The Social and Solidarity Economy: From the Margins to the Mainstream

Case study

Rural Development Focused Social and Solidarity Economy Organisations' Social Impact Measurement: A Systematic Review and Ways Forward

Peter Musinguzi
UNE Business School, University of New England

Derek Baker
UNE Business School, University of New England

Nicolette Larder
Department of Geography and Planning, University of New England

Renato A. Villano
UNE Business School, University of New England

Abstract: Social enterprises (SEs), which have emerged more recently among social and solidarity economy organisations are touted for steering rural development through their social impacts. However, SEs' social impact measurement is underdeveloped theoretically and empirically despite its importance in the social and solidarity economy, specifically within social entrepreneurship field. This systematic literature review documents empirical studies of SEs' social impacts in rural communities and reveals that the literature on social impact measurement is sparse, recent, and dominated by case studies and qualitative analysis. It lacks consistency in defining social impact and the social impacts are overwhelmingly reported as positive despite a lack of attribution of such impacts to SEs. We advocate methodological improvements such as: using a rural livelihoods framework, project/program level impact measurement, application of appropriate social impact analysis methods e.g., mixed method and theory-based evaluation approaches. These could strengthen design and management of SEs' programs/projects besides advancing scholarship of SEs' social impacts.

Rural Development Focused Social and Solidarity Economy Organisations' Social Impact Measurement: A Systematic Review and Ways Forward

Peter Musinguzi[1*], Derek Baker[1], Nicolette Larder[2], Renato A. Villano[1]

[1] UNE Business School, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia

[2] Department of Geography and Planning, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia

Abstract

Social enterprises (SEs), which have emerged more recently among social and solidarity economy organisations are touted for steering rural development through their social impacts. However, SEs' social impact measurement is underdeveloped theoretically and empirically despite its importance in the social and solidarity economy, specifically within social entrepreneurship field. This systematic literature review documents empirical studies of SEs' social impacts in rural communities and reveals that the literature on social impact measurement is sparse, recent, and dominated by case studies and qualitative analysis. It lacks consistency in defining social impact and the social impacts are overwhelmingly reported as positive despite a lack of attribution of such impacts to SEs. We advocate methodological improvements such as: using a rural livelihoods framework, project/program level impact measurement, application of appropriate social impact analysis methods e.g., mixed method and theory-based evaluation approaches. These could strengthen design and management of SEs' programs/projects besides advancing scholarship of SEs' social impacts.

1. Context

Social enterprises (SEs) are new organisational forms classified under social and solidarity economy organisations (Haugh, 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Krlev et al., 2021). They are a tool touted for addressing grand challenges to sustainable development (Rahdari et al., 2016) e.g. poverty, inequality, climate change, homelessness etc.They operate in various organisational forms (Kim et al., 2020) with the main goal of creating social impact for their mainly marginalised beneficiaries/clients (Gupta et al., 2020; Santos, 2012), mostly in settings/sectors where private or government services have declined or with significant market and/or state failure (ibid). These are mainly in rural/regional areas, where the majority of SE clients are faced with grand challenges e.g. high poverty rates and inequality (Bird et al., 2012; World Bank Group, 2020) which justifies SEs' roles in rural development action for livelihood improvement (Richter et al., 2019).

Despite their importance, measurement of SEs' social impacts remain underdeveloped both theoretically and empirically (Rawhouser et al., 2019). In particular, there is currently no

*Corresponding author Email: pmusingu@myune.edu.au; ktp990@alumni.ku.dk;mpeteratooki@yahoo.com

overall accepted definition of social impact (Clifford et al., 2014; Grieco, 2015; Hertel et al., 2020; OECD, 2015; Rawhouser et al., 2019). There are calls to develop standards of social impact measurement (Rawhouser et al., 2019). This could be achieved by measuring impacts in particular contexts, and carefully selecting social impact measures that relate to human welfare: possibly drawn from human development measures (Salazar et al., 2012) or related indicators from global initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (GRI, 2020). Such efforts fall within the intersectional research advocated by social entrepreneurship researchers (e.g., Ormiston & Castellas, 2019). Applying this intersectional research thinking in social entrepreneurship to rural focused SE social impact studies could benefit from similarly applied frameworks (e.g. the rural livelihoods and/or sustainable livelihoods framework (Scoones, 2015). This has an outcome dimension within which social impacts arising from rural focused SEs could be summarised and researchers have recently identified potential for use of such a framework in social entrepreneurship (Masukujjaman et al., 2016). The intersectional research efforts could enrich and support the growth of social impact measurement, as "impact assessment should be understood as a transdisciplinary practice evolving from, and blending together with, multiple practice worlds'' (Ormiston, 2019, p. 423).

