THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP MODEL

THEORY and PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP MODEL

AND THE HISTORY OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The Local Partnership Model was developed by specialists from the US Department of Labour (USDOL) in cooperation with Worldwide Strategies, Inc. Its history goes back to the 1970s, when thousands of workers in the restructuring heavy industry and car plants were laid-off. A solution was adopted then, helping local workers, companies and communities adjust themselves to the radically changing labour market. The developed model was successfully implemented in other countries, such as Canada, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and the Ukraine.

The Model’s methodology aiming at effective adaptation of an individual, community and business organizations to economic changes builds on the effective use of three types of tools:

- **Rapid Response** – dislocated persons and the unemployed are assisted in finding new jobs as quickly as possible;
- **Local Economic Development** – groups of local representatives are trained in developing and implementing community-wide and job-creating projects;
- **Enhanced Enterprise Competitiveness** – helps boost companies’ productivity by using efficient and hands-on instruction methods to retrain the workforce.

Between 1998 and 2000, a pilot undertaking called the Workforce Development Project was implemented in Poland. It was designed in 1997 to facilitate restructuring processes in the Polish coal mining and steelwork industries, situated mainly in Upper Silesia. The initiative was sponsored by the USDOL and financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Another pilot site was Małopolska Region. Project’s outcomes revealed that such support was in demand. The responsibility for continued services was taken over by a non-governmental organization, the Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation, seated in Katowice.

The Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation (ILP&C) is a training and educational organization registered as an association. Its staff is competent practitioners trained by USDOL consultants between 1998 and 2000 that proved their efficiency and skills in setting up Labour-Management Adjustment Teams, conducting Local Economic Development workshops and implementing business projects aimed to create new jobs. They are experienced leaders who have contributed to the development of local employment pacts endorsed by enterprises, gminas (communes) and poviat (counties).

The Institute is dedicated to furthering the cooperation with local communities, promoting the methodology and preparing handbooks on the Local Partnership Model methodology.

In recent years, the Institute has executed tens of domestic and international projects that applied solutions developed within the Local Partnership Model. Their major examples are the Local Partnership Model Programme being an extension of the USDOL project originally implemented in Silesia and Małopolska, establishment of Peer Support Clubs „Labour”, a joint Polish and Ukrainian project „The Subsidiarity-Dialogue-Development” and the lessons-
learnt exchange programme being a co-operative effort of Polish and Romanian communities.

The Local Partnership Model Programme was started up in 2002. As before, it was sponsored by the USDOL and the executing parties were Worldwide Strategy, Inc., and the Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation. It was actively supported by the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, the Ministry of Economy and Labour, the US Department of Labour, US Ambassador, the Polish Poviat Association, Marshals’ Offices, Regional Labour Offices, county executives (starostas) and heads of local communities, the County Labour Offices, local businesses, professional unions, development agencies and NGOs. Additionally, the Programme received funding from many central and local government institutions and third sector organizations.

The Programme focused on spreading the knowledge and skills necessary to build stable partnership between the public sector, local and business organizations. To this end, 592 people were trained and a network of Local Partnership Specialists was established at the national, regional and county levels. Within the three years of its activity, many projects were put together that built on solutions offered by the Local Partnership Model. The projects helped retain or create jobs, activate the long-term unemployed, release many commercial initiatives and reinforce the notion of local cooperation and partnership.

Taking advantage of the Local Partnership Model’s methodology, the Institute for Cooperation and Local Partnership collaborates with many labour offices as well as regional and municipal welfare centres to develop and carry out projects funded by the local or the national government and by the European Social Fund. Whether completed or underway, all projects aim to support unemployed workers, excluded persons and job creating processes, to trigger business initiatives and to disseminate the concept of local co-operation and partnership among community representatives – members of local governments, NGOs, employers and trade unions.

The Local Partnership Model offers a spacious toolbox helping the dislocated workers, enterprises and communities successfully adapt to the transforming economy. The grassroots approach is used to build local partnerships that enable individuals to plan their future rather than wait for someone else to come up with a magic solution. The model has been proven that when applied by governments systematically and in combination with other active measures of the labour market, it can reduce the economic and social burden of adjustments, shorten the time needed by workers to find new jobs and smooth local communities’ transition to market economy.

The **RAPID RESPONSE COMPONENT** is used to set up, through the establishment of on-site Labour Management Adjustment Teams (LMATs) and Peer Support Groups, a coordinating body responsible for the development of well-targeted and early provided services that match the needs of workers who face new occupational challenges or look for jobs.

**PEER SUPPORT CLUB „Job”**
is a meeting place that offers a friendly atmosphere, where people can meet their peers, read a newspaper, review job offers collected by the club leaders or use a copier or mini library that makes available publications on the labor market, aid institutions and how to handle difficult situations. These clubs can nest support groups that facilitate self-help and conduct educational activities for unemployed women, men and youth.
PEER SUPPORT
is a form of assistance offered to co-workers or those whose life experiences are similar. In his or her lifetime an individual may have experienced such turning points that are now faced by others: dislocation, closures of enterprises, graduation from schools, the need to seek a job or to retrain. A hands-on knowledge of such changes is an important element of the working life. Sharing the skills and knowledge people have gained they offer peer support. Peer support is going out to people to listen to them, to share information, to answer their questions, to understand their feelings, to help them take advantage of the information offered by others. Peer support is about walking with others hand in hand, so they do not have to go through the changes all alone, and seeking for jobs for ourselves and others.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT ADJUSTMENT TEAMS
is a group of persons operating in an enterprise threatened by layoffs that comprises representatives of the workers, labor unions and the management. This group has the support of persons delegated by local authorities, labor offices, local NGOs, and even training institutions, local development agencies or an employers’ organization. The team aims to offer workers various services ranging from a full set of information, peer support, possibly provision of retraining, teaching how to seek jobs and preparation of applications through active promotion of the dislocated persons in the labor market.

The LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) COMPONENT provides a series of workshops as well as post-workshop support to help communities work out and implement specific and feasible business projects that can make difference in the local environment by stimulating business growth and job-creation processes.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS
is a series of meetings participated by a group of 40 - 60 local citizens representing local governments at the gmina and powiat level, employers, local government agencies, community leaders, unionists, citizens enjoying special reputation in the area. The workshops are expected to generate interesting solutions to community problems and projects, but most of all they contribute to the integration of local authorities, organizations and institutions in a joint effort to prevent unemployment and create jobs.

The ENHANCED ENTERPRISE COMPETITIVENESS COMPONENT introduces a customized training methodology (Quick Start) that enables businesses to become more competitive by retaining their skilled workforce through timely, on-job training. The approach accelerates the absorption of new technologies in organizations and provides workers with more secure and better-paying jobs by helping them acquire skills corresponding to their new tasks.
The Local Partnership Model

1. Rapid Response

2. Local Economic Development

3. Enterprise Competitiveness

Local Government

Vocational Training

Employment Services

Chamber of Commerce

Trade Unions

Private companies

Consulting Firms

Local Enterprise Agencies

NGOs

Social Service Agencies

Local Economic Development

Enterprise Competitiveness
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP MODEL PROGRAMME

The Programme primarily intended to help trainees to be known as Local Partnership Specialists acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to apply the Local Partnership Model tools. The Programme-executing parties - the Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation and Worldwide Strategies, Inc., focused on the practical use of the tools and supported their implementation. Owing to the participation and commitment of many local governments and social partners, it became possible to gather tremendous experience on conducting economic development activities, inspiring self-help processes among the laid-off and unemployed workers and delivering the Quick Start training. The experience translated into higher employment and better quality of life in the partnering communities; it also helps the Institute enhance and refine its methodology.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LED WORKSHOPS

During the three years of training, many Local Partnership Specialists in regions and counties acquired knowledge of the Local Economic Development. The county specialists successfully applied their new skills to implement the Local Economic Development workshops in their areas. Between October 2003 and September 2004, 15 counties completed the LED workshops and another 7 were actively engaged in the process.

The most successful counties delivered workshops over the period of 3 or 4 months and promoted the idea among their businesses, local government agencies, bankers, tax administration representatives, the Social Insurance Agency, labour offices, local development agencies, NGOs, public service providers, trade unions, young people and pensioners, as well as welfare institutions. Bringing in a vast representation of local communities added to the workshops’ success, because the participants not only boosted workshop activities, but also promoted them and informed local citizens about their outcomes in press articles, television and radio broadcasts.

