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Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

MAP Position Paper

SOCIAL DIMENSION OF RURAL AREAS



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1. Summary and key messages

Within the topic of the social dimension of rural areas, SHERPA proposed four sub-topics related to social relationships and their roles in: improving rural population well-being; ii) bridging rural-urban gap; iii) provisioning public goods; and iv) favoring social inclusion (migrants).

Given the interest of the MAP and the work carried out during the previous cycles, the Galician Multi-Actor Platform (MAP) decided to focus on the improvement of rural population well-being and favoring social inclusion. Sherpa proposed the following key questions to discuss:

- What are the needs of the area covered by the MAP in relation to social dimensions in rural areas?
- What are the policy interventions that are already being implemented?
- What are the examples of actions taken by local actors addressing these needs in the area covered by the MAP?
- Which policy interventions (i.e. instruments, measures) are recommended by the MAP members to be implemented at local, regional, and/or national levels? How can the EU support these interventions?
- What are the knowledge gaps, which research projects are needed?

Both Spanish MAPs, the one from Galicia and from Aragón, both in Spain, decided to collaborate in this particular topic. At the beginning of this cycle, they prepared and launched an online questionnaire in both regions in order to provide both MAPs with some preliminary insights regarding those above key questions. After that, the Galician MAP held two debate sessions. The overall exercise produced the following key messages:

- (i) The improvement of the social dimension of the rural areas in Galicia needs to primarily reinforce its economic base and improve the employment opportunities for the population.
- (ii) On access to services, the main needs and following recommendations for the future rural policies concern the mobility and transportation services (to face the challenges of a disperse habitat) and access to housing (with measures adapted to the different types of rural areas).
- (iii) On a second priority level, the MAP also considers it necessary to improve other services for the population: health service, access to Internet, access to leisure, culture and sport, care for the elderly, and childcare.
- (iv) The recommendations for future policies regarding those services are based on two guidelines: a) service provision schemes in rural areas should not mirror urban models and they have to involve the local population in the planning to achieve adapted solutions; b) the public sector has the obligation of granting the access of rural population to those services, but the provision can be public or through a private-public cooperation.
- (v) The main facts that condition the social relations in the rural areas of Galicia currently are the lack of time and the reduced number of neighbors (due to the disperse habitat and depopulation). Therefore, the capacity of public policies to directly influence these relations is limited. The MAP highlighted some measures that may contribute to foster social life in rural communities: provision of services that allow time for relationships, support for cultural and sport activities and provision of public spaces that favour socialisation.
- (vi) The MAP considers that the role of the EU in the future policies should be more active than at present, which is primarily focused on the provision of funds and in setting general guidelines. Among the proposals are the following: set up an experiences exchange program among rural territories across the EU that are facing similar social problems, the incorporation of the rural

perspective in a crosscutting manner in all the European policies; regulating the migratory flows promoting in an active way the immigration towards rural areas.

- (vii) The MAP points out several other aspects that affect the well-being and social relations in the rural areas, for which better data and scientific knowledge are needed. However, the MAP considers that the priority is to enhance the transference and the dissemination of the existing knowledge to potential beneficiaries in these areas, more than the generation of knowledge.

2. Introduction

The social dimension in rural areas includes multiple aspects related to living conditions, both material and immaterial, especially the social relations, which historically constituted a basic capital of the rural communities. In this SHERPA cycle, the Galician MAP set as its objective to reflect on the current reality and the facts that condition the quality of life and the social relations in the rural areas. This was based on a diagnosis of the current social situation of the rural areas in Galicia and their main conditioning facts, based on background research and evidence (Section 3).

With this starting point, a collaboration with the MAP from Aragón was established to design and application of the methodology. The MAP from Aragón represents another Spanish region with a rural reality that has similarities but also significant differences with Galicia. During the development of this common methodology it was launched, in both regions, an online survey aimed to rural inhabitants, with the objective of collecting information about environment conditions, access to employment, to services and population well-being and, finally, social relations and inclusion of the diverse groups.

The participants of the survey were invited by the MAP to assess their present quality of life regarding the above-mentioned issues. The results are analysed in section 4.1.1. Section 4.1.2 contains their priority needs to improve their quality of life. Finally, section 4.1.3 contains their own point of view about the current situation of social relations in rural areas and the factors influencing it. The answers from the survey were debated by MAP members. They identified several initiatives underway, promoted by public administrations or by different collectives and social agents, aimed to fulfil the different needs. Section 4.2 gathers the main identified needs by both the MAP and all the participants of the online survey.

Section 4.3.1 summarises the recommendations for the future rural policies formulated by the MAP, with the objective of responding to the priority needs. Among these recommendations, the following stand out: a) access to housing; b) mobility and transportation services, a particularly relevant issue given the enormous dispersion of the rural population in Galicia; c) care services for dependents, which are another priority issue in a rural environment, such as the Galician one, with a very dispersed habitat and a high level of urban sprawl. In addition, this section 4.3.1 also includes policy proposals for the strengthening and revitalisation of social relations in rural areas. Moreover, a specific point is dedicated to the role that, according to the MAP, the EU can play in policies for the improvement of the quality of life and the promotion of social relations.

Finally, section 4.3.2 collects the recommendations for future research agendas. The most outstanding result is that the MAP members consider that the priority is to improve the transfer and dissemination of existing knowledge to potential beneficiaries in rural areas.

The document finishes with a summary of the main conclusions, in addition to bibliographical references and two annexes.

3. Current situation based on background research and evidence

The diagnosis of the current situation in Galician rural areas from a social perspective considers three aspects: environmental conditions; access to employment, services, well-being of the population; social relations and inclusion of different groups.

3.1. Main conditioning elements

The current social reality of rural areas in Galicia is, in the first place, shaped by the **demographic structure and dynamics**. In the last 70 years, the social reality of Galicia is characterised by a sharp decline and a strong aging of the population, trends that continue in recent decades (López Iglesias, 2019). The result is that, according to the 2021 data following the DEGURBA methodology, rural areas, which we identify as thinly populated areas (TPA), occupy 4/5 of the territory (81.8%) but have only 1/4 of the population (26.3%), with an average density of 30.1 inhabitants/km². Depopulation is particularly severe in low-density thinly populated areas (low TPA): 65.2% of the territory has only 14.2% of the population, with a density limited to 20.7 inhabitants/km². Furthermore, 40.4% of the rural population is 60 years of age or older, while only 12.2% is under 20 years of age (IGE, 2022).

A second influencing factor is the **extreme dispersion** that has historically characterised and continues to characterise the structure of the Galician rural habitat. This strong dispersion is reflected in the fact that, while occupying 6% of the territory, Galicia has half of Spain's population settlements (more than 30,000 in absolute terms), 91.0% of them with less than 100 inhabitants (Guimarey et al, 2020). The consequence is a growing number of abandoned rural settlements or with an exceedingly small number of inhabitants, mostly elderly.

Over the last two decades, the confluence of aging and low fertility is causing terribly **negative natural growth rates** of the rural population. Regarding migratory flows, a persistent migration of young people to Galician urban areas and to other areas of Spain is compensated by the arrival of former migrants returning to their place of origin and, to a lesser extent, foreign immigrants (López Iglesias, 2019; Toxo, García Arias, 2018). Thus, the percentage of foreign (non-Spanish) population in rural Galicia, although it has increased, was limited in 2021 to a 3.0% (IGE, 2022).

The **loss of demographic and economic weight of rural areas** has been accompanied by an accelerated de-agrarianisation, due to the intense reduction in the importance of agricultural activity (López Iglesias, Pérez Fra, 2004; López Iglesias, 2019). Current data illustrate this reality: in 2021, only a 12.3% of the employed people living in rural areas (TPA), had as their main activity the agricultural sector (including forestry and fishing); 9.8% worked in construction, 15.1% in industry and 62.1% in the service sector (IGE, 2022). Consequently, we are witnessing the disappearance of the rural society based on traditional agriculture. Taking its place, we find in Galicia a social structure of rural areas characterised by a growing diversity of groups, not referred to their economic activity and social relations.

