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## RESCuE technical report on fieldwork in Ireland

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## Abstract

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RESCuE is an FP7 funded project that examines the patterns of resilience during socioeconomic crises among households in nine European countries. The project is led and co-ordinated by Dr. Markus Promberger of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nuremberg, Germany. This paper is a technical report on the fieldwork carried out by the Irish RESCuE team<sup>1</sup>. In particular, it provides a description of the local contexts of the research sites; observations from the field; a discussion of field access, contacting strategies and difficulties; sampling criteria and methods; and the process of conducting qualitative and photographic interviews<sup>2</sup>. The paper was originally produced as the Irish national report for Work Package 3 (D3.16) within the RESCuE project.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of the methodological approach see: Promberger et al. (2014). Patterns of resilience during socioeconomic crises among households in Europe (RESCuE): Concept, objectives and work packages of an EU FP 7 project. pp. 26-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ethical Approval for RESCuE Project in Ireland was granted by the Social Research Ethics Committee of Maynooth University in June 2014.

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# 1. Description of local contexts

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The Irish team aimed to select an urban location with significant deprivation measures (outside of Dublin) as well as a rural location with similar deprivation levels. They also aimed to select a unified, or linked, urban and rural space in order to examine the similarities and differences between these spatial communities within a cohesive region. To do this we drew on a scientific instrument, the All-island Digital Atlas, developed by AIRO out of Census data (2011) and using the *Pobal HP Deprivation Index*, (Hasse and Pratschke, 2012), which measures affluence and deprivation at the level of electoral division across the island.

The index shows the level of overall affluence and deprivation across 3,440 electoral divisions in 2011. This instrument is freely available at:

<http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/mapping-resources/airo-census-mapping/local-authority-modules>.

The Index measures three dimensions:

- Demographic vitality (rural/urban indicator looking a population's age, education levels, household composition and rural/urban status);
- Social Class composition (education and socio-economic status); and
- Labour Market situation (unemployment rates, socio-economic status of workers and household headed by lone parents)

To provide for diverse cases, the sampling sites selected for the Irish context of *RESCuE* comprised:

- midlands urban/suburban setting (MUrb)
- midlands village/rural hinterland (MRur)

The names of the settings have been concealed to preserve the confidentiality of informants.

## 1.1 Urban Case.

The midlands urban setting (MUrb) is a large provincial town in the Irish Midlands, within commuting distance to Dublin city centre. In the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, it is identified as part of a linked national gateway. The MUrb was traditionally an agricultural market town, but in the past number of decades it has succeeded in attracting foreign direct investment, mainly from the United States. Between 1996 and 2006, considerable suburban development took place on the outskirts of the town. During that period, population in the suburban area doubled over a ten-year period. The most recent Census (2011) has seen the population in this area continue to increase slightly (2011). Similarly, the urban centre has increased only slightly (2011). The MUrb area maintains small populations from the UK, Poland, Lithuania, other EU countries and the rest of the world at a rate of 3%-6% of the total population. The majority of residents of the MUrb setting are classed in the "Managerial and Technical" social class, followed by the "Non-Manual" class (CSO, 2011) with the majority

of residents holding "professional occupations" at 14.9% of the total population, 13.2% hold "Skilled Trades", while 11.7% hold "Elementary Occupations".

A recent study, "Suburban Affiliations" (Corcoran et al., 2010), examined four locations on the periphery of Dublin that were experiencing increased suburbanisation. The researchers conducted a survey of selected suburban estates. As a result of this, they found that although commuter urban areas became an attractive location during the "boom years" for those wishing to move out of Dublin city but still commute for work, the majority of those who occupied the new estates were people returning to these urban commuter locations or people taking an opportunity to move into the urban centre from the countryside. Furthermore, they found a general satisfaction with the urban area by residents in terms of amenities, facilities and resources. There was a general sense of "home" with a good quality of life, and community life, especially by those who grew up in the area. In general, those who grew up in the area have family networks they can draw upon, however, outside family circles they turn towards friends rather than neighbours resulting in locals describing the MURb setting as "clannish" - simultaneously inward looking and intrusive.

### *1.2 Rural Case.*

The rural locations selected for the Irish case study incorporate the hinterland of our urban setting. They are situated in the North, and Northeast of the urban midlands. The recent Census (2011) indicates that there has been a slight increase in population for the midlands rural setting (MRur). The MRur is renowned for bogland with key traditional employers, such as Bord na Móna, in the area. Other employers in the region include concrete works, quarries, factories, and local councils. While job losses have been experienced in all locations in the area of construction, agriculture remains stable (AIRO/CSO:2011). These areas have a majority of small farms (less than 100 acres) and farmers, although the land is of poor quality as it is an area of bog land. The majority of the population in the MRur area are Irish, with only slight diversity seen in a few regions.

A recent Report (2013) by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) examined rural areas nationally and recommended an integrated approach to rural economic development that would facilitate economic and community participation, increase accessibility, and focus on sector specific development. However, accessibility, economic depletion, high speed broadband, isolation and gender differentiation remain high on the agenda of rural needs.

## 2. Observations from the field

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### *2.1 Observational strategies*

Participant observation was used as a method of data collection prior to the commencement of interviews with project participants, and also during the interview stage. The post-doctoral researcher initially spent several days in both the MUrb and MRur case study locations in order to become familiar with the communities. In relation to MUrb, this involved taking various routes to walk from one end of the urban area to the other in order to become acquainted with the orientation and spatial layout of the urban centre, to observe the movements of inhabitants of the urban space, the types of businesses and leisure activities ongoing within the urban centre, and the local amenities provided and utilised by its inhabitants.

