

# CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CHANGING TIMES

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The approaches of social entrepreneurs  
to Europe's most pressing challenges



**ASHOKA**

Learning and Action Center



## About Ashoka and the Learning and Action Center

Ashoka, founded in 1980, is the world's leading network of social entrepreneurs. Our founder Bill Drayton coined the term "social entrepreneurship". **According to NGO Advisor, Ashoka is the 5th most influential NGO in the world.**

Every year, we spot over 100 leading social entrepreneurs worldwide with the best system-changing ideas to address social problems and change society for the better. In the selection process we focus on five criteria: the new idea, creativity, entrepreneurial quality, social impact of the idea, and the ethical fiber of the candidate. We elect the social entrepreneurs as new "Ashoka Fellows" into our global network that now supports **3,517 social entrepreneurs** in **93** countries.

**In Europe**, we elect around **50 Ashoka Fellows** each year in **22 countries**. Since 1995, Ashoka has been electing **more than 500 Fellows in Europe** – a collection of the continent's most powerful social innovators.

The **Learning and Action Center** is a European Ashoka think tank started in 2018. Its research cuts across all Ashoka programs and initiatives. It screens and analyzes our knowledge about European social issues, Ashoka Fellows and system-changing new ideas, and makes the insights actionable for collective solutions.

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Franklin  
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# THE SOLUTIONS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS FOR THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC AGENDA

Europe faces increasingly complex social challenges. They require continuous reassessment of underlying causes, potential approaches and emerging stakeholders that can effectively solve them. Social entrepreneurs all over Europe are the innovative pioneers from civil society that address these challenges.

For the past 38 years, Ashoka has been committed to identifying the most innovative ideas and dedicated social entrepreneurs and organizations that address social problems. Ashoka Fellows go beyond tackling symptoms and aim at underlying systemic causes of social challenges. In the last five years, Ashoka has elected 194 Fellows that are active in Europe.

This study features Europe's most crucial social challenges and it reflects the ways in which the Ashoka social entrepreneurs approach them. It also details the patterns of innovation that these different approaches highlight and their relevance for the broader European public agenda.

The motivation for the study comes from the need to better coordinate the work of Ashoka with external stakeholders and Ashoka Fellows at a European level in order to support systemic changes necessary for solving the complex challenges society is facing today.

## THIS STUDY WILL HELP YOU TO:



Have an overview of 194 Ashoka Fellows from 22 European countries elected between 2013-2018 and their complementary approaches to social issues in Europe;



Find alignment between the contributions of Ashoka Fellows to the wider European public agenda and the most pressing social issues facing Europe today;



Think about potential coordinated action in addressing these challenges at a European level.



# WHAT ARE EUROPE'S MAIN SOCIAL ISSUES?

There is a large debate around what constitutes a social problem both in academia and among practitioners (Hervieux and Voltan, 2016; Bornstein, 2007). This study starts from the collective perceptions of stakeholders from business, government, civil society and academia around social problems. We consulted Eurobarometers, publications and opinion pieces of the European Parliament, the World Economic Forum, Eurodiaconia and academia to find out what these organizations and experts consider to be the most important social challenges in Europe in 2017-2018. Through synthesizing these sources, we identified six most prominent issues in Europe:

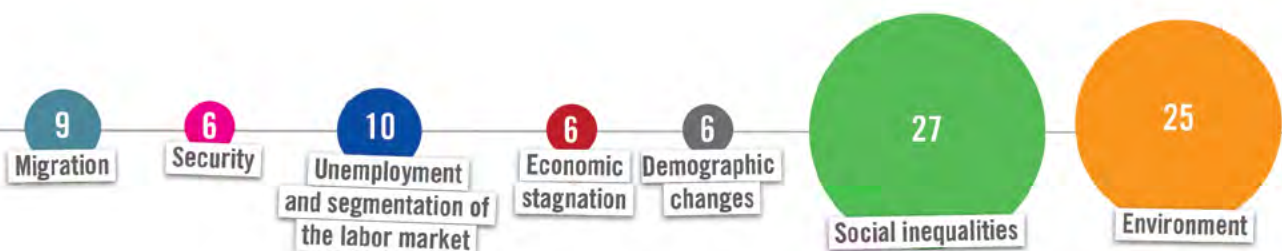


These are listed in the study depending on how often they were mentioned in the sources we consulted. Migration was the challenge identified by all sources, while the issues that follow were mentioned only by some of the sources. For more details please see the **Methodology** section in the **Annex**.

While these issues emerged from the literature as having most consensus in terms of priority, there are many other challenges facing Europe. Out of the 194 recently-elected Ashoka Fellows in Europe, 64 (or one third) work on these six issues. The other two thirds focus on themes such as environment, digitalization, youth empowerment, political engagement, education, health, the changing nature of the welfare state, and changes in justice systems. While these social issues might not feature in the consulted literature as being the most pressing challenges at the present moment, they are without question of significant social importance. Ashoka Fellows are elected based on the merits of their solutions and entrepreneurial character, not because of the current popularity of the challenges they tackle. These additional social problems are therefore included in the study, as they are reflected by the most recently elected Ashoka Fellows and play a significant role in social development in Europe:



The following sections will cluster and portray the contributions of social entrepreneurs to all of the above-mentioned issues. For each of them we highlight the main approaches that social entrepreneurs have developed throughout Europe. We believe that it is the combination of these approaches that can transform whole social systems all over Europe for the better.



# FELLOWS IN EUROPE 2013-2018



6  
Use of  
technology

15  
Children and  
youth

18  
Active  
citizenship

5  
Media and  
journalism

17  
Education

26  
Healthcare

9  
Redesigning  
social services

9  
Justice  
system

# FOUR KEY MESSAGES

This study takes stock of the approaches of social entrepreneurs to European social issues. Four key messages emerged as we explored the wide range of solutions being implemented by Ashoka Fellows across Europe:



## 1 SOCIAL ISSUES ARE TACKLED EUROPE-WIDE

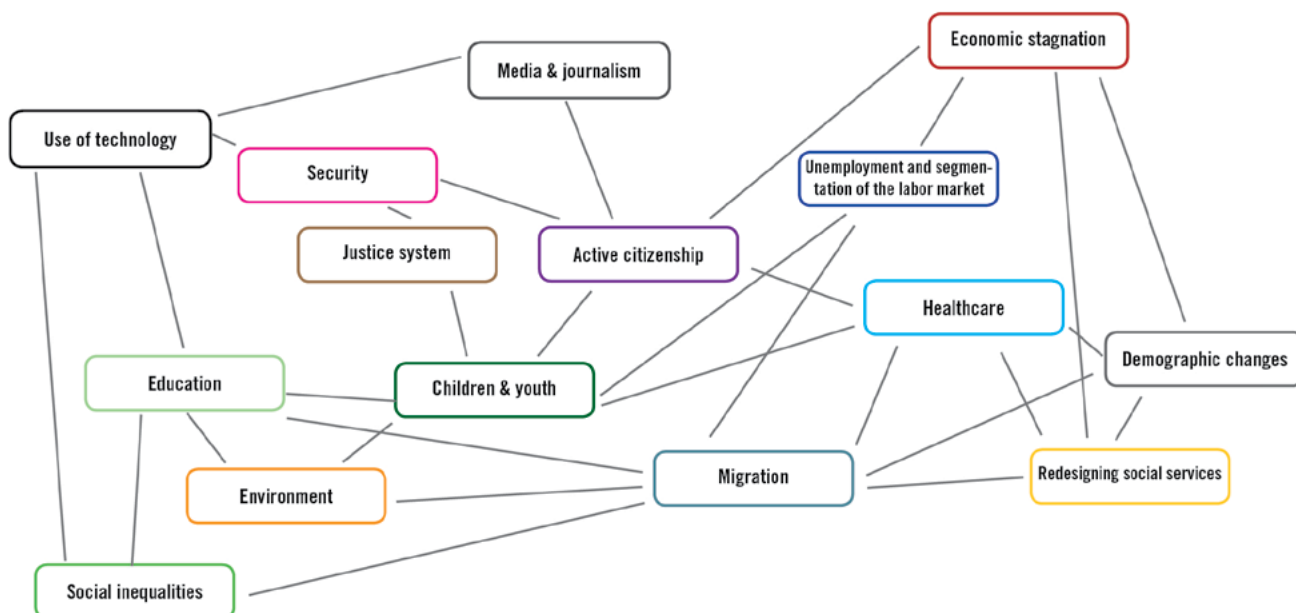
Ashoka Fellows in countries across the continent develop complementary solutions and ideas for solving social problems of high international relevance.

Example: Dennis Lennartsson of the European Sign Language Center started promoting sign language through technology in Sweden, expanded all across Europe, from Estonia to Bulgaria, and also worldwide, from Brazil to India and Uganda (*see Social Inequalities section*).

## 3 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS ARE ADDRESSING THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF SOCIAL ISSUES THROUGH THEIR WORK

They bring together actors from various sectors and experts in different fields that pool together their knowledge and experience in order to develop more aligned, coordinated and effective cumulative solutions. Social entrepreneurs highlight, therefore, the overall need for more integrated action between different sectors in order to tackle complex systemic issues.

Example: Nathanaël Molle of Singa in France simultaneously tackles issues of unemployment, economic stagnation and social integration of migrants and refugees by developing entrepreneurship and incubator programs for migrants and their communities (*see Migration section*).

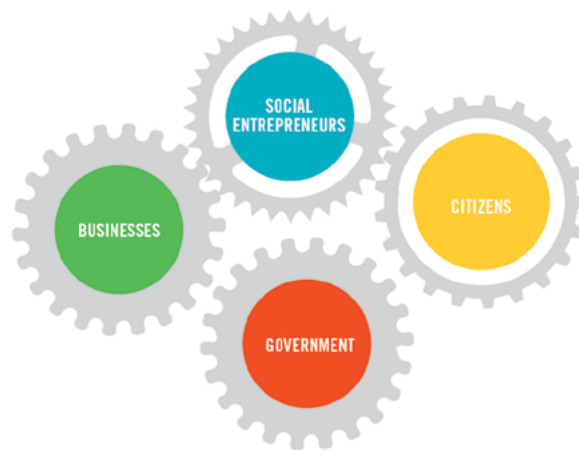




## 2 THE DIFFERENT ANGLES OF APPROACHING A SOCIAL ISSUE AND THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF APPROACHES HIGHLIGHTS THE COMPLEXITY AND POTENTIAL FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

The issues themselves manifest in different ways depending on context. An in-depth understanding of them in future studies is essential. It takes more than any single organization to achieve system change and only by developing collaborative formats do social entrepreneurs, their public and private partners advance such a holistic approach.

Example: Dorica Dan of Prader Willi Association in Romania reinvents services for patients with rare diseases by developing an integrated center for social, administrative and medical services (see *Healthcare section*).



## 4 SOME SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE PERCEIVED AND ACKNOWLEDGED MORE THAN OTHERS BY VARIOUS PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS



This is an issue of visibility of problems and also of attention distribution in the public sphere. The work of Ashoka Fellows highlights and emphasizes issues that are not perceived as so urgent on the public agenda as reflected in the sources consulted for this study (such as environment, education and reforming the welfare system). At the same time, there are issues on the agenda (such as taxation and instability in regions bordering EU) that are not as strongly represented in the work of social entrepreneurs.

This underlines the importance of constant dialogue between actors operating at different levels: for public institutions to be more responsive to the phenomena signaled by social entrepreneurs and for social entrepreneurship support organizations such as Ashoka to remain alert to the prominent debates on the broader European social agenda and identify more innovators in these fields.

Example: James Thornton of ClientEarth in the UK develops a law-focused approach to advance and protect the European environmental agenda by working cross-country and multi-layered to keep stakeholders accountable to legislative stipulations (see *Environment section*).



