



The Comparative Analysis on the Socio-Economic Context of the Rural Regions and Local Empowerment Networks in the Project SEMPRE (GoA 4.1)

170418

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Acronyms

BSR	Baltic Sea Region
DE	Germany
DI	De-institutionalization
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
FHS	Folk High School
FI	Finland
GoA	Group of Activities
ICT	information and communication technologies
LEN	Local Empowerment Network
LEO	Local Employment Office
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
NEET	Not in education, employment or training youth
PL	Poland
PP	Project Partner
PPS	Purchasing Power Standards
RCG	Regional Coordination Group
SE	Sweden
SEA	State Employment Agency
SFI	Swedish for immigrants
SSDM	Social service department manager
SSOM	Social service organization's manager
SSPO	Social service provision organization
VUoAS	Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences
WM	Welfare Ministry
WP	Work Package



Categories of the end-users of the local empowerment networks in the project SEMPRES

(definitions of the end-users are used in the same form as they have been given by the respondents)

Disadvantaged youth (aged 15-29) in rural areas: lonely parents, NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, young persons with intellectual disabilities, mental and social behavioral problems –Vidzeme, LV

Ex-prisoners and families with children – Lõuna-Eesti, EE

Families with children and elderly – East-Virumaa + Järva , EE

Long-term unemployed migrants – Kokkola and Pietersaari, FI

Long-term unemployed people and their families –Plön, DE

Migrants with permanent residence permit and those applying for asylum – Luleå and Övertorneå, SE

Older adults (65+) –Vaasa, FI

Refugees and migrants –Nordfriesland, DE

People with mental and physical handicaps/disabilities – Kurzeme, LV

Single parents and persons suffering from addiction diseases - Pagegiai /Jurbarkas, LT

Refugees – Toender and Varde, DK

Rural Youth (11-25+) – Ryczywół, PL

Single parents – Dithmarschen, DE

Young people in lack of education and work in risk of becoming long-term unemployed – Luleå and Boden, SE



Key words

Socio-economic specifics of the local empowerment networks: purchasing power standards, density of population, change in population, influential factors of the end-users' life, barriers and obstacles in the social service provision.

Summary

The analysis of the socio-economic context includes the statistical data by the Eurostat on the purchasing power standards, density of population, change in population and comparison of these data between the local empowerment networks located in eight Baltic sea region countries of the European Union. Additionally to the statistical data there are analysed and compared data derived from a survey on the project partners LENS' socio-economic specifics, restricting factors that influence the life circumstances of the end-user group, and specific barriers and obstacles that social service providers face when working with the end-user group.

Introduction

The essential aims of gathering the information on the socio-economic context of the local empowerment networks of the project SEMPRES are, firstly, the exploration of the socio-economic context shall encourage all project partners to consider the framework conditions for the operation of their LENS and RCGs already on the early stage in the project.

Secondly, it shall help to the responsible partners for evaluation to understand differences between regions and take into account the respective local context.

Thirdly, as partners will talk with different target groups not only about their own but also about other partners' LENS and the specifics, it should empower the partnership to briefly explain framework conditions of other project regions when communicating the project.

Finally, it will provide input to the development of policy recommendations and the further work in the fourth work package for activities, called "Raising the empowerment competence of service provider staff", "Training programme" for service provision organizations staff, "Building organizational capacity for empowerment" and the main output "Organizational roadmap for empowerment".

Limitations of the exploration of the socio-economic context activity include that it is not the intention to carry out a large study or collect wide data.

Methodology

To the exploration of the LENS' socio-economic context two different methods has been used as well sources of gathering the information on the socio-economic context of the local empowerment



networks of the project SEMPRES partners. One source is the statistical data by the Eurostat and some local statistical data given by several partners.

The second source of the information on the socio-economic context of the local empowerment networks is a survey and its instrument questionnaire where the partners have been asked to answer in brief three questions. The first question they were asked was to **explain in short social and economic specifics** of the place where concrete LEN is located. The second question was to explain in short **barriers and restricting factors that influence the life circumstances of the end-user group**. The third question was to **name in short specific barriers and obstacles (legislative, social, cultural, economic) that social service providers face** when they are working with the end-user groups, and, finally, there was given a chance to make additional comments or remarks.

The survey was organised electronically in the third quarter of 2016, but the last one response was received in July 2017.

The partners have been requested to give the information in a brief form. The size of the received answers was very different mainly answers were brief but there were some exceptions and there was given a large informative text. The largest of them are shortened a little bit.

The analysis of the answers is made in the same sequence as the questions were asked in the questionnaire. The sequence of the partners in the analysis follows the official numeration of the project partners.

The analysis of the verbal answers has been organised so that at the very beginning there is given an answer in the italic and in just the same form as it has been given by the respondent and then conclusions follow.

There are analysed the data of those project partners who have an end-user group and local empowerment network.

The text is organised in the way, that each topic in statistical part of the information on regions and information on each partner on different topics ends with conclusions. There are given general conclusions at the end of each part of the informative content.



1. A Comparison of the statistical data on the purchasing power standards, population density, and population change in the regions of the project SEMPRES

The statistical data specially are highly limited. They offer a notion about an economical state and population state and change in the regions of the LENS.

Table 1. Purchasing power standards, population density, and population change in the SEMPRES project regions

PP No.	Region	PPS/capita in % of EU	Population density Inhabitants/km ²	Relative population change % (2011-2015)	Local statistics
1	Dithmarschen DE	96	92,9	-1,57	12,1% - single parents families
2	Plön DE	68	117 (2014)	-5,53	1,1% unemployed 1> year
3	Nordfriesland, DE	112	77,8 (2014)	-1,98	-
4	Varinai-Suomi and Pohjanmaa FI	103 and 115	44,3 and 23,3 (2014)	+1,62 and +1,8	-
5	Keski-Pohjanmaa and Pohjanmaa FI	100 and 115	13,7 and 23,3	+0,75 and +1,8	-
6	-				
7	Kurzeme LV	47	19,5 (2014)	-6,06	5340 (2016) disabled adults in Liepaja, 752 – Grobina, 510 – Priekule, 140 – Rucava
8	-				



9	Pagegiai and Jurbarkas Taurages LT	41 (2013)	24,2	-6,72	77% households have difficulties to meet ends (2014)
10	Lõuna-Eesti EE	53	20,7 (2014)	-3,16	6.403 children 18<, 7.164-65+
11	Lõuna-Eesti EE	53	20,7	-3,16	6.403 children 18<, 7.164-65+
12	Poznański PL	73 (2013)	117,2	+0,73	-
13	Norbotten Companion SE	130	2,6 (2014)	+0,55	2871 of 9544 unemployed individuals are migrants (+10% change 03/2015- 03/2016). Övertorneå 112 of 235 (+30,2% from 03/2015-03/2016). Luleå 691 of 2709 (+12,4% change 03/2015-03/2016).
14	Norbotten Sunderbay FHS SE	130	2,6 (2014)	+0,55	-
15	Syddjylland DK	124	81,6	+0,2	-
16	-				
17	Vidzeme LV	38	13,6	-6,12	-

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/regions/data/database>

Note: a sequence of the numbers in the table is harmonised with the official numeration of the project SEMPRES partners.



1.1. Comparison of the purchasing power standards

The statistical data show that the purchasing power standards are higher than the EU average in the following regions: Norbotten, Sweden (130%), Sydjylland, Denmark (124%), Nordfriesland, Germany (112%), Pohjanmaa, Finland (115%), Varinai-Suomi, Finland (103%).

The region of Keski-Pohjanmaa in Finland (100%) has the EU average PPS.

All three Baltic states have the lowest PPS. Their ranks are 38% in Vidzeme region of Latvia, 41% in Taurages region of Lithuania, 47% in Kurzeme region of Latvia, and, 53% in Lõuna-Eesti of Estonia.

1.1.1. Conclusions

The Nordic countries – Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Nordfriesland in Germany have the highest indices of the PPS in the project SEMPRES regions.

The Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have the lowest indices of the PPS.

These data let conclude that economical state of the Baltic sea region countries and following their local empowerment networks are very different. The core causes of differences of that economical indicator are different values and approaches in a dominant social-political orientation (social-democratic in the Scandinavian countries or opposite: neoliberal in Baltic states), a long-term life without war experience in Sweden, long-term living in the same socio-economical formation or in the radical socio-economical changes in the East-European countries and state property privatization following the wild capitalism model in Baltics - all that is an outline that explains why there are such big distinctions in the purchasing power standards between the Nordic states and Baltic sea region countries.

1.2. Comparison Comparison of the population density in the regions of the LENS

The second statistical indicator is the number of the inhabitants per square kilometer. That indicator can characterize the economical and social attractiveness of the place as well as its climate conditions.

