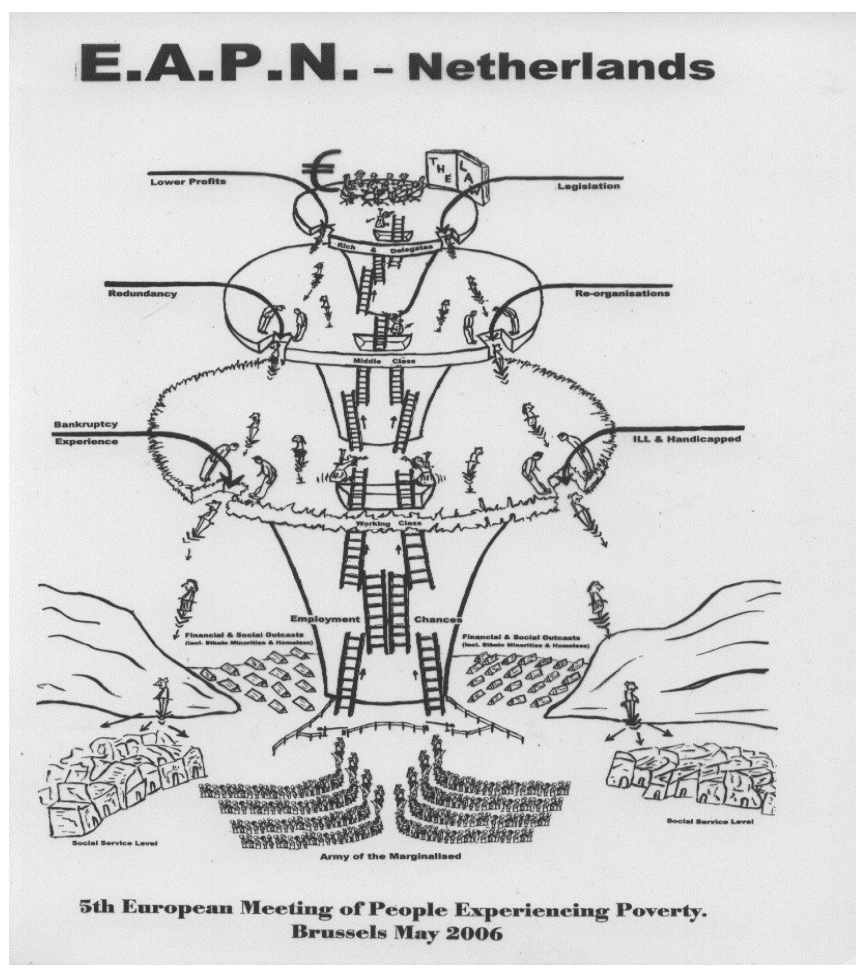




Annual report 2013 English summary



5th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty.
Brussels May 2006

Annual Report 2013

Introduction

In recent years, it was extremely difficult to continue working as network. It had everything to do with a lack of funding. Despite many attempts to raise money we succeeded only with great difficulty to continue to do the work. Thanks to the efforts of the volunteers it was possible to fulfill a program somewhat corresponding with what we would like.

Thanks to the support we received from the EAPN Fund in 2013, we were able to work more the way as we would like to. So different work shops were organized, which in addition to the issues of poverty and exclusion also created attention for specific target groups. Think about people with mental disabilities, the elderly or people in poverty.

In 2013 a number of new organizations joined the network. Not only new organizations in the sense of beforehand not in sight, but also and especially working with new audiences. Because that is one of the major pitfalls of poverty. It is not a question of one target group, but there are lot of audiences.

In 2012 we were invited to participate in an international project based on life long learning. Learning from each other. Based on the Grundtvig Programme of the European Union . For us, a whole new experience , which started in 2013 with a visit from delegations from Hungary, Austria and Italy to the Netherlands.

At the end of the year the project " Together seeking for a change" was accepted and granted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. One of the characteristics of this project is that we faced new partners. Besides Stimulansz (a professional organization supporting local councils and local – or regional Departments of Social Assistance) , also one of the new network organizations joined. The Black Hole, the self-organization of people with mental disabilities is taking part.

As in previous years, this year two representatives of EAPN NL were invited to participate in the government delegation for the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion , the annual EU conference that replaced the European Round Table.

The European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (PEP) got a new suit in 2013 . It was no longer the major international conference in Palais d' Egmont, but became a large tent camp on the square in front of the European Parliament. Since more and more delegations wanted to be more visible, this is the outcome. After the evaluation it will be clear how this new visibility will be followed up. The Dutch delegation felt it a step backwards.

In November, the second part of a project which involves 31 European countries and different organizations, the Minimum Income European Network, was started.

The two colleagues that we delegated to the Exco , respective the European Union Inclusion Strategy Group, had as usual, their hands full with all the European work. The General Assembly is organized in Serbia this year. It was the first GA new style, which took place in Belgrade.

2013, the year that we used to restart.

Work shops

"Mental health and poverty , isolation or participation"

The first workshop we organized was "Mental health and poverty, isolation or participation?". The workshop is organized in conjunction with the Black Hole, a major self-organization for people with mental disabilities. The partnership started at a national meeting within the national Grundtvig program. We met and looked if and how we could co operate. The work shop is the first product of this co operation. The workshop was well attended . Notably also by people from the mental health side. Their experience, expertise was very evident in the discussions. In addition, we also used this workshop to give our foreign guests, in the context of the ICE project (Increasing Citizenship and Participation in Europe) the possibility to get acquainted by our way of working. Thanks to the efforts of three professional interpreters it was for the guests a very precious day, which offered them a lot of insight into the mental health issues . In view of the fact they obviously have to deal with in their own country, comparing was relatively easy.

