



## EAPN Proposals on Shadow Principals on Active Inclusion

For Discussion at the EAPN Seminar on Active Inclusion in Paris (June 2008)

### EAPN Principles on Active Inclusion: An Integrated strategy to deliver fundamental rights

#### Overarching Principles

- 1) Respect for human dignity
- 2) Freedom from discrimination
- 3) Respect for individual needs and preferences
- 4) Holistic, multidimensional and integrated
- 5) Participatory and inclusive

#### Principles on Adequate Minimum Income

- 1) Adequacy for a dignified life
- 2) De-coupled from the obligation to take any paid work
- 3) Easily understood, transparent and effective
- 4) Continuous and sustainable
- 5) Making work attractive – a positive balance between adequate income and wages

#### Principles on decent work and participation fully in society

- 1) Positive social activation based on human rights
- 2) Individualised, tailored and multidimensional
- 3) Supporting life long learning for life and not just work
- 4) Long term support to sustainable, quality employment
- 5) Sustainable and adapted work respectful of people's needs
- 6) Joined up integrated delivery based on partnership

#### Principles on affordable, quality Services of General Interest, particularly social services

- 1) Respectful of human dignity, security and fundamental rights
- 2) Affordable, accessible and reaching the target group
- 3) Personalised, holistic and sustainable
- 4) Participative and empowering
- 5) Accountable, transparent community proximity services
- 6) Investing in quality employment conditions for social services

## Active Inclusion: An integrated strategy based on fundamental human rights

EAPN has contributed to the debate on Active Inclusion through both rounds of the current consultation. The present document focuses specifically on the principals which EAPN affirm must guide the EU's active inclusion approach, if it is to contribute to the delivery of the Common Objectives of the Open Method of Coordination in social protection and social inclusion 2006<sup>1</sup> and to support the overarching objective of social inclusion and the eradication of poverty. In the annex a supporting document is provided which sets out EAPN's current overarching concerns and essential political pre-requisites for ensuring the effectiveness of this approach, in the current political context.

The primary overarching principle must be the affirmation of an integrated approach, based on fundamental human rights. This must underline the right of all to a life free of poverty, to social inclusion and active participation as part of a cohesive society, based on solidarity. The language and focus of the Active Inclusion principals need to stress specifically the rights to an:

- adequate income for a dignified life.
- affordable, quality services of general interest, including social services.
- a decent job and to participate fully in society

The strategy should demonstrate visibly and explicitly how these rights are to be activated and guaranteed by the EU and member states.

### Overarching Principals.

#### 1. Respect for human dignity

The starting point is the respect for human dignity which is enshrined in the EU Treaty and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This must be based on the recognition that all human beings are intrinsically worthy and deserve unconditional respect, regardless of age, gender, social background or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. This respect is owed to every individual by the mere fact that he or she is a "member of the human family" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) 1948, Preamble). This intrinsic worthiness is widely recognized by international law as the source of human rights. A respect for human dignity means a recognition that people should never be treated solely as means, but as ends in themselves. People should not be instrumentalized nor viewed solely in terms of their economic value. These rights are now made legally binding under the EU Lisbon Treaty through the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as through the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe, as well as the international covenants drawn up by the United Nations. The right to live a life free of poverty is a key fundamental right.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Common Objective

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

## 2. Freedom from Discrimination

In essence, any denial of fundamental human rights to a dignified life is discrimination. Two European Community Directives, the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Framework Directive, define a set of principles that offer everyone in the EU a common minimum level of legal protection against discrimination based on a more narrow interpretation of discrimination. The directives prevent people in the European Union from being discriminated against on grounds of race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, primarily in the workplace. This comes in addition to the numerous laws adopted in the past 30 years to fight discrimination based on sex and to allow for equal treatment between women and men in the workplace. The current proposal over the extension of these rights to other groups and to access to goods and services is currently being debated. However, more action is needed – namely the commitment to the EU to embed the fundamental right of freedom from discrimination in accessing all human rights, for all groups, in all policies, thus delivering EU and Member State commitments to the International conventions and charters to which they have signed up.

