



Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions

Country Brief: South Africa

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About the British Council

The British Council was founded to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this work cultural relations.

We work in over 100 countries, connecting millions of people with the United Kingdom through programmes and services in the English language, the Arts, Education and Society. We believe these are the most effective means of engaging with others, and we have been doing this work since 1934.

www.britishcouncil.org

About Plymouth University

Plymouth University is one of the leading modern universities in the UK, ranked in the top seven institutions under the age of fifty by Times Higher Education. The University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2012, and was the first in the world to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark in recognition of working as a genuine social enterprise, caring for communities, and protecting the planet. The study has been led by SERIO, an applied research unit based at Plymouth University, in collaboration with colleagues from the Institution's Futures Entrepreneurship Centre.

Using this report

Overview

This research seeks to identify the benefits and challenges of partnership between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs) with a particular focus on those operating within an international context. Specifically it explores:

- Existing partnerships between HEIs and social enterprise across twelve countries, spanning four continents;
- The benefits of existing cooperation between social enterprise and HEIs;
- The impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders; and,
- The role of HEIs in supporting an increased awareness of social entrepreneurship as a career option, and in assisting start-ups and early growth.

In May 2016, the British Council published the core research report¹ emanating from this study - *'Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions'* – which placed a deliberate focus on the macro international landscape for engagement between HEIs and social enterprise. In contrast, this report on South Africa provides a specific country focus, enabling a more granular view of social enterprise activity among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A similar report has been produced for each of the eleven other countries that participated in this study.

It is expected that the findings of this research will:

- Facilitate dialogue, networking and knowledge exchange, opening up avenues for greater international cooperation between HEIs, and a stronger global narrative on social value and the contribution of this activity to achieving social development goals.
- Assess and promote the role of HEIs in social enterprises and the benefits of existing co-operation, based upon an analysis of opportunities and challenges related to collaboration.
- Provide a body of evidence which supports and informs further research and collaboration opportunities.

All research outputs from this study, including this report, will be made available on the British Council Social Enterprise webpage: www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports

¹ Referred to hereon after as 'the global research report'.

Introduction

Outlining the research

This research is set against a context of global growth in higher education, and seeks to understand and enhance the role of international cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs). The study, led by Plymouth University for the British Council, is one of the first to attempt to identify the range of HEI activity in the social enterprise sector. Specifically, the study maps and explores existing partnerships between HEIs and SE; the benefits of existing cooperation; and the impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders.

One of the challenges of conducting social enterprise research on a global level is that the term is governed by different legal frameworks, terminology, and cultural approaches. For this study, the researchers adopted the www.socialenterprise.org.uk definition, which considers a social enterprise to be:

“A business that trades to tackle social problems, improve communities, people’s life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community”

Study approach

The global research was undertaken with over two hundred HEIs drawn from Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom and the USA. These twelve countries were selected to provide a wide range of different geographical locations, higher education structures, and levels of economic development and rates of growth. The study comprised three core methodological stages:

Approach	Overview
Desk-based review of social enterprise activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This included academic and grey literature, as well as media sources such as HEI and news websites, blogs, and third party partner organisation websites. ▪ The review was supported by consultations with British Council representatives from each country and explored country-specific issues such as variations in the definition of social enterprise, legal structures for the sector, and challenges to growth.
HEI survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An online survey was sent to all known HEIs in each country to map social enterprise activity, and to explore the benefits and challenges of partnership working. ▪ The survey was disseminated to 993 HEIs, yielding a return of 205 (a 21% response rate).
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth semi-structured interviews with up to three HEIs from each country, to capture their social enterprise activity and partnerships in more detail. ▪ This data was combined with analysis from the preceding two stages to formulate a series of case studies of practice.

With specific regard to South Africa, twenty-five HEIs were invited to complete a survey, yielding a return of twelve – a response of 48%. Where possible, the survey was targeted toward named contacts with knowledge of, or responsibility for social enterprise at their institution. Whilst this approach was felt to provide the most rounded view of cross-institutional engagement and practice, it should be noted that any views expressed may not necessarily reflect the official stance of their HEI.

The survey findings have been exemplified and elaborated upon through the inclusion of case studies of practice from three South African HEIs, and consultation with representatives from the British Council team in South Africa.

The British Council's social enterprise programme

Social enterprises address social and environmental problems through innovative solutions that improve people's lives in our communities and societies. The British Council's global social enterprise programme draws on the UK experience in social enterprise to promote its growth around the world. We build capacity in the sector, forge international networks, and support policy leaders to create ecosystems in which social enterprise and social investment can thrive. Our work supports positive social change, inclusive growth and sustainable development while building trust and creating opportunities between the UK and other countries.

The landscape for social enterprise

Country overview

South Africa's higher education system has a long and varied history. Dating back to the 19th Century, the sector has undergone considerable change prior to, and following, the demise of apartheid.² Presently, there are approximately twenty five HEIs in South Africa, managed both nationally by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and locally, with state education departments present in each of the country's nine provinces. In 2013, there were just over 1 million student enrolments in South Africa, representing around 2% of the population.³ This is lower than the 3.6% mean average number of student enrolments as a proportion of the total population across all 12 study countries reported in this research.

