

SIMPACT SOCIAL INNOVATION BUSINESS CASE STUDY

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Dialogue in the Dark

Creating a Dialogue between Visually Impaired People and Society

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SIMPACT Social Innovation Business Case Study

Covers research on the «Economic Foundation of Social Innovation» related to the components, objectives and principles of the social innovation process and measurement of social innovations at micro-level to inform policymakers, investors and other interested stakeholders.

SIMPACT

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DIALOGUE IN THE DARK



1

OVERVIEW

City, Country	Germany
Addressed theme(s)	Marginalisation, raising awareness
Target Group	Visually impaired people
Development Stage	Scaled
Established in	1988
Type of Organisation	For-profit social franchise enterprise
Size of Organisation	Small enterprise (est. 18 employees)

Dialogue in the Dark is a program of the Dialogue Social Enterprise founded by Andreas Heinecke to facilitate the social inclusion of blind people. Since 1988 it offers exhibitions and workshops in total darkness lead by blind trainers and guides to raise awareness and overcome barriers between people without a disability and people with a disability.

2

PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED AND IDEA

There are estimated to be about 80 million people with a disability throughout Europe and over 30 million of them are blind or visually impaired.

They are usually provided for by government welfare but the level of support and understanding varies from one European country to another (EBU, n.d.). It remains a challenge for the government to integrate blind people and people with a disability into social life. For example, only 15 percent of this group of the population have jobs.

The main problem is that communication between people with a disability and people without a disability is often hindered by stereotypes, prejudices and avoidance. Non-disabled people often don't understand the wishes, needs and problems of people with a disability, because their lives are too dissimilar.

Andreas Heinecke has identified this problem and created an exchange platform called «Dialogue in the Dark», that brings together blind and seeing people. His social company works with marginalized people and people with a disability and offers exhibitions and business training in total darkness. This way, he believes that he can show people without a disability how it is to live without visual senses in order to create more understanding and tolerance for blind people.

Furthermore Heinecke's enterprise trains blind people and people with disabilities to become a guide or a personal trainer for the Dialogue in the Dark experience and so create jobs for marginalized groups.

It was a personal interest to help marginalized groups to be part of the society that motivated Heinecke to create this kind of experience.

Figure 1. Founder:
Andreas Heinecke



Andreas Heinecke is German and Jewish. He was born in 1955. When he was 13 years old he heard that his mother had lost much of her family in WWII and that his father's family supported these atrocities. Because of that he grew up with very palpable tensions. He couldn't understand why one part of his family was murdered by another part of his family. In his childhood he was often sick and spent many time in the hospital or at home. While he was sick in bed he had much time to think about the issues that bothered him. So in this time he questioned again and again why some people marginalize others and why people judge others and classify them as inferior or superior? These issues, Andreas realised, were not unique to just him, but can be found in cultures all over the world. (Wilkins, 2006)

After his study in literature, philosophy and history and his subsequent doctorate he started working as a journalist in a radio station.

The idea for 'Dialogue in the Dark' came up in 1988, when Andreas Heinecke was asked to develop a rehabilitation program for a blind colleague. This was the first time he was engaged with blind people and their living conditions in particular. So first, he felt pity and had no idea how to cope with the situation.

But quickly he realised that blind people don't need pity and that being blind implies having qualities that usually are not experienced by able-sighted people. (Changemakers, 2012)

So after working in a home for the blind in Frankfurt for few years he wanted to create his own idea to support blind people to their integration in society.

For Heinecke it was important to show how blind people live their life and which problems they had. He wanted to do this in an active way, where non-disabled people interact with blind people and be part of their special life in complete darkness. Therefore he created the experience of Dialogue in the Dark, where visitors were led by blind guides through different environments in absolute darkness in order to create awareness and understanding.

His concept has since evolved into a social business model with exhibitions and workshops in over 32 countries worldwide.

3

CORE SOLUTION AND MOTIVATIONS

Dialogue in the Dark is a social initiative created by Andreas Heinecke in 1988. His program offers exhibitions and business training in total darkness and creates jobs for blind people.

