

The NGO Sector in Norway

Current trends

Dr. Sturla J. Stålsett
General Secretary
Church City Mission, Oslo

— Thanks to Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal, Deputy Secretary General
Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Birgitte Brekke, Association of NGOs in Norway, for important inputs

Dynamic civil society

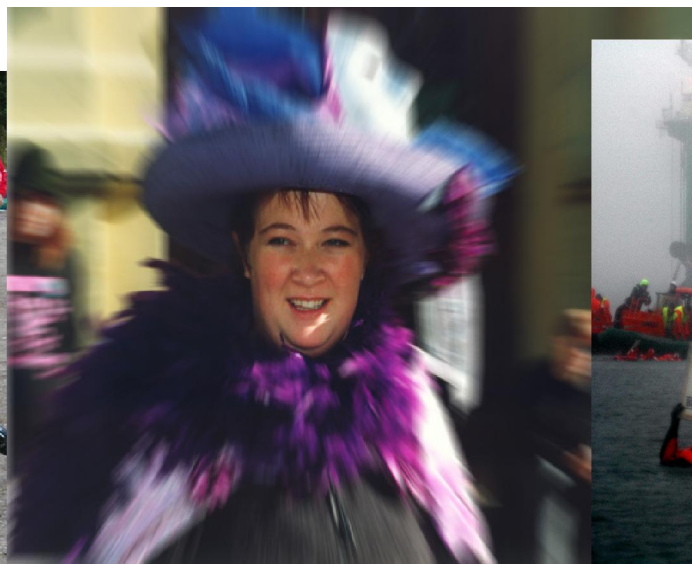
- large, dynamic and innovative in a large range of areas
- many “umbrellas”, coordinating work of similar organisations
- a new initiative by the civil sector and the state:
 - The Association of NGOs in Norway (“Voluntarism Norway”), which aims to coordinate and promote interests of non-state and non-business 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:

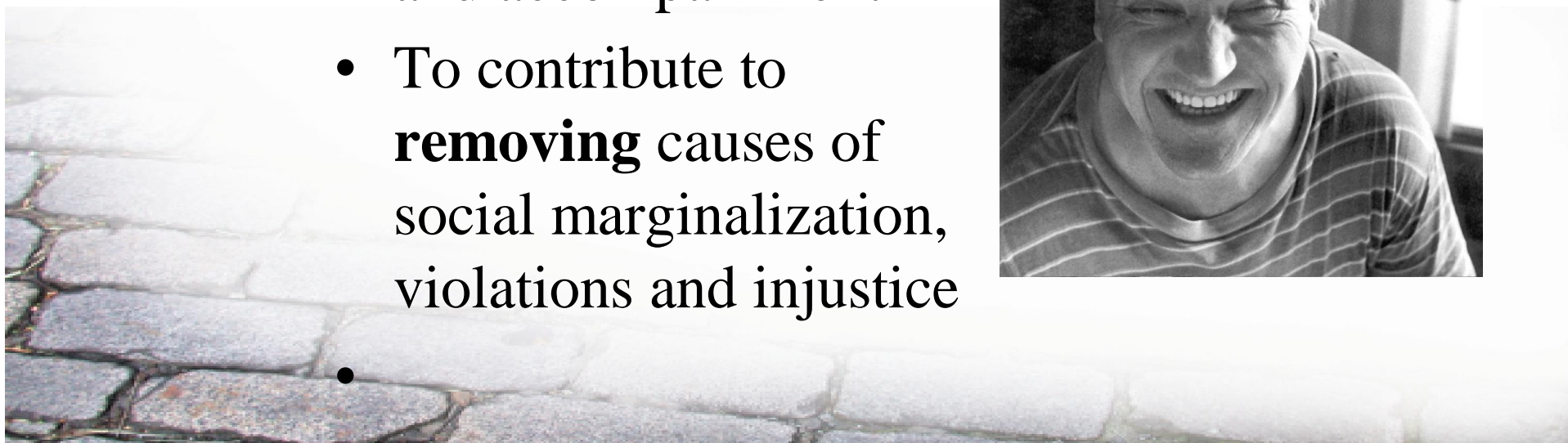
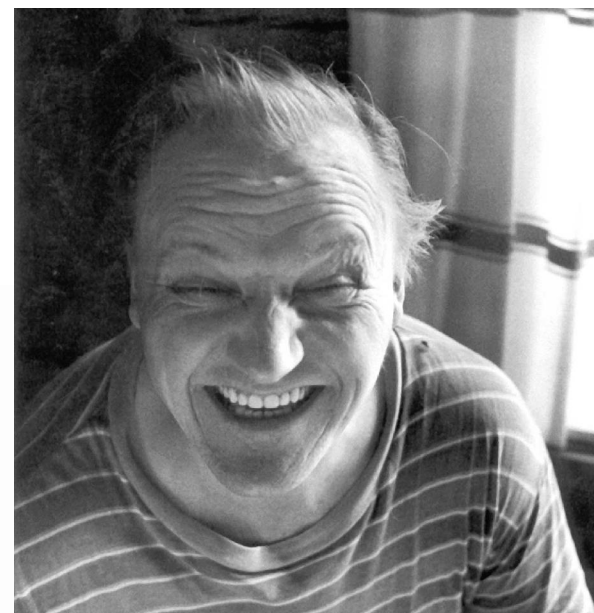
- Social work in Oslo since 1855
- 1350 employees
- 1400 volunteers
- about 40 different institutions and projects
- heading a network of ten independent City Missions in Norway