In particular, the researcher walked around the social housing estates in the areas designated disadvantaged within the MUrb. These housing estates are visually quite different as one area contains four different estates all of which have different types of houses built from different eras, while the other area is well maintained, colourful in places, and all houses are of similar design and construction.

Both areas have houses that are dilapidated and in some cases boarded up. Both areas have sports grounds situated nearby. Similarly, one area of the MUrb has experienced closures in terms of small shops as well as a large UK Supermarket chain, while another area of the MUrb has experienced sustained growth as hotels and industry complexes remain.

These observations acted as points of investigation in drawing similarities and differences between various areas of the MUrb and also facilitated exploring differences between the urban centre and its suburbs.

Participant observation in the MUrb also involved visiting associations that have a supportive role within the community, in terms of providing a service or acting as a resource. These services (ranging from religious charities, to an older persons club, to crèche facilities and community projects) within the MUrb are almost all contained within close proximity to one another. However, further resource centres are situated alongside the suburban estates they support. Observation at the above locations informed the researchers of the type and frequency of classes and supports provided to residents within the community and at these resource centres.

Additionally, the researcher visited and browsed the local charity shops in the MUrb, noting the local conversations and the types of items sought by clientele. Following an expert interview with the director of an older persons club, the researcher spent an afternoon playing cards with some members of the club. She also participated in their coffee morning and bingo session the following day. This provided an opportunity to casually chat with the persons who dropped in, listen to stories of their day, and in some cases, changes they have made as they moved into active retirement along with their perceptions of the effects of the crisis, often on their children and grandchildren.

Participant observation in the MRur included walkabouts in the rural locations, noting the visible amenities and resources provided to the community. It involved time spent in the local hotel or coffee shop observing the customers and interactions amongst community members. As we have incorporated a number of rural locations as part of our MRur participant observation proved particularly useful in terms of similarities and differences between our rural locations.

## *2.2 Results from observation*

The MURb, in many senses, appears as a well facilitated and well resourced urban location. In terms of public spaces it has newly constructed roads that connect the town centre to the outlying ring roads and cross-country motorway, as well as having a train station with a commuter service to Dublin city. Many locally owned business and retail premises remain in the urban centre. Small independent newsagents exist, betting shops and pubs, and mix-match mini-supermarkets in which one can buy anything from souvenirs to breakfast cereal to wallpaper. Independent hardware stores and furniture shops remain on the main street. Large warehouse style supermarkets such as Lidl and Aldi are visible on the outskirts of the MURb.

The urban park space and waterside walkway provide public social and leisure spaces. Small public pedestrian squares are provided through the MURb. An Integrated Arts Centre provides opportunities in the area of dance, opera, drama and music. Local government offices, cafe and public library provide civic space for community members, while also acting as gallery space for community arts projects.

The midlands in general have several lakes and so there are fishing, boating and sailing clubs as well as picnic facilities. The MURb has playing fields accommodating soccer clubs, rugby clubs, GAA hurling clubs and gaelic football clubs. There is also a local swimming pool, an athletics club, tennis club and golf club.

In regard to social groups, older people drop in to the active retirement/old age club and take part in social activities such as exercise classes, computer classes, card games, weekly bingo or organised day trips. Home visitations and care for older people is provided through a long established community project. This established community project provides adult education classes, childcare care, community employment, back to education initiatives, local training initiatives, and QQI level 5 courses. The resource centres that support the local catchment area of the MURb facilitate community groups such as resident committees, youth groups, sports facilities and clubs, childcare, summer camps, and allotments. Religious charities such as SVdeP operate a thrift shop and provide outreach support to families. The local Lions Club also provides social support to families in the area.

In regard to festivals, the MURb has an annual St. Patrick's Day festival which draws participation from local schools, clubs and associations within the town. It also hosts annual events such as cycling championships and a Christmas market.

The MRur study areas vary in size. Recent years have seen many rural locations lose essential services such as the local post office, the Garda station, or bank. The loss of these public services and closure of these buildings along with the reduction in public transport services have been topical issues for small communities as they face increasing isolation, unemployment and insecurity. Our MRur vary in terms of layout; some are structured around a main town square with few business and retail premises operational. Others are quiet



parishes with solely a local shop, school and church. The MRur areas mainly consist of small farms, with people taking the opportunity of commuting to nearby urban centres for construction and other work during the boom years. Emigration has significantly affected the rural areas, often articulated in terms of how it has affected local GAA teams. For example, one family might provide several players but now these brothers may have emigrated resulting in the loss of important players and subsequently, the team.

## 3. Field Access and Contacting

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### *3.1 Ways of accessing the field.*

The Irish team approached the field through participant observation, expert interviews and snowballing. Within each case study site 'experts' were contacted through local organisations that had a particular supportive role within the community and also through other 'snowballing' methods that sought to reach people not attached to organisations. As a result, this component of the Irish *RESCuE* sample includes people who are connected to and participating in organisations (ranging from Community Resource Centres to unemployment centres and charity organisations, to men's groups, women's groups and active retirement associations), and also experts who were active or well-known within the community.

