

Learning from Newly Emerging Regional Knowledge Arrangements

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Outline

- **Context of the research project**
 - Learning from newly emerging regional knowledge arrangements on how to enhance sustainable regional development
- **Research approach**
 - Aim: learning community as the outset for a public knowledge / learning network vital/versatile countryside
 - Methodology: visits to the work floor of regional KA to enhance joint / interactive learning and action learning (interactive evaluation & reflection)
- **Preliminary results**
 - Basic features of regional knowledge arrangements
 - 'Pearls' & 'Puzzles'
- **Preliminary findings**
 - Building stones for a learning network 'Versatile Countryside'
- **Questions**

Context

- Growing public/private interest in versatile countryside - sustainable regional development
- Growing need to learn on actors/processes - to (re)built new (personal and institutional) capacities
- However: in modernization era learning is disconnected from diversity and specificity (*obstacle to overcome*) - especially in (publically funded) research or expert system
 - Modernization rational = rather one-sided, mono- functional perspective on agriculture (cheap food) and the countryside (production conditions) – industrialization and massive reconstruction – a specific capacity was institutionalized
- Furthermore: extension services has been privatized – hampered (public/open) learning from each other and knowledge utilization / innovational capacity
- Consequence: institutionalized incapacity
 - lack of appropriate knowledge and skills
 - fragmentation of knowledge

Context

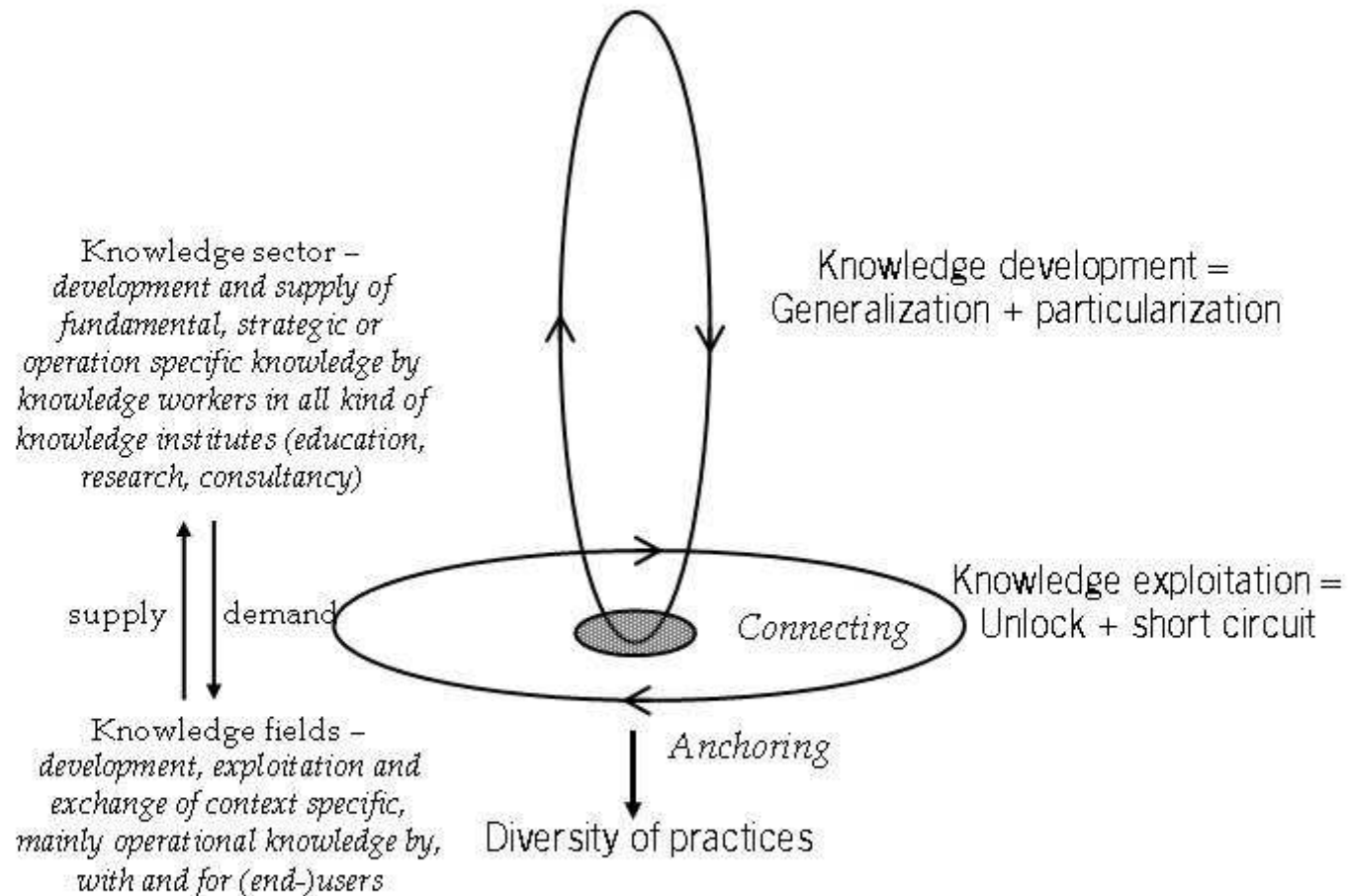
- Renewed interest in learning – sustainable regional development (booming innovation & transition studies)
 - Importance of learning networks, learning communities etc.
 - Also in policy, e.g. Ministry of ANF – main financier of (green) research and education (WUR)

- The question is:
 - a) how to (better) anchor KG in regional practices and (better) sustain regional development (KU)? – knowledge institutes (education, research, consultancy)
 - b) how to improve learning among actors involved – networks? communities? experimental spaces for joint learning?

- Basically (see figure):
 - reconnecting and short circuiting of ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ knowledge flows
 - anchoring of KG&KU in promising/innovative/transitional regional practices

knowledge for impact

improving knowledge circulation by connecting & anchoring knowledge flows



Context

- Ergo: new knowledge arrangements are needed
 - here: agreements between regional actors and knowledge institutes on how to anchor KG + KU structurally in regional (transitional) practices to enhance SRD
- Such new regional KA are emerging
 - 'Meeting and learning from regional KA' project

Some Newly Emerging Regional KA

- Rural Academy
- Regional Innovation Centre Eemland
- Workplace Veenkolonien
- Countryside Exchange Westerkwartier
- Knowledge Desk Kempenland

But there are more



Project 'Learning from newly emerging regional Knowledge Arrangements'

■ Aim:

- To facilitate exchange of experiences and lesson learned between pioneering regional KA
- How learning between regional KA and regions can be facilitated
- How KA in regions can be facilitated

■ Activities:

- Regional meetings
- A public workshops 'learning regions'
- A final workshop:
Joint harvest and building an agenda



Preliminary results: *basic features*

	Area & Focus	Duration	Driver	Aim	Pearls	Puzzles
Knowledge desk	Province Noord Brabant Reconstruction areas	10 years experience	Educationally driven	Providing a learning environment for Regional students	Well organized knowledge interface between regions and schools	Connection with research institutes for supra-regional questions
Regional Innovation Centre	National Landscape Arkemheen Eemland City – Countryside relations	1 years experience	Entrepreneurial driven	Stimulate Entrepreneurship and innovation	Regionally organized network focused on Entrepreneurs	Lack of capacity Translating regional issues in knowledge questions
Rural Academy	Region Eemland – Western Netherlands	2 years experience	Educationally driven	Learning environment for students, teachers, entrepreneurs	Educational knowledge desk for the region	Differences in dynamic between entrepreneurs and the school system
Workplace	Northern Netherlands Connecting research/education to regional practice	4 years experience	Driven by higher education and research institutes & regional Government	Create an workplace for students, teachers, regional administrators, Researchers	Connecting research agenda to regional agenda	How to involve entrepreneurs? How to create space within knowledge institutions?
Countryside Exchange	Not regional bounded Complex regional problem situation	9 month process	Methodological driven	Encourage regional development processes	Involvement of foreign expert Mobilizing the region	How to start a regional program after CE?

Preliminary results: *pearls*...



- Involvement of students in regional processes can lead to new, fresh turnover
- Rural academy, work place, knowledge desk work as 'office' for the region and can offer extra manpower
- Education becomes more realistic and challenging
- Research becomes demand driven

Preliminary results: *puzzles...*



- Who takes which role in the process?
- How to organize connections between regions and knowledge- and research institutes?
- How to develop a collective regional agenda?
- How to create ownership in the region?
- How to translate regional issues into knowledge questions?

Preliminary Conclusions

- What do we learn from the regional tour?
 - Common language, grammar
 - Getting to know each other = learning
 - Start of a learning community

- Possible enabling/facilitating roles of a (Dutch?) knowledge (learning) network?
 - Facilitating exchange of experiences between regions
 - Up-scaling of supra-regional questions
 - Creating more space within knowledge institutes
 - Monitoring of regional processes

Questions?

More information?

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