

StayOn_

A more inclusive, active
and creative world!

1st Impact Assessment

POLAND

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stay-on.eu



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1. INTRODUCTION

StayOn is a transnational project coordinated through the cooperation of eight European partners whose ultimate objective is to create conditions that enable young people to "stay on" rural areas by ensuring access to opportunities, benefits, services, and jobs. With this impact assessment report, we intend to measure and assess The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre's impact to improve it. This report is to be read as part of the project's "Impact management and research" work package, representing a systematic effort to provide credible evidence on the causal impact of interventions meant to integrate young adults, and NEETs¹ especially in the labor market.

The work package is managed by the European Center for Social Finance (ECSF). It encompasses a series of activities, including developing a Theory of Change and related impact management framework, creating periodic impact evaluations, and learning to inform decision-making within and among the organizations involved. This report proceeds as follows. After a brief introduction, Section 2 describes the interventions. In Section 3, the report focuses on detailing the methodology used to conduct the evaluation. Section 4 presents the results, while Section 5 interprets them and discusses the lessons learned to facilitate the translation of findings into practice for the project's partners.

2. INTERVENTIONS

The project StayOn foresees the implementation of a four-stage community-based development approach (CBD) in five European countries. The first stage is called "community involvement" and includes the implementation of continuous life/career individual coaching support and a series of training courses on digital and environmental topics according to the local needs² aimed at developing soft and hard skills that are useful for personal development and facilitate entry to the labor market. This step includes creating a group of young local NEETs, the "community shapers", who are interested in the social and economic development of their community and will continue their StayOn path through the three following phases: "community catalysis", "community co-innovation labs", and "community entrustment".

Training courses

As of 31.07.2022, one type of training course was delivered and coordinated through The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre. This is a private, not-for-profit company that aims at providing advisory services to farmers, fostering rural development, and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among youth in rural areas. The organization is located in the village of Miastkowo in Łomża County, Podlaskie Voivodeship, in north-eastern Poland. The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre aims to provide support and assistance to private individuals and community groups active at the local level through capital grant aid, technical assistance, guidance and mentoring, information and

¹ Young persons not engaged in education, employment or training.

² See the potentials assessment report for Poland available at: <https://www.stay-on.eu/impact-compass/>

support, training opportunities, and development initiatives. Table 1 summarizes the primary information for all training courses.

Table 1. Summary of training courses

#	Training course title	Number of iterations	Number of hours	Objectives	Modules
1	Identification of professional needs; career motivation; CV preparation; soft skills and stress management	2	64	To improve soft and professional skills among NEETs. Training is divided into 11 modules that support NEETs in developing their soft skills, ability to work in a group, dealing with stress, maintaining professional motivation, practicing job interviews.	My dream profession, Soft skills, CV, Cover letter, Job interview, Vocational courses and training - local initiatives, My needs and job dreams, Mentoring, Business plan – general Social media in business, Dealing with stress, Summary of the training,

Coaching

The main goal of the coaching in the context of StayOn is to support participants on their journey through the whole StayOn process:

- training, where they gain new skills and knowledge to improve their future career options; and also
- community shaping process, where they further explore their ideas for developing opportunities for youth in their communities.

The StayOn coaching process is aimed at developing a goal-oriented mindset with participants. The suggested methods to be used by coaches range from SMART goal methodology to dialogue groups. All sessions have a suggested outline to follow. However, these guidelines can be adjusted according to the coach's judgment to best use the process for the participants. The coach's role is to support the participants to make a change, learn something new and/or achieve their goals. The essence of coaching is not giving answers to participants but instead guiding them with curiosity and empathy to help them find answers on their own. Coaches in the StayOn project lead participants through the process of training & community involvement, help them identify their potential, and support them in overcoming obstacles to their empowerment.

Through the StayOn project, participants receive, on average, four individual coaching hours, mainly over a series of four sessions with the coach. Coaching sessions are divided into three main categories: I) introductory / starting session; II) implementation support / intermediate session; and III) follow-up/closing session. The coaches and coachees meet preferably in person, but some meetings also take place online. In order to create a relationship and create a more substantial impact, the coachees are encouraged to meet regularly and with a defined development goal, which also supports their training in the context of the StayOn project (or further). Coaches in the StayOn

project participate in individual and group supervisions to help them better address the obstacles and opportunities of the coaching process. They help them be more flexible and open to opportunities in the process.

Implementation figures

As of 31.07.2022, The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre has trained 60 young people and coached 60. Table 2 summarizes the number of participants in the training courses and coaching by month.

