



WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?

OVERALL AIM:

Gaining knowledge of the concept and main features of social innovation



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Defining social innovation...

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Flw9g6rzTJo>
- What the heck is Social Innovation? Social innovation refers to the creation, development, adoption and integration of new and renewed concepts and practices that put people and the planet first. We can all be a part of the solution. Because it's up to us.
- [Centre for Social Innovation](#)
- Publication: 2014
- Reference: A Michael Krauss / Lhara Eben Production - www.MichaelKrauss.ca
- Duration: 1,24 m

Defining social innovation...

- There is not a common and shared definition of social innovation
- Stanford Centre for Social Innovation: SI is “the process of inventing, securing support for, and implementing novel solutions to social needs and problems
- SOCIAL POLIS project: SI is “the satisfaction of alienated human needs through the transformation of social relations: transformations which ‘improve’ the governance systems that guide and regulate the allocation of goods and services meant to satisfy those needs, and which establish new governance structures and organizations (discussion forums, political decision-making systems, etc.)

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Defining social innovation...

- Johnson in his essay “Where good ideas come from” (2010) identifies 4 different environments that create new ideas, processes and things:
 - the ideas of individual inventors working as or with businessmen,
 - ideas of individuals in society that may be taken up at different places,
 - market-networked innovations, generated by (clusters of) enterprises and their R&D departments
 - non-market/networked movements inventions and actions making them practical innovations.

Why social innovation?

- Why has social innovation moved centre stage over the last decade? The main reason is that existing structures and policies have found it impossible to crack some of the most pressing issues of our times – such as climate change, the worldwide epidemic of chronic disease, and widening inequality
- The classic tools of government policy on the one hand, and market solutions on the other, have proved grossly inadequate. The market, by itself, lacks the incentives and appropriate models to solve many of these issues. Where there are market failures (due to non-competitive markets, externalities or public goods), these tasks have fallen either to the state or civil society.

Why social innovation?

- However, current policies and structures of government have tended to reinforce old rather than new models. The silos of government departments are poorly suited to tackling complex problems which cut across sectors and nation states. Civil society lacks the capital, skills and resources to take promising ideas to scale.
- As during earlier technological and social transformations, there is a disjunction between existing structures and institutions and what's needed now.
- This is as true for the private as for the social economy. New paradigms tend to flourish in areas where the institutions are most open to them, and where the forces of the old are weak.

Why social innovation?

- So, for example, there is more innovation around self-management of diseases and public health than around hospitals;
- more innovation around recycling and energy efficiency than around large scale energy production; more innovation around public participation than in parliaments and assemblies;
- and more innovation around active ageing than around pension provision.

The growth of a new social economy

- Much of this innovation is pointing towards a new kind of economy. It combines some old elements and many new ones. This is a 'social economy' because it melds features which are very different from economies based on the production and consumption of commodities.
- Its key features include:
 - The intensive use of distributed networks to sustain and manage relationships, helped by broadband, mobile and other means of communication.
 - Blurred boundaries between production and consumption.
 - An emphasis on collaboration and on repeated interactions, care and maintenance rather than one-off consumption.
 - A strong role for values and missions.

The growth of a new social economy

- Two themes – sometimes clashing, sometimes coinciding – give it its distinctive character.
- One comes from technology: the spread of networks; creation of global infrastructures for information; and social networking tools.
- The other comes from culture and values: the growing emphasis on the human dimension; on putting people first; giving democratic voice; and starting with the individual and relationships rather than systems and structures.
- Much of this economy is formed around distributed systems, rather than centralised structures. It handles complexity not by standardisation and simplification imposed from the centre, but by distributing complexity to the margins – to the local managers and workers on the shop floor, as well as to the consumers themselves

The growth of a new social economy

- As a result, the role of the consumer changes from a passive to an active player: to a producer in their own right.
- Retail purchases that have been cast as the end point of the linear process of mass production are redefined as part of a circular process of household production and reproduction.
- The so-called consumer doubles as a domestic producer – a cook, a mother, a carer, a shopper, a driver, a nurse, a gardener, a teacher or student – entailing so much of what makes us human.
- This domestic sphere has previously been seen as outside the economy, as too complex and ungovernable, but has now come to be recognised as economically critical, with all the needs for support, tools, skills and advice that being a producer entails.

