



European Network for  
Rural Development

# 5th NRN meeting

## Reconnecting people and places

*11-12 May*

*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

*(Joint event with the Amsterdam Rural Forum)*



*Milk tasting at Amsterdam Rural Forum*

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### Introduction to the report

#### Context & purpose of the meeting

The overarching theme of the event was ‘*re-connection*’ as reflected in the words of professor Erik Mathijs (keynote speaker) from the Leuven University: “*In the transition to a sustainable future, we have to overcome the divides between agriculture and nature, the urban and the rural, the producers and the consumers. In other words, we have to overcome an ecological, a social and a cultural divide*”.

The events aimed to discover, with the participation of national and European Network Support Units, local stakeholders, creators, artists and designers, how to reconnect these worlds. The examples showcased during the event aimed to demonstrate how the approach and perspectives of cultural workers and artists can help to re-connect and communicate more effectively with rural stakeholders.

#### Purpose of the report

The 5<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting was **organised jointly and in an integrated way with the Amsterdam Rural Forum** (an event initiated by the Dutch Rural Network). This report covers the sessions specifically devoted to NRN/NSU participants during these two events. Other parts of the event (especially the workshops and performances during the Amsterdam Rural Forum) are reported separately by the Dutch Rural Network on the webpage of the Amsterdam Rural Forum: <http://netwerkplatteland.nl/kamer/amsterdam-rural-forum-5th-nrn-meeting>.

## 11 May: NRN meeting

### Introduction to the 5<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting

Timing 🕒

9.00 – 10.50

Agenda item 📄

Welcome by *Matthias Langemeyer (DG AGRI) & Paul Soto (ENRD CP)*

Brief summary

**Matthias Langemeyer reported recent developments in DG AGRI.** First amendments of RDPs have been received and are processed, some already concerning NRNs. He furthermore pointed to the discussion in the Rural Development Committee seeking more flexibility on programme amendments.

Mr Langemeyer also highlighted the need for a result based reporting, in line with the common effort of EU institutions to better demonstrate the effectiveness of its policies. NRN play an important role in report and will contribute to the Annual Implementation Report (AIR) .

The Contact Point is about to start the 3rd year of its operation and NRNs feedback on how to improve its work would be welcome. Finally, Mr Langemeyer highlighted the upcoming Rural Development Conference in Cork (to be held on the 5 and 6 September), for which the invitations will be sent out soon. The main purpose of the event is to discuss with rural communities about the future of rural areas.

**Paul Soto** remarked that the rural forum is an event to help participants rethink the identity of rural areas in close connection with cities and modern society. He highlighted that this event is not about specific measures or procedures on RDP implementation. It is about taking a step back in order to rethink how to use the measures and procedures in a different way.



Agenda item

[The Dutch RDP and the role of culture in rural development in the Netherlands](#), Jan Hartholt (Dutch NSU)

Brief summary



Jan Hartholt explained that rural areas in the Netherlands are facing a number of challenges like the ageing of farmers without successors, the close proximity of rural and urban areas and the consequent conflicting interests over land use, the need to take into account societal demands such as animal rights, food production and environmental challenges. As he pointed out, the Dutch RDP has allocated over 50% of its budget to the environmental objectives. Overall, he underlined that there are **inextricable links between the social, cultural and economic perspectives** and the role of artists is to help see new perspectives and accelerate innovation. As he emphasised innovation is about changing the game through finding new solutions and telling new stories.

Agenda item 1

[Introduction to the purpose and the context of the meeting](#), Edina Ocsko & Ed Thorpe (ENRD CP)

Brief summary



Edina Ocsko introduced the objectives of the 5<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting, which sought to take advantage of the Amsterdam Rural Forum to explore the role of arts & culture in rural development. As she explained it also aimed to provide NSUs' staff with **new examples, ideas and inspiration** and discuss how these can be used in their work on stakeholder involvement and on increasing the efficiency of their communication activities.



Ed Thorpe reminded about the **main conclusions of the discussion group on arts and culture** held during the previous NRN meeting in Bled, Slovenia. As that group concluded, arts and culture can be a valuable tool for revitalising and energising rural areas and rural communities. Arts and culture can help connecting groups such as rural and urban or communicate messages by portraying rural needs and realities so that they are more understandable to non-rural audiences. Arts and culture can play a key role on bringing communities together by engaging local people into arts projects. Arts projects can engage young people in rural discussions and thinking, and can attract tourists in rural areas.

