

NEWSLETTER 1 – JUNE 2012

Welcome to the first newsletter of the TEPSIE project – a major new research initiative to support the development of social innovation in Europe.

These newsletters will provide regular updates on our research findings, along with policy developments in the field of social innovation. In this first edition, we explain what the TEPSIE project is about and highlight some of our early research findings. We also report back from our first event which brought together European and American social innovators to discuss the ‘Sharing Economy’ with Lisa Gansky.



Introducing TEPSIE

The TEPSIE project is a research collaboration between six European institutions aimed at understanding the Theoretical, Empirical and Policy foundations for developing the field of Social Innovation in Europe (TEPSIE). The project explores the barriers to innovation, as well as the structures and resources that are required to support social innovation at the European level.

The aim is to identify what works in terms of measuring and scaling innovation, engaging citizens and using online networks to maximum effect in order to assist policy makers, researchers and practitioners working in the field of social innovation.

Over the next three years we will be mapping the field of social innovation - reviewing theories, models, methods and identifying gaps in existing practices and policies - in order to support the work of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners engaged in social innovation.

The Consortium consists of six institutions:

- The Danish Technological Institute, Denmark
- The Young Foundation, UK
- The University of Heidelberg, Germany

- The Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal
- Atlantis Consulting, Greece
- Wroclaw Research Centre EIT+, Poland

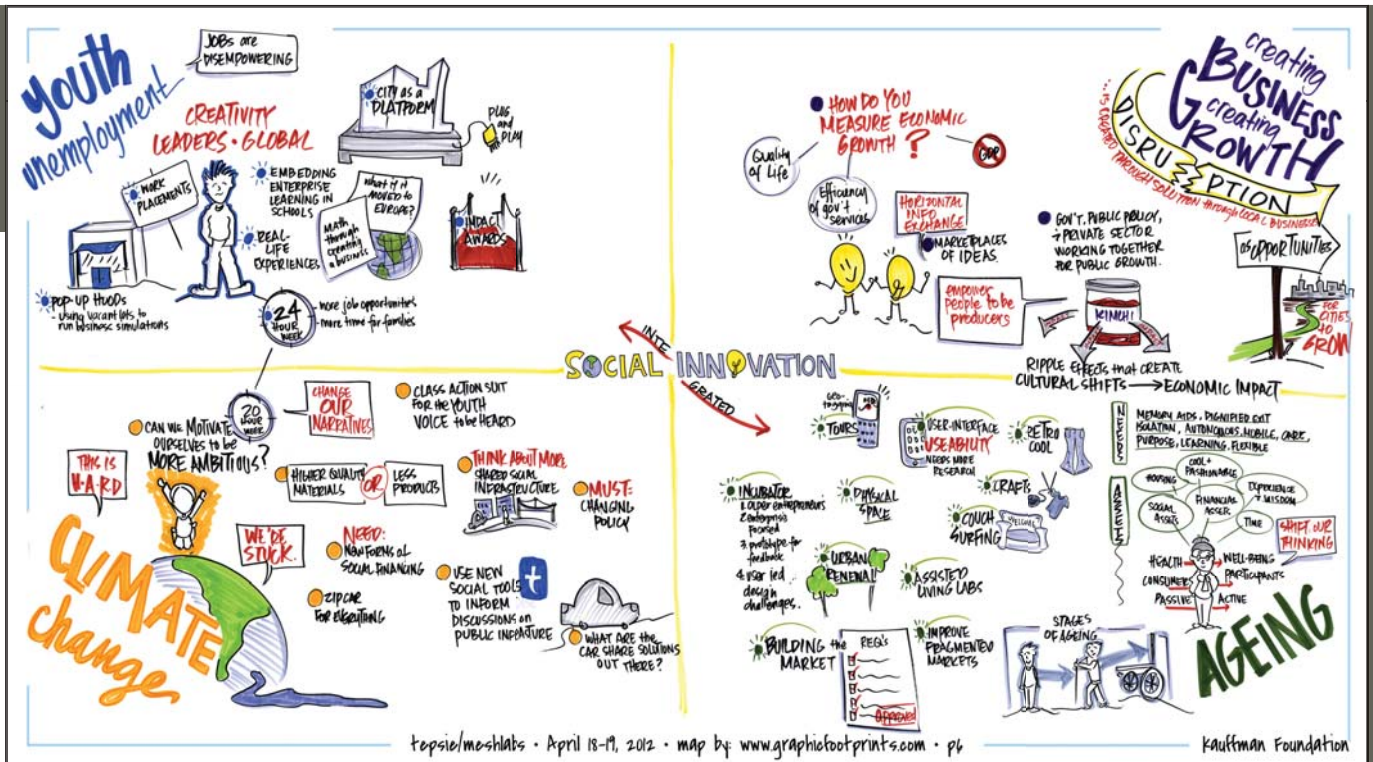
The project consists of ten work packages. You can read full descriptions of each of the different work packages, as well as the research publications on our project website, www.tepsie.eu.

