

# ViSEnet

Village Social Enterprise learning  
material guidance and networking



ViSEnet Virtual Round Table discussion:  
Sept 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021



## The Future of Rural Social Enterprises in Europe

European countries are facing many similar societal challenges, such as tightening economy and diminishing local services. Consequently, there is a common need to find new tools for rural communities to plan for and manage these challenges. One possible solution is the development of locally based social enterprise (SE).

Social enterprises are businesses where the social impact of activities is prioritised to an equal or greater extent than making a profit. This approach has raised a lot of interest as a way to support rural development and service provision in Europe in recent years. People in local communities are more and more interested in pro-

viding services by the means of community enterprise and invest the profits back in the local community. Local communities have much potential, embedded knowledge and skills to participate in local service and welfare provision, but setting up and running a community enterprise might need some support and tools.

This round table discussion is all about sharing the ideas and exchanging knowledge of rural social enterprises. The aim is to encourage European communities to work together to better meet the contemporary needs of rural areas and to support rural social enterprises.

### DATE

Sept 14<sup>th</sup> 2021

### TIME

13.00–14.30 EET, 12.00–13.30 CET, 11.00–12.30 UK

Please register for the seminar by Sept 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 at the following link: <https://elomake.helsinki.fi/lomakkeet/112575/lomake.html>

### PROGRAM

#### A short introduction of the ViSEnet-project

##### **Introductory remarks for discussion:**

##### **Research needs and future co-operation**

*Mary O'Shaughnessy*, University College Cork & EMES  
and *Lucas Olmedo*, University College Cork

##### **Promoting social entrepreneurship in the society**

*Chris Raftery*, Scottish Government

##### **Rural social enterprises, benefits and experiences**

*Roger Evans*, Eesti Maaülikool

##### **Discussion: the future of the rural social enterprises?**

ALL INTERESTED IN RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ARE WELCOME TO JOIN!

## GUEST SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS:

**DR. MARY O'SHAUGHNESSY** is Head, Department of Food Business and Development at Cork University Business School, College of Business and Law, University College Cork. Her teaching and research interests include sustainable, place-based rural development, community/collective social entrepreneurship, and social enterprise. She is a director at Micro Finance Ireland, director and founding member of EMES (International research network, comparative research, social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social and solidarity economy and social innovation), former member of the National Social Enterprise Task Force (Ireland) and academic advisor to Ireland's First National Social Enterprise Policy (2019). She was awarded the UCC Research Supervisor of the Year Award in 2019. She is UCC PI on the MSCA ITN PhD Research Project RurAction, with a focus on social enterprise, social innovation and sustainable rural development. She contributes to national and Europe policy on social enterprise and rural development.



**LUCAS OLMEDO** is as a researcher based at the Department of Food Business and Development, University College Cork (Ireland). His research interests include social enterprises, community social entrepreneurship, local, rural and regional development. Lucas has recently finished his PhD on 'Exploring Irish Rural Social Enterprises as Neoendogenous Development Actors' conducted with a H2020-MarieCurie research fellowship within the project RurAction. Lucas latest research publications include 'Rurality as context for innovative responses to social challenges – The role of rural social enterprises', published in the Journal of Rural Studies, 'Rural social enterprises in Europe: A systematic literature review' published in Local Economy and 'Community-Based Social Enterprises Fostering Inclusive Development in Peripheral European Rural Areas' published in the United Nations Knowledge Hub for the Social and Solidarity Economy.

**CHRIS RAFTERY:** Chris joined Scottish Government and including some its agencies has undertaken a total of 10 different roles. Whilst, most of the these roles have been within the Health portfolio, Chris has also headed up a number of Chief Executive's offices, led development of a new support fund for disabled people and worked in Pensions.

Chris is currently Head of Enterprise Third Sector and Social Investment within Scottish Government. Chris currently has responsibility for Third Sector Covid support/recovery which provides the context for implementing the next 3 year Scottish Social Enterprise Action Plan and associated investment. The action plan, recognises the unique challenges and opportunities for Social Enterprise within Rural area, which often lead to local people providing vital support to their communities, supported by their enterprising activity. The action plan is supported through a range of social investment activity which ensures a pipeline of Social Enterprise is supported throughout their potential journey.

**ROGER EVANS**, PhD is a Senior Specialist at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMÜ) working in project development, education and training for communities and small enterprises in rural areas, the development of vocational education & qualifications, and with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship, rural community development, micro business development, rural tourism, craft and local food production, rural community and rural development education, training and curriculum development.

[ViSEnet \(Village Social Enterprise learning material, guidance and networking\)](#) supports the resilience of rural communities by providing ideas, tools and methods of promoting and developing social entrepreneurship in rural areas, and by enhancing the networking and exchange of knowledge of rural social enterprises.

Visit the [Learning material](#) prepared in the project and join in the international network of rural social enterprises: [Rural SE Hub!](#)

ViSEnet is funded by the EU Erasmus+ Strategic partnership for adult education. Website: <http://www.visenet.net>

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