



Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks, an EU-funded project. This document has been produced by financial assistance of the EU funds of Civil Society Facility Operating Grants to IPA C.SO Associations.

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YouSEE Platform Statement for Regional Policy Transformation

Genuine social innovation in pre-accession period
(Call for creating the perspective for the youngsters in the Western Balkan region)

INTRODUCTION

By participating in Regional Collaboration Council work, Governments of Western Balkan countries made a commitment to open one million new workplaces until 2018. Around 600 000 workplaces were created until the end of 2017, out of which the most (more than a half of this number) were created in Serbia, in proportion to number of citizens and country size. Of course, this is just the statistic data, indicating neither the dramatic economic growth nor intensive investment in active employment measures. One of the reasons of insufficient impact on employment increase is the fact that regional countries have up to 10 times lower budget for active measures then it is predicted by the budget of the EU countries.

There hasn't been realized any significant merging among small and medium businesses in region, even though the better business ambient creation, removing barriers in indicating professional qualification and diploma admission were indicated as flagship initiatives. When it comes to innovations, particularly those referring to new relationship establishment, alternative economy and new technologies, no changes were indicated until last year, when process of creating of some policies has merely began. Data indicating migrations of young people towards Western Europe countries are the best signs of lack of satisfaction among citizens, the youngsters particularly, and optimism about state in region.

While preparing this document, we haven't dealt with transformative social innovations (process of changing dominant ways of work, mind set and organizing) but we used the experience based on European projects and networks functioning. Transformative social innovations that lead to more sustainable and rightful common future were strongly recommended by Manifesto created by Transit networks. This is an essential and political story. These innovations can be acts of defiance toward changing of power system, institutionalized interests and deeply rooted beliefs and practices. Wide networks of universities, institutes and organizations worked on researches in order to divulge the meaning of social innovations in our city, neighborhood, village, sector, organization and personal life and to share the identified experiences making them applicable and available to majority. The SIC (Social Innovation Community) declaration determines the basic values that are of use to European policy creators while negotiating about new budget and EU programs. Declaration contains 10 specific recommendations for policies of vital importance for these questions. It is suggested that social innovations should be implemented in each European policies and programs as a priority (such as European Social



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Fund Plus or Horizon Europe) by interested actors and there are sets of proposals focused on profiting from strategic partnerships among EU, national and regional governments in order to change and obtain liberation of communities and organizations potentials in civic society. YouSEE platform supports values and principles of platforms integrated in this document that represents suggestion to regional politicians and communities.

Besides the monitoring of positive processes in European Union, in last 4 years, YouSEE platform has been carrying out complex process of analyzing some of the major barriers in national politics that are restraining social innovation impact increase, particularly in youth prosperity segments, that would cause their maintenance in region. In order to affiliate with different actors from regional Social innovation communities, we created and carried through a range of activities- workshops, trainings, meetings, social media campaigns, stakeholders' round tables and forums. The main goal was simple: understanding community attitudes toward the question: "What is needed for making social innovation the main stream in next decade?"

YouSEE platform prepared proposal of sets of measures that should lead to politics transformation through social innovations. These innovations would result in creation of different perspective for Western Balkan and Turkey youth. This proposal is based on aforementioned documents, policies suggestion realized through Transit network and SIC Platform (ex. How is EU employment policy driving social innovation?), Lisbon Declaration of social innovation, EU study on social innovations trends and vision (using the Guide to Social innovations by European Commission). Also, this proposal was defined taking into account citizens needs and national documents analysis created by partners.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN EU AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Employment policy in EU (enlisted by group of SIC publication authors- How is EU employment policy driving social innovations- Nabeela Ahmed, Sophie Reynolds, Isaac Stanley, Sandra Gulyurtly, Madelaine Gabriel) is a wide and complex field including several types of accessing policies: Macro-economy policy, Labor market policy, Employment protection policy. Macro-economy policy encourages the creation of employment by increasing the aggregate demand. Also, it represents fiscal policy expansion in accordance with traditional Keynesian employment policy access. Labor market policy aims to influence the interaction between demand and offer of labor. Policy of employment protection regulates individual and group labor conditions. This function makes it similar to Employment protection Law (EPL).

The fact that EU's attention has been drawn from employment protection to employment promotion during the Post-Maastricht period, can be considered as a part of transformation (caused by shift towards Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)) and response to constantly high unemployment rate in member



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countries. This change was initiated in accordance with Amsterdam Concordance from 1997 and based on European Employment Strategy (EES).

SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Innovation is finding or idea implementation. Innovation is idea realization i.e. process of transforming idea into practical application. Innovation refers to creating something new as well as to reinventing and reusing of something old. Social innovations very often denote reinventing, reuse, revitalization and reimplementation of long lost, forgotten or abandoned forms of labor and thinking. Innovation refers to merging between experiences and practice as much as it refers to new proposals and technologies implementation in current contexts.

It is not necessary for innovation to be global, but it can represent innovation for particular organization. What is innovation for one doesn't necessarily have to be innovation for another organization that can apply that product/service, process or business model.

The social innovation abuse, as an excuse for abolition of necessary and traditional public services, is forbidden. Process of development, maintenance and improvement of needed social benefits should not be replaced by social innovations. They should be promotion and enrichment of community services and processes rather than "cheap solutions" supporting austerity measures.

Social innovation should not be the basis of competition among Civic Society organizations. Sector members have to cooperate and to secure communication between institutions and people, identify research and test relationships and suggest service adaptation to public policies.

The change of tools we have been using and what we have been working is not sufficient: **It is necessary to experiment with alternative accesses to social relations development and values that they bring.** Social relations (relations among neighbors, consumers and producers, employees and employers, policy makers and citizens) are fundamental for better quality of life. We have to pay special attention to relations among individuals- experiment with ways of promoting relationship values of trust, reciprocity, equality, sharing, solidarity, inclusion and transparency. Commitment to experiments that are leading to development of group competences is required for creating and maintaining of such relations.

Social and material changes are entwined: we need both social and technological innovations. Social innovations are contrary to technological innovations that became synonym for innovations in community. It is very important to understand that technology, sustainable development, culture, economy and politics are entwined and that something that is social is not shaped only by people but under influence of computers, new technologies, mobile phones, climate changes etc.

Social innovations induce creating of new policies. It doesn't matter about which innovation it is about, it will result in new



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policy creation. This is general estimation defined by recently attended forum on Social innovations in Seville. By the EQUAL typology, used as the basis in aforementioned SIC publication, there are 3 employment categories lead by social innovations: **process-oriented innovations** (encourage creating new and improving current methods and accesses), **context-oriented innovations** (changing of political and institutional sector and system development) and **goal-oriented innovations** (identification of new qualifications, creation of new employment areas and establishing new goals).

Social innovations are people-oriented, because people are the best innovation source and focus consumers. The aim is investing in people in order to provide creation and implementation of innovation in accordance with their values and aspirations.

Social innovations are systems focused on transformation of people and intuitions potentials into positive results. Raising social innovations on level of city and regions, we are making transformation of these places into giant laboratories. The institutions ability to work together in many complex and diverse functions, organized trough permanent and predictable interaction with people is the way how country transformations are created;

Social innovation has to be the essence of policy creations and Balkan agenda. It cannot be secondary policy, nor the policy promoted trough awarding concept, but has to precede the first stage of creation.

REASONS FOR POLICY CREATORS INTEREST IN SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Reasons for supporting policy creators are obvious and can have multipurpose value. Social innovations can be promoted on different way, but dominantly as a way of:

- solving of constant social challenges
- employment creation
- economic growth, particularly inclusive growth promotion
- public service improvement, making them potentially cheaper and/or more efficient
- establishing stronger legitimacy of public institutions
- encouraging flexibility in communities by providing the means for solving problems to people
- modifying relationship between citizens and government
- innovations of management model

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF SOCIAL INNOVATIONS COMMUNITIES

Values and principles by Lisbon declaration of SIC ("Social innovation as mean to sustainable, resistant and inclusive Europe"), are based on extensive consultations and online researches and YouSEE platform contributed to it. Presented values and principles, inspired by other manifestos and declarations (including **Manifesto for Digital social innovations**, **Manifesto for Social innovation transformation**



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and Declaration on SI-DRIVE policy and Strasbourg declaration on Social enterprises), represent initiating point for social innovations development in Western Balkan region.

This document shows dedication to **common values** that include:

- Assumption that social innovations are one of means for offering perspective to young people and for social challenges solving- from local to global;
- Openness, democratization and conviction that different actors-including citizens, communities and those faced with marginalization- will take part in innovation development, interpersonal relationship development, social and economic development and making decisions process;
- Conviction that top-down concept of obtaining research findings and bottom-up co-operation, experimenting and collaboration in measures development are required for overcoming the challenges that we are faced with when it comes to reaching national aims of employment policies, other policies that are dealing with status of the youngsters, and support to accomplishing demanding goals determined by UN Millennium Development Goals;
- Desire for finding creative ways for improving the public services quality and inclusiveness, conducted by decision that social innovations should never be an excuse for its abolition.

