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**"NEW TYPE OF PARTNERSHIPS: THE MEANING OF THE
NETWORKS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS
FROM THE GENDER ASPECT"**

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**Welcoming of the President of the board of directors of Cyprus
Gender Equality Observatory-PIK and the President of the D.P
ELANI Mrs. Anna Pilavaki**

The Community Initiative Equal is a tool for the European Strategy of Employment, which is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to the experimental implementation and dissemination of new tools against discrimination and inequality in the working place.

The Project Open Doors of the Developmental Partnership ELANI, where the Project Coordinator is the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory, has been planned in order to support women who are excluded or are facing the danger of exclusion from the labour market and to face the lack of coordination when it comes to applied policies.

The Gender Equality is a basic goal of the social policy of the European Union and it is considered as an essential constitution for social coherence and economic growth. The legislation for the gender equality is strongly safeguarded and it is an essential part of the community acqui. Nowadays the equality between men and women should be safeguarded in all political fields. The admission of the dimension of gender equality in the employment policies in a European and a National level, it is a quite recent development which can be considered as a challenge for the equality and the employment policies.

The European goal to increase the women employment up to the 60% until 2010 is imposing decisive leaps in order to assist to the entrance and the continuation of women to the labour market. This strategy in this field needs to focus to fight against those factors which force women to work without prospects of advancement, with low income, little expectations and in some cases without even getting paid.

It is our duty to recognise that the discriminatory place of women when it comes to the labour market and in the society in general, is a result of the unequal allocation of power between the two genders and to the social predetermination of the roles, something which legalise discriminations. Many have been written about the circumstances of women employment



under the framework of gender relations, of the promotion of equal opportunities in different fields and of the structure of labour force.

Despite the fact that women employment is increasing, there is an absence of women when it comes to decision making bodies, a separation of women and men jobs, a professional inactiveness and a rear presence to managerial positions, an increasing participation in informal forms of employment and the discrimination in educational and professional training which creates many obstacles for the women employment.

The implementation of the gender dimension to the employment policy needs a multidimensional approach in the reproduction of gender inequalities in the labor market and a wide spectrum of interventions for the change of the institutions, the norms and the practices, in order to achieve equality to employment. (educational policy, policy for professional training, policy of conciliation of family and professional and private life etc).

The Project OPEN DOORS through the actions of the sub-projects worked for the change of the mentality, of the stereotypes and the perceptions when it comes to the social gender roles and in order to help the women to enter and to be in position to remain in the labor market.

Very crucial role in this effort has the family, the employers, the Trade Unions and the State in general. The sensitization of all the above mentioned was our priority and we hope that we managed to do the start through the Project OPEN DOORS.



New Type of Partnerships: the meaning of the networks and the development of partnerships from the gender aspect.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, many insist that they are going through a financial and social crisis and a crisis of values, while foreseeing an intense communication crisis between the society, organisations, citizens, men and women, which distances them from each other¹. However, people, through communication, strive to meet their important personal and social needs. As pointed out, *“people want the others to listen to them, to appreciate them and to seek them. They also want to fulfill duties and achieve goals. So, it is apparent that the main aim of communication is to help people feel, well about themselves and among friends, groups and organisations.”* (Hinstreet, Murlin -Baty and Lehman, 1989). The fact that on a social - collective level of this kind communication is undergoing a crisis, means that in most European countries, such as Greece, the responsibility lies with the existing collectiveness (groups, organisations) etc. The public law organisations bear the greatest responsibility. This is due to the fact that on a governmental organisation level, despite efforts, there is a closed administrative system, where the flow of information follows a one-way passage downwards without replenishing, and decision-making continues to be a privilege of senior hierarchy in the administrative pyramid, excluding the various social categories from decision-making. This leads to the broadening of the distance between administration and citizens, the discouragement of relative collective interventions and the cultivation of a concept regarding the ineffectiveness of collective action and pursuits. Fortunately, in the Republic of Cyprus there is an interesting interaction between the government organisations and social movements, which intervene substantively and are effective in their demands, with the main one being the trade union movement.



In the current period, the Civil Society is called on to make a continuous input and, partially, the redistribution of power between the government and citizens, or rather their movements, continues on a European level to be the demand (Hirsch,2005). Before we go on, we should point out the multitude of objections made regarding the substance and content of the term “Civil Society” (thus its different definitions) and the dangers a consensus procedure entails, especially for those who are even today seeking a different organisation of social production - reproduction (Bountouris, 2005). However, it remains to redefine the public sphere of life and actions carried out within.

If we want to define the limits of the Civil Society, then we must take it as a group of “*various non-governmental institutions, strong enough to stand up to the state (without) obstructing it from fulfilling its role (and without leaving margins) to dominate and neutralise the rest as a society*” (Georgiadou, 1996:19). So, it is a society on alert, demanding and participating in all those state political activities that it deems are to its benefit but is also willing to react to anything it believes could harm it. It is a society that structures its collectiveness and renders them able to make important and effective interventions. This means, of course, a high social political conception and the awareness of the role and character of the citizens, men and women, of the various collective groups, their span of action and the form of their action. Their deficit means that the area covered by the Civil Society is weak and not structured. But what fate does a weak and poorly structured Civil Society reserve for repressed and excluded social groups, as it is proven that in work, education, training, human rights, these people usually have the smallest part and their access to public opportunities is continuously minimized? (Wallas,2005)



CHAPTER 1 Social exclusion and Gender

The basic characteristic of the process of exclusion from the social-productive process is its gender dimension. The whole of women of the broader excluded social groups are witnessing their double (or multiple) exclusion. As members of these groups and as a gender: Millions of women all over the world are being deprived of basic and not legal, but human rights, millions of women are mutilated every year in the name of tradition and customs, millions of female embryos are aborted. It is certainly a fact that women in the western societies have made significant steps towards abolishing gender asymmetry and exclusion. Especially in the European Union, the effort to promote equality between men and women is, according to the declarations and the legal regime, a main priority, while the whole of European strategies, such as the 5th Community Interim Action Plan *“Towards a Social Strategy - Framework for Gender Equality (2001-2005)”* or the recent Road Map on Equality, 2006-2010 (Gasouka and Tsoukala 2007)² is being promoted to a prerequisite of completing democracy and an important element of its external relations. However, we should clarify that western women are not the majority of women on the planet, despite the tendency we often see to elevate their conquests into ecumenical ones. The majority of women on Earth continues to be in a distressful situation (Willis,2000). Even though until recently these women were far from the western societies, in what we have come to call the third world, the latest movements of population brought these people into the hearts of western cities³ (Wright,2000), where the female immigrant *“marginalized by her gender, her origin and her traditions, the nature of her work, not knowing the language, the social environment, the law and her rights, closed in by the insecurity and uncertainty that her situation creates, is a victim of multiple exclusion and exploitation, works for humiliating compensation and awaits, fearful and unprotected, to be placed in a ghetto, before a society that usually does not*



recognise her and does not integrate her" (Kourtovic,1998:161-172 and Zlotnik,2000).

However, to return to western women - since the Cypriot women belong there too - despite the important steps taken towards abolishing gender discrimination and securing equality in access to opportunities (mainly public), there is still a long way to go (Conell,2006). The data, the numbers, the statistics, the research etc prove the social asymmetry in all sectors: family, work, politics etc. It is women that first bear the brunt of crises striking the western countries (financial, social, cultural). The EU officially admits that the continuing under-representation of and violence against women bear witness to the continuing structural inequalities between men and women. Indeed, anyhow, although not mentioned thoroughly by the researchers, the indices of gender asymmetry set the limits, the breadth and the quality of a Civil Society, but at the same time the form of the society's structure and its development create the preconditions for abolishing (or broadening) discrimination. As it is eloquently noted, the issue of lifting gender discrimination and especially integrating women in the labour market, is not just superficial or geographical, but geological: it is the derogation of the civilised, that which shakes the foundations of the society, the democracy and the economy. There is anyway a huge and complex relation between the deep confusion in the economy and the society, and the distribution between genders of attitude, practices, values and representation (Lang,1996:101).

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out a fact that creates new social qualities and structures which cannot be ignored: The western society, as is well known, is moving at full speed towards the process of transformation into an Information Society. Dramatic changes are being made - the most stable element of the Information Society is possible the "change" - due to the innovation of new technologies which continue and will continue to be achieved at great speed and frequency (Gasouka,2004). In this context, the idea and content of work are transformed, the traditional work structures are



dissolved, the necessity of trade unionism is questioned, the term worker is redefined (many propose its replacement with the term user), and the use of time/space of workers and human relations during the productive process. At the same time, the new element, that is the identification of information with authority, is becoming the cause of new social divisions and exclusions, deeply class-related in their nature, irrespective of how they will be called.⁴

Experience so far and the clear prospects convince that the Information Society is turning male-centred in its structure and philosophy, and reserves second and complementary roles for women (Gasouka,2004). Despite the optimistic projections, the lowest, worst paid jobs, the most flexible types of work arrangements etc, which are imposed by the newly-formed conditions in the market and at work, have already taken on an intensely female colour and it seems that this is one of the elements that the new type of employment is willing to maintain from the existing Information Society system. At the same time, the danger of new, “modern” this time, enclosures in the private area is apparent (Bethke-Elshtain,1981) in the name of technology and information, and the increase of the already existing roles of women, which bring about the broadening of the prospects of this critical relationship forming among Gender and Technology. This necessity is pointed out by Stratigakis: *“The complexity of applications and uses of new technology demands a diversified approach to the relationship between technology and work organisation, in order for the analysis to proceed beyond the common estimations and evaluations that accompany the public debate regarding the potential and the social consequences of new technologies. At the same time, it has been recognised on behalf of sociology that the gender make-up of the society is a primary factor in forming the social phenomena and the system of social hierarchy contributes decisively in the living and working conditions of the people. The theoretical approach that combines these two factors, technology and gender, enriches the analysis of the consequences of the applications in human work and leads to more comprehensive conclusions, since it significantly broadens the interpretive framework of the study”*(1996:11).

