

GENERATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP KNOWLEDGE: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION ON A HEMISPHERIC LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Provide insights on how social entrepreneurship (SE) knowledge can be more effectively generated by universities through the entrepreneurial creation and effective management of a knowledge network centered on international collaborative research; illuminate how one such network has enabled Latin American researchers to advance the knowledge and practice frontiers in the hemisphere and globally.

Methodology/Approach: Retrospective analysis of the two-decade evolution of the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network, a pioneering international research collaboration (IRC) of Ibero-American management schools.

Findings: Documents factors and dynamics enabling the successful creation and operation of international knowledge networks. Analyzes the key mechanisms for capturing synergies in collaborative research. Identifies specific effectiveness determinants for successfully operating an international social enterprise knowledge generation network. Identifies multiple impacts of a knowledge generation network.

Research Implications: Advances understanding of IRCs. Provides a model for assessing knowledge network multiple impacts. Identifies a series of future research opportunities and needs.

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Practical Implications: Provides operational guidance for researchers developing or operating collaborative international knowledge networks.

Social Implications: Reveals the value of collaboration in international research and factors that contribute to effective collaboration.

Originality/Value: Provides unique retrospective study of an IRC network operated by developing country schools of management. Expands the scope of recent comparative research on SE education to include a set of countries in Ibero-America. Documents an approach to assessing the impacts of a knowledge network. Identifies important areas for advancing future social enterprise research and teaching.

Keywords: Research benefits; collaboration effectiveness determinants; international research collaboration; knowledge network; performance assessment; social entrepreneurship

ADVANCING THE FIELD THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

The advancement of the young field of social entrepreneurship (SE) requires the robust generation and application of knowledge globally in order to consolidate its distinctive set of theoretical foundations (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Haugh, 2012). Morley and Heraty (2019) point out that

...the generation of novel contextual understanding to enhance theory building, deepen our appreciation of embedded management practices in more diverse territories, and open up new lines of enquiry was, and remains, challenging social science research. Increasingly, international academic research networks that bring together scholars from different countries in the co-production of knowledge represent a key approach to rising to this challenge. (p. 341)

Importantly, in recent decades knowledge generation through collaborative research networks has increasingly expanded beyond long-standing major players in Europe and North America. Particularly, international research collaboration (IRC), an important subset of collaborative research, has also grown significantly during the last years (Wang et al., 2014). Adams (2012) observes, “new regional networks are reinforcing the competence and capacity of emerging research economies, and changing the global balance of research activity” (p. 335). According to Chen, Zhang, and Fu (2019), the study of IRC networks has experienced a process of development culminating in a “take-off” phase that helped establish it as one of the major areas in which the IRC research domain can be classified. In some countries, university accrediting organizations have even created international collaboration indexes to assess this as a valued dimension (Noh & Chang, 2019). Collective international research undertakings hold significant potential for accelerating future research, yet there is very limited examination of what factors, mechanisms, dynamics, and impact make IRC collaborative networks powerful knowledge generators (Chen et al., 2019; Li & Shapira, 2012).

To help fill that gap, this chapter analyzes a pioneering approach to international collaborative research and education on social enterprise, encompassing the entrepreneurship processes and the resulting social enterprises, in Ibero-America: the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN). Founded in 2001 through a process of academic entrepreneurship, the Network brought together a group of leading management schools committed to advancing the frontiers of knowledge and practice of inclusive and sustainable corporate and social initiatives in the region. The creation of SEKN was in large part motivated by the will to incorporate social enterprise as a core element in management curricula across the region to strengthen future business and social leaders' contributions to significant and much needed social change. The Network's regional focus provided the opportunity to learn from the contextual particularities of Ibero-America through collaborative research that enabled more powerful knowledge generation.

After two productive decades, SEKN's initial motivation and the appeal of the opportunity it sought remain valid. There is growing space in management curricula for social enterprise education (Solomon, Alabduljader, & Ramani, 2019). Additionally, as stated by Aguinis et al. (2020), Latin America does not just add a new geographical setting to test old theories; rather, it "offers unique opportunities for conducting research that force us to rethink baseline assumptions and theories on individual behavior, firms, organizations, markets, and institutions" (p. 616), notably social enterprises and blended social and economic value creation. They also state, however, a major challenge is that generally, "Latin American management faculty lack the international research networks to advance their research agendas" (p. 630). This chapter's analysis of SEKN illuminates how this challenge can be effectively met as well as reveals possible pathways for how universities can entrepreneurially create collaborative knowledge networks to accelerate the future development of SE globally. As a single case study, our analysis of SEKN reveals a set of postulated key performance factors on knowledge networks based on IRC. These, in turn, constitute future avenues for SE research for testing and refining their applicability to other initiatives and contexts.

A knowledge network can be defined as a collaborative grouping whose constitutive elements are either individual or collective agents acting across organizational, spatial, and disciplinary boundaries in order to create, search for, adopt, transmit, and store knowledge (cf. Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012; Pugh & Prusak, 2013). Importantly, agents in these networks play the simultaneous roles of sources and recipients of information and knowledge. Based on a comprehensive systematic review, Phelps et al. (2012) propose a typology that classifies knowledge network research around: (1) *knowledge outcomes* (creation, transfer, and adoption), (2) *knowledge network properties* (structure, relations, nodes, and flows), and (3) *level of analysis* (interpersonal, intraorganizational, and interorganizational). Importantly, they emphasize the need for a richer understanding of the microfoundations underlying interorganizational relationships in knowledge networks.

All these dimensions and others are explored in the following analysis of SEKN as an innovative approach to international collaborative research and education on social enterprise. The chapter adds empirical evidence on knowledge networks, particularly the insights and challenges that arise for organizational members to entrepreneurially create, build, and manage those networks effectively. Additionally, it expands to Ibero-America the scope of recent comparative research on SE education (Solomon et al., 2019). Throughout it identifies future research opportunities.

The chapter has five components:

- (1) *Evolution of SEKN*: To provide an empirical basis for examining critical dimensions of generating new SE knowledge through IRC, we start by documenting the founding and evolution of SEKN. We offer it as an example of academic entrepreneurship that may prove illuminating for other schools as well as pointing to pathways for further research.
- (2) *Assessing Performance of Knowledge Networks*: We illustrate through an analysis of SEKN's performance a possible model for assessing the chain of impacts of IRC.
- (3) *Benefits and Challenges of IRCs*: We conceptualize a set of benefits as well as challenges of undertaking cross-country comparative research that can be corroborated or modified by other researchers contemplating, engaged in, or investigating IRC.
- (4) *Effectiveness Determinants*: We identify postulated key effectiveness determinants of operating an international collaborative knowledge network. These effectiveness variables provide possible guidance for IRC undertakings as well as constitute opportunities for future research to assess their relevance and dynamics.
- (5) *Further Avenues of SE Research*: The final section offers a set of additional important and promising research opportunities identified by SEKN researchers and the body of knowledge they helped to produce.

EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

The creation and development of SEKN constituted a process of academic entrepreneurship. At the heart of SE is the identification of an opportunity to address significant social needs and the creation of an innovative approach to meet those needs, “a social value creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, or government sectors” (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006b, p. 2). SE effectiveness requires implementation mechanisms that can mobilize the necessary resources and overcome a multitude of known and unknown barriers. In the case of SEKN, this academic entrepreneurship involved the creation of an international network as well as the development of social enterprise programs within each of the member schools' curriculum,

resulting in a stream of important research and pedagogical outputs for the emerging field of SE.

