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Learning for change: Sharing Cities: Activating the urban commons

November 14, 2017

Linda Zuijderwijk & Wolfgang Hoeschele

[Shareable](#) offers a platform for exciting stories and experiences about sharing as to inspire others worldwide to make a start and grow with their own sharing initiatives. To further support the emergence and interconnection of local sharing initiatives, Shareable activates local enthusiasts to map out the sharing activities available in their surroundings. Shareable's newest book '[Sharing cities: activating the urban commons](#), is an important milestone on the way towards, finally, what they call a '[sharing transformation](#)'.

This workshop aimed to contribute to this activation and transformation. It highlighted people, projects and policies working to create real equitable sharing cities, with a focus on projects in energy, finance, housing and water. The session has shown examples from over 120 model policies and case studies that are discussed in this new book. As participants came from countries and cities with various (professional) experiences, the workshop addressed a diversity of ideas and thoughts.

What is the local potential of this movement? Using a world café-method, everyone was invited to contribute their ideas and local experiences, to think of the potential that already exists in their communities and how it could be enhanced. Ideas ranged from growing of intangible values and non-monetary exchanges, which are actually difficult to realize.

What is necessary for the local context to get there? We need strong local communities that foster social innovation and sharing initiatives, and we need to be able to change policies and regulations. Political re-engagement and empowerment, too, is necessary. And we should be brave enough to not obey to all the rules, but to create some ourselves and find the loophole that enables to pursue our sharing and work in a directly democratic way with each other. Open access and collaboration are practices that can kick-start not just our political, but also our social re-engagement. We also need to acknowledge that regulations and practices cannot be simply replicated from the one to the other context, but at the same time, that the '[urban commons](#)' (and also [here](#)) is a concept and a practice that is useful and applicable in various contexts (as [Bologna](#) and [Barcelona](#) show).

Apart from that, intangible and non-monetary values are important – but are they important for everyone? How to accommodate such a cultural change in thinking and feeling? It was put forth that we need better methods for engagement in advancing several sharing-practices that are accessible for people 'after a long day of hard work', as one of the participants put it. Are the dominant participation-methods enough for motivating the residents? And we need spaces for coming together: common spaces

and time, where we can meet and grow the seed of sharing. For example, shared or co-housing projects increase the amount of shared facilities while reducing the size of each individual apartment, making it possible to reduce the cost of housing construction while enhancing the potential for informal, convivial interaction among the residents.

The website of Shareable offers many stories and experiences on local sharing initiatives. Would you like to start an initiative yourself and connect with others? Have a look at the [‘how to’](#)-page.

About the authors:

Wolfgang is an economic geographer and Shareable fellow. His Shareable book chapter focuses on energy and finance in the sharing economy; more broadly he is working on strategies to advance an ‘economy of abundance of life’.

Linda is an urban sociologist at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, with a specialization in use, production and regulation of public space and qualitative research methods. She is dedicated to contributing to cities that are smart, sustainable and inclusive. Shareable featured as [a case study](#) in the TRANSIT-research.

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Social Innovation for transformative change

November 14, 2017

Monica Nagore, The Young Foundation

At the TRANSIT conference I attended in Rotterdam, I was reminded of that famous Einstein quote “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.”

The desire for change in today’s world is all around us. There is frustration about inequality and clear evidence that the systems that shape our lives are ineffective, even broken. Surely there is a better way to share resources and address the challenges facing Europe both at a national and also a neighbourhood level: families struggling to put food on the table, young graduates who can’t find work that matches their skills, refugees fleeing the dire situations in their countries in search of international protection, polluted cities, unaffordable housing, citizen disengagement... the list can sometimes feel endless.

Where are the solutions? Do we have to wait for governments and corporations? Is there a role for entrepreneurs, communities, local organisations and municipalities who directly experience the impact of these challenges? This is the realm of social

innovation – new approaches and instruments that address social needs and create new capabilities. These innovations often take a focussed approach where impact can be demonstrated in a local community or with a particular customer or beneficiary group.

The TRANSIT conference focused on social innovations that contribute to transformative change – change that challenges, alters or replaces dominant institutions and structures. The event was the culmination of a [4 year research project](#), exploring how social innovation can work at a systemic level. By analysing social innovation networks – ways that local actors connect with their peers seeking to achieve similar change in other countries and contexts – TRANSIT set out to understand how these innovations contribute to societal transformation.

The project explored 20 networks that included basic income, the sharing economy, participatory budgeting, timebanks, alternative currencies, transition towns, hackerspaces, local energy production and crowdfunding.

I attended a session on basic income, where the discussion centred on this new instrument as an alternative to current welfare programmes. This panel discussion brought together students, politicians, activist and academics. As well as examples from cities piloting basic income like Groningen in the Netherlands we also heard about Mein Grundeinkommen in Germany, where a non-profit organization crowdsources unconditional basic incomes of 1.000 € a month. To date they have provided a year's basic income to 12000 people, an inspirational example of social innovation. There was agreement that Basic Income is still at experimentation level and that there is further work required to develop measurement tools to provide compelling evidence for policy makers. Ronald Mulder, an entrepreneur (MIES) highlighted how 'story telling' has a crucial role to play and Sjir Hoeijmakers from Effective Altruism supported that as the way it is communicated is very important. Should we review the name itself? Would 'Social Wage' explain the concept better? Certainly the discussion could have lasted for ever...

In the 'Learning from Critical Turning Points – Evaluation for Social Innovation' session Saskia Ruijsink demonstrated a tool developed in TRANSIT project that facilitates learning and evaluation of social innovation. 'Critical Turning Points' are "moments or events in processes at which initiatives undergo or decide for changes of course". Breakthroughs, setbacks and surprises resulting in decisive changes. The session included a practise exercise with the 'timeline of events' tool through which the history of a social innovation initiative can be visualized and this was followed by a discussion about how the 'Critical Turning Points' let us understand the ways in which SI initiatives change over time, and the different ways in which they seek to achieve social impacts.

After four years of work TRANSIT demonstrated that social innovation has the capacity of transforming our societies by challenging, altering or replacing the dominant ways of doing, thinking and organising. The TRANSIT research project couldn't end just providing insights, examples and findings therefore TRANSIT partners are working collaboratively on a manifesto on transformative social innovation towards a more sustainable, just and resilient society. The final session of the conference was focused on the manifesto giving us, the attendees, the

opportunity to contribute to its content. Now to come the excitement of seeing the final version and, most importantly, how we can all play our part in using social innovation to transform our world.

Notes Table Hosts Critical Talks Session

November 14, 2017

Notes Table Hosts Critical Talks Session

Friday 15th of September / 09:00 – 11:00 / Plenary Session with Critical Talks & Group Discussion

Table hosts who sent in notes:

1. Isabel Lema Blanco
2. Linda Zuijderwijk
3. Jens Dorland
4. Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, AAU
5. René Kemp
6. Tim Strasser
7. Carla Cipolla
8. Paul Weaver
9. Iris Kunze (BOKU; TRANSIT)
10. Alex Haxeltine
11. Tom Bauler
12. Bonno Pel
13. Saskia Ruijsink

For each round of discussion, table hosts were asked to note down the main points discussed at the table and the main questions/ remarks in response to the speakers.

Round 1: Edina Vadovics: Ecological Sustainability and its Urgency for TSI today.

Question: How strong is the connection between social and ecological aspects in your work and how can you make it stronger?

What were the main points discussed at your table regarding Edina's talk?

Isabel Lema Blanco

- There a kind of selection for being an associate component of a social innovation initiative. So, when the speaker refers to 'sustainable for whom?' we need to provide

context. As an example, an ecovillage can be sustainable, but this is not a representative society and ecovillages are not for anyone.

- Being green or sustainable is great but we can't lose the focus on the social. A bridge between both social and ecological sides is needed in sustainability approaches, which sometimes are conceptually separated.
- Building sustainable communities and drawing transitions towards green societies involves training politicians to work with researchers, in order to apply research and scientific knowledge on the ground. And vice-versa. Researchers and professionals should be skilled over how to interact with policy-makers and social society as well as how to disseminate better their research results.
- There are different research agendas on the regional, national and EU scale. Thus we need to be clear as to what are the real issues to be handled (in terms of sustainability and social issues), and the common challenges to our response.

Linda Zijderwijk

- Salvatore from Ripess mentioned a specific example in which recycling and jobs for the poor people go hand in hand. They work via participatory democracy, in which they educate the participants on the environment, but they are also paid to attend meetings on operational and managerial work.
- Where is the knowledge we are looking for? We need a database of all projects. Plus, education and policy needs to be cross-sectoral, allowing linkage between climate change and refugee crisis all in one. It is also about living in another way: it is a cultural change that is required.

Jens Dorland

Practitioners presented their background and practice. (This takes most of the time allotted for discussing the first question). Most are already trying to connect social and ecological issues, but saying they are not doing enough.

Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, AAU

- SI does not automatically ensure environmental sustainability
- We do not give the citizens the tools to make changes – they are not told for example about the CO2 impact from eating 1 kg of chicken meat
- The social dimension is nowadays a small part of sustainability
- Transition network: we do not say that we want to change the environment, we say we want to offer to society – focusing on local social and cultural changes and fresh relationships to nature
- We need integrated solutions – not enough to reduce, we need to have positive impact
- Regenerative solutions: permaculture, fish farms. But they are still small 'in pockets'
- Permaculture is not enough to feed the planet...TU Delft: need for genetic modification of crops and use of robots for harvesting.....at the existing huge farms
- Transition Network: I disagree. Permaculture and organic farming are more productive per square meter than conventional farming

René Kemp

Ecological issues considered? If so, which ones, with what success? There is a need for a more comprehensive ecological ethos

Tim Strasser

- Sweden, there's a strong engineering culture: this often misses the social / behavioral part
- Can be easier to integrate both when starting a new initiative (ecovillage), rather than trying to change those which do not integrate very much yet.
- Green Offices at universities often focus more on the ecological aspect of sustainability, partly because many people have a more superficial understanding of sustainability and are not so aware of the social dimension.

Carla Cipolla

Focus is always in one of the two aspects. Discussion and work always in technology /funding.

Social aspects are hard to integrate and require lots of work, while the ecological environmental aspects are more appreciated than the social aspects.

Paul Weaver

The connections for the represented SI initiatives at this table were already strong albeit it was discussed they could be stronger. Most of the represented social innovations at this table have motivations and aspirations directed toward changing modes of production and consumption, including cultural and lifestyle shifts that favour local production of food, energy and material goods.

It was acknowledged however, that there may be differences between intention and actual impact and that too little attention is paid by initiatives to measuring ecological impact. Citizen Science has ecological foundations and aspirations and these, arguably, are stronger than the social aspects. Urban gardening and some of the food initiatives may also deliver greater social impact than environmental impact. For FabLabs, inspiring people to be producers and makers in situ rather than passive consumers is part of the motivation and aspiration, but this doesn't automatically reduce the environmental footprint and could even have perverse environmental impacts by inadvertently contributing to a widening and spreading of material consumption. Conversely, time banks, where the narratives focus mostly on community strengthening, can have quite significant positive environmental impacts, since activities focus around delivering services (e.g. transport, gardening, home repairs) that reduce the need for individuals to own equipment.

It was agreed that more attention needs to be paid to measuring actual ecological impacts.

Iris Kunze

- Social issues (e.g. drugs+ pain killers: overdoses kill people at home)
- Young graduates miss orientation as to how/ where to find work

Alex Haxeltine

Co-design of SI progress, how to address questions

- Burn out ... Impact Hub
- Recognize power dynamics in commons

Bonno Pel

- SI quite naturally tends to address both these 2 aspects, as it crosses/transcends policy fields.

- One project mentioned by panel participants is explicitly working towards/guided by the UN sustainable development goals; another, on the solidarity-based economy Chamber of Commerce in Geneva, has established; a Charter through which (aspiring) members commit to principles of production that comprise social and ecological issues.
- Sustainability transitions are an increasingly prominent normative orientation/vision for SI initiatives.
- Transportation impacts tend to be overlooked in small-scale and locally embedded SI initiatives.
- Socio-ecological impacts of SI should be measured better.

Saskia Ruijsink

- In some cases ecological urgency pushes away the social dimension of sustainability innovations, social inclusiveness takes time
- Paradox: People with low incomes have lower carbon footprints, but ecologically sustainable solutions for e.g. (private) transport, housing and energy production are more expensive
- In practice social and ecological dimensions are silos
- The ecological dimension (its challenges and solutions) are typically easier to define, measure and manage (more technical) than the social one

Tom Bauler

- Prioritizing environment vs social goals; i.e. consensus at table that environmental objectives/goals should be evaluated in the light of the improvements for human kind (anthropocentric)
- Refocusing on the social question of environmental endeavours, e.g. Energiewende should be evaluated in light of what it means for the poorest in German society
- Wider call to engage deeper into discussing the consumers' perspectives, i.e. re-focus TSI-practice on class-questions

What was the main question/ critical remark/ response to Edina's talk?

Isabel Lema Blanco

- Ecological perspectives involve being coherent with your own principles at both local and global levels. Being involved in local/regional projects/initiatives sometimes loses the global focus and avoid international relations and how systems operates worldwide.
- In order to make stronger social and ecological aspects of our work, a cultural change is needed. We all need to be responsible planetary citizens!

Jens Dorland

- We all agree on her assessment that we need to be more radical
- Balint - The system moves, so the SIs need to move as well, what was radical when they started may not be radical anymore. They lack system thinking, they need to move together with the system and re-radicalise. Is it another application?

- Also need to consider everything, when you are buying coffee or shoes, you do not just get coffee or shoes, you buy into a whole system. Another dimension of system thinking.
- In the Netherlands, it is important to be more radical.

Carla Cipolla

- Ecological: distanced, top-down
- Primary urgency: social stability

René Kemp

Total harmony with nature is not possible. Nature is not harmonious itself. Rather than being resourceful we should be more ecologically minded. Accept responsibility and care as aspects of meaning are more important than being resourceful/innovative.

Tim Strasser

How do you measure the integration of social and ecological aspects (navigating the doughnut)? How to set priorities and evaluate this? Universities can have a key role here in assessing this. For instance, researchers visiting and studying ecovillages. Can be seen as "testbeds" (pushed by the EU!)

- ecological: distanced, top-down
- primary urgency: social stability

Paul Weaver

Much depends on the perspective from which the SII originates. SII have different foci. If the SII originates from an ecological perspective, the connection between social and ecological aspects will be relatively strong, at least in terms of sustainability motivations and aspirations.

It was also noted that many local manifestations are small. They can easily be overloaded by being requested to focus on multiple issues.

Iris Kunze

Separating social and ecological issues is not helpful for conceptualising transformative change as stated in the presentation.

It is neither true nor helpful to blame ecovillages that they do not meet their CO2 aims – they are anyway much better than national average – not by chance, but through cultural change, there is still lots of potential.

Sarah Rach

- Organisations need to be sustainable in their core
- The framing needs a system view

Alex Haxeltine

How to frame the ecological/social as co-essential rather than as trade-offs?

Bonno Pel

There are some SI initiatives targeting particular sets of new social relations that are quite transformative, yet are not equally addressing social and ecological aspects.

Why would they have to broaden their orientation? Why raise the bar? Why expect them to be scoring on all counts?

Saskia Ruijsink

The social dimension is extremely important, but seems more difficult to work with than the ecological dimension: time consuming, complex, its success is very subjective, etc.

Tom Bauler

Generally very positive response. Main questions on the level of "how to".

Round 2: Ariel Gordon: Exclusion/Inclusion Dynamics of SI: Perspective from the South

Question: What are the exclusion dynamics in you work and what could you do to make it more inclusive?

What were the main points discussed at your table regarding Ariel's talk?

Isabel Lema Blanco

Participants discussed in what extend the organizations they belong to Universities, Administration, Social Innovations, are inclusive or not, identifying some pitfalls and exclusion dynamics:

- Are universities as inclusive as they should be? If universities have high taxes and make different treatment between EU and non-EU students, they are eventually unequal and unfair.
- Also, concerning research agendas, more research is needed on social issues and social organizations should be involved, not only the high-level actors and stakeholders, but civil society should be listened to.
- How much SI actors care about social inclusion? As example, credit cooperatives are meant to give loans to social organizations and social enterprises and they do so. However, cooperatives' members do not talk about coping with the risk of exclusions.

Linda Zuijderwijk

- Exclusion takes place when it comes to 1. Decision-making (in public planning), 2. Who is addressed and how are people addressed (communication), 3. Who has access to which knowledge, 4. Whose knowledge is involved. An example from public housing, Oslo, showed that people living in this public housing were tapping in a source of knowledge not often used: a grassroots activist who advised the municipality in their policy for public housing. Another example came from Ripess, indicating that the trade-unions are quite exclusionary when it comes to workers taking their own decisions for the enterprise. What if the workers become the bosses and owners? The participatory enterprise (cooperative) is the enemy of the trade-union.

- What needs to happen is that awareness needs to be spread, for example when it comes to the emission rates of production/consumption of clothes. Make it personal.
- A critical remark was made when it comes to the connection to SDGs. The translation of these universal goals to the local levels was missed.

Jens Dorland

Several problems:

- Researchers and academics go to the usual suspects, people who are already active, i.e. preaching for the converted.
- Many initiatives are passive, people need to actively apply for funds or approach, which again means that it is the usual suspects or people who are already convinced that are reached
- It is a naïve/unrealistic question– there is always inclusion and exclusion in every decision.

Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, AAU

Transition Network: There are exclusion dynamics in TSI – but maybe less than 'normally' in society

- The high energy prices: perception and reality – agree that something is broken
- Exclusion in some types of action
- Transition Network: some activists aim at being inclusive; some could be better at channeling it. Traditional perspective: transfer from North to South
- Should be building more on local innovation capacity
- India: Honey bee initiative by Gupta. Interesting. Walks for 100 km from village to village. Gandhi tradition: talk with local citizens. See what people do. Try to support them.
- Not a good idea trying simply to replicate SI from place to place
- What do we call SI? Impact Hub Rotterdam is losing their space, because
- Squatting movement is not seen as social innovation.
- Numbers do not say something without knowledge about local culture
- NL: different potential in different places with respect to natural resources. These should explicitly be acknowledged
- Children of the poor experience the worst environmental conditions
- H2020 project: green infrastructure that try to improve the living conditions....empowerment within the local community
- Social housing companies have put up a lot of solar panels / cells which enable lower electricity prices in 'poor' communities

René Kemp

Cultural divides as an endemic phenomenon.

Tim Strasser

- Green Offices can be encouraged to do more on the social inclusion topic, e.g. with regards to refugee integration or making university knowledge more accessible to the wider community and engaging more with the local community (going outside of the ivory tower), as well as promoting and adapting the model more in Southern contexts.
- Ecovillages, like many SI initiatives, are often more middle-class, especially since it often requires a lot of capital to set up these projects.

- University of Uruguay was mentioned as having made an attempt to transform themselves to become more inclusive: making inclusivity part of the curriculum and knowledge production.
- Should emphasize more critical pedagogy: encourage students to contribute more to inclusivity, organize internships for students not just with big companies but with those organisations who really need them the most.

Carla Cipolla

- Top-down approaches change- makers (not leaders) e.g. ASOKA
- Continuous dynamics of exclusion and inclusion (over time)

Paul Weaver

It was agreed across the table that there are some groups and individuals that are difficult to reach and that even SII that proclaim inclusivity are not really inclusive. There are mechanisms at play that exclude especially the poor, albeit unintentionally. Educational and other barriers (background, experience, available time for participation, priorities of individuals, etc.) can stand in the way of participation. Also, the capacity of local manifestations of initiatives to absorb those who are more difficult to assimilate can be a limitation.

Citizen Science appeals to articulate, educated middle class people. People from that background are likely to feel more comfortable in Citizen Science projects than those who are less well educated or from minority or marginalised groups. Eco-villages are mostly white, middle class affairs. The experience of food cooperatives and projects is different, these being more open, but there is still the problem that people who would benefit most, such as the poorest, operate in 'survival mode' most of the time and therefore lack the time and energy and opportunity to participate fully.

Time banks seek to be inclusive and there are many that work to support assimilation and integration of migrants, benefits claimants, the elderly, those with mental health or other health issues, etc. but there are limits to the number and size of time banks (owing to funding constraints) and this limits absorptive capacities and inclusion opportunities. Some modes of working are administratively barred; for example, in the UK legislation prohibits asylum seekers even from undertaking service exchanges within time banks until their claims for asylum are settled and they have achieved refugee status.

Recognising the problem and the needed reaching out by the SII is therefore only one half of the challenge here. The other half of the challenge is to provide a more facilitating context of incentives and supports to enable those hard to engage with to join initiatives and participate actively.

Iris Kunze

- Common interests/ values are needed
- Higher level of ownership intrinsic motivation à more empowerment and stake government workers, policy makers

Sarah Rach

- Education and building skills for 'marginalized' to become part of change dynamics
- Transforming research

Alex Haxeltine

- Exclusion due to lack of resources...need to be addressed
- But ... need for policy... redesign, access to services.

Tom Bauler

- Changing systems vs focusing on small-scale SI solutions
- Improve understanding of the multiple specificities in the different sectors (typical example taken here: agriculture vs energy sectors)
- Seek to get health issues more into the focus of the TSI-thinking (as one further example of going towards a system-wide discussion).
- Current focus on what happens w/r to TSI in the Global South is often idealized from the North
- Improve the understanding of the constraints flowing from the institutional/political/administrative difficulties present in the global south; account better for the contexts in the global south.

Bonno Pel

- The two researchers at the table agree that inclusiveness typically is expressed/effectuated in research through the respondents selected, and the diversity of views shown in the knowledge produced.
- In SI practice there is the recurring challenge of being inclusive whilst maintaining effectiveness and manageable size of the groups/networks collaborated with.
- Working with 'frontrunners' tends to increase effectiveness of SI initiatives, helping in turn to reach out to broader segments of communities. This preferential focus on certain change agents is of course exclusionary, but can be justified by the change it helps to bring about that favours broader groups.
- SI continues to be 'a middle class conversation'. That is a manifestation of certain exclusion mechanisms. On the other hand, various SI activities, as opposed to the discourse on it, are surely including a broader diversity of individuals and communities – for whom it often does not matter that much whether that's called SI.

Saskia Ruijsink

- Innovation and transition also means disruption and this is often the big elephant in the room
- The cosmopolitan class benefits from innovation; it is fashionable and sexy and hence there is more focus on innovative and hip approaches than there is on urgent issues such as reducing poverty
- We have a culture of picking winners and forget the hard simple work that needs to be done to address important issues
- There are very limited accountability mechanism and it is often not clear who has responsibility for what in innovation
- We need to develop increased sensitivity for others, search for dialogue in which we disagree (be challenged, do not stick to your own circle of believers) and have the courage to look in the mirror and challenge yourself

What was the main question/critical remark/ response to the Ariel's talk?

Isabel Lema Blanco

- SIs need to strengthen their networks to tackle with this issue. Poor people do not need loans, but they need investors and partners. New relations are needed in economy and public policies in order to give disadvantage groups real opportunities to prosperity.
- Evidences of exclusion dynamics exists in starting new social projects, which have not open doors for anyone to come. Social innovations should also make an effort on increasing their social diversity, assume and be aware of existing unintended exclusion dynamics.
- We also observed exclusion dynamics in politics. How to engage social initiatives in politics? How to give a voice to all? A solution can be creating new networks and federations which represent the more social initiatives as possible.

Jens Dorland

The main critical remark is that it is the wrong question. Inclusion and exclusion is inherent in any decision, it is about being brave and open about who it is in specific situations. Say it out loud, and not be "naïve" and try to say no one is excluded. Also researchers, policy makers, and communities see widely different issues and problems related to the very same challenge.

René Kemp

Social exclusion is something we don't think about a lot. An economic price on fossil fuels and pollutants may do more for exclusion than inclusion policies. They benefit everyone and if used in a proportional way they are socially just. Revenues can be used for redistribution and for social inclusion policies. Green energy should be cheaper than non-green energy. If so, a transition to green energy will occur more or less automatically.

Tim Strasser

We should consider more the time-space relations: "we" in the North often think about the future, while the Southern countries already face sustainability related problems now.

Carla Cipolla

- Inclusion based on capabilities
- Where issues of inclusion and exclusion are brought to ecological issues, thus led to social innovation

Iris Kunze

Centralized energy systems are the problem right now, not the future.

A voice speaks: "What gives us ownership to include or exclude? We do not have this position." There is another, complementary side to inclusion: it is about protecting spaces for social innovation. Experimentation/ laboratories need special constitutions to make innovations happen. Probably needs conscious effort to make protected spaces inclusive – only via an integration process. Western people going into the

Global South or expecting the Southern people should be part of our European learning transition processes can have even a neo-colonialist effect. Better let the South become more independent – this is still far to go – and then we communicate/exchange on eye-level.

Sarah Rach

- Deconstruct the world as it is
- Question the logics, choice made
- Transition town turns to be middle class ...

Tom Bauler

Comment at the table with regard to a particular slide where Ariel presented the “ideal” world in the renewable energy dimension (a sunflower field with some windmills on it): seed movement representatives found it hilarious to show an agricultural monoculture as being a somehow an image of an ideal world.

Paul Weaver

Supporting people who are underrepresented by deliberately reaching out to them, helping them learn how to participate more, and supporting their integration into activities are all important, but SII themselves need help in this. There are resourcing challenges here both for the SI initiatives and those we seek to integrate. External agencies could do more to support SII financially, such as covering basic operating costs, and could provide incentives and supports that are meaningful to those who are difficult to reach.

Bonno Pel

- Not explicitly addressed by group. In retrospect, the discussion of inclusion/exclusion does raise the issue though that this topic is not a particularly Northern or Southern perspective. As SI is about changing relations, it is just a key dimension of any SI – in some contexts more pressing than in others.

Saskia Ruijsink

- We ourselves are part of the problems that we study, discuss and try to solve and we find it hard to search for confrontation; rather we group together with other believers and this won't be enough.

Round 3: Gilda Farrell: Looking back at 25 years of EU (social) innovation policy.

Question: When we imagine ourselves in the future looking back at our work today, what may be our blind spots regarding transformative change?

What were the main points discussed at the table regarding Gilda's talk?

Linda Zijderwijk

- Blind spots emerge when it comes to the body, to culture and to collective feeling. It is not just the ratio of change that we need to deal with: acknowledging that we all have our limitations means that we can also 'broaden' our view. However, this is

rather a question of 'deep change'. Change is about the guts, about the feeling, about connection among people

- Central is the focus on the 'collective' work: in Barcelona, people started to change the narrative around mortgages. Were they guilty to having such debts? They challenged that feeling and forged a connection among many around this topic. The 'collective' also becomes apparent when it comes to political meetings and lobbying: groups that are not the usual suspects. ALL groups (income groups, no distinction here) have to become politically active. There is a need for collective courageousness.
- Change takes time. The example from Ripess showed that people were paid to come to meetings, and empowerment-meetings on dialogue and communication, and that it took them 5 years to become acquainted with this set up.

