

# The IDELE Seminar in Lille, 2nd July, 2004

We are very grateful to you for agreeing to help us with the Lille event. It is part of a very important process of seeking to understand the contribution of the local approach to employment and development. After more than a decade of experimentation we are in a wonderful position to look back and see what can be extracted from those hundreds of projects that have been exploring the approach in a variety of contexts across the EU.

IDELE gives us a unique opportunity to do this through its series of 12 seminars and from the extensive analysis of what has been viewed as good practice by those engaged in Local Employment Development (LED). The broad questions that we are looking to answer are:

1. what contribution can we realistically expect bottom up and local partnership action to make;
2. what can we identify as the best of good practice;
3. what hard lessons have we learned to date about how to extract the value added that comes from local action;
4. how can these examples and lessons be transferred to other areas; and
5. what sorts of policy frameworks at other levels (regional, national, EU) can help or hinder the development of best features of these approaches.

We know that the answers are far from simple ones not least because the experimentation has been carried out across a huge diversity of contingent circumstances - geographically, over stages in the economic cycle, in widely varying systems of government and governance, and in accordance with different policy initiatives such as URBAN, Territorial Employment Pacts, Local Social Capital and so on.

To deal with this inevitable complexity we have tried to control for at least some of these variables. We have tried to bring people and projects together from similar sorts of areas so that they can share common experiences about the problems they face.

Initially we have selected old industrial and mining areas, major metropolitan cities under pressure from the flow of migration, and dispersed rural areas coping with the special problems that come from distance and low densities of population.

The first IDELE seminar event is the Lille Seminar. This brings together actors and experts to look at what have traditionally been known as Objective Two regions. The day will be set up to address the questions set out earlier through a structured sequence (see attached agenda):

- a synoptic introduction (Jouen) to set the broad policy scene;
- 5 examples of actions in local contexts (Liverpool, Lille, Barcelona, Leipzig, Marinha Grande);
- some observations and questions from a New Member State (Katowice);
- a discussion on LED and big policy frameworks like the EES and Lisbon (Morley);
- a reminder that the task is to revive older industrial areas and create jobs (Potter); and
- a wind-up debate on how effective LED can really be in context with other competing approaches.

We trust that you will find the day rewarding and we are banking on you to participate actively in all aspects of the debate. The event is not an end in itself but one element of a process of enquiry that will lead us in the long run to an intelligent and well-informed view of the role and contribution of LED. The seminar will be followed up by the preparation of a Working Paper on which your comments and suggestions will be a necessary component. We look forward to seeing you on 2nd July in Lille.

