

BORDERS TO CROSS

Title:	A problem shared is a problem halved
Name workshop:	Active involvement of citizens
Projects presented:	1. CittA@ttiva 2. Valsamoggia Citizen's Review Initiative
Workshop director(s):	Marcel Maussen
Name rapporteur(s):	Maxime Molenaar
Date and time of workshop:	30-10-2013, 11.30-13.00

This workshop represents the spirit of Borders to Cross: involving citizens by bottom-up projects. Both projects presented at this workshop are Italian and involve very direct citizen participation.

What triggered me during the discussion, was the fact that social initiatives such as those presented are established with a noble perspective, but come with a struggle of who to involve in the process. This issue was shared by many people in the audience.

The struggle with 'who to involve' mainly entails the question of how to reach the marginalized people. As the initiatives are not made by these marginalized people, can we still speak of effective bottom-up initiatives?

Generally, the problems that social innovations face seem to be communication-related. How do government and citizens find each other half way? How do you reach an audience besides the usual suspects of higher educated people? How do you create awareness? Who do you pick as representatives?

Although the problems seem to be shared across borders, there is no cookie-cutter answer, yet. The goals are usually clear, but it often remains trial-and-error in reaching them. We can wonder whether that is a problem, or whether it provides the flexibility that is necessary with social innovation. Either way, it is fruitful to share the problems that you run into with your project to create awareness of the issues that others could run into.

Finally, what needs to be kept in mind, is that bottom-up and top-down are not mutually exclusive. There is a possibility to meet half way, but it requires an open attitude.

Reflection, possibly linking up to the leading questions and threads: 5-10 lines:

Extra information: