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Paper Title: Emerging Issues in Social Entrepreneurship Research

Author(s):

Jennifer Wade, University of Colorado at Denver, Denver, CO, USA

Rachel Mosher-Williams, The Aspen Institute, Washington, DC, USA

Janelle Kerlin, The Urban Institute, Washington, DC, USA

Leslie Crutchfield, Ashoka, Arlington, USA

Cynthia Massarsky, The Goldman Sachs Foundation Partnership on Nonprofit Ventures, New Jersey, USA

J. Gregory Dees, Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship, Durham, NC, USA

Paul Light, New York University, New York, NY, USA

Summary of Research

This volume on emerging issues in social entrepreneurship research will be the third in ARNOVA's series of Occasional Papers. The volume will include papers on the theoretical origins of social entrepreneurship; current models of social entrepreneurship; its prevalence in the United States and internationally; its observed and potential impact; and future research needs in this area.

Description

1. The Evolving Theory of Social Entrepreneurship:

This paper charts the origins and evolution of the social entrepreneurship construct. It describes two main schools of thought that have emerged. One is focused on innovative responses to social needs, and the other is concerned with the generation of earned income for social purposes. While this split reflects, in part, a pre-existing division in the literature on general entrepreneurship, it also is grounded in different assumptions about the requirements for organizational survival ("sustainability"), growth potential ("scalability"), and effectiveness ("impact"). These assumptions are open to dispute and seem to be driven in part by ideological commitments. Despite these differences, both of these schools have their origins in emerging fields of practice that blur old sector boundaries, and both encourage the creative use of business ideas, attitudes, and market mechanisms. For instance, social entrepreneurs view the choice of organizational form (nonprofit, for-profit, cooperative, etc.) as a strategic decision, not a core part of their identity. The latter part of this chapter will explore this shared drive to breakdown old sector boundaries in an effort to improve the effectiveness of organizations dedicated to serving or addressing social needs.

2. Social Enterprise Reaches the Tipping Point: Data and State of the Field

What does it take for an area of inquiry or practice to become a field or social movement? What are examples of this institutionalizing process from other disciplines?

What do we know about social enterprise organizations? How large is the social enterprise sector and what does it look like? In which subsectors is social enterprise densest and growing most quickly? What do the data tell us about sources of revenue/capital for these ventures?

3. Impact: How is the impact of social entrepreneurship being observed and measured? What has or can be learned about social ventures that fail? What are the policy implications of the growth in this "fourth sector" and what policy and regulatory issues will face social entrepreneurs over the next decade or two?

4. Case Study: The Visiting Nurses Health System, Inc.

This case study focuses on a single organization with a long record of engaging in social entrepreneurship and the utilization of social enterprise techniques. The paper provides an accurate narrative description of the Visiting Nurse's activities associated with social entrepreneurship and focuses on questions associated with the effective use of entrepreneurial activity. More specifically, the

case analysis describes the organization's context and strategy as it entered into a business venture and assesses the nature of benefits derived from this decision.

5. Counterpoint/Critique: How is the broader application of pressure to innovate affecting nonprofits (both positively and negatively)?

6. Social Enterprise in the United States and Abroad: Learning from Our Differences

This paper examines similarities and differences in the concept of social enterprise in the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Australasia. Social enterprise, broadly defined as the use of non-governmental, market-based approaches to address social issues, has become an increasingly popular means of funding and supplying social services on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet while the trend and its ultimate objectives are similar in both regions, there remain vast differences in the conceptualization of social enterprise including emphases and discreet outcomes. These differences stem from contrasting forces shaping and reinforcing the movement in each region. To date, little has been written comparing and contrasting American and international conceptions of social enterprise resulting in difficulty communicating on the topic and missed opportunities to learn from and build on one another's experience. To address this need, this paper examines social enterprise through an extensive review of literature from the various world regions. It outlines the differing definitions of social enterprise used by American, European, Latin American, and Australasian academics and practitioners and identifies broad areas of agreement and disagreement. It also identifies historical factors promoting and shaping the different conceptions of social enterprise and the differing institutional and legal environments in which they operate. It concludes by analyzing the problems and opportunities that result from different understanding and implementation of social in the four regions.

7. Conclusion: Issues for further research.