Research update: Defining social innovation

One of our first tasks has been to develop a working definition for social innovation. Despite the growing interest in social innovation among policymakers, foundations, researchers and academic institutions around the world, there is currently no common definition of social innovation.

Instead, there are numerous definitions - some of which are very specific and exclude many examples of social innovation, while others are so broad that they describe projects and organisations that are not particularly innovative, even if they are in some way social.

This is partly because social innovation is a practice-led field – understandings, definitions and meanings have emerged through people doing things in new ways rather than thinking about them in an academic way.



And since the practice of social innovation looks and feels different in different fields, sectors and continents, it is not surprising that meanings and definitions vary.

While this openness and lack of clarity may be one reason that such a broad range of organisations and sectors have felt comfortable adopting the term and engaging in the debate surrounding it, we argue that reaching a common understanding of the term is critical if the field is to mature and develop further.

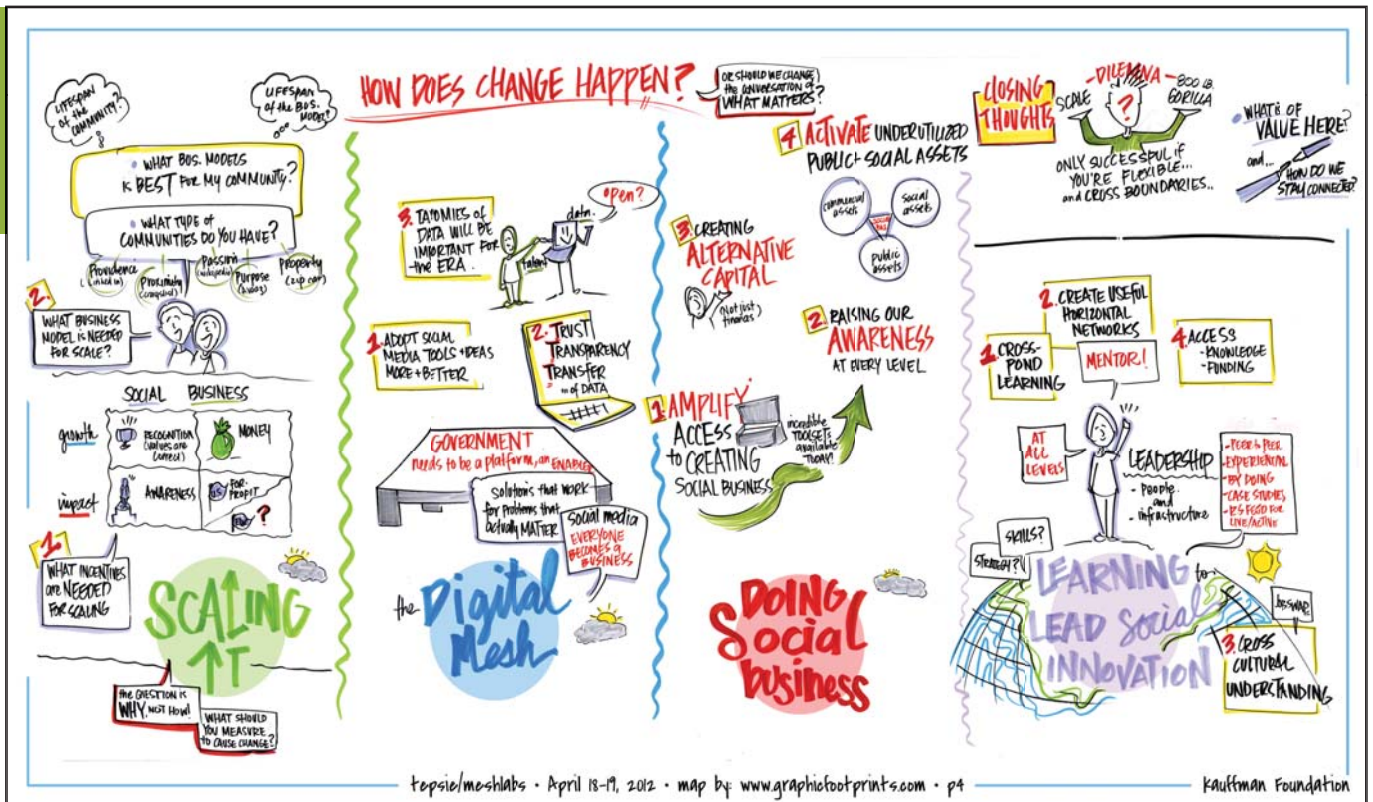
Based on our research and review of current literature and practice, we have developed a working definition of social innovation. This will be revised over the course of the TEP-SIE project as we test some of our early hypotheses.