An additional phenomenon that conditions the structure and social relations in rural areas is the **growing volume of daily mobility flows** (commuting). According to the 2011 Population Census, 42.8% of employed people in Galicia work in a municipality other than the one where they reside. Mobility through the Atlantic Corridor and nearby rural areas is notable, but the attraction towards the two inland provincial capitals (Lugo and Ourense) and the regional centres is also observed (López-Iglesias, Peón, Rodríguez-Álvarez, 2018). Thus, at present we find many people who reside in rural areas but commute daily to work in urban centres or the reverse phenomenon, those who work in rural municipalities but live in urban centres; and also, people who, having their usual residence in urban areas, use rural dwellings as a secondary residence on weekends and/or vacations.

All the previous notes refer to the rural context of Galicia. A final fact that emerges from the literature review and statistical data is the increasing heterogeneity that present the rural areas. Specifically, considering both demographic and social economic variables, we can differentiate **three major types of rural areas: the urban-forested rural, the active rural and the abandoned rural** (Ferreira Golpe et al, 2021; Martínez-Filgueira et al, 2017).

3.2. The current social reality of rural areas in Galicia

Rural areas continue to show a low GDP/inhabitant in Galicia: in 2019, primary income (obtained from the production process) per inhabitant was limited to 71.6% of the regional average, while in urban areas it reached 120.2% of the average. The situation of the rural population is less unfavourable in terms of disposable income per inhabitant (81.6% of the average), thanks to public subsidies, mainly Social Security transfers (IGE, 2022).

Inequality in income distribution and the incidence of unemployment shows, on the other hand, relatively low values in rural Galicia, clearly lower than in urban areas. Therefore, the percentage of people at **risk of poverty or social exclusion** has tended to reduce in rural areas in the last decade (from 22.8% in 2011 to 17.6% in 2020), and in recent years is below the average for Galicia (in 2020 this average was 19.5%) (IGE, 2022).

An element that conditions the quality of life in rural areas of Galicia, and the economic dynamism of these areas, are the important deficiencies that continue to exist in **access to basic services for the population and companies** (health, education, childcare and dependent population, public transport...) (Guimarey et al, 2020, 2021). This problem is aggravated by the strong dispersion of the habitat structure, which hinders the adequate provision of services to people who do not live in rural areas of a certain size (Fernández, Peón, 2017). In this aspect, considered in the Spanish context, for most of the Galician rural areas the main conditioning factor for adequate access to services is not so much the low demographic densities but the dispersion of the population. The phenomena of territorial exclusion that affect a significant part of the rural population of Galicia do not refer only to the access to public services, but also to private services dependent on the business logic (commercial, financial services, ...) (Fernández, Riveiro, 2018).

The available studies confirm, firstly, the existence in Spain of a problem of accessibility to services for the population living in rural areas. Thus, Spain's predominantly rural provinces have a lower availability of local services than their counterparts do in other European countries, in terms of distance to the nearest service. A difference between Spain and other EU countries (such as Germany, France or Italy) that is not observed, however, for urban areas (Alloza et al, 2021). The second fact to highlight is that, according to the perception of the population regarding the difficulty of access to different services, this problem is particularly serious in Galicia. The data confirms **Galicia as the region with the greatest difficulties of access to services**, doubling the percentage of households that express these difficulties to the Spanish average. A situation that studies explain by the dispersion presented here by the rural population (Fernández, Peón, 2017). To specify the diagnosis of this issue in Galicia, it is not enough to analyse the data on the availability of different services at the municipal level (Goerlich, Maudos, Mollá, 2021). Since, while in most of Spain the population of each municipality is concentrated in a single nucleus, in Galicia each municipality has on average about 100 different population entities.

Despite the conditions that we have just described, based on empirical evidence (low relative level of income/inhabitant, limited employment opportunities, deficiencies in access to services), the available data on the perception that the Galician rural population has of its quality of life show a level of satisfaction that can be qualified as medium-high. Specifically, according to the data of the *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* (Structural survey to households) do Galician Statistics Institute referred to 2019, the population residing in rural municipalities (less than 10,000 inhabitants) shows an average level of **satisfaction with the quality of life** in the area where they live of 7.67 on a scale of 0 to 10; which is significantly higher than the Galician

average (7.50) and clearly above that recorded in the largest urban centres (7.20). More than 3/4 of the rural population (76.5%) indicates values equal to or higher than 7, while only 6% express a clear dissatisfaction with the quality of life (values below 5) (IGE, 2019).

Regarding **social relationships**, regular contact with neighbours continues to be much more frequent in rural areas than in urban areas (IGE, 2019). However, the density of social life and community ties in rural Galicia has weakened greatly in recent decades, because of depopulation, aging and changes in the social structure. The extreme situation is found in a growing number of population centres where there are only very few inhabitants, most of them of advanced age, with consequent problems of relationship and social integration (Xunta de Galicia, 2015). In any case, the situation in this aspect, as in all those commented above, varies greatly between the three main types of rural areas that we can differentiate today in Galicia (urban-forested rural areas, active rural areas and abandoned rural areas) (Ferreira Golpe et al, 2021; Guimarey et al, 2020; Martínez-Filgueira et al, 2017).

4. Position of the Multi-Actor Platform

4.1. Identified needs

In May 2022 was launched an online survey to people living in the rural areas of Galicia with the aim of collecting initial information about the following variables: their perception of the quality of life in the rural areas and the facts that determine that quality of life (identification of needs), the current situation and the determinants of the social relations in these areas, examples of actions and best practices. From the results of this survey, was organised a MAP meeting on the 28th of June. In this meeting, the members debated, completed and nuanced these results, especially the ones referred to the needs of the Galician rural areas regarding the social dimension.

The results of the online survey and this first MAP meeting are in Annex 2 and are analysed below.

4.1.1. Assessment of the current quality of life in the rural areas of Galicia

The survey received 166 answers. These do not constitute a statistically representative sample of the rural population, but they are a significant number and with the presence of different groups (by age, gender, economic activity and types of rural areas).

The first one was aimed at finding out the **assessment of their quality of life**. The answers show that the perception of quality of life in the Galician rural areas is quite positive (5.4 average on a scale of 1 to 7, table 5, Annex 2). These results are coherent with the ones collected by official statistical sources, such as the Structural household survey (Enquisa estrutural a fogares, IGE, 2019). Moreover, the data do not indicate significant differences among the three types of rural areas that we distinguish (table 5, Annex 2): in the three cases (urban-forested rural, active rural and abandoned rural), the average value is between 5.4 and 5.5 and the 80% of the answers point to the same values or over 5.

The analysis based on **gender** shows certain differences, with an average rating of women (5.6) higher than the average rating of men (5.3) However, this must be nuanced per types of rural areas. In the case of women, those who live in more isolated municipalities, with less demographic density and public services (abandoned rural areas), they limit their rating to a 5.4, while in the best connected and dynamic areas, this increases to 5.8 (urban-forested rural areas). On the other hand, the responses of men are similar in the diverse types of rural areas. In fact, the highest average value is in abandoned rural areas (5.5). Therefore, the best feminine rating of the quality of life is concentrated in the most dynamic rural areas, while the perception of men and women is equal, and even reversed, in the abandoned rural areas. These results must be put in relation to question debated by the MAP in previous years, about the survival in the Galician rural areas of differentiated roles according to gender, which means that unpaid work within the family continues

to fall mainly on women. This being a general problem, its seriousness is greater in those less dynamic rural areas, because of the survival of the traditional values and because of the lesser availability of services (public and private).

The differences are clearer depending on the **age**. Young people (<35 years old) that live in rural areas are those who rate their quality of life worst (average value of 5.0), with no differences between the three types of rural areas. While the rating is increasing with age, reaching an average figure of 6.0 (out of 7) for those aged 65 and over. Finally, regarding the economic activity, the main fact to highlight is the clearly higher than average rate of their quality of life indicated by two groups of the rural population: retired people (6.0) and those who work in public administrations (5.7).

In the second part of the survey, there are 23 variables that determine the quality of life, grouped into three categories: environmental conditions, access to employment and services, social relations. It was requested to assign a value from 1-7 based on the importance given to each of them. The following conclusions are highlighted:

- The importance attributed to **variables related to the environment** is the highest (average value of 5.8), oscillating between 5.6 in abandoned rural areas and 5.9 in the active rural areas. Among the 6 variables included here those to which greater relevance is granted are the following: living in a natural environment and absence of pollution and noise while the rating is lower for those related to security and lower accumulation of people and traffic (table 6, Annex 2).
- The 11 variables included in the category of **access to employment and services** obtain a global rating of 4.6 (out of 7), oscillating between 4.3 in the abandoned rural areas and 4.8 in the urban-forested rural areas. These results raise certain doubts as whether the respondents rated these aspects or the quality of these aspects in the area they live. Two of the variables collected, the ones considered more relevant are access to education, access to housing, access to health services and access to Internet (values between 4.9 and 5.3). While the lowest values (4.0-4.3) correspond to access to banking services, access to mobility and transportation services and existence of employment opportunities. This scale of priorities is similar for the three types of rural areas that exist in Galicia (Table 7, Annex 2).
- The 6 variables related to **social relations** receive an intermediate importance between the two previous groups (average rating of 5.1), without significant differences among the three types of rural areas. Within fairly similar scores, those considered most relevant are the possibility of establishing social relations with the local community (5.3) and the inexistence of tension between groups (5.2) (table 8, Annex 2).

