DOING SOCIAL INNOVATION

A Guide for Practitioners

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

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A Guide for Practitioners

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Introduction

Barbara Clapham is 97 years old, and can no longer walk to the shops because of arthritis in her spine. She feared moving into a care home, but through an innovative London scheme called 'Homeshare' she has been matched with 26 year old actress Beth Cooke, who now lives with her in return for an extremely low rent and a commitment to spend time every week helping with household tasks.

Jenny Bush, who manages Homeshare, describes it as "a bit of a crazy dating service". The charity, which is open to applications all year round, interviews and selects potential homeowners and homesharers before they are introduced to each other and, providing all goes well, are finally "matched".

"The relationship adapts over time," says Bush. "Obviously, you start off and it's very new, like any relationship. Then you get to know each other and find out more and more as time goes on. It's an ongoing issue about high rents in London and also people being isolated in their homes, not being able to get out to do things like the shopping. I think it's really reassuring for family and friends to know there is someone a little bit older, there is someone there in the evening and overnight." Barbara agrees. "I've only got one friend left from my own generation, I'm too old. All my contemporaries have gone, which is boring. So it's nice to have someone around the place, I must say."[1]

Homeshare is just one example of what is often called social innovation. This is because Homeshare provides a novel way of addressing a social need (affordable housing for young people and care and company for older people who might be at risk of isolation). Social innovation, which is seen as one way of contributing to economic growth, while at the same time promoting sustainability and addressing social challenges, is high on the European agenda. Across Europe's Member States there is now a range of funds, foundations, labs, research centres and networks dedicated to supporting and growing social innovation. In the UK, for example, the Centre for Social Action is managing a £14m Innovation Fund to support innovative solutions in a number of priority fields. In Denmark the new Municipality Network on Social Innovation is bringing together more than 30 municipalities to share new ways of proving high quality public services. In Germany, social innovation is high on the political agenda, with the current federal administration aiming to promote citizen engagement, social innovation and entrepreneurship, as explicitly laid out in its coalition contract. But what exactly is social innovation and why is there so much hype around it?

So in essence, social innovations are new approaches to meeting social needs. Famous examples include Fair Trade, micro-finance, hospices, work-sharing, time-banking, restorative justice, community currencies and mobile apps for car pooling. But there are other, less well-known examples of social innovation all around us. Across Europe, there are numerous social, economic and environmental challenges that traditional approaches used by governments, businesses and civil society have proved incapable of adequately addressing. In fact, social innovations are being developed in towns and villages across Europe – in schools and hospitals, in care homes and prisons, in hubs and youth clubs. It is often those working at the grassroots, in voluntary and community sector organisations, associations and networks that are at the vanguard of social innovation; they're trying new ways of doing things to meet social needs.

This short guide is aimed at practitioners – those currently or considering engaging with social innovations. Even though the term social innovation is becoming more widespread, there remains

significant confusion about what it is and what the term means. This guide aims to provide an overview of what social innovation is, who does it and why it's important. We also present a number of short case studies to show social innovation in action. These represent just a small selection of the many social innovations being developed by civil society organisations across Europe and elsewhere. However, our aim in presenting these is to highlight some of the dynamism, creativity and innovation that are taking place in community and voluntary sector organisations everywhere.

1 Why is social innovation important?

Long-standing issues such as unemployment, child poverty and growing inequalities remain challenges for governments and communities across Europe. New challenges have also emerged over the past few decades. Migration and highly diverse communities have put pressure on community cohesion and, in some cases, placed additional demands on already pressed local services; a rapidly ageing population has dramatically increased demands on health and care services as well as public and personal budgets; and new lifestyles have brought with them problems of obesity and an increase in chronic disease such as diabetes. The recent economic crisis, and the austerity that has followed, has exacerbated many of these trends, for example by worsening long-term youth unemployment. However, these challenges also show the real difference that social innovation can make in finding new and better solutions to address them.

The following are just four of the many challenges we face. In each of these cases, traditional approaches have so far proved inadequate. Social innovation can be a means to reducing the harm caused by each of these issues.