The term 'social enterprise' is widely used amongst practitioners, academics, investors, and a growing number of policy makers.⁴ However, there remains some ambiguity around the criteria that delineates social enterprises from other social or environmental impact organisations; and confusion with other terms such as 'social entrepreneurship' or 'social innovation' is commonplace.

Approaches to social enterprise

Social enterprise is a relatively established concept in South Africa. Whilst some countries have only been conducting dialogue on the sector since the late 2000s, South Africa has been engaging in social enterprise activity since before the 1990s.⁴ The last 10-15 years has seen considerable expansion to the sector, and increasingly social enterprise is being perceived as a viable method of addressing the country's pressing societal challenges, such as the issues of chronic unemployment and the prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

Currently, no dedicated legal structure for social enterprise exists in South Africa, but there are several options available which allow for flexibility, including: non-profit organisations, public benefit organisations, and donor deductible status.⁵ Feedback from consultations with in-country representatives conducted in support of this study suggests that the South African government is generally supportive of the sector. For example, despite there being no existing policy on social enterprise, the New Growth Path Framework 2011 identified the growth of the social economy as being a crucial source of employment opportunities for the people of South Africa.⁴

Support for social enterprise

International support organisations are relatively commonplace in South Africa; for example the US Ashoka Foundation has been present in the country since 1991.⁴ Others also working in South Africa include the Schwab Foundation, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), Lifeco UnLtd South Africa, and the Skoll Foundation.⁶ These organisations initiate various programmes of support to promote, invest and expand the social enterprise sector in South Africa. For example, The Skoll Awards Programme is an investment initiative of the Skoll Foundation, in

² Council on Higher Education (2007) Review of Higher Education in South Africa

³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016). Enrolment by level of education. Available at: http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT_DS

⁴ International Comparative Social Enterprise Models (ICSEM) (2015) Social Enterprise in South Africa. Available at: <http://www.iap-socent.be/sites/default/files/South%20Africa%20-%20Littlewood%20%26%20Holt.pdf>

⁵ Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (2015) A Guide to Legal Forms for Social Enterprises in South Africa. Available at: <http://www.gsb.uct.ac.za/files/BerthaCentreGuideLegalFormsSocialEnterprisesSouthAfrica.pdf>

⁶ Tshikululu Social Investments (2010) Social Enterprise Development in South Africa – creating a virtuous circle

which they provide established social enterprises with demonstrable impact with considerable, and often unrestricted, funding to scale their venture and increase their reach to a global level.

More recently, national not-for-profit support organisations are being established to promote the development of the sector. For example, the African Diaspora Network provides a knowledge sharing platform for investors, social entrepreneurs, volunteers and donors to connect and collaborate on social enterprise projects across Africa. Similarly, the Social Enterprise Academy Africa, established in 2012, provides learning and development for social entrepreneurs to help them increase their social impact, ensure financial sustainability and gain internationally recognised qualifications. The South African Social Investment Exchange (SASIX) is South Africa's first online social investment stock exchange, connecting social enterprises with interested investors who can offer them greater visibility, profile and access to capital.

The role of HEIs

HEIs across South Africa are undertaking a range of activities in support of the development of the social enterprise sector; and dedicated SE centres are becoming increasingly prevalent amongst South African institutions. For example, the University of Johannesburg runs the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Economy (CSESE), and Durban University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal recently established their Centre for Social Entrepreneurship. Similarly, the University of Cape Town runs the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the first academic centre dedicated to advancing the SE sector to be established in Africa. They do this in various ways, including but not limited to, integrating the concept of social entrepreneurship into the core academic curriculum; incubating new social enterprises; and engaging in collaborative research opportunities with international and local partners. The Bertha Centre partners with the Social Enterprise Academy on the 'Social Change Collaboration'; whereby international students are given the opportunity to undertake a student internship within South African social enterprises, coupled with a comprehensive academic programme.

Although historically, social enterprise has not been a staple feature of the academic curriculum in South African HEIs, institutions are now beginning to incorporate the concept in practical and experiential learning-style courses. For example, the Gordon Institute of Business (GIB) at the University of Pretoria offers a 'social entrepreneurship programme'. This provides potential and existing social entrepreneurs with training in various theoretical and practical elements of social enterprise, strengthening their skills and application of concepts to real social entrepreneurial endeavours. In addition, the University of KwaZulu Natal runs the SHAPE programme (Shifting Hope, Activating Potential Entrepreneurship); a nine-month teaching and learning course that combines classroom-based learning with practical hands-on experience in a real-world social business environment to assist them in eventually setting up their own social enterprise.

There is also ample evidence of local and international partnerships between HEIs and social enterprises in South Africa, particularly that focus on developing communities, creating employment opportunities, and improving access to sanitation facilities. For example, the Water and Health in Limpopo initiative is a long-term collaborative partnership, established in 2008, between the University of Virginia (in the US) and the University of Venda, Limpopo. The partnership supports an ongoing research hub, providing students with fieldwork opportunities to design and implement sustainable improvements in water and sanitation. One enterprise to evolve from this initiative is 'PureMadi', a scheme developing socially and financially sustainable ceramic water filter factories, providing a consistent supply of clean water across an increasing number of communities in South Africa.

