

Rural Jobs: developing policy and practice in Europe

Agrarian Perspectives XVIII, CULS Prague, September 2009

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Agenda

- The RuralJobs project
 - Background
 - First findings
 - Emerging issues
- The importance of education, training, research and knowledge transfer
- Breaking down the boundaries



RuralJobs



The RuralJobs Project

- a multi-national research project funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme,
- entitled *RuralJobs: New Sources of Employment to Promote the Wealth-Generating Capacity of Rural Communities*.
 - Full partners: France; Hungary; Lithuania; Romania; Spain; United Kingdom.
 - Associate partners: Bulgaria; Italy.

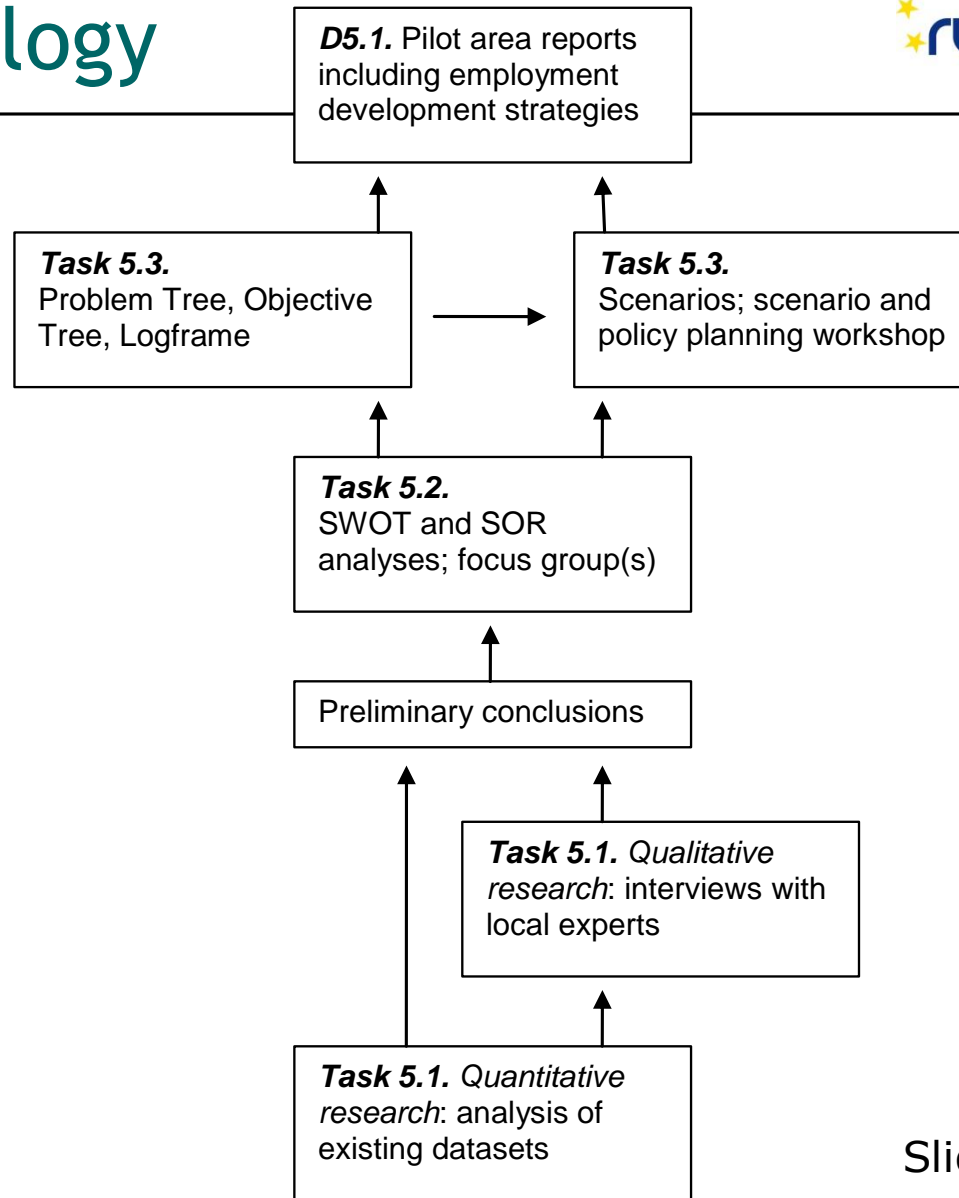
Objective

- ‘to provide a clearer understanding of the factors influencing the employment potentials of different types of rural areas to support the future evolution of rural development policies.’
- identify labour market, demographic and economic trends in rural areas across EU-27 and the potential for new sources of employment...
 - identify employment growth areas where rural development programmes can be targeted...

