

SEPTEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

In this sixth newsletter we introduce the new Tepsie work packages that have kicked off this summer. Work package 7 will be looking into scaling of social innovation and work package 8 will review how social innovation has been evaluated and what the best evaluation methods and practices are. In both of these workpackages we will be harvesting the insight we collected in our previous work.

We also provide some sign-posts for blog posts you can read on our European Social Innovation Research portal www.siresearch.eu.

This fall, we are looking forward to running our Interim project conference – the Tepsie Research Conference & Colloquium on the 1&2nd October in Heidelberg, Germany. About 60 Social Innovation experts from all across Europe will gather for a few days in beautiful and – we hope – inspiring surroundings to discuss key findings from the first wave of TEPsie workstreams that have finalised their data collection and to discuss approach, meaning and next steps for this work. Most importantly the aim of this conference is to draw out areas for further research by the future FP7 SI research projects that are starting off, and to help build synergies between these projects.

If you have any comments, we welcome your feedback on our portal or on specific deliverables. Please do get in touch.

Happy reading!



Gwendolyn Carpenter
Senior European Policy Advisor
Director of Dissemination, Tepsie

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW WORK PACKAGES

This summer we launched the final two streams of work for the Tepsie project – one looking at scaling up and the other at evaluating social innovations. Below we introduce how we will be approaching these work packages.

SCALING SOCIAL INNOVATION (WORK PACKAGE 7)



Anna Davies, The Young Foundation (UK)

The idea of scaling or scaling up is increasingly the dominant frame for conceptualising success in the field of social innovation. For many the idea of scaling is a kind of 'holy grail'. This terminology has been adopted by academics, policymakers and in the wider ecosystem of blogs, articles and grey literature that has sprung up around social innovation. According to Jeffrey Bradach (2010), "there may be no idea with greater currency in the social sector than 'scaling what works'". With such enthusiasm around the language of scaling, we think it is important in this work package to look critically at this concept and how it frames the idea of growing and spreading social innovation.

Our first task will be to undertake a literature review of scaling social innovation (deliverable 7.1). The literature looking specifically at scaling in the context of social innovation is limited, and we argue, insufficient as a frame for thinking about all the different ways in which social innovations grow, spread and become institutionalised. It will therefore be necessary to look to other literatures to map out the terrain of what will be relevant, including the older and more extensive literature that conceptualises the growth of innovations in terms of diffusion.



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The next stage of work will be a set of case studies (deliverable 7.2) of social innovations that have scaled. Rather than trying to capture all possible varieties of social innovation growth and diffusion, we intend to focus more narrowly on two or three in depth case studies. In contrast to the wealth of work on scaling social enterprises, we would like to look at instances of complex social innovations which have achieved real transformation and constitute social movements. Current candidates we are discussing include the Fairtrade mark and the hospice movement.

In the latter half of this work package (deliverables 7.3 and 7.4) we plan to work closely with our consortium partners to develop a better understanding of the ecosystem that is required to support the growth of various forms of social innovation. We will also produce a policy report, outlining the ways in which policymakers can help support and develop social innovators to take their ideas from inception to impact.

Overall in this work package we hope to contribute to a reframing of the debate so that we talk less about 'growing social innovation' generically, and apply more precision to the different forms of social innovation and the diverse strategies for growth they will require. We'll be keeping people up to date with the latest developments in WP7 through our newsletters and the blog, so do keep an eye on siresearch.eu. And if you have a particular perspective on scaling or are doing relevant work in this area, we'd love to hear from you.

EVALUATING SOCIAL INNOVATION (WORK PACKAGE 6)



Ioanna Garefi & Eirini Kalemaki, Atlantis Consulting (GR)

In Work Package 6 we are reviewing how social innovation has been evaluated and drawing together a synthesis of the best evaluation methods and practices. We will then be able to capitalize on the results of previous work packages, bringing more cohesion to the TEPSIE study. It is to be hoped that the finalized report can be used to inform policy in this area and will help investors and governments decide how best to generate social value through social innovation.

There are many different approaches regarding the evaluation of social innovation initiatives. The reason for such a rich diversity is the nature of social innovation itself. It is a relatively new and broad field, with no universally accepted definition which applies to all fields and sectors. The evaluation process is complicated because social value (which social innovation creates) is often subjective and hard to capture.



