Making social innovation happen

Analysis of best practices on support to social innovation

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Social innovation is by many policymakers and others considered a useful approach when tackling complex societal challenges and working for a sustainable society.[1] If social innovation is desired and several actors want to make it happen – how can that be done in practice? How can social innovation processes best be supported – identifying and innovating solutions to societal challenges with many perspectives and partners, and make them last?

The ambition to find answers to these questions is the background of this report. The report summarizes findings from an analysis of best practices on support to social innovation. It presents examples of methods, tools and approaches from organizations supporting social innovation in Spain, France, Latvia, and Sweden.

The report is produced in the project Building Capacity for a Sustainable Society (BuiCaSuS)[2], one of several EU-consortia cooperating to strengthen competence centres and ecosystems for social innovation in EU member states, connected to the new funding period of the European Social Fund (ESF).[3] This report can be used by anyone with an interest of supporting and realizing social innovation.

1.2 Content of report

The report starts with a chapter presenting the background of the report, a description of methodology, material and the analytical framework. In chapter 2, the findings of how social innovation is supported are presented. Chapter 3 presents conclusions and recommendations for further support to social innovation.

1.3 Method and material

In order to distinguish how to best support social innovation, an inventory was done of practices among support actors in the four participating countries (Spain, France, Latvia and Sweden). The aim was to learn from and describe examples of support

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[1] BEPA, 2010; Mulgan & Pulford, 2010.

[2] https://buicasus.eu/

[3] The European Commission funds competence centres for social innovation in its member states to strengthen their social innovation ecosystems. BuiCaSuS is one of six funded and its partners are Spain, Latvia, France, and Sweden.

to social innovation through different types of assistance, services, methods, knowledge, networks, etc.

Best practices were identified through a survey in each country. The survey was sent out via networks and actors with an interest in social innovation, in each country. A total number of 35 best practices were selected from the four countries. The identified organizations were interviewed based on a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews were then analyzed, and the results from the analysis form the basis for this report. The best practice descriptions of each support actor can be found on the BuiCaSuS website.[4]

The analysis has been complemented with desk research that identified tools used to support social innovation from other sources, to complement the findings in the analysis.

1.4   Analytical framework

In this section, an analytical framework is presented for how to understand and support social innovation processes, based on international policy and research. The framework is used in the analysis of best practices on support on social innovation later in the report.

A general definition of social innovation, guiding the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) program, is:

> *"'Social innovation means an activity, that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models, that simultaneously meets social needs and creates new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act."[5]*

The above claim that social innovations are social in their ends, implies that their primary purpose is to improve people's well-being, inclusion, and empowerment, especially among those who are in a socially or economically vulnerable life situation.[6] Similarly, that social innovations are social in their means, implies that they are developed through collective processes with new social practices, relationships and structures.

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[4] https://buicasus.eu/best-practices-supporting-social-innovation/
[5] Regulation (EU) 2021/1057, p 15.
[6] BEPA, 2010; Mulgan & Pulford, 2010.

1.4.1 Novelty and involvement

The novelty in social innovation can be understood in terms of more fair, sustainable or effective approaches and perspectives compared with existing solutions in society.[7] More specifically, a social innovation may be "new" in the sense of *why* it is created (e.g. that it is motivated by unmet needs), *what* is created (e.g. a new service or method), *where* it is created (e.g. that it is new to the specific area of activity), and *who* creates it (e.g. that beneficiaries are involved in novel ways).[8]

These types of newness are normative, in the sense that they can be valued differently by different actors and in different contexts. This means that social innovation can be subject to conflicts and power struggles concerning which ends and means to prioritize.[9] Such conflicts may regard the extent to which social innovation is allowed to truly transform existing systems, or only act as a "smoke screen" that buffers the consequences of a dismantled welfare state.[10]

A common denominator for social innovation is community involvement, where people who are directly affected by the addressed societal challenge are engaged in the process.[11] This is because insights into their perspectives and needs are crucial for ensuring the relevance, usefulness and effects of the process and results. Community involvement may be enhanced by civil society organizations – also called voluntary associations, non-profit organizations, etc. – through their established contacts, arenas and activities among stakeholders.[12]

1.4.2 Cross-sectorial co-creation

Another common denominator for social innovations is that they are often developed through cross-sectorial co-creation, where actors from the public sector, civil society, industry, academia, etc. jointly explore and tackle societal challenges.[13] This is because the addressed challenges are often so complex that they span over several societal sectors, policy/activity areas, etc. The lack of simple and final solutions to these challenges has motivated the labelling of them as "wicked problems".[14] Cross-sectoral co-creation is seldom easy, though, due to differing logics, interests and resources among the concerned sectors and actors.[15]

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[7] BEPA, 2010, Mulgan & Pulford, 2010.

[8] Lindberg, 2021

[9] Segnestam Larsson & Brandsen, 2016; Ziegler, 2018.

[10] Bock, 2016; Martinelli, 2013.

[11] Howaldt, 2019.

[12] Anheier et al., 2019.; Lindberg, 2021.

[13] Domanski & Kaletka, 2018.

[14] Churchman, 1967; Howaldt, 2019.

[15] Krlev et al., 2019.

Research also acknowledges that social innovation is part of "ecosystems", with reference to the environment of actors and framework conditions that affect the ability of new solutions to develop and make an impact.[16] Such ecosystems encompass various societal structures, norms, functions, and roles, spanning from political systems to attitudes, business models, competencies, etc. The critical mass of actors and initiatives in an ecosystem can be seen as a prerequisite for single initiatives to prosper, by enabling cross-fertilization and a fertile environment.

1.4.3 Elements and levels of social innovation

Research has pinpointed crucial elements and levels in the process of developing and establishing social innovations, illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Elements and levels in social innovation.[17]

The elements and levels are illustrated as loops in the figure, in order to emphasize that they may not occur in a chronological order. Instead, they tend to be continuously iterated and interwoven to cope with the complexity of the societal challenge.

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[16] Kaletka et al., 2016.
[17] The illustration is inspired by Lindberg, 2021; Mulgan & Pulford, 2010; Westley et al., 2017.

Here follow short descriptions of each element:

- **Societal challenge** – This element encompasses the identification and analysis of a persistent societal challenge, e.g. youth unemployment, housing segregation or ageing populations, where existing solutions in society have failed. This can be done in regard to the specific context, e.g. a city, village or organization, and to specific perspectives, e.g. gender, age or ethnicity.