The Entrepreneurial Origins: Opportunity and Innovation

The basic problem, and hence the *opportunity*, that needed to be addressed was that social enterprise research in Latin America was scarce, and ideas generated in economically developed nations needed to be contested in other contexts. The conceptual seeds for SEKN emerged in 2000 from Harvard Business School's (HBS's) Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI) that had been created in 1993 as one of a few pioneering graduate SE education programs and the first to offer a course on entrepreneurship in the social sector (Austin & Rangan, 2019). In 1999–2000, SEI concluded that it needed to internationalize its efforts to build on its solid research and teaching foundation primarily focused on the United States. Simultaneously, HBS's global research strategy was expanding into Latin America with the opening in 2000 of the Latin America Research Center based in Buenos Aires. To reinforce that effort and to capitalize on connections in Latin America, SEI focused on that region.

Given that one of the SEI's goals was to maximize its impact on the field, SEI conceived of a distinctive organizational approach for social enterprise research. The concept was to foster and undertake collaborative research with and among other leading business schools in the region, in stark contrast to HBS's and most US universities' traditional approach of having individual faculty carry out field research abroad alone or with other individual researchers from non-US schools. In effect, this novel network approach was the *entrepreneurial innovation*. Consequently, the SEI leadership and HBS dean viewed this as a strategic pilot project. HBS was serving as the initiating academic entrepreneur catalyzing the concept.

For such a collaborative approach to succeed, social enterprise had to be seen by potential partner schools to be of priority importance, and contextual implementation barriers had to be identified. To assess both aspects, a coleader of the SEI along with the executive director of the HBS Latin America Research Center, acting, in effect, as the initiating academic entrepreneurs, conducted discussions with leaders of outstanding business schools in the region, most of whom were well-known acquaintances. This feasibility study identified strong interest in social enterprise and a disposition to collaborate with other Latin American management schools, but there were serious resource constraints hindering the development of major research and teaching initiatives in this area.

To overcome these resource mobilization barriers, HBS entered into discussions with the president of the Avina Foundation created by the Swiss businessman Stephan Schmidheiny to support innovative projects in Latin America. These discussions identified a congruency of objectives and a complementarity of resources that gave birth to a partnership aimed at developing SEKN. It was agreed that over an initial six-year period Avina would provide matching funds to member schools and HBS would provide faculty and staff time, teaching materials, teacher/researcher training, and other intellectual capital, as well as provide the initial organizational leadership for SEKN. For HBS the approach involved

both knowledge generation and institutional development; it was aimed at learning from and investing in the region. In effect, Avina was coinvesting with HBS and member schools to provide the start-up capital to launch the Network.

Invitations to join SEKN were extended to six schools and all accepted. SEKN was launched in 2001 with the following schools plus HBS: Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey Business School (EGADE), Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas (INCAE), Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Universidad de São Paulo in Brazil, Universidad Católica de Chile, and a consortium in Argentina created to run a nonprofit graduate program formed by the Universidad de San Andrés, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, and Centro de Estudios del Estado y Sociedad (CEDES). Each school designated one of its professors to be its representative to SEKN, each, in effect, functioning as an academic entrepreneur building the Network and each school's internal social enterprise activities.

Mission, Strategy, and Theory of Change

The initial organizing meeting of the SEKN schools took place from May 13 to 14, 2001, in Miami at Avina's offices. A critical early task was the formulation of the Network's mission, which emerged as: *To advance the frontiers of knowledge and practice in social enterprise through:*

- rigorous and important collaborative research,
- shared learning,
- excellence in participant-centered teaching, and
- strengthening management education institutions' capabilities to serve their communities.

These major elements of the initial strategy were accomplished by in-person meetings held two times annually at different schools with work continuing between meetings. Leadership of the Network rotated among the partner schools.

To achieve the mission and guide the strategy, SEKN members refined over the first two years their Theory of Change (see [Fig. 1.1](#)). To be powerful engines of change, social enterprises should be fueled by the enabling force of new knowledge. Knowledge generation based on the experience of local organizations documents and interprets one's environment and behavior; this increases awareness, deepens understanding of phenomenon, and expands possibility frontiers. New knowledge transmitted through academic and practitioner publications and teaching with case studies to future and current social enterprise managers would motivate and enable them to perform their functions and achieve their missions more efficiently, effectively, and creatively, thereby generating greater social and economic value. The teaching of new knowledge can alter attitudes, increase capabilities, and change behavior of students and practitioners. In effect, the process invests in future and actual business and social sector change agents and their organizational vehicles. The resultant social return is not one time, but rather a lifetime of actions by these leaders.

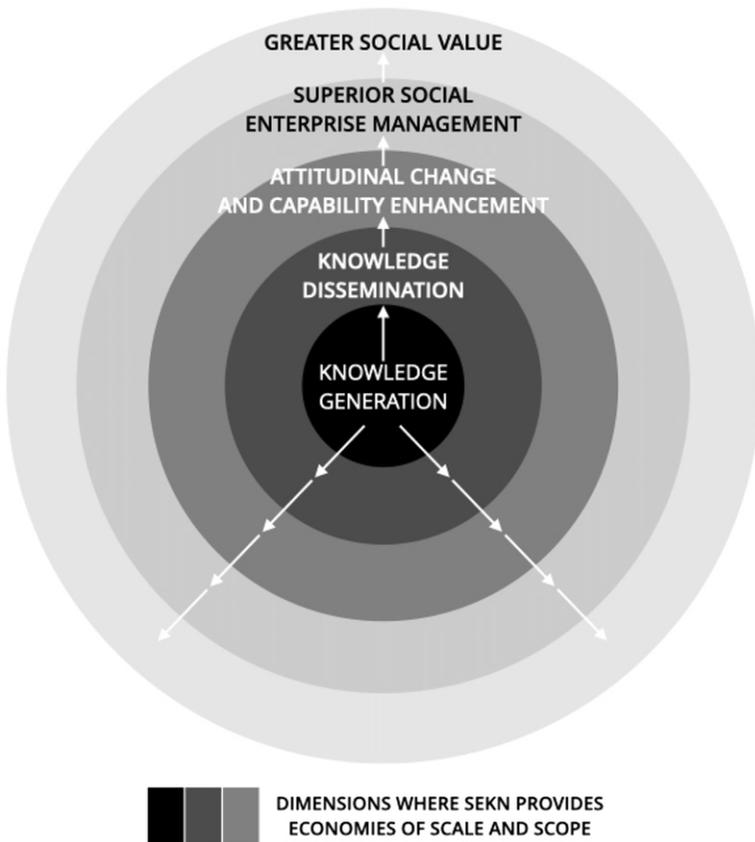


Fig. 1.1. Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN) Theory of Change.

While the change model relied on individual leaders in each school to move this institutional process forward, the Theory of Change aimed at leveraging the interschool collaboration and complementary resources. Network development was a slow process, but its payoff was large because it achieved greater scale and sustainability.

THE START-UP: INITIAL RESEARCH CYCLE

The first two-year (2001–2003) research cycle theme aimed at broadening and deepening existing social enterprise conceptual and empirical knowledge on cross-sector collaborations between nonprofits and businesses. It focused on testing the applicability of a new and highly cited (Austin, 2000a, 2000b) conceptual framework and findings of this form of collaborative SE in the United States with those in Latin America. These collaborations were becoming

increasingly important as social value creators and important societal intersections for business and civil society. Additionally, the research would engage both businesses and civil society organizations (CSOs), thereby developing for each school closer ties with these vital stakeholder groups.

The research methodology consisted of 24 field-based case study analyses following an agreed-upon protocol and research questions, with each member school developing an analytical working paper combining the data from the case studies of four cross-sector collaborations in its country, to be subsequently compared with the other countries' studies. The comparisons were also extended to assess the degree of confirmation and nature of variances from the base conceptual framework and conclusions of the reference US research. The research was then transformed into a book, *Social Partnering in Latin America*, included in Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies book series and published by Harvard University Press (2004). Because of its perceived high relevance to practitioners and its high academic quality, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) translated the book into Spanish and Portuguese. Additionally, SEKN researchers generated spinoff publications and conference presentations.