Looking at the highest indices of the population density in the regions ranking on the wane they are 117, 2 in Poznański of Poland, 117 in Plön in Germany, 115 in Varinai-Suomi in Finland, 92,9 – Dithmarschen in Germany, 81,6 - Sydjylland Denmark 77,8 - Nordfriesland in Germany.

The lowest indices of the population density are ranking growing up: 2,6 – Norbotten in Sweden, 13,6 in Vidzeme, Latvia, 13,7 in Keski-Pohjanmaa, Finland, 19,5 in Kurzeme, Latvia, 20,7 in Lõuna-Eesti, Eestland, 23,3 in Pohjanmaa, Finland, and 24,2 in Taurages, Lithuania.



1.2.1. Conclusions

The three highest population density indices have Poznański region in Poland, second one has Plön in Germany, third one – Varinai-Suomi region in Finland.

Norbotten region in Sweden has the lowest population density, second rank has Vidzeme region in Latvia, third one has Keski-Pohjanmaa region in Finland, fourth one has Kurzeme region in Latvia, next ranks have - Lõuna-Eesti region in Estonia, Pohjanmaa region in Finland, and Taurages region in Lithuania.

The purchasing power standards, level of the geographical attractiveness of the place, feeling belonging to the place and traditional behavior are the core causes of the high density of population.

Harsh climate conditions are the main cause of the very low population density in Norbotten region in the Northern Sweden and Keski-Pohjanmaa region in Finland.

The harsh socio-economic life climate for the majority of population in the wild, free from the ethics capitalism conditions of the governing liberalism in the Baltic states have pushed a huge part population to emigrate from their native places.

1.3. Comparison of the process of the population change in the regions of the LENSs

The general process of the population change documented by the Eurostat in time period 2011 – 2015 is decreasing of the population in rural area of the Baltic sea region.

The three highest levels of decreasing population have Taurages region in Lithuania (-6,72), Vidzeme region in Latvia (-6,12) and Kurzeme region in Latvia (-6,06). The fourth rank has Plön region in Germany (-5,53), the fifth rank has Lõuna-Eesti region in Estonia (-3,16). Then follow else two regions in Germany – Nordfriesland (-1,98) and Dithmarschen (-1,57).

The regions of the Nordic countries and Poland have the population's increase trends. Their indices of the growth of the population are +1,8 in Pohjanmaa region in Finland, +1,62 in Varinai-Suomi and +0,75

in Keski-Pohjanmaa regions of Finland. The fourth rank has Poznański region in Poland (+0,73), the fifth rank has Norbotten region in Sweden (+0,55) and the sixth rank of the growing population has Sydjylland region in Denmark (+0,2).

1.3.1. Conclusions

The main trend in the social process of population change in the regions of the SEMPRES project is **depopulation** of regions. A proportion of population decreasing is significantly higher than increase numbers in the Nordic countries and in Poland.

Regions of Lithuania and Latvia have the highest depopulation tendencies. Next highest tendencies of depopulation have Plön region in Germany and Lõuna-Eesti region in Estonia.



The principal cause of depopulation in Lithuania and Latvia is emigration of adults of working age plus both natural processes – low birth rates and high mortality rates. Neoliberalism and relevant to “wild capitalism” liberalism’s governance have establish such living conditions that people in mass have left their native countries.

Estonia has been governed strategically to win a favour for the own country and people. That explain lower Estonians emigration rate.

A lack of an information does not permit to explain relative high depopulation rate in Plön region in Germany.

Concerning population increase in Nordic countries there might be a hypothesis that explains this process connected with the wave of refugees and immigration from North Africa, Near East countries and Asiatic countries with long-time conflicts consequences. Good socio-economic conditions of living there and friendly official politics towards refugees and immigrants are stronger attraction in spite of harsh climate conditions.

The hypothesis of increasing population in Poland is related to the dominant conservatism of the family value and high birth rates grace to dominance of the catholic church.



2. The qualitative characteristics of the LENs of the project SEMPRES

The method of survey was used additionally to the statistical data.

A questionnaire was structured into three questions and there was given a possibility to make a comment. The partners were **requested** to describe in short **socio-economic specifics of the LEN's, to characterise in short factors that influence end-users life circumstances, and to name in short barriers and obstacles that** social service providers face when they are working with the end-user groups.

2.1. Socio-economic specifics and distinctions of the LEN's regions

The information on socio-economic specifics of the concrete LEN and region was sent by the responsible partners electronically. Its amount differs in scale from laconic data to several extended characteristics on the region. The answers have been given below, the largest part of them is a little bit shortened. The information given in answers is followed by conclusions on the most essentials features of the development in region.

All answers have been ordered in the same sequence as it is in the project partners numeration. Sometimes the answers have been joined in case that another partner has the same regularity. The partners' information shows following pictures:

PP1. Dithmarschen, DE.

no answer

PP2. Plön, DE.

Plön has been characterized so, that its very typical specifics are a domination of agricultural industry.

68,3% of Plön territory is an agriculture area and due that a high number in seasonally conditioned employment.

*Demographically Plön has a large part of the **population** that is **older than 65 years**. The part of under 18-year-old people in the population lies under the average in Schleswig-Holstein.*

Plön has many small and middle class companies that are not oriented in growing up.

Conclusions

Economically Plön is the area of **agriculture industry** with seasonal employment and many small and middle class companies that are **not oriented in growing up**. The traditional and conservative approach dominates in economics in Plön.

The ageing population is a typical feature of this location.



PP3. Nordfriesland, DE.

Nordfriesland has been characterized as a rural area of 2,083 square km with a share of the population of 162,203 inhabitants, the age group 50 + is 54%.

Immigration is very important factor of the population change in Nordfriesland:

“The district is affected by demographic change and skills shortage. But for all that the immigration rate is higher than the migration rate. One effect is based on the constant rate of immigration of migrants and the wave of refugees, based on the war in the middle east countries.”

Conclusions

Nordfriesland is a rural area.

Demographic change has two trends, one is the **ageing of population**, second is a constant **immigration** and a wave of refugees from the Middle-East countries.

PP4. Vaasa, Ostrobothnia, FI.

Specifics are: 1) rural area 2) one of the economically the most well-situated regions in Finland. 3) Bilingual region (Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns). 4) Large share of older adults in the region. 5) Many older adults live alone and independently at home.

Conclusions

Vaasa, Ostrobothnia is the rural, bilingual speaking, economically well situated Finnish region with an **ageing of population**.

PP5. Kokkola and Pietersaari, Keski-Pohjanmaa and Pohjanmaa, FI.

As a central specific of this Finnish region is mentioned an immigration of foreigners. The partners responsible from Kokkola and Pietersaari has given an information on a larger region called Ostrobothnia and has spotlighted a process of immigration. “In Ostrobothnia 4,6% of population are foreign citizens (8 252 individuals) whereas only 1,9% are foreign citizens in Central-Ostrobothnia (1710 individuals). During the year of 2013 the number of immigrants moving to Finland was about 18 000 of which 1090 moved to Ostrobothnia and 240 to Central-Ostrobothnia. In general, In Finland the number of foreign citizens is 200 000, which is 3.8% of all inhabitants living in Finland.”

Conclusions

The main specific of Keski-Pohjanmaa and Pohjanmaa, Ostrobothnia and Central-Ostrobothnia in Finland in view of the respondent from Kokkola and Pietersaari is the high rate of **immigration**.



PP7. Kurzeme, LV.

Kurzeme region in Latvia has been characterized as region with long sea border and significant military harbor in the past. A distance to the capital city Riga is approximately 220 km / Liepaja-Riga, Riga-Liepaja train functions once a week / relatively good is bus traffic to capital city; weak public transport connection from county centers (except Grobina) to Liepāja/Riga, In some areas there are no public transport connections at all.

High unemployment rate because of a bankruptcy of the big employers. Population is decreasing and ageing, number of people with disabilities is increasing. Liepaja town has an ambition to become a culture and creativity city.

Conclusions

The main socio-economic specifics of the Kurzeme region are several negative population change processes: **decreasing** of population, **population ageing**, high **unemployment** and **emigration** rates.

Public transport is a serious problem for mobility, especially inside region borders.

PP9. Pajėgiai and Jurbarkas, Taurages county, LT.

Taurages county, where are located Jurbarkas district municipality and Pajėgiai municipality, is a border region with all socio-economic characteristics typical for such regions in other countries: emigration of youth and economically active inhabitants, lower level of economic activity, higher level of welfare dependence, high rate of unemployment, including long term unemployment, higher level of deviant behaviour concentration, more obviously expressed manifestation of poverty culture: single parenthood, addiction problems, inheritance of low social status, etc.

Conclusions

Taurages region is a border region and has many similar characteristics as border regions in Latvia and Estonia.

There are high unemployment rate and its consequence - widespread **poverty** and **addictions**, **emigration of the youth and working age adults** from rural regions to the bigger cities and/or abroad. The consequence is **depopulation** and **ageing population** in rural area.

PP10. Võrumaa and Põlvamaa, Lõuna-Eesti region, EE.

