

Social Innovation – Learning from Multinational Collaboration

Trans-Atlantic Platform

Online Conference 16th-17th November 2022 –
Abstracts of the Multinational and Trans-Atlantic Research Projects

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1. COLLABORATION – Collaboration for Social Innovation: Scaling for Impact

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Project duration:
January 2020 – August 2023

Link:
<https://www.nwo.nl/en/projects/46318270>

Funders Involved:
NWO, BMBF/DLR-PT, SSHRC

Abstract

Our project aims to provide a better understanding of the possibilities, limits, and tensions of scaling social innovations. We provide a particular emphasis on different organizational means of scaling social innovation (e.g. through growth and replication). We also examine the abilities and tactics that can help organizations scaling social innovation (i.e. social enterprise capabilities and social movements' community building strategies).

First, we pay attention to intra-organizational factors influencing the scalability of social innovation through organizational growth. At the intra-organizational level, we identify cost-related barriers and enabling factors related to scaling in microfinance organizations. Our insights help to illustrate the difficulty of spreading social innovation through organizational growth and point to strategies that can help to mitigate potential cost-disadvantages.

Second, in addition to examining barriers to organizational growth, our project examines enablers of replication across communities. Our project studies how community-based enterprises (CBEs) can achieve impact across varying contexts. Rather than individually, CBEs in their aggregate can help to scale social innovations, one community at a time. We examine how different configurations of local conditions support the diffusion of CBEs across communities. Our preliminary insights highlight the relevance of a combination of both social- and business environment conditions that enable replication.

In addition to examining the different organizational means of scaling social innovation, we also look at the capabilities and tactics adopted by specific organizations to grow. First, through a literature review, we identify the capabilities developed by social enterprises to gain scale. Second, through an ethnographic study of a social movement promoting local food, we identify the strategies adopted by social movements to build community and advance a market for socially innovative products.

By studying these factors, we expect to help entrepreneurs and policymakers to identify the types of approaches and incentives that they can adopt to advance social innovation.

2. SOCIAL INNOVATION IN MULTINATIONALS – Social Innovation Processes in and around Multinational Companies: The Role of Social Activists and their Transnational Networks

Abstract

Our project has addressed social innovation processes within and around multinational companies to address inequality. With their cross-border mobilisation of technologies and relentless search for skills, markets and cost savings, multinationals can be drivers of inequality. However, some countervailing evidence has pointed to some multinationals engaging in initiatives to address economic and social issues.

This project looks at social innovation initiatives on inequality carried out by actors within multinational companies in interaction with civil society and government stakeholders in different industry, community and national contexts. It has focused on three developed economies (Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom) and two emerging economies (Brazil, Mexico). The multidisciplinary research team in these countries has examined the nature of these innovations and whether and how they are scaled-up and diffused beyond the boundaries of national institutional systems. The initiatives that we have researched consist of a wide range of types, including disability inclusion, the mechanisms and resources that social enterprises require to flourish, human trafficking, core labour rights, sustainable finance and the actions that are sometimes taken to address the marginalisation of migrants and indigenous peoples.

The project has investigated the different types of social activists who instigate, spread and sustain such social innovations, the resources and social skills they deploy, and the level of social reach and impact they attain. We have adopted a lens to look at social innovation initiatives as bottom-up and co-constructed by a variety of private firm and community actors, with a focus on the conditions under which such innovations might be scaled up to provide broader solutions

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Project duration:
January 2020 – December 2023

Link:
<https://socialinnovationresearch.com/about>

Funders Involved:
ESRC, NWO, SSHRC

to problems of inequality and inclusive growth. The findings will enable policymakers, multinational managers and community activists to develop policy recommendations to promote diversity and social inclusion and will highlight the conditions and practices conducive to the scaling-up and dissemination of social innovation initiatives on inequality.

3. uVITAL-Valued Innovations for Social Housing Upgrading through Trans-Atlantic Living Labs

Lead Principal Investigator:
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Project duration:
January 2020 – December 2022

Link:
<http://www.fecfau.unicamp.br/~uvital/>

Funders Involved:
BMBF/DLR-PT, ESRC, FAPESP, NWO

participatory design processes are considered essential for political, social, economic and environmental reasons. Importance should be given to user values in upgrading processes. The concept of Living Labs (LLs) can be applied in such processes to enable collaboration between stakeholders and solve complex problems. Our research involved four countries Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK where LLs were developed as case studies that applied different tools in specific contexts. The research project was affected by the pandemic. Methods and tools were modified to attend to imposed restrictions. Our primary research goals for our research are to evaluate the LL concept in diverse contexts and develop a protocol to solve dilemmas and conflicts in participatory processes as social innovation. Results of this collaborative research will be presented in the form of videos of phases of the four case studies. Challenges of stakeholder engagement are shown. Complexities of refurbishment interventions are detailed and the social innovations produced are described through the application of various participatory tools to visualise and understand upgrading proposals.

