UNDERSTANDING OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

25 YEARS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AT HBS

INSPIRING LEADERSHIP FOR GOOD

CHANGE IS OUR BUSINESS

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL
Social Enterprise Initiative
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THE IDEAS SEEMED RADICAL.
The Social Enterprise Initiative started as an experiment at HBS. The dean told a donor to wait two years before he would accept a $10 million gift. As a reflection of the norms at that time, junior faculty members were advised that their research interests might amount to “career suicide.” HBS stepped into the void. Today, we see how those actions helped shape the practice of managers seeking change for good across the globe. It is the courage and vision of these pioneers that helps us navigate our own path forward in a world in need of leadership.

1991
John C. Whitehead (MBA 1947) writes to Dean John H. McArthur encouraging HBS to start a nonprofit management program. He offers a founding gift of $10 million.

1993
The Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI) launches under the leadership of faculty cochairs James E. Austin and V. Kasturi “Kathi” Rangan and director Bob Burakoff.

1995
The Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management (SPNM) executive education program is offered following the first iteration of the Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector MBA elective course.

2000
Student leaders hold the first annual Social Enterprise Conference (SECON). Within a year, SEI initiates a track within the student New Venture Competition.

2003
HBS commences the MBA elective on Entrepreneurship in Education Reform and the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) with the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

2006
The Business at the Base of the Pyramid MBA elective launches as does a custom executive education program for leaders in microfinance.

2011
The Forum on Social Impact Investing pursues an action research agenda, hosting multiple research convenings on impact investing and venture philanthropy.

2014
The Business for Social Impact Forum convenes 100+ practitioners and academics focused on the global role of business in creating social change.

2015
The new Public Entrepreneurship MBA elective addresses issues including “flexibility in the face of bureaucracy” and “speed amidst uncertainty.”

2018
Developed out of SEI’s Impact CoLab research project, the Investing for Impact MBA elective examines the spectrum from market returns to concessionary approaches.
IDEAS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE FIELD

From their earliest research endeavors, Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI) faculty members have focused on understanding what it takes to achieve meaningful social change across different business models, legal structures, and funding sources. One of SEI’s first cases, “Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai, India: In Service for Sight,” by Professor V. Kasturi “Kash” Rangan, has sold nearly 100,000 copies.

The formation of the Social Enterprise Initiative’s intellectual agenda over its 25-year history has been informed by, has helped shape, and has adapted to the changing landscape surrounding social impact and innovation. The intellectual ideas and frameworks have been developed, tested, and refined through interactions with practitioners. This interconnectedness has enabled the spread of ideas to advance the way managers understand, think about, and respond to the challenges and opportunities that confront them.

Today, it’s truly a two-way street—businesses learn as much from leading mission-driven organizations as nonprofits do from leading business models. As explored in a March–April 2019 Harvard Business Review article by Professor Julie Battilana, et al., dual-purpose companies provide insight into what it takes to balance the two.
From the outset, the faculty and administrative team established a broad intellectual focus. Understanding the unique aspects of management and leadership within the nonprofit sector was simply a starting point—one that would enable an exchange of knowledge across sectors, embody a mission-driven focus, and provide a global reach.
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

with increasing levels of managerial sophistication among nonprofit executives, board members, and funders, managerial frameworks have enabled leaders to work within and beyond their organizations to bring people along, guide strategic decision-making, and respond to ever-changing environments. among the tools that faculty have introduced to the more than 7,000 nonprofit leaders and 3,400 MBA students who have taken SEI nonprofit-focused courses are the four-step strategy process, the value-capacity-support model, and the nonprofit coherence framework.

NAACP: THE EVOLUTION OF A STRATEGIC SHIFT

In 1997, SEI embarked on a shared journey with the NAACP—one that would change both organizations. Within the NAACP case study and collaboration, the team explored nonprofit governance issues inherent in leading through crisis. From there, an eight-year relationship ensued during which SEI faculty co-led the NAACP annual board retreat on campus. Professor Jim Austin reflected, “The partnership strengthened the NAACP’s governance capacity and deepened our understanding of the complexities of addressing civil rights challenges.”

Prior to the Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI), a handful of faculty members conducted research on the nonprofit sector—primarily focused on health care, religious, and educational institutions. Some notable highlights served as precursors to the future development of SEI’s first intellectual pillar of focus:

1990: A young marketing professor developed the case “Population Services International: The Social Marketing Project in Bangladesh.” It would go on to sell nearly 34,000 copies worldwide. Later, Professor Kash Rangan would be tapped by Dean John H. McArthur to help launch SEI.

1991: An assistant professor teaching entrepreneurship wrote “Notes on Starting a Nonprofit Venture.” In 1994, Professor Greg Davis developed SEI’s first MBA elective, Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector, a continuously evolving course that has been taught every year since.

Once launched, SEI served as a “magnet” to enable faculty members to focus on topics that had historically been deemed as beyond the scope of the work of a business school.

SNAPSHOT:

NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE

SEI attracted faculty members from the Accounting & Management, Organizational Behavior, and Technology and Operations Management units to explore the arena of nonprofit governance. Through decades of direct service, intellectual frameworks, and the teaching of thousands of nonprofit leaders, Professor F. Warren McFarlan shaped the trajectory of numerous nonprofit organizations. More than 25,000 copies of his nonprofit governance cases have been sold globally.

In 2011, he co-authored Joining a Nonprofit Board: What You Need to Know.
“THE FACT THAT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE HAS BECOME AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON GIVES ME HOPE THAT IN ADDITION TO BEING A FORCE FOR GOOD, BY WORKING WITH OTHER BUSINESS SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD, OUR COLLECTIVE ENERGY CAN BE AN EVEN GREATER FORCE FOR CHANGE.”

DEAN NITIN NOHRIA
BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

The founding dean of Harvard Business School, Edwin F. Gay, defined the role of business as “making things to sell at a decent profit—decently.” For decades, there had been a handful of faculty members exploring concepts focusing on topics such as agribusiness and social marketing. With the Social Enterprise Initiative in place, its “faculty magnet model” created a broader curricular change at HBS with the role of business in addressing societal challenges. This work dovetailed with the hypothesis that “social-called farm problems…are agribusiness rather than agricultural in nature and scope.” Goldberg notes, “it became clear that the firms that were successful were the ones that look at society’s needs and not just made money.” His 2018 book, Food Citizenship: Food System Advocacy in an Era of Distress, focuses on change makers of today’s global food system to provide a panoramic view of a revolution in progress.

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR

Among the first research convenings hosted by SEI was the 1997 forum “Business Leadership in the Social Sector” that brought together nearly 100 leading practitioners and scholars. In the resulting 1999 Harvard Business Review articlE, “From Spare Change to Real Change, the Social Sector as Beta Site for Business Innovation,” Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter outlined the mutually beneficial possibilities when businesses shift from a traditional model of treating “the social sector as a charity case” to a partnership model focused on sustainable change.

