

SOCIAL FARM A WAY OUT OF DISADVANTAGE

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Abstract

The aim of my paper is to present the „social farm”, as one of the possible ways out of disadvantage. In European countries, such as in Norway, Great-Britain and the Netherlands social farms have a bigger tradition, there are more sources and experience of this model.

According to my hypothesis, social farm may be a suitable solution for treating employment gaps through agricultural activities, and it may inspire the efficiency of economic units. Social farm is a new, innovative agricultural model, which handles social function along with traditional agricultural activities.¹ It is an agricultural scene, where underprivileged people can be involved. It means using agricultural landscape and production for therapeutic purpose as well as knowledge transfer for the participants.² The social farm completes traditional agricultural activities. It makes possible the join in agricultural activities for disadvantaged people, since it provides a wide range of agricultural type of activities. The purpose is promoting the mental, physical and social well-being of the individuals, maintaining this condition and at the same contributing to the activity of learning. Furthermore, it is in a close contact with the nature, which has an important role in the rehabilitation of handicapped people.

Key words: *social farm, way out of disadvantage, agricultural activities, innovative and multifunctional model, well-being*

1. Introduction

Due to the development of civilization, modernisation and urbanisation the importance of the green environment decreased, people seceded from nature and lost their knowledge and skills about the land and the countryside. Edward O. Wilson said the following: “we have an instinctive need to make contact with nature which has driven our evolution as a species”. The social farm tries to recruit this connection, as it is well-known, that the connection with nature promotes the health of a person. It means that seceding from nature has a negative effect on mental health and on the preservation of natural environment. However, not every activity in nature is qualified as care. Care

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¹Mi a szociális farm <http://szocialisfarm.hu/szocialisfarm/mi-a-szocialis-farm>

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has to appear in some wise during the process.³ According to my hypothesis social farms can be suitable for managing of employment gaps through agricultural activities.

Social farming is the new model of social economy. The social farm is a non-profit organization. It means that the primary aim of its activity is not profit-making. The farm is an agricultural scene, where underprivileged people can be involved. It is not a new legal form, rather than a status, which is based on existing organizational forms. The term of "social farm" was first applied by Dr. Karl König, who established the Camphill-movement in 1939. Later this movement spread all over the world.⁴ The term of "green care" appeared in the last decade in social care and in health treatment. This model has been increasingly suitable alternative solution for Europe's such rural areas, where state social services are often lacked, not adequate, not available or have poor quality. Green care is not just caring for other people, it is more. It involves the promotion, development and maintenance of health and social rehabilitation. It is a connection between traditional health service and the other sectors of society (e.g. agriculture, horticulture, landscape and nature conservation, animal keeping and stock-farming). On the farm agricultural activities are pursued connected with plants, animals, environment, nature and the elements of land. The basis of green care is the farm itself, where the participants can develop their skills in a safe and restorer environment.⁵ To put it simply, green care provides mental and physical well-being and knowledge through agricultural activities. It ensures or stabilizes recovery and the possibility of rehabilitation for those, who have mental disease, physical disability, those who are disadvantaged or those who have other problems, and it develops their condition in a positive direction by activities in green area. For healthy people it is the place of knowledge and teaching. In turn, agricultural work can help revive country life. However, there is no generally accepted definition- due to the diversity of care farms. It is an umbrella term, which includes care farming (social or care farms), social and therapeutic horticulture, healing gardens, green exercises and animal-assisted therapies. Thus, social farming is a model of green care. There are differences regarding each country, since every country has unique features for green care and accordingly they define its term differently. But the common elements in them are the therapeutic purpose and the agricultural activity, during which the animate and inanimate elements of nature are used. The aim is creating and maintaining the social, physical, mental and learning-related well-being of an individual.⁶ Since there is no standard definition of green care and there is no specific legal regulation, the national legislation usually uses the term "social farm", when it would like refer to such farms and gardens, where promoting the mental and physical well-being is a fundamental factor. It is clear, that social farming has multidisciplinary nature.⁷

³BENTE Berget, Bjarne Braastad, Ambra Burls, Marjolein Elings, Yolande Hadden, Rex Haigh, Jan Hassink, Dorit Haubenhofer, John Hegarty, Rachel Hine, Konrad Neubinger, Erja Rapper, Joe Sempik, Marianne Thorsen Gonzalez, Deborah Wilcox: Green Care: A Conceptual Framework, Loughborough University, April 2010.

