



**Boosting social innovation in European Cities**  
**WELLBEING IN CITIES**  
**A SOCIAL INNOVATION REVOLUTION**

How municipalities can support social sustainability  
in local communities through social innovation



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# Preface

This is an input of the URBACT III Boosting Social Innovation Network into the Pan- European discussion on cities and social innovation. It is planned as a support for any city administration, however small or large, wanting to focus on and develop social innovation. This is not window dressing but a real evolution towards a co-created city.

Choose your chapters at will, you don't have to read everything. This text is charged with links if you want to go further. If you are just starting go to the Booster chapter, if you are already a fertile ground for innovators go to the Ecosystems chapter and if you want to get into impact measurement try the measurement chapter. Happy reading!

## **Fabio Sgaragli:**

The importance of social innovation lies mostly in the underlying assumption that the current model of social development is undergoing a massive crisis, both in terms of its sustainability and its capacity to deliver sense and equal prosperity to all. Social innovation represents a new and specific process for innovation through which alternative models of social development can be invented, prototyped, tested and scaled. The mission of social innovation is therefore to help us find a novel and shared ecosystem of interactions and interrelations based on an integrated approach to development, one that takes into account the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

In the context of the many papers, publications and final project reports on the fashionable topic of social innovation, the Boostinno project's final report "Wellbeing in cities: a social innovation revolution" is a welcome novelty.

Written as a smart guide for cities wanting to either start or grow a local ecosystem for social innovation, this online document is an easy-to-read manual with a variety of insights, examples and external references that make it useful and practical at the same time.



See more:

**Commentary by Fabio Sgaragli**  
**Boostinno Ad hoc expert**



# 0 INTRO



The URBACT “Boosting Social Innovation” network was co-constructed by 10 very large and medium cities (Braga (PO), Baia Mare (RO), Barcelona (ES), Gdansk (PL), Milan (IT), Paris (FR), Strasbourg (City and Europmetropole) (FR), Skane County (SE), Turin (IT), Wroclaw (PL)). Through the work done over three years, these cities have found, that social innovation is not just a trend, but could be qualified as **a fundamental change in the management of cities, in the management of impact and in the relations cities uphold and develop with their inhabitants**. Some would describe this change as equivalent to the industrial (steam and electricity) or the IT revolutions of the XX<sup>th</sup> and XXI<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Up until now, one of the basic assumptions of urban policy, was that the citizen will accept what is decided, planned and built. Recent years have shown that it is often **the citizens who are the makers of the city**, organising themselves, as says Manzini, in a collaborative perspective. Where this does not happen sufficiently, we are in a situation of social and often economic relegation and cities discover that they have whole areas at their doorstep which they have to regenerate. This is not just a territorial phenomenon, but one which touches the whole of our societies, because as G. Mulgan underlines, the redistribution of wealth, notwithstanding our collective hopes, has not happened, even due to the IT industry, which has mainly remained a closed bubble and has enriched only those who have managed to participate.

We would therefore like to propose a vision of the reality of 2018 on which the **Living Lab of ten cities** has worked very hard and which they want to continue as an ongoing process.



See more:

**Ezio Manzini: The making of collaborative cities**



## The new city: patterns and forms: a compendium of 4 professors work and thoughts

[Prof. M. Mazzucato, prof. E. Manzini, prof. M. Calderini, prof. J. Edler]

The Boosting Social Innovation network has come across some very substantial and innovative research about the cities of today and most of all of tomorrow. Statistics show us, that more than half of the planet's population will live in cities by 2050. The themes of the EU Urban Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have strongly influenced the work of the network. The composition, the DNA of cities is therefore key to the future of the planet, but also to the cities themselves. Many cities find themselves in crisis due to the disparities in life expectancy, wealth and well-being, especially in abandoned peripheries, and sometimes centres.

The main themes of our work – city and citizens, governance and policy making, spaces and impact measurement, are all referred to directly or indirectly in the work of these illustrious professors:

**Professor Mariana Mazzucato** says that the *raison d'être* of public authorities can no longer be just to “fill in the gaps” or “stop the leakages” in the bucket. They now can and should act with determined public purpose, creating new markets, giving value to what is important. The value in question refers not only to financial values, but also to social value, which improves wellbeing and creates the social cohesion necessary for communities to develop. She insists that it is the public side who is the innovator (Apple only put together what NASA and the US Ministry of Defence financed) and not the private sector.

This social value is seen by **Professor Ezio Manzini** as central to what human exchange is all about, as in the trading exchange, in which we all participate. It is the relationship with the other person which should be the most important. For Manzini, the observation of social innovation trends over the last ten years allow us to operate on the basis of lessons learnt:

1. the new forms of city life are “**built from inside**” as they are made by citizens and their projects.
2. cities act as **enabling ecosystems** creating environments where a variety of projects can thrive.
3. **active citizens** are now to be taken into account, not only as co-designers, and co-producers.  
Therefore the citizen becomes a social inventor, a social activist, a citizen of a new kind of normality → **transformative normality**.

Linked to the work done on impact measurement, **Professor Mario Calderini** shows that the impact investment market is challenged as it has to develop the demand side of structures, which have developed social innovation projects capable of being attractive for investors. Even though the new hybrid structures (blended social and financial return, management capacity and technology or competency intensive) are starting to flourish, it is the role of cities to foster conditions for the creation of new eco-systems where these social enterprises can evolve with a sufficient density. To achieve this all sorts of incubators and accelerators are necessary and it is the role of the public sector to nurture this approach. Finally he claims, that in the sphere of urban regeneration a **paradigmatic shift** is taking place. The value accorded to infrastructure can no longer be assessed through the hardware, but by the will of people to come to the area and invent their lives there. So investors and local authorities alike, must work on and think about the impact of the infrastructure on **the wellbeing of its inhabitants**.

**Professor Jakob Edler** underlines in his work, that public procurement, appropriately adapted to social innovation can have very positive results for the quality of the services and the development of local capacities, which are in line with the needs of the population. His analysis shows, that for the public sector the most important elements to encourage innovation are:

- innovation requirements in tenders,
- early interaction with the procuring organisation,
- outcome based specifications,
- advanced communication of future needs.

The conclusions for public institutions are that it is very important to encourage procurement networks in city regions and between cities. It is important to do “piggy backing” where a stronger local authority can carry through procedures for a smaller one, on the basis of existing know-how. The development of specialist buying organisations can be a key, as well as creating systems of leaders of buying within a given group of public authorities thereby creating the reality of Urban Functional Areas.



### **Social innovation in practice:**

As Mayor, politician, director of strategic development, economist, social worker do I need social innovation and what will my territory get out of it? We will try to answer this question in this innovative report, by describing a certain number of our experiences, which fully show how and why the above very simplified theories of our researchers, are confirmed in reality.

### **0. The overriding human factor.**

Citizens and civil servants and politicians as well as entrepreneurs, academics and activists are all human beings!

This unsurprising knowledge is largely ignored by most projects, strategies and operational programmes. However in the Boosting Social Innovation network we emphasize that without building, reinforcing and understanding the importance of human relations nothing can be achieved. Within the network it was only when the participants got to know each other that they started to really interact, to exchange and to work on a priori trust. The analysis of their structures shows that this aspect of co-construction and co-decision is central to the success of cities going forward and has a slowing down effect where it does not exist. This was strongly emphasised by the work done on the quality of relations through the sense mapping process.