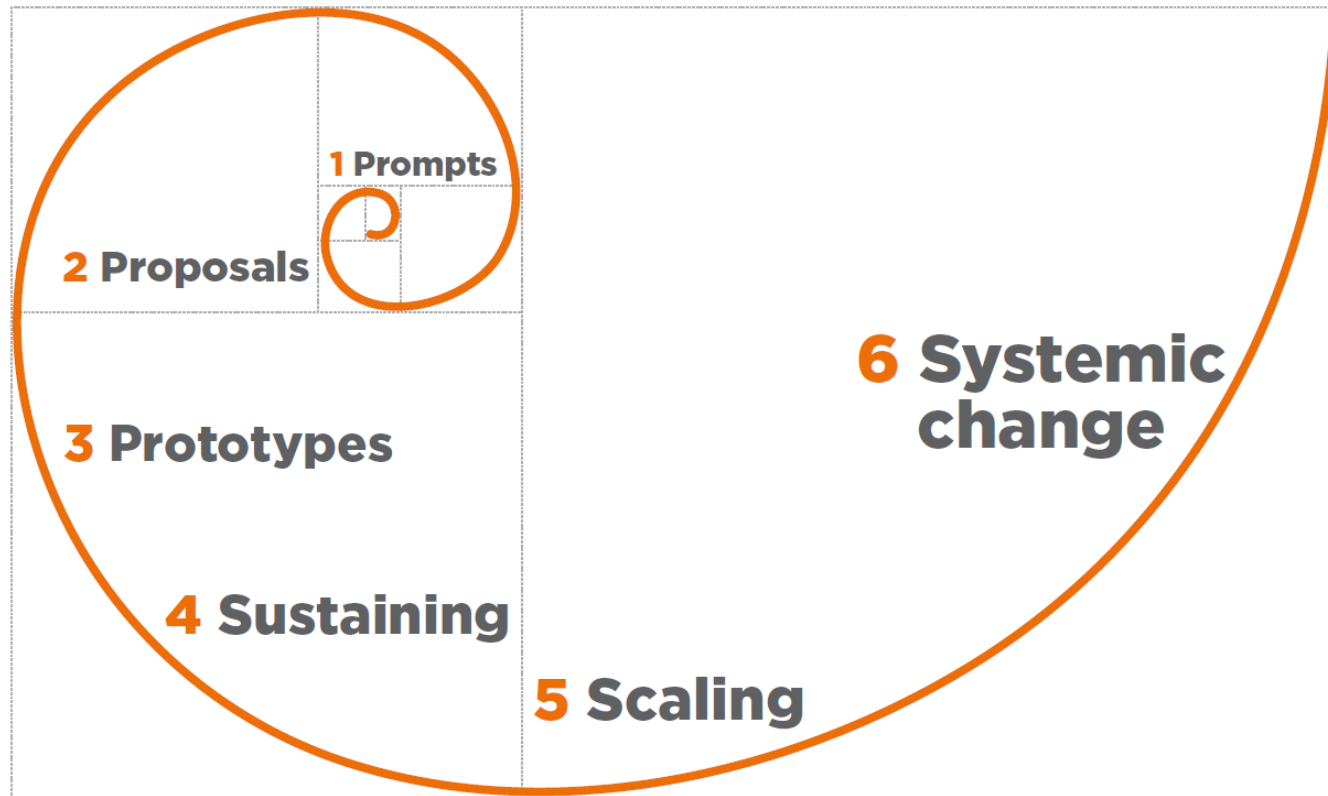
The growth of a new social economy

- In both the market and state economies, the rise of distributed networks has coincided with a marked turn towards the human, the personal and the individual.
- This has brought a greater interest in the quality of relationships; it has led to lively innovation around personalisation (from new types of mentor to personal accounts); a new world rich in information and feedback; growing interest in pathways (for example from early childhood into adulthood) and service journeys (whether of a patient through a health system or a passenger through an airport).
- Public policy has also turned towards the household, through innovations like nurse-family partnerships and green concierges

