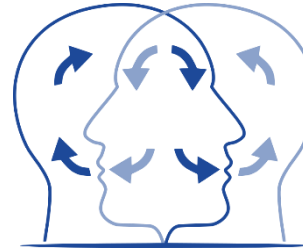# A rural impulse towards the Great Transition

Conditions, approaches and success factors for promoting rural talent from the bottom-up

Image sources: Krambach 2013; OpenClipart, Liftarn 2021

3rd November 2022

Dr. Alistair Adam Hernández

Agenda

My perspective

Short introduction

Two contrasting case studies from rural Europe

Strong socio-economic situation – Digital education 4.0 in OWL

Weak socio-economic situation – Tourism & crafts in Albarracín

Conclusions

My perspective

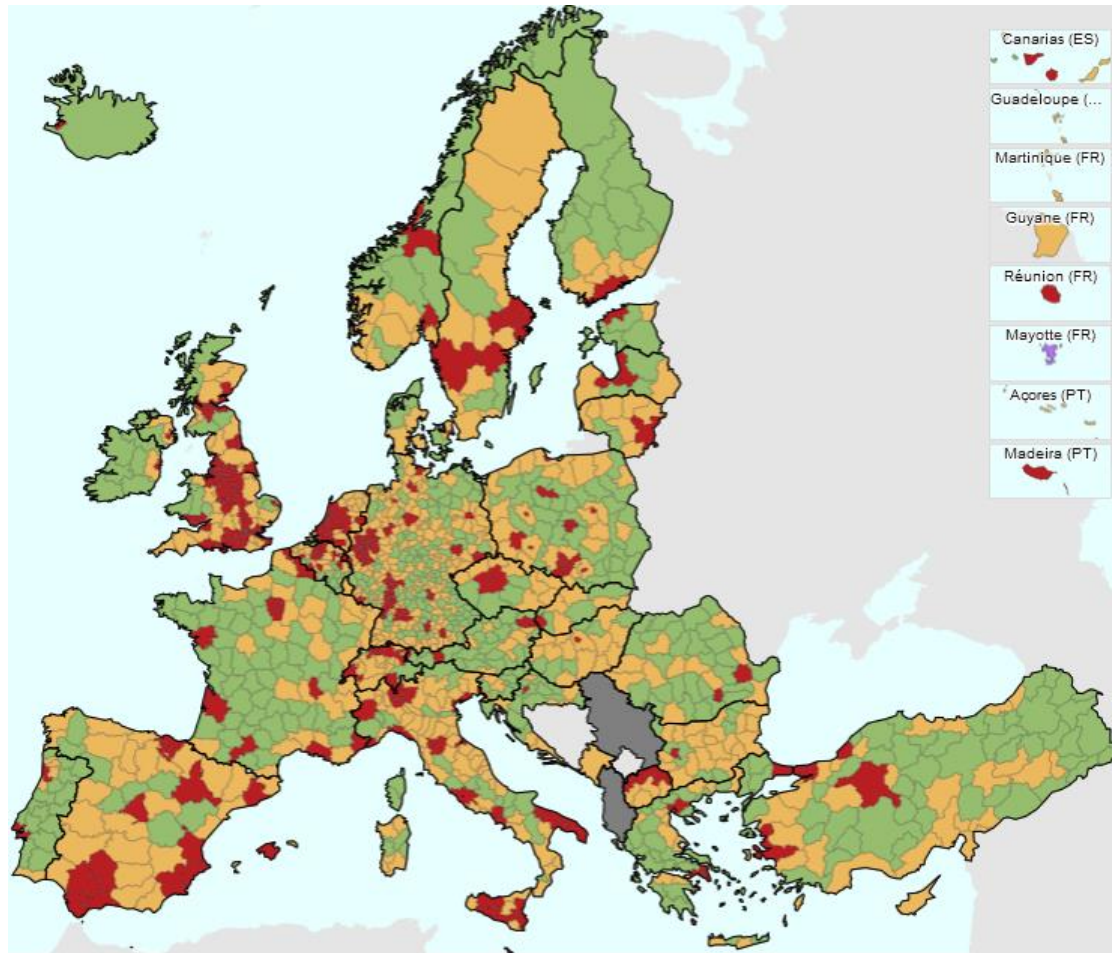Social and spatial sciences | Researcher

Local economic & community development | Practitioner

Rural areas in Europe | Diverse ruralities

Develop creative potential at the local level | Enabling multilevel policy

Diverse starting points in rural Europe

Canarias (ES)

Guadeloupe (...