In accordance with these values, we are calling national and local policy makers to create their social innovations policy agenda based on the 3 following principles:

- Confirm the true diversity of innovation creators' community and in accordance with it create supporting policy. Social innovations can be initiated by social entrepreneurs, civil servants, mayors, Civic Society and Social economy actors, businessmen, educators, civic groups and others.
- Overcome the support concept based on donation to social innovations and implement principles and values of social innovations into policies, programs and instruments. Each field of policy can support innovative experimenting and learning, dim sectorial boundaries and include wide number of actors in solving social challenges.
- Support social innovations as fundamentals, not as complements: integrated understanding of innovations for public good should be included in main National agenda and harmonized with support and investments of policy makers on each government level.

HOW TO BENEFIT FROM PRE-ASSESSMENT PERIOD IN FAVOUR OF WESTERN BALKAN INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Long-term development plan, that will be based on current innovative solutions creating and induce new area of employment



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and empowerment, new models and approaches, and new institutional arrangements, is required in Western Balkan.

The YouSEE Platform suggests 3 sets of recommendations, based on 4 regional documents monitoring current employment policies, over 20 national policy documents, identification of community challenges, and selection of potentially tested EU's trends:

A. Tasks innovation

Tasks innovation represents measures that will determine new goals, including identification of new qualifications and opening of new employment fields. We suggest:

A.1. Immediate creating of alternative development and economy diversity

Current economic systems are source of many contemporary ecological and social challenges. People all around the world are examining alternative economies, including solidarity economy, social economy, green economy, de-growth economy, sharing economies, circular economies and many other forms. Inspired by global needs and Millennial Development Goals, new technology aims to artificial intelligence application, development of ICO based on block chain technology, technological start-ups.

A precondition to creation of new forms of economies and rapidly growing of new technologies and start-ups is open mind approach that will be realized on long-terms trough:

- Investments in educational programs development and digital competencies among youngsters and managements that conduct this programs;
- Precondition for experimenting in Western Balkan region is merging among actors in region and stakeholders on international level, bearing in mind citizens' needs and cultural context.
- Modernization of teaching plans and programs in elementary and high schools in collaboration with IT sectors, software industry, intermediaries for entrepreneurship development, innovations and Civic society organizations.

A.2. Investing in intermediary bodies network

The creation of development systems supports for set of intermediary bodies is required i.e. the creation of bodies such as co-working spaces, accelerators, experimental spaces (Hubs, Fab labs, Hackerspaces, Ecovillages, Urban Living Labs), centers for new technologies, creative industries, traditional economy and alternative economy merging. On the EU territory, and wider, these bodies are acting as supporting surroundings for testing, developing of new ideas in the frames of alternative economy and new technologies.

People need space for experimenting, failure, learning and engagement. Very often, such spaces are functioning on



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principles that are completely opposite to dominant mind-sets, such as tendency of being prone to improvisations, getting conclusion from many unsuccessful programs carried out without previously testing, superficial solutions and excessive planning.

Regionalization of centers for developing different forms of alternative economies in line with economic and social potentials of regions should be tested there. These centers can be used as spaces for conducting modernized teaching plans and new qualifications education. **Physical space for learning and experimenting** is a condition needed for supporting social innovations development that would have potential to deal with identified social challenges in regions with high needs.

Technological and developmental institutes would be initiated at Universities. Institutes should monitor economic potentials of countries in region and support the initiatives development and entrepreneurship in community with their resources for researching. These institutes have to ensure the process of **innovations, creative industries and re-industrialization associating.**

A.3. Prevention of human potential leakage trough investments in professional staff

Ensure pro-activity and functioning of youth on labor market. There are many professions for which we are currently educating staff and until the end of decade they will have been extinct. Due to that, the transition from macro-economic model of employment policy to labor market model where the concept of harmonization between education and perceived labor market needs would relax with concept of supporting the transition of youth from profession to profession.

Ensure that young people become entrepreneurs, not only by creating business, but in process of positioning on labor market. Rigid rules of acquired knowledge licensing and conditions for starting businesses have to be in accordance with this trend, because they are consuming time and money.

