

Social Innovation: Development, Contributions, and Challenges

社会创新：发展，贡献和挑战

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This paper explores the modern context of social innovation. It provides an insight into the practices and processes of social innovation, specifically through the lens of both the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Three case studies of social innovation are accordingly presented per each respective sector: the Grameen Danone Foods Social Business Enterprise in Bangladesh, aging enhancement public-private partnerships in the United States, and the non-profit Nest. In understanding both the theoretical and practical aspects of social innovation, it is hoped that this research report can help provide insight into a topic that is continuously developing and adapting within societies across the globe.

Defining Social Innovation

Social innovation is the creation of a new idea or method that solves a social problem in an effective, impartial, or maintainable manner. Social innovations are more desirable than previous solutions to a social problem because of their more suitable attributes (Defining Social Innovation, n.d.; Ali, R., et al., 2007, p. 8). Unlike business innovation, social innovation is not for profit maximization, but rather for meeting social needs (Ali, R., et al., 2007, p. 8). Social innovation can be useful to businesses, however, because it can potentially reduce economic inequalities and thereupon lead to new market opportunities (Wyman, 2016, p. 5). In fact, businesses that pursue and support social innovation are not only enabled to scale the reach of their services and products, but are also enabled to increase the trust of consumers in their business through their services to the public good (Wyman, 2016, p. 5).

Social innovations can be engendered and implemented by a variety of human sources including local communities, societal organizations, businesses, public servants, public institutions, and even individual citizens (European Commission, 2013). Rising life expectancy, managing diversity, reducing inequality, disease, undesirable behavioral problems (like obesity and drug addiction), promoting the transition to adulthood, and promoting general happiness are all areas for which social innovations have great potential to make substantial impacts (Ali, R., et al., 2007). Some modern examples of social innovation within these areas include charter schools, emissions trading, and fair trade initiatives (Defining Social Innovation, n.d.). Not only do innovations such as these improve upon previous social structures, but they also replace outdated structures that are unable to meet evolving social needs in a changing

cultural and political environment (Ali, R., et al., 2007).

Social innovation is also not to be confused with social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. Although both are aimed at bringing social benefits, social entrepreneurship focuses on the people who establish new organizations whereas social enterprise focuses on the organizations oriented on bringing social change (Dieglmeier, et al., 2008). In contrast, social innovation emphasizes solutions that purely increase social value (Dieglmeier, et al. 2008). According to the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA), there are three key perspectives of social innovation: social demand innovation, societal challenge, and systemic change (European Commission, 2013). Social demand innovation is a response to social needs not traditionally targeted. This response usually concerns vulnerable or marginalized population segments. Societal change aims to impact the entirety of society through innovations concerning the economy or the environment. Finally, systemic change combines both social demand innovation and societal change by changing the relationship between institutions and stakeholders (European Commission, 2013)

With social innovation clearly defined, the remaining sections of this paper outline and analyze the modern status and applications of social innovation. It begins with an outline of the development of social innovation for context, the 7+1 features of social innovation, and then transitions into the process of social innovation. Following this, three case studies demonstrating social innovation in the areas of business, government, and individualism will be presented. This includes the Grameen Danone Foods Social Business Enterprise in Bangladesh, the public-private models to enhance aging in the United States, and Nest established by Washington University

graduate Rebecca van Bergen. It is hoped that this paper provides the necessary foundational understanding for those interested in social innovation and its current role in society.

Development of Social Innovation

While the processes, methods, drivers, and targets of social innovations remain relatively stable, exact social innovations are subject to the historical context in which they were implemented (Dieglmeier, K., et al., 2003). Examples of social innovation can be dated as far back as the 19th century. In these early stages, changes brought by social innovation were beginning to garner positive connotations, even though the term “social innovation” did not yet exist (Godin, 2012). For instance, during industrial age England trade unions and cooperatives are examples of social innovations, despite lacking the “social innovation” label, because they answered the gruesome conditions of factory labor (Ali, R., et al., 2007). Additionally, during the Great Depression, the government-issued New Deal can be considered as another type of social innovation because it helped resolve the unprecedented banking crises and skyrocketing unemployment rates of the 1930s. The New Deal was a sort of package of social innovations policies, it organizations like the Works Progress Administration, the Social Security Administration, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (Dieglmeier, K., et al. 2003).

