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National Report: Cyprus

Research, Mapping and Preparatory
Assessment of the Social Innovation Ecosystem
of Cyprus



Center for Social
Innovation



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Executive Summary

EU Social Innovation

Generally social innovation stakeholders agree that social innovation aims to bring about solutions to societal challenges that in turn bring positive change at a societal level. Social enterprises are considered a subset of social innovation and are achieved through the process of social entrepreneurship.

The social innovation field experienced many challenges and growth over the past few decades. Researchers stress the difficulty in conducting research on the field due to a large degree of fragmentation. Three major shared traits were identified through literature review: a) much social innovation work is done through multi-stakeholder partnerships, b) digital technology is prevalent as a distributor, disruptor and enabler, c) comprehensive understanding of issues and a collaborative approach which ensures knowledge is shared with all partners. Additionally research notes the prevalence and popularity of prizes and competitions as a way of accessing funds as well as considering context when scaling social innovation.

Researchers generally agree there is a critical need for strengthening support in policymaking, addressing the six main challenges that the European Union is facing as identified by the European Commission, and conducting high quality empirical research on impact evaluation.

Cyprus Ecosystem

In Cyprus today only one law is in place that relates to social innovation as social innovation and social entrepreneurship are relatively new concepts on the island. The law refers specifically to the creation of social enterprises, however no substantial policies are in place that streamline social innovation efforts from a governmental perspective. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of any social enterprise



or social innovation efforts. Many sustainable initiatives have been brought forward by the four sectors (public, private, civil, academia/higher education) with many social enterprises focusing on digital inclusion, capacity building and installing equipment at affordable prices. In addition, a number of higher education institutions and research centers as well as voluntary organizations/NGOs which complement the role of the state in various policy arenas, have been active in social innovation work in recent years. Five social innovation trends have been identified in Cyprus; Technological development, agriculture, education, health, social inclusion and integration.

Empirical Approaches & Perspectives

SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education alongside Center for Social Innovation conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis through roundtables and a national survey aiming to better understand stakeholder perspectives on the Social Innovation ecosystem in Cyprus. Stakeholder participants generally agreed that more infrastructure is needed to support social innovation with an easier access to funding and more funding opportunities alongside awareness increase, and training opportunities.



Social Innovation in Europe

The following section covers foundational definitions for social innovation, social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. Following, is a short analysis of the major trends in the social innovation sphere in the European Union as well as the major challenges and/or barriers to social innovation.

1.1 Concepts of social innovation

Some of the earliest references of social innovation date back to the 1960s, where the term was used in academic debates and experimental research (The Young Foundation, 2012). From the beginning of the 21st century, the term has been used in relation to actions that **bring change at a societal level** and has played a key role in the international political community and academia.

In the sphere of policy and practice, there are many definitions and concepts of social innovation. Yet, there is no single concept that is accepted by everyone. Definitions generally acknowledge that social innovation “is a new practice, is born as a response to social or environmental need, is open to engaging a *variety of actors*, and is social not only in its purposes, but also in the way it is delivered” (OECD, 2016).

The OECD definition of social innovation (OECD, 2000) which is adopted by many communities and organizations, suggests that it concerns “conceptual, process or product change, organizational change and changes in financing, and can deal with new relationships with stakeholders and territories”. Social innovation aims to create solutions to societal challenges that deliver positive social outcomes (European Union/OECD, 2015).

Innovation requires implementation either by being put into active use or by being made available for use by other parties, firms, individuals or organizations. (OECD, 2018).



According to the Oslo Manual, the impacts derived from innovation depend on the “diffusion and uptake of related innovations”(2018). It also suggests that “innovation is a dynamic and pervasive activity that occurs in all sectors of an economy” including the third sector, civil society, public sector, private sector, academia as well as individuals.

While private companies and businesses may use innovation to improve profits and productivity, social innovation seeks to create new social structures and to enhance social values (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014) . These could concern values such as the quality of life, social inclusion, citizen participation, well-being, environmental sustainability and others.

The FUSE project uses the TEPsIE project’s definition, which defines it as the process of “new solutions simultaneously meet a social need and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources” (The Young Foundation, 2012).

Social innovation is seen as the key for solving challenges in education, urbanization, agriculture, health, poverty, migration, gender discrimination and justice. Over the years, social innovation has proven to be a powerful tool for identifying, creating and implementing solutions that bring positive changes in social, economic and environmental problems. As we are navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic, social innovation could contribute to regional and national development and bring resilience.

1.2 Social Enterprise

From the beginning of the 21st century, the term social innovation has been used to describe activities taking place within the context of social entrepreneurship. Social enterprises have gained importance in policy development in many countries across the world over the last two decades. In Europe, a crucial milestone for policy-makers,



organizations and other stakeholders was the release of the “Social Business Initiative” by the European Commission in 2011 (European Commission, 2015).

Social enterprises are identified by the European Commission as organizations that “focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives.” These organizations “combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit.” It is in the efforts of the European Commission to create an enabling environment for social enterprises to operate on equal conditions as other types of enterprises. By strengthening the field in which they operate, social enterprises will be able to address social and economic challenges in a more effective manner and contribute to the creation of more inclusive societies. As a part of the efforts to achieve this, the “Social Business Initiative” identified actions that will improve the situation of social enterprises and contribute to job creation.

According to OECD, a social enterprise is “any private activity conducted in the public interest, organized with an entrepreneurial strategy, whose main purpose is not the maximization of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment” (OECD/European Union, 2013).

More recently, the European Commission has defined a social enterprise as being “an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders” (European Commission, 2015). The definition also mentions that “it [social enterprise] operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.”



When it comes to the types or forms of social enterprises, there are many variations and descriptions, which are very often interconnected. Social enterprises can be start-ups, public entities or governmental organizations, and organizations created by transforming pre-existing private organizations or public entities implementing governmental initiatives. The transformation process could refer to an organizational change in the form of the organisation, a new economic activity or a spin-off from another organisation.

There are many definitions about social enterprises around the world which is why it is difficult to make comparisons or come up with one single term that incorporates all important notions. This is because social enterprises can take different types of legal structures, require different resources, have access to different types of markets and have the legal and regulatory framework varies. The FUSE project suggests that a "social enterprise can be thought of as a *subset of social innovations*". A social enterprise could take different types of forms such as associations, solidarity enterprises, NGOs, co-operatives or limited liability social co-operatives, public entities, collective interest co-operatives/collective interest companies or community interest companies. The FUSE project also acknowledges that there some common aspects addressed in a number of European countries including the definition of a social enterprise; stakeholders system, external stakeholders; asset allocation and governance system.

Social enterprises are active in a wide range of spheres and in many different fields. In Europe, this may include social services, housing, culture and arts, agriculture, tourism, health, education, fair trade, transport, renewable energies and other.

Creating and running a social enterprise can prove more challenging than a traditional business because of the lack of understanding of what a social enterprise is and what is the social value that is created by it. This creates a greater difficulty in accessing funds



or acquiring capital. There is also a lack of knowledge on the skills that are needed to manage an enterprise with a social mission which are different from managing one with an economic mission. Overall, the concept of a social enterprise varies from country to country and from each other as they are shaped based on the legal and regulatory framework and are affected by cultural contexts. They are also different from each other as they have different business support and development structures, financial resources, training supports and are also impacted by aspects such as access to markets.

1.3 Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is described as the **process** in which social entrepreneurs create organizations or initiatives that have a social impact dimension (European Commission, 2015). It plays an important role in social innovation as it is used to address social, economic or environmental challenges while at the same time promotes inclusivity, prosperity, democratic participation and economic or personal growth. In most cases, social entrepreneurship could further contribute to job creation and empower communities to have a more active role as citizens.

Social entrepreneurship addresses social challenges and meets social needs while benefiting the community or a special target group. For it to flourish, it requires skills that would facilitate the development of solid business structures that focus on social impact rather than the maximization of profit and contribute to an inclusive society and sustainable growth.

Putting in place an enabling environment which follows a holistic-policy approach will help ensure a better access to market, funds or capital and better opportunities for skills development. Creating an appropriate regulatory framework that follows an ecosystem approach is essential for the success of social entrepreneurship initiatives.



1.4 Trends in Social innovation globally and in the European Union

Over the past few decades social innovation work has been increasing in depth and reach on a global scale. The inclusion of social innovation in the 'Europe 2020' strategy in 2010 "triggered a cascade of regulatory and non-regulatory actions with notable impact on the promotion of the third sector and social economy" (European Commission, 2017, p. 7). This brought new forms of funding, new research and publications; as a result the European Union experienced a steady increase in social innovation projects, methods and practices. Since the early stages of social innovation work in the European Union, initiatives included focus on the Green Deal initiative, democracy, fight against populism, supporting the systemic transformation of institutions and supporting SDGs (European Commission, 2017).

Much research has been conducted on the emerging trends in social innovation work globally and specifically in the European Union (European Commission, 2017; Borroket, 2019; DGRIEU, 2017; Mulgan, 2019; Waters, 2019); although researchers stressed the difficulty of compiling and analyzing social innovation research as the field is "characterized by a remarkable degree of fragmentation, which has made its development a difficult issue" (SIA, 2020, p.9).

A report from the European Commission finds the following trends in Social Innovation work in Europe: (1) Institutional capacity and well-being, (2) Democracy and trust, (3) Skills and the future of work, (4) Internet technologies and On-line/Off-line interactions, (5) New financial instruments, (6) Urban renewal and (7) Global interdependencies. (2017). Researchers from the Social Innovation Academy (SIA) also conducted a literature review and trends analysis and found comparable findings to the EU Commission (2020). Through their research and literature review of major publications



and online resources on social innovation they also find that overall social innovation topics were the *use and development of technology and digital means* to accomplish a variety of a) societal needs (e.g., e-democracy, artificial intelligence, smart cities, data collecting etc) on b) climate change (reducing plastic waste, reimagining fashion industries, consumption patterns, renewable energy etc.), c) social justice efforts (e.g., services and training for migrants and refugees, food security, upwards mobility programs etc.) and finally e) on health/ community health (Programs for aging populations, disease prevention, housing etc.) (2020).

