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**Multicultural social Living LABS in second tier Chinese  
cities: how to accelerate sustainable, smart city  
focused urban development through the promotion of  
local public and foreign private interaction**

*Plenary Session 3 :*

New communities and social innovation: living and working environments

Author :

Nuria Celorio

Eseune Business School in China

Co-author:

Chris Golden

## **Multicultural social Living LABS in second tier Chinese cities: how to accelerate sustainable, smart city focused urban development through the promotion of local public and foreign private interaction**

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### **Terms:**

Multicultural: People from Asia and Western countries co-creating new innovative solutions and business opportunities

Socially responsible: Projects that address global problems through mobilizing resources to have a socially constructive and sustainable impact, at the local, regional and global level

Smart cities: A developed urban area that creates sustainable economic development and a high quality of life by excelling in multiple key areas; economy, mobility, people, living, and government. Excelling in these areas can be done through strong human capital, social capital and/or ICT infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.

Zhongxijiehe Living LAB: the methodology co-created by Eseeune to create opportunities out of new trends such as micro-multinationals and born-global companies, through mobilizing multicultural education resources  
Second tier cities in China: Those cities in China that are not the larger mega-cities, such as Chongqing or Shanghai though some may be regional capitals, that are already industrialized and urbanized, and in the context of this project are welcoming of new living and working environments in order to increase their citizen's quality of life.



















local and city governments can take forward smart city development and monitor progress and achievement. This is an opportunity for the program to further explore opportunities for program expansion, and as such could see the program build on the business case of the Living LAB for expansion to other regions in China.

The core output would be a report on the progress of the project using KPI and metrics agreed in coordination with town and city halls, and using community and private sector input:

### **Activities**

- 1-Create a report which measure progress against agreed KPI's and metrics
- 2-Organize a seminar inviting key actors in the field of smart city development to identify further opportunities for program expansion

### **Living LAB milestones to date:**

From 2008 to 2014 Eseune has carried out a variety of activities, with initial outputs being very successful and allowing the team to create an implementation methodology which will guide the ongoing growth of the Living LAB:

- From November 2014 to January 2015 the Living LAB researched methodologies for identifying good practices to inform on the expansion of the program. The team looked to other similar projects being implemented around the world, and from created a core methodology of the program to inform its future activities. This methodology can be found at the below link:  
[http://www.ltu.se/cms\\_fs/1.101555!/file/LivingLabsMethodologyBook\\_web.pdf](http://www.ltu.se/cms_fs/1.101555!/file/LivingLabsMethodologyBook_web.pdf)

- The Living LAB team has begun implementation of the methodology in projects commencing this year, from January 2015, and will continue to inform on new projects as they come online.

- The first outcome from the methodology informing on project impact will be available June 2015, and will be a test case for the new methodology, and is intended to inform further improvement if needed. It is forecast that a report will be available as of the IASP 2015 Conference.

- Each project will have a rating, using a five-star system that will measure not only each project outcome but also the impact of the living LAB on society, and will be used in establishing the key project output and outcome KPI's and metrics by the end of 2015, which will also be used in future projects.

- An annual seminar with key actors in the field of smart city development will be held to identify further opportunities for program expansion alongside the Living LAB's partners. The first annual event is scheduled for March 2016.

### **Eseune and the Living LAB are open to co-creating new projects with new partners, and are constantly welcoming new partners in to the Living LAB.**

Currently we are looking for partners that are interested in:

- Becoming a member of the Living Lab project and be associated with smart city development, aiming to create an association of partners by the end of 2015.
- Cooperation with Agencies of Innovations, Science Technological Parks and Universities from the West and the East to cooperate in the management of transnational multicultural programs. The program aims to identify at least one Western and one Chinese university by the end of 2015 to provide technical input and to develop discussion in the academic field of smart city development. Additionally the program would benefit

from a partnership with a Western (European or Latin American) STP by the end of 2015, to further promote multi-cultural and technology innovation exchange.

**We want to promote financial innovation.**

Eseune through the Living LAB aims to promote innovative financial system in order to better suit the financial needs of transnational multicultural projects.

