



FRAGILE COMMUNITIES' SITUATION AND SELECTION IN ITALY

NATIONAL REPORT



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PREFACE

The first step in the implementation of the INTERFACE project comprises the selection of the fragile communities, most suitable to be covered by project activities, in order to achieve a substantial and long-lasting effect for these communities in partner countries. This National Report presents the results of the fragile communities’ selection process in Italy and includes an overview of the situation of the selected fragile communities, together with a description of the final fragile communities’ selection process and its outputs. The Report follows the generic structure, proposed by the IO1 ‘Competence Gap Analysis’ leader – Tora Consult, in order to allow for comparability of reported information and outcomes across INTERFACE partner countries, and includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Fragile communities’ situation;
- Chapter 2: Final selection of the INTERFACE fragile communities – the selection process and its results.

In preparing this material, a variety of sources have been used, incl. statistical data, reports and reviews, together with the results obtained during the fragile communities’ selection process and the own insights/experiences of the authors – Dorothea Urban and colleagues from CESIE (Irene Pizzo, Tiziana Giordano, Roberta Lo Bianco, Letizia Portera, Maja Brkusanin). CESIE’s team would like to acknowledge the contribution of all people from the different communities that were involved in fragile communities’ selection.

CESIE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the selection process of the “Fragile Communities” that will be targeted by further activities of the INTERFACE project in Italy, providing also a detailed description of their fragility characteristics and possible mitigating factors. Three urban communities have been selected: Ballarò, Vucciria and Kalsa, and one rural community: Chiusa Sclafani; all are situated in the “Metropolitan City of Palermo” area, in the North-Western part of Sicily.

Based on the general methodology adopted by the project partners, the ten pre-selected communities, which had been chosen on the basis of available statistics (using the following indicators: Number of persons migrating to other countries/other parts of Italy; Unemployment and NEET rate, and immigrant population), were reduced to four with the help of experts’ assessment of more subjective “fragility mitigating factors”.

The first part of this report presents the current situation of the four selected fragile communities. (1) First, their location and infrastructure facilities are assessed, and it is shown that all the selected communities lag behind in terms of infrastructure development, as well as in terms of efficiency of the public administration. (2) The demographic characteristics show a problematic emigration/immigration trend in the urban selected communities with many young well-educated leaving while at the same time many immigrants are arriving from Sub-Saharan Africa/Asia. For the rural community, Chiusa Sclafani, the problem lies in strong depopulation and an aging population. (3) Educational indicators show that compared to other regions Sicily has lower levels of education and a much higher rate of young people not in education nor employment compared to the Italian average. (4) The local economy in Palermo still depends highly on the working places of the local/regional administration and the urban communities are affected by high rates of unemployment; however, especially tourism provides a strong growth potential, as all selected urban communities are to be found in the historical center where a rich cultural patrimony is located. The rural community Chiusa Sclafani presents a strong dependence on agricultural production, which could be further strengthened, and also diversified through new offers for tourists (special events/farmstay tourism). (6) An important lack, but also an opportunity, can be seen in the use of available funds, both from European and from National Programmes, which so far have been spent insufficiently.

The second part is dedicated to the findings from the mini-survey, for which 3 representatives, from the four selected communities were interviewed. (1) The survey confirms the high number of various problems that affect the communities, particularly in the following fields: “Human Resources”, “Business sectors, jobs and labour productivity”, “Infrastructure facilities” and “Regional and local development policy”. (2) Although the respondents were rather sceptical about the general pro-activity of the communities, all were aware of existing initiatives that have tried to address these problems. (3) All the survey participants showed themselves interest in a skills-developing programme for their communities, most of them

stating that such a programme has not been implemented so far. (4) The skills seen as most beneficial for their communities were “Analytical Thinking”, “Creativity”, “Resourcefulness”, “Innovation” and “Leadership”.

SINTESI

Questo report presenta il processo di selezione delle “Comunità fragili” che saranno oggetto di ulteriori attività del progetto INTERFACE in Italia, fornendo anche una descrizione dettagliata delle loro caratteristiche di fragilità e dei possibili fattori attenuanti. Sono state selezionate tre comunità urbane: Ballarò, Vucciria e Kalsa e una comunità rurale: Chiusa Sclafani; tutte sono situate nell'area della “Città Metropolitana di Palermo”, nella parte nord-occidentale della Sicilia.

Sulla base della metodologia generale adottata dai partner del progetto, le dieci comunità preselezionate, che sono state scelte sulla base delle statistiche disponibili (utilizzando i seguenti indicatori: il numero di persone che migrano in altri paesi/altra parte d'Italia; tasso di disoccupazione e NEET, popolazione immigrata), sono stati ridotti a quattro con l'aiuto di esperti che hanno valutato “fattori di mitigazione della fragilità” più soggettivi.

La prima parte del report presenta la situazione attuale delle quattro comunità fragili selezionate. (1) In primo luogo, si valutano la loro ubicazione e le infrastrutture e si dimostra che tutte le comunità selezionate si trovano in una situazione di svantaggio in termini di sviluppo delle infrastrutture e di efficienza della pubblica amministrazione. (2) Le caratteristiche demografiche mostrano un problematico trend di emigrazione e immigrazione nelle comunità urbane selezionate, con molti giovani ben formati in partenza, mentre allo stesso tempo arrivano molti immigrati dall'Africa/Asia subsahariana. Per la comunità rurale, Chiusa Sclafani, il problema è rappresentato da un forte spopolamento e dall'invecchiamento della popolazione. (3) Gli indicatori educativi mostrano che, rispetto ad altre regioni, la Sicilia ha un livello di istruzione più basso e un tasso di giovani non in educazione o occupazione molto più alto rispetto alla media italiana. (4) L'economia locale a Palermo dipende ancora fortemente dai posti di lavoro nell'amministrazione locale/regionale e le comunità urbane sono colpite da alti tassi di disoccupazione; tuttavia, soprattutto il turismo offre un forte potenziale di crescita, in quanto tutte le comunità urbane selezionate si trovano nel centro storico dove si trova un ricco patrimonio culturale. La comunità rurale di Chiusa Sclafani presenta una forte dipendenza dalla produzione agricola, che potrebbe essere ulteriormente rafforzata e diversificata anche attraverso nuove offerte turistiche (organizzazione di eventi particolari/agriturismo). (5) Una carenza importante, ma anche un'opportunità, si riscontra nell'utilizzo dei fondi disponibili, sia dai programmi europei che dai programmi nazionali, che finora sono stati spesi in misura insufficiente.

