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Rural resources and building capacity for rural regeneration

Burren Winterage School, October 23rd 2020

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ILR - Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development





- ▣ The RURALIZATION project
 - ▣ Why now and what are its aims?

- ▣ Realising rural regeneration opportunities
 - ▣ Identifying, realising and sustaining them?
 - ▣ Rural resource (s) and capacities

- ▣ Examples
 - ▣ Build it and they will come? Rural youth future dreams
 - ▣ The jigsaw of resources: Scottish Land Reform

The RURALIZATION project (2019-2023) is funded through the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme involving 18 organisations across 12 European countries

RURALIZATION – why?



Unequal development of rural and urban areas

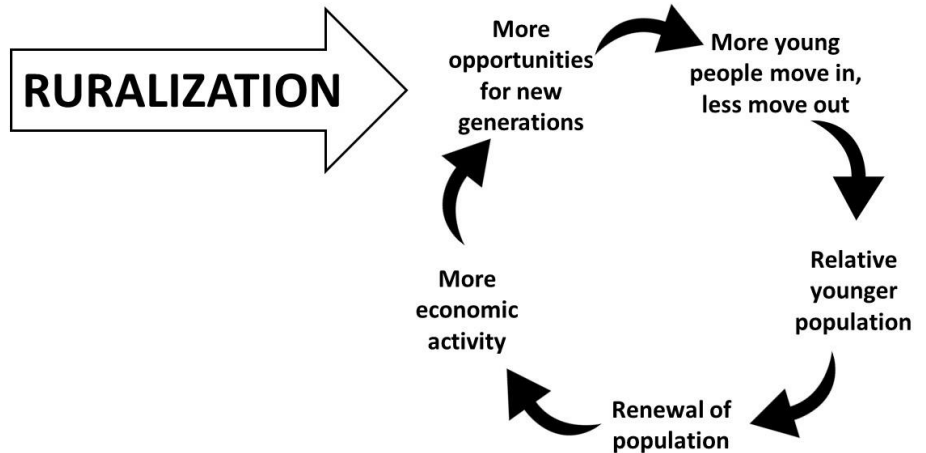
- ▣ Urbanisation a dominant trend
- ▣ EU population growth forecasts 2014-2050
 - ▣ Urban +12%
 - ▣ Rural -7%
- ▣ EU GDP per head 2014
 - ▣ Urban €34,479
 - ▣ Rural €19,104(Eurostat, 2017)
- ▣ Rural decline trend and:
 - ▣ Knock on
 - ▣ Related
 - ▣ Uneven impacts

➤ *Need for evidence to inform policies to impact generation of opportunities for new rural generations*

RURALIZATION ambition



- ▣ Shift away from
 - ▣ The negative spiral of rural decline
- ▣ To create
 - ▣ A positive spiral of new rural opportunities
- ▣ Focused on:
 - ▣ Future foresight
 - ▣ Assess trends to identify opportunities
 - ▣ Rural youth dream futures
 - ▣ Promising practices facilitating
 - ▣ Rural newcomers
 - ▣ New entrants to farming
 - ▣ Farm succession
 - ▣ Access to land for farming



- *NB – Also explore how findings may transfer to similar rural regions*

New rural opportunities?



RURALIZATION

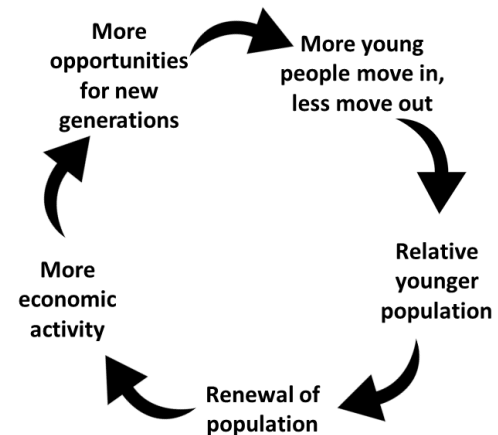
More
opportunities
for new
generations

❑ Opportunities?

- ❑ More 'feminised' labour market (e.g. tourism, creative industries)
- ❑ Diversified, entrepreneurial farms improving viability
- ❑ Create conditions for remote working (hubs, broadband)
- ❑ Support greater levels of rural innovation and entrepreneurship in future focused, sustainable sectors
 - ❑ e.g. circular economy, bioeconomy
- ❑ Attract and retain 'new generations' e.g. youth, entrepreneurs, migrants

❑ But key questions

1. How to realise opportunities?
2. How to sustain renewal?



NB – capacities and rural resources

Attract new generations of youth? Build the rural they want...

