# Social innovations: Theoretical input

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picture source: www.cipra.org

Innovation sociale

# Social innovation

**Innovazione sociale**

**Gesellschaftliche Innovation**

**Soziale Innovation**

"'Social innovation' is a term that almost everybody likes, but nobody is quite sure of what it means"

(Pol & Ville, 2009)

# What I'll cover:

Innovation term

Societal challenges

Historical introduction and examples

Definitions

4 different theoretical approaches

Examples from and for the practice

Eco-system and actors

practical steps for implementation

Barriers and critical reflection
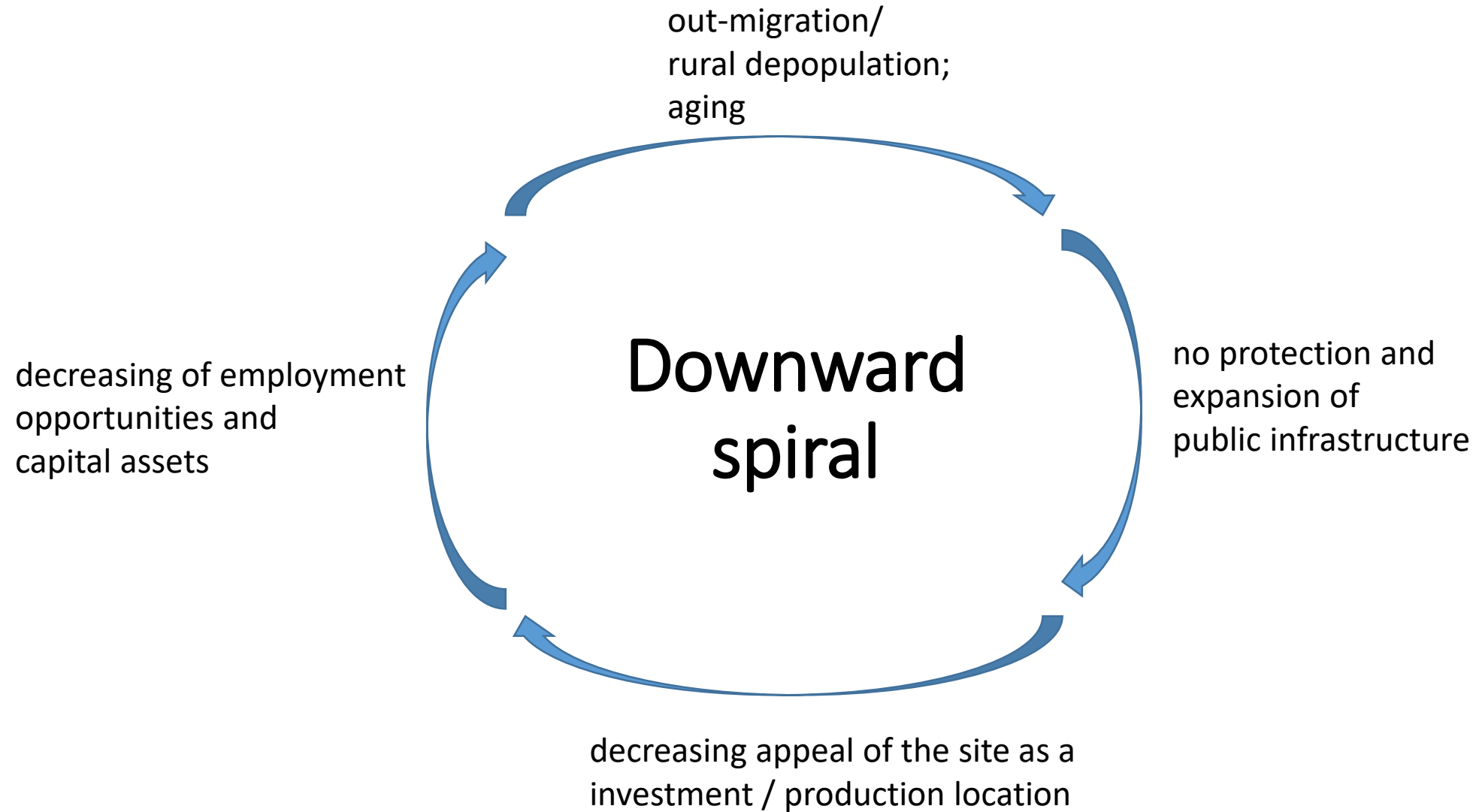
Discussion
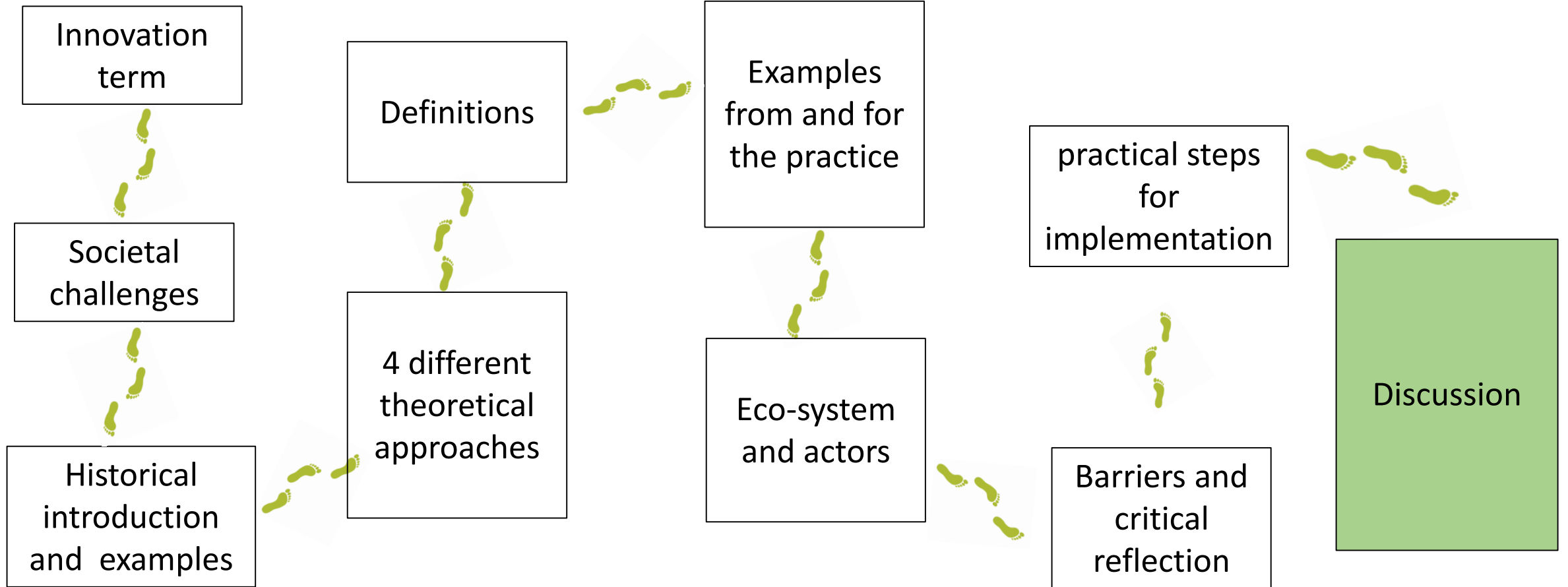
# "Innovation": Mainly a technical focus