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



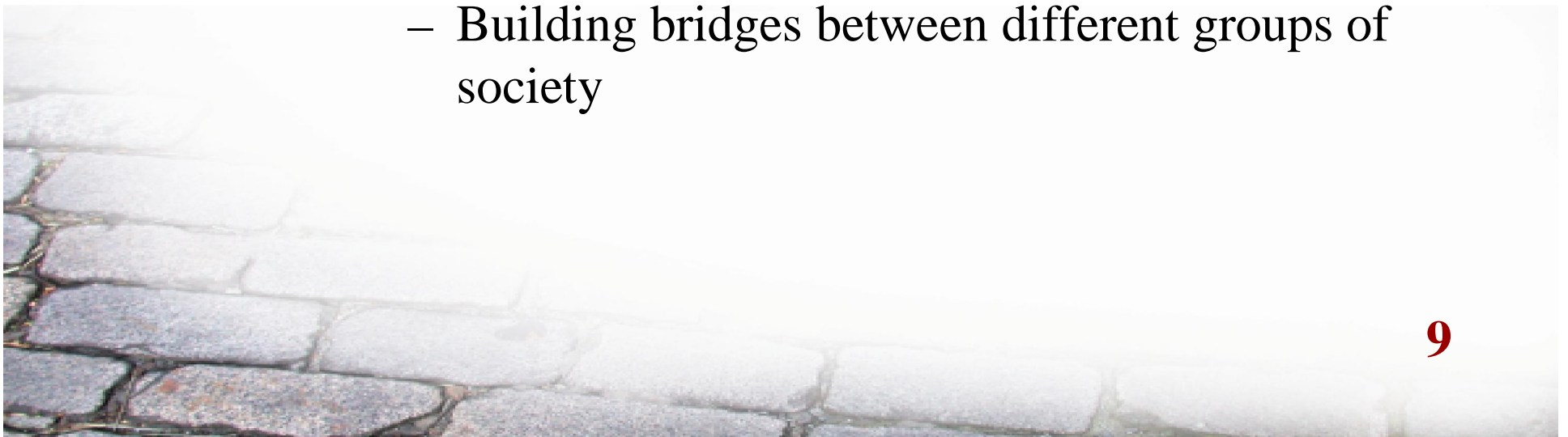
Our areas of work:

- 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.

