

Spooning of Antonella Valmorbida speech on Tools Kit day

Friday 13th May – 14:00 – 17:00

Paris, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France



**Support to the local authorities in the field of decentralized cooperation-
The European Commission possible contributions-Citizen participation
and local governance at the centre of the action: methodologies,
instruments and best practices**

The topic of today is how to share with you our keys of success as I presented yesterday, in inappropriate term, as you will see now in a fundraising. The topic of this morning is this toolkit for actors of local governance and decentralized cooperation. You all are involved in local governance, as mayors, as civil servants, NGO's and you are dealing and engaging with local governance to promote initiatives of citizen participations, mainly also in your own local community, but also in territorial cooperation, which is the base of this decentralized cooperation. I will have few introduction slides. For the beginning I would like to go very quickly at the end of the presentation through the lists of all the founding (not all, because I said that ALDA is monitoring 400 projects) sources of founding on a regular basis, so I go through the list, but my point this morning in the next 10 minutes is not to show you the list of European Commission projects, because you can go to the Commission website and get the list. But what I want to share with you is why ALDA is successful in not only getting the fundraising, but as I would show you, in access resources.

As I know some of you in this table, I think we can further discuss about that.

The point is as a start, it is not for supporting our work an local governance and support decentralized cooperation both for CSO's and local authorities, those are some hints what to do, like you have problems in your own community, whether it is for your citizens or whatever it regards a more global scope you want to improve something. We had this discussion with the city of Gdansk, present in the room, interested in cooperation with Ukraine, so the question is always what to do? You want to do something, you have an idea, you have a plan, so what to do? The first point today is community approach. As we said yesterday, we cannot count only on the local government to mobilize resources because: 1. they are often (even the big municipalities that you think that have big budget) limited with budget and 2. local governments have restrictions, political stress on them and, as we spoked yesterday, only working together with local

governments you can create the possibility to lose all your partners, if you have a wile spoil system (the next mayor may cancel all the good things that you are doing with the previous one).

In any case local governments are part of our work without doubts, but with a strong connection with the CSO's and civil society. Usually ALDA is working, as it was discussed today and yesterday by UNDP and Platforma, with a community approach. Our projects are usually successful and have long term impact and they are community based. Other point that is very important is that we don't talk about the funding, I mean fundraising is a really inappropriate term. What we want to do at the end of the day is to do the famous action, EOP and what we have to be for, is not to find necessary the money to be transferred on our bank account but what is important is to find a resources for implementing this action, so getting out of this tremendously narrow concept of getting money. Out of these limitations things are much more productive, it means that working together is actually valorising all the possible resources which are around us, which are available in the community. That is valorising the people, this is valorising the working hours, not only for the sake of the EC, but this is for us. On that way, we valorise also and energy, knowledge, experience voluntary contribution, someone else contribution, because the point is not to get the funding, the point is to get this action done. What is another third point, which is how ALDA is actually moving on, is that actually (and this is I would say and I would agree around this table) is to understand what to do. There is an old slogan which is not 100% true, it is 2000% true, that there is more money around than good ideas to implement. This is the case both for the EU but also for the neighbourhood and Balkans.

So, the hard thing is to do the right thing and to make sure that our idea is valuable. Once you have a good thing to do, then your resources will come up.

That is not same thing here, I would say ideological or whatever, but let's take the example where ALDA is involved a local governance in the neighbourhood, both in the Eastern Partnership and in the Mediterranean area. I came back from Tunisia, or maybe we can also talk about more complicated country like Libya, where we not definitely working. There is money for local governance in Libya, my point is what to do in a country like Libya. Maybe Irene will explain us better, but you see that is the same in the Eastern partnership. In Ukraine do you want to work with citizen participation or to do that in Belarus? The point is not to get the right money, the point is to get right action which will solve a problem, or at least try to solve the problem. Starting from the first point, that the money is not the problem and that you have good idea and partners to implement them, then usually resources comes. The fourth point for discussion is that you are not working in a vacuum, because you are local authority. It means that for instance the City of Strasbourg, the City of Gdansk, the City of Kragujevac, The Pays Vichy-Auvergne or other can have good money, but the point is to ask yourself why European tax payers should support your

idea and your project. Why? So we are not working in a vacuum, so your own idea in Vichy, Chios, Skopje is placed in certain time and if you have your idea and you don't understand what is going on around, you cannot be intentionally funded, because you are completely out of the balloon. This is why you have, even if you are looking for support for your institution, you need to be ready to know what Europe is about. If you watch European money, you cannot do things without understanding what Europe is about. Indeed, when ALDA is providing consultancy is to fill up easier the application form, we always say that you cannot get the money out of these application forms if you don't have a clue of what is the European project. It is not an exercise of filling the boxes, it is an exercise of accompanying political projects. Without this, you don't have money. So my point is that if you do fundraising in an appropriate term, you need to work in you awareness of where you are on the map of Europe. Otherwise, you cannot work in field of fundraising of international projects. This is why we are involved so much in some networks, because if you are part of a network, which is accompanying you in this understanding. Of course, the municipalities don't have expertise in European policy, but they can be accompanied by networks that can help, which is also with ALDA.

