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Social Innovation Brokers

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Map of the joint didactic and conceptual issues

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Social Innovation Brokers

WE FOR YOU

The Social Innovation Brokers Project is co-funded by the EEA and Norway Grants (Project Nr. EOG/21/K3/W/0042) with 181.060 Euro from 01.02.2022 to 31.01.2024.

The Social Innovation Brokers (BIS) project aims to develop a pilot version of vocational training for Social Innovation Brokers, **the first in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).**

The Transfer of Knowledge project is initiated by the Linking Foundation in Krakow, Poland and realized in partnership with ECWT - The European Centre for Women and Technology with Secretariat in Oslo, Norway.

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Author and the Project Partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the EEA and Norway Grants Funding organizations.

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1. Introduction

1.1. About the project

Social Innovation Brokers is a project created based on collaboration between the Linking Foundation in Krakow, Poland and the European Centre for Women and Technology, with Secretariat in Oslo, Norway.

The aim of the Social Innovation Brokers project is to develop, and pilot based on a Transfer of Knowledge approach an innovative training for Social Innovation Knowledge Brokers – the bridge builders, who connect innovators with stakeholders and help them bring their ideas to life.

The Social Innovation Brokers project is co-financed by the EEA and Norway Grants Project Number: EOG/21/K3/W/0042 with 181.060 Euro from 01.02.2022 to 31.01.2024.

1.2. About this Document

The present document summarizes the joint didactic and conceptual issues of the Social Innovation Brokers project.

2. Social Innovations

The European Commission, OECD and the Polish National Centre for Research & Development agree regarding the following definition of social innovations:

Social innovations are innovative solutions that have a predefined social objective, are used to meet specific social needs, lead to the development and

strengthening of civic society, and are based on cross-sectoral and inter-area cooperation between actors, thereby also changing social relations.

Realizing the potential of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in tackling pressing societal challenges, the European Commission has been since year 2013 intensively working to promote social innovation as a source of growth and job creation. Since 2013 through the annual European Social Innovation Competitions¹ the European Commission acts as a beacon for social innovators across Europe, employing a proven methodology for supporting early-stage ideas and facilitating a network of radical innovators shaping our society for the better. Each year the Competition addresses a different issue facing Europe and the support given to the best solutions presented helps the innovators and their start-ups to become viable, scalable and visible social enterprises.

A broker is essentially a mediator between parties often found in the finance and banking industries. In these industries, they usually liaise between buyers and sellers of various kinds of goods and services like investments, real estate, and insurance. Essentially, they listen to the needs of their customers and try to connect them with the right services, goods, or people that are required to fulfil their needs.

An innovation broker connects ideas, people, organizations, and communities to enable and support the innovation process. They are the bridge builders that try to connect every question with an answer. This is hard to achieve since it requires deep knowledge and understanding of many things together with good connections in the field.

Innovation brokers are essential in procuring innovative goods and services by linking buyers' demand and suppliers' innovation capacity. Innovation brokers can help buyers identify their needs and connect them with the startups and SMEs that are able to develop tailored, innovative solutions for them.

Further, **innovation brokerage** includes giving advice on **project development**, encouraging unconventional thinking, hunting for potential innovation partners ("matchmaking"), promoting focused knowledge transfer, and increasing information sharing.

¹ The European Social Innovation Competition was launched in memory of the Portuguese politician and social innovation pioneer Diogo Vasconcelos (1968-2011). The European Competition is run by the European Commission, with support from the European Innovation Council across all EU Member States and Horizon Europe associated countries. For more about the annual competitions: <https://challengeworks.org/broader-programmes/european-social-innovation-competitions/>

In 2020, the OECD launched the Global Action “Promoting **Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems**”, funded by the European Union’s Foreign Partnership Instrument, to support the development and internationalisation of the social and solidarity economy. The Action focuses on **two critical policy levers** that can help unlock the potential of the SSE, namely **legal frameworks** and **social impact measurement**, while considering the entire policy ecosystem as a framework.

OECD defines **social entrepreneurship** as the entrepreneurship that has as main goal to address pressing social challenges and meet social needs in an innovative way while serving the general interest and common good for the benefit of the community. *In a nutshell, social entrepreneurship targets to social impact primarily rather than profit maximization in their effort to reach the most vulnerable groups and to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth.*

“Social entrepreneurs identify resources where people only see problems... They begin with the assumption of competence and unleash resources in the communities they’re serving.”- as defined by David Bornstein.²

2.1. Creativity and Innovation

Creativity is a prerequisite for innovation, but creative thinking does not always result in valuable innovations. Creativity can be defined as the ability to ask how something can be done differently or better, combined with the ability to design broadly understood changes in various spheres of social life. Innovation, on the other hand, is realized creativity. The link between creativity and innovation is a pro-innovation attitude, which is associated with an interest in and realization of creative ideas or concepts. It is a willingness to take all or part of the responsibility for operationalizing and implementing a project. The combination of creativity, innovation, and a pro-innovation attitude creates an opportunity for valuable change to emerge.

While there are a lot of positive attitudes towards innovation, often, innovation is misunderstood as a concept. It is perceived as happening outside of society, something that only concerns technology and the economy. There is almost a "mechanical" separation of technological and social innovations. In many spheres of social practices, the "valid" definition of innovation is the one published by the

OECD in a series of manuals called the Oslo Manual. According to this definition,

² David Bornstein: How to change the world: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas

"Innovation is a new or improved product or process (or a combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit's previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)". Such a definition refers mainly to the novelty in relation to the economic and business spheres.

