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## Social Innovation 2015 «Pathways to Social Change» - A Guide through the Conference from an «Economic» Perspective

**Dortmund/Gelsenkirchen, October 28, 2015:** One of this year's main events on social innovation is about to start. The conference **Social Innovation 2015 «Pathways to Social Change»** on November 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> in Vienna, is hosted by two projects under the EU 7th Framework Programme: **Social Innovation – Driving Force of Social Change (SI-DRIVE)** and **Transformative Social Innovation Theory (TRANSIT)** plus **NET4SOCIETY**. They are joined by two collaborative partners: **Creating Economic Space for Social Innovation (CRESSI)** and **Boosting the Impact of Social Innovation in Europe through Economic Underpinnings (SIMPACT)**. The program holds 3 key notes, 22 parallel sessions, several plenary debates and networking sessions. This guide through the conference, subjectively assembles the «economic aspects» addressed throughout the 2-day programme.

The research project «**Social Innovation in Europe through Economic Underpinnings**» (SIMPACT) has a twofold objective: It asks for the economic factors that underpin social innovation's social and economic impact, while emphasizing social innovation's role in empowering vulnerable groups in society. Substantiating the economic dimensions of social innovation as a so far largely unexplored research field is expected to accelerate the social and economic impact of social innovation through an advanced knowledge base and tailored tools supporting policymakers, innovators, investors and intermediaries.

According to SIMPACT's understanding, social innovation refers to «*novel combinations of ideas and distinct forms of collaboration that transcend established institutional contexts with the effect of empowering and (re)engaging vulnerable groups either in the process of the innovation or as a result of it*». Hence, emphasis is on social innovations addressing vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. Due to market and policy failure, these groups are not able to fully participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of society. Being marginalised is not viewed as a result of individual inadequacies, but is the result of institutional constraints. By focusing on the economic dimensions on social innovation, SIMPACT seeks to highlight the potential for the empowerment and (re)inclusion of marginalised and



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vulnerable. Consequently, a shift in thinking and acting from «marginalised and vulnerable as burden of society» towards one that values their potential within society, constitutes a cornerstone in the social debate.

SIMPACT uses a tentative categorisation of economic principles, objectives & components as a heuristic to analyse social innovation. During the conference, several researchers from the SIMPACT consortium will present their findings in those three categories:

### **Social Innovation Objectives**

In SIMPACT's research approach, micro and meso-level objectives refer to the goals and underlying motivations of actors or organisations to engage in social innovation. These objectives can be social in nature or cover social and economic goals. The following sessions with SIMPACT contributions are addressing SI objectives:

#### **BEYOND TENDERING: PUBLIC POLICY AS ACTIVE ENABLER OF SI**

Helen CHAMBERS, Inspiring Scotland (tbc)

Peter CRESSEY, Rosemary EXTON, Peter TOTTERDILL, SIMPACT project, University of Bath,  
NN, CRESSI project (tbc)

The relationship between public policy and social innovation is often limited to competitive tendering or bidding for grants followed by a focus on contract compliance. A growing body of evidence suggests that this fails to produce systemic change, not least because funding is often short term, over-emphasises quantifiable outcomes and fails to invest in sustainable organisational capacity. Policy approaches focused on a more strategic approach to stimulating, resourcing and sustaining social innovation are emerging in many parts of Europe but are less well defined and understood. This session will engage researchers, policymakers and social innovators in exploring the emergence of new forms of policy production and implementation, and assessing their prospects for the future

#### **EMPOWERMENT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE THROUGH DSI**

Ingo BOSSE, Christian BÜHLER, Christoph KALETKA (SI-DRIVE), Bastian PELKA (SIMPACT), TU Dortmund University, Dortmund  
Jeremy MILLARD, SI-DRIVE project, Brunel University, London  
Gianluca MISURACA, EC, Joint Research Centre. Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS), Seville  
Gabriel RISSOLA, Telecentre Europe, Brussels