There have been attempts to study the SEs' social impacts through conceptual frameworks (e.g., Arena et al., 2015; Bagnoli & Megali, 2011) although these do not, in most cases, provide a deeper understanding of how social impacts are actually measured. SE practitioners suggest that pursuing social impact measurement can be unrealistic and confusing (Barraket & Anderson, 2010). A concern is that social impact measurement does not emerge from existing SE research, given the science-practice gap noted from the wider entrepreneurship field (Hand & Lewis, 2016). Most extant studies of SE impacts are descriptive case studies, use qualitative approaches for social impact measurement (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Short et al., 2009; Wry & Haugh, 2018), and they are from disparate fields. Many such studies portray positive social impacts, which raises concerns about their potential bias towards "success story" narratives (Dees et al., 2008), and led to concerns such as "much of the current SE literature has adopted a positive management frame in which advantageous values, virtues and impacts are proselytized" (Davies et al., 2019, p. 1619) rather than a critical analysis of the field (Dey & Steyaert, 2012). Understanding and measuring SEs' social impact in rural development could thus contribute to the establishment of SEs' legitimacy (Sarpong & Davies, 2014). Without such an understanding, there exists danger of SEs being discarded as a development fad (Lyon, 2009).

This study addresses the above knowledge accumulation and advancement gaps by providing an initial systematic literature review (SLR) that gathers, maps and synthesizes findings from the available rural focused SE impact studies, and generating insights for future research. Our focus on rural SEs forms an initial "small coalition" for advancing social impact measurement, as suggested by Rawhouser et al. (2019). From our sample studies, we identify the need for embracing multidisciplinarity to understand and measure social impacts, and contribute to closing the science-practice gap (e.g., Hand & Lewis, 2016) by advocating for methodological approaches such as; i) the use of a sustainable rural livelihoods framework, ii) project or program level social impact measurement, iii) the use of a mixed method approach involving

the SEs' theory of change (ToC[2]) and/or logic model and a comparison group, iv) application of social impact analysis techniques that accommodate covariates and, v) the use of theory-based impact evaluation methods e.g. process tracing (PT) and contribution analysis (CA) in cases of purely qualitative SE studies. These methods have the potential to enhance social impact measurement methodological rigour and thus advance scholarship on SEs' social impacts, and the design and implementation of projects/programs by the SEs' managers.

2. Methods

We apply a SLR approach (Tranfield et al., 2003) that overcomes researcher bias thus enhance methodological rigour to identify articles for this study. The inclusion criteria is as follows: the articles' being journal articles[3] published in English language between January 1987 and March 2019; articles that defined and measured social impact; and targeted marginalized rural dwellers. The choice of the 1987- March 2019 period was based on social entrepreneurship research growth (Short et al., 2009) and was used in related reviews e.g. (Phillips et al., 2015). This period is longer than some recent reviews e.g. (Rawhouser et al., 2019) in the field, and represents a comprehensive search. Our search was conducted in relevant databases: Science Direct, Taylor and Francis, EBSCO, Informit, Jstor, Business Source Complete Scopus, rural science/development (CAB abstracts), ProQuest, Oxford Journals, Cambridge Core, Emerald Insight Web of Science, Gale, and Wiley Online library. We used a variety of keywords[4] in search strings[5] due to multiplicity of terms referring to SEs and their impacts. Our search resulted into 16,313 articles with 10,951 duplicates; an indication of search comprehensiveness. Further screening of titles, keywords and abstracts allowed exclusion of 5,287 articles. These excluded papers were from poor quality/obscure journals, non-empirical and/or not oriented to the rural context. This large exclusion confirms our earlier statements on the emphasis of received research literature. The remaining 74 articles were read in full after which 21 articles were selected for analysis (Table 1).

3. Main Results

Thirteen of the 21 included in this SLR are located in developing countries and they span the continents: Asia (India (4)), Bangladesh (2); Africa (Rwanda (2), Burundi (1), Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Kenya (1) and Namibia (1); Europe (United Kingdom (3)) and Ireland (1); Australia/Oceania (Australia (3), Papua New Guinea (1); and Central America (Nicaragua (1), Mexico (1)). As Table one shows, almost all studies (19) report positive social impacts. Almost all studies (20) measured social impacts at project/ program level while one combined many SEs and analysed their impacts at organisational level. Organisational level analysis masked detailed social impacts from projects within the different SEs studied while the use of the project/program level approach revealed the SEs' social impacts which is essential for

[2]A Theory of Change is "an explicit theory/model of how a program/project or policy causes the intended or observed outcomes" (So & Staskevicius, 2015, p. 13) and thus, the ToC helps in the identification of the "preconditions, pathways, and interventions necessary for an initiative's success" (Kickul & Lyons, 2016, p. 95).

[3] Peer review was used as an academic quality indicator (Kraus et al., 2020) besides Rankings in Scopus and SCImago Journal Rank (Thananusak, 2019).