- Technical advancement is a driver of social development. (Ogburn, 1969)

- "Innovation-related thinking is asymmetrical. The emphasis is on technical innovation". (Rammert, 1997)

- At the heart of the industrial society, technical innovations relating to products and processes that are regarded as (almost) the only hope of societal development. (Hochgerner & Howaldt, 2012)

- Technical innovations are often more likely to be part of the problem and not as a contribution to their solution. (Howaldt, 2012)

# Societal challenges: Areas of activity

- Health, demographic change and wellbeing

- Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the Bioeconomy

- Secure, clean and efficient energy

- Smart, green and integrated transport

- Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials

# Downward spiral:



out-migration/
rural depopulation;
aging

no protection and
expansion of
public infrastructure

Downward
spiral

decreasing appeal of the site as a
investment / production location

decreasing of employment
opportunities and
capital assets

Source: http://www.sdgfund.org

# "Social innovation is not a new phenomenon"

(Neumeier, 2017)

# Historical examples:

Robert Owen
(1771 – 1858)

# Historical examples:



Friedrich Froebel
(1782 – 1852)

# Historical examples:



Florence Nightingale
(1820 –1910)

# Historical examples:





Term „L'innovation sociale" („social innovation") was used with the student and workers movements in Paris, Berlin and other European and American cities in the 1960s and early 1970s. (Moulaert et. al, 2010)

# May social innovation theories helps...

# 1. Moulaert, MacCallum and Hillier: Sociology of Knowledge (SoK) approach

**Three dimensions of social innovation:**

1) Content dimension: Content or goal of social innovation is the satisfaction of human needs

2) Process dimension: Social innovation involves the process of changing social relations

3) Empowerment dimension: Increasing socio-political capability and access to resources

→ Sociology of Knowledge (SoK) can contribute to making the bridge between analysis and practice

→ Scholars / Scientists become an integral part in the development of social innovation

Source: (Moulaert et al, 2010); (Moulaert et al, 2005)

# 2. Vicari and Tornaghi:
# Social innovation initiatives:

**Research field of social innovation:**

- Processes of social exclusion: Labour Market and Social Economy, Education and Training, Housing and Neighborhood, Health and Environment

**Two dimensions of social innovation initiatives:**

1) Progressive social change

2) Relationships with public actors and governing institutions

Source: (Vicari & Tornaghi, 2010)

# 3. Garcia, Anglada and Pradel: Impact on governance regimes:

- Social innovation are "social experiences aiming at finding new solutions to unsolved problems" (Drewe et al, 2008)

- Analyzing the innovative potential of civil society groups and their initiatives considering their capacity to produce resources and empowerment to des-empowered citizens.

- Political-administrative institutions (Governance) and social innovation are not antagonistic

Source: (Garcia et al., 2010)

# 4. Gibson-Graham: Transdisciplinary and creative thinking

- Experimental attitude: Scholars join forces with participants in addressing weaknesses with creative thinking

- Working together: Blurring the line between 'researcher' and 'researched'

Source: (Gibson-Graham, 2010)

# Summary of social innovation theories

1. Moulaert et. al.: Sociology of Knowledge (SoK) approach

2. Vicari and Tornaghi: Social innovation initiatives

3. Garcia et. al.: Impact on governance regimes

4. Gibson-Graham: Transdisciplinary and creative thinking

Source: (Gibson-Graham, 2010)

# May some social innovation definitions helps...

Social Innovations are "innovations that are social both in their ends and in their means".

(Mulgan, 2011)

"Social innovation can help communities respond to local problems, to effect sustainable change and to react to environmental, economic and social challenges."

(Kirwan et al., 2013)

"Social innovations are per se multidimensional: not just economic or technical changes were striven, but also social, ecological, regional and value-based goals."

(Kropp, 2016)

"Social innovations encompass new practices [...] methods, processes and regulations that are developed and/or adopted [...] in order to meet social demands and to resolve societal challenges in a better way than existing practices."

(SI-DRIVE, 2014)

"Social innovation thus must be understood as a cooperative and reflective process that is directed and guided by actors. Social innovations often grow in partnership between the private, the public and the civil society."

(Scoppetta, 2014)

# May social innovation examples helps...

# Example 1: Local supply
## DORV (Local Allround Service Provision)



Post office + Car registration +

# Example 2: Agriculture

## Community-supported agriculture (CSA)



+



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Source: www.schweisfurth-stiftung.de; facebook.de/Kartoffelkombinat

# Example 2: Agriculture
## Community-supported agriculture (CSA)

Germany / Austria:  Solidarische Landwirtschaft – SoLawi (solidarity agriculture)
                    Gemeinschaftsgestützte Landwirtschaft  (community based agriculture)
                    miteinander landwirtschaften – MiLan (farming together)

France:             Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne (AMAP)
                    (association for maintaining small-scale family farming)

Italy:              Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS)

Slovenia:           Partnersko kmetovanje

# Example 3: Transportation

## Citizens' bus / phone call bus



"Citizens' drive for Citizens'"

