



IDELE Newsletter on local employment development

IDELE is a key element of the European Commission's activity to encourage the Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in Local Employment development and promoting better governance. It is a three-year project implemented by ECOTEC Research and Consulting on behalf of the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

IDELE aims to highlight and enhance the contribution of local employment development to the objectives of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and thus to the EU's strategic goal: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. Activity is based on key principles regarding best practice in local employment development and the best means to identify, disseminate and exchange it. Key to IDELE has been the series of twelve international seminars.

Harnessing Local Potential for Employment

When we launched the IDELE project three years ago we were uncertain as to what lay ahead. Yet here we are, 11 seminars later, with several reports, a network of local actors, and a huge body of evidence and experience from across the European Union regarding good practice in Local Employment Development.

The European Union has been supporting local actors in promoting employment and combating unemployment for some years now. The European Commission, together with other European Institutions, recognised the potential of local development in the fight against unemployment as early as 1984. But it was in the 1990s that local employment development acquired an increasingly prominent role with the endorsement by the European Council in 1993 of the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, and then in 1997 the establishment of the European Employment Strategy (EES).

IDELE grew out of the desire to further embed and promote the local dimension of the EES. The local dimension was a feature of the Strategy from its inception in 1997, but its importance was bolstered via two Communications from the European Commission in 2000 and 2001 which expanded on how the local level could contribute to achieving the aims of the strategy. An important issue raised was how to capitalise on existing experience and enhance the transfer of best practice at European level.



*Dominic Rice
European Commission*

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The IDELE Newsletter is produced by ECOTEC Research & Consulting - part of the ECORYS group - on behalf of the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. IDELE is a three year project of the European Commission to "Identify, Disseminate and Exchange good practice in local employment development" and was initiated in 2003. For further details contact us at idele@ecotec.com.



European Commission

The IDELE programme was a direct outcome of this, being all about building on and learning from existing experience and facilitating the transfer of best practice in local employment development.

Of course, there have been similar initiatives in the past, so what has been different about IDELE? Well, to start with it has been able to draw on around 20 years of experience in local employment development, both EU-funded and non-EU funded, much of it pilot initiatives, some of it more mainstream, some supported via the Structural Funds, some not. There has been a rigorous process of identifying relevant initiatives from the wealth of contacts, databases and reports out there. Then there have been the seminars, each on a different theme, in which a handful of carefully selected case studies have been presented with a deliberately small audience so as to ensure there is a real conversation about what worked and why, and what points may be transferable. Throughout the focus has been on overall approaches and local strategies rather than on ad hoc projects. And in all of this it is the local actors themselves who have been given the major voice. Finally each theme has then been written up into a report, drawing not only on the seminar but also on other research, aimed at a wide audience but particularly at policy makers and practitioners at the local, regional and national levels.

It is still relatively early to start drawing conclusions, and this will be the task following the final seminar in Brussels on 13-14 July. However, some points have particularly struck me over the past three years.

- There is so much innovative, diverse and exciting local employment development activity taking place across Europe.
- There is no one-size fits all approach, but there are common issues and approaches, and therefore potential for learning and transfer.
- Good governance is essential, and a key success factor is the extent to which local actors and projects manage to be effectively linked in to other levels, both horizontally and vertically.
- Creating a spirit of trust - between local partners and between the different governance levels - is paramount. It is essential that the higher governance levels create a framework which balances accountability with freedom and flexibility for the local level.
- Partnership is essential, but we need to remember that is not the end in itself; it is simply a tool.
- There is definitely more scope to involve the private sector in initiatives, as one of the key players in helping to develop employment locally.
- A radical overhaul is not always required - existing structures can often be adapted.
- Some local employment initiatives do manage to break out of dependency on EU funds, or other sources of public finance, to become sustainable in their own right.
- Local approaches cannot do everything, there are limits - but they can achieve a lot!

Whilst we are approaching the final seminar and the end of the project, this is not the end of the process. In some senses we are at the beginning of an important stage in IDELE, when the outcomes are disseminated more widely and the lessons learned are taken on board and used by the key players across the employment policy spectrum. Furthermore, a network has been created from all those who have taken part in the seminars and the research, and this can continue. It is what happens from now on in these respects that will be the important legacy of the IDELE programme.

