

# RAISE UP



Stop **undeclared work** in agriculture





BOOKLET

GOOD PRACTICES  
TO CONTRAST TO UNDECLARED WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE

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METES FOUNDATION

As part of RAISE UP – grass Root Actions, Innovative approaches  
and Stakeholders Engagement to tackle Undeclared work  
Propensity (VS/2017/0320)





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## Premise

Undeclared work in agriculture is not an exclusively Italian phenomenon, but is to be found in various European countries. It is only through transnational cooperation, the involvement of all the interested parties and the adoption of a holistic approach that we can think of finding a solution to the problem.

This is why trade unions, employers' organisations and institutions from Italy, Bulgaria, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia were able to work together and in January 2018, thanks to funding from the European Commission, launched the RAISE UP project to engage in strategic discussions and develop effective policies and concrete measures that will contribute to combating undeclared work in agriculture. This project supports mutual learning on innovative policy measures and practices and their transfer into regional and national systems through cross-border cooperation.

The exchange of good practices in the field has led to the construction of the idea of unity in the fight against exploitation, promoting solidarity among workers, trade unions, local institutions and control bodies, beyond any differences relating to the country of origin or residence, thus raising the level of attention on the protection of workers' rights globally.

The comparison of experiences and working conditions in different economic-social systems has allowed the highlighting of different characteristics of undeclared work in agriculture connected to territorial, economic and productive peculiarities.

In both cases it was possible to reconstruct useful guidelines for:

- The identification of objectives
- The definition of the approach with the workers
- The choice of interlocutors and the methods for involving stakeholders

This booklet brings together the solutions that have been put into practice and produced good results, in a schematic way and with a practical approach.

For further information on the activities of the project, please go to:

<http://www.fondazionemetes.it/raise-up> where you can also find the following documents:

- Analysis and evaluation of the training needs of the participants
- Vademecum - Good practices to combat illegal work in agriculture

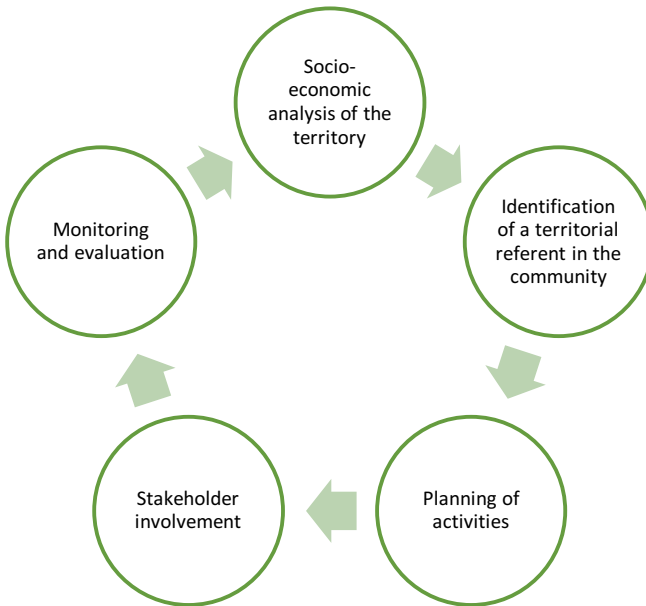


# Guidelines

In the needs analysis we asked the interviewees what are the main problems they face in organising an effective campaign to combat undeclared work. Based on their experience, it was possible to reconstruct the workflow, identifying the individual phases of planning, implementation and follow-up of the initiatives.

The outcome of this work is a checklist, an operational working document attached to this booklet, which allows users to follow the phases, in self-check mode, with the possibility of adapting them according to the characteristics the territorial context of reference.

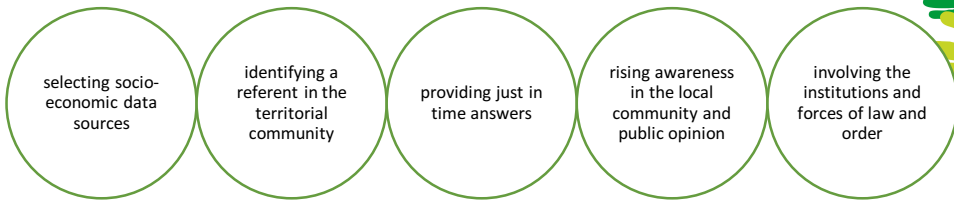
For each of these phases, the interviewees then described the main problems they face, also showing, through their concrete experience, the solutions that were found, illustrating their advantages and disadvantages.





