SOCIAL INNOVATION VERSUS GENERATIONS - NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN GENERATIONS ON THE FIELD OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

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Abstract:
Nowadays, one of the most pressing social problem is the generational shift, and the generational differences which however can be a driving force of finding and adapting common solutions (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). The outcomes of social innovation might be the form of new institutions, new social movements, new social practices, or different structures of collaborative work (Mumford, 2002). Universities have a great chance to improve or build relationships between different members of different generations in order to accelerate the innovation and creativity in a society. The viability and economic potential of a region is determined by the quality of human capital which is influenced primarily by the knowledge, competences and the creativity of stakeholders of the region. Lack of social innovation and missing creativity highlights the need for interactions between stakeholders (Callon, 2007) which can affect the retaining ability of the workforce and the population in a region.
The main aim of the study is to review the concept of social innovation and creativity from the view of generational differences. Because the featured review is a work in progress therefore the study is limited to the literature review and a case study. Further results of the study are indicators of cooperation between generational members in order to improve the innovation and creativity of society.

Keywords: social innovation, intergenerational cooperation, generations

1. INTRODUCTION

We are surrounded by a number of urging social issues today: social exclusion, poverty, high unemployment rates, aging population, deteriorating environment and many more. These problems are unfortunately present everywhere in the world, and we are faced with them in our immediate vicinity as well. The paper aims to discover the social innovation process, and the intergenerational cooperation during the process. First we are defining the social innovation from the view of creativity because the further goal of the paper is to discover how social innovation can be facilitated through intergenerational cooperation. Than we investigate the role of generations in intergenerational cooperation. We use case study method in order to present a good practice for the intergenerational cooperation which can improve social innovation. The following research questions were formulated:

   Rq1: How can we define social innovation in the context of creativity?
   Rq2: According to the literature how can generations influence the social innovation paradigm?
   Rq3: What kind of indicators are signifying success in an intergenerational cooperation in order to facilitate the social innovation process?

2. DEFINING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CREATIVITY

The topic of social innovation is receiving greater attention on macro level in last few decades. According to Rifkin (2014) "a collaborative economy and society, people and organisations do not just share existing goods and services but are also empowered on a large scale, for the first time since the modern market economy formed" (p. 14).

According to Mumford (2002, p. 253) social innovation is "the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions to meet one or more common goals." Creativity plays an important role during social innovation process, because the process starts "with goals that initiate intentional problem solving that leads to solutions by means of reasoning, association, analogy, and conceptual combination", as in case of normal creativity process too (Jiang & Thagard, 2014, p. 383).

According to the review of several studies social innovation is:

  - a new combination and/or new configuration of social practices (Hochgerner, 2011; Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010; Cajaiba- Santana, 2014; Ruiz & Parra, 2013),
  - the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) (The European Commission, 2013),
  - in order to satisfy different human needs (Moulaert et al., 2005; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010; Cajaiba- Santana, 2014; The European Commission, 2013; Ruiz & Parra, 2013) and
  - to achieve changes in social relations (Moulaert et al., 2005; Cajaiba- Santana, 2014; The European Commission, 2013; Ruiz & Parra, 2013) and
  - to increase the socio-political capability and the access to resources (Moulaert et al., 2005).

An innovation should meet with the following two requirements: the novelty (it need to be original), and the improvement (more effective than the pre-existing alternatives) (Phills et al., 2008). In case of social innovation novelty means that the new solution needs to address social problems, and the improvements need to affect to the society in general.

Social innovation encompasses new practices, methods, processes in order to reach social change. According to Zapf social change is a "process of change in the social structure of a society in its constitutive institutions, cultural patterns, associated social actions and conscious awareness" (Zapf, 2003, p. 427). The main actor in the process of social innovation is the social innovator. Social innovators are often referred as game changers. In this context game changers are broadly conceptualized as "macro-phenomena (events and trends) that are perceived to change (the rules, fields and players in) the 'game' of societal interaction" (Westley et al., 2016, p. 1).