Even though the labor unions of Europe and the New Deal policies of America targeted unique social issues, the transformation of a radical idea on the fringes of society to a mainstream and almost “self-evident” social system is a common theme shared between them and many other social innovations (Ali, R., et al, 2007). Particularly in earlier history, social innova-

tions were motivated by the expansion of governments' involvement in solving social problems, which might have helped accumulate acceptance among the general populations (Dieglmeier, K., et al., 2003). Yet, as the twentieth century progressed, the paths of European and American social innovation diverged. During the economic crises of the 1930s, European states did not implement many social innovations even with the presence of influential thinkers, like John Maynard Keynes, who promoted state intervention policies. By the 1960s, however, European social innovation driven by government intervention was revived. Americans meanwhile increasingly rejected the notion of social innovations directed by government bodies (Dieglmeier, K., et al., 2003; Slomp, 2011). Primary factors contributing to the shift in European ideologies include the influence of the labor movement, increased social spending in times of economic prosperity, and a series of social legislations in response to the two world wars (Slomp, 2011). The term "welfare state" also began circulate in use among European countries. Today it has manifested itself in many forms, including the liberal welfare state, the state-oriented welfare state, the continental welfare state, and the Central European welfare state (Slomp, 2011). On the other hand, the term corporate social responsibility (CSR) proliferated in usage in the United States during the 1960s (Dieglmeier, 2003). Although the federal government launched the Great Society program in 1965 to help marginalized population segments, the funds were managed by businesses or specialized non-profits rather than by the government (Deforuny and Nyssens, 2010). In the 1980s, while Medicaid, food stamps, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were being cut under the Reagan administration, American

businesses like the Body Shop and Ben & Jerry's were embracing CSR as they searched for new ways to contribute to the development of society (Dieglmeier, 2003). American NGOs as deliverers of social innovation also proliferated at this time, especially as more and more Americans believed that competition between privatized NGOs would encourage social service practices that were more flexible, more efficient, and cheaper (Hall, 2016).

Current Status

In recent years, social innovations have emerged from the increasingly intertwined efforts of nonprofits, governments, and businesses (Dieglmeier, 2003; European Commission, 2011; Micheli, 2012). An example of this includes the Obama administration's 2009 Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation. This institution combines federal power with locally and globally focused nonprofit organizations in order to pursue social innovations (The President's Social Innovation Agenda, 2009). In essence, the establishment of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation represented a step away from the previous "hands off" approach prevalent in the practices of the federal government since the Reagan administration. Additionally, the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation's establishment was a movement toward American private-public partnerships in the field of social innovation. The European Union's 2010 innovation strategy is counterpart to the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation. As part of the strategy's provisions, involved European Union member nations are called to focus on innovating solutions for key societal problems in Europe by involving public institutions, economic actors, and individual citizens as well as by taking advantage of each member state's specializations (European Commission,

2011). The European Union's innovation strategy therefore not only represents an increased interest in the potentialities of social innovation, but also the merging of different sectors in pursuing and creating social innovations. While the three case studies presented later on this paper may seem as silo examples of business, government, and individuals in social innovation, it is important to remember that these sectors can and often do overlap in terms of finding ways to bring effective solutions to pressing social problems.

Features of Social Innovation (7+1)

There is an eclectic range of services and structures in place with potential to be enhanced by social innovation (European Commission, 2013). Micheli (2012) has identified seven key features plus one additional characteristic that can be used to help recognize the features of social innovation. Collectively, these are known as the *7+1 Features of Social Innovation*. Understanding and recognizing social innovation through such features is especially important as the broad range of uses for the term "social innovation" might obscure what can be classified as social innovation and what cannot (Anderson, et al., 2014). Therefore, the first feature of social innovation is that it generates a positive social impact (Micheli, 2012, p. 12). That is, social innovation brings forth a better quality of life, creates an affordable product of excellent quality that brings benefit to society, or even addresses resource scarcity (Micheli, 2012, p. 12). Although one can debate whether the specific impacts of a social innovation are positive, such as if it truly promotes equality or battles injustice, it can be argued that as long as the pioneers of the social innovation had intentions to bring about a positive outcome then their social innova-

tion meets the requirement for the first characteristic (Anderson, et al., 2014).

