

Sustainability and Social Enterprise: The Ways Forward

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Abstract

Sustainability has become an ever-increasing issue in today's world. Countries across the world have had to re-focus on sustainability due to the new pressures of climate change. In recent decades, numerous different institutions have become the architectural framework for the promotion and implementation of sustainability in society, namely: governments, non-government organizations, universities, social enterprises, and the private sector. One of the key drivers of sustainability is social enterprise education. This driver has become vital in higher education, as it enables the learner to understand the complex processes of sustainability. This chapter critically explores the interlocking relationship of social enterprise and sustainability. The authors of this chapter present findings from their UKIERI research project entitled 'The Benefits of Modifying Social Enterprise within Higher Education's Social Sciences Curriculum.' Moreover, the authors argue that social enterprise can have a real influence in the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were set out by the United Nations in 2015.

Keywords: Community, Higher Education, Social Enterprise, Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. Introduction

“Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development does imply limits – not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth.”

(Brundtland, 1987, p. 15)

The above quote is from the famous 1987 Brundtland Report, which sets out the key principles for sustainable development. This historical report is seen by many scholars as the starting point of real global attention on sustainability (Hummels and Argyrou, 2021; Oberoi et al., 2019; Elliott, 2004; Barnaby, 1987). The Brundtland Report, at the time, brought new forensic focus on sustainability and enabled different stakeholders to engage with the concept. Crucially, the work carried out by the Brundtland Commission is seen as the milestone moment in driving United Nations policy changes and propelling a new way forward on environment and development. These policy changes have been implemented by the UN at organized summits and conferences, most notably:

- The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro
- The 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg
- The 2009 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen
- The 2012 Rio+20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro
- The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris

At these proceedings, different stakeholders (e.g. politicians, policymakers, non-government organizations) had the power to implement new global guidelines on sustainable development, through which there have been closer strategic links with the concept of social enterprise. The UN perceives social enterprise as an economic tool that creates solutions for disadvantaged groups in society (see British Council, 2020), and social enterprise is also playing a crucial role in progressing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, research by Chatzichristos and Nagopoulos (2020) notes that social enterprise has become a popular concept that brings together government and community, which creates a sustainable agenda. Chatzichristos and Nagopoulos point out that:

“Social enterprises constitute such cooperative initiatives that can balance the complexity reduction with the sustainability quest (Thompson, 2014) and by that counteracting to the environmentally destructive tendencies of hierarchical firms (Thompson and Valentinov 2017; Agafonow, 2015). A subordination of the coordination principles of the mainstream enterprises to a cooperative structure can regain the embeddedness to the environment and ipso facto the sustainability of the enterprise.”

(2020, p. 486)

The authors of this chapter examine the key relationships between sustainability and social enterprise, which achieved, firstly, by providing a critical academic discussion of the different aspects of sustainability and social enterprise in a global context. Then, the chapter briefly outlines the research strategy that was undertaken. By setting out the methodology, the chapter presents findings from social enterprise education and highlights best practice in a

global sustainability framework. This chapter builds on previous academic work from the authors (see Halsall et al., 2021; Oberoi et al., 2020; Oberoi and Halsall, 2019; Oberoi et al., 2019; Oberoi et al., 2018). Hence, as demonstrated in this chapter, the authors argue that social enterprise is one of the best strategies that can make an impact on the 17 SDGs.

2. Global Sustainability in Social Enterprise Agenda

It is evident that the existing neoliberal order is not working in the best way for people, or for the planet. Powell et al. (2018) believe that the problem has been aggravated further since the Government concurrently rolled back its involvement with social welfare, at the same time as communities and citizens were encouraged to play a more dynamic role in the alleviation of many social and economic problems; this was subsequent to the post domination of the neoliberal global agenda and privatization. Reaching sustainable development goals requires global effort to fulfil the genuine objectives of problem solving in social and economic spheres (UN, 2019). These 'grand challenges' range from poverty and climate change to ageing societies, inequality, financialization, social exclusion, unemployment, migration, depletion of natural resources and social conflicts. Many of these challenges manifest themselves on a universal scale and on a negligible scale within local communities.