The process of social innovation

- Six stages of social innovation
- These stages are not always sequential (some innovations jump straight into 'practice' or even 'scaling'), and there are feedback loops between them.
- They can also be thought of as overlapping spaces, with distinct cultures and skills.
- They provide a useful framework for thinking about the different kinds of support that innovators and innovations need in order to grow.

The process of social innovation



Source: Butzin et al. (2014), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309241238_Theoretical_Approaches_to_Social_Innovation

The process of social innovation

1 Prompts, inspirations and diagnoses.

- In this stage we include all the factors which highlight the need for innovation – such as crisis, public spending cuts, poor performance, strategy – as well as the inspirations which spark it, from creative imagination to new evidence.
- This stage involves diagnosing the problem and framing the question in such a way that the root causes of the problem, not just its symptoms, will be tackled.
- Framing the right question is halfway to finding the right solution.
- This means going beyond symptoms to identifying the causes of a particular problem.

The process of social innovation

2 Proposals and ideas.

- This is the stage of idea generation. This can involve formal methods – such as design or creativity methods to widen the menu of options available. Many of the methods help to draw in insights and experiences from a wide range of sources.

3 Prototyping and pilots.

- This is where ideas get tested in practice. This can be done through simply trying things out, or through more formal pilots, prototypes and randomised controlled trials. The process of refining and testing ideas is particularly important in the social economy because it's through iteration, and trial and error, that coalitions gather strength (for example, linking users to professionals) and conflicts are resolved (including battles with entrenched interests).
- It's also through these processes that measures of success come to be agreed upon.

The process of social innovation

4 Sustaining.

- This is when the idea becomes everyday practice. It involves sharpening ideas (and often streamlining them), and identifying income streams to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the firm, social enterprise or charity, that will carry the innovation forward.
- In the public sector this means identifying budgets, teams and other resources such as legislation.

The process of social innovation

5 Scaling and diffusion.

- At this stage there are a range of strategies for growing and spreading an innovation – from organisational growth, through licensing and franchising to federations and looser diffusion.
- Emulation and inspiration also play a critical role in spreading an idea or practice. Demand matters as much as supply: how market demand, or demand from commissioners and policymakers is mobilised to spread a successful new model. This process is often referred to as ‘scaling’, and in some cases the word is appropriate, as the innovation is generalized within an organisation or the organisation itself expands.
- But scaling is a concept from the mass production age, and innovations take hold in the social economy in many other ways, whether through inspiration and emulation, or through the provision of support and know-how from one to another in a more organic and adaptive kind of growth.

The process of social innovation

6 Systemic change.

- This is the ultimate goal of social innovation.
- Systemic change usually involves the interaction of many elements: social movements, business models, laws and regulations, data and infrastructures, and entirely new ways of thinking and doing. Systemic change generally involves new frameworks or architectures made up of many smaller innovations.
- Social innovations commonly come up against the barriers and hostility of an old order. Pioneers may sidestep these barriers, but the extent to which they can grow will often depend on the creation of new conditions to make the innovations economically viable.
- These conditions include new technologies, supply chains, institutional forms, skills, and regulatory and fiscal frameworks. Systemic innovation commonly involves changes in the public sector, private sector, grant economy and household sector, usually over long periods on time

Further readings

- R. Murray, J. Caulier-Grice and G. Mulgan, 2010. The open book of social innovation, Nesta, London



**Project "SURE - Sustainable Urban Rehabilitation in Europe"
implemented in frames of Erasmus+ Programme
Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership Projects
Agreement n° 2016-1-PL01-KA203-026232**



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