If you build it they will come...

But what do youth want?

Dream lifestyle in 15 years (very preliminary insights)

- Living income/financial stability
- Local facilities (sports, schools, shops, library, community centre)
- Varied things to do (e.g. yoga, drama, sport, restaurants)
- Participate in sports
- Access to nature (e.g. forest, beach, greenways)
- Strong local community
- Participate in community
- Close to family and friends
- Well-being (health, fitness, happiness)
- Have a family
- Work-life balance



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How do you ideally envision your future in 2035?

Are you aged between 18 and 30 and located in one of the following counties: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Louth, Meath, Kildare or Wicklow?

PLEASE TAKE OUR SURVEY

The RURALIZATION project aims to gain insight on the key 'ingredients' that make up the 'dream futures' of youth (aged 18-30) in relation to livelihood, accommodation and lifestyle looking 15 years ahead to 2035 and will use these insights to develop recommendations for a future policy agenda.

 The RURALIZATION project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817642.



RURALIZATION

Attract new generations of youth? Build the rural they want...

If you build it they will come...?

What are the obstacles?

Rural resources presenting obstacles to youth the dream future (very preliminary insights)

- **Financial**

- Cost of housing and living
- Debt/ability to save
- Availability of local jobs
 - With career prospects
 - Specialist/linked to education background

- **Services**

- Broadband
- Transport
- Wider services availability/proximity e.g. schools



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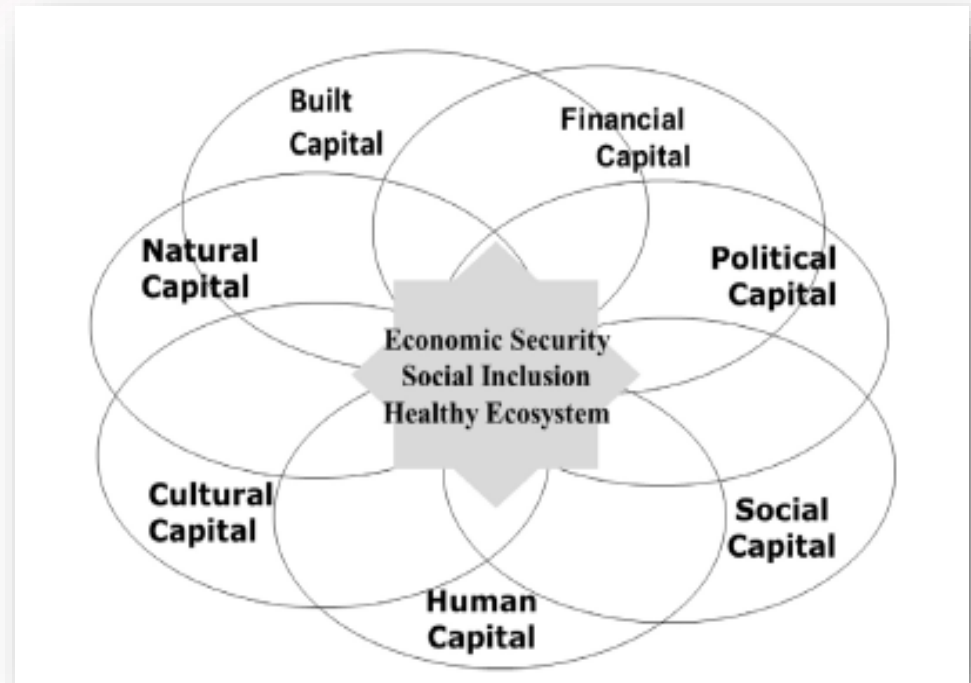


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How? Rural resources

Capacity for change impacted by:

- ▣ Variety of resources
- ▣ At a variety of scales
 - ▣ Individual, farm, community, region, national, international
- ▣ Number of different resources often drive capacity to realise opportunity



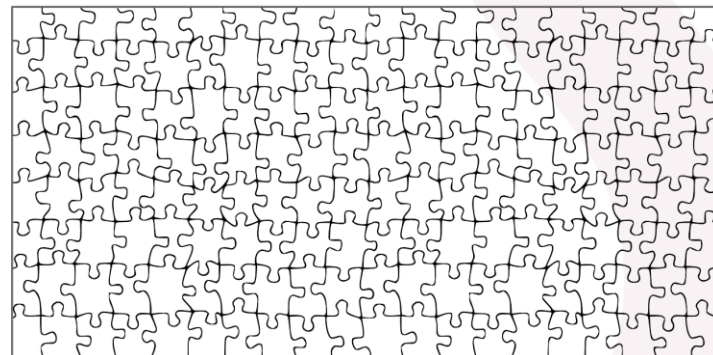
Source: Flora and Bregendahl, 2012

Building capacity?