Martinique (FR)

Guyane (FR)

Réunion (FR)

Mayotte (FR)

Açores (PT)

Madeira (PT)

■ Predominantly urban regions (%)   ◢ Intermediate regions (%)   ◢ Predominantly rural regions (%)
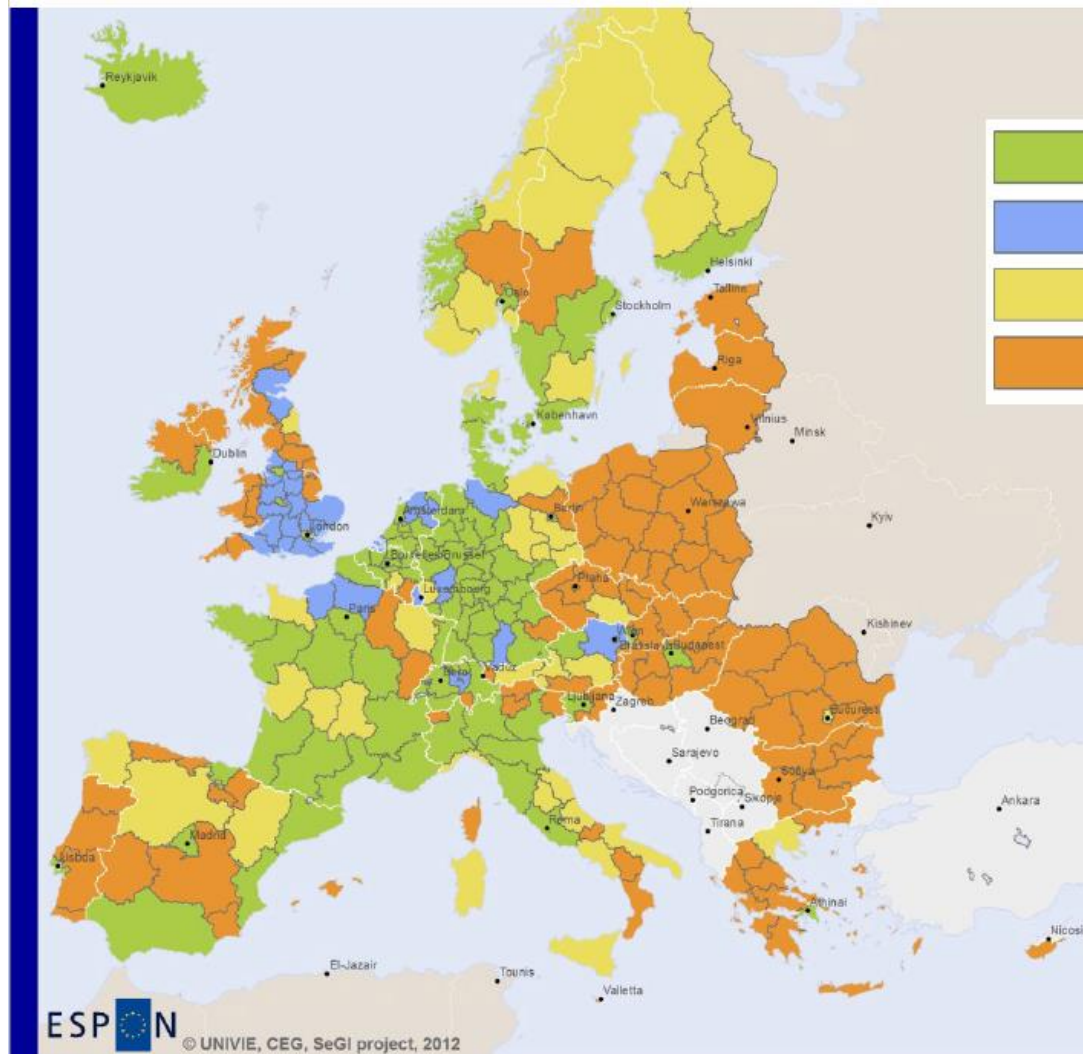
(Urban-rural typology, EUROSTAT 2013)

Population

Just over one quarter (28.0 %) of the EU-28 population lived in a rural area in 2015, with a somewhat higher share living in towns and suburbs (31.6 %), while the biggest share of the EU-28 population lived in cities (40.4 %).

