



## **Mobilizing social innovation to combat poverty in Europe: call for promising social innovation initiatives**

*The European FP7 research project ImPRovE searches for promising examples of social innovation concerned with combatting poverty. Therefore we encourage social entrepreneurs, creative civil society organisations, engaged professionals and policy makers to share their knowledge on interesting, successful or controversial cases of social innovation in their region. The ImPRovE-consortium will analyse no less than 30 cases of social innovation to identify under what conditions they can complement, strengthen or modify welfare state policies.*

### **About ImPRovE**

ImPRovE (Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation; <http://improve-research.eu>) is a European collaborative research project that aims to advance evidence-based policy making in the area of poverty, inequality, social policy and social innovation in Europe. The project is carried out by the ImPRovE-consortium and financed by the European Commission. It runs from March 2012 until February 2016. ImPRovE takes as its starting point the long standstill in poverty reduction and the emergence of local practices and policies that offer novel strategies to address and combat poverty, i.e. local and regional forms of social innovation.

### **What do we mean with social innovation?**

The project is concerned with social innovation as a strategy to address and combat poverty and social exclusion. For the purpose of our project, social innovation refers to localized practices that empower socially excluded individuals and groups to satisfy basic social needs for which they find no adequate solution in the market or established welfare policies. Social innovation is an alternative paradigm for social intervention driven by civil society organisations, social entrepreneurs and/or local governments. It involves processes of social learning, collective action and awareness raising. We do not regard social innovation as isolated projects or practices but as processes that are part of the on-going transformation of the diverse European welfare states.

In order to identify actions and policies as socially innovative we use three basic criteria:

- Firstly, socially innovative policies and actions engage in “doing things differently” by adopting new (at least in their particular context) arrangements, procedures, instruments and/or methods;
- Secondly, social innovation is driven by civil society organisations, social entrepreneurs and/or local governments;

- Thirdly, social innovation has a bottom-linked character: Local social innovative initiatives are organized by local actors that are familiar with the daily life experience and social needs of citizens. At the same time these actors forge linkages with institutions beyond the local level.

### **Share your knowledge!**

The ImPRovE-consortium will carry out 30 case studies of localized social innovative initiatives. A well informed and balanced selection of cases is indispensable and therefore we ask you - socially innovative civil society organisations, professionals, researchers, policy makers and activists - to share your knowledge on social innovation initiatives in your region. You would help the research project by answering the following questions via the e-mail addresses below.

- What is the name of the initiative?
- Who is/are the leading organization(s) and/or network(s)? Who are the main partners? Who is the relevant contact person?
- Where is the socially innovative initiative located or initiated: country/region/municipality?
- Why is this an interesting case?
- What has been the biggest challenge for the initiative so far?/ What are the challenges for a durable future?

Your response broadens our overview on social innovative strategies against poverty in Europe and the challenges for the actors involved. Please submit your information before October 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. (We still welcome your suggestions after this date, but these can only be fed into the research process at a later stage.) You will be informed about the selection of cases in the following weeks. Our research team will support the selected projects with an in-depth analysis and publicity in European policy circles and the academic world.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

The ImPRovE-consortium.

### **Contact**

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