On the pedagogical side, 24 cases and accompanying teaching notes were produced from the field research. A complicating factor was that member schools' experience with case writing and teaching ranged from extensive to minimal. Consequently, an integral part of collaboration was training in the case method as well as feedback on draft cases and their teaching notes during in-person meetings. The collaboration enabled lateral capability transfer. Furthermore, it was arranged with Harvard Business Publishing (HBP) to create the SEKN Case Collection, available for global distribution in English and ultimately also in Spanish and Portuguese. To ensure that the cases met HBP quality standards, HBS faculty served as reviewers of all the initial cases and teaching notes. The case studies provided teaching material on local and regional organizations, thereby increasing student interest in the expanding social enterprise-related course offerings in Network schools and others.

Expansion

SEKN envisioned from its inception an expanding network and identified during the first cycle four new schools to join for the second research cycle: Universidad del Pacífico, Peru; Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA) in Venezuela; Fundacion Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil; and with the incorporation of ESADE Business School from Spain, the Network expanded beyond Latin America to Ibero-America. Beyond Spain and Latin America sharing cultural roots, it also enriched the research sample by including a more developed country. The due diligence process to approve a potential candidate school for membership in SEKN was and continues to be quite stringent. In one case where a founding SEKN school was unable to mobilize the requisite faculty commitment to social enterprise expected by the Network, the school, by mutual agreement, exited from SEKN. Subsequently, this occurred again with another school, leaving 10 members

by 2005. What was important, however, was that the Network had developed a set of mutual expectations required to ensure quality research and collaboration. Fulfilling those obligations was the price of membership.

New Knowledge Frontier

The research focus in Cycle 2 (2003–2005) made an important shift. Whereas Cycle 1 research built upon an analytical model originating from United States social enterprise research, Cycle 2 sought to develop an analytical framework derived from its own field research in Latin America and Spain. The selected focus was on the identification of determinants of effectiveness in social enterprises. Common criteria were established for selecting the enterprises to be studied in each country, and these candidate research sites were vetted by the entire Network to ensure adherence to the comparability indicators.

The same first cycle research process was followed in the second cycle, but now with an expanded sample in size and country coverage, 40 enterprises were studied. Effectiveness determinants were analyzed in key management areas (leadership, strategy, organizational culture and structure, human resource management, financial viability, governance, performance measurement, and generation of social and economic value). Commonalities and differences across enterprises and countries were identified. A key addition to the research process was the creation of an Editorial Team that put forth a tremendous effort in unifying the material. This exemplified the Network's ability to identify areas in the knowledge production process requiring strengthening and then designing collaborative organizational mechanisms to address them. The ultimate result was the publication of a second book, *Effective Management of Social Enterprises* (Austin, Gutierrez, Ogliastris, & Reficco, 2006a), with subsequent Spanish and Portuguese versions. Additionally, SEKN published more specialized articles (Austin, Gutiérrez, Ogliastris, & Reficco, 2007).

On the pedagogical side, 31 cases with their corresponding teaching notes were published. Many SEKN members' case method teaching and case writing capabilities had been strengthened, and, in turn, these faculty trained others within their schools. In aggregate, the cases from the first two research cycles provided sufficient teaching materials to sustain entire social enterprise courses.

Consolidation and Increased Productivity

For the third cycle (2005–2008), the last one in which SEKN had funding from Avina, the topic selection focused on Prahalad's (Prahalad, 2004; Prahalad & Hart, 2002) ideas about the "fortune at the bottom of the pyramid." Two reasons made inclusive business the new research agenda: one, contribute to the impact businesses could have in eradicating poverty, and second, go beyond the criticisms questioning the scale and scope of these ideas. The new Editorial Team gave special attention to ensuring comparability in data collection. SEKN was able to produce a Special Issue of *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, "Social Enterprises: Initiatives With Real Impact," three articles for *Harvard Business Review América Latina* (Márquez, Reficco, & Berger, 2009; Bruni Celli,

González, & Gómez Samper, 2009; Gutiérrez, 2009), 16 teaching cases and notes, and a third book – *Socially Inclusive Business: Engaging the Poor through Market Initiatives in Ibero-America* (Márquez, Reficco, & Berger, 2010), with subsequent Spanish and Portuguese versions (IADB).

Moving beyond the Seed Capital

By the time Avina’s funding ended, SEKN was generating sufficient royalty income from the HBS sales of its cases to cover the Network’s operating expenses (travel to meetings and administrative coordination). It also received a corporate donation from CEMEX that created a modest capital reserve. Emphasis during 2007–2011 was shifted to dissemination to practitioners through funded training grants: Inclusive Business Training for CSO (2009), Training on Collaboration (2007–2009) both with Fundación “la CAIXA” support, and Training and Research on Scaling and Impact of Social Enterprises in Ibero-America funded by BBVA (2009–2011). As part of the latter project covering six countries, six analytical studies were produced.

In 2013 SEKN identified a new research topic: Sustainable Business Models. A professor from Uniandes shared his knowledge, exemplifying the Network benefits of sharing complementary expertise. To accommodate a new cycle without external funding required several adjustments, with the first being scaling down to document one field case by each school (four was the number with external funds), write one teaching case, and an academic article. Again, a protocol was drafted with face-to-face meetings, held once a year, and organized around a major conference to capture synergies. SEKN used those organizing capabilities that had made it so productive in its first decade.

As topics were added to SEKN’s research agenda, individual researchers kept deepening the work on previous ones. The accumulation of field-based analytical working papers was a rich “knowledge gold mine” for further publications.

Growing Credibility and Leveraging Network Capabilities

The high-quality research output attracted the attention of IADB leaders, who were interested in knowledge management for their inclusive distribution program. In 2014, they convened a meeting of academics and practitioners in Washington, D.C., subsequently opening a bid for the creation of an Inclusive Distribution Network Observatory. Uniandes, leveraged by SEKN, won this three-year contract (2016–2019) with two mandates: research and disseminate knowledge about inclusive distribution, in effect, leveraging the core competencies of SEKN. As with past cycles, Uniandes designated an Academic Committee that oversaw the production of 13 working papers, four teaching cases, and an e-book published by Publicaciones IESA.

New Member, New Topic, New Approach

In 2019, consistent with SEKN’s strategy of addressing topics on the knowledge frontier, the Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, that replaced the Universidad Católica

in Chile, proposed regenerative businesses as a new research topic. In 2020, two professors presented a literature review, and a University of Liverpool expert shared his research on regeneration in SEKN's first online meeting. Taking advantage of ICT, virtual monthly research meetings started happening. Cases were selected in each country and research protocols developed. Continuous interaction, extremely difficult some years ago, now readily allows timely feedback.

The Network's Cumulative Output

The most appropriate summary of the foregoing analysis of SEKN's evolution is the evidence that it has delivered on its knowledge generation promise, which is presented in the following Performance Assessment section.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE OF KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

For the SE field to advance, it is increasingly important to assess research impacts. This section provides a possible approach to the performance analysis of knowledge networks. The literature predominantly defines IRC narrowly as joint articles by authors from different countries and evaluates output in terms of number of articles published and number of citations obtained by internationally coauthored articles vis-à-vis other types of articles. As [Chen et al. \(2019\)](#) acknowledge in their comprehensive review of IRC, coauthored articles only represent one type of multiple outcomes that can emerge. International knowledge networks involve multiple organizations and scholars generating various types of outputs and impacts, requiring a more robust performance assessment.

