

Chapter 2

Facets of Social Innovation in Higher Education



Mary McDonnell-Naughton and Carmen Păunescu

Abstract Emphasis on social engagement and innovation for the higher education sector is a priority, despite the various challenges that have arisen as result of Covid-19, for third level providers. It is a conversation that continues to evolve of how the higher education providers can prepare students for global citizenship and societal innovation. There are specific concerns regarding best practice and the contribution of higher education to teaching, research and ultimately public policy. Universities are embedded in teaching and research whereby the onus is to engage collaboratively with outside organisations to develop competences and create products for greater use by society. This chapter aims to explore how the higher education institutions can contribute to transforming teaching and research so that the student, and ultimately each academic community member, experiences the full value of contributing to a successful society, reflecting on sustainable partnerships, engagement, whilst reflecting the whole idea of societal innovation. Its ambition is to define spheres of influence for enhancing social innovation in higher education.

Keywords Social innovation dimensions · Higher level education · Social and community engagement · Teaching and learning · Society

The Key Points of the Chapter Are the Following

- To explain the concepts of social and community engagement in higher education and gain an insight into their manifestations in practice.
- To gain an understanding of what enablers in relation to social innovation are of benefit to higher education providers.

M. McDonnell-Naughton (✉)
Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone, Ireland
e-mail: mmcdonnell@ait.ie

C. Păunescu
School of Business Administration, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: carmen.paunescu@ase.ro

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- To clarify how students can be encouraged to participate in specific community engagement activities.
- To understand how higher education institutions can contribute to enabling and exchanging social innovation.
- To identify practical dimensions of social innovation in higher education and how they can be best implemented.

1 Introduction

Higher education is going through a great deal of change worldwide. The world pandemic because of Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of active engagement by its citizens and social innovation by all public, private, and governmental actors. The catalyst for social change and innovation is to ensure and sustain an economy that benefits everyone in society. One response to these challenges is the development of the entrepreneurial university model, which adds a strong third mission to Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) (Stolze, 2021). Within this structure there is an implied commercial orientation and a required social engagement. Stolze (2021) suggests that there are exogenous and endogenous forces which determine how HEI's can engage with community and innovate. Schröder and Krüger (2019) highlighted the necessity of new governance structures in universities for enabling and fostering social innovations and a more active role of HEI's in exchanging social innovations that contribute to enhancing education and realizing societal impact. Hunt's (2011) report on various challenges that are facing higher education acknowledged that "higher education will need to innovate and develop if it is to provide flexible opportunities for larger and more diverse student cohorts." (Hunt, 2011, p. 10). In agreement with this, Thomas (2012) highlighted the importance of students having a sense of belonging to the third level education sector and spoke about nurturing students to have a clear academic purpose. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) pointed to several variables that influence the transition of students to third level education, one of which is social involvement. The social involvement needs to be extended to the concept of community engagement (Machimana et al., 2020). As per Hunt (2011), "higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve" (p. 77). This philosophy is meant to underpin the ethos of higher education institutions and within its action plan to support campus-community volunteering and innovation opportunities.

The chapter aims to explore how the HEI's can contribute to transforming teaching and research so that the student, and ultimately each community member, experiences the full value of contributing to a successful society. It also seeks to answer the question of how social innovation in higher education can contribute to realizing educational change and societal impact and evaluates enablers that can contribute to the higher education providers to act. Moreover, the chapter argues the need for a more active and a new role for universities in fostering social innovation and in recognizing its multiple facets within their educational system.

2 Role of Higher Education in Society

2.1 *Need for New Roles for Higher Education Institutions*

The 2020 global pandemic began a period of enormous change and created unparalleled societal challenges. Many HEI's had to embrace digital technology in order to meet its obligations to students. Teaching remotely became the norm for HEI's. It transformed the whole concept of education and placed enormous emphasis on community wellbeing and engagement. Many HEI's helped by contributing to civic society organisations, frontline workers, and policymakers in an endeavour to address societal challenges and support the emergency response in every way possible. The health and wellbeing of students and staff were of enormous importance to the higher education sector. Avenues were exhausted providing support and in most cases the use of technology was shown to be so important in assisting students to accomplish their programmes of study.

The current worldwide pandemic has worldwide economies counting the costs. Governments all over the world are endeavouring to tackle the spread of the virus. Despite the development of new vaccines, many are still trying to visualise a global recovery. Epidemics of infectious diseases are occurring more often across the globe. Planning and preparation for epidemic prevention and control is essential (World Health Organization, 2018). Education equitably will be pivotal to the recovery from the pandemic. Efforts to fund this equitably needs to be at the heart of the recovery with emphasis on building robustness in educational systems (Global Partnership for Education, 2020). Reducing inequities in education will be the norm and there will be a positive societal impact which will benefit from a reimagination of our educational systems (García & Weiss, 2020a, b).

Education has a critical role in restoring human and social capital. A decrease in learning will have negative long-term impacts on productivity and economic growth (Global Partnership for Education, 2020). It cannot be underestimated the importance of education within this sphere and ensuring that certain members of society do not get left behind in relation to third level access. This may occur due to demand for places and changes in admission criteria of HEI's. Students may have encountered challenges in completing final examinations prior to commencing tertiary level. This maybe because of poor digital infrastructure due to their personal circumstances.

