

Communication technologies to encourage innovative activities engagement in students

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Abstract. The challenges of the new century have expanded the range of tasks universities are facing. In addition to traditional research and cultural tasks, the task of mastering the role of innovators not only in educational and research technologies - but also in cultivating socially responsible individuals and active citizens who are aware of global threats, able to anticipate risks, address social issues and develop the economy. The article presents the results of the author's sociology research on the following issues: how students of VN Karazin Kharkiv National University respond to global challenges, whether students are prepared to become part of a solution to global development challenges identified by the Government of Ukraine (based on UN Sustainable Development Goals) as a priority for the near future and what forms of innovative practices the students choose for this purpose. Attractive for students and young people, as an innovative practice enabling them to combine social activity and a startup, be independent of the state in the labor market and commence entrepreneurial activity in an exciting sector, is social entrepreneurship. Young people now feel congenial to the philosophy of social entrepreneurship, including many members of Generation Z- people aged 18 to 24, who care for the future of their country. According to the Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers, students belong to Early Majority of innovation adopters. For this group of innovators, it is important that information and communication programs should contain success stories and other evidence of the effectiveness of innovation, especially by opinion leaders of youth audiences. The article looks into the new communicative technologies of influence, which encourage students to innovate.

Keywords. Sustainable Development Goals, communication tools, youth, innovative practices

Introduction. Traditionally, universities have been and are centers of development of science and culture of their regions, realizing the mission of research and education. The challenges of the new century have expanded the range of tasks universities are facing. Now, in addition to the traditional research and cultural tasks to be accomplished, the university is supposed to meet the challenges that enable it to survive - the development of a system of measurable (transparent) performance, building effective relationships with a new partner - the labor market, offering a unique and innovative product, developing leadership competencies for university and student management. Another relevant component of the mission of universities today is social - "to work with the social transformation of a particular region, its economic development and support for small and medium-sized businesses. So today, universities are facing the challenge of being a cure for many of social issues. The key requirement of the state to universities is for them to play the role of innovators". [Jones 2019]. Innovators not only in educational and research technologies - but also in cultivating socially responsible individuals and active citizens who are able to understand global threats, anticipate risks, address social

causes and develop the economy. The latter can be achieved by modernizing traditional university methods of teaching and educating students, by focusing not only on the dynamics of the labor market, but also on the need to develop in students leadership competencies, critical thinking, awareness of responsibility for their own life and career. Those competencies are developed not only by students following their university curricula, but also by their participation in international projects, mobility programs, their local university programs of self-governance and others.

The state has ceased to be universities' partner, so it is important to create strong networks in the university community to join forces in establishing new partnerships to implement the mission of the university, address professional issues and cooperate with the labor market. Ukrainian universities have many opportunities to discover and strengthen the leadership potential of staff and students. Programs from the European Union, the United Nations, the British Council, the Soros Foundation, the Governments of Poland, the United States and many more offer internships and training in communication, management, leadership, cutting-edge learning and management technologies, creating professional communities to share experiences and join forces in search of solutions to new global challenges. This experience is important for students and teachers to master innovative practices that lead the university to addressing new tasks in a rapidly changing society.

Study Theory. The issue the author of the article aims to address here is to look into how students in Ukraine respond to global challenges, whether students are ready to join in the addressing of global development issues prioritized by the Government of Ukraine (based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) for the near future [National report "Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine" 2015] and the forms of innovative practices they choose for this. Also, in the article the author will consider the issues of new communication technologies of influence, which encourage students to innovate.

The topic of practice was studied by sociologists Robert Merton, Pierre Bourdieu, Emile Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Piotr Sztompka, Max Weber (social action) and others. The study of practice is gaining popularity. To address the academic task the author aims to look into, it is important to distinguish practice from other forms of activity. Kateryna Nastoiashcha indicates the following criteria for defining the practice: involuntary, automatic, repetitive, culturally-specific, embodied, mobile, indexical, measurable, conditional and conventional [Nastoiashcha 2017]. The practices are divided into traditional and innovative according to the process they follow to be established. Traditional practices are associated with the processes of constant reproduction of the same manifestations of existence - repetition and reproduction in time. Traditional practices reveal the stability of culture, they change or disappear only under radical change. They are eventually replaced by new practices - innovative ones, which spread gradually, becoming popular and then traditional.

