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### IMPACTS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORGANIZATION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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#### **Abstract**

*Social entrepreneurship is not new, but has attracted little academic justification as a specialized sector that could be anchored on collaboration, environmental movement and social enterprise. This special area of entrepreneurship, often created in the form of "for profit," with revenues advancing societal interests rather than individual interests, and "nonprofit", focusing exclusively on advancing societal interests, are overlooked by dominant market theories. Meanwhile it works for social benefit rather than mere profits, generating a lot of social capital and voluntary hours to further sustainability in its social, economic and environmental ramifications. It seems to be obvious that the current business view has little concern about common, collective or public interest, a reason it appears to be neglecting social entrepreneurship. Given this situation, it becomes important to popularize and entrench social entrepreneurship. A convenient point to start is social entrepreneurship for environmental protection which developed with the innovation of environmental movements in different forms and interacts with diverse parties, private and/or public. As such, many environmental movements are exemplary of social entrepreneurship. Using descriptive and exploratory approaches and relying on secondary data and literature review, this article investigates this form of social entrepreneurship by exploring its structural and practical features.*

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, NGO, non-profit, Charity

#### **1. Introduction**

Social entrepreneurial organizations are not new, but have received little attention as a specialized sector especially in terms of collaboration, environmental movement and social enterprise. Different scholars and stakeholders provide varied views on it. This might be because of the prevalence of the neo-classical economic model of business or the lack of knowledge about sustainability. But in the least, there is a consensus that social entrepreneurship is a special area of entrepreneurship which is created in response to social crisis or to take advantage of market opportunities where dominant market theories fail.

Social entrepreneurship adds value to the social economy by taking the form of "for profit" and "nonprofit" organisations. That it is for profit does not mean that individuals appropriate the profit, but



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rather that it makes profits channeled to societal needs. When designed as a non-profit organization, it goes without saying that it does not make profits for stakeholders or distribute the same to them. Thus, notwithstanding their form, social entrepreneurships work for social interests rather than profits.

The United Nations Development Program Human Development Report (2003) provides evidence that for many people on this planet, life remains grim, and hope for improving their situation is frail. Even if it cannot take people out of their hopeless situation, social entrepreneurship could reduce the harsh experience these people face around the world.

Social entrepreneurship in the area of environmental protection developed with the innovation of environmental movements in form of nonprofit, charitable or other forms of NGOs, aiming at flexibility and interacting with diverse stakeholders including private and public entities.

It is obvious that the current business model shows little concern about the common, collective or public interest. To address this problem, social entrepreneurship needs to become known and acceptable to stakeholders, as a complement to conventional business. Striving towards this might necessitate popularizing social entrepreneurship through academic channels.

The study reviews the existing theory of social entrepreneurship and explores the legal and practical features of environmental organizations as a form of social entrepreneurship. In view of this, it attempts to achieve two major objectives: clarify the concept and practices of social entrepreneurship by defining and exploring its trend, intent and area of activities; and explore the legal and practical features as well as the impacts of environmental organizations as social entrepreneurship. As such, the key questions it attempts to answer are: What is social entrepreneurship? What are the potential gaps of existing theory of social entrepreneurship that need to be addressed? What is the form of environmental social entrepreneurship?

## 2. Methodology

This paper employs the descriptive and exploratory approaches. It uses secondary data from the literature and conducts a literature review.

The research has accumulated data from secondary sources. Data have been collected from the official websites of the top 25 environmental organization in the world, a list of which is on file with the



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author. The research also presents the quantified result, pictures, graph and other works from different authentic research institutions, journals, books and surveys made by other scholars related with the research purpose.

The literature review explores the concept of social entrepreneurship and shows how this concept fits into the organization of environmental movement as a form of social entrepreneurship. Besides, the role of environmental organizations and how they interact with parties are also studied.

### 3. Theoretical Approach

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined sustainable development (SD) as development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It appears that this definition is the mission of environmental social entrepreneurship. As such, it guides their form and activities.

Although social entrepreneurs are characterized by very special traits, a firm ethical fiber (Drayton, 2002) and special leadership skills (Thompson, Alvy&Lees, 2000), entrepreneurship as a process that fosters social progress has only recently attracted the interest of researchers (Alvord, Brown & Letts, 2004; Dees & Elias, 1998). One group of researchers define social entrepreneurship as not-for-profit initiatives in search of alternative funding strategies or management schemes to create social value (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skiller, 2003). Other authors (Sagawa &Segal, 2000; Waddock, 1998) understand it as the socially responsible practice of commercial businesses engaged in cross-sector partnerships. Some other researchers (Alvord et al., 2004) view it as a means to alleviate social problems and catalyze social transformation. Although all these authors perceive social enterprise from the point of social orientation, the social purpose also directly or indirectly relates to environmental sustainability.

