

## SOCIAL FARMING TERMINOLOGY AND BENEFITS

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**Abstract.** Social farming and “inclusiveness”-related terminology have become more and more often encountered in literature, across domains, as a result of widespread efforts towards sustainable societies in the future. A case in point is also the vocabulary around social farming education, which upholds the therapeutic effect of farms, gardens, and rural access in a more socially inclusive manner. Social farming is a valuable novelty in Romania because it allows groups of disabled people to access policy and program alternatives to improve their situation; it maximizes clients' efforts in exploring options and choices, in becoming more effective in their relationships with agencies, bureaucrats, and professionals involved in this type of farming. The study analyzes the corpus of linguistic items used in this domain and other terms related to quality of life. This study aims at defining and describing social farming, and at identifying its goals, its beneficiaries at both social and individual levels, the types of mental disabilities targeted, and the types of therapies involved. The research method used is the bibliographic one. The authors hope this study will motivate decision-makers to implement the principles of social farming in Romania as they have already done in other sectors (industry and services) of the economy.

**Keywords:** inclusiveness, social farming, social farm, mental disability, terminology.

### INTRODUCTION

The terminology of “inclusiveness” is more and more often encountered in literature, across domains, as a result of widespread efforts towards sustainable societies in the future (IBRIC, DRAGOESCU, JURCUȚ, IANCU, 2023). A case in point is also the vocabulary around social farming education, which upholds the therapeutic effect of farms, gardens, and rural access in a more socially inclusive manner.

In what follows, the study analyzes the corpus of linguistic items used in this domain and other terms related to quality of life (IBSEN, KIRKEVOLD, PATIL, & ERIKSEN, 2019) and educational purposes.

Care farming, farming for health, green care, social agriculture, and social farming are synonyms for:

- Farming practices that are focused on:
  - Promoting disadvantaged people's care, education, and rehabilitation;
  - Integrating people with limited capacity (i.e., convicts / offenders, drug-addicted individuals, intellectually and/or physically disabled people, migrants, minors, etc.) (ELSEY et al., 2014);
- Farming practices that provide services in rural areas for groups of disabled people (children, the elderly).

Social farming:

- Adopts a multifunctional view of agriculture and its main products are: education, employment, health, saleable produce, and therapy;
- Features better quality of life, inclusion, and prevention of illness;
- Has multifarious added value potential, especially the opportunity for the disabled to interact normally with peers and to have their skills enhanced and valued;
- Has as key features rehabilitative practices such as:
  - The assumption of specific responsibilities;

- The contact and relationship with the nature (plants, animals);
- The presence of the farmers;
- Concerns:
  - “Agricultural enterprises” and “market gardens” that can integrate people that are emotionally, mentally, or physically disabled;
  - Farms that offer opportunities for active senior citizens, people with drug dependencies, the long-term unemployed, the socially disadvantaged, young offenders, and young people with learning difficulties (RESCHLY, 1996; CERMAK & RIEBER ABERSON, 1997; ELIAS, 2004; KAVALE & MOSTERT, 2004; BARBRA & JOYLINE, 2014);
  - Kindergarden farms;
  - School farms; regarding this young segment of users, a case that may receive attention is represented by children with various deficiencies, who could benefit from mineral intake to develop healthier teeth (OANCEA, BONTE, PODARIU, ROSIANU, TAMPA, MATEI, 2014).

A social farm is also called care farm, green farm, inclusive farm, social farm, and therapeutic farm. All these phrases designate rehabilitation settings (BEAULAUER & TAYLOR, 2001).

Social farms can be classified according to the following criteria: (HASSINK, 2009, 35-40):

- Characteristics: based on the community / based on family / based on professionals / based on service-users;
- Legal basis: institutional / private third sector;
- Main activity: agriculture-based / care or education-based (RESCHLY, 1996; CERMAK & RIEBER ABERSON, 1997; ELIAS, 2004; KAVALE & MOSTERT, 2004; BARBRA & JOYLINE, 2014);
- Purpose: care oriented / educationally or pedagogically oriented (RESCHLY, 1996; CERMAK & RIEBER ABERSON, 1997; ELIAS, 2004; KAVALE & MOSTERT, 2004; BARBRA & JOYLINE, 2014) / employment or labour oriented;
- Target group: mix of people (the unemployed, intellectually disabled, people with mental health issues); people with alcohol / drug use and abuse issues, intellectual disability, mental health issues; people with less serious forms of disability who are able to work autonomously.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The material used in this study consists in the most searched articles and books on the digital media currently dedicated to social farming for people with mental disabilities. These articles and books present social farming and mental disability from two perspectives – theoretical (definition, classification) and practical (benefits of social farming for farm families, service users, and wider society; mental disability therapies). We will look at both these aspects in order to collect the vocabulary of interest to our study.