- **Mobilization** – This element encompasses the mobilization of resources and actors that may help understand and address the societal challenge. This can involve various types of resources, e.g. public funding, private investment capital or volunteer work. It can also involve stakeholders from various societal sectors, e.g. the public sector, civil society, industry and academia. An important part of stakeholder mobilization is community involvement that encompasses the involvement of beneficiaries and communities who are directly affected by the addressed societal challenge. They can be involved to various extent, from consultation to co-production.

- **Ideation** – This element encompasses the generation of new ideas to address the societal challenge. It also encompasses designing, testing and adapting, in order to transform the idea into a materialized solution that is effective, sustainable and apt for tackling the challenge, in regard to the beneficiaries' needs and living conditions.

- **Realization** – This element encompasses the implementation of the developed solution, where it is put into use in the beneficiaries' everyday lives and sustained through a functional organization model and business model. It may also encompass scaling, where the solution is either scaled "up" to multiple places, organizations, activity areas or beneficiaries, or scaled "deep" to reach improved impact in its original context.

- **Societal impact** – This element encompasses the impact and value generated by the realized solution, for individuals, organizations and the society. The achieved values can be of a social, economic and/or environmental nature, and may be determined through impact measurements. The achieved impact can be sustained through institutionalization of the solution, as part of new or existing organizations.

Here are also short descriptions of each level:

- **Micro level** – This level encompasses the individual initiatives to address a specific societal challenge through mobilization of stakeholders and development of novel solutions. The initiative may be taken by individual innovators, groups or organizations.

- **Meso level** – This level encompasses the networking and ecosystem of the initiative, in order to engender synergies and cross-fertilization between different actors and sectors. This may take the form of new networks, platforms, projects, etc.

- **Macro level** – This level encompasses the societal structures that impact and are impacted by the initiatives. It refers to policies, regulations, norms, organizations, routines, etc. which restrict or enable societal, organizational and individual transformation. This includes the government and public administration, as well as the society, industry, and the wider public sphere.

2 How to support social innovation

How do the actors in the study support social innovation in relation to the different elements of social innovation? For each element, both common and specific approaches in the identified best practices are described. Some approaches are used in several elements and the elements are often iterated and interwoven. The aim with these practical descriptions is not to state exactly which approach should be used in each element, but rather to give inspiration and examples of how the different elements of social innovation can be supported. Under each element in this chapter, there is also a complimentary box with additional tools, from other sources than the study.

2.1 Support to identification and analysis of societal challenges

The actors in the study use different approaches to create common spaces for actors from different sectors to jointly identify, describe and understand societal challenges. The description of challenges is sometimes done in relation to specific themes, such as ageing, disability or unemployment. Others have a focus on challenges in a geographical area – for example a municipality or region. Sometimes societal challenges are selected from a pre-identified set, sometimes they are chosen in a more open process.

The identification and analysis of the societal challenge is sometimes continued and elaborated throughout the whole social innovation process, rather than a one-time event, in order to take account of continuous changes in challenges and needs.

The specific approaches identified in the study are described below.

2.1.1 Providing a diverse understanding of societal challenges

An overarching theme among the actors in the study is to use tools and methodologies that ensure that societal challenges are identified and described from a diversity of perspectives. Social challenges can be understood in different ways, depending on which perspective you have and who is experiencing it. To describe the challenges from many sides, many perspectives and sectors are invited – from those who are directly experiencing the social challenge, as well as the civil society, public, private sector and academia/research.

The Observatorio de la Realidad Social is a public sector organisation in the Spanish Region of Navarra that supports the creation of preconditions for social

innovation.[18] Among other things, they have produced a tool to support social innovation that describes different elements of social innovation processes. One step specifically concerns exploring and describing the societal challenge. The tool has a list of activities that helps in describing a challenge, such as: Identifying the stakeholders that need to be involved in order to understand all perspectives of the societal challenge, different aspects of the challenge (for example social, business and technological), possible sources of information to get the information needed to describe the challenge, choosing methods to get the information (enquiries, in depth interviews with stakeholders, finding projects that are working with similar issues in other areas, on line searches), and finally concluding the findings and design specifications for the continued social innovation-work. Other ways to achieve this broader understanding of the social challenge are described below.

2.1.2 Gathering stakeholders to analyze and describe societal challenges

Many of the support actors use different meeting spaces and platforms for social innovation as collective arenas to identify and describe societal challenges. This is by some done with a focus on jointly analyzing social needs and challenges in a specific geographical area, for example in a region or a municipality.

One example is the Partnership for Social Innovation in the County of Örebro, Sweden.[19] Here, yearly meetings take place where their 40 partner organizations from all societal sectors are invited to discuss and decide which societal challenges are most relevant to focus on in the region, in the coming years. They then have further meetings where they dig deeper into the selected themes in order to understand them better.

Another example is the French Fabrique à Initiatives – "initiative factories" – that develop new local economic activities that address social and environmental challenges in different regions.[20] This is done by linking public and private stakeholders with citizens, to construct suitable entrepreneurial responses within the field of the social economy. After having analyzed specific local needs, scoping and feasibility studies are conducted during the first stage of the process.

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[18] https://www.observatoriorealidadsocial.es/

[19] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=7

[20] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-France_210722.pdf#page=14

Other support actors focus on a specific thematic, and gather actors to go deeper into thematic issues such as ageing, integration, youth unemployment or other societal challenges.

2.1.3 Considering voices of those directly affected

Many support actors stress the necessity to ensure that the voices of those who are directly affected by the societal challenge are considered and to use citizens experiences as a starting point for analyzing and understanding societal challenges.

In Sweden, the municipality of Umeå has started a multidisciplinary innovation platform called "Social Progress Innovation Sweden".[21] It connects people, knowledge and tools in order to co-create ideas to solve complex societal challenges. The aim is to co-create to strengthen the innovation capacity and ability to solve complex sustainability challenges in the municipality. The innovation platform is managed by Umeå municipality and also involves a research institute. The ambition is to create a modern, socially sustainable municipality that invites, listens to and co-creates with citizens and other stakeholders in the city. There has been an increasing number of voices – citizens, private sector and civil society that want to be invited and listened to, wanting to discuss problems and ideas in new ways, and sometimes challenge the traditional ways to reach the public administration.

