BOOK REVIEW

Social E-Enterprise: Value Creation through ICT

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Social E-Enterprise: Value Creation through ICT is edited by Teresa Torres-Coronas and Maria-Arantzazu Vidal-Blasco, and this book involves 15 chapters, which are written by different contributors from various countries. Editors of the book believe that social e-entrepreneurship is a source of growth and wealth creation in emerging, developing, and developed economies. They emphasize on the role of ICT in promoting social enterprise and the development of the social sector. This book provides applications of ICT on the social entrepreneurial enterprise field by bringing together leading academics and practitioners all around the world.

The book composes of the following three sections:

• Innovation: Value Creation through ICT;
• Knowledge in Action: Social E-Entrepreneurship;
• Knowledge Transfer: Learning through the Experience.

Section 1, Innovation: Value Creation through ICT in the Social Sector, gives a general framework for the use of ICT in the social enterprise. Next section, Knowledge in Action: Social E-Entrepreneurship, tries to help social e-entrepreneurs how to identify and exploit ICT opportunities. Finally, Section 3, Knowledge Transfer: Learning through the Experience, presents experiences of social enterprises and provides a general understanding of how ICT can add value to management processes and e-services.

The first chapter, “Social and Solidarity Economy Web Information Systems: State of the Art” by Mariana Curado Malta and Ana Alice Baptista, presents the state-of-the-art on interoperability developments for the social and solidarity economy (SSE) web based information systems. This article begins with introduction and followed by a contextualization section in which the concepts of SSE and semantic interoperability are explained in a detailed way. After that, authors perform pre-
limary analysis of the platforms that support SSE activities and interview with the representatives of some of the world’s most important SSE organizations. This study shows that the platforms are still not interoperable, but that there are efforts in this direction promoted by SSE organizations. The article ends with the conclusion that SSE organizations will need to find a common framework of understanding in order to implement interoperability among their platforms.

Business Intelligence enables contextual, agile, and simplified information exchange and collaboration among enterprise users, stakeholders and networks of partners. Thus, Business Intelligence helps enterprise users to achieve the collective intelligence of the organization in order to make better business decisions. The choice of a suitable Business Intelligence platform is very important for the enterprises to take the great advantage of using information technology. Chapter 2, “Business Intelligence Tools for Social e-Enterprises”, by Jorge Bernardino addresses the problems existed in the social e-enterprises and describes and evaluates the major open source business intelligence tools that can have strong impact on social enterprise change and development.

In order to succeed in an environment in which other businesses fiercely compete along with social enterprises, it is essential to take into account innovative systems such as e-enterprise to leverage competition and increase productivity. Chapter 3, “Appreciating Rapid Technology Integration in Creating Value in Enterprises” by Mambo G. Mupepi and Sylvia C. Mupepi, uses social constructs such as Appreciative Inquiry, Community of Practice, and the Theory of Structuration methodologies to understand organization, the notion of the division of labor, and the introduction and management of e-enterprise in value creation processes in social economy. Authors try to find out the answers of the following questions: Is appreciative inquiry useful in creating the knowledge and skills required in successful social societies? Can a community of practice advance the interests of a company in a social economy? Is the theory of structuration effective in creating successful social enterprise? In this study, all of these methodologies seen as positive approaches for strategic communication and ongoing business improvements.

Chapter 4, “Capacity Building for Different Abilities using ICT” by Ina Freeman and Aiofe Freeman, discusses the role of technology in the employment and training of individuals with various forms of disabilities. Authors argue that social enterprises are expected to contribute to the well-being of society. One way this is done is through assisting individuals to become productive citizens. For those enterprises that work with individuals with disabilities, this is accomplished through education and assistance with various daily tasks. This chapter indicates that social enterprises might research the necessary technology to further develop and facilitate the engagement of individuals with disabilities into society. They conclude that through the utilization of ICT disabled individual gains a sense of self-worth and becomes more productive citizens.

Chapter 5, “Telework as a Driver of the Third Sector and its Networks” by Angel Belzunegui-Eraso, Amaya Erro-Garcés, and Inmaculada Pastor-Gosálbez, addresses some of the applications of telework in the areas of social economy and third sector institutions and organizations. Telework as a tool has generated considerable change in the traditional organization of work. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to respond more quickly to customer requirements and to users and beneficiaries of third sector and social economy organizations. Following the introduction section, authors examine telework as a quantitative dimension in terms of its dissemination throughout the European Union and other leading countries. Then they examine new organizational forms which are generated and generalized by telework and which are collectively called network organizations. They also emphasize the general characteristics that result from incorporating telework in different third sector and social economy institutions and organizations. In the fifth section of the paper, authors present an overview of how telework
affects the organization of the entities that use it. Finally, in the last section authors explain some of the central ideas and propose some ideas for further research to examine the relationship between telework and the third sector.

