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Abstract:

Exemplary cases of social innovation do not involve profit as the primary goal but emphasize social, spiritual and humanitarian goals such as minimizing suffering and empowering people and communities. The business models of the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) approach receive worldwide recognition today. BoP means developing innovative businesses to serve the largest, but poorest socio-economic group in the world. In global terms, about four billion people live on less than USD 2.50 per day. However, we can predict that the success of BoP businesses will finally be limited because they do not transcend the logic of mainstream, materialistic business. The paper analyses the cases of the Economy of Communion in Latin America and Europe, SEKEM in Egypt and Aravind Eye Care System in India as alternative social innovation models, which show that an ethos for serving the common good appears to be a precondition of successful social innovation.

Keywords: social innovation, Bottom of the Pyramid models, Economy of Communion, SEKEM, Aravind Eye Care System

There is creative destruction as well as destructive creation in the economy and the quality of products and the fairness of the market need serious reflection (Guitinan 2009). There is not always a good match between the products that are produced and marketed, and the basic needs of consumers in the market. Some innovations increase the level of ‘hard’ technology and efficiency, and facilitate a centralized and globalized economy. The forces of globalization with all its contradictions and inequalities have accelerated the growing disparity between rich and poor. Amongst the manifold consequences of this growing inequality is poverty traps with lower health and ultimately lower life expectancies in many countries. The real price of financial crisis and globalization is not primarily an economic problem, but rather a serious human one with existential consequences that are generally under-communicated (Stiglitz, 2013). In the same manner, Helena Norberg-Hodge (2000) gives a thick description of the real costs of modern technical and economic progress.

Our main focus in this chapter is on social innovations that are aiming at serving that part of the population which is at the bottom of the economic pyramid and cannot afford to pay for the usual products in the free market (see Phills et al. 2008). Inspired by the work of Muhammad Yunus (2010), different types of social innovation in the developing world are explored. While recognizing the importance of technological or financial innovations, we call for serious ethical reflection on the perils of the so-called “devil’s doctrine” and the “economic doctrine.” The “devil’s doctrine” consists of creating and constructing whatever is technically possible, regardless of its destructive potential, while the “economic doctrine” is about “selling what can be sold profitably, no matter its substance.” We challenge both doctrines by presenting and analyzing successful social innovations. They serve not only the interest of commercial markets but also advance social development (Ims and Zsolnai 2014).

1 The Bottom of the Pyramid Model

The business models of the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) approach (Prahalad 2004, Hart and London 2005) receive worldwide recognition today. BoP means developing innovative businesses to serve the largest, but poorest socio-economic group in the world. In global terms, about four billion people live on less than USD 2.50 per day.

The Base of the Pyramid Protocol developed at Cornell University’ Johnson School of Business is a corporate innovation process for serving communities in the base of the world's

income pyramid. With the BoP Protocol, companies work to develop new markets and lift up low-income communities through the co-creation of innovations and enterprises in the BoP.

By building common ground between companies and communities, the BoP Protocol is a model for enterprise and market co-creation. Via the BoP Protocol, a company can:

- Build a deep understanding of BoP communities' needs and aspirations
- Develop key local partnerships in BoP communities that form the foundation for a sustained business venture
- Incubate and launch businesses that are embedded in the community's aspirations, strengths, and values
- Co-create new markets via new value propositions that neither the company nor its community partners could have created on their own.

The BoP Protocol extends the logic of the market and follows profit making as primary goal of the company while aiming at serving poor communities. In contrast, exemplary social innovation cases do not involve profit as the primary goal but emphasize social, spiritual and humanitarian goals such as minimizing suffering and empowering people and communities. (Ims and Zsolnai 2014)

For its primary profit orientation and materialistic mindset the success of BoP models is finally limited. Cornell University's expert Erik Simanis (2012) argues that there is a fatal flaw in the low-price, low-margin, high-volume strategy that multinationals have been pursuing in the bottom of the pyramid for the past decade. Companies seeking to improve the lives of the world's poor should elevate gross margins far above the company average by pushing down variable costs and boosting the price consumers are willing to pay for a unit of product. They also need to raise the price point for a single transaction.

Not every need of the poor can be transformed into marketable demand and when it is possible, social, environmental and cultural externalities may overwrite the material benefits provided by BoP projects. Social development requires going beyond the logic of the market and transcending profit making as the primary goal of business.