2.1.4 Involving researchers in understanding societal challenges

Many of the mapped support initiatives work closely with academia and stress that it is vital to make use of existing research and involve researchers in the description and analysis of societal challenges. One example is how the French Institut Godin was asked by the civil society organization Secours Catholique – Caritas to look at the issue of energy insecurity, through their project "Réseau Eco Habitat".[22] The project acts for the thermal improvement of housing, supporting families at all stages of their work. Caritas had expressed the need for conceptualization and academic methodology to qualify its action. Among other things, the Institut Godin did a literature review on the societal challenge of energy. In Spain, the Basque

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[21] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=17
[22] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-France_210722.pdf#page=7

Social Innovation lab aims to close the division between analysis and action, and is organized as a centre linked to the University of the Basque Country.[23]

FFSIS in Sweden, is a national knowledge and collaboration platform for social innovation, based at the University of Malmö, working in cooperation with other Universities in Sweden to strengthen the role of social innovation in reaching the Agenda 2030 goals.[24] Among other support activities, FFSIS focuses on strengthening researchers and universities in the field of social innovation and strengthening the role of academia in cross-sectoral social innovation. This is done through for example producing Foresights, facilitating networks and larger meeting arenas such as the yearly conference Social Innovation Summit, connecting practitioners, researchers, public and private sectors.

2.1.5 Challenging the challenges by expanding norms

The mapped initiatives suggest that in order to be innovative, there is a need to "think outside the box". This can involve challenging and expanding traditional norms. One example is the Swedish toolbox for supporting social innovation, called "The Joint Way".[25] It aims to increase the ability of innovation promoters – such as incubators and science parks – to identify, attract and support social innovators. The Joint Way offers different tools and methods, and has as its starting point to challenge norms regarding who can be an innovator and what an innovation is. Such norms have traditionally favored technological and industrial innovations and innovators, which are challenged by shifting the focus to social solutions and societal impact.

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[23] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=7

[24] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=10

[25] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=15

Box: Links to tools/material that supports the identification and analysis of societal challenges

The 5 Whys technique
The 5 Whys technique helps you find the root cause of any problem by asking the question "Why" repeatedly. The number '5' here comes from the anecdotal observation that five iterations of asking "Why" is usually sufficient enough to reveal the root cause. In some cases, it may take more or fewer "whys", depending on the depth of the root cause. The tool may show that the source of the problem is quite unexpected.

Link: https://kanbanize.com/lean-management/improvement/5-whys-analysis-tool.

The six thinking hats
A method for looking at a problem from six different perspectives or roles.

Links: http://www.socialinnovationacademy.eu/project/learn-to-look-at-the-problem-from-different-perspectives/, and
https://www.debonogroup.com/services/core-programs/six-thinking-hats/.

Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort
A method for gathering the local community as well as decision-makers to look at disparities of power and other topics of choice which are of relevance to the community. The aim is to thereafter set up structures for power sharing and enable community members to take a leading role.

Link: https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/north-america/earned-legitimacy-learning-cohort.

The problem tree
A problem tree maps out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue. The process often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action among the actors participating.

Links: https://odi.org/en/publications/planning-tools-problem-tree-analysis/, and
https://mspguide.org/2022/03/18/problem-tree/.

Learning to Listen Again
An approach for listening to groups experiencing multiple disadvantages that are seldom heard. This approach is still being developed to be even more inclusive and an integrated part of a practice that responds to what has been heard.

Link: https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/partnering-for-learning/learning-to-listen-again.

The Societal Readiness (SR) Thinking Tool
A practical resource for researchers and innovators to integrate broader societal concerns consistently across the stages of innovation. The tool provides a structured way to develop responsiveness to societal values, needs, and expectations.

Links: https://thinkingtool.eu/, and https://www.coursera.org/lecture/newhorrizon/the-societal-readiness-thinking-tool-how-to-use-lxqbu.

Science Shop
Science Shops are entities that carry out independent participatory scientific research on behalf of citizens and local civil society. Many Science Shops are based within universities and research institutes, but they can also be run by non-profit organizations, or even companies wanting to co-create new knowledge or understanding about community issues.

Links: https://www.scishops.eu/resources/what-is-a-science-shop-faq/, and

2.2 Support to mobilization

Support of mobilization is often done through arranging and facilitating new connections, collaborations and partnerships between different stakeholders and beneficiaries, in the studied examples. It is also done through various tools for mobilizing resources such as funding and competencies. Most of the mapped initiatives support cross-sectorial co-creation, involving different actors, communities and resources. They also attempt to involve people who are directly affected by the addressed challenges, as well as to engage different types of resources for social innovation. Examples of such approaches are described in this section.

2.2.1 Mobilizing, coordinating and connecting actors

The support actors in the study use different meeting spaces or platforms to mobilize and involve stakeholders from various societal sectors, e.g. the public and private sector, civil society, industry and academia. They create opportunities for increased cross-sectoral interaction, such as innovation hubs and innovation platforms, in all elements of the social innovation process.

One example is "Pôles territoriaux de coopération économique" (PTCE) in France.[26] This economic form of cooperation is formed by gathering actors in the same region, including enterprises from the social and solidarity economy with other enterprises, local authorities, higher-education and research institutions, training bodies, and others. The goal is to achieve sustainable local development by implementing a shared, ongoing strategy of pooled resources and create cooperation to serve economic and social projects that are socially or technologically innovative.

In the Spanish El Día Después, multi-stakeholder workshops are organized that enable a structured dialogue and co-creation based on specific and complex issues that require multiple sectoral perspectives.[27] They connect society, academia, with decision-makers. The aim is to function as a platform to generate transformative partnerships that address the challenges posed by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Another example is the Partnership for Social Innovation in Örebro, Sweden.[28] It is a regional forum for dialogue and exchange of experience on societal challenges

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[26] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-France_210722.pdf#page=7
[27] https://diadespues.org/

[28] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=7

and social innovation. It builds on a network of 40 organizations from social economy, the university and public sector in Örebro County. The aim is to strengthen the conditions for social innovation in the County in order to deal with societal challenges and contribute to a sustainable development. Offers competence building, knowledge sharing, funding of social innovation initiatives, project support and provide advice for the development of social innovation.

Asociación DECIDES innovación social in Navarra, Spain, is described as the first effort in the region to bring together capacities of actors that do not usually work together.[29] It also connects different perspectives by bringing together actors that do not often integrate technology into their innovation; technological companies that do not always have access to the reality of the accessibility and impact of their solutions; and the academic sectors that are not always able to connect their work to the real needs on the ground and thus are unable to up-scale solutions. They also help the public servants incorporate social innovation in their daily work.