In last few decades, the research in sustainable development has increased significantly (Bansal et al., 2019). Scholars are approaching the theme of sustainable development from numerous perspectives and fields of inquiry. Sustainable development goals need to be seen as complex, multifaceted global challenges that need a plethora of diverse innovations to resolve them. The grave climate change concerns and multiple socio-economic inequalities are frequently attributed to a contemporary neoliberal capitalist system of production and consumption driven by global markets. Mega global corporations are usually held culpable for rapid ecological decay and social malfunctioning. The capitalist economy in totality is often criticized for being disembedded from society and environment (Polanyi, 1944). Several contemporary global corporations are disembedded from the ecological and societal milieu in which they function, as they are freewheeling in organic and societal terms, exhibiting no genuine concern for the locations in which they operate. These global corporations often outsource their activities to places where they get low-priced labor and resources, violating regulatory norms. Therefore, intrinsically global corporations are constrained from becoming ecologically sustainable and socially accountable (Boda and Zsolnai, 2016). The fundamental problem lies in the pathological nature of corporation itself, which aims to maximise profits (Mayer, 2013; Bakan, 2003). The contemporary firm, as a legal entity, was an institutional innovation in the early capitalist era; although it has significant advantages, it has an obdurate consequence of dispersing and, eventually, vindicating obligation and liability. The actuality is that companies put the 'shareholder value' interest above everything else.

Urgent transformation of the contemporary market paradigm based on profit maximization is needed to accomplish a sustainable future. Sustainability is, after all, about bringing equilibrium and balance to development and safeguarding a viable future. Sustainability is broadly defined as an enduring balance and stability in ecology that is not damaging to others or exhaustive of natural resources. When matched with progress, sustainability becomes an edifice preserved over a period that does not harm the atmosphere, and guards the welfares of present and future generations. For Weiss: "The freedom of future generations are insured by satisfying the following principles: (i) conservation of options; (ii) conservation of quality; and (iii) conservation of access" (1989 p. 23). Sustainable development is a strategic, closed-loop model where contributions and productivity are well-adjusted and resources are converted and recycled in continuous and circular ways. Sustainability in the ecosphere can be understood as composite, symbiotic dealings for conversion of matter for the advantage and progress of all. This shift to a sustainable future

requires a transformation that necessitates the growth of new business models that are socially embedded and ecology-oriented, which respect the needs of future generations, and yield values for society in general – not just for shareholders or designated stakeholders. The embracing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has strengthened the pursuit of sustainable solutions to development complications. It is being professed that corporate actions must be pro-social and pro planet, namely, and ought to contribute to inclusive and sustainable development for all humanity. Moreover, Crowther and Seifi provide a useful definition of sustainability, which:

“implies that society must use no more of a resource than can be regenerated. This can be defined in terms of the carrying capacity of the ecosystem (Hawken, 1993) and described with input–output models of resource consumption. Viewing an organisation as part of a wider social and economic system implies that these effects must be taken into account, not just for the measurement of costs and value created in the present but also for the future of the business itself. This approach to sustainability is based on the Gaia Theory (Lovelock 1979)—a model in which the whole of the ecosphere, and all living matter therein, is co-dependent upon its various facets and formed a complete system. According to this theory, this complete system and all components of the system are interdependent and equally necessary for maintaining the Earth as a planet capable of sustaining life.”

(2019, p. 2)

On the path to achieving sustainable development, the ideas of social enterprise and sustainable development are comparable and analogous, crossing ways with overlying concerns and understandings. Social enterprise primarily exists to address societal and environmental challenges (Santos, 2012). Social entrepreneurs are essentially change agents who use entrepreneurial means for systemic solutions to social and environmental problems, while also safeguarding their own existence and sustainability. The pioneering influence of entrepreneurs plays a significant part in the pursuit of a more sustainable future. Social entrepreneurs are thus viewed as the essential apparatuses for the goal of a sustainable future. Social entrepreneurs can play a vital part in the sustainability agenda, as it is their natural predilection to address difficulties that others overlook or cannot tackle as competently or efficiently as they can. Furthermore, the European Commission notes:

“Social enterprises contribute to smart growth by responding with social innovation to needs that have not yet been met; they create sustainable growth by taking into account their environmental impact and by their long-term vision; they are at the heart of inclusive growth due to their emphasis on people and social cohesion.”