Overview of social enterprise activity

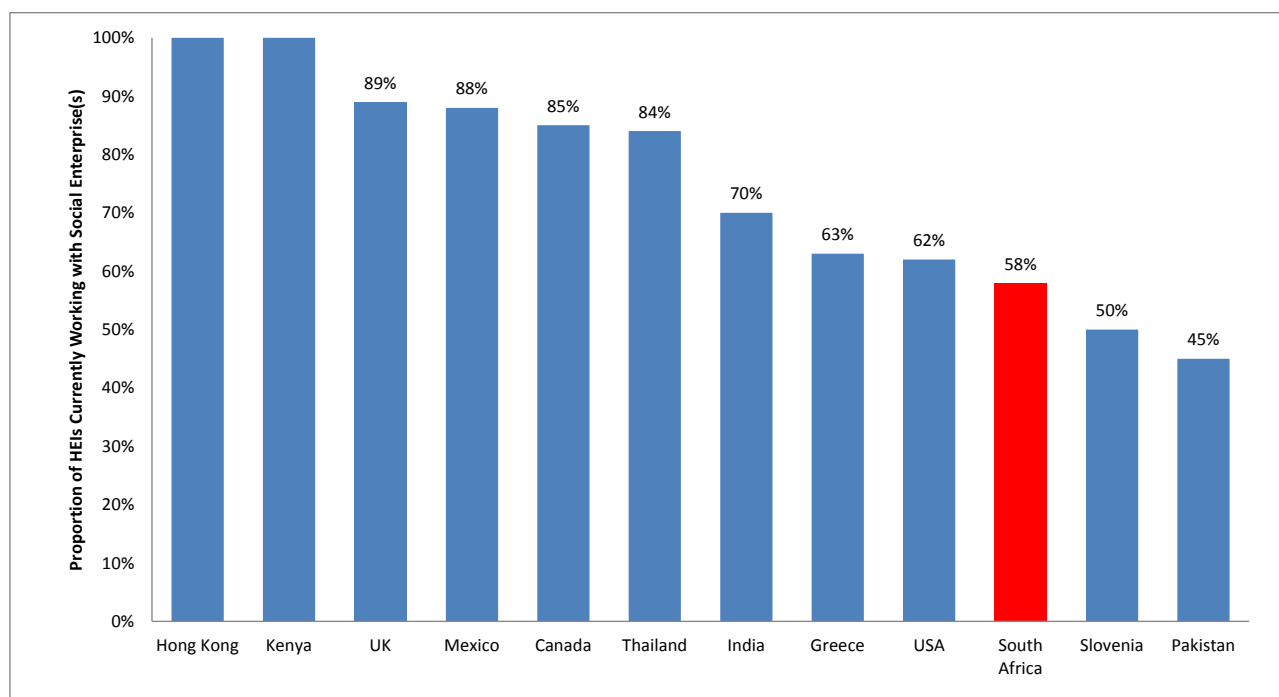
Introduction

This section firstly summarises the scale and characteristics of HEI and SE partnerships in South Africa, followed by a review of priority areas, and discussion on the benefits and approaches to supporting social enterprise. Where appropriate, the analysis draws on findings from the eleven other countries of focus in order to provide a comparator position to South Africa (see 'Using this report').

The scale of social enterprise activity

Social enterprise activity amongst South African institutions was relatively commonplace. As illustrated in Chart 1, of the twelve responding HEIs, seven (58%) were found to have active partnerships at the time of the survey. Two responses were invalid, so the remainder of this report's analysis is based on the ten valid responses from South African HEIs. Of these, six had active partnerships (60%), and four (40%), whilst not currently working with social enterprise(s), stated an intention to do so in the future.

Chart 1: Proportion of institutions from each country currently working with social enterprises



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Base: 205

Analysis revealed no obvious trend with regard to the number of active partnerships across responding South African HEIs. Of those who were working with social enterprise at the point of the survey, two engaged with between one and five partnerships, two stated that they had between six and ten; and another had between eleven and sixteen active partnerships.⁷

As with the findings from the global research report, the number of active social enterprise partnerships in South Africa was found to be diverse, and do not represent one homogenous

⁷ One respondent was unsure how many partnerships the HEI currently had.

group. However, taking into account the size of a social enterprise could go some way toward accounting for these differences. For example, North West University in South Africa was found to have between one and five active partnerships. However, one of these was with an umbrella organisation, Mosaic, which is home to several large scale social enterprises.

International activity

Regarding the geographical scope of engagement amongst the six South African institutions who reported having a current partnership(s) with social enterprise(s), four HEIs indicated that this included a partnership within their own country. Furthermore, half (3) also specified their work with social enterprise(s) had included some element of international activity, such as international trading, utilising international students through placements, and conducting research. As described in *'The landscape for social enterprise'*, international partnerships between South African HEIs and social enterprise are commonplace; for example, the social enterprise 'PureMadi' originates through the University of Venda's 'Water and Health in Limpopo' initiative in partnership with the University of Virginia, US.