Abstract

Social Housing (SH) debates mostly focus on new buildings, and research on upgrading the existing stock is scarce. Upgrading has positive social, health and financial outcomes for low-income populations and promotes environmental sustainability. Upgrading processes involve multiple stakeholders such as end-users, housing and construction companies, design professionals, and the public sector who have specific, at times, conflicting needs and interests. SH upgrading processes demand reflection on new social norms, community and individual desires, as well as construction and information technology trends. In developed countries, top-down legislation mandates refurbishment to attain energy efficiency. In developing countries, the general low construction standards exert upgrading pressures expressed through bottom-up transformations of homes. In both cases,

4. SPIN – Social Pharmaceutical Innovation for Unmet Medical Needs

Abstract

Rare diseases are associated with difficulties in addressing unmet medical needs, lack of access to treatment, high prices, evidentiary mismatch, equity, etc. While challenges facing the development of drugs for rare diseases are experienced differently globally (i.e., higher vs. lower and middle income countries), many are also expressed transnationally, which suggests systemic issues. Pharmaceutical innovation is highly regulated and institutionalized, leading to firmly established innovation pathways. While deviating from these innovation pathways is difficult, we take the position that doing so is of critical importance because the current model of pharmaceutical innovation alone will not deliver the quantity of products needed to address the unmet needs faced by rare disease patients, nor at a price point that is sustainable for healthcare systems. In light of the problems in rare diseases, we hold that re-thinking innovation is crucial and more room should be provided for alternative innovation pathways. Our project observes a significant number and variety of new types of initiatives in the rare diseases field that propose or use alternative pharmaceutical innovation pathways which have in common that they involve a diverse set of societal stakeholders, explicitly address a higher societal goal, or both. Our project draws on principles of social innovation in the framing and articulation of such alternative pathways, which we term social pharmaceutical innovation (SPIN), and argues that they should be given more room for development. As an interdisciplinary research team in the social sciences, public health and law the cases of SPIN we investigate are spread transnationally and range across the pharmaceutical R&D life-cycle from new forms of partnership and collaboration, to alternative forms of manufacturing and licensing, and emerging modes of coverage and reimbursement. We do this to develop a better understanding of SPIN's breadth and to advance changes ranging from the bedside to

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Project duration:
March 2020 – May 2023

Link:
<https://www.socialpharmaceuticalinnovation.org/>

Funders Involved:
ANR, FAPESP, NWO, SSHRC

the system levels. We seek collaborations with those working in such projects, we add comparative and evaluative value to SPIN initiatives, and we are organizing an outreach event on SPIN on March 9th and 10th 2023 in Utrecht to ignite further interest in these initiatives thereby actively contributing to them as a part of our work.

5. SIMBIO – New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research: Social Innovation Management for BIOPlastics

Lead Principal Investigator:
Simon Fraser University, Canada

Principal Investigators:
Coventry University, United Kingdom
University of Lodz, Poland
SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland
Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil

Project duration:
December 2019 – December 2022

Link:
www.simbioresearch.com

Funders Involved:
SSHRC, ESRC, NCBR, FAPESP

A total of 100 key informant interviews took place in all four countries between February 2020 and June 2021. The interviews drew upon the expertise of stakeholders representing diverse sectors of the food supply chain who are impacted by the production, use, and end-of-life management of food packaging. Following the interviews, we held three social innovation lab workshops: 1) „Seeing the System“ (developing a common understanding of key issues related to bioplastics); 2) „Designing Solutions“ (identify potential social innovation solutions), and 3) „Prototyping Solutions.“ Workshops were held online or in a hybrid format between October 2020 and June 2022 with approximately 20 to 30 stakeholders per workshop in each country participating.

Findings from the key informant interviews and workshops indicated similar challenges and opportunities for bioplastic food packaging across the four countries. While some countries are far more advanced in bio-plastics adoption than others, common themes included gaps in infrastructure to manage the waste down-stream and challenges around regulatory issues. Many jurisdictions in the four countries do not have the processing facilities for bioplastics at end-of-life so they often end up at disposal facilities. Bioplastics are not regulated in any of the four countries, which causes confusion and contamination of recycling and compostable waste streams. Recommendations from the study include more robust certification standards and labelling, education on bioplastic packaging, and developing bioplastic products/markets that takes into account a circular economy approach.