A framework for a diverse range of settings was devised from which to select organisations in each setting:

- **Community Organisations/Groups:** Church and parish centres; Family Resource Centres; Community Development partnership/organisations; Resident's Associations; Charity organisations; Garda Community Liaison Officer; Tidy Towns.
- **Sports/Recreation Clubs:** Men's Shed Movement; Irish Countrywomen's Association; Active Retirement associations; Macra na Feirme; Art's Centre.
- **Education Settings:** Post Leaving Certificate; FAS Training Centres; Local Schools.
- **Government Agencies:** County Partnership; Department of Social Protection.

Each of the above types of network in each category was approached where present and available in each site, with the overall aim of striving for maximum diversity of cases. Site profiling to identify key 'experts' in advance as well as snowballing for key 'experts' within sites once fieldwork began generated the overall set of 'experts'. 'Snowballing' involves identifying one key contact, explaining to them the purpose of your study and asking them to refer you on to other potential contacts. This process is continued with each new layer of contacts so that the approach continually 'snowballs' out from the original contact, or until you reach saturation point.

Table 1 summarises the Irish *RESCuE* sample of 'experts' by sector (public, private, or civil society) in both the urban and rural case study regions.

**Table 1: Irish *RESCuE* sample of 'experts' by sector (N=19)**

Urban			Rural		
Civil Society	Private Sector	Public Sector	Civil Society	Private Sector	Public Sector
Manager of Resource Centre	President of Chamber of Commerce	Local Politician	President of Men's movement	Local Business man	Local Politician National Politician from rural location
Director of Older People's non-governmental organisation	President of Employment Action Group	Director of local state agency	Irish Country Women's Association		Director of Rural State Agency
Former manager of local Christian Charity		An Garda Síochána			
Manager of Resource Centre		Director of Government Initiative			
Director of Traveller Project					
Health Officer of Homeless Project					
<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

### *3.2 Contacting criteria.*

For each key category of 'expert' selected, researchers made contact with an appropriate 'gatekeeper' who was appraised of the study in written format (formal letter and/or email) and verbally. As well as gaining the 'experts' participation in the form of an interview, four options were presented for how researchers could engage household participants in an interview:

1. If participants came together in the site (e.g. group meetings), researchers visited in person, made a short presentation on the study and invited participants to take part. Those present were circulated with a simple factsheet on the project and asked either to contact the researcher (via phone, email or text) or indicate their interest by discussing participation with the researcher there and then. This could also be done by meeting with the researcher in a public location after the presentation.
2. If participants did not come together, the request to take part was passed to the gatekeeper who, with colleagues, approached potential participants. The gatekeeper then arranged a meeting between anyone who expressed an interest and the researcher.
3. The request to take part was circulated by the gatekeeper to potential participants, e.g. via an email list, and anyone interested in taking part contacted the researcher directly themselves or responded to the gatekeeper.
4. In instances where gatekeepers were unable to approach potential participants the researchers designed a project poster that advertised the request to participate in the research project and invited participants to contact the researchers directly either via email, phone, or text.

### *3.3 Difficulties.*

In general, it proved beneficial to conduct expert interviews with all possible gatekeepers so that they felt officially involved in the project. Such involvement also yielded in-depth knowledge of the kinds of households the project was interested in accessing. However, although some experts were keen to be involved in the project they were unable to provide access to participants. In such instances the researchers inquired about other contacts or experts within the community, employing a snowballing technique. We experienced difficulties in accessing sporting groups in rural locations as these groups generally meet in the evening times and at sporting matches over the weekend.

### *3.4 Possible sources of bias and decisions to reduce or avoid it.*

It was important to the researchers that gatekeepers were given as much information as possible about which potential participants might be involved. This was provided during the interview process with experts. All efforts were made to minimize bias by discussing the suitability of participants put forward by the expert. For example, an expert would initially suggest someone known to them who they felt would make a good case, however, with further discussion of criteria the expert would reconsider their selection and suggest someone more appropriate. Additionally, the researchers thoroughly discussed the project with each participant. In some instances, although potential interviewees were provided by gatekeepers the researchers acknowledged their willingness to participate but did not engage the potential participants in the interview process.

Snowballing amongst interview participants resulted in bias in one instance as the researchers felt that a participant recommended a friend as a favour in order to receive the incentives of a voucher and digital camera. Nevertheless, the participant was an interesting case, contributing to the project. The researchers decided to only snowball from interview participants in particular circumstances where, for instance, a participant knew someone in a similar situation as themselves. This was thought possible in cases where individuals had suffered the collapse of their business as a result of the crisis.

## 4. Sampling criteria and methods

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### *4.1 Type of sampling used.*

When interested persons contacted researchers (see Section 3.2), the researchers described the nature of the study, which in some cases resulted in the interested person describing their situation and why they felt they would be good cases. In the instances where this did not occur, the researcher described the project and the types of cases that they were interested in and asked for some biographical details about each potential participant. The researcher explained that some, but not all, who expressed an interest in taking part would be interviewed over a period of time. Participants were selected on the basis of maximising diversity of the selection criteria i.e. age, gender, occupation, ethnicity etc. We explained that we would be back in touch with participants if they were selected for participation.