These locations of the LENs are placed in a peripheral area with low population number, low population density, and large elderly population. Average income there is lower than Estonian average.

There are large distances to work places and inadequate public transportation system. A lack of other infrastructures, e.g., shops.



People are hopeless about their situation and are not motivated to change it.

Conclusions

All main characteristics show that this region of Estonia is depressive. **Employment** problems, lower than average income level. Large amount of the **old age persons**. Bad quality of the infrastructure – **public transportation**, a lack of shops, etc. Depressive mood of the local people is a logical consequence of such life conditions.

PP11. East-Virumaa and Järva, Lõuna-Eesti region, EE.

East-Virumaa and Järva, Lõuna-Eesti region is characterized as Eastern part of Estonia with large group of Russian-speaking inhabitants, a big part of them are without any citizenship, using so called grey passport. Their number has diminished: in 2007 their number was 41 000, in 2015 - 25 000 persons.

Ida-Viru is the most contrast part of Estonia: being a center of heavy industry, energy production, mining, chemical industry. People are living in towns and employed in big enterprises about 80% from the working force. Widespread occupational diseases and lower life expectancy in the cause of work in heavy industries.

Health state characterizes a growing number of beds in maintenance hospitals needed in 2007 was 1175, in 2014 -1693, patients with special needs/maintenance: 2007 was 224, in 2014 – 406. The number of children with deep or medium special needs is 1116 in Eastern Estonia. This indicates growing need for medical and non-medical care. The number of disability and dependency among retired persons is raising.

*Other specifics of this location are **diminishing of the population** and **large elderly population** (50+ is about 45,9%).*

Insufficient communication between social service providers of different municipalities.

Social service providers and end-users have often different ideas about how they can be helped or what needs to be done.

Conclusions

In East-Virumaa and Järva, Lõuna-Eesti region of the Eastern Estonia there were located heavy industries with huge amount of Russian ethnicity workforce who have no Estonian citizenship and is not integrated in the society. Heavy industry created **bad life conditions** for the health.

The social processes that dominate in that Estonian region are **disintegration of society, depopulation, and population ageing.**



PP12. Ryczywół, Poznański region, PL.

LEN in Ryczywół is located about 60 km from the big city Poznan, its population amount is 7411 inhabitants (30 June 2016).

Many people, including youth, work or study in Poznan yet as the distance is bigger and the **transportation is more complicated**, many of them work and live in commune Ryczywół.

There are limited opportunities for youth in Ryczywół. Thus the SEMPRES project has a chance to support the youth with micro projects that may substantially increase the youth empowerment and thus promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Conclusions

The youth in Ryczywół has limited opportunities for free time activities. Additionally **transportation** between rural and urban areas has become more **complicated**.

PP13. Luleå and Övertorneå, Norrbotten region, SE.

The overall unemployment in Norrbotten is declining but unemployment amongst migrants and long term unemployed is increasing. Norrbotten County Council is the largest public employer in Norrbotten. Mining employs most people in the private sector. LKAB is the largest mining company.

In Norrbotten we are lacking doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers and chefs. Norrbotten County Council has difficulties in employing staff to the public health care sector. They have to pay extensive amounts hiring doctors from the private sector in Sweden and other EU countries plus other county councils in Sweden. There is a big interest in identifying migrants with professions within the health sector.

Conclusions

The respondent from Luleå and Övertorneå describes the specifics of Norrbotten region in Sweden in the terms of employment. The region has the deficit of high educated staff in many professions. Especially, the health care sector has acute problems. Simultaneously the unemployment and long-term unemployment among immigrants is increasing. That is why Norrbotten County Council has an interest to find or train immigrants to work in the health care sector.

PP14. Luleå and Boden, Norrbotten region, SE.

The partners responsible from Luleå and Boden, describes specifics of the same Norrbotten region in Sweden a little bit otherwise. In that description deficit of professionals in social and health care sector has been connected with demographic process.



The demographic challenge is to find people who are willing to work in the social or health care system. The urbanisation has not stopped. That means that our rural areas are losing young workers and the old people are left.

Conclusions

Norbotten region in the Northern part of Sweden has a demographic challenge.

The **urbanisation** process continues and the rural youth migrates to the cities.

Ageing of rural population is the consequence of the youth emigration.

Norrbottn region has an acute **deficit of working force in social and health care** systems. The local authorities have a purpose to educate and so to prepare immigrants as a workforce in these fields.

PP15. Toender and Varde, Sydjylland region, DK.

*Specifics of region's two living places - Toender and Varde by the partners responsible are characterised separately. Toender municipality is located at the south-western part of Jutland, bordering to the North-western part of Germany. Toender municipality is generally characterized by its rural location, which can be observed in a wide variety of social and economic indicators. First of all, Toender is a relatively small town with its 7.600 inhabitants (Kontur 2016: 3). Demographically it has experienced a persistent and slow decline in population. Since 2005 it has experienced a fall in inhabitants every year with the exception of 2007 (Befolkningsprognose 2016: 1). Especially the age group around 20 has been observed to move away (2013-2015) (Kontur 2016: 33). In comparison to the rest of Denmark, Toender has a smaller share of people between 20 and 49 years old, while it has a bigger population of people over 50 years old (Kontur 2016: 28). Toenders municipality is increasingly characterized by having an **ageing population**. One possible explanation for the exodus of the young population is their educational aspirations (Flytteanalyse 2016: 4-5). Toender already has the lowest income per capita in the region (212.400, 2014) and is significantly below the national income per capita (245.000, 2014) (Kontur 2016: 39).*

*Furthermore, the **ageing population** has led to a lower degree of overall employment level among the working population (25-64 years). In Toender 73,6 percent are employed, while 75,4% are employed on a national level. The primary explanation seems to be a higher degree of people, who have received different types of early retirement schemes (Kontur 2016: 11).*

Another central economic factor characterizing Toender is the relative high proportion of the workforce employed in small companies compared to Denmark in general. In relative terms, there is a lower percentage of the employed in Toender, who work at a company with 50 or more employers (28,3% compared to 47,7% on a national level).

*Finally, a distinctive element in the economic and social landscape of Toender municipality is the relatively **sparse condition of local public transport** (Kontur 2016: 38). While the local road network*



allows the inhabitants of Toender to drive across most of the region, the local public transport does not allow such flexibility. **Inhabitants** of Toender municipality **are heavily dependent on a car** to be fully **mobile** in the areas surrounding Toender and Toftelund, the two biggest cities in the municipality. This can be thought to impact our end-user group, who might not have readily access to a car upon arrival in the municipality.

Conclusions on Toender

Economically Toender has the lowest income per capita in the region, the income is significantly below the Danish national income per capita. Employment rate is lower than average in region, high proportion of the workforce employed in small companies compared to Denmark in general. The local road network is well developed but there is a **sparse condition of local public transport**. So, inhabitants of Toender are **heavily dependent on a car** to be **mobile**.

Urbanisation process – the youth moves from rural area to cities. This process causes other population change processes - the **ageing** of the rural population and local **depopulation**.

Varde municipality is located on the west-coast of Jutland, just north of Esbjerg municipality. Varde municipality has 50 284 inhabitants (Befolkningsprognose 2016: 4). The biggest city is Varde, which has 13.800 inhabitants (Kontur 2016: 3). Varde municipality is characterized by being one of two municipalities in the Region of Southern Denmark with the lowest unemployment, only 2,5% (among the working population between 25-64) (Kontur 2016: 11-13). Varde municipality has generally a very low rate of unemployment, when comparing to the average rate of unemployment in Denmark between 2007 and 2016. Varde have the highest rate of employment in the region 2014 at 78,7% (together with Billund municipality).

Demographically, even if the population remains constant throughout the next decade(s), Varde municipality still faces an **ageing population**, where the share of people over 65 will increase (Befolkningsprognose 2016: 21). In 2016 around 20% of the inhabitants of Varde municipality are 65 years or older, but in 2028 around 25% are expected to be 65 or older (Befolkningsprognose 2016: 21).

Another element distinguishing Varde municipality from other municipalities in the Region of Southern Denmark is the very low share of people employed in the private sector, who have a higher tertiary education (a bachelor, a master degree or a Ph.D. degree). Only 8,1% of the workforce hired in the private sector in Varde municipality have a tertiary education. (Kontur 2016: 9). This is the lowest in the entire region of Southern Denmark.

Around a third of the workforce are employed in small companies (between 1-9 employees) (Kontur 2016: 18). This is around 8 percentage-points higher than the national average and 7% higher than the regional average. Correspondingly 13% fewer are employed at companies with 50 or more employees (Kontur 2016: 18). 34,4% are employed at companies with 50 or more employees in Varde municipality as opposed to almost half of the workforce on a national level (47,4%).



