

ROAD Research event report MUA Ähtäri 22-23.8.2019

### **Klaus Brønd Laursen: Partnership development – When simple problems require complex solutions**

“Post world war Danish Rural Development is characterised by a strong movement towards fewer and larger farms a decline in rural population and a loss of functions”

“Fewer larger municipalities are causing a general centralisation of public services and goods”

“A central mantra behind this seem to be a narrow economic rationality preaching – let fall what cannot stand”

→ “There is a necessity to reconceptualise our valuation of rural qualities

→ “Added value is bad at capturing non-measurable quantities” and “we take the easy as measurable in development”. “What alternative forms of organising/organisations can capture alternative valuation and different understanding of values”? “Relations are essential in capturing other values than pure economic value”

→ Contracts are something fixed for future and for specific issues whereas partnerships are promises on a more open and functional future

→ Partnerships are prosessual arrangements, well suited on negotiations over values. Disadvantage: they produce a surplus of possibilities and are also subject of complexity.

→ Political awareness and action is needed to tackle the different rural realities

### **WORKSHOPS**

Helsinki University - Ruralia Institute – Katja Rinne-Koski, Merja Lähdesmäki, Anne Matilainen, Outi Hakala

#### **What Municipalities think about developing social entrepreneurship? Survey and preliminary results**

- Villages are positive on the idea to provide services – 40% of the villages without service providing could consider doing it and 50% of the villages that had service providing could consider strengthening it.
- There is not enough understanding of social entrepreneurship in municipalities or in the villages
- The state and the municipalities are providing services – “should villagers take care of themselves”
- Solutions – activating, national funding/policy, tax reductions?

Vaasa University – Päivi Kujala, Seija Virkkala

#### **Enabling interaction between rural Authority and entrepreneur – on-going study - interviews**

- Low interest if the entrepreneurs in the support and assistance measures – “bureaucracy”
- “The entrepreneurs are thought to implement the objectives of the society”
- “There are differences between expectations and experiences”
- “The authorities serve each other” and “administration is built for administration”
- “The strict implementation guidelines limit the discretion of the policy implementer”
- Everyday realities cover situations of place basedness, place blindness, place awareness

→ How to make the authority an enabler?

→ How to dismantle the bottlenecks?

Leader Group Mansikka – Seija Korhonen. Increased vitality through central villages and partnerships – in practice

### **Through several pilots LEADER group Mansikka develops partnerships, diversifies services and find models of providing services**

The methodology: pilot villages choose the core theme to develop, workshops and large partnership tables with all interested stakeholders (including research) are organised and coordinated by a partnership developer (facilitator). One main result was the creation of a functioning partnership model.

The project has created a lot of new services and ideas having lead the job creation. In village and municipal (Finnish context) economy listening, working together for common purposes is beneficial

→ Do not start partnerships by building the walls, start with activities, networking and services

→ Ensure partnership with your local place-based decisionmakers

→ Local economies and partnerships are easier because of closeness and shared objectives

Turku University Brahea Center, Sami Tantarimäki – coordinator of the Smart Village working group of the Finnish Rural network

### **From Smart villages to smart cities - how is a smart ("place") territory built - smart village competition data 2018-2020**

- "When we speak about smart territory, we should not forget about smart small and medium-sized towns between the smart cities and villages"
- We should think of place-based smartness
- "We should understand and accept realities, also think of smart decline processes". The smart decline is about how to best handle the slowing and declining situations in territories
- Policies should support smart development. The process would include ideas, coaching, targeting and policy.

Pylkkänen Päivi, Helsingin Yliopisto Ruralia Institute – Preliminary results on survey and interviews

### **Partnerships between LEADER-groups and municipalities (funding partner in Finland of LEADER-work)**

The interviews gave information on different working, partnership and contractual relations. There is project-related cooperation, membership in LAGs, two-way communication, common planning activities, events, pre-financing...

→ Municipalities are among the most important partners of LEADER-groups

→ There is a big variation in the level of partnership/cooperation between LAG's and municipalities (Local development authority)

→ There is room for increased interaction

**Plenary pics 22-23.8.2019**

1. Decentralise education to rural areas

Tarja Lukkari – coordinator of the remote rural area network in Finland: Case Kainuu University of Applied Sciences Out of 2300 students, 80% come from elsewhere, 60% stay in the area, whereas young people leaving to study elsewhere only 1% come back

(Background research KS)

To grasp the true meaning and value of decentralization one must first have an understanding of centralization and the current educational ecosystem... Since the course-ware is strictly governed it is often outdated, as well as narrow-minded in approach... Centralization activists argue that decentralizing unnecessarily complicates student's ability to socialize and network. While there is a difference between in-person and online interactions, many decentralization startups and systems actually enable students to expand their community and/or network more than they normally could.

Read more: <https://exlskills.com/decentralized-education/>

In his keynote input, Jón Torfi Jónasson (2016) suggested that, within centralisation-decentralisation debates, issues of policy aspiration and ambition, formal responsibility, and the potential institutionalisation of mistrust are at stake and must be clearly understood.

Many researchers (Androniceanu and Ristea, 2014; Busemeyer, 2012; Urbanovič and Patapas, 2012) suggest that, in decentralised systems, resources can be used more efficiently... Systematic evaluations of decentralised systems are though lacking.

[https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Decentralisation%20in%20Education%20Systems\\_0.pdf](https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Decentralisation%20in%20Education%20Systems_0.pdf)

2. Handling smart decline at political level is understanding realities
3. Creating more female jobs might have positive effects on the village demography
4. Teleworking is a solution – "do people want to be outside social working networks"?
5. Rethinking rural – issue of values and valuating. Do we think rural (economically) big, centralised, urban or local, social and partnership. Even rural expertise speaks an urban centralised discourse. Are we (working/economically) culturally bound and blind?
6. We should abandon unnecessary work and think of life career (Jeremy Rifkin). AI and 3D will soon be part of our life.
7. For megatrends like climate, environment rural must be part of the discussion, solutions and policy.

Sectoral is killing horizontal (Themes and administration) we for for ourselves – lobbying sectoral is killing the beneficial horizontal. Lobbyists benefit and some sectors win ahead of common good.

Everyone is on its own platform.



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