

Chapter 8

Social Enterprise and Higher Education in a Globalized World

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Introduction

Social enterprise is a business model where the overarching aim is “significant social impact” (Galvin and Iannotti, 2015, p. 423). Economists, academics and policy makers perceive the concept of social enterprise as both having the potential to contribute to national economic growth and as a framework that “positively impacts a community” (Jenner, 2014). The UK government Department of Business, Innovation and Skills has defined social enterprise as:

"A business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners."

(British Council, 2017, p. 10)

Social enterprise organizations are “revenue-generating businesses” and have two key goals: (1) “to achieve social, cultural, community economic and/or environmental outcomes” and (2) “to earn revenue” (BC Centre for Social Enterprise, 2017). Drawing on the work of Young (2008), Galera and Borzaga (2009, p. 210) note that:

"Social enterprise is ... distinct from classical business and traditional non-profit activity, combining at different extents elements of the social purpose, the market orientation, and financial-performance standards of business."

Social enterprise has come to play a pivotal role in civic society today (Farmer, et al., 2016; Szymanska and Jegers, 2016; Chell, 2007), particularly following the global financial crisis of 2008, which caused governments across the world to implement tough austerity programmes to respond to structural deficit and to stabilize national economies. From this point forward social enterprise has become an important concept in economic and social policy and has been perceived as a positive catalyst that plays a part in driving a country’s economic agenda in a globalised world.

Bridge (2015p.1014) has used the academic work of Harris and Albury (2009) to provide a useful understanding of the context of the rise of social enterprise:

1. "The decline of state involvement in the planned provision of services in society and conceptualisation of the ‘market’;
2. The focus on a culture that emphasises self-reliance and personal responsibility and the rise of entrepreneurship more generally;
3. Changes in funding opportunities within the community, voluntary and non-profit (social) sectors – specifically the move from grant giving to contract/competitive tendering and the devolution, deregulation and privatisation of welfare states globally (Bull, 2008, p. 269), and
4. The financial and fiscal crises and the need to innovate more creatively in the design and delivery of public services."

Mauksch, et al. (2017, p. 116) argue that social enterprise “portrays hybridity” and that there are frequent “tension-ridden relations between social mission and the financial goals”. Moreover, research carried out by Chan, et al. (2017, p. 262) notices that social enterprise projects in Canada “rely” a great deal on “external supports” from the public and private sectors. However, on the whole, past

academic evidence suggests that social enterprises in society have a positive effect on a national economy (The Social Economy Alliance, 2017; Doherty, et al., 2014; Kickul and Lyons, 2012; Wei-Skillern, et al., 2007).

The aim of this chapter is to critically explore the relationship between social enterprise and teaching and learning in higher education. After a brief outline of the methodology, the chapter reviews the growth of the social enterprise phenomenon. Next it examines the role of higher education institutions in supporting and fostering social enterprise. Finally the chapter explores the potential for integration of social enterprise into teaching and learning.

Outline of Methodology

The authors of this chapter have employed a qualitative theorizing approach for this review as this approach enables the researchers to engage constructively in knowledge exchange to both the academic social sciences community and the voluntary and statutory sectors. As such, this chapter was written by undertaking a systematic literature review of academic literature as well as a range of other documentary data sources such as policy documents and reports from both the public and private sectors.

Social Enterprise: A Global Phenomenon

In the book entitled *Mission, Inc. - The Practitioner's Guide to Social Enterprise*, Lynch and Walls (2009) describe the purpose or mission of a social enterprise as a business that seeks, above all, to make the world a better place - a business for the common good. Yunus (2010), one of the leading advocates of the social business concept, insists that social business holds the potential to redeem the failed promise of free-market enterprise. Since the challenges that underline the world's development agenda are to find ways to end poverty, ensure quality education for all and to advance equality, it is necessary to develop innovative and economically sustainable solutions, particularly in the context of the crisis in state welfare systems, in terms of budget, effectiveness and legitimacy. Analyses of the social enterprise phenomenon have established that they often emerge in areas where the customary private or public sector has not been able to offer an adequate solution. As Sepulveda (2015, p. 843) notes:

"...social enterprise is said to offer possibilities for social engagement and economic inclusion to different social groups, providing novel solutions to a range of societal problems that the state and private sector have been unable to solve."

The hybrid nature of social enterprise is well illustrated in various countries around the world where social work, community development and productive activities are mixed in initiatives such as production communes, social residences and folk high schools, the latter two being known for their ability to take care of young people with social problems. In the United States social enterprises can take various legal forms, including sole proprietorship, corporation, partnerships, limited liability company, non-profit, and for-profit organizations (Kerlin, 2006). Some examples of social enterprises in the USA include Rebuild Resources Inc., which has a mission to help recovering addicts and alcoholics by offering them transitional employment, and Greyston Bakery in New York, which hires men and women with backgrounds that include homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, welfare dependence, domestic violence, and illiteracy (Lynch and Walls 2009, p. 10). In summary, social enterprise is associated with social organization, activism and enhancement of capabilities (Yunus 2010; Sen 1999).

