Stakeholder profiles for Social innovation education

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Introduction

Joining the Pact for Skills on Proximity and Social Economy, the European Social Innovation Campus (ESIC) contributes to the challenge of the upskilling and reskilling of 5% of the workforce and entrepreneurs of the sector each year to tackle the green and digital transitions in the social economy by boosting social innovation capacities.

The Alliance brings together higher education and vocational education and training, social economy organizations and enterprises from several European countries as well as European level actors.

Drawing on evidence regarding the skills needs of occupational profiles, the Alliance boosts the provision of new skills and addresses skills mismatches by creating a new general Core Curriculum for the social economy and curricula to different EQF levels.

The Alliance designs and delivers transnational education and training content, as well as co-produce teaching and training methodologies for quick uptake of the contents at regional and local levels and for emerging occupational profiles.

In addition, the project will establish a strong communication and dissemination network, promoting the social economy sector as a career choice and supporting the development of a sense of initiative and entrepreneurial mind-sets in the EU.

Executive Summary

This second skills monitor report of the European Innovation Campus project discusses the ten relevant stakeholder profiles for social innovation education. These findings are based on data analysis of 69 interviews and 34 focus groups. 289 stakeholders were involved in these discussions, including entrepreneurs, managers, intrapreneurs, government officials, researchers, coaches, network leaders, educators, and funders, all involved in social innovation throughout nine countries: Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Romania, Spain, and Ukraine. Furthermore, relevant literature on social innovation was included to corroborate the need for social innovation education.

The study led to the following conclusions:

- Social innovation education is often limited to social entrepreneurship education. While social entrepreneurship is undeniably relevant for social innovation, **social innovation needs more than capable social entrepreneurs.** All stakeholders should have the capacity to support and/or perform social innovation.
- Social innovation education should exist for the following **stakeholder profiles**: citizens, for-profit businesses, government, involved employees, non-governmental funding organisations, schools, social economy organisations, social innovation managers, support organisations, and universities.
- Each of these profiles is described in this report as: what their contribution is to social innovation, and what their activities are to deliver these contributions.
- The results did not show a need for novel occupational profiles. Rather, **for each stakeholder, relevant profiles from the ESCO database are shown. These profiles have to be updated and applied towards social innovation,** as the social dimension of social innovation provides challenges which are not met in general innovation processes. Furthermore, general innovation jargon does not always speak to people interested in social innovation.

This skills monitor is based on an academic article still in progress. As the article is published, the source website (socialinnovationcampus.com) will be updated to refer to the article.

Table of Content

The Need for Social Innovation Education

Based on academic literature, we find there are two approaches to social innovation education:

Social Innovation as Social Entrepreneurship	Social Innovation as systemic change
In this view ● social innovation is seen as a competence of social entrepreneurship, or; ● social innovation is an outcome of social entrepreneurship, or; ● social innovation is equal to social entrepreneurship, and; ● Examples of social innovations are limited to products and services for the social good generated through social entrepreneurship.	In this view ● social innovation happens at the macro-level and requires the restructuring of society, and; ● social innovation can be initiated by any stakeholder, not only social entrepreneurs, and; ● Examples of social innovations include many activities with a social outcome, like policy design, funding mechanisms, or social movements.

The first view frames social innovation as a part of, or equal to, social entrepreneurship. In this case, social innovation education actually focuses on innovation competencies for future social entrepreneurs. The second view emphasises that multiple stakeholders should join the social innovation process and collaborate with product and service innovators to change institutions. In this view, social innovation education prepares students to support social innovation in different career paths. While the first view is dominant in literature and practice, we support the second view of social innovation education. Literature and the many stakeholders consulted in our project indicate that social innovation is a multi-stakeholder process requiring the collaboration of all actors in society to be successful. This indicates that **there is a need for social innovation educational programs aimed at a diverse array of stakeholders and activities,** instead of focusing social innovation courses on entrepreneurial processes**.**

We research how stakeholders support social innovation. In our analysis, we identified:

- Which stakeholders support social innovation?
- What contribution they have to social innovation;
- Through which activities they actualise these contributions;
- Which relevant occupational profiles exist in the ESCO database for these stakeholders?
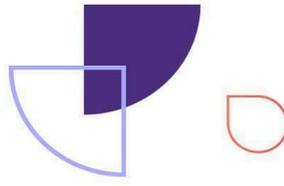
Methodology

From January to July 2024, the ESIC consortium organised 69 interviews and 34 focus groups. In total, we reached out to 271 stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, government employees, support organisations, educators, funders, corporates, non-profit organisations and experts active in the field of social innovation.