2 The Economy of Communion Experiment

We have selected The Economy of Communion (EoC), founded by Chiara Lubich in May 1991 in Sao Paulo Brazil as our first alternative business model. This model has been analyzed by many scholars, amongst other Gold (2003a, 2003b) and Linard, (2003). Gold (2003a) uses the concept 'Economy of Sharing', but she refers to the same phenomenon. Linard describes EoC as a business paradigm, which arise from the spirituality and social praxis of the Focolare Movement. According to him, this paradigm represents a living 'third way' between Marxism and Capitalism and is a genuine contrast to many earlier movements of business such as The Cooperative or The Quaker business, which have been successful on national as well as on international scales. The problem with those movements according to Linard is that "They have generally merged with the prevailing business ethos to the extent that their outward face to the world is indistinguishable from that of their capitalist competitors" (p 166). However, according to Linard, the praxis of the Focolare Movement is a sharp contrast to those movements. EoC is not an economic theory, but practitioners living an ideal and creating an economic theory. EoC is no longer a localized phenomenon, but "part of a global praxis – a living 'Third Way'" (2003, p 166). Within the first decade businesses operating within the paradigm spread to 100 countries, and attracted some 800 firms, generating almost 100 academic theses.

The Focolare entrepreneurs, workers, directors, consumers, savers, citizens, scholars, economists, are committed all, at various levels, in promoting a practice and an economic culture imprinted on communion, gratuity and reciprocity. Entrepreneurs are invited to share their profit to sustain the goals of the EoC: reduction of exclusion and its subsequent poverty, diffusion of the culture of giving and of communion, development of businesses and creation of new jobs; business people who can conceive and live their activity as a vocation and service for the common good, aiming at the excluded in every part of the world and every social context. (Economy of Communion 2014)

The sharing of profits in three parts is a practical proposal: (1) one part of the profits would be reinvested in the business in order to develop and create new jobs; (2) the second part would

be used to create a new culture, which would inspire women and men capable of incorporating communion into their lives; (3) and the third part would go directly to the poor so as to reinsert them fully into the dynamic of communion and reciprocity. (Bruni and Hejj 2011)

The EoC is not an experience defined by philanthropists or great entrepreneurs who give their goods to the poor without questioning their own lives, without becoming brothers or sisters in equal standing with the “poor” they are helping. The EoC businesses are really an economy of communion even when they have no profits to give, but when they are working and producing a culture of fraternity. Chiara Lubich who started this movement is very explicit on how this redistribution took place in the community of Trent: “The spirit of unity in charity was the ever-living flame that kept this fraternity alive...it did not require everyone to sell all that they possess, depriving themselves of what they could without causing themselves harm.....Everyone brought the extra that they had, above all in money, and committed themselves to giving a monthly sum. The donor and the amount promised remained secret. With the money received, The committee would help, month by month and in secret, those families in the community in need, carrying out this delicate task with the greatest charity and discretion.” (Chiara Lubich “Erano un cuor solo e un anima sola”, 1948, cited in Gold 2003b p 148).

Today business and the economy play a vital need for communion, happiness, relational goods, and goods of gratuity. By remaining faithful to its vocation day by day, the EoC is increasingly capable of producing these typical “goods.” Unity with God and thinking in terms of community, this is the essence of the Economy of Communion. (Bruni and Hejj 2011). Gold (2003) emphasizes that this model generates a wider client base and higher loyalty of both employees and clients, especially in an age of crisis. Gold states that an important aspect of the communitarian ethos of the Focolare is the building of relationships based on communion. This ethos may be called a culture of giving, and rests on a different anthropology of the human person than is dominant within economic theory. Thus the EoC stresses an anthropology which sees human beings as beings “in search of the others gaze” in search of communion” (Gold, 2003 p 171). Not as isolated beings, but beings that find fulfillment in meaningful relationships with others. As a consequence barriers of distrust that often exist between business and NGOs in formal partnerships have not been a problem

within EoC due to the high level of prior knowledge of the work of the Focolare. Gold stresses that the focus of the Focolare's work is not on poverty alleviation *per se* but on building relationships based on mutual care and solidarity.

In the early 2010s the Focolare Movement operated in 182 nations with more than 100,000 adherents and linked more than 800 companies.

