Policy Recommendations on Skills for Social Digital Innovation and Resilient Organizations

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POLICY BRIEF

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Overview of the +Resilient Transnational Study

This policy brief is based on the results of transnational study on skills and capabilities assessment of Clusters of Social Vocation and Responsiveness in 10 Mediterranean Regions: Alentejo (Portugal), Aragon(Spain), Catalonia (Spain), Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (France), Veneto (Italy), Lazio (Italy), Anatoliki Makedonia, (Greece) Jadranska Hrvatska (Croatia) , Vzhodna Slovenja (Slovenia), Albania (Albania).

The transnational study has been coordinated by GenTIC research group, Internet Interdisciplinarity Institute (IN3), Open University of Catalonia with the contributions of the following partners: Veneto Region, coordinator of the project, Aix-Marseille University (AMU), Region of East Macedonia and Thrace (REMTH), Instituto Tecnológico de Aragón (ITAINNOVA), Barcelona Activa SA SPM (BA), Foundation for Partnership and Civil Society Development in Croatia, Region of Istria – Croatia, Development and Innovation Network (RCDI) in Portugal, Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities (PRIZMA) in Slovenia, National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania (UCCIAL).

The methodology of the transnational analysis is based on both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The sample is composed of 366 participants and comprises a wide range of stakeholders from a 4th helix approach: social economy organisations, enterprises from the private sector, public administrations, research institutions and civil society.

Results of the +Resilient Transnational Study

The results of the +Resilient Transnational study brings nuanced evidence on the key skills and organizational elements to generate social digital innovation to make possible resilient organization. The results shows the importance of looking into both soft skills and hard skills (UNESCO, 2013) and the specific competences and organizational elements necessary to mobilize the individual competences.

Soft skills for social digital innovation

Soft skills are identified in all regions as a necessary condition to enhance social digital innovation and ensure its quality in accordance with the last studies and EU reports on the skills for the future of work (European Comission, 2020; European Union, 2019, 2022; IBM, 2019).

The following soft skills are identified as an essential requirement for generating a high-quality social digital innovation:

- Interpersonal skills: It includes empathy, management of social relations and conflicts, teamwork and communications skills.
- Capacity to establish collaborations with others: It refers to both the collaborative relations inside the organisations and the external collaborations with other institutions and stakeholders in terms of networking and cooperation.
- Adaptability/flexibility: In terms of the capacity for learning but also it refers to the tolerance of frustration capacity and the aptitud to understand other points of view.
- Creativity and the capacity to design new solutions
- Social and self-awareness and ethical commitment
- Self-management skills: including autonomy, time management, resilience and motivation.
- Openness to change: In terms of being curious about novelties and being able to supersede the reluctances to change.
- Leadership skills: In terms of decision-making and in being able to motivate the team.
- Self-confidence in the own capacities
- Team Management: In terms of team building, promotion of cooperative relations and group facilitating skills.

In addition to these skills, the following soft skills are also identified as necessary to assure that innovations take into account a gender equality perspective and an intersectional approach:

- Open mindedness and non-discrimination principals: It includes tolerance, acceptance of diversity and the recognition of other's views.
- Bias awareness: It consists of being aware of the values transmitted during the innovation processes.

Qualitative analysis introduces not only important nuances on the meaning of each identified skill but also enlightens relevant dimensions to consider in terms of identifying and mobilising these skills.

For instance, in the case of communication skills it refers to both external and internal communication skills. In terms of external communication, it is not only referred to the ability to sell products or services (which is more related to hard skills) but also the capacity of disseminating the values of the organization and its results. In terms of internal communication, it is not only linked to the capacity to transmit clearly a message but also the ability of transmitting the values and goals of the organization among the team members and the capacity of establishing a fluent communication that includes active listening competence.

Hard skills for social digital innovation

The +Resilient study identifies the following hard skills identified as necessary to foster social digital innovation are:

- Digital skills: from basic digital skills for all workers from IT specialists
- Socio-analytical skills: capability to collect, manage and analyse information and understand the social context and identify social needs.

- Data analysis skills of digitalized data.
- Communication skills in terms of dissemination.
- Project Management skills: It comprises change management, management of internal resources and in-depth knowledge of the organization.
- Team Management: In terms of team building, promotion of cooperative relations ad group facilitating skills.
- Knowledge of the specific field of intervention
- Interdisciplinary skills: In terms of combining skills from different sectors and fields (socio-humanistic and technological).
- Legal and Public Policies Knowledge Business Management: financial skills, enterprise management.

In addition to these skills, the following soft skills are also identified as necessary to assure that innovations take into account a gender equality perspective and an intersectional approach:

- Gender & Intersectional knowledge: It consist in specific training or knowledge on gender equality (analysis and measures) and know-how to avoid prejudices and any type of discrimination.
- Inclusive methodologies: In terms of how to assure the participation of all individuals regardless their social condition.
- Design inclusive innovative solutions: In terms of being able to design solutions that take into account the different needs and social realities.
- Experience on implementing gender and intersectional measures: know how to design and implement effective measures.

As also shown by international studies which identify the most strategic professional profiles for the future of work (European Union, 2019, 2022; IBM, 2019; OCDE, 2018), +Resilient study points out the importance of hybrid profiles that counts on training and/or experience on both social science/humanities and technological background. Then, technical digital skills are at the same level of importance as the analytical capacity to identify social needs and design effective solutions with an inclusive approach.

Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendation 1. Soft skills as an essential dimension to ensure the quality social digital innovation

Policy Recommendation 2. Digital Skills for all for a resilient and innovative organizations

Policy Recommendation 3. Socio-Analytical Skills to ensure effective social digital innovation

Policy Recommendation 4. Gender & Intersectional Competences to assure inclusive social digital innovation

Policy Recommendation 5. Hybrid profiles and interdisciplinary teams for a sustainable social digital innovation

Policy Recommendation 6. Organizational Measures to ensure the mobilizations of key skills for resilient organizations

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Project partners

Lead Partner