

Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Low-Density Territories: The i3Social Project

Manuel Salgado^{1,2}, Ana Daniel¹, Ascensão Braga¹, João Copeto¹, Rosa Branca Tracana¹, Cristina de Castro¹, Vitor Roque^{1,3}

¹Research Unit for Inland Development (UDI), Polytechnic of Guarda, Guarda, Portugal

²Research Unit Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policy (GOVCOPP), University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

³Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation (CiTUR-Guarda), Polytechnic of Guarda, Guarda, Portugal

manuelsalgado@ipg.pt

adaniel@ipg.pt

sbraga@ipg.pt

joaocopeto@ipg.pt

rtracana@ipg.pt

cristinacastro@ipg.pt

vitor.roque@ipg.pt

Abstract: The last decade has seen a significant increase in economic and social inequalities, especially in Portugal's inland territories. As a consequence, the increase in social needs is increasingly evident in low-density territories. In this sense, social entrepreneurs have an important role in society, to the extent that, by having more direct contact with their surroundings, they are also more alert to identify needs, which until then have not had the necessary response from public policies. Thus, social entrepreneurship, allied with innovation, can serve as a "tool" to meet social needs, as well as help combat depopulation. Thus, this work shows the social entrepreneurship activities developed within the i3Social project, which aims to clarify the aspects and dynamics of social entrepreneurship to create social businesses. In this sense, this work also seeks to give an overview of what social entrepreneurship involves, i.e., in practical terms, to show that there is a path that should and must be followed for the business idea to become effective and successful in the social intervention market.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Social Sustainability, I3Social.

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship and social innovation are concepts that have received increasing attention in recent decades, as a result of the significant increase in economic and social inequalities, especially in the interior regions of Portugal, which suffer from a sharp population decline. In this context, social entrepreneurs have been assuming an important role in the fight against these inequalities, by identifying more closely the needs not met by public policies, assuming themselves as agents of change. Thus, social entrepreneurship, combined with innovation, can serve as a "tool" to respond to social needs, as well as helping to combat depopulation.

Given the increasing depopulation of the country's interior, as confirmed by the 2021 Census, and the growing social needs in low-density territories, public policy responses are required to support social workers and social entrepreneurs who, due to their essential role in these territories, enable an adequate social intervention to meet the multiple needs diagnosed. Thus, the goal of this work is to present the i3Social project, a social innovation project that aims to promote the empowerment of the Beiras e Serra da Estrela (BSE) territory by strengthening resources, skills, and collaborative culture of local agents as a way to promote social entrepreneurship and thus respond to complex social challenges, throughout the intervention territory Beiras and Serra da Estrela¹. And also to reflect on the importance of social innovation, particularly at the level of social entrepreneurship, which can serve as a "tool" to meet social needs and help combat depopulation. In turn, the i3Social project is part of the public policies that are being developed to increase territorial cohesion, which would like to mitigate regional asymmetries and, thus, positively discriminate the interior regions of Portugal, which are the least developed.

¹ i3Social website - <https://www.i3social.pt/>

The structure of this work includes four parts: a first part concerning the conceptualization of social entrepreneurship, social innovation, social responsibility, and social sustainability; a second part about low-density territories, economic-social inequalities, and social enterprises; the presentation of the i3Social Project and their results is the third part; and the last part is the conclusion and future research lines.

2. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation

Social entrepreneurship and social innovation are concepts that have received increasing attention in recent decades, as a result of the significant increase in economic and social inequalities as a result of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of public policies. Social entrepreneurship targets the community, the increase of the organization's sustainability, the development of social capital, and activities that prioritize community empowerment and social and human growth.