(EUROSTAT 2018)

Diverse starting points in rural Europe

Legend:
- Positive SGEI and SSGI
- Positive SGEI and Negative SSGI
- Negative SGEI and Positive SSGI
- Negative SGEI and SSGI

ESPON
© UNIVIE, CEG, SeGI project, 2012

Quality of public services

SSGIs - Services of **social** general interest
(including primary, higher and tertiary education & healthcare)

SGEIs - Services of general **economic** interest
(including ICT Infrastructure, transport, public finance ...)

(Humer, Rauhut & Marques da Costa 2013)
(Humer & Palma 2013)

Two contrasting case studies

Digital Education 4.0 in OWL (Eastern Westphalia-Lippe, Germany)

Tourism & crafts in Albarracín (Autonomous Community of Aragón, Spain)

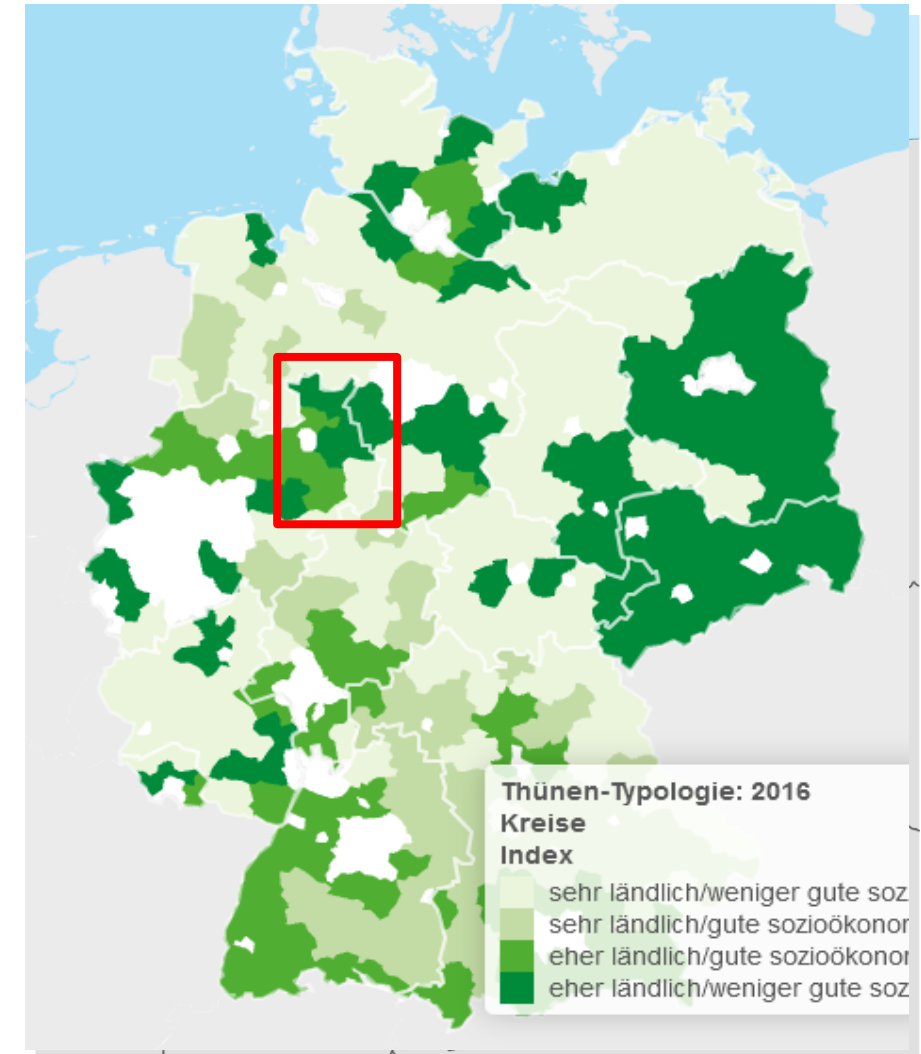Image sources: OWL GmbH, 2021

Education 4.0 in OWL (Eastern Westphalia-Lippe, Germany)

Regional actors transform the educational chain in the face of digital challenges

In the period 2018 – 2021 | Project for pilot scheme in OWL region

Characteristics of the OWL region

- Eastern region of North Rhine-Westphalia

- Approx. 1 Million inhabitants

- Approx. 150.000 companies/businesses

- Mixed rural typology but a clear rural character and environment

- Strongly industrialised with a good number of globally operating companies:
  e.g. Bertelsmann, Miele, Dr. Oetker, Melitta, Gerry Weber, DMG Mori Aktiengesellschaft, Hörmann, Schüco, Wincor Nixdorf, Phoenix Contact, HEGLA or Claas.

