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CENTER FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Climate neutrality and climate resilience require measures in all areas of social action. At the Centre for Climate Change and Transformation (CCT) scientists from several Eurac Research institutes and centres do research together in an inter and trans-disciplinary way. We provide knowledge and solutions towards climate neutrality and climate resilience and foster socio-ecological transformation.

INSTITUTE FOR
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Promoting social justice, supportive and resilient communities and increasing environmentally friendly mindsets is the goal of our transformation research at our Institute. By fostering relationships with the people in South Tyrol's valleys and other mountain regions and endowing citizens with responsibilities as our co-researchers, local knowledge and science combine to shape the future in a sustainable way.

20.06.2024

Fiumicina - Experimenting with the Sun

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12.07.2024

KLIMACAMP Verano

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27 June 2024

Heat waves in Casette Inglesi: Eurac Research presents the questionnaire results

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09.05.2024

Decamp north or decamp up – where do we and why should we migrate to as climate change?

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Empowering Communities: The Role Of Social Innovation In Local Development

Outline

1.   Background: societal challenges

2.   Social innovation: framework explaining the development and implementation of social innovations

3.   Social innovation: local development and community engagement

4.   Social innovation contribution to societal wellbeing: case study of women empowerment in south Tyrol

5.   Key messages on how to enhance social innovations

Societal challenges

Societal challenges: climate change

San Leonardo in Passiria, 2009

Raging wildfires, floods and hurricanes, the hottest days in recorded history. Solutions includes transitioning to a green economy, reducing carbon emissions, and managing natural resources responsibly to mitigate environmental impacts.

Societal challenges: demographic change

Leaving No One Behind In An Ageing World" (UNDESA).

ATLAS MIGRATIONS : pp. 10-11
ouverte, 217,6 x 127
Les flux migratoires dans le monde

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-31716-3_1

Ageing population, expected to rise sharply, is putting pressure on public finances, healthcare, and pension systems. Migration poses challenges for social cohesion, requiring better integration policies that address the needs of diverse communities and promote intercultural understanding.
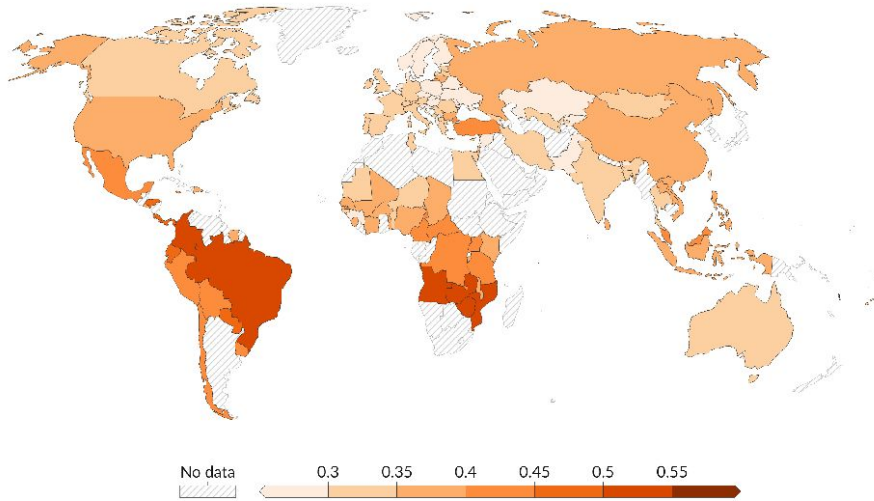
Societal challenges: socio-economic disparities

Income inequality: Gini coefficient, 2023

The Gini coefficient[1] measures inequality on a scale from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate higher inequality. Depending on the country and year, the data relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or to consumption, per capita[2].

| No data | 0.3 | 0.35 | 0.4 | 0.45 | 0.5 | 0.55 |

Data source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2024)

OurWorldinData.org/economic-inequality | CC BY

1. **Gini coefficient:** The Gini coefficient is the most commonly used measure of inequality. It is typically used as a measure of income inequality, but it can be used to measure the inequality of any distribution – such as the distribution of wealth, or even life expectancy. It measures inequality on a scale from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate higher inequality. This can sometimes be shown as a percentage from 0 to 100%, this is then called the 'Gini Index'. A value of 0 indicates perfect equality – where everyone has the same income. A value of 1 indicates perfect inequality – where one person receives all the income, and everyone else receives nothing. Read more in our article: Measuring inequality: What is the Gini coefficient?

2. **Per capita:** 'Per capita' here means that each person (including children) is attributed an equal share of the total income received by all members of their household.