## The problems

Most of the interviewees were faced with the following problems:



The selection of the sources concerns the analysis of the territory from a socio-economic point of view, in order to obtain information on the main crops; on the type of labour employed; on the locations of labour recruitment; on the most represented ethnic groups on the

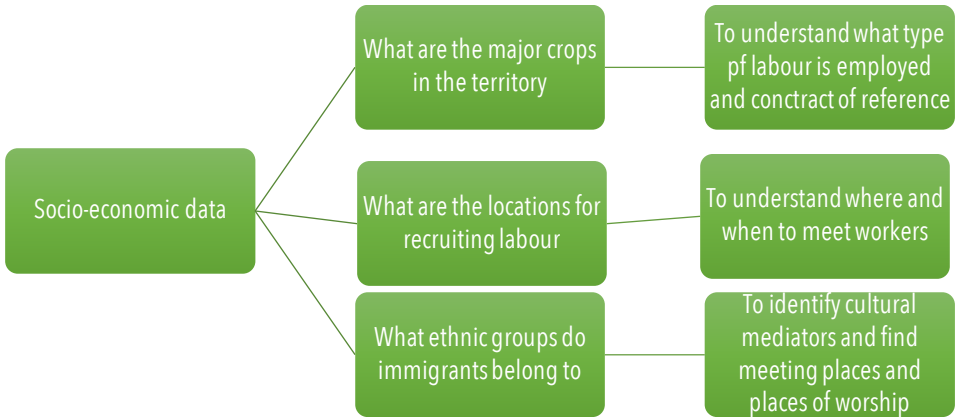
The difficulty in identifying a referent in the territorial community, refers to the need to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

The ability to respond to workers' requests in real time derives from the limited time available and the need to create a relationship of trust.

Raising awareness in the local community and public opinion on the importance of the holistic approach as a priority for integration in all its aspects (housing, school, regulatory and fiscal policies) is a fundamental aspect for creating the conditions for lasting integration founded on the principles of mutual respect and solidarity.

Finally, for the interviewees it may be difficult to proactively involve the institutions and the forces of law and order.

# 1. Socio-economic analysis of the territory



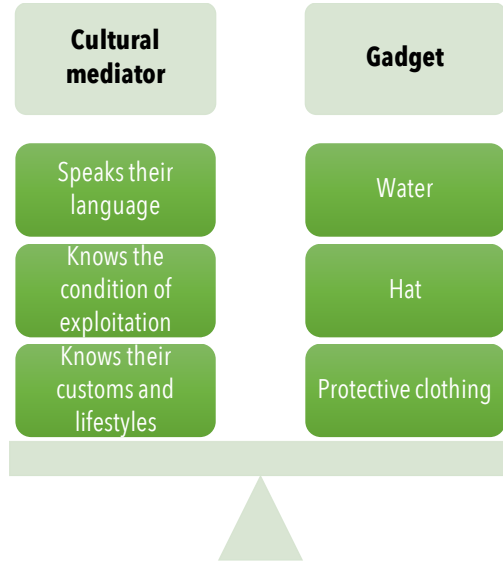
Only some of this information can be obtained by consulting official sources. In fact, these sources tend to underestimate undeclared work. Informal sources might then prove to be more useful. In some cases, in the absence of useful sources, a survey might be commissioned on working conditions in agriculture from a local research institute.

<b>Official sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social security and welfare institutions</li><li>• Chambers of Commerce</li><li>• Institutions responsible for the functioning of the labour market</li><li>• Research institutes</li></ul>

<b>Informal sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Territorial union representatives</li><li>• Privileged witnesses</li><li>• NGOs and aid workers</li><li>• The press</li></ul>

## 2. Identification of a territorial referent in the community

Language and cultural barriers can often be an obstacle in the approach to workers and a source of mistrust.



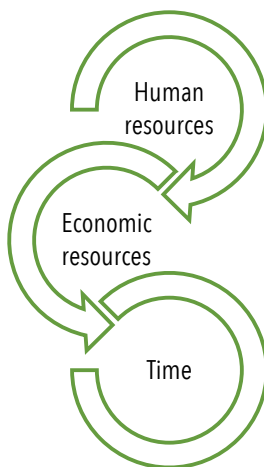
The interviewees would consider very useful the establishment of a network of cultural mediators, specialised in different languages and cultures, located in the territories and available on an ongoing basis to be involved in the various campaigns to combat undeclared work and exploitation.

The choice of which gadgets to be used is made on the basis of the activity to be carried out in the field and the achievement of the objective of the campaign (straw hat, water bottles, bicycle lights, reflectors, gloves, shoes and socks against the cold and rain, waterproofs). The union contact details can also be transmitted via the gadgets, for example by having them printed on the labels of water bottles, hats or reflectors.



### 3. Planning the activities

The planning of activities is the result of choices that take into account the objective to be achieved and the needs, expectations and requirements of the workers, without ever constituting a risk for their safety in the workplace. The prevailing opinion is that the scarcity of human and economic resources is one of the greatest risks for the sustainability of projects.



In order to carry out an effective intervention, according to the interviewees, it is necessary to select the work group in order to have the capacity to respond to all workers' requests, possibly also involving professionals from outside the organisation.

The tools to manage the little time available for meeting the workers are: having a clear and shared strategy before starting; having an adequate number of human resources to blanket the territory as quickly as possible; to be easily recognisable; to always leave contact details. In some cases, during the planning phase, reconnaissance and surveys of the territory were carried out using technologies (Google Maps bookmarks) capable of geo-locating the areas in which to intervene subsequently. The lack of time, according to the interviewees, also leads to a further need: that of providing just-in-time answers, without taking anything for granted, using simple and immediately understandable language without being influenced by the customs and lifestyles of our own cultural models..

### Human resources

- provide a large group
- a services expert
- an immigration expert
- a contract expert

### Time

- have a clear strategy
- provide the possibility to re-establishing contact
- be easily recognisable
- carry out preliminary surveys

Workers can be approached at work; at the end of the working day; in recruitment locations; in places of worship on holidays; in community meeting places

#### Action in camps and recruitment locations

- at dawn in places of recruitment (square, bar, road junctions)
- delivering gadget and flyers

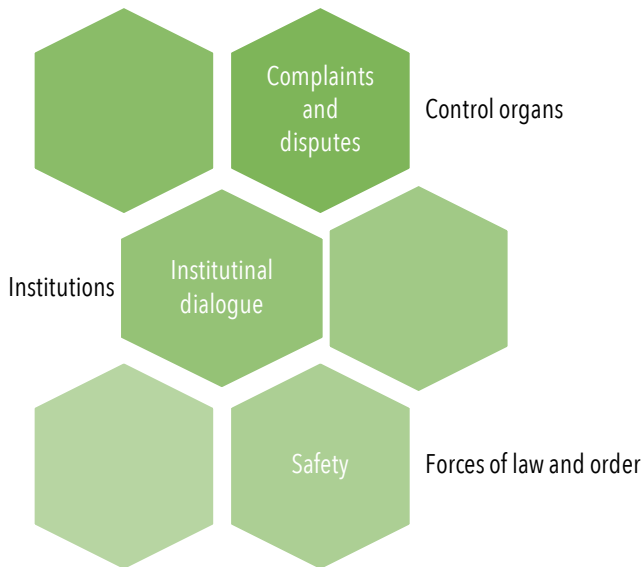
#### Action at the end of the day and in reception camps

- in the afternoon at meeting places, in the reception camps
- information regarding pay slips, resident's permits, and forms of income support

On the basis of the experiences gained, when the campaign takes place at the time of recruiting labour (square, bar, reception camp, etc.) or in the workplace, the activity is purely informative: brief multilingual explanatory flyers are therefore delivered which contain basic information on the types of contracts, on individual and collective protection, and organisation contacts so that the worker knows who to contact and where. It is advisable to leave before the arrival of the employers or gangmasters in order not to risk the workers losing that day's work and putting subsequent ones at risk, but then to return to the same place later, to consolidate the knowledge, relationship and trust with workers. Instead, in the case of activities that take place at the end of working hours, a longer period of time is available. This type of activity is carried out, on the basis of the experiences gained, in reception centres above all, in which, according to a pre-established calendar, provisions are made to provide legal, tax and social security assistance services. In other cases, mobile workstations are set up (with a simple tablet or equipped campers) along the road or at meeting places.

## 4 Stakeholder involvement

The interviewees believe it is essential to involve the key players in a synergistic coordination, in particular, the control bodies (labour inspectorates, local government representatives) and the institutions.



In most cases, institutional dialogue is a bland dialogue that does not translate into effective collaboration. Instead, according to the interviewees, it is useful to provide the data and information collected regarding working conditions in the territory and to request new controls and interventions in the companies and farms that have already been reported to counteract inaction and an attitude of wait-and-see.

According to the interviewees, it is also important to involve the entire community of reference through effective communication: the problem of undeclared work is not just a matter of labour law, but is a social scourge, even if the general low level of awareness suggests a lack of sensitivity to the problem in local communities. It is also important to create a network of contacts with third sector organisations in order to arrange the reception: hot meals, beds, medical care, repair of means of transport, transport to the workplace, employment lists. In any case, it is a generally held opinion that it is useful to involve the media by communicating the results of the activity to them: places, numbers, people, working conditions, reports of exploitation. It is also possible to organise a conference in the presence of the institutions, politicians and civil society, to solicit interventions and solutions.

## 5 Monitoring and evaluation

It is essential for all interviewees to evaluate the outcome of a campaign both in terms of quantity and quality. In many cases, meetings are held during the course of the campaign to assess progress and take corrective action.

### Monitoring indicators

No. of workers who approached the union

No. of new subscribers

No. of complaints

No. of mentions in the press

### Evaluation issues

Was the chosen right?

Was the chosen location suitable?

Did I meet a decent number of workers?

Did I gain their interest and trust?

In some cases a database was established and data collection formats adopted which are constantly updated. Most interviewees link the success of a campaign to the growth in the number of members and the impact this can have on the contract renewal phase in the sense of acquiring greater negotiating power.

Interviewees believe that it would also be useful to monitor labour flows in the various geographical areas according to the harvesting phases (geo-referencing workers).

Finally, the majority of the interviewees expressed the need for a place in which to exchange their experiences also in order to ensure greater coordination. The interviewees, in fact, are aware that not all initiatives are replicable or immediately transferable, but they know that comparison is an essential moment to understand what to do and what not to do. According to the interviewees, study visits to the places of origin of the workers are important in order to understand people's lifestyles, meet the local unions and learn about the different ways of organising work.

# Checklist for the organisation of an initiative to combat illegal work in agriculture

## Before the initiative

### Analisi del contesto:

In the identified area are there:

- Situations of exploitation
- Concentrations of immigrant workers
- Harvesting campaigns
- Impromptu ghettos or camps

I know:

- What the major crops are
- Type of labour employed
- Fundamental elements of the contract of reference (rates of pay, working hours, classification)
- Labour recruitment locations
- Most represented ethnic groups
- Meeting places and places of worship

### Organisation:

- Evaluation of economic resources
- Evaluation of time available
- Choice and production of gadgets
- Availability of internet access during the intervention
- Definition of the quantitative and qualitative objectives of the campaign
- Scheduling and timing of interventions
- Organisation of a closing conference

I have identified/contacted/informed/involved:

- At least two people dedicated to the campaign
- Cultural mediators
- Territorial union structures
- Contact for the workers who are permanently present in the territory
- Local institutions
- The forces of law and order



## After the initiative

### Evaluation of the result:

- The time chosen was right
- The place chosen was suitable
- I met a decent number of workers
- I gained their interest and trust
- In the following days, some of these went to the territorial union headquarters to investigate the acquired information or report a negation of their rights
- I collected data, information, images and useful testimonies to build a complete report of the situation to submit to the competent institutions and solicit their intervention
- I received positive feedback to posts on social media to publicise the initiative
- I was contacted by journalists wanting to learn more about the phenomenon
- I received requests from the territory (workers, delegates, local trade union leaders) for the replication of the initiative

### Monitoring of the intervention:

- no. of workers who after the first contact turned to the union
- no. of new workers who signed up
- no. of reports of cases of exploitation

### Relations with institutions:

- Establishing a permanent committee
- Transmission of report on the situations encountered and the data collected (no. of workers, pay rates, living conditions, exploitation)

### Follow up:

- Monitoring of labour flows in the various geographical areas according to the harvesting phases (geo-referencing the places frequented by the workers encountered).