



*8th International Conference in Corporate  
Responsibility, Sustainability, Governance and Innovation*  
**"Innovation shaping a sustainable future"**

#### **Track 04: Grassroots and Community Innovation for Sustainability**

Increasingly local communities, grassroots organisations, alternative lifestyle movements, users and consumers are taking a proactive stance on tackling the major challenges of sustainable development. Disappointed by political, organizational or institutional responses or non-responses, they come together to build alternative systems of production and consumption grounded in local, social and ecological values. These movements have been labelled 'grassroots innovations for sustainability' (Seyfang and Smith, 2007) or community-based entrepreneurship (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006).

While a large body of innovation literature can be found on sustainability innovation by firms (Nidumolu et al 2009), another stream of innovation literature has expanded this firm-centric view to the wider concept of open innovation (Gassmann et al. 2010). Although this stream pays greater attention to a variety of different actors in the innovation process including non-profits, governments and users (Goodman et al 2017; von Hippel 2005), innovations by civil society at the community level have been relatively neglected (Seyfang & Smith 2007).

With this call for papers, we want to explore community and grassroots innovation and their capacity to bring about change for sustainable development. By community based innovation, we mean innovations that have emerged from local people (geographical proximity), that were developed and implemented with the community, and which eventually directly benefited the community. In other words, we are referring to innovation by, with and for the community. Our emphasis is on innovation developed at the community level with the objective of developing solutions to grand societal challenges.

We encourage papers focusing on communities in different geographical areas, as well as work connecting the local community level with global challenges and impacts. Communities may be resource rich or coming from Base of the Pyramid (BOP) (Halme et al. 2016) or frugal innovation (Hossain 2018) contexts. They may be urban or rural. We welcome contributions regarding all aspects of grassroots and community innovation and which may respond to (but are not limited by) the following questions:

- What is the role of community based initiatives in developing innovative solutions for sustainable development?

- What types of innovations are developed at the community level and how do they differ from or complement other types of sustainability innovations?
- How does innovation emerge and how is it sustained at the grassroots level? Is community innovation necessarily resource constrained such as frugal innovation? What are the antecedents of community or grassroots innovation?
- Is there a tension between grassroots innovation initiatives and existing market systems?
- How do grassroots innovations contribute to sustainability transformation on a systems level?
- Does community innovation happen in specific sectors or on specific issues? Eg energy/living?
- What role does technology play in community and grassroots innovation? Does technology, in the context of community, hinder or stimulate innovation?
- How is community innovation governed?
- What role, if any, do MNEs and Governments play in such innovation? Are MNEs interested in this type of innovation? Is there conflict or cooperation across different sectors?
- Is there a difference between urban and rural innovation settings? What is the relationship between the two?
- Do communities belong to a wider network with a shared identity? Or does community innovation happen in isolation?
- How can grassroots innovations be scaled up?
- What influences the diffusion of grassroots innovations for sustainability?

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