

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOCIETY: CHALLENGES, TENDENCIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Academic papers

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REDAKTORIAUS ŽODIS

Gerbiamas skaitytojau, pristatome Jums trečiąjį mokslinio žurnalo "Aukštųjų mokyklų vaidmuo visuomenėje: iššūkiai, tendencijos ir perspektyvos" leidimą. Šiame numeryje pateikiama virš keturiasdešimt mokslinių straipsnių, nagrinėjančių studijų inovacijų, informacinių technologijų taikymo, studijų kokybės, ekologijos problemas socialinių, techninių ir ekonominių pokyčių kontekste. Šiandien švietimo situacija ne tik Lietuvoje, bet ir visame pasaulyje kelia vis naujus iššūkius, todėl įvairių sričių mokslininkų, verslo atstovų indėlis yra ypatingai svarbus. Alytaus kolegija puoselėja inovatyvias idėjas ir iniciatyvas švietimo ir technologijų taikymo srityse, skatina bendradarbiavimą tarp įvairių institucijų mokslininkų bei verslo atstovų. Vienas iš pavyzdžių – Alytaus kolegijoje naujai įkurtos atsinaujinčių energijos šaltinių laboratorijos galimybių įsisavinimas ir taikymas studijų procese. Straipsnius parengė autoriai iš įvairių Lietuvos, Norvegijos, Australijos ir Lenkijos aukštųjų mokyklų. Pažymėtina tai, kad visi autoriai dalyvavo Alytaus kolegijos 2014 metais organizuotose konferencijose, pristatė savo pranešimus ir turėjo galimybę "gyvai" padiskutuoti nagrinėjamais klausimais, pasidalinti įgyta patirtimi su konferencijų dalyviais.

Labai tikiuosi, kad Redkolegijos darbas leidžiant žurnalą padės užmegzti glaudžius ryšius tarp institucijų, skatins bendradarbiavimą tarp būsimų straipsnių autorių ir žurnalo skaitytojų, o žurnalui bus skirta priderama vieta tarp kitų mokslinių žurnalų.

Vyriausioji redaktorė Doc. dr. Lina Kankevičienė

SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT: HOW TO GROW INTEREST AMONG CAPITAL PROVIDERS?¹

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify how social impact investment from Norway can be a resource for social entrepreneurs internationally. The research will introduce criteria's investors have, steps that can be taken towards social impact investment and what kind of investment models that can be tested. A main problem for social entrepreneurs is funding and financial sustainability. Investment from the start is crucial in order to create a sustainable business. My hypothesis is that investors and the government need to create new investment models to encourage social entrepreneurs. The results of this research can be used to bridge the gap between investors and social entrepreneurs. The research consisted of interviews, questionnaires and papers written on the subject investment and social entrepreneurship. As data collection, interviews have been made with investors in private and governmental investment companies. The findings in the interviews were then discussed with the findings in papers on the topic. Results indicate that there is a willingness among investors to invest in social entrepreneurs. The biggest differences are between private and governmental investors. Answers show that private investors have to take the first step.

Keywords: investment, social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, funding, social impact investment, investment models.

Introduction

Investment from the start is crucial in order to create a sustainable business either it's a social or commercial business. A major challenge for social entrepreneurs is funding (Salamon, 1994; Dees, 1998; Kingston and Bolton, 2004). A social enterprise faces the same issues that any commercial business faces in its growth and operations (Douglas, 2008). While some social business are able to generate income through sale of services and/or products, funding such as private investment, donations and government funding, can be difficult. There is a substantial body of case study material on how to be a good social entrepreneur, however, there is little or no theory; little systematic data at a national level, and nothing in the way of international comparisons of impact and types of social entrepreneurial activity (Harding, 2004). This renders the area of little interest to investors in particular since there is no estimation of the hard economic impact that these ventures create. If access to finance is a key factor in ensuring the continued growth of the social enterprise sector, what options are out there (Segran, 2010)?

Across almost all business, the operating environment has become radically more dynamic, unpredictable, and turbulent. The more uncertainty and turbulence and the more urgent need there is to break with the past and go for radical change, the stronger is the fear of letting go and leaving behind what is perceived as safe (Bogsnes, 2009). My proposition is that private investors and the government, together or separately, should test new investment models. The models can be a resource for social entrepreneurs, commercial entrepreneurs and even non-profit.