Conclusions on Varde

Economically Varde have the **highest rate of employment** in the region and the lowest share of people employed in the private sector, who have a higher tertiary education (a bachelor, a master degree or a Ph.D. degree) in the entire region of the Southern Denmark. Around a third of the workforce is employed in small companies.

Demographically Varde faces the **population ageing**.

PP17. Vidzeme, LV.

*The partners responsible characterizes Vidzeme region as a region which qualities are “**low population density. Limited access to social services** and highly skilled specialists in different areas – medical doctors, architects, lawyers, bankers, etc. Specific services for persons with intellectual disabilities, handicapped, persons with social behavior problems, mental disorders, are not available. Lack of employment opportunities relevant to their education, skills and interests. Access to the services is limited due their concentration in distant cities and towns and rare public transport services.*

Restricted local employment sector - few employment opportunities in rural areas - alternative agriculture, food production, forest industry, crafting. The Local Employment Office (LEO) is not available in rural areas, only registered may receive the state support.

High level of an institutionalization of the mentally disabled people in rural areas – special boarding schools for handicapped and persons with intellectual disabilities; and schools located in rural areas offering education for “problem” children - drop-outs from city schools with social behavioral problems etc. Those institutions are fulfilling not only education of these children and youth, but also parenting care function; it creates specific social, isolated environment in those areas.

Poor living conditions – poor housing, lack of basic conveniences (water, sanitation).

*The life conditions are a cause of **emigration of young people** (brain –drain) and following consequence is an **ageing society** - low level of immigration and re-emigration; youth (after primary and secondary education) is leaving the rural areas for better education and employment opportunities in capital city Riga; few cases of return migration (brain-gain) whereas established new enterprises, found innovative ways of living.”*

Conclusions

Vidzeme is a region of Latvia which has **low population density, limited access to social services, poor living conditions**.

Young people leave Vidzeme region. Urbanisation process and emigration abroad cause another social process. That is the **population ageing** in the rural community.

Vidzeme region faces a high level of an institutionalization of the mentally disabled people.



2.1.1. General Conclusions on the socio-economic specifics of the regions of the LENSs

The social facts witness that there are both differences and similarities between eight Baltic sea region countries.

There are following specifics of developments

The Baltic sea region countries of the European Union have some similar features and many different qualities. They all are the members of the same political and economical union, but their socio-economic context is highly different. They are located in one geographical region but they have different climate conditions.

Some outlines of the developments in the Baltic sea region countries could help for a better understanding of their present socio-economic status and processes. They have different historical and economical developments. Only Sweden has no experience of the Second World War, so its development goes without radical changes in politics and economics. Denmark and Finland have developed under same socio-economical political regime, but their history and geographical location and weather conditions are different. East-Germany and Poland have an experience of socialistic development orientation, but not Schleswig-Holstein as a federal state of the West-Germany.

All three Baltic countries have similar historical developments during the XXth century and they have an experience of living in two radically different socio-economic systems, as well as a radical socio-economic transformation of these societies in the 1990s. The very latest trend of the economical globalisation impact socio-economical developments of the entire world.

The economic specifics

The received information on the concrete rural territories shows many common trends and several specific developments.

One common economic specific of the rural area is a restricted employment possibility, traditional agricultural industries. Typical features of the employment are seasonal job and small or middle enterprises. The small and middle class companies are dominating and they are not oriented in growing up (DK but not only). The high unemployment level, economic and psychological depression both are widespread in regions of the Baltic states. But Varinai-Soumi and Pohjanmaa region is one of the economically most well-situated regions in Finland.

Employment specific in Denmark, LEN Varde is a very low rate of unemployment and very low share of people employed in the private sector.

Employment specific in Norrbotten region of Sweden is a deficit of working force in social and health care systems.



Another specific of the employment indicator is an increase of unemployment among immigrants due to language skills barriers in the Nordic countries and Germany where a community of the refugees and immigrants is large.

Specifics of the migration

Two directions of migration waves built a specifics of the migration process in the project SEMPRES regions of the Baltic sea region countries. One direction is emigration of the local native youth and working age adults to big cities because of education and/or employment reasons as a continuation of an urbanisation process (LV, LT, SE, DK) and/or a large emigration wave abroad sometimes because of education reason but mainly because of an economical reason, that means, searching a job abroad (LV, LT, EE).

Another wave of migration is an immigration of the foreigners - refugees and economical immigrants. This kind of immigration is a very important factor of the population change in Nordfriesland region in Germany, in Keski-Pohjanmaa and Pohjanmaa region in Finland, in Norrbotten region in Sweden, and in Sydjylland region in Denmark.

Specifics of infrastructure

The state and quality of national, regional, and local infrastructure in the Baltic sea region countries is highly different. Both the state and quality of infrastructure are a significant factor that attracts people to places or motivates to escape from certain places.

The most important elements of the infrastructure are accessibility to education, health care services, post, bank, shop services, existing roads network and public transportation.

Public transport services have been diminished and become complicated and is a serious problem for mobility, especially inside the region borders. So, inhabitants of Toender in Denmark and in Plön in Germany are heavily **dependent on a car** to be **mobile**. Public transportation as well other services are very acute and painful problem in the regions of the Baltic states. A lack of the public transportation does not permit many rural inhabitants to have an access to health services, education, cultural and social events.

General conclusions on the specifics of population change in the rural regions

There are two remarkable and significant trends in the population change process.

One of them is the **depopulation of the rural areas**. The statistical data and the answers of the respondents show that trend in many project SEMPRES regions. In four countries' regions population is



increasing. They are Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Poland. In four countries' regions population is decreasing. They are Germany and all three Baltic states.

The second significant trend is the **ageing of the rural population**. This trend has been mentioned by seven of eight countries representatives (FI, DE, DK, EE, LV, LT, SE). Only the partners responsible from Poland did not mention this feature on the locality.

The both trends – the **depopulation** of the rural area and the **ageing of the rural population** have a direct correlation with emigration of the youth and working age adults owing to high unemployment rate, bad quality of the infrastructure and accessibility of different kind necessary services.

2.2. Barriers and restricting factors that influence the life circumstances of the end-user groups

The partners have been requested to give a brief information on the factors that influence life circumstances of the end-users. The information by partners was received electronically and its amount differs in scale from laconic data to several extended characteristics on the region. The answers have been given below, the longest of them are a little bit shortened, and then follow conclusions on the most essentials features of the development in region.

PP1. Dithmarschen, DE.

End-user group: Single parents

“Services are often scattered across different offices and providers. This results in particular in a rising time investment: travelling to different places and in increasing financial resources: tickets for busses or petrol for cars and parking fees.

Often services are bound to district borders: the district of Dithmarschen does not offer psychological emergency support for somebody who lives outside of the district.”

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the single parents in Dithmarschen are **fragmentation of social service provision** places and as the consequence travelling to different offices to get a needed service.

PP2. Plön, DE.

End-user group: Long-term unemployed people and their families



“The end-user group often lives in small villages with a long distance to bigger municipalities. They are limited in their mobility if they have no own cars, and because often there is no possibility to go by bus or train.

There are especially for woman many problems in the organisation of the care of the children. Often there are no offers for the care of children in the place or the costs for a care during the working hours are too high.

There are many small and middle-class companies in the region. These have a trained employee's trunk. This leads on the one hand to a stable employment situation; on the other hand, it is hard for unemployed persons to get an employment. Especially, for long-term unemployed persons this is a big hurdle.”

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the long-term unemployed people in Plön are, firstly, long distances to bigger municipalities and a restricted offer of the **public transportation**, and following limitation in a mobility if a person does not have their own car, secondly, no supply of **nursery school**, thirdly, it is hard to become **employed** for strangers and long-term unemployed persons.

PP3. Nordfriesland, DE.

End-user group: Refugees and migrants

“The long waiting time for admission as refugee to take part in social life and work as well as the fear of foreign cultures of parts of the general public influences the life circumstances of the end-user group.

Furthermore, we have a shortage of housing in Nordfriesland. Affordable flats and houses for families are urgently needed.

The unemployment rate is relatively high. During the harvest season there are many jobs, but there are always only temporary seasonal jobs (for example during the harvest on the fields).

The infrastructure is very poor. Without a private car there are very bad possibilities of locomotion. A big problem: because between the place of residence and the place of work are often many kilometres to drive.”

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the refugees in Nordfriesland are long time waiting for being integrated in a society, that means, to be accepted as equal, to be employed, to have a permanent housing, to have a possibility to be mobile. High **unemployment** rate, deficit of **housing**, and limitation of **mobility** are main influential factors of the quality of life for the refugees in Nordfriesland.



PP4. Vaasa, FI.

End-user group: Older adults (65+)

There are mentioned following influential factors on quality of life of the older persons:

- *“Rural area and long distances,*
- *Lack of service due to changes in demographic structures, centralisation of services and ICT-development,*
- *Harsh winter conditions.”*

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the older persons in Vaasa LEN are, firstly, long **distances** to service provision organizations and from service provision organizations to the older persons, secondly, lack of services due to the **ageing of society**, an access to social services for the older persons burdened the **centralisation of services, and new information and communication technologies**, as well as **harsh winter conditions**.