Core features

- **Novelty:** Social innovations are new to the field, sector, region, market or user, or to be applied in a new way.
- **From ideas to implementation:** Social innovation describes the implementation and application of new ideas, rather than just the development of new ideas (invention).

- **Meets a social need:** Social innovations are explicitly designed to meet a recognised social need.
- **Effectiveness:** Social innovations are more effective than existing solutions – they create a measurable improvement in terms of outcomes.
- **Enhances society’s capacity to act:** Social innovations empower beneficiaries by creating new roles and relationships, developing assets and capabilities and/or better use of assets and resources.

Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and/or better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act.



Common elements

- **Cross sectoral:** Social innovations often occur at the interfaces between sectors and involve actors from across sectors.
- **New social relationships and capabilities:** Social innovations are often developed 'with' and 'by' users and not delivered 'to' and 'for' them. They can be identified by the type of relationships they create with and between their beneficiaries.
- **Open, collaborative and experimental:** Social innovations often involve mass collaboration - large numbers of people working independently and voluntarily on collective projects without normal market structures and mechanisms.
- **Pro-sumption and co-production:** Social innovations frequently include blurred boundary between producers and consumers.
- **Grass-roots, bottom-up:** Social innovations are often highly local, driven by local communities and connected by networks.
- **Mutualism:** Social innovations are frequently based on the idea that individual and collective well-being is obtainable only by mutual dependence.
- **Better use of assets and resources:** Social innovations regularly involve the recognition, exploitation and coordination of latent social and physical assets.
- **Development of capabilities and assets:** Social innovations often embrace participatory approaches that enable beneficiaries to meet their needs over the longer term.

We want to hear your thoughts, comments and suggestions! What's missing? What shouldn't be included? How can we improve our definition so that it resonates with both researchers and practitioners?

Send your ideas to Jeremy Millard, Danish Technological Institute, jrm@teknologisk.dk.

EVENTS UPDATE: TEPSIE IN SAN FRANCISCO

The first TEPsie project event was held at the University of California Berkeley, California April 18-19. The conference, "Social innovation in the age of the sharing economy – local challenges meet the network effect" brought together 50 practitioners and policy makers for a series of working sessions to explore social innovation from a European and North American perspective.

From micro-credit to mobile banking to new models of eldercare, the field of innovation for social benefit has grown rapidly worldwide and is increasingly recognized with new networks, research initiatives, funding sources and even a dedicated office in the White House.

Expanded access to networked technologies and the recent economic crisis are driving much of the innovation being aimed at our most urgent social problems. In an era when governments alone lack the resources to solve these challenges, our global community has both the opportunity and imperative to re-imagine what is possible.

Part of this global trend is based in a fundamental shift in business strategies and models which enable far reaching social innovations which both arise from and generate a new type of economy – the Sharing Economy. With increasing access to the Internet through low cost mobile devices and tablets, more people are connected to one another than ever before in history.