- High levels of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment has been at least double the rate of general unemployment for the last 20 years.[2] This trend has worsened dramatically since 2008: there are now more than 14 million young people not in education, employment or training, and the youth unemployment rate stands at an average of 23.5%.[3]
- The explosion in **chronic disease**. Chronic diseases are the leading cause of mortality in the European region, accounting for 86% of all deaths.[4] They affect more than 80% of people aged over 65 and represent a major challenge for health and social care systems. Already 70–80% of health care budgets are spent on chronic diseases in the European Union.[5]
- **Demographic shifts**. In Europe, people are living longer and as a result, the population of working age is shrinking while the relative number of retirees is increasing.[6] This inversion of the population pyramid will pose a radical challenge to two principal strands of the 20th century welfare settlement – pensions and care for the elderly.
- **Climate change and resource scarcity**.[7] The costs and impacts of climate change will be considerable and wide-ranging.[8] Dealing with these require profound changes, not only in terms of new technologies, but also in terms of individual behaviour. We will need to cut energy use, use it much more effectively, conserve materials through recycling and re-use, and avoid production where possible rather than expanding it. This requires innovation on a vast scale.

Each of these four examples is problematic for a number of reasons. First, there is a growing disconnect between traditional services and new needs – health services for example were originally designed to deal with acute rather than chronic disease, but it is chronic disease which is becoming more prevalent.

Second, in the case of chronic disease and climate change, the most effective policies are preventative rather than curative but these have been notoriously difficult to implement despite their apparent economic, health and social benefits. To do so would require considerable innovation.

Third, difficulties in meeting growing demand have been significantly exacerbated by cost savings and efficiencies which have reduced investment in schools, prisons, care homes and hospitals, and the labour intensive services they provide. What is needed is innovation both in the way we address these challenges and innovation in the kinds of institutions responsible for dealing with them.

There are a broad range of social, economic, environmental and demographic pressures which are becoming ever more pressing at a time when public budgets across Europe are being dramatically reduced. Innovation is needed to address these challenges and to help modernise the institutions tasked with addressing them.

Spice, UK

Spice is a charity that develops time credit systems for communities and public services. Unlike many traditional person-to-person time banks which focus on mutual support, the Spice time credit model is primarily aimed at building relationships between communities and public service organisations by increasing engagement. It takes an asset-based approach, with a view to ultimately achieving increased co-production of services.

Organisations (from schools, to youth centres, homeless hostels or community cafes) invite community members to provide their time and skills by contributing to its running or organising activities and events. Each hour contributed earns the member one 'time credit'. Time credits can then be spent on a wide range of other community activities – some offered by the 'host' organisation where the credits were earned, and others by external partners such as leisure centres, training opportunities, local theatres and cinemas or museums who have 'spare capacity' to offer. Individuals can also trade credits between themselves to provide mutual support.

For example, one Community College introduced time credits for students and found that it "dramatically improved the number of students that are positively participating in the college. It has especially helped to identify all the great work being given by the more 'silent students', the one who always helped but wasn't a natural leader or even a student who played up! We are really excited about the future and the possibilities that have been opened up". Others are using time credits to engage parents as well as students, offering opportunities to spend credits on things like tickets to the school play dress rehearsal or to use the IT facilities 'out of hours'.

From small beginnings in 2009 as a University of Wales Institute, Spice now operates across the UK and is expanding rapidly. In the last five years, almost 14,000 people have taken part in Spice programmes, contributing to their local communities.

Spice is also committed to increasing co-design and co-production in health and social care, creating a dedicated time credit programme, UpLift, which emphasises that everyone has the assets and skills to contribute to their community. The programme is actively seeking to engage those who are most socially isolated and those who have chronic health conditions.

Figure1: Spice Time Credits Model

Time Credit earners at a social care service in London

Copyright: Spice

Evaluations have shown that the introduction of Spice time credits in a locality or service leads to a significant increase in the number of people giving time to their community and marked increases in social capital. It is an approach which is effective at reaching beyond 'the usual suspects' and the community based options for spending credits also boost participation and social cohesion. Members of Spice time banks report an increase in self-esteem and well-being, increased skills development, and increased motivation and access to paid employment. Both community and staff report improved relationships and more collaboration between professionals and community members.

