

## **Influential Article Review - Models for Fostering Communication Between Social Entrepreneurs and Local Authorities**

**Brad Reyes**

**Cedric Frank**

**Audrey Mckenzie**

*This paper examines entrepreneurs and government. We present insights from a highly influential paper. Here are the highlights from this paper: Social enterprises and government share the ultimate goal of solving societal problems, which provides a lot of potential for collaboration between the two parties. While the local government level is the most relevant for social enterprises, little research has been done on the relationship between social entrepreneurs and local government officials. However, in the Netherlands, social enterprises experience these relations as far from optimal, evidenced by the fact that they named 'regulations and government policy' as the most important obstacle for increasing their impact in a 2015 sector survey. Therefore, a pilot project was started with social entrepreneurs in an Amsterdam neighborhood, forming a learning network aiming to improve relations with local government. In the network, an innovative tool was developed in the form of a set of five illustrated stereotypes of social entrepreneurs with certain views towards local government. These stereotypes serve both as a reflection tool for social entrepreneurs and as a communication tool to open dialogue between social entrepreneurs and local government. We conclude that in an applied research project, it is crucial to place focus on the final phases in which results are reformulated into practical tools to match target groups, and resulting tools are distributed through targeted events and publications. For our overseas readers, we then present the insights from this paper in Spanish, French, Portuguese, and German.*

*Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, Social enterprises, Local government, Applied research, Learning network, Stereotypes*

### **SUMMARY**

- What lessons can be learnt from the process in the learning network and the development of the stereotypes? In this section, first, we briefly discuss the use of stereotypes in general. We then continue to place the results into perspective by elaborating on the limitations of the study. Finally, we return to the views of the entrepreneurs in the learning network.
- The choice to develop stereotypes in this study was not taken in the phase of research design. Instead, it was a choice made at the point where interim results from the learning network were analysed, and the clustering of codes inspired this direction for the development of a practical tool.

- This was not an easy option, as we are aware that the concept of stereotypes and the process of stereotyping has negative connotations for some. However, we take courage from research showing that stereotypes are especially useful in situations in which a stereotype is highly diagnostic. In our case, the phenomenon of social entrepreneurs is new to a lot of local government officials, and we think that the stereotypes can help them to start thinking about this group.
- However, the stereotypes developed in this study also have severe limitations. This research project was set up as a pilot project, aiming to develop ideas based on experiences gathered in a non-randomly selected learning network of social entrepreneurs. We did not aim for theorisation or for tools with general applicability, but rather for tools that have the potential to encourage dialogue between social entrepreneurs and government officials. The stereotypes that were developed are therefore based on a limited range of experiences of social entrepreneurs that are active in Amsterdam New-West in the impact area of labour market participation. This small basis implies that research outcomes are not generalizable. We think that a large-scale survey or a randomised sample can yield better results; however, we are also aware that setting up such types of research with entrepreneurs can be a daunting task. To conclude this section, how do the participants in the learning network themselves—given the limitations above—see the usefulness of the stereotypes? They saw two main forms of use, for themselves and for government officials respectively.
- Mirror for social entrepreneurs. The stereotypes work like a mirror for me. I now see that in my company I have played a specific role, without thinking about this. I now realise I could also play a different role and that this could have advantages.
- Improved understanding among government officials. I think it is very useful to show local government that social entrepreneurs can take different approaches.

## HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL ARTICLE

We used the following article as a basis of our evaluation:

Hogenstijn, M., Meerman, M., & Zinsmeister, J. (2018). Developing stereotypes to facilitate dialogue between social entrepreneurs and local government. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 7(1), 1–18.

This is the link to the publisher's website:

<https://innovation-entrepreneurship.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13731-018-0084-5>

## INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurs and government share the ultimate goal of solving societal problems. In theory, this means that there is a great potential for social enterprises and government to form partnerships and collaborate in various ways. In practice, this often proves problematic. Governments find it hard to handle the hybridity of social enterprises, which have a problem-solving mission but also need to run a sustainable business, or do not recognise their role in problem-solving. Misunderstandings are common. In this article, we focus on the results of a pilot project with a group of social entrepreneurs in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The entrepreneurs formed a learning network, focusing on efficient and effective ways to cooperate with the local government. The aim of this applied research project was also to develop research-based tools to facilitate dialogue between social entrepreneurs and local government.