PP5. Kokkola and Pietarsaari, FI.

End-user group: Long-term unemployed migrants

Factors that influence life of the long-term unemployed migrants mentioned by the partners responsible from Kokkola and Pietarsaari are:

- “1. Racism, stigmatization,
2. Lack of jobs and difficulties with getting jobs,
3. Difficulties in higher educational studies (due to language skills).“

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the long-term unemployed migrants in Kokkola and Pietarsaari are **racism** of local residents, **stigmatization** of immigrants and **employment** and difficulties to get higher **education** owing to insufficient Finnish language knowledge.

PP7. Kurzeme, LV.

End-user group: People with mental and physical disabilities



There is named by the partners responsible from Kurzeme a list of factors which influence life of the people with mental and physical disabilities in that region of Latvia. The mentioned factors are:

- “1. The disability (physically, sensory or/and mentally),*
- 2. Lack of public transport in some rural areas,*
- 3. Finances – small pension plus for some people with mental disability it is hard to understand the value of money, and/or to do simple mathematical operations,*
- 4. Few working places in the rural areas, and it’s easy to collect information regarding any new candidate - the disability, even if not visible, is hard to hide,*
- 5. Legislation – strongly limits the possibilities to fire a disabled person, which brings to situation that it is easier not to hire a person with disability,*
- 6. Very few subsidized workplaces for people with disabilities,*
- 7. Social entrepreneurships not developed (as well – legislation not supportive enough),*
- 8. Few possibilities to reasonably spend the day. Workshops with available tools and advice could help,*
- 9. Loneliness. As well for young people who would like to find someone to be with,*
- 10. Fellow people, society can be very harsh.”*

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the adults with disabilities in Kurzeme region and in Latvia generally are, firstly, a fact of **disability**, secondly, tiny **pensions** on disability and very limited **employment** chance, thirdly, lack of **day centre** services, fourthly, lack of **public transportation** service, fifthly, **psychological problems** – loneliness and unfriendly attitude from the society.

PP9. Pagegiai and Jurbarkas, LT.

End-user group: Single parents and persons suffering from addiction diseases

The partners responsible has mentioned following life of end-users influential factors:

- “1. Lack of social skills, unwillingness to change something in life,*
- 2. Lack of minimal secondary and/or professional education,*
- 3. Lack of possibilities to face different life examples,*
- 4. Stigmatisation/condemnation of departure from the traditional family model is vigorous,*



5. *Persons suffering from addiction diseases have a difficult way back to society after rehabilitation period, both because of their past and their social skills. Weak Lithuanian social support system.*

Conclusions

The factors which influences life circumstances of the single parents and substance addicted persons in Pagegiai and Jurbarkas LENSs in Lithuania are their **lack of education** and **social skills**, **unwillingness to change** something in life, and **stigmatisation** as social attitude.

PP10. Võrumaa and Põlvamaa, EE.

End-user group: Ex-prisoners and families with children

The factors that influence end-users' life circumstances mentioned by the partners responsible from Estonian LENSs in Võrumaa and Põlvamaa are:

1. *Families being apart because the work place is far,*
2. *Alcoholism,*
3. *Young people have left the countryside,*
4. *Some places lack shops,*
5. *Average income of Võrumaa and Põlvamaa is lower than Estonian average,*
6. *People are not motivated and are hopeless about their situation. "*

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the ex-prisoners and families with children in the LENSs of Võrumaa and Põlvamaa are **employment** problems, low income that means **poverty**, insufficient **infrastructure**, **emigration of youth** and following **ageing** of local community, **hopelessness** and **alcoholism**.

PP11. East-Virumaa and Järva, EE.

End-user group: Families with children and elderly

Both Estonian living places are characterised separate, but one factor is mentioned as typical feature for both places. It is formulated: "Young people have left the countryside."

Factors that influence life of the end-users mentioned for Järva are such:



"1. Lonely elderly living in remote places difficult to reach by congregations' volunteers or social workers,

2. Law on Administrative Reform (2016) brings along unsure situation: diminished number of municipalities results in reorganizing stabilized obligations of local authorities and hence the decision-makers on national level will be hundred kilometers away. This annoys locals very deeply and makes cooperation of local authorities and, for example, congregations more difficult. Actually nobody knows who is going to be your partner next year."

East-Virumaa:

There are mentioned following factors that influence life of end-users' in East-Virumaa:

"1. Significant part of the population is descendants of Soviet immigrants, the fall of the Soviet heavy industry models and restructuring /modernization of production processes leaves a lot of people unemployed,

2. Lack of State language skills and other language skills produce difficulties in finding jobs in other regions of Estonia,

3. Alcoholism and HIV/AIDS,

4. Lack of working places in accordance with education."

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the families with children and the elderly in LENs of East-Virumaa and Järva are first, **ageing** of local community and **depopulation of rurality**, second, **employment** problems because of the heavy industry modernization, third, **environment pollution** and unhealthy life conditions, fourth, uncertainty in **coordination** of the functions between social service management and provision organisations, fifth, ethnically disintegrated society, sixth, **demoralisation of society** that consequences are spreading the alcoholism and HIV/AIDS disease, seventh, **older persons** live **isolated** that is why there are difficulties to reach them, eighth, **public transportation** problems.

PP12. Ryczywół, PL.

End-user group: Rural Youth (11-25+)

There are named following life factors that influence rural youth in Ryczywół:

"1.lack of meet up places (there is available only library or municipality building in Ryczywół, or in other villages only day room at school,



2. *lack of time (limited time) due to other activities (including regular school),*
3. *distance to bigger cities (Oborniki, Poznan) that unables youth to move freely, especially under aged youth,*
4. *youth is not 'taken seriously' when wanting a change locally or asking for what they would like to have or change."*

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the rural youth in Ryczywół are 1. **lack of a place for meetings**, 2. **large distances** to bigger cities, 3. **social attitude** does not consider the youth as a serious subject.

PP13. Luleå and Övertorneå, SE.

End-user group: Migrants with permanent residence permit and those applying for asylum

"Migrants with a permanent residence permit have the possibility to participate in language training provided by the municipalities (or certified folk high schools), so called, "Swedish for immigrants" (SFI). The SFI is also a part of the individual integration plans set together with the Swedish unemployment agency. Some migrants finish SFI early, some migrants finish SFI with just limited language skills. After finishing SFI and the individual integration plan (24 months) many migrants stay unemployed and have less support from the society.

*There is a general problem with the **lack of meetings points** where natives and migrants can exchange experience, networks etc. There are also problems with **segregation** in the neighbour hoods.*

*We also see **cultural restrictions and attitudes amongst natives and migrants** that complicates the situation."*

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the migrants with permanent residence permit and those applying for asylum in Luleå and Övertorneå are, firstly, the **lack of meetings points** for natives and immigrants to make a network, secondly, a spatial **segregation**, and the mutual **cultural misapprehension amongst natives and migrants**.

PP14. Luleå and Boden, SE.

End-user group: Young people in lack of education and work in risk of becoming long-term unemployed

There are given following factors for that kind of youth:



“Young people with low educational level and lack of self-confidence. Some of them might have problems to concentrate, focus or function in the social life. They need help to find their own way of learning and to manage their life circumstances.

The rate of unemployment in this group is high and some of them cannot be found in the registers at the Unemployment agency or the Social Insurance agency. They often use internet games or social media to get in contact with others. The challenge is to find them and motivate them to join an education programme. In this group you often find boys/young men but there is a small group of girls/young women with complicated problems.

Another group is young people, migrants with permanent residence permit. Their needs are help to get ready for job in social service for elderly. We want to get in touch with them as soon as possible and give them a short education together with validation of their skills in a demonstration project. We hope that they later on are available to help other young migrants to find a way to work.”

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the young people in Luleå and Boden are a **low education level** and **lack of self-confidence**. They are mainly boys and they have a high rate of **unemployment** and are not registered at the Unemployment agency or the Social Insurance agency. Another group of end-users is young migrants with permanent residence permit who should be prepared for job in **the social service for elderly**.

PP15.Toender and Varde, DK.

End-user group: Refugees

The partners responsible of LENS in Toender and Varde has characterised the factors that influence life circumstances of the end-users in these locations following:

“We have chosen to define our end-user group as follows: The end-user group for SEMPRES project in Denmark are refugees and family reunificated, who have been granted a temporary residence permit and are still participating in the integration-program provided by the relevant Danish authorities. The integration program lasts from 1 to 5 years depending on when the participant passes a Danish Language test and are in a self-supporting ordinary job or ordinary education.

The following will describe three barriers for the end-user group, which might have a significant impact on their life circumstances: **language barriers**, discrimination and economic and educational barriers.

