

**SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURSHIP – AN EXTRA FORCE FOR
SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION – DISCUSSION PAPER**

**DRAFT VERSION FOR FEEDBACK FROM SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS
AND SUPPORTERS**

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1. Introduction

Jo da Silva was born in 1967 in Washington, DC while her father was on diplomatic assignment to the US. From an early age she absorbed her parents' love of travel as well as what she describes as "pre-war values" which emphasise the importance of community and contributing to society, careful use of resources and earning a living (vs. making money).

Jo's love of designing and making things led her to choose engineering as a profession. However, her parents' tales of exotic places inspired her to intersperse academic work at Cambridge with travel adventures in Turkey, the Middle East and India. After graduating she returned to live in India - building a clinic and a water supply as well as undertaking other projects - "living right up against nature in its raw and beautiful form. . . where humanity is there in three dimensions, floodlit every day."

The Indian experience proved pivotal in heightening Jo's awareness of the interdependence of human beings and their environment, shaping her desire to develop and apply her engineering skills to solving societal problems. She joined Arup as a graduate engineer, inspired by founder Ove Arup's emphasis on humanitarianism and doing rewarding, interesting work.

In parallel with her engineering career, Jo began undertaking post-disaster relief projects. The psychological impact of the first - constructing refugee camps in Tanzania after the Rwandan genocide in 1994 - "marked the beginning of the end of mainstream engineering" for Jo. She joined an Arup Sustainable Task Force formed by a board director who was "looking for people to be activists, not to be corporate animals." Jo co-led a building engineering group which focused on creating social infrastructure such as schools and libraries mostly for public sector clients in deprived urban area, growing the team from six to 35 people in 3 years.

Although Jo had conducted her post-disaster recovery activities separately from her work projects, the Tsunami disaster of 2004 proved a major turning point. She was invited by UNHCR to co-ordinate post disaster shelter construction in Sri Lanka with approximately 100 NGOs, building 60,000 shelters in six months. Determined to create a focus within Arup to address poverty in developing countries, Jo wrote directly to the chairman and engaged senior directors, appealing to them to uphold Ove Arup's original humanitarian ideals by resourcing development work.

By persuading Arup management that alleviating poverty served the interests of the business, Jo was able to establish Arup International Development as a consultancy arm providing expert technical advice and practical solutions to reduce poverty and improve human, economic and environmental health in developing countries. Starting with three months of funding, she has now grown Arup International Development into a thriving entity within the group, offering services spanning urban development, water and sanitation, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaption and education.

"I don't feel brave, I feel lucky that I've got skills that can be put to use and make a real difference. . . I couldn't work for a company that's making money for third party shareholders. [With a] social conscience, you've got to make money but making money is not the raison d'etre."

Jo da Silva is a social intrapreneur. The Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility is currently examining the contribution that social intrapreneurs can make both to their businesses and to improving environment and society.

Our current working definition for social intrapreneurs is:

A person within a large corporation who takes direct initiative for innovation(s) which addresses social or environmental challenges profitably.

The definition explains why social intrapreneurs hold the potential for large scale innovation and change. Social Intrapreneur Gib Bulloch at Accenture explains: “Affecting even small change in large organizations can lead to significant positive social impact.” (SustainAbility Field guide to social intrapreneurship, 2008).

The value of studying social intrapreneurship lies in its potential to develop solutions to our global challenges. In contrast to social entrepreneurs, social intrapreneurs can leverage existing infrastructures and organizational capabilities to deliver social value already at scale. Unlike corporate volunteers, corporate responsibility champions or green team members inside companies, social intrapreneurs furthers social and environmental goals while at the same time generating a profit for their employers.

We reviewed existing publications on the subject (Fetzer and Aaron's Climb the Green Ladder, 2009; N Making Your Impact at Work - A Practical Guide to Changing the World from Inside Any Company: et Impact, 2009; SustainAbility's Field Guide to social intrapreneurship, 2008) as well as profiles available on the Aspen Institute's First Movers Fellowship Program website. Additionally, we issued a call for participation through the Ethical Corporation magazine, personal contacts and postings at different list-servers around the issue of social innovation and change. We have interviewed 25 social intrapreneurs to date with several more still to do: see figure 1 below . We have also interviewed several people who have studied and helped social intrapreneurs as well.