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CHAPTER 2. *The necessity to redefine human communication and social networks*

In a society in which there is a huge development of technology and its invasion in every aspect of personal and public life of its members, the primary concern is redefining the communication process between people (Wetherell,2004). Networking through computers, however many positive consequences, always includes the danger of distancing, lack of directness of human contact, practical partnership and solidarity among people. The necessity of live human contact does not obviously annul the meaning and usefulness of technology, as long as it is understood that it is just another “means” - definitely valuable - in the communication of persons, which cannot however replace human contact. In one such case we could talk about a clearly Orwellian society.

Thus comes forward the necessity of systemizing human contact, social networking of human resources reacting to inertness and passivity, which conceives social intervention as its duty, which understands the meaning of collectiveness and puts forward the collective way of thinking before the personal. So it is not by chance alone that over the past decades the term “social network” is being adopted with the content that Barnes proposed as far back as 1954. A social network is conceived as a structure of “knots” (persons or organisations) connected (by “links”) by one or more specific types of interdependence, such as values, visions, ideas, financial transaction, friendship/partnership, relation etc, which makes it very complex but absolutely necessary for an active civil society. In its sociological definition, the social network is a map of all the relative links between the knots that are being studied (Wellman,1999). The network can also be used to determine the social chapter of the isolated users. These concepts appear in the following social diagram of networks, where the knots are the points and the links are the lines.



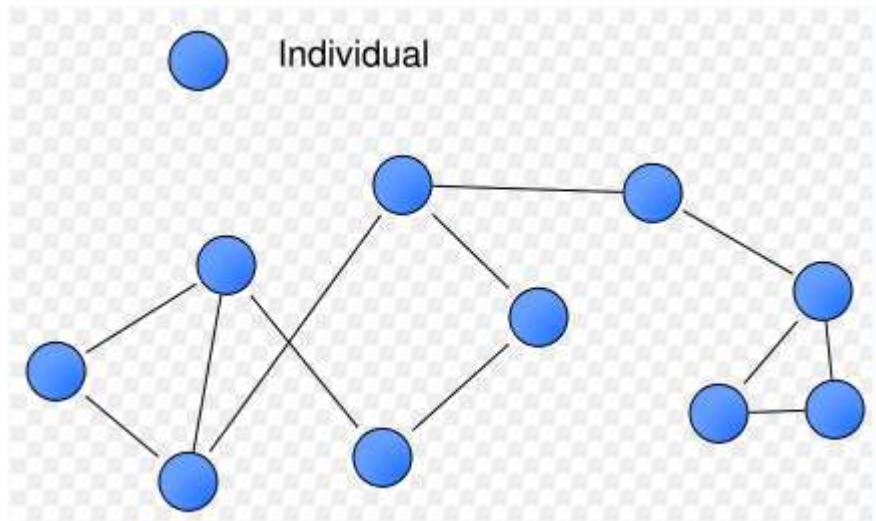


Diagram A.
Network Map

A fundamental factor of such a process in the case of those social networks that are activated in the framework of the civil society and on which the current study focuses, is the understanding, the release from complacency, achieved through the exchange of information and experience among the members of the network (Newman,2003). In the redefined communication process, the role of technologies remains important, linked to the democratic right of the citizens - thus the members of the network - to information, and contributes with the proper use to the vital issue of equal opportunities (Huisman and Van Duijn,2005). However, despite the fact that networking is in conclusion a group of human and material/technological resources, human-centeredness, the concept of solidarity among the members, is the reference point and of course collective human action and intervention-pursuit its basic method. Voluntary undertaking of part of the public responsibility and the conflict with existing social problems in the centre of attention of the networked human force, is connected by an unbreakable link to the concept of the active citizen (Hill and Dunbar,2002). However, one should stress that any activation of the citizens neither reduces nor restricts the responsibilities and

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obligations of the state and its bodies, regarding the solution of social problems and indeed the substantive tackling of issues concerning the lifting of gender - inter alia - discrimination and to a greater extent social exclusion. It is imperative that the limit of obligations between the relative state strategies and practices and those of the respective social movements and the forms of citizen networking is clear. Because the danger of transferring the responsibilities of any state inactivity to the citizens, men and women, is possible. We have significant experience of such behaviour on behalf of the state, which easily transforms the citizens from simple participants - due to their non-activation - into the responsible party, mainly for political purposes.

However, in any case, the citizens, men and women, are obliged to adopt the social problems and form their own strategies, which can be complementary to those of the state - a fact that reaffirms the role and the substance of a civil society - but can also fight wrong state concepts and decisions (Wyllman, 1999). Especially in issues of social exclusion, it is necessary to have a strong resistance with the selection of specific forms, since social exclusion - apart from the financial, productive and political conditions imposing it - is exclusively a cultural expression, based on and reproducing attitudes, prejudices, deeply rooted concepts, forming social conscience and finally contributing to the forming of a culture in which the human element is in withdrawal.



CHAPTER 3. *The European side*

For the European Union, networking and volunteerism are important aspects of strengthening social cohesion and achieving its main aim, which is tackling marginalization and economic/social development. According to the press release of the General Directorate 23 of the EU, approved by the Commission in July 1997, the socioeconomic organisations and the respective networks constitute a significant instrument of political dialogue of the citizens, men and women. It is the expressed wish for cooperation between the EU and the specific organisations, and also the interest of the former to develop local cooperation (partnerships), especially with organisations of the public sector and the recently developed on a national and international level third sector. Especially regarding the twofold unemployment/employment, through the activation of the forms of this kind of partnership, the European policy for maintaining employment or “*employmentability*” of the unemployed is promoted, and an effort is being made to set up limits for the enlargement of socially marginalized groups, since, as it is well known, Europe, with the high percentage of unemployment, is lacking in this sector compared to the USA and Japan. So it is focusing its attention over the past decades to reducing this difference, since its late involvement with the problem has cost it valuable time. And it has become obvious that the governments on their own are proving to be ineffective. So it is necessary to activate the social organisations in a social action - aggressive strategy to combat unemployment, a turning point of which, *inter alia*, a part is the sector of continuous training of the workforce and upgrading its skills, aiming at the potential to adapt to the changes in technology and averting the danger of structural unemployment. It is the cap of a long effort which became more specific in the 1970s with the Social Action Programmes to combat poverty, where the necessity for “model actions” is elevated, as well as the involvement of non-governmental organisations in them. However, the innovation and broad approach to the problem continues to stumble on the low budget and red tape obstacles.



The total experience from the implementation of the programmes to combat poverty contributed to the definition of the scope of social exclusion - establishing the term at the same time - a front that goes beyond the concept of poverty, since the latter *“is interpreted as a broader phenomenon of a multifaceted nature,”* which imposes, at least in Greece, *“to develop a social policy strategy, based on which the extent of social needs will be measured, the effectiveness of the proposed policies will be evaluated and policies that can be implemented and be effective will be developed against social exclusion”* (Dedousopoulos, 1997:217). The one certain thing is that for the EU social exclusion undermines any efforts it makes to achieve social cohesion, and in general economic growth, and constitutes a threat against the sought after social peace, while it recognises the relationship of social exclusion with the deficits recorded by inadequate relative policies and services, and the necessity for active interventions and varied strategies to tackle it (Zagaroli, 1998).



CHAPTER 4. New Type Collectiveness and Partnership Relations

The interest in this whole procedure of programmes to tackle poverty and social exclusion is the establishment of axis, such as partnership and the involvement of aim groups in their implementation, as well as the variety of ways to approach them. Partnerships between the organisations of the public and private sector are proving to be a determining factor for the success of the enterprise. The latter takes on new qualitative characteristics, to the degree that the participation of the aim group is secured and its word in relation to its needs and expectations is articulated. As already mentioned, the networking of human and technical resources with an non-hierarchical structure and philosophical concept, open to the gender dimension of the issues for which it was formed, is a new qualitative fact in the collective action, a New Type Collectiveness (NTC). The question is if the strategies adopted by the NTC, the way they operated, the results they are seeking and in general the climate they are forming, make them attractive to those people and especially those women who are experiencing social exclusion, the disappointments and the disbelief accompanying it, in order to accept not only to become users of the services provided by such a network, but also to become relatively active, constituting active members and participating in the forming and decision-making concerning them. So, the problem of the role, the content, the aim and the services provided by a NTC is raised, and indeed collectiveness aimed at supporting the socially excluded women, cultivating the awareness of the local and broader societies, and developing cooperation and partnerships with organisations of a public or private nature.

In order for a NTC to become attractive to the social category it is addressed to, so that the members of this social category (in this case women) want to become member of it, the following must apply:

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- a) They must be convinced that a collective effort will tackle their problem more effectively than their individual effort.
- b) They must understand the action scope of the NTC and their own role, the importance of their personal involvement in the effort made to tackle the problems concerning them.
- c) They must understand the aims, pursuits, timeframes and mainly the limits of the whole enterprise and the strategies that will be used to achieve them.
- d) They must not face communication problems within the Collectiveness and have direct and continuous access to the flow of information concerning them.
- e) They must reaffirm their participation in decision-making, forming strategies and in the efforts made to conclude *and* develop partnerships with other local, regional etc organisations.

The dynamic of New Type Collectiveness is linked to their networking, with the feeling that they are part of a broader collective effort against the market forces and the marginalization of important human resources and talents, an effort based on self-administration, cooperation and communication and which, going beyond the local, regional and often national borders, develops relations of "*hyper-territorial solidarity which enriches and strengthens the popular and democratic communities with the exchange, distribution, separation and composition of ideas, activities and arts*" (Dedousopoulos,1997:21). It is part of a generalised effort of persons, networks, groups, relationships and technologies for the tackling of problems that have for some time stopped being exclusively national and their solution demands the coordination of action both on a local and national level, as well as outside the national borders (GGNG,1998). Social exclusion is also one of the most interesting cases.



