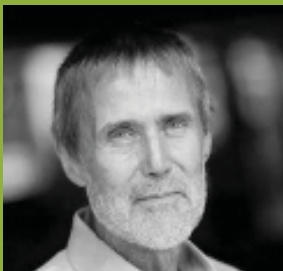


## MARCH 2013 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fourth edition of the TEPSIE newsletter! In this issue we provide an update on our research and upcoming events, highlight some of the contributions on our research portal and report back from a recent event held by the WILCO consortium.

This is an important time for the project as we are rounding off its first half by attempting to improve some of the basic building blocks of social innovation. Thus, our first tranche of work packages are moving towards the summer 2013 deadline to refine their research into measuring social innovation, overcoming barriers which might impede its successful implementation, how to create a better understanding of financing social innovation and how to improve the impact of citizen engagement.

This work will provide a set of robust conceptual frameworks and tools designed to be used during the project's second half when TEPSIE will focus on knowing what works and growing what works in social innovation, as well as finalise on-going work on the potentially tremendous importance of online networks on the roll-out and impacts of social innovation.



*Jeremy Millard and John René Keller Lauritzen,  
Project managers, Danish Technological Institute*



### RESEARCH UPDATE

In June, the TEPSIE project will have reached its halfway point. As we approach the next set of deliverables, the consortium partners provide an update on current activities within each of the five active work packages.

#### Measuring Social Innovation (Work Package 2)



*David-Karl Hubrich, Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg*

Work package two is focused on measuring social innovation at the macro level. So far we have published two deliverables. The first assessed the state of the social economy in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The second is a policy paper that argues that major data gaps need to be filled if we are to achieve a better understanding of the contribution made by the social economy to social innovation.

Currently, we are working on a comprehensive report focusing on analysing existing measurement approaches that are located in fields that could or should be taken into account when developing a social innovation measurement approach. This report summarises around 35 publications/information systems that together contain roughly 1,500 variables.

This report has two purposes. First, it will serve as a compendium that shows what is currently being measured in different countries that can be linked to social innovation. Second, it is a crucial step for developing our social innovation indicator blueprint. This blueprint will be our proposal for how social innovation can be measured.

Both the comprehensive report and the indicator blueprint will be completed by June 2013 and be available for download during July.



Foto: Gikon

### Overcoming barriers to social innovation (Work Package 3)



*Ioanna Garefi, Atlantis Consulting*

The nature and characteristics of social innovation present deep challenges. Multidimensional scope, unpredictable outcomes and complexity are just some of the characteristics that generate many of the barriers affecting its operation, development and scaling.

The main focus of the third work package is to get a deeper understanding of the challenges pertaining to social innovation, to provide concrete solutions for overcoming them and also to highlight possible reasons for failure to overcome barriers. Work completed so far has included reviewing existing literature on challenges to social innovation, thus making some tentative steps towards developing a conceptual framework which will be further utilized during the next steps of this work package.

In the next stage of our research our objective is to conduct in-depth case studies, investigating further the different challenges that social innovators face, their impacts and most importantly the strategies they use to overcome them. In particular, a number of distinct case studies will be developed based on the most pressing challenges identified and selected across Europe. This will allow for a comparative analysis explaining in more detail the reasons why

some social innovations are blossoming in some sectors, countries and regions and not in others.

Based on the results achieved in this respect, we will be able to form concrete policy recommendations on how the identified challenges can be overcome.

### Generating capital flows (work package 4)



*Gunnar Glänzel, Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg*

Since submitting our analysis of the existing financial instruments, products and vehicles to finance social innovation last year, our focus has been on analysing two prevalent observations by means of explorative interviews with innovators and investors. First, the general undercapitalisation of social innovators, and second, the infancy of social investment markets in TEPSIE partner countries. In order to say something meaningful about generating capital flows for social innovation, our research needs to help establish the link between these two observations.

Interviews with innovators and investors began in the second half of November, and most partners have finished interviewing recently or are still continuing to gather valuable data from face-to-face and telephone conversations. The major goals of these interviews were to explore the field, to test some of the hypotheses of our previous deliverables, and to gather as much information as possible.