3. GENERATIONS AS GAME-CHANGERS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL COOPERATION

Social innovation is based on collective actions which are considered in a given social system. The social system in which the social innovation occurs is important because of its' historical and cultural context (Novy & Leubolt, 2005; Tapsell & Woods, 2010). "Sustainable social innovations arise from relationships and partnerships between different interconnected players… Effective solutions require people from different walks of life to work collaboratively across academic disciplines, economic sectors, and geographic boundaries" (Freeman & Hawkins, 2016, p. 7). Therefore intergenerational cooperation

is major to promote social innovation if we aim to involve several generations into a social innovation process.

The following table contains the most important characteristics of generations in connection with social innovation (Table 1).

Table 1: Generational characteristics in connection with social innovation

Builders (1926-1945)	Baby boom (1946-1964)	X (1965-1979)	Y (1980-1995)	Z (1996-2010)
Conservative and disciplined, like social order, averse to risk, strongly committed toward teamwork and collaboration the most affluent elderly population (Tolbize, 2008)	Less important: advancement potential (Barford & Hester, 2011)	Work ethic: task-oriented, self-confident, independent, stereotype: less open to change, cynical, family is a priority, self-sufficient (Leahy et al.,2011)	Important: advancement potential, free time (Barford & Hester, 2011)	Born into digital world, change orientation, new ethical values (Besenyei, 2016)
	Positive contribution to society and to the health of the planet, work/life balance matters to them (Hewlett et al., 2009)	More independent, autonomous and self-confident than previous generations, they have strong feelings of loyalty towards their family and friends, they value continuous learning and skill development, money does not necessarily motivate, adaptable to change, pragmatic and creative (Tolbize, 2008)	Experiences and challenges, comfortable working with people from different ethnicities and cultures, eco-awareness, social consciousness, positive contribution to society and to the health of the planet (Hewlett et al., 2009)	
	Being more process- than result-oriented, being goal-oriented, accepting of diversity, liberal, they value health and wellness and personal growth, they thrive on the possibility for change (Tolbize, 2008)		Work ethic: multi-tasking, group-oriented, stereotype: open to change, spoiled, self-sufficient, comfortable with diversity, highly knowledgeable and comfortable with technology (Leahy et al.,2011)	

Source: Tolbize, 2008; Barford & Hester, 2011; Leahy et al.,2011; Besenyei, 2016; Hewlett et al., 2009

According to Freeman and Hawkins (2016) social innovators are able to bring transformation in themselves and able to contribute to social change. The problem of the existing labour market can be traced back to the increasing number of ageing people and the appearance of the need of new management tools in order to treat multi-generational cooperation. New cooperation, communicational and knowledge sharing forms are developing day-to-day. According to Bontekoning (2011) intergenerational cooperation is optimal in the following environment (Table 2).

Table 2: The optimal environment for intergenerational cooperation

Factors	Explanation
Personal and authentic Concrete, respectful and direct	Being personal; seeing the individual; being authentic; communicating what you personally consider important; being direct in a respectful way; and speaking from your heart; being specific
Leading and structuring the process	Choosing an (informal) leader of the process; proposing a certain design of the process; striving towards a collective goal or solution; and putting subjects aside or in the centre with clear arguments
Being curious and asking questions	Going on questioning; listening to each other; look at each other; putting forward concrete questions for the group; and devoting equal attention to all the members of the group
Respecting and bridging differences	Allowing room for other perspectives; making an effort to give an idea you consider illogical a chance; reflecting on differences; and making an effort to compare diverse opinions, look at their differences and try to bridge them
Work on an urgent question	Working together on the question which feels most urgent and realistic
Positivism and seeing opportunities	Optimism; seeing opportunities; giving complements to each other; and humour

Source: Bontekoning, 2011, pp. 11-12

The above mentioned factors influence how generations participate in the process of creating new social innovations, and by learning about each other the culture becomes open for various generations. Intergenerational cooperation can be a driving force of the creation, transfer and retention of knowledge.