Jens Dorland

- Balint reframed the question –what will our kids criticize us for?
- We have worked with one size fits all. This is naïve, one type of solution or system does not fit all contexts. We need to have a global political project, and not think as individual states. Problems transcends boundaries, so solutions need to do so as well. Also, like CO2 emissions. Denmark is below the EU average, but we have outsourced a lot of our production to China, i.e. we are paying and causing for CO2 emission elsewhere (just an example, we do not agree that CO2 emissions is the best or correct measurement).
- We need more integration with knowledge on psychology in relation to sustainability and behaviour.
- We cannot do cutting edge framework in the current system, the EU only wants to support research with a lot of history behind it. Comment from Desis, that any ambitious ideas have little chance of getting funding. There is a political acceptability issue.
- Future kids might accuse us of being too political, why were we not out doing, living the life, showing. They might also accuse us of not being political enough.

Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, AAU

- Activists: what we do today.....
- Rotterdam: in (local) government/administration too much focus on writing down, too little focus on doing things
- Pessimistic: if we do not do something...there are tipping points...there are thresholds that are not 'obeyed'
- Transition Network Brighton: Need for more focus on inclusion.....
- Per O: we are on the right track
- Are we underestimating the push-back – look at Trump and Putin.....
- Macron: why did he win?
- Brexit was supported by the rich and by hackers – mixed support
- The social media is being misused – e.g. in relation to Brexit
- Blind spot: capitalism
- Remember Google did not start up big.....
- Per O: sometimes a naïve belief that big companies will change their basic business model
- Question to the researchers at the table. Are there critical discussions among academia about the competition among researchers and commercialisation of research?

- Transition Network: what do we identify as innovation? We do not see the innovations taking place in Africa

René Kemp

The role of resistance, the positive vision, and the world being complicated and chaotic.

Tim Strasser

- That we were too exclusive!?
- Not having had enough courage to face conflict and challenge regulations.
- Academics only criticizing instead of being more proactive to change how universities are organized: too much agreement but not action among colleagues!
- How can we as the university engage more with challenging the status quo instead of just "observing from the outside"!?
- Fear to not get funding (money from the EU) or to lose legitimacy causing reluctance of academics to engage more in politics. We should stop just blaming EU laws (e.g. unfair competition, public procurement). Rather, we should start going more beyond the rules and engage more with civil society, not with party politics (can also do that more but that shouldn't be the main way).
- We need to discuss across borders more (natural and social sciences, but also beyond academia): "cross borderlines rather than meet deadlines". This also involves profound personal change: in terms of acknowledging our co-responsibility for re-producing the rules of the game instead of challenging them. Perhaps it's also about allowing / surfacing the shame in that.
- We need to reinvent ourselves as universities in the 21st century!

Carla Cipolla

- The need to have a vision where we want to go, not mapping consequences properly. Map out consequences of actions.
- Personal level (personal incoherencies) taken for granted
- Normative statements not reflected on move beyond experimentations

Paul Weaver

There's a lack of an animating myth – a narrative around the need for action and the sense of responsibility to act. Sll need to assert themselves as actors. There's a need to (re-)create certain worldviews around the concepts of commons, rights and responsibilities. This needs to be built around shared value. The effort of social innovation organisations and initiatives needs to be more strategic, coordinated, values/principles driven, inclusive and vision-led. There needs to be a greater questioning over the purpose of innovation. What kinds of innovation do we need? Whose interest does innovation serve?

Iris Kunze

- We invested too much energy/ effort in paper work
- Can we change the system from within – or better from outside, creating alternatives?
- We are caught in the system in our 9-5 jobs and in the limits of the system
- We miss time for reflection and really be able to reach a meta-perspective.
- Basic income or long sabbatical before retirement should be introduced to create these free spaces.

- Purpose of work should not only be increasing the GDP, but creating social meaning.

Sarah Rach

Familiarized structures do not allow for 'humanity', it is intellectual, masculine, not allowing 'the heart'

Regulation is focused on the past-

Alex Haxeltine

- Loss of values in the culture
- Loss of a 'myth'
- Emphasis on human ... may be come back
- If we had more connection to each ... we might re-... deeper values

Tom Bauler

- Historical accounts are very important indeed; example form the seeds movement which excluded in their initial moments all political reading and activities (it was just about getting the seed distribution right again)
- All TSI projects and initiatives have their political dimension to it; it needs often to be explicitly revealed though
- Particular blind spot at the level of research with regard to the political questions.
- There remain big serious difficulties to grasp the diversities of SI-actors at the level of most science/research projects

Bonno Pel

- Table agreed with one participant's point that it would be very tragic to realize afterwards that one had forgotten or failed to disseminate the successful and encouraging stories of SI bringing out about transformation (or other desirable effects). It would be tragic to see how SI had failed to break out of its communicative 'bubble', not encouraging people and assuring them how their activities – however marginal – could make a difference. The blind spot, in retrospect, would have been the neglect of constructing compelling and empowering stories.
- The researchers considered that the academic world may eventually, and well after the fact, come to see how it has failed to make the contributions to society it could have made – by neglecting its potential for transdisciplinary, SI-empowering, transformation-enhancing and practice-oriented research, or alternatively by forgetting to man (M/F) the ivory towers, rebuild the towers destructed, and therewith failing to play its clarifying and interrogating role in society.
- Another blind spot mentioned was the complacency and fear of failure that paralyze action: After 25 years, we might well come to see how we've been held back from crucial action by hurdles we exaggerated, by irrational fears, and by lack of commitment to and prioritization of urgent matters.
- In 25 years we'll probably realize how unaware we've been of the ongoing technological transformations of society, and their social implications. Which transformations in particular, the panel participant couldn't tell, for lack of deep knowledge into these matters – yet that only underlines the point 9.
- It would also be tragic to find out afterwards how people had failed to learn from each other, and especially to exchange contextualized solutions (rather than generically transferred 'best practices'). Reinventing the wheel in isolation, current SI networks should have helped to avoid that.

What was the main question/ critical remark/ response to the speaker's talk?

Isabel Lema Blanco

Participants discussed on the blind spots that Gilda mentions. Due to the majority of researchers in this table, the discussion approached the responsibility of science and researchers on dealing with current global challenges. However, according to the specialization each scientist, it is difficult to have a wide view of global issues and how to tackle them. Are we doing the right thing? Are we so naive of thinking that we are right and people should do the right thing?

- Do not embrace what we don't know. There are mental limitations to utopian thinking. Are we eventually recreating certain (e.g. North) worldviews?
- There is a logical resistance and individual capacity to take risks. Are we prepared (as researchers, as social entrepreneurs/actors) to build new beliefs and to formulate new utopias and heterotopias?

Jens Dorland

That we need to create a global political project. And we need to be more ambitious. And our political system is not geared towards ambitious projects or experiments, there is a political acceptability issue

Carla Cipolla

- The need to balance the visions and narratives with pragmatic actions (bridge the gap)

René Kemp

Every system is how we created it. The barriers we face are self-created! Systems are reproduced by our own actions. We should be willing to go for system change and accept the costs of discomfort (for instance by not eating meat, owning a car, etc.) LSD in the drinking water may make our thinking more free. We are too much focussed on difficulties and complications. On the other hand, there are no simple solutions. As humans, we need something to believe in and live for.

Paul Weaver

There are implementation challenges. There was agreement at the table over the risk of capture by existing elites and/or by leaders becoming new 'elites' and therefore also the risk of distortion and perverse outcomes. There is a risk of 'leaving the people behind'. So, how do we protect against that? The grassroots and a more equitable sharing of commons must be at the heart of concern and action.

Iris Kunze

- Work/ meeting amazing people is important
- Reflection and reminder for practitioners was helpful
- Although the content was strong, the style of the talk was not perceived as very inspiring, the acoustics had been poor at our table, people were checking their phones

Saskia Ruijsink

- Underestimation of the ugliness and power of the status quo; this is true in institutions, private and corporate interests, in our personal lives

- Materialism and capitalism have become the core values of society, capitalism has taken over role of religion in setting values (material wealth has become a value rather than a means; above values of e.g. care for others that are important in many religions)
- Much egoism, no synergy
- Not enough focus on sharing experiences with younger generations
- Many change initiatives are not radical enough
- There is a paper reality in many organizations, not enough focus on implementation, policy focus too much on reports

Sarah Rach

- We stopped dreaming (in some part of the world) and we have no vision of the future. We need to internalize the urgency.
- Change is not possible within the current boundaries of the system. Former sphere needs changes
- Blind spot: loss of value and animating myth in the culture of western civilisation

Tom Bauler

- "How to" enhance the political in times where that particular level of public engagement is not sought after by actors these days

Bonno Pel

The group passionately engaged with this very important, confronting and inspiring question – the particular answers to the question -as they were suggested in Gilda's speech- were not discussed very extensively.