In the ten partner cities there are many spaces dedicated to start-ups. Only in one of these spaces is there room for public servants. They need creativity as much as anyone in the private sector and these internal social innovations can really improve the way they work, think and succeed. These examples may seem unattainable to many, but they are full of surprises, as creativity and experimentation is not something which is simple to have and can almost not be bought; but it allows “institutional entrepreneurs”, as some call them, to develop social innovation within and around city halls as is shown in Turin’s new transfer network on this subject.

Managing social innovation in municipal structures requires spreading to all departments and has to irradiate **all levels of the decision making processes**. This will empower those civil servants who are closest to the inhabitants, to experiment and allow them to fail in certain circumstances. This acceptance of failure



should be worked out whilst identifying and sharing a theory of change, which has to include the idea that an innovation can be very original, but may not work, is not accepted or may cause too much disruption in other sectors.

## 1. Working with everybody - being a broker

A local authority was often the decider on many questions, based on the representative democracy that we all know and cherish. But we also know, that sometimes, well thought through decisions are refused by citizens, because of a lack of co-construction, co-ownership. In other words a lack of respect for their opinions. In Boosting Social Innovation we have been inspired by the “**Quadruple helix**”, which invites us to share the development of our territories not only between the private and public sectors and with the knowledge sector but also with citizens, not as experimental testers of policy, but as co-authors and sometimes inventors of solutions.

### **Quadruple Helix Innovation**

Government, Academia, Industry and Citizens collaborating together to drive structural changes far beyond the scope of any one organization could achieve on its own

Involve all stakeholders in quadruple helix to innovate and experiment in real world settings, in creating frictionless ecosystems



The knowledge sector can help a lot, bringing in the importance of design, market analysis, which should permit an easier decision making process. As states Manzini, the citizens are making the city from inside themselves.

The new role for public institutions, and especially local authorities fits in well to that of a **broker**. Each person, each department, the city hall as an administration and its partners have to move from a secure traditional ruling role, to a more convivial, uncertain, smaller comfort zone of a broker, who deals out the cards to different stakeholders, creating the potential for them to be coherent and to work together for the common good, creating commons and wellbeing in the community.

## 2. Booster.

If a public institution wants to develop social innovation, it has to act as a booster. This implies, on the basis of the experience of the network, creating spaces accessible to new projects as in Paris, cross fertilising experiences and ideas as in Gdansk, creating ecosystems and then adapting them to the evolving situation of Turin or influencing mainstream policy through such experimentations as civic crowdfunding in Milan. The process of boosting social innovation was very varied in the network's cities; some were very refined, others were just being created and in some cases it was just the beginning. Every city can start this process (see p. 18 on Booster).

## 3. Knowing what we are doing.

Many EU documents make reference to evaluation, impact measurement etc. In reality many cities do not have the real capacities to measure what they do and they continue to take decisions on the basis of impressions, political impulse or intuition. This network of large and medium sized cities thinks, that it is time to be able to base decisions on evidence. This process, accompanied by the specialist of impact from the UNDP SDG Impact Finance (UNSIF) Karl Richter, has evolved from impact measurement to impact management, putting the emphasis on knowing what we want to measure and on the process of decision making, which is a consequence of this knowledge.

## 4. From people to efficiency.

The Boosting Social Innovation cities think that social innovation is growing into a social revolution, based on the most positive aspect of human beings. Appreciating this and engaging it for the common good is the challenge the cities gave each other in Paris by signing the co-constructed "Call for action". We hope as cities that you will join us in this new exploration of the human kind, the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution.

# 1 CITY CHALLENGES

Urban challenges are well defined at European level and they constitute the EU Urban Agenda. They are common for all cities, independently of their size or geographical location.

Most of the 12 themes of the **Urban Agenda** are absolutely central to the work done in the Boosting Social Innovation network and constitute the reason to get involved in social innovation which produces multiple, integrated solutions.

Below you will find examples of urban actions of the 10 network cities, which show the **importance of social innovation in urban policies**. These examples do not represent a complete picture of the work done by these cities but are included to try to illustrate the importance of social innovation in urban policies today.





## Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees,



In Barcelona a very interesting example of social innovation is based on the main activity of newcomers, who often do not have formal documents. They occupied their time and tried to survive by collecting recuperable refuse. A local association created a social enterprise- cooperative Alencop, which employed these persons, who now receive a salary and have obtained professional equipment to do the same job in a structured way.



GDANSK

In Gdansk an integrated process of preparing all the partners for newcomers took over a year and a half with over 120 stakeholders. The Immigrant Integration Model has collectively been produced and the city has been accompanied by Ghent and Barcelona as mentors through the efforts of Eurocities.



**For Baia Mare the 8 Roma communities constitute a major challenge that the city has to face, while working on crafts, local history and culture.** The authorities from Baia Mare together with NGOs have started some actions towards the living space of Roma citizens in Baia Mare to improve their integration into society. The three multifunctional social centers in Baia Mare and the activities done here are considered as a good practice model for the other counties in Romania. Although the national strategy has as a goal the social inclusion of the Roma minority through the implementation of integrated policies in the fields of education, employment, child protection, housing, health, justice and public order the answer from the community is not the proper one. We cannot have a realistic dialogue with them as regarding the future actions to be taken in order to improve their lives and living conditions. Therefore we can only start several actions hoping that they will solve the problem.



## Housing & Urban Poverty,



In Barcelona, Barcelona Activa is implementing an important part of the urban policy called “**strategy of nearby economic development**” which underlines the need to work much more intensively on **the lowest-income districts**, among others through a very original system of regranting to local initiatives and organisations aimed at fostering the social and economic ecosystem of those areas.

Milano



Comune di Milano

Milan has already installed one of the it's incubators **FabriQ** in a more difficult area and is developing policies to give more chances to local inhabitants, through very integrated policies.



MAIRIE DE PARIS

Paris, realising that initiatives and social innovation have to be placed within the city boundaries, has developed a strong policy of making square metres accessible in the city with the help of public finance.



CITTA' DI TORINO

Turin, with it's social innovation ecosystems, which are in inconstant change, has always invited social innovators to come and benefit from the system, by establishing themselves in Turin, with subsidies, lodgings.



GDAŃSK

Gdansk and Wroclaw are looking into the more difficult areas of their cities, by trying to innovate in methods of close collaboration with the inhabitants.



smartcity  
wroclaw



## Circular Economy,



MAIRIE DE PARIS

In Paris a social enterprise is renting clothes for babies and pregnant women, and just recently a food cooperative has been launched, which is based on the participation of the owners/consumers/workers/volunteers.



CITTA' DI TORINO

Turin has welcomed several initiatives in this area, especially Sotto Casa a digital tool which allows consumers to buy more cheaply, shops to sell almost dated products and the city to have less waste to deal with.

Strasbourg  
eurooptimist

On the other hand Strasbourg is innovating not only in car sharing but also on territorial collective planning. In some instances these projects have a very high symbolic value such as the Kaleidoscope project. Be it through Zero Waste or responsible consumerism, both Strasbourg and Paris are showing the example to others, by linking in the circular economy to social and solidarity economies, to social innovation and local participative processes.



## Digital Transition,

Barcelona  
Activa

Barcelona has put a lot of effort into becoming the digitally most literate city in Europe. Hundreds of persons are introduced and trained to many computer programmes. This process is now being extended to the peripheral areas.