A vital take away from the literature on scaling social innovation, is the importance of **context** when doing social innovation work. Typically, solutions and innovations to social problems address the context of a specific area, region or community; when efforts to scale or duplicate social innovations in other contexts fail or took too long to materialize is due to inadequate addressing of context across geographies over time (European Commission, 2017 p. 10). It is interesting to couple this with a trend that stood out among the research, the prevalence and popularity of *prizes and competitions* as ways of obtaining financial support as well as disseminating projects (SIA, 2020). The variety and scope of available competitions, challenges and prizes is not geographically bound, with plentiful opportunities available both for locales and large urban areas. The increase in interest in challenge prizes as an effective tool for developing innovative solutions could be one way to combat efforts of duplication in inappropriate environments, allowing locals to apply for their own funding with solutions relevant to them.

Shared traits amongst all projects and trends is the presence of the **multi-stakeholder partnership**, the presence of **digital technology** as a distributor, disruptor and enabler, as well as comprehensive **understanding of issues** and a **holistic collaborative approach** ensuring knowledge is shared with all partners.(European Commission, 2017; SIA, 2020).



1.5 Sustainable Development Goals and Social Innovation

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a blueprint for balancing social, economic and environmental goals that was designed to “achieve a better and more sustainable future for all” (UNDP, 2015). They were developed to succeed the Millennium Development Goals which ended in 2015. They address global challenges such as peace, poverty, hunger, discrimination against women, environmental degradation, AIDS, climate change and justice.

Social innovation plays an important role in achieving the SDGs as it is increasingly used to meet the needs of marginalized and low-income people in a gender sensitive manner. In the last 10 years, social innovation is setting the ground for “future policies and principles of societal development at all levels”. It was only recently that civil society was added in the ‘quadruple helix’ as the fourth innovation source proving its significance in achieving change and serving as an important source of innovation that interacts with government, academia and industry.

In order to achieve the SDGs and meet societal challenges, new forms of innovation are being deployed. Selecting the most appropriate type of innovation is the key to addressing these challenges and achieving societal change. Therefore, it is vital to cultivate mindsets that promote the development of ideas and initiatives that follow an integrated approach in achieving social innovation while creating a more sustainable future for the society. Understanding the interconnectedness of global challenges is essential for creating an environment that encourages innovation in a way that benefits the society and creates sustainable growth.

1.6 Mind the gap: EU capacity for social innovation

There are many challenges in social innovation work. Researchers generally agree that there is a critical need for *strengthening support in policymaking*. More specifically,



special attention to be given toward embedding holistic social innovation policies across governmental departments. This ties directly to the call for an increase in cross-sectoral collaborations which in turn require infrastructure and support to better facilitate large scale impact and achieve meaningful systems change. Furthermore, there is a need for education of relevant stakeholders in order to develop competences for social innovation work targeted towards practitioners, researchers and policy-makers. (European Commission, 2017; European Commission, 2013).

More specifically, the European Commission identified **six challenges** that the European Union is currently facing as well as predicted challenges for the future (2013). First, a demographic challenge, specifically addressing the doubling of the ratio of retirees working in Europe (Carone & Costello, 2006) Second, addressing the critical need for dealing with climate change and its increasing impact on European cities by exploiting groundwater resources utilizing circular economy structures; overall reducing pressure on natural resources (SIA, 2020). Community third, and more specifically bridging the digital divide. Fourth, addressing the statistic that 1 in 6 Europeans are living below the poverty threshold, addressing the large and persistent health disparities and finally continuing to support the rise in fair trade product purchasing. Finally, it would be remiss to not address the exponential rising of immigrants in the European Union, with Cyprus specifically having the third highest immigrant-population ratio in the European Union (Eurostat, 2019).

Overall, there is growing consideration amongst researchers that the greatest challenge in social innovation work is conducting empirical research in the field of impact evaluation; Social Innovation work requires validated tools for measuring impact and more research is needed on the systematic use of data (European Commission, 2017).



1.7 Assessment tools and how social innovation impact can be measured

Due to the lack of consistency and a comprehensive approach to social innovation, there is also great difficulty in locating one comprehensive way of measuring social innovation impact including commonly shared terminology and metrics. In other words, there is no standard or practice regarding metrics used for social innovation assessment, however the use of the Randomized Control Trial method on health related issues is widely accepted (TEPSIE, 2014).

One approach to mitigate the lack of measurement metric specific to social innovation, is through measuring 'social impact'; the "beneficial outcomes resulting from prosocial behavior that are enjoyed by the intended targets of that behavior and/or by the broader community of individuals, organizations, and/or environments" (Stephan et al, 2016; Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2019).

Established metrics that can be used to measure innovation in private or public sector organizations: Innovation Union Scoreboard (European Union), Global Innovation Index (INSEAD), Innovation in public sector organizations (NESTA), Measure public innovation in the Nordic Countries (MEPIN) global competitiveness Index (WEF). Additionally, examples of metrics that focus on social, normative or environmental dimensions focused on capturing the social element of social innovation; OECD Better Life Index, European System of Social Indicators (GESIS), Civil Society Index (CIVICUS) National Footprint (Global Footprint Network). Other tools that are also commonly used; Social Return on Investment (SROI), Social Reporting Standards (SRS), Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) and Randomized Control Trials (RCT).

In general, it seems that the flexibility of a tool can signal the interest to the greater stakeholder base and increase the likelihood of adoption. Additionally, other considerations prior to adopting an assessment framework are the high cost and technical knowledge required to complete often lengthy and complicated evaluation



protocols. Often, especially for the public sector, external expertise is required to be able to complete assessments due to the lack of know-how by the state (TEPSIE, 2014).

2. Cyprus ecosystem

2.1. Key social innovation ecosystem's pillars/ dimensions and actors in Cyprus

This section addresses the Social Innovation ecosystem and covers legal frameworks, policies, research, financing and funding availability as well as analyses the civil society landscape in Cyprus.

2.1.1 Policy and Institutional Framework

Existence of national policy on social innovation, research and impact

Until 2017 in Cyprus, the existence of national policy on social innovation or anything remotely relevant, was non-existent. Still today, there is no specific national policy on social innovation. According to the research findings by Lipparini and Phillips (2021) in the framework of the European Commission's ICT-Enabled Social Innovation (IESI) project, only 7 organizations in Cyprus meet the EU operational criteria for what constitutes a social enterprise, thus identified by the Commission's experts.

Nevertheless, there are still many sustainable initiatives brought forwards by entrepreneurial third sector organizations as well as by mission oriented businesses. Tertiary education, for example, has been activated to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Cyprus, either as an independent area or as part of a wider entrepreneurship zone. In addition, a number of universities, higher education institutions and research centers nowadays include courses on social entrepreneurship, social innovation and socially impactful work.



Cyprus, alongside Malta and Greece, represent a subgroup in between Mediterranean and Eastern countries, where social enterprises are a relatively new concept, strongly sustained by international organizations (such as UNDP and USAID) and the EU including through the allocation of funding (Lipparini & Phillips, 2021). The term “social enterprise” was initially used in November 2010 when the first conference on the topic, Connecting Social Innovation, was organized in Cyprus by the SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education. Since then, several initiatives have been established by organizations pursuing a social and/or environmental purpose in conjunction with economic activity, mainly motivated by the private sector. Initiatives to build capacity within the third sector as well as to support social enterprises are ongoing (Lipparini & Phillips, 2021, 131). Additionally in 2013, Cyprus’ President announced a list of policies that targeted unemployment and social exclusion; more specifically, specific actions were identified regarding the development and creation of social enterprises (PIO, 2013; Isaias, 2019). The Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance’s ESF unit began actively participating in the international Social Entrepreneurship network as well as began to gather knowledge on policy support regarding social enterprises in Europe and in Cyprus.

Legal framework for social enterprises

Until 2019, there were no institutionalized forms of social enterprise in Cyprus. De facto social enterprises could be found among Foundations and Associations with commercial activities, and mainstream enterprises pursuing an explicit and primary social aim. In accordance with the EU operational definition, the typologies that would most likely qualify as social enterprises in Cyprus are private companies limited by guarantee, cooperatives and associations.



This is gradually changing with the approval of specific legislation relevant to social innovation work, allowing companies, cooperatives and other legal entities to be registered as social enterprises (N. 207(I)/2020). This process began in 2017 with the House of Parliament approving revisions to Income Tax Law which incentivized investment in startups and innovative companies in Cyprus alongside the startup visa scheme, attracting startups from non-EU countries to relocate to Cyprus and enhance a startup ecosystem. The approved legislation provides a definition of social enterprises that classifies them into two types: general purpose (GP); and social inclusion/integration (SI) social enterprises.

Effectiveness of the system in policy implementation

As there is no substantial policy on social innovation in Cyprus, it is difficult to consider ways to assess the effectiveness of the system in regards to policy implementation. Nevertheless, looking at the broader paradigm of social enterprises and their activities, according to the Cyprus National Reform Programme, the emphasis placed by the Government on enhancing the economy's competitiveness and productivity requires the establishment of a mechanism to systematically monitor the performance of the country in relation to international competitiveness benchmarks.

This refers to inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes intended to be assessed through this mechanism, in the form of an annually prepared and published *Competitiveness Report*, which will provide an analytical tool for the comprehensive assessment of country's performance and facilitate the dialogue between governmental and non-governmental sectors, as well as assisting in setting the agenda for reforms aiming at competitiveness improvements.

The inclusion of the monitoring and evaluation of international indicators into the national policy framework will facilitate the design of the appropriate actions and policies for growth. Furthermore, the Government has pledged to evaluate and consider



the findings and policy recommendations of the 3rd GEM report, prepared by the Centre for Entrepreneurship of the University of Cyprus, since the report can be a valuable tool for the promotion of entrepreneurial activity on the island.

2.1.2 Financing social innovation

Availability of government financing to promote social innovation

Compared to the EU average, Cyprus spends considerably less on social protection of the public and private sector. Before the recently approved legislation aforementioned, similar to most countries in the EU, Cyprus did not have a comprehensive array of public support measures specifically targeting social enterprises and social innovation initiatives with public support; in most cases tending to be fragmented and ad hoc. This fragmentation has been identified in the past as a particular challenge for a number of countries, including Cyprus. The type of support mentioned by stakeholders in previous EU Commission reports, which is currently lacking (and could go some way in developing the sector) included: Technical support, including training and knowledge, and transfer opportunities. According to the National Policy Statement (2015), which set the government's policy priorities for the period 2014-20, 92% of Cypriot entrepreneurs strongly believe that securing funding is a prerequisite for the proper function of their businesses (OECD Cyprus Country Notes, 2020). This is especially important considering in 2019 Cyprus scored 60/100 on an ease of getting credit case; Cyprus scored below the Europe and Central Asia average indicating an increased difficulty with getting credit (Doing Business Project, 2019).