We will follow up the qualitative interviews with a large-scale online survey which we will launch later this spring. Several thousand social innovators will be invited to participate from across Europe, but concentrated in TEPSIE partner countries. Besides the problem of 'investment readiness' the survey will also cover issues such as sources of innovators' income, financial instruments, types of investors and intermediaries, risk, co-operation activities, as well as some indicators of the social innovativeness of respondents' organisations.

Overall we are looking forward to some exciting months ahead. The online survey will be a major endeavour in the field of social investment and finance in Europe. In combination with the interviews of all partners, we aim to provide a clear picture of the overall situation of resourcing social innovation in Europe on a sound empirical basis.

### Engaging citizens in social innovation (work package 5)



*Anna Davies, The Young Foundation*

Following our first paper that mapped out different types of citizen engagement in social innovation, we have now turned our attention to the question of the value of various participation and engagement practices. The idea that citizen engagement is critical to the development and implementation of social innovation is regarded by many as a self evident truth. Equally, the importance of engaging as many people as possible in developing new solutions to social challenges is often thought of as axiomatic.

However, our recent research on this topic indicates that there is a real need for caution in the way engagement and participation activities are currently being advocated. First, there are few well established links between participatory activities and their supposed benefits. This doesn't necessarily mean that these links do not exist, but it does, at the very least, raise the possibility of a substantial waste of resources if participatory activities fail to realise the benefits they were established to generate.

Second, it is not only that participatory activities may not deliver the beneficial outcomes they promise; in some cases engagement and participation activities can be harmful and lead to negative consequences. This is especially the case where participation activities are tokenistic, fail to take account of local contextual factors such as local power dynamics, cultural mores and so on.

Does this mean that we should reject the move towards engagement altogether? Not at all! We argue that for social innovation, engaging people will always be a necessary feature in the development and implementation of effective projects that genuinely meet social needs. However, engagement needs to be done with a specific purpose in mind.

The only way to recover the concept of engagement and make it useful again is to move away from talking about it in the abstract and look at specific types of engagement activities, their specific purposes, and the value they might generate. This is what we're hoping to achieve with our forthcoming paper on case studies in social innovation – where we take a closer look at competitions, co-design, peer research, crowdsourcing, participatory budgeting and co-operative governance.

To complement the papers on the role and value of citizen engagement in social innovation and the case studies, we'll be providing a research brief for policy makers. All three papers will be available from the beginning of July.

**Using online networks to maximum effect (work package 8)**



*Jeremy Millard, Danish Technological Institute*

It is relatively easy to make a strong case that online networks will have, and are in fact already having, potentially the most transformative impact on social innovation compared to any other single factor. Is this just well worn hype or does such a view have some credence, albeit in the context of an enabling mix of other factors, and if so what are these? One obvious challenge is the sheer pace of technological change and the emergence of new tools and networks as well as the communities and ecosystems that form around them, sometimes fleetingly and sometimes more long-term, although anticipating the difference is rarely possible. A clear characteristic of online networks is their connectivity and the potential this might give to both communicating and scaling social innovation.

TEPSIE's work package 8 is tasked to examine these and related issues. In the middle of 2012, we published an in-depth review of the main technology trends and related application areas. We are currently developing a meta-analysis of the role of communities and networks in social innovation enabled by ICT (Information and Communication Technology). The purpose of the meta-analysis is to articulate one or more robust analytical frameworks, including definitions, taxonomies and domain and trend characterizations.

Although work is far from complete the research has revealed some focus areas for developing a number of potential frameworks which have value for theory, practice and policy. For example, possible typologies around some of the major dimensions relevant to social innovation which seem to be heavily influenced by ICT according to the work done in the first deliverable of this work package. These include changing relationships between bottom-up and top-down activities, between centralisation and de-centralisation, between individuals and groups, between hierarchical and networked forms of organisation, between local or small scale and global and large scale, and between innovation as new ideas and activities on the one hand and copying or emulation on the other.