This session deals with a triple intersection: It asks for social innovations empowering vulnerable people and focuses on those social innovations which are either "supported" or "enabled" (Millard/Carpenter 2014) by digital technology ("digital social innovations" DSI, Bria 2014). The notion of "Social Innovation" is

based on the understanding of Howaldt/Schwarz (2010) as «new social practices», trying to solve problems in a better way than existing practices. The notion of “vulnerable people” refers to those hindered from meaningful participation in various social fields, like employment, education or health by the social and technological environment. The session asks for contributions which address one or more of the following topics (non exhaustive):

- How (far) can social innovations for vulnerable people be supported or enabled by digital means?
- Which aspects of vulnerability could be addressed by digital social innovations in particular?
- and more.

### **Social Innovation Components**

Along SIMPACT’s definition, SI components comprise the institutional context plus actors and resources as central production factors. The following sessions with SIMPACT contributions are addressing SI components:

#### **SOCIAL INNOVATION ECO-SYSTEMS**

Jürgen HOWALDT and Dmitri DOMANSKI, SI-DRIVE project, TU Dortmund University, Dortmund  
Dieter REHFELD and Anna BUTZIN, SI-DRIVE project, Westphalian University, IAT, Gelsenkirchen  
Nicolás MONGE, LaFIS, Santiago de Chile

Despite growing awareness of the significance of social innovation in successfully addressing societal challenges, there is still no sustained and systematic analysis of social innovation, its theories, characteristics and impacts. Also, the relationship between social innovation and social change remains a largely under-explored area in social sciences as well as government innovation policies. What we need to understand are the conditions, under which social innovations develop, sustain, and finally lead to social change. As ensemble performances they emerge at the interfaces between different societal sectors. Increasingly, innovation policies in addition to supporting new technologies also start focusing on such ecosystems. But what are social innovation ecosystems exactly? How do they emerge and function? In what capacity do different actors understand and develop social innovations? What are the success factors for social innovations in communities, cities, regions, and states?

## **Social Innovation Principles**

Along SIMPACT's definition, social innovation principles refer to concepts or strategies for efficient allocation of resources in reference to the set objectives, modes of efficiency and modes of governance. The following sessions with SIMPACT contributions are addressing SI principles:

### **SERVICE DESIGN IN PUBLIC SECTOR AND SI**

Alessandro DESERTI, SIMPACT project, Politecnico di Milano, Milan  
Francesca RIZZO, SIMPACT project, University of Bologna, Bologna

The economic, demographic, social, and environmental long-term challenges are calling for deep changes, questioning many of the assumptions that have underpinned public services and posing new challenges for institutions, policy makers, civil servants, and communities. While austerity measures are being adopted, innovative solutions based on the active involvement and engagement of citizens emerge as a new paradigm, questioning the established welfare systems and raising quite a few unsolved problems. In this scenario, design thinking (Brown, 2009) is being interpreted as a mean to generate innovative solutions, to reshape services and to change the ways in which they are conceived and delivered. The session will investigate how service and participatory design processes can be applied to foster innovation in the public sector, and how prototypes and small-scale experiments can be scaled and turned into diffused practices. Set of relevant questions and challenges.

- What is the desired impact of design culture on SI?
- How can we introduce design culture as an agent of change in public organisations?
- How can we relate design experiments to policy making to create impact and scale innovative solutions in the public sector?

### **SI IMPACT ASSESSMENT – APPROACHES, METHODS & TOOLS**

Alfonso UNCETA, Javier CASTRO SPILA, Alvaro LUNA and Egoitz POMARES, SIMPACT project, Sinnergiak Social Innovation, Donostia-San Sebastian

Social Innovation does not possess a stabilized framework (concepts and methodologies) and its impact evaluation is still a pending task. In this context what should be the suitable measurements and methodologies to evaluate social innovation and its impact? The question does not have an easy answer because of the multidimensional dimension of the social innovation concept and the multi-sectorial scope of its impact. In addition to this and stimulate the meeting turning more dynamic, provocative, invigorating and short inputs will welcome from participant and attendants under the topic of social innovation frameworks and assessment experience.