In social enterprises, the "social impact on the community is not only a consequence or a side-effect of economic activity, but its motivation in itself" (Nyssens, 2006, p. 5). As such, six major domains are natural settings for social enterprise initiatives:

1. "Welfare and health services (such as the Aravind eye hospitals in India);
2. Education and training (such as the Committee to Democratize Information Technology in Brazil);
3. Economic development (such as work integration social enterprises, or WISEs, in Europe);
4. Disaster relief and international aid (such as Keystone's innovative "Farmer Voice" project);
5. Social justice and political change (including race and gender empowerment, such as SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association in Pakistan), and
6. Environmental planning and management (such as the Marine Stewardship Council)."

(Volkman, et al, 2012, pp. 3-4)

During the 1980s and 1990s, organizations emerged that focused exclusively on social enterprise and entrepreneurship, across the globe (e.g. Ashoka, founded in 1981; the Schwab Foundation and the Skoll Foundation founded in 1998 and 1999 respectively) (Nicholls, 2010, pp. 612-13). At the same time, government policy in several countries began to explore the possibilities of the field in terms of welfare provision (Dees and Elias, 1998). Social enterprise in Europe first appeared in the early 1990s (Defourny and Nyssens, 2006, p.4), when the Italian parliament created "social co-operatives" in 1991. These "went on to experience an extraordinary growth" and responded to "needs that had been inadequately met, or not met at all, by public services" (Borzaga and Santuari, 2001, p. 16).

By 2002 the debate on social enterprise picked up in the UK: "The Blair government launched the 'Social Enterprise Coalition' and created a 'Social Enterprise Unit' to improve the knowledge of social enterprises and, above all, to promote social enterprises throughout the country" (Nyssens, 2006, pp. 3-4). In 2007, the number of social enterprises in the UK was estimated at 62,000 (Bosma and Levie, 2010, p. 14). In particular, home-care cooperatives emerged "in response to market or state failures within a particular context of fast developing quasi-markets and competitive contracting practices with the local public authorities" (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001, p. 14).

The development of social enterprises in different countries is often complex and uneven. As Borzaga and Defourny (2001, p. 354) describe in Europe:

"In some countries (for example, in Italy), there are thousands of organizations which ... have developed both in the provision of a range of social services and in the work integration of disadvantaged people, and involve several thousand members and employees. In other countries (Sweden and Finland, for example), the number of social enterprises is significant, but they mainly operate in very specific fields, such as kindergartens and employment services. Conversely, there are countries with a very small number of social enterprises (such as Greece and Denmark) or in which the existing ones are not all clearly different from public or traditional third-sector organizations (Germany and the Netherlands)."

Fayolle and Matlay (2010) suggest that in Asia, particular political contexts and problems have shaped the direction of social entrepreneurship:

"In India, for example, many social entrepreneurs address the huge gap that exists between formal legislation (which recognizes no discrimination across social strata) and social reality (the prevalence of the caste system). In Bangladesh social entrepreneurial organizations such as BRAC or Grameen have assumed the role and activities of absent or ineffective government. In many Latin American countries the political heritage of weak and corrupt governments and public sectors has encouraged entrepreneurial solutions to social problems." (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010, p. 22)

As Shahnaz and Tan, (2009) point out, most social enterprises are small and medium sized organizations, with "neither unlimited access to capital nor the required recognition of their

impactful work” (p.5). However, Asia has been the birthplace of a number of large social enterprises: "such as BRAC (originally Bangladesh, now in 14 countries worldwide), Grameen Bank(founded in Bangladesh, and has now spawned 13 related companies), Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA, with over 600,000 members) and the Population And Community Development Association in Thailand”(Shahnaz and Tan, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, the nomination of Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank as Nobel Prize for Peace winners in 2006 can be seen as a turning point in the global recognition of social entrepreneurship (Martin and Osberg, 2007), and social innovation in general (Mulgan, et al., 2007).

Shariha Khalid, co-founder of Scope Group, a Malaysian social impact consultancy, suggested that the EU can learn from Asia in terms of the inventiveness of grassroots innovation by regular citizens who see issues in their communities, and find socio-entrepreneurial approaches to solve them (Khalid, 2013). The EU can also learn from Asia about community resilience - the strength of community support and collaboration in solving problems faced by other community members."Experiences in Korea, Japan and even China can be extremely interesting for decision-makers in Europe; conversely, the way some countries in Europe developed local ecosystems for social enterprises can serve as a good toolkit for many stakeholders in Asia (Khalid, 2013).

