

Growing stronger communities

Written by Marit Hendriks

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As the UK's central government backs away from centrally driven, top-down initiatives, all local communities are expected to take greater control of their destiny. Local solutions will need to be found to meet local challenges.

Local jobs, enterprise, education, health, the environment, transport and all manner of public services will, under the government's 'localism' measures, be 'freed from Whitehall control' and left to local leadership.

Recovery from economic recession during a time of reduced public sector funding leads directly to hopes that private sector enterprise will take up the slack – in theory creating new local jobs and services and (maybe with greater voluntary effort) making good the societal shortfalls.

Expectations of successful outcomes for these radical changes are, frankly, not very high. Across the UK many communities lack the citizen-leader experience needed for this new era. Most communities also lack the essential utility infrastructure for 21st century enterprise endeavour. Nor is there much evidence of direct citizen engagement in things that have for decades been managed by local/central government and major utility providers. And in long-suffering rural areas these challenges may now be even greater.

To seek solutions for whatever local priorities arise, in whatever type of rural, urban, or city environment, local people will need to work together and find, from somewhere, the insights and ideas to inform their own local solutions.

At Community Study Tours we believe that local problems are rarely unique. We identify places (at home or overseas) that match your local situation but where similar challenges have long-since been solved – and we then take small teams of ordinary people from your community to visit, to absorb that experience and adapt and share the knowledge back home.

Our first Study Tour project addresses that most basic of infrastructure needs. High quality

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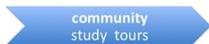
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local digital access networks are essential enablers for many other regeneration projects and economic growth - but the UK lacks any long-established examples.

We have already identified many communities outside of the UK (but within easy low-cost reach) where this basic infrastructure challenge was solved years ago – with the result that their experience of exploiting it for economic and societal development is now well established and easily shared.

Join us this year on a custom-made journey to understand the extent to which your community could take control and remedy the lack of utility services and enterprise growth.



A Marit Hendriks production in association with Groupe Intellex

For more information email studytours@groupe-intellex.com

Or see: [Community Study Tours: digital infrastructure](#)