"We export high quality products that are produced by 'Made by Mosaic' which is one of our associated income generating companies. The products are sold in Germany, France and Sweden"

"We make use of German and US student volunteers on a regular basis for building homes and providing schooling"

"We have conducted collaborative research on an international scale, the aim of which was capacity development"

In terms of the scale of this international activity, one HEI who works on international SE partnerships stated that this amounted to between one and five projects, whilst two reported that they engaged in between six to ten international activities. Further, as a proportion of total work with social enterprise, one institution stated that international partnerships accounted for approximately forty per cent of their social enterprise engagement and activity, whereas for another, it accounted for around fifty-five per cent. The remaining HEI was unable to attribute a proportion for which international activity accounted for.

Notably, for those HEIs in South Africa that were currently engaged in an international partnership at the time of the survey, both the key motivations and challenges for this global activity centred on funding. In terms of motivations, it was highlighted that relying on funding from within South Africa to develop social enterprises wasn't a sustainable approach; instead, seeking international funding was perceived to offer a more stable foundation for development. However, at the same time, securing funding was cited as a challenge to international partnerships, as was a lack of resource and engagement from within HEIs' senior management.

“Our current exchange rate is favourable to develop social enterprise within South Africa. We need international partnerships because there are too few resources locally to meet all the different kinds of needs in South Africa”

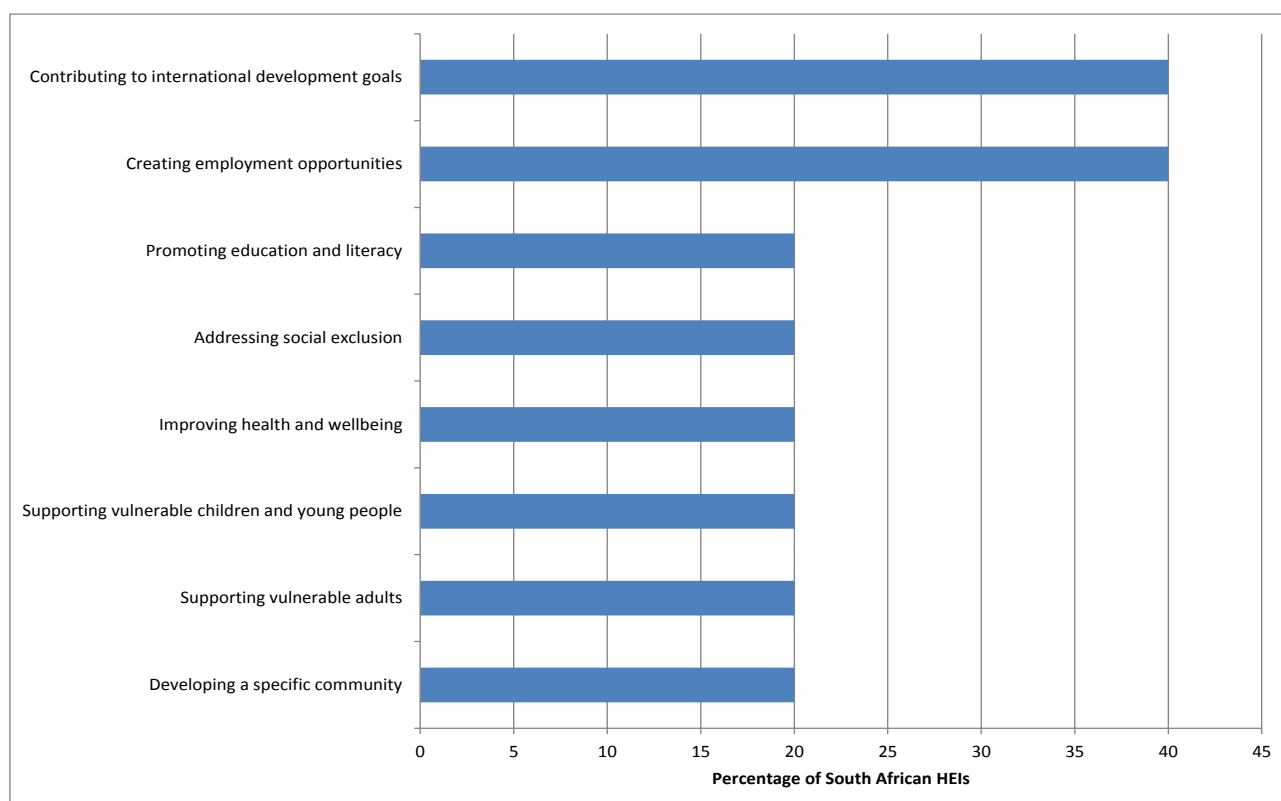
“We are motivated to scale up our current projects through the provision of international donor funds. This enables us to conduct impact assessments and explore the effectiveness of our social enterprise projects”

“Our social enterprise activity receives international funding and we work with other national HEIs on these projects”

Priority areas

Somewhat echoing the findings from the global research report, the most commonly cited social purposes that South African HEIs would be most likely to support⁸ were those which contribute to international development goals, and those which create employment opportunities, each of which were cited by two institutions. As shown in Chart 2, addressing social exclusion, improving health and wellbeing, supporting vulnerable adults, children and young people, and developing specific communities were also deemed to be important social purposes, all cited by one HEI each. As noted in *‘The landscape for social enterprise’*, the social economy in South Africa is widely considered to be a key source of employment opportunities for local people. Thus, it is unsurprising that HEIs here also reported that this was a social purpose they would prioritise their support for.

