

# transformative social innovation theory



## **Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change**

### **Deliverable n. 6.7**

Theme [ssh.2013.3.2-1][Social Innovation- Empowering People, changing societies]  
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**Focus of deliverable:**

This is Deliverable 6.7. It is an approach for evaluating (transformative) social innovation. It does this by focusing on the narratives of change of social innovation initiatives as well as the critical turning points that happened during the journey of (transformative) change that the initiatives engaged in.

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Text Developed by: Veronica Olivotto, Saskia Ruijsink and Mattijs Taanman

During the process of developing the text we have received useful tips from Marlieke Kieboom and Tunde Kallai

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to deliverable 6.7

This deliverable present a text that introduced and contextualizes a tool. It explains how this tool can be used in training. Additionally it presents the tool itself, a PowerPoint for trainers and the background document produced in WP2 (part of deliverable 2.5).

### 1.2 Introducing Evaluation for Social Innovation

The field of Monitoring & Evaluating social innovations is developing rapidly. It responds to a widening range of questions being asked about social innovation: its outcomes, its impacts and the contexts within which it operates and with which it interacts. This document builds on previous reflections on M&E for social innovation produced in preparation for the TRANSIT M&E workshop that took place on 15-16 of February 2017 (See Weaver et al., 2017 and Olivotto et al., 2017). In this paper we describe the reasons why SI initiatives may be more amenable to forms of monitoring and evaluation that are not based on positivism, “involving a strongly-linear model of evaluation that conceptualizes clear cause-effect links and seeks to explore these” (Weaver et al., 2017:8). The monitoring and evaluation of social innovation initiatives is indeed not apparent. This is influenced by the environment in which social innovations happen which is subject to constant change, while, at the same time social innovations themselves change constantly. This requires a different form of M&E that takes constant changes in the surrounding environment and the feedback of its diverse beneficiaries into consideration and that goes beyond making definitive and overall judgments about the merit and worth of an initiative (Weaver et al., 2017). In line with this we have developed a tool that can support evaluation of social innovation initiatives and that draws on ideas generated in approaches such as Developmental Evaluation and Reflexive or Dynamic Evaluation.

### 1.3 Target audience and objective

This tool is intended primarily for social innovators of enablers of social innovation and their partners. More specifically:

- Social Innovators who want to use evaluation approaches that can be used for evaluating dynamic processes in dynamic circumstances. It is particularly relevant for social innovation initiatives that are relatively new and/ or in an explorative

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stage, or those that are evolving strongly and who are confronted with major internal or external changes.

- Policy makers who are interested to learn more about (evaluating) complex and chaotic change process (for the sake of development) and.
- Researchers who want to work with and for social innovations, reflecting with them on the processes of their innovation (action research)- how can initiatives reach more ?; how can resources be utilized better?
- Trainers working in the context of social innovation. Trainers can use this tool in trainings for innovators and their partners who want to learn more about Monitoring & Evaluation of (transformative) social innovation. This tool is primarily developed as 'action tool', but we also developed material that supports its use in training.

The tool can be used by internal teams of social innovation initiatives, but it can also be used to engage with externals such as partners from sister initiatives or (transnational) networks of your social innovation, or other partners and / or key stakeholders such as enablers. They can use this tool to engage in a learning journey about how a social innovation initiative is engaging in societal and transformative change.

The objective of this tool is to trigger social innovation initiatives and their partners to systematically learn about themselves and by that achieve more, without compromising on the dynamics and creativity of social innovation.

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## 2 Transformative Social Innovation

There is a lot of talk about social innovation, but what is it? We understand social innovation as **the creation of new social relations** and as **new ways of doing and thinking**. For instance, when citizens organise themselves into a cooperative and jointly own a wind turbine, they create new relations between citizens, energy users and producers. A social innovation is **transformative**, when it is not just marginally new, but purposively challenges, adjusts and/or provides alternatives to the dominant systems and institutions in society.

At their core, transformative social innovations (TSI's) are **value-driven**. They are developed by groups or networks of people that join because they want to promote certain values for themselves, as a group, in their local context and for society as a whole. This is their main motivation and when the TSI provides a context in which they can do what they care about and what they are good at, when they can choose the actions they find purposeful and feel they can make a difference, they as an individual and as a group become empowered (Avelino, 2009) and agents of change and the TSI is their means to do so. Any attempt to understand and improve TSI's therefore needs to tap into these sources of empowerment and agency.

As with most innovations, transformative social innovations (TSI's) are never really finished: they remain work in progress **-they evolve-** over extended periods of time. They change constantly and rarely if ever do they develop as anticipated. Which is both a fact and a strength (see Pel et al, 2017; Avelino et al, 2017). For a large part then, understanding STI's, including valuing what they are about, how they work and how they realize their transformative potential requires understanding how they evolved. Done systematically, this means evaluation.

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## 3 Evaluating TSI's

### 3.1 Alternatives to 'traditional' M&E

As most social innovators, policy makers and evaluators know from experience, many traditional evaluation schemes, based on a fixed linear, causal logic, struggle to take the ongoing changes within and around TSI's into account (Weaver et al, 2017). Such schemes are based on a 'hammer and nail' logic in which the hammer (the social innovation) has a direct and clear causal effect on the nail (outcomes or impacts). A way of thinking well-suited to situations where goals can be agreed and quantified, progress can be reliably measured and where activities and results of these activities can be readily observed (Rogers, 2008). And, as Regeer (2009) adds, where the innovation and its context are relatively stable, where causality is clear (there are no non-linear dynamics or 'other hammers') and everybody involved acts in accordance to this causal logic. More metaphorically, as in 'if the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as a nail', such schemes, which in themselves can be very valuable, may often be insufficient, unpractical or even plainly the wrong tool for the evaluation job in TSI's.

In response to these issues alternative evaluation approaches have been developed. The first is **developmental evaluation**, where the landmark publications by Patton (1994, 2011) called into question the value, purpose and timeline of classical program evaluation for particular circumstances. Developmental evaluation "*guides action and adaptation in innovative initiatives facing high uncertainty. Where predictability and control are relatively low, goals, strategies and what gets done can be emergent and changing rather than predetermined and fixed. Continuous development occurs in response to dynamic conditions and attention to rapid feedback about what's working and what is not working*" (Patton, 2011: 36). If you think this description describes the TSI you are working on or with, developmental evaluation is the way to go. Rather than establishing proof of the efficiency and effectiveness of a TSI afterwards (summative evaluation) or incrementally improving the theory of change behind a TSI (formative evaluation) it focuses on supporting the **on-going development** of a TSI together with its stakeholders by questioning and providing feedback on whether it is doing the right things. Its niche is TSI's that are 'not ready yet' for formative or summative evaluation, or find themselves in a phase or circumstance when it is important to scrutinize their underlying values, actions and goals.

The second strand of evaluation, **reflexive evaluation**, or **dynamic evaluation** comes from research and practice to improve multi-stakeholder, transformative innovation processes. It is rooted in (organizational and systemic) learning approaches. Rather than focusing primarily on an innovation's impact on others, the environment or a system, it focuses on *how* the stakeholders can realize transformative innovation together. This is no easy feat because of the diverse interests and knowledge of the stakeholders and the tendency of current conventional and deeply engrained 'system logic' to seep back into the innovation and erode its transformative and innovative potential (Van Mierlo et al., 2010; Regeer, 2009). As a consequence, the main accomplishments of a TSI are evaluated by the occurrence of fundamental learning, changing practices and institutional change. Reflexive evaluation aims both to stimulate and record reflexivity. Something that cannot be done without the active involvement of those directly working on the TSI.

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As a result, both developmental and reflexive evaluation see the role of the evaluator, not as an external judge but as someone who is part of a design team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, continuous process of development, adaptation, and intentional change. Although critical distance is a prerequisite, the evaluator can be a team member who triggers discussions on ongoing programs, their achievements and goals within an SI based on the choice of inquiry framework. The developmental evaluator, indeed, seeks answers to questions that are relevant to innovation, by helping SI initiatives take a broader systems perspective and help navigate the inherently uncertain and judgment-based processes of change, by making them reflect on their assets and the opportunities and dangers afforded by a changing context and how this may affect local action.

Please note that the above should not be read as an invitation to refrain from or abort any linear and quantitative monitoring and evaluation activities. Some (transformative) social innovator and change makers, researchers and policy makers may see the ‘narrow instrumental’ and ‘what gets measured gets accounted for’ nature as symbols of the very societal logic they aim to change. However we found that, when used appropriately, they are highly valuable and provide much needed reality checks and evidence as *part of* the improvement of a TSI. For example Impact Hubs, a worldwide network of hubs providing workplaces, networks and skills to individual social entrepreneurs, regularly monitors the number of entrepreneurs, their prospects and satisfaction with Impact Hubs as part of their efforts to generate and demonstrate impacts and improve their services. However, for defining what the actual impact of these hubs is and how they are best to be stimulated, the network recognizes that these activities are not enough and explores alternative methods (Wittmayer, Avelino, Afonso, 2015) and the tool described here can be useful for such endeavour. The table below illustrates in what occasions the Social Innovation Evaluation tool on Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change can be useful.

<b>Why</b>	<b>When and for whom</b>	<b>With Whom &amp; How</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide feedback on the development of a TSI / social innovation initiative</li> <li>- Stimulate empowerment of actors in and around the TSSI</li> <li>- Promote individual and collective learning on engaging in societal change</li> <li>- Develop improved strategies and change practices within the TSI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TSI's that are relatively new ad/ or in an explorative stage</li> <li>- TSI's that are evolving strongly and who are confronted with major internal or external changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In a team formed by people from the TSI/ social innovation initiative; one of the team members as evaluator</li> <li>- In a team with external stakeholders and partners</li> <li>- As an event in a workshop format with a facilitator/ evaluator</li> <li>- As a continuous process with an involved evaluator</li> </ul>

Table1: Why, when and how to use the Social Innovation Evaluation tool on Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change



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## 3.2 Critical Turning Points (CTPs) and Narratives of Change used for Evaluation

### 3.2.1 Narrative of Change (NoC)

We use the term Narratives of Change (NoC) to refer broadly to sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses or story-lines about change and innovation (..). In TRANSIT we are particularly interested in NoC “told by social innovation actors themselves in their (implicit) attempt to counter hegemonic discourses and to show ways for change and transformation” (Wittmayer et al, 2016:4). Such storylines can be formal and informal and often inconsistent across participants and they play an instrumental role in social innovation. They are used to not just retell experiences but also to open up new ways of thinking about reality and look for new possibilities for action. In this sense NoCs are different from the widely used Theory of Change (ToC) rooted in the development studies and evaluation literature. ToCs are often too rigid and do not allow to capture what is important for TRANSIT, that is “the performativity of narratives as they guide current actions in anticipation of a future and reminiscent of a past” (Wittmayer et al, 2016:3).

In TRANSIT we take a constructivist approach to narratives recognizing how they are socially produced in specific socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions and co-constructed between narrators and audiences. As such NoC are simultaneously relatively stable over time but also emergent. Time is essential in narratives as they can be considered particular discursive forms which clarify the position of an actor in a specific context and orders events and actions in temporal sequence towards the achievement of a desired goal. For instance, our research revealed that the narrative of Innovators for the Public (Ashoka) “has undergone a significant reorientation in terms of the leading protagonist – from the ‘one-in-a-million social entrepreneur’ to an ‘everyone a change-maker’ vision” (Wittmayer, 2017) as they keep propagating the ideas of social entrepreneurship.

NoCs are important for processes of transformational change because social innovators, by retelling the past and imagining different futures, revisit “the world that they live in” and reveal as the ways in which narratives are deeply informed by the cultural values and assumptions” (Wittmayer et al, 2016:8). This process of sense making can be empowering on both personal and collective levels. Finally we identify a methodological framework for analyzing narratives. We recognize three constituent components of NoC: Rationales, actors and plots. Briefly through rationales the “scene is set and justification is delivered for the activities carried out by various actors, including the social innovation initiatives”. Describing actors in narratives allows “an understanding of who engages in activities furthering or hindering desired societal change” and plots, that is the actual storyline as it unfolded from the past into the present and how it envisages future situations.

Patton (2011) identifies the use of a theory of change by a SI as part of developmental evaluation process and recognizes how narratives of change will evolve through time under the influence of diffusion and going to scale. When social innovators reflect on the underlying values of their initiative, how they see change manifesting through their

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strategies, action, activities and what they aspire to achieve, they are spelling out their narratives of change, as they evolve in time. We consider this a more “external” process that should be accompanied with a more “internal” one where tactics, bottlenecks, means of achieving the mission are analysed. We suggest this process can be fulfilled by the concept of Critical Turning Points (CTPs).

## 3.2.2 Critical Turning Points (CTPs)

In TRANSIT, we have understood that people who are engaged in transforming our society towards a more sustainable and socially just forms typically experience that transformation is a process and a journey on a bumpy road, it does not happen from one day to the other. During this journey we are engaged in events, encounters and actions, which are decisive for achieving transformation. Some of those are carefully planned, while others occur by chance, spontaneously. Such decisive moments can be understood as Critical Turning Points (CTPs) for achieving transformation. CTP's, help us to learn more about journeys of various social innovation initiatives towards societal transformation. CTP's can be used as an internal tool for reflecting and anticipating on (potential) moments that are decisive for generating impact on society as well as taking to scale the initiative. In so doing it contributes to at least two of the five aims of development evaluation according to Patton (2011) and these are: 1) on-going development in adapting a project, program, strategy, policy or other initiative to new conditions in complex dynamic systems and 2) how an innovation may need to be adapted as it is taken to scale in the effort to have broader impact.

A CTP approach focuses largely on the iterative monitoring done by internal stakeholders interested in understanding how effectively they are achieving social impacts rather than measuring outcomes and impacts directly. Reflection about past decisions and course of action is an important feature of the CTP approach contributing to an understanding of an SI reaches its goals. We also see a correspondence between specific social innovators' NoC and the way they approach the CTPs. For instance, the entrepreneurial mission that is the focus Ashoka's narrative may be retraced in the way the innovators devise tactics revealed through the CTP approach. Therefore this can become a mean for initiators or facilitators/evaluators to monitor whether the SI “walks the talk” so to speak.

We believe this approach may also contribute to the process of social learning, where SI members “learn many things as individuals and reach new worldviews and understandings that have an impact on their behaviors” leading to both personal transformations as well as new shared meanings, norms and practices (Dumitru et al., 2017:3). By asking a simple set of questions the aim is to understand the journey of a SI, that makes a CTPs approach to monitoring a form of “developmental evaluation”. In this approach the evaluation focus shifts from measuring social innovation as a product or service to evaluating it as a process that has impacts. In the words of Patton (2011):

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*“Each year the program changed in significant ways and new evaluation questions emerged. Program goals and strategies evolved. The evaluation evolved. No summative evaluation was ever conducted, no final report was ever written. The program continues to evolve—and continues to rely on developmental evaluation”.*

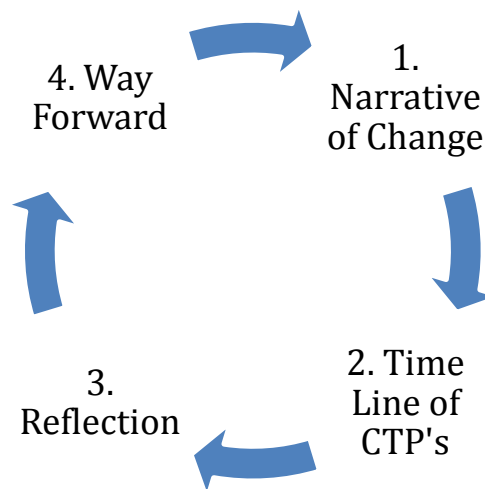
In sum a monitoring approach using as inquiry frameworks the NoC and the CTP approach can be used as a combined tool to analyze both the internal (tough questions, key encounters, choices about a particular line of action) and external facets (“how the world has changed and how can we influence it”) of social innovations. It also serves the purpose of understanding how specific social innovators' narratives resonate with how they dealt with CTPs, providing a sounding board for consistency between the larger narrative of change and the tactics and actions that lead to societal change.

Finally this combined approach can be ascribed to the field of developmental approach because: 1) it brings about a process that through the recollection of past moments that were decisive for the SI initiative and challenges their members to think if they can anticipate on any CTP's that might be upcoming; 2) the CTP approach guides SI members in reflecting about what is under direct control of the initiative and what is out of the control of the same. In so doing it can contribute to the observations on whether the initiative is adapting to new conditions driven by developments in socio-economic or political circumstances; 3) it stimulates the creation of an internal developmental evaluator that is trained in the use of this inquiry framework helping local innovators with both top-down and bottom up processes of societal transformations and the interactive processes that lie in between (the “muddled middle”).

## 4 Towards a TRANSIT Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change

### 4.1 A cyclical process in phases

The Evaluation Tool is a process guide that has the looks of (card) game that is complemented with canvases. The tool is based on a cyclic process and is organized in four phases.



#### **Phase 0: Getting Started**

The very beginning of this process is the identification of the need for starting an evaluation process and based on this, you form a team.

#### **Phase 1: Narratives of Change**

The first phase is to identify, discuss and clarify the theory of change of a TSI or social innovation initiative.

#### **Phase 2: Critical Turning Points or “how did we get here”**

You then construct the timeline of critical turning points (CTPs) in the journey of change of the Social Innovation Initiative and you describe CTP's in-depth.

#### **Phase 3: Reflection: are we walking the talk, what were the main changes?**

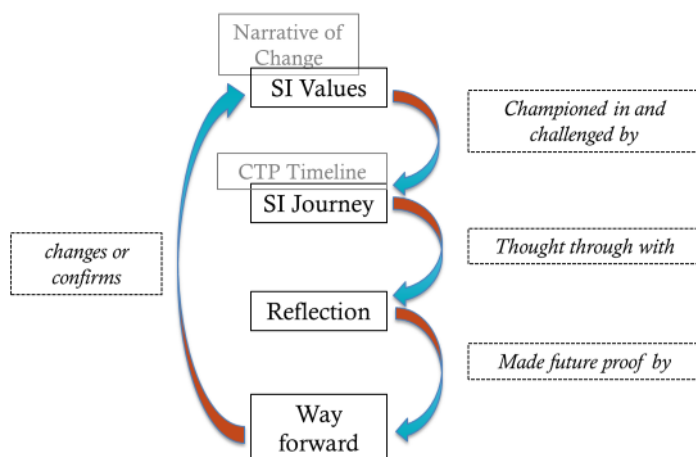
Is what has happened (as expressed in the time line) in line with how you talk about the change the change that you want to achieve (narrative of change). What can you learn from this?

#### **Phase 4: Looking Forward**

In this phase you can revise your narrative of change and define strategies on improving process of co-production and mobilisation and use of resources.

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Going through those different phases allows learning as is visualized below



## 4.2 Different time paths

This tool can guide a compact workshop process as well as lengthy change process that can last up to several months as well as anything in between. We have developed an outline of two different ways of using the tool in table 2.

Phases	Activities	Workshop format of half day	Learning Trajectory in 4 phases
1. Narrative of Change	Individually write down the narrative of change Discuss and synthesize in group	15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes	Phase 1: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to do individual work; ask them to gather examples, stories images and prepare short presentations about the narrative of change. Have group session (about ½ day) with short presentations and a synthesis part in which you develop a slogan, images and illustrative stories. Document it for internal use.

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<p>2. Critical Turning Points timeline</p>	<p>Individually define a number of CTP's (between 3 and 5) Discuss and synthesize in group</p>	<p>15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes</p>	<p>Phase 2: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to do individual work; ask them to gather examples, stories images and prepare short 1-pagers about the CTP's they identify. Have group session (about ½ day); share the short reports and discuss and bring them together in a synthesis session. Based on this you draw a timeline that is illustrated with images and stories. If desirable the CTP's can then be further developed in-depth and discussed in another plenary session. Document it and develop it into publishable material (after session).</p>
<p>3. Reflection</p>	<p>Individually define main learning points Discuss and synthesize in group</p>	<p>15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes</p>	<p>Phase 3: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to make reflections and derive main learnings; every individual should make notes of this. Have group session (about ½ day); share the notes and discuss and bring them together in a synthesis session. Based on this you identify key lessons learned; highlighting different stakeholders' / individuals' perspectives. Document it for internal use as starting point for defining a way forward.</p>
<p>4. Way forward</p>	<p>Individually define suggestions for way forward Discuss and synthesize in group</p>	<p>15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes</p>	<p>Phase 4: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to identify options for a way forward based on input from all 3 assignments and sessions. Develop a way forward in one or two ½ day sessions. This includes the revision of your narrative of change as well as the development of strategic actions for co-production and resourcing. Document the outcomes of the session and develop publishable material that materializes your narrative of change.</p>

Table 2: Two different time-paths for using the evaluation tool.

## 5 Using this tool for training

### 5.1.1 Target group for training

The target group for a training about this tool ranges from people who work with and in TSI as well as policy makers, and academics (including students) with an interest in social innovation. There is no specific knowledge about M&E required for following a training on this tool, but familiarity with social innovation is advisable.

### 5.1.2 Training format

If you want to use this tool as a trainer we advise that it is used a workshop format that can change in length as is indicated in table 2. If you deal with a group that is engaged with or in a specific social innovation initiative they can take this initiative as the subject of doing the exercises. In mixed groups a trainer can also choose to work with a case study. The TRANSIT website offers plenty of material that can be used for this:

- <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/discover-our-cases-2>
- <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sij>

In addition to the tool itself, we have developed a PowerPoint presentation that can be used to introduce the workshop.

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# **7. Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change**

# **Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical turning points and narratives of change**



# What is (transformative) social innovation?

In a time of many global challenges more and more people globally are taking their and the planet's future into their own hands by developing innovations. Many of those innovations have a strong social dimensions and some of those are also transforming society. While transformative social innovations may seem invisible or marginal to some, we have observed in the TRANSIT research projects that these are actually meaningful and engaging with global communities, focusing on improving the lives of more and more people every day. They are very diverse, ranging from community energy initiatives, basic income experiments and participatory budgeting projects, to ecovillages, co-working spaces, digital fabrication workshops, sharing platforms, agriculture cooperatives and urban labs, and social entrepreneurship platforms as well as many other examples. Transformative social innovations provide diverse pathways and concrete practices towards more sustainable, just, democratic and resilient societies.

## What is transformative social innovation?

**Social innovation:** changing social relations, involving new ways of doing, thinking & organizing.

**Transformative change:** challenging, altering and/or replacing dominant institutions (= dominant ways of doing, thinking & organizing).

**Transformative social innovation:** social innovation that contributes to transformative change.

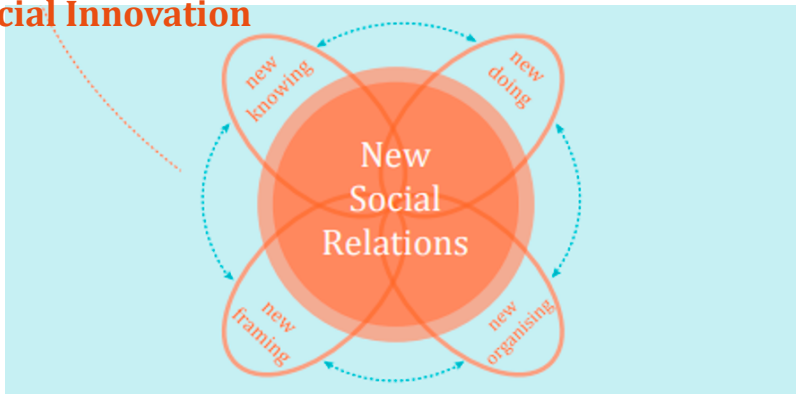
## References:

For more information on (transformative) social innovation see: the Transformative Social Innovation Manifesto on [www.transitsocialinnovation.eu](http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu)

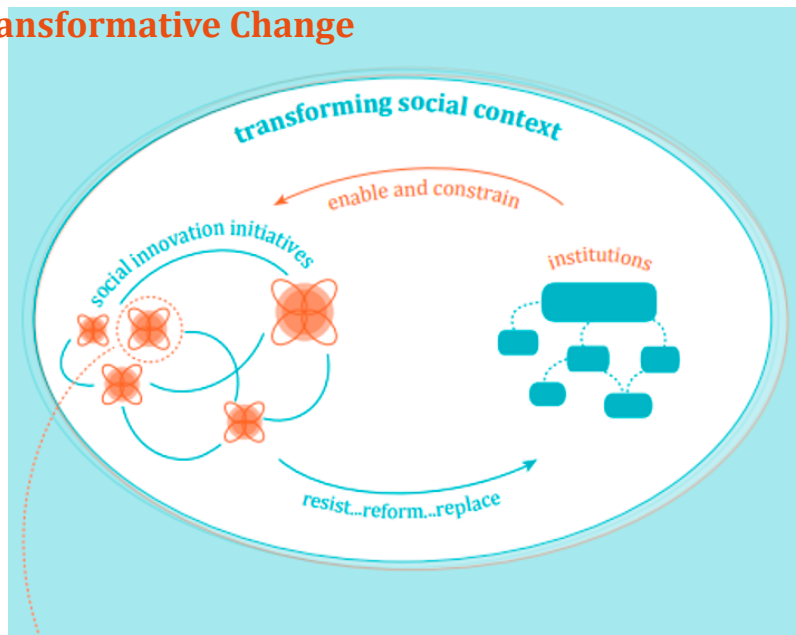
Kemp, R.; Zijderwijk, L.; Weaver, P.; Seyfang, G.; Avelino, F.; Strasser, T.; Becerra, L.; Backhaus, J. and Ruijsink, S. (2015) **Doing things differently : exploring Transformative Social innovation and its practical challenges** (TRANSIT Brief ; 1), TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169.

Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Cozan, S., Ruijsink, S., Backhaus, J., Avelino, F. and Dumitru, A. (2017) *How social innovation leads to transformative change : towards a theory of transformative social innovation* (TRANSIT Brief ; 3), TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169.

### Social Innovation



### Transformative Change



Source: Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Cozan, S., Ruijsink, S., Backhaus, J., Avelino, F. and Dumitru, A. (2017) *How social innovation leads to transformative change : towards a theory of transformative social innovation* (TRANSIT Brief ; 3), TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169.

# Getting started

## Preparing yourself to evaluate and learn

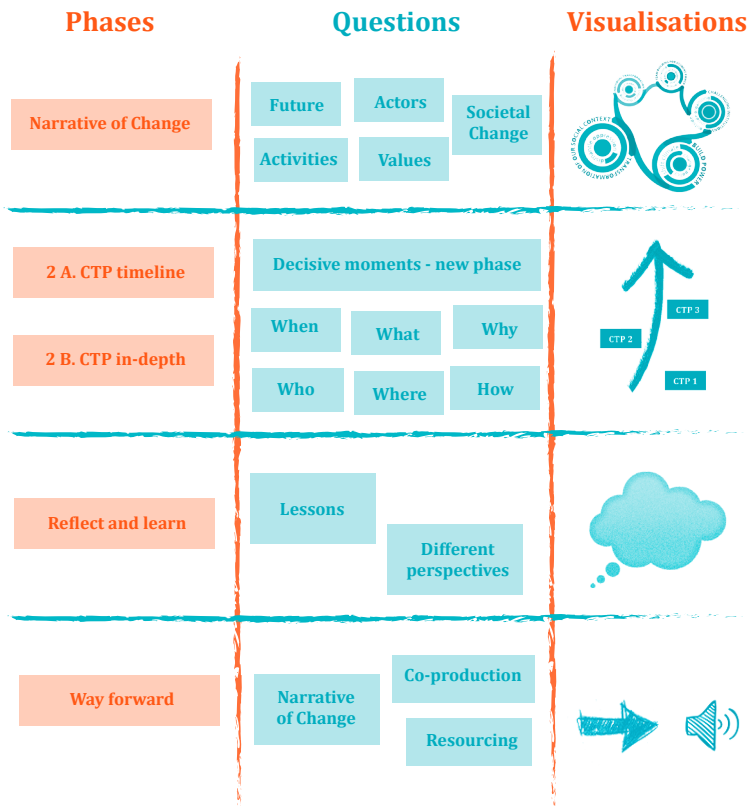
There are various reasons that can motivate you to engage in evaluation and to use this tool for it. It is particularly relevant if you want to become more clear on: what kind of social change you are engaging in as social innovation initiative, on how you are doing that, on getting clear who are important in this process, on what happens to you while doing this on how you deal with the things happening to you and why, and on how you can improve what you are doing, to become stronger, more focused and a more effective agent of change.

This can be a useful process if you are relatively new social innovation initiative, but also, if you are undergoing changes that impact your way of doing things and maybe even your 'raison d'être'. Social Innovation initiatives are very diverse, but social innovation initiatives never operate alone, they always have partners and/ or engage with stakeholders. This tool can be used by internal teams of social innovation initiatives, but also it can be used to engage with externals such as partners from sister initiatives or (transnational) networks of your social innovation, or other partners and / or key stakeholders. If you are not yet very sure on your narrative of change internally it is probably best to start of with an internal process. If you are interested in getting external feedback on your identified narrative of change and on your process of change then it is a good idea to combine and in- and external processes. This tool will describe how it can used in both ways; purely internal, or as a combination of in- and external.

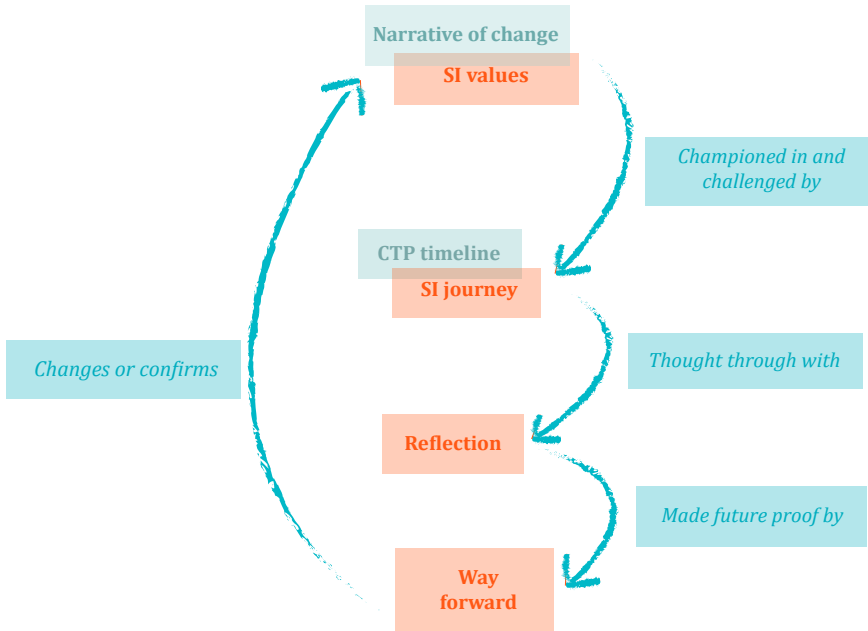
# Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical turning points and narratives of change

The tool is structured in the following phases:

0. Form SII team incl. developmental evaluator
1. Identify / discuss/ adjust your Social Innovation's Narrative of Change
2. Develop a Timeline with Critical Turning Points
  - A. (Re)Construct Timeline
  - B. Select & describe Critical Turning Points in-depth
3. Reflect & learn
4. Way Forward



# A cyclical learning process



## Form team & develop time-frame

### Team

Forming the team is part of the process of getting started an important and delicate task. In this approach/ for this tool, an evaluation team ideally is:

- Between 4 and 10 people
- Composed of social innovators and 1 evaluator (also facilitator)
- The evaluator can be internal, but needs to be able to evaluate and facilitate with critical distance, while (s)he should also be engaged in shaping the future.
- Diverse and complete: composed of people with different viewpoints and positions (also if internal)
- If you combine in- and external partners in your evaluation process you should include representatives of your key partners and/ or stakeholders. It is important to first reach internal agreement on the balance (how much in- vs external) and on who to engage with.



## Time-frame

You can use this tool in different time frames. We suggest two different options here; that you can adapt to your own circumstances.

- Phase 1: Narrative of Change
- Phase 2: Critical Turning Points timeline
- Phase 3: Reflection
- Phase 4: Way forward

Phases	Activities	Workshop format for half a day	Learning Trajectory in 4 phases
1. Narrative of Change	Individually write down the narrative of change Discuss and synthesize in group	15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes	Phase 1: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to do individual work; ask them to gather examples, stories images and prepare short presentations about the narrative of change. Have group session (about ½ day) with short presentations and a synthesis part in which you develop a slogan, images and illustrative stories. Document it for internal use.
2. Critical Turning Points timeline	Individually define a number of CTP's (between 3 and 5) Discuss and synthesize in group	15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes	Phase 2: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to do individual work; ask them to gather examples, stories images and prepare short 1-pagers about the CTP's they identify. Have group session (about ½ day); share the short reports and discuss and bring them together in a synthesis session. Based on this you draw a timeline that is illustrated with images and stories. If desirable the CTP's can then be further developed in-depth and discussed in another plenary session. Document it and develop it into publishable material (after session).
3. Reflection	Individually define main learning points Discuss and synthesize in group	15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes	Phase 3: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to make reflections and derive main learnings; every individual should make notes of this. Have group session (about ½ day); share the notes and discuss and bring them together in a synthesis session. Based on this you identify key lessons learned; highlighting different stakeholders' / individuals' perspectives. Document it for internal use as starting point for defining a way forward.
4. Way forward	Individually define suggestions for way forward Discuss and synthesize in group	15 minutes individual work (post-its) 30 minutes for synthesis in group (flip-chart) 45 minutes	Phase 4: 1-4 weeks in total Give people assignment to identify options for a way forward based on input from all 3 assignments and sessions. Develop a way forward in one or two ½ day sessions. This includes the revision of your narrative of change as well as the development of strategic actions for co-production and resourcing. Document the outcomes of the session and develop publishable material that materializes your narrative of change.

# Phase 1

## Identify narrative of change

### **What is a narrative of change?**

A narrative is a kind of story that plays a role in sense making and in the construction of meaning. Social Innovation Initiatives use particular narratives in generating social and societal change; we call those 'narratives of change'. A narrative of change constructs a story around the type of issues that justify change; the action and focus chosen to tackle those and the desired future. It is produced both consciously and subconsciously by various actors who engage in and react to various developments. Narratives of change are important for social innovation initiatives since they give identity, trigger imagination and can be empowering.

### **An example of a narrative of change from Ashoka**

Ashoka sees that the world changes and says: "Now is the moment to ensure that everyone knows they can change the world for the better, and does so (Ashoka.org, 2017)"; in line with this they see the ideal world as the "everyone a changemaker" world. They do this by promoting the amount and quality of change makers by investing in various ways in social entrepreneurs and in young people. The CEO and founder of Ashoka Bill Drayton is the most prominent actor in developing the narrative. Many people are now connected to Ashoka and they use all kind of opportunities: they built on the growing interest for and number of social entrepreneurs, the growing number of venues to address societal issues and media interest. They also use various metaphors such as 'ecosystem for social innovation' as well as visualizations to strengthen their message. Also see the Ashoka website: [www.ashoka.org/en/about-ashoka](http://www.ashoka.org/en/about-ashoka) and [www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/ashoka](http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/ashoka)

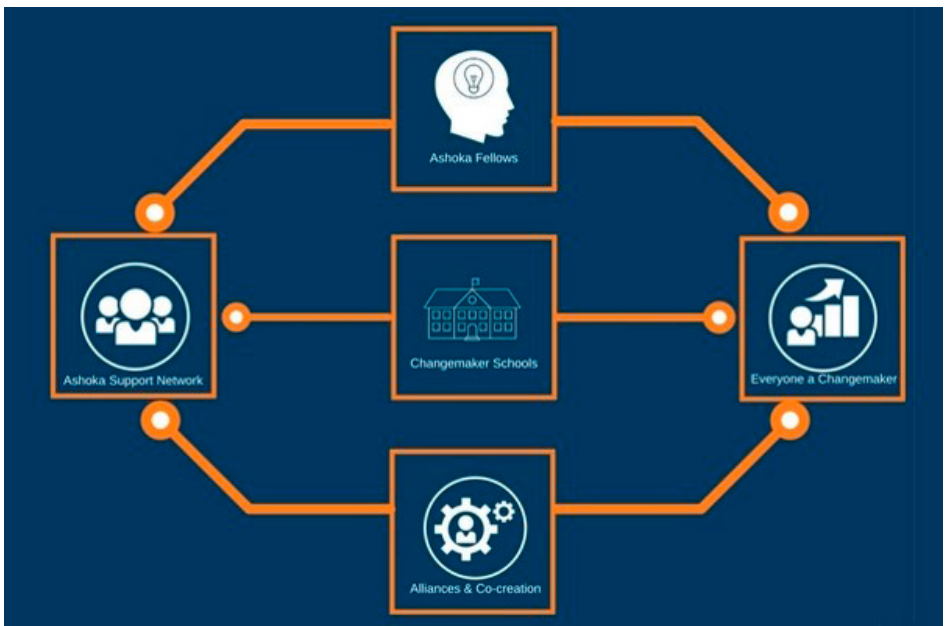
## References:

In the TRANSIT project we developed a paper about narratives of change. Wittmayer, J. M.; Backhaus, J.; Avelino, F.; Pel. B.; Strasser, T. and Kunze, I. (2015) Narratives of change : how social innovation initiatives engage with their transformative ambitions (TRANSIT working paper 4) TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169.

At Kennisland Marlieke Kieboom and Martha Vahl have worked with narratives, (feedforward) stories and anecdotes in the ‘Emergence by Design Approach” see [www.kl.nl/en/projects/emergence-by-design/](http://www.kl.nl/en/projects/emergence-by-design/) and [www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MDDeliverable3.2LiteratureReview-1.pdf](http://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MDDeliverable3.2LiteratureReview-1.pdf) and [www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MD-Deliverable-3.2-Case-Study-Education-Pioneers.pdf](http://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MD-Deliverable-3.2-Case-Study-Education-Pioneers.pdf)

# Identify narrative of change

Example of image that visualizes Ashoka's narrative of change



Reference: <https://www.ashoka.org/en/country/netherlands>

# Identify narrative of change

## What are the issues that you want to address with your Social Innovation Initiative?

What are the broader underlying social issues that require social/ societal change?

On what kind of issues do you focus?

## What kind of future do you want to create with your Social Innovation Initiative? What are your key values?

## What are you doing to achieve societal change?

What kind of activities do you do that address the identified issues?

What are supportive and disruptive developments and where and when do these take place?

## Who are the relevant actors?

Which actors are working towards the desired future?

Which actors are opposing /counteracting the desired future?

## What image visualizes / symbolizes the change that you want to achieve?

Go to **“CANVAS for Narrative Change”**

# Narrative of Change step by step

- Start with an individual round
- Ask people to address the main questions individually
- Encourage people to use visualizations that support the Narrative of Change
- Evaluator collects ‘evidence’ of the existing Narrative of Change
- Discuss the main elements of the Narrative of Change together with the full team; embrace and respect diversity in viewpoints, confront diversions with narrative as constructed by evaluator, discuss underlying values
- Bring the individually identified elements of the Narrative of Change together using the Canvas; try to go deep on the values and creative on visualizations

# Phase 2

## Critical Turning Points

### What is a critical turning point?

People who are engaged in societal change typically experience that transformation is a process and a journey on a bumpy road. During this journey we are engaged in events, encounters and actions, which are decisive for achieving transformation. Some of those are carefully planned as milestones, while others occur by chance, spontaneously. Such decisive moments can be understood as critical turning points (CTPs) for achieving transformation. They mark the moment or transition period in which a social innovation initiative enters in a new phase; the time span of such phases can vary.

### Example of a timeline with critical turning points

The timeline provides an overview of 6 CTPs for the Dutch Association for Basic Income. The CTPs can be internally and externally produced and have more or less impact. An example is the deceptive political breakthrough of basic income on December 17th 1994 in which two Dutch ministers publicly spoke out in favour of the basic income. The endorsement by politicians in power suggested that basic income became a serious policy option. The apparent breakthrough soon proved deceptive, however. Another example is the establishment network of experimentation initiatives in March 2015 when a network was established of Basic Income activists, researchers and representatives from various Dutch municipalities who decided to coordinate their plans and lobby for basic income-inspired experiments.

### References:

In the TRANSIT project we developed more than 70 timelines with more than 450 critical turning points. All those meaningful stories can be accessed and searched through via: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii>

Van Mierlo et al. developed the guide Reflexive Monitoring in Action – A guide for monitoring system innovation projects in which they developed a timeline method that can be inspirational for further reading: <http://edepot.wur.nl/149471>

Click the buttons to switch timeline view

## Related timeline

## Linear timeline

### Publication on Basic Income by Dutch Scientific Advisory Council

In 1985, the Dutch governmental Scientific Advisory Council (WVZ), published an influential report in which the Basic Income was included as one of the policy options for a future restructuring of the Dutch welfare state. It placed Basic Income on the agenda.

[Read more](#)

5 related events

October 1985

October 1987

### Establishment (predecessor of) Dutch Basic Income association (VBI)

In October 1987 the *Workless Basic Income* was established. Several basic income proponents from different affiliations decided to bundle forces, and set up a politically neutral platform for the promotion of and stimulation of debate on the basic income.

[Read more](#)

5 related events

### The deceptive political breakthrough of basic income

On December 17th 1994, two Dutch ministers publicly spoke out in favour of the basic income. The endorsement by politicians in power suggested that basic income became a serious policy option. The apparent breakthrough soon proved deceptive, however.