The top 1% controls 46% of world's wealth. —Oxfam

1%

...STILL NOT ENOUGH...

https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/global-social-challenges/2021/05/05/how-big-are-we-going-to-let-the-inequality-gap-get/

Persistent inequalities and social exclusion hinder economic development and innovation. The economic crisis has further exacerbated disparities between social groups and regions, impacting overall social cohesion.

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Solving societal challenges

https://energytracker.asia/climate-change-technology-solutions/
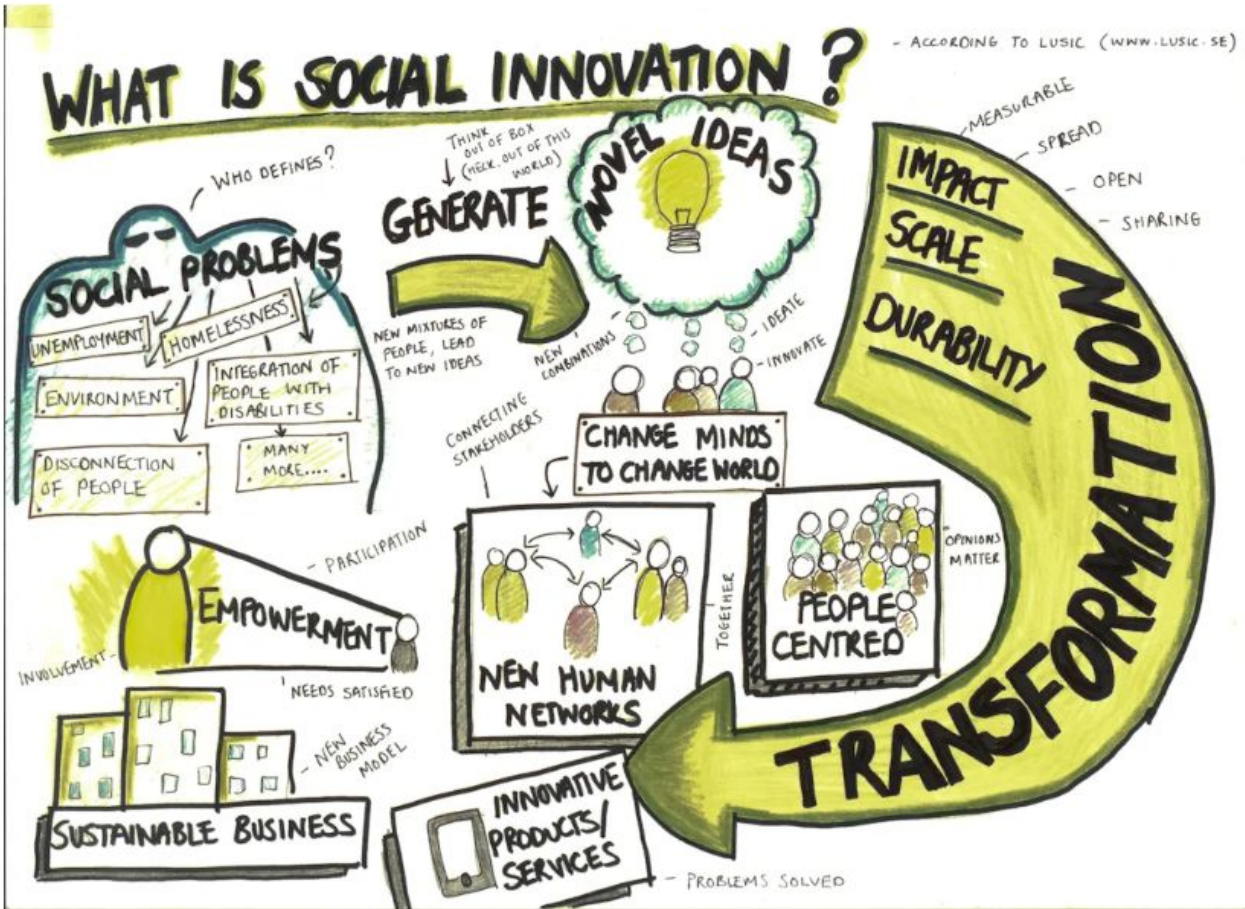
17 SDGs

EU- Green Deal

- Climate-neutral by 2050
- Decouple growth from resource use leaving no one, neither people nor region, behind.

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Social innovation

What is it social innovation?

https://medium.com/@be1morechange/what-is-social-innovation-4928d3f03c81

Imagine a world where communities are not just recipients of change but the architects of their own futures.

