

**Volume 24, Special Issue 1****Print ISSN: 1098-8394;  
Online ISSN: 1528-2651**

# **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP KNOWLEDGE PROMOTION AMONGST STUDENTS IN A HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING**

**Vhonani Olive Netshandama, Community Engagement Directorate,  
University of Venda, South Africa**  
**Ishmael Obaeko Iwara, Institute for Rural Development, University of Venda,  
South Africa**  
**Ndamulelo Innocent Nelwamondo, Department of Statistics, University of  
Venda, South Africa**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Social entrepreneurship has represented an important point of departure in socio-economic transformation. Institutions of Higher Learning, globally, are investing in the application of the concept because of its potential to facilitate involvement of students and staff in impactful lifelong learning and entrepreneurship development. This paper examines students' knowledge about social entrepreneurship and the role that the university can play towards building a social entrepreneurial environment, drawing on the Transformative Learning Theory. A cross-sectional mixed-research design was followed. Using convenient and stratified simple random sampling techniques, 54 and 392 participants were drawn from the University of Venda for qualitative and quantitative data collection, respectively. Thematic analysis, descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation were exploited with the data. The result reveals that only a minority (32.7%) of students have comprehensive knowledge of social entrepreneurship, suggesting the need for robust engagements to bring many students on board. Three key roles which the University can play in promoting social entrepreneurship among students are suggested - scaling-up social entrepreneurship-related programmes on campus (83.7%), offering and infusion of social entrepreneurship compulsory module to all courses (77.6%), and introducing student social entrepreneurship internship programmes (73.5%). The creation of a social entrepreneurship development hub which integrates the three suggested components stands as a crucial recommendation from the study.*

**Keywords:** Community Development, Institution of Higher Learning, Historically Disadvantaged University, Social Entrepreneurship, Students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The social entrepreneurship culture, defined as 'a way of doing business that makes positive social and environmental changes' (Littlewood & Holt, 2018), is lacking in Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs). This study departs from an acknowledgement that the

development of this culture cannot be divorced from the country and the Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) historical context (Littlewood & Holt, 2018; Chipeta et al., 2020). This study is essential because, in recent years, a significant body of literature has emerged around social entrepreneurship representing an important point of departure in terms of community social change, students' development and employability (Nicholls, 2010; Shaw & de Bruin, 2013; Phillips et al., 2015; Pomaquero-Yuquilema et al., 2019; de Bruin & Ferrante, 2011), however, its representation and role in skills development, as well as graduate employability in the context of rural-based institutions of higher learning in South Africa, has not been sufficiently harnessed.

The concept 'social entrepreneurship' has developed and gained popularity in recent decades, although, it has been interpreted differently by different people, institutions and societies. The underlying drive for social entrepreneurship, basically, is working as non-profit initiative for change and sustainable development (Chell, 2007; Chang et al., 2014). The mandate, regardless of the structures and/or actors involved, is changing the face of society. Most often, social entrepreneurship clusters exist as a community of practice where people of distinct skills merge efforts to solve problems (Simón et al., 2017). Interestingly, social entrepreneurship is not limited in scope and operation, as the concept may be applied to a wide range of disciplines and/or organizations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs. It also operates in fields like education, economics, and health which demand and assist community development.

Social entrepreneurship praxis departs from a group of entrepreneurs or an individual, strategizing and implementing a solution-based plan, to dwell on social, cultural, as well as environmental issues (Acs et al., 2013; Partzsch & Ziegler, 2011; Picciotti, 2017). Social entrepreneurs, therefore, are solution-driven individuals, working for their own gratification, while also pursuing social surpluses - goals that stand to benefit people in society (Mulgan, 2006; Chell, 2007). It entails networking among, pace-setters, selfless-minded individuals and novelties, who can willingly share their distinct innovative skills in efforts to achieve common societal needs (Phillips et al., 2015). Unlike the classic notion of entrepreneurship which is solely profit-oriented, social entrepreneurship offers a different standpoint - a creation and emphasizes on social value, as opposed to personal wealth. According to Stephan et al. (2015), profit-driven businesses may be referred to as social enterprises only when their operations are blended with social responsibilities, with a positive return to society that brings sustainable development. While the innovative power of social entrepreneurs plays an important part for meeting the unfulfilled social needs and ensuring a more sustainable future (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Bouchard, 2012; Phillips et al., 2015), the academic dialogue on how this process will unfold has been neglected.