One approach to monitoring SEKN's performance is to review it relative to its Theory of Change (see [Fig. 1.1](#)) in terms of the *outputs, outcomes, and impacts for the basic functions of knowledge generation, dissemination, and institutional strengthening*. We will illustrate the application of this impact assessment model by examining the performance of the Network in terms of these three core functions of academic activity. Other models consider research time and interactions complexity ([Rambur, 2009](#)), as well as specific contextual factors ([Brew, Boud, Lucas, & Crawford, 2013](#)). It is our hope that this model will serve as a helpful reference platform that future impact research will build upon, refine, and strengthen.

Knowledge Generation

SEKN's intellectual output includes (see [Table 1.1](#) below for timeline):

- Three collaborative books: *Social Partnering in Latin America*, *Effective Management of Social Enterprises*, and *Socially Inclusive Business*;
- A collection of 85 teaching cases, with their accompanying 85 teaching notes, available at the HBP website;

Table 1.1. SEKN's Research Agenda and Outputs.

Research Topic	Participating Schools	Finance	Starting Year	Publications
Alliances between businesses and nonprofits	SEKN founders (HBS + 6 Latin American schools)	Avina + local matching funds	2001	1 book, 24 teaching cases (TCs with teaching notes), 1 article
Effective management of social enterprises	HBS + 10 Ibero-American schools	Avina + local matching funds + TC royalties	2003	1 book, 31 TCs, 1 article
Inclusive businesses/BoP	HBS + 9 Ibero-American schools	Avina + local matching funds + TC royalties	2005	1 book, 16 TCs, special issue, 7 articles
Scale in social entrepreneurship (SE)	6 Ibero-American schools	BBVA	2010	1 TC
Sustainable business models	8 Ibero-American schools	Schools + TC royalties	2014	2 TCs, 2 articles
Inclusive distribution networks	9 Ibero-American schools + individual researchers	IDB-IDRC	2016	1 e-book, 4 TCs, 13 case studies
Regenerative businesses	10 Ibero-American schools	Schools + TC royalties	2020	In process

Note: HBS: Harvard Business School; BoP: Bottom of the Pyramid; IDB: Inter-American Development Bank; IDRC: International Development Research Centre; SEKN: Social Enterprise Knowledge Network.

- 20 articles by SEKN members, directly derived from SEKN field research, published in peer-reviewed journals;
- 38 articles and 1 e-book by SEKN members, not directly derived from SEKN field research but generally in related topics, published in peer-reviewed journals;
- 40 articles by SEKN members, published in other non-peer-reviewed journals; and
- 50 chapters by SEKN members on related topics.

Beyond enumerating outputs, it is important to move to outcomes and identify in what specific ways has the research contributed to advancing the frontiers of knowledge in the field of social enterprise. In each research cycle, SEKN has contested the applicability in Ibero-America of theories developed mainly in developed countries, but it has also contributed new elements to deepen the understanding of social enterprise phenomena in the following ways:

- Comparing *cross-sector collaborations* between nonprofits and businesses in the United States and Latin America led to several *conceptual advances* in aspects such as: the creation of bridges through preexisting relationships in contexts of high mistrust; the existence of an inverse relationship between the institutional capacity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and barriers to collaboration; the various combinations of depth and breadth in the mission, strategy,

and values of parties for the development of partner alignment; and the management of multiple alliances.

- In the identification of *determinants of effectiveness* in social enterprises, Hoefler (2007) assessed SEKN's book as follows: "We have had evidence from some studies that the cross-cutting capabilities (and other parts of the framework) are important for effective organizational action. Still, few resources are as well designed around a single model, with so many variables within that model, as is this book."

Another contribution of this second research cycle is the thesis of the *convergence between companies and NGOs* (Austin et al., 2007), which creates significant opportunities for mutual learning between the two types of organizations.

- Research on **inclusive businesses** presented dimensions that had not been analyzed or sufficiently studied, such as: the economic performance of low-income sectors beyond consumption (such as producers, suppliers, and distributors); the role played by other types of organizations, in addition to multinational companies; and inclusive businesses in services and products with a high impact on the living conditions of low-income populations. Furthermore, it contradicted previous hypotheses, reinforced others, and developed new hypotheses for future research.

SEKN has influenced other academics and stimulated further social enterprise research, thereby having a multiplier effect for knowledge generation. It has acted as a positive research driver for member institutions, in academic environments where research is not predominant. Additional spillover impact evidence comes from the dozens of social enterprise-related publications not derived directly from the SEKN field research (Fig. 1.2).

The IRC literature has raised the issue of whether collaborations between North and South researchers are unduly shaped by the North to the detriment of local knowledge generation. However, Ordóñez-Matamoros, Vernot-López, Moreno-Mattar, and Orozco (2020) found that this did not hold in a review of 20 years of publications by Colombian researchers. Similarly, Austin and Rangan (2019) observed that

Perhaps the most significant aspect of SEKN is the reversal of the traditional knowledge flow of North to South. This is the South producing knowledge flow for the South and for the North. (p. 7)

SEKN's mission focuses on creating value for local stakeholders, and furthermore, the centrality of SEKN's case study research on local organizations ensures relevancy and value added to local knowledge.

Knowledge Dissemination

The number of publications and citations is a useful and common way to assess outputs, and many analyses reveal that internationally coauthored articles have higher citation counts and impact (Ronda-Pupo, Sánchez, & Cerpa, 2015;

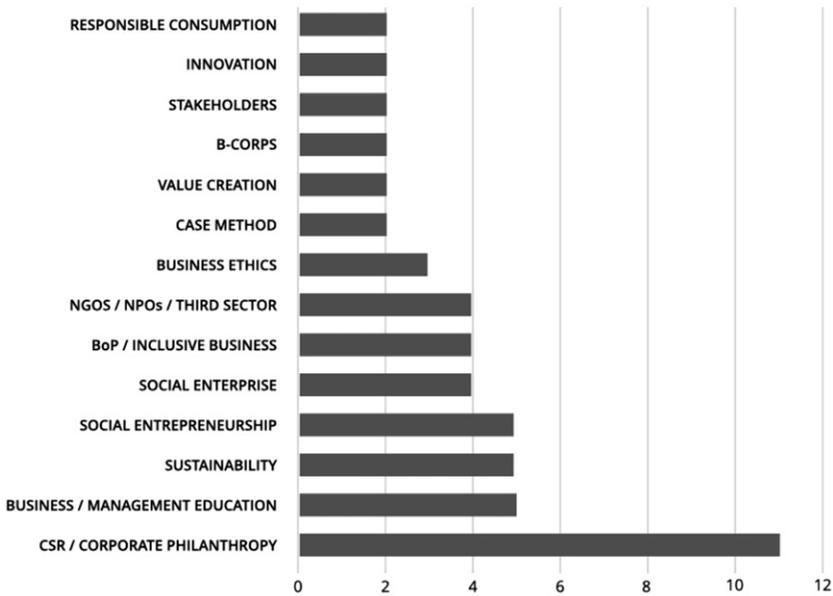


Fig. 1.2. Main Topics Addressed in Non-field-based Social Enterprise-related Articles.

Wagner, Whetsellb, & Mukherjee, 2019). Nonetheless, this measurement is very narrow. The analysis of *extended, multiple directional impacts of academic knowledge networks is considerably more complex*. Those impacts include changes in the network's members, as well as those in its wider sphere of influence, due to multiplier effects. In SEKN's Theory of Change, new knowledge is transmitted through publications and teaching to future and current social enterprise managers and leaders and their organizations (including NGOs, businesses, and public sector entities). According to Gutiérrez and Austin (2003), "Teaching and service are indeed two faces of the same coin – a coin minted by research in different areas of knowledge" (p. 69). In the use of teaching cases for knowledge dissemination, SEKN scores high in quality and number.

