

# Get Involved through peer mentoring 'involve'

Partners meeting

Hannover

August 22-25<sup>th</sup> 2012



# **Volunteering: a political strategy and /or an active citizenship approach**

Critical presentation on  
definitions-terms , aims and  
activation



# Getting involved as volunteer :A State choice

- Governments are increasingly **aware of the social and political value of volunteering**, and many are actively supporting and cultivating volunteer engagement to address a **broad range of social objectives** :
- to help the less well-off **adapt to new and changing situations**
- to promote sustainable economic and social development
- **Social entrepreneurship and social innovation**, putting **social value** creation at the heart of **their mission** in order to **improve individuals' and communities' lives and increase their w**



# Policy approach is towards social entrepreneurship and innovation

- A term like social entrepreneurship tends to overlap with terms such as social economy, third sector, non-profit sector, social enterprise and social entrepreneur, some of which are also ill-defined and overlapping

[SMEs, E 186 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION © OECD 2010]



# types of organisations

- The social economy includes organisations such as cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations.
- active in certain fields such as social protection, social services, health, banking, insurance, agricultural production, consumer affairs, associative work, etc.

[http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/IMG/pdf/2007\\_08\\_20\\_EN\\_charte-2.pdf](http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/IMG/pdf/2007_08_20_EN_charte-2.pdf)



# Distinctive specific features

- The primacy of the individual and the social objective over capital
- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic control by the membership
- The combination of the interests of members/users and/or the general interest
- The defence and application of the principle of solidarity and responsibility
- Autonomous management and independence from public authorities
- The essential surplus is used to carry out sustainable development objectives, services of interest to members and the general interest.



# An undeniable reality

[http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/IMG/pdf/2007\\_08\\_20\\_EN\\_charte-2.pdf](http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/IMG/pdf/2007_08_20_EN_charte-2.pdf)

- The social economy:
- ® is founded on the principles of solidarity and individual involvement in a **process of active citizenship**
- ® generates high-quality jobs and a **better quality of life**, and offers a framework suited to new forms of enterprise and work
- ® plays an important role in **local development** and **social cohesion**
- ® is **socially responsible**
- ® is a factor of **democracy**
- ® contributes to the stability and **pluralism** of **economic markets**
- ® corresponds to the European Union's priorities and strategic objectives: social cohesion,
- **full employment and the fight against poverty**, participat
- **sustainable development**,...



[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/investment/social\\_investment\\_funds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/investment/social_investment_funds_en.htm)

- Social businesses combine a **social, ethical or environmental** mission with the entrepreneurial flair and innovation of a **business perspective**. They can face some specific challenges in getting investments. The Commission announced in the Single Market Act work to explore how private investment funds might help, so that investors and social businesses better reap the benefits of the single market. This includes ensuring there are no unintended barriers within EU fund rules to the efficient channeling of investments to **social businesses**.



# Questions on social entrepreneurship [SMEs,

*ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION © OECD 2010, P.190]*

- 1. Is social entrepreneurship an individual or a collective phenomenon?
- 2. Is social entrepreneurship shaped by social value rather than economic value?
- 3. Is social entrepreneurship located only in the non-profit sector, or can it also be found in the for-profit and public sectors?
- 4. Does social entrepreneurship aim to achieve incremental social impacts, or is it meant to produce radical social transformations only?
- 5. Is social entrepreneurship a local phenomenon or a global one?

# ‘value’ as focus

- “What distinguishes social entrepreneurship from a commercial entrepreneurship is the predominant focus on value creation rather than on value appropriation. ... Although individuals may have multiple goals, organizations need clarity of purpose in order to engage with their environment in coherent ways. They need to choose either value creation or value appropriation as their dominant focus” (Santos, 2009, p. 13)

# Getting volunteer in an active citizenship approach : active participation

The meaning of **participation** :

- made up by all other forms of citizen *participation* which citizens may exercise in various roles. This means, more precisely, all forms of *participation* in the management of public/collective services. Here two further forms can be distinguished:
- a. *participation* in the management of the public/collective services which represent all those contexts where citizens can participate in the definition of the quality of the services themselves (public services, child care facilities, schools – and interested associations – environmental associations).
- b. *participation* in the democratic management of society (neighbourhood activities, citizens' groups) with a particular focus on immigrants and young associations as well as on gender issues.
- In all these contexts, citizens **can be involved in participatory processes in their roles** as parents, residents of their districts, migrants, young people, students etc. On this third level, the area of *participation* overlaps with the area of social integration.
- *Participation* of this third kind can be distinguished into two forms:
- a long-term, institutionalised process as opposed to
- purpose-based and temporary *participation*.

# Citizenship approaches

In seeking to understand the roots of citizenship three traditions are often identified: liberal, communitarian and civil republican (Jochum et al., 2005; Kerr, 2005).