Yet innovation is not and should not be separate from culture and social life. Innovation thrives where it finds a welcoming atmosphere and openness, where it is not overwhelmed by the dominant force of tradition.

The most significant barriers to the development of innovations lie on the side of the lack of social capital, poor cooperation between the scientific community and entrepreneurs, or the side of the complicated legal environment for innovative activities. Similarly, the barriers to the development of different organizations are inadequate competencies of the employees, lack of cooperation skills, and anti-innovation attitudes. These pressing issues can only be solved through modern education and pro-innovative, creative attitudes.

Successful innovation depends on human creativity, knowledge, skills and talent nurtured and developed through education.

2.2. Social innovations - why are they needed

In the modern world, there is an overlap of activity in three sectors: the public (*state*) sector, the *business* sector and the *civil society* sector. The state sector operates mainly in the area of regulation and supervision. The business sector operates through market mechanisms and the civil society sector through non-profit-driven community activities. Thus, they solve problems that are important for the present day in various ways. Given the complexity of the modern world, problem-solving requires innovative, combined and consistent application of methods typical for all three sectors.

And this is how social innovation projects are understood - not limited to one sector but covering the whole problem. Therefore, social innovations are the best response to the challenges of the modern world.

Social innovations' goal is to meet the needs of society. Thus, social innovations are needed by societies and entrepreneurs. Civil societies are gaining strength and are more aware of their needs and possibilities, which they can express, i.e. via the Internet. They have the ability to make social changes but also to support initiatives particularly needed in their opinion. For entrepreneurs, these changes are a challenge and an opportunity, thanks to which they can develop and compete effectively with others. The keyword of the subject of social innovations is cooperation - between non-governmental organizations, enterprises and science.

The biggest challenges facing Poland, Norway, and other countries in the world are climate change and renewable energy solutions, unemployment, marginalization, ageing of the society and the uncertain situation of public finances. Such challenges require radical and wide-ranging innovations, both short-term and long-term endeavors. Each of these problems affects local and international communities and represents a potential for innovation, job creation and development. We should take advantage of these opportunities as they can change the situation in many areas.

We can boost economic growth, stabilize public finances, and balance the use of natural resources while reducing marginalization and unemployment by focusing on our resources and talents.

As mentioned before, successful innovations depend on human creativity, knowledge, skills and talent nurtured and developed through education. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the situation concerning educational systems and teaching practices in Poland and Norway - the two countries addressed through the Social Innovation Brokers project, which this report is a part of.

First, we will focus on the educational system in Poland and the current situation concerning social innovations in Poland. Then, we will address the situation in Norway.

2.3. Social innovation and social entrepreneurship

We find it important to clarify already at this stage that social entrepreneurship is related to social innovation, but the two phenomena are not the same.

It is the social entrepreneur who creates social innovation(s), which otherwise would have only been an idea for better ways of solving social problems and challenges.

In our Training we will lay special emphasis on clarifying the links between social entrepreneurship and social innovation and providing the necessary tools for social entrepreneurs for being successful in their social innovation activities.

3. Diagnosis of educational system and teaching practices in Poland

3.1. The Educational System in Poland

Pupils in the Polish educational system learn in two types of schools: from age 7 to 15, they attend primary school, and from age 15 to 19, they go to secondary school (high school). After finishing high school and passing the high school exam, students can apply to college. Schools are mostly public and governed by the state. For every level of education, the Polish Ministry of Education and Science defines sets of competencies required for students to obtain during the educational process. Digital and media competencies are one of those sets.

The Basic Curriculum for Pre-school Education and General Education indicates that the goal of general education is for students to acquire knowledge and be able to use such knowledge in practice to function in the modern world efficiently and responsibly. The key competencies to be acquired include the ability to read, to think mathematically and scientifically, to communicate in native and foreign languages, to use ICT, and to work in a team. Other competencies are "creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; development of critical and logical thinking skills, reasoning, argumentation and inference, critical analysis, scientific character, identifying and solving problems, as well as formulating conclusions." The fact that such skills are addressed, at least on paper, confirms the legislator's intentions to address the skills needed in the modern, innovative world.

Nevertheless, in practice, things are usually not as colorful as intended. The current Polish curriculum is a legacy of the Prussian education system, which was designed to educate obedient recruits for the army. It grows out of an ideology of cultural transmission, in which the child was expected to be intellectually subservient rather than independent in exploring the world. In Polish schools, positive protagonists are still the type of "renaissance men" who have freed themselves from the fear of nature and magic, who treat science as a liberation from the world in which knowledge was only for a few and was the domain of the elite.

It is difficult to disagree with the statement that nowadays, students are no longer the people the Polish educational system was designed for. We cannot question that the students, who live in a fast-paced, digitalized world, are different from students of all previous generations. That is why innovation should not only be cultivated in educational settings but also why educational settings should be addressed through innovations.

Innovation in education means promoting behaviors and actions which create new values and change the world. It also means creating structures, systems, and processes - which are themselves innovative. Moreover, it means bringing to life culture and shaping the innovation of individuals and the collective. The human being is always the starting point when it comes to innovation!

3.2 Creativity and Innovation in Polish Schools - Obstacles

Creativity is a crucial part of innovation. When addressing the development of pro-innovative competencies through education, it is valuable to focus on three separate, interdependent areas. First, teaching pro-innovative competencies; second, using innovative teaching methods; third, learning creatively.