Haxeltine et al 2015

Social innovation-definition by SIMRA project

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).

1. Means to address complex societal challenges

2. Process of intentional change of social practices

3. Voluntary engagement of civil society actors

4. A process, a product, an outcome/impact

Social innovation-development

- **Existing context**
- **Perceived context** that creates the conditions for the SI to emerge
- Unmet **social needs** SI want to address
- **Trigger** decisive moment, event that gave birth to the SI idea
- **Agents** who initiated and developed the SI initiative
- **Reconfiguration of social practices**
- **Project Activities** to implement the SI project
- **Outputs** immediate results in terms of products, services
- **Outcomes** effects of SI at the level of beneficiaries
- **Learning process**
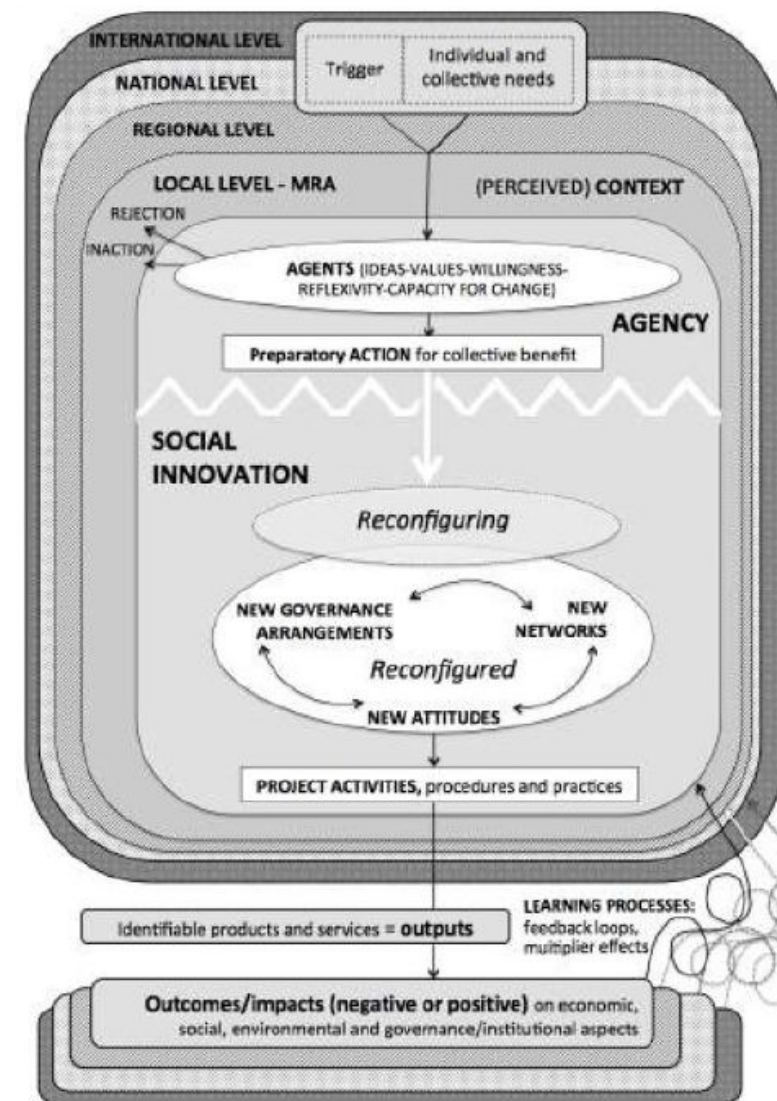
Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=11&v=qCfeLxX6I7c

Local development and community empowerment

*Community empowerment is a "process through which individuals, groups, or communities gain control, achieve autonomy, and **increase their capacity to make decisions and implement changes in their social, economic, and political environments**. It emphasizes enhancing community strengths, **building local capacities**, and fostering participation to improve quality of life and well-being"*