To understand the background and context of our research, we briefly explain our view towards the concept of social entrepreneurship, some particularities of the Dutch context, and the problem that was identified in the relationship between social enterprises and local government, which forms the reason to start this research project. We then discuss the methods and results, focusing on the practical application of the tools that were developed in our project.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this pilot project was to develop research-based tools to facilitate dialogue between social entrepreneurs and local government, in order to find a solution for the problem that social entrepreneurs in the Netherlands perceive ‘government and regulations’ as a major barrier for the enlargement of their societal impact. To achieve this, we have formed a learning network with eight social enterprises in Amsterdam New-West, which are all active in the impact area of labour market participation. Experiences in the learning network have yielded interesting lessons, both with regard to content and with regard to the process.

Content-wise, we have created five stereotypes of social entrepreneurs in relation to local government. Early signs indicate that these stereotypes are useful starting points for dialogue between the two parties. Once they then realise, they are both pursuing the same ultimate goal of solving societal problems, this forms an opening for collaboration.

Process-wise, we can conclude that a learning network provides a good setting to generate new ideas. The focus on a positive scenario describing an ideal relationship between social entrepreneurs and government proved very productive. At the same time, however, not too much effort can be expected from entrepreneurs in a learning network. They are in the process of running a business, and the time they can spend on a project not directly generating new income is limited. In addition, we have learned that focus on the final phase of the research project, in which results are reformulated to match target groups and distributed through targeted events, is crucial to make an impact.

Social entrepreneurs are innovative changemakers in society. A lot of targeted efforts are required for researchers to reach this same level of change making.

## APPENDIX

**FIGURE1**  
**THE DISAPPOINTED AUTHORITY AVOIDER, BY ARTIST YARA SAID**



Source: Hogenstijn et al. [2016](#), p. 38 (reprinted with permission)

**FIGURE 2**  
**THE CREATIVE SYSTEM CHANGER, BY ARTIST YARA SAID**



Source: Hogenstijn et al. 2016, p. 39 (reprinted with permission)

**FIGURE 3**  
**THE PROACTIVE PROBLEM HANDLER, BY ARTIST YARA SAID**



Source: Hogenstijn et al. 2016, p. 40 (reprinted with permission)

**FIGURE 4**  
**THE STRATEGIC POLICY FOLLOWER, BY ARTIST YARA SAID**



Source: Hogenstijn et al. 2016, p. 41 (reprinted with permission)

**FIGURE 5**  
**THE NETWORKING LOBBYIST, BY ARTIST YARA SAID**



Source: Hogenstijn et al. 2016, p. 42 (reprinted with permission)

**TABLE 1**  
**LOGICS APPLIED BY GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS**

Aspect	Logic government	Logic social entrepreneur
Government involvement	Needed at start of initiative, to get it going	Needed when initiative is running and needs to be made sustainable
Role of government	Select promising initiatives	Follow and participate in own initiatives
Focus of government	Stimulate, provoke and help to get going	Subvene, take over when needed
Timing of government role	Release and withdraw after a few years	Take up and hold after a few years of independence

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## **TRANSLATED VERSION: SPANISH**

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## **VERSION TRADUCIDA: ESPAÑOL**

A continuación se muestra una traducción aproximada de las ideas presentadas anteriormente. Esto se hizo para dar una comprensión general de las ideas presentadas en el documento. Por favor, disculpe cualquier error gramatical y no responsabilite a los autores originales de estos errores.