### *4.2 Criteria (ex-ante and emerging).*

In selecting participants to invite for household interview we sought from the outset to achieve a diversity of cases across the lifecourse and a balanced gender and ethnic representation, following the overall guidelines of the RESCuE project. Identifying resilient practices, and indeed resilient households in advance, proved problematic, and so the focus was upon households under stress in which there are resilient practices. Stemming from the literature and focus of the project, the Irish team sought to target the following specific types of household ex-ante:

- Those actually poor and on public benefits, but active and self-supporting - getting by better than others.
- Those being at risk of poverty but struggling not to get into it by various activities.
- Those actually poor but not in benefit schemes due to various reasons, and getting by somehow.
- Low-paid working families or households.

Emerging from interviews with 'experts' the Irish team expanded the above sample to specifically include the following type of household:

- Any of the above classification of households with NEET adults living in the home.

### *4.3 Difficulties in accessing certain profiles.*

One type of participant from the above classifications was particularly difficult to access as they were less inclined to be involved in community activities, namely:

- Those actually poor but not in benefit schemes, and getting by somehow.

There was anecdotal evidence from the expert interviews that these comprised households who experienced the collapse of their livelihood as a result of the crisis, and further extenuating events such as mortgage arrears. This is consistent with research showing a significant loss of jobs in male dominated sectors such as construction (McGinnity et al.,

2014). These households were described as being in considerable debt but not to have approached the traditional organisations that support families and households in crisis and poverty. Self-employed people in Ireland pay a different rate of PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance) and so in the event of loss or collapse of their business they found it difficult to access welfare support, or it took a long time for their cases to be processed. Although we heard many stories of these types of households over the course of our expert interviews it was difficult for our experts to approach these participants as there were issues of shame, sensitivity and ultimately, confidentiality. However, we worked with a religious charity organisation that provided us with a household for participation in the project. We also approached an organisation that works specifically with cases of accrued debt and debt default. This resulted in access to similar cases for comparative purposes. We also contacted a homeless project operating in MUrb who provided full day access to allow for participant observation, expert interview, and case specific interview. The Irish team also approached job activation supervisors in a Community Development Centre in order to access profiles of participants who may have experienced the collapse of their business as a result of the crisis. All of the above diverse ways of accessing these specific profiles resulted in extra time being required in the field, which extended the length of fieldwork overall.

## 5. Conducting interviews

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### *5.1 Narrative interviews*

#### *5.1.1 Interview progress.*

The household interviews were completed by April 2015 with 13 households interviewed in the urban location, and 12 households interviewed in the rural location. The interest and engagement by experts was uneven, in the sense that, at times there was a rapid response by experts followed by a quick connection to interview participants, whereas for others it was a long process in gaining access to interview participants. Initial expert contacting took place during October and the start of November with household interviews beginning to taking place over the course of November/December/ January. A second round of expert contacting took place over January/February which led to another round of household interviews taking place during March. A final round of expert contacting took place during March in order to access specific profiles that were lacking for comparative purposes with these interviews taking place in April 2015.

#### *5.1.2 Positive elements.*

The researchers were warmly received at all households; however, in three cases participants requested to be interviewed in public locations. Participants often asked about the types of questions that they would be asked. However they were assured that it would be a natural conversation about their experiences over the past number of years. Participants were engaged in answering the questions or prompts, and often remarked at the end of the interview how much more they had to say than they expected.

#### *5.1.3 Limits of disclosure.*

It became apparent when interviewing men that they often talked ‘around’ incidents of crisis. They were sometimes vague in their description of events leading to certain incidents and reluctant to talk directly about crisis events, often resisting probes to talk about the incident in more detail. In contrast, women were more direct in their discussion of crisis events, responding to probes by providing greater detail.

#### *5.1.4 Sensitive topics.*

Sensitive topics were encountered by the researchers during the household interviews particularly in terms of the impact certain events had on people’s personal lives. The effects of their changed circumstances on relationships with their children, their partner, or wider family network, was a prevalent sensitive subject. These topics included the collapse of their business (particularly where this was the main household income and it was a man retelling the incident), unable to secure welfare support, family dynamics as a result of crisis, and mental ill health.



### *5.1.5 Problems encountered.*

For some participants, discussion of their circumstances, particularly in regard to the sensitive topics mentioned above, became highly emotive during the interview process. Men displayed outbursts of distress by crying, or leaving the room. In contrast, women discussed their distress in terms of mental ill health. For some, it may have been their first time telling their story from start to finish in such a way, and to strangers. This was predominantly the case with male participants. It was important to ensure that we were not causing harm to the participant by provoking undue reflection on their circumstances. Every effort was made by the researchers to ensure that time and support was given to the participant to discuss sensitive topics further, or for the conversation to return to natural and mundane topics before the researchers' departure. Participants were assured throughout that they were under no obligation to discuss a particular topic, or to continue with the research.

### *5.1.6 Adapting guidelines.*

The researchers found the guidelines to be helpful and in the majority of cases used these as a tool, probing with additional questions where necessary and relevant (See Appendix VIII).

### *5.1.7 Individual &/or group interviews.*

The majority of household interviews took place with individuals; however, there were two cases where two members of the household were present, both participating in the interview process. In these particular cases it was the interviewees' preference that they both participate, rather than a response to a direct request by the researchers. In practice this was experienced as beneficial by the researchers, as the experiences, reflections and insights of the participants complemented each other, enriching the quality of the interview.

### *5.1.8 Reaction to consent forms.*

Due to varying literacy levels the researchers felt it was good practice to talk through a summary of the information sheet with all participants highlighting all important points. They asked the participant to take a few moments to read the information themselves if they wished, and ask any further questions they might have. The researchers then verbally went through each option on the consent form with the participants, to ensure that they understood what they were agreeing/disagreeing to. In general, reaction to the consent form was positive with all participants content to be audio recorded and to having their anonymized transcripts deposited in a digital repository.

## *5.2 Photographic interviews:*

### *5.2.1 Interview progress*

Photographic interviews were completed in both urban and rural locations by September 2015.

### *5.2.2 Understanding of technique & attitudes to photographing*

Reception of the photographic element of the project was positive at the first interview stage, and in such cases the researchers discussed the requirements of the photo elicitation stage with the interviewees. At the end of the interview, or at the beginning when signing the consent form, the interviewee was given the inspiration sheet. The researchers went through a few examples from the inspiration sheet to give the interviewee some guidance as to what kinds of pictures they could take. If discussing the photographic exercise at the end of the interview the researchers drew on some examples from their interview content, illustrating further examples of photographs the participants could take. They also informed the participant that they did not have to stick to the inspiration guide.

Regardless, when the researchers contacted the participants to organise a photo elicitation interview many said that they did not understand what photos the researchers wished them to take, or that they kept forgetting the camera, or that they just need more time, indicating a certain lack of confidence on their part about this phase of the interview process. The researcher drew on the participants' first interview and reminded them of details they gave that could serve as possible photo examples. The researcher also reminded the participant of examples they gave themselves as possible photographs, while also reminding the participant of the inspirational guide.

### *5.2.3 Positive elements and negative elements.*

From the photo elicitation interviews, the taking of photos has been a family affair, sometimes with sometimes all members of the household involved. In other cases participants took their children along as they went about taking photographs, and so for many, taking the photos has been an engaged family/household affair. Participants were proud to present photographs of activities they had taken together, which allowed the researcher to access details of activities undertaken by the household.

Few participants used the inspirational guideline despite its being discussed in the interview. However the researcher and participant used the inspirational guide as a tool to co-construct the possibility of what the photographs could represent. Rather than being a negative aspect of the process, this allowed the researcher to draw out the detail of the photographs from the participant. For instance, where a participant began to discuss the importance of an item in a photograph, the researcher would ask if that was something that they 'could not get by without' (see Appendix VIV Inspirational Guide). As such, the classification of the photographs was an interactive and co-constructed, emergent process.

#### *5.2.4 Understanding/Difficulty with topics.*

When the participants were shown the inspirational guide for photographs either at the beginning, or at the end of the first household interview, they were given a chance to read it through and ask any questions. Often, the more abstract guidelines raised queries from participants to which the researchers gave indicative examples of what kinds of photographs these could be. Nevertheless participants did not stick with the guideline and instead intuitively took photographs of their surroundings and daily activities. Positive as this was, it meant in some cases they may have missed opportunities to take photographs that would have yielded greater insights for the project. Where the interviewer felt this could have been the case she asked whether the participant felt there were photographs that they did not get a chance to take, creating an opportunity to discuss activities that were not covered.

## Appendix 1: Expert Information Sheet (Phase 1)

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### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR LOCAL EXPERTS

*Project title:* RESCuE: Patterns and Dimensions of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe

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You are invited to take part in this international study funded by the European Commission, due to your support or work with those in economic hardship in the area of MUrb and/or MRur. It is important that you understand why this research is being done and what your involvement in it entails.

#### PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY:

RESCuE is a European comparative project with similar work being carried out in countries such as UK, Germany, Poland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Finland. The project wishes to explore how poor households are coping or adapting to the financial crisis. Research has shown that some vulnerable or disadvantaged households can be seen to "bounce back", or be resilient, while others do not. We wish to look at, and try to understand, the kinds of habits or ways of adapting that households use to cope during times of hardship, and how institutions and communities can assist them.

#### WHAT IS BEING STUDIED?

Information for this research is collected in a number of ways:

- State-of-the-art national and international reports are being compiled.
- Interviews with local experts that work with or support disadvantaged households.
- Interviews with community representatives and leaders.
- Interviews with disadvantaged households.
- Digital photographs of disadvantaged households everyday situations.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 613245  
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#### WHO IS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Any person who is a community leader in the areas of MUrb or MRur.
- Any member of a community or voluntary sector that interacts with disadvantaged households in the areas of MUrb and MRur.
- Directors and/or active members of poverty agencies (e.g. NGO's) will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews.
- Disadvantaged households within the county will be asked to participate.

#### WHAT HAPPENS IN THE INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL EXPERTS?

At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will be asked whether you wish the name of the community or voluntary organization and your own name to be included in the study and if you are happy for the interview to be audio recorded. You will also be asked if you agree to have your interview deposited in a digital repository for sharing and re-use by other bona fide researchers. None of these questions affect your rights nor your ability to participate in the study. All interviews are conducted in English.

Interviews can be expected to last from 30 minutes to one hour maximum. The questions concern your knowledge of the areas of MUrb and/or MRur. We are particularly interested in your understanding of the impact of the financial crisis on people, households and organizations in your area, and also in how your organisation has adapted to meet any new challenges that they face. The interviews will be semi-structured. You will be invited to discuss any other issues that you deem relevant to the project. You may choose not to answer any question you wish, and you may also withdraw from the interview at any stage.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND WITHDRAWING FROM THE STUDY

Please feel free to contact the researchers with any questions or suggestions at any stage of the study. Details of how to contact them are provided below and on the project website [[www.rescueproject.eu](http://www.rescueproject.eu)]. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. At any stage you can indicate whether you wish your name or the name of your organisation to be withdrawn from the study.

You may wish to be identified in your transcript and in subsequent outputs from this study. However, if you wish to participate anonymously you will be guaranteed full confidentiality. You will be asked to complete a consent form where you can specify the conditions under which you wish to participate in this study.

#### HOW YOUR DATA WILL BE USED

If you agree on your consent form, your interview material will be deposited in a digital repository and made available to other bona fide researchers, subject to the conditions you have agreed to. Research from the project will be presented in academic conferences internationally and published academic journals. Before being deposited in a digital repository, the data collected for this research will be kept in a safe location on the premises of Maynooth University for five years. *It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.*

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at [research.ethics@nuim.ie](mailto:research.ethics@nuim.ie) or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for taking part in the study.

## Appendix II: Expert Consent Form (Phase 1)

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### WRITTEN CONSENT FORM EXPERT PARTICIPATION

Title of Project: RESCuE: Patterns of resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe.

Principal Researchers: Jane Gray; Jenny Dagg, Maynooth University.

Please tick the box

	YES	NO
1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet dated (...), and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and that I have had enough time to consider the information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview or one month thereafter, without affecting my rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree:		
o To the interview being audio-recorded for the purposes of data processing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o To my name or the name of my organization being included in the study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o To the interview being archived with a digital repository.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to take part in the photo elicitation exercise and to a follow-up interview to discuss the photographs with the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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7. I understand that I can withdraw my name and have any personal details rendered anonymous. This can be done at any time after the interview or after being informed about the initial findings of the study, up until the study is submitted or published and the data have been deposited.

Name of participant.....  
Date.....  
Signature.....  
Name of interviewer.....  
Date .....

Signature.....



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## Appendix III: Participant Information Sheet Household (Phase 2)

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### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOUSEHOLDS (PHASE 2)

*Project title:* RESCuE: Patterns of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe

*Principal Researcher:* Jane Gray, Ph.D., Auxilia House, Rm. 2.5, Maynooth University, Maynooth. T: 01-7083596

*Post doctoral Researcher:* Jenny Dagg, Ph.D., NIRSA, Iontas Building, Rm 2.10, Maynooth University, Maynooth. T: 01-7086150.

*Email:* [jane.gray@nuim.ie](mailto:jane.gray@nuim.ie) / [jennifer.dagg@nuim.ie](mailto:jennifer.dagg@nuim.ie)

You are invited to take part in this international study funded by the European Commission, which is trying to understand how families in the area of MUrb and/or MRur are coping in the current economic environment. It is important that you understand why this research is being done and what your involvement in it entails.

#### PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY:

RESCuE is a European comparative project with similar work being carried out in countries such as UK, Germany, Poland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Finland. The project is looking at those factors that help families to be resilient in the face of adversity.

#### WHAT IS BEING STUDIED?

Information for this research is collected in a number of ways:

- State-of-the-art national and international reports are being compiled.
- Interviews with local experts that work with or support families.
- Interviews with community representatives and leaders.
- Interviews with families.
- Digital photographs of everyday family activities.

#### WHO IS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Any person who is a community leader in the areas of MUrb or MRur area.
- Any member of a community or voluntary sector that interacts with households in the areas of MUrb and MRur.



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- Directors and/or active members of NGO's will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews.
- Families within the MUrb and MRur area will be asked to participate.

#### WHAT HAPPENS IN THE INTERVIEW WITH FAMILIES?

At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will be asked if you are happy for the interview to be audio recorded. You will be asked if you agree to have your interview deposited in a digital repository for sharing and re-use by other bona fide researchers. We will ensure that you or your family will not be identifiable in any future use of your interview.

You will be asked if you wish to participate in a photographic exercise and a follow-up interview to discuss the photographs. If you agree, you will receive a digital camera or simple mobile phone with camera function to take photographs. The researchers will give you an inspirational guide and provide you with additional information to assist you in taking the photographs. You will be asked to complete a separate consent form about how your photographs will be used as part of the follow-up interview. None of these questions affect your rights nor your ability to participate in the study. All interviews are conducted in English.

Interviews can be expected to last from one to three hours. The questions concern your life history, how the financial crisis has changed your lives and what you and your family/household do to make ends meet on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. We are particularly interested in your daily activities, the local or community activities you take part in, or community groups you attend, who you think you get support from and who you do not feel supported by. You will be invited to discuss any other issues that you deem relevant to the project. **You may choose not to answer any question you wish, and you may also withdraw from the interview at any stage. You are under no obligation to participate in this project and it will have no impact on your use of services or resources in the area.** You will receive a one-for-all voucher to the value of €50 for your participation in the family interview.



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#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND WITHDRAWING FROM THE STUDY

Please feel free to contact the researchers with any questions or suggestions at any stage of the study. Details of how to contact them are provided below and on the project website [www.rescueproject.eu]. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. At any stage you can indicate whether you wish your name to be withdrawn from the study.

You will be guaranteed full confidentiality. You will be asked to complete a consent form where you can specify the conditions under which you wish to participate in this study.

#### HOW YOUR DATA WILL BE USED

If you agree on your consent form, your interview material will be deposited in a digital repository and made available to other bona fide researchers, subject to the conditions you have agreed to. Research from the project will be presented in academic conferences internationally and published academic journals. Before being deposited in a digital repository, the data collected for this research will be kept in a safe location on the premises of Maynooth University for five years. *It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.*

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at [research.ethics@nuim.ie](mailto:research.ethics@nuim.ie) or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for taking part in the study.



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## Appendix IV: Participant Consent Form Household (Phase 2)

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### WRITTEN CONSENT FORM HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION PHASE 2

Title of Project: RESCuE: Patterns of resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe.

Principal Researchers: Jane Gray; Jenny Dagg, Maynooth University.

Please tick the box

	YES	NO
1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet dated (...), and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and that I have had enough time to consider the information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview or one month thereafter, without affecting my rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree:		
o To the interview being audio-recorded for the purposes of data processing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o To the interview being archived with a digital repository subject to my name and all identifiable details removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to take part in the photo elicitation exercise and to a follow-up interview to discuss the photographs with the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I understand that I will be asked to complete a separate consent form in the follow-up interview about how my photographs will be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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8. I understand that I can withdraw my interview transcript at any time up until the study is submitted or published and the data have been deposited.

Name of participant.....  
Date.....  
Signature.....  
Name of interviewer.....



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## Appendix V: Participant Information Sheet Household (Phase 3)

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### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOUSEHOLDS (PHASE 3)

*Project title:* RESCuE: Patterns of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe

*Principal Researcher:* Jane Gray, Ph.D., Auxilia House, Rm. 2.5, Maynooth University, Maynooth. T: 01-7083596

*Post doctoral Researcher:* Jenny Dagg, Ph.D., NIRSA, Iontas Building, Rm 2.10, Maynooth University, Maynooth. T: 01-7086150.

*Email:* [jane.gray@nuim.ie](mailto:jane.gray@nuim.ie) / [jennifer.dagg@nuim.ie](mailto:jennifer.dagg@nuim.ie)

You are invited to take part in this international study funded by the European Commission, which is trying to understand how families in the area of MUrb and it's rural environs are coping in the current economic environment. It is important that you understand why this research is being done and what your involvement in it entails.

#### PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY:

RESCuE is a European comparative project with similar work being carried out in countries such as UK, Germany, Poland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Finland. The project is looking at those factors that help families to be resilient in the face of adversity.

#### WHAT IS BEING STUDIED?

Information for this research is collected in a number of ways:

- State-of-the-art national and international reports are being compiled.
- Interviews with local experts that work with or support families.
- Interviews with community representatives and leaders.
- Interviews with families.
- Digital photographs of everyday family activities.

#### WHO IS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Any person who is a community leader in the areas of MUrb or it's rural environs.
- Any member of a community or voluntary sector that interacts with families in the areas of MUrb and it's rural environs.
- 



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- Directors and/or active members of NGO's will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews.
- Families within the MUrb and it's rural environs area will be asked to participate.

#### WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW WITH FAMILIES?

At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will be asked if you are happy for the interview to be audio recorded. You will be asked if you agree to have your interview deposited in a digital repository for sharing and re-use by other bona fide researchers. You will be asked if you wish to discuss your photographs with us. You will be asked if you agree to selected photographs being used for scientific work. All selected photographs will be numbered and will require individual consent. You will be asked whether you agree to the selected photographs being published as part of a visual exhibition. None of these questions affect your rights nor your ability to participate in the study. All interviews are conducted in English.

Interviews can be expected to last from one to three hours. The questions concern your understanding of the photographs presented to the researcher: what was happening around you before the photograph was taken, why you took the photograph, what is going on in the photograph, what the photograph means to you. You will be invited to discuss any other issues that you deem relevant to the project. **You may choose not to answer any question you wish, and you may also withdraw from the interview at any stage. You are under no obligation to participate in this project and it will have no impact on your use of services or resources in the area.**

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND WITHDRAWING FROM THE STUDY

Please feel free to contact the researchers with any questions or suggestions at any stage of the study. Details of how to contact them are provided below and on the project website [www.rescueproject.eu]. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. At any stage you can indicate whether you wish your name or the name of your organisation to be withdrawn from the study.

You will be guaranteed full confidentiality. You will be asked to complete a consent form where you can specify the conditions under which you wish to participate in this study.



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#### HOW YOUR DATA WILL BE USED

If you agree on your consent form, your interview material will be deposited in a digital repository and made available to other bona fide researchers, subject to the conditions you have agreed to. Research from the project will be presented in academic conferences internationally, published academic journals and a visual exhibition.

Before being deposited in a digital repository, the data collected for this research will be kept in a safe location on the premises of Maynooth University for five years. *It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.*

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at [research.ethics@nuim.ie](mailto:research.ethics@nuim.ie) or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for taking part in the study.



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## Appendix VI: Participant Consent Form Household (Phase 3)

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### WRITTEN CONSENT FORM Household INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION PHASE 3

Title of Project: RESCuE: Patterns of resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among households in Europe.

Principal Researchers: Jane Gray; Jenny Dagg, Maynooth University.

Please tick the box

	YES	NO
1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet dated (...), and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and that I have had enough time to consider the information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview or one month thereafter, without affecting my rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree:		
○ To the interview being audio-recorded for the purposes of data processing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ To the interview being archived with a digital repository subject to my name and all identifiable details removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to discuss the photographs I have taken with the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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7. I agree to the numbered photos listed below being published as part of the scientific work of the above project.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. I agree to the numbered photos listed below being published in a visual exhibition as part of the above project.  Yes  No

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. I understand that I retain all copyright and intellectual copyright of the photographic images that I take as part of this project.  Yes  No

10. I understand that I can withdraw my photographic images from the study at any stage up to publication of scientific work or visual exhibition.  Yes  No



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Name of interviewer.....  
Date .....  
Signature.....  
Name of participant.....  
Date.....  
Signature.....



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## Appendix VII: Participant Variables

Document group	Document name	employment status	Level of Education	Housing Status	Family Type	Degree of Hardship	Ethnicity	Sex
Household Rural	INT.HR.001	Non-wage benefits	Secondary	Social Rented	Couple w/ dependent children	Poor	White Irish	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.002	Retired	Secondary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children	Very Poor	White Irish	M
Household Rural	INT.HR.003	Non-wage benefits	Full Primary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Poor	White Irish	M
Household Rural	INT.HR.004	Retired	Full Secondary	Mortgage	Couple	Low Income family without apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.005	Retired	Full Primary	Mortgage	Single adult living alone	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.006	Non-wage benefits	Full Primary	Mortgage	Couple	Poor	White Irish	M
Household Rural	INT.HR.007	Non-wage benefits	Less than Secondary	Private rented	Couple w/ dependent children	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	Traveller	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.008	Non-wage benefits	Special Needs	Social Rented	Single adult living alone	Poor	White Irish	M
Household Rural	INT.HR.009	In training	Early School Leaver	Parental	Couple w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.010	In training	Full Secondary	Parental	Couple w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.011	Unemployed	University	Private rented	Couple w/ dependent children	Low Income family without apparent hardship	Centre European	F
Household Rural	INT.HR.012	labour	Vocational Education	Social Rented	Couple w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Poor	White Irish	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.001	Non-wage benefits	Secondary	Social Rented	Single Parent	Poor	White Irish	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.002	Non-wage benefits	Full Primary	Private rented	Single adult with adult living at home	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.003	In training	Full Primary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.004	In training	Full Secondary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.005	Non-wage benefits	Full Primary	Social Rented	Single Parent	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	Traveller	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.006	labour	Full Secondary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children	Poor	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.007	labour	Full Secondary	Mortgage	Couple w/ dependent children	Very Poor	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.008	Self-employed	Vocational Education	Mortgage	Couple	Low Income family without apparent hardship	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.009	Non-wage benefits	Less than Secondary	Social Rented	Single Parent	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	East European	F
Household Urban	INT.HU.010	Non-wage benefits	Secondary	Private rented	Single adult living alone	Poor	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.011	In training	Early School Leaver	Parental	Couple w/ adult living at home	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.012	In training	Early School Leaver	Parental	Single parent w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Low income family w/ apparent hardship	White Irish	M
Household Urban	INT.HU.013	In training	Full Secondary	Parental	Single parent w/ dependent children and adult living at home	Poor	White Irish	F

## Appendix VIII: Household Participant Interview Questions

Parts	Topics	Questions
<b>Introduction</b>	Project Presentation	We have now an economic crisis in Europe for about six or seven years. The RESCuE project is about how people, families and households live in these times of crisis. It is more about those of us that manage to get by. We want to compare how families all over Europe do actually get by those days
<b>Interview dynamics</b>		This is supposed to be a natural conversation, no need to wait for a question, no wrong answers.
<b>Ethical Procedure</b>		Recording, anonymity, consent
<b>Starting</b>	Two options:	Tell me about yourself and your family/household Tell me what do you do to get by, to make ends meet
<b>Biographical interview</b>	Biographical interview / parents' background / past practices / changes: income, household	Could you elaborate your personal history from childhood to present times? Can present lifeline to help elaboration
<b>Topic interview</b>	Practices and results / family-household roles, relationships, care / gender issues / mobility	Tell me anything you do to help make ends meet Do you receive support? What & from whom? How is it working? (ask for each of the practices, if needed) Can draw ecomap to help elaboration)
	Lifestyle & cultural aspects: household traditions, values & religion, leisure	What do you and your family usually do in your spare time or during weekends? How would you describe your family in terms of the things you like to do together? And in terms of the things you believe in?
	What do you think about the crisis and its consequences? At what point is this a fair situation? And what about the role of the government in the crisis? How are you affected by all this? How do you think your life will be in 5/10 years time?	Tell me about associations or organizations you know in your community (including social economy) In which of them do you participate and how? To what extent do you feel you belong to a community? Do you feel supported by your community? How? By whom? How was community life before and now? Do you think you participate in local life more or less than before? Do you participate in social networks? Which? How?
	Understandings of crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairness of situation</li> <li>• Vision of social order</li> <li>• Opinions on welfare support &amp; changes / effects of policies on household</li> </ul>	
	Future Life aspirations	What do you think your life will be like in 5/10 years time? What do you expect of the future? What are you doing/projecting for the future of your household?

## Appendix VIV: Photo Elicitation Inspiration Guide

### Inspirational/Ethical Guide for Photographs

My family

Things from my past

A day off / leisure activities

A Feast Day

What makes us feel good / bad

We are good / bad at...

Things we do well / badly...

Mealtimes

What we believe in...

What we do on a regular day

Earning a living

Working around the home

Can't live without...

Can live without...

Things that help us to get by...

Don't have enough of...

Succeeding and failing

Sharing

My neighbourhood: likes and dislikes

Moving around my neighbourhood /  
community

Friends and good company

People / things I can count on (beyond  
family)

How we'd wish to be/what we'd wish to  
have...

