

SOCIAL INNOVATION TRENDS 2020-2030

THE NEXT DECADE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION



SOCIAL INNOVATION TRENDS
2020 - 2030



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By training the social innovators of the future, the Academy aims to help the most pressing global challenges.

- **Social Innovation Academy**

INTRODUCTION 1/4

From the beginning of the 21st century, social innovation has played a key role in both academic debates and the agenda of the international political community. It was against the backdrop of the 2008 economic and financial crisis that social innovation began to gain momentum as a practical solution for tackling social, political, economic and environmental challenges such as poverty, ageing or migration, among others.

It was within this context that social innovation began to receive growing attention as a promising concept to be researched, understood, defined and conceptualised. Its classification is wide and complex and includes different approaches from which the concept can be observed.

This myriad of meanings of social innovation is evident within the diverse initiatives and projects that can be found later in this document. Moving beyond its conceptual diversity, however, all of the definitions share a common recognition that social innovations should be:

- Open rather than closed when it comes to knowledge-sharing and the ownership of knowledge
- Multi-disciplinary and more integrated with problem solving than the single-department or single-profession solutions of the past
- Participative and empowering of citizens and users
- Tailored rather than mass-produced
- Demand-led rather than supply-driven



INTRODUCTION 2/4

At Social Innovation Academy we define **social innovation** as:

‘Any innovation that is social in its end or in its means, or simply any working innovative solution to help address a pressing societal challenge.’

Based on the positive momentum experienced by social innovation during the first two decades of the 21st century, it can be stated that globally, an ecosystem for social innovation has been created that reflects the number, variety and richness of the initiatives, projects, platforms, actors and entities involved. From poverty to education, health to the environment, we can point to many innovations around the world that, although characterised as socially innovative, actually have minimal impact. The Social Innovation field is thus lacking serious and sound initiatives focused on systemic change.

As such, there still is a long way to go if we are to provide effective responses to the big challenges facing our societies.

What does this report contain?

Social Innovation Academy is a project co-funded by the Erasmus Plus Programme. Social Innovation Academy aims to develop the tested concept of the Social Innovation Academy to a whole new level of content, delivery and reach. Social Innovation Academy aims to develop tested methodologies to train in social innovation, co-create learning content and build a sound community of experts, practitioners and citizens interested in social innovation.

PRO-TIP: Learn information in multiple ways. Use different media to stimulate different parts of your brain. The more resources you use, the faster you learn.

-Social Innovation Academy

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Seek constant learning. An investment in knowledge has the best interest.

-Social Innovation Academy



INTRODUCTION 3/4

The objective of this document is to design and prepare a quick and agile text from which we can obtain an overview of the future trends of social innovation worldwide. It does not claim to be a research study for the academic community or a policy paper for policy-makers. The document was conceived for the purpose of offering the general public a useful and first-hand document capable of serving as a guide for those interested in being introduced to the Social Innovation world. The report is oriented towards a comprehensive understanding of social innovation that is not limited to single areas. In order to apply this concept, the project team used three different sources of information:

- A selection of the key literature on Social Innovation.
- An analysis of three websites of reference in the Social Innovation field.
- An analysis of the mapping of Social Innovation competitions, awards and prizes worldwide, emphasising the most significant ones.

The Social Innovation Trends Report is composed of five sections. The first section contains a brief description of six key documents on social innovation. The second section comprises an analysis of three websites of reference (SIC, SIX Wayfinder, DSI4EU) in the field of Social Innovation, while the third section contains an analysis of the challenge competitions and prizes promoted worldwide.

The fourth section includes the trends identified from the analysis of the information sources mentioned above. Following a brief introduction to the trends, the section is divided into two sub-sections; firstly, the relation of the trends for the next decade is outlined and secondly, particular trends for social innovation in the five continents are described. Finally, the fifth section presents some conclusions for the future of social innovation.

This report was prepared by UPV/EHU in collaboration with Impact Hub Hungary, Limitless and We4You.

Prior to reading this document, it is important to note that a more comprehensive list of trends in social innovation could probably be elaborated. However, we have opted to include in this report only the most salient tendencies for the next decade (2020–2030).

What is the vision of this report?

The report focuses our research on the most transformative trends regarding Social Innovation at present. It is essential to note that following the philosophy of the Social Innovation Academy project, the project’s four partners intended to go beyond their own vision of the tendencies and open it up to the rich community of social innovators. Thus, the following co-creation process was established for the composition of the Social Innovation Trends Report:



INTRODUCTION 4/4

- **Analysis phase.** The first phase involves a definition of the first landscape of future trends in the social innovation field. The best way to analyse the future innovation need is to start at the top: The global megatrends that are defining the future challenges and opportunities for society as a whole.
- **Co-creative phase.** The second phase, which relies on the philosophy of Social Innovation Academy, will focus on the co-creation of the document with both scholars and practitioners but also with the community. This phase will result in an approved collaborative document.

PRO-TIP: Learn to analyse and critically evaluate ideas by focusing on optimising those areas you are most interested in exploring.
-Social Innovation Academy

Phase 1

- Literature Review
- Webpages
- Prizes and Competitions



Phase 2

- Peer review
- Social Innovation Academy Community

The trends emerged from the reference literature on the issue, an analysis of the websites and platforms pertaining to social innovation, such as SIC, DSI and SIX Wayfinder, and, finally, from an analysis of the competitions held worldwide with the aim of boosting social innovation practices. As a second stage in the development of this report, the trends will be peer-reviewed by a selected group of scholars and expert practitioners on social innovations and will also be enriched through contributions from members of the Social Innovation Academy LinkedIn Group.

What are the most remarkable trends related to Social Innovation obtained from the analysis of leading academic publications in the field?

THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH GUIDE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



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When analytic thought is applied to experience, you make a small step outside the frame.

- **Social Innovation Academy**

Six of the latest key documents in the social innovation field were consulted in order to shed light on the definition of the future trends in social innovation. A summary of each publication is presented below.

[Social Innovation. How Societies Find the Power to Change. 2019. Geoff Mulgan.](#)

This is a recently published book by acknowledged social innovation expert Geoff Mulgan. Over its 306 pages, the author introduces us to a study and reflection of the challenges for social innovation today with respect to tackling the global social, economic and sustainability issues facing our contemporary societies. Through a descriptive analysis, Geoff Mulgan takes us back in time to the beginnings of social innovation and its surge at the beginning of the 21st century, and then introduces us to its future trends for the next decade.

The author examines the beginnings of social innovation and its developments over time. He also presents the achievements of social innovation during the first two decades of the 21st century thanks to the impetus provided by governments, before finally introducing us to its future trends and offering a comprehensive perspective of how social innovation can help in overcoming current challenges.

[Innovation Trends Report published by Stanford University, January 2019.](#)

In this publication, Bret Waters, a scholar at Stanford University, considers the nature of the success of innovation at the same time as exploring its current trends. Through interviews with 100 corporate innovation executives, Waters provides us with a quick snapshot of the current trends in business innovation. Although the document does not intend to provide an in-depth analysis of social innovation, one section features an introduction to this by describing the work of five main organisations within the North-American context.

According to the publication, the following three main tendencies are identified:

- Social innovation initiatives for refugees
- Financing Social Innovation
- Food security.

[Vision and Trends of Social Innovation for Europe.](#)

This paper details the main results – whether derived from European initiatives or not – and maps the main opportunities and actions required to drive social innovation to the next phase and deliver for a better society. It offers a critical review of theory and illustrates the main trends affecting current and future developments through an array of examples and recommendations for the European Union and all other stakeholders to foster human-centred innovation, designed for and operating at the system level, and firmly embedded in the mainstream policy-making process.

The paper was intended to assist the European Commission in a review of the social innovation agenda and in the formulation of a new vision that is aligned with the challenges of the 21st century and that meets the aspirations of Europeans.

The report highlighted the following seven trends in social innovation:

- Institutional capacity and well-being
- Democracy and trust
- Skills and the future of work
- Internet technologies and online/offline interactions
- New financial instruments
- Urban renewal
- Global interdependencies.

Atlas of Social Innovation: 2nd Volume, 2019

The second volume of the Atlas of Social Innovation – 2nd Volume: A World of New Practices – gathers leading experts to provide a comprehensive overview of the dynamic field of social innovation research and practice. The 43 articles provide insights into the current trends and research streams, building up a knowledge repository for a growing community of practitioners, policy-makers and researchers. In order to cope with contemporary societal challenges, social innovation needs a **New Innovation Paradigm as well as new models of governance.**

Social Innovation as a Trigger for Transformations, 2017

This publication examines the place of social innovation research through an analysis of projects funded by the European Commission, setting priorities for social innovation research to strengthen the position of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in both the present and future European research and policy landscape. The report highlights the transformative potential of social innovation and mainstreams its value to better understand a wide range of activities and practices for addressing social problems or meeting human needs.

The report proposes giving prominence to epistemological and methodological research in European SSH. It also recommends redefining the terms of cooperation between social sciences and the so-called 'hard sciences', thus acknowledging the long-standing contribution of social sciences in inter- and trans-disciplinary research.

The authors recommend that the Commission's future research programme should focus on a fully developed and separate set of 'Societal Challenges' concerning the future of democracies, societies and economies, such as

- Youth empowerment
- Health

- Social entrepreneurship
- Promoting environmental sustainability
- Food processing and consumption
- Ocean development and governance

Conclusions: Main Social Innovation Trends from the Academic Review

Analysis of the above publications helped us to identify two lines of trends: a first line relating to publications in which social innovation trends are related to the development of the field as a whole, and a second line that underlines trends that relate more to social innovation research.

The following three reports addressed the issue of social innovation as a whole:

- Social Innovation. How Societies Find the Power to Change. 2019. Geoff Mulgan.
- Innovation Trends Report 2019. Stanford University.
- Vision and Trends of Social Innovation for Europe.

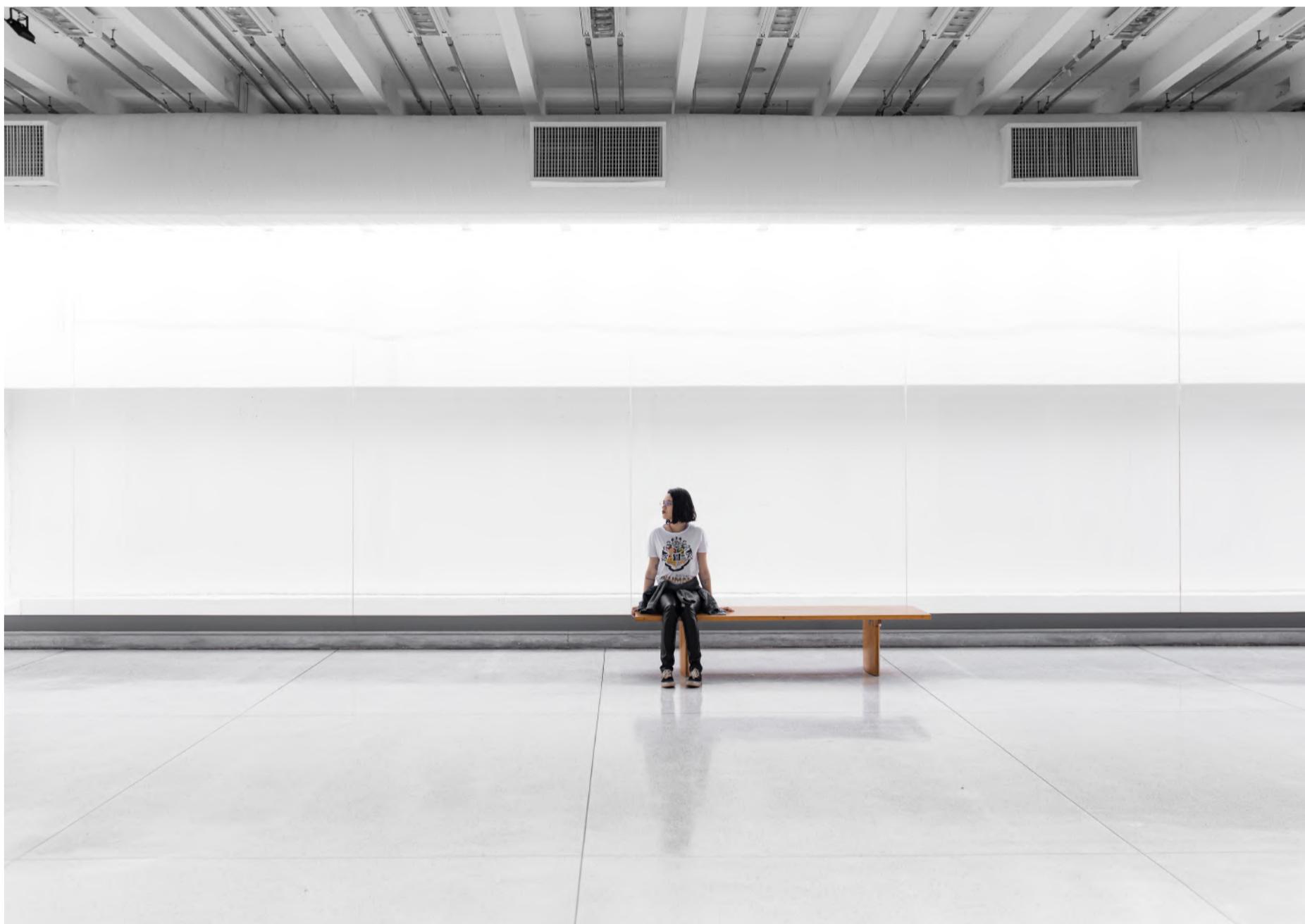
While the following two reports focused on an analysis of the social innovation research needs:

- Atlas of Social Innovation: 2nd Volume. 2019
- Social Innovation as a Trigger for Transformations. The role of Research. 2017

Regarding social innovation research, on the one hand, there is a huge range of strands that enrich the debate, while on the other hand, the social innovation research field is characterised by a remarkable degree of fragmentation, which has made its development a difficult issue. According to the publications consulted in the process of developing this report, the social innovation field has been recognised as a scientific field in itself.

What trends can be identified from the analysis of reference websites?

THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH GUIDE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



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Don't try very hard to trend or to be relevant. In times of drastic change seek learning and growth.
- **Social Innovation Academy**

For this section, we consulted three websites of reference in the field of social innovation. These websites were designed in line with the framework of projects funded by the European Commission. A brief description of each website along with the most remarkable trends they identify is given below.

[Social Innovation Community \(SIC\)](#)

Social Innovation Community was a European Commission-funded project aimed at building the community for social innovators across Europe. The project ran from February 2016 to January 2019.

Based on the known areas of social innovation, SIC organised them as networks within the project. They were created to enable a wide and extended engagement with the field of European social innovation and to grow existing areas of social innovation activity.

Over the project's three-year lifespan, SIC conducted a series of on- and offline activities – including practical place-based experiments, learning, policy and research.

The main social innovation issues that emerged from the analysis of the SIC website, which we will continue to discuss over the coming years, are listed below.

- Corporate Social Innovation
- Social Innovation in Cities and Regions
- Social Innovation and Academia
- Social Innovation in the Public Sector
- Climate Innovation
- Collaborative and Sharing Economy
- Social Economy
- Intermediaries
- Digital Social Innovation (DSI)
- Funding Innovation.

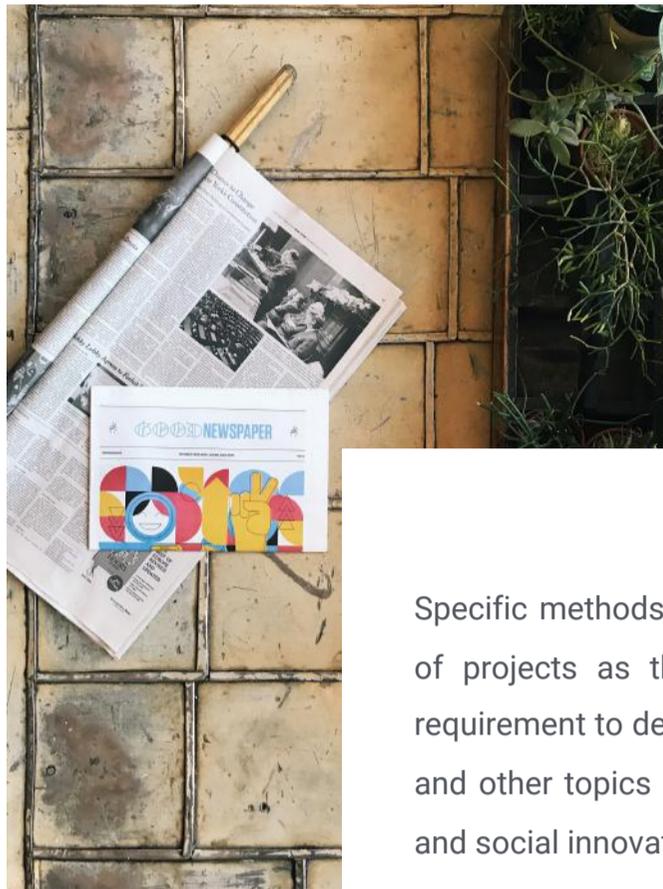
Through these networks, the SIC project hosted a total of 42 events of a diverse nature (hot topics, sessions, summer schools, masterclasses, among others) in which Social Innovation was addressed from the perspective of different fields and sectors. Each event resulted in the following main conclusions:

Keeping social innovation alive. Social innovation has to be kept alive in the years to come. Funding is needed at all key stages of the social innovation lifecycle, including prototyping, experimentation, scaling and replicating proven innovations, to encourage the successful development of solutions. A strategic focus is needed concerning the best way to invest and fund in order to create the greatest social outcome.

Changing the culture to new collaborative approaches. In recent years, we have witnessed the creation of new initiatives to deliver positive social impact, the emergence of many ideas aimed at rethinking the collaborative economy, and the resurgence of sharing and collaborative ownership models. Collaborative, in the words of European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, is 'one of the mega-trends of our times'; however, it is also essential to measure its social impact.

Further research is needed. The challenge for social innovation in the field of research, according to SIC, is twofold: identify the ways in which academics change mindset and practice as well as the modes in which the surroundings learn and improve the collaboration with universities.

In the same field, we should develop more effective impact measurement and monitoring tools capable of tracking the policy-making process through its different phases.



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Focus on learning in more than one way. This might involve real-life experiences, from listening to a podcast to reading materials or even describing what you've learned to others. Discover your own path and become the changemaker you aspire to be.

-Social Innovation Academy

Specific methods include tools for capturing the socio-economic value and impact of projects as their social return on investment. And finally, there is a latent requirement to delve deeper into the research on the links between social innovation and other topics such as social value and social innovation or artificial technology and social innovation.

Fostering social innovation policy in Europe. A key theme within the SIC project concerned the importance of placing social innovation at the heart of the public sector. The project, over its three-year lifespan, outlined various recommendations to foster social innovation in the public sector. These included transforming public administrations into platforms aimed at fostering social innovation, adapting a more user-centred approach to social innovation or creating a culture of innovation through experimentation.

