

HOW THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES INNOVATION PLATFORM MATCHES SOCIAL CHALLENGES WITH INNOVATIVE SOLUTION PROVIDERS

June 26, 2019 | Aneta Pawlik

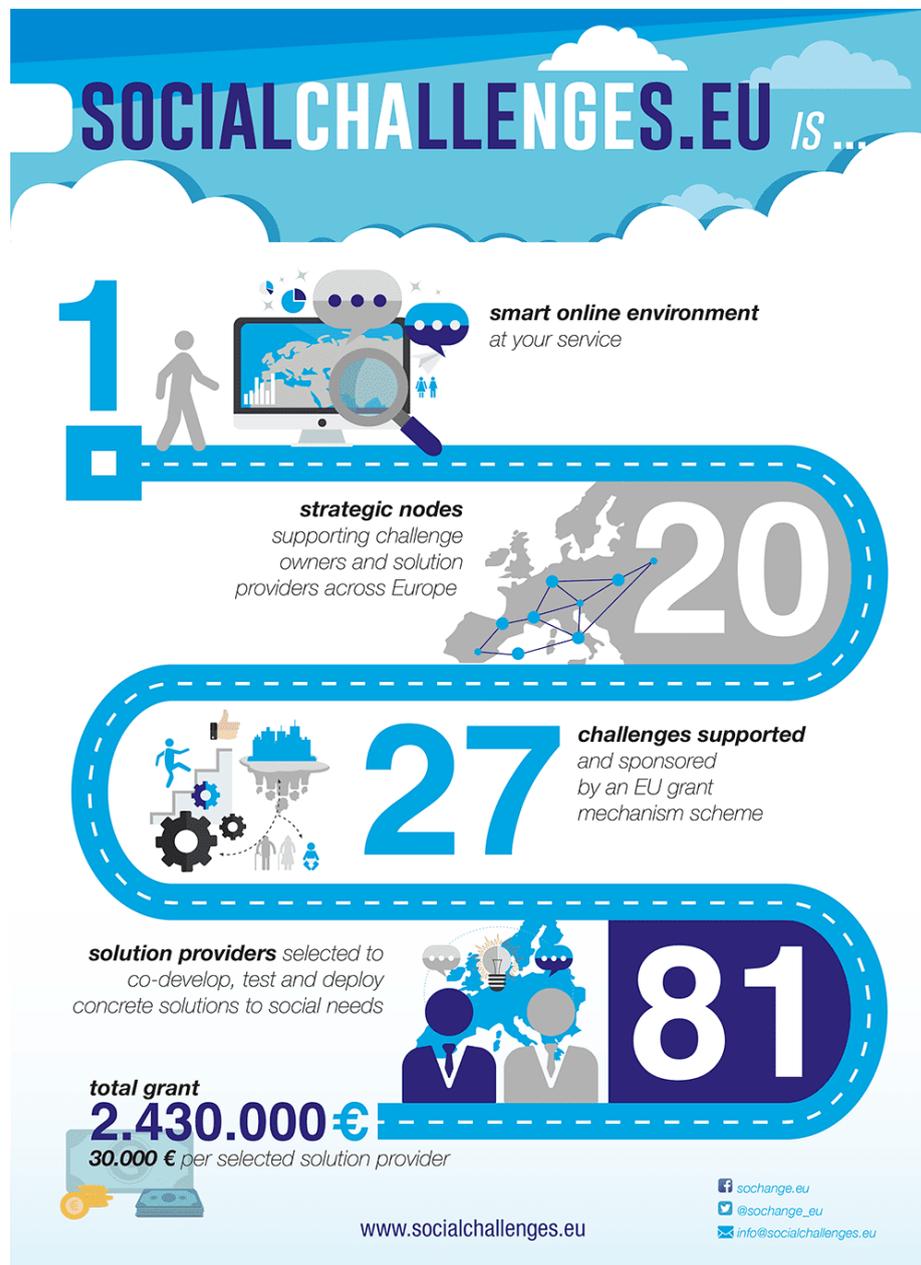
How do small and medium-sized enterprises and social innovation fit together?

