

Strategic Community Economic Development: sources & good practice - supplement to the Localise WM briefing: “Strategic Community Economic Development in Birmingham”



Good practice

i) RESO



The *Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest* is a community economic development corporation working for the economic and social revitalisation of Montreal's Southwest - an area that suffered continuous industrial decline from the 1960s to the 1990s. From the start, it was committed to approaches that reach those hardest to reach – e.g. chronically unemployed youth.

In 1984, organisations in the Point St. Charles area began organising against loss of manufacturing jobs and pressures to gentrify. In 1989, these efforts led to the formation of RESO, a unique partnership focused on renewal of the five poorest neighbourhoods in the city's southwest.

RESO evolved into a membership-based organisation. Four major organisational member categories elect their own representatives to the board—four from the community movement, two from trade unions, one from big business, and one from small business. Today, there are 300 organisational members and 1500 individual members of RESO, this latter group also elects a member to the board. This is out of a total population of only 80,000.

Its remit covers human resource development and training; technical assistance aimed at business retention; issues related to land use, development of infrastructure; and representation, consultation, and promotion related to community economic development and to the development of the Montreal region.

Through years of local training, job development and business advice they have uniquely developed the ability to customise their training to the needs of the local business profile. So they are building effective bridges between the needs of the poor and the needs of the business community & locally tailored.

They have developed an early warning system designed to alert RESO of the potential loss of a business. Trade unions that see potential problems in their employers—for example, a business owner retiring with no buyer, financial difficulties, or market problems—and issue a warning to RESO. RESO then work with management and union to problem-solve (e.g., a succession problem could lead to a worker buy-out). They have also impacted on corporate procurement and relocations to create better local returns.

RESO has had significant impacts in reducing poverty, social exclusion and economic decline.

Source: <http://www.resomtl.com/en/home.aspx> and Lewis & Swinney (2008)

ii) Revitalising the Manufacturing Sector in Chicago through a “Social” Partnership

The Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council (CMRC) was created in July 2005. Born of a history of 25 years of de-industrialisation and 200,000 associated job losses, the CMRC is a unique public/private/community partnership that aims to place Chicago manufacturing back into the top ranks of global innovation. To make this happen, three principles are seen as crucial:

1. Commitment to a genuine social partnership of labour, business, community and government;
2. Each partner is essential to the design and implementation of each initiative undertaken;
3. Commitment to development that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.

By bringing together all the stakeholders, the Council is explicitly setting out to develop long-term, “high road” solutions that will help manufacturing companies become more innovative in production; reinvest in equipment and in their workforce; improve the educational institutions that produce the next generation of workers; ensure that government and labour support the sustainability and growth of manufacturing companies; and revitalise some of Chicago's most devastated neighbourhoods.

Source: Lewis & Swinney (2008)

SME consortia - Italy

A consortium approach used in Italy which permits local SMEs and social enterprises to overcome minimum turnover requirements etc in order to bid for major contracts while retaining local identities and maximising local benefits. Source: <http://www.buildup.eu/blog/23848>

Economic gardening – Colorado

Instigated in Colorado following the loss of inward investors to emphasis the ‘home grown’ economy, it bases its activities on three pillars: provision of information and market research; infrastructure for transport, quality of life and higher education in order to create a favourable environment for entrepreneurs; and connections between local businesses and academic institutions, thinktanks and other businesses. Source: <http://www.economicgardening.ca/>

Useful sources:

- LWM’s Mainstreaming CED project and its literature review: http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/mainstreaming_ced/
- Bryden, J. and Hart, K. (2001) *Dynamics of Rural Areas (DORA) the international comparison*. The Arkland Centre for Rural Development Research.
- Levett-Therivel sustainability consultants (2007) *Report to Sustainability West Midlands Policy Group: West Midlands regional strategy options papers: Sustainability issues* (unpublished)
- Lewis, M. & Swinney, D. (2008) *Social economy? Solidarity economy? Exploring the implications of conceptual nuance for acting in a volatile world*. Centre for Community Enterprise, Canada.
- Shuman, M. (2006) *The Small-Mart Revolution: how local businesses are beating the global competition*. San Francisco: Berrett-Loehler.
- Shuman, M. (2000) *Going Local: Creating self-reliant communities in a global age*. New York, Routledge.
- Ward, B. & Lewis, J. (2002) *Plugging the Leaks: Making the Most of Every Pound that Enters Your Local Economy*. London: New Economics Foundation
- The Canadian CED network: <http://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en>

Localise WM, November 2012

www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk; info@localisewestmidlands.org.uk