The workshops attracted various groups of citizens determined to resolve jointly local business problems, including the unemployment issue, and to make their own economic development plans. That the communities did appreciate the initiative is shown by the average attendance rates given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure representatives</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and advisory organizations</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Partnership Model – theory and practice

— Young people 4.4%

Local businesspersons turned out to be supportive in the process. For instance, in the county of Lwówek Śląski, a project called “Lwówek County – Traditional Polish Production and Processing” was given the green light and the private sector promised to cover 70% of its costs. The project purposed to promote products manufactured by local private businesses. The local government assumed the responsibility for raising funds necessary to run promotional activities in Poland and abroad. There were also plans to submit the project to the Integrated Operational Programme for Regional Development. The project was expected to boost output, to make numbers of outlets grow, to increase the number of jobs available locally, to enhance local companies and to generate new contractors dealing in product tagging, packaging, promotion, etc.

The LED Workshops’ organizers pointed to the following advantages enjoyed by counties going through the process:

- Improved knowledge of the local economic environment.
- Consolidation of the business environment in the area.
- Formation of local leaders.
- Preparation and implementation of viable business projects.
- Promotion of local government representatives.
- Publicity for local companies.
- Engagement and cooperation of local citizens.
- Shortened distance between local communities, county governments and representatives of various institutions and organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LABOR MANAGEMENT ADJUSTMENT TEAMS AND PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Persons trained in Rapid Response frequently indicated the urgent need to implement the Labour Management Adjustment Teams or Peer Support Groups. Notwithstanding the demand, Polish experience proved that long time and many favourable circumstances were needed for such an initiative to come true. Anyway, several components of the Rapid Response approach were implemented in many local communities quite early.

Labour Management Adjustment Teams (LMAT)

According to the original LMAT concept, the Teams should be formed in response to mass layoffs, affecting more than 50 people. During the Programme implementation period (2002-2004), the economy was past the most intensive restructuring in the economy that generated mass layoffs. Today dismissals typically affect individual employees or their small groups. Consequently, the demand for this measure is substantially lower and so many County LP Specialists think that countywide LMATs would be a more appropriate approach. However, it takes consolidated social partners to set up an LMAT and the process is time consuming. Below, three on-site LMATs formed under the Programme are presented.
Labour Management Adjustment Team in the Hardboard Company (Zakłady Płyty Pilśniowych) in Czarna Woda, Pomerania

Having examined the local labour market, the Regional LP Specialists found out that the company and its workforce were going through economic hardships. They immediately contacted workers’ representatives and the management, while making further economic and social analysis of the local environment. The decision was made to form a Local Labour Management Adjustment Team. The staff of the local labour office and local government representatives joined the initiative. Other LMAT members were the Chair of the City Council, the leader of the local, managers of county labour offices in Starogard and Chojnice and the management of the local welfare centre. After formation, the Team contacted the official receiver supervising the bankruptcy procedure in the company and learnt that 462 employees had been given the layoff notices.

Two consultation centres were opened and research tools necessary to analyze the needs and expectations of the dismissed workers were prepared. Almost half of the laid-off workforce (218 people) was analysed. In-depth analyses were followed by a wrap-up study and consultation sessions with individuals commenced.

The Team operated between June and December 2003 and assisted most of the laid-off workers. After mid-September 112 people were reemployed by a new firm established on the bankrupt company site and 30 more people found employment in other local enterprises. The follow-up of the dismissed workers was completed by the end of that year.

The Labour Management Adjustment Team in the “Jedność” Steelworks in Siemianowice Śląskie, Silesia

The LMAT was set up to organize various forms of assistance for the dislocated workers and those exposed to dislocation in the Steelworks and its subsidiaries. The Team members represented the county labour office, the Institute for Cooperation and Local Partnership, on-site trade unions, the Unemployed Protection Movement and the Town Council. The situation of the Steelworks was miserable. Most of its spin-offs it cooperated with were scheduled for liquidation and over 500 employees were expected to be laid off. The Steelworks’ workforce was in limbo from 2001 and in the period they did not manufacture any products and their wages were paid irregularly and in various amounts.

The Team designed a communication channel between the company liquidators and the workforce, established groups of people receiving information directly from the employers at individual sessions and group meetings. Peer Counsellors, i.e. reputable workforce members, were consulted by their laid-off colleagues.

