Partnerskap - från princip till praktik : En jämförande studie i hur partnerskapsprincipen tolkats i praktiken i ett regionalt strukturfondsprogram i Sverige och i Finland

Abstract

The partnership principle is one of four basic principles that governs work with the EU Structural Funds. The principle is supposed to foster a greater involvement of different regional actors in the regional development. This involvement in turn is expected to improve the conditions for growth in the region. This is an analysis of the interpretation of the partnership principle in two regions that belonged to a Regional Objective during the years 1995-1999; Gävleborg in Sweden and South Ostrobothnia in Finland. This is studied through an examination of the actors involved in each different phase of the programme. The analysis is based on qualitative interviews performed in both regions. Differences between the countries regarding their regional governance explain some of the different solutions to administrate the programme. Traditions and policies of governance also influenced how the programme was to be implemented. The national rules and regulations and the traditional practices on both national and regional level how to deal with issues regarding development policy largely affected participation in the Regional Objective programme and also determined to a great extent which actors got a role in the implementation of the programme. The programmes in both regions were to be dominated by the regional actors that already previously had a given position in the regional development sphere. Even though the partnership principle especially strives for the involvement of the private and the third sector in the programme the public sector actors had by far the largest part; they created most projects, financed these and also decided on the EU-financing. The co-operation in the partnership forums mostly only concerned the public authorities and the dialogue with the other sectors of society was laconic.

The analysis also points at some obstacles that serve as explanations why some, especially smaller actors, found it difficult to participate; the work concerning the Structural Funds developed to a large degree into a world of its own and to be able to take part in this inner circle a great deal of specialist knowledge of terminology and of the regulations of the Funds was required. This distanced potential actors from participating in the programme. The greatest differences concerning participation between the two regions were that the municipalities in Gävleborg in Sweden had a much larger role in the programme in comparison with the sub-regions in Finland; in South Ostrobothnia, on the other hand, a larger number of different organisations, not necessarily public ones, were involved in the creating of projects.

Keywords

Structural Funds
partnership
partnership principle
regional development
regional government
participation

Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited

Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information