⁴<http://camphill.net/>

⁵LECK, C., Evans, N., & Upton, D.: Agriculture-Who cares? An Investigation of „Care Farming” in the UK, Journal of Rural Studies, 2014
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/261373490_Agriculture_who_cares_An_investigation_of_Care_Farming_in_the_UK

⁶DORIT Karla Haubenhofer, Dr. Mag. Marjolein Elings, ir., Jan Hassink, Dr. ir., Rachel Elizabeth Hine Bsc. Menv.: The Development of Green Care in Eastern European Countries, 2010
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/42974148_The_Development_of_Green_Care_in_Western_European_Countries

⁷M. IANFRANCHI, C. Giannetto, T. Abbate, V. Dimitrova: Agriculture and the social farm: Expression of the multifunctional model of agriculture as a solution to the economic crisis in rural areas, Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science, Agricultural Academy <http://www.agrojournal.org/21/04-01.pdf>

Social farms also ensure well-being (mental and physical), social or educational benefits, and they create connection between farmers, health and social organizations and participants. Every farm enables some elements of farming but in different degrees and forms. Care functions similarly to social farms. Differences derive from the size of the farm, the type of care and services, the circle of participants and the type of the farm. The primary aim of every farm is the participants' care, and agricultural production is just a secondary aim.⁵

2. Content

The definition of social farming in Hungary

The term of social farm was defined in Hungary on the following way⁹: “In accordance with social and solidarity principles, it is a cooperative economic form in the interest of social and environmental awareness, which performs agricultural productive, processing and service activities with the involvement of underprivileged people; and it performs additional awareness shaping activities related to agriculture for wider society.” Based on national experiences, three types of social farms are distinguished: Rehabilitation Farms, Care Farms, Social Farms.

Rehabilitation Farms¹⁰

This type of farm specialises on disadvantaged people, who need special support and their active involvement in farms promotes their rehabilitation. The following people belong to the target group: e.g. disabled, psychiatric patients, older people, addicts, etc. On rehabilitation farms the therapeutic nature of the activities is the most important.

The rehabilitation Farm has two types. Those social, health and other institutions belong to the first type, which perform agricultural activities. For them the challenge is not the assistance of the target group, this is what they deal with, but the operation of the agricultural activity. The other type is the rehabilitative farmer and the farm. The farmer has knowledge about the target group. He ensures the place and that the participants can work on the farm.

Care Farms¹¹

In case of this farm type the impetus for work is much more intensive. The participants really work. With the experience gained they can be able to take care of themselves and live independently. The following target groups belong to this farm type: disabled, ex-convicts, homeless, long-term unemployed, etc. and those, who have been moved to this level from a rehabilitation farm.

The care farmer is an agricultural entrepreneur or a person, who performs agricultural activity, and who involves underprivileged people in agricultural activities. Care farms can be operated by farmers or social services.

⁹RACHEL Hine, Jo Peacock and Jules Pretty: Care farming in the UK: Evidence and Opportunities, Report for the National Care Framing Initiative (UK), 2008. January
<http://www.carefarminguk.org/sites/carefarminguk.org/files/Care%20Farming%20in%20the%20UK%20%20Essex%20Uni%20Report.pdf>

¹⁰DR. CZAFRANGÓ János, Dr. Csák Csilla, Dávis István, Dr. Gazsi Adrienn, Jakubinyi László, Kajner Péter, Dr. Pataki György, Horváth Janka, Matthew Hays, Dr. Rácz József, Dr. Regényi Enikő, Szabadkai Andrea, Üveges Gábor: Szociális farmok létrehozása Magyarországon, Szimhiózis Alapítvány, 2015. szeptember

¹¹i.d.

¹²i.d.