Work-packages

- Complete:
 - WP2: Assessment of labour market policies and programmes.
 - WP3: Assessment methodologies and indicators.
 - WP4: Typology for regions.
- Ongoing:
 - WP5: New strategies for employment in pilot areas, includes most of the field research.
 - WP6: Synthesis of recommendations.

Fieldwork methodology



Desk research - few surprises



- Clear differences between types of region;
- Predominantly Urban (PU) regions perform more strongly than Predominantly Rural (PR) or Intermediate (IR);
- EU-15 regions perform more strongly than those in New Member States (NMS).

RuralJobs Reference Areas



Region	GDP per capita 2005		Regional GDP by economic activity, 2005 % ²			Employment by economic activity, average 2000-2006 %		
	EUR	PPP ¹	Agric ³	Industry	Service	Agric ⁴	Industry	Service
Andalucia (IR)	16,343	18,010	5.4	27.1	67.5	9.9	25.3	64.8
Limousin (PR)	22,461	20,596	4.4	21.4	74.1	8.5	26.0	65.6
Essex (PU)	24,955	22,246	1.2	27.5	71.3	1.2	24.0	74.8
Lithuania (PR)	6,055	11,914	5.7	33.1	61.3	16.4	28.0	55.6
N. G. Pl. Hu (PR)	5,606	9,153	8.5	30.1	61.4	7.7	33.6	58.7
NW Romania (PR)	3,499	7,542	11.4	33.9	54.7	34.3	31.3	34.4

Table 1. OECD classification of rurality and economic data for six EU NUTS2 regions which would be the locations for the field research in RuralJobs WP5 (From Kerekes and Fieldsend, 2008).

¹ Purchasing Power Parities

² For Essex, GVA data for 2003 from national source shown for indicative comparison only

^{3,4} Agric includes agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing

Data source: Eurostat

PR – predominantly rural IR – intermediate PU – predominantly urban

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Strategies and programmes - again no surprises...



- Attempts at European consistency
 - EU Sustainable Development
 - The Lisbon Strategy
 - European Employment Strategy
 - Cohesion policy/Structural Funds
 - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- Implementation approaches vary considerably between EU members.
 - Positive - allowing for regional difference, or
 - Negative - undermining cohesion
- Tensions between EU policies and between them and national policy drivers

Emerging issues (1)

- Need for a typology more discriminating and sensitive than the OECD version, but easily applicable in practice by reference to existing datasets.
 - Over 60 typologies reviewed
 - Chosen typology is applied at NUTS3 level
 - Based on OECD (population density)
 - Plus remoteness (driving time to the closest city)
 - Plus GDP (threshold of 50% of the EU-27 average).

Emerging issues (2)

- Can a 'one-size-fits-all' policy approach work across the EU?
 - Economic trends and cultural conditions in rural areas of the post-socialist new member states (NMS) are very different from those in EU-15 countries, and indeed from one another;
 - so a rural development strategy designed for Western Europe is unlikely to be perfect for Eastern/Central Europe.

Emerging issues (3)

- Agriculture still appears to dominate rural policy thinking
 - and yet the service sector is the major employer in all six contrasting reference areas, and an even bigger contributor to regional GDP...
 - ... although it may not have the capacity to absorb surplus agricultural labour in poorer regions.

Emerging issues (4)

- Capturing and retaining the economic value of ‘natural capital’ will have a major influence on rural employment.
 - Direct employment from ‘new challenges’ (energy, biodiversity, climate change, food security, etc);
 - Indirect impacts through, for instance, enhancing ‘attractiveness’.
 - e.g. basis of rural tourism;
 - e.g. attracting and retaining population from other areas seeking enhanced ‘quality of life’.

