

## FARCURA NEWSLETTER No. 2

### Project update

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter of our Erasmus + project *Fostering Inclusion through Social Farming*. Over the past year and a half our project partnership, comprised of educational and third sector organisations from Slovenia, Belgium, Germany, Portugal and Ireland have been working together to create an introductory training course in social farming.

Social Farming is the therapeutic use of farming landscapes and practices on part or all of a working farm in order to provide health, social, educational and/or vocational supports to people at risk of social exclusion.

Over the past number of years the practice has grown more widespread and there is a greater recognition of the effectiveness of social farming as a therapeutic experience. Our work in FARCURA is focused on increasing awareness and knowledge of social farming and to provide encouragement to those wishing to get involved - be they farmers, service providers or participants.

To this end we have taken an in-depth look at the practice of social farming in Ireland, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. We have developed a report on the state of social farming in each of our countries – where we find that it is at different stages of development. We developed 14 case studies of unique social farm projects (more on this below) and we are currently working on our social farming training course – which will be freely available on our website later this summer.

We are very thankful that we have been able to continue our work despite the pandemic. We were due to have project meetings in Germany and Portugal over the last year, but instead had to carry out this work virtually. It was particularly disappointing, that we didn't get to visit the Korenika Social Farm in Slovenia in March for our schedule **Local Teaching and Training Activity** However this virtual event was so well presented by our Slovenian partners Mosaic ,that it almost seemed that we were there. You can read more about this and watch a video below.

## Social Farming Case Studies

Our team has visited social farms in each of the partner countries, spoken with the participants, the owners, and the service providers and created 14 case studies of different social farms, 4 from Slovenia, 2 from Portugal, 4 from Germany and 4 from Ireland. The farms cater for a range of different participants each of which has been isolated from society for one reason or other. The case studies give us a real insight into the daily activity and ethos of social farming. They also provide us with inspiration, as we see how the founders, the participants and the service providers work together to overcome obstacles and develop innovative uses of the farm environment as a venue for therapy.

You can read the case studies for each country on the [farcura.eu](http://farcura.eu) website.

### Check out Our Video!!

To get a sense of what FARCURA is all about check out this short video on our home page at [farcura.eu](http://farcura.eu)

## Virtual Training Event – Slovenia



**The Korenika Social Farm**

At the end of March we held a three day training and networking event, for our project partners and other invited social farming stakeholders. It was hosted by our Slovenian partners Mosaic and was meant to be held at their magnificent social farm Korenika, in the beautiful Pomurje region in north eastern Slovenia but, unfortunately the pandemic

prevented us from traveling to meet in person. Instead Goran, Lili and the team at Korenika put in a tremendous effort to give us a richly interactive experience – providing all the attendees with lots of inspiring stories and perspectives to ponder.

The highlight of day one of the event was a video documentary of Korenika farm that gave us a virtual tour of the facility and an opportunity to meet and hear the stories of many of its staff and social farm participants. **You can take a virtual walk around the farm through this short video** (<https://youtu.be/LdISw30 urM>).

On day two we got to hear presentations about social farms in practice from across the partnership countries. Martin Nobleman from HNEE, Johannes from Hof Und Leben, Dermot from LIT and Joe from SKDP all presented case studies from the Farcura project. This provided us with an insight into the different inspirations behind social farms, how they differ widely in approach and also how they experience different challenges and opportunities as they develop. We heard also from Sabina Sajher, the founder of Eco Garden Beltinci – Slovenian, a social farming project that is deeply embedded in the local community. Jasmin Kuvec from the Local Action Group Goricko, spoke on the concept of smart villages and the day was closed by Bernard Gorsak, whose thought-provoking presentation reminded us of how spirituality can be enhanced through social care and care of the environment.

The last day of the event was dedicated to a group review of the Farcura training course. The draft course has benefited greatly from the input of our invited stakeholders and we are now preparing a second draft in advance of a pilot testing exercise in Germany, Slovenia, Portugal and Ireland.



## Pilot Tests for Farcura training course

We are currently in the development phase of our short training course which aims to provide, service providers, farmers and other potential stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of the practice. It is based on the work of the [Farcura project](#), co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union and involving the input of partners from Ireland, Germany, Slovenia, Portugal and Belgium.

As part of the development of the course we are running a pilot version to test its quality and are seeking the help of people who might be interested in getting involved in social farming, to evaluate the course and provide suggestions for improvement. The course will be available online and will take approximately 2 to 3 hours to complete.

## Conferences

We will be holding conferences in Slovenia, Germany, Portugal, Belgium and Ireland. No dates have been set yet as we hope to hold them when it is possible to have people attend.

Keep an eye on our website and social media platforms for information on our conferences.

## Social Media

Please follow the FARCURA project on Facebook and Twitter for updates