Development and internationalization of social entrepreneurial ventures: a conceptual framework

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Social entrepreneurship (SE) is playing an increasing role in the development and growth of economies, as governments find it harder to bear the burden of national social and economic development; this has become particularly important since the recent global economic recession. At the same time, there is relatively little research on how SE ventures develop, and, particularly, how they evolve to a point of internationalisation and scale development. An important question is, can internationalization theory help to inform SE theory development? This paper attempts to cast light on this question by presenting a conceptual framework of the stages in the development of an SE venture, and providing links with internationalization theory. We do this by exploring the development phases of SE ventures, from initial formation or start-up, through domestic expansion, and finally to internationalization into new foreign markets. Drawing primarily on recent perspectives of the Uppsala internationalization process model (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009), our study investigates the parallels and contrasts in the development of an international SE venture. Of particular interest is the application of additional concepts associated with internationalization, networks, resources, and legitimacy building. (For more information, please contact: Melodena Balakrishnan, University of Wollongong in Dubai, United Arab Emirates: melodenabalakrishnan@uowdubai.ac.ae)