Social Farms¹²

This farm type is mainly the place of awareness and education. The target groups are the following: people sentenced to public social work, children from child protection institution, refugees, the Roma, people living in deep poverty and mainly students. The participants can get to know agricultural activities, and this farm type facilitates social awareness. Participants enrich with practical knowledge, which they can use later. Social farms can be operated by farmers or social institutional farmers.

These three types of farms create the three pillars of social farming. So it is an umbrella term, it includes Rehabilitation, Care and Social Farms. None of them is superior to the other, they are just different categories. Their common central element is the agricultural activity, which enables the involvement of disadvantaged people in work and which contributes to their personal development, and their independent life. Based on experiences it can be stated, that the social farm firstly starts its operation with one or two target groups, focusing on just a few activities, and later it is extended. There are some farms, which employ special target groups, e.g. farms for people with autism, drug rehabilitation farm. After all, this is not the only possible model. If people differ from it, new solutions can appear.

Subjects

People, who are at the age of being able to work, can be classified into two groups: active population- within this group: employed and registered unemployed persons- and inactive population- those who don't appear on the labour market.¹³ In Hungary primarily not the registered unemployed persons mean the main problem, but the inactive population.¹⁴ Despite this fact, public labour market measures not cover these people. Social economies, including social farms, try to help and support this social layer. So those belong to the target group, who are not able to improve their situation on their own, but need help. The subjective scope of social farms can be divided into two groups:

Primarily target group

a) People, who need help, who are unable to improve their situation without help. Their need for care can arise from:

- integration, social problems
- chronic or permanent medical conditions
- lack of skills required for employment
- other dysfunctions.

The following people belong to this group:

- disadvantaged people
- handicapped people or people suffering from chronic disease
- disabled people
- people suffering from mental problems, addict, other impaired people

¹²i.d.

¹³Szociális Farmok. Innováció a gyakorlatban, Baráthegyi Majorság meglévő portfóliója, Erste_good.bee_szoc_farm_munka_slide_ok

¹⁴DR. CSÁKY György, Dr. Fehér Tamás, Dr. Laczkó Zsuzsa, Dr. Molnár György, Dr. Ormai Gabriella, Tóth Laura: Út a szociális vállalkozások felé, Módszertani Füzet 3., Út a piaci munka világába. A szociális vállalkozás mint a közfoglalkoztatásból való egyik lehetséges kivezetés, 2014. március

- children from child protection institutes
- juveniles in correctional measures
- convicts
- refugees, protected people.

b) The coming generation, for whom the social farm is the place of education and awareness.

The following people belong to this group:

- kindergarteners, pupils, students
- volunteers.

Secondary target group

- wider society

Farmers and supporting organizations may be classified with as subjects, too, since they can also gain profit from these activities.¹⁵

Operation

Two possibilities can be differentiated from the point of view of technical execution operation:

1. One of the possible ways of forming social farms is that supporting organisations (organisations, which employ disadvantaged people) look for farmers in the neighbourhood, where they regularly, even daily, take the disadvantaged members to do activities. Supporting organisations pay service fee to the small farms for this service, so small farms do not get free labour. In this case supporting organisations don't need to establish a separate agricultural environment, but the members of the target group can already do the work in an existing farm, where they regularly appear. And they do not need to employ an agricultural expert, either. The farmer can also employ the members of the target group himself. Overall, this solution is advantageous for both the disadvantaged people and the farmers managing small farms.
2. In the case of the other form of social farms supporting organisations themselves establish an agricultural unit, where disadvantaged people are employed. However, for the sustainable function agricultural experts need to be employed. In this solution supporting organisations can intervene in the processes, develop and limit the function of the farm more easily. The members of target groups may become farmers, and supporting organizations can utilize production income.

In case of both solutions - "target group goes to the farmer" and "target group acts on the own farm of the supporting organisation" - the basic aim is to improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged target group members by agricultural activity.¹⁶

Social farms provide therapeutic environment and several services, which are the following:

- employment, occupational rehabilitation- occurs mainly in employment relationship, but therapeutic employment also belong here,
- socializing and re-socializing services,
- education.

¹⁵i.d.