Second, social innovations are driven by economic and social motivations (Michelini, 2012). That is, social innovations are not implemented for purposes of profit maximization, political gain, or self-interests. Instead, they are altruistic in nature and aim to advance the welfare of humankind (European Commission, 2013). Third, social innovations must be novel in some way, shape, or form. They must be new or unique, but may also expand upon or remake a previous idea in use (Michelini, 2012, p. 13). For example, the first European bike-sharing programs can be considered a social innovation because they helped provide population segments with lower incomes a cost-friendly and environmentally transportation method that is safe and faster than walking. Subsequent installations of bike sharing systems in cities of similar of size and caliber, however, would not possess the social innovation feature of novelty because the bike sharing system was already conceptualized in Europe (National Center for Public Performance, 2016).

Fourth, although often associated with non-profit organizations, social innovations may be implemented by entities of the private sector, NGOs, or governments. In fact, it is also possible for social innovations to be implemented by a partnership that crosses between these three sectors (Michelini, 2012). One social innovation that exemplifies a public-private crossover partnership is National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAI) of Portugal. In recognizing the challenges and inefficiencies of Portuguese government immigration services, CNAI attempts to aid immigrant needs by a series of strategic and specialized partnerships between the Portuguese government and NGOs (European Commission, 2013; “National Immigrant Support Centre”, n.d.).

A fifth feature and a sixth feature of social innovation are scalability and sustainability (Michelini, 2012, p. 12). True social innovations bring sweeping change, meaning that they can be applied on large scales and can be continuously enacted for long periods of time. Social innovations may experience qualitative scaling up in which it is applied to multiple regions, functional scaling up in which the quality or quantity of its uses are enhanced, or organizational scaling up in which the its

promoters increase their efficiency (Michelini, 2012, p. 14). For instance, the European bike-sharing example fits the fifth feature of social innovations because its model can be scaled and extended to multiple cities across the world. It also fits the sixth feature of social innovation because the cheap rental rates for the public bikes make them affordable for even severely disadvantage citizens. The seventh feature of social innovation is that it may take different forms (Michelini, 2012).

Already through the broad range of examples alluded to in this paper, from industrial age trade unions to New Deal packages and to CNAI and bike-sharing plans, it is clear that social innovations provide a beneficial and disruptive change to various types of population segments; this includes immigrants, commuters, and factory workers. The forms of social innovation also vary: a new government policy, an NGO service program, a private business venture, a philanthropists’ project, etc.

In addition to these seven features of social innovation, there is an additional feature that must always underlie a social innovation; it must improve and change the lives of the poor (Michelini, 2012, p. 12). If social innovations reject this goal, they have lost their original altruistic purpose. Elements of well-being that can be improved among the poor include physical necessities, financial necessities, health, security, social relations, and freedom (Michelini, 2012, p. 15).

Process of Social Innovation

Despite the variegated nature of social innovations, there is a general implementation process that social innovations follow. The first stage of this process involves recognizing a need and identifying the necessary steps to resolve that need (Mulgan, 2006; Hochgerner, 2013; Grant, 2013). The forces that lead social innovators to recognize a need may come in various shapes or forms. Sometimes a need is observable with issues like malnutrition or homelessness. Other times awareness of a need comes from a campaign of individuals, like with domestic violence (Mulgan, 2006). Political movements also have potential to raise awareness for a need as seen through the issue of climate change

(Mulgan, 2006). Important questions at this stage include defining the size and attributes of the issue as well as the stakeholders (Hochgerner, 2013).

The next step in the process of social innovation involves developing and piloting potential ideas to solve the problem (Mulgan, 2006). This stage may take the form of a scientific intervention in which potential products or service models are tested on smaller scales (Hochgerner, 2013). For instance, during this stage, a socially innovative private entity might test a new food product aimed at combating malnutrition among a certain population segment. A nonprofit implementing a new homeless shelter data management system may begin by focusing on a few, key shelters. Agents of advocacy at this stage are engaging in trial-and-error experimentation with the underlying hope of securing a feasible social innovation (Reinstaller, 2013). Due to the general enthusiasm and impatience among social innovators, prototype solutions are often swiftly implemented early on in the planning process (Ali, R., et al., 2007). This enables innovations to undergo several rounds of revisions before the final implementation such that any flaws can be acknowledged and improved upon (Ali, R., 2007). Following the period of trial and error is the stage that involves scaling and implementing the successful pilot tests (Ali, R., et al., 2007; Mulgan, 2006). Arguably, this third stage is also the most critical stage for social innovators because it determines whether their ideas will be successful in helping a marginalized population segment (Hochgerner, 2007). One of the greatest challenges of this stage is empirically measuring the success of a social innovation. While sales rates, employment rates, malnutrition levels and other statistics are easy to quantify other dimensions of social innovation such as happiness levels and life qualities are not so easy