## **SI & WORKPLACE INNOVATION**

Peter OEIJ, SI-DRIVE project, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, The Hague

Deborah AKUOKO, DreamOval Foundation and GIMPA Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, Accra, Ghana

Audrey CHIA, NUS Business School and Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Rosemary EXTON, UK WON and Workplace Innovation Limited, London

Katharina LOCHNER, cut-e GmbH, Hamburg

Peter TOTTERDILL, UK Work Organisation Network, UK WON and Workplace Innovation Limited, Kingston University London, London

Longfei YI, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou

Recently, Eurofound has performed a 51-case study research into workplace innovation across Europe. This research will be a stimulus to explore how workplace innovations and social innovation can inspire each other. In this session a discussion will be held on the basis of submitted research papers, about questions like these:

- How can we design workplace innovation in such a way that this will enhance the capabilities of both the employees (and employee representatives) and the (innovative) capability of the work organization?
- How can employees play a role in designing such workplaces?
- How can organizations and employees be supported to develop workplace innovation?
- How can we link workplace innovation within organizations with social innovation in the environment of organizations?

## **RETHINKING BUSINESS MODELS FOR SI**

Alessandro DESERTI, SIMPACT project, Politecnico di Milano, Milan

Maria KLEVERBECK and Judith TERSTRIEP, SIMPACT project, Westphalian University, IAT, Gelesenkirchen

Francesca RIZZO, SIMPACT project, University of Bologna, Bologna

Even if quite a few adaptations to social enterprises of schemes and tools meant to design business models for commercial enterprises have been tried, there is a lack of investigation and understanding of the specificity of business models for social innovation. Apart from the seminal work of Smith, Binns and Tushman (2010) and that of Jonker and Dentchev (2013), very little has been said on this topic. The session will present and discuss with participants the results of the extensive empirical research on the economic foundation of social innovation conducted in the SIMPACT project project, showing how social innovation is characterised by intrinsic contradictions/dilemmas and other contextual conditions that naturally lead to the creation of complex business models, partially or substantially different from those adopted by commercial enterprises. Set of questions on the specificity of social innovation business models

## **Social Innovation Components, Objectives & Principles**

Interested in all three elements and their interplay? Come join SIMPACT's and CrESSI's joint session:

### **THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SI**

Alex NICHOLLS, CRESSI project, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, Oxford

Judith TERSTRIEP, Maria KLEVERBECK and Dieter REHFELD, SIMPACT project, Westphalian University Gelsenkirchen, Gelsenkirchen

Rafael ZIEGLER, CRESSI project, Social-ecological research group GETIDOS, University Greifswald, Greifswald

Gudrun SCHIMPF & Georg MILDENBERGER, CRESSI project, CSI Heidelberg, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg

Christopher HOUGHTON-BUDD, CRESSI Project, TU Delft

Sharam ALIJANI, SIMPACT project, NEOMA Business School, Reims Campus, Reims

So far, the economic dimension of social innovation is a largely unexplored research field lacking theoretically sound approaches. The economic foundation should not be interpreted as economisation of social innovation and is not limited to questions of market efficiency.

In particular, the session aims to sensitise the understanding of the economic dimensions of social innovation with regard to the theoretical framework of the two projects. One part will refer to the theoretical approach of components, objectives and principles. The session should emphasise the dilemma of effectiveness of addressing social problems and efficiency of resources allocation plus balancing cost and revenues. A further contribution to this session will explore how economic sociology offers a novel way into exploring the structural drivers of marginalization as a means to identifying new policy agendas that develop a fairer and more balanced European economy.

### **Conference venue**

TechGate Vienna, Donau-City-Str. 1, 1220 Vienna

### **Further information**

For additional information including accommodation, please visit the [conference website](#).



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