



## AEIDL organises CLLD training course

*On 2<sup>nd</sup> April AEIDL piloted its new one-day training course on Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The day combined theory with practice, comprising an introduction to the concepts and policy development, a Local Action Group case study, a session on applying CLLD to social inclusion, an explanation of the new EU regulation, and a study visit to a local development initiative in Brussels. The guinea-pigs were 15 of AEIDL's staff.*

The session, organised by **Jyostna Patel**, started with a brief introduction by **Toby Johnson** on the important opportunity that the introduction of CLLD as a methodology across the Structural Funds represents. It offers the chance to create development which is inclusive, cohesive, citizen-based and sustainable, and is led by organisations that are accountable to local people. It works at the level at which people can engage, and can thus help to remedy the disenchantment that many Europeans feel with government from far away. It makes the most of the skills and resources within an area, and develops a balanced economy, rather than one that relies on 'exporting' a single product. It is an antidote to excessive globalisation.

### **The holy trinity – strategy, territory and partnership**

**Paul Soto** outlined how the concept has developed. It was born in cities, but was taken up enthusiastically in rural areas with the advent of LEADER, and more recently in fisheries areas under FARNET. There are now 2,300 LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) and 300 FLAGs. During LEADER, AEIDL developed a set of seven principles,<sup>1</sup> which articulate the 'holy trinity' of three necessary factors:

- **strategy:** a local development strategy
- **territory:** for designed geographical area
- **partnership:** managed by a multi-stakeholder local action group

What sets CLLD apart from other types of local development is that the Local Action Groups have a high degree of autonomy – they both design the local strategy and select the projects to be supported

CLLD has proved to be a very popular and cost-effective methodology, and its codification has ensured its survival. But the principles may need to be adapted. In the new

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<sup>1</sup> [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=B973735A-9614-ABDF-4A4E-2800119E5476](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=B973735A-9614-ABDF-4A4E-2800119E5476)

programming period, funding for LEADER from the EAFRD is down from €5.5bn to €4.5bn. However 15 or so Member States plan to make ESF and ERDF funding available for CLLD, so this may make up the shortfall. This opens two opportunities:

- to create new local action groups
- to reinvigorate the existing 2,300 groups. Applying the CLLD method to urban and social inclusion issues could be a major stimulus for this.

Giving us a hand-on view of how Local Action Groups work, **Eamon O'Hara** presented his experience as the first manager of the Fingal LEADER Partnership in rural County Dublin. Serving 70,000 people in Dublin's hinterland, the group developed a strategy based on farm tourism, food, crafts and community development. With its staff of six, the group built physical infrastructure such as an enterprises centre and horse riding stables, established community groups including women's groups, and set up 30 new businesses. It also promoted the area's identity.

### Community coaching for excluded groups

**Marta Marczis** explained the method the UNDP has developed to apply local development methods with the Roma community in central Europe. This was first applied in the Cserehát programme<sup>2</sup> in northeast Hungary and has since been used in Serbia, Kaliningrad, Belarus and Kosovo. The programme works with the values and experiences of the target group – they are the authors of their own development. It brings in external energy to stimulate change. To apply CLLD to work with an excluded group demand an preliminary 2-3-year phase of community coaching, structured in five phases:

1. a well-prepared and experienced coach is integrated into the group
2. an active development group is created
3. the process of self-organisation is mentored as leaders emerge
4. the coach steps out of the group
5. a viable local group continues

The last classroom presentation came from **Jean-Pierre Vercruyse** of DG MARE (but speaking in a personal capacity). He elucidated the Commission regulation on CLLD.<sup>3</sup> This is to be found in the Common Strategic Framework which applies across four funds. Countries that establish a CLLD priority benefit from the incentive of a 10% higher intervention rate. It is already in force, so capacity building measures, so long as they were mentioned in the Partnership Agreement and the Operational Programme, could be running right now.

CLLD is targeted at areas with a population between 10,000 and 150,000 – but in cities this might apply to selected neighbourhoods facing a shared problem. One controversial rule is that local authorities cannot exercise majority control of the local action group; however their role is still very important – particularly as they will be providing matching funding.

The quality of local development strategies put forward for support is crucial, and this is why the regulation specifies their content in detail.

Multifund programmes are the big novelty in the programme, but using more than one fund has to meet a need and it not an end in itself.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://localdevelopmentforinclusion.org/the-csereh%C3%A1t-model.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303&from=EN>, Chapter 2, articles 32-25, OJ L 347/355-357

Discussion brought out two fresh challenges for CLLD – addressing social exclusion, and adapting to steady-state development in place of traditional ‘growth’.

### **A local development centre in Anderlecht**

After lunch, the group transported itself to Cureghem to visit Euclides,<sup>4</sup> an enterprise centre that consciously acts as a local development agency. It is in the heart of the ‘industrial banana’ that arose alongside the canal dug in 1832 which linked Brussels to the coalfields and the sea. In the 1960s, planning blight caused most businesses to move out, and the area is now the focus of the city’s second-hand car dealing. Around a third of children in the area are born into jobless homes.

Euclides is the most venerable of the enterprise centres in Brussels, having been set up 20 years ago. Manager and AEIDL board member **José Menéndez** traced its history and gave an overview of its projects.

The centre was established by co-operative which brought together the municipality, the regional development company and local groups and individuals. It opened in the Chaussée de Mons in 1994, offering 600m<sup>2</sup> of easy-in easy-out workspace, and supported by a grant of €75,000 a year from Brussels region for five years. What enabled it to expand into its current 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> building was a grant from the EU’s URBAN programme. Since then, the project has received continuous support from the ERDF.

Today, Euclides hosts 40 stable businesses. Because of its role as a local development agency, Euclides wants to encourage businesses to remain in the area, so, unlike some enterprise centres it does not ask its tenants to leave after five years. The rent it charges (€7/m<sup>2</sup> per month) is around 1/3 of the average for the area.

It has a number of tools to encourage entrepreneurs. Its *Guichet d’Economie Locale* (GEL) offers free support to business start-ups. It receives 200 enquiries a year, 30 of which results in businesses being established. An example of these is *Murmuur*,<sup>5</sup> a 15-strong work integration enterprise that works in building renovation. Adult education – for instance in IT – cultural and sport activities are offered by the *Université Populaire d’Anderlecht*.<sup>6</sup> The *Centre de Stages* is a website that links trainees with firms offering training.

Euclides’s latest project is *Port Sud*,<sup>7</sup> the redevelopment of a flourmill further south along the canal, which will provide 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of workspace along with COOP, a 1,200m<sup>2</sup> interpretation centre for the canal zone. Appropriately, it will be topped off by a working model of a lock on the roof. Renovation is to be completed in 2015. The building has been bought for €1.8 and is being renovated with the help of a €7.5m ERDF grant.

*Toby Johnson*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.euclides.be/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.financite.be/projets-solidaires,fr,63,11,44,118.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/luniversitepopulaire>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.portsud.be/>