to measure (Hochgerner, 2007). Additionally, scaling up a successful pilot project may also prove difficult as the specific factors of different areas, cities, and even countries of implementation are widely different (Ali, R., et al, 2007). Two barriers in particular may serve as obstacles to the growth of a social innovation: demand and capacity to grow. Demand and acceptance of a new social change may not exist as strongly in one area as another. Unique governance policies and business cultures might also prevent the capacity of a social innovation to grow (Ali, R., et al., 2007). Social innovations that can overcome these barriers are the most successful, though in general social innovations are rarely able to reach globalized levels of completion (Hochgerner, 2007).

The final stage of social innovation involves its impact and evolution (Mulgan, 2006; Hochgerner, 2007; Reinstaller, 2013). After the initial conceptualizations, social innovations rarely conform to a single plan throughout the process of their implementations. Instead, they evolve and change in the manner of a learning curve until the best methods, systems, and solutions are ascertained (Mulgan, 2006). The social innovations that reach this stage are no longer categorized as radical or novel, but rather as self-evident and normal (Hochgerner, 2007). Ultimately, as both leaders and the general public recognize the effectiveness of the innovation in question, an institutional change within the social hierarchy is launched wherein established organizations support and adopt the ideas of the formally radical social innovators (Reinstaller, 2013).

Case Studies

The Grameen Danone Foods Social Business Enterprise in Bangladesh

Grameen Danone Foods Social Business Enterprise in Bangladesh is a company founded in 2006 whose

purpose is to provide Bangladeshi population segments with key nutrients. In a typical Bangladeshi diet, such nutrients are lacking (Michelini, 2012, p. 70-71). The partnership, also known as Grameen Danone Foods Ltd. (GDFL), was formed by a 50-50 joint venture between Groupe Dannon, a French dairy product and bottled water company, and the Grameen Bank, a Bangladeshi microfinance firm (Michelini, 2012, p. 70-71). The final product delivered by GDFL was a nutritional yogurt called 'Shoktidoi' (or "yogurt which makes ones strong"). It is made from cow milk, molasses, and essential micronutrients. At the time of initial production, the yogurt was priced at only 6 BDT, or about \$0.08 (Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010). Besides providing a product of nutritional value to the Bangladeshi diet, the Grameen Danone partnership also aims to create jobs, protect the environment, and remain economically viable (Michelini, 2012, p. 70).

Initial testing indicated Shoktidoi did not taste flavorful, despite its nutritional fortifications. Therefore, Danone flavor experts had to modify the formula. In early marketing strategies, Grameen conducted a survey among children to ascertain what would be the most popular animal to associate the yogurt with; it was found that the lion was the best choice (Michelini, 2012, p. 73). Additionally, Poly Lactic Acid was chosen as the material used to create the pots for Shoktidoi to be sold in since it is a 100% biodegradable material created from corn starch (Michelini, 2012, p. 73). Marketing strategies also included informative posters displayed by Grameen Bank, informational visual aids carried by door to door saleswomen, educational games distributed to schools in the Bogra area (near the GDFL factory), and even celebrity endorsement by the internationally famous French soccer player Zinedine Zidane (Michelini,

2012; Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010).

In order to cut production costs and support local economic development, GDFL chose to produce Shoktidoi using local ingredients rather than imported ones. Milk, a limited ingredient in Bangladesh, was secured through micro-farms. These are farms for which Grameen Bank offered farmers with potential to raise cattle annual fixed prices and veterinary assistance. Doing so limited price increases in milk essential to production costs, helped ensure the quality of the milk utilized in Shoktidoi, and also bolstered a self-made upstream supply market (Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010). GDFL's initial Bangladeshi factory is only 500 square meters in surface area and can produce one-thirtieth of a typical Danone factory in Europe (Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010).

