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Developing Human Capital to Strengthen Rural Economies:

Reflections on the Northern Rural Network

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Plan

Neo-endogenous rural
development

Universities & knowledge
economy

Rural development & CRE

Iterative learning and its
implications





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	Exogenous development	Endogenous development
Key principle	Economies of scale & concentration	Harnessing local (natural, human & cultural) resources for sustainable development
Dynamic force	Urban growth poles (drivers exogenous to rural areas)	Local initiative & enterprise
Functions of rural areas	Food & primary products for expanding urban economies	Diverse service economies
Major rural dev problems	Low productivity & peripherality	Ltd capacity of areas/groups to participate in economic activity
Focus of rural development	Ag. Modernisation; encourage labour & capital mobility	Capacity-building (skills, institutions, infrastructure); overcoming exclusion



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Neo-endogenous development

- ‘Wholly ‘endogenous’ development is an unattainable ideal
- Hybrid model, “locally-centred” development
- Key role of ‘neo-endogenous gatekeepers’ (e.g. universities as both local and global institutions)
- Knowledge production, valorisation & circulation crucial





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Knowledge economy

- the ability to produce, circulate and apply knowledge is now more fundamental to economic competitiveness than the more traditional (and tangible) wealth-creating assets of land, labour or capital.
- Innovation becomes the driving concern
- location-specific factors for competitive success
- Tacit knowledge
- Mode 2 Science / Mode 2 Universities





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Rural Development & CRE

- Established 1992
- School of AFRD
- “To advance the study and practice of rural development, nationally and internationally, through high quality research, scholarship and postgraduate training”





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The 'New Rural Economy' project

- Northern Rock Foundation, One North East (RDAs), county councils etc.
- Northern Rural Network** (workshops, short courses, mail-base)
- MSc Rural Development studentships
- Evaluation & innovation
- A community of practice?





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i. The 'Northern Rural Network'

- Over 700 members
- 4-5 workshops per year
- 80-100 attendance
- MSc students write up reports
- 1 or 2 two-day short-courses
- Future formats
 - Seminars without speakers
 - 3-day study tours





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ii. NRN workshops (2001- 03)

•2001-2002

- Consultation on the Rural Action Plan for the North East (75)
- Renewable Energy (55)
- Future Directions after FMD (80)
- The Rural in the Regional Agenda (55)

•2002-2003

- Rural Tourism (79)
- The Future of Livestock Marts post FMD (56)
- The Curry report (100)
- Agri-Environment Schemes - Future Directions (82)
- Rural in the Regional (100)





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iii. NRN workshops (2003- 05)

•2003-2004

- The Implications of Ageing for Rural Areas (33)
- Compressing the Food Supply Chain (90)
- The Role of Local Government in Rural Policy and Delivery (100)
- Rural Housing (42)
- The Role of Development Trusts in Rural Delivery (50)
- The “Rural” Northern Way (82)

•2004-05

- Rural Futures : Scenarios for the North (45)
- Grand Attractions in Rural Development (75)
- Understanding Rural Economies (80)
- Forestry and Rural Development (70)





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Envisioning rural futures

- Stakeholder workshops to engage with futures scenarios for rural areas
- Opens up space for strategic questions about rural and regional development





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iv. MSc placements

National Trust

Northumbria Larder

Teesdale Enterprise Agency

Teesdale Marketing

Business Link, Northumberland

Tynedale Artists

Tyne Grain/ GrainCo

Northern Counties Meat Group

Northumbria Organic Producers Group

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

North East Land Link

Northumberland County Council

Tees Valley Rural Community Council

Environment Agency

Durham Rural Community Council





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Evaluating Iterative Learning

- Human capital formation / tacit knowledge
- Learning through 'co-production' of knowledge
- Capturing & codifying learning
- Academics as 'neo-endogenous gate-keepers'





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Conclusions: Iterative learning

- Knowledge economy v knowledge ecology: (hi-tech products v iterative co-production of know how)
- Human capital development through circulation (of postgraduates, researchers & practitioners); role of action research
- Modes of academic performance (modesty; humility; independence)
- Business & management studies/ organisational theory: Wenger's 'Communities of practice'
- Science studies: Stengers' 'Competency Groups'