The exhibitions:

Visitors are guided around in total darkness by a blind person. They go in small groups of 5-10 people and explore different rooms and environments. Each area shows another normal place of life with all sounds and smells. There is a park, with a forest and a sea, a city centre and a bar, where visitors can try to eat or drink something in total darkness. This way normal daily routines turn into a new experience. At the end of the tour, visitors have the chance to ask the guide all questions

they ever wanted to ask a blind person. This exchange aims to break down barriers between those who are blind and those who are not. According to the founder Andreas Heinecke it is the beginning of a dialogue without stereotypes and conventional thinking. In the exhibitions the visitors have the chance to discover the world from a completely different perspective (Schwartz, 2012).

Workshops and seminars:

In addition to the exhibition the Dialogue Social Enterprise also offers workshops and seminars for schools, companies and especially human resource departments.

The workshops are conducted by blind and sighted trainers and are practiced in total darkness. This method is mainly for employees and managerial staff. The workshop-program consists of a series of different team challenges and exercises to improve solidarity, teamwork, leadership and problem solving skills. The exercises consist of simple tasks like building a toy railroad. However this routine task becomes a challenge in total darkness. Now the participants have to cooperate and make an arrangement to solve the problem. In all exercises the members are actively supported by the blind coaches.

The idea behind the workshop in total darkness is to activate entirely new resources and unused potential to reach the set goal, without visual sense. Furthermore, the total darkness creates a learning atmosphere of authenticity, empathy and openness. On this way new strategies and skills can be [developed](#) to develop new insights in everyday routines. (Dialogue in the Dark, 2009a)

Figure 2. Members of a Dialogue in the Dark workshop



An evaluation survey by Dialogue in the Dark shows that the workshops have lasting effects. For the most part attendees valued the workshop as an excellent experience, which modified their communication skills and their perspective on other people and their life. The experience in total darkness showed them how important it is to have trust in yourself and in your team. According to the study the workshop is an unforgettable experience that leads to a change of perspective (Dialogue in the Dark, 2012). Also, 97 percent of the sample would recommend this workshop and share this experience with other colleagues. The five main reasons to recommend the workshop are:

- It improves management skills especially on the communication and the teamwork level
- It develops the capacity to adapt and manage changes
- It is an awareness program for diversity and fosters self-reflection (strengths and weaknesses)
- DID workshop can be used as a retention tool
- DID workshop is a powerful team building (Dialogue in the Dark, 2012)

Furthermore the Dialogue in the Dark program offers special seminars for schools in which blind people visit school classes to explain to the students how it is to live without visual sense and what kind of problems you have to overcome every day.

With his program 'Dialogue in the Dark' Andreas Heinecke wants to facilitate social inclusion of marginalized people and people with a disability, by raising awareness and overcoming barriers between both sides. With the help of role reversals, blind people are no longer the outsiders but the experts, who are guiding the others and answering their questions. This way visitors as well as guides can change their perspective and see the world with other eyes.

The program also creates jobs for disadvantaged people and gives them new perspectives for their lives. For many staff members, the job in Dialogue in the Dark project is the first job they ever had.

Dialogue in the Dark hasn't got a specific geographic delimitation. The idea behind the experience is to bring people together and create more understanding and tolerance for blind people all around the world. Heinecke starts with his project in Germany, but his concept can be reproduced and established in each city where people want to create awareness for blind people. Today, his programs provide employment for visually impaired people on a worldwide scale.

4

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND VALUE CHAIN

Dialogue in the dark is a program of the Dialogue Social Enterprise founded by Andreas Heinecke to facilitate social inclusion of blind people. It offers exhibitions and workshops in total darkness leading by blind trainers and guides.

The idea for 'Dialogue in the Dark' came up in 1988, when Andreas Heinecke was asked to develop a rehabilitation program for a blind colleague. He presented his concept for an exhibition in total dark with different sounds, smells and environments guide by blind people for the first time at an exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany in 1988 (Dialogue in the Dark, 2009b).

His idea was successful, but it was hard to find funding in order to present the concept in other cities. Many public support groups and banks did not believe in Heineckes concept idea and didn't provide resources for his exhibitions. So he searched in private sectors for financing support and found it. For an insurance company, Heinecke created a program for improving the leadership to secure the funding for his project. In the following years Andreas Heinecke got more and more financial support by private companies and universities. In reverse he involved his sponsors in his concept or supported them with special training programs to improve their staff development and their management. (Deutscher Gründerpreis, n.d.)

