Welcome to the co-creation Module of "la Caixa" Foundation's Work 4 Progress programme.

In the previous module, we looked at how the community listening process is the first step in the search for socially innovative solutions.

During the listening process, the community’s principal challenges and opportunities are identified.

After the community listening process, we can find three situations.

First, during the process we identified challenges for which there are already solutions in place. In this instance, our task will be to connect or reinforce these actions.

For example, in India, Work4Progress connects female agricultural micro-entrepreneurs with training programmes offered by the International Labour Organisation.

Second, it might be the case that the ideas which emerge during the listening process are specific enough so that they can be quickly translated into prototypes. In this instance, we will move directly on to the prototyping phase.

For example: in India, Work4Progress prototyped 8 information kiosks which provide advice, assistance and support to various entrepreneurs.

And thirdly, what happens if the ideas which emerge from the listening process are not specific enough to enable us to move on to a prototyping phase?

This is the situation we will look at in this module, co-creation.

When we use the term “co-creation”, we mean creating in conjunction with the community.

This approach enables us to:
- draw on local knowledge,
- identify emerging opportunities,
- implement solutions tailored to actual needs, owned by the community.

Co-creation places the emphasis on the people from the community as having a key input when developing new solutions.

These solutions could be products - such as the drying and commercialisation of pine mushrooms in Andahuaylllas, Peru - or services – such as the e-rickshaws that provide safe transport and work for women in India.
How do we approach the co-creation process?

In "la Caixa" Foundation Work 4 Progress Programme, each platform is involved in enacting this process, which has an estimated duration of four months, depending on the context.

The co-creation process involves the systematic use of a set of tools and methodologies by a facilitating team, which will be made up of members from each of the organisations from the platform.

In order to transform the ideas into prototypes, the facilitating team will begin by organising the ideas emerged from the listening process into groups, according to their similarity or subject area, and assigning them a working group.

The working groups, supported by the facilitating team, will conduct various co-creation sessions.

It is important to have as many working groups formed as topic groups identified, since only some of the ideas will make it to the prototyping stage.

The ultimate aim will be to generate prototypes at four different levels of impact, which are:

At the community level with no business involved, e.g. the "safe spaces" in Uttar Pradesh in India, where discussion sessions are facilitated on gender issues and empowerment for women.

At the level of small and medium enterprises involving a business, e.g. that of rural micro-entrepreneurs in the Montepuez District of Mozambique.

On a large scale, also involving a business, e.g. the construction of a market for local producers in Mozambique.

And lastly, at the level of public service reforms, e.g. pushing for a change to tax benefits so as to encourage the use of solar panels.

In order to have an impact at all levels we need to work to co-create the greatest number of solutions with the greatest number and variety of actors.

This way of working involves a series of challenges.

We have to believe that it is possible to find solutions even if we don't know what the best possible answer to the problems we face is.

We have to be open to the unexpected, to trust in the collective intelligence and to learn to manage our prejudices.
In order to do this, the facilitating team will need to create an environment of trust in which each person feels they can contribute to the conversation.

In the next classes, we will look in detail at how this can be done in a step by step fashion.