[4] Examples of keywords used for making search strings include: social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, social business, social purpose business, social entrepreneurial organisation, combined with social impact/impact, and rural development/regional development.

[5] Examples of search strings used for instance in ProQuest are: i) "social entrepreneurship" AND impact AND (Rural develop*) AND (stype.exact("Scholarly Journals") AND la.exact("ENG") AND PEER(yes)) AND pd(19870101-20190331), ii) "social entrepreneurial organisation" AND impact AND (Rural develop*) AND PEER(yes) AND pd(19870101-20190331).

developing strategies to improve the SEs' capacity to achieve desired social impacts. Social impact is defined in various ways across the studies but in general, it refers to the SEs' externalities[6]. In this SLR, a definitional pattern for social impact emerges that relates to rural livelihood improvement i.e. wellbeing outcomes of the SEs' target beneficiaries and/or clients. For instance, in eight studies social impact is referred to simply as "impact" or words including the term "impact" (e.g. livelihood impact and social-economic impact). Although included studies did not explicitly classify the variables employed in their analyses, we categorised them as independent and dependent. The independent variable common to all the 21 studies was participation/membership/beneficiary in and of the SE. The dependent variable varied across the studies based on the specific aspects of the intervention. Based on Rawhouser et al.'s (2019) activity/outcome approach and single sector/multisector criteria, almost all studies (20) measure the effect/impact of a SE on participants/beneficiaries/clients and/or the entire community and thus they are categorised as using the outcome approach: just one study uses the activity approach. Six studies are multiple sector in nature while 15 are classified as single sector. A closer reading of our sample studies using the logic model (Wry & Haugh, 2018) indicates that just one study attempted to fully measure social impacts while the rest (20) reported generalised impacts (outputs, outcomes or impacts). Notably, just three studies use a ToC concept which is an important tool for social impact analysis in impact studies.

Table 2 shows that the most commonly used data collection methods from our sample studies include: interviews (11); focus group discussions (6); participant observation (6); surveys (4); document reviews (2); ethnography (1); and workshops (1). All studies in the sample (21) used a case study approach and (14) used a single case study for their investigations, two used two case studies and the remaining five each used 3, 9, 10, 20 and 50 cases respectively. Thirteen studies were qualitative in nature while eight used quantitative methods for social impact measurement. Two studies used a quasi-experimental design to address selection bias, but participant selection in most studies (17) was purposive, while it was random in only four. Out of the eight studies that applied a quantitative approach to social impact measurement, five use quantitative methods while three use mixed methods. Measurement would ideally satisfy minimal methodological requirements (e.g., use of a comparison, and some form of attribution of social impacts to the SE such as theory-based methods (e.g. PT and CA in qualitative studies) and covariate adjustment techniques (matching techniques such as propensity score matching (PSM), difference in difference (DiD), etc.). Most qualitative studies (12) in our sample do not use a comparison group nor a rigorous theory-based technique when measuring the SEs' social impacts. For the eight quantitative and mixed method studies, only two consider a comparison group and apply covariate adjustment technique to control for covariates.

4. Discussion and implications for future studies and practice

Our sample SEs are active in different countries and operate in many sectors of the social economy. Although extant research notes that social entrepreneurship is primarily studied in developed countries, (Gupta et al., 2020; Short et al., 2009), the majority of studies in our

[6] Externalities in this paper refer to outcomes which are created from an economic activity that exceed the objective functions of those engaged in the activity (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Santos, 2012).

sample were from developing countries. This may reflect not that SEs are more studied in such countries, but rather that most of the studied SEs were originally NGOs/NGO spinoffs, or have been funded partly by external donors/funders. A further consequence of this genesis for SEs is that they are likely to be the subject of social impact measurement in order to comply with external stakeholders' expectations (Barraket & Yousefpour, 2013).
Also in agreement with extant literature, empirical social impact measurement in rural focused SEs is found to be a recent phenomenon, with a predominance of descriptive case studies, a method common in SE studies (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Short et al., 2009; Wry & Haugh, 2018). The case studies in this study identify positive SE social impacts without application of rigorous/robust social impact measurement methods. To rigorously measure social impact, studies employing a quantitative/mixed method approach could include random assignment of participants or quasi experimental designs. Given the challenges of internal validity with such designs, covariate adjustment techniques could be applied e.g., matching, instrumental variable estimation and inverse probability weighting to avoid endogeneity problems, and to account for sampling problems (e.g., Austin, 2011; Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). For qualitative studies, robustness could be enhanced by the use of a ToC and/or a logic model together with theory-based impact measurement methods e.g. (PT) (Morgan, 2016) and CA (Delahais & Toulemonde, 2012). Using a mixed method approach and a ToC, and considering a comparison group and covariate adjustment, Kabeer and Sulaiman (2015) measured the SE's social impacts and established the extent to which the impacts could be attributed to the SE. This exemplifies the feasibility of a mixed method approach as echoed by Wry and Haugh (2018).The use of a mixed method approach is enhanced by applying a ToC and/or logic model which assists with attribution of social impacts to SEs' actions (ibid).

