

CREATING ECOSYSTEMS FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION



INTRODUCTION:

What is an ecosystem for social innovation?

An ecosystem is a set of complex, interdependent relationships that function best through effective networks and communities. Certain conditions help develop these ecosystems, allowing innovation and innovators to thrive and shift the dynamics of the status quo system.



Why is it important?

Supporting the development, growth and maturity of a social innovation ecosystem is an essential task to deepen the impact of social innovations - in Turkey and around the world. Supportive ecosystems help to develop solutions that match the scale and complexity of the problems we're trying to solve.

At the **Istanbul Wayfinder** in May 2018, we explored both the visible and invisible components needed to develop and strengthen ecosystems for social innovation with lessons from Canada, Europe, Australia and the Middle East and North Africa. For more information, please visit www.sixwayfinder.com

ENABLING MINDSETS

"Social innovation ecosystems should be inclusive, collaborative, neutral, and diverse enough to hold and bring together different people and engage them to solve problems." **Violaine des Rosiers, la Maison de L'innovation Sociale, Canada**

Diversity

Diversity drives innovation. This means we need to value difference, and find a way for people of diverse backgrounds to come together, share experiences, exchange theory and practice, and solve problems.

"There are a lot of people who want to make change for good but they're working in their own silos and are disconnected from others. If we want to create real change, and allow for more impact, we have to get people to see others & work across their silos." **Nova Franklin, Meld Studios, Australia**



Collaboration

Exchange and connections between and amongst all sectors is key to strong ecosystems. Building understanding and trust is a prerequisite of collaboration.



"We've created a space (in Montreal) for people of different backgrounds to come together, experiment, and to challenge perceptions of power and roles. Creating spaces for people to answer questions collectively and start co-create solutions is so important" **Violaine des Rosiers, la Maison de L'innovation Sociale, Canada**

"The challenges we're trying to solve are too large and complex for one organisation or sector. We must work together and collaborate across sectors to create real change" **Gianluca Misuraca, The European Commission.**

"Behind all real innovation, there is collective action" **Gorka Espiau, The Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies, Spain**

Dedicated spaces and places

A dedicated space (physical or virtual) in a city or a region can help create the conditions for collaboration, highlight new opportunities and provide needed inspiration. It also helps make social innovation more visible. An ecosystem doesn't manifest in an isolated laboratory or test-tube, nor without space, place and people.

Diverse & Holistic Finance & Funding

The ecosystem itself and those who operate within it need resourcing. Access to social finance and funding from different types of actors for different stages of innovations and capacity-building is key.



The European Commission has been critical to Europe's strong ecosystem by providing substantial funding over the past decade — funding not only for social innovation, but the ecosystem itself by investing in capacity-building, networks, research, narrative development and the keystone institutions who support innovators.

Increased visibility and public awareness of social innovation

"Reaching those outside of our bubble. Mainstreaming social innovation will require new and creative ways to communicate the process and purpose of this work. This also means engaging with new audiences. How do we unlock community, family, households as an asset and include them in our movement for social innovation? How do we include those who never would attend a social innovation conference?" **Carolyn Curtis, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation.**



Government support and engagement

Engagement in social innovation is crucial for working at scale. Recognition and support of social innovation is just as important as engagement — by signalling its support, government creates a culture of permission for public servants and government partners across sectors to engage in social innovation.

"In Canada, we talk about 'getting social innovation into the water supply', an image made popular by community organizer Al Etmanski. Governments not only influence national natural resources — they have an unparalleled influence on this metaphorical water supply as well. Through supportive messaging and recognition, governments can foster a national mindset for social innovation." **Kelsey Spitz-Dietrich, author of Social Innovation Generation: Fostering a Canadian Ecosystem for Systems Change.**

ENABLING MINDSETS

Mindset

Creating ecosystems for social innovation is a mindset. This means not only seeing one set of top-down components parts, but also seeing things bottom-up — seeing people, values and cultures as the fundamental ingredients of the ecosystem.



"This work has to involve every aspect of the human from perseverance, hope and mindset. It's a different way of thinking that requires us to be able to work with people on the ground as well as people in the systems that we live in." **Tarik Yousef, Brookings Center Doha, Qatar.**

Time

Nurturing all these enabling conditions requires time and is a lifetime activity and beyond.

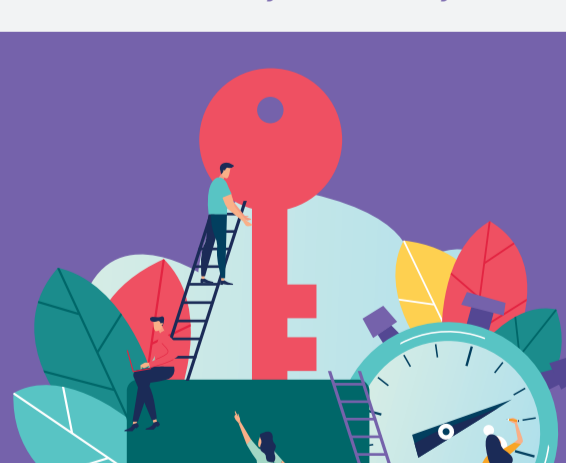


"You need to be in this for the long haul" **Tim Draimin, McConnell Foundation, Canada.**

"It doesn't happen overnight, you need to be comfortable with an ambiguity of identity and you need patience" **James Stauch, Mount Royal University, Canada.**

A common (and collective) aspiration

Healthy ecosystems foster an outcome greater than the sum of the parts by challenging the myth of the individual entrepreneur and recognising behind all real innovation there is collective action — rooted in share values and aspirations.



"In Australia, a key foundation is working with a range of other players from the corporate private sector, philanthropy, NGOs, government, to think about, what is actually the ecosystem for Australia and what's going to help us solve some of the big problems that lie ahead of us in the coming years and decades?" **Carolyn Curtis, TACSI.**

A common narrative

We can create a shared understanding, relate to one another and develop trust by finding where our stories align and co-creating a common narrative.

"Europe has embraced the narrative of social transformation and a collective acceptance that current model is not working, helping to provide momentum for the social innovation field and encouraging more actors to come in." **Gorka Espiau, The Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies, Spain.**

A common terminology

To run alongside shared narratives, so that what we do is clear both to each other and to those outside the movement. Different interpretation of key words and phrases can create misunderstanding.

"Unless we understand each other in the most simple language, how will we ever change a system" **Louise Pulford, SIX, UK.**