



Empowering marginalised mountain communities to act for change



Prof Dr Maria Nijnik



The James
Hutton
Institute

Processes Observed in Marginalised Mountain Areas



The James
Hutton
Institute



- ❑ **Out-migration & ageing**
- ❑ **Population drift** to larger villages & towns:
 - Closure of services
 - Threatening capacity for endogenous advance
- ❑ **Diversification & restructuring**
- ❑ Changing **infrastructure**
- ❑ Changing **lifestyles**

They interact with **macroeconomic settings** → societal segmentation

To respond: support small businesses & new business models; local, short supply chains; circular bio-economy; infrastructure & services; digital growth; exploit green spaces & nature-based solutions; valorise ecosystem services; explore fiscal incentives & **new collaborative actions – social innovation (SI)**



Social Innovation

- ... introduced to respond to pressing social demands **not traditionally addressed by markets or existing institutions**
- ... first & foremost is about **quality of life & human well-being...**
- ... involves **new social relationships & collaborations**
- ... relates to **governance mechanisms & economic opportunities...**
- ... seeks to address **sustainability (SUST) & social justice**
- ... enhance **smart & inclusive growth**



What is it About?

...new ideas, products, services, models, arrangements, relationships, interactions (attitudes, collaborations, values, behaviours, skills, practices), fields of activity (social entrepreneurship & social enterprises), processes & changes designed to meet societal needs



“the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being & necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors” (Polman et al., 2018)



SIMRA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 677622



PARTNERS

simra
Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas

www.simra-h2020.eu

simra-h2020@iiaz.cineam.org
@simra_eu
@SIMRAeu
Visit us on LinkedIn!

Duration
April 2016 to March 2020

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 677622

Get involved in SIMRA!

There are many opportunities to get involved in SIMRA...

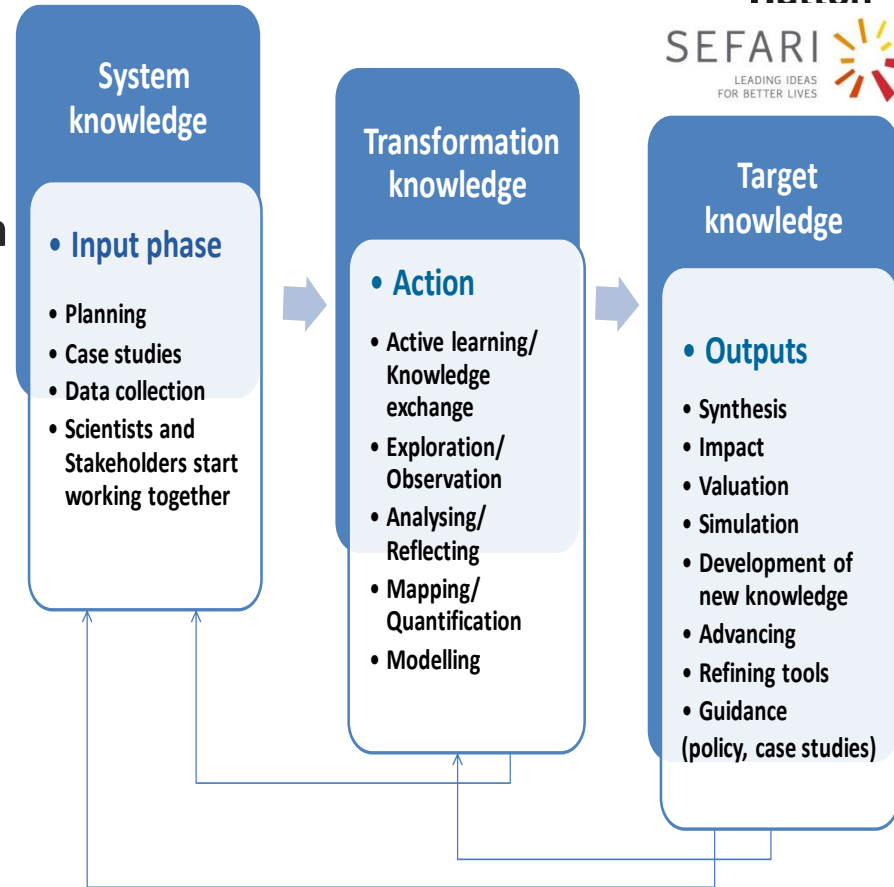
- Participate in our workshops
- Take part in the case studies
- Contribute to our online blog
- Follow us on social media

To register your interest in SIMRA please contact us at simra-h2020@iiaz.cineam.org

www.simra-h2020.eu

The Co-construction of Knowledge

- **Transdisciplinary** approach, combining Theoretical – Empirical – Expert – Traditional knowledge (KN) & local wisdom
- **Multi-level multi-actor** engagement
- Doing things **for people & with people**
- **Co-constructing & evaluating** decisions for our common & more SUST futures





SIMRA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 677622

SIMRA was a H2020 project, 26 partners, 15 countries, focussing on forestry, agriculture & rural development



✓ We defined, conceptualised, categorised social innovation

✓ Explained its:

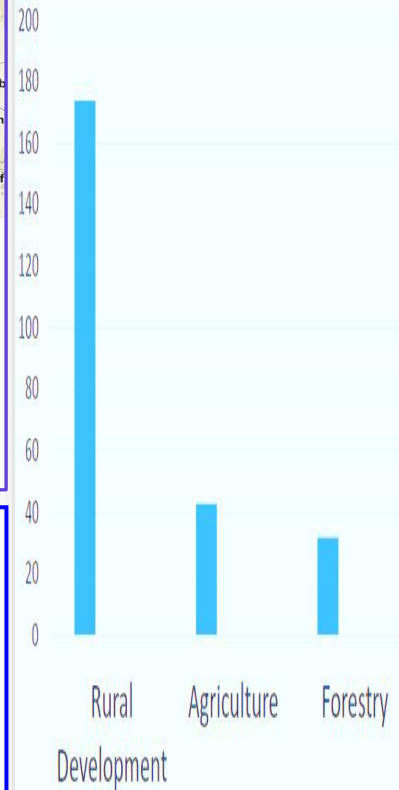
- variability & diversity
- triggers
- enabling factors
- success factors
- challenges & barriers
- development paths