- Leading Edge Technology Cluster for intelligent Technical Systems

Das Technologie-Netzwerk:
Intelligente Technische Systeme OstWestfalenLippe
it´s owl

Thünen-Typologie: 2016
Kreise
Index

sehr ländlich/weniger gute soz
sehr ländlich/gute sozioökonor
eher ländlich/gute sozioökonor
eher ländlich/weniger gute soz

(Wikimedia Commons, TUBS, 2022)
(Thünen Landatlas, Thünen-Institut 2016)

Challenges in education & skills dev.

- Demographic change **+** rural **=** looming shortage of skilled workers

- Quickly advancing digitalization/robotization in manufacturing

- Shift of focus in digitalization = machines → professionals → students

- Complexity of the education system in a federal and strongly subsidiary country like Germany (high leverage of the regional level, districts and councils → responsible for vocational education)

- Low permeability of the German education system in general! (silos)

Need to collectively analyse what changes are needed to transform the regional educational chain and implement them through key actors …

The initiative

- What skills and capabilities does the region need tomorrow seen from different perspectives?

- Break up sectoral silos by means of bringing actors from business, public education and training together and jointly developing small "transfer-projects"

- Increase permeability – Joint training for school and university students together with apprentices

- Sow collaborative seeds for future joint projects among willing actors

Image sources: OWL GmbH, 2021
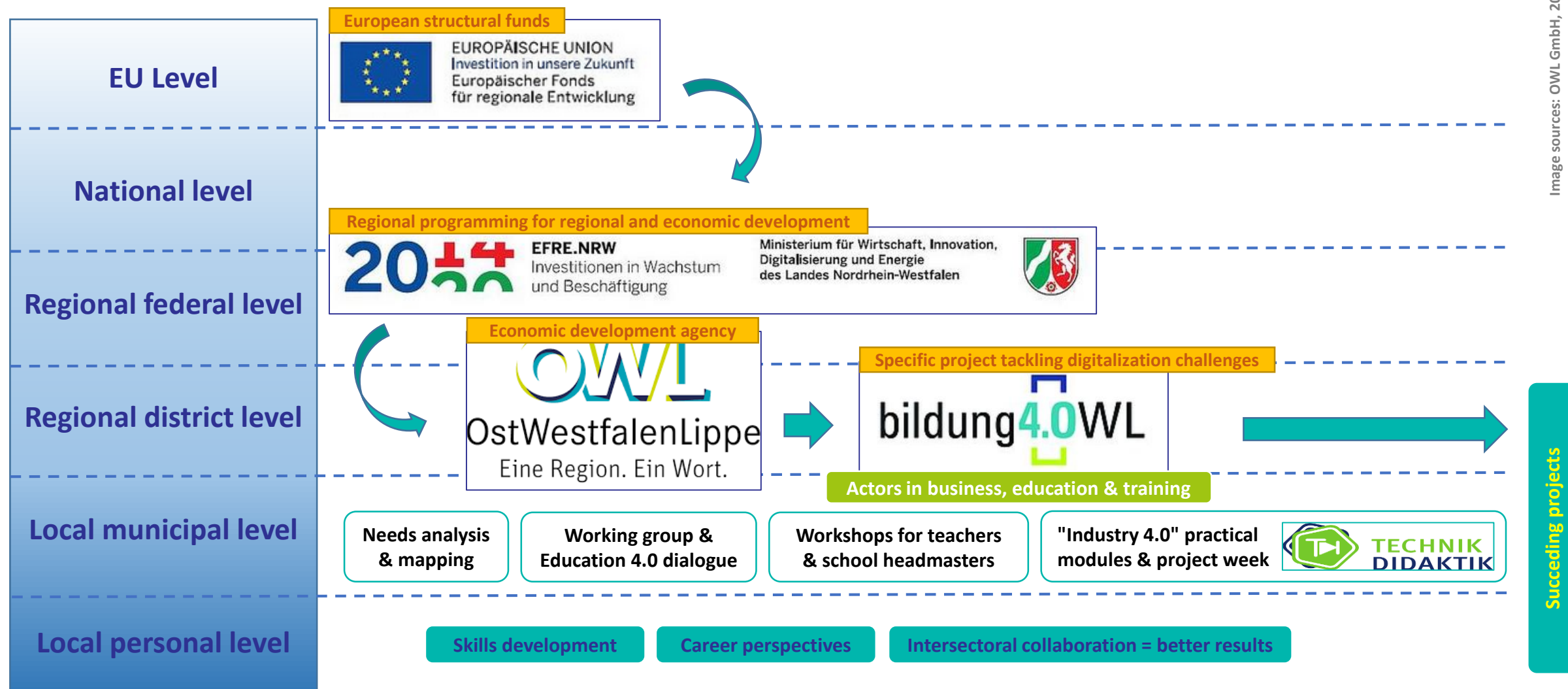
Multilevel governance & policy