Milestones:

- Research of traditional and new financial models and best practices research, aiming to be identified by June 2015.
- Design an effective methodology for approaching innovative financial solutions for transnational multicultural projects, to be completed December 2015.
- Application of the new mythology to the Living LAB projects, by January 2016.
- Creating a network of partners suitable for this objective
- Bringing private and public partners in to the Living LAB project and applying funding to projects incubated through the Living LAB.

Living LAB Current Activities

The Living LAB will be coordinating the Fusion gastronomy week in Tianjin in cooperation with the St. Regis Hotel in Tianjin and a Michelin Star restaurant in Spain (Restaurante Extanove). This will be the first inaugural launch of what will become an annual event to promote European/Chinese fusion cuisine in Tianjin.

The Living LAB will be coordinating the Smart cities open innovation week in Tianjin in cooperation with the Bilbao town hall in Spain. This will be the launch of an annual event that will promote linkages between the European and Chinese private and public sectors and the opportunities that smart city development can create for business and Chinese urban communities.

**Projects with Chinese companies based in Beijing:**

Datang Telecom Group has placed two MBA students (One from Spain and another from Venezuela) in their company in order to promote knowledge of the Spanish, Latin American and Turkish markets. The company works in the rapidly developing telecommunications sector that is looking to expand its products and services to overseas markets and benefits from the skills and experience of the students in exploring future investment and partnerships. Datang is located in Zhongguancun Tech Park in Beijing.

Beijing Leili Group has 1 MBA student from Argentina placed in their office researching the market potential for the international sale of Maritime seeds, a variety of pine tree native to southern Europe that is widely used in promotion of forestry and for plant extracts, and is often used for parks and green areas. The company is located in Zhongguancun Tech Park.

**Foreign companies are continually looking for Chinese partners:**

Currently the Living LAB is in contact with foreign companies looking for partners, and with the Living LAB are interested in identifying Chinese companies that can provide:

- Access to and analysis on social media habits and brand management, including western and the eastern social communication, in recognition of the power of social media in public information and introducing new social habits.
- Social media and IT support for the promotion of ecologically friendly habits amongst Chinese citizens,

especially amongst the urban population.

- IT support for using online video games and eLearning packages for promotion, using the commonly used (and accessible via computer and smart phone) HTML5 format.

### **III. Conclusions, lessons learned and how SPT and AI s can best contribute to the Living LAB promoting smart city principles and investment.**

#### **Main conclusions:**

Science and Technology Parks (STP) and Areas of Innovation (AI) are a key element for SMEs to become global, and Eseune Business School is one example of successful venture that looked from the outset to incorporate an international dimension to its work, and through the Living LAB project is well placed to bring international smart city practices to China and identify opportunities for investment and inter-cultural exchange.

Eseune is already active in helping companies to become global actors in China, and is helping at the same time SMEs to have a global perspective by enrolling in ESEUNE programs and activities as opportunities for different cultures and experiences to come together in the spirit of developing China.

Lessons learnt:

Eseune and the Living LAB have learned invaluable lessons since launch, which will inform future programs:

- That a multicultural, transnational project must pay close attention to multicultural team and cross cultural communication, work best when actively mentored on how best to cooperate and work in a multicultural atmosphere.
- Co-creation of projects and cooperation between the public and private sector from the east and the west is essential in order to allow SMEs with the potential to become global.
- Projects led by SMEs need assistance and mentoring before and during their move in to a global multicultural atmosphere to ensure success, and also need access to international financial resources to fund the move.

How can SPT and AI s be helpful to this project, and with the SMEs facing challenges as they move to become global actors? The main assistance they can provide is:

- Assist with building linkages that promote net-working and partnerships between groups, and create the opportunity for innovation and investment
- Providing information on the business and investment, and building the capacity of SME to make informed strategic decisions

We would like to thank IASP, I-bridge in Zhongguancun, Htibi and Zhongbei Town Municipality for all their ongoing support in China, and we look forward to meeting new partners in the future.