# PROMINENT ISSUES ON THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC AGENDA

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**MIGRATION**



**SECURITY**



**UNEMPLOYMENT AND  
SEGMENTATION OF THE  
LABOR MARKET**



**ECONOMIC STAGNATION**



**DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES**



**SOCIAL INEQUALITIES**

# MIGRATION



Migration has been on the top of the European agenda since the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ that began in 2015, when over one million people affected by conflicts in the Middle East and Africa arrived on the continent. Today, there are over 28.5 million asylum-seekers and refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2017), adding to a broader movement of economic migrants who reach Europe as a final destination or transit route. Migration is part of a broader challenge of demographic changes, which will be explored later on, and it is also expected to increase with climate change (Raleigh et al. 2019). The challenges posed by migration movements are, therefore, inherently transnational and manifold, affecting not only the lives of displaced persons themselves but societies as a whole. As governments struggle to cope with the issues surrounding international migration flows, the problem requires collaborative and systemic solutions to move beyond the limitations of traditional approaches and untap the changemaking potential of migrants.



Over the last five years, Ashoka has identified and supported social entrepreneurs who are mediating and building collaborations between communities, local residents, educational institutions, businesses, state agencies and social sector organizations, to tackle the complex challenges posed by migration. Social entrepreneurs focus on the skills, capacities and potential of migrants, empowering them as agents of change. Developing community-centered initiatives, these Fellows are giving voice to migrants and assessing the different needs of displaced people, from humanitarian and mental health assistance to work and education opportunities.





## DEVELOPING NEW LIVING CONCEPTS

Founded by **Daniel Kerber** in Germany, [More than Shelters](#) (MTS) is tackling the very first stages of a refugee's arrival into a new country. Working globally with key stakeholders, MTS is disseminating a model of integrated humanitarian urban design to prototype dignified refugee camps, arrival centers and transit zones. By involving refugees themselves in the creation of these structures and partnering with state agencies, NGOs and local residents, the organization is transforming how humanitarian aid work is understood and delivered worldwide.



## PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are exposed to stressors that can dramatically exacerbate mental health conditions, (WHO, 2016), further aggravated by a lack of access to mental healthcare (Priebe et al., 2016). **Geertrui Serneels** has pioneered a community-based mental health system for refugee and migrant children, while advocating for the mental health of culturally diverse populations to be included in the Belgian political agenda. [Solentra](#) offers a training program to help community members and social workers become more attuned and sensitized to the challenges of cultural adaptation and refer children to psychosocial care when needed, building partnerships with local institutions.



## DEVELOPING SKILLS AND FACILITATING EMPLOYMENT

Ashoka Fellows are also working across Europe to empower migrant communities through education and skill development. By supporting the development of social ventures and community projects led by people from immigrant or refugee backgrounds, the organizations created by **Rui Marques** and **Nathanaël Molle** are providing vocational opportunities while simultaneously changing the way host societies perceive migrants. Founded by **Rui** in Portugal, the [Ubuntu Academy](#) is a program aimed at young people, particularly immigrants from vulnerable contexts. They work on skill development through non-formal education methodologies focused on community leadership and the development of social entrepreneurship projects. Exploring the untapped potential of refugee populations who are often stigmatized, [Singa](#) is also bringing together refugees and their host communities to meet and cooperate through an incubator and accelerator for entrepreneurs' initiatives. In Portugal, [Speak](#) is fostering integration and skill development by creating a community of migrants, refugees and locals who get together to teach and learn new languages. Created by **Hugo Aguiar**, the program is simultaneously promoting learning, cultural exchange and the strengthening of social bonds.

Fellows are also facilitating the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the European labor market. [Social Bee](#), founded by **Zarah Bruhn**, is a temporary employment agency that hires, supports and qualifies refugees to work in German corporations, carefully assessing each individual's needs and creating the conditions for long-term employment. Created by **Matthieu Le Grelle** and **Frédéric Simonart**, [Duo for a Job](#) is an intergenerational coaching program in which retired Belgians volunteer as mentors to help unemployed migrants enter the job market, supporting migrants' integration and promoting intercultural exchanges.



## INTEGRATING MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN URBAN AREAS

Other Fellows are promoting the integration of migrant and refugees communities in urban areas, both globally and locally. Based in France, [Urban Refugees](#) is working to support, connect and empower refugees living in cities around the world. Created by **Sonia Ben Ali**, the organization is collaborating with refugee leaders and communities, connecting solutions and enabling refugees to advocate and influence policies that affect their lives. Founded by **Admir Lukacevic** in Sweden, [Idrott Utan Gränser](#) (*Sports Without Borders*) is a local program run in underutilized urban spaces. Recreational activities and sports are led by a young local leader, often from a migrant background. This promotes the emergence different types of role models and creates space for diverse relationships to form across social groups, using play as the mechanism.

# SECURITY



Security and governance challenges are becoming increasingly complex and global, crossing borders and transcending sectors. In 2010 terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime became top priorities in the European Commission agenda related to security. While geopolitical tensions and new forms of radicalization continue to be amongst the countries' main concerns, individual rights related to privacy and personal data ownership have also become central in current debates, reflected in the recent adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by the European Union (EC, 2019).

Social entrepreneurs are working alongside civil society actors to address security concerns that emerged with the shifting landscape of Internet services and potential misuses of personal data, as well as to address international organized crime. Ashoka Fellows are connecting multiple stakeholders to tackle online privacy issues and empower citizens by exposing invasive surveillance practices, monitoring governments' responses to security demands and ultimately transforming the ways in which we share online data. Fellows are also directly engaging citizens in becoming active agents of change against organized crime.





## ENSURING DATA SECURITY

Ashoka Fellows are addressing data security on two levels: by providing the necessary information to empower citizens, and by collaboratively building alternatives to current online systems. Based in Poland, the [Panoptikon Foundation](#) was created by **Katarzyna Szymielewicz** and a group of engaged lawyers to draw attention to contemporary tools of control which potentially endanger citizen privacy rights. By combining monitoring, research, advocacy and education, the Foundation established a platform to enable civil society to monitor surveillance mechanisms and legal interventions that affect privacy rights.

In Germany, **Christian Grothoff** has founded [GNUnet](#), working with multilateral actors to replace vulnerable Intellectual Property (IP) and DNS systems with more secure, decentralized and self-organizing alternatives, which don't require any alteration to the physical structure of the Internet. The organization also produces free code libraries and programming tools as well as a suite of alternative applications for social networking, financial transactions and other functions, creating a privacy-preserving network architecture for a safer, autonomous and anonymous online space.



## FIGHTING ARMS TRADE NETWORKS

**James Bevan** of [Conflict Armament Research](#) in the UK set up a global methodology of mapping illegal gun flows. Through a transparent analysis of the gathered data, the organization increases the accountability of stakeholders engaged in fighting illegal networks and support countries in controlling weapon flows.



## FIGHTING ORGANIZED CRIME

Social entrepreneurs are also tackling organized crime through their organizations. In Italy, anti-mafia efforts stand out. **Dario Riccobono** of [Addiopizzo Travel](#) has established a network of anti-mafia businesses and consumers, alongside a tourism agency working exclusively through these networks. This enables citizens to have choices as consumers, and collectively respond against the mafia both within Italy and from abroad. Similarly, **Vincenzo Linarello** of [GOEL](#) is growing a network of businesses and social enterprises operating as an economic alternative to unemployment or working for mafia-run businesses. By integrating environmentally-friendly, legal, inclusive business from the South supplying to business in the North, he generates an alternative economic ecosystem that reduces dependency on and engagement with mafia-run economic activity. In Romania, **Paul Radu** set up the [Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project \(OCCRP\)](#), a network of civic investigators such as scientists, journalists and programmers, that look into transnational crime worldwide.

# UNEMPLOYMENT AND SEGMENTATION OF THE LABOR MARKET



Even though the European employment market as a whole is positively recovering from the economic recession (EC, 2017), recent research shows that youth unemployment rates continue to be disproportionately high (Eurostat, 2018). Europe's recovery is strongly dependent on its potential to find solutions for the overall economic stagnation discussed in the next section, but the job market presents a worrisome pattern: while some countries are managing to reverse the sudden rise of unemployment rates of the past decade, many continue to struggle with joblessness. Intervention programs promoted by local governments are proving to be insufficient in many areas, creating segmentations that tend to affect the entire continent.



Organizations are working with key stakeholders across Europe enabling young people to change their own futures through education, technology and sports. Other social entrepreneurs are fighting against gender divides that persist in the labor market, aiming to shift values and perspectives in the corporate world to support women's career development and to promote equal opportunities. What unites the approaches of all these Ashoka Fellows is a strong focus on changing employment models by either developing appropriate structures and support for using or advancing skills or by engaging a variety of stakeholders and integrating their actions to improve the labor market.







## FIGHTING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Many Ashoka Fellows are addressing youth unemployment through education. In the Nordics region, **Eddi Eidsvåg** offers an intensive training program to help young people acquire the skills and habits needed to enter the labor market. [Pøbelprosjektet](#) works mainly with so-called “troubled youth”, who have often dropped out of school, encouraging participants to recognize their own potential and connecting them with a network of companies to secure employment.

In Spain, one of the countries with the highest rates of youth unemployment (Eurostat, 2018), **José María Luzarraga** is increasing young people’s employability and autonomy. [Mondragon Team Academy](#) is an educational model in which students collaborate to create a company throughout the academic year, building on each other’s abilities and skills. The model results in 50% of their graduates taking on entrepreneurial activities while 97% of students manage to find full-time employment after the program. In Italy, **Eleonora Voltolina** is tackling the gap between the end of formal education and the beginning of paid work. Through [La Repubblica degli Stagisti](#) (*The Interns’ Republic*), she works with interns, companies and the government to promote fair business practices and better job opportunities. Several regions of Italy have adopted her model to create minimum standards for internships that protect young people and ease their route into employment.

Technology is also used as a tool to tackle youth unemployment. Based in France, **Frederic Bardeau** of [Simplon.co](#) offers training opportunities worldwide in the digital sector for underrepresented populations – specifically youth, women and refugees – while also connecting them to relevant tech companies for further training or work opportunities. In Italy, **Alfonso Molina** is tackling high school dropout by creating “innovation gyms” where youth can rediscover learning through tech and develop a career in the sector. The [Fondazione Mondo Digitale](#) (*Digital World Foundation*) offers an online platform for long-term education and experience exchange, engaging young people to find new passions and leading them into education or to employment.

In the UK, **Kelly Davies** has created a model to address youth unemployment through sports. [Vi-Ability](#) engages unemployed local youth in revitalizing community sports clubs and enabling them to gain accredited work qualifications as managers of viable businesses, transforming sports clubs into training opportunities that also serve entire communities.



## IMPROVING THE WORK LIFE OF WOMEN

European social entrepreneurs also identified specific gender-related challenges when it comes to employment opportunities. In Italy, **Riccarda Zezza** founded [MaaM, Maternity as a Master](#) to help employers, particularly from the corporate world, redefine maternity leave as a period of intense and valuable learning, instead of a period of unproductivity. The organization also supports mothers to develop and acknowledge their skills while on maternity leave. Beginning in Belgium and France, **Isabella Lenarduzzi** aims to reshape the management practices of European corporations towards a greater valorization of work-life balance and a redefinition of success. Her organization, [JUMP](#), is doing so by creating a wide network of professional women who become ambassadors of this new corporate culture.



## DEVELOPING NEW EMPLOYMENT MODELS AND SUPPORT

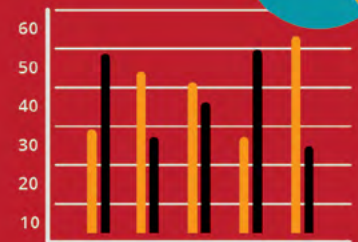
Less job security, short-term contracts and the growth of independent work are reshaping the European labor market. Based in Belgium, [SMart](#) is ensuring greater stability for independent workers across Europe by bringing them together as a cooperative. Founded by **Sandrino Graceffa**, the organization connects freelancers and offers a range of services to improve their activities, such as administrative workshops and legal advice. [Activ’Action](#), founded by **Emilie Schmitt**, is also building support networks by offering workshops that can boost the confidence and self-esteem of those who are facing unemployment in France.