Figure 1

Doughty Centre interviews with 25 social intrapreneurs

FROM SECTORS SUCH AS:

- Energy
- Telecoms
- Media
- Financial services
- Engineering consultancy
- Management consultancies
- Advertising & PR agencies
- Logistics
- Alcohol
- Retailing
- construction

DEVELOPING BUSINESS IDEAS TO TACKLE e.g.:

- Banking services
- Micro-enterprises
- Agricultural development
- Climate change
- Waste
- Water
- Sustainable development
- Child labour

Q.1 Do you agree with our definition of social intrapreneurs?

2. Social Intrapreneurs - An under-exploited category of change agents – what do they do?

Social Intrapreneurs create innovations which are both socially and financially beneficial by leveraging the resources and capabilities of their organizations. Nick Hughes and Susie Lonie from Vodafone are examples, leveraging Vodafone’s expertise in telecommunications and technology to provide banking solutions to the people of Kenya who had no bank account; making their financial life easier and more secure with a service called (M-PESA)

M-PESA (M stands for mobile and PESA is Swahili for money) is an example of the work of social intrapreneurs in inclusive business and “Business at the Bottom of the Pyramid” popularised by writers like the late C. K. Prahalad: “Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid” (2005). The societal challenge here is to bring the benefits of business to low-income families thus increasing their quality of life. While being poor they have the same nutritional, security, housing and other needs as middle class citizens and usually have to pay a much higher price for such services. Social Intrapreneurs are alleviating this situation. Some of them like Michael Anthony at Allianz use the capabilities of multinational insurance companies to offer micro-insurances to low-income families. Their innovative products of health, life, accident and disability insurances is already reaching more than 2.3 million people in developing countries. Others such as Ian Mackintosh, at drinks company SABMiller are working with local farmers and indigenous communities to source natural ingredients for their production process giving these suppliers a stable source of income. Social Intrapreneurs in the energy sector, like Robert Bocca, formerly at BP, are trying to leverage the business expertise of their employers to provide micro-energy solutions to off-grid villages.

Another big area social intrapreneurs are addressing is resource consumption and waste, for example, saving water by innovative drip irrigation systems which help farmers in dry areas to efficiently water their plants. Social intrapreneurs in logistics optimize their routes in order to save petrol and to avoid emissions. To develop chemicals from natural ingredients instead of oil is the challenge for one social intrapreneur at an international pharmaceutical company.

Climate change is another area of activity for social intrapreneurs. Social intrapreneurs at different telecommunication companies are promoting tele-working solutions to improve employee satisfaction, reduce traffic and congestion as well as reducing CO2 emissions. Hugh Saddington at the Australian telecommunications company Telstra has successfully championed a carbon calculator for Telstra clients to see how much their use of various Telstra services such as video-conferencing, will both save clients money and reduce their carbon footprint. The more successful they sell these products and services the better for the planet. Early in their career with the German electrical engineering company Siemens, the IT professionals Mark Siebert and David Murphy built an internal network of people interested in sustainability issues. This group of socially and environmentally sensitive colleagues discussed issues where IT and sustainability meet. The first wave of their engagement concentrated on “Green IT”. Eco-friendly and resource-saving applications resonated

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with Siemens as well as with clients who were able to save costs related to their IT infrastructure. At the same time, Siemens and Murphy's initiatives also lowered emissions from energy consumption.

The activities of other social intrapreneurs focus on awareness building as well as leveraging their organizations' effectiveness. In particular, social intrapreneurs working for media companies - like Carrina Gaffney at the Guardian newspaper in the UK - have realized that there is a significant segment of the population interested in sustainability issues. This represents a new reader segment and it puts sustainability issues in the mainstream media. Other social intrapreneurs are leveraging the capabilities of consulting firms to enhance the effectiveness of civil society organizations. Gib Bulloch at Accenture initiated Accenture's Development Partnership programme, Jo da Silva has created Arup International Development, and Ralf Schneider (now with HSBC) was behind Price Waterhouse Coopers' Ulysses experimental learning programme.

We found the majority of social intrapreneurs we have interviewed to be engaged in inclusive business, reducing resource consumption and climate change. The examples outlined above show that social intrapreneurs do not necessarily need to scale their initiatives themselves, as the small changes they provoke inside big organizations can have an immediate impact on thousands – and in some cases, millions - of people.

CLOSE RELATIVES

There are a number of close relatives of Social Intrapreneurs – who may sometimes be confused with Social Intrapreneurs. “Close relatives” include social entrepreneurs, in-company sustainability champions and members of corporate “Green teams”¹ of volunteers, public sector entrepreneurs, and responsible entrepreneurs (running their own for-profit businesses responsibly); “sense-makers” (writers, consultants and campaigners about entrepreneurship and sustainability); “catalytic convertors” – people comfortable crossing boundaries between public, private and NGO sectors and bringing people from different sectors together / building public-private-community partnerships (sometimes called “civic entrepreneurs;”) and Corporate Responsibility /Corporate sustainability directors / managers.