Dominic Rice
Policy Officer - Local Employment Development
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European Commission

NETTI-NYSSE:

The World's Heaviest Mobile Service?

During the recession and economic restructuring of the mid-90s, unemployment rose very rapidly in Tampere - a city situated in the south of Finland - to over 20% and the industry sector was hit the hardest. These events put lifelong learning and re-training of older workers very high on the local agenda. To survive in an increasingly competitive global market place, a high local knowledge base and the capacity to capitalise on it were seen as fundamental assets. Consequently, in the last decade, the City of Tampere has developed a solid local lifelong learning strategy based on a wide local partnership encompassing all local educational institutes, businesses, social partners and third sector organisations. This effective local strategy combined with a blossoming service sector have combined to greatly improve the Tampere economy in recent years. A key element of the local strategy entails using public libraries as a tool for enhancing citizenship in the information society.

An example of one of the latest services from the Tampere city library is Netti Nysse - an IT bus fitted with a teaching studio and ten computers with internet connection. The aim of this bus service is to encourage local residents to start using computers and the Internet and to give them the initial guidance, free of charge, to be able to do that. Various clubs, societies, groups of neighbours - any group of people who want to learn to use the computer and the Internet can book the bus for their use and have it come to their own neighbourhood. The maximum group size is 10 people and the bus can service up to 4 groups every day. So far, many different groups have used the bus to gain IT skills including: senior people, groups of mothers, truck drivers, home aids, young unemployed people, people with hearing problems, groups of immigrants, entrepreneurs and extended families. More than 200 groups have used Netti-Nysse over the past two years.



Netti Nysse in Tampere, Finland

For further information on this topic, check out www.tampere.fi/kirjasto/nettinysse/english.htm or contact:

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Job Activation - the Dutch way!

The 10th IDELE-seminar was held on 27-28 April 2006 in Bologna, Italy. For this seminar delegations from Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Malta and the Netherlands were invited. The Dutch delegation included among others Gerrit Jan Schep (Director StimulanSZ), Yvonne Bieshaar (Director Social Affairs and Employment, Municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch) and Pieter van Schie (Director Social Affairs and Employment, Municipality of Papendrecht). They were invited to explain the Dutch way to activate unemployed people. The first article explains how the Dutch activate unemployed people through a decentralised "work-first" approach. The subsequent article describes how local practitioner Pieter van Schie experienced the Bologna seminar and how participants reacted to the Dutch "good practice" presentations.



Map of the Netherlands

Close-up: the Dutch job activation approach

In the Netherlands, the "Work and Social Assistance Act" 2004 assigns full responsibility for social assistance to municipality level. This offers Dutch municipalities much more autonomy in developing their social assistance policy and it shifts financial responsibility from the Dutch state to the Dutch municipalities. This has facilitated a whole new approach leading to more cost-efficient policies and new methods to ensure that unemployed do not flow into social assistance. Yvonne Bieshaar from the Municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch explained how they changed from a civil service organisation to a business-oriented organisation with clear goals, fixed targets, budgetary considerations and a clear-cut method.

One approach increasingly used by Dutch municipalities to limit the inflow into social assistance is gate-keeping through the "work-first" approach. The work-first approach has its origins in the state of Wisconsin, United States and its basic principles are:

- Clear focus on work - people should work
- Focus on short-term work placement to offer clients the possibility to get used to work and gain suitable skills
- Focus on the self-responsibility of the client, clients are obligated to find & accept work, else they risk losing (part of) their benefit
- Integrated provision of services - clients are referred by their case manager to a suitable partner organisation, for example to treat an addiction, to increase their skills level, to gain work experience, etc.

The advantages of decentralisation of social assistance in combination with the work-first approach are a more result-oriented system and large cost-savings. But one disadvantage of decentralisation is that it leads to differentiation of social rights and obligations among Dutch municipalities and of municipalities "re-inventing the wheel" instead of learning from each other's experience. Another disadvantage of the work-first approach is the fact that some people will slip through the net - instead of flowing back into employment they risk becoming excluded.