Busenitz et al. (2003) doubts the risk that social entrepreneurship may never gain the consensus and legitimacy that academics seek and may be viewed merely as a venue in which other disciplinary perspectives such as psychology, social change, economic system etc. may be tested rather than the traits, model, scope and area of social entrepreneurship itself. Most existing studies on social entrepreneurship are case-based, applying diverse research designs and methods and introducing insights from other

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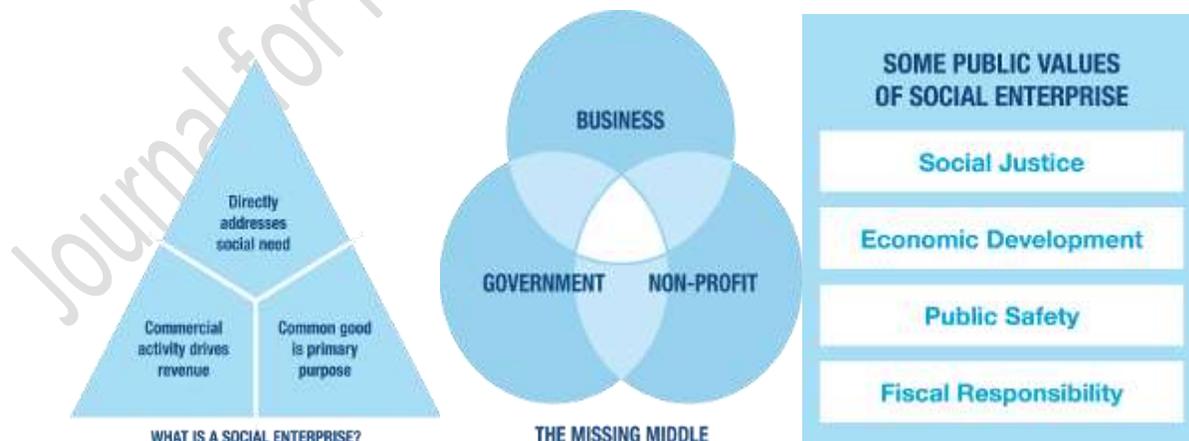
disciplines, hence the reason the term, social entrepreneurship, has taken on a variety of meanings (Dees, 1998).

Gentile (2002) argues for three aspects of business activities that should determine social entrepreneurship enterprise:

- Purpose, both in societal and business terms
- Social context (the legitimate rights and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders need to be considered by management and the proposed strategy needs to be evaluated for both financial returns as well as broader social impacts) and
- Metrics, the measurement of both social performance and profitability for both short and long term frames.

Social entrepreneurship basically contributes to the social economy. Nonetheless, it does not stand alone in this regard. Private corporations, through corporate social responsibility, and governmental initiatives, for example social service through public universities and healthcare, also contribute to the social economy.

The social enterprise alliance identifies social entrepreneurship as the missing middle, between for profit and governmental organization, which intends to advance social and human justice agenda. This directly relates to environmental sustainability which focuses on the interests of the future generations. This is better illustrated in the following chart:





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source:<https://www.se-alliance.org>

How do we distinguish social entrepreneurship from commercial entrepreneurship? Austing, Stevenson and Wei-Skiller (2006) define social entrepreneurship as innovative and social value-creation. They offer four variables that differentiate between social and commercial entrepreneurship:

- Market failure- creates different entrepreneurial opportunities for social entrepreneurship and commercial entrepreneurship
- Mission- results in fundamental differences between social entrepreneurship and commercial entrepreneurship
- Resource mobilization- requires different management approached in social entrepreneurship and commercial entrepreneurship
- Performance measurement- social entrepreneurship necessitates the measurement of social value in addition to commercial value

Venkataranman (1997) depicted that traditional entrepreneurship sees the creation of social wealth as a byproduct of economic value created by the entrepreneur, an act considered the primary objective in social enterprise. Economic value creation, in the sense of couching at least a part of the created value in financial terms, is often limited, mainly because the “customers” social enterprise serve may be willing but are often unable to pay for even a small part of the products and services in cash value. Containing the gist of the definitions, scope and structural differences, the definition by Mook et al (2010) is more specific. They describe how the social economy creates social value and economic aspects. According to them, organizations in the social economy can be outlined in two categories.