Much has been written about the need to bridge the relevance gap in management research and education (cf. Mintzberg, 2005; Starkey & Madan, 2001) and build strong communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). SEKN books have an applied orientation to ensure relevancy to practitioners. Additionally, member schools used their own practitioner-oriented journals.

SEKN's field-based research directly benefits organizations analyzed as well as the larger community from insights gleaned. Fig. 1.3, created by SEKN researchers, presents the structure of the impacts of the informing process occurring during case production and discussion, as described by case protagonists:

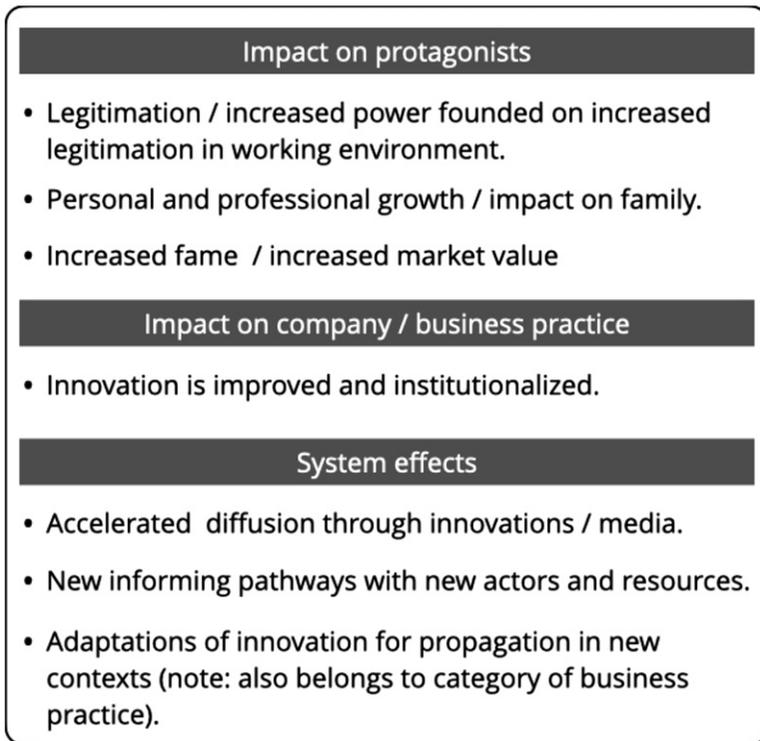


Fig. 1.3. Structure of Impact of the Informing Process. *Source:* [BruniCelli & González \(2013\)](#).

Case production also generates close links between the organizations studied and the schools, an important form of institutional social capital. Fundamentally, case discussions widely disseminate the generated knowledge to students and practitioners. To date, more than 16,000 copies of cases in the SEKN Collection have been sold, plus thousands more used free by SEKN member schools. In addition to regular usage in their social enterprise courses, half of the SEKN schools use these cases in courses on other subjects, thereby enriching the broader curriculum. These pedagogical research outputs serve as dissemination outreach vehicles that greatly expand the learner audience and the subsequent outcome as practitioner application of the knowledge.

Among the attributes of SEKN cases most valued by faculty are: their focus on Latin America, which facilitates the identification of students and practitioners with the situations raised; their subject matter and specialized approach, which allows debating the social role of companies; their call to action with sustainability criteria; their quality; access to teaching notes; and availability in Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

Parallel to their informative purpose, according to SEKN's Theory of Change, *case method is a means to transmit values, alter attitudes, and change behavior of students and practitioners toward ethical and social issues involved in management.* But, to what extent is this true? Research efforts by SEKN members provide some insights:

The teaching of value-based contents – social responsibility, business ethics and environmental sustainability – has gained ground in the region in the last decade, and that emphasis on value-based contents goes hand-in-hand with a more intensive use of active learning methodologies – the case method in particular. From the perspective of respondents, the emphasis on active learning seems to correlate positively with observed changes in students' civility. (Reficco, Jaén, & Trujillo, 2019, p. 857)

The analysis shows the connection between the CM [Case Method] and SEE [Social, Environmental and Ethical] content. According to interviewees, when both are used together systematically, form and substance become synergistic and learning goes beyond the transmission of knowledge. This finding suggests that dynamics at play in class allow for second-order learning, where individuals come to reflect critically on their behavior and explore their own paradigms (Reficco & Jaén, 2015, p. 2548).

In addition to the case method, some schools have tried other active learning methods. For example, experiential learning in the *20 Nuevos Soles* project in Peru, from the Universidad del Pacífico, “seemed to have triggered change in the learner's behavior and values rather than their competencies and their thinking about entrepreneurial outcomes” (Klapper & Farber, 2016, p. 435).

As knowledge disseminators, entrepreneurship educators are in prime position to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students, which, in turn, can increase their intentions to start social ventures and their abilities to manage and grow them, with the resultant positive social value creation as *outcomes* (Solomon et al., 2019). Many examples within SEKN include Spain where former ESADE students created the Ship2B Foundation, whose mission is to promote the Impact Economy, an economic model where the main purpose of start-ups, companies, investors, and organizations is to maximize economic profitability and social and environmental impact. In Colombia, Uniandes alumni have used cross-sector collaboration ideas to form alliances for their organizations. In Venezuela, two IESA graduates were finalists for an award recognizing their work at the forefront of high-impact social initiatives. In Argentina, MBA students who take courses that use SEKN materials do their final projects in partnership with entrepreneurs from B-Corporations.

Institutional Strengthening

According to SEKN's Theory of Change, one must strengthen the institutional commitment and capacity of universities to carry out important research and teaching in the social enterprise domain. SEKN's model relies on individual leaders in each school to move this institutional process forward but also aims at developing the capabilities and processes to leverage and transcend the reliance on a single leader by mobilizing the larger organizational resources and capacities of the leader's school. Furthermore, the Network gives individual schools access

to additional resources, experiences, and motivations that accelerate and improve capacity-building processes. SEKN members, except two new ones, consider that the field of social enterprise is currently institutionalized in their schools (see Table 1.2).

In 2006, the members of the Network approved a process, similar to that carried out by the accrediting organizations International Association for Management Education (AACSB), EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and Accelerated Masters in Business Education (AMBA), to promote the continuous improvement and quality enhancement of social enterprise education in SEKN schools, which was carried out by some Network members. That procedure included: preparation of self-assessment reports on the institutionalization of social enterprise research and teaching; assignment of teams made up of peers from other schools to do off-site reviews, on-site visits, and exit reports; and submission by each school of a social enterprise institutionalization plan.

More than 10 years after the first efforts to evaluate SEKN’s institutionalization process, the Network has passed several decisive tests: financial

Table 1.2. Indicators of Institutionalization in Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN) Schools.

School	Organizational Model	Undergraduate		Graduate		ExEd in SE	Number of Published SEKN Cases
		Number of Mandatory Courses	Number of Elective Courses	Number of Mandatory Courses	Number of Elective Courses		
EGADE	Center exclusively for social entrepreneurship (SE)	NA	NA	2	–	Yes	7 + 3 with other schools
ESADE	Center for SE and other topics	2	>10	1 mandatory for all Masters	5	Yes	6
IESA	SE across various centers	NA	NA	4	1	Yes	7 + 2 with other schools
INCAE	Center for SE and other topics	NA	NA	2	2	Yes	14
Uniandes	Center exclusively for SE	4	–	2	1	Yes	13 + 3 with other schools
UP	SE across various centers	6	6	10	NA	Yes	3
UdeSA	Center for SE and other topics	–	2	A whole program Does not offer MBA	2	Yes	12
USP	Center exclusively for SE	2	2		1	Yes	9

sustainability; the planned exit of HBS, founder and promoter of the Network; and the leadership shifts in several schools, mostly successful, except in one case that led to its exit from the Network. However, today there are new challenges such as the incorporation and accompaniment of the new members, so that they can match the existing members' capabilities. In the opinion of current members, the most important test facing the Network for the future is the generational change of some leaders. While this challenge has not yet been systematically addressed, its existence is a tribute to the longevity of SEKN.

