

***Through social innovation to
better social inclusion in the EU***

Proposals for Policy Task Forces 2015

Objective of the Task Force

- *To increase knowledge/understanding base of EAPN members on the existing forms of social innovation policy and practices, as well as the opportunities and risks they involve, in order to enable them to*
 - *engage pro-actively in debate on social innovation*
 - *apply more effectively for social innovation, funding and develop innovative practices in their social inclusion services*
 - *advocate for a better institutional and policy framework, which will be more favorable for the promotion of better as well as innovative services, that better suit needs of variety of groups at risk of poverty and exclusion*

Justification

- *Across the EU and candidate countries there is worsening of living conditions in many aspects and for many groups of population*
- *classic tools of tackling the poverty and social exclusion have been increasingly undermined by austerity measures.*
- *Social innovation has become important in the policy framework of the EU, partly as a response to the austerity drive, and the interest in restricting public debt and services through increased privatization and liberalization of social services, as well as an awareness that new alternatives to old solutions (both market and government) are needed, and that grass-roots organizations are well placed to develop such approaches.*

Definition of social innovation

- Widely disputed
- Common one: *“new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations”* (Murray et al., 2010).
- *Innovative approaches are present in all sectors (public, private or civil society), in a variety of areas (from business to environmental protection to employment and social inclusion), and usually they emerge in between the sectors as well.*

Why and how TF on social innovation

- *Anti-poverty NGOs need to understand the threats and opportunities offered by this new approach, and particularly see how the new frame can be used to support NGO initiatives at grass-root level.*
- *Social economy is one of the areas of opportunity in which there is the potential for improving services and supporting grass-root NGO services through social innovation, due to the new forms of linking economic activities and social objectives.*
- *EAPN, however, will be very concerned to ensure that new support in this area is not used to undermine the large-scale commitment of the state to ensure social inclusion.*
- *Unlike social reforms that include major changes of laws, institutions and policies, social innovations are initially small initiatives that can have “contagious effects”, and therefore, they are much more available to social actors and can potentially be spread and initiate changes on larger scale.*

Main output/s

- *1) a Briefing on social innovation – looking at several definitions and how it is treated in the broader policy agenda, as well as highlighting opportunities and threats for anti-poverty NGOs; (2) Development of criteria / checklist for good practice in social innovation;*
- *(3) Presentation of 10 good practices, collected from the EAPN membership.*

Membership of Task Force

- TF leader – Marija Babovic WAPN Serbia with support of Amana Ferro
- 5 additional full members – 4 representatives of National Networks, 1 from European organization.
- *Selection criteria include: expertise in social policy, grass root service development, advocacy and ideally already some experience in social innovation funding and projects on the ground. During the selection process, geographical and gender balance will be observed as much as possible, with an aim also to include representatives from countries with different types of welfare states/regimes. It would be desirable for the task force to include one person with direct experience of poverty.*

Working method and Timeline for the work of the Task Force

- *The Task Force would last approximately six months and will meet three times. It will be led by Marija Babovic (Serbia) with support from the EAPN Secretariat. The meetings will include:*
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- *First meeting (April 2015)*
- *Clarifying the scope of the task force and agreeing deliverables; decide the structure and main content of the Briefing and methodology for developing it; first exchange on the criteria / checklist; deciding timeline, deliverables, next meetings, and responsibilities.*
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- *Second meeting (July 2015)*
- *Presentation and discussion of the draft Briefing; finalising the checklist / criteria; develop a template for example collection.*
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- *Third meeting (October 2015)*
- *Formal approval of the final Briefing and checklist; discussion on collected best practices and decision on how they will be presented; preparation for the presentation to the EU ISG; discussion on a dissemination strategy for the deliverables.*

Indicative proposal re follow up

- *Based on Briefing and mapping of best practices, the work of the task force could be mainstreamed into the EU ISG, in the direction of preparing an advocacy/lobbying campaign on a better institutional and policy framework for innovative social inclusion practices.*