The notion and awareness of participation in a generalised effort should be part of the perception of the members of the New Type Collectiveness. And if this is easy for working women, social active women members, it is obvious that to a great extent it does not apply for those women who are unemployed and all the socially excluded women who meet and are included in this collectiveness, who are experiencing personal-social disappointments and are hesitant towards these kinds of efforts. In the stance and hesitation of these women, an important role is played by the environment from which they come from. Things are clearly easier for those from an urban environment, who usually to some extent have some personal or family experience of collective activity from the past *and* an increased amount of relative information concerning the situation they are in. On the contrary, the women from a rural environment meet many more difficulties since they do not have experience of collective action and their family environment is also more traditional and with more intense stereotypes of gender, prejudice and deeply rooted concepts, while the amount of relative information is less. However, for both categories of socially excluded women that meet the NTC, the conscience of the member is of great importance. The conscience means the existence of common - mainly cultural - characteristics among the members of the group, enough to form the basis of "*communication*" or an internal "*society*" the NTC makes. These women must recognise the position, the roles, the mutual relationships, a feeling of belonging, while participating. Then and only will the network operate in a way that will help overcome the identity and self-respect crises and of its socially excluded women members, when they see their internal structure, their internal and external relations, a "*body spirit*", an interest, aims and pursuits that of direct interest to them.



CHAPTER 5. *The role of the networks as New Type Collectiveness*

From the abovementioned, some more issues arise which have to do with the content and the role of the networks, issues that must be clear to all the members, in order to achieve its effective operation. On the one hand, issues concerning the members such as accession motives, the form and degree of commitment, the degree of initiative and intervention etc (Hill and Dunbar,2002). On the other hand broader issues such as means of cohesion, necessary efforts, types of common activities, effects of the group on the behaviour of the members, ways to handle possible crises and conflicts, the will for the viability of the network, the degree of its authority, its means of expression and its internal force, the intensity of its action, the effectiveness in relation to its aims, the promotion of its officers, and even its ability to structure cooperation of various forms with other organisations (partnership), the percentage of the population it affects, as well as the social consequences, the reaction of the societies to the framework in which the network is active etc (Hill and Dunbar,2002).

The action and the degree of achieving the aims and pursuits of the New Type collectiveness irrespective of the anti-authoritative and anti-hierarchical structures, must be monitored and evaluated. Thus, it is necessary to establish indices and criteria, such as the existence of a web of corrective moves - interventions able to effectively tackle any difficulties that arise in the process of implementing the programmes and aims that, we stress again, should have clear, specific and above all realistic limits (Wellman.1999). A matter of special importance is the collection and processing of data obtained by the network regarding issues that concern it and it is always useful to staff it with social scientists able to implement the various research techniques that modern science provides and to secure reliable and valid results. The safe interpretation of the data and facts leads to safe planning (Huisman and Van Duijn,2005).



These networks comprise groups that combine the sentimental motives with the beneficial aims and secure in their framework the immediate relations and mutual contact of their members. At the same time they should understand the necessity to maintain their character as a pressure group, that is as a collective unit of persons which, defending the interests of its members, tries with the means at its disposal to influence the choices of the state, and also to direct the society towards its aims and goals. The feeling of this kind of function contributes to cohesion and the dynamism of the network, and plays a special role in improving the psychology and the elevation of the appreciation of its excluded women members.

To the degree that the operation and action of a NTC are attractive to its excluded women members and it can promote them towards active participation, activation of potential, skills and talents that they have - and which often ignore or underestimate or are embarrassed to present under other circumstances - then the commencement of the procedure to lift their exclusion can become visible, as well as the strong demand for the portion of the life in the market and society they are entitled to. The transformation of women belonging to a social aim group from "*passive receptors*" of the services of a network to "*active individuals*" of the network, is the reaffirmation of its necessity and encourages its action. Also contributing to this process is the solidarity of the socially integrated and active women members of the network. There are two turning points in this process of lifting the exclusion by the excluded women themselves:

- a) They must be convinced of the importance of demanding equal opportunities and specialize in the access to relevant information and the means and forms of distribution available by the network.
- b) The feeling that in this effort, apart from the other members of the network, other people, organisations, networks etc are involved, and that broad alliances are being set up aiming at lifting the exclusion and securing their

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social and financial re-integration, so it is very important for this part of human resources of the NTC to have direct participation in the structuring of partnerships, decision-making and the setting out of aims.

Over the past few years, the pan-European and other social networks and a multitude of networks and NTC have made their appearance. An interesting experience was one of the first that set an aim to tackle the gender social exclusion, the ARTEMIS women's network, which was created at the initiative of INE/GSEE-ADEDY and other organisations in Greece, in the framework of Social Initiative EMPLOYMENT - Axis NOW, aiming at:

1. The coordination and completion of these organisations on a regional and local level, in the field of preventing and tackling women's problems
2. The diagnosis of the special needs of female users on a group and individual level
3. The development of intervention initiatives in local societies
4. The development of a series of activities and services concerning women
5. The development of women's entrepreneurship
6. The cooperation among users
7. The awareness - mobilisation of local societies in gender issues
8. The development of information and consulting mechanisms
9. The strengthening of training and employment connection systems.

Especially in the context of ARTEMIS network, which was considered to be an especially innovative effort for European standards, a significant number of women (trade unionists, professionals, municipal and district councilors etc) became involved, aiming, through local structures, at breaking the local "silence" regarding gender issues. The experience gained during their activity concerning the social category they were addressing verifies the aforementioned evaluations regarding the "*communication*" nature difficulties. So, its flanking for example by the socially excluded women themselves lacked significantly compared to the non excluded women that participated.⁷

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Another interesting multinational networking experience currently underway is the European Information network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN), which was established in 2000. It is a unique network of citizens continuously monitoring the situation in all member states regarding the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, providing assistance to EUMC in the function of “*timely notice*” and the collection of reliable and objective data and information. So it becomes obvious that with the direct involvement of the civil society, EUMC contributes in a positive manner to the improvement of democracy and transparency in European institutions. RAXEN is the central instrument for collecting data and information which provides the necessary material to EUMC to draft comparative reports on a European level regarding the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism for use by the European Union and its member states. Since May 2004, RAXEN comprises 25 national cooperation organisations (NCO), one for each member state. These organisations are the EUMC access points on a national level for the collection of data and information.⁸ RAXEN network organises, *inter alia*, regular national round-table meetings, the main aims of which are:

- To promote the participation of civil society and public authority representatives in a dialogue and encourage their cooperation
- To determine the “*main issues*” and specific aspects in the member states
- To inform about developments in the sector of racism and xenophobia
- To exchange information regarding “*good practices*” in the member states
- To notify their work to the EUMC, at other round-table meetings and to other RAXEN network members
- To give emphasis on the participation of a series of communities, especially immigrants and ethnic minorities, as well as the European Committee Against Racism and the European Network Against Racism
- To undertake a consultative role and submit recommendations on the Work Programme and the Annual Report of the EUMC

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The round-table meetings focus on the analysis and evaluation of the situation of racism in the specific member state. Discussions are held and information is exchanged regarding good practices in the member state to combat racism. Emphasis is given to current and future developments and the intention is to develop a common strategy with the basic factors of the sector.

Along with the aforementioned, the creation of REITOX could be described as a positive experience, a European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction, which aims at “becoming the human and electronic network, the heart of collecting and exchanging data on drugs in Europe” and which develops strategies, aims and methods for cooperation in the sectors of epidemiology, documentation and information techniques.

In an effort to create collective forms of NT with the active participation of the affected social categories themselves for lifting all kinds of exclusion in the socioeconomic scene, a problem arises regarding the participation or even the use of the services offered by those categories of people (men and women) who do not belong in the dominant group regarding nationality, religion and culture (Mousourou,2003). More specifically, in the case of the networks studied by the current project, the absence of immigrant women (economic, political, religious etc) is obvious not only in participation but in the use of the services (Kassimatis, 2003). And we do not know of the existence of strategies on behalf of the NTC to record, meet with such women and integrate them in the action and pursuits of the networks, with the comforting exception of some Social and Political Rights networks which act mainly in big cities, which however focus on helping the foreigners facing serious problems, such as resident permits, deportation, their keep when they first arrive etc etc. The ARTEMIS network for example did not have in its ranks immigrants, with the exception of a significant number of women from Pontos, but did not have the strategies to tackle the problems of the especially vulnerable social categories. However, the female immigrants exist, are on the rise and

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experience multiple exclusions, both as members of the socially excluded social categories as well as excluded within the exclusion due to race, traditions, attitude etc (Mousourou,2003 and Kassimatis Κασσιμάτη 2003). So, their absence from the NTC is a serious deficit which cannot be ignored any more and needs policies, strategies and aims in their direction. *"There were the concepts of equality were dismissed and humiliated, there where equality continues to be a myth, there where the ancient links between the genders are reaffirmed, is the world of the foreigners, the immigrants and the refugees. There the roles are historically affirmed and their reversal is not possible. There, more than elsewhere, the multiple discrimination and suppression of the woman, the wife, the mother and the working woman due to gender, role, work and origin is verified. The foreign woman, immigrant or refugee, usually from the Third World countries, drags with her all that misery, to which the concepts of her society condemned her, they place her in her house, her small environment, in her social ghetto and she bears it patiently, as she had learned to do for centuries in her country. Additionally, however, in the hosting country she experiences once again, more than the other women, gender inequality and exploitation"* (Kourtovic,1998). The tragic timeliness of gender talk shows where the NTC should focus their necessary relevant strategies: On the continuous demand for the comprehensive examination of the problems concerning the various categories of foreigners by the state, based on the national and international orders for the protection of human dignity and fundamental rights, finding ways to approach these women and integrate them in national organisations, contribute to the creation of centres for the reception and support of foreign women and the development of related volunteerism, mainly by specialised scientific members of NTC, the demand for human terms and the monitoring of work at home, the demand for institutions for the protection of their children and their integration in the educational system, the demand for security health, child-bearing, lactation etc.