La seconda parte è dedicata ai risultati del mini-sondaggio, per il quale sono stati intervistati 3 rappresentanti delle quattro comunità selezionate. (1) L'indagine conferma l'elevato numero di vari problemi che colpiscono le comunità, in particolare nei seguenti campi: “Risorse umane”, “Attività economiche, occupazione e produttività del lavoro”, “Infrastrutture” e “Politica di sviluppo regionale e locale”. (2) Sebbene gli intervistati fossero piuttosto scettici sulla proattività generale delle comunità, tutti erano a conoscenza di

iniziative esistenti che hanno cercato di affrontare tali problemi. (3) Tutti i partecipanti al sondaggio si sono dimostrati interessati a un programma di sviluppo delle competenze per le loro comunità, la maggior parte di essi ha dichiarato che un tale programma finora non è stato realizzato. (4) Le competenze ritenute più vantaggiose per le loro comunità sono “Pensiero analitico”, “Creatività”, “Ingegnosità/intraprendenza”, “Innovazione” e “Leadership”.

1. FRAGILE COMMUNITIES’ SITUATION IN ITALY

1.1. Location and infrastructure



Figure 1 Location of Palermo and Chiusa Sclafani on the island of Sicily

The selected fragile communities are all part of the **“Metropolitan City of Palermo”** (until 2015 “Province of Palermo”), which is the administrative capital of the Italian region of Sicily (one of Italy’s 20 regions). Sicily is part of Southern Italy and is classified as a “less developed region” of the European Union. Palermo is located in the North-Western part of Sicily, which is the biggest island of Italy and of the Mediterranean. The selected three urban communities, Ballarò, Vucciria and Kalsa are all located in the historical center of Palermo, as unlike in many other cities Palermo’s center has characteristics of a “periphery” in the sense that many parts of its inhabitants can be seen as “socially and economically marginalised”. The historical center is also called the 1st Administrative district. The rural community, Chiusa Sclafani, on the other hand, is located 80 km away from Palermo inside the island, at the margin of the territory of the Metropolitan City of Palermo.

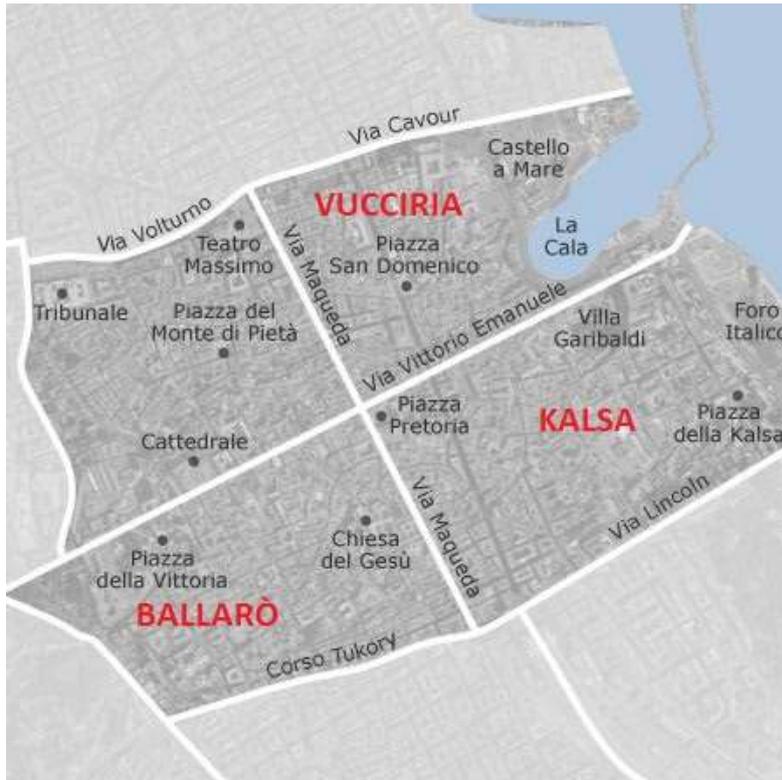


Figure 2 Location of the selected urban communities in the city center of Palermo
The whole darker grey area is the historical center, a rectangle of about 250 hectares

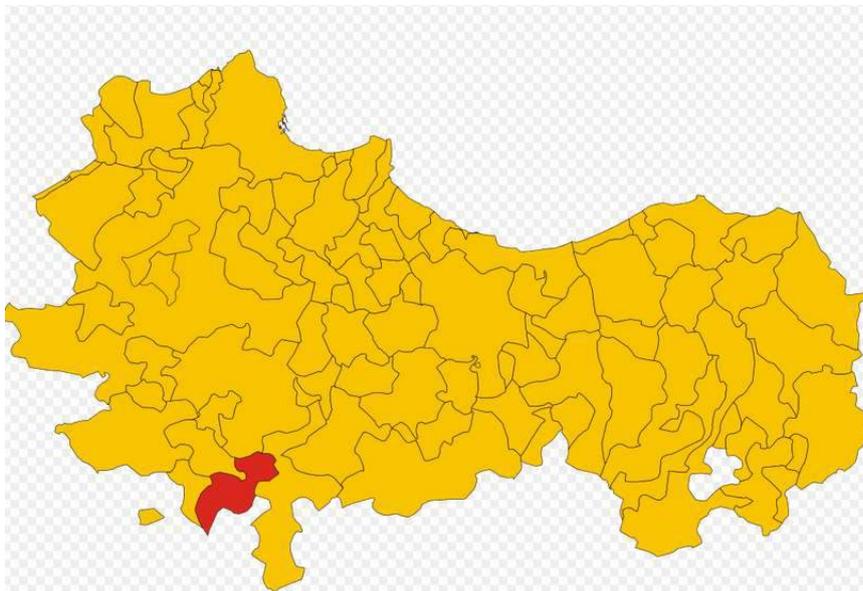


Figure 3 Territory of the Metropolitan City of Palermo
In red: location of the municipality of Chiusa Sclafani

As an island region, Sicily is particularly dependent on connections via air and water. Palermo has national and international connections through its international airport and its port.