3 The SEKEM Experiment

The organization SEKEM (Ancient Egyptian: 'vitality from the sun') was founded in 1977 by the Egyptian pharmacologist and social entrepreneur Ibrahim Abouleish in order to bring about cultural renewal in Egypt on a sustainable basis. Located northeast of Cairo, SEKEM includes: biodynamic farms; trading companies for produce and processed foods, herbal teas and beauty products, medicinal herbs and medicines, and organic cotton products; a medical center; a school based on the principles of Waldorf pedagogy open to pupils from any religious or ethnic background; a community school catering specifically to the needs of children from disadvantaged groups; a vocational training center; a college (Mahad Adult Education Training Institute), a research center (Sekem Academy for Applied Art and Sciences) and the Heliopolis University. It focuses on sustainable development and is working with several partners from Europe in a large consortium. Amongst its programs there are basic training course for solar technology instructors. Special importance is given to the interaction between all four sectors of society: the economic, cultural, social and environmental sector.

SEKEM's goals are to "restore and maintain the vitality of the soil and food as well as the biodiversity of nature" through sustainable, organic agriculture and to support social and cultural development in Egypt. By 2005, the organization had established a network of more than 2,000 farmers and numerous partner organizations in Egypt and began increasingly to seek to extend its experience and knowledge to other countries, including India, Palestine, Senegal, Turkey, and South Africa.

In 1975, Ibrahim Abouleish decided to begin a project of cultural renewal based on a synthesis of Islam and anthroposophy. Two years later, he bought a plot of land in what was, at the time, desert bordering farmland of the Nile valley. The original goal was to develop the land and improve crop yields using biodynamic methods. A thick border of trees was planted

to encircle the seventy hectares of land, and trees were planted along all the roads built; a forest was also planted on part of the land. The Bedouins, who lived nearby, and sometimes on the land, were brought into the project, given work and helped with their living needs. Buildings were constructed using traditional adobe. The initial farm animals were Egyptian buffalo.

The first large economic venture of the community initiative was production of a medicinal compound, ammoidin, an extract of Ammi majus (Laceflower). The manufacture of herbal teas and a company to market fresh biodynamic produce in Europe followed. The needs of these companies led to many farms throughout Egypt switching to biodynamic methods; the SEKEM organization began an active advisory service to aid these farms in the transition to and the maintenance of biodynamic standards.

Community projects began early in the initiative's history: a medical clinic using anthroposophic medicine, and a Society for Cultural Development sponsoring lectures, concerts and other cultural activities.

In 1987, the center for adult education (Mahad) began its work; children with handicaps are also educated in this center. In 1988, SEKEM opened a kindergarten also open to the local Bedouin community; this grew into the SEKEM School, educating children from kindergarten through twelfth grade (about 18 years of age) based on Waldorf education. "The school serves Muslim and Christian children alike encouraging them to live in harmony and have respect for the other's religious practices." The school also operates a literacy center for illiterate children between ten and fourteen years of age. In response to the use of child labor in Egypt, SEKEM founded the project "Chamomile Children", which offers children between ten and fourteen years an education, vocational training, meals, and medical care in conjunction with their work; the children's teachers look after the children the whole day. There is also a cooperative for employees to organize the social processes (the Cooperative of SEKEM Employees), an independent organization with members from all the businesses and cultural institutions associated with SEKEM.

In 1990, SEKEM founded the Centre of Organic Agriculture in Egypt (COAE), an independent organization that inspects organic farms in Egypt, Iran and Sudan. Faced with pesticide residues in their products that came from aerial spraying on nearby farms, SEKEM

took up an initiative to eliminate such spraying in Egypt. As cotton production depended upon the sprays, SEKEM explored organic cotton production on initially small fields. The experiments were successful and yields actually were better than non-organic production achieved. The Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture sponsored further and more extensive tests. Within three years, the ministry agreed that organic pest suppression was superior for cotton farming and began converting the entire area of Egyptian cotton, 4,000 square kilometers, to organic methods for controlling pests; the conversion took two years. The conversion resulted in a reduction in the use of synthetic pesticides in Egypt by over 90% and an increase in the average yield of raw cotton of almost 30%. SEKEM then created a company to process organic cotton using mechanical rather than chemical methods, Conytex.

In response to increasing publicity about the novel methods employed by the community in many realms, the association of Muslim sheiks in Egypt gave the community a plaque verifying that SEKEM is an Islamic initiative. This was the result of intensive meetings between SEKEM and Muslim religious leaders.