CHAPTER 6. Partnership relationships and New Type Collectiveness

With the term Partnership Relationships we mean an organised and conative formation of various organisations with a set temporary or permanent social purpose⁹. This means organisations which jointly set out for this purpose their knowledge, experience and activity in a voluntary intervention that aims at transforming the social environment, improving social situations or changing social situations. Usually, this formation aims at providing work of a social nature, social assistance and tries - in the context of the given system and its institutions - to cure social wrongs/difficulties or to prevent some of them or to facilitate various social categories in solving problems they cannot solve without help. This is an answer or even better one of the answers to the continuously decreasing - due to the multitude and size of social inequalities - social cohesion. The necessity for new forms of cohesion through various activities and new organisation systems, as well as expressions of solidarity, which often extend beyond the local and regional frameworks and take on national and multinational dimensions, is in any case now visible. The withdrawal of the welfare state, the increasing exclusion of an ever-growing number of people from the social and political functions, impose flexible ways of tackling the problems, which seem to be worsening on a daily basis, and the active participation of the citizens, men and women, in this process is becoming imperative. At the same time, this kind of collectiveness and the ideological messages emanating from their existence and action, constitutes a kind of connection, a bridge between the society of the exclusions and inequalities of today and the society of tomorrow we are looking forward to.

In this case, it is cooperation and joint activity of NTC and traditional organisations of the public or private sector, in one of the preset fields of social inequalities and exclusions. The development of this kind of common action of NTC and the traditional organisations demands the formation of common beliefs and a common vision regarding the more permanent plans. The meaning of the partnership relationships developed by the social

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organisations is linked to the idea of social progress, since it expresses the basic philosophical position that the society can be transformed, improved with the will of its people and the power of its groups (and thus the social evils can be cured and their cure is a common cause) and also the wish for the structures and the conditions of the specific socioeconomic system to become more humane or more viable, to produce specific gradual changes in the issues that demand the development of partnership relationships and the collection of social organisations (Newman,2003).

The development of partnership relationships demands a new concept, as already mentioned, in the social alliances and the necessity for their effectiveness imposes a viability that should be based on the equal alignment of the organisations and the planning of strategies that will be based on the needs of the social category for which there is a problem, and to take seriously into consideration the pre-existing practices, concepts, attitudes with which conflict usually takes place. Either way, the above strategies mean short-term, medium-term or long-term (depending on the case) coordination of all forces and means that are deemed as necessary for a successful conclusion, a sought after result, despite any current difficulties. In this kind of social effort, the relative strategy aims at the generalised organisation of necessary relevant actions that will allow the success of the enterprise (Wellman,1999). At the same time it requires a spherical and complex knowledge of the current situation and the ability to foresee adaptations of tactic to the developments, the correlation of forces, the setting out and coordination of actions.

From the above the following questions arise: Even if we suppose that we have complete forms of NTC, with a formed philosophy and understanding of their role, what happens with the traditional organisations, the way they think and act, the authoritarian structure of many of these (such as those of a public nature) which are nevertheless fields of alliances of NTC? How will their successful cooperation and effectiveness be secured? The coexistence of

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both kinds of organisations requires serious action on the inside of the traditional organisations, both on an ideological and practical level, which is of special importance, and extremely difficult, especially regarding the deeply authoritative red tape organisations of the public administration. In fact, the issue has to do with the role and content of the public administration itself and its characteristics. So any important structural changes are probably highly improbable, on a central and regional and local level. Either way, it is well known that a fundamental change of public administration and its organisations and services requires a huge political (and financial) cost and remains a demand for many years now.

The development of cooperation relationships between NTC and traditional organisations may engraft the traditional ones with the new culture - as is possible, on the reverse side, the red tape operation may lead the NTC to disappointment and resignation, which is not unusual. Of course the question it remains whether any influence can touch the tips of the service pyramid, the decision-making ranks, that is the political leadership, which also presents the additional difficulty of temporary, opportunistic, with exceptions, presence of various persons in the specific position.

It is highly interesting to examine the qualitative profile of the public organisations, the actions they develop (if so) apart from the formal facts of their organisations, the experience they have, the ideological and practical matters that concern them. So far the findings of researchers of public administration are not so flattering. Their structure is adapted to the functioning of the closed hierarchical system which resists innovation and efforts towards modernisation. Often modern planning is absent and any plans are implemented in the framework of ministerial offices without the knowledge of the workers. The solutions chosen are not the most effective or beneficial to the social group (while usually there are no alternative solutions) and any corrective moves are not always the right ones, which sometimes leads to social conflicts. The organisations reflect the dusticia of their operation and

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the suffocating control from the central authority, while the flow of information often stumbles on the concepts of hierarchy, fear of responsibility and the existing institutional framework. The ARTEMIS network (from which we continue to draw good practices for the past ten years) for example (in the context of the aim to develop partnership relationships between the organisations of the public and private sector to cultivate the awareness of and mobilise the local societies in issues of socioeconomic integration/re-integration of socially excluded women, with the joint planning and implementation of support services - depending on the needs - encouraging and - as far as possible - integrating them in the labour market and the social process in general) carried out an interesting survey in 1997 regarding the occupation of the organisations of the wider public sector with Social Gender issues¹⁰. The same study included issues of developing formal and informal forms of partnership relationships with other organisations of the private or public sector concerning the same issues. The research was carried out in Lower Macedonia (Imathia and Kozani districts), Larissa district and Lower Peloponnesus (Arcadia and Messinia districts), and in the Heraclion, Crete, district. Despite the low number of responses received in the end, the research was interesting from the following points of view:

- a) From the fact that it uncovered the weakness of a large number of organisations of the public sector to take a stance on new issues with a broad social dimension, such as Social Gender.
- b) From the impressive similarity of the answers among the organisations, either they were from Imathia district, or Heraclion district, a fact which proves their common ideological foundation (regarding the subject and the organisation itself) and the common way of thinking and tackling the whole sphere of problems.
- c) The common fear of the employees who were appointed by the service to fill in the relevant questionnaires on the non-disclosure of “dangerous”, from

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their point of view, situations in the internal environment of the organisations (e.g. discreet or not treatment of the staff of these organisations due to gender or percentage of gender representation in the decision-making bodies, such as Board of Directors, official councils etc).

- d) The fact that a significant number of such organisations had already timidly begun to deal with gender issues and had an experience of mainly unofficial gender partnership relationships.
- e) From the fact that through the communication procedure of the interview the opportunity for contact of the usually closed organisations with a NTC, exchange of views, experience etc was given, and it paved the way for more substantive cooperation and contact among women members of the network and officials, which the women themselves evaluated as very positive.

Eleven years later, there has not been a similar study to determine the quality and size of change, which is tangible and can be measured due to the various funded European programmes and a slow but existing transformation of the collective social conscience regarding gender issues and the social inequalities linked to gender. The latter makes the public organisations show a relative interest and they do not see the demand for equality between men and women as a foreign case in every sphere of private and social live. In Cyprus, on the contrary, as a recent survey indicated on the creation of the “*National Action Plan for Gender Equality of the Republic of Cyprus*”, there is great interest and multiple forms of cooperation between organisations of the private and public sector with the most characteristic case being the Mechanism for Women’s Rights. However, the problem which remains in Greece and in our view remains in Cyprus as well as other parts of Europe (e.g. Spain¹¹) is the fact that the women users of the organisations’ services and in general the members of the aim groups do not participate in decision-making concerning them. The fact does not seem to worry the organisations, which conceive it as “*matter-of-course*” and do not integrate it in the sphere of

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possible communication difficulties with the aim groups. The determination of the problem, whenever achieved, usually in external evaluation procedures, is said to be due to:

- The mistrust of aim groups regarding the effectiveness of the organisation
- Their lack of knowledge regarding the relevant procedures
- The red tape and the fact that many women live in distant mountainous areas

As a rule, the public organisations - and this is worth mentioning - believe that their internal environment secures the equal treatment of men and women workers, regarding the salary and job advancement. However, when they are called upon to mention the percentage of women's representation in decision-making centres, they become extremely hesitant.

It is obvious that in an authoritatively structured administrative environment, the human factor adapts and functions respectively, reproduces and broadens the attitudes and in the end appears unwilling to respond to the new qualities demanded in tackling modern problems, such as social exclusion and gender hierarchy in any way they are expressed. The majority of these officers of public services lack knowledge on these issues. Although efforts are being made on behalf of the educational organisations - such as the Institute of Continuous Training of Civil Servants in Greece and the National Academy of Administration in Cyprus - in order for the staff to be informed about the gender gap in the public administration and the state services, with seminars, the deficit remains.¹² However, today the diagnosis and more comprehensive examination of equal opportunity policies for women and men in all expressions of political, economic and social life of European countries, is imperative. At the same time, a comparative analysis is being made across Europe regarding the form, extent and prospects of integrating equality policies in the actions of various countries, in order to determine

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possible weaknesses, gaps or even advantages and good practices, which could become useful teachings in planning government policy on gender equality and handling gender social exclusion (KETHI, 2005:8). In this generalised effort, the participation and assistance of civil society organisations, and especially the NTC, is deemed a prerequisite for success. Consequently, the issue of informing and training the staff of the public organisations, mainly on gender and wider social exclusion issues etc, is very timely. Training on these issues is an important factor of familiarizing civil servants with the new ways of functioning and response imposed by the creation of partnership relationships with other social organisations. Through such training and education, the civil servants get a picture of the problem, are informed on its past, on the policies the solution needs, the improvement of relevant services provided, the ways to respond to the partnerships in which their organisation is participating. It is a process which sociologically broadens the horizons of the employees to the benefit of their service, the common interest and of course themselves. In our view, it is preferable to provide such training in a decentralized manner to selected officers, men and women, with programmes created and implemented within the public organisations. So far the central administration of the issue by the Greek Institute of Continuous Training of Civil Servants, for example, did not meet the needs and expectations even of those who participated in them, despite the high level of lecturers, due to the fact that the employees, returning to their services, never utilised the knowledge and experience they gained and on quite a few occasions were faced with sarcastic comments, mainly from their seniors.