Social innovation have been on the rise in recent years as the world has increasingly changed, and new social needs are emerging (Adnan, Yusoff, & Ghazali, 2018). Social innovation is associated with the emergence of a new idea and a different way of thinking and acting that changes existing paradigms. OECD (2023) indicates that social innovation refers to the design and implementation of new solutions that imply conceptual, process, product, or organizational change, which ultimately aim to improve the welfare and well-being of individuals and communities. To fully tap the potential of social innovation, an enabling policy framework is needed to support public, non-profit, and private actors to co-construct and implement socially innovative solutions and thereby contribute to addressing socio-economic issues, build stronger territorial resilience, and better respond to future shocks. According to Cajaiba-Santana (2014), social innovations are new social practices created from collective, intentional, and goal-oriented actions that aim to bring social changes by reconfiguring how social goals are achieved. Regardless of the source of social innovation, the concepts of social action and social change are fundamental to the process. Social innovations are a type of social change that has an impact on the social and economic development of a region. Westley and Antadze (2010, p. 2), characterize social innovation as a complex process of introducing new products, processes, or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs. Such successful social innovations have durability and broad impact. In practice, measuring this impact may not be easy, but for Bagnoli and Megali (2011) it can be summarized in three categories: (a) economic-financial performance, associated with overall performance such as profits, value-added, and analytical results; (b) social effectiveness, to measure the quantity and quality of the work done and identify its impact on the intended recipients and the public; and (c) institutional legitimacy, verifying compliance with the law and mission statement.

Concerning social responsibility, social entrepreneurs have a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to making a positive difference in society. They are driven by a mission to create social value, and their actions are oriented towards the well-being of individuals and communities rather than purely financial gains (Tracey, Phillips and Haugh, 2005).

According to Santos and Roberts, (2013) and Kamaludin, Xavier and Amin (2021), social sustainability is understood as the process of developing sustainable solutions for social, economic, or environmental problems that are not being addressed by the market. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship seeks to create lasting and sustainable social impact. This involves implementing initiatives and projects that can continue to benefit society over the long term, rather than providing short-term solutions to social issues. Kamaludin, Xavier, & Amin (2021) argue that social entrepreneurship is closely related to sustainability, hence it has been gaining strength in the business world, where technology and innovation dominate the sector. Notably, the rise of social entrepreneurship is due to the long-term benefits it can generate for society and the environment in solving social problems, including unemployment, poverty, and education (Adnan, Yusoff, & Ghazali, 2018).

An analysis of the development of social entrepreneurship in the most advanced European countries shows that the high activity of this sector is due to the legislative consolidation of its role in the economy of the countries, the support from local authorities, the appropriate regulation of the development of social entrepreneurship and also the subvention activities. On the other hand, in the advanced countries of America, its development is due to social stimulation by the government, which creates favorable conditions to support the development of this sector. As an integral part of European Union (EU) policy and to overcome the social isolation of people in situations of fragility, social entrepreneurship has been promoted to achieve social goals within the framework of sustainable growth (Halunko, Ivanyshchuk, & Ppovych, 2018). However, according to these authors, social entrepreneurship differs from region to region, considering its characteristics. In fact, it is inequalities and the attempt to correct them that allow the development of social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs are change-makers who leverage entrepreneurship and business skills to tackle social challenges, foster social inclusion, and improve the quality of life for different groups of people. They play a crucial role in addressing complex social problems that may not be adequately addressed by traditional for-profit businesses or government initiatives alone. By combining business opportunities with a social mission, social entrepreneurs aim to create a positive and lasting impact on society.

3. Low-Density Territories and Economic-Social Inequalities

One of the EU's concerns has long focused on counteracting the decline in its population and the increase in social inequalities, as shown in published studies (EU, 2008; EU, 2013) and more recently (EU, 2023): "Demography tells the story of our lives. It is about how old we are likely to become, how many children we can expect to have, and where and how we are likely to spend our lives. Demographic change also has a powerful impact on our economies, on our welfare and health systems as well as on housing and infrastructure needs in the European regions..."²