# ECONOMIC STAGNATION



The European economic landscape has changed considerably over the last few years, markedly after the global financial crisis of 2008. The divergence of member states' economic performances within the EU and the eurozone, the rise of unemployment in some countries and the challenges posed by global financial changes, such as indebtedness, urges the continent to take action. Apart from the tensions affecting the labor market discussed in the previous section, the influence that an increasingly urbanized Europe has on farming and food production also has economic and environmental consequences. Some of the economic challenges stated by the European Commission when it comes to agriculture and rural development are related to empowering rural people, delivering more public goods and services to rural populations, creating more sustainable forestry, and improving food production efficiency, sustainability and resilience (EC, 2013).

Ashoka Fellows are tackling macroeconomic issues through the development of rural areas, which are vital to Europe's economic health and to tackling economic stagnation. By protecting producers, and ensuring a sustainable agricultural practice, social entrepreneurs are contributing to sustainable economic growth and developing the necessary conditions for rural producers to navigate emerging economic challenges. Fellows are also addressing the issue of indebtedness that has been so central in triggering the financial crisis. They strongly focus on mediating collaborations, both in regard to economic development in rural areas and the development of solutions for high levels of debt.





## DEVELOPING FARMING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN RURAL AREAS

Several Ashoka Fellows are working across Europe to develop collective models of small-scale production and expand the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices. The [Herenboeren](#) movement, created by **Geert van der Veer**, is establishing a scalable model of collective ownership and management of farmlands, enabling local communities, buyers, investors, consumers and producers in the Netherlands to cooperate for the production of sustainable food in small-scale farms. **Fabrice Hégron** is also developing an alternative production and distribution system of dairy products based in small-scale farming, in response to the increased industrialization that is endangering small producers in French rural landscapes. By creating a viable subsidy-free economic model, [En Direct Des Eleveurs](#) (*Live from the Breeders*) is connecting farmers directly to consumers and supporting sustainable production of healthy milk products.

In Spain, **Pedro Medrano** created a model for enabling the sustainable and simplified collective ownership of forest areas that were often left abandoned. [Monte de Socios](#) (*Forestry Partners*) contributes to the protection of the land while enabling the development of a profitable forestry market, enhancing the life quality of those who live in rural areas.

Tackling a different land management challenge, [TARSIM](#) (*The Agricultural Insurance Foundation*) safeguards small farms against the unforeseen contingencies of natural hazards in Turkey. Created by **Tanfer Dinler**, the organization educates farmers on risk management and develops a holistic insurance system, working together with private and public institutions. Also based in Turkey, **Durukan Dudu** is creating a movement of regenerative farming to restore soil damaged by harmful agricultural practices, produce nourishing food and prevent rural evasion. His organization [Anadolu Meralari](#) (*Anatolian Grasslands*) researches regenerative techniques and offers extensive training, counselling and market support to promote sustainable food production in damaged areas.



## PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Over-indebtedness is one of the most pressing economic issues of the Czech Republic. **Radek Hábl**, together with the [Open Society](#) group, created [Mapa exekucí](#) (*Repossessions Map*), which collects and analyses extensive data that demonstrates the main social causes of debt and the most affected areas. Through this comprehensive map of repossession and lobbying for legislative action, the organization raises awareness and educates government bodies, media and opinion makers on addressing this topic as a social matter, instead of an individual one.

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES



With an aging population, low birth rates, increased migration flows and the transformation of family structures, Europe is facing major demographic changes. Predictions made by the European Commission (2014) show that these population trends will continue to intensify, whereby the elderly are expected to account for almost 30% of the total EU population in 2060. Changes in average life expectancy are already impacting the lives of individuals and families as well as countries as a whole, increasing pressure on health systems and labor markets while also shifting our conceptions of when 'old age' begins and what it implies (Sanderson & Scherbov, 2015).

While some Ashoka Fellows are extensively tackling migration issues, as explored in detail in the first section, others are addressing some of the main challenges around the aging of the European population. These social entrepreneurs are creating solutions that reinforce older people's autonomy, strengthen their social integration, increase overall well-being and facilitate their contributions to society. What unites the approaches of Ashoka Fellows is a focus on the capabilities, roles, strengths and added value that the elderly have and the way in which they all actively contribute to the European society.



Photo: Missmichi



## BUILDING CONNECTION AMONG GENERATIONS

Social isolation has ramifications beyond the social realm and is becoming a significant health issue in Europe with dramatic consequences for the elderly population in particular (Hansen & Slagsvold, 2015). A number of Ashoka Fellows are tackling this issue by fostering community building and meaningful exchanges among generations. In Germany, [Generationsbrücke Deutschland](#) (*Generational Bridge Germany*), founded by **Horst Krumbach**, is creating a bridge between children in primary schools and elderly living in nursing homes, promoting both empathy and learning. Also working with nursing homes residents, [Cykling Uden Alder](#) (*Cycling Without Age*), founded by **Ole Kassow**, is taking the elderly out into the streets of Denmark for a ride with young cyclists, enabling joyful intergenerational exchanges.



## REDESIGNING THE ELDERLY CARE SYSTEM

Ashoka Fellows are also promoting changes in the current nursing systems, creating alternatives that engage communities in care work to replace the rigid regimens of traditional institutions. [Aktivitetsdosetten](#), founded by **Lone Koldby** in Norway, is engaging staff, families and residents in activities that privilege creativity and social interaction, ensuring care home residents experience autonomy and enjoyment. **Ana Urrutia Beaskoa**, head of [Fundación Cuidados Dignos](#) (*Dignified Care Foundation*), is also remodeling the culture of Spanish care homes together with a group of geriatrics and gerontology professionals, aiming to turn the focus of public and private institutions back to the patients' needs. In Austria, [ALLMENDA](#), founded by **Gernot Jochum-Müller**, is implementing an alternative elderly care system called *Time Pension System*, in which non-monetary payments based on the exchange of time, skills and cooperation are integrated into citizen's benefit schemes.



## SUPPORTING SENIOR CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Aging is being redefined in the last decades as people are remaining active for considerably longer than in the past (Brown, 1996). Through [Gründer 50plus UG](#) (*Founders 50plus UG*), **Ralf Sange** is tackling demographic changes in Germany and people's prolonged active life by supporting those over the age of 50 to become entrepreneurs and contribute to solving social issues. Rather than being perceived as no longer contributing to society or as a burden, this active population is being encouraged to use their latent potential to create solutions for social change.

# SOCIAL INEQUALITIES



Social inequality is one of the most widespread and intensely debated social problems of today's world (Piketty, 2014). OECD data from 2017 contrasts the fact that in the 1980s the average income of the richest 10% was 7 times higher than that of the poorest 10%, while it currently is 9,5 times higher, which depicts the increasing inequality trend throughout the past decades. In Europe too, 84% of citizens agree that the differences in people's incomes in their country are too big (EB 471, 2017). Inequality is not only reflected on an economic level but also regarding the quality of jobs, of education, access to services, community structures, tolerance towards vulnerable groups and gender divides (OECD, 2017).

Ashoka Fellows are taking complementary approaches to assess the needs of different populations and tackle multiple challenges around social inclusion. They are working for the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable populations, fighting against religious intolerance, ensuring the inclusion of the Roma population, empowering homeless people, using new methodologies for the inclusion of people with disabilities and addressing gender biases in the labor market. Social entrepreneurs do all this by focusing on enhancing the economic power and participation of all these populations, as well as by including multiple stakeholders at community and institutional levels in developing inclusive social systems.





## INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ashoka supports several social entrepreneurs who are doing ground-breaking work around the social and economic inclusion of people with different abilities, mainly addressing educational systems and inclusion in labor markets.

Fellows are promoting different forms of inclusion through education and play. In Czech Republic, **Klára Laurencíková** is fostering inclusive education through the work of [ČOSIV](#) (*Czech Professional Society for Inclusive Education*). Their aim is to stop the segregation of disabled children in underperforming schools and classrooms by involving every stakeholder in changing national practices and policies. Also promoting interactions among differently abled children, **Eszter Harsányi**, founder of [MagikMe](#), develops inclusive playgrounds in Hungary by producing and supplying appropriate equipment, as well as working with communities and kindergartens to promote inclusive education.

A number of organizations are working towards the establishment of a more inclusive labor market. [Career Moves](#), founded by **Gregor Demblin** in Austria, is an inclusive job platform in Europe that offers equal opportunities for people with disabilities to apply, while the [Institut Inklusive Bildung](#) (*Institute Inclusive Education*), created by **Jan Wulf-Schnabel** in Germany, is collaborating with different stakeholders to qualify and employ people with disabilities in educational work.

[Blindspot](#), founded by **Jonas Staub**, is also advocating for inclusion by creating a holistic range of projects in the areas of education, leisure and work, addressing different kinds of disabilities, institutions and age groups in Switzerland. In Poland, **Ireneusz Bialek** worked extensively for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Universities and is now focusing on their participation in the labor market through [Moffin](#), an expert think tank that promotes social responsibility across sectors. Finally, **Celal Karadoğan** is tackling the inclusion of people with disabilities in Turkey through sports, creating the [Genç Engelliler Gençlik ve Spor Kulübü](#) (*Youth with Disabilities Sports Club*), a space for community building and integration of those with different abilities.



## INCLUDING MINORITY POPULATIONS

Several Fellows are working across Europe to increase the social inclusion of vulnerable populations through education. **Pablo Santaefemia** in Spain has created [Bridge for Billions](#): an online incubator for entrepreneurs that ensures equality of chances, while **Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi** in Hungary is focusing on active citizenship among marginalized groups with her [Közélet Iskolája](#) (*School of Public Life*), a community-based training, research and development center on social exclusion and democracy. Also working in Hungary, **Nóra Ritók** and her [Igazgyöngy Alapítvány](#) (*Real Pearl Foundation*) are connecting stakeholders and marginalized communities to create dialogue in order to reduce poverty through three pillars: education, community development and institutional cooperation.

In order to fight against religious intolerance and for the inclusion of religious minorities, both **Marine Quenin** and **Samuel Grzybowski** established organizations in France to promote interfaith dialogue in schools. [Enquete](#) (*Investigation*), founded by Marine, is developing educational resources to facilitate discussions among teachers and children about diversity and religious practices, while Samuel's [Coexister](#) (*Coexist*) created a one-year program for young people of different religious backgrounds to engage in dialogue sessions and solidarity actions.

Fellows across the continent are also tackling the segregation of Europe's arguably most marginalized population, the Roma. Founded by **Carlo Stasolla**, [Associazione 21 Luglio](#) (*Association 21 July*) is working in Italy at the institutional, community and civil society levels to transform the conventional approach to the issue from an ethnic perspective to a socio-economic one. In Slovakia, [Svatobor](#) was established by **Štefan Straka** to integrate poor Roma as farmers in communities and combat food insecurity, while [ROMFO](#), founded by **Hacer Foggo**, is creating an umbrella where Roma NGOs and communities in Turkey can co-create solutions and collectively communicate with civil society and decision-makers.



## EMPOWERING HOMELESS PEOPLE

To tackle the increase of homelessness in Europe (Serme-Morin, 2017), Fellows are designing solutions to empower both youth and adults who are, for various reasons, living in streets. **Jörg Richert**, founder of [KARUNA](#), created different programs in Germany focusing on the prevention of homelessness, substance abuse and offering the social and emotional support that youth need in this situation.