## 3. Respect for individual needs and preferences

Based on human rights, an effective strategy must focus on people's individual needs and preferences, rather than an instrumentalist approach geared to their use to the economy. It will recognize the specific obstacles to the realization of these individual human rights – particularly the right to an adequate income, quality services geared to their needs and decent employment, underpinned by their right to participate as an equal and respected individual in society. This respect must differentiate between a person's changing needs through the life-course (childhood, youth, adults, older people, those with families) but recognize the very different needs and obstacles faced by specific groups– immigrants (including undocumented migrants); ethnic, black and religious minorities; women; lone parents; those discriminated against because of religion or sexual orientation; people with disabilities and health difficulties, but also those who suffer long-term unemployment, poverty wages and/or live in poverty.

## 4. Holistic, multidimensional and integrated

Poverty and social exclusion are multidimensional phenomena. It is not possible to separate a person's needs according to administrative divisions. People need and have a right to - a decent house, a job, access to effective health and education services as well as sufficient income to afford to eat and drink properly, heat and light their homes, provide support for their families and participate fully in a normal social life and with their local communities. This is the particular added value of the Active Inclusion approach. However it will only represent progress if the pillars are viewed as an integrated package, and interpreted broadly. Otherwise Active inclusion runs the danger of instrumentalizing the poor and social excluded focusing overly on their "*value to the economy*" through strong activation measures, rather than the recognition of human worth. For EAPN, a key pre-requisite is to view the 3 pillars as a triangle, with access to adequate income and quality services at the base, providing the essential pre-conditions for effective activation approaches which support people to get decent employment and to participate more fully in their communities. Without a guaranteed income which can cover basic costs and access to key

services like housing, health and education, as well as support services – like child and dependent care, work can often not be a realistic option, without causing great hardship. Providing people with security – based on a predictable income and access to services, will enable people to make long-term plans for the future, including employment.

## 5. Participatory and Inclusive

The model that the EU is promoting based on the participatory democracy clauses of the Lisbon Treaty as well on the commitments to good governance in the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion, continually confirm the importance of active participation of all stakeholders in the governance process. But more emphasis must be given to the recognition that an integrated Active Inclusion approach will only be successful if the people most affected are directly engaged in the process of developing the measures, and particularly in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Putting individual rights and needs at the centre means also putting participation and empowerment of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and the NGO's in which they participate, at the centre of the strategy. Participation, in this sense, is not an "add-on" but an essential part of effective policy development and delivery.

### Right to an adequate minimum income for a dignified life

The Principals must focus clearly on the goal of ensuring adequate income for a dignified life and represent significant progress from the 92 Recommendations. EAPN can only underline the crucial role and importance of this commitment in the light of worsening inflation and prices. EAPN agree that the wording of the 92 may remain valid, encompassing the notion of "right" and human dignity, but the problem lies in measurement and implementation, and a broader commitment to participation in society. Stronger instruments are needed if this right is to be made a reality.

#### Key Principals

##### 1. Adequacy for a dignified life

The definition of adequacy could be drawn from the definition used in the 92 Regulation "*sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity*". However a stronger reference is made in the Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2002, which refers to "*an adequate income and resources to live in human dignity ...with sufficient income to lead a life with dignity and to participate in society as full members*". It is clear that the actual level and measurement through indicators need to be relative, adapted to the circumstances of each member state or even at regional/local level, reflecting the different living standards and aspirations of a "*normal dignified life*". However, given that the poverty threshold is already a relative indicator – EAPN is of the view that a commitment could be made that the levels set should be at least at the level of the at-risk of poverty threshold (ie 60% of median household income).

The different needs of household groupings and target groups however, must also be recognized – A specific challenge is to ensure that the specific household needs of people and specific target groups are adequately covered – for example that lone parents have adequate income to cover childcare/transport costs as well as school-related costs including trips/excursions, that migrants have sufficient income to cover cost of language classes/training, that disabled or long-term sick have sufficient to cover adaptations, support services, transport..

Equally important, will be the establishment of an adequate participatory governance process to develop the appropriate levels of adequacy<sup>3</sup>. This process could help to ensure that minimum income levels are regularly up-dated related to the movements of prices and services. Another proposal could be the establishment of an independent index-linked budget standard of adequate income levels linked to the regular assessment -reality check- involving a focus group methodology<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. De-coupled from the obligation to take any paid work, irrespective of its economic rewards or its social and personal costs