Saskia Ruijsink

We should challenge ourselves to address our blind spots even if we do not (want to) see them, since the world as it is also has many conveniences for ourselves.

Ecological Sustainability and the Urgency for TSI today

October 17, 2017

Edina Vadovics

“We tend to put the environment last because we think the first thing we have to do is eliminate poverty. But you can't reduce poverty in a vacuum. You are doing it in an environment.”

- Wangari Maathai

www.mindsocialinnovation.eu

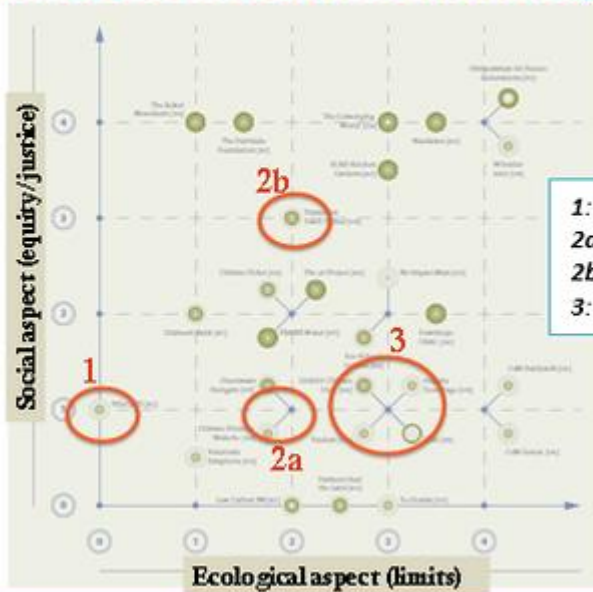
as much as we assume it does?

The quote from Wangari Maathai very nicely introduces this short piece of writing. It suggests that in our work in or with social innovation initiatives, we need to connect environmental and social sustainability, and, in some cases, we may even need to give preference to tackling environmental issues, so that we are then able to deal with social ones as well. Although this may sound self-evident, I would like to challenge everyone to really think about it and ask: is it really happening

Furthermore, is it happening within the framework of "strong and just sustainability"? To provide a brief definition for this without turning this blog into an academic paper, by "strong" I refer to respect for and living (or aiming to live) within ecological limits and [planetary boundaries](#), and by "just" to providing equal access to resources and benefits as well as ensuring equitable burden sharing for both present and future generations.

If we take the definition of strong and just sustainability, we will see that social innovation (SI) does not automatically connect the environmental and social aspects. And we indeed found this in a research project called CONVERGE (FP7) that we completed a few years ago. Our international team of researchers mapped sustainability initiatives in a coordinate system where the horizontal axis represented the ecological aspect, and the vertical the social. As it can be seen in the figure, selected examples of SI connect the two aspects to varying degrees, but there is plenty of room for development for all of them (*to read about the details of this research, please [visit here](#)*).

SI does not automatically connect the two, and the connection is not always strong

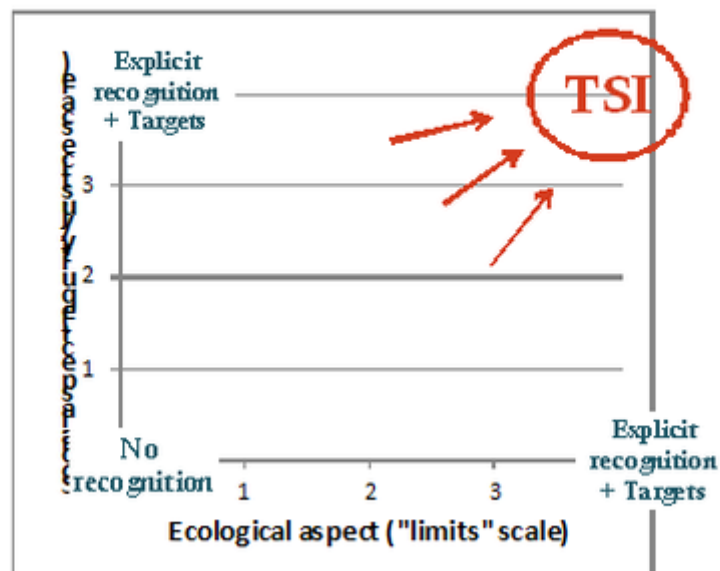


1: local exchange system in HU
 2a: Transition Town initiative in HU
 2b: Transition Town initiative in the UK
 3: Ecovillage in Sweden

Source: Vačovič et al., 2012
 // CONVERGE project

Thus, the argument I am presenting here is that social innovation becomes transformative if it explicitly addresses both the ecological and social aspects of sustainability, and helps move towards a state that is within ecological limits in a just and equitable way.

Social innovation becomes transformative:

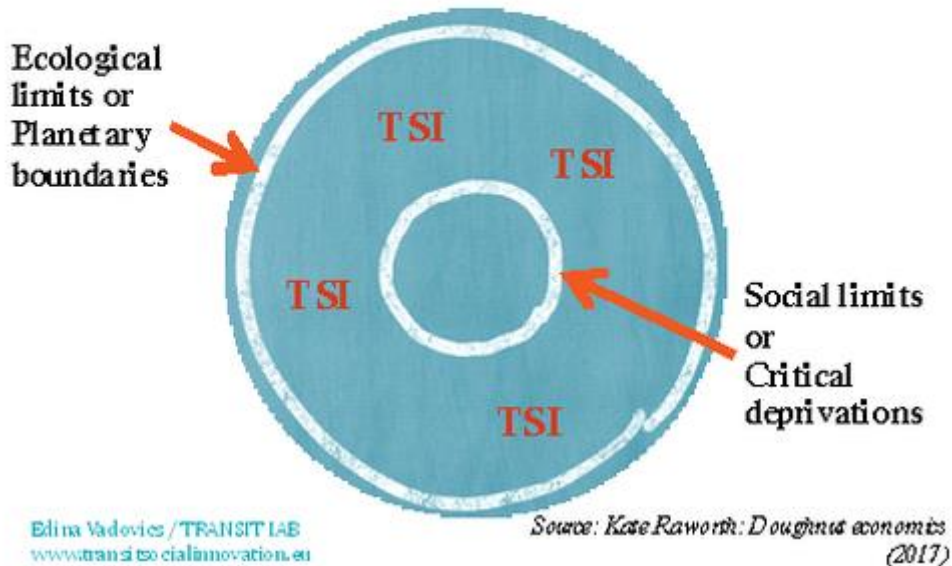


Zofia Vačovič / TRANSIT LAB
 www.transitlab.eu

This can also be shown using the language of "doughnut economics" as developed by Kate Raworth. The doughnut represents the safe and just space for humanity with the outer boundary of the doughnut representing ecological limits and planetary

boundaries, and the inner boundary standing for social limits, or minimum social standards. And transformative social innovation or examples of transformative social innovation should already be situated within the doughnut, or should have a clearly defined aim of wanting to get there.

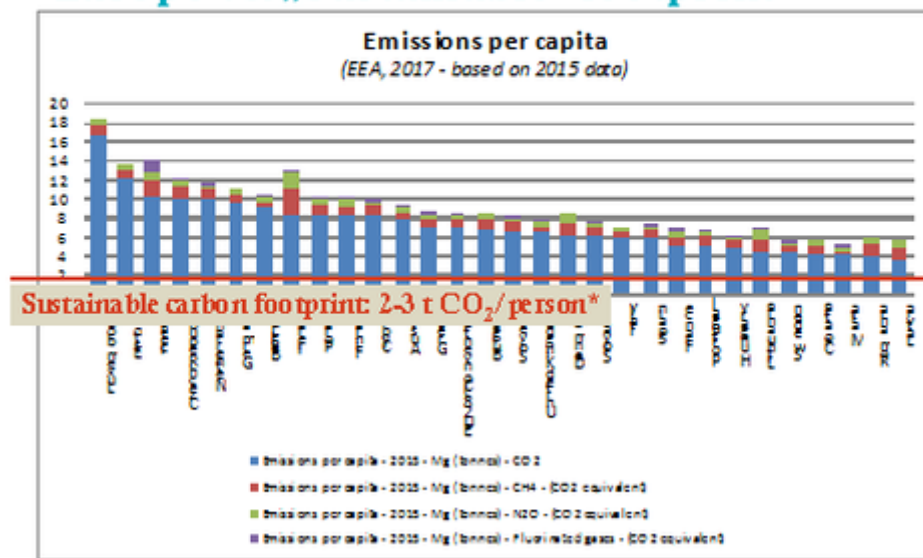
**Or, put another way:
TSI helps move into the „doughnut”**



And the challenge of being in the doughnut or getting there should not be underestimated. To illustrate the challenge, let us take the example of climate change, which represents one of the important and critical planetary boundaries today, a boundary that is widely known and studies. I've selected it as it is a very well defined and elaborated boundary with fairly clear indicators to guide our work.

