Perspectives on the Application of Social Innovations in the Social Services Sector

Janina Čižikienė
Academic Centre of Social Sciences,
Arts and Humanities
Kaunas University of Technology
Kaunas, Lithuania
janina.cizikiene7@gmail.com

Abstract- **Rapid societal changes drive the integration of social innovations into the social services sector. Demographic shifts, population aging, increasing social inequality, and ongoing challenges related to service accessibility and sustainability necessitate innovative solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social services. The challenges of globalization further encourage a shift from traditional service delivery models. Social innovations, characterized by novel operational methods, collaborative governance models, and technological advancements, provide opportunities to improve service quality, accessibility, and long-term sustainability. These innovations not only address pressing social issues but also play a crucial role in strengthening community resilience, reducing social exclusion, and fostering inclusive development. Despite the potential of social innovations, their implementation faces numerous obstacles, including financial constraints, bureaucratic inertia, institutional barriers, and the complexities of adopting technological solutions. The aim of this study is to assess the role of social innovations in the social services sector, identify key barriers to their implementation, and propose strategies to overcome these challenges. The study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing interviews and content analysis to provide a comprehensive examination of social innovation practices across various social service sector contexts. The findings reveal that integrating innovative solutions not only enhances the efficiency of social services but also drives broader social transformations—strengthening local communities, reducing social inequality, and increasing the resilience of social service systems in times of crisis. The study highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, continuous professional development for social service practitioners, and the creation of a more flexible institutional environment to support the expansion of innovations.**

Keywords: Innovation, social innovation, social services sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

The social services sector is a crucial component of the social welfare system, aimed at reducing inequality, fostering the integration of vulnerable groups, and enhancing their quality of life [7], [9], [24]. However, traditional models of social service provision increasingly face significant challenges, including limited resources, rising service demand, and evolving societal structures and needs [9], [12]. In this context, social innovations have gained prominence as they enable the modernization of service delivery, optimization of resource utilization, and enhancement of service efficiency and sustainability [1], [5], [10], [14], [32].

Social innovation is a widely studied phenomenon encompassing various strategies, technologies, and governance models aimed at addressing complex social issues and generating long-term social value [1], [25], [26]. Research indicates that the successful implementation of innovations depends not only on technological advancements but also on organizational transformations and effective cross-sectoral collaboration between public, private, and non-governmental sectors [17], [31], [32].

Despite the potential of social innovations, their implementation faces numerous challenges. Financial constraints, bureaucratic inertia, organizational and cultural barriers, technological complexities, and a lack of competencies among social service providers constitute major obstacles to innovation diffusion [12], [32], [33], [34]. Moreover, disparities in infrastructure development and regional differences further hinder the implementation of innovative solutions and their impact assessment [35].

The concept of social innovation has been analyzed from various perspectives in the academic literature. Researchers [1], [5], [6], [11] argue that social innovations represent novel solutions to societal challenges, driving substantial social change and improving problem-solving efficiency. Researchers [10], [19], [21], [23] emphasize that social innovation extends beyond technological advancements, encompassing new organizational models, social enterprises, and community engagement in problem resolution.

Researchers further highlight that the success of social innovations is contingent on the political and institutional environment, which can either facilitate or constrain innovation development [13], [19], [21], [27]. Cross-sectoral collaboration is also considered a key determinant of effective innovation implementation [12], [17], [31]. Additionally, studies indicate that the integration of social innovations into the social services sector is often impeded by workforce shortages and insufficient staff training [13], [19], [33]. Consequently, the implementation of social innovations requires not only new competencies but also organizational transformations, which frequently encounter resistance from both employees and institutional leadership.