Building skills and capabilities in social innovation. One of the challenges involves re-skilling public employees, social innovators and practitioners through hands-on approaches. Learning by doing thus emerges as a much better way of creating knowledge and skills.

Leading the fight against climate change. Early on, SIC recognised the urgent need to take serious action to tackle climate change and move towards sustainable development. In this field, there has been a huge upsurge in local, community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability that have the potential to greatly accelerate the transformation to a low-carbon society. Thus, in order to further accelerate this transformation, it is crucial that EU policy-makers and community-led social innovators connect and work together.

PRO-TIP: Always keep learning and practising new things. It is important to keep practising new theory in order to maintain knowledge and the gains you've achieved. True transformation comes from within.

*-Social
Innovation
Academy*

Social innovation has to be digital. Social innovation should take advantage of new technologies to build more inclusive and resilient societies.

SIX Wayfinder (SIX)

In 2017, in London, Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) partnered with Nesta and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, Social Innovation Generation (SiG), The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) and the J.W.

McConnell Family Foundation, launched SIX Wayfinder. SIX brought together social innovation leaders and changemakers from across the world to discuss how we should be addressing the challenges that societies are facing in the 21st century, in particular how social innovation can contribute to solving these challenges over the next ten years.

The SIX Wayfinder event held in London in 2017 was followed by another event in Istanbul (Turkey) in 2018. Bringing social innovation towards the vision of society we want for 2027, SIX Wayfinder outlines the following steps that must be undertaken:

Focus on demand. Social innovation should be applied to critical emergent demand.

Focus on people. We need to foster collaboration and connections among diverse groups (sector, people, agents...). Building social innovation can help in this matter.

Get off the sidelines and into the game – of politics. We need to embrace the political dimension and create a political strategy.

Reframe relationships. The challenge is to innovate society, reframe connections and society, making visible the disconnections resulting from the prevailing economic, cultural and social structures.

Get truly multi-sector. The radical middle needs to be activated. Institutions need to be more human, inclusive, responsible and responsive.

Take up digital. Technology should work to serve our values and our needs.

Redirect resources. We need to pursue a fundamental shift in the rules and assumptions that guide how resources and power are accessed, distributed and held accountable in terms of **Money** (rethink the economy),

Knowledge (prioritise people and planet), **People** (revolutionise citizenship) and **Power** (transition institutions and embed values in digital frameworks).

Digital Social Innovation for the European Union (DSI4EU)

Across the world, in recent years, there has been an explosion in the number of initiatives, projects and organisations that use digital technologies to tackle social and environmental challenges in fields ranging from health and care, education and employment to democratic participation, migration and the environment ([DSI](#)). These initiatives use a broad range of established and emerging technologies – including collaborative platforms, open data, citizen sensing, digital fabrication, open hardware, blockchain, machine learning, and augmented and virtual reality – to empower citizens to collaborate and deliver social impact. The digital field offers great scope in terms of its potential to be developed for social innovations.



“ Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.

- William Pollard

Following this, Digital Social Innovation was a project funded by Horizon 2020 of the European Commission to map the projects and organisations that use technology to tackle social challenges across Europe and explore the enablers and barriers to the growth of digital social innovation. The mapping of the initiatives was grouped into five main categories:

- Digital democracy
- Health and care
- Migration and integration
- Food, environment and climate change
- Skills and learning.

Despite its growth to date, however, digital social innovation continues to lack greater support from private funders and government, specifically in relation to:

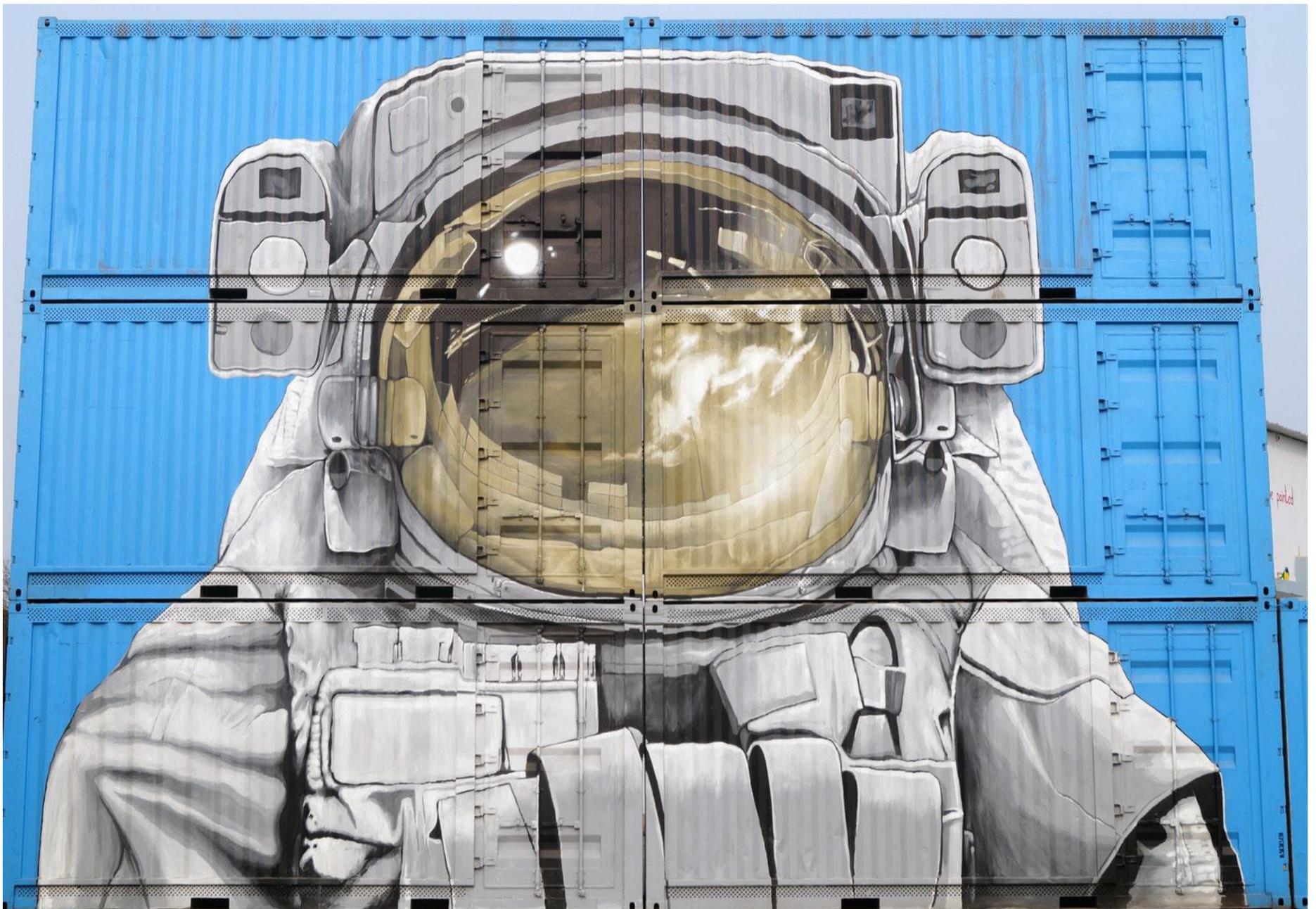
- Developing new funding mechanisms
- Supporting infrastructure for DSI
- Investing in and enabling DSI approaches within existing civil society organisations
- Enabling peer learning and the spread of best practice
- Conducting further research into the supporting conditions and models for growth and sustainability of DSI
- Using public procurement to advance DSI.

PRO-TIP: Did you know that one of the best ways to catalyze innovation is to pinch an idea that works elsewhere and apply it in your project, initiative or business? Always be on the lookout for new inspiring ideas!

-Social Innovation Academy

What trends in Social Innovation are shaped by challenge prizes and competitions?

THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH GUIDE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



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There is always a story behind anything that happens. It is the mark of the world shaping us. Question yourself how to respond to it.

- Social Innovation Academy

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Human interaction, debates, failure, arguments and conflict are always key components in the process of turning complex ideas into true innovation.

-Social Innovation Academy



‘Through the power of challenge prizes, we can inspire talent, nurture ideas and deliver real change where it is needed most.’ Tris Dyson, executive director, Nesta Challenge

Prizes and competitions are one of the most popular methods of financing and disseminating social innovation initiatives and projects. They have been used as facilitators to uncover hidden social innovations and capitalise on their problem-solving abilities.

Prizes and competitions allow innovators to develop skills and build capacities, creating learning opportunities, and act as a catalyst for systemic change, becoming a true agent for transformation (NESTA, 2019)¹.

‘Prizes and challenges are competitions between individuals, communities, government entities, businesses, institutions, or non-profit organizations to achieve defined goals in a defined time frame. They can use incentives – which can include monetary rewards or non-cash rewards like recognition – to identify the best models, increase participation, or achieve progress in a certain area of need. They are open to all and generate ideas from a broad cross-section of citizens, including many new entrants or unlikely problem-solvers.’ (Deloitte, 2015)

Around the world, there has been a dramatic increase in interest in challenge prizes as they gain legitimacy as an effective tool for applying and developing innovative

solutions to contemporary wicked problems. As prizes continue to grow in popularity, we are seeing similarities and differences emerge across continents, while a new wave of challenge prizes is helping to cope with the big challenges of our 21st century.

The following are descriptions of some of the most outstanding challenge competitions and prizes worldwide.