4. THE ROLE OF INTERGENERATIONAL COOPERATION IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE SOCIAL INNOVATION PROCESS – CASE STUDY

The following actors have an important role during the process of social innovation: Social enterprises, and other actors of the social economy, Civil society, Social movements, Science, Universities and Research Institutes, Companies, Customers/ users/ citizens/ beneficiaries, Designers, Poor and marginalised groups and Government actors (Howaldt et al., 2014, p. 159). The role of universities is vital to the contribution to regional development especially from the economic, social and cultural view (Rosenberg, 2004; NCIHE, 1997).

The aim of the case study is to show how a university can participate in a process of the creation of social innovation, how a university can be a bridge between generations through the social innovation process. We aimed to discover the indicators that are signifying success in an intergenerational cooperation in order to facilitate the social innovation process.

The case study is based on a project, namely the International Social Innovation Competition for Students and Adult Learners (henceforward: I-SCIS). The duration of the project was 3 years (2014-2017), and more than 300 students, adult learners, mentors, professors, agency members, professional partners, decision-makers etc. participated in it.

4.1. Background of I-SICS

The I-SICS project's aim is to raise at raising the awareness of university students and adult learners to the most important problems of their regions, and to urge them to think in a socially responsible way, so that they become active and committed actors of their homelands.

As set out in the EU Modernization Agenda, it is important to "stimulate the development of entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills in all disciplines and in all three cycles, and promote innovation in higher education through more interactive learning environments and strengthened knowledge-transfer infrastructure… and to… strengthen the knowledge-transfer infrastructure of higher education institutions and enhance their capacity to engage in start-ups and spin-offs" (EC, 2011, p. 11). By putting together a social entrepreneurship training that makes use of state of the art teaching tools and materials, the project's goal is to give students the necessary skills and the motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities that aim not only at producing goods and services for their own benefits, but for the benefit of the society as well.

The overall goal of the project initiator as well as that of the participating universities and adult education centres is to become more competitive, which can be achieved through a high quality and attractive education offer and can be measured by the number of successful graduates. By introducing new concepts to the participating students and by giving them new tools and new skills, the participating organisations aim at increasing the employment chances of their students, while urging them to act in ways that also benefit other members of the society as well, thus enhancing equality. By creating an easy-to-apply competition concept that can be adapted anywhere in Europe, the project expands its range of target and offers a solution to other institutions, regions and communities as well.

The main objective of the project is to create an adaptable methodology that continuously provides new social innovation solutions for Europe. In order to accomplish this goal, the project is going to introduce an International Social Innovation Competition for Students. Through this initiation the project is further aimed to:
- promote the concept of social entrepreneurship and social innovation
- draw the attention of university students to various social issues
- urge students to think in a socially responsible way
- encourage them to find solutions to social issues using entrepreneurial concepts
- create a competition concept that can easily be replicated anywhere in Europe
- improve entrepreneurial skills of students
- enhance international cooperation between students

For the elaboration a well experienced Consortium is formulated from six expert groups, representing five countries from the European Union. Two universities, one adult education provider, two non-governmental and one public organisation responsible for regional development have, teamed up for this work. Altogether all of the generations were represented during the project. Students, and adult

learners were from Y and Z generations, mentors and trainers were X, Y generations, the partners of the consortium were from the Y, X generations and Baby Boomers, and the organisational team, the jury and sponsors were from the Y, X generations and Baby Boomers, and Builders.

4.2. The process of I-SICS

During the preparation phase of the project, a research on the good practices in the field of various entrepreneurship and innovation competitions and student contests around the world were analysed. There is already an emerging tendency of organising start-up contests across Europe, however the competitions covering the field of social innovation are scarce, especially the ones organised for students.