- Build diverse resources?
 - *Soft rural resources*
 - Networks, social connections, changed attitudes, cultural traditions, skills, knowledge, policy influencing etc...
 - *Hard rural resources*
 - Finance, natural resources, land, infrastructure, communications, broadband etc...

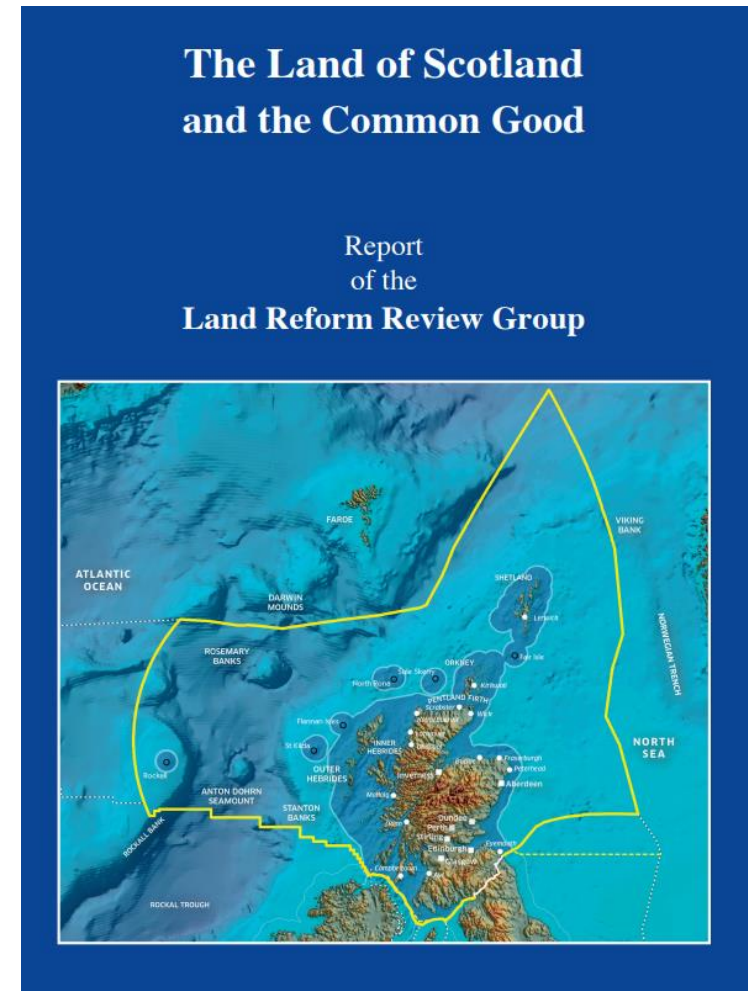
But also key...

- ***“...capacity cannot be measured merely by the increases in stocks of assets within the specific capitals, but requires an increase in the flow of assets that build stock in additional capitals” (Emery and Flora, 2006, p.22).***



The capacity building jigsaw: Scotland land reform & community land ownership

- Concentrated land ownership patterns
 - Land reform to support more equitable land ownership patterns
- Has facilitated community ownership of land
 - Support the public interest
 - Support sustainable development



The capacity building jigsaw: Scotland land reform



Legal levers - Legislative change e.g.

- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced
 - **Community right to buy rural land**
 - Community right to buy abandoned, neglected or detrimental land
 - Crofting community right to buy
- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016
 - Right to Buy Land to Further Sustainable Development