Despite the SEs' social impacts being defined differently, social impact measurement in terms of rural livelihood and wellbeing outcomes is found to be suited to the existing definitional approaches such as the rural livelihoods framework from development studies cf; (Scoones, 2015). The application of such a framework offers potential as an overarching-organising framework for rural focused social impact, and its importance is emerging in social entrepreneurship (Masukujjaman et al., 2016). Borrowing of theories and/or concepts and frameworks from other fields to enrich and support social impact measurement has been encouraged (Ormiston & Castellas, 2019). A common definition of social impact conceptualises it as "beneficial outcomes resulting from prosocial behaviour that are enjoyed by the intended targets of that behaviour and/or by the broader community of individuals, organizations, and/or environments" (Rawhouser et al., 2019, p. 2). We propose a modification of this definition when applied to the measurement of social impacts in rural focused SEs, to include both the positive and negative or intended and unintended consequences of the SEs' interventions to align with Clifford et al.'s (2014) definition.
Measurement of SEs' social impacts at project or program level offers the management advantage of identification of project or program-specific impacts (both intended and unintended) at beneficiaries'/clients' levels, which would enhance the SE's ability to achieve its social mission which is the core reason for social impact measurement in SEs (OECD, 2015). The use of a single sector approach for social impact measurement, commonly applied in our sample, is disadvantageous as it limits generalisability. However, opportunities are apparent for comparability amongst social impact measurement if the following conditions are met: i) social impacts are measured in similar contexts e.g. rural settings; and ii) use of social impact

measurement dimensions that are indirect measures of human development/welfare (Salazar et al., 2012) or indicators drawn from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (GRI, 2020). The use of such measures/indicators together with the application of the ToC and/or logic model and the rural livelihoods framework as an analytical lens and/or organising framework in rural social impact studies would thus create an opportunity for comparison of social impacts from different studies. A further step is the use of multi-dimensional constructs/indices across various social impact indicators (e.g., Hertel et al.'s (2020) civic wealth).

5. Conclusion and contribution of the study

To conclude, despite there being no universally agreed definition of social impact within this study, rural focused SEs social impact measurement could be approached with an understanding that SEs are meant to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing outcomes of rural communities. Whilst positive social impacts are always intended, SE interventions can also result in unintended positive and/or negative impacts that need to be considered. There has been minimal use of rigorous social impact measurement methods to enable progress beyond the simple reporting of (anecdotal) positive narratives of social impact, and towards results that can be verified and attributed to the SEs. Improvements are offered by mixed method/quantitative approaches involving the SEs' ToC and/or logic model, and a comparison group or theory-based impact evaluation methods such as PT and CA in cases of purely qualitative studies.

To the authors' knowledge, this is the first SLR of empirical rural focused SE studies that has gathered, synthesised, analysed and documented social impacts and their measurement. It thus contributes to the broader conversations on social impacts and their measurement in SEs (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Wry & Haugh, 2018).This study also contributes to the emerging theory of social entrepreneurship, specifically to the concept of social impacts and their measurement through stimulating the need for multidisciplinarity. The study offers new insights into the applications of theory to social impacts and their measurement. It also documents the variety of definitions of social impacts used with regard to rural communities, and offers rationalization of these. It contributes to closing the science-practice gap in social entrepreneurship where Hand and Lewis, (2016, para. 6) note the importance of synthesising studies to go beyond 'anecdotes and case studies and enable the growth of the field while generating knowledge that is "useful to practitioners, leading to more productive interactions between academia and practice". Thus, by synthesising SE case studies in this study, we identify methodologies that; i) SE practitioners can use for rigorously understanding their impacts to better manage their SEs, and ii) researchers interested in social entrepreneurship could use to uncover social impacts, mechanisms and processes through which they are created to theoretically contribute generally to social and solidarity economy organisations' studies.