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) has developed a method to make cross sectoral connections in coalitions.[30] A coalition is a program consisting of four meetings that focus on selected societal challenges. The meetings are facilitated by FfSIS and designed to take the actors from the starting position of getting to know each other and each other's working methods to the identification of problems and the brainstorming of ideas for solutions that they could work on together after the coalition's four meetings. By taking part in the coalition, the actors exchange knowledge and gain perspective on their own operations and, above all, find new potential partners for future projects and activities. Around 20 actors are handpicked from academia, civil society, private and public sector and take part of the coalitions.

2.2.2 Community involvement

The support actors in the analysis often support the involvement of beneficiaries and communities through engaging them in different parts of the social innovation process. They use different methods to make sure that everyone concerned by the challenge is involved.

One example is the Agirre Lehendakaria Center – "The Basque Social Innovation Lab" in Spain.[31] They use what they call "a community listening process" to ensure the

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[29] Home-new - UIS (innovacionsocialnavarra.com)

[30] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=10

[31] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=7

participation of beneficiaries and the community in all parts of the social innovation process. They seek to challenge the traditional division between analysis and action, incorporating a permanent listening system that generates real-time information about the perceptions of communities while responding to ongoing initiatives.

In the Spanish Red Cross – SI network, the approach is to ensure the participation of the beneficiaries and social sector workers, in the local context, in all parts of the social innovation process - from identifying the needs, designing projects, piloting with technical validation of the solutions to social validation of the solutions.[32]

In the Swedish municipality Umeå, the innovation platform rests on the thesis that development of a social sustainable city is only possible if all the citizens participate.[33]

There are also examples of involving beneficiaries in advocacy work, and in projects governance.

2.2.3 Mobilizing resources

Another aspect of mobilization among the support actors involves various types of resources, e.g. public funding, private investment capital or volunteer work. Some examples are:

The Innova Programme in Spain, managed by Fundación Caja Navarra, is aimed at financially supporting social and cultural innovation projects in the Spanish region of Navarra.[34] Projects receive funding and support through a network which fosters their connection and collaboration. As a complement to the financial aid, training and networking sessions are provided to strengthen the social and cultural sectors, as well as a project to bring the business world closer with the support of a facilitator who tries to bring together the needs and objectives of the social, cultural, and business sectors by providing individualized support.

Another example is The Swedish Innovation Agency Vinnova, that strengthens social innovation by project funding.[35] They have, for example, funding programs for strengthening social innovators/entrepreneurs and the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation/entrepreneurship. They have also adopted a mission-oriented approach in their general work, to achieve changes at the system level. This

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[32] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=4

[33] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=17

[34] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=17
[35] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=20

approach is a way to create collaborative processes with a common goal, by ensuring cross-sectoral cooperation and involvement of those concerned. It is also a way to integrate social dimensions and social impact in their general funding. As part of this, they focus on strengthening civil society´s opportunities and capacities to be involved in solutions for a sustainable society. One example is a Vinnova mission focusing on that every child should succeed in school. They support this through a learning program, where civil society organizations are invited to strengthen their innovation ability by learning methods of system thinking and design thinking.

Mikrofonden in Sweden supports social investment and mobilizes actors as well as funding.[36] Mikrofonden is a consortium of regional funds with members from the entire ecosystem, such as business advisors, banks and social enterprise associations. This means that the board has all the skills needed to understand the different types of organisations submitting applications for funding. Mikrofonden reaches the members and customers of their member organizations, and can encourage them all to send in applications.

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[36] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=3

Box: Links to tools/material that supports the mobilization

Social Innovation Lab (can also be used to support ideation)
A Social Innovation Lab is a process that brings together many stakeholders to address complex social problems. The length of them, their structure and ways of working may vary. Nevertheless, there are three key elements that define this unique process:

1) People affected by the problem must be part of the lab,
2) Social labs are designed to give form to ideas through the practice of experimentation and prototyping.

Links: https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/social-labs/, and https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/social-innovation-lab-guide/.

Multi-purpose community mobilizer groups
Multi-purpose community mobilizer groups have the purpose to mobilize people and resources to address a wide range of challenges faced by the affected communities in their everyday life. The method is used by UNICEF and has proven enormously important when getting out crucial information to communities and helping them mobilize actions.

Link: https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/reports/mobilizing-change.

Community Mapping
Community Mapping is a tool which requires the involvement of the community - of those existing in the place that is being mapped out. The joint mapping is a good first step in mobilizing actors through exchanging knowledge on local problems as well as resources and opportunities. All this knowledge will be visualized on a map.

Links: https://www.academia.edu/14728092/A_Guide_to_using_Community_Mapping_and_Participatory_GIS, and https://ucanr.edu/sites/CA4-HA/files/206668.pdf.

Social Innovation Competition
A competition that gathers social innovators, supports them to develop their ideas into working solutions and awards the best social innovations with some funding. An example is the European Social Innovation Competition, which engages people, businesses, and start-ups in many sectors, as well as universities, engineering schools and civil society organizations.

Link: https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-prizes/european-social-innovation-competition_en.

Beneficiaries' Advocacy
Samu Social de Paris is a French Public-Interest Group (i.e. an organization with public and private partners) that fights social exclusion among people experiencing homelessness. During the 2020 local elections in Paris, they gathered a hundred of their beneficiaries from their shelters and social hotels, to build advocacy together. Fifteen suggestions were then sent out to the election candidates.

Link: https://www.samusocial.paris/.

Committee
Entourage is an association that fights social exclusion and develops programs and tools for homeless people. One way they involve their beneficiaries is through one committee of their governance, which is composed of former (or current) homeless people. This committee designs the associations' roadmap and gives advice from their own experience.

Link: https://www.entourage.social/.

2.3 Supporting ideation – developing and testing new solutions

To support ideation, design, testing and adaptation of possible solutions to societal challenges, the support actors in the study use various forms of support. They offer spaces such as webinars, meetings or more long-term platforms, gathering stakeholders from different sectors to ideate and develop solutions to societal challenges. Incubator programs are used to support individual innovation initiatives to develop and test new solutions. Many attempt to challenge traditional silos and systems and work to make traditional systems more open for social innovation. Some advocate the need to involve relevant stakeholders in the ideation, in order to achieve sustainable results.

2.3.1 Gathering stakeholders to develop solutions to societal challenges

Many actors used webinars, meetings and approaches to inspire, develop and design solutions to identified societal challenges, involving different sectors.