Image sources: OWL GmbH, 2021

Level	
EU Level	**European structural funds** EUROPÄISCHE UNION Investition in unsere Zukunft Europäischer Fonds für regionale Entwicklung
National level	
Regional federal level	**Regional programming for regional and economic development** 20**14** EFRE.NRW Investitionen in Wachstum und Beschäftigung — Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Innovation, Digitalisierung und Energie des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
Regional district level	**Economic development agency** — OWL OstWestfalenLippe Eine Region. Ein Wort. → **Specific project tackling digitalization challenges** — bildung4.0WL
Local municipal level	**Actors in business, education & training** Needs analysis & mapping · Working group & Education 4.0 dialogue · Workshops for teachers & school headmasters · "Industry 4.0" practical modules & project week — TECHNIK DIDAKTIK
Local personal level	Skills development · Career perspectives · Intersectoral collaboration = better results

Succeeding projects

Key success factors

- Educational landscape (sectors, actors, infrastructure …) is understood in an integrated way as an "education ecosystem"

- Education and digitalisation have been identified as determining factors for innovation, location and regional economic development

- **OWL OstWestfalenLippe** *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Region mbH* plays the key role as a trend-scouter and "dynamisateur", facilitating dialogue and matching ideas, actors and funding

- Initiative finds a good balance between mapping needs, developing future project ideas and experimenting with small "transfer projects"

- The regional arena (multilevel governance) is ideal for the task

Image source: own picture   Image source: Fundación Sta.Ma. de Albarracín, 2016
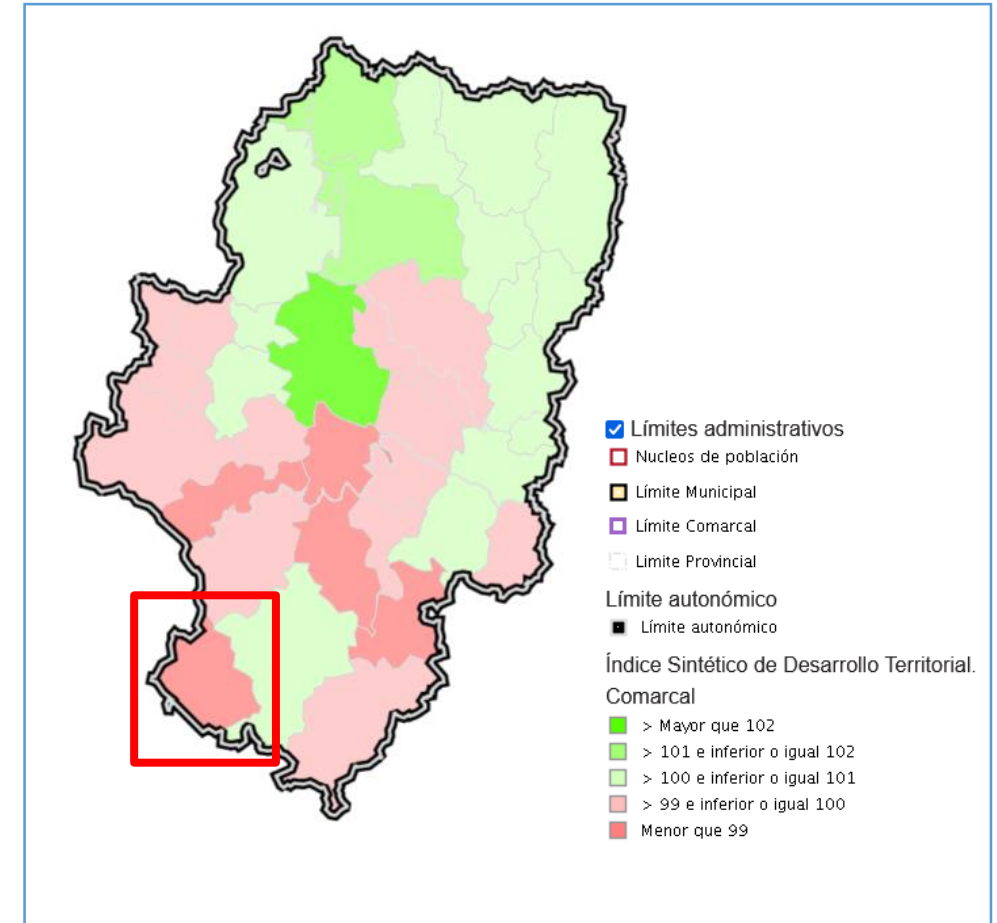
Tourism & crafts in Albarracín

