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 markers, 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 Outdated legal and operational definitions of ‘rural’ fail to recognize the role of urban centers and rural-urban linkages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.