

# Supporting the development of good social economy models

## A Report on Proposed Transnational Study Visits To Africa



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## **Introduction**

“Steps to Success” is a project, partially funded by the European Union, which began in September 2009. Free to participants, its aim is to guide and support people in the North West of England who are unemployed or whose jobs are under threat and help them improve their chances of finding employment, particularly in the ever growing Social Enterprise Sector. The project also aims to assist people who have a viable idea(s) for setting up a new Social Enterprise or Social Cooperative. It is with this latter aim in mind that visits to other European countries are also subsidised by the European Social Fund (ESF) so that participants can study their Social Enterprises and Cooperatives with a view to replicating their successes in the UK.

## **Chara Trust and the BAME Communities**

Chara Trust is also actively involved in the “Merseyside BME Legacy Project” which is aimed at supporting and helping the development of BME (now ‘BAME’ – Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) and Refugee Community organisations. They took the opportunity to build on this activity by creating and delivering a “Steps to Success” programme designed to complement the work being done by the BME Legacy team. While the aims of the project remain as stated above, participation is invited exclusively from members of the BAME Communities in Merseyside or others who are already involved in working closely with them.

## **Chara Trust Meets the Barka Foundation**

Between November 2010 and September 2011, twenty-eight Participants from Chara Trust have taken part, with others in four visits to Poland and one to Sweden. The CEO of Chara Trust, Godwin Bateren, attended on all five occasions and the “Steps to Success” consultant, John MacPhie, on three of them.

The primary objectives of these Study Visits were to:

- Gain an insight into the European Social Economy Sector and Social Integration Centres;
- Gain an understanding of how Social Cooperatives are developed, established and operated, to compare this with current practices in the UK and identify “best practice” models;
- Learn what can be achieved by visiting flourishing Social Economy businesses and Social Cooperative Centres;
- Inspire participants to have faith in their ideas and strengthen their resolve to create similar businesses for the benefit of the BAME Communities in Merseyside

Since meeting with them in November 2010 and learning first-hand about the Barka Foundation’s wonderful achievements in Poland and the UK, Godwin and his team are convinced that their work in creating Social Enterprises and Social Cooperatives can be replicated for the benefit of the disadvantaged BAME communities in Liverpool and has continued to forge and strengthen the links between Chara and Barka; and especially with Ewa Sadowska, CEO of the Barka Foundation UK.

In June 2011, Chara Trust facilitated a training event in Merseyside entitled “Women, Leadership, Involvement and Influencing Change”. Ewa was the keynote speaker. Her talk so inspired the attendees that the September visit to Poland was arranged exclusively for Chara Trust.

Participants were further privileged to meet with and learn directly from Barbara and Thomas Sadowska, Ewa's parents and the creators of the Barka Foundation.

### **Barka, Chara, the EU and Africa**

Of the twelve participants, eight are first-generation Africans, each closely involved with his or her Nation's Community Organisation in Merseyside as with the communities in their birthplace. It was during this visit that Thomas identified the synergy between the work Barka is so good at; the energy, vision and personal connections of the Chara delegation in general and of Godwin Bateren in particular; and the desire of the EU to promote the development of Social Economies in Africa.

With Poland currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, and Poznan born Dr Filip Maczmarek MEP having a particular interest in African humanitarian matters, two further ingredients were added to the mix. At very short notice, a meeting was held in Dr Maczmarek's office – in his absence since he was on a fact-finding tour of Kenya – to propose the idea of using this unique combination of talent, energy, resources, vision and desire to help create Social Economies in under-developed African countries for the benefit of the many disadvantaged communities there.

Adding further weight to the meeting were Mr Jerzy Mankowski, a close friend of Thomas but, more importantly, a successful businessman with over twenty years' experience of working in Cameroon; and Dr Killion Munyama a Zambian-born Polish citizen and Member of the Wielkopolskie Parliament.

The proposal was unanimously and enthusiastically accepted! It was further proposed that a fact-finding visit to the African countries represented in the group should be undertaken in December 2011 if possible and no later than February 2012. Mr Baiba Dhidha Mjidho was asked to carry out further research relating to the outcomes of the meeting and his Report is included as an Appendix to this one.

### **Fact-Finding Study Visit to Africa**

At the time of writing, Godwin Bateren has made favourable contact with potential partners or people of influence in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe and has drawn up the attached budget for Thomas to present to Dr Maczmarek. It is based on enabling a delegation of twelve people (six from Poland, six from the UK) to visit all of those countries during a two-week period.

It is proposed that Thomas leads the group while Godwin organises the administration and logistics. A detailed programme will be drafted for circulation and approval once the outcome of the funding bid is known.

## Annexe 'A'

The African Continent is endowed with extreme wealth in the form of natural resources, diverse weather conditions and creative peoples. Despite the abundance it contains, there still exists within it extreme levels of marginalisation and deprivation among the majority of its population compared to other developing economic regions.

It is calculated that 26% of African households have no access to electricity and 58% have no access to clean water. Only 31% have access to basic sanitation and only 18% of the irrigation potential is being exploited. This compares very badly with other developing economies where 90% have access to electricity, 80% have clean water and 90% have proper sanitation facilities.

