

# Social Innovation

## Introduction to the course

The course Social Innovation revolves around the concept of social and interlinkage with the term innovation. The course will span a total of 16 weeks during which we will begin by understanding the concept and definition of social innovation. The second session will involve us going through the different theories and frameworks in relation to social innovation. We will further look into the types and field of social innovation.

At this point it will also important to understand who actually is a social innovator. Social innovators can be individually of all kinds and in different setups as well. It is really important to understand and reframe our mindset to think like a social innovator and this will also be discussed about.

Gradually, we will look into design thinking which is an integral part of social innovation as well as understand the designer's mindset. We then will move forward to understand new business models as well as learn to integrate social into these business models. Then will learn to turn ideas into a minimum viable product.

At this point of time, it is also important to understand the concept of sustainability as well also its relation with social innovation which will be a part of weeks 11 and 12. The sessions hereafter will focus on learning about networking and capacity building, supporting social innovation. The final two sessions is solely focused to look at examples of good practices in social innovation.

## **Unit 1: Concepts and definitions of Social Innovation**

This unit is focused on understanding the concepts and definitions of social innovation. To do so, we will look at the concepts, meaning, forms, elements and definition of social innovation.

The objectives of this unit is

- to understand the concept of social innovation
- to be able to integrate these concepts into practice
- to expand our horizon
- to acquaint ourselves for further sessions

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## Concept of Social Innovation

Now moving to the concept of social innovation we need to first delink the two words social and innovation. Social means being related to a society or a certain organization and innovation means either a new method, idea, product and a lot more.

The concept of social innovation therefore, revolved around the combination of social and innovation. Social innovation is an idea that works in meeting social goals. It can also refer to new ideas that meets the unmet needs. New social practice to meet social needs in a better way or social purpose of meeting social needs for the society and community is also a concept of social innovation.

Social innovation can also be referred to as innovation different from business innovation. The concept of social innovation also includes innovation for social or public good. It can also be an effective, creative, and optimal solution to a social problem or a social cause. Further, social innovation is any innovation that is made, nurtured, and started within a society. The concept of social innovation can also be a positive change with combined effort of every individual in a society or innovation for a better society or community.

As far as concept of social innovation is concerned it can also mean innovation that meets social needs of the society and people through various innovations or novel solutions to social problems that focuses on the community.

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## Meaning, forms and elements of Social Innovation

Social Innovation is a multidisciplinary subject. The different clusters of social innovation we can look into are

- Social enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Urban studies, territorial innovation and governance
- Transition management and grassroots innovation
- Ecological resilience
- Social policy and network
- Social innovation practice

Then, there are also forms of innovation. The several forms of innovation are

- Product
- Process
- Service
- Legislation

- Model
- Social movements
- Business practice/ social practice

Here, we can see that the common elements of social innovation are society, shared values, scalable ideas, sustainable practices and something new.

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### Definition of Social Innovation

Improved forms of action, news ways of doing things, new social inventions (Taylor, 1970)

The process of social innovation produces the effect of rebuilding social relations systems, as well as the structure of rules and resources that reproduce such systems. Therefore, according to the author, one only speaks of social innovation “when the changes alter the processes and social relations, changing the pre - existing structures of power” (Fleury, 2001)

Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc) that simultaneously satisfy a social need (more effectively than existing solutions), create new or better capabilities and relationships, and make better use of assists and resources. In other words, social innovations are good for society and improve society’s capacity to act. (The Young Foundation, 2012)

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