[Read more](#)

5 related events

December 17th 1994

March 2006

### Central Planning Bureau report/a decade of silence on basic income

In March 2006 the Dutch Central Planning Bureau published a study on the future of the welfare state. It featured the basic income, underlining its economic inadequacy however. Evoking little public discussion, it marked a standstill in the BI debate (2000-2013).

[Read more](#)

5 related events

### Publication influential Basic Income article

The CIP is about the publication of the article "Why we should give free money to everybody" by the Dutch critical author Rutger Bregman. Evoking a media storm, the publication re-invigorated a Basic Income debate that had come to a (near) standstill.

[Read more](#)

10 related events

October 14th 2013

20/03/2015

### Establishment network of experimentation initiatives

In March 2015 a network was established of Basic Income activists, researchers and representatives from various Dutch municipalities who decided to coordinate their plans and lobby for basic income-inspired experiments. Experiments are due to start in 2017.

[Read more](#)

9 related events

# A. Develop CTP Timeline

- Which ‘Critical Turning Points’ (CTP) can you identify in the journey of change that your social innovation initiative is engaged in?
- What were decisive events or moments in the process of achieving societal change?
- What events or moments marked the entry to a new phase?
- Is there anticipation on CTPs that might happen in the future?
- When did it take place, did it happen on an exact date, or a (short) period?

**See CANVAS for Timeline.**

# B. Describe one CTP in depth

- How can you describe one CTP in depth?
- What happened during this CTP?
- Why/ how did the CTPs lead the SI Initiative into a new phase?
- Were the CTPs planned for?
- What happened at this event/ moment and before and after? And what were consequences?
- How was this CTP co-produced and enabled: Who (people) and what (events) was/ were involved in making this happen? What kind of resources have you used?

**See CANVAS for CTP in-depth.**

# CTPs step by step

- Start with an individual round
- Ask people to identify their most important critical turning points by addressing the questions; there is no fixed number, but a top 3 generally works great
- Bring the individually identified turning points together, discuss them; merge where possible and develop a timeline, using the Canvas (N.B. in short workshop sessions you can stop here)
- Then work out the most important CTP's in depth, it is nice to do this in pairs and then address the questions; using the canvas
- Discuss the in-depth descriptions again with the full team

## Phase 3

# Reflection and learning

### **Learning about change and a narrative of change?**

The aim of reflecting on CTP's is to identify how the focus and the deliberate and planned actions, but also the events and co-productions that were not or less planned, is to learn about how your social innovation initiative is engaging in social change. It helps to learn more about what worked, what did not work and why, addressing your own role and that role of others. It can also make you aware on the type of stories that you tell and it generates stories on its owns. This can help in sharpening your narrative of change and in giving it more flesh. Reflecting on your journey of change is the first step in strengthening your identity and by doing that it can be empowering.

### **Engaging with society**

Addressing how change is constructed also includes reflecting on how you engage with society. You influence the society and the society influences you as a social innovation. Reflecting on this helps you to draw lessons on how to sharpen who you are, what you stand for



and also in addressing what has helped you or what has disabled you in your efforts of increasing your impact.

### **Example**

Shareable Melbourne organized a MapJam event in and with the City of Yarra. The founder of Shareable MapJam learned from this how important it is that staff from the City participate in a MapJam. Their participation was needed to bring different elements of the Council together; the city has the resources to sponsor such an event and to bring it to the strategic city level. The MapJam was promoted under the name of the City of Yarra, which added to the legitimacy and credibility of the event. In addition to engaging with the City it is was important to also involve stakeholders from outside the local government such as the business and community sectors. This facilitated cross-sectoral ideas exchange as well as triggering of collaboration potentials.

Another positive impact of the Yarra MapJam is that it introduced more people to the idea of sharing. Its co-production processes similarly created a learning experience for the City of Yarra and the map that was developed gave them an overview of the abundance of resources that exist within their communities. For more information see: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii/ctp/ctp4-yarra-map-jam>

### **References**

Assessing impact is not the core of this tool; but you can start reflecting on it. There are different tools and approaches that can help you do this; they typically require that you know exactly what you intend to achieve and that you can measure that, at least to some extent. Sinzer a consultancy and training organization with expertise on measuring social impact has a useful online knowledge center: <http://www.sinzer.org/knowledge-center/>)

# Reflect and learn for development

- How can your journey of change inform and sharpen your initiative's Narrative of Change ?
- Which CTP's were fundamental for achieving - or not – the social aim(s) of the initiative? What actors, events, resources were critical and why?
- Does the timeline bring up new information about the challenges that you address, the activities that you do and the actors that you engage with?
- What can you learn from the CTP's in terms of how you have defined and expressed your identity as social innovation initiative?
- What lessons can you draw, based on the CTP's, on how you engage with society? What did you influence and how were you influenced? Who did you reach?
- What kind of impact did you want to achieve and have CTP's increased or reduced your impact and how?
- Did the CTPs tell you anything ?

See **CANVAS for reflection and learning.**

## Reflection and learning step by step

- Start with an individual round
- Ask people to identify the lessons that they can draw and find most important from personal perspective by using the questions. Tip in case of time constraints: stick to 3 main insights
- Evaluator draws lessons from social innovation initiatives' point of view
- Bring the individually identified lessons together, discuss them; spent time on discussing conflicting and/ or diverging viewpoints and address the added value of the diversity; merge where possible and summarize on the canvas

# Phase 4

## Way forward

### **Moving forward by going back to your narrative of change**

A narrative of change is about constructing a story around the process of societal change that social innovations engage in. Your story gets stronger if your activities and action are in line with the values that you promote. After reflecting on your journey of change you can work on a way forward by going back to your narrative of change. You can revise and strengthen your narrative. You can use stories to make your narrative more powerful. You can (re)draw an image to visualize it. You can see if you need to address your stories to other actors; to change and/ or increase the type and amount of people that you reach.

### **Co-production and resourcing**

Journeys of change are the result of many things happening and some things coming together: they are co-produced by other actors and events and they draw on all kind of resources such as ideas, funds, technologies, etc. In order to define a way forward for your social innovation initiative it is important to know with whom and with what you want to engage and how you will do that. You can decide to make or revise your overall strategy, or go for a more specific co-production or resourcing strategy, or even develop a business model or plan for a specific product or idea that you want to develop further.

### **Example:**

Living Labs are “user-driven innovation environments where users and producers co-create innovation in a trusted, open ecosystem that enables business and societal innovation.” The European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) was constituted through the Helsinki Manifesto of December 2006, under the Finnish EU Presidency, and legally established as an international, non-profit, independent association of Living Labs in 2010.

It has drawn lessons on its vast experience with living labs and urban experiments and based on that it developed a guide on Citizen-Drive Innovation that puts forward a framework for a way forward in urban development. This guidebook is written primarily for city mayors and leaders but is actually useful for all kind of change makers and innovators. You can access it: [http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/sites/enoll.org/files/Citizen\\_Driven\\_Innovation\\_Full%284%29.pdf](http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/sites/enoll.org/files/Citizen_Driven_Innovation_Full%284%29.pdf)

## References:

Read more about co-production and especially see how co-production can be enhanced in the questions posed at the end of this article from Kennisland: <https://www.kl.nl/nieuws/feed-forward-stories-re-designing-public-policies-services-through-knowledge-co-production/>

In the TRANSIT project we have developed a tool that helps you in defining a resourcing strategy. See: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/deliverables>

There are several nice business model or plan canvasses available online: Nesta, partner in the Social Innovation Community, and Rockefeller Foundation created two canvasses, <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/business-model-canvas/> and <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/business-plan-2/> and the young foundations has also developed a social business model canvas <https://youngfoundation.org/social-innovation-investment/introducing-the-social-business-model-canvas-2/>

# Way forward

(Re-)directing your Narrative of Change

- Does your Narrative of Change need to be reframed/ communicated differently/ more focused/ broader/ ..?
- Can you strengthen your narrative of change with the stories that you produced during this evaluation exercise?
- Can you visualize what you stand for (better)?
- How can you better reach those that you want to reach?

(Re-)directing co-production and resourcing efforts

- Who should be in your network? Do you miss important partners or have abundance?
- How can you focus on the most important partners?

How can you make better use of your resources and/ or mobilize other resources based on our experience and lessons learned?

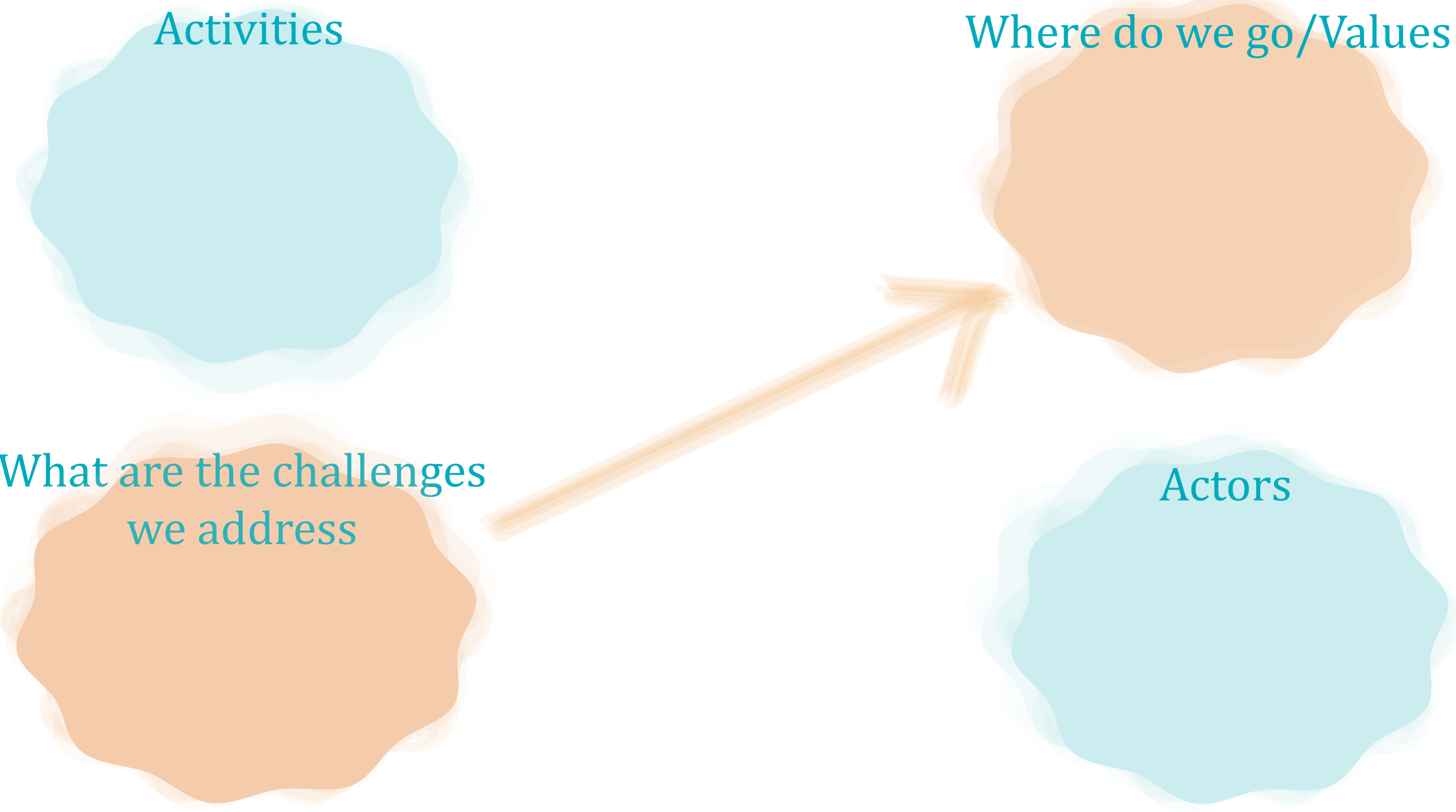
**See CANVAS for way forward.**

## Way forward step by step

- Start with an individual round
- Ask people to identify how they would pave the way forward by addressing the questions; ask them to make a personal top 3 in order to prioritize
- Evaluator makes top 3 following from the social innovation initiatives' point of view
- Bring the individually identified ways forward together, discuss them; address the added value of the diversity; merge where possible and summarize on the canvas

# CANVAS for Narrative of Change

transformative  
social innovation  
theory



# Visualise your Narrative of Change

transformative  
social innovation  
theory

# CANVAS for Timeline

transformative  
social innovation  
theory

**Critical Turning Point (CTP) 1**

Title/description



Date/period

**Critical Turning Point (CTP) 3**

Title/description



Date/period

Date/period

**Critical Turning Point (CTP) 2**

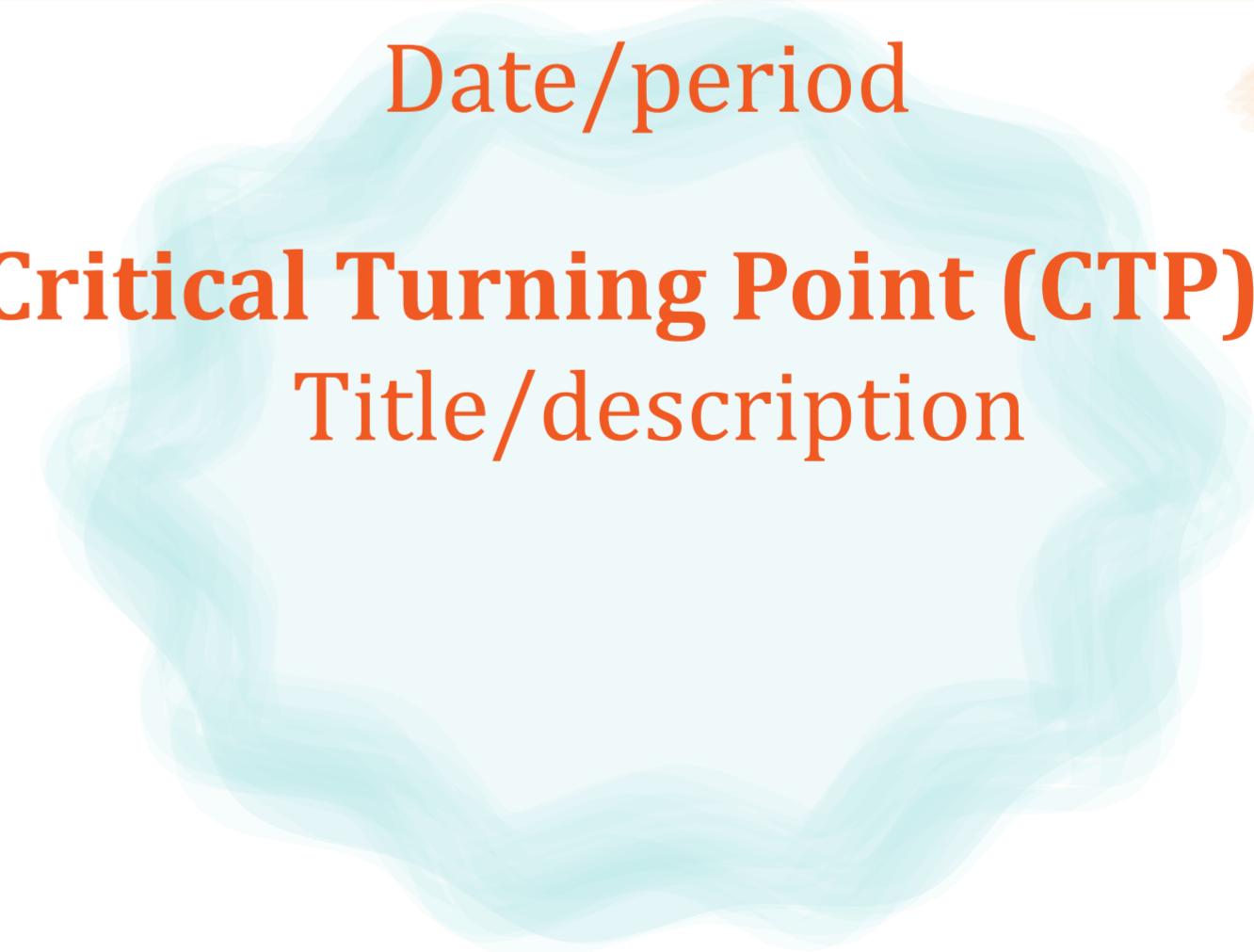
Title/description



Date/period

**Critical Turning Point (CTP) 4**

Title/description





# CANVAS for CTP in-depth

transformative  
social innovation  
theory

What happened?

Other

Triggering events

Why and how did it  
lead to a new phase?

CTP

Consequences

Actors involved

Other

Resources

# CANVAS for reflection and learning

transformative  
social innovation  
theory

Social aims

Other

Identity

Actors/Events/  
Resources

Reflection  
and learning

Engaging with society

Activities

Other

Influence and impact

# CANVAS for way forward

transformative  
social innovation  
theory

Revised  
Narrative of Change

(if needed: develop a new version  
of the canvas for the NoC from step 1)

Other

Resourcing

Way  
forward

Other

Co-production

## **8. Training & Lecturing Material for Evaluation of Social Innovation**

# transformative social innovation theory



## Introducing Evaluation for Social Innovation: Critical Turning Points and Narratives of Change

**Date: ..... Trainer:.....**

**Lecture Developed by Saskia Ruijsink & Veronica Olivotto, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS),**

Erasmus University Rotterdam, [ruijsink@ihs.nl](mailto:ruijsink@ihs.nl) & [olivotto@ihs.nl](mailto:olivotto@ihs.nl)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613169.

# Outline

- What is Transformative Social Innovation
- Developmental Evaluation for Social Innovation
- Using a tool for evaluating social innovation
  - Narrative of Change (NoC)
  - Critical Turning Points (CTP)
  - A cyclical tool in 4 phases

# **What is Transformative Social Innovation?**

# Transformative Social Innovation

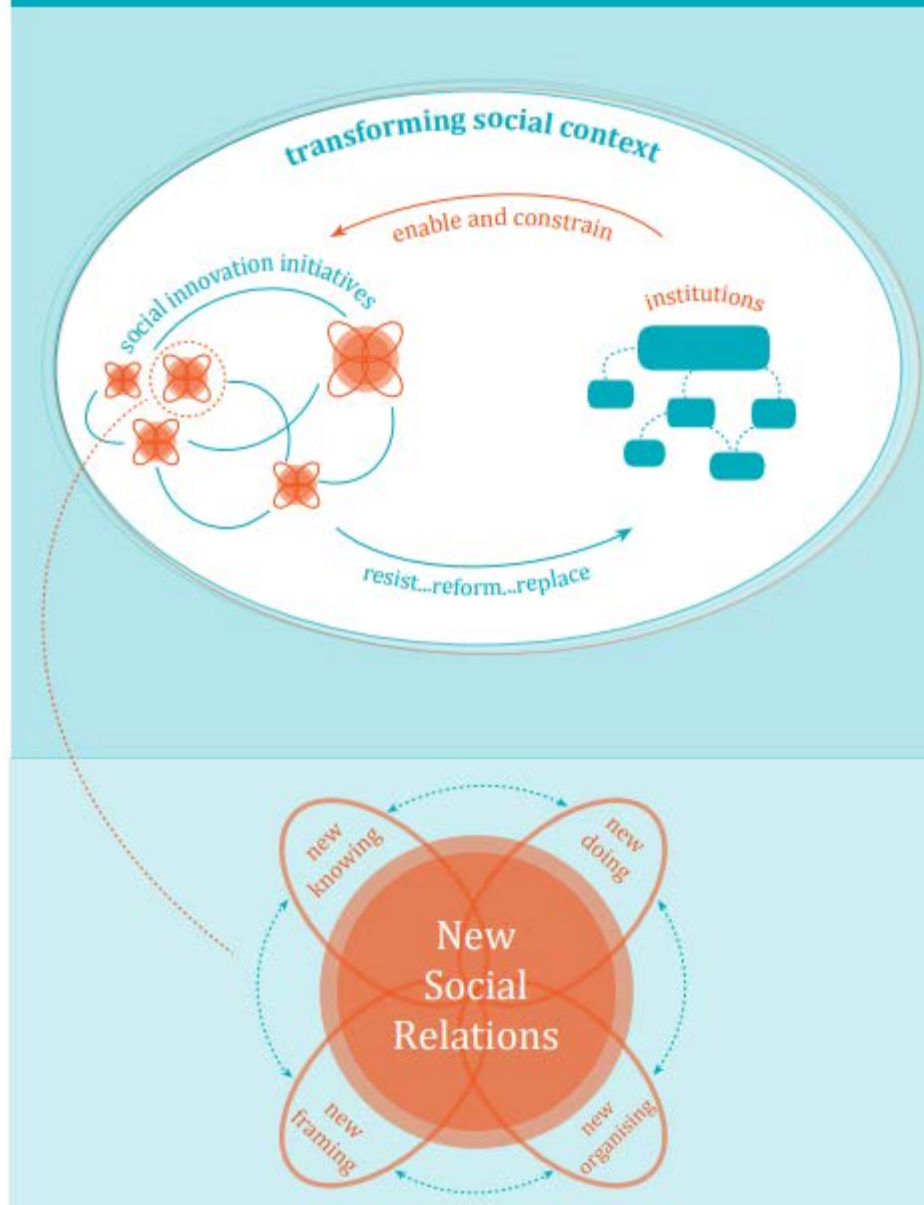
Social Innovation is about a process of change in social relations, involving new ways of doing, organizing, framing and/or knowing.