Social Impact Award

The Social Impact Award (SIA) was founded in 2009 in Vienna and now runs in more than 15 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia (10 countries in Europe), supporting early-stage social entrepreneurs in developing innovative business solutions to societal problems. The programme has four main objectives: 1. To raise awareness of social entrepreneurship, both in itself and as a potential career. 2. To educate youth about the input and skills necessary to found a social enterprise. 3. To develop a community of social entrepreneurs to enable them to connect and collaborate. 4. To support this community with know-how, incubation and pre-seed funding.

By organising workshops and events, SIA teaches the necessary skills to make the transition from vague intentions or ideas to promising business ventures. It also provides access to know-how and networks by connecting social entrepreneurs to experts from the fields of social innovation, impact financing, business development, investing, etc.

¹ Challenge Prizes. A Practical Guide. Nesta Challenge. 2019 https://challenges.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nesta-Challenges_Practice-Guide_2019.pdf

SIA also promotes the best teams by acknowledging them with an award and financially supporting implementation with often-scarce pre-seed funding. In 2019 alone, the programme reached more than four million people via social media, attracted 8,000 participants to 200 workshops and events held in 71 cities, received 800 applications, incubated 220 impact ventures and awarded 58 impactful social enterprises.

Asia Social Innovation Award

Launched in 2008, the **Asia Social Innovation Award (ASIA)** is the first regional social start-up competition promoting the culture of social innovation and exchange of ideas in the Asia Pacific region. Targeting pioneering ideas and social start-ups in the early to growth stage, the award provides entrepreneurs with the support, exposure, network and resources they need to generate greater social impact.

Prize: \$100,000 HKD

Recognising a start-up in any category that demonstrates excellent innovation in creating social impact with commercial potential and scalability.

2019 winners:

Sense Innovation is a Taiwan-born social start-up that provides eye-tracking assistive technology to the severely disabled. Through innovative eye-tracking applications and training courses, Sense creates a new channel of communication and method of learning for patients to improve their cognitive ability, autonomous communication and professional skills, while lightening the load of their carers.

2020 edition: Reimagining our New Urban focused on 10 impact areas: Restore ladders, housing and space, inclusive society, rethink learning, health and wellness, wisdom city, global citizenship, sustainable living, shape culture, and other.

Social Challenges Innovation Platform

Among the many awards and grant opportunities in Europe (most of which are provided or financed by the European Commission), the Social Challenges Innovation Platform (SCHIP) founded in 2017 stands out as one with a proven track record and social impact.

SCHIP is a successful pilot for challenge-based innovation, supporting social entrepreneurs and solving local problems that may be possible to scale. It is a digital marketplace where actual social challenges can meet powerful and innovative solutions, a space where the work among different players makes the European Social Ecosystem vibrant and collaborative. Where a challenge is transformed into a new business opportunity.

SCHIP made available a challenge-driven web platform allowing local authorities, NGOs and even private stakeholders to post pressing social challenges to solve around Europe, attracting social entrepreneurs to apply with their innovative solutions and compete for 30,000 EUR grant prizes.

In 48 cities across 18 countries, stakeholders posted 83 social challenges to SocialChallenges.eu, tackling areas as diverse as sustainable food and smart cities. These challenges prompted almost 500 solutions: creative ideas, pitched principally by start-ups, SMEs and other for-profit organisations from 36 countries, and 81 solutions won a €30k grant and six months of support from local business mentors.

The themes of the challenges that received the most solutions were **Social Inclusion-Gender (88)**, **Environment-Food (82)** and **Education (71)**, followed by **Employment-Skills (53)**, **Refugees-Migration (52)**, **Smart Cities-Mobility (45)**, **Ageing (44)** and **Health-Disability (40)**.

It is clear from this list which industries and themes European social innovators, social entrepreneurs and NGOs are interested in, or view as challenge or problem areas worth diving into.

Another interesting trend that emerged from the results and reports of the SCHIP programme is that smaller cities can and do compete with larger ones in terms of innovative solutions, if they are given a chance (like that offered by the socialchallenges.eu platform).

Although larger cities, on average, received more solutions to their challenges, many smaller cities did better than average. The 'average city' launched 1.77 challenges and received 10 solutions, yet Leeuwarden (NL; population: 108k) and Angers (FR, population: 148k) each launched 5 challenges and received 41 and 40 solutions respectively, while many much larger cities generated far less activity.

Even more interesting is the internationality of the programme. Although it seems social entrepreneurs prefer to solve local problems, when there were insufficient challenges available locally, they did not hesitate to look abroad and apply their skills and knowledge in another city or country: more than one-third of grant winners crossed national borders to solve social challenges.

European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC)

Organised in memory of Diogo Vasconcelos, a prominent Portuguese social entrepreneur, the **European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC)** calls on all Europeans to come up with solutions to the problems affecting our society. Sometimes affectionately referred to as the #diogochallenge, it is a challenge prize run across EU countries by the European Commission. Every year, the Commission changes the theme of its call: the title in 2017 was Equality Rebooted, which **addressed the growing gap between people who have the skills and opportunities to take advantage of technological progress** and those who do not.

The theme of the competition in 2018 was 'Rethink Local', when the challenges and their solutions were centred around location-based approaches to support young people, our future workforce, to acquire the skills for well-paid, rewarding jobs that create value for themselves and their community, all in an ever-faster-changing economy of new technologies and new ways of working.

As we become more aware of the environmental problems caused by human behaviour, it was welcome that the theme of the competition for 2019 was 'Challenging Plastic Waste'. The European Commission was looking for ideas and projects that reduce plastic waste, either by changing and improving existing processes or by coming up with new products and solutions.

The edition of the prize for 2020 was launched in the middle of January, under the title of 'Re-imagining Fashion'. The current prize aims to reduce the overall environmental footprint and improve the societal impact of the fashion market, help to make it more accessible and fairer, and aspire to change behaviours sustainably.

Across the eight editions of the competition, the challenges have been framed within the following topics: Current edition: Re-imagining Fashion. Previous editions: Reducing Plastic Waste, Rethink Local, Equality Rebooted, Integrated Futures, New Ways to Grow, The Job Challenge and New Forms of Work.

EU Horizon Prize for Social Innovation

On 27 November 2017, the European Commission launched the Horizon Prize in Social Innovation aimed at improving the mobility of older people.

The Commission sought to identify replicable and scalable solutions that promoted bottom-up creativity by bringing together innovators and organisations from civil society and the private and public sectors.

The winning projects were expected to combine technological, social and behavioural features, and they had to have been implemented for at least five months during the period of the contest.

The first edition of the prize was launched in 2017 with the topic of Ageing Population and Mobility.

The challenge of the contest was to develop innovative and sustainable mobility solutions for older people (65+).

The three best projects were selected, with €1 million awarded to the winner and €250,000 for each of the two runners-up.

[MAPFRE Foundation Awards for Social Innovation](#)

In 2018 the MAPFRE Foundation launched the 'Mapfre Foundation Awards for Social Innovation' to encourage the development of local solutions to specific problems related to current global problems. The challenges are grouped into three categories:

- **Health and Digital Technology.** The awards promote initiatives and projects which contribute to improving our health culture, encouraging healthy behaviours and helping to change unhealthy ones. They look for initiatives that are especially aimed at improving the health and quality of life of a specific group.
- **Insurance Innovation.** Within this category, the projects and initiatives awarded relate to the provision of innovative solutions to problems such as quality retirement when the time comes; innovations that promote the culture of saving and/or social welfare; or projects aimed at reducing the insurance gap, making insurance more accessible to groups of people who have hitherto been uninsured.

- **Sustainable Mobility and Road Safety.** Innovation that takes advantage of existing platforms to design more sustainable urban environments, both socially and environmentally, and always from the point of view of safe and sustainable mobility. The awards in this category also support disruptive environmental innovations linked to the smart city through mobility or ideas for reducing the carbon footprint of traffic pollution, among others.

Health Improvement/E-Health is the category that has generated the greatest response from social innovators in Latin America. From the nominations received we can highlight two aspects that are critical in the region. Firstly, **universal access to basic health services.** Latin American social innovators are taking up the challenge of complementing health services that are not being met by the public administration.