"Elderly, Loneliness & Poverty"

Secondly, we had, in collaboration with the Open House in Biddinghuizen the workshop "Elderly, Loneliness and Poverty". About twenty older people, especially women, took part in this work shop. After a hesitant start, they soon came to clear statements. In particular, the isolation, the loneliness, was clearly defined. To many this was worse than not be able to make ends meet. The importance of the Open House was therefore repeatedly emphasized. At the end the request was put on the table to have more of this kind of meetings.

People experiencing poverty meeting

The meeting of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion was held in Lelystad. In addition to the organizations in the network, new organizations were invited to participate. To meet with EAPN NL and see whether co operation is possible. In view of the fact that the workshop took place on a Saturday, we were pleasantly surprised that five new organizations participated. It was a dynamic session. The agreement to have a second meeting in 2014 and see how we can work together, has ensured that the network is alive.

Training course

In November we organized a two day training course, in which a group of persons from the 'old' organizations and from the 'new' organizations took part. The participants were acquainted with new working methods we have gained within the ICE project.

In this way we were able to test whether this approach for our Dutch organizations is manageable and useful, and we wanted to open a way to give new knowledge. Plus, we had the opportunity for the two volunteers participating in the ICE project to go into practice with the group. This way, they also grow in the process.

Talks and visits

According to the plan to expand with new organizations, we had several meetings. This led to co operation as to new member organizations.

Unfortunately the youth organization against mobbing was not able to respond and during our attempts to build something, they decided to end the work.

We were also present when Inclusion Netherlands started its new network, mainly involved with the interest and actions of people with disabilities. Inclusion is now also member of the EAPN network, as well as another interest group for people with mental limitations, the Gerbera Foundation.

European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty

In 2013, a delegation of 2 women and 2 men, coming from four different Dutch cities, four different organizations and all belonging to the financial weak / working poor went to the European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty. This unique European conference, which was organized by the President of the European Union and EAPN Ireland, with support from the European Commission and the Belgian Government, was on 19 and 20 May, held in Brussels.

ICE project

The European Meetings are an important platform for the voices of the poor. Those voices are seldom heard. It is a way to bring forward their requests and their solutions. They can talk about the problems they struggle with on a daily basis. Since 2001, the national networks developed and implemented in practice the involvement of the experts and their organizations. This was done in compliance with all particularities of each national network, but especially by looking at the capabilities of the people themselves. Each Member State has different experiences and different methodologies: groups, lobbying mechanisms, participation in working groups established by local, regional or national governments, demonstrations and so on.

Four national networks, which are members of EAPN and a major Italian partner decided to go one step further and presented a project within the framework of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme, in which they use the opportunity to work together and to develop collective practices

EMIN

The Minimum Income European Network is a two-year project, commissioned by the European Commission, in which 31 European countries (27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, Serbia and FYROM) participate alongside several European organizations and institutions.

The aim is to get a clear focus on the minimum income in the several EU Members States. For our country social assistance, state pension and various allowances are the combined minimum income scheme.

Given the changes which are in development, it is not so easy to give an overview without these changes, even though they are future-orientated.

Exco

This year was also the year of change in the European board of EAPN. The network is growing larger and larger. Organizations asked for a different way of organizing. 2013 was a year to try new things. Many questions about the new form were raised in the meetings. Because not everything is immediately clear.

That is a part of an organizational change. But there was also the reality that EAPN Europe had to deal with cuts in the budget. This has its effect on the changes.

There probably will be no time to be given for a try out for the proposed changes. In addition, it is also difficult and hard work to maintain the PEP meetings. EAPN will seek ways for raising funds to become more financially independent.

Time seems to turn against us, but the strength to stand up and go for it, next to our shared vision is and remains enormous. This is also reflected in the atmosphere of the meetings of the Exco.

The European Union Inclusion Strategy Group

The European Union Inclusion Strategy Group has met 3 times in 2013 and has been involved in the discussion of the National Reform Plans, active youth inclusion, employment workshops , - active inclusion - structural, political development, poverty and social exclusion .

Our delegate participated in :

- May 2013 Demographic Forum on 6 and 7 May in Brussels , promoting work for the next 20 years and a panel discussion on the economic recession as to the new challenges for social policy in Europe.
- The Population Europe Event , recession and social vulnerability in Europe: insights from demography .
- May 2013 EAPN Learning Forum : strengthen our base and the impact of our action - an area for members - co-organized with Dignity International in Estonia, with visits , workshops, and how we can connect and strengthen in the fight against poverty and other social exclusion in the country, Europe and throughout the world.
- June 2013 : Alter Summit in Athens / Greece : " fight against poverty and the resistance over the dismantling of the welfare state in Europe Social Rights for All", including a speech " Voices from the Ground". People who experience poverty and social exclusion, together with the European leagues and the Greek EAPN colleagues have demonstrated for social rights for all .

- October 2013 : invitation to speak about the reality of poverty in the Netherlands, and the reactivation of the governments and the EU. The meeting was held in the European Parliament and organized by the NL Socialist MEP Dennis de Jong.
- December 2013 : EAPN EU Workout inventory of capacity building needs and expertise by the Task Force Training and Capacity Building in Brussels .
- December 2013 : Training on informative and communication technologies in Leuven , Belgium

Frontpage

On the front is the project positioned made by the delegation that went to the PEP 2006. It shows how people fall out of the paid work system and how they are unable to return into the system. Because the ladder has been taken away!
People therefore remain trapped in poverty, unemployment and hopelessness. EAPN NL works, along with colleague organizations and many others to end the degradation of our society, of our social security and our dignity.

Article 1 of the German Constitution:
"The dignity of man is untouchable."

EAPN Netherlands sees this article as the basis of a decent society where everyone's place.