Transformative Social Innovation challenges, alters and/or replaces dominant institutions and structures.

See: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu>



## the relations between transformative social innovation and the context



# Developmental Evaluation for Social Innovation



# Developmental Evaluation

- Summative Evaluation – measuring impact against pre-determined goals
- Formative Evaluation – qualitative approach to improve & learn
- Basis: test & improve your ‘known model’
- Developmental Evaluation: develop something new, knowledge base is not well-established (Patton, 2009)

## A Spectrum for Evaluation approaches

Summative Evaluation

Formative Evaluation

Developmental Evaluation



Low degree of uncertainty

High degree of uncertainty

# Social Innovations and process of change

- Developmental Evaluation for bumpy change process
- “Moreover, social innovators don’t follow a linear pathway of change; there are ups and downs, roller-coaster rides along cascades of dynamic interactions, unexpected and unanticipated divergences, tipping points and critical mass momentum shifts” (Patton, 2011, p.5).
- DE can use different tools to evaluate process and give directions for development

# Role of the Developmental Evaluator

- Identify and document initial conditions and monitor what emerges.
- Provide ongoing, timely, and rapid feedback about what is emerging.
- Track incremental actions and decisions that affect the paths taken (and not taken).
- Facilitate regular reflective practice about what is developing.
- Embed evaluative thinking in the innovative process.  
(Patton, 2011, p.110)

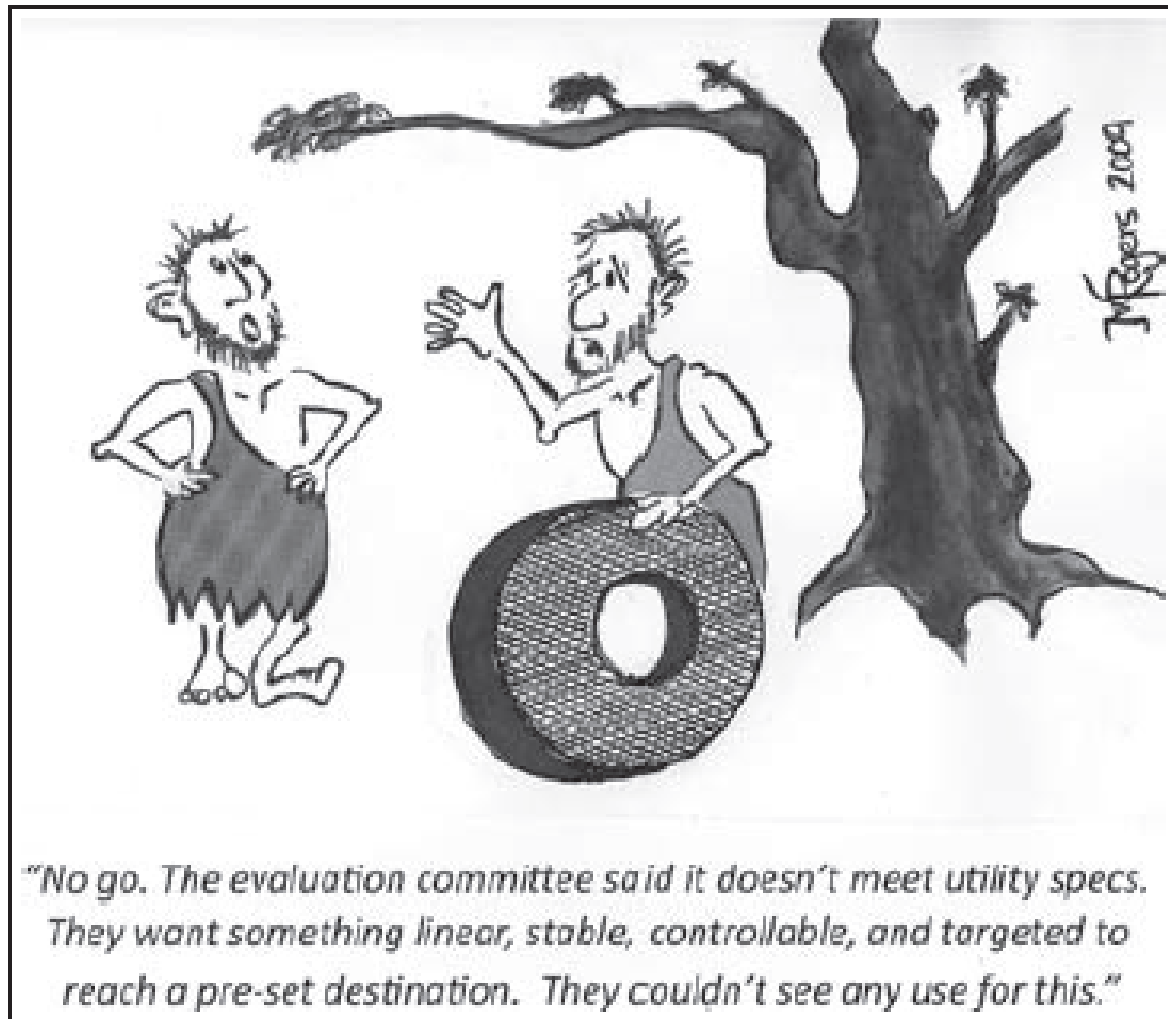


Illustration about Developmental Evaluation, by Mark M. Rogers in Patton, 2011, p.5

# Using a tool for Evaluating Social Innovation



# For Whom?

- Social Innovators who want to use development evaluation approaches
- Policy makers who are interested to learn more about (evaluating) complex and chaotic change process (for the sake of development)
- Researchers who want to work with and for social innovations, reflecting with them on the processes of their innovation (action research)

# Underlying concepts

- The tool is developed based on primarily two concepts:
  1. Narrative of Change
  2. Critical Turning Points

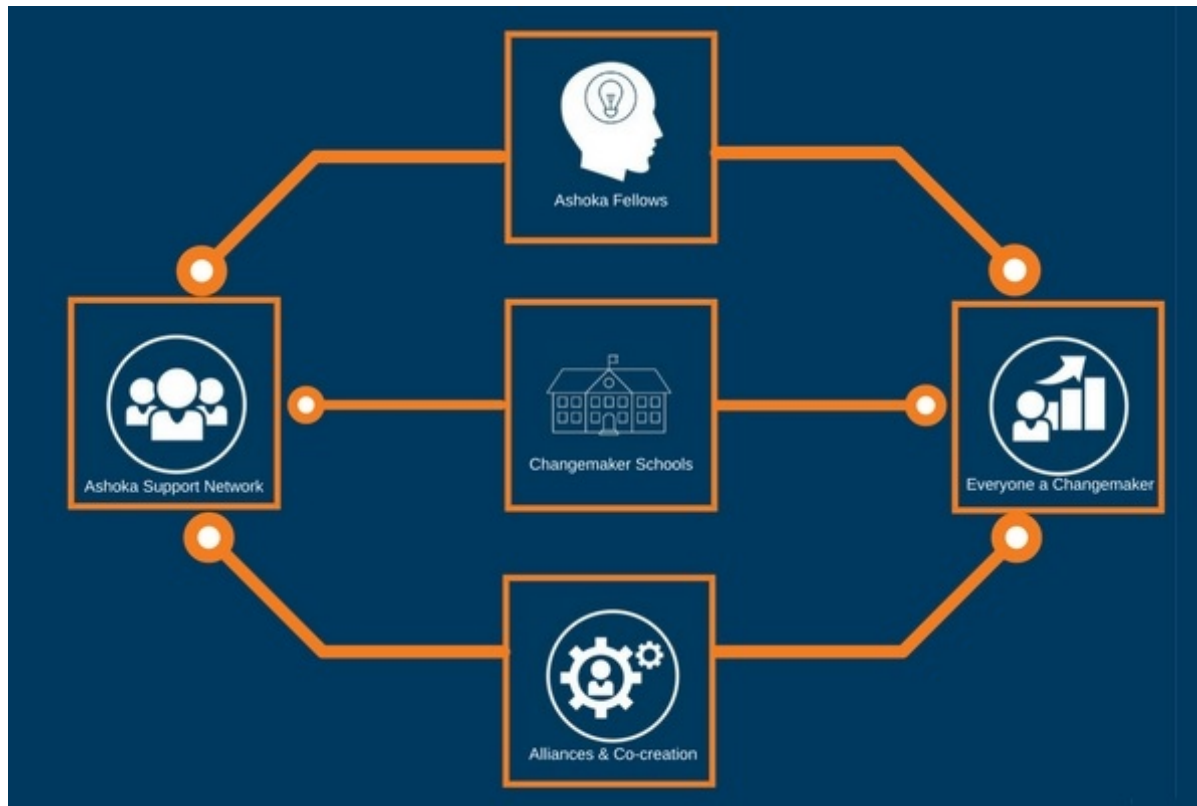
# Narrative of change

- Sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses or story-lines about change and innovation
- Storylines can be formal and informal and often inconsistent across participants and they play an instrumental role in social innovation

# Example of Narrative of Change

- Ashoka sees that the world changes and says:
- “*Now is the moment to ensure that everyone knows they can change the world for the better, and does so (Ashoka.org, 2017)*”;
- In line with this they see the ideal world as the “*everyone a changemaker*” world.
- They tell stories about their ideology and this is all part of their NoC
- See <https://www.ashoka.org/en/about-ashoka> and <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/ashoka>

# Example - Ashoka's narrative of change



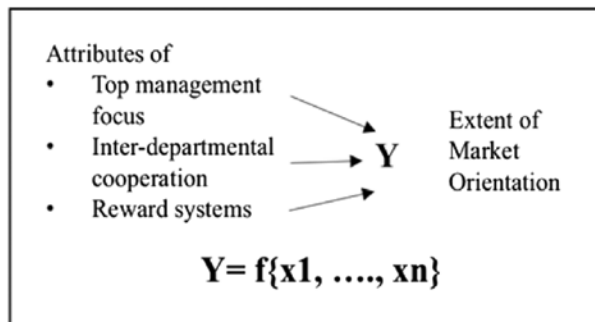
Reference: <https://www.ashoka.org/en/country/netherlands>

# Critical Turning Points

- Process theory approach
- Transformative Social Innovations develop in phases
- CTP important in marking such phases
- CTP: “.. moments or events in processes at which initiatives undergo or decide for changes-of-course ..” (Pel et al, 2015, p.24).

## VARIANCE THEORY

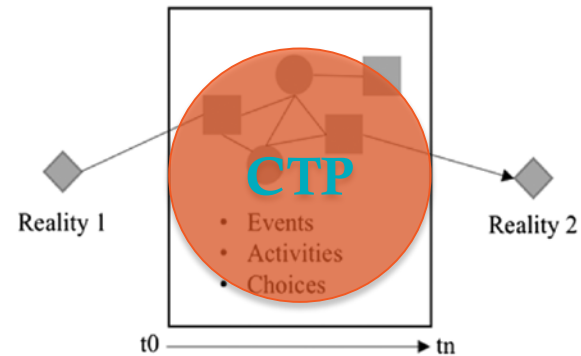
Explaining strategic change through a variance model



e.g., Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden (2005)

## PROCESS THEORY

Explaining strategic change through a process model



e.g., Gebhardt, Carpenter, and Sherry (2006)

From: Process Theorization in Cultural Consumer Research

J Consum Res. 2016;43(4):497-508. doi:10.1093/jcr/ucw047

J Consum Res | © The Author 2016. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of Journal of Consumer Research, Inc. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: journals.permissions@oup.com

# Example of a Critical Turning Point

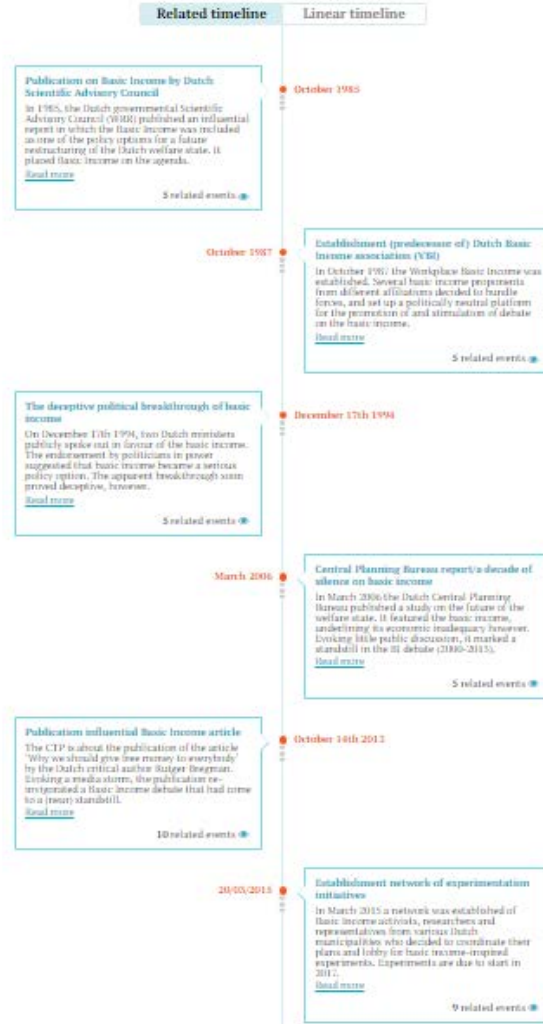
## Example of a timeline with critical turning points

The timeline provides an overview of 6 CTPS for the Dutch Association for Basic Income. The CTPs can be internally and externally produced and have more or less impact. An example is the *deceptive political breakthrough of basic income on December 17th 1994* in which two Dutch ministers publicly spoke out in favour of the basic income. The endorsement by politicians in power suggested that basic income became a serious policy option. The apparent breakthrough soon proved deceptive, however. Another example is the *establishment network of experimentation initiatives in March 2015* when a network was established of Basic Income activists, researchers and representatives from various Dutch municipalities who decided to coordinate their plans and lobby for basic income-inspired experiments.

See: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii/httpbasisinkomennl>



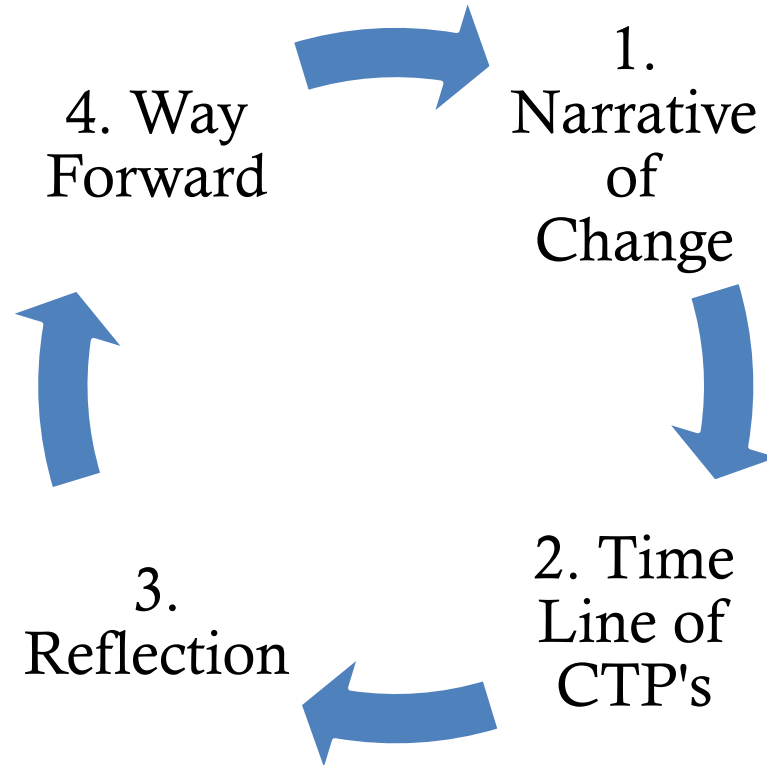
Click the buttons to switch timeline view



Accessible online:

<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii/httpbasisinkomennl>

# A cyclical tool in 4 phases



# Social Innovation Evaluation tool: Critical turning points and narratives of change

The tool is structured in the following phases:

0. Form SII team incl. developmental evaluator
1. Identify / discuss/ adjust your Social Innovation's Narrative of Change
2. Develop a Timeline with Critical Turning Points
  - A. (Re)Construct Timeline
  - B. Select & describe Critical Turning Points in-depth
3. Reflect & learn
4. Way Forward



## Phases

## Questions

## Visualizations

1. Narrative of Change

Future

Actors

Societal Change

Activities

Values

2 A. CTP Timeline

Decisive Moments – new phase

2 B. CTP in-depth

When

What

Why

Who

Where

How

3. Reflect & learn

Lessons

Different perspectives

4. Way forward

Narrative of Change

Co-Production

Resourcing

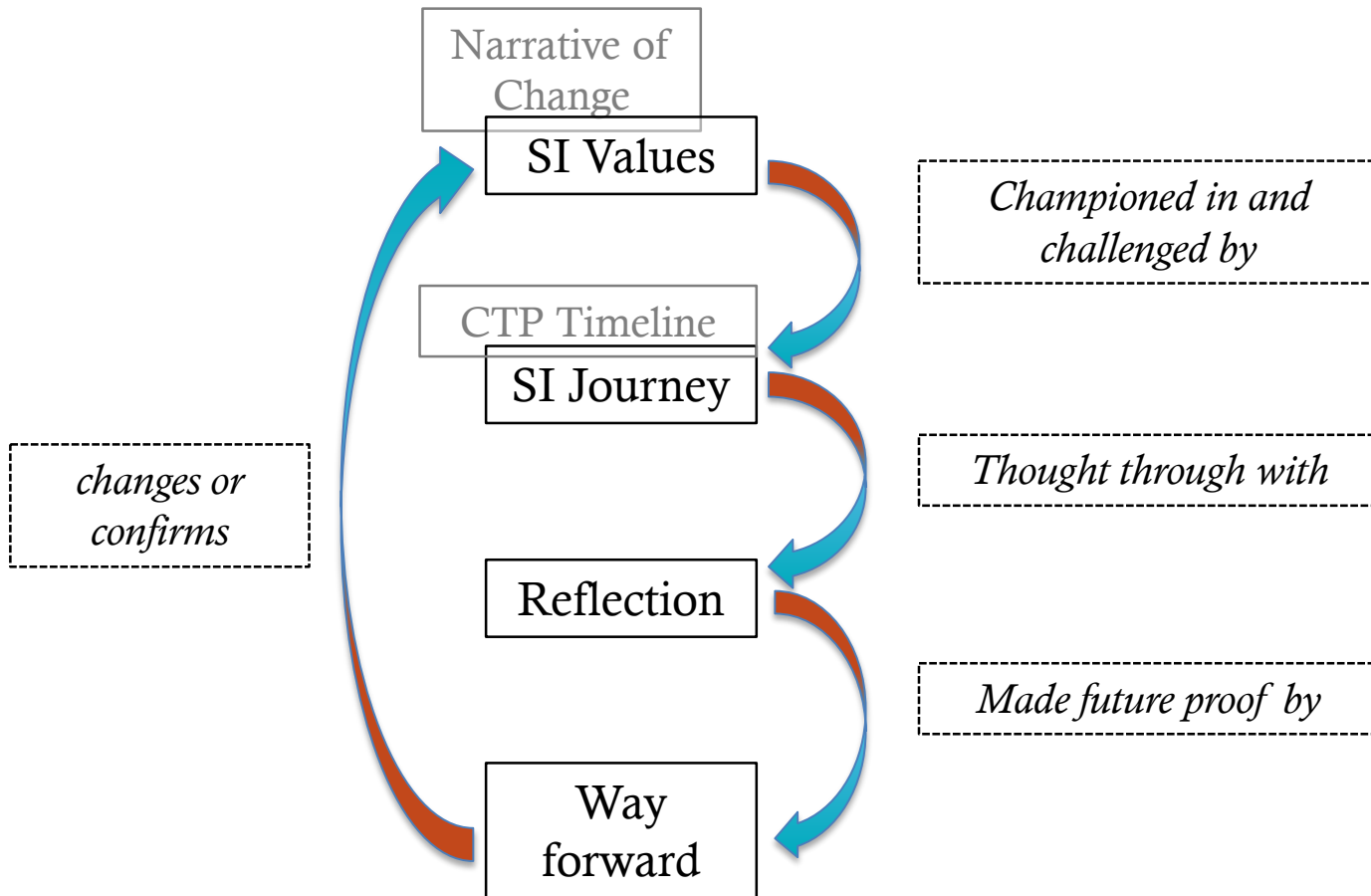


CTP 2: ...

