



Urban N.O.S.E.

Network of Social Enterprises

Introductory Paper to the Final Conference

16th May 2011

L.E. Sergio
Campanella



Connecting cities
Building successes



Introductory Paper to the Urban N.O.S.E. Final Conference

During the five thematic conferences the Urban N.O.S.E. thematic network has held to deepen as many macro-themes of vital interest to the network itself, we have drawn up the following lessons, here resumed by theme:

Macro-theme 1: "Building a Territorial Support System for Social Enterprises and 3rd Sector Incubators"

After having studied the situation about governance in the nine partner cities, we can say that the social incubators represent a clear goal of the network of cities, with an appropriate integration of the principles of mainstreaming of the third sector in the world of work of the cities. However, there is a generally low level of cooperation city-region, with a weak community involvement and networking and exchange of experiences resulting in a level that could be raised through a more effective use of the participatory approach, mainly of local support groups. On the other hand, all the cities involved declare to have a potentially very good ability to involve strong local partnerships.

With regard to existing public policies in support of the social economy, we have well verified the existence here of a good general standard of public programs and interventions, mainly at national and regional level.

By analyzing the main obstacles to the promotion and creation of social enterprises in each city, we see an average level of barriers to overcome for most of them. It is necessary to address and remove all these obstacles, so as to enable social enterprises to grow as they deserve.

Finally, by looking at the variety and range of agencies and organizations that may be involved at all levels, regarding the construction of local governance in support of social entrepreneurship, we can see a very good variety and plenty of such entities.

Macro-theme 2: "Management of knowledge and learning processes of urban social economy"

There is a generally positive attitude of the network of cities towards this topic, with a widespread desire to increase the supply of information / training on advice and training needs related to the social economy.

However, there is a generally weak level of information or no specific training courses dedicated to social entrepreneurship and / or social economy which took place in the partner cities: level that could be fostered through a more effective and systematic optimization of the local offer, again using a greater involvement of local support groups.

It is also evident a necessity for all cities of the network: having the will and the ability to share their knowledge in the field, particularly helping those who are in a less highly developed towns, with a significant transfer of knowledge, showing case studies, guidelines, recommendations, and so on. Only through this feedback we could share the same real levels of awareness and knowledge, along with practical tools available to the entire network in order to foster a general alignment of all the partner cities, so ensuring the same starting conditions for the realization of Social incubators.

Macro-theme 3: "Building a System of Tools & Methods for the Supply of Social Services"

An adequate supply of products / services provided by social enterprises in partner cities has been highlighted, with an average offer level for the vast majority of them, along with some points of excellence and also with some cases of weak supply. The main areas of service delivery identified by the partner cities regard the environment (services and solid waste management, protection, recovery and the emergence of the natural environment, "food miles", "km zero" or "short chain" production and distribution for agricultural products, creation and maintenance of gardens and greenhouses), recycling (almost everything, from wood to used cooking oil), social services (education, welfare and healthcare of the second level, nurseries, kindergarten, social assistance to weak categories, etc.), the creative industries (tourism and leisure activities to enrich the curriculum through learning new skills, such as music, sports, food, civil protection, visual arts, souvenirs and gadgeting, etc.) and fields of catering (food supply for the school, asylum, hospice, hospital canteens).

However, the partnership is divided into two main groups, if we focus our attention on what is the number and type of services that are actually provided to local authorities in general: a first group of cities has a larger medium-high level of service provision, while the second outlines a weaker level of service provision. The two groups, nonetheless, return to regroup when it comes to analyzing the expectations of the partner cities towards the concrete possibilities of diversification of economic sectors in which social enterprises should be involved from their local authorities: in fact, they seem to show an intermediate level of expectations regarding the real possibilities of diversification, with a majority of cities thinking not only that social enterprises should

be engaged in all sectors (primary, secondary and tertiary sector), but also that there is usually a huge number of services produced by social enterprises, with a consequent and declared lack of additional and innovative production options, such as in the secondary sector, especially agro-food or recycling. With a smaller number of cities who prefer to concentrate on social activities of more traditional companies, in order to strictly specialise them, especially in activities related to education, childcare, social care, housing maintenance and meals to canteens.

It 'also very important to reflect on a final sensitive spot that there are no current, for the vast majority of partner cities, specific procedures for local procurement / tendering in order to enter into contracts with social enterprises for the provision of public services. Even the only two cities which enjoy the best position on the subject, either simply show the equality of treatment between conventional and social enterprises, in tendering for the provision of local services, or simply admit that "*there is much work going to make the award of public services more accessible to social enterprises, including national guidelines to get more services in this way*".

From this third level of analysis, we can say that there are currently good conditions and an interesting potential for the Urban NOSE network, in order to build in each of the territories involved a wide, diverse and participatory tools and methods system for the delivery of social services relating to social enterprises. As a result, the Urban NOSE cities exchanged between them and have refined local models of tools and methods completely useful for the best structuring of social incubators in their areas, to share with their local partners, regional and national ones belonging to both the public and the private spheres, thereby contributing to the choice of priorities and models of local management to be eventually included in their own related LAP.