SEKEM's next initiative was the first private pharmaceutical company in Egypt, specializing in medicinal teas. The medical center had now grown to the point where it needed its own building; concurrently it considerably expanded its outreach into the Bedouin community, helping establish sanitary facilities and clean water supplies.

In 1997, SEKEM established a vocational training center offering trainings in metalwork, carpentry, mechanical work, electrical work, tailoring, biodynamic farming and trading. The vocational center also includes an art school. The German Society for Technical Cooperation helped establish this project. In 1999, the SEKEM Academy (now Heliopolis University) opened. Originally, a center for agricultural, pharmaceutical and medical research, the University now also conducts studies and offers training in other areas.

In 2001, a holding company was established to administer the finances of all the SEKEM companies and to oversee developmental projects. The holding company includes a department to help each individual company with its developmental process, and is responsible for the education and training programs for employees.

All SEKEM companies have a policy of ensuring transparency in the production, distribution and consumption of their goods. They work to ensure fair and secure prices for the farmers supplying them, basing their operations on the principle that the health of the economy depends upon producers, distributors and consumers cooperating to generate stable businesses.

SEKEM and Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish received the Right Livelihood Award in 2003 for integrating the commercial success with promotion of the social and cultural development of society. The organization has been cited as a successful example of social entrepreneurship that has had a significant impact on Egyptian society both through its influence on the country's agricultural practices and through its educational and cultural institutions. Furthermore Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish and his son Helmy were named Social Entrepreneurs of the year 2003 by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, and well known business schools like IESE and CIDA City Campus use various case studies (e.g. Harvard Business Press to illustrate this novel approach to sustainable social entrepreneurship). In 2012, Dr. I. Abouleish received the 'Oslo Business for Peace Award'. Aboulsh expressed that one of his inspirational sources was the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss's ideas about "deep ecology".

Yearly seminars to reflect on the aims and goals of SEKEM have evolved the following motto: We aim towards living together according to social forms that reflect human dignity and further development, striving towards higher ideals. Our main goal is a developmental impulse for people, society and the earth. SEKEM wants to contribute to the comprehensive development of people, society and the earth, inspired by higher ideals. The cooperation of economic, social and cultural activities is stimulated by science, art and religion.

SEKEM has set itself the following goals for the economic sphere:

- Healing the earth through biodynamic farming
- Development and production of herbal remedies and any kind of product or service which relates to real consumer requirements and has standards of the highest quality.
- Marketing in associative cooperation between farmers, producers, traders and consumers.

SEKEM aims to advance the individual development of the person through the cultural institutions. Free education is the goal of SEKEM's educational institutions for children, adolescents and adults. Health care and therapies using natural healing remedies are provided by SEKEM. The SEKEM Academy for Applied Arts and Sciences researches and teaches solutions to pertinent questions from all areas of life. Socially, SEKEM furthers a community of people from all over the world who recognize the dignity of the individual, enabling both learning to work and working to learn, and providing equal rights to all.

3 Aravind Eye Care System Experiment

Aravind Eye Care System, founded in Madurai (Tamil Nadu), by Dr. G. Venkataswamy known as 'Dr. V', has implemented an alternative model of health care in India, and Aravind is now one of the largest providers of eye surgeries in the world. Aravind's foundational principles and work ethics set it apart from the usual health organizations run on business lines. The firm is framed by market gurus Kuma, Scheer and Kotler (2000) as a *market driving*, not a market driven firm. Aravind as a transformational venture goes beyond the practice of social entrepreneurship by adopting and successfully applying the idea of individuals paying for services according to their means. Through its focus on service to the individual as the exclusive motor of any business operation, Aravind's business philosophy moves away from the pure economic logic. Aravind manifests a pattern of entrepreneurial action and a management style that break away from profits, markets, products and consumers. Individuals are no longer a variable that must be adjusted to the imperatives of expansion, viability or numbers. (Virmani and Lépineux 2014)

Aravind's adoption of spiritual principles of service and compassionate care distinguish it from other health care actors. Its eye camps in villages are one example of how public health interventions can promote solidarity among the population. As a young man Dr. V was disciple of Sri Aurobindo, an Indian philosopher and saint who lived in service to God and man. The name of the Aravind eye care system is inspired by this sage, whose philosophy may be summed up as believing in the interconnectedness of human beings. Aravind has promoted a shift in the social contract with people. As distinct from the traditional view of the social contract in which individuals are isolated from each other, we can see an interconnected form of social contract, which encourages individuals' involvement, commitment and

responsibility to community welfare. By its elaboration of eye care as public good, not private good, Aravind illustrates how transformational entrepreneurship can contribute to the common good of society. (Virmani and Lépineux 2014)