*Local development is the process of "**building stronger, more vibrant communities, where economic opportunities flourish, and all residents can enjoy a high quality of life**. It's about job creation and competitiveness, but not only. Issues such as inclusion, social connectedness and civic pride are also at the heart of a modern approach to local development." OECD*
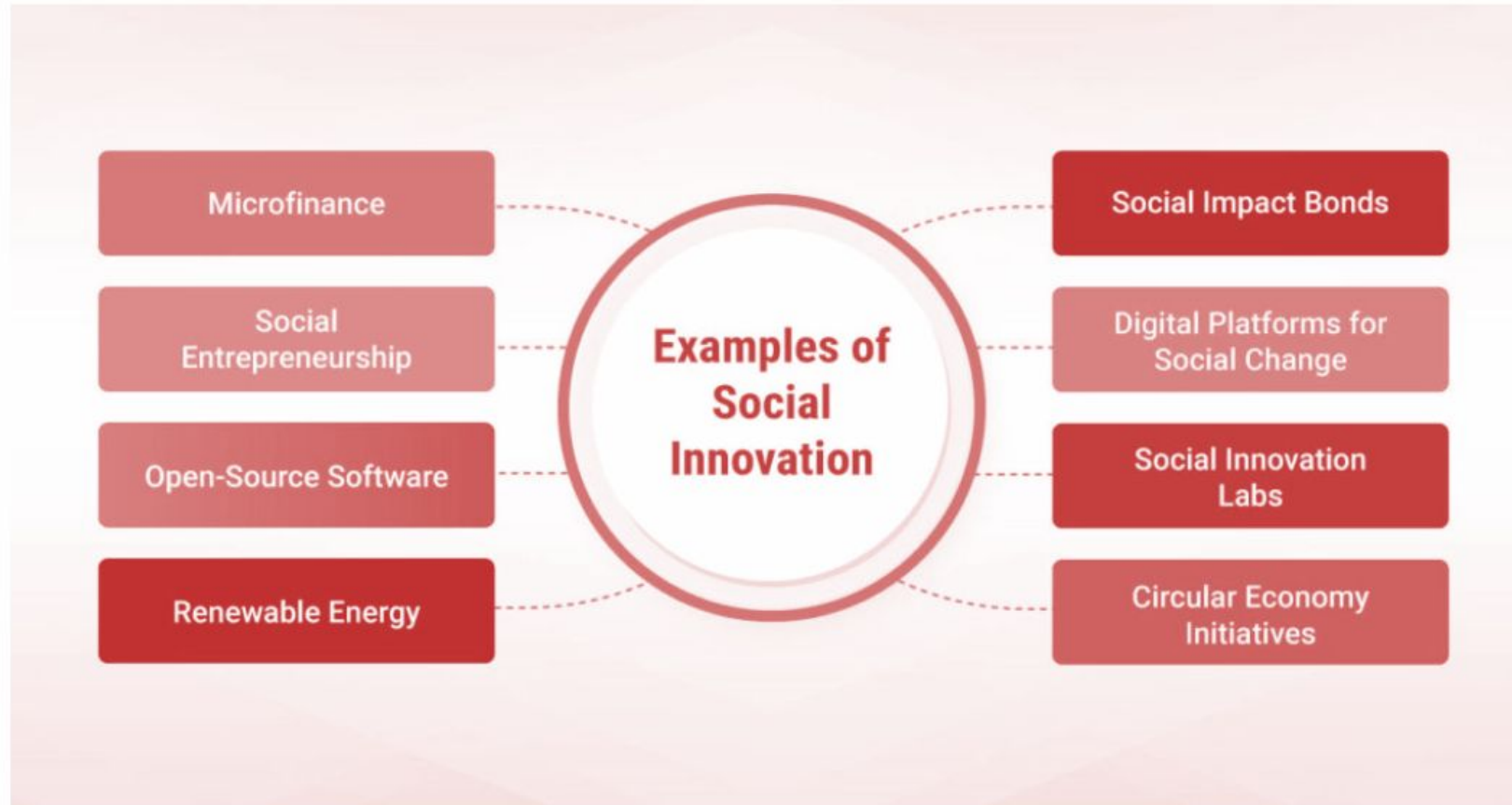
Social innovation, local development and community empowerment

1. **Social Innovation Drives Empowerment**: By engaging communities in the creation of solutions for their challenges, social innovation empowers individuals and groups to take action.

2. **Empowerment Fuels Local Development**: As communities become empowered, they are more likely to mobilize resources and collaborate effectively towards local development goals.

3. **Local Development Reinforces Social Innovation**: Successful local development initiatives can lead to further social innovations as communities identify new challenges and opportunities for improvement.