Key References

Arena, M., Azzone, G., & Bengo, I. (2015). Performance Measurement for Social Enterprises. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *26*(2), 649–672. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-013-9436-8

Austin, P. C. (2011). An introduction to propensity score methods for reducing the effects of

confounding in observational studies. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *46*(3), 399–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2011.568786

Bagnoli, L., & Megali, C. (2011). Measuring Performance in Social Enterprises. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *40*(1), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009351111

Barraket, J., & Anderson, H. (2010). *Developing strong social enterprises: a documentary approach* (CPNS 52). http://eprints.qut.edu.au/39028/

Barraket, J., & Yousefpour, N. (2013). Evaluation and Social Impact Measurement Amongst Small to Medium Social Enterprises: Process, Purpose and Value. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *72*(4), 447–458. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12042

Bird, K., Hulme, D., Shepherd, A., & Moore, K. (2012). Chronic Poverty and Remote Rural Areas. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1754490

Clifford, J., Hehenberger, L., & Fantini, M. (2014). *Proposed Approaches to Social Impact Measurement in European Commission legislation and in practice relating to EuSEFs and the EaSI*. https://doi.org/doi:10.2767/28855

Davies, I. A., Haugh, H., & Chambers, L. (2019). Barriers to Social Enterprise Growth. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *57*(4), 1616–1636. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12429

Dees, M. J. G., Nash, B. A., Kalafatas, J., Tolman, R., Wendy, K., Bloom, P., & McGrath, A. (2008). *Developing the Field of Social Entrepreneurship*. https://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-case.pdf

Delahais, T., & Toulemonde, J. (2012). Applying contribution analysis: Lessons from five years of practice. *Evaluation*, *18*(3), 281–293. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389012450810

Dey, P., & Steyaert, C. (2012). Social entrepreneurship: critique and the radical enactment of the social. *Social Enterprise Journal*, *8*(2), 90–107. https://doi.org/10.1108/17508611211252828

GRI. (2020). *Global Reporting Initiative Standards Download Center*. https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/gri-standards-download-center/

Grieco, C. (2015). *Assessing social impact of social enterprises : does one size really fit all?* Springer Briefs in Business. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15314-8

Gupta, P., Chauhan, S., Paul, J., & Jaiswal, M. P. (2020). Social entrepreneurship research: A review and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, *113*, 209–229. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.03.032

Hand, M., & Lewis, J. (2016, May 24). The Research Gap in Social Entrepreneurship. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_research_gap_in_social_entrepreneurship

Haugh, H. M. (2021). Social economy advancement: from voluntary to secure organizational commitments to public benefit. *Journal of Management History*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMH-06-2020-0035

Hertel, C., Bacq, S., & G. T., L. (2020). Social Performance and Social Impact in the Context of Social Enterprises—A Holistic Perspective. In V. Antonino & R. Tommaso (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Innovation and Social Enterprises*.

Kabeer, N., & Sulaiman, M. (2015). Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization: Nijera Kori and the Construction of Collective Capabilities in Rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, *16*(1), 47–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2014.956707

Kickul, J., & Lyons, T. S. (2016). *Understanding Social Entrepreneurship: The Relentless Pursuit of Mission in an Ever Changing World* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://books.google.com.au/books?id=WOlBjgEACAAJ

Kim, D., Cho, W., & Allen, B. (2020). Sustainability of social economy organizations (SEOs): An analysis of the conditions for surviving and thriving. *Social Science Journal*, *00*(00), 1–17.

https://doi.org/10.1080/03623319.2020.1799174
Krlev, G., Pasi, G., Wruk, D., & Marika, B. (2021, April 21). *Reconceptualizing the Social Economy*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/reconceptualizing_the_social_economy
Lyon, F. (2009). Measuring the value of social and community impact. In P. Hunter (Ed.), *social enterprise for public service:how does the third sector deliver?* (pp. 1–100). The Smith Institute. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/social-enterprise-for-public-service-how-does-the-third-sector-deliver
Masukujjaman, M., Siwar, C., Alam, S. S., & Halim, S. A. (2016). Does social business link with the sustainable livelihoods of rural households?: Lessons from Bangladesh. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, *50*(5), 403–413. https://doi.org/10.1353/jda.2016.0031
Morgan, K. J. (2016). Process tracing and the causal identification revolution. *New Political Economy*, *21*(5), 489–492. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2016.1201804
OECD. (2015). *Social Entrepreneurship: Social Impact Measurement for Social Enterprises* (No. 10; Issue 10). https://doi.org/10.1787/5jrtpbx7tw37-en
Ormiston, J. (2019). Blending practice worlds: Impact assessment as a transdisciplinary practice. *Business Ethics*, *28*(4), 423–440. https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12230
Ormiston, J., & Castellas, E. (2019). Measuring impact in social entrepreneurship: Developing a research agenda for the 'practice turn' in impact assessment. In *A Research Agenda for Social Entrepreneurship* (pp. 46–58). Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788972321.00009
Phillips, W., Lee, H., Ghobadian, A., O'Regan, N., & James, P. (2015). Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship. *Group & Organization Management*, *40*(3), 428–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601114560063
Rahdari, A., Sepasi, S., & Moradi, M. (2016). Achieving sustainability through Schumpeterian social entrepreneurship: The role of social enterprises. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *137*, 347–360. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.06.159
Rawhouser, H., Cummings, M., & Newbert, S. L. (2019). Social Impact Measurement: Current Approaches and Future Directions for Social Entrepreneurship Research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *43*(1), 82–115. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258717727718
Richter, R., Fink, M., Lang, R., & Maresch, D. (2019). Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Rural Europe. In *Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Rural Europe*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351038461
Rosenbaum, P. R., & Rubin, D. B. (1983). The central role of the propensity score in observational studies for causal effects. *Biometrika*, *70*(1), 41–55. https://doi.org/10.1093/biomet/70.1.41
Salazar, J., Husted, B. W., & Biehl, M. (2012). Thoughts on the Evaluation of Corporate Social Performance Through Projects. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *105*(2), 175–186. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0957-z
Santos, F. M. (2012). A Positive Theory of Social Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *111*(3), 335–351. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1413-4
Sarpong, D., & Davies, C. (2014). Managerial organizing practices and legitimacy seeking in social enterprises. *Social Enterprise Journal*, *10*(1), 21–37. https://doi.org/10.1108/sej-05-2013-0019
Scoones, I. (2015). *Sustainable livelihoods and rural development*. Practical Action Publishing.
Short, J. C., Moss, T. W., & Lumpkin, G. T. (2009). Research in social entrepreneurship: past contributions and future opportunities. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, *3*(2), 161–194. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.69
So, I., & Staskevicius, A. (2015). *Measuring the impact in impact investing* [Harvard University]. https://www.hbs.edu/socialenterprise/Documents/MeasuringImpact.pdf

