
Book Review

Reviewed by Daphne Halkias

E-mail: daphne_halkias@yahoo.com

Scaling Social Impact: New Thinking
by Paul N. Bloom and Edward Skloot
Published 2010
by Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 270 pages
ISBN-10: 0230104371

‘Social impact’ is the value created for beneficiaries, society, and the world by a social- purpose organisation or program, value that cannot be reduced to economic wealth for owners or consumption benefits for customers. ‘Scaling social impact’, an interdisciplinary concept, is the *process of increasing the impact a social-purpose organisation produces to better match the magnitude of the social need or problem it seeks to address*. Scaling social impact can include: expanding the quantity and improving the quality of the services provided directly by your organisation; enabling other organisations to provide a higher quantity and quality of direct services; changing the political, cultural, or economic environment to reduce the need or problem; improving the productivity of resources devoted to addressing the need or problem (http://www.caseatduke.org/documents/annotated_bibliography_scalingsocialimpact.pdf)

The multidisciplinary nature of ‘scaling social impact’ requires that the topic be examined through many lenses, resulting in *Scaling Social Impact*, which incorporates theories and practical knowledge from across the academic curriculum. *Scaling Social Impact* is an ambitious and comprehensive account of this issue close to the heart of social entrepreneurs and their stakeholders or, as this compendium tells us, should be. This volume grew out of a conference titled “Scaling Social Impact: What We Know and What We Need to Know” hosted by the Fuqua School’s Center for the Advancement for Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University and the Bridgespan Group. With a Foreword by Bridgespan’s Jeffrey L. Bradach and an Introduction by the editors, *Scaling Social Impact* presents 12 essays by a variety of scholars and practitioners offering innovative ideas on scaling and growth of social enterprises with a targeted focus on impact and performance.

Many social entrepreneurs struggle to take successful, innovative programs that address social problems on a local or limited basis and scale them up to expand their impact in a more widespread, deeper, and efficient way. This book represents a valuable addition to the growing body of serious social entrepreneurship research. There are no clear answers yet in this young research movement on ‘best practice’ in scaling social impact in the non-profit sector. However, *Scaling Social Impact* is well-organised edited text succinctly and eloquently raising critical issues of scaling for social entrepreneurs, unlike many edited texts whose chapters seem just awkwardly brought

together under one title. The chapters here logically flow together to create a progressive entrepreneurial process for scaling social impact in nonprofit enterprises, under five well planned and defined sections: *'Framing the Issues'*, *'The Pros and Cons of Scaling'*, *'Cultivating Ecosystem Alliances and Networks'*, *'Communicating and Branding and Guiding Funders and Supporters'*.

The makeup of this book itself reflects the professional backgrounds of its editors. Paul N. Bloom is Faculty Director and Adjunct Professor of Social Entrepreneurship and Marketing with the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE) at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. Dr. Bloom leads CASE's Scaling Social Impact research program and has focused his own research on understanding the organisational capabilities that drive successful scaling. Prior to coming to Duke in 2006, Bloom's voluminous scholarly work over the past two decades focused on how the field of marketing can contribute to societal welfare. Bloom's co-editor Edward Skloot is Director of the Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society and Professor of the Practice at the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University. Skloot was founder and President of New Ventures, a nonprofit consulting firm that assisted other NGOs in earning income as a complement to fundraising. Earlier, he served as a senior official in the governments of New York City and New York State and worked in the for-profit world as a management consultant. Bringing together esteemed scholars to offer their contribution to this text in such a collaborative style credits Bloom and Skloot with understanding the all-important human factors involved in the multifaceted issues on how to scale social impact successfully.

So, my recommendation to scholars, students, policy makers, venture capitalists, social entrepreneurs- or anyone thinking of entering the new frontier of the social economy: read this book. It should be noted that *Scaling Social Impact: New Thinking* is the first in a new book series by the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE). Aptly titled, The Social Entrepreneurship Series represents a new and exciting knowledge dissemination initiative in the field of social entrepreneurship. The series will contain monographs and compendia of papers offering the latest thinking about how to become more effective at social entrepreneurship, drawing upon the best thinking in both the business and philanthropy worlds to develop innovative approaches to addressing critical social needs in health, poverty, the environment, and other domains. I look forward to reading and once again reviewing the volumes to come in CASE's The Social Entrepreneurship Series.