AGRIBUSINESS

The 1957 publication A Concept of Agribusiness by Professors John H. Davis and Ray A. Goldberg coined the term agribusiness and outlined the hypothesis that “social-called farm problems…are agribusiness rather than agricultural in nature and scope.” Goldberg notes, “it became clear that the firms that were successful were the ones that look at society’s needs and not just made money.” His 2018 book, Food Citizenship: Food System Advocacy in an Era of Distress, focuses on change makers of today’s global food system to provide a panoramic view of a revolution in progress.

BUSINESS AT THE BASE OF THE PYRAMID

“The 4 Billion People at the Base of the Pyramid (BOP)—whose output represents one-third of the world’s economy—are not a monolith.” Wrote Kash Rangan, Michael Chu, and Djordjija Petkoski in their 2011 Harvard Business Review article “The Globe: Segmenting the Base of the Pyramid.” Based on six years of research and teaching, the article focused on both formal and informal markets within varying segments of BOP markets. Since 2006, nearly 2,000 students have enrolled in the business at the base of the pyramid elective, a course that has been taught by Rangan, Chu, and Shawn Cole.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Government downsizing in the mid-1990s and the United Nations’ formation of the Millennium Development Goals in the early 2000s led to an increased focus on the role of the corporation in a societal context. HBS faculty research focused on topics from understanding market failures to new models of corporate/nonprofit partnerships. A framework put forth in a 2015 Harvard Business Review article by Kash Rangan, Lisa Chase, and Soheil Karim, “The Truth About CSR,” distinguished the differences between CSR efforts related to philanthropy, operational effectiveness, and shaping the firm’s business model to create shared value.

INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

SET’S EARLY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED THE NECESSITY OF CROSS-SECTOR INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL CHALLENGES AT SCALE. EARLY PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS PROFESSOR JIM AUSTIN’S 1999 CASE “WOMEN’S WORLD BANKING: CATALYTIC CHANGE THROUGH NETWORKS” EXPLORED APPROACHES TO FINANCIAL ACCESS FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES. IN THEIR 2018 HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ARTICLE, “INCLUSIVE GROWTH: PROFITABLE STRATEGIES FOR TACKLING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY,” PROFESSORS ROBERT S. KAPLAN AND GEORGE SERAFEIM ARGUE THAT CORPORATIONS NEED TO REIMAGINE THE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS IN WHICH THEY PARTICIPATE TO SEARCH FOR SYSTEMIC, MULTISECTOR OPPORTUNITIES.

INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

Unilever in India, Hindustan Lever’s Project Shakti, 2005, Rangan VK/Rajan R;
Narayan Hrudayalaya Heart Hospital: Cardiac Care for the Poor, 2005, Khanna T/Rangan VK;
Amanco: Developing the Sustainability Scorecard, 2007, Kaplan RS/Reisen de Pinho R;
McDonald’s Corp.: Managing a Sustainable Supply Chain, 2007, Goldberg RA/Droste Yagan J;
Pepsi: From Spare Change to Real Change: The Social Sector, 2009, Garcia-Cuellar R/Rangan VK;
Coca-Cola: The 4 Billion People at the Base of the Pyramid, 2010, Rangan VK/Chu M/Segel AI;
Banco Real: Banking on Sustainability, 2005, Kaiser RM/Reisen de Pinho R;
The Inside Story of-out Reach-A Hit at the Bottom of the Pyramid, 2011, Edmondson AC/Leonard HB/Rashid F;
Carpe Diem: Analog Apparel for the Base of the Pyramid, 2014, Adamsons L/Rangan VK;
The Truth About CSR, 2015, Rangan VK/Chase L/Karim S/Spangenberg J;
Responsibilities to Society, 2017, Hsieh N/4/5

500,000+
COPIES OF SEMINAL PUBLICATIONS SOLD WORLDWIDE

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

Responding to Market Failures, 1996, Dao Ji;
Sustainable Development at Shell, 2003, Wei-Skillern J;
Timberland: Commerce and Justice, 2004, Austin JE/Leonard HB/Quinn JW;
Barco Real: Banking on Sustainability, 2005, Kaiser RM/Reisen de Pinho R;
Amanco: Developing the Sustainability Scorecard, 2007, Kaplan RS/Reisen de Pinho R;
McDonald’s Corp.: Managing a Sustainable Supply Chain, 2007, Goldberg RA/Droste Yagan J;
Pepsi: From Spare Change to Real Change: The Social Sector, 2009, Garcia-Cuellar R/Rangan VK;
Coca-Cola: The 4 Billion People at the Base of the Pyramid, 2010, Rangan VK/Chu M/Segel AI;
When Stig Leschly (MBA 1997, JD 1998) returned to HBS in 2002 to teach entrepreneurship, he successfully pitched the idea of a new elective course that would apply management principles within the field of education. “It was an extraordinary opportunity to develop a course on education reform at the best business school in the world,” reflects Leschly. That course, and the intellectual agenda around K-12 education that it helped to spawn, has been carried forward by a faculty team comprised, in part, of fellow alumni who returned to HBS to do research and to teach after successfully directing their own entrepreneurial careers, including Stacey M. Childress (MBA 2000), John J-H Kim (MBA 1993), and Monique Burns Thompson (MBA 1993).

**COHERENCE FRAMEWORK**

Based on Public Education Leadership Project research, core faculty members developed the “PELP Coherence Framework” as a tool to help implement district-wide strategies amidst the unique managerial challenges within complex, urban school systems. “The framework is based on what business has taught us about organizational alignment,” notes Professor Allen S. Grossman, co-founder of PELP. “But then it is adapted based on what we know about reform in education.” The framework identifies organizational elements critical to high performance and poses a series of diagnostic questions designed to foster coherence.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**COHESION FRAMEWORK**

WHAT ROLE CAN MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGY PLAY IN DRIVING STUDENT OUTCOMES WITHIN LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS? THIS HAS BEEN THE DRIVING QUESTION BEHIND THE HBS/HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION PUBLIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT (PELP) SINCE 2003. PELP FIRST PARTNERED WITH NINE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES WITHIN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION CONTEXT. THE PROJECT HAS GROWN TO INCLUDE 40 DISTRICTS ACROSS 24 STATES REPRESENTING MORE THAN FOUR MILLION STUDENTS. PELP FACULTY HAVE PUBLISHED FIVE BOOKS, NUMEROUS NOTES AND ARTICLES, AND MORE THAN 40 TEACHING CASES WHICH ARE DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EDUCATION REFORM**

SINCE 2003, APPROXIMATELY 1,000 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EDUCATION REFORM ELECTIVE COURSE. THE COURSE EXAMINED THE OVERALL CONTEXT WITHIN THE URBAN SCHOOL SETTING IN THE UNITED STATES, TALENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES AMONG TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS, THE PATHWAY TO UNDERSTANDING DATA AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CONTEXT, AND THE PROCESS OF LAUNCHING AND GROWING NEW SCHOOLS. STACEY CHILDESS (MBA 2000 AND FORMER SENIOR LECTURER) PUBLISHED TRANSFORMING PUBLIC EDUCATION: CASES IN EDUCATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN 2010 BASED ON THE COURSE.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