Social Innovation traineeship and Fellowship should be affirmed and regulated as a concept trough which new graduates would be supported in order to acquire additional knowledge and experience in practice in country, region and wide. Also, it is necessary to support by fellowship the already existing staff that would get, during the 2-year-long help in living costs, the chance to dedicate their time to carry out the research and innovation development as well as transitional initiatives establishment. Regional countries, by adopting legislative provisions, should provide support for different forms of these working engagements without establishing any particular working engagement, but they should provide it by both, active measures forms and regulating traineeship on open market that will not be limited on national boundaries. Fellowships programs, via relevant ministry and implementing agencies, should be directed to support the economic sector and intermediary bodies.



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A.4. Outsourcing

Wide spread freelancing in particular countries in region, especially when it comes to occupations in high demand, high fees outside the borders of region and youth needs to live in more urban way, are the main causes of "brain leakage".

The freelancing should be regulated and defined by diminishing the social risk for everyone who decides to "export" their knowledge staying in our region. It is required to create measures that will determine young people to stay in region, stimulating them on re-distribution of part of knowledge into domestic economy, education and innovation development.

Geographic location, good climate conditions and the costs of living and staying there, make Western Balkan an attractive destination for living for "digital nomads" and freelancers from all over the world. **With an appropriate tax policy, destination promotion and support of intermediary bodies' network, this region can become migration destination for arrival of people with new ideas and knowledge.**

B. Innovations in processes

Process-oriented innovation refers to develop of new approaches and methods and improving of already existing. We suggest:

B.1. Intersectional regional flagship initiatives

Western Balkan countries have a set of common challenges that they have to face with trough the unique promo and advocacy initiatives. It is necessary and possible to carry out initiatives and campaigns determined trough this document, but with support of institutional regional mechanisms such as Regional Cooperation Council, Western Balkans Fund and Regional Youth Cooperation Office, and/or via intermediary bodies' leadership, Civic society organizations networks and innovators.

Annual or two-year forum should be used for determining priorities, representing innovations, examples of good practice and networking. Forum should be traditional place for gathering on the topic of perspective, employment and innovations, determination of road map and process monitoring. Inspiration for organization can be Upbeat forum of social innovations held in 2017 and 2018 in Podgorica. The first topic can be Entrepreneurship culture development and Regional programs of supporting the acceleration of initiated businesses.

Local governments should use regional initiatives in order to work on Entrepreneurship culture development in society permanently, holistically and in wide partnership (development of entrepreneurship and proactive mind set). Via local partnerships there should be supported creating of modern contents for promotion of young entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs via online platforms and medias, campaigns promoting youth proactivity in society (such as choosing the best young entrepreneur, the best activist enterprise, awarding etc.), as well as organizing competitions that promote entrepreneur spirit among youngsters and their education trough simulation etc.



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B.2. Redefining employment active measures' planning and conducting ways

Appropos the current state on market and possibilities that are on disposal to employment services in region, when it comes to individual approach and determination of employment plan-**combo package should be offered instead of a la card offer.** This model foresees individual approach and connection of active measures that will lead candidate from level required for employment increase up to level that will ensure their employment in short period of time. It entails horizontal collaboration of actors on local level, development of decentralized services and investing in empowering the capacities of service providers in employment and human resources area.

The using of innovative and co-creative methods in active measures planning and planning reduced to lowest possible level (if it's possible bellow the local levels in larger towns) are needed. Each actor (beside the public employment services) should be enabled to take part in such a way to contribute the most with its expertise, experience or position in decision-making system. On national level, classification of active measures should be in line with EU classification in order to enable results comparison on different levels: 1) training measures (institutional, workplace, alternately and practicing by stimulating employers and fees for training specific vulnerable groups); 2) stimulating employment on open labor market jobs that could persist and could be created without public stimulations; 3) assisted employment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities for integration into labor market; 4) measures contributing to creation of additional jobs for hardly employed and long-term unemployed persons; 5) stimulus for entrepreneurship.

B.3. Local funds, initiatives and policies merging trough co-creative process

Due to public perception and decision makers' on constant lack of money, faced with increasing unemployment, different government levels are trying to provide significant means for credit support to new entrepreneurship development by using different mechanisms. Beside the auspicious interest rates and grace period for few years, funds have to provide assurance trough municipality guarantee and find supporting channels via business angels capital in order to ensure their optional functioning and availability for beginners and entrepreneurs that cannot provide guarantee on their own. Risk decrease should be ensured trough investments and collaboration with intermediary bodies. Both, investments and intermediary bodies have to make certain individual merging, synergy and co-creative process of need transformation into business idea. Investing in accelerating funds, which would launch themselves via intermediary bodies, would provide entrepreneurship development and new workplaces. The most important is to ensure model sustainability by returning part of assets to investment chain, after its development. This process cannot be carried out by particular individuals.



