

Group discussions: Main results

High-Level Rural Policy Forum, Sigüenza (Spain)
27-29 September 2023



Session 1: Data and evidence for policy making (Betty-Ann)

- ▶ More granularity at municipal level is needed e.g. 78 indicators but only 11 indicators below Nuts 3, this should be encouraged by EU
- ▶ Develop local capacity to design and collect data; make sure it is more in synch with local needs and there is transparency in how data is used.
- ▶ Think about new ways to report data to not miss learning from different experiences in rural areas (e.g. mismatch between how positive outcomes are captured and analyzed}
- ▶ Just focusing on indicators is not enough encourage more focus on “what really happens at the local level”.
- ▶ Improve the data to support effective implementation of Territorial Impact Assessments
- ▶ Consider the different types of rural e.g. rural adjacent to a city vs remote rural.

Session 6: Harnessing rural talent through entrepreneurship and the social economy (Betty-

Ann)



- ▶ Not just “job” creation but quality job creation and more diverse and flexible employment opportunities. E.g. campus rural/Spain, voucher system/Ireland
- ▶ Bring Young People to the table, provide them with opportunities to provide input to strategies and plans for their rural communities e.g. involving YP in LAC;
- ▶ Build the capacity of decision makers to represent the interests of young people e.g. Luxembourg/ young people training DM



Session 3: Strengthening rural areas contribution to food systems and the bioeconomy (Maura Farrell)

- ▶ **Boost territorial approaches:** to enhance basic services and infrastructure, including everything from access to land, education and training, road networks etc. This positively impacts depopulation, innovation, investment and broader rural development and sustainability.
- ▶ **Ensure social return on investment:** by creating conditions and criteria around funding and those selected for funding to ensure that value chains and financial gain contribute to the local area and region. This will maximise innovation and development directly within the region.
- ▶ **Enhance local capacity:** of rural people to consider local bottom-up development. This can be achieved through skills and training around project development and access to funding and can be delivered via a One Stop Shop model.

Session 4: Boosting women's role in rural areas (Maura Farrell)

- ▶ Strengthen the **data collection around women** in rural areas at both national and EU levels to provide a clear picture for gender proofing in policy and in rural areas.
- ▶ **Reduce gender inequalities** in rural areas and boost women's **opportunities for employment and innovation**: this can be achieved by providing skills and services, for example; access to finance, tailor-made training and access to childcare and improved healthcare.
- ▶ **Ensure women's engagement at decision making levels**: This can be achieved by changing the gender narrative and empowering women through highlighting their innovation practices, and achieving a certain percentage of women in decision making bodies.

Session 2: Paving the way to the digital era (Serafin Pazos)

- ▶ **Make Gigabit Connectivity a right** – Future-proofed Digital infrastructure can improve basic services, not replace physical ones
- ▶ **Collective Rollout** of digital, shared services and Public Procurement Innovation to both creating market and demand for digital.
- ▶ **Make Children as Agents for Change:** User led policy design and awareness of opportunities –start skilling from schools and extend to all age groups, involve LAGs and address the social impact of digital investments
- ▶ **Rural digital proofing**, and coordination between digital and rural ministries or departments

Session 5: Enabling community-led innovation and Smart Villages (Serafin Pazos)

- ▶ **Capacity building** how to measure social capital
- ▶ **“Easy Money for Difficult Things”**: Rules to foster appetite for risk, learn from failure, allow for mistakes
- ▶ **Qualitative** evaluation and **innovation replication/knowledge transfer for RDP/LAGs**
- ▶ **Local capacity building Support Action** is needed; **Single Local Office** as **one stop shop for technical assistance** and avoid fund duplication
- ▶ **Innovation brokers** for early stage of innovation development - no new structures but using existing ones

THANK YOU

Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform

https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en



<https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu>

