



social innovation  
eXchange

Amsterdam  
24 - 25 May 2011  
SIX Spring School

# Co-creating Democracy: Citizen Passion in the 21st Century

From the recent eruption of civil unrest in North Africa, to crowd sourcing ideas for commercial products in the US; from investing in micro enterprises in Mumbai and Mexico City, to city ideas banks in South Korea, the nature of what it means to be a citizen is changing. All over the world, 'regular people' are claiming a voice as activists, journalists, educators, producers, social entrepreneurs, bankers, and policymakers. The potential of citizen driven innovation in this digital age broadens both what citizens can become involved in and how they can become involved. This changes the way citizens interact in every aspect of their lives, and it changes the way that social issues and wicked problems are addressed. It undermines top-down thinking, but it is often not entirely bottom-up. We will explore how co-creation can play a critical role in the way in which we live our lives and shape our society.

# What is the most effective strategy for governments, businesses and NGO's to anticipate citizen potential?

In a time of public expenditure cuts and harsh competition, there is a growing interest in co-creating society and citizen engagement. But can citizen driven innovation really address social or customer needs in a new way? Can it really be used to co create a democracy? Can it be used to tackle some of the biggest societal challenges? And what is the most effective strategy for governments, businesses and NGO's to anticipate citizen potential? What are the opportunities and threats in unleashing this power?

For many years, governments at every level have been experimenting with new ways to engage the public in shaping what they do, not just through elections every few years. But finding effective ways to engage citizens is no longer a concern for governments alone - it is a challenge shared across the boundaries of the public, private and non-profit sectors. Organisations worldwide are using new technologies to harness the creativity of citizens to conduct activities as varied as responding to neighbourhood violence in downtown Chicago; redesigning products – whether its choosing a new flavour of Starbucks coffee, or customizing clothes; and taking action on pressing global, regional and national issues, like conflict resolution and climate change, by logging in online in their living rooms.

On Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 May 2011, attendees will gather in Felix Meritis ([www.felix.meritis.nl](http://www.felix.meritis.nl)) in the historic centre of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to discuss the advantages and pitfalls of co-creation between citizens and organisations in this new technology-mediated world. A global community including professionals from public agencies, NGOs, global firms and universities will join with technology experts, policymakers, and service users will gather to explore some of these issues.

# Outline of the program

The spring school will start with a reflection on the recent events in Northern Africa illustrating the power of citizen activism. The revolutions emphasize the urgency for a revitalization of the discussion on how democratic societies should be organized, not only in the Arabic countries but across the globe. Within the context of four thematic pillars of society (government, communities and neighbourhood, business sector and media) participants will explore how to stimulate, support, design and scale effective ways of co-creating democracy in the 21st century. A variety of inspiring cases from different countries will provide input for the discussion. The Amsterdam Dialogue Cafe will provide an extra dimension to the program by facilitating a real time connection with other cities all over the world. The event will result with the collective writing of a 'co-creation manual'. Answers to the following questions will form the building blocks of the manual:

- How do the roles of citizens and organisations change in the context of contemporary technological, economic and social developments?
- What are the do's and don'ts with regard to citizen co-creation in the digital age for governments, NGO's and businesses?
- How can effective models be scaled up, shared or supported?
- How can new approaches help governments and businesses become more effective in engaging with communities and inspire meaningful participation in civil society?

SIX spring school events are designed to ensure that everyone who attends learns – this event will be smaller, more intensive, and we hope more useful, than some of the very big events in related fields and will include a mix of inspirational speeches, case studies with honest analyses of what worked and what didn't, and lots of time for working sessions, informal discussion and networking.

## Program

DAY 1: 24 MAY

### Introduction and welcome by Kennisland and SIX Chair

Key note: Learning from the recent events in North-Africa as an illustration of citizen passion in the 21st century

 **Building block 1:  
Co-creating the business sector**

Learning from cases in which companies are actively using the potential of citizens to improve their business.

 **Building block 2:  
Co-creating our neighbourhoods**

Learning from cases in which citizens are actively reshaping their neighbourhoods.



**Dinner hosted by the City of Amsterdam**

DAY 2: 25 MAY

 **Building block 3:  
Co-creating our media**

Learning from cases in which citizens are actively reshaping our media.

 **Building block 4:  
Co-creating our governmental  
institutions**

Learning from cases in which citizens are actively reshaping the public sector.

### Piling up the building blocks

Writing a 'co-creation manual' for unleashing the passion of citizens in order to reshape our society.

