

THEMATIC GUIDE TEN

Local Governance **AND** **Sustainable Rural** **Development**



EURACADEMY THEMATIC GUIDE SERIES

EURACADEMY ASSOCIATION

EUROPEAN ACADEMY FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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The European Academy for Sustainable Rural Development

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Local Governance and Sustainable Rural Development

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PREFACE

Euracademy Association is a pan-European, non-profit membership organisation devoted to capacity-building of rural communities in Europe. The Association brings together planners, researchers and practitioners of rural development from a host of European countries. A Summer Academy on a theme pertinent to sustainable rural development is organised every year in a different location; also, a Thematic Guide is published every year on the same theme as the Summer Academy. In addition, the Association organises conferences, undertakes research and coordinates EU-funded projects with a view of building up a body of knowledge on sustainable rural development. These activities aim to prompt lifelong learning opportunities amongst members of rural communities, by using a variety of educational means.

This is the Tenth Thematic Guide in the Euracademy series. It was included as a reference tool in the Tenth Summer Academy, held in Gandia, Spain, from 27 August to 4 September 2011. This Tenth Thematic Guide was revised in the light of the discussions in the summer academy, enriched with examples brought in by participants, and published. It aims to provoke the reader's thinking on topics as:

- Partnerships and networks in local governance: their potential and limitations for sustainable development
- Foundations, experience, lessons and future of rural participatory governance
- The role of the "Rural Animator" in local governance systems
- Winning or losing regions? The position of rural areas in the context of globalisation and multilevel governance systems.
- EU Rural Policy and rural governance: is there a clear model?
- The pivotal role of ICTs, new pedagogies and e-learning as drivers for networking and building local governance capacity for sustainable development

For Euracademy Association, this issue is part of the broader challenge of **sustainable rural development**. It inevitably cross-relates to, or overlaps with, themes of previous Summer Academies:

1. Developing Sustainable Rural Tourism
2. Information Society and Sustainable Rural Development
3. Diversification of Rural Economies and Sustainable Rural Development in the Enlarged Europe
4. Social Capital and Sustainable Rural Development
5. Education and Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Rural Development
6. Culture and Sustainable Rural Development
7. Sustainable 2020 for Rural Environment in Europe
8. Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development: an integrated approach
9. Social Innovation and Sustainable Rural Development

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CHAPTER 1.

Local governance as multi-level partnerships and networks

1.1 This chapter focuses on local governance and its role for sustainable rural development. It defines sustainable local development and presents the argument that local governance, defined as a multi-level system of partnerships, networks, institutions and actors spanning the local level but extending into the regional and the national level, represents the vehicle for local development.

1.2 The role of local institutions, partnerships and networks, as the core of the local governance system, and their potential contribution to sustainable local development is explained; as is the role of higher tier government institutions at the regional and national level and their potential for influencing local governance and local development.

1.3 It analyses the characteristics of local partnerships and presents the argument that they represent a key element of local governance with respect to sustainable development. It identifies problems and obstacles that may negate their capacity to manage the process of sustainable development and presents key conditions for partnerships to be effective and play fully their role for local development.

Networks are distinguished from partnership and their role in paving the way for partnerships, complementing partnerships, and bridging is analysed.

1.4 **Sustainable development** is broadly defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; it contains within it two key concepts: the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the most needy, to which overriding priority should be given; and the concept of limitations imposed by the state of "technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs" (International Institute for Sustainable development, www.iisd.org/sd/).

Typically, sustainable development:

- concerns a geographically bounded territory characterized by a degree of economic, social and cultural cohesion,
- involves an area based development strategy which is multi-sectoral, i.e. encompassing economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives, and is characterized by a strong degree of integration at the level of development plans and their implementation,

- relates both to the process of development (e.g. learning, capacity building, bonding, networking, etc.) and to the outcomes of development (e.g. products, projects, services, etc.).

1.5 Sustainable development is relevant to any territorial level: local, regional or national. These levels are often defined in administrative terms but their boundaries –between local and regional, regional and national- in relation to sustainable development are blurred. Essentially, at the local level, sustainable development is manifested in the form of concrete actions and projects; at the regional or national level, sustainable development is manifested in the form of regional or sectoral policies, their implementation and their regional or local dimension.

Why local governance?

1.6 Local governance is defined as a complex and multi-level system of partnerships, networks and individual institutions and actors that span the public, the private and the third/community sector (local institutions) and often extend outside the local level at the regional and the national levels(regional and national institutions) as well as indirectly at the supranational level (European Union institutions).

1.7 Under this definition governance represents a process and differs from government which represents institutions and formal structures. Thus local government cannot be equated with local governance. Local government is one of the constituent parts of the local governance system, albeit a very important part in terms of resources and powers, and a part which draws its legitimacy from its elected status.

1.8 Governance, at any level (local, regional or national) should also be distinguished from *good governance*. Good governance at the local level is characterized by a number of qualities (such as responsiveness, transparency and accountability, participation and consensus, equity and inclusion, adherence to the rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency) which represent important requirements for success in pursuing sustainable development. Partnerships and networks have a pivotal role in promoting these qualities and building the necessary local capacity for sustainable development.

1.9 *Local institutions*, including local government authorities and other local actors, represent the

core of the local governance system and are indispensable, though not always conducive, to sustainable local development. *Regional and national institutions* represent the periphery of the local governance system and impinge of the core of the local governance system through their policy, funding and regulation powers; as with local institutions, their effect on sustainable local development may not always be positive.

1.10 Local institutions are important for sustainable development for many reasons. According to Uphoff (1985)

- Local institutions are important for mobilising resources and regulating their use with a view to maintaining a long term base for productive activity.
- Through local institutions, available resources can be put to their most efficient and sustainable use with location- specific knowledge, which is best generated and interpreted locally.
- Monitoring changes in resources' status can be quicker and less costly where local people are involved; making adaptive changes in resource use is speeded up where local decision-making has become institutionalised.
- While local institutions are not always able to resolve resource management conflicts, if they are absent, all conflicts must be dealt with at higher levels, yielding slower and often less appropriate outcomes.
- People's behaviour is conditioned by community norms and consensus, so preserving or instituting practices that are environmentally sound requires more than just individual incentives and persuasion.
- Institutions encourage people to take a longer-term view by creating common expectations and a basis for cooperation that goes beyond individual interests. To the extent institutions are regarded as legitimate, people comply without (or with fewer) inducements and sanctions.

On the other hand, local institutions can produce practices that do not favour sustainability:

- If factionalism prevails, some groups may use local institutions to exploit local resources to their short-run advantage and others' loss.
- Institutions that regulate the use of resources may break down and limits of regeneration may be exceeded when people do not understand these.

1.11 The role of local institutions, and especially the role of local government and its pivotal role in the local governance process, as a key to

sustainable development has been underlined by UN's Agenda 21 Initiative (Agenda 21: Earth Summit - The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio, Chapter 28, 1993):

Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and sub-national environmental policies.

As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.

Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies.

The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. Local authority programmes, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives would be assessed and modified, based on local programmes adopted. Strategies could also be used in supporting proposals for local, national, regional and international funding.

1.12 Regional and especially national government institutions are also important for sustainable development. Almost all EU member states have established sustainable development strategies following the Agenda 21 UN initiative and EU's policy for sustainable development (European Commission, 2009). These are national strategies for sustainable development, but they set out the context and guidance for promoting and funding sustainable development policies and projects at local level, whether rural or urban. At the same time, multi-sectoral integrated local development programmes have been consistently funded through the structural funds, albeit without some of the institutional requirements for sustainable development at the local level, namely the involvement of local institutions.

1.13 The LEADER Initiative, which was launched in 2001 and remains a key instrument for rural development, probably represents the most prominent case of sustainable development at the local level initiated by the EU and promoted by national governments. The Initiative is designed to help rural actors consider the long-term potential of their local region and encourage the implementation of integrated, high-quality and

original strategies for sustainable development, with a strong focus on partnership and networks of exchange of experience. It adopts a bottom-up approach of collective local action in the form of local action groups that prepare their own development programmes (Noguera, Esparcia, Buciega, Moxseley, and Cherret, 2002).

According to an OECD review of national sustainable development strategies (OECD, 2006), the following represent successful practices:

- Policy integration – national strategies should give consideration to environmental, economic and social concerns in integrated approaches contained in national plans and reports.
- Intergenerational timeframe – national strategies should adopt long term timeframes which enable inclusion of intergenerational principles and indicators.
- Analysis and assessments – integrated assessment tools should be used in national reports to identify the environmental, economic and social costs and benefits of policy and strategy options.
- Co-ordination and institutions – a wide range of government departments and agencies should be involved in the formulation and implementation of national strategies, with overall responsibility in the office of the Prime Minister or equivalent.
- Local and regional governance – local and regional authorities should be fully involved in the development of national strategies, with certain delivery aspects devolved to sub-national levels.
- Stakeholder participation – stakeholders (e.g., business, unions, nongovernmental organisations) should participate with government representatives in commissions responsible for developing and implementing national strategies.
- Indicators and targets – strategies should be based on structured indicator systems (enumerated in national plans and reports) to assist in monitoring progress and to serve as quantitative targets.
- Monitoring and evaluation – independent bodies or processes should be established to act as watchdogs monitoring implementation of national strategies and providing recommendations for their improvement.

1.14 These practices are conducive to sustainable development at the local level, directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, according to the same review: promoting sustainable development effectively when governments at different levels with different geographical jurisdictions may be

pursuing various agendas is complex; only a few OECD governments have attempted to catalyse and fully co-ordinate with the sustainable development efforts at sub-national government levels.

1.15 The fact remains that national institutions may facilitate sustainable development at the local level or sometimes provide constraints to it through their policy, funding and regulatory powers. Potential constraints may stem from coordination gaps in national policies, conflicts between national policy priorities and local priorities, and a tendency, stemming from an administrative culture of centralization, to use regulatory and funding powers to control local development decisions and impose models of local development management.

1.16 On the other hand, parochialism and a narrow, territorially restricted, view of development –the equivalent of nationalism at the local level- may lead local institutions to block sustainable development at the regional or national level (e.g a waste disposal facility servicing a wider geographical area) under the pretext of defending sustainable development in their own territory.

Local versus national interplay

1.17 The more local development depends on higher levels of government and national or regional policies, the more likely it is that bodies at these levels will use their powers to impose on local territories and institutions development priorities and management models that may or may not fit local priorities and needs and may or may not serve the institutional requirements for sustainable local development. Regional or national policies that are uncoordinated or too inflexible to adapt to local conditions may also provide constraints to sustainable local development.

1.18 In this context the capacity of local institutions to drive the process of local development towards local needs and priorities and negotiate the involvement of regional and central government to the same effect, is crucial for sustainable local development. To this end collective action at local level is indispensable and this brings to the fore the key role that partnerships and networks have as vehicles of integration and collective action.

Why partnerships ?

1.19 Local partnerships exist in a variety of forms but can be said to share four key characteristics (adapted from Geddes, 1998):

- a formal structure for decision/policy making and implementation,
- the bringing together/mobilization of a coalition of interests and the

participation/commitment of a range of different partners,

- a common agenda and multi-sectoral / integrated action programme,
- powers to manage funds, directly as a body or through their members.

They differ from networks or other forms of collaboration which are informal and much more loose in all the above characteristics.

1.20 Local development partnerships represent a key element of local governance when it comes to sustainable rural development. In principle, in an ideal world, they may establish the necessary preconditions for sustainable rural development, i.e.: responsiveness to needs, representation of interests, inclusion - participation of stakeholders, effectiveness, through:

- the collaboration of local actors and stakeholders from the public, private, and third sector;
- the reconciliation of different interests, viewpoints and values;
- the balancing of economic, social and environmental objectives;
- the integration of development strategies and plans and the coordination of their implementation.

1.21 In practice, this may often not be the case for a variety of reasons:

- the partnership agenda and strategy may be limited in scope in relation to the problems at hand or time wise,
- there may be –and usually are– more than one partnership, each with its own agenda and strategy, within any one geographical or administrative territory/area or community,
- different partnerships may have conflicting interests or uncoordinated briefs, or different reference points,
- the scope of intervention and power of most partnerships is usually externally bounded by powers at higher levels, e.g. by regional or national authorities, or is subject to strong private interests,
- not all local interests and stakeholders may be represented in a partnership, and, when they are, influence and power may be unevenly distributed among the partners;
- partnerships may not possess sufficient technical and organizational capacity and skills, including communication skills.

1.22 Thus the mere existence of a partnership is usually a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the partnership to be effective and contribute to integration and sustainable development. Important requirements to this end

relate to the process whereby it is set-up, its life span of their operation, leadership, available resources and support, vertical and horizontal linkages, accountability, and mission. More specifically:

- **Set-up process.** In many cases, a local partnership is set-up in relation to a development programme by the regional or national body which funds the programme, which may determine the partnership's structure and model of operation, thus impinging on its representativeness and power allocation, and bypass or ignore local stakeholders, e.g. elected authorities such as local government or social partners.
- **Time span of operation.** In many cases a local partnership is related to a specific project or programme, its life span is restricted to the limited duration of the particular project or programme and it is terminated at the end of the project or programme concerned, thus losing one of its key potential strengths which is long term –sustainability.
- **Leadership.** The strength and quality of the local partnership's leadership is important. It should not be monopolized by one or two partners but shared and operate on a basis of consensus rather than formal authority. Care should be taken to insulate as much as possible continuity in leadership from political instability (e.g. changes in party-political local authority control).
- **Resources and support.** In order to be effective local partnerships need technical and financial support, which could take the form of a professional staff secretariat to service the partnership, a budget for its operation (funded not necessarily from national or regional bodies but from the partnership members as well), and in most cases external technical support (not limited to the partnership set-up stage) to build the capacity of the partnership combined with evaluation and performance monitoring mechanisms.
- **Vertical linkages.** Local development is strongly dependent on sectoral policies and programmes. Thus, any local partnership is bound to be dependent, to a greater or lesser degree, on national or regional bodies which control such policies and programmes as well as the resources and support necessary for its effective operation. At the same time, national or regional bodies are dependent (although sometimes they are not aware of this) on local partnerships for the effective implementation of sectoral policies and programmes. Thus, a balanced and cohesive working relation between the local partnership and the regional or national bodies involved is to the benefit of both levels it has to work with is important should be to the benefit of both sides.

- **Horizontal linkages.** Local development is multifaceted and it is unlikely that any single partnership covers all such facets. Moreover, development in any territorial area is unlikely to be independent of development in adjoining territorial areas. Thus, any partnership should build working relations with partnerships covering different development facets in its area as well as with partnerships in adjoining areas.
- **Accountability.** Local partnerships represent the constituencies of their partners and more broadly the local community. Accountability through public participation and involvement beyond the membership of the partnership and transparency in their activities is important for the legitimacy of the partnership vis-à-vis the local community as well as for the full exploitation of the local knowledge and potential for consent of the local community.
- **Mission.** In order to be effective, the mission of a partnership should be holistic; it should combine development strategy with development action, and focus not only on the practical outcomes of the partnership but also on the partnership process regarding especially learning and capacity development.

1.23 It is such requirements that can make a partnership effective, establish its legitimacy vis-à-vis the community it represents as well as in relation to higher government levels, making it a learning organization able to build its capacity and, in the longer term, secure its sustainability. Clearly individual partner commitment is another crucial requirement. Two tests appear to be critical for assessing partner commitment, (OECD and USAID Croatia, 2007) namely whether partners:

- are willing to contribute to the resources necessary for the operation of the partnership financially or in kind (e.g. by seconding staff to the partnership secretariat),
- are willing to put their own development plans to the scrutiny of the partnership to ensure that they fit with the overall strategy and development priorities.

Why networks

1.24 Networks differ from partnership although the distinction can be blurred between the two is sometimes blurred. Networks can be defined as informal, or sometimes formalized, structures whose functions include communication, information exchange and sharing, collaboration among individual institutions and actors from the public, the private and the third/community sector, and the building of bonds among their members, which are informal and fluid but nevertheless important for local development. Their membership may be institutional or personal or

both and tends to be relatively open and informally controlled.

1.25 Unlike partnerships, networks do not have any formal powers; do not manage funds or projects; there is no leadership as such; their agenda may be sectoral or it may be territorial at local regional, national or supranational level (e.g. LEADER); they can be horizontal or vertical, they may be set up from above (LEADER) or spring from the initiative of their members.

1.26 In a sense, all partnerships are also networks, but networks may be rarely considered as partnerships. Network functions (communication, information exchange and sharing, collaboration and bond building) are also partnership functions. Nevertheless, the role of networks is broader and complementary to the role of partnerships. They benefit from their informality, flexibility and relative openness. More specifically:

- Networks contribute to community building and can be the precursor of partnerships. Network participation allows/facilitates for its members: the discovery of common priorities and complementarities; the raising of awareness of different or broader development agendas and of the need to balance or reconcile conflicting interests; the recognition of mutual dependence and the value of collaboration and integration in local development; the building of confidence and trust at a personal level; and the birth of development ideas and initiatives.
- Networks can complement partnerships. Partner's own networks represent an important resource to a partnership; they may provide valuable links to the local community that enhance the legitimacy of the partnership and community involvement; equally they may also provide links to individual institutions or other partnerships, either horizontal at the local level, or vertical links at the regional or national level.
- Networks can take on a bridging function (Brown, 1991; OECD and USAID Croatia, 2007); they may link local institutions or partnerships by providing a common space for exchange and collaboration, e.g. in the case of the transnational LEADER and EQUAL networks; or serve as an umbrella structure to facilitate horizontal coordination between partnerships at the local level or vertical coordination between the local and the regional level.

Conclusions

1.27 Partnerships, as well as networks in their different but complementary way, can be said to represent a necessary condition for community mobilization, policy integration, and sustainable

development. Nevertheless, their mere existence is not a sufficient condition for this purpose. They need for this purpose a range of qualities concerning the way they are set-up; a life span of operation that will ensure their sustainability; effective, yet consensus-based leadership; resources and support, financial and technical; building effective linkages at the local level and with the regional and national level, accountability based on transparency and on monitoring and evaluation procedures, a mission which combines concern with practical outcomes but also with strategy and process. Organizational learning and capacity building represent key factors of success.

Questions arising from Chapter 1 to reflect on:

1. Do you think that there are differences in the role and potential of partnerships and networks, as drivers of sustainable development, between rural and urban areas?
2. Describe, on the basis of your experience, what you would consider as a good practice of effective collaboration for sustainable development, through a partnership, network or other local governance structure.
3. Describe, on the basis of your experience, what you would consider as a bad practice of poor collaboration, through a partnership, network or other structure of for sustainable development.
4. How the democratic model of full stakeholder involvement and consensus building compares in the real world with the model of limited stakeholder consultation and centralized authority (e.g. at the local government level), for the purpose of sustainable development? Set out the pros and cons of the two models.

Case study 1.1

A business-friendly municipality – Jánossomorja, Hungary

Jánossomorja is a young prosperous small industrial town of the West-Transdanubian region with 6000 inhabitants, which lies in the north-western part of Hungary, close to the Austrian border.

The 80ies and mainly the 90ies meant a boom for the town instead of a recession that afflicted most of the Hungarian industrial towns at that time. Its location close to the Austrian borders made it to become soon a "foreign capital" (mainly Austrian), which solved the problem of employment of locals who were mainly unemployed due to the restructuring (degradation) of agriculture. Following the opening of the borders Austrian companies arrived and employment boomed.

The flourishing of the local industry is well illustrated by that fact that presently twelve foreign companies operate in the area from which three operate in the construction industry and six deal with food industry or supply industrial equipment. Most companies settled down in the municipality after the transition in 1991.

But what was the reason for this fast and successful development? Having reacted to the fast industrialisation processes and to its inherent potentials, the then mayor and the vice-mayor decided to designate an industrial area and begun to develop necessary infrastructure to attract entrepreneurs. The local government received a 66% national support for investments to the infrastructure of the area. As a result the municipality was ready to receive the newly settled companies with modern and state of the art infrastructure.

In addition to the development of the industrial area the local government took 3 hectares from the area of the former regional cooperative and a so-called 'material finding-pit', and offered it as shares for one of Europe's biggest construction company. With the then 3 hectares, the 'gravel-pit initiative', several financial contributions and the transfer of machines from the Austrian company a new factory began to operate.

Analysing the success factors of the prosperous economy of this small town, one of the main factors of success was the constructive and business-friendly behaviour of the local government and the local management. This also meant an appropriate settlement plan, the sale of public land and real estate, supporting businesses in land acquisition and a general business friendly mentality.

The settling down of the first companies in the area was facilitated by the fact that the leaders of the former regional cooperative proved to be good negotiators. The preparedness, the quality and the

aptitude of local leaders played a very important role in the economic processes of the transition period. Without the innovative and business-friendly policy of the local management the tempo of the development would have been much slower.



Another factor of success is that the local government since 1994, has been able to represent itself without political party colours. The current mayor is politically independent and has been running the municipality for the past four election terms. The economic elite of the area considers him a fair, prepared and loyal businessman who means continuity not only for the local inhabitants but also for the companies operating in the area.

As a result of the fast industrialisation processes after the transition, the workforce who had earlier worked in agriculture but lost their jobs due to the structural changes, could now become employed by the new industrial companies. While in the beginning of the 90ies, in time of the disintegration of cooperatives the unemployment rate was about 11,7%, nowadays in the municipality unemployment is very low (3,5–4%). Thanks to the appearance of the western capital, Jánossomorja was affected neither economically nor socially after the transition.

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Case study 1.2

Examining the development factors of rural areas in Greece: The role of local governance for the development of Distos Municipality in Evia Prefecture, Greece

Developing rural areas is a key aspect of most E.U. structural policies in order to surpass inequalities that arise between two regions (core-periphery theories, urban-rural, industrialized north-rural south) or even within the same region. The development factors of rural areas compose the cause and the result of local and regional inequalities. Also the examining and understanding of these factors is the key issue in order to implement strategies of sustainable rural and regional development. Lately many E.U. countries (Denmark, Finland, Greece etc) use the decentralization of administrative governance, by municipal amalgamations, in order to achieve better standards of living for their citizens and to enhance their development prospects.



A study was recently conducted aiming to describe the development factors of rural areas in Greece. The study emphasizes on Distos municipality, which is a rural area in Evia prefecture. As part of the study a field survey was conducted with the use of a questionnaire (200 participants). The results of the field survey are analysed by descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The main findings of the statistical analysis prove that the major factor that affects the development of the area is local governance (explaining 17,68% of the variance of all variables). Other important development factors are quality of life, rural cooperatives, economic situation, tourism and infrastructure.

The area has significant prospects of local development even though there are some problems related to its fundamental infrastructures. It's up to the local stakeholders and the local administrative governance to benefit

from these development prospects in order to achieve better standards of quality of life.

The study concludes by presenting a solution for the problems and the inequalities that appear in the area by proposing a specific municipal merger-amalgamation that will lead in the formation of a larger and more economically viable municipal entity. The new municipality will be empowered, in order to design a development plan for the whole area and will have the abilities and the means to overcome the infrastructure problems. Furthermore it will be a vital, well-functioning and cohesive municipal structure that will provide high quality services accessible to all citizens.

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Case study 1.3

Local governance and NGOs in Poland

The situation of rural areas in Poland several years after EU accession has undergone very dynamic changes. Transformation which has taken decades in other parts of Europe is taking place in Poland at a higher speed.

As relationships within rural communities are personal and strong, local governments in rural areas perform to some extent a representative function for the local communities. Local government leaders, councillors and even office workers often initiate actions which can be termed as non-governmental. The self-governing organisation of village residents (*sołectwo*, or village council) plays a completely different role in taking local initiatives than is the case in cities. Village councils – which are not legal entities and have no decision-making powers, though paradoxically are elected in universal and direct elections – often play the role of non-governmental organisations. The village chief (*sołtys*), who is also elected through popular vote, is regarded in many villages as the real leader and organiser of the local community's life, although officially he or she has a status that is auxiliary to the local government (commune council). Potential initiatives associated with the self-organisation of rural people are certainly hampered by the fact that village councils have no budgets (there are some small exceptions) and that the village chief and village council have only limited decision-making powers.



The launch of the rural renewal programme in Poland triggered the spontaneous emergence of new initiatives, called rural renewal groups, which have stimulated the activity of village councils, or in some cases took over from them as initiators of

local action. Paradoxically, what poses a threat to rural initiatives and the rural renewal movement is that the programme has been included in the list of European Union programmes. As a result, rural initiative, as part of these programmes, is returning to the level of the local government (commune council) and rural commune administrator. In this situation, rural communities may in many cases become merely beneficiaries of investment activities taken by the local government, something which may lead to a underestimation of self-organisation, bottom-up activity, and the use and maintenance of buildings newly constructed in the village.

In many descriptions of the Polish situation after the 1989 changes rural areas are often shown as the place with lower degree of self-organisation and lower social capital. This is confirmed by the so-called „social diagnosis” carried out regularly in subsequent years, by data of organisations monitoring the official activity of NGOs (Herbst, 2006) as well as by a report describing the situation of the Polish rural areas (Report, Gorlach, 2000). The voices defending the image of rural areas as a place for civic initiative did not find significant support until the period 2006-2008. At that time, in the biannual report „Rural Poland 2008”, Jan Herbst mentions as many as 43.5 thousand organisations making up the rural „third sector”. This number is composed of 27 thousand associations, including 16.5 thousands of voluntary fire brigades, 700 foundations as well as 3.5 thousands of rural professional or economic organisations, in particular women's centres, producer organisations, around 3,500 organisations of professional and economic self-government, such as agricultural circles and producer organisations, 900 other organisations such as hunting units or mutual support groups, 1,300 trade unions – non-agricultural, as stressed by the author, since the agricultural ones do not have a legal entity, 4,000 agricultural cooperatives, 8,000 organisational units of the Catholic Church and other churches, as well as other entities such as water companies, flood wall unions, soil and forest communities.

According to research, the passive attitude of rural inhabitants is the reason why voluntary and charity organisations operating in the Polish rural areas are much less compared to those of cities. In the rural environment most of the joint activity is not catalysed by institutions, but by informal networks of cooperation and mutual aid, which are not easy to capture by statistics.

New non-governmental organisations are not set up in opposition to existing traditional organisations, although a rather different kind of people are involved in their activity. The new associations represent a new organisational form established mainly in order to gain access to external funding. This is exactly how leaders and activists understand the reason for their existence, and this is what rural people expect them to be. The associations and foundations regard the acquisition of funding as their greatest success. And vice versa, inability to acquire funding is regarded as failure. Rural people are very pragmatic and utilitarian in their approach to this issue. The reason for the existence in rural areas of the new kind of non-governmental organisations is their ability to acquire external funds to be spent on holidays for children, the redecoration of a local youth club, school or kindergarten expenses, the construction of a sports field and so on. The widespread opinion is that "The money is available but one needs to set up an association, otherwise no one will give you the money". This is the effect of the law on public benefit and volunteer activity as well as many regulations associated with acquiring EU funding. Under the law on public benefit, all local governments set aside a pool of money to be distributed through competition for non-governmental projects.

In contrast to other non-governmental organisations in Poland, like for example farmer's wives' associations and sporting associations, the new associations do not complain of a shortage of funds for their activity. Additionally, they point to local government as a source of funding much less frequently than other organisations. They complain much more of indifference to the initiatives they take on the part of local residents and authorities. Surveys conducted show it is much easier for such organisations to acquire external funding than integrate the local population for a common cause. The lack of understanding and interest from the local people must be more frustrating than a shortage of funds considering that most of these organisations point to the local residents as the most important beneficiaries of their activities.

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CHAPTER 2.

20 years of bottom-up, participative governance in rural areas: lessons learned and prospects for the EU rural policy?

Introduction: governance and sustainable development in the complex rural world

2.1 Today, at least in developed societies, the rural world responds mostly to the needs and requirements of the urban environment. The traditional demand for raw materials and food have been supplemented with other functions related to the recent relocation of equipment, economic activity and residence in the case of accessible rural areas, and tourism and leisure, food production and quality products, power generation or storage of waste, in the case of remote or lagging rural areas (Esparcia and Noguera, 2001).

2.2 In this context, one wonders what "sustainable rural development" is meant to be. Is it the bulk of activities related to the so-called "green economy" (Kennet and Heinemann, 2006), that takes advantage of the opportunities arising from the need to replace the current energy and production models to generate economic activity and employment in rural areas and, at the same time, contribute to global sustainability? Is it, rather, to reach a rural world where residents and visitors can adequately address the difficulties in accessing all kinds of goods, services and employment, especially in the case of disadvantaged social groups and in remote areas (Borden and Moseley, 2006)? This is not necessarily exclusive but a choice is needed to clarify what is the philosophy behind the concept of "sustainable countryside": the one centred on the rural culture, the rural area and the needs and demands of rural people, or another that focuses on responding to the needs and demands of the urban environment?

2.3 It is essential to resolve this dilemma and go for a model of rural development (Noguera, Esparcia and Ferrer, 2004) that focuses on the need to: (i) respond to rural land management in an effective and sustainable way; (ii) prioritise wishes and needs of rural residents; (iii) help meeting the needs and demands of the urban environment as long as they are not in contradiction with the rural environment and not detract from its inhabitants and territory. In any case, it would be more appropriate speaking of "models for rural areas", in the plural, to respond correctly to the extreme and increasing diversity of rural areas, a diversity that needs to be characterised in order to define appropriate

strategies and policies (OCDE 2006; Copus and Noguera, 2010).

2.4 During the last 3 years, the ESPON EDORA Project (European Development Opportunities for Rural Areas) has worked in the definition and characterisation of different typologies of rural areas in Europe. The resulting diversity is awesome considering that only some factors of differentiation have been taken into account (ie. Rurality, economic structure and economic performance). If other key elements like political structures and institutional cultures, social indicators, accessibility issues, etc., had been included, the resulting diversity would have multiplied. However, this is a valid and informative division that improves understanding of the rural diversity (see Box below).

2.5 A rapid initial conclusion is that rural governance presents several challenges and difficulties derived from: (i) the complexity and diversity of rural areas; (ii) the different government and governance traditions and cultures in the European Union; (iii) the generalised lack of power in small and medium size rural municipalities to design and implement strategic policies and programs; (iv) the dominance of a "municipal" rather than "territorial" conception of rural development in many regions, etc.

The complexity associated to a diverse rural Europe: the EDORA Typologies

The aim of the ESPON EDORA project is to develop a systematic view of the socio-economic changes, development challenges, and opportunities facing diverse types of rural areas in Europe, and to formulate an appropriate policy rationale which will support them in realising their potential. The rural development policy literature is populated by stereotypes, some being more or less representative "stylised facts" and others being anachronistic "fallacies". Whilst recent policy design and implementation has attempted to incorporate a degree of flexibility to meet local circumstances (menu-based approaches, neo-endogenous approaches and so on), generalisations still have a very important role to play in policy design and targeting. It is extremely important that "stylised fallacies" should be superseded by generalisations that are more accurately representative of contemporary rural

Europe. The EDORA typologies are an important element of that process of refreshing the stereotypes which underlie policy design and implementation (Copus and Noguera 2010).

The EDORA typologies are implemented at NUTS 3, and (in terms of the OECD classification) cover all Intermediate and Predominantly Rural regions. This accommodates the inclusion of the Dijkstra-Poelman (D-P) modified OECD typology, as specified in the technical specification of EDORA. It also reflects the theoretical arguments for not separating rural areas from the adjacent small and medium-sized towns with which they interact within local and regional economic networks. The EDORA typologies thus cover the areas of Europe which broadly equate to Gade's (1991, 1992) concept of an Intermediate Socio-Economic Region (ISEZ) and Saraceno's (1994) "Local Economy".

Instead of a single typology this working paper proposes an "analysis framework" in the form of three typologies reflecting three important dimensions of differentiation among non-urban regions. These are:

- Rurality/accessibility.
- Degree of economic restructuring.
- Socio-economic performance (accumulation or depletion).

The first typology (the D-P classification according to rurality and accessibility) covers the EU27 plus Norway and Switzerland.

The Structural typology derives its rationale in part from the second meta-narrative "Economic Competitiveness and Global Capital". The long-term evolution of economic structures in non-urban areas (away from primary and secondary activities and towards the expansion of market services) can be seen as the most recent phase of a long historical process of global/spatial division of labour. It also draws on the discourse regarding territorial and sectoral policy, the concept of "consumption countryside", and the importance of countryside public goods.

The third (performance) typology derives mainly from the urban-rural meta-narrative, and places regions on a continuum between "depletion" and "accumulation" of various kinds

of capital (human, financial, fixed, and so on). Although initially specified as a continuous variable, it is also presented in four categories.

More information in:

<http://www.nordregio.se/inc/openitem.asp?id=115412&nid=2112>

The history of rural policy in Europe:

In the beginning, it was essential to guarantee food

2.6 Until the mid 70's the prevailing conception was characterised by the identification, implicit or explicit, of development with economic growth, which in turn was defined by a process of industrial and urban concentration. Issues such as productivity growth, GDP, income per capita, and so on, presided over a biased concept development and, therefore, also of regional development policies (Richardson, 1976; Lorca et al, 1981). Under this conception of development the social and territorial spheres were basically ignored, leading to the rise and consolidation of existing territorial disparities.

2.7 On the other hand, rural areas in this period are fully identified with primary activities (provision of food, fibre and other prime matters). Therefore, between the 50s and 70s we can not speak of policies specifically aimed at rural development, although agricultural policies with impact on rural areas existed, but not specifically addressed to them. This is the reconstruction period in Europe in which rural areas serve the dual function of basic food production and provision of labour for industry and other urban activities. Agricultural policies developed a system of guaranteed prices for certain products, while practicing protectionism (Atienza, 1992).

2.8 Being the main goal of the "rural" policy during the 50's-70's the growth of production, the need to increase mechanisation and use of chemical inputs was of paramount importance. As a result of the modernization process productivity increased dramatically, but the agricultural sector changed its function from capitaliser of the regional economies to net recipient of capital. Moreover, major modernization efforts were concentrated in certain rural areas and already during the 80's, there were serious environmental impact due to the increase in the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Agricultural modernisation also had other negative consequences, particularly those arising from the dismantling of agricultural economies in lagging rural regions. This is the case for the high losses of active population in agriculture, and the subsequent process of rural exodus and increasing regional disparities in many EU countries.

2.9 All in all, since the establishment of the European Community until 1975, rural development measures have been very general or sectoral, based upon a "horizontal" and uniform policy framework. The reason can be traced to the fact that the EC consolidated on the basic objective of achieving food self-sufficiency and development and equilibrium of agricultural markets. Therefore, following these principles, the goal of the policy action in rural areas aimed at achieving an increase in agricultural productivity and

production, without much attention to regional diversity (Tardity 1993; Sumpsi, 1994).

2.10 Rural governance in this period was reduced to the main “forces” in each village. Most decisions at local level had to do with everyday issues while strategic decision and relevant actions were executed from a top-down perspective.

The origins of a European rural development policy

2.11 In 1975, the European Community implemented the Directive 75/268 on agriculture in mountains and certain disadvantaged areas. This regulation represented a significant shift in the philosophy of the CAP to that end. Horizontal measures were combined with new measures whose application depended on the characteristics of each territory. Several factors explain this shift (Gomez Benito et al., 1987):

- First, several weaknesses (economic crisis, inflation, unemployment, rising costs, market crises, etc.), questioned the model based upon intensive production and noted the need for policies with other goals: hold people in rural areas, enhancement of non-farm activities to supplement the incomes of farmers to enable the survival of many small and medium-sized farms, and encourage a new form of regional development based upon bottom-up approaches.
- Second, the development of an intensive agriculture led to increasing environmental problems. This raised awareness of the need to promote the use of environmental friendly production methods, including the role of farmers as stewards of the environment, especially in areas where abandonment of agricultural activity is leading to a deterioration of the traditional landscape and natural resources.
- Third, the influence of regional planning policies on agriculture, in the sense that they describe regional disparities and the assignment of functions to spaces, facilitating their integration, as well as planning and infrastructure provision and equipment, as preconditions for economic activity.

2.12 With the enactment of Directive 75/268/EEC, the hitherto structural policy changed direction and became not only an instrument of modernization and increased agricultural productivity, but also a tool for socio-political support and for the compensation of the negative impact that the policy of prices was having on the most disadvantaged areas. Directive 75/268 is the start of EU policy aimed specifically at supporting disadvantaged areas.

2.13 This regulation contains the framework for the implementation of a policy aimed at supporting disadvantaged areas through the maintenance of

agricultural activity, while ensuring the continuity of minimum levels of population to avoid disruption of the territory and the progressive deterioration of the environment.

2.14 Directive 75/268 is for disadvantaged rural areas, the political recognition of the need to react and act in territories facing social and economic dislocation, lack of viability of a big share of the economic activity and employment, and the consequent out migration. Despite its importance, Directive 75/268 is a fundamental policy of agricultural support without a comprehensive vision of rural development that could guide further action

2.15 Already in the 80's, the Regulation 85/797 constitutes the revision of Directive 75/268. It was to coordinate and rationalise the previously defined policies of modernization of structures (1972) and regional development (1975). Despite a certain ongoing nature of its principles, it is a more comprehensive policy, while manifesting a greater willingness to reduce regional disparities. Emphasis is on coordination of programs under the same management procedure, to increase their effectiveness and to avoid duplication, and posits a common action based on EC criteria. It increases the amounts of aid and gives more importance to the promotion and development of lagging rural areas.

2.16 Rural development is seen specifically as one of the priority targets of the Community Initiatives arising from the reform of the Structural Funds in 1988. Thus, lagging rural areas are benefiting from initiatives aimed specifically at promoting integrated rural development (LEADER I and II), or other more targeted sectors that also contribute to the revitalisation and development of these areas - CARREFOUR to establish information networks on all policies, programs and actions, HORIZON, to promote access of disadvantaged groups into the labour market, FUTURES, to boost tourism development, and LIFE for environmental conservation.

2.17 Following these factors profound changes have occurred in the design of rural development policies, from a top-down, horizontal approach under which all areas had one type of policy, towards a new approach that takes into account the specific nature and needs of each territory and, therefore, poses different solutions.

2.18 After the 1988 reform, rural development clearly contemplates a comprehensive and participatory approach. Community initiatives and in particular the LEADER program, are a clear example of this new concept that is making a difference in disadvantaged areas in relation to previous experiences. The principle of management from the local level, involving local people in preparing the Development Plan for each area, the streamlining of bureaucratic procedures and a clear multi-sector vision, are the explanatory factors for the growing confidence of stakeholders

of disadvantaged rural areas in the possibilities of development and the credibility of policy initiatives.

2.19 For disadvantaged rural areas, this shift has led to the awareness by policy makers -at least from a theoretical standpoint- of the need for paying special attention to those areas, because of the serious processes of economic dislocation and social and environmental deterioration that are taking place and affecting the new goals of regional and economic cohesion. Since then, the policy for these disadvantaged areas has become increasingly important in the overall EU policy, so that already in the European Commission document "The Future of Rural World" (1988), two of the three characteristic problems of rural areas, are targeted to these disadvantaged areas. The first of these categories is the so called "rural decline" where the challenges referred to the need for economic diversification and development of one's potential, driven programming, dialogue and partnership, the strengthening of intermediate centres and the need to obtain a overview of rural territory. The second, is the so-called "marginal areas" addressing "serious obstacles". Hindsight, it is clear that the reflections contained in this document involved a substantial contribution at the time, that has guided much of the efforts of the European rural development policy.

LEADER: a new approach to rural development

2.20 Among the various Community Initiatives stands out the implementation of the LEADER program since 1991. As it is well known, LEADER aims at promoting rural development in order to help mobilise the local potential to promote rural economic diversification and maintenance of adequate socio-economic structure. LEADER aims to demonstrate, through the implementation of local endogenous development, the possibility of promoting the development of rural areas through an integrated approach, devised locally, with the participation of the affected population, through their institutions and representative organizations in Local Action Groups (Beltrán, 1991; IRYDA 1991). It provides support to local networks of rural development, delegating to them the management of grants. From the territorial point of view, its implementation is done in the most deprived areas in accordance with the parameters of EU regional classification (Cazorla, 1994, Perez Esparcia and Noguera, 1996).

2.21 After the 1988 reform, rural development clearly contemplates a comprehensive and participatory approach. Community initiatives and in particular the LEADER program, are a clear example of this new concept that is making a difference in disadvantaged areas in relation to previous experiences. The principle of management from the local level, involving local

people in preparing the Development Plan for each area, the streamlining of bureaucratic procedures and a clear multi-sector vision, are the explanatory factors for the growing confidence of stakeholders of disadvantaged rural areas in the possibilities of development and the credibility of policy initiatives.

2.22 In many ways, LEADER has been a very significant intervention in rural Europe. Prior to LEADER, rural development policy was almost completely unknown and, for this reason alone, LEADER represented a new force in rural affairs. The invitation to form territorial collaborations was also novel and local actors were quick to perceive it as an important political tool with which to tackle both the problems of rural areas and the challenges presented by the new roles being assigned to the rural world. Furthermore, LEADER has subsequently produced material, local impacts through its ability to generate investment in development projects.

2.23 The progress of LEADER has, of course, been refracted through (some might say 'hindered' by) the institutional conditions of the politico-administrative system. LEADER has been used as a political power tool by the various administrative and territorial levels, leading to confrontations in order to gain control over the programme; this is specially important in the case of local level, in which LEADER had been seen -by the different actors involved- as a instrument of influence -and even of control- in the local society. Nevertheless, awareness and acceptance of the deeper philosophy behind LEADER has been gaining ground so that it is increasingly acknowledged as a powerful tool for the promotion of rural development in general and for the animation of local, collective action.

2.24 However, it would be inaccurate to describe LEADER as a 'great success'. Rather, it has started an incipient process in which a new democratic and co-operative culture in rural areas is being created and in which rural entrepreneurs are acquiring an enhanced capacity for decision-making. However, some studies show that this new democratic culture and the conception of LEADER as an instrument to promote development in rural areas, were hindered by the use of it, by many actors, as an instrument to influence, control or reinforce their position in the local society or local structures of power (Esparcia and Noguera 1999).

2.25 The understanding of LEADER by many local actors is quite simple, in the sense that the concepts they use mean a narrow view of the programme. In this sense, specificities are still a complex set of concepts that members of LAGs use with some difficulties. This explain that the strategies wrote down in the Business Plans used to be limited in a broad conception of all the specificities.

The most common is that LAGs are focused on a short number of specificities, which can be

considered as the most “successful” in general terms:

- **Territorial approach** is probably the element that was more clearly taken into account in the Business Plans. However, in many cases, this territorial approach was much more in the head of the manager team than in the written documents. As a consequence, it cannot always be said that there was a formal common and shared strategy for the territory. At the same time, the objective of integrating actions (in the same or different sector), search for complementarities between actions and/or projects, or the promotion of actions or projects taking into account their multiplier effects, was not sufficiently followed by the managerial teams and the Boards of Directors of LAGs. Thus, in many cases, the initial territorial approach does not correspond with a real integrated and multi-sectoral approach. There have been few LAGs that could develop and implement a real and effective integrated development strategy.
- **Bottom-up concept** is also present in the conformation and operation of LAGs. Frequently it was used as a way to reinforce the position of local actors before regional structures, focusing on their new and protagonist role in this context. However, from the internal point of view, it cannot be said that the decision making process was also sufficiently shared among all members of LAGs. The existence of a Board of Directors as the effective structure of decision making have had critics, sometimes very strong, from the remainder members or groups of actors in the LAG. The reason was usually that the information flows from the Board of Directors were insufficient. In other occasions, local population and even some members of the LAG -non in the Directive Board- had the feeling that those who were in that structure used this position in their own benefit.
- Local actors were aware of the **participative approach** as a distinctiveness of LEADER, despite each of them could have very different expectations from their involvement in the LAG. At least at the beginning, most local actors and associations were willing to participate in the LAG as a structure of cooperation. Conflicts arise when some of these actors in the local society were not sufficiently taken into account. In this sense, the role of regional authorities has been important as they promote a wide representation of local society and their different representatives, following LEADER philosophy. In some cases, direct participation of regional authorities in the LAG was a way to avoid conflicts but also a way to have certain control over the LAG. On the other hand, it is important to point out that most of the LAGs have a shared, public and private structure. However, although to a lesser extent than in LEADER I, there are still some LAGs with an exclusive public character. In these cases, conflicts, in a latent or real way, were evident. Another source of conflicts were the balance between public and private agents. The first ones used to have more official representation or, at least, more influence in the decision making process.
- In relation to the **innovation aspects**, this was one the specificities that worried more to the persons in charge of the managerial teams. Managers tried to promote innovative actions –at least innovative in the municipalities or territories where they had to be implemented-; however, frequently other criteria, such as the creation or maintenance of employment, or even just the need for some actions, were taken into account to take decisions on funding. Finally, some actors found that many proposals were presented in a nice way, showing a high degree of innovativeness, but which did not correspond to a real innovation.
- Managers and members of LAGs were much more aware of the technological side of the concept of **innovation** than the remainder perspectives. Thus, very few of them consider, for example, an effective, participative and cooperative LAG as an innovation that could allow them to go forward to a contribution in the “management of their territory”. It is still low the number of LAGs that conceive this as a cooperative structure that could serve to undertake some other challenges different to the management LEADER; however, more and more LAGs try to cope with other programmes, initiatives, etc., related to their territories, being those complementary of the actions under LEADER. Some LIFE projects were the starting point in this new conception, but recently some regional governments try to give to the LAGs the possibility to cope with certain aspects of the regional policies.
- **Networking** has been a need for the LAGs. All actors agree on the critical importance of networks, internal and external, to be more effective and to reach higher effectiveness in the implementation of the programme. Everybody was highly critical with the great difficulties to establish a proper cooperation with other LAGs of the same country. On the other side, in spite of the support to do cooperation with no national LAGs, the different actors recognized that language was an important barrier for them. This explains that the really successful transnational cooperation projects were scarce, in spite that all of them started some kind of relationship – with the high valuable support of the European LEADER Observatory- and even some common

projects. At the end, all these projects were more focused and useful for the LAG members, the managerial team, or a scarce number of local entrepreneurs; local actors do not have the filling that transnational cooperation benefit the area in a wide sense: they were the starting point for individual and concrete initiatives, that could have bigger and better impact in a medium-long term. On the other hand, LAGs and mainly managers recognize also the useful task of National Units of the LEADER Observatory, since they gave three types of very accessible and useful inputs.

2.26 Unquestionably, LEADER has had a significant impact in rural Europe. At the very least, it has helped to raise awareness among politicians and professionals of the dynamics of rural areas. Private sector investment has been mobilised and some employment created, although there is no sufficient information about the survival rates of projects started through LEADER. In terms of concrete projects, the ability of LEADER to inspire 'innovative' actions appears to have been limited.

2.27 A major problem facing the scientific analysis of LEADER is the absence of a framework to enable comparative investigation, evaluating projects within and without LEADER. An important element of such a framework would be control areas free of the LEADER effect. In the absence of such a framework, uncertainty remains and other aspects of LEADER assume a greater significance in analyses: the democracy-learning process; the rural development education function; the improvement in the capacity for decision-making; participation; the territorial approach to the design and implementation of policies; the Europeanisation of rural actors.

2.28 In the Spanish context, at least, this must be juxtaposed with the apparent susceptibility of LEADER to being used by the institutions of the politico-administrative system to legitimise their own agendas and interventions. Local actors showed a willingness to participate and collaborate in the initial stages of LEADER, when the Business Plans were being written and about to be implemented, but subsequently each LAG tended to fragment into a number of narrow interest lobbies, each trying to use LEADER as an instrument of power.

2.29 All strategic documents since the Structural Funds reform in 1988 have shown an increasing awareness in the European policy of the need for special attention and prioritisation of action in rural areas in order to avoid economic, social and environmental deprivation. There is a continued These documents represent a step forward in considering the need for a holistic approach to development initiatives to be carried out in rural areas. In this context, the implementation of the LEADER Community Initiative has demonstrated effectiveness and success of a multisectoral,

participatory, approach to development that enhances the opportunities for rural areas.

2.30 Although much has been achieved in the scope of rural development policy and action, the powers in relation to rural development are shared by a multiplicity of institutions, agencies and organisations at different levels. This prevents the achievement of an integrated and coordinated treatment of rural development problems through effectively coordinated programs that integrate all aspects of rural development, avoiding the current overlapping that inevitably leads to reduced efficiency and, at the same time, increasing conflicts.

Lessons learned from the analysis of the impact of public action on rural development in the European Union

2.31 When talking about challenges and strategies for rural development policy two aspects should be taken into account: firstly, the diversity of rural areas (see Box 1); secondly, the possibility of multiple futures in perspective. Regarding the former, any classification effort is overwhelmed by the heterogeneity of each category, ie, each contains a variety of rural areas that could, in turn, be divided almost ad infinitum. With regard to the "future", any challenge and strategy for any type of rural area is necessarily framed in a prospective exercise that involves subjective choices and, therefore, can be questioned. For this reason, the author renounces to venture into an exercise of defining future scenarios for each of the established types of rural areas, focusing instead in those aspects that are considered key for the definition of future challenges and strategies for rural development policy.

The need for a long-term territorial planning framework at multiple levels

2.32 Whatever the nature of a rural area or region, the action of public and private institutions need a strategic reference of territorial model for the future in order to determine the potential land uses, establish constraints and prohibitions to certain uses in certain places according to the model, determine the strategic development axis, threshold capacities, and incompatibilities between activities and uses (Esparcia and Noguera, 2000).

2.33 This is not an operational framework to 4-5 years away but a longer range exercise of reflection-planning-action (20-30 years) in which, with the necessary flexibility, setting out the guidelines that should drive efforts to reach a predetermined territorial model. However, in most cases, territorial models at state and regional level have not been defined, although in most cases there is the legislative framework of reference (Box 5). The absence of territorial models leads to a fragmented territorial organization guided, in

many cases, by local urban planning or sectoral rules.

2.34 As a consequence, there is an irrational land occupation, which reduces the sustainability of development processes. It is, therefore, urgent not only to develop the current legislation on land management but do it so as to allow effective implementation. Even if allowing for a fundamental reference frame, spatial planning is not sufficient for a good rural governance. There must also be a rural development strategy at the state and, where appropriate, regional levels, with adequate tools and resources for implementation.

2.35 The rural territory can only be understood as a system. Consequently, it is meaningless carrying out uncoordinated actions that may be not only ineffective but counterproductive. For example, the effort to boost economic activity must be accompanied by actions to ensure adequate provision of basic and supplementary services to support quality of life of rural residents.

2.36 Despite the undoubted success of some rural development policies and programs, the European rural world has not had, until recently, a common strategy that drives a more focused and sustainable action.

2.37 In the case of Spain, it was not until 2007, Law 45/2007 for sustainable rural development, when this instrument was legislatively set. However, although the law emanates from the Ministry of Rural and Marine Affairs, it affects powers of a number of other ministries and regional and local authorities.

2.38 This Act takes place in a Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRS) for the period 2010-2014 that establishes a General Strategy for Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. However, this strategy and program impact administrative powers at various levels according to the vision of the countryside as a system. Therefore, it must define not only development activities but also effective coordination mechanisms and an adequate budget to make a positive impact on sustainable development in rural areas.

EU Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development

(extracted from <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>)

The EU Rural Development policy for the period 2006-13 is based upon an strategic approach. On February 2006 the Council adopted the EU Strategic Guidelines for RD that provide six EU strategic guidelines according to which Member States prepare their national strategy plans on RDt. The guidelines outline the focus of rural development policy in three key areas: the agrifood economy, the environment, and the broader rural economy and population. A new generation of rural development strategies and programs have been developed at Member State

level in line with this framework, built around four axes:

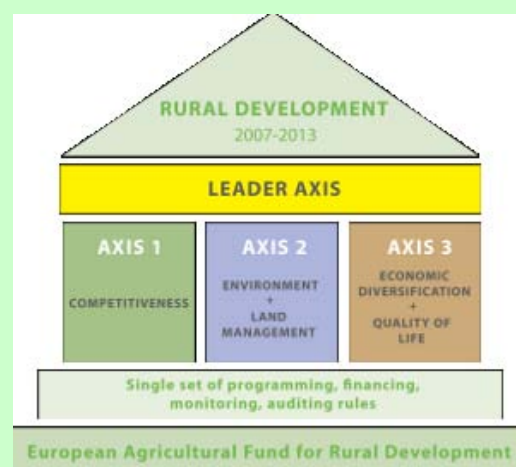
Axis 1: to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector including a range of measures that target human and physical capital in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors (promoting knowledge transfer and innovation) and quality production.

Axis 2: to improve the environment and the countryside providing measures to protect and enhance natural resources, as well as preserving high nature value farming and forestry systems and cultural landscapes in Europe's rural areas.

Axis 3: to enhance the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy offering support to help to develop local infrastructure and human capital in rural areas, to improve the conditions for growth and job creation in all sectors and the diversification of economic activities.

Axis 4: based on the Leader experience, introduces possibilities for innovative governance through locally based, bottom-up approaches to rural development.

To ensure a balanced strategy a minimum funding for each thematic axis is required (10 %, 25 % and 10 % respectively for axis 1, 2 and 3 are a safeguard to ensure that each program reflects at least the three main policy objectives), but the percentages are set sufficiently low to leave Member States or regions a high flexibility (55 % of EU funding) to emphasize the policy axis they wish. For the Leader axis a minimum of 5 % (2.5 % for the new Member States) of the EU funding for each program is reserved. The new RD policy (EC) No 1698/2005 is characterized by "continuity and change". It provides a set of tools (measures) from which all Member States can choose and for which they can receive EU financial support to implement integrated Rural Development Programs.



Detailed information available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006D0144:EN:NOT>

Combining history, identity, functionality and sustainability in a new rural governance

2.39 Although rural municipalities tend to have larger territorial dimensions, land-use management and rural governance can not be made from a multiplicity of micro-structures of local government without enough human and financial resources to develop a minimum of government activity. In the case of Spain, the vast majority of the more than 8,000 Spanish local governments fall into this category. Other countries also have an extremely fragmented territorial structure. In these cases it is urgent to create more rational territorial levels of government by promoting legislation that provides supra-local scales (counties or similar) with skills and powers to the provision of services, the design of territorial development strategies, etc.

2.40 Another important issue relates the need for optimisation of the structure and functioning of local government. Inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other forms of cooperative governance are paradoxical when local councils lack internal cohesion and communication. Often, the resources available in the local administration are misplaced or do not meet the management needs. It is therefore imperative to improve the internal structure and organization according to management needs and the actual workload. When necessary, professional skills (through specific training or recruitment) can be obtained. At the same time there is need for establishing methods and protocols for communication and coordination between the different areas of local government.

2.41 Rural governance, whatever it may be, must base its action in a process of strategic reflection and action agreed by local stakeholders. Although there are countries or regions in which this claim appears to be the "truism", the reality of many regions and countries of the European.

2.42 Union is that rural governance barely exists, there is little supra-municipal cooperation and there is little strategic processes of reflection-action that rationally direct development efforts. Consequently, the proposal goes through the definition of "territorial model of Future" to be defined in a shared and agreed form with local stakeholders. This involves: (i) commitment at the political level (not appropriation), (ii) commitment of the main institutions of the territory, (iii) involvement of social and economic organizations, (iv) working towards a real model of participatory democracy.

A good place to test the participative democracy

2.43 Recent times tell us about a growing dissatisfaction of citizens with regard to their

political representatives and, even worse, with respect to the democratic system. The continued misuse and perversion of the principles of representative democracy have led in recent statistical barometers, to the fact that one of the main problems perceived by citizens are "politicians". This disaffection threatens to delegitimise the entire democratic system with the enormous risks associated. Recent public demonstrations of discontent are only an initial expression of the direction events may take if the "divorce" between citizens and political representatives continues or increases.

2.44 The reality is proving that public sphere evolves much faster than the institutional sphere. As a result, responses to citizens' movements are between disqualification and ideological sympathy with no real implications. At the core of most of these movements lies the idea that representative democracy has been perverted in a way that serves primarily the interests of political groups and the associated social and economic lobbies. The proposals in this situation are also varied and are among quasi-anarchic visions up to models of participatory democracy with increased role of the local scales, greater concern for issues of sustainability and greater control of the citizenry.

2.45 In this scenario, rural areas become privileged places for the promotion of participatory models of governance that come closer to the concept of participative democracy. This "new" governance model has been tested for over 20 years mainly in rural areas through EU programs like LEADER, LIFE, INTERREG, TERRA, etc. therefore, the principles of "participative democracy" are well rooted in most rural societies Europe-wide.

Use the LEADER Method as a paradigm to achieve a new rural governance based in the participative democracy

2.46 The LEADER method provides a set of learning lessons or key elements that, in principle, could be useful in rural development policies or other policies to be applied in rural areas. Among other:

- The centrality of territorial specificities as a promoter of rural development;
- The need to advance in the territorialisation of sectoral policies, with consultation between the local and other institutional levels for more effective implementation of such policies;
- The need to bring people to resources and opportunities through a bottom-up approach, taking into account the problems of regional disparities;
- The promotion of a multisectoral or integrated approach to the development of economic

activities, facilitating the integration of all activities of the territory;

- The promotion of local partnerships as a tool for strategic decision making and consultation in the area, making them valid and representative partners at other levels of government;
- The work and organization in network, developing cooperation at different territorial levels (close relationships, rural-urban linkages, relations with rural areas in the state and other countries).

2.47 Despite the undoubted interest of these lessons, their generalization to other policies is not an easy task because there are many conditions and factors of regional diversity. There have been different experiences, each of which has designed the generalization in a different way and has tried to address specific problems in different rural areas where they have been implemented.

2.48 Extend the lessons of LEADER is not only possible but necessary and useful. But the diversity of situations in the European Union is such that it is easy to think of a generalization of the LEADER method from each and every one of the seven key elements listed above, these differences stem from the combination of factors related to the context. In any case, the integration of such teaching requires flexible tools that allow for broad community participation in programming tools that ultimately have the capacity to respond to the diversity of rural problems through the structure of actors and mechanisms consultation and cooperation between institutions and actors.

2.49 However, future rural development policies will have to define more precisely at least the following aspects: first, which functions are expected from rural areas both in sectoral policies (ie. the role of agriculture) and territorial policies; second, what the EU and national governments want or need to transfer or play (action, methodology, institutional structures, etc.); third, the very features expected from the future rural development policies' method, according to the diversity noted above (animation, territorial balance, promotion of other instruments or policies, intervention in the local economy, empowerment of small projects, revitalization of social and territorial networks, promotion of cooperation mechanisms, etc.); last, which are the most suitable future innovations in rural development policy making and what role should they have in relation to mainstream rural policies, in particular how complementarities are established in relation to these and how they are implemented.

Create networks

2.50 In most cases, rural areas are not in the position of competing in production capacity or low

prices. Both the own nature of rural areas and types of farming, and the reduced size of local production systems, demand the choice of "quality" in development strategies. In this way, it becomes possible the establishment of quality standards for products and services in a particular rural area or network of rural areas, from a strategic standpoint (see Box 8). These types of actions help achieve improved competitive positioning of the territory, optimising their potential and the orientation of action in a common direction.

2.51 One strategic element of networking is the inclusion of rural territories in thematic or geographic networks. The diffusion of knowledge and the generation of critical mass or economies of scale are achieved in rural areas through close collaboration with other areas (Silva Perez, 2002). Networking promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and learning processes. There are many opportunities through projects and networks of cooperation within the EU. It is always better that these initiatives are supported by common strategies and actions that go beyond the simple travelling experience.

Bottom-up rural development based upon rural partnerships is a serious and strong alternative to traditional forms of governance if some shortfalls are prevented

2.52 The EU LEADER initiative, and other national leader- like policies constitute the paradigm of the whole approach to rural development that local partnerships are bringing into practice in most European countries. These initiatives were conceived as alternative bottom- up programs in opposition to the more bureaucratic top-down policies of previous years. The need for participation and involvement of the local population in their local development processes was at the core of this new approach. Previous attempts (Directive 262/75) did not succeed mainly due to the contradictions of the established institutional structure (centralised, sectoral, hierarchical) with the new decentralised, territorialized and participatory system. During the 1990s, the new "bottom- up" approach has been well established in most EU rural areas.

2.53 However, the practice of local partnerships for rural development does not lack deficiencies: most co-operations are clearly project-oriented (i.e. driven by a perceived opportunity rather than a perceived need), which leads to the concept of "middle-down" development, as the one initially promoted from a top-down approach (i.e. regional governments and external sources of funding are the main catalysts of the process), but is later turned into a more endogenous, participative way of decision- making (i.e. local partnerships deciding upon the allocation of public funding according to a self-defined strategy). This middle-

down development reflects the initial stages of the “partnership culture” in which local co-operation pursues short-term objectives and is, to a certain level, controlled by external forces (i.e. regional or national levels of government). Partnerships are a fairly new way of decision-making except for northern EU countries. They have to fight in order to find their place in the existing institutional structures. They constitute powerful neutral spaces for decision-making and because of that, they tend to be the object of political desire.

2.54 It is true that most partnerships would not be there in the absence of a good source of funding, that their actions to date may not be so determined by economic dynamism, that very often there has not been a truly democratic way to build up the partnership, that the decision bodies are to some extent “controlled” by public local authorities.... It could even be said that there is uncertainty about whether the partnership is making any difference to the degree of impact which public money is making to the local economy. What is relevant, however, from the partnership approach is its ability to integrate in a single forum a diverse group of key people from the local community who come together from a variety of situations and with different interests, with the purpose of deciding upon the future of their territory. Also, what is extremely valuable is the knowledge of the local circumstances that local people bring to the strategy and hence, the input that they make to the sustainability of the projects initiated. In any case, this practice constitutes a fundamental shift in the rationale of the traditional *savoir-faire* of public policy that requires considerable adjustment in procedures and attitudes.

2.55 Public policy-makers and practitioners on the one hand, and the local community invited to play a new more active role in public policy design and management, will need to adapt to the new way of working. In the meantime, some “noise” will be perceived in the establishment of this new approach. But a new, long-term process has started and is already showing clear benefits (more social concern and willingness to co-operate from the local society, better guided strategy on the basis of the local knowledge, a new way to locate local problems and views into a wider frame that helps to create empathy and mutual understanding, etc.) that are exclusively due to the existence of a partnership. If less than a decade of experience, relatively reduced budgets and severe deficiencies and imperfections in the practice of the partnership approach are showing such results, the experience and the long-term view will surely improve substantially the outputs in the future, and will contribute to the consolidation of a real bottom-up approach.

2.56 The “rural experiment” in more than 800 rural territories over the last 20 years call for the promotion of transversal development structures at local and regional levels, with the following

functions: (i) coordination and logistical and technical support to government bodies, participation and advice, (ii) promotion of strategic initiatives in the development process; (iii) mobilization and mediation between local resources and entrepreneurs, (iv) integration of sectoral policies, (v) promotion of local business networks, (vi) social intervention, socio-cultural and innovation, (vii) fundraising and development programs.

Efficiency and effectiveness

2.57 One of the major needs and goals of decision makers is to increase knowledge about the actual results of the initiatives already implemented. The absence of an effective monitoring and evaluation is a major weakness in public administration. This results in a reduction of the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, with the consequent loss of financial and human resources. In the case of integrated rural development policies, there are a number of indicators that can help assess the effectiveness and efficiency of a policy or program and to give greater attention to monitoring and evaluation processes. Currently, the evaluation of public policies and programs is in the best cases in the control of deadlines and in a purely financial control. There is no reliable measure the true impact of a particular development policy or program in the implementation area.

2.58 The effectiveness and efficiency of rural development policies can be increased taking into account the following recommendations:

- **Programs managed locally increase the efficiency of resources used.** This is explained by two factors: first, the proximity of managers to potential beneficiaries improves the availability of information and support, and second, the empowerment of managers increases the efficiency of management tasks (rapidity of payments, technical support, etc.). However, for this increase in efficiency to occur, it takes a number of requirements: first, the existence of adequate training and a high degree of availability of managers; second, the need to have financial autonomy in order to accelerate the payment of grants or shares granted; finally, the participation of key actors in local decision-making process.
- However, it is necessary to **maintain a coordinating role by Central and Regional Governments.** All the advantages of managed development policies at local level are greatly reduced if there is no a coordination effort by a responsible body to have a broader political context and the goals and objectives established for specific policy or program.

- **Promotion of private initiative and investment**, as an effective way to mobilize the local economy.
- **The need to improve channels of information and technical assistance in rural areas.**
- **The need to establish effective procedures for monitoring and evaluation of development policies.** In some countries monitoring and evaluation of development policies is insufficient. As a result, there is a high degree of uncertainty about the adequacy and effectiveness of development programs. Often, managers make decisions without a clear analysis of its consequences for the lack of the necessary information and time.

Implementation procedures

2.59 Some aspects of the way in which management of rural development policies takes place contribute to significantly reduce their efficiency and impact in the development process that seeks to create. If greater efficiency in management and outcomes is to be achieved, future rural development policies need to consider such issues and act in ways that reduce their impact.

2.60 First, it is necessary to simplify as much as possible the administrative and bureaucratic procedure as the rural population, potential beneficiaries of development programs, typically have low education levels. The establishment of complicated procedures to request public support leads to a significant reduction in the number of beneficiaries and the effectiveness of the policy.

2.61 Second, the accessibility and availability of technical officers in rural area (In the style of LEADER technical offices) are key to the success of the development initiative. Assuming that a program is managed locally, the personal conduct of the manager and of the management team have a great influence on the outcome of the program. The analysis of the LEADER program has shown the benefits of the post of manager as approachable and friendly person, always willing and able to gain the trust of local people. On the other hand, beneficiaries of programs that run on a regional or State complain of the difficulties encountered when dealing with the administration of the program because of the absence of a clear and accessible interlocutor. Beneficiaries tend to negatively evaluate the management and application procedures for those programs managed from outside their areas (Regional or Central). Therefore, the availability and proximity of managers increases the confidence of the rural population and expectations of success. Although, generally speaking, local agencies are well regarded, there are some gaps that need attention in the future.

Co-ordination of rural development policies and development agencies

2.62 There is a strong need for co-ordinate objectives of policies with impact on rural areas from different governments or departments of the same government in order to avoid duplication of efforts and contradictory actions (i.e. the *mapa escolar*) is reducing the number of primary schools in small settlements and obligates people to migrate to bigger towns; at the same time, the LEADER programme or the Farm Modernisation Scheme are trying to promote the maintenance of the population in these same settlements). Local agencies should be co-ordinated and local people should be involved in the development plan. There should be a clear responsible for the management of each development programme. There should be a common plan for public financial assistance to avoid overlapping schemes.

2.63 At the same time, there is a need for a minimum continuity of the objectives of the rural development policy. Beneficiaries and institutions agree that there is a need for reinforcing the rural development policy of last years in order to consolidate and maximise efforts and results.

Acceptability of rural development policies

2.64 Two elements can be pointed out as the key factors explaining the degree of acceptability of rural development policies. First, the organisational structure of public institutions and private agencies in charge of rural development policies (or those that contribute in any way to the rural development process); here, we refer as much to the internal structure as to the spatial or territorial organisation. Second, the nature of the policy (its conception, tools, resources, etc.). The spatial sphere in which the policy is set in progress and the institutions act is a key element that influences the policy effectiveness.

2.65 **The organisational structure of institutions and agencies.** Policy implementation relies, to a big extent, on the organisational structure of institutions and agencies; at the same time, policy implementation conditions the level of acceptance of a policy from beneficiaries. Several aspects must be taken into account here:

1. First, the **level of dependence / autonomy of institutions** regarding as much the policy management and implementation as the policy design. Institutions with high autonomy in both policy design and implementation (National and Regional Agencies) enjoy an optimal situation for the development of a rural development policy according to their views on the issue. However, this autonomy brings about one of the main problems of the rural development policy: the lack of co-ordination among institutions in charge of rural development programmes or policies. As a result, need for a common action is one of the

main needs in policy design and, specially, policy management.

2. A related issue is the **internal structure of rural development institutions and agencies**. In many EU countries, the institutional system is both hierarchical and sectoral. Recently, however, a different, more horizontal approach organises local agencies. When talking about rural development, this usually implies areas showing high social and economic desertification, and low ability for revitalisation. In such situations, most effective agencies have proved to be those low hierarchy, local level based agencies, where managers and workers are much more accessible for potential beneficiaries, and usually become more concerned with the problems of the area. According to the empirical experience, a network of local agencies able to manage a set of locally applied rural development policies and programs is a key factor for increasing the effectiveness of such actions, although a Central institutions acting at higher spatial level is essential in order to carry out co-ordination, evaluation and advice to local agencies. Several key-aspects for the efficiency of a rural development policy show high improvement when this structure is set in progress:

- Speed of payments. When a grant is award, if the beneficiary has to ask for a bank loan for carry out the granted project because the money of the grant comes very late, high interest rates for personal loans reduce a lot the final real support from public financial assistance.
- Good and effective information. Farmers and entrepreneurs usually complain about the lack of information about available grants and other policies. This fact reduces the impact of policies on the population and, thus, their efficiency. Local agencies are a good way to improve this delivery of information because of their proximity to potential beneficiaries.
- High quality advice. Most times, rural people having money to invest do not have the knowledge or information to do it in the right way. When a policy is set from outside of the area where it is applied, it is much more difficult to give good advice due to the lack of a local agent available.
- A local agent that inspires confidence, enthusiasm and security, and be easily available, is a guarantee for improving the success of rural development policies.

2.66 **The Nature of the Policy**. Despite the fact that policies have a theoretical approach that generally matches the real needs of lagging rural areas in Spain, political tools and resources are both not suitable or not enough as to have a

strong impact on the problems of lagging rural areas.

Deficiencies of rural development policies

2.67 Most deficiencies and gaps of rural development policies have already been pointed out during previous sections (lack of co-ordination, lack of resources, problems relating management, etc.). One of the main lacks is the own absence of an integrated, endogenous and participative rural development policy. The traditional sectorality of public administrations has determined the organisation of the policies on rural areas in a set of sectoral programs and actions. Few programs draw near the concept of integrated rural development: the ones that have involved local stakeholders in the development program, have brought the management of the program to the rural areas. However, it is more the case for investment promotion initiatives lagging a real integrated development plan for an area, and lagging enough financial and human resources.

Future rural development policies will have to focus on the main needs of rural stakeholders:

- Most demanded and less available needs of beneficiaries: public finance, transport and communication networks, training, new technology, good quality advice, supply of skilled labour.
- Factors for competitiveness and change of business and farms (ranked): quality of products/services, marketing of the area, marketing of product/services, wage rates, cost of credit/interest rates. The priority for change of these factors is: first, cost of credit/interest rates; second, taxation; third, marketing of region; fourth, quality of services/products.
- Biggest obstacles for business and farms development: government requirements (taxes), bureaucracy, lack of economic resources, business activity, location, lack of customers.

2.68 Rural development institutions and agencies will have to solve the gaps detected in services provided and increase quality of most demanded services:

- **Improvements suggested for organisations**: speed up payments and management, more services, improve management, improve information.
- Most helpful services: grants for investment capital, general advice, advice for training, financial advice, marketing programs, marketing advice, technical advice, training programmes.

Questions arising from Chapter2 to reflect on:

1. Why rural areas become privileged places for the promotion of participatory models of governance? Discuss your experience.
2. Local development initiatives are rarely monitored and evaluated systematically. How do you think the monitoring and evaluation should be organised, who should take responsibility for this and to whom the results should be communicated?
3. Talking of participative democracy, can you think of any examples in your region/country of consultations held with the inhabitants of an area or their representative bodies, at the planning stage of a programme or policy? Are you aware of positive or negative results?
4. Is there a LEADER action group in your area? Or do you know of the work of a LEADER LAG in your country? What are the benefits and shortcomings of these LEADER initiatives?

Case study 2.1

The failure of a bottom-up, multi-scale and integrated territorial development process: the case of the Consortium of the Central Territories of the Valencia Region (CONCERCOST), Spain

The structure of territorial governance in Spain is composed by a central government, 17 regions (Comunidades Autónomas) with strong competences, 52 province governments (Diputaciones) with residual powers and over 8,000 municipal governments with strong responsibilities (land use planning, urbanism, economic development, social services, etc.). Most municipalities are very small, with less than 1,000 inhabitants. Due to their reduced size, they face important difficulties to implement their duties and powers and strategic aspects like land-use planning is not rational.

To solve these and other problems, there are voluntary associations of municipalities (Mancomunidades) that help achieve the necessary scale for service provision, land use planning and economic development. In most cases, these associations happen at country level. A good example of supra-municipal planning attempt happened in the Central area of the region of Valencia (Comarques Centrals) under the auspice of the TERRA Initiative. The project was called CONCERCOST.

A group of social and institutional actors of the Central Counties of Valencia (CCV) led them to voluntarily agree on the need to implement a process of integrated planning of this area consists of different counties of southern province of Valencia and north of Alicante.

and supported by the Consortium of Central Valencian Counties, a group of public and private organisations, representative of various interest groups and local stakeholders including local councils, social and economic networks, experts and Universities.

The project included 18-sectoral reports on various aspects of the territorial situation from the analysis of historic urban centres, environmental systems and landscapes, or tourism, among other. Later, these papers were integrated into a final diagnosis and Territorial Action Plan which included and prioritised major development strategies for the coming years.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that both its design and technical implementation can be considered good practices, several factors caused the shutdown and subsequent abandonment of the project. These factors include the voluntary nature of the project, its association with certain political tendencies, and the high uncertainty about funding resources.

More information available at:

<http://www.comarquescentrals.com>

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/innovation/innovating/terra/expplan/concercost.pdf



The existence of a Community Initiative to support territorial development (TERRA) facilitated the design of a project to analyse in depth the territorial problems of the CCV, reach a diagnosis and define integrated development strategies through a Territorial Action plan. Between 1999 and 2001 the project CONCERCOST was launched to achieve this goal. The project was conceived

Case study 2.2

The “weak link” of the chain: distortions and bad practices derived from failure of multi-level governance articulation: the case for the implementation of the LEADER approach after 2006 in the region of Valencia, Spain

Since 1991, Valencia, like many other territories of Spain and the EU, has been the scene of the implementation of the Community Initiative LEADER. During the first 3 periods (LEADER 1, 2 and Plus), Valencia did not differ, at the level of management, of the other regional territories, despite continuing disagreements between the managers of LAGs and the regional administration, showing an attitude of permanent distrust of the LEADER model and its management by the technical and social structures of LAGs.

During the completion of LEADER + LAGs underwent multitude of pressures both in terms of public funding from LEADER + period, as well as the conditions of continuity into the next period of implementation. The regional government of Valencia took advantage of the transitional period to impose conditions on the design, implementation and evaluation of the new rural development program, RURALTER, that deviate significantly from the LEADER philosophy and methodology recognised, valued and promoted by the EU. Despite the warning signs, no one, neither the European authorities or the national ones, on which depends the regional government for the use of European resources raised or delivered any action.



As a result, the program RURALTER of the Generalitat Valenciana (with two subprograms Landscape and LEADER) has become a poor substitute for the LEADER Initiative with the following characteristics: (i) the regional government establishes the territorial division away from the opinion or wishes of local actors, thus minimising the "endogenous" dimension of the LEADER method, (ii) in this regard, also the territorial zoning generated lacks the minimum principles of consistency and does not respect

previous LAGs territorial divisions, all of this leading to a sharp de-identification of territories with a program that, to date, had very effectively promoted territorial identity (iii) technical structures of LAGs disappear, so that program management is taken over by the regional administration through a set of "technicians" who travel to the territories and gather the local requests; this heavily diminishes the decision-making capacity "from the territory," one of the main virtues of the LEADER method, (iv) LAGs do not pose a Rural Innovation Plan similar to those due in previous programming periods, thereby diluting the strategic component of the initiative, (v) the loss of liability on the part of the territories in designing, managing and implementing the program cause a "cascade" effect that prevents the consolidation of previously generated development structures.

Faced with this situation, it is greatly surprising that the very rural areas involved have had only a lukewarm response to this radical change of direction.

More information (in Spanish) available at:

<http://www.agricultura.gva.es/web/web/guest/desarrollo-rural/presentacion>

Case study 2.3

Getting and implementing the essence of sustainable rural development: the territorial quality brand: a bottom-up, participative, integrated and networked model of rural development, Spain

Starting from the work of a LEADER II transnational cooperation project, Local Action Groups El Condado de Jaén (Spain), Pays Cathar (France) and Valle Umbra (Italy) developed the "Framework for a European Regulation on Territorial Quality", which set out the fundamental values of the concept of territorial quality, the minimum criteria for application of the principles inscribed therein, and drew up the assignation and control methods for a possible official European "territorial quality" mark.

This idea seeks to provide competitive advantage to rural territories that "face a new situation of gradual decrease in protection and assistance from the States and the European Union, at the same time as markets are globalised, which means opening, open and competitive spaces" (General Regulation, page 2).

Considering the fragility of the rural territories to respond to this new situation, the proposal of a European Territorial Quality brand seeks to offer rural territories the possibility to go to market with a collective operation which groups the entire territory in a global quality project, a territory which is projected to market with a differentiated identity and which works to attain territorial quality, understanding that to mean quality in products and services, quality in their production processes (socially, culturally and environmentally respectful production), with companies and entities committed to the territory, with participation by the population in the process of development and integration of all collectives. Each territory with a territorial quality project must have been identified with an image, which is its territorial quality mark.

Those marks are not merely commercial instruments, but rather lead economic agents to reflect on authenticity, balanced development of the territory and the quality process. Furthermore, all the territorial quality marks support each other in the valuation of heritage and natural resources as a lever for development and as a sign of differentiated identity. Each mark has to establish the conditions to guarantee quality and authenticity, as well as respect for the territory and, to that end, involve the public authorities in each territory as well as a considerable number of business people, favouring solidarity within the sectors and between the territories, finding synergies and facilitating the start-up of collective operations for joint promotion.



Guaranteeing the success of the marks and their sustainability requires a necessary critical mass which an isolated territorial mark is not always able to achieve, the territories with marks already established within the process of territorial quality wish to form an alliance sharing an additional common mark to give them reasonable critical mass and, consequently, the capacity to be successful in the market and facilitate identification by consumers.

More information available at:

<http://www.calidadterritorial.es/mct/index.htm>

CHAPTER 3.

The Rural animator: a key player in local partnerships and networking

“Animation” of local development in rural areas

3.1 The concept of rural animation has been initially linked to social contexts characterised by lack of technical abilities to drive local development initiatives, and as such it has found an application in third world countries and especially in Africa. According to Yves Goussault (1968), rural animation involved, to a large extent, the non-formal and informal education of local inhabitants as an integral part of development programmes operated by Europeans in Africa, with both economic and social development aims.

3.2 Although animation stems from community development, it has evolved as a quite different concept with direct references to capacity building, local governance and participation of the community in important development decisions in their area. A new definition of local development in the 1990s, as part of the Local Agenda 21 implementation, integrated the concept of rural animation in the definition of endogenous and integrated development. Endogenous development is based on a bottom-up approach, built upon community involvement, allowing the local community to make decisions about their own future, assigning a strong role to partnerships, animation and capacity building; while, integrated rural development implies a territorial strategy which incorporates sectoral policies at the stage of implementation (Shortall and Shucksmith, 2001).

3.3 To make endogenous development happen, local communities need to be empowered and facilitated so that their capacity for action is strengthened; and this calls for animation and facilitation functions to be introduced, to help communities take up the challenge of endogenous development and initiate action. The term pre-development is sometimes used to refer to the phase that precedes development, when local groups are animated and a capacity is generated among local people to work purposefully in collective action (NESC 1994). The time scale of pre-development is not though defined strictly. A review in Northern Ireland showed that the time scale required for the development model to work itself through in deprived communities cannot be worked out from existing examples and raises the issue of the time scale required for a community development process to evolve into a process of successful social and economic regeneration. The issue of whether there should be a policy commitment to animation and capacity building is

also raised. However, rather than pre-development being regarded as a stage that precedes development, there is an argument that it should continue alongside development, and the role of animation and capacity building is also seen as continuing. This role refers to the ability of animators to engage groups who may be slow to participate in the development process. Another important issue refers to the distinction between the goal of rural development and the process of it. Animation is more closely linked to the process.

3.4 The concept of animation of rural development has been closely connected with the building of partnerships at local level and the evolution of local governance systems. Rural regeneration programmes funded by the European Union in the 1990s, such as LEADER, tried to develop models of local rural partnerships, starting from entirely voluntary ones and ending to institutional, almost predefined organisation systems, dictated by the brief of the funding programme.

3.5 Although the concept of partnerships implies an inclusive partnership structure, in reality the composition and form of local rural partnerships depends on the funding organisation or the government body that fund their activities. The legitimacy of partnerships is sometimes questioned, on the grounds that they are not by definition inclusive and representative of the key players. Often partnerships exist alongside elected local government bodies and the division of responsibilities and power becomes unclear. The legitimacy of partnerships has been questioned as early as 1994 by Bryden who points out that local government systems are legitimate by virtue of their democratic structure and elected status. The transfer of power and responsibility to quasi-autonomous or autonomous, non-state bodies can be questioned and their relationship to local government as well as their representational capacity needs to be defined. Partnerships can be unsuccessful, tyrannical or representative and egalitarian (Craig 1995, Mannion 1996). Partnerships are not uniform entities and representation of different groups is not automatic with the formation of a partnership but is frequently inbuilt into a programme's guidelines (Shortall and Suchsmith, 2001).

The scope of action of rural animators

3.6 Ideally, local development processes will be steered by a team of technicians and experts covering a diversity of issues. However, this is not

always the norm, particularly in the case of rural areas where the economic activity and population size are very small at village level. In most cases, rural animators have to work on their own, having to face a very complex mix of problems, opportunities and challenges that range from loss of economic activity and population to poor exploitation of natural resources coupled by inefficient policies and insufficient funding of investment initiatives.

3.7 The scope of action of the local animator is broad. Potentially, it covers all dimensions of development (social, economic, cultural, environmental, etc.). According to Izquierdo (2002) a local animator should provide inspiration for new development actions among local communities, as well as technical knowledge for the promotion and organization of such actions. Although his/her role is political in terms of community development, his/her operations should be kept away from politics.

3.8 The role of the rural animator has been associated since the launching of this term, with community development and all that it involves: strengthening the social capacities traditionally associated with rural communities, and effectively utilising the power of mutual help, strong neighbourhood ties and local social capital. Thus, a rural animator is a trusted person who can protect and develop the interests of the community and address local development issues including all aspects of it as they affect a rural community: economic regeneration, social cohesion, quality of life.

3.9 The Rural animator, as a facilitator and a mediator of the local development processes, is an agent of change. The role of the rural animator can be summarised as follows (Academic Guide of EMRA, 2011):

- The rural animator initiates and sustains community activities related to the local economy; he/she also encourages the re-establishment of social bonds and the reinforcement or re-establishment of local identity, thus facilitating sustainable rural development.
- The rural animator stimulates everyday economic and social activity using a bottom-up approach. This confers authenticity as it is based upon grass-roots definitions of local needs and the means necessary for their fulfilment.
- The rural animator works within the political and cultural context of social, ecological, economic and cultural changes in rural areas.
- The rural animator mediates the formation and operation of local partnerships and networks, either formal or informal, to implement rural regeneration programmes or more generally to corroborate the local development process by

bringing together all relevant players; and may be also the link between decision-makers and the local communities.

- The rural animator helps the rural communities to build their capacity for development and thus undertake and run economic development projects and initiatives.

According to Izquierdo, a local animator takes:

- from "Tarzan", its ability to "live in the jungle";
- from "Macguiver", its ability to combine simple elements of the environment to get spectacular results;
- from Sherlock Holmes, perseverance to discover possible resources and capacity for observation, analysis and deduction;
- from Kung Fu, the ability to combine his energy and the one of the opponent to target the resulting effort;
- from Indiana Jones, perseverance and unwavering faith in the pursuit of social cohesion and territorial excellence;
- Asterix and Obelix, defending the village against the empire, and
- from Almodovar the passion and forcefulness to project him/herself through their works.

Rural animation: an interdisciplinary approach

3.10 Rural animators are expected to possess a good knowledge and understanding of the paradigm of sustainable rural development, including an inter-disciplinary knowledge of the different fields involved in rural development. Such an approach calls for a departure from the model of rural areas as a "monopoly of farming" (Van der Ploeg, 2000). The need to increase agricultural production brought about modernisation processes that at least partly worked against the traditional rural life and culture, introducing elements of "urbanisation" of village life. The introduction of industrial production methods in agriculture triggered a revolution in rural culture and quality of life, leading to a model much closer to an "urban" way of life for rural residents. In the mid-twentieth century, economically developed countries managed to secure a satisfactory level of food sufficiency through such modernisation of agriculture and "industrial" production methods, which in turn proved to result in immense destruction of the traditional rural economy. A large variety of social problems became evident, including the depopulation of large areas both in Europe and in the United States and Canada.

3.11 Traditional research on rural communities always started with farmers and farming families. Szczepański wrote in the 1980s: *"The countryside*

is a place of food production, with the workspace integrated with the household and results of activity dependent to a larger extent on the forces of nature." Today, farming families also make an obvious starting point for such research but one cannot fail to notice that the number of families able to earn their livelihood exclusively from agricultural activities is on the decrease. Multi-activity or "pluri-activity" as is termed in some member states of the EU, has become the new "bible" for the survival and growth of rural economies, implying a strong diversification of the economic activity in the countryside. Rural tourism, sports and cultural events, direct sales of farm products to consumers, welfare services, environmental protection activities are some of the channels selected by rural residents to complement their income, notwithstanding of course salaried jobs in local industries and outsourcing offered by national or international companies.

3.12 The economic scene is thus becoming a complex one: the rural animator cannot operate effectively without an understanding of this complexity, with all its social, cultural, welfare and environmental repercussions. Moreover, the position of modern farmers as entrepreneurs requires a new philosophy and additional skills, often lacking among rural residents, who are in need of support and encouragement. On top of this, rural regeneration programmes operated by national governments and the European Union bring forward an additional challenge, as they require good organisation, collective action, planning, innovative ideas and dealing effectively with a stiff bureaucracy in order to secure funding. The rural animator is expected to face all these changes, challenges and opportunities as a valuable "mediator", encouraging action and steering the rural communities towards the best solutions or options, without superseding or replacing the elected leaders of such communities.

The tasks which rural animators may be asked to tackle include:

- building and maintaining mutual trust in the community,
- supporting the creation of development plans, showing leadership,
- participating in the implementation of development plans, undertaking coordination and management,
- fulfilling the function of an intermediary between different stakeholders, being also the link between decision-makers and the local communities.

3.13 The interdisciplinary nature of rural animator's work is well reflected in the composition

of the curriculum of the Masters for Rural Animators (EMRA), a new postgraduate education programme explicitly-targeted to the profession of rural animator (see also Case Study 3.2) The different areas of knowledge that a rural animator is expected to possess, range from agriculture and farming to environmental protection and management, cultural development, community development and welfare, SME support, rural tourism, lifelong learning and diversification of rural economies, as will be presented below. Although rural animators are not expected to become experts in all these disciplines, they are expected to have a good enough knowledge and a level of competency that would allow them to understand the complexity of problems facing rural communities, converse with the experts to find a solution, and communicate this solution to the local and central government and other relevant bodies.

3.14 The disciplines that define the scope of action for a rural animator, according to EMRA, are:

1. **Sustainable agriculture.** This is a relatively new concept that represents a response to natural resources depletion, which is associated with capital and technology intensive farming systems (McIsaac and Edwards 1994). Farming is viewed as a system with many interacting components (e.g. environmental, economic, socio-cultural). As a result, sustainable agriculture comes forward as a way to manipulate agro-ecosystems in order to maintain or increase productivity within a certain social and economical context for the long term and with fewer negative environmental impacts. Agriculture has major and measurable impacts to the environment and amongst others, the quality of a rural landscape and biodiversity encompassing essential economical, cultural and societal values. Issues that are pertinent in this field refer to the diversity of the agricultural systems in Europe; European agro-environmental legislation and fund raising; and major concerns in contemporary agriculture, such as climate change, genetically modified organisms (GMO), degradation of biodiversity, food quality and safety etc.
2. **Human and social capital, including welfare.** The different types of non-economic capital should be considered in this field of knowledge, as resources for rural development, covering also the specificities of the welfare system and policies that pertain in rural areas. Issues of importance include mechanism of creating social capital; social policies for rural areas; welfare services for rural areas and alternative scenario for initiating and securing them, including public provision and strengthening of the social capital in rural communities.

3. **Environmental planning and management.** A central issue here is to recognise the natural and anthropogenic factors that have determined the development of rural areas in Europe through time, including ecological, economic, social and cultural conditions. This field includes spatial planning considerations, landscape design and landscape aesthetics; rural settlements and buildings; accessibility of rural areas and traffic planning; and some important social topics in the village, with direct physical and development planning implications.
4. **Cultural development.** Culture has been universally recognised as a resource for local development in rural areas. The rural animator should be able to use culture as a tool for territorial development; be aware of the relevant European legislative and policy framework; be competent to use the appropriate tools for the management of cultural development; and be able to recognise the assets that can be transformed into a cultural resource and integrated into a local development strategy.
5. **Sustainable rural tourism.** Rural tourism can be approached from different angles, relating to the economic, environmental and social aspects of tourism; the role of local partnerships in developing sustainable tourism in rural areas; and the promotion strategies that can be applied in rural tourism. Issues of importance in this field for the rural animator include: the position of rural tourism between the global tourism sector and the sustainable tourism principles; shaping and marketing the rural tourism product, including alternative and "mild" forms of tourism; business development and quality assurance in rural tourism.
6. **Innovation and development policies in rural areas.** Rural areas are not typically understood to be the most innovative environments. But different kind of rural areas have still their own strengths and weaknesses, which should be considered when promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. The rural animator should be able to adapt existing innovation policies and practical management tools to the needs of SMEs taking into account business attributes and environmental factors. Rural areas should be seen, under a different viewpoint, as innovation environments, and issues relating to regional characteristics of innovation activities and policies in European rural areas considered. The innovation processes that can be adopted by rural SMES constitute another important aspect, seeing innovation as a management process and creating the ground and communities of SMEs for innovation, supporting innovativeness of SMEs in practice.
7. **Education and lifelong learning for rural development.** The rural animator is expected to understand the role of education and lifelong learning for rural development; and become familiar with different types of delivery of lifelong learning (LLL), including learning methods and pedagogies, need satisfaction, technological tools, inclusive policies and social learning. The rural animator should recognise the added value of LLL in rural area and be aware of the opportunities for LLL in rural environments. Formal, non-formal and informal learning is included in this concept and the different models of LLL available as well as the support provided for them are fields of knowledge that may facilitate the process of rural development, especially if education and LLL are seen as promoters of development in rural areas.
8. **Diversification of rural economies.** As already stated in this Chapter, diversification of economic activity and pluri-activity are important aspects of the current economic scene in rural areas, affecting the current standing and future prosperity of farmers. The rural animator should be aware of the different approaches and tools to diversification, in the context of globalisation and European integration; consider the farmer as an entrepreneur with all that it entails; and be able to mediate the provision of services in rural areas through alternative means, including voluntary activity and consumer networks.

The skills and competences of a rural animator

3.15 Further to the knowledge of the complex, multi-disciplinary environment of rural development, the role and tasks a rural animator would be expected to undertake call for a variety of skills and competences.

- *Strategic thinking and planning competencies.* The design, development, direction and execution of actions that are necessary in order to achieve certain objectives. The purpose of any development strategy should be reaching "territorial excellence": the process of quality improvement in which people and institutions involved create a space where the collective and individual needs can be met.
- *Social communication skills:* building trust, ability to interact easily with every member of the community, conflict resolution, stimulation of innovative thinking, stimulation of positive attitudes towards community and himself / herself, self-presentation awareness and skills, rhetorical skills and skills covering the explanation of complicated issues; information processing skills, writing and publishing

articles, contributing in discussion fora, web pages etc. IT skills.

- *Research skills*, to allow finding out the community's needs and problems: ability to gather knowledge about the community through simple surveys and polls, conducting focus groups and exploratory meetings, investigating individuals' attitudes towards common action, conducting and observation, ability to perform qualitative data analysis and to compile reports.
- *Management and coordination skills*: ability to assess different kinds of opportunities and actions, knowledge of sources of financing, basic information about procedures, motivation techniques, group management, project management, coordination, leadership, communication with community leaders, practical knowledge of the functioning of local institutions and organisations (self-government, NGO's, regional bodies, national bodies).

The rural animator should be

- *Intuitive observer*, understanding the complexity of local relationships and acquiring an early perception and understanding of processes.
- *Accurate diagnosis performer*, capable to analyse and determine the strengths and weaknesses of an area and its resources for development.
- *Flexible planner*, capable to transform the diagnosis to a development plan based on identified problems and potential. The features of a good plan are: (i) adaptability; (ii) flexibility to incorporate new features in case of structural changes; (iii) participatory nature; (iv) comprehensiveness, targeting all areas of development; (v) endogenous, enhancing local resources for the benefit of local society; (vi) inclusive, incorporating all social groups and giving priority to the most disadvantaged.
- *Bold manager*, applying the correct tools and plans to achieve the set goals; showing leadership ability and securing the necessary support and enthusiasm from local people.
- *Versatile promoter*, resourceful and capable to initiate innovative action, organise and mobilise people and resources in any field to serve local development.
- *Effective mediator*, using dialogue, negotiation and communication between different entities and interests in the territory in order to resolve conflict and agree on a common plan for development.

Source : Euracademy Thematic Guide 8, 2008

A mediating role in a new reality

3.16 The role of the rural animator cuts across intuitive social relationships in rural communities and institutional relationships, trying to provide a link between the two levels. The institutional environment is of major importance in achieving such a link in a balanced way, representing accurately the needs of the local community and the policy and funding opportunities available at the time. The example of Poland during the 1990s and the first decade of 2000 demonstrate vividly how a shift in institutional policy has affected rural regeneration practices before and after the accession to the EU.

Before EU accession – genuine bottom-up initiatives of village leaders supported by local authorities

3.17 Activities undertaken in Poland within the village renewal approach in mid-1990 involved the preparation of the Renewal Plan (or Village Development Plan), the starting point of which was an audit of local resources carried out by the inhabitants themselves. This ensured that local community members became aware of the value of their village and surrounding areas in the context of the changes taking place in the global environment. To support this process, the initial pilot applications of this model suggested that an implementation structure should be created locally, without necessarily a legal status. In addition to the individual villages, the decision to take part in the rural renewal programme was taken by the municipal authorities, who appointed a coordinator – a person responsible for the programme and cooperating with the village leaders (a role very close to that of a rural animator).

3.18 The "village renewal group" was also created as an informal group in many cases to steer the plan, although on occasions this role was taken by the village council, and sometimes by another legal entity, e.g. a voluntary association. The task of the village renewal group was to carry out a number of meetings with inhabitants, leading to the development of the village renewal plan. After consultations with the municipality and other entities, the plan was publicly approved in a village meeting and the inhabitants undertook a commitment to implement it, sharing tasks between themselves. In this model the municipal authorities defined the scope and amount of eligible support, and on some occasions they took the role of investor or donor, and sometimes they would transfer the necessary assets or tasks and funding to the village community.

3.19 Further support was offered by regional authorities: organisation of training programmes, workshops and conferences for village leaders involved in the village renewal programme was certainly an important motivation for many rural communities to become involved in the

programme. Before EU accession the financial transfers for starting the implementation of village plans were quite small, ranging from 1.000 to 15.000 euro. However, the funding was always provided for projects initiated by the rural inhabitants who also took responsibility for everything included in the renewal plan.

Village renewal from EU funds – a bureaucratic programme for small investments by municipalities

3.20 After 2004 village renewal became one of the measures financed from EU funds for rural development, resulting in a totally different model of implementation. Funding from this programme became immediately available for almost all Polish municipalities. Unfortunately, most of them treated the funding for village renewal as one more source of financing their small-scale investments. If there was a formal requirement to develop a village renewal plan, a municipal official was appointed to draft it and undertake responsibility for its contents. In this way the original methodology of village renewal, involving a bottom-up process of developing a village plan and integrating the inhabitants around its implementation, was lost. The role of rural animator was not any more necessary, as all the responsibilities of mediating and facilitating the development process were taken over by institutional bodies and their employees, minimising the consultations with local inhabitants.

3.21 It should be noted in conclusion that programmes of external assistance for local initiatives, either financial or technical, should be organised with great care because neither large EU funds nor broad-scale educational campaigns will be of much help if mutual trust is lacking. **Cooperation requires trust and little can be done if there is no trust.** Optimism over rural

renewal programmes and LEADER action plans can be justified in that the principles of these programmes and their success in EU countries are based on respect for traditional organisations and support for bottom-up initiatives. But this is merely a good signal and an opportunity for positive change. The bureaucracy and technocratic approach which are omnipresent in EU programmes should be regarded as a serious threat to the hopes rural people pin on the new structures they form to acquire external financial assistance. The rural animator may exercise a valuable mediating role between the unavoidable bureaucracy and the fulfilment of rural people's hopes.

Transversal competences of a rural animator:

- Learning to learn;
- Participate or lead work in groups ;
- Initiate and maintain networks;
- Time management;
- Conflict management;
- Review documentation and extract necessary information and tools;
- Independence and autonomy at work;
- Analytical and critical thinking;
- Report writing;
- Social communication;
- Leadership (capacity to generate and maintain trust).

Questions arising from Chapter 3 to reflect on:

1. Does the rural animator have a different role during the pre-development phase and the development phase? What are the differences?
2. What do you think should be the background and the experience of the rural animator to be able to perform his/her role in the best way?
3. What would be the best position of a rural animator? e.g. to be employed by the local government, by a local NGO, or be an independently contracted person? What are the pros and cons of each option?
4. Do you think that the rural animator should be established as a profession, or can only be a role within a different profession? Why?
5. The rural animator will inevitably take a lead in some actions, to encourage local people to become active and take up opportunities. This may create conflict with locally elected leaders or central administration. Is there a solution to this? How can such a potential conflict be reconciled?

Case study 3.1

Village Renewal Plan as a tool for participative governance on rural areas in Poland: The case of Lubicz Municipality, Poland

The idea of rural development assumes- among others- that rural renewal actions should be organized and conducted as bottom-up initiatives. The main principles of this approach are: animation, participation and common responsibility for the community development strategy of both municipality administration and village inhabitants (or their representations such as NGO's or informal groups).

In the European Union's law the principle of participative and bottom-up local governance was predefined as one of main tools for the Rural Renewal programmes offered by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (2007-2013) and introduced straight to national rural development programmes.

The Polish Programme For Rural Development (Program Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich) offers to local communities, NGO's and parishes a financial support for rural renewal actions. Access to funds is granted when beneficiaries have prepared and presented a Village Renewal Plan (Plan Odnowy Miejscowosci). This document is prepared and introduced using participatory methods such as: public meetings, debates, discussions and presentations. At the same time this document plays crucial role in securing participative governance of the area - in reality it forces local authorities to apply this methodology in order to get access to substantial EU funds.

The rural community of Lubicz (Gmina Lubicz) is located near the City of Torun in Central Poland. For Polish conditions it is a relatively large rural community, with 19 000 inhabitants, with the interesting feature that has many urban people that moved in recent years. The population is mixed with poor educated farmers and very highly educated and relatively wealthy representatives of middle and upper class.

A Village Renewal Plan requires the following stages: preparation of a draft of the Plan, village meeting, discussion on the draft, implementation of remarks, voting by citizens and then - voting by Community Council. The first step is crucial - when the draft of the Plan is prepared with a certain thesis. Usually - as the experience of many Polish municipalities has shown - the draft version of the Plan is being accepted without any remarks from the citizens. This is due to the high level of social apathy and the low level of competences of local people.

In the Lubicz Community situation was rather different though. The idea of preparing and introducing of Village Renewal Plans for all 17 villages within the Community was raised by the

Mayor in 2007, when the EU rural renewal funds for 2007-2013 had been offered. As the Mayor says today "We were thinking that this was just formality - to organize some public meetings, discuss the Plan prepared by municipal clerks with the silent acceptance of the people. But we were wrong."

In the Lubicz Community the participative method was introduced fully, mainly thanks to the conflict of interests between two groups: the native rural inhabitants, mainly farmers and the newcomers, mainly middle class representatives. During the village meetings both groups surprisingly to the Mayor contested the presented "official version" of the Plan, produced by Municipality officials - but both of them used different arguments.

Nevertheless the Plan became an occasion for application of different models of governance within the community - both groups refused to accept the imposed village strategy and proposed their own vision for village development. During another series of meetings both groups professionally prepared and presented very innovative goals and well defined actions to reach these goals. The conflict of visions of the development among the groups was actually the fuel for enthusiasm and the political awareness. But the conflict turned out to be very functional for the system as a whole. The discussion between groups during meetings was modest and rational. Both of them accepted their views and finally constructed compromise.



Foto. Discussions on Village Renewal Plan gathered dozens of inhabitants from various groups of interests. Village meeting Lubicz Dolny

Then the obstruction processes started, to secure "the old" model of political management for village

development, based basically upon the phenomenon of clientelism.

At first sight the municipal clerks rejected the possibility to apply a bottom-up designed change to the Village Renewal Plan, as a part of their strategy for maintaining their status quo.

The second manifestation of obstruction was observed, when some inhabitants related with municipality officials (by family, kinship or friendship and business relationships) became very critical and doubtful against the Plan, feeling that participative governance threatens existing informal links between local authorities and some of their clients.

These processes were revealed during another village meeting and this clientelistic approach had been criticised and even ridiculed very much by the public. Finally the Plan was accepted and adopted. "But the fight for local democracy in rural Poland has just started. Now we have to re-think how village mayors are elected, and how our deputies represent our interests in the Community Council" – said one of the leaders of the citizenship groups.

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Case study 3.2

European Masters Programme for Rural Animators – EMRA

EMRA aims to establish a new European programme of studies at postgraduate level, interdisciplinary in nature, which would offer the necessary education, competence building and qualifications to graduates who wish to work as rural animators

EMRA is a joint degree, offered by six European universities, brought together by Euracademy Association, namely: Nicolaus Copernicus University (Poland); Babes-Bolyai University (Romania); Isztvan Szchenyi University (Hungary); University of Rostock (Germany); University of Valencia (Spain), Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (Greece); and by Euracademy Association. The lead partner is N. Copernicus University. EMRA will admit its first round of students and will start classes in October 2012.



EMRA targets graduates in humanities and social sciences (sociology, economics, political science, social psychology) geography, agronomy, land use planning, engineering, management, education etc., both mid-career professionals and people who just completed their first degree, and are willing to work in rural areas. Special emphasis is given to professionals that are active in the field of rural development.

The learning methodology is based on e-learning combined with hands-on experience (practical work), face-to-face learning in an international seminar and thesis work. Peer learning is encouraged through virtual class sessions and by organising small groups of students who would work together on projects, exchange experiences and learn from each other.

A strong emphasis is given on the interdisciplinary nature of the studies, to correspond with the many facets of rural development and the different skills that the rural animator should develop. It is made clear, at the same time that the rural animator will not be expected to become an expert in all these

fields; rather, he/she is expected to acquire enough knowledge and skills to understand the different aspects of rural development, communicate efficiently with the various actors of rural development, and provide encouragement, mediation and advice when and where required.

EMRA comprises four semesters, corresponding to two years of full-time study or three years of part-time study. The curriculum is organised around a "core" course and 8 "specialist modules", exploiting to a large extent the Thematic Guides published by Euracademy Association for the summer academies organised between 2002 and 2010.

The core course is delivered by N. Copernicus University and includes three units: theory of rural development; methods of rural research; the role and skills of the Rural Animator. The modules deal with salient topics of rural development, such as sustainable agriculture; community development and welfare; environmental planning and management; cultural development; sustainable rural tourism; innovation and development policies; education and LLL for rural development; diversification of rural economies. An additional module organises the practical placement work, structured around a "village project" selected by the students in cooperation with their tutors. The thesis of students may be based, optionally, on their village project. Evaluation will be on-going and will be based at the end on the student's portfolio.

Each participating university delivers at least one module and takes responsibility for accrediting it. The joint degree is granted by Nicolas Copernicus University and co-signed by all other participating universities.

For further information you may visit the website of EMRA www.rural-animator.eu or contact Wojtek Kniec, N. Copernicus University, kniec@umk.pl or Fouli Papageorgiou, Euracademy Association, foulipapageorgiou@prismanet.gr



Case study 3.3

Nature Protection in the Algarve: Setting up a Sustainable Development Education Centre

Background

The history of the Janela Aberta 21 (Open Window 21) project began in the UK where Gordon Sillence, the project coordinator, was working as a co-operative development worker in the 80s and early 90s, running a development education centre called Worldwise. This was the time of the Rio de Janeiro global conference that produced Agenda 21, which Gordon Sillence was working on, bringing the messages from Rio to schools throughout the UK. In 1993 Gordon moved permanently to the Algarve region of Southern Portugal and started a small eco-tourism business.

By 1996 he had more or less recuperated a small olive and lemon farm, yet all around him he was seeing the local culture dying off in the face of advancing modernity. In that decade of living in Portugal he witnessed the continuation of mass planting of eucalyptus monoculture, bulldozing of old donkey tracks to make way for motor vehicles, further abandonment of villages as the rural population drifted to the rapidly expanding tourism urban coastal belt, and the lack of conservation of two of the world's IUCN red-listed endangered species, the Iberian Lynx and Bonelli's eagle.

On his first visit to the local council to see what they were doing about these issues, he discovered that not only did they not have a local agenda 21 plan, but they had never heard of Agenda 21. Having come from the forefront of Agenda 21 implementation in the UK, where on his departure he was involved in establishing the first Green team in Brighton Council – a forerunner of Agenda 21 officers and sustainable development strategies, Gordon Sillence decided to work in the area to develop an Agenda 21 programme to counter the rural deterioration that he was witnessing.

Introducing innovation – the Monchique Bio-Park Network

Direct approaches to the council yielded very little effect – he was faced with not only the problem of being a foreigner in a very conservative rural area, but the president of the council was an autocratic ruler who eventually served for over 20 years in his post, entirely dominating all local development. However, Gordon's ideas were recognised by other local residents who also saw the decline of the natural and cultural patrimony, and a small group joined together with the idea of setting up a conservation business. Gordon decided that he needed to put the Agenda 21 development process in simple terms, and created the Monchique Bio-Park Network Project, which started in 1996. The concept was to map the old paths before they disappeared and create a network of walking and cycling paths to attract nature-friendly tourism to

the area. On the back of this network it was planned to develop a series of local businesses offering local products and nature-based tourism experiences aimed at preserving the local culture and supporting nature conservation. By 1998 he had established an environmental association (the Instituto Portugues de Ecologia - INPECO), produced a map of the area and developed nature conservation material to promote the area's natural assets, and established a landscape conservation business. The concept took off, supported by the regional tourism authority and the local LEADER group, and Gordon was invited to present the work at regional conferences, then nationally and also internationally. It was cited as an example of good practice in a study on tourism and Natura 2000 for DG Environment in 2000. Yet 13 years later, the Bio-Park in Monchique has still not been built, though it has received international attention, with the concept being used in other parts of Portugal and around the world.



Problems of Implementation

The problem of implementation of the concept stemmed from the local council and its president, who saw conservation as an obstacle, and was even opposing the creating of the Natura 2000 zone at that time. It was compounded by similar mentalities of heads of the LEADER group and those at the regional level administration departments responsible for rural development, all of who were using the concept to raise money for their own organisations. It became clear that without council support the implementation process could never go ahead. However the success of the map meant that the area was given further recognition and the Monchique Bio-Park was marketed around the world, whilst the neighbouring LEADER group (IN Loco) took up the concept and developed a successful bio-park in the nearby Serra de Caldeirão. Meanwhile in 2003 the Southern Algarve witnessed the worst fires in

Europe, and 90% of the nature 2000 zone burnt in 10 days of forest fires, the consequence of decades of poor forest management, abandonment, lack of resources and knowledge for fire fighting, and administrative corruption.

Recognising that there was a need for further education and awareness raising, the process of creating the Bio-Park shifted to setting up a Centre for Sustainable Development Education, which was established in 2004 under the name Janela Aberta 21, aiming to provide a window opportunity to all stakeholders in the area to learn about sustainable development. The Janela Aberta 21 Education for Sustainable Development Centre was formed a local association promoting sustainable development in the area, launched in the Gruntvig Project of the EC under the Socrates programme in an innovative project to establish citizen's schools. Currently in the framework of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, launched a programme of activities targeting key Algarve stakeholders who are interested in the issues of using Agenda 21 for sustainable territorial management and biodiversity conservation.

The centre has functioned on a part-time voluntary basis ever since, offering language and computer courses, forest school events, kids summer camps as well running a series of educational campaigns on the themes of environmental protection and sustainable development.

The role of rural animator

From this experience, it can be seen that the intervention of a rural animator can have far-reaching consequences. Taking a multi-stakeholder approach, interaction with the different stakeholders is essential to build a consensus of opinion. Learning the culture of an administration, the nature of business stakeholders, and how community interests are formed is an essential part of the process.

Within a local government organisation, identification of key players in the right departments enables an insight into what the municipality is capable of, and who might open doors and finds resources. In this case 42 visits over 3 years were made to the presidential office to argue the case before it was clear that no meaningful partnership could be formed, yet during this time several officers of the council started to support the idea, and the result was a general acceptance that the concept was very useful – the Council submitted its own Bio Park plan and appointed a new post of council officer responsible for environmental matters. A dozen visits to the regional coordinating committee and over 20 visits to the regional tourism authority put the plan on regional map. Once again, although he heads of these organisations co-opted the process rather than supported it, officers in individual departments provided positive support and encouragement.

Lessons learned

- The better you can paint a vision of your concept, and then express it in the language of each stakeholder, then the easier it is for the idea to take hold
- Once the idea has taken hold, then it needs to be given substance by the key players in the area. Persistence pays off if the idea is right
- In institutional situations where autocratic rule is the order, then it is necessary to build relationships with sub-ordinate officers and then be patient
- There is a need to engage local, regional and national levels of administration when working on agenda 21 issues, especially to create links between policy and implementation. The national sustainable development plan was cited as the policy line that regional and local government should follow, and regional funding lines were identified to support local development based on sustainability
- There is a need to work across departments. This process engaged officers from departments of the environment, agriculture, forestry, employment, education and tourism. Getting them into a common forum proved difficult, but it was finally achieved through the later development of the Green Belt Project, supported by WWF. This international backing was a key factor in bringing local and regional actors together
- Engagement of local businesses was based on the promotion of the area through the map, which quickly led to a network of over 20 local businesses based in the Bio-Park area supporting the project. Cafe owners, tourism businesses, hotels and restaurants were all involved through personal visits and discussions.
- The vision of the Bio-Park created community interest, and was seen as the concept, which could turn the area around after the devastating fires of 2003. Preservation of old villages, traditional cuisine, use of local herbs as well as the development of new skills in languages and technology was seen very positively by local residents. Walks and cycle rides were held, a marathon route created, and local schools were offered outdoor activities, taking the message of the value of local nature to the family homes.

In 2011, under a new president, the council is finally developing a Local Agenda 21 plan. Gordon Sillence will start working on the implementation of the Bio-Park in Monchique once again, following the light to the end of the tunnel.....

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CHAPTER 4.*Community Futures**A Community Development Approach to
Community Action Planning and Public
Participation in Local Governance***Introduction**

4.1 This Chapter is based on the experience of working with rural and small town communities in Scotland and Southern Ireland over the last 15 years. The Chapter focuses, in particular, on a process which has been developed to enable communities to have greater say in what matters to them, to have more meaningful participation in their local governance, to be stronger and better organised, and ultimately to have more control over their own future. This process is called Community Futures.

Background and Context**Local Government in Scotland**

4.2 In 1975, there was significant structural change in local governance in the UK which impacted on communities, particularly rural communities. At this time in Scotland, local government was re-organised into 9 regional authorities with responsibility for "strategic" services such as roads, education etc and around 50 district authorities with responsibility for more local services such as libraries, sports facilities, housing. It was also at this time that Community Councils were formed, under the Local Government Act of 1973. Community Councils are elected by their communities to represent the interests of local people. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consult community councils on planning, development and other issues directly affecting that local community. However, the community council has no direct say in the delivery of services.

Community Councils

4.3 There are around 1200 Community Councils in Scotland, although not every community has been able to form a Community council. Representatives are supposedly elected, but there is a notorious lack of interest in either standing for election or in voting at elections for Community Councils. This often leads to "co-option" of Community Council members, and complaints that the Council is then not representative of its constituents.

4.4 In 1996, a further re-organisation of Local Government led to the abolishing of the Regions and District councils, and the formation of 32 new

"unitary" authority councils for Scotland. But Community Councils lived on as the imperfect representation of local people in local governance. Complaints that they were under-resourced and poorly supported led to a review in 1999 as part of the McIntosh Commission that recognised these shortcomings and recommended that:

"Councils (local authorities) should concentrate on: assisting and encouraging community councils to become more democratic; and seeing that they have adequate resources to do what they have to do. Community councils, for their part, should undertake a process of renewal, specifically addressing - their own representative nature and how effectively they establish public opinion within their own area."

Representation in Local Governance

4.5 The differences between Scotland and the rest of Europe at this time in terms of local governance and representation, is startling. In Scotland in 1996, the average population in a local authority area was over 160,000. In France, this would be around 1,500; in Spain, just under 5,000; in Norway around 9,000. The ratio of numbers of people represented by individual elected members of the Council is equally dramatic. In Iceland there is one elected member of Council representing 194 people, in Sweden one member represents around 700 people, but in Scotland one member represents over 4,000 people.

4.6 By the end of the 1990's in Scotland, public participation in local governance was poor to say the least. Community Councils were failing to achieve their purpose of local representation, and communities were unable to have any meaningful influence on their local services and issues. There was a severe "democratic deficit" compared to the rest of Europe, and a recognition (from local people anyway!) that communities had to be better supported and enabled to be able to participate in local governance and have more control over their future.

Devolution to a Scottish Government

4.7 Local control and greater public participation came a little closer with devolution of government for Scotland. Scottish Executive was formed and the first elections to the Scottish government were held in 1999.

4.8 The Scottish Government and its statutory agencies have increasingly seen the value of community participation in local governance and provision of local services. The Scottish Government introduced a policy of "Community Planning" for local government and other agency bodies – such as Police, Health Services, economic development agencies, environmental bodies, and so forth. Essentially this policy was about ensuring efficiency of public sector bodies by closer working in partnership, and cost effectiveness by joining up service delivery mechanisms. The title "Community Planning" however is a complete misnomer and very misleading, because it has little to do with planning, and even less to do with communities!

A New Approach - Participative Democracy

4.9 However, this "top down" approach to Community Planning has been a useful catalyst for many of us involved in community development to think about what real community planning would be about. How would communities themselves, the people who live and work in those communities, be best equipped to participate in this partnership approach? How could local people really be fully involved in decisions about change and development in their communities?

4.10 It is against this background that the Community Futures process was developed, to enable rural communities to prepare their own Community Plans, and to have greater influence and stronger participation in local governance.

About Community Futures

Local community planning and participation – leading to action

4.11 Community Futures provides communities with a way of thinking about and planning their future. It enables communities to put together a well thought through Community Action Plan which states and makes the case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

4.12 Importantly, Community Futures aims to help generate more involvement and interest from the local community from residents, groups and organisations, and businesses. It does this by making sure that the Community Plan is put together in a participatory way and that views from different parts of the community are listened to, discussed and taken into account.

4.13 The result is that people not participate in sharing their views in the planning process, but also become involved in subsequent action to make the Plan a reality. In doing so, Community Futures helps to strengthen local democracy and to foster active citizenship.

4.14 Community Futures was designed in the belief that investment in the local planning process, involving people in the process and building and strengthening the community

organisations will contribute to sustainable community development and create communities that can genuinely be partners in their own development.

A Partnership Approach – communities and government working together

4.15 Community Futures aims to foster enterprising communities able to play a greater part in their own development. Local people will participate on a voluntary basis, while government and other public sector staff will be paid. There needs to be a supportive environment which recognises the role that communities can play and which seeks to support this role in decision making and the shaping of policies and service delivery.

Community Empowerment

4.16 A significant milestone in this journey towards full local participation was the launch, in 2009, of the Scottish Government's "Community Empowerment Plan". The Scottish Government and Local Authorities across Scotland acknowledged the important role that local communities play, and gave a commitment to empowering those communities and people *"to have more power and influence over what matters to them."*

4.17 However, the Scottish Government also recognised that there are changes that will need to happen to enable this process of community empowerment – in particular a cultural change.

"In some places there will need to be a process of culture change, in communities and the public agencies who support them, to make sure that local people have opportunities and the ability to play their full part in helping Scotland to flourish. At times there may be a need to re-visit where power and control currently reside, as we continue to develop the relationship between Government and communities across the country."

4.18 One of foundation stones of the process of "empowering" communities has to be ensuring that all voices are heard and taken account of in the decision making process. Although the Scottish Government has only recently acknowledged this, Community Futures has been empowering rural communities for over 15 years.

The Community Futures Story

4.19 Inspired by his experiences in West coast Canada in the 1990's, "community strategic planning" was pioneered in Scotland by community development expert Colin Roxburgh, in a number of rural communities including Mull, Iona and Strathfillan. Success in these communities was quickly recognised, and led to one local Authority in Scotland – Stirling Council – piloting a small programme of four communities to undertake Community Futures Action Plans. The work in Stirling won an Award by the Royal Town Planning Institute for Social Inclusion in Planning, and became the inspiration for the biggest and most long lasting programme of Community Futures –

the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Community Futures programme.

4.20 As Scotland's first National Park, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs was faced with the challenge of ensuring that the social and economic well-being of local communities was given as much consideration as conservation of the environment and management of the land.

Community Participation in Scotland's First National Park

4.21 Covering over 700 square miles of land, with a resident population of around 16,000, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park was established in 2001 with four equal aims:

- Conserve & enhance natural & cultural heritage
- Promote sustainable use of natural resources
- Promote enjoyment & understanding of special qualities
- Promote sustainable social and economic development

4.22 This fourth aim is unique for Scottish National Parks and presented a challenge, but also an opportunity for those involved at that time. How would the 16,000 people who live and work in the 20 communities of the Park benefit from social and economic development – in a way that ensured their own involvement and participation, to be sustainable.

4.23 The planning to bring the Park into being was carried out by an Interim Committee set up in 2000, which took the decision to involve communities in that planning process from the outset, through developing the Community Futures Programme.

The Community Futures Process of Community Action Planning

4.24 The Community Futures process has been designed to enable and encourage widespread participation by everyone who lives or works in a community. Importantly, the process is also robust and strategic.

Strategic Planning Framework

4.25 Community Action Plans identify

1. A Vision for the future of the Community
2. What the community is like now
3. The main issues that the community need to tackle
4. Priority Projects and Actions

Community Engagement Process

4.26 Plans are produced following extensive community engagement so that they genuinely are based on what the community think the most important things are to do to contribute to the community's future well-being.

The Community Futures process of engagement includes:

- Establishing and working with a local Steering Group
- Carrying out a Community Views Survey to all households
- Interviews and focus group meetings with different groups and interests within the community
- Preparation of a Community Profile documenting facts about the local community
- A Community Futures Event

Local Participation leading to Action

4.27 The process of preparing the Action Plan provides an opportunity to involve local residents and businesses in thinking about the future of the community and creates an opportunity for them to become involved in carrying forward the main things that need to be done. The timescale for preparing a Community Futures Action Plan is usually about 6 months. Any shorter, and communities don't realise it is happening and people don't get the chance to participate. Any longer, and people get fed up with "talking" and want to get on with "doing". So the timescale is very important.

4.28 Communities taking part in Community Futures therefore end up with a Plan and more people willing to volunteer to make things happen. Action Plans are then used in negotiating for funding and support for the priority projects identified.

Community Futures is designed to help communities to:

- become more proactive and strategic in shaping their future
- encourage more people to become involved in local groups
- attract funding for their priority projects
- strengthen local democracy and the ability to make representation.

Personal and Community Development in Local Governance

4.29 The Community Futures approach provides an opportunity for individuals to become involved in community action and in local governance. As already discussed, over the last 30 years, community representation in rural Scotland has tended to be through the Community Council – the most local form of elected governance.

4.30 Community Councils tend to be reactive rather than proactive – statutory and voluntary at same time. The way they are set up by government means they are not able to take ownership of land or buildings, or employ staff, or

to raise any funding from local taxes or from charitable sources. Therefore they are not able to take action on many issues and tend to become a “voice” rather than a “hand” in development.

4.31 Community Futures provides communities, and individuals in communities, with a way of thinking about and planning their future. It enables communities to put together a well thought through community action plan which states and makes a case for the things that the community thinks are most important and wishes to make happen. Importantly, Community Futures aims to help generate more involvement and interest from in the community from residents, businesses and other stakeholders. It does so by making sure that the Community Action Plan is put together in a participatory way and that the views from different parts of the community are listened to, discussed and taken into account.

4.32 The upshot is that people not only become involved in sharing their views in the Plan but in subsequent action to make the Plan and its priorities a reality. In so doing, Community Futures helps to strengthen local democracy and to foster active citizenship.

4.33 Community Futures Action Planning offers an arena that individuals can step into to work collectively to achieve the priorities in their Action Plan. Out of the Action Plan there will be formed new “working groups” to take forward priority actions, and existing groups will be strengthened.

4.34 Local Governance, in the form of elected representatives or officials, can sometimes be wary of this form of “participative democracy” as it can be seen as a potential threat to their elected status. Active, participative communities tend to be more able to take action for themselves and therefore may not be so dependent on the traditional role of the elected representative or the patriarchal figurehead (for example the role of the priest in Irish communities).

4.35 However, rather than competing with representative democracy, the Community Futures Action planning process strengthens local democracy in a number of ways:

- Quality and thoughtful community input into strategic plans and service delivery
- Increased quality and strength of the rural voice – supporting representative and participatory democracy
- Community organisational capacity
- Increased participation within communities - active citizenship and volunteering
- Effective participatory planning and community engagement
- Proactive rather than reactive communities
- Communities able to be partners in their own development

Outcomes of Community Futures – benefits for local participation

4.36 The Community Futures Programme in the National Park was designed to allow 24 communities to participate in the programme over an 18-month period, from 2002 to 2004. Through that programme the following outcomes were achieved:

24 communities prepared local community action plans. In the process of preparing their plans, from around 6,000 households in the National Park:

- 4,000 adults gave their views in surveys
- A further 500 children gave their views
- 500 individuals and groups were interviewed
- Nearly 2,000 people came to Community Events

4.37 Eight local people were trained as Community Agents to support the Community Futures process. Of these eight, three went on to get full time posts with the National Park Authority. The role of local people in supporting the Community Action Planning process is crucial. It provides some trained, paid support to work alongside volunteers, enabling greater participation and community involvement.

4.38 The 24 communities were assisted to form four “area networks”. The networks bring communities together to discuss common needs and aspirations and take joint action. They are also a useful and well-used forum for dialogue between agencies and communities, enabling greater local participation in debate and decision-making about services.

4.39 The Community Action Plans are a clear expression of local needs and aspirations and have informed development of the National Park Plan, as well as assisting communities to participate more effectively in the “top down” Community Planning process.

4.40 Communities have much greater number of people active in local democracy and in making their plans into a reality. “Action Groups” have formed around the main priorities in the Action Plans, and many of the projects have now been achieved. In fact, many of the National Park communities have subsequently prepared second Action Plans in 2007, and are now embarking on their third Action Plans.

Some Case Studies of Community Futures – Demonstrating Public Participation in Local Governance

4.41 Over the last 15 years, the Community Futures family has grown and developed, with around sixty communities across Scotland and Southern Ireland having benefited from this process of participative community planning. These range from individual communities to

programmes of a number of communities working together. There have been urban as well as rural communities, but usually it is the rural communities that see most benefit from this approach to local participation.

Strathfillan

4.42 The small rural community of Strathfillan is situated at the gateway to the Scottish Highlands. The total population is around 400, and is characterised as a young population with a high proportion of self-employment, and also a high proportion of residents who rent their houses rather than owning them. The community prepared its first Community Futures Action plan in 1997 and set up the Strathfillan Community Development Trust. Since then a lot has been accomplished including:

- Two community woodlands have been planted and managed and Tyndrum woodland has been bought for the community. These are important local resources creating employment and recreation.
- Buying and renovating four railway cottages to be used for low cost homes to rent by local families.
- Creation of a new play park and football area for young people.
- Development of a virtual learning centre which provides computers and internet access in village halls across the area – used by young and old.

4.43 Since then, the community has prepared their 2nd and now 3rd Action Plans, identifying a set of new priorities to be tackled over the next 5 years. These are ambitious and wide-ranging, demonstrating the confidence and ability of this small community. Some priorities are:

- Developing safe roads through the villages, which will involve negotiations with the police, the roads authorities, the railway authority, and the local Council.
- Creating new paths and cycle routes in and around the villages, which will require partnership working with local landowners, the Forestry commission, the National Park Authority, and fundraising almost £1million.

4.44 Strathfillan is also part of the National Park programme of Community Futures, and is able to benefit from the networking with other communities, and encourage local participation in governance of the National Park.

Islandeady

4.45 This is a rural Irish parish, situated between two bustling towns of Castlebar and Westport in South West Mayo. The population is around 1,450, which grew rapidly with new house building in the early 2000's. Employment is mainly tourism based, but there are still around 250 farm holdings

rearing cattle and sheep – although 90% of farmers now subsidise their income by working outside the farm.

4.46 When Islandeady became one of the first Irish communities to join the Community Futures family in 2007, there was an overwhelming public response to the process to prepare their Action Plan. In fact, out of 483 households, there were actually over 700 survey responses received. Nearly 300 people attended a community event which then led to the community setting up new Action Groups for the main priorities in their Action Plan:

- Environment and Heritage
- Community Facilities
- Business and Tourism
- Caring Services
- Planning and Development

4.47 Islandeady is one of 16 communities that are now part of Mayo Community Futures. Starting with four communities, Mayo County Development Board and the Leader programme have been able to resource sixteen communities over the last 3 years to prepare Community Futures Action Plans. The County Development Board then assists in "brokering" the Community Action Plans to make sure that public agencies are aware of their contents and take community priorities into account in developing their own strategies and services.

Conclusion

A robust planning process

4.48 Enabling effective public participation in local governance requires a robust process that will ensure that all voices are heard, and gets beyond the usual suspects. However, it is important that the process is rigorous enough to determine a limited number of priorities that are measurable, achievable and have the consensus of the community – not just a "wish list".

Partnership with communities/agencies

4.49 The principle for effective participation should be that communities will work as "partners in their own development". People in communities cannot, and increasingly do not, expect other organisations to provide all services or do everything for them. Equally, public and private sector bodies need to acknowledge and welcome community involvement in design and delivery of services.

Participation in planning and in action

4.50 From a community development perspective, it is vital that any intervention that encourages greater public participation in local governance also leads to action. Our experience of Community Futures is that the participative process of involving people in creating their own plan for the

future, also provides the foundation and motivation for local people and community organisations to take action on the things that matter most to them – often in partnership, but sometimes just by getting new people in the community involved.

Questions arising from Chapter 4 to reflect on:

1. How could local people really be fully involved in decisions about change and development in their communities given that they do not often have technical knowledge of the issues concerned? Do they need support to do this? And how can they get it?
2. Communities should work as “partners in their own development”. If you agree with this statement explain what it involves and how it can be achieved.
3. Residents and/or businesses who are invited to participate in community decisions may find that they have conflicting interests. How can you resolve this?
4. Public participation processes are often blamed for delaying important decisions and action. What is your opinion?

Case study 4.1

POMO+ programme strengthening local governance and sustainable development in the rural areas of Finland

Introduction

The Rural Programme Based on Local Initiative (POMO+) was one of the five programmes implemented by the local action groups in Finland in 2001-2006. Local action groups are formed by rural residents, local associations and enterprises along with representatives of the municipalities. It is open for everybody to participate. Leader method was geographically mainstreamed with these five programmes in the Finnish rural areas. There were seven POMO+ local action groups that operated in 64 municipalities.

Activities

The aim of POMO+ was to develop and diversify the structure of rural economies and enhance the rural amenities in view of providing attractive environments for life and work, with due account for the principles of sustainable development. POMO+ groups followed Leader features which are: innovation, cooperation, networking, area-based local development strategies, bottom up elaboration and implementation of strategies, local public-private partnerships (local action groups) and integrated and multi-sectoral actions. Furthermore, POMO+ groups followed horizontal principles of equality and sustainable development.



Employees of POMO+ group and actors of Hinthaara village examine a renovation plan of the old station. Picture: Merja Ojala

POMO+ programme was implemented through small-scale development projects and related investments. During the programming period 2001-2006, 786 projects were implemented. They included 212 investments. Projects enhanced especially village action, which included building and maintaining structures and improving operational environment. Also, projects improved the services of rural residents and enterprises. Rural culture was fostered by arranging different

happenings and by conserving traditions. Rural tourism was enhanced by developing services, especially of different activities and of improvement in accommodation facilities.

The funding for the programme totalled 24 million euro, all of this from national sources. 73% of funding was public and 27% private. Municipalities paid 20% of public funding and the state paid the rest. 88% of funding was directed to projects and 12% to the administration of local action groups. Average amount of public funding was 18 300 euro / project.

Lessons learned; suggestions and conclusions

The Results of the POMO+ programme were very good. Measuring by the indicators, all other objectives were fulfilled very well except the objective of new jobs. POMO+ completed LEADER+ 2 programme and Leader method was expanded to new areas. POMO+ strengthened local governance and sustainable development.

POMO+ increased local activity, networking of different actors and cooperation and partnerships in the rural areas. It offered a way for local residents to improve their living conditions and to participate in a grass root level development work. New people and actors were committed to the local development work to work for common goals. POMO+ projects created innovations and new activities that were locally important. Projects enhanced attractiveness of the area and capacity of local residents and enterprises.

Leader method is a cost-effective way to implement participatory sustainable local rural development. It should be strengthened as a main tool in the EU rural policy and spread to all European rural areas - and why not to urban areas as well.

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Case study 4.2

The Case of Tana: From 'Image Building' to Local Development, Norway

For almost 200 years, Tana River (Deanu in Sami) has been known for its excellent salmon fisheries. Tana River, which marks the border between Norway and Finland in Eastern Finnmark, has not only lent its name and reputation to the municipality on the Norwegian side, but has also 'for as long as the river has been running' been the main life nerve and livelihood for all the communities built along the river, on both the Finnish and the Norwegian side. Today, salmon fishing in the river is still an important income source for the local population in general and for tourist enterprises in particular. Economically speaking, Tana has been one of the most successful rural municipalities in East Finnmark, with a diversified and strong local economy based on transport, construction, and engineering.

In 1995, a negative development put Tana, and in particular the Sami community of Skiippagurra, on the map, including prostitution, alcohol, and drug trafficking from Murmansk, a nearby Russian city. In a couple of years, the massive prostitution traffic from Russia had almost destroyed the social fabric of Skiippagurra and the nearby communities. The problem was not solved until 2001, when the municipal council of Tana criminalized the sex trade through a bylaw, and for 'health reasons' closed the camping sites where the prostitution activities were practiced. By then, the regional, national, and international reputation of Skiippagurra and Tana was dominated by media coverage of scandalous and illegal activities. The Skiippagurra syndrome had become a social stigma and a problem for the entire population and was threatening to result in massive out-migration. In 2003, the municipality of Tana received funding from the Ministry of Justice to re-develop its reputation. Tana approached the Finnmark University College (FiUC) for help. Education, research, and development cooperation between FiUC and the Sami municipality of Tana dates back to the 1970s

After a public meeting about branding and image-building in the municipal centre in May 2003, Tana and FiUC decided to establish a development partnership with the municipal authorities and SEG (a Sami consultancy firm) as the main partners. Together, the partners planned and executed a local development workshop in June 2004 with focus on image-building as a first step. The narrow focus turned out to be a limiting factor for any kind of broad and integrated cultural, social, and economic development process proposed by academic participants, and there was a risk that

municipal senior management would get distracted by quick, but superficial solutions.



After initial insecurities on the part of Tana administrative leadership and temporary 'shelving' of the research documents, representatives of voluntary organizations and businesses began to inquire about the partnerships and about municipal action plans. The opposition in the municipal council supported these inquiries and claims for action. Finally, a development strategy based on the reports was incorporated into the Municipal Master Plan. The legitimacy of the partnership and the support of the open and inclusive process from the local population were determining success factors.

During the two years it took to produce a development strategy for Tana, the participants from the municipality, the business community, and the voluntary sector learned to know, respect, and trust each other. The new, positive climate and preference for cross-sector cooperation in addressing common issues or problems in the municipality also spread to the municipal council and administration and to the business community and their different local interest organizations.

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Case study 4.3

Avjovarri Development Workshop and the Power of Social Capital, Finland

The workshop held on behalf of the Sami municipalities Porsanger, Karasjok and Kautokeino, in Hetta, Finland in 2006 by the Finnmark University College (FiUC), contained a number of lessons for partnerships between mainstream academic institutions and Indigenous communities. The main goal was to develop an appropriate and effective governance model for a new regional Sami entity. A secondary objective of the new entity was to find or establish a common cultural identity that reflected every member of the community and would strengthen their social capital.

The structure of the workshop was built around the priority areas of the communities. Five working groups were established to address the areas of culture and education, health and elderly care, economy, technical infrastructure, and social work and child protection. Practitioners presented the situation and the issues they were facing or witnessing in the municipalities, and academics offered resources from their corresponding fields of expertise.

Some of the issues that emerged from the workshop and the partnership itself included criticism from strongly ideologically driven Sami interest groups, who found that the partnership with FiUC and its role in the workshop organization compromised the true Sami character of the new entity and the process leading up to it. There are a number of counter arguments in favour of FiUC's role, including financial capacity, expertise, and organizational capacity, but it is important to be aware of the ideological argumentation and respect the voice of the community.

Another weakness of this particular workshop was the choice of participants, who were exclusively middle and senior level municipal management. It would have been more representative, inclusive, and supportive of wide spread local and regional networking to invite representatives of all stakeholder groups, such as the business community, the service sector, the voluntary sector, and local politicians. This, however, would exacerbate existing issues with the number of participants. The inclusion of relevant stakeholders would have meant a bigger number than can be

effective on a workshop setting. Given that three municipalities partnered in this project, there were already over one hundred participants, a lot more than recommended and a strain on resources and workshop coordination.



One of the successful elements of the workshop was the facilitation of informal networking through entertainment and non-serious common activities with a deliberate purpose of bringing participants closer together in the partnership and helping them to find common ground. This contributed to a positive and productive inter-municipal dynamic. Although the follow-up on the active, collaborative dynamic beyond the workshop has been somewhat limited, the municipalities of Porsanger, Karasjok, and Kautokeino have at least achieved much better control of their own budget and economy through the introduction of new common economic steering and control mechanisms. This is indicated by a budget surplus in two of the three municipalities in Avjovarri Indigenous Region. The surplus can be used to facilitate and stimulate change and development in the local economies since, in the Nordic periphery including Finnmark, municipalities play an important role in facilitating innovative and entrepreneurial activities in both the public and private sector.

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CHAPTER 5.

Learning networks in rural areas: their contribution to local governance and development

5.1 This chapter focuses on the contribution of learning networks on local governance and sustainable development. In its first section it concentrates on local governance stakeholders and their learning needs with respect to their role in local governance. It starts by defining governance and identifying and explaining the qualities of "good governance" and their importance for sustainable development. It then proceeds to the question of the needs of local governance stakeholders and the importance of qualities such as participation and learning; presents a case example of stakeholder individual needs; and concludes by discussing the issues of access to learning and learning delivery.

5.2 The second section of the chapter focuses on the learning requirements for good governance, the role of learning networks and the relevance of ICT and e-learning for this purpose. It discusses the relation between networking and learning; highlights the relevance of the so called "21st century competences and their implications for pedagogy and the roles of learners and teachers; discusses the relevance of ICTs for networking and the obstacles faced by rural areas because of the digital urban-rural gap, underlines the importance of the so called "information literacy" as opposed to digital literacy; discusses in detail e-learning and its relevance for networking and building local governance relevant skills; and concludes with an example of a European-wide learning network promoting e-learning.

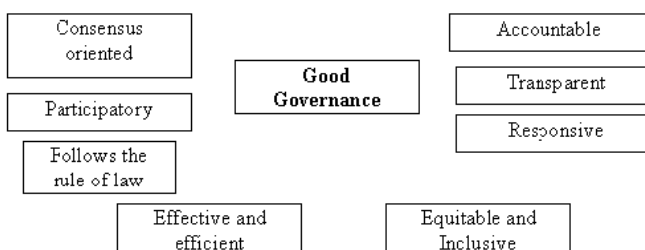
Learning for local governance: the needs of different stakeholder

Governance

5.3 The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put, "governance" means: **the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)**. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

Good governance has 8 major characteristics as shown in the graph.

5.4 It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the



rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

Participation

5.5 Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision-making. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

Rule of law

5.6 Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

Transparency

5.7 Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.

Responsiveness

5.8 Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

Consensus oriented

5.9 There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community.

Equity and inclusiveness

5.10 A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

Effectiveness and efficiency

5.11 Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Accountability

5.12 Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

Summarising

5.13 From the above discussion it should be clear that good governance is an ideal, which is difficult to achieve in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development actions must be taken to work towards this ideal with the aim of making it a reality. Governance is "good" when it ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on a broader consensus in society, and that the voices of all are heard in decision-making over allocation of resources.

Unbundling "governance" into its key components is useful for several reasons:

- It enables more precision in policy discussions of which aspects of governance require most improvement and attention, and to identify

specific steps through which that might be achieved.

- By allowing for a relatively precise measure of its components it enables a benchmarking of the quality of governance in a country, and to track the changes in its quality over time and the governance development needs in order to make improvements and move towards new goals.
- It enables a statistical analysis of how the quality of governance impacts upon desired developmental outcomes such as increase in per capita incomes, reduction in infant mortality, increases in literacy, reduction in deforestation and expansion of area under sustainable forest management, control of pollution, etc.
- It allows for a comparison of the development experience across countries. In particular, the linkages between governance and development outcomes will likely yield a useful learning experience from cross country analysis.

Stakeholders

5.14 Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision. Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance vary depending on the level of government that is under discussion. In rural areas, for example, other actors may include influential land lords, associations of peasant farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions political parties, the military etc.

Participation

5.15 Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives in order to facilitate the recognition, understanding and protection of the interests of current communities and future generations. All decision-making should include adequate participation of all community stakeholders, long-term development programmes for stakeholder education and awareness should be undertaken to facilitate informed participation.

Learning and development

5.16 These different stakeholders need a range of support and learning tools and while some general needs are listed below training and learning requirements are often quite specific to the particular communities involved.

Individual learning needs:

5.17 The Australian Local Government National Workforce Development Forum 2011 highlighted the following learning topic preferences listed by local government staff and elected members as extremely useful / quite useful (topics are listed in order of preference):

Strategy and vision	Councillor-manager relations
Community engagement	Governance and probity
Change management	Access and equity issues
Workforce development	Inter-government relations
Risk management	Water management
Asset and infrastructure management	Economic development
Local government law	Transport
Service delivery options	Climate change
Financial management	Affordable housing

5.18 Other learning needs for good governance have been identified as (this list is not exhaustive):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Partnership & Cooperation • Communication skills (at all levels) • Managing an organisation • Team building in an organisation • Project planning and evaluation • Project management • Identifying & securing resources • Public appearance: forming and maintaining reputation • Public relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Community development • Village development planning • Establishing a Non-Governmental Organisation • Role of a Non-Governmental Organisations in society • Legislation • Dealing with corruption • Conflict management
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5.19 Delivery / access to learning:

A range of issues has also been identified regarding delivery and access to learning on governance and includes:

- Training budgets are often scattered across municipalities and thus difficulties arise in building a critical mass for training to be delivered.
- Stakeholders and individuals may lack capacity or information to clearly define their own training needs.
- Variable level of access for individuals for funding to pay for learning.
- Qualifications may or may not contribute to understanding of role in governance, job security and career progression.

- Reduced capacity to attend training because of the need to travel, take time away from work, or because of limited literacy skills.
- The “thin market” problem – stakeholders are separated by distance and include small numbers of individuals in multiple professions, which reduces the financial feasibility of learning program development.
- Intensive labour and cost in preparing relevant sector specific training materials.
- Need for experienced practitioners to deliver sector specific training and especially to local government staff and elected members.
- Lack of facilitated learning pathways for individuals involved in local governance and especially within councils between learning programmes and educational qualifications.
- Speed of change within the operating environment which outpaces the time needed to develop learning programmes and accredit courses.
- Between states there is inconsistent access to federal funding through the PPP program for VET training.
- Under utilisation and lack of knowledge of the local government training package.

Summarising

5.20 In conclusion we can see that the framework for developing learning for good local governance requires:

- that programmes of appropriate learning are in place,
- that programmes of learning materials are relevant to the needs and skills/knowledge gaps of stakeholders at the local level,
- that delivery methods are in appropriate to the needs of local stakeholders,
- that funding mechanisms and methodologies are appropriate to the needs of local stakeholders.

Learning for local governance: the role of learning networks and e-learning

5.21 **Local governance** has been defined in Chapter 1 as “a complex and multi-level system of partnerships, networks and individual institutions and actors that span the public, the private and the third/community sector and often extend outside the local level into the regional, the national, and the supranational levels”.

5.22 Governance has been described earlier as being fundamentally “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are

implemented – or not implemented” regarding, in the case of local governance, decisions that relate directly or sometimes indirectly the local territory concerned; with specific qualities being set out as the core requirements of good governance, especially regarding the process and outcomes of local governance and its contribution to sustainable development, as follows:

- Responsiveness
- Transparency and accountability
- Participation and consensus
- Equity and inclusion
- Adherence to the rule of law
- Effectiveness and efficiency

Learning requirements for good governance

5.23 Achieving these qualities requires knowledge, skills and values that concern the process of local governance and local development and not just development-specific content and implementation tasks; and which relate not just to the level of the individual stakeholder involved in local governance but more so to the collective level, e.g. the institutional stakeholder level or the level of a development partnership.

5.24 In other words, individual learning should combine task-oriented learning with process-oriented learning, and should be supplemented with organizational learning. Development capacity cannot be simply taught, e.g. to the individuals involved in local development such as the members of a development partnership; it has to be built through a combination of learning from doing, learning from working together or not working together, learning from dealing with conflict and negotiating, as well as course based learning and learning delivered through expert support.

Networking and learning

5.25 There is a two-way relation between networking and learning; networking (including partnerships that by definition incorporate networking) facilitates informal learning but at the same time formal learning is necessary for networks (and partnerships) to supplement their capacity for effective local governance:

- Networks, including partnerships, by their very existence facilitate learning; they represent the backbone structure of the local governance system, as networking is in itself a fundamental condition of good governance and sustainable development. Networks represent the ground where local governance partners meet, communicate, exchange information, work together, resolve differences and manage conflict; in other words, where stakeholders have the opportunity to learn from each other, learn from working together,

learn to live with each other, and build capacity for sustainable development.

- At the same time, acquiring the knowledge, skills and values required for good governance, needs external learning inputs in the form of course based learning, and learning delivered through expert support. Thus, in order for networks (including partnerships) to be effective for local governance, networks should be learning networks;

The nature of learning, ICTs and e-learning

5.26 According to a recent OECD report (Dumont, Istance, Benavides, 2010) OECD societies and economies have experienced a profound transformation from reliance on an industrial to a knowledge base. Global drivers increasingly bring to the fore what some call “21st century competences”. The quantity and quality of learning thus become central, with the accompanying concern that traditional educational approaches are insufficient. At the same time the rapid development and ubiquity of ICTs are re-setting the boundaries of educational possibilities. Yet, significant investments in digital resources have not revolutionised learning environments and to understand how they might requires attention to the nature of learning.

5.27 In essence the nature and process of learning are rapidly changing, as a result of the emergence of new learning needs, new learning pedagogies, and new ICT-based learning tools in the form of e-learning.

New learning needs and pedagogies

5.28 The same OECD report proposes an educational agenda and learning pedagogy that is much broader than standard educational thinking and more effective in terms of outcomes and impact. Under this agenda, learning is defined as being learner centred, structured and well designed, profoundly personalised, inclusive. To quote from the same report:

- It is important to develop in learners “adaptive expertise” or “adaptive competence”, i.e. the ability to apply meaningfully learned knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in different situations.
- The learning environment should recognise the learners as its core participants, encourages their active engagement and develops in them an understanding of their own activity as learners.
- Effective learning is not purely a “solo” activity but essentially a “distributed” one: individual knowledge construction occurs throughout processes of interaction, negotiation and co-operation”.
- The learning professionals within the learning environment should be highly attuned to the

learners' motivations and the key role of emotions in achievement.

- The learning environment should be acutely sensitive to the individual differences among the learners in it, including their prior knowledge.
- The learning environment should strongly promote "horizontal connectedness" across areas of knowledge and subjects as well as to the community and the wider world.

5.29 Under this approach to learning: the role of the teacher shifts from that of the "sage on the stage" to that of the "guide on the side"; whilst, the "ability to cooperate and learn together" emerges as a core "21st century competence".

5.30 This approach to learning has universal application; it is relevant to formal as well as informal education. But it is especially relevant to learning needs for local governance and sustainable development. This is not just because it is more effective compared to traditional educational approaches, but more so because it features values, such as cooperation, interaction and exchange, learning together whilst respecting individual differences, which are central to good governance qualities and the workings of local governance structures such as networks and partnerships.

ICTs, the Internet and the digital gap

5.31 Whilst ICTs and Internet have long being considered as a key to competitiveness, economic and social development; the digital gap between rural and urban areas remains an important barrier for the development of the rural areas of Europe, as well as a barrier for the full exploitation of the capabilities of e-learning.

5.32 The digital divide is manifested in two forms. The first form of digital gap concerns the uneven broadband (internet) access and affordability by individuals and organizations and is determined by the supply and quality of telecommunications infrastructure, chiefly in terms of broadband coverage (percentage of the population reached by broadband infrastructure measured by the number of switches equipped with DSL or living in houses passed by an upgraded cable), and affordability, in terms of the cost of access. EU policy has set the goal of full broadband coverage. For the whole of the EU, broadband coverage is close to 93% (98% for urban areas compared to 77% for rural areas), but this masks substantial differences in the magnitude of the rural gap between countries. Thus whilst for certain countries (Netherlands, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the United Kingdom), there is virtually no rural gap, there are countries, especially among recent and new entrants to the EU (Poland, Estonia, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus) with low broadband coverage overall which show a substantial rural broadband gap (IDATE Consulting & Research 2009).

5.33 The second form of digital gap concerns Internet and computer usage and is determined by digital literacy and more importantly by "information literacy". Whilst broadband access may be available and affordable, individuals and organizations may lack the necessary skills to fully benefit from its use. There have been various studies about usage patterns. For instance, a recent survey of computer usage patterns in Germany revealed that, in spite of high broadband coverage, 35 % of the population is not actively using ICT, while another 30% uses ICT only casually. Thus, active users remain a minority (INITIATIVE D21, 2010). Here too the digital gap between rural and urban areas remains strong; it is affected by aspects where rural areas lag behind, such as lack of sufficient knowledge of English (which is the working language of the Internet), lack of digital literacy and limited learning opportunities to improve it; socio-economic aspects such as gender, education and occupational status; and may well increase as ICT technology and capabilities become more sophisticated and demanding of ICT literacy skills (Shapiro, 2009).

Information literacy

5.34 Information literacy concerns the capacity to define informational needs and look for the necessary information. Information literacy requires digital literacy but goes much further. According to the American Association of College and Research Libraries (2000), information literacy involves:

- determining the extent of information needed,
- accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently,
- evaluating information and its sources critically,
- incorporating selected information into one's knowledge base,
- using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose,
- understanding the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

5.35 Clearly, the distinction between digital literacy and information literacy has important implications for the adequacy of standard digital literacy learning (such as ECDL) for exploiting fully the benefits of internet and available broadband infrastructure.

E-learning and learning networks.

5.36 E- learning is defined as distance learning involving the use of computers, Internet and/or other communication media. When distance

learning is combined with face-to-face tuition, as is quite common, it is called blended learning.

5.37 E-learning offers two major advantages for education and teaching (Laschewski, 2006 & 2011) Firstly, it allows a scope of different media (text, pictures, graphs, audio files, movies) to present learning content to learners. Secondly, learners may actively use such content, modify it and therefore create new content. Internet connection allows easy access to a huge amount of information, both for teachers and learners, and provides the infrastructure for various forms of communication at a distance via email, online chatting, as well as audio and video conferencing.

E-learning has in its disposal an impressive array of learning tools and applications (Rowe. & Keskinarkaus, 2011). They include:

- Stand alone media that can be used where there is poor or no access to internet.
- Videocassettes and DVD's can be used to display pre-recorded training content to learners.
- Audio material which is extensively used for language learning.
- E-books combined with portable devices.
- Flexbooks which allow the creation of custom made textbooks.
- Online e-learning platforms.
- Virtual learning communities.
- Wikis which are websites that users can edit.
- Podcasts which are audio/video clips stored in digital format and shared over the web.
- Blogs which are online diaries or personal/communal publishing forums.
- Mobile phones that can be used to access online learning resources such as web-links, help guides, forums and downloadable material.
- Learning games that are not used for entertainment, but in the educational context for engaging learners and for addressing specific learning needs.
- Simulations that can be especially useful in training situations where the real world equivalent would be dangerous, expensive and time-consuming.

5.38 Thus e-learning has the potential to overcome barriers to learning which are especially important for rural areas, such as (Schulmeister, 2006):

- Time barriers: Reducing the time it takes to access learning materials; solving time conflicts through a-synchronic communication, using technologies to change the flow of time (time lapse, slow-motion).

- Spatial barriers: The connection of learning communities and learning objects independent from their location. Contact of or between experts in distant locations. Study locations without travelling. The application of techniques and experimentation in virtual spaces.
- Analog-digital barriers: Combining any text, audio, video and animation. Animating learning content. Exploring and modifying learning objects, understanding, practicing and constructing without changing the device.
- Norm barriers: Being a parent, employment or physical handicaps are no barriers to participate in training courses. Shifting role of learners from pure consumers to active co-producers of learning content.

5.39 To fully utilize its potential e-learning has to adopt the new learning pedagogies referred to earlier, in which case, by definition, virtually any e-learning activity produces, temporarily at least a learning network. Web 2.0 applications (virtual learning communities, blogs, wikis, facebook, podcasts, on line software, tagging systems, etc) merit special reference in this respect, as in some of them networking is not a product of the learning activity but learning is the product of networking. Notably, these e-learning pedagogies when fully exploited promote the skills and values that are important for effective partnerships, networking, and, in the longer-term local governance qualities that foster sustainable development.

5.40 However, in reality there are obstacles to overcome which are more acute in the case of rural areas, hence the second thoughts that followed early enthusiasm about e-learning. These include:

- the digital gap referred to above such as broadband coverage, digital literacy and information literacy;
- the new pedagogical competences required;
- the competences and costs for content development or content adaptation;
- the competences and costs required for exploiting fully the pedagogical opportunities offered by new learning tools and applications, especially Web.2 applications;

Conclusions.

5.41 Learning requirements for good governance relate to what is being called 21st competences and a new approach to learning, which is much broader than standard educational thinking and more effective in terms of outcomes and impact. Under this approach, learning is defined as being learner centred, structured and well designed, profoundly personalised, inclusive; and requires an altogether different relation between student and

teacher. Interaction, exchange and collaboration among learners as well as between learners and teachers represent core characteristics of this approach. In effect, under this approach, networking constitutes a structural quality of learning. Available ICTs and the Internet provide tools that facilitate greatly the adoption of this learning approach in practice. These tools, in the form of e-learning, offer to rural areas learning opportunities that were not available in the past which are crucial for building local governance capacities for sustainable developments. Obstacles to this end include difficulties to fully adopt this new learning approach (relating to pedagogical competences, technical competences and content development costs); and in the case of many rural areas the rural-urban digital gap (relating to

access to broadband, digital and information literacy).

5.42 Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for effective learning as well as for effective networking, and ultimately for building local governance capacity, which depends on learning and networking. Networking and learning should be seen as distinct but intrinsically related processes. Effective learning requires networking and effective networking requires learning: learning from doing, learning from working together or not working together, learning from dealing with conflict and negotiating, etc. In other words, in order for networks (as well as partnerships which by definition include networking and together with networks form the backbone of the local governance system) to be effective, should be *learning networks*.

Questions arising from Chapter 5 to reflect on:

1. Have you ever been a member of a network, a partnership or other collaboration/exchange structure? If not explain the reasons why. If yes, indicate whether there were any learning benefits resulting from your participation and how they came about.
2. Do you have any experience of e-learning? If not explain the reasons why. If yes compare your experience of e-learning with your experience of standard face-to-face courses you may have attended.
3. Do you think that the so called "21st century -process-related- competences" (e.g. "ability to cooperate and learn together") are as important as task-related competences?
4. Rank good governance qualities in relation to their importance for local governance and sustainable development (from the most important to the least important); explain your ranking.

Case study 5.1

Learning Networking Related to Good Governance: The Community Planning Partnership Model (Scotland).

National Strategic Priorities, National Outcomes, and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)

The Scottish Government has set 5 strategic priorities for Scotland: making Scotland Wealthier and Fairer, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Smarter, and Greener; and developed a local authority/government led CPP model of governance. Each CPP has developed a customised plan to work with other main agencies including representatives from local authority teams, universities, colleges, schools, health services, employment services, transport services, police and fire services, industrial organisations, enterprise and community groups to meet the needs of their local area in terms of geography, local industry and population.

To support these priorities 15 National Outcomes were set to be achieved by the CPPs. Of these, the first four specifically support Economic Development and the links to Learning:

- Outcome 1: making Scotland the most attractive place for doing business in Europe;
- Outcome 2: realizing Scotland's full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people;
- Outcome 3: making Scotland better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for its Research and Innovation;
- Outcome 4: making young people successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.



In order to achieve these outcomes a local Learning Network or Lifelong Learning Partnership forms part of the CPP, which is usually part of the

Economic Development Partnership and includes knowledge transfer for industry, vocational skills for employed people, up-skilling and work-experience opportunities for unemployed people and community-led learning to raise the basic skills level in the area. Its aim is to provide a service and progression pathway which appears seamless to the individual or company using the service. The Learning Network partners work together to ensure the local workforce are trained to the specific level required to take advantage of any employment opportunities when new industries or companies set up in the area.

Typical obstacles faced under this model include: lack of suitable premises, lack of suitable trainers, lack of opportunities to progress learning; lack of vocational training due to restricted facilities, lack of clarity as to "whose responsibility is the provision of learning", and excessive cost.

Examples of progression pathways through learning partnerships and vehicles for delivering learning

Lifelong learning & providing progression pathways through learning partnerships:

- Community Learning through Informal Learning: basic training such as numeracy, communications and IT skills offered at various learning centres such as Learning Shops, the Rural Training Bus, Libraries, community halls etc.
- Employability Skills acquired via Social Enterprises: work-experience within local companies organised by colleges and employment organisations.
- Formal Learning: full/part-time study courses offered via Further Education Colleges & Universities.

Vehicles for delivering learning:

- Shared premises (and related running costs) to deliver information from various organisations such as employment advice, housing advice, education at various levels, social/community support groups, business start-up support etc.
- Learning Bus: mobile facility offering similar services as shared premises including internet access in rural mountain locations.
- Learning Shop: small learning facility such as a shop or café in a central location.

- E-learning: inclusive on-line lessons with students accessing 'live' classroom training remotely.

The case of supporting the recruitment of local people to work in a new supermarket build by ASDA in Girvan: an example of how the CPP members can work together to achieve Outcome 1 ("...most attractive place for doing business") and Outcome 2 ("more and better employment opportunities...")..

Girvan (population 8,000, 22 miles from Ayr, population 48,000) was traditionally a farming, fishing and tourism area. Until recently, employment was seasonal in the area with people travelling 50 miles to process salmon in the winter and participate in golf related tourism work in the summer months. As the fishing and farming industries diminished unemployment figures grew. Industry is now mainly farming with additional income streams developed, tourism and service industries to support the local communities. In this context:

- Members of the CPP worked with local shop owners to overcome their fear of the competition and to assist local suppliers to work with ASDA encouraging the sale of local produce. There were full-time and part-time permanent jobs provided which suited the local employment needs.
- To encourage recruitment of local people, an ad hoc working group of CPP members was set-up to train and support people who had been unemployed for some time. The group was led by Job Centre Plus, who communicated directly with the company managers on behalf of the group. The local College offered a versatile training package, which covered confidence building, customer service, numeracy, communication skills and interviewing techniques. The course also offered a collection of specialist courses such as food hygiene, health and safety, lifting and handling, first aid etc. This allowed individuals to select the most appropriate training for their own situation e.g. they might want a food hygiene course to work in the bakery section or stock-control for the stores. This introduced student empowerment with regards to course content for the first time in the college. A local social enterprise group offered travel assistance and childcare during the courses.

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Case study 5.2

Cross Communities Solution - Cybermoor Project, U.K

Cybermoor was the first rural broadband co-operative in England, based in Alston a market town in Cumbria, England. Alston is the highest market town in the UK as it is located among the Pennine Hills its isolated location is roughly equidistant (30+miles) from the cities of Newcastle on Tyne and Carlisle. Cybermoor now provides broadband service to rural communities in Cumbria, Northumberland and Herefordshire. In addition it operates community websites connecting together the geographically dispersed residents of Alston Moor, providing an on-line forum where residents can discuss local issues and benefit from travel text alerts etc.

tapped into and distributed via a mast located on the local Community College and local line of sight connections and relays established over the next 2 years. In 2003, Cybermoor Ltd. was set up to move the project towards sustainability. Gradually connections to customers have been improved and in 2010 Cybermoor completed the installation of its own wireless backhaul connection over a distance of 40 miles with a capacity of up to 375 megabits per second. It now has the highest penetration of broadband in any rural area in England.

For more information visit:

<http://www.cybermoor.org>

<http://www.inca.coop/case-study/cybermoor>



The most recent service development has been the initiation of Telehealth and Telemedicine services. Cybermoor has a number of trading activities including the sale of computer consumables, hire of equipment and consultancy for local authorities and Government agencies. The profit from these activities goes towards providing affordable broadband for rural residents. Cybermoor is a founder member of the Community Broadband Network which supports and develops community-owned broadband schemes across the country and also the Independent Networks Co-operative Association (INCA) which supports the development of next generation broadband initiatives by sharing expertise and information.

The Cybermoor project launched in Alston, Cumbria, in 2001 with funding from the “Wired up Communities” a UK Government initiative. Line of sight connection was established to a redundant MOD facility with fibre optic connectivity: this was

Case study 5.3

E-ruralnet: an example of a learning network

E-ruralnet is a 3-year European network project funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong learning programme and covers 11 countries representing the North, the East and the South of Europe. Its objective is to promote the use of e-learning in the rural areas of Europe for the benefit of all those involved in, or potentially being interested in, the supply and demand side of informal learning.



The target group of the project on the demand side includes individuals, whether they have experience of e-learning or not, who may use e-learning, or attracted to e-learning for those without e-learning experience, to further their personal interests or their professional development and strengthen their position in the labour market; rural businesses, especially SMEs and micro-enterprises who wish to enhance their operation and become more competitive and the social partners who represent them; and policy makers working in the education field. On the supply side, the e-ruralnet target group includes training organizations providing e-learning, e-learning content developers and training organizations that may be interested to move into the e-learning market.

The network built by the project includes now a membership of over 550 stakeholders (e-learning providers, social partners, policy makers) and has a much larger dissemination audience. Contact and exchange with and between network members is conducted through the multilingual project website and social network facilities (blogs, facebook, etc) in some of the participating countries. Network members and the broader project audience receive regularly project information, materials, and products.

The e-ruralnet products include reports of national surveys of supply (e-learning providers) and demand (e-learners and people with no experience of e-learning); a European Synthesis report of supply and demand for e-learning in Europe; an electronic inventory of innovative e-learning products and library of best practice examples (in the website); review reports on "Innovative E-learning in Rural Areas" and on "Alternative Media and Contemporary Applications, in a Rural Context"; and a multi-lingua Guidance Tool for prospective e-learners using the format of Game-Based Learning (www.e-ruralnetgame.net).

In essence, the project serves a dual function: networking and learning. It is a learning network that the partners plan to sustain beyond the end of the project and develop it to a learning community proper. At the same time, the project supports through the network the use of e-learning which in itself promotes skills that are important for good governance and sustainable development at the local level.

For more information visit:

www.e-ruralnet.eu

or contact N. Varelidis, PRISMA Centre for Development Studies, n.varelidis@prismanet.gr



CHAPTER 6.

Institutional and power structures for winning regions

6.1 Experts dealing with spatial development frequently wonder whether their activity is successful or not, i.e. whether the inhabitants of the area like living there and whether the given settlement or rural space becomes attractive for others as well. What is the secret of success and what are the factors that define a successful village, small town or rural region? The primary goal of the future scenario for the development of rural areas is the improvement of the quality of life of the rural population (Moseley, 2003 Euracademy Association 2002, Szörényiné Kukorelli 2005). The "Rural White Paper" published by the British Government in 2000 summarises the future scenario for rural areas and the means for improving the quality of life of rural inhabitants as follows:

Rural regions must be

- living countryside (full of life) where we find thriving rural local communities with access to high level public services, i.e. given the comfort, amenities and security of the everyday life;
- working countryside (active): a working countryside, with a diverse economy giving high and stable levels of employment, i.e. where there are jobs to provide the income of the local population;
- protected countryside (protected) in which the environment is sustained and enhanced, and in which all can enjoy the well-kept environment;
- vibrant countryside: countryside capable of management that can shape its own future, with its voice heard by government at all levels (Rural White paper, 2000).

6.2 If all four criteria are met, we can visualise a rural area where the local inhabitants simply like to live there, i.e. it is not usual to move out, population ageing is not typical, and in fact, the

area is able to increase its population size. The recipe then is very simple: we have to make true these four characteristics of rural regions – but how can we do it?

6.3 The major factors of success for rural regions can be categorised in three groups: successful governance, i.e. coordinated action between social groups, individual stakeholders and institutions; rich physical environment and resources; and a 'soft' factor representing social conditions and the dynamics of the community (Table 1).

Hardware features	Software features	
Physical and economic "endowment" and resources	Governance	Social conditions/ dynamics of the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geographical location • infrastructure • local economic power • local resources • capacity of economic structure to change • capacity of decision-making • knowledge-based production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • innovation capacities- well functioning institutional system • local governments cooperating with each other • cooperative regional and local governments • local governments cooperating with non-governmental organisations • open planning system – strong participation • strong connections among institutions that are involved in the joint activities • getting implementations done without the use of direct authority • voluntary organisations embedded into the institutional system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong social capital • skilled human capital • strong civil society • adaptive skills • respect for and preservation of local culture and traditions, mindful exploitation • knowledge (collective and individual) and desire for knowledge • environmental consciousness • strong local identity • conflict management ability • growing employment • enhanced income generating capacity

Table 1: The three pillars of success and their elements
Source: Iren Kukorelli

The role of governance in success

6.4 A community, be it rural or not, is only able to achieve success if its members can make their own decisions and assert their interests. A community that is incapable of this, either because it lacks the adequate knowledge or because it has no dedicated and enthusiastic people and institutions, will not enjoy an economically stable countryside providing good living conditions. In other words: capacity building, i.e. increasing the capacity of local people, agencies, and professionals who support the communities and who promote development with their ideas and knowledge and are able to create strong relationships with their

networks – this is an important source of success for rural communities.

6.5 However, the implementation of a future scenario is impossible without an effective planning process; therefore, the planning capacity of the local community must be enhanced both at strategic and local level with a well-functioning governance system.

The five basic principles of governance, as they are defined in the EU White Paper (2000), are

- *openness*: (local) institutions should work more openly, they should have a more active and efficient communication in order to strengthen trust;
- *efficiency*: principles and policies should be effective and topical, the definition of the objectives should be clear and their implementation should take place at the most appropriate level;
- *coherence*: principles and measures should be easily comprehensible; it is necessary to increase coherence in order to overcome challenges such as climate change or demographic trends; also, the local and regional authorities should be even more active participants in the policies of the European Union;
- *accountability*: for the better transparency and the definition of responsibilities, accountability has to play an important role;
- *community participation*: the success and efficiency of EU policies must be secured by a community participation as broad as possible. This means that participation should be extended to a range of activities from concept to implementation, and thereby the institutional background that is responsible for the implementation of policies should enjoy a higher level of trust.

6.6 The five principles laid down in the document assist the EU to work in a democratic way, but it is important that these principles should be followed not only by the EU institutions but also the institutions at national, regional and local level.

Institutional systems of spatial development at local level: the case of Hungary

6.7 The systemic change that took place in Hungary in 1990 totally transformed, in addition to the political structures, the administrative system and the institutional system of spatial and settlement development. Before the transition to representative democracy, a so-called council system operated in Hungary in 1950 – 1990, by which regional bodies were local bodies of the state power, municipalities had no self-governance rights, and the most important task at local level was the implementation of centrally formulated policies.

In order to reach success, the institutional system must have the following characteristics at national, regional and local level:

It should

- be stable and predictable,
- have a financing system that is transparent and capable of interest assertion,
- work with a dedicated, professional management that has a broad system of relations,
- inform and involve the open local communities capable of self-organisation,
- allow bottom-up non-governmental initiatives to become elements of the regional/local institutional system.

6.8 More than half the 3,200 independent settlements (villages, towns and cities) had a so-called "partner village status", which simply meant that the minimum, often non-existing development resources made the operation of the settlements at the lower level of the hierarchy impossible. In many cases a rural exodus took place: villages had to close their institutions because of the measures of the centre, and relocate their services to other settlements.

6.9 The systemic change was followed by the building of the institutional system of democracy. Hungary became a unitary state, with a two-tier decision-making system. Although the former 19 counties continued to exist, their roles were weakened, constricted to the management of their institutions. A dominant role was assigned to the basic elements of public administration, i.e. the municipalities, due to the measures of the ministry responsible for spatial and settlement development and the act on local government entering into force in 1991.

6.10 The inhabitants of the small villages then rightly felt that at last they were the real owners of their own settlements; they had the right to set up sovereign decision-making bodies, and they were keen in accepting the legally binding as well as some voluntary tasks. Each municipality, irrespective of their population size, set up independent self-governments, as a result of which almost 3,200 municipalities replaced the former 1,600 council centres, i.e. a disintegration process took place.

6.11 The result was an extremely fragmented and expensive local government system, which, however, asserted the self-governance rights of the settlements (Pálné 1996). At the same time, parallel to individualisation, one could also see signs of cooperation, as the association of settlements started in the early 1990s on a totally voluntary basis, from the municipal level. In other words, the two opposite processes of disintegration

and integration took place at the same time in local government.

Municipal Associations

6.12 This form of municipal cooperation evolved in a voluntary form of association and became a means for local development especially in rural areas dominated by small villages. On the one hand, the act on local governments resulted in the disintegration of the settlement groups belonging to the former common councils, settlements became isolated, and they wanted to do, all on their own, the tasks obligatory by law and even the ones taken up voluntarily. On the other hand, almost parallel to this process, the signs of cooperation also showed up – when mayors saw and felt the difficulties of local government of small villages in interest representation and interest assertion and recognised the need for harmonised efforts in infrastructure developments. Of course these initial signs were of different intensity in various part of Hungary, depending in the first place on the local decision-makers and the intensity of local problems and also on the structure of the settlement network (Csatári 1996).

6.13 This associational form of municipal government developed for a decade and a half. In the first period (first half of the 1990s) non-governmental organisations and entrepreneurs could also join the associations, but the Act on Regional Development and Spatial Planning passed in 1996 allowed only municipal self-governments to be members of municipal associations. These organisations could participate, with an interest assertion function, in the work of the county development councils, where they were given interest representation rights and the right of opinion in the distribution of decentralised spatial development resources. Also, these associations were able to strengthen themselves by winning resources through tender, i.e. through the operation of agencies or development councils that prepared strategic plans and started to implement, step by step, the measures defined in them.

6.14 Because of the fragmented local government system, it was more and more difficult for the small villages to fulfil their tasks as required by law, so the government pressed the municipal associations in 2004 to take over municipal public service responsibilities in addition to their development activities. Although the municipal associations were not forced by law to take up such tasks, extra financial means were awarded to those associations that took over at least three public services from the municipal self-governments belonging to the association. This form of association is called multi-purpose micro-regional association. The above-mentioned micro-regional cooperation structures were able, on a completely voluntary basis, to assert the local wills and interests, but they have lost their initial momentum by now. This is not a surprise, because

the role that they assumed after the systemic change has been significantly transformed. The multi-purpose associations have to manage more and more difficult daily operations by accepting the performance of public service tasks (e.g. school maintenance, health care).

6.15 While public administration has two operational tiers, spatial development has five. The number of spatial units compatible with the NUTS 2 level of the European Union is seven in Hungary, the 19 counties are the EU NUTS 3 level, while NUTS 4 areas are the micro-regions whose organisational form is the above-mentioned multi-purpose micro-regional association. NUTS 5 level is made up by the municipal governments, of which there are 3,200 in Hungary. During the past twenty years the organisational system of the institutions and their relations have changed a lot. This fluid situation is demonstrated by the fact that spatial development has changed positions six times so far, moving from the ministry of environmental protection to the ministries of rural development, economy and local government successively, while for a spell of 4 years it belonged to the Prime Minister's Office; it has been part of the Ministry of Development since 2010.

6.16 With the exception of a period from 1998 to 2002, when spatial development issues were managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, spatial development and rural development were always under separate institutional systems. However it should be added that the micro-regional municipal associations also played a significant role in rural development, as most of the multi-purpose micro-regional associations, due to the nature of their tasks, operated and still operate in rural areas.

Institutional system of rural development

6.17 The institutional system that supports rural development was launched in Hungary in the late 1990s. The first effort for this was supported by the SAPARD pre-accession fund. The then existing Department of Rural Development Programmes in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development announced in 1998 a tender inviting the micro-regional associations to prepare strategic rural development plans. According to the call for tender, not only municipal development associations were entitled to apply but also groups of those municipalities that declared their cooperation willingness and whose members stated that they were also members of a micro-regional association with rural development purposes. In 1999 another micro-regional cooperation system started, the so-called SAPARD, or micro-regional cooperation with rural development purpose. By 2000, 194 such cooperating groups were registered. Their task was the acquisition of SAPARD funds, the provision of assistance to farmers applying for subsidies, and the coordination of village renewal plans. Each

micro-regional cooperation structure was headed by a so-called rural development manager, whose task was the coordination of rural development activities.

6.18 Hungary joined the European Union in 2004, and accordingly SAPARD as a pre-accession fund ceased to operate; its rural development activity was taken over by the LEADER Initiative, well known in the older member states of the European Union. In 2004-2007 Hungary only had limited access to LEADER funds, as it was not more than 400,000 Euros that became available for Hungary. A new era started in 2007, when Hungary received approval for its New Hungary Rural Development Programme (NHRDP) running from 2007 to 2013. In the framework of the NHRDP, LEADER groups were founded, who practically cover the whole of Hungary's territory.

Hungarian National Rural Network (MNVH)

6.19 An important step in the creation of the institutional system was the requirements of the Decree No. 1698/2005 of the Council of Europe, Par. 68, i.e. "Each Member State shall establish a national rural network, which groups the organisations and administrations involved in rural development."

6.20 In accordance with this decree, the Hungarian National Rural Network (HNRN) was established. In the European Union, Hungary was the only member state to authorise this network through national policy (Glatz 2010). The Network can make recommendations at national level for rural policy, spatial development and infrastructure investment issues, has representations at all territorial levels, and its activity is assisted by a large number of professional advisors. Presently this organisation with its broad social support represents a new type of rural policy mechanism, as well as a social political force. In addition, it has the important task of being the coordinator of the local rural development programmes. The Network created the system of Local Rural Development Offices (LRDO), which operate at micro-region (NUTS 4) level and are closely related to the local LEADER groups which are also members of the HNRN. In order to identify and suggest solutions to the rural development problems, a number of National Regional Fora are regularly held, dealing with the specific problems of the regions of Hungary.

6.21 Another member of HNRN is the "Village Caretakers' Service Network". This is a remarkable case of a voluntary network of people with an interest in and concern for the countryside and its villages, which has now assumed institutional status and is active as an NGO in 1200 Hungarian villages. The main activity of the village caretaker is the provision of social services, i.e. access to medical services (transport of elderly people to the general practitioner or to the nearby medical

centre, purchase of medicines, transport of lunch, travelling of kindergarten and school pupils to the nearest institution). In addition to these activities caretakers also organise shopping tours to the nearest hypermarket, assist people with administrative affairs, organise visits to the theatre, and mediate information. Village caretaker activities can only be undertaken by local residents, while the tasks related to the operation of the service are the responsibility of the mayor's office, and only one person can take up a village caretaker's job in each village.

6.22 The "Village Caretakers' Service Network" is a successful example of partnership between voluntary citizens' movements and government at both central and local levels, based on the best principles of local governance. It is also a fine example of the conditions that lead rural communities to success, if the latter is interpreted by a better quality of life for rural inhabitants and for a more inclusive society in rural areas. The principle of complementarity between the public and private-voluntary- sectors has in this case worked at its best, increasing access to social care for up to 300,000 rural citizens (see also Case Study 5.1).

Physical and economic factors of success

6.23 György Enyedi (Enyedi 1997) studied the success of spatial and settlement development and the factors that make settlements successful. Although his study concerned mostly cities, it is still worth considering Enyedi's factors, as most of them are also relevant for rural areas. A crucial question, however, concerns the extent to which the rapid expansion of digital communication since the 1990s have modified these success criteria.

Enyedi's factors of settlements' success

1. Ability of the economic structure to transform
2. Number of value creating sectors
3. Knowledge based production
4. Innovation capacity
5. Decision-making capacity
6. Strong and growing middle class
7. Conflict management ability
8. Broad external relations system
9. Growing employment
10. Enhancement of income generating capacity

6.24 Following a drastic political and economic change in Hungary, the small towns and villages adopted a strategy of survival in most cases, while only a few decided to adopt a strategy of development. At the time of the liquidation of small state-owned companies and side-branch plants, the decision-makers of the settlements

could hardly think of any future-oriented strategy, as they were totally immersed in current problem management. Towns and cities, following their own-generated policy, offered locations and exemption from local taxes to incoming firms, contributing this way to the renewal of their economic structure by attracting industrial plants more advanced and financially stronger than their Hungarian counterparts. While the companies of the tertiary and quaternary sector were able to choose a location in the larger towns and cities, in the small towns and villages it was already a great thing if a small company of foreign or mixed ownership settled there, thus alleviating the problem of rising unemployment. Even more important than the offer of employment was the tax revenue accrued from the company, assuring an extra source of income for the local government. Where settlements managed to attract such companies, usually being located at the edge of the village in "big boxes" -as they were called by many - this meant success for the local community. The West Hungarian region, especially its north-western zone and its western gateways, were discovered by Austrian investors and the economic restructuring of the villages started, although it was limited to new industrial and technological investments (Rechnitzer, 1994, Szörényiné Kukorelli, 1996).

6.25 The share of the services sector in the economic structure of the rural areas grew as well, which is considered a factor of economic success in urban areas, although it was often simply due to the decline of the industrial activities. However, the value creating service industries within the tertiary sector, such as the financial institutions, consulting firms and other business services, typically did not locate in small towns and villages.

6.26 Although there was initially a question as to whether the knowledge based economy would have space for development in rural areas, it has now been proved that it has. Moreover, it has been recognised that only those regions and settlements can be competitive and economically successful that use new technologies or -even better- develop them. Innovations related to agriculture and food production, coupled with the use of renewable energy for industrial activities are more and more frequently mentioned, as they have a growing impact on employment. New technologies were equalled to innovation in rural areas at the beginning of the 21st century.

6.27 The capacity for decision-making is also an important criterion for the success of a community and a territory. This is a critical factor in those settlements especially which have their own economic space, their own dynamic economic systems. In small towns and villages, the operation of locally owned small enterprises is the core of the economic system and in most cases forms the basis of development with an endogenous character. Endogenous development depends largely on local decision making, which in

turn characterises a successful region, capable to manage its future.

6.28 Another factor of success is the balanced social composition of the population, including the presence of a developing middle class which traditionally seeks to improve the economic standard and the quality of life of the individual and the community. The safeguarding of the income generating capacity of a region can be achieved by a society that maintains a fair level of consumption of goods and services. On the other hand, the assurance of quality of life calls for non-material values, including cultural and environmental ones. Access to cultural facilities, preservation of the identity of rural communities, the protection of natural environment are values that may determine the quality of life in rural areas, and they can form criteria for success if they are complemented by the provision of public services at a sufficient level, including education, medical and social care, and public safety.

6.29 T Enyedi also cites the conflict management capacity of a community as a success criterion. A conflict that often arises in rural areas is that between the local residents and the immigrants and visitors. Murdoch and his fellow authors (Murdoch, et al. 2003) talk about the "conflict-laden countryside", pointing to the areas that are located farther from suburban spaces where the interests of the "native people" concentrate more on the development of agriculture and the improvement of public services that affect their everyday lives. The influx of middle-class employees or pensioners and holidaymakers tilts the balance towards different priorities that are not shared by local people. This leads to growing conflicts between local people and incomers who can hardly find any common interests. Conflict however, if not managed, can lead to great tensions, creating a barrier to success.

6.30 Openness, as a success factor, does not only mean the building of external economic relations (outward looking community) but also building a system of relations within the community as a whole and between individuals. The development of new economic activity needs both internal and external openness: for example, rural tourism is built on a system of external relations between the destination and the origin of visitors, but also depends on the openness of the local society to visitors, and on the willingness of individuals and the community as a whole to welcome them, host them and service them.

6.31 Finally, it is widely accepted that the growth of employment and incomes is one of the most typical criteria of success. During the recent economic crisis however, these success factors are hard to achieve by rural economies. However, in most countries the crisis has affected urban areas more than rural ones and there is a tendency for urban inhabitants to return to rural regions as farmers or other self-employed workers. This

creates a dynamism in rural regions, based on new jobs, the influx of relatively young people and the achievement of a sound proportion of inhabitants employed in the local economy.

6.32 The factors or criteria of success discussed above have, on the whole, an economic basis, although some social and cultural (value-oriented) concerns are present. Although these factors were originally defined for urban regions, most of them can apply equally well in rural areas. It should be noted though that the judgement of being successful has undergone many changes since the 1990s. At that time a successful economic restructuring towards the services sector or the location of an industrial plant using new technology could make a rural region successful, offering employment to individuals and extra income from taxes to the local government. However, in the 21st century, the situation has become more complex and success depends on a multiplicity of inter-related factors, some of which are determined at European or even global level.

6.33 Overall, the attractiveness of a region is an important determinant of success: Attractiveness depends firstly on jobs and income, and secondly – but equally decisively – on quality of life. If a region or municipality does not have the ability to attract people, then it is led into a downward spiral, because the narrowing down of the local job opportunities, i.e. the decline in the number of jobs, will entail the acceleration of outmigration, leading to population decline. If there is a decreasing population, there will be less demand for certain services, less competition in the market, and a shrinking demand for public services too, making their maintenance too expensive. The decreasing demand will lead to the liquidation of other jobs, thus reinforcing the outmigration of the population in their active working age, precipitating the depopulation of the region and leading to the vicious circle of economic and social decline. Unfortunately it is not only economic

processes but also inconsiderate political decisions that can trigger the process of “accumulated circulation” (Drudy, 1989, see image).

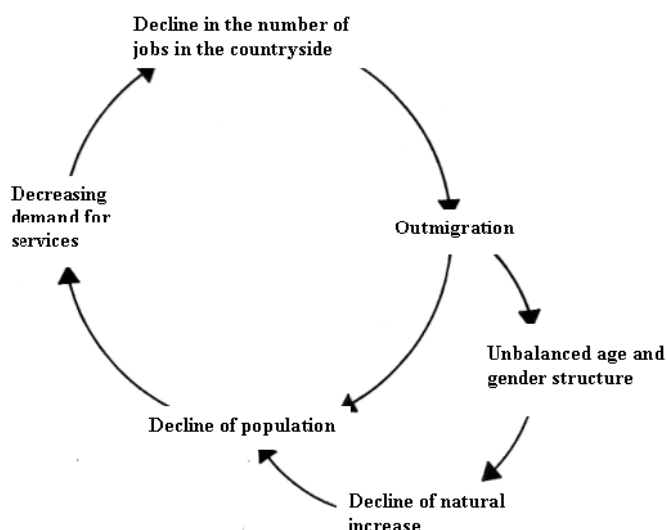
6.34 As we have already discussed in the beginning of this Chapter, the geographical location of a region, its proximity to an urban agglomeration and its access to a motorways system could easily bring an initial success for the region. In the 1990s, these were considered as pre-conditions for success, although it depended a lot upon the regional communities to maintain their internal dynamics and preserve as well as further enhance this success.

6.35 In the first decade of the 21st century, the “hardware” conditions were more and more replaced by “software” elements, i.e. community organisation, knowledge economy and quality of life. But what tools do we need so that these elements should serve success? In the recent decades social scientists have dealt a lot with the concept of knowledge society and its impacts. Especially in rural areas, the use of digital communication technologies seems to offer a unique opportunity to close the gap between urban and rural in a number of fields, such as education and lifelong learning, trade and employment. Examples are offered by e-learning, e-commerce and e-jobs, either distance work by self-employed people or outsourcing by companies based anywhere in the world.

6.36 As mentioned above, a key factor in the success of rural regions is access to high quality public services. Services facilitating digital communication are more than ever necessary to be supplied in rural regions and most EU countries have already provided or are in the process of providing broadband connection and/or optical fibre networks throughout their rural territories. However, technology alone cannot guarantee success, unless it is coupled with strengthening community dynamics, institutional support and endogenous development policies.

6.37 The relationship between local and global has sparked countless discussion over the past ten years, and the effect of globalisation upon rural areas, their economies and culture, has become a sine qua non reference in many rural development writings. Globalisation certainly provides opportunities to rural areas by opening up the markets to their products and making it possible to share a large variety of non-material goods throughout the world, so that rural areas do not feel excluded from the world-wide community. Globalisation can also have a negative impact on the local rural economy: while the local economy is getting more and more open, it is also increasingly vulnerable in the world-wide economic competition. Moreover, there is a danger that the value system promoted by the globalisation processes can destabilise rural communities, as their local value systems and culture may be

Causes and effects of accumulated circulation



weakened and their heritage may fade away in the melting pot of globalisation.

6.38 To face such dangers, it is important to strengthen both the individual and the collective organisation of rural societies. The individual can be strengthened mainly through knowledge. The opportunity is there, because the internet presents a huge potential for the acquisition of knowledge, information and social networking. Knowledge increases the creativity of people and their innovation capacity, but can influence also their values, and make them more aware of their heritage and more appreciative of their culture. Knowledge can also make people more aware of the value of partnerships, networking and local action, to achieve their goals.

6.39 Besides securing the individuals' communication and information channels, the local institutions need to be strengthened, to allow effective governance systems attract funding, create a vision of the future, encourage the citizens' involvement in local development through a bottom up approach, and promote the cooperation between different government levels, i.e. the local governance systems. As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, in relation to the Hungarian associations and networking movement, citizens' voluntary initiatives, public-private partnerships and commitment by municipalities of small settlements can reach remarkable results, especially in the fields of social care, quality of life and social inclusion. Effective local governance systems, with active NGOs and forward-looking local governments, can supplement effectively the valuable public services that are so scarce in the countryside, especially those relating to health, welfare and education.

6.40 We can say in conclusion that winning regions are those regions that create a "culture of success", built on the wide-spreading of knowledge through the use of ICT, the promotion of endogenous development through the engagement of citizens in the planning of their future, and the creation of partnerships at different government and non-governmental levels and organisations, to ensure the best exploitation of resources, both natural and human.

6.41 How can such a "culture of success" be created? What tools and policy measures are necessary to be adopted by a local community to become a powerful "partner" of the local development strategy? Fekete (2002) proposes three conditions that provide food for thought:

- the local residents should have the wish for change;
- the institutions and all local stakeholders, who are the makers of the local strategy should have the knowledge, the creativity and the tools to achieve their goals;
- the community should take a vigorous role in the planning and implementation of the strategy, reinforced by internal and external support.

Rural tourism as a manifestation of local identity

The strengthening of local identity and the promotion of a cultural economy is one way of creating a "culture of success" in a region. The example of promoting rural tourism through LEADER programmes provides some interesting examples. We can distinguish four phases in the development of such programmes, according to LEADER philosophy (Ray 1998):

Phase 1: the initial step, when the enumeration of the local heritage takes place and the local identity is strengthened. Following the identification of the heritage, the tourism product is created and marketed.

Phase 2: existing local organisations, development offices and local authorities work together to develop a tourism product "identity" and integrate it in their local development plans.

Phase 3: the self-confidence in the local actors is strengthened and development strategies now come in place that do not only market the local tourism product to external costumers but also within the region.

Phase 4: the capacity of cultural economy is recognised, an economic model is built up at local and regional level, including the reconciliation of the global economy with the local goals and alternative development paths. Such a path can be e.g. local self-confidence or the emphasis on community level care. The individuals' and communities' love and care for their territory becomes the dominant element, and the local culture is re-evaluated, becoming a "culture of success"

Questions arising from Chapter 6 to reflect on:

1. Do you think Enyedi's factors of success apply in rural areas too? From your experience, identify at least one factor that does not apply as well in rural areas as in urban ones
2. How can ICT and the Information Society contribute to success in rural regions? Give some examples from your own experience
3. Describe your own understanding or your own experience of the ingredients of the "culture of success" that should characterise a winning region.
4. If we accept that one of the main factors that define the winning regions is the assurance of the quality of life for their inhabitants and communities, how can local governance systems and partnerships achieve this?

Case study 6.1

Village Caretakers' Service Network, Hungary

A special Hungarian feature is the Village Caretakers' Service Network that has become a national organisation by now, but also has county-level organisations. It is an organisation integrated in the institutional system of rural development, which started as a non-governmental, bottom-up defined organisation at the time of the systemic change. The Village Development Society and its chairman, Bertalan Kemény, a landscape architect fond of the villages and the countryside, launched this organisation. The way he created his network is astonishing: each Thursday he met in a beer bar of Budapest all those people who wanted to consult him about their problems; he was visited by ministry officers, village mayors, farmers, academic researchers – all of who shared an interest in and concern for the countryside.

Bertalan Kemény was a hard-headed and consistent village developer who promoted the building of local fellowships and the human connection. He dreamed up and organized the Village Caretaker Network. He suggested that in each village there would be a person who solves economic, medical, social, educational etc. problems.

The first experiment was launched in a Hungarian county with many small villages. The objective was that in small villages, with ageing population and very deficient services, the inhabitants should not suffer from the lack of services. In fact, they should directly and personally feel they are paid attention to.

According to the established rule defined by now in the form of acts and decrees, villages with less than 600 inhabitants can apply for a village caretaker service, together with the infrastructure it entails, i.e. the "village bus". Presently there are more than eight hundred small villages and scattered farms that have received this benefit and information connection, which also means the creation of eight hundred jobs in villages where local employment is scarce. The activity, attention

and assistance of the village and scattered farm caretakers make life easier for 200,000-300,000 people, who had no chance before to live in conditions similar to those of their fellows in bigger settlements. Today 1200 villages have village caretakers who visit old people, cut the wood, and take the ill to the town, deliver letters, buy medicines and visit old, lonely people.

The main activity of the village caretaker is the provision of social services, i.e. access to medical services (transport of elderly people to the general practitioner or to the nearby medical centre, purchase of medicines, transport of lunch, travelling of kindergarten and school pupils to the nearest institution). In addition to these social service activities caretakers also organise shopping

tours to the nearest hypermarket, assist people with administrative affairs, organise visits to the theatre, and mediate information. Village caretaker activities can only be undertaken by local residents, while the tasks related to the operation of the service are the responsibility of the mayor's office, and only one person can take up a village caretaker's job in each village.

The village caretakers' service

was highly appreciated by the representatives of the EU when they analysed the Hungarian village caretakers' service network during the Hungarian seminar of the "peer review" within the "Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion".

This network is an example of the complexity of rural development, which shows how closely social care and the fight against social exclusion relate to the improvement of the living conditions of rural inhabitants. The village caretakers' network can be a sort of bridge between rural development and social care.

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Case study 6.2

Could a municipality and an association of village associations work successfully together for social and economic development of rural areas? The Case of Lohja, Finland

A process of local government restructuring is underway in Finland. The process began in 2005 with the introduction of the Project to Restructure Local Government and Services (PARAS). The goal of this initiative was to create a system of governance that will ensure that high-quality services continue to be delivered by local governments in the future.

This case study is from Lohja in Finland which is a town of 39 000 inhabitants. Lohja is located in southern part of the country around Lake Lohja. Base. The municipality of Lohja will grow bigger in the beginning of 2013, as it will be merged with the municipality of Karjalohja (1 500 inhabitants) and possibly with one or two other municipalities, Nummi-Pusula and Siuntio (both with 6 000 inhabitants). The final decision on the merge will be made on the 10th of October 2011.



Lohja Villages Association was found in 2008 to bring together all the local associations working for the development of villages or subdivisions of towns. The aim is to strengthen the co-operation of the decision makers and civil servants of the municipality with the inhabitants. The Association has so far managed to save a few small schools, improve the waste transportation system on the rural part of the area and especially, it has been able to get initiate an increasing discussion between the town and the surrounding rural areas. The municipality and the association jointly organise a two times a year the "village leader" meetings, that take up common problems and discuss solutions. Furthermore in the negotiations regarding the possible merge of Nummi-Pusula and Siuntio with Lohja municipality, a decision was made to organize activities for increasing local democracy with the help of Lohja Villages Association.

There is a threat that in a larger municipality, particularly people living further from the municipality's centre will lose their voice to the

administration and that the public services on these areas will be neglected. The decision makers and civil servants should be made to understand this threat and work for the development of social and economical development on these rural areas. They need actual information about these areas to be able to make fair decisions. Lohja Villages Association is able to take this information from the villages and suburbs to the decision makers. One very good tool for this collaboration is village plans.

Lessons learned; suggestions and conclusions

Decision makers, civil servants and associations understand lately that this kind of system can work. One of the biggest problems though for these associations is the lack of volunteers that actively work in these associations. The mean age of the members in the boards of village associations are now 55 +. Employers demand more and more productivity and so employees don't have time or strength to work voluntarily in associations. Voluntary work in the board of an association has, at the same time, become more demanding. Members need to follow-up lots of activities when dealing with large municipalities, and also need to be aware of and be able to use various kinds of EU programmes to finance planned activities. To carry out these tasks at least the "umbrella" villages association needs to be able to employ at least some part time persons to look after administrative work. Furthermore in order to get new people to work in the boards the association should be able to compensate the costs caused by travelling to meetings and other relevant costs.

Co-operation of municipalities and villages associations could be one way to improve local democracy and thus social and economic development of rural areas. But a basic financing scheme is needed from EU, state, counties or municipalities. People don't work anymore for free and at least not without compensation of costs caused by this kind of demanding voluntary work.

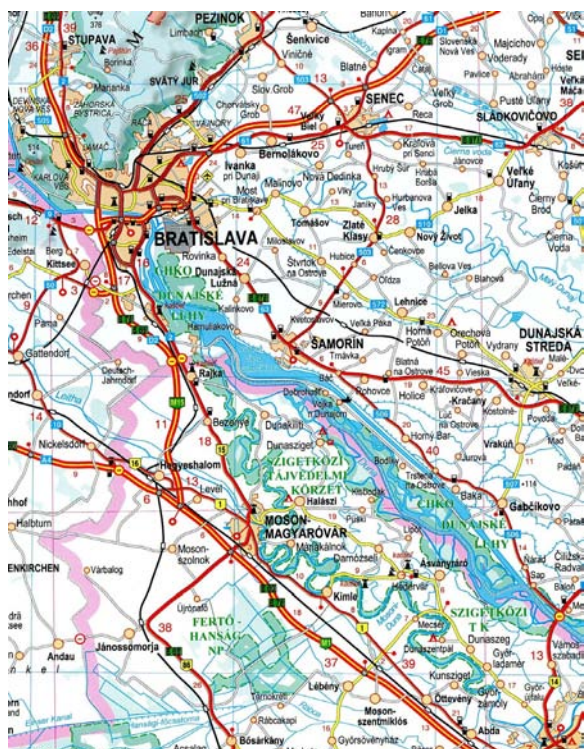
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Case study 6.3

A successful network of municipalities at Hungarian-Slovakian border

In this case study a cooperation network of municipalities is presented that jointly tries to meet and serve the demands of a new trend - people moving out from Bratislava to suburbia. The incoming Slovak population moving to the Hungarian-populated municipalities near Bratislava significantly puts stress to the previously satisfactory public services system and its infrastructure. Sub-urbanisation is a consequential stage of the development of large cities as, at point in time, part of the city inhabitants moves to suburban areas. The population that moves out is often followed by the creation of new services and jobs in suburbia, which boosts the economy of municipalities located in the city's agglomeration. This phenomenon has already occurred in most of the big cities in Europe during the past few decades. The main reason for this change is economic growth. In a large city real estate prices raise rapidly and as the household income increases, families pursue a change of quality by moving in the relatively cheaper suburban municipalities (villages), which offer better life-quality. Therefore the city expands, creating a wider urban zone around itself.



Nevertheless the new population differs substantially from local residents regarding age, habits, education, financial status etc. Furthermore the numerous new houses alter the character of these rural areas and as these become an expanded part of the city with increased daily commuters, there is a significant traffic increase.

A cross-border European Union project undertook to understand the characteristics of Bratislava's agglomeration that is continuously expanding and extends to the Hungarian-Slovakian border. Another aim of the project is to create a development network of public services in the cross-border agglomeration of Bratislava with the collaboration of 6 affected municipalities. The aim of this network is to organise a cross-border agglomeration cooperation among local governments, civil organisations and service providers to solve problems that arise from this rapid change. Networks are new or newly recognised forms of social organisation receiving increased interest in recent years. This cooperation network is an important organisational structure in order for local governments and other public organisations of the region to cooperate and devise new methods for understanding their common challenges.

The network of public services strives for solutions to the problems caused by Bratislava's sub urbanisation spreading to Hungary. Bratislava's expansion opportunities are significantly restricted by the fact that the city borders with Austria and Hungary. In the cross-border regions of the two neighbouring countries the real estate prices were substantially lower than in the Slovak capital, so the free border crossing and the freedom to move enabled the moving in of Slovak citizens to the Hungarian and the Austrian side since 2007. This phenomenon of residential mobility started intensively after 2007, and at the beginning concerned two villages along the border: Rajka (which is practically neighbour to Bratislava) and Dunakiliti, which is separated from the administrative area of the Slovak capital city by the Danube River.

Follow up activities to the EU project have created several partnerships between public organisations that facilitate research and development in connection with problems of sub urbanisation and have so far succeeded in developing proposals for questions such as: how the Hungarian local government can provide public services (education, health care) for the settled Slovak-speaking people; what can be done in connection with the problems of taxing, since Hungarian and Slovak taxing system is different? The main question is how the newly settled inhabitants can integrate into the society of the host communities without creating social problems.

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