The research method used is corpus linguistics, as well as bibliographic analysis, which consists in the revision of existing bibliographical material with respect to social farming for people with mental disabilities.

The systematic literature review has been instrumental for the collection of terms and other relevant characteristics of inclusive farming-related issues which have been retained for the present review (MOHER et al., 2009; URLICA, COROAMA-DORNEANU, KAMBERI, MALENKO, 2019). We also consider the terminological aspects from a sustainable ecolinguistic perspective (DRAGOESCU URLICA & STEFANOVIĆ, 2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Social farming is beneficial for farm families, service users, and wider society (KINSELLA et al., 2014, 3-10).

Farm families have financial and non-financial benefits (KINSELLA et al., 2014, 3-5):

- Financial benefits:

- Sufficient income to cover expenses;
- Added economic value obtained in the market place for goods produced on a social farm;

- Non-financial benefits:

- Extra labour provided by service users;
- Establishing greater connections between farmers and the wider community;
- Improving the image of farming in the area through recognition for providing care supports and positive feedback from participants, families and referring bodies;"

• Sense of personal achievement and fulfilment through helping excluded people.

Service users have mental, physical, and social health benefits:

- Mental health benefits (HASSINK, 2009, 41; ELSEY et al., 2014; KINSELLA et al., 2014, 6; KINSELLA, WALSH & DOHERTY, 2015; SUDMANN & BØRSHEIM, 2017; WHO, 2018; IBSEN et al., 2019; BORGI et al., 2020):

- Boosted self-confidence;
- Complemented traditional psychiatric treatment;
- Distraction from symptoms;
- Engagement in an activity which interests and motivates;
- Enthusiasm;
- Improved contact with users' own families;
- Improved social behaviour;
- Improved well-being;
- Increased responsibility;
- Increased self-awareness;
- Increased self-esteem;
- Increased self-respect;
- Increased self-responsibility;
- Provision of continuity and stability which enhances users' feeling of confidence / safety / security;

- Reduced feelings of anger, confusion, depression, fatigue, and tension;
- Reduced need for medical intervention and hospitalization;
- Restored feelings of worth;

- Physical health benefits (HASSINK, 2009, 41; ELSEY et al., 2014; KINSELLA et al., 2014, 5):

- Better appetite;
- Better sleep patterns;
- Better use of energy;
- Better use of senses;
- Development of skills;
- Improved diet (and healthy eating);
- Improved physical, farming, and other skills;
- Less aggression;
- More physical strength;
- Motivation in terms of getting a job done;

- Physical fitness;
- Social health benefits (HASSINK, 2009, 41; KINSELLA et al., 2014, 6):
- Acceptance of participants by ‘normal’ people;
- Better social interaction;
- Building of social skills (apologizing, asking a question, asking for help, controlling anger, dealing with frustration, decision-making, expressing your feelings, feeling sad, goal setting, introducing yourself, keeping out of fights, learning how to listen, negotiation, responding to aggression, responding to failure, starting a conversation, using self-control, working cooperatively; as well as approaching others and building positive relationships, cooperating, negotiating, and managing conflict non-violently, help-seeking and help-giving, including identifying problems correctly, listening and communicating accurately and clearly, problem solving, decision making, and planning, recognizing emotions in self and others, recognizing strengths and areas of need, showing ethical and social responsibility, taking others’ perspectives and sensing their emotions, working effectively in groups) as participants encounter other people visiting the farm (CERMAK & RIEBER ABERSON, 1997; ELIAS, 2004; KAVALE & MOSTERT, 2004);

- Employment;
- Formation of work habits related to inclusiveness;
- Greater independence and personal responsibility;
- Enhancing self-confidence and the willingness to try new things and meet new people;

- Integrating people in an effort to “de-stigmatize” them against social exclusion;
- More independence;
- More social contacts;
- More social skills.