Social innovation examples

Example: Social innovation contribution to women Empowerment in South Tyrol

Social farming *is a practice that "includes all activities that use agriculture resources s—plants, animals, and abiotic assets—for educational, care giving, health promotion, recreation, education rehabilitation and to promote social inclusion and social services in rural areas (Di Iacovo 2009).*

Background: Women in agriculture
Social exclusion and low recognition

13,5% Women are legal and economic responsible of the 16% of 20.247 farms in South Tyrol

41% Women constitute 41% of the familial workforce

4,7% Women farm- managers with university degree (Vs. 3,1% men)

41,9% Women farm- managers with high school degree (Vs. 45,6%)

15% Agritourism on 3.125 farms, 15% of the South Tyrolean farms (women responsibility)

Source: ASTAT, 2013, 2016
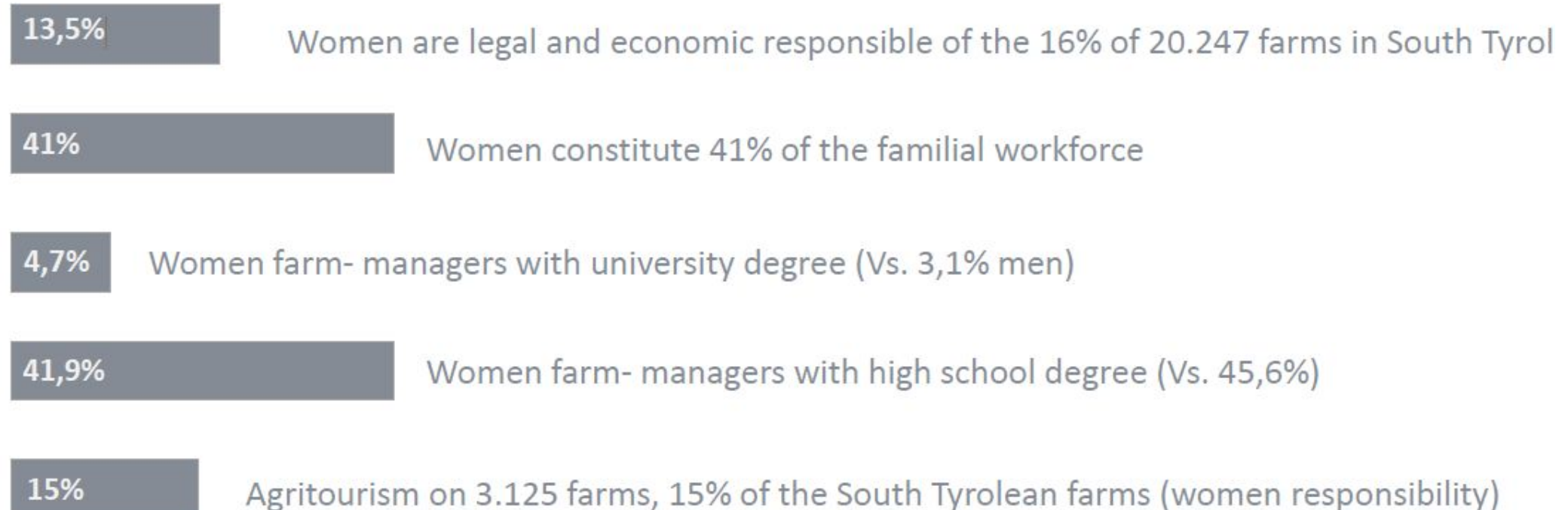
Background: Women in agriculture

Gender inequality

- have **trouble being respected as business initiators** and community leaders
- are **in minority in decision-making and planning** processes; furthermore
- are affected by lack of **service provision** and **access to jobs and education** opportunities

Background: Women in agriculture

Sustainability of rural community

- Contribute to rural livelihoods, socio-economic development and overall wellbeing
- They ensure **food production**
- They **participate in the food market**
- They **maintain tradition knowledge and values** practices regarding farming and rural lifestyle
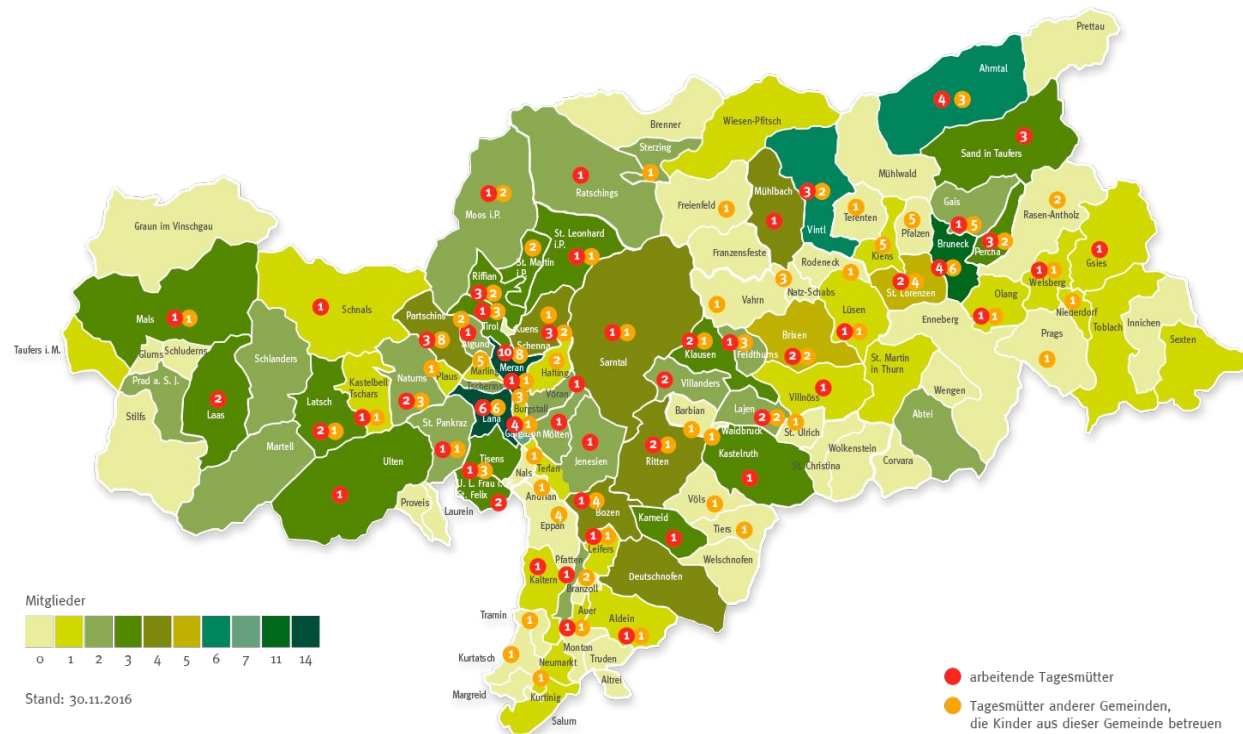
Research interest

- How social farming as social innovation initiative was able to **improve the well-being of rural communities?**

- **Which** are the impacts that social innovation had at local level/ on rural community development?

Social innovation initiative

Learning-Growing-Living with women farmers in South Tyrol

116 women providers of childcare and elderly care across rural areas in the region.

"At the farm children feed animals, learn nature and rural lifestyle, play together"

Method

Quali-quantative method: 4 focus groups, **6** semi-structured interviews with key actors in the SI initiatives,**20** structured interviews to members of the networks, project managers and beneficiaries

13 women farmers interviewed

Age of the interviewed women farmers

Source: own figure
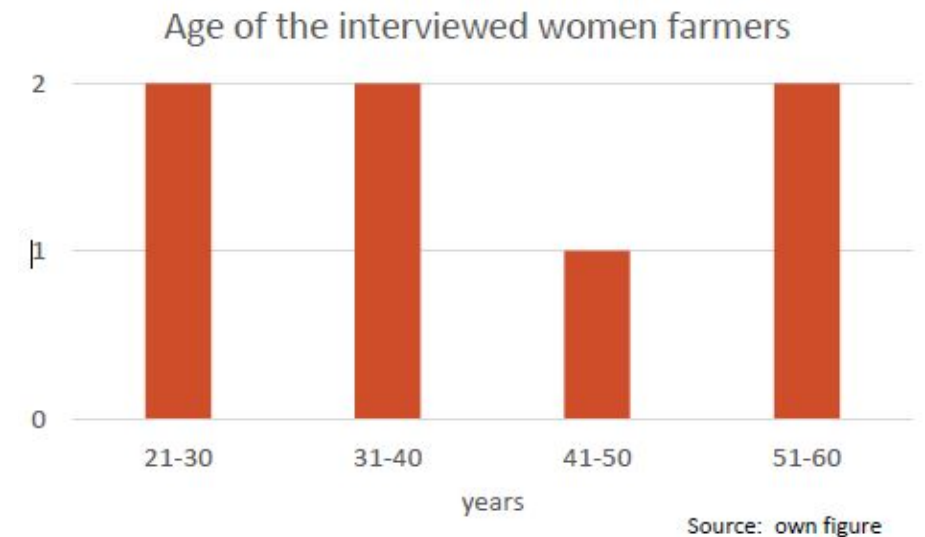
Social and economic impacts of the initiative

Women empowerment and new power relations

- Women are embowed through **entrepreneurship** and new acquired **skills** needed to manage and expand their businesses

- Increasing **women's access to income**, motivated them to be better involved in political activities

Social and economic impacts of the initiative

Societal wellbeing and social cohesion

- Employment of **over 100 women**

- Provision of **decentralized childcare services** on the farm to over 500 children

- Opportunities for **business diversification** that see farm a **place for socialization and rural education** and not only for agricultural production.