The primary aim of this study is to assess the prospects for implementing social innovations in the social services sector by analyzing their impact on sector efficiency, identifying key implementation challenges, and proposing strategies that contribute to sustainable innovation adoption. To achieve this objective, the study sets forth the following research tasks: analyze the academic literature on the impact of social innovations on the efficiency of social services and their significance in contemporary society; identify key barriers to the implementation of social innovations based on existing research and expert insights; provide recommendations for reducing implementation barriers and fostering sustainable social innovation development in the social services sector.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Literature review

The implementation of social innovations in the social services sector is becoming increasingly important in effectively addressing issues related to social inequality, poverty, health challenges, and other societal concerns [27]. Although societies have long recognized the need to support vulnerable individuals and promote overall well-being, contemporary challenges demand innovative, creative, and efficient solutions [15], [12], [13], [24]. Social innovations enable the transformation of traditional social services, improving their quality, increasing accessibility, and promoting a sustainable, user-centered service model. The application of social innovations is based on insights from various social science disciplines. Empirical studies indicate that innovative forms of social service delivery, such as digital solutions, personalized

services, and community participation, can significantly enhance service efficiency and accessibility for different societal groups. According to social innovation theories [25], [26], [28] and the collaboration paradigm the social services sector can undergo a fundamental transformation through innovations that ensure better service adaptation to the specific needs of recipients [4], [25], [27]. Moreover, innovations help reduce structural social inequalities, as modernized service models can be more effective, cost-efficient, and accessible even to the most socially vulnerable groups [1], [6], [7], [12].

Social innovations, defined as new methods, strategies, or ideas aimed at addressing social problems and creating long-term social value, have become a crucial factor in modernizing the social services sector. The application of these innovations enhances service efficiency, accessibility, and adaptability to rapidly changing societal needs [9], [11], [25], [27]. Recent studies indicate that social innovations not only improve service quality but also contribute to social integration and reduce social exclusion [29]. Social innovations play a key role in increasing the effectiveness of social services by providing systematic solutions to contemporary societal challenges. Recent research highlights that technology integration into the social services sector is a fundamental element of innovation. For example, the use of digital platforms not only optimizes service delivery but also enables service personalization based on individual needs. Studies conducted during the pandemic revealed that the expansion of remote services can improve accessibility and reduce administrative costs [3], [12], [22].

The effectiveness of social innovations is also closely linked to cross-sector collaboration. The latest literature suggests that partnerships between the public, private, and non-governmental sectors facilitate more efficient resource coordination and ensure the sustainability of innovations [31], [32]. For instance, Kolk and Lenfant [17] emphasize that such partnership models not only reduce redundancy but also strengthen service management, fostering long-term change.

Another significant aspect is the involvement of communities in innovation processes. Participatory methods, such as community budgeting, strengthen social capital and enhance public trust in institutions [23], [30]. Lim and Ong [23] note that such initiatives increase the effectiveness of social services by ensuring they are better tailored to the specific needs of communities.

The impact of social innovations on efficiency can also be explained through the lens of systems theory. This theory emphasizes that complex social problems require a multi-layered approach, with continuous adaptation and renewal at its core. In this context, social innovations act as a catalyst, connecting different systems and facilitating inter-institutional collaboration [5], [34]. Systems theory highlights that each system has its own internal dynamics, but social innovations create linkages between these

142

dynamics, fostering coordinated actions and synergy [28]. For example, Kwilinski et al. [18] notes that digital platforms serve as intermediaries, connecting public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and communities, thereby ensuring faster and more efficient communication and decision-making.

Systems theory also emphasizes feedback loops, which are essential for ensuring long-term effectiveness. These loops allow organizations and communities to assess the impact of social innovations, adapt strategies, and ensure continuous improvement tobulėjimą [2], [5], [26]. Ahrweiler [2] highlight that systems theory requires constant data analysis, which enables the identification of potential problems and addressing them before they escalate. In this way, social innovations not only respond to existing needs but also create preventative measures to mitigate potential risks. Despite progress, the implementation of social innovations still faces various challenges. A lack of funding is one of the biggest obstacles, especially when projects rely on temporary or limited funding. Scholars emphasize that to ensure the sustainability of innovations, it is necessary to create long-term financial mechanisms and encourage private sector investments in social projects [21].