The County Labour Office set up an on-site consultation unit that helped approx. 200 people. The unit was operated by a social worker and a psychologist and it provided information about assistance available from the Unemployed Persons Protection Movement, the Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation and trade unions, and cooperated with parishes and charity organizations to secure material help. Vocational counsellors in the local labour office in Siemianowice Śląskie monitored the needs of the laid-off workers.

The LMAT operated at the Steelworks between 1 November 2003 and 30 January 2004. The Team had 18 members and united 7 organizations. Because further on-site operation of the Team became impossible, assistance was provided outside the company premises. The laid-off workers received information on the available services through local media, parishes, Social Information Desks in Siemianowice Śląskie and at the Peer Support Club (“Job” Club).
Local Partnership Model – theory and practice

Labour Management Adjustment Team for the Military Unit 3090 – Łomża Depot

The Łomża Depot had been scheduled for liquidation due to the restructuring of the 9th Regional Depot. The depot was a public enterprise operating in the national defence sector. The expected number of lay-offs was 65.

The Team had 11 members, including the representatives of the Łomża Mayor, County Labour Offices in Łomża and Zambrów, the Social Insurance Institution, the National Labour Inspectorate and the Łomża Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

The Team organized meetings with individual employees, events participated by local companies, e.g. “Employer Day,” started up an information facility for the laid-off employees, promoted Team’s services, offered psychological support workshops, as well as prepared surveys and collected data. The Team operated between June 9 and 30, 2004.

Peer Support Groups (Job Clubs)

The Peer Support approach is an integral part of the Rapid Response approach. The Institute for Local Partnership and Cooperation expanded the approach and organized training for parish volunteers. The method was also presented during the Rapid Response training throughout Poland and the LP Specialists responded very positively to it. Currently, several tens of “Job” Clubs are active nationwide and their number is increasing. Most of them were set up by members of the Local Partnership network who specialized in Rapid Response.

Club leaders (volunteers) are responsible for providing comprehensive information, counselling, and making the long-term unemployed more active.

Job Clubs are active in various regions and occupational and social environments. Most of them can be found in southern Poland, i.e. voivodeships of Silesia, Lublin, Opole and Małopolska. LP.

As of 15 August 2004, two hundred twenty eight Peer-Counsellors operated in Poland in 56 Job Clubs. They had provided services for 14,807 employees, in which number around 860 were reemployed. Peer-counsellors and volunteers in the Clubs helped prepare 29 projects submitted to various sponsors.

To implement Peer Support in Silesia and Małopolska, a group of prospective trainers meeting specific criteria was selected from among local leaders active in the Job Clubs. They underwent a 50-hour train-the-trainer course providing them with skills necessary to teach other volunteers.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “QUICK START” METHOD

The Quick Start method became part of the “Book of Procedures” of the mining reform Programme between 2003 – 2006, as a method instrumental in training workers that had to leave the sector and exercised the “retraining contracts” option pursuant to the Mining Sector Restructuring Act of November 28, 2003.

The “Quick Start” method was used to train 12 former employees of the mining sector in two organizations: the archives of the Central Institution for Mining related IT and the Housing Management Institute in Bytom. The employment contracts were concluded for 27 months. Two contracts were drawn up for Quick Start training in administrative jobs.
The Mining Employment Agency responsible for providing former miners with services and the project originator intended to conduct all training for their customers using the Quick Start method before 2006. At least 500 people were scheduled to undergo the Quick Start training.

Higher School of Management and Social Sciences in Tychy established a post-graduate International Vocational Counselling School on approval of the College Senate. The School would train vocational counsellors and Quick Start would be one of the subjects taught.

The Quick Start methodology was applied in many sites. For instance, in “Lubinex” clothing company 24 sewing machine operators were trained and 15 of them got jobs immediately afterwards. In “SANHA POLSKA” Ltd., Legnica, 37 persons were taught the theory of “operating a turning lathe with alphanumeric control” (17 jobless trainees who completed the course were offered jobs). A candle manufacturing company in Olawa was getting ready to use QS in its training. In the ITC company in Skarszewy 22 sewing machine operators were trained in manufacturing pram covers. All of them got jobs after the training. In the hotel Antracyt in Gdynia, the tasks of receptionists and chambermaids were analyzed and the work resulted in the preparation of a comprehensive training programme.