

Empowering hidden voices

Hard to reach groups

- Effective animation is critical. Right people, place, time and quality.
- Identify right entry points or people, door openers not door keepers
- Constantly review engagement, animation, refresh, train to improve.
- Do not assume rural stakeholders should fit your expectations LAG, NRN, RDP, NGO, turn it around, how can we fit theirs?
- Focus on identifying and addressing real needs.
- Meeting the needs of the programme can compromise the ability to engage, red tape, admin, spending imperative etc.
- Demonstrate tangible benefits, early wins, communicate these.
- Be inclusive at local level, active animation, mobilise demand.
- It takes time, a long term approach, invest in the young.

Empowering hidden voices:

Hard to reach areas

- Establishing trust is more important in hard to reach areas, often feeling of isolated, conservative and resistant to change.
- Local animators, people widely known and trusted by local stakeholders enable the communication flows and high engagement levels required.
- Seminars organized at local level can increase stakeholder commitment to the discussion.
- Well designed consultation processes can help create commitment from rural stakeholders and the NSU/LAG. Show stakeholders that each voice is as important as the other.
- Long term stakeholder involvement: ‘one off’ does not achieve the same results as longer term more sustained involvement.
- Demonstrate and communicate what specific and concrete improvements results can be achieved and their relevance to them.

New methods for building urban-rural linkages:

- New methods(eg Theory U) involve a range of techniques: reaching out beyond usual suspects (eg to city dwellers), effective listening, deeper problem analysis, connecting to emerging futures, prototyping..
- Provide toolkits, training for trainers, capacity building.
- Bring policy makers into the process.
- Ensure flexibility in the strategies.
- Pick the urgent hot topics where there is energy eg. food, flooding.
- Build up a mosaic of cooperation from remote rural to urban – encourage partnering, mentoring, study visits.
- Use social media but also face to face.

Strengthening local cooperation: Regional Deals

- The key is TRUST, needs to be built from each side
- Communication is vital, practical and helping to explain complexity
- Don't be driven by money only, social capital matters
- Horizontal (not hierarchical) relationships of all actors of the regional deal
- Decentralising decision creates responsibility
- „Action” mode, not just talking and planning