Are there further social intrapreneurs you would be prepared to introduce the Doughty Centre to?

¹ Some commentators also regard champions and green team members as social intrapreneurs because they are challenging the organisational status quo – we are taking a more exclusive definition.

3. TYPES OF SOCIAL INTRAPRENEUR

Based on our interview data and what we learnt from the previous studies, we observed the following types of social intrapreneurs:

Table 1: Types of Social Intrapreneurs

Type of Social Intrapreneur	Description
Resigned	Quit their company because of a lack of support for their social intrapreneurial ideas.
Frustrated	Remained within the company, but have given up to push for social innovation and concentrating on their core job.
Emergent	Starting out with their idea and it is still unclear how the corporate environment will respond.
Quiet	Operating below the corporate radar in order not to attract criticism and objections.
Tolerated	Experimenting with ideas while the company is indifferent or neutral towards their activities.
Embraced	The company is actively encouraging the idea empowering the social intrapreneur.

Do you recognise our description of types of social intrapreneurs as accurate and realistic?

4. THE SOCIAL INTRAPENEURS JOURNEY

The notion of the **social intrapreneur's journey** has been described by Maggie Brenneke (now with the consulting firm: Imaginals²) in a model focusing on the **development of a social intrapreneur's project**. The social intrapreneurs may pass through several stages described as inspire -> design -> lift -> launch -> scale.



1. Inspire: Aha moment – get ideas
2. Design: research the idea
3. Lift – find finance, mentors, allies, momentum
4. Launch – test and perhaps
5. Scale – take the intrapreneurial idea from test-market to broadscale.

Based on our interviews, we believe that the **developmental journey of the social intrapreneur** may contain cycles of project/enterprise development but is ultimately **linear** in nature, with the social intrapreneur (and the organisation) exposed to opportunities for personal transformation along the way – e.g.

- Empowered social intrapreneurs may subsequently become Frustrated/Resigned as the result of a change of senior management or other conditions in the corporate environment.
- A successful social intrapreneur may grow a project to a size which requires a different sort of individual who can manage large scale organisational processes, with the social intrapreneur exiting the organisation to launch other

² www.imaginals.net

projects or remaining within the organisation but assuming a different sort of role.

- Successful business entrepreneurs may belatedly recognise the positive social impacts of their operations and become sustainability activists.
- Frustrated social intrapreneurs may move within an organisation to a team with whom they are more ideologically aligned; or resign from their organisations and go on to become empowered social entrepreneurs running their own enterprises.

Our interviewees included several who had taken their ideas to scale within their organisation. Amongst these were both resigned and embraced Social Intrapreneurs:

- One social intrapreneur – a serial entrepreneur who had been head-hunted in to a global business to create an intrapreneurial unit – had quit the company and gone back to being an independent entrepreneur
- One social intrapreneur has stayed with his project which he continues to manage eight years after initiating it
- Two social intrapreneurs have stayed with their multinational employers, but have moved job – one is replicating his idea in another market; and the other has moved on to other sustainability initiatives.

Thus, our interviews suggest that social intrapreneurs may be some or all of these types at different stages, during the development of their ideas. While the interaction between the social intrapreneur and the corporate environment varies, we observed some stable sets of mindsets, behaviours and skills.

Does the description of the Social Intrapreneur's Journey (Maggie Brenneke) resonate and do you have any particular experiences of the stages of the journey, you are willing to share?

5. THE MINDSET, BEHAVIOUR AND SKILLS OF SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS

Beyond identifying how social intrapreneurs act as change agents in companies, we were also interested in identifying mindsets, behaviours and skills which are common to social intrapreneurs. Only with the right mindset, appropriate behaviours and skills will individuals be able to deal with current sustainability challenges. We, therefore, took as our unit of analysis, the personal history of the *social intrapreneurs* themselves. We were particularly interested in discovering through our interviews whether there are specific life circumstances (e.g. early exposure to social issues or entrepreneurship; opportunities for skills development) or personality traits (e.g. a consistent tendency to persist in the face of adversity; openness to new experiences) that are common to social intrapreneurs.

We were also interested in discovering whether any of these environmental factors or personal characteristics enhance or diminish a social intrapreneur's chances of

guiding a project to a successful conclusion (i.e. producing both positive commercial and social impacts).

