding
5. Improved statistics
6. Functional areas



# Link to social entrepreneurship



## 9 Flagship initiatives

1. Rural revitalisation platform
2. Research and innovation for rural communities
3. Sustainable multimodal mobility best practices for rural areas
4. Rural digital futures
5. Support rural municipalities in energy transition and fighting climate change
6. Climate action in peatland through carbon farming
7. EU mission : a soil deal for Europe
8. Social resilience and women in rural areas
9. **Entrepreneurship and social economy in rural areas**



# For a broad understanding of the concepts

## Social economy:

- ▶ People, social & environmental interests before profit
- ▶ Reinvestment of surplus to benefit members/users
- ▶ Democratic/participatory governance

Typical forms: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations and foundations

- ▶ **Social enterprise** is a specific form of social economy
- ▶ It can have a precise definition in some national legislations
- ▶ **Social entrepreneurship** – a process of developing ideas, organisations & initiatives to address social or environmental issues
- ▶ However...

# ...the essential for our meeting:



# Rural areas – a key space for social economy and enterprises



- ▶ Loss of jobs, markets and incomes
- ▶ Population decline
- ▶ Various forms of exclusion (social, educational, cultural, digital...)



BUT ALSO

- ▶ Availability of human and natural resources
- ▶ Often more entrepreneurial attitudes
- ▶ Social capital and networking



# Fostering social entrepreneurship through local action



- ▶ **Adapting the solution to the local context**
  - finding the right type of organisation & governance to respond to local needs, using local knowledge and assets...
- ▶ **Involving key local actors**
  - Identifying people and organisations with the necessary skills, mobilising critical mass of community support...
- ▶ **Ensuring long-term sustainability**
  - Coherent vision, adaptability, attracting different funding sources...

# Fostering social entrepreneurship through local action



## ▶ **Adapting the solution to the local context**

- finding the right type of organisation & governance to respond to local needs, using local knowledge and assets...

## ▶ **Involving key local actors**

- Identifying people and organisations with the necessary skills and resources, and mobilising critical mass of community support...

## ▶ **Ensuring long-term sustainability**

- Coherent vision, adaptability, attracting different funding sources...

**CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:**  
Skills and capacity building  
Innovation  
Funding sources



**Costantini A. Pastorelli L ( 2021) Empowering rural communities through social and solidarity economy: observations and case studies**

[https://www.diesis.coop/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Ciriec\\_Paper\\_Empower-Rural-Community\\_AC\\_Final\\_edited0701-1.pdf](https://www.diesis.coop/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Ciriec_Paper_Empower-Rural-Community_AC_Final_edited0701-1.pdf)

Costantini A. Sebillio A (2023) THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ON WOMEN in rural areas (June 2023)

# What can social entrepreneurship do for rural communities?

- **unlocking of the potential of rural areas** - not only jobs, but also participation and **a sense of community and social cohesion.**

- building up **ecosystems for engaging all stakeholders** thus accelerating the empowerment of rural communities.

- based on **participatory governance, SEEs are appropriate for revitalising rural areas' economic situation.**

## Provide social services and create jobs for disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

- **WISE** (Work Integration Social Enterprises), effective in promoting marginalised groups' development and social inclusion.
- Example: **Social farming** (socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable agricultural production combined with sociosanitary and socio-occupational services)
- Building social cohesion, responding to:
  - ageing population,
  - changing family structures,
  - revaluation of rural life,
  - high influx of migrants
  - increase of people with chronic diseases.

## Promote the development of emerging and diversified rural economies.

- **Arts and cultural activities:** SEE can increase confidence and empowerment of people, as well as aiding social cohesion, education and personal development.
- New opportunities to improve local development and **mitigate youngsters' emigration.**
- Can improve the interconnection between rural and urban areas, giving opportunities to the urban population, especially among youth, **to rediscover the potential of living new rurality.**

# Italian "community cooperatives" – a model to foster local development of depopulated areas

- Democratic and solidarity-based organisations that work in the community's interest.
- Offer services and products responding to the community's specific needs.
- Strengthen local and regional development and improve the quality of life.
- Not speculative economic actors => generate more sustainable added value. Distribute community resources more equitably
- They are innovative, enable new eco-social developments.
- They use the resources of citizens that are already available and partly unused.

## Social enterprises can also

- Develop green, inclusive business models, creating new job opportunities especially for young people.
- Build strong, mutually supportive linkages between rural and urban areas, enhance collaboration, interconnection and mutual support.
- Overcome the issue of financial sustainability through digitalisation (e-shop, collaborative platforms, ...)



# THANK YOU

**Rural Pact Community – Join us**  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/RuralPact>



<https://rural-vision.europa.eu/>

 **Funded by  
the European Union**