Transformational entrepreneurship is an ongoing process that creates a ripple effect: like a stone thrown into the water, it generates waves from the center, affects people, institutions and the State. The necessary transition calls for the development of transformational entrepreneurship ventures, which – like Aravind – can have a multi-level impact and expand the very notion of entrepreneurship. Thirty year after Dr. V’s modest start of Aravind, the system consists of a network of five regional hospitals performing over 200.000 cataract operations per year, 70 % of them without cost to the patient (Matalobos, Pons, and Pahls 2010). Aravind is not funded through government grants, aid-agency donations or bank loans, since Dr. V has chosen to develop an unusually high operational efficiency that has consequently extreme cost reductions. Thus, the organization has been able to be supported on an average contribution of 40 dollars for 1/3 of its patients that can afford it. Another innovative element is the use of ‘Screening Camps’. In India, there are large populations of untreated patients who cannot afford displacements to the main hospitals. In order to solve this problem Aravind sets up temporary screening camps in villages. These camps perform classifications of patients and offer free transportation to hospitals for patients who require specialized treatment. In 2006, 1793 screening camps were established and examined more than 2.3 million patients and performed 270.000 site restoration surgeries. This initiative has been extended to special areas amongst other school screening camps, and includes innovative technology such as teleophthalmology (Matalobos et al. p 2).

Internationally Dr. V was also one of the founding directors of the Seva Foundation, based in the United States. Seva was created by veterans of the smallpox eradication program, and one of its goals was the elimination of needless blindness, beginning in Nepal and India. Seva’s collaboration with Aravind began with small grants to subsidize the cost of cataract surgery, but soon developed to a partnership. Seva eye care workers from Nepal, China, Cambodia and Tanzania were trained at Aravind. In addition Aravind sent senior staff to assist in program development, hospital design and operation training with no cost by Aravind to “nurture a growing network of effective eye care centers”. (Brilliant and Brilliant 2007).

In 2005, with the encouragement of Aravind, Seva launched the Center for Innovation in Eye Care in Berkeley, California. One of its key activities is the development of the Center for Community Ophthalmology (CCO) These CCOs include at least one institution in every region of the world, drawing strongly on Seva's partnership experience with Aravind. One should also mention that Aravind shaped international eye care through its emphasis on understanding the human aspect of sight restoration using social science research. Dr. V insisted that research should be done to explore why rural patients who could benefit from surgery were not coming. One of the findings was that literacy and gender largely determined who got surgery and who stayed blind. "Globally, women carry a greater burden of blindness than men; Two out of every three blind are female.....not because of genetic propensities, but because worldwide, utilization of preventive and restorative eye care for female has not been equal to those of their male counterparts. This inequity begins in childhood". (Brilliant and Brilliant 2007 p 52). A number of international organizations, like WHO, has now affirmed that the "right to sight" should be equally available to women and men.

4 Understanding "social innovation"

All three founders of SEKEM, Economy of Communion, and Aravind Eye Care System may be regarded as social entrepreneurs. They all experienced a powerful vision or a mission. Mitroff's four perspectives on any problem (Mitroff 1998) may be a useful framework to analyze similarities and differences among the three exemplary cases.

The different perspectives in Mitroff's model are scientific/technical, interpersonal/social, systemic, and existential/spiritual (Mitroff 1998 pp 58-65). Mitroff emphasizes that the existential/spiritual perspective concerns some of the most basic issues of the human condition: meaning and purpose. Spiritual does not necessarily mean religious, but it means a different perspective than the materialistic one. Mitroff argues that the existential/spiritual perspective is not incorporated in theories of management. Without taken this perspective into consideration, "We have no comprehensive theories of management!" (Mitroff 1998, p 151). The scientific/technical is the ruling paradigm in our culture, emphasizing instrumental rationality which favors scientific/technical solutions. This easily leads to trying to solve most problems with scientific/technical means even if the problem may be defined as existential or spiritual and therefore need different approaches. The scientific/technical paradigm thus easily leads to techno-centrism which may produce powerful and latent side effects in the short as

well as in the long run, and lead to irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals and human beings (Ims and Zsolnai 2006).