The personal commitment of the founder was one of the main reasons for the successful dissemination of the concept. His new idea of empowering blind people with the help of role reversals quickly became known and inspired many people.

Ten years after the first exhibition in Frankfurt, in April 2000, the first Dialogue in the Dark permanent exhibition in Hamburg, Germany opened its gates.



Figure 3. The entrance into Dialog in the Dark exhibition in Hamburg, Germany.

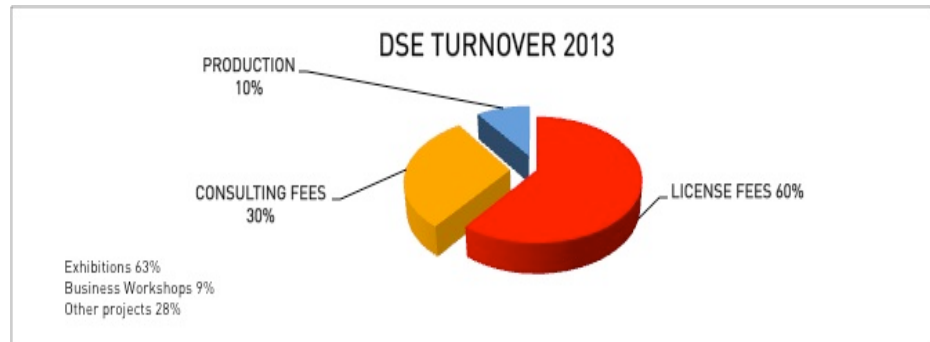
In the following years Andreas Heinecke presented his concept in different cities and countries all around the world and became internationally renowned.

In order to disseminate his idea and concepts he founded a holding for all Dialogue programs - the Dialogue Social Enterprise, in 2008. This enterprise is situated in Hamburg, Germany and is responsible for all programs and activities, like exhibitions, workshops or special seminars. Dialogue Social Enterprise is a profit-making business organisation that wants to tackle social and environmental needs. (Dialogue Social Enterprise, 2013d) The key differentiation between Dialogue Social Enterprise and other profit oriented enterprises is that this innovation has a different business model, which has primary social and environmental objectives. According to the website it is one of the first social franchise models worldwide. (Dialogue in the Dark, 2013b)

Dialogue Social Enterprise receives a license payment from business partners that cover a broad spectrum of organizations «such as private social investors, corporates, non-profit-organizations, museums and universities» (Dialogue Social Enterprise, 2015). The partners operate Dialogue-exhibitions in their country and are supported by the Dialogue Social Enterprise management to ensure high quality standards and international conformation. Additionally, Dialogue Social Enterprise

offers business workshops for corporates on a global scale that focus on the topics of diversity and inclusion.

Figure 4. Distribution of the business model on a percentage basis (Dialogue Social Enterprise, 2013b)



It shows that the Dialogue business model operates on two levels. On the one hand as a social franchise business with partners all around the world, which are trained and supported by Social Dialogue Enterprise, on the other hand as a provider consulting services with the aim to include marginalized and disabled people and break down communication barriers.

Subsequently, the Dialogue Social Enterprise has an annual turnover of 5 million EUR in 2010 (Mehltretter, 2010). There is no information about the precise turnover figures for the entire company but as seen below, the annual turnover of one of the Dialogue in the Dark museum in Germany is shown. The Dialogue in the Dark museum in Frankfurt was founded in 2005. It opens from Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 7pm. The standard 60-minute tours take place on mornings (Tue - Fri) from 9am - 12.45pm and cost 16 EUR for adults and 8 for children until 13 years. The extended 90-minute tours take place on afternoons (Tue - Fri) from 1pm - 5pm, and on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The extended tour costs 19.50 EUR for adults and 11.50 EUR for children. (Dialog Museum, 2013)

In 2012 the museum has an annual turnover of 1.58 million EUR, of that:

- 70 % are income (tickets, dinner, events, workshops)
- 12 % are funding for the integration of people with a disability from the competent authority in Hessen, Germany (Integration Office Hessen)
- 8 % are funding from the city Frankfurt and Eschborn
- 4 % are integration support from the German employment office
- 6 % sponsors and other subsidies (Dialog Museum, 2012)

Dialogue Social Enterprise also has an international consulting function to leverage its social mission to include marginalized people in to society. The company tries to disseminate Heineckes concept idea all over the world to include people with a disability worldwide and provide other entrepreneurs to create their own dialogue program by building the sets or consulting on all the pieces. So Dialogue Social Enterprise is a worldwide operating social enterprise, which aims to break down barriers between people without a disability and people with a disability and give marginalized groups jobs and the chance to be part of the society.