Holding onto the benefits of social entrepreneurship, specifically on student self-development and societal change, institutions of higher learning, globally, are investing enormously into the concept (Kolk, 2014; Littlewood & Holt, 2018). Essentially, social entrepreneurship increasingly can impact positively on knowledge development of the students, necessary for advancing academic tasks, given that they learn in the process of solving societal issues (Huq & Gilbert, 2013; Jensen, 2014; Chang et al., 2014). Involvements in social entrepreneurial activities enables team-building and networking amongst peers, as well as a sense of social responsibility and accountability. These are integral tenets of a better citizenry, and young graduates require such skills to stand up to the growing competition in the labour market and navigate complex societal situations.

Graduate employability, a concern of many universities and government is one challenge that social entrepreneurship can mitigate through skills development. Graduates' capability of

contributing to rising community challenges through social entrepreneurship is another benefit that is not well documented and harnessed for an inclusive growth. It is, therefore, ideal that universities acknowledge the need for graduates to develop a range of cross-cutting skills through social entrepreneurship programmes (Kerlin, 2008; Dacin et al., 2010; Estrin et al., 2013; Littlewood & Holt, 2018). There is an emerging academic interest in social entrepreneurship, globally, and in South Africa, however, the extent to which rural-based traditional institutions of higher learning have embraced the concept remains open to debate as research on the subject matter is lacking.

According to Littlewood & Holt (2018), social entrepreneurship combines economic and social objectives in its operation and has a key role to play in transforming inequalities, low national skills and education levels - legacies of the apartheid system in South Africa. Regardless of the context, the concept remains quite fragmented and has not been given sufficient attention in the country. A body of literature explores aspects of the concept including - intentions of students in the country to engage in social entrepreneurship activity, as well as the skills and competencies required (Urban, 2008); social enterprise development virtuous circles (Fury, 2010); social entrepreneurship impact measurements (Fonteneau, 2011); legal forms for social enterprises (Legal Resource Centre, 2011); the social entrepreneurship contextual narrative and social change (Karanda & Toledano, 2012) and its influence on the environment (Littlewood & Holt, 2018). There has been, however, limited consideration as to how social entrepreneurship can be promoted in a rural-based institution of higher learning for student development, and this gave the impetus for the current study.

This paper, sets the tone by exploring environments that a university can harness to spur social-entrepreneurship culture among students, drawing from the Transformative Learning Theory. The choice of the theory was informed by the fact that it supports the formation of systemic structures, thinking and interpretation of conditions based on existing realities of a specific institution (Mezirow, 2009; Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Solutions to problems should be context-based, drawn primarily from the ground, and driven by people's understanding of specific measures that inform transformation. In this context, actors of transformation are sourced traditionally from the same environment for which development is required. This allowed the researchers to mobilize students primarily from the study area to provide an understanding of social entrepreneurship and perceived measures the university can utilize to promote the concept within the students' immediate environment, and given that there is much about the topic that is still unknown. The paper is structured into sections that provide an overview of the concepts as explained in the introduction: the research area, methodology, the findings and discussion. The paper concludes by highlighting the implications of the findings and recommendations are made based on the findings.