The last chapter of the first section, “Social e-Enterprise through Technological Innovations and Mobile Social Networks,” by Vanessa Ratten, reviews the existing research on technological innovations in social e-enterprise and mobile social networks by providing a set of research propositions that can be used to understand the adoption of social technology innovations. Ratten integrates social cognitive theory to link the literature on innovation adoption theory and mobile social networks. In the Chapter 6, Ratten gives the literature on technological innovations with a focus on the role of mobile communications. Then, she examines the linkages between social networks and mobile technology as a way to facilitate mobile social networking. She also addresses the practical implications for social e-enterprises and social entrepreneurs. The paper then concludes by suggesting a number of future research avenues for social e-enterprises, which focus on technological innovation and mobile social networks.

Section II consists of four chapters and starts with Chapter 7, “Social Entrepreneurial e-Empowerment” which is written by Alfonso C. Morales-Gutiérrez, J. Antonio Ariza-Montes, and Noel M. Muniz. Authors review the main experiences of social entrepreneurial empowerments and pinpoint those pioneering projects that exploit new technologies on reaching and interrelating individuals and communities. This chapter starts with analyzing the emergence and development of social enterprise, its encouragement and empowerment. Later, some key initiatives for social entrepreneurs are examined, in particular those offered virtually (e-empowerment). Authors state that social entrepreneurs noticeably understand that intensive use of new technologies engenders innovation and they argue that ICTs, especially the web 2.0, have constituted catalysts to accelerate collaborations for social change: social innovation labs, social e-enterprise incubators, social innovation centers and social innovation park.

The rapid changes in the communications and information technologies have also influenced the educational sciences. Technology has created new ways of learning and opened up new opportunities in life-long learning. In chapter 8, “Social e-Entrepreneurship, Employment and e-Learning” by Medhina Tezcan, details the benefits of e-learning programs. Author discusses the social and economic benefits provided by the utilization of the e-learning programs in the trainings provided by the social entrepreneur organizations that aims to generate employment.

Chapter 9, “The Role of ICT in Supporting Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship” by Leona Achtenhagen, Bengt Henoch, and Quang Luong, elaborates on the role of ICT in facilitating transnationalism and Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship. Authors indicate that transnational entrepreneurial activities by migrant entrepreneurs, also called diaspora entrepreneurs, involving resources from both the home and the host countries, can contribute to socio-economic value creation of both countries. They also argue that ICT solutions can play an important role in facilitating and supporting such entrepreneurial activities. The chapter outlines the relevant context of migration, remittances, transnational diaspora entrepreneurship, and innovation systems, and discusses prerequisites and challenges of such ICT solutions. First, authors integrate academic literature on social entrepreneurship with that on transnational diaspora entrepreneurship. Then, the concept of Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship innovation systems is introduced with a discussion of how migration can generate business opportunities, which can help socio-economic value creation in the home and host countries. Authors also propose an ICT-based solution to support such entrepreneurial efforts.

In the tenth and final chapter of section two, “ICT: A Resource for Bricolage in Social Entrepreneurship” by Preeta M. Banerjee, highlights the use of ICT as a resource for making do with what is on hand (bricolage) in social
entrepreneurship. This chapter investigates the role of ICT as a bricolagable resource that provides malleability and scalability for social entrepreneurship. Author reviews the traditional roles of ICT in business, which are multi-faceted. Then Banerjee builds the perspective of ICT as a bricolagable resource and by using the resource-based view he argues that ICT can truly create competitive advantage for social entrepreneurship. In order to do so, ICT must be malleable, scalable and co-evolvable. Banerjee also defines these three terms and explores them using the case of Ananda Dhara Creations to provide solutions and future research directions in developing models of competitive advantage based on ICT as bricolagable resources. Findings of the study suggests that implementing ICT alone is a resource model set for failure and such a tactic ignores the need for co-evolution with complementary human capital of the entrepreneurs. Banerjee concludes that these insights are valuable not only for the building of social entrepreneurship ventures, but more broadly for resource-constrained firms in dynamic and uncertain environments that are required to leverage resources for competitive advantage.