- Increased **community ties** based on mutual acquaintances, recognition and trust

- Foster **active civil society engagement** /active political participation/ civic awareness

Social and economic impacts of the initiative

Re-interpretation of transitions and Cultural change

- Valorisation of **community rural symbols**, **local knowledge** and **identity and** re-interpretation of traditional cultural values

- **Changed the way society see women farmers** and their activities on the farm was recognized and appreciated broadly, progressing towards gender equity

- **Greater impacts on the territory** in which it is located, and only occasionally spill-out effects and **strong positive impacts** at the **community** level and at the civil **society level**

Key messages

Recommendations

- Support initiatives that foster **women's full participatio**n in socio-economic life and politics by **financial and economic resources**

- Promote strong political and public support and an **active role of municipalities** and **partnership** with civil society actors

- Enable **bottom-up community actions** and **promote social capital, human skill development** combined with **strong civic engagement** of local actors to increase local population capacity to act

- Sponsor **intermediary support structure** as contact point for local actors seeking advice

- Develop **cross-sectoral policy** that **enables local self-determination** with transfer of power, tasks and responsibilities down to the local level

Recommendations for future research

- Better understanding of the **regulatory and market obstacles to SI development**, and of the policies which are supportive or hinder

- Better understanding the **learning mechanisms** and how to replicate social innovation from one contexts to another

- Better understanding of the **transformative power** of social innovation

- Assessment of the **critical effects** of Social innovations

- Study the role social innovation in **fighting climate change** (adaptation/mitigation) and making citizens active player

References

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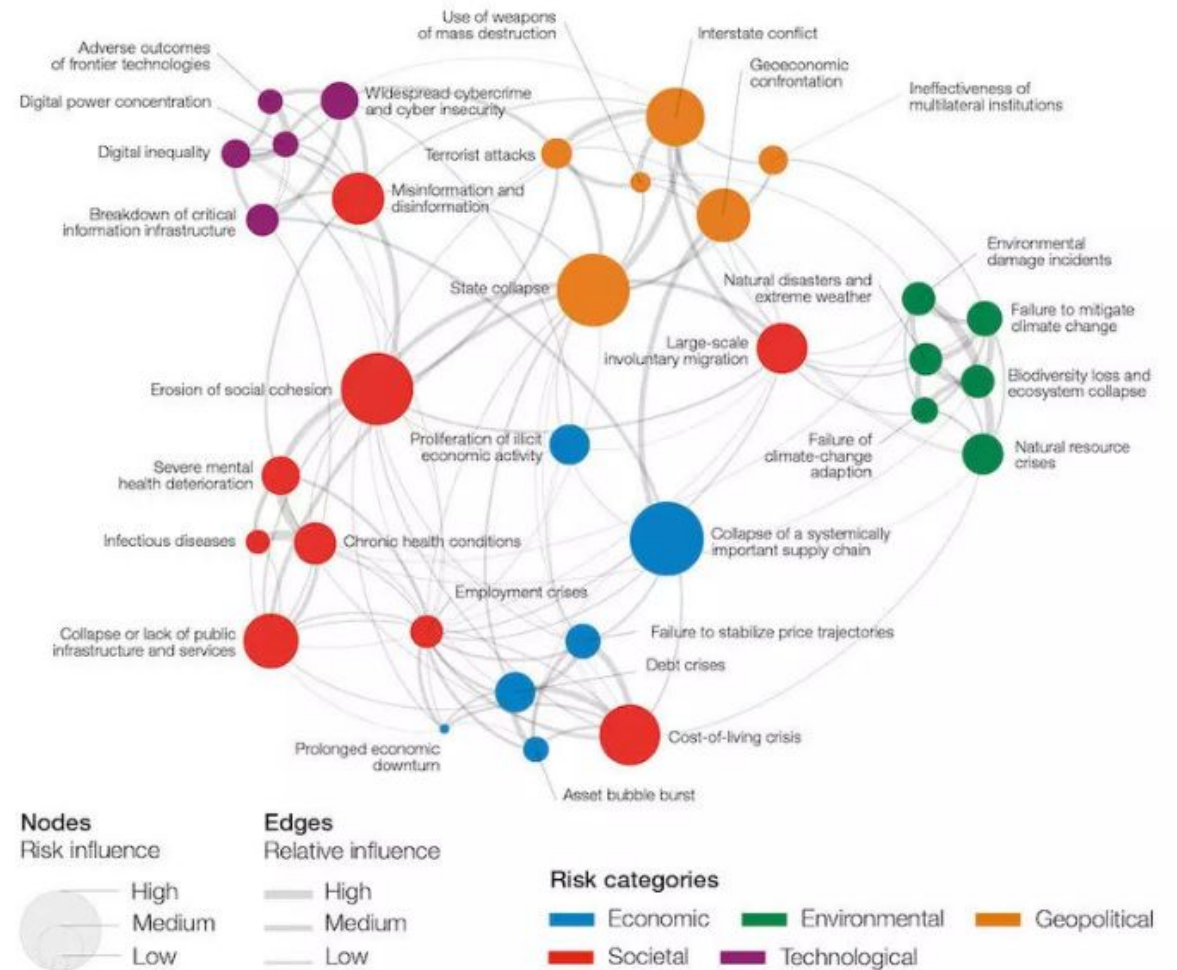
Our time: poly-crisis