  
GDAŃSK

**Social innovation as such is becoming an international reality, due to the digital transition, which produces many opportunities.** The rapid advancement in areas such as 3D scanning, 3D printing, software development, Machine Learning, Image Recognition, Internet of Things allows new generations of entrepreneurs having a strong social focus create startup projects with global potential and with a major social impact.

To name just a few as examples:

1. <http://hospicare.pl/> – a solution based on mobile applications that allows families to manage everything concerning terminal and chronic patients staying at their homes;
2. <https://holoroad.eu/> – an Augmented Reality solution that allows a certain group of almost blind patients to substantially improve what they see;
3. <https://andiamo.io/> – using 3D scanning and 3D data modelling Andiamo revolutionizes the process of creating orthoses by cutting the cost by 50% and cutting the manufacturing time by over 80%.



The city of **Braga** has taken an extraordinary initiative. Namely in order to educate the youth better the voting on the special youth participatory budget takes place in a physical way, with paper and voting booths and boxes. It would appear that clicking on “enter” does not have the same importance. On the other hand Braga has developed with 6 other cities strict criteria as to how to become a **100% Youth city**. This model needs coaching and support, but can be also be seen due to digital tools.



Strasbourg has used the Kumu programing to map it's stakeholders and partners and their projects or realizations which helps the development of the ecosystem, whilst the network has used this sense mapping process, to better understand the links between different actors and cities.



## Urban Mobility,



In Baia Mare the process of development in the shadow of Cluj Napoca, where many young persons move to because of employment, has stimulated the city into thinking about measures to maintain the young persons locally. In many cities the reflection of how to facilitate transport and maintain populations in their social contexts is progressing, but within the network this did not appear as one of the priorities.



## Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy,



Turin wondered what was withholding the main actors of social innovation, who are the social enterprises, from developing more strongly, especially in the direction of export to other cities or other countries. Here we found that social innovation, as a constantly changing process has to foster all kinds of ecosystems, especially if the local authority understands that its decisions cannot just compensate lacks, or fill in holes, but must define clear objectives and policies, as underlines Mazzacuto.



Wroclaw has already worked on the transfer of the competences of craftsmen in more difficult areas of the city. The main challenge of the Nadodrze district was to integrate the municipality's plan of regeneration with measures of social inclusion, poverty reduction, and protection of minorities living in the area. It was made by a range of artistic and craftsmen activities tailor-made for residents, at the beginning initiated by the municipality and later ignited and boosted by local NGOs and residents.



Strasbourg has developed the co-construction methodology, especially in the area of social and solidarity economy and social innovation very intensively. All these elements have jobs and skills and the local economy as a priority.



In 2016 the City of Milan supported a bottom-up crowdfunding initiative by allocating EUR 400,000.00 as co-funding in favour of projects of public interest with a social impact. In the first phase, a crowdfunding platform was chosen through a public procurement tender. In the second phase, innovative projects were gathered through a public call; 54 projects were received and assessed by an Evaluation Committee. The call was open to both non-profit organizations and profit companies, and the incoming projects came from both groups in a balanced way.

The initiative of the Civic Crowdfunding in Milan represents the first case in Italy of a local government using the crowdfunding tool in match-funding with the Administration. It has been an occasion to experiment innovative ways to finance projects of public interest by encouraging the pooling of public and private resources to support high-impact social projects, and by promoting direct citizens' involvement in the choices of the decision of a Public Administration on where to allocate the money.



Gdansk has obtained the URBACT Good Practice label in the jobs and skills field. It is the SO STAY Hotel which was established by the Social Innovation Foundation in cooperation with the Municipality of Gdansk (PL) and business partners in 2016. The hotel was created to change the lives of young people who grew up outside of the family, in care homes. The innovative hotel's operational model - the first in Poland - combines a market approach with social responsibility. Young people gain qualification and experience under the guidance of professionals on site, which is highly valued in the open labour market. Youths participating in the employment programme are provided with housing support organised by the Foundation. This support gives young people opportunities to leave care facilities and start an independent, adult life.





## Public Procurement,

This aspect was only indirectly treated by the network, which was very interested in the process of learning done in the URBACT Procure network.

A visit to Manchester and Preston in another project allowed us to transfer a certain number of essential elements to the network, concerning not only how to do responsible public procurement, but how to analyse what happens locally with the money. This is undoubtedly a social innovation at the level of cities, who are approaching the question of the wellbeing of their citizens as a central question. It has become clear that the enormous volume of public buying can change the market situation and that it is in the power of local authorities to do so.



MAIRIE DE PARIS

In Paris responsible public procurement became the symbol of the way the mayor wanted to use its financial resources not once, but twice and for the good of the inhabitants. A special office of public procurement was created directly under the secretary general of the city hall, where the procurement methods and priorities were established directly under the orders of the mayor and other politicians.



## Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions

Milano



Comune  
di Milano



CITTA' DI TORINO

Planting vegetables in urban public gardens in Milan or on the roofs of supermarkets as in Turin, can have spectacular effects on the local community. Looking after a common garden in a common yard can even increase the value of the infrastructure, as it shows that the inhabitants can and do collaborate in creating a friendly space and atmosphere. It is also clear that urban shared spaces, for vegetable gardens for example are developing everywhere. As Manzini puts it however, an urban garden, with no people giving it a value, will soon be overgrown and ceases to be a garden of commons.

# 2 THE CITY AUTHORITIES AS A BOOSTER



## How to start?

All communities face smaller and bigger social challenges, depending of where we live. Boosting social innovation is not the monopoly of city administrations, as many stakeholders (the private sector, the knowledge sector and citizens) can do it as well. The social innovation approach is based on the idea that one actor (e.g. a municipality) is unable to perform all the roles, which are necessary to address the challenges. It is impossible to take responsibility for naming the challenge, finding and funding the solution, finally testing and scaling it. It is much more feasible to make a change if the different stakeholders share their assets. The experience of the Boostinno network has shown that local authorities have a key role to play in creating the right conditions for the internal development of the city, by stimulating social innovation. We hope that these questions and answers will help you to start, or to improve what is happening in your city: to become a booster...

## 1. How does my city administration function? Am I happy with it? What is to be improved? Do I know how to improve it?

These almost existential questions can be directly related to the positive development of social innovation. If “nothing happens in my city”, if “there are no initiatives taken” then perhaps the right exchange has not taken place between the city and its citizens. Citizens are full of initiatives and want to participate. However very often after years of a lack of a “communication platform” of some sort, they stop believing that they can do anything, or that what they say will have any effect. Indeed especially in more difficult areas of cities, inhabitants have “given up” or are so negative, that they get on with their own lives and forget about the common interests.

If I want to know what the potential of citizens in my city is, I have to create appropriate conditions for dialogue, and I have to guarantee, that some of the ideas that have been put forward, will be at least experimented, with the active participation of the idea givers. For this I have to develop ways of exchanging with the inhabitants, through persons who have this competence.

## 2. I have heard of social innovation – new products, new services but also new ways of doing things. Hmmm? How can I start?

Hearing of social innovation is perhaps not enough. The first step would be to visit another town or city, where social innovation is more active. Sometimes creativity and citizens’ activism is not called social innovation, so the way in which the subject is approached needs to be very incisive.