Agenda item 1

[New ways of communicating and re-connecting to rural stakeholders](#), Sinikka Torssonen (Finnish NRN)

Brief summary



Ms Torssonen presented the approach/campaign developed by the Finnish NRN in order to **reach rural stakeholders and change their perception about rural areas**. She explained that to promote the possibilities offered from the RDPs, the network is using all key communication channels, including events, the internet, TV and radio ads, etc. Ms Torssonen underlined that in this process it is vital to have clear and understandable messages to ensure effective communication.



## Next steps: Upcoming events

Timing 🕒

10.50 – 11.15

Agenda item ⓘ



Brief summary



[Interactive innovations under EIP-AGRI](#), *Sirpa Karjalainen (DG AGRI)*

[Introduction to the workshop on the role of NRNs in Budapest](#), *Margarida Ambar (EIP-AGRI Service Point)*

Introduction to upcoming ENRD CP events, *Paul Soto (ENRD CP)* – no presentation, see details below

The **presentation by Sirpa Karjalainen** (DG AGRI) demonstrated the added value of EIP Operational Groups (OGs) in fields such as precision agriculture, use of advanced technology (drones) and food supply chains. The presentation featured real-life experiences from the first OGs to showcase the functioning of and results from this type of partnership in practice.

The **presentation of Margarida Ambar** (EIP Service Point) provided details on an upcoming EIP-AGRI workshop in Budapest (4-5 October), whose aim will be to promote networking as a tool for the implementation of the EIP-AGRI at regional, national and European levels. The workshop will be much **targeted at NRNs/NSUs** and therefore, Ms Ambar invited NSUs to provide their suggestions on themes/issues that they would like to address.

The ENRD Contact Point and Network Support Units' representatives highlighted the following **upcoming events**, consequently further disseminated (or to be disseminated) via the ENRD Newsletter:

- 26 May 2016: ENRD Seminar on Smart and Competitive Rural Areas
- 1 June 2016: ENRD Workshop on Measure 16 'Cooperation'
- 14 June 2016: ENRD Workshop on LEADER/CLLD Cooperation
- 16 June 2016: 5<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks' Steering Group Meeting
- 23 June 2016: Wallonian NSU Seminar on Social Agriculture and Forestry
- 29 June 2016: National Seminar of the 2014-2020 French Rural Network
- 1 July 2016: ENRD Seminar on Promoting the Transition to a Green Economy
- 24 July 2016: Estonian Open-Farm Day
- 24-26 August 2016: LEADER Transnational Cooperation Fair, Estonia
- 29 August 2016: French NRN Seminar on EIP-AGRI
- Late September 2016: First Meeting of the Greek NRN
- Early October 2016: Scottish Rural Parliament
- 14 October 2016: Irish NRN conference on EIP-AGRI
- Early November 2016: 6<sup>th</sup> NRNs' Meeting in Slovakia

## 12 May: ENRD Workshop

Please note that the outcomes of the various workshops during the Amsterdam Rural Forum are uploaded on the event's page:

<http://netwerkplatteland.nl/kamer/amsterdam-rural-forum-5th-nrn-meeting>

### ENRD workshop on 'Taking away innovative ideas for on-the-ground work of NSU's/NRNs'

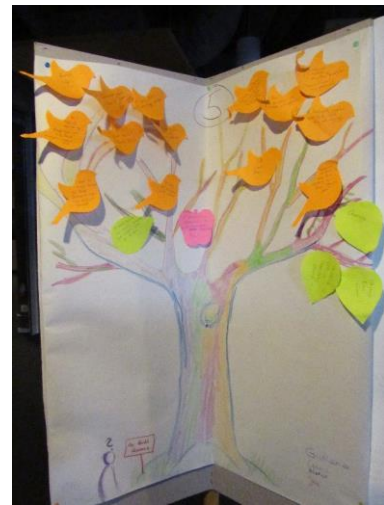
#### Timing 🕒

13.45 – 15.15

#### Context

Participants were asked to collect different ideas during the whole event:

- Ideas that inspired them ('birds')
- Ideas that not just inspired them, but they would like to follow up further ('leaves')
- Ideas that they already implement or know how they will implement in their own work ('apples')



#### Feedback

Different ideas were placed on a 'tree' displayed in the coffee area. During the workshop session, they were discussed in small groups and planned actions ('fruits') were brought back to the plenary.