Educational planning in this pandemic requires the recognition of Maslow's hierarchical of needs placing safety and survival first before formal education (Doucet et al., 2020). The pandemic has provided an avenue for third level education delivery systems to be tested to see if they are fit for purpose. Nations that endorsed public health guidelines promptly have managed to keep their communities safe, with less harm to their citizens. Valuing and developing innovation partnership and collaboration with communities is paramount. Collaboration with national and local agencies can enhance inclusion and agility of a community that will benefit all citizens. It is important that we learn from history and follow these steps to develop a broader, deeper reimagination of our society (Walker, 2020). Enabling leadership

within cultures will be essential for ensuring that innovation spreads and becomes a cultural norm (West et al., 2017). Compassionate leadership, seen as ability to take institution to a higher level of performance and wellbeing, is central and fundamental as an enabling factor that will create a culture of improvement and radical innovation across health care (West et al., 2017). This analogy can also be applied to higher level education as it also helps to promote a culture of learning. Compassionate leadership is seen as an enabling condition for innovation across sectors (Amabile & Khaire, 2008; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Compassionate and collective leadership encourages individuals to respond to challenges by innovating, and this is focused on working together across boundaries (West et al., 2017). All leaders need to model authenticity, openness, and transparency, and, above all, compassion (West et al., 2017). This is now of paramount importance in education. The United Nations proclamation of 2005-2014 focussing on sustainable development has been pivotal in driving higher education institutions in integrating sustainability into their system (UNESCO, 2005). It placed emphasis on partnering with civil society. A modern university produces numerous interrelated effects that affect several social factors and focuses on the quality of university management, considering its applicability to local communities (Belov et al., 2020).

Education must be a priority in post Covid-19 recovery as it is one of the most protective mechanisms to inequalities and lends itself to responsible citizenship and innovation. Our world needs it now more than ever before. The pandemic has placed enormous emphasis on the impact of technology on learning and teaching within education. Covid-19 has put an impetus on educators to reflect on the tools that will best serve their students and reflect pedagogical practice (Doucet et al., 2020). Consideration must be given to what is accessible and fit for purpose, along with devising routes that will bring connectivity, relationality, and humanity into a distance learning model. Some countries were able to respond expediently to the pandemic because of their prior stance on technology access for education (see for example the *International Council of Education Advisers Report 2018-20*, published by the Scottish Government in December 2020). Society needs graduates that are fit for purpose, with a talent pipeline that can deliver services. Lifelong learning is very important, this also needs to be made available in an easily accessible environment. Leadership educators recognise community engagement for the purpose of developing civic and socially responsible leaders (Purcell, 2017). Community-engaged scholarship and teaching as “pedagogy of practice” can be advantageous (Ganz & Lin, 2011). A great deal of universities is committed to engaging their campuses in their surrounding communities, whilst place-based community engagement helps to creatively connect with the community to foster positive social transformation (Yamamura & Koth, 2018). Sustainability has made inroads into HEIs, with only a few universities implementing it holistically (Menon & Suresh, 2020). Initiatives adopted by institutions have been successful in incorporating sustainability in education, research, campus operations and outreach programs (Menon & Suresh, 2020). Experiences of community partners with higher education qualifications highlight the importance of the third level education providers in promoting social justice, recognising that community challenges are not confined to a lack of material

resources, but a dearth of knowledge about the local resource (Machimana et al., 2020). Universities can partner with communities to address critical twenty-first-century challenges and LaDuca et al. (2020) reflected on an innovative initiatives that provided for transdisciplinary community engagement in pursuit of social justice.

There are drawbacks associated with neo-liberalisation in higher education (del Cerro Santamaría, 2021). What society needs for the future cannot rely on what evolved in the past as there has to be a bridge between the academic and the global economy. Planning for higher level education needs put in place a strategic plan to ensure that societal needs are met, and employment opportunities created. Strategic plans of HEI's need to endorse, develop, and foster spin out companies within the academic world. Most HEI's have research offices and innovation centres built into their physical campuses. Policies on intellectual property are built into HEI's protocols which is important to nurture innovation and give support to companies that can develop and employ people. The development of entrepreneurial activities incorporating a third mission proved to be a complex matter (Almeida et al., 2016). Almeida et al. (2016) showed that when commercial entrepreneurship was beginning and when patenting, technology transfer, and spin-offs were new and untested, although embodied in university proposals, it was difficult to see the evidence in practice. Change takes time and investment. It must be reflected in the ethos of the university and the scholarship of research innovators requires nurturing. The entrepreneurial university focussing on initiatives and endorsing the commercialization of technology and appropriation of knowledge, will ultimately create social value within a society.

2.2 Community Engagement in Higher Education

The Irish National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 highlights civic and community engagement as one of the “three core roles of higher education” (Hunt, 2011), with the Higher Education Authority's devising a tool to measure indicators in relation to civic society engagement. Hall et al. (2010) described community engagement in higher education as a cluster of activities that includes service-learning programmes and research that addresses some aspects of social, economic, and political needs. Community engagement is also about bringing together new knowledge through research and improving teaching with a centrality of the relationship between community, goals, and respect (Wynsberghe & Andruske, 2007; Vickers et al., 2004). Jacob et al. (2015) urged HEI's to engage with their local community where they are geographically located so that they would have a sustainable impact on society showing that engagement activities between communities and higher education can be either formal or informal. This can lend itself to certain members of society availing of an opportunity in third level education. They may be the first in their family to embark on that journey.

Over twenty years ago, Remenyi (1999) spoke about placing emphasis on information sharing to an increased understanding of development issues and their

significance for good citizenship. Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972) spoke about hearing those with the least voice and he also placed emphasis on the reflective, experiential, activist, and the worldview of affairs. This contrasted with only the elitism in society that were afforded the opportunity to be educated. This has changed within Europe. However, the concept of social and community engagement, although not new, needs further development in line with progress for the twenty-first century. The educational process that is necessary must be embedded in the learner and must also include interactive methodologies. Universities are morally accountable to society (Cooper, 2005). Putman (2000) spoke about the concept of social capital and highlighted in 2000 that trends of civic disengagement would lead to a crisis in society. The concept of the American dream is now becoming more of a dream than reality as education costs in the US places a serious financial burden on families. The concept of working hard leaves very little room for younger people to engage in voluntary activities, thus they need to ensure that it is placed firmly in their undergraduate degree programmes. Putman (2000) argued that society needed to renew civic engagement by creating new structures and policies.

