



**Conference
ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?
PARADIGM REVIEW BY CSOs AS
DEVELOPMENT ACTORS**

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Challenging paradigms from the South and the East

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Good afternoon! Thank you very much for inviting me here. I will try to be provocative.

I will speak about three approaches:

1. a conceptual approach;
2. what we see in Brazil;
3. and how we approach these questions in the World Social Forum (WSF)

ad 1) Conceptual Approach

It is very important to see clearly a distinction between development and economic growth. Behind each approach is a completely different logic. The logic of growth does not include the necessary distribution of richness. The logic of development is really about the growing of humanization, of the potentiality of each human being. This is completely different.

If we follow the logic of economic growth, we are caught in the logic of productivity and of consumerism, where people are seen as consumers, not as citizens. This is a short term logic, not a long term logic. It is the logic of competition - nature is used, not protected; the main goal – and even condition - is profit; corruption is seen as necessary means.

The logic of development is completely different: cooperation instead of competition; another conception of richness (not monetary); equality; real democracy; human needs and not profit; nature is respected and not used; and power is used to serve not to dominate.

ad 2) Brazil: How do we look at these questions in Brazil?

The government, the system and institutions are looking for growth. Brazil is scandalously unequal, but everything is directed towards economic growth and how to reach monetary richness. Those who do not agree with this, do not speak about development. They use another word – they use the word change. We must change things and enter into another logic: the logic of cooperation etc (as mentioned before). In reality it means to overcome the economic system, the capitalistic system of economic growth. We do not know, how to call the new system. We do not want to call it socialist, we speak about post-capitalism. We are building it. Civil society is very important in this process as a new actor.

Civil society was also crucial for the initiation of the World Social Forum (WSF). The WSF is a space to make possible for civil society organizations to discuss how to overcome the capitalistic system. We understand civil society as NGOs, but also as social movements, unions. The importance of this new actor is in the ability to work in a different way than parties and governments; it is able to work in diversity, that is respecting different types of actions, perspectives. It uses networks, not pyramids. Cooperation is very important – not to compete for money for projects.

Change is necessary also in the North and not only in the structures, but also in personal behavior and the way we see and act.

ad 3) World Social Forum (WSF)

We in the WSF try to learn from each other; we speak not only about development but also about change; we speak about personal change; we learn to decide by consensus, not by vote; we speak about new political practices, new visions, new ways of working politically; we learn to build a union among the diverse civil society.

It is important to multiply the occasions and the ways of working together, because...

... another world is possible – but more than this, it is absolutely necessary - because of justice, and absolutely urgent - because of the ecological problems. Thank you.

Minutes: Jana Krajčírřiková, Ecumenical Academy Prague