Lastly, the Network is a *creator of valuable new social capital*. Being a single network of highly prestigious schools in Ibero-America has made SEKN an ideal partner for dozens of different international and national initiatives. *It fosters and builds important relationships among leaders and organizations within and across sectors and countries*. Furthermore, several SEKN members have been invited to serve on editorial boards seeking enrichment from regional perspectives.

In summary, SEKN has generated the outputs, outcomes, and impacts that it proposed in its Theory of Change, with the expected effects in terms of attitudinal change toward social enterprises and capability enhancement of current and future leaders of NGOs and businesses. SEKN's Theory of Change can also be conceived as part of a Knowledge Impact Assessment ecosystem. SEKN's mutually dependent actions and collective outputs create a series of local, regional, national, and international impacts. Those actions increase the capabilities of individual SEKN members and other institutions that reciprocally feed back into the Network and beyond. The many multiplier effects demonstrate the leverage of collaboration.

[Aguinis et al. \(2020\)](#), p. 630) observed that "knowledge produced in the region is often for local or regional consumption only." In contrast, SEKN reveals how its knowledge network can serve, along with others, as important "boundary spanners." As a future research path, the foregoing illustrated Knowledge Impact Assessment model provides an approach that can be applied in the future to other knowledge generation assessments with the corresponding desirable refinements, adjustments, and improvements.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION IN KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

Since SEKN has utilized IRC as a highly productive form of knowledge generation, SE researchers should consider IRC as a productive vehicle for carrying out future work. This section will offer some of the significant benefits as well as challenges of undertaking IRC.

Two traits stand out in SEKN's evolution: the chosen topics have been at the forefront of academic research, and the Network keeps delivering high-quality products for practitioners and academics. It has contributed importantly to what [Granados, Hlupic, Coakes, and Mohamed \(2011\)](#) cited in their bibliometric

review as the need to increase international collaboration and multidisciplinary research to integrate the bases of SE theory from both business and social context. SEKN's research has also addressed the call by [Gupta, Chauhan, Paul, and Jaiswal \(2020\)](#) for comparative studies on social enterprise within a given industry from developed and developing countries. Furthermore, it is advancing the scholarly contributions to SE knowledge from developing countries, which [Persaud, Bayon, and Cartmell \(2018\)](#) have sighted as highly underrepresented.

One of the early articles about IRC ([Katz & Martin, 1997](#)) asked, what motivates research collaboration? They proposed seven elements that apply to any research field: funding, recognition, complexity, specialization, cross-fertilization, pooling knowledge, and training apprentice researchers. [Casey, Jr's \(2010\)](#) study of an IRC project identified reasons for establishing such networks, which were similar to those that HBS, Avina, and the Network schools had in 2001 for starting SEKN: (1) explore rich management experiences and organizations worldwide; (2) capture IRC synergies and produce greater results than individual universities; (3) overcome scarce research funding; and (4) learn from cultural and contextual differences.

What SEKN has been doing effectively during the last 20 years stands out in international SE research. [Contractor and Monge \(2002\)](#) argue that the challenge of knowledge management implies understanding the mechanisms whereby knowledge network ties are iteratively created, maintained, and dissolved. Four IRC synergies are salient.

Scale: By combining the resources of individual universities, a collaborative network increases a research sample size and the robustness of a study. Then, subsamples that have been processed in parallel, using the same protocolized methodology, are aggregated ([Beaver, 2001](#)).

Scope and Comparative Analysis: An IRC network's geographical scope enables international sampling, cross-country comparative analysis, and contesting contextual significance. [Morley and Heraty \(2019\)](#) stress the importance in future research of analyzing emerging countries' context: "from an historical perspective, it may be read as a form of redress in the face of an increasing realization that many contextual features of management practice in numerous territories have not been fully landscaped. The correction of this deficit requires comparative enquiry focused on under-researched regions in order to augment and rebalance the body of knowledge, plug research gaps, and unearth and give expression to indigenous features of management" (p. 342).

Complementarity of Capabilities: IRC broadens the disciplinary expertise and perspectives that enrich research design and analyses. [Levine and Moreland \(2004\)](#) assert that diversity in IRC teams increases creativity by stimulating divergent thinking. Furthermore, the different country knowledge of each member provides deeper contextual understanding than could be obtained by researchers carrying out fieldwork in a country other than their own. The capacity and "intelligence" of a knowledge network resides in the network as a whole rather than in its particular members ([Contractor, 2002](#)). The

complementary competencies that enable members to generate collective outputs are dispersed throughout the network.

Collaborative Learning: In a set of Austrian scientific networks, higher levels of collaboration are strongly associated with lower levels of variability in quality (Rigby & Elder, 2005).

To strengthen collaboration, SEKN invested in peer training and support to complement skills and disciplinary approaches. SEKN's broadened experiential base has enriched mutual learning, but for this to be fully realized, the members needed to develop an openness to other's ideas and a willingness to construct a common research design and protocol and execute it collaboratively. This required mutual respect, consensus building, collective decision-making, receptivity to research feedback, and mutual accountability for delivering research outputs on time and up to expected quality standards.

However, IRC also has challenges, and SEKN has experienced many in its 20 years. First, international collaboration carries with it "transaction costs" (Cummings & Kiesler, 2005; Katz & Martin, 1997; Wagner & Leydesdorff, 2005; Williamson, 1985). These include costs of coordination and communication among heterogeneous institutions each with their particular administrative systems and academic practices, as well as travel, working across times zones, unfamiliar environments, developing new relations, and even information loss due to suboptimal communications. Before COVID-19, e-mail and face-to-face meetings were the primary way of communication; now, Internet meetings are easily convened. Still, collaboration brings increased administration. With 10 universities, SEKN dealt with this challenge by creating an administrator position to assist the rotating faculty Network leaders. Importantly, rather than view these "transactions" as costs, one can view them as investments in interactions that build valuable social capital and institutional learning opportunities for the functioning of the collaboration.

A second challenge is "cultural" (Katz & Martin, 1997), starting with language. Although the primary language of SEKN is Spanish, Brazil's is Portuguese, and academic literature requires English. Furthermore, even Spanish has country variants and cultural norms also vary. On the other hand, SEKN's experience revealed that cultural affinity was a significant lubricant that facilitated interactions. Face-to-face meetings deepen cultural affinity and develop positive personal relationships and dynamics. Regular personal interactions and communication are, in fact, recognized in the literature as beneficial for cross-cultural research collaborations (Dixon, LeBon, & Wieseke, 2019).

A third challenge is international team dynamics (Ettorre, 2000). With a large group of researchers, not everyone has the same agenda or agrees with proposals. Respected leadership, particularly at the beginning, was critical for coherence and commitment to a research agenda and protocols, and to foster constructive group processes. Exploratory evidence in the case of English academic and research institutions suggests that collaboration among members of research networks tends to be highly concentrated among a few of them (Toral et al., 2011). SEKN

reduced this risk by having strong norms of mutual accountability and shared responsibility. In the rare instances where members were unable to meet those obligations, they left the Network. Being a team player was essential in SEKN's research development.

A fourth challenge is alignment with internal priorities within each member university, requiring representatives to balance Network needs with their school demands. During SEKN's first decade, for example, teaching cases were highly appreciated, while research articles became a priority for most schools during the second decade.

SEKN's experience illustrates the synergies and ways to address the challenges of IRCs. Future research on IRCs will enrich this framework and our collective understanding of collaborative undertakings.