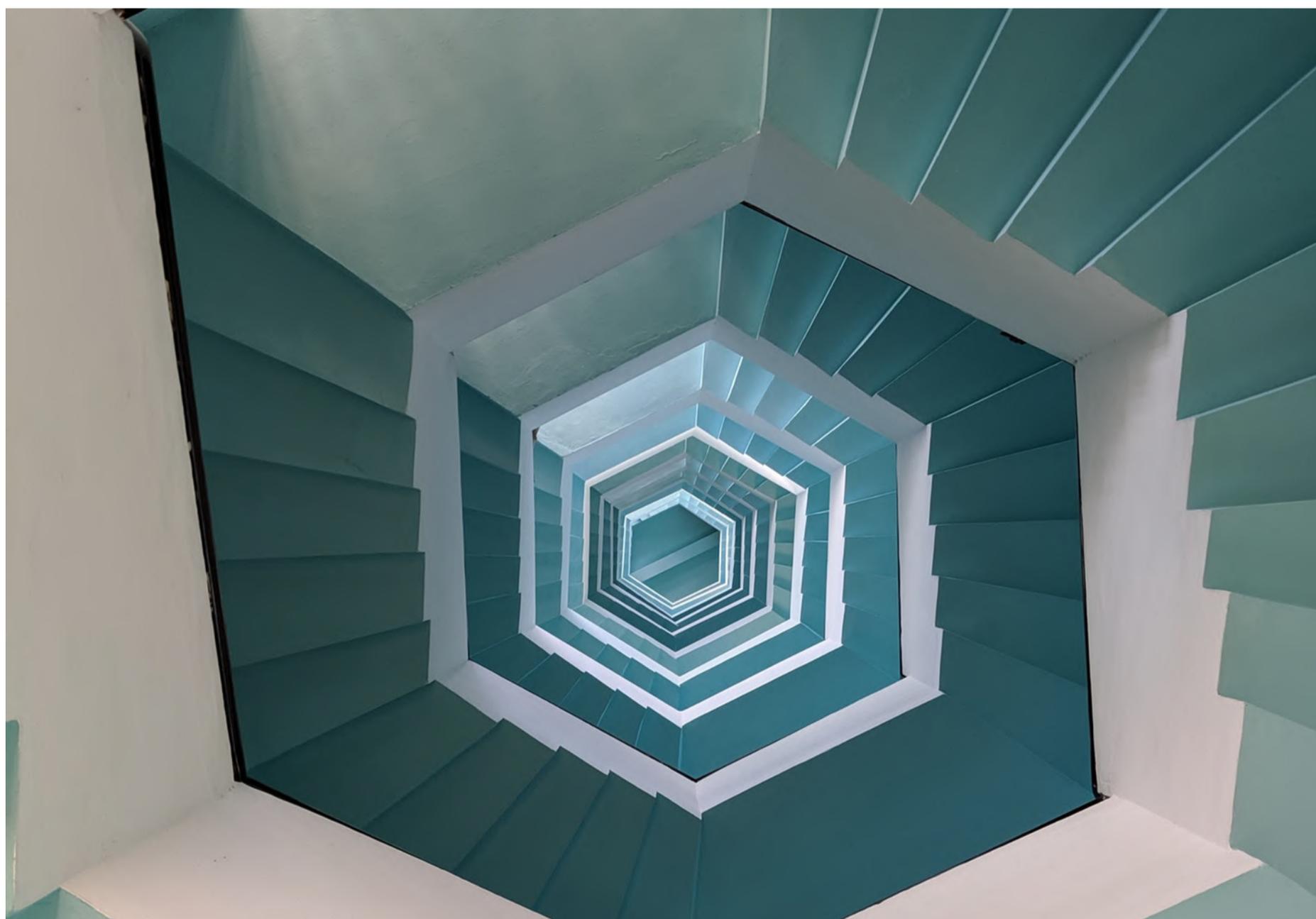
Secondly, there is a **very important focus on child healthcare.** The weakness of health services in the region particularly affects children; whether or not they have early access to the treatment they need can have a definite effect on their future and even on the construction of their identity.

The awards are presented in three geographical regions: Brazil, Latin America and Europe.

Since 2018, three editions have been launched, to which more than 500 ideas and projects have been submitted. Three ideas are rewarded each year with a prize of €30,000.

What are the trends for Social Innovation worldwide in the coming years?

THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH GUIDE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



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Delivering social good lies at the heart of social innovation. Without the spur of innovation for social good our societies would not look beyond their barriers to find purpose in humanity.

- Social Innovation Academy

The year 2020 is the start of a new decade, the third of the 21st century. The social, economic and environmental challenges that societies will face in future years will force governments, corporations, organisations and citizens to tackle them globally with responsibility, creativity and urgency. In a context characterised by globalisation, uncertainty and complexity, innovation becomes a key lever to foster growth, development and the sustainability of our contemporary societies. According to Frost and Sullivan (The Whitepaper Social Innovation to answer Societal Challenges., 2014), this decade will be characterised by 'the need to harmonize multiple types of innovation to address complex and interlinked global societal challenges' and in this sense, the notion of 'convergence' regarding social innovation becomes crucial.

As has been evident in previous years, global challenges, as stated in the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) of the United Nations², cannot be met from a unilateral perspective, and social innovation is recognised as an important component of this new framework. They demand innovative solutions that can be implemented jointly by the whole society and accomplished with a **mission-oriented approach**, which brings us to a new innovation paradigm (Howaldt J. , 2019). Social innovation can no longer be understood as a siloed field. What becomes prominent is the need to foster the potential of social innovation through a constructive approach. This requires interaction between sectors and actors, in addition to interdisciplinarity, to find solutions to grand challenges.

Analysis of the social innovation trends across the various continents reveals several differences in terms of the challenges they face. Thus, while in Africa social innovation challenges should be focused on combating poverty, inequality and unemployment, in Europe and North America, the emphasis is on how to tackle climate change, the ageing population or the use of technology to cope with these big challenges.

Through the analytical work carried out in the preparation of

this report, it was possible to identify a set of terms associated with social innovation:

- Artificial intelligence
- Digital social innovation
- Social data
- E-Democracy
- E-Health
- Smart city
- Health
- Reducing plastic waste
- Re-imaging fashion
- Change consumption patterns
- Change behaviours
- Extend the life cycle of products
- Sharing services and products
- Inclusiveness
- Reduce environmental footprint
- Ageing
- Food security
- Migration and refugees
- Mobility
- Renewable energy
- Health solutions for diseases
- Climate change
- Housing
- Community-led
- Participation
- Education and skills.

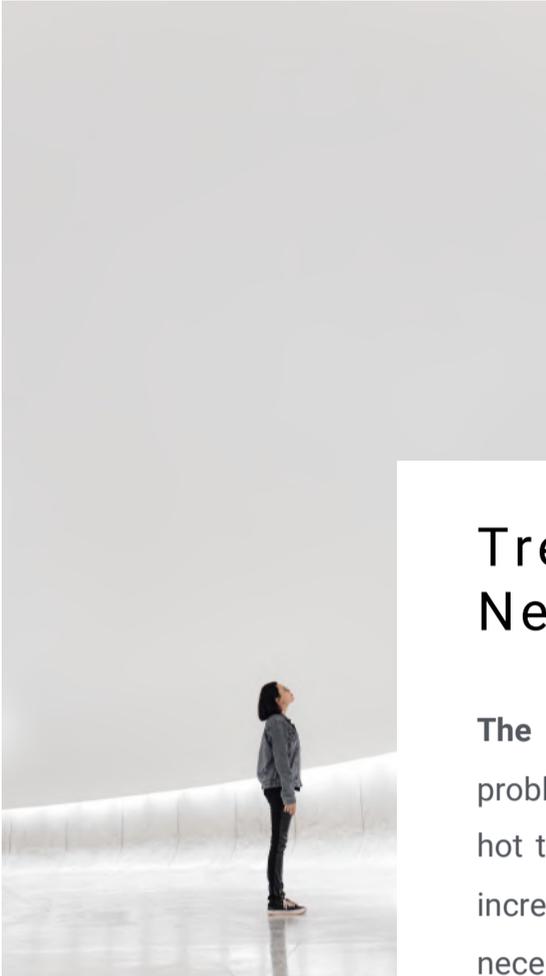


² The Sustainable Development Goals were set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030.

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Utilise your previous learning as it is the backbone of your success. Plan for what is coming and have a clear vision of the future. You can make a societal impact but you always need to plan ahead of it.

-Social Innovation Academy



Trends in Social Innovation for the Next Decade (2020–2030)

The Demography Challenge and Social Innovation. The challenges and social problems arising from an ageing population and other demographic changes are a hot topic in Western societies. On the one hand, an ageing population leads to an increase in the average retirement age, while the changing nature of work that necessitates lifelong learning is creating growing concern for the socio-economic future of countries all over the world. Pensions, healthcare and long-term care systems risk becoming unsustainable, with a shrinking labour force no longer able to provide for the needs of the growing number of older people (Source: European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

On the other hand, in a decade with more people aged over 30 than under³, the so-called decade of the ‘yold’, as termed by John Parker⁴, we must rethink how to improve our social system and make it more inclusive and equalitarian in terms of education, healthcare or cultural services.

Social innovation offers us a new perspective from which the complex problems of our societies can be tackled and also the capacities of our communities and individuals can be empowered, thus changing the relationships between people and creating greater social inclusion.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Social Innovation. Achieving the 17 goals by 2030 will require new forms of innovation both in but also for development. In this sense, social innovation is a specific element to work with across the 17 SDGs in order to help meet societal needs. The key questions are centred not on how to encourage more innovation in more places but rather which kinds of innovation should be encouraged while at the same time discouraging harmful innovation.

PRO-TIP: Watch out for the competition and use your networks to understand people and processes to see what the big new ideas of the future will be!

Don't take things for granted because complex social issues involve groups of people or societal subsystems.

- Social Innovation Academy

Thus, moving far beyond designing initiatives and developing ideas to tackle contemporary global challenges, social innovation can help create a new mindset and supportive framework for SDGs as a particular input of the new knowledge paradigm.

Urbanisation and Social Innovation. The world is becoming prominently urban. **Cities around the world like Seoul, Mexico City and Tokyo are growing faster, resulting in emerging social problems.** There is a reinforcement of the role of cities as spaces for experimentation and laboratories of opportunities to build **Smart, Green, Sustainable, Equitable, Inclusive and Resilient** societies. This new geography is shaping the need for innovative approaches to help solve the challenges.

Migration and Social Innovation. In 2019, according to the United Nations, the number of international migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million. Migration is becoming an urgent and challenging issue, specifically for Europe, which as a region hosts the largest number of international migrants (82 million)⁵. Social innovation has a lot to offer concerning the challenge of migration. Since 2015, when Europe experienced an unprecedented arrival of refugees and irregular migrants, several initiatives have emerged from the public and private sectors, as well as from society, presenting some bright ideas for paving the way to integrating these newcomers into European culture and countries.