(Autonomous Community of Aragón, Spain)

Local actors transform the economy by craftsmanship and vocational training

Over a long period 1988 – 2018 | Endogenous local development

Characteristics of Albarracín (& Region)

- Southern region of the Aut. Reg. Aragón

- Small town with approx. 1.100 inhab. in a district of approx. 4.500 inhab.

- Extremely peripheral and rural location

- Well-advanced process of depopulation with densities below 3 inhab./km²

- Traditional rural economic sectors: forestry and wood processing, agriculture and cattle breeding as well as some small and medium-sized food industries

Límites administrativos
Nucleos de población
Límite Municipal
Límite Comarcal
Limite Provincial
Límite autonómico
Límite autonómico

Índice Sintético de Desarrollo Territorial. Comarcal
> Mayor que 102
> 101 e inferior o igual 102
> 100 e inferior o igual 101
> 99 e inferior o igual 100
Menor que 99

(Wikimedia Commons, TUBS, 2022)
(Synthetic Index Terr. Dev., IAEST 2020)

Image sources: OWL GmbH, 2021

Challenges in education & skills dev.

- Back in the 80s – collapse of the strong wood-processing industry

- Economic downwards spiral of the traditional rural economic sectors

- Limited schools, due to the sparsely populated and demographic characteristics of the area → Provincial capital 1 hours drive away

- Limited arguments and little public acceptance for young people "to stay": educational and professional "success", personal realisation

- Those who do choose to stay don´t necessarily need qualifications!

Need to articulate and develop the local endogenous potential (cultural and architectural heritage) with specific skills development
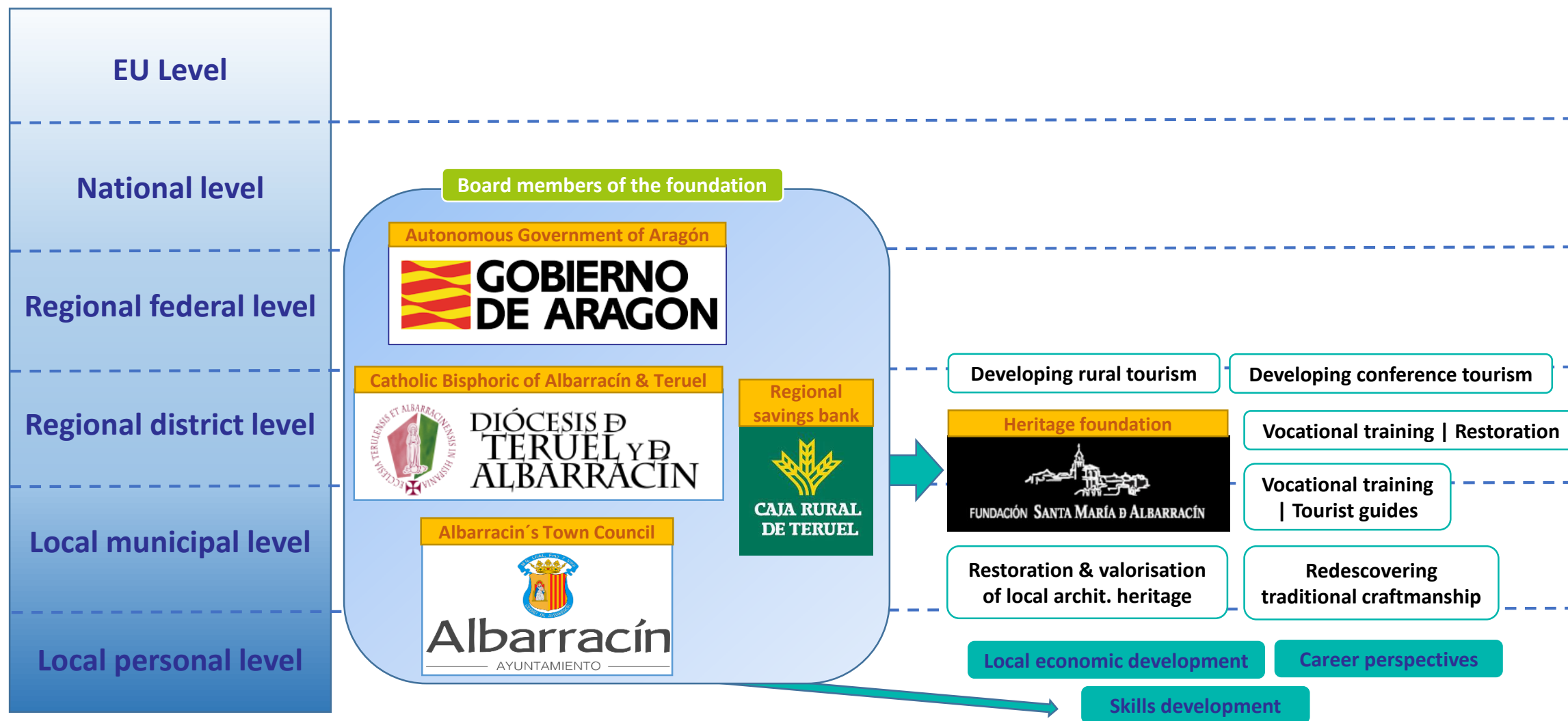
The initiative