Social Enterprise and Higher Education

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly seen as “powerhouses of intellectual and social capital; they create the knowledge, capability and expertise that drive competitiveness and nurture the values that sustain our open democracy”(Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2016, p. 5). Rossi and Rosli(2014, p. 1) assert that it is becoming increasingly crucial that higher education institutions, “transfer ‘productive knowledge’ ... and engage with a multiplicity of stakeholders in order to deliver economic benefits.” Jo Beall the Director of Education and Society for the British Council places due emphasis upon higher education institutions, and describe universities as:

"...anchors, shapers and innovators of our communities and countries. They foster cultural, social and economic vitality. HEIs help to build an informed citizenry, more tolerant societies and more participative communities. They generate and nurture the skills, research and innovation that spur economic development and shape the future. And today as never before, they are being called upon to contribute to positive social and economic change both nationally and internationally...Engaging with social enterprise gives HEIs an opportunity to interact closely with local businesses and communities to create inclusive and financially sustainable solutions to pressing local and international issues."

(British Council, 2016, p. 4)

Early in the development of the social enterprise phenomenon, academics started to study its emergence and to incorporate the concept into higher education institutions. In 1996, researchers formed the EMES European Research Network to study the emergence of social enterprises in Europe (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001, p. 21). In 1993, Harvard Business School (HBS) launched the ‘Social Enterprise Initiative’, one of the milestones of the period. Since 1993, HBS faculty have researched and written over 800 social enterprise books, cases and teaching notes. Today, more than 90 faculty members engage in research projects, course development, and other activities. Other major US universities – including Columbia, Stanford and Yale – and various foundations have set up training and support programmes for social enterprises or social entrepreneurs (Nyssens, 2006, p. 3)

An eighteen-month HEFCE funded project, which supported 70 HEI’s in the United Kingdom to develop social ventures, concluded that “social entrepreneurship adds value to Higher Education...it enhances teaching, research impact and staff development” (HEFCE/UnLtd, 2013) and emphasized the need to embed a culture of social entrepreneurship in Higher Education. Some key benefits of the project were that 75% of students felt they had improved their employability, 63% felt their social

enterprise had benefited their studies, 83% planned to continue their social enterprise following graduation, and that 89% of staff felt the social venture benefited their position by enhancing teaching methods, research impact and extending their role.

Furthermore, a research study, conducted by SERIO (Socio-Economic Research and Information Observatory) at Plymouth University explored the range and nature of social enterprise activity in 205 HEIs in twelve countries spread across four continents (British Council, 2016). The study identified that partnerships existed in HEIs in all of the twelve countries of study, with 75% engaged in some form of enterprise activity during the survey; distinctly, only three HEIs (2% of the total sample) stated that they had never worked with a social enterprise. A wide range of activities were identified; these included a dedicated social enterprise support and advice service, the provision of facilities such as incubation space, embedding social enterprise principles into curriculum delivery in the form of dedicated modules of study, and the provision of internships or placement for students. The British Council concluded that engaging with social enterprise has a number of benefits for HEIs:

"It also allows them to provide students with experiential learning opportunities and entrepreneurship skills that enhance their employability. Furthermore, it can support academic staff to develop enterprise solutions arising from their academic research and translate the latter into tangible social impact. And it can generate reputational benefit and income for universities."

(British Council, 2016, p. 4)

However, the British Council identified that the primary beneficiaries of social enterprise activities were found to be the HEIs themselves, with benefits to students in 94% of the sample, and to 93% of the social enterprise partners. Across all institutions, the most commonly cited social purposes that HEIs would be most likely to support were: developing a specific community (54%); creating employment opportunities (53%); contributing to international development goals (46%), and improving health and wellbeing (44%) (British Council, 2016, p. 9). Interestingly a prominent feature of the British Council report is the notion of challenge in the form of the cost of staff time and the resources needed for engagement with the social enterprise. It is also clear that despite the range of social enterprise initiatives occurring within the sector, many of these are extra-curricular and there remains a paucity of literature exploring and illustrating the application of these concepts within the curriculum.

Social Enterprise and Teaching and Learning

Educators are presented with distinct challenges to develop curricula that prepare today's graduate for the demands of tomorrow. Barnett (2011, p.6) suggests that in the ever-changing and super complex world the development of knowledge and skills in one context may not be suited to another; each group, community or society is different in terms of need, knowledge and skills. As Ramsden (2008, p. 11) describes:

"We need to encourage universities and colleges to explore new models of curriculum...we require curricula that are trans disciplinary, that extend students to their limits, that develop skills of inquiry and research, and that are imbued with international perspectives...That standard must enable them to embrace complexity, climate change, different forms of citizenship, and different ways of understanding individuality and cooperation. A student experience that is fit for the future will develop their qualities of flexibility and confidence and their sense of obligation to the wider community."

