InnoSocial

Mainstreaming Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

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Stakeholder Discussion Panel Report

University of Pavia

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REPORT

WP2.A3 Stakeholder Discussion Panels

1. General information about the event

1.1	Partner organization(s) hosting the event: University of Pavia
1.2	Date of the event: 23/06/23
1.3	Number of participants: 10
1.4	Participants' profiles:

Internal stakeholders	Number
University's faculty	
Management and administrative staff	3
Senior students	6
Other, please specify:	
External stakeholders	Number
Industry and business	
Non-profits and non-formal community groups	
Public bodies and policy makers	
Grassroots innovators	
Social entrepreneurs	
External experts in the field of II & SE	1
Other, please specify:	

2. Event results

2.1	Please, briefly describe your event.
	The event was conducting in a friendly and open atmosphere, where opinions and points of view were exchanged freely. The interaction benefited. Further, the discussion allowed to go deeper into the topics under investigation, with a further question asked by the moderator for question no. 4 to more in detail shed light on methodologies scaffolding II&SE.
	The insights provided were interesting and addressed many areas.
2.2	1. Do you have experience with Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship? (e.g. teaching these disciplines/ topics, consulting in these fields, running a social enterprise, developing innovations for groups of people that are at risk of exclusion, etc.).

The feedback on the toolkit have been obtained mainly from senior students, from some academic staff and an external expert. All the people had at least little experience with the topic.

In particular, one of the participants was a senior student enrolled in a double degree programme between the University of Pavia and the University of Dresden, shared he already approached the topic of II&SE within a course named "Corporate Sustainability", held at the Technical University of Dresden. In the course, a couple of lectures were dedicated to sustainable social entrepreneurship in particular. He is aware that II&SE implies launching entrepreneurial start-ups embedded in the aim of generating social value and impact, especially for marginalized groups.

Another participant was a PhD student at the University of Pavia and Bergamo and she researches mainly in the field of corporate non-financial disclosure and its transparency. She knows II&SE too because she obtained the certificate issued by CEPAS as impact evaluator, which concentrates on evaluating social impact.

2. How relevant is Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship for economic and social development?

Inclusive innovation is pointed at as particularly relevant in light of the recent worldwide increase in the gap between the wealthiest and the poor. II enters this debate as it can cater for the needs of those groups that are marginalized or somehow excluded from economic growth by providing highly promising innovative solutions.

When it comes to social innovation, participants evidence its relevance originates from the awareness that capitalism is no longer sufficient alone to satisfy society's needs. There is a need for rethinking and redesigning the way of doing business in a way new ventures can increase the life quality of stakeholders (e.g., work-life-balance, air quality).

Informing people about the possibility of carrying out II&SE is extremely meaningful to enable them to possibly take part in it and come into contact with already running social businesses that provide concrete solutions. It is also important to inform people that II&SE is not restrained to charity. Besides, one participant stresses that II&SE might inspire and stimulate students from a human perspective.

Moreover, participants agree that spotlighting the social component contributes to having a more complete overview of sustainability, since more attention has been drawn so far to the environmental dimension, with the social one remaining overshadowed.

Furthermore, it is mentioned that II&SE can serve as a tool to build bridges between generations. On the one hand, different age groups can be brought together though II&SE projects. One participant refers to an entrepreneurial competition held at the University of Pavia in which students had to support a start-up whose core business was matching elderly people with younger ones to keep company to the former. On the other hand, new generations are more and more aware of social sustainability and force companies to respond to their needs in that field.

Lastly, one participant highlights that it is pivotal to dedicate attention to how the social impact generated by II&SE can be measured and assessed. This is the real challenge. For instance, measuring work-life balance is extremely subjective and, as other social dimensions, requires objective metrics.

3. **How could it be embedded in higher education? (e.g. as a mandatory or elective course, as part of existing courses; as a non-formal training in business incubators, innovation hubs, etc.) Which option do you find more feasible and appropriate in our context? [i.e. in the context of partners' countries and partner HEIs]?**

Participants agree that dedicating a whole curriculum to II&SE would not attract many students due to the fact the social component of sustainability lags behind in comparison to its environmental counterpart, as previously stressed. As a consequence, II&SE dedicated curricula can result less appealing. Dedicated curricula might be more effective when the target groups are professionals already active in the field of II&SE that want to fine-tune their skills after years of experience.
For these reasons, introducing a specific II&SE course within a curriculum already addressing sustainability as a whole is pointed out as the best option. Further ideas to attract students can encompass time-constrained intensive initiatives, such as summer schools or entrepreneurial competitions launched by the University that focus on social entrepreneurship. By participating to these projects, students can acquire more generic skills related to entrepreneurship, as well as those skills more connected to II&SE.

4. **What are the most important elements of content and the most appropriate instructional approach to teaching Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship?**

Practical, field-oriented learning methodologies are deemed by participants as the most promising ones. Hackatons are mentioned with the aim of supporting students in coming up with their ideas, whereas case-studies are referred to as methods to present which II&SE projects or ventures already exist and how they operate.
One participant outlines service-learning can make students experience the needs of their community and develop an attachment not only to social issues in general, but especially to those rooted in their contexts.
Lastly, participants stress that the methodology should be picked up taking into account the targeted learning outcomes, the time of the course and the resources available.

The moderator further enhanced the discussion by asking for the participants' opinions regarding meetings with guest-speakers and on-site visits at corporate headquarters. Participants agree that these kinds of experiences are pivotal to provide a concrete overview of what II&SE means, and that they are largely enriching, since after academic studies such opportunities rarely come up again. Though, one participant warns that these meetings should have a specific focus and that students' involvement through questions or other methods is to be minded to exploit their full potential.

5. **How could different stakeholder groups participate in design and delivery of education and training in the field of Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship? What could be a stakeholder engagement strategy?**

Participants address local and institutional authorities – they have rich and extended datasets regarding population groups most in needs – as those stakeholders that cannot be left apart when teaching II&SE or launching social ventures. However, the actual involvement of local authorities can entail administrative and time trade-offs. Further, not-for-profit entities are mentioned as important stakeholders; though, it is important to highlight that these are not the only ones having a social impact, since II&SE projects or ventures also serve the community, but come with economic returns beyond that.

6. Do you have any further ideas on how to improve the InnoSocial Toolkit for design and delivery of II&SE education / What other aspect of II&SE education could be considered?

No new ideas are mentioned. Remarkably, participants pinpoint that having discussion panels offering the possibility of exchanging ideas among stakeholders – e.g., professors, staff, students – highly benefits the introduction of new modules. Taking everyone's perspective and hints into account clearly improves the outcome.

Thank you!

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