

Prospects for Collaborative Research in Social Entrepreneurship

Thomas S. Lyons, Ph.D.
Baruch College, CUNY

Kathleen Liang, Ph.D.
University of Vermont

What is “Social?”

- From the Latin word *socialis*:
Meaning an associate, ally or companion
- Easily translated to society or community

Who is an “Entrepreneur?”

An entrepreneur is “a production innovator who perceives the opportunity to provide a new product or implement a new production method and then organizes the needed production inputs and assumes financial risk.”

- Terry, 1995

Who is an “Entrepreneur?”

- An entrepreneur is “a marriage broker between what is desirable from an economic point of view and what is possible from a technological (i.e., operational) point of view.”

-Klein, 1977

What is “Entrepreneurship?”

Entrepreneurship is “a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach, and leadership balanced.”

- Timmons and Spinelli, 2007

What is “Entrepreneurship?”

At minimum, entrepreneurship involves:

- Innovation; and
- A goal of growth for the business

- Lichtenstein and Lyons, 2010

What is “Social Entrepreneurship?”

“Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value);
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission;
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning;
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand; and
- Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.”

- Dees, 1998

“What is “Social Entrepreneurship?”

“Social entrepreneurship is a multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behavior to achieve the social mission, a coherent unity of purpose and action in the face of moral complexity, the ability to recognize social value-creating opportunities and key decision-making characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking.”

- Mort, et al, 2002

What is “Social Entrepreneurship?”

“Social entrepreneurship creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and mobilizes the ideas, capacities, resources, and social arrangements required for sustainable social transformations.”

- Alvord, et al, 2004

What do Social Entrepreneurs do?

“Social entrepreneurs are not content to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry.”

- Bill Drayton, CEO, Chair and Founder,
Ashoka

What Forms Do social Ventures Take?

- Nonprofits/NGOs
- Earned income (for-profit) ventures that directly impact social need
- Context business partnerships (nonprofits and for-profits)
- Public-private partnerships
- Venture philanthropy

Examples of Social Ventures

- One Laptop Per Child
- **Mission:** To create educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by providing each child with a rugged, low-cost, low-power, connected laptop with content and software designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning. When children have access to this type of tool they get engaged in their own education. They learn, share, create, and collaborate. They become connected to each other, to the world and to a brighter future.

Examples of Social Ventures

- Year Up:
- Our mission is to close the opportunity divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education.

Examples of Social Ventures

COMMON	
	GROUND

Our mission is to **END** homelessness.

Major Issues in Social Entrepreneurship

- Legal/Organizational Structure
- Evaluating Effectiveness/Performance
- Viability of Pursuing the Double and Triple Bottom Line
- Marketing in Social Entrepreneurship
- Youth Social Entrepreneurship
- Social Entrepreneurship's Impact on Community Development

Selected Unanswered Questions

- How successful are social ventures in actually having social impact?
- What is the most effective legal/organizational structure for social ventures?
- Is the “double bottom line” truly achievable?
- Are earned income strategies an effective means of generating revenue for cash-strapped nonprofits?

Full-Group Discussion

- Identify prospective social entrepreneurship research topics that interest participants (a list).
- Have participants “vote” for their top five research topics

Break-Out Group Discussions

- Groups coalesce around most frequently identified topics of interest
- Generate ideas for collaborative research within interest groups
- Share these ideas with full group

Next Steps