



LancewadPlan Final Conference

Wilhelmshaven

19 June 2007

Terramare

Willem Foorthuis

People in Charge, Making the Best of Local Resources

- a Belvedere on the Wadden

In rural areas we are witnessing a transformation, which is probably the most radical in the past 3000 years. The economic importance of agriculture is declining at a great pace. The number of people working on the land has dropped to less than 7% now, compared to more than 60% half a century ago. The point has been reached where traditional economies no longer guarantee the survival of rural and suburban areas. In the Netherlands we perceive a transformation from an agricultural based economy into a housing, leisure and knowledge economy. Some specialists are talking in terms of the post-agricultural society which we are entering now! A new world is emerging. A huge new potential is developing itself in rural areas – 70% of Dutch surface – whilst knowledge, capacity and strategy to guide and facilitate this process are missing. We lack a clear understanding of what is actually going on, what new potential is emerging, and what chances and opportunities this will bring. Are we developing these changes/possibilities? No. Instead we apply a policy of restriction in order to 'protect' our values and our traditional economies. This doesn't work and in the meantime especially the cultural values are vanishing in a rapid pace! During the last decade Lancewad gave us enough evidence for this cultural erosion. Do we have a Problem? No, we are the Problem!

The new economy which is emerging now, is one of living, housing, locally-based economy in a global context. We don't need the industrial organised agriculture, we don't want the current low quality urbanisation of our suburban and rural areas; the quality driven by the lowest budget. We need regions with a very high cultural quality; we are in search of the unique mix between the slow world (strong identity) and the fast world (near to mobility and networks). We are thinking in regional development but always as a part of urban networks and most of all we want to be a part of a real living culture; the thing that moves people. This

should be the basis of our economic and spatial development: regional identity as a unique quality as the basis for economic development. This would be a new attitude which will result in a high quality public space. And this again is, which was proved by Prof. Parkinson (Manchester/UK), the quantee for a sustainable economic development. And please do not waste time! Hurry. For we know now that the cities in our region will win the competition with the rural areas within 15 years. Here lies the main task of LancewadPlan in the near future.

Regional qualities; the uniqueness in landscape, culture, traditions and economy as the driving force. This is not a problem for the Wadden Region(s). The whole region is known since Roman times as a densely populated region with a highly developed economy and strong attitudes. This image never changed until the second half of the last century; the period in which we lost the sea. From that moment on it was only agriculture and tourism. And what do we have now? Nearly 30 sub-regions. With there sub landscapes, sub cultures and sub economies. There is no place, no region in the world in which we can find this cultural diversity on this scale. This is not tourism!?, this is a way of life. Something we do not fully understand anymore these days because of the fact that we only want to see a part of the whole: tourism, museum, architecture, nature, agriculture, living or industry. This of course is due to the fact that we lost the element which can combine all the elements: the sea. We are a generation which lost the coast. And that is the reason that we do not understand the whole. We have to re-orientate on the coast, on the sea. The second step is that we have to combine the elements; we have to work together from the basis of the living culture; the thing that drives people, that make things understood.

The question emerging from public organisations, authorities, private companies and local inhabitants is how to use these (cultural) values to facilitate the kind of development we desire: contributing to quality of life, regional prosperity, distinctiveness and sustainability. In this context the “lectoraat voor plattelandsvernieuwing” of the University for professional Education Van Hall Larenstein in Leeuwarden/Velp, the Netherlands, has developed a *strategy in practise* through which the dynamic process of interactions between people – professionals as well as laymen – to exchange existing perspectives as a basis of knowledge creation, and thus it opened up the completely new knowledge domain of *consilient* planning. We refer to W. Whewell, who in 1840 explained *consilience* as 'jumping together' of knowledge by linking facts and theories from different specialised fields to create a common groundwork of understanding. We seem to have lost the ability to share knowledge, and we should recapture it if we want to guide the process of current transformations. Thus, the real challenge for all who are responsible in politics, business and education is how to open up our current frames of knowledge in order to realise a paradigm shift towards consilience in knowledge creation, in policy making and in planning. This way of thinking led us to the development of what we call *De Werkplaats* (the workplace), a physical location in a region which is under heavily transformation. And now after three years of experimenting and working on projects we learned that reality is developing itself in a different way than our policy documents are anticipating. Another important lesson is that the fuel for *consilient* planning and the motivation for 'jumping together' is developing processes on the basis of local and regional cultural values.