The process of engaging the community to act centres around building commitment to a common set of values and principles that motivate community's members to act. International comparisons of community engagement in higher education varies as the concepts can be completely different in each country with different understandings. Bernardo et al. (2012) showed that the role of university leadership was found to have a critical role in embedding community engagement. The application of both leadership and management is needed to ensure sustainable and effective community engagement (Bernardo et al., 2012). Krčmářová (2011) defined the "third mission" of the university as extending the role of the universities beyond the traditional roles of instruction and research, to encompass community engagement and in principle opening HEI's to external partners. Elements such as cultural, social, political are often missed within the realm of community engagement (Winter & Wiseman, 2008; Sandmann et al., 2009). The breadth of community engagement spans across all levels of university leadership inclusive of both academic, administration and support staff. Watson (2011) speaks of universities on their evolution embracing community engagement, with specific cultures and historical events having an influence.

Third level embodies the intellectual independence and critical thinking that engages students during their studies. That engagement now must lend itself to policy development, thus improving society, embracing the concept of digital transformation. The onus is to engage collaboratively with outside organisations to develop products for greater use by society, in an efficient manner. This may involve multi-nationals working alongside interdisciplinary teams, to create an impact. It also places emphasis on the critical evaluation of the various dimensions of education to ensure that knowledge is shared, which now can have a global impact due to technology. The value system of individuals who are educated in a reflective way emerge with a vision and capacity to make a difference to society. Harris (2005) echoed the sentiments that the process of schooling is more orientated towards producing communities which are "obedient" as opposed to critically engaged

individuals in society. Education needs to foster the ethos of critical engagement. Tackling social inclusion amongst a community group where members are encouraged to engage in exercise can be a very simple way of innovation which can be supported by HEI's especially where there are sports facilities available. This can be intergenerational and can also assist in family dynamics, such as the parent participating with their child, both benefiting from exercise leading to greater wellbeing.

Promoting social engagement and retention is one of the aims within the National Higher Education Stem programme in the UK (Jones & Thomas, 2012). They found that students benefit both academically and personally from social engagement with peers and staff. This social engagement extended to collaboration with appropriate communities which enabled the student in acquiring the skills that are needed to benefit society including the ecosystem. All third level educational programmes leading to an award needs to embed the concept of social and community engagement. Curriculum integration of community engagement across the teaching and learning processes is vital to instil the infusion of social values (Bernardo et al., 2012). Bernardo et al. (2012) on "institutional advocacy" encourages social activities regarding information on social and political activities as critical to national development and projects that are prioritised are those that have a direct impact on poverty alleviation and the promotion of justice and peace. Managers in education need to review curricula so that there is a platform for a commitment to civic engagement (Spiezio et al., 2005).

Bernardo et al. (2012) clearly articulated that there would not be single community engagement framework "where everyone should fit" and it is more crucial to generate understanding that could lead to collaboration "where everyone has a space to be". Essentially it is a philosophical belief that can help evolve, shape and progress higher education for local national and international communities. Marston et al. (2020) showed how digital technology has played an integral role during Covid-19, assisting various sectors of the community and highlighting that smart cities can provide opportunities to respond to many future societal challenges. Higher level education institutions have an enormous role here to ensure that students are best prepared to engage in this infrastructure and plan accordingly. Hoof and Marston (2021) place emphasis on all members of the wider scientific community, local, regional, and national governments along with social enterprises and industry leaders working together can afford citizens various opportunities for active engagement within age-friendly cities and ecosystems. This is an example of excellent community engagement with the development of educational pathways which can be provided by higher level institutions. It is an intergenerational, interdisciplinary approach to enable a better quality of life for the older person and thus enhancing society. In essence, it is the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and skills to make a difference. This is an opportunity for academics, stakeholders, policymakers and governments, and other personnel within industry to ensure that the adjoining facets associated to the quality of life for both younger and older people are met (Hoof & Marston, 2021). All of this can positively benefit wider communities.

Integral to the development and growth of HEI's is research. Companies who wish to develop their research capacity can enhance the connection with the university in their area. Centres can grow through collaboration and bringing together academics, researchers and innovators who can develop an innovative solution that can transform an area and enhance economic growth. Health and wellness are areas constantly expanding and the sharing of knowledge from academia can assist in building capacity, all of which has a positive impact on the community. Digital health is an area that is growing and has been accelerated by Covid-19. This will become the normal in the future so it is essential that HEI's play their part by investing in resources that can enable the infrastructure around the development of technology that can assist in the development of innovative digital solutions to address societal issues. The partnering with key stakeholders in this area is essential. Most HEI's will have a digital strategy, this will need to include community partners.

2.3 Leading Innovation through Community Engagement

Citizenship is multidimensional (Khoo, 2006). Civic duty instils in the individual a desire to participate and engage positively with public matters. How this engagement occurs varies from one individual to another (Ward, 2005). The concept of elective placements by health professionals is one of the ways that higher education students can embody civic and community engagement. Those who are undertaking professional degree accredited programmes may through their higher education institution be afforded the opportunity to explore the concept of social and community engagement by choosing to participate in a relevant elective module. This can also provide an opportunity for one to whet their appetite in this area and provide very valuable experiences that can underpin their lifelong career(s). A network for the promotion of civic engagement activities in Irish higher education already exists and is known as Campus Engage. It is open to all higher education institutions and community organisations in Ireland. It aims to strengthen the relationship between higher education and wider society, through civic engagement activities (Campus Engage, 2014). Existing community knowledge initiatives place emphasis on student's civic engagement through "service learning". Kanj (2003) spoke about service learning as a continuum in life which includes various life skills including social responsibility, ethical and moral development and professionalisation. It implies the whole area of professionalisation, upskilling, greater accountability, outcome driven approaches within the concept of ethics and community engagement. In terms of social responsibility, community engagement increases understanding of the facets of community service, social justice, diversity, empathy, and social responsibility (www.campusengage.ie). Examples exist that are wonderful and highlight very clearly the area of social engagement. In Trinity College, Dublin, students are encouraged to participate in "Foodcloud" which aims to reduce food waste, reducing food poverty and bringing communities together, with two of the university students sitting on the board. Another example in Letterkenny Institute of Technology is

students helping to evolve culture and attitudes towards sexuality. In National University of Ireland Galway another example is students promoting positive mental health, this reflects other colleges as emphasis on mental wellbeing is of paramount importance and is nurtured in all third level colleges.