Participants' feedback highlighted that arts and culture can significantly contribute in every aspect of rural development and at all levels including local, national and European (see more detailed recommendations on how the role of arts & culture could be improved in rural development in Annex I).



Main outcomes  
of the workshop

**At the local level:**

- Arts and culture are particularly relevant for the implementation of LEADER as they can potentially support all **LAG activities**, e.g. the development of local development strategies, animation, etc. They are also important tools/ area for **transnational cooperation**.
- Artists can play a particularly important role with regard to engaging local youth (and marginalised local groups). For this, it is important to identify (local) artists that can support LAGs in their actions.

**At the national level:**

- It would be useful to **offer training to civil servants** so that they can support the integration of arts into the implementation of the policy.
- Among others, NRNs can build on arts & culture experiences more widely in order to support networking among various actors. For instance, arts & culture can be used during rural development events, i.e. to **develop inspiring methods and spaces**.
- The importance of **cooperation between relevant ministries** (e.g. ministry for rural development and ministry of culture) was highlighted.

**At the European level**

- Lastly, there is added value in **recognition and sharing of good practices on arts and culture** engagement in rural development, and sharing at national / EU level what is happening at local level.
- Activities need to be carried out that can help 'arts & culture' to be more recognised within the EU policy frameworks.

Next steps

Based on the outcomes of the event, the project **factsheet on 'Arts and culture in rural areas'** has been updated with further examples and key recommendations. Factsheet is available on the events' webpage: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/event/5th-nrn-meeting-amsterdam-nl>

In case there is sufficient interest from NRNs, there is scope to set-up a Community of Practice or Working Group to continue exchange and to follow up some of the proposed actions.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Recommendations for improving the role of arts & culture in rural development

Key areas for the role of arts & culture	Recommendations
<b>Local level actions</b>	
The role of arts and culture in the work of LAGs, and transnational cooperation	<p>LAGs often need and ask for new inspirational ideas for their local development strategies and projects' development. Arts and culture can support local development, and in particular provide inspiration for local stakeholders (stimulate community actions). It is important to understand the main local development challenges and identify the key areas where arts &amp; culture could be used to unlock local development potential.</p> <p>One form could be for LAGs to create a dialogue amongst different stakeholders including artists, policy-makers, universities and local grassroots stakeholders, including farmer organisations (see INLAND project methodology in the 'Arts &amp; culture in rural development' factsheet, available on the <a href="#">event's webpage</a>). Based on this dialogue, LAGs can commission artists to contribute to local strategy objectives/implementation.</p>
<b>National level actions</b>	
Training and support for LAGs	NRNs can play an important role in supporting LAGs with regard to implementing their local development strategies. NRNs can provide inspiring project ideas for LAGs in the fields of arts & culture. Furthermore, they can support LAGs through identifying their challenges, and help them to unlock the potential of using arts & culture. Finally, they can help to bring together different stakeholders at local and national levels to facilitate exchange and identify joint actions.
Cooperation of national ministries	In order to understand the full potential of arts & culture, and to make best 'use' of it within national policies, it is recommended that various ministries, especially the ministries of culture (responsible for cultural policy) and ministries of agriculture and rural development (responsible for rural development policy) work closely together.
Integrate arts & culture into the	While national policy stakeholders can provide guidance for local stakeholders (especially LAGs), they can also