¹⁶A szociális farmok létrehozása Magyarországon munkaanyaghoz, Modelltelepítő gondolatok

Employment

The basic aim of social farms is employment. Agriculture is an important, central element, but in itself is not economically viable, it serves just for sustainability. Work is carried out in manufacturing activities. The majority of participants not only need a job, but first they must be able to work.¹⁷ Therefore, habilitation and rehabilitation have an important role. On the ground of these things, the form of employment depends on the condition of the participants, on the level of their ability to work and on the working strategy and possibility applied by the employer. During the employment the use of local resources is suitable; the agricultural land is the most important of them. The farm provides useful and meaningful daily activities, and the food needed for living is producible. The area can be various kind of agricultural-, forest utilized land; arable, orchard, garden, etc. A fundamental characteristic is animal keeping, which has a significant therapeutic effect. However, due to the bigger responsibility and continuity, animal keeping can only be subsidiary. The farm functions according to the principle of “producing everything by myself and turning out”. In the interest of this principle the aim is to do several activities, which provide the survival and existence of the farm, e.g. pottery, weaving, basket weaving, wood carving, etc. Furthermore, the farm provides housing in respect of social services both for the employees and the owner.¹⁸

Socialization, re-socialization

The aim of this activity is to make the participants capable of living an independent way of life, to develop their social life, to become stronger, and thus re-integrate into society to the highest degree.

Education

Adult education is closely linked to employment. It includes induction trainings, courses complementing work processes, and courses keeping up and developing skills. In the case of injured people the focus is on practical education, which is provided for them by the farms. Furthermore, education and shaping awareness on farms are well incorporable in kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and even in higher education too. Irregular lessons can be held, and environmental education, education related to equal opportunity, and health promotion can occur on the farms as well.¹⁹

The aims of social farms

Social farms have dual purposes: on the one hand they promote the integration of disabled people into society, the development of the skills of self-sufficiency, self-determination- therapeutic and social purpose; and on the other hand these farms have economic purpose, too.

¹⁷DR. GERE Ilona, Szellő János: Foglalkozási rehabilitáció, Foglyatékos Személyek Esélyegyenlőségért Közalapítvány. 2007.

<http://tudasbazis.specialpecs.hu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=3473516>

¹⁸Dr. CZAFRANGO: i.d. JAKUBINYI: i.d.

¹⁹JAKUBINYI: i.d.

Therapeutic and social purpose²⁰

It provides living space, the possibility of development, social integration and activity for disabled people. Shape of new relationships is important, as the established relationships may become close and long-lasting. The different kinds of works (common, group, physical, outdoor, sometimes the working in extreme weather) create comradeship and responsibility for the others. The common meals and the common planning of activities also promote the development of relationships. All of them contribute to the fact that people feel themselves to be useful, valuable members of society, and they may become self-sufficient by working. Last but not least it provides continuous employment for those people, who live on the farm. But overall, the primary purpose is to build and develop the disabled people's personality.

Economic purpose²¹

Production serves primarily the consumption of those people, who live on the farm, and serving the external market sale is only secondary. Economy is for saving cost and raising money as well. The aim of raising money is to obtain a part of not producible goods on the market for satisfying all requirements without any subsidies. It can be said, that the result of work primarily is not the income, but the value, which cannot be expressed in terms of money (therapeutic and social purpose). On-off organizational system is built, which serves firstly the interest of the disabled people. The farms have to operate independently within the economy to be able to function well, but each activity has to form a unified system.

3. Conclusion

In this study I attempted to summarize the most important pieces of information about social farming, as the solution of a way out of disadvantage for people. I tried to show a comprehensive, general picture about one of the segments of the third sector of economy. I can say, that people need the services provided by social economy, and within this, services provided by social farms, because in many cases black labour and unpaid housework provide the missing services. And this model contributes to re- and integration of participants into the labour market and to the ability of independent life. It aims to create real value; it has therapeutic, social and economic purposes, too. Therefore, developing this economic sector is important; it promotes employment and economic benefits, in addition it promotes social solidarity, social responsibility and the strengthening of cohesion.

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