Palermo's airport is the 10th biggest airport of Italy in terms of passengers, but despite Palermo being the capital of Sicily the airport is only the second biggest of the region, lagging behind Catania airport (with around 37% passengers less in 2017). Palermo's port connects Palermo with regular passages to different Italian destinations (Napoli, Livorno, Cagliari, Civitavecchia, Genova), but also with Tunisi. In terms of passenger transits Palermo's port is the 8th biggest of Italy. Palermo's airport is the second busiest airport in Sicily in terms of passengers (after Catania) and the tenth busiest in Italy, it has both national and international flight connections. Regarding the **sea connections** Sicindustria draws attention to the fact that at the moment an entrepreneur can not directly bring goods to Northern Africa, but must pass through other sea ports in Northern Italy, Genoa or Livorno, or even through the French port Marseille.

In terms of **road connections**, the city of Palermo is linked to three highways: the A19 Palermo-Catania, the A20 Palermo-Messina and the A29 Palermo-Mazara del Vallo (Trapani). However, especially the highway between Palermo-Catania oftentimes experiences difficulties with the structure (broken parts that are not repaired speedily, for example).

The railway network in Sicily is quite extensive, and from Palermo it is possible to travel by train to Catania and Messina (and with the train on ferry to mainland Italy) in the East of the island, to Agrigento in the south, and to Trapani in the west. However, apart from some smaller renovations, the railway network has not been modernised in big parts of the island, and so travelling by train in Sicily is very slow, also due to the fact that up to date no high-speed train has been created. This means that in Sicily travelling a distance of a bit more than 200 km (Palermo-Catania) takes the same time, 2h50min, as travelling a triple distance in other parts of Italy (600 km from Rome to Milan with high-speed train).

In light of the above, it is no surprise that **general infrastructure of Sicily is rated quite low** in the European Regional Competitiveness Index: Sicily comes on the 207th position out of 263 regions regarding accessibility.

In studies on the **efficiency of the public administration**, Sicily lags behind in comparison to other European and Italian territories. In a study of the CGIA from Mestre, for example, comparing 206 European territories, including Turkish ones, Sicily is placed on the 185th position. Although the inefficiency of the public administration is a general problem in Italy (none of the Italian regions is placed among the first 30 regions), the Southern Italian regions are to be found among the last places, and behind Sicily only four other Italian regions follow. Also Sicindustria, the General Confederation of Sicilian Industry points the finger at the inefficiency of the public administration in a report on the future prospects of the Sicilian economy: "we have excellent companies, able to compete in international markets. But we do not move forward if a company is not put in a position to work; if it is forced to wait for

years for an authorisation; if it is forced to wait up to 600 days to obtain payment of an invoice (when the European Union prescribes that they be paid within 30 days).”¹

The **climate** in and around Palermo is mild, it is of Mediterranean type with long, hot and very arid summers, and mild and humid winters. The city of Palermo itself is an urbanised territory; however, there are still vast areas of agriculture, particularly in Ciaculli quarter (where the typical mandarins are cultivated). Also, fishery is an important economic branch in the city of Palermo (starting from the central port “La Cala” and from the peripheral port of the suburb “Sferracavallo”).

In the surroundings that are part of the Metropolitan City of Palermo, especially citrus fruits, but also various other fruits, olive trees and wine grapes prosper, thanks to the fertile soil and the mild Mediterranean climate. The area is also home to several protected natural areas or areas of particular natural interest. The most important of these is the “Madonie Regional National Park”.

In the selected **urban communities of Palermo (Ballarò, Vucciria and Kalsa)** natural resources play a less important role, but for example the Kalsa has a vast green area in its middle, the “Piazza Magione”. This large square covered by grass, is a popular meeting point both during the day and at night (especially in summer, young people meet there at night, because it’s a fresh place in the city). There is a children’s playground on the square and also a soccer field. In **Chiusa Sclafani**, on the other hand, the main economic activity of the town is agricultural. Wheat, olives, cherries, vine grapes are cultivated and, in the southern part bathed by the river Sosio, peaches and citrus fruits.

1.2. Demographic characteristics

Urban Communities in Palermo

The **population of Palermo city** is of around 700.000 people in the central area, while in the urban space it is estimated to be 855.000 by Eurostat, and up to 1.200.000 people residing within the whole metropolitan area. Since the end of the Second World War, the historical centre of Palermo has suffered a marked decline in the resident population and only recently has registered a reversal of the trend. According to the census data, in 1951 there were 125.271 inhabitants in the historical centre; between 1961 and 1971 the population more than halved from 106.836 to 52.013. The decline in the resident population continued in the following years, so much that, in 1981, the number of registered inhabitants was 38.672, while, ten years later, it was reduced to 24.438, reaching an all-time low in 2001, when there were only 21.489 residents in the historic centre. The trend has since been reversed; however, heritage of this de-population is the fact that still one out of ten houses in the center is empty (not inhabited in most cases because of severe problems with the building structure).

¹ Sicindustria: Sicilia 2018-2022 Considerazioni E Proposte Per Lo Sviluppo

Another characteristic of the historical center of Palermo (1st Administrative District) is that about a quarter of the entire immigrant population settled in the city resides here, with an incidence of around 20 % on the total number of residents.

Grafico 6 – Stranieri per 100 abitanti nelle otto Circoscrizioni al Censimento 2011