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The first thing that we are doing is identifying existing evaluation methods and approaches on a variety of levels. For example, we are looking at existing evaluations of EU programs that fund social innovation projects, e.g. EQUAL. At a national level we are planning to map the evaluation techniques used by national, regional and local programs that fund social innovation initiatives. Moving on to investors, we are hoping to identify the ways in which donors evaluate social innovators.

For example, we hope to examine the evaluation approaches used by Ashoka in order to assess any given social innovation project. Finally, we will identify the ways in which social innovators themselves evaluate their own projects and actions. Once we have examined these different modes of evaluation we will be able to compare them and then produce our own recommendations as to which are the best and most useful methods for evaluating any given social innovation initiative.

EVENT UPDATE: EMES CONFERENCE



Gorgi Krlev, CIS, Heidelberg University (D)

The bi-annual EMES conference has become a key event for scholars dealing with the social economy, the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship and the concept of social innovation. This year, over 300 researchers found their way to the lovely city of Liège in Belgium at the beginning of July. The conference was hosted by members of the research network from the HEC Management School of the University of Liège, in cooperation with the Belgian Inter-university Attraction Pole on Social Enterprise (IAP-SOCENT).

If not for profit, for what? And how?

This year's conference took its headline from Dennis Young's seminal book on non-profit organizations and was dedicated to exploring the question: "If not for profit, for what? And how?"

One response might be: For creating social innovation! Social Enterprises are the key research subject of the EMES network, but the role they might play in the emergence and diffusion of social innovation is still unclear. However, questions regarding the reciprocal relationship between entrepreneurship and innovation in the social sphere, and the increasing prominence of both, were clearly reflected by the conference panels.

This year an entire stream of ten panels focused on exploring various questions surrounding social innovation. Among these were issues of: definitions and measurement, diffusion and institutionalization, the relevance of local context and its influence on social innovation and many more.

Defining and capturing social innovation

The conference was therefore just the right place for the TEPSIE team to discuss their most recent research findings. Eva Bund presented the “Blueprint for Social Innovation Metrics” in the panel “Defining and capturing social innovation”, which was chaired by Johanna Mair, Professor at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin and academic editor of the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

The Blueprint proposes a set of social innovation indicators, representing a first step towards measuring social innovation at the national level. The indicators have been derived from a screening of more than 30 models that were designed to capture innovation in the private and the public sector and include metrics that focus on social, normative or environmental dimensions. Through this screening, it has become clear that social innovation, while sharing some traits, also differs in essential terms from mainstream innovation.

Against this background the research performed by the team of the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg has uncovered vital gaps in existing measurement systems. These concern for instance: the connection between social innovation and social needs, the struggle of innovations to gain legitimacy in society at large and the diversity of resources that need to be committed to create this type of innovation.

These issues were central aspects in the critical assessment of the Blueprint by the conference panel and the connected audience discussion. The proposed Blueprint, however, is not restricted to uncovering such gaps but also proposes metrics that might improve upon existing models. This could be done by drawing from data provided by “value surveys” or the realization of “needs mappings” for instance.

TEPSIEs “Blueprint for Social Innovation”

What is more, the Blueprint categorizes proposed indicators along three analytical levels that pay tribute to the complexity of social innovation: (1) Framework conditions, (2) entrepreneurial activities, (3) organizational output & societal outcome. The discussion at the EMES conference has however made clear that by a measurement approach alone we will not be able to capture all aspects that constitute social innovation, such as the dynamic nature of innovation processes.

However, the development of metrics – analogously to similar attempts regarding technological innovation – illustrates how a major step can be made towards understanding social innovation capacity as a vital source for societal cohesion and well-being. In this sense the Blueprint adheres to the ideal of ‘measuring what matters’ and thus provides a new way for politicians and managers to demonstrate the efficacy of social innovation hopefully leading to increased take-up.

Towards new indicators

Measurement at the aggregated macro level should ideally be accompanied by in-depth case studies that allow for more detailed insights into the process of social innovation. In the same way it will be complemented by discussion of social impact at and beyond the organizational level as well as so called “new welfare indicators” such as the “Social Progress Index” recently proposed by Michael Porter, and the comprehensive report on their promises and drawbacks by Nobel laureates Stiglitz and Sen from 2009.

The measurement of social innovation will play a pivotal role for future research and practice and we are happy to engage in more discussions going forward on how it should be designed.