## **INTRODUCCIÓN**

Los empresarios sociales y el gobierno comparten el objetivo final de resolver los problemas sociales. En teoría, esto significa que existe un gran potencial para que las empresas sociales y el gobierno formen asociaciones y colaboren de varias maneras. En la práctica, esto a menudo resulta problemático. A los gobiernos les resulta difícil manejar la hibridación de las empresas sociales, que tienen una misión de resolución de problemas, pero también necesitan dirigir un negocio sostenible, o no reconocen su papel en la resolución de problemas. Los malentendidos son comunes. En este artículo, nos centramos en los resultados de un proyecto piloto con un grupo de emprendedores sociales en Amsterdam, Países Bajos. Los empresarios formaron una red de aprendizaje, centrándose en formas eficientes y efectivas de cooperar con el gobierno local. El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación aplicada era también desarrollar herramientas basadas en la investigación para facilitar el diálogo entre los empresarios sociales y los gobiernos locales.

Para comprender los antecedentes y el contexto de nuestra investigación, explicamos brevemente nuestra visión hacia el concepto de emprendimiento social, algunas particularidades del contexto holandés y el problema que se identificó en la relación entre las empresas sociales y el gobierno local, que constituye la razón para iniciar este proyecto de investigación. A continuación, discutimos los métodos y resultados, centrándonos en la aplicación práctica de las herramientas que se desarrollaron en nuestro proyecto.

## **CONCLUSIÓN**

El objetivo de este proyecto piloto era desarrollar herramientas basadas en la investigación para facilitar el diálogo entre los empresarios sociales y los gobiernos locales, con el fin de encontrar una solución al problema que los empresarios sociales neerlandeses perciben "gobierno y reglamentos" como una barrera importante para la ampliación de su impacto social. Para lograrlo, hemos formado una red de aprendizaje con ocho empresas sociales en Amsterdam New-West, todas activas en el área de impacto de la participación en el mercado laboral. Las experiencias en la red de aprendizaje han dado lugar a lecciones interesantes, tanto en lo que respecta al contenido como al proceso.

En cuanto al contenido, hemos creado cinco estereotipos de emprendedores sociales en relación con el gobierno local. Los primeros indicios indican que estos estereotipos son puntos de partida útiles para el diálogo entre las dos partes. Una vez que se dan cuenta, ambos persiguen el mismo objetivo final de resolver los problemas sociales, esto constituye una apertura para la colaboración.

En cuanto a los procesos, podemos concluir que una red de aprendizaje proporciona un buen entorno para generar nuevas ideas. El enfoque en un escenario positivo que describe una relación ideal entre los empresarios sociales y el gobierno resultó muy productivo. Al mismo tiempo, sin embargo, no se puede esperar demasiado esfuerzo de los empresarios de una red de aprendizaje. Están en el proceso de dirigir un negocio, y el tiempo que pueden dedicar a un proyecto a no generar directamente nuevos ingresos es limitado. Además, hemos aprendido que el enfoque en la fase final del proyecto de investigación, en el que los resultados se reformulan para que coincidan con los grupos objetivo y se distribuyen a través de eventos específicos, es crucial para tener un impacto.

Los emprendedores sociales son innovadores cambiadores en la sociedad. Se requieren muchos esfuerzos específicos para que los investigadores alcancen este mismo nivel de creación de cambios.

## **TRANSLATED VERSION: FRENCH**

Below is a rough translation of the insights presented above. This was done to give a general understanding of the ideas presented in the paper. Please excuse any grammatical mistakes and do not hold the original authors responsible for these mistakes.

