Social Innovation Platforms

Design for Social Innovation (DSI) aims to tackle modern society’s complex “wicked” problems by making new ways of thinking, doing, and being “social innovations” more probable, effective, long-lasting, and scalable. Social Innovation Platforms (SIPs) are a promising approach to address collaboration challenges, but haven’t achieved a level of adoption that would meaningfully impact DSI practice as a whole. Through exploratory prototypes, this thesis aims to propose a conceptual model of a SIP that addresses these problems and opportunities.

### Platforms

**Social Innovation Platforms (SIPs)**

- Platforms to enhance collaboration efforts within and across DSI initiatives, they have not yet achieved a level of widespread adoption.

**Design for Social Innovation (DSI)**

Aims to tackle modern society’s complex “wicked” problems by making new ways of thinking, doing, and being “social innovations” more probable, effective, long-lasting, and scalable.

**Types of Platforms**

- **Open Innovation Platforms**: Platforms open to the general public for participation and co-creation specific to DSI initiatives.

### Example Platforms and Their Capabilities

- **UNDP SIP**
  - **Capability**: End-to-end activities
  - **Opportunities**: Initiative diversity, scale range
  - **Challenges**: Open and accessible
  - **Known Challenges**: Knowledge-sharing functionality

### Gaps & Opportunities

- **Accessibility**
  - How might we design a cost-effective platform for initiatives of all scales?
  - How might accessibility and social innovation platforms be integrated?

- **Audience**
  - In terms of design project scaling, would it be helpful to narrow in on a specific audience, like grassroots initiatives, healthcare, or youth?

- **Modularity**
  - How might modularity allow for nuanced levels of support from the platform?
  - Could modularity help address scalability issues?

### Example Platforms and Their Capabilities

- **Open IDEO and Wazuka**
  - **Capability**: Open innovation, open management
  - **Opportunities**: Hosts diverse initiatives
  - **Challenges**: Fully open for single activity
  - **Known Challenges**: Limited cross-initiative knowledge sharing

- **Hylo**
  - **Capability**: Cross-initiative, single process activity
  - **Opportunities**: Cross-initiative activities
  - **Challenges**: Closed access, accepted on team
  - **Known Challenges**: Cross-initiative knowledge sharing

### Approach

This thesis will propose a design concept and prototype for a collaborative social innovation platform, with functionality that addresses the pain points experienced by practitioners, and the opportunities identified through research into the problem space. In order to analyze the effectiveness of the proposed design, this thesis will apply an exemplary DSI Initiative within the platform design concept.