

Identification and Analysis of Co-Development Practices in Europe: Methodology and Overall Results

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Beginnings: Identification of practices in Belgium

This initial research involved a survey of associations, mainly in French-speaking Belgium, engaged in ‘co-development’ work (N=157). The concept was defined through a questionnaire on practices in the Belgian context. The reflection on the quality criteria applied to this work led to the creation of an analysis tool for practices¹ which is applicable at European level.

This tool uses a general matrix created from a list of practices taken from the bibliography (850 items). The matrix was tested on Belgian practices and simplified by factorial analyses to classify the practices according to the capabilities implemented. The result was an *analysis tool for co-development practices in associations*, featuring 35 capabilities grouped into five factors:

- LINK NORTH AND SOUTH
- PACIFY TENSIONS
- MANAGE
- REFLECT ON PRACTICE
- LEAD GROUPS

Application at European level

To test the model at European level, we created a sample (N=154) and collected data.

The analysis was used to *validate the tool at European level and provide a snapshot of co-development in Europe*.

Guided by an information sheet, all the associated and member associations in 11 countries participated in the identification of a dozen practices ‘selected’ for each country. We visited the websites of the practices indicated.

Three readers analysed the documents associated with each practice and categorised the practices in the *Matrix of Practices in Associations*. Formal information on the projects was also encoded. The factorial analysis validates the analysis tool at European level, since the structure of the five factors is identical in the Belgian and European cases. It measures the co-development capabilities of associations according to five factors and classifies the initiatives according to the selected criteria.

Overview of practices

Of the 154 projects, half were started in *2003 or later*.

Of the projects for which budget information was provided, 56% of projects have a budget *under €10,000 a year*; 11% under €20,000; 8% under €30,000, and 3% under €40,000.

One in every three projects concerns *persons from the same country of origin*; these projects are ‘less effective’ and obtain a lower overall score.

More than one in three projects is concerned with *economic objectives* such as creation of employment, professional training, sustainable tourism or food security. These projects seem to be ‘more effective’ both North and South, obtaining a higher overall score and a higher ‘Link North and South’ score. In fact, projects with a more social vocation have effective spinoffs in the regions over a longer timeframe.

The more ‘*cross-sector*’ projects (covering several sectors of activity or regions) and the *oldest* projects have higher overall scores, especially concerning Factor 3, ‘Manage’.

The *oldest* projects are French, Spanish and Portuguese. The Italian and Czech projects are among the newest. Of the projects for which budget information was provided, the French projects are by far the *best financed*. France and Portugal had the greatest number of projects identified as ‘*efficient*’ and with a high ‘Link North and South’ score (Factor 1).

In the South, the oldest projects are underway in Mali and DRC. The projects in Senegal and Cape Verde are among the newest. The Malian projects are the best financed of the projects for which budget information was provided. Cape Verde and Morocco had the greatest number of projects identified as ‘*efficient*’. The projects in DRC presented difficulties.

Analyses by specific projects

The five-factor scores obtained by the 154 projects were classified. The projects which appeared at the top of the lists most often were identified.

¹ Report available on www.eunomad.org.

Twenty-two projects appear at least three times in the top 10 five-factor scores. *These initiatives will be analysed in the network's Good Practice Guide:*

Projects from all countries in the North are among the highest scoring, including Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the UK.

Most of these projects are run by EUNOMAD General Assembly member associations

The highest scoring countries in the South are Morocco, Senegal, Mali and DRC

These initiatives have budgets ranging from €5,000 to €60,000

The socio-educational sector is most commonly addressed in the North; in the South, food security, employment and tourism are the leading sectors

One of these is a cross-sector project: Co-development Education in France, Portugal and Italy

Almost a dozen of these projects are in the field of economic work.

Understanding Economic Co-Development Work

In the group of 15 economic projects selected (see summary sheets below), we notice that the majority are aiming to *mobilise* partnerships. For this purpose, the key players harness social capabilities, as explored in a previous EUNOMAD workshop:

Provide information and raise awareness; help migrants become aware of their needs and resources

Reinforce the capabilities of other players

Supervise other players in project implementation

Share know-how

The key players thus 'secure' additional partnerships, in particular with the host country institutions, and open the door to more extensive *investment* in potential projects. The migrants also *donate* more than just their time. Conversely, *saving* is the least common phenomenon in the projects analysed.

The work observed also touched on three cross-sector issues, listed below in order of frequency:

Intercultural communication, an issue which affects virtually every stage of every project due to the diversity of the participants and regions

Gender relations, an issue which should not be reduced to the mere presence of women on the projects

Respect for the environment and sustainable development, the least common cross-sector concern

The majority of the projects analysed enjoy the *support and supervision of professional organisations* specialised in the promotion of migrant initiatives. Development NGOs are involved to a lesser extent. We see the emergence of '*pro-migrant*' or *mixed* organisations alongside the associations created by immigrants. The development spinoffs essentially concern the South; *combined spinoffs for living conditions North and South were seen in only one case in three*.

ESTABLISHING A CO-DEVELOPMENT CYCLE?

The observations demonstrate that the progress of co-development initiatives can be represented as a model. However, this provisional model has yet to be confirmed, and is by no means the only scenario possible

The study of good practices showed that the *ends of cycle* – initiation focused on the difficulties facing migrants in the North (Phase 1) and work to create a balance in North/South exchanges (Phase 7) – are rarely used. The **essential** part of the initiatives begins in Phase 2 ('cooperation with organisations in the North') and ends in Phase 6 ('consolidation of work in the South').

We notice that *cooperation between migrants associations and specialised organisations* is the most common and the most varied type of project designed to develop economic capabilities such as investing, saving and securing. These are the rare projects which manage to overturn or balance the dynamic and generate a *South > North or South > South impetus*.

Conclusions and prospects for the network

The *associations using co-development practices* are highly diverse. One of the driving forces observed is the presence of a number of individuals from an immigration background, '*double agents*' grounded in the realities of the host country and the country of origin. Ideally, these persons can take advantage of a *dual local environment* useful both North and South. As a result, co-development practices themselves are multiple and constantly evolving.

Each different stage of these practices plays an important role in transforming the organisation applying the practice

The associations, at various stages in their development, need each other's help to *learn together, consolidate their structures* and *act on their environment*;

This highlights the importance of *networks* at both *local* and *international* level, as well as the importance of *mixed partnerships*.

The diversity of situations results in *asymmetrical* networks. Within the member organisations, the experience, history, degree of recognition and material resources differ enormously among the various countries and at European level.

The study showed that the best documented projects also proved most satisfactory in terms of quality criteria. A number of these initiatives were related to the *Co-Development Education* project previously run by French, Italian and Portuguese partners. This leads us to conclude that the *network process*, although time-consuming, brings benefits in terms of consolidation of expertise and helps to ensure the *sustainability* of the projects:

Stabilisation and diversification of resources

Appropriation of practices: From 'your project' to 'our project' and from 'do for' to 'do with'

Key players made self-sufficient: Used as tools or mutually beneficial partnership?

The network process also needs to be developed further:

Consolidation of EUNOMAD

Cooperation with NGO networks poorly represented among the players identified

Opening up to a sister network in the South to balance North/South and South/North exchanges, compare different points of view and promote the movement of persons.