All the three cases have a fundamental similarity that only can be accounted for by introducing an existential/ spiritual perspective. The social entrepreneurs behind all the three cases had a *strong vision or mission* that may explain the impetus for their commitment, innovative thinking and actions. We will not attempt to define spirituality in a scientific way, because we believe that such a definition may inherently miss what is truly spiritual. If we want to keep the notion of spirituality experience-based, we have to accept that spirituality is a rich, intercultural and multilayered concept. As a guideline we used the working definition of the Leuven-based SPES Forum: Spirituality is people's multiform search for a deep meaning of life interconnecting them to all living beings and to "God" or "Ultimate Reality." Most definitions of spirituality share a number of common elements: reconnection to the inner self; a search for universal values that lifts the individual above egocentric strivings; deep empathy with all living beings; and finally, a desire to keep in touch with the source of life (whatever name we give it). In other words, spirituality is a search for inner identity, connectedness and transcendence. (Bouckaert and Zsolnai 2011)

We think that spirituality merges human beings with something supernatural and that a scientific approach may only be able to measure the effects of spirituality rather than spirituality itself (Newberg and Monti 2011). As Bruni and Hejj write about EoC "life precedes the theoretical reflection that always accompanies it, because life is denser with truth than theory (which serves life inasmuch as it comes from life and is nourished by it)" (Bruni and Hejj 2011 p 381).

All three founders were strongly touched by what they saw when they traveled in the local communities. Abouleish who was born in Egypt (1937), and educated in Austria, visited Egypt in 1975 and felt deep and poignant grief for the social and economic conditions. He saw destructive pollution of the land due to heavily use of pesticides. Two years later, he founded SEKEM in the desert outside of Cairo. Dr. V retired at an age 58 from the Government Medical College, Madurai, as the head of the Department of Ophthalmology. However, he was so affected by the suffering of the blind people in his region that he determined to continue his work of organizing and providing quality eye care (Manikutty and Vohra 2004). Chiara Lubich was a mature woman when she visited Sao Paulo in Brazil, and

was “confronted with a scenario that powerfully symbolizes the potential contradiction with capitalism: a forest of skyscraper surrounded by a savannah of slums. EoC arose as a response to his experience of the suffering of humanity...” (Bruni and Hejj, 2011 p 380). Lubich was deeply moved by the poor neighborhoods where people had no work and no dignity. Within a few days of that trip, EoC was born.

We believe that the success behind all three social innovation models may be explained by the way they integrate *all four perspectives* suggested by Mitroff’s framework.

All three models had strong visions behind their engagement. Originally, Chiara Lubich had such a powerful religious experience that she changed her name from Sylvia to Chiara in honor of Clare of Assisi. This transforming event was dated to 7 December 1943 and it may be said to be the beginning of the Focolare movement. When bombs were falling on her hometown, she communicated one wish to her closest friends. Only one inscription should be carved on her tomb: “And we have believed in love”

In their article “From market Driven to market Driving”, N. Kuma, L. Scheer and P. Kotler (2000) uses Dr. V’s enterprise as an exemplary case, and ends up with what “Aravind Eye Hospital share with other market driving firms ... is the inability of the market driven approach to explain their success. ... The inspiration for the radical business ideas of these market driving firms came from a visionary such as Dr. Venkataswamy... who saw the world differently and whose vision addressed some deep-seated, latent, or emerging, need of the customer ... Ultimately, these firms revolutionized their industries by changing the rules of the game and ‘driving’ their markets” (Kuma et al. 2000, p 130).

Concerning the *systemic* perspective, SEKEM is explicitly taking the sustainability of the natural environment into account. This is one of their *‘raison d’etre’* and is one of the strongest markers of their new Heliopolis University for sustainable development and leadership. SEKEM’s role in changing the cotton industry of Egypt into an organic industry implied that the chemical industry lost a market in Egypt of an annual sale of 35000 tons pesticides, is an exemplary case. It demonstrates that a national environmental revolution is possible when scientific knowledge is used in a pro – nature, innovative way. (Abouleish 2012 p. 137-143). Aravind’s eye care system has demonstrated that it is a system that is self-financed not depending upon financial aid or economic support from external sources. The