There are issues which often stand in a way of teaching creativity - and teaching creatively - in Polish schools:

- Promoting shallow learning - about 90% of the knowledge acquired this way is lost. Getting grades and passing exams provides feedback to the teachers, but the knowledge gained this way does not really enrich students intellectually.
- Teachers using the "curriculum" - from the student's perspective, the curriculum is an abstract concept. This way of communication objectifies students and teaches them that cognitive processes are something outside their minds - something imposed and controlled from outside by authority.
- Teaching outdated content - lowers the authority of the school and the teacher. In addition, it deprives the student of the impression that knowledge is constantly evolving and that one must be vigilant while learning.
- The division into subjects - this is one of the canons of modern education systems, although it can negatively affect creativity. Teaching the core curriculum through interdisciplinary (cross-subject) projects should have better impact on students' creativity.
- Excessive favoritism for students who show a high level of restraint and discipline - focus on punishing extreme rule violations rather than rewarding those who have never transgressed any rules. The way the schools create "positive heroes" and "negative heroes" is fundamental in encouraging pro-innovative competencies.
- Stopping students from spontaneously trying to solve a problem before they know a method to solve it - a very harmful yet standard practice in schools.

- Meanwhile, in everyday life, when solving a problem, looking for how to solve it is part of the creative process.
- Promoting imitation, discouraging independence - using all sorts of set answers, and encouraging the rest of the class to act like the "model student".
- Strict distinction between "learning" and "play" - most creative companies get results by having employees have a great time.
- Insufficient use of modern technologies in the process of teaching
- Ineffective teaching methods that make it difficult to translate theoretical knowledge into practice.
- Insufficient cooperation of secondary schools with universities aimed at practical learning of the subject.
- Maladjustment of the teaching process to the requirements related to the formation in students of skills relevant to the modern labour market, as well as maladjustment of educational tools in this regard.

A school focused on assessing test scores takes away the meaning of creative thinking. Passing an exam is a bureaucratic event, not a student's achievement. Polish schools should introduce into their curricula the possibility of creating more sustainable achievements by students.

3.3. Digital Skills in Polish Schools

According to estimates, students of a Polish public school participate in 14,700 teaching hours throughout their education from the first grade of primary school to the fourth grade of high school. At school, the development of digital and media skills (computer science classes), which are undoubtedly important in developing innovations, is planned for one hour a week, which amounts to about 30 h a year. Media use other than in computer science classes is rare and not a common practice. In primary school (for eight years) and high school (for four years), approximately 360 h is allocated to learning computer science, accounting for 2.5% of all teaching hours in the entire education process.

In 2020, the situation in education changed globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The teaching process shifted to remote learning. Both students and teachers had to use the Internet tools - the situation required both groups' fluency in digital and media competencies. Still, after

coming back to in-person learning, the situation shifted to the pre-pandemic state. Digital skills are not a crucial part of the curriculum in Polish schools.

Still, it is important to teach digital competencies at school. We cannot assume that because the students are born at a specific time and have access to technology, they know how to use it or that everyday media consumption guarantees the acquisition of the ability to use it. It is necessary to build the ability to use digital technologies and media and to introduce innovation, to teach students the ability to learn and consider new technologies that are ubiquitous in their lives. However, these changes are complicated to implement in bureaucratic education systems.

Now that we discussed the educational situation regarding teaching creativity, digital skills, and pro-innovative behaviors, it is time to describe the social innovations and social and economic conditioning in Poland.

4. Social innovations in Poland - As of October 2022

4.1. Social innovations and social and economic conditions in Poland

The increase in material prosperity, which has been taking place in Poland since the nineties, is based on technological innovations and is undoubtedly associated with marked socio-economic progress. There have been favorable changes in the social position and living situation of a large part of society. There has been a quantum leap forward in the economy, expressed in the improvement of many economic indicators measuring changes on the macro (country) and micro (enterprise) scale.

However, at the same time, negative consequences of the current development path appeared. They express in:

- growing social inequalities

- rising unemployment
- social exclusion
- increasing environmental pollution and its impact on the health of society.

The external factor of development - technological innovation - is not enough. The resource we should reach for is people, their knowledge, and skills, which constitute an endogenous development factor, shaping the attitudes and behaviors and thus influencing activity, creativity, commitment and the effects of undertaken actions.

The level of Poland's socio-economic development achieved so far is still a long way from the vision of Poland in 2030 or 2050. This distance shows the scope and scale of challenges that await Polish society and economy. At the current stage of development, it is necessary to reach for human resources.

People, their knowledge and skills, are the basis for development. The creativity and active implementation of creative initiatives are to serve and address Poland's socio-economic challenges. Using such resources is what we refer to as the implementation of social innovation.

The distinguishing features of social innovations are improved quality of life in society (at home, work, social and natural environment) and investment in people. In terms of the implementation of social innovations, one can speak of specific features, such as:

- process nature of changes
- permanent improvements
- participants with pro-social attitudes, willingness to cooperate and trust.

While implementing social innovations, it is necessary to ensure the achievement of the intended goal, i.e. improving the quality of life and creating new social relations. Doing so means such social innovations can improve the quality of life and address Poland's social and economic challenges. Social innovations recognize people and their knowledge and skills as the source and driving force of modern development.