During the last decades, Portugal has witnessed a progressive decrease in its population, particularly throughout its interior, causing a deep devitalization that led to the abandonment of land, the almost complete depopulation of small settlements, and deep aging. The dynamics of the Portuguese population over the last almost 70 years have translated on the one hand into a strengthening of the demographic structure of the entire Portuguese Atlantic corridor, the so-called littoralization, and on the other hand into a representative urbanization of the growth of urban areas, particularly those forming part of metropolitan areas. In this context, there has been a clear emptying of low-density territories, particularly in inland regions (Natário et al., 2017). However, in addition to this phenomenon, we should also consider the cross-border migration flows, which are largely composed of young people and adults of working age. If we analyze the statistics of the resident population by age group at the date of the last two Census (2011 and 2021) - Table 1, we can see that the reality is the same both in the Continent and in the Center, as well as in the NUT III Beiras and Serra da Estrela, the region where the i3Social project is focused, which covers 15 municipalities: Almeida, Belmonte, Celorico da Beira, Covilhã, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Fornos de Algodres, Fundão, Gouveia, Guarda, Manteigas, Mêda, Pinhel; Sabugal, Seia, and Trancoso (Figure 1).

Table 1: Resident Population in Portugal Mainland, Central and Beiras and Serra da Estrela (Years 2011 and 2021)

Portugal (Mainland – NUT I) - 2011	Centre (NUT II) – 2011	Beiras and Serra da Estrela (NUT III) - 2011	Portugal (Mainland – NUT I) – 2021	Centre (NUT II) – 2021	Beiras and Serra da Estrela (NUT III) - 2021
10 047 621	2 327 755	236 023	9 855 909	2 227 239	210 602

Source: Portugal National Institute of Statistics (INE).

In addition to depopulation, economic and social changes are taking place, leading to a deregulatory trajectory of these communities, compromising the development of strategies to enhance and promote these territories (Braga et al. 2013).

²UE (2023). In: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/impact-demographic-change-europe_en



Figure 1: i3Social Project Territory.

Table 2 shows some indicators that prove this reality, regarding Continental Portugal (NUT³ I), NUTS II (North, Center, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, Alentejo, and Algarve), and NUTS III of the Central Region.

Table 2: Social/Economic Indicators in Portugal (NUT I, II, and III) – 2021

Region/Economic Indicator	Doctors per 1,000 inhabitants (No.)	Illiteracy rate (%)	Number of Companies	Aging Index
Portugal (Mainland)	5,7	3,0	1 283 412	183,7
North	5,7	3,0	456 034	185,0
Lisbon Metropolitan Area	6,8	2,0	390 857	149,8
Alentejo	3,2	5,4	86 696	214,1
Algarve	4,2	3,1	76 680	173,8
Center:	5,4	3,7	273 145	226,9
Beiras and Serra da Estrela	4,2	5,4	25 345	335,0
West	2,3	3,2	47 944	183,0
Aveiro Region	3,8	2,5	44 968	184,4
Coimbra Region	13,5	3,4	54 871	243,2
Leiria Region	3,0	3,6	37 373	201,8
Viseu Dão Lafões	4,9	4,2	29 221	245,9
Beira Baixa	3,9	6,0	9 027	325,4
Médio Tejo	2,5	3,8	24 396	251,3

Source: Portugal National Institute of Statistics (INE).

The analysis of the table shows that the Centre region has the highest aging index, compared to the other regions, and within the region, the NUT III Beiras and Serra da Estrela have the most worrying value. Regarding the other variables, the inequality between regions is confirmed.

The demographic, social, and economic analysis of the low-density regions, in this case, the NUTS Beiras and Serra da Estrela is fundamental, since it represents the verifying element of many of the problems that arise when it comes to taking advantage of the potentialities and the economic and social revitalization of the regions. The lack of public policies that promote the qualification and competitiveness of the regions will result in the total disarticulation and non-financing of the territories, hence the importance of social enterprises in these territories.

³ Acronym for Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

4. The Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is defined as an organization or entity that provides services according to its social goals aimed at solving a specific social issue while operating in a self-sustaining and entrepreneurial manner (Kamaludin, Xavier, & Amin, 2021). A social enterprise has a strong social mission first and foremost, but it must also have the goal of profit if it is to sustain its operations.

Osberg & Martin (2015), further argue that social enterprises must learn to be financially sustainable by avoiding the practice of receiving subsidies from government institutions. These identified methods of indefinite revenue flow will not allow social enterprises to be sustainable. To achieve sustainability, operating expenses in managing social enterprises will be reduced as the number of beneficiaries increases.

