WP3:
"Social Innovation Knowledge Exchange Units"

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INTRODUCTION

This project will demonstrate the potential of universities to use their knowledge in order to affect social change in a direct and meaningful way. It will do this by developing new paradigms and tools for knowledge exchange practice that embrace social innovation, encourage social entrepreneurship and offer more effective support to local communities. The Partners - leading socially innovative universities and experienced social innovation drivers - will work together to create an ecosystem that nurtures and supports sustainable, resilient and responsible innovation.

The Knowledge Alliance project will support social innovation through knowledge exchange by forging alliances between the stakeholders of the social innovation ecosystem, from business, local government, civil society organisations and community groups and develop Social Innovation through Knowledge Exchange (SIKE) Units that will specifically develop and adapt knowledge exchange tools and processes to the needs of social innovators.

The work package number three is called "Social Innovation Knowledge Exchange Units". The main objective is to establish a unit for social innovation support through knowledge exchange. Based on the results of work package number one (need analysis) and two (identification and exchange of best practice), the results of the diagnosis and benchmarking activities and the regional site visits. All these results feed into the Social Innovation Knowledge Exchange Unit so called SIKE unit.

The Project will design and establish spaces where knowledge exchange for social innovation can take place. Each unit should be:
- A space for dialogue
- A space for innovation and co-design
- A hub for connecting people

The Units should attract a variety of stakeholders:
- *Academics:* social innovators and anyone from the network will be able to contact academics in order to receive guidance
- *Students:* Students benefit from shared work spaces, incubation facilities or training in social innovation
- *Representatives from private bodies:* industry will be able to generate inputs related to prototypes, products, services and models for social innovators
- *Representatives from public bodies:* public managers/public servants will be able to generate inputs on how social innovators can integrate with current policies, including access to finance
- *Experts:* The Units should incorporate suitable experts for mentoring social innovators.

The Units will be expected to generate:

- New social enterprises and projects
- New social innovations
- New organizational models (foundations, cooperatives, not-for-profit, - combinations and hybrid forms are possible)
- New models for corporate social responsibility (rethinking the way in which private bodies interact with society)
- New business and funding models, including microcredit and crowd funding resources
- New products and services (produced as a result of new social processes, social patterns, social interactions or social organisations)
- New collaborations between university academics and social programmes
- New courses, content or projects that seek for a social change

The Units should have the following characteristics:

- Creativity
- Collaboration with society
- Open-door policy
- Mutual-learning process
- Innovative copyright policy
- Academic credibility
- Dynamic Approach

Based on all these requirements we are able to design a blueprint for the SIKE unit. For sure we not know all the regional specifications and the specific needs in every country.

Therefore, the second step is to give this blueprint to all the partners. Each regional partnership will work to establish a SIKE unit within their region. After starting the SIKE unit in every region there has to be an every six months a report on the activities and results of the unit.

The Partners are invited to define the characteristics of the SIKE unit. The input from the consortium are going to be incorporated into the blue print so this is the second version including the Partners' comments from the meeting in June. This document is composed as follows:

POSITION IN the LOCAL SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM and REGIONAL MISSION: This section includes a space for every institution to reflect on their existing local SI ecosystem and the context they are working with (in). Furthermore, in a second step based on that, to define the specific mission/intention/objective and benefit the SIKE unit should have in this circumstances.

STRATEGIC POSITION WITHIN THE HEI: this section includes recommendations of possible strategies and actions necessary for the implementation of a unit in a Higher Education Institution; and a description of the potential institutional limitations that might be encountered. It is based on the review of guidelines and best practices in social innovation support identified during the Preparation Phases (WPs 1&2).

PHYSICAL SPACE: this section includes recommendations about the characteristics of the physical space for the operation of the SIKE unit.

APPROACH, OPERATION and METHODOLOGIES: this section includes recommendations about the operation of the SIKE unit and which methodologies and approaches could be used to support the achievements of its main goals.

SIKE UNIT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: There are a number of specific activities developed by the SIKE Project that may be integrated within as part of the SIKE unit model development and maintenance. These include:

- Support social innovation through knowledge exchange by: forging alliances between the stakeholders of the social innovation ecosystem, from business, local government, civil society organisations and community groups and develop Social Innovation through Knowledge Exchange (SIKE) Units that will specifically develop and adapt knowledge exchange tools and processes to the needs of social innovators;

- Stimulate social entrepreneurial skills within the University and the local community by: offering facilities for social innovation incubation and hot-desking facilities; linking services for connecting social entrepreneurs and community groups with the knowledge base of the university; offering resources, processes and expertise to evaluate and demonstrate the value of social innovation to policymakers.

- Develop extracurricular and curricular modules for professional development in social innovation that will allow external stakeholders benefit from the academic expertise of the university partners while also allowing the universities to access the practical experience and real-life know-how of social innovation professionals.