Is there the political will to replicate the Dutch approach in other countries? Maybe not yet, but it can be generated. The Dutch government was sceptical at first about the work-first approach and even penalised municipalities when they inserted the system. However, several Dutch municipalities went ahead; their impressive results combined with good press coverage led to the method being accepted more generally.

Can the Dutch approach be replicated in countries lacking comprehensive reintegration services? In the Netherlands, such services - operated nationally - were perceived to be falling short. Consequently, the Dutch government decided to break open the market to improve these services by giving private companies the opportunity to compete. Within the first few years after the newly introduced privatisation law in 2001 (SUWI-law) many new private reintegration companies were set up which led to a "supermarket of reintegration services" for municipal case managers to choose from.

The Dutch Model Put to the Test in Bologna

The European Commission believes that local approaches can help tackle long-term unemployment. Indeed, the Commission has stimulated local initiatives through funding programme such as ESF. But many Member States face reductions in ESF from 2007, so it is important that the subject of job activation (for young people, 50+, minorities, ethnic groups, etc.) remains high on the agenda and that good practice in activating the unemployed is disseminated and mainstreamed. At the IDELE seminar in Bologna, the diverse approaches of EU Member States were presented, debated and critiqued.

Germany

Germany has developed a special programme - Perspektive 50 plus - to reduce long-term unemployment of people aged 50+ and to promote their reintegration to the labour market. Awareness of unemployment among this age group is still limited in the Netherlands, but our German friends indicate that this must be addressed rapidly! The 50+ age group is large and growing and thus gaining in political importance. Yet this reservoir of skills and experience remains under-used in the labour market. Solutions like increasing the pension age do not make sense whilst unemployment among the 50+ age group persists.

England

The English "New Deal for Communities" is supporting comprehensive and integrated local approaches to deprived areas which suffer from crime, long-term unemployment, and a low level of skills and education among their residents. The focus and funding already made available has led to significant improvements, including a considerable drop in crime and unemployment. Levels of education and employment have also increased.

The participants of the IDELE seminar listened with a mixture of admiration and shock to the Dutch experience of activating the unemployed. There was admiration for the results achieved, particularly in light of the recent low economic growth of the Netherlands in comparison with other EU Member States. Indeed, it became clear that the Dutch are leading the way with the lowest percentage of benefit dependency in the EU.

Delegates from the UK and Ireland in particular, were somewhat taken aback by the work first approach. They defined it as 'very harsh' and were concerned to know what would happen to those who were unwilling or unable to co-operate. Delegates from these countries do not seem ready yet to make the necessary culture change, but they do seem interested to introduce the basics of the work first concept.

In summary, it seems that the Netherlands is at the forefront of a cultural change in how to activate the unemployed. Many other EU Member States currently still lack the political support and structure for a "more harsh but also more honest" approach. But the times they are a-changing . . . fast!

*Pieter van Schie,
Director Social Affairs and
Employment municipality
Papendrecht*



*Gerrit Jan Schep - Director of Foundation Stimulansz
speaking during the Dutch workshop at the IDELE seminar in Bologna*

Practical Handbooks on Developing Local Employment Strategies

In light of the Communication [COM (2001) 629 final] on the local dimension of the European Employment Strategy, the Commission published a series of handbooks for local actors. These handbooks were developed by ECOTEC Research & Consulting and provide a practical tool indicating the best approaches for designing, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating successful local employment development strategies and activities. There are 16 handbooks developed - one for each of the 15 Member States that were EU members prior to May 2004, and a general one for New Member States and Candidate Countries. Each handbook has a common first part, followed by country-specific chapters. In each of these handbooks, the key principles are presented, documented with examples and including a list of useful contacts. The country-specific chapters contain a description of the governance context, key policies, advice on establishing a partnership, and implementing a strategy and how to access funding.

To download the Practical Handbook for your country - available in the native language and English - go to

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/local_employment/publi_en.htm or visit the IDELE website.

Fresh Approaches to Local Development of Employment in the New Member States (FALDE)

'New Member States and Local Employment Development: taking stock and planning for the future' is a two-year research project commissioned by the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) and being carried out by ECOTEC Research and Consulting and WYG International. The FALDE project was launched in 2004 and will finish in 2006.