## STUDY AREA

The University of Venda is a rural-based historically black and previously disadvantaged institution of higher learning located in Thohoyandou, in the Limpopo Province in South Africa. There were approximately 16,000 students registered to pursue distinct degrees at the University in 2019. Undergraduate students were the main targeted group in terms of determining their awareness regarding social entrepreneurship and the role that a university can play to develop a social entrepreneurship culture. The choice of this rural-based institution of higher learning located in an area where the students and the surrounding communities need assistance to

unbundle socio-economic challenges was also deliberate and convenient. More than 90% of the students are funded through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); a structure put in place by the government to support students from less-privileged and/or low-income backgrounds. Until the past year or so, there were no resources (in terms of space, human capacity and tools), platforms or an enabling environment for students to discover themselves as social entrepreneurs. It was, hence, relevant to determine some kind of baseline at the starting point. Social entrepreneurship in this context is regarded as essential skills for the personal and career development of students. This paper, therefore, reports on the baseline data of one of the first initiatives to engage students around the topic of social entrepreneurship development in an HDI.

## METHODOLOGY

A mix cross-sectional (quantitative-qualitative) research design was employed, using a mix deductive-inductive approach. A stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw 392 participants from the 16000-student population at the university. The actual sample size appropriate for the study was derived using Yamane's 1967 formula ( $n=N/(1+N(e)^2)$ ), where 'n' stands for the actual sample size, 'N' signifies the population, and 'e' is the margin of error - usually given as 0.05. Approximately 55% of the sample comprised of female students while the remaining were their male counterparts (Table 1). Similarly, undergraduate students cover 71% of the sample. These demographics enabled an analysis of variance which shows how views about social entrepreneurship vary among groups. A 3-Likert type scale questionnaire was administered to the participants for data collection regarding their knowledge of social entrepreneurship, where 1 signifies 'not sure', 2 represents 'fairly sure', and 3 stands for 'very sure'. Descriptive statistics and a One-Sample Test were exploited with the data, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, IBM SPSS version 26 (Hejase & Hejase, 2013).

A convenient sampling technique was used to select students from distinct groups, such as gender and qualification for 6 focus group discussions of 9 participants each. In total, 54 students were drawn from different student demographic details for the study, for the qualitative data collection. A group was, therefore, either comprised of undergraduate and postgraduate students, male and female students, undergraduate students only, postgraduate students only, male students only, or female students only. Participants were asked to share their knowledge of social entrepreneurship, and possible strategies which the university can harness to promote its culture among students. A thematic analysis was subsequently performed on the data to extrapolate key factors. The inputs informed a questionnaire, which was further subjected to 392 samples to score in terms of preference. The data was captured and validated using Microsoft Excel 2013, and subsequently uploaded to IBM SPSS v26 for cross tabulation.

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	216	55.1
	Male	176	44.9
Qualification	Undergraduate	280	71.4
	Postgraduate	112	28.6

## RESULT

Participants' knowledge of social entrepreneurship was measured on a scale of 3 (not sure, fairly sure & very sure) as earlier mentioned with the intention of examining the extent to which students understand the concept. The essence was to determine and provide an understanding of the place of social entrepreneurship at the University and the nature of support required to spur its awareness. As presented in Table 2, an examination of participants' understanding of social entrepreneurship reveals that only 32.7% are sure of what social entrepreneurship is, 20.4% have a fair knowledge of it, while 46.9% are not sure what it is, and the One-Sample Test difference ( $P=0.00$ ) is statistically significant. This result indicates that the majority of the sample (about 66.3%) lack a broader knowledge and insight about social entrepreneurship. This suggests the need for intervention measures to promote social entrepreneurship knowledge among the students.

Frequency Statistics				Descriptive Statistics				One-Sample Test	
Valid N (listwise)	NS	FS	VS	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
392	46.90%	20.40%	32.70%	1	3	1.8571	0.88176	41.7	0
<i>Acceptable significance level <math>P &lt; 0.05</math></i>									
<i>NS: Not Sure; FS: Fairly Sure; VS: Very Sure; SD: Standard Deviation</i>									

Interrogating participants further to explore options for promoting social entrepreneurship among students at the University, three key factors emerged (Table 3): scaling-up social entrepreneurship-related programmes on campus (83.7%), introducing student social entrepreneurship internship programmes (73.5%), and infusion of a social entrepreneurship compulsory module to be offered to all student (77.6%). Overall, the P-values ( $P=0.00$ ) of the factors fall within the acceptable 0% and 5% level for the study, thus, it can be inferred that participants contributions to these intervention measures are statistically significant.

Factors	Freq %	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Internship programmes	73.5	56.671	391	0	1.26531	1.2214	1.3092
A Compulsory Module	77.6	58.03	391	0	1.22449	1.183	1.266
Scaling-up programmes	83.7	62.234	391	0	1.16327	1.1265	1.2

In terms of gender and contributions to intervention measures identified, the females accounted for a greater proportion of it across all factors, when compared with their male counterparts, however, the difference is statistically insignificant (Table 4). It could be emphasized that the variances noted was as a result of participants' frequencies, of which the

females accounted for the majority of the actual sample of the study. Similarly, there was a collective agreement of the factors with regards to qualification as participants' different views of the suggested intervention measures are statistically indifferent, except for the 'introducing student social entrepreneurship internship programmes' factor, where the P-value ( $p=0.001$ ) between the contribution made by the undergraduate students (49.0%) and the postgraduate students (24.5%) is not statistically significant. The difference may be influenced by the fact that the internship programme is the next point of action for many undergraduate students who desire a job, after their first degrees.

Factors		Female %	Male %	Total %	Value	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Internship programmes	Yes	38.8	34.7	73.5	2.370a	0.124
	No	16.3	10.2	26.5		
A Compulsory Module	Yes	42.9	34.7	77.6	0.905a	0.79
	No	12.2	10.2	22.4		
Scaling-up programmes	Yes	44.9	38.8	83.7	1.692a	0.193
	No	10.2	6.1	16.3		

Factors		Undergraduate %	Postgraduate %	Total %	Value	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Internship programmes	Yes	49	24.5	73.5	12.062a	0.001
	No	22.4	4.1	26.5		
A Compulsory Module	Yes	55.1	22.4	77.6	0.094a	0.79
	No	16.3	6.1	22.4		
Scaling-up programmes	Yes	61.2	22.4	83.7	2.988a	0.084
	No	10.2	6.1	16.3		

### Scaling-up Social Entrepreneurship Programmes

Of key importance is the scaling-up of social entrepreneurship programmes, which ranks highest among the other factors. Currently, the University has rolled out some entrepreneurship programmes, one of which is an individually-run project on social innovation and entrepreneurship. Students have shared concern about scaling up the capacity of the programmes as intake in the existing programmes cannot ensure maximum coverage of the students. Undergraduate students in a focus group discussion mentioned:

*"...We know of a social entrepreneurship programme currently running in the university, many students would have joined but enrolment into it is often limited to a certain number of participants in a year...The University should encourage various departments to come up with such programmes so that anyone interested can involve and benefit..., in this the orientation will keep expanding..."*

*“...create social entrepreneurship-in-residence programmes where students of distinct disciplines, qualifications and cultural lines can be grouped to pursue a common social goal...train specific people or invite skilled social entrepreneurship practitioners to mentor and guide the groups. Such initiatives are insightful in promoting a culture...”*

Students believed that scaling up social entrepreneurship programmes at the University will ensure maximum variation as it will provide opportunities for many students to participate. It is an ideal measure that can place the University in a position of promoting social entrepreneurship education among students. The view to scale social entrepreneurship programmes at the university was also discussed in other focus group interviews by postgraduate students:

*“...it is important to have social entrepreneurship programmes if it has been positioned as a significant concept for students’ development. So far, I have not heard of anyone around the campus... The University should come up with the concept, introduce it to the students, create strong awareness and make it catchy. Social entrepreneurship contests can be very motivating and amazing to students. Form clusters of students drawing from different degrees, give each a task, maybe solving a social problem within the campus and make the groups compete against each other. A little bit of reward will do...”*

