

Points for presentation – 17 November 2006

Reviewing OECD experience in the social enterprise sector, Trento (Italy)

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- Invitation to Trento very significant given the town's importance as a concrete example of social enterprise and local development
- Crucial context that donors must understand – sustainable donor programmes require local involvement, local development, local partnership
- The challenge for donors is to ensure that their work leads to the entire environment for local development to be in place. The thematic slicing of donor assistance (e.g. entrepreneurship, civil society development, financial sector work, social service provision) is a threat in this respect
- The challenge for donors is to adapt their programmes to the situation expected at the time the donor programme ends – too many of the transition projects financed in the 1990s did not take into account the possibility of the CEE countries being EU members
- There are three drivers influencing the achievement of sustainable partnership at the local level:
 - EU membership / accession – the partnership principle in the EU Structural Funds provides some access for civil society in decision-making, although Member States try to limit this. Such participation involves two types of power: the illusion of power (NGOs are a small fish in a big pond) as well as staying power (it is not a grateful task and many social partners / NGOs simply do not attend the meetings they are invited to);
 - access to funding – grants should come with a health warning, both for the nervous strain involved as well as their addictiveness. There is a need for humility from donors as their financing will only ever make up a few percent of the total financing used by NGOs (it comes principally from local and regional authorities). Gaps that need filling need proper identification;
 - limitations to external funding – the thing with donor funding is that it ends / exits / graduates / phases out. Whatever is funded must be provided for the environment that is necessary for the project to survive without the donor funding. It is now 44 days to the end of EQUAL ...
- The question therefore is – are you ready to provide through the grant funding the environment necessary for partnership and local development?