UTOPIAS OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

SIMON TEASDALE

ISIRC 2019
A CAST OF THOUSANDS
ERIK OLIN WRIGHT AND REAL UTOPIAS
THE UTOPIAN PROMISE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION
Faced with the uncertainty of the future, actors create fictional expectations, stories and images of the future that attract others to support this future pathway, providing it with legitimacy and increasing its achievability. (Ziegler 2019, 164-165).
• The world is defined by change and requires a new mindset.
• Ashoka envisions a world in which everyone is a changemaker: a world where all citizens are powerful and contribute to change in positive ways.
• Ashoka builds and cultivates a community of change leaders who see that the world now requires everyone to be a changemaker. Together, we collaborate to transform institutions and cultures worldwide so they support changemaking for the good of society.
• SIX is a social innovation exchange built on mutual value, relationships and knowledge. We work globally to facilitate purposeful cross-sector conversations, that challenge and inspire people to use innovation to increase social impact.

• Our vision is that everyone can use innovation to grow social impact, and live the life they want to live.

• We believe that the exchange of experiences and knowledge drives positive social change. This belief drives our work to create impactful exchanges between socially innovative thinkers and doers.
METHODS

What's the problem? Reaching the promised land Utopia? Moral principles Analysis of websites Coded against Wright's schema Allowing space for more inductive themes to emerge Understanding themes within wider contexts
SOCIAL INNOVATION IN A WORD
(CLOUD)
## MORAL PRINCIPLES

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ASHOKA</th>
<th>SiX</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality</strong></td>
<td>One reference (0.01%)</td>
<td>No references</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Democracy</strong></td>
<td>No references</td>
<td>One reference (0.02%)</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Two references (0.02%)</td>
<td>Three references (0.05%)</td>
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ASHOKA: PROBLEM STATEMENTS

• Fast changing world:
  • The world is defined by change and requires a new mindset
  • In a world of rapid change, society is confronted by an increasing number of complex challenges and opportunities

• Existing institutions not working:
  • Unfortunately, the market is not working as well as it could. Inequality is increasing at a staggering rate. Several billion people are excluded from the formal financial sector. More than 800 million people do not have secure rights to the land under their homes. Too many young people do not see themselves as having a pathway toward a viable livelihood. The opportunity gap between men and women is not going away.
  • Unlike traditional philanthropists, ASN members are changemakers who fully apply their creativity, energy, and connections to effect positive social change
  • Great business ideas go global to serve customers around the world. By contrast, no such market forces are at work in the social sector. Social innovation too often remains local or national.
• Autonomy / agency (Changemaking, entrepreneurs, innovators, leading)

• Autonomy is central to Kantian moral philosophy and also John Stuart Mill’s utilitarian liberalism. Generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one’s own person, live life according to one’s own belief and choices **NOT** the product of manipulative or distorting external forces

• Empathy? *(can prevent moral violations but isn’t itself a moral principal)*

• If we empathise with the subject of our social entrepreneurial endeavours perhaps we won’t commit any moral violations?
ASHOKA: REACHING THE PROMISED LAND

Developing heroes (10 references)

Creating new networks and collaborations (15 references)

Transforming institutions (particularly universities) (6 references)

Teaching the masses to become changemakers (16 references)

(New ways of organising (4 references))

Through consultancy
Through education
Through storytelling
THE ROUTE TO UTOPIA

Developing Heroes

Creating new networks and transforming institutions

Teaching the masses
AN ASHOKAN UTOPIA?

EVERYONE A LEADER?  HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/JRDEMERQ8MA
SIX HIERARCHY CHART
SOCIAL INNOVATION EXCHANGE: PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Fast-changing world:
We live in unprecedented times. The challenges we face are more complex and more extraordinary than ever. Whether it is how to live in increasingly polarised societies, how to make AI work for everyone, or how to achieve the SDGs, everyone is affected.

The world isn’t well connected:
(We need to) Address the lack of shared knowledge between organisations supporting social innovation across the world.
One of the biggest challenges in building social innovation capabilities is that it is often competency based and done in isolation, rather than being practice based and connected to people.

Note also the emphasis on practice, not theory.
SOCIAL INNOVATION EXCHANGE: MORAL PRINCIPLES

• Collaboration:
  • Linking the best practitioners around the world can generate new energy, new insights and new confidence about how to achieve change for the better. Geoff Mulgan, Chief Executive of Nesta and Founder of SIX
  • The bad news is that in many parts of the world the climate for social innovation is deteriorating - with authoritarianism, prejudice and lies all gaining ground, and fears that the gains of recent decades are being reversed. That makes it all the more important that everyone who cares about social change bands together and that we keep encouraging more and more people to join this exchange.
  • **Together we are always stronger than when we are apart.** SIX is a practical expression of that simple but very powerful idea.
SOCIAL INNOVATION EXCHANGE: REACHING THE PROMISED LAND

• Creating new networks and collaborations (25 references)
• Transforming Institutions (Universities, Charities, Businesses and Government) (22 references)
• Teaching the masses to create impact through social innovation (8 references, mainly consultancy)
  • Storytelling (6 references)
THE ROUTE TO UTOPIA

Creating new networks → Transforming institutions → Teaching the masses → Storytelling
A COLLABORATIVE UTOPIA?

“TOGETHER WE ARE ALWAYS STRONGER THAN WHEN WE ARE APART”

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=1THE-VYHK4A
UTOPIA OR COPING WITH DYSTOPIA?
POSTSCRIPT: TOWARDS A MORE SYMPATHETIC READING