(2011, p. 3)

Social enterprise is unquestionably the model gaining attention, as they demonstrate how we can organize commercial activity in a way that recognizes the ecological boundaries, empowers society, and build community capacities. Social enterprise produces social value by audacious novelty and originality. Social enterprise operates together with business enterprises, and is chiefly seen as an innovative business development possibility. Yet, social enterprise is not just a corporate growth choice; rather, it is a crucial constituent of sustainable development. Locating social enterprise as a way of being, rather than just a commercial model, underscores the ways in which all are involved in social enterprise through everyday connections and choices as customers, employees, and inventors, thus building a noteworthy linkage between social enterprise and sustainability, and giving each one a part in it.

Sustainability is about establishing this sense of equilibrium and equipoise to development and guaranteeing a feasible future. Social enterprise is a good place to begin, structuring the base for sustainability in all spheres of economic, ecological and social. Since several of the principles needed for sustainability inherently exist within social enterprise, the shift in emphasis from social to sustainable is notionally achievable and significant due to the interrelationship and complexity of the issues involved in achieving sustainability. At a micro level, a solo social enterprise can become more sustainable in its own right purely through astute choices and practices. However, social enterprise is still exposed to the practices of business enterprises that continue on the path of unsustainability.

Studies on entrepreneurs focused on environmental and economic aspects consider these individuals 'ecopreneurs.' Fundamentally, an ecopreneur is a person or institution that aims to propagate eco-friendly concepts/products/expertise/novelties, either through market or non-market routes. The approach of ecopreneurship is accommodative for policymakers and the social order in general, as there is no suspicion of the conversion to sustainable development needs for ecopreneurship on a grand scale (Dixon, 2007). Environmental and social policy pursued by these social ecopreneurs intends to rectify market let-downs and externalities, thus disturbing the current market paradigm. The social entrepreneurship process aims to fit into and realign economic/financial interest and social value in equilibrium.

Belz and Binder (2017) explain that it is critical for social entrepreneurs and ecopreneurs to blend profits and ecological, social, and customer benefits as a response, in order to accomplish the triple bottom line. Social enterprises generate social value by offering social advantage and economic cost, by generating employment and income for their undertaking while achieving their goals. Social enterprise is branded by the espousal and practice of numerous unique and hybrid values. Foremost, social enterprises use commercial and organization values to resolve social difficulties, particularly where administrations or markets fail, or where there are unmet needs. Social enterprises focus "on value creation not capture, [...] on innovation, not the status quo, [...] on sustainable solution not sustainable organisation", and they also focuses "on empowerment of participants in the value chain not control of industry forces" (Konda et al., 2015, p. 213).

At the core of social entrepreneurship is a synchronized accomplishment, to generate public good by sensing and recognizing social problems, in addition to using entrepreneurial values to achieve constructive social changes. In effect, social entrepreneurship is, in fact, social innovation, as social enterprises establish how effective the amalgamation of the commercial with societal and ecological themes can be. Subsequently, social enterprise underscores the advancement of effective, reasonable and profitable resolutions. To resolve the major concerns of the world, it is essential to adopt interdisciplinary methods and inter-sector partnerships. The UN's 17 SDGs undoubtedly convey the need for collaboration in order to accomplish the goals by 2030. Even a preliminary look at the global scenario provides an awareness into the growing number of entrepreneurial ingenuities with a social purpose, and how social enterprises are starting to be accepted as an important representative within the international economic framework. Inter alia, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission emphasize the resilience that social enterprises have demonstrated during the economic-financial crisis of 2008, in addition to their capacity to provide constancy to the labor market (OECD/EU, 2017). Social entrepreneurs in particular play a significant part in crisis situations too, because of their tendency in the social order to tackle difficulties that state and market conveniently shun or are unable to address as imaginatively or professionally as social enterprise.

Social enterprises inherently draw on designs and concepts from various arenas, adopt hybrid models, and are sector blurring. The idea of social enterprise places real emphasis on the sustainability agenda in a blending approach, and provides pragmatic answers that are

now considered worth emulating. Social entrepreneurs have experience and abilities to bridge manifold and varied understandings through their networks (Dufays and Huybrechts, 2014). Social businesses aim to generate socio-ecological welfare while upholding their economic feasibility. The triple bottom line requires that commercial operations do not harm the environment, ecology and environment nature and encroach upon the benefits of future generations. Commercial activities are 'progressive' only if they fulfil these principles. Some social entrepreneurs are able to resolve the local problems of the communities around them because their obvious proximity and expertise empowers them to diagnose the exact issue, whereas, other social enterprises gear themselves towards tackling larger systemic issues by patching up "the social fabric where it is torn" (Zahra et al., 2009, p. 523). Furthermore, other social enterprises are disruptive for the purpose of social change, where their objective is to renovate dysfunctional societal and economic systems by presenting an alternative sustainable system. (Newey, 2018; Zahra et al., 2009).