EFFECTIVENESS DETERMINANTS OF COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

The need to expand our knowledge on the factors that contribute to effective collaborative knowledge networks is widely acknowledged in the literature (Lee & Bozeman, 2005). Brew et al. (2013) stated, "understanding about what is involved in successful international collaboration is not well developed" (p. 94). Ordóñez-Matamoros et al. (2020) recommended that

...to better substantiate the conclusion as to the fact that IRC has great potential for improving team performance, and more importantly the process through which this happens, a more in-depth research based on case-study methodology could be a good complement. (p. 194)

This section identifies and examines the enabling determinants of network effectiveness based on our analysis of the previously described 20-year SEKN experience. Many network performance enhancers suggested by Pugh and Prusak (2013), Bagshaw, Lepp, and Zorn (2007), and Tjosvold (1991) are also present in SEKN's trajectory. Our analysis revealed key factors that we offer as hypothesized significant contributors to SEKN's effectiveness, to be further examined in future research.

Alignment and Motivation

Alignment has been cited as critical to collaborations (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012). The member schools shared a demonstrable commitment to social enterprise research and teaching. This requisite criteria for admission to the Network created congruency of values and interest. The collectively formulated mission and Theory of Change provided the basis for developing a clear strategy and ongoing guidance.

While each school's and faculty member's particular situations meant there were varying interests and needs, several motivating factors were shared. The opportunity to engage in a potentially more productive and impactful form of research and curriculum development in this priority area with the concomitant

professional growth was particularly attractive. Being part of a Network of the leading management schools is prestigious and stimulates each school to demonstrate its capabilities to its peers. As a founding member, HBS provided important initial legitimacy.

Leadership

Building a novel network and social enterprise programs in each school required entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities. A willingness to act collaboratively to build the network and to produce collectively was essential. But more than just individual “Champions,” each school had teams of full-time or adjunct faculty members engaged in a shared effort. They developed their leadership roles as value integrators, institutional networkers, inclusionists, and risk-taking change agents (Austin, Jaen, Reficco, & Vernis, forthcoming). SEKN was operating as “collective social entrepreneurship” (Montgomery, Dacin, & Dacin, 2012). Although early social enterprise literature was emphasizing “heroic individuals” (Spear, 2006), SEKN studies showed that SE was more collaborative and collective (Austin et al., 2006a).

For many, their SEKN leadership roles and outputs contributed to their subsequent academic advancements and promotions to other leadership roles within their universities. Also important during the first five years was the support of a leading HBS authority in the social enterprise field who acted as steward not only of the mission but also of the Network development process.

Social Capital

Heringa, Hessels, and van der Zouwen (2016) observe that “social proximity facilitates and fosters joint knowledge production and knowledge exchange” (p. 758). Over time and through personal interactions at SEKN’s periodic face-to-face research workshops, the team members developed close professional relationships and friendships. Intense working, joint creations, and the accompanying social gatherings enabled members to appreciate and enjoy each other. Importantly, this developed the valuable intangible assets of trust and respect, which facilitated organizational processes that enhance flexibility and productivity. It also strengthened mutual accountability for delivering research outputs on time. You do not want to disappoint colleagues, but even more so when they are friends.

Productivity

Results stimulate more results. In the early stages of the Network, there was high uncertainty as to the ability to meet its ambitious output goals of books, cases, and articles. When the SEKN team did deliver, repeatedly, on its goals, that built increasing *confidence* internally and *credibility* externally. The successful research experiences led SEKN members to collaborate with each other on non-SEKN research as well as being invited to participate in third-party research projects, thereby increasing further their academic productivity. Ordóñez-Matamoros

et al. (2020) observe that “research collaboration is communitarian work to achieve new knowledge” (p. 175).

Governance

While in the initial start-up phase HBS played a leading entrepreneurial and management role, the goal was to create an independent South-led network, which avoided an often-cited risk of undue influence from the North. SEKN created a distributed leadership system for the four core network functions of system coordination, research, case development, and communications. Each of these functional areas had coleaders, an incumbent, and a prospective leader, with the former passing on knowledge and experience to the incoming leader who became the senior leader in the next cycle. This aimed at preserving network management knowledge and ensuring continuity, which reduces the risk of “knowledge walks out the door” due to personnel turnover (Beazley, Boenisch, & Harden, 2002, p. 4; Christensen, Bevort, & ErlingRasmussen, 2019). It also distributed responsibilities to make the function more manageable in scope and to create a greater sense of shared ownership and mutual accountability for the network. The model placed a premium on coordination and that meant greater transaction costs, but the social capital facilitated those processes.

Self-evaluation, Self-improvement, and Mutual Learning

It is widely accepted that organizational improvement requires ongoing self-assessment. SEKN members conducted periodically organizational audits to identify areas needing improvement. Additionally, SEKN collectively saw the development of the Network as part of its intellectual agenda rather than just an organizational task. SEKN sees itself as an innovator in terms of IRC network development. Members consciously learn from the experiences, analyze, document, and test out new models, systems, and processes. These insights are not only used for internal improvement but also shared with the broader academic community as exemplified by this chapter and other publications.

Beyond the above self-improvement processes, SEKN members have developed an openness to ideas and suggestions from each other and from outside sources. Member schools with greater capabilities in certain areas, for example, case teaching and development, have engaged in developing these skills in sister schools. Christensen et al. observe,

At the very foundations of international research networks...lies the assumption that knowledge of existing procedures for collecting, structuring, and interpreting data are effectively shared and retained over time within each research unit (the national team) and, indeed, across the international organization in general. (2019, p. 450)

Supporting Partners

During the start-up and early years, Avina and local businesses, foundations, and other organizations provided SEKN with vital funding. Avina also provided encouragement, particularly toward strengthening practitioners (Ebrahim,

Battilana, & Mair, 2014; Fabbri, Lai, Grundy, & Bero, 2018), but reciprocally the Network also served as a learning grounds for Avina, shaping its subsequent emphasis on supporting networks rather than just individual organizations. HBS provided initial capacity-building training and organizational assistance. A variety of development assistance agencies and corporations partnered with SEKN on various knowledge-generating and training efforts. In all these efforts, SEKN's capabilities to engage in cross-sector collaborations have been fundamental.

Financial Sustainability

One of the pioneers of the SE field, initially at HBS, expressed: "Unless we find a way to marry the cultures of charity and the cultures of problem solving, social entrepreneurship will suffer" (Dees, 2012, p. 333). Avina's matching funds requirement stimulated local fundraising and with it projects that addressed local needs. The journey toward financial sustainability through earned income began with the creation of the SEKN Case Collection and the agreement of HBP to pay SEKN royalties. These royalties have been allotted to cover Network-operating expenses.

The development of the foregoing effectiveness determinants is a demanding organizational challenge. They emerge slowly and require considerable and continual efforts by all members of a network. They are the result of trial and error in an organizational learning environment enabled by strong collaborative competencies. Our hope is that the foregoing effectiveness determinants will provide guidance to SE researchers engaged in developing or participating in international research networks, as well as hypotheses of effectiveness determinants for them.

FURTHER AVENUES FOR FUTURE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH

For academia to significantly advance the SE field and its impact on society, it needs to develop research and pedagogical approaches that leverage universities' capabilities. The foregoing sections have opened multiple avenues of future investigation to confirm, broaden, or deepen our understanding of: (1) the multiple forms and paths of knowledge networks' impacts; (2) synergies and challenges of IRCs; and (3) effectiveness determinants for knowledge networks to ensure productivity, sustainability, and relevance. Further research of IRC and knowledge networks would respond directly to Battilana and Lee's call to create "a research infrastructure that permits rigorous, high-quality empirical studies of social enterprises" (2014, p. 427).

We set forth below promising additional research paths for advancing SE knowledge and impact frontiers based on insights from SEKN, as a pioneering social entrepreneurial initiative that has contributed to this body of knowledge.

