Rural Vibrancy Tool: Enabling Rural Society to Best Meet its Potential

Presentation to Co-operation Ireland and ICLRD (International Centre for Local and Regional Development) Joint Conference on ‘Rural Society in Transition: Planning for 21st Century Rural Potential and Challenges.’

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1. Defining Rural Vibrancy

“A new OECD report, Promoting Growth in All Regions, provides fresh analysis that shows how relatively backward regions can in fact be potentially important sources of growth, but that a very different approach is needed to tap that potential”

• Urbanisation is associated with higher levels of output but not necessarily faster growth;

• Fast-growing less developed regions tend to have higher levels of human capital;

• Faster-growing intermediate regions are characterised by better infrastructure, connectivity and innovation;

• Addressing the problems of low-skilled workers may matter more than increasing tertiary attainment rates in less developed regions
Declining Vibrancy

“The role of the village ‘local’ as a vibrant social centre at the heart of the community is as important as ever, but the future of the pub in our rural communities is increasingly under threat”

(Sternad, Kennelly and Bradley, 2016: 109).
Community Vibrancy Domain

Social Engagement
• Social Participation
• Civic Participation
• Economic Participation

Attitudes towards Others and Community
• Trust
• Respect for Diversity
• Altruism
• Sense of Belonging

Social Support
• Size of Social Networks
• Reciprocity

Community Safety
• Crime (non)
• Perception of Safety

Canadian Council on Social Development, 2010
2. Methodology

• Data collected as part of an INTERREG Project (NW Europe) on Rural Alliances and Measuring Rural Vibrancy.

• Inspired by Collaboration with CIEL (Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership)

• Survey Work in South Kerry
  1. Survey of 104 Civil Society Organisations
  2. Mapping of Public Service Provision
  3. Survey of c.1000 citizens on community vibrancy

• Follow-Up / Ongoing work with Communities
Rural Alliances’ Partners

1. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority [UK]
2. University of Wales, Trinity St David [UK]
3. Innovatiesteunpunt vzw [BE]
4. Vlaamse Landmaatschappij (VLM) [BE]
5. Stichting Streekhuis Het Groene Woud & De Meierij [NL]
6. Huis van De Brabantse Kempen (NL)
7. Gemeente Lochem [NL]
8. Philipps-Universität Marburg, Fachbereich Geographie (DE)
9. South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. [IE]
10. Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo (Mayo County Council) (IE)
11. Maison de l’Emploi, de Développement, de la Formation et de l’Insertion du Pays de Redon – Bretagne Sud (MEDEFI) [FR]
12. Laval Mayenne Technopole (FR)
3. Presentation of Results

a. Civil Society and Community Vitality

b. Service Provision

c. Citizens’ Perceptions of Rural Vitality
Community Groups i.e. Civil Society provides vital local services and promotes development

Participative Democracy <-> Community Development
Who engages?
Membership of Voluntary Organisations
How Groups Operate – Percentage of Groups with the following features.

- A Clear and Agreed Vision
- Access to Services of SKDP
- Constitution / Articles of Association
- A Documented Strategic Plan
- Recruitment Mechanisms
- Procedures for Rotation
- Website / Facebook Account
- Access to Training
- A Recruitment Policy / Strategy
Perceptions on the Impact of SKDP

Iveragh

Kenmare

Mid-Kerry

Kilarney

Legend:
- Very Positive
- Generally Positive
- Mixed
- Negative
Issues Pursued by Communities through Planning and Policy

- Elderly
- LEADER
- Housing
- Mental Health
- Signage
- Roads
- Garda
- Employment
- Ambulance
- Casualties
- Health Care
- Alcohol
- Children
- Participation
- Regulation
- Retention
- Lighting
- Development
- Tidy
- Transport
- Tidiness
- Public Area
- Water Applications
- Resurfacing
- Safety
- Derelict
- Communities
- Sites
- Walkways
- Link
- Park
- Men's
- Physical Paths
- Greenway
- Waste Management
- Sustainability
- Family
- Grants
- Local
- Amenity
- Integration
- Searad
- New Gaeltacht
- National Access
- People
- Youth
- Older Areas
- Activities
- People
- Team
- Family
- Children
- Planning
- Policy
- Disability
- Environmental
- Women
- Village
- Services
- Control
- Childcare
- Rural
- Towns
Main Issues facing our Community

Unemployment

Lack

Employment

Isolation

Transport

Emigration
Citizens’ Perceptions of Place

Recap
972 citizens surveyed
Representative Sample, stratified by Geography.