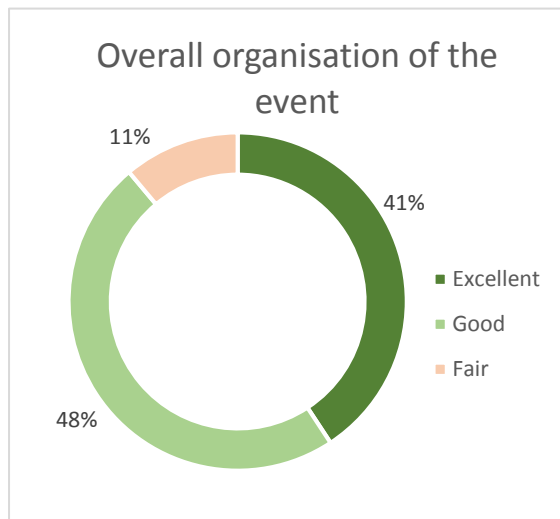
Key areas for the role of arts & culture	Recommendations
everyday work of policy-makers	integrate arts & culture into their everyday work. For instance, arts & culture can be used as inspiring tools during events.
Informing policy-makers, politicians as well as public opinion about the added value of arts & culture	Events can be used to raise awareness about the role of arts & culture in rural development. For instance, rural arts forums could be organised on a bi-annual basis, in a bottom-up way (involving also NRNs, LAGs and EU-level policy-makers, e.g. representatives of various DGs of the Commission, the European Parliament, etc.).
Connection with universities & research	A lot can be done to better connect agriculture & rural development studies with arts & cultural studies, especially to explore the potential of arts in rural development, as well as implementation of cultural strategies in the local context.
<b>European level actions</b>	
Identify and create an inventory of examples on the role of 'arts & culture' in the rural development context	<p>EU-level research is needed to <b>identify good practices</b> according to a set of criteria such as innovation, participation, impact, quality. Examples collected and disseminated through a projects database could be classified/searched according to specific characteristics, such as target groups (e.g. women, youth, migrants), country, type of art involved (e.g. visual arts, performative arts).</p> <p>Good practices collected could be made accessible and visible either physically, e.g. in the form of an exhibition or (creative) fair or as a virtual museum of art in the territories, accessible online and multimedia. Face-to-face, physical meetings (e.g. fairs) involve bringing together different artists and rural arts organisations, as well as stakeholders involved in rural development programme implementation (including LAGs, Managing Authorities, NRNs), with the aim of promoting exchange and mutual recognition.</p>
Exchange of stakeholders at the European level (networking)	Networks and networking can play a crucial role in bringing together, in a common platform, relevant stakeholders, including various ministries (at national-level), European policy-makers, including different DGs of the Commission, LAGs and cultural workers/ artists. The Amsterdam Rural Forum is a good example of this.

## Annex 2: Summary of participants' feedback

Some 27 evaluation forms (approximately 18% of participants) were received after the event. The evaluation does not only concern the NRN meeting sessions (as covered by the report), but is based on feedback from all participants and covers all sessions of the meeting (including all sessions within the Amsterdam Rural Forum).

It has to be noted that the forms received from NRN/NSU participants were mixed with those received from other participants. There are some aspects (e.g. prior information about the event, etc.) that were dealt with separately by the ENRD CP (for NRN/NSU participants) and the Dutch Network (for other participants). It is not possible to tell whether comments on these aspects come from one or the other group.

### Assessment of the overall organisation of the event



Most participants who provided feedback rated the overall organisation of the event excellent or good (89% of respondents).

The comments received overall reflect a very positive feedback about the organisation (especially highlighting the nice atmosphere of dinner). There are also a few criticisms with regard to the prior information about the date and content of the event (*NB: It is not possible to tell whether it came from NRN/NSU or other participants – see comment above. E.g. the official website of the NRN meeting was set up before the meeting with draft agenda, etc.*)

A number of suggestions and comments were made with regard to organisation, that can be summarised as follows:

#### 👍 Good/excellent organisation & dinner was great:

- Organisers were easy approachable, keep that!
- Extremely well organised, with a very positive atmosphere
- The dinner was amazing, very nice that it was in a venue that linked with everything we were talking about during the event.
- Congratulations! One of the best events I ever been.
- The programme was good. Especially the workshops, wow. The dinner was super!
- Dinner super! Thanks!"

#### 👍 Good mix of participants

- There were a good variety of people who participated, both as guests and as facilitators.

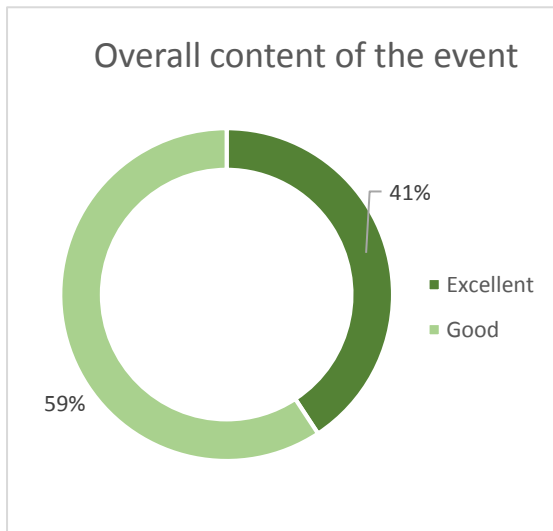
#### 👎 Prior information about date could be improved

- It would be good if people were informed about the event meeting a bit earlier!
- Information available before the meeting was a bit poor (no official webpage, late communication - some error with mails)

