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The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion

Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment V

Deal with economic disadvantages faced by those discriminated against

Suggested Approach:

Create a small business development unit to help individuals and groups to initiate small scale enterprises and support them in the initial stages.

CEO Philadelphia Access Network

Country: USA

Background

- In 2010 the majority of residents of Philadelphia were Black, Latino, Asian and women. However only one quarter of the estimated 63,000 small businesses were owned by minorities.
- Despite minorities comprising the majority of the population they only generated 3 percent of total business revenues.
- Aware that the economy of Philadelphia was suffering from the inability to adequately include marginalized groups, in 2006 the mayor of Philadelphia signed an executive order aimed to transform the city's government as it related to minorities including women, disabled and would-be entrepreneurs.
- This executive order led to the drafting of a strategic plan aiming to change the entrepreneurial landscape of Philadelphia (2010).
- A study by the Urban League of Philadelphia underscored the challenges faced by Philadelphia citizens and how these are linked to unemployment and in turn too few business/entrepreneurship opportunities amongst minorities.
- The Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia felt that building networks between established business owners and up-and-coming minority business owners was a critical support mechanism needed in order to strengthen minority entrepreneurship.
- One of the efforts made to support minority entrepreneurs is the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Access Network project.

Goals

- The first goal of the strategic plan of the city of Philadelphia in 2010 was to increase by 25 percent the number of registered businesses owned by minority, women and disabled persons.
- The goal of the CEO Access Network of Greater Philadelphia is to drive

business and create economic opportunity for urban businesses and residents by building and strengthening a network between established and up-coming CEOs and business owners.

Method

- The CEO from an established large business will be partnered with a minority CEO for the purpose of providing counseling, guidance and networking opportunities.
- The partnered CEOs will interact both within the CEO Access Network (i.e. meetings and events) as well as outside the formal Access Network gatherings.
- The pairings between CEOs are expected to last 1 year as established by the network program, but it is anticipated that these will last beyond the Access Network program and become enduring relationships.
- The Access Network will formally meet three to four times per year for a breakfast meeting.
- The formal Access Network meetings are expected to last no more than 90 Minutes.
- Each Access Meeting will feature a guest speaker who will cover a topic of interest.
- Access meetings may also include brief presentations by member CEOs on business opportunities.

Impact

- Since the CEO access network has recently started operations it is not yet possible to know what the impact of this enterprise has been.

Enabling conditions

- Willingness by established CEOs and by minority CEOs to join forces in a network.
- Support by the local government to nurture the network relationship.
- Good definition of relevant groups within society to ensure their participation and prevent this effort from becoming a further dividing rather that unifying enterprise.

References/contacts for farther information

- http://www.telrosecorp.com/new_031309.html
- http://www.limaconsulting.com/newsroom.aspx
- See document entitled "Inclusion works for all Philadelphians Mayor Michael A. Nutter Feb. 8, 2010" available through Google search as a direct Pdf downloadable
- See also Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce: http://www.greaterphilachamber.com/Membership.aspx

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