Call for Papers
Strengthening Intangible Infrastructures
December 10 – 11, 2012 – Salzburg, Austria

The term *infrastructure* commonly refers to the partly naturally given, partly manmade constitutive conditions and facilities that affect, enable, and ensure our everyday lives. Usually the term is used in an economic sense and points to material or institutional circumstances of our environment – for instance to traffic and transport facilities like roads, railways and airports, to supplies of water, energy or gas, or to facilities of industry and trade but it also refers to public administration and authorities or to leisure facilities. All together these facilities and conditions can be summed up as the *tangible* means upon which our societies are based. Consequently, talking about *intangible infrastructures* may seem like an uncommon concept.

The term *intangible* points to areas of our lives that are not (or not primarily) represented physically and therefore are not visible and cannot (or not sufficiently) be accessed by approaches focusing mainly on material means; it points to invisible realms of the human existence, to intellectual or knowledge-based, to cultural, or perhaps even ethical matters. Yet although we are speaking about 'soft' infrastructures, we are still speaking of *infrastructures* and hence we imply that our subject is something that is *underlying* our lives and something fundamental for our well-being and for what we regard as a good life.

Intangible infrastructures can be defined as "the set of factors that develop human capability and permit the easy and efficient growth of business activity including human capital or institutional quality" (Credit Suisse, Intangible Infrastructure. The Key to Growth, 2008). But they also refer to the social adhesives and cultural techniques civilizations build on. They can have effect on and be of transformational influence on development in an economic as well as a social sense. They can foster social cohesion as well as economic prosperity. They are based (and have impact) on *tangible infrastructures* to a certain extent and like most of *tangible infrastructures*, *intangible infrastructures*, too, need to be built up and maintained; they need attention and need to be cultivated and strengthened in order not to vanish or collapse. In this respect, *intangible infrastructures* are a necessary medium for all the different forms of social capital. In turn, they are transformed by social capital. Usability, reliability, and availability turn out to be as critical criteria as they are in the tangible world. How important is therefore access to, acceptance, and relevance of *intangible infrastructures* in our daily lives?

The aims of the conference *Strengthening Intangible Infrastructures* are (i) to draw a map of the discourse on intangible infrastructure and (ii) to arrive at strategies of strengthening intangible infrastructure. The conference wants to allow for the treatment of the subject in its wide spectrum of aspects. Thus topics may include (but are not restricted to):

- o dimensions – education, health care, social and charitable domains, socio-economics, science, and religion
- o parameters – social cohesion, social inclusion, equality, and happiness (including questions of measurement and quantification)
- o resources and symbols – culture, knowledge, memory, and remembrance
- o preconditions – communications, recognition, and social norms
- o values – trust, confidence, and belonging
- o chances and challenges – difficulties, obstacles and how to overcome them / importance of intangible infrastructures, and benefits of intangible infrastructures (direct/indirect)

- o institutions and instruments to strengthen intangible infrastructures – festivals and urban (or quarter) or regional/local development programs (e.g., "Soziale Stadt", European Capitals of Culture)
- o players – at the level of foundations, NGOs, religious institutions, civil initiatives (individual/organizational level) but also at the level of nations and regions(e.g., spending plans)
- o dependencies, interdependencies, and relationships between tangible and intangible infrastructures
- o the role of intangible infrastructure for social capital (and related forms like human, regional, or community capital)
- o techniques and methods to make intangible infrastructure visible/aware (e.g., social network analysis)
- o scale-dependent availability and distribution of intangible infrastructure, issues of power relations within and between different types of intangible infrastructure
- o contemporary ideas of commons (e.g., Open Source Software or Wikipedia), and intangible infrastructure
- o historical perspectives & social change
- o regional development and intangible infrastructure (e.g., cluster policy, cross-border cooperation, benefits of agglomeration)

Abstracts of approx. 300 words should be submitted to Andreas Koch and Elisabeth Kapferer (akoch@ifz-salzburg.at & elisabeth.kapferer@sbg.ac.at).
Deadline for submission is **June 15, 2012**. Notification of acceptance will be given by June 30, 2012.
Invited colleagues are asked to prepare a paper for the **conference proceedings** (approx. 6.000 words) which will be published in 2013. Deadline for submitting manuscripts is **October 31, 2012**.
The conference will be held interdisciplinarily. The format will include lectures and discussion as well rooms provided for open discussions.
Conference fee: 60 €

The conference is held by the Centre of Ethics and Poverty Research/University of Salzburg (www.uni-salzburg.at/zea) and the international research centre for social and ethical questions (ifz www.ifz-salzburg.at) in cooperation with Bildungszentrum St. Virgil Salzburg (www.virgil.at) and Austria's first social festival *Tu was, dann tut sich was.* (www.tu-was.at).

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