*“There is lack of encouragement and people turn to give up in entrepreneurial-related initiatives at the University. The UIGC competition for innovation addresses special needs on doing profit-driven businesses, it should create programmes that will provide opportunities for students to participate in social entrepreneurship contests. Students can share entrepreneurial ideas through such platforms...”*

*“Students should be mobilised to carry out social entrepreneurship-related activities through community engagement, most especially visiting high schools to educate learners about the concept and encourage them to embrace the culture. This initiative can form part of students’ class assignments... Promote social entrepreneurship awareness to people who want to become agents of it”*

An important point to note about scaling up social entrepreneurship programmes is that students will have a variety of options to get involved in. The majority of the students can easily be integrated as this would offer opportunities for many to be enrolled, unlike the existing ones that accommodate fewer candidates, who are selected based on certain principles. Expanding the scope of the programmes will result in increased hands-on learning opportunities and scaling up knowledge-sharing among the students. This will contribute to transforming the University towards becoming a social entrepreneurial institution of higher learning.

### **Social Entrepreneurship as a Core-Curricula and or Compulsory Module**

The introduction of core curricula and compulsory social entrepreneurship education and or compulsory module ranks among the highest enabling factors, standing second to ‘scaling-up of social entrepreneurship programmes’. Participants are of the view that social entrepreneurship development should be infused into the curriculum as a module that can be taken by all students. The University should teach case studies based on social entrepreneurship to expose students to thought processes when analyzing situations to provide real-life solutions to issues in their surroundings. In this, students will be able to relate theoretical content to real challenges in their communities and link ideas to concrete scenarios. Postgraduate students in a focus group discussion maintain:

*“Social entrepreneurship knowledge and skills are vital to student’s overall development but most of them will not take such serious unless it is made compulsory and imposed on them... introduce social entrepreneurship as a foundation module and/or short course that must be taken by all students regardless of academic background. ...invite professionals to deliver classes on the programme because such expertise is lacking in this University... It should be that such lectures will be more engaging and add practical insight rather than the theory...”*

Among the students, there is an absolute lack of willingness to work selflessly for the community, although, it is a platform that provides opportunities to advance social entrepreneurship skills. Participants expressed that the University is a diverse and large community versed enough to generate great ideas that can build social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship principles should be transferred to students through teaching, preferably included in the curriculum; students should be taught and trained to be logical and fair to one another in their daily endeavours, the base for social awareness. During a focus group discussion with a group of undergraduate and postgraduate students, participants stressed:

*“... it is obvious that there is no social entrepreneurship background in the University’s pedagogy, we are not taught about that, besides, students are not willing to volunteer in community-related projects that may give them such knowledge, so it is bound to be missing in our practice. Socially entrepreneurship culture starts there...”*

*“...UNIVEN must improve the learning environment to provide for social entrepreneurship education, ... it should partner with key stakeholder like government, traditional leaders and entrepreneurship agencies for knowledge building.”*

*“...stakeholders can share useful information on the nature of challenges that affect their communities that will enable the University to develop a proper framework for students’ knowledge development. The nature of education we receive should be that which speaks to societal realities. Teach students practical knowledge to social entrepreneurship and not only theory.”*

Social entrepreneurship has a key role to play in the University’s transformation and development, however, at present many students do not have access to such knowledge, triggering calls for the integration of the concept in higher learning. There is a shared belief that this advancement will offer university students of diverse backgrounds and qualifications with equal opportunity to benefit from the essential knowledge provided, for their development and social change in surrounding communities.

### **Student Social Entrepreneurship Internship Programmes**

Student social entrepreneurship-related internship programmes emerged as the third and least ranked factor the University can harness to promote social entrepreneurial knowledge among students. There is a shared opinion that students should be exposed to different social entrepreneurship professional backgrounds by allowing them to serve as a short period interns in socially-oriented organisations. The University, therefore, should leverage relationships and establish ties with existing social entrepreneurship-driven units to regularly send students as interns for knowledge building, experience and networking. A mix of male and female undergraduate students in a focus group discussion said:

*“...students should be attached to social entrepreneurship-driven units within the town to learn practical skills. ...it can be a week or month training for each student regardless of discipline, to take them through a systemic approach of practical solutions to societal issues...”*

This corroborates with male and female postgraduate students in a focus group discussion, who also emphasized creating ties with key stakeholders through which students can be deployed to learn and gain social entrepreneurship skills.