The management level of Dialogue Social Enterprise consists of two independent boards which work hand in hand to improve and disseminate the dialogue concepts. Besides the management board there is an advisory board consisting of five members. Two of them are part of the management of Dialogue Social Enterprise and the other three members are external experts with expertise in the fields of social entrepreneurship, foundations and corporate citizenship. All members are appointed by the shareholders meetings and work together for five years. They advise the management, control the monthly financial overview and decide in particular about the approval of the annual business plan and the budget plan of the company (Dialogue Social Enterprise, 2013).

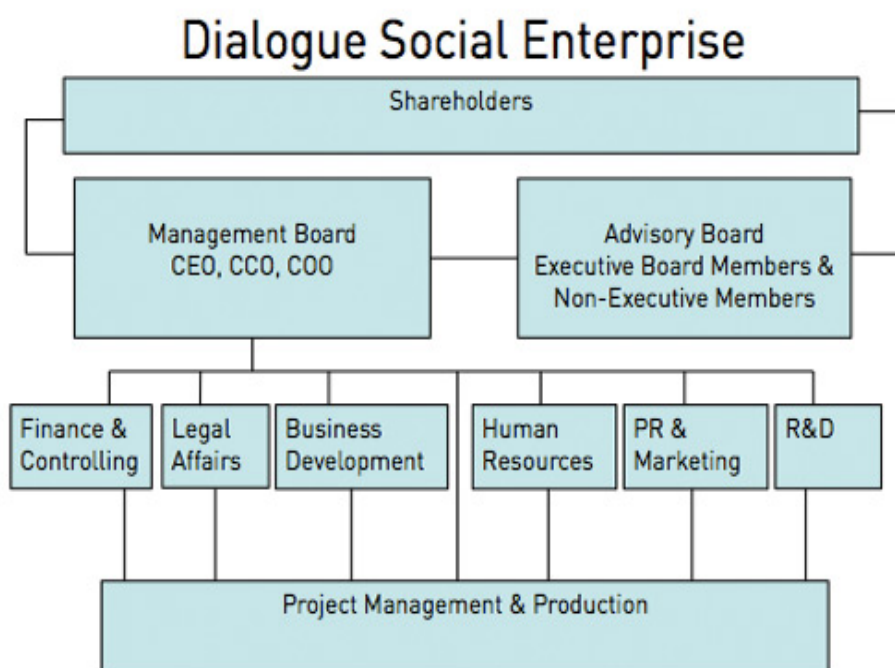


Figure 5. Organisation structure of Dialogue Social Enterprise (Dialogue Social Enterprise, 2013c).

Additionally the enterprise leads the professional training of all blind people who work for Dialogue-programs. The staff do not all have a disability but most have an underprivileged background. In the majority of cases the job with 'Dialogue in the Dark' or another Dialogue programs is the first job they ever had. In their training the future employees learn diverse management skills, communication skills and responsibility for their work as guide or trainer.

The enterprise aims to create permanent job placements for its staff. They work together with the local community, the local government Labour Office, and local companies to achieve its objective. In this process the museum is some kind of training ground where the people with a disability have the chance to prove themselves and to test their opportunities. This way, they can experience how it is to have a job and work in a company. (Schwartz, 2012)

Currently Andreas Heinecke still works on new concepts and exhibitions aimed at overcoming stereotype mind-sets by breaking communication barriers. In the last few years he won many awards for his work including the Global Award for the best innovative and out-of-comfort-zone event by the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), a peer network of chief executives and business leaders (Young Presidents' Organization, 2015) in 2009 and the Engagement Public Voting Award in 2013. Furthermore he became the first Ashoka Fellow in Western Europe in 2005. Ashoka is a network of social entrepreneurs worldwide founded in 1980. It offers financing, professional support services in business and social sectors. Ashoka defines Fellows as: «leading social entrepreneurs who we recognize to have innovative solutions to social problems and the potential to change patterns across society.» (Ashoka, n.d.)