Chart 2: Types of social enterprise South African HEIs would be most likely to support



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016
 Base: 5

⁸ HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second choice of purpose they would be most likely to support.

Motivations for engagement

South African institutions outlined a range of motivating factors that underpinned their engagement with social enterprises. Of those providing a response, four reported that they would be particularly motivated⁹ to engage with social enterprise to address local or regional needs. This was followed by a motivation to address national needs (3), develop partnerships if such practices were part of the HEI's mission or strategy (2), or if it was part of the curriculum on some of their courses (2). Further motivations included improving the student experience, developing services and products, and expanding research opportunities, each of which were cited by one HEI.

“Through partnership working, local communities benefit from income generation and social support as it increases the general wellbeing of parents and children”

“As an institution, working with social enterprises provides us all with better understanding, a bigger profile, and new research opportunities”

“Students develop feelings of citizenship and an understanding of excluded communities. There are also benefits to curriculum content through experiential learning”

Working with and supporting social enterprise

South African HEIs that were found to be currently working with a social enterprise(s) were asked to indicate the ways in which this took place, and to exemplify the associated type of support they provide.

As shown in Table 1, and in line with the findings from the global research report, by far the most common approach was through a project, partnership or joint venture, cited by all six South African institutions. This was exemplified by the provision of: training, expertise, and access to facilities (6 HEIs); as well as collaboration or research opportunities (5), business support services (4), and placement students (3). A further two HEIs indicated that they had a dedicated social enterprise support service, and advertise social enterprise goods and services.

The second most commonly cited support approach was through facilitating student-led social enterprises, reported by five South African institutions. This was followed by support for HEI- or staff-led social enterprises (5); institutional membership of a social enterprise network (4); and institutional commitment to working with and supporting social enterprises in the HEI's mission or strategy (4). All of these approaches were in line with the global findings; indeed, South African HEIs exceeded the global average. However, on the contrary, South African institutions were less likely to report providing incubation space which was only cited by three HEIs, in comparison to 68% globally.

⁹ HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second most motivating factor.

Table 1: Approaches to working with social enterprise¹⁰

Approach	Percentage	
	South Africa	Global
A project, partnership or other joint activity with one or more social enterprise(s)	100%	96%
Student led social enterprises	100%	78%
HEI/ Staff-led social enterprises	83%	67%
Institutional membership of a social enterprise network	80%	70%
Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy	80%	81%
Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop	60%	68%

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

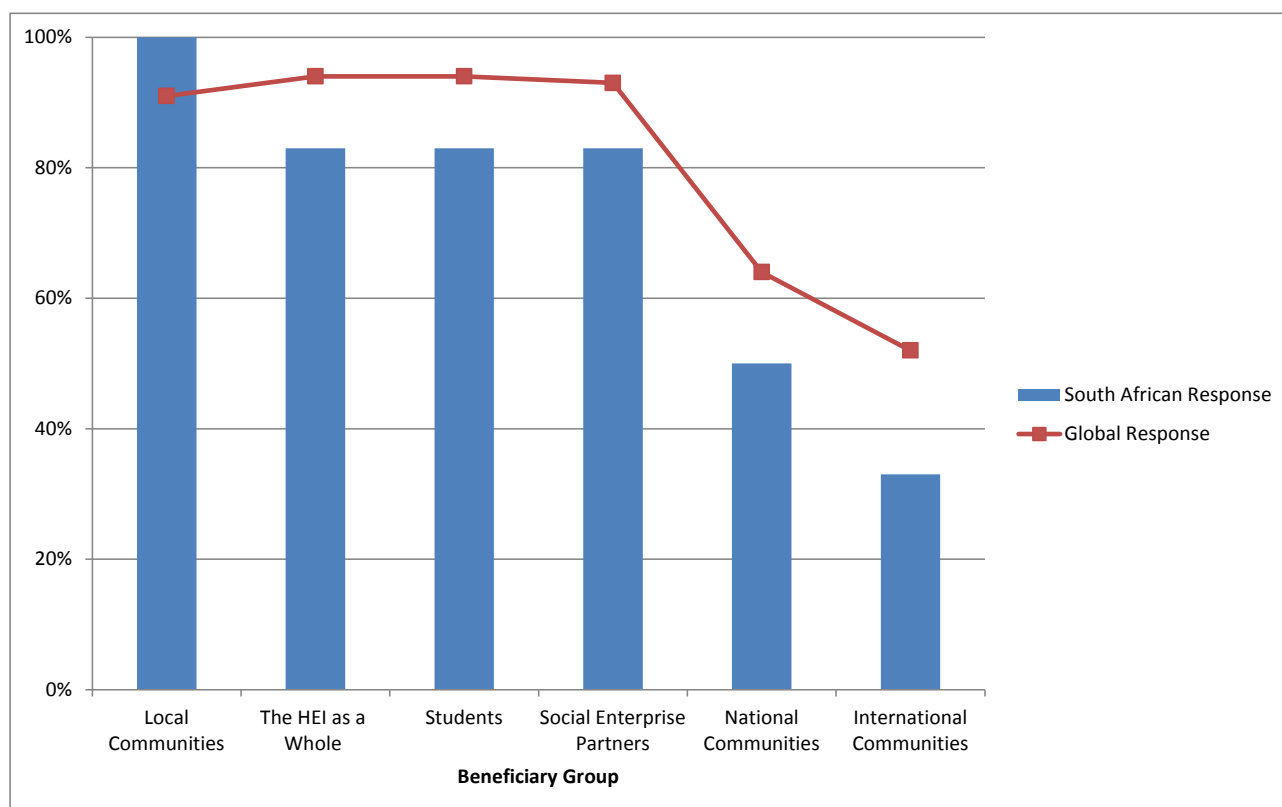
Base: 6 except 'Student led social enterprises', 'Institutional membership of a social enterprise network', 'Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy', and 'Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop' where B=5