Table 2. Summary of implementation figures

Type	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Total
Trainees	0	20	40	60
Coachees	10	30	20	60

3. METHODS

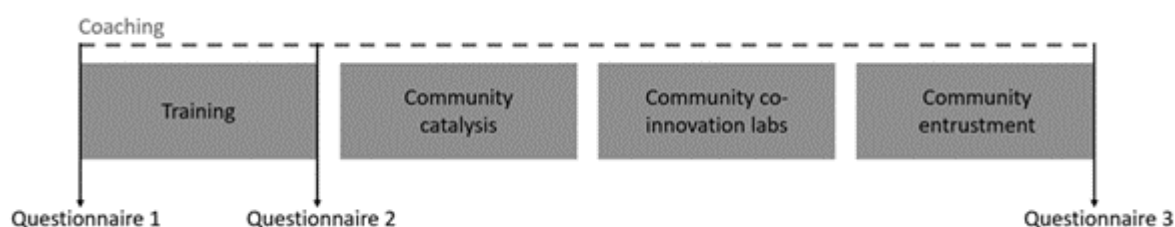
Data collection

StayOn’s impact management system is made of three impact layers which, in turn, include six clusters (derived from StayOn Theory of Change).³

- Layer I Management of StayOn’s impact on the participants (CLUSTERS 1, 3, and 4)
- Layer II Management of StayOn’s impact on the project partner organizations in terms of capacity building (CLUSTERS 2 and 5)
- Layer III Management of StayOn’s impact on society (CLUSTER 6)

This report covers clusters 1, 3, and 6. The output data presented in the previous sections make up Cluster 2. While data related to StayOn’s outcomes and impact, clusters 3 and 6, respectively, were collected through a survey administered at the beginning and end of the training courses, as Figure 1 shows. All participants in the training courses were asked to fill out the same questionnaire on the day the intervention started and the day it ended.

Figure 1. Data collection timeline



We administered the survey to participants through an online questionnaire, which is available in full in the Appendix to this report. The questionnaire included the following groups of variables:

³ See pages 3-4 of the Impact Management Toolkit available at: <https://www.stay-on.eu/impact-compass/>

Demographics (*labor status, income, age, gender, belonging to a minority background*) were measured through multiple choice, checkboxes, and open-ended options (see questions 15-19).⁴

Social inclusion was measured by looking at:

- *access* to knowledge of resources in the community, see question 2;
- *support* from social networks, see questions 11-14 (Bernal et al., 2003);
- *participation* in labor markets, see questions 15-16.

Social benefits to rural areas were measured by looking at:

- *common good*, see questions 3-8 (Looman, 2006);
- participants' *willingness to migrate*, see questions 9-10.

Data analysis

59 beneficiaries completed pre/post-intervention questionnaires, and the data they provided was used for subsequent analysis. We first examined the distribution of differences between the two sets of scores to analyze the pre- and post-test comparison. For the variable *common good*, the data of differences between pre and post-test are not normally distributed. Therefore, a non-parametric test (Wilcoxon signed-rank test) was used to compare the two sets of scores from the same participants for this variable. For the variables *willingness to migrate*, *support* from social networks and *access* to knowledge of resources in the community, data regarding the differences between pre and post-test are normally distributed; hence, paired samples t-tests were used to compare the two sets of scores. Finally, to compare the paired proportions related to *participation* in labor markets, a McNemar test was used in order to assess the significance of the pre- and post-intervention differences in the variables 'employment status' and 'income'.

4. FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics: demographic variables

Descriptive statistics of the pre- post-observations related to the sample of 59 participants are presented in Table 3. 34 people in the sample analyzed were women (57.63%), while 25 (42.37%) were men. Most participants (39 people, 66.10%) were between 18 and 24 years old. 20 participants (33.90%) were between 25 and 29 years old. 25 people (42.37%) were self/employed or students at the start of the intervention, while 34 people (57.63%) were unemployed or inactive and constituted the remainder of the sample. 59 participants in the sample analyzed completed the question inquiring about income: all of them (59 out of 59, 100.00%) stated their income is less than or equal to the national minimum wage. Finally, 2 people answered the question about minority backgrounds: one out of 2 (50.00%) reported belonging to the group of people with disabilities and the other (50.00%) to a religious minority group.