Since Bangladesh lacks supermarkets outside of the capital of Dhaka and other densely populated zones, GDFL had to distribute Shoktidoi via an informal network of door-to-door sales women known as "Grameen Ladies" (Michelini, 2012, p. 73). The "Grameen Ladies" are not considered to be employees of GDFL, but are rather treated as small entrepreneurs. Backed by credits from Grameen Bank, they receive a commission for each Shoktidoi sold and cannot return unsold yogurts. A typical Grameen Lady can reach up to 200 households per day (Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010). Within Dhaka and other more developed areas of Bangladesh, Shoktidoi was placed in a total 1,600 grocery and small corner shops. There it is not promoted by Grameen Ladies (Rahman, 2016).

A container of Shoktidoi totals 80 grams and provides 30% of a child's daily needs for vitamin A, iron, zinc, and salt. Within four years of its establishment, GDFL has employed or at least economically benefited, approximately 750 people: 50 workers at the

Bogra plant, 300 Grameen Ladies, and 400 farmers who supply the milk (Michellini, 2012; Lehmann-Ortega, et al., 2010). Between 2008 and 2011, John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health funded by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) conducted an evaluation study on the impacts of Shoktidoi on school aged children between 6 and 9 years of age (Michellini, 2012). It was found that children who are fed 60 grams of the nutritionally enhanced yogurt once a day experienced better growth rates and abilities to learn (Michellini, 2012). The same study also found that 2 million units of Shoktidoi sold within 40 km impacted 40% of the children's health in surrounding villages (Rahman, 2016). Today, GDFL is still in operation today and plans to open up another 50 plants by 2020 throughout Bangladesh (Rahman, 2016).

Public-Private Partnerships to Enhance Aging

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) combine the infrastructure and service resources of government agencies with the resources and specialized knowledge of private sector agencies. While examples of PPPs date as far back as the Roman Empire, in the United States PPPs experienced a revival during the 1970s. Recall that this is also around the time government intervention became increasingly unpopular among the majority of Americans, and so PPPs were seen as an alternative answer to bureaucratic public agencies (Clark, et al., 2016; Chowdhury, et al., 2016). In modern PPPs, private parties assume the financial risk and repayment is linked with performance (Clark, et al., 2016). PPPs have become increasingly popular in terms of aging services within the United States, especially due to the limited public resources available to invest in aging services (Clark, et al., 2016). The 2015 White House Conference on Aging hosted by President Barack Obama

exemplified the importance of involving the private sector in this regard; the conference emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships at all levels of government including federal, state, and local (Clark, et al., 2016; White House Conference on Aging, 2015).

One example of PPPs in the area of aging enhancement is the Dementia Friendly American Initiative partnership with US Against Alzheimer's, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota (Clark, et al., 2016). Dementia is a growing challenge and is a disease that is most prevalent in America's elderly population. Between 1900 and 2010 the percentage of elderly Americans over the age of 65 with dementia increased from approximately 4.1% to 13% (Morken and Turner, 2016). In order to combat this, the Dementia Friendly American Initiative has formed innovative cross-sector partnerships. They have so far established dementia-friendly resources and awareness campaigns in over 30 cities across the U.S. (Dementia Friendly America, n.d.; White House Conference on Aging, 2015). PPPs have also assisted combating Alzheimer's disease. Studies suggest that PPPs result in higher productivity, reduction of risk, and the promotion of innovation in terms of Alzheimer disease research (Clark, et al., 2016; Jones-Davis and Buckholtz, 2015). For instance, impactful private-sector investments in the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI) nonprofit of almost \$49 million enabled the organization to increase the scope of its achievements. Through the ADNI Industry Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB), which was later named the Private Partner Scientific Board (PPSB), ADNI was also able to gain important perspectives from industry experts, gain access to new projects, and utilize new resources to conduct treatment

experiments (Jones-Davis and Buckholtz, 2015). Indeed, both the Dementia Friendly American Initiative and ADNI demonstrate illustrate that without private donors, the capabilities of non-profits and government organizations specialized in a social need might have been limited.