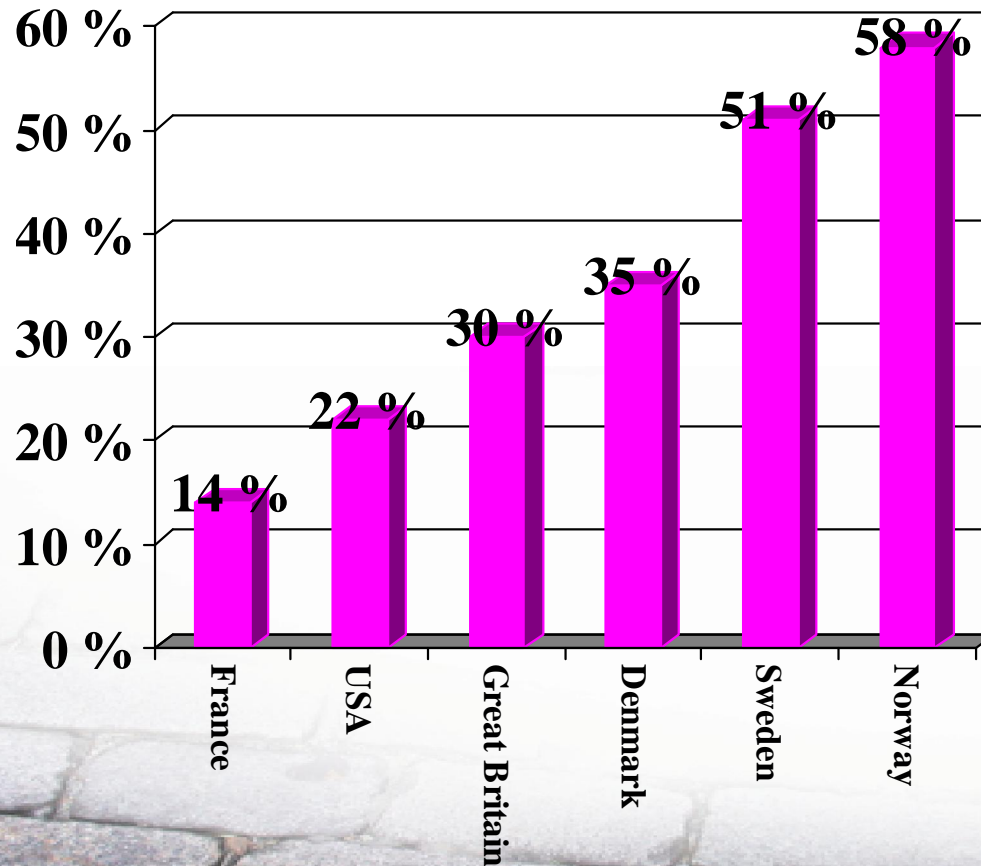


A Nordic Paradigm?

- 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



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

1850	1900	1950
<p>First NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religion • alcohol-abuse • labor organizations • poverty • enlightenment and education, • “outdoor life” • sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • social sector • humanitarianism • women's rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sports • environment and leisure organizations • humanitarian and social work taken over by the state, but civil society organizations continues to be pioneers

Current situation and trends

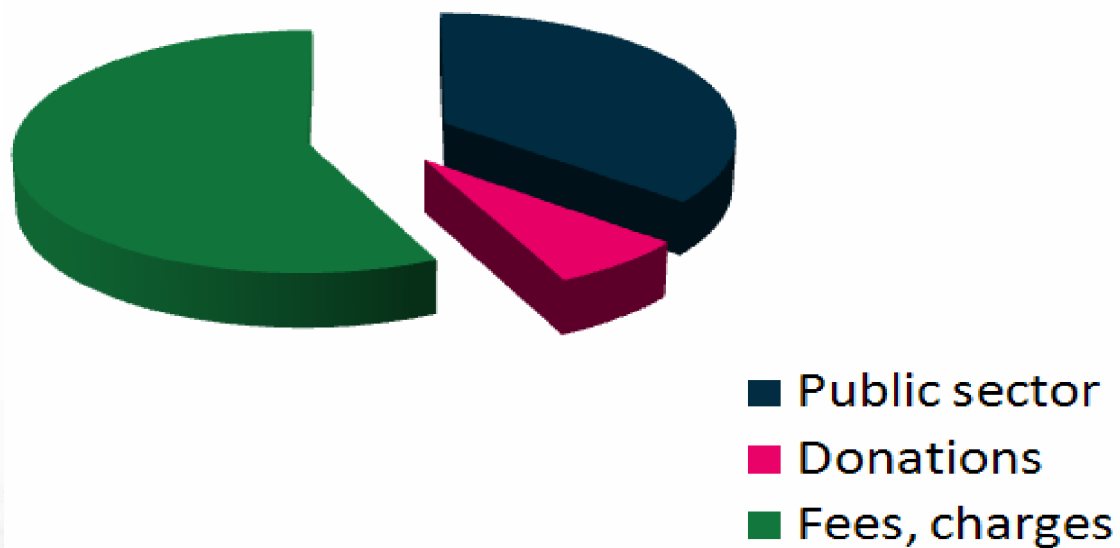
- Main sectors
 - Children and youth
 - Development cooperation (aid)
 - Environment and using nature for recreational activities
 - Health and social issues
 - Culture and sport
 - Life view and religion
 - Law and order
 - Multi- / transcultural issues
 - Education

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 6250 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