In the UK, **John Bird** founded [The Big Issue](#), today the world's most circulated street newspaper, inspiring more than 100 street papers in over 40 countries. The organization is engaging those experiencing homelessness in the production and selling of this newspaper, also using the money raised to support them in their paths towards a better future. Also based in the UK, the [Homeless World Cup](#), founded by **Mel Young**, is catalyzing the global popularity of football as a means to engage and empower homeless people to change their own lives. The organization is creating football teams and tournaments all over the world to challenge public perceptions of homelessness and empower people experiencing it. In France, **Louis-Xavier Leca** founded [La Cloche](#) (*The Bell*) to build a support network between small business, neighbors and homeless people, offering an opportunity for them to engage in their communities.



## EMPOWERING WOMEN

Gender divides that persist in the European societies are also a source of structural social inequalities. **Viviana Waisman** from Spain works on strategic litigation to strengthen human rights infrastructure for women and girls through her organization [Women's Link Worldwide](#). The work of WLW contributes to eliminating gender biases from the interpretation and implementation of the law, as well as generating social mobilization to improve reproductive rights and reduce discrimination and violence against women.

**Huriye Goncuoglu** is also fostering women's empowerment through the work of [Türkiye'nin Kadın Balıkçıları](#) (*Fisherwomen of Turkey*). The organization is connecting fisherwomen to disrupt gender roles in the Turkish fishing sector, protect coastal ecosystems and encourage women to be leaders in their communities. Huriye is also one of the founders of [Akdeniz Koruma](#), the Mediterranean Conservation Society.



## USING TECHNOLOGY FOR INCLUSION

There is great diversity in the solutions presented and the populations addressed by the social entrepreneurs, but also relevant synergies – for example, in the widespread use of digital tools. The [European Sign Language Center](#), created by **Dennis Lennartsson** in Sweden, became a reference in promoting sign language across the continent. Dennis and his team are now documenting sign languages across the world and making it available through a new web tool, [Spread the Sign](#). In Spain, [Change Dyslexia](#), is also working globally to spread new methodologies to detect and overcome dyslexia through apps and other resources. With a similar approach, **Gaelle Regnault** and the team of [Learnenjoy](#) created a wide range of educational apps to facilitate learning for children with special needs and to support teachers and parents in Spain. [Atempo](#), founded by **Walburga Fröhlich** and **Klaus Candussi** in Austria, is also addressing learning disabilities through technology. The organization created digital tools and an online platform for assisting people with disabilities, while also offering educational and work opportunities.

In Turkey, **Hasan Zafer Elcik** is developing digital educational materials for children on the autism spectrum and with other learning difficulties. [Otsimo](#) is a game application that enables effective intervention in early childhood and also engages families and public education institutions in developing more inclusive formats for children with different abilities and needs. Through [Serlo Education](#), **Simon Köhl** addresses inequality in the German educational system and uses digital tools to engage students and teachers in creating an interactive learning platform that builds upon classroom diversity and democratizes educational processes.





# ІНДІЙСЬКИЙ

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# EUROPEAN SOCIAL ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY ASHOKA FELLOWS

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 ENVIRONMENT

 USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

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 EDUCATION

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 REDESIGNING SOCIAL SERVICES

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# ENVIRONMENT



From heat waves and rising sea levels to frequent wildfires and biodiversity loss, the effects of climate change are signaling the urgency of a more integrated and effective global environmental response. In 2015, Europe reinforced its central position in driving environment and climate change talks by hosting the Paris Climate Accords, where the international community agreed to control greenhouse gas emissions and keep global warming below 2°C in relation to pre-industrial times. A global survey conducted by Pew Research Center that same year shows that the concerns of governments also reflect public opinion: 60% of European citizens agree that climate change is already harming people around the world while 73% believe that major lifestyle changes are necessary to reduce its effects (Pew Research Center, 2015).

In the face of irreversible environmental damage, the civil sector in Europe embraced environmental degradation and climate change as top priority matters. Ashoka Fellows are relying on systemic approaches to tackle environmental issues on several fronts: they are designing sustainable solutions for industries and households, improving the collective management of natural resources, transforming food supply chains, finding new paths to preserve biodiversity and working restlessly to raise awareness through advocacy and education.





## INCREASING SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPROVING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Ashoka identified social entrepreneurs in Europe who are fostering mindful consumption practices and shifting industries towards a more sustainable use of resources. For example, [Latitude](#), founded by **María Almazán** in Spain, aims to change the fashion industry, one of the most polluting in the world. The organization works across the fashion sector to engage brands, factories, manufacturers and consumers into a sustainable network of production and consumption of clothing, making production more local, improving workers' conditions and facilitating companies access to ethical materials and processes.

In France, **Vincent Legrand** is tackling the construction sector, responsible for half of the country's energy consumption. Addressing the disproportional impact that heating systems of older buildings have in France's energy consumption and families' income, [DORÉMI](#) is providing affordable energy renovation to individual homes using sustainable techniques. In the Netherlands, **Aart van Veller** is also transforming the energy sector by offering an affordable and accessible alternative of renewable energy: [Vandebron](#) is an online marketplace where consumers can buy renewable energy from independent producers through a subscription model, which incentivizes producers to increase production.

In Ireland, firehouses are becoming role models of sustainability and community engagement through the work of [The Green Plan](#), founded by **Neil McCabe**. The organization created a replicable model to dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of fire stations, which tend to consume huge amounts of water, fuel and energy, and yet are essential to every community. Recognized as best practice by the EU Commission, the model was made available online to spread sustainable practices around the world. While Neil is changing how fire stations manage natural resources, **Oriol Vilalta** is addressing fire management itself by collaborating with firefighters, government bodies, researchers and key civil society stakeholders. The [Pau Costa Foundation](#) aims at a shift of paradigm from fighting fires to preventing them, offering extensive training and raising awareness.



## INVESTING IN ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Advocacy and education are at the heart of many social entrepreneurs' approaches to climate change and environmental issues. Founded by **James Thornton** in the UK, [ClientEarth](#) is the first organization to work across the entire European continent using the law to defend Europe's environmental agenda. Inciting cross-country collaborations, ClientEarth approaches environmental challenges at many levels, taking into account all the key players involved in their cases, from corporations and local governments to the European Union itself.

Also working on a continental level, **Jacob Radloff** created the [Oekom Verlag](#) in Denmark: a publishing house specialized in disseminating knowledge about sustainability and the environment. The organization identifies areas that need to be further addressed in the public debate and develop strategies for informing and mobilizing citizen action. Focusing on the education of children and young people, **Christoph Schmitz** has created [Ackerdemia e.V.](#) in Germany. This practice-based educational program allows children to learn about sustainability while gaining hands-on experience in producing food – from harvesting vegetables to selling the crops and preparing the soil for future use.

Pioneering a movement to raise awareness around soil erosion and its effects to Turkey's environment and economy, **Hayrettin Karaca** is also educating and empowering civil society through the work of [TEMA](#), The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion. TEMA is now a wide network of volunteers, researchers, civil society members and donors working across Europe to promote the protection of natural habitats and support the establishment of national policies, while also developing models to combat soil erosion in impoverished rural areas of Turkey.



## IMPROVING FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS AND ACCESS TO FOOD

In the EU, an estimated 88 million tons of food waste are generated annually, while 43 million people cannot afford a quality meal every other day (Stenmarck et al., 2016). Changing the ways in which we produce, distribute and consume food is an urgent measure to reduce environmental impacts and increase overall food security. Identifying the need to involve stakeholders at every stage of the food supply chain, **Tristram Stuart** has designed a multilevel approach to reduce waste throughout food systems around the world. Leading a wide range of programs, [FeedBack](#) examines supply chains and presents sustainable solutions to every stakeholder – from farmers and supermarkets to consumers and policymakers.

In Germany, Ashoka is supporting social entrepreneurs who developed online platforms to reduce food waste in innovative and complementary ways: **Kai Gildhorn's [Mundraub](#)** is mapping the country's abundant public fruit resources and making a collaborative online platform available for public use, while **[SirPlus](#)**, founded by **Raphael Fellmer**, is creating an affordable and accessible market for selling surplus food that would otherwise be thrown away by producers and supermarkets.

The Internet also offers new possibilities to connect producers and consumers who want to do things differently. In France, **[La Ruche qui dit Oui](#)** (*The Beehive That Says Yes*), founded by **Guilhem Chéron**, is working across the supply chain to establish an alternative to industrial agricultural production and distribution by directly connecting consumers and artisanal producers of several sectors through an online platform. Similarly, **Uygar Özemi** has created **[good4trust.org](#)**, a Turkish social platform that brings together fair and sustainable producers and consumers. Uygar is also working extensively in raising awareness to environmental issues through over a dozen of other organizations and initiatives across the country.

In the UK, **Patrick Holden** founded the **[Sustainable Food Trust \(SFT\)](#)** to show the real economic, environmental and social costs of our current food production system. SFT focuses on advocacy, research and communications, aiming to reach all influential key players in the production chain for implementing sustainable, diverse and integrated food and farming systems.



## SAFEGUARDING BIODIVERSITY FOR ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Global climate change and the devastating impacts of human actions are endangering natural habitats and leading to biodiversity loss. Social entrepreneurs are working to preserve animal and plant biodiversity.

By raising awareness across sectors, conducting extensive research and proposing alternative management systems. The central role that bees play in maintaining plant biodiversity is the focus of **[Beeodiversity](#)**, created by **Bach Kim Nguyen** in Belgium. The organization is raising awareness to the disappearance of bees in the European landscape – responsible for the pollination of 84% of European crop species – and working with both academia and the beekeeping sector to develop an integrated management system that ensures bee health.

In Italy, **Federico Garcea** is using digital tools to increase plant biodiversity, contribute for the reduction of CO2 emissions and support small farmers in economic hardship. **[TreeDom](#)** is an online platform that allows companies and individuals to plant fruit trees remotely and to closely track their development. The fruits that are collected from the trees are then sold by cooperatives of local workers, so that the impact is on sustainability as a whole, both environmental and economic.

Fellows in Spain, France and the Netherlands are working to raise awareness around ocean biodiversity and influencing marine industries. **[Alnitak](#)**, founded by **Ricardo Sagarminaga**, is using research to inform and connect different players to protect marine biodiversity while ensuring fishing communities a sustainable livelihood. Bridging research and policy, **Claire Nouvian's [Bloom](#)** is also raising awareness about the state of marine ecosystems and working extensively with advocacy to improve fishing regulations and denounce the impacts of unsustainable consumption habits. Through a different approach, the **[Sea Ranger Service](#)**, created by **Wietse Van der Werf**, is addressing ocean conservation by recruiting navy veterans to train unemployed youth as sea rangers, who are qualified to assist governments in managing protected areas, conduct marine research and conserve historic sites.

Other entrepreneurs are addressing biodiversity challenges by fostering community-led initiatives and developing local projects. **Çağan Şekercioğlu** has founded **[Kuzey Doga](#)** to engage Turkish communities in preserving wildlife through collective conservation and ecotourism projects. The organization's model privileges a holistic approach, combining nature conservation, wildlife research, environmental education, capacity building and income generation activities. In Romania, the **[Kogayon Association](#)** is also working on different fronts to protect natural areas. The organization was decisive for the establishment of the country's first citizen-led national park and now focuses on the management of this and other protected areas, while also promoting research and public awareness.



## INCREASING URBAN BIODIVERSITY THROUGH CIVIC ACTION

Fellows are also engaging citizens in fostering biodiversity and food security in urban spaces. **Heike Boomgaarden** is redesigning German cities by planting regional and edible plants in urban spaces, making them available to all. By setting up holistic urban gardens [Essbare Stadt Andernach/Wesentlich](#) (*Edible City Andernach/Wesentlich*) also brings biodiversity, permaculture and soil improvement to the center of civic attention. With a similar approach, **Pam Warhurst** in the UK has set up [Incredible Edible](#) to build more resilient communities around the idea of edible gardens that can invigorate deprived communities and unused public spaces. In Poland, [The Meadow Foundation](#), founded by **Maciej Podyma**, is also raising awareness around the need to increase biodiversity in urban landscapes by engaging citizens in planting flower meadows and actively fostering biodiverse environments.

# USE OF TECHNOLOGY



Digitization is one of the fastest evolving global phenomena and an issue that European leaders are increasingly aware of. In 2018, the European Commission announced a €9.2 billion investment in digital programs (EC, 2018), while a 2017 UN report estimated that by 2019 the internet traffic worldwide will have increased 66 times from 2005 levels (UN, 2017). New technologies present opportunities for economic growth, more inclusion and inequality reduction (WEF, 2018). They also have the potential to significantly change labor markets and create demands for the development of new skills. Last but not least, human interaction is undergoing changes under the influence of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, the internet of things and advanced robotics (UN, 2017).

Social entrepreneurs are working towards bringing technology closer to civil society organizations and to educational settings, with the purpose of making data and technology a tool for positive social change. They also use technology as a means to trigger ethical consumption and to better tackle crises and natural hazards. Through these approaches, Ashoka Fellows engage youth, civil society organizations and citizens in problem-solving, empowering them to find solutions with the help of the newest technologies.



Photo: SchulePLUS Forum





## LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Through the work of the [Open Knowledge International](#), **Rufus Pollock** empowers citizens and civil society organizations to effectively make use of the available open data, while also working with governments and policy-makers towards a system in which data is open by default. Starting in the UK, the work of Open Knowledge is now a global open data movement.

In Germany, **Stephanie Hankey** is advising and training organizations committed to social change to implement the most effective and useful technologies to reach their aims. The focus of [Tactical Technology Collective](#) is to bring issues of security and information usage to the core of the advocacy and political engagement activities of CSOs around the world.



## EMBEDDING TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATION

Technology is a tool that can raise concerns when handled by children and youth but that can also provide solutions if used appropriately. Founded by **Jörg Schüller**, [Digitale Helden](#) (*Digital Heroes*) is a platform to enhance digital empathy among children as a way to counteract the negative effects of cyberbullying. By leveraging on the skills of the so-called “digital natives” and involving them in the production of relevant content and activities, the organization is creating a network of German schools and institutions (such as welfare organizations and police stations) that can prevent cyberbullying and promptly react when necessary. Based in Spain, **David Cuartielles** is using technology to develop youth’s abilities to handle social problems in creative ways. The learning methodology developed by the [Arduino Verklad](#) enables teachers to integrate technology in their curriculum in meaningful ways, allowing students to make use of it in problem-solving processes and not as an end in itself.



## TURNING TECHNOLOGY INTO A TOOL FOR ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

[Fairphone](#), in the Netherlands, is proving that even electronic industries can produce products through fair supply chains and avoid negative impacts to society and the environment. The organization founded by **Bas van Abel** created an ethical modular smartphone that is easy to repair, promotes good working conditions and makes use of ethical materials, creating a generation of mindful consumers of electronic goods worldwide.



## EMPLOYING TECHNOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATORY CRISIS MANAGEMENT

In France, **Gaël Musquet** aims to change the crisis management systems used by the government in case of natural disasters. With [Hackers Against Natural Disasters](#), citizens can directly contribute to the development of a digital infrastructure that helps society respond more effectively to natural hazards, challenging the traditional top-down approaches of public institutions.

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Participation is considered an essential element of citizenship in a democratic Europe and a core element of youth empowerment, as it leads to positive changes in the lives of young people, as well as to social and economic development (Croley & Moxon, 2018). The importance of young people's participation in democratic life is highlighted in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2007, Art 165) and has increased since 2014, according to the Flash Eurobarometer 455 (2017). However, recent research also shows that European youth face considerable vulnerabilities that endanger their well-being and civic engagement. According to the latest Eurostat data, out of the 88.6 million young people between 15 and 29 years old living in the EU, 28.8% are facing poverty while 11% of the working youth in the European Union are at risk of poverty (Eurostat, 2017).

Social entrepreneurs address these issues from an early stage and in strongly complementary ways. One approach is to focus on the well-being of children in the first place. Ashoka Fellows also develop programs that later on prevent the radicalization of youth and provide appropriate settings for their growth, either through a focus on training or by establishing supportive community structures. The key in their approaches towards ensuring child and youth well-being and participation is to engage parents, teachers, care givers, state institutions and experts in developing holistic multi-layered programs. More importantly, social entrepreneurs are turning to youth themselves and supporting them in their own self-directed development journeys.





## ENSURING CHILD WELL-BEING

Ashoka supports social entrepreneurs in Europe who are working towards ensuring children well-being and reinforcing the collective character of this task. For example, **Annette Habert** in Germany established a support network of volunteers that host separated parents who need to travel in order to see their children. [Flechtwerk 2+1](#) advocates for changes in legal practices while enabling children to maintain relationships with both of their parents.

In the United Kingdom, **Dame Esther Rantzen** started a 24/7 helpline for children in distress that supports young people while influencing government policy around child abuse, neglect and the daily challenges of children and youth. The success of [ChildLine](#) inspired Esther to found [Silver Line](#), a helpline for the elderly and other isolated people that addresses the issue of loneliness. While Esther is responding to young people's emergencies in the UK, **Carlene Firmin** is taking a complementary approach to prevent them. The [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#) aims to shift the public attention towards identifying and tackling the conditions under which child abuse occurs by connecting researchers, policymakers and practitioners to prevent abuse in both private and public environments.

Recognizing that children are the most vulnerable among the affected groups in the armed conflicts between Kurdish groups and Turkish forces in the Southeastern Anatolian region, [ÇAÇA \(Çocuklar Aynı Çatı Altında\)](#) (*Children under the same roof*) is working to minimize their traumas and promote children's rights. Working in vulnerable neighborhoods, **Azize Leygara** is offering art workshops for young people while also supporting families and mediating collaborations between other institutions and partners.



## PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND RADICALIZATION

Social entrepreneurs are also focused on preventing youth antisocial behavior, violence and radicalization. In the UK, **Charlie Howard** started [MAC-UK](#) to provide mental health services and street-therapy to marginalized youth and gang members. The program includes opportunities for youth to start their own projects and clubs which in turn helps them develop employment skills.

**Edit Schlaffer**, in Austria, is fighting youth radicalization by engaging mothers in the process through her organization [Women without Borders](#). Through the MotherSchools program, now being replicated globally, mothers are trained to spot early signs of radicalization in their families and also act as community advocates. Edit has developed a new security model based on family and community stability and support, rather than military and police intervention. With the [Institute of Public Safety Awareness](#) in Poland, **Jacek Purski** has also developed an educational methodology that enables people to identify early stages of radicalization. Through trainings on physical safety and on radicalization processes, schools, police officers, local government and social workers are all engaged in a holistic process of preventing social radicalization.



## INVESTING IN YOUTH SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP

Many social entrepreneurs focus on developing youth skills and giving voice to young leaders. In Turkey, **Serra Titiz** is developing an online and offline mentoring program for youth through her organization [Gelecek Daha Net](#) (*Future is brighter*) which connects young people with role-models, exposing them to various career and life-possibilities, making youth proactive and engaged members of society. In Northern Ireland, **Vernon Ringland** of [Youth Bank International](#) is also developing leadership and problem-solving skills among youth by engaging them as grant-makers in their communities. Youth-led groups are gathering the funds, distributing them and ensuring follow-up activities thus directly contributing to tackling community challenges. In the UK, **Ruth Ibegbuna** has founded [Reclaim](#) to empower youth leaders from working class backgrounds to address issues in their communities through advocacy and engagement with public authorities. Her new venture, [The Roots Programme](#), is also fostering civic participation by bringing together people from different walks of life to socialize and debate matters that affect them all.

With [Hayat Sende Gençlik Akademisi Dernegi](#) (*"It's your life" Youth Academy Association*) in Turkey, **Abdullah Oskay** is focusing on empowering youth from state institutions to become fully engaged citizens by connecting them to a platform of other engaged youth in their communities. The organization works with government agencies and NGOs to develop appropriate policies and change the mindsets of childcare institutions. In France, **Stéphane De Freitas** is

giving voice to young people through a comprehensive educational program focused on eloquence, argumentation, and confidence. [Coopérative Indigo](#) aims to bring society closer together by encouraging exchange, as well as developing a social network that rewards solidarity.



## DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY STRUCTURES FOR YOUTH

Supportive community structures are also key for youth empowerment, and social entrepreneurs are specially addressing this need through sports. Based in Germany, **Florian Zech** set up [AMANDLA EduFootball](#) to develop Safe-Hubs around the world. The hubs are community spaces for the practice of soccer and other activities aimed at youth. Leveraging the power of sports to bring young people together, the organization uses these spaces to foster other civil society and government programs, such as psychological counseling, social support, ICT training zones and start-up incubators. In Norway, **Knut Ove Børseth** also uses adrenalin-filled sports to engage youth, prevent them from dropping out of school and help find tailored solutions to their needs and social situations. By collaborating with government services, [Kjørforlivet](#) (*Drive for life*), helps at-risk youth to become part of inclusive communities while also shifting perceptions around the potential of youth. Through [Calciosociale](#), **Massimo Vallati** is changing the perception and role of soccer in marginalized communities, turning soccer games into community events and conversation spaces. He is changing the rules of the game away from competition and aggression, incentivizing play to focus on inclusion and empathy on and off the field.

# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



The past years have highlighted significant changes in democracies around the world. The Brexit vote in the UK, the democratic backsliding taking place in Central and Eastern European countries, as well as the comeback of far-right movements and parties are all raising questions regarding the future of democracy in Europe. A key area of action to deal with these developments is to broadly encourage active citizenship. This is one of the core strategies of the European Commission to generate social cohesion and reduce the democratic deficit across Europe (Mascherini et al., 2009). Forging solidarity among different generations and bridging common interests (EESC, 2012) is also a way of advancing global citizenship (UN, 2018) and encouraging political pluralism, accountability and transparency in societies (EC, 2019).

Ashoka social entrepreneurs foster active citizenship skills among youth and adults alike. They connect organized civil society with citizens and work towards increasing citizens' well-being and strengthening community ties. They also build trust between governments and citizens as a way to strengthen democratic institutions in Europe. Throughout these different areas of action, Ashoka Fellows create spaces that give voice to citizens of different ages and backgrounds and increase their access to key stakeholders in the public sphere, allowing groups to underscore the issues that matter to them and to directly take action.





## TURNING YOUTH INTO ACTIVE CITIZENS

Social entrepreneurs are fostering the engagement of citizens from various perspectives. Throughout Europe, Fellows are making sure that children and youth have a voice in public and political processes. **Emrah Kirimsoy**, for instance, through her organization [Gündem Çocuk Derneği](#) (*Agenda for Children Association*), builds alliances and collaborations between Turkish NGOs, media and experts to position children as key stakeholders in social problems. In the United Kingdom, [Bite the Ballot](#), founded by **Michael Sani**, creates a network of young leaders which mobilizes youth to vote, campaigns for facilitating registration requirements and uses online media to bring relevant political issues to their attention, triggering their political participation. The Swiss think-and-do tank [Foraus](#), led by **Nicola Forster**, engages youth in the political processes around issues of their interest. They conduct research and write position papers on these matters and also mobilize around election campaigns that address these causes.

Social entrepreneurs also develop training programs for youth: **Mayread Healy** has started [Future Voices](#) to educate marginalized Irish youth on their rights and responsibilities as citizens, while also expanding their networks to increase their access to the legal and political systems. Through [Ticket to Change](#), **Matthieu Dardailon** facilitates young people's development into entrepreneurial, engaged and change-oriented citizens. The program has expanded to engage corporations and their employees along the path of building changemaking communities. Another approach of engaging youth in public matters is that of **Mikuláš Kroupa** and [Post Bellum](#) in the Czech Republic. The organization focuses on the family environment, media spaces and the educational system to make historical events more present through the narratives of those who experienced them. The approach allows youth and adults to learn from history and develop a collective narrative of their experiences.



## STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS OF CITIZENS

Another way in which social entrepreneurs address active citizenship is by working with civil society organizations. **Itir Erhart** and **Renay Onur** in Turkey set up [Adım Adım](#) (*Step by Step*) in order to facilitate support for NGOs. Fundraising through endurance sports events, they mobilize thousands of volunteers and individual donors, thus strengthening the bond between citizens and organizations. Similarly, **Christian Vanizette** created [Make Sense](#) in France as a platform for citizens to provide know-how for social organizations. In this online platform, the community is encouraged to present effective solutions to problems posed by the organizations, thus advancing problem-solving skills and methodologies for social change. In Poland, **Jan Jakub (Kuba) Wagnanski** started [Stocznia](#) (*Shipyard*) in order to develop a more stable and stronger citizen sector to safeguard the development of democracy in the country. The organization is bringing together researchers, activists and civic organizations to address social challenges through research and impact evaluation, social innovation and civic participation.



## DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

Citizens tend to engage with public matters primarily through local communities. Because of this, social entrepreneurs focus on strengthening community ties and increasing the involvement of local stakeholders. In France, **Anne Charpy** of [Voisin Malin](#) (*Smart Neighbor*) brings together authorities, public utility companies and citizens from marginalized communities to encourage direct and equal footing conversations. Through information and educational programs, she facilitates dialogue and problem-solving collaborations to tackle local-level issues.

In the UK, **Sanderson Jones** set up [Sunday Assembly](#), weekly gatherings that foster integration and well-being. These community-driven gatherings are centered around social activities that focus on growing empathy, mutual support and collective action. Founded by **Dan Archer** in Switzerland, [Happy City Lab](#) also focuses on turning community engagement into a low-threshold activity and an everyday practice. Through participative and immersive events organized regularly, passers-by are engaged in intervention activities to improve their communities. In the UK, the [Craftivist Collective](#), founded by **Sarah Corbett**, engages communities in developing creative and mindful approaches to activism, focusing on collaboration rather than confrontation. With [Bibliothèques Sans Frontières](#) (*Libraries without Borders*) **Jérémy Lachal** from France is turning libraries into engines for community developments, especially those located in isolated and deprived areas. Going beyond their educational role, libraries become centers for changing community dynamics, increasing access to technology and addressing community-specific social issues.



## DEVELOPING TRUST BETWEEN CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT

In the Czech Republic, **Jiří Skuhrovec** started [zIndex](#), a public procurement benchmark that enables citizens to have a more transparent and therefore trustworthy overview of the way public tenders are undertaken by authorities. The platform creates rankings of the performance of different institutions and goes further by working with agencies to improve their processes based on the assessment results.



## FOSTERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN SPACES

In Turkey, **Yaşar Adanali** started [Beyond Istanbul](#) to develop a participatory model of urban planning in which engineers, architects, activists, students and city planners create collaborative projects so that spaces in the city can ensure inclusion and social justice. Also encouraging citizens to appropriate the city, [Yes We Camp](#), founded by **Nicolas Detrie** in France, uses vacant buildings to create common spaces where people can start their own cultural, social or economic initiatives. In Portugal, **António Bello** is working with vulnerable communities to improve the living conditions for citizens living in unsafe or degraded spaces. Putting the dwellers themselves at the core of the project, [Just a Change](#) connects government, universities, companies and parishes through the complex issue of appropriate housing.

# MEDIA AND JOURNALISM



The phenomenon of fake news and its spread through social media has been at the forefront of the public debate in recent years. The European Commission considers it to be one of the major challenges that Europe is facing, since anyone can publish and share unverified information online (EC, 2018). International organizations like the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe acknowledge the need of a robust and diverse media ecosystem and emphasize the importance of public service media in counteracting disinformation and propaganda (Council of Europe, 2019). The quality of media content, its accuracy and ethical principles are under constant scrutiny (Ireton & Posetti, 2018), while the challenges of developing new media funding models have not yet been overcome (Sachdev, 2018). These issues require solutions capable of ensuring fundamental democratic principles such as the freedom of expression, media pluralism, and the rights of citizens to diverse and dependable information (EC, 2018).

Social entrepreneurs are at the forefront of developing new journalism models and styles, either by creating solutions-oriented media or by investing in citizens' media literacy and journalistic skills. Their purpose is to maintain high journalistic standards that positively contribute to the public sphere. Through their work, Ashoka Fellows democratize media production and content, developing more collaborative formats among professionals and citizens alike.







## ENCOURAGING CITIZEN JOURNALISM

European social entrepreneurs are engaging citizens in developing high-quality and relevant media content. In the UK, **Oren Yakobovich** trains communities for recording and denouncing human rights violations in video. [Videre](#) is a safe platform for these violations to be reported and for connecting citizen journalists with mainstream media. In Turkey, **Mehmet Atakan Foça** created [teyit.org](#), a platform that promotes media literacy among citizens and provides them with the tools to hold media outlets accountable. As a way to counteract misinformation, they are also working with news agencies, universities and civil society organizations towards developing appropriate skills for navigating such a dense media environment.



## CHANGING NEGATIVE DISCOURSE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Fellows are also shifting the negative discourse that is often encountered in mainstream reporting. Through [Sparknews](#), **Christian De Boisredon** created a platform for sharing solution-focused media material among editors-in-chief worldwide. Apart from serving the public's need for solution-based journalism, Sparknews also changes exclusivity practices in the media sector through a decentralized approach and enables new funding models by engaging advertising companies in developing their brands alongside solutions-based news.

In Spain, [porCausa](#) brings together journalists and researchers to develop reports and other informative materials that provide media practitioners with a truthful perspective of social problems. Founded by **Gonzalo Fanjul**, the organization is changing misleading narratives around social challenges and reaching a variety of stakeholders engaged with these issues. Based in Italy, [Italia che Cambia](#) (*Italy That Changes*) is creating a comprehensive database of citizen-led initiatives that are positively transforming Europe. Led by journalist **Daniel Tarozzi**, the project is mapping and connecting social entrepreneurs in Europe, while also supporting them in sharing their solutions by developing more solution-oriented media channels.

# EDUCATION



The rapid transformations of today's world are posing new pressures and demands to educational systems worldwide. The European Investment Bank highlights the importance of high-quality education for social and economic progress (EIB, 2019), while the OECD (2019) emphasizes its role in fighting polarization, strengthening democracy and unravelling social innovations. The educational process itself is undergoing significant changes, requiring more inclusive and collaborative methodologies to address the needs of different actors. Digital developments are also increasing the complexity of the modern world, presenting challenges and opportunities for education (OECD 2019).

The approaches of social entrepreneurs in the field of education are diverse and far-reaching: Ashoka Fellows develop new methodologies that can be incorporated in curricula, they focus on the role and skills of teachers in a rapidly changing world, they bring in relevant stakeholders as active contributors to the educational process and they work to improve access to higher education, while also making academic research more accessible to the general public. Social entrepreneurs understand the systemic complexity of the educational sector and develop therefore a wide range of complementary interventions that address essential stakeholders and system dimensions.





## INCORPORATING NEW CURRICULUM DIMENSIONS AND METHODOLOGIES

Social entrepreneurs are working to develop educational programs and the set of skills necessary for children to navigate an increasingly complex world. **Tom Ravenscroft** in the United Kingdom is bringing entrepreneurial skills into the schools through the programs of [Enabling Enterprise](#). The organization created a curriculum centered around 8 key entrepreneurial skills and an online platform that allows teachers to track the progress of students. By building alliances with NGOs, teachers, youth groups and other educational actors, their aim is to create a systemic approach towards the development of entrepreneurial skills.

In Spain, **Roser Ballesteros** has founded [VoxPrima](#) to develop a pictograph methodology of teaching writing in primary school. Learning through drawing allows children to focus on storytelling rather than on the writing itself, while also addressing creativity, multilingualism and learning difficulties. The methodology is available to schools from various socioeconomic backgrounds through an online platform. In the Netherlands, **Emer Beamer** is also developing new learning methodologies by combining design-thinking and 'maker education' approaches. Her [Designathon Works](#) method allows children to develop creative solutions to social and environmental issues, building on their passion for certain topics.



## BROADENING TEACHER ROLES AND SKILLS

Social entrepreneurs are also contributing to changing the education sector by supporting teachers to improve their work methods, strategies and skills. **Florence Rizzo** from France founded [Synlab](#) in order to make international academic research on learning and education accessible to teachers, allowing them to incorporate new methodologies and pedagogical tools in the classroom. The organization also empowers teachers to innovate at a school level and advocates for implementing more open and collaborative approaches in the national education system. In Spain, **Carmen Pellicer** of the [Trilema](#) Foundation also focuses on transforming educational processes by identifying and training leading teachers who can implement new methodologies in their schools. The selected teachers go through an intensive training on innovative methods and are encouraged to pass on their learnings to their colleagues, triggering large-scale change in education systems across Europe.

In Germany **Robert Greve** founded [SchulePLUS Forum](#) (*SchoolPLUS Forum*) with the purpose of turning schools into multi-professional spaces. The organization encourages teachers to include external expertise in their pedagogical practices thus developing a more holistic schooling approach and upcoming educational challenges. In Spain, the [Colegio Montserrat](#) proposes an international educational reform movement. The organization created by **Montserrat Del Pozo** provides teachers with a five-module training program to turn students into active players of the learning process and to effectively transmit knowledge through a set of proven methodologies.



## ENGAGING VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Several social entrepreneurs are working to engage other stakeholders in the educational system. Founded by **Bernhard Hofer**, [talentify](#) is developing a holistic model that focuses on the development of employment skills among youth, engaging Austrian schools and businesses in this process. Through a peer-to-peer online and offline platform, youth from a variety of social backgrounds tutor each other around educational and employability topics.

In Germany, [EDUCATION Y Bildung. Gemeinsam. Gestalten](#) (*Education Y Shape. Education. Together*), created by **Roman Rüdiger**, implements a methodology to develop of students' social and emotional skills and ensure future employability. The organization fosters peer-based learning by bringing students and parents to take part in the educational process while also training teachers and working with employer consultancy. Also based in Germany, **Margret Rasfeld** built the prototype school [Evangelische Schule Berlin](#) (*Protestant School Berlin*) to put children in charge of shaping their own education and to open up schools to civic engagement, breaking down existing walls dividing schools from society. The school integrates an informal learning network, the "School Rising" initiative, with 40 other schools based in this model.

In the Czech Republic, **Zdeněk Slejška's** [EDUin](#) connects various stakeholders with the purpose of formulating a common vision for the development of education. Their goal is to make the general public more informed about

education and to promote its transformation by disseminating research, connecting professionals from multiple areas and working with the media. **Burak Ulman** is tackling the Turkish school system with [Baska bir Okul Mumkun Mutlu Keci ilkokul](#) (*Another School is Possible Association*). The organization is building a growing network of schools where parents, educators, activists and entrepreneurs come together to collectively develop alternative solutions for persistent problems in the Turkish education system, creating a child-centered, ecologically friendly, democratic and non-profit school model. In Poland, **Teresa Ogrodzinska** of the [Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci im. Jana Amosa Komeńskiego](#) (*The Comenius Foundation for Child Development*) develops participatory methodologies to change pre-school education on a national level by bringing together parents, teachers, children and local governments. The organization also contributes to developing long-term strategies and alternatives for improving pre-school education in Polish rural areas.