Abstract

Bioplastic food packaging is gaining traction as a circular alternative to address the growing threat of plastic pollution. However, bioplastics present their own complex challenges to sustainability across their lifecycle and may complicate sustainable waste management practices. Addressing a global problem such as single use plastic pollution requires a systems and interdisciplinary approach. The Social Innovation Management for Bioplastics (SIMBIO) project applied a social innovation lab method in Brazil, Canada, Poland, and the United Kingdom, to explore the challenges and opportunities, as well as the role of bioplastic food packaging in a circular economy. In this collaborative project, each country followed a similar approach to social innovation that included key informant interviews and a series of three workshops.

6. DATAS – Documenting Africans in Trans-Atlantic Slavery

Abstract

“Documenting Africans in Trans-Atlantic Slavery (DATAS)” (www.datasproject.org) develops an innovative method to explore African ethnonyms from the era of trans-Atlantic slavery, circa 1500-1867. Ethnonyms index African identities, places and historical events to reconstruct African culture that is linked to a history of slavery, colonialism and racism. The construction of an ethnonym vocabulary based on contemporary terminology and attribution was a major focus of database construction. The identification of ethnonyms is embedded in the project on Freedom Narratives, supported by Walk With Web, and linked to the scholarly literature on interpretations of ethnicity in Global Africa. Because of the Covid epidemic, our original plans had to adjust. Explaining what has been achieved is the subject of our presentation.

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University of Essex, United Kingdom

Project duration:
January 2022 – December 2023

Link:
<https://documentingafricans.blogspot.com/p/direction.html>

Funders Involved:
SSHRC, FRQSC, ANR, AHRC

7. XAVANTE – Colonization of the Sacred Places of the Xavante Territory of Marãiwatsédé and São Marcos

Lead Principal Investigator:
Universidade Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP), Brazil

Principal Investigators:
University of Winnipeg, Canada
Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), Poland
Queen's University, Canada

Project duration:
2022 – December 2024

Link:
<https://lea.unifesp.br/en/research-project/xavante>

Funders Involved:
FAPESP, NCBR, SSHRC

Abstract

Since the beginning of colonization in Brazil and the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, indigenous societies have suffered extreme violence characterized by a continuous process of erasing their memory, history, and culture, which legitimized the loss of their rights. During the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985), the acceleration of socio-economic processes marked by new political conjectures deeply impacted the Xavante communities of Marãiwatsédé and São Marcos in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. Recently, the Bolsonaro government has destroyed important ancestral Xavante villages by constructing highways; even Xavante Sörepre Ancestral Village, considered to be the “mother village” of the Xavante territory for having been the center of political and geographic unity, as well as the diffusing pole of the various groups that would later populate the other regions of the Rio das Mortes, was demolished. The present research aims to carry out archaeological surveys of Xavante territory and linguistic studies of the memory of their sacred sites and their cultural importance in order to understand their cultural meaning and their territorial distribution. In doing so, the indigenous communities may reclaim the memory of their territory and sacred spaces. Firmly based in community participatory archaeology, this research project, guided by the members of the Xavante community, will examine strategies and provide guidelines for the maintenance of their traditional customs and culture.

8. WPC – Worlding Public Cultures: The Arts and Social Innovation

Abstract

Worlding Public Cultures: The Arts and Social Innovation aims to change public narratives about globalisation and its impact on public institutions and tell new stories from multiple regional perspectives about our transnationally and trans-culturally entangled presents and shared pasts, in order to imagine new ways of living together in the future. Ultimately, by conducting research on and with institutions of public culture, this project aims to create a vector or think tank of social innovation that impacts how the global is theorised and practiced in institutions. The project will make concrete recommendations for the education and museum sectors and contribute to the creation of a more resilient society with more elastic models of social cohesion through changes in public discourse.

This presentation will outline how Worlding Public Cultures articulates worlding as a way to theorize better forms of social innovation, especially within the framework of changing polities and publics in diverse civil societies. Worlding understands the global as actively co-produced from multiple and complex locales, in contrast to dominant discourses and practices rooted in ideas of the global as a passive effect of global capitalism.

The presentation will report on the progress of the project to date by reporting on the academies, gatherings and assemblies in which artists, academics, activists, museum professionals and early career researchers came together to debate the project's core questions framed from worlded but regional perspectives in collaboration with host public institutions: "Worlding the Global: The Arts in the Age of Decolonisation" with the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; "Consent not to be a single being: Worlding Through the Caribbean" in London with Tate Modern; "Letting go of having to speak!" in Amster-

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Project duration:
January 2020 – December 2023

Link:
<https://www.worldingcultures.org/>

Funders Involved:
BMBF/DLR-PT, ESRC, NWO, SSHRC and FRQSC

dam with the National Museum of World Cultures in Amsterdam and "Lessons Learned: Transcultural Perspectives in Pedagogies and Curating" with the State Art Museums in Dresden and the forthcoming assembly in Montreal. The presentation will also share updates on the planned chapbook publication series and ongoing thematic research clusters: Relationality and Repair, Pluriversal Ways of Knowing, Worlding Data Ontologies, Curating (in) Crisis and Instituting Otherwise.