It is noteworthy that elements that the MAP has repeatedly highlighted as priorities for the future of the rural areas in Galicia, such as access to employment or transportation and mobility services, obtain a relatively low rating. To interpret these results, we must consider that the questions referred to the importance that the respondents give to each variable, not to the existing deficiencies in it, and the answers are based on their individual situation. People that answer chose to continue living in rural areas and therefore it can be understood that they have achieved a solution to these issues (access to employment, mobility, and transportation needs). In this sense, the answers debated should be complemented with those analysed below.

4.1.2. Identification of needs; priority aspects to improve the quality of life in rural areas

The third block of the survey was based on the same 23 variables that have just been commented. However, it was requested the **selection of the 8 priorities to be improved to enhance the quality of life** in the Galician rural areas. The answers can be identified with the main needs detected in the social dimension of these areas. The panorama changes substantially with respect to the previous section: the priority needs

concentrate on aspects related to the access of employment and services, without great differences between the three types of rural areas (table 9, Annex 2).

In table 10, Annex 2, you can see the needs considered priorities by the group of respondents. Seven out of the eight more popular answers belong to the category of access to employment and services. The first position is for: *existence of employment opportunities* (chosen by 77.1%), the second is the improvement of the *transportation and mobility services* (62.7) and in the following positions are: *health services* (52.4%), *access to housing* (51.2%), *access to Internet* (50.6%) and *elderly care services* (47.0%). Differentiating the three types of rural, the existence of employment opportunities is the highlighted aspect in first place in the three cases. The transportation and mobility services and the health services come after except for the abandoned rural areas, which places in second position access to housing (table 11.a, Annex 2).

These results were debated at the MAP meeting. The answers coincided with the survey (tables 10.b and 11.b, Annex 2), but the debate allowed the addition of nuances for the three types of rural areas.

- Abandoned rural areas: For this type of rural area, the selection of needs conducted by MAP is similar to the one obtained in the survey. The main difference is that the MAP members excluded from the 8 priorities list the access to leisure, culture, and sports and also absence of pollution (that appeared at the 7 and 8 positions in the survey), including instead two related to the attention to children and young people: access to education and access to babysitting services and childcare services. In this regard, during the debate was highlighted that the lack of babysitting services and schools is an obstacle for the maintenance of these rural areas of the current residents and, overall, for the settlement of new inhabitants. The people native to the area count with the support of family and neighbours for the care of their children, but those who settle for the first time in that area, do not have that social network and these services are essential. Overall, the need to preserve traditional dynamics, in which children are raised with the support of the family and the whole community, has been stressed.

The other six needs that the MAP consider priorities coincide with the ones resulting from the survey, although the order was modified. Thus, the MAP members place in first position the improvement of access to housing, even above the employment opportunities, indicating the existence of many empty houses that are not available neither for sale nor for rent, which makes difficult the permanence or arrival of young population. On the other side, they give special attention to the improvement of health care. Generally, they state that the urban model of service provision is not suitable for these rural areas, so it is necessary to design models adapted to their reality. For example, for the transportation and mobility services the potential of models such as the use of the school transport by adults or on demand transport was pointed out.

Although the MAP does not include among the eight first needs any related to the strengthening of social relations, it does give these aspects greater relevance than in the survey. In this sense, the members highlighted that the scarcity of neighbours and the lack of meeting places affects the quality of life of the residents and hinders the integration of possible new inhabitants. On the other hand, while the sense of community was emphasised as an advantage of the small rural communities, the existence of conflicts that can make coexistence difficult was also mentioned. Regarding safety, although the abandoned rural areas in Galicia are safe, there is concern about the safety of elderly people. They often live in isolation and fear being deceived, without the protection of the neighbourhood they used to have. Lastly, MAP members highlight the relevance of the issues related to governance, where it is necessary for the rural population to actively participate in the design of policies that affect them, and not be a mere passive submissive subject of externally imposed models.

- Active rural: For this type of rural areas, the eight needs selected as priorities by the MAP coincide with those resulting from the survey, varying only the order of some of them (see tables 11.a and 11.b, Annex 2). As additional notes derived from the debate in the MAP, it is worth mentioning those

related to the role played by the improvement of access to housing: the MAP Members recognise the importance of this aspect but consider that the priority to maintain or attract population are the employment opportunities and access to diverse services. On the other hand, regarding the access to Internet, they qualify that as or more relevant than investments in infrastructures is to improve the education of rural population, so that they can use digital tools. As an example, the role that this can play in mitigating the financial exclusion derived from the lack of bank offices in rural areas is mentioned.

Regarding social relations, a general consideration should be noted: the dispersion of the rural habitat in Galicia and the process of depopulation means that in many small towns the problem is no longer the improvement of relations between the community, but rather the absence of neighbours. On the other hand, for the areas integrated in the "active rural areas" (characterised, in general, by a farming specialisation) it was mentioned the increasing presence of foreign immigrants as labour force in the farms. This does not constitute a problem, nor is this causing conflicts, since they are people fully integrated in the local communities.

- Urban-forested rural: The valuation of the MAP members is, as in the previous cases, very similar to the one derived from the survey. They only eliminate from the eight priority needs the promotion of participation in collective activities (which the survey places at position 8), incorporating in its place (position 5) access to childcare services (see tables 11.a and 11.b of Annex 2). This last aspect is included by the MAP among the eight priorities for the three types of rural areas in Galicia.

In addition to the scores given to the different needs, we summarise some additional notes derived from the debate in the MAP:

- It was highlighted, especially for the urban-forested rural are (that includes many peri-urban areas), the importance of the transportation and mobility services, as a decisive element to be able to live in rural areas even if having a job elsewhere. This requires the development of transport networks, both public and private.
- It was also emphasised the relevance of having a good Internet connection, to improve the access to certain services and as an essential element for the companies and rural business (hostelry, for example).
- Regarding access to housing, apart from the limited availability, common to all rural areas of Galicia, there is a specific problem in coastal areas due to the tourist pressure: this increases prices and causes that the houses are not rented for the entire year, but only in periods of lower influx of tourists.
- Regarding the services of attention to elderly people, the great current deficiencies were made clear: the shortage of residence places and other support services, which cause women to be overloaded with these tasks in the family environment. But the existing demand for this type of services was also mentioned as a potential source of employment in rural areas.
- In a different area, although it was not included among the 8 priority needs, the MAP Members debated an existing problem, especially in the urban-forested rural areas of Galicia, related to the natural environment: the proliferation of forest plantations near the houses (with species such as eucalyptus and pine trees), which end up causing security problems due to forest fires.
- Finally, reference is made to the need to enhance access to leisure, culture and sports activities, as a way to promote social relations.

Overall, for Galicia as a whole, the MAP selected eight priority needs to improve the social dimension of rural areas. According to the number of votes received, these can be classified into two main levels of priority: the first is the existence of employment opportunities, access to housing and transportation and mobility

services; at a second level are services of different types (health services, Internet access, access to reading, culture and sport, care services for the elderly and childcare services) (Table 10b, Annex 2).

4.1.3. Social relations in rural areas: current situation and determining factors

The research conducted in previous years highlights the problem of the disappearance of social and community structures linked to the traditional agrarian system, and the consequent need to implement actions to facilitate the consolidation of new structures for social relations and participation. Without a living society with a capacity for participation, it is difficult to accept one of the priority elements of the Galician MAP for the rural areas of the future: cooperation and improved governance.

For this reason, the last block of questions in the survey aimed at analysing social relations:

1. First, they were asked to rate a series of conditioning or limiting factors of social relations in the environment in which they live. They were also asked to select the 3 places that facilitate these relationships to the greatest extent.
2. Subsequently, several questions were asked about the areas or activities that favour the establishment of relationships among the neighbours, the intensity of social relationships and the level of participation in social life of a series of groups.

