

The current crisis: Consequences, survival strategies, demands to donors and politicians

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“The Future of Civil Society Development Organisations”

10th – 11th November 2009
Kolpinghaus Wien

The current crisis

Characteristics

1. The current crisis is a kind of generalisation of decades of regional crisis' like the debt crisis of developing countries since seventies, the regional financial crisis' since nineties (Mexico, Argentina, South-East Asia, Russia...), crisis of transition (Central and East Europe). Only after the impact of the crisis in USA and EU it is perceived as a problem.
2. Main cause of the current crisis is the dominance of neoliberal economy and politics (Washington consensus) performed by IMF, WB and G8 in the interest of the strong economies and the transnational companies. Especially the deregulation of financial transactions serving for the profit maximization of the rich demonstrated the destructive potential of this ideology.
3. Synchronism of the crisis' in different sectors (finance, economy, food, energy, climate, employment and other social impacts..) shows the systemic nature of the current crisis and that is why only a systemic approach can bring a sustainable solution.

Preview

4. Recently the end of crisis is celebrated after some of the big economic players make anew profits. Because there is hardly a trace of systemic changes around, this recovery of the profiteers is not of long term importance. We can rather expect prolonged deep problems, like some of prominent independent think tanks predict (like www.europe2020.org; www.trendresearch.com)

World after the crisis?

5. Deep roots of the crisis lay in the contradictions of capitalist economy and related political, cultural and social systems. The main question for the future is if it is possible to tame (domesticate) globally capitalism as it succeeded partly in post war welfare social market economy. The attempts to do this are quite half-hearted. The alternative option for democratic socialism is as well not well established. Barbarism (fascism, dictatorship, failing of social coherence) is one of the real possibilities.
6. Civil society in its variety (including independent NGOs, trade unions, churches, independent academic sphere, social movements, independent media) is the source of innovative and creative potential to redefine the concept of development, formulate the political goals and exercise the necessary pressure to reach them.
7. If we speak about the necessity of a paradigm shift or of change of the patterns of the western civilisation, there is no other way how to develop positive alternatives than in the broad dialogue of civil society on national, regional and global level.

Survival strategies for CSOs

8. We observe a renaissance of the acceptance of the state role if it acts in favour of private interests (with the promising to save employment) and in the same time there is a pressure to cut social expenses, development assistance and to privatise public services. Important is to reverse this disequilibrium in favour of social and development coherence.
9. The offer of financing of CSOs without predefined political options which enables independent acting is diminishing. The right to this kind of financing from public sources has to be reclaimed. The CSOs can do that if they demonstrate their legitimacy by competence, by public support and by credible representation of the interest of the poor.
10. Sustainability and independency of CSOs can be reached by diversification of resources, by solidarity (instead of prevailing competition) and by rooting in the alternative economics.

Demands to donors and politicians

The demands matter only if there is a power behind

11. It can be a power of arguments. Often the CSOs have more experiences and better analysis and better concepts for solutions than government officials or parliamentarians. It is possible to present the arguments in media, to lobby, to find allies.
12. It can be a power of public pressure performed through campaigns and other actions or by a high number of members or supporters.
13. For substantial demands broad coalitions are necessary – nowadays „all people of good will“ are needed to prevent the disaster.
14. The content of concrete demands has to be first negotiated within the CSOs stakeholders with the special respect to the demands of the Southern partners. Only a clear positions of basic consensus can be assert jointly with a chance to breakthrough.