4.1 Social Business Areas

There are several areas of activity of social enterprises. Each area has its own particularities that begin with the target audience for which the social response is intended, through the type/types of response that the company will create. This means that all areas have the same purpose although each one responds to different problems. The "Children and Youth" area covers the following sub-areas: Children and youth in danger; Children and youth with disabilities; Children and youth. The area of "Adult and Elderly Population" includes the following sub-areas: Elderly people; Adults with disabilities; People in a situation of dependency. The area of "Adult Population" considers the sub-areas: People with mental or psychiatric illness; Homeless people; People with HIV/AIDS; People with substance abuse and People who are victims of domestic violence (Copeto et al, 2023).

Although social enterprises originate in the third sector, nowadays they cross traditional and legal boundaries (Cardoso, 2018). There are therefore several ways to create a social enterprise.

4.2 Legal Forms of Social Enterprises

There are several ways to create a social enterprise. In addition to its social mission, it must also have the goal of profit if it wants to survive. In this sense, these companies can have as their main legal forms those contemplated in the Código das Sociedades Comerciais (CSC). There are, however, other ways to create a social enterprise, such as social franchising. This method allows all organizations that fall under the umbrella of the social economy to try to maximize their social impact. It requires the presence of a social franchisor and one or more franchisees. The franchisor develops the business concept, the sustainability foundations and plans, and how to operate the business. The franchisor authorizes the franchisee to use the brand that he or she has created as well as all the methodologies and systems that guide the business. The franchisee is the entrepreneur who negotiates with the franchisor to replicate his business, being entitled to implement it according to a detailed manual provided by the franchisor and being entitled to use its brand and receive support and training. The social franchisor is required to have a specific social business, i.e. a social purpose (Copeto et al, 2023).

Another way to create a social enterprise is through Foundations, Mutual Associations, Charities, Cooperatives, Associations, and Private Social Solidarity Institutions (IPSS).

According to the Portuguese Foundations Centre (CPF) ⁴, the representative institution of the foundation sector in Portugal, a Foundation may be set up through a public deed, between living persons, or by will. In the first case, the founders prepare the respective statutes and in the second case these are prepared by the executors, except if they are already foreseen in the will. The act of institution occurs with the signing of the will, under the legally required terms.

The purpose of the Foundation, and the assets allocated to it, must be indicated in the act of establishment. When the initial endowment of a Foundation is made exclusively in cash, the minimum amount legally required is currently set at 250 000 euros. However, in the case of a Foundation established for a fixed term, the value of the initial endowment of assets required is established on a case-by-case basis, always taking into consideration its suitability to the object and purpose of the Foundation.

⁴ Information obtained from cpf.org.pt

In cases where the initial endowment of a Foundation is made up of a patrimonial patrimony, this must, mandatory, also include a cash portion, which cannot be less than 100 000€.

Mutual Associations are legislated through Decree-Law no. 59/2018 - August 2nd, the Charities and IPSS through Decree-Law no. 172-A/2014 - November 14th, making the fifth amendment to Decree-Law no. 119/83 - February 25th, which approves the Statute of Private Social Solidarity Institutions. Cooperatives are legislated through Law no. 119/2015 - August 31st, and the Associations through Decree-Law no. 391/2007 - December 13th.