# Example 4: Connection
## Kommunalkonsulat (municipal consulate)



Source: nonconform

# Example 5: Health care
## Mallu-Auto / Mallu-Bus

# Example 6: Inclusion
## Multi-generation houses

# Example 7: Hospitality and tourism sector
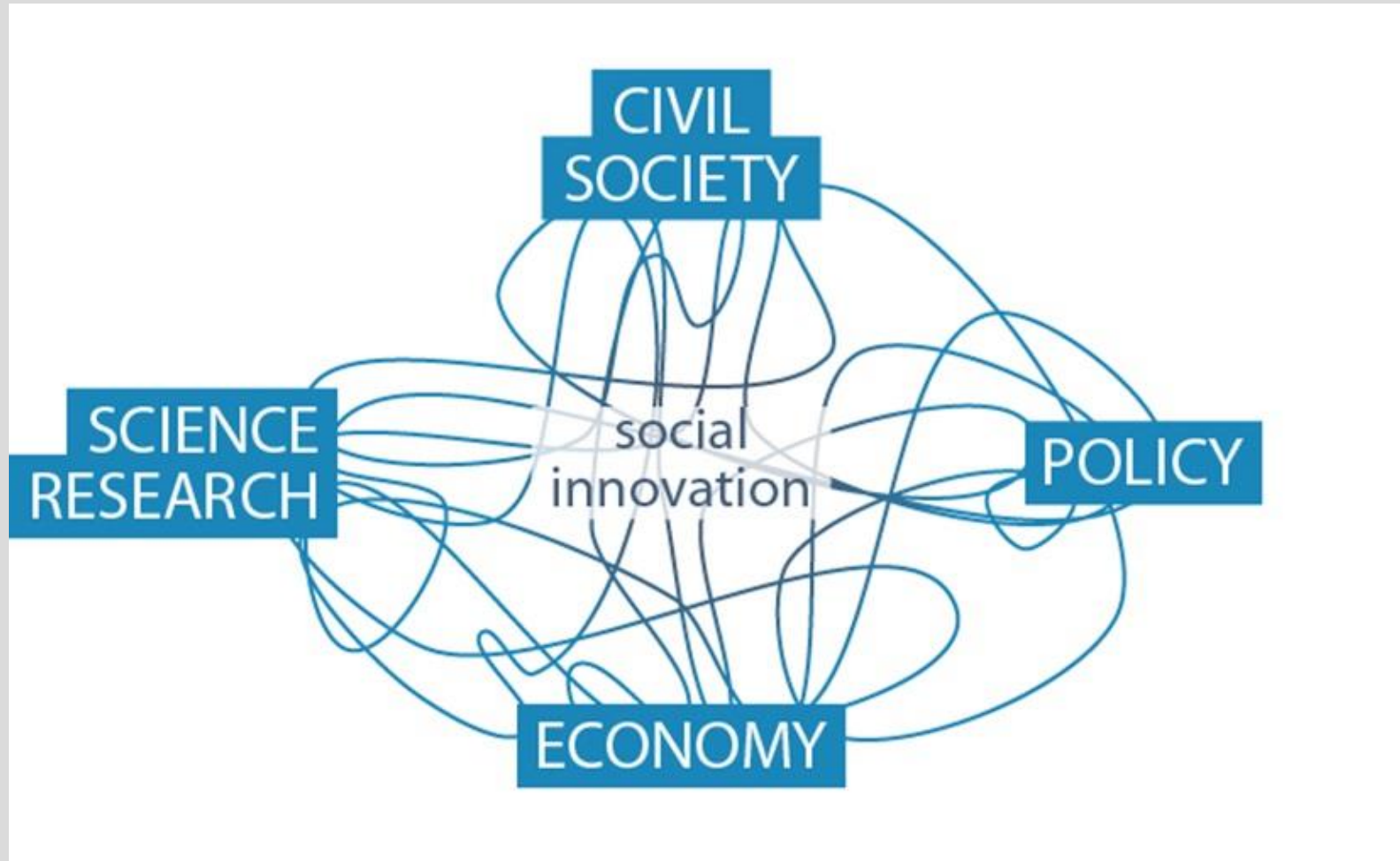
Eco-tourism: Laggan Forest Trust

# Example 8: New work

## Co-Working Space, Lab or Hub; „Mountain Office"
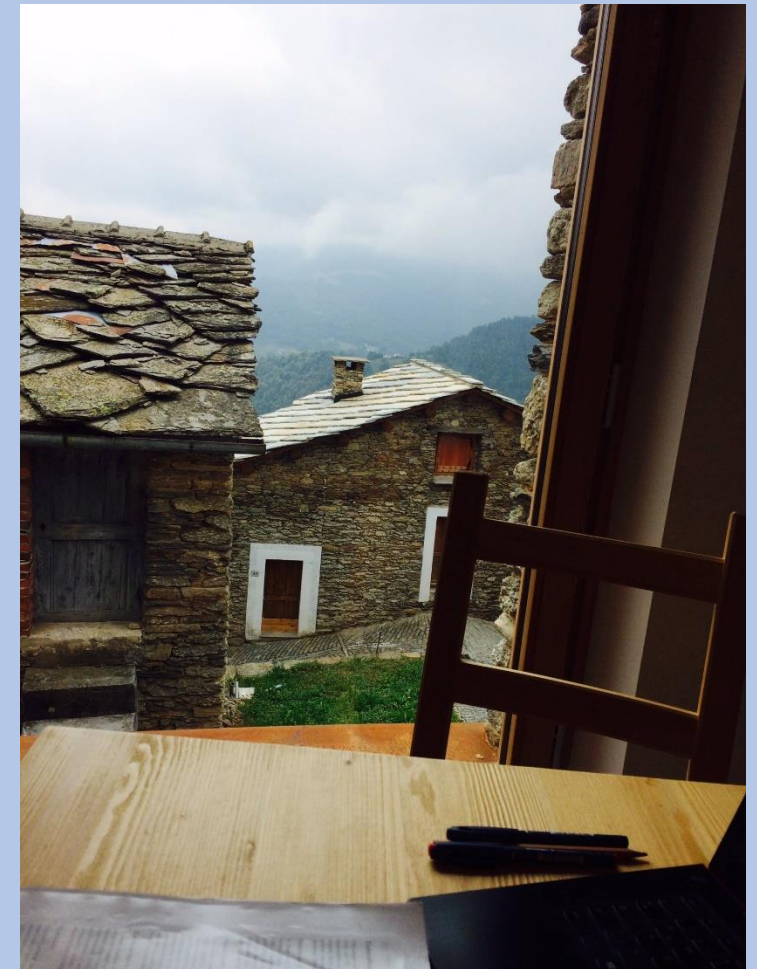




Dates:  03.11. #3 MonViso Mountain Office im Piemont
01.12. #4 MonViso Mountain Office im Piemont

Source: twitter.com/NoraKlopp; Mountain Office Piemont

# The field of social innovation:

# „Eco-system of social innovation"

# Actors:

- Social enterprises / social entrepreneurs / social ventures and other actors of the social economy
- Civil society
- Non-profit organizations and charity foundations
- Social movements
- Science, Universities and Research Institutes
- Companies
- Customers/ users / citizens / beneficiaries
- Designers
- Poor and marginalised groups
- Government actors
- …

# Main barriers of social innovation

1) Practices which do not fit the task

2) Risk-averse administrations

3) Closed systems: single-issue solutions, lack of awareness, communication, networking and trust

4) Fragmented capacities and skills

5) Insufficient funding

Source: Dro & Therace, 2011

# Critical reflection:

- Why are things the way they are now? Whose interests are being served?

- Social innovations are not "good", easier, cheaper or faster per se! (Kropp, 2014)

- Inclusion & exclusion of actor constellations: Participation related to education level

- Commercialization of civil society innovations and social innovations (Peter & Pollermann, 2010)

- Market competition between market and societal oriented organizations (Garcia et al., 2010)

- Often replacing governmental involvement by building on citizens and enterprises (Bock 2016)

Source: Middendorf, 2017

# Some practical steps to implement social innovation...

# Practical steps to implement social innovation:

- Be active and engaged for your region
- Learn
- DIY
- Develop ideas
- Tell your idea and story
- Copy & paste
- Building a community
- Looking for supporters
- Doing, learning, failing, not giving up!
- Don't forget the impact

Source: Middendorf, 2017

# One more (new or holistic) definition?

**Social innovations …**

… provide a new (and better) approach (than former practices) to a known (local, regional, environmental, economic and/or social) problem.

… address a known behaviour patterns to a new target group.

… address something known to a new (geographic) environment.

… access new (previously unused) material or human resources.

… grow in cooperation of various players.

… use new synergy effects.

# Discussion:



Source: Schweisfurth Stiftung

# Thanks for your attention!

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