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WORKSHEET: Learning Journey, 2012 – 2014 European Cycle

The PACTES project: Learning and Cooperation Platform for the Social and Solidarity-based Economy- Grundtvig Learning partnerships

Improving the Learning Journey: the tool used by cooperating-actors in the PACTS project

➔ This collaborative production process offers a rigorous method for formalizing cross-cutting learning. It was developed in 2007 to prepare a workshop for the 4th international RIPESS forum¹ “demonstrating that an alternative economy exists”, hosted in April 2009 by Luxembourg. The French *Pactes Locaux* network, expanded on a European scale for the occasion, organised six regional meetings in two years, hosted by participative organizations with strong roots in their territories, previously identified for their exemplary nature and valuable results.

➔ The cycle summary was expanded in April 2009 during the workshop with participative contributions from Europe, Burkina Faso, Chili, the Ivory Coast, Georgia, Reunion, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, the Philippines, Quebec and Senegal. A consensus statement was produced: “Seeing the reality of the solidarity-based economy for yourself makes it possible to undertake a more rigorous analysis of its thematic aspects and to understand how to stimulate an alternative economy in a given area; it provides a realistic vision of its development at the local, national and continental levels. More important still, territorial anchoring further highlights the role of governance in promoting the solidarity-based economy as an economic alternative in the context of the globalization process.”

➔ The Association *Pactes Locaux*” accepted the task of implementing this consensus in preparation for the 5th RIPESS forum, to be held in Manila, the Philippines, in 2013.² Several countries used the Learning Journey tool; the workshop continued its work from a distance: several international meetings took place, enabling participants to document the territorial approach of this “new economy”, to better understand it and to better understand each other.³

¹ The Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) has been working since 1997 on promoting social transformation within local and global societies, demonstrating the important role played by inter-cultural diversity, democracy and participation in community development and the realization of human potential.

² In French: http://www.pactes-locaux.org/bdf/docs/capitalisation_7pages_-lux_09.pdf
In English: http://www.pactes-locaux.org/bdf/docs/capitalisation_7pages_-lux-pl-eng-7.pdf

³ Delegation of practitioners at the Montreal FIESS (Canada), October 2011: http://www.pactes-locaux.org/bdf/docs/pactes_poster_fr_vf.pdf; http://www.pactes-locaux.org/bdf/docs/pactes_poster_en_vf.pdf;
Asian Forum in Kuala Lumpur, November 2011: http://www.pactes-locaux.org/bdf/docs/kl-martineth-p_acts1st-11-2011.pdf.

➔ The organization also continued to arrange Learning Journeys in Europe: Mulhouse in France, Linz in Austria and São Brás de Alportel in Portugal¹. The European Resources Collective was created in 2010, becoming European Pacts in January 2012. It represents a concrete extension of the relationships established during this valuable process.

➔ Partners in the Learning Partnerships project will make use of and adapt the Learning Journey. They are committed to improving its methodology in order to meet the learning and social transmission objectives they set themselves for the 2012-2014 cycle.

What does this achieve? Testimonies (1st Learning Journey Cycle, April 2009):

"It enables tools to be built collectively for working together on the same subject." (France)

"Watching people in action within a project, talking to them on site, is always more interesting than the actual presentation. Ultimately, the value lies in applying an experience, seen elsewhere but adaptable to our situation, to our contexts, atmospheres and cultures." (Québec)

"Presenting your project in order to explain in, within guiding principles, acts as a catalyst for years of discussions and actions and serves to validate and lay the groundwork for cross-cutting, inter-institutional public action." (France)

"We need to gather these learning experiences together to show the world that there is an alternative, to compile case studies in order to produce a collective effect, to discuss things within a non-academic study group. Because we need to understand what we have learnt so we can promote proposals together." (Philippines)

Who are the PACTS project partners?

➔ They are primarily actors with practical experience and proven results from six countries in southern, central and northern Europe. They draw on their individual capacities to transform their realities and transform themselves.

➔ The socio-economic innovations they are working towards provide a long-lasting and participative solution to the essential needs of daily life, such as food, housing, work and organization, which are important in finding a way of living well together.

➔ Their organizations cooperate within a critical and constructive framework that formalizes and transmits concrete acquired knowledge and lessons learnt from their practical experiences.

Results-based objectives for the Learning Partnership cycle

1- ➔ Create a European toolbox of available and transferable solutions.

Each partner organization in turn plays host to the others to share the specific expertise it has developed, covering substantive theme-based content and activating methods used in collective processes. The Learning Journeys will tackle the topics of companies pooling to create shared

¹ Development of the Learning Journeys: http://aloe.socioeco.org/page74-projet_fr.html;
http://aloe.socioeco.org/page74-projet_en.html

work, short circuits between producers and consumers, environmental education, social and solidarity-based companies, discussion groups and support for the unemployed.

2- ➔ Promote peer-group training at the European level.

Discussions tend to be debates between expert practitioners whose contributions are theoretical as well as practical. However, meetings in informal spaces between adults from different backgrounds create the ideal conditions to appropriate knowledge, consolidate analyses, promote a real appropriation of the proposed methods and tools, find inspiration from the reliable source of other people's experiences, put forward proposals for inclusion in public European debate and suggest ideas on how to make a positive impact on public policies on the basis of concrete examples.