We are part of Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership, Vladeja is co-chair of this civil society form for Eastern Partnership, because we cannot know everything about this countries. We need them accompanying us.

Another, fifth point is partnership! We cannot apply alone and this is why you always need a partner, you need a friend for that and not only to create list of partners for your project. You need to have the correct one. What is funding? As you saw, ALDA is working systematically and being dedicated. I am sorry but if you want to have money and resources for your work, this is what you have to do. Why European tax payers (since we are speaking about EU resources) should support your idea if that is not something particularly good, for the whole community. Let me give you an example. You have a lot of companies approaching ALDA, saying to us that they know that EC is supporting SME, please help us to get the money. We always say, but what do you want to do for global community? Because, Europe is giving resources for the global good, not for the fact that you as the owner will get more profit. That is not a point. Do you bring a new alternative source of, for instance, environmental energy? New resources for solving a social problem? The point is that support for SME as example is not to support private profit. It is globally speaking support. The fact is that we need to find resources, to get a lot of money from European Commission, it is a hard job for all of those actors and this is it. Why should it be different? So as on it, what is funding? A transfer to your bank account is a good start, second is the people expertise and knowledge. It is 100% true that the resources of ALDA are not the 4 mil EUR budget, that we have, but is all this people sitting in this room and more. Without this, we are nothing. Funding is networking, is to be in the right networks or the right place. This is to find partners, the good one,

the other one is credibility and quotation. If you are credible, if the people trust you, which is a long process. Why should people give you public money if you don't have reputation and credibility? So you have to work on it. This is fundraising. Fundraising is not filling up an application form. Filling up an application form is a tremendously boring bureaucracy exercise. That is not fundraising. The other point is good reporting and quality, that ALDA never compliance about the audit of the European Commission. Why should we? This is European public money. Why shall we complain? They come and we have to be ready for that. When we have an audit from European Commission and we have that constantly, then we try to leave this exercise as a capacity building exercise. So when you have a good audit, this is not the end of the world, you move on and this is a very good fundraising exercise. Good reporting is good money.

Before the future, the last point is governance and participation. If you are NGO, as one man show, why should it deserve public European money? If you own a NGO, you are not democratic to yourself.

You see how much it cost, in terms of energy and resources, but if you are not democratic in yourself and you are not participative, then you cannot do good fundraising. There is this impression that resources are limited, but that is not a case. To mobilize 100 EUR or 10000 EUR (and we have people in this room, who are working for 400 EUR, from the small municipalities as we discussed yesterday with our colleagues from Zavidovici, who said to me that is hard and I agree with him that is very hard, because it is not 200000 EUR contract) is not so easy job. We are talking about a small amount of money. Ok, this is hard and that is it. We need to be assertive. If you don't believe in it, why should other person believe in you? This is not bureaucratic work, where you have the salary every month. This is very hard and Marco is working like this for 10 years now. So we need to fight until the very last minute and we all know that. Well, when your application form is not accepted, it has failed, what do you do? You say "oh no, EC is terrible" and you say "all other sources of founding are terrible and they don't like us". But that is not fair! Come on, you move on, because the point is not the money of Renaissance foundation. The point is to get your work finished. After, you go to the next step, you have to find another way. So, you move on and you try other sources.

You need fundraising to get things done. So everything needs to be clear. Because, our problem, and we discussed with some of you, is that is very difficult to explain the value of what we are doing. But on the other hand, can we really get out of it? We need to explain why is good and are we doing so. My experience tells me that the best thing to do is to be clear. Sometimes, we collaborate, very complicated projects and I say at the end of the way, what do you want to do? And why should it work? When you have this answer it is half of the job done. Of course, then you have collaboration, but to be clear and coherence, how you want to get there is half the way.

We are talking about the LADDER. LADDER, like everything else that has been written on the page by Marco, five or six years he said this is LADDER. So that was the first thing, the last thing is that you have (when you want to apply for funding) a half list of what are you doing and that is these 400 resources. Then of course, your brilliant idea should be adapted to the good alliance, because as I say to the local government and civil society (sometimes they miss this connection) that they have their ID. If the found for them are not matching, also the European Commission guidelines are not matching. There is very critical professional exercise on the stand.

That is question, why your ID should fit in to their own objective? That is very complicated exercise, so I will stop here. Here you have a list of the projects. Some of you may know them well.

There is all the EU, all DG NEAR (and we have Ms. Irene today with us, I hope that my speech was complementary to yours) and all others, but I would say that for a start, this is how I would explain how ALDA is fundraising.