As reported in the Country report for Cyprus on Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe (Isaias, 2019), support measures for social enterprise development are envisioned in the recently approved legislation and a National Action Plan (NAP), which was approved in January 2018 with an anticipated budget of 3.1 EUR million. The majority of funds are intended for social enterprise start-ups. According to



the 3rd Progress Report - Policy Statement: Strengthening the Business Ecosystem in Cyprus, issued in February 2019 (in Greek) by the MECIT – the governance system is an indispensable condition for the prosperity of the entrepreneurship policy and nurturing social innovation in Cyprus. The Coordination and Monitoring Committee has been established and operates under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the MECIT (OECD Cyprus Country Notes, 2020).

The NAP is dependent upon the legislative framework which is approved, but not widely implemented yet. The provisions include the support measures listed below:

Funding

The plan includes a grant for start-ups and existing social enterprises. Support, once initiated, will generally be offered up to 25,000 EUR.

Support by Incubators

From 2019 to 2021, two social enterprise incubators will support social enterprise start-ups for a period of up to three years. After that period, enterprises will move to their own workspaces, as new entities replace them in the incubators. Additional measures, which are subject to final decisions, may include:

- a. a label and certification system, which will help social enterprises to distinguish themselves from other enterprises;
- b. an electronic portal to inform the public and potential investors as well as new entrepreneurs about the steps for creating a new social enterprise, available funding sources and training opportunities;
- c. initial and advanced vocational and educational training for young and experienced social entrepreneurs to help them develop new ideas and social enterprises;



d. mentoring schemes.

Private funding & financial instruments available

There are several non-governmental schemes and programmes that could be of benefit to social enterprises and social innovation activities. However, the role of the non-governmental sector in stimulating and/or implementing targeted entrepreneurship and social innovation support programmes for different target groups is limited (OECD Cyprus Country Notes, 2020).

Private financing initiatives have emerged, following social impact investment markets in Europe, such as the creation of the first Cypriot Network of Business Angels (CYBAN) in 2013 and the development of venture capital transactions by a small number of companies operating in Cyprus.

Cyprus Business Angels Network (CYBAN) is an angel investment network connecting the most innovative, fast growing companies in the country to smart equity finance. Being the only Angel Investment Network in Cyprus, they are uniquely positioned to match carefully selected start-ups with experienced and influential angel investors.

One other significant initiative that relates to promoting entrepreneurial culture and social networking in Cyprus, Enterprise Europe Network Cyprus offers free integrated support services to Cypriot enterprises wishing to invest in research and development, technology and innovation. The Network provides information services for funding and legislation issues, internationalization and finding partners, advisory services on technology transfer, innovation and intellectual property to all Cypriot enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized ones. It is a member of the European network Enterprise Europe Network and consists of the Research Promotion Foundation as Coordinator, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the European Office of Cyprus as members (Enterprise Europe Network Cyprus, 2020).



2.1.3 Civil Society

Diverse socio-economic, cultural, religious, political and other particularities have shaped the organizational arrangements in the history of Cyprus and make it difficult to link a particular form of development in the voluntary sector to the policies and strategies of respective governing rulers. An official independent welfare state, similar to that of other countries, was only established following the island's independence from its colonizer, in 1960.

At the moment, there is no legal framework that provides a definition for the “third sector”, although a distinct, separate third sector exists in Cyprus. The same applies for other relevant more contemporary terms used in an EU context, such as “not for profit sector”, “voluntary sector”, “civil society” or “NGO sector”. Laws and regulations in Cyprus, as in other countries, define and recognise the legal organizational forms of non-governmental/not for profit organizations, coordinative councils as well as the different components of the sector. Of the most important references in legislation which offer useful definitions on the components, characteristics and concepts of the not for profit organizations, are a) volunteering activity: as described under the “not for profit purpose” definition in Article 2 of the PanCyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council Law, b) not for profit purpose: which, according to the law, is “every voluntary action or act which tends to alleviate or relieve human suffering, human poverty, illness or need and any physical, mental and psychological malfunction, as well as any action which serves the welfare or the protection of children, teenagers, young people, adults and old persons, any action which contributes to the prevention or addresses social problems or needs and generally any action which contributes to the improvement of the welfare of the people residing, permanently or temporarily, in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus” and c) voluntary organizations: which are defined as “every organisation which is comprised by volunteers and its main or exclusive purpose is not for profit”, d) organizations: which are defined as any organised group of natural or legal



persons, including associations, foundations, institutions, committees and clubs which have an administrative structure and operational autonomy. (PanCyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council Law).

The legal organisational forms of the not for profit/volunteer involving organizations in Cyprus are: clubs, associations/societies, foundations/institutions, voluntary organizations and not for profit companies. Despite the legal distinctions, the conventional language used to describe all the above organisational forms is “voluntary organizations” and lately the term “NGOs”.

Culture of volunteerism

At its core, the origins of social welfare and the early philanthropy (“voluntary activity” in the present day) can be traced in religion, in particular with the early establishment of the Church of Cyprus and in the early Greek settlement on the island. Like most countries, the voluntary sector in Cyprus subsequently grew in response to the needs or broader concerns and issues of society, which could not be met by the state. The sector grew with a focus on the area of welfare; the Registry of the Societies and Institutions Law and other sources confirm that the activity of volunteerism dates as early as the 1900s.

Currently, there exist a large number of voluntary organizations/NGOs, which complement the role of the state in various policy areas. A growing number of programs run by these organizations depend on voluntary engagement. Due to its small size, the island of Cyprus retains strong ties between its members and communities.

It is still evident that people continue to volunteer and take pride in offering their services to people in need. In general, the levels of volunteering are high, in comparison to the island’s population number.



Youth Volunteering

There is a scarcity of research on youth volunteering in Cyprus. Findings mainly derive from two studies with official statistics conducted by the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) respectively. The results from both studies indicate that a relatively high percentage of young people between 14-35 years old, do not engage in voluntary activities (55% as per the first report, 'The current situation of young people in Cyprus' assigned to KPMG on behalf of the Cyprus Youth Board, and 92,83% as per the second study, also conducted in 2015 by the CYSTAT).

The survey was held again in 2017 and the results were presented in October 2020. The survey showed that the percentage of the population that participated in voluntary activities amounts to 12.4% indicating a slight increase from 2015.

In terms of Youth Volunteering, such a National Programme does not exist in Cyprus. However, the Office of the Commissioner of Volunteerism and NGOs has launched a new website under the name prosfero.com.cy. The new website is used as a platform in which people can register in order to volunteer in different NGOs.

Political participation

The Republic of Cyprus is a democracy that has de jure sovereignty over the entire island. In practice, however, the government controls only the southern, largely Greek-speaking part of the island, as the northern area is ruled by the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognized only by Turkey. Political rights and civil liberties are generally respected in the Republic of Cyprus. Ongoing concerns include societal discrimination against minority groups and weaknesses in the asylum system.

Cyprus has experienced regular democratic transfers of power between rival parties in recent decades, and multiple opposition parties are able to gain representation in the



legislature. People are generally able to express their political choices without undue interference from outside actors.

In Cyprus, EU citizens enjoy rights to vote in and stand for European Parliament (EP) and local elections. The voting rights of non-resident Cypriot citizens are, however, more restrictive. Non-resident Cypriot citizens only have limited voting rights in the national legislative and EP elections held in Cyprus, but may stand as candidates in both.

Three recognized Christian minorities—the Armenians, the Latins, and the Maronites—each have one non voting representative in the parliament. Members of these minority groups vote in special elections for their representatives, as well as in the general elections. The Turkish Cypriot community's 24 seats remain unfilled.

Women in Cyprus have equal political rights, but they are underrepresented in political parties. No parliamentary party is led by a woman, and parties have failed to meet internal quotas mandating that 30 to 35 percent of their candidates be women. Nevertheless, in June 2021, the first woman was elected as the President in the House of Representatives, Annita Demetriou, aged only 35 years old. The interests of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community, which still faces significant discrimination from some sectors of society, are not always well represented in the political system.

Civil society engagement

Civil society in Cyprus has a key role to play in creating spaces for dialogue and cooperation in the island, given the political situation and the tension between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Different research evidence demonstrates that important steps are being taken by civil society organizations to overcome prejudices and break down barriers, and that by further developing links with



local and international policy makers and institutions, civil society could be a stronger player in the peace process. To succeed the latter, it is essential to involve 'more people' or involving 'key people' at two levels, the individual and the socio-political (Gillespie, Georgiou, & Insay, 2011).

In the Cypriot context, effective peacebuilding requires not only to invest in participation of key people, – which civil society partly provides – but also that they are effectively linked to processes, which has not been the case. Further to this, strong incentives and support are needed. While incentives can be drawn from political momentum, a key challenge is how to sustain momentum when political incentives recede. Peacebuilding requires the involvement of more people, which the civil society is attempting to reach. In the context of the political situation in Cyprus, civil society is divided – with separate support, NGOs, advocacy groups, labour unions, professional associations, and relief and charitable organizations, providing similar functions in their respective communities – opportunities, or the desire for Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to become involved in joint activities have been limited. That said, several initiatives have taken place for peacebuilding, including training, conflict resolution workshops, interactive problem solving workshops, communication workshops, bicommunal projects, meetings, contacts, visits, over the past two decades.

It is essential to have an established legal ecosystem to support CSOs in their actions. However, in the southern part of Cyprus, CSOs are working in an obscure legal environment with complicated registration and operation procedures while, in the northern part of Cyprus, the administration has attempted (unsuccessfully) to take control of CSOs through replacing already unhelpful legislation with draconian associations' legislation (Gillespie, Georgiou, & Insay, 2011).

CSOs are imperative to help focus on participatory democracy, political accountability, social capital (including developing capacity, trust, networks, cooperation, influence and



so on), advocacy and equity, citizenship and rights, and promoting innovative and creative approaches to social inclusion.

