

Raising Autonomy

Autonomy ~ Dignity ~ Solidarity

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This Program proposes to foster autonomy of social activities, by generating self sustaining funding solutions through the creation of commercial activities, by and for the Community with the objective to support the youth.

→ For Community leaders, raising autonomy is a political project. Community empowerment based on the reinforcement of the local economy and activities is possible thanks to a long term self sustainable funding.

→ For the Community members raising autonomy means getting stronger. Circulating the revenues created or received collectively would contribute to raise the community's prosperity and this would create new employment opportunities.

→ For the Community youth, it means the opportunity to get involved in new projects and training.

This program proposes a method which consists of matching a community project / public service, with the creation of commercial activities designed to generate revenues in order to fund them.

The commercial activity would, in the process, create new employment and training opportunities, encourage the creation of "socially responsible" businesses, reinforce the local economy, retain and spread as much as possible the community revenues locally.

Based on its previous experiences, this program also provides advice for the elaboration of the business plan as well as an access to a network of investors, as part of a global autonomous scheme.

The Raising Autonomy Project is all about the support to elaborate of a tailored Global Autonomous Scheme as envisioned by the Community.

The following steps are designed to get the basic information of the community's resources and potential in order to elaborate a realistic business plan.

→ Identify a project (school, elders' lodge, public services, youth program, etc) that will benefit from the commercial initiative. It can be –preferably– based on a local initiative, as well as based on the results of a careful study of the community needs.

→ Prepare background information on the analysis of the consumption behaviours of the Community members (the flows of wealth of the Community). It implies elaborating a complete mapping of all flows (goods, services, knowledge, communication, etc..) occurring in and around the community.

→ Identify the kind of commercial activity that will be supported by the community. The economic leverage that will be funding the targeted public service.

→ Form a committee comprised of elders, community member, leaders, business experiences people, who will lead the project.

→ Elaborate the business plan to be presented to local investors or to the network of socially responsible investors.

❖ The basic principles of this Program are based on

→ **Autonomy**: develop, finance and manage the delivery of public services and basic needs of the community, integrating a whole range of know-how oriented towards raising autonomy: energy, water management, knowledge, culture and arts, eco-housing, etc...Ref: the Agency's observatory on autonomy. (raisingautonomy.org)

→ **Solidarity**: strengthen the community bond, guided by a common project integrating all aspects of life

→ **Social responsibility**: encourage and link to the network of socially responsible investors that supports commercial, operational and environmental best practices

→ **Dignity**: community vision, values, culture and knowledge, are used as a reference and promoted through the projects as designed by the community itself,

Designing and realizing a commercial activity to finance public services implies to take into account the following elements:

- The mapping: a careful study of the economic context, including the Community's consumption behaviour
- Local resources: projections of employment for local staff and resources through its realization and its management
- Economic pragmatism: the elaboration of a business plan
- Charter: the compliance of the project with the highest standards
- Knowledge: training opportunities

Once the project is defined, follows the elaboration of the business plan to be submitted to the socially responsible investors. The business plan would include:

- the level of involvement of the Community members (leaders, youth, elders, families)
- the integration of the Community values and cultural patterns into the plan
- the use of local resources, production and knowledge
- the financial sustainability of the project in the long run
- the respect of social responsibility specifications of the investors network

Experience of the Paradis Project: (www.leparadis.ch)

In Bobo-Dioulasso, 2nd largest city (1,5 millions inhabitants) of Burkina Faso, 250'000 persons are living in the middle of the town, in a neighbourhood abandoned by the local authorities. Any initiative to improve their living conditions would thus depend on foreign aid or on their own efforts and limited resources.

In the year 2001, according to the will of a small part of the Community, a school is built in this neighbourhood, with 50 students and 1 teacher, thanks to a donator contribution.

| | In 2000 – operations funded by donations | In 2009 – operations funded by local activities |
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| | A group of committed persons created “Le Paradis” and decided to build a school in the neighborhood | The school goes and grows, and developed other public services |
| | Funding source: one time donation from a Switzerland municipality helped to build and to manage the school. By 2002 , the donations were spent. “Le Paradis” decides to search a long term funding for the school and its | Funding source : Students’ parents participation, as well as a network of socially responsible investors who lend money for diverse projects geared to generate revenues for the school and other public services. “Le |

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| | future social projects. | Paradis" reaches financial autonomy by 2006 |
| | Government didn't provide funding for school | Still don't provide funding for school |
| | 50 students 1 teacher 1 classroom | 200 students 4 teachers 3 staff 4 classrooms Next 2010-2011 school year, New building (Fall 2009) 400 students 6 teachers 3 staff 6 classes |

Since 2002, ALL activities are financed through the network of socially responsible investors.

Public services:

- the school / 2000
- a public library / 2000
- a micro credit bank serving 150 families / 2001
- water for the agricultural activities: drilling of a pastoral ring / 2002
- the waste management : collect and recycling / 2003
- a small basic health unit / 2004

Commercial activities:

- three sewing shops, 6 employees, 20 persons having completed their training / 2002
- one truck, one taxi, one delivery truck, one minibus for group transportation / 2002

- a mechanic repair shop: two employees, over 20 apprentices formed / 2002
- 10 hectares of cereals production, 2 permanent employees, 15 during season / 2002
- a wood shop, two employees / 2001
- a furniture shop, one employee, two trainees / 2004
- other various commercial activities, using a special financial reserve designed to react swiftly to punctual business opportunities

Autonomous Scheme:

How it benefits and involves the community:

- The car repair shop is raising revenues. It offers easy and cheap maintenance for the taxi and other vehicles owned by the community and its members. Also servicing the Community members so that the wealth remains inside the Community. It provides training and new job opportunities for the youth who are not at school
- The taxi, the transport truck, the bus and the motorcycles are providing needed service to the Community who instead of contracting others private companies will pay the one raising revenues to sustain the school.
- The sewing craft shop is generating profits, selling clothes to locals and also exporting productions abroad. They also make the uniforms for the students enrolled in the Paradis school.
- The wood sales shop support the Community center needs (preparing food for the students and the Community workers) and the profits from the sales contributes to the school
- The local farming products help to feed the student, the trainees and staff

By 2008, all loans have been reimbursed to their investors, with an average of 5% rate of return.