The Spanish Red Cross supports the creation of solutions to societal challenges within their own organization, through the IDEATECA Participatory Innovation Platform.[37] It is a digital platform that is open to all Spanish Red Cross staff and volunteers to co-create innovative responses to common societal challenges. Ideas and proposals are collected from any person from the organization in any territory and any sector, opening a creative space for sharing of ideas and co-creating proposals. Another example is the Social Innovation Network run by the Spanish Red Cross, which engages actors in a series of thematic webinars to discover impactful solutions to the world's most pressing problems.[38] During these bi-monthly 45-minute online sessions, a social challenge is presented, and three or four initiatives are presented by experts who are currently responding to the problem. The webinars are organized in collaboration with the Stanford Social Innovation Review and the Ashoka network of social entrepreneurs. The Network´s online platform is dedicated to sharing content to test, scale and promote social and technological innovations.

Another example is the Latvian organization SEAL, that organizes Hackathons for Social Innovations.[39] It is a 48-hours marathon of idea development, where new, viable social business projects based on modern technologies can be created under

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[37] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=4
[38] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=14

[39] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf

the guidance of professional mentors. In cooperation with the British Council in Latvia, SEAL organizes a Social Entrepreneurship Pitch called "Tam labam būt augt" ("That Good should Grow") with the aim to promote the development of existing social enterprises and new social entrepreneurship ideas, as well as to show and present these ideas to others.

2.3.2 Challenging traditional silos and structures

There is a perceived need among the support actors to challenge traditional ways of working and thinking, in order to be innovative in ordinary systems and structures. For example, the municipality of Umeå, Sweden, describes the need to connect their innovation processes with the traditional line operation in the municipality. They see a need to update and redirect the culture and tradition of leadership and planning in public administration in order to create a modern, socially sustainable municipality that invites, listens to and co-creates with citizens and various actors in the city. Through inviting actors to innovation labs and a co-creation community where citizens, companies, associations, researchers meet to explore solutions to challenges in society, they use co-creation to make Umeå greener, more equal, inclusive, circular and creative. The aim is to open up the organization in the municipality to interact with and to provide opportunities for citizens to be involved in the development in the municipality, in a simple way. The discussions from the meeting arenas end up in board meetings and influence decisions, for example on digital meeting places for elderly and digital centers for youth. Prototypes have been explored for developing the elderly care, on how to live well as a senior in Umeå. A prototype for modern generational housing has influenced the detail planning with the housing companies in the municipality.

2.3.4 Involve those who can address the challenge

In order to make innovation last over time, some of the support actors describe how they all the way from the start aim to involve those actors who can make sustainable change happen.

One example is the Pamplona City Council's Pact for the elderly population of San Juan, that aims to generate cross-sectoral synergies between entities in the same neighborhood with a common objective: the improvement of the quality of life of the elderly.[40] They strive to involve all actors that can contribute to improving the

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[40] https://www.pamplona.es/ayuntamiento/varios/pacto-de-san-juan-de-las-personas-mayores

everyday lives of the elderly, in designing proposals to jointly address the three pillars of ageing: health, participation and safety. They design projects based on the participative action of different social and professional agents, of different sectors and services, as well as of those in charge of the local municipal entity.

Another example is the Latvian civil society organization "Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia" that manages a project to enhance youth capacity in municipalities, strengthening the cooperation between social enterprises and local governments.[41] Social enterprises, civil society organizations and youth organizations work together to promote a sense of belonging and to seek effective solutions to societal challenges at local level. As creators of the social impact ecosystem, it is considered important to involve municipalities as partners, motivating and encouraging them to set up support systems for community organizations in their regions, also for youth organizations and social enterprises. The work helps scaling the solutions identified. The approach itself is also being disseminated to other municipalities in Latvia.

2.3.6 Strengthen actors to be part of cross-sectoral co-creation

Some of the mapped initiatives support actors from societal sectors – often the civil society – that may need increased support and opportunities to be involved in cross-sectoral co-creation for social innovation.

For example, the Latvian SIF is a public foundation working to ensure effective implementation of social cohesion policy and strengthens citizenship and democracy by supporting a civilly educated, active, responsible, inclusive and cohesive society.[42] Innovation in solving social problems of vulnerable groups has been one of its most important measures. SIF has financially supported civil society organizations, municipalities and companies strengthening their capacity and improving existing or creating new social services. They describe that civil society organizations and other organizations sometimes lack support opportunities in various areas, such as administrative skills, human and financial resource management, planning, operations and impact assessment. SIF has provided supervision and support to the project applications as well as to project implementation. Many of Latvia's organizations have since built their capacity to develop ideas, prepare applications or other documents and implement activities. It contributes to the sustainable development of civil society by enabling civil society

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[41] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf

[42] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=8

organizations to improve democratic processes and cooperation at all levels of the public sector.

Box: Links to tools/material that supports ideation

Ideation Workshop

An Ideation Workshop is the third step in a design thinking process aiming to support the generation of ideas. The workshops consist of tools/exercises such as "How Might We?", "Brainstorming", "Prototyping", etc. The tools often serve to question the obvious and open up the mind to new creative solutions.

Links: https://uxplanet.org/how-to-run-an-effective-ideation-workshop-a-step-by-step-guide-d520e41b1b96, and https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/what-is-ideation-and-how-to-prepare-for-ideation-sessions.

Alternatives Transformation Framework

A framework for gaining a more in-depth understanding of existing initiatives from political, economic, social, cultural and ecological fronts. It also helps in identifying the worldviews that underlie and inform the initiatives. The purpose of the frameworks is to enable the actors in the initiative to take steps towards a better initiative - an alternative - for a more comprehensive transformation.

Links: https://kalpavriksh.org/publication/alternative-transformation-format/, and https://vikalpsangam.org/wp-content/uploads/migrate/Resources/alternatives_transformation_format_revised_20.2.2017.pdf.

UPSHIFT

UPSHIFT is a training programme specifically designed for disadvantaged youths. Its aim is to introduce them to social innovation and to train them in the capacities needed to work with social innovation.

Link: https://www.unicef.org/innovation/upshift.

2.4 Supporting realization

To support the realization of social innovation processes in terms of achieving implementation and scaling, the support actors use different approaches such as incubation programs to enable social innovators to test and scale their solutions, or to incubator programs and other innovation/business promoters to strengthen their capacities to support social innovation. Others work to strengthen and connect the actors of the ecosystem, in order to create better preconditions for scaling, connecting and matching actors for collaboration and partnerships.