PPPs also have potential in enhancing the caregiver industry, another important aspect of managing an aging population. Reducing caregiver stress increases the quality of care given to older adults, and so it is an important facet of this social issue (Clark, et al., 2016). Accordingly, the SCAN Foundation, a private entity, set up strategic public healthcare partnerships to donate and invest \$2 million in community-based aging networks (White House Conference on Aging, 2015). Some examples of the SCAN Foundations' recent donations include donations for approximately \$350,000 to the American Society of aging for the provision of training and technical assistance to community-based organizations, approximately \$150,000 to the Public Consulting Group for a 12 month project to evaluate California's eligible care service pilot program, and approximately \$75,000 to implement integrated eligible pilot programs across nine states through the Center for Health Care Strategies (SCAN Foundation, 2016). The John A. Hartford Foundation is another organization that also plans to invest \$3 million to support the Area Agencies on Aging's delivery of evidence-based services and programs, which support older adults and their caregivers in their communities (White House Conference on Aging, 2015). Since the year 2000, the Hartford Foundation has raised nearly \$400 million in grants to improve the health of older adults through strategic partnerships (John A. Hartford Foundation, 2013). The important takeaway here is that these organizations emphasize the relation-

ship between local care homes and public agencies, an incredibly important relationship within the healthcare industry.

Note that PPPs are not necessarily confined to focusing on projects that pertain to broader or even national levels. Instead, they may also form to address local level issues (Clark, et al, 2016). One example of this in terms of aging services is the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Service, which includes the collaboration between multiple government agencies, businesses, voluntary service agencies, and consumers. The goal of this partnership is to assist older adults in the Westchester County community, which consists of over 193,000 adults aged 60 and over in Westchester County wherein 25% of the seniors live alone and 9,000 live below the poverty level (The Westchester Public/Private Partnership, 2016). In its mission to help seniors age with dignity, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership includes programs, events, and donations supported by recruited corporate donors (The Westchester Public/Private Partnership, 2016). As a result of this commitment, the Westchester County now includes 19 livable communities and collaborative, nearly 50,000 connecting seniors, 238 villages in the network, and 162 caregiver-coach matches (The Westchester Public/Private Partnership, 2016). Due to utilizing private corporations in aging services, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services again shows how corporate donors can expand and enhance critical services needed for aging adults (Clark, et al., 2016).

Nest

Nest is a non-profit certified 501(c)(3) organization that commits itself to the social and economic advancement of global artisans and homeworkers (Nest, 2016a). Founded in 2006 by the Washington University Brown School

of Social Work graduate Rebecca van Bergen, the concept of Nest was awarded a \$25,000 grant upon van Bergen's graduation (Felder, 2014). Nest focuses on consulting and supporting artisan businesses throughout the world via building sustainable development plans, leveraging technology, raising awareness, and business relationships (Nest, 2016a). Particularly under van Bergen's leadership, Nest emphasizes female empowerment and employment (Nest, 2016a; Bergen, n.d.). Accumulating worldwide industry data is also an important focal point in the Nest mission; governments and consumers may utilize this data to raise awareness for the artisan cause and enact support on macro-scales (Nest, 2016a).

Nest operates in 46 countries, including India, Mexico, Kenya, Guatemala, and South Africa (Felder, 2014; Nest 2016a). In this spirit of globalization, Nest has recently launched the Artisan Guild, an open access artisan community of 195 businesses from all 46 countries that Nest is involved with (Nest, 2016a). After filing a brief survey, potential artisan businesses can participate in mentorship and training as well as opportunities to gain access to advice from fashion industry professionals (Nest, 2016b). Artisan Guild membership also includes access to The Remote Learning Center, an online learning platform that includes webinars, video/phone consulting services, a library, digital design briefs, remote fellowship jobs, and prototype market incubation (Nest, 2016b). Previous webinar hosts have included brands like Ralph Lauren, Eileen Fisher, and Anthropology (Nest, 2016b). Library materials include development templates, trend reports, educational reading material, among other helpful resources (Nest, 2016b). Prototype market incubation includes testing product ideas among groups of market experts (Nest, 2016b). As part of Nest's

mission to connect small business artisans with fashion industry experts, the nonprofit also hosts the Artisan Leadership Summit in New York City (Felder, 2014; Lane, 2016). The summit consists of leaders from small global artisan businesses and industry professionals. In this way, representatives from both parties can ascertain areas for mutual cooperation and collaborate to overcome challenges (Felder, 2014).