Factors limiting social relationships and places facilitating them

The lack of time is pointed out as the factor that limits the most social relationships (average value of 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 7), followed by the small number of inhabitants (4.3). With average values, around 4 are also mentioned the following: the lack of interest in social relationships, the existence of opposing interests and the lack of trust. The least important aspects (values between 3.2 and 3.5) are the existence of previous negative relationships, cultural differences and the lack of infrastructures that facilitate sociability (table 12, Annex 2).

However, these global results hide **differences according to the type of rural areas**. In urban-forested rural areas, the lack of time appears as the main limiting factor, followed by the lack of interest in social relations and the existence of conflicting interests, which should be related to the greater heterogeneity of local communities in these areas, with a greater diversity of interests of the residents. On the other hand, in both active rural areas and abandoned rural areas, in addition to the lack of time, demographic weakness (reduced number of people living in the locality) comes to the forefront as a limiting factor in social relations (Table 12, Annex 2).

The **differences according to gender** are limited. Based on this, women give somewhat more importance to the lack of time, the existence of cultural differences and opposing interests and negative past relationships. On the other hand, they give less importance than men to demographic factors and to the lack of interest in establishing social relationships. The analysis by age shows bigger differences. Lack of time is of little relevance for people aged 65 and over, who, on the other hand, give greater importance than average to lack of interest in social relationships, lack of trust and conflicting interests. The younger population expresses an opposite view, under 35 years of age (table 13, Annex 2).

As a whole, the analysis of the answers obtained in the survey refers us to a phenomenon pointed out in the MAP meetings in the past years: the breakdown of the community life linked to a traditional and agrarian model. Related to this, it also points out a fact well collected in the academic literature: the role traditionally played by the community has now been partially replaced by that of the public sector. Moreover, the transmission through the media of values in which individualism prevails is added as an element that weakens social relationships.

Regarding the **places of socialisation**, the respondents were asked to choose the three that they consider most important for the establishment of social relationships. The places of hospitality (bars, restaurants, nightlife) are by far the most cited, followed by neighbourhood places and spaces open to the public, while

the role of cultural and sports centres is much smaller (table 14, Annex 2). Some interviewees indicate that in the locality where they live there are none of the above-mentioned spaces, while others extend the list citing as relevant spaces of socialisation the workplace, traditional festivals, and religious events, as well as one of the few institutions of the traditional agrarian society that is still alive: the communal forests (of collective property).

Areas of activity that favour social relationships and intensity of these relationships

Section 15 of Annex 2 contains the responses on the role played in social relations by different areas or activities. All the proposed areas obtain an average rating equal to or higher than 4 (no scale from 1 to 7), but with differences (the values range from 4.0 to 5.2). Those considered to encourage to a greater extent social relations are the leisure activities and sharing daily activities, followed by the activities of neighbourhood associations, the provision of mutual aid on the daily work and cultural and sports activities.

These overall results hide **differences by type of rural area**, especially for the active rural areas (areas with greater agricultural dynamism). In this type of area, the role attributed to all areas of activity in stimulating social relations is lower. Within this overall picture, the relationships derived from the agricultural activity itself (sharing day-to-day activities, mutual help in work) acquire greater relative importance, together with the leisure activities and those carried out by neighbourhood associations. The workload involved in agricultural activity (mainly livestock farming) may partly explain these results.

In part, the **differences between men and women** illustrate the persistence of differentiated gender roles. Women only give lower values to the commonly owned mountain land communities (entities in which the representation of each house traditionally corresponded to the households) and to leisure activities. However, they value to a greater extent the role played in social relationships by the remaining areas, especially those related to the care of children (activities in educational and sports centres) and to daily life (day-to-day activities and mutual help at work) (Table 15, Annex 2).

Regarding the **intensity of the relationships** in the place where they live, the two extreme options are very few, if any, the two extreme options: the almost non-existence of social relationships and, at the other extreme, the entrepreneurship in joint projects. Most of the responses coincide, in similar proportions, in two intermediate situations: the existence of superficial relationships (44.0%) and a coexistent and mutual relationship between neighbours (47.6%). By types of areas, the intensity of the relations is clearly greater in the abandoned rural areas (the most traditional areas) and less in the urban-forested rural areas, with the active rural areas occupying an intermediate position; this seems to be coherent with the characteristics of several territories. In addition, there are significant differences according to gender, with the intensity of the relationships, according to women being much higher than that indicated by men (Table 16, Annex 2).

The **central role played by women** in the social life of rural areas in Galicia also highlights our results on the intensity of participation of different groups (Table 17, Annex 2). The respondents consider that women are the most participative group by far. The data by age show, on the other hand, a worrying fact for the present and the future: the level of participation in social life of the young people is low, and in some cases lower than that of the elderly population, especially in areas with greater agricultural activity (active rural areas) and in peri-urban areas (urban-forested rural areas). Finally, there is less participation in the social life of the new settlers, especially foreigners.

4.2. Existing interventions and actions

To address the question "*What are the policy interventions already in place and what are examples of actions taken by local actors addressing these needs implemented on the area covered by the MAP?*" we have introduced a specific question in the online survey, we have asked the MAP members during the meeting of June, and we have collected other interesting initiatives already in place.

Among the 166 respondents to the online survey, 63 of them identified initiatives and activities organised by local actors towards social revitalisation. They cited 11 types of organising entities and 13 types of activities, among them: popular festivals and dinners (25%), cultural activities (14%), walking trails or tourist tours (11%), sportive activities (11%), demonstrations, collaborative works around common lands, etc. Among organising entities they cited: neighbourhood associations (35%), cultural associations (20%), municipalities (15%), common land property owners (13%).

The Galician MAP identifies several initiatives already in place that cover social needs in rural areas. An important group of these activities are carried out by social agents on the ground and fits well with the lack of services to the community in rural areas as well as with the need of creating employment opportunities (Table 1).

Table 1 – Examples of actions taken by local actors.

CDR ANCARES (*): Social community services and social/cultural revitalisation. Mainly private funding and public funding. Since 1986

CDR O VISO (*): Social community services and social/cultural revitalisation. Attention to elderly people with common housing facilities, community restauration and local transport. Public and private funding. Since 1986. <http://www.cdroviso.org/cdroviso.html>

CDR PORTAS ABERTAS (*): Social services and social revitalisation. Since 1990. <http://www.cdrportasabertas.org/>

TEITOS DE PIORNEDO: this is a women association of a historic village, Piornedo. They launched a crowdfunding project in order to recover the roofs of ancient constructions made in rye straw. For doing that they needed to plant rye again, recovering local knowledge. <http://culturagalega.gal/noticia.php?id=30709>

ALLARIZ MUNICIPALITY: social services addressed to elderly people and children, job creation initiatives and other revitalisation initiatives. Public aids funding. <https://www.allariz.gal/administracion/areas-municipais/benestar-social/>

<https://www.allariz.gal/administracion/areas-municipais/promocion-economica-turismo-e-comercio/>

PORTA A PORTA: Public service health delivered in a vehicle that visits each rural municipality in Galicia offering basic health services, like memory workshops or chiropodist to people aged more than 55 years old. Since 2022. <https://politicassocial.xunta.gal/es/recursos/planes-y-programas/coidados-porta-porta>

Employment workshops, financed by the European Social Fund. These workshops, financed by the European Social Fund are aimed at several crafts, for instance, the rehabilitation of ancient constructions to use them for social meetings or other social uses like offering housing facilities. This initiative was highlighted by the MAP.

ASOCIACIÓN ANTONIO GANDÓY: This entity approaches educational services to children under three years old living in rural areas. At the same time, it is an initiative of self-employment. Private and public financing. It is the continuity of a previous experience, Preescolar na Casa, founded in 1977. <http://antoniogandoyeducacion.blogspot.com/p/preescolar-na-casa-un-programa-pioneiro.html>

CENTRO OCUPACIONAL VILALBA: Private-public funding for the inclusion of disabled people in this municipality. <https://centroocupacionaldevilalba.org/quen-somos/>

ARCA DA NOE: private initiative to develop a cultural agenda in a rural area (Vilar de Santos). In place for 8 years. <https://gl-es.facebook.com/ArcaDaNoe/>

AMIPA: Private initiative (disabled people families association) with public funding for the inclusion of disabled people in Padrón (A Coruña). 15 years of experience. <https://asociacionamipa.gal/>

SEMENTEIRA: Private initiative (Catholic organisation CARITAS) with the collaboration of public entities at different territorial levels which promotes the integration of social excluded families through different food-related activities in Ordes (A Coruña). https://www.caritas.es/economia_solidaria/semteira-formacion-laboral/

(* CDR= Centro de Desenvolvemento Rural: In Spain some ONG exist called Rural Development Centres (CDR) grouped under a confederation of CDR (COCEDER) at national level.