Figure 2: Overview of Spice Time Credits impact, 2014

2 What is social innovation?

There are many different definitions of social innovation. This definition is based on our research over the last three years and in offering this definition we hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion on social innovation.

We define social innovations as new approaches to addressing social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise the beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources.

We define social innovation in the following way:

- *New*
  A social innovation is new to the context in which it appears.[9] It might not be entirely new but it must be new to those involved inits implementation.
- *Meets a social need*
  Social innovations are created with the intention of addressing a social need in a positive or beneficial way. Social innovations can also play a role in articulating or shaping social needs; they can help to legitimise new and emerging social needs or those which have so far gone unrecognised. Because social innovations are concerned with meeting specific social needs, we argue that social innovations are distinct from innovations which have a social impact.[10]
- *Put into practice*
  Like innovations more generally, social innovations are ideas that have been put into practice. In this way, social innovations are distinct from social inventions (new ideas that have not been implemented).
- *Engage and mobilise beneficiaries*
  Beneficiaries are involved or engaged in the development of the social innovation or in its governance. This is either achieved directly, or through appropriate intermediaries or other actors who themselves have direct contact to the beneficiaries. It might also take place via actors who directly support the beneficiaries or have legitimate knowledge of their needs. This engagement often helps to ensure that the social innovation serves legitimate goals and involves the members of the target group themselves in addressing and owning their own problems. This can, in turn, lead to better and more innovative solutions, as well as increasing their awareness, competences, and even their dignity and self-esteem.
- *Transform social relations*
  Social innovations aim to transform social relations by improving the access to power and resources of specific target groups. As such, social innovations can empower specific groups of people and challenge the unequal or unjust distribution of power and resources across society. In this way, social innovations contribute to discourses about the public good and the just society.

Aside from the five criteria above there are also a number of factors, which often characterize social innovations, but do not necessarily have to be present:

- Unlike other forms of innovation, especially innovation in large scale companies, social innovation often tends to be **'bottom up' rather than 'top down'** and ad hoc rather than planned. It often emerges from informal processes and the entrepreneurial actions of citizens and groups of individuals.

- At the outset, social innovation is typically marked by **a high level of uncertainty**, in part because it has never been implemented before. As a result of this uncertainty it is impossible to say at the outset whether the social innovation is 'good' or more 'effective' or 'better' than alternatives. This can only be seen in hindsight.
- At the beginning, a social innovation will be different from widespread or mainstream practices. But, depending on the social, political and cultural context in which it appears, it **may become embedded in routines, norms and structures** and thereby become a widespread everyday practice. Once the innovation has become institutionalised, new needs and demands might arise, leading to fresh calls for social innovation.
- Despite good intentions, social innovations might prove to: be socially divisive; have **unintended consequences** that have negative social effects (by excluding people who are affected by the innovation in the design and implementation stages) and; become vulnerable to co-option and/or mission drift.[11]

Types of social innovation

Social innovation is a broad term which refers to a wide range of activity. A key reflection on our research is that we often need to go beyond using 'social innovation' generically and be clear about what kind or type of social innovation we're talking about. To this end, we've developed a typology of social innovations which sets out five forms or types of social innovation. Some social innovations might cut across more than one type.

Type of social innovation	Description	Example
New services and products	Such as new interventions or new programmes to meet social needs	Car-sharing; zero energy housing developments (e.g., BedZED)
New practices	Such as new services which require new professional roles or relationships	Dispute resolution between citizens and the state in the Netherlands (the professional civil servant role has changed dramatically and citizens' social needs are much better met)
New processes	Such as co-production of new services	Participatory budgeting (started in Brazil and since widely scaled; is not dependent on ICT, though ICT often used); Fair Trade
New rules and regulations	Such as the creation of new laws or new entitlements	Personal budgets (e.g. in Denmark and the Netherlands where older people can decide themselves how to spend much of their support money)
New organisational forms	Such as hybrid organisational forms; for example social enterprises	Belu Water, a small UK based social enterprise, which sells bottled water and donates all its profits to WaterAid and has pledged to raise £1m by 2020

Wäscherei in der Aumühle (a laundrette in Aumühle), Germany

Aumühle is an institution for people with learning disabilities in Darmstadt. It is run by Mission Leben, a Protestant social enterprise. A series of sheltered workshops exist connected to a residential home, including a laundrette which opened in 2007. When planning the laundrette, the main question was how to create jobs which are secure in the long run for people with learning disabilities. And how can people who lack skills such as literacy and numeracy still render services in a growing service society?