Social innovations attach great importance to shaping pro-social attitudes and behavior, without which it is impossible to raise activity, knowledge, and awareness. Such developments, in turn, help to use human potential to build a knowledge-based economy. Social innovations are characterized by the participation of societies at all stages of creating social innovations - coming up with the ideas, implementing them, and finally, consuming while consciously caring about the quality of their own life, the natural and social environment, and the future generations.

In this way, they are the driving force behind Poland's modernization, which ultimately equates to meeting social and economic challenges for Poland.

4.2. Social innovations - challenges and opportunities

Social innovation must have favorable conditions for development. While the idea arises under the influence of a real social need and is the result of internal motivation, its implementation requires favorable external conditions - faith in the idea, involvement and support of others working on making it real and disseminating it. Social innovations require good external conditions, a supporting social climate or efficient assessment and support instruments to develop.

The barriers to innovation in Poland include the lack of an appropriate level of innovation and cooperation culture. While we have good intellectual capital, social capital is one of the lowest in Europe. Cooperation and communication between entities (enterprises and the public and private sectors) developing and implementing innovations are also weaker than in other European Union countries.

It is worth noting that in the last 2.5 years, the world has been shaken by two crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Both crises caused inflation, supply chain disruptions, social isolation, and increased mortality.

However, crises are also a chance for change and development. The pandemic accelerated the digitization of many areas of life, and the war caused migration responsible for many initiatives supporting refugees.

As for the importance of innovation in general, it is a derivative of the quality of social dialogue, the awareness of citizens and entrepreneurs, and of the administration. Understanding innovation functions in cooperation between science and business, most often in technology. Meanwhile, social innovations arise primarily at the meeting point of sectors to develop new solutions using the space between areas, processes, or institutions. Regarding the innovation support system there is still a huge place for improvements. It is about qualifications, financing, setting research directions, conducting research, and implementing results, as well as building networks. Moreover, there are few reliable mechanisms for assessing social innovation.

In Poland, to accelerate the development of social innovations, there is a need for well-developed and appropriate support infrastructures, such as clusters, technology parks, business incubators, and developed financing infrastructure.

The external factors contributing to the improvement of the innovation potential of Polish society undoubtedly include increasing access to modern technologies and media, which is conducive to the democratization of communication and cooperation. On the one hand, this helps to disseminate and exchange knowledge and good practices, and on the other - to co-

finance ideas for social innovations. Examples of such mechanisms are, i.e. idea exchanges, crowdfunding, participatory budgeting or the Funders Ring.

Democratization means the participation of the entire society in creating innovations (so-called co-solving), using banks of ideas, hackathons, incubators or web portals dedicated to new solutions.

The space for creating innovative solutions to social problems is undoubtedly a sign of the new times. The chance of popularizing the developed solutions may increase if we add the possibility of using open licenses.

All kinds of initiatives based on intersectoral cooperation also deserve attention. The cooperation of businesses with social organizations and the public sector may inspire ideas that solve specific social needs.

These activities fit in well with social responsibility, based on the broadly understood dialogue of the organization with its social environment and openness to new business development opportunities for the benefit of the entire social environment of the company.

The success factor seems to be the extension of instruments and principles for financing social innovation. On the one hand, one should remember comprehensive support for the innovation - from idea to implementation, on the other hand - about increasing the range of instruments, e.g. by replication grants, repayable instruments (loans) or shares.

It is also crucial to better understand the role of social innovations in the modern economy and solving social problems and the mechanisms of their formation and effective implementation. Thanks to this knowledge, we will be able to improve the support system for the processes of creating and implementing innovations that are so socially important.

For Poland to achieve its ambitious development goals in the field of social innovation, it is worth focusing on six areas:

- i. social capital
- ii. human capital
- iii. infrastructure
- iv. natural resources
- v. energy
- vi. quality of the institution.

In all these areas, including all resources available for development, Polish society must learn to operate more efficiently and effectively, achieving effects with more limited expenditure.

Achieving such a goal is possible only in the case of establishing cooperation between state institutions, businesses and civil society, aimed at developing the best solutions accepted by stakeholders.

4.3 Social innovations in Malopolska Region

The Regional Center for Social Policy in Krakow has between 2016-2019 implemented an interesting project resulting in a true success story: Malopolska Incubator for Social Innovation, a funding space for bottom-up, fully-supported innovations in the field of care services for dependents: elderly and disabled.

The initiative was deeply rooted in the demographic and regional prognosis of the area. According to regional forecasts in 2050, every third Malopolska citizen will be 65+, and every tenth 80+ and the number of dependents is constantly increasing. On top of this 12% of the population is living with disabilities in the region.

Believing in the potential that lies in local communities, the Malopolska Incubator for Social Innovation - pilot project used non-standard ways and practices unprecedented in local government administration: Design Thinking, creating open-sourced products, reduced bureaucracy and supported by full financing of costs.

In the framework of the project from 87 submitted ideas 40 have been selected, verified, and funded, among them: 7 products, 26 services, 7 IT solutions.

76% of participants of the incubator research confirmed that taking part in the project has changed their life!

The success of the project has also led to the establishment of a regional Social Innovation Council, which consists of leaders, representatives of many aid institutions, universities, scientists and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The Council is also a guarantee of the long-term impact of innovation in Malopolska region.

