

Business & Society 360

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Edited by

DAVID M. WASIELESKI

JAMES WEBER



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360

Series Editors: David M. Wasieleski and James Weber

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The *Business and Society (BAS) 360* book series is an annual publication targeting cutting-edge developments in the broad business and society field, such as stakeholder management, corporate social responsibility and citizenship, business ethics, sustainability, corporate governance and others. Each volume will feature a comprehensive discussion and review of the current 'state' of the research and theoretical developments in a specific business and society area. As business and society is an inherently multi-disciplinary scholarly area, the book series will draw from work in areas outside of business and management, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, religious studies, economics and other related fields, as well as the natural sciences, education and other professional areas of study.

This volume presents insightful case studies and adds important new knowledge to the social entrepreneurship conversation. It is well worth reading.

–Tom Lumpkin, Michael F. Price Chair and Professor of Entrepreneurship, University of Oklahoma

The chapters in this volume on social entrepreneurship offer readers an insightful and complex reflection on an emerging and increasingly important area of research to academics and practitioners. Various and unique insights are provided by expert international scholars and lay out intriguing pathways for future work that address gaps in the academic literature providing insights to business executives and academics.

–Gideon D. Markman, PhD, Professor of Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Enterprise, Colorado State University

This year's *Business and Society 360* book series by Drs. Wasieleski and Weber are very timely. Their focus on social entrepreneurship is needed now more than ever. Not only is there a growing gap between the rich and the poor, but also the middle class continues to shrink. Traditional business models aren't effectively addressing these complex problems. In far too many instances they are making them worse. Successful social entrepreneurship models and paradigms can help bridge those gaps.

–William Generett Jr., Esq., Senior Vice President, Duquesne University, Entrepreneur in Residence Duquesne School of Business and Social Entrepreneur

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BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360 VOLUME 5

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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PREFACE

Sophie Bacq, David M. Wasieleski and
James Weber

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360 BOOK SERIES OVERVIEW

Where are we? How did we get here? Which way should we go now?

Sound familiar? Have you ever considered the answers to these questions related to the work you do? Existential moments are common in the maturation of any academic discipline. They are the product of a passionate, caring constituency that is driven to make meaningful contributions that can propel future research and provide illusory discoveries that are conceptually powerful, empirically sound, and practically useful.

It is in the desire for academic progress that we proudly continue the *Business and Society 360 (BAS 360)* annual book series. *BAS 360* is an annual book series targeting cutting-edge developments in the broad business and society field. Each volume features a comprehensive 360-degree discussion and review of the current state of the research and theoretical developments in a specific area of business and society scholarship. Our series began five years ago with Volume 1 on “Stakeholder Management.” Volume 2 was published a year later on “Corporate Social Responsibility.” In 2019, we focused Volume 3 on “Business Ethics” and last year we assembled Volume 4 focusing on “Sustainability.” The goal of this series is to shape future work in the field around our many disciplines and topics of interest, to enlighten scholars in the area about the most productive roads forward. Essentially, at this crossroad, which way do we proceed?

The 360-degree view is intended to reflect on a theory’s cross-discipline research, empirical explorations, cross-cultural studies, literature critiques, and meta-analysis projects. Given our multidisciplinary identity, each volume draws from work in areas both inside and outside of business and management.

Social Entrepreneurship: Origins, Trends, and Future Directions

In 1972, Bill Drayton, founder of the international nonprofit Ashoka, coined the term social entrepreneurship to describe a then growing trend of entrepreneurs pursuing market-based opportunities in an attempt to address unresolved yet pressing social and environmental issues. These entrepreneurs noted that

traditional state-led and charity efforts often struggle to tackle these challenges, in part because their top-down, bureaucratic, and somewhat arm-length structures and approaches often yield slow and suboptimal solutions. However, they also acknowledged that traditional profit-driven entrepreneurs, whose nimbler and more adaptable structures and approaches might yield superior solutions, tend to veer away from these sorts of issues because they do not see enough potential for financial gain in attempting to solve them. Social entrepreneurs aimed to address these actors' apparent shortcomings, respectively known as government and market failures, by applying traditional entrepreneurial structures and processes, while adopting state and nonprofit actors' focus on meeting others' needs over making profits – albeit while still striving to achieve economic sustainability as market-based ventures.

Over the following two decades, the social entrepreneurship ecosystem strengthened, as evidenced by the creation of other organizations promoting social entrepreneurs, including Echoing Green (est. 1987), the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship (est. 1998), the Skoll Foundation (est. 1999), to name just a few. As social entrepreneurship gained visibility and traction among practitioners, it triggered a wave of academic analyses of the concept, marked by a sharp increase in research and publications over the last decade. Initially, researchers examined the individual motives that appeared to lead some entrepreneurs down a social, and others down a more traditional, path (e.g., Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006). They then shifted their focus to the strategies social entrepreneurs use to balance the tensions between their economic and noneconomic goals in their organizations (e.g., Battilana & Lee, 2014), largely in response to external institutional and resource provider pressures (Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019). In contrast to individual motives and organizational processes, to date, few researchers have examined the outcomes of social entrepreneurship – that is, which social entrepreneurial solutions appear to work in a given context and which do not. As a result, extant research has yet to inform researchers or practitioners of whether or under which conditions social entrepreneurship actually yields more or more meaningful social benefits than traditional state, NGO, or entrepreneurial initiatives (Bacq & Lumpkin, 2021).

This research gap stems at least in part from the reality that social entrepreneurship outcomes are uniquely difficult to measure. While traditional ventures usually evaluate success by means of one metric – typically net profits – social enterprises by nature often monitor multiple metrics simultaneously, many of which are far less tangible or precise than financial capital. In fact, many develop dashboards showing dozens of metrics to assess their success, and practitioners and funders have developed hundreds of tools and frameworks for measuring and presenting them (IssueLab, 2021).¹ Specific metrics of interest also frequently vary from one context to another, over time, and even between two ventures operating in the same general space, based upon their individual missions and/or approaches (Hertel, Bacq, & Lumpkin, Forthcoming).

¹This observation is drawn from the records of conversations between the first author and multiple social enterprises.

As social entrepreneurship often attempts to create value for distinct local communities (Lumpkin, Bacq, & Pidduck, 2018), recent research has attempted to measure a given venture's outcomes from the perspective of the specific group or groups it seeks to serve. This approach has led researchers to conceptualize new overarching and fungible metrics, including but not limited to civic wealth (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019); community resilience (Dutta, 2017; Gray, Duncan, Kirkwood, & Walton, 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016); community development, regeneration, and renewal (Haugh, 2007; Jain & Koch, 2020); and community well-being (Gordon, Wilson, Tonner, & Shaw, 2018; Vestrum, 2014). Adopting a broader conceptualization of wealth, beyond economic terms, and examining social entrepreneurship outcomes in terms of stocks and flows of capital, offers avenues for future research that complements the currently heavy focus on inputs and organizational processes.

Most social enterprises form with the goal of eventually expanding their operations beyond an initial community of focus, as the issues they aim to address are ultimately global concerns. As such, social entrepreneurs and their supporters – like traditional entrepreneurs – also tend to measure their success in terms of their ability to scale up their solutions. Indeed, as any entrepreneurial ventures, social enterprises start small, yet the problems they intend to solve are large, from poverty to climate change to biodiversity loss. Understandingly, scale has been the center of attention for many social entrepreneurs and their supporters, and we are witnessing a social entrepreneurship ecosystem built on expectations of scale. But while traditional ventures often measure this facet of success in terms of organizational size, organizational scaling does not guarantee scaling of social impact. Rather, and reminiscent of the multidimensionality of impact, scale can take many forms. Social enterprises can scale their impact, either by increasing the number of people they serve – such “scale breadth” strategy has been adopted by many microfinance organizations that have made their purpose to increase the number of borrowers they serve – or by improving their services to beneficiaries, known as “scale depth” (Desa & Koch, 2014).

