

Laboratory for Community Development: An Innovation for Resilient Innovation Systems in Central Romania

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Digitalization and technology are reshaping contemporary realities at an unprecedented pace and are generating new opportunities for innovation at the intersection of multiple fields. The algorithmic logic of these innovations produces novel social phenomena and nurtures a range of anxieties, fears, and retreat of particular categories of population into conservative values for obtaining the needed psychological comfort. In this context of social change, we propose an integrated approach from the perspective of the social sciences to understand how communities can be made part of these processes so that change is comprehended and social solidarity reinforced. Therefore, this presentation outlines the working logic of the Community Development Laboratory piloted in Romania and examines how new forms of digital governance can contribute to the development of a resilient innovation system. On the one hand, the core themes addressed relate to the potential of innovation systems to support democratization and to foster the participation of younger generations in social processes that previously held little interest for them, as well as multi-actor frameworks required for this process. On the other hand, the response to these new trends within society is documented in the case of Romania's younger generation and interpreted through an analysis of their uncertainties regarding the society of the future. This perspective enables us to introduce the community dimension into systems dominated by digital and global patterns of technological transformation. In this framework, the Community Development Laboratory operates within emerging innovation ecosystems shaped by technological convergence and digitally mediated governance. Its role is to strengthen inclusive participation and institutional resilience in contexts marked by rapid socio-technological transformation.

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