The polycrisis term has a real utility descriptively, because it's **arm-waving**. It's going, '**Look, there's a lot of stuff happening here all at once**'.
And that precisely is what we're trying to wrap our minds around.

Global risks landscape: an interconnections map

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Risks Perception Survey 2022-2023

The interconnected nature of current and emerging risks threatens a polycrisis.

Image: World Economic Forum.

Example: Diffused hospitality of asylum seekers in Camonica Valley, Lombardy

Coopetative K-PAX

- Camonica Valley, Lombardy

- K-Pax is a social cooperative, instituted in 2008 to offer assistance to asylum seekers, refugees and adults in difficulty

Project of **diffused micro hospitality** in the perspective of better socio-economic integration of newcomers in mountain villages.

Source: Photo © Claudia Burlotti, 2015

CASE STUDY 1 - K-PAX

Existing context	Depopulation, brain drain, loss of services, no job opportunities, week economic development. In-migration of economic migrants and since 2011 of asylum seekers
Perceived Context	Strong opposition towards hosting asylum seekers with public manifestations
Unmet social needs	Hosting asylum seekers; socio-economic integration of asylum seekers
Trigger	Hundreds of asylum seekers were delocalized in an abandoned hotel at 1800 masl with lack of services of general interest and opportunities of exchange among the newcomers and the receiving community. Such solution triggered the social cooperative K-Pax to intervene
Agents	Social cooperative K-Pax, third sector organization like CGIL labour organization, public health system, mountain community, 11 municipalities of the valley
Social practices reconfiguration	Cooperation among sectors, relationship among actors, network of actors working on integration and allocation of asylum seekers
Activities carried out by the initiative	Search for adequate accommodation; provision of a job coaching service to migrants to facilitate their autonomy in the integration in the labour market. Awareness rising.
Outputs	25 places for asylum seekers in the municipality of Breno, dislocated in small units of accommodations (SPRAR) and 75 places in CAS in the whole territory of Camonica Valley
Outcomes/Impacts	Legal process of recognition and acceptance of the status of asylum seekers and integration into the local community
Learning process	Creation of a network among public agencies f third sectors organizations

How can social innovations promote the inclusion of forced migrants

- **Co-creation is an important value** that allowed social entrepreneurs, civil society, businesses and government actors to re-invent some sectors and mutually achieve their goals.
- **Civil society actors** play a relevant role in **activating and preparing the local communities** for migrant reception and integration.
- **A positive process of migrant reception and integration** into the local community occurs especially if migrants show **interest in community activities,** if they are directly **engaged in local life** and involved in the traditional/local activities having a mutual interest.

How can forced migrants foster a process of economic and cultural renaissance

- The **territory plays an important role in shaping positive pathways of migrant integration** and local development as it is the place where new identities are created and negotiated, and new processes of inclusion and exclusion take place.

- Migration is an opportunity for the innovation of mountain territories, for preserving cultural values, traditional jobs and for re-inhabited empty spaces. However, a process of **cultural negotiation** is necessary together with a **process of territorialisation.**

OPEN QUESTIONS

- Under which conditions (political, social, economic, environmental,…) migrants can become drivers of local development, in terms of economic, social and cultural innovation?
- How and when innovative services and practices created for the integration of migrants can increase the territorial attractiveness and social cohesion?
- How migration flows, with the related settlement practices, are changing the physical spaces where they occur, re-shaping and transforming local traditional spaces and places?