Today, such forms of education are imperative to tackle a series of issues in which the gender dimension is very hard to ignore. Experience has shown that in this specific case, that is the activation of a public organisation to form partnership relationships with NTC and other traditional organisations, an important role is played by “enlightened” and “aware” officers, whose professional experience allows them to find ways to overcome objective obstacles which the institutional and often the civil servant attitude and fear of

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responsibility entail. These people, with the choices they can make, with the action they can develop, with the imaginativeness in overcoming red tape obstacles, contribute anyway in commencing the necessary internal procedures, mainly on an ideological level, with the precondition of course that they pass on the way of action to the rest and make their intentions known, at the same time justifying them, a fact that means a first contact of the broader groups of people with the problem and its prospects. The acceptance of the existence of the problem on their behalf is the first step of becoming involved. Some people may proceed to broaden it, which does not exclude the wish to contribute towards a solution. The active support and encouragement of “enlightened” and “aware” members of traditional organisations, on behalf of the NTC members and officers, their regular presence at the traditional organisation, the submitting on their behalf of specific justified and above all proposals that can be implemented and will lead to effective action, are factors that strengthen the ideological activity being carried out within the public organisation and constitute a significant contribution to innovative and substantive openings in the local and broader society.

However, despite the importance of the involvement of public organisations in their internal environment with gender and other social issues, the respective deficit is evident in other organisations of a private nature but with a special social span, and thus important for the successful construction of partnership relationships aiming at tackling issues such as social exclusion and the gender dimension. As already mentioned, serious weaknesses in this sector continue to be found in the trade union movement - private and public sector - and its established bodies, despite the significant steps taken towards adopting gender policies over the past years, and here we should point out the especially important contribution of women trade unionists. In our view, the huge problem within the trade union movement is the need to inform its officers - on all levels - regarding the causes, extent and way of functioning of the gender issue in general and its political-economic dimension, that is its relationship with economic growth, social cohesion and

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democracy itself. The restricted information does not allow the completion of the supererogation of the male-centred structure and philosophy, and the male-centred strategies that are still to some extent reproduced. Furthermore, it does not allow the substantive “grafting” of most European trade unions with the gender view, in order to achieve, not the opportunistic, but their permanent involvement with the great social demands connected to the genders. Furthermore, the image projected outwards, according to which male-centred trade union leaderships of all levels have better knowledge than women regarding what is best for women so they speak on behalf of both genders, should be changed.

The problem of information and training of trade union officers on gender issues and the way they prolong social exclusion is thus raised more intensely than on the inside of the public sector organisations, due to the nature, role and history of the trade union movement. Indeed, from what we know at least, no generalised strategy on gender education for trade unionists has been adopted, and at this point a good Cypriot practice with added value could prove to be very useful. It is a comprehensive and scientifically complete educational/awareness programme for trade union officers, which was held in the context of the project “Open Doors”, implemented by the development collaboration “ELANI” with funding from Community Initiative EQUAL and which ended in creating an extremely useful Educational-Awareness Manual for Trade Union Officers *“for demanding measures to reconcile the family and professional life of women and their integration in collective bargaining”*(1997)

It is obvious that partnership relationships with traditional organisations of a non governmental nature and indeed trade union or equality ones, are easier to be created due to the potential of “self-determination” these organisations, regarding their choices and the development of activities - the ease which the public sector organisations lack - and also their increased awareness towards social inequalities and exclusions and their respective experience to some

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extent or other. However, in this case as well there are difficulties, mainly regarding the manner in which trade union and other organisations conceive the cooperation and the to some extent hierarchical structure and functioning.

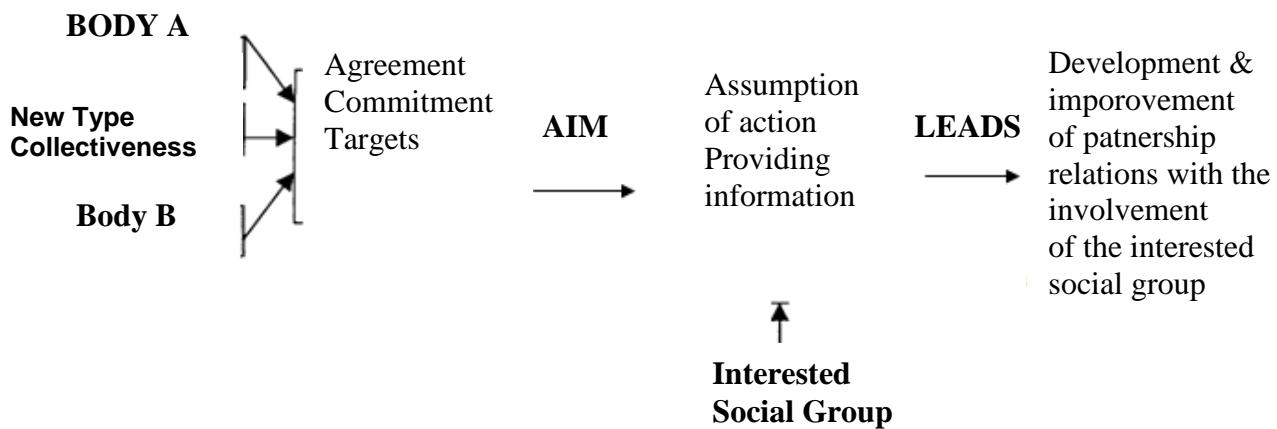


Diagram B. The philosophy of creating Partnership Relationships

From the abovementioned the determining role of the NTC in developing partnership relationships becomes even more evident. They are obliged to take the initiative of moves in the commencement and progress of negotiations which will lead to the creation of partnership relationships of a temporary or more permanent nature. And this will be judged by their ability to either propose or actively participate in the organisation of the procedures and the creation of mechanisms to structure the partnership, which requires the existence of relevant know-how.



CHAPTER 7. *The role of information*

The role, the flow and exchange of information, and above all its sources, appear to be quite enhanced in the specific networking. Either way, from a sociological point of view, the same information has various dimensions that have to do with the techniques used, its validity and effectiveness. The content and authenticity of the messages conveyed and the necessary selective nature of the facts transferred, they way the facts are presented or commented on, so that they either meet the expectations, the wish of the person being informed, or direct views (Huisman and Van Duijn,2005). The purpose for the dissemination or seeking of information and lastly the way the information is obtained. In the structure of partnership relationships, a very important factor for securing mutual trust among the partners is the timely distribution of the information and mainly its validity.

The decisions that have to be taken and the strategies that must be chosen during the process of developing partnership relationships are nothing other than a flow of simultaneous, interconnected and continuous methods of selection. Their correctness and effectiveness depends on the size and validity of the available information. The piece of information can be internal, that is elements and facts collected within the environment of the organisations, information formed by each one separately - a system of information of each organisation - and which is placed at the disposal of the organisations partners, or external, with a focus outside the partnership formation (e.g. National Statistical Service, State Services, special Institutes, studies, surveys, various publications etc).



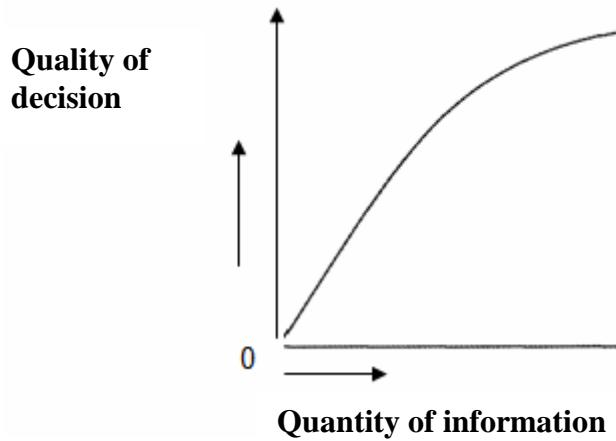


DIAGRAM C

The source of the information should be able to offer guarantees regarding its correctness and be socially responsible. From this point of view, it would not be a bad idea to integrate cooperation ethics in the cooperation protocol of the organisations regarding information (Huisman and Van Duijn,2005). Obtaining information as mentioned above demands the parallel recording and the most comprehensive utilisation of the sources on an international, national, regional and local level: “*The value of a piece of information depends directly on the social and economic framework in which it is used. Also, the value of a piece of information is directly linked to its ability to be generalised and its ability to convey meanings, experience and techniques to other broader social and economic areas*” (Hinstreet, Murlin -Baty and Lehman, 1995:148). Either way, the issue of choosing the basic, dominating information among a multitude of information remains open and concerns all the users of information technology. Generally, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that information technology leads to the creation of new social areas or broadens the already existing ones, enriching their structure and developing their ties, and that the relationships created between NTC and

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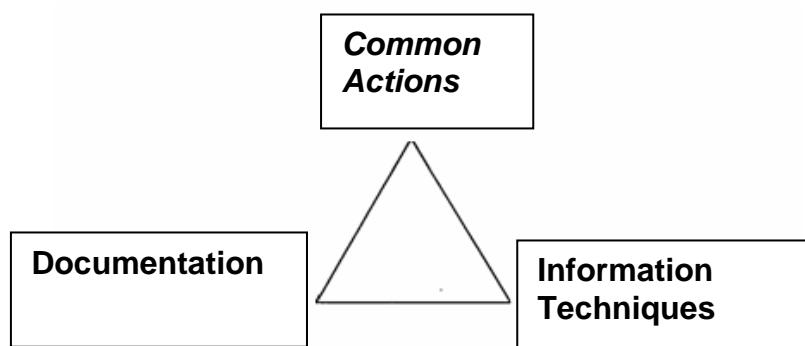


other allies should cover these areas, incorporating their action spans. The example of Netnews 102 is indicative. An interesting and useful example of creating and operating a data bank, e.g. the framework of partnership, regarding the aims, planning methodology, axis of contents, way of collecting informative material, replenishing etc, which is a data bank created by INE/GSEE and the other partner organisations in the framework of the programme Community Initiative “EMPLOYMENT” - Axis NOW.



CHAPTER 8. Fields for forming partnership relationships

The use of information falls under a wide area of developing strategic aims and methods for cooperation, the calculation and long-term (in the case of



more stable partnership relationships) coordination of all the measures and actions, which are deemed necessary by the partners to reach the desirable result, the organisation of the actions that will contribute to the success of the initial expectations. A basic precondition is the will for cooperation the its purposes, the spherical and composite knowledge of a situation and its purposes, and the ability to foresee corrective moves in case this is necessary. If we wish to summarize all this, we could mention the triptych "*Documentation - Information Techniques - Common Actions*", based on the conviction of its necessity.

A strategy of partnership relationships as mentioned above in the end expresses the culture of a new collective social action or, to be closer to reality, one of the forms of social action being created, because other are possible, which however do not fall within the interests of this study. As areas of creating partnership relationships both the place and the region as well as the state are provided. The geographical-administrative extent within which partnership relationships are agreed on and developed plays an important role in their viability and effectiveness. It is difficult to assess the importance of each of the above fields. What is certain is that the wider the area the greater

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the needs and demands put forward, which makes mainly the informal forms of partnership relationships difficult and imposes, to some extent, prioritized formal partnership formations. It is however calculated that the new concepts on anti-authoritative and non-prioritized NTC favour respective cooperation and lead - initially - to mainly informal forms of partnership relationships which find a field of development in restricted geographical-administrative extents (municipality - district). This kind of procedure on a local level, apart from its importance in tackling the problem for which it is formed, has a more general effect on activating the local society (Passy,2001). The NTC should develop varied relationships with the local organisations of the public and private sector, always aiming at meeting the interests of the aim group and its real needs. Special interest arises from the effort to govern and promote cooperation in mainly small and medium sized enterprises, a field which still presents a delay in most European countries - in contrast with others, e.g. Italy. Nevertheless, on a local level the role of the NTC appears to be important in expanding the sensitivities of the local societies and local organisations, that is how they can respond to local needs linked with the social gender situation. Indeed, in many cases it is possible for local societies and other organisations, such as the European Union, to mediate in the direction of a local social-cultural human-centred development, with a tendency to restrict the inequalities and exclusions (Passy,2001). It is a role visible on a local level, recognizable and controllable.

The networking of the human and technological force that manages to spread beyond the borders of the local societies and the region (in most municipalities, districts and regions), as well as the respective partnership relationships that emerge (such as the ARTEMIS network), need the National Focusing Point (NFP) to coordinate their action and to gather and produce national data and national information sources. This facilitates local regional networks and the cooperating organisations in drawing policies and strategies on a national level - and European level, as we shall see further down - in order to understand the organisational infrastructure on which they depend,

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the expected results, the sources of information and the competent centres that are processing existing information. It is especially important to the NFP to take all the necessary measures for the continuous improvement of the information infrastructure, which is of utmost importance in case where transnational comparison is demanded. A fundamental precondition for the success of the role the NFP is called on to play in such an effort is its close cooperation with the local-regional networks and vice versa. Especially regarding the improvement of the flow of data and information, the NFP should regionalise the work for gathering information and expand the use of the automated data processing system. It is a fact that regionalisation noticeably improves cooperation with other cooperating organisations.

The creation of a central information system by the NFP aims more specifically at: a) the creation of a “proactive” basis of data regarding the existing experience mainly, b) the direct access of local-regional networks and their partners to the database, and c) securing quality analysis for the information of networks and their partners. However, a point that needs to be stressed has to do - mainly regarding formal partnership relationships - with the important potential existing today for the expansion of the field of developing the NFP beyond the national borders, on an transnational level, between the government and non governmental organisations (Wellman,1999). Over the past few years valuable respective cooperation experience has begun to be collected, especially in the framework of the European Union, as well as countries of the former eastern coalition and indeed the Balkans. Regarding the latter, such contacts are considered today as urgent after the traumatic war experience of the past years, which reserves a central role for the Greek and Cypriot organisations, who are undertaking the initiative for further moves.

Either way, transnational cooperation, the development of international partnership relationships, is an interesting reality which permits, through the flow of data and information, the exchange of national experience and ways to

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improve the definition of action within the national boundaries. Generally, such cooperation leads to significant benefits, since it provides the opportunity and necessity for the organisations to draft their strategy and take their decisions, not only to increase their knowledge - so that the data to be submitted in their transnational cooperation is reliable - and to gain respective reliable data from the cooperating countries. In this way, the European for example dimension of the cooperation purpose is understood, the interrelation on a national and international level is appreciated, the effectiveness and the results of such partnership relationships is evaluated, and the possibilities of further developing common actions on an international level are examined (Wellman,1999).

On the international level, as on the national level, the development of partnership relationships is a turning point for the creation of a broad view on many important issues such as social exclusion, vocational training, lifelong education etc, and constitutes the combination of expectations (what the partners would like in the best case) and pragmatism (what is available and possible with respect to cost, for example, to be achieved). At the same time, it is always a challenge on an international level to determine and understand the differences and similarities between the partners of a different nationality. Thus, this kind of partnership relationships is often an informal forum for exchanging information on the importance of existing elements, clarifying any similarities and differences, providing a basis for the interpretation of data etc. Indeed, as the procedure for developing partnership relationships on an international level is important and interesting, the difficulties often found during their development are not negligible. Indicatively, one could mention the lack of common models of action, and the gathering, archiving and distribution of information (even in the case of their existence they differ in implementation). Common models of documentation have not yet been completed among the organisations from different ethnicities on the abovementioned issues and each one separately is obliged to create his own, e.g. non compatible archiving system or information software.

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However, irrespectively of the geographical kinds of partnership relationships, the fundamental precondition for success remains on the one hand securing the communication channels among the organisations, and on the other hand a common philosophy and stance towards the problem they are called on to face and of course common terminology. And it is a fact that as partnership relationships are developing and being strengthened, the partnership relationships are obliged to improve the options provided by the organisations for the exchange of experience, information etc. Both on a personal level as on an electronic level, the dialogue regarding their organisational structures, the mutual provision of assistance, the common potential to reply to questions emerging from their joint action must be upgraded. Especially regarding terminology, often the differences found lead to serious obstacles and reflect the deeply rooted and diversified concepts of persons regarding key concepts for the development of cooperation¹³. On a technological level, the achievement to some degree of the stylisation of terms used to archive the existing material and the way through which the users of information are led to the archive terms, was deemed necessary since it is they who turn to databases to retrieve a comprehensive list of relevant publications (Huisman and Van Duijn,2005).

The forms partnership relationships can take on range from the more simple, temporary and opportunistic to the more complex and more temporary. Partnerships on a local level from the view that it is in a truly advantageous position, since it is the smallest and shortest cooperation (e.g. exchange of information, participation in an event, submitting a proposal that finds response, participation in an informal formation, a common interview on a problem, etc), are the first and certainly not negligible steps towards achieving longer-term and often local partnership relationships. The organisations of course can simultaneously develop informal and formal relationships with respective partners, since partnership is a common field of action that requires dynamic expressions of communication relationships,

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behaviour and sometimes creative conflicts. The success of the informal partnership relationships is based on the quality of the relationship developed between the organisations and especially the people bearing the burden of this success. These relationships - apart from the existing commitments emerging from the participation of these people in respective organisations - are also created spontaneously in the context of their partnership activity. The informal partnership relationships do not have a permanent organisational structure and thus do not appear on protocols, agreements, constitutions etc. “Formal” documents, however, contribute to the success of the aims that have been set out, and thus should be encouraged by the various organisations.

In this kind of cooperation, the role of the coordinator who takes more responsibility than the others for the success of the idea and pursuit is important. This person coordinates the meetings, the information, the activities of the other members of the team appointed by the representatives of the organisations for specific purposes, and is their link and thus the link between the organisations. His/her communication and organisational skills are preconditions for the success of the aims of the specific partnership, without in any case underestimating the role of the others in solving the problems arising and their contribution to the success of the partnership. Otherwise, even unconsciously, hierarchies and authoritative behaviour is produced which undermines the partnership.

The informal forms of partnership relationships can have a regional and national and transnational nature. However, in broader geographical formations the possibility to structure formal partnership relationships is enhanced, a cooperation of organisations with a formal structure and operation, which has a) its social dimension, that is the roles and relationships required by the social situations that were the cause for the formation of the partnership formation and the respective interrelations within, b) the strategy, that is the roles of the relationships and actions that aim at meeting the goals set out, and c) the dynamic of the cooperation, which is none other than the

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harmonisation of decisions and activities to the benefit of the final goal.