5. Diagnosis of educational systems and teaching practices in Norway

5.1 The Educational System in Norway

Children and young people in Norway have a right and an obligation to complete primary and lower secondary education, and adults are also entitled to primary and lower secondary education. Everyone who completes primary and lower secondary education is entitled to upper secondary education qualifying for further studies or a vocation. The Higher Education Entrance Qualification qualifies students for admission to university or university college programs. Higher education is offered at bachelor, master and PhD level and should be research-based. Tertiary vocational education is a short vocational alternative to higher education.

In Norway but all children are entitled to a **kindergarten** place in their home municipality from the age of one. The purpose of kindergarten is to help families and to contribute to children's social and educational development. It is also intended to make it possible for parents and guardians to work or study while having responsibility for young children.

Primary and secondary education in Norway normally lasts for 13 years. This includes primary and lower secondary education (years 1–10) and upper secondary education (years 11–13). The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for supervising the quality of primary and secondary education.

Upper secondary education consists of either a general studies program preparing pupils for further studies, or a vocational program. The education is intended to qualify pupils for work or higher education. The county authorities fund upper secondary education and have a high degree of freedom as regards how it is organized.

Everyone who completes primary and lower secondary education, or an equivalent education is entitled to upper secondary education. Adults over the age of 25 are entitled to upper secondary education for adults upon application.

Upper secondary education is divided into twelve programs: four general studies and eight vocational programs.

Vocational programs lead to a trade or journeyman's certificate, normally after two years at school and a two-year apprenticeship period. Vocational programs for vocations that are not recognized trades will consist entirely of school-based tuition. It is possible to achieve the Higher Education Entrance Qualification by supplementing a vocational education (by taking the Upper Secondary Level 3 program Supplementary program for general university admissions certification).

Folk high schools are a special form of boarding schools in the Nordic countries with no examinations. This school form was founded by the Danish educationalist and theologian

Grundtvig in 1844 in Røding. Folk high schools are an alternative and supplement to the formal

education system. The Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for administering the folk high schools. There are no tuition fees, but students pay to live in the halls of residence and also for their board, course material and study trips.

There are both independent, liberal folk high schools and Christian folk high schools owned by or closely affiliated to churches and Christian organizations. The schools offer different program subjects that are normally taught over one school year (33 weeks), but some also offer shorter courses. Most schools have an 18-year age limit, and many choose to take a year at a folk high school after completing upper secondary school.

Another popular form of education in Norway are **Tertiary Vocational Programs** which are short programs of vocational study that build on upper secondary education or equivalent prior learning and work experience. No Higher Education Entrance Qualification is required. Tertiary vocational programs vary in length, but they should have a scope corresponding to between six months and two years of study.

There are both public and private vocational schools. Among other things, the county authorities offer publicly funded technical and maritime programs as well as health and social work programs. Private providers offer many different programs in the areas of creative, commercial, service, media, multimedia and ICT studies. Tertiary vocational education is intended as an alternative to higher education that imparts knowledge and skills that are directly applicable in the workplace.

Tertiary vocational programs run in Norwegian and must be accredited by NOKUT. Such approval entitles students to financial support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen).

Higher education in Norway is delivered by 33 accredited (approved) higher education institutions in Norway (October 2019): 10 universities, 9 specialised university institutions (1 of which are art academy) and 14 university colleges. In addition, there are 18 non-accredited university colleges offering approved first degree programs.

Since 2003, higher education has been structured as three-year bachelor's programs, two-year master's programs and three-year PhD programs, with some exceptions.

Life-long learning: Under the Norwegian Working Environment Act, all employees are entitled to full or partial leave for up to three years in order to attend organized courses of education.

Adult education in Norway aims to enable adults to acquire necessary basic skills and allow them to formalize and develop their qualifications. The municipalities and county authorities are responsible for providing primary and secondary education for adults.

Continuing and further education programs allow people to update their competence and improve their ability to adapt. Such programs are intended to ensure that enterprises and organizations have employees with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Formal, informal and non-formal learning methods

Formal learning – as defined by OECD - is associated with structured, classroom-based education offered in an organized environment, that is, at school, college, or university. It is a process within a given time frame, with objectives and a curriculum, leading to gaining degrees or certifications. If we look into formal learning, it is a trainer who provides the training, determines the physical location and methodology.

In Norway non-formal and informal learning methods are regarded to be best suited for teaching social entrepreneurship among youth. Formal learning is found to be least helpful, when it comes to stimulating creativity, proactive attitude and acquiring new skills and competencies.

Life experiences are considered to be the primary and most important teacher of informal learning or 'experiential learning' that one faces throughout one's life.

OECD's definition of informal learning stresses, that Informal learning is never organized, has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner's standpoint. Often it is referred to as learning by experience or just as experience. The idea is that the simple fact of existing constantly exposes the individual to learning situations, at work, at home or during leisure time for instance. This definition, with a few exceptions also meets with a fair degree of consensus.

Non-formal education is provided not only by public institutions but also public-private partnerships, employers, civic social groups, NGOs or international agencies. It takes place exterior to a formal and organized learning arrangement. However, we can also say that non-formal learning is relatively organized and systemic, but it does not mean that it should be necessarily planned beforehand with specific intention from both the learner and the educator to achieve some task which involves learning. It is evident that for such learning, guidance from the educator is needed. This is a kind of training that is not mandatory but learned as an acquired skill.

