

FSN FORUM DISCUSSION No. 42
RECENT THINKING ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
FROM 4 SEPTEMBER TO 9 OCTOBER 2009

Hi,

My name is Jan Michiels and I am a Consultant working in the Policy Assistance and Resource Mobilization Division Service of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). I am currently writing a paper analyzing Rural Development's past, present and likely future trends including projects and policies covering the full spectrum from the local to the regional, national and international field.

Rural Development (RD) is playing an increasingly significant role in both developing and developed nations' policy frameworks. Initial attempts to impact rural areas, since 1950s, used mainly sectoral approaches as entry points, through top-down often blue-print driven frameworks. Recent interventions have become more grassroots-based, community driven through participatory actions and with a cross-sectional and highly integrated and spatial oriented development approach which centres on people's livelihoods and wellbeing.

I have drafted three questions which I would appreciate to hear your views on:

- A key component of rural development is agriculture. The thinking has, however, evolved towards a more holistic approach that aims at achieving broader objectives of area development and livelihoods' improvement applied to the rural space. **Given this, what are the essential components of a modern comprehensive rural development strategy/ approach and if possible could you share case studies which encompass your views?**
- **Can you provide evidence to-date on the impact and effectiveness that the shift of paradigms/approaches have had in a developing or transition country context?**
- The number of actors involved in rural development assistance programs has increased dramatically in the last decades. **What are the effects of this evolution based on existing evidence, and what implications are there for a conducive environment for RD?**

Thank you for having taken time to read this note and for providing any comments and suggestions you may find relevant.

Warm regards,

Jan Michiels,
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