

# The ethical consistence of an organisation

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*Indaba-network*, December 2008

Let's start at community level. I am sure that most of the readers of this blog did sometimes feel the need to form a group or to associate with their friends to develop some kind of project to give concrete outcome to the desire to better serve the community or to help others.

When confronted with human suffering, environmental issues, injustice or violation of human rights, some people tend to take distance, they feel it is not their business. However, most young people -especially if they went through an appropriate educational experience- feel they must do something, getting somehow involved in activities that may contribute to reducing suffering of those most in need and promoting their rights, or join their voice and action to limit environmental damage. At once they feel they need to get *organised* and join with others who share similar values and ideals.

Some may dedicate a portion of their free time in the development of such an initiative, or simply to volunteer in existing socially committed organisations. When still a student, this is the most common way of getting socially involved.

However when main studies are behind us and we need to orient our professional life, we may want to chose ways that bring together our desire for social involvement and our professional engagement. Also in this case we may join an organisation that we feel coherent with our vision, or think of starting a new socially valuable enterprise. In fact, when we think of a value based organisation we do not necessarily refer to nonprofit; to contribute to a better world any economical activity should be inspired and reflect an appropriate ethical framework. To the idea of social enterprise, or otherwise values based productive organisations we will devote analysis and debate later on.

In any case, the social value of the objectives of an organisation (solidarity toward the most disadvantaged, environmental protection, disaster relief, production of social services, education, health assistance, etc.) represent only one dimension of a values based organisation. Some how it's *external* dimension.

Besides its objectives, the ethical consistence, hence the credibility of an organisation is in fact highly dependent on both structural (the way it is organised) and dynamic factors (relations among, and behaviour of its members) of its *internal* dimension.

When there is no coherence between those external and internal dimensions the ethical consistency of an organisation is seriously at stake. How does our organisation behave under this point of view?

A first point of verification is our local group (whether itself a self-contained organisation or a local section of a wider -national, international- one)

Assuming that our reference values framework is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, let's ask ourselves: "Is my group open to all? Does it recognise equal dignity and rights to all? In my group do we all act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood?"