

Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas

22-26 MARCH 2021

Rural Vision Week



Rural-Urban Relations: Enhancing Synergies

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Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies (ROBUST)

24 March 2021

Workshop 5: Strong and dynamic rural-urban partnerships

Overall goals:

1. Better understand interactions and dependencies between rural and urban areas
2. Promote governance arrangements and policies that foster mutually beneficial relations

Multi-actor project

11 Living Labs & 5 thematic Communities of Practice



Main challenge: urban – rural dichotomy

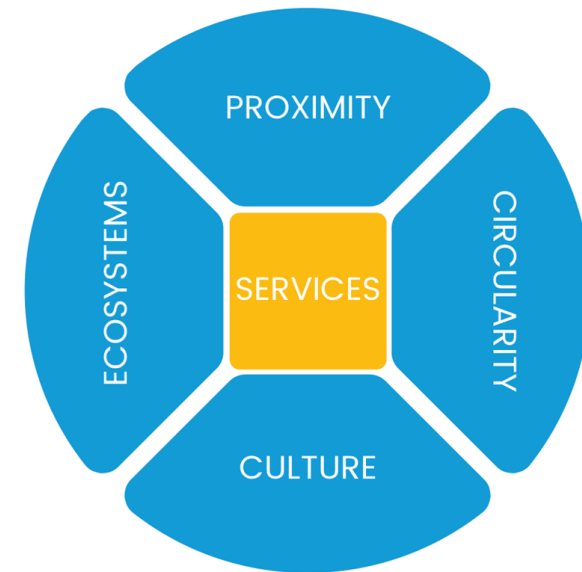
- Urban vs rural policies (e.g., food = agriculture = rural; culture = creativity = urban)
- Urban vs rural images (cities as hotspots of modernity and creativity; rural areas as backward and dull and lagging behind)
- Urban vs rural investments (boosting economic development vs combatting marginalization, depopulation and economic decline)
- Rural as subordinate to urban (rural services to cater for urban needs)

Important to focus on rural-urban relations, stressing the inter-connection, inter-dependence and blending of the rural and the urban.

Opportunities and trends

- Inter-municipal collaboration between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ municipalities (e.g., social services, mobility, spatial planning, employment)
- Rural-urban public-private partnerships and governance arrangements (e.g., ecosystem service provision by farmers’ collectives funded by cities)
- City-region food strategies / policies (and food policy councils as governance arrangement)
- COVID-19: rediscovery and re-appreciation of rural areas nearby; growth of local food networks; counter-urbanization & teleworking; (social) services & infrastructures in rural areas

- Rural development \neq growth of GDP, but producing essential daily services and social and material infrastructure needed to sustain / improve quality of life
- Key is social value of services and their contributions to wellbeing
- Five main domains / building blocks:
 - Social services (availability, access, quality)
 - Social and spatial proximity relations
 - Circularity (circular economy)
 - Culture & heritage
 - Ecosystem services



What is needed to get to the desirable future?

- New economic models (doughnut, foundational, wellbeing, circular economy)
- Community wealth through anchor institutions (e.g., schools, health care)
- Place-based rural-urban governance arrangements (key role for local governments)
 - Build on and learn from well-working arrangements
- Rural proofing of urban policies, but also urban proofing of rural policies

Rural-urban synergies are key to ensure the accessibility of basic services in rural places (and keep those places 'liveable') in exchange for contributing to the socio-ecological foundation of urban areas through other dimensions (ecosystems, circularity, etc.).

Thank you

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