As for innovative practices, they arise in response to social change and are a form of response to the emergence of new socio-cultural conditions. According to Sztompka, "practices are a synthetic product that arises as a result of the merger of social circumstances, on the one hand, and the abilities of people who act - on the other" [Sztompka 1996]. The first thing that is associated with the emergence of innovative practices is scientific and technological progress and inventions that improve human life. But this is not the only reason for the emergence of innovative practices. Other culture, foreign cultural influence, cultural borrowing and fashion can become factors for the development of innovative practices [Nastoiashcha 2015].

Innovative ideas penetrate into various social groups and turn into practices gradually. Everett Rogers, author of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, identified stages in the behavior of the owners of a new idea - innovators. He developed a template for the spread of successful innovations among members of the social system. Owners of a new idea in their behavior go through the following stages: awareness - interest - evaluation - trial and adoption. The process

of dissemination of innovative practices in social groups takes place according to a pattern called diffusion of innovations. Everett Rogers singles out social groups whose behavior is important to consider when choosing a strategy to promote an innovation. The groups are as follows:

1. Innovators (2,5 %) are *first to try a new product*. They have financial liquidity to help absorb the risk of failure and are willing to confirm their social status. No significant efforts are needed to persuade them.
2. Early Adopters (13,5 %) often have the highest degree of opinion leadership among the adopter categories. They have a higher social status, advanced education and financial liquidity. They are more discreet in adoption choices than innovators. To get this category on board information *on advantages of an innovation* needs to be provided.
3. Early Majority (34 %). These individuals seldom hold positions of opinion leadership in a system. They adopt an innovation earlier than an average person, have above average social status and contact with early adopters. These individuals need *to witness that an innovation is useful* before they decide to adopt it. To promote an innovation within this group success stories and other proofs of innovation effectiveness are to be included.
4. Late majority (34 %). These individuals approach an innovation with a high degree of skepticism and after the majority of society has adopted the innovation. Late Majority often have below average social status and little financial liquidity. For this group the adoption strategy should contain information on how *many people have been using the innovation successfully*, which will create an element of psychological pressure.
5. Laggards (16 %). These individuals are too conservative, tend to be focused on traditions and pay little attention to public opinion. Laggards often have lowest financial liquidity, are oldest among adopters and in contact with only family and close friends. Adoption strategies for this group include *innovation use statistics, psychological pressure of other social groups, etc.* [Rogers 2003].

How do students perceive innovation and what should they be offered in innovation promotion strategies? According to Rogers' theory, we refer students to Early Majority (34%) - people who experience innovation earlier than others. The author draws this conclusion based on the following characteristics of students as a social group: "young people, especially students who are fluent in the flow of various bits of information and are able to more actively model situations and more adequately perceive the current situation than people formed in the past historical and cultural reality" [Mid 1998].

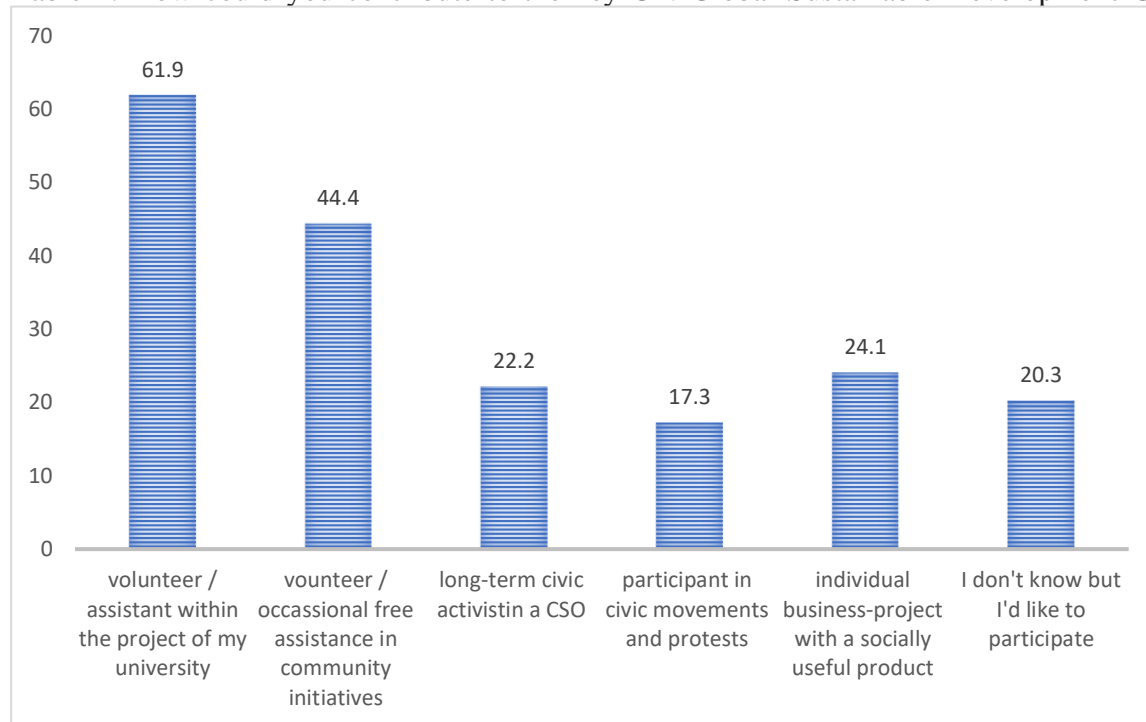
With the acquisition of the status of an independent state Ukraine has developed the practice of creating political parties, civil society organizations, private educational institutions, revival of craft traditions and decentralization, which is now commonplace. The events of 2014 added new innovative practices - volunteering, volunteer service, charity and creating associations via social media.