Wider society’s benefits may consist in the following: (KINSELLA et al., 2014, 6; GENOVA, MACCARONI & VIGANÒ, 2020):

- Engaging in activities in open air where individuals with specific needs may display their skills to the general public, leading to empathy and better understanding of their capabilities;
- Enhancing the employability of participants;
- Fostering a more inclusive society;
- Increasing the participants’ potential availability to participate in the general workforce;
- Enhancing the social value of health care services;
- Providing a wide range of health care opportunities;
- Providing for more efficient use of public finances;
- Providing greater access to the therapeutic qualities of nature;
- Providing more diversified farm incomes;
- Providing new employment opportunities;
- Providing the farmers with work companions in the daily farm activities;
- Reducing the isolation for farmers.

“People with invisible impairments” may also be victims of discrimination or stigmatization, for instance in cases of unobvious issues related to mental health which are difficult to identify. (LOCKYEAR et al., 2003). One example would be ocular deficiencies as a result of recent viral threats (MILCU, A.I., ANGHEL, A., MUŞAT, O., MUNTEANU, M., SALAVAT, M.C., IORDACHE, A., UNGUREANU, E., BONŢE, D.C., BORUGĂ, A., 2022).

A wide range of mental disabilities – social constructs (ANASTASIOU & KAUFMAN, 2013; KLEPIKOVA, 2017) which are not synonyms of impairments (ANASTASIOU & KAUFMAN, 2013) – are targeted in social farming:

- Affective conditions:
  - Depressive behaviour – feelings of worthlessness or guilt, hallucinations, inability to concentrate, loss of interest in activities for long periods of time, paranoia, sleep issues, suicidal thoughts;
  - Manic behaviour – distractibility, hyperactivity, inflated self-esteem, reduced need for sleep);
- Anxiety-based conditions: irrational fear; panic attacks; persistent apprehension; recurring obsessions and compulsions; sudden fear or terror; tension;
- Autistic conditions: repetitive activities; problems with verbal and non-verbal communications;
- Mental retardation: incapable of taking care of his own needs, such as eating or dressing himself; limited verbal skills depending on the severity level; unable to perform daily activities; unable to understand simple instructions (RESCHLY, 1996; KLEPIKOVA, 2017);
- Organic conditions: a 15-point or more I.Q. reduction; hallucinations; inability to concentrate; inability to participate in daily activities and social situations; losing cognitive abilities – understanding place and time; showing memory impairment; substantial mood changes;
- Personality conditions: aggression; autistic thinking; hostility; mood issues; passiveness; suspicion; unstable relationships;
- Psychotic conditions: hallucinations; delusions; catatonic behaviour; incoherence; isolation; restricted activities;
- Somatoform conditions: changes in coordination and sensations; preoccupation with having an injury or disease; hearing, speech, or vision disturbances (RESCHLY, 1996);
- Substance addiction: paranoia.

Social farming involves three main types of therapies:

- Animal mediation / therapy or animal-assisted therapy (dog therapy, donkey therapy, equi- / horse therapy) on farms or in veterinary clinics (DRAKE et al., 2009);
- Assisted therapeutic horticulture or horticultural therapy;
- Farm therapy (as a form of occupational therapy or for educational purposes, such as practicing social interaction out of class (CERMAK & RIEBER ABERSON, 1997).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The bibliographic study of the most searched articles and books on the benefits of social farming has led to the following conclusions:

- Social farming goals are meant to integrate excluded, marginalized, stigmatized or socially isolated categories of people, to promote disadvantaged people's rehabilitation, integration and education, and to support the specified target groups.
- Social farming is beneficial for farm families (financial and non-financial benefits), service users (mental, physical, and social health benefits), as well as for the wider society.
- Social farming provides benefits for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and for residents or service users.
- Social farming targets mental disabilities such as affective, anxiety-based, autistic, organic, personality, psychotic, and somatoform conditions; mental retardation, and substance addiction.

- Social farming may include animal mediation / therapy or animal-assisted therapy; assisted therapeutic horticulture or horticultural therapy and farm therapy; these topics may provide content for future research papers.

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