Emerging issues (5)

- An holistic approach is crucial:
 - Creating jobs alone can just be building 'cathedrals in the desert' - other components need to be in place.
 - Influences design and management of policy (e.g. how far control of funds is retained centrally rather than being delegated to regional/local authorities).
 - implies challenge to the accepted notion of a rural/urban divide
 - consider such possibilities as giving a designated authority a 'single pot' of EU money to meet a set of targets covering urban, rural and regional development.

Emerging issues (6)

- Networks such as RUR@CT (linking regions for rural innovation) help by encouraging exchange of best practice;
 - could have an enhanced role in the context of policy implementation.

- www.ruract.eu



- ABOUT THE NETWORK
- RUR@CT EVENTS
- TO TRANSFER A GOOD PRACTICE
- METHODOLOGICAL ADVICES
- CONNEXION

"SHARING FOR PROGRESSING TOGETHER"

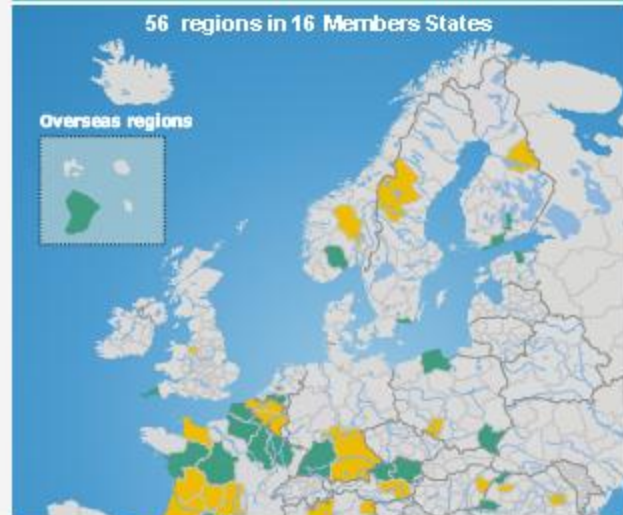
Do you want to benefit from the experience of other european Regions in the field of rural policies ?

Did you experiment innovative projects that are likely to be adapted in other contexts ?

RURACT network provides capitalization tools for the transfer of good practices between Regions at european level :

A **cooperation network** gathering european Regions politically involved for promoting rural innovation at operational and regional level, but also within a strategic perspective at european level.

RUR@CT NETWORK REGIONS



These are provisional thoughts



- open to challenge;
- will be tested (and added to) by the extensive fieldwork now under way in the partner countries.



The role of the education sector

The role of the education sector



- Creation of employment in rural areas is only partly a matter of providing job opportunities;
- It must be matched by development of the skills and attributes of the potential workforce.
- New industries and new policies bring new challenges for education and knowledge transfer.

Challenges for the educational sector



- Providing for all ages, not just the young:
 - also training/retraining the middle-aged, and providing new, meaningful roles for older generations
- Accepting new models of FE/HE:
 - For instance reaching out from city universities; developing purpose-designed part-time provision; delegating HE to non-university institutions and private agencies; challenging 'sacred cows'
- the necessity of maintaining research and knowledge transfer capacity in agriculture, forestry and related fields:
 - even as the latter move from the centre stage of rural policy.

The danger of over-reacting

- Responding to new policy emphases - and to new pressures in academia - can leave us with policy-makers and implementers who do not really understand or empathise with those who manage the land (it has already happened in some countries)
- Realising the full value of ‘natural capital’ requires skilled management at all levels.
- Thus education for land management - including agriculture - is still important (even if potential students do not appreciate it) and HE still has an important role.

Breaking down the boundaries



- More than ever we need teachers and researchers who can resist the temptation to work in a ‘silo’, and are able to work across boundaries of discipline, community of practice, and geographical area.
 - Agricultural education has traditionally been better than most in this respect;
 - But growing academic pressures by institutional structures (e.g. promotions, citations, research assessment, etc) are forcing young academics into narrow specialisms;

The pressures will not change...



- ...but their effects can be moderated by a university system which values and rewards interdisciplinarity



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Full paper downloadable from
www.martynwarren.co.uk