We presented the research results in a univocal way having the same understanding of the issues identified, being:

1. Social entrepreneurship and innovation competitions (start up, social innovation, social entrepreneurship)
2. Methodologies of competitions
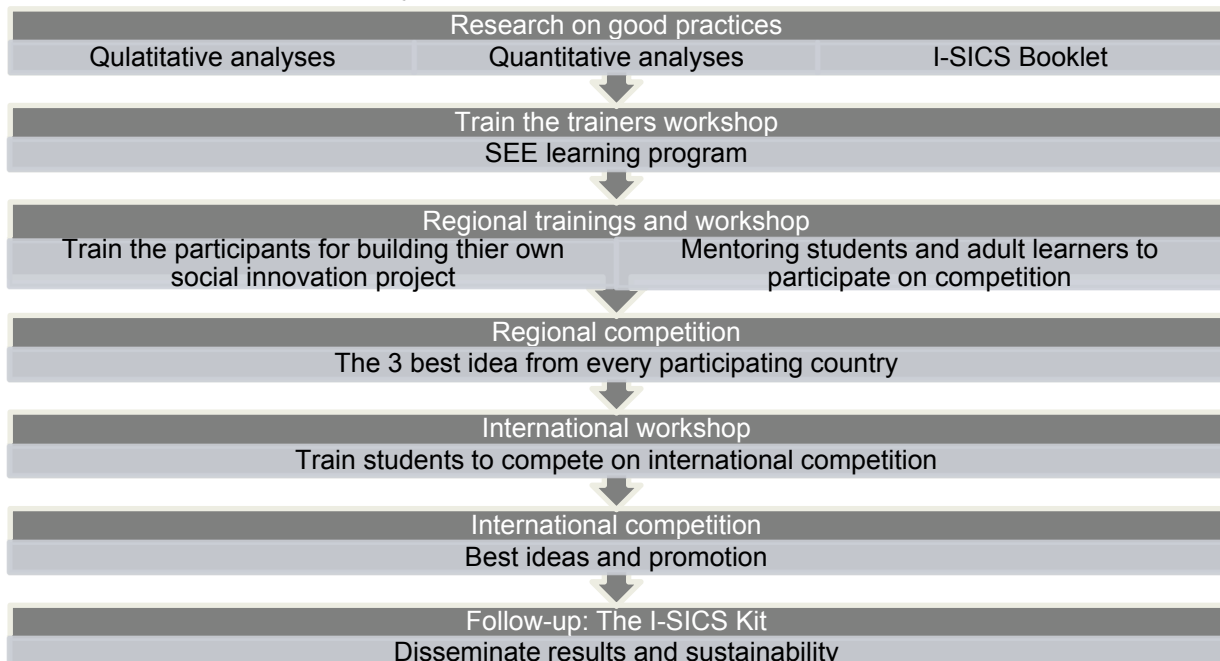3. Target areas and sectors of social innovation competitions.

The research was based on quantitative and qualitative methods and was carried out by filling in a questionnaire for every case study. Data was collected by:

- Conducting desk research
- Conducting structured interviews (telephone, Skype, face-to-face).

The research differentiated a set of best practices and case studies in order to organize highly competitive international competitions and courses in connection with social entrepreneurship and innovation.

The results of the research were summarized in a study on good practices (I-SICS Booklet), based on which the concept of the International Social Innovation Competition for Students were created. Using the experience and the well-established operational and organisational methods of already existing competitions, we adapted their good practices to a new field, that of social entrepreneurship, where students have the opportunity to use their creativity and create valuable ideas and business plans using entrepreneurial concepts to solve those issues that are the most crucial ones in their regions.

Picture 1: The process of I-SICS project

Research on good practices		
Qulatitative analyses	Quantitative analyses	I-SICS Booklet

Train the trainers workshop
SEE learning program

Regional trainings and workshop	
Train the participants for building thier own social innovation project	Mentoring students and adult learners to participate on competition

Regional competition
The 3 best idea from every participating country

International workshop
Train students to compete on international competition

International competition
Best ideas and promotion

Follow-up: The I-SICS Kit
Disseminate results and sustainability

During the project, mentors of the competitors firstly have a chance participate on a "Train the trainers" learning program where the Social Entrepreneurship Education Program (SEE Learning Program) were applied. It is a modular program and therefore allows for a trainer to select the modules which he or she feels are necessary within the scope of the trainings.