4.3 Financing of Social Enterprises

There are several ways to obtain financing for social enterprises. Everything will depend, among other factors, on the objectives of the company, on the capital required for its constitution, and, also, on the stage at which they are. Examples of financing possibilities are: (i) Crowdfunding, Crowdequity, and Donations - This type of financing should be considered when the company is being set up, i.e. when the idea comes up, or when it exists, but the receipts do not yet cover the payments, i.e. at an early stage when the number of customers is insufficient. The legal regime of collaborative financing in Portugal was approved in 2015 by Law 102/2015 - August 24th. Article 2^o defines collaborative financing as "the type of financing of entities, or their activities and projects, through their registration on electronic platforms accessible via the Internet, from which they raise investment tranches from one or more individual investors". The law also clarifies the duties of collaborative financing platforms, who can be the owner of a platform, who can be a beneficiary, and how to join, among other aspects. The main difference between traditional Crowdfunding and Crowdequity (equity crowdfunding) is that, in Crowdequity, the investor receives, in return, a stake in the supported company. Donations are one of the ways of Crowdfunding. In Portugal and as an example of a Crowdfunding platform we can cite PPL Crowdfunding Portugal⁵; (ii) Family, Friends, and Fools (FFF) - This type of funding is justified when an idea for a social enterprise arises and the proposers have no income of any kind. Therefore, family, friends, or "crazy people" who believe in the project will be the main funders; (iii) Business Angels - They are individual investors with considerable monetary power who support entrepreneurs who want to make a difference and those who believe in more ethical, healthy, and fairer consumption for all and a better society. Besides being investors, they also support their investors with technical knowledge in the different phases of the project. See the Portuguese Business Angels Association⁶ or the National Federation of Business Angels⁷; (iv) Public Financing - They should essentially be considered in the initial phases, the start-up phase, and the development of the activity phase, mainly at a local level, through municipal incentives as is the case of CIMBSE, which participates in this project with 30% funding for future entrepreneurs who want to create their social business; (v) Venture Capital - Venture capital are common investment funds that manage the money of investors looking for private equity in start-up companies and SMEs with strong growth potential. As the name implies this will be venture capital and is justified in a growth phase, with the main goal of the company to grow even more. These investors always seek to obtain a return on their investment; (vi) Bank Loans - The company can use this capital at any stage of development, however, it is more justified to use it in more advanced stages such as growth or maturity; (vii) European Funds -

European funds are resources that must be used by companies implementing social entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives.

5. i3Social Project

The i3Social project was created to combat the social problem of depopulation in the territory of NUT III Beiras and Serra da Estrela through social entrepreneurship. The project is based on a multidisciplinary action strategy, working with promoters of social initiatives, local agents, municipalities, stakeholders, and entities of the scientific and technological system.

⁵ <https://ppl.com.pt/pt>

⁶ <http://www.apba.pt/mission/?lang=pt-pt>

⁷ <http://www.fnaba.org>

This project has a unique feature that has not yet been carried out at a national level, the existing business incubators work in a traditional way, that is to say, they incubate a project and help it to be developed, while i3Social does not incubate the projects by itself. A structure that allows this support/incubation to continue even after the project is over, "how?" through trained technicians and the mutual help network they comprise.

5.1 Project description

i3Social is an itinerant incubator of social innovation that aims to recreate in the territory of intervention (BSE) conditions conducive to the generation and development of concrete social responses to the problems emerging there. All this through inter-institutional and inter-territorial cooperation, through the training of governance agents and entities that support local development, and by stimulating innovation and social entrepreneurship in each of the communities in the target territory.

The i3Social project is based on 3 major axes of intervention (Incubation, Networking, and Empowerment/training) and was developed over 4 phases (Figure 2).

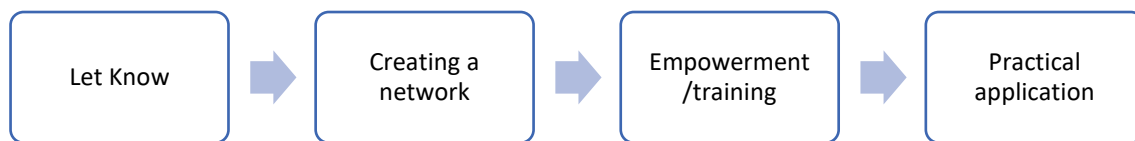


Figure 2: i3Social Project phases.

In the different phases, several activities were carried out in order to make the best out of each phase, such as:

The first phase (Let Know) was to make the municipalities aware of the project and try to get them to appoint people to work on the project. In this phase were done several meetings online and presencial with mayors to evolve the municipalities into the project.

The second phase (Creating a network) was to create a network/team among all the technicians assigned so that they can come to help each other and work as a whole. A facilitation and integration program was created for technicians, consisting of monthly meetings and activities to streamline and stimulate group work.