Benefits of partnership working

South African HEIs identified that their work with social enterprise(s) had created benefits for a range of groups. This is presented in Chart 3, and benchmarked against findings from the global report, indicated by the red trend line.

Perceived levels of benefit amongst South African institutions followed a similar, although not exact, trend to the collective view across all twelve countries. As shown, of those providing a valid response South African HEIs identified local communities as the primary beneficiaries of partnership working, cited by all six institutions. This was followed by recognition of the benefit of partnership working for the HEI as a whole, students, and social enterprise partners – each of which were identified by five institutions. All of these were broadly in line with the global findings of 91%, 94%, 94% and 93% respectively. In contrast, however, there was less recognition regarding the benefit to international communities - identified by only two South African HEIs in comparison to 52% globally. This may be reflective of the nature of the international partnerships South African institutions are working on; wherein the benefits of such collaborations are felt on a local level, as opposed to internationally.

¹⁰ NB: Percentages may vary due to differing base numbers and have been provided so that a global comparison can be made, however caution should be exercised when interpreting this data because of the small sample from South Africa.

Chart 3: South African views regarding the key beneficiaries of HEI/SE partnership

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

South Africa Base: 6

Global Base: 157, except 'Social Enterprise Partners' where B=156; 'Students' and 'Local Communities' where B=155; and 'National Communities' and 'International Communities' where B=148

Embedding social enterprise in higher education

In line with findings from the global research report, South African HEIs that had active partnerships at the point of the survey commonly used social enterprise to support the delivery of extracurricular activities (4). However, contrary to the global average of 42%, only one South African institution offered an accredited social enterprise course. Furthermore, no HEIs in South Africa involved social enterprise in the delivery of curriculum teaching, nor did they incorporate SE across all courses. This compares to 67% and 30% that reported these methods respectively, on a global scale.

Good practice in developing partnerships

Introduction

As noted previously, the research sought, in part, to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, and to inform further collaboration opportunities (see *'Using this report'*). In support of these objectives, the survey asked HEIs to share examples of good practice stemming from their experience of developing partnerships with social enterprises.

HEIs in South Africa provided a range of good practice approaches that could be shared more widely, which were broadly categorised as follows: communication and knowledge exchange; developing cooperative networks; a focus on impact and sustainability; and involving local communities. These are discussed in turn, and exemplified by quotes from responding institutions.

Communication and knowledge exchange

HEIs in South Africa highlighted the importance of clear and regular communication with social enterprises in order to build strong and effective partnerships. HEIs indicated a number of different approaches to establishing and maintaining contact; for example: the creation of private groups on social platforms to debate and share information, the delivery of regular newsletters, and face-to-face visits between partners.

"Try to bring all stakeholders around the table together; this represents good practice because collaborative working yields benefits for all involved"

"We communicate via social platforms with all partners, thereby all staying informed and connected"

"Have good newsletters with monthly feedback to reflect on successes and future opportunities"

"We make use of annual visits to the social enterprises with personal report back sessions"

Developing cooperative networks

In line with the findings from the global research report, another frequently cited example of good practice within South Africa was the development of cooperative networks for social enterprises as a source of advice and resources. In South Africa, HEIs also advocated the development of such networks internally within the HEI, to take advantage of academics' skills and experience to support strong HEI / social enterprise partnerships.