Another approach is to strengthen policies on social innovation to create a clearer steering and follow up of social innovation.

2.4.1 Incubation programs

Incubation programs are a common approach among the support actors to strengthen social innovation. Some examples are:

Ronalpia in France, that is a social entrepreneurship incubator that develops programs in various locations across the Auvergne-Rhônes-Alpes region in France.[43] They provide assistance with the creation of the project, the structuration of its business model, and support in getting in connection with the local ecosystem, thus enabling social innovators to test and scale their solution.

Another example is the Spanish Fundacion Once, that provides support to entrepreneurial projects, start-ups and companies that bring innovation and social value with a specific focus on disability in Spain.[44] They provide Acceleration Services that support in validating the social impact of the idea, improving the business model, and providing opportunities for cross-sectoral cooperation. They also carry out a biennial study called "Radiography of entrepreneurship and disability in Spain" that promotes entrepreneurship and social innovation in the field of disability in Spain and analyses the current situation. It identifies and analyses the ecosystem of support available for social entrepreneurs, and shares best practices of entrepreneurial, innovative and successful initiatives that are achieving or are willing to achieve a positive impact on the group of people with disabilities encouraging intersectoral collaboration. They also have a networking group that includes the ONCE Foundation itself, business schools, consultancy firms, and entities promoting social innovations.

2.4.2 Supporting innovation/business promoters

One approach to social innovation realization is to help innovation/business promoters to become better at supporting social innovation. For example, The Joint Way in Sweden is a digital toolbox that provides methods and knowledge on how to support social innovations/innovators, freely available to innovation/business promoters.[45] The initiative aimed to strengthen the opportunities for Sweden´s innovation promoters to identify, attract and support social innovators/entrepreneurs. The toolbox is both research- and practice-based and

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[43] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-France_210722.pdf#page=29

[44] https://www.fundaciononce.es/en

[45] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=15

was co-created with the involvement of innovation/business promoters, private sector, civil society and academia. It was designed based on the supportive practices of the participating innovation/business promoters, in order to fit their needs and routines.

2.4.3 Strengthening the ecosystems

One approach to realization and scaling of social innovation among the support actors is to strengthen the ecosystems around the innovations/innovators. In order to do this, the Spanish Social Innovation Lab Navarra[46] have contributed to building, making visible and reinforcing the social innovation ecosystem in the region of Navarre. This has been done by introducing the concept of social innovation in the region, connecting different agents and stakeholders, the ideation of projects and the support through methodologies and trainings.

In Latvia, the organization Reach for Change works both as training and support institution for strengthening the capacity of social innovators and also works to develop the Latvian social entrepreneurship ecosystem.[47] The main focus is on children and young people. The two directions help build an understanding of the situation and problems in Latvia, and allows to provide better support and create enabling conditions for the development of social innovation.

2.4.4 Connecting and matching actors for scaling

The support actors help disseminate and scale social innovations by arranging different forms for exchange and connections. Through mobilizing, coordinating and connecting ecosystem actors, on international, national, regional, and local levels, they create possibilities for scaling.

One example is Reach for Change Latvia, that organizes international peer experience exchanges, joint learning sessions as well as events where social entrepreneurs from different countries meet.[48] Through forums and workshops they get to know each other or enable potential partnerships. An example of such partnership was established during "Baltic Change Leader Days" which led to the cooperation between social entrepreneurs from Latvia and Lithuania – as the result

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[46] Home-new - UIS (innovacionsocialnavarra.com)

[47] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=12

[48] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=12

of joint international project one of the social entrepreneurs expanded their products to new markets.

Another example is The Spanish Fundación Caja Navarra, that creates cross-sectoral alliances through the Innova Programme, generating synergies for the development of innovative and sustainable projects.[49] Through knowledge of the projects carried out by public and private entities of all kinds, they create alliances. A facilitator from the Innova Programme is exclusively focused on weaving networks and favoring the sustainability of the projects. They also provide training on topics such as opportunities for partnerships with social and cultural entities, new models of strategic alliances and keys to achieve collaborations with greater impact, and on incorporating the intersectional perspective into social and cultural projects. In addition, they facilitate exchange of good practices between social organisations. They also support social organizations in the region to become more ambitious, sustainable and scalable, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Latvian Social Innovation Center (SIC) aims to strengthen and disseminate knowledge, promote international and national experience exchange and establish a network for social innovation - thus enhancing sustainable development of society.[50]

Among other things, SIC supports actors with knowledge and competences regarding ideating and implementing social innovation in collaboration with other sectors/stakeholders, where a key is matching the right collaboration partners for greater good. SIC describes that their support is especially needed for less experienced or knowledgeable stakeholders as they embark on the path of working with the topic of social innovation or implementing novel concepts themselves.

2.4.5 Strengthening policies on social innovation

Some of the support actors actively work to make national, regional and local policies include social innovation. One example is the Observatorio de la Realidad Social in Spain, that advise the government of Navarra to integrate social innovation in their policies and plans and also try to promote initiatives within the government that promote social innovation.[51] They are currently working with the regional government of Navarra to promote a social innovation hub specializing in disability and active ageing, where all sectors come together in a comprehensive manner.

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[49] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=17

[50] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=4

[51] https://www.observatoriorealidadsocial.es/

Another example is the work of the facilitator of the Innova Programme, that is exclusively focused on weaving networks and favoring the sustainability of the projects.[52] The also provide trainings on topics such as: opportunities for partnerships with social and cultural entities; new models of strategic alliances and keys to achieve collaborations with greater impact; and incorporating an intersectional perspective into social and cultural projects.

2.4.6   Integrating innovation into existing systems

One approach among the support actors to make sure that social innovations are integrated into regular systems is to work closely with the systems themselves. For example, Umeå's innovation platform for sustainable cities – Social Progress Sweden strives to connect innovation processes with the traditional operations of the municipality.[53] They describe a need for the culture and tradition of leadership and planning in public administration to be updated and redirected in order to create a modern, socially sustainable municipality that invites, listens to and co-creates with citizens and various actors in the city. The project manager in the municipality describe how innovation in the public sector is about adaptability and the ability to include different perspectives, and that municipalities need to include those that the organization exists for in development work. They also acknowledge that this involves crossing more boundaries of the organization, between competence fields and perspectives.

