Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA)

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International and European Contexts

- How can **social innovation** contribute to addressing **societal challenges**?
- What **policy frameworks** can help social innovation?
Challenges in Rural Areas

1. Out-migration and ageing
2. Population drift to larger villages and towns
   ➔ Closure of services
   ➔ Threatening capacity for endogenous development
3. Diversification and restructuring
4. Changing infrastructure
5. Changing lifestyles
6. Climate change

To create opportunities and address challenges:

Support small businesses and entrepreneurs (new business models); local/short food supply chains; infrastructure and services; valorising ecosystem services; bio-economy; exploit green and blue spaces; digitalisation and growth; new collaborative actions – Social Innovation
SIMRA Project

Overarching Aim:
To understand and enhance Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas …

- By advancing state-of-the-art in Social Innovation and associated governance mechanisms in agriculture, forestry and rural development
- With a particular focus on the Mediterranean region

- Research and Innovation Action project
- Funded by EU Horizon 2020

- 26 partners
- 14 countries
- 4 years (2016 to 2020)
“The reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors”. (Polman et al., 2017)

... Social innovation incorporates new ideas, products, services, modes, arrangements, relationships, interactions (attitudes, collaborations, values, behaviours, skills, practices), fields of activity (social entrepreneurship and social enterprises), and processes to meet societal needs (e.g. learning), in particular in marginalised rural areas
The Social Innovation development process captured in a framework (Kluvankova et al., 2018)

- Working with stakeholders at international, European, regional and local levels
- Multi-level multi-actor engagement is core to our science process
- Evaluating decisions and co-constructing common, more sustainable futures

SIMRA Transdisciplinary Framework

Social Innovation Think Tank, Aberdeen, UK, October 2019
Integrated Set of Valuation Methods

• To evaluate Social Innovation and its impacts
• The co-constructed process to develop, test and validate
• Integrate qualitative and quantitative tools
• Include modern issues related to the evaluation of Rural Development, e.g. social capital, networking, governance (Secco et al., 2019)
Social Innovation On-The-Ground

Co-learning with practitioners, policy and researchers

Case Studies: Insight and understanding

- 24 Case Studies

For example: Reduce social, environmental and economic risks

- e.g. Case Study - Forest Fire Volunteers, Catalonia, Spain

Innovation Actions: Facilitation and operationalising

- 7 Innovation Actions

With EIP Operational Group

Online Purchasing: ISHOPRURAL

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Social Innovators in Rural Areas
Brussels, 19th February 2020
Capacity Building of Scientists

• **Capacities** for Social Innovation were built by bringing together scientists, businesses, governments and civil society.

  - Input phase
    - Planning
    - Case studies
    - Data collection
    - Scientists and stakeholders start working together

  - Transformation Knowledge
    - Action
      - Active learning / Knowledge exchange
      - Exploration / observation
      - Analysing / reflecting
      - Mapping / quantification
      - Modelling

  - Target Knowledge
    - Outputs
      - Synthesis
      - Impact
      - Valuation
      - Simulation
      - Development of new knowledge
      - Advancing
      - Refining tools
      - Guidance (policy, case studies)

• Findings **validated** by end-users and peer reviewed scientific publications

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Co-learning is core to transdisciplinarity and SIMRA approach

Local actors and research teams sharing experiences with actors at EU and international levels, and between places

- Fostered collaborative working
- Emphasised shared experience

- Informs discussion
- Strengthens relationships

Training Course, Zaragoza, November 2019

Online training course

Participatory videos
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To Help You: Research, Policy and Practice

Resources developed from transdisciplinary working providing insight to needs for evaluation, and practitioner experiences of social innovation

Developing database of examples of Social Innovation

Evaluation

Social Innovation on the ground

Recommendations for policy

Guide for practitioners

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SIMRA Partnership Thanks You