5.2 Creativity and innovation in Norwegian schools

Norway prides itself upon being an innovative and forward-thinking society. As such, the concept of innovation has been given great importance in Norwegian public schools. The terms 'innovation' and 'innovative skills' are mentioned throughout the Norwegian curriculum — not only in traditionally creative subjects such as Art and Crafts but also in traditional STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

In 2016, the Norwegian Minister of Education and Research, Torbjørn Røe Isaksen invited the key players of the ecosystem and the Norwegian local and regional authorities to a conference on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the Norwegian educational system. Despite consensus, both in the government and in the educational system that the development of innovation is important, there are little to no strategies employed to describe how to achieve innovation development. In fact, end of 2022, still six years after, the innovation practice needs to be innovated.

5.3 Digital skills in Norwegian schools

Digital skills are defined as one of five basic skills in Norway's national curriculum. They are considered fundamental to learning in all subjects as well as a prerequisite for learners to be able to demonstrate their competences and qualifications.

Digital skills involve being able to use digital tools, media and resources, efficiently and responsibly, to solve practical tasks, find and process information, design digital products and communicate content. Digital skills also include developing digital judgment by acquiring knowledge and good strategies for using the Internet. They are seen as a prerequisite for further learning and for active participation in working life and a society in a constant change. The framework defines four subcategories of digital skills: search and process, produce, communicate and digital judgement.

In 2020 Norway started to implement **a ground-breaking initiative** to modernize the country's primary and secondary school curriculum **by incorporating digital learning** which is being rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Research and incorporates digital awareness, digital responsibility and digital competence. The reform desires to achieve a balance between teaching responsible digital skills and the personal use of evolving digital equipment, such as smartphones, iPads and other internet-connected devices by students.

The digitization of Norway's primary and secondary schools is intended as the first major step in **a process of tech-influenced education**. Although the new teaching curriculum is not expected to bring immediate revolutionary changes in methods or practices, the longer-term intention is that "screens" will replace books and paper materials as the most common means of delivering information in Norway's schools and colleges.

6. Social entrepreneurship and innovation in Norway – State of the art October 2022

The Scandinavian countries are rooted in a social-democratic welfare state, with a large public sector that emphasizes equal distribution of income as well as gender equality. In terms of democratic governance, the Scandinavian model is characterized by a culture of compromise in politics, local government autonomy and cooperation between the state and civil-society organizations.

In Norway in specific on the one hand the integration between the state and popular movements and on the other hand a social contract between the state and individuals according to which the central purpose of policy is to maximize individual autonomy.

In contemporary Norway, the welfare state provides universal social services to its citizens. Municipalities play a central role in welfare- service provision, as most welfare services are decentralized and delivered by local public agencies. In comparison with most other countries, in Norway, the prevalence of child poverty, social exclusion and exclusion from the job market is low.

However, surveys indicate that the proportion of citizens experiencing such problems is rising, and ensuring that public welfare services reach the most vulnerable groups appears as particularly challenging.

Although Norway avoided invasive austerity measures in public services in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the gap between demands for social services and the welfare state's re-sources to address them is expected to grow in the foreseeable future.

Social entrepreneurship is relatively new as a field of study and research. Until today there is no public register of social entrepreneurs in Norway - figures from two recent studies in the area, however, point in the direction of a number of 300 to 400 social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs in Norway are emerging both as small and innovative limited companies linked to networks in the business community as well as out of the voluntary sector and large non-profit actors having activities aimed at social work.

Two relatively different types of social enterprises are predominant in Norway:

- small, newly established private companies organized as LTDs, non-profit LTDs and business foundations, with few employees and relatively little turnover;
- large and professionalized organizations designed as NGOs, non-profit foundations, and cooperatives, which are increasingly adapting to a commercial market and interest in social innovation in their project development.

In Norway social entrepreneurship has only to some extent found its way into the education curriculum.

Until now, the Norwegian Best Practice in the field of Entrepreneurship is related to the start-up world: The award-winning **Norwegian School of Entrepreneurship (Gründerskolen)** is a Norwegian academic cooperation program involving all the universities and several university colleges in Norway, coordinated by the Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Oslo. The program focuses on high-tech startups, and many of the work placements are with companies in the IT, biotech or other technology sectors. The alumni network consists of over 1,500 former students and is by far the largest network of its kind in Norway.

The program has received a prize for 'Best quality in higher education' from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, an award for "Best Learning Environment" at the University of Oslo and "Best Startup Industry Provider" in the Norwegian Startup Awards.

In regard to **the state of the art in social innovation in Norway** in 2022 the OECD published a study assessing the implementation of the recommendations from the OECD Innovation Policy Review of Norway 2017 along four major themes:

- (1) Developing research communities of outstanding quality;
- (2) Enhancing competitiveness and innovation capacity;
- (3) Tackling major social challenges and
- (4) Improving the governance of the science, technology and innovation system.

Based on the results of this assessment new opportunities for reforms in the Norwegian Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education have been identified for the period 2023-2032.

Last but not least as a consequence of the Post-COVID economic development and the war on Ukraine the Nordic Council of Ministers has since 2019/ 2020 decided to lay special emphasis

on supporting collaboration between Nordic actors in the field of social entrepreneurship and social innovation during the coming years.

Nordic Social Entrepreneurship 2.0 – a project aimed at mapping of social innovation stakeholders in the Nordic Countries was carried out with financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers 2019-2022. The final report of the project expected to be published in the first half year of 2023 will provide an upgrading of the report ‘Social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the Nordic countries’ carried out for the Nordic Council 2013-2015.

