

Challenging universities to rethink their purpose

SIX track record

Date: November 2019



Introduction

SIX works across all levels of universities to help them become more than academic institutions.

Our research has found five major ways universities are organising themselves to increase societal impact ([SIX scan](#)). Our work with universities not only helps the next generation prepare to be effective social innovators, but encourages universities as institutions to play a greater role in their communities and become more than just academic hubs.

The projects, programmes and events we run with universities focus on connecting research and practice to accelerate social innovation. We create exchanges between the “unusual suspects”, both within universities and the wider community. Alongside this work, we provide support to universities so that they can make institutional changes necessary to become better social innovation ecosystem builders in their community.

SIX is focused on three types of work:

- Rethinking the role of university in the 21st century
- Connecting research and practice
- Building capacity and peer networks of universities and other stakeholders

Rethinking the role of university in the 21st century

SI Studios - Exploring the role of university as a lab

SIX runs social innovation workshops called “[SI Studios](#)” that bring together different parts of universities (academics, students, admin staff) and external actors, such as community organisations and social entrepreneurs, to examine and shift the role of university towards positive and meaningful social change. Through a 2-3 day workshop, participants gain greater knowledge of social innovation methodologies and have a collective discussion on the role of a university and its potential for innovation as a “lab”.

Connecting research and practice

Global content co-creation and curation

In multi-stakeholder Consortium projects (generally EU funded), SIX creates an inclusive and dynamic knowledge exchange between partners and ensures that the knowledge and content produced is communicated with relevant audiences (policymakers, education community, practitioners). SIX’s strength lies in translating knowledge and information across different disciplines, sectors and cultural boundaries.

SIX plays this type of engagement role in the following EU projects: [SEASIN](#) (Southeast Asian Social Innovation Network), [LASIN](#) (Latin America Social Innovation Network), [SIKE](#) (Social Innovation through Knowledge Exchange) and [SCALINGS](#) (Scaling up co-creation).

Research-practice collaboration

SIX creates [collaboration platforms for social innovation research](#), facilitating connections between researchers and practitioners in order to develop socially impactful collaborations and new approaches that produce innovative solutions to local challenges. SIX designs and curates experiences (collaboration jam, sandpits) that enable participants to find each other and start a collaborative project.

Building capacity and creating a peer community

SIX International Summer School

[SIX International Summer School](#) on social innovation is a 1-week training course in London which combines theory and practice of social innovation targeting young people between the ages of 19-24. The participants gain introductory knowledge on social innovation methodologies and get a chance to develop ideas around a challenge.

SI-Live

[SI-LIVE](#) is an international conference exploring the role of universities in social innovation, which connects research and action. It brings together academics, practitioners, changemakers and students to co-create a future agenda for social innovation.

Our track record

Type	Project	Geography	Description
EU project	SEASIN (Southeast Asian Social Innovation Network)	Southeast Asia - Myanmar, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand	EU project which develops a network of Southeast Asian universities, promoting and supporting social innovation.
	LASIN (Latin America Social Innovation Network)	Latin America - Chile, Colombia, Panama, Brazil	EU project which develops a network of Latin American universities promoting and supporting social innovation.
	SIKE (Social Innovation through Knowledge Exchange)	Europe - Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Spain, UK	A knowledge exchange community aimed at developing new social projects and products through universities across Europe.
	Common Good First	South Africa	EU Erasmus+ funded project, led by Glasgow Caledonian University, to build digital skills and identify, showcase and connect community projects in South Africa and beyond.
	SCALINGS (Scaling up co-creation)	Europe	An interdisciplinary European research project that explores the avenues and limits for the wider use of co-creation and open innovation practices across Europe.

	Social Innovation Community (SIC)	Europe	SIX led the creation and coordination of SIC, the social innovation community, a project involving partners scattered across Europe and sectors. This “network of networks” provides research, experimentation based learning, new frameworks, news and insights, all of which is made open to the wider community through www.siceurope.eu
	SI-LIVE	Europe/Asia	The first SI-LIVE in 2014 was designed by SIX and brought together four of the EU's flagship social innovation research and incubation projects: TEPSIE , SI Drive , BENISI and TRANSITION . SIX designed and hosted SI-LIVE Asia in 2018 as part of SEASIN project, to bring together researchers and practitioners in Asia.
British Council Hong Kong	BRICKS (Building Research Innovation for Community Knowledge and Sustainability)	Hong Kong	A British Council-led project that aims to find innovative solutions to social challenges in Hong Kong by fostering collaboration between higher education institutes, NGOs, social enterprises and other organisations that deliver public services.