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Points for an intervention

Social entrepreneurship and empowerment in the Swedish context. (I am not totally following the instructions of the panel as there is nothing much to say about law financing controlling and marketing).

300+ work integration social enterprises. Most are in the form of workers cooperatives and make part of the general legislation on cooperatives. There is no specific legislation.

1/3 in Skoopi – the interest organization for Wises. Our objective is to double the number.

However more are organized in employers organisations as workers are covered by collective agreements on wages and working conditions, a rather unique situation in Europe.

25-50 new WISEs created each year – a growth industry (figures to be checked).

There is a voluntary public register for social enterprises – four criteria should be fulfilled

- Work integration objective
- Profits are to be reinvested
- Independence from the public
- Participation/control by the individual workers

In short the WISE is a collective enterprise with social objectives based on empowerment of individuals.

I will focus on the fourth criteria **participation through empowerment**

Startup phase – how to promote new social enterprise

Start ups are based on

- Organizing meeting places for mutual learning (no hierarchical learning process, democratic – the experience of each individual is accounted for)
- The need to find employment
- The interest to engage
- Identifying good practice (models of wise that exist both inside and outside Sweden; Italy for instance, not so much UK)

However initiators have often been active in civil society organisations or the public sector.

Support structures are often used In Sweden there is a network of cooperative development agencies (in all regions) mobilizing people with interest to create a collective enterprise.

That is Coompanion, a cooperative enterprise/association in its form partly financed by the public authorities (state, region, EU funds).

There are also other structures and existing social enterprises which promote startups but Coompanion is dominating.

The existing enterprise

The pathway of career (particularly the cooperative enterprise) –

1st phase Participant (remunerated by the social services and public employment agencies).

2nd phase Co-worker (employed by the social enterprise)

3rd phase Member/owner of the cooperative

The pathway of career and empowerment

Several models – but I am using a model which is rather well known and is becoming disseminated elsewhere. It is about capacity building of the human being.

Each individual is a human being – and must be seen and listened to. The participants come from very different difficult environments; crime, prison, drug addicting, prostitution and sexual harassment, psychical illnesses, nobody has listened to them before. It is a new experience.

There are no leaders that decide.

Common meetings for mutual learning and planning of work tasks. Each morning and lunch and regular weekly meetings– The work should be performed together. The positive in each human being is identified, not the negative.

Individual plans are set up for each individual together with her/him. The contacts with the public authorities is not made on an individual basis, always a support from the team.

Underline mutual democratic learning processes. Based on each individuals unique experience.

Ideals/good models are important to identity and follow. ...(more on this)

Models of “motivational interviewing” are e.g. used – with certified persons within and outside the enterprise – a model based on partnership/companionship between “counselor” and “client”.

A few points of MI to explain

- Motivation to change is elicited from the client, and is not imposed from outside forces
- It is the client's task, not the counselor's, to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence
- Direct persuasion is not an effective method for resolving ambivalence
- The counselor is directive, in that they help the client to examine and resolve ambivalence

Another model used is the “salutogenic leadership” (Antonovsky)

The term describes an approach focusing on factors that support human health and well-being, rather than on factors that cause disease.

They are a few aspects on the human and democratic aspect of empowerment. The human capacity is building.

But there is also the dimension of professional capacity building. How to run an enterprise, financially sustainable, market oriented, innovative to exploit new ideas and approaches and produce new services and products.

There is a clear link between the human and professional capacity building. Empowered people will be more innovative in their thinking, they will organise production in new and more effective ways, they will not be locked into a traditional hierarchical enterprise structure.

Empowerment means that their entrepreneurial spirit – everyone is in possession of an entrepreneurial spirit – can be used for running an efficient enterprise.

A bit more on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit here.

The formal institutions of empowerment are found in the democratic forms of enterprise that are mainly used in Sweden for WISEs namely worker cooperatives. The last phase in the career pathway is that you become a member of the cooperative, which – but that is normal – can last a few years.

The challenges for Skoopi except for strengthening the organisation, getting more members and promoting a policy for strengthening social enterprise

- Organise and promote good models for capacity building
- Disseminating models of good practice in social entrepreneurship

Certification (benchmarking, labelling) of social enterprises is a key point.

We would rather promote a certification model that is set up by our organisation. A system for standards on the criteria for the WISE (see the abovementioned 4 criterias) which should be commonly defined by our organization and which then are followed up in different ways by benchmarking and peer reviews i.e. the verification of the standards by another enterprise(s).