Increasingly minimum income, where it is available, is linked to the obligation to take any paid work, irrespective of its economic rewards or its social and personal costs. If the right to adequate income is to be sustainable, then it needs to be de-coupled from this obligation to take any paid work and be more respectful of the individual's ability to determine what options are going to improve their life chances. This does not mean that there is no expectation of work, indeed the right to **work** must be underlined, but the right to an **adequate income** should not depend on this. EAPN is strongly of the view that to make the right to adequate income subject to a narrow definition of "*active availability to work*", according the narrowest of "*Make Work Pay*" strategies, is both an attack on human rights and ineffective in terms of supporting people into sustainable work or on the road to inclusion. The starting assumption needs to be that adequate income is a human right and that most people want and have the right to decent work. A more organic, developmental, and indeed optimistic approach about human nature, is likely to be more effective. This has implications for the implementation of services, where so-called one-stop shops often have a contradictory role in supposedly "*supporting and ensuring adequate income*" at the same times as "*sanctioning and reducing benefits*" because of failure to get work. This is only likely to lead to distrust and negative communication between the employment services and the people they are most trying to help, as well as resulting in lower benefits because unjust sanctions are applied.

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<sup>3</sup> See approach proposed by the EAPN Ireland Social Standards project [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie). The project proposed a detailed process involving regional focus groups involving people experiencing poverty and with reasonable incomes, to establish adequacy in terms of key criteria for sufficient income to cover agreed basic services and products, adapted to the national/regional context ( Food, Housing, Basic Utilities, Transport, Education, Health, Clothes, Social and Cultural Life and participation..).

<sup>4</sup> See EAPN UK Shadow NAP Inclusion Report 2006-8.

### 3. Easily understood, transparent and effective

A theoretical right to adequate income is not going to challenge poverty and social exclusion. Most Member States have major problems in take-up of existing benefits, due to the opaqueness and complexity of the entangled mesh of different types of income support schemes, and often the stigmatization that goes with this. Any system needs to give priority to simplifying the system, making the process and outcomes transparent and putting a premium on the means to ensure that the strategy is effective at reaching those who need it and takes them out of poverty. In the view of many EAPN networks, universal benefits, such as non-means tested child benefits etc, are often the most successful in reaching those who need them, as it targets the delivery of benefits to the main carer – usually the women, and is accessible by all. Links with the tax system, eg negative tax can more productively be used to channel the necessary redistribution.

The right to benefit should be clearly displayed and form the basis of the service- client relationship. Credibility will also be enhanced by adequate, transparent and independent monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the services in delivering adequate income to those who need it and how far they have impacted on poverty.

### 4. Continuous and sustainable

A major problem for most people in poverty is the unpredictability of income support. This may be due to the implementation of sanctions and other levers, but also because of the realities of a precarious labour market where they may be moving from low-paid, insecure work to benefits and back., often losing in-kind benefits, or waiting for “benefits” to be re-started or to kick in. This leads to untold hardship, debt and discouragement. People in poverty need to be able to plan their expenditure effectively, and as a consequence – their lives. Otherwise the effort can often appear not worth it. This means that steps should be taken to ensure that no abrupt changes (particularly reductions) are made to their income levels, without sufficient warning. Particular attention has to be made to “transitions” from different types of benefit eg social assistance, to working credit and insurance-based contributory based income replacement schemes to ensure that “traps” are avoided. A bottom-up approach, affirming people’s rights to benefits and based on people’s needs, which analyses real pathways and their consequences together with those affected, would clarify the pitfalls and gaps and help to engender the necessary security for people to plan their lives.

### 5. Making Work Attractive – a positive hierarchy between adequate income and wages

The main focus of “*make work pay*” has been to use the reduction or sanctioning of benefits as a lever to create an “*incentive*” to accept often low-paid, low-quality jobs. The use of benefits as a “carrot and stick”, is generally de-humanising, causes untold hardships and often counterproductive.<sup>5</sup> It is unlikely to encourage people to plan and positively approach the search for sustainable work. A more effective approach is to use adequate social income, including minimum income, as a positive tool to guarantee the security needed for activation. Benefits should be used as a positive incentive to face the extra costs and risk when resuming a job after

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<sup>5</sup> See Reports of People Experiencing Poverty Meeting 2006,7 and 8 and EAPN Book: Voices from the Poverty Line: Jobs and Unemployment in an enlarged EU.

unemployment. The link between adequate income and minimum wage needs to be rights-focused and more effective, creating a progressive hierarchy starting from an adequate minimum income, as defined and measured above, and ensuring that the Minimum Wage is set at a significant level above this. This in the end will be a more successful approach than subsidies to employers or tax credits for low wages, in tackling working poverty and ensuring that work is worthwhile.