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55 people with learning disabilities plus some additional staff work in the laundrette. A market gap was detected in the handling of people's individual laundry (e.g. clothes of residents in residential, retirement or nursing homes, work clothing, etc.). The laundrette is operated through ICT at nearly all stations of the laundry process. Devices (terminals, readers, data carriers, sorting devices, IT-hardware, and printers) as well as software (database system and modular software) are used which, on the one hand, control and facilitate the work processes, and on the other hand, were developed according to the needs and abilities of the employees.

The laundry process is split into several steps with different demands on, and tasks for, the employees. Every piece of laundry is fitted with a code or tag which can be scanned. In this way, soiled laundry can be identified at the entrance. It is sorted either by RFID technology or scanned by hand and then sorted and treated according to the simple symbols shown on the screen of the reader. The applied modular software subdivides the laundry process in further segments. At each station, the screen shows only what is necessary at that moment. Communication between employee and machine follows largely pictures, colours or symbols. After washing and tumble drying, the laundry is sorted, ironed, folded, and sorted again. In contrast to commercial laundrettes, Aumühle offers numerous opportunities for manual labour. This has been a conscious decision, as not all employees are able to work with ICT.

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As an essential added value, the customers do not only get clean laundry back, but it is already sorted by residents, ready to put into the wardrobe. The sorting is done at the end of the laundry process. Two or three employees work in the individual sorting area. There, each piece of laundry is scanned. By way of database assistance and lights above container boxes, each piece of clothing can be associated with its owner. The employees sort the textiles in the right boxes.

Depending on their personal needs and requirements, the employees of the laundrette work in shifts. The employees value and use the new leisure time options which they get as a consequence: sleeping in on a late shift day and having a relaxed breakfast with colleagues who work late, too; or using a day off during the week to pursue a new hobby. This opens new perspectives for the individual employee.

The experiences of Aumühle show as well that working with modern technology motivates employees with learning disabilities. They want to work with computers, to continue learning, and to try new things. A further innovation of Aumühle that has resulted from these experiences is the offering of computer classes for employees (handling of standard software, internet usage, rules for social media).

The example demonstrates a successful social innovation integrating people with learning disabilities into the job market. It addresses their psychological needs (e.g. their sense of belonging, quality of life, dignity etc.) and creates sustainable jobs in service industries.

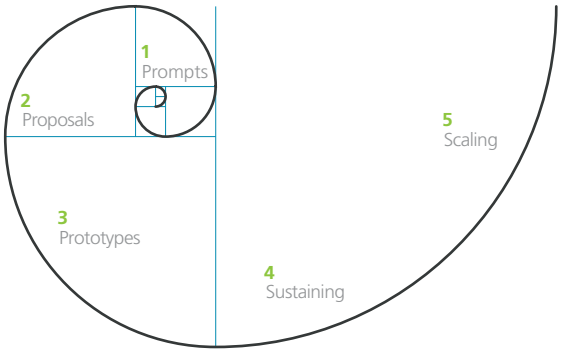
3 How social innovation takes place

We have identified five stages in what is called the social innovation life-cycle that take an idea from inception to impact. While this five stage process does not capture the often messy and experimental nature of developing and growing social innovations, it does provide a very useful analytical framework with which to think through the range of different activities that take place and the support and resources that are required at each stage.