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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ONLINE PORTAL (siresearch.eu)



Rachel Schon, The Young Foundation (UK)

The social innovation research website (www.siresearch.eu) continues to feature new contributions from various partners and guest bloggers. Below we provide you with some of the highlights since our last newsletter:

Jeremy Millard reports from the Annual Grantmaker's Association Conference, where a highlight was a panel discussion on big data and philanthropy. He gives examples of ways in which big data has already been put to use in a global philanthropic context, such as the innovative 'I Paid A Bribe' website in India, or the drive to challenge voter registration fraud in Croatia. He however closes with a caution as to the need for philanthropic organisations to interpret data carefully, rationally and ethically, remembering in particular that correlation does not always equal causation.

Gwendolyn Carpenter writes on what is nudge and what does it have to do with social innovation? 'Nudge' has become the hottest term in brand communications, and a new approach in policy-making. What is the big idea? Thaler and Sunstein's theory focusses on changing peoples' behavior without binding regulation or legislation. The

core subject of 'nudge' is 'choice architecture' — the art of indirectly influencing decision-making. Indirect routes that gently nudge an audience towards an ultimate goal is an attractive proposition, particularly as governments are going to depend more and more on people to take social responsibility and socially innovate. So could this be a mechanism governments should be using to support social innovation? They are certainly trying across the political spectrum and with more or less success across domain areas too. For instance, nudge is applied from Obama to Cameron from the political left to the political right, and in some countries like the UK even has its own delivery team. Read more about whether citizens like to be nudged, and what governments should bear in mind when nudging.

Eirini Kalemaki reports back from the European Business and Innovation Centre Network congress on digital, cultural and social innovation. She shares her experiences attending inspirational talks given by such well-known innovators as Steve Wozniak from Apple and Sir Tim Smit of the Eden Project. She also describes the social innovation workshops that she attended at the congress, which demonstrated the ways in which local social innovation initiatives have taken on new global dimensions and examined the increasing popularity of social innovation over recent years.

Rachel Schon reviews a new collection of essays published by the Local Government Information Unit. In this collection, Jonathan Carr-West argues that local government is at a crossroads, and citizens therefore have a unique opportunity to create a brand new form of civil settlement. Contributing essays examine new ways of rooting power in local communities and methods by which governmental organisations can work more closely in tandem with informal networks of support. They also examine questions such as the impact that increased localism might have on social mobility.

Rachel believes that the essays are of excellent value as a discussion piece, but argues that more detail must be filled in before they can serve as guides to policy.

Anna Davies writes about a new typology from Ethan Zuckerman that helps us to distinguish between different kinds of activism and the social value that they might produce. 'Thin' participation takes place when people are asked only to perform some kind of pre-defined activity, 'thick' participation on the other hand requires ideas, input and creativity. 'Symbolic' activities are about allying oneself with a particular point of view, while 'impactful' activism is connected to levers of change in the real world. Anna argues that this new typology is useful as it helps us to move beyond simplistic discussions about online vs. offline activism and instead to consider which kinds of activism are most appropriate under which circumstances.

If you would like to contribute to the portal as a guest-blogger or upload your own social innovation research project, please get in touch. You will find our contact details below.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE COMING MONTHS



John René Keller Lauritzen, Danish Technological Institute (DK)

5th International Social Innovation Research Conference 2nd-4th September at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.

The 5th International Social Innovation Research Conference ISIRC is an open conference that brings together scholars from around the globe to discuss the role of innovation in social businesses, social movements, not for-profits, state actors, and the broader social economy. This year, members of the TEPsie team presented two papers: 'How to grow social innovation: A review and critique of scaling and diffusion for understanding the growth of social innovation' and "'New ethos' with obstacles? - Empirical results on the barriers and potentials of impact investing from the perspective of investors and social Entrepreneurs".

Both papers were selected as highly commended by

the conference organisers.

TWO UPCOMING TEPsie EVENTS

As described in more detail in the last newsletter, TEPsie will be hosting two events this autumn:

1-2 October: TEPsie Research Conference & Colloquium, Heidelberg (DE).

Tepsie has now reached its half-way mark, and in October a two-day conference will be held in Heidelberg both to share preliminary findings and to receive input for the second stage of the project. With a number of other social innovation research projects also reaching this stage, and new projects set to kick off in the Autumn, the conference hopes to address the overall direction of social innovation research in Europe. Presentations will cover the current status of the Tepsie deliverables and examine how different social innovation research projects are connected. Participants will also be treated to a site visit to local social innovation projects in Heidelberg.

14-15 November: TEPsie Policy workshop as part of the conference, 'Social frontiers: the next edge of social innovation research'. London (UK).

Hosted by Nesta in collaboration with Glasgow Caledonian University and TEPsie.

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