The third phase (Empowerment/training) was to train technicians so that they could provide support to entrepreneurs from the ideation to the implementation of their social business in the field. An intensive program of 39 certified hours was carried out, by professors and trainers from the partner institutions of the project consortium.

The i3Social project contemplates the measurement of the impact, an aspect that became, a great challenge, and to this end, a matrix was developed in which the various dimensions, measured by different indicators, were analyzed in terms of qualitative and quantitative aspects.

Subsequently, a network began to develop through actions (Introduction to Facilitation of Participatory and Collaborative Processes) with the goal of common thinking. Once the network and the commitment were created, a training course with 10 modules was developed (Table 3):

Table 3: Training course modules.

Module	Contents
Module 1: Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship	Concepts, importance, can I be a social entrepreneur?; Social entrepreneurship, a different way of entrepreneurship.
Module 2: Problem and stakeholders	How to detect problems and identify <i>stakeholders</i> ?; Stakeholder analysis, when and why?
Module 3: The social business model	How to make the transition from problem to solution, using the technique of <i>design thinking</i> ; Development of the Canvas social business model.
Module 4: The team, structure, and organization	Create the work team and its functions; Define the structure and legal form of the organization.

Module	Contents
Module 5: Viability/Sustainability of the project	Test the social business plan and verify its viability in the implementation territory.
Module 6: Impact indicators	Structuring of the impact matrix, dimensions, main indicators, and forms of measurement.
Module 7: Social Marketing and Communication in Social Entrepreneurship	Definition of the communication strategy: purpose, target audience, objectives, and channels to use.
Module 8: Pilot Project	How to develop a prototype of a social project, to support future projects.
Module 9: Financing	Present the various sources of funding available for project development.
Module 10: Welcoming entrepreneurs	Reception of entrepreneurs by the municipalities; Development of social business ideas; Creation of social enterprises (i3social.pt).

These modules aimed to clarify the technicians how to accompany entrepreneurs during the several phases they have to go through, from ideation (when the ideas occur) to implementation (when the project stabilizes on the ground). After this training, the technicians were put in contact with entrepreneurs through boot camps, which allowed them to put the whole process into practice.

In the last phase, phase four (Practical application), where it was verified if the result was as expected. Trained technicians/agents were placed in contact with the entrepreneurs to help and captivate them to develop their social ideas, stimulating their entrepreneurial spirit, clarifying their doubts, and minimizing their fears. Bootcamps, events such as workshops, laboratories, and other activities were held to stimulate the development of social ideas.

5.2 Project Results

The i3Social project was fully implemented and the results exceeded expectations even though it was developed, in part, during the COVID-19 pandemic period with the resulting limitations.

As result, we highlight the mobilization of 15 municipalities and the training of 31 technicians from different municipalities. These technicians participated in 25 events for a total of 70 hours of training, of which 39 were certified by a training center.

A platform⁸ was developed where social business ideas can be developed with the support of trained technicians from the municipalities (Figure 3).

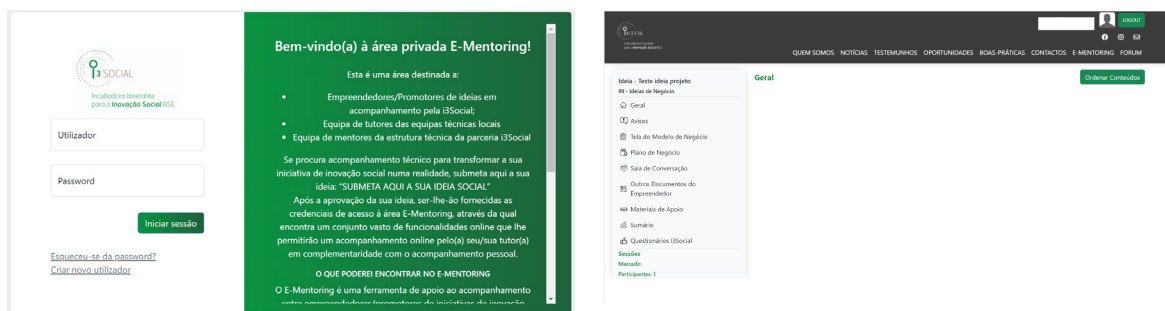


Figure 3: i3Social entrepreneurship platform.