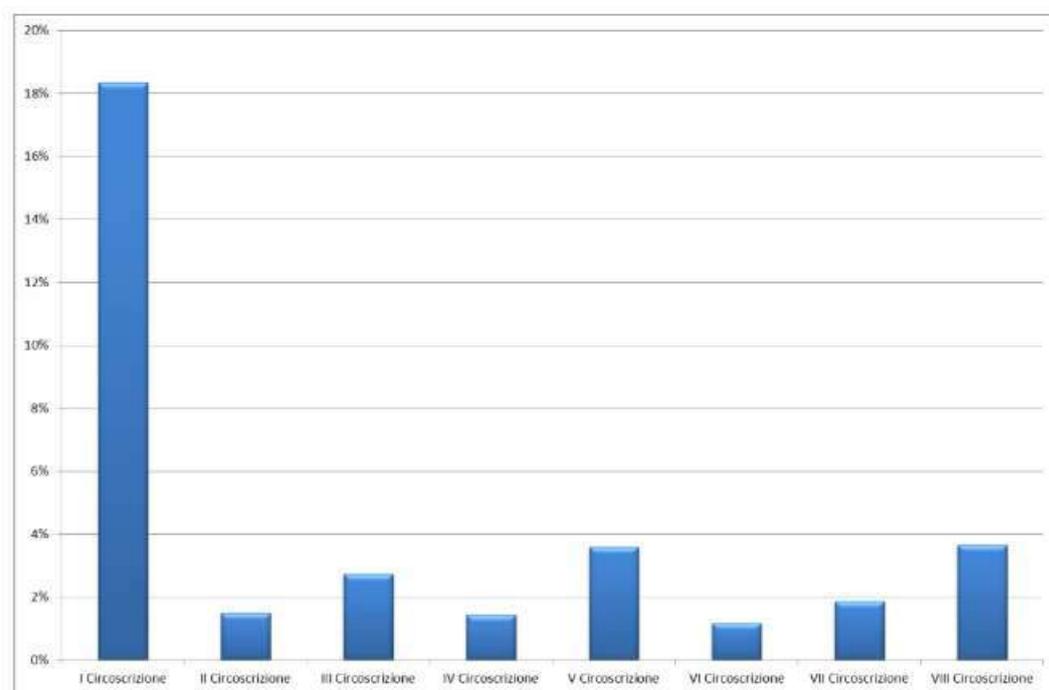


Figure 4 Number of foreign nationals (in %) in the eight districts of Palermo city in 2011
The selected urban communities are part of the first district, where the percentage is the highest, i.e. 18,4%

As can be seen in the graphics below, the population of Palermo has become increasingly older, with a growing percentage of people over 65 years, and a decreasing percentage of children between 0 and 14 years. However, looking at the age structure of the different districts, it can be seen that the structure of the 1st District, where all three urban selected communities lie, is slightly more favourable: here, 70% of the population in 2011 was part of the age group between 15 and 64 years, while 17,6% were under 14 years old and 12,4% over 65 years old. This is probably due to the fact that the 1st District has the highest percentage of foreign population of the Palermitan districts, and many of the foreigners come from younger age groups.



Figure 5 Age structure of Palermo (in %)

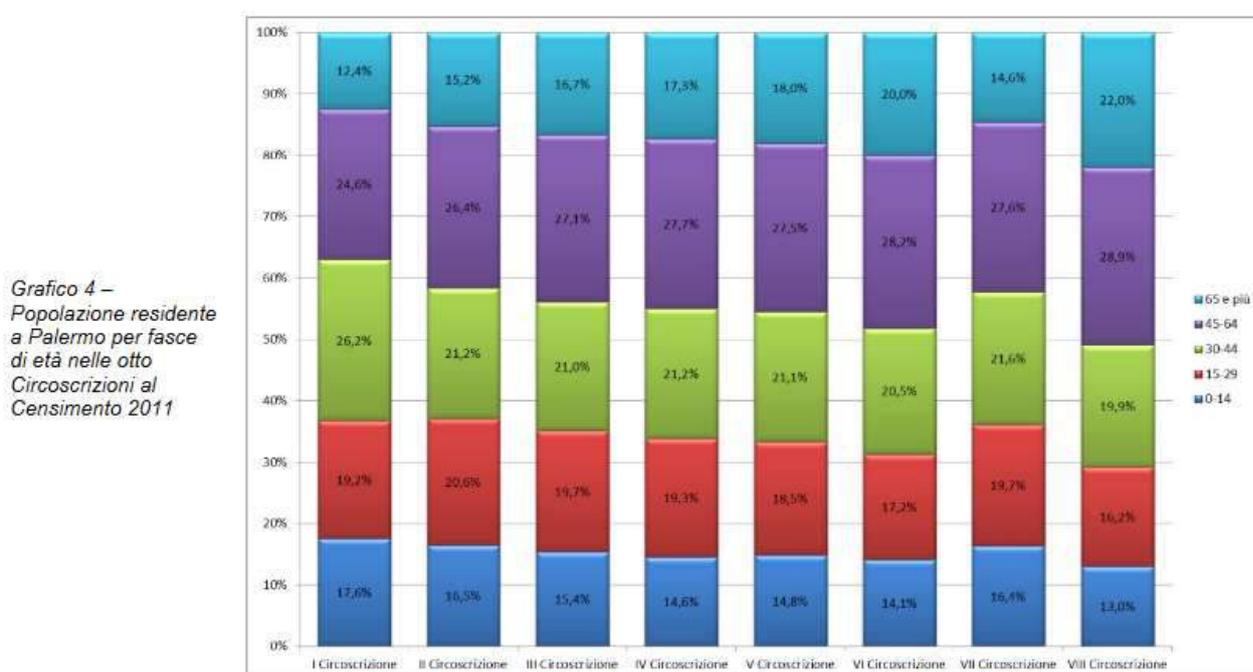


Figure 6 Age structure in the different districts [circoscrizione] of Palermo

Rural Community Chiusa Sclafani

The demographic characteristics of Chiusa Sclafani, the selected rural community, are a bit different from Palermo city. First, it can be observed that the population has declined: between 2001 and 2016, the community lost around 16% of its residential population – from 3.304 in 2001 the population went down to 2.766 in 2016 (in comparison to 1951 the town lost even 50% of its population!). This is due to a continuing negative migration flow, but also due to a negative balance between deceases and births. Second, the age structure is more

unfavourable compared to the city of Palermo: the population is much older (29,6% are older than 65 years), and the active population (between 15 and 64 years) as well as children’s population is smaller (60,2% and 10,2%). Third, there is only a very small proportion of foreign nationals residing in the town, under 1%.



Figure 7 Trend of the residential population in Chiusa Sclafani



Figure 8 Age Structure of the population in Chiusa Sclafani

Educational Structure

Regarding the educational structure, there are some statistics at regional level showing that the region of Sicily is particularly disadvantaged in several aspects. One important indicator is the percentage of young people who are not studying nor working. With 37,6% this percentage is particularly high compared to the national and European average.

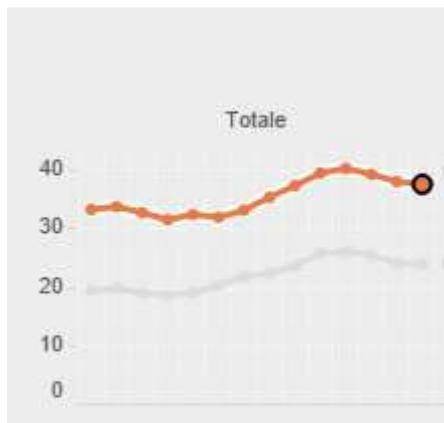


Figure 9 Percentage of young people who do not study nor work in Sicily and in Italy
 Orange line: Sicily, grey line: Italy. The percentage was 37,6% in 2017 in Sicily, compared to 24,1% in Italy

Also, in other educational indicators the Sicilian region lags behind the other Italian regions: the percentage of the population having only a lower secondary school diploma (which is reached at the age of 14) is among the highest in Italy with more than 50,5%. Parallel to this, the percentage of people between 30 and 34 years holding a university degree is the lowest of all regions, with only 20% that have completed university studies in this age group.