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[52] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=17

[53] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Sweden_210722.pdf#page=17

Box: Links to tools/material that supports the realization

Scale accelerator

Scale Accelerator is a 6-month intensive training programme targeted at social leaders to help them grow the reach and impact of their organisation. The participants will, besides the actual training, get the extra benefit of each other's company and so they will challenge, support, and inspire each other. The programme is conducted online by Spring Impact with the funding of The National Lottery Community Fund.

Link: https://www.springimpact.org/scale-accelerator-2/.

Catalyst Fund

A Catalyst Fund can be set up to support the scaling of social innovations. Two examples are The Social Innovation Catalyst Fund by European Union and The Catalyst Fund by FirstPort. The fund offers loans to social entrepreneurs, often to those that don't meet the criteria for getting other types of investments.

Links: https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/helping-social-innovators-scale-size-and-impact, and https://www.firstport.org.uk/social-investment/the-catalyst-fund/.

Learning As You Scale

Learning As You Scale is an approach to promote scaling through the continuous evaluation of social innovation projects by looking at their data and insights. The approach aims toward involving end beneficiaries/consumers in the process and can lead to the constant evolvement and improvement of the social innovation or the dissolvement of the innovation if proven to be ineffective and thus giving space for new, impactful social innovations. Genio has developed a guide for Learning As You Scale which comes with plenty of tools such as SWOT, Venn Diagram, The PICO Framework, Process tracing, and Lived experience.

Link: https://www.genio.ie/publications/learning-as-you-scale.

Funder Support

Funder Support is a type of collaboration where funders get help on how to design their funding programmes in order to support scaling. Spring Impact, who offers this support, also include the development of a scalability assessment framework in the collaboration.

Link: https://www.springimpact.org/funder-partnerships/.

Impact Transfer

Impact Transfer is a process led by Ashoka in which the core is that they match solutions with funders and local implementors in other parts of the world so that the impact can be transferred - scaled. The whole process consists of five steps: inspire, screen & assess, match, setup & support, and learn.

Link: https://impact-transfer.org/.

2.5 Supporting the visualization of achieved impact

The support actors help supporting the social innovation initiatives to show societal impact and value by different approaches, including impact assessment, visualizing and dissemination of results.

2.5.1 Supporting impact assessment

In Latvia, the national branch of the international organization Reach for Change support social entrepreneurs with promising solutions to challenges among children and youth.[54] They support social entrepreneurs in business planning and in measuring their social impact. In their incubator program, social entrepreneurs are offered training in impact measurement as well as individual support. They build on existing suggestions for objectives and milestones, which are then supplemented with their own specific objectives.

Another Latvian example is the Social Innovation Centre (SIC), that has built a website for The Social Entrepreneurship Network in the Baltic Sea Region[55] that can be considered as a method for displaying results and effects of social innovation and especially social entrepreneurship, by their featured success stories. There is also a site section dedicated to impact measurement methods for educating people on evaluation of social innovation.[56]

In France, Avise - a competence center for social innovation – offers a training program called Cap Impact.[57] It offers social innovation support organizations/incubators a basic skill training on social impact assessment, so that they in turn can support social innovation projects. Avise also manages a national resource center dedicated for social impact evaluation.[58] It's mission is to raise the awareness on these issues among ecosystem actors and provide the necessary tools to promote the new practices and to foster interaction among stakeholders.

The Spanish Acción Contra El Hambre is part of a European Network of Innovation for Inclusion.[59] In their entrepreneurship programs, they incorporate the social approach in the creation of all companies, and they also advise social entrepreneurs. With a social innovation project funded by ESF, they have an impact measurement system with control groups, which can serve as a reference for other social innovation projects.

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[54] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=12

[55] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-Best-practices-Latvia_210722.pdf#page=4

[56] https://www.socialenterprisebsr.net/library/impact-measurement-methodology/

[57] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-France_210722.pdf#page=6

[58] https://www.avise.org/evaluation-impact-social

[59] https://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/en

ALC is a centre linked to the University of the Basque Country and supported by the Agirre Lehendakaria Foundation.[60] They are a team of 15 who are specialised in the design, implementation and evaluation of Social Innovation Platforms. They design social innovation processes with a territorial approach that connect community networks, public institutions and companies.

Social Innovation Platforms allow for shared diagnoses of social challenges, co-creation and co-design processes and the activation of a portfolio of interconnected initiatives. ALC also facilitates the evolutionary evaluation of these platforms.

Competitions, awards

One example of supporting and making the values of social innovation visible comes from the Observatorio de la Realidad Social in Spain.[61] They organize a yearly Award for social innovation in social services, to recognise and visualise projects and their results.

La Social Cup is a French yearly contest aiming to raise awareness on social entrepreneurship and rewarding young social entrepreneurs.[62] The contest includes different supportive elements such as collective innovation workshops throughout France. In the national contest, the results of social entrepreneurs are pitched and made visible for others.

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[60] https://buicasus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/All-best-practices-Spain_210722.pdf#page=7

[61] https://www.observatoriorealidadsocial.es/

[62] https://lasocialcup.com/

Box: Links to tools/material that supports the creation of societal change and value

> **I2E Inventing Green Tool**
> The I2E Inventing Green Tool is an online self-assessment, which will help you to identify areas where one can improve one's social enterprise's environmental practices.
>
> Link: https://www.nesst.org/i2e-inventing-green-tool.
>
> **Collective Impact Evaluation**
> An approach to measure and evaluate initiatives where the emphasis lies on participation by all stakeholders and that promotes continuous learning. At the heart of it is the creation of a shared measurement system which the stakeholders relate to in order to show if, where, and for whom the initiative is making a difference. It is a framework meant to be used over a long period of time.
>
> Links: https://www.fsg.org/resource/guide-evaluating-collective-impact/, and https://ssir.org/articles/entry/evaluating_collective_impact#.
>
> **Effektakademin (The Academy of Impact)**
> Effektakademin is an academy created by the Swedish NGO Effektfullt (translated into "Impactful"). It offers online crash courses, an Impact Master Class and network meetings. The crash courses and the master class provide training in the different aspects of impact measurement such as Theory of Change Fundamentals, Problem Mapping, Designing a Measurement Plan, etc. The network meetings are an opportunity for members of the academy to meet others with an interest in impact measurement and exchange struggles as well as tips on how to overcome challenges. The classes are open for everyone (although there is a discount for paying members) whereas the network meetings are a perk for members only.
>
> Link: https://akademi.effektfullt.se/.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

With the growing understanding of social innovation as a useful – although challenging – approach when tackling complex societal challenges and working for a sustainable society, there is a need for more knowledge on how to make social innovation happen in practice. The actors in the study are providing that kind of insights, exemplifying how cross-sectoral co-creation can be supported in the different elements and levels of social innovation processes. These examples can inspire other support actors to continue to identify and facilitate solutions to societal challenges and to make them sustainable. Below are some of the key findings of the study.