For the interviews, we had four different protocols for semi-structured interviews with common main sections and different secondary sections to provide more relevant questions for different stakeholder types. For the focus groups we provided four protocols with different topics per focus group. The interview data consisted of over 70 hours of recording and 1.149 pages of transcripts. The focus group data consisted of almost 70 hours of recording and 720 pages (A4) of transcriptions.

After an exploratory stage, the data were coded into:

- Stakeholder type
- Dynamic capability
- Activity

Stakeholder types were initially coded as belonging to categories of the quintuple helix. Still, after iterative analysis, we created a more specific categorisation based on the contributions and activities of the stakeholders.

While participants discussed how social innovation stakeholders support each other in social innovation, we looked for a theoretical framework to help analyse this support. Based on a conceptual match with the purpose of our study, we decided on the Taxonomy of Dynamic Capabilities (Leemann & Kanbach, 2021). What competencies are for people, capabilities are for organisations. These dynamic capabilities describe which abilities an organisation should have in order to perform or support social innovation. By using dynamic capabilities as an outcome of stakeholder activities, we can describe how stakeholders contribute to the social innovation process.

Table SEQ Table * ARABIC 1. Overview of dynamic capabilities (Leemann & Kanbach 2021)

Civil society		
SENSING	SEIZING	TRANSFORMING
Experimenting	Acquiring and leveraging of resources	(Re)structuring the organization
Institutionalizing idea generation	Building and adapting business models	Acquiring and circulating knowledge
Networking and exchanging with stakeholders	Defining strategies and tactics	Adapting processes and support functions
Recognizing valuable resources	Entering new markets and technologies	Changing business culture
Screening opportunities and risks	Joint venturing and partnering	Disposing and reducing resources
	Shaping ecosystems and markets	Reconfiguring of internal and external resources
	Structuring evaluation and decision-making	Top management commitment

To identify activities, we iteratively labelled and clustered activities for different stakeholder types, providing an overview of how different stakeholders contribute to social innovation.

The ESCO profiles are added by comparing participant profiles and keywords in the stakeholder descriptions with the ESCO database.

Stakeholder roles in social innovation

To highlight which roles stakeholders play in social innovation, we describe how different stakeholders contribute to the dynamic capabilities of social innovators.

We identified 10 relevant stakeholders for social innovation education: Non-governmental funding organisations, for-profit businesses, support organisations, social economy organisations, citizens, government, schools, universities, involved employees, and social innovation managers.

In our analysis, we note that fundamentally new occupational profiles are not emerging. Rather, existing profiles should be "upgraded" to gain a social dimension. For this reason, we look at relevant ESCO occupational profiles for each stakeholder category. Each of these profiles can benefit from an adjustment or specialisation towards social innovation. For inspiration on which competencies should be included in this novel orientation, we refer to our competency framework of our first skills monitor report on socialinnovationcampus.eu.

Below is a summary of the activities, dynamic capabilities and responsibilities key stakeholders take up in supporting social innovation, along with relevant occupational profiles from the ESCO database. A more detailed description of dynamic capabilities will be provided in the academic publication accompanying this report (in progress).

Citizens

- Recognise personal or community-level needs and take action. Actions include petitioning local governments, voluntary services, philanthropic funding or entrepreneurship.
- Be an active citizen and community leader, take part in co-creation processes and research.
- *ESCO profiles: social entrepreneur*

For-profit businesses

- Support scaling, providing social innovators access to specific technologies, market channels or funding which the business controls.
- Social procurement, be a "customer" of social innovation and co-create a market for socially responsible goods and services by implementing procurement guidelines that benefit social innovations.

