

Regional Science Dialogues for Peace
and Sustainable Development
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Special Session Proposal

Social Innovation for Sustainable and Inclusive Regions, Communities and Neighborhoods

Organisers:

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Abstract

There is a growing recognition of the need for innovative approaches that address complex social challenges and create a lasting impact on societal well-being.

This conference session will explore the transformative power of social innovation in fostering sustainability and inclusivity within regions, communities, and neighborhoods. The session aims to showcase successful models, case studies, and emerging trends in social innovation, shedding light on how it can drive positive change at various scales. We are looking for both quantitative and qualitative research that addresses diverse ways social innovation is being employed to address environmental, economic, and social issues within regions. Examples of collaborative initiatives, grassroots projects, and community-led innovations can be examined to illustrate the breadth and depth of social innovation's influence.

We are especially looking for contributions that explore cross-sectoral collaboration, emphasizing the need for partnerships between governments, businesses, academia, and civil society to create a holistic and sustainable impact. Investigations of intersection of social innovation and behavioural, nature-based, digital and technological innovation (including, but not limited to social agriculture, biocultural innovation, urban farming, sustainable transportation, community-based conservation programs, inclusive and participatory urban planning, citizen science etc.) are also welcome.

Justification:

Social innovation is a catalytic force that propels the transformation of regions, communities, and neighborhoods toward sustainability and inclusivity.

At the **regional level**, social innovation acts as a dynamic driver for sustainable development. It encourages the creation of novel solutions to regional challenges, from economic disparities to environmental concerns. Through collaborative efforts and the integration of diverse perspectives, social innovation initiatives empower regions to build resilient economies, promote environment friendly practices, and enhance overall quality of life and well-being. By rethinking traditional approaches and embracing innovative models, regions can adapt to the changing global landscape while ensuring long-term sustainability.

On the **community level**, social innovation provides a platform for community members to actively engage in problem-solving and decision-making processes. Social innovation promotes inclusivity by valuing the contributions of all individuals, regardless of background or status. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, creating communities that are not only sustainable but also socially cohesive.

At the **neighborhood level**, the impact of social innovation becomes even more palpable. Neighborhoods, often the closest social units to individuals, serve as laboratories for testing and implementing innovative solutions. Socially innovative initiatives within neighborhoods can address specific challenges such as affordable housing, inclusive public spaces and community well-being. By harnessing the collective intelligence and resources of residents, neighborhoods can become hubs of creativity and collaboration, driving positive change from the ground up.