Details of the three traditions are outlined below:

- Liberal/Individualistic – Citizenship is a status. It is a function of the political realm to protect and maximise individual interests. Individuals are urged to take up their civic responsibilities, rather than to rely on governments.
- **Communitarian – Citizenship is a practice.** It arises from a sense of belonging to a community, and wishing to work with others to achieve the common good. An individual's identity is produced through its relations with others – creating a sense of group identity

## 2}

- **Civil republican – Citizenship** is a practice. It is concerned with developing an overarching sense of civic identity. It is shaped by a common public culture and a sense of belonging to a particular nation state. In particular it desires to create a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the state. It is sometimes referred to as 'civic morality'

## According to the Active Citizenship Centre (<http://www.active-citizen.org.uk/active.asp>):

- Active citizenship can be defined as citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life... Citizenship can be more than putting a cross in elections every few years. Individuals are capable of creating a better society through a direct and positive contribution to their communities.

## [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active\\_citizenship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_citizenship)

- Active citizenship can be seen as an articulation of the debate over rights versus responsibilities.. The implication is that an active citizen is one who fulfills both their rights and responsibilities in a balanced way.

# Volunteering

- There is mounting evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigate violent conflict at all stages and that it even fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations.
- By contributing to building trust, volunteer action diminishes the tensions that give rise to conflict and can also contribute to conflict resolution.
- It can also create common purpose in the aftermath of war. Indeed, people bound together through active participation and cooperation at local level are in a better position to resolve differences in non-confrontational ways.
- Source: State of the World Volunteerism Report, 2011

# Points for discussion

- **Volunteers are not only** youth they can be of any age; senior citizen; people from middle class; etc. Further, civic engagement can be facilitated through the platforms
- **Many NGOs** are recruiting volunteers but they are treated as cheap labour. Whether they are paid or not they should be recognized. **Thus, there is a need to have a legitimate framework for volunteering.**
- **The debate about volunteering and active citizenship should be looked at in the context of accountability from the various stakeholder's especially from the government and civil society.**
- The space for volunteering should not wither away from the society..  
[http://www.vsointernational.org/Images/volunteering-and-active-citizenship\\_tcm76-36149.pdf](http://www.vsointernational.org/Images/volunteering-and-active-citizenship_tcm76-36149.pdf)

# Statements for discussion

- It is undisputed that Active Citizenship can contribute to better development and bring in more effectiveness in development process and reach out to the poorest and excluded communities.
- “Undisputedly, one can argue that the state has its duty towards citizens. Citizens have their responsibility to society and contribute to change.”

**[http://www.vsointernational.org/Images/volunteering-and-active-citizenship\\_tcm76-36149.pdf](http://www.vsointernational.org/Images/volunteering-and-active-citizenship_tcm76-36149.pdf)**

- The spirit of volunteerism is increasingly gaining recognition in many countries around the world.
- There are appropriate spaces created for civic action and active citizenship, further funding allocations are made, management are systems created and there is a higher recognition and value system for volunteering.
- To enhance volunteerism these aspects are very crucial and only a robust national policy on volunteering backed with government willingness and resources will create legitimacy to volunteerism.

# Crucial questions on active citizenship

[ inspired by

[http://www.inca.org.uk/pdf/Active\\_citizenship\\_background\\_paper.pdf](http://www.inca.org.uk/pdf/Active_citizenship_background_paper.pdf)

for example:

- Is it primarily about rights and individual self-interest, or is it about responsibilities in relation to a community or nation state, or is it a combination of these?
- Does it emphasise self-reliance (for example discouragement of reliance on state support), or does it emphasise the state as provider, or does it emphasise citizens and the state as partners?
- Does it encourage volunteering/giving freely of one's time, or is the emphasis on expanding democratic participation through involvement in the political process, or is it a combination of these?

# Active citizen –volunteer

- A particular concern is that the term active citizenship is often misunderstood, or assumed to mean volunteering or community service.
- This confusion is partly fuelled by a misunderstanding of the purposes of the 'community involvement'
- Billig explains that, whilst community service activities are usually associated with civic engagement and caring or altruism, service-learning has more to do with 'learning critical thinking skills, problem solving and other cognitive or academic outcomes' (Billig, 2004).

# Being learner as active citizens means to participate in :

- Programmes that provide opportunities for learners to develop active citizenship skills and attributes, as follows:
- **-Awareness of issues broader than those related to the individual** – whether at community, national, international or global level (citizenship education, in particular political literacy, is a fundamental foundation for active citizenship).
- **Desire to address and act upon community**, national, international or global issues and genuine interest in being involved, having influence or taking action to promote change
- **- Ability to make judgments and decisions about matters of community**, national or international importance, based on an ability to balance evidence (informed decision-making) and using this ability to take action in an informed manner (knowing how to be effective).

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- Taking direct peaceful action in the organisation, community or in a national or international arena with a view to improving services, affecting change, campaigning or acting as an advocate for others.
- · Combining with others to address commonly defined problems and to improve services, affect change or enhance the political process.
- · Reflecting upon decisions, actions and work undertaken, in order to understand, assess and review their quality and outcomes.

## Sources :

- [http://www.inca.org.uk/pdf/Active\\_citizenship\\_background\\_paper.pdf](http://www.inca.org.uk/pdf/Active_citizenship_background_paper.pdf) page 19

# Active citizen ...

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You make a living by **what you get**. You  
make a life by **what you give**.

Winston Churchill

# Thank you for your attention

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