



Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

Trinijove Foundation, Barcelona - Spain

Introduction The Trinijove Foundation first started in 1990. In 1995 the project gained European funding under HORIZON to develop the basic and vocational skills of the immigrant population in a number of neighborhoods in Barcelona. These are largely very run-down areas in the North of the city, with many young immigrants and a birth rate much higher than the average. The project aims to increase participants' chances of finding employment and to create 'social firms' or enterprises. The Foundation has also received subsequent funding through Integra and EQUAL.

Nature of the approach Market opportunities were identified in three areas:

- maintaining parks or other public green spaces,
- improving the urban environment through planting trees and shrubs,
- recycling rubbish.

The organisers believe that the project can only be successful if it monitors closely the progress of all the participants in their transition from training to employment. It has established an advice and guidance service which offers vital moral and practical support to individuals as they follow what can often be a long and difficult road towards employment.

Activities The foundation has set up two co-operatives: one which is involved in gardening and conservation of green spaces and another which undertakes environmental protection work (forestation and recycling of urban waste). The social enterprise model used is the French integration enterprise, a transitory work system which helps the most disadvantaged people in the process of social integration. The choice of enterprise form was much influenced by transnational contacts which came about as a result of participating in a European Union Horizon project. The co-operative legal form was chosen because it seemed most appropriate to the nature of the integration enterprise and would operate with a participatory internal management structure.

a) The Centre for Work and Training was set up in 1991 and is involved in gardening activities. It began with seven members and has grown to 17. The workers tend to be involved initially in the minimum integration wage programme (immigrants, ethnic minorities, drug-dependent people, long-term unemployed).

b) Defence of the Environment began its activities in 1995 and currently employs nine

people. Its main activities are restocking forests, cleaning up woodland, cutting and pruning in the countryside and reintroduction of specific plant species. The co-operative is also involved in the recuperation of solid urban waste. In both co-operatives contracts are agreed with members (they are paid in the same way as ordinary gardeners or recycling workers) and the usual period of work with the co-operative is one to two years. The intention is that in this time the workers become rehabilitated and succeed in finding work in other enterprises in the relevant sectors.

Geographical focus

The focus was on very run-down areas in the North of the city.

Partnership

The project created a closely knit local partnership with the regional government of Catalonia, with other neighboring authorities, with schools and training centres, and with various associations of firms including the Spanish Association for the Recycling of Aluminium. In addition, information and experience was exchanged with other Spanish organisations working to recycle rubbish or protect the environment.

Successes

The project has now been operating successfully for a number of years through accessing a variety of different funding streams.

Lessons learnt

- The potential for matching local people to local jobs in the private sector depends partly on a buoyant labour market and the availability of jobs. Where jobs are scarcer, local partnerships often seek to employ local people in public sector projects and services, often creating innovative solutions to fill local service gaps. Such initiatives work best when they are not 'make work' schemes, but actually address real service shortages, leading to greater sustainability.
- Local partnerships can be successful in identifying local service gaps that will not be filled by the market, and developing mechanisms for delivering such service while employing local people, particularly migrant populations who have difficulty accessing the formal labour market.
- Social enterprise and cooperative development can be a potential tool for this.
- It is important however, to offer people routes into the formal labour market.
- Threats to cooperative development include the size of the enterprise (growth could cause financial problems). The main threat to the successful operation of the co-operatives has been delayed payments by clients, which can have a severe effect on the financial structure of these very fragile enterprises.

Tools and transferability

Tools used include: skills training, social project, cooperative development, environmental projects.