Education and Social Innovation. Education is mostly based on the acquirement of knowledge. In the years to come, there will be a greater need to foster developing competences and skills regarding social innovation at all levels of the education system. Social innovation learning should be promoted among practitioners, policy-makers and researchers by using participatory learning processes, enabling reflection on practice and developing and sharing models, tools and other resources and best practices.

Climate Change and Social Innovation. Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges of this century. Actions to combat climate change have gained the attention of social innovation practitioners, innovators and the community as a whole. Social innovation actions regarding the mitigation of climate change can be split into several missions designed to cope with smaller but real objectives to combat this daunting challenge. Among these initiatives we find the following: moving away from fossil fuels, looking for alternatives to the use of plastic or fostering re-forestation, among others.

Technological Development and Social Innovation. Despite the undoubted value of the digital world, new digital technologies will transform our societies as we know them. From the education field to the work environment, from policy making to the forms of relationships, our societies will experience radical changes. Digital Social Innovation (DSI) has huge potential to strengthen collaborative and open technologies to tackle some of the most prominent challenges in Europe.

The Circular Economy and Social Innovation. In 2015, the EU launched the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), which defined a set of actions to be implemented by member states to deal with future challenges and paving the way to a climate-neutral, circular economy where pressure on natural and freshwater resources as well as ecosystems is minimised. In 2020, the EU will continue to make a strong commitment to the circular economy, and thus, social innovation finds fertile ground for its development

The Future of Work and Social Innovation. In a world of constant change, societies will need to be more intuitive, to sense and respond to new technological opportunities, social challenges and citizens' needs, and it is here where social innovation can play a role to make societies more inclusive, resilient and equal.



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First comes thought as there are several steps to achievement. Be yourself and plan purposefully. Transformation emerges through people that look up answers.

- Social Innovation Academy

Social Impact and Social Innovation. The final aim of every social innovation is to produce a real change in society, that is, to achieve social impact. Knowing and measuring the social impact and fostering the social value of the initiatives developed is one of the greatest challenges in the field of social innovation.

Democracy and Social Innovation. Democracy faces its most serious crisis in decades. A decline in democratic standards has been a constant trend of the last decade. Institutional trust is decreasing worldwide. Social innovation offers new ways to come up with novel solutions to government transformation, the empowerment of civic society and the development of participatory approaches for the inclusion of those excluded from the political system in the decision-making process. Social innovation can help create an environment where citizens can take a more participatory approach in policy making and thus improve the participative ecosystem to combat the crisis of democracy.

Gender and Social Innovation. The lack of gender equity is considered to be one of the greatest obstacles to achieving the SDGs. There is significant evidence that poverty reduction and human development are related to advancements in both innovative capacities and gender equality. There is no doubt concerning the role of social innovation as a force for social change.

Thus, by cultivating social innovation to foster greater gender equality, we have the opportunity to create and harness new solutions that offer fresh thinking to global challenges. In recent times, we have observed the rise of social movements, such as the #MeToo movement, which are critical for building an equal society. Social innovation has a prominent role to play as a tool for consciousness-raising, coalition building and advocacy.

PRO-TIP: A great strategy for improving your social innovation capabilities is to discover your own drivers. Solving problems requires a self-awareness, so always bear in mind what keeps you going throughout the day.
- Social Innovation Academy



PRO-TIP: To drive a global culture of social innovation you need to approach health in a social and inclusive way. To do it well you need to keep data so others can use it and transform it to their own contexts.
- Social Innovation Academy

Health and Social Innovation. In this century, health and social care systems around the world are exposed to new strains. The challenge of caring for an ageing population is compounded by other challenges such as how to deal with the refugee crisis or how to deal with a global health crisis, as has been the case with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges also represent great opportunities to develop innovative responses and to enhance collaboration between and across sectors. Social innovation in health can be related to a wide range of activities, from new products to new services or new forms of governance of public systems. Because the relationship between social innovation and health is inclusive, the coming years will see new social innovation flourish in the field of health. But to do this, we need to focus on the specific innovations needed to better respond to the challenges we face.

Social innovation in the era of social distancing. COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has shown the globe how vulnerable we are as a species. Within weeks from discovery it has dominated the headlines, leaving question marks hanging over your daily routines and well-being, and highlighting our interdependence across communities, borders and continents.

It is precisely in this strange and unsettling moment that communities want to firmly reiterate the strong belief of people when it comes to approaching the COVID-19 pandemic as a global network.

❑ We are responsible for one another

At times like this, when authorities are taking action at different speeds and people are getting information from many different sources, it is maybe the most natural reaction to either panic or discredit the problem. When people are being advised to stay apart and away from group gatherings, it feels almost inevitable to lose a bit of our human spirit. But just because of that people shouldn't forget our shared responsibility as residents of one planet.

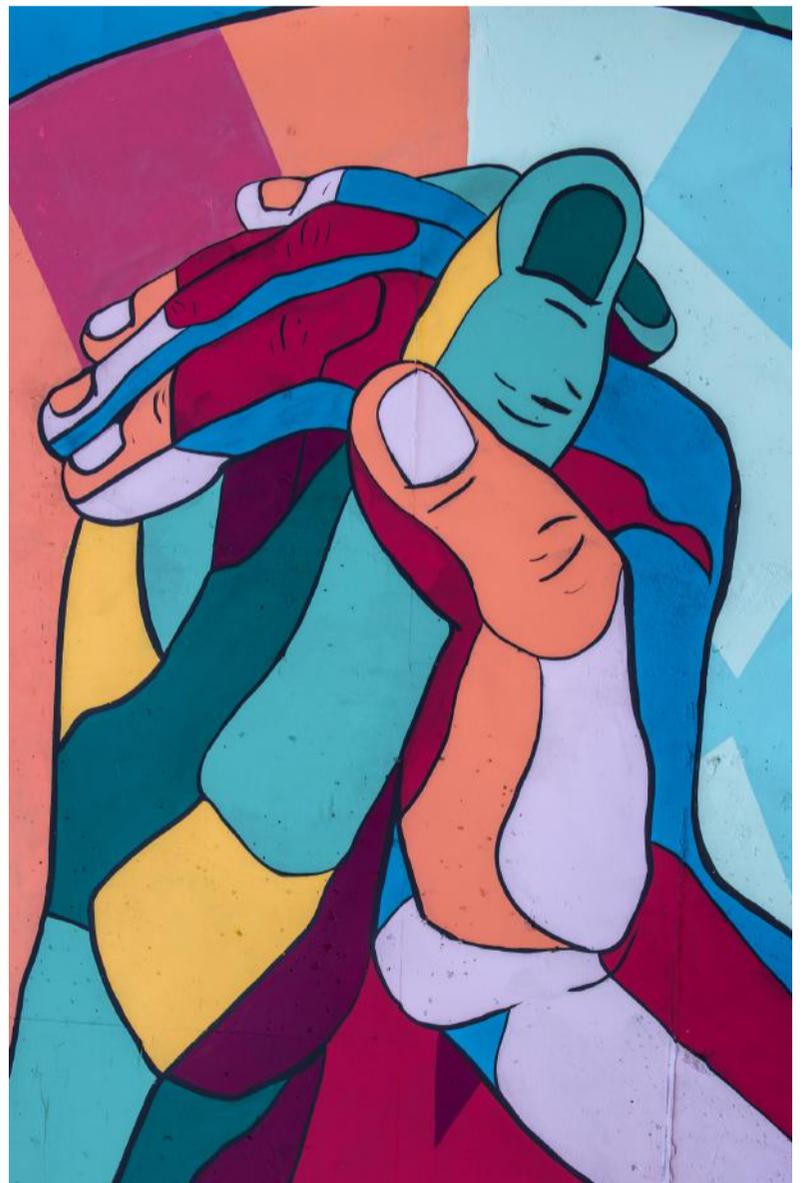
❑ Just because people cannot be physically together, does not mean we can't still come together

As this situation is proving, people are one, and now, more than ever, communities and families have to ensure that every individual has the information, understanding and resources they need. We have to guarantee that everyone feels supported, has somewhere to turn to, has someone to ask. Just because people cannot be physically together, we can still come together. We can still combine our knowledge, share our experiences and offer our help. In such situations, when things need to be done online, at a distance from each other, a lot of social innovations are born, e.g. helping out seniors with their network, SMS shopping for elder people, connecting overworked parents with underworked educators, COVID genomic data, etc.

❑ People and communities must collaborate and come up with social innovations faster than ever

Together, we are powerful. It is certain that by helping each other as best as we can, combining our approaches and learning, each and every member of a network and broader community will feel more empowered and confident in facing challenges. There are Hackathons going on in more countries to come up with new and innovative solutions to the acute challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. In one particular example from Germany, from March 20–22 2020,

the German government began partnering with different entities, including Impact Hub Berlin, and had 42,869 participants working and there were over 800 ideas on topics such as shopping, childcare and symptom monitoring in a Hackathon called #WirVsVirus (Us v. Virus)





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Change is not a product of schooling but of the constant attempt to create it. Social change is the end result of true self-awareness and learning.

-Social Innovation Academy

A Regional Approach to Social Innovation Trends

AFRICA

Africa – Social Innovation Trends in Africa

Africa’s social innovation is encumbered by the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Social policy is receiving more attention nowadays in the field of innovation and development. Much emphasis is placed on the important issues of reproduction, redistribution and social production.

Rapid population growth across Africa poses major challenges for the provision of food – agriculture; housing; education; healthcare and well-being; the environment – energy; manufacturing; transportation; water and sanitation. Social innovators and entrepreneurs in Africa are leading the charge to address the continent’s mounting challenges by developing and deploying new solutions to tackle serious social problems, where the value created accrues primarily to society.