The research fills the gap in information about the current situation with respect to local employment development in the 10 New Member States, Bulgaria and Romania. This knowledge is indispensable in order to better tailor advice and guidance and to exploit the wealth of good practice that has already been built up within the EU15 regarding local employment development.

The FALDE project undertakes a major review and assessment of policies and activities in the 12 countries related to the local dimension of employment development.

Apart from providing an overview of local employment development in each country, the research will also identify key areas for developing relevant strategies and policies in the future. The project will be completed at the end of 2006 and is drawing on the experience and ideas of a wide range of stakeholders through personal interviews, round-table discussions and a two-day conference held in Warsaw in April 2006. So far, public, semi-public and third sector agencies have been consulted from the twelve countries being studied, including viewpoints from the local, regional and national levels.

For further information on the FALDE project please contact us at idele@ecotec.com or consult the website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/local_employment/index_en.htm

The FALDE project consists of the following key stages:

- A stock-take of local employment development activities in the New Member States
- An assessment and analysis of the activities identified, both on their own terms and against experience in the EU15 Member States
- The identification of good practice, key gaps, potential for transfer, etc. so as to define future priorities and recommendations
- The dissemination of the findings and of recommendations for the future.



European Structural Funds 2007-13

In March 2000, the European Council set out the ten-year Lisbon Strategy to make the EU the world's most dynamic and competitive, knowledge-based economy. In line with the Lisbon Strategy, the Commission has issued Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) 'to give effect to the priorities of the Community with a view to promote balanced, harmonious and sustainable development'. As part of this process, each Member State produces a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) outlining its strategy for delivering Structural Funds in line with the broader EU objectives and reflecting the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs. Final agreement of the NSRFs will come from the Commission after a dialogue over the broad aims, the content of the Operational Programme(s) and the allocations of funds.

The allocation of resources for the new round of Structural Funds has now been broadly agreed. A total of €308 billion has been allocated and this will be disbursed under three Objectives as follows:

- Convergence Objective (CO), including the Cohesion Fund: 81% of total funds (€251 billion);
- Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective: 16% of total funds (€49 billion);
- Territorial Co-operation Objective: 2.5% of total funds (€7.5 billion).

Local employment partnerships will need to note the fine detail of the NSRF for their country as well as the proposed funding for their respective regions - likely to be reduced in most parts of EU15 but increased in the New Member States, compared to 2000-06.

Overview of recent LED Activities of the European Commission

- Grants towards pilot projects (Preparatory Measures 2000-2003)
- Practical Handbooks for Local Employment Strategies (2004)
- Benchmarking & Local Employment Development (2005)
- New Member States and Local Employment Development- taking stock and planning for the future (2005-2006)
- Linking Local Actors (2006-2007)
- Joint work with the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme
- IDELE: Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in Local Employment Development (2004-2006)

For more information on these activities, check further articles in this Newsletter and the website address for LED pages on Europe: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/local_employment/index_en.htm

Regional innovation through bottom-up approach a top priority

The Directorate General for Regional Policy is organising a series of conferences over the next year under the general heading 'Regions for Economic Change'. They are designed to be useful to practitioners (national, regional and managing authorities) in terms of the learning opportunities provided and to examine the different ways in which Europe's Cohesion Policy contributes to the growth and jobs agenda of the Lisbon process. There will be three events in the series, leading up to the fourth Cohesion Forum in June 2007.

The first event was held on 12-13 June 2006 entitled "Regions for Economic Change - innovating the EU regional policy". The Commissioner for Regional Policy, Danuta Hübner, took the opportunity to highlight successful strategies and practices for "improving knowledge and innovation for growth", as recommended by the draft Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013. The conference focused on examining best practices regarding fostering knowledge transfer, innovation and clusters, with particular attention to those strategies and projects which have succeeded in less-prosperous regions.

Throughout the different sessions, the emphasis was clearly put on the necessity of a differentiated strategy for innovation policies. The best opportunities for growth can be found at the local level, where businesses interact with local knowledge. In this bottom-up approach, the role of local and regional authorities is crucial and thus leads to a constant search for an appropriate "partnership culture" between the different stakeholders and governance levels. This vision goes hand in hand with a clear emphasis on actions that build on existing strengths in a region. Future investments need to concentrate on well defined measures that have sufficient critical mass and development potential.

