

# Research & Policy (WP8)



This conclusive work step will synthesize the findings of the previous reasoning and empirical investigation. It will help assess larger Third Sector impact potential. The main aim will be to identify policy implications in terms of strategies for cluster building, regional development and the encouragement of civic engagement in the wake of fostering social innovativeness of municipalities and regions. The guiding question to be addressed is: What are the implications of the findings in terms of the role of volunteering and third sector impact as social innovation?

The synthesizing process will follow three major steps:

## **1. Assessing approval or rejection of hypotheses**

The individual hypotheses initially developed will have been either approved or rejected on the grounds of case based testing as well as the structural and perceptual analysis of the Third Sector and the influences of volunteering. These insights will serve three purposes: (1) to derive larger impact potential of Third Sector organizations and regions approximated by the stimulation of social innovation; (2) to develop recommendations for policy makers and

practitioners with regard to fostering mechanisms for social innovation; (3) to draw conclusions and connected follow-up questions for future research.

## **2. Aggregated Social Innovation estimates as impact**

The assessed data will be used to draw a developed picture of the Third Sector, emphasizing the core added value it produces which is supposed to lie in the stimulation of social innovation via its capital building functions (social, e.g. social networks and cohesion; cultural, e.g. personal values, identity formation; political, e.g. participation) and with a particular focus on volunteering therein. If possible, we will try to aggregate insights from the organizational or regional level to national levels against the theoretical exploration of different welfare state conceptions and traits of individual socio-economic systems.

## **3. Policy & Practice implications**

The recommendations we want to give, will mainly focus on the aspect of cluster building, municipal and regional stimulation of social innovation by the Third Sector, which we interpret as the main contribution policy can make in this context. It will also provide the most valuable implications for practitioners, be it Third Sector managers, individual entrepreneurs, social activists or civic engagement networks.

### ***Issues will include:***

- Which factors enable organizations of the Third Sector to be socially innovative?
- Which contribution does the sector make in terms of Social Innovation?
- How does it thereby have an impact on socio-economic development in the EU?
- How can policy contribute to foster Social Innovation ecosystems of the Third Sector?
- Which particular role does civic engagement play thereby?