As managers of HEI's, there is a discussion that is warranted on socially-constructed meanings, their implications, and the institutional factors that influence the extent to which faculty members engage in innovation projects. The theoretical foundations of interdisciplinarity and collaborative research is paramount to developing new insights and modern methods of operating that will enhance society. Collaborative research is supreme and potentially beneficial to students however, it can also be institutionally challenging and often incongruent to the dominant culture of teaching within a university. Technology transfer is there which assists industry to link in with academia which can enhance collaboration and lead to greater developments. The management of this is vital to ensure there is gain for all concerned. Autonomous decision making is essential ensuring there is fairness and processes need to ensure that transitions due to digital transforming is available which benefits all in society.

It is important to engage with communities and society to identify what their specific needs are and therefore HEI's can then, through their innovation centres, develop what is required that can assist people and ultimately, if the idea is good enough, can create employment. Knowledge sharing is pivotal with community engagement and collaborating with various institutions. In essence, third level educators and universities must ensure that social and community engagement is endorsed and linear collaborations developed. The concept may assist in creating partnerships that are of value to society, in essence the sharing of knowledge. Flexibility will allow for people to engage with potential benefits and build up resources that can be trialled within the academic environment and may have the potential to be commercialised. Universities linking in with the local community can enrich development through education, focused research, volunteering, and activities specific to that region. Local government organisations coming on board for the greater good is also an example of serving the community and may provide financial resources to assist in the sharing of knowledge and upskilling individuals. There are government backed organisations which assist greatly in these endeavours such as Enterprise Ireland as an example (www.enerpriseireland.ie). Innovation and sustainability are the keys to the future and technology will be so important in assisting societies to live better. Remote delivery of healthcare is another example of developments that will be utilised much more in the future. Trust has to be in place so that patients can trust the technology and that the results from monitoring of their conditions can be picked up accurately and managed professionally by the healthcare experts.

When students see the benefit of those structures, they may replicate this altruism in their careers later. One of the leading volunteering educational programmes within higher education UCD Volunteers Overseas (www.ucdvo.org) enhances the student's awareness of key international developments and encourages them to reach their potential to bring about positive global change. Ensuring that higher education

level staff are given the recognition and the training that is needed to develop civic engagement is vital (Thomas, 2012). Collaborative learning and teaching, involving joint intellectual efforts by students and faculty, needs recognition and be visible on timetables and modules. Vaughan (2016) reflects on students with a range of disabilities and difficulties, endorsing the concept that they are accommodated appropriately to ensure they have access to curricula that addresses socio-cultural capital in third level and higher education. This may influence communities and is reflective of communities of learning and building upon a learner's experience and knowledge (Henson, 2003). Bourdieu (1986) in reviewing social capital visualized it as something that can be used by those in position of power or dominance to exclude people from various social groups or structures. Pedagogical action enables Bourdieu's (1986) culture and replicates itself based on vested interests of groups or classes within society. This results in the distribution of social capital amongst those groups only. Therefore, it is necessary that students are facilitated through their university education to participate in activities outside of mainstream academia. This will heighten social mobility occurring within certain circles and change the habitus. There is an ethical imperative that the students through their own development and acquisition of knowledge become part of the systemic change that can positively impact on society (Thomas, 2012). The benefits to the economy and society cannot be underestimated.

Social research on resilience often takes on a macrolevel systemic perspective and it may be adopted as a systemic characteristic (Capano & Woo, 2017). Due to Covid-19, resilience has become of great importance to governments. It may not always apply to policy (Duit et al., 2010; Duit, 2015). Resilience is of enormous concern during the policy formulation phases of any public developments. This is where all concerned need to have a voice at the table. Policy makers are often reluctant to take on new developments due to the fear of existing policies being perceived as failure (Capano & Woo, 2017). This subscribes to the dichotomy of 'dynamics without change' (Woo & Howlett, 2015, p. 1).

Covid-19 has shown how communities and HEI's can be very resilient despite adversary. Facilities including access to technology must deliver to all. The question remains as "to whether a policy system that has encountered shock should aspire to become resilient or whether it should seek to adapt or transform into something different" (Capano & Woo, 2017, p. 5). It may not always be possible to embed resilience within policy, nevertheless the harsh lessons that have been learned from Covid-19 must not be lost. The development of technology such as the Covid Tracker app helped to combat the disease. This was an innovation that no one could have foreseen the need for two years ago. Yet, it was developed by an Irish company developing technology that had enormous capability (www.NearForm.ie), which was tasked by the Irish Health Service Executive with coming up with a contact-tracing app prototype in just five days. This is an example of innovations through technology which has made an enormous difference to the quality of life of people worldwide.

Narbutaite-Afaki & Freise, 2019 reflected on how Sweden and Germany reacted to the unprecedented increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in 2015.

Their work showed that this triggered transformative policy changes, however it also led to reduction of the legal rights of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, demonstrating the importance of proper consultation and integration of various viewpoints especially those who are in a minority. Refugee children have a greater complexity for social inclusion that necessitates specific skills (Elikaksoy & Wadensjo, 2017). This vulnerable person has other requirements such as legal, psychological and pedagogical needs (Narbutaite-Afaki & Freise, 2019). The question is who takes responsibility to ensure that they are cared for appropriately and that they can integrate into society and participate fully into age specific activities. Public policies need to be in place to address these specific needs, however those needs may change thus necessitating a review of the policy. Public-sector policies may have an impact on users which varies from the macro or policy level to the micro or service level (Windrum, 2008). This can vary depending on time and place.