At the same time, it is argued that regional innovation strategies should equally foster experimental approaches when it comes to making public policy more effective. In particular, greater emphasis should be placed on more openness towards policy risks and on the importance of an innovative approach in regional development.

For further information on this topic, check the DG REGIO website http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Sustaining Rural Communities Locally in the English Countryside

The Rural Economy . . . or the Economy in Rural Areas

Industries traditionally associated with rural areas, such as farming, mining, and seaside tourism are no longer the major sources of employment. The proportion of the total workforce employed in farming has fallen from 2.8% in 1984 to 1.8% in 2003. Manufacturing and, in particular, the service sector now provide more jobs and rural areas now have a mix of employment sectors similar to England as a whole.

In the large majority of rural areas more than 80% of employment is accounted for by 4 key sectors: distribution, business and financial services, public administration and manufacturing.

One lesson from this, certainly in England, is that it is wrong to talk about farm diversification as a way of strengthening the local rural economy. Rather in order for farms to diversify, there is the need for a strong local economy for farmers to be able to diversify into.

However, rural businesses are more likely to be based around the household rather than the more typical business structure found in urban areas.

In addition, the economy in rural areas is often home to large numbers of micro-enterprises and artisan firms that represent very small manufacturers, crafts people (which contribute by themselves about £1 billion per annum to the UK economy), farmers seeking supplementary income, redundant workers with no alternative employment options and spouses of working people.

However, even though rural and urban areas may have similar aggregate employment levels in many industrial sectors, there can be a good deal of variance between different types of rural area. A feature of sparsely populated areas

is the high proportion of employment in the, generally more poorly paid, hotel and restaurant sector while less sparsely populated areas and urban areas contain a relatively high proportion of employment in the financial intermediation and real estate sector.

The Government's Strategy . . .

The UK Government has three priorities for rural policy:

- **Economic and Social Regeneration** - supporting enterprise across rural England, but targeting greater resources at areas of greatest need.
- **Social Justice for All** - tackling rural social exclusion wherever it occurs and providing fair access to services and opportunities for all rural people.
- **Enhancing the Value of our Countryside** - protecting the natural environment for this and future generations.

The Strategy provides the policy framework, the tools and the evidence base to help all Government Departments and regional and local partners work together in a collaborative way to deliver more sustainable rural communities.

Delivery arrangements will be modernised to rationalise funding programmes and provide more professional and streamlined support for rural people, targeted on their needs; and **devolve decision making and delivery closer to the community, and ensure clear responsibility and accountability for policy and delivery.**



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An example of local devolution: the Local Delivery Pathfinders . . .

The Local Delivery Pathfinders focus on better delivery of Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) rural policy objectives. It is widely recognised that local government is democratically accountable for delivering high quality services to rural communities. Local authorities play a crucial role in community leadership, in planning and delivering services for rural areas. The closeness to their communities and people gives local delivery organisations a better understanding of what will make a difference.

Local government and other partners at local level - the voluntary and community sector, social enterprises, and others (Rural Community Councils) - have the skills and knowledge to better target local needs. But local delivery needs to be driven locally, with best practice mainstreamed and innovation in delivery developed and owned locally to maximise impact.

What will happen?

In each English region (excluding London), a sub-regional pathfinder has been set up to explore and test opportunities for more joined up, flexible and effective approaches to rural delivery at a local level. These will ensure greater co-ordination of a range of rural delivery activities (e.g. economic development, service delivery, access or a mix of these) at the local level. Where possible, they will be linked to relevant second generation Local Public Service Agreements (PSA) targets, and will be used to help translate Local Strategic Partnership priorities into

deliverable actions. It will also test practical options for revised local delivery mechanisms which might lead to different local arrangements, and/or identify practical solutions to 'blockages' that need to be removed or gaps to be filled.

What is required at local level?

Any local initiative should demonstrate that it is meeting specifically local needs and that these needs are not being addressed by national policy. One example is the provision of childcare. Evidence suggests that many of the people who are inactive but who would like to join the labour force are women who are unable to find nurseries or child minders.