Macro-theme 4: "Animating and Sensitising the Territory upon the Social Economy"

With regard to this topic, there is a large number of cities that maintain a positive attitude and some of them even a strongly dynamic and proactive position.

In addition, there is a majority of partner cities that suggest a broad and diverse range of proposals on mode to promote recognition of the value of socio - economic organizations of the Third Sector and Social Enterprises in the city partners, with a strong need to involve all types of local stakeholders, both public and private, up to general public. And a special tip comes from the network proposed in Brighton & Hove, to design publicity events and awareness to highlight the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts and responsibility, so as to generate a basic assumption, that the social economy optimizes its viable performances when

considered as strictly interconnected with other "innovative economies" as the 'green economy', the 'knowledge economy', the 'creative economy' and so on.

However, the partnership seems to be divided into three groups, if we focus our attention on what kind of key stakeholders can play a key role in raising awareness on the importance and the potentialities of social entrepreneurship: a first 'large group of majority' of partner cities suggests a huge number and variety of local actors, while the second outlines a smaller average number of them, finally, a third minority group indicates a very small number of traditional subjects. The last two groups together do not reach the number of cities that belong to the first group: in fact, looking a little deeper, the cities belonging to the two minority groups appear to show a smaller number of stakeholders only to focus their work on the players likely to be more active locally, but not with the purpose to exclude the participation of other parties who, in general, are very welcomed in all the partner cities. Finally, it is useful to highlight the types of subjects more easily identified by the partner cities, as they are considered to be irreplaceable as promoters of social economy and at the same time, as recipients of the same promotional interventions: public entities, media, financial institutions, universities and training institutions, NGOs, traditional business and social enterprise representatives. All of them are together regarded as the correct leading group because better ensure its promotion in the name of the local social incubator, along with the certainty of its right governance and sustainability.

In general, from this fourth level of analysis, it can be said currently there are favorable conditions for building in each of the territories involved a diverse range of activities organized entertainment and local awareness on social enterprises and social economy: and there are good conditions for the social incubators and their transnational networks just as 'principal authorities' of this kind of fundamental process that must be carefully designed to highlight the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of social businesses.

Macro-theme 5: "Animating and Sensitising the Territory upon the Social Economy"

Even on this last big issue, there is a strongly positive assessment on the ability of municipalities to meet the objective of 'Creating a model for the social sustainability of the incubators', with a huge number of towns that maintain an attitude very positive and some of them even in a highly dynamic position.

In addition, there is a majority of the partner cities that denounces the existence of barriers and obstacles to overcome, to transform positive attitudes into real positive behaviours, with a strong integration of the cities that show the real problems that must cope every day, with interesting tips for their concrete overcoming.

Another smaller group of cities, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of positive support schemes already in place in their respective territories, such as specific suggestions for the entire thematic network.

However, the partnership seems to be unified into a single, compact group, if we focus our attention on the potential offered by existing models to the sustainability of the social economy incubators: all the cities suggest a wide and diverse range of possibilities, going by the statement that "the incubator is the appropriate tool to move the financing of social enterprises from other financing sources of public sector (internal or private donors)", until the underlining that "with the appropriate skills and training provided by the incubator, social enterprises may be able to take several grants co-funded by the European Union to continue with their activities of social assistance", or, again, emphasizing that their "experience is transferable to other local authorities if the political will is strong enough to implement this type of planning that needs to be durable. The association that conducts the incubator must be evaluated and must demonstrate its willingness and ability to implement the project over the long term. Governance and management coordination between the partners must be strong and reliable" and concluding that "it is necessary to structure networks that deal with entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship of collective dimension is important. Broader partnerships are necessary for a coherent development of the territory and not only a social policy to push people to create their own employment through entrepreneurship".

In general, from this fifth level of analysis, we can state that there are currently wide potentialities and favourable conditions for the Urban NOSE network to build in each of the territories involved the appropriate models to measure the sustainability of the incubators of social economy: and there are good conditions to ensure the social incubators and their transnational networks a good and effective choice of financing possibilities, together with suitable premises and support for special counselling.

Presentations for the Urban N.O.S.E. Final Conference

Taking into account the facts and insights of exchanges made between the partner cities on the five macro-themes, briefly summarized above, each partner city is now asked to give its precious contribution to the project final conference, preparing a brief presentation that should contain, at least, the following crucial aspects:

- a) an update on the situation of the social economy in the city, highlighting the aspects related to the existing legislative framework, the attitude of local authorities towards the subject, any useful examples of good practice being implemented in cities;

- b) a description of how the thematic network Urban NOSE has influenced this situation, with reference to instruments and methods of intervention triggered by the project, and the real value added that the project has brought to the city;
- c) a summarised description of the contents of the LAP, indicating if it is centred on all the five macro themes analysed, or only on some of them and, following the format that you already own, a specific reference to the strategy, objectives, timing, costs and expected results of the same LAP;
- d) finally, a reasoned list of recommendations to policy-makers that can also be useful as a basis for suggestions for the next seven years of planning, in progress preparation by the European Commission.

The Urban N.O.S.E. Lead expert
Sergio Campanella

URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 255 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

www.urbact.eu/project



EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME
FOR
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