Thananusak, T. (2019). Science Mapping of the Knowledge Base on Sustainable Entrepreneurship, 1996–2019. *Sustainability*, *11*(13), 3565. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11133565

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review. *British Journal of Management*, *14*(3), 207–222. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00375

World Bank Group. (2020, April 16). *Poverty Overview*. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview

Wry, T., & Haugh, H. (2018). Brace for impact: Uniting our diverse voices through a social impact frame. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *33*(5), 566–574. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.04.010

Table 1: Terminology, definition and measurement of SEs' social impacts

Author (s)	Terminology for SE impact	Definition of SE impact	Operationalisation of SE impact		Social Impact overall direction	Use of Comparison group	Covariate adjustment method	Social impact process stage	Generalisability of the application
			Independent Variable	Dependent Variable				Activity or outcome	Multi- or single-sector
Caló et al. (2019)	Social outcomes	improved health outcomes and perceptions of those participating in the SE activities	Participation in the SE's health and social care program	-Perceptions/ feelings of connectedness, inclusion and protection	Positive	Yes	None[a]	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)[*]	Multisector
Steiner & Teasdale (2019)	Impact	Outcomes from SE interventions	Participation in the SEs' activities	-Economic resilience (Job creation), -Investments in the local areas, -Local service provision -Community cohesion and added value	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Franzidis (2018)	Impact	Production of a high quality tourism product that disseminates social value among all stakeholders	Participation in the SE's livelihood programs	-Education -Employment -Local community support	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outputs and Outcomes)	Single sector
Barstow et al. (2016)	Impact	Adoption of improved cook stoves and advanced water filters by the rural poor	Participation in the SE's cook stoves and advanced water filters program	-Adoption of improved cook stoves and advanced water filters	Positive	Yes	None	Outcome (Outputs and outcomes)	Single sector
Butler & Lobley (2016)	Social-economic impact	Changes in wellbeing of SE participants	Participation in training offered by the SEs	-Wellbeing (subjectively measured using five dimensions) -Return on Investment.	Minimal impacts	Yes	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Multisector
Cieslik (2016)	Benefits	Benefits which accrue from the SE (community Child Protection Committees (CPC)) interventions	Participation in the SE's (Project Lumière's nine CPCs) activities	- Education -Poverty reduction - Health outcomes -Environment (use of green energy)	Positive	No	None	Activity Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Farmer et al. (2016)	Benefits	Well-being impacts on people's lives in a community	Participation in the SE's wellbeing program	-Health -Wellbeing perceptions	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Multisector
Vázquez-Maguirre et al. (2016)	Benefits	Wellbeing of women derived from participating in the SE activities	Participation in the SE's enterprise activities	-Employment -Provision of no-interest loans -Political empowerment	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector

Author (s)	Terminology for SE impact	Definition of SE impact	Operationalisation of SE impact		Social Impact overall direction	Use of Comparison group	Covariate adjustment method	Social impact process stage	Generalisability of the application
			Independent Variable	Dependent Variable				Activity or outcome	Multi- or single-sector
Mohanan et al.(2016)	(Health) Outcomes	Outcomes from the SE activity i.e. treatment of childhood diarrhoea and pneumonia	Participation in the SE intervention (World Health Partners (WHP) Sky program)	-Prevalence of key children's health outcomes (diarrhoea and pneumonia) -Changes in parents' health care practices for children	No impacts	Yes	Difference-in-difference[a]	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Spencer et al. (2016)	Social effectiveness (Social performance)	Employment and social capital creation in the local community	Participation in the SE (Nuwul) programs and activities.	Social effectiveness; changes in beneficiaries' livelihoods (Job creation and readiness, income generation, and Social capital creation	Positive	No	None	Outcomes (Outputs, outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Holt & Littlewood (2015)	Impact	Social and economic changes in the lives of the SE participants	Participation in the different SEs' activities/programs	-Income status -Relational wellbeing benefits -Community improvement	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Kabeer and Sulaiman (2015)	Impact	Livelihoods improvement, political knowledge and local and national participation	Membership and participation in the SE (NK) activities	-Improved livelihoods -Improved knowledge of politics and policy -Community participation	Mixed results	Yes	Propensity score matching[a]	Outcomes (Impacts)	Single sector
Munoz et al. (2015)	Benefits	Production of health and wellbeing benefits	Participation in the SE's wellbeing program	-Health and wellbeing perceptions	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Multisector
Bonny and Rajendran (2013)	Social value	Value creation associated with group priorities for the greater empowerment of group members	Women's participation in SHGs as SE's.	-Social value creation (in form of women empowerment)	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Multisector
Sakata and Prideaux (2013)	Impact	Community-defined positive/negative impacts of economic tourism	Participation in SE's (community-based ecotourism) activities	-Poverty reduction -Social capital creation -Economic impact (reduction in economic leakage)	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Impact)	Single sector
Tobias et al. (2013)	Social value	Poverty and conflict reduction	Participation in the SE program (Coffee washing stations)	- Wealth -Quality of life	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Multisector

Author (s)	Terminology for SE impact	Definition of SE impact	Operationalisation of SE impact		Social Impact overall direction	Use of Comparison group	Covariate adjustment method	Social impact process stage	Generalisability of the application
			Independent Variable	Dependent Variable				Activity or outcome	Multi- or single-sector
				-Conflict (outgroup prejudice and social trust).					
McKague & Tinsley (2012)	Impact	Improved livelihoods (i.e. employment and subsequent income generation by rural women and affordable accessibility to socially beneficial goods by the rural populations)	Participation in the SE's (JITA Bangladesh) program	Poverty reduction: -Improved incomes by the rural sales women -Accessibility to socially beneficial goods by the BoP consumers	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Pless & Appel (2012)	Impact	Improvement in health, restoration of dignity, empowerment of women and breaking of the vicious circle of poverty	Participation in GV program activities	-Health - Education -Livelihood improvement -Environmental sustainability; improved farming practices and use of clean energy)	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Output, outcomes, and impacts)	Single sector
Torri (2012)	Social-economic impact	Empowerment, capacity building and increased income	Participation in the SE's (GMCL) activities	-Increase in Income -Enhanced social status for women	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
O'Shaughnessy et al.(2011)	Impacts	Improving access to remote areas for marginalised users living alone in isolated rural areas.	Participation in the SE's (BRT) rural transportation services	-Level of independence -Perceptions of isolation -Access to health and related care services	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector
Lapeyre (2010)	Livelihood impacts	Improved livelihoods of those participating in the SE activities	Participation in SE intervention (community-based tourism)	-Income status -Stability in employment -Capacity building for rural people -Social capital	Positive	No	None	Outcome (Outcomes and impacts)	Single sector

*This refers to the social impact process stage (what was measured in the study) through the lens of a program logic model.
[a] indicates that the study applied ToC knowledge in its impact analysis.