The five stages are:

1. Prompts – where the need for social innovation becomes apparent
2. Proposals – where ideas are developed
3. Prototyping – where ideas get tested in practice
4. Sustaining – when the idea becomes everyday practice
5. Scaling – growing and spreading social innovations

Figure 3 – The social innovation life-cycle[12]



Of course, in reality, many of these stages overlap and may be undertaken in a different order. Many ventures start with a practice or prototype and only fully flesh out the demand in terms of needs much later. Often, implementation, action and practice precipitate new ideas, which in turn lead to further improvements and innovations. And feedback loops exist between every stage, which makes the process iterative rather than linear. This is why we represent this process visually with a spiral.

The process is highly experimental so many ideas never make it off the ground. In many cases, plans are abandoned, prototypes fail and innovators start all over again. Failure is a natural part of the social innovation process. And these failures are a necessary part of learning what works. Indeed, Samuel Beckett's famous line 'Try again. Fail again. Fail better.' could be a mantra for any social innovator.

Not all social innovations go through all five stages, but to be a social innovation a project or practice needs to get to the fourth stage: sustaining. We see the first three stages of prompts, proposals and prototyping as the stages of experimentation and invention. Once they've become financially sustainable (either through grants or donations, or by selling goods and services), some social innovations remain small in scale and locally based, rather than attempting growth and scale, and in our view, this does not make them any less valid or valuable. In other cases, for example online, social innovations can skip out stages entirely, quickly going from prototyping to scaling and only then exploring business models and revenue streams when, again, they may fail if this does not happen successfully. It is also important to recognise that many people use the term social innovation to describe the whole life-cycle.

Mama CoWork, Poland

'Mama CoWork' is a space for mothers that enables them to combine professional career development and childcare, with no need to use external childcare providers. It allows women to do their job in a more efficient way than they could at home, thereby creating the conditions for a better work-life balance. It is primarily a place for freelancers, the self-employed, e-workers and importantly, jobseekers.

The 'Mama CoWork' proposition is a co-working office environment, adjusted to mothers' specific needs. It consists of 3 elements:

- Mama CoWork – rentable workstations in an open office environment with the possibility to register independent businesses at the Mama CoWork address, or use its reception services;
- Baby CoPlay – a space for children supervised by qualified staff;
- Mama CoWorkshop – a space in which a mother can make use of a conference room and multimedia equipment, and also a mini business incubator where a mother can attend workshops (on interpersonal skills, effective time management, professional career development etc.).

'Mama CoWork' addresses several social challenges. The most important is women's exclusion from the labour market due to the need to take care of their children. Bearing in mind that taking care of a child is usually more than a full-time activity, particularly when combined with home duties, it's obvious why it can make mothers' professional goals either postponed or impossible to achieve.

After a break to care for a child, mothers often face a number of barriers in returning to work. In Poland this problem is even greater because of an underdeveloped support infrastructure for parents; that is, a limited number of nursery schools and kindergartens, inconvenient opening hours, high costs, etc. Even were these problems to be fixed, there still remains the psychological cost of separation (both for a child and its mother). 'Mama CoWork' is supposed to address this problem too, helping mothers to find a balance between their family life and their professional carrier development.

Indirectly 'Mama CoWork' may also help to ease the problems associated with an ageing population, which in many countries including Poland is caused not only by rising life expectancy but also by declining birth rates. There seems to be a strong correlation between the latter and women feeling that they cannot successfully balance professional goals and a family life. Therefore, by helping mothers to do just this, initiatives like 'Mama CoWork' can contribute to resolving this issue.

Apart from enabling mothers to be active in the labour market and close to their children at the same time, Mama CoWork also provides an opportunity to build a community of mothers. Its innovativeness lies not only in creating opportunities to enter/return to the labour market with small children, but also in the tool it uses to achieve this objective, that is co-working (sharing workspace) which echoes the ideas of collaborative consumption or the sharing economy.

Mama CoWork is still in the prototyping/testing stage – the project is being implemented in Warsaw, Poland and it will probably take a year or two to fully evaluate its impact. People are nevertheless optimistic that it will succeed in meeting its objectives, especially since it addresses an important and common social issue and has a replicable business model. Although still in a very early stage, it is well-known (particularly as a finalist of the European Social Innovation Competition) and many people have declared their willingness to introduce similar solutions in their localities. So, while it hasn't scaled yet, it has the potential to scale because of its replicable business model.