Students were provided the opportunity to firstly participate in a workshop, where they mapped the most important social issues, acquired new skills and broadened their knowledge in the field of social innovation.

Students and adult learners participated from several fields of higher education, and also from several generations. It provided the opportunity for students to concentrate on several different social issues during their social innovation project.

Students presented their ideas they have elaborated with the help of expert mentors in front of a broad audience on regional and international level. To the award ceremonies of the regional pre-selection rounds as well as to the final award ceremony of the international competition the most important stakeholders be invited. Thus the opportunity was created for the ideas to be heard and understood by decision-makers as well as by intermediaries. Therefore these events were occasions to raise the awareness of both the public and the stakeholders of important social issues and they were also a place where the students had the opportunity to find partners and supporters for their ideas. Furthermore, the international workshop provided the opportunity for the participants to cooperate on important issues with various nationalities and exchange their experiences, as well as to create international networks.

Based on the research conducted and the feedbacks received from participants, the jury and those invited, a guideline package was put together for the International Social Innovation Competition Kit. This Kit does not only include the education material for the workshops, but communicational, intellectual property, financial and organisational guidelines as well. Thus the final product is a ready-to-apply Kit, through which students, regions and communities across Europe will be able to benefit.

4.3. Results and impact

The innovative character of the project can be discovered in three main aspects. Firstly, the adaptation of good practices in the field of entrepreneurship and student competitions to a new field, that of social innovation. Secondly, the use of the International Social Innovation Competition as a communicational channel, using it as an awareness raising campaign to draw the attention of individuals, companies, media, decision-makers and stakeholders on various other levels to the most important social issues and to urge them to act in a socially responsible way. And thirdly, the creation of a Social Innovation Competition Kit, which is a ready-to-use package of various materials that can be applied anywhere in Europe.

As a main result, we expect:
- the concept of social entrepreneurship to be more widely distributed,
- the emerge of creative, new social innovation / entrepreneurship ideas and
- the continuation of our initiation with educational institutions and development bodies joining our contests, organising their events with the help of the Competition Kit.

On the longer term, this initiation could help to widely disseminate the concept of social innovation and encourage young people to use their talents for the support of disadvantaged groups.

Altogether almost 50 teams wanted to participate on the regional competition, and more than 130 local and international people participated on the international competition.

Table 3: Participants of I-SICS

	Partners	Students	Trainers	Mentors	Jury	TOTAL
Training	6	146	3	0	0	155
Mentoring		64	0	5	0	69
Regional Competition	5	35	0	0	8	48
International Workshop and Competition	5	20	0	0	6	31

And more than 150 decision-makers, company representatives, other students and adult learners, media representatives, spectators etc. took part in the competitions and on award ceremonies.

4.3.1.The success of the project from the view of intergenerational cooperation

The success of the project in the short run can be measured by the number of students who wish to participate in the competition and the number of ideas presented respectively. Also, the number of attendants at the events of the project can be used as an indicator. In the medium term the number of project ideas turned into products and services, as well as the number of competitions organised after the project life time can be taken as indicators. The long-term indicator of the effectiveness of the project will be the number of social enterprises established in the project areas.

Participating in the I-SICS project resulted in the widening and deepening of the professional experiences of partnership. New valuable professional contacts were made. The staff of partnership gained new and special knowledge, while the existing knowledge of the staff deepened (please refer to the good practice study 12 best practices, 12 case studies and 3 courses). Another impact of the project implementation is that based on the extensive knowledge transfer among partners, partnership members are better prepared to answer development needs and issues in the social field, as the social consciousness of partnership staff expanded. Our colleagues are seeking social challenges to be answered on purpose both in their professional and private lives. As the result of the organisation and implementation of the regional competition, our organisational skills improved.

