19 November – DEBAT

Friday 19 November
Doors 19:00
Start : 19:30
Studio 4 of Flagey, 1050 Brussels

Debate

In response to local and urgent needs, but also out of curiosity or desire, people have always set up small initiatives. These have given rise to inventions like moving motion pictures or home computers, to new types of organisation like co-operative enterprises or micro-credit facilities, and even to new values like those promoted by the ecology movement.

More recently, the creativity and responsiveness of these initiatives, has been harnessed by politics, as well as business and research. Talk of “big society” [UK government] or “good society” [opposition], “citizenship” or “social innovation” [EU Commission] are merely different ways of using people's own initiatives in the running of the state. Companies like Nokia, IBM and Microsoft spend a considerable part of their research budget in an “open source community” they still criminalised a decade earlier as “hackers”. As recently as in 2009, Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for her argument that the commons – the resources we share, like air and water – can also -and maybe even better- be managed from the bottom-up.

In a very direct way, the collapse of the banking system, the threat of global warning and the rise of extreme right politics, confront us with the questions we are currently confronted with. How do we distribute wealth more fairly, how do we reduce our impact on the environment, how do we involve all concerned in decision-making.

In the debate of 19 November, we discuss the relationship between small initiatives, and these big challenges we are confronted with. We ask representatives from Politics, Research, Business and Activism to position themselves towards this question, after which they enter in debate with each other.

We have invited representatives form the UK Labour Party, the Green Party, Greenpeace, Philips and research institutions in the US and Europe.

Registration is possible on http://urbanplatform.citymined.org or info@citymined.org