

The involvement of the «women and economy» Workshop at the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre : a synthesis.

Invited to participate in the round table of synthesis of the Seminar on Solidary Economy and to present the results of the workshop we organized, I made a brief report on the basis of the workshop «women and solidary economy» as well as the related activities, notably the work meeting we held there.

First a general comment is essential. The participants to our Workshop, who participated in Porto Alegre are satisfied of the progress obtained in the recognition of the thematic «gender and economy» and of their involvement in the opening and synthesis panels of the seminar on solidary economy. These involvements gave a visibility to the diversity and to the wealth of the solidary practices of women, that they wish to be better taken into account in the construction of a real solidary economy. Their innovations and their contributions to the collective wealth and to the transformation of the economic relations on the basis of the values of which women are traditionally the bearers, constitute an asset that has been proposed as one of the guidelines of the seminars to be held at the WSF 2004, and that will be shortly in preparation within the Pole.

To get the recognition of the solidary economy, a real stake for all participatants, we expressed the following proposals and strategies at the panel of synthesis :

- 1)Elaborate tools encouraging the recognition of the solidary economy.
- 2)Construct, strengthen and develop networks representative of the diversity of the components of the initiatives of the solidary economy.
- 3)Promote solidary economy to the civil society from local to global levels, what implies the construction of a movement with all the networks engaged in activities of solidary economy and anchored in the practices at the ground level as well as the establishment of some relations with other social and union movements having common values.
- 4)Construct real N/N, S/S, N/S, E/W cooperations between actors/actrices at the ground level and resources people.
- 5)Work towards the change of mentalities and the development of a gender analysis in solidary economy.

Information on some activities :

* The workshop : women and solidary economy

The workshop allowed six (6) participants – Madeleine Hersent of France, Rabia Abdelkrim of Sénégal, Angelica Alvarez of Chile, Nedda Angulo of Peru and Angela Miles and Cécile Sabourin of Canada – to express themselves about their concrete practices or their reflections towards the renewal of the economic concepts. In spite of very varied contexts and narrations of practices of different natures, some themes clearly come out. The main preoccupations mentioned several times in the interventions of the panel include the importance of personal development and the satisfaction of the aspirations, the expression of «renewed» relations to the markets, the necessity to change the relations of women to public authorities and the building of network considered necessary to encourage the reinforcement of initiatives.

The exchanges also permitted the mentioning of expectations with regards to intervening parties, technicians and professional accompanying solidary initiatives, notably with regards to respecting the wishes of root actors/actresses that want to keep control of their initiatives. However, acquiring a political formation has been mentioned as essential to the preservation of this control.

The 25 people who participated in the workshop were from Argentina, Brazil, France, Finland, United States, Senegal, Canada, Spain, Chile, Switzerland and Peru.

* * Diffusion of the process and the results of the Workshop.

I participated in the seminary organized jointly by the World March of Women and the Red of mujeres transformando the economia (REMTE) under the theme «Alternative proposals for another economy». Opportunity to present the process and the results of the workshop «women and economy», this involvement was a step in the establishment of closer contacts between two international processes having common aims to construct another internationalization. A collaboration in the respect of our respective processes appears very desirable.

* * * Work meetings.

Some work meetings punctuated this stay in Porto Alegre. In particular, we were seven (7) to exchange on the perspectives of follow-up of the Workshop. This very stimulating meeting was the opportunity to validate some proposals already identified for the follow-up process including the enhancement of privileged moments that are the continental and international meetings or forums.

A project of follow-up will be distributed on the forum for discussion and validation in a few weeks. I wish to remind that this project of the Workshop «women and economy» is part of the Socio-economy Workgroup project in preparation during spring 2003. We participated to the meetings of the Workgroup and of the networks of solidary economy.

A stage in the construction of a respectful solidary economy taking in account the solidary initiatives of women, this involvement in the WSF 2003 constitutes in our opinion a success on which we can build to go ahead. As announced earlier, we threw the idea to propose that the activities on «solidary economy» of the WSF 2004 in India chooses as one of its guidelines the enhancement of the innovating initiatives of women, important levers of transformation of the economic practices. To follow...

You have questions or comments? We are eager to read you.

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