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Network for Transdisciplinary Research

Workshop „practical approaches to integration“ – Case 2

*Please read the case description and discuss the questions in your group.
Prepare a short presentation on your results.*

The project „Quo vadis Lavanttal?“ and its concomitant intervention research

„Quo vadis Lavanttal?“ is a process of regional development driven by regional entrepreneurs aiming at positioning and strategic orientation of Lavanttal, a rural region in the south of Austria (Carinthia) with a quite successful economic development in the last years. Sustainable development towards a region viable for the future in the initiator's perspective requires cooperation of the relevant regional actors and cannot be reduced to economic aspects. A concomitant intervention research focuses on discussed contents and social/organisational dynamics throughout the process. The research aims at supporting the process by continuous feedback on both dimensions, contents and process dynamics, and it provides scientific knowledge to aspects that turn out to be relevant.

The „Quo vadis Lavanttal?“-process (including scientific activity) is financed by Kärntner Wirtschaftsförderungs Fonds and Entwicklungsagentur Kärnten (both institutions of the Carinthian government).

The project runs from April 2008 to May 2009. Actually further steps are discussed.

Major steps in the „Quo vadis Lavanttal?“-process

Five events with residents and decision-making persons/groups in the region:

- “Nachhaltige Wirtschaft – Utopisches Konzept oder strategische Chance für KMU?” (“Sustainability in Economy? – Utopistic concept or strategical chance for small and middle sized enterprises?”): Discussion meeting with contributions from sustainability research (ca. 180 participants)
- “Jugend schafft Zukunft” (“Young people creating future”): A workshop where young people work out ideas for a sustainable future (ca. 100 participants)
- “Internationale Netzwerke mit Lavanttaler Wurzeln – Große Töchter / Große Söhne” (“International networks rooted in Lavanttal – Great daughters / Great sons”) : Discussion meeting (ca. 75 participants)
- „Zukunftskonferenz” (“Future-conference”): A workshop where decision making persons from different societal areas work out ideas for a sustainable future (ca. 70 participants)
- “Abend der Lavanttaler Wirtschaft” (“Evening of the Lavanttaler Wirtschaft”): A review of the „Quo vadis Lavanttal?“-process with contributions from the research team (ca. 320 participants)
- Presentation and discussion of the documentation of „Quo vadis Lavanttal?“-process (for the association only; ca. 20 participants)
- Presentation of the book „Zukunftsgestaltung als Prozess“ („Creating future as a process“) (ca. 100 participants)

Actors/groups of actors

- The association „Lavanttaler Wirtschaft“ (ca. 60 enterprises in the region) mainly represented by the executive and the board
- The nine mayors of the district Lavanttal
- The „Regionalmanagement Lavanttal“ (an institution for regional development) and the department for regional policy and planning at the Carinthian government
- Decision making actors from different societal systems (education, administration, public health ...)
- Residents
- The Kärntner Wirtschaftsförderungs Fonds and Entwicklungsagentur Kärnten (financiers of the project and institutions concerned with regional development in Carinthia)
- A process provider (organisation development/counselling; background: philosophy, intervention research)
- Scientific team: two researchers (sociology, regional development; philosophy, intervention research)

Interventions by the research team

- Participation in a two years long phase of project development
- Presentation and discussion of the research-design at a meeting of the association „Verein Lavanttaler Wirtschaft“ (after several talks with the board and the formal assignment)
- Qualitative interviews with selected actors
- Participating observation at all events
- Participation in several meetings of the association's board
- Feedback-Workshops for the board
- Composing a documentation to the five events
- Presentation of selected aspects at the event „Abend der Lavanttaler Wirtschaft“ (“Evening of the Lavanttaler Wirtschaft”)
- Organisation and composition of a book illustrating the process and elaborating selected aspects
- Presentation of the book „Zukunftsgestaltung als Prozess“ („Creating future as a process“)

Questions for group discussion

Please discuss the following questions in your group.

- *Where do you see a potential for /the necessity of integration?*
- *Where do you foresee barriers?*
- *What ideas do you have for reaching integration (practically ie with methods)?*