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Implementing a social innovation in rural areas

SIMRA Final Conference

1. Who implements SI in rural areas?
2. What do they aim at?
3. What do they need?
4. Social Innovation Actions:
accelerating SI embryos in rural areas
5. Participatory Video of SIMRA
Innovation Actions



The Social Innovation agents

Core team: Innovator(s) & Follower(s)



Transformers/project partners
Beneficiaries



SOCIAL INNOVATION OBJECTIVES

Often targeting public/common goods

1. **Social** – inclusion, equity, empowerment (skills, recognition)...
2. **Economic** – business viability, scale benefits, economic independence...
3. **Environmental** – externalities, non-marketed ecosystem services, risks...

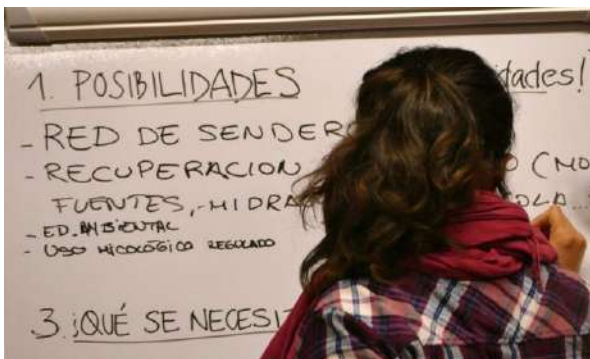
What do SI need to progress?

1. **TIME & OPPORTUNITY**
2. **LEADERSHIP & COORDINATION & COMMITMENT**
3. **SKILLS**
4. **FINANCE**
5. **SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

* critical in RURAL areas

What do SI need to progress?

- 1. TIME & OPPORTUNITY:** structured reflection(*), narrative, adaptive design, critical mass*, smart timing (momentums)

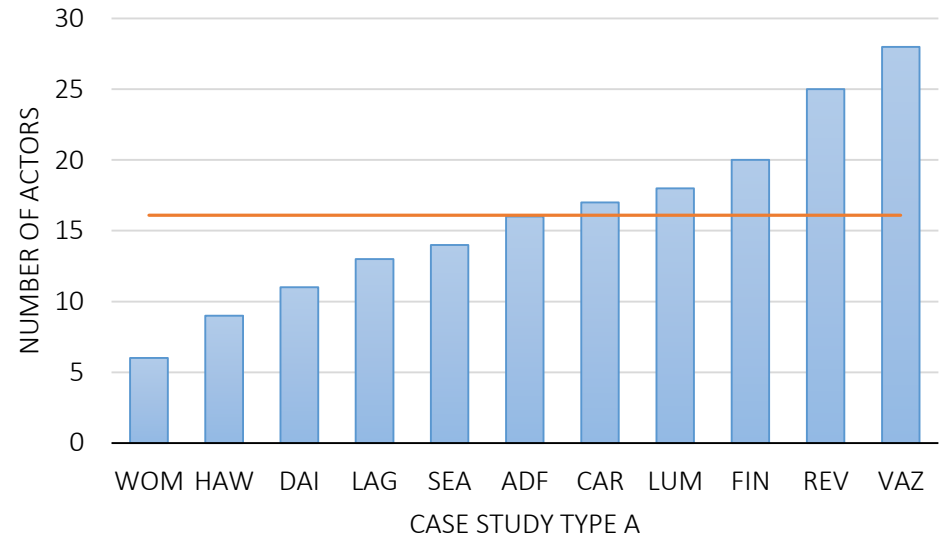


2. LEADERSHIP & COORDINATION & COMMITMENT: motivation & alignment, risk management*, conflict management, constructive self-assessment



SI backbone: strong dedication of a few people (volunteers or for-profit entrepreneurs)

A core group of people:



A core group of people

Positive intra-group relationships (bonding SC)

+ clear shared SI vision

+ shared implementation responsibilities

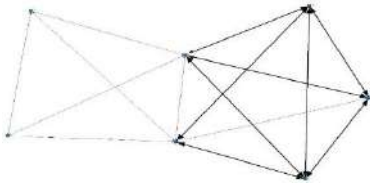
... are necessary but not sufficient conditions for a SI to thrive.