Barnett has developed a tri partite model of curriculum that is relevant here, where the curriculum incorporates societal, institutional and student needs (1994; 2004; 2012). Schofield describes this approach as supporting:

"...development of critical thinking, confidence and resilience and adoption of maxims of authenticity, situatedness, learning with and in support of a community and its members at the heart of the approach. It deliberately and actively couples educational intentions with a beneficent ethic."

(Schofield, 2017, p. 22)

It is not difficult to see how introducing students to social enterprise has the potential to fulfill these ambitions. According to the British Council (2016) the key benefit for students engaging in social enterprise is the opportunity to participate in "real world" teaching and learning; crucially, this engagement raised awareness of social problems, and how to address societal issues, promoting citizenship and social justice. Furthermore, teaching social enterprise helps to increase the future pool of social entrepreneurs, and to help widen the impact of social entrepreneurs' activity.

Turner (2011) identified that the number of HEIs offering social entrepreneurship courses has increased rapidly over a relatively short period of time: over 90 in the US and 122 internationally were reported in 2011 compared to only 20 a few years earlier. Turner (2011) also attributes this uplift to HEIs increasingly "responding to the importance of their role in equipping students with the skills necessary to make transformational social change" (p. 12). Social enterprise was most commonly offered as an accredited course across HEIs based in the USA, where it was provided by all but one institution engaged in a partnership. In India, although entrepreneurial focused education is prevalent in universities, in the form of structured mentorship programs, short courses or other forms of training, only one institution offers a course in social enterprise (IDCK, 2016, p. 5).

Sommerrockpoints (2010, p. 10) out that including social enterprise in a taught curriculum can be done at three different levels:

1. "Functional or macroeconomic level: What do social entrepreneurs do?"
2. Psychological/sociological/individual level: Who does social entrepreneurship?"
3. Management/instrumental/organization level: How do social entrepreneurs act?"

However, it is clear that learning *about* social enterprise is not the same as a real world experiences of social enterprise embedded into university curricula. In order to achieve the latter educators must be innovative, adopting for example project based social enterprise activities such as those articulated by Burrows and Wragg (2013). Furthermore, a heautogical curriculum has the potential to embed social enterprise opportunities through solution focused teaching and learning, alongside mentoring, to create socially enterprising and entrepreneurial learning (Schofield 2017; Snowden 2017). Combined with the growing body of literature on enterprise and entrepreneurial education it is clear that these curriculum innovations have the potential to aid educators in developing curricula that incorporate experiences of social enterprise, and thus for students and communities to reap the benefits that the concept has the potential to provide.

Conclusion

It is clear that social enterprise has become a global phenomenon, embraced by governments as a solution to a range of complex social issues and challenges. This in turn has inspired a large amount of literature on the concept, from policy makers, the business community and academics. Not only does social enterprise offer great promise to society in general, but it also has the potential to serve a number of purposes for higher education institutions. Faced with the challenges of having to generate income, attract students and prepare them for their futures as well as to have a positive impact on the wider society, engaging with social enterprise offers HEIs the opportunity to potentially fulfil all these functions at once. It is perhaps not surprising then, that nearly all HEIs surveyed to date engage with social enterprise to some degree, and that the number of courses in social enterprise is expanding rapidly.

One area that has received less attention, however, is the theoretical and pedagogical aspect of designing a curriculum that incorporates social enterprise. This is perhaps as the majority of research to date on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship is from economics, social science and management research, and focuses on the concept itself, rather than the most effective way to design curricula so that students gain a meaningful experience of it. As the name suggests, social enterprise combines both the social aspect as well as its inherent entrepreneurial nature, and experienced educators of both disciplines attest to the fact that these are subjects that lend themselves to experiential learning. Practical activities and engagement with “real-world” experiences are essential if the inclusion of social enterprise into curricula is to bring the benefits in terms of student engagement and employability that have been promised. It is not enough to tell students about social enterprise; courses must be designed in such a way as to give them an experience of it. Further work is needed to assess the different pedagogies being utilised in the teaching of social enterprise so that we may optimise the teaching of the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

Acknowledgements

The chapter originated from a UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) funded project on 'The Benefits of Modifying Social Enterprise within Higher Education's Social Sciences Curriculum'. The financial support from UKIERI is gratefully acknowledged. We also wish to thank many people for helping with the funded project: Suruchi Pareek, Jane Faithfull, Alastair Brown, Joanne Addie, Martha McLean, Lydia Stead, Vikki Hart and Claire McPartlin.

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