A minor research article recently published by SFI, a national research institution in Denmark, suggests that language can be a significant barrier for immigrant’s successful integration on the labour market. Language barriers can be subdivided into two main areas: 1) basic language skills, 2) understanding of cultural norms and values. Whereas the first dimension is primarily preoccupied with communication



necessary to successfully understand on another, the second dimension includes a broader set of culturally based customs and habits, which might be essential in the everyday life on the workplace (SFI 2016: 3-4). This barrier is especially interesting to our end-user group, who have recently arrived in Denmark and been awarded refugees status. The research suggests that a bigger share of recently arrived immigrants complete the mandatory Danish course than previously was the case. Previously 66 percent complete the Danish course of either level 1, 2 or 3, whereas 72 percent completed it in 2015 (SFI 2016: 1-2). A survey conducted among none-western immigrant in 2016 revealed that 57 percent did not experience any or only minor problems, because of their Danish language capabilities. The survey was conducted among none-western immigrants, who had been residents in Denmark for at least 3 years (SFI 2016: 2). The end-user group for this project have not necessarily been in Denmark for such a long period, but the research suggest language to be a crucial element in the development of their life circumstances in Denmark. The possibility of successful employment and cultural inclusion is among other things mediated by their own language skills.

Another crucial dimension in mapping the possible life circumstances of refugees is **discrimination** in Denmark. A report published in 2014 revealed that almost a quarter (24%) of Danish wage-earners held negative attitudes towards hiring minorities (Personer med anden etnisk baggrund end dansk) with imperfect Danish skills (Virksomheders sociale engagement 2014: 77). Approximately one in six (14%) have negative attitudes towards working with minorities, who wear religious or cultural symbols (Virksomheders sociale engagement 2014: 78). A survey conducted among minorities in Denmark, which have been resident for at least three years, reveals that 43% have experienced discrimination (Medborgerskabsundersøgelse 2016: 16). Over two-thirds (69%) of the young men between 18-29 years have experienced discrimination (Medborgerskabsundersøgelse 2016: 17). These surveys reveal that refugees might be met with considerable animosity, when attempting to integrate into core arenas in Danish Society such as the labour market or the civil society. The extent and degree of such malice in Toender municipality more specifically is unknown to the knowledge of the authors.

The final barrier can **economic and/or educational and/or legal barriers**. Most refugees in Denmark are eligible for a particularly form of benefit, integrationsydelse, which is lower than other similar types of benefits. According to the Danish Refugee Council these benefits might contribute to marginalization and poverty among many refugees (Dansk Flygtninge Hjælp 2015). Furthermore, refugees with education from their country of origin might have considerable difficulties in getting their educational qualifications recognized in Denmark. A significant part of the refugees might also have different types psychological traumas, as a consequence of fleeing from a war-torn country. This also might be considered a barrier for refugees, when attempting to attain a solid foothold on the Danish labor market – and in society in general.



As the section shows, refugees in Denmark face a wide variety of possible barriers, when attempting to gain a permanent foothold in Danish Society.”

Conclusions

The factors which influence life circumstances of the refugees in the LENs of Toender and Varde are the Danish **language barriers, discrimination, and economic, educational, and legal barriers and obstacles to integrate** in the Danish society due to insufficient Danish language skills.

PP17. Vidzeme, LV.

End-user group: Disadvantaged youth (aged 15-29) in rural areas: lonely parents, NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, young persons with intellectual disabilities, mental and social behavioral problems

The partners responsible from Vidzeme region in Latvia has characterised the factors that influence life circumstances of the end-users in this location and has given four short case studies of the disadvantaged youth. An information received from the Vidzeme partners responsible is following:

“Latvia is very mono-centric, economic and political power is concentrated in its capital and surrounding. That creates significant inner migration especially for young people. Remaining young people who stay in other regions they already have fewer chances and possibilities in their region; lack of jobs and business development chances; 77% of young people in Latvia have experienced some kind of discrimination at work.

- 1. **Lonely mother** (higher educated, skilled) with two children decided to live in rural area, returned to place of origin with an illusion to have green/ ecological way of living with her children. In reality, she could not find any flat/ place of living with normal living conditions (capital repairs were needed), she is unemployed for almost two years as she could not take the offered low skilled jobs in different sectors, but there were no high-skilled jobs in her profession (or at least what she could do); for instance, early mornings (4-6 AM) in agricultural sector with no kindergarten opportunities, 10 -12 hours shift work in trading industry or requiring good physical condition; she was thinking to develop her own business or work with handcraft, but had no starting capital; now she found volunteering work at private kindergarten/ school, thus being offered a place for her children there.*
- 2. **Lonely mother** - two small children (3 and 5 years old), get her first child in age of 18, drop-out from education; went for some time to UK, but returned back; now living with her mother, no job, no education and no social networks; is not registered at the Local Employment Office (LEO) not using social services.*
- 3. **Young person with intellectual disabilities** (24 years), have primary education and professional training (gained in local special boarding school), now living at home with his*



parents; have no meaningful employment opportunity, e.g., at Day care centre or elsewhere; living in physical and social isolation, losing his skills/ knowledge.

4. **Unmotivated, low self-esteem, young man (25 years)** - *for long time living in socially disadvantaged circumstances (parents are long-term unemployed, no education, no job and living in poverty), at local level have no employment opportunities, decent income; doing some short-term works, illegally, seasonal, physically requiring with high health risks; low social competences; deprived for long period of time; experienced violence."*

Conclusions

The factors which influence the life circumstances of the disadvantaged youth in Vidzeme region of Latvia are their difficulties to be included in the **labour market**. Employment restrictions in regions are main cause for inner **migration** to bigger cities and **emigration** abroad of the youth.

The disadvantaged youth very often live in poor and isolated life circumstances. Many factors of the disadvantage mutually connect and interfere. The causes and consequences influence each other and transform in each other.

2.2.1. General conclusions on the factors that influence the life circumstances of the end-user groups

The core common factors that impact life conditions in rural regions for all rural inhabitants not only for end-user groups and even a sustainability of several rural regions are the restrictions of **employment, emigration of the rural youth** to cities or abroad in many cases for ever, **depopulation** of the rural area, **ageing** of the rural population, **destruction of the infrastructure** in rural areas. Economical calculations as a base for closing schools, doctorates, public transport itineraries, abandonment ways and destroying other services would be evaluated as the biggest mistake in a strategic future planning. Many rural areas, for example, in Latvia are becoming empty.

The public transport problems face rural regions in well-situated Denmark and Germany as well in the Baltic countries and mobility of the people is depending on their own car.

The specific problems have specific end-user groups. **Refuges** and none-western **immigrants** face a complex of problems due of a lack local language skills in labour market and education system. The segregation, stigmatisation, and discrimination is their common widespread fate.

Many groups of end-users have deep **psychological problems**, such as apathy, unwillingness to make an effort and change something in their own life, lack of self-confidence, loneliness.

Another problem which should be mentioned is widespread **negative social attitude** towards different kinds of the disadvantaged people – people with disabilities, immigrants, long-term unemployed, single parents, and several other groups.



2.3. Specific barriers and obstacles (legislative, social, cultural. Economic) that social service providers face when working with the end-user group

The third question of the survey was a request to name specific different kind barriers and obstacles which could be legislative, social, cultural, economic that social service providers face when working with the end-user groups. Below there is the information given by the respondents of the LENs in the same sequence as they have in the official numeration of the project partners.

PP1. Dithmarschen, DE.

End-user group: Single parents

There is given following information:

“Service providers are strongly focussed on their already existing and approved services. There is little willingness to reflect on change. Pressure is experienced because of shrinking public finances. The financial threat often hits services first which focus on women. Services in rural areas are permanently based in centres: the focus is on “coming-in” structures not on outreach.”

Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with single parents in Dithmarschen are **shrinking public finances** that usually as the first object hits services for women, next specific obstacle – location of the services in the centres and focusing on “coming-in” structures, and SSPO giving **preference to routine** and **avoiding changes**.

PP2. Plön, DE.

End-user group: Long-term unemployed people and their families

The information by the respondent is following:

1. Missing motivation in case of negative experiences in the past
2. Missing motivation because of potential financial disadvantages (if a badly paid job is taken compared to unemployment benefits)
3. Traditional role model
4. Lack of mobility to commute/move to other places, e.g. because life is familiar in rural regions and there is a fear or no willingness to leave the traditional surrounding.”



Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with long-term unemployed people and their families in Plön connect with **end-users qualities and characteristics** - lack of the motivation to make changes in their life because of the negative experience in the past, uncertain financial income, traditional role model and feeling a risk to leave their habitual living place.



PP3. Nordfriesland, DE.

End-user group: Refugees and migrants.

The information given by the respondent is following:

- “1. Only non-binding answers to future questions such as place of residence (after first recording) → obstacle for fast integration.
2. Cultural misapprehension of staff (religious, gender).
3. Language (only few interpreters).
4. Many refugees have psychological problems like war traumas.”

Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with refugees and migrants in Nordfriesland are related to the **end-users own situation** - their difficulties in social integration because of a lack of the German language knowledge as a language of the new residence country, lack of their own living place, and a psychological suffer from war traumas which need to be rehabilitated.

PP4. Vaasa, Ostrobothnia, FI.

End-user group: Older adults (65+)

The information given by the Finnish partner is only one sentence: “Difficult to find and to reach the most vulnerable end-users.”

Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles which face social service providers in work with older adults (65+) in Vaasa are reduced to only one obstacle which is a difficulty to find and reach older persons living in rural area. The older persons in Finnish rural area are often living alone, isolated, and far from social service provision centres.

PP5. Kokkola and Pietersaari, FI.

End-user group: Long-term unemployed migrants

The received information is such:



“Transition period where people (mostly refugees) move from integration services to general social services is crucial for empowerment and belonging. People can and do easily fall through the cracks at this point.”

Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with long-term unemployed immigrants in Kokkola and Pietersaari are relating to challenges in the transition period from the integration social services to the general social services.

PP7. Kurzeme, LV.

End-user group: People with mental and physical disabilities.

The information on that topic is following:

- “1. Constant need to motivate, encourage, engage many of the service users and potential service users,*
- 2. Some end-users feel discouraged, losing control and don't let the service provider introduce services,*
- 3. Difficult to reach those, who are not applying for any reason at social service despite the need.”*

Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles that face social service providers in work with the people with mental and physical disabilities in Kurzeme region are only their **psychological characteristics**. So it has been witnessed by the respondent from Kurzeme region. The typical characteristics are their demotivation to be active and a lack of courage. Another obstacle is difficulties to find and reach end-users. That is an obstacle for the SSPO staff.

PP9. Pagegiai and Jurbarkas, LT.

End-user group: single parents and persons suffering from addiction diseases

The information received from the Lithuanian partner is such:

- “1. Lack of social skills, unwillingness to change something in life,*
- 2. Lack of minimal secondary and/or professional education,*
- 3. Lack of possibilities to face different life examples,*
- 4. Lack of social work skills in some state agencies, dealing with vulnerable groups of clients.”*



Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with single parents and persons suffering from addiction diseases in Pagegiai and Jurbarkas are related to individual characteristics of end-users. These characteristics create obstacles to make changes in life are a lack of education, a lack of social skills, an isolation trend. Concerning to the SSPO staff a barrier is a lack of specialization how to deal with the specific disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

PP10. Võrumaa and Põlvamaa, EE.

End-user groups: ex-prisoners and families with children

The information received from the Estonian partner is such:

- “1. Insufficient communication between social service providers of different municipalities.
2. Social service providers and end-users have often different ideas about how they can be helped or what needs to be done.”

Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles facing social service providers in work with ex-prisoners and families with children in Võrumaa and Põlvamaa living places of Estonia are insufficient **coordination** between social service provision organizations and **different opinions** about needed services among service providers and end-users.

PP11. East-Virumaa and Järva, EE.

End-user groups: families with children and elderly

The information on both living places is divided in two separate parts and is following:

“Järva:

- 1. Social service providers and end-users have often different ideas about how they can be helped or what needs to be addressed.*
- 2. Lack of “multitasking” service providers who are psychologists, pastoral counsellors+financial advisors.*
- 3. Elderly may need help with computer services as a lot of local services are accessible via internet mainly.*
- 4. Lack of conviviality tradition – elderly are lonely, families with children in need for childcare and grandmotherly/grandfatherly help.*



East-Virumaa:

- 1. Elderly people are lonely, social service providers lack time and financial resources dealing with their loneliness,*
- 2. remoteness, for example, clients'/patients' living in so-called ghost districts hampers good service providing,*
- 3. insufficient communication between social service providers of different municipalities,*
- 4. lack of information,*
- 5. lack of qualified work-force, especially in social services,*
- 6. social service providers and end-users have often different ideas about how they can be helped or what needs to be solved,*
- 7. important here is counseling: people without citizenship, not integrated, lack information about job market, social support and language studies opportunities, civil society mechanisms in Estonia."*

Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with the families with children and the elderly in East-Virumaa and Järva are diverse. One part of barriers and obstacles is connected with end-users' life situation due to old age, unemployment, a lack of citizenship, the Estonian language knowledge, computer literacy among the older persons. Other part of barriers and obstacles is connected with the SSPO's staff qualification, insufficient communication and coordination between SSPOs. A different opinion about the needed services among end-users and service providers is another additional barrier in the social service provision.

PP12. Ryczywół, PL.

End-user group: rural youth (11-25+)

The information given by the Polish partners responsible has a look at barriers and obstacles from two perspectives:

"From the perspective of the project target group - the social service providers have:

- small willingness or lack of willingness of parents to be active and support youth (transportation, participation in additional, after schools activities), especially for the under aged youth,*
- lack of meet up places (only library or municipality building, or in other villages only day room at school),*



- lack of time (limited time) due to other activities (including normal work) as for most of them the activities in commune Ryczwól are extra after work activities (mostly voluntary).

From the perspective of the project end-users - youth:

-lack of understanding of adults (also social service providers) and attitude 'we do for you' instead 'we do with you' that does not enhance the youth active participation,

- lack of meet up places (only library or municipality building, or in other villages only day room at school)."

Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles for the rural youth in Ryczywól are a **lack of meeting rooms** and a lack of time for work with the rural youth. Another specific barrier is a **passivity of the parents**, and not very good **intergenerational understanding**. **Public transportation** services are insufficient.

PP13. Luleå and Övertorneå, SE.

End-user group: Migrants with permanent residence permit and those applying for asylum

The information received on barriers and obstacles in work with this end-user group is the same as an information on the factors that influence end-users life circumstances. The Swedish partner has both joined, so both units of the information are identical:

"1. Language training "Swedish for immigrants" (SFI) is part of the individual integration plans. Some migrants finish SFI with just limited language skills. After finishing SFI and the individual integration plan (24 months) many migrants stay unemployed and have less support from the society.

2. Lack of meetings points where natives and migrants can exchange experience, networks etc.

3. Cultural restrictions and attitudes among natives and migrants, problems with neighborhood segregation."

Conclusions

Specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with **migrants** with permanent residence permit and those applying for asylum in Luleå and Övertorneå are identical to the factors that influence end-users' life circumstances. The mentioned barriers, obstacles, and factors are a insufficient Swedish **language knowledge**, an **unemployment** after 24 month integration plan, **segregation**, a lack of rooms for the common meetings of the natives and immigrants.



PP14. Luleå and Boden municipalities, SE.

End-user group: Young people in lack of education and work in risk of becoming long-term unemployed

The brief information on the young people in lack of education and work is such:

“No legislative barriers, but three different parts who are meeting the same group. They need help in finding the end-users and to give them adequate education where theoretical and practical educations are mixed. They need new instruments to be able to support the end-users go find their personal goals and a suitable education.”

Conclusions

The insufficient coordination between several service providers in education and support is the main barrier and obstacle in work with young people in lack of education and thus in risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

PP15. Toender and Varde, DK.

End-user group: refugees

The barriers and obstacles faced in service provision to refugees in the Danish living places Toender and Varde are such:

*“The social service providers also encounter several types of barriers in their work with the end-user group. The **language barriers**, which have previously been described, complicates the communication between refugees and social workers. This might be somewhat mediated by the use of translators, but still represents a specific challenge for the service-providers.*

*Another barrier is the complicated legal infrastructure regulating rights and obligations of refugees in Denmark. The **complex legal infrastructure** possibly makes it very difficult for social workers to coordinate different types of services. An example can be the coordination of company traineeships and language school classes.*

*Another example of how the legal infrastructure might impact the service providers work with the end-user group is the **amount of paperwork**. An extensive documentation practice among service-providers might leave refugees with an experience of having certain legal limitations to their own engagement with the surrounding society, which might in turn impact their wider sense of empowerment.”*



Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with refugees in Denmark are, firstly, their Danish language barriers, secondly, the **complex legal infrastructure** that burdens to coordinate different types of services. Else there is mentioned is an **extensive documentation** as another bother that limits a direct communication with clients and their own engagement.

PP17. Vidzeme, LV.