There are examples of where local areas are in need of development. Yet when the opportunity presents itself, such as through LEADER which involves a bidding process, they don't have the skills or networks to be able to do so successfully. This can result in these areas falling further behind in terms of economic performance.

However, by going down to a local level, there is the danger that any initiative or action will miss out on some of the opportunities or solutions. The reason for this is that the economy works on a bigger scale where members of the labour market commute in and out of the areas, where many of the important services may be located outside the area along with many of the businesses. This means there may be job opportunities beyond which the local workforce could tap into, and conversely there may be opportunities for local businesses to develop by tapping into the labour market beyond the immediate locality.

Finally, it is important for any initiative to demonstrate its value for money if it hopes to prove to central and regional policy developers and deliverers that it is in their best interest to continue investing tax payers money into that initiative.

Alastair Johnson
Senior Economic Adviser
Commission for Rural Communities
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Equalising labour markets through local and regional governance in southern Spain

EQUAL is part of the European Union's strategy for more and better jobs and for ensuring that no-one is denied access to them. Funded through the European Social Fund, **EQUAL** is testing and promoting new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work, through transnational co-operation. As Rafael Rossi from the Regional Government of Andalusia explains, the efforts made by projects and stakeholders through **EQUAL** has brought local approaches into play.

During round one of **EQUAL**, Andalusia was covered by a web of 29 partnerships, nearly a fifth of the total in Spain, and more than in many countries. They all belonged to the Andalusian **EQUAL** network, born as a result of the strong commitment to **EQUAL** from regional policy makers, who are responsible for employment policies. This network has enabled the roll out of an important battery of measures to support mainstreaming at regional and local level.



EQUAL trainee, Andalusia

Detecting good practices in **EQUAL** has many different starting points, but the litmus test for all the approaches is their contribution to the improvement of the general employment policies of the region. **EQUAL** cannot be seen as an isolated programme, it is essential to extract every last drop of innovation for the benefit of active labour market policies. That is why in Andalusia a direct link has been made between good practice on the ground and regional employment policies. These include: analysis of the main regional labour market problems and the gaps in existing labour market policies; the identification of good practice in **EQUAL**; a review of legal and regulatory changes required for transferring these practices into mainstream policies; and, finally, the process of convincing policy makers that the change is worthwhile.

The first step was to commission a thorough analysis of the labour markets dealt with by each of the **EQUAL** partnerships. The second was to review existing active labour market policies. The third step was to identify the most relevant good practice through:

- a) general criteria for deciding on the innovative nature of the actions (process, product and contextual innovations);
- b) direct contact through a regional seminar on employment policies;
- c) a questionnaire sent by e-mail;
- d) a request for background documentation;
- e) in depth interviews.

Good practice examples were grouped according to their relevant to the main elements of regional employment policies.

The final stages of the process included: a detailed analysis of the legal and regulatory changes required for transferring certain good practices to mainstream regional employment policies; and the process of convincing other political decision makers and managers that adopting the practice was worthwhile (face-to-face meetings with local and regional employment representatives and with the staff of many different employment centres).

The result...

The three main Andalusian employment policies (labour market intermediation, training for employment and employment promotion including self employment) have incorporated 17 good practices extracted from **EQUAL** and many large local authorities have incorporated them into their local employment plans. This has happened with the full co-operation of social partners and representatives of civil society.

Several conclusions can be extracted from this process. The main conclusion is that when dealing with planning and designing employment policies, local agents must be involved. They are closer to job seekers, employers, and employment services and understand the local context better. They must have power to generate innovative solutions to local problems. At the same time, national and regional policy makers should monitor local actions and results, take part in local planning, guarantee the co-ordination of resources, offer technical assistance to local agents, and establish transference mechanisms which incorporate local innovations into mainstream policies.

Rafael Rossi
Regional Government of Andalusia
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A View from Italy

The Practitioner View...

The **EQUAL** framework, with its network and steering principles, has provided an innovative solution to the disadvantage situation of the rural labour market of North Cordoba and its 28 rural city towns and villages (Los Pedroches and Guadiato's Valley). Taking into account regional and national provision, the "Opportunity for Entrepreneurship in North Cordoba" project has provided a sustainable solution to improve the situation of our target group.