Furthermore, many practitioners, and a small but growing body of researchers (e.g., Bansal, Grewatsch, & Sharma, 2021), recognize that the ability of social enterprises to scale in any meaningful respect is often a function of their ability to overcome systemic barriers to their efforts, and foster supportive ecosystems, through interactions with local activists, communities, corporations, governments, and other actors (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019) – a process often conceptualized as *systems change* (Papi-Thornton, 2019). Such a systems approach implies for social entrepreneurship researchers to acknowledge and (re)connect social entrepreneurs and organizations to the other actors in the system – not only supporters and communities but also governments, activists, and large corporations – when evaluating the outcomes of social entrepreneurship. A measure of success, in this case, would then be the extent of change (e.g., in power dynamics, in voice representation) brought to existing institutions following social entrepreneurial action.

These existing lines of research demonstrate the importance – and unique opportunity – for social entrepreneurship researchers to challenge assumptions

drawn from traditional entrepreneurship and management theories. Such opportunities abound. Let us illustrate with the case of stakeholder theory, an organizational management, and business ethics theory that accounts for multiple constituencies impacted by business entities like employees, suppliers, local communities, and funders can inform our understandings of this subject. Since it rose to prominence in the 1980s following R. Edward Freeman's publication of his landmark book "*Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*" in 1984, explorations of this theory have focused on how a given focal organization can improve its outcomes by accounting for the needs and views of multiple actors its activities affect. The centeredness of the focal organization has been the assumption since the theory became in vogue in the 1980s. However, the complexity of social and environmental issues invites us to consider how multiple distinct actors' actions can combine to create value and improve outcomes within a given space – drawing upon theories of commons (Ostrom, 1990) to conceptualize this complexity and address collaboration dilemma among multiple stakeholders. To wit, the concept of the commons itself has been revisited and reinterpreted in management, in recent special issues (e.g., Peredo, Haugh, Hudon, & Meyer, 2020) and theory pieces (e.g., Bridoux and Stoelhorst, 2020). As such, in a concerted effort to push scholarly understanding of impact, who gets what value, and on which basis value is allocated (Bacq & Aguilera, 2021; Klein, Mahoney, McGahan, & Pitelis, 2019), this volume brings the spirit of critical and multipolar thought forward by examining social entrepreneurship through the lenses of international collaboration, complexity, and scaling. This volume's coverage of both established and emerging topics, such as networks, crowdfunding, and teams, makes it a rich source of inspiration for anyone interested in researching social entrepreneurship.

Volume 5 is organized into three sections that represent the work included therein. The first part, Case Studies, features five chapters that utilize a case study methodology examining diverse aspects of social entrepreneurship and community issues. Chapter 1, "Generating Social Entrepreneurship Knowledge: International Research Collaboration on a Hemispheric Level" is presented by James E. Austin, Gabriel Berger, Rosa Amelia González, Roberto Gutiérrez, Ivan Lobo, and Alfred Vernis. In this unique piece, the co-authors examine social entrepreneurship knowledge created by universities to improve how a particular knowledge network can facilitate the transfer of knowledge. Looking back over 20 years, the research team provides a model for evaluating the impact of knowledge networks.

Chapter 2, "Social Venture Scaling in Distressed Communities," written by Peter T. Gianiodis, Malcolm Muhammad, and Wendy Chen, examines venturing in communities with limited economic potential. This chapter explores an important gap in the social entrepreneurship literature with its focus on the venture growth and expansion stages in distressed economic areas. Using a case study illustration, the authors present venture scaling challenges in these communities and offer ways economic development can occur in the face of limited economic opportunity.

In “Social Entrepreneurship and Nonprofit Management: Negotiating Institutional Complexity,” Michelle Ouimette, Imran Chowdhury, and Jill R. Kickul examine two nonprofit cases to understand how this type of organization pursues social entrepreneurial ventures while adhering to the parent firm’s social welfare logic. Their study reveals a divergence between parent nonprofit organizations and subsidiary social enterprise in terms of identity and legitimacy. They offer valuable implications on how nonprofits may deal with the dissonance of logic between the values and mission of the parent firm and their seeking of revenue-generating activities.

In Chapter 4, Douglas Schuler, Reginald Young, Asiya Kari, and Jeffrey de Groot examine a case of social entrepreneurship in the food sector. In “Addressing the Interlinkages of Persistent Social Problems: Food for Change as Social Entrepreneurship,” the authors examine an innovating social program from the food bank in Houston, Texas. This fascinating example illustrates how food insecurity is influenced by multiple factors in society. They offer valuable lessons about clients and partners for addressing the causes of social problems.

The final chapter in this section is entitled “Community-based Social Enterprises and Social Innovation: The Case of Women’s Cooperatives in Turkey.” Burin Kalabay Hatipoglu takes us on a deep analysis of a new program associated with a social entrepreneurial organization in Turkey. Examining refugee women’s empowerment, the author finds ways the cooperative can be more inclusive and provide a greater community impact through social innovation. The chapter ends with important implications for society that can be generalized to other community-based social enterprises.

Part 2 focuses on the theoretical development of the field, a topic that is also highlighted in our Preface. Chapter 6, written by Tasneem Sadiq, Karen Maas, and Rob van Tulder, looks at challenges manifested from a hybrid model of an organization. In “The Impact of the Hybridization Movement on Organizations and Society,” the authors utilize a hybridization taxonomy to better understand what challenges to expect in a hybrid characterization of organization. They find that challenges differ by type of hybrid organization and offer suggestions for how each type can address those issues.

In “Scaling Social Impact: What Challenges and Opportunities Await Social Entrepreneurs,” Philippe Eiselein and Nikolai Dentchev examine the theoretical background of scaling challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs. They provide a detailed and thorough literature review to identify both challenges facing the entrepreneurs and different strategies that can be taken to address those scaling issues. The chapter offers many forward-looking avenues for future research in this area.

Chapter 8, by Cyrine Ben-Hafaiedh and Frederic Dufays, establishes a forward-seeking agenda for social entrepreneurial teams’ research. In “Social Entrepreneurial Teams: A Research Agenda,” they address a gap in entrepreneurial research by exploring work that has been done in collective dynamics of socially innovative teams. This underresearched area is an important component of social entrepreneurship scholarship. After their review, the author proffers six topic areas of study for future work in social entrepreneurial teams.

Finally, in Part 3, the remaining three chapters of the volume examine applied research in social entrepreneurship. In Chapter 9, Josefina Murillo-Luna, Esperanza Garcia-Uceda, and Jesus Asin-Lafuente introduce “Obstacles to Social Entrepreneurship.” The team presents a 360-degree view of the factors that inhibit social entrepreneurship as a business model. Their exploratory analysis identifies the key obstacles that hold back social entrepreneurship in this regard. Their chapter also features a set of recommendations from experts in social entrepreneurship to overcome these barriers.

Saheli Nath conceives social entrepreneurship in a different manner in his chapter, “Social Entrepreneurship as ‘Acts of Solidarity’ in Disasters.” In the context of global disasters, Nath proposes thinking of social enterprise as a function of solidarity in order to discover novel patterns of social interaction and to increase inclusivity. She argues that this new vision allows for more community resilience and cohesion in the wake of natural disasters.

Our volume concludes with Chapter 11 entitled “Helper Networks and Crowdfunding: Mobilizing Social Entrepreneurship.” Paulami Mitra, Jill R. Kickul, and Colleen Robb examine crowdfunding in the context of social entrepreneurship to understand what motivates a network of individuals to engage in this behavior. The authors provide insights into the characteristics of these individuals to see what makes these groups unique. Lessons for social entrepreneurs are offered on the formation of their networks as well as communication strategies for engaging in crowdfunding.

In the spirit of this book series, this ensemble of chapters captures the essence of some of the most important and cutting-edge research in social entrepreneurship. Our distinguished group of authors gives a critical examination of the work done in this area, identifies gaps in the extant literature, elucidates pathways for future research, and offers practical and theoretical implications for the field.

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GENERATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP KNOWLEDGE: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION ON A HEMISPHERIC LEVEL

James E. Austin, Gabriel Berger, Rosa Amelia González,
Roberto Gutiérrez, Iván D. Lobo and Alfred Vernis

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Provide insights on how social entrepreneurship (SE) knowledge can be more effectively generated by universities through the entrepreneurial creation and effective management of a knowledge network centered on international collaborative research; illuminate how one such network has enabled Latin American researchers to advance the knowledge and practice frontiers in the hemisphere and globally.

Methodology/Approach: Retrospective analysis of the two-decade evolution of the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network, a pioneering international research collaboration (IRC) of Ibero-American management schools.

Findings: Documents factors and dynamics enabling the successful creation and operation of international knowledge networks. Analyzes the key mechanisms for capturing synergies in collaborative research. Identifies specific effectiveness determinants for successfully operating an international social enterprise knowledge generation network. Identifies multiple impacts of a knowledge generation network.

Research Implications: Advances understanding of IRCs. Provides a model for assessing knowledge network multiple impacts. Identifies a series of future research opportunities and needs.

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Practical Implications: Provides operational guidance for researchers developing or operating collaborative international knowledge networks.

Social Implications: Reveals the value of collaboration in international research and factors that contribute to effective collaboration.

Originality/Value: Provides unique retrospective study of an IRC network operated by developing country schools of management. Expands the scope of recent comparative research on SE education to include a set of countries in Ibero-America. Documents an approach to assessing the impacts of a knowledge network. Identifies important areas for advancing future social enterprise research and teaching.

Keywords: Research benefits; collaboration effectiveness determinants; international research collaboration; knowledge network; performance assessment; social entrepreneurship

ADVANCING THE FIELD THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

The advancement of the young field of social entrepreneurship (SE) requires the robust generation and application of knowledge globally in order to consolidate its distinctive set of theoretical foundations (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Haugh, 2012). Morley and Heraty (2019) point out that

...the generation of novel contextual understanding to enhance theory building, deepen our appreciation of embedded management practices in more diverse territories, and open up new lines of enquiry was, and remains, challenging social science research. Increasingly, international academic research networks that bring together scholars from different countries in the co-production of knowledge represent a key approach to rising to this challenge. (p. 341)

Importantly, in recent decades knowledge generation through collaborative research networks has increasingly expanded beyond long-standing major players in Europe and North America. Particularly, international research collaboration (IRC), an important subset of collaborative research, has also grown significantly during the last years (Wang et al., 2014). Adams (2012) observes, “new regional networks are reinforcing the competence and capacity of emerging research economies, and changing the global balance of research activity” (p. 335). According to Chen, Zhang, and Fu (2019), the study of IRC networks has experienced a process of development culminating in a “take-off” phase that helped establish it as one of the major areas in which the IRC research domain can be classified. In some countries, university accrediting organizations have even created international collaboration indexes to assess this as a valued dimension (Noh & Chang, 2019). Collective international research undertakings hold significant potential for accelerating future research, yet there is very limited examination of what factors, mechanisms, dynamics, and impact make IRC collaborative networks powerful knowledge generators (Chen et al., 2019; Li & Shapira, 2012).

To help fill that gap, this chapter analyzes a pioneering approach to international collaborative research and education on social enterprise, encompassing the entrepreneurship processes and the resulting social enterprises, in Ibero-America: the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN). Founded in 2001 through a process of academic entrepreneurship, the Network brought together a group of leading management schools committed to advancing the frontiers of knowledge and practice of inclusive and sustainable corporate and social initiatives in the region. The creation of SEKN was in large part motivated by the will to incorporate social enterprise as a core element in management curricula across the region to strengthen future business and social leaders' contributions to significant and much needed social change. The Network's regional focus provided the opportunity to learn from the contextual particularities of Ibero-America through collaborative research that enabled more powerful knowledge generation.

After two productive decades, SEKN's initial motivation and the appeal of the opportunity it sought remain valid. There is growing space in management curricula for social enterprise education (Solomon, Alabduljader, & Ramani, 2019). Additionally, as stated by Aguinis et al. (2020), Latin America does not just add a new geographical setting to test old theories; rather, it "offers unique opportunities for conducting research that force us to rethink baseline assumptions and theories on individual behavior, firms, organizations, markets, and institutions" (p. 616), notably social enterprises and blended social and economic value creation. They also state, however, a major challenge is that generally, "Latin American management faculty lack the international research networks to advance their research agendas" (p. 630). This chapter's analysis of SEKN illuminates how this challenge can be effectively met as well as reveals possible pathways for how universities can entrepreneurially create collaborative knowledge networks to accelerate the future development of SE globally. As a single case study, our analysis of SEKN reveals a set of postulated key performance factors on knowledge networks based on IRC. These, in turn, constitute future avenues for SE research for testing and refining their applicability to other initiatives and contexts.