According to scientific research, the success of social innovations in the social services sector is closely linked to the professional competencies of employees, their ability to apply innovative solutions, and continuous learning [5], [6], [8], [13]. Organizations play a crucial role in investing in employee qualification development, as this directly impacts the effectiveness of innovation implementation [7], [21]. Birdi et al. [8] argue that continuous training programs aimed at strengthening employees' skills are one of the key factors ensuring the sustainability and long-term impact of innovations in the social services sector.

Research reveals that ongoing learning and adapting to technological changes not only increase service delivery efficiency but also foster employee motivation, job satisfaction, and reduce the risk of burnout [12], [13]. It is important to note that the implementation of innovations requires not only enhancing individual employee skills but also cultivating a learning culture throughout the organization. This requires flexible learning methods, incorporating both formal (training programs, seminars, certification courses) and informal (hands-on workshops, mentoring programs, peer learning) forms of learning [14], [15], [19].

Moreover, studies show that the integration of technologies, such as e-learning platforms and technology-based training systems, can increase the accessibility of training and personalize the learning process, thus contributing to the more effective implementation of innovations [15], [19]. In this context, social service organizations should not only promote professional development among employees but also create an environment where innovations are easily applied in practice, and employees feel empowered to experiment and introduce new solutions. Only in this way can the implementation of social innovations bring real benefits not only to organizations but to society as a whole [18], [19], [20], [33], [35].

Community involvement, technology integration, and intersectoral collaboration are key components of social innovations that determine the effectiveness of the social services sector [20], [21], [29], [32]. These factors not only contribute to higher service quality but also promote long-term social changes by reducing social exclusion, strengthening social justice, and optimizing resource use. Empirical research shows that active community participation in the creation and implementation of social services ensures greater efficiency and better alignment with the real needs of users [1], [3], [6], [7], [13]. Eurich and Langer [19] emphasize that community involvement builds stronger social networks and fosters mutual aid mechanisms, which not only increase service accessibility but also reduce social isolation. Additionally, community participation raises awareness and activism within civil society, promoting long-term social capital [15], [17], [20], [21].

Intersectoral collaboration between the public, private, and non-governmental sectors has become a key catalyst for the implementation of social innovations [5], [26], [31]. Unseta et al. [34] notes that this collaboration model allows for the optimization of financial, human, and organizational resources, ensuring sustainable and innovative service delivery. Cooperation among various sector participants fosters the sharing of best practices, creates synergies between different actors, and helps ensure more effective service access [29], [30], [33].

Technology integration in the social services sector is also one of the most important factors that can enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of innovations. Digital tools, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics not only optimize service management but also provide the ability to more efficiently predict the needs of service recipients, allowing for the application of preventative models [7], [35]. Moreover, properly implemented technologies can reduce bureaucratic burdens, increase service personalization, and ensure faster and more accurate responses to social challenges.

Survey instrument.

The research was conducted using a qualitative methodology, which provides the opportunity to thoroughly analyze the impact of social innovations on the effectiveness of social services. Qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, their perspectives, and the contextual factors that contribute to the success or failure of innovations [16]. By using this method, it is possible to analyze in detail how

the implementation of social innovations affects service accessibility, quality, and organizational work principles.

One of the primary advantages of qualitative research is its ability to provide contextually grounded information that is not easily accessible through quantitative methods [16], [36]. The chosen strategy helps to highlight not only general trends but also individual perspectives, experiences, and evaluations that may be significant for the development and effectiveness of social innovations. Qualitative research methodology allows for assessing the impact of innovations not only based on objective indicators but also through the subjective experiences of social service providers [16], [36]. According to Hennik at al. [16], qualitative research provides the opportunity to explore phenomena in their natural context, taking into account their complex and dynamic nature. In the field of social innovations, this is particularly important as their impact often depends on many interconnected factors, such as organizational culture, management models, policy directions, and service user involvement.

The qualitative study also emphasizes intersubjective knowledge, which helps understand how different social actors perceive the impact of innovations and what significant changes they notice [16], [27], [36]. The participants' experiences and their individual evaluations provide additional value when analyzing the success factors and challenges of implementing innovations. This way, it is possible to identify which factors promote the adoption of innovations and which aspects may hinder their effective implementation.

Empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allow for a balance between standardized structure and open-ended questions that encourage deeper responses. To ensure the validity of the research, the collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which enables the identification of key themes and patterns reflected in the participants' responses. Additionally, the triangulation principle will be considered, which helps verify the reliability of the data by comparing information from different sources [16].

To ensure a comprehensive perspective on the implementation of social innovations, nine respondents will participate in the study: three representatives from the public sector (P_1; P_2; P_3), three from the non-governmental sector (N_1; N_2; N_3), and three from the academic community (A_1; A_2; A_3). Participants will be selected through purposive sampling, allowing for the selection of individuals based on their experience in managing or analyzing social innovations. During the study, semi-structured interviews will be conducted, maintaining a balance between structured questions and flexibility, allowing participants to freely express their perspectives. The interview topics will cover the following areas: *What changes in service quality, accessibility, or user satisfaction have been observed? What difficulties did you face when implementing new solutions? Did*

intersectoral collaboration contribute to the success of social innovations? How did decisions change in response to feedback from service users or partners?

Research Ethics and Confidentiality.
The study adhered to ethical standards to protect participants' rights and interests. Before the interviews, they were thoroughly informed about the study's objectives, process, and participation conditions. All collected data remained confidential, and respondents' anonymity was ensured by removing or encoding personal information, including the names of organizations and job position

Research limitations.

Due to the qualitative nature of the methodology, the findings of the study cannot be directly generalized to the wider population. The results may be influenced by subjective experiences and interpretative differences within each respondent group. During the interviews, there is a risk that representatives of different sectors may avoid critical assessments or emphasize positive aspects, improving their personal or organizational image. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable, deeply contextualized information that reveals key aspects of the impact of social innovations and creates useful insights for further research and practical application.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research reveals the perspectives of three sectors—public, non-governmental, and academic—on the implementation of social innovations and their significance. The responses provided by participants highlight specific priorities, core operational principles, and challenges in each sector.

Public sector participants emphasized that innovations are often introduced in response to political changes or social issues. The following key trends emerged: The pandemic acted as a catalyst for digitization, such as the implementation of remote consultation systems that increased service accessibility. One participant stated: *"During the pandemic, we implemented a remote consultation system, which significantly increased service availability"* (P_3). Another participant added, *"Using digital platforms allows us to reach citizens quickly, especially in unfavorable circumstances"* (P_2). Innovations focused on improving the efficiency of bureaucratic procedures, reflecting the public sector's aim to reduce operational costs and improve service delivery quality. One participant noted: *"New technologies implemented in our organization have allowed us to shorten decision-making time and reduce the paperwork burden"* (P_2). Innovations are often centered around programs aimed at reducing social exclusion. Participants emphasized: *"Innovations in our sector are usually focused on targeted assistance to reduce social exclusion"* (P_3). Another participant added, *"New social programs*

help include vulnerable groups and ensure they feel part of society" (P_1).

Non-governmental sector participants emphasized flexibility and collaboration with communities as the foundation of innovations: *Experimentation and problem-solving with communities (N_1)*: Non-governmental organizations often act as innovation laboratories, seeking effective solutions to social problems. One participant stated: *"We often experiment with new programs that help communities solve their problems"* (N_1); another participant added, *"Communities are actively involved in creating solutions because only they know their real needs"* (N_3).

Changing funding models as innovation reflects strategic changes aimed at ensuring the continuity and independence of organizations' operations. Participants noted: *"By changing the funding model, we were able to attract more investors and ensure the continuity of projects"* (N_2); *"We diversified our funding sources to become less dependent on one sponsor"* (N_1). The role of volunteers shows that non-governmental organizations are able to quickly adapt and attract new ideas. One participant said, *"Volunteers bring new ideas and allow us to quickly adapt to changing needs"* (N_3); another added, *"Expanding the volunteer network allows us to operate more efficiently and implement larger-scale projects"* (N_1).