Since starting in Frankfurt 1988 the Dialogue in the Dark has presented in over 130 cities in 32 countries all over the world, including Japan, Israel and Mexico. So far, more than 6 million visitors have visited the exhibitions worldwide and over 5,000 blind people have gotten a job through this program.

5

EVIDENCE FROM THE CASES

Problem to be Addressed and Idea

5.1

The SI is focussed on contributing to the solution for the problem of marginalization

The marginalisation of this vulnerable population is a widely seen problem which is, among other reasons, based on avoidance, lack of awareness and a deficiency in understanding their needs. Marginalisation which is related to disabilities discriminates a population of about 80 million people throughout Europe. Focusing on blind or visually impaired people, there is a population of about 30 million. Among others, especially blind people are discriminated by a weak integration into the labour market. This means a loss of workforce for the economic system and financial pressure on the welfare system.

The SI aims to tackle marginalisation by raising awareness and understanding

To tackle the marginalisation of people with disadvantages, it seems to be necessary to raise awareness and understanding among the population. This idea addresses the necessity to reduce prejudices as well as avoidance and to fight stereotypes to include blind people in society. The SI picks up this idea by aiming on a dialogue between blind or partially sighted and able-sighted people, based on activities where sighted people can experience how it is to be blind. This enables a change of perspectives which broadens the horizon of the participants. As a result, awareness for the needs of blind people is created, also leading to spill-over effects in awareness for the needs of other marginalized groups. Thus, the *Dialogue Social Enterprise* does also run or contribute to similar projects for deaf people and elderly people.

The SI directly includes vulnerable population

To generate a dialogue, the SI directly involves blind and partially sighted people by making them experts and by offering employment to them. This means a direct inclusion of a marginalised group and a contribution to a relief of the welfare system since it is the first employment for many of the experts. Hence, it generates employability of vulnerable people by providing the experience of having a workplace which is combined with the provision of employability trainings. Furthermore, all visually impaired employees of the *Dialogue Social Enterprise* and the programmes receive training to further improve their employability.

The SI is addressing a need which is related to a problem based on the societal level

While the need to include marginalised groups into society is a widely seen need among science and politics, it is not a fundamental part of most people's needs. Therefore, the SI has to address the visitors and participants of exhibitions, workshops and seminars in different ways than offering a direct explanation of the societal requirements.

By providing exhibitions, the SI is using a mode which is containing the character of an «event» which helps to convince people to participate in the experience of changing perspectives. When it comes to business-workshops, the main argument for participation seems to be the broadening of said participant's horizon, which incidentally can also be used to cope with tasks at work. As schools are mostly run by the public, the need to provide dialogue with marginalized groups seems to be more obvious to the decision-makers. Therefore, the issue of inclusion is directly addressed when it comes to school workshops or seminars.

The SI aims at two different issues at the same time: It strives to raise awareness for the needs of blind, visually impaired or – in general – for people with disabilities and facilitates the employability and empowerment of the same groups by providing employment.

5.2

Core Solution and Motivations

The innovator's mission is to tackle the marginalization of blind people and people with disabilities

Based on his own background, the founder has a personal interest in fighting the marginalisation of groups within society. He is aware of the problem of marginalisation and the worst consequences that might be the result of it. From his perspective, marginalisation is based on a lack of understanding the needs of marginalized groups. When he was confronted with the situation of a blind colleague, he decided to develop a concept to raise awareness for blind people in specific. The innovator's personal interest to generate a dialogue defines the mission of the SI.

The SI is raising awareness for the needs of blind people by changing perspectives

By performing exhibitions and workshops in total darkness, the SI is trying to change perspectives. In the exhibitions, blind or partly sighted people become experts and help sighted people to cope with the new situation of complete darkness in well-known situations, like visiting a bar or a park. In the workshops, blind or partly sighted experts help managerial staff or employees of companies to solve tasks in complete darkness. When visiting schools, blind or partly sighted people also take the role of an expert. Therefore, the core solution aims on tackling prejudices, stereotypes and avoidance by changing roles and by providing a new experience resulting in a dialogue between blind or partly sighted experts and the participants of the events.