In my city, working together with my teams, I have to find out where some initiatives are forthcoming and find out how the city can foster them, support them or even finance them, whilst maintaining the activists (social innovators) in their role and not transforming everything into the success of the city authorities. This requires a fundamental change in the **governance paradigm**: the city is not the rower, but steers the city in a new direction. So the mayor and the city team have to be clever helmsman and woman, have to find out how to navigate and how to work together with the initiatives coming from the citizens.

In fact, the city becomes the **broker**, deals out the cards in a new way and links what was earlier top down and bottom up initiatives into powerful movements, which create the city from inside and give it the institutional support which is needed.

### 3. I would like to do something safe and cosy without too much risk.

Social innovation implies, by its nature, the risk of failure. As is well known public institutions “cannot fail” as the press and social media are immediately merciless in their approach. So to start in a safer way there can be a process of analysis to see which innovation is safer: does it require new local or national laws, does it correspond to the reality of the city, is it easy to accomplish, or very difficult? Starting and making the dynamism of social innovation grow may mean doing something “under the radar” in order to “collect low hanging fruit”. That will empower the city and its partners to be able to take more risks next time.

### 4. I have to choose someone/a department, where there is potential: what are the characteristics I should be looking for? Do I have to order them to do something, or incite them? What's the difference?

Social innovation cannot start everywhere in the city administration. Some choices have to be made and here it is the wise navigation and knowledge of the city departments which becomes crucial. Which departments are the most capable of managing risk? Which ones are capable, very quickly of accepting and even promoting change? Which director has a trustful relationship with me, where together we can try to foster social innovation? These questions, and maybe many others have to become part of the decision making process, which later will also include those persons and departments which have the highest potential of communicating successes, because after all social innovations succeed very often.

It appears obvious, that ordering social innovation from a hierarchical position does not appear logical. Therefore inciting and fostering the right approach becomes the rule.

### 5. I would like to accompany the social innovation chosen almost incognito – I must build a relationship of trust with 1 person or 1 department in order to be able to observe. At the same time I want to simplify things for them as they may come up against structural difficulties.

The governance paradigm comes into play once more. The previous relations based on authority and dispositions have to evolve towards trust and co-construction, not only within the city administration, but most of all with other outside stakeholders, who are, after all, local inhabitants. This trust cannot be bought. It has to slowly grow, through concrete signs and symbols that it exists. This is perhaps facilitated by choosing one person or department, with whom I feel a strong empathy, where there is a lot of trust, and where logically my collaborators will tell me the real story and not just what I want to hear.

This should allow me, with time, to try to facilitate things for the social innovations, by influencing other key departments and persons, with whom I may not have the same relationship, but who have to listen to my opinions or orders...

## **6. What are the risks? Can I contain them? What are the advantages? How can I share them...**

The risks are important. Experimenting seems to be a term close to physics or chemistry, where in a contained situation an experiment is conducted. How does that fit into the real world where the experimentation is visible, concerns real people and has given effects? So social innovation has to be well prepared, has to be done on the basis of trust and confidence, which are not the same elements as financing and signing agreements. So the governance paradigm again has to play its role, as the city, or the mayor, has to become one of the members of the local community that co-constructs the social innovation and takes a part of the co-responsibility. On that basis the success will be shared ... and so should an eventual failure.

## **7. A social innovation works. What does this mean? How can I show the effects of this social innovation? Do I have the proofs?**

A new company is born, creating tools to improve the daily life of persons with particular illnesses, a way of working of the city administration is largely improved by initiatives coming from civil servants, a group of associations takes on a collective initiative and comes up with concrete propositions that the city has agreed a priori to implement. These are all positive social innovations and it is in the interest of all the stakeholders to communicate on the successes, through the press, social media, etc.

However some sceptics will always remain unconvinced. Therefore it is necessary to implement some kind of evaluation, or impact measurement. In the case of an positive social innovation it may become important to measure its impact, in order to be able to scale it up by investing much more public money in the initiative. This requires, not only having a priori a theory of change already discussed in the city, but also agreement on what we measure, from what point of view and why. Measuring must serve decision making. It can be done from a micro, mezzo or macro level, but the results have to be shared. The intensity of the measure must also be collectively established.

### **8. In my city there seem to be many innovations, but they act separately. What should I do to strengthen them?**

The concepts of co-construction, co-development, co-management are key. Social innovations often concern stakeholders from different areas of life in a city, or even from different cities. Such groups are often described as ecosystems. An ecosystem cannot be created by force. It creates itself, breeding upon the empathy and trust mentioned earlier. As claims prof. Manzini, it is not one ecosystem which makes the difference, but a whole lot of ecosystems, which have a tendency to be “messy” but which create the appropriate climate for successful social innovation. He adds, that it is the responsibility of the city authorities to facilitate and foster the existence of these ecosystems.

Within the ecosystems, the position of the local authority can evolve. At the beginning it should be facilitating and maybe leading, but after a time, it should become just one of the stakeholders of the ecosystems, allowing them to progress and innovate. As soon as the ecosystems become “governable” they lose in creativity and start to be less interesting for the development of the whole city.

### **9. What spaces does my city need to support social innovation? How many? What type? How should they be managed? How can I measure their efficiency?**

Fostering and facilitating the coming into existence of ecosystems requires space: mental and virtual, but also physical. Spaces, managed in very subtle ways are key to fostering social innovations. They have to be open, they should be co-managed, they should include spaces for very different things (from Fab

Labs to laboratories, to spaces for dreaming and sleeping) and should be capable of welcoming everyone, even civil servants, who after all are also very creative persons. These spaces can be of very different natures and statutes but together they constitute the “hard” core of the ecosystems of a city. To start it may be very motivating to reflect on temporary spaces, which can be arranged collectively, and which, after a time, will be bought or developed, allowing the creative space to go elsewhere in the city...

### 10. How do social innovation ecosystems affect the functioning of my city administration? What is different? How should my directors, employees, vice mayors change?

Social innovation ecosystems do not require management, but need safe havens, require specific collaborations, need timelines which are rapid and agile and deal in what is generally called “tailor made” conditions, requirements and needs. Therefore yes, the existence of such ecosystems will require strong implementation of the new governance paradigm: light touch governance, co-construction, empathy and true partnership. This may seem an evidence for some and appear unattainable for others. But the Boosting Social Innovation network cities have shown that it is possible.



# 3 BROKERAGE



Real exchange is hard to achieve: need for brokerage

The whole innovation discourse is teaching us that we have to think and operate differently on all levels. Lessons learned from the Boostinno project confirm the theoretical assumption that collaboration is the pillar of the societal order, which is the only way to deal with the complex challenges we are facing now.

The second step of collaboration is actual exchange – of ideas, assets, commodities, ways of thinking. And at the top of that we have sharing.