7. Comparisons and Conclusions

7.1. About Linking Foundation

Linking Foundation, founded and led by Piotr Olszowka is passionate about 'Supporting Local Ties', training and motivating people in various non-profit projects dedicated to women and youths, especially involving business Digital Transformation, e-commerce and marketing.

[Linkingfoundation.org](https://linkingfoundation.org)

7.2. European Centre for Women and Technology

ECWT is the leading European Platform for women in Digital Transformation, in safeguarding the gender dimension and DEIS (diversity, equity, inclusion and sustainability) in research and innovation and for measurably and significantly increasing the number of girls and women in STEM careers, in education, workforce, entrepreneurship and leadership. ECWT has a long Track record of large scale EU Programmes and EEA and Norway Grants co-financed, UN-DESA Award rewarded projects and as organizer of high-level EU and national conferences Related to entrepreneurship, digital skills and jobs, e-skills and e-leadership skills initiatives or hosting together with the EU-GCC Dialogue for Economic Diversification the '4.0 Skills – Women's Path to Ikigai' high-level event @ World Expo 2020 in Dubai the 24th October 2021.

[ECWT](#)

Linking Foundation and the European Centre for Women and Technology have come together to find common solution in their first joint project [IntegrART](#) for empowering and integrating migrant communities through Digital Creativity and their success in creating growing Community of Practice around the agenda during 2021-2023 has led to synergies and spinoffs.

In Chapters 1 to 6 we have described the considerable differences in the Polish and Norwegian social entrepreneurship and innovation environment in which Linking Foundation and ECWT operate and which have led their responsible organizations to formulating the need for taking actions towards developing a totally new type of Social Innovation Brokers Training. This happened in fact before the outbreak of the war on Ukraine.

The political development since 24th February 2022 has, however, given special impetus to speeding up our work and focusing on how to find the most efficient and effective solutions to the social challenges of the exponentially growing number of refugees in the Malopolska region.

After starting the project, in the autumn of 2022, Linking Foundation has reached out to The Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow and the Malopolska Region’s Incubation Centre.

7.3. The Social Innovation Brokers Training & The Sessions

The Social Innovation Brokers Training consists of 100 hours training of which:

- 25 hours presentations
- 25 hours workshop and exercises
- 50 hours piloting and field work.

The presentations and the workshops will be facilitated by two skilled professionals, a facilitator and a supporting trainer - preferably a man and a woman – as the Project Team believes that diverse teams and DEIS (diversity, equity, inclusion and sustainability) provides a more constructive atmosphere for implementation and delivery of the work.

Facilitators should have strong merits both in regard to hard and soft skills:

Hard skills	Soft skills
Social innovation and entrepreneurship skills & experiences Ecosystem building skills & experiences Funding & alternative financing knowhow Negotiations, IPR, Legal issues	Management skills Interpersonal communication skills Networking, problem solving and collaboration skills

All sessions should be recorded and in the end the script of the sessions should be provided for documentation and as basis for evaluation and quality improvements. The number of participants in the groups should be max 10 people.

Participants of the Social Innovation Brokers training will have access to the SIB Mentoring Community for continuous support.

7.4. Who is the Train the Trainers Guidebook for?

The Social Innovation Brokers Guidebook will be developed in two versions, one for the Trainers and the other one for the participants of the trainings. Both materials provide tailored methodologies and tools for assisting the work of the target group.

7.5. What is the structure of the Guidebook?

The Guidebook follows a strict structure and consists of 5 Modules. Each module provides a set of tools with clearly defined objectives and step-by-step implementation instructions, timeframe, and provides a set of tools - required materials:

Guidebook for the Social Innovation Brokers Train the Trainers Course

<p>MODULE 1 Introduction to Social Innovation Brokers Training</p>	<p>Session 1.1 Selecting Sancho Panzas with 21st century skills Tool 01: Key concepts of Social Innovation Tool 02: Why Train the Trainers in Malopolska Region?</p>
<p>MODULE 2 Team Building and Individual Commitments</p>	<p>Session 2.1 Getting Started Tool 03: Introduction of Participants Tool 04: Building a Social Innovation Brokers Community Tool 05: Ice-Breakers & Team Building</p>
<p>MODULE 3 The Social Innovation Brokering Process</p>	<p>Session 3.1 The 4 key stages of doing social innovation Tool 06: Ideation: Understanding needs and identifying potential solutions Tool 07: Developing, prototyping and piloting ideas Tool 08: Monitoring - Sustaining -Scaling up Tool 09: Learning and evolving until a systemic change</p>
<p>Module 4 Success Factors of Social Innovation Brokerage</p>	<p>Session 4.1 The necessary skills set of Social Innovation Brokers Tool 10: Knowledge in the specific field Tool 11: Human centered design thinking approach Tool 12: Project management and delivery Tool 13: Communicating the project - Reporting on Impact</p> <p>Session 4.2 Creating Social Entrepreneurship Tool 14: Social entrepreneurship mindset & skills of a social entrepreneur Tool 15: How to set up a social enterprise? Tool 16: Legal framework: in the EU and on a national level Tool 17: Visualizing different business models & The Business Model Canvas Tool 18: Social Enterprise Marketing Tool 19: Scaling your idea, alternative financing, raising impact investment capital Tool 20: Design, writing and implementation of a Business Plan Tool 21: Social innovation camp for empowering young social entrepreneurs Tool 22: Pushing the industry - Focus on social impact oriented project planning</p> <p>Session 4.3 Enabling conditions for Social Innovation Tool 23: Building alliances & creating ecosystems the Quadruple Helix model Tool 24: Networks and Community Building</p>
<p>Modul 5 Looking back to Move Forward</p>	<p>Session 5.1 Training Evaluation Tool 25: Focus Groups</p>

7.6. How to use the Guidebook?

This Guidebook provides a simple step-by-step guide to how to become a successful Social Innovation Broker.