## **VERSION TRADUITE: FRANÇAIS**

Voici une traduction approximative des idées présentées ci-dessus. Cela a été fait pour donner une compréhension générale des idées présentées dans le document. Veuillez excuser toutes les erreurs grammaticales et ne pas tenir les auteurs originaux responsables de ces erreurs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Les entrepreneurs sociaux et le gouvernement partagent l'objectif ultime de résoudre les problèmes sociétaux. En théorie, cela signifie qu'il existe un grand potentiel pour les entreprises sociales et le gouvernement de former des partenariats et de collaborer de diverses façons. Dans la pratique, cela s'avère souvent problématique. Les gouvernements ont du mal à gérer l'hybridité des entreprises sociales, qui ont une mission de résolution de problèmes mais qui ont également besoin de gérer une entreprise durable, ou qui ne reconnaissent pas leur rôle dans la résolution de problèmes. Les malentendus sont fréquents. Dans cet article, nous nous concentrons sur les résultats d'un projet pilote avec un groupe d'entrepreneurs sociaux à Amsterdam, aux Pays-Bas. Les entrepreneurs ont formé un réseau d'apprentissage, axé sur des moyens efficaces et efficaces de coopérer avec le gouvernement local. L'objectif de ce projet de recherche appliquée était également de développer des outils basés sur la recherche pour faciliter le dialogue entre les entrepreneurs sociaux et les administrations locales.

Pour comprendre le contexte et le contexte de nos recherches, nous expliquons brièvement notre point de vue sur le concept d'entrepreneuriat social, certaines particularités du contexte néerlandais, et le problème qui a été identifié dans la relation entre les entreprises sociales et les gouvernements locaux, qui constitue la raison de lancer ce projet de recherche. Nous discutons ensuite des méthodes et des résultats, en nous concentrant sur l'application pratique des outils qui ont été développés dans notre projet.

## **CONCLUSION**

L'objectif de ce projet pilote était de développer des outils de recherche pour faciliter le dialogue entre les entrepreneurs sociaux et les administrations locales, afin de trouver une solution au problème que les entrepreneurs sociaux aux Pays-Bas perçoivent comme un « gouvernement et des règlements » comme un obstacle majeur à l'élargissement de leur impact sociétal. Pour ce faire, nous avons formé un réseau d'apprentissage avec huit entreprises sociales à Amsterdam-Nouvelle-Ouest, qui sont toutes actives dans le domaine de l'impact de la participation au marché du travail. Les expériences du réseau d'apprentissage ont donné des leçons intéressantes, tant en ce qui concerne le contenu que le processus.

Sur le plan du contenu, nous avons créé cinq stéréotypes d'entrepreneurs sociaux par rapport aux administrations locales. Les premiers signes indiquent que ces stéréotypes sont des points de départ utiles pour le dialogue entre les deux parties. Une fois qu'ils se rendent compte, ils poursuivent tous deux le même objectif ultime de résoudre les problèmes sociétaux, ce qui constitue une ouverture à la collaboration.

Sur le plan du processus, nous pouvons conclure qu'un réseau d'apprentissage fournit un bon cadre pour générer de nouvelles idées. L'accent mis sur un scénario positif décrivant une relation idéale entre les entrepreneurs sociaux et le gouvernement s'est avéré très productif. Dans le même temps, cependant, on ne peut pas attendre trop d'efforts de la part des entrepreneurs d'un réseau d'apprentissage. Ils sont en train de gérer une entreprise, et le temps qu'ils peuvent consacrer à un projet qui ne génère pas directement de nouveaux revenus est limité. En outre, nous avons appris qu'il est crucial de mettre l'accent sur la phase finale du projet de recherche, dans laquelle les résultats sont reformulés pour correspondre aux groupes cibles et distribués par le biais d'événements ciblés, pour avoir un impact.

Les entrepreneurs sociaux sont des changeurs innovants dans la société. Beaucoup d'efforts ciblés sont nécessaires pour que les chercheurs atteignent ce même niveau de changement.

### **TRANSLATED VERSION: GERMAN**

Below is a rough translation of the insights presented above. This was done to give a general understanding of the ideas presented in the paper. Please excuse any grammatical mistakes and do not hold the original authors responsible for these mistakes.

### **ÜBERSETZTE VERSION: DEUTSCH**

Hier ist eine ungefähre Übersetzung der oben vorgestellten Ideen. Dies wurde getan, um ein allgemeines Verständnis der in dem Dokument vorgestellten Ideen zu vermitteln. Bitte entschuldigen Sie alle grammatikalischen Fehler und machen Sie die ursprünglichen Autoren nicht für diese Fehler verantwortlich.