Multiple Indicators of Economic, Socio-Cultural and Environmental Vitality and Well-Being
Levels of Agreement or Disagreement with Statements about Economic Vitality among Citizens in South Kerry

Local businesses appreciate local custom.

Local people are good to support local businesses.

People in this community have a good standard of living.

People with business ideas can get support and advice locally.

This community produces entrepreneurs and self-starters.

Innovation is valued and recognized in the community.

The local economy is as strong here as in other rural areas.

The local policing service is satisfactory.

Most people in this community have decent jobs.

This locality attracts investment.

We have good public services in this community.

Local middle-income earners can afford to buy a house.

Local Government services here are good.

Local Government provides good value for money.

Public Transport Services are sufficient to meet local needs.
Citizens’ Perceptions of Economic Vitality—on selected indicators, by Community Forum Area

**Most people in this community have decent jobs.**

- Killarney: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Mid-Kerry: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Kenmare: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Iveragh: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

P<.001, Cramer’s V=.132

**We have good public services in this community.**

- Killarney: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Mid-Kerry: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Iveragh: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- Kenmare: Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure/No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

P<.001, Cramer’s V=.155
Economic Vibrancy - Cumulative Score for each community

- Fossa
- Muckross
- Killarney & Environs
- Killorglin
- Blackwater / Templenoe
- Listry
- Lauragh / Tousist
- Glenflesk & Headford
- Kenmare
- Valentia
- S. Kerry Mean
- Annascaul
- Bonane
- Caherdaniel
- Barraduff
- Dromid
- Kilgarvan
- Glenbeigh / Glencar
- Milltown
- Portmagee
- Inch & Keel
- Kells / Foilmore
- Cromane
- Beaufort & Black Valley
- Sneem
- Cahersiveen
- Baile na Scúilge
- Castlemaine
- Waterville
## Percentage of Persons in Agreement with Statements about Socio-Cultural Vibrancy in their Communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Socio-Cultural Vibrancy</th>
<th>% of Persons in Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People greet each other, regardless of whether or not they know them.</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have at least one public festival annually.</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens are committed to this community—they have a strong sense that they belong here.</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have good sports and recreation facilities in this community.</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are good facilities for meetings locally.</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community has a distinct culture and heritage that are appreciated by the community.</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens are interested in national and international news and current affairs.</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You see many active, healthy-looking seniors in this locality.</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levels of Agreement or Disagreement with Statements about Environmental Vibrancy among Citizens in South Kerry

- There are adequate recycling facilities locally.
- For local people, the integrity of the environment is a priority.
- Local farmers are true guardians of the countryside and farm in an environmentally-friendly manner.
- The drinking water is clean and it tastes good.
- Buildings are appropriate to the local landscape.
- Planning and development are carried in a sustainable way.
Cumulative Scores for Communities across the Four Community Forum Areas on the Dimensions of Sustainable Development

![Bar chart showing mean vibrancy scores for communities across four areas: Kenmare, Killarney, Iveragh, Mid-Kerry. The chart measures economic vibrancy (blue), socio-cultural vibrancy (yellow), and environmental vibrancy (green).]
4. Observations and Recommendations

• Higher levels of socio-cultural vibrancy than economic vibrancy.

• Highest levels of economic vibrancy correlate with population

• Highest levels of socio-cultural vibrancy correlate with:
  – Rurality
  – Leadership (little red hen philosophy)
  – LEADER
Recommendations

- All places have potential.
- Recognise Civil Society as ‘The Fifth Estate’
- Broaden participation – especially by youth.
- Resource and mainstream social economy / community business.
- Enforce minimum targets for public service provision
- Promote the Co-Creation of Vitality / Vibrancy.
5. Measuring Vibrancy ->
-> Participatory Community Planning
Geodesign Workshop Proposals

2.1 Develop a safe pedestrian walk and cycleway connecting the lake with the sea front.

2.2 Develop an amenity footpath from The Lug to the lake.

2.3 A number of road safety measures at narrow sections and bends.

2.4 & 2.5 Develop a comprehensive set of speed control zones.

2.6 Install public lighting from the Church to the playfield and from The Lug to the school.

2.7 Construct a leisure boat launch/slipway.

Fig. 7.2.1: Infrastructure, Transport and Roads Project Locations
Cromane Community Council
Socio-Economic Development Plan 2018 – 2022

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Ni neart go cur le chéile – Many Hands Make Light Work.