The NGO Sector in Norway
Current trends

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Dynamic civil society

- large, dynamic and innovative in a large range of areas
- many “umbrellas”, coordinating work of similar organisations
- a new initiative by the civil sector and the state:
  - The Association of NGOs in Norway (“Voluntarism Norway”), which aims to coordinate and promote interests of non-state and non-business actors in Norway
  - This sector should “stand on its own feet, and not be subject to frameworks and rules adapted to other parts of society”
Voluntarism and professionalism combined

- Voluntarism: non-paid work in civil society organisations
- Professionalism: paid work in civil society organizations with a high degree of specialization and competence
- Many organizations combine professional staff with active members who do voluntary work
Illustrations

• What it’s about…
The Church City Mission in Oslo:

- Social work in Oslo since 1855
- 1350 employees
- 1400 volunteers
- About 40 different institutions and projects
- Heading a network of ten independent City Missions in Norway
Our vision:

• The Church City Mission’s vision is that people in the city experience respect, justice and care
Our mission is:

- To see and **uncover** injustice and needs
- To **offer** help, comfort and accompaniment
- To contribute to **removing** causes of social marginalization, violations and injustice
Our areas of work:

• Children and young people
• Alcohol and drug addiction
• Psychiatry
• Employment
• Care for elderly
• Centre for families
• Church activities
• Work against human trafficking
• Care for sex workers
• Care for homeless people
• Centres for voluntary work
• Meeting places, cafés, etc.
A Nordic Paradigm?

• Strong role of NGOs
  – Keeps up democratic channels
  – Training its members to understand democracy and its rules
  – Provides an understanding of local cultures
  – Building bridges between different groups of society
Participation in voluntary work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Great Britain</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in voluntary work (%)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
More on voluntarism in Norway

• Which has 4,7 million citizens ...
• ...and a total of 10 million memberships in Norwegian civil society organizations
• 115 000 organizations
• 88 members on average
## Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First NGOs</td>
<td>• health</td>
<td>• sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• religion</td>
<td>• social sector</td>
<td>• environment and leisure organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• alcohol-abuse</td>
<td>• humanitarianism</td>
<td>• humanitarian and social work taken over by the state,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• labor organizations</td>
<td>• women's rights</td>
<td>but civil society organizations continues to be pioneers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• enlightenment and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>education,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• “outdoor life”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• sports</td>
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</table>
Current situation and trends

• Main sectors
  – Children and youth
  – Development cooperation (aid)
  – Environment and using nature for recreational activities
  – Health and social issues
  – Culture and sport
  – Life view and religion
  – Law and order
  – Multi- / transcultural issues
  – Education
Ways of finance

- The Church City Mission gets financial support mainly from local and national authorities (83%) and donors (private persons, groups and congregations, business corporations),
- Organisations like Amnesty International Norway get money from members, business companies and private donors
- «umbrella organisations» get money from member organisations
- institutions like the Norwegian Centre of Human Rights, University of Oslo, the Pro Centre etc., are funded by the state
- organisations like the Norwegian Helsinki Committee get money from the state, members, private donors, selling of products
  - Organisations frequently address the public to collect money for different purposes
  - Strong tradition of private donations, emerging tradition of business donations to NGOs
Financial overview

- Voluntary sector spends 60 billion NOK (€7.7 billion) each year
- 60,000 organizations have annual budgets below 6,250 Euros
Relationship with the government

- organizations **criticise** the government, but most of the time in a **constructive** manner
  - proposing alternative actions
  - pointing to Norway’s international obligations and commitments
  - taking part in public debates
  - taking part in seminars, committees etc. to give advice to the government
  - commenting on draft legislation
  - informing the government on the result of their investigations, missions etc.
  - Providing new services, which could eventually be taken over by the government, or by commercial actors
Role of civil society organizations

- establish channels of political influence
- evaluate and criticize the work of the Government
- engage and educate the public
- propose solutions
- Provide a wide range of services
- represents the interests of different groups in the society. Makes more balance
- establish channels for international contacts and co-operation
Challenges ahead:

- Consensus: The voluntary / NGO sector is positive for the whole of society
- ’Social capital’ (R. Putnam, et al.)
  - General trust
  - Democracy
  - Economic development, etc.
- ’Third sector’ – between the state and the market
- …still, only 6% of paid work in the welfare sector is delivered by the third sector (K. Sivesind et al. 2008)
- Competition and pressure from both sides (state, market)
- What will be the role of the third sector in the future?
We need a strong civil society

• In a globalised world: Interconnecting the local and global
• Watch-dogs, whistleblowers and challengers
• Mobilising and training people
• Challenging political powers and commercial interests
• In a search for common and sustainable solutions for all people