## Right to decent work and to participate fully in society

The right to work, needs to be reinforced, rather than the obligation in “partnership with people on the poverty line”. A social vision that starts from the assumption that people want to work, to be useful and to contribute to their families and their communities, should inform policies on decent work and support for participation in society. People are only asking that they should be valued and treated with dignity as “human beings” with legitimate needs, hopes fears and aspirations who need support along the road to participating in society.

### Key Principals

#### 1. Positive social activation based on human rights<sup>6</sup>

Activation needs to be built on a hopeful vision of people and the society in which we want to live. The focus of activation policies should be to develop a “*pathway*” to social inclusion and to “*full participation in society*”<sup>7</sup> which hopefully can include access to employment but does not only focus on this objective. The aim of activation is social inclusion and professional mobility by empowering people to improve their competencies and skills, physical and mental health, to establish social contacts, improve their feeling of participation and citizenship. Support and accompaniment to social inclusion is emphasized, not obligations. Such an approach to activation is an investment in human, social, psychological and cultural resources, and sees labour market integration as one element to promoting social integration in a wider sense. This approach is urgently needed to counter the current strategies aimed at “*creaming*” applicants who are seen as easiest to place and dividing people into “*those considered apt for work and those not*”. This must be recognized as a deeply divisive and socially unjust policy leading to a new type of segregation and two-tier society , which replaces the old division of “*deserving and undeserving poor*” with “*employable and unemployable*”, discarding people in one moment as being without use to society.

#### 2. Individualised, tailored and multidimensional

The starting point takes the whole person into consideration and acknowledges the diversity of age, experience etc ie ethnic or cultural background, household status, gender, age, disabilities or

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<sup>6</sup> Most of this section is adapted from the EAPN Positive Activation Criteria paper – October 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2002

health status. It analyses the specific barriers they may face to inclusion or to overcome discrimination and provides solutions, particularly in the provision of vital flanking services – like affordable childcare, help with transport, specific training..... The strategy needs to be broad, taking the multi-complexity of problems into consideration and offering tailored, but multidimensional intervention for individual needs and expectations. Such a social activation approach can therefore be the most effective for engaging with the most excluded groups with the most serious problems, who are furthest away from the job market, including alcoholics and drug addicts, people with health or psychological problems, single mothers with little support, immigrants with poor language skills, and to tackle difficulties over income, housing, loneliness, low social skills, communication, language, training qualifications etc.

The social activation approach explicitly recognizes the person's rights and the necessity to value and respect their contribution and treat them with dignity, as fellow human beings. It builds on the strengths, reinforcing existing competences and helps the person work to overcome weaknesses. Always at the fore must be the determination to respect the person and their sensibilities aiming to design a strategy which reflects their own preferences, wishes and priorities. For example in the case of helping access to childcare - ensuring that people can access good quality, affordable local services and helping to overcome the suspicion and lack of confidence in these services that many people in poverty feel.

### 3. Supporting life-long learning for life not just work!

The focus of the social activation approach is developmental aiming to improve personal, social and vocational skills and competencies, enabling further social integration as well as steps in to work. This means that vocational training is only seen in the overall continuum of competence and confidence building. The priority is to build confidence, gradually reinforce competences and move on from a place of security and achievement to more focused vocational training and education. Equally important will be a specific education on rights<sup>8</sup>, particularly in new democracies where awareness of rights is very low, and assumptions about the role of the state in relationship to the individual is constantly evolving. Once in work, skills development is crucial to help particularly relatively unskilled workers progress to better jobs, but needs to reinforce and build on competences which will serve them for future jobs and lives (a broader lifelong learning approach), particularly in the context of flexible working and insecure contracts. Recognition of existing competences is also vital, rather than a rigid focus on formal qualifications, which many excluded people have not been able to acquire. This includes valuing experience and learning gained in informal and non-formal settings eg voluntary work. This type of learning, is also often more effective in supporting people to personal and professional progress.

### 4. Long-term support to sustainable, quality employment

Work must ensure a route out of poverty and represent a progressive step on the road to greater personal and professional development. This means implementing much stricter criteria of what constitutes a reasonable offer of decent work, related to guaranteeing social standards at EU and

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission assessment of the JIMs 2004.

national level (ie in relation to working time, security of work, as well as fighting in-work poverty by supporting decent levels of wages, secure contracts, high levels of social protection including for part-time jobs). It also means providing long-term, continuous support into sustainable employment both in phases of social participation, accessing work and once in work. The approach needs to be flexible and recognize changing needs as a person builds confidence, or experiences changes/difficulties in their personal or family situation, in their health situation or in the state of their disabilities, or in relation to difficulties over legal restrictions on migration, income difficulties etc as well as in work.. The support has to provide security and make a commitment to obtaining sustainable solutions to often structural difficulties of exclusion, which will not be solved by a quick fix/short term solution.

Once in work, strategies also need to be in place to ensure progression and transition to better, employment and on maintaining people in decent work. This means focusing on groups that are most vulnerable to losing their jobs through redundancy or restructuring, or are in precarious, insecure or temporary employment. A more progressive and less punitive approach must also be employed to support people currently working in the informal labour market, which often offers the only realistic possibility of a decent income to specific excluded groups which takes them out of poverty – particularly migrants, ethnic minorities and lone mothers.

## 5. Sustainable and adapted work respectful of people's needs

Decently paid work can be a vital support to people who have been excluded for a long period and is a key tool for social inclusion and building cohesive society. It can give people new confidence, social relationships, skills and competences, as well as a vitally important beneficial financial return. However for many people returning to work after a long period of unemployment or with specific difficulties – eg long term sickness, mental illness or disabilities – specific adaptations to the working environment and conditions are necessary if work is to be sustainable. This has to be done through agreement with the person concerned. Equally for parents, particularly women as the main carers – a supportive environment to help them develop work-life balance through flexible working, childcare support is vital. This however should not be viewed as a cost to employers or the state but as an investment in the future - a key element to preventing unemployment and further social exclusion.

More investment must also be made to counter discrimination and promote diversity. Major barriers exist for key groups to equal access and progress to decent jobs due to discrimination – on the grounds of age, gender, ethnic or cultural status, relation or sexual orientation. Governments should be ensuring implementation of current and new EU legislation in this field, but it cannot stop there. Strategies must be drawn up with social partners to focus on the specific difficulties that each of these groups face in both accessing the workplace and progressing within the labour market and the joint development of pro-active strategies. The creation of decent jobs which can meet the real needs of those furthest from the labour market requires the involvement and commitment of communities, as well as more responsible and ethical responses from Companies... Social economy and social enterprises, as mainly non-for profit organizations, with predominantly social objectives are a clear tool for inclusion, as long as they are adequately supported and resourced.

## 6. Joined up integrated delivery based on partnership

The most effective strategies to promote sustainable inclusive labour markets and promote social participation will involve wide ranging networking with all relevant actors at local level. This must clearly include the traditional actors on the labour market – employers/agencies/trade unions as well as employment/training and education services. However, real joined up and effective support for people experiencing poverty will ensure the involvement of health care services, social services, housing sector, local communities as well as the person themselves and their families and social network. An integrated plan and approach involving joined up planning and delivery is essential.

**Right to affordable, quality Services of General Interest, particularly social services.**

EAPN highlights the need to focus on the right to access of all Services of General Interest, and that the key principles of Universal Service Obligations should be honoured and implemented – particularly affordable, continuous, quality universal services. We however highlight the special role of Social and Health Services, in supporting the social inclusion of people experiencing poverty. For SGI, particularly network industries ( energy, water, transport) as basic utilities, the main need is to ensure that the Universal Service Obligations are respected, recognizing the serious impact that particularly affordability/ and equal access can have on fundamental rights to a decent standard of living. These concerns are likely to become more serious in the light of rising food and energy prices. For personalized social and health services, the personalized relationship and asymmetrical relationship where most users are not in an equal relationship with the provider raises the need for a more exacting set of principles.

### 1. Respectful of personal human dignity, security and fundamental rights

All Services of General Interest need to be delivered in such a way that the person is treated with respect and their right to access equal services honoured. They should reflect the rights outlined in the EU Charter of fundamental Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms for the Council of Europe. In particular they should respect user's preferences and be provided without discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religious belief and social origin. Their right to a safe and secure environment, is a further key need, particularly in relation to care services provided to children, disabled and older people. People's rights to such services also needs to be made publicly known. This is particularly an issue in some New Member States. Confidentiality should be respected and an independent complaints procedure adopted which is easily understandable and usable by ordinary people themselves.

In the case of personal social and health services, a more personalized, on-going systematic relationship would be expected to be established between the provider and user, which builds a vital personal relationship based on respect.