Currently, Nest has served over 46,000 artisans, secured over 30 brand partners, obtained \$5.2 million in impact sourcing from Nest Brand Partners, donated nearly \$500,000 to artisans, and has accumulated over 7,000 volunteer hours (Nest, 2016a). In working with specific regions, Nest has previously followed a 360 degrees of business support model. One example of this takes place in Anou, Morocco where Nest helped local artisans overcome three main challenges: the translation of Moroccan crafts into contemporary designs, the formalization of a supply chain, and a provision of business training (Nest, 2016a). By engaging Moroccan artisans with remote learning tools, on-site fellowship professionals, attendance at the Nest sponsored Artisan Leadership Summit in New York City, and market access, the results of Nest's interventions included the creation of \$35,000 worth of new orders and an economic ripple impact in which 4,300 Moroccans benefited.

Discussion

Social innovation is a promising field of study and work, though it is not yet fully understood. As social innovation may be conducted by a cross sector partnership between businesses, governments, and individuals, it is an answer to those that do not trust one particular industry to tackle a social problem alone and unchecked. For instance, in American history sentiment towards government involve-

ment with marginalized populations segments has shifted over time. In the 1930s it was more so accepted than it was in the 1960s. Modern social innovation answers the concerns of both liberal and conservative viewpoints because it invites participation from public and private sector entities. So while not all social innovations succeed, they do help stakeholders understand what types of programs work in the public and which do not.

Given that they might be implemented by a broad range of parties, social innovations may tackle a large scope of issues and come in a wide range of forms. This is important to understand because it implies that within social innovation may apply to multiple sectors of society, so long as it benefits the well-being of society. Whenever there is an injustice, a health issue, or perhaps a painful daily inconvenience, there is most likely room for social innovation.

Granted, even though social innovations go through numerous revisions before the stages of final implementation, the end product is not always complete. In fact, there are critics of the case studies presented in the previous section, particularly of the Danone-Grameen joint venture in Bangladesh. Opponents argue that Bangladeshi culture does not support women travelling alone from door to door and that furthermore the women of Bangladesh themselves might feel uncomfortable talking to strangers in this way (Yasmin, 2016). Moreover, they point out that even though the yogurt contains essential nutrients, it has been found that children can only benefit from the consumption of Shoktidoi if it is eaten around 4 to 5 times a week. GDFL has reached the break-even point from a financial perspective, but this is only because Shoktidoi is sold in urban cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet (Yasmin, 2016). While producing Shoktidoi did not

solve malnutrition in Bangladesh, and perhaps it is illogical to think a yogurt product could achieve this feat, the GDFL product at least promotes awareness about health in rural communities, provides a cheap source of nutrition for children, and bolsters the local economy. Additionally, the culture of Bangladesh might disagree with “Grameen Ladies”, but the woman who chose to pursue this opportunity did so out of choice – not force.

What can be taken away from this criticism is that there are important scopes to consider when implementing a social innovation. Of course, drivers of social innovation are free to envision solutions on as grand a scale as necessary, but at the same time it is unreasonable to dismiss a potential model of innovation just because it did not solve a problem completely. As long as progress is being made in a positive direction, then the social innovation on some level can be considered to have successful elements. Criticism here also teaches that there are important social barriers to consider when designing a social innovation. Social innovation aims to change the mainstream ideas of society, and that should always be a priority for drivers of innovation. However, just as some disapproved of the Grameen Ladies, culture tradition cannot be ignored when determining how to implement a social innovation. After all, the goal of GDFL was not gender rights, but rather increased nutrition rates.

Social innovation might also be criticized for a lack of ways to measure its effectiveness. For instance, while Nest produces statistics about its success internally, there is a lack of scientific verification about its effects the artisan businesses it serves and their local economies. The same is true for many aging service PPP programs in the United States. In the future, it would be widely beneficial to encourage the independent and external eval-

uation of social innovations. Governments have an incentive to support evaluation as it affects they have potential to deeply and radically effect of the lives of citizens.

Conclusion

Social innovation is perhaps one of the quickest and most entrepreneurial methods for which to tackle pressing social issues. As successful social innovations may replace preexisting outdated social systems and institutions, they are worth of investment by governments, businesses, and individuals. Social innovations might solve problems to greater extents than others; bike sharing systems radically transform public transportation whereas dementia awareness communities do not fully eradicate the disease. What is important is that the successes and failures of social innovations indicate the right direction for stakeholders interested in solving a pressing issue. As social innovations become increasingly sophisticated, expect to witness increase cross-sector partnerships, robust evaluations, and refined implementation models.

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