Credit: Mama CoWork

4 Who does social innovation?

Social innovation doesn't refer to any particular kind of organisation, or to any particular sector of society. Social innovations can be developed anywhere, including on the frontline of our public services – they can be developed in schools, hospitals, prisons and care homes. They can also be developed at the local level by voluntary and community sector organisations, grassroots networks and associations, as well as by social entrepreneurs.

Social innovation takes place in all four sectors:

- The third sector – which includes foundations, associations, charities, housing associations, and other philanthropic organisations, is the source of many pioneering approaches to tackling social needs, through campaigns, advocacy and the provision of services. One example is the global Teach For All Network, which is pioneering a new approach to addressing educational disadvantage by harnessing the talent of young leaders to create systemic change.[13]

- The public sector – both in terms of policies and service models. The public sector, with its access to large budgets, huge organisational and capacity resources, policy and regulatory levers for change and networks for implementation, has the tools to create the most systemic change. One example is personal budgets which enable service users to choose directly the types of services they need.

- The private sector – this includes for example, socially responsible businesses which provide a range of goods and services such as ethical finance, Fair Trade products and renewable energy. It also includes inclusive businesses which provide services for low income communities in developing parts of the world in an attempt to alleviate poverty. One example is Pupa, a business which works in Brazil to expand access to early childhood education in low income areas. They offer training and certification to women and sell books, toys and CDs which aim to stimulate children's cognitive development.[14]

- The communities sector – which includes the activities of individuals, families and communities working to meet social needs, including the non-monetised activities undertaken by civic, religious and other community groups. This includes forms of mutual support and care, volunteering, membership of informal groups and associations (such as urban gardening and Transition Towns), collective action and social movements. One example is Streetbank, a website which allows people to connect and share things with their neighbours, with a view to encouraging more real-world interaction.[15]

The figure below shows the sectors from which social innovations emerge and the intersections between them.

Figure 4 – The four sectors

Hybrids

The above illustration is by nature a simplification. In reality, many organisations working within the field of social innovation are hybrids – containing parts of the public, private, third and communities sectors. For example, many organisations in the third sector run their own shops and other market enterprises, and many are contracted by the state to run public services.

Indeed, one of the most significant and remarkable developments in recent years has been the growth of social enterprises and social businesses. These organisations are hybrids since they operate in the market (or in quasi-markets) but are driven by social goals. Profits made are usually reinvested, either fully or partially, into the organisation or 'community of benefit'.

Challenges

Each of these sectors, and the institutions that operate within them, face numerous barriers and obstacles which prevent social innovation from flourishing. The state, for example, lacks the mechanisms that allow the best to flourish and the weak to fail and wither away. Similarly, the informal, community sector which often generates ideas, lacks the capital, surplus time and organisational capacity to turn ideas into social innovations. The non-profit sector (sometimes referred to as the voluntary sector or third sector) is the source of many pioneering approaches to tackling social needs, through campaigns, advocacy and the provision of services. However, the majority of organisations in this sector are small, dependent on grants and donations, and limited in their ability to scale. Social enterprises operating in the private market may find it difficult to compete when their bottom-line isn't their first priority but still essential for survival.

A key role for civil society

However, even though social enterprises have dominated much of the discussion about social innovation to date, it's clear that charities, community and voluntary sector organisations and other civil society organisations also play a really significant role in developing social innovations. We argue that these kinds of organisations play a particularly important role in terms of highlighting new and emerging social needs and therefore raising awareness about the need for social innovation.

Digital social innovation

We define digital social innovation as the use of digital technology to enable or support social innovation. With the rapid growth of cheap, ubiquitous and powerful tools like the internet, social media and smart phone apps, new ways of carrying out social innovation have become possible while many existing ways have been strengthened. Often this means the barriers to social innovation in terms of communication, outreach and scaling have been reduced and thresholds lowered. For example, the so-called 'sharing economy' is blossoming in which people can share cars, tools, accommodation, and even their time and skills. This is now possible more than ever before using the internet or mobile apps to match, almost instantaneously and regardless of distance, people with a social need with others who can meet that need.

