



The Necessity of Social Entrepreneurship in the Post-Covid 19 Era

Great Transition of Digital Transformation Conference

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Overview

- About the **University of Northampton**.
- What are the post-Covid **challenges/opportunities**?
 - Need for **systems thinking**.
 - Framing this within **Sustainable Development**.
- The unique value of **social entrepreneurship**.
- How can social entrepreneurship **support global recovery**?
- How can **universities/academia** help to enable this?
- What is the social entrepreneurship **blueprint** for the post-Covid world?



UoN

**University of
Northampton**



**Hello
Waterside**

*Changemaker
Campus*

*Committed to Social
Innovation*

*Community
Anchor Institution*

*21st Century
University*

*Community work
informs teaching*



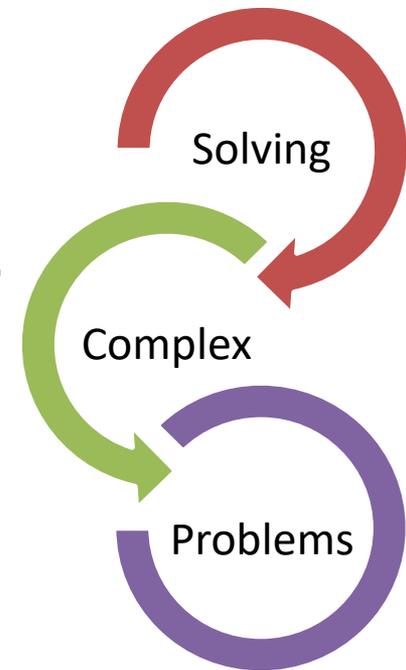
Post-Covid 'Opportunities'

- Will we experience **challenges** or **opportunities** post-pandemic?
- Covid-19 has exposed **sustainability issues**.
 - Overtly shown **health inequalities**.
 - Outdated **working practices**.
 - A lack of **digitization**.
- In relation to sustainable cities (EEA, 2021)...
 - **Transitioning** city-centre economies.
 - Enhancing **green transport** networks.
 - Improving urban **air quality**.
 - **Green growth** (job creation).
 - **Affordable** housing.
- There is a clear need to **reduce inequality!**



Systems Thinking

- Need to embed our recovery strategies in the context of ***all the crises*** facing us (Haley et al., 2021).
 - Covid, climate emergency, economic stagnation, species extinction, human mass migration.
 - Need to understand what ***systemic values*** we want.
 - Systems are ***human experiences***, we must understand people.
- Therefore, ***bottom-up social innovations*** are required.
 - Social entrepreneurship can help identify & deliver these.
- This systemic understanding must be embedded in & supported by ***top-down frameworks*** also
 - UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



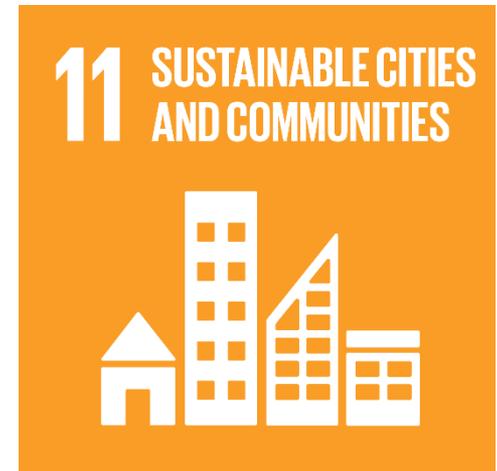
Sustainable Development

- The Sustainable Development Goals provide **17 impact areas** of focus to run to 2030.
 - **17 SDGs, 169 targets**, one holistic pathway to sustainability.
- The SDGs can provide the framework, but they need to be understood and implemented **on the ground**.