CTP 3: ...

CTP 1: ...





# 1. Identify narrative of change

What are the issues that you want to address with your Social Innovation Initiative?

What are the broader underlying social issues that require social/ societal change?  
On what kind of issues do you focus?

What kind of future do you want to create with your Social Innovation Initiative? What are your key values?

What are you doing to achieve societal change?

What kind of activities do you do that address the identified issues?

What are supportive and disruptive developments and where and when do these take place?

Who are the relevant actors?

Which actors are working towards the desired future?

Which actors are opposing /counteracting the desired future?

What image visualizes / symbolizes the change that you want to achieve?

## 2. A Develop CTP Timeline

- *Which ‘Critical Turning Points’ (CTP) can you identify in the journey of change that your social innovation initiative is engaged in?*
- What were decisive events or moments in the process of achieving societal change?
- What events or moments marked the entry to a new phase?
- Is there anticipation on CTPs that might happen in the future?
- When did it take place, did it happen on an exact date, or a (short) period?

## 2.B Describe one CTP in depth

- *How can you describe one CTP in depth?*
- What happened during this CTP?
- Why/ how did the CTPs lead the SI Initiative into a new phase?
- Were the CTPs planned for?
- What happened at this event/ moment and before and after? And what were consequences?
- How was this CTP co-produced and enabled: Who (people) and what (events) was/ were involved in making this happen? What kind of resources have you used?



# 3. Reflect & learning for development

- *How can your journey of change inform and sharpen your initiative's Narrative of Change ?*
- Which CTP's were fundamental for achieving - or not – the social aim(s) of the initiative? What actors, events, resources were critical and why?
- Does the timeline bring up new information about the challenges that you address, the activities that you do and the actors that you engage with?
- What can you learn from the CTP's in terms of how you have defined and expressed your identity as social innovation initiative?
- What lessons can you draw, based on the CTP's, on how you engage with society? What did you influence and how were you influenced? Who did you reach?
- What kind of impact did you want to achieve and have CTP's increased or reduced your impact and how?
- Did the CTPs tell you anything

# 4.Way Forward

## **(Re-)directing your Narrative of Change**

Does your Narrative of Change need to be reframed/ communicated differently/ more focused/ broader/ ..?

Can you strengthen your narrative of change with the stories that you produced during this evaluation exercise?

Can you visualize what you stand for (better)?

How can you better reach those that you want to reach?

## **(Re-)directing co-production and resourcing efforts**

Who should be in your network? Do you miss important partners or have abundance?

How can you focus on the most important partners?

How can you make better use of your resources and/ or mobilize other resources based on our experience and lessons learned?

# References

Pel, B., Bauler, T., Kemp, R., Wittmayer, J.M., Avelino, F. and Dorland, J. (2015) From research design to meta analysis guidelines, TRANSIT Deliverable 5.1. TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169

Wittmayer, J. M.; Backhaus, J.; Avelino, F.; Pel. B.; Strasser, T. and Kunze, I. (2015) [Narratives of change : how social innovation initiatives engage with their transformative ambitions \(TRANSIT working paper ; 4\)](#) TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169.

Examples of Critical Turning Points timelines developed for research:

<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii>

Transformative Social Innovation Case Studies:

<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/discover-our-cases-2>

# Partners



## **DRIFT** (Coordinator)

Erasmus University of Rotterdam,  
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## **3S-group**

University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

## **ICIS**

University of Maastricht, the Netherlands

## **IHS**

Erasmus University of Rotterdam,  
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## **ULB-CEDD**

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

## **AAU**

Aalborg University, Denmark

## **SPRU**

University of Sussex, United Kingdom

## **IEC-UNQ**

Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina

## **COPPE**

Rio de Janeiro Federal University, Brasil

## **People-Environment Research Group**

Universidade da Coruna, Spain

## **BOKU**

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences  
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## **9. Annex: A review of monitoring and evaluation methods for social impact evaluation with suggestions for use (D2.5)**

## 2 A review of monitoring and evaluation methods for social impact evaluation with suggestions for use

Paul M. Weaver and René Kemp  
ICIS, Maastricht University (NL)<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract:

*Different forms of monitoring/measuring of social innovation are needed to respond to the evaluation concerns and questions of different stakeholders and the evaluation needs that arise at different stages in the process of social innovation. The established social innovation measurement paradigm, which is based on positivism and is grounded in economics-based methods, responds to some but not to all of these needs. It is ill-suited to explore, account for, or to support potentially-transformative social innovation. Furthermore, issues of causality and attribution are especially problematic in the case of societally transformative social innovation, which engages with complex systems and involves lines of influence that cut across levels of scale. These concerns have led to calls to develop new assessment frameworks that would address the limitations of conventional approaches (e.g. Antadze and Westley 2012) and, in respect of support for scaling of potentially transformative social innovations. For fostering innovation and improvement of social innovation, Developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011) and Dynamic evaluation (Kieboom and Vahl, 2014) are useful methods. There is also value in combining methods. We propose that social return on investment (SROI) analysis pays more attention to the stories of people involved (those helped by a SII and the professionals in providing the help in the case of help services), to explain to outside people what the SI is about and for understanding better causal-effects links. Monitoring should be fit for purpose and maximum efforts should be undertaken to make it so. Action research can be used to find useful ways of monitoring, as shown by the experiences of the eco-localisation project of Kersty Hobson and co-workers (Hobson et al., 2016). Focussing on only those factors that can be measured (as happens in randomised controlled trials), may keep from view essential factors and processes that link causes to effects.*

### 2.1 Introduction

Monitoring of impact of social innovation initiatives is mostly done as an informal, qualitative, ad hoc activity, if done at all. Many social organisations and societal initiatives would like to do this in a better way. An exemplary statement is

*“The initiatives [of the Migration Hub] are growing; more and more people want their [our] services. We are having a great impact, but we don’t have the tool to show the amount of impact we are having. How do we do this? Do we need a business model?” (Hoffmeister, 2016)*

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<sup>1</sup> The report draws on interviews by Kay Hoffmeister with social organisations (based in Berlin) on monitoring and discussions at the TRANSIT workshop on resourcing and monitoring on Febr 16-17, 2017 in Maastricht (NL). We also thank Marlieke Kieboom of the Knowledge group for her suggestions.

# transformative social innovation theory

An example monitoring activity is a website that registers activities and comments (used by *Civocracy*, an online platform offering people the possibility to vote online on things that affect their community)

*“on our website, we have (...) a progress box. In that box you can see the number of people participated, the number of comments that were forwarded by the community, and the number of comments (...). And then a last badge about policy making (...) [but] that is all we are tracking. [we] do not really get important data for the real social impact measurement. The demographic data is also missing. We are very biased on our work. So we say that our social value generating is amazing! But I can't show it. However we need to try as much as possible to unbiased ourselves, and to elaborate on our impact. But that is a thing we haven't tackled yet.” (Hoffmeister, 2016)*

Graefewirtschaft, a Berlin-based social enterprise that employs migrants and asylum seeking, audits the people they employ in the businesses it runs (a restaurant called “*Die Weltküche*”, kitchens catering for schools, kindergartens and day-care centres and household services and care for the elderly)

*“Generally speaking we use the social auditing procedure. A main indicator for us is the amount of people we get into jobs and apprenticeships”.*

In the Netherlands, a platform for social enterprise and citizen initiative called “*Kracht in NL*” created a metric system for social impact called MAEX.<sup>2</sup> The MAEX consists of 8 elements which are scored on a scale from 0 to 10 (the highest score): smart use of existing resources; self-reliability; social cohesion; cooperation for a better environment; (social) safety; sustenance support; leisure; education/development. The scoring is done by the initiatives themselves and reflects their own subjective assessment of impact.

The MAEX makes visible initiatives that occur around the Netherlands (1091 in total), signalling to others what they are doing, which social impacts are being created and what resources they need (specific expertise, money, materials etc.). For those interested in it (volunteers, local government, businesses) it offers a portal for participation. For government and research it offers data on SII in the form of information on the nature of activities, types of social impact that are being created, the average amount of volunteering time per week (which is 50) and amount of self-earnings (which is 26% on average).

In Figure 1 the MAEX scores are given for 4 initiatives in the Netherlands:

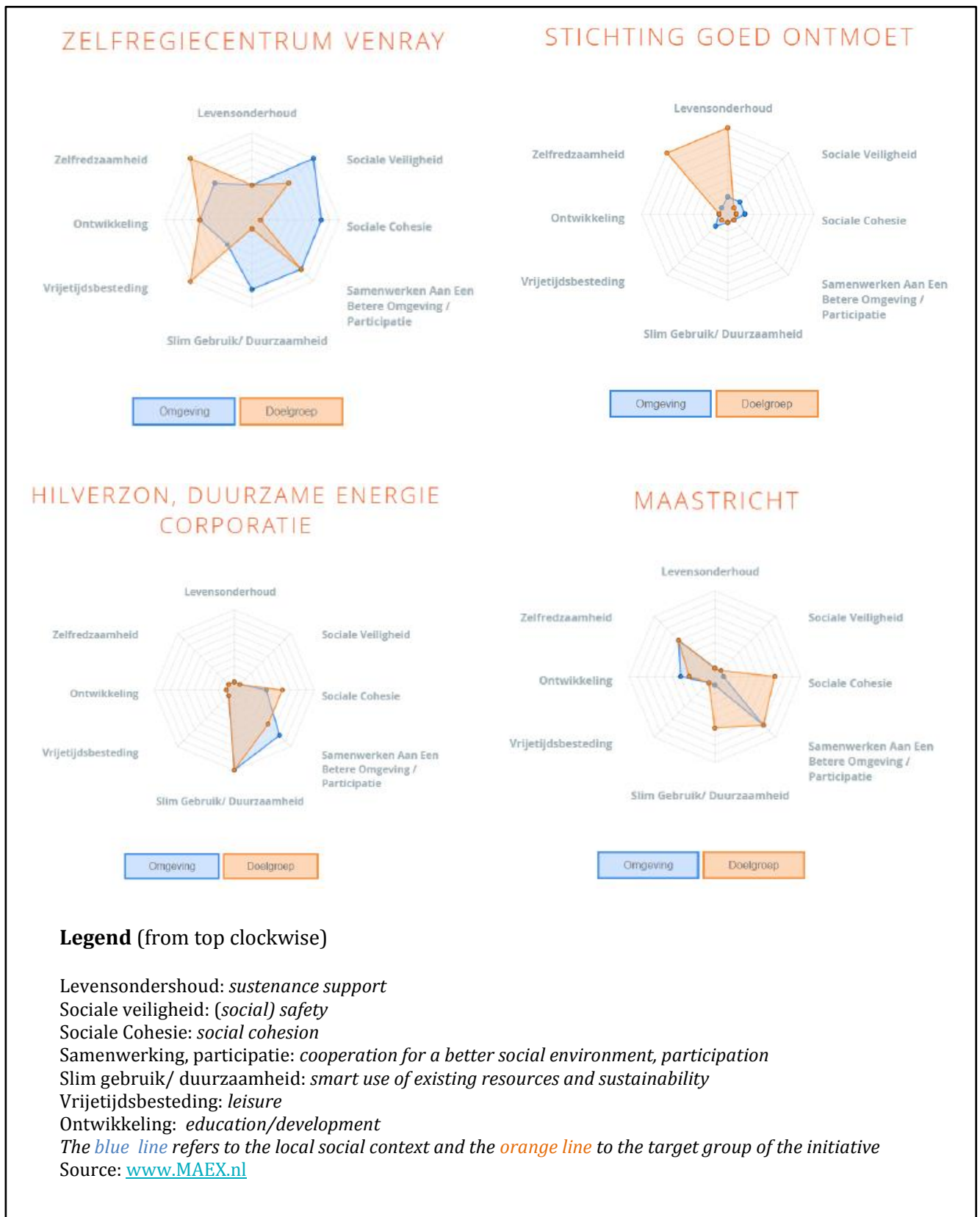
- Zelfregie-centrum Venray: experience experts help people with psychological problems get a grip on their life (especially those who are not eligible to official care because of budget cuts and illness requirements)
- Stichting Goed ontmoet: a food bank
- Hilverzon, Duurzame energie cooperatie: a renewable energy cooperation
- Senioren kennis netwerk Maastricht: professionals-in-residence offering knowledge services to societal initiatives and local organisations at the interface of government and society.

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<sup>2</sup> The name MAEX refers to the AEX the Amsterdam Exchange Index, the official index of the stock exchange in the Netherlands. The term M stands for Maatschappelijk (*Societal*).

# transformative social innovation theory

Figure 1. MAEX scores for 4 initiatives in the Netherlands





# transformative social innovation theory

The field of evaluating social innovations is developing rapidly in response to a widening range of questions being asked about social innovation, its outcomes, its impacts and the contexts within which it operate and with which it interacts. The paper surveys selected literature on evaluation theory, methods and practice in this field. The materials reviewed are selected for their relevance to the concern of TRANSIT for transformative social innovation.

In section 2 we explore what is driving developments in this field by looking especially at the changing context for social innovation and at the expanding range of evaluation interests, foci and questions of different stakeholders.

Section 3 provides a review of currently dominant evaluation methods and tools, their strengths and their weaknesses. This draws on existing surveys of the field. It is found that the dominant tools, indicators and metrics within the paradigm are based mostly on standard economic and accounting approaches, which is related to the need for summative evaluation by funding agencies. Section 4 describes the most prominent of the approaches: Social Return on Investment (SROI). Section 5 presents and discusses an exemplary analysis of SROI, as an example of summative evaluation for the case of Foster Parents in the Netherlands.

Section 6 contains the recommendations from a group of experts on social entrepreneurship (GECES) tasked by the European Commission provides to offer recommendations on impact measurement. Section 7 outlines a contingency approach to impact measurement (developed by Alex Nicholls in the CRESSI project), which starts from the question *how can organizations chose an approach that is appropriate to their concerns and context?*

Section 8 presents an innovation-oriented form of evaluation called developmental evaluation (DE), developed by Michael Quinn Patton. Rooted in case studies of (social) innovation processes, DE seeks answers to questions that are relevant to *innovation*, by helping the SI take a broader systems perspective and help them navigate (inherently uncertain and judgment-based) processes of change, by making them reflect on their assets, their theory of change and the opportunities and dangers afforded by a changing context. It contends that the measuring needs at each stage in social innovation processes are different and that the measuring approaches and tools used, such as indicators and metrics, will also need to change from one stage to the next.

Section 9 discusses evaluation anxiety and discusses the role of action research. Section 10 discusses the importance of the monitoring of *context* (for helping SI initiatives find suitable partners and strategies). Finally, in Section 11, we draw conclusions from the overall discussion on evaluation, monitoring and measuring for the development of a theory of transformative social innovation (TSI) and the development of supporting tools and methods in the TRANSIT project. A table with monitoring elements of TRANSIT cases is being provided in Appendix A.

# transformative social innovation theory

## 2.2 Diverse demands for monitoring and evaluation

The 'evaluation' issue is not so simple or straightforward as it might at first appear. There are many very different kinds of evaluation question that can be asked about social innovation. Different stakeholders, with different concerns and interests, have different evaluation needs and therefore pose different evaluation questions. Also the evaluation needs of specific stakeholders, and especially those of social innovators and social organisations, will change depending on the stage of the social innovation process and the context for the innovation. What is being evaluated and in respect to which impacts and which targets differs from one evaluation question to another. Even the levels of scale at which impacts manifest are potentially different. At one extreme, some evaluation questions concern outcomes and impacts experienced at the scale of individuals. At the other extreme are much broader changes that manifest at higher levels of scale. The evaluation question that underlies and motivates the TRANSIT project is especially relevant here since it concerns impacts of social innovation processes that could manifest at the societal level through broad, lasting (and therefore transformative) changes in social relations, institutions, constructs and behaviours. In this perspective the 'targets' of interest are the social relations, institutions, constructs and behaviours manifested by and in society and aspects of these that are relevant to important qualities of society, such as its cohesiveness, greenness and resilience. As well as positive impacts there is also scope for social innovation to have negative impacts, which are also important to be included in evaluations. The 'content' of evaluation is therefore also a relevant aspect of evaluation design.

Overall, different evaluation purposes and questions call for different types of evaluation and for different evaluation approaches, methods and tools. Similar arguments apply to the range of different social innovations, stages in the social innovation process and implementation contexts. They apply also to different definitions and perspectives on social innovation and, especially, to whether social innovation is defined mostly or exclusively by its content (as products, services, activities, actions, etc.) or as a process. This wide diversity means that there is a need for different types of evaluation and for evaluations to be designed and implemented that are 'fit for purpose' and 'fit for context'. At the same time, there are clearly commonalities in evaluation processes that imply the possibilities of some generalizable principles and guidelines. Also some needs for information and other resources recur across different kinds of evaluation questions. There is a strong interest in capitalising on these commonalities to provide for comparability across evaluation and to help in reducing monitoring burdens and increasing monitoring efficiency.

Furthermore, since social innovations are (by definition) innovative and therefore are likely to be evolving through the stages of their invention, experimentation, proving and upscaling social innovations as objects of evaluation are a moving target. From a management perspective this is important because monitoring, evaluation and comparison of variants of the 'basic model' of the social innovation is an important part of learning about a social innovation and perfecting its design. The kinds of evaluation questions important to social innovators to support learning and continuous improvement

# transformative social innovation theory

are therefore likely to involve comparison of the impacts and outcomes of different design variants and their comparative advantages, disadvantages and effectiveness.

Against this backdrop it is useful to list some of the main distinctions that are relevant in mapping the field of social innovation evaluation. An important distinction is between **internal** stakeholders in social innovation and their concerns versus **external** stakeholders and their concerns. The distinction is important in part because the values sought through social innovation may be different for these different groups. Internal stakeholders, such as mission-oriented social organisations need to know what impacts their activities are having and how effective these are in achieving the outcomes and impacts they seek. They are especially interested in the technical effectiveness of their actions and activities in relation to achieving their social goals and objectives. They are likely to want to use evaluation as a management tool to help inform their decision making at different stages in the social innovation process. Some external stakeholders may be more interested in the social impacts actually produced and less concerned for how these are produced; for example interest organisations may want to know how social innovations affect particular individuals and groups of special concern to them.

When social organisations receive funding from public, private, philanthropic or blended sources there is a need both for the social organisation to demonstrate that the funds it receives are making a difference and for the funders to demonstrate that grants, loans and investments in social innovation organisations and activities are productive and efficient. If social organisations take over or complement roles and functions taken by the state (for example in areas of welfare delivery) and receive income in return, this also generates a need to measure financial performance and added value for reasons of transparency and accountability. When the financial instruments used to finance activities take the form of performance assurance contracts, as applies to Social Impact Bonds, the very viability of the funding instruments depends on developing and agreeing ways to measure outcomes and impacts. In general a capacity to demonstrative effective and productive use of funds is especially important in the context of a more challenging financial context characterised by greater competition for funds.

What is at 'stake' and is, therefore, of monitoring and measuring interest for these different actors and stakeholders can include, *inter alia*: the range of outcomes and impacts produced, positive and negative; the activities through which outcomes and impacts (positive and negative) are produced; the nature of the mechanisms through which impacts and outcomes are produced; the value-added to different affected parties by the activities of the social organisation, including to beneficiaries in groups of special interest (such as the vulnerable, excluded, unemployed, or elderly); the relative and absolute 'technical' effectiveness of the social innovation; the financial effectiveness of investments in the social innovation; specific aspects of the social innovation (such as its acceptability to regulatory authorities, its need for finance, its possibilities to generate financial returns as well as social returns, the possibilities for it to take over roles from the state that the state might be happy to offload, the safeguarding and governance issues surrounding the innovation, etc.).

# transformative social innovation theory

Evaluation questions can therefore be addressed toward the social innovations of interest, but they can equally be addressed toward the organisations that promote them, the resources (such as finance) that are applied to them, the strategies, activities and actions that they entail, or the contextual conditions they encounter. They can be directed toward specific outcomes and impacts that might be sought or be more open and designed to explore different outcomes and impacts, both positive and negative. They can be directed on different targets: individuals, groups, communities, sectors, society as a whole, etc. One question that has become very important in the current context, especially to policy makers, is the evaluation question that the TRANSIT project is asked to explore concerning the societally-transforming potential of social innovations.