3 Higher Education and Social Innovation

3.1 Concept of Social Innovation in Education

The experience of Covid-19 teaches us that as a society it is imperative that we all work together. Social and community engagement is an educational goal of the higher education institution along with teaching, learning and research, all integral in defining the role of higher education, in the wider social context. There is a role for universities situated in a region to ensure there is economic growth and opportunities created for innovation and sustainable development of communities. A wide variety of initiatives such as engaging diverse communities in health, education and environmental sustainability projects are excellent, however social responsibility and sustainability development is still far from being fully integrated into the core activities of the HEI's (Symaco & Yee Tee, 2019). Engagement with the community can have various interpretations in the academic world and integrates amongst teaching and research to reinforce drivers and outcomes of the academic work (Renwick et al., 2020).

There is an abundance of research into innovation in higher education, whether in curriculum, pedagogical approaches, support service mechanisms or governance and networking (Carayannis et al., 2012; Kolleck et al., 2017). Most of these studies, however, tend to overlook the dimensions of innovation that generate educational change and societal impact (Hasanefendic et al., 2017; Schröder & Krüger, 2019). Higher education plays a significant role in creating better youth employment opportunities, reducing societal disparities, ensuring better inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and creating impactful research that generates sustainable socio-economic returns. As per Kapoor et al. (2018) social innovations in education are regarded as “novel solutions addressing social challenges in education contributing towards newer and better practices” (p. 190). In line with this definition, Schröder et al. (2018) regard social innovations as ways of identifying and

addressing the deficits, constraints and limitations of an educational system. Social innovations take part in all core and organizational processes and involve several groups of actors who are expected to take responsibility for initiating entrepreneurial actions which address social challenges. The Stanford Business Centre for Social Innovation (2018) defines social innovation “as a process which utilizes effective solutions to challenging, complex, and systemic social issues.” Therefore, social innovators identify a problem, which can be a social demand or an unmet social need, and, by using creative tools and novel approaches, create a novel way (solution) to filling the gaps in service design and provision (Chowa et al., 2019). Given the complexity of social problems, the overall process of social innovation requires a multidimensional approach to developing effective solutions (Chowa et al., 2019).

Loogma et al. (2013) conceptualized a model which describes social innovation as a process that aims at “facilitating educational change or innovation” by taking into consideration several elements: social problem or need, concrete logic of steps, social change agent, social mechanism, basis of legitimacy, social outcome, or gain. According to Conrad (2015) various challenges in education, such as students drop-out and disengagement, school violence, digital learning and technological advancement, social integration, and diversity, can be resolved by determining sustainable innovative solutions. Conrad (2015) highlighted “social innovation in education has a wider scope to create influence for ensuring innovative learning environment, organizing and managing schools, discovering new ways of teaching, learning and collaborating with local communities” (p. 5). As such, social innovations can be found in all organizational processes top-down or bottom-up and horizontally in the education organization. In line with the social mission orientation of Mazzucato (2018) (cited in Schröder & Krüger, 2019, p. 20), the social innovation in education could build-up new capabilities, knowledge and expertise for public administrations, enriched curricula which are better linked with local market demands, new or connected governance forms. This will further lead to changing current routines and practices as well as the building of a more dynamic capacity for the development of new governance structures of higher education institutions.

3.2 Practical Dimensions of Social Innovation in Higher Education

Social innovations can take place across the higher education ecosystem. Schröder and Krüger (2019) discuss four types of social innovation in education which can lead to educational transformation: learning through diversity, facilitating digital and virtual learning (for instance, for disadvantaged groups), offering home schooling (particularly for groups with special needs) and separating with the provision of alternative learning opportunities. Social innovations can happen through governance, teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, social and community

engagement, cooperation and collaboration, funding, impact, diffusion and transfer (Table 2.1). These practical dimensions are not necessarily representing the only possible classification of social innovation in higher education. They are an instrument for building the framework of social innovation in higher education for educational change and further societal impact.

Social innovation through governance takes place when innovation is institutionalized and embedded in all HEI's organizational structures across all management layers, participation of multiple actors and stakeholders in the decision-making process is expected, and various communication channels are used (Schröder & Krüger, 2019). There are overarching and connected governance structures of multi-actors and multi-stakeholders from policy, economy, civil society, environment, and academia—quintuple helix—(Kapoor et al., 2018; Schröder & Krüger, 2019), established to resolving societal problems. The institution can benefit from digitalized systems and technology assisted processes, and strategies are developed to demonstrate flexibility, sustainability orientation and impact achievement. HEI's performance is monitored by an advisory board against society relevant KPIs, and priorities regarding for example industry cooperation, community engagement or international rankings are jointly decided. A culture of diversity is nurtured to sustain multi-sector, multi-nations, and multi-disciplinary learning and research. The HEI's strategic plan extends to incorporate a social integration strategy concerned with ensuring access to quality education and offering equal opportunities to employment for disadvantaged groups, including low-income groups, immigrants, ethnic groups, refugees, mature groups, and people with disabilities.

Social innovation through governance also means developing a culture of volunteering and continuously nurturing it. Training and counselling offered by faculty and staff in collaboration with professional associations or private companies, mentoring and training offered by students in exchange, for example, for tuition fee or rent subsidy are a few examples of widely spread volunteering practices. Moreover, HEI's networks are extended to include not only alumni network (entrepreneurs and investors), but also research network (corporate and industry) and other professional networks (local, regional, national, and international level). Local networks with actors and stakeholders coming from outside of the formal systems are also carefully established (Kolleck et al., 2017).