One of these indicators is the carbon footprint. In the figure below you can see the average per capita carbon footprints of European countries. On the one hand, you can observe great variation from Luxemburg and Estonia having rather large per capita annual carbon footprint and Romania and Latvia having much smaller ones. On the other hand, if the sustainable carbon footprint [1] is projected on the figure, it becomes very clear that even the smallest average national footprint in Europe is two to three times larger than what would currently be sustainable.

Climate change – Carbon footprints in Europe vs. „Sustainable” footprint



*Sources: www.ecocivilization.info and timeforchange.org/

It is interesting and important to note that, obviously, there is variation in the size of the carbon footprint within countries as well. For example, in Hungary the poorest percentiles of the population have a carbon footprint that is below the ecologically sustainable carbon footprint [2]. At the same time, in the UK even the poorest segments of society have carbon footprints that are larger than what would be ecologically sustainable [3]. So, the challenge of staying within the doughnut is indeed rather formidable.

At this point you may be interested to find out how some SI initiatives are doing from this aspect. A well-known ecovillage initiative, Findhorn in Scotland, commissioned a study of their carbon footprint in 2015 [4]. They learnt that it is about the same as the UK average, so it is well above the sustainable carbon footprint. As a result, they are now making renewed efforts to lower their footprint as well as find ways of compensating for its size.

And now, let's see some examples of SI initiatives that successfully combine the ecological and social aspects in their work. First, a **bio-briquettes initiative from Hungary**.



The initiative is organized in Northern Hungary, one of the poorest regions of the country where communities suffer from fuel poverty as well. This means that during the cold winter months they are forced to cut down trees in the forests surrounding their villages and/or burn household waste - often plastic or rubber - in order to keep warm. So, the solution one of the NGOs working in the region came up with is to involve members of these communities in making bio-briquettes from local agricultural waste, waste that was dumped illegally prior to the project. This way, apart from alleviating fuel poverty, improving the health and well-being of people, they also manage to provide clean fuel and thereby prevent the burning of household waste, save local forests from being cut down and utilize a local raw material so far wasted. In other words, the initiative innovatively and successfully combined the social and ecological aspect of

sustainability in how it tackled a complex challenge. [5]

Making bio-briquettes

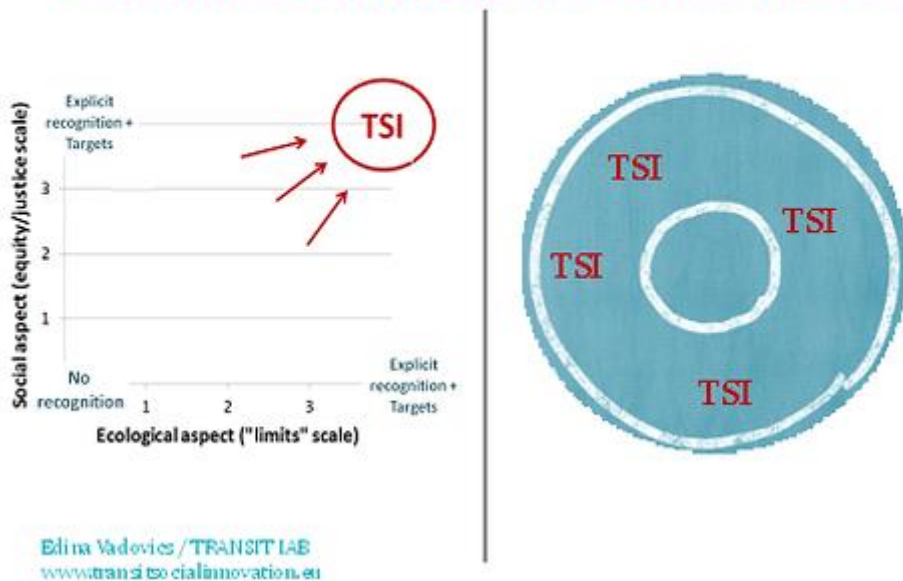
Source: Real Pearl Foundation, HU

Then, let's turn to an inspiring example from **Southern India: SCAD Kitchen Gardens and Fruit Tree Afforestation**. SCAD (Social Change and Development) operates in Tamil Nadu, where a great part of the population lives on less than \$1 a day, which means that the basic needs of people are not met, for example, they do not get enough nutrients.

In addition, the impacts of climate change, most importantly desertification, can clearly be felt. So SCAD started a programme in which they involve local communities in planting fruit trees. Among other beneficial effects, trees have the potential to satisfy basic needs such as food, fuel, fodder, medicine and provide income as well as safeguard ecosystems from harmful effects (e.g. improve the soil and its water retention, provide shade). In addition, SCAD also teaches villagers to establish organic kitchen gardens which help provide nutrients as well as create income generation opportunities. Again, the initiative improves social sustainability in a way that respects the environment, including ecological limits. [6]

So, to summarize, the argument I'm presenting here is that social innovation initiatives become truly transformative if they combine the ecological and social aspect of sustainability in their approach and work, and they do so in the framework of strong and just sustainability. In other words, the new ways of doing, organizing, knowing, and framing represented in a SI initiative that challenge, alter and/or replace dominant institutions occur with the explicit aim of staying within ecological limits in a just and equitable way, or, 'staying in the doughnut'.

Transformative Social Innovation combines ecological and social aspects



Edina Vadovics, *GreenDependent Institute /*
Member of the *TRANSIT International Advisory Board*

References:

[1] Data for the sustainable carbon footprint can be found in the following sources:

<http://timeforchange.org/CO2-emissions-by-country>

<http://www.ecocivilization.info/three-tons-carbon-dioxide-per-person-per-year.html>

Le Quéré, C. et al. (2014), 'Global Carbon Budget 2013', *Earth System Science Data*, 6: 235-263. Available from: <http://www.earth-syst-sci-data.net/6/235/2014/essd-6-235-2014.pdf>

[2] Source: Csutora, M., Tabi, A., Vetőné Mózner, Zs. (2011) A magyar háztartások ökológiai lábnyomának vizsgálata. In Csutora, M. (Eds), *Az ökológiai lábnyom ökonómiája*, Budapest: AULA, 28-39.

[3] Source: Gough, I. (2013) Carbon Mitigation Policies, Distributional Dilemmas and Social Policies, *Journal of Social Policies* 42. 2. 191- 213.

[4] See: parkecovillagetrust.co.uk/carbon-neutrality/ and

Tinsley, S. and George, H. (2006) *Ecological Footprint of the Findhorn Foundation and Community*. Sustainable Development Research Centre, p. 61. Available from: <http://www.ecovillagefindhorn.org/docs/FF%20Footprint.pdf>

[5] To find out more about the biomass briquette initiative in Hungary please visit <http://www.energy-democracy.net/?p=348>

[6] You can find out more about the Kitchen Garden and Fruit Tree Afforestation initiative in Tamil Nadu in:

Vadovics, E., Milton, S. and the CONVERGE Project Consortium (2012) Case Studies('initiatives') Illustrating Contraction and Convergence. Equity within Limits in Theory and Practice. pp. 140. CONVERGE Deliverable 33. GreenDependent Institute. Available

from: http://intezet.greendependent.org/documents/CONVERGE_ebook_EquityWithinLimits_initiatives_web.pdf;

or please visit <http://www.scad.org.in/what-we-do/health/kitchen-gardens/>

Reflections on Rotterdam as a Critical Turning Point

October 12, 2017

Paul Weaver – Groundswell Research Associates

Our social, economic and political systems and the welfare-capitalism model could be re-designed and made to work much better: to be more inclusive, more responsive, more preventive, more resilient and, above all, more 'human'. Transformative change is needed; but transformation of the needed scale and direction cannot come from within the established systems alone. Social innovations are needed to drive and enable transformative change. Social innovations change relations in society and offer new ways to address societal needs. They achieve these through bottom-up, decentralized processes. Social innovation actors are therefore crucial in securing effective systems changes that command citizen support. Of itself, this is empowering for social innovation organisations, but individual initiatives acting alone will always struggle. Social innovation practitioners from different initiatives need to work with each other and with other concerned actors, especially action researchers, to design and deliver solutions. Maximising transformative potential and power depends on coalescing around shared values and principles, on being vision-led and mission-driven, and on contributing to strategic actions that are bigger than can be achieved by any single organisation.

So the final TRANSIT conference that brought us all together at the end of a four-year learning process – social innovation practitioners, action researchers and other concerned parties – was an important milestone reached on our own transformative journeys. The learning achieved has been impressive, but the real legacy of TRANSIT as we move toward our next phase of collective working and co-production will be if the final conference and what was achieved in Rotterdam can be the springboard for strategic action. Rotterdam was an inspiring experience. It brought all our networks together, cemented the relationships built over the last four years, and built cross-network support for a strategic, political process that can frame and direct joint actions based upon shared values. Rotterdam marks a call to action. At Rotterdam we proclaimed our right to innovate, to construct alternatives and to co-create social change. Rotterdam can be a critical turning point for all our initiatives and for the future of our society and communities. It will be a critical turning point if we work

together and others join us to realise our collective potential for transformative change.