Modern challenges of Ukrainian society: the warfare, ineffective social programs and slow progress of reforms have caused new vulnerable groups to spring up, to include many young people and students (internally displaced persons, combatants, rehabilitated drug and alcohol addicts, people with special needs etc.) with a variety of problems with employment, social adaptation and psychological support. Such vulnerable groups are in need of social initiatives intensification and innovative practices to address them. Along with the already widespread forms of social assistance as volunteer or charitable assistance, the innovative practice of social entrepreneurship is new to Ukraine.

Method. According to the results of the author's sociological survey conducted in May 2020 with the sample to include 412 students of higher educational institutions of different cities of Ukraine, by using the method of expert survey, it was revealed that students are ready

to join the implementation of UN Global Sustainable Development Goals in one way or another (See Table 1 for findings).

Table 1. How could you contribute to the key UN Global Sustainable Development Goals?



We see that most students are more willing to join existing social projects than to create their own ones. This may indicate a lack of knowledge and lack of experience in organizing and administering social and business projects. Regarding the willingness to acquire knowledge of social entrepreneurship as a form of solving social problems and ensuring self-employment and doing business - explicitly positive answer was given by 76.4% against 23.6% of those who are not interested in this form of activity. Non-formal education (trainings, workshops, etc.), as a desirable form of acquiring knowledge in social entrepreneurship, was noted by 57.7%, whereas the study of social entrepreneurship in a separate course - by 20.3%. Students did not support alternatives to special training in social entrepreneurship for certain bachelor's or master's degree programs, which indicates a willingness to acquire social entrepreneurship competencies in addition to the core professional ones. Therefore, teaching this practice should be provided by universities at the level of elective courses or additional curricula.

The responses to the questions on determining the priority of social causes, the solution of which students would like to influence through social entrepreneurship, were distributed as follows: drawing people's attention to social problems - 12.2%, changing people's attitudes to social problems - 28.8%, changing people's behavior in the context of social problems - 27.5%, willing to join all the said initiatives - 26.6% not willing to participate - 5.3%. The distribution of responses demonstrates an active position of students in terms of their willingness to address social causes.