At different stages in social innovation processes, evaluation may play very different roles. **Formative evaluation** is useful for gathering information about the effects of actions and activities, positive and negative, when little is known about these. **Summative evaluation** is useful when more is known about impacts and interest lies in fine tuning innovations or selecting among different variants prior to scaling up. As we discuss later in this paper in more detail, a third form of evaluation, **developmental evaluation**, is, in principle, very important for the purpose of increasing positive impacts (Box 1).

Against this backdrop there is a growing for evaluation systems and metrics to measure social impact and outcomes, but also a diversifying demand, since the demands are arising from different sources and these reflect different perspectives, purposes and needs. Different stakeholders have different evaluation foci and needs, which manifest as differences in the kinds of evaluation questions they seek to answer including differences at the very fundamental level of what is being evaluated; i.e., the impact *of what on what?* Furthermore, evaluation needs and questions are likely to change through different stages in the development of a social innovation as the social innovation develops, evolves, diffuses and goes to scale. The dominant evaluation paradigm is based on positivism and involves a strongly linear model of evaluation that conceptualises clear cause-effect links and seeks to explore these. This paradigm focuses on social innovation as defined by content (i.e. social innovation perceived as innovative actions, activities, products or services) rather than social innovation defined as a *process* interacting with complex systems. In section 8, we a deeper discussion of developmental evaluation will be offered.

## Box 5: Developmental evaluation

“Developmental evaluation refers to long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development. Developmental evaluation processes include asking evaluative questions and gathering information to provide feedback and support developmental decision-making and course corrections along the emergent path. The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. The evaluator’s primary function in the team is to elucidate team discussions with evaluative questions, data and logic, and to facilitate data-based assessments and decision-making in the unfolding and developmental processes of innovation.”(Patton, 2008).

# transformative social innovation theory

In Table 1, the results of a developmental evaluation exercise are given for the case of homeless people in Canada, showing the elements of DE, the translation of it for the case of homeless day labourers and the ways in which they were helped with securing housing and achieving better income.

**Table 1. Results from a Developmental Evaluation exercise: Experimenting with innovative ways to help homeless day labourers secure housing and better income in Canada**

<b>What was developed through developmental evaluation?</b>	<b>What this means</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>Understanding the challenges of innovation and systems change</i>	The effort to tackle a complex problem may generate new and/or deeper insights about the nature of the challenge being addressed and/or the context in which it is being addressed.	The innovators realized the importance of social supports in the “homelessness puzzle”, once some of the clients who secured housing were drawn back to the streets to regain the friendship and company of their previous network.
<i>Theory-of-change elaboration</i>	The innovators may have new ideas about how they might address the challenge and/or the kinds of results they might expect from their efforts.	The innovators expanded from their strategy focused primarily on housing and employment income to one that included education, social networks, and mental and emotional help.
<i>Change mechanisms</i>	The establishment of concrete mechanism (e.g., practices, regulations, relationships, policies) that have an influence on the challenge being addressed may represent the most tangible development of the innovation.	The innovators established (a) a protocol with local credit unions to provide clients with access to bank accounts, even before they had permanent addresses; and (b) an arrangement where laborer could bypass predatory, temporary job agencies (which took 50% of their wages) and use a nonprofit intermediary that allowed them to retain all their employment earnings.
<i>Capacity development of social indicators</i>	Developments that relate to the capacity and morale of the innovators and affect how they think and pursue their innovation (e.g., skills, resources, membership).	The trust between previously disconnected service agency leaders increased after these early successes and allowed them to open up their work to discussing the deeper reasons why they found it difficult to integrate their services more closely (e.g., competition for resources).

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*Deepening understanding of context*

Developments that are not under the complete control of innovators but in which what happens (emerges) contextually shapes the goals, design, delivery, and results of the innovation (e.g., economy, demographics, key events). All developments are important to track and assess in DE Whereas the previous four types in this exhibit refer to the development of the innovations, this fifth one (the context) is equally important because innovation does not emerge in a vacuum, but instead is highly influenced by the context in which it is unfolding

Source: Patton (2016)

## 2.3 Evaluation paradigms and its toolbox

There is a limited body of past research on the monitoring of social innovation and the evaluation of social impact. Albeit this is now a fast-developing area, it is widely acknowledged in the evaluation literature that the area of social impact measurement has been under-conceptualised, under-theorised and under-researched. A specific observation is that research on metrics for social innovation is scarce and that there has been very little work to develop tools and methods to evaluate social innovation and social impacts specifically (e.g. Ebrahim and Rangan 2010).

On this basis, most currently-used tools in social impact measurement practice were not developed expressly for social impact assessment. Instead they are based on standard economic methods and tools of financial accounting and reporting. These tools therefore have closer affinity with perspectives and needs arising in social finance, for example needs to measure investment efficiency and productivity or to optimise investment portfolios, rather than with needs arising from mission-oriented social organisations concerned to improve or to track the effectiveness of their activities and actions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Antadze and Westley (2012) note that for social organisations productivity of finance is a means to an end, not an end of itself.

# transformative social innovation theory

Against this backdrop, there have been several review studies already of approaches to measuring social impact (e.g. Mulgan, 2010; Nichols, 2015; Antadze and Westley, 2012). Included in most such reviews are:

- **Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis:** these are widely used tools based on expressing the costs and benefits of interventions in money terms, often applying a discount rate and often using a 'costs-saved' approach to place money values on social benefits; e.g. the saved or avoided healthcare costs of an intervention that promotes healthier lifestyles. CBA and CEA are often used for large programs in areas of public provision of social and welfare services: health care, care of the elderly/young/vulnerable, rehabilitation of ex-offenders, etc.
- **Stated preference:** the approach is based on expressing benefits in money terms using a willingness-to-pay approach through which beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of an intervention are asked to estimate how much they would be prepared to pay for the benefits.
- **Revealed preferences:** compares options and infers the value of benefits from the choices people actually make; e.g. using relative costs of similar homes in different locations to estimate difference in local amenity value.
- **Social impact assessment and social return on investment:** estimates direct costs of an action/intervention, the probability of it working and the likely change in future outcomes (sometimes with a discount rate). This is a broad family of tools used to support philanthropy and impact investment decisions, for example to compare alternative grant or investment options. Many (sometimes fund-specific) variants exist; e.g. Best Available Charitable Option (Acumen Fund).
- **Public value assessment:** seeks to assess how much the public values a service, such as public-service broadcasting
- **Value-added assessment:** seeks to assess the quality added through a service, such as education, by comparing entry- with exit- level characteristics, such as educational-levels (rather than by using only qualifications attained, which cannot account for differences in school intake).
- **Quality-adjusted or disability-adjusted life years:** seeks to estimate the cost-effectiveness of health-care treatments by combining objective and subjective experiences (extension of life and experienced life quality).
- **Life satisfaction:** assesses social projects and programs in terms of the extra income beneficiaries would need in order to achieve an equal gain in their life satisfaction.

# transformative social innovation theory

The Life Satisfaction Approach is potentially interesting for evaluating social innovation impacts in contexts where there is a demand for money valuations. The Life Satisfaction Approach seeks to value non-market impacts. It uses econometric methods to estimate the life satisfaction provided by non-market goods and converts this into a monetary figure by also estimating the effect of income on life satisfaction. The approach therefore seeks to assess impact in terms of "how people think and feel about their lives as a whole, instead of assessing impact based on what people say they want and what they choose" (Fujiwara and Campbell, 2011).

- Government accounting: some national governments (e.g. France, Italy) use standard sets of indicators to monitor government spending and its societal effects

This listing confirms that many of the most widely-used methods in current use stem from conventional accounting practices, so they are not designed from first principles for capturing social impact. CBA, CEA and related assessment methods are further limited because the indicators can measure only single aspects of performance and each impact requires a 'tailor-made' indicator. These assessment methods are therefore unable (or unlikely) to reflect the full value of the social impacts. The most widely-used model of social impact measurement currently – the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model – is also based on conventional economic and accounting principles and on cost-benefit thinking. The approach seeks to establish a ratio of returns (economic, environmental and social) to the activities of an organisation. The model reviews the inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts made and experienced by stakeholders in relation to the activities of an organisation, putting money values on all costs and benefits created by the organisation (economic, social, environmental) and expressing these in terms of a productivity ratio (Arvidson et al 2010).

Not being developed specifically for this field and for the needs within it, currently-available methods and tools are therefore not always fully appropriate for the specifics of particular evaluation tasks or for fulfilling specific evaluation functions. Needs within the field are diverse already but also are still diversifying, so the challenge of developing new and more appropriate social impact evaluation approaches is becoming more urgent.

Antadze and Westley (2012) state that the situation calls for the creation of new evaluation models that incorporate not only financial but also environmental and social considerations and that provide mechanisms for determining the scale, impact and durability of social innovations. But they note, also, that there are special challenges in evaluating social innovations, which is intrinsically more difficult than evaluating technical innovation.<sup>4</sup> Of considerable significance in this regard is their observation that the dynamics of social innovations and the challenges they address are nonlinear, uncertain and unpredictable, which implies that "a positivist approach to measuring social impact is insufficient" (Antadze and Westley 2012, p.134). This is significant because the established paradigm of monitoring and measuring social innovation is based on positivism. However,

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<sup>4</sup> They state, for example, that unlike technical innovation, the impact and outcomes of social innovations cannot, at least initially, be judged by growth in market share, profitability, or even consumer satisfaction.



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this observation holds added significance for the TRANSIT project since a positivist paradigm is intrinsically unsuited for exploring the wider impact of social innovations in respect to broad-scale processes of societal transformation. We return to this point later in the present paper.

## 2.4 Social return on investment

There is currently a strong government interest in incentivising or requiring social organisations to use the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model. Wood and Leighton (2010), in a report on behalf of DEMOS, suggest this is because public services are facing a period of unprecedented cuts as efforts are made to recover the economy and public finances in the wake of the economic and financial crisis and policymakers are seeking both to harness social organisations in the delivery of services and to ensure value for money. In the UK, for example, social organisations have increasingly been harnessed in delivering public services leading, since 1997, to “an unprecedented shift toward plurality in public services.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, Wood and Leighton observe: “a recent surge of interest in social reporting has seen SROI becoming the tool promoted by government, thanks to its unique feature of attributing monetary values to ‘soft’ outcomes” (Wood and Leighton, 2010, p.14).

The surge of interest by policymakers in social reporting using SROI has led to concern over both the appropriateness of making SROI a dominant approach in measuring and reporting social impact and the practical feasibility of this in the short term. Concerns are expressed also for social organisations to be treated fairly, so that lack of capacity to use SROI should not be an impediment to their receiving income. In a survey of social organisations, Wood and Leighton (on behalf of DEMOS) found that very few organisations are implementing SROI as yet and that the majority are not ‘SROI-ready’.<sup>6</sup> The DEMOS study concludes that “although SROI may be neither practicable nor desirable for all organisations, the basic concepts of outcomes evaluation that it encourages are important for all organisations to achieve.” Furthermore, the DEMOS study accepts that there will be continuing pressure on social organisations to monitor and report SROI.

Against this backdrop, the DEMOS report makes a set of recommendations, including that there is a need first to set a more achievable social value measurement target for the whole sector. This could be “a universal benchmark” established as “a stretch target” to help improve evaluation in the sector. It therefore needs to embody good practice in outcomes measurement and evaluation and to be accompanied by investment in training and practical guidance. Also, social organisations should be encouraged and incentivised to work toward it by commissioners and funders. The DEMOS study further suggest that any such benchmark should be underpinned by three principles: proportionality, so that the burden of evaluation is in line with the scale and nature of the organisation

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<sup>5</sup> Wood and Leighton report that by 2010 the UK government accounted for one-third of the total income of social organisations and that, by then, around 27,000 charities (25% of the total number of registered charities) relied on government for over three-quarters of their funding

<sup>6</sup> Wood and Leighton define SROI-readiness as involving the capacity “to identify and measure organisational outcomes adequately in a quantitative way.”

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undertaking it; comparability, so that even with a range of flexible frameworks, organisations can still produce outputs based on comparable principles and terms of reference; and, standardisation, so that there are tools and data available to remove the need to evaluate outcomes from scratch and reduce the burden on organisations.

The Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, which funded the DEMOS research, advocates that foundations work with grantees to face the challenges posed by measuring social returns and, in support of this, makes the following suggestions to funders:

- Include a budget for measurement of outcomes (and then social returns) in your grants and set measures for yourself as well so you learn in parallel with your grantees.
- If you hit difficulties in your discussions with grantees come back to the common goal: social impact. Discuss this with your grantees: many of the problems of measurement turn out to be problems of lack of agreement on goals.
- Even if you do not seek to quantify the financial impact of your outcomes do think about how this financial value will be delivered as it will refine your view of what is truly valuable.
- Monitor implementation around outcomes, not outputs, as this is where the impact is often assumed and not managed.
- Be persistent: this is going to be a long journey. Seek continuous improvement; one of the benefits of measures is that they enable us to continually ratchet up expectations (of ourselves and others).
- Share good practices between grantees and with other funders.

## 2.5 An exemplary analysis of SRIO: The case of Foster Care in the Netherlands

In this section, we present an exemplary analysis of a social return on investment calculation, to give an idea of how it works.<sup>7</sup> The analysis is undertaken by Sinzer in the Netherlands, at the request of the sector organization of foster care homes for children who are unable to live with their parents. It concerns children in the age category up until 18 year for whom youth care professionals consider the home situation inappropriate for their socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development because of violence, sexual abuse and negligence. Foster care homes (gezinshuizen) are an alternative to state care institutions (residentiele instellingen). In the SROI the costs and benefits are determined for funders, municipalities, the children themselves and agencies responsible for finding places of care. The costs and benefits for the parents are not determined but their acceptance of the referral and their assessment of moments of contact is assessed (via scores on a scale from 0 to 5).

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<sup>7</sup> This section is based on <http://www.gezinspiratieplein.nl/lezen-weten/lijst-met-alle-publicaties/74-maatschappelijke-business-case-gezinshuizen/file>

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Effects for all people and organisations involved are being determined via interviews with foster care providers, experts and to a smaller extent the children. For children the positive effects include: the creation of a prosocial network (based on relationships of care and trust), greater chances of obtaining a school diploma, finding work, less debt and a greater sense of self-love and acceptance. For funders the benefits include lower care costs (which amount to 11688 euro per child). For municipalities/government the benefits include: prevention of crime, less need for special education, and lower demands on social welfare arrangements.

Based on interviews with foster parents, for each effect category, the duration of the effect (1, or 3 years) is estimated together with the attributed chance of the effect occurring. Each effect is monetarized, based on cost and benefit information that is available. The cost information used gives a hard element to the monetarization but no attempt is made to personify the costs and benefits. The basis for calculating the benefits from reduced crime are the costs of custody. The avoided psychological damage to victims of crime is not included. The benefits of having a support network of 3 persons are calculated as 4500 based on the maximum payment of 1500 euro that volunteers in the Netherlands can receive for doing volunteering work. This translates into a benefit for the child of 714 euro a year based on a positive impact chance of 32% (the impacts chance stems from subjective guess by experts). The gains of a diploma are based on econometric studies that say that every extra year of schooling results in 5-15% income. The 5% number is used as this is considered most appropriate (the percentage increases with level of education) and for income, the average minimum wage for 18 to 20 year olds is used. Here the impact factor is estimated at 22%. Those assumptions appear reasonable (more reasonable than those for estimating the benefits of having a social support network which are not based on benefits for the recipient of care but based on the sum of money that government is prepared to pay for the work done by volunteers in general).

The value of the benefits for a foster care child is estimated at 1,727 euro, for municipalities at 4,106 euro and for agencies responsible for finding places of care it is 189 euro. The biggest benefit category is the saving in the costs of direct care by bringing children in foster care homes. The SROI (the quotient of overall benefits and costs) is estimated at 1.30 (91% of which stems from the lower care cost element), indicating a positive societal business case. Human stories about life changing experiences are absent from the evaluation, a missed opportunity. For fostering innovation, the SROI offers little. The analysis does not provide any insights into conditions for success and processes behind achieving positive results for the children, the results of which could help foster care people to provide care in a better way and other organisations to take helpful measures. To funders, the study showed a clear benefit which they already knew. The analysis is an example of a summative evaluation.

The limitations of a purely summative evaluation are recognized in a blog by Marlon van Dijk on theories of change, where she offers useful suggestions for increasing impact.<sup>8</sup> In her blog, she argues for a deeper investigation of the conditions for success and for using

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<sup>8</sup> <http://blog.sinzer.org/author/marlon-van-dijk>

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such knowledge for a more tailored approach of social care. The example she uses is that of an alcohol rehabilitation programme, where it was discovered that having a social support network of family and friends was a critical factor for success. It also was discovered that failures to get off alcohol resulted in depressions, feelings of failure and reduced motivations, as negative side-effects. These learnings led to the introduction of buddies for people without social support and the decision to limit the programme to those with social support. Both choices greatly improved the effectiveness of the rehab programme and helped to reduce the negative side-effects.

## 2.6 The recommendations of the GECES sub-group

The DEMOS study, while supporting the idea of a universal reporting of social impact, nevertheless has concerns over the pre-occupation on SROI that represents the evaluation priority of funders, but does not necessarily respond to the evaluation needs and concerns of other stakeholders. As evaluation needs and questions of parties with other than only financial perspectives also need to be considered, more comprehensive approaches to monitoring and evaluation are needed. The DEMOS study therefore recommends the development of a more comprehensive and universally applicable evaluation framework. Progress in this direction is represented by the recommendations of another group – the GECES sub-group on Impact Measurement – whose report on 'Proposed Approaches to Social Impact Measurement' has just been submitted (GECES, June 2014).

GECES (Group of Experts of the Commission on Social Entrepreneurship) was established in the policy context of European Commission legislation and practice. The Single Market Act II states that “the Commission will develop a methodology to measure the socio-economic benefits created by social enterprises” and that “the development of rigorous and systematic measurements of the impacts of social enterprises on the community is essential for demonstrating that the money invested in social enterprises yields high savings and income”. The GECES sub-group on Social Impact Measurement was therefore established “to agree upon a European methodology which could be applied across the European social economy” (GECES 2014, p.i).

The immediate need for a methodology relates to two funding instruments for social enterprises. The European Social Entrepreneurship Funds (EuSEFs) and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)<sup>9</sup>. Both programmes come under the Social Business Initiative (SBI) and are focused on supporting the development of Social Enterprise within EU Member States.<sup>10</sup> The measurement needs of these two instruments are different, however. For EuSEFs there is a need to create a standard for judging whether a social enterprise qualifies to receive financial support. For the EaSI programme, under

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<sup>9</sup> Under EaSI, €86 million in grants, investments and guarantees will be made available to social enterprises in 2014-2020.

<sup>10</sup> In this context, a social enterprise is defined as an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It is characterised by the dominance of a social objective of the common good, the reinvestment of most profit with a view to achieving the social objective, and by governance structures (e.g. systems of organisation, ownership, stakeholder participation, etc.) that reflect this mission.

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which grants will be made available to social enterprises that are able to demonstrate “a measurable social impact”, the need is for those managing the funds to report upon the extent to which the social impact targets of the whole fund are delivered (GECES 2014).

The GECES report makes clear, nevertheless, that the development of a standard for impact measurement goes beyond these immediate needs, pointing out that “nowhere in the world is there an agreed standard for social impact measurement” and that “to develop one would bring consistency to reporting” (GECES 2014, p.i). While the GECES standard is thus developed in relation to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship and is sensitive to the funding instruments it is intended to serve, the underlying intention to “measure social impact” is relevant more widely across the field of social innovation. The GECES report, like the DEMOS report, thus identifies the need for an agreed and universal measurement standard and seeks to build foundations for this in the form of a set of principles and guidance for an approach that evaluates impact based on outcomes.

The main argument of the GECES report is that it is neither possible nor desirable to devise a rigid set of indicators in a top-down and ‘one-size-fits-all’ fashion to measure social impact in all cases.<sup>11</sup> The report warns that to impose a pre-determined, closed set of quantitative indicators “from the top” also risks being highly counterproductive, especially if funding decisions are based on performance against these indicators, since this introduces dangers of perverse incentives; for example risks of social organisations organising themselves so as to maximise their achievements against pre-set measures, rather than to achieve the greatest social impact in their own eyes (GECES, 2014, p. 11).

Rather the sub-group recognises that there exists a range of approaches to measuring social impact, which differ in the detail of indicators and metrics, but which show some convergence on the main steps in the process that constitutes the groundwork for any measurement of social impact. Broadly, these steps involve, “identifying clearly the social impact sought, the stakeholders impacted, a ‘theory of change’ for social impact, putting in place a precise and transparent procedure for measuring and reporting on **inputs, outputs, outcomes** and for assessing thereby the **impact** actually achieved, followed by a ‘learning’ step to improve impacts and refine the process” (GECES, 2014, p.10, highlights maintained as per original). This is recognised to be an iterative process.

