SPECIAL ISSUE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE JOURNAL ON THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN SUPPORTING SOCIAL INNOVATION

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Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are under increased pressure to transform and co-evolve with society to serve its increasingly complex needs amidst continued debates about the relevance of higher education and its relationship with community. Universities are key institutional players within their localities since they have been shown to have significant economic and social impacts on their communities (Bonner, 1968; Glasson, 2003). Driving the development and sustainability of social innovation ecosystems in their localities can also drive social innovation globally. In this context, higher education has the potential to address important local and global social issues through education and teaching; research and knowledge creation; resource acquisition and provision; network creation and partnerships; community engagement and knowledge transfer; and policy advocacy and innovation.

The early language employed by HEIs, whether from a 'social entrepreneurship' (Brock & Steiner, 2009) or 'social enterprise' (Austin and Rangan, 2019) tradition, was narrow in scope and audience, primarily geared toward those comfortable with the language and lens of business (Brock & Steiner, 2009). Recently, however, there has been a noticeable shift in higher education to use a broader framing – that of social innovation – as part of an effort to be relevant to the entire institution with a range of disciplines and audiences. As a maturing field of pedagogy and practice, there is an increasing level of self-reflection about the current trajectory of social innovation and whether or not it aligns with the original intent and values of the movement. This self-reflection is a healthy part of a process to ensure enduring relevance, rigor and integration into higher education structures, practice and culture. Thus, assessments of the effort and impact of social innovation in HEIs are crucial (Elliott, 2013). However, the literature on the role of HEIs in social innovation and its practices and impacts are still limited (Kraus et. al., 2014).

Effective engagement in social innovation through HEIs requires a broad focus on research that delivers impact, teaching that empowers students as social innovators, and partnerships that leverage networks resources to create social value and drive social change (Hazenberg, Wang, Chandra and Nicholls, 2019). Further, within HEIs social innovation education requires educators to cross or blur conventional disciplinary boundaries between theory and practice, teachers and students (Grion, 2014), whilst leaving ivory towers to engage with practitioners from community/private enterprises (Nichols et. al, 2013). Social innovation education also requires an approach that encourages students to develop skills such as self-efficacy and to develop social identities as changemakers (Smith and Woodworth 2012) and problem-solvers (Alden Rivers et al., 2015). It requires that educators teach values, skills and knowledge that emphasize social change (Wiley and Berry, 2015), and requires an orientation that takes into account an ecological view of humans embedded in social and cultural systems (Orser, Elliot and Cukier, 2019). This is particularly true for social innovators from traditionally marginalized groups (Cukier, 2018). The benefits of effective social innovation engagement by HEIs have been well-documented. Indeed, in return for educating students about social innovation, engaging in community partnerships and utilising research to drive impacts in communities and policy, universities can experience such outcomes as reputational gains, material resources, connection with their communities and deliver social impact (Abbott, et. al., 2015; Hazenberg et al., 2019). The need for HEIs to continue to diversify their work and offer holistic support to communities

both locally and globally, is only becoming ever more pressing with the introduction of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indeed, the rise of metrics to assess universities' contribution to delivering the SDGs (see: Times Higher SDG Rankings) makes understanding how to drive social innovation in higher education ecosystems even more pressing.

The focus of this Special Issue emphasizes the changing landscape of HEIs with relevance to researching, studying, and developing social innovation. We aim to uncover challenges and best practices, highlight innovative approaches to assessing effectiveness, examine the role(s) of diverse voices and cultures, and interrogate the ways that students, faculty and community are invited to participate in social innovation through research, teaching and partnerships.

Submissions for the Special Issue could include research on:

1. *Research with Impact:* The need for universities to use their intellectual capital to develop and deliver research that creates social value and changes society for the better is now more important than ever. Globally, governments are looking at how research can provide practical as well theoretical solutions to the problems faced by society. Better understanding of how HEIs can facilitate this research, how research creates impact, and how data can be disseminated through non-academic networks are important areas of focus here.

2. *Innovative pedagogy:* How do we further integrate ethics into social innovation education principles and how do we educate students in social innovation? There needs to be a stronger emphasis on ethical engagement with communities as a precursor to any social innovation activities. More than just a description of in-class activity, lesson plan, or syllabus, but approaches backed up by data and empirics that demonstrate effectiveness, make a theoretical contribution, and advance pedagogy.

3. *Role of Post-Secondary Structure in Facilitating or Inhibiting Social Innovation:* Some of the biggest challenges in integrating social innovation in higher education include breaking down hierarchies, rewiring campus relationships and power dynamics, and changing campus culture in addition to curriculum change. Facilitating or inhibiting social innovation also requires HEIs to engage with external actors such as community, policymakers and international organizations.

4. *Diversity in Who is Involved in Social Innovation:* In the HEIs context, faculty, students and institutions involved in social innovation currently do not reflect the full population of our communities as much as we would like to see. There is an opportunity to ensure that a greater variety of voices are at the table to reflect the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. Administration staff, local community, business, government, social enterprise and international organization could be considered as one of the key actors of social innovation in HEIs.

5. *Creating a Culture of Impact Assessment:* HEIs are in the early stage of measuring its impact of social innovation in terms of education and teaching; research and knowledge creation; resource acquisition and provision; network creation and partnerships; community engagement and knowledge transfer; and policy advocacy and innovation. How can HEIs create a culture of social impact assessment and use it more frequently as an approach to contribute social innovation?

The topics listed above can serve as a suggestion for researchers who are looking to contribute to this Special Issue, but other lines of inquiry, interpretations, and approaches that relate broadly to the theme are welcomed. In addition, the editors of this special issue are more than happy to respond to author inquiries related to the special issue theme and topic fit.

We invite and encourage inter- and transdisciplinary methodological and theoretical approaches to this topic, along with unique or novel interpretations of social innovation practices and research in the context of higher education. We welcome contributions from scholars from a wide variety of disciplines, as well as

from inter- or transdisciplinary research teams. We also welcome papers that trouble or challenge social innovation in higher education or the existing canonical approaches to this area of inquiry. We welcome both conceptual and empirical contributions to the topic, but all papers should be of scholarly significance; contributions focusing on advocacy alone are not suitable for this special issue.

While interested in a wide variety of approaches to the topic of social innovation in higher education, it is imperative for all submissions to clearly illustrate their relationship to the theme of this special issue. It is expected that all papers will focus on the role of universities in supporting social innovation within and outside of campuses.

The deadline for full paper submissions is October 31st 2020.

Submitted papers should follow SEJ submission guidelines (http://emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=sej) and be written in good English to be fully considered. The submitted papers will go through the usual double-blind review process as per the guidelines of the Journal. Submissions to this special issue must be made through Social Enterprise Journal's submission system (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sejnl). When submitting your paper, please ensure that the correct Special Issue is selected from the dropdown menu on page 4 of the submission process.

Enquiries should be directed to the special issue corresponding editor: Prof. Richard Hazenberg (richard.hazenberg@northampton.ac.uk).

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