

Social Innovation: changing contexts and open challenges

Four workshops

Milan, November 2012

Introduction

The Social Innovation workshop series, promoted by Avanzi, HUB Milano, Make a Change, City Monitor, Societing, Centro Ricerche IED, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca and INDACO Politecnico di Milano, has the objective to contribute to the debate about the transformative potential of social innovation vis-à-vis the changing political and economic contexts in Italy and in Europe, by discussing four themes at the forefront of research and practice on this theme.

In particular, the series will focus around a possible working definition of social innovation, given the diversity of current theoretical approaches and emerging practices; on a reflection upon the entrepreneurship dimension and its relationships with the regulatory framework; on a cross-European comparison of different practices and actors, and finally on the scale of these phenomena, exploring the tension between global and local dimension.

The workshop series will be based on the exchange between researchers and practitioners, with the aim of accumulating knowledge and proposing a final output document, to be further discussed in a subsequent moment with relevant policy makers at local and regional level.

Progetto patrocinato da:

Milano



Comune
di Milano

W1. Defining Social Innovation

Social Innovation vs Open Innovation. Social Entrepreneurship.

What does it mean to drive social innovation through business activity?

What is social innovation? How is it different from social activism? What does it mean to use entrepreneurial methods to address social problems? What sort of ethical issue can come out of this? Is social enterprise a new form of political action? How can we understand social entrepreneurship in the context of an emerging new socio-economic paradigm, an 'Ethical Economy'?

These are some of the themes that will be addressed in the workshop.

Invited speakers

Alessandro Caliandro (Università di Milano/Centro Studi di Etnografia Digitale), "Impresa e start up su twitter"

Adam Arvidsson (Università di Milano), "Impresa sociale, ethical economy: per un nuovo paradigma socioeconomico?"

Carolina Pacchi (DiAP Politecnico di Milano e Avanzi), "Dalla mobilitazione locale all'innovazione sociale urbana"

Anna Meroni (INDACO Politecnico di Milano), "DESIS – Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Network. Una rete internazionale per supportare l'innovazione sociale attraverso il design"

Alessandro Rimassa (Centro Ricerche IED), "Social business, impresa sociale, no-profit, benefit corporation... definirsi per comunicarsi"

Location

Università Statale di Milano, Dipartimento di Scienze Sociali e Politiche, via Conservatorio 7, Aula 26

Date

7 nov 2012, 15:00 – 18:00

W2. Social innovation and social entrepreneurship

Reference regulation. Missing points in the Italian regulatory framework, and implications linked to the (missing) possibility to invest in and finance social enterprises (problem about profit distribution)

Legal forms for social enterprises are the most diverse and, as it is suggested by the EC in the Social Business Initiative, they can have both the features of the profit and of the no profit company. If at international level hybrid forms of enterprise are advancing, in between profit and no profit, in Italy the “social enterprise” status, as it is foreseen in our legal order (law 155/06), appears to be inappropriate in particular to attract ambitious investors and entrepreneurs. As a matter of fact, the most scalable and capital intensive companies do not choose this legal status.

Together with a number of speakers we will therefore identify which are the essential features of such emerging hybrid forms, trying also to synthetically describe what they do and how they do it. Moreover, we will explore the origins of the companies that would benefit from the introduction of a specific legal form, able to recognize the features of low profit enterprise with social objectives.

Together with an analysis of the main reference models diffused at international level (Benefit Corporations, Community Interest Corporations, Flexible Purpose Corporations, Low Profit Limited Liability Corporations), we will hold a workshop session with the aim of defining which are the main elements that could be included into a (hypothetical) new Italian regulatory initiative, starting from the model of “start-up a vocazione sociale” traced by the Restart Italia Report delivered by the Ministry of Development.

Invited speakers

Davide Zanoni, Davide dal Maso (Avanzi. Sostenibilità Per Azioni)

Paolo Venturi (AICCON)

Roberto Randazzo (R&P Legal)

Flaviano Zandonai (Euricse)

Paolo Campagnano (HUB Rovereto)

Location

Avanzi. Sostenibilità Per Azioni, via Ampére 61/A

Date

20 nov 2012, 17:00-19:30

W3. Social Innovation Europe

Comparison with other EU contexts (especially related to the UK, Germany and Northern Europe). Is there any Italian/Milanese specificity that we may underline?