Mindset

A mindset is defined by the principles and values that shape individual decision making. The principles and values of the majority of social intrapreneurs we interviewed centre around societal value creation such as preserving nature and serving others.

“I’ve been brought up not to waste anything . . . my mum’s a cook and my dad’s a social worker but they’ve always had the same interests as me – they like gardening and they’ve got a book on self sufficiency I found interesting.”

“I always liked to be involved in projects and wanted to see the fruits. I was inspired by an aunty who was in Sao Paulo and worked in a favela in Monte Azul with child care centres..”

“I think I have a different mindset – possibly because I have had such a varied career.”

Exposure to nature or rural life awakens interest in sustainability. Several of our subjects reported having early experiences of nature – whether by the sea, in the countryside or on farms - which kindled an interest in, and often a desire to preserve, the natural environment.

“Although I was born in London, we then moved to Frome when I was aged 8 – quite a rural town. I spent time in Wales at my grandparents’ farm – so had a dual urban and countryside upbringing. I’ve always loved the countryside. I’ve always been attracted to the idea of being self-sufficient which has evolved into sustainability.”

“There was my immediate family and my half sister’s family on a smallholding in Cornwall. . . On a smallholding you see where your food comes from. There were influences from there.”

Even later experiences can awaken an awareness of nature and the interdependence of people and their environment:

“Apart from a two-week exchange in France, I hadn’t travelled at all. Then I was living in the jungle in India – living right up against nature in its raw and beautiful form. . . humanity is there in three dimensions, floodlit every day. It was huge – and realising we are all human beings – different from home – realising dependency and balance with the environment. My thinking about society and the environment goes back to that year.”

However, social intrapreneurs have overcome the traditional dichotomy of thinking either in business or in societal terms. Many of our interviewees struggled with a corporate environment which either placed their ideas in a philanthropy or business

field. They, however, integrate both ideas, and are able to express those with business and societal indicators.

“There was a long-term relationship. I could present that in a business framework. This isn’t about making money but it’s not about philanthropy, either. This debate went on for months. People presumed this was philanthropy – I said, no, this is about doing good business.”

“Key lesson? Almost disguise social aspects and present [the project idea] as helping business to grow revenue. You can still talk about sustainability – but emphasise business – then people are happier to talk.”

Our interviewees clearly exhibited principles and values oriented around social and environmental care and preservation. One intermediary in the social intrapreneurship environment remarked: “The loyalty of social intrapreneurs is bigger regarding the societal value than to the company.” . Therefore we describe their mindset as oriented towards societal value creation. However, in contrast to many people working in the non-profit sector social intrapreneurs are able to understand the business value of addressing societal issues and overcame the dichotomy of either profit or societal value.

Behaviours

Social intrapreneurs demonstrated some dominant behaviours in the way how they became aware of societal challenges as well how they would approach resolving them. Three behaviours were most common: persistency and self-belief, learning, and outreach.

All our interview partners referred to being persistent in following through with their ideas especially when asked what advice they would give to others.

“Perseverance – there were times when it felt like I was fighting a guerrilla war inside the organisation. Be determined to make happen where you think it right for organisation.”

“Be resilient and thick-skinned about the cynicism and doubt you will get.”

“Don’t give up – this is where dogged determination comes in. In the early days, I was accused of all sorts by competitors, trade associations, the media. It would have been easy to sweep it [labour issues] under the carpet. [Q: What kept you going?] I was right and they were wrong. I’d seen it and they hadn’t.”

“Be courageous, hold on to your idea even if this is difficult at times. If you can’t find the business case for your project – think again and create it.”

Also social intrapreneurs exhibited a strong learning orientation mostly expressing an experiential learning experience which involved trial and error.

“I loved engineering – I’m a learning junkie – you learn new stuff every day.”

“It was one of those environments where if you tried something, you could do more of it if you succeeded. From that I decided to do economics at A levels and maths – decided I wanted to go to university and do business. But I wanted to do a sandwich degree – 2 years study, 1 year working, and another year study.”

Part of this the learning opportunity reaches out to the communities or environments where they wanted to make a difference.

“I went out there (India) – got a good tour of all of the areas, tried to turn over as many stones as possible to see what was going on. If you look at social issues, it’s easy to be taken round by someone with a vested interest. I had been to places people had never been before – people there said they’d never seen anybody like me before. . . You’ve got to really understand the issues. It’s really easy to say bonded labour is a problem. You’ve got to visit, understand, deeply analyze what’s going on.”

“I had spent a year travelling into very remote, poor areas – where a dollar a day seems like a lot of money – and I saw then the impact, when I started to pay the farