



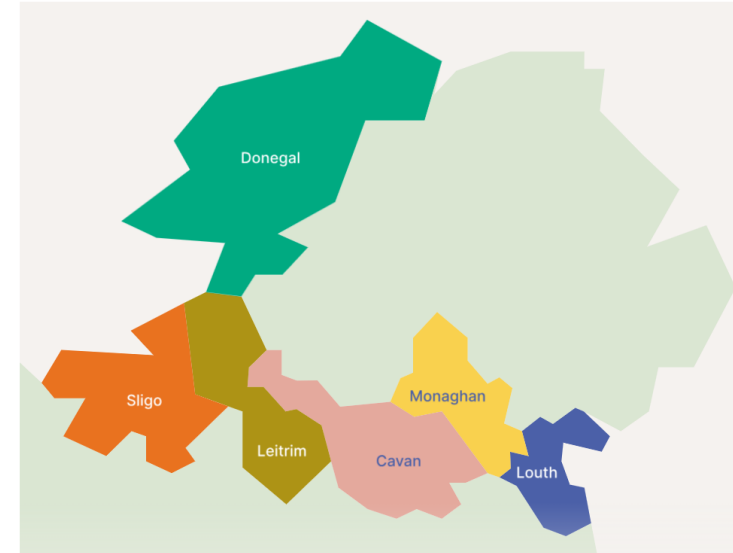
Innovating Communities

- designing our future

Monaghan Integrated Development

High-Level Rural Policy Forum, Sigüenza (Spain)

27-29 September 2023



Enabling Community led Innovation

- ▶ We identified the need for greater levels of 'Community led Innovation'
- ▶ Through LEADER cooperation, we developed [Innovating Communities](#) designed to stimulate local innovation and improve problem-solving
- ▶ Communities invited to identify local challenges / opportunities, (6 LAGs)
- ▶ Projects with sufficient support selected to progress to facilitated training
- ▶ Used 'Design Thinking' as an iterative process to problem-solve / engage
- ▶ A strong focus on 'learning by doing' – a facilitated process



A Focus on Supporting Social Innovation

- ▶ **Key Outcomes:**
- ▶ **1,470** people trained in problem-solving tools
- ▶ 227 opportunities & **51 challenges** identified
- ▶ Many new cohorts engaged (i.e. Youth, Migrants)
- ▶ High satisfaction rates of participants **>90%**
- ▶ Over **70% of participants** agree that taking part in the course has helped them with **new ideas for their communities**
- ▶ **38 local Co-Trainers** to embed the legacy of IC
- ▶ A LEADER [Showcase Event](#) to share the learning



Participant comments on the IC approach

"This session really opened up the discussion and opinions of all the group, it was very helpful to see all the different perspectives that I wasn't aware of."

"It feels like we are establishing clearer communication networks and the greater community is being considered."

"The Jamboards and layout are excellent and the lessons are helping us progress. The trainers are great facilitators."

"skillful facilitation and total presence to ensure everyone was included and nothing left out."

"Each meeting feels like a team huddle, everyone is validated."

"The lesson brought us through a very important discussion and let us see ideas and next steps clearly."

"I like the ethos of communities working with students/professionals and professionals working with communities."

"Time to think out loud: the right environment for listening and learning from each other."

What participants said about their Innovating Communities experience.

Key Learning

- ▶ Today's **rural challenges are complex & require new ways for communities to engage and problem-solve** (i.e. Climate Change, Migration etc), but as we see from the LEADER funded [Innovating Communities](#) ex, rural communities will step up to the challenge if supported.
- ▶ The **Place-based approach is not just about funding, it** means harnessing the skills of a rural area by **digging deep to engage a wider cohort of creative and passionate people in a developmental process** which can make a difference and drive innovation and change. ***This is the core of the LEADER method.***

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ **LEADER Programme funding is insufficient for the scale of the rural challenge – we need an integrated approach with greater strategic use of all the Funds for CLLD** - multi-fund approach. (ESF, ERDF etc)
- ▶ **LEADER Cooperation is a key development tool for rural areas – financial supports should be focused on the Social Innovation and collaboration potential** of Local Action Groups
- ▶ LEADER has a strong synergy with the **Smart Village policy agenda** and is an ideal vehicle for Rural areas **to develop Social Innovation capacity – requires a strong community developmental approach, which in turn needs greater investment in LEADER** and a **greater appetite for local experimentation.**
- ▶ Place matters and **our communities are changing** – LEADER Programme is ideally placed to **drive rural Innovation, reinforce and empower place-based development and strengthen social cohesion and play its part in achieving the objectives of the LTVFRA.**

THANK YOU

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