It is striking that the **LAGs** that have been executing LEADER programs do not appear among the initiatives included in this list. In MAP's opinion, these groups are relevant in terms of project funding but in most cases, they make a limited direct contribution to the social revitalisation of rural areas.

4.3. Recommendations from the MAP

The second MAP meeting was held on September 13th, 2022, and it focused on the recommendations or proposals to tackle the needs identified in the previous meeting:

- Recommendations on the policies for managing the social needs in rural areas in Galicia. The debate was divided in two parts:
 - o Policies to meet the social demands prioritised in the June meeting (access to housing, transportation and mobility, other services for population).
 - o Public policies that can contribute to the strengthening and revitalisation of the social relations in the rural areas (considering the results obtained in the online survey about the current situation and the main limits of that social relations).
- Role of the EU in policies aimed at improving the quality of life and enhancing social relations in rural areas.
- Main shortcomings in knowledge and research on these topics, and, therefore, shortcomings in the research fields that should be supported in the coming years.

The results obtained for each for these blocks are summarised below.

4.3.1. Recommendations for future rural policies

Recommendations on policies to address the prioritised social demands

Table 10b, in Annex 2, shows the 8 social needs of the rural areas in Galicia prioritised by the MAP. It was decided not to address at the meeting the need referred to the existence of job opportunities. The reason is that the possible policy proposals in this area refer to the different actions to strengthen the economic base of rural areas, an issue widely debated in the previous cycles.

The debate and the recommendations of the MAP focused on the other two needs that will be prioritised to a greater extent (access to housing, mobility and transportation) and, within other services to population, those of care for the dependent population. Below are the recommendations for these 3 policy fields:

- **Access to housing.** The MAP pointed out an action that refers to the above point 4.3.2 : the need to improve the knowledge about the available housing in the rural areas. For this purpose, the MAP proposes the elaboration of local censuses that will make it possible to identify the existence of vacant properties that could (potentially) be available for rent or sale, as well as the state of conservation. Once this potential offer had been identified, different types of interventions were identified to facilitate an adequate access to housing in rural areas (by new residents, rural young people who wish to become independent from their families ...):

- o Public housing promotion policies, focused on the rehabilitation of housing acquired from private owners and public properties, for their subsequent sale or rental. This type of action is considered as particularly adequate for the less dynamic rural areas, given the scarcity of private real estate developers and the existence of many abandoned buildings (public and private).
 - o Creation of public housing banks, which facilitate the availability, for sale or rent, of both publicly owned housing and, above all, of private owners. This action is thought to be especially necessary in the less dynamic rural areas, in order to replace the lack of a minimally organised and transparent private market. In these public banks, in addition to acting as an intermediary between potential suppliers and seekers, the Administration (regional or local) should act as guarantor of housing contracts, which may encourage the owners of vacant housing to incorporate them into the market. In addition, to stimulate supply, MAP considers it necessary to penalise, by means of tax measures or other mechanisms, the maintenance of vacant housing.
 - o In the most dynamic rural areas (urban-forested rural areas), MAP members propose measures to limit competence from tourist uses, which hinder access to housing for regular residents.
 - o Subsidies for housing rehabilitation by private owners, conditioned to the incorporation of the houses to the rental market. Additionally, to facilitate the processing of licenses for housing rehabilitation, which is an added difficulty especially in areas of high architectural or historical value.
- **Mobility and transportation:** the need of having a better knowledge both on the current demands of potential users and on alternative forms of mobility to conventional public transport is highlighted. MAP Members recognise the complexity of defining an adequate public transport policy, which allows the population access to the different services, in a rural reality such as Galicia, characterised by a much-dispersed population and, in many areas, with low demographic densities. Given this habitat configuration, any public planning action elaborated at state or regional level, without the participation of the local or regional Administrations and agents (as it happens nowadays), is condemned to failure. In fact, the current planning has the result that at present there is a significant part of the territory where the supply of public transport is inexistent or is not adapted to the needs of the demand (for example, timetables). Consequently, the main recommendation is to elaborate a planning of transport services at local level, coordinated (in routes, frequencies, and schedules) with the offer of public (educational, sanitary, social) and private (commercial, banking...) services existing in rural areas that act as service poles for the population of the surroundings.
 - **Care services for the dependent population.** The MAP considers it essential for the future of rural areas that there is a sufficient provision of services for these groups (mainly elderly people who require care). In this sense, a field in which the offer is today practically inexistent and therefore requires urgent action was highlighted: the integrated services of proximity. The opinion of the MAP members is that this type of services should be provided mainly by the public sector, although certain modalities of public-private collaboration through initiatives similar to the current RDCs can also play a relevant role (see section 4.2). It was also pointed out that, as far as possible; people who need these services to be able to choose who provides them, encouraging the relationships of trust that may already exist in the territory. Finally, it was highlighted the existence of growing problems of available work force, which make it difficult to hire people to provide these services in rural areas. To address this problem, some measures were suggested in the debate: from encouraging the arrival of immigrants to work in this sector to improving the salary and working conditions of those already in employment.

Recommendations on policies aimed at strengthening and revitalise social relationships

The debate began with an analysis of the results obtained in the survey on the current situation and determining factors of social relations in rural areas of Galicia (see point 4.1.3). The MAP member agreed, in general terms, agreed with the image derived from these results.

Starting from the diagnosis, in terms of policy recommendations, the MAP members consider public intervention in this field to be less relevant. The fact that the main limiting factors of social relations, according to the survey, are the lack of time and the reduced number of neighbours (derived from the dispersion of the habitat and the low population densities) means that the direct capacity of public policies to promote social relations is modest. Nevertheless, measures that can indirectly facilitate these social relationships were pointed out at the meeting:

- Provision of services that allow a greater availability of time (conciliation policies, care services for dependents).
- Policies of support to entities and activities in rural areas that promote socialisation and participation (sports and cultural activities, neighbourhood associations ...).
- Measures aimed at reducing isolation and solitude, overall, in elderly people.
- Promote the design of more people-friendly public spaces that facilitate socialisation.

Role of the EU in policies for the improvement of the quality of life and the promotion of social relations in rural areas

The MAP considers that the EU can play a more active role than the one it has carried out to date by focused on the allocation of funds and the establishment of general guidelines for the rural development policy (within the CAP) and for other programs (co-financed by other European Structural and Investment Funds).

Throughout the debate, the following considerations and proposals on the possible role of the EU in policies aimed at improving the social dimension of rural areas in Galicia emerged:

- Implementation of a program of exchange of experiences between EU rural territories facing similar social problems, to disseminate examples of good practices and policies applied with good results (for example, in relation to mobility and transport).
- Changes in the control mechanisms for projects financed by these EU funds, moving audit and control from administrative compliance and focusing instead on the achievement of the real and actual fulfilment of the objectives established for each policy. For this purpose, a greater social participation is also considered necessary, both in the design of the policies and in the follow-up and control of the actions carried out.
- On the other hand, it was pointed out the need for the rural dimension or perspective to be incorporated in a cross-cutting way in all the policies that affect these areas, and therefore in all the programs co-financed by the different EU funds, both in the design of the policies and in the distribution of their economic endowment.
- Some MAP Members question the distribution of some European funds to which Spain is eligible, and specifically in Galicia. Rural areas, due to their lower demographic and economic dynamism, largely contribute to the fact of Galicia being classified by the EU as "less developed" or "in transition", thus receiving a higher volume of European Structural Funds. However, it is often the urban centres and the most dynamic areas that receive most of these funds.
- To curb the process of depopulation that most of the rural areas in territories such as Galicia are suffering, the MAP considers that a more active policy of attracting foreign immigrants is necessary. In this aspect, the EU should play a central role, through an adequate regulation of migratory flows in European borders that favours an orderly immigration to rural areas.