The idea and the actual programme are not limited to geographical areas. The concept is capable to be used worldwide as it is a common problem for people without disabilities to not fully understand the needs and wishes of people with disabilities. While there might be minor contextual dependencies in the application, the core solution can be easily adapted and disseminated as it is based on the idea of bringing people together.

The SI is providing jobs to include blind or partly sighted people and to generate employability

Next to the idea of creating a dialogue between people without disabilities and people with disabilities, the SI aims to provide permanent jobs for blind or partly sighted people to include them into working environment and to create employability. When transferring the SI to other contexts, this solution should also work in other places as the need for experts is part of the core concept.

The SI engages blind and partly sighted people as experts

When it comes to the realisation of the exhibitions, workshops and seminars, blind and partly sighted people are employed as experts for handling the situation of having no visual sense. Therefore, being visually impaired is no longer defined as a disability but as a qualification which fuels a change of perspective on another level. Whilst changing the perspective between able-sighted and visually impaired people means to raise awareness for the needs of marginalised groups, the change of perspective on the disability itself is a shift in the definition of being blind which could be considered as a contribution to a paradigm shift.

The experience of changing perspectives does also encourage unconventional thinking which helps to cope with challenges at work by trying different ways. Therefore, the SI does also provide workshops for employees and managerial staff. This shows another avenue to include visually impaired people into the labour market by employing them as experts in unconventional capacities which could mean another contribution to a paradigm shift idea.

The use of different approaches helps to reach bigger parts of society and to scale the SI

By providing exhibitions worldwide, the concept is able to address and reach out to many people in several cities and several countries. Furthermore, by selecting different channels to reach people (exhibitions, workshops and seminars) the SI is showing its capability of improving its scale, which in turn helps to raise more awareness and to create more jobs for marginalised groups.

5.3

Development Process and Value Chain

Scaling and Diffusion is based on a transferable idea

Starting with a single program to raise awareness for the needs of visually impaired people by changing perspectives and creating dialogue, the SI has been scaled resulting in a for-profit social business which is operating in 32 countries worldwide. Based on the original idea of Dialogue in the Dark, the concept has been transferred to other locations and other marginalized groups, namely deaf people (Dialogue in Silence) and elderly people (Dialogue with Time). Therefore, the core concept of

the SI can fairly simply be adapted to similar cases which can be considered as a source for its success.

By selecting different channels (exhibitions, workshops, seminars) for the creation of dialogue, the SI is able to reach a large population and is also adapted to different contexts.

The economic sustainability is based on a self-sustaining for-profit concept, combined with funding from private and public actors

The provision of different modes to generate dialogue is combined with the diversification of activity fields. Additionally to the provision of exhibitions, workshops and seminars, the enterprise does also provide a franchise concept and is running a consulting department. Therefore, it benefits from franchisees that are willing to transfer the concept to other locations, which generates the biggest part of the turnover. The second largest turnover is based on the fees of the consulting department, which is strongly related to the franchise business by contributing to the quality of the partner-programmes.

Furthermore, the SI receives funding from several private actors who are benefitting from free workshops and seminars for employees and managerial staff at the same time. Thus, a win-win situation seems to be an essential part of the financing by private actors.

In the meantime the Dialogue in the Dark programme does also receive funding from the public sector, which in the case of the permanent exhibition in Frankfurt means a total of 24% of its turnover combined with a total contribution of 6% by sponsors and other subsidies. The main part of the turnover (70%) is generated by income based on local workshops, tickets for the exhibition and additional offers.

In general, the organisation behind the SI seems to be able to finance itself by its own income as it is generating the most turnover. The income is combined with a set of different contributions from different private and public actors.

6

DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCES IN SIMPACT'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 Social Innovation Components

6.1.1 Actors

The SI involves a complex set of different actors from different sectors:

The founder of the SI has a strong personal motivation to fight the marginalisation of vulnerable groups based on his long-held strong beliefs. This motivation does provide the core idea for the SI and defines its mission. Based on his mission, he is strongly contributing to the scaling and diffusion of the SI.