Impact Hub is one of the world’s largest networks focused on building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale – a home for the innovators, the dreamers and entrepreneurs who are creating tangible solutions to the world’s most pressing issues. Social innovation is in focus by supporting the development of social entrepreneurship and creating and measuring social impact in Africa as well.

As of 2017, Impact Hubs in Africa have supported more than 1100 local entrepreneurs. There are a total of 9 Impact Hubs operating in Africa: 3 in Southern Africa – Johannesburg (South Africa), Harare (Zimbabwe) and Lusaka (Zambia), 3 in Mid-Africa – Kigali (Rwanda), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and 3 in North Africa – Lagos (Nigeria), Accra (Ghana) and Bamako (Mali).

PRO-TIP: *To accomplish great things you must act with a social purpose in mind. Those who nurture for the well-being of others are the true changemakers of tomorrow, as our societies and communities are faced with unprecedented challenges.*
-Social Innovation Academy



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The only limit to your impact is yourself. Make an impact by starting to realise your own truth.

– Social Innovation Academy

Impact Hubs in Africa are working on different incubation and acceleration programmes, plus there are awards supporting African innovators and entrepreneurs.

One of the main trend areas is **health and sanitation**. IH Accra has started the Lafiya Innovators programme. Lafiya means ‘health and wellness’ in Hausa, a local dialect spoken both in Senegal and Ghana. Lafiya Innovators is a start-up incubation programme to support and accelerate early to mid-stage start-ups addressing challenges around health and the determinants of health in lower and middle-income countries. By 2030, it is expected that 85% of the world’s population will be living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The substantial gap between the need for healthcare and the level of access in these countries has been well established over the past years. Senegal and Ghana have different levels of health start-up innovation ecosystems. Therefore, the programme is adapted to fit the unique needs of the respective ecosystems. The Starter Track will support three early-stage start-ups in Dakar, Senegal, while the Growth Track will support three mid-stage start-ups in Accra, Ghana. Specialised health innovation support will be provided directly to start-ups in both communities.

Impact Hub Johannesburg organised **Impact Launchpad 2019**, which provides incubation to social enterprises and social entrepreneurs at an early stage of their development and operation. The programme fosters an environment in which social entrepreneurs can learn from each other and ‘hack’ challenges together. The theme for 2019 was Education (skills development, TechED, Digital Literacy, knowledge-sharing, training), which ran for a period of six months up to December 2019.

[African Innovation Foundation](#)

The purpose of the African Innovation Foundation is to increase the prosperity of Africans by catalysing the innovation spirit in Africa. The Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) 2018 invested in inclusive innovation ecosystems. The objectives of the IPA were as follows:

- to increase Africa’s prosperity through investing in home-grown innovations and entrepreneurship
- to strengthen African innovation ecosystems through their platform and mobilise a network of innovation enablers, driving business development and cross-collaboration
- to demonstrate that African ingenuity exists at a pan-African level through honouring outstanding innovations and recognising their positive impact in Africa and beyond.

IPA's platform is a leader within the African landscape. It has a network of 9400+ African innovators spanning 55 countries and 400+ innovation enablers.

IPA grand prize: US\$ 185,000:

- Grand prize winner: US\$ 100,000
- 2nd prize winner: US\$ 25,000
- Special prize for the greatest social impact: US\$ 25,000
- Each of 7 nominees: US\$ 5,000 voucher per nominee.

IPA 2019 was keenly contested with 3,000+ applicants from over 52 countries. Innovations sought to address critical challenges in **ICT, agriculture business, public health and the environment/energy sectors**. In over seven years they have seen multi-million-dollar businesses emerging from the IPA initiative, with health, environment/energy and agriculture innovations leaving imprints across the African continent and beyond. The top 10 nominees from IPA 2018 all presented innovations from similar sectors – agri-business, public health and well-being, ICT, energy, environment and water.

[Social Innovation Academy \(SINA\) – Uganda](#)

SINA tackles failing education and the resulting unemployment in Uganda through the creation of self-organised and freeresponsible learning spaces, where disadvantaged youth unleash their potential for positive change as social entrepreneurs.

2016: The 1st SINA Community grew to 70 members, adopted Holacracy as its self-management system and won the Good100 Award. Three refugees decided to take the SINA model to the Nakivale Refugee Settlement: SINA Opportunigee was born and the model was successfully replicated.

2017: The first SINA social enterprises won international awards and recognition.

2018: UNCHR Award with 'Unleashed' and 'SINA Loketa'. The 3rd and 4th Communities were founded in the Bidibidi and Nakivale Refugee Camps by refugee SINA scholars. SINA won the UNCHR Innovation Award.

2019: The start of international expansion. A self-managed network was launched between the different SINA communities and SINA actively scaled into new refugee contexts in Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda.

There is no link here.

In October 2019, the Social Impact Award Ceremony was held in Uganda by Social Innovation Academy (SINA). Through a series of workshops at the beginning of the year in universities, refugee camps and local communities, young people were supported to create ideas for solving challenges in their communities. A total of 99 applications were received in 2019 and an independent jury selected eight finalists based on feasibility, innovation and impact potential.

The finalists went through an intense mentoring boot camp in June at SINA to test and validate their ideas and move them towards implementation. Mentors continued to provide support online right up to the final pitching event. The finalists presented their social impact ventures, their progress since the beginning and the impact they had already achieved. The jury, made up of local Ugandans and international experts from a broad variety of fields, had the opportunity to ask questions after the presentations, before retreating to their deliberations to select the two winning projects.

The two winners each received a cash prize of USD \$1,000 and an invitation to participate in the Global Social Impact Summit in December in Ukraine. The winners were (1) **Reform Africa**, which adds value to trash and upcycles plastics into school bags and waterproof designer bags; and (2) **Bloom Toilet Spray**, which produces a disinfectant for use in public toilets and creates awareness of common urinary tract infections (UTIs) due to the bacteria present in public toilets.

Eight terms shaping Social Innovation in Africa

The terms linked to social innovation when referring to Africa are strongly linked to the SDGs but in particular to social inclusion, education, healthcare, food security, water and sanitation, social innovation in rural areas, refugees, and social entrepreneurs, among others.

ASIA

Asia – Social Innovation Trends in Asia

Asia is a diverse cultural, social and economic continent. More than half of the planet's population live in Asia. The dynamism of Asian economies contributed greatly to the global economic recovery, simultaneously lifting more than half a billion people out of poverty. Societal transformation emerged partly thanks to inspiring initiatives, thus proving the strength of social innovation in Asia.

The region is characterised by a large gap between rich and poor people, both within and between countries in the region, a weak civil society and political instability. This diversity is also reflected in its social problems and the solutions presented.

Sound research conducted by The Hope Institute showed that social innovation in Asia was related to **development, community, engagement and cross-sector collaboration**⁶, thus leading us to conclude that it has grown within the urban sustainable development of local areas. The social innovation field in Asian countries is noted as undergoing a two-speed development.

On the one hand, we find several countries in which responding to the most pressing social needs remains a priority, while in other countries social innovation is being sought as a tool to address more global social problems such as climate change or to devise solutions that apply technological developments for the good of society.

In a study carried out by The Hope Institute, social innovation in Asia is clearly targeted at solving local problems, expanding social welfare services or reforming undemocratic social systems⁷.

In any case, according to the Institute, social innovation in Asia can be described based on the following seven main characteristics⁸:

- People-centred development
- Community empowerment
- ICT-based civic engagement
- Public sector leadership and local governance
- Social entrepreneurship
- Intermediary organisations
- Cross-sectoral partnership.

Eight terms shaping Social Innovation in Asia

The eight terms shaping social innovation in Asia are: community engagement and empowerment, ICT, health, education, social welfare services, SDGs, reforming undemocratic social systems, and employment.

EUROPE

Europe – Social Innovation Trends in Europe

The last decade proved to be very fruitful for social innovation in Europe. It was at the centre of the academic debates in addition to featuring in the European public policy agenda. When the financial and economic crisis hit European societies in 2008, numerous structural problems arose. These included high levels of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, the process of population ageing in European countries and environmental problems, among others. It immediately became obvious that there was an urgent need to implement innovative responses, beyond technological solutions, to cope with the challenges that European societies were facing.

⁶ The Hope Institute, 'Social Innovation in Asia: Trends and Characteristics in China, Korea, India, Japan and Thailand' in The Social Innovation Landscape in Asia.

⁷ Ibid (The Hope Institute, 2017).

⁸ Ibid.

It is in this context in which social innovation initiatives began to play a central role as useful and viable tools for coping with contemporary complex problems. And thus, a rich myriad of projects which set the ground for a better understanding of social innovations and their societal impacts started to flourish worldwide.

Yet despite these fruitful years for social innovation in Europe, there are many things still to be done to secure a place for social innovation within the mainstream of the social, economic and political agenda. The future of social innovation in Europe will undoubtedly be linked to:

- Its transformation towards becoming the first climate-neutral continent through the [Green Deal Initiative](#) launched by the European Commission.
- The reinforcement of democracy and the fight against populism. The **relationship between democracy and social innovation** will bring us to another level of understanding about what democracy is, how to build more democratic institutions, organisations and societies and how democracy can be encouraged. In this sense, social innovation can support democracy by applying the social innovation processes to promote public participation and engage citizens to build a socially sustainable future. Social innovation can also help the systemic transformation of society and its institutions, but to do this, 'political leaders must foster innovations in participatory democracies at a much bigger scale' (Lane, 2014).
- Support for the SDGs. In this vein, social innovation will feature in the next EU funding programme, Horizonte Europe, as a cross-cutting issue, essential to building the future of the continent and the well-being of all European citizens. There is a common acknowledgement that social innovations can respond to the megatrends of our society and provide the ability to cope with future challenges such as globalisation, sustainability, digitalisation, demographic or climate change.