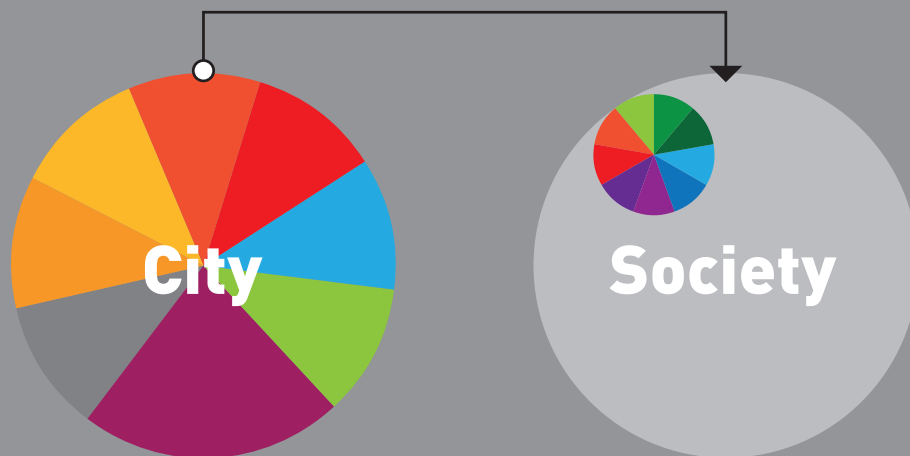
**Collaboration**  **exchange**  **sharing**





Local authorities are confronted today with such phenomenon as “big data”, “big picture”, urban activists, ecological defenders of all changes, lack of finance. Inhabitants are faced with ununderstandable institutional language, decisions they don’t understand and a feeling that they have no influence on anything. This vision appears to be even stronger in the so-called regeneration areas, often “forgotten” by the city authorities.

This strong tension can be resumed by the lack of connection between the top down and the bottom up approaches, The Boosting Social Innovation network has identified, with the help of the SIAC Network the idea of brokerage. Some cities have found in this idea a new way, level and methodology of building real exchange between city authorities and citizens. Indeed “city and citizens” together with the “governance and policy making” themes constituted part of the backbone of the Boostinno network.



In short the brokerage function changes the relationship between city authorities and their citizens, by changing the way in which they collaborate. As indicates prof. Manzini, it is the citizens who are for a large part building the cities from the inside. This is confirmed by the way in which municipalities are trying to reach communities in more difficult areas of their cities. This is also based on the conviction that no city can develop well leaving behind part of its population, which in some cities has really lost contact with the rest.

If the brokerage function develops to become the basis for intensive collaboration between the city and its citizens suddenly sharing, co-decision making, co-living values, short production circuits, social and solidarity economy or circular economy become the subject of the day, as they are really what citizens are concerned by, but may need more leverage and understanding from the city government, to be able to activate their ideas and actions.

In this sense brokerage becomes sensemaking, stimulating the sharing of values, commodities and assets. At the same time brokerage gives a new dimension to the relationship building question as the process of building relations and knowing who is working on what and what added value this can give is central to good governance and of course the impact measurement and management of local, regional or even national and EU policies.

### **What can brokerage mean on the daily basis?**

- habitat of shared experiences – openness for inviting people from different social classes, backgrounds and professions to think and act together (co-creation of policies),
- mediation or mediator which/who enables connections, understanding and collaborations, e.g. joint workshop for people from different sectors where they can freely explain their perspective,
- trying to link people, institutions, organisations and groups of citizens who can be useful for each other,
- sharing your data, knowledge, challenges and questions – being open for engagement of those whom you never work with,

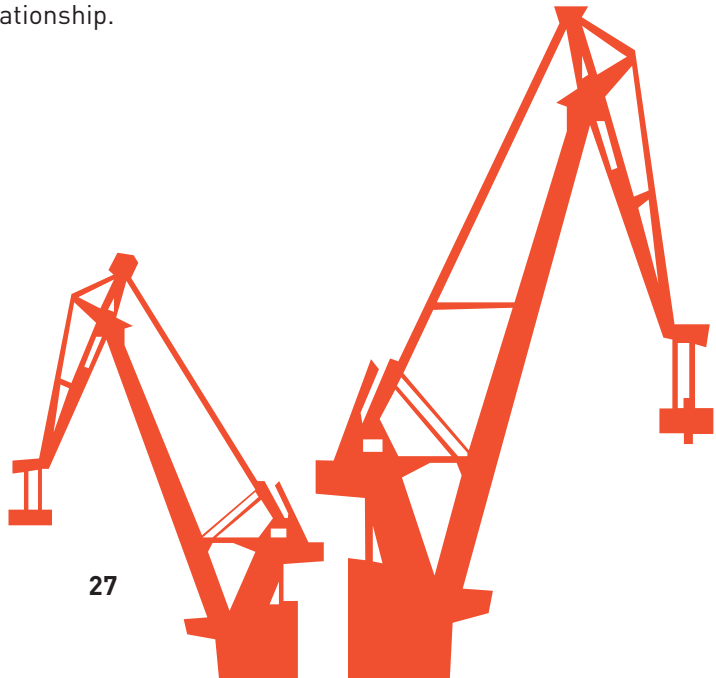


- taking care of constant communication
- translation of different approaches, worldviews and practices to enable balanced collaboration
- fostering connections which enable real change and actions (integrated urban development management)
- sharing of responsibilities and wellbeing.

### Examples:

**Gdansk:** the Integrated Action Plan was conceived, designed and created by a group of local innovators, coming from the city administration, NGO's, the private sector and the knowledge sector. A "broker" was brought in to help make sense of the work of the group and to propose a final version, which the group sifted through and accepted.

**Baia Mare:** the project coordinator found himself managing several local groups after the visit of the lead expert. This produced unplanned energies and allowed the new relationships between the city authorities and the citizens to flourish, creating a very innovative brokerage relationship.



### Practicalities:

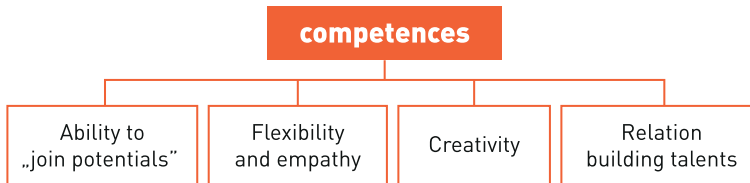
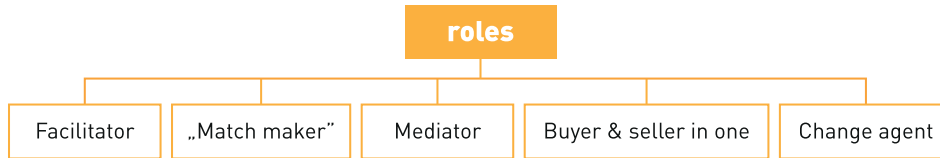
Being a broker, for a civil servant, a politician, a city administration implies a new form of governance, new profiles for civil servants and the capacity and will to build up new forms of relations. For the Boosting Social Innovation network cities this means, that co-creation is the only way of policy making, management should be based on integrated urban development, policy implementation should be based on partnerships and partenerial relations, which come out of networking and process facilitation. Only such functioning will empower citizens, who become creative empathetic partners, and permits the creation of added values.

The roles and competences of civil servants and even politicians are quite different from the traditional ones, and this implies a lot of changes in the internal management of cities, as more and more of our collaborators have to be “out of the office”. This gives specific content to the new **“social innovation paradigm”** where relations are based on trust and respect, people function on the equal partner footing, each civil servant tries to approach her/his partner with an individual approach and networking stands as the basis for success, as it will oblige the municipal systems to work across silos, in an integrated, inclusive and open fashion.

The only question which we have to ask ourselves is “are we ready”? WE that means city authorities, citizens, entrepreneurs, academics, civic organisations, NGO’s, city movements, informal groups. Are WE ready to share responsibilities and wellness, are we ready to work for the common good, are we really ready to be truly innovative?