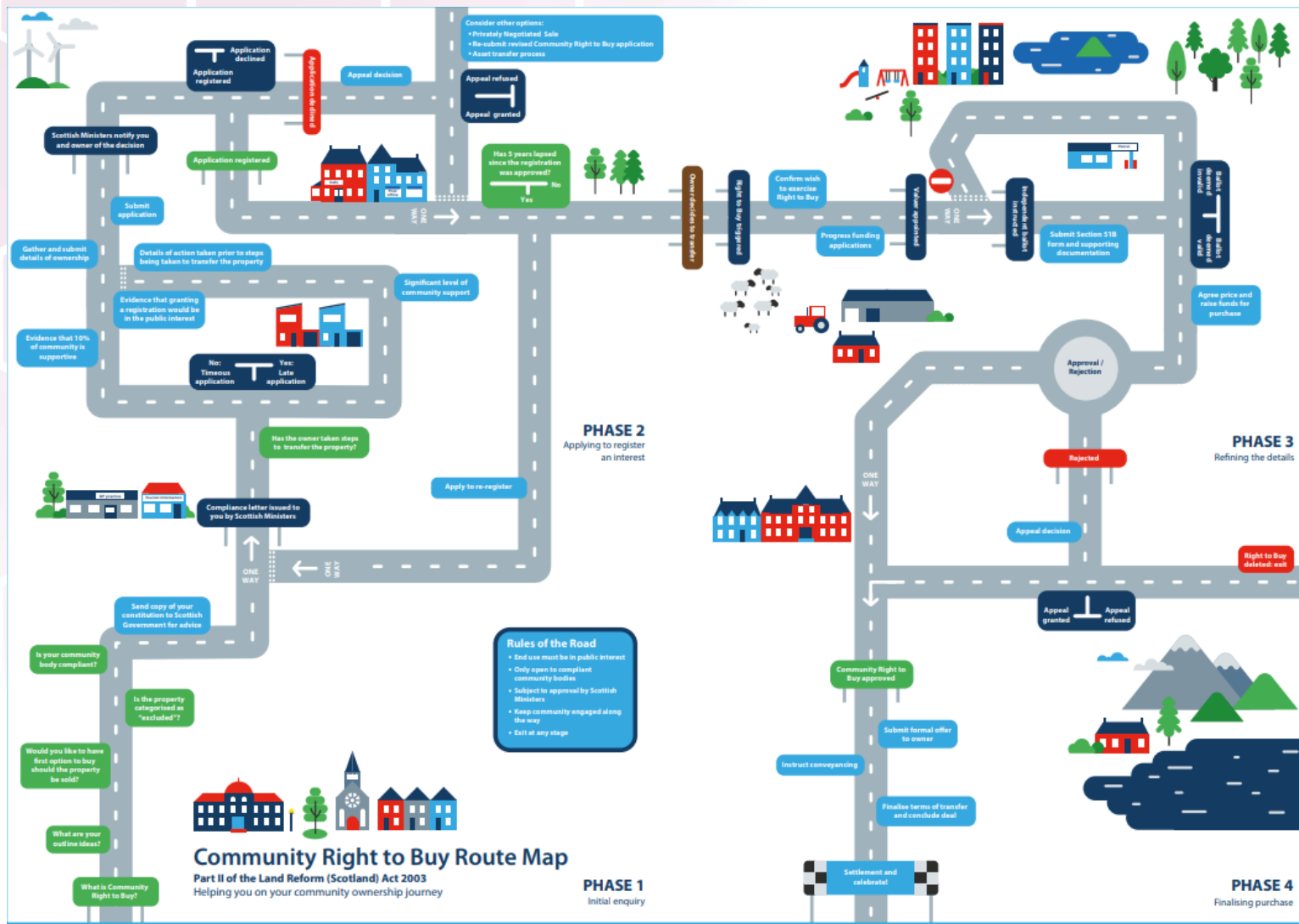
Supporting institutions

Scottish Land Fund
Ionmhas Fearainn Na H-Alba



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Scotland land reform: Community right to buy process