The local cooperation network has allowed us to better detect and to disseminate our good practices. We were able to tackle the regional level, reinforcing and disseminating our good practices through a mainstreaming process in each andalusian province. The lessons learned during the first Equal round empowered us on this second Equal round to better influence mainstream policies (local, regional and national levels).

*Basilisa Pizarro
Mancomunidad de Municipios
Valle del Guadiato*

Raffaele Colaizzo is employed by Formez and is an expert in local development through his role as co-ordinator of the Italian SPRINT programme. This programme operates within the framework of the structural funds for Objective 1 regions. The general aim of SPRINT is to increase the capacities of public administrations in the framework of governance, co-ordination and implementation of territorial integrated initiatives. Mr Colaizzo participated in two IDELE seminars (Budapest and Bologna). We have asked Mr Colaizzo to tell us about his impression of the IDELE concept, the IDELE seminars and his idea of the future of local development.



*Raffaele Colaizzo
Formez*

What is the most striking aspect of the IDELE concept and seminars?

The IDELE seminars offer the possibility to discuss the diversity of solutions to a given problem at pan-European level. We all share roughly similar issues, but we do not adopt the same approaches to resolving them, due to our specific policy frameworks and traditions. The question is how to identify the most efficient solutions and how, in general, efficiency is assessed. Results are not always quantifiable and easy to measure and this is at the heart of the problem when it comes to judging the validity of different approaches.

What is the added value of the IDELE seminars for you?

IDELE enhanced my awareness of the importance of co-operation through the exchange of know-how. Co-operation per se is an abstract concept but when it is transposed at the local level it has substance: territories, with their communities, citizens and set of values. Being

pushed to reflect on how they interact when they face a similar issue in different European contexts is the real value of the IDELE seminars.

Are you in touch with participants of the IDELE seminars you attended?

I am developing my contacts with some people I met at the IDELE seminar. It is not always easy to keep and foster relationships when there is no obligation to do so. However, I see the potential for cooperation with some of the participants and I will persist in my endeavours.

If it was up to you to manage the IDELE seminars, what would you do differently?

I would not change the concept in any way and I am not saying this just to be kind. Perhaps, it would have been interesting to have held an IDELE seminar on innovation, technology and local employment development. Exchange of know-how by local actors at European level would be invaluable to identify those factors that shape the development of technological districts.

How do you see the future of local development in the next round of structural funds?

Local development is a consolidated concept and it will inevitably be considered during the next programming period. However, at the European level, there is a need to reassess territory more as a resource than as a problem of social cohesion as it currently seems to be. Territory with its know-how, tradition and communities is a valuable asset and this is the approach that policy makers - at national and European level - should take forward. Encouragingly, the Italian Strategic Reference Framework is already going in this direction.

www.formez.it

IDELE website gets a make over!

The IDELE website has undergone a make over. We have made the site more user friendly and put more resources on it. You can now find on our IDELE website the most up to date information on the 2006 seminars, 2006 themes, including all the background material and pictures of all the seminars of 2004, 2005 and 2006. In addition, we have put online all the summaries of the thematic reports of the 2004 and 2005 themes besides the full reports. Last but not least, we have included summary reports for 2004 and 2005, both in English and French for those who want to have a quick overview of good practice examples and lessons learned. Make sure to have a look at www.ecotec.com/idele.



IDELE coming up . . .

On 13-14 July 2006, the final IDELE seminar will take place in Brussels. This is however not the end of the IDELE concept! After the seminar, the thematic reports of 2006 and their summaries and an overall 2006 summary report will be made available through our IDELE website. In addition, background material, pictures of the Brussels seminar and other material related to the Brussels seminar will be put online.

In August, a second Newsletter will be published and made available through the IDELE website. If you want to subscribe to this Newsletter and receive it by email, please email idele@ecotec.com.

Last but not least, IDELE will continue through the many networks and relationships that have been created between the different participants: local practitioners, local, national and

regional policy makers and of course the European Commission!

Disclaimer

This Newsletter is an information source for those interested in local employment development. It is not an official communication of the author's organisations, nor of the European Commission or ECOTEC.

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