Often referred to as the backbone of the European economy, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a focal point in shaping enterprise policy in the European Union. In 2015, SMEs represented 99 % of all enterprises in the EU! While social innovation has become an established movement around the world, it has not yet managed to sufficiently penetrate the ranks of SMEs, the sector most relevant for furthering the development goals of the social innovation agenda.

The Social Challenges Innovation Platform encourages sustainable, marketable innovations with clear social benefits by matching “Challenge Owners” – organisations with problems to solve – with creative entrepreneurs and social innovators. In a nutshell, SCHIP has created a matchmaking platform where social needs meet sustainable and innovative solutions, which you can visit under socialchallenges.eu.

“As the City of Vienna and the environmental department is working towards a sustainable future for its citizens as well as companies, SMEs and start-ups, it is important for us to also have the right tools for their participation. The SHIP project was a perfect „playground“ for trying out an innovative online participation tool as a pilot project for further decisions and developments”, commented Bertram Häupler from OekoBusiness Wien, one of the Challenge Owners.

The Platform is powered by Meta Group, EBN and Impact Hub, under the management of the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) and with the support of the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme.



Where a challenge is transformed into a new business opportunity

When SCHIP launched in 2016, the objectives of the project were not only to create awareness and facilitate the interaction among a wide range of stakeholders relevant for the platform but also to identify high-impact social challenges Europe is facing today and kick-start a collaboration between SMEs and social innovators to address these challenges.

Part of the SCHIP efforts is to provide financial support through grants in the amount of €30k each and six months' worth of training and mentoring to help translate social innovators'

pitches into practical, marketable solutions. Today we are checking in with five social innovators who submitted their pitches to the SCHIP platform and who were selected to make their ideas a reality.

Unverschwendet

The challenge: Make conscious consumption mainstream in Vienna.

Farmers are forced to produce up to 200% of the amount of fruit needed to ensure that enough of them meet the excessive market norms. The highly specialized requirements of supermarkets for shape, colour and size of fruits lead to a surplus of up to 500 kg per day for one small farm. In most cases, these surplus fruits are thrown away.

Unverschwendet turns excess fruits and vegetables into delicious products such as jam, syrup, chutneys, pickles, sweets, ketchup, sauces and more. This culinary solution is a tool in the fight against food waste! In the long-term, Unverschwendet wanted to offer various large scale solutions for preventing waste of surplus food. The social enterprise is run by siblings, Cornelia and Andreas Diesenreiter, who are supported by a great team and partners.

Some SCHIP Milestones:

- With SCHIP's help, through their research and networking, Unverschwendet built partnerships with three well-established food producers who will help them to scale their production over the next three years.
- Unverschwendet won both start-up programs from the two biggest food retailers in Austria for nationwide listing and

- they are currently in the final stage of negotiations.
- Together with WWF Austria Unverschwendet launched an online campaign on food waste in order to inform people on the Food Overshoot Day.

erdbeerwoche

The challenge: Make conscious consumption mainstream in Vienna.

erdbeerwoche is an innovative e-commerce platform that is both an awareness-raising tool as well as an online shop for sustainable feminine hygiene products.

erdbeerwoche decided to create an extension to their offering – an e-learning platform for teenagers that educate boys and girls between 13 and 16 years about the topic of menstruation and sustainable feminine hygiene. With the prototype of an e-learning platform for teenagers “Ready for Red”, erdbeerwoche are the first to provide a holistic learning experience about menstruation and sustainable feminine hygiene by providing unique content in a way that teenagers like to learn: interactive, funny and with a lot of videos and games.

Some SCHIP Milestones:

- erdbeerwoche approached more than 200 schools in Vienna and established successful collaborations such as the collaboration with the City of Vienna.