The Guidebook will take you through:

- 1) Necessary skills and competences of Social Innovation Brokers and the Social Innovation ecosystem in the Malopolska Region
- 2) Team building and Individual commitments in your Social Innovation Community
- 3) Key stages of the Social Innovation Brokering Process
- 4) Success Factors and Good Examples of Social Innovation Brokerage
- 5) Evaluation of the Social Innovation Brokerage Training and Lessons Learned

The Guidebook is rounded off with some tips and advice for further reading:

- Glossary of key concepts
- Latest Reference Literature
- Useful Links and Contacts
- Handouts used during the implementation of the Social Innovation Brokers Training

Glossary

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The context in which entrepreneurs exist, consisting of (among others) other entrepreneurs, support organizations and institutions.

Impact investment	Investment in new ideas of how to solve different social issues, potentially by impact investment firms the government or other entities.
Impact investment firm	Investment firms targeting specifically social innovation.
Incubator	An entity that supports entrepreneurs with the process of creating a company.
Network	Relationships and connections among actors.
Social enterprise	An enterprise whose operations address social issues. The operations may or may not be innovative.
Social entrepreneur	An entrepreneur whose business idea is a social innovation. However, a social innovation is not necessarily invented by a social entrepreneur.
Social impact	The positive difference a social initiative brings to a certain social issue. This is often hard to measure.
Social innovation	Innovative solution that solves societal issues. The innovation may or may not be invented by a social entrepreneur.
Social Innovation Incubators	Incubators which aim to support innovation with a social interest
Vocational Education and training – VET	Vocational education and training, sometimes simply called <i>vocational training</i> , is the training in skills and teaching of knowledge related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation in which the student or employee wishes to participate. Vocational education may be undertaken at an educational institution, as part of secondary or tertiary education , or may be part of initial training during employment, for example as an apprentice, or as a combination of formal education and workplace learning.

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[White paper \(Meld. St.\) No. 28 \(2015-16\) – A renewal of the knowledge promotion reform](#) (in Norwegian)

Useful links & Contacts

Challenge Works

Challenge Works is a social enterprise founded in 2012 by NESTA's Centre for Challenge Prizes with the goal to run challenge prizes that support social innovation across the globe
<https://challengeworks.org/>

InDigiSE

An ERASMUS+ project co-financed with 143.307€ between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2022 which aimed to promote social entrepreneurship in the youth sector by digital and informal education tools. The project was led by Klaipėdos Universitetas from Lithuania and with partners from Norway (Kristiansand Katedralskole Gimle), Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs (Poland), Socialas Inovācijas Centrs (Latvia) and Stowarzyszenie Gmin RP Euroregion Baltyk (Poland)
[InDigiSE website](#)

Made in Danube

An INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme involving 15 partners and 3 associated strategic partners from 10 Danube Region countries, led by Steinbeis Europa Zentrum generating significant changes throughout the entire Danube Region to improve framework conditions for innovation and support the implementation of regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (2017-2019 with a budget of 1.9 M €).
[Made-in-Danube website](#)

NESTA

The UK innovation agency for social good. NESTA designs, tests and scale new solutions to society's biggest problems with the goal to changing millions of lives for the better: <https://www.nesta.org.uk>

**Regional Centre for
Social Policy in Krakow**

“Malopolska Incubator for Social Innovation”- A success story of a project implemented 2016-2019 for inspiring, developing, testing and implementing modern solutions in the care of dependent people. In the framework of the project 40 ideas, were chosen verified and financed. Among them: 7 products, 26 services, 7 IT solutions. Grantees of the incubator were: 16 representatives of the not for profit sector, 13 natural persons, 5 public bodies, 4 universities, 2 informal groups, 2 businesses

[The Guidebook](#) published shares good practices as well as lessons learned.

SEiSMiC

‘Societal Engagement in Science, Mutual Learning in Cities’ is an EU research project that was financed by the European Commission’s 7th Research Framework Program (FP7-SIS, 2013-2016) and funded by the EC with € 2.995.117 addressing social innovation incubation in an urban context.

The project was closely linked to the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe. The project created a structured dialogue and mutual learning ecosystem of citizens and urban actors by setting up National Networks (and expanding on existing networks where possible) in 10 countries across Europe.

In the framework of the project the European Centre for Women and Technology presented the 1st Gender Action Plan for Integrating Gender and Social Innovation in city development.

<https://ecwt.eu/portfolio-item/seismic/>

SkillLab

Skilllab is an EU Social Innovation EU Challenge 2021 Year Award winning Dutch mobile solution that helps people to identify and express their skills.

On the basis of a detailed skill-profile, individual pathways are shown by mapping skills to occupations and to training offerings that address skill-gaps.

<https://skilllab.io/>

SSEs

A Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy

Ecosystems", initiated by OECD and funded by the European Union's Foreign Partnership Instrument, to support the development and internationalization of the social and solidarity economy.

The project is focusing on the European Union, OECD, Brazil, Canada, India, South Korea, Mexico and the US.

To find out more:

<https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-economy/oecd-global-action/>