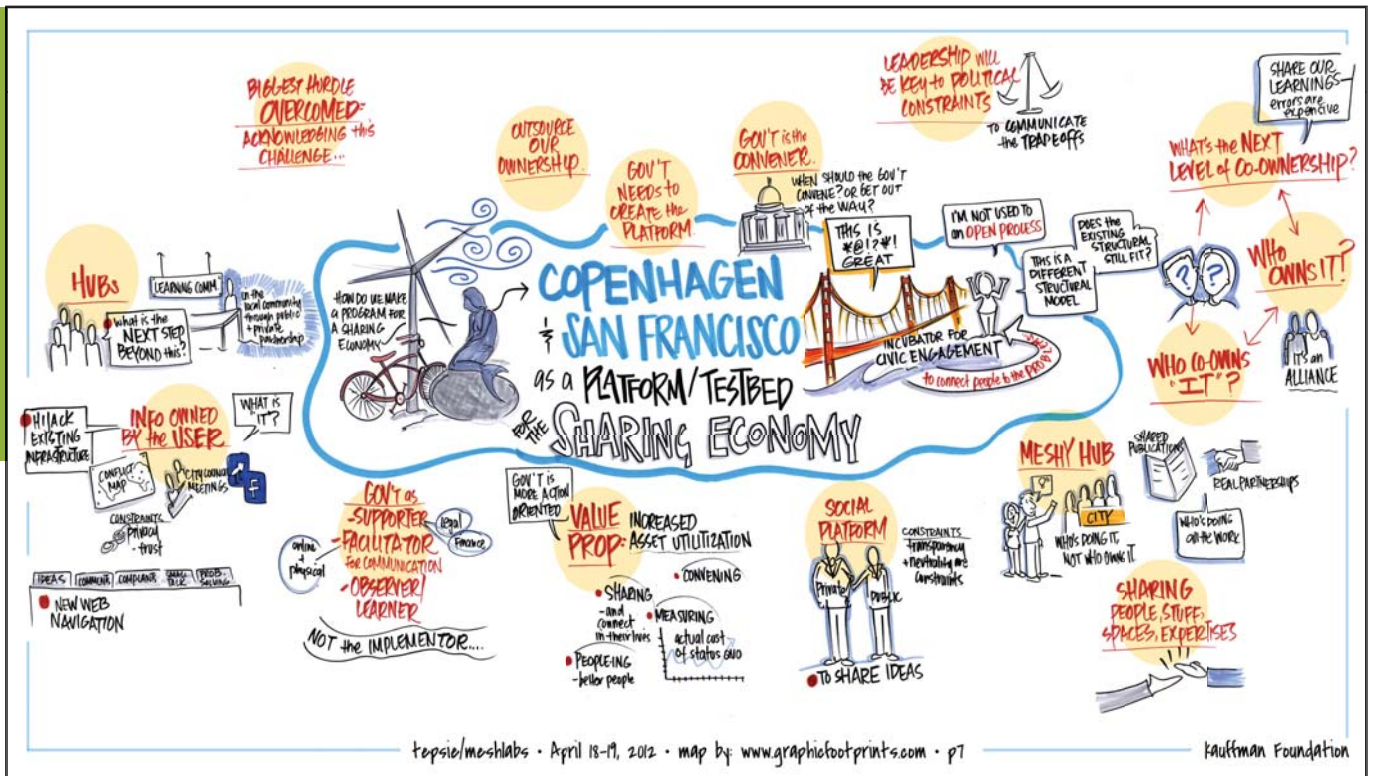
This new capacity has the power to spread ideas and inspire and reimagine old ones. Coined the Mesh, by Lisa Gansky, this timely and significant shift is reshaping how

businesses create products, define markets and craft partnerships. The Mesh or Share Economy, is at its core, a world in which access to goods, services and talent triumphs over the ownership of them. The impact will be a resounding one for our economies, communities and our planet.

The TEPsie team co-organized this workshop with the generous support by the Kauffmann Foundation, Berkeley University, the Innovation Centre Denmark and Citris.

This invitation only workshop provided an opportunity to explore the intersection of innovation with the sharing economy and a forum for exchange of best practice between leading thinkers in Europe and North America. Through sharing ideas, tools, best practices and experiences, this workshop shaped new alliances between entrepreneurs, social innovators, service innovation practitioners and policy makers.

It is our hope that this workshop has kicked off a strong and effective collaboration between those involved in social innovation in Europe and North America, which will continue throughout and beyond the course of the project.



The majority of this event was devoted to interactive working sessions. In particular the working sessions addressed the fundamental challenges faced by delegates, including:

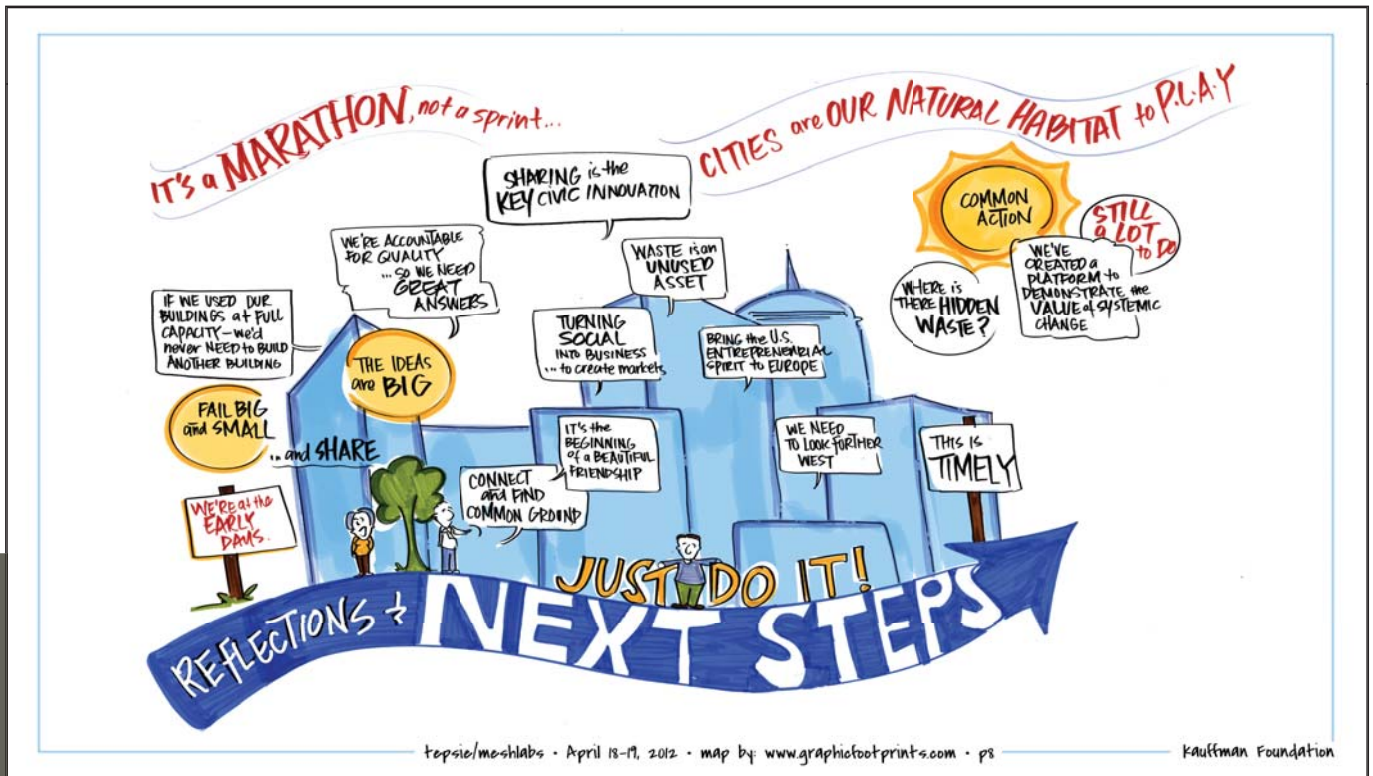
- The challenges in moving from local to large scale social innovation programmes.
- The impact of social media tools for social entrepreneurs.
- Access to key resources (relational and financial capital) and new forms of currency .
- Strategies for supporting and equipping leaders in the field of social innovation.
- The role of public authorities, particularly cities, as enablers of social innovation as well as key stakeholders.

During this event, participants also focused their discussions on key challenges, like:

- Youth Unemployment
- Ageing
- Climate Change mitigation
- Creating business, creating growth

The event proved to be highly interactive, and US and European participants quickly found common working ground. Evidence is distributed throughout this newsletter in form of the graphic maps that were produced live during the workshop.

As a concluding remark – a theme that emerged strongly throughout the 2 days was that cities seem to have a special need for social innovation, and a special role to stimulate and to enable social innovation. This theme will be further investigated throughout the TEPsIE project during the next 3 years.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The TEPSIE programme will develop a research portal as part of this Social Innovation Europe site (SIE). This online research portal will provide a platform on which citizens and stakeholders, and social innovation experts and practitioners can create and contribute themselves, either by responding to the material, contributing new papers, case studies and examples or by providing new solutions for tackling social problems.

The working papers, interim findings, policy recommendations and detailed case studies of the TEPSIE programme will be published online as part of this new research portal.

Specifically, social innovators will be able to access:

- Latest research
- Case studies
- Best practice
- Evaluation methods
- Finance tools and instruments

- Relevant examples from within the EU and outside
- Scaling models
- Models for engaging citizens

If you'd like to continue to receiving newsletter updates from the TEPSIE project, you can sign up here: www.tepsie.eu

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