

Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Thursday, 13 June, 2019, 8:15am-9:30am

Conference Room 6

Sponsoring Organizations:

Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations
UN DESA
Harvard Law School Project on Disability
Beit Issie Shapiro

Speakers:

- Chair: Prof. Michael Stein, Executive Director, Harvard Law School Project on Disability, USA;
- Ms. Jean Judes, Executive Director, Beit Issie Shapiro, Israel;
- Mr. Loic van Cutsem, Impact Transfer Director, Ashoka, Austria;
- Ms. Sara Minkara, Founder & CEO of Empowerment through Integration, USA;
- Ms. Venus Ilagan, Visiting Fellow, Harvard Law School Project on Disability, USA;
- Mr. Fernando Acafrao, CEO and Founder, & Mr. Gidon Judes, Board Member, XTEND Schools Health, South Africa

Description of Event & Main Takeaways:

Social entrepreneurship is the use of social entrepreneurs to develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a variety of organizations with different sizes, aims, and beliefs. For-profit entrepreneurs typically measure performance using business metrics like profit, revenues and increases in stock prices, but social entrepreneurs are either non-profits or blend for-profit goals with generating a positive "return to society" and therefore must use different metrics. Social entrepreneurship typically attempts to further broad social, cultural, and environmental goals often associated with the voluntary sector in areas such as poverty alleviation, health care and community development.

The side event examined social entrepreneurship - specifically approaches by non-profit, business, and government initiatives - that offers new solutions for advancing disability equality.

Some of the main takeaways from the panel of speakers, included:

- People with disabilities are natural social entrepreneurs, and with the appropriate supports at a young age, can become catalysts for change in their own lives, their communities, and beyond.

- Social entrepreneurship models represent an interesting avenue to address disability issues worldwide in a sustainable, scalable, and systemic way.
- Many social innovations already exist in the disability field and have proven evidence that they work. These should be replicated in other contexts and an ecosystem of partners interested in replicating/scaling proven social innovations in this field, needs to be developed.
- Civil society organizations of the future need to be more entrepreneurial and use their advantage to have a significant role in the implementation of CRPD. They need to adapt quickly to the changing environment and needs; their structures need to include trans-disciplinary, cross organizational teams to create synchronization and creativity; they need to be flexible and be able to correct course; there needs to be a growth mindset among the employees; and management has to be able to hear needs from the bottom-up, not just top-bottom.
- A culture of partnerships between the public, business and third sector is key to the success of social entrepreneurship, the sustainability of solutions and their scalability.

Left to right: Loic van Cutsem, Venus Ilagan, Michael Stein, Jean Judes, Gidon Judes



Left to right: Sara Minkara, Loic van Cutsem