"We market social enterprises in the local media, provide access to experts that assist with marketing plans, and give them access to networks and contacts"

"They have access to pro-bono legal advice and any expertise within the university"

"It is good practice to make use of the many smart and creative minds that universities have, so that social enterprises can tap into this resource"

Focus on impact and sustainability

HEIs in South Africa noted the importance of adopting a business-led approach to supporting social enterprise. Implementing clear action plans, and establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks to underpin their social enterprise partnerships were considered vital to the development of strong and sustainable social enterprises. It was also reflected that HEIs should develop a well-defined framework of joint working and ensure that the social enterprises they support are self-sustainable.

“A social enterprise is an enterprise - they need to be treated as a business even if they are not making an income at the start. Elements that do not contribute to sustainability must be avoided or you must find solutions to such challenges. Have a triple bottom line approach considering profit, people and planet”

“Ensure from the start that you have an exit strategy that both parties have agreed upon. Use your research capacity to monitor and evaluate over a longer term rather than just a few years”

Involving local communities

In common with the global findings, the involvement of local communities in social enterprise partnerships was highlighted as being a key measure of success for South African HEIs. In particular, institutions identified the importance of HEIs working with communities in order to maximise the social value of the intervention; for example through activities such as data collection and support for delivery. The involvement of communities from an early stage was also felt to lead to more positive impact through increased understanding and engagement.

“Involve local communities in the data collection process; this interaction leads to a closer relationship between them and the social enterprise, and a better understanding of the issues. If recommendations are implemented this is more likely to lead to positive benefits”

Summary

In South Africa, the social enterprise sector is relatively well established, and has grown considerably over the last decade. SE is increasingly becoming known as a useful tool to address societal issues present in South Africa; and HEIs here are offering various forms of support that contribute to the promotion and development of the sector. For example, the survey found that over half of responding institutions currently have an active partnership with an SE (58%); and the remaining HEIs stated an intention to do so in the future.

With regard to the geographical scope of engagement, four of the six South African HEIs with active partnerships indicated that this included a partnership within their own country, whilst three stated that their partnership also involved international activity. Underpinning this engagement was a motivation to address local, regional or national needs; if it was part of the HEI's mission or strategy; and if social enterprise formed part of the curriculum on some of their courses.

Contributing to international development goals and creating employment opportunities were the most commonly cited social purposes that South African HEIs would be most likely to support, which was somewhat in line with the global trend. As described in the *'The landscape for social enterprise'*, there are many examples of international partnerships between South African HEIs and overseas organisations; working to develop communities and create sustainable sources of income for people here.

The research identified various ways in which South African HEIs approach their work with social enterprise(s). The most commonly cited approach was through a project, partnership or joint venture, for example through the provision of training, expertise and access to facilities. In addition, South African HEIs commonly reported facilitating student-led social enterprises and holding institutional membership of an SE network. However, institutions in South Africa were less likely to report providing incubation space for social enterprises, and no HEIs were found to incorporate SE across all courses or involve SE in the delivery of curriculum teaching.

In terms of which groups were felt to be most likely to benefit from partnership working, institutions in South Africa identified that the HEI as a whole, students, and social enterprise partners were the primary beneficiaries of SE partnerships. In contrast, South African HEIs were less likely than the global average to report international communities as key beneficiaries. As noted in the *'Overview of social enterprise activity'*, this may be related to international HEI/ SE partnerships having a local purpose in South Africa, as opposed to the enterprise's focus being international in nature.

Looking forward, the social enterprise sector in South Africa is growing ever more established, and HEIs have the potential to become a key source of support. Whilst engaging social enterprises in the delivery of extracurricular activities was a common approach reported by South African institutions; no HEIs reported involving SEs in curriculum teaching. Thus, there now exists future opportunities for institutions to embed the concept of social enterprise into the academic curriculum; providing potential social entrepreneurs with formal education, training and incubation support to encourage and facilitate this vocation as a career path.

Case studies

Case study 1: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Institution overview:

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) was founded through a merger of three institutions in 2005. A public university, NMMU now has a total of six campuses spread across Port Elizabeth and George, South Africa. The university aims to offer a diverse range of quality educational opportunities that will make a critical and constructive contribution to regional, national and global sustainability. There are around 27,000 students currently enrolled.

Approach to social enterprise:

NMMU engage in partnerships with social enterprise to simultaneously provide their students with experiential learning opportunities, to develop research opportunities, and to help address local or regional needs. They are particularly supportive of enterprises that create employment opportunities, promote education and literacy, improve health and wellbeing, and support vulnerable children and young people.

Community engagement and student experience:

NMMU run a Cooperative Education and Service Learning Unit which initiates and promotes co-operative partnerships between the university and external stakeholders, including social enterprises. In this way, students' academic experience is enhanced with experiential learning opportunities, and social enterprises benefit from the presence, skills and expertise of student and university involvement.

NMMU also provide community development training for individuals interested in starting up their own social enterprise. For example, they train unemployed adults to set up their own home-based care and childcare social enterprises; sharing guidance on how to formulate a business plan, applying for funding, and running a successful enterprise.

The university is also one of the key partners of Life College Group Unlimited South Africa (Life Co UnLtd), a social enterprise that seeks, profiles and awards grants to emerging social entrepreneurs in South Africa. They support social entrepreneurs to develop and scale their ventures, introduce them to key network partners and open doors for them in South Africa through their membership of the Global Social Entrepreneurs Network (GSEN).