## 2. Affordable, accessible and reaching the target group

Quality services need to fulfill their social objectives, as specified in the Universal Service Obligations. However, the expansion of the internal market and the impact of the current EU framework competition and state aids, as well as increased pressure to reduce public deficits and spending on social protection is leading to increased privatization of services, and reduced or lower quality services. Unless the Universal Service Obligations are carefully monitored, these services run the risk of substantially reducing the access of people on low incomes or socially excluded groups, who do not fulfill the criteria and where the provision to such groups is unprofitable. A key

group that is in danger of exclusion from services is migrants, particularly undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.. A key principle of quality must therefore be that the services reach all the intended target audience, particularly those in most need – and that any obstacles of price, or geographical or physical access are identified and removed. A clearer definition must be given to what is affordable and for whom. For example in the provision of childcare for low- income single parents who wish to return to work or education, high costs and inaccessibility – ie too far away from the home or workplace, create an insuperable barrier to returning to work.

In terms of some basic services like Energy, some countries have calculated what is considered to be affordable energy prices, drawing on a definition of Energy Poverty where by it is judged unaffordable when people have to spend more than 10% of disposable income to heat and light a home to an acceptable level. (UK). Failure to ensure accessibility and affordability will restrict the users of the service and will undermine any quality framework whose main objective is quality services to promote social inclusion.

## 3. Personalized, holistic and sustainable

People experiencing poverty want to be treated as human beings with individual needs. This can only be achieved through a strong commitment to personalized services which create a pact between the user and the provider and which make a commitment to on-going, long-term support. The user has the right to decide on the specific elements of the services provided and to curtail them when they wish. The services need to reflect their changing needs – either because of changing personal circumstances – geographical, health, disability, or through the life course. The services also need to take a holistic approach and deal with the whole person. This means a multidimensional approach which looks at the interrelationship between different needs and sets up an integrated response – eg looking at housing, employment, training, childcare and health support needs.. This requires that the service is planned and coordinated together with other services, in an integrated, team approach.

## 4. Participative and empowering

In all Services of General Interest, the user needs to be actively involved in the development and delivery of the service, ensuring that real on-going and changing needs are met. In for example

Energy Services – it is vital that people on low incomes who are currently in danger of losing services because they cannot afford them or are too much in debt, are actively consulted on the development and impact of the services, to ensure that providers are able to meet their Universal Service Obligations.. The regulating bodies both at national and EU level, should see the participation of low-income users as a key element to ensuring effective delivery. In terms of Social Services of General Interest, the on-going personalized relationship, fundamental to the providing support, requires a more structured on-going involvement. Personal social services should include as a key objective the achievement of autonomy and the empowerment of the user which can involve the development of the user to the position of a volunteer in the same service. This implies that the service should actively support the person to participate in the services and the community, and acquire increasing confidence and power in their own powers self representation and action. It also implies the development of an active participative governance structure in the management of the service – involving users as a group able to represent the demands and needs on the service.

## **5. Accountable, transparent community proximity services**

Key social services like housing, personalized care and social services cannot be developed separately from the community in which they serve. The objective must be to promote more socially cohesive communities through a bottom-up community development approach which aims to engage the communities in the development and delivery of new and existing services. In reality this means an active partnership approach, involving all key actors, including users – existing, prospective or currently excluded users, local authorities, tenant's associations, employers and trade unions in an active community management approach. The management of all Services of General Interest, must also be carried out in an open and transparent fashion, with clearly defined and known guidelines and methods of operating, and the rights of the users to information, complaint and engagement in the delivery of services directly stipulated. In terms of social services, accountability is owed to the individuals that use the service, but the local community who funds the service and for whom the service is supposed to deliver. Access to records and data is particularly crucial, for example as to the operating mechanisms, costs, profits – effectiveness and efficiency in delivering services. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be done, not only by the users/providers/workers and board but by independent assessment and a community board, and should ensure a qualitative as well as a quantitative assessment of outcomes, taking on board the views of all.

## **6. Investing in quality employment conditions for social services**

In many community organizations, the line between paid and unpaid staff is a narrow one. A constant feature, however, is the low value placed on the “caring” work, primarily done, as it is by women and often migrant workers. Whilst up-skilling, and increasing lifelong learning and training for all workers and helpers is vital, more needs to be done to value existing competences and to invest in quality employment conditions and wages for these services as essential supports for the future of a socially cohesive society.