1. POSITION IN the LOCAL SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM and REGIONAL MISSION

This section includes a space for every institution to reflect on their existing local SI ecosystem and the context they are working with (in). Furthermore, in a second step based on that, to define the specific mission/intention/objective and benefit the SIKE unit will have in this circumstances. The Evaluation and Advisory Committee could be useful.

1.1 Position in the local SI ecosystem

Each organisation should complete this individually.

Your university's focus of research, knowledge and education politics should be considered.

1.2 Specific regional mission

Each organisation should complete this individually.

Do you target any special challenge in your region? Unemployment, societal separation e.g.

2. STRATEGIC POSITION WITHIN the HEI

This section includes recommendations of possible strategies and actions necessary for the implementation of a SIKE unit in a Higher Education Institution; and a description of the potential institutional limitations that might be encountered. It is based on the review of guidelines and best practices in social innovation support identified during the Preparation Phases (WPs 1&2).

Possible models for institutional relationships between the SIKE units and the HEIs. → results of WP 2 "Consolidated Best Practice":
- HEIs provide scientific expertise
- HEIs provide funding
- HEIs offer students expertise in order to create effective solutions
- SI organisations provide services
- SI organisations give the opportunity to examine social innovation projects in action
- Concepts developed by HEIs can be tested in the SI organisation
- Students gain practical experience
- Adjust the curriculum
- SI organisations help the HEI to build a better relationship with the community
- HEIs provide specific support
  - concept oversights
  - development of projects
  - monitoring
  - formal and non-formal educational content
  - one on one coaching
  - evaluation support
  - various learning events
  - organisation of workshops
  - space for events and incubation
  - connection to fellow start-up social innovators and potential partners

To strengthen the idea of SI connected directly to HEIs, we would recommend an approach to integrate social enterprises in the value chain (buying and disposing) for the implementation and operation of the SIKE units (IT support, furniture e.g.).

Ideally, this will be transferred to the Universities' value and supply chain in general. HEIs often do have a noteworthy impact on the local economy.

3. APPROACH, OPERATION and METHODOLOGIES

This section includes recommendations about the operation and activities of the SIKE unit and which methodologies and approaches could be used to support the achievement of its main goals.

3.1 SIKE unit Values

- It represents an innovative strategy to develop solutions for social problems
- Greater diversity of skill means greater possibility
- It encourages a collaborative physical environment
- It progressively builds local development
- It creates commitment with social issues

3.2 SIKE unit Objectives

- New social enterprises and projects
- New social innovations
- New organizational models (foundations, cooperatives, not-for-profit)
- New models for corporate social responsibility (rethinking the way in which private bodies interact with society)
- New business and funding models, including microcredit and crowd funding resources
- New products and services (produced as a result of new social processes, social patterns, social interactions or social organisations)
- New collaborations between university academics and social programmes
- New courses, content or projects that seek for a social change

3.3 SIKE unit Characteristics

A SIKE unit should have the following **characteristics**:

- **Creativity**: the SIKE unit is a creative environment, which is not only generated by the physical spaces it offers but also through the people who work within it. The SIKE unit encourages the presence of people in their facilities. A SIKE unit encourages people to use spaces and resources available to develop ideas, projects and also enhance and generate knowledge

- **Collaboration with society**: a SIKE unit will not deliver or provide a top-down solution to a society, as "experts from university" providing knowledge to "passive citizens" but will recognize the diffused creativity available in society and that social innovations often emerge from bottom-up initiatives such as citizens' activism, emerging spontaneously from a specific group of people.

- **Open-door policy**: a key policy of a SIKE unit should be to have an open-door policy in order to attract social innovators but also any kind of stakeholder. This is a key factor for supporting projects but also to raise awareness inside and outside.

- **Mutual-learning process:** a SIKE unit will foster knowledge exchange between universities and society in a mutual learning process. Universities recognize the knowledge embedded in society (e.g. Traditional knowledge) and, at the same time, they make scientific and technological knowledge available to society.

- **Innovative copyright policy:** social innovations are the result of collaborations between different stakeholders in society to face commonly recognized challenges. Traditional copyright policies may not be appropriate in a SIKE unit if it is to foster the right environment for the development of social innovation, it might hinder the process.

- **Academic credibility**: an active SIKE unit contributes to academic credibility in the realm of social innovation (as universities have done in scientific and technological innovation through institutes and dedicated centres).

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3.4 SIKE Generic Process

The generic process can be used as a guide and a recommendation on each HEI's designing process. A clearly defined process can be shared with the SIKE unit's stakeholders, so you can work out the most efficient way for participation. The generic process can be used regardless how many projects a HEI is running and at which point this projects are. It is possible to add or remove stages depending on their suitability for each individual unit.