### **EINLEITUNG**

Sozialunternehmer und Regierung teilen das endhöchste Ziel, gesellschaftliche Probleme zu lösen. Theoretisch bedeutet dies, dass es ein großes Potenzial für Sozialunternehmen und Regierung gibt, Partnerschaften zu bilden und auf verschiedene Weise zusammenzuarbeiten. In der Praxis erweist sich dies oft als problematisch. Regierungen tun sich schwer, mit der Hybridität von Sozialunternehmen umzugehen, die eine Problemlösungsaufgabe haben, aber auch ein nachhaltiges Unternehmen führen müssen oder ihre Rolle bei der Problemlösung nicht anerkennen. Missverständnisse sind weit verbreitet. In diesem Artikel konzentrieren wir uns auf die Ergebnisse eines Pilotprojekts mit einer Gruppe von Sozialunternehmern in Amsterdam, Niederlande. Die Unternehmer bildeten ein Lernnetzwerk, das sich auf effiziente und effektive Wege zur Zusammenarbeit mit der lokalen Regierung konzentrierte. Ziel dieses angewandten Forschungsprojekts war es auch, forschungsbasierte Instrumente zu entwickeln, um den Dialog zwischen Sozialunternehmern und lokalen Behörden zu erleichtern.

Um den Hintergrund und den Kontext unserer Forschung zu verstehen, erläutern wir kurz unsere Sicht auf das Konzept des sozialen Unternehmertums, einige Besonderheiten des niederländischen Kontextes und das Problem, das in der Beziehung zwischen Sozialunternehmen und lokalen Gebietskörperschaften identifiziert wurde, was den Grund für den Start dieses Forschungsprojekts bildet. Anschließend besprechen wir die Methoden und Ergebnisse und konzentrieren uns auf die praktische Anwendung der Werkzeuge, die in unserem Projekt entwickelt wurden.

### **SCHLUSSFOLGERUNG**

Ziel dieses Pilotprojekts war die Entwicklung forschungsbasierter Instrumente zur Erleichterung des Dialogs zwischen Sozialunternehmern und lokalen Gebietskörperschaften, um eine Lösung für das Problem zu finden, das Sozialunternehmer in den Niederlanden als ein großes Hindernis für die Erweiterung ihrer gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen betrachten. Um dies zu erreichen, haben wir mit acht Sozialunternehmen in Amsterdam New-West ein Lernnetzwerk gebildet, die alle im Wirkungsbereich der Erwerbsbeteiligung tätig sind. Die Erfahrungen im Lernnetzwerk haben interessante Lehren gezogen, sowohl inhaltlich als auch prozessal.

Inhaltlich haben wir fünf Stereotype von Sozialunternehmern in Bezug auf die lokale Regierung geschaffen. Frühe Anzeichen deuten darauf hin, dass diese Stereotype nützliche Ausgangspunkte für den Dialog zwischen den beiden Parteien sind. Sobald sie dann erkennen, verfolgen beide das gleiche Endziel, gesellschaftliche Probleme zu lösen, dies bildet eine Öffnung für die Zusammenarbeit.

Prozesstechnisch können wir schlussfolgern, dass ein Lernnetzwerk einen guten Rahmen bietet, um neue Ideen zu generieren. Der Fokus auf ein positives Szenario, das eine ideale Beziehung zwischen Sozialunternehmern und Regierung beschreibt, erwies sich als sehr produktiv. Gleichzeitig ist jedoch von Unternehmern in einem Lernnetzwerk nicht allzu viel Aufwand zu erwarten. Sie sind dabei, ein Unternehmen zu führen, und die Zeit, die sie für ein Projekt aufwenden können, das nicht direkt neue Einnahmen generiert, ist begrenzt. Darüber hinaus haben wir gelernt, dass die Fokussierung auf die Endphase des Forschungsprojekts, in der die Ergebnisse zielgruppengerecht umformuliert und durch gezielte Veranstaltungen verteilt werden, entscheidend ist, um Wirkung zu erzielen.

