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The approach of making local pacts to improve social cohesion started in France with a manifesto aimed at parliamentarians: act local, build a long-term legal framework rather than introduce stopgap emergency measures. They proposed a partnership-based dynamic that brings all stakeholders together: business, elected representatives, associations, social workers, and the unemployed. This new way approach to relationships requires “jointly analyzing the situation, negotiating shared objectives and the implementation of a strict but flexible brief”. With the support of the Foundation for the Progress of Humankind they developed and disseminated the lessons learnt in a booklet describing about 50 experiences in 2001, followed by a handbook of proposals in 2004, called “1+1=3”.

2005: maturity, a formal association, European ambitions.

Although often both culturally and geographically distant from one another, the approach spread beyond the borders of France. The concept of local pact evolved to that of PACT: the local is the concept of territory, and the pact cooperation. “ACTS also imply ACTING, together with those who share the approach and the commitment to reconstruct an economic and social pact capable of facing the challenges. This is all outlined in the 2nd Proposal Handbook in 2011 “Making a pact to pool, progress and create.”

The movement was launched, with the music of the Portuguese poet Torga in our minds and hearts: “The universal is the local minus the walls!”. A methodology that works

Learning Journeys make it possible to learn from one another.

Meetings are based on mutual, non-judgemental peer respect. Participants set aside their institutional posture during a journey, but not necessarily their ideas. Listening and observation are well-meaning, critical and contributive. Dialogue is aimed at building better mutual understanding of respective approaches to action. Acquiring experience through observation, questions and answers help build the analysis, broaden horizons and build trust through others’ success stories.

Who can participate?

Elected representatives, entrepreneurs, inhabitants, trade unionists, local authorities, associations, researchers, and resource people. All committed through their activities, mandates, responsibilities in an open territory economy (commercial, public services, third sector, voluntary sector). They all aim to organise complementarities and build cooperation. This is why they are interested in building inclusive partnerships, both binding and voluntary, either routine or exceptional, that may not yet exist but that are desirable...

How to prepare and hold a Learning Journey:

A theme, questions, an interpretive support, and upfront communication.

A 3-stage approach: illustrate, discuss, and propose, over 2-3 days. The hosts take the initiative on the theme and extend local invitations. The external delegation of approximately 10 people is selected according to the theme. The PACTES act as an interface with the local expert hosts during the preparatory and feedback phase. Production: A case-study sheet summary, public feedback with the dual objective of support and helping put forward proposals of general interest.

10 Learning Journeys since 2007 !

What purpose does it serve?

France Joubert « Jointly develop tools to work together on the same issues ». CERGE and PACTES (Poitiers, 12.2007)

Alain Laurent « Telling your story in a structured framework allows people to catalyse years of reflection and action; it validates or prepares crosscutting and inter-institutional public actions ». TEP_RES (Avignon, 05.2008)

Jacques Fiset « Observe people in action on a project, and listen to them in their own context is better than just a presentation. At the end of the day it helps us to transfer an experience that we can adapt to our own context, atmosphere and culture ». Local Development Centre, Quebec (Aude, 04.2009).

Ben Quítones « In Asia we talk about an integrated approach. We need to bring these learning stories together to show the world that this is a genuine alternative ». (Aude, 4.2009)

CSR SME Asia (Coalition of Socially Responsible SMEs), the Philippines, organiser of the 7th RIPESS Meeting in 2013 (Aude, 04.2009).

Tools and methods developed by the associate partners:

ALOE, Fratèspaus Wautiez, International Alliance for a Responsible Plural and Solidarity Economy: an Internet site that provides information and showcases case studies and analyses and hosts multilingual fora.  

BASE Sud Audiois, Peter Wollny, France, Languedoc-Roussillon. An associative Platform and Citizen’s Internet site for inhabitants of the district of the Hauté Vallée de l’Audé. It is aimed at local economic development through experience and knowledge sharing www.base-sud-audus.fr/  

BEST, Heike Birkhoelzer, Germany. Berliner Entwicklungsgesellschaft für Soziale Unternehmen und Teilzeittum. A development agency for social enterprise and neighbourhood economy in Berlin: it provides a strategy for a different way of living and sustainable development, independent of external funding: www.technet-berlin.de/

CERGE, France Joubert, France, Europe. A voluntary alliance between employers provides job security: a legal framework enabled the Employers Group to incorporate an association as a company, and hire staff for job-sharing: there is a Regional Resource Centre, a European Centre for dissemination in Europe. This approach has proved it works: 34,600 employees, 750 million €/p. Participants practice territorial social dialogue. www.cerge.com/index.php?lang=fr&site=1&gd_page=96

UNADEL, Jean-Marc Binaud, France works in the town and urban community authorities of Knockin and the communal local economy, local sustainable development, citizen’s education, network with multi-functional levels. It is a unique systemic approach to changing the system. It is a unique systemic approach to changing the system. www.terredeliens.org  

OPE, Abilio Machado, GD Luxembourg. Since the 1980s, Objectif Plein Emploi has been a citizen’s initiative of resilience to industrial change. Supported by the trade union DGB-L, then by grass-root support in local authorities, the State and Europe. Job-creation, solidarity economy, local sustainable development, citizen’s education.: 1000 non-delocalisable jobs in 2009, 400 volunteers, OPE works as a network with multi-functional levels: Initiative Centres, and joint management at local, regional, sectoral levels all intermeshed with a shared resource centre (management, consulting). www.ope.lu/  

Technologie-Netzwerk, Karl Birkhoelzer, Berlin, Allemagne. A network of individuals, initiatives and organisations that share joint objectives in research, training, education on local economy and employment strategies. They have a broad spectrum of contacts and cooperation with similar projects. www.technet-berlin.de

Terre de Liens, Marc Barny, France, Rhône-Alpes, in regular informal exchanges. Founded in 2003, to support small-scale farmers installation in organic agriculture. The movement includes regional associations and local committees. 2 financial tools mobilise capital that enables collective solidarity access to land for farming: la Fondière (2006) and Le Fonds de Dotation (2009), a recognised Foundation www.terredeliens.org

URGENCE, Andrea Calori, International. Urban-Rural Partnerships for Generating New Exchange between Citizens since 2004. Community Supported Agriculture provides healthy local food and solidarity partnerships between farmers and consumers. URGENCE aims to “jointly restructure the relationship between local food and local economy (energy, carbon footprint) and food as a human right. It is a unique systemic approach to changing the system. Members of the Civil Society Mechanism of the FAO www.urgenci.net