

A Practical Framework for the Scaling of Social Enterprise across Developed and Developing Economies

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Social enterprise is an emerging field focusing on the use of entrepreneurship and earned income to run a business with a social focus and mission. While the idea is certainly not new, academic analysis, coursework, and degree programs are a recent development in this interdisciplinary subject. Prominent research in the field currently focuses on the key traits of a social entrepreneur, case studies for specific countries, and the sectors in which social enterprise develops and thrives. However, very little research has been done on social enterprise as it spans different economies. As social enterprises seek to solve major societal issues, such as poverty, poor education, and lack of empowerment, understanding the most effective growth strategy for social enterprise is key in maximizing impact of the organization. This research will focus on the scalability of social enterprise models that transcend both borders and stages in economic development. Through qualitative case study analysis and review of the current commercial and social enterprise scaling literature and methodology, a framework has been developed for designing social enterprises that seek to scale in a way that they can operate in both developed and developing countries. Key findings show that differences do exist in social enterprise development in different economic situations, and that scalability is a matter of leveraging core competencies that provide economic and social value and understanding and adapting the business model as fit. This framework, designed for social enterprise practitioners, has been validated with case study comparison of social enterprises that operate in both economies. This is significant because the social enterprise sector is expected to grow rapidly over the next decades, thus understanding and implementing scale effectively is imperative for continued success of many social enterprises.