Three crucial issues which affect the capacity of CSOs in Cyprus. First, a key challenge is being able to diversify sources of funding (as some of the case studies have done). Second, staff turnover is high and building team spirit is difficult. The sector still cannot offer job security and attractive benefits, leading to a relatively high turnover of civil society professionals as they are attracted by more secure opportunities in the public or private sectors. Third, a key variable for working effectively is the ability to maintain networks. However, NGOs have difficulties in keeping networks functioning, mainly due to a lack of resources such as time and staff.

The CIVICUS: Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Cyprus, conducted in 2011, highlights a number of actions which can be addressed to increase the effectiveness of civil society in the Republic of Cyprus and are still relevant. The most important and relevant until today, include:

- Strengthening the legislation for CSOs in Cyprus, which will have a positive effect on their ability to contribute to change in society.
- Greater dialogue between CSOs to monitor legal reform, and establishing a dialogue with policy makers, which will help to increase the visibility of CSOs and their participation in future related policy issues
- Promoting the role of civil society in rural areas to stimulate civic engagement and influence policy-making
- Efforts to strengthen the values of civil society in areas including volunteering, democratic culture, tolerance and diversity within the education system to lead to a more effective civil society



- Motivate individuals to become active members of CSOs, not only of traditional organizations such as sport associations, cultural groups and professional associations, but also of more progressive and newly developed associations
- Improve the overall impact of civil society in Cyprus by highlighting why a strong civil society is important, by presenting best practices from other countries and explaining what roles CSOs have in the European context in formulating policies and practices (CIVICUS, 2015, 15).

2.2 Social innovation trends and gaps

The following section presents trends in Cyprus in the fields of technological development, agriculture, education, health and social inclusion and integration.

2.2.1 Technological Development

Over the past few years, Cyprus organizations have received major grants to fund Centers of Excellence focused on Research and Innovation. Research Centers like KIOS, featured below, alongside CYENS Center of Excellence who have received large competitive HORIZON2020 funding. There are also additional research centers and institutes that span the public, private, academia and civil society sector with many of them focusing on utilizing technological research and development to achieve their goals. To see more examples of such organizations, centers and institutes please see Annex 1.

KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence



KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence is a research center that operates within the public University of Cyprus since 2008 and officially labeled a Research and Innovation Center of Excellence in 2017. Currently it is the largest research and innovation center in Cyprus specializing in Information and Communication Technologies with a focus on monitoring, control, management and security of critical infrastructures such as electric power systems, water distribution networks, telecommunication networks, and transportation systems. The center conducts numerous research and innovation projects; three advanced software projects especially will be highlighted due to their cross-sectoral and innovative nature.

“Oceanos” platform is a collaborative effort alongside the Water Board of Limassol, a public sector organization. An integrated platform was developed which gathers, stores and accesses data from water networks. The objective is to assist the Water Board of Limassol with better monitoring any leaks and reducing response time to any faults in addition to effective decision-making.

“GNOSIS ” platform is also a collaboration with the public sector and more specifically the Public Works Department of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works. GNOSIS collects, stores, analyzes and presents data on Cyprus’ road network which would assist the public works department in optimizing management of the road network and thus reducing road hazards and potentially improving areas with high accident reporting.

“Mission Control” platform is a collaboration with the Cyprus Police and is designed to support emergency management, strategic planning and decision making. A highlight of the platform is a digital map that can calculate optimal routes for travel and measure distances accurately.

CovTracer – (Exposure Notification-EN)



COVID-19 pandemic has massively impacted society in numerous sectors including health and socio-economic consequences on both the personal level, national and global scale. As part of a European effort to curb the spread of coronavirus, the Cyprus government's official application, CovTracer, is a digital contact tracing app, developed as an urgent response to the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to track and inform the Cypriot community of a proximate infection of the virus. The project is led by CYENS Center of Excellence in collaboration with the KIOS Center of Excellence at the University of Cyprus and partnered with the Ministry of Health and Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy and consulted by The National eHealth Authority of Cyprus. This strategy is innovative in the sense that it utilizes technology the general public already carries, in this case Bluetooth, and it enhances the ability of the government to locate individuals close to a carrier, inform them in a timely manner, conduct necessary disinfectants and ensure prompt follow up regarding testing and treatment (Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, 2020). In an effort to improve handling of future pandemics, KIOS CoE in collaboration with the Cyprus Ministry of Health secured funding through the Resilience and Recovery Fund to develop CIPHIS (Cyprus Innovative Public Health ICT System).

2.2.3 Social Innovation and Agriculture

In the last decades, food systems have been experiencing challenges related to economic and market developments, environmental changes, urbanization and changes related to diet and nutrition. These challenges are often interconnected and addressing them requires changes in institutions, communities, markets and systems. Globalizing economies and climate changes have a huge impact in nutrition security, food security, the environment and human rights in a broader sense. The livelihoods of smallholder farmers and poor households are increasingly affected by changes in food systems.



Research has been focusing on promoting adaptive systems that integrate resilience and other elements that allow constant change. Building on social learning processes and exploring innovation in the food chain has been described as the key for creating transformative and lasting change. The SDGs have placed a significant importance in addressing issues related to food sustainability, food security and poverty. These issues are interconnected and therefore the innovations that are usually employed are not just focusing on addressing one single issue but a series of problems and challenges that affect many people and institutions.

In Cyprus, the agriculture and farming system have seen changes in the way that goods or products are being cultivated but also in food sustainability and nutrition. Over the last 10 years, there has been a rise in the number of farmers or initiatives that focus on organic products while respecting the environment. The last decade saw the increase of efforts that aim to improve the value of nutrition and promote a healthier diet. There is also an increased focus on using ancient farming techniques and practices that promote resilience. While farmers have been using new technologies widely in the production and transportation process, the use of technological innovations still remains relatively low and it does not extend that much in other parts of the food system such as markets, research and climate change (European Commission, 2022).

2.2.4 Education

The debate around social exclusion began in France during the late 1960s. Academics, activists, journalists, politicians, officials, and various decision-makers were reported to form ambiguous though ideological references to the working class and those facing economic hardship as “les exclus” (Klanfer, 1965). The concept soon spread to other neighboring European countries as the economic crisis of the 1980s became increasingly a reality for a significant percentage of the nation’s population (Silver, 1994). Though the EU acknowledged its responsibility to incite the concept into public



and policy discourse across Europe, as well as promoting a spirit of research into the topic, social exclusion remained a minor concern throughout the 80s and 90s. The turning point came in 2000, where during the Lisbon strategy, social exclusion was highlighted as an integral proponent of EU social policy going forward (Levitas et al., 2007; Marlier, Atkinson, Cantillon, & Nolan, 2007).

Definitions of social exclusions have been widely contested through the foundations of each can be summarized as follows: groups at risk of being excluded, what the latter group are being excluded from, the limitations and challenges that arise from exclusion; the processes involved and the levels at which they act, and the actors involved or reinforce the process.

December 2017 marked the authorization by the European Council, European Parliament and the Commission of the “European Pillar of Social Rights.” This agreement underlines the importance of the cultural, educational, and social dimensions of EU policies for creating a common European future. The first principle of the “European Pillar of Social Rights” states the following:

“Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labor market”

(European Commission 2017).

The vision was furthered by highlighting the integral role of youth, education and cultural policies nation-wide that reflect European values, in order to strengthen the identity and character of Europe.

To prevent social exclusion and support the inclusion of vulnerable groups within the context of Cyprus, the Cypriot Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth have implemented School and Social Inclusion Actions (DRASE) in 100 schools. These



initiatives include new creative learning programs, new innovative school equipment and educational materials, training support for educators, access to updated information on the education system and socio-economic support centers for students and their families. It is estimated that at least 15.6% of the total student population have already benefited from the onset of the project in 2015, mostly pupils from vulnerable backgrounds or at risk of poverty (European Commission, 2020). The project also hopes to assist families that are economically struggling and decrease the school dropout rates across the country. Another initiative that was implemented to tackle exclusion in the school context and early school leaving is the “Programme for Zones of Educational Priority” (ZEP) that is aimed at eliminating negative stereotyping of social groups and promoting dialogue around tolerance (European Commission, 2016).

Though progress has been made through various initiatives that focus on preventing social exclusion in the national context, there is still work to be done on creating an environment that reflects the European ideal.

2.2.4 Health

Materia Group

Reports from the European Commission find that the pace in which the population becomes dependent for everyday life activities in Cyprus is faster than in the EU; 36% increase in the EU and 58% for Cyprus (European Commission, 2016). Although the average life expectancy is on par with the European average, expenditures for long-term care far differ in Cyprus from the EU; 1.6% for EU and only 0.3% for Cyprus. Founded in 2000 and one of the first organizations to transition to Social Enterprise status following the social enterprise law passing in 2020, gerontology focused *Materia Group* aims to improve the quality of life for older adults living in Cyprus. They work with older adults and their families by providing holistic support, care, nursing and rehabilitation services and services include arts therapy, technological training and support, caregiver training



and transportation services. Outside of their services for older adults and their caregivers, Materia group is actively involved in cross-sector collaborations with local higher education institutions; they operate as a center for health and social science for students attending universities in Nicosia (St. George's University, European University and University of Nicosia) for fields of nursing, medicine, physio, speech-language-hearing therapy, social work and business. Materia Group is also an active and experienced partner in EU funded projects focused on gerontology matters with a network of 25 partnerships.

Cyprus Genetic Thalassaemia Prevention Program

Thalassaemia or Mediterranean anaemia, an inherited hematological disease that is characterized by reduced ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen to tissues is unusually common in Cyprus; 1 in 10 Cypriots are carriers of β -thalassaemia and for pairs of carriers each pregnancy has a 25% of the disease to be being passed on (Lederer, Patsali, Papasavva, Papasavva & Kleanthous. 2019). Having one of the highest prevalence of thalassaemia in the world and a major public health challenge, a cross sectoral collaboration between Molecular Genetics Thalassaemia Department at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, Thalassaemia Screening Laboratory of the Cyprus Thalassaemia Centre and in collaboration with the relevant governmental departments and the Church of Cyprus, Cyprus was the first country to incorporate a premarital screening and prevention program in the 1970s (Angastiniotis, Hadjiminias, 1981). This required couples to obtain a medical certificate confirming their thalassaemia status before marriage in a church, receive generally provided public education on the disease, offered couples genetic counseling, and antenatal diagnosis. More recently, a web portal, ITHANET was created and coordinated by the Molecular Genetics Thalassaemia Department that specializes in haemoglobinopathies, encouraging information exchange and collaborations between scientists; This portal and approach to prevention is aligned with the trend of emergence and importance of



digital access and resources in social innovation work. The program was successful in reducing babies born with thalassemia from the expected number of 50-70 (children) in 1980s to zero-two in 2000 and have now resulted in almost complete reduction of babies born with thalassemia in Cyprus (Kolnagou & Kontoghiorghes, 2007). More recently, new medical advances have made the disease chronic instead of deadly and a search for a cure gradually approaches. However, population shifts in the region have brought new mutations to Cyprus and different areas of the world; it remains unknown what policy changes this will bring to the current policy.