Attracting students to the training enhanced the colleagues' recruiting and marketing knowledge (new ideas were put in practice). Mentoring, on one hand, deepened our practical knowledge of the social issues surrounding us. Some of the students were not from the business faculties (they were physiotherapists, IT engineers etc.), our teaching experiences during mentoring improved (e.g. by explaining financial issues to them). The application of new techniques (e.g. business model canvas) enriched our colleagues' knowledge as well.

In addition, further project ideas – in the social innovation and social entrepreneurship topic – completing the I-SICS idea were identified and elaborated between partners deepened. Contacts were widened, with other universities and other parties. Also some of the students who participated on the International competition were invited to present their ideas on other competitions.

To the events of the competition the most important decision makers and stakeholders were invited, the jury members were people active in and/or responsible for social challenges. The provision of the I-SICS Kit to regional and local relevant stakeholders will help in identifying answers to local/regional challenges (applying best practices or case studies). The impact of project I-SICS at European level currently is less visible, influence is expected to become apparent later.

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of the paper was to discover social innovation process from the intergenerational cooperation view. According to the literature social innovation is a new combination of practices and ideas in order to satisfy human needs. New generations have a great chance to make changes in the social environment, but cooperation with older generations goes along with broadening of the range of vison of new generations. "Organizations and managers who understand these deeper generational differences will be more successful in the long run as they manage their young employees, finding ways to accommodate differences in some cases and exert constructive counter pressure in others. The profits of the twenty first century will go to businesses that can harness the unique traits of Generation Me to their benefit and that of their company" (Twenge and Campbell, 2008, p. 873).

Therefore on the field of social innovation it has several benefits for those how are participating intergenerational cooperation. According to Hardy et. al (2014) "the celebration of generational differences classifies workers into narrow age-based behaviours and identities, arbitrarily delineates generational groups, and reduces the complex, dynamic and multifaceted nature of individual identities into homogenized, simplified cliché" (p.1576). It could be helpful to provide evidence how different people can interact together in an organization.

We presented a good practice as a case study in order to collect indicators which can signify the success of intergenerational cooperation in case of social innovation process.

Our most important stakeholders in project I-SICS were (i) university students and adult learners, (ii) groups addressed by the competition ideas, (iii) decision makers. The following indicators provided the success of the project:

Table 4: Indicators of successful intergenerational cooperation in case of I-SICS

Stakeholder	Indicator	Generational affiliation
Students, adult learners	Gained knowledge, know-how Social innovation ideas covered social issues International cultural and inter-cooperation experiences Communicational skills improved Social innovation "thinking" in long term	Z, X, Y
Disadvantaged groups	New solutions, ideas for the affected social problem	X, Y, Baby Boomer, Builder

Decision-makers, authorities, various regional social and economic actors	Gained knowledge, know-how Social innovation ideas covered social issues International cultural and inter-cooperation experiences	X, Y, Baby Boomer, Builder
Project partners	Gained knowledge, know-how International cultural and inter-cooperation experiences Organizational competences improved	X, Y, Baby Boomer

The success of intergenerational cooperation in case of I-SICS is based on the newly gained knowledge and know-how, on the improvement of communicational skills, on the broadening of inter-cooperation experiences, on the covered social issues and on the acquisition of social innovation thinking in long term. According to Tomšič (2010) an established intergenerational system will provide learning from each other; one generation's help to another; create, maintain and expand social networks; and gain the effective functioning of the employees of different generations at workplace (Tomšič, 2010 In: Čič & Žižek, 2017).

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is a work in progress therefore the results are not generalizable, results can be applied in case of the present study. Our further aim is to investigate several intergenerational cooperation in order to evolve network opportunities in the interest of increasing social innovation potential for given regions of Hungary.

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