The well known Deming model could express to a certain degree the actions of the partnership relationships: Plan, Do, Check, Act

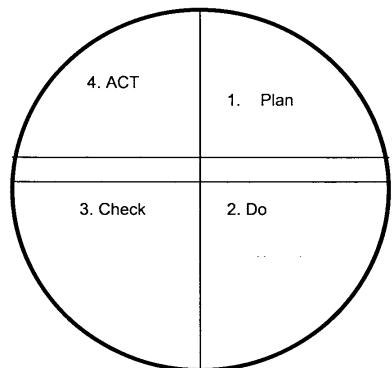
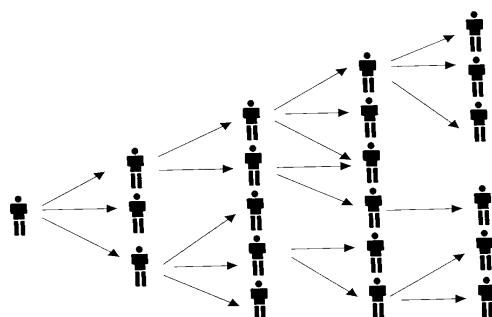


DIAGRAM C Deming Model

Usually this kind of cooperation is ratified by the signing of protocols, agreements etc, legal documents aimed at the binding determination of the functions of the harmonisation of actions and avoiding the waste of time, money etc, and the clear setting of goals and the respective timeframe. A useful example is Italian Pati Teritoliali, a form of agreement of a local nature, ratified by a ministerial decision (GGNG,1998:24). They are characterised by planning from below upwards, the determination of local needs and all the local organisations interested in participating and helping or meeting these local needs.

DIAGRAM D Informal Communication Network



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In the formal forms of partnership relationships, it is obvious that there are increased expectations regarding the formation of the most favourable possible conditions for cooperation to meet common goals. Thus it is necessary for them to be characterised by rationalism and the greatest possible participation of the available human resources. The development of formal partnership relationships raises the issue of the legal form of NTC and the wider issue of the institutional establishment of volunteerism and non governmental organisations, especially in the process of their cooperation with government organisations. Examples of formal partnership relationships are the established participation of various organisations in the creation and functioning of an institution, e.g. scientific, social etc. In a regional committee (e.g. district equality committees). The joint undertaking to plan and implement a European programme etc. It is obvious that the development of such procedures is a factor that awakens important social forces and influences the local societies.

The NTC are called on to play a leading role and often need to take the initiative of launching these procedures. The latter is of special importance, since, having a diversified view - in relation to the traditional organisations - regarding the composition and operation of partnership formation, they can effectively intervene a) as mobilizing factors in urging local organisations to become active socially in specific issues, b) in avoiding authoritative and hierarchical forms of organisation of partnership relationships, especially if they are created with the cooperation of public sector organisations, c) in securing the involvement in the whole process of the directly interested social groups to solve the problems of which partnership relationships are created. And this in the direction of safeguarding rational and justified expectations on their behalf that should not be dismissed, because in such a case the disappointment from canceling that which is expected could lead to abandonment, drop of self-esteem and the conviction of generalised ineffectiveness. The aims set in the prospect of cooperation and the action programme the partner organisations are called on to implement are of

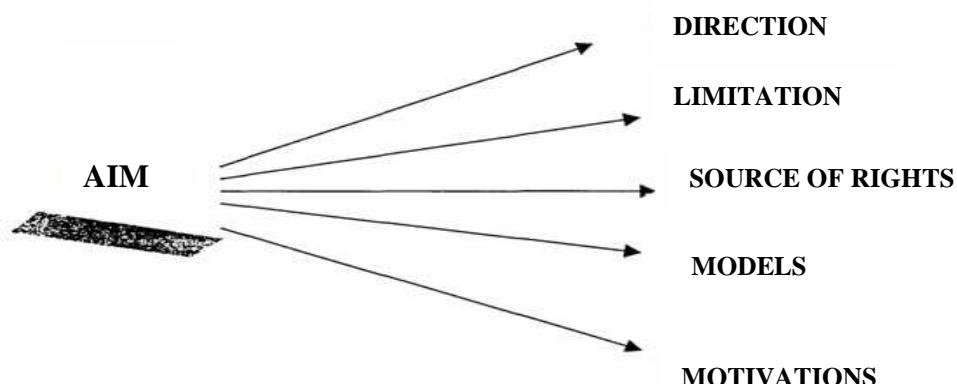
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special importance to the informal partnership relationships and mainly the formal partnership relationships.

Regarding the aims, their selection and consequently their prioritisation is a demanding, difficult and at the same time dominating action of the whole process of partnerships. An important difficulty is found in the coinciding of aims and the general strategies to select the partner organisations. It is obvious that the main pursuit of the process to determine the aims is to determine the conditions and situations that may apply during the period concerning the specific planning and which can affect the course of the effort and the activity for which the aims have been set. In short, the aims in partnership relationships - as everywhere, e.g. businesses - refer to the desirable and necessary results that can be achieved over a specified period of time.



It is actually a general definition, a description of the qualitative dimension of the effort undertaken by the partner organisations and must follow the four-fold: Clarity - Realism - Prioritization - Continuity. The aims of a partnership can be the evaluations recorded in a number or term, but hide a huge effort in the form of analysis, commitment, participation, inspiration, The project is co-funded by 50% by the European Social Fund and by 50% by the Republic of Cyprus

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imagination, emulation etc.

The success of a formal partnership relationship is judged by the way it plans and implements its action programme and by the final evaluation of the expected results. A comprehensive planning cannot but determine precisely the responsibilities, obligations and contribution of each partner organisation in achieving the aims. Important elements are setting the limits for authority-responsibility sectors among the organisations, clarity in communicating the roles, the opportunities for education and participation of officers of the organisations who do not have respective experience, urging (and giving compensation etc, motives) involvement in the programme of persons of the social category concerning the specific programme etc.



**THE ROLE OF
NEW TYPE
COLLECTIVENESS
TO THE
DEVELOPMENT
OF PARTNERSHIP
RELATIONSHIPS**

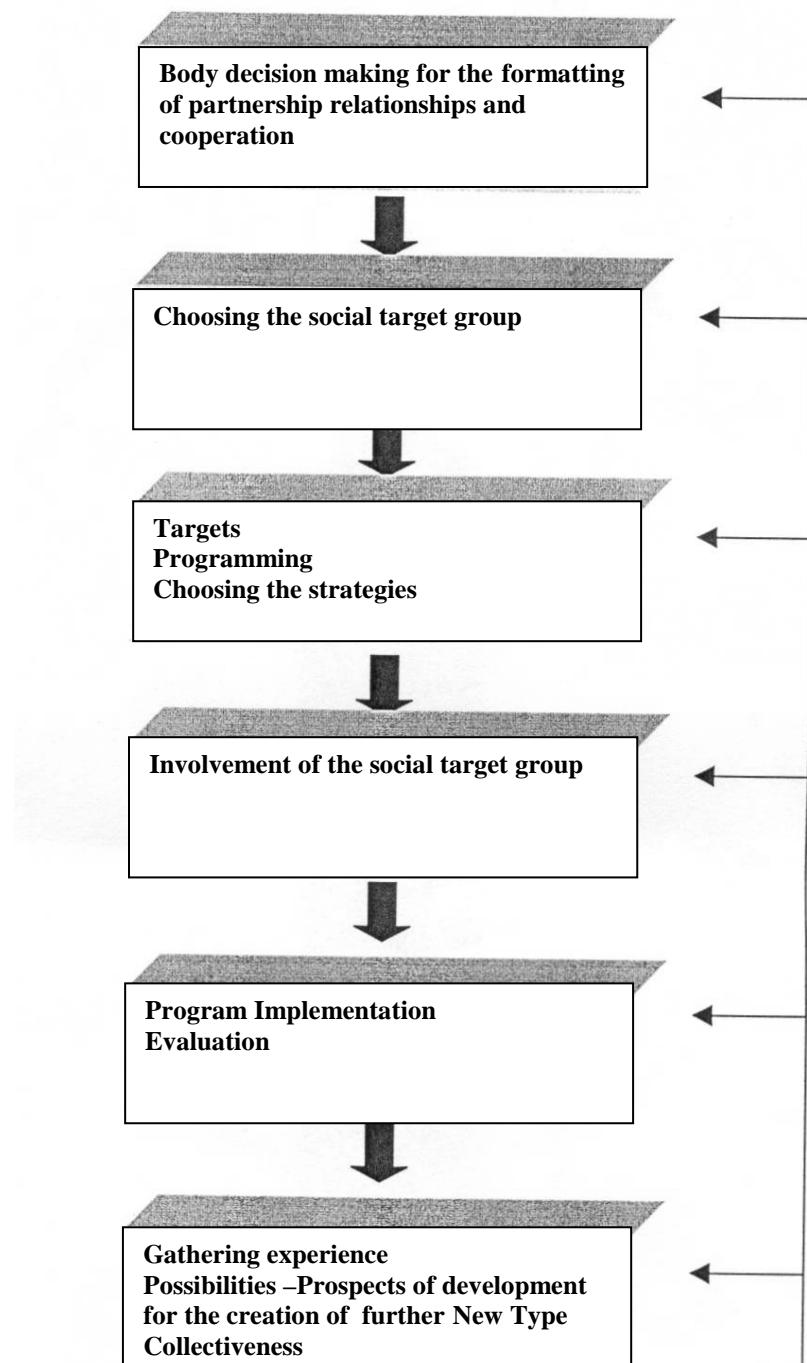


Diagram F. STEPS FOR THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

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An action programme is nothing more than a step to step recording of the aims that have been set out, not an indefinite and passive wording, but a clear presentation of what we want the partners to achieve (aims), how they will achieve it (strategy), which part of the programme is allocated to each partner organisation (delegation - appointment) and when (timeframe). In other words, it is an instrument with practical value which secures measurable results for the cooperating organisations, a basis for control (which in turn requires a mechanism with specific aims, the determination of measurement and evaluation instruments and the provision of the potential to intervene with corrective actions), the evaluation of each partner organisation separately and mainly coordination.