2.2.5 Social Inclusion and Integration

Statistics from EUROSTAT tell us that in 2019 there were 29,67 immigrants per 1000 inhabitants on the island, up three percentage points from 2018; Cyprus ranks 3rd highest in immigrant-population ratio in the European Union. (Eurostat, 2019). In 2020 over 196,167 people in Cyprus were classified as immigrants (foreign born but residing in Cyprus) an approximate 4.5% increase from 2010, and we also see a 14% increase in refugees from just 2019 to 2020 (UN Population Division, 2020). This correlates with the global migrant and refugee crisis associated with the Arab Spring as well as ecological, population and economic crisis in other parts of the world. Given the statistics, many organizations began developing solutions to meet the needs of these populations and created comprehensive inclusion/integration services to assist the integration efforts and community building for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

New Channels for Integration

One of the first programs offering direct services to third country nationals (TCNs), and a cross-sectoral collaboration between Municipality of Nicosia, Multifunctional Foundation, Municipality of Engomi and two private consultancy firms NCK Advent Consulting and Losadeal, New Channels for Integration is a programme aiming to integrate qualified TCNs in their local communities. Since its inception in 2012



co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the EU and the Republic of Cyprus they have offered services to hundreds of TCNs which include social care and psychosocial support services, seminars with specialized training, general education, empowerment and orientation, opportunities for intercultural exchange with local populations, cultural identity preservation programmes for children of Chinese and Arabic origins, creative expression and cultural workshops and networking events with local authorities and local organizations. A unique feature of the program is the support line “We keep you company 22797870” that operates Monday-Friday and Sunday and offers counseling services. Given the programme's success, the collaboration has been renewed for a 10th cycle of funding.

3. Empirical Research Perspectives

3.1 Research Methodology

Center for Social Innovation and SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education prepared two questionnaires that aim to collect information from (a) stakeholders that work directly on social innovation (practitioners) and (b) stakeholders that aim to promote and indirectly are involved with social innovation (social innovation promoters). The questionnaires were designed to collect information about the challenges experienced by those working directly in the field of social innovation and by those working in a supportive role, their training needs and the types of educational opportunities they would like to engage in.



Twenty stakeholders responded in both direct and indirect surveys (n=20). Twelve stakeholders in total responded to the survey which regards those involved directly in social innovation. Respondents were instructed to respond to a series of questions and provide constructive comments where applicable. The questionnaire included 1 closed question with a five-point Likert scale rating (from 1 – Very dissatisfied or Poor to 5 – Very satisfied or Excellent). Furthermore, 9 open-ended programs were used to gain a better understanding about the challenges experienced, their training and educational needs.

The second survey was completed by eight stakeholders holding support roles in social innovation. As with the first survey, respondents were instructed to respond to a series of closed and open questions with a five-point Likert scale rating (from 1 – Very dissatisfied or Poor to 5 – Very satisfied or Excellent).

Moreover, SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education organised two panel discussions that aimed to explore the concept of social innovation and identify challenges, gaps and opportunities at a national level. The roundtables were attended by representatives from the media, universities, ministries and social innovation promoters and practitioners.

The results collected through the two surveys and the roundtables are analyzed below.

3.2 Panel Findings

The first roundtable took place on the 11th of October 2021. It was attended by 8 professionals working in the field of social innovation either as promoters or practitioners. It included representatives from the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, as well as representatives from universities, the media, social innovation practitioners and organizations that aim to support social innovation.



The aim of the first roundtable was to explore the concept of social innovation and identify challenges, gaps and opportunities at a national level.

First, participants were asked to define what social innovation is to them. From the first moment, participants agreed that social innovation and social entrepreneurship are interlinked, and that social innovation aims to address social challenges or issues related to the environment.

Participants gave examples of social entrepreneurship initiatives taking place in Cyprus and other EU countries. The examples were focused on initiatives that aimed to create positive changes in different fields such as agriculture and farming, environment, nutrition, civic engagement and participation, healthcare and technology.

Moreover, participants were asked to identify challenges and gaps experienced at a national level in regards to social entrepreneurship and social innovation. Some argued that social entrepreneurship is not very well developed in Cyprus because of the lack of support structures. Specifically, the public institutions that were assigned to promote social entrepreneurship dealt with issues related to bureaucracy which caused additional delays in creating support measures. The legal framework on social enterprises was only agreed in December 2020, which means that there were no support structures for those who were interested to be engaged in social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Participants also agreed that the education system does not promote skills related to social entrepreneurship and that a social entrepreneurship or social innovation mindset is not celebrated. Others mentioned that the education system does not promote teamwork and collaboration and therefore the society is not focused on creating structures that could support collective challenges but it's rather focused on personal needs.



The roundtable discussion ended with participants concluding that public institutions should strengthen their efforts to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation and that there should be more educational opportunities for those interested in social innovation.

The second roundtable took place on the 4th of November 2021. It was attended by 7 professionals working in the field of social innovation either as promoters or practitioners. It included representatives from the Ministry of Education, universities, social enterprises working in the field of caregiving and sustainable tourism.

The aim of the second roundtable was to explore the concept of social innovation and identify challenges, and opportunities at a national level.

The first part of the discussion focused on the definition of social innovation. Participants agreed that social innovation is a process that is being used to address social or environmental challenges.

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Insufficient promotion of the benefits which will be addressed by following sustainable practices
- Lack of support structures for social entrepreneurs
- The legal framework for social enterprises has not yet been in effect
- Lack of training opportunities for public authorities and those who work for organizations that aim to support social innovation
- Lack of networking opportunities for individuals working in the field of sustainable agriculture



- Lack of networking opportunities for individuals working in the field of sustainable tourism
- Insufficient support mechanisms for those interested to take part in social entrepreneurship activities
- There is no professional recognition for those who work as caregivers or other workers that provide support to vulnerable groups

After discussing the challenges, participants came up with the following solutions:

- Strengthen training opportunities for public authorities and those who work for organizations that aim to support social innovation
- Create a database with good practices to inspire those who are interested in taking part in social entrepreneurship activities
- Increase opportunities for collaborative learning in sectors that could be benefited from social innovation such as healthcare, environmental sustainability, tourism and agriculture.
- Support the creation of networks/networking opportunities in different fields that could be benefited from social innovation initiatives
- Celebrate those with a social innovation mindset
- Increase training opportunities for those interested to develop their skills on social innovation related themes.
- Create a platform which aims to assist those who are interested to become social entrepreneurs
- Promote initiatives that aim to support vulnerable groups and other initiatives that aim to address social challenges.



→ Further integration of social entrepreneurship skills in the school education.

The findings of this research activity show that there is a strong need to develop collaborations between different stakeholders to promote the notion of social innovation in different sectors and increase training and networking opportunities. Furthermore, there is an increased need for more infrastructure and more funding and financing opportunities.

3.3 Survey Findings

Survey findings for both direct and indirect stakeholders indicate a diverse group of organizations work within the social innovation realm in Cyprus. Most respondent organizations regardless of survey were non profits and most responders were Directors and Managers within the organizations. Most organizations have a global outlook; most responders report the European Union as their intended reach, second within Cyprus and then internationally.

By far most responding direct orgs deal with **educational materials** followed by **technology** and **climate change**. Most indirect SI survey responders conduct training, workshops or support growing organizations. About half of responders serve society at large and the other half target youth and students especially marginalized communities which corresponds with the focus on education.

Of direct survey respondents, 61,5% say they receive support from public and/or private sectors and predominantly receive funding through national and EU funds and grants. One non profit also mentioned receiving support through having access to a free space to conduct their programming. There is however a mixed response on satisfaction on the type of support; 46% share they feel satisfied or extremely satisfied and 38.5% neutral.



Stakeholders share mixed open responses that range from having experienced no issues in receiving support in conducting SI work to non-recognition of their work.

For indirect survey responders, when asked of their satisfaction in terms of training they received to support social innovation, report lower satisfaction; 25% not at all and 37,5% slightly satisfied. One in four responders feel somewhat confident in having competencies required to support social innovation and 1 in 4 feel extremely confident.

Three out of 5 direct responders attended training and workshops that increased their professional development whereas the majority of indirect responses did not attend any SI professional development training or workshops. For direct responses, the most requested type of support is knowledge exchange, followed by capacity building and networking events and finally training and workshops.

When asked about challenges, restrictions and limitations experienced, there were similar patterns for both direct and indirect responders. The most common challenge mentioned was the failure of the system to support SI work either through increased bureaucracy, lack of measures (e.g., difficulty conducting SI work within public schooling) or the lack of prioritization for the field by the government. Second is the difficulty of accessing funds both in quantity available but also the time and effort required. Responders also bring up the impact of the pandemic in continuing their work as well as lack of awareness and hesitation in moving on from traditional business models. Overall, direct SI responders were 20 percentage points more aware of funding schemes than indirect.



When asked about how these challenges were addressed, responders primarily talked about creating more awareness by lobbying and recommending policies as well as interacting with relevant stakeholders. Additionally providing and receiving more training through events and workshops and finally through holistically incorporating efforts and projects that work towards easing SI work in Cyprus. When asked about relevant support to the challenges responders addressed similar responses to the challenges; more funding, more support and awareness.

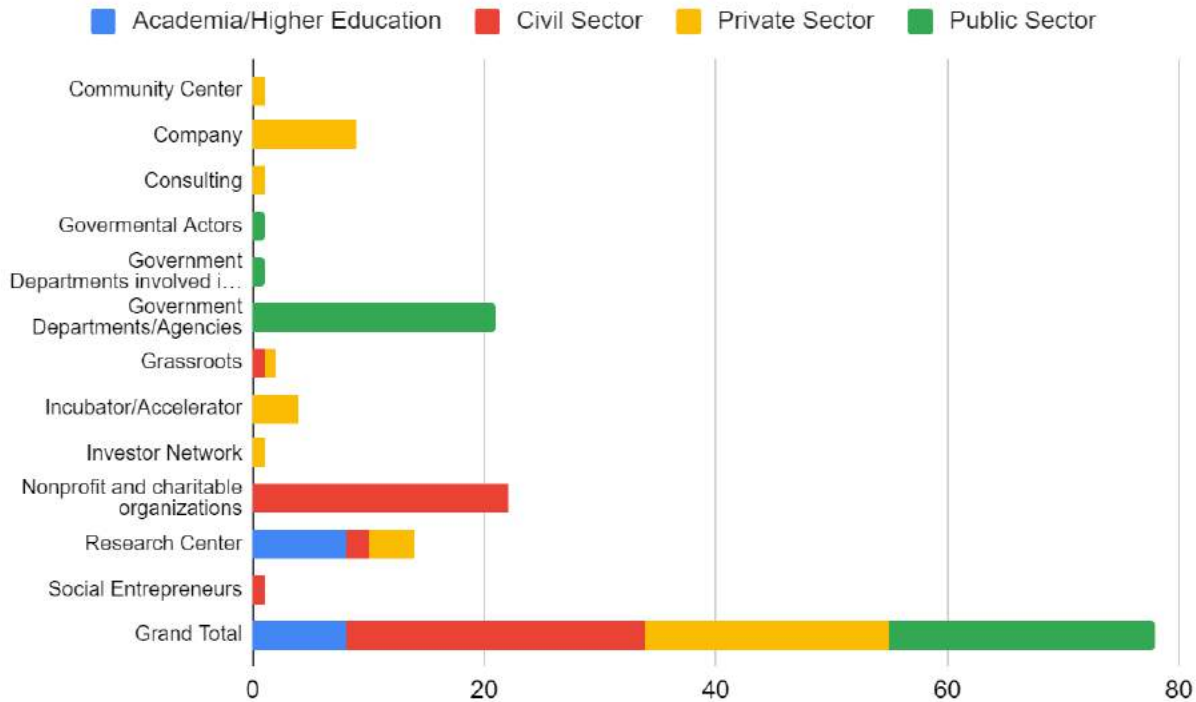
When asked about the type of skills they would like to develop, indirect responders were most interested in growing their technological, system building, strategic thinking and social impact bond knowledge as well as funding and fundraising. For direct responders, they were most interested in attending events and workshops around project management (including dissemination outcomes), scaling projects, creativity workshops, networking events, technological skills, proposal writing and exchange of good practices.

For both direct and indirect responders, social media, email and the internet are primary sources for hearing about events, workshops and training regarding SI. Word of mouth also seems to be a highly impactful way to share info on SI happenings in Cyprus.

4. Mapping Social Innovation in Cyprus

Social Innovation initiatives as mentioned earlier, are foundationally cross-sectoral with a variety of actors/stakeholders involved, each respectively taking on different roles that add to the ecosystem of social innovation and Cyprus is no exception. Informed by the quadruple-helix model of innovation framework (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009.), we will highlight four categories of types of actors and stakeholders in Cyprus consisting of Public Sector, Private Sector Academia and Higher Education and Civil Society. The highlights and trends listed below are not an exhaustive list as the Cyprus field is in

transitional stages; instead we examine trends evident through the mapping research. For a more complete list please see Annex 1.



Prevalence of Research Institutes

Alongside definitions of Social Innovation work, Cyprus is highly active in cross-sectoral collaborations in efforts to create, sustain and achieve social innovation work and impact. Multiple partnerships exist that span sectors and topics. As mentioned earlier, Cyprus is highly active in the creation and expansion of various research centers and institutes. Though many exist within the private sector (e.g., Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics & Promitheas Research Institute, CYENS) there are many that exist and operate through academic and higher education institutions (KIOS, EMME-CARE, Molecular medicine Research etc.). Many if not all are in active collaboration either with native Cyprus universities or universities and higher academic institutions abroad as well as in active partnerships with the public sector, specifically



governmental agencies or departments that can assist them in meeting specific research goals and achieve maximum impact.

Civil Society

Most organizations identified in desk research on social innovation in Cyprus are in the Civil Society Sector closely followed by the public sector. Organizations that make up the civil society representatives span various specialties and focuses. From advocacy focused organizations like ACCEPT LGBT Cyprus, an LGBTQ advocacy non profit, to IDEA Innovation center which funds and supports new start ups to non-profit research centers, there are numerous approaches to socially innovative work and the sector already the largest continues to grow.

5. Discussion

The Cyprus SI ecosystem is in steady development, although much further behind than other European Countries. Promising actions such as the passing of the social entrepreneurship law indicates a step towards the sustainable development of a social entrepreneurship and innovation system. In addition, our desk research shows a wide range of organizations are involved in social entrepreneurship and social innovation work which indicates that work is being done regardless of the presence of official governmental policies and systems. However, much work still needs to be done in order to have a well functioning ecosystem of social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Based on the desk research conducted, the quantitative and qualitative empirical research as well as the mapping of the Social Innovation ecosystem, we have reached the following conclusions regarding the social innovation ecosystem in Cyprus.

Better Infrastructure is Required



Social Innovation stakeholders expressed difficulty in navigating and working with government entities in social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Although the law on social entrepreneurship has passed, few steps have been taken in creating and enacting policies that support it. Stakeholders have also expressed that bureaucracy is a significant barrier to enacting social innovation; therefore, an approach to evaluate and better understand the systems that support social innovation is required in order to ease access and increase the prevalence of more social innovation initiatives.

Specifically, our research shows that there is a need to focus on six key areas:

- Enforcement of the legal and regulatory framework
- Develop incubators/accelerators to support social innovation initiatives and scale up practices.
- Create a simplified set of laws and regulations for social innovation/entrepreneurship
- Increase communication between key stakeholders and public authorities/government to ensure that the regulatory framework responds to the needs of the society/market.
- Develop incubators/accelerators to support social innovation initiatives and help them scale up practices.
- Promotion of public contracts exclusively for social enterprises.

Strengthen Funding and finance opportunities

Our research findings show that there is a strong need to strengthen funding and finance opportunities by working on the following key areas:

- Develop measures to strengthen the financial/funding viability of social enterprises/social innovations



→ Minimise bureaucracy and simplify administrative processes and procedures.

Need to foster a culture of innovation, awareness and training opportunities

Our research shows that more efforts should be made to foster a culture of innovation, awareness and training opportunities. After analyzing the results of the research activities, we concluded that more efforts should be made to strengthen the following key aspects:

→ Create information centers that aim to support social innovations

→ Create a coordinating committee who would be responsible for for the promotion, coordination and monitoring of governmental supports that aim to promote social innovation and social entrepreneurship

→ Create thematic networks on social innovation; Increase networking opportunities between stakeholders.

→ Increase training opportunities for social innovation practitioners and those actively involved in supporting social innovation

→ Increase training opportunities for public employees

→ Train public employees on public procurement

→ Develop a targeted training on fund procurement

→ Create a culture of social innovation and entrepreneurship with long-term plans that aim to bring social change

→ Reinforce collaboration between different sectors



→ Increase opportunities for collaborative learning in sectors that could be benefited from social innovation such as healthcare, environmental sustainability, tourism and agriculture

→ Investigate potential of utilizing the many research institutes.

Overall, the findings of the desk research and the quantitative and qualitative empirical research show that there is a strong need to create collaborations between different sectors to promote a culture of social innovation and work towards the establishment of better infrastructure and financing opportunities.



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8. Annex



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
Excelsior2020/ Cyprus University of Technology	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Excelsior2020 - EXcellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring Of the Environment	Funded by HORIZON 2020, EXCELSIOR is an autonomous and self-sustained center of excellence and aims that within the next 7 years, the ECoE will become a world-class Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) for EO and Geospatial Information becoming the reference Centre in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa (EMMENA)
Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies/ University of Nicosia	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies - (medinstgenderstudies.org)	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies promotes and contributes to social, political and economic projects related to gender equality and women's rights, with a focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region.
EMME-CARE / Cyprus Institute	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Home - EMME-CARE (cyi.ac.cy)	The Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East – Climate and Atmosphere Research (EMME-CARE) project, has been established with a view of creating a regional Centre of Excellence (CoE) for climate and atmosphere research in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) region, which has been identified as a global climate change "hot spot".
Microsoft Innovation Center in Cyprus / European University Cyprus	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Microsoft Innovation Center - now operates in Cyprus - European University Cyprus (euc.ac.cy)	A Microsoft Innovation Center (MIC) is a technical facility where government, academic, and industry participants collaborate on research, technology, and software solutions.
Molecular Medicine Research Center / University of Cyprus	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	biobank.cy - Center of Excellence in Biobanking and Biomedical Research	Established in 2011, The Molecular Medicine Research Center (MMRC) was the first research center of the University of Cyprus (UCY) that aspired and aimed at developing front-line research on human genetic diseases and offer better prospects for diagnosis, prevention and therapy, in the framework of precision medicine.
Center for Entrepreneurship C4E/ University of Cyprus	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Home Centre for Entrepreneurship University of Cyprus (c4e.org.cy)	Our mission is to promote the culture of entrepreneurship in the academic community of the University of Cyprus: students, young researchers, academics, administrative staff and graduates. We strive to contribute to the development of a healthy, innovative business ecosystem in Cyprus that can exploit research results, infrastructure and expertise available in the University, in order to compete with the international business environment.
KOIOS Center of Excellence/ University of Cyprus	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	KIOS Research Center (ucy.ac.cy)	The KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence (KIOS CoE) operates within the University of Cyprus. The Center was established in 2008 and was subsequently selected by the EU to advance into a Research and Innovation Center of Excellence in 2017. The KIOS CoE is the largest research and innovation center in Cyprus on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with an emphasis on monitoring, control, management and security of critical infrastructures such as electric power systems, water distribution networks, telecommunication networks, and transportation systems
The Cyprus Institute	Academia/Higher Education	Research Center	Home - The Cyprus Institute (cyi.ac.cy)	The Cyprus Institute (Cyi) is a world-class, non-profit research and educational institution with a strong scientific and technological orientation. It is a regional Center of Excellence, addressing issues of regional interest but of global significance, with an emphasis on cross-disciplinary research and international collaborations. Cyi is being developed as an international science and technology organization to strengthen the research community of Cyprus and to help transform its economy to a knowledge-based economy.
Cyprus Circular Economy Network	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Cyprus Circular Economy Netw	The Cyprus Circular Economy Network (CCEN) is a network of 5 strategic partners in Cyprus, International and European Collaborators, Supporters and Members. The ultimate goal of the CCEN is to enable and accelerate the transition of Cyprus economy to a circular and green economy, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, offering its services in a multilevel stakeholder approach; businesses, academia and public sector, contributing to the achievement of the economic and social resilience of Cyprus, for a sustainable future.
Stelios Hadjioannou Foundation	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Stelios Philanthropic Foundati	Stelios Hadjioannou Foundation aims to financially support philanthropic efforts in Cyprus and other countries. Highlight of this foundation are the annual Bi-Communal awards.
Cyprus Girls Can	Civil Sector	Grassroots	Home cyprusgirlscan	Cyprus Girls Can is a campaign which aims to encourage girls and women of all ages and abilities, all across the divided island of Cyprus to get more active and involved in sport.
ACCEPT LGBT Cyprus	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Accept – LGBT community of Cyprus	Accept promotes and supports respect for human rights regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, colour, ethnicity, religion, age, disability or any other trait. They fight for acceptance, self-acceptance, equality, equity, and simultaneously harmonizing on an equal basis the Cypriot society with issues concerning the LGBTIQ community.
AEQUITAS Cyprus	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Aequitas - An NGO Working On Human Rights Education (aequitas-humanrights.org)	AEQUITAS is a non-governmental organisation in Cyprus that works towards creating a just society through human rights education, intercultural education and citizenship education.