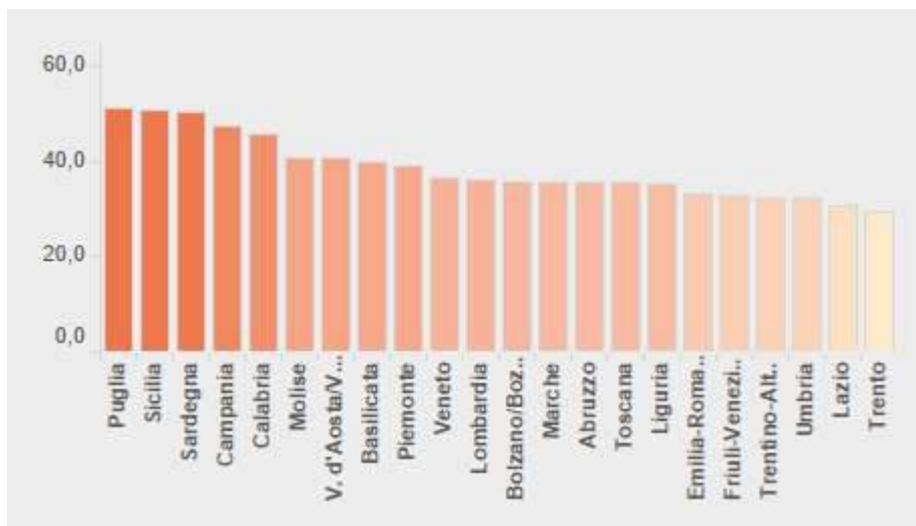


Figure 10 Percentage of people with only lower secondary school education
 In Sicily, 50,5% of the population has only this level of education, and the region is thus on the second place behind the region Puglia in Italy.

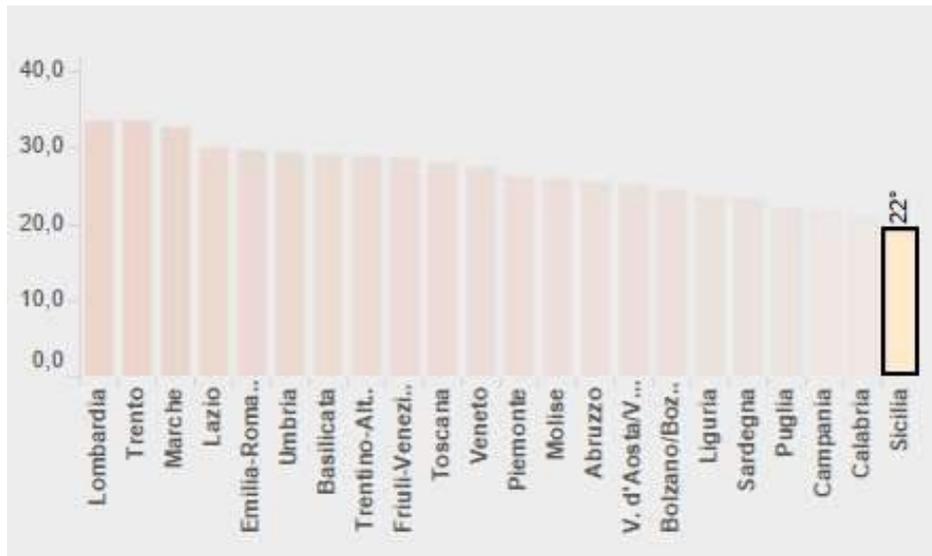


Figure 11 Percentage of people between the age of 30-34 years with University diploma
Sicily is to be found at the end of the ranking, with only 19,1% of graduates in this age group

Bringing together these data with other figures, such as the age of people who emigrate from Palermo/Sicily, and with statistics on the number of students attending a University outside Sicily as well as figures on the education level of emigrating persons, one can see that the region suffers from a brain drain, which pushes especially the most educated young people out, in order to seek better standards of education and/or work, principally in the Northern part of Italy or even abroad. Of those leaving Palermo to other Italian regions, almost 50% are between 25 and 39 years old, and also people going abroad are mainly in this age group (around 40%). The number of people leaving for countries abroad has been growing in the last years.

Unfortunately, no such detailed data was available for Chiusa Sclafani in this regard, but in the light of an increasing share of the older population, it can be assumed that a similar trend of especially young people leaving the town is happening.