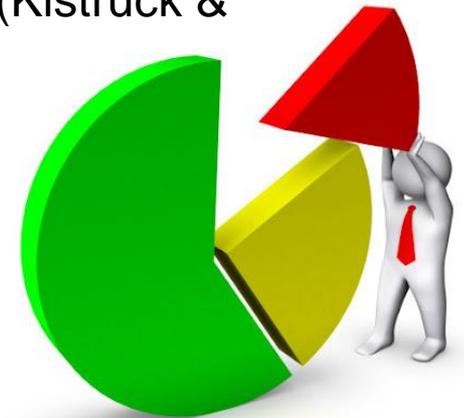
SDG11: Sustainable Cities & Communities

- Sub-aims within [SDG11](#) related to the issues outlined earlier:
 - Affordable *housing*.
 - Inclusive/sustainable *transport*.
 - Inclusive/sustainable *urbanization*.
 - Protect *cultural/natural* heritage.
 - Reduce *environmental impact* of cities.
 - Improve size of/access to *green spaces*.
 - *Enhance links* between urban/rural areas.
 - Support *developing nations* with urbanization.
- These are all areas that SEs can support with.
- Social enterprises work to solve problems that *existed before Covid*, but that have been *exacerbated* by the pandemic (Weaver, 2020).



Unique Value of SE

- **Social entrepreneurship:**
 - “...encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organisations in an innovative manner” (Zahra et al., 2009:519).
- **Social intrapreneurship** is also an interesting potential area of study:
 - Individuals within organisations who restructure previously separate institutional boundaries whilst maintaining legitimacy (Kistruck & Beamish, 2010).
- Berkes & Hunt (2007) argue that SE provides a tool for local communities to **shape globalisation** by providing control over common resources.



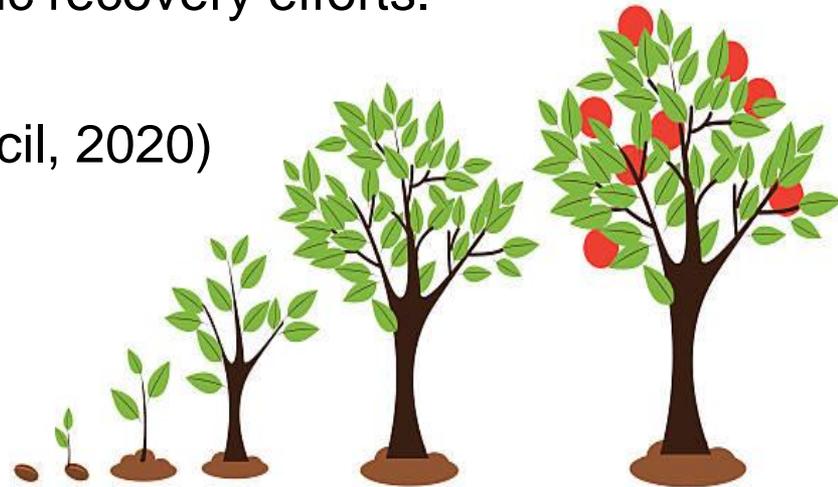
Contextual Communities

- Type of SE that emerges in each region is based within the ***cultural/institutional context*** that it emerges (Mendell, 2010).
- SE ecosystems are ***social systems***, where networks & relational capital enable (or inhibit) the flow of resources (Hazenberg et al., 2016).
- Cooney (2018) argues for a need to develop truly interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder, '***epistemic communities***' to meet these challenges.
- Social entrepreneurs can be ***key components*** of these ***communities***.



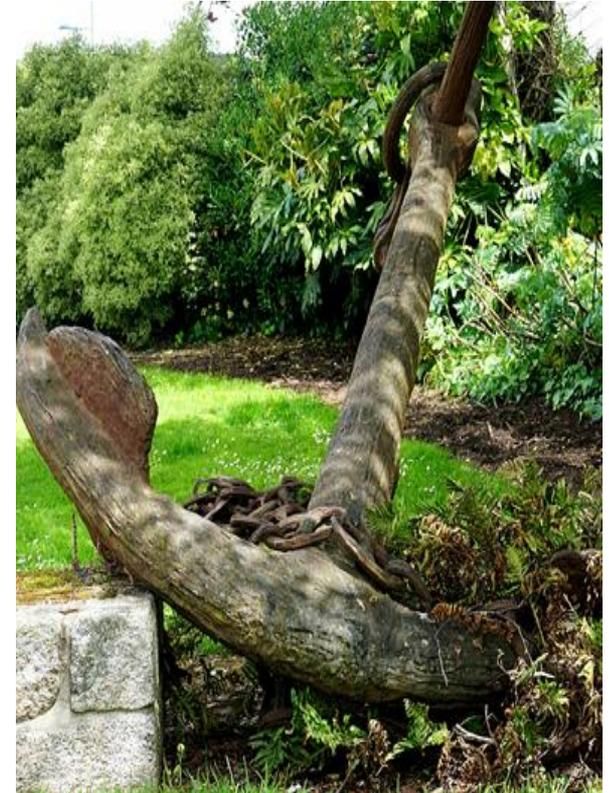
How can SE support recovery?