## MAKING FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MORE TRANSPARENT

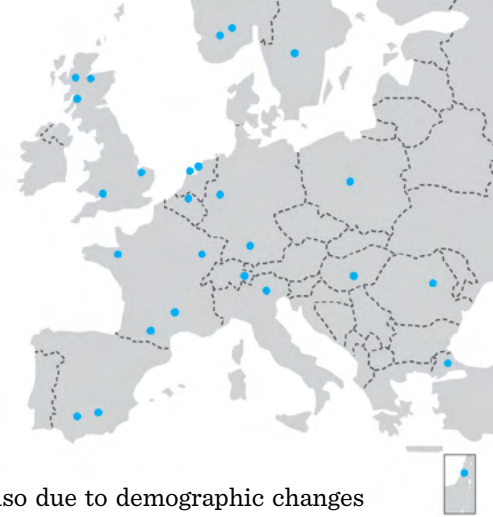
The higher education system is also targeted by social entrepreneurs. **Dr. Mira Maier** in Germany started the [Initiative für transparente Studienförderung](#) (*Initiative for Transparent Award of Scholarships*) to make information on scholarships more accessible to high-school and university students. The organization also works with potential funders and partners to increase the offered stipends and to fund underrepresented groups. Similarly, **Mesut Keskin** is democratizing and digitizing the scholarship system in Turkey through [E-Bursum](#) (*E-scholarships*), an online platform that creates a fair and transparent system for students to access scholarship opportunities. The organization also conducts extensive research with the gathered data to improve the Turkish scholarship ecosystem as a whole.



## CONNECTING RESEARCH AND SCIENCE TO SOCIETY

Fellows are also relying on the potential of research for creating systemic change. **Melanie Marcel** from France envisions impact research to be easily accessible and attractive for social organizations. [SoScience](#) builds a framework for social entrepreneurs and researchers to closely collaborate, enabling organizations to incorporate social impact research, develop thorough research budgets and gain access to research funds. In Greece, **Theodore Anagnostopoulos** engages schools, scientists, journalists and the general public to create a culture of science literacy. Through his organization [SciCo](#) he inserts innovative and interactive elements into scientific dissemination and creates communication channels between scientists and the public. After successfully fostering a “pop culture of science” in Greece, SciCo is now expanding throughout Europe, Asia and Latin America.

# HEALTHCARE



Similar to education, the European healthcare system is under constant pressure also due to demographic changes previously addressed in this study. Longer lifespans, lower natality rates and increased migration are affecting the way in which healthcare can be provided (EC, 2012), as well as the evolving standards of patient care. The increased demand for healthcare translates into economic pressures and burden on public finances, which also relates to an increase in the costs of medicines and innovative technology (EC, 2017). The OECD estimates that healthcare costs could reach 13% of GDP by 2050 from 7% in 2010 (De la Maisonneuve & Martins, 2015). The need therefore is to meet the increased demand of care services with cost-efficient models (Gløersen et al., 2016) that can also ensure an even distribution of health professionals and services, securing the availability of appropriate care across the European society (EC, 2017).

Social entrepreneurs are addressing these needs in complementary ways, from focusing on the demands of specific target groups to improving the overall provision of services and reshaping the dynamics between stakeholders in the healthcare system. By making people more aware of the importance of healthcare, they also provide them with concrete opportunities to get engaged and make a difference in the care of others and that of their own. Here too Ashoka Fellows focus on connecting institutions with the emerging needs of the population, by revising practices through a systemic understanding and engaging its beneficiaries in the design of services.



Photo: European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants



## INVESTING IN THE HEALTHCARE OF CHILDREN

One major area of focus of social entrepreneurs is children's health. In Hungary, **Márta Bácskai** founded [Gondolkodj Egészségesen!](#) (*Go Healthy!*), an educational program for health practice starting from pre-school. Through the program, parents and teachers come together to ensure the full well-being of the child while also encouraging children to take responsibility for their own healthcare choices from a young age. In Italy, [Fight the Stroke](#), founded by **Francesca Fedeli**, supports children who went through a stroke and their families in understanding the condition and adopting adequate rehabilitation tools such as toolkits based on videogame technology.

Caring for both mothers and children, **Barbara Muller** is developing safe spaces in the Netherlands where soon-to-be and young mothers coming from difficult backgrounds can care for and connect with their babies through the programs [Het Babyhuis](#) (*The Baby House*) and [De Beschermde Wieg](#) (*The Protected Cradle*). The organization primarily targets women and families who otherwise wouldn't have access to public services or proper support. The programs also offer a safe environment and legal support for women willing to give their babies up for adoption.



## SAFEGUARDING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Social entrepreneurs also engage with issues related to women's health. In Poland, **Ida Karpinska** of [Kwiat Kobiecości](#) (*Flower of Femininity*) runs a program on health and sexual education to provide women from different backgrounds with appropriate preventive care and support for gynecological cancers. The organization connects various institutions and organizations in a wide support network and focuses on eliminating public taboos around the topic of women's health with the help of the media, public figures and activists.



## IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH OF ADULTS AND YOUTH

Mental health care has gained increased public attention in the past years and is also a topic of concern to social entrepreneurs. [The Reader Organization](#), founded by **Jane Davis** in the UK, uses literature as a therapeutic tool by launching reading aloud groups in various spaces such as libraries, hostels, mental health centers, schools and prisons. Reading with others facilitates people to share their own experiences, improving mental health and community well-being. Focusing on children's well-being, **Kjartan Eide** founded [Trivselsprogram](#) (*Wellbeing Program*), a recess educational program in which children exercise empathy and inclusion. The program reduces bullying and contributes to a more positive experience of children in Norwegian schools.

Several Fellows are expanding the access to mental health support. **Emma-Jane Cross** of **The BB Group** in the UK developed an online platform connecting youth in need with volunteers and professionals who can provide emotional support. In case of necessity, the platform also connects them with emergency services. With a similar approach, **Ingrid de Jonghe** created [Tejo](#): a network of volunteer therapists who provide free and immediate support to youth across Belgium. In Germany, **Inge Missmahl** started [Ipsos](#) in order to develop psychosocial counselling and the community of specialists that can deliver it. This type of counselling is in-between therapy, medication and social work, focusing less on diagnostic and medication and more on community and social well-being. Through [Assisted Self-Help](#) in Norway, **Oskar Blakstad** helps people suffering from mild to moderate mental health disorders by developing an online tool in which health experts can share knowledge and treatments, improving the quality and access of underdeveloped services for this particular target group.



## IMPROVING PROCEDURES AND TREATMENTS IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Many social entrepreneurs work on improving the traditional healthcare system overall. In Switzerland, **Caroline Kant** and her organization [EspeRare](#) act as an intermediary between government, patients, and pharmaceutical companies in order to provide more effective treatment for rare diseases. By developing new financial models and several drug repositioning programs, EspeRare also facilitates the emergence of new treatments and of personalized medicine. Also addressing rare diseases, the [Prader Willi Association](#), founded by **Dorica Dan** in Romania, created a comprehensive and holistic system through which patients can access a network of all services available to them, be they medical, social or administrative.

In Germany, the [European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants \(EFCNI\)](#), founded by **Silke Mader**, is running an international interdisciplinary program for developing appropriate care protocols for preterm and ill newborns to

prevent further complications. Together with families, professionals, governments, businesses and researchers, EFCNI works at individual and family levels, crossing sectors and borders in order to trigger systemic changes.

**Jos de Blok** and **Buurtzorg** (*Neighborhood Care*) in the Netherlands is working towards making nursing professionals more independent, closer to the patients and central to the care-taking process, in order to reduce the patients' need for institutionalized care. By creating a network of nurses who provide patient-centered care services, Buurtzorg is contributing to increased job satisfaction for health professionals, better care results for patients, and a reduction of costs for the healthcare system. **Nolwenn Febvre** of **Les Ptits Doudous** (*The Little Comforters*) in France is also strengthening the healthcare system by empowering health professionals to develop cost-efficient and patient-centric solutions in their work and build on their expertise in improving services provided.

Fellows are using technology to improve procedures, increase access to treatments and centralize information. In Spain, the **Organización Nacional de Trasplantes** (*National Transplant Organization*), founded by **Rafael Matesanz**, works on setting up a more responsive system for organ donation. The organization trains doctors to communicate and trigger organ donation processes through a transparent and effective management system, supervised by the government. Also in Spain, **Ignacio Hernández Medrano** of **Savana** has developed an online platform gathering millions of patient records, providing caregivers with a comprehensive overview of centralized medical information. With a similar approach, **Shifo** developed a digital system to track the immunization records of children in Sweden. The system, created by **Rustam Nabiev**, is more user-friendly than other platforms and considers the everyday needs of families and nurses in tracking the records and accessing information. In the UK, **Andrew Bastawrous** of **Peek Vision Foundation** developed a smartphone technology for faster and better screenings and diagnostics of eye care. The organization works with healthcare institutions across the world to enable effective access to eye treatment in vulnerable and remote areas with this tool.

Social entrepreneurs are also improving primary care, focusing on prevention and offering alternative treatments. **Equiphoria**, in France, engages care-givers, family members and patients in a non-drug-based therapy for patients with neurological disorders. By using equine therapy based on the latest scientific research, the organization founded by **Hélène Viruega** emphasizes the importance of holistic therapies, changing mindsets of medical professionals and making therapies financially accessible. Also in France, **Bénédicte Défontaines** of **Réseau mémoire Aloïs** (*Alois Memory Network*) is redesigning early-stage interventions to help families and patients cope better with the evolution of cognitive diseases. She has created an integrated value chain of early detection, support and medical care that improves the lives of patients and families. **Benjamin Mousnier-Lompré** of **Ipsosanté** is also focusing on prevention and early intervention by increasing access to the French primary care, developing a collaborative model between doctors, engineers and organization experts that moves away from hospitalization and reshapes the primary care system.



## ENGAGING CITIZENS IN PROVIDING HEALTHCARE

In order to counteract the shortage of healthcare personnel, social entrepreneurs are engaging citizens in health services. **Eli Beer** of **United Hatzalah** in Israel trains citizens as volunteer first-aiders and coordinates them through a GPS app in order to tackle the long response time of professional medical help. While reducing the action time of medical emergencies to under three minutes, the program also connects the Jewish, Arab and Christian communities in saving lives. In the UK, **Wellbeing Enterprises**, founded by **Mark Swift**, supplements healthcare personnel with volunteers focused on social prescribing and community support for health issues. Their work is complemented by training programs for healthcare workers and the promotion of social prescribing in the public healthcare system, changing the understanding of effective care.



## ORGANIZING HEALTH-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITIES

Physical activity is an important component of healthcare and **Paul Sinton-Hewitt** focuses on promoting it. Initiated in the UK, **Parkrun** organizes weekly community exercising events in over 12 countries aiming to promote physical exercise for a healthy life while also to improving community bonding among participants.



## IMPROVING WORKERS' HEALTH

**Abdülhalim Demir** of **Clean Clothes Campaign** in Turkey started a coalition that exposes problems and aligns stakeholders for advocacy in improving health and safety conditions for workers in the textile industry. By bringing together workers, trade unions, media and experts, the organization realigns the dynamics between all these stakeholders to advocate for fairer conditions in the industry.

# REDESIGNING SOCIAL SERVICES



European welfare states are undergoing considerable changes as a result of an aging population, new mobility patterns, the emergence of private providers for social services and other social transformations (Gløersen et al., 2016). Some of these aspects have been detailed in the previous sections on demographic changes, migration and economic stagnation. The extended European welfare state model is under revision and topics such as the universal basic income have gained traction as potential alternative economic models (Meuleman et al., 2018). Innovative solutions along the lines of financing services, providing benefits and ensuring appropriate infrastructure are necessary in order to address social inequality and to ensure upward convergence (EC, 2018).