*“How often does the University, through its departments visit surrounding communities to identify social issues that should be solved? The University’s social network is poor and this should be improved. It cannot offer what it does not have to students... It should scale up collaborations with community members, entrepreneurship agencies and NGOs to maximize its social entrepreneurship propensity. Deploy students periodically to the community, through existing social entrepreneurship structures to learn what the concept entails”.*



Social entrepreneurship development in higher education gives arms that enable students to contribute as problem-solvers to societal challenges. Student internship programmes have been viewed to be instrumental to this transformation, hence, the call for the University to provide the environment. It is believed that involvement of students in social entrepreneurship-related programmes could enable acquisition of fundamental skills, essential orientation and networking that can position a student appropriately for new venture creation and or workplace.

## DISCUSSION

Only a minority (approximately 33%) of the university students randomly sampled in the study have some knowledge of social entrepreneurship and its application for self-development and social change. It can then be emphasized that the level of awareness about social entrepreneurship is currently not sufficient to guarantee a socially entrepreneurial culture in the University. Arguably, its application, although the terminology may differ, could only be understood within the community engagement and outreach frame. Only a few students who voluntarily participate in community engagement activities relating to social entrepreneurship may have ample knowledge of what the concept entails, and this can give them advantage over many other students who have not been similarly exposed. This finding confirms the notion that social entrepreneurship orientation in South Africa is still lacking despite its proliferation in studies (Rahim & Lajin, 2015; Chengalvala & Rentala, 2017; Urban & Kujinga, 2017; Wonglimpiyarat, 2015), and the knowledge gap is even wider in the universities. Even though social entrepreneurship has presented an important position in transforming inequalities, low national skills and education levels, its resources remain underutilized, and the contextual dimensions for understanding the concept in such settings is still lacking in South Africa and Africa at large (Kolk, 2014; Littlewood & Holt, 2018). This is a relevant concern that the University of Venda should address, given its benefits on students' transformation, institutional growth, societal change and community development.

In exploring the roles, the University can play to enhance social entrepreneurship among students, three key factors were suggested - scaling-up social entrepreneurship programmes, the introduction of a compulsory social entrepreneurship education module, as well as student social entrepreneurship-related internship programmes - were identified from participants' narratives as an important point of departure towards building a strong social entrepreneurial university environment. This is reflected in growing research on social entrepreneurship (Rahim & Lajin, 2015; Chipeta et al., 2020) that universities should take rapid actions in promoting social entrepreneurship activities given its essence towards graduate development. According to Chipeta et al. (2020), inequality and other socio-economic issues are rapidly increasing globally and the gap is widening in developing countries, despite government efforts to mitigate the challenges. Social entrepreneurship is a fashionable construct known for addressing such issues. In a study "Social Entrepreneurship and Graduate Employability", Rahim & Lajin (2015) aver that involvement in social entrepreneurship-related activities enables a graduate to gain essential interpersonal and other transversal skills, yet, these skills have been reported to be lacking among fresh graduates. In the study by Rahim & Lajin (2015), it was also established that participation in social entrepreneurship development initiatives provides a unique experience for students to practice solving real problems, teamwork, resilience and selflessness.