The meta-analysis will be available from the beginning of July 2013, and will also encompass a framework with templates and case selection criteria for undertaking six in-depth case studies in the autumn of 2013 with publication in December 2012. This, in turn, will be followed by an analysis of appropriate policies and practices leading to recommendations for policies, framework conditions and practices at European, national and sub-national levels.

**REPORTING BACK**



*Julie Simon, The Young Foundation, reports back on an event hosted by the WILCO consortium in Brussels.*

In January, the WILCO consortium brought together research projects on social innovation funded by the EU to explore and discuss current trends and approaches to social innovation research and identify possible future directions in order to prepare for Horizon 2020. It was an excellent opportunity to meet fellow researchers working in the field and to find out more about projects including WILCO, INNOSERV, SERVPPIN, CITYSPICE, LIPSE and PERSE.

The day started with a presentation by Jane Jenson from the Université de Montréal and Denis Harrison from the Université de Québec à Montréal, who had carried out an analysis of current and recent social innovation research projects funded by the European Commission. In all, 15 projects were analysed, even though 7 of these projects did not explicitly mention the concept of social innovation.

Jenson applied the idea of a 'quasi-concept' to describe social innovation. A 'quasi-concept' (Bernard 1999; McNeill, 2006) is according to Jenson, 'a hybrid, making use of empirical analysis and thereby deploying scientific methods, but simultaneously having an indeterminate quality making it adaptable to a variety of situations and flexible enough to follow the twists and turns of policy'. Arguably, it is this flexibility which leaves the quasi-concept of social innovation open to criticism on theoretical, analytical and empirical grounds. But, as Jenson stressed, this does not mean that social innovation is merely a buzzword. This notion of a quasi-concept is a useful framing device and allows for and explains the myriad interpretations, definitions and approaches to social innovation across the policy and academic worlds.



A few themes and questions emerged from the discussion on trends, approaches and definitions. Is social innovation an explanatory phenomenon or is it the phenomenon that needs to be explained? Is social innovation a new concept to explain something which has been happening for a long time i.e. is it a new way of describing forms of social change? Or is it a concept to explain new phenomena, i.e. does social innovation describe a new form of social change? Is one theoretical approach more relevant than others for understanding social innovation? Who is responsible for social innovation? Are existing research methodologies adequate for capturing and understanding social innovation?

## EVENTS UPDATE



*John René Keller Lauritzen, Danish Technological Institute*

### **TelePresence discussions: 3rd and 12 April, 2013**

In April, we are running two TelePresence events, kindly hosted by the Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) and Cisco. Tele-Presences provide an opportunity for truly global conversations; they foster community, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences amongst social innovators. You can read more about SIX TelePresence events here: <http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/what-six-globaldialogues-series>

Our first TelePresence on April 3 focused on the sharing economy. The event brought together leading practitioners and academics to discuss what's next for the sharing economy. What are the emerging trends? What are the greatest challenges? What is the role of cities and governments in supporting and enabling the sharing economy? And – what can be done to accelerate the growth of these new forms of consumption? You can read a summary of the event on [siresearch.eu](http://siresearch.eu)

The second event takes place on April 12 and is focused on measurement and social innovation. There are many open questions about what we should measure. Should we measure a nation's performance or capacity for social innovation? Is a comparative approach between nations even possible given that social innovation will look different in different countries and contexts? And what is the appropriate unit of analysis; should we focus on social innovation actors – such as social entrepreneurs or social enterprises?

Participants will join the two discussions from TelePresence locations in London, New York, San Francisco, Pittsburg, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Brussels, Paris, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Eschborn, Aarhus, Berlin, and Lisbon.

### **TEPSIE interim conference, Heidelberg: October 1st and 2nd, 2013.**

Over two days in October, the TEPSIE partners and selected guests will meet in Heidelberg to discuss the outcomes of the project so far. This will be an opportunity for us to reflect on progress and plan the final year of the project. We are particularly keen to involve researchers from other FP7 projects also working on topics related to social innovation. Look out for further details in the next newsletter.