⁸ <https://i3social.pt/loginpage.aspx>

A total of 16 videos were developed for project promotion and, for promotion of project events (Figure 4).

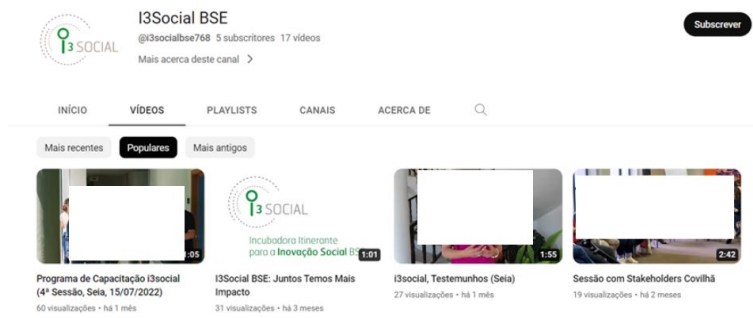


Figure 4: i3Social Youtube channel.

13 newsletters were developed that look at the activities carried out by the i3Social project and also the opinion of different project stakeholders, partners, and other personalities (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Newsletter cover.

Different manuals were developed to support technical entrepreneurs and also a manual with the compilation of the contents presented in the training session modules (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Training manuals.

The i3Social project helped to develop 31 ideas of which 25 were incubated (Figure 6). These 25 projects were incubated under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (UNDP, 2023). Nine projects were incubated under SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being; four projects under SDG 4 - Quality Education; ten projects under SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities; one project under SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production; and one project under SDG 13 - Climate Action (Figure 6). Four incubation spaces have also been identified.

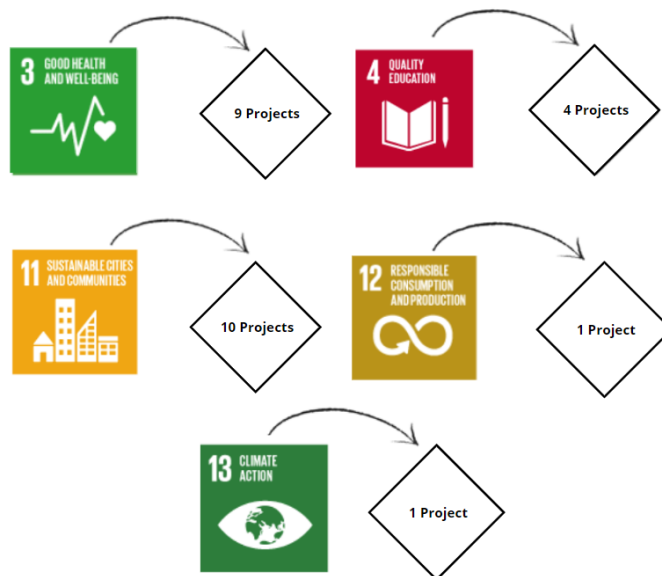


Figure 7: Projects incubated and SDG.

6. Conclusion and Future Research Lines

Social business and social innovation have been on the rise in recent years as the world has increasingly changed, and new social needs are emerging.

The i3Social project was developed based on the growing inequalities of the territories, the decrease in the population, and the increase of social problems. In fact, with the rising cost of living in Portugal, all these projects that are being followed by i3Social have particularities that make them unique and innovative in the social field. We found that at the level of entrepreneurs, each one has its focus, knowing very well where they want to get to, and most projects are related to the third sector. On the other hand, the projects monitored are divided into two types, those that already operated in the territory and those that are being developed. Regarding the former, the biggest difficulties are related to the financial and bureaucratic aspects. In Portugal, social projects

are very dependent on public funding, creating a dependency on these, not seeking other forms of funding or trying to make the business sustainable as already mentioned in other situations.

In conclusion, the results of the i3Social project are positive because it has stimulated the creation of several social businesses.

As a future line of research, it is proposed to deepen the study on social impact and its measurement since it is still a subject on which there is no consensus, and in practice, it is important to be able to measure the social impact of what is happening in the territories.

Funding: This work was supported by the project I3Social (BSE) - Incubadora itinerante para a Inovação Social das Beiras e Serra da Estrela (POISE-03-4639-FSE-000731), funded by COMPETE 2020 and European Social Fund (ESF).

Partners: Associação Aldeia Dos Girassóis, make it Better, Universidade da Beira Interior, Instituto Politécnico da Guarda.

Social Financier: Comunidade Intermunicipal das Beiras e Serra da Estrela (CIMBSE).

References

- Adnan, R. M., Yusoff, W. F., & Ghazali, N. (2018). The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Malaysia: A Preliminary Analysis. *American Scientific Publishers*, 3264-3269.
- Bagnoli, & Megali. (2011). Measuring performance in social enterprises. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector*, 149-165.
- Braga, A., Natário, M., Daniel, A. e Fernandes, G. (2013). "Tendências Demográficas da Região Centro de Portugal: Caso de estudo dos Municípios de Baixa Densidade", in atas das XXIII Jornadas Hispano-Lusas de Gestão Científica, 2013, Málaga (Espanha), 7 - 9 de fevereiro de 2013. ISBN:978-84-695-69283.
- Cajaiba-Santana, G. (2014). Social innovation: Moving the field forward. A conceptual framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 42-51.
- Cardoso, J. F. (2018). Novas Tendências de Empresas Sociais em Portugal. Tese de Mestrado. Universidade de Coimbra.
- Copeto, J., Daniel, A., Braga, AM., Salgado, M., de Castro, C., Tracana, RB., Roque, V. (2023). Reinventar o Empreendedorismo e a Inovação Social. Instituto Politécnico da Guarda.
- Halunko, V., Ivanyshchuk, A., & Ppovych, T. (2018). Global Experience of Social Entrepreneurship Development. *Baltic Journal of Economics Studies*, 62-67.
- Kamaludin, M. F., Xavier, J. A. and Amin, M. (2021). Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 1–24. doi: 10.1080/19420676.2021.1900339.
- Kamaludin, M. F., Xavier, J. A. and Amin, M. (2022). Social entrepreneurial sustainability during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 18(2), 344–363. doi: 10.1108/SEJ-05-2021-0041.
- Natário, M., Fernandes, G., Braga, A. e Daniel, A. (2017) "Municípios Portugueses em Declínio e Fortemente em Declínio", in atas das 24th Jornadas da Associação Portuguesa de Desenvolvimento Regional, 2017, Covilhã, 6 - 7 de julho 2017. ISBN: 978-989-8780-05-8.
- OECD (2023). Social Innovation. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/regional/leed/social-innovation.htm>. Accessed at 28-7-2023.
- Osberg, S. R., & Martin, R. L. (2015). Two Keys to Sustainable Social Enterprise. *Harvard Business Review*, 86-94.
- Santos, F. and Roberts, N. (2013). Is social enterprise sustainable? Available at: <https://knowledge.insead.edu/responsibility/social-enterprise-sustainable>. Accessed at 28-7-2023.
- Tracey, P., Phillips, N. and Haugh, H. (2005). Beyond Philanthropy: Community Enterprise as a Basis for Corporate Citizenship. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 58(4), pp. 327–344. doi: 10.1007/s10551-004-6944-x.
- UE (2008). Shrinking Regions: a Paradigm Shift in Demography and Territorial Development. Brussels, European Parliament.
- UE (2013). A Socio - Economic Background Analysis Demographic Change in Central Europe. European Regional Found Development.
- UE (2023). The Impact of Demographic Change in Europe. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/impact-demographic-change-europe_en. Accessed at 14-3-2023.
- UNDP (2023) The SDGs in Action. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>. Accessed at 30 July 2023.
- Westley, F. and Antadze, N. (2010). Making a difference: Strategies for scaling social innovation for greater impact. *Innovation Journal*, 15(2).