4.3.2. Recommendations for future research agendas

- The MAP points out as one of the priority issues in which it is necessary to improve the information and knowledge available: the identification and structure of property in rural areas, both for houses (as previously mentioned) and, to an even greater extent, for rural properties.
- Another priority issue for future research projects refers to population mobility, both for work reasons and for access to various services, especially in rural areas with a much-dispersed habitat, such as Galicia. More research is needed both on the current reality and on the mobility needs of the population, as well as to design innovative ways of providing these services, better adapted to reality.
- On the other hand, the MAP detects shortcomings in the statistical information available for rural areas, such as an insufficient incorporation of gender perspective in these statistics, which hinders or prevents an adequate understanding of the reality.
- The objective of bringing the public administration closer to the citizen is for the MAP another field that needs more research. Research that orients the measures aimed at: making it easier for the administration to reach the citizens; making digitalisation accessible to different groups of rural population, including the elderly; and the digitalisation of the administration should not mean, as it has often happened, a greater bureaucratic burden for the users.
- In another area, more research on the design and evaluation of public policies applied in rural areas is considered necessary with two ultimate objectives: to improve coordination between the different policies (horizontal coordination) and the various institutional levels (vertical coordination); to make the measures more flexible and adapted to the reality and needs of each territory.
- Finally, the MAP Members indicate that, the generation of new scientific knowledge in different fields, is as important as to promote to a much greater extent its transfer to potential recipients in rural areas. An example mentioned in the meeting is what happens with renewable energies: scientific and technological development today allows self-generation through energy communities, but the deficient transfer of this knowledge to rural areas is limiting the establishment of these production units even in areas with good conditions for their operation. Other areas where the same problem was highlighted were climate change or water availability.

Conclusions

The needs in terms of quality of life and social relations identified in the MAP of Galicia coincide with those detected in the online survey (to which 166 people responded). They are related to two fundamental aspects: access to employment and access to services. Within those services, those that were regarded as a priority and which have greatest demand are access to housing and mobility and transport services; at a second level, health services, access to the Internet, care for the elderly and childcare services are also required.

The needs regarding social relations are considered a lower priority, but the MAP highlights the importance of access to leisure, culture, and sports activities as a way of fostering these social relations. On the other hand, in a dispersed habitat such as the Galician one, the improvement of mobility and transport services is also essential to foster social relations. Finally, the MAP highlights that the rupture of the community life linked to the traditional agrarian model appears as a fundamental factor in the changes of social relations, due to the dissemination of the individualistic values of urban societies in rural areas as well.

With respect to the initiatives underway to address the above needs, the MAP identified several initiatives aimed at the provision of community social services (child and elderly care), the organisation of cultural and leisure activities, job creation initiatives and social revitalisation. However, LAGs were not regarded as

promoters of this type of initiatives, as the MAP considers that their direct role in social revitalisation of rural areas is limited, as they are focused on the financing of projects that can contribute to this revitalisation.

The main recommendations made by the MAP for public policy interventions concern access to housing, mobility and transportation services, and care services for dependent persons. Thus, policies for the promotion of public housing, the creation of housing banks or rehabilitation subsidies conditioned by the availability of housing in the renting market were suggested. The transportation policies in rural areas should be planned in a coordinated way between the different levels of public administration and particularly the local administrations (municipalities, provinces) as they have a closer awareness of local demand deriving from the need of access to other public services (health, education, etc.). With respect to services to dependent people, the MAP understands that a public or public-private offer of integrated proximity services is necessary. It needs to be adapted to the characteristics of the rural environment, where the relationships of trust would facilitate the provision of certain services by the citizens, or the school transport network could be adapted to the transport of travellers in general. Urban models would not be applicable.

Regarding policy recommendations for the strengthening of social relations, public interventions seem less relevant for the MAP, given that social relations are conceived as a variable dependent on the global socioeconomic dynamics of rural areas. With this initial limitations, some measures that can contribute to fostering social relations are mentioned: provision of services that allow time for relationships, cultural and sports policies, promotion of friendly public spaces that favour socialisation.

The role of the EU in the promotion of these policies should be more active than the current one as it is presently focused on obtaining funds and establishing guidelines on the destination of these funds. Among the ideas pointed out by the MAP are: the implementation of a program for the exchange of experiences between rural territories of the EU that face similar social problems; the need for the rural perspective to be incorporated in a transversal manner in all European policies that affect these areas; or a regulation of migratory flows at European borders that actively promotes immigration to rural areas.

Finally, the MAP points out a series of topics for a future line of research: the realisation of studies on the demand for transport and mobility, housing censuses and studies on property that allow to real situation on which to act, the application of the gender perspective to the available indicators on the rural reality, how to bring the administration closer to the rural area, how to improve horizontal and vertical coordination between public policies applied to the countryside. However, the main gap detected by the MAP is the lack of transfer of the knowledge generated.

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Annex 1 Methodology used by the MAP

To address the social dimension of the rural areas and as a previous step prior to the celebration of the MAP meetings, we prepared an online survey. The drafting and dissemination of the questionnaire was carried out jointly with the MAP "Innovation in rural development in Aragón (IDRA). It was considered of interest to work in a coordinated way in this cycle and carry out a comparative analysis of the obtained results. The questionnaire is in section 3, Annex 2.

In the month of May the online survey was launched. It was aimed at rural population in general, with the objective of knowing their perception on the quality of life and the factors that condition it, the identification of needs, collect examples of actions and best practices and know the state of the social relations and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in rural areas. The MAP members, LAG members and other associations present in rural areas were asked to participate in the questionnaire and to disseminate it. We obtained 166 samples, which is not statistically significant for the rural population. Even though, we obtained a representation of the different collectives (age, gender, economic activity, and other type of rural areas).

On June 28th, the first MAP meeting took place. 11 members attended: 6 representatives of civil society, 3 politicians and 2 scientists. The objective of this first meeting was to answer the two first key questions raised by SHERPA: what are the needs of Galicia in relation to the social dimension of rural areas? What are the policy interventions that are already taking place, and what are examples of actions taken by local agents addressing these needs that have been implemented in Galicia?

The meeting started with a brief introduction on the topic to address in 2022 and the objectives to achieve in this cycle. Afterwards, the results of the survey were presented, allowing time for additional comments on the information presented. The members were divided in 3 groups, 1 per each type of rural area (abandoned, active, and urban and forested) and each member was asked to individually rank and write the needs identified (afterwards the form with the ranking elaborated by each member was collected). Then, the debate in each group was opened, highlighting the discrepancies among the results of the survey and the opinion of the MAP members. Afterwards, it was possible to validate and/or qualify these results, as well as to collect additional information on the needs for each of the established rural areas. Back to the plenary and after a brief oral presentation of the debate and the results of each of the groups, an online questionnaire was handed out where the MAP members prioritised the needs identified, this time for rural Galicia as a whole.

After the coffee break, the plenary debated the best practices and experiences in progress in the social field existing in the Galician rural environment. The information obtained was collected in a document that reflected the needs of the service, the beneficiary group, the territorial scope, the promoting and participating entities, and the financing. The meeting ended with the indication of the next steps and a proposal of dates for the September meeting.

On September 13th, the second MAP meeting took place. 13 members attended: 7 representatives of society, 3 politicians and 3 scientists. The objective of this meeting was to answer the last two key questions raised by SHERPA: which policy interventions (i.e. instruments, measures) are recommended by MAP members to be implemented at the local, regional, and/or national levels? How can the EU support these interventions? What are the knowledge gaps, and what research projects are needed?

The meeting started with a brief statement of the objectives to achieve. Then, a brief reminder was made of the main results of the meeting in June, especially the prioritisation of the social needs to be improved in rural areas of Galicia. It was decided not to debate the need that received the highest number of votes (employment opportunities), as it was a subject that had been sufficiently addressed in previous MAP cycles. Then, the debate began in plenary on policy proposals to meet the exposed needs. Both new policies and changes and suggestions for improvement of the existing ones were debated. For each proposal we tried to define the objectives or specific needs to be addressed, the beneficiary groups, the instruments and measures to develop them, the institutional level responsible and the territorial scope. Once this block was

finished, we proceeded to debate the policies for the supply and revitalisation of social relations in rural areas, with the same format as the previous debate.

After the coffee break, and always in plenary, the role of the European Union, beyond financing, in the development of the proposed policies, and the knowledge and/or research gaps to be covered in order to improve the social dimension of rural areas were debated.