Academic community representatives indicated that their innovations are primarily related to the application of research results, as academic knowledge helps other sectors better meet the needs of target groups. Study participants stated: *"Our research data allows the public and non-governmental sectors to better understand the needs of target groups."* (A_2); *"Based on the analysis, we were able to create solutions that are more effective and better substantiated."* (A_1). The academic community develops and refines new methods that help gain a deeper understanding of social processes: *"The implementation of new methods allows us to more accurately identify trends and better respond to societal changes."* (A_2). Academic institutions help connect different sectors by acting as platforms for knowledge and idea exchange.

Public sector respondents' insights reveal that social innovation is an effective tool for increasing service accessibility and addressing the inclusion issues of disadvantaged groups: *"Electronic systems have reduced waiting times and increased citizens' satisfaction with services."* (P_3). This shows how digital technologies can not only optimize service delivery but also contribute to residents' satisfaction. Study participants highlighted that innovations allow for better addressing social exclusion issues. These insights reveal that public sector innovations, when focused on the needs of vulnerable

groups, can significantly contribute to social equality and the overall improvement of service accessibility.

The emphasis on community involvement by the non-governmental sector demonstrates how this sector ensures that social innovations are tailored to the real needs of communities: *"When creating projects, we always involve local communities."* (N_1). This approach reveals a people-centered method of innovation implementation, which strengthens local residents' participation and trust in organizations. One study participant noted: *"Due to new technologies, we can respond more quickly to the needs of recipients."* (N_3). This highlights the importance of technology, allowing non-governmental organizations to operate more dynamically and efficiently. From a scientific perspective, the non-governmental sector becomes a space for creating social innovations, where the needs of the community drive innovation.

The responses provided by the academic community emphasize its contribution to the development of evidence-based and data-driven solutions: *"Our research results allow us to more accurately identify the needs of target groups."* (A_3). This statement underscores the importance of academic research in creating more targeted and effective interventions in the field of social policy. *"Some public sector decisions were based on our analysis, which allowed resources to be directed more precisely."* (A_1). This statement reveals how recommendations from the academic community can contribute to the creation and implementation of innovative, data-driven solutions.

Representatives of the public sector identified bureaucratic constraints and a lack of long-term funding as the biggest challenges: *"Innovations often get stuck due to strict regulations."* (P_1). This shows how the regulatory environment limits the public sector's ability to respond flexibly to social challenges.

Representatives of the non-governmental sector emphasized that their main challenges are related to financial and technological resources. N_1 stated: *"Sometimes we have many ideas, but we lack the funds to implement them."* This highlights the vulnerability of the non-governmental sector, which arises from its dependency on external funding.

Representatives of the academic community indicated that their influence is limited by the gap between research and practice and long approval procedures. One participant stressed: *"There is a gap between research and practice, which makes it difficult to apply the results."* (A_2). This shows that academic research often does not match the pace of real decision-making.

Intersectoral collaboration plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of innovation implementation and the sustainability of solutions. Representatives of the public sector emphasized that partnerships with other sectors help create data-driven strategies, better

understand community needs, and implement technological solutions. Participants in the study said: *"Regular discussions with non-governmental organizations help better understand community needs."* (P_3). This demonstrates how intersectoral collaboration contributes to creating targeted support and adapting services for specific groups.

Non-governmental sector representatives also emphasized that partnerships with the public, academic, and private sectors are essential for the continuity of projects and innovation financing: *"Public sector support is often crucial for the long-term sustainability of projects."* (N_2). This response highlights that non-governmental organizations are dependent on the public sector, which provides not only financial but also institutional stability. One study participant mentioned that the academic sector helps assess the impact of activities: *"We regularly collaborate with scientific institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs."* (N_1). This demonstrates how research-based assessments allow non-governmental organizations not only to improve their activities but also to prove the effectiveness of innovations.