Expanding SE Context and Theory Knowledge Base

SE research in Latin America has made significant advances (Ronda-Pupo, 2016). Nonetheless, it remains relatively underrepresented, with recent reviews of the SE literature calling for more field-based research in Latin America (Aguinis et al., 2020; Luc, Lan, Le, & Trang, 2020). We contend that this need also holds for SE research in other developing countries, which are relatively underresearched.

There is a need to broaden the empirical knowledge base about a wide gamut of SE dimensions through comparative analyses across countries (Monge, 2018). SEKN's comparative research has revealed how contextual differences and similarities can shape SE phenomena being studied within and across regions. The importance of examining rigorously this contextual diversity to turn it into an opportunity for theory-building was stressed by Mair (2020, p. 333):

(...) embracing rather than taming the diversity among social enterprises facilitates future theorizing. A disciplined approach to exploring whether and how social enterprises vary across context helps identify features of a social enterprise archetype and to inspire the search for real-types that complement ideal-type schemes to categorize social enterprises. This approach also helps clarify the role that social enterprises play in the economy and society and how this role differs across contexts.

Field case studies, as a research method, effectively capture analytical nuances of this diversity and contribute to theoretical generalization. As Haugh contends, "Theory development concerning the generalizability of findings from individual case studies of social enterprises to larger populations of organizations and different country contexts is a valuable contribution to knowledge" (2012, p. 9). Comparative and integrative analysis of field case studies from different countries and regions helps strengthen theory building.

The State of Social Entrepreneurship Practice

To gain insights on practice, one might apply periodically a common survey in different countries, following the methodology of the Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management (CRANET) (Parry, Stavrou-Costea, & Morley, 2011). Since 1989, CRANET's member universities and business schools have undertaken periodic surveys assessing the state of HRM practice (now in 46 countries). They utilize a common questionnaire designed, revised, and administered by Network members to provide comparative analyses of the evolution, divergence, and convergence of HRM practices. Their publications have advanced theoretical insights into contextual determinants, enriched pedagogical HRM curriculums, and guided practitioners (Christensen et al., 2019).

While the SE field is relatively young, systematically and broadly documented practice within and across countries, and explorations into the interrelationships of institutional contexts, cultures, and practices are needed. The development of a survey instrument would crystallize concepts and practice categorizations. Such a collaborative research undertaking could begin small and grow, as was the case

with CRANET. The survey and the above recommended case studies would be complementary instruments for broadening and deepening SE knowledge.

Social Entrepreneurship University Programs

Globally, SE university programs have expanded dramatically since their emergence in the early 1990s (Solomon et al., 2019). However, a recent book (Giraldo-Mejía & Vara-Horna, 2018, p. 15) indicated that, “very little is known about the effectiveness of the role of Latin American universities to promote development and participation in social enterprises.” Additionally, we have limited understanding about how SE education programs operate, with only a few exceptions (Austin & Rangan, 2019; Mirabella & Wish, 2001; Mirabella, Gemelli, Malcolm, & Berger, 2007). This analysis of SEKN is a start, but there is yet no comprehensive assessment about the state of SE education in Latin America and other regions. To foster mutual learning and a deeper understanding of how academia is attempting to contribute to the development of social entrepreneurs, it would be desirable to undertake a survey and programmatic analysis of university SE education programs and compare this to surveys done in other regions. This pedagogical and programmatic survey could be a sister to the SE practices survey proposed above.

In addition to the foregoing research opportunities focused broadly on the field, the following eight more specific topics have been identified by SEKN’s work as priority areas meriting future research efforts.

Interinstitutional and Cross-sector Collaboration

Cross-sector social partnerships remain a vital area for further research (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Clark & Crane, 2018); asking how, why, and when do partnerships occur is an emergent area of research (de Bruin, Shaw, & Lewis, 2017). Understanding successful collaboration between public sector organizations and social enterprises in the delivery of welfare services (healthcare, social services, aging, housing, education, etc.) will be helpful because social entrepreneurs bring different angles to social challenges, and their contribution to public innovation processes may improve “the understanding of the problem or challenge at hand, bring forth new ideas and proposals, and build joint ownership of new and bold solutions” (Nicholls, Simon, Gabriel, & Whelan, 2015, p. 145).

Corporate and Public Social Intrapreneurship

The practice of SE inside organizations aligns private/public value creation within for-profit companies and/or public organizations. Some of the questions relate to who within a company or public organization can take on the intrapreneurial role, what dual value creation means, how much discretion is needed for actions to be truly intrapreneurial, and the meaning of innovation in this context (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern, 2008; Kuratko & Morris, 2018; SustainAbility, 2008).

Mission Tension

The study of the tensions that arise between social missions and entrepreneurial ventures within the Ibero-American context could add insights into social and hybrid enterprises, informing traditional organizational theories (Smith, Gonin, & Besharoy, 2013). There is debate of whether commercial performance improves social performance (Glaveli & Geormas, 2018; Seelos & Mair, 2007) or leads to underachievement in commercial and social objectives because of underlying tensions between different logics (Foster & Bradach, 2005).

Social Innovation

The interest in social innovation as the process of developing effective solutions to social and environmental issues in support of social progress (Nicholls et al., 2015; Phills, Deiglemeier, & Miller, 2008) has been steadily growing in the last decade. How SE contributes to create, test, and disseminate social innovations in different regions can help to understand strategies to speed up much required social change. In addition, what kinds of contextual factors and management approaches help to spread and scale these innovations are topics that require comparative research. Finally, understanding how social entrepreneurs and social enterprises creating social innovations interact with the public sector in order to inform and influence public policies are topics of urgent need in underserved and institutionally weak regions.

Inclusiveness and Diversity

A relevant and underresearched social enterprise issue is inclusiveness for groups and communities that are mostly located at the periphery of mainstream social and political circuits. Attempts at building conceptual bridges between SE and phenomena like *indigenous entrepreneurship* (Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004) can be a fruitful avenue to learn from the region's cultural and ethnic diversity. Relatedly, exploring more extensively how SE can promote gender equality in the region merits pursuit, given the benefits of women's participation in inclusive businesses (Bruni Celli, forthcoming).

Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and Regenerative Enterprise

How SE and sustainability can cross-fertilize offers opportunities to explore important emerging new ground (Kury, 2012). Schaefer, Corner, and Kearins (2015) propose social, environmental, and sustainability entrepreneurship as three distinct types with SE capturing more requisites for sustainability. Related to this would be research on SE's actual and potential contributions to the furthering of the Sustainable Development Goals, or what the European Union has called the "Grand Challenges for Society." Yet another innovative approach, on which SEKN's future research will be focused, is regenerative enterprises, a concept that offers a paradigmatic alternative to sustainability.

Social Entrepreneurship and Organizational Forms

SEKN's research revealed varied organizational forms that largely transcend the archetypal institutional divides between the private, public, and community spheres. Future research in SE can investigate in more detail the complex interrelations between legal forms, problem domains, and institutional contexts. The emergence of institutional isomorphisms across countries and how SE can adopt and use specific organizational forms in different national contexts (e.g., B-Corporations, cooperatives, hybrids models, nonprofit organizations) are promising areas.

Social Entrepreneurship and Service Learning: Service learning was identified several years ago as good pedagogical method for teaching SE (Enos, 2015). It offers an active learning opportunity tied to community engagement and problem-solving. However, there is little evidence of how service learning is helping social entrepreneurs. Or, if this kind of programs are helping to promote more social entrepreneurs within university students (Mueller, Brahm, & Neck, 2015).

We have aspired throughout this chapter to identify abundant opportunities for advancing the SE knowledge and practice frontiers in Ibero-America and how their pursuit will contribute importantly to the field in the region and globally.

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