



CYMRU WLEDIG  
**LPIP**  
RURAL WALES

# Policy-focused Research for Rural Wales

Introducing the Rural Wales Local  
Policy and Innovation Partnership



Climate change and the transition to net zero; affordable housing; decline of the high street; loss of local services; limited investment and employment opportunities. Communities in Wales face a number of challenging issues, with the trials affecting those in rural regions, in particular, often misunderstood or under-researched. The resilience of local communities in times of economic hardship is being put to the test, and innovative solutions are required to solve these tricky problems.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is a partnership of universities, policy partners, social enterprises, and businesses committed to explore how research and innovation can help find solutions to the challenges facing communities in rural Wales, thanks to a £5m grant by the UK Government's research funding body, UKRI.

*"Our work will be solution-oriented. We are NOT doing research for the sake of doing research, but in order to make a difference."*

Cymru Wledig  
LPIP Rural  
Wales Director,  
Professor Mike  
Woods, at  
the Senedd  
launch event,  
July 2024.



## **The Challenge**

The purpose of Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is to enable the more effective use of research and innovation to support policy development and delivery. We aim to support inclusive, sustainable development in Rural Wales, working towards a Wellbeing Economy in which economic prosperity is balanced with social wellbeing and environmental resilience.

Both the UK and Welsh governments have invested significantly in economic regeneration in Rural Wales, but achieving growth is hindered by the dispersed geography of the region, the typically small size of local businesses, limited endogenous capital for investment, and inadequate infrastructure.

The lack of relevant, up-to-date and local-scale data and evidence is also an obstacle for policy-making and implementation.

Politicians and community leaders recognise that there is a need to develop distinctive solutions for Rural Wales, based on robust and reliable evidence.

During the LPIP's launch at the Senedd in July 2024, we shared our vision for the next three years with our political stakeholders. Since then, we

have started projects exploring perceptions of 'growth' in the rural economy; investigating women's entrepreneurship in agriculture; and mapping community assets, among others. It is exciting to see our researchers engaging with these issues, and further projects are planned in response to needs identified by our partners and stakeholders.

## **Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales**

Drawing together experts from across Wales, the aim of the partnership is to explore how research and innovation can link together different policy strands, helping to improve understanding of the true needs of rural communities. The project will secure academic and practical outputs that will ensure genuine change on the ground.

Our work will include surveys and studies to collect and analyse new data to fill evidence gaps; innovation labs to identify and test solutions to key policy problems; and public dialogues to discuss tricky issues. We will build an Online Integration Evidence Hub for Rural Wales, making data more accessible. We will also work directly with local communities, supporting them to carry out their own research on locally-identified priorities.

## **Creating a Wellbeing Economy. Together.**

Thematic groups, comprised of researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and community representatives meet quarterly to share best practice, and provide progress updates on their specific areas of research. New research themes will be identified throughout the project's lifecycle, as data, networks and analysis reveal new opportunities, and as new partnerships are established.

Professor Alison Park, Head of UKRI's creating opportunities, improving outcomes theme, said:

***"Through these long-term collaborations, we will accelerate the use of research and innovation to reduce regional inequalities and drive sustainable, inclusive growth."***



## Research Themes

Building a  
Regenerative  
Economy



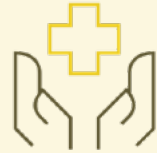
Enhancing  
Wellbeing  
in Place



Empowering  
Communities  
for Cultural  
Recovery



Supporting  
the Net Zero  
Transition



How can we be lower  
impact today than we  
were yesterday?

There are already so many excellent and committed organisations investigating and highlighting rural challenges, but such projects are often disjointed, short-term, and frequently lack the relevant data they require to be effective. Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales will overcome these obstacles by joining the dots between existing projects, facilitate knowledge exchange, and fill gaps in the evidence base.

If you would like to collaborate or receive more information, please contact Professor Michael Woods, Director, Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales  
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Interim website: [www.arsyllfa.cymru/category/lpibruralwales/](http://www.arsyllfa.cymru/category/lpibruralwales/)

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UNIVERSITY

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enterprise

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TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

**CARDIFF**  
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