**Social frontiers: the next edge of social innovation research: 14th and 15th November, 2013**

In February, together with TEPSIE and Glasgow Caledonian University, we launched a call for abstracts for research papers that go beyond the current state of knowledge on social innovation, identify and address gaps in knowledge and generate hypotheses that can shape future research agendas in this field.

Social Frontiers is a major new conference which will bring together academics from a wide range of academic disciplines. The conference builds on the efforts of others including the International Social Innovation Research Conference (ISIRC) coordinated by the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, the Social Innovation Exchange and many others.

The call, which is now closed, was left deliberately open. The aim was to elicit and uncover a diversity of subjects. However, we're hoping to uncover interesting research relating to the theory and definitions of social innovation, metrics and evaluation, systemic social innovation, the economics of social innovation, how social innovation relates to resilience and wellbeing, impact investment and social finance, diffusion, replication and growth of social innovations, and collective action and participation amongst other things.

Abstracts will be selected by a panel of distinguished academics and policy makers which includes:

- Taco Brandsen, Professor of Public Administration, Radboud University Nijmegen/WILCO/EMES
- Josef Hochgerner, Zentrum für Soziale Innovation (ZSI)
- Jürgen Howaldt, Social Research Centre (sfs) of Dortmund University of Technology
- Agnes Hubert, BEPA, European Commission
- Jeremy Millard, Danish Technology Institute/TEPSIE
- Karen Miller, Glasgow Caledonian University
- Geoff Mulgan, Nesta
- Robin Murray, Young Foundation/TEPSIE
- Alex Nicholls, University Lecturer in Social Entrepreneurship, Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the Said Business School
- Antonella Noya, OECD Forum on Social Innovations, Paris, France
- Johanna Mair, Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society
- Peter Droell, European Commission
- Maria Bernal, CEPAL

Successful abstracts will be announced at the end of April 2013. For more information about the conference contact [Julie.Simon@youngfoundation.org](mailto:Julie.Simon@youngfoundation.org)

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH PORTAL

The social innovation research website ([www.siresearch.eu](http://www.siresearch.eu)) has been extremely busy since its launch with contributions from various partners and guests. Here are some of the highlights since our last newsletter:

- **Julie Simon** writes about systemic innovation in the social context. Transforming whole systems has never been more important due to the multifaceted challenges facing society. The idea of systemic innovation has been explored with regards to business and technology but a broader view of the concept is needed to help tackle some of societies pressing social issues. Therefore, systemic change needs to be explored across all four sectors business, government, civil society and households.
- **David Karl Hubrich** assesses the importance of associations in the social economy in Germany. Associations are responsible for a lot of the activity in the social economy and offer a variety of services. Further understanding of the role of associations and creating more refined measurements of social innovation can help find solutions to social issues.
- **William Millership** looks at the role of philanthropy in impact investment by reviewing a study by the Monitor Group. Small start-ups often struggle to get past the beginning stages of research and development. This is particularly true of inclusive businesses, ones that attempt to create positive social or environmental returns as well as financial ones. Philanthropists should support inclusive businesses in early stage research and development.
- **Witold Kwasnicki** announces the first social innovation competition in Poland. Social innovation has become a lively issue in Poland in response to labour market difficulties and globalisation. Different consortiums will compete for grants for programmes that attempt to solve social issues with innovative technical solutions.
- **Ute Stephan** outlines recent research into how organisations can drive social change. We currently lack a framework for understanding how positive social change can be achieved. Her study is based on 123 sources of evidence and suggests that organisations need to address three components to effect change: motivation, capability and opportunity.
- **Eirini Kalemaki** discusses the role of social entrepreneurship in Greece and its potential for the future. Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new idea in

Greece and there are many barriers faced by individuals and organisations attempting to create new social enterprises. Coordination is needed across the public and private sector to ensure that the correct conditions to foster social enterprises can be reached.

If you would like to contribute to the portal, we are keen to feature guest bloggers! Please get in touch – contact details below.

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