## New profile of civil servants

- New competences
- New roles



See more:

**Old and new paradigm: to understand better**



See more:

**Social innovation in cities**



See more:

**Brokerage: Are we not all brokers?**



# 4 ECOSYSTEM(S)



How we should think about the city to help it effectively face its challenges and develop smart usage of its assets? Which metaphor can embrace all the complexity we are coming across while thinking about introducing change? Which notion can support us in navigating between all those informations, theories, good practices and recommendations?

Cities are the result of a collective intelligence allowing different initiatives, groups, businesses and cultural events to co-exist, thereby creating a collaborative city. However these energies<sup>(1)</sup> need to somehow be linked into the general functioning of a city. Rules and regulations can be produced in a Cartesian fashion, and become a system. However an eco-system does not respect the same rules. It is selfcreating and does not follow a determined path, but rather tries to create new realities, often in social innovation. It may continue or it may stop. It may be more or less creative.

In every city there is more than one eco-system and, as underlines Manzini, the result is ungovernable and messy but is strongly enabling. It is exactly this lack of predictability and the strength of the improvisation and innovation that make eco-systems so important to the cities of today. A city should therefore not try to manage the eco-systems, because as Turin found out, it is better to be one of the members of the eco-systems, than to try to be above them. The creativity of eco-systems appears to increase in proportion to their freedom and autonomy.

Eco-systems can however be supported in different ways: calls for ideas, spaces (Braga Gnration, Gdansk social hub, etc), co-construction methods (Strasbourg – co-construction of social innovation policy, Start up de territoires), participative budgets (Baia Mare). It is really the brokerage role of the local authority which here comes into force, as the mediator and host of the city, who invites the citizens to fill out the real meaning and content of the city.

Obviously not everything can come from the inhabitants, but many complicated situations can be alleviated, through a strong brokerage role, especially if it is shared between civil servants and politicians, as well as other partners of the city. This is even more so in difficult areas, where for numerous reasons the role of the city administration has diminished to almost nothing. Notwithstanding it would appear that many cities such as Barcelona or Milan are working on a return to these areas in need of regeneration, and are using local mediators, local municipal offices and other means to get closer to the inhabitant and build up the capacity for dialogue. This in turn allows the city to pursue more innovative policies in areas such as urban mobility or the circular economy, which cannot achieve success without the participation of the local population.

In short the main makers of a city are it's citizens, who organize themselves in various ways. It is therefore the responsibility of the city to enable these self creating eco-systems to exist and thrive. As we have seen they cannot "be organised" as they are too complex and their development cannot be foreseen. However producing virtual and real spaces for them is vital. Measuring their social and financial impact is the next collective challenge, which we are all facing.

[1] It is almost surprising that in none of the network cities was there a "department of energy" (the human one) which underlines the importance of the human touch, which is taken so much for granted, but is hardly managed at all.



See more:

**Metaphor which can help in thinking**

The background of the page is a vibrant red. In the center, there are dark silhouettes of two people standing in a field. The person on the left is taller and appears to be wearing a long-sleeved shirt and trousers, while the person on the right is shorter and wearing a dress. The field is filled with various plants, including tall grasses, small flowers, and several butterflies of different sizes. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

## Co-visualizing the in-between

Social innovation is about addressing very complex “wicked”<sup>[1]</sup> problems, in which actors from across many sectors – governments, corporations, educational institutes, NGOs, and, of course, citizens – need to work together intensively for a prolonged period of time. In this way, deep lessons learnt can be shared, and collaborations can come to fruition that align and scale efforts beyond the prototype and project level so as to reach truly collective, integrated and systemic impact. To collaborate successfully, participants need to be able to recognise not only the various interests and perspectives of all stakeholders involved, but also to see the evolving “big picture” of the quality of (potential) connections within all that diversity.

Building this shared understanding is already difficult at the level of a city, when people representing different communities can often meet face-to-face. It is even harder at the national, let alone the European level. The core problem is the fragmentation of collaboration that happens when addressing an intricate web of wicked problems. This requires countless participants to work together, often for a very long duration, and on an array of interrelated solutions. This fragmentation is compounded by everything continuously being in flux: the shifting articulations of the problems, the multitude of approaches, the many stakeholders involved as well as resources available, and so on. Thus, fragmentation of collaboration often results in confusion, the reinventing of many wheels, and only suboptimal solutions. Mapping can help reduce this fragmentation.

Maps are powerful visual artefacts to help people navigate complex spaces. We all know location-based maps that help us navigate from A to B. This geographical metaphor has been extended to create online maps of location-based social innovation services and resources, such as the Paris map where we can see the location of hundreds of “actors” within the social and solidarity economy. These location-based maps are good at classifying and positioning elements, but less suited for capturing their network of collaborative relations.

Another type of map is the **community network map**. These do not start from a geographical metaphor to provide the necessary reference points, but instead



use salient commonalities of the community network itself, such as the issues, goals, themes, or the “sharings” that their collaboration is about. Such maps provide joint conceptual beacons that help participants and others to explore and navigate their often very complex collaboration space. Typically, social network analysis maps capture some such relations, but in a formal, analytical way. An example is the analysis of the Torino informal startup network. Using full-fledged community network maps, however, their members can interact with the map and see how their goals, themes, activities, organisations, stakeholders and resources interrelate. Participants can perceive how they themselves are positioned in this collaboration landscape; where they might want to take their contribution from there; and visually anchor their own efforts in the collaborative network. In short, this type of mapping both shows and grows the network of collaborative relations, on which the creativity of social innovation depends.

<sup>[1]</sup> A wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. The use of the term “wicked” here has come to denote resistance to resolution, rather than evil. [1] Another definition is “a problem whose social complexity means that it has no determinable stopping point”. [2] Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.



**See more:**  
**Mapping common ground in European social innovation projects**



**See more:**  
**Boostinno Participatory Collaborating Mapping Experiment**



**See more:**  
**Aldo de Moor: Community sense expert in field of sense mapping**



# 5

## IMPACT MEASUREMENT



Management of impact is an evolving concept. It became the fourth main heading of the Boostinno network, as cities concluded that knowing what the impact of the work on social innovation is key to obtaining political support for such actions, as well as recognition by society at large. We joined the SDG work through the director of Knowledge and Research of the UNDP SDG Impact Finance (UNSIF) Karl Richter, who allowed us to appreciate the complexity of measurement, to clarify concepts and to realize that the intensity of the measurement and management depends on the local territory, its needs and possibilities.