Emerging pressures such as migration, ageing or the urbanisation of the world will create a focus on social innovations as the facilitators of sustainable solutions to the challenges they seek to address.

Terms shaping Social Innovation in Europe

In Europe, social innovation is shaped by terms such as social impact, democracy, technology and digital innovation, climate change and the future of the oceans, the circular economy, smart cities, the inclusion of migrants and refugees or the future of work, among others.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America – Social Innovation Trends in Latin America

Latin America and the Caribbean are regions characterised by social and regional disparities, with large imbalances in terms of access to education, health, basic services and sanitation between urban and rural areas, for example. Striking inequality and poverty are experienced by many, and solutions are needed that are efficient, inclusive and which pay attention to the needs of the people and communities affected. Social innovation initiatives are an important part of solving the many social challenges faced by these regions, while at the same time contributing to (sustainable) economic development.

Social innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean is triggered by conflicts or problems at a local level and is mostly small-scale. The initiatives address local problems but with a clear potential to scale up and replicate solutions beyond the local sphere. The story of SI in Latin America has been dominated by civil society organisations or communities. Although NGOs work as the driving force, a very important part of each initiative and project is carried out by groups and individuals from the local communities themselves.

A report from ECLAC (Naser, 2014) highlights that important initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean can be found in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

With such a vast territory and so many countries, and with wide-ranging (sometimes severe) social challenges and issues and a history of inequality, social innovation is key to providing an answer to the needs of these regions. Over the years, Latin America has been acknowledged for its many creative initiatives to foster social innovation, from very local and micro-scale activities to large, cross-border projects, and it is impossible to list them all.

Despite these initiatives, the region continues to face the challenge of how to transform them into public policy to fight against poverty and to affirm respect for economic, social and cultural rights.

Eight terms shaping Social Innovation in Latin America

In Latin America, the most representative terms regarding social innovation, among others, are: income generation, youth at risk, education, health, SDGs inequality and exclusion, social economy, and community-led innovations.

NORTH AMERICA – USA and Canada

North America – Social Innovation Trends in the USA and Canada

When scanning the globe for interesting and inspiring examples of social innovation, the United States and Canada have a lot to offer.

The growth of social innovation, both in the USA and Canada, has been significant over the two decades, during which time there has been considerable evolution in the concept and a widening of its application. Back in 2009, the



Obama administration fostered social innovation worldwide by creating the Office of Social Innovation in the White House, highlighting its importance to the recovery of the American economy, and thus creating a new Social Innovation Fund. This was made up of public and private funds to finance social initiatives aimed at promoting private-public partnerships and supporting the evaluation and expansion of ideas and projects which transform communities.

Since then, significant growth in non-profit organisations, educational institutions and businesses has shaped the evolution of social innovation in the country, as seen in:

- A proliferation of challenging research and educational programmes
- The emergence of the so-called venture philanthropy practised by both new start-ups and transformed by private foundations
- The establishment of informational websites and other tools that provide data and documents.

As such, this new recognition of SI as a driver to tackle social and economic challenges was key to fostering its ecosystem in the country.

Canada has a long and strong tradition of individually driven social innovation initiatives. In recent years, social innovation has been regarded as a fertile field in terms of expanding developments in SI education as well as accelerating

programmes across public institutions, academic and non-profit organisations. After decades of intensive work in siloed fields, it is recognised that to foster social innovation in Canada it is essential to move towards collaborative action change systems. This approach was supported in 2018 by the federal government of Canada, which announced \$800m in social finance funding. Thus, the transformative shift of SI in the country began to gain momentum with the launch of the Transition Accelerator. SI is strongly linked to transformational impact. In order to achieve this, [Social Innovation Canada](#) is focused on building a real ecosystem in the country through the creation of a collaborative infrastructure. Within this framework, the current thematic areas are strategic in terms of responding to contemporary challenges.

Eight terms shaping Social Innovation in the USA and Canada

In the United States and Canada, the most representative terms regarding social innovation, among others, are: Labs for social innovation, Experimentation, Development evaluation, Funding mechanism of SI: public and private, Transformative leadership, Community-led and indigenous social innovation, Habitat conservation, Technology and social innovation, and Collaborative approach.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australia and New Zealand – Social Innovation Trends in Australia and New Zealand

Despite receiving historical recognition as being at the forefront of many social advances, social innovation in Australia and New Zealand has not been widely recognised (Johnston, de Bruin, Schroder, & Kuschmierz). In both countries, the term has overlapped with concepts such as social impact, social entrepreneurship and particularly with social enterprises. In both Australia and New Zealand, social innovation has been linked to communities and individuals; initiatives and projects which have been

formulated through a bottom-up approach at both the community and local level.

Despite the development of many initiatives and projects concerning the social integration of vulnerable communities, such as the Maori Community in New Zealand, or the protection of the environment in Australia, they continue to have a 'limited or uneven policy and regulatory support' (Borrocket, 2019).

In terms of social innovation in Australia, various actions have been taken 'to build the infrastructures, conditions and capacity to move social innovation from the margins to a national priority' (TACSI, 2020). Within this framework, many efforts are being deployed to co-design and co-create the first Social Innovation Declaration, to move away from solving problems and progress towards investing in cultures of experimentation and greater collaboration between citizens and institutions.

As far as New Zealand is concerned, three topics have driven social innovation initiatives. These are social innovation based on Maori cultural values, environmental conservation through the promotion of a culture of green businesses, and the development of skills for digital learning. However, taking into account all of the above, we can state that the building of a real ecosystem for social innovation in Australia and New Zealand continues to pose a challenge.

Terms shaping Social Innovation in Australia and New Zealand

In both regional contexts, the most representative terms regarding social innovation, among others, are community-led, education and training for disadvantaged groups, youth employment, cultural integration, affordable housing, participation in social innovation, social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, social impact in ageing, education and health.

What are the challenges facing Social Innovation in the next decade?

THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH GUIDE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



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The future belongs to those who seek constant change. Social change calls for innovation and social innovation leads to societal progress.

- Social Innovation Academy



Analysis of the sources of information leads us to conclude the following:

2009–2019 was a golden decade for social innovation. There is a common acknowledgement among scholars and practitioners of the achievements realised worldwide in the social innovation field, specifically over the last decade (2009–2019).

Social innovation was set at the centre of academic debates, in addition to being granted a position within the European public policy agenda. The financial and economic crisis of 2008 gave rise to numerous structural problems among Western societies, including, among others, high levels of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, the process of population ageing and environmental problems. It immediately became obvious that there was an urgent need to implement innovative responses, beyond technological solutions, to cope with such challenges.

And it was at this point that social innovation began to gain momentum as a useful tool for use in tackling social, economic and environmental problems.

Different countries worldwide have pursued many different social innovation initiatives, building new opportunities to set the groundwork or promoting social investment funds, among others.

The results of the report show that social innovation is embedded within a broader ecosystem, which is not fragmented or limited to separate, disconnected areas, but rather builds on inclusiveness, integration and co-creation, as well as collaboration. It also shows us that every societal sector has an enormous responsibility in terms of co-developing social innovation as well as the great potential to foster it. The findings of the report lead us to conclude that there is a clear demand in the social innovation field to:

- Integrate social innovation as a cross-cutting issue among sectors and therefore promote social innovation in more cross-sectoral initiatives
- Encourage actors to work jointly to make social innovation approaches more open and understood
- Embed social innovation in all policies, programmes and actions
- Strengthen social innovation for social and structural or systemic change
- Conduct deeper research on empirical evidence in social innovation, specifically in the field of impact measurement, social innovation funding mechanisms and social innovation and digital technologies.

PRO-TIP: Don't miss your chance to enable social innovation ecosystems. Start by understanding the various needs already faced in your communities.

-Social Innovation Academy

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Be open-minded and adopt positive behaviors. Change can be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.

- Social Innovation Academy

The future for social innovation is uncertain. The political ground has shifted. Right-wing populism is on the rise and is pushing back the progress of social justice and liberal concerns. New technologies continue to shake up how we live and work. The global environment and the world economy are both in a fragile balance.

What is not in question is that these big challenges demand great amounts of creativity, both technical and political. Despite the progress made in bringing social innovation into the mainstream, there is also the need to take it more seriously and to ensure it is included in the policy agenda.

More research on social innovation is needed. Looking to the future, there are many promising areas for research. One of the most important is for the greater systematic use of data to track how innovations emerge, spread and evolve. Another is to achieve a better understanding of how top-down processes intersect with bottom-up ones to achieve genuinely systemic change, for example, to cut carbon emissions.

Social innovation is a cooperative and multi-actor effort. Fostering social innovation requires us to create the necessary conditions in which diverse actors with different missions, assets and skills can work together to face the great challenges of this century.

Social innovation is context-led. While the mainstream discourse on social innovation in Europe and North America is focused on innovative methods of cooperation between different actors and sectors, the sustainability of societies or the voluntary participation of the citizenry, the reality in Africa or Asia is very different. African countries continue to struggle with serious problems linked to poverty, health or education and thus social innovation has been addressed as a means of coping with daily vital needs. In the case of Asia, the two-speed development of Asian countries has created a similar situation in the region's social innovation field, with some countries having developed social innovation projects aimed at specific social needs while others are related to problems on a global scale such as climate change, the ageing population or the protection of the environment (The Hope Institute, 2017).

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