Werkplaats – Objectives

Our objectives are: 1. To *define* the new knowledge domain of regional transformation and consilient planning; 2. To establish *best practice examples* of it's economic, social and cultural structures and performance, and 3. To translate it into *policy*.

Of course, all these objectives are mutually linked into a circle of cross-fertilisation and all the objectives are embedded in and driven by local and regional cultural values (what we call *Belvedere*). The human measure and people's creative capacities is the leitmotif of our programmes in the Werkplaats. We aim to gain knowledge on what people are concerned about: the facts of what actually is going on, the culture reflecting context and soil, and the values that people are fostering. The disciplines involved are at least: cultural history, spatial

and landscape planning & design, land & water management, life sciences, ecology, hydrology, economy, communication & ITC, demography, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, politics, aesthetics / fine arts. People, our living culture and our capacity of co-creation are the key determinants in connecting these disciplines. Through this multi-focal approach we revitalised local and regional cultural values and the local identity which in itself became the basis for new developments

Werkplaats – Envisaged results

Our central result is to deliver a consilient approach to identity-based sustainable economic innovation of regions, in policy, business and decision making. On the basis of a shared perspective on the value of vital cultural expression, the Werkplaats is exploring the potential of spatial and cultural quality as a motor of economic prosperity and liveability which is reflected in the mutual relations between the domains of:

Regional/local administration/management and governance; Output: examples and routines to facilitate management and investment structures which allow delegation of responsibilities to where they belong: participation management, local ownership and forming of durable alliances between organisations, agencies, networks and individuals;

Landscape, housing and infrastructure; Output: spatial and architectural planning and design procedures which enrich and strengthen the quality of the surroundings, laying ground for attractive villages and landscapes for inhabitants and visitors;

Knowledge management, new services and entrepreneurship; Output: new rural entrepreneurship and citizen-farmer alliances; farmers as landscape managers within the local and regional community, new best practice examples concerning water, energy and environmental management, leisure and tourism.

Relevance

Modern scholars' research is focussed on *government* and to a far lesser extent on *governance*. We will have to make the large body of already existing *tacit* knowledge explicit to surpass traditional institutional frontiers and to use social capital, which is based on the potentials of local communities in investment programmes, as well as on the strengths of self organising innovation processes for governance structures and policies (e.g. cultural-developmental planning). The *Werkplaats*-strategy links (physically and mentally) the day to day experience of local inhabitants with stakeholders involved in teaching, research, knowledge application, policy making, politics and business into a network of co-operating partners when addressing the challenges of regional transformation. Demand-driven, real life innovative regional projects and an integral and participative approach set the *Werkplaats*-stage for transsectoralism and transpowerment of the diverse public and private actors. It is focussed on empowerment of bottom-up initiatives. The result is a concurrent process based on *action research* which includes knowledge creation proven in national and international practice, dynamic policy making, sustainable economic innovation, improvement of the living environment and enriched life quality. It delivers a huge, and yet unknown, potential of social and economic valorisation, which has to be monitored, assessed and further worked out in order to fully use its social and economic benefits.

Action plan

The programme shows a circular movement consisting of the following parts:

A body of knowledge – *Define* the new knowledge domain.

Strategic focus: Create a trans-disciplinary and participative network of knowledge. Actions: a) Explicate and combine local, expert and sector knowledge on regional and local facts and figures; b) Create an understanding of what 'regional transformation' means and how it is reflected in day to day life, economically, socially and spatially; c) Work out an integral vision on regional transformation, development and innovation, cross-cutting sector domains; d) Develop transferable methods and instruments to use and integrate existing knowledge into the new knowledge domain of regional transformation and consilient planning.

