

Social Capital Conference

Conference: June 1, 2011, Amsterdam

Panel Topic: Entrepreneurs' voices

Panel Description:

What compels and what sustains? What are the lessons learnt and the stories waiting to be told from the voices in the field? There are more than 100 world-changing entrepreneurs with us at the conference. They are on the frontlines of the impact we seek to make, their hands on the ground building models. Their voices carry many accents, and their stories come from different lands. Here are four micro-keynotes giving voice to visionary SOCAP entrepreneurs.

Moderator & Panelists:

1. Sam Alemayehu, GoGoAfri, former venture capital specialist, Ethiopian social entrepreneur, www.gogoafri.com
2. Ineke Aquarius, Butterfly Works, co-founder and program director, www.butterflyworks.org
3. Onno Schellekens, PharmAccess, former MD and board member, www.pharmaccess.org
4. Nigel Kershaw, Big Issue Invest, CEO, www.bigissueinvest.com

Design, Methodology, Approach:

1. GoGoAfri invests in business opportunities in sub Saharan Africa, in particular Ethiopia and Senegal. The company identifies needs in the society and creates solutions that save money and environmental waste and improve lives.
2. Butterfly Works' mission is to "co-design for a better world." Through serious media, social branding and experiential learning they share knowledge, trigger creativity and build sustainable businesses.
3. PharmAccess is a fast-growing international organization aiming to improve access to affordable quality basic health care in low-income countries in Africa at the bottom of the pyramid.
4. Big Issue Invest is a specialized provider of finance to social enterprises or trading arms of charities that are finding business solutions that create social and environmental transformation.

Main Panel Discussion Points:

1. Alemayehu's key point is that there are plenty of highly attractive social investment opportunities in Africa, as long as you:
 - a. are on the ground, adapting your solution to local circumstances
 - b. are careful about choosing your local partner
 - c. leverage economies of scale, i.e. serve multiple countries from 1 office, etc.
2. Aquarius needs funding to grow Butterfly Works operations. She explains that investors reach a high social impact while earning a healthy IRR
3. Schellekens stresses that international organizations only spend fractions of their health budget in Africa. His business model is to institutionalize health insurance for the poor,

leveraging existing insurance companies and clinics. Donors play a crucial role to take the bad risks. The total health insurance fund is now USD 180 million.

4. Kershaw stresses the need for an alternative credit-scoring model for social enterprises. His vision is to turn around SRI investment and create a social merchant bank for and by social entrepreneurs. He feels social enterprises are the market, not a sub market, and should therefore be more confident set their own terms.

Outcomes & Analysis:

The session proves that social entrepreneurship is no longer a premature and small-scale sector. Here are three social entrepreneurs that are creating successful and sustainable businesses with a strong positive impact in emerging markets and an investor that can't wait to transform social entrepreneurship into a mainstream asset class.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, developing countries, best practice, SRI

Paper type: Review of conference panel.

Willem Nolens
SolarNow
Nijmegen, the Netherlands
willem@solarnow.eu