Social entrepreneurs are mainly addressing these challenges by promoting a stronger integration of the social services available to different target groups, thus changing the dynamics between stakeholders and the ways in which they collaborate. Ashoka Fellows also work to improve social service infrastructure in rural areas, underlining the need to support these particular communities on multiple fronts, as detailed in the Economic Stagnation section. What is common in the approaches of Fellows is their focus on developing stronger integrated models among the various providers of social services and their creativity in overcoming sectoral divides to design and deliver better services.







## INTEGRATING STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Social entrepreneurs are integrating diverse actors to improve the European welfare systems. In France, the [Institut d'Éducation et de Pratiques Citoyennes](#) (*Institute of Education and Citizen Practices*), founded by **Mara Maudet**, connects beneficiaries of social services with policy-makers to adjust policies to their exact needs. Focusing on marginalized areas and populations, the institute promotes a user-centered design of social services and integrates services provided by different administrations. Also in France, **Paul Duan** of [Bayes Impact](#) is working together with governments and public institutions to develop a social service system that is owned and developed by citizens. Using data science to highlight and implement necessary changes for social services in partnership with governments and citizens, the team of programmers, developers and engineers contributes to addressing essential issues as health and education. In Switzerland, **Christophe Dunand** founded [Réalise Entreprise d'Insertion](#) (*Accomplish Insertion Enterprise*) to develop a new architecture for the social sector by establishing social integration enterprises. The organization also contributed to federalizing social service frameworks that were previously local, promoting social innovation and fostering collaboration between government, academia and businesses. **Pierre Foldès** also integrates multiple stakeholders in developing an ecosystem of services for victims of domestic violence with [Institut en Santé Génésique](#) (*Institute for Reproductive Health*). The model brings together psychologists, lawyers, police, doctors and social workers to identify domestic violence cases early on and ensure fast and appropriate support for victims in France.



## DESIGNING SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Social entrepreneurs are also working to design and deliver better social services for young people. **Jacqueline Williamson** of [Kinship Care Northern Ireland](#) provides administrative and emotional support for children in difficult family situations by focusing primarily on the needs of kinship carers and children. She also fosters community support structures and lobby initiatives to change policy based on the solutions developed by children and families themselves. In Turkey, **Abdullah Oksay** of [Hayat Sende Derneği](#) (*"It's your life" Association*) works with organizations and decision-makers to change their programs and approaches towards youth from state institutions. By connecting key stakeholders such as NGOs, government agencies, youth, professional associations, the organization ensures an effective integration process of institutionalized youth. In Hungary, **Barbara Czeizel** started [Budapesti Korai Fejlesztő Központ](#) (*Budapest Early Development Center*) to provide integrated early-childhood interventions for children with disabilities. She changed the dynamics between doctors, social workers, parents, experts and teachers by involving them in the comprehensive offer of services for children and by increasing transdisciplinary engagement early on with this target group.



## REDEVELOPING RURAL LIFE AND RURAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Ashoka Fellows also improve rural development by providing basic services to remote areas. In Spain, **Victoria Tortosa Vicente** created [La Exclusiva](#), a logistics model that is increasing the quality of life of the rural population – particularly of the elderly. Based in the region of Soria, the organization provides a range of services on a weekly basis, such as grocery shopping and medicine delivery. **John Kearney**, founder of [Irish Community Rapid Response](#) (ICRR), addresses another fundamental basic need of the rural population: emergency healthcare. He developed an effective volunteer network of highly trained medical personnel to provide emergency care to patients in remote areas, who otherwise wouldn't have access to treatment.

# JUSTICE SYSTEM



According to the 2017 Eurobarometer 87, 10% of European citizens identify crime as a topic of concern. Through globalization processes, phenomena such as cybercrime, environmental crime and trafficking are emerging and developing as international issues (UNODC, 2019). Preventing crime, dealing with criminal acts, and developing effective mechanisms of rehabilitation are therefore a necessity in responding to these worries. The EU member states are constantly implementing judicial reforms and are monitored by EU institutions on their legislative framework, training procedures, physical infrastructure and other measures to deal with crime and successfully reintegrate criminal offenders (EC, 2018).

Social entrepreneurs are working directly with the justice system in supporting the social reintegration of prisoners, developing their employability skills and assessing the particular needs of young people. Ashoka Fellows are also creating networks of support for international justice proceedings. Apart from addressing inconsistencies and loopholes in the formal justice system, social entrepreneurs focus on the potential, needs and perspectives of prisoners, avoiding isolation and connecting them with social structures that can support their long-term rehabilitation and social reintegration.





## SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Social entrepreneurs are working to change how youth experience the justice system. In the Netherlands, [Young in Prison](#) focuses on the creativity of incarcerated youth and develops a reintegration program connecting them with the civil society and the government. The organization created by **Noa Lodeizen** has a bottom-up and top-down approach to untap the potential of young people, while also reducing the stigma of incarceration and contributing to the formulation of appropriate policies. Also working with young people, the [Youth Re-Autonomy Foundation of Turkey](#), founded by **Güney Haştemoğlu**, has piloted the country's first models of legal support, institution monitoring, rehabilitation and crime prevention for children and youth. These models have been adopted by the government and are currently expanding to other countries and international organizations.



## DEVELOPING PRISONERS' SKILLS AND IMPROVING REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

Prisoner reintegration is core to the work that social entrepreneurs are doing. **Zafer Kirac** in Turkey founded [Ceza Infaz Sisteminde Sivil Toplum Derneği](#) (*Civil Society in the Penal System Association*) to bring civil society organizations and university programs to prisons. The connection between the inside and the outside worlds of prisons improves the shortcomings of the penal system, facilitating prisoners' rehabilitation and reintegration. **Alexander McLean** of the [African Prisons Project](#) works to change policies and mindsets about prisoners both in the UK and in East African countries. Partnering with institutions in the UK, the organization is providing legal advice, training, and education to those living and working in African prisons, empowering those most in need of justice to access it for themselves. In the Czech Republic, **Dagmar Doubravová** works with the [Rubicon centrum](#) towards developing a national probation system, closing legislative gaps for reintegration and creating an employment platform for ex-prisoners with the purpose of reducing recidivism. In Italy, **Luciana delle Donne** of [Made in Carcere](#) employs women in prison and develops a supply-chain model with structures outside of the prison, paying employees a competitive market salary. The program has been adopted by the Ministry of Justice as a best-practice model.

**Marjan Gryson** in Belgium started [Touché](#) as a training program that focuses on re-channeling prisoners' frustrations, working with them towards focusing on positive goals. The program started mainly in prisons and is now being implemented in a variety of communities. In Germany, **Volkert Ruhe** develops a mentoring program between adult ex-prisoners and youth through his organization [Gefangene helfen Jugendlichen](#) (*Prisoners help Youngsters*). The environment of empathic communication prevents youth crime and facilitates the social reintegration of the offenders. The program is used by the police, educational and justice institutions, youth support and victim support organizations.



## FIGHTING WAR CRIMES IN THE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Social entrepreneurs also work on crime-related matters at international level. **Andras Vamos-Goldman** from Switzerland founded [Justice Rapid Response](#). Through their programs, groups of experts in human rights and criminal justice get trained by international organizations, government and NGOs, to support states emerging from conflict in the judicial process of solving war crimes.

# ANNEXES

## METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the issues that have been at the forefront of the public agenda between 2017-2018, we have looked into reports, articles, positions and research produced by a variety of stakeholders: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the World Economic Forum, Eurodiaconia and the academic world. The main goal was to include perspectives from the public sector, citizens, business, academia and civil society organizations who contribute to assessing what the overall perceived social issues at European level are. The list of all the information sources used is:

Standard Eurobarometer 89, (2018). (Online) Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2180> (Accessed 29 January 2019).

Special Eurobarometer 467, (2017). *Future of Europe. Social issues*. (Online) Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/.../80645> (Accessed 29 January 2019).

European Parliament, (2018). *Europe's challenges in 2018: Ten issues to watch*. European Parliamentary Research Service Blog. (Online) Available at: <https://epthinktank.eu/2018/01/17/europes-challenges-in-2018-ten-issues-to-watch/> (Accessed 4 February 2019).

Bildt, C. (2017), *The six issues that will shape the EU in 2017*. World Economic Forum. (Online) Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/the-six-issues-that-will-shape-the-eu-in-2017/> (Accessed 23 January 2019).

Isaacs, S. (ed.). (2017). *European social problems*. 1st edition, Routledge, London.

Eurodiaconia, (2018). *What are the key challenges for social Europe today?* (Online) Available at: <https://www.eurodiaconia.org/resources/social-policy-toolkit/chapter-ii-social-policies-in-europe-today/what-are-the-key-challenges-for-social-europe-today/> (Accessed 14 February 2019).

We listed which social issues were mentioned by all of these sources and marked the frequency with which they were mentioned. We clustered issues closely related to each other (for instance, terrorism and security). If an issue was mentioned by more than 50% of the sources used, we included it among the most prominent. Some of the other issues mentioned were further incorporated by being related to the problems tackled by social entrepreneurs in the Ashoka Fellowship based on an inductive analysis. Some issues such as public finance/public debts, EU's influence in the world, energy supply, rising prices/cost of living, taxation, instability in regions bordering EU, sexuality and the future of the Eurozone, have not been directly covered in the study. Although they were mentioned by the sources cited, they were not directly reflected in the work of the social entrepreneurs. For more details on the categorization of social issues please consult the table below.

For the analysis of the work of social entrepreneurs, we used information stored in the Ashoka database of Fellows and the profiles written by Ashoka staff at the time of Fellow election between 2013-2018. We selected all social entrepreneurs who were elected as Ashoka Fellows in a European country and whose social impact is within the region. Fellows elected in Europe but working in other regions of the world were outside the scope of this study. The countries included in the study represent the countries incorporated in the Ashoka Europe regional structure and not necessarily countries geographically belonging to Europe (this is why Israel, for example, is also included). We coded the social issues addressed by the social entrepreneurs in the sample and the types of solutions they developed, and clustered the Fellows in overarching approaches to a particular social issue. We then matched these approaches with the social issues identified in external sources through the methods presented above.

	EB 89, 2018	EB 467, 2017	EP, 2018	WEF, 2017	Isaacs 2017	Eurodiaconia 2018
Immigration/Migration	●	●	●	●	●	●
Terrorism/Security issues/Foreign and security policy/Crime	●	●	●	●	●	
Unemployment/Segmentation of the labour market	●	●				●
Economic situation/Insufficient economic growth	●	●		●		
Pensions/Aging population/Demographic changes	●	●				●
Social inequalities/Rising inequalities		●	●		●	
Climate change/The environment	●	●				
Digital Europe/Disinformation and cybersecurity			●	●		
European elections/Political scene - national elections, populism			●	●		
The state of member states' public finances/ public debt	●	●				
Competition from emerging countries		●			●	
Brexit			●	●		
Youth empowerment			●			
Riots and protest					●	
Education					●	
Health					●	
Rising prices/Inflation/Cost of living	●					
EU's influence in the world	●					
Instability in regions bordering EU		●				
North Korea			●			
Taxation	●					
Future of the Euro area			●			
Legislative and decision-making processes in the EU						●
Future financing of the Union			●			
Multiculturalism and religion					●	
Sexuality					●	
Energy supply	●					

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The study builds upon a non-exhaustive set of data sources and list of social issues in Europe. There is also a tendency of focusing on issues that are connected to countries of the European Union (due to the data sources consulted), although other non-EU countries are included in the study. This can lead to a bias and a focus on concerns highlighted by EU institutions. Because the information gathered was from the time of election of the Ashoka Fellows, some of the data has the potential to be out of date at the time of publication. This may discount the evolving nature of the organizational practices of Ashoka Fellows. In order to mitigate some of these limitations, further research could be conducted into a more in-depth analysis of the systemic approaches of Ashoka Fellows within and across social issues in the future.

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