Preparing and consolidating a network of local actors before implementation. New relations fluent & trustworthy

Mutual understanding of goals and means. If vision, when challenges emerge → readiness to explore alternatives. Otherwise, **frustration** and **risk of negative SC**

Distributed roles, accountability

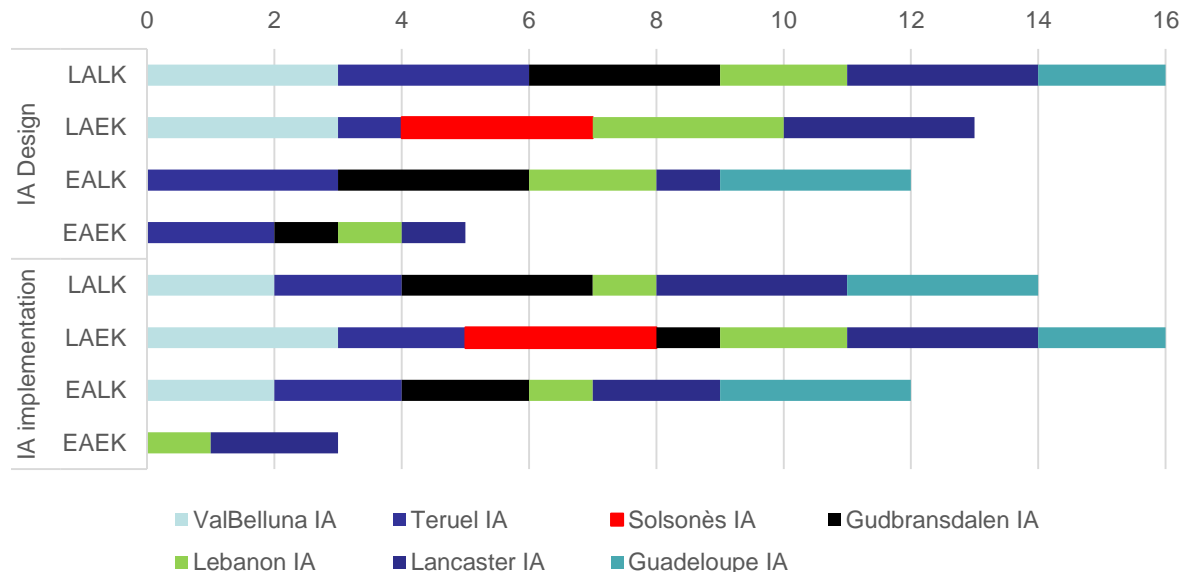
3. SKILLS: (internal/external) technical knowledge, collective action catalysing, smart networking, relationships with donors/policy-makers/marginalized collectivities



Peer-to-peer learning opportunities broaden the portfolio of solutions and reduce risk perception

Local knowledge by local actors crucial for design

Local actors with External knowledge crucial for the implementation



Because SI is about Reconfiguration of Social Practices...

... changes in Social Capital dimensions = legacy of the SI project

1. **Bonding SC:** core group of promoters, leadership
2. **Bridging SC:** bringing external knowledge & approaches & contacts
3. **Linking SC:** smart lobbying, political momentums as windows of opportunity, support tackling marginalisation
4. **Cognitive SC:** shared values → joint vision (motivation), social recognition
5. **Relational SC:** (in)formal norms for sharing and commitment to activities, trust



4. **FINANCE**: seed money + running support/viable business model* + co-financing*

The social innovation should identify a strategy that maximises benefits to the community for the least burden.

- Risk vs public goods/critical services offered (public support)
- Neither public funding nor donors are sustainable over long term → need to dig into innovative alternatives for guarantee its long-term economic sustainability
- Underpinning all SI are voluntary resources, often not well recognized

Funding is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a SI

- Design a self-supportive business model

5. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT: local/regional/State legal framework, recognition, alliances*

- : missing supportive legislation at national/regional level
 - rigidity of the governments in adapting to new challenges and innovative approaches
- : siloed policies
 - ideally pooled funds for initiatives bridging sectors
- +: place-based devolved budgets & participatory budgeting → more accountable actions
- : budget limited or politically limited support from municipal governments
- +: wellbeing indicators reflect more the achievements than €
- +: lobbying needed to influence (non-)public donors

After SIMRA Innovation Actions we found as critical elements...

1. Reconfiguration of social networks (SOCIAL CAPITAL)
2. Knowledge and skills (HUMAN CAPITAL)
3. Social entrepreneurship as driving force (HUMAN CAPITAL)
4. Sustainable financing of the SI (FINANCIAL CAPITAL)
5. Policy tools (INSTITUTIONAL CAPITAL)

... with NATURAL and INFRASTRUCTURAL CAPITAL as external facilitating/hindering factors (double/triple marginalisation)