The purpose of this study is to identify how to grow interest among investors about social impact investment, that can be a resource for social entrepreneurs in Norway and globally. The results of this research can be used to bridge the gap between investors and social entrepreneurs. Between governmental investment funds and private investors. It is possible to generate more social impact in investment; there is enough capital.

Methods

During the period between August and October 2013, I interviewed private investors, investment companies, venture companies and governmental investment funds. The youngest company has existed for five years and the oldest for 92, but the average age of the rest of the companies were 15 years. The investment companies and funds have between two and 50 employees. The main part had about four employees. Companies who invest one billion and more invest in more than 30 companies. The smaller investors; 450 million and less, invest in an average of 10 companies.

¹ Paper to be presented at 30th Summit International Social Entrepreneurship Conference hosted by ALYTAUS KOLEGIJA University of applied sciences, Alytus, October 2013.

² The respondents wish to be anonymous.

The interviewees selected were from all parts of Norway and the business sectors they invest in are diverse. A major part of the interviewees invest in ICT. The investors were located in Norway, but half of the investors also invest in companies located in other countries such as Africa, Europe and America. This is people who have worked within the field between 10 and 50 years. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. I also conducted questionnaires with 8 questions.

I asked the respondents these questions:

- In what kind of enterprises do you invest today?
- What are your investment criteria?
- What is important to you/your business?
- Do you invest in social entrepreneurship today?
- What are/would be the investment criteria for social entrepreneurs?
- Do you think that a social impact bond model could work in Norway?
- What kinds of incentives have to be present?
- What investment models for social impact would be interesting for you to try?

I grouped the answers into investors who invest in social entrepreneurship today and those who don't.

I have read articles and reviews written on the subject investment, social impact, funding and social entrepreneurship. The findings in the interviews were grouped and discussed according to my proposition.

Results

I have talked to two advisors in governmental investment funds and 16 private investors, ventures and investment companies. I found that 10 of 18 invest in social entrepreneurship today or were positive to invest in social entrepreneurship. The biggest differences were between private investors and governmental investment funds. The governmental investments are decided by politicians and are therefore depending on policy and guidelines. The private investors are more flexible and are often driven by personal motivation.

The investors' criteria for investment in commercial enterprises and social enterprises were different. To invest in commercial enterprises they have to be financial sustainable, scalable, have international potential and deliver large profit. To invest in social enterprises the investors don't expect large profit, but financial sustainability, entrepreneurial skills and social impact were the most important criteria. Only one of 18 said that the criteria would be the same, social or not.

When it came to investment models for social impact, there were few suggestions other than crowdfunding. One of the respondents emphasized the importance of measuring new and better models, in order to gain more interest for social impact investment.

Social and commercial entrepreneurship investors

Of the 10 investors who already invest in social entrepreneurship, seven were positive to social impact investment and to test out new models. One of the respondents replied that social impact investment is the future. We can't depend on the government to pay for the present challenges in the society, alone. A different respondent stated that most investors want to have a close follow up on their investment, especially when it comes to social impact. Only investors with a huge amount of money would be able to invest in social impact.

Commercial entrepreneurship investors

Of the eight investors who don't invest in social entrepreneurship and were not planning to do so, 4 were positive to that social impact investment could be a resource. One of the respondents believed that several investors would be interested in this, and even though social impact was not a criterion for an investor, he/she would be pleased if his/her investment would have a social impact. A different respondent said that he has no belief in the government about this topic. If social impact investment could work or not has a lot to do with how you structure available resources. In Norway the government are wasting our resources.

Discussion

When Nkala (2009) emphasizes that the traditional market-driven and profit-focused enterprises remain the dominant business form. In fact, depending on how the concept is defined, social enterprises only represented 2.9% to 4.6% of all U.S. businesses in 2006, and many venture capitalists still believe they are not worth the effort required. In UK there are an estimated 62,000 social enterprises, contributing over £24 billion to the economy and employing a workforce of nearly a million people (Social Enterprise UK, 2009). Support mechanisms like Business Link have being modified to incorporate social entrepreneurship support and various funding have been earmarked for advancing social entrepreneurship, like the European Social Fund (ESF). This highlights the evidence of an increase attention to social entrepreneurship by local, national and regional governments (Nkala, 2009). This is in addition to UK government specific support organs like the Office of the Third Sector (Cabinet Office, 2006). In the last five years, the UK has seen the

emergence of a number of small social investment intermediaries such as Venturesome, Big Issue Invest and Bridges Social Entrepreneur's Fund, offering a range of investments to social sector organisations from unsecured debt to equity and quasi-equity (Segran, 2010). This is just a few of the investment companies that have emerged globally during the last ten years. This shows that there is an increasing amount of investors who wants to explore the possibilities with social enterprises.