9. ADVOST – Socially Innovative Interventions to Foster and to Advance Young Children’s Inclusion and Agency in Society through Voice and Story

Lead Principal Investigator:
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Principal Investigators:
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Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

Project duration:
January 2020 – February 2023

Link:
<https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Webpages/Teacher-Education-for-Social-Justice-and-Diversity/Projects/ADVOST>

Funders Involved:
AKA, ESRC, SSHRC

In Finland, the study concentrated on developing pedagogical innovations in Sami language online classes for small children. The aim was to apply Sami pedagogical approaches, such as land-based education and story-telling in online teaching. The findings indicated that it is possible to transform online language classes to support children’s active agency and voice in an enlarged collaboration when teachers’ expertise is supported. However, challenges remain with the status, support and practical organization of the classes.

In Canada, the project focused on diverse perspectives from marginalized, indigenous, and immigrant populations through processes that utilized artistic, visual and digital forms to enhance children’s voices. Research findings indicated that professional learning opportunities for teachers to work alongside artists introduced new pedagogical tools to re-envision curriculum in ways for enhanced children’s voices and agency in classrooms. The enhancement of children’s voice and agency was deeply dependent on the teachers building of relationships, trust, and empowerment in classrooms.

Abstract

In close cooperation with practitioners, the project has taken into practice theoretical guiding principles for facilitating and enhancing young children’s voices in specific contexts with children from indigenous, diverse ethical and cultural backgrounds in Finland, Canada and the UK. Young children are often regarded as limited members within their communities. This is especially the case with children from non-mainstream communities, where becoming a full member might also mean to become a mainstream citizen, meaning simultaneously compromising identity, culture and language. A community-base, comparative multi-case study approach was used to ensure listening and hearing children’s voices in their own contexts.

In the UK, the study sought to provide a deeper understanding of how teachers were using pedagogical approaches to facilitate the voices and agency of young children in ways that valued the cultural diversity they bring to the classroom. The findings indicate three key factors to the successful use of voice and agency as pedagogical tools – trust, time and space. Pedagogical decision making related to time and space for voice and agency required teachers to be flexible and adaptable. Additionally, trust between school management, classroom practitioners and students was necessary for voice and agency to be effectively implemented.

10. SEEYouth – Social Innovation through Participatory Art and Design with Youth at the Margins: Solutions for Engaging and Empowering Youth with Trans-Atlantic Mirroring

Abstract

Between 2019 and 2021, the SEEYouth project responded to the societal challenge of marginalisation of youth and young adults by deliberately focusing on cases on both sides of the Atlantic: homeless and refugee young adults in Brazil, and youth with refugee or immigrant background in Finland a reflecting on its severity in the global South and seriousness in the global North. The project's research questions addressed ways in which new knowledge and social innovation can be created to improve youth's well-being through arts-based research and participatory art and design and its core objectives were to develop new methods, models and social innovation policy that support youth agency and prevent their marginalisation, and, through this, generate new knowledge and innovative methodologies for use in the social sciences and the humanities.

Our presentation will identify and discuss the eight key recommendations which have resulted from the research, and which range from a need for adhering to principles of trust when undertaking participatory research to empower marginalised youth; the development of a situational conceptual framework at the intersection of acts of ,encounter' and those of ,resistance' and, in particular, we will explore a model of ,mirroring' which has formed the basis of a many of our conceptual and practical approaches.

The 'mirroring' method was developed and utilised to further our understanding of the complex socio-economic challenges faced by marginalised young people and deliberately made use of arts-based methods to generate innovative solutions and, significantly, as the basis of a dialogical tool which allowed for borders to be traversed in particular ways. At the basis of this dialogue are moments of mutually-beneficial ex-

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Project duration:
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Link:
<https://seeyouth.substack.com/>

Funders Involved:
AKA, ESRC, FAPESP, SSHRC and FRQSC

change (or ,correspondence') which underpins much of our project's activities and facilitates how we have considered impact.

Given the arts-based methodological approaches and design-led tools at the heart of the project, our presentation will look to illustrate meaningful instances of Trans-Atlantic Mirroring by way of key visual examples from the work produced by young participants, through the documentation and dissemination of the range of materials produced both through and from the research.

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