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Policy development and local partnership of interested sides should provide process and mechanisms application and recognition.

C. Managing innovations

Context-oriented innovation refers to changes in system structure (political and institutional) and development.

C.1. Creation of mind lab/observatory

Creation of mind lab/observatory should be provided by supervisory services in policy fields of highest priority, such as local and regional development; ensure sustainable solutions for inhabitancy and creating of better and more sustainable employment. Social innovation policy trends should be monitored, and analysis and directions on how member countries can implement social innovation experimenting into national policy reform should be provided.

Creating cross-service Social Innovation Action Plan

It represents one of jurisdictions that should be delegated by these labs/ observatories in countries in region. Action plan would ensure harmonization between different strategies of social innovations and workflows in order to accomplish long-term social goals. Coordinated responses to social innovation policy should be conducted- particularly for complex social challenges that are remote from relevant ministry, institution or agency jurisdiction. There can be included: rural social innovations in agriculture policy; application lessons from EU countries; social innovations that are using technology for suppression new digital era challenges such as insecure work or irrelevant formation spreading; social innovation application in climate changes and environment policies. This plan should be co-created with social innovations community and involve cross-sectorial and regional interested sides from particular policy field.

Intersectional collaboration and multi-sectional approach to strategy development will provide radical decrease of number of strategies.

C.2. Abolish law barriers and fill in policies that would make entrepreneurship easier and provide development and merging of alternative economy and new technologies

Affirmative conditions for entrepreneurship initiative development, trough long-term and short-term measures and legislative provisions, should be created. In short-terms it is possible that local authorities discharge new business initiatives on different taxes on inscription and registration and taxes on labor contract for first business year for young entrepreneurs initiating their start-up. Also, it is possible that local authorities create new advantages that would decrease the costs of start-up to its lowest. There are many non-financial supports such as: obtaining international certificates for export, patterning, purchase of cash register, fire extinguisher, computer programs etc.



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For each limited liability company that regulates its functioning as social (social useful) by its statutes, there should be provided income tax returning.

In long-terms, there should be done many things:

- start-ups and social enterprises should be regulated
- putting public spaces for social entrepreneurship development, social services and start-ups into operation should be provided
- freelancers status, their social protection and incentive taxes should be defined precisely
- visa policy, staff outsourcing and digital nomad attracting should be harmonized
- legislative conditions for new technologies development, including distributed Ledger Technology, should be created

C.3. The lack of support for social innovations and political will in general, mind set and skills required for social innovations development

Empower capacities, skills and stimulus for civil servants end policy creators

It is of vital importance to empower capacities, skills and stimulus for civil servants and policy creators in order to support and draw on (citizen-led) social innovation and alternative economy forms development. Herein, sensitization and clearly understanding of economy forms and new technologies importance are needed in order to provide precise terminology in policy and avoid wrong law solutions.

Develop appropriate relation to policy creations.

Starting from the beginning system and "blue flag" principle should be avoided. "Blue flag" principle represents rewriting EU legislation and policies, uncritical approach to solutions supported by EU in order to decrease number of existing laws that are not in use due to cultural context or other barriers.

Citizens, allied communities and civil society should be supported and empowered

This is of vital importance for these actors in taking the main roll in contributing to policy development processes. So, strategic regional and local partnerships are needed as well as innovative services development created trough intersectional cooperation. This would contribute to diversification in service providing in community. Employment policy management should be changed by appropriate participation of interested sides, including NGOs.

Regional policy Labs

Being established by community actors and NGOs, it can affect, on unique way, changes on regional level via interaction with regional and intergovernmental bodies. Also, it can be an actor of changes in different local communities. Positive example can be YouSEE platform model of regional policy Lab.



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C.4. Public procurement policy determination

The way of public procurement carrying out is a major barrier for innovation conducting. For public procurement in EU, there is 1.9 trillion euro paid each year. In Western Balkan region, more than 30% of national budget is determined for public procurements. Due to regulatory difficulties or lack of demand by public institutions, public market remains unavailable for many organizations that are engaged in social innovations. Even though, many of them with potential to assist to governments when it comes to effectively solving of social challenges of highest importance. Therefore, there are required establishment and implementation of ISO standard 20400 and development of standard that will induce taking into account social values by public institutions during evaluation and making space for innovations in the area of public procurements. The main goal was minimizing impact on environment and experimenting with new, more effective ways of public procurement of services from social innovation community actors. In such a way, public procurements would become one of the main social development innovations catalyzer in practice. Experience for government development in region could be found in Guide for innovative procurements recently published by EU Commission.

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