You can contact Paul Weaver at pweaver.groundswell@gmail.com

Learning for Change: Universal Income

October 12, 2017

Henry Koopman, Erasmus University of Rotterdam

On the 14th of September, four pioneers working towards the realization of basic income came together for a panel discussion convened by [Julia Backhaus](#) (ICIS) and [Bonno Pel](#) (ULB).

Some key insights from the session:

- Basic Income is an unconditional individual entitlement provided to all inhabitants, providing more or less sufficient income to survive and live a comfortable life.
- According to Alexander de Roo, chairman of the Dutch branch of the BIEN network VBI, 80% of people in the Netherlands heard of the concept – compared to only 20% some 15 years ago.
- There were four different waves of realization strategies. These waves include social critique, scientific underpinning, policy entrepreneurship and ‘New wave’ strategies (including online petitions, referenda and crowd funding).
- Experiments in countries such as Canada have shown some positive effects of basic income or related ideas, such as a negative income tax.
- However, the full effect of basic income cannot be assessed in a space- and time-bound experiment and would only become apparent upon implementation.
- One strategy to gain political authority is to make the concept widely known and to convince the constituency of its feasibility and desirability.
- Two strategies to do so mentioned are an online platform explaining ways of financing a basic income, as developed by the VBI, or the spreading of stories of Mein Grundeinkommen raffle winners who receive 1,000 EUR every month for one year.
- The fragmentation of basic income initiatives may pose a threat to the common cause of BI realization. At the same time, the many labels under which the idea can be discussed (e.g. social wage, negative income tax, basic income guarantee) and the various strategies available to promote the concept allow for clever strategizing depending on audience and opponents.

Learning for Change: Social innovation and Hybridity

October 12, 2017

Dr. Philip Marcel Karré

Dr. Philip Marcel Karré is a senior researcher at Inholland University of Applied Sciences, lecturer at the Erasmus University Rotterdam & coordinator for the Knowledge Lab Urban Liveability.

In this session, we took several of the lessons of the upcoming Transit manifesto by heart and adopted a more critical yet constructive view on social innovation. We mainly discussed three points:

1. In the public debate, social innovation is often misrepresented as an a-political and a-historic phenomenon in which naively idealistic citizens take on social challenges all by themselves. Some even go as far as calling traditional institutions (governments, the market) outdated or obsolete. But in practice, they are anything but. We need all three 'governance modes' (state, market and civil society) to succeed with social innovation. Civil society arguably is on the rise in recent years but nowhere near as important yet as the other two.
2. A second misconception is that social innovation is a-political. It isn't and shouldn't be. Social innovation addresses so-called wicked problems. Wicked problems are wicked because they do not have a one best solution that you can calculate to be demonstratively better than all other solutions. Political choices (value choices) are needed and cooperation between state, market and civil society.
3. We have to take in mind though that each of these parties has its own logics which often contradict one another. Social innovation asks us to combine these conflicting logics nevertheless. This hybridity produces tensions which can lead to innovation and synergy. But it can also produce ambiguity, conflicts over values and legitimacy issues. Hybridity is a double-edged sword and we should be well aware of its benefits and risks in processes of social innovation.

Learning for Change | The secrets of successful boundary workers: bridging society and government

October 12, 2017

Paul Weaver

The starting point for this session on brokerage, as summed up by the session leader, Friso Coumou, is that boundaries are obstacles to transformative change, so we need to know how to work across them. The boundaries of concern here are those between society (social innovation organisations specifically) and policy. Much of the discussion centred on the bureaucratic rationality of government and its agents and the distributed rationality of social innovation organisations. When organisations reach a certain size they need a bureaucracy, so boundaries between government and society are to be expected, but there are significant differences between states in recognising the need to facilitate dialog at the policy-society boundary, in responding to that need by creating boundary spanning organisations and processes, and in promoting (or not promoting) active citizenship. The Netherlands is one of the more progressive countries in seeking to facilitate working across boundaries and support active citizenship, so Friso, who works in a government agency dedicated to boundary working, is well-placed to advise on strategies and give tips about engaging with government. Here, then, are some personal reflections on the session and what I took home from it.

The session was structured around a set of questions. In groups of two-to-four, participants discussed each question. Outcomes were then shared with the whole group – around 20 people – and the key points distilled. The opening questions gave everyone scope to explain their background and interest in this topic. What had drawn us to this group dialogue? What organization do we represent and how do we position ourselves and our own organization in relation to the bigger picture, the bigger system and other stakeholders? In what sense do we see ourselves as 'activists', politically active or revolutionary?

These questions led to useful discussions not only about our own initiatives, but also about the tools we use or can use to map the wider system of issues, stakeholders, networks, needs and interests. Landscape mapping adds to our understanding of the broader system of which we are part and that we seek to transform and can help in developing strategies and tactics and going about implementation: identifying issues, finding allies, creating advocacy coalitions, etc.

There was much discussion about positioning: how to balance conforming and confronting. Discussions focused around the need both to conform and to confront and the need – in any dialectic process – for a dynamic interplay between societal

groups and government agencies with moments of confronting and moments of conforming. Pragmatism calls for both patience and impatience.

We discussed the importance of:

- Reflecting on the whole system
- Creating spaces for people to come together
- Being open-minded about who to bring together: different people bring in their own part of the 'ecosystem' we are building and many different people are needed because they all bring in complementary pieces of what we are seeking to build
- Understanding what we each need from the other
- Finding common ground around common needs
- Recognising this as a political process
- Bargaining and working on the basis of reciprocity. If there isn't enough common ground, there's a need to build political power.
- Focusing on the long term direction more than on individual projects: consistent efforts are needed over the long term, as this is a long term project.

And the main thought to take home from this? Maybe it's that there's a need for social innovation organizations and initiatives to understand bureaucracies and their dynamics better and also to recognise that diversity exists also within bureaucracies. It's important for social innovation organisations to understand the role of public servants and to work with them to understand each other's needs. There may be public servants who are sympathetic to the social innovation, but the nature of the political culture acts as a constraint. Confidence building can come from finding sympathetic public servants and working together to take small steps forward. Understanding that the public servant is sometimes forced by the system to make certain statements or act in certain ways can help to defuse anger and criticism. The key is to build relations based on an understanding of the pressures and constraints that public servants face that limit what they might say or do. In government ministries, like everywhere, there is diversity. While there are 'hard-liners' there are also people willing to listen, be creative and to compromise. It's important we all reach out and find each other.

Learning for Change: social innovation for a humanized economy

October 12, 2017

Paul Weaver

Discussions at the social welfare table focused around the inherited models of welfare capitalism that were established in Western Europe in the last Century and now dominate in the EU, but which have high costs and often impede creation of the kind of 'caring' society that many social innovation organisations and initiatives aspire to (re-) build and the kinds of care giving and receiving that people want.

There was agreement around the table (over two rounds of group discussion) that government and professional welfare organisations have lost sight of core values of care-taking in family and community. What is our goal as a society? Is it to make profit, to be efficient? Or is it to create wellbeing for everyone, to care for the unfortunate, to care for ourselves and each other, to arrange care giving and receiving as people want? Societal goals, progress indicators and even the tax system set perverse incentives. GDP is bigger if more people are sick and more money is spent treating symptoms of (often avoidable) sickness. A re-orientation to focus on prevention could reduce avoidable cost, but the political system is locked in a point-scoring debate around marginal changes to the existing system or in stigmatizing and blaming system users even when what is needed is system change.

There's a need to organise and empower people to take care of each other. Social innovation initiatives can contribute to care-taking in the community and to creating wellbeing directly through their activities. There are already bottom-up self-organised social insurance initiatives that mobilise community members and look, not at people's needs, but at the assets they bring and the contributions they can make. Community initiatives bring care back into community at a neighbourhood scale. Successful demonstrations can begin to change the debates and narratives around social welfare and its creation. Recognising, valuing, and rewarding care-taking in family and community will help empower people and facilitate system change.

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Learning for Change: the Challenges of Resourcing and Diversification for Sustainability

October 12, 2017

Paul Weaver

This session was an exploration of different ways in which long-lived manifestations of social innovation initiatives have managed to sustain themselves. Long-lived manifestations are often the exception rather than the rule; for example, around 70% of time banks in the TBUSA network fail within their first three years of life and hardly any have sustained longer than a decade. There are nevertheless some individual exceptions in the US, UK, and elsewhere that have bucked the trend. This begs the question: 'what did these exceptions do differently that makes it possible for them to sustain and thrive when so many others fall back?'

The background for discussion was presented by Paul Weaver in the form of a set of propositions. One is that: if social innovation initiatives are to have transformative societal impact many more local manifestations will need to sustain long term. Another is that transformative societal impact also depends on social innovation initiatives working with each other and with external organisations in concerted fashion, as they are unlikely to be able to deliver societal- or systems-level change as individual initiatives. In this perspective, the observations that so many social innovation initiatives struggle to sustain their activities even when they demonstrate positive social impact and that the net effect of new start-ups being offset by die-backs of existing initiatives is that social innovation networks often find themselves with 'their wheels spinning' rather than driving forward urge us to address the financing, diversifying and resourcing challenges facing initiatives.