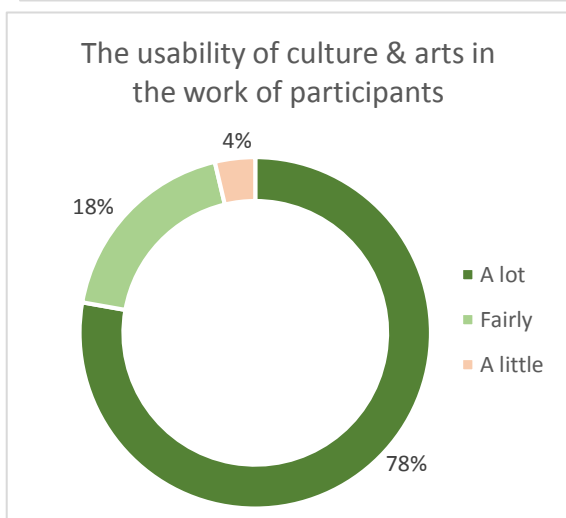
### 👉 More time needed for networking & workshops

- Coffee breaks too short, not enough time for questions and discussion
- Plenary programme: maybe shorter presentations (half time). Gives more energy (kort en krachtig) and more time for interactive workshops.

### Overall content & usability of arts & culture



The overall content of the event was rated good or excellent (by 59% and 41% respectively) by all respondent participants.



Participants were asked to what extent they were inspired by examples, are they planning to use culture & arts in their work and in their opinion can culture & arts change perspectives. A combined analysis of these responses show that most respondent participants (78%) found that they were inspired a lot/ could use a lot arts & culture in their work.

Comments on the content and the usability of the outcomes also reflect an overall positive assessment:

### 👉 Inspirational & innovative

- Lots and lots of good thoughts
- Very well organised event. Innovative ideas and nice workshops. Loads of ideas out there
- As a student this was amazing forum for my knowledge, wisdom and network to grow. We are energy, the creative within us is infinitely renewable
- The story of Bright inspired me a lot. See if the NRN can organise a play (We Pigland), the art examples and how they can contribute to social cohesion.
- Loved this perspective so much
- It was really an eye opener for me.

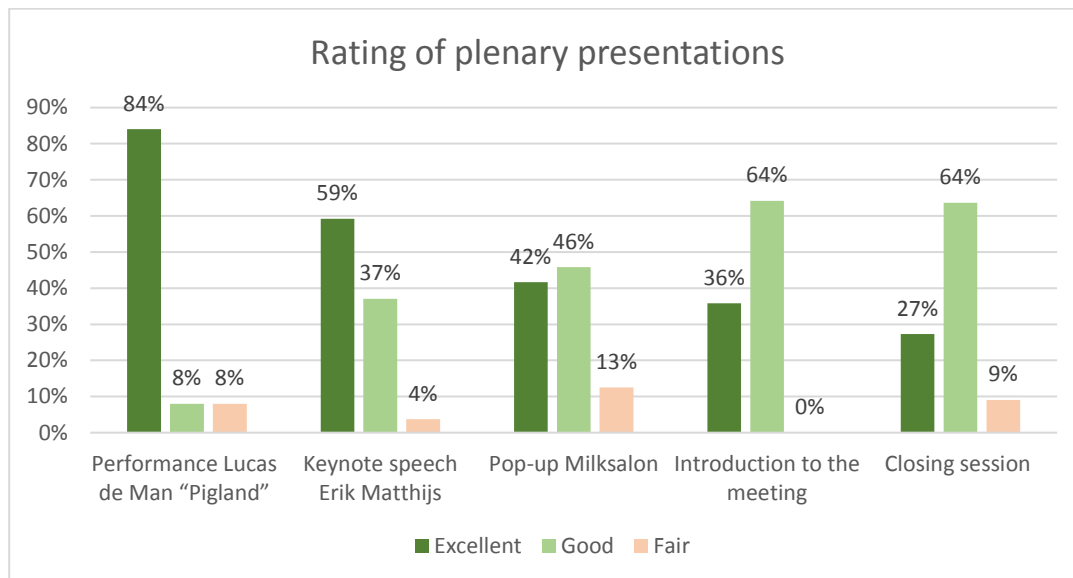
### Scope/potential for more use of arts & culture

- In the correct use can reconnect gaps within social, cultural and even economic terms
- Culture is sometimes poor in our events, now I plan to use more often culture/artists.
- Although it might not be particularly useful at the moment for my work I hope to (and am very inspired now) to find ways to integrate the examples I have seen during the conference in my own work.
- Of course the outcomes of the event are useful for our work but we have to see what we can accomplish (money, people/staff, policy)

### Not sure about future use

- In our case the scope for using arts is limited due to the focus on other priorities. However you probably can't get a change in perspective without it.
- It was really an eye opener for me. But I think it is difficult for us to get the approval from our steering group to launch certain culture groups or projects. There are so many important topics within the EAFRD. But as a tool for other groups I think culture could be used more.