The SIKE generic process suggests 5 stages:
It starts with an **entrance (1)**, where new users enter the project. the process contains an **offer (2)** module, where the entire social innovation support is described and delivered to the users, who enter in the SIKE process. This is followed by a **monitoring (3)** and **evaluation (4)** stage designed to keep track of the advances of each individual or group and furthermore to use the results to improve the ongoing operational process of the SIKE unit as well. The generic process ends with a **closing (5)** stage. A sustainable exit strategy is key for the long term success of both the participating users and the SIKE unit itself.

3.5 SIKE Operational functions

Based on the activties in WPs 1 and 2 and input from the Advisory and Evaluation Committee, the generic SIKE model will define instruments and processes for raising awareness within the university community, fostering social innovation as an integral part in the institutional activities in knowledge transfer.

The SIKE units will specifically aim to widen the scope of regular knowledge transfer activities and offer special shared incubation space. These spaces will not simply work as a social business incubator, but rather they will develop the tools and resources to build an ecosystem in which social innovations can grow and flourish. In particular, they will seek to offer the following:

- Help social innovators to protoype solutions with appropriate equipment
- Increase in new social enterprises and projects;
- Identify and leverage new funding opportunities, including microcredit resources;
- Encourage collaborations between university academics and social programmes in order to lend academic credibility;
- Develop new innovation models (foundations, cooperatives, not-for-profit companies etc.),
- Standardise measurement of social responsibility based on benchmarking such as ISO26000 or ASHOKA changemaker status offered to internal and external, private and public organisations
- Become involved international networks in social innovation
- Develop measurement procedures to assess both social and economic impact of social innovation initiatives

3.6 SIKE Operational Plan (Tools and Workshops)

Organisations should aim for a set of tools and training programmes fitting to their individual regional needs and focus to operate the SIKE Unit.

Helpful suggestions can be found on the SIKE website shortly.

sike social innovation through knowledge exchange

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4. PHYSICAL SPACE

This section includes recommendations about the characteristics of the physical space for the operation of the SIKE unit. While planning the physical space of their SIKE unit, institutions should divide the (1) Minimum Viable Product (MVP) for an effective SIKE unit from (2) the recommended facilities for the medium to long-term development of a SIKE unit. The later can be defined at a later and already operating stage.

The space of a SIKE unit shoud be a space for dialogue, a space for innovation and co-design and a hub for connecting people: a physical place where people can gather together. This space should have the following characteristics: Creativity, collaboration with society, open-door policy, mutual-learning process, innovative copyright policy and academic credibility.

In order to foster the social innovation and collaboration process within the institution, the space should be equipped with the appropriate facilities. The space needs to be attractive to academics, students, representatives from private and public bodies, experts and members of the wider community interested in social innovation and knowledge exchange.

5. SIKE IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Implementation plans for SIKE units

Implementation plans:

- Adapt the blue print according to the institutional structure and organizational characteristics, of each HEI/ social environment;
- Incorporate regional recommendations by members of the Evaluation and Advisory Committee;
- Six months to establish a SIKE unit in every region;
- One year to test and develop the SIKE unit by the regional specific details
- Six-monthly report by every partner.

5.2 SIKE Users

The Units should attract a variety of stakeholders:

- **Academics***:* social innovators and anyone from the network will be able to contact academics in order to receive guidance.

- **Students***:* Students benefit from shared work spaces, incubation facilities or training in social innovation

- **Representatives from private bodies:** industry will be able to generate inputs related to prototypes, products, services and models for social innovators.

- **Representatives from public bodies:** public managers/public servants will be able to generate inputs on how social innovators can integrate with current policies, including access to finance.

- **Experts:** The Units should incorporate suitable experts for mentoring social innovators.

5.3 SIKE Staff

The SIKE unit will not simply work as a social business incubator, but rather they will develop the tools and resources to build an ecosystem in which social innovations can grow and flourish. A possible setup could look like this (the roles are combinable and switchable):

SIKE unit Manager/Coordinator
In charge of coordinating and managing all operational details such as budget, contracts, public relations, networking etc.

Community Manager
First contact person for every issue the SIKE users might want to address. In charge of organising events and distributing information.

Project Officer
Oversees SIKE Projects. Can be combined with the Community Manager.

IT Assistant
In charge of technical supervision and – if needed - open-source knowledge-sharing or data collection solutions.

Administrative Assistant
Helps in the everyday SIKE affairs like finances and logistics.

5.4 SIKE Equipment

Partners will share their experience on what is needed for operating a SIKE unit.

5.4 Business Model

Organisations should think of a sustainable way to finance the SIKE unit. This could include applications for public or private funding or partnerships with private enterprises.
The Generic Process (3.4.) could help to identify the needs and at the same time it is a notable instrument for showing what your unit is about und why it is support worthy.