

Rural policies in Latin America: The missing half of the half-full glass

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Territorial approach to rural development

- ▶ **15 years of theory and practice** of area-based approaches to rural development in Latin America
- ▶ **Well-established conceptual foundations** with a recognized body of literature
- ▶ Relatively well-articulated **networks** of policy makers, researchers and practitioners
- ▶ Some **framework laws**
- ▶ Hundreds of **programs and projects** branded as “territorial development”



Preliminary results of review

- ▶ Zero evaluations of results and impacts, although numerous process evaluations with some anecdotal evidence about contributions to improving opportunities and well-being
- ▶ Ongoing review of the published and grey literature, plus seven in-depth case studies
- ▶ Preliminary conclusion: a lot of old wine in new bottles, but sufficient examples of good progress to keep trying



Four main shortcomings

1. “Territorial” policies and programs with a distinct agricultural focus
 - ▶ Ministries of Agriculture continue to play dominant role in rural development and regressive, subsidy-based policies are firmly entrenched
2. Outdated legal and operational definitions of ‘rural’ fail to recognize the role of urban centers and rural-urban linkages



Four main shortcomings

3. Lack of incentives and institutionalized mechanisms for coordination
 - ▶ National-provincial-local
 - ▶ Inter-sectorial
 - ▶ Public-private (more progress here)

4. Limited forms of participation in decision-making: local actors not empowered to make decisions affecting the allocation of public resources



More attention needs to be given to the political and institutional environment of rural development policies



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