Scaling-up social entrepreneurship programmes have attracted wide debates. For instance, Chengalvala & Rentala (2017), aver that institutions of higher learning should be at the

centre to motivate and guide students that have the desire to pursue entrepreneurship of a social nature. This echoes Karanda & Toledano (2012), who emphasize increasing interest in social entrepreneurship engagement - to influence transformation, the formation of practitioner networks, the creation of social entrepreneurship incubation systems, introduction of learning hubs for skills development and knowledge exchange (The African Social Entrepreneurs Network, 2014; Social Enterprise Academy Africa, 2014).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We can conclude that social entrepreneurship concept still require robust exploration of its models and application at the University. Four key suggestions for spurring the orientation among students were - scaling-up social entrepreneurship-related programmes on campus was the first key, followed by the establishment of the core-curriculum and or compulsory module on social entrepreneurship; infusion of a social entrepreneurship in existing modules, and lastly, introducing student social entrepreneurship internship programmes. At present, research on social entrepreneurship at the rural-based institutions of higher learning in South Africa remains quite untapped, these results, however, reflect deliberations in a wide array of contexts. While scaling-up social entrepreneurship programmes and the infusion of the compulsory course to be offered to all students are areas widely discussed globally, tailor-made student internship programmes emerged as a new and original contribution of the current study, particularly as it relates to a rural context.

It is expected that these findings will inform policy reforms of the University towards building a strong social entrepreneurship environment that can transform students into becoming social change agents. Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

- The University creates an enabling environment for scaling up of programmes that provide early-stage entrepreneurial education, as well as increase entrepreneurship awareness. This is an important path for any university as the successful implementation has potential spinoffs to neighbouring communities.
- Infusing social entrepreneurship development into the existing curriculum, and development of social entrepreneurship core-curriculum and or a compulsory module that can be taken by all students that will also assist in developing a social entrepreneurship culture.
- There is a need for the creation of entrepreneurship/social entrepreneurship incubation centers or hubs for skills development and knowledge exchange at the University. It should use the key areas suggested as nodal operations points. Such will be a vehicle for the University to reach to communities, provide a collaborative learning platform thereby contributing as a pace-setter.
- Further research on social entrepreneurship is required to distil more learning points to maximize return on investment and benefits to society.
- There is a need for multi-stakeholder collaboration between the University, businesses, relevant Government agencies and NGOs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study received funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) grant (CEC180430325032), South Africa. We would like to thank the students at the University of Venda who talked to us about their social entrepreneurship experiences.