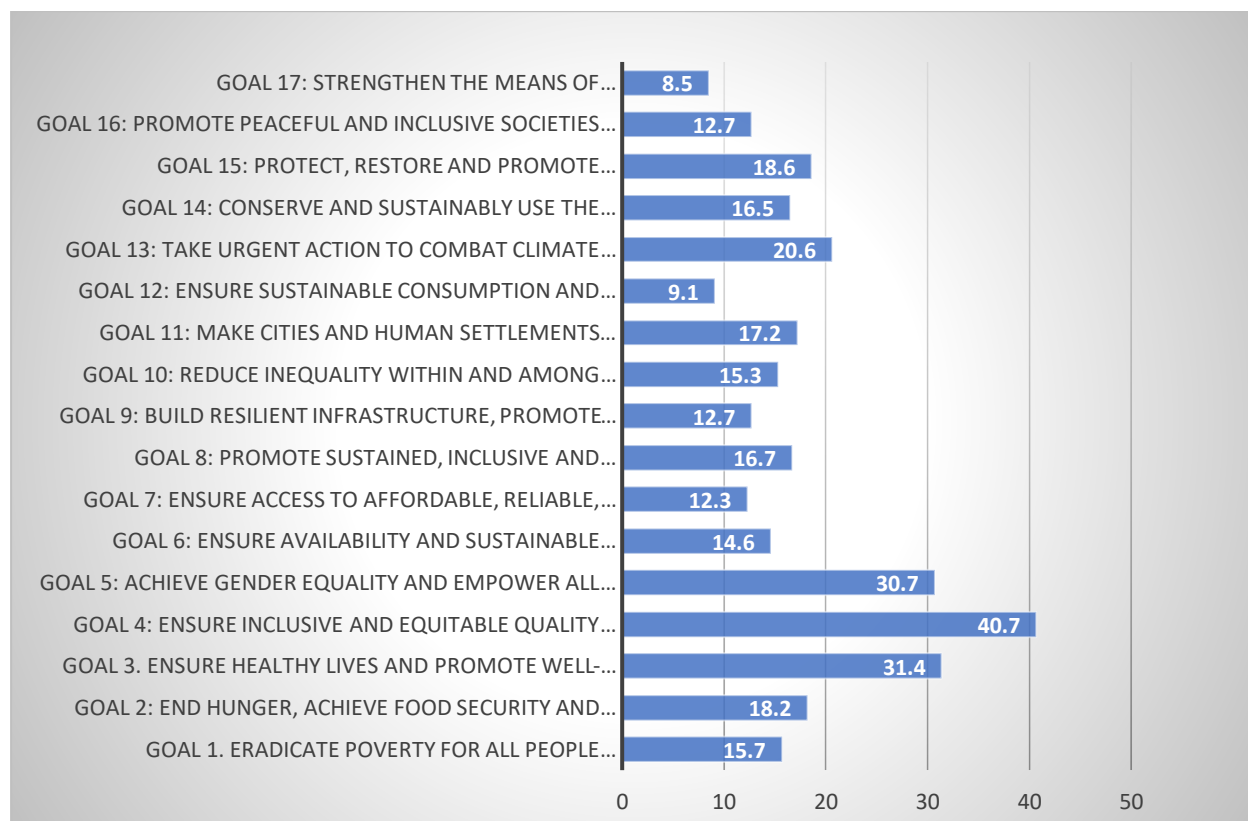
Social entrepreneurs are often called innovators because they try to solve 'old' social problems with 'new' entrepreneurial approaches. This is primarily related to the fact that traditional businesses have occupied the most curious niches, in terms of profitability, and the specifics of social groups that find themselves in difficult life circumstances. Social entrepreneurship is a social innovation that serves as a social mechanism for social transformation and sustainable development in the framework of non-profit or profitable business activities.

The responses of students from different cities of Ukraine revealed that the most pressing issues for students (identified by the UN as Sustainable Development Goals), which they would choose to address through social entrepreneurship, are as follows: providing comprehensive and equitable quality education and encouraging lifelong learning for all (40.7%), ensure a healthy lifestyle and promote well-being for all at any age (31.4%), achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (30.7%). The distribution of responses between all 17 sustainable development goals is presented in Table 2.

Innovative activities in Ukraine's social sphere are predetermined by the availability of resources that traditional businesses have no appetite for and by the growing number of civil society organizations. In some countries, entire social entrepreneurship ecosystems have been established, with educational and financial programs, a wide range of experts and pertinent regulatory framework in place. Ukraine is on its way to developing a similar ecosystem. There are numerous international projects to support social businesses. Moreover, the number of social enterprises is increasing and formal and non-formal learning programs for social entrepreneurs are being popularized [Kornetsky 2019].

Today it is important for universities to adapt to employer needs, due to the rapid change of those needs and the difficulties in determining them for the long-term perspective. Therefore, the arguments in favor of developing a new attitude to retraining and requalification, both at the individual level and at the system level, are convincing. Entrepreneurial skills, continuous growth in motivation and career management should be developed at the individual level to ensure consistent investment in self-development.

Table 2. Distribution of answers to the question 'In what sector of social entrepreneurship do you see your skills utilized?', %



Social entrepreneurship is an attractive innovative practice for students and young people in that it provides an opportunity to combine social activity and start your own business, be independent of the state in the labor market, start a business in an exciting field. According to statistics, the majority of social entrepreneurs (67%) work in the service sector, because this type of business does not require significant investment. Another 26% combine the provision of services and the production of goods, and only 7% produce something - usually light industry goods and souvenirs. There is no law on social business in our country. Therefore, everyone chooses the form of work organization that seems more convenient to him within the current legislation. In Ukraine, non-profit organizations (60%) and sole proprietors (individual entrepreneurs) predominate among social enterprises. Despite all the obstacles in social entrepreneurship there is every chance to become a new trend. This is evidenced, in particular, by the popularity of ethical goods - they are chosen by 81% of young people [Nastya Suvorova 2019].