A knowledge network can be defined as a collaborative grouping whose constitutive elements are either individual or collective agents acting across organizational, spatial, and disciplinary boundaries in order to create, search for, adopt, transmit, and store knowledge (cf. Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012; Pugh & Prusak, 2013). Importantly, agents in these networks play the simultaneous roles of sources and recipients of information and knowledge. Based on a comprehensive systematic review, Phelps et al. (2012) propose a typology that classifies knowledge network research around: (1) *knowledge outcomes* (creation, transfer, and adoption), (2) *knowledge network properties* (structure, relations, nodes, and flows), and (3) *level of analysis* (interpersonal, intraorganizational, and interorganizational). Importantly, they emphasize the need for a richer understanding of the microfoundations underlying interorganizational relationships in knowledge networks.

All these dimensions and others are explored in the following analysis of SEKN as an innovative approach to international collaborative research and education on social enterprise. The chapter adds empirical evidence on knowledge networks, particularly the insights and challenges that arise for organizational members to entrepreneurially create, build, and manage those networks effectively. Additionally, it expands to Ibero-America the scope of recent comparative research on SE education (Solomon et al., 2019). Throughout it identifies future research opportunities.

The chapter has five components:

- (1) *Evolution of SEKN*: To provide an empirical basis for examining critical dimensions of generating new SE knowledge through IRC, we start by documenting the founding and evolution of SEKN. We offer it as an example of academic entrepreneurship that may prove illuminating for other schools as well as pointing to pathways for further research.
- (2) *Assessing Performance of Knowledge Networks*: We illustrate through an analysis of SEKN's performance a possible model for assessing the chain of impacts of IRC.
- (3) *Benefits and Challenges of IRCs*: We conceptualize a set of benefits as well as challenges of undertaking cross-country comparative research that can be corroborated or modified by other researchers contemplating, engaged in, or investigating IRC.
- (4) *Effectiveness Determinants*: We identify postulated key effectiveness determinants of operating an international collaborative knowledge network. These effectiveness variables provide possible guidance for IRC undertakings as well as constitute opportunities for future research to assess their relevance and dynamics.
- (5) *Further Avenues of SE Research*: The final section offers a set of additional important and promising research opportunities identified by SEKN researchers and the body of knowledge they helped to produce.

EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

The creation and development of SEKN constituted a process of academic entrepreneurship. At the heart of SE is the identification of an opportunity to address significant social needs and the creation of an innovative approach to meet those needs, “a social value creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, or government sectors” (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006b, p. 2). SE effectiveness requires implementation mechanisms that can mobilize the necessary resources and overcome a multitude of known and unknown barriers. In the case of SEKN, this academic entrepreneurship involved the creation of an international network as well as the development of social enterprise programs within each of the member schools' curriculum,

resulting in a stream of important research and pedagogical outputs for the emerging field of SE.

The Entrepreneurial Origins: Opportunity and Innovation

The basic problem, and hence the *opportunity*, that needed to be addressed was that social enterprise research in Latin America was scarce, and ideas generated in economically developed nations needed to be contested in other contexts. The conceptual seeds for SEKN emerged in 2000 from Harvard Business School's (HBS's) Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI) that had been created in 1993 as one of a few pioneering graduate SE education programs and the first to offer a course on entrepreneurship in the social sector (Austin & Rangan, 2019). In 1999–2000, SEI concluded that it needed to internationalize its efforts to build on its solid research and teaching foundation primarily focused on the United States. Simultaneously, HBS's global research strategy was expanding into Latin America with the opening in 2000 of the Latin America Research Center based in Buenos Aires. To reinforce that effort and to capitalize on connections in Latin America, SEI focused on that region.

Given that one of the SEI's goals was to maximize its impact on the field, SEI conceived of a distinctive organizational approach for social enterprise research. The concept was to foster and undertake collaborative research with and among other leading business schools in the region, in stark contrast to HBS's and most US universities' traditional approach of having individual faculty carry out field research abroad alone or with other individual researchers from non-US schools. In effect, this novel network approach was the *entrepreneurial innovation*. Consequently, the SEI leadership and HBS dean viewed this as a strategic pilot project. HBS was serving as the initiating academic entrepreneur catalyzing the concept.