Academic community representatives identified their role as intermediaries between the public and non-governmental sectors, as well as promoters of the practical application of research results: *"We help the public and non-governmental sectors communicate and exchange ideas."* (A_2). This response reflects the academic sector's role in promoting sector collaboration and ensuring knowledge exchange. *"Collaboration with non-governmental organizations allows us to better apply research in practice."* (A_1). This reveals the academic sector's potential to contribute to solving specific social problems.

The future prospects of the social services sector are based on three main directions: technology development, closer intersectoral collaboration, and new financing models. Public sector representatives unanimously highlighted the importance of technology in optimizing service delivery: *"Digitization has the potential to reduce costs and expand service accessibility even in the most remote regions."* (P_1). This indicates that the public sector sees digital solutions as a way to reduce regional inequality and increase operational efficiency.

Non-governmental sector participants emphasized the importance of community involvement and the development of social enterprises in the future: *"By collaborating with communities, we can ensure that services are tailored to their real needs."* (N_1). This perspective highlights the importance of involving service users in innovation creation. *"A stronger practice of community involvement will allow us to better identify their needs and reduce the risk of service inefficiency."* (N_3). Participants also stressed the significance of social enterprises for increasing financial independence: *"Social*

enterprises can ensure that our programs won't rely solely on short-term grants." (N_1).

Representatives of the academic community highlighted the importance of scientific research and data analysis in shaping innovations in the social services sector: *"In the future, it is important to develop data analytics solutions that allow for real-time monitoring of the impact of innovations and the adaptation of programs."* (A_1). This demonstrates the potential of technological solutions and data analysis to more effectively manage the quality and impact of social services; *"Data-driven decisions allow for more accurate identification of problems and directing resources to the areas that need them most."* (A_3). These responses show that the academic sector not only focuses on innovation creation but also seeks to strengthen the link between theory and practice, ensuring the potential for intersectoral knowledge exchange.

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of social innovations in the social services sector depends on the collaboration between the public, non-governmental, and academic sectors. Each of these sectors operates based on distinct principles that can either facilitate or hinder the development of innovations. The public sector, guided by institutional and political decisions, shapes the direction of innovation; however, bureaucratic constraints, a lack of long-term funding, and complex regulatory mechanisms limit its flexibility. The non-governmental sector, in contrast, is community-oriented and highly adaptable but is often reliant on external funding and access to technological resources. The academic sector provides a scientific foundation for innovations, yet its impact is constrained by lengthy knowledge transfer cycles and challenges related to practical application.

The study highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the implementation of social innovations. Key strengths include technological integration, community engagement, and evidence-based decision-making, all of which enhance innovation effectiveness. However, bureaucratic restrictions, limited resources in the non-governmental sector, and the slow implementation of academic research hinder the smooth introduction of new initiatives. Opportunities lie in technological advancements, the expansion of social enterprises, and the strengthening of cross-sectoral collaboration, which could facilitate the optimal utilization of resources across different sectors. Nevertheless, short-term funding models, a lack of technological competencies, and inadequate monitoring of innovation impact pose significant threats to their sustainability.

Based on this analysis, integrating social innovations can significantly enhance the efficiency and sustainability of the social services sector, provided that financial, bureaucratic, and technological challenges are addressed.

Cross-sectoral collaboration is a critical factor in leveraging the strengths of the public, non-governmental, academic, and private sectors. The development of social enterprises has the potential to serve as a financial foundation for innovative solutions, yet their growth requires a supportive legal and economic environment. Furthermore, technological advancements and research-based decision-making can ensure that social innovations are not only effective but also inclusive and accessible to the most vulnerable societal groups.

To ensure the sustainable development of the social services sector, it is essential to simplify bureaucratic processes, invest in technological capabilities, and strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation. These measures would foster an effective innovation ecosystem aimed at enhancing societal well-being and promoting social equity.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the implementation of social innovations in the social services sector depends significantly on the interaction among the public, non-governmental, and academic sectors. The public sector, responsible for establishing an institutional environment and implementing policy decisions, improved accessibility and efficiency of social services through digital solutions and optimization of administrative processes. The non-governmental sector demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to community needs, whereas the academic sector played an essential role by conducting evidence-based analyses that assess the impacts and feasibility of social innovations. Cross-sector collaboration emerged as a critical factor for the successful implementation of social innovations, enabling more effective adaptation to community needs and evidence-based decision-making. The findings confirm that social innovations considerably enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and impact of social services, especially for marginalized groups, by promoting user-oriented service models.