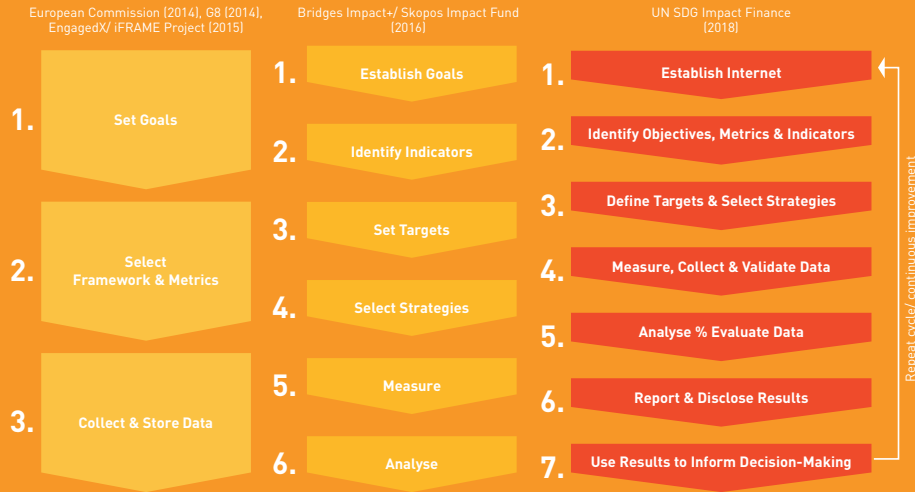
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations benefit from a planetary effort to improve the way in which measurement and evidence based decisions can become everyday elements of decision making and appears to be central to the thinking of the Commission in its planning of the next 7 year budgetary period. This global trend shows, that at the present moment there is a move from underlining the importance of impact measurement, to treating the question of impact management as central. This would allow more insistence on “why” something happens and less on “what” happens, which in turn allows easier decision making and empowers all the stakeholders to choose which elements require the most effort concerning their impact.

In order to be able to at least slightly harmonise impact management there are three axes to be taken into consideration:

1. a common journey,
2. different pathways for making that journey,
3. varying levels of intensity of the evidence required.

Historically in the last 20 years approaches to these axes have evolved very rapidly to achieve in 2018 the following shape:

## A common journey for impact management is emerging



However the process of impact management is not simple. Even if there is overall agreement on the above stages of the journey, several variables now come into play. Firstly from what perspective are we looking, secondly who is the institution or person and what are the most important interests, thirdly what is the intensity which is required to get a qualitative result.

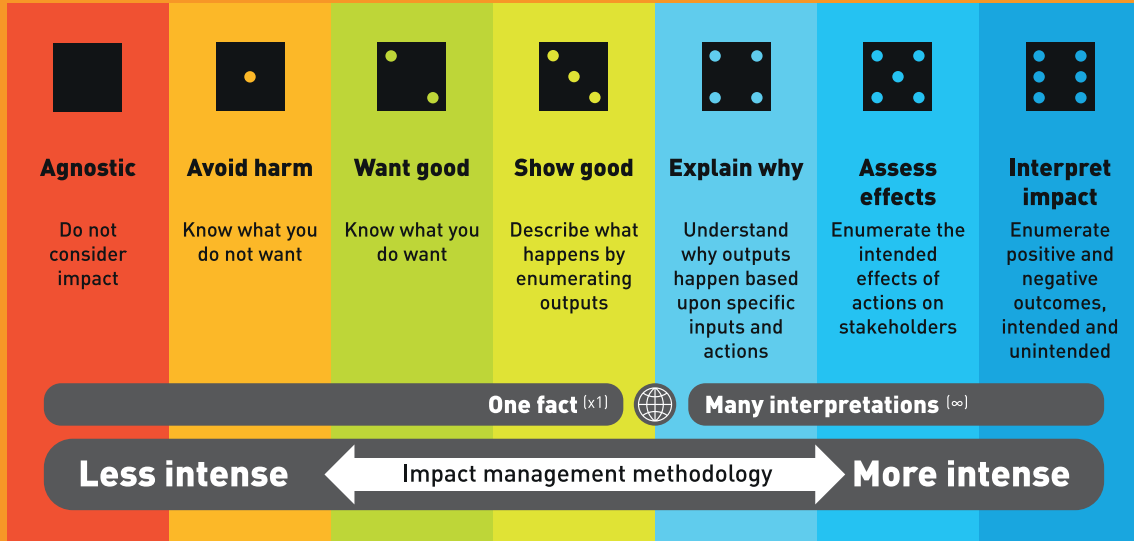
To take into account that the whole sphere of impact management is dependant on the following formula:



**Definition of impact + purpose for data = mandate for impact management**

## Discrete pathways for the impact management journey

Select pathway that suits your definitional framework and mandate for impact management methodology



Design of the pathways was informed by UNSIF undertaking a pilot to segment market activity (enterprises, investments, funds and portfolios). The delineation is based upon the practicalities of discretely and unambiguously codifying attributes that are objective and independently observable.

As can be seen such a variety of pathways should satisfy most public authorities and allow them to pursue the impact management at the level of their needs and means. This choice also lets the public authorities realise how many pathways are available and opens the door for different choices at a further stage.

In the case of the SDG's Karl Richter proposes elements, which allow comparison, assurance of quality, interoperability and resource allocation.

The levels of evidence should conform to the need and can be of varying levels:



**vii)** Published and peer reviewed



**vi)** Published in academic or research journal



**v)** Statistically rigorous analysis



**iv)** Multiple studies or time-series analysis



**iii)** Single case study or story-telling



**ii)** Expert opinion or rating or label



**i)** Circumstantial evidence or stakeholder opinion

Choosing the level is a question of perspective, context, financing capabilities, reasons for needing the assessment of the impact and the rigour of data required.



**See more:**  
**Impact management for everyone**

# 6 CONCLUSIONS

Our civilisations and planet have in the last few hundred years gone through 3 previous revolutions:

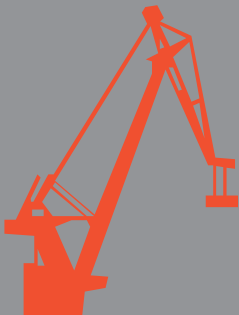
- steam,
- electricity,
- electronics.



Presently there are several analysts and specialists who are upholding that the **fourth industrial revolution** is here, and it concerns and integrates directly **social innovation**. This new revolution identifies new paradigms:

- the producer and consumer are no longer separate entities and often become “prosumers”,
- the frontiers between the world of work and the rest of our lives have become very fluid, and help this “prosumer” paradigm to develop,
- the eco-systems which are present and the prosumer paradigm necessitate very agile management, both in the private and the public sectors, moving away from the “we decide once and for all” towards permanent creative management,
- the development of social innovations in the private, III sector and in the public one results very often in tailor made products, services and partnerships,
- all this complexity demands forms of “open management” which put pressure especially on public authorities, to be reactive, creative and to be able to adapt to changes as quickly as they come about.

This messy complexity has to be dealt with taking into consideration that the role of the public sphere is more important than ever. Prof. Mazzucato underlines, that the public purpose of governments of every level has to be much more visionary and demanding, than just compensating what the market cannot deliver. Therefore it is up to local governments to create conditions for this social innovation fermentation, knowing that the results will be positive, and having the confidence, that what comes about will be for the benefit of society at large.



To conclude, social innovation as the new revolution strains the older systems of working and governance, but could be an answer in relation to the extremes that European countries are witnessing, as it drives citizens energies differently. It also relates directly to values, moral ones and market ones, bringing them together to try to produce a collective transformative wellbeing.