New economy – *Apply* the new knowledge domain.

Strategic focus: Assure regions of an economic future, by safeguarding diversified economies, integrating activities that based on people's capacities, and that are complementary to traditional business and in line with local / regional conditions and (future) demands. Actions: a) Detect and realise innovative, integrated, participative and community based regional and local schemes to create new (social, cultural and economic) services, niche products, new jobs and (micro)enterprises; b) Encourage interaction and synergy between economic sectors which have traditionally been separated: housing, mobility, agriculture, water management, (green / culture) tourism, (renewable) energy; c) Establish multi-discipline and multi actor research and co-operation networks to continue and deepen the consilient approach.

Participatory governance – *Anchor* the new knowledge domain.

Strategic focus: Build new partnerships as active, engaged and responsible bodies in strategic decision-making. Actions: a) Explore new communication strategies between government levels as well as between government and stakeholders; b) Develop and carry out training for capacity building among practitioners and policy makers.

The title of this paper, *People in Charge, making the best of local resources*, a Belvedere is meant to indicate the best possible integration of three type of resources: cultural heritage, socio-economic and spatial development, and the institutional and political context. Cultural heritage should enclose multiple sources: archaeology, architecture, landscape, and, last but not least, the stories, knowledge and identity of the local residents. The hypothesis of this project is that while taking into account the regional (local) cultural heritage, socio-economic development will be better located in the landscape, and lead to higher revenues. The integration of the three types of resources is realized by a careful and intelligent design of development process, in which people play a central role. And through this approach we are able to jump together!

Making the best of local resources is a key-issue in the *Lectoraat Platelandsvernieuwing* of the University of Professional Education Van Hall Larenstein in Leeuwarden/Velp, Holland. In the European relations of the Lectoraat this concept is seen as *the Dutch approach through which cultural qualities of landscape, the living culture of its inhabitants, traditions and objects are implemented in regional and local policies*. In other words the policy focuses on the integration of spatial development with cultural heritage. Yet, in the approach of the Lectoraat, we work hard to strengthen the approach will designing stronger links with socio-economic development.

Let's start working

Culture is said to be expensive. Maintenance of monuments and museums takes loads of money and landscapes – they are values that even for billions are not to buy. So, we witness the cultural exposure of the Wadden declining.

But this is only half the truth. We also know that an economy built on a rich public space in a unique environment, which we can read, feel and understand, is a top-economy (Parkinson: Barcelona, Munich, Amsterdam, etc). In other words: every euro spent in the economy of the Wadden-region(s) should be culture-based. And then you will see that we have money enough for our culture, for our landscapes and our traditions.

But:

Do not hide it in a 'museum'!

Do not claim it as your own!

Do not fragment the whole in small unreadable pieces!

Never create a cultural oasis amidst a grey agricultural landscape!

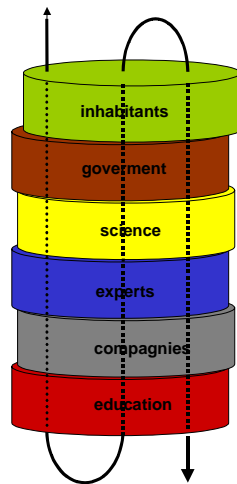
And never, never pamper the culture with the big C!

Otherwise you will loose the whole picture, and the wholeness represents that kind of culture, which of main importance for the local residents – and thus should be sacred for you as well: the living culture.

You know as well as I do that a huge amount of money is up to flow to the coastal areas.
Climate change brings up a choice:
investment in coastal safety on the basis of coastal quality => sustainable maintenance
investment in coastal safety on the basis of coastal engineering => destroy it forever

The smart transnational alliance of authorities, experts, private companies, education and research institutes and civilians will give us the opportunity to write history in this unique and valuable region.

Trans-powerment



Multi-loop / Multi-actor

