

ERP WORKSHOP REPORT – Workshop 5.2

<p>Workshop Name Communities as Developers</p>
<p>Names of Leader and Reporter Vanessa Halhead Ryan Howard</p>
<p>Method The participants were asked to work in 3 groups, and to present examples (previously requested) of how local projects had been either enabled or disabled by the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance and capacities of local structures 2. Resources (financial, human, assets) 3. Community champions and volunteers 4. Rural development agencies <p>From these to identify policy recommendations and additions to the ERP Manifesto</p>
<p>Main issues and lessons identified</p> <p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village associations able to work in partnership with others or to take over ownership - Motivated leaders - Bottom up approach - Decisions taken close to the people - Communication skills - Making statistics and economic analysis available to the community - LAG as community champion to help identify ideas and solutions - Visit and share experiences between communities/ regions - Step by step approach as appropriate to capacity - Flexibility of approach - Book of 100 sustainable actions - Local ideas - Self-sufficient ecological approach to energy etc. <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International investment funds focussed on capital infrastructure through regional & local authorities, not to local initiatives - Business risk - State of mind - political attitudes - policy barriers (education system, finance, etc)
<p>Ideas and case-study examples relating to the theme</p>

1. Finland: Problem: Children from a small village to be moved to another school 10km away. Solution: village association worked with municipality to save school. Outcome: a new school in the village lead to new inhabitants.
2. Sweden: Problem: School closure. Solution: village association took over school.
3. Netherlands: Health centre in village. Solution: Co-operation with village association re. transport etc.
4. Belarus: Zheludok – small town. Problem: local development and capacity. Solution: open minded mayor enabled residents to visit other regions to develop capacity and ideas. Led to formation of first NGO
5. Romania: Problem: local community development, lack of local finance and champions. Solution: LAG work with ideas, lessons and possible solutions. Outcome: first guesthouses in region developed in phased programme.
6. France: Problem: isolation of older people. Solution: Local authority recognised problem. Investment in local transport.
7. Czech Republic: Community Knezice – Social Accommodation Project – to support older population with biofuel heating = 1005 environmental community
8. Italy: Stay in your Land! Monti Dauni (Meridaunia LAG). Problem: state of mind and political attitude. Solution: bottom up approach
9. Estonia: Sanna ecovillage: people from capital city to rural areas, self-sufficient services

Policy proposals

1. Policy makers should realise local people are ready to take responsibility, and should respect, resource and provide 'back-cover' support.
2. Finance and resourcing:
 - LEADER-type funds: Importance of the right community champions for project initiatives – have to seek them out. Ensure investment is available from LEADER
 - funding in some countries is focussed more on big capital projects, and needs to be more flexible and bottom-up (Belarus)
 - Local authority acting as a leader/ champion where issues are bigger than the community (France)
3. Policies closer to the people (bottom up) listening to the people (eg. Estonia)
4. Policies should be rural proofed **and** local proofed

Additional messages for the ERP 2019 Manifesto

- The Manifesto should focus more on solutions and less on problems
- Rural people are a key part of the solution
- Social cohesion in rural areas is an important asset to build the future
- Lack of local self-government, especially in some countries (eg. Belarus) is an important issue