### **Boostinos` s 10 encouragements for public support of social innovation**

1. Public authorities must learn to know how to balance between inside city citizen initiatives and energies and their own planning systems.
2. Approaching the inhabitants as a fertile ground, where needs are known and solutions can be invented is the key for fostering social innovations.
3. Understanding that a new revolution is taking place in the city "market place": social innovation is as important a change as steam, electricity or IT and brings in and develops added social value.
4. Public authorities have to start with themselves: what social innovations can help their own functioning, what changes can be installed?
5. Change is a personal phenomenon: as a civil servant can I change my office into a creative meeting place? Can I allow my co-civil servants to "float" on creativity and inventivity to get the best out of them?
6. Building up eco-systems of social innovators is their challenge. The public sector has to foster this development, facilitate, co-create spaces, eliminate difficulties and link different families of innovators.
7. Accepting a theory of change in a public body, will empower it to appreciate the permanently transformative normality of social innovation, much of which, if it proves itself, must just become the new normality in the end.
8. Knowing what we are doing and what the results are. Impact measurement thinking is moving from measurement itself to impact management, meaning moving from counting "what" to understanding "why" allowing decisions to be taken as to what it is relevant to measure and create the indicators to do so.
9. Social innovation produces change, but requires the recognition of failure, as it is based on experimentation. The capacity to fail must become included in public procurement, in EU subsidies and other forms of financing, so that social innovation has the space to thrive.
10. Responding to this new social innovation revolution public bodies have to review their vocation and system of functioning. They are no longer the rowers in the boat, nor even the helmsman, but more likely the recruiters of future sailors, who should not use press ganging[1] methods. In this way they become true brokers of social innovation.

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[1] press gang: group of sailors from ships who in ancient times would take young men by force, to become sailors of navy ships in the UK.



# 7 ANNEXE

The culture of experimentation  
based on NESTA

**Reflection 1: Experimentation as a way of accelerating learning and exploring “the room of the non-obvious”**



Governments need to increase:

- their pace
- their agility
- in learning about which ideas have the highest potential value-creation
- and make people’s lives the rationale of governing.

**Reflection 2: Experimentation as a way of turning uncertainty into risk**

- run your experiments at an early stage,
- reduce risk due to small budget and available resources,
- learn from your mistakes,
- therefore closing the gap between uncertainty and risk.

**Reflection 3: Experimentation as a way to reframe failure**

- **Bad failures** can be considered as preventable failures in predictable operations.
- **Good failures**, are often unavoidable failures in complex systems or when entering uncharted territory and dealing with high levels of uncertainty.
- In practice, ideas are never fully formed, but need **to work in and adapt to a dynamic system**



## Reflection 4: Experimentation on a continuum between exploration and validation

### Reflection 5: Experimentation as cultural change

- **Mindset** – fundamental set of assumptions and perspectives that frame the understanding of one’s own role, practice and potential.
- **Attitude** – emotional state that creates a propensity to perceive and solve problems in a particular way.
- **Habits** – fundamental actions and activities that one views as essential and valuable in exercising one’s professional role.
- **Functions** – core operational tasks of government (i.e. how to approach policy development, procurement, etc.) that often go unquestioned.
- **Environment** – factors and elements that shape how decisions are made and how development processes are enabled and authorised.



See more:

**Towards an experimental culture in government:  
reflections on and from practice**

# 8 CREDITS



Many thanks to all the participants of the Boosting Social Innovation network. But as we want every reader to become a participant in building social innovation, we include a list of participants, their email addresses and a word on their competences or special interests, to incite the reader to make contact:

- Baia Mare (Romania):** Dorin Miclaus: miclaus.dorin@gmail.com - bottom up participative co-construction going towards brokerage as a new form of governance.
- Barcelona (Spain):** Cristina Gil-Adelantado: cristina.gil@barcelonactiva.cat - international relations, social innovation in peripheral areas.
- Barcelona (Spain):** Cinta Arasa Carot: cinta.arasa@barcelonactiva.cat - international relations, social innovation in peripheral areas.
- Braga (Portugal):** Carlos de Sousa Santos: carlos.santos@gnration.pt - 100% Youth Policy, Erasmus trainer, city center reoccupied by youth, multifunctional social innovation centre.
- Braga (Portugal):** Eva Sousa: eva.sousa@cm-braga.pt - municipal specialist in youth policies.
- Braga (Portugal):** Cristina Palhares: cristina.palhares@cm-braga.pt - assistant to the mayor and the deputy mayor.
- Gdansk (Poland):** Magdalena Skiba: magdalena.skiba@gdansk.gda.pl - project coordinator, head of innovation and partnership unit in Gdansk city hall.
- Gdansk (Poland):** Magdalena Zawodny-Barabanow: urbact@gdansk.gda.pl - co-coordinator of Boosting Social Innovation.
- Gdansk (Poland):** Michał Pielechowski: michal.pielechowski@gdansk.gda.pl - the ideal new younger civil servant.
- Milan (Italy):** Renato Galliano: renato.galliano@commune.milano.it - director of economic development, creator of alternative financial instruments.
- Milan (Italy):** Annibale d'Elia: Annibale.DElia@comune.milano.it - director of economic innovation, exciting speaker, explains the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution.
- Milan (Italy):** Clara Callegaris: Claramaddalena.Callegaris@comune.milano.it - Head of Smart City unit.
- Milan (Italy):** Anna Cristina Siragusa: Annacristina.Siragusa@comune.milano.it - civic crowdfunding.
- Paris (France):** Patrick Trannoy: patrick.trannoy@paris.fr - responsible for development of social, solidarity economy and Head of circular economy office.
- Skane (Sweden):** Jorgen Dehlin: jorgen.dehlin@lansstyrelsen.se - social innovation and culture.
- Strasbourg (France):** Sandra Guilmin: Sandra.GUILMIN@strasbourg.eu - responsible for social and solidarity economy development - specializes in co-construction and co-management.
- Strasbourg (France):** Agathe BINNERT: abinnert@maisonemploi-strasbourg.org - deputy director Job Centre.
- Strasbourg (France):** Manon MARQUIS: m.marquis@cress-grandest.org - Regional Chamber of Social and Solidarity Economy.
- Strasbourg (France):** Agnès GUTH: direction@regiedesecrivains.com - director of a social enterprise « Régie des écrivains ».

- Strasbourg (France):** Stève DUCHENE: sduchene@alsaceactive.fr - Alsace Active – alternative sources of financing.
- Strasbourg (France):** Delphine KRIEGER: delphine.krieger@strasbourg.eu - responsible for Innovation at Eurométropole de Strasbourg.
- Strasbourg (France):** Marion BARDOT: Marion.BARDOT@grandest.fr - Regional Council.
- Strasbourg (France):** Pauline SCHELL: pauline.schell@sielbleu.org - association Siel bleu.
- Strasbourg (France):** Eric LEGALL: e.legall@alsaceinnovation.eu - « Alsace innovation » agency.
- Strasbourg (France):** Sophie KELLER: skeller@lelabo-partenariats.org - Start up de territoire.
- Turin (Italy):** Fabrizio Barbiero: fabrizio.barbiero@comune.torino.it - responsible for social innovation and the changes in it's management, brilliant speaker, super networker.
- Turin (Italy):** Nadia Bonghi: nadia.bonghi@comune.torino.it - receives and supports all social innovation projects.
- Wrocław (Poland):** Matgorzata Golak: Malgorzata.Golak@um.wroc.pl - regeneration of a main street, participation with different stakeholders.
- Wrocław (Poland):** Marzena Horak: marzena.horak@um.wroc.pl - deputy director of infrastructure and economic development.

**Authors:**

Piotr Wołkowiński, lead expert, Boosting Social Innovation, with the support of Aleksandra Goddys, Michał Pielechowski, Magdalena Skiba and Monika Chabior and with the collaboration of Fabio Sgaragli, Aldo de Moor and Karl Richter.