system's efficiency in structures and operations makes it possible to have an economic policy expressed as follows: "We set prices not on our costs, but on who can afford to pay how much." In this way Aravind cross-subsidizes their different patients to the advantage of the worst off patients. Aravind is also developing the market and thus generating a demand. In a process of converting a basic need (cure blindness) into a demand, this makes the model very sound in a business sense. Another core principle in Aravind's business model is excellence in execution of efficiency in providing the treatment, including outpatient services and surgeries. The last core principle is quality. Also the EoC enterprises take the sustainability perspective into account through its organizing in "business parks", networks and redistribution of profit through the network. The owners of EoC company's are committed to put into practice social responsibility by paying fair taxes to the authorities. In that way, local development is supported. Probably the most important factor behind the EoC networks success is the empowering element of being a member of the network. When individuals are freed from their poverty traps, and regain their dignity, individuals develop hope, inspiration, and energy which unfold their creativity. Such a development changes a person's status from being a victim to external forces to becoming a productive resource contributing to the common good. This personal development is closely linked to *social* perspective in Mitroff's framework which is emphasized explicitly by all the three enterprises.

In EoC the social dimension is the first and primary principle. The economic exchange of goods plays only a subordinated role. A core principle is acknowledging the dignity of all people in practice by giving them opportunities to become economic players and partners in the EoU network. In Aravind the organizational vision; to 'eliminate needless blindness' as an outreach to people who suffer, and being able to treat as many patients as possible even if they cannot pay, is an demonstration of interconnectedness and that we all have co-responsibility for each other. In SEKEM cultural and social events, and in particular their morning circles where all co-workers and leaders meet each other and share their upcoming duties and tasks, are important part of the daily routines. A number of art activities play an important role in the social life of the SEKEM initiative. In Stockholm in 2003 Dr. Aboleish and SEKEM Farm received Right Livelihood Award: The jury gave this reason for the award: "A business model for the 21 st century in which commercial success is integrated with and promotes the social and cultural development of society through the 'economics of love'" (Abouleish 2011 p 145).

Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the alternative social innovation cases presented in this chapter.

Table 1 *Main Characteristics of Alternative Social Innovation Cases*

	Inspiration	Vision	Means	Outcome
Economy of Communion	Christian love, spirituality of unity	serving the poor and the needy	Building relationships based on a culture of giving, solidarity and sharing	restoring dignity of persons and communities
SEKEM	Anthroposophy & Islam	restoring and maintaining the vitality of the soil and the biodiversity of nature	sustainable, organic agricultural methods	catalyzing social and cultural development
Aravind	Aurobindo's philosophy of human interconnectedness	eye care as public good	individuals paying for services according to their means	new social contract for the common good

What is common in the analyzed cases is the strong intrinsic-spiritual motivation to serve the common good of society and attempts to understand and measure success in holistic terms which go beyond monetary results and market outcomes. The primary goal is not profit making but providing livelihood enabling services for people and enhance their well-being. We think this kind of motivation may corroborate the concept of embeddedness used by Granovetter (1985) and Mair and Marti (2006) in which they argued that economic functioning is embedded in social and structural relationship that modify economic behavior. Mair and Marti (2006) state that social entrepreneurship, like entrepreneurship in the business sector, cannot be understood in a purely economic sense but needs to be examined in light of the social context, and the local environment. We have emphasized the spiritual dimension as the major factor in all the three cases we have studied. We do not underemphasize the social and local environment. But we believe that our cases demonstrate that we need to take the spiritual dimension into account in order to explain the successes of our sample cases. As stated in the Right Livelihood Award given to Aboleish in 2003. “The SEKEM initiative shows how modern business can combine profitability and engagement in world markets with a humane and spiritual approach to people and respect for the natural environment” (Aboleish 2011, p 145).

5 Concluding Remark: Producing goods that are truly good and providing services that really serve

The market is a powerful institution to provide private goods and services and satisfy the short-term and to some extent long-term preferences of people who have enough purchasing power. The strong materialistic bias of the conventional business models including Bottom of the Pyramid models makes it difficult to serve the needs of those stakeholders who have little or no voice in the market system (Zsolnai 2015). Billions of people in the developing countries are unable to pay for products and services that would satisfy their basic needs. The World Bank (2004) states that services that satisfy basic human needs such as health care and education are failing poor people – in access, in quality, and in affordability. For an inclusive social development, innovative social enterprise models are needed which transcend the logic of the market in business and the economy and introduce more holistic approaches in order to produce goods that are truly good and provide services that really serve.

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