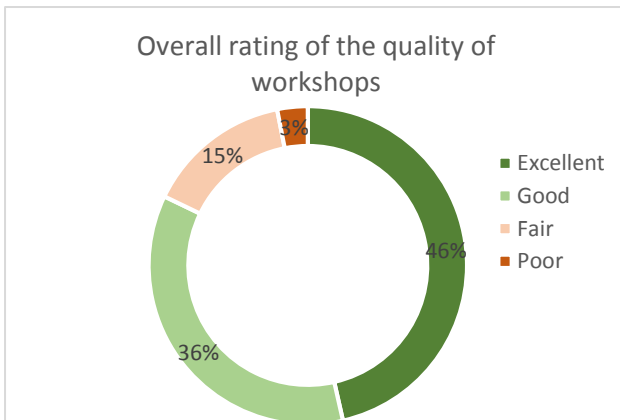
### Assessment of various plenary sessions



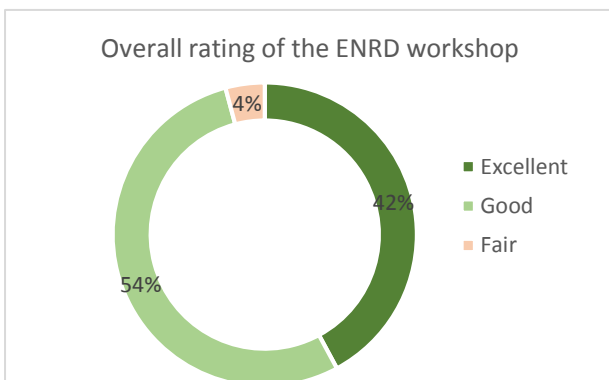
Most performances/presentations in plenary were rated excellent or good (with only few people rating them 'fair'). The performance of Lucas de Man (Pigland) was rating especially high (a large majority of participants rating it excellent), the introduction to the NRN meeting and separate introduction to the Amsterdam Rural Forum were mostly rated good (64%, remaining respondents all rating it good).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NB: Again it is not possible to tell which rating belongs to the NRN meeting introductory session and which belongs to the introduction of the Amsterdam Rural Forum, as responses were mixed.

### Overall rating of workshops within Amsterdam Rural Forum



There were 4 rounds of workshops organised within the Amsterdam Rural Forum (each with 4 workshops, i.e. a total of 16). Overall, most respondents rated the workshops excellent or good (46% and 36% respectively).



The ENRD workshop (within round 4 workshops) was rated good by a majority of participants (54%), the rest rating it excellent (42%) and a few fair (4%)

The main messages that participants take away from the event show that the event was both **inspiring and raised awareness about the important role of arts & culture in rural development.**

*“My approach towards challenges will besides a sustainable and innovative participatory approach also tackle the possibility of **social cohesion by using cultural and artistic approach** to break walls and build bridges.”*

*“Try to **connect artist and rural development makers more through the NRN**. The NRN can divide the barrier between top-down and bottom-up. Artists can often bring a message in a more effective and inspiring way.”*

*“Follow up! Keep the ideas growing!”*

*“Let you be inspired and inspire.”*

*“**Culture can be an eye opener**, a mean for making people meet and talk and addressing issues that can be difficult to talk about.”*

*“Culture and art can give an input into making a real change in rural development.”*

*“The opening of my mind towards using arts as a means of communication complex subjects and to bring people together.”*

*“Europe is culture and art. Every manifestation of our lives may involve culture: How we behave, the masterpieces that we see every day walking, nature and man's wonders, or even simple things.”*



*"Anything we say through art is stronger and rural areas need it. Also agriculture itself, life in general can be artistic and creative. We have to open our minds and explore new innovative ways."*

*"It was a day full of inspiration! Especially the workshops (youth, refugees)"*

*"Welcome to the village: interesting, inspiring!"*

*"Students Zwolle: wow very good!"*

*"New Dutch connections: Wow what a story, inspiring and useful for my work."*

*"Data driven analysis is the key to change."*