⁴ The questions inquiring about income and belonging to a minority background were optional.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

Gender	n	%
Female	34	57.63
Male	25	42.37
Total	59	100.00
Age		
	n	%
18-24	39	66.10
25-29	20	33.90
Total	59	100.00
Labor status		
	n	%
Employed, self-employed, enrolled in high school or university	25	42.37
Other	34	57.63
Total	59	100.00
Income		
Less than or equal to the national minimum wage, i.e., 3010 zł	59	100.00
More than the national minimum wage, i.e., 3010 zł	0	0.00
Total	59	100.00
Minority background		
	n	%
People with disabilities	1	50.00
Religious minority group	1	50.00
Total	2	100.00

Outcomes: evaluation of social inclusion

Table 4 below shows the mean and median for pre- and post-observations, together with the related percentage change.

Table 4. Percentage change, pre/post mean and median for outcome variables

Variables	Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Mean % change	Median (Pre)	Median (Post)	Median % change
Access to knowledge of resources in the community	4.69	5.59	19.19% increase	5.00	6.00	20.00% increase
Support from social networks	4.66	5.27	13.09% increase	4.75	5.50	15.79% increase

Regarding *access* to knowledge of resources in the community, a paired-samples t-test revealed that pre/post means of the variable were statistically significant, as shown in Table 5. This means that participants were more likely to know where to get the career development resources, they needed in their community after the interventions.

Table 5. T-test statistics table for the variable access to knowledge of resources in the community

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
				Lower	Upper				
Access to knowledge of resources in the community pre-test – Access to knowledge of resources in the community post-test	-.898	1.155	.150	-1.199	-.597	-5.973	58	<.001	<.001

Regarding *support* from social networks, a paired-samples t-test revealed that pre/post means of the variable were statistically significant, as shown in Table 6. This means that, after the interventions, participants felt they have been receiving more emotional, interpersonal, and material support than before joining the project StayOn.

Table 6. T-test statistics table for the variable support from social networks

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
				Lower	Upper				
Social networks support pre-test – Social networks support post-test	-.61017	1.51876	.19773	-1.00596	-.21483	-3.086	58	.002	.003

With respect to *participation* in markets, we analyzed data regarding income and employment status. The pre-and post-intervention proportions of individuals who were not in employment nor education (versus self/employed, student) and low-income earners (versus high) are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Pre/post proportions for labor status and income

Variables	Pre-intervention		Post-intervention	
	n	%	n	%
Labor status				
Employed, self-employed, enrolled in high school or university	25	42.37	24	40.68
Other	34	57.63	35	59.32
Income				
Less than or equal to the national minimum wage, i.e., 3010 zł	59	100.00	56	94.92
More than the national minimum wage, i.e., 3010 zł	0	0.00	3	5.08

A McNemar's test determined that the differences in the proportion of employed, self-employed, enrolled in high school or university and low-earners pre- and post-intervention were not statistically significant, as reported in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8. McNemar test statistics for labor status^a

	Labor status pre & Labor status post
N	59
Exact Sig. (2 tailed)	1.000 ^b
a. McNemar Test	
b. Binomial distribution used	

Table 9. McNemar test statistics for income^a

	Income pre & Income post
N	59
Exact Sig. (2 tailed)	.250 ^b
a. McNemar Test	
b. Binomial distribution used	

Impact: evaluation of social benefits to rural areas

As already pointed out, an analysis of the results indicated a non-normal distribution of scores for some of the variables under study. Therefore, the results are presented using both the mean and the median for each variable in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Percentage change, pre/post mean and median for impact variables

Variables	Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Mean % change	Median (Pre)	Median (Post)	Median % change
Common good	4.93	5.77	17.04% increase	5.00	6.00	20.00% increase
Willingness to migrate	4.73	3.12	34.04% decrease	5.00	3.00	40.00% decrease

Regarding the variable *common good*, a Wilcoxon signed rank test showed a significant positive difference ($Z = -5.138$, $p < 0.01$) between post- and pre-observation, as shown in Table 11. This means that after the interventions, participants had increased their contributions to the common good by bringing more benefits to their community than before they joined the project StayOn.

Table 11. Wilcoxon test statistics table for the variable common good^a

	Common good pre-test – Common good post-test
Z	-5.138 ^b
p	<.001
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on negative ranks.	

Regarding participants' *willingness to migrate*, a paired-samples t-test revealed that pre/post means of the variable were statistically significant, as shown in Table 12. This

means that, after the interventions, participants were less inclined to move elsewhere in Poland or abroad for employment reasons.