Instead of proposing indicators and metrics of its own, therefore, the GECES sub-group proposes the development of a standardised methodological approach for developing customised and context-sensitive impact assessments. This is based upon a set of principles and guidelines concerning: setting objectives; analysing stakeholders; measuring results; verifying and valuing impact; and monitoring and reporting. As no single set of indicators can be devised top-down to measure social impact in all cases the approach proposed by the GECES is to develop a framework for indicators. It is suggested that this, “should provide a broad structure into which the majority of cases should fit,

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<sup>11</sup> The report of the sub-group states that “there is a range of approaches to measuring social impact, each of which promotes particular kinds of indicators, but that none of these has yet reached the state of a gold standard”. Further “it is unlikely that any of these will become a gold standard since diversity of social need, intervention, scale and stakeholder interest demand different information and presentation of it” (GECES, 2014, p.10).

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showing differences between different types of intervention but recognising that for each type indicators are likely to be selected from a range” (GECES 2014, p.11).

Concepts and terminology play a key role in the development of the GECES guidance. The literature review undertaken by GECES as part of its remit identifies five key terms that recur in social impact assessment studies. These are adopted in developing the approach that GECES proposes. The approach distinguishes:

- Inputs: Resources used in delivery of an intervention
- Activity: What is done with those resources (the intervention)
- Output: How that activity touches the intended beneficiaries
- Outcome: The change arising in the lives of the beneficiaries and others
- Impact: The extent to which that change arises from the intervention

In respect of the last of these several adjustments are to be taken into account:

- Deadweight: To account for changes that would have occurred anyway
- Alternative attribution: To discount change attributable to other activities and actions
- Drop-off: To account for the decreasing effect of interventions over time
- Displacement: To account for negative consequences.

In coming to a standard capable of wide application, GECES draws a distinction between four elements in producing a meaningful measurement of social impact:

- Process: The series of steps and stages (mechanisms) by which the social innovators or funders investigate, understand and present how activities achieve change (outcomes) and impact in the lives of service-users and stakeholders.
- Framework: For each major area or sector in which social innovators intervene, a list of the most usual outcomes being targeted and, for each of these, a series of sub-outcomes that appear most regularly.
- Indicator: A particular way of attaching a value or measure to those outcomes and impacts.
- Characteristics: Qualities of the reported measurement of the outcomes and impacts that contribute to recognition of reliability, validity and robustness.

The GECES report also draws attentions to limitations that attach to any project seeking to establish a standard for measuring impacts of social innovation. It refers to: the intrinsic

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difficulty of capturing all impacts objectively, especially given the wide diversity of impacts; difficulties in capturing qualitative aspects of impacts, which can be underrepresented when using quantitative indicators; the need for measurement to be a proportionate activity that balances the wish for accuracy with the costs of measuring more precisely; the trade-off between comparability and context-sensitivity (the need for measurement and choice of indicators to be relevant in the specific case and context); and, the difficulty of sticking to any standard over a number of years in the fast-changing world of which social innovation is a part. The standard proposed by GECES therefore reflects “a balance between the needs of funders, investors and policy-makers for sound information on measurable social impacts with the need for proportionality and practicality” (GECES 2014, p.ii).

Within the limits implied by these caveats, the GECES sub-group develops a process to measure social impact, defined as “the social effect (change), both long-term and short-term, achieved for its target population as a result of its activity undertaken – taking into account both positive and negative changes, and adjusting for alternative attribution, deadweight, displacement and drop-off”. This standard process involves five stages:

- Identifying objectives: This is concerned with both the objectives of the service being measured and the measurement objectives of the various parties.
- Identifying stakeholders: This is concerned with identifying who gains and who gives what and how.
- Setting relevant measurements: This is concerned with the theory of change that the social innovation uses to plan and implement its intervention; i.e. with how the activity is thought to achieve the outcomes and impacts most needed by beneficiaries and stakeholders. Measurements appropriate to explaining the link from activity to impact are set with input from major stakeholders.
- Measuring, validating and valuing: This is concerned with assessing whether – and to which extent – the targeted outcomes are achieved in practice.
- Reporting, learning and improving: This is concerned with using the measurements in regular reporting about services and their effectiveness to internal and external audiences.

The format for reporting is an integral part of the proposed GECES standard and is a means for quality assurance as well as of communication, so both structure and content are prescribed in terms of a set of points to be covered. These include:

- I. An explanation of how the process has been applied

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- II. An explanation of the effects of an intervention in terms of outcomes, beneficiaries, and an account of attribution that considers deadweight, alternatives, drop-off, etc.)
- III. The social innovator's logic model (theory or hypothesis) of change, suggesting how/why the activity caused or contributed to the outcomes and impacts
- IV. An identification of third parties having a role in the delivery of these outcomes and impacts, explaining how they contributed (which is important for alternative attribution)
- V. An identification of those stakeholders whose interests are being measured and the nature of the gain to them (appropriately categorised)
- VI. A set of indicators for the identified impacts with explanation for the selection of these, how the indicator relates to the impact and the needs and interests of stakeholders and how these have been agreed with stakeholders.
- VII. A social and financial risk analysis covering the contingency that targeted social and financial outcomes are not delivered.

The standard for social impact assessment proposed by GECES marks some progress in that it provides for some consistency across assessment processes but proposes a flexible framework for selecting metrics and indicators so that these are contextually appropriate. It also continues in the (positive) direction of measurement based upon outcomes and impacts, rather than on outputs (see, also: Epstein and Yuthas 2014).<sup>12</sup>

The standard is nevertheless narrower in scope than would be needed to cover a full range of possible evaluation questions. In part this is because it is based on a positivist approach to impact assessment, which assumes a greater clarity of means and goals than necessarily applies in all stages of a social innovation. An explicit argument in the GECES report, for example, is that “social enterprise needs to be defined and qualified by way of function, principle and primary purpose, and the impact measurement should be based upon and emerge from this” (GECES, 2014, p.7).

In part the scope is reduced because social innovators and their evaluation questions and needs are under-represented in the development of the standard relative to investors and their needs. While recognising that the context for and field of evaluation has been changing rapidly over recent years “to meet changing social, policy and investment needs”, the proposed GECES standard heavily emphasises support for investment and financial decisions.<sup>13</sup> The report refers specifically to the global financial crisis as a motivation for measuring impact because of “the resulting heightened desire of funders and investors (public or private) to concentrate scarce resources on initiatives with an impact that can

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<sup>12</sup> Epstein and Yuthas (2014) *Measuring and Improving Social Impacts: A Guide for Non-Profits, Companies and Impact Investors*, Greenleaf Publishing.

<sup>13</sup> Thus for example, the GECES report states that: “In the case of all stakeholders, a key need for social impact measurement can be seen in decision making. The investor needs to evaluate the advantages of the impact achieved against the risks of investing. The fund manager needs to consider whether a given investment delivers both acceptable social and financial returns, as well as whether it meets policy and fund focus objectives. The service-user needs to understand the nature of the intervention, and the gains to be enjoyed by engaging with the service. The funder of the service, be it a public body, a service-user, or another party, needs to understand the value it gains and for which it is paying. The needs of all such stakeholders should be recognised and should be balanced” (GECES 2014, p.2).



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be demonstrated”. Equivalently, the needs of service-providing organisations considered in developing the standard are mostly those relating to scrutiny and accountability; i.e. monitoring is designed to support transparency in explaining how funds are used and to demonstrate they are being used productively.<sup>14</sup>

More generally, in the GECES report the field of social impact measurement is considered to be a facet of the economic evaluation of impact, which has roots that can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. By implication, the proposed GECES standard is also developed from those roots and strongly reflects the approaches of economics, finance and accounting.

In some reports there is recognition also that a ‘perfect’ system would be an illusory objective and that the aim should be more one of continuous improvement of schemes and metrics. It is suggested also that working to improve evaluation is an important part of the process of social innovation, since this imposes a discipline of conscious reflection and precision over the impacts that a social innovation seeks to have, the mechanisms through which impacts are created, and the strategies to be deployed for maximising the effectiveness of achieving impacts.

## 2.7 A contingency approach to impact measurement and evaluation

Accepting that formal methods for SIO have severe limitations in terms of do-ability and usefulness, Nicholls (in a report for CRESSI) develops a contingency approach. The starting point for the contingency approach is the question *how can organizations chose an approach that is appropriate to their concerns and context?* This question brings into focus the goals for evaluation. According to Nicholls, establishing a basis for trust is one important goal (important in its own right). A second important goal is offering an information basis for decision making for the social organisations and those interested in supporting it or evaluating it. These considerations led him to distinguish what he calls *The Basis-for-Trust Dimension*. For stakeholders what the social organisation is doing is important to know and mission statements and descriptions of activities are valuable for this. For social organisations working on a pay-per-performance basis for public authorities and those funded by social impact investors this will not be enough. External funders may also have an interest to ‘look under the bonnet’ to “form judgements about the quality of the management team and the challenges and prospects facing the business” (Nichols, 2015, p. 20). In general, direct contact, dialogue and observation are ways to “allow confidence to build up (or not) and reduce the need for the costly generation and processing of abstracted evidence and reports” (ibid, p. 15). The need for quantitative analysis also will be smaller when the initiative is embedded in a community, a social movement or field of professional activity with well-described practices and ethos as to what is permitted and what not (ibid, p. 20).

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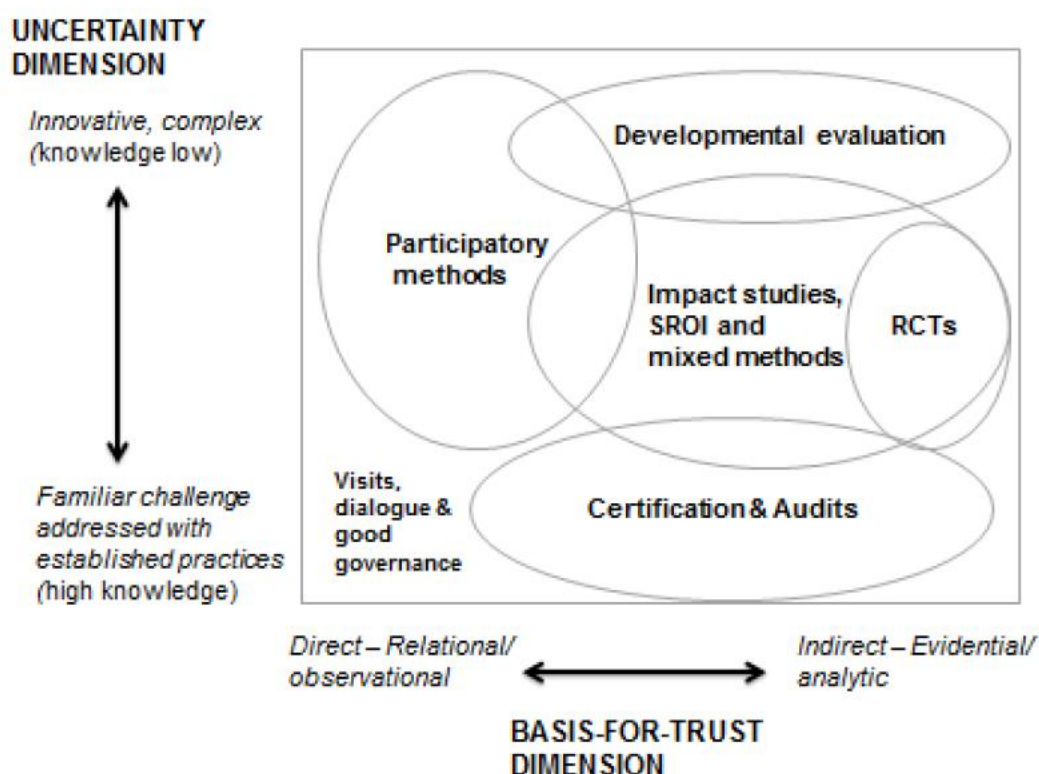
<sup>14</sup> This extends to the use of impact measures to enable service providers and commissioners to improve effectiveness in delivery, where concerns expressed in the GECES report are for both technical efficiency (of the intervention) and financial efficiency (of the investment).

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The second dimension of the contingency framework is the degree and amount of uncertainty. Uncertainty is high for novel and complex initiatives and low for well-established ones. Both trust and uncertainty will affect the confidence of external stakeholders in the occurrence of positive outcomes.

The value of the Contingency Framework is that it offers guidance in terms of the most appropriate impact measurement approach for the different context (shown in Figure 2)

Figure 2: A Contingency Model for Social Impact Measurement



Source: Nicholls, 2015 (p. 21)

According to Nichols, the central area of the graphs is the most difficult because uncertainty is considerable and the basis for trust is unclear. Here, certification and participative approaches will not be sufficient or appropriate for some stakeholders but the initiative may not be able to undertake certified method because of costs. Nicholls feels that especially here the SROI has a great to offer here because of its flexibility, in terms of combining (quantitative) evidence with participatory relationship building.

## 2.8 Developmental evaluation for innovation

After having discussed positivistic models of evaluation, especially, SRIO, we now offer a deeper discussion of developmental evaluation *as a model of evaluation for innovation*. In developmental evaluation, the focus is not on impact evaluation but on possibilities for

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*increasing* positive impacts through innovation. Developmental evaluation fits with internal needs for monitoring and external ones for summative evaluation and constitutes an important complement to positivistic forms of evaluation that are grounded in measurement rather than in exploration of possibilities.

Antadze and Westley (2012) argue that Milbergs and Vonortas (2004) made a major contribution in their analysis of innovation metrics by recognising that innovation is a process that entails change within complex systems, that it is multidimensional, that it is uncertain and that these aspects are not captured through conventional approaches. This line of argument is taken up also by Morris (2011) who says that the pursuit of innovation necessarily involves a venture into the unknown and concludes from this that “opportunities will be lost if we try to pin these unknowns down too early” in our (innovation and evaluation) processes. These aspects “open the possibility that the evaluation of the impacts of innovation is itself an experiment” (Antadze and Westley, 2012, p. 143).

This reflection on innovation as a complex process operating and interacting with complex systems is at odds with the established paradigm. The established paradigm of social impact measurement derives from a positivist tradition that defines social innovation narrowly as a product or service, rather than as a process. The range of evaluation questions asked, the scope of impacts and values considered, and the types of assessment methods used within the established evaluation paradigm are therefore all much narrower than is needed to capture the full range of impacts when social innovation is defined as a process that entails change within complex systems. Yet, crucially, it is in this latter understanding of social innovation that it holds potential to transform society; i.e. by contributing to broad and lasting changes in social relations, institutions, constructs and behaviours.

Elaborating further on conventional measuring approaches and the difference with approaches that might be needed to evaluate social innovation, Antadze and Westley (2012) group currently-used approaches according to whether they are focused on single or on multiple outcomes and according to whether approaches are designed deliberately to capture particular outcomes (which they refer to as approaches of ‘deliberate design’) or whether they are open to reconfiguration by emergent qualities of the transformation they are measuring (‘emergent design’).

They find that most currently-used approaches are characterised by deliberate design, with either a single outcome (economic) focus or a multiple-outcome focus. They also show that most approaches are applied to measure concrete phenomena, such as products, services, and behaviours, rather than something more abstract, like a process or an idea. This, they conclude, is unsurprising, precisely because conventional notions of evaluation have been based generally on traditions of positivist science, leading to an approach that is causal and linear and based on input-output measurements. As a result, they say, “what can be counted tends to be what is evaluated” (p. 144). Concrete

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phenomena are relatively easy to evaluate. Social innovation, by contrast, demands a link among complex and abstract phenomena, social processes, and multiple outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

Antadze and Westley (2012) draw attention to an alternative approach to evaluation, referred to by Patton (2011) as ‘developmental evaluation’, which arises from this perspective on and definition of social innovation as “a complex process” determined by “its impact on the broad system”, rather than by the conventional definition of social innovation as a specific outcome in the form of a product, service or behaviour. In the perspective of development evaluation the evaluation focus shifts from measuring social innovation as a product or service to evaluating it as a process that has impacts.

By introducing ‘development evaluation’ Patton draws a distinction with more usual ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ modes of evaluation. Effectively, Patton is introducing a third and new mode of evaluation that is designed to serve a hitherto overlooked purpose. Both formative and summative evaluations are tests of a model. Formative evaluation is used to improve a model and bring it to some final stage of refinement. Summative evaluation is used to determine the success and effectiveness of the final model and, especially, to help decide whether it should be continued, extended or disseminated. It implies the existence of well-defined goals, an optimal solution, a targeted intervention and a fairly stable environment. Developmental evaluation, by contrast, “supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments”. It suggests constant movement back and forth between problem and solution in support of an ongoing and continuous development process. Here Patton is describing a constructivist role for evaluation and a role in the adaptive management of upscaling processes.

Developmental evaluation is “purpose-and-relationship driven and not method-driven”; making method decisions is part of the process (Patton, 2011, p. 288). “It’s all about persistently asking questions and pursuing credible answers in time to be used” (Patton, 2011, 288). **Typical questions** to be used are (pp. 46-47):

- *What is the baseline understanding of the situation?*
- *What are the vision and values that will guide innovation?*
- *What are the initial conditions and the nature of the environment within which action will occur?*
- *What is meant by innovation?*
- *What do rapid feedback and initial results reveal about progress in desired directions?*

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<sup>15</sup> This raises the issue of attribution and causality in social innovation assessment. These are difficult issues to handle generally because social sector impacts can be caused by multiple factors and actors. However, there are additional difficulties of assessing impact and ascribing causality in a complex process when social impacts may result from actions by more than one organisation and lines of influence may be too long, complex and indirect (Earl et al. 2001).

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- *What's considered "working" and "not working" as exploration unfolds and innovation is undertaken?*
- *What criteria emerge to tell the difference between working and not working?*
- *What processes and outcomes generate enthusiasm? Why?*
- *How is the programme as an intervention system connected to and affected by larger systems in its environment?*
- *What are the trends in those larger systems?*
- *What can be controlled and not controlled, predicted and not predicted, measured and not measured?*
- *How to distinguish signal from noise to determine what to attend to?*
- *What innovations emerge that merit more formal implementation as pilot programmes ready for formative evaluation?*

It is based on a number of **key conditions**, which are that:

- ✓ Social innovators have a strong vision and commitment to making a difference.
- ✓ There is a willingness and capacity to act and innovate under conditions of uncertainty and turbulence.
- ✓ There is commitment to use data and rapid feedback to make sense of what emerges during exploration and innovation, and use those emergent understandings to guide next steps.
- ✓ Funders are willing to try out and trust the innovation process and developmental evaluation as a way of monitoring what emerges.
- ✓ Evaluators are capable of operating without predetermined clear, special and measurable outcome or a well-defined logic model.

Ontologically, it is based on the view that "conclusions include reasoning, critical thinking, judgment, and argument—and cannot be reduced to methods and data". Reconstructing concepts of fairness, autonomy, resilience and sustainability (in terms of one's own understanding and that of others) may be part of the process, giving the evaluation an element of "phronesis" (practical judgment) (cf. Loeber, 2007 and Avelino and Grin, 2017). Patton (2011) lists five main uses for developmental evaluation: for ongoing development in adapting a project, program, strategy, policy or other initiative to new conditions in complex dynamic systems; for adapting general principles to a new context as ideas and innovations are taken from elsewhere and developed within a new setting; for developing a rapid response (in real time) in the face of sudden major change; for developing the performance of a potentially scalable innovation; and for evaluating major systems changes and cross-scale developments to provide feedback on unfolding systems changes, evidence of emerging tipping points and/or on how an innovation may need to be adapted as it is taken to scale in the effort to have broader impact.