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
AFIS Cyprus Ltd/ Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Home AFIS (afiscyprus.com.cy)	AFIS Cyprus is a Non-Profit Organization that was founded on the initiative of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), aiming at the collection and management of Portable Electric Strips (PES or batteries).
AKTI Project and Research Centre	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	AKTI Project and Research Centre	AKTI Project and Research Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit organization based in Nicosia, Cyprus. It was established in 2000 by a group of experts in environmental issues and has succeeded today to create an extensive network of collaborators and volunteers for raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainable development.
Anakyklos	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	anakyklos.org/en/	Anakyklos Perivallontiki is a non-for-profit environmental organization aiming to actively contribute towards a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The most important activity of Anakyklos is the Textile Collection and Recycling Project.
Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)	The AHDR contributes to the advancement of historical understanding amongst the public and more specifically amongst children, youth, and educators by providing access to learning opportunities for individuals of every ability and every ethnic, religious, cultural, and social background, based on the respect for diversity and the dialogue of ideas.
C.I.P. Citizens in Power	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Citizens In Power	Citizen in Power designs and implements cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary approaches, as a response to fundamental social, educational and environmental challenges and policy gaps, mainly by employing technology transfer and operationalizing the research findings
CARDET	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	CARDET - Home	CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, research and development organization based in Cyprus, with partners around the world. CARDET's mission is to inspire next generation education, and to promote research, innovation, and development through evidence-based practices, cutting-edge research, and empowered people.
Citizens In Power	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Citizens In Power	Description Citizens In Power (CIP) is an independent non-profit, non-governmental organization that addresses the needs and demands of people through their involvement in social and civic life, by simultaneously providing them innovative material and free trainings related with a variety of fields, such as education (including on-line education), entrepreneurship and business, culture, labour market and lifelong learning.
Cyprus INNO	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	CyprusInno - Connecting Cypriot Entrepreneurs, Startups, and Innovators Island-Wide - CyprusInno	An award-winning non-profit startup social venture and think tank, building an island-wide entrepreneurial ecosystem through a portfolio of digital tools, live events, and physical spaces, using entrepreneurship as a peace-building mechanism.
Cyprus Seeds – Pre-Seed Funding, Mentoring, Networking	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Cyprus Seeds – Pre-Seed Funding, Mentoring, Networking	Cyprus Seeds is a non-profit organisation with the mission to help commercialize innovative academic research in Cypriot universities and research institutions. The aim is to fund research in Cyprus, from any area/field, with market potential and with the goal to reduce uncertainty so that an external party would invest in the technology. In addition to grants, Cyprus Seeds offers mentoring, business skills training and networking with the business community and possible investors outside Cyprus.
Family Planning Association	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Σύνδεσμος Οικογενειακού Προγραμματισμού (familyplanning.org.cy)	Family Planning Association educates, raises awareness, informs and promotes policies and legislation regarding the safeguarding of the sexual rights of all individuals.
FutureWorldsCenter - FWC	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	FutureWorldsCenter - FWC	Future Worlds Center (FWC) is an innovative non-profit initiative of social entrepreneurs using a model of horizontal entrepreneurial management. Their work harnesses the power of emerging new technologies and the science of structured democratic dialogue in order to accelerate positive social change.
Hope for Children CRC Policy Center	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Hope for Children – UNCRPC	"Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center works together with national, regional and an international advocacy institutions to reform child welfare systems on behalf of children who depend on them for protection and care.
IDEA innovation center	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	IDEA Innovation Center Startups Cyprus Incubator (ideacy.net)	Originally an incubator-accelerator for startups and entrepreneurship hub for Cypriot entrepreneurs, IDEA is not the largest non-profit, comprehensive organization in Cyprus which forms a cluster of private and public partnerships to support startups and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises(SMEs).



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
Nicosia Development Agency ("ANEL")	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	Home - ANEL	Nicosia Development Agency was established on 16th December 2011 by the Municipalities of Greater Nicosia aiming at claiming available funds from European or other sources for the benefit of its members. A commitment of the Agency's management is the provision of the necessary resources to deliver quality services that contribute to the exploitation of the economic and social potential of the area under any circumstances. The Agency promotes, by all means, sharing of know-how and expertise with internal and external partner organizations, expands the area of concern of the local community and provides additional growth opportunities. It establishes stable and sincere cooperation relationships with associates and other organizations, based on the fact that the pursuit of quality is an objective of everyone involved.
SEAL Cyprus	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	SEAL CYPRUS	SEAL CYPRUS is a non-profit organisation located in Nicosia. They support competence development of individuals by offering customised education, training and career resource solutions. They also assist capacity building of organisations by offering training in leadership, project management and dissemination strategies.
Sistema Cyprus	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	SISTEMA	Sistema Cyprus is a social-music orchestra and choir programme established in 2018. Sistema Cyprus offers music education to the children and young people of Cyprus, including migrants, refugees and children and young people with less opportunities, and ensures that these groups are respected, recognised, and included in the society.
Visual Voices	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	VISUAL-VOICES	Visual Voices is a global network based in Nicosia whose mission is to strengthen the capacity of young artists affected by violent conflict and providing non-commercial platforms of expression for them to share their voice and advocate for peace through contemporary visual art.
Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics	Civil Sector	Research Center	https://www.cing.ac.cy/	The Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics (CING) is a private, non-profit, bi-communal, medical, research and academic center.
Promitheas Research Institute	Civil Sector	Research Center	http://www.inep.org.cy/	The Prometheus Research Institute is a non-profit research center established to promote interdisciplinary research.
Materia Group	Civil Sector	Social Entrepreneurs	About Us - (materia.com.cy)	Materia group is a social enterprise in Cyprus aiming to provide a holistic range of support, care, nursing and rehabilitation services to older adults and their families.
Home for Cooperation	Private Sector	Community Center	Home for Cooperation (home4cooperation.info)	Officially opened in 2011, the Home for Cooperation is a unique community centre located in the middle of the dividing lines in Cyprus, in the Ledra Palace area, UN Buffer Zone, Nicosia. Today the Home for Cooperation has become a landmark building in Nicosia, acting as a bridge-builder between separated communities, memories and visions through its physical presence and its peacebuilding programs benefiting from the transformative power of arts and culture.
Center for Social Innovation	Private Sector	Company	https://csicy.com	Center for Social Innovation (CSI) is a Research and Development organization, which focuses on fostering social innovation that can bring about a positive change to local, national, regional, and global entities. These entities include but are not limited to governments, local administrative agencies, non-profit agencies, commercial entities, and educational institutions.
CyRIC Business Innovation Center	Private Sector	Company	Home - CYRIC	CyRIC is a fast growing company with a strategic aim to become an important regional Center developing disruptive products for the world markets and providing unique, high quality services to the industry.
EuroCY Innovations	Private Sector	Company	Home EUROCY Innovations Ltd	EUROCY Innovation Ltd aims at contributing to the social e-inclusion and innovation in Cyprus and beyond, with high quality development and consulting services offered both to private and public sector, design and development of state-of-the-art web-based software solutions, study of application fields, analysis of business requirements and efficient adoption of new technology.
Levantus Innovations	Private Sector	Company	https://lelantusinnovations.com/about-us/	LELANTUS is a startup company based in Cyprus, that was founded in 2020 by a team with strong scientific and technological background. LELANTUS goal is to bring to the market cutting-edge research outputs including innovative solutions for estimation, monitoring and control for Intelligent Buildings.
Malloc	Private Sector	Company	Malloc - Privacy and Data Security Solutions (mallocprivacy.com)	Malloc is an AI-driven Privacy and Data Security Startup based in Cyprus.
Phoebe Research and Innovation	Private Sector	Company	Home PHOEBE Innovations	We are an SME dealing with the design, development and realization of cloud-based solutions to help system operators and consumers enhance efficiency, security and quality of their services.
Reset	Private Sector	Company	https://resetcy.com/	The aim of RESET is to promote a fair and peaceful world through education, youth-led initiatives, transformative dialogue, skill development, community-led change and digital innovation for the promotion of creative and social empowerment
Startup Cyprus	Private Sector	Company	Startup Cyprus (startup-cyprus.com)	Startup Cyprus is the Cyprus startup ecosystem entity that culminates the ecosystem's efforts to realize the pledge made by the Cyprus startup community, by people that believe in the creative and disruptive power of startups and innovation, to startup Cyprus.



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education	Private Sector	Company	Synthesis Center for Research & Education (synthesis-center.org)	SYNTHESIS creates and implements research and educational projects of social impact (particularly in the fields of social inclusion, employment, entrepreneurship, migrant integration and sustainable development) and manages "Hub Nicosia," a pioneering social innovation hub which houses and supports organizations, entrepreneurs and enterprises with social or environmental mission.
GrantXpert Consulting	Private Sector	Consulting	Home - GrantXpert Consulting	GrantXpert Consulting's mission is to inform and guide individuals and organisations on how to apply for and manage EU funds
Cypriot Enterprise link	Private Sector	Grassroots	Cypriot Enterprise Link (aldryn.io)	The Cypriot Enterprise Link (CEL) is a youth-led organization aimed to connect and support the Cypriot entrepreneurial talent in order to form a local and a global entrepreneurial network supported by events, meetups, workshops and projects.
ARIS/ Deloitte & Bank of Cyprus	Private Sector	Incubator/Accelerator	https://ariscy.com	ARIS is a startup accelerator, founded by Deloitte and the Bank of Cyprus with the sole purpose of offering entrepreneurs with the structure, mentorship and network needed to launch successful business ventures. The acceleration programme has been designed and is being curated by Deloitte's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre.
Chrysalis leap	Private Sector	Incubator/Accelerator	https://chrysalisleap.com/	Chrysalis Leap assists startups and entrepreneurs bring their cleantech ideas to market.
HUB Nicosia	Private Sector	Incubator/Accelerator	HUB Nicosia 	Hub Nicosia is a youth-oriented educational center, a co-working space and a community of individuals, organisations and enterprises with cultural, environmental or social aims. Our vision is for Hub Nicosia to become the first incubator for social enterprises in the country.
Gravity	Private Sector	Incubator/Accelerator	Gravity	Gravity is a cutting-edge, venture building incubator that fosters and propels innovation. Their approach focuses on building startups from early-stage to mature ventures, by assisting them in all the necessary steps and being with them throughout their journey.
CyBan Cyprus Business Angels Network (CyBAN)	Private Sector	Investor Network	http://www.cyban.com.cy/	Cyprus Business Angels Network CYBAN is the only Angel Investment Network in Cyprus. CYBAN is a full member of EBAN, the European Business Angels Network, which is the pan-European representative for the early stage investors gathering for over 150 member organizations in more than 50 countries today.
Centre for Entrepreneurial Development, Alliance & Research	Private Sector	Research Center	Centre for Entrepreneurial Development, Alliance & Research (cedar.org.cy)	CEDAR is the pioneering Centre for Entrepreneurship in Cyprus and the first interdisciplinary research centre working with stakeholders, universities, and academic centres, including UCLan Cyprus.
CMMI Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute	Private Sector	Research Center	CMMI Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute cmmi.blue	The Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI) was established in April 2019 and it is a Centre of Excellence for marine and maritime research, innovation and technology development.
CYENS Center of Excellence	Private Sector	Research Center	CYENS - Centre of Excellence	CYENS, as a Centre of Excellence, cultivates a culture of innovation and creativity in an inspiring environment filled with academics, researchers, creative and onward-looking people, innovators, entrepreneurs, and practitioners. The Centre operates under the motto "Inspired by Humans Designed for Humans" with the vision to produce world class research that drives innovation towards social and economic benefit while conducting excellent, internationally competitive scientific research in the areas of visual sciences, human factors and design, communication, and artificial intelligence.
Gnous	Private Sector	Research Center	Gnous	They combine Video Game entertainment with Cognitive Assessment. The abilities tested by Gnous, have been scientifically validated (for ages 6-12) for their capability to predict Dyslexia and other learning difficulties, as well as to predict the overall learning abilities of a specific child
Chief Scientist	Public Sector	Governmental Actors	Chief Scientist	The Chief Scientist coordinates and supervises the formulation of the national R&I policy and the overall operation of the National R&I Governance System, including the Departments and Bodies involved in both the political and operational levels. In addition, the Chief Scientist participates as ex-officio member and supports the work of NBRI to formulate proposals for the national R&I Strategy and its implementation and proposals regarding the structure and operation of the national R&I governance system.
DG EPCP	Public Sector	Government Departments involved in ESF	DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES, COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT - Welcome to our Website (dgepcd.gov.cy)	Founded in 196a, the DG EPCD's mission is to promote economic growth through strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of government policy and to safeguard the optimal use of available European and other funds. Amongst many responsibilities, they are the National Authority for the ESF fund and other European programs.
Cyprus Pedagogical Institute ("Paidagogiko Institutouto")	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΙΚΟ ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ (pi.ac.cy)	Since its founding in 1973, CPI aims to provide continuous learning opportunities for all educators, inform of contemporary trends in education as well as research and produce educational policy.
Cyprus Productivity Centre ("Kentro Paragogikotitas")	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	CYPRUS PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE - Welcome to our Website (mlsi.gov.cy)	In its 40th year of operations, the CPC works closely with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance on management development, training and productivity aimed at the utilisation of human and capital resources and improvement of quality of life in the European Union.



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (dmrid.gov.cy)	The Deputy Ministry for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, is the competent authority for the design and implementation of the Government policy for Research and Innovation (R&I).
Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA / ANAD)	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	http://www.hrdauth.org.cy/	The mission of the HRDA is to create the conditions for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus, at all levels and in all sectors, to meet the needs of the economy within the social and economic policy of the state.
Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Environment	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Home - Υπουργείο Γεωργίας, Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης και Περιβάλλοντος (moa.gov.cy)	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Environment
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture (moec.gov.cy)	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry (meci.gov.cy)	Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry
Ministry of Health	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	MINISTRY OF HEALTH - Welcome to our Website (moh.gov.cy)	Ministry of Health
Ministry of Interior	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών - Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών (moi.gov.cy)	Ministry of Interior
ESF Unit: Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Public Order	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance - European Social Treasury Unit (mlsi.gov.cy)	In the framework of the Structural Funds Regulation, for each Single Programming Document (SPD), a Managing Authority (MA) is being assigned by the Member State. In the case of Cyprus, a single Managing Authority has been assigned, which has the responsibility for the application of all the Programmes dealing with the Structural Funds, and the Community Initiatives. With the Council of Ministers Decision No of 57.798 of 30 April 2003, as the Managing Authority, was appointed the Planning Bureau (PB). With the same decision, the MA transferred the competences for the application of the Programmes that deal with the ESF, to the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (MLSI), which was appointed as the Intermediate Body (IB) for ESF.
Ministry of Transport, Communication and Works	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (mcw.gov.cy)	Ministry of Transport, Communication and Works
Municipal Center of Nicosia ("Polidinamo Kentro")	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Δήμος Λευκωσίας - Πολυδύναμο Δημοτικό Κέντρο (nicosia.org.cy)	The Municipality of Nicosia through the Multipurpose Municipal Center of Nicosia and with the support of the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Sports, European funding and Private sponsors provides quality care services, education, employment, infants, the elderly, immigrants, single parents, large families, families with three children and unemployed parents, utilizing for this purpose three well-equipped buildings.
New Channels for Integration/ Municipality of Nicosia & Municipality of Egkomi	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Local Integration – Local Integration	The Municipality of Nicosia with its Multifunctional Foundation and the Municipality of Engomi uphold this legacy together with the principles and values of contemporary democratic pluralistic societies and join forces in the period July 2020 – December 2021 to assist the integration of TCNs locally and in Cypriot society through the programme "New Channels for Integration".
National Board for Research and Innovation	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	NBRI – NBRI	The National Board for Research and Innovation (NBRI) is the advisory to the President of the Republic body for defining R&I strategy. The Council is responsible for promoting and implementing the National Strategic Framework for R&I, for submitting proposals and suggestions on strategy issues and for monitoring the implementation of actions adopted at policy level.
Research and Innovation Foundation	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	ΙΔΕΚ – ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ (research.org.cy)	The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) is the national authority in charge of supporting and promoting research, technological development and innovation in Cyprus.
The Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund (CYPEF)	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	The Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund (CYPEF) (eif.org)	This co-investment initiative aims to support SMEs and startups, providing financial support through an equity (co-investment) and/or quasi-equity contribution.



Organization Name	Sector	Category	Website	Short description
Youth Board of Cyprus ("Organisos Neolaias Kiprou")	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Οργανισμός Νεολαίας Κύπρου (onek.org.cy)	The Youth Board of Cyprus was founded in 1994 as a public legal entity pursuant to the Youth Board Law of 1994 (N.33 (I)/94). The organization's main role is advisory but it also undertakes youth related projects. The aim of YBC policies are progress and welfare of all young people in Cyprus, provide opportunities to young people and their organizations to actively participate and be responsible for the social economic and cultural development of their community and country and young peoples' creative engagement and entertainment dealing with youth related problems directly and effectively.
IDEP	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	https://idep.org.cy/	The Foundation for the Management of European Programs (IDEP) Lifelong Learning was established by Resolution 64,892 of the Council of Ministers, dated 17 January 2007. The main concern of IDEP Lifelong Learning is the management of funds allocated to Cyprus by the European Commission for the participation of Cypriot beneficiaries in European Education and Training Programs
Structural Funds of the European Union in Cyprus	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	www.structuralfunds.org.cy/en/home	The structural funds of the European Union in Cyprus provides comprehensive information regarding the Operational Programmes 'Competitiveness and Sustainable Development' and 'Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion' that are co-financed by the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds in the period 2014–2020.
Enterprise Europe Network Cyprus	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	EEN Cyprus – EEN Cyprus	A network that provides, free of charge, integrated support services to Cypriot enterprises wanting to invest in entrepreneurship, knowledge, research, technology and innovation.
Prosfero	Public Sector	Government Departments/Agencies	Prosfero.com.cy :: Home	The main policy of the Office is to strengthen and modernize the role and the action of the Voluntary and Non-Governmental Organizations of the country, to encourage the citizen to participate in the community and to cultivate volunteering and active citizenship among young people.
Interdisciplinary Centre for Law, Alternative and Innovative Methods	Civil Sector	Nonprofit and charitable organizations	https://www.iclaimcentre.org/	ICLAIM envisions a society where citizens are empowered individually and collectively and enjoy access to social justice, through alternative and innovative approaches in the application of the law to societal issues, underpinned by high quality research and impact.