Sozialunternehmer sind innovative Veränderungsmacher in der Gesellschaft. Es sind viele gezielte Anstrengungen erforderlich, damit die Forscher das gleiche Maß an Veränderung erreichen.

## **TRANSLATED VERSION: PORTUGUESE**

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## **VERSÃO TRADUZIDA: PORTUGUÊS**

Aqui está uma tradução aproximada das ideias acima apresentadas. Isto foi feito para dar uma compreensão geral das ideias apresentadas no documento. Por favor, desculpe todos os erros gramaticais e não responsabilize os autores originais responsáveis por estes erros.

## **INTRODUÇÃO**

Os empresários sociais e o governo partilham o objetivo final de resolver os problemas sociais. Em teoria, isto significa que há um grande potencial para as empresas sociais e o governo formar parcerias e colaborar de várias maneiras. Na prática, isto muitas vezes revela-se problemático. Os governos têm dificuldade em lidar com a hibridiz das empresas sociais, que têm uma missão de resolução de problemas, mas que também precisam de gerir um negócio sustentável, ou não reconhecem o seu papel na resolução de problemas. Mal-entendidos são comuns. Neste artigo, focamo-nos nos resultados de um projeto-piloto com um grupo de empreendedores sociais em Amesterdão, nos Países Baixos. Os empreendedores formaram uma rede de aprendizagem, focando-se em formas eficientes e eficazes de cooperar com o governo local. O objetivo deste projeto de investigação aplicada foi também desenvolver ferramentas baseadas na investigação para facilitar o diálogo entre os empresários sociais e a administração local.

Para compreender o contexto e o contexto da nossa investigação, explicamos brevemente a nossa visão sobre o conceito de empreendedorismo social, algumas particularidades do contexto neerlandês, e o problema que foi identificado na relação entre as empresas sociais e o governo local, que constitui a razão para iniciar este projeto de investigação. Em seguida, discutimos os métodos e resultados, focando-se na aplicação prática das ferramentas que foram desenvolvidas no nosso projeto.

## CONCLUSÃO

O objetivo deste projeto-piloto era desenvolver instrumentos baseados na investigação para facilitar o diálogo entre os empresários sociais e a administração local, a fim de encontrar uma solução para o problema que os empresários sociais nos Países Baixos consideram "governo e regulamentos" como uma barreira importante para o alargamento do seu impacto social. Para tal, formámos uma rede de aprendizagem com oito empresas sociais em Amesterdão, no Novo Oeste, que estão todas ativas no domínio do impacto da participação no mercado de trabalho. As experiências na rede de aprendizagem deram lições interessantes, tanto no que diz respeito ao conteúdo como ao processo.

Em termos de conteúdo, criámos cinco estereótipos de empreendedores sociais em relação ao governo local. Os primeiros sinais indicam que estes estereótipos são pontos de partida úteis para o diálogo entre as duas partes. Uma vez que se apercebam, ambos estão a perseguir o mesmo objetivo final de resolução de problemas sociais, isto constitui uma abertura para a colaboração.

Em termos de processo, podemos concluir que uma rede de aprendizagem proporciona um bom cenário para gerar novas ideias. O foco num cenário positivo que descreve uma relação ideal entre empreendedores sociais e governo revelou-se muito produtivo. Ao mesmo tempo, porém, não se pode esperar muito esforço dos empresários numa rede de aprendizagem. Estão em processo de gestão de um negócio, e o tempo que podem gastar num projeto que não gera diretamente novos rendimentos é limitado. Além disso, aprendemos que o foco na fase final do projeto de investigação, em que os resultados são reformulados para corresponder aos grupos-alvo e distribuídos através de eventos direcionados, é crucial para causar impacto.

Os empreendedores sociais são inovadores na sociedade. São necessários muitos esforços direcionados para que os investigadores atinjam este mesmo nível de mudança.