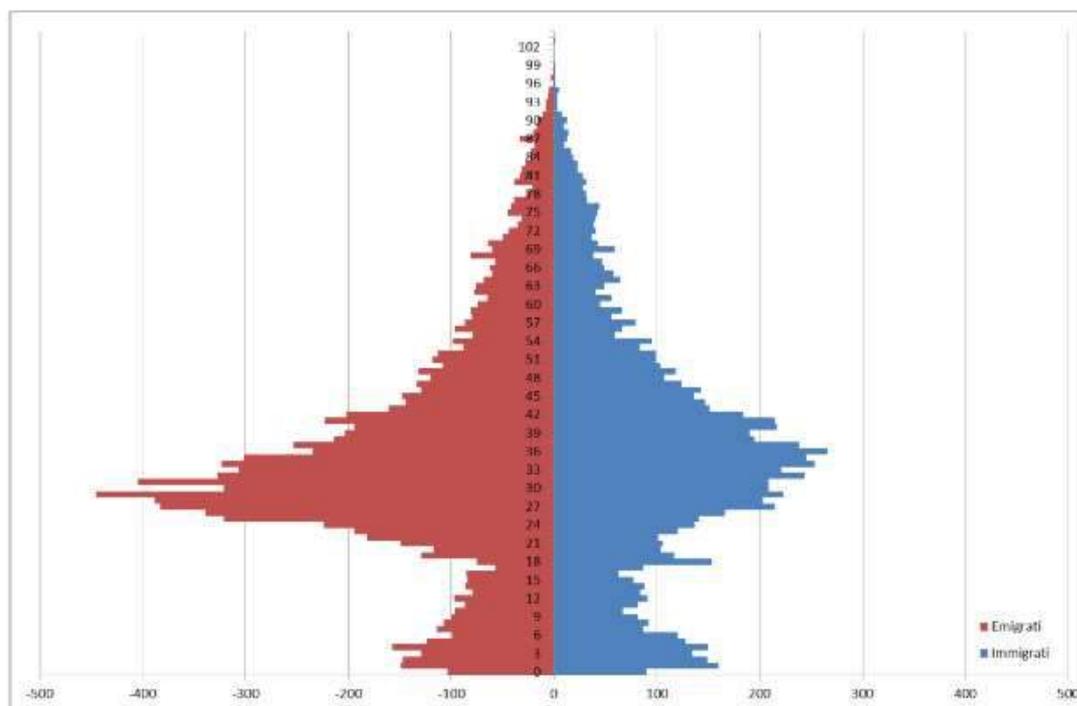


Figure 12 Palermo city: age structure of emigrated and immigrated people in 2016
 Red part: emigrating persons, blue: immigrating people

1.3. Local economy and labour market

As the **administrative capital of Sicily**, Palermo’s economy highly depends on the work places the public administration (regional, metropolitan city and municipal offices) provides. In general, the tertiary sector is the most important sector of the city, with three quarters of the employed people working in this sector. Tourism (reception services, restoration) is an important part of the service sector, as Palermo offers a rich architectonic and cultural patrimony, which is concentrated mainly in the historical center (e.g. various theaters, churches, more than 400 aristocratic palaces). Further, agriculture, fishery and industrial sectors (main areas: housing construction, shipbuilding, engineering, food manufacturing and textiles) are traditional economic sectors, which still have some weight in the economic growth.

In the four selected communities, the structure of the local economy can be described as follows:

Ballarò: hosts the biggest, permanent local market (vegetables and fruits, clothes, things for the house); is now home for many smaller hotels and B&Bs, there are also restaurants, pubs, street food stands and a vivid nightlife. In Ballarò, many migrants have started small businesses, such as little shops, hairdressers etc. The informal economy plays an important role.

Vucciria: the local market, which used to be the biggest of Palermo, has almost extinguished; there are street food activities and pubs (nightlife), but still many areas are neglected and run-down, many houses are not yet restored.

Kalsa: the quarter was severely bombed during the Second World War, it has undergone a series of requalification and has become host of restored churches and palaces, tourist services such as hotels, B&Bs, restaurants, pubs. In the summer, the centrally located “Piazza Magione” becomes a popular meeting point for young people, especially at night.

Chiusa Sclafani: the main economic activities are agricultural. There are no industrial settlements in Chiusa Sclafani; the only structures for the processing of agricultural products are a mill and the various oil mills. There are also various settlements of small or very small manufacturing and craft activities. A significant strength of the agricultural sector in Sicily in general is the presence of numerous quality products.

One of the biggest problems of the Metropolitan City of Palermo is its **very low level of employment:** only 40,7% of the working age population (between 15 and 64 years) was employed in 2017. The unemployment rate was 18,1% in 2017, with only a light improvement in comparison to 2016. For young people between 25 and 44 years, the numbers are even more dramatic: their unemployment rate is around 60%.

Growth potential is seen in the tourism sector and cultural heritage sector (e.g. so far, tourism is highly concentrated in the summer season), the renewable energy sector (hydropower, solar and wind energy), the infrastructure sector, and in the agri-food sector (cereals, olives, tomatoes, citrus fruits and many other products). Further, the region of Sicily is committed to the development of research and innovation enterprises.

1.4. Community support initiatives and grant funding

European Programmes

As less developed region of the European Union Sicily receives different funds from European programmes:

- European Social Fund (ESF) – employment-related projects and funds. It foresees training opportunities and other activities to support the integration into the labour market.
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – for the Metropolitan City of Palermo, various infrastructure interventions are foreseen (e.g. construction of new tram lines), and also interventions for the support of socially marginalised parts of the population.
- Rural development programme: the current programme puts particular emphasis on actions related to restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems as well as on actions related to improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sectors and to

promoting social inclusion and economic development in rural areas. Organic farming is considered very important.

So far, the European funds have had only “marginal impact” on the structure of the Sicilian economy, as Confindustria Sicilia observes, “favouring, instead a ‘diffusive’ strategy of the effects of income and expenditure, with the aim of acquiring and managing consensus, rather than of radical transformation of the regional socio-economic context.”

The role of the local and regional administration is crucial for the implementation of all the above-mentioned funds, as it is responsible to put in action and manage the spending. Unfortunately, so far, the management has been quite poor, leading to cuts of the funds, because they were not spent in time, or even penalty fees for irregularities in the management.

National Funds

The Municipality of Palermo has made an agreement with the national government in 2016 for more than 700 Million Euro of investments, called “Patto per Palermo”. The investments are meant to realise new infrastructure projects and to provide better services to citizens; there are also funds for cultural events in the city quarters.

Another national programme for Southern Italy is “Resto al Sud”, a programme of Invitalia (national agency for investment attraction and enterprise development), supporting young people between 18 and 35 years who would like to found a new enterprise.

2. FINAL SELECTION OF THE INTERFACE FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN ITALY – THE SELECTION PROCESS AND ITS RESULTS

During the preparatory process of the project application, ten communities were preselected for participation in the INTERFACE project activities. This pre-selection was made on the basis of different statistical data; the main indicators considered were: migration rates (both emigration and immigration), unemployment and NEET rates. In all the indicators, the region of Sicily is ranked poorly in comparison with other regions in Italy, and the province of Palermo is also at the bottom of the rankings. In the case of Italy, it was decided to not include only rural communities, but also urban ones, as “fragility”, interpreted on the basis of above-mentioned indicators, concerns also urban contexts, namely in the city of Palermo. One particularity of the province of Palermo in terms of “population” is the simultaneity of opposing migratory movements: while on the one hand particularly well-educated young people leave the region of Sicily to find work in other parts of Italy or abroad, on the other hand the region and the province is a port of call for migrants mainly from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. This phenomenon creates an unusual fragile context – potentially talented economic actors leave, while others arrive, starting, however, from a different basis, with the need to receive specific support (language acquisition, social and economic support) in order to be able to successfully integrate themselves into the local economy.

Already in the pre-selection process the knowledge and direct working experiences of CESIE’s staff of the communities has been used, as our organisation has been working in all of these communities in various occasions, in projects addressing social inclusion topics, early-school leaving, and local/regional development in general.