Recommendations for SI accelerators

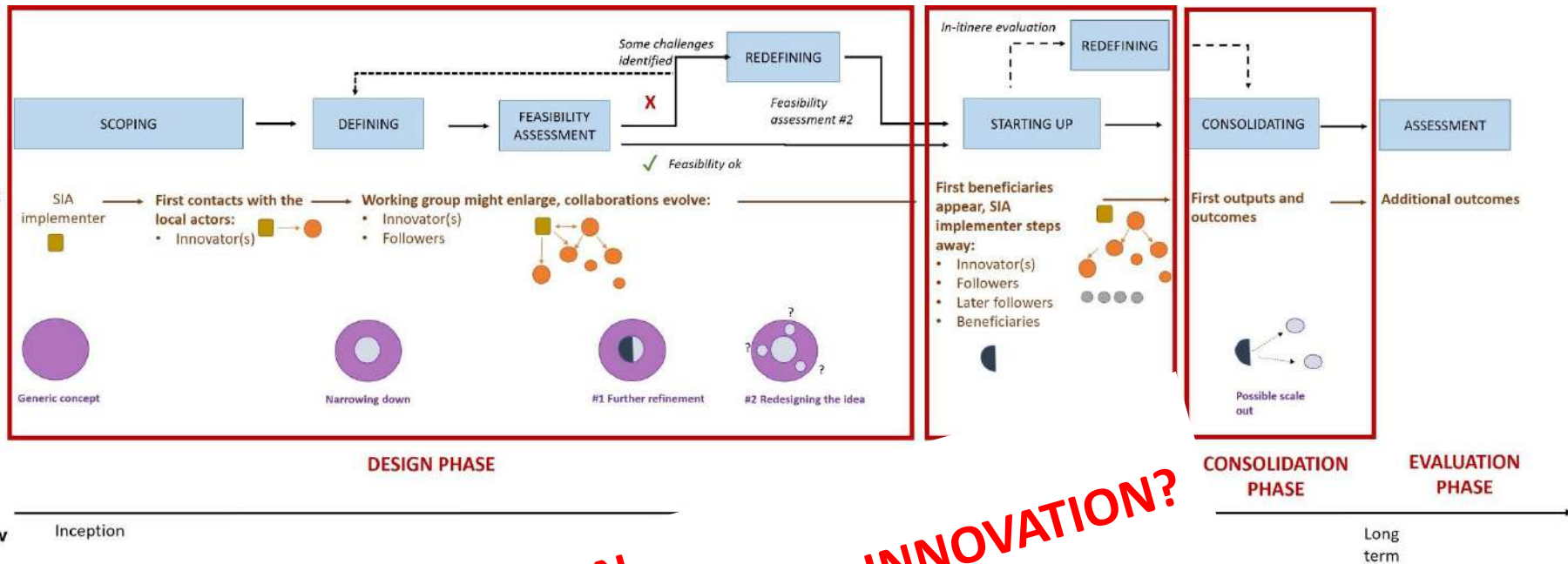
SIMRA Innovation Actions

- An operational framework for co-constructing SI
- Used to stimulate the uptake of SI in 7 study areas

Location	Topic
Norway	Migrant integration
Lancaster (UK)	Social entrepreneurship, women empowerment
Veneto (IT)	Social entrepreneurship, youth
Lebanon	women empowerment, local products
Aragón (ES)	Land banking
Lleida (ES)	Forest value and human wellbeing
Guadeloupe (FR)	Agroforestry



The SIA operational framework



TOMORROW SESSION
HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SOCIAL INNOVATION?
 ... implementation and *in-itinere* evaluation Phase

3. Consolidation Phase
4. Evaluation Phase

Source: Marini-Govigli et al (2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqq6qdceIBM> 1:26

Thank you for your attention

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SIMRA Deliverable D7.3 – Lessons learned from Social
Innovation Actions
& Deliverable D5.4 – Cross-case study analysis

Participatory videos in SIMRA YouTube



PROCESS: SI as game-changers, SRL

OUTCOMES: evaluation of SI

SRL 1 – identifying problem

SRL 2 – formulation of problem, proposed solution(s) and potential impact; identifying relevant stakeholders for the project.

SRL 3 – initial testing of proposed solution(s) together with relevant stakeholders

SRL 4 – problem validated through pilot testing in relevant environment to substantiate proposed impact

SRL 5 – proposed solution(s) validated, now by relevant stakeholders in the area

SRL 6 – solution(s) demonstrated in relevant environment and in co-operation with relevant stakeholders to gain initial feedback on potential impact

SRL 7 – refinement of project and/or solution and, if needed, retesting in relevant environment with relevant stakeholders

SRL 8 – proposed solution(s) as well as a plan for societal adaptation complete and qualified

SRL 9 – actual project solution(s) proven in relevant environment

Source: Adapted from Innovation Fund Denmark