Visually impaired people are included as employees of the programme and the connected enterprise. They are working as experts for the needs of partly sighted and blind people. They are needed to start the dialogue with people without disabilities. Therefore, they are an essential factor for realising the mission of the SI. As the core mission of the SI is directly related to their own lifeworld, their motivation for commitment seems to be strongly related to this mission. Furthermore, the SI is providing employment and training for employability which should also motivate this group to be part of the SI.

Visitors and participants of exhibitions, workshops and seminars are needed as customers and to pursue the mission of the SI. Without these actors, dialogue between the two groups (visually impaired and able-

sighted) would be impossible. Their own motivation to accept the offer might be related to mission of the SI or the opportunity to make new experiences, depending on the individual case.

Private and public sponsors are financially contributing to the SI. As public financiers refused to provide a start-up financing, the SI was in need of the help of private actors. In the meantime the Dialogue in the Dark programme does also receive funding from the public sector.

Private sponsors are benefitting from workshops and seminars in return, due to their contribution as they might benefit from tax savings related to donations. Their motivation might be related to these benefits or the mission of the SI. Therefore, philanthropic motivations might also be a reason for their contribution.

The main motivation for the contribution of public sponsors seems to be related to the policy target of including vulnerable population into all areas of society.

Franchisees help to diffuse and transfer the SI to other locations and contexts. As the main mission of the SI is to tackle the marginalisation of vulnerable population in general (and not only the marginalisation of visually impaired population), they are directly contributing to the mission by providing a larger scale. By taking the franchise, they are also contributing financially by paying license-fees and consulting-fees for the advice in designing and operating the spin-offs. Their motivation seems to be strongly related to the mission whilst the prospect of profit might also play a role.

Resources

6.1.2

Knowledge of the founder was crucial for the core idea

The founder of the programme already had knowledge on the problem of marginalisation of vulnerable populations. This knowledge has to be considered the crucial starting point for the SI. As he already had some experience in finding solutions for blind people, this knowledge most likely helped to elaborate the concept of Dialogue in the Dark.

The SI is including vulnerable population to realize its mission

The programmes and the social enterprise are run by a mixture of people with disabilities and people without disabilities. This means an inclusion of marginalised groups as human capital of the SI.

Knowledge of vulnerable population is used to pursue the mission

By including visually impaired people as experts for relying on senses other than the visual one and as essential part of the dialogue, the SI is building on their knowledge to pursue its mission. Furthermore, additional value is created by providing business-workshops to broaden the horizons of participants with the help of visually impaired people as experts of unconventional thinking.

Several actors are financially contributing additionally to the self-sustainable concept

Private and public sponsors are financially contributing to the SI. As public financiers refused to provide start-up financing, the SI was in need of the help of private actors. In the meantime the Dialogue in the Dark programme does also receive funding from the public sector. However, the biggest part of the turnover of the connected social enterprise is based on consulting and franchise fees. Therefore, the business structure of the SI can be considered self-sustainable.

6.1.3

Institutions

The SI is contributing to a policy target

The problem of marginalisation of vulnerable population is recognised by national and European politics and therefore is part of their policy, especially during recent decades. Resulting in the aim of including vulnerable population, an enabling framework for the SI is provided. While public actors refused to finance the programme due to doubts on the effectiveness at the beginning, they are financially contributing in the currently. It can be argued that the SI is strongly corresponding to policy targets of the political level.

The SI is aiming at social change

The social phenomenon of marginalisation and exclusion of vulnerable groups has to be considered the main pre-condition of the SI. Without the need for inclusion and understanding the SI might not have seen fruition. Therefore, the SI is aiming at social change by contributing to a dialogue between people with disabilities and people without disabilities to raise understanding for the needs of vulnerable population and to change perspectives.

Social Innovation Objectives

6.2

The founder has a mission which defines the goals of the SI

The founder of the SI has a strong personal motivation to fight the marginalisation of vulnerable groups which is based on strong beliefs. This motivation does provide the core idea for the SI and defines its mission to create dialogue between people without disabilities and people with disabilities.