Table 2: Methods applied in the selected studies: Research type and design

		Research design			
Study Author(s)	**Phenomenon of interest**	**Research type**	**Data collection method**	**Sampling strategy**	**Sample**
Caló et al. (2019)	The impact of a SE-led activity on beneficiaries	Qualitative (with a comparison group) (2)*	(In-depth semi-structured) Interviews	Purposive	68 beneficiaries, service providers and external stakeholders
Steiner and Teasdale (2019)	The prevalence of SEs in rural areas and their contribution to rural development through solving rural challenges	Qualitative (descriptive without any comparison group) (2)	Interviews	Purposive	11 stakeholders
Franzidis (2018)	The business model of a SE and its importance to stakeholders from participating in the SE's activities.	Qualitative (without a comparison group) (1)	Interviews, field observation, photographic documentation and document review.	Purposive	Sample number not specified but it includes business founders, managers and SE employees
Barstow et al.(2016)	The importance of SE intervention to solving rural energy and water problems	Quantitative (Cross sectional with a comparison group) (1)	Survey	Random	198,319 i.e. 99,515 and 98,804 community members
Butler & Lobley (2016)	Efficacy of SE in offering training and skills development in rural areas	Mixed method (longitudinal) (3)	Interviews (Telephone) and a survey	Purposive	50 participants
Cieslik (2016)	How rural Burundi's agrarian communities accommodate and benefit from the SE model	Mixed method (without a comparison group) (9)	Interviews , focus group discussion and document review	Purposive	9 communities; senior staff, field workers, 3 group leaders and group members
Farmer et al.(2016)	The mechanisms of wellbeing generation from a SE	Qualitative (ethnographic without a comparison group) (1)	Mental mapping and (walking) interviews	Purposive	13 beneficiaries
Maguirre et al.(2016)	The SE factors/ mechanisms which enable the empowerment of women and influence local community development	Qualitative (Descriptive without a comparison group) (1)	(In depth semi-structured) Interviews	Purposive	70 participants
Mohanan et al.(2016)	The impacts of social franchising (within health care, a sector with a social objective) in the health sector	Quantitative (Quasi experimental with a comparison group) (1)	Survey (Household)	Random	67,950 children below 5 years
Munoz et al.(2015)	The conceptualisation of SEs as spaces of well-being i.e. how they produce health and wellbeing benefits for their participants	Qualitative (ethnographic without a comparison group) (1)	Ethnographic observation, focus group discussion and Interviews	Purposive	3 paid staff and 21 volunteers
Spencer et al.(2016)	The effectiveness of a SE (ability to facilitate employment, income generation and social capital	Qualitative (descriptive without a comparison group) (1)	(Semi-structured) Interviews, participant observation and Yarns	Snowball	24 participants (15 staff and management and 9 community stakeholders)
Holt and Littlewood (2015)	Identifying, mapping, and building impact indicators to measure SEs' impacts	Qualitative (without a comparison group) (20)	Interviews and observation	Purposive	20 SEs
Kabeer & Sulaiman (2015)	Impacts of SE's social mobilization and livelihood improvement on poor men and women	Quantitative (Quasi experimental with a comparative group) (1)	Survey, interviews and focus group discussion	Random	500 participants (250 SE members and 250 non-members)
Bonny & Rajendran (2013)	The conditions under which women's empowerment is related to value creation in self-help groups (SHGs)	Quantitative (Correlational analysis without a comparison group) (50)	Participant observation and (key informant) interviews	Proportionate	50 women SHGs from 22 Public Private Partnership models
Sakata and Prideaux (2013)	The impacts of a SE within Community-based ecotourism (CBT) in a remote indigenous community with poor amenities	Qualitative (descriptive without a comparison group) (1)	Interviews and focus group discussion	Purposive	6 guest house stakeholders
Tobias et al.(2013)	How entrepreneurship may catalyse prosperity and peace in poverty and conflict stricken areas	Quantitative (Cross sectional without a comparison group) (1)	Survey	Convenient	239 coffee workers

		Research design			
Study Author(s)	**Phenomenon of interest**	**Research type**	**Data collection method**	**Sampling strategy**	**Sample**
McKague and Tinsley (2012)	The SE rural distribution model as a possibility of combining market-based solutions to poverty reduction with in underserved participants	Mixed method (Cross sectional and longitudinal (on a few variables) without a comparison group) (1)	Participant observation, field observation, interviews and document review	Purposive	25 rural sales women, Bata employees and CARE staff
Pless and Appel (2012)	How a SE can realize a vision of an equitable and sustainable society	Qualitative (1)	Desk research (existing reports and papers), workshops, focus group discussion, interviews and field visit	Purposive	109 i.e.37 community members, 14 senior management and other staff members,11 local village staff, 45 regional managers and 2 other stakeholders
O'Shaughnessy et al. (2011)	The role of a rural-based SE organising rural transportation for improving access to remote/ rural areas and challenges that threaten its long term sustainability.	Mixed method (mainly descriptive without a comparison group) (1)	(In-depth) Interviews	Purposive	Sample not specified but it includes selected passengers and key stakeholders
Lapeyre (2010)	The contribution of community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) in rural areas.	Qualitative (without a comparison group) (1)	Survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and observation	Purposive	16 tour guides (Number of household members or other stakeholders not provided).
Torri (2010)	The conditions under which community-based enterprises (CBEs) could be an alternative model of entrepreneurial activity for the enhancement of marginalised rural livelihoods	Qualitative (descriptive without any comparison group) (1)	Interviews and focus group discussion	Snowball and random	36 i.e.12 staff, four field coordinators and 20 community members.
*Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of cases (the number of SEs) involved in each study.					

This paper was prepared by Peter Musinguzi, Derek Baker, Nicolette Larder, and Renato A. Villano in the framework of OECD Global Action "Promoting Social & Solidarity Ecosystems".

OECD Global Action | Promoting Social & Solidarity Economy Ecosystems

This project is funded by the European Union