# About the Organisers

## **Social Innovation eXchange (SIX)**

[www.socialinnovationexchange.org](http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org)

SIX is a global community of over 3000 individuals and organisations – including NGOs, global firms, public agencies and academics - committed to promoting social innovation. Our aim is to improve the methods with which our societies find better solutions to challenges such as climate change, inequality and healthcare.

A series of varied events is one of the key ways SIX achieves its objectives – some focus on specific regions and themes, others bring together people from different corners of the world to converse via TelePresence. SIX's landmark events are its 'summer schools'. These events are more intense and useful than others in related fields. We take one current global challenge, people of varying ages and experiences, allow plenty of time for open space learning and collaboration, and keep traditional 'speeches' and 'lectures' to a minimum.

SIX's most recent project has been to develop a strategy for the European Union to support social innovation, including in ageing, through reforms to current funding for research, regional development, business and employment.

SIX is currently hosted by the Young Foundation, a centre for social Innovation in East London.

## **The Young Foundation**

[www.youngfoundation.org](http://www.youngfoundation.org)

Drawing inspiration from Michael Young's ideas, the Young Foundation has a long history of contributing innovative ideas to the debate about ageing as well as developing practical projects to address the needs of an ageing population (for

example Grandparents Plus and University of the Third Age).

The Foundation also supports the development of a number of ventures, and advises the NHS's Regional Innovation Funds, one of whose roles is to invest in radical innovations on the boundaries of health and care, and employs 'social entrepreneurs in residence' located within the health service.

Through researching and testing the potential of digital technology as a tool for social change, digital social innovation is a key part of the Young Foundation's work. From Neuroresponse, a new model of telecare for people with Multiple Sclerosis, to the School of Everything, a project that connects people who want to learn with potential teachers; the Young Foundation's work shows how digital technology is leading to increasingly creative responses to social issues.

## **Kennisland (Knowledgeland)**

[www.knowledgeland.org](http://www.knowledgeland.org)

Kennisland (Knowledgeland) contributes to a smarter Dutch society. Believing that the best guarantee for future prosperity and welfare, now and in the future, is to strengthen our knowledge society. We help to realise this goal by developing and delivering key interventions. Kennisland is an independent think tank. Continuously searching for ways to spark the social innovations needed to improve the knowledge society. Starting by defining challenges for the knowledge society and creatively finding possible answers to them. Kennisland also develops and delivers projects, programmes and platforms to help others solve the issues at hand.

Altogether, Kennisland develops and realises a broad range of interventions to make societies smarter. We often initiate them ourselves, but we are also frequently commissioned by the government and public organisations which share our ambition

and which are in need of our expertise. This yields investigations, recommendations, projects, programmes, networks, meetings, trainings and reorganisations. Kennisland is active in six fields: education, government, cultural heritage, copyright, creative economy and social media. We strive to innovate these fields, often in collaboration with partners and networks.

## **Amsterdam Innovation Motor (AIM)**

[www.aimsterdam.nl](http://www.aimsterdam.nl)

The Amsterdam Innovation Motor (AIM) promotes innovation, cooperation and new activity in a number of sectors which are very promising for the Amsterdam metropolitan area; creative industries, ICT and new media, life sciences, sustainability and trade & logistics.

AIM acts as a catalyst, generating initiatives in these sectors in Amsterdam's knowledge-based economy, with partners from those sectors. These partners include institutions, businesses, government and social organisations.

In concrete terms, this means promoting knowledge-intensive enterprises, especially start-ups; profiling the Amsterdam area as a knowledge-intensive area and furthering cooperation between knowledge institutions, businesses and government. AIM is a cooperation of universities, enterprises and government.

## **Dialogue Cafe**

[www.dialoguecafe.org](http://www.dialoguecafe.org)

Dialogue Cafe uses state of the art video conferencing technology to enable face-to-face conversations between diverse groups of people from around the world so that they can share experiences, learn from each other and work together to make the world

a better place. Dialogue Cafe is a platform for innovation and creativity – enabling organisations and individuals to forge new links, consolidate existing ones and create new collaborations and projects.

Dialogue Cafe is for individuals and organizations with a social, educational or cultural mission – such as foundations, civil society organizations, community groups, universities, schools, social enterprises, co-operatives, public sector bodies and agencies.

## **The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK)**

[english.minbzk.nl](http://english.minbzk.nl)

The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) is one of the eleven ministries of Dutch central government. The mission of the ministry is to uphold the Constitution, guarantee the democratic rule of law, ensure an effective and efficient public administration, promote the quality of the civil service and coordinate management and personnel policy for all civil servants, implement asylum and immigration policies, and coordinate cooperation with Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. The ministers and civil servants formulate policy, prepare legislation and regulations, and are also responsible for coordination, supervision and policy implementation.