Partzsch and Ziegler (2011) advocate that the pioneering aspect of social enterprises is their ability to address stubborn problems. Social businesses are capable of making profit whilst pursuing their social missions. The profits produced by these enterprises can be ploughed back into the business to offer cost-effective value products and services for the targeted section of the population (Yunus, 2010). The requirement to toil within severe resource limitations stimulates social entrepreneurs to be pioneering and find frugal and prudent answers to problems. For instance, Ehealthpoint, which operates in deprived parts of India, provides clean water to the residents for a small, fixed charge. Simultaneously, Ehealthpoint provides primary healthcare to the residents who receive clean water. Furthermore, Ehealthpoint developed an economical solution that mutually realizes a public health goal through access to clean water, and a good healthcare delivery mission through better-quality access to primary care.

The competence of social enterprise processes to generate equally social and economic values is measured as the 'double bottom-line' and is appreciated more than typical business organizations that create mainly a 'single bottom-line' or profits. Wallace states: "another key premise underpinning the meta-narrative of sustainability is that social enterprises are businesses – albeit with social aims" (2005, p. 84). However, Wallace also recognised the disagreement of the co-inquiry group, who claim:

"Social enterprises are not just businesses with social objectives. They're set up specifically to benefit the community...Community benefit is the whole raison d'être. Trading is merely a means to an end."

(2005, p. 84)

Hence, policies that wish to amend market failures or externalities, thereby effecting market dynamics, are becoming increasingly powerful (Albrecht, 2002). Social enterprises perform a cohesive and consistent role, to maximise resource procurement and expectation, and shared benefit and commonality within the bounds of valid productivity in terms of goods or services. The innate character of social enterprises, and their relationships with the government and stakeholders, provides 'relational assets' for structure (Haugh, 2005). 'Relational assets' (Torre, 2003) are increasing in significance in terms of their resource and portfolio abilities, using social enterprises' knowledge to bring in financial revenue, social return, and ecological profit. Often, social entrepreneurs aim to bolster the public, focusing on their progress and building social capital. Hence, constructive outcomes of social enterprise cannot be calculated in tangible forms, but we also need an intangible matrix to correctly assess their contributions (Lumpkin et al., 2018).

These benefits flow to the community and, subsequently, the monetary proceeds get ploughed back into the social enterprise giving further legitimacy and credibility to the emerging social enterprise model. Social enterprises are hybrid organizations balancing

numerous rationalities and aims, i.e. marketable reasons to efficaciously realize commercial purposes, and social wellbeing/civic logic to generate common shared value (Gillett et al., 2016; Pache and Santos, 2010). Social entrepreneurship offers understandings that can inspire concepts for more socially adequate and sustainable business approaches and structural arrangements. As it contributes unwaveringly to globally documented sustainable development (SDGs) goals, social entrepreneurship also inspires conventional companies to take on more social responsibility.

3. Methodology in the Research

The authors of this chapter have received research funding from the UK India Education Research Initiative (UKIERI). This three-year project has critically examined the association between social enterprise and higher education (please see the British Council Report 2018-19, p. 15 for more details on the project). The research applied two geographical case studies, namely India and the UK. The case studies gave the authors a detailed understanding of how social enterprise is integrated into the current social science higher education curriculum. At the start of the research process, a detailed literature review was undertaken using the search tool Summon at the University of Huddersfield, before which the work of Hart (2001) was examined to refresh the authors' strategies for understanding a comprehensive literature review. From this, the authors applied a qualitative approach for their data collection; documentary data sources, semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings were used. Strict ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process. When the data collection was completed, a thematic analysis strategy was used and specific themes emerged. As with the review method, the authors of this research examined the work of Guest et al. (2012) to inform their approach to thematic analysis.

4. Social Enterprise Education

The global financial crisis of 2008 created a new emphasis on social enterprise and how it relates to higher education (Capella-Peris et al., 2020; Raudsaar et al., 2020). It has been common practice for many universities across the world to have a number of undergraduate/postgraduate courses in social enterprise with specialised units. Recent research by Calvo (2016) provides a useful explanation of social enterprise in a higher education context. Calvo states:

“The term ‘Social Enterprise’ (SE) describes a broad range of organisational forms that vary widely in terms of activity, size, legal structure, geographical scope, resources, degree of profit orientation, and governance (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Bridge, et al., 2009; Peattie & Morley, 2008). The SE label has been used to refer to earned income strategies by not-for-profit organisations (Dees, 1998), voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) that are contracted to deliver public services (Di Domenico, et al., 2009), democratically controlled organisations that aim to benefit the community (Defourny & Nyssens, 2006), profit orientated business with social aims (Kanter & Purrington, 1998; Harding, 2006), and community enterprises that have been founded by local people to tackle a particular social problem (Williams, 2007).”

(2016, p. 603)

In the institutions that were examined for this piece of research (i.e. University of Delhi and University of Huddersfield), there was a real strategic emphasis on how the university and local community were working together. Clear evidence of this collaborative ethos is present in the way each of the institutions have a precise and deliberate strategy (see Table 1, which shows the strategies of both institutions). As can be seen, both institutions have the same

ethos in higher education, but have different ways of presenting their strategy, which reflects the nature of social enterprise found in this study.

When the qualitative data collection was undertaken, the participants were asked how the momentum of social enterprise has occurred in recent years in international, national and local contexts. Moreover, the study demonstrates how social enterprise is related in the higher education institutional context (i.e. University of Delhi and University of Huddersfield). It was discovered that the real impetus for social enterprise in higher education in recent years has transpired due to the events of the financial crisis of 2008. The consensus of the data collected from the interviews is represented in the following excerpt:

“There’s quite a big growing movement worldwide now to completely re-think the way we understand and teach economics. It’s got a lot of academics involved in this, and it’s on the basis of the financial crash in 2008, and it basically argues that a) the kind of economics that we have been brought up on led to the financial crash and that b) the world that now exists after the financial crash cannot be understood in terms of traditional growth theories. It’s a whole very wide-ranging thing, but [...] part of what it says is that, you know, traditional growth theories basically cause climate change and cause the refugee crisis and stuff like this and that’s what we need to completely rethink.”

(Focus Group Participant, 2018)

Table 1: Summary of global strategies from the University of Delhi and the University of Huddersfield.

University of Delhi	University of Huddersfield
<p><u>Vision Statement:</u></p> <p>“Be an internationally acclaimed University, recognized for excellence in teaching, research and outreach; provide the highest quality education to students, nurture their talent, promote intellectual growth and shape their personal development; remain dedicated and steadfast in the pursuit of truth aligned with the motto of the University of Delhi ‘Nishtha Dhriti Satyam’ and serve humanity through the creation of well-rounded, multi-skilled and socially responsible global citizens.”</p> <p><u>Mission:</u></p> <p>“Foster all-round development of students through multi-faceted education and sustained engagement with local, national and global communities, and nurture lifelong inspired learners from across the globe in line with our cultural ideal of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.”</p>	<p><u>2025 Strategy:</u></p> <p>“We will work as a team to provide an excellent service to all of the communities we support.”</p> <p><u>Values:</u></p> <p>To meet the above values, six leadership principles have been set, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovation 2. International 3. Growth and Efficiency 4. Financial Sustainability 5. People First 6. Inspiring

Sources: (University of Delhi, 2021 and University of Huddersfield, 2021)

The data collected from the focus group participant's observation, illustrated above, is comparable with the views expressed in other studies in the social enterprise research field. For example, very recent work by Arantes (2020) notes that there has been much conjecture on social enterprise as a result of the impact of the financial crisis of 2008. In her work, Arantes (2020) highlights other studies that have found a similar pattern (see Kim and Defourny, 2011; Poon, 2011). The increased emergence of social enterprise reflects the realization that social enterprise can have a real, positive impact on society at different levels in many countries across the world. Dobeles notes that social enterprise is an "important tool to tackle social challenges"; social enterprises "create innovative initiatives to unsolved social problems, putting social value creation at the heart of their mission in order to create benefit to different individuals and society" (2016, p. 227). Governments, such as those in India and the UK, have become more supportive of social enterprise. Powell and Osborne argue that, on the whole, social enterprises can "effectively marry together sustainable business practice with an adherence to social mission" (2020, p. 63), and are in a good position to respond to environmental sustainability challenges. Relatedly, during this research, the authors encountered many social enterprise organizations that play vital roles in community welfare projects. The increase in governmental support for social enterprises has been influenced by the shift in capitalist economies. Today, many developed and developing countries' economies are perceived as social economies. In essence, a social economy has a clear aim: to create social impact and to achieve social objectives in a democratic way (Lambooy et al., 2020). Subsequently, the participants in this research wholeheartedly saw governments' attitudes on social enterprise in the UK and India as social economy approaches, as one social entrepreneur stated:

"Now I think Social Enterprise is right at the centre of a new economic model and what I'm saying is the connection between research and the Social Enterprise might be that it provides a new economic model, because I know that's the kind of thing that you're trying to do in terms of getting Social Enterprise into different areas of the community and I think we need to really completely and utterly rethink the way that we study and understand economics, but we also need to get economics in a different way, right across the curriculum in all educational institutions."

(Focus Group Participant, 2018)

Based on the above contribution, it appears that the fundamental reason for the emphasis on social enterprise in government public policy is the track record of social enterprise in working with – and coming up with solutions for many social problems in – communities. Furthermore, social enterprise organizations share the common purpose to create social value and, more importantly, are great examples of contributing to a sustainable economy (Choi et al., 2020). In addition to the responsibilities they share with social enterprises, universities are also responsible for the way communities and social enterprises bond. Van Zyl provides a useful summary of what universities can do:

"Universities are called upon to provide the knowledge and the appropriate responses for communities that are successively exposed to rapid, unexpected changes. Our communities are faced with globalization, climate change, economic uncertainty and rapid, disruptive technological advancement. In these circumstances, universities can empower communities to respond to these challenges."

(2014, p. 65)

5. Best Practise in Global Social Enterprise

The notion of best practice in social enterprise can be characterized as a set of guidelines, as principles that represent the most efficient, ethical, and beneficent course of action based upon appropriate evidence. However, we argue that best practice is more than evidence-based practice; it should reflect quality enterprising activities that are considered the optimal standard based upon the prevailing standards and point of view. Specific best practices in social enterprise are significant because they serve to direct social entrepreneurs to develop solutions to identified problems and needs. In this section of the chapter, the authors offer some best practice examples from their own academic work to demonstrate solutions that can be achieved.

To enable the sustainability of social enterprise, best practice must be identified and shared amongst practitioners, which can in turn raise awareness of social enterprises' own accountability for excellence. In addition, the sharing of best practice can facilitate a drive towards quality improvement and the adoption of an effective governance strategy, creating:

“A framework through which Social Enterprise organizations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their service and safeguarding high standards of entrepreneurship care by creating an environment in which excellence in social enterprise will flourish.”

(Snowden et al., Forthcoming)

Consequently, best practice is characterized by two key dimensions: mentoring and heutagogy.

Mentoring is often postulated to be a learning process characterized by helpful and critical learning discussions within a sustained, nurtured and non-hierarchical relationship. Typically, mentors are more “senior” (mentor) practitioners in terms of knowledge, skill and experience; they offer support to a less skilled, less knowledgeable or inexperienced practitioner (mentee) with the aim of increasing the mentee’s capability of, for example in this case, social enterprise. Snowden and Halsall describe mentoring as “an intervention that supports those individuals with less experience within any given context in their personal, social and professional development” (2017, p. 297), and furthermore enables:

“[the] mentee to access the inside knowledge that the mentor has developed over their life course; distinctly, the mentor is able to translate reality, and help the mentee inhabit their own patterns of reasoning, insight and the application of knowledge and skill.”

(Snowden, 2019, p. 123)

Nonetheless, experiences on this project have demonstrated that the transfer of experience, knowledge and skills of the mentor is a challenging and transformative process that requires key skills, qualities and abilities. McSherry and Snowden (2019) suggest that there are four key attributes of the mentor to ensure effective transference; these include the ability to teach, explain, prioritize and develop interpersonal skills, the ability to provide constructive and critical feedback based upon both negative and positive experiences, a critical awareness of standards that are commensurate with excellence, and the ability to develop and construct awareness of politics that influence practice.