- Supporting intrapreneurs by providing space for social intrapreneurship, businesses can gradually transform themselves to be more socially (and environmentally) responsible and become social innovators themselves.
- *ESCO profiles*: *marketing manager, innovation engineer, purchasing manager, corporate social responsibility manager, research and development manager, sustainability manager,* Intrapreneur, chief technology officer

Funding organisations (non-governmental)

- Provide diverse types of financial instruments tailored to social innovation. For example, loans, crowdfunding, donations, social impact bonds, etc.
- *ESCO profiles*: *bank manager, investment fund manager, sustainability manager,*

Government

- Provide diverse types of financial instruments tailored to social innovation. For example, subsidies, loans, social impact bonds, etc. In relation to policy and legislation.
- Develop policy and legislation aimed at supporting social innovation, specific sectors, specific needs, or different types of organisation models.
- Support networking, collaboration, and collective learning between all stakeholders involved in social innovation. Furthermore, in relation to policy, provide direction for the stakeholders to synchronise.
- Provide coaching and expertise through existing business support channels on topics of the full business start-up, scaling, consolidation and ending process.
- Stimulate impact measurement, improve learning not only on the organisational level, but also on the regional or national level. Experiment, but make informed choices on which social innovations to select and support in scaling.
- Social procurement, be a "customer" of social innovation and co-create a market for socially responsible goods and services by implementing procurement guidelines that benefit social innovations.
- *ESCO profiles*: *purchasing manager,* Fiscalist, budgeting, procurement, policy development

Schools

- Teach social innovation competencies to students.
- Work together with social innovators in education programmes. Let students go out and gain first-hand experience on social innovation. But also bring social innovation in the school by including social innovators as guest lecturers and using social innovation cases in courses.
- *ESCO profiles*: 23 teaching professionals

Social economy organisations

- Sensing society's needs and generating answers to these needs in diverse forms like products, services, campaigns and so on.
- Seizing opportunities to bring these answers to life and support their existence as long as necessary.
- Transforming the organisation to evolve along with changing needs and context.
- *ESCO profiles*:

Social economy support organisations

- Connect social innovators and other stakeholders, collect insights and disperse them.
- Advise on policy development through lobbying and advocacy.
- Make opportunities for funding, expertise, network and other resources more accessible.
- Provide general services for members: coaching, consultancy, workshops, …
- *ESCO profiles*: *coach, stakeholder manager, legal, communication*

Universities

- Research needs, opportunities and best practices for social innovation.
- Leverage expertise by transferring intellectual property tailored to social innovation.
- Teach social innovation competencies to students and professionals.
- Support social innovators with impact measurement as applied research.
- *ESCO profiles*: *research and development manager,* 23 teaching professionals, IP manager, valorisation officer

Involved employees

- Be an expert in their own professional domain.
- Support the social innovation process of their colleagues by sharing information on target groups, joining idea generation, experimenting with new products and services, and helping in planning and strategising on social innovation.
- *ESCO profiles: all*

Social innovation manager

- Initiate and manage projects for social product and service development in collaboration with colleagues and partners.
- Support colleagues in developing social innovations through coaching and providing resources.
- Develop an organisational environment with policies, procedures, resources and culture for social innovation.
- Keep an overview of all social innovation activities and organise impact measurement and learning.
- Manage resources and partnerships for social innovation.
- Lead change processes of the organisation.
- *ESCO profiles: [innovation engineer](#), [operations manager](#), [social entrepreneur](#), [product development manager](#),*
- Different roles identified in the participant profiles and discussions:
    - Entrepreneur
    - Director/manager
    - Project manager
    - Coach

References

1. Leemann, N., & Kanbach, D. K. (2021). Toward a taxonomy of dynamic capabilities – a systematic literature review. *Management Research Review*, *45*(4), 486–501. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-01-2021-0066