Visually impaired experts share the mission

The SI is including visually impaired people as experts for their needs and to facilitate the change of perspectives needed. They are an essential part of the envisaged dialogue as they are part of one of the involved groups. By including visually impaired people as employees, the SI is building on members who are most likely sharing the mission as they are benefiting from its targets.

Franchise helps to diffuse the SI and pursue the mission on a larger scale

By the creation of a franchise, the SI has found a way to diffuse itself. In this way, the mission can be pursued in other locations and in other corresponding contexts. The sustainability and effectiveness of the transfer into spin-offs is supported by the for-profit franchise and consulting business.

The for-profit business keeps on the mission

When focussing on the main turnover of the social enterprise, it becomes obvious that the most profit is created by the franchise and consulting activities. As these activities are providing the successful diffusion of the SI, the enterprise seems to keep on the core mission of the SI. Hence, the

tensions between the mission and the activities of the for-profit business seem to be negligible.

The addressed need is not necessarily recognized by the population

While the need to include marginalized groups into society is a widely seen need among science and politics, it is not seen as a fundamental part of most people's needs. Therefore, the SI has to address visitors and participants of exhibitions, workshops and seminars in different ways than directly pointing out the societal requirement.

By providing exhibitions, the SI is using a mode which is containing the character of an «event» which helps to convince people to participate in the experience of changing perspectives. When it comes to business-workshops, the main argument for participation seems to be the broadening of the participant's horizon, which can also be used to cope with tasks at work. The indirect approaches to raise awareness could lead to a lack of understanding of the main concerns of the mission behind the SI. However, the success in raising awareness depends on the dialogue and on how far the participants are confronted with the needs of marginalised groups. Hence, the programme and the enterprise are building on the core motivation.

As schools are mostly run by the public, the need to provide dialogue with marginalized groups seems to be more obvious to the decision-makers. Therefore, the issue of inclusion is directly addressed when it comes to school workshops or seminars.

6.3 Social Innovation Principles

6.3.1 Modes of Efficiency

Private funding leads to additional activities in return

Private investors of the SI appear to be open to the possibility of letting employees participate in business-workshops to create a win-win-situation. The main target of these workshops is to facilitate unconventional thinking which helps employees cope with challenges at work. Hence, the mission to create dialogue and understanding for the needs of the marginalised population seems to be neglected in this case.

However, as these workshops are also performed by the visually impaired experts of the social enterprise, it means an inclusion and also a possibility for a dialogue. Therefore, even the business-workshops seem to contribute to the mission.

Public funding is corresponding to the mission

The problem of marginalisation of a vulnerable population is recognized by national and European politics and is therefore part of their policy, especially in the most recent decades. Therefore, it can be argued that the SI is strongly corresponding to policy targets of the political level which provides a connection to the motivation behind public funding and the core mission of the SI.

The for-profit business keeps on the mission

When focusing on the main turnover of the social enterprise, it becomes obvious that the most profit is created by the franchise and consulting activities. As these activities are providing the successful diffusion of the SI, the enterprise seems to keep on the core mission of the SI. Hence, the tension between the mission and the activities of the for-profit business seems to be on a low.

Modes of governance

6.3.2

The SI is built on a relatively complex business structure

The SI is built on a single for-profit entity which is operating the programmes and which is also providing a franchise concept, creating the main part of the turnover. By using the franchise concept as an instrument for diffusion, the business structure is tailored on the needs of the mission to create a social dialogue. The entity itself is built similar to other business by featuring different departments like a management-board, an advisory-board (which contains of experts for the addressed issues) and several further departments for human resources, marketing and so on.

As the SI does also aim directly at including marginalised groups into society by providing employments, the choice of a for-profit entity might be considered an adequate solution to provide jobs. Furthermore, the for-profit concept does provide the base for the self-sustainability of the SI which has to be considered a key factor for its success.

This case does not show a tendency of state's withdrawal

The SI is finding a way to facilitate dialogue within society with the aim of raising awareness and understanding for the needs of marginalised groups. Whilst inclusion of marginalized population can be considered a task of public policy, the SI is not aiming at a gap which is related to the withdrawal of the state or the reduction of public services. In fact, the SI is adding an opportunity tackle the problem of marginalization.

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