End-user group: disadvantaged youth (aged 15-29) in rural areas: lonely parents, NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, young persons with intellectual disabilities, mental and social behavioral problems

The barriers and obstacles are formulated by Latvian partner from Vidzeme region following:

- 1. "Restrictions of the State Social service providers, Local Employment Office (LEO) - have strict legal norms, mean-tested benefits on household level, no enough resources for preventive actions, measures; some of important services are not available in rural areas; restricted information available about the end-users group (aged 18-29); restricted communication channels; availability of resources: trainings, workshops and other activities depends on distance (more activities in centers – cities, less in rural areas); mean-tested approach.*
- 2. Youth organization (local government department or NGO) - mainly working with leaders, active youth in age group from 15-18 (before further education), have no experience to work with age group 18-29.*
- 3. Parents – active leadership: engagement depends on their personal resources (time, interests and financial ability for supportive actions).*
- 4. Workshops, craft and creativity centers – domestic home industry (food, agriculture/ eco-bio production and craft work): lack of experience how to work with disadvantaged youth, NEET youth.*
- 5. Professional educational institutions (municipal/state): Not targeted only on youth from Vidzeme region rural areas, but youth in general.*
- 6. Day care centers: deinstitutionalization process and new service development have initiated and is in progress. However, still lack of knowledge/ training and exchange of practices is the main limitation for social service providers, still unclear requirements from the state regarding the deinstitutionalization (DI) process.*
- 7. Social entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurship: depending on project and state funding, engagement rely on their ability to combine volunteering with direct responsibilities; personal interests.*



8. *Volunteering, church, local community leaders, NGOs: No stable funding - project based activities; depending on their collaboration and networking, strategically developed partnerships on local/ regional and state level.*
9. *Online, distance jobs, employees: not enough knowledge and skills to overtake distance job or work online, existing equipment and ICT (access to appropriate speed internet) level does not support fast information supply and exchange.*
10. *Municipal authorities, regional authorities: Elections (June, 2017) may influence their participation, activity and position in the project activities; engagement depends on leadership, resources available for other activities."*

Conclusions

The specific barriers and obstacles facing social service provision in work with disadvantaged youth in Vidzeme are a deficit of financial **resources** or unstable funding, the regulations of the preventive and interventive actions, insufficient **coordination** of the activities of different institutions, restricted **communication** between institutions, an **uncertainty** concerning to functions of the day centers, deinstitutionalisation, and social entrepreneurship. Some of the important services are not available in rural area. **Public transport** services and distances to trainings, workshops and other activities places make many services out of reach.

2.3.1 General conclusions on barriers and obstacles that social service providers face when work with the end-user groups

The answers by the respondents witness that the barriers and obstacles they are facing in the social service provision differ and could be grouped following:

1. barriers and obstacles related to decreasing public finances for social services.
2. Barriers and obstacles related to lack of rooms for meetings (for rural youth in Ryczywół in Poland and for natives and immigrants in Luleå and Övertorneå in Sweden).
3. Barriers and obstacles related to a complex legal infrastructure which burdens service provision for the refugees in Denmark or a lack of normative regulations for social entrepreneurship and deinstitutionalisation in Latvia.
4. Barriers and obstacles related to the qualities of the staff of the SSPOs – avoiding changes, insufficient specialisation for working with specific disadvantaged social groups.
5. Barriers and obstacles related to an extensive documentation that limits a direct communication with end-users and their own engagement.
6. Barriers and obstacles related to mutual communication and job coordination between social service provision institutions and municipalities, as well as between the staff of the SSPO and end-users.
7. Barriers and obstacles related to the characteristics of the end-users – a lack of motivation to be active and make changes in their own life situation, as well as the lack of education to be competitive in labour market, social skills, self-confidence.



8. For refugees and immigrants main barriers and obstacles are related to their poor knowledge of the national language of their new residence country.
9. Barriers and obstacles to reach and find such social service recipients as the older persons and people with mental disabilities.

Final general conclusions

1. Statistical data on the PPSs show that regions in Sweden, Denmark and Germany have the highest purchasing power standards (PPS). Regions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have the lowest PPSs.
2. Statistical data on population density show that the highest population density is registered in Germany, Denmark and Poland. The Northern Swedish regions have the lowest indices of population density because of the very harsh weather conditions in that geographical location. The lowest population density has been registered in regions of Latvia and Estonia.
3. Statistical data on the **population change** show both trends – increase and decrease of the population in the rural regions which are included in the project SEMPRES.
 - 3.1. The three Scandinavian countries and Poland have the population increase trends. Their indices of the growth of the population are +1,8 in Pohjanmaa region in Finland, +1,62 in Varinais-Suomi and +0,75 in Keski-Pohjanmaa region of Finland. Poznański region in Poland has the fourth increasing rank (+0,73). Norbotten region of Sweden has the fifth increasing rank (+0,55), and Sydjylland region of Denmark has the sixth increasing rank (+0,2) of the population.

Main cause of the population increase in the Scandinavian countries is the immigration wave from North Africa, Near East, and Asiatic countries because of war or economical reasons. A hypothesis to explain the increase of the population in Poland is such that the dominant catholic church and its conservatism about a regulation of the reproduction has caused the high birth rates.
 - 3.2. The regions of the Baltic states and Germany have the decrease of the population. Regions of Lithuania and Latvia have the highest trend of the depopulation, Germany follows them. The indices of the population decrease from highest to lowest are -6,72 in Taurages region of Lithuania, -6,12 in Vidzeme region and -6,06 in Kurzeme region of Latvia. Plön region in Germany has -5,53, Lõuna-Eesti region in Estland has -3,16. Then follows Nordfriesland with -1,98 and Dithmarschen -1,57 in Germany.

So, the **depopulation** is the main trend in the social process of population change in the rural regions of the project SEMPRES. The proportion of the population decrease is significantly higher than the increase numbers in the Scandinavian countries and Poland.



The main causes of the rural depopulation are the continuation of the urbanization and emigration of the working age population abroad. The causes of the both processes are unemployment in rural areas, destruction of the infrastructure of social services (closing schools, health care institutions, bank filiales, public transport lines, even post offices and shops).

3.3. Another significant population change process is the **ageing of rural population**. This process correlates with the previous analysed social facts and processes and is a logically inevitable consequence of them. Emigration rural youth and adults in working age leads to a growth of the alone living older persons in rural areas. Emigration of the young people and low population density in rural areas is a cause for the difficulties to reach there the older persons and people with mental disabilities.

The facts of the **depopulation in rural areas** and **ageing of the rural population** are evident using both information sources and methods –statistical data and survey.

4. The survey data on the barriers and obstacles show that there are many factions of the barriers and obstacles which social service providers face when working with the end-user groups. There are mentioned the decrease of public finances for social services, the lack of rooms for meetings, the complex legal infrastructure which burdens service provision for the refugees and immigrants, the extensive documentation, inefficient mutual communication and job coordination between social service institutions and municipalities, and insufficient specialisation of the SSPOs' staff.
5. The characteristics of the humans in general and end-users particularly built another faction of the barriers and obstacles.
An avoiding changes is the common characteristic of the humans which has been mentioned in relation to both – SSPO's staff and many categories of the end-users.
The turbulent characteristics of the end-users are a lack of motivation to make changes in own life, insufficient education to be competitive in labour market, lack of social skills and self-confidence.
The typical restrictive factor for **refugees** and **immigrants** is the poor knowledge of the national language of the new residence country for their successful integration. Refugees and none-western immigrants face segregation, stigmatisation, and discrimination. The part of them suffers from the war traumas.
The **psychological problems** of the end-users are the serious barriers.
They suffer from apathy, unwillingness to make an effort and something change in their own life, lack of self-confidence, loneliness.
6. The **negative social attitude** is the widespread phenomenon and impact factor. The negative attitude towards the disadvantaged people is, without doubt, a kind of barriers and obstacles for them for the social integration. This negative factor has been witnessed frequently.



The very **final conclusion** on the socio-economic context in rural areas should be focused on the awareness of the **three general trends and risks** for a sustainable development in rural areas and even the general sustainability of the rural area as a living place. These trends are the **depopulation, ageing** of the rural population and **destruction of the infrastructure in rural living places**. The elimination of the vital important public services such as closing schools, doctorates, post offices, bank filiales, shops, public transport itineraries, abandonment routes – makes not accessible education, health care, public transport as the mean of the mobility, all that push people away from rural living places. Then rural territory becomes more economically and socially passive and empty. An emptiness from people and services is the social fact in many former rural living places. Many rural areas, for example, in Latvia are becoming empty. Developments in rural area as they are nowadays, seems, show that the rural areas really wan't be sustainable. The present social processes in rural regions impact not only the quality of life of the rural inhabitants but also the sustainability of the rural regions generally. Economical calculations as a base for decision making should be evaluated later as the biggest mistake in a strategic future planning.

Quo vadis rural area in the Baltic sea region? Towards the further intensification of the agricultural industry and the emptiness of the former rural living places (as it is happing evident in many places of Latvia)?

Finally, in the survey was given a possibility to add the **comments and/or remarks**. There were given no many answers. One of the rare comments has been given by the representative from the LEN in Luleå and Boden in Sweden, which could be a good final thought of this analysis due to its attitude towards the empowerment of refugees and immigrants:

“One important aspect for our project is that the increasing migration to Norrbotten will result in new services which will contribute to the common welfare and growth. For example, interpreters, mother tongue teachers, new foreign kitchen and food distribution, services provided in other languages than Swedish, etc. More is sure to come.”



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