SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)
SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: 18236
STSM title: Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change
STSM start and end date: 13/09/2021 to 03/10/2021
Grantee name: Kadri Kangro

PURPOSE OF THE STSM:
The goal of the STSM was to increase the knowledge about the concept and general functioning of the policy lab DIAK-Hub in Helsinki and how it relates to Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (DIAK) and to other actors. The purpose was to increase the knowledge about living labs and policy labs as an element of the social innovation ecosystem. The focus was on the DIAK-Hub as a part of the social innovation ecosystem and social entrepreneurship ecosystem - what are the most influential elements of the lab, how the collaboration between actors are governed, what are the cooperation mechanisms and relations in that ecosystem. This STSM contributes to COST Actions WG 3 by giving the additional knowledge about a good example of Finnish policy lab DIAK-Hub to model the process of Pan-European Public Sector Innovation (ePSI) Lab. This STSM contributes also to WG 2 by describing the case of how HEI has created supportive space between different sectors and stakeholders and implementing processes according to the 4-helix model.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS
The STSM has been primarily directed to increase the knowledge about the concept and functioning of the policy lab by observing the DIAK Hub activities. I thus discussed with a host Dr Harri Kostilainen the methodological approach and feasible action plan in the circumstances of COVID restrictions in Helsinki. The aim was to find an answer to the questions:

- How does DIAKHub´s quadruple-helix framework work in the SI ecosystem in practice?
- Who are the partners and stakeholders for DIAK Hub, how do they interact?
- What kind of relations and tensions are between actors and how they are managed from a practical perspective?

I started with desk research with publications and documents about the DIAK Hub and Finnish social innovation ecosystem. Observation of everyday work in DIAKHub was hindered due to COVID restrictions but was replaced with participation in online workshops and seminars. On the final seminar of the project "Ilona - Social Entrepreneurship as a Way to Meaningful Work" (DIAK was one of the project partners), the model of social enterprises that integrate people into work was presented. In addition to STSM official actions in DIAK Hub, I participated in the webinar "Leading in complexity – together towards systemic change" hosted by the Finnish policy lab Sitra.

The STSM was meant to discuss and analyse the relationships and potential synergies between actors in the quadruple helix model. The interviews and discussions with the DIAKHub team, researchers and some stakeholders took place. I had the opportunity to introduce and discuss my research on the topic of the social hackathon as a short-term arena for the co-creation of new solutions at the local level to members and partners of DIAK Hub.

During the discussions in that STSM, I got valuable inspirations and new perspectives to my research about the social innovation ecosystem and how funding mechanisms and local policies related to social innovations and collaborative partnerships. This encouraged me to submit an abstract to Science Days in Administration and Municipal Research at Tampere University, in November. My abstract was accepted.

To get an idea and feeling of the success story of Finnish social innovation on co-creative mindset, I visited Helsinki Central Library Oodi. Oodi is a living meeting place in Helsinki, right opposite the Parliament Building. It is a non-commercial, urban public space that, in addition to literature and books, provides free access to a diverse set of equipment and services that people would need in their daily lives and self-fulfilment. The concept of Oodi was co-created with citizens and other stakeholders. Oodi could be taken as a tangible manifestation of the social innovation ecosystem or quadruple helix model in the heart of Helsinki.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

- DIAKHub is a co-creation platform developed on a quadruple helix framework. DIAK Hub's innovation activities aim at leading to more functional human-centred service systems and service processes across governance and administrative silos and boundaries. It belongs under the organization of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences with the purpose to build bridges between university, public, private and third sectors. DIAK's activities addressing complex wicked social challenges need a common infrastructure to connect diverse actors across disciplines, and DIAK Hub was established to meet this demand. The profile as a university of applied sciences gives a unique role in the Finnish social innovation ecosystem to link and combine research and practical needs from society.
- The focus is on collaborative solving of problems relating to well-being, health, and employment. These focus topics determine the scope of partners and collaborators in the field. The partners in the solution/service development process are mainly public and private sector institutions. Civil society is engaged through 'umbrella' organizations. The start of a collaboration between partners with different roles relies on shared values and trust. The emerging of new initiatives in Hub is based on strategic and defined goals, but under these goals, the partnership in a specific project has strong roots in informal communication, friendship, the former social capital of team members. The importance of a sustainable long-term relationship was described in interviews, but these relationships are not forced with an active, official partner management program and framed with contracts. These strong relationships have grown over time through experiences and have their base in shared values and trust. Contracts and agreements tend to have more technical roles rather than being bases of the relationship between different actors in the field.
- End-users are engaged in the design process through project-specific case studies. It leads to the notion that the architecture of the possible social change, facilitated by DIAK Hub, is using existing organizational structures and elements. Grass root initiatives or problems need to be developed in the innovation spiral to a certain extent where it has generated the interest for change on a larger scale before it is ready to be taken in the hub. This type of lab takes selected themes for boosting the development of the solution and system change, it requires a predefined understanding of the problem and its scale.
- The students play an important role; while engaged in DIAKHub activities, they become co-designers and experts, participating in the teaching and RDI activities they are exposed to during their studies.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

During the STSM took place fruitful networking. There are several ideas on how to continue to collaborate with DIAK and DIAK Hub – started with sharing experiences between DIAK and Tallinn University and joining in teaching and research, ending with disseminating the idea of the social hackathon, as a tool for initiating social innovation, in Finland.
My journey in exploring the Finnish social innovation ecosystem continue with presenting my research at Science Days in Administration and Municipal Research at Tampere University in November 2021.
This STSM has inspired me to consider doing an international year in Finland during my doctoral studies.