1. Non-profit (profit not for individual rather than for common and further expansion); and
2. Cooperatives

In all, there appears to be little conceptual development in the area of social entrepreneurship especially in environmental movement, and among the organizations working for environmental protection and development. But those organizations are playing a vital role in environmental



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development, and this might be acknowledged and developed as social entrepreneurship for the greater social development.

### 4. Overview of Environmental Entrepreneurship

Since it lacks a proper identity and policy framework, social entrepreneurship in general remains vague. The closest concepts to social entrepreneurship that have been thoroughly explored, hence having a proper identify, are social innovation and social entrepreneurship in socio-economic sectors, particularly on issues like economic development, employment creation, community development, social enterprise and cooperative sectors. But environmental social entrepreneurship primarily focusing on environmental protection in forms of non-profitable (association, foundation, trustee) or charitable organizations are not recognized as social entrepreneurship. A majority of stakeholders, practitioners and authors treat those activities as social movements, pressure groups and somewhat expanded political movements like Green Peace, Green Party and Marxist Socialism. It appears that this is because those social entrepreneurs are misconstrued.

Meanwhile, these environmental social entrepreneurs produce a lot of volunteer and paid labor, accumulating social capital through non-capitalistic movement, hence contributing to the social economy. They create social development in different sectors especially in social justice, public safety and environmental protection, which are neglected or not well managed by the corporations and the state. *Burke and Shear (2014) argue that scholarship should emphasize these non-capitalistic organizational activities. They also warn if these activities are not studied and properly engaged, they could turn into radical institutions of socio-structural changes.*

#### 4.1. Impacts of Social Entrepreneurship on Environmental Sustainability

Social entrepreneurs always look for the fulfilment of social demand. Although the study on social entrepreneurship is growing, social entrepreneurs' impacts on environmental sustainability still have a large scope.

Social entrepreneurs work for environmental sustainability through the organizational structures of social movement. Social movement theory normally examines how activists elicit and marshal



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popular support to mobilize the public political process to influence legislation, regulation and judicial interpretations to institutionalize new sets of norms (Della Porta and Diani, 2006) because the state acts as the agenda target of social activists (Davis, McAdam, Scott and Zald, 2005).

Nowadays, pursuing corporate behavior is an important trend of social activists. This is why scholars have expanded social movement theories to encompass forms of private politics by examining how social activism influences corporate behavior (Briscoe and Safford, 2008; Davis et al., 2005; King, 2008; McAdam and Scott, 2005; Schneiberg and Lounsbury, 2008).

### 4.1.1. Private politics

Targeting companies with shareholder resolutions to influence decision-making (Gillan and Starks, 2007), consumer boycotts and protests have been conceptualized as private politics (Baron, 2003; Baron and Diemeier, 2007). From the mid-1980s, institutional investors, NGOs and unions began to play an increasingly prominent role in this private politics (Gillan and Starks, 2007) with a scope of different issues ranging from executive compensation and labor rights to environmental responsibility (Slater, 2007).

The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a London based NGO that represents more than 300 institutional investors with a combined \$57 trillion in assets under management, pursued 500 index companies to disclose information about their company-wide greenhouse gas emissions (Reid and Toffel, 2009).

### 4.1.2. Public politics

Social activist organizations engage simultaneously or consecutively in private and public politics (Baron and Diermeier, 2007; Dalton, Recchia and Rohrschneider, 2003; Den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Baron (2003) claims that private politics often takes place in the shadow of government.

Sometimes, social entrepreneurship as a self-regulatory body design environmental, administrative and conformance requirements (Darnall and Carmin 2005). For example, the Marine



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Stewardship Council was formed through the collaboration of corporations, stakeholder groups, and International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

William Foster Lloyd (1833) and Garrett Hardin (1968) have employed ‘the tragedy of commons’ as a powerful metaphor for the problems inherent in self-regulation. The contribution of Hardin is most relevant to the contemporary discourse.

Hardin (1968) claims that the inherent logic of any commonly held resource remorselessly leads to ruin. His thesis could be extended to the self-regulation of any shared resource. Ostrom (1990) makes some modifications to this thesis, depicting how it best applies to commonly held resources such as water, forests and fishery. More recently, Nash and Ehrenfeld (1997) have added flesh to this modified thesis by describing how the Bhopal disaster and the Exxon Valdez oil spill intensified public pressure on industry to change not just its practices but its underlying values. Illustrating the implications of common resource challenges, Burke and Shear (2014) claim that we see the crises in the gendered and racialized divisions of labor, uneven distribution of economic benefits and environmental toxins, and in response to the growth of environmental and economic justice movements.