When criteria for investors are different for social and commercial business, this shows that believing in social enterprises to be scalable, have international potential and deliver large profit is not present. In fact several of the respondents implied that large profit couldn't be expected. There are examples on social entreprises who make a social impact and have a major profit. Enterprises like Grameen Bank, People Tree, The thought collective, The Big Issue, the Eden Project and more. Social businesses differ from traditional not-for-profit institutions in that the social businesses must have profits to successfully function, and, they differ from traditional profit-based businesses in that their profits are used to support social causes rather than to increase the wealth of investors, managers, and owners (Masetti, 2008). But as one of the respondent said, it's all about the mindset.

One explanation about the lack of knowledge about social impact models can be that the question wasn't clear enough. Others can be that it's not in their interest or that the knowledge is actually limited. Maybe it is as Kanter (1999) underlines in his article *From spare change to real change;* as government downsizes and the public expects the private sector to step in to help solve community problems, it is important that businesses understand why the old models of corporate support don't create sustainable change.

When 11 of the 18 respondents had a positive answer to a social impact model, which implies that there is an interest and willingness to invest in social entrepreneurs, maybe the challenge is something different. It can be lack of knowledge or available research and information on social impact investment. One of the research challenges, then, is to find a way of measuring both the levels of social entrepreneurial activity and the impact that social entrepreneurs have in terms of job and wealth creation that can be understood by the investment community (Harding, 2004).

A weakness in the selection of respondents can be related to that the topic, social impact investment, and investors who are especially interested would take the time to be interviewed, because they care. Private investors are not easy to approach since they want to be incognito. The are few respondents from governmental investment funds, beacuse they are few in Norway. The amount of respondents are not high enough to see a very clear pattern.

Conclusion

Results indicate that there is a willingness and interest among investors to explore the possibilities for social impact investment and several are doing it already. A change of mindset could be the tipping point to weather or not investors trust social entrepreneurs to deliver large profit, be scalable and have international potential. Different organizational structures, business models and business maturity will require different investment structures. A way to showcase possible models for social impact investment that includes research and qualitative measuring could be very useful. Answers from the respondents about the government ability to structure the available resources indicate that private investors have to take the first step. In many cases they do.

Obtained results can be taken as an introduction to further studies on measuring the social and financial impact of different social investment models. In addition, further studies should include larger samples and samples from different countries in order to ensure the representativeness of the results.

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Santrauka

SOCIALINIO POVEIKIO INVESTICIJA: KAIP PADIDINTI INVESTUOTOJŲ SUSIDOMĖJIMĄ

Šio tyrimo tikslas – nustatyti, kaip Norvegijos socialinės investicijos poveikis gali būti ištekliu tarptautinėje socialinėje verslininkystėje. Mokslinių tyrimų metu bus nustatyti investuotojų turimi kriterijai, veiksmai, kurių galima imtis siekiant socialinio poveikio investicijoms ir kokius investicinius modelius galima išbandyti. Pagrindinė socialinės verslininkystės problema yra finansavimas ir finansinis tvarumas. Siekiant sukurti tvarų verslą, investicijos yra pagrindas.

Hipotezė – investuotojai ir vyriausybė turi sukurti naujų investavimo modelių, skatinančių socialinius verslininkus. Šio tyrimo rezultatai gali būti naudojami siekiant panaikinti atotrūkį tarp investuotojų ir socialinės verslininkystės. Tyrimas susideda iš interviu, klausimynų ir straipsnių, parašytų tema apie investicijas ir socialinį verslumą. Duomenims surinkti, interviu buvo atlikti su investuotojais privačių ir vyriausybinių investicinių bendrovių. Interviu išvados vėliau buvo aptartos straipsniuose, parašytuose šia tema. Rezultatai rodo, kad investuotojai nori investuoti į socialinį verslą. Didžiausi skirtumai yra tarp privačių ir valstybinių investuotojų. Atsakymai rodo, kad privatūs investuotojai turi žengti pirmą žingsnį.

Esminiai žodžiai: investicijos, socialinė verslininkystė, socialinė įmonė, finansavimas, socialinio poveikio finansavimas, investavimo modeliai.

AUKŠTŲJŲ MOKYKLŲ VAIDMUO VISUOMENĖJE: IŠŠŪKIAI, TENDENCIJOS IR PERSPEKTYVOS

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