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Purpose	Key conditions	Priority questions	Common evaluation approaches	Key factors affecting use
<p><b>Developmental evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help social innovators explore possibilities for addressing major problems and needs, and identify innovative approaches and solutions.</li> <li>Develop promising innovations.</li> <li>Support adaptation in complex, uncertain, and dynamic conditions.</li> <li>Document what actions innovators engage in, the short-term results and consequences of those actions, and their connections to the larger vision of the innovators.</li> <li>Identify emergent processes and outcomes that accompany innovation, and support making sense of their implications.</li> <li>Support ongoing development and adaptation to changing conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social innovators with a strong vision and commitment to making a difference.</li> <li>Willingness and capacity to act and innovate under conditions of uncertainty and turbulence.</li> <li>Commitment to use data and rapid feedback to make sense of what emerges during exploration and innovation, and use those emergent understandings to guide next steps.</li> <li>Funders willing to try out and trust the innovative process and developmental evaluation as a way of monitoring what emerges.</li> <li>Evaluators capable of operating without predetermined clear, specific, and measurable outcomes or a well-defined logic model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the baseline understanding of the situation?</li> <li>What are the vision and values that will guide innovation?</li> <li>What are the initial conditions and the nature of the environment within which action will occur?</li> <li>What is meant by innovation?</li> <li>What do rapid feedback and initial results reveal about progress in desired directions?</li> <li>What's considered "working" and "not working" as exploration unfolds and innovation is undertaken?</li> <li>What criteria emerge to tell the difference between "working" and "not working"?</li> <li>What processes and outcomes generate enthusiasm? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developmental evaluation.</li> <li>Systems-and-complexity-based interactive design.</li> <li>Rapid assessment, rapid feedback.</li> <li>Emergent evaluation.</li> <li>Real-time evaluation.</li> <li>Ongoing environmental scanning and outcomes monitoring.</li> <li>Reflective practice.</li> <li>Participatory action research.</li> <li>Network analysis.</li> <li>Systems change mapping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovators and developmental evaluator(s) able to work together in partnership: mutual respect and trust.</li> <li>Getting busy and action-driven innovators to value and spend time in sense making, reflection, and data interpretation to inform ongoing innovation.</li> <li>Openness to what emerges.</li> <li>Adaptive capacity.</li> <li>Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty ("getting to maybe").</li> <li>Balancing quality and speed of feedback.</li> <li>Nimble, agile.</li> <li>Integrate and synthesize multiple and conflicting data sources.</li> </ul>

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All of these different uses for development evaluation stress the importance of context. Context sensitivity includes paying attention to the primary intended users of an evaluation, priority uses, the political environment within which the evaluation occurs, the stage of development of the innovation and other factors relevant to the use of the evaluation. A key conclusion drawn by Patton (2011) and reinforced by Antadze and Westley (2012) is that standardized metrics are not appropriate for developmental evaluation given the diversity of innovation contexts, so development of metrics and their continuous review and revision (as emergent metrics) needs to be built-into the social innovation process as a central aspect of development evaluation.

*“Evaluation isn’t something to incorporate only after an innovation is underway. The very possibility articulated in the idea of making a major difference in the world ought to incorporate a commitment to not only bringing about significant social change, but also thinking deeply about, evaluating, and learning from social innovation as the idea and process develops.” (Westley et al., 2006)*

Antadze and Westley further argue that formative, summative and developmental evaluations are not exclusive; rather they can play complementary roles at different stages in the development of social innovation. Using the adaptive cycle of Gunderson and Holling (2002), Antadze and Westley (2012) suggest that formative evaluation can support the exploitation stage by fine-tuning a model, summative evaluation can support the more stable and grounded conservation phase by judging overall effectiveness of a model, and developmental evaluation can support the reorganisation and release phases “where social innovators need to make sense of the emergent opportunities, understand the ongoing dynamics, and try out new ideas and approaches” (Antadze and Westley 2012, p. 146).

As social innovation process progresses this will imply change in requirements not only in terms of evaluations, but also in terms of suitable business, financial, learning and governance models. Next to the stage of development, the characteristics of the context space matter. Kirkland (2013) distinguishes three evaluation ‘spaces’: simple, complicated and complex.<sup>16</sup> Complex space call for open exploration and put a premium on flexibility. Complicated space involves a better, but still not fully, understood space where there is still room for debate and decision about the best way forward. Here the focus is on measuring what is thought will happen, so the focus is on measuring sought outcomes. There is a need also to consider the efficacy of different approaches, so that different variants of an intervention might be tested and evaluated to see which gives best results. There is still a need to be mindful of unintended consequences, so evaluations systems are needed to capture those things that do not show up with established measures. Simple space by contrast is where a good deal is known already about the context, the intervention and the mechanisms and nature of its effects. Here the focus of evaluation is on measuring what is thought or is expected to happen. Approaches, like randomised controlled trials can be appropriate here because the effects sought are known and the need is for the most robust method to detect these.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/knowledge-centre/blogs/evaluating-social-innovation-what-and-when>

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For social innovation, useful alternatives to developmental evaluation exist. Traditional models based on goals and step plans may not be suited because of the asset nature of social innovation initiatives (which are based on autonomy and consent). An interesting approach for social innovation is the model of Dynamic evaluation which is based on help to innovators in terms of intervention suggestions and sharing of experiences via stories (Kieboom and Vahl, 2014).<sup>17</sup> In the case Education Pioneer, the innovators in education (school teachers) were asked to share their stories and to structure and order their experiences on the basis of feedback from other innovators in education. Like developmental evaluation, dynamic evaluation seeks lessons for innovation. It exploits people's natural interest in stories and their proneness to understand causal elements of "why and how" if they are presented in the form of a narrative.<sup>18</sup> The stories themselves may need further articulation, systematisation and scurtinisation, which is done by bringing people in direct contact with each other (allowing them to ask questions) and by breaking down the stories into four parts: 1) the problem that was being addressed, 2) the idea, 3) the actions, and 4) the results obtained. It helps SI people to better deal with the critical issue of finding partnerships of collaboration and subjects them to external feedback, something which Developmental Evaluation is said to be less suited for.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.9 Evaluation anxiety

Imposed forms of evaluation create anxiety. Funders (or governments) often desire the demonstration of social impact in return for funding. However, initiatives are not keen on spending time on those activities, do not have the necessary expertise or would rather focus the monitoring on different aspects. They prefer to spend their scarce resources on *making* impact rather than on measuring it.

Monitoring fit for purpose can be created as part of an action research project, as shown by the action research project on monitoring and evaluation of eco-localisation projects in the UK (described in Hobson et al., 2016). In the project, the interest in monitoring and evaluation was explored amongst low carbon' community groups and partnerships (LCCGPs). The interest in M&E was examined and exploited in a step-wise process, which started with a one-day M&E workshops in Oxford, London and Manchester. The aim of the project was not so much to collect and analyse M&E data, but rather "to explore what happens when groups are given the space, resources and tools to do so themselves, in-keeping with calls for 'a more holistic evaluative frame' when examining the impacts of community groups" Hobson et al., 2016, p. 1398).

In a second step, experience was gained with M&E methods in the course of several months. Each group was asked to trial at least two M&E tools and was allocated one project team member as support over the trial period. When the trials had ended,

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<sup>17</sup> This section is based on <https://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MD-Deliverable-3.2-Case-Study-Education-Pioneers.pdf>, [https://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pres\\_mk\\_de2.pdf](https://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pres_mk_de2.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> A narrative is "an account of the unfolding of events, along with an effort to explain how and why these processes and events came to be". <http://understandingsociety.blogspot.nl/2014/02/a-causal-narrative.html>

<sup>19</sup> Personal communication of Marlieke Kieboom in an email.



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feedback was being sought from each participating group on the process and tools. Overall, the feedback was “positive and constructive”. Participants said that the evaluation led them into discussions on their mission and ‘theories of change’. It enabled some groups “to plan future projects in line with the desire to create specific impacts” rather than using M&E for capturing “outcomes after-the-fact”. In the words of a Transition Network staff member, the M&E exercise ‘stimulated me to do some of the work that I’ve been wanting to do, like around theories of change because that was the first thing that confronted me when I started doing this project. It was “so what’s your theory of change and how are you going to fit the impacts and what you want to measure into that logic model”?’ (p. 1401)

The exercise revealed anxiety towards the element of judgment and the possibility that it might “highlight shortcomings within the group, either in terms of tensions between members or perceived missing skills and constituents”. The exercise also showed that not all of them are interested in expansion. One group in particular, chose “not to take up the mantle of becoming a well-funded and expansive group, able to deliver on national level policy goals and prove their impact to attract competitive external funding” (Hobson et al., 2016, p. 1406). People in this group were content with their current size. For this group, “doing projects that were of interest to them – not ones that delivered the most quantifiable impacts – was their intended pathway”

Another important conclusion found by the researchers is that action research can help people to find their own way of dealing with M&E, in ways that help them gain traction with the public and specific stakeholders, through expressions of their ethos and particular representations of impact (Hobson et al., 2016 p. 1505).

## 2.10 Monitoring of context to find suitable partners and strategies

In section 8 the importance of context sensitivity is being mentioned. In this section, we examine the element further for the case of social innovation. At this moment, opportunities for social innovation are large because there are shifts underway that favour social innovation initiatives as service providers. We see, for example, the shift from local authorities acting as direct service providers to becoming service commissioners in areas of adult social care, urban poverty relief, etc. Another relevant development is the discussion about the current welfare systems and experiments with new forms of social welfare provision and rules, such as incentives for welfare claimants to volunteer, experiments with basic income, possibilities for health service beneficiaries to engage in activities that will help them to improve their own health or engage them in helping improve the health of others.

But such evaluations come with additional challenges, often in the form of dilemmas. For example, when establishment actors set the agenda and expect the SIs to play along, they are creating problems of co-opting. An example is the UK government deciding to send thousands of people (benefit claimers, including migrants) to time-banks without providing appropriate resource. SI’s can collapse when agendas are imposed top-down by (single-topic) agencies. The development goals of funders and SI leaders may also conflict

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with the wishes of volunteers not to be judged and their desires for keeping to old ways of doing. SI leaders must take care not to lose the grassroots element.

Table 2. Scaling routes for social innovators

Scaling route	Models and approaches	Activities
Influence and advise	Campaigning and advocacy Consultancy Training	Public speaking Publishing Engaging with policymakers Communicating via traditional and social media Advising or training others
Build a delivery network	Federations and membership models Communities of practice Kitemarks and quality marks Licencing Franchising Delivery contracts Collaborations	Representation Advocacy and awareness raising Transferring knowledge, codifying processes, sharing good practices, providing tools Training, support and quality assurance Community and movement building
Form strategic partnerships	Strategic alliances Mainstreaming into the public sector Piggybacking on another organisation's infrastructure Joint ventures Mergers and acquisitions	Brokering and managing partnerships with other organisations that allow a step change in scale Transferring knowledge Creating a sense of common values and mission
Grow an organisation to deliver	Setting up new branches Growing delivery capacity of a central team	Building staff and team capabilities Raising funds/investment Developing organisational capacity and systems

Source: NESTA (2014, p. 5)

To go to scale, social innovation initiatives may use different routes (Table 2). They may campaign for recognition and support by government and incumbent actors, they may build a delivery network, form strategic partnerships and grow an organisation to deliver. The choice of stakeholder-collaborators is a critical issue for going to scale (NESTA, 2014). Social innovators are advised to differentiate people into those who'll pay, those who'll take part, use and benefit, and those who'll devote their time to the innovation and make it happen (NESTA, 2014, p. 6.). This helps them to identify allies and work with them in mutually beneficial ways.

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A possible way of investigating motivations of actors (especially those who hold the key to system change and transformative impact) is the PAIR matrix of Henk Diepenmaat of Actor Management. The PAIR-analysis is a method that helps to improve on understanding of the players in a certain field of players, where *P* stands for *Position*, *A* for *actions*, *I* for *Interests* and *R* for *Role*.

- **'Position'**: A position is the espoused viewpoint, which is usually declared to others in public, in the press, in a position paper, or at a private negotiation table. An example statement is that the 'empowerment' of citizens and communities is *"absolutely essential to our economic, social and political future. If our local economies are vibrant and strong we are far less vulnerable to global shocks or the failures of a few dominant industries. If people know that their actions can make a real difference to their local communities, they're far more motivated to get involved – and civic pride is revived."* (Cameron, 2009: n.p.). Positions are often about the concrete characteristics of the *present* or the *future* situation of an underlying change perspective, as seen by the actor who is taking up a position. They say something about the intentional logics of an actor.
- **'Role'** is a name that covers a set of acting- and other perspectives that go together and are typical for a certain actor (for example a certain *business company, a research organisation, intermediary, advisory body, mayor, teacher*).
- **'Interest'** is something that an actor wants for himself (to be re-elected, to achieve particular goals, to have a good income or to maintain the one he or she has). If an interest is under threat, the actor will take a curative or preventive action. The interest
- **'Actions'** are the actual conducts/activities carried out by a party. Actions are the entire concrete manifestation of interpreting one's own intentional logics in a world shared with other actors. (Diepenmaat, 2011).

## The pair matrix

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	Visible
INTEREST	ROLE	Invisible

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The PAIR-matrix is made up of six "halves": a bottom half, a top half and 2 diagonals (*from bottom left to top right and from top left to bottom right*)

Source: Diepenmaat

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The PAIR matrix helps to think about partners for collaboration in a more structured way, and for offering guidance for what to do. The PAIR-matrix is made up of six “halves”: a bottom half, a top half and 2 diagonals (from bottom left to top right and from top left to bottom right).

- **Top half: positions and actions.** This is what can be observed directly: *positions* are expressed and *actions* are carried out. Interests and roles, by contrast, are to a large extent invisible and are hidden in the actors’ inner selves. The advocacy for Big Society by the Cameron government was suspected to be a cover for spending cuts (Small Government). Positions are only credible if they are combined with action, which can be asked for.
- **Bottom half: interests and roles.** The bottom half is the invisible half of the PAIR-matrix. It is also the half that allows us to overcome the deadlock in the multi-actor process. After all, interests can be served by more than one position and roles can be fulfilled by more than one action. That is why looking for cooperation is more likely to be successful if one is not focussed on the positions that have been taken up and the actions that have been carried out (top half), but on interests and roles. When looking for cooperation, one should look down to the bottom half. It may be less tangible, more difficult to grasp, but *that* is where the wiggle room is, if there is any.
- **The diagonal from top left to bottom right: positions and roles.** Ideally, positions and roles mutually enhance each other: important positions have competent and recognisable roles; and robust roles are secured by a clearly articulated position. But if a position is created based on a role rather than based on an interest, this is highly vulnerable to change. SII should be aware of that.
- **The diagonal from top right to bottom left: interests and actions.** A similar consideration goes for the diagonal interests-actions. Actions should be rooted in interests and interests should be secured by actions. Actions that fit with their own natural roles and direct interests, but that are not rooted in a deeper interest, can change when deeper interests can be served better

The behaviour implications of the PAIR matrix are as follows: *If you want to form coalitions, focus on the bottom half. If you want to enrol new actors, look at the left half. If you want to know whether actions and roles fit together perfectly, look at the right half. If you want to see through monopolies, look at the diagonal from top left to bottom right. And if you want to identify shortfalls in action (given interests) and actions which are weakly connected to interests (and thus may disappear), you should look at the diagonal from top right to bottom left.*

Researchers of Wageningen University and the VU Amsterdam developed a method called **Reflexive monitoring in action** (RMA) which offers a more systematic approach to the scanning of opportunities for system innovation by undertaking a system analysis, stakeholder analysis, causal loop mapping and other activities. It is a form of

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developmental evaluation with an important role for research, where “the insights gained from monitoring are tried and experimented with in the projects and activities” (van Mierlo et al., 2010).

## 2.11 Conclusions

In reviewing the literature on and tools for social impact evaluation it is apparent that there are different perspectives on evaluation systems and tools and that these reflect different perspectives on social innovation. The perspectives of social sector actors differ from those of for-profit sector actors, so that the adaptation and application of models of performance used in the for-profit sector – such as measures of profit or productivity – are potentially problematic for social sector actors. For social sector actors financial performance is often a means rather than an end of social sector activity. Social sector actors are mission-focussed and therefore they need *mission-based measures for performance evaluation*. It has nevertheless been observed that, to date, the debate around the measurement of social innovation outcomes and impacts “mainly reflects the perspective of private social finance that is attempting to be more strategic about its capital allocation” (Ebrahim and Rangan, cited by Antadze and Westley 2012, p. 135). Existing tools for social impact assessment are therefore ones mostly borrowed from economics and accounting. Not being developed specifically for this field and for the needs within it, they are not always appropriate.

Even if there is some overlap in interests, approaches, metrics and data needs, stakeholders’ different evaluation needs therefore require different focuses and methods, as even what is to be evaluated – the productivity of finance, the effectiveness of activities, the nature of benefits experienced by different beneficiaries – differs. Further, the evaluation needs of a social organisation are likely to evolve as the organisation and its innovations evolve, diffuse and go to scale. Overall, because of the importance now applied to the sector, this is a very fast-moving field where progress is being driven by the imperatives and opportunities (political, financial and social) to harness social organisations and social innovation both to maximise social impact and to optimise social investment.

The diversity and dynamics of needs are stimulating new work to develop evaluation frameworks based on generalizable principles and protocols that seek to combine consistent guidelines with flexibility over indicators and metrics. These put premium on understanding the processes and pathways through which outcomes and impacts are produced. However, even the most-recently proposed frameworks are still being developed from a largely positivist perspective. Furthermore, the issues of attribution and causality, which are difficult issues to handle generally in social innovation assessment,<sup>20</sup> are especially problematic when lines of influence may be long, complex and indirect and when outcomes are influenced by multiple factors and interactions among these, as is likely to apply when concern is for transformative societal change (Earl et al. 2001).

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<sup>20</sup> The difficulty arises, inter alia, because social sector impacts can be caused by multiple factors and actors and the precise contribution of a particular activity to an outcome and impact may not be separable.

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Policymakers, researchers and social innovators interested in whether and how bottom-up social innovations might contribute to positive societal-level change and in understanding how any such contribution might be maximised have a yet different concern from those that are typically addressed within the established evaluation paradigm that is focussed on what has been achieved. The question of *how to enlarge positive impacts* requires an approach to evaluation that is very different from the approaches developed under a positivist perspective that seek evidence in relation to pre-specified cause-effect links and chains. Whereas in a traditional impact assessment the focus is on measurement of outcomes and attribution, developmental evaluation uses monitoring to obtain new data and understandings about the complex dynamics behind positive outcomes and reasons for failure, with the help of stories of success and failure in combination with a look at data.

To us, all methods have positive value but also limitations. For measuring what has been achieved, SRIO is a useful method. For fostering innovation and improvement of social innovation, Developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011) and Dynamic evaluation (Kieboom and Vahl, 2014) are useful methods. There is also value in combining methods. We propose that SRIO pays more attention to the stories of people involved (those helped by a SII and the professionals in providing the help in the case of help services), to explain to outside people *what the SI is about* and for understanding better causal-effects links. Monitoring should be fit for purpose and maximum efforts should be undertaken to make it so. Action research can be used to find useful ways of monitoring, as shown by the experiences of the eco-localisation project of Kersty Hobson and co-workers (Hobson et al., 2016). In action-based forms of evaluation, such as developmental evaluation, evaluators do not take distance but immerse themselves in contextual specifics, they “co-create interpretations and arguments, examine the evidence and reason together” (Patton, 2011, p. 287). Focussing on only those factors that can be measured (as happens in randomised controlled trials), may keep from view essential factors and processes that link causes to effects.

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## 2.13 Appendix

Network	Social innovation initiative	Monitoring element	Process and impact
DESIS	Creation of Sustainability Report by Study Center of Design & Technology (CedTec/DESIS LAB), for the State University of Minas Gerais in Brazil for the year 2011.	<b>Sustainability report.</b> The report was prepared following the guidelines of the GRI - Global Reporting Initiative.	The report was created despite absence of support from the University. One-off affair.
Impact Hub	Incubation and acceleration programme for entrepreneurs	<b>Social impact analysis</b> is part of the programme	Source of income for the IH Incubation Center in Vienna.
Transition Town	Creation of Impact matrix in TT Tooting which was considered useful for professionalizing and for making funding bids.	<b>Impact matrix</b>	The impact matrix was a result of discussions during the “Visions and Pathways” day
DESIS	educational food activities in schools located in the poorest neighbourhoods of the city of Aveiro In Portugal	A didactic game where students (from the 1st to 4th year) follow a storytelling process and <b>keep record</b> of their meals in a diary.	One-time event involving 5 schools. Discontinued because of lack of (public) funding
iMinds	New structure for the Living Lab Unit in the IMinds platform thanks to a positive impacts evaluation and a merger with imec	<b>Impact evaluation</b> (of the living lab by two external organisations)	The impact evaluation took away negative views on the value of Living Labs and facilitated a merger with imec, a nanotech research center
GovLab	Evaluation of the Co-Bologna project by independent researchers	Survey questionnaire	The evaluation is not completed, but the agreement to be evaluated signaled openness to innovation and to learning to the Municipality of Bologna
Living Labs	Application for ISO 9001 quality certificate for the management system of ReGIM Lab	Compliance with ISO 9001 which involves (survey-based) bi-yearly <b>client satisfaction analysis</b>	Acquiring the ISO certification provided the Living Lab unit of ReGIM Lab with national and international recognition and allowed it to become part of the European Network of Living Labs
Budget monitoring	Letting go of the human rights elements in workshops about budget monitoring organized	Human rights as an <b>evaluative element</b> was being removed or	The effect was a watered down version of budget monitoring fitting with the

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	by the Centre for Budget Monitoring and Citizen Participation (CBB)	downplayed	demands of municipalities
Budget Monitoring	Revoking of policymaking and budget authority of districts by the City of Amsterdam.	More <b>centralized budget information</b>	Districts lost budget authority and a district level budget with it

Source: Jørgensen et al. (2015)