Table 12. T-test statistics table for the variable willingness to migrate

	Paired Differences				t	df	Significance		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	
				Lower					Upper
Willingness to migrate pre-test – Willingness to migrate post-test	1.6102	1.3648	.1777	1.2545	1.9658	9.062	58	<.001	<.001

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This report leaves a positive overall impression on the work that The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre and the participants in their interventions are doing in this first implementation phase. Regarding demographic variables, the participants' age and labor status align with the EEA & Norway Fund for Youth Employment's conditions and the specific objectives of the call for proposal. Additionally, the high share of female trainees and coachees (57.63%) gives evidence that the threshold required (50%) to assure the project's target values are met is far surpassed. The percentage of employed, self-employed, enrolled in high school or university participants (42.37%) slightly deviates from the previous agreements among project partners (30.00%). Finally, the differences between post- and pre-intervention for the variables *access* to knowledge of resources in the community, *support* from social networks, *common good* and *willingness to migrate* analyzed are statistically significant.

Regarding outcomes, this impact assessment evaluation reveals that young adults living in the towns of Łomża, Piątnica Poduchowna, Piątnica Włociańska, Kalinowo and Marianowo who have benefited from The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre's training and/or coaching services from March to July 2022 were more likely to know where to get the career development resources they needed in their community after the interventions (+19.19 mean % change). Additionally, the data show they have been receiving more emotional, interpersonal, and material support than before joining the project StayOn (+13.09 mean % change). Results regarding *participation* in markets were not statistically significant suggesting that changes in labor status and income might need some more time to emerge. Overall, however, it can be deduced that participants have been experiencing more social inclusion.

Regarding impact, this report shows that participants have increased their contributions to the common good by bringing more benefits to their community than before they joined the project StayOn (+17.04 mean % change). Also, after the training courses, participants were less inclined to move elsewhere in Poland or abroad for employment reasons (-34.04 mean % change). This extends the project's impact beyond the mere effect of StayOn on the participants and brings social benefits to rural areas by

equipping them with young adults who feel socially included and want to contribute to the common good.

The evaluation conducted has a few limitations. Firstly, the pre-test/post-test design impedes drawing rigorous causal inference between the project's activities and its results. Secondly, the lack of control groups also restricted the researchers' ability to control for other influential events. Although this type of design is often criticized for weakness in establishing a causal link between project activities and outcomes, the pre-test/post-test design is the most useful in demonstrating the immediate impact of short-term interventions (Monsen, 2018). This design might prove less valid for long-term interventions because a higher amount of circumstances outside the project may arise and interfere with the effects of the project's activities over a more extended period of time. Finally, it would be helpful to collect and integrate qualitative data (such as interviews and focus groups) to validate and explore further the quantitative findings of this evaluation.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

In the context of the StayOn project, we are conducting research on the effectiveness of our services. The survey should only take 5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. Thank you for agreeing to take part in it. We really appreciate your input!

*Required

1. Please, include the first 3 letters of your first and last name, and the day of birth (in English * letters) to allow for initial and final evaluations during the project. For example, the identifier for Mary Smith born on 03.11.1995 would be MARSMI03. Thank you.

Please, rate each of the following statements on a rating scale of 1-7, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 7 is 'strongly agree'.

2. I am aware where to get the career development resources I need in my community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

3. I talk to others about ways to improve the community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

4. I work with others in the community to make it a good place to live. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

5. As a young person, I am contributing to the community's well-being. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. I work with other people like me to help the community understand our needs. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

7. Young people are important to this community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

8. There are many things I can do to help others in the community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Please, answer each of the following questions on a rating scale of 1-7, where 1 is 'extremely unlikely' and 7 is 'extremely likely'.

9. How likely is it that you will move elsewhere in your country for employment reasons? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Extremely unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely likely

10. How likely is it that you will move abroad for employment reasons? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Extremely unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely likely

Please, answer each of the following questions on a rating scale of 1-7, where 1 is 'much less than expected' and 7 is 'much more than expected'.

11. How much advice did you receive in the last month? (e.g., professionals, family, friends, * religious leaders, other groups, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Much less than expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much more than expected

12. How much companionship from other persons did you receive in the last month? (e.g., * professionals, family, friends, religious leaders, other groups, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Much less than expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much more than expected

13. How much material support did you receive in the last month? (e.g., professionals, family, * friends, religious leaders, other groups, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Much less than expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much more than expected

14. How satisfied are you with the support received? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Much less than expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Much more than expected

Please answer the following questions:

15. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status? *

Mark only one oval.

- Employed, self-employed, enrolled in high-school or university
- Other

16. What was your income last month?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than or equal to PLN 3010 gross
- More than PLN 3010 gross

17. How old are you? *

18. To which gender identity do you most identify? *

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
- Other

19. Do you belong to or identify with any of these minority groups?

Tick all that apply.

- Racial, ethnical and linguistic minority group
- Religious minority
- Sexual minority group
- People with disabilities

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