Research by Weaver, Marks, Skropke and Hogan using a success-case approach applied across a range of different social innovation types in different world regions and country contexts identifies important factors influencing potentials and prospects for social innovation initiatives to sustain and therefore also to contribute to transformative change. Diversifying income streams, becoming entrepreneurial around creating own income streams, creating networks of partner organisations to deliver mission, and maintaining focus on mission and values, especially in internal governance arrangements, are all important.

This 'challenge' workshop looked mostly at the challenge to individual initiatives and drew on the experience of three practitioners, Barbara Huston, Sarah Bird and Michael Marks. Each described a different resourcing strategy for individual initiatives. These covered, respectively: starting a social enterprise to create own income; embedding in a larger organisation; and becoming a commissioned service provider. The cross-over opportunities were also explored. There was also some discussion around

strategic approaches based on wider partnerships among initiatives linked to projects for building secondary economies using new socio-economic models.

Each resourcing strategy was introduced as a basis for round-table discussion of the challenges it implies with discussion stimulated around three guiding questions:

- What can grassroots SI organisations/initiatives do themselves to develop and seize opportunities to augment and diversify income streams, pool resources, and develop co-production possibilities?
- What changes in framing conditions are needed for these to support and enable social innovation initiatives to sustain and develop their potential to contribute to positive societal- and systems-level transformation?
- What interventions are needed to support partnerships across organisations for co-produced sustainability and transformative change?

Own income stream through social enterprise

Barbara Huston introduced her own social innovation organization, Partners-in-Care, which has been operating successfully as a not-for-profit for over 25 years in Maryland helping older people stay active and to age *'in situ'* as valuable members of their communities.

The fortunes of her operations turned around taking advantage of an opportunity to develop a thrift store and to incorporate that into the time and service exchange culture she and her co-founders were using to provide self-help opportunities for older people. A time bank boutique has been developed from the basics of time banking combined with a repair and valorise model of up-cycling surplus-to-requirement clothes and goods. The boutique generates an own income stream that offers financial stability but in its own right is also a very tangible instrument of community building and creating opportunities for older people to be active. It is staffed by time bank members in return for time credits. The high compatibility of the boutique to the core mission makes this a successful social enterprise. The boutique also makes Partners-in-Care much more 'visible' to the wider community, as there is a physical space – the boutique – which is a tangible and evident symbol of the presence of Partners-in-Care compared to its other activities, such as providing transport for older people or organising home repair, which are 'invisible' to the wider public and to grant-givers: *"Partners-in-Care arranges 20,000 rides annually. People don't see that... but people do see the boutique"*.

The boutique operates in line with time banking values and principles. It's not a consignment store – those offering their unwanted items to the boutique don't get a percentage of proceeds from their sale but get credits for the time taken to gather, valorise, package and get their donated items to the store. Mission is the most important principle here. *"Money is scarce, not precious. Mission is precious. Mission is more precious than money."* Barbara has nevertheless found it important to profile the impact of Partners-in-Care in ways meaningful to mainstream actors, such as expressing the hours contributed to the organisation by its members in terms of money-equivalent contribution (saved wage costs) and the value of the work done in terms of avoided costs and cost savings.

The guiding principle both internally and in relation to external partners is to "stay on mission". It's important that everyone – all the members – feel ownership of Partners-

in-Care. While there is a CEO *"it can't be led by just one person"*. There's a process of succession planning for the CEO and leadership team currently underway. This started already three years ago to provide for a new CEO (a replacement for Barbara who is retiring) to understand and learn how to work with the mission, principles and values of the organisation, as it is so different from a conventional business model. Partners-in-Care invests in developing the skill sets within the membership needed to protect the mission and to enable distributed ownership and leadership.

Staying on mission and maintaining core principles and values while being entrepreneurial have, therefore, been important foundations for the long-term sustainability and success of Partners-in-Care.

As her organisation and its social impact have grown, so too have wider awareness of what Partners-in-Care achieves and its powers when negotiating with external actors and commissioners. For many years Partners-in-Care has worked alongside the Department of Aging to support the elderly living actively in and being supported in and by community. *"Partners-in-Care can achieve what the Department of Aging can't do"*. It enables elderly people to live at home and is effective in reducing hospital re-admission rates by not only supporting the elderly and frail in their own homes with services but engaging them as active members of the time bank. *"We started to work with LifeLine. They supply emergency call out devices. We also have small mobility buses. We now operate with over 3000 people across five sites"*.

Long- term partnerships with organisations like the Department of Aging have helped Partners-in-Care understand the needs they can help address and helped the organization identify new services to offer and additional partners they can work with, like LifeLine. Partners in turn help further extend the partnership network in a snowballing process.

New legislation has been passed that now imposes financial penalties on hospitals if re-admission rates are high. Hospitals are now seeking to contract Partners-in-Care to help reduce re-admission rates. The Centre for Medical Services in the US is requiring that hospitals use the kinds of approaches that Partners-in-Care has developed and delivers. There is a special concern over health and hospital system 'super-utilizers'. 'Again, the principle that "mission is more precious than money" is overriding for Partners-in-Care. Partners-in-Care only works with hospitals on its own terms to ensure that those it helps accept the principles and values of the organisation and are willing to be co-producers in value creation.

The new legislation is potentially a game changer for Partners-in-Care. It creates a financial imperative for hospitals to seek lower rates of re-admission and creates demand for Partners-in-Care services and its delivery model.

Similarly rich and insightful discussions were held around the discussions of the two other development pathways and business models, 'embedding' and 'offering commissioned services'.

Embedding in bigger organisations

Sarah Bird introduced this strategy and pathway in relation to her experience as a time banking practitioner and CEO of TBUK, leading to discussion of the opportunities and challenges it presents.

Currently, TBUK has around 250-270 member time banks in the UK, with around 5,800 individual members of these exchanging 3.2 million hours annually. Many external organisations are interested in time banking and want to partner with time banks. Experiences range across Local Authorities, Government Departments, Health Authorities, Hospitals, Churches, Charities, NGOs and Businesses. There are important links between the UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and time banking. Time exchange systems and those active in them are provided with special fiscal and welfare benefits exemptions. DWP has a policy of signposting claimants to local time banks, seeing *"time banking as a stepping stone to paid employment"*.

TBUK and local time banks use pilot and demonstration projects to build embedding relationships. Hosts often provide physical space and cover money costs of operations and salaries of paid coordinators in return for a time bank being set up within the organisation, among its clients, or among the served community and helping achieve the goals of the host. There may be other in-kind benefits.

Care is needed to maintain the integrity and identity of the time bank and there are risks attaching to embedding in larger organisations, as the leadership of the larger organisation can change and this can arbitrarily lead to the end of an embedding relationship even when this has been successful in its mission. Demonstrating the impact of the activities of the embedded social innovation in terms of outcomes achieved and costs saved is important for maintaining the relationship, but not a guarantee.

An important recent development is the interest shown in establishing time banks within business organizations as a way to break down barriers between levels. Ralph Lauren stores in Central London, for example, are embedding time banks within their organisations to *"help level the playing field and remove social barriers between senior managers and shop floor workers."*

Providing commissioned services

Michael Marks introduced the strategy and development path involving social innovation organisations and initiatives being commissioned as service providers.

Social innovation organisations, like the Parent-Support-Network that Michael is involved with as an action researcher, may develop activities that offer new, better or more efficiently provided services that enable them to take on formal roles as commissioned service providers. The main differences between being a commissioned service provider and being embedded in an organisation is that a social innovation organisation can operate with several different commissioning agencies simultaneously rather than having only one dedicated partner and relationship and that a contract is established involving money transfers. The pros and cons of commissioning include that service commissions are prone to the vagaries of the mainstream economy and public finances. There is no guaranteed smooth flow of

contracts to provide secure funding. Diversification is therefore important and empowering for the social innovation initiative.

Key challenges relate on the one hand to the silo nature of government departments and agencies that could commission services (as well as changes in policies) and on the other hand the limited capacities of individual social innovation organisations to meet the quality assurance requirements of commissioners and investors, who are risk averse. Upscaling, upskilling and improved safeguarding are often needed to overcome commissioning risk. This requires upfront investment to get the social innovation organisations 'investment ready'. Programmes such as the UK's Big Potential are important for capacity building. Social impact bonds and pay-for-success contracts offer important new financial mechanisms and instruments. These are still in the early stages of their development and there is an important agenda of work to be undertaken still to design, test and register interventions; e.g. in prevention. This is challenging owing to the need for appropriate evaluation metrics and protocols.

Further information

The workshop was co-designed by Linda Hogan, Barbara Huston, Michael Marks, Paul Weaver (all Associates of Groundswell Research) and Sarah Bird. It was co-presented by the last four of these. Paul Weaver and Sarah Bird are representatives of Timebanking UK. Paul Weaver is also a TRANSIT researcher.

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