✓ Advised how to: i) initiate, develop & spread SI; ii) build capacities & develop collaborations; iii) lay pathways to societal impact; iv) assess & enlarge the impact & help revive marginalised rural areas (MRA)

A Database of Social innovations



Distribution of Sis examples by sector



≥ 450 SI examples, 243 - validated, 24 case studies (CS), 7 innovation actions (IA)

Valero *et al.*, 2020

- **The scientific IMP** provided a basis for improved stakeholder engagement, science-policy-practice dialogues, changing attitudes & perceptions, advancing & sharing KN, raising awareness, building capacities
- **Benefits realized via the uptake of**
 - i. **methods & framework** (Secco *et al.* 2020) to examine SI & evaluate its impact
 - ii. **new evidence** includes SI Divergent Development Paths (Kluvankova *et al.*, 2022); Catalogue of Diversity of SI; Interactive online database of examples (Valero *et al.*, 2020); Maps of characteristics of MRA (Miller *et al.*, 2018)
- **Outputs for practitioners:**
 - i. **policy & practice guides** (Slee, 2020; Alkhaled *et al.*, 2020);
 - ii. **innovation actions;**
 - iii. **educational courses:** face-to-face & MOOC, sessions at the Final Congress, & of FAO IPROMO, CAS;
 - iv. **decision makers** received access to evidence, findings, tools to develop, evaluate, support & spread SI;
 - v. **local communities** have built capacity & co-constructed & used KN through new processes, income streams & business models.



(Barlagne, 2019)

Dedicated volunteers with a vision

Seed & match funding



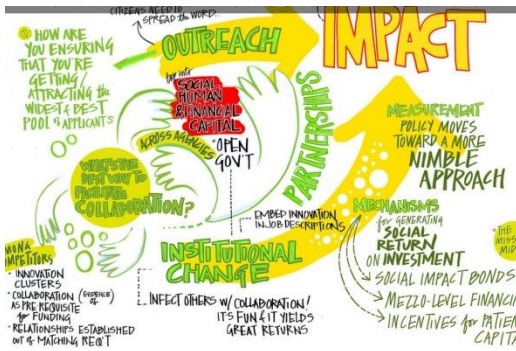
Skills (e.g. a full time Community Development Officer, Networks)



Opportunities !!!

LCDC is a registered Scottish charity. No SC020150.

Alternative business models



The Strathcarron Artisan Dairy Project.

Posted on May 14, 2017

The Strathcarron Artisan Dairy Project.



- ❑ To promote its **initiation & development**
- ❑ Endorse supportive & **well-designed policies & governance mechanisms** (e.g., with multi-level interventions ('SI ecosystems'))
- ❑ Strengthen local **actors** for SI to **sustain & spread**
- ❑ Give attention to **enablers & barriers** & to adequate scale & size of SI
- ❑ Inspire **creativity & motivation**
- ❑ Create new **opportunities & business models**
- ❑ Advance the development of **strong social & human capital**
- ❑ Promote **co-learning**: with local actors sharing experiences within & between places & on various levels, & with scientists, policy & businesses



Multi-Actor Platforms

EU Horizon projects:

SIMRA

SHERPA

DESIRA

FIREURISK

RURACTIVE

Partner & Follow-up Projects

These projects received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research & innovation programme under Grant Agreements No 677622 & 862448 & 101003890 & 101084377

The findings have been complemented & reinforced by our research under the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme & in

❑ H2020 project **FirEUrisk** (38 partners) creating a strategy (Assessment – Reduction - Adaptation) to enhance the resilience of socio-ecological systems against wildfires

❑ through a **science-society-policy interface** of H2020 **SHERPA** &

❑ by **DESIRA** - on socio-economic impact of rural **digitalisation**

All these projects have contributed to the formulation of policies, while a new **Horizon Europe** project **RURACTIVE** is **empowering communities in MRA to act for change.**

RURACTIVE *will share the accumulated KN around smart solutions that integrate various forms of innovation (social, digital & technological etc.) & will enhance the communities' capacities, capabilities & skills (through training, social learning, etc.)*



We are grateful for the support coming from:



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The integration of stakeholder participation & social innovation into natural capital approaches is being undertaken in the **project JHI-D5-1 of the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme (2022-2027)**.

<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/research/projects/bringing-participatory-approaches-widen-scope-natural-capital-valuation>



The following projects received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research & innovation programme under Grant Agreements No 677622 (**SIMRA**) & 862448 (**SHERPA**) & 101003890 (**FirEUrisk**) & under the Horizon Europe of 101084377 (**RURACTIVE**)



<http://www.simra-h2020.eu/>

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101084377>

<https://rural-interfaces.eu/> <https://fireurisk.eu/>

Thank you to the SIMRA Think Tank & its splendid team in the UK & elsewhere, to my colleagues **David Miller**, Diana Valero, Ruth Wilson, Mariana Melnykovich, Simo Sarkki, Tatiana Kluvankova, Laura Secco, et al. & to stakeholders working in living labs in all our projects, to numerous innovators & supporters of natural capital based social innovation in marginalised rural areas across Europe & beyond.

This output is linked to the activities of the **IUFRO Unit 4.05.05 on Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship**

Thank you for attention

Maria.Nijnik@hutton.ac.uk

<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/staff/maria-nijnik>