The meeting ended with an indication of the next steps to be taken and an announcement of the topics to be addressed in the next SHERPA cycle.

Annex 2. Results of the online survey on the social dimension in Galicia rural areas

1. Notes on the type of information gathered

To identify the needs of the Galician rural areas in the social aspects, two types of information were used:

- a) Online survey. During May a survey was launched aimed at all members of MAP, LAGs and other associative actions present in the Galician rural areas, with the objective of having it disseminated among its members. With the survey we intended:
 - To know the perception of the quality of life of the inhabitants of rural areas and the relevant variables that can explain it.
 - Identify the main variables that are considered necessary to improve towards the increase of quality of life offered by these spaces.
 - Collect examples of ongoing actions and best practices related with the social needs of rural areas.
 - Know the state of social relations and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in rural areas.

The questionnaire also included variables that allowed us to segment responses by gender, age, work activity and municipality of residence. The latter is a precise segmentation variable to be able to continue differentiating the 3 types of rural areas in Galicia established in the previous cycles. The questionnaire is at the end of this Annex.

- b) Taking as a start point the results obtained in the survey, on the 28th of June a MAP meeting was organised, in which its members had the opportunity to validate, reject or nuance that results. In addition to providing information on the needs of Galician rural areas in social aspects.

Below are a several tables with the main results obtained in the online survey. Moreover, for the needs, the answers obtained at the MAP meeting are also collected, for comparative purposes.

2. Tables with the results of the survey

1. Size and composition of the sample

Table 1: Distribution of the answers according to the type of the municipality of residence

Rural type	Number
Abandoned rural	50
Active rural	35
Urban-forested rural	64
Urban municipalities	16
No data	1
Total answers	166

Table 2: Distribution of the answers according to gender

Gender	Number
Women	68
Men	98

Table 3: Distribution of the answers according to age

Age	Number
18-34 years	19
35-64 years	137
>=65 years	10

Table 4: Distribution of the answers according to employment activity

Employment activity	Number
Number	33
Industry and construction	8
Private services	39
Work in public administration	63
Responsible of the household	2
Retired	11
Other	10

2. Quality of life: global rating and relevance given to the different aspects Scale 1-7

Table 5: Global rating of the quality of life of the respondents

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total (1)
Average value	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.4
Frequencies				
% under 4	2.0	2.9	3.1	3.0
% out of 4	14.0	17.1	7.8	12.7
% over 4	84.0	80.0	89.1	84.3

(1) Figures refer to the 166 respondents of the survey (including 16 who live in urban municipalities) This is applicable to the following tables:

Table 6: Relevance for the quality of life of the variables related to the environmental conditions of the area (average value in a 1-7 scale)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total
Total of the category	5.6	5.9	5.8	5.8
Security	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.6
Natural environment	6.1	6.3	6.2	6.2
Absence of traffic	5.5	6.1	5.8	5.8
Absence of pollution	5.8	6.0	5.8	5.9
Absence of traffic	5.4	5.9	5.7	5.6
Absence of accumulation of people	5.3	5.6	5.4	5.4

Table 7: Relevance for the quality of life of the variables related to the access to services and employment (average value in a 1-7 scale)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total
Total of the category	4.3	4.5	4.8	4.6
Existence of job opportunities	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.3
Access to health services	4.4	4.9	5.1	4.9
Access to education	4.8	5.5	5.4	5.3
Access to housing	4.9	4.9	5.2	5.0
Access to leisure, culture and sports	4.2	4.6	4.9	4.6
Access to Internet	4.4	4.7	5.1	4.9
Access to transportation services	3.5	3.7	4.3	4.1
Access to care services for the elderly	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.5
Access to childcare and childcare services	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.6
Access to banking services	3.9	3.7	4.1	4.0
Access to commercial and other services	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.5

Table 8: Relevance for the quality of life of the variables related to social relations (average value in a 1-7 scale)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total
Total of the category	5.1	5.0	5.2	5.1
Live with the family	4.9	5.5	5.0	5.1
Live close to friends and family	4.8	5.2	5.3	5.1
Establish social relations with the neighbourhood	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.3
Participate in collective activities	4.9	4.9	5.2	5.0
Absence of great economic and cultural inequalities within the neighbourhood	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.8
Absence of tension between groups	5.4	4.9	5.5	5.2

3. Needs: priority aspects to improve to increase the quality of life (number is the % of the answers)

Table 9: Prioritisation of the variable categories depending on the type of rural area (% of answers for each category)

	Category conditions of the environment (6 variables)	Category access to employment and services (11 variables)	Category social relations (6 variables)
Total	15.3	66.9	17.7
Abandoned rural	16.8	66.2	17.1
Active rural	15.7	66.7	17.6
Urban-forested rural	14.3	68.7	17.0

**The percentages are calculated from the number of times that a variable is selected as a priority. In the different types of rural areas was considered the number of answers for the variables in each category (the ratings of those that live in urban municipalities are not included)*

Table 10.a: List of the needs with the highest and the lowest priority for all the respondents (% of the respondents that consider a priority an improvement in these aspects) *

Most prioritised needs		Less prioritised needs	
Existence of employment opportunities	77.1	Absence of accumulation of people	6.6
Transportation and mobility services	62.7	Absence of traffic	9.6
Health services	52.4	Absence of traffic	9.6
Access to housing	51.2	Live with the family	13.3
Access to Internet	50.6	Live close to friends and family	16.3
Elderly care services	47.0		
Access to leisure, culture and sports	38.0		
Natural environment	34.9		

*Each person had to choose the 8 needs that consider a priority to improve the quality of life in the Galician rural areas.

Table 10.b: List of needs in order of prioritisation according to the MAP (number of votes)*

Prioritised needs	Votes
Existence of job opportunities	10
Access to housing	9
Transportation and mobility services	9
Health services	6
Access to Internet	6
Access to leisure, culture and sports	6
Elderly care services	5
Access to childcare and childcare services	4
Access to education	2
Natural environment	2
Participate in collective activities	2
Commercial services and other private services	1
Establish social relations with the neighbourhood of the place and nearby	1

*Votes casted by the MAP members in the June meeting through a form in which they were asked to choose the 5 needs that they considered a priority to improve in the Galician rural areas. The number of participants in the vote was 13.

Table 11.a: List of the 8 prioritised needs in each type of rural area (% of the answers in each rural type that include that aspect among the priorities to improve). Results of the survey

Abandoned rural		Active rural		Urban-forested rural	
Existence of job opportunities	78.0	Existence of job opportunities	77.1	Existence of job opportunities	78.1
Access to housing	50.0	Transport. & mobility serv.	74.3	Transport. & mobility serv.	65.6
Transport. & mobility serv.	48.0	Health services	62.9	Health services	53.1
Health services	48.0	Access to housing	60.0	Access to Internet	53.1
Access to Internet	46.0	Elderly care services	54.3	Access to housing	50.0
Elderly care services	42.0	Access to Internet	51.4	Elderly care services	46.9
Absence of pollution	40.0	Natural environment	42.9	Access to leisure, culture and sports	43.8
Access to leisure, culture and sports	38.0	Access to childcare and childcare services	34.3	Participate in collective activities	34.4

Table 11.b: Prioritisation of needs for each type of the rural (prioritisation by the MAP)

Abandoned rural		Active rural		Urban-forested rural	
Access to housing	1 ^o	Existence of job opportunities	1 ^o	Existence of job opportunities	1 ^o
Existence of job opportunities	2 ^o	Transportation and mobility services	2 ^o	Transportation and mobility services	2 ^o
Health services	3 ^o	Elderly care services	3 ^o	Health services	3 ^o
Transportation and mobility services	4 ^o	Health services	4 ^o	Access to housing	4 ^o
Access to education	5 ^o	Access to Internet	5 ^o	Access to childcare and childcare services	5 ^o
Elderly care services	6 ^o	Access to housing	6 ^o	Access to Internet	6 ^o
Access to Internet	7 ^o	Natural environment	7 ^o	Elderly care services	7 ^o
Access to childcare and childcare services	8 ^o	Access to childcare and childcare services	8 ^o	Access to leisure, culture and sports	8 ^o

4. Information related to social relations

Table 12: Facts that limit the intensity of social relations (from 1= little limiting to 7=very limiting). Average value for each type of rural