Social innovation through teaching and learning can happen through building quality education that develops talented human capital (graduates, teachers, researchers, and academic entrepreneurs), through the spread of knowledge and intellectual exploration (Kim et al., 2020) and in close connection with the market changing demands (Tyumaseva et al., 2020). Innovation through teaching and learning also means implementing modern pedagogies and alternative forms of education. The ambition to comply with new educational standards pursues HEI's to promote creativity as a learning tool in a multi-disciplinary setting, by bringing together academics, scientists, entrepreneurs, designers, artists, teachers and students, and linking arts, music, technology, businesses and sciences (Kapoor et al., 2018; Schröder & Krüger, 2019). Investments in digital learning through development of online learning platforms, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

Table 2.1 Social innovation dimensions in higher education

Social innovation dimension in HE	Arguments/ Reasons	What?	How?
Governance and networking	Pressure from the society to provide consistent socio-economic returns	New governance structure	Institutionalized and integrated innovation in structures (Schröder & Krüger, 2019), systems, leadership, strategies, and culture
		Overarching and connected governance structures	Quadruple or quintuple helix (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Carayannis et al., 2012)
		Social integration strategy	Access to quality education and equal opportunities to employment; digital inclusion (Schröder & Krüger, 2019) Culture of volunteering
		Networking	Alumni network; research network; professional networks Local networks (Kolleck et al., 2017)
Teaching and learning	Pressure from the society to deliver highly skilled, talented and entrepreneurial graduates more prescient of the societal problems and better equipped to act themselves as agents of change	Quality and effective teaching and learning	Education that develops the human capital through the spread of knowledge and intellectual exploration (Kim et al., 2020) and based on the market demands (Tyumaseva et al., 2020)
		New educational standards	Multidisciplinary learning International mobility
		Digital learning	Online learning platforms; MOOC; blending learning (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020); webinars and online tactics using social media (Morley & Clarke, 2020)
		New pedagogies	Mentoring, coaching, consulting, guidance (Tyumaseva et al., 2020) Problem-based learning and project-based learning Story-crafting (Kapoor et al., 2018)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Social innovation dimension in HE	Arguments/ Reasons	What?	How?
		Alternative / new forms of education	Learning communities, collaborative projects, service learning, capstone learning (Vught & Ziegele, 2012), (overseas) experiential learning trip (Kim et al., 2020), remote student learning and self-directed field practicum (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020),
		Education for sustainable development	Learning that addresses the SDGs/ societal challenges
		New strategies and structures for lifelong learning	Cross-border, flexible lifelong learning
Research	Pressure from the society to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to social and environmental issues (SDGs) and to increase the impact of public policies	Research on sustainability development	Research directed to improving sustainability and wellbeing (Kapoor et al., 2018) Research driven by social demands and societal challenges (Schröder & Krüger, 2019) Research directed towards environmental problems (Kim et al., 2020)
Knowledge transfer	Pressure to ensure the transfer and exchange of knowledge across educational areas, societal sectors, actors, disciplines and borders	Incubators, technological parks, business portals, hubs for local development	Partnership with business incubators, innovation products, leased workforce for business incubators Spin-offs or start-ups (Kim et al., 2020)
Social and community engagement	Pressure from the civil society to contribute to increasing the responsiveness and impact of public policies	Service to humanity	Structures for collaboration and support with local, regional, and national communities and partners (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020)
Cooperation and collaboration	Pressure to innovate at the local, regional, national or international level	Co-design and co-creation platforms	Use technology to create structures to support the intense work circumstances (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Social innovation dimension in HE	Arguments/ Reasons	What?	How?
		Partnerships and alliances	Quadruple or quintuple helix
		Channels and networks	Communication channels with media and culture-based public (Kim et al., 2020) Academic planning meetings, regional meetings,
Funding	Pressure to ensure a broad range of sustainable sources of funding	Sustainable funding for teaching, learning, research, community engagement	Local governments, philanthropic foundations, royalty income from intellectual property, student fees, alumni fundraising, social impact bonds (Katz et al., 2018)
Impact, diffusion and transfer	Pressure to contribute to the economic and social development at the local, regional, national or international level	Teaching and learning	Talents, unique skills Businesses and community engagement Absorptive capacity of workforce International mobility
		Research and innovation	New knowledge, innovation partners, innovative products (Păunescu & McDonnell-Naughton, 2020) International rankings
		Social integration/inclusion	Cooperation with local groups with specific societal relevance
		Social and community engagement	Service to humanity (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020), civic engagement, citizenship role Leading roles of universities in the community agenda
		Emotional support and interactions	Virtual connections and celebrations; structures to support the intense work circumstances for faculty and staff (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020)

(Dargaud & Jouneau-Sion, 2020) and blending learning is of extreme importance. A blend of on-line learning and work with hours of volunteering and internships at different community agencies, companies, and other organizations for the direct practice and work experience is gaining more and more ground currently (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020). Innovation through digital learning also integrates tailored support and resources meant to enhance learning, offered by instructional designers and technology coaches to faculty and staff in the form of consultation, training, joining sessions, and workshops (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020; Morley & Clarke, 2020).

A broad range of innovative pedagogies, which proved their value in society, have been adopted by the HEI's to different extents to enhance their students' learning experiences. Some examples include mentoring, coaching, consulting, and guidance, where volunteers of all types—retired faculty, business professionals, community actors, artists, and even students—act as mentors and coaches (Tyumaseva et al., 2020). Other methods have shown their merits as well: teaching through enterprise projects and real work with local employers; teaching through which learners receive something for themselves personally and know how to develop from here (Tyumaseva et al., 2020); and story-crafting that enables sharing and listening (Kapoor et al., 2018). Alternative and new forms of education have gained momentum recently. For example, learning communities, collaborative projects, service learning, capstone learning (Vught & Ziegele, 2012), (overseas) experiential learning trip (Kim et al., 2020), remote student learning and work and self-directed field practicum (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020), entrepreneurship education are a few of them. Supervision and engagement of students with clients, organisations and stakeholders via remote/distance placements (Morley & Clarke, 2020) have received a strong attention recently. In all these situations, alternative assignments, requirements and expectations, rigorous enough for student learning and accreditation standards, should be developed (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020).

Lately, education for sustainable development has shaped new curricula to create learning that addresses the SDGs and societal challenges for the local and regional environment, including climate change, skill shortage, ageing population, and integration of migrants (Kolleck et al., 2017). Also, it included cases of innovative solutions that utilize cutting-edge technology for a broad spectrum of social problems (Kim et al., 2020). HEI's are also concerned with development of new strategies and structures for lifelong learning to support the local development and innovation. Some common practices include building up a lifelong learning system beyond the borders of educational institutions and areas and arranging lifelong learning possibilities in a more flexible way, especially at the local level (Mazzucato, 2018 cited in Schröder & Krüger, 2019).