The benefits of mentoring are well documented and, as a consequence of the perceived impact upon organizational performance, it has increasingly become an established practice within many disciplines and professions (Garvey et al., 2017). Building upon this, despite the

paucity of mentoring literature in the field of social enterprise (Thomaz and Catalão-Lopes, 2019), Oberoi et al. (2020a) and Oberoi et al. (2020b) illustrate its relevance to social enterprise organizations and the development of social entrepreneurs. The skills identified previously by McSherry and Snowden (2019) clearly resonate with the findings from the authors' experience on this project.

Heutagogy is an increasingly popular approach to skill development and learning, advanced from the study of self-determined learning first postulated by Hase and Kenyon (2007), and subsequently reworked within the community context by Snowden (2017), Halsall et al. (2016) and Snowden and Halsall (2014). Heutagogy is a learner-centric approach to skill and knowledge development, where the learner – student, practitioner, adult or child – is supported by a mentor to follow and develop their own subject expertise and interest that is encapsulated within their own philosophical approach to learning and skill development. This approach is often described as a self-determined approach to learning and based upon real-world experiences, developing more capable practitioners (Snowden and Halsall, 2014). This notion of capability is an important measure within social enterprise. Successful social entrepreneurs are those that are able to work in unpredictable and uncertain surroundings, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability, the ability to draw upon multiple perceptions, intuition, and the ability to conceptualize complex solutions successfully in a rapidly changing world (Snowden et al., 2021).

Embracing heutagogy provides a twenty-first century approach to learning and teaching congruent with the demands of contemporary society, a society that is in constant flux. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the notion of global change and dynamic needs in a world that is characterized by the unprecedented speed of change. Traditional knowledge acquisition models are no longer of value. Learning is becoming increasingly focused upon what we do, and the growth of those distinctive skills and aptitudes suitable for the changing, active and contested work environment as highlighted by Barnett: "The 21st century is calling for human beings who are themselves flexible, able to respond purposively to new situations and ideas" (2014, p. 9). Accomplished people are more likely to be reactive and lead successfully within the active setting characterized by modern global society, and to possess the qualities and skills needed by the present-day entrepreneur.

Reflecting upon the notion of heutagogy and its relevance to social enterprise in the context of the UKIERI project provides an alternative lens through which to view social enterprise practice, and its relationship with communities and the global society. Clearly, social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, as highlighted earlier in this chapter, is becoming increasingly complex due to the dynamic nature of global challenges and the multifaceted nature of social enterprise. The UKIERI project has demonstrated that the development of best practice is dependent upon the interrelationship of effective mentoring within a heutagogical approach to skill and knowledge development.

The interrelationship between mentoring and heutagogy promotes best practice, as it serves to develop solutions to identified problems and needs; these are shared and developed further by effective governance, ensuring an effective cycle of quality enhancement. Clearly, the discipline must reflect upon how to convey the transformative message of best practice illustrated by mentoring and heutagogy.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has been focused on the relationship between sustainability and social enterprise. At the heart of this relationship is the institutional impact that it has on both these concepts. In this chapter, the authors have provided a realistic conceptual understanding of sustainability and social enterprise in a global context. As presented here, there is a wealth of academic literature in this field. The significance of the

relationship between sustainability and social enterprise hinges on the balance it creates in the developed and developing world. There is a real global understanding, which can encapsulate different societal institutional sectors, i.e. government, third sector and private sector.

In this chapter, the primary focus has been on how social enterprise equilibrium can have a connecting impact in the higher education sector. At the forefront of this are the ways in which different higher education institutions embrace sustainability and social enterprise. It is evident that both of the case studies that have been used for this research, the University of Delhi and the University of Huddersfield, foster these concepts to facilitate a wider impact at local, national and global levels. Moreover, the qualitative data analysis demonstrates a real appetite for social enterprise, which is evident as a result of the different stakeholder engagement (i.e. Government, Local Government, Third Sector Organizations and Universities).

This research project is a small snapshot of what is going on in the subject area of sustainability. To conclude this discussion, the authors make the following recommendations:

1. Interconnectivity is needed between economics, sustainability and social enterprise, with emphasis required on how the public can better understand and engage with each area.
2. Showcase more how social enterprise organizations are having a real impact on the SDGs. From the outset, social enterprise in both form and function embraces these goals.
3. Promote an effective governance strategy to promote best practice, drawing upon mentoring and heutagogy.

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