Overcoming challenges:

Staff at NMMU note that working with social enterprises is often accompanied by unique challenges. Particularly of note for NMMU staff is how academics balance their curricula workloads with the demands of their social enterprise endeavours. They note that sustainable financial support is needed for social enterprises to maximise their impact. Currently, staff who work on social enterprise projects are often appointed on fixed-term contract appointments, which is not cost-effective. They note that the university has often had most success in their social enterprise endeavours when they include a third partner such as an NGO ('non-governmental organisation') or CBO ('community-based organisation'). They add that partnerships should be formalised, and the rules of engagement understood and supported by all parties in order to maximise profitability with minimal issues.

Contact information: www.nmmu.ac.za

Case study 2: University of Venda

Institution overview:

Founded in 1982, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) is a public, rural university located in Thohoyandou in Limpopo province. The university has subject specialisms in information systems, natural sciences, environmental and agricultural sciences and health sciences; and aims to be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa. There are between 10,000 and 15,000 students currently enrolled.

Approach to social enterprise:

UNIVEN promotes a campus-wide approach to financially sustainable, rural development endeavours. Working with social enterprises is part of their HEI mission and they do so to both improve the student experience and to address national needs.

Community engagement:

UNIVEN run many social enterprise endeavours from their Community Engagement Directorate (CE). Here, they focus on rural development and poverty reduction in South Africa through a coordinated approach across schools and centres on campus. One of their ventures is the 'Amplifying Community Voice' programme in which self-driven rural development within grassroots communities is facilitated by the CE. They ensure that the decisions of children, youth, women, men and community leaders are incorporated into rural development planning for their region using 'participatory reflection circles'. Here, students and staff work in partnership with community representatives at the village level, known as 'Foot Soldiers', who in turn facilitate the democratic discussion of local issues and concerns to ensure community-owned decisions are made.

International partnerships:

PureMadi is a social enterprise that originated from the Water and Health in Limpopo Initiative (WHIL); a long-term partnership between UNIVEN and the University of Virginia in the USA. This partnership is dedicated to improving water and sanitation in rural South African villages and designing educational opportunities for students from both institutions. Having begun in 2008 as a project to provide clean water to two villages, this venture evolved and led to the creation of 'PureMadi' which develops ceramic water filter factories in rural South Africa, providing filtration devices for home use and much needed employment for local citizens.

Benefits of social enterprise:

The university notes that working with social enterprises creates numerous benefits for all engaged partners. Local communities benefit from improved health status as a result of the social initiatives taking place, and staff and students benefit from the knowledge and skills they acquire through this work. The university benefits as a whole from the wide dissemination of their experiences nationally and internationally.

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Case study 3: North-West University

Institution overview:

Founded in 2004, North-West University (NWU) is a merged public institution with three campuses at Potchefstroom, Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark, South Africa. With its merged status, NWU has become one of the largest universities in South Africa with more than 50,000 students currently enrolled. North-West University's mission is to become a balanced teaching, learning and research university and to implement its expertise in an innovative way.

Approach to social enterprise:

Social enterprise is used as a vehicle by NWU to address the needs of their local communities, and to develop new research knowledge. It is also a key strategy for enhancing the university's reputation and generating income for communities. They are members of a social enterprise network and provide support in a number of ways, including through the provision of expertise, access to their facilities, training and collaboration on research.

Supporting communities:

NWU supports Mosaic SA, an organisation implementing South Africa's first self-sustainable orphan care model. NWU provides mentoring to Mosaic's CEO and supports training, access to expertise, research and evidence-based impact assessments. NWU also engage student volunteers from institutions overseas to support the enterprise's schooling and building work, whilst locally they involve student volunteers and run service learning courses through training activities.

Mosaic provides housing, education and employment opportunities for families caring for orphans. This is funded through a number of income-generating social enterprises, such as: 'Made by Mosaic' – a manufacturing enterprise creating handmade goods and products that are exported and sold internationally; and 'Mosaic Builders' – a building contractor that coordinates all of Mosaic's infrastructure developments.

Opportunities and challenges:

The university conducts impact assessments of their social enterprise and community engagement activities in order to understand the value of their work. They have found that working with social enterprise attracts various opportunities to the institution, including new research opportunities, a bigger profile and greater interest from other academics who want to link social enterprise to their research and service learning.

Working internationally has provided the university and Mosaic with many unique opportunities. For example, international exposure has led to them having greater access to more diverse funding sources; and they have received volunteer support from individuals and organisations in the USA, such as international students who are enthusiastic about contributing to education programmes in South Africa.

However, NWU note that universities in South Africa tend to struggle with funding service learning activities as the government does not provide any subsidies for these activities, and social enterprises cannot support costs for students because all profits must be reinvested for their social purpose. In addition, start-up funding and mentoring costs in the enterprise development space remains a challenge; and because they have limited funding they can only afford to help a certain number of entrepreneurs.

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