The young people of today feel congenial to the philosophy of social entrepreneurship, including many members of generation Z – people aged 18 to 24 years. Generation Z is socially conscious, comprising politically active youth. These young people care about the future of their country, they are active in rallies, marches and protests. Vegetarianism and veganism are very popular among them, as is sorting and recycling. Z-people support equality - advocate for the rights of sexual minorities, civil rights and support feminist views. Therefore, new communication channels and forms of influence on the new generation are needed.

Returning to Roger's Diffusion of innovations, we focus on the features of communication strategies to promote innovation among Early Majority, which includes students and youth. According to Everett Rogers, it is essential that information and communication programs for this group of innovators contain success stories and other evidence of the effectiveness of innovation, especially – opinion leaders. Young people, like other social groups, perceive information not directly from the media, but indirectly, through people who have authority in a specific area. Opinion leaders do not necessarily have a high social status. In socio-economic terms, they belong to the same group as the people they affect. Opinion leaders are at the junction of mass and interpersonal communication and act not in the vertical but in the horizontal plane (influencing from within their own social group) [Ivanov 2010].

In the age of the Internet, opinion leaders have been given a new space to exercise influence - social media. At the same time, we saw the birth of new media, which replaced the old ones, they completely supplanted the influence of television, newspapers and magazines. A new term for opinion leaders, bloggers, and experts who have their own active audience and are a powerful and influential source of information for Generation Z is 'influencer'. Those can be 'classic' celebrities - singers, actors, musicians, athletes, and those who have achieved recognition through social networks and YouTube, as specialists in a specific area. The main feature of an influencer is the presence of a reliable and trusting relationship with his or her own audience. A recent study by Common Sense and Survey Monkey [New Survey Reveals Teens Get Their News from Social Media and YouTube 2019] revealed that teens (aged 13-17) learn most of the news from influencers, ignoring the classic media: 61% said they received YouTube / Instagram news from influencers, whereas 39% said they received the news from the media.

A survey by IREX (results published on May 8, 2020) revealed that in social media young people are most influenced by former Minister of Health of Ukraine Ulyana Suprun, journalist and TV presenter Yanina Sokolova and showman and TV presenter Serhiy Prytula (analysts analyzed accounts of public people on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and VKontakte, while their impact on young people was determined exclusively by Facebook). Among the top 10 influencers are the accounts of former parliamentarian Boryslav Bereza,

veteran and blogger Valerii Ananiev, former political prisoner and director Oleg Sentsov, writer Oksana Zabuzhko, journalist and TV presenter Sergii Ivanov, singer and MP Svyatoslav Vakarchuk and blogger Anatolii Sharii [WHO INFLUENCES UKRAINIAN YOUTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA 2019].

To effectively promote innovations appropriate tools for their socio-psychological and technological support are needed. Among such is developing a positive image of innovation in the minds of recipients and effective management of this image. As Olga Petrunko notes [Petrunko 2013], in the implementation of those tools 'it should be remembered that the main semantic parameters on which the positive image of social and educational innovations in the minds of their recipients are based are as follows: 1) expediency and relevance of innovation; 2) sufficient resources, also organizational; 3) its pro-sociality, 'environmental friendliness' and safety; 4) its transparency, clarity and predictability; 5) innovation actualness and its harmonization with world standards; 6) its ability to activate the recipients' sense of personal involvement in innovation and include them in innovative changes; 7) democracy, non-authoritarianism and humanistic orientation'. The focus on those semantic parameters in innovation management decreases the resistance to innovation, evokes more positive attitude and contributes to the creation of innovation's positive image.

Conclusions. Summing up, the author of the article emphasizes that the students of today show a high level of interest in innovative practices that positively affect social, economic and political change, responding to the new social mission of the university - to work with social transformations of the region, its economic development, with support for small and medium-sized businesses and to play the role of innovators. According to Everett Rogers' Diffusion of innovations theory, we refer students to Early Majority - these are people who experience innovation before others. According to Everett Rogers, it is essential that information and communication programs for this group of innovators contain success stories and other evidence of the effectiveness of innovation, especially – opinion leaders. The power to motivate students to social change and innovative practices is possessed by influencers - opinion leaders among students who exercise their influence through social media and the Internet. The power to motivate students to social change and innovative practices is possessed by influencers - opinion leaders among students who exercise their influence through social media and the Internet. Appropriate tools for their socio-psychological and technological support are needed for the effective promotion of innovations. Among such is building a positive image of innovation in the minds of recipients and effective management of this image. This role should be taken over by the university at all levels of management - from administration to student government, involving business and civil society organizations as partners.

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