### **4.2.The Evidence: Prominent Social Entrepreneurial Organizations in Environmental Movement**

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) was created by few committed individuals that signed the declaration known as the Morges Manifesto in 1961. WWF has grown to become one of the world’s largest and respected independent conservation organizations working in 100 countries and supported by 5 million people. It has focused on single species and individual habitats in line with an ambitious strategy to preserve biodiversity, hence contributing to sustainable development across the globe.

The Earth First was founded in 1979 with a different strategy: to make small groups from grassroots deliberate action to protect the environment. It employs diverse strategies ranging from grassroots activism and involvement in the legal process to civil disobedience. It emphasizes education in attracting attention to environmental concerns and dissuading people and corporations from destroying the earth.



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Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organization that works to bring changes in attitudes and behavior to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace. Greenpeace was founded in Vancouver in 1971 and today operates in more than 40 countries with headquarters. It has over 90,000 supporters only in Canada and more than 2.9 million members around the world, representing it at virtually every international environmental conference. It couched one of the longest banners and touchy word cliché: “When the last tree is cut, the last river poisoned, and the last fish dead, we will discover that we can't eat money” (see <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada>).

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is an American environment protection organization established in 1872 and boasts over 4 million supporters and 49 state affiliates. It is the voice of conservation for diverse constituencies that include different classes to lead the next generation of habitat stewards (see <http://www.nwf.org/Who-We-Are/History-and-Heritage.aspx>).

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an effective environmental action organization founded in 1970 in America by a group of law students and attorneys. It uses law, science and its supporters of 1.4 million and social media activities to protect the planet's wildlife, and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things. Currently it has a staff of more than 300 lawyers, scientists and policy experts (see [http://www.nrdc.org/about/who\\_we\\_are.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/about/who_we_are.asp)).

One Percent for the Planet was founded in 2002 by Yvon Chouinard, with the belief that good business needs to protect natural resources that keep it in business. It has grown into a global movement of more than 1200 member companies in 48 countries, all donating at least one percent of annual sales to sustainability initiatives within 10 years. In total, companies affiliated with One Percent for the Planet have given more than \$100 million for environmental sustainability (see <http://onepercentfortheplanet.org>).

Green America is a not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1982, run by the name "Co-op America" until January 1, 2009. Its mission is to harness economic power to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society (see <http://www.greenamerica.org/about/>).

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is a CEO-led organization that believes that business has an inescapable role to play in sustainable development. It is a forward-thinking company that galvanizes the global business community to create a sustainable future for business,



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society and the environment. Its membership is open to companies committed to sustainable development and to promoting the role of eco-efficiency, innovation and corporate social responsibility. WBCSD takes a unique approach to developing publications and tools that are created with extensive input from and road tested by member organizations, presenting proven results focusing on the areas, sector projects, systems solutions and capacity building. Currently it has an alliance of nearly 60 CEO-led business organizations united by a shared commitment to providing business leadership for sustainable development in their respective countries or regions (see <http://www.wbcd.org/about.aspx>).

Due to the failure of the Rio Earth Summit to produce an agreement to stop deforestation, a group of businesses, environmentalists and community leaders created the Forest Stewardship Council in 1992. They gathered their first general assembly in 1993 in Toronto, Canada and made the policy to work based on voluntary, market-based approach to improving forest practices worldwide. FSC operates in more than 80 countries, wherever forests are present (see <https://us.fsc.org/our-history.180.htm>).

Rainforest Action Network, founded in 1985, campaigns for forests, their inhabitants and the natural systems that sustain life by transforming the global marketplace through education and grassroots organizing. It works in 60 countries to protect the rainforests and their inhabitants through financial contributions and networking services, supporting the efforts of indigenous and environmental groups in tropical countries to achieve ecologically sustainable solutions within their own regions (see <http://www.ran.org/our-mission>).

Heal the Bay was founded in 1985 by a group of people in Los Angeles. It now has 50 staff working with 10000 members. It employs research, education, community action and advocacy to pursue the mission of safe, healthy and clean beaches. At the moment, it has an average of 15,000 people working to clean more than 50 sites in both coastal and inland areas, each year in the Los Angeles County alone (see <http://www.healthebay.org>).