Social innovation in higher education can also happen through research. Research on sustainability development is of paramount importance. One stream of research can be directed towards problems or technologies that can potentially contribute to improving sustainability and wellbeing (Kapoor et al., 2018). Research driven by social demands and societal challenges, including climate change, skill shortage, ageing population, integration of migrants, energy supply, health and social care, transport and mobility, poverty reduction (Schröder & Krüger, 2019), receives big

interest in the society. Also, research directed towards environmental problems—fine dust, food waste, diaper waste, clothes waste, CO₂ from excessive meat consumption (Kim et al., 2020)—raises a broad interest.

Social innovation takes also place through community engagement and happens through creation of structures for collaboration and support extended with local and regional communities. Collaboration within and beyond the faculty, leading to invitation of regional, provincial and national partners to listen, share, learn and vision together for increased innovation and local development, is a good way to engage with communities (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020). Social innovation through cooperation and collaboration can happen, for instance, through building co-creation platforms where multi-actors from various sectors embrace technology, join resources, rethink practices, and create environments to support the intense work circumstances for faculty and staff and their external partners (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020). A sign of social innovation in higher education through collaboration are also partnerships and alliances developed with professional associations, governmental agencies, corporate, research institutions, environmental organizations, and other NGOs to addressing societal problems at the local, regional, national, or international level. Various channels and networks are used to develop communication and improve collaboration with media and culture-based public (Kim et al., 2020). Academic planning meetings, check-ins with staff, regional meetings with field staff, and faculty meetings are common management tools used to improve cooperation and collaboration.

Social innovations can also happen through sustainable funding for teaching, learning, research and innovation. In many European countries, public funding of universities has indicated declining trends. Identifying and attracting new and creative sources of funding is of paramount importance for modern HEI's. Therefore, searching for multi-funding opportunities is critical: local governments, private companies, philanthropic foundations, royalty income from intellectual property, student fees, alumni fundraising, and more recently social impact bond funding (Katz et al., 2018), a form of capital provided through public-private partnerships for better social outcomes in certain areas.

Social innovations take also place through the HEI's knowledge transfer mechanisms, dissemination practices and impact evaluation. Various channels for dissemination and transfer of knowledge in society are used and different spheres of impact are identified. For example, innovation through teaching and learning is measured through the capacity of HEI's to develop talents and unique skills and to engage businesses and communities in the educational act. It is also measured through the absorptive capacity of workforce on the local or regional market, higher education mobility and HEI's positioning in the international rankings. Innovation through research is measured through the new knowledge created, innovation partners engaged and innovative products delivered (Păunescu & McDonnell-Naughton, 2020). Innovation through the social integration strategy is measured through cooperation with local groups with specific societal relevance, including persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, disadvantaged/marginalized groups, and abandoned children. Innovation through community engagement is measured

through the service to humanity (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020), civic engagement, citizenship role and the leading roles of universities in the community agenda. Innovation through emotional support and interactions can happen through opportunities for virtual connections and celebrations, structures meant to support the intense work circumstances for faculty and staff (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2020) and mind-sets, attractiveness and relevance of social innovation itself (Schröder & Krüger, 2019).

Table 2.1 summarizes the forms of manifestation of social innovation in higher education and its spheres of influence

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter has highlighted some of the concepts of social and community engagement in relation to their manifestations in practice. It has sought to identify enablers and to encourage development and growth in enabling social innovation in higher education. The heart of social and community engagement resides in supporting HEI's to achieve their goals. The understanding of the importance of embedding social innovation in higher education is central to the research agenda of the new modern higher-level sector. There is a critical need to acknowledge and engage fully with all members of society to enhance and nurture the capabilities of everyone and facilitate more nuanced conversations around the multiple facets of social innovation in higher education. Governmental and European policies need to emphasize and support the responsible action by higher education institutes in their navigation to ensure that they are empowered to meet these criteria. Leaders can promote conversations amongst communities, academics, and the wider stakeholders to place emphasis on how they can incorporate best practice in this area. Educational approaches that recognise the unique geographical location of the higher educational institute can pay enormous dividends with reference to community and social engagement. Challenges to addressing specific issues for equitable educational access will be a priority. The conceptual complexity of the notion of 'equity' adds to the challenges. There is impetus for implementing and evaluating important various community engagement strategies, their tendency towards deficit-based portrayals risks overlooking positives of engagement. Encompassed in these socially constructed approaches may involve dealing with the complexity of competing interests. By identifying these interests and creating a space for ongoing dialogue a positive outcome can be ensued.

Higher education providers are expected to encourage the members of their wider scientific and academic community to promote conversations amongst communities, governments, and businesses, at local, regional, national, or international level, leading to various opportunities for active community engagement, educational change, and social innovation. These areas, where social innovations can take place in higher education and priorities should be as follows:

- **Governance and networking.** For social innovation to happen there is a need for new, overarching, and connected governance structures, with distinctive, intercorrelated roles and responsibilities. Also, HEI's need to ensure that social and community engagement is endorsed and there is a social integration strategy in place.
- **Teaching and learning.** Engagement as a key element of institutional teaching and learning strategies needs to be embedded. HEI's need to ensure that all educational programmes leading to an award embed the concept of social community. This will assist in strengthening the concept of innovation that can lend itself to developing communities and help to foster an equitable society. There is an urgent need to invest in interactive and enhanced digital pedagogies for the various curricula and address cultural inequities in access to higher level education. Digital learning, alternative or new forms of education, new strategies and structures for lifelong learning, as well as education for sustainable development are some of the main priorities in the area. Experiential learning assists students reflecting on their learning gains. Graduates need to have a range of skills and achievements which will enable them to gain employment and contribute positively to society. The question of ensuring that students get recognition for prior learning is also pivotal, thereby opening access to a whole new group of learners. Modular short, based specific accredited courses would open the doors to higher level education for those working in industry or other fields of the economy who wish to upskill.
- **Engaged research for societal impact.** The duty that is embedded into students in higher education needs to reflect Ward's (2005) desire to participate and engage positively with public matters. HEIs' engaged research, involving collaborative engagement with communities aiming to address societal challenges, illustrates share knowledge for positive societal impact. It also has very good transferable skillsets, such as management, and ethical knowing around issues. It is important that research evidence is gathered to show the impact on the local economy by HEI's engaging with the community. National policies need to be in place that encourage engagement with communities for producing impactful research and build on capacity. Partnerships with incubators, establishment technological parks, business portals or hubs for local development are critical for ensuring the transfer and exchange of knowledge across educational areas, societal sectors, disciplines, and borders. HEI's need to embrace political and social reform that enables positive change for all members of society.
- **Social and community engagement.** HEI's should take responsibility to devise new methods to engage with communities to meet societal needs and demands. It is essential that the higher education institute bridges the gap with the local community and enriches development through education, focused research, volunteering, and activities specific to their region. Higher education students should be given opportunities for national and international engagement so that the learning environment is aligned with enterprise and the wider community. This would also assist in meeting social and economic objectives.

- **Cooperation and collaboration.** HEI's should bring together capabilities of its staff and students to work collaboratively with local communities, businesses, industry leaders, to achieve sustainable outcomes for their mutual benefit. They need to support social, cultural, and economic development as identified by Conrad (2015). Inclusivity must be an essential principle of HEI's. Concepts that assist in creating partnerships are of value within HEI's. Interdisciplinary research and collaboration with colleagues in other fields is paramount to enrich academic research and give new insights into areas relevant to social and community engagement. HEI's provide a teaching and learning, nurturing and social structure for students and academics across the spectrum of disciplines. Organising seminars and exhibitions across various campuses can help to promote and encourage public engagement. This area is beginning to grow; however, it was not traditionally seen as part of the work of the HEIs'. Collaborative research with a purpose of public engagement is to create knowledge collaboratively. This engagement needs to be in place from the inception of the idea to setting the research questions to evaluating the results. This helps to promote civic engagement and the work produced is for the public and community. Projects can be driven by a defined community's need, which then can be addressed by research leading to social innovation. The learning from one project can assist in helping to developing structures, sharing learning, and resources for other engagement research or projects.
- **Funding.** Funding streams will vary across Europe. Inherent in any funding mechanism is the investment that provides and sustains equal access and also embraces diversity. Sustainable funding for teaching, learning, research, and community engagement with different opportunities can lead to promote interdisciplinary research whilst identifying benefits for the community. Creative sources of funding, such as social impact bonds, are needed to create academic carrier incitements to engage in collaborative teaching, learning and research with the surrounding society for social innovations. Funding needs to be part of the wider discourse with governments focusing on a wider social policy strategy that discusses and addresses issues of hardship across society.
- **Impact, diffusion, and dissemination.** Engagement needs to be firmly embedded in HEI's strategic plans. Central to this is students perspectives and identifying key priorities, such as research and knowledge exchange and engaging with communities. To achieve this, HEIs will need to be a recognised presence in the region's where they are located. The creation of new partnerships and fostering relationships in their area will help in having a positive impact.

Progress has been made in higher education with regards to developing competences and creating knowledge for greater benefit by society. However, emphasis must continue to ensure that its populations are inclusive and reflective of the diversity and dynamics of society. Talents if appropriately nurtured will become visible in the economy by having graduates who are critical thinkers by their innovative and creative ways of addressing challenges. Digital and remote access to education will provide opportunities for learners to engage and complement their

development. The opportunity is now to review processes which embeds and has at its core inclusivity. HEI's can now transform and build on its reputational history so that the future is bright for all potential learners by having a transparent and open access for people to build and develop new careers. This can be achieved by having clear and effective pathways to nurture talent so that it is fit for purpose and has at its core the concept of rigorous scholarship and the development of new ideas through its innovative approaches.

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Mary McDonnell Naughton, PhD is a Registered Nurse, Midwife, and Registered Nurse Tutor, and is currently a Senior Lecturer and Chairperson of the College’s Research Ethics Committee. She holds a PhD from the College of Medicine, (University College Dublin, Ireland) and has extensive research experience with members of the interdisciplinary team and has been involved in collaborating international research across disciplines. Mary has supervised students and engaged in various areas of research from Child Health, Smoking, Alcohol and Learning Disability to various aspects associated with the Older Person, especially the centenarian. She has also been a member of various European COST actions such as Old-Age Social Exclusion and Ageism. Along with an interest in Ethics, Mary also has an interest in innovation, social and community engagement work and has engaged in various community research projects. Presently, she is involved in supervising PhD students in various areas from Centenarians and Factors Contributing to Successful Ageing, through to novel ICT enabling technologies that enhances quality of life to cross generational changes in relation to food preferences.

Carmen Păunescu, PhD is a Professor of Entrepreneurship in the UNESCO Department for Business Administration at Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE), Romania. Her research interests lie in the areas of social entrepreneurship, innovation, business continuity, sustainable entrepreneurship and higher education. Since 2011, she supervised ten doctoral theses to completion and other nine theses are under completion, all of them covering topics in the areas of social innovation and entrepreneurship. Carmen is an expert and local coordinator of the Erasmus+ project “CLLC—Community Learning for Local Change” (localchange.eu) and Erasmus+ project “VISEnet—Village social enterprise: learning material, guidance and networking (ruralsehub.net/visenet-overview). She also leads the WG2 Higher Education Institutions (HEI), social change and transformation under the COST Action CA 18236 Multidisciplinary innovation for social change (socialchangelab.eu). Carmen published over 50 peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters. Carmen is an Editor of the Management and Marketing. Challenges for a Knowledge Society journal.

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