For such a collaborative approach to succeed, social enterprise had to be seen by potential partner schools to be of priority importance, and contextual implementation barriers had to be identified. To assess both aspects, a coleader of the SEI along with the executive director of the HBS Latin America Research Center, acting, in effect, as the initiating academic entrepreneurs, conducted discussions with leaders of outstanding business schools in the region, most of whom were well-known acquaintances. This feasibility study identified strong interest in social enterprise and a disposition to collaborate with other Latin American management schools, but there were serious resource constraints hindering the development of major research and teaching initiatives in this area.

To overcome these resource mobilization barriers, HBS entered into discussions with the president of the Avina Foundation created by the Swiss businessman Stephan Schmidheiny to support innovative projects in Latin America. These discussions identified a congruency of objectives and a complementarity of resources that gave birth to a partnership aimed at developing SEKN. It was agreed that over an initial six-year period Avina would provide matching funds to member schools and HBS would provide faculty and staff time, teaching materials, teacher/researcher training, and other intellectual capital, as well as provide the initial organizational leadership for SEKN. For HBS the approach involved

both knowledge generation and institutional development; it was aimed at learning from and investing in the region. In effect, Avina was coinvesting with HBS and member schools to provide the start-up capital to launch the Network.

Invitations to join SEKN were extended to six schools and all accepted. SEKN was launched in 2001 with the following schools plus HBS: Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey Business School (EGADE), Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas (INCAE), Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Universidad de São Paulo in Brazil, Universidad Católica de Chile, and a consortium in Argentina created to run a nonprofit graduate program formed by the Universidad de San Andrés, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, and Centro de Estudios del Estado y Sociedad (CEDES). Each school designated one of its professors to be its representative to SEKN, each, in effect, functioning as an academic entrepreneur building the Network and each school's internal social enterprise activities.

Mission, Strategy, and Theory of Change

The initial organizing meeting of the SEKN schools took place from May 13 to 14, 2001, in Miami at Avina's offices. A critical early task was the formulation of the Network's mission, which emerged as: *To advance the frontiers of knowledge and practice in social enterprise through:*

- rigorous and important collaborative research,
- shared learning,
- excellence in participant-centered teaching, and
- strengthening management education institutions' capabilities to serve their communities.

These major elements of the initial strategy were accomplished by in-person meetings held two times annually at different schools with work continuing between meetings. Leadership of the Network rotated among the partner schools.

To achieve the mission and guide the strategy, SEKN members refined over the first two years their Theory of Change (see [Fig. 1.1](#)). To be powerful engines of change, social enterprises should be fueled by the enabling force of new knowledge. Knowledge generation based on the experience of local organizations documents and interprets one's environment and behavior; this increases awareness, deepens understanding of phenomenon, and expands possibility frontiers. New knowledge transmitted through academic and practitioner publications and teaching with case studies to future and current social enterprise managers would motivate and enable them to perform their functions and achieve their missions more efficiently, effectively, and creatively, thereby generating greater social and economic value. The teaching of new knowledge can alter attitudes, increase capabilities, and change behavior of students and practitioners. In effect, the process invests in future and actual business and social sector change agents and their organizational vehicles. The resultant social return is not one time, but rather a lifetime of actions by these leaders.

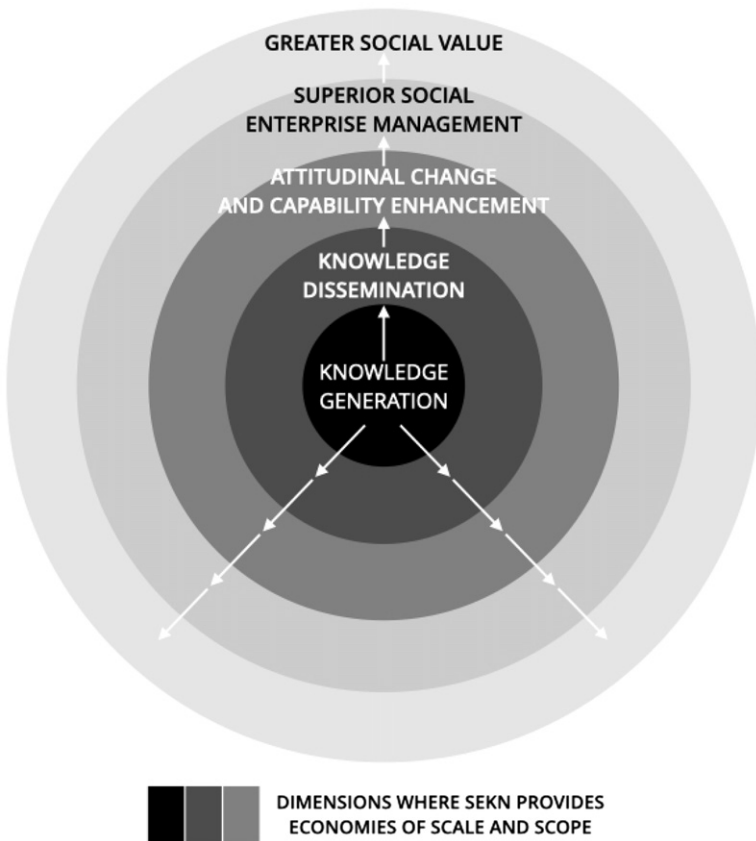


Fig. 1.1. Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN) Theory of Change.

While the change model relied on individual leaders in each school to move this institutional process forward, the Theory of Change aimed at leveraging the interschool collaboration and complementary resources. Network development was a slow process, but its payoff was large because it achieved greater scale and sustainability.

THE START-UP: INITIAL RESEARCH CYCLE

The first two-year (2001–2003) research cycle theme aimed at broadening and deepening existing social enterprise conceptual and empirical knowledge on cross-sector collaborations between nonprofits and businesses. It focused on testing the applicability of a new and highly cited (Austin, 2000a, 2000b) conceptual framework and findings of this form of collaborative SE in the United States with those in Latin America. These collaborations were becoming

increasingly important as social value creators and important societal intersections for business and civil society. Additionally, the research would engage both businesses and civil society organizations (CSOs), thereby developing for each school closer ties with these vital stakeholder groups.

The research methodology consisted of 24 field-based case study analyses following an agreed-upon protocol and research questions, with each member school developing an analytical working paper combining the data from the case studies of four cross-sector collaborations in its country, to be subsequently compared with the other countries' studies. The comparisons were also extended to assess the degree of confirmation and nature of variances from the base conceptual framework and conclusions of the reference US research. The research was then transformed into a book, *Social Partnering in Latin America*, included in Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies book series and published by Harvard University Press (2004). Because of its perceived high relevance to practitioners and its high academic quality, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) translated the book into Spanish and Portuguese. Additionally, SEKN researchers generated spinoff publications and conference presentations.

On the pedagogical side, 24 cases and accompanying teaching notes were produced from the field research. A complicating factor was that member schools' experience with case writing and teaching ranged from extensive to minimal. Consequently, an integral part of collaboration was training in the case method as well as feedback on draft cases and their teaching notes during in-person meetings. The collaboration enabled lateral capability transfer. Furthermore, it was arranged with Harvard Business Publishing (HBP) to create the SEKN Case Collection, available for global distribution in English and ultimately also in Spanish and Portuguese. To ensure that the cases met HBP quality standards, HBS faculty served as reviewers of all the initial cases and teaching notes. The case studies provided teaching material on local and regional organizations, thereby increasing student interest in the expanding social enterprise-related course offerings in Network schools and others.

Expansion

SEKN envisioned from its inception an expanding network and identified during the first cycle four new schools to join for the second research cycle: Universidad del Pacífico, Peru; Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA) in Venezuela; Fundacion Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil; and with the incorporation of ESADE Business School from Spain, the Network expanded beyond Latin America to Ibero-America. Beyond Spain and Latin America sharing cultural roots, it also enriched the research sample by including a more developed country. The due diligence process to approve a potential candidate school for membership in SEKN was and continues to be quite stringent. In one case where a founding SEKN school was unable to mobilize the requisite faculty commitment to social enterprise expected by the Network, the school, by mutual agreement, exited from SEKN. Subsequently, this occurred again with another school, leaving 10 members