3.1 Support to all elements of the social innovation process

Research tells us that the described elements of social innovation processes – e.g. mobilization, ideation and realization – are crucial to make social innovation happen and achieve societal impact. The report shows that support actors use different approaches to facilitate each element. This includes support not only to the "classic" element in innovation that concerns the generation of new ideas, but also to preparatory elements of mobilizing stakeholders and critically analyzing the addressed challenge – as well as to executional elements of implementing, scaling and assessing the impact of the developed solutions. The study supports the claim that awareness of the different elements of the social innovation process – and their access to tools to support them – is useful for designing change processes with greater potential to tackle complex societal challenges.

3.2 Providing means to meet social aims

The report shows that the identified support practices encompass support to social innovations in relation both to their *social aims* to improve people's well-being, inclusion and empowerment, and to their *social means* of collective processes with new social practices, relationships and structures. Support of social aims include, for example, support to creating better approaches that provide effective and thorough descriptions and ideas when identifying, describing, designing and scaling solutions to societal challenges, where more perspectives are used than in more traditional attempts. The mapped initiatives suggest that social aims can be reached in a better way when more innovative understandings and solutions to challenges are developed.

Support of social means include, for example, support to processes of cross-sectoral collaborations where actors from the civil society, public sector, industry and academia jointly identify and address societal challenges. The support actors often also include those who are directly affected by the challenges. The mapped initiatives suggest that community involvement can contribute to ensuring perspectives that otherwise tend to be left out. This may contribute to improved innovation in terms of sounder analysis and solutions, by providing input in challenge identification, ideation, realization, and value creation. The involvement ranges from consulting beneficiaries and communities to full engagement in co-production. The mapped initiatives suggest that it is critical to make sure that the involvement is meaningful for all concerned parties, especially for the beneficiaries.

3.3 Challenging cross–sectoral cooperation

The initiatives in the study show that coordinating different societal actors and sectors needs to be recognized as an important but complicated process, and that silo-busting in development work is easier said than done. There are challenges in converging the respective logics of the public and private sectors, the civil society and academia. Research shows that different sectors and organizations may have different agendas and working methods, which means that collaboration requires time, perseverance, and coordination. Coordination is also complex as it often covers several areas of policy and implementation. The study suggests that there are challenges in the (im)balance of power between sectors, and special measures may be required to ensure that beneficiaries and underrepresented actors and sectors have the opportunity and incentive to participate. Working consciously with power imbalances is challenging but needed, to create spheres of co-creation that is based on equal opportunities for all involved. So, while having the potential to create more innovative solutions, cross-sectoral co-creation needs specific support, increased knowledge on the how to do it, as well as political leadership to make it happen.

3.4 Multi–level support to social innovation

As shown in research, social innovation encompasses the different levels of individual initiatives (micro level), ecosystems (meso level) and societal structures (macro level). The presented examples indicate that also the support of social innovation needs to span these different levels, in order to enable societal impact and change.

The mapped support practices on the micro level concerns support to individual initiatives – for example by strengthening individual innovators/entrepreneurs through advisory services and incubation programs. It also encompasses support to organize the initiative, for example to find a suitable organization form and to mobilize relevant competencies and resources.

Mapped support practices on the meso level concerns efforts to strengthen and make use of the ecosystem that the initiative is – or might be – part of. This involves support to and organizing of cross-sectorial platforms and processes, where stakeholders and beneficiaries can meet to explore societal challenges and co-create innovative solutions. Meso-level support also involves the creation and dissemination of support tools for innovation promoters, as well as the establishment of – and access to – incubators that support social innovation/innovators on the local, regional or national level.

Mapped support practices on the macro level concerns support to impact those societal structures that the initiatives strive to improve or transform. Some support actors in the study attempt, for example, to affect public policies to better integrate the need for social innovation. Other examples connect the initiatives to, for example. the municipality's established ways of handling societal challenges. There are also examples of support to use impact assessment to ensure real change and value-creation for individuals, organizations and the society. Taken together, this shows a potential to enforce transformative change in organizations and society by better integrating practices of social innovation, e.g. cross-sectoral co-creation and community involvement, into regular systems and established institutions in all sectors of society.

3.4   Expressed needs for better supporting social innovation

In the study, the support actors were asked what they need in order to strengthen their support to social innovation. Their answers describe a lack of clear political support and guidance for social innovation and social entrepreneurship in their countries. They also request more long-term and systematic financing for social innovation processes. Moreover, they describe a need for more knowledge and research on how to best support social innovation. They also stress the need for a stronger organisation and facilitation of the ecosystem for social innovation, to make the cooperation between different support actors more effective and sustainable – and to increase possibilities for scaling social innovations. They describe that these issues prevent cross-sectoral co-creation from happening with greater impact. There is therefore a perceived need among the support actors for a

systems approach, that involves strategic coordination and support of large and small actors in the field of social innovation.

3.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings in the study, the report ends with the following recommendations:

- Make better use of existing knowledge and approaches to support social innovation

- Ensure support to all elements of the social innovation process, not only ideation but also preparation, realization and impact

- Help realize and scale initiatives on the micro, meso and macro levels

- Strengthen the ecosystems that enable social innovation by establishing and managing local and regional platforms for cross-sectoral co-creation

- Create a coordinating function for support to social innovation on national and regional levels

- Integrate social innovation support practices into regular systems and established institutions, e.g. through cross-sectoral co-creation and community involvement

- Ensure public and private funding of social innovation in all elements and levels of the process

- Improve public policy to better acknowledge and support social innovation

- Support further knowledge development on how social innovation can be supported in practice

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"BuiCaSuS is a transnational project aimed to strengthen the capacities of national competence centres for social innovation. Partners come from Spain, Sweden, Latvia, and France. It is one of six consortia funded by the European Commission. Amongst its tasks is to map current social innovation systems, support piloting and upscaling schemes, foster transnational learning on tools for innovation, and develop policy propositions for National competence centres."