- erdbeerwoche developed a webinar series to train teachers on how to use “Ready for Red” in classes. The “Ready for Red” team trained 140 teachers in nine one- hour webinar sessions.
- One of the most valuable outcomes of SCHIP was that erdbeerwoche had the chance to test the prototype of “Ready for Red” and develop a business model that provides longterm sustainability and represents a completely new income stream for erdbeerwoche.
- “Ready for Red” won the Next award and has been nominated for the “Get active social business award” (October 2018).

Wohnbuddy.com (by WGE!- Gemeinsam Wohnen)

The challenge: Fight marginalization in Vienna.

WGE is a social enterprise that matches the elderly and retirement homes via the [wohnbuddy.com](https://www.wohnbuddy.com) platform with suitable buddies for co-living. These co-living buddies are mostly young people, who provide time for common activities as well as everyday support for a low-cost room.

WGE! developed a prototype of a new online platform called [wohnbuddy.com](https://www.wohnbuddy.com) to improve the matching process and vacancy management, enabling the company to increase its impact and to scale the business to other European cities.

Some SCHIP Milestones:

- WGE! Met their initial objective, the development of a prototype of an online platform, at the end of March 2019.
- WGE! Was invited to participate in a panel discussion about “The Future of Living” organized by the Viennese People’s Party.
- WGE! met a lot of stakeholders and could acquire two new partnerships with well-established organizations from the area of Social Services in Austria through SCHIP.

Kuorum

The challenge: fight marginalization in Vienna.

The City of Vienna is committed to reducing inequality, but the political misrepresentation of immigrants can lead to marginalization and social conflicts. The Integration and Diversity Unit of the city council of Vienna can benefit from implementing novel means of civic participation. But it is equally important to be able to measure the impact of those innovative solutions in order to monitor their achievements.

Kuorum is a technology consultancy firm that provides solutions to support collaborative problem solving and citizen engagement. Kuorum’s technology – aimed at local governments, corporations and organizations – is free and the only charges applied are for customizations and ad hoc software development. Their submitted pitch was for an idea centred around fostering the diverse civic engagement through training and online debates among local politicians and young immigrants.

Some SCHIP Milestones:

- The Engagement Platform was translated to German and launched in July.
- There was a severe delay in the selection of the training partner, which caused the training to start in January instead of September. After the initial training session, the youngsters started to participate in the platform. In March the youngsters met again with the training partner in order to work further on their proposals. Finally, some of the youngsters will present their proposals in front of district elected officials.
- Kuorum collected all the information from the training partner to produce a final report.
- Lesson learned: Without involving someone in the city council who is responsible for citizen engagement, dissemination is

hard, as Kuorum didn't have permission to use the official channels and logos.

SHADES TOURS

The challenge: fight marginalization in Vienna.

SHADES TOURS organizes alternative tours and activities in Vienna on socially polarizing topics. The difference in comparison to regular tours is that the tours are guided by affected persons themselves and therefore provide a different perspective on the city.

SHADES TOURS showed a proof of concept in 2016-2018 and began developing new ways to integrate marginalized groups back into society and back into the labour market. Their SCHIP proposal was to create a new product, "Tours Guided by Refugees", and start working on the upcoming tour product on the topic of Drugs & Addictions.

Some SCHIP Milestones:

- SHADES TOURS conducted focus groups and a survey with employees of different Viennese companies and another survey with social institutions. The employee survey delivered the prerequisites of Social Team Building activities, whereby the survey to the institutions provided a clearer picture of their needs.
- The newly developed tours and presentations were able to sell to 1 149 participants on the topic of refugees &





ANETA PAWLIK

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How to join The Social Challenges Innovation Platform

SOCIAL INNOVATION GENERATION

May 28, 2018 | Anja Stevic

BUILDING A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF INCUBATORS FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

May 7, 2013 | Matthias Reisinger

GRAMEEN SOCIAL BUSINESS LAB

May 11, 2011 | Matthias Reisinger

FINALISTS SELECTED IN EUROPEAN SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION: 'NEW WAYS TO GROW'

October 27, 2015 | guestblog



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