Friends of Earth International (FoEI) is a combination of four organizations from different countries, founded in 1971. There are now 74 Friends of the Earth member groups campaigning locally, nationally and internationally to protect the environment and create sustainability. They have a united common ground that environmentally sustainable development requires both strong grassroots activism and effective national and international campaigning. The number of members and supporters of FoEI



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was more than two million in 2008, and its partners united more than 5,000 local activist groups. It has approximately 1,200 staff members (see <http://www.foei.org/about-foei/history/>).

Worldwatch is an independent research institute founded in 1974 by Lester Brown. The institute is devoted to global environmental concerns. It is recognized by opinion leaders around the world for its foresight and fact-based analysis. Worldwatch develops innovative solutions to inflexible problems, focusing on government leadership as well as private sector enterprise and citizen action that can create a sustainable future (see <http://www.worldwatch.org/mission>).

With the mission of saving wildlife and wild territories across the globe, the Wildlife Conservation Society was founded in 1895. It currently works in more than 60 countries, managing about 500 conservation projects and educating millions of visitors on important issues affecting the planet at five living institutions in New York City. It has 200 scientists managing 200 million acres of protected lands around the world (see <http://www.wcs.org/about-us.aspx>).

National Geographic Society was founded in 1888 and has become one of the largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations in the world. Until now, it has funded more than 11,000 scientific researches all over the world in conservation and exploration projects. It uses various media vehicles to perform its activities and increase its public to more than 600 million people monthly. Its publication, "National Geographic," provides commentaries that are considered among the most important for conservation (see <http://press.nationalgeographic.com/about-national-geographic/>).

The Sierra Club is a radical environment protection organization, founded by John Muir in 1892. It is now the largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization with more than 2.4 million members and supporters. It has mandates to protect millions of acres of wilderness by helping to pass the Clean Air, Water and Endangered Species Act. (see <http://www.sierraclub.org/about>).

Audubon's is a powerful organization working through the field of science, education and policy on issues ranging from protection and restoration of local habitats to the implementation of policies of wildlife and other relevant resources across the Americas. It is the US's most popular conservation magazine to introduce all ages to the wonders of nature (see, <http://www.audubon.org/about-us>).

There are many more social entrepreneurs having environmental mandates. Some of them may be mentioned briefly. Environmental Life Force (ELF) was founded in 1977 by John Hanna in the



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UK and works as a leader among environmental protection organizations (see <http://earth-liberation-front.com/>). Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company (LFUSC), the St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated (SABRI), and Fogo Island Fisheries Co-operative Society Ltd are other examples of sustainable social entrepreneurial organisations providing different kinds of environmental protection support to marginalized people. They protect some that are displaced from land, tradition and culture. These organizations are involved in activities such as sports, education and environmental development while also generating employment (Foley, Mather and Neis, 2013).

There are other neo-environmental social enterprenurships in that these organisations have the essential features of a social enterprise but also peform other functions not essentially inherent in a social enterprise. At the national level, the world's foremost and largest neo-social entrepreneurship working for environment protection is the US's Environmental Protection Agency, founded in 1970 (see <http://www2.epa.gov/aboutepa/origins-epa>). This organisation has been in the forefront of environmental protection activities in the US. It's activities have included conducting public consultations, investigations, and hearings. At the international level, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program to prepare the ground for strategy formulation based on available scientific information, assessments on all aspects of climate change and its impacts. The organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for its contributions. The IPCC provides periodic Assessment Reports. Assessment Reports provide a clear and up to date view of the current state of scientific knowledge relevant on climate change (see, <http://www.ipcc.ch>).

### 5. Conclusions

From the discussion so far, the activities and impacts of social entrepreneurial organizations to the society, people and public policy form the body of evidence showing that social entrepreneurship is doing a great job in its environmental protection efforts. Most of the social entrepreneurships are organized by individuals or non-governmental organizations in form of non-profit entities, often dubbed "foundations," "associations," "trustees," and "charities." Their impacts on their areas of focus, like environmental protection, could be greater than that of the state, and go beyond geographical boundaries



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if properly acknowledged and supported by stakeholders. Stakeholder in this instance include state, non-state and economic actors.

In any case, in view of a lack of proper conceptual and practical framework, social entrepreneurship is still vague. The result is that social entrepreneurs are not recognized, and have not taken their spot in the society. The society continues to neglect the benefits these organizations could bring into the society.

As such, it might add academic and policy values if experts delve into these elements of social entrepreneurship. A comfortable point to start is by, philosophically and structurally, ascertaining how social entrepreneurship could impact on environmental and socio-economic concerns. That the scholarship produced as a result of this could be used as a policy guideline for legislators in developing programs and policies to attract entrepreneurs and increase the popularity of social entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasized.

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