- Around 14 properties (cathedral, museums, artists' residences and historic buildings for conferences as well as a tourist office) have now been restored and revalorised

- Prestigious vocational training for craftsman and restorers

- Restoration work is commissioned throughout the whole country

- Today, well established conference tourism location in a peripheral rural area

Image sources: Fundación Sta.Ma. de Albarracín, 2018

Multilevel governance & policy

EU Level

National level

Regional federal level

Regional district level

Local municipal level

Local personal level

Board members of the foundation

Autonomous Government of Aragón

GOBIERNO DE ARAGON

Catholic Bisphoric of Albarracín & Teruel

DIÓCESIS Đ TERUEL Y Đ ALBARRACÍN

Regional savings bank

CAJA RURAL DE TERUEL

Albarracin's Town Council

Albarracín
AYUNTAMIENTO

Heritage foundation

FUNDACIÓN SANTA MARÍA Đ ALBARRACÍN

Developing rural tourism

Developing conference tourism

Vocational training | Restoration

Vocational training | Tourist guides

Restoration & valorisation of local archit. heritage

Redescovering traditional craftmanship

Local economic development

Career perspectives

Skills development

Key success factors

- Local architectonic and cultural heritage → Endogenous potential of the town is main protagonist of local and economic development

- An unusually strong and multilevel partnership steers the board of the Foundation: know-how, financial resources, political influence

- A charismatic key personality, the foundation´s CEO, is a recognised ambassador for Albarracín, building strong support for the initiative

- Local know-how built up over decades transforms into a diversified local business model: rural tourism, conference tourism, restoration and tourism vocational training, public/private commissions for restoration nationwide

- Initiative is resilient to the unhealthy local and regional rivalry

Conclusions

Essential policy conditions & good practices

Conclusions

- Clear nexus of education and skills development with local and regional economic development

- Local and regional economic development, especially in rural geographies, is an ultramarathon → **stable political agenda?**

- Effective multilevel-governance and policy implementation requires facilitated multilevel partnerships for innovation and experimentation

- Predominantly rural territories tend to need more intensive facilitation and capacity-building to develop their full potential

- Authentic collaboration allows co-creation → **Actor´s ideas and needs must find their way into specific project implementation**

- Development is rarely "only bottom-up" or "only top-down" → **neo-endogenous development** (Shucksmith 2010)

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Many thanks!

Global
HR Forum

- Your questions …

- Your critical comments …

- Your thoughts and suggestions …

I look forward to the discussion!

Let us stay in touch! ☺
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