The trends determining social innovation and social entrepreneurship processes in the European context are heterogeneous and specific to each Country. In particular, each European State has developed different approaches around social innovation, as the needs of the population change depending on different factors, such as for example the natal rate, the increased ageing rate, immigration issues, job market trends. That said, social innovation experiments grew according to people's needs that were not met by the public sector or by the private sector. Since each Country has a unique economic and political structure, likewise the social innovation sector is experimenting different approaches depending on the environment in which it is growing.

The workshop aims to investigate the social innovation systems of different European Countries in order to detect best practices in tackling social needs. Such best practices will then be explored to understand whether they could be scaled up in other Countries. In particular, we will be investigating the Milanese context to mark out its peculiarities within the social innovation sector, as it is the most attractive and dynamic one of the entire Italian social innovation scene.

Invited speakers

Henriette van Eijl (European Commission, Brussels) – t.b.c.

Hinnerk Hansen or Gabriela Gandel (Director, HUB Network, Vienna, Austria)

Louise Pulford (Social Innovation Exchange, London, UK) – t.b.c.

Laura Bunt (NESTA, London, UK)

Leon Reiner (Social Impact Lab, Berlin, Germany)

Alberto Masetti Zannini (HUB Milano, Italy)

Oana Paun (HUB Bucharest, Romania)

Marieke Huysentruyt or Max Bulakovskiy (I-Propeller, Brussels, Belgium)

Location

HUB Milano, Via Paolo Sarpi 8

Date

4 dec 2012, 17:00 - 19:30

W4. Consolidating over time and approaching different contexts: issues of scales for social enterprises

Social innovation is both a process and an outcome; the process dimension concerns institutional aspects involved in innovation: forms of governance, rules and regulations, cultures, and so on. The outcome concerns the results of social innovation in terms of enlargement of entitlements, empowerment, satisfaction of needs of different nature, recognition of different identities, increase in citizens' quality of life, and so on. Process -and content- oriented social innovation within social enterprises is a multi-level phenomenon which operates at different scales : neighborhood, city, region, nation and worldwide scales are drawn in, resulting in different geometries of successful institutionalization. The workshop will focus on an analysis of the dynamics of scale in the consolidation and growth process, with the goal of answering the following questions:

1. Value orientation motivates people to pursue progressive social change and legitimizes their action. How is value-orientation used and acted upon in the communication of the social enterprise mission? How is this resource used to enlarge its range and sphere of activity?
2. Process of institutionalization serves as the 'engine' of social innovation, and it represents the mechanism by which social innovation is produced and reproduced over space and time. How do social enterprises relate with public sphere? Which relationships with public institutions they engage in? What is the role of relationship/partnership with public actors or other institutions in the consolidation and growth process?
3. The bottom-up/bottom-linked components of the practices of social innovation are essential to understanding the processes of democratic participation, empowerment, openness and creative social experimentation that can forge changes in socio-spatial relations. How do social enterprises engage with "locals" in different contexts and at different scale? Under which conditions can such links become conducive to creativity and innovation? How do such links become carrier of new ideas and resources?

The workshop will be the stage for an open discussion about these issues among international scholars and practitioners engaged in socially innovative strategies. The objective is to obtain first a picture of the constraints and resources for social enterprises and social innovation in general in European cities, and secondly a possible agenda aimed at creating more room for socially creative and innovative actions.

Invited speakers

Serena Vicari (Università di Milano-Bicocca)
Isabella Inti, Giulia Cantalupp (Temporiuso)
Valeria Inguaggiato (La Cordata)
Alberto Masetti-Zannini (HUB Milano)
Davide Agazzi (Make a Cube³)

Location

Università Bicocca, Aula Pagani, edificio U7, via Bicocca degli Arcimboldi, 8 Milano

Date

19 dec 2012, 17:00- 20:00