

**Building Participation of People Experiencing Poverty in EAPN  
Reflection Meetings 2009  
3-4 April 2009**

**Rationale**

As a platform of organisations committed to the participation of people experiencing poverty and exclusion, EAPN has decided at its last General Assembly to organize in 2009 a Large Reflection Meeting, followed by two smaller meetings and look at how best to develop a participatory strategy for EAPN and its members. As the Work Programme 2009 states:

“The aim in this work programme is also to strengthen EAPN’s work on participation. It is proposed that rather than having a mainstreaming group in the Executive on participation we would create one large reflection meeting to bring together all the present work EAPN is doing in relation to the topic of participation. This reflection meeting should include people from the present Mainstreaming group on participation, National Coordinators for the European Meetings and people with direct experience of poverty.

This reflection will have two elements:

- 1) How to further strengthen the direct participation of people experiencing poverty in the National Networks?
- 2) How to ensure more people with direct experience of poverty participate in the work of EAPN (Europe)?

Two small reflection meetings with a similar balance of participants will meet to follow up the reflections from the large reflection event and to make proposals to the Executive on how to move forward on these two questions. We will use these meetings to also ‘experiment’ with language diversity in our meetings. French and English interpretation will be provided but we will not expect that all the participants at the meeting are able to work in these languages: we will experiment with informal interpretation and with pauses to allow for reflections in different language groups. This will of course impact on the way the agendas for the meetings are planned but it should provide some valuable learning.”

The Participation and Poverty Mainstreaming Group of the Executive Committee has followed throughout the years all EAPN’s work on participation. In this Group, NNs have:

- defined what participation meant for EAPN,
- exchanged good practices of involving people experiencing poverty in their policy and advocacy work;
- followed the impact of European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty on national anti-poverty policies;
- contributed to the development of a publication of participation case studies.

After all this progress, it is time for EAPN to develop a more concrete strategy of involving people experiencing poverty in its work and the work of its national networks.

**Aim and Objectives**

The main aim of the meetings is to draw on the experiences of EAPN members, together with people experiencing poverty themselves and look at two questions:

- 1) How to further strengthen the direct participation of people experiencing poverty in the National Networks?

2) How to ensure more people with direct experience of poverty participate in the work of EAPN (Europe)?

In both these questions, the impact of participation will also be explored.

Specific objectives include:

1. Create a space for sharing NN experiences and approaches to building participation of people experiencing poverty (use some case studies from NNs)
2. Gather the perspectives of people experiencing poverty, national coordinators for the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty and Executive Committee members related to participation in national and European context
3. Identify elements and steps that could be part of a strategy of building a participative EAPN
4. Develop a strategy and feedback in smaller follow-up groups

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Experiences of NNs in approaching participation
- Reflection on EAPN participative practices by people experiencing poverty themselves
- Elements of an EAPN participation strategy
- A reflection group to follow-up the work

### **Timeframe**

The meeting will last two days and it will be organized on 3-4 April 2009.

### **Language**

English/French interpretation will be provided. All delegations will include one member of EXCO or National Coordinator for the European Meetings to support people experiencing poverty throughout the meeting.

### **Participants**

This meeting will bring delegations of national networks of EAPN, including one person experiencing poverty who has been involved in developing participation in their respective National Networks and by preference the EXCO member. In case the EXCO member is not available or she is not the person responsible for developing participation of people experiencing poverty in the National Network, she could be replaced by the National Coordinator for the European Meetings who have been working on participation of people experiencing poverty in their National Networks. Preference is given to the EXCO member to make it easier to treat this subject further on also during the EXCO meetings.

### **Venue**

As this meeting will experiment with working in more languages, the event will be held in Brussels. The follow-up reflection groups could be hosted by NNs.

### **Organizing team and methodology**

In preparation for the event, the national delegations will be asked to think about the two questions and bring a short presentation of the experience of the National Networks and people experiencing poverty on developing participation in NNs.

The meeting will present some of the participation case studies from NNs and will give enough time to small group discussions. Emphasis will be put on participants' experiences.

The organizing team will collect key points that come out of the small group discussions.

One person from the administrative team will be responsible for all the technical and logistics coordination. Financial matters will be coordinated with the finance officer.

For any questions, please contact [Tanya.basarab@eapn.eu](mailto:Tanya.basarab@eapn.eu).

## Proposed programme

### Day 1.

1<sup>st</sup> session – introduction of participants and ice-breaking

2<sup>nd</sup> session – introduction of the programme and the way the meeting will be held: focus on 3 questions

- presentation of the case studies publication
- small group discussion and questions so far

lunch

3<sup>rd</sup> session

- presentation of 3 case studies in groups (focusing on participation in policy-making, participation in running the organisation and representing the organization and the impact of each)
- small group discussions

Questions and Clarifications

4<sup>th</sup> session

- doing a swot analysis of participation of people experiencing poverty in NNs and in EAPN (what are the challenges and successes)
- presentation of the Swot

Questions and Clarifications

End of day reflections

Dinner

### Day 2.

1<sup>st</sup> session

- revisiting the Swot analysis and discussion
- small group discussion: taking the conclusion of the manual and the previous days and discussing elements:
  - o participation in policy-making and impact
  - o participation in running the organisation and impact
  - o representing the organisation and impact

Questions and Clarifications

2<sup>nd</sup> session

How can EAPN do it better?

How can NNs do it better?

- transforming negative into objectives
- proposing elements for participation strategy

Questions and Clarifications

Lunch

3<sup>rd</sup> session (continuation of the previous session)

How can NNs do it better?

How can EAPN do it better?

- transforming negative into objectives

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- proposing elements for participation strategy

Questions and Clarifications

4<sup>th</sup> session

Conclusion

Proposal of candidates for the follow-up reflection group (decision will be taken by the Bureau)

Evaluation, follow-up and closing