3- ➔ Multiply the number of people familiar with and using these work methods

The goal is to export these socio-economic innovations to other geographical and economic contexts. The medium-term prospects are for incorporating horizontal cooperation processes into much broader territorial levels and recognition in common law.

The way participants relate to other people is crucial.

➔ The meeting is designed to foster sharing between peers. Each participant is there to listen, observe, react, interact and contribute to results. It is not about taking a detached or superior attitude to judging the proceedings. Participants listen and observe with understanding, but also in a spirit of constructive criticism.

➔ Members and learners from the partner organization together form a "community of practices". Setting out together on the same path of knowledge towards shared goals, they will all actively contribute to all the meetings in the 2012–2014 cycle.

Transnational meetings are ideal occasions for discussions that serve to pool learning experiences and put together proposals.

Preparing a Learning Journey

1- ➔ Invited partner organizations prepare the Learning Journey.

- The coordinators put together documentation on the theme to be tackled so that the different European approaches to the same theme can be discussed.
- They choose the guests, checking that their participation has a useful role to play: opening up to Europe, increasing skills, providing an inspiring example, strengthening national partnerships, etc.
- Guests are stakeholders in the organization or organizations they work with regularly: unemployed people's organizations, consumer associations, regional local administration, schools, cooperatives, socio-professional organizations, etc.
- The learners they invite are involved from the start in preparing their participation, designed as an intensive training module: preliminary meetings to find out about their expectations, provision of information and guidelines for the report on their learning

experiences to be produced on their return. They will still be involved in the post-journey period.

- Each organization finances its “learners” either 12 or 24 depending on the choice made.

2- ➔ **The host organization has a day for sharing its experiences.**

- It defines the entry point, visits, presentations and its own invitations.
- It ensures that they meet the requirement to provide elements that can be used for pooling.
- It organizes the day’s programme in such a way that participants can learn from one another.
- It sets aside time for informal and friendly discussions.

➔ **The organization is in charge of Learning Journey logistics.**

- It makes an information kit available on the site prior to the journey.
- It provides practical information early enough for low-cost tickets to be bought.
- It draws up an agenda with a detailed programme of work.
- It organizes reception of learners based on a fixed cost (covering accommodation and meals) per person that takes into account the small budgets available.¹
- It organizes travel during the journey for around 20 participants.
- It provides good quality French and English simultaneous interpretation.²
- It provides flip charts, enough copies of the assessment questionnaires, etc.

➔ **The organization presents the meeting’s results in a Newsletter.**

- It coordinates production of the Newsletter.
- It finalizes the definitive version in both the project’s languages (French and English).

3- ➔ **The coordination team acts as the interface to help achieve the project’s objectives.**

- It works together with the local partner organization and provides as much help in preparing the meeting’s agenda and programme as needed.
- It monitors the cycle’s continuity and prepares a brief progress report before each meeting.
- It checks that the number of participants is balanced, with a maximum of 21 people per Learning Journey.
- It ensures that simultaneous interpretation equipment is available for 15 participants.

Sample programme for a meeting: work period of 4 half-days spread over 4 days (including travel)

➔ **First ½ day**

¹ In France, the trip budget for the people taking part in Chef-Boutonne was €250 per person. The total budget per participant was set at €550 including transport.

² It may be possible to call on the services of Yves Tixier and Margaret Durham for a moderate cost if there are no interpreters available on site (but the travel, accommodation and meal costs must be covered by the hosts, as was the case in France at Chef-Boutonne).

- Introductions: 2/3 of learners and the on-site guests find out about the project.
- Presentation of partner organizations: review of the activities they have undertaken since the previous meeting to ensure that the PACTS project respects the continuity of the cycle.
- The hosts present their activities in their contexts. At this initial stage, the idea is to provide information so that each participant can understand which needs the project aims to meet and how the action template operates.

➔ **Day dedicated to the Learning Journey:**

1- ➔ The hosts illustrate their projects (2 to 4 visits).

- They represent the different facets of their action template.
- They are presented by their authors.
- They include a presentation of the activity in the presence of the various internal stakeholders and associated partners.
- Time is set aside for discussions with visitors.
- There is no reason not to plan a moment during the day for communicating with the local media.

2- ➔ Participants then share their observations and analyses

- They ensure that everyone has a clear understanding and provide explications and additional information.
- They discuss the relevance and value of a particular action template in addressing similar problems in other participants' contexts.

3- ➔ They provide key first impressions of their learning experiences

- They address the substantive content of the activation tools and methods used by the collective processes presented to them.
- These first impressions will later be supplemented by an evaluative summary based on a standard questionnaire.
- They discuss possible follow-up actions: spin-offs, expansion of the action template, cooperation between their organizations, etc.
- They collectively define the key points of the learning experiences acquired during the meetings so they can use them to prepare the Newsletter.

➔ **Last ½ day**

- All participants share their assessment of the meeting: what went well, what was difficult, what needs to be improved in the future.
- Assessment questionnaires are returned to the partner organization, which will summarize them: this task will be rotated each time.
- Points that need on-going collective attention are put up for discussion; improvement of self-assessment tools in the four selected areas:
 - training aspect for the two categories of participants;
 - partner relations and cooperation between partners;
 - efficiency and applicability of the Learning Journey's operational framework;
 - spin-off process and results per country;
 - other.
- Planning of activities in the period up to the next meeting: documents, preparing the Newsletter, communication, monitoring relations, spin-offs, etc.