Either way, the success of the effort to develop partnership relationships depends above all on the relationship the partnership formation develops with the social category to solve the problems for which the partnership relationships are created. It is a social category with specific - each time and maybe different - wishes, preferences, needs etc, which lead to respective behaviour. It is often that the partnership formations decide, plan and implement without the knowledge of the interested parties and this is a kind of arrogance, where privileged people decide and plan for other non privileged people, the expectations, insecurities and uncertainties of whom they usually ignore. Such reason and practice cannot but be foreign to the NTC, which should fight it in the case it is proposed by the partnership formations in which they participate. In order for the plans and actions of the partnership formations to be successful, they should know the social category, the difficulties it is facing and the behaviour it is forming, especially in matters concerning the aforementioned planning. It is well known that human behaviour is influenced by four factors: cultural (culture, sub-culture, social gender, social class), social (reference groups, family social roles and status), personal (age and circle of life phase, occupation, financial conditions, way of life, personality and self-esteem), psychological (prodding, understanding, beliefs, stance etc). All these factors provide valuable information for the more

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effective approach and service to the persons of the specific social category and - mainly - are the key for tackling the fears, doubts and protests that they usually present and to convince them on an active substantive participation in a programme that was drafted for them and cannot succeed without them.

In conclusion, it is noted that the structure of partnership relationships and cooperation and the creation of alliances around the serious social problems can function in a motivating way to recognise and accept the - in our case gender - problems on behalf of the local and broader societies. It is certain that this recognition and acceptance is the first and not in any case negligible step towards solving them. The notification of agreeing on partnership relationships, the development of actions that are made known by utilizing e.g. the local media and - mainly - the effectiveness of these actions, activates the local society and makes it willing - to the extent possible - to adopt the problem.



EPILOGUE

The networking of people and means with an aim to lift the social and specifically gender injustices, on any level (local, regional, national, transnational) is regulated by the reason of awakening, awareness and activation regarding the societies of these levels and their participation - to the extent possible - in the whole effort. And this is of great difficulty, mainly when it comes to injustices and exclusions based e.g. on gender, as already mentioned. Today, even though the societies of the western category of thought, in which our country belongs, are characterised by their ability to access a multitude of information and present an exceptional mobility, with ease in adopting new models and behaviours, there is a conflict among the cultural collective memory and the new influences created every day. This memory is presented strong and often unwilling to dismiss the stereotype images and symbolisms - social origin - that it has accumulated. So the pursuits of the NTC are called on, through the selected strategies, to invade the cultural table of specific societies and feed them with new value formations, creating on the specific issues "*an image of undertaking and understanding the reality of the environment that influences the socially integrated person.*" The triptych that the society is informed, adopts and is activated constitutes a fundamental strategic option and the aims and means converge to implement it. The broader the knit of formal and/or informal relationships achieved, the more effective they will prove - especially regarding the local societies - their actions, the more organisations of a private and/or public nature participate in all kinds and levels of cooperation, making it known at the same time to the local public opinion, the more permanent alliances created, the more programmes undertaken and implemented by partnership formations, the more known their problems are known to the society in their true dimensions.

Concluding, it is imperative to make the following observation: The question as to whether the society and state can coexist in common actions continues

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to be promoted (Wallace,2005). Of course, experience in various sectors, such as the economy, yields positive results. Indeed the varied protests presented especially in issues of a broader social nature, such as the case of facing issues of social exclusion, and values to be examined are (Hirsch,2005). A basic protest is the fact that often such cooperation “neutralize” the problem and “remove incrimination” from the state regarding any stances or omissions and it is not on rare occasions that the social organisations bear the burden of the unwillingness or different policy of the state - and any commitments this entails - and are exposed mainly before the social categories the common activities are addressed to. However, no matter how significant the protests made are, it would be a mistake to exclude the effort of joint action between the state and the social organisations, especially in the case of social exclusion. The limits of these joint actions are obviously outdated and the responsibilities lie exclusively with the state, which in the end is the actual administrator of the whole issues and the relationships developed around it. On quite a few occasions the social organisations did not fulfill the responsibilities they had undertaken and several plans were not completed because of them, despite the positive will of the state, thus feeding the reservations regarding the role of the “established” movement.



NOTES

1. The significant subsidence of traditional social movements, the disappointment and withdrawal from the lines of a multitude of active citizens, contributes to a turn in what we are used to calling a “collective” solution of socioeconomic problems, with the active demand through collective mobilisation of the concerned groups, to solutions of a “personal” nature. Thus, that historical-social procedure of intervention and action of a group of people somewhat organised and somewhat grouped, aimed at social reform or transformation of the society programmes (since the forms of action and intervention differ depending on the sort of movement, the means and its purposes) is in recess. So it is no surprise that one of the most interesting characteristics of the crisis are: the traditional social alliances are being dissolved, traditional collectiveness (e.g. trade unions, women's organisations) are losing the masses and are seen with suspiciousness, thus often weak - and with serious internal problems - to articulate a modern, realistic and convincing work which would restore their prestige and attract their previous base.
2. In the Road Map on Equality (2006-2010), the planning for the next five years is set out and the reconciliation of the professional and family life is by itself one of the six basic aims of the European policy, next to equal financial independence and not any more a means to increase the participation of women in employment. The reconciliation of family and professional life can also be defined as the balancing of professional and family obligations. This new term refers to the equal participation of men and women in family responsibilities in a way that allows both parents to meet their professional obligations and to utilize their creativity and skills in the workplace. The shared responsibility of the couple in the home and family responsibilities and the equal provision of opportunities to both genders in the workplace that will

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contribute to their professional advancement are a precondition for the implementation of this new policy which comes to complement and promote the policy of integrating gender mainstreaming.

3. Thus, the forced prostitution of young girls is not restricted exclusively to Bangkok or Manila, since hundreds of such children are offered to the prostitution industry in Athens, Berlin or Rome. It would also be of great interest to break the “conspiracy of silence” between the Moslem populations of the West to see how many clitoris excisions for example are carried out every year in Paris, London, Munich or Athens.

4. The low specialisation or unskilled workers are now facing, apart from the humiliating salaries (in the event of course that they are employed) extreme infringements of their rights concerning their social security and labour legislation. Efforts made by governments to tackle these kinds of problems failed due to the frequent moves from business to business, seasonal work, self-employment, the wave of immigrants from third world and Eastern Europe countries, etc. It is worth noting that I.S. forces many workers to withdraw from work earlier due to the lack of adequate qualifications, at the same time when the retirement age is on the rise and early retirement programmes are ending. (See the exceptional work of Maria Volakis *“The new technologies and the changes they brought about to the organisational structure of the businesses. The case of tele-work”* Aegean University).

5. The social analysis of networks approaches social relationships from the viewpoint of *knots* and *links*. The knots are isolated actors within the networks, and the links are the relationships between the actors. There can be many forms of links between the actors. Research in various academic fields has shown that the social networks operate on many levels, from the families to the level of nations, and play a crucial role in solving social problems of organisation structure and degree to which the persons achieve their goals.



6. It is a strategy which nevertheless is questioned regarding its adequacy and effectiveness, because, despite its implementation, long-term unemployment remains and grows, at the same time extending to groups that until recently, at least, were not approached, despite the fact that already since the Treaty of Rome (1957) there was a clearly defined aim regarding the necessity of the “*accelerated elevation of the standard of living*” of European citizens, men and women.

7. The same goes for the Social Intervention Network for Young People, which was created by INE/GSEE-ADEDY and basic axis of services for young people, vocational orientation, consulting, encouraging, information on issues of unemployment, employment, education, training etc.

8. The year 2004 was the fifth year of RAXEN and was characterised by the implementation of a new strategic approach focusing on the determination of the needs of aim groups of the Observatory and continues through a comprehensive approach to meet these needs. Along with this procedure, RAXEN network was extended, through an open competition, and thus includes today 25 National Cooperation Organisations (NCO). In 2004 a special project of PHARE, which began in 2003 and was completed in 2004, contributed to this enlargement process. The NCO are organisations of various forms: In some countries they are research institutions or special organisations, while in other countries their are led by a non governmental organisation. Today, many of the 25 NCO are joint venture organisations - see the EUMC website at: <http://eumc.eu.int>

9. The term gender “partnership relationships” means every form of cooperation and joint activity which is formed and developed formally (with specific commitments, agreements, contracts, protocols etc) or informal (opportunistic actions or more permanent without the previously mentioned commitments) between organisations of the private and public sector - commercial or not - the aim of which is to tackle the socioeconomic exclusion

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of women and to strengthen and support them towards their integration and advancement in the social-productive process.

10. Social Gender is the total of socially defined gender roles. And the thought system and ideological reenactment that culturally define the male and female and created the identity of the gender (Gasouka, 1998 and 2004). The social gender system was introduced in scientific research by A. Oakley in 1972.

11. And it was confirmed by the recent comparative study carried out by Development Collaboration “ELANI” in the context of the project “Open Doors” regarding the social situation of women in Cyprus and the Spanish autonomous state of Melilla.

12. A truly traumatic experience is the way the Equality Offices in Greece operated during the 1990s. Wherever they were activated they were treated in an unacceptable way both on behalf of the head of directorates that obstructed their employees from responding to their programmes in every way, as well as the political leaderships of the ministries, which often operated them as areas to decommission officers that did not belong to the ruling party. The important effort to operate established Equality Offices, which were provided for in the relevant regulations of the services was not successful, mainly due to the attitude and notions of the male-dominant nature, which did not allow them to meet their goals.

13. The variety and complexity of actions, programmes etc implemented over the past few decades in the framework of the European Union, as well as the development and establishment of Women/Gender Studies imposed the formation of a common “language”, which to a great extent led to new terminology. This terminology contributes to the understanding of the terms and matters on a European level, despite the existing and not negligible difficulties emanating from the attribution of this “language” - which is based on English - in the other European dialects. However, it is an instrument

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serving the effort made by the Community to pass in a clear way the information regarding European policies from the circle of “insiders” to the disposal of all the citizens, men and women. For this reason, already since 1998 the Publications Service of the European Communities proceeded with the very important publication “*100 words on Equality - Vocabulary of terms related to the equality of women and men*” according to which: the glossary “*is addressed to persons forming political decisions, the members of the parliaments, both on a national and European level, the persons working in the specific sector, to all those who are just interested in these issues, to all women and to all men.*”



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