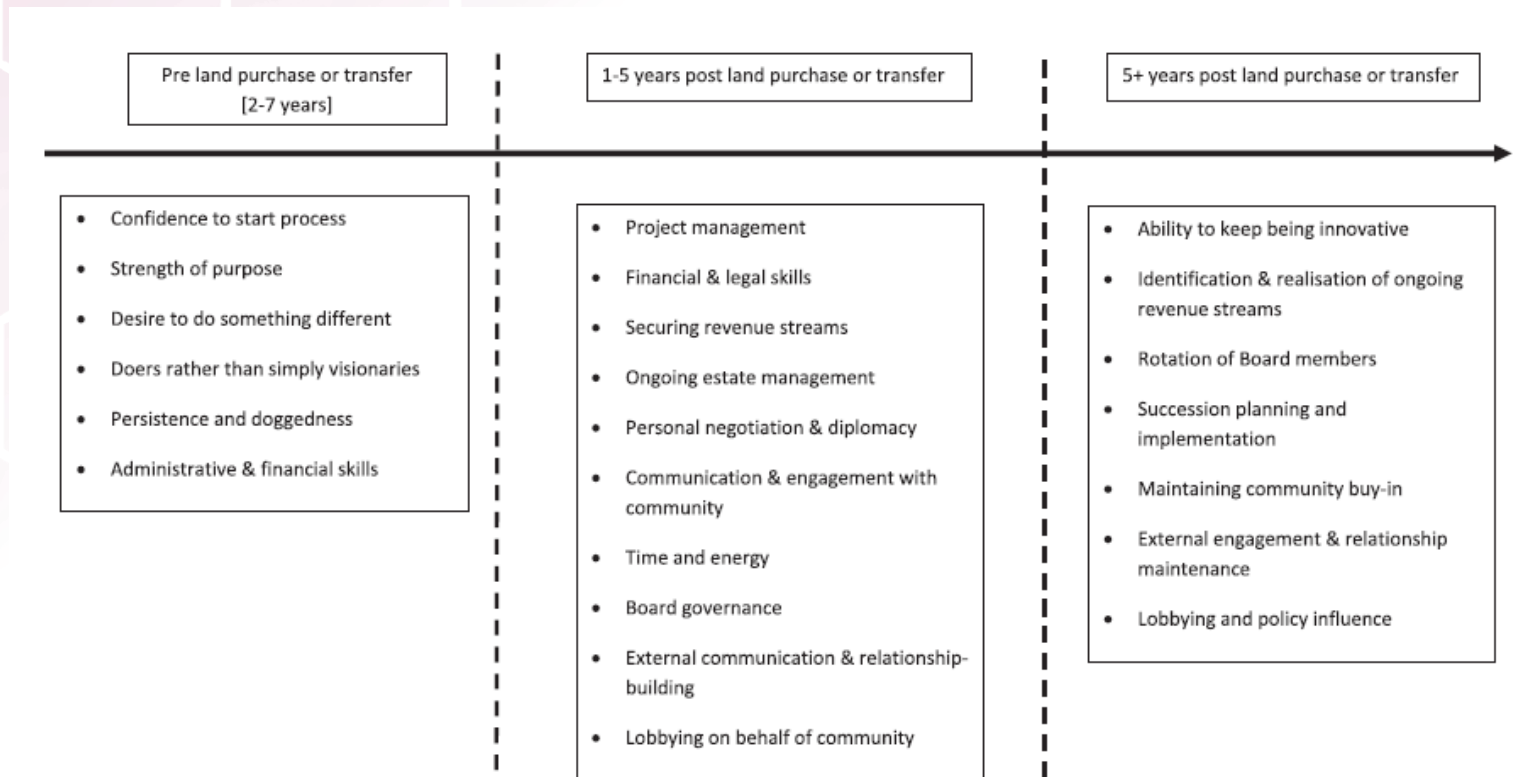


Source: Scottish Government, 2019

Scotland land reform: Community right to buy process and capacities/skills needed



Stages of community land purchase and development



Associated skills and capacities required and built

Source: Skerratt, 2013

Challenges

- ❑ Complexity of the process
- ❑ Time required
- ❑ understanding of commitment needed
- ❑ Legal technicality issues
- ❑ Legal challenges
- ❑ Managing relations with landowners
- ❑ Population critical mass to sustain a community body
- ❑ Local specialist knowledge
- ❑ Securing finance

Capacity building impacts

- ❑ Benefits of the process
 - ❑ Improvement of awareness of funding supports
 - ❑ Improved knowledge and skills (e.g. legal, communication, organisational)
 - ❑ Sense of empowerment/voice for the local community.
- ❑ Economic (when the purchase was complete)
 - ❑ Income generating potential for the community
 - ❑ Supporting existing/expansion of employment in the community body.
 - ❑ Increase potential for further investment (public or private) supporting future development

Rural resources and building capacity for rural regeneration?

Some final thoughts

- ▣ Need stock of diverse resources
 - ▣ Don't overlook the 'soft' rural resources
 - ▣ Networks, social connections, attitudes, cultural traditions
 - ▣ But they don't make up for the 'hard' rural resources
 - ▣ Finance, natural resources, land, infrastructure, communications, broadband
- ▣ Need resource flow
 - ▣ One resource complements another
 - ▣ One resource enables another to build
 - ▣ Over time

Implications?

- ▣ Context matters
 - ▣ Issues
 - ▣ Place
- ▣ Need 'integrated' approach
 - ▣ Catalytic effects
- ▣ Need long-term approach
 - ▣ 10+ years?



THANK YOU!

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RURALIZATION

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