Although the public sector plays a pivotal role in creating conditions favorable to the implementation of social innovations, its potential is constrained by bureaucratic limitations and short-term funding strategies. The stability of the non-governmental sector is challenged by unpredictable funding and a lack of technological resources, highlighting the necessity for systematic resolution of these issues to ensure sustainable sector development. While the academic sector's analyses are comprehensive, their direct practical application in social innovation initiatives often remains limited; thus, mechanisms for applying research findings in practice must be strengthened. Collaboration between the public sector and academic institutions enables evidence-based decision-making, while partnerships with non-governmental organizations facilitate more effective tailoring of services to community needs. Non-governmental organizations, by collaborating with academia, can substantiate their impact and secure additional funding. Academic institutions serve as crucial intermediaries fostering knowledge exchange and developing innovative strategies.

REFERENCES

[1]   O. A. Acar, M. Tarakci and D. Van Knippenberg, "Creativity and innovation under constraints: A cross-disciplinary integrative review," Journal of management, vol. 45, no. 1, p. 96-121, 2016.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318805832.

[2]   P. Ahrweiler (Ed.), Innovation in complex social systems. London: Routledge, 2010.

[3]   J. Amankwah-Amoah, Z. Khan, G. Wood and G. Knight, "COVID-19 and digitalization: The great acceleration, " Journal of business research, vol. 136, p. 602-611, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.011.

[4]   M. L. Andersen, "Empowering collaboration within a Danish workfare paradigm: a challenge in social-work research," European Journal of social work, vol. 22, no.5, p. 778-790, 2019.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1553149.

[5]   H. Anheier, G. Krlev, and G. Mildenberger, Social innovation: Comparative perspectives. Taylor & Francis, 2019.

[6]   F. Avelino, J. M. Wittmayer, B. Pel, P. Weaver, A. Dumitru, A. Haxeltine and T. O'Riordan, "Transformative social innovation and (dis) empowerment, " Technological Forecasting and Social Change, vol. 145, p. 195-206, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.002.

[7]   L. M Benjamin, A. Voida, C. Bopp, "Policy fields, data systems, and the performance of nonprofit human service organizations. In Human Service Organizations and the Question of Impact. Routledge, 2020.

[8]   K. Birdi, D. Leach, W. Magadley, "The relationship of individual capabilities and environmental support with different facets of designers' innovative behavior, " Journal of Product Innovation Management, vol. 33, no.1, p. 19-35, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12250.

[9]   I. Bode, Social services in post-industrial Europe: an incomplete success story and its tragic moments. In Social Services Disrupted. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017.

[10] C. Borzaga and R. Bodini,"What to make of social innovation? Towards a framework for policy development, " Social Policy and Society, vol. 13, no. 3, p. 411-421, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746414000116.

[11] G. Cajaiba-Santana, "Social innovation: Moving the field forward. A conceptual framework,"Technological forecasting and social change, vol. 82, p. 42-51, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2013.05.008.

[12] J. Čižikienė, Vadovų lyderystė pasirenkant diegti Europos socialinių paslaugų kokybės užtikrinimo sistemą. Vilnius: Mykolo Romerio universitetas, 2020.

[13] J. Čižikienė, The impact of social innovations on human resource management in an organization. National and international imperatives of ensuring sustainable development of socio-economic and ecological systems in the face of structural transformation. Scientific monograph. – Plovdiv: HSSE Publishing Complex, p. 306-326, 2024.

[14]   J. Eurich and A. Langer,"Social innovations as opportunities: How can innovations in social services be stimulated and managed," Diaconia, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 174-190, 2016. https://doi.org/10.13109/diac.2016.7.2.174.

[15]   A. Evers, R. Haverinen, K. Leichsenring and G. Wistow (Eds.), Developing quality in personal social services: Concepts, cases and comments. Routledge, 2019.

[16]   N. Hennink, I. Hutter and A. Bailey, Qualitative research methods. Sage, 2020.

[17]   A. Kolk and F. Lenfant, "Cross-sector collaboration, institutional gaps, and fragility: the role of social innovation partnerships in a conflict-affected region," Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, vol., no. 2, p.p. 287-303, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.14.157.

[18]   A. Kwilinski, O. Vyshnevskyi and H. Dzwigol, "Digitalization of the EU economies and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion," Journal of Risk and Financial Management, vol. 13, no. 7, p. 2-14, 2020. https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm13070142.

[19]   A. Langer, J. Eurich, S. Güntner ,A. Langer, J. Eurich and S. Güntner, "Innovation and Organisation. Innovation in Social Services: A Systematizing Overview based on the EU Research Platform INNOSERV, p. 29-40, 2019.

[20]   V. Lapuente and S. Van de Walle, "The effects of new public management on the quality of public services," Governance, vol. 33, no. 3, p. 461-475, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12502.

[21]   W.J. Lee, I. Juskenaite and R. Mwebaza, "Public–private partnerships for climate technology transfer and innovation: lessons from the climate technology centre and network," Sustainability, vol. 13, no. 6, 2021. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063185.

[22]   E. Liberati, N. Richards, J. Parker, J. Willars, D. Scott, N. Boydell and P. Jones, "Remote care for mental health: qualitative study with service users, carers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic," BMJ open, vol. 11, no.4, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-049210.

[23]   M. Lim and B.Y. Ong, "Communities of innovation," International Journal of Innovation Science, vol.11, no. 3, p.p. 402-418, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-09-2017-0086.

[24]   J. E. Mosley, Social service nonprofits: Navigating conflicting demands. The nonprofit sector: A research handbook. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020.

[25]   G. Mulgan, "The process of social innovation", Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 145-162, 2006.

[26]   G. Mulgan, The theoretical foundations of social innovation. In Social innovation: Blurring boundaries to reconfigure markets. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012.

[27]   R. Murray, J. Caulier-Grice and G. Mulgan, The open book of social innovation (Vol. 24). London: Nesta, 2010.

[28]   P. R. Oeij, W. Van Der Torre, F. Vaas and S. Dhondt, "Understanding social innovation as an innovation process: Applying the innovation journey model," Journal of Business Research, vol. 101, p.p. 243-254, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.04.028.

[29]   T. Osburg and R. Schmidpeter, Social innovation. Solutions for a sustainable future. Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2013.

[30]   S. Perikangas, H. Kostilainen and S. Kainulainen, "Co-production of social innovations and enabling ecosystems for social enterprises," International Journal of Public Sector Management, vol. 37 , no. 3, p.p. 351-369, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-04-2023-0111.

[31]   A.V. Rakšnys, A. Valickas and R. Vanagas, "Challenges of creation and implementation of collaborative innovations in public sector organisations," Public policy and administration, vol. 19, no. 1, p.p. 9-21, 2020. http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.ppaa.19.1.25989.

[32]   R. Rønning and M. Knutagard, Innovation in social welfare and human services. Routledge, 2015.

[33]   R. K. Sawyer and D. Henriksen, Explaining creativity: The science of human innovation. Oxford university press, 2024.

[34]   A. Unceta, J. Castro-Spila and J. Garcia Fronti, "The three governances in social innovation," Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, vol. 30, no.4, p.p. 406-420, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2017.1279537.

[35]   G. Zanello, X. Fu, P. Mohnen and M. Ventresca, "The creation and diffusion of innovation in developing countries: A systematic literature review," Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 30, no. 5, p.p. 884-912, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12126.

[36]   V. Žydžiūnaitė and S Sabaliauskas, Kokybiniai tyrimai. Principai ir metodai. Vilnius: Vaga, 2017.

.