



AUTUMN 2023

FARM ELDER

Funded by the EU under Erasmus+



The Farm Elder Story so far...

The FarmElder project's primary goal is to demonstrate how social farming can effectively meet identified needs across Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Slovenia, and Belgium. Through this project all partners will collaborate to delve into the challenges faced by elderly individuals and explore emerging social farming interventions in their respective nations. The project yields 14 compelling case studies, along with comprehensive reports detailing the issues affecting elderly individuals in each participating country.

In May 2023 the first learning and training activity took place in Kenmare, Ireland. The high attendance rate of local and transnational attendees was a testament to the work of South Kerry Partnership and the excellent work they are doing to progress Social Farming for the elderly in their area.



THE PROJECT HAS IDENTIFIED THAT...

- EUROPE'S POPULATION IS AGING AT AN UNPRECEDENTED PACE.
- THE EXISTING CARE HOME AND NURSING HOME MODELS OFTEN FALL SHORT OF MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF OUR ELDERLY CITIZENS.
- THERE IS A PRESSING NEED TO DEVELOP MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES THAT FOSTER ACTIVE AGING.
- A LACK OF INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION HINDERS ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS FROM MAKING FULL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

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Social Farming visit to Kerry May 2023

The FARMELDER Meeting, held from May 10th to May 12th, 2023, brought together dedicated project partners in the picturesque landscapes of Kenmare and surrounding areas in County Kerry, Ireland. TUS and South Kerry Development Partnership (SKDP), the Irish project partner, recently hosted FarmElder representatives from Europe on a mutual learning visit in Kerry. Out of 120 social farms across Ireland, there are over 40 based in the county with more than 60 participants. Chair of the Kerry Social Farming (KSF) working group, Éamon Horgan, emphasised the need for secure and consistent funding to support the initiative.

The meeting featured a visit to local farms, including the Murphy Dairy Farm, shedding light on the intricacies of dairy farming in the region. Teagasc advisor Claire McAuliffe, who is a member of the KSF working group, outlined how dairy farms can be ideal venues for social farming as they provide a variety of activities, which change depending on the season.

Additionally, the event delved into the growth and sustainability of KSF, incorporating international insights from the German experience. Anni and Josef Hindelang, who run a social farm at the foothills of the Bavarian Alps in Germany, shared their story through a video about their farm. Since 2020, they have hosted older people with dementia, their family members, and carers on the farm twice a month.

The group also visited Breeda and Pat O'Sullivan's sheep and suckler farm in Glencar, which is a case study in the FarmElder project. The FARMELDER Meeting was an invaluable platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and the pursuit of innovative solutions to enhance the well-being of elderly individuals through social farming.





A visit to the O' Sullivan Farm

(The visit to Breeda and Pat O'Sullivan's sheep and suckler farm in Glencar, as part of the FarmElder project, offered a captivating glimpse into the heart of social farming in the Kerry region. The O'Sullivans, who have been hosting social farming initiatives since 2017, exemplify the vital role that such programs play in the local community. Their picturesque farm, nestled near Ireland's highest mountain, Carrauntoohil, serves as a remarkable backdrop to their work.

In 2016, Breeda and Pat found themselves preparing for a future where it would just be the two of them running the farm. Breeda's curiosity about social farming was piqued when she heard about it on Radio Kerry, prompting her to reach out to Joseph McCrohan, SKDP Rural Development Officer. Today, the O'Sullivans, in collaboration with Kerry Social Farming (KSF), host participants each week, fostering a sense of inclusion and community.



A visit to the Kenmare Community Garden

The visit to the Community Garden off Railway Road in Kenmare took place on the second day of the LTTA, a transformative initiative led by Denise, a resident at Taobh Linn, which is home to many other older residents in the community. Denise, a dedicated farmer and grower, is a driving force behind the development of the garden.

The garden project was initiated on an unused piece of land and initially, the plan was to utilise a polytunnel for growing fruits and vegetables to supply Taobh Linn's kitchen. The project attracted attention locally and now the garden currently boasts a polytunnel and a surrounding garden area divided into various plots and raised beds with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Denise also provides the older residents of Taobh Linn with fresh produce for their meals.

Denise's passion and example inspire other residents in the community to become active gardeners or learn more about gardening.





Project progress

Online Training Course: Over the summer the project partners were busy developing an online training course aimed at building skills and competencies in providing and supporting social farming services for elderly people.

Inspiring videos: FarmElder is producing a series of four high-quality short videos describing successful practices and highlighting key themes that emerged during our research and case studies. These videos will serve as an inspiring motivator for those seeking knowledge of meaningful activities for elderly people and innovative models of social farming. Filming for the Irish video took place in May and we will share the finished results through our newsletter and social media at a future date.



Key Dates and news

Events: In July our TUS partners were showcasing the Farm Elder project at the Energy and Farm Diversification Show held in Gurteen Agricultural College in Tipperary.



Upcoming Meetings:

The next transnational meeting takes place in Arouca, Portugal, more to follow in the Winter Newsletter.