Principals are key change agents for their schools. A new course for school principals, Leading Change, focuses on three essentials for driving school improvement: adaptive leadership, culture, and equity. Co-led by Professor Allen Grossman, the first module of the certificate program, created by HBS and the Harvard Graduate School of Education and delivered through the HBS Online platform, launched in 2018 with 1,400 individuals participating in its first year. Senior Lecturer Monique Burns-Thompson is collaborating with Grossman to develop and deliver subsequent program modules.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION**

HOW CAN ONE APPLY BUSINESS PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS TO DRIVE SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN K-12 EDUCATION? MORE THAN 300 MBA STUDENTS HAVE Explored THIS QUESTION THROUGH THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION ELECTIVE COURSE SINCE 2013. THE COURSE EXPLORES EXAMPLES IN WHICH ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACHES HAVE LED TO A REIMAGINATION OF THE CLASSROOM, NEW SCHOOLS, ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS, AND DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES TO PERSONALIZED LEARNING TO EXPLORE ISSUES OF EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH A GLOBAL LENS.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**K-12 EDUCATION**

30,000+ COPIES OF SEMINAL PUBLICATIONS SOLD WORLDWIDE

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Note on Student Outcomes in U.S. Public Education, 2006, Childress S/Leschly S
Note on Charter Schools, 2013, Kim J/William G/Weissler A

URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Learning to Manage with Data in Dallas County Public Schools, 2004, Grossman A/King C/Ivanon J
Memphis City Schools: The Next Generation of Principals, 2005, Childress S/Peterson R/Claxton T
Focusing on Results at the New York City Department of Education, 2007, Childress S/Claxton T

ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACHES

New Leaders for New Schools, 2002, Leschly S
KIPP National, 2004, Leschly S
Teach for America 2005, 2005, Childress S
Green Dot Public Schools: To Collaborate or Compete?, 2007, Childress S/Kim OC
Codman Academy: Beyond the Start-Up Phase, 2008, Chang TK/Childress S
KIPP 2007: Implementing a Smart Growth Strategy, 2008, Childress S/Manino M
BYJU’s The Learning App, 2017, Kim J/Tahilyani R
"THE SOCIAL SECTOR HAS TO DEAL WITH THE HARDEST PROBLEMS. IT HAS THE LEAST RESOURCES. AND, IT HAS THE WEAKEST ALIGNMENT OF MARKET FORCES AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO PRODUCE HIGH PERFORMANCE.

AND YET, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, IN THESE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, THE SOCIAL SECTOR DOES REMARKABLE WORK. HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE—IT LIES IN THE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT OF THE PEOPLE WORKING IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR. FOR SOCIAL SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS, IT IS ALWAYS ALL ABOUT THE MISSION."

PROFESSOR HERMAN B. "DUTCH" LEONARD, FACULTY COCHAIR, HBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE
INVESTING FOR IMPACT

Over the last several decades, a new breed of philanthropist/investor has been driving experimentation around new forms of financial intermediaries and instruments. Within this rapidly changing landscape, former HBS professor Alnoor Ebrahim’s research on social impact measurement led him to apply his work within the domain of impact investing. His direct engagement with the Global Impact Scholars to examine the substance of new philanthropic firms—today, commonly known as venture philanthropy organizations—set the stage for the development of foundational case studies and frameworks.

A team of faculty members from SEI embarked on its Forum on Social Impact Investing in 2011 that brought together 40 leading practitioners and scholars to examine the substance and demystify the hype within this emerging domain. That effort fueled the founding of SEI’s Impact CoLab along with the development of new cases and courses.

SEI FACULTY HAVE HELD EIGHT FOCUSED PRACTITIONER CONVENINGS OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS THAT HAVE LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE THAN 20 CASES. IN 2018, PROFESSOR SHAWN A. COLE AND SENIOR LECTURER VIKRAM S. GANDHI (MBA 1989), LAUNCHED AN MBA ELECTIVE COURSE, INVESTING FOR RETURN, RISK, AND IMPACT. “REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE CONVINCED OF THE MERITS OF THIS PRACTICE OF INVESTING,” COLE CONTENDS, “EVERYONE ENTERING THE FIELD OF FINANCE OR INVESTMENT MUST BE CONVERSANT IN INVESTING FOR IMPACT.”

VENTURE PHILANTHROPY

AS THE DOT-COM BUBBLE GREW TO SPEED IN THE LATE 1990s, THERE WAS A SIMULTANEOUS EMERGENCE OF NEW PHILANTHROPIC FIRMS—TODAY, COMMONLY KNOWN AS VENTURE PHILANTHROPY ORGANIZATIONS. AS THIS CHANGING LANDSCAPE WAS TAKING SHAPE IN 1997, PROFESSOR ALLEN S. GROSSMAN AND CO-AUTHORS CHRISTINE W. LETTS AND WILLIAM P. RYAN PUBLISHED THE PIVOTAL HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ARTICLE “VIRTUOUS CAPITAL: WHAT FOUNDATIONS CAN LEARN FROM VENTURE CAPITALISTS.” IN IT THEY OUTLINED KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NONPROFITS AND FOUNDATIONS BASED ON THEIR EXPLORATIONS WITH LEADERS OF FOUNDATIONS, NONPROFIT GROUPS, AND VENTURE CAPITAL FIRMS.

MICROFINANCE

IN THE MID-1990s MICHAEL CHU (MBA 1976) BECAME PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ACCION, A U.S.-BASED NONPROFIT PROVIDING SMALL BUSINESS LOANS TO THE SELF-EMPLOYED POOR IN LATIN AMERICA. DURING HIS TIME IN THAT ROLE, HE HELPED MICROLENDEES TRANSITION FROM NON PROFITS TO REGULAR COMMERCIAL BANKS IN ORDER TO ACCOMODATE GROWTH. AS THE FIELD CONTINUED TO EVOLVE, HBS FACULTY FOCUS ON THE TOPIC INCREASED. CHU JOINED THE FACULTY IN 2003 AND HAS CONTINUED TO ADVANCE THE SCHOOL’S WORK ON BUSINESSES SERVING LOW INCOME POPULATIONS IN BOTH EMERGING MARKETS AND DEVELOPED NATIONS.

ESG INVESTING

OVER THE LAST DECADE, FACULTY RESEARCH HAS EXAMINED CORPORATE APPROACHES TOWARD FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING. AMIDST AN INCREASING EMPHASIS ON “SUSTAINABILITY” REPORTING, PROFESSOR GEORGE SERAFEI AND FORMER HBS PROFESSOR BOB ECCLES ARGUED FOR “INTEGRATED REPORTING.” IN RECENT RESEARCH, SERAFEI PROVIDED INSIGHTS INTO WHY AND HOW INVESTORS USE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) INFORMATION IN THEIR INVESTMENT PRACTICES.
Innovation and entrepreneurial approaches are inherent in all things social enterprise. From the outset, SEI faculty recognized the importance of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning in the field. In its early years, most SEI research focused on understanding impact at the “unit level”—defining strategic frameworks that enabled organizations to clarify their mission and adopt a performance/impact-based orientation. As the agenda progressed, faculty research streams explored the role of entrepreneurship in social change across multiple sectors. This work, combined with the exploration of the evolving funding landscape, pushed faculty to address the elephant in the room—what does it take to achieve systems impact that gets at the root causes of the issues? This work provides insight into the next frontiers as SEI moves into its next quarter century.

**PUBLIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Mitch Weiss (MBA 2004), Professor of Management Practice and the Richard L. Menschel Faculty Fellow, acknowledges that the term “public entrepreneur” may sound like an oxymoron to many. However, he argues that there are many examples of public entrepreneurs around the world improving lives and inventing new ways to serve the public. Upon joining the HBS faculty in 2014, Weiss launched the Public Entrepreneurship Elective Course that has subsequently enrolled nearly 500 students to explore how best to adapt entrepreneurial practices within a public sector context.

**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Professor Howard Stevenson’s definition of entrepreneurship is widely known: the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled. Professor Greg Dees is widely remembered for his work in understanding the role of the social entrepreneur—creating and sustaining social value in the absence of market forces. Dees pioneered the first SEI MBA elective on the topic in 1994. The course was later taught by former HBS Professor Jane Wei-Skillern, who went on to publish Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector along with Jim Austin, Dutch Leonard, and Howard Stevenson. In 2019, Senior Lecturer Brian L. Treistad launched Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation, an elective course that examines how social entrepreneurs engage with traditional philanthropic, corporate, and government organizations.

**TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT SUMMITS**

SEI faculty members pursued a research stream focused on the emerging paradigm of “transformative scale” termed by the Bridgespan Group. In collaboration with Bridgespan’s co-founders Jeff Bradach (PHDob 1992) and Tom Tierney (MBA 1993), SEI convened 20 organizations from across the globe in 2015 and 2017 and then developed six field cases to study in-depth the dilemmas and opportunities that these organizations face in transforming their business models to truly move the needle in addressing some of society’s most difficult problems.

**HYBRID ORGANIZATIONS**

Over the last decade, there has been an increase in entrepreneurs who pursue hybrid model organizations to advance social goals. A 2012 research project led by Professor Julie Battilana in collaboration with Echoing Green, a nonprofit focused on supporting early stage social entrepreneurs, found that the percentage of Echoing Green-supported entrepreneurs pursuing hybrid business models increased from 37% to 50% over the preceding five-year period. Battilana’s research seeks to understand how hybrid organizations can combine aspects from business and nonprofit models to achieve high levels of both social and commercial performance.

**SNAPSHOT:**

**IMPACT AT SCALE AND SYSTEMS CHANGE**

A common thread throughout the faculty research domains, regardless of sector focus, has been the challenge of scaling social impact. Within the nonprofit domain, faculty research migrated from growth strategies to networked organizations that focus on mobilizing resources beyond their control. To the concept of transformative impact, Professor Kash Rangan’s resulting framework distinguishes between impact and scale and suggests that innovators often follow a zig-zagging path—one that requires continuous strategy adjustments en route to systemic impact.
Social change is neither a linear process nor a unitary destination—so, there is no one path to get there. If it were straightforward, the challenges would have been addressed long ago and the opportunities realized. What have we learned over 25 years of studying the issues, engaging with those on the front lines, and helping to clarify the pathways for the next generation? Here are six key takeaways from our first quarter century.

### 1. The Pursuit of Social Impact Requires Adapted Tools—Because Social Missions Are Different.

When SEI began its journey, the common mantra was “nonprofits do it differently” and operate more like businesses.” Our research taught us that nonprofit leaders were encountering growing gaps when attempting to apply business frameworks to their social missions. New frameworks were required—that could take principles from business strategy and adapt them to the realities of mission-driven organizations. SEI faculty members developed tools and frameworks designed for the social context—accounting for the absence of market forces, the need for alignment of incentives between operators and funders, and the tension between upstream competition for funding and downstream collaboration to serve the true “customers.” These include:

- **The Value, Capacity, & Support Diagnostic Tool**
- **The Four-Step Strategy Platform**
- **The Balanced Scorecard for Socially Mission-Driven Organizations**
- **The Nonprofit Coherence Framework**

### 2. The Unit of Analysis: Informs the Strategy.

The majority of our research has focused on the enterprise as the unit of analysis. This lens has provided ample opportunity for inquiry and insight into what it takes to achieve organizational effectiveness within a social sector context, with a clear action-orientation for those stepping into leadership roles. This view forces core questions regarding the clarity of a leader’s objectives and the performance measurement tools required to support that pursuit. Given the reality that each organization operates within a broader ecosystem, our research agenda has evolved to encompass a wider perspective. For example, the Public Education Leadership Project team embraced a district-level perspective to deliver tangible and actionable learnings to leaders of large urban school districts seeking to improve student outcomes at scale.

### 3. You Can’t Manage What You Don’t Measure...

...But how do you measure things that are hard to quantify? Understanding approaches to impact measurement has been a central theme within SEI’s work from its early days. The 1998 publication High Performance Nonprofit Organizations: Managing Upstream for Greater Impact exposed investing in organizational capacity to develop adaptive capabilities in service of mission. Further work examined the benefits and limitations of the logic model and theory of change frameworks within varying social sector contexts by distinguishing the components within an organization’s direct span of control from those that depend on multiple stakeholders, the framework just then in “What Impact?” (California Management Review, 2014) suggested new levels of accountability for funders.

### 4. It’s A Fool’s Errand to Treat the Base of the Pyramid as a Monolith.

As the concept of doing business at the base of the pyramid gained traction, HBS research revealed obstacles toward reaching profitability within bottom-of-the-pyramid markets but found opportunities in the layers just above among people who are still quite poor. The findings set to a market segmentation that elucidated potentially profitable business models through an understanding of the diversity of market conditions and the importance of scale. Faculty field research focused on profitable business models to bring food, clean water, housing, education, health care, and financial services to those segments mired in inefficient, informal markets. This research helped to propel ideas around “inclusive business models” that advance growth, profits, and development simultaneously.

### 5. Outside-in and Bottom-up Innovation Can Move Mountains.

Government and public systems are often viewed as slow-moving bureaucracies. New models of social and public entrepreneurship have flipped these views on their head. The idea of “public entrepreneurship” suggests that public managers at all ranks—including mid-level and front-line workers—can create change through experimentation and entrepreneurship. When combined with the reach of government agencies, small innovative ideas can have far-reaching impact. Meanwhile, social entrepreneurs attempt to affect change from outside the system. HBS research suggests that their path to impact often involves an emergent process of “zig-zagging” their way towards scaling that impact.


Increasingly, business and social impact are mutual priorities within a given enterprise. Faculty research on blended business models suggests that to successfully pursue financial and social priorities, organizations must learn the art of “hybrid organizing.” This work includes establishing explicit financial and social goals, creating organizational structures to mobilize employees to embrace the dual priorities, and practicing “dual-minded leadership.” Similarly, new models and tools have been upending traditional boundaries within funding organizations. Current faculty research focuses on the ways investors use environmental, social, and governance information to make decisions.

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**Key Publications**

2001: Managing Multi-Site Nonprofits (Nonprofit Management & Leadership)
2004: Lify Missions, Down-to-Earth Plans (Harvard Business Review)
2011: Segmenting the Base of the Pyramid (Harvard Business Review)
2019: The Dual-Purpose Playbook (Harvard Business Review)
Organizations develop multi-faceted approaches toward connecting with SEI’s content and community, including through its portfolio of executive education programs. By combining leadership training, talent pipeline programming, and network connections, SEI enables organizational capacity building that helps accelerate change.

In the closing session of the six-day Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program, faculty chair Dutch Leonard remarked to the group of 150 nonprofit executives, “We haven’t accomplished anything until you take these ideas and apply them to do something different than you otherwise would have done.” Leonard’s comment reflects the underlying premise of the Social Enterprise Initiative that its work is incomplete until it is tested and proven—and then applied—in practice.
THE HBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE NETWORK EXTENDS ACROSS THE GLOBE. STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS FROM MORE THAN 135 COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE IN SEI’S MBA AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. FACULTY MEMBERS LEVERAGE THE SCHOOL’S GLOBAL RESEARCH CENTERS TO DEVELOP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CASE STUDIES ACROSS MANY CONTINENTS. ALUMNI APPLY THEIR SKILLS AND CONNECT THEIR COMMUNITIES TO THE BROADER HBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK.

NEW ORLEANS IMMERSION EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (IXP)
From 2006 to 2011, HBS students, faculty, and staff undertook real-world consulting engagements with partner organizations on post-Katrina recovery efforts in New Orleans.

HBS-MACC PROGRAM ON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN RISK AND CHANGE
Since 2006, more than 60 program participants have represented microfinance, regulatory, and fintech firms from Mexico.

NEW ORLEANS IMMERSION EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (IXP)
From 2006 to 2011, HBS students, faculty, and staff undertook real-world consulting engagements with partner organizations on post-Katrina recovery efforts in New Orleans.

“OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH HBS IS CRITICAL IN STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL IMPACT ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA.”
NUNO SIRIMAN, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR SOCIAL IMPACT AND PHILANTHROPY AT ASHOKA UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUMMER FELLOWS

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SEI designed three custom executive education programs in 2016–2018 for top leaders within the organization to help advance their executive leadership/development strategy.

“OUR WORK WITH HBS ALLOWED US TO DEVELOP SHARED UNDERSTANDING, ALIGNMENT, AND COMMITMENT AMONG 150 OF OUR MOST INFLUENTIAL CEO WITHIN OUR ENTERPRISE.”
LORRAINE ORR, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER, BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

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HARVARD CLUB OF AUSTRALIA
Provided more than 40 scholarships for Nonprofit Fellows to attend Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management (SPNM) since 2001.

HARVARD CLUB OF VICTORIA
Sent 40 Fellows to SPNM over the past 20 years—providing travel stipends to recipients for a North American learning tour after SPNM to visit nonprofits and share best practices.

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Year Up enables young adults to move from minimum wage to meaningful careers in just one year. Since its founding in 2000, Year Up has grown from a small Boston-based nonprofit organization to an award-winning national social enterprise. Year Up aims to close the Opportunity Divide by equipping underserved young adults with the skills, experience, and support they need to reach their full potential.

In 2007, HBS began hosting Year Up interns and hiring graduates. Since that time, HBS has hired more than 40 Year Up graduates. HBS’s connection is part of the larger Harvard University partnership with Year Up, which has hosted more than 300 Year Up interns and hired more than 210 Year Up graduates since 2004.

In 2008, Professor Allen Grossman developed the HBS case study, “Year Up: A Social Entrepreneur Builds High Performance.” This case has been taught to more than 2,000 MBA students and executives at HBS and has sold more than 12,000 copies worldwide.

Since 2002, Year Up has hired four Social Enterprise Summer Fellows and nearly a dozen graduates who have been a part of the HBS Leadership Fellows program and/or the Social Enterprise Loan Repayment Assistance program.

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After a successful post-MBA career in high tech, Gerald Chertavian focused on launching the nonprofit he had envisioned in his HBS application.

GERALD CHERTAVIAN
(MBA 1992)

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Year Up has turned to HBS as a source for talent as they have built and grown their organization. “The MBAs we have worked with have taken on some of our most important and strategic projects and have made a lasting impact on our organization,” says Year Up Founder and CEO Gerald Chertavian.
Several Habitat for Humanity HBS case studies have been developed to explore aspects of a multi-site organization operating in a global context and teach concepts including partnership models, brand marketing, and organizational design.

Habitat for Humanity hired Cindy Song (MBA 2007) as an HBS Leadership Fellow in its headquarters office following her graduation. Tjada D’Oyen McKenna (MBA 2002) serves as Chief Operating Officer for Habitat for Humanity International, and four HBS alumni serve on the organization’s board of directors, representing 16% of the board.

EXPLORING ISSUES AROUND STRATEGY, GROWTH, AND SCALE

Habitat for Humanity and HBS: Building Management Capacity Through a Shared Commitment to Leadership Development

Seeing the value of the Social Enterprise executive education programs, Habitat for Humanity has sent five to eight senior leaders to the Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management (SPNM) program each year since 1998. Attendees represent 28 states within the United States.

In reflecting on the impact of the HBS Social Enterprise programs, Mary Ellen Taylor, former Senior Director of Learning Systems and Organizational Development for Habitat, notes that “time and again, Habitat leaders have shared how HBS Social Enterprise executive education experiences have influenced and strengthened both their personal leadership and the operation of their affiliates. Habitat participants often describe HBS program experiences as ‘career changing.’”
The HBS-Accion Program on Strategic Leadership in Inclusive Finance (SLIF) works with leaders from around the globe seeking to make financial services available to all, no matter where they are on the socio-economic pyramid. “This program is right at the center of gravity of our mission,” notes Senior Lecturer and former President and CEO of Accion Michael Chu.

Over the course of the HBS-Accion collaboration, the field has evolved from NGOs issuing small working capital loans, to microfinance icons that have become vital components of national banking systems, to modern-day fintechs that are changing the basics of delivery and credit scoring.

Just as microfinance changed the practice of conventional banking at the start of the 21st century, the field today is in the process of a major disruption. “Today, technology is fundamentally changing every aspect of financial services—and this gives us a great opportunity to find new ways to meet the needs of billions of people who have previously been left out,” says Michael Schlein, President and CEO of Accion. “The HBS-Accion collaboration provides an important forum to enable leaders from around the world to learn what works and what doesn’t as they navigate these dramatic shifts.”

Over the program’s 14-year history, Accion has selected nearly 1,000 attendees representing 650 organizations and more than 100 countries to participate in the program.

Accion brings together leaders of financial inclusion enterprises—regulated financial entities, fintechs, microfinance institutions—all engaged in bringing financial services to low-income and underserved populations.

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LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM PROVIDES UP TO 20 FELLOWS A YEAR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THEIR EXPERTISE TO ROLES FOR WHICH THEY PRODUCE IMMEDIATE RESULTS AND BUILD LONG-TERM CAPACITY WITHIN NONPROFIT AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS. THE CITY OF BOSTON PROVIDES A CASE STUDY FOR THE WAYS IN WHICH HBS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS CAN AFFECT THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE. “OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN SEI’S SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. MOREOVER, WE’VE SEEN AN INCREASING RECOGNITION BY THESE SECTORS OF THE BENEFITS OF BUSINESS TRAINING IN THEIR OPERATIONS,” SAYS RICHARD L. MENSCHEL (MBA 1959), WHOSE SUPPORT—PERSONAL AND THROUGH THE HORACE W. GOLDSMITH AND MARGARET T. MORRIS FOUNDATIONS—HAS FUNDED MORE THAN HALF OF THE BOSTON-BASED LEADERSHIP FELLOWS. MENSCHEL CONTINUES, “A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF ALUMNI FELLOWS HAVE REMAINED IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, RISING TO SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS TO THE BENEFIT OF THE SECTOR’S PERFORMANCE.”

THE LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM WAS FOUNDED WITH THE DUAL AIM OF PROVIDING PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ACCESS TO ANALYTIC AND STRATEGIC TALENT AND ENCOURAGING GRADUATES—EARLY IN THEIR CAREER—TO DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF LEADING IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR. FELLOWS HAVE SERVED ORGANIZATIONS IN A RANGE OF GEOGRAPHIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES—FROM NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, D.C., TO CHICAGO AND DETROIT, TO PORTLAND, OREGON, AND SEATTLE—AND THEY HAVE WORKED AROUND THE WORLD ACROSS AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE, AND SOUTH AMERICA.
At Forgotten Harvest, CEO Kirk Mayes oversees the rescue and redistribution of 138,000 pounds of healthy, fresh food to 50 sites in the greater Detroit area, six days a week—over 41 million pounds last year. Attending Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management (SPNM) in 2016 marked a turning point for Mayes and the organization, which now uses a data-driven approach to more efficiently distribute food to those in need. “My experience at HBS—the faculty, the case discussions, but most of all the people—was a game changer,” says Mayes. “I came back to Detroit with a fire to make change happen.”

SNAPSHOT:
FORGOTTEN HARVEST
INITIATED THROUGH SEI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS, A NETWORK OF HBS ALUMNI ARE NOW LEADING CHANGE WITHIN ARTS ORGANIZATIONS.

NEW YORK, NY
INITIATED THROUGH SEI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS, A NETWORK OF HBS ALUMNI ARE NOW LEADING CHANGE WITHIN ARTS ORGANIZATIONS.

IN NEW YORK, WORLD-RENOWNED ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ABOUND. WHILE IT IS THE MASTERPIECES AND THE PERFORMANCES THAT TYPICALLY GARNER HEADLINES, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS ARE WHAT ENTICE HBS MBAs. THEY FOCUS ON ISSUES RELATING TO NEW AUDIENCES, NEW MARKETS, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, AND MORE.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
When the Whitney Museum hired a summer strategy intern in 2015, it sparked a wave of engagement with HBS at a key time in the museum’s growth. Since then, interns and full-time Fellows have led projects focused on membership acquisition and retention, tourism strategy, and earned revenue.

Hired 42 Social Enterprise Summer Fellows since 1999
Hired 12 HBS Leadership Fellows since 2002

RALEIGH-DURHAM, NC
“PEOPLE RETURN FROM HBS SAYING, ‘WHAT WE’VE BEEN DOING IS GOOD, BUT WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING IS SO SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT THAT WE HAVE TO CHANGE.’"

IN 2011, THE SEI TEAM WONDERED WHY THEY SAW AN UPTICK IN APPLICANTS FROM NORTH CAROLINA’S RESEARCH TRIANGLE IN THE GOVERNING FOR NONPROFIT EXCELLENCE PROGRAM. THE ANSWER RESIDED IN A RALEIGH-DURHAM PHILANTHROPIST. “I DECIDED MY CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS COULD GARNER GREATER SOCIAL IMPACT IF INVESTED IN BOARD LEADERSHIP,” SAYS CHUCK RE CORR, AN INVESTMENT ADVISOR WITH MERRILL LYNCH.

DETROIT, MI
A REGINAL HBS ALUMNI CLUB STRENGTHENS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BY EMPOWERING LOCAL NONPROFITS THROUGH HBS EXECUTIVE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOCAL CONVENINGS.

SINCE 1999, THE HBS CLUB OF MICHIGAN HAS PROVIDED SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING FOR 40 LOCAL LEADERS TO ATTEND HBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. “THESE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES TO MORE THAN 300,000 MICHIGANDERS,” SAYS RICHARD SHAPACK (MBA 1971) WHO OVERSEES THE CLUB’S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. “THESE LEADERS PARTICIPATE IN OUR SOCIAL IMPACT LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE THAT CONVERGES APPROXIMATELY 150 NONPROFIT EXECUTIVES QUARTERLY, HELPING TO CREATE A MULTIPLIER EFFECT.”

HIGH IMPACT PHILANTHROPY
Chuck Re Corr has provided scholarships to more than 100 local leaders—board members and executive directors—to attend SEI executive education programs at HBS. The group gathers a few times a year to share ideas, build community, explore collaborations, and maximize the impact of what they learned at HBS. Re Corr’s own ROI analysis suggests an average of $160,000 of positive impact for each $10,000 investment he has made.

“The Michigan Club’s Social Impact Collaborative has really opened up and connected me to other people in the local nonprofit sector—it’s a fantastic opportunity to network, learn, and build capacity as a leader."

DONNA MURRAY BROWN (SPNM 2014), PRESIDENT AND CEO, MICHIGAN NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION
The Social Enterprise Track of the New Venture Competition creates a rigorous and supportive learning environment by hosting a series of workshops and office hours with leaders in the field, as well as by ensuring that each team receives feedback from a panel of expert judges, regardless of how far they progress within the competition. This robust network of judges—many of whom return year-after-year—includes representatives from leading capacity building, social entrepreneurial, and funding organizations (e.g., impact investors, philanthropists, and venture philanthropists).

In 2000, Stephanie Lowell (MBA 1999) published The Harvard Business School Guide to Careers in the Nonprofit Sector. With growing numbers of students and alumni pursuing social impact careers, she and fellow alumna Lisa Schorr Kaplan (MBA 1998) and Susan Wolf Ditkoff (MBA 2001) agreed that there was a need to foster increased connections among this segment of alumni. They formed the Social Enterprise Alumni Association. The Club grew to 1,000 members and increased alumni connectivity through annual conferences and networking support to the growing number of alumni-led pro bono consulting practices led by regional clubs. Today, social enterprise alumni engagement efforts are advanced from within regional clubs as well as through SEI, which leads “Alumni for Impact” programming to connect social enterprise alumni with one another and the School.

“I remember when there were six of us meeting in a dark, basement conference room,” muses Willis Emmons (MBA 1985). “That was the Nonprofit Management Club at HBS!” Times have changed—thanks to student and alumni leadership coupled with institutional support. Over the past 15 years, the student-led Social Enterprise Club (SEC) has consistently been one of the largest clubs on campus, with an average of approximately 300 members each year. In recent years, it has spun off a series of related clubs including the Consulting for Impact, Impact Investing, and Education clubs. In 2000, the SEC began hosting the annual student-led Social Enterprise Conference (SECON) in coordination with students from the Harvard Kennedy School—a conference widely regarded as one of the leading social enterprise convenings in the United States.

The growth and evolution of the Social Enterprise Club did not happen by itself. A cadre of alumni committed to paying it forward formed the SEC Alumni Advisory Board and worked with the School to provide support to the fledging Club—creating leadership continuity, providing institutional knowledge, and enabling greater access to leaders in the field. “We ultimately were able to declare success and put ourselves out of business,” notes David A. Dechman (MBA 1987), who chaired the board for more than 10 years. “The landscape on campus had changed considerably and, with the level of administrative support provided by the Social Enterprise Initiative, a formal board structure was no longer needed.”

“IF WE BUILD IT…”

“If we build it…will they come?” That was the question that Susan Wolf Ditkoff (MBA 2001) explored with Professor Allen S. Grossman as they sought to establish a Social Enterprise Track within the HBS Business Plan Contest—now known as the HBS New Venture Competition (NVC). The answer was a resounding, “Yes!” Since its founding, more than 600 teams representing more than 1,750 individuals have participated in the Social Enterprise Track. Back then, the idea of a social impact venture competition was a novelty—today, social impact competitions abound on business school campuses and beyond.
We started as an experiment and, over time, became an essential part of the institution. Those changes have moved HBS toward new areas of inquiry—those centered at the intersection of business and society. The intellectual explorations and connections formed through these endeavors have expanded the role of the School and built a network of alumni and practitioners at the leading edge of the field.

FROM PIONEERING CONCEPTS...

The founding pioneers of SEI elevated research and teaching around topics that previously had been considered beyond the scope of a business school curriculum. Professor Regina Herzlinger’s work on financial accounting and governance within the nonprofit sector became a staple of SEI’s initial executive education programs. Today, she is known as the “godmother of consumer-driven health care” and has been a leading contributor to the School’s Health Care Initiative.

...TO NEW FRONTIERS

The blending of business models, the blurriness between sector boundaries, and the evolution of new models of investing and finance provide a range of new opportunities and tools to address today’s vast societal challenges. Social Enterprise faculty collaborate across disciplines from organizational behavior to finance to entrepreneurial management. To advance her work on innovation across domains, Professor Julie Battilana holds a joint appointment between HBS and the Harvard Kennedy School.
SEI started as an experiment—pursuing an intellectual agenda that did not fit neatly within traditional academic disciplines.

“A part of what makes SEI special is our long-standing commitment to tri-sector talent. We educate, support, and inspire leaders across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—because we need all three to tackle society’s toughest challenges.”

Margot Dushin, Director of Programs, SEI, 1996–Present

Matt Segneri (MBA 2010), Director, SEI, 2014–Present

“Over time, we learned that the special sauce of SEI resides in the virtuous cycle created across its range of constituents—including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and more.”

Laura Moon, Director, SEI, 2005–2014

Delivering executive education, student career support, and alumni engagement programs

“The field of social enterprise has changed dramatically over the past two decades—wherever you look, our students and graduates are there.”

Maggie Bushin, Director of Programs, SEI, 1996–Present

“Members of SEI faculty and staff”

MATT SEGNERI (MBA 2010)

A cross-disciplinary model combining faculty and administrative leadership

Blending research, teaching, and practitioner engagement activities

Tim Nicolette (MBA 2008), Steve Nelson (MBA 1988), and John Kim (2008)

BobBurakoff and Jim Austin

Members of SEI faculty and staff

Matt Segneri (MBA 2010)

Margot Dushin, Sage Ruth (MBA 2014), and Laura Moon

Stacey Childress (MBA 2000) and Tom Feeney (MBA 1998)

Mat Segneri, Dutch Leonard, and Kash Rangan
Within HBS

At HBS, the creation of an “initiative model” changed the School’s way of approaching pressing, multidimensional challenges facing society. Over the past 25 years, these topics have moved from the sidelines to the core of what any business school must address. In response to the increasing complexity of the issues and the continued blurring of sector boundaries, the School created a portfolio of initiatives—faculty and administrative groups within the School—focused on a range of societal challenges too complex for any one discipline or industry to solve alone.

Built on a foundation of faculty research, these initiatives provide a topical focus, create a bridge between HBS and the world, and mobilize top thinkers from across disciplines to advance smart solutions to society’s most pressing problems.

Across Business Schools

The intellectual ideas, case studies, notes, articles, and books developed by SEI faculty members are purchased by hundreds of academic institutions worldwide via Harvard Business Publishing’s distribution channel. These publications reach college and graduate students, academics, and business and government leaders around the world.

And Around the Globe

In developing its intellectual agenda and early programming, SEI knew that to realize its aspirations it needed to broaden its lens well beyond the boundaries of HBS. What happened on campus would need to serve as a starting point to advance a broader field building and network development agenda.

SEI’s path to impact is based on a multiplier effect through a combination of direct and indirect channels.

Field building: SEI seeks to influence and enable institutions around the globe to develop similar capacities.

Examples: In 2017, SEI entered into a partnership with Ashoka University and Dasra to train nonprofit leaders in South Asia.

Through our foundation and the future, we enable leaders to make a positive difference in the world.
The SEI25 2018 MBA alumni survey was sent to approximately 4,500 SEI alumni from the classes of 1992 through 2018—those who participated in a Social Enterprise elective course, a Social Enterprise career support program, or a leadership role in student-led Social Enterprise efforts. We received approximately 400 responses. The overall alumni population comparisons were made based on data from the Gender Initiative’s 2017 Life & Leadership After HBS survey, with a focus on responses from the Class of 1992 to present.

The SEI25 2018 executive education surveys were sent to approximately 1,660 attendees from the past five years of the Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management, HBS-Accion Strategic Leadership in Inclusive Finance, and Public Education Leadership programs. We received approximately 335 responses.

2/3 of SEI executive education participants report “strong” or “significant” influence on their post-program work and career.

The influence of SEI programs on work, careers, and organizations.

Key benefits gained from SEI programs:
- Expanded network of peers
- New conceptual frameworks and perspectives
- Actionable knowledge and tools
- Increased confidence as a leader
- Professional renewal

Comparison to overall alumni population:

- Employed in nonprofit or public sectors:
  - MBA alumni: 36.4%
  - SEI alumni: 8.6%

- Employed in private nonprofit hybrid organizations:
  - MBA alumni: 1.7%
  - SEI alumni: 6.8%

The SEI25 2018 executive education surveys were sent to approximately 3,840 attendees from the past five years of the Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management, HBS-Accion Strategic Leadership in Inclusive Finance, and Public Education Leadership programs. We received approximately 335 responses.

The SEI25 2018 MBA alumni survey was sent to approximately 4,500 SEI alumni from the classes of 1992 through 2018—those who participated in a Social Enterprise elective course, a Social Enterprise career support program, or a leadership role in student-led Social Enterprise efforts. We received approximately 400 responses. The overall alumni population comparisons were made based on data from the Gender Initiative’s 2017 Life & Leadership After HBS survey, with a focus on responses from the Class of 1992 to present.
WE ASKED HBS ALUMNI TO DESCRIBE THE SOCIAL IMPACT THEY AIM TO HAVE IN THE WORLD. THEY TOLD US THAT THEY SEEK TO...

“USE FOR-PROFIT BUSINESS MODELS TO SOLVE MAJOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES.”

“BRING LATIN AMERICA OUT OF POVERTY BY ACCELERATING THE REGION’S TALENT.”

“PROTECT THE EARTH FROM THE RAVAGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE.”

“MAKE HEALTH CARE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY TO PAY.”

“USE PRIVATE EQUITY TO REDUCE INEQUALITY.”

“MAKE RENEWABLE ENERGY AN ECONOMICALLY SOUND DECISION FOR EVERYONE.”

“CHANGE THE WAY WE FINANCE SOCIAL CHANGE.”

“FACILITATE THE CREATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES.”

“CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND BUSINESS.”

“LEAVE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE THAN BEFORE I CAME.”

“CREATE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY, SO THAT RACE AND PLACE DO NOT DETERMINE LIFE CHANCES FOR U.S. CHILDREN.”

“REduce PREVENTABLE DEATHS FROM INFECTIONal DISEASES IN THE WORLD’S POOREST COUNTRIES.”

“USE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PRODUCTS TO EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.”

WE ASKED HBS ALUMNI HOW THEIR EXPERIENCE AT HBS SHAPED THE WAY THEY THINK ABOUT THEIR ROLE AS A LEADER. THEY TOLD US...

“It showed me there is not one ‘traditional career path’ I must follow and that business and social enterprise do not have to be at odds with each other.”

“It provided me a broader understanding of the business world and expanded my confidence to tackle issues.”

“It helped me think about how to represent voices that are not in the rooms in which I might have the opportunity to lead.”

“It gave me the courage I needed to launch a social enterprise when everyone else was heading into consulting, banking, or tech.”

“It helped me think about organizational and systems change on a broader level.”

“It taught me to aim high. If anyone can do it, you can.”

“It helped all people to pursue the American dream by equipping them through education.”

“Enable all people to pursue the American dream by equipping them through education.”
Today’s societal challenges cut across boundaries and require multifaceted responses. No one sector can address the issues alone, and yet we are confronting a deficit in leadership and models to bring key players together to drive change. At such a time, we are called upon to develop innovative solutions, form unexpected partnerships, and apply our management and leadership acumen to advance novel approaches that will accelerate progress. The frontiers of change require our imagination to create new organizational models, innovative financial tools, methodologies for measuring impact, and cross-sector solutions to solve our most pressing problems—all in the context of a digital era, with a global perspective that drives toward more inclusive societies. CHANGE IS OUR BUSINESS.
AS WE CELEBRATE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST 25 YEARS, WE ARE DEEPLY COGNIZANT OF AND GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AN ARRAY OF INNOVATORS, INVESTORS, RESEARCHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND MORE.

FROM NOVELTY TO NECESSITY

Some say it takes a village, but in the words of Dean Emeritus John H. McArthur, it requires an army. This “army for good” has helped to move the concept of social enterprise from novelty to necessity. This foundation provides us with a platform from which to pursue the next quarter century of Social Enterprise at HBS.
TOP ORGANIZATIONS IN TERMS OF MBA HIRING

WHERE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI HAVE WORKED WHILE PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

1. Accumen Fund
2. Acumen Fund
3. Boston Children’s Hospital
4. Boston Children’s Hospital
5. City of Boston Mayor’s Office
6. City of Sacramento Mayor’s Office
7. Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation
8. Endeavor
9. Federal Bureau of Investigation
10. Grammen Foundation
11. Hospital for Special Surgery
12. Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
13. International Finance Corporation (IFC)
14. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
15. Mercy Corps
16. Robin Hood Foundation
17. Social Finance
18. Teach for America
19. TechnoServe
20. United Nations Development Programme

IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS (IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF ATTENDEES)

1. United States Department of State
2. United States Department of the Treasury
3. United States Navy
5. Year Up
6. Kaplan Foundation
7. Mayor’s Office
8. City of Sacramento
9. Boston Medical Center
10. Boston Children’s Hospital
11. Acumen Fund
12. Accumen Fund
13. Boston Children’s Hospital
14. Social Finance
15. Teach for America
16. TechnoServe
17. United Nations Development Programme
18. Kaplan Foundation
19. Mayor’s Office
20. City of Sacramento

TOP ORGANIZATIONS IN TERMS OF ATTENDANCE

WITHIN THE SEI PORTFOLIO OF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF ATTENDEES)

1. United Way
2. Habitat for Humanity
3. YMCA
4. Boy Scouts of America
5. Boys & Girls Clubs of America
6. Bobby Dodd Institute, Inc.
7. YWCA
8. Make-A-Wish
9. Big Brothers Big Sisters
10. Goodwill Industries International
11. International Federation of the Red Cross
12. Harvard University
13. NISH
14. Save the Children
15. Catholic Charities
16. Girl Scouts of America
17. World Vision, Inc.
18. Jewish Community Centers of North America
19. Outward Bound
20. United Nations
21. The Casey Family Programs
22. Communities in Schools
23. Jewish Family & Children’s Service
24. Lutheran Social Services
25. The Nature Conservancy

IN TERMS OF ATTENDANCE

1. United Way
2. Habitat for Humanity
3. YMCA
4. Boy Scouts of America
5. Boys & Girls Clubs of America
6. Bobby Dodd Institute, Inc.
7. YWCA
8. Make-A-Wish
9. Big Brothers Big Sisters
10. Goodwill Industries International
11. International Federation of the Red Cross
12. Harvard University
13. NISH
14. Save the Children
15. Catholic Charities
16. Girl Scouts of America
17. World Vision, Inc.
18. Jewish Community Centers of North America
19. Outward Bound
20. United Nations
21. The Casey Family Programs
22. Communities in Schools
23. Jewish Family & Children’s Service
24. Lutheran Social Services
25. The Nature Conservancy

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