Digital tools can also be transformational and open new perspectives on social innovation, such as the use of so-called 'big data'[16] to collect and analyse data absh people in different places at different times. Using new digital technologies can also open new perspectives for locally manufactured and very cheap products for people who otherwise have no chance of being helped, such as 3-D printed prosthetic limbs for war victims in developing countries.

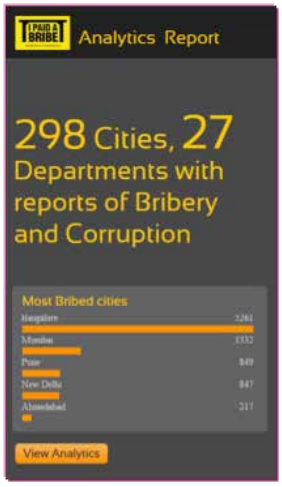
I paid a bribe, India and elsewhere

The hugely successful and innovative "I paid a bribe" web-site[17] was launched in India in 2010 in the context of a massive social outcry and movement against corruption in that country. The site was developed by the non-profit organisation Janaagraha to harness the collective energy of millions of citizens using a crowdsourcing tool to tackle corruption in public services in India. The site collects citizens' reports about the "nature, number, pattern, types, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts" across the country.

Citizens can contribute in a number of ways, including reporting on bribes they paid, bribes they resisted and instances where they received a public service without paying a bribe, that is, when they encountered 'honest officers'. There is also a 'bribe hotline' for people to ask advice about rules and regulations, how to avoid paying bribes, how to deal with corrupt officers, and so on. The result is that, together, these reports provide a snapshot of bribery and corruption in a particular locality.

This information can then be used to paint a picture of the nature, scale and location of bribery in India. This information is important for a number of reasons. First, it can be used to support citizens in their attempts to resist bribery. Second, it can be used as a tool for campaigning and advocacy – it can be used to put pressure on corrupt officials and signal to citizens that they no longer have to pay bribes. It can also be used to put pressure on government departments to change their processes and procedures, thereby improving public service delivery.

For example, there are numerous instances where government rules and procedures have been changed in light of information garnered through the site. One example is the Department of Transport in the Government of Karnataka in Bangalore. Based on the information in I Paid a Bribe's report, some twenty senior officials were issued with warnings. Similarly, changes were made to registrations of land transactions at the Department of Stamps and Registration in Bangalore.



The data being collected provide powerful evidence to document the extent and the nature of the corruption challenge in India and thereby became a unique resource in exposing and combatting it, as well as raising awareness amongst "the masses" of that country who suffer most from its depredations. The approach is so innovative and effective that it has already been taken up by grass-roots organisations in 16 other countries, including Greece, Hungary, Kosovo, Azerbaijan and Ukraine in Europe.

Conclusion

Social innovations are new approaches to meeting social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources. There are many examples of social innovation, from Fair Trade and micro-credit, to restorative justice and holistic early years' care.

Social innovation is more important than ever before. There is a broad range of social, economic and environmental challenges that require us to innovate new responses and solutions. Many of these solutions will come from civil society organisations – from charities and associations, social enterprises and grassroots organisations and groups. There is so much creativity, ingenuity and innovation already taking place across these kinds of organisations. However, to grow and spread, these social innovations will often need to be supported in some way, for example by grants, funds, philanthropic organisations, public sector bodies, networks of practitioners and professionals, partnerships, or enlightened businesses or individuals. Additionally, amongst many other challenges and needs, we need to better track and document the processes and impact of social innovations, and to strengthen and sustain networks and communities of social innovators.

We hope that this short guide has helped to provide an overview of what social innovation is, why it's important and how it takes place. To learn more, please visit www.tepsie.eu.

Resources

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To find out more see www.tepsie.eu.

Useful links

- Social innovation exchange – the global network of social innovators www.socialinnovationexchange.org
- Siresearch.eu – a platform which brings together all EU funded research on social innovation www.siresearch.eu
- Social Innovation Europe – the European network and community of social innovators https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope/

Endnotes

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