## REFERENCES

- Acs, Z.J., Boardman, M.C., & McNeely, C.L. (2013). The social value of productive entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, 40(3), 785-796.
- African Social Entrepreneurs Network. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://asenetwork.org/>
- Bouchard, M.J. (2012). Social innovation, an analytical grid for understanding the social economy: The example of the Quebec housing sector. *Service Business*, 6, 47-59.
- Chang, J., Benamraoui, A., & Rieple, A. (2014). Learning-by-doing as an approach to teaching social entrepreneurship. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 51(5), 459-471.
- Chell, E. (2007). Social enterprise and entrepreneurship: Towards a convergent theory of the entrepreneurial process. *International Small Business Journal*, 25, 5-26.
- Chengalvala, S., & Rentalala, S. (2017). Intentions towards social entrepreneurship among university students in India. *International Journal of Research-Granthaalayah*, 5(6), pp.406-413.
- Chipeta, E.M., Kruse, P., & Surujlal, J., (2020). Effects of gender on antecedents to social entrepreneurship among university students in South Africa. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 12(1), pp.18-33.
- Dacin, P.A., Dacin, M.A., & Matear, M. (2010). Social entrepreneurship: Why we don't need a new theory and how we move forward from here. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(3), 37-57.
- de Bruin, A.M., & Ferrante, F.M. (2011). Bounded opportunity: A knowledge-based approach to opportunity recognition and development. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 1(4), 1-21.
- Estrin, S., Mickiewicz, T., & Stephan, U. (2013). Entrepreneurship, social capital, and institutions: Social and commercial entrepreneurship across nations. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(3), 479-504.
- Fonteneau, B. (2011). *Overview of appropriate mechanisms for guaranteeing the social purpose and measuring the social impact of social enterprises in South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa. International Labour Office.
- Fury, B. (2010). *Social enterprise development in South Africa - Creating a virtuous circle*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Tshikululu Social Investments.
- Hejase, A.J. & Hejase, H.J. (2013). *Research Methods A Practical Approach for Business Students (2nd Edition)*, Philadelphia, PA, Masadir Inc, USA.
- Howie, P., & Bagnall, R. (2013). A beautiful metaphor: Transformative learning theory. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 32(6), 816-836.
- Huq, A., & Gilbert, D.H. (2013). Enhancing graduate employability through work-based learning in social entrepreneurship. *Education and Training*, 55(6), 550-572.
- Jensen, T.L. (2014). A holistic person perspective in measuring entrepreneurship education impact—Social entrepreneurship education at the Humanities. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 12(3), 349-364.
- Karanda, C., & Toledano, N. (2012). Social entrepreneurship in South Africa: A different narrative for a different context. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 8, 201-215.
- Kerlin, J.A. (2008). *Social Enterprise: A Global Comparison*. University Press of New England, Lebanon, NH.
- Kolk, A. (2014). Linking subsistence activities to global marketing systems: The role of institutions. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34,182-194.
- Legal Resource Centre. (2011). *A guide to legal forms for social enterprises in South Africa*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization.
- Littlewood, D., & Holt, D. (2018). Social entrepreneurship in South Africa: Exploring the influence of environment. *Business & Society*, 57(3), 525-561.
- Mezirow, J. (2009). Transformative learning theory. In Mezirow, J., & Taylor, E.W. (Eds), *Transformative Learning in Practice: Insights from Community, Workplace, and Higher Education*. San Francisco, Jossey Bass, CA, 18-32.
- Mulgan, G. (2006). The process of social innovation. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization*, 1, 145-162.
- Nicholls, A. (2010). The Legitimacy of Social Entrepreneurship: Reflexive Isomorphism in a Pre-Paradigmatic Field. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 611-633.
- Partzsch, L., & Ziegler, R. (2011). Social entrepreneurs as change agents: a case study on power and authority in the water sector. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 11(1), 63-83.
- Patzelt, H., & Shepherd, D.A. (2011). Recognizing opportunities for sustainable development. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 35(4), 631-652.
- Phillips, W., Lee, H., Ghobadian, A., O'Regan, N., & James, P. (2015). Social innovation and social entrepreneurship: A systematic review. *Group & Organization Management*, 40(3), pp.428-461.

- Picciotti, A. (2017). Towards sustainability: The innovation paths of social enterprise. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 88(2), 233-256.
- Pomaquero-Yuquilema, J.C., López-Salazar, J.L., & López-Aguirre, J.F. (2019). Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Review. Polo de Capacitación, *Investigación y Publicación (POCAIP)*, 4(1 ESPECIAL), 329-347.
- Rahim, H.L., & Lajin, N.F.M. (2015). Social entrepreneurship and graduate employability. *International Academic Research Journal of Social Science*, 1(1), 33-40.
- Shaw, E., & de Bruin, A. (2013). Reconsidering capitalism: The promise of social innovation and social entrepreneurship? *International Small Business Journal*, 31(7), 737-746.
- Simón, F.J.G., González-Cruz, T., & Contreras-Pacheco, O. (2017). Policies to enhance social development through the promotion of SME and social entrepreneurship: A study in the Colombian construction industry. *Entrep. Reg. Dev.*, 29, 51–70.
- Social Enterprise Academy Africa. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.sea-africa.org/>
- Stephan, U., Uhlaner, L.M., & Stride, C. (2015). Institutions and social entrepreneurship: The role of institutional voids, institutional support, and institutional configurations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 46(3), 308-331.
- Urban, B., & Kujinga, L. (2017). The institutional environment and social entrepreneurship intentions. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 23(4), 638-655.
- Urban, B., (2008). Social entrepreneurship in South Africa: Delineating the construct with associated skills. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 14(5), 346-364.
- Wonglimpiyarat, J. (2015). Challenges of SMEs innovation and entrepreneurial financing. *World J. Entrep. Manag. Sustain Dev.*, 11, 295–311.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn.)*. Harper & Row, New York.