



Euro-Mediterranean Souk and First Annual Inter-Regional Learning Exchange Conference:

Citizen-led innovation and social change practices during periods of transition

Date: 9-12 October 2012

Venue: UN Buffer Zone, Nicosia, Cyprus

CYINDEP, the Cyprus Island-wide NGO Development Platform, in partnership with the Peace It Together Network is hosting an Annual Inter-Regional Learning Exchange Conference together with a Euro-Mediterranean 'Souk' (a civil society bazaar) from 9-12 October 2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The conference will focus on the role of citizens and civil society in stimulating social change during periods of transition and aims to provide a forum where participants from Europe and the Arab region can share their experiences and can learn from each other.

The learning exchange will focus on three priority areas of clear relevance to the current historical moment in both regions and where an inter-regional dialogue can maximize learning and transfer of practical solutions as well as foster future mutual collaboration. The event will be organised in a non-conventional way, giving the space to the participants to engage in dialogues and constructive conversations and using methodologies such as *Open Space*.

It is expected that the number of participants will be between 100 and 150.

Intended Results and objectives:

Within this context the Souk and Conference will focus on achieving the following results:

- New partnerships between CSOs from Cyprus, Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Arab region;
- Development of a framework for the sustainability of inter regional collaboration including proposals for financial sustainability and mobilizing donor support;
- Concrete proposals for follow-up actions by the participating CSOs;
- Agreement on a declaration which captures a commitment for inter-regional collaboration involving research institutions, Think Tanks, universities and civil society organisations

Selection Criteria:

The conference will look to attract representatives who can make significant contributions to the learning exchange and be able to actively participate in the English-language discussions, including ensuring a balanced gender representation amongst the participants. Conference participants will be selected from three main categories of delegates:

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The project receives funding from the European Union.



- 1) *Civil society leaders and practitioners*: CSO representatives from Europe and the Southern Neighbourhood region of the EU, who are at the forefront of their fields in the key areas of the Conference.
- 2) *Representatives from, think-tanks, research institutions and academia*: Forward thinkers from independent public policy research and engagement institutions, networks and academia from Europe and the Southern Neighbourhood region of the EU that generate policy-oriented research, analysis and advice to inform policy development in key conference focus areas.
- 3) *Active citizens*: Individual practitioners who have been involved in local mobilisation for positive social change.

Conference Focus Areas:

Participants themselves will also be contributors, and are therefore expected to demonstrate significant knowledge and experience of inspiring positive and sustainable social change in the following conference focus areas:

Social cohesion and reconciliation – The role of Civil Society in promoting constructive coexistence between diverse groups and communities in supporting the development of pluralistic societies. What support role can civil society play in ensuring social inclusion during periods of socio-economic fragmentation and stress?

Shaping the policy debate – Research in action and the role of think tanks, thought leaders, universities, research organisations, and development practitioners as an informed and independent voice in fostering transition towards peaceful and inclusive democratic societies. What are the opportunities and priorities for civil society in influencing policy-making to ensure social equity, access to economic opportunities and the protection of vulnerable groups during periods of transition?

The right to be heard: community voice for representation - The role of New Media in promoting equality and diversity and representing marginalized voices with a special emphasis on women and youth. What are the possible strategies for social activists at the local and national levels for changing and influencing public opinion and promoting citizens' interests in a sustained way?

In addition as a base line for selection, participants will:

- Have experience of impacting on change and transition in their own communities.
- Be creative visionaries, capable of realizing their vision for change through peaceful means.
- Be able and willing to share knowledge generated locally with a regional and global audience.
- Be open to new ideas and innovative approaches to problems and be willing to change old patterns
- Have the relevant level of experience and knowledge to engage with counterparts from the other regions.
- Have concrete examples to share in at least one of the three focus areas,

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- Have affected citizen-led change and understand the responsibility of representing marginalised groups.
- The organizers are aiming to have a balanced gender representation amongst the participants and speakers
- Ability to adapt knowledge and experience to strengthen social change at the local and regional level.

If you are interested to join the Conference and Souk, please send your application form to deniz.usman@cyindep.org as soon as possible, but latest by 1 September. If you want to present your own case study or project experience, please complete the Case Study Template document and return to Deniz as early as possible.

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