- Social entrepreneurs can be the ***intelligence agents*** identifying/developing bottom-up social innovations.
- Social enterprises as a ***specific organisational form*** can embody community efforts towards sustainability.
- Their ***hybrid focus*** on economic, social & environmental goals makes them perfect for post-pandemic recovery efforts.
- But they ***need support*** (British Council, 2020)
 - Connections to investors/funders.
 - Government support.
 - Business management support.



Supporting Institutions

- **Anchor institutions** can support SEs & come in many forms.
 - Governmental bodies.
 - Foundations/NGOs.
 - Corporates/businesses.
- But... **universities** can also perform this role.
 - Focus more on **impactful, applied research** that has **tangible value** to SEs/communities.
 - Ensure teaching is **high-quality & applied**
 - Encourage **partnerships** with/between social entrepreneurs/communities, government & business.
 - Partner with public, private & third sector institutions to **build trust**.
 - **Engage** with & **commit** to the UN SDGs.

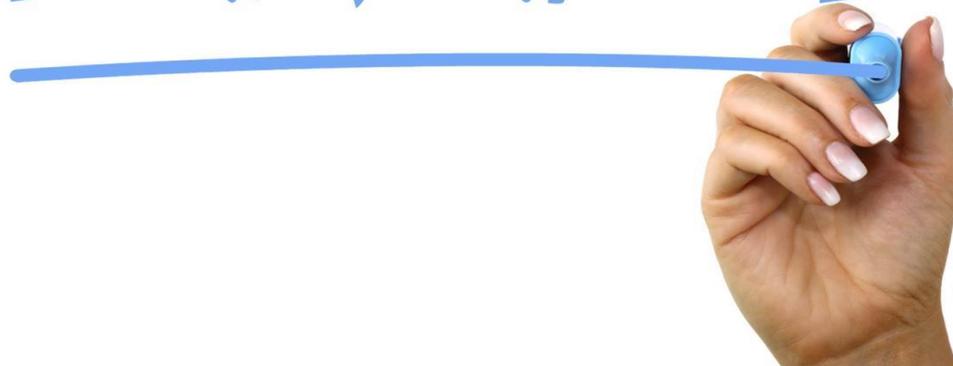


HEI Impact Hexagon



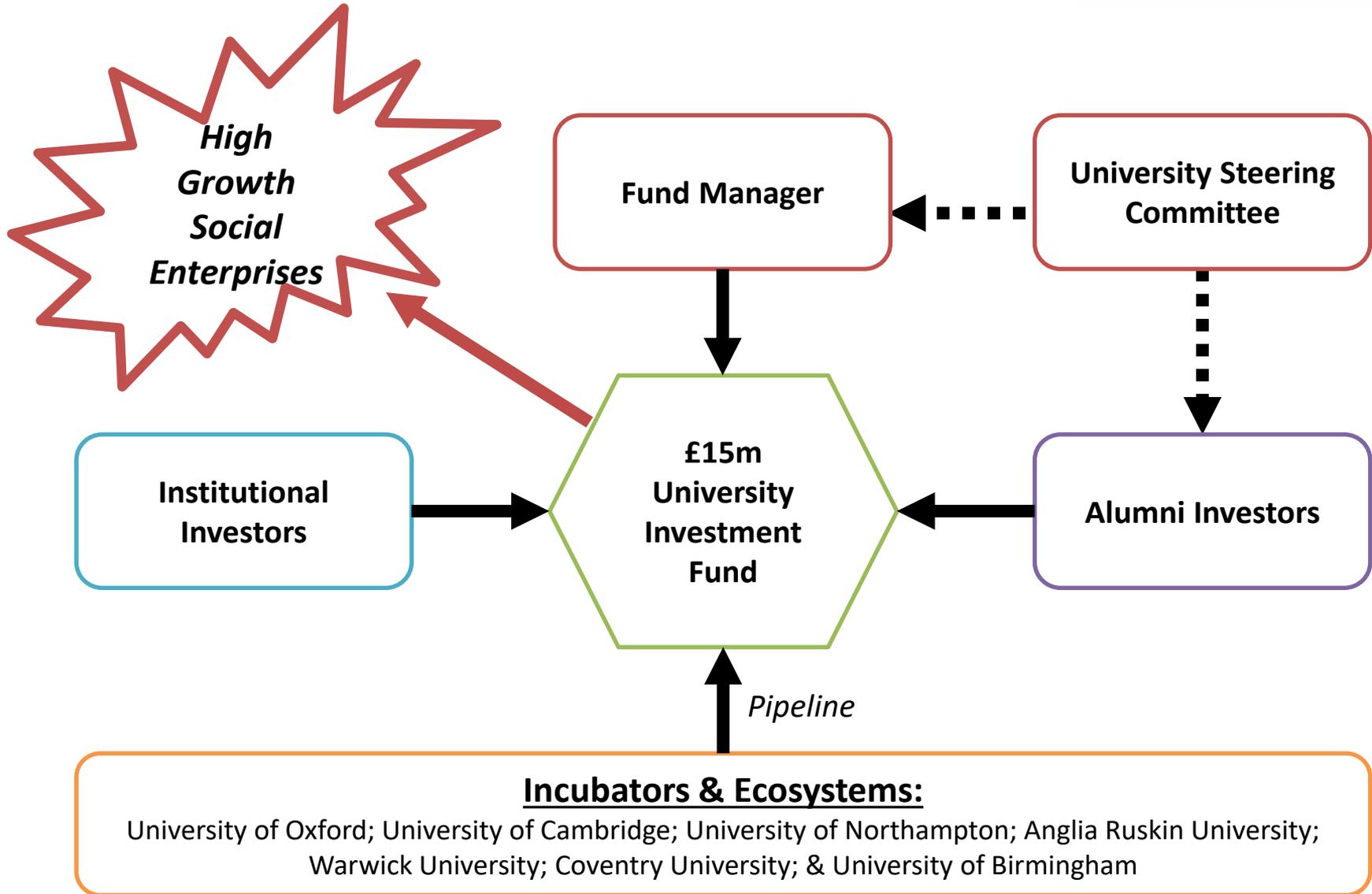
*HEIs acting
socially
entrepreneurially
to support
recovery*

EXAMPLE



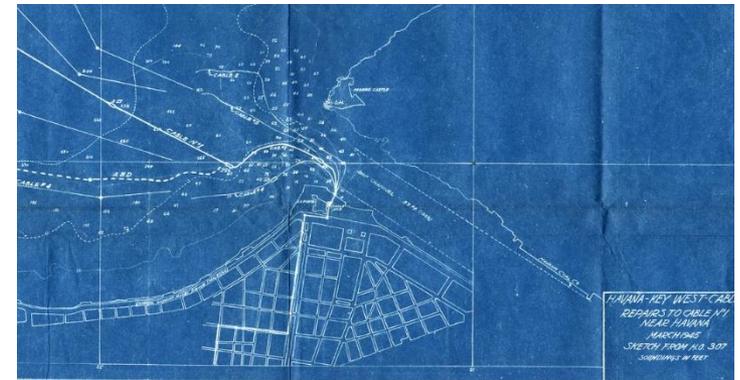
One example of HEI support...

Incubation & Scale



The Blueprint...

- Post-pandemic recovery depends on ***systems thinking*** approaches to rebuilding the ***new normal***.
- Need to ***listen to and support*** communities...what do ***they need?***
- Social entrepreneurship should play a ***central role*** in this.
- SEs need support to do this, which should be delivered in ***multi-disciplinary communities***.
- Post-Covid provides us ***opportunities*** to drive ***real change!***



Thank you
for listening

Any questions?

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