



# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title *LinkedIn-group and blog Netwerk Platteland 2.0*

Theme *Network communications and Knowledge exchange;*

NRN *Netherlands* Coordinator *De Lynx*

Partners *Various from the broad Network*

Period *Still running activity* Resources *Time to manage the webpages*

Geo-location *Netherlands*

Beneficiaries *Professionals working in the field of the rural area (like researchers, policy officers, consultants, project managers, entrepreneurs), and other people interested*

### Background

The popularity of social media as a communication tool is still growing. It is an easy and fast way of communicating and makes it possible to contact many people at the same time. Since the main goal of Netwerk Platteland is to get people involved, support knowledge exchange, bring people into contact with each other and strengthen the network, social media are indispensable tools. LinkedIn is the ideal communication tool to get professionals involved. The format of our blog page makes this tool easily accessible to others as well.

Netwerk Platteland focusses on all kind of issues within the field of rural development and covers the entire Netherlands. Social media make it possible to get people from different regions working on different topics involved. People, who otherwise would have never met get the opportunity to learn from and help each other.

### Main activities

On our LinkedIn page hot topics relating to rural development are discussed. Participants share their opinions, start their own discussions or ask for examples of good practices or advice on a personal level. Through our blog Netwerk Platteland 2.0. people interested in regional issues, both professionals and others, are welcome to share their opinions by writing their own blog or reacting to blogs already posted. Sometimes people are invited to write a blog as well. Interesting discussions occurring on the blog-page and within the LinkedIn-group are also communicated via Twitter. Both Netwerk Platteland 2.0 and our LinkedIn group are used to get input for the 'STREEKstelling'. 'STREEKstelling' is a statement about a hot topic in rural development. Responses are gathered through those social media and published in the Netwerk Platteland magazine 'STREEK'.

### Main results/benefits

Nowadays, social media are one of the most efficient means of communication. Through blogs and LinkedIn-pages people are able to easily get involved in discussions about relevant topics, topics that do matter to them. It provides a platform for two-way information and knowledge exchange and we are able to provide more insight into the things happening within the network, our views and plans, and upcoming events. We also receive interesting views and ideas from people outside the network who are formally or informally involved in the field of rural development. Through our blog-page and LinkedIn-group we receive opinions about our 'STREEKstelling' and views on current hot topics. These social media also provide an opportunity to reflect on events or discuss topics raised at the events further. Netwerk Platteland 2.0 and LinkedIn provide ideas for new events and field trips and inform us about what kind of activities are still needed. This information is really valuable, since it derives directly from people within our field of activity.



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#### Contribution of the NSU

The NSU builds and supports the network. The NSU also contributes directly to both the blog and the LinkedIn-group by posting blogs, starting discussions, inviting people and actively participating in the conversations.

#### Contribution of the partners

The different partners contribute by managing and writing the LinkedIn-group and the blogs. This includes writing blog, starting discussions and participating in them. Partners also ask for contributions from relevant people involved in the field of rural development.

#### Success factors

The discussions within our LinkedIn-group receive a lot of attention and there is hardly any effort needed to get discussions started and to keep them running. This helps more people to find their way to our blog and LinkedIn-page. We connect activities in these media with other social media like twitter and Facebook, to involve more people interested in our subjects. The media make our Rural Network more personal and make people feel more involved.

#### Additional information

LinkedIn-group Netwerk Platteland: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Netwerk-Platteland-GUUS-kennis-van-1823856>

Netwerk Platteland 2.0: <http://www.netwerkplatteland.nl/np20/>

STREEK: <http://www.netwerkplatteland.nl/streek/>