The AU/NEPAD Strategy 2010-2015 states *“Development in Africa would be meaningless if it is not centred on the empowerment and wellbeing of the people of Africa especially the marginalised and vulnerable groups and communities. Africa should invest in its human resources and ensure equitable access of its most disadvantaged and marginalised groups to social services especially rural areas”*.

This is reinforced by the following passage in the same document *“ To address poverty and hunger across the continent, sustained agricultural growth must be a high priority of every African national and local government. Hunger undermines the health and people’s ability to study and work. It leaches away enterprise, intelligence and energy. Hunger and malnourishment devastate children, stunting their potential as adults and making it more likely that their offspring will have to endure the same lifelong cycle of deprivation and hunger.*

*The challenges of productivity and profitability are not easily addressed, however. The underdeveloped agricultural sector is characterised by poor farmers who are risk averse and do not have the resources to invest in new technologies. There is over-reliance on primary agriculture often practised on soils with low fertility and subject to environmental degradation. About 95% of African agriculture is rain fed, thus making food production vulnerable to adverse weather patterns.*

*Barriers to market access and penetration, such as poor market infrastructure and roads, lack of information, inadequate policies, insufficient extension services and lack of consistent market and phytosanitary standards increase the level of producer risk. With few resources to counter the risk, producers generally rely on traditional methods of production and risk mitigation strategies, such as small scale diversification, low cost input agriculture and marketing products at the farm-gate. Programmes such as Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Organisation (PAN-SPSO) and BecANet assist on a Continental basis.*

*Despite the Challenges facing Africans and African agriculture, the news is not all bad. During the past decade, Africa’s agrarian economies have been growing. GDP has averaged an increase of 6% per year and agricultural productivity has grown by 4-5% per year. Average poverty levels have dropped by about 6% and proportion of under-nourished Africans has declined from 36% to 32%”*.

The report goes on to say *“Unlocking the potential for growth in Africa’s greatest asset is its youth. Education directly affects the quality and magnitude of Africa’s social development among its youth and other participants alike. It has also been regarded as the most potent weapon available for Africans to expand economic growth, raise living standards, have greater freedoms of choice and compete in a global economy”*. This aspect has a correlation with agricultural performance.

### **Social Enterprise in the EU**

The Network of Social Enterprises URBACT II – Thematic Baseline Study October 2008 states that the widely accepted legal definition of Social Enterprises is *“organisations with an explicit aim to benefit community, initiated by a group of citizens and in which the material interest of capital investors is subject to limits. They place a high value on their independence and on economic risk-taking related to on-going socio-economic activity.”*

The same report states *“From the standpoint of macro-economy, social economy in Europe has a significant impact on both employment and economy in general. It is estimated that more than 11 million people are employed in the sector of social economy, i.e. 6.7% of EU employees. These figures are significantly higher in the 15 “old” member states, where approximately 7% of employees work in the sector of social economy, whereas this rate is significantly lower (i.e. 4.2%) in the 10 new member states”.*

Apart from creating employment and income, social enterprises have played a significant role in mobilising dormant “human capital” towards national economic growth. The range of engagement is highly diverse, from rehabilitation of infrastructure, preservation of the environment, rehabilitation of the marginalised in society, services to migrants and refugees, training and investment in both low- and high-technology. Social enterprises span all sectors.

### **Additional Reference Material**

While initially the project is rooted on the publication of the EESC “Opinion of the European Union on what role and perspectives for Africa’s social economy in development cooperation?” 2011/C 44/21) it was considered prudent to delve on wider views in the public domain interacting within or with Africa which would have relevance to the project. The following were reviewed and add value:

1. CAAD Pillar III; Framework for African Food Security (FAFS), March 2009
2. Communities and Local Government; Community Enterprise Strategic Framework, Feb. 2010
3. G8, L’Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security; L’Aquila Food Security initiative (AFSI), July 2009
4. G20, Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture, June 2011.
5. G20 Ministers of Agriculture Must focus on smallholder Farmers to Achieve Food Security and Prevent Food Price Volatility; Press statement, June 2011
6. Germany and Africa: A strategy Paper by the German Government.
7. Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015; (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction).
8. Joint Africa EU Strategy Action Plan 2011-2013
9. Nairobi Strategy – Enhanced Partnership to Eradicate Drought Emergencies; September 2011.
10. The Social Economy – Africa’s Response to the Global Crisis; ILO October 2009
11. Speech by Mr. Luca Jahier, 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly, 31 March 2010.
12. The AU/NEPAD African Action Plan 2010-2015, Advancing Regional and Continental Integration in Africa.
13. URBACT II – Thematic Network Baseline Study, Network of Social enterprises, October 2008

**Annexe 'B'**

	Days	Persons	Countries	Cost per person GBP£	Totals GBP£
<b>Visa Costs</b>		12	5	50	3,000
Transport to Warsaw airport		6		50	300
Transport to Liverpool airport		6		10	60
<b>Air Fares</b>		12		2,200	26,400
Accommodation	14	12		100	16,800
Internal Transport		12		100	1,200
Translator/Facilitator/Guide		2	5	100	1,000
					0
Meals	14	12	3	20	10,080
					0
Travel Insurance		12		50	600
Sub total					59,440
Administration, bookings, reports					5,900
Total					<b>65,340</b>
Contingency					4,660
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>					<b>70,000</b>
Cost per person per day					417
Notes					
Discounts and reductions may be possible - figures for initial planning purposes.					