



Through social innovation to better social inclusion in the EU

EAPN Task Force on Social Innovation

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Chair



EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK
RÉSEAU EUROPÉEN DES ASSOCIATIONS
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE



What is EAPN?

- **European Network of organisations committed to fighting poverty and social exclusion, on behalf of, and with, people who experience them.**
 - Founded in 1990, comprising 31 National Networks + 18 European Organisations in membership
 - Actively engaging with Europe 2020 and the European Semester, the Social Open Method of Coordination, the European Employment Strategy, and Cohesion Policy
 - Committed to promoting and fostering the direct and active participation of people experiencing poverty
 - Funded by the European Commission through the EaSI programme.



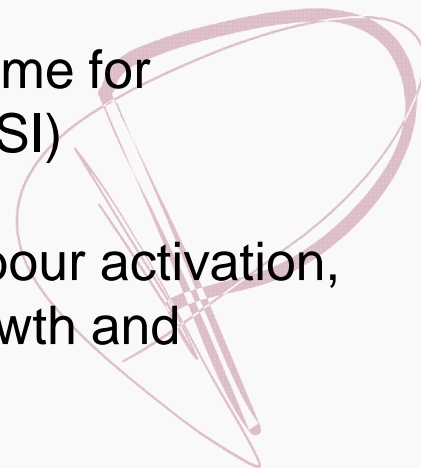
Introduction

- **The mandate of EAPN's Social Innovation Task Force :**
 - provide better knowledge and understanding of social innovation
 - open the debate about the opportunities and the risks offered by social innovation as it is currently being interpreted
 - identify a variety of innovative practices and facilitate the exchange of experience
 - build EAPN's capacity to: better engage in debates on social innovation; be better placed to apply for funding; be more innovative in their service provision; be better advocates for a better institutional and policy environment
- **Task Force Members:** Serbia, Slovakia, Latvia, Spain, Romania, Hungary
- **Process:** May – December 2015; 3 meetings, one broad policy group discussion + mapping of good practices in all EAPN membership.



Social Innovation in the EU policy framework

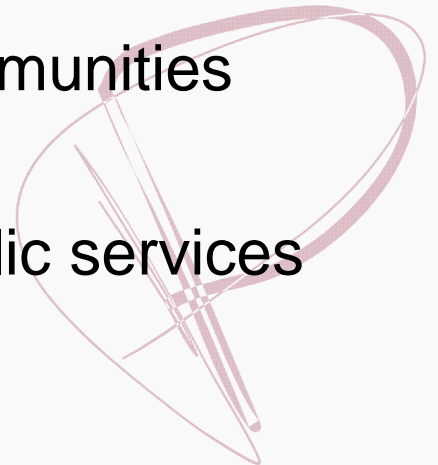
- Great importance for the EU
- Driven by crisis, stagnation and increased social problems
- *Social innovation ‘means developing new ideas, services and models to better address social issues. It invites input from public and private actors, including civil society, to improve social services’.*
- Financing instrument: The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)
- Approach focused on business and labour activation, consistent with overall EU focus on growth and competitiveness.



EAPN definition of Social Innovation



- Contributes to combating poverty and improving social inclusion
- Features novelty (in relative terms) in:
 - Content – **what** is being provided
 - Method – **how** is the need satisfied
 - Actors and agencies – **who** delivers it
- Promotes sustainable change
- Is driven by social needs
- Empowers both people and communities
- Is a bottom-up process
- Supports, without replacing, public services



Social Innovation - Opportunities



- Financial support for experimentation and innovation
- Opportunity to build new relations, partnerships
- Improved service delivery and responding to needs
- New perspectives, frontiers – ‘thinking outside of the box’
- Empowerment of NGOs as innovators
- Strengthening and empowering EAPN as a whole
- Raising visibility of actions and issues otherwise overlooked.





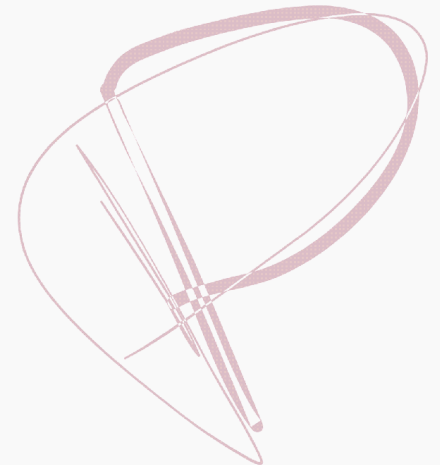
Risks

- Undermines the role of the State as universal service provider
- Justification for austerity cuts, transferring the burden of service provision to CSOs
- If unmonitored, can lead to the privatization of services, decrease of quality, unaffordability
- May favour targeted over universal services
- Justification for shift from core to project funding for NGOs
- Breeds competitiveness, instead of solidarity and cooperation, among CSOs



Threats

- Lack of political or financial support, lack of legislative context for social economy
- Delayed efficiency – results of innovations are not immediate
- Opposition of vested interests – traditional service providers
- Old mindsets and resistance to change
- Poor follow-up – one-off initiatives, no durable effects
- Unsuccessful up-scaling, adopting without adapting





Checklist

1. **Effectively reducing poverty and improving social inclusion.**
2. **Types and relativity of novelty** (new need, new product or service, new methodologies, and/or new actors).
3. **Empowering users**, featuring **bottom-up approach** and **complete ownership**.
4. **Strengthening communities**, increase social capital, transform social relations.
5. **Empowering CSOs**, raising the reputation and influence of civil society
6. **Sustainability** is privileged over one-off interventions with no follow-up
7. **Transferability / adaptability**, bringing impact beyond the single case where it was generated.
8. **Accountability**, with appropriate internal and external evaluation, end users' feedback mechanisms, and impact assessment before and after.
9. **Needs to contribute to positive changes in attitudes, mindsets, and values**, decreasing the social distance between groups, while fostering solidarity and cohesion.
10. **Complementing, without, universal public services**, not substituting comprehensive and universal State service provision.



Thank you for your attention!

For more information, visit

www.eapn.eu

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket, is shown from the chest up. He is holding a white and yellow megaphone to his mouth and shouting. His mouth is covered with a piece of silver duct tape. The background is a plain, light color.

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