Facts	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total
Lack of time	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7
Non-existence or excessive distance to a social place	4.1	3.4	3.3	3.5
Reduced nr. of people living in the locality	4.7	4.9	3.9	4.3
Lack of interest in social relations	4.4	3.8	4.0	4.1
Conflicting interests	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0
Lack of confidence	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.9
Cultural differences	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.3
Negative past relations	3.6	2.7	3.2	3.2

Table 13: Facts that limit the intensity of social relations. Average value according to gender and age (scale from 1 to 7)

Facts	Women	Men	18-34 years	35-64 years	More than 64 years
Lack of time	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	3.0
Non-existence or excessive distance to a social place	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.5	4.0
Reduced number of people living in the locality	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.3
Lack of interest in social relations	4.0	4.2	3.7	4.1	4.4
Conflicting interests	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.2
Lack of confidence	3.8	4.0	3.5	3.9	4.1
Cultural differences	3.6	3.2	2.8	3.4	3.1
Negative past relations	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.3	2.9

Table 14: Places that facilitate to a greater extent the establishment or strengthening of social relations at local level (number of responses)*

Number of answers	
Neighbourhood centre/social place	73
Educative centre	54
Cultural centre	40
Sports centre	34
Bar/restaurant/nightlife	119
Shops	26
Open public space	71

**Each person could select 3 places.*

Table 15: Areas of activity that favour social relationships to a greater extent (scale from 1 to 7, average values)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total	Women	Men
Leisure/entertainment activities	5.2	4.8	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.2
Activities linked to educative centres (ANPA)	4.3	3.5	4.5	4.2	4.7	3.9
Sports	4.6	3.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	4.4
Culture	4.7	3.9	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.6
Share the daily activities	5.7	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.0
Provision of help/mutual assistance in work activities	5.2	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.5
Activities in neighbourhood associations	5.0	4.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7
Owners of commonly owned mountain land and other community projects	4.2	3.6	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.1

Table 16: Intensity of the relations in the place where they live (% of the answers, reading in vertical)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total	Women	Men
Social relations practically don't exist	2.0	0.0	3.1	1.8	0.0	3.1
Casual and superficial relation	30.0	45.7	46.9	44.0	36.8	49.0
Daily relations and mutual help	54.0	51.4	48.4	47.6	54.4	42.9
Daily relations and undertaking joint projects	14.0	2.9	1.6	6.6	8.8	5.1

Table 17: The participation level in social life of different collectives (scale from 1-7)

	Abandoned rural	Active rural	Urban-forested rural	Total
Young people	4.2	3.3	3.6	3.7
Elderly people	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.7
Women	5.3	4.8	5.1	5.0
New national inhabitants	3.5	3.0	3.7	3.4
New foreign inhabitants	2.8	2.1	2.8	2.7

3. Questions used in the online survey

1. To start, could you provide this personal information?
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Gender
 - 1.3. Main economic activity:

- 1.3.1. Agriculture, farming and/or forestry sector
- 1.3.2. Industry and construction
- 1.3.3. Services
- 1.3.4. Work in public administration
- 1.3.5. Responsible of the household
- 1.3.6. Retired
- 1.3.7. Other

If you chose other, could you specify which one?

1.4. In which municipality do you live?

2. In a scale from 1-7, rate your quality of life (1 = very bad, 7 = very good).
3. Rate the IMPORTANCE of the following aspects to define your quality of life, classified in conditions of environment, access to employment and services and social relations (1 = less importance, 7 = great importance).

3.1. Environment conditions

- 3.1.1. Security
- 3.1.2. Natural environment
- 3.1.3. Absence of noise
- 3.1.4. Absence of pollution
- 3.1.5. Absence of traffic
- 3.1.6. Absence of accumulation of people

3.2. Access to employment and services

- 3.2.1. Existence of employment opportunities
- 3.2.2. Access to health services
- 3.2.3. Access to education
- 3.2.4. Access to housing
- 3.2.5. Access to leisure, culture and sports
- 3.2.6. Access to banking services
- 3.2.7. Access to commercial and other private services (plumbing, consultancy, home help services)
- 3.2.8. Access to Internet
- 3.2.9. Access to transportation services
- 3.2.10. Access of elderly care services (at their homes or in specialised centres)
- 3.2.11. Access to childcare and childcare services

3.3. Social relations

- 3.3.1. Live with the family
- 3.3.2. Live close to friends and family
- 3.3.3. Establish social relations with the neighbourhood of the place and nearby
- 3.3.4. Participate in collective activities
- 3.3.5. Absence of great economic and cultural inequalities within the neighbourhood

- 3.3.6. Absence of tension between groups (elderly, young people, women, migrants, new inhabitants)
- 4. Select the 8 ASPECTS THAT YOU CONSIDER PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE the quality of life of the place where you live, classified in conditions of the environment, access to employment and services and social relations.
 - 4.1. Environment conditions
 - 4.1.1. Security
 - 4.1.2. Natural environment
 - 4.1.3. Absence of traffic
 - 4.1.4. Absence of pollution
 - 4.1.5. Absence of traffic
 - 4.1.6. Absence of accumulation of people
 - 4.2. Access to employment and services
 - 4.2.1. Existence of job opportunities
 - 4.2.2. Access to health services
 - 4.2.3. Access to education
 - 4.2.4. Access to housing
 - 4.2.5. Access to leisure, culture, and sports
 - 4.2.6. Access to banking services
 - 4.2.7. Access to commercial and other private services (plumbing, consultancy, home help services)
 - 4.2.8. Access to Internet
 - 4.2.9. Access to transportation services
 - 4.2.10. Access of elderly care services (at their homes or in specialised centres)
 - 4.2.11. Access to childcare and childcare services
 - 4.3. Social relations
 - 4.3.1. Live with the family
 - 4.3.2. Live close to friends and family
 - 4.3.3. Establish social relations with the neighbourhood of the place and nearby
 - 4.3.4. Participate in collective activities
 - 4.3.5. Absence of great economic and cultural inequalities within the neighbourhood
 - 4.3.6. Absence of tension between groups (elderly, young people, women, migrants, new inhabitants)
- 5. Rate the importance of these aspects to establish/strengthen the social relations in the place where you live (1 = slightly limiting; 7 = very limiting).
 - 5.1. Lack of time
 - 5.2. Non-existence or excessive distance to a social place
 - 5.3. Reduced number of people living in the locality
 - 5.4. Lack of interest in social relations
 - 5.5. Conflicting interests

- 5.6. Lack of confidence
- 5.7. Cultural differences
- 5.8. Negative past relations
- 5.9. Other

If you chose other, could you specify which one?

6. What are the 3 places in which you consider it easier to establish and strengthen social relationships in the place where you live?

- 6.1. Neighbourhood centre/social place
- 6.2. Educative centre
- 6.3. Cultural centre
- 6.4. Sports centre
- 6.5. Bar/restaurant/nightlife
- 6.6. Shops
- 6.7. Open public space
- 6.8. Other

If you chose other, could you specify which one?

7. Rate the areas that favour to a greater extent the establishment of relationships between the neighbourhood of the place where you live (1 = less, 7 = greater).

- 7.1. Leisure/entertainment activities
- 7.2. Activities linked to educative centres (ANPA)
- 7.3. Sports
- 7.4. Culture
- 7.5. Share the daily activities
- 7.6. Provision of help/mutual assistance in work activities
- 7.7. Activities in neighbourhood associations
- 7.8. Joint-owners of commonly owned mountain land and other community projects

8. Select the level of bonding of personal relations in the place you live. You can only choose one of the options.

- 8.1. Social relations practically don't exist
- 8.2. Casual and superficial relation
- 8.3. Daily relations and mutual help
- 8.4. Daily relations and undertaking joint projects

9. Indicate the participation level of the following groups in the social life where you live (1 = less, 7 = greater).

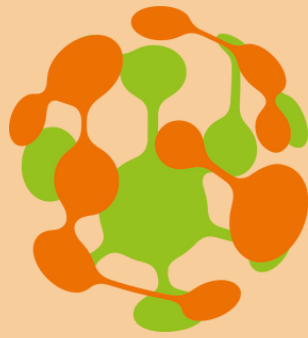
- 9.1. Young people
- 9.2. Elderly
- 9.3. Women
- 9.4. New national inhabitants
- 9.5. New foreign inhabitants

10. Are there specific initiatives that favour the personal relationships among the neighbours and their participation in common actions?

10.1. Yes

10.2. No

11. If so, briefly explain what they consist of and who leads them.



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