2.1. Communities’ fragility mitigating factors assessment

During the pre-selection process of communities, fragility factors were considered; in accordance with the INTERFACE partners, the final selection of communities assessed possible “mitigating factors” for the fragile situation of these communities. These factors can be of various nature: the attention of national, regional and local administration to reverse the situation, the presence of active citizens, the general growth potential of the communities in specific economic sectors.

The ranking presented in Annex A. was made on the basis of reports/documents and statistics, and with the support of local experts in- and outside of CESIE.

The assessment of mitigating factors can be divided between urban and rural communities.

- 1) **Urban communities:** all pre-selected urban communities are to be found in the city of Palermo. The mitigating factors have been weighted differently for the various communities: here the decisive factor has been, inter alia, the growth potential for the communities, which is considered to be much greater for the districts located in the

historic centre (Ballarò, Vucciria and Kalsa). This is mainly due to the fact that these districts have more potential to exploit their touristic value, as they are all located around important tourist attractions, whereas this is much more difficult for districts located outside the city centre or on the outskirts (Brancaccio, Borgo Vecchio, Zisa and ZEN). Further, more attention is being paid on these districts by the local administration for the same reason, i.e. that these districts attract more interest from people visiting the city, but also for the fact that many incoming migrants have been settling particularly in these areas. Another mitigating factor is that these three quarters have better access to regional infrastructure.

- 2) **Rural communities:** for the rural communities the picture is somewhat different: here, the most important mitigating factor can be found as well in growth potential, however, in the case of Chiusa Sclafani, this is rather related to agricultural production (especially high-quality agricultural products), and only secondary to a further development of tourism (particularly through organisation of special events and the so-called “agriturismo”, i.e. farm holidays). Also, the development of business support infrastructure has potential at rural communities, and so far little has been done to mitigate adverse effects of external factors. In comparison to the other two rural communities of the pre-selection (Trappeto and Cefalù) Chiusa Sclafani is particularly affected by depopulation trends, i.e. many young people leaving in order to find work/live in other places of Sicily, Italy or abroad; however, there are very low numbers of incoming migrants (differently from the districts of Palermo). Differently from the urban communities, the connectivity and infrastructure to other places in Sicily is rather problematic in the rural community of Chiusa Sclafani; however, a mitigating factor is the fact that in recent years a group of citizens has been established, which has been active in furthering local development through the organisation of a series of cultural events.

2.2. Personal characteristics of attitudes assessment survey respondents

The survey respondents were all selected on the basis of their experience, both living and working experience, in the communities. This is why most respondents are members of organisations (business, civil society and voluntary organisations) that have already been active for various years in the communities in related areas to the INTERFACE project – community development, social inclusion projects, business development. Most of the respondents have University level education, other secondary school level education, there were both male and female respondents, and as can be seen in the responses, all persons know of community development initiatives, and almost all persons have already been actively involved themselves in such initiatives before.

2.3. Perceived community problems and ways to address them

(a) Regarding the perceived community problems, it can be stated, that these are of various nature, and all respondents stated that they are not satisfied with the overall situation in their community.

(b) Most respondents rate the overall pro-activity of their community “rather low” (6/12 respondents), and only some “rather high” (3/12), while one is not decided between “rather low” and “rather high”; only one respondent assesses it as “high”.

(c) All respondents knew of some initiative aimed at overcoming at least one of the perceived problems of the community, these actions have been mainly undertaken by internal actors, and mostly by civil society organisations/voluntary organisations, some also by local administration and social enterprises. In some cases, as external actors, voluntary organisations were mentioned. These initiatives addressed various issues – from “Business sector and labour productivity” (7 times mentioned) over “Human Resources” (4), to “Infrastructure facilities” (4), “Regional and local development policy (2); mentioned once each time were “Natural Resources” and “Access to financial support for public and private projects”.

(d) Perceived problems: most respondents mentioned “Human Resources” (11/12), “Business sectors, jobs and labour productivity” (11/12), “Infrastructure facilities” (10/12), “Regional and local development policy” (8/12).

(e) Intention to participate in an initiative: All respondents declared their individual willingness to participate both in an initiative addressing one or more of the problematic areas of their community and in an initiative aiming to raise the skills development in the community. The assessment of general interest of the community in such a skills development is rather mixed and rated between rather low-rather high by most respondents. So far, such an initiative has not been implemented in the communities, except for Chiusa Sclafani.

(f) Beneficial skills: regarding the specific skills that would be beneficial for the communities, the majority retains “Analytical Thinking” (10/12), “Creativity” (9/10), “Resourcefulness” (8/12), “Innovation” and “Leadership” (both 7/12) as important, to a lesser extent “Resilience” is mentioned (3/12).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The available statistics and reports on the current socio-economic situation clearly show the “fragility” status of the selected communities. A peculiarity of the selected urban communities is their central location in the city of Palermo, while at the same time they can be clearly defined as “periphery” in the sense of socio-economic marginalisation. This is confirmed by a number of statistics of the population – immigration and emigration numbers as well as educational level and unemployment/NEET rates. While in other contexts “fragility” is often connected to “depopulation”, in the Sicilian urban selected communities, it is related both to high rates of local population emigrating and to simultaneous immigration of people arriving from Sub-Saharan African and Asian countries. In contrast, in the case of the selected rural community, Chiusa Sclafani, one of the main issues is indeed the negative migration trend, which has led to a strong population decline together with a growing share of the older population. As growth potentials different sectors were identified in the communities, including tourism/cultural heritage sector and the agri-food sector.

The above-mentioned objective factors were also set into relation to more “subjective” fragility mitigating factors, which have been assessed through the questioning of experts, people both inside and outside CESIE who have been living and/or working in the communities. Through these assessments first the number of preselected communities was reduced to four; and then, the perceived problems and attitudes of the communities were assessed through a mini-survey with three representatives from each of the four communities. The survey showed that on the one hand a series of problems is identified, including oftentimes an inadequately developed pro-activity of the community; on the other hand, all surveyed persons knew of some initiative which had been undertaken in the past, which means that first steps towards pro-active local development have already been done. Further, which is possibly even more important, all persons participating at the survey showed active interest in the initiative envisaged by the INTERFACE project, i.e. to develop a skills-raising programme for their community. Also, the skills identified by the INTERFACE partnership for such a programme were mostly assessed as “beneficial” for the communities.

ANNEXES

Annex A. Fragile communities’ mitigating factors assessment grid

Partner country:		Italy									
Community No.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Criterion		Criterion scoring (on a 1-5 scale)									
1.	The community has a strategic location in terms of connectivity and access to big markets and high-quality public services	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2
2.	The community has access to high-quality public services and regional infrastructure facilities are favourable for the development of the local/regional economy	4	4	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
3.	Although in place, the natural resources’ potentials are not being sufficiently utilised for the betterment of the community	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4
4.	The age and educational structure of the human resources in the community are relatively favourable, yet the local economy cannot fully utilise them	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
5.	So far, the grant funding, received by the community has been limited, mainly due to the lack of initiative coming from within the community itself	4	3	3	3	5	3	4	4	5	4
6.	The community has growth potentials in specific economic sectors, e.g. agriculture, tourism, etc., which so far have not been sufficiently utilised	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	4	5	5
7.	The business support infrastructure at local level (if any) does not seem to operate effectively to the benefit of local businesses	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	5	4	5

8.	The improvement of the socioeconomic situation in this and similar underdeveloped communities is among the priorities of Development policies at regional and national level	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	5	4
9.	The local/regional administration is apt to supporting activities, initiated by third parties or by community members themselves in support of local development	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	4
10.	The community’s situation is affected by external factors, such as economic crisis, geopolitical situation, etc., with little effort at local level to mitigate their adverse effects	3	4	4	3	5	5	5	3	3	5
Total score:		37	36	36	27	33	31	30	34	35	37

List of communities:

- Community No.1: Ballarò
- Community No.2: Vucciria
- Community No.3: Kalsa
- Community No.4: Brancaccio
- Community No.5: Borgo Vecchio
- Community No.6: Zisa
- Community No.7: ZEN
- Community No.8: Trappeto
- Community No.9: Cefalù
- Community No.10: Chiesa Sclafani

Annex B. Fragile community members’ attitudes assessment – summary of responses

Partner country:	Italy											
Community:	Chiusa Sclafani			Ballarò			Vucciria			Kalsa		
Survey question:	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3
SECTION I. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS												
I.2. Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male
I.3. Age	30-39	30-39	20-29	40-49	30-39	30-39	50-59	40-49	30-39	20-29	30-39	20-29
I.4. Education	University level	Secondary School	Secondary School	Secondary School	University level	University level	Secondary School	University level	University level	University Level	University level	University Level
I.5. Affiliation	Civil society organisation	Civil society organisation	Volunteer organisation	Business organisation	Civil society organisation	Voluntary Organisation	Business organisation	Civil society organisation	Individual member	Civil society organisation	Business organisation	Civil society organisation
SECTION II. COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM												
II.1. Are you and those around you satisfied with the overall situation in your community?	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

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II.2. How would you rate the general level of pro-activity in your community with regards to issues of community importance?	Rather high	Rather low	Rather high	High	Rather high	Rather high	Rather low	Rather low-rather high	Rather low	Rather low	Rather low	Rather low
II.3. Which of the categories below do you consider most problematic for your community? (select all that apply)	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc. Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc. Business sector, jobs and labour productivity Regional and local development policy	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc. Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc. Access to financial support for public and private projects Business sector, jobs and labour	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc., Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Regional and local policies	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity; Regional and local development policy	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity; Regional and local development policy	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity; Regional and local development policy	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity; Regional and local development policy	Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc.; Human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity; Regional and local development policy

	External factors – economic crises, geopolitical situation, etc. (economic crisis)	productivity Regional and local development policy								productivity Regional and local development policy; External factors – economic crises, geopolitical situation, etc. (economic crisis)		
II.4. Are you aware of any initiative(s), which has been undertaken in your community to address one or more of the problematic fields identified above?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.5. If the answer to the previous question was	Natural resources – air, water, soil, etc.	Business sector, jobs and labour	Human Resources	Infrastructure facilities – roads,	Infrastructure facilities – roads,	Human resources – age structure,	Regional and local development policy	Infrastructure facilities – roads,	Access to financial support for public and	Human resources – age structure,	Business sector, jobs and labour	Human resources – age structure,

affirmative, what problematic area(s) did the initiative(s) address?	Infrastructure facilities – roads, electricity, etc. Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	productivity (culture)		electricity, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	electricity, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	level of skills, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity		electricity, etc.; Business sector, jobs and labour productivity	private projects; Regional and local development policy	level of skills, etc.	productivity	level of skills, etc.
II.6. Was the action(s) initiated by actors from within the specific region or outside it and who was/were the main actor/s? (select all that apply)	Internal actors: Civil society organisation	Internal actors: Civil society organisation	Internal actors: Voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Local administration; Social enterprise; Voluntary organisation; Civil society organisation; External actors: Social enterprise; voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Local administration; Social enterprise; Voluntary organisation; Civil society organisation; External actors: Voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Social enterprise; Voluntary organisation; Civil society organisation; External actors: Voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Local administration; Voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Local administration; Voluntary organisation	Internal actors: Voluntary organisation; External actors: Business organisation	Internal actors: Civil society organisation; external actors: Local administration	Internal actors: Voluntary organisation; External actors: Social enterprise	Internal actors: Civil society organisation; external actors: Local administration

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II.7. Have you already been involved in any such initiative?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.8. If you had the opportunity to participate in an initiative, which would potentially serve to address one or more of the problematic fields identified above, would you take it?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.9. Raising the potential for responsibly and autonomously employing which of the following skills do you believe would be beneficial for your community?	Innovation Analytical Thinking	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefu Iness Leadership Resilience	Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Resourcefu Iness	Innovation, Resourcefu Iness, Resilience	Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Leadership , Resourcefu Iness	Innovation, Creativity, Leadership	Innovation, Analytical thinking, Leadership	Innovation, Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Leadership	Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Leadership , Resourcefu Iness	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefu Iness Leadership Resilience	Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Resourcefu Iness	Creativity, Analytical Thinking, Leadership , Resourcefu Iness

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(select all that apply)												
II.10. Would you or anyone you know be interested in actively participating in an initiative, directed towards boosting the level of the above skills within your community?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.11. Have any initiatives of such type already been implemented in your community?	No	Yes (partly)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
II.12. If such an initiative is undertaken in the future, how would you rate the interest and support it is likely to	High	Rather high	Rather high-rather low	Rather high	Rather high	Rather high	Rather high	Rather low	Rather high-rather low	Rather high-rather low	Rather low	Rather low

receive in your community?												
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