Section III, consists of five chapters and starts with the Chapter 11, “ICT and Agricultural Cooperatives: Are they Prepared to Take Advantage of Business Opportunities? by Yolanda Montegut-Salla, Eduard Cristóbal- Fransi, and Maria Jesús Gómez-Adillón. The aim of this chapter is to analyze the current situation of Internet usage and electronic commerce in agri-food cooperatives in the province of Lleida, Spain. The findings show that although the management of the cooperatives is aware of their ICT possibilities, the active presence of the cooperative on the Internet is not very high. The main obstacle for this situation is seen as the lack of personnel for carrying out business on the Internet. The results provide information on aspects for ensuring agricultural cooperatives take full advantage of the opportunities offered by new technologies. The findings are also useful for the managers of these organizations as well as for policy makers that are concerned with encouraging and promoting the social economy.

Chapter 12, “ICT Adoption in the Small and Medium Size Social Enterprises in Spain: Opportunity or Priority?” by Glòria Estapé-Dubreuil and Consol Torreguitart-Mirada, analyzes the actual use of ICT in the social economy in Spain, focusing on the ICT-related management of its organizations. This study shows that the analyzed sample of social economy enterprises has a good ICT positioning in the Spanish business framework. Analyzed sample of social economy enterprises have reached a high level of ICT infrastructures and internet presence and these firms also try to provide ICT training for their partners and employees. In addition, ICT adoption is seen as an opportunity to enhance their competitive advantage in the markets, mainly through electronic commerce.

The objective of the Chapter 13 is to present the ICT implementation experience of a Social Enterprise and the benefits of ICT implementation. “ANOBIUM, SL: The Use of the ICT as Niche of Employment and as Tool for Developing the Social Market” by Millán Díaz-Foncea and Carmen Marcellino give the experience of ANOBIUM, which is a nonprofit Special Employment Centre that focused on the social integration through employment of physical, sensory, intellectual, and mentally disabled persons. Firstly, authors present the general context of the Special Employment Centers as Social Enterprises and then briefly explain the methodology of study. Data for elaborating the case study come from a semi-structured interview to the ANOBIUM’s general manager, the financial statements contained in the Spanish Official Register of Enterprises, and the review of both public documents available on the ANOBIUM website and private documents. Then authors analyze the ANOBIUM business model and its relation to ICT in order to show how ICT are useful in achieving ANOBIUM’s social objectives and in spreading the activity of other social organizations. The findings of the ANOBIUM case shows that ICT can be used as a niche of employment in order to develop the activity of Social Enterprises, and that ICT incorporates multiple benefits that can be used.
to achieve the social objective pursued by Social Enterprises.

Chapter 14, “The Effects of ICT on Sports Fan Management” by Dino Ruta, Barbara Imperatori, and John Cavenaghi, studies the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a potential managerial tool to sustain and develop the relationship between sports organizations and their primary stakeholders, namely, their fans. Firstly, authors present their research framework combining sports literature, the social enterprise perspective, stakeholder theory and the ICT approach. They assume fan quantity, fan feedback and fan involvement as the prerequisite of managing and developing key fan variables; in order to achieve a high level of engagement and to support the proactive role of the club in generating social value. Later, authors propose three successful case histories in the sports domain that exemplify the impact of three web-based initiatives on fan engagement. These emblematic case histories describe and exemplify the theoretical argument presented in this chapter and offer stimuli for the discussion of both theoretical and managerial implications.

Last chapter of the book, “Technology Integration in Strategic Management: The Case of a Micro-Financing Institutions Network” by Nouha Taifi and Khaddouj Gharbi, demonstrates the important role of technology integration in the micro-financing sector strategic management. The aim of this research is to develop the mechanisms in the sector of micro-financing, thus leading its various institutions to develop, introduce and integrate technologies in their strategic management, and to investigate the dynamics that allows the continuous success of the use of these technologies. Through a case study related to a strategic network of micro-financing institutions that develop and integrate technologies in their strategic management, authors try to identify the most important pillars of social value creation of information and communication technologies. The findings of the study also demonstrate the impact of IT integration in the micro-financing sector and derive a theory and a methodology for the development of IT integration and usage in this sector.

This book provides valuable insights about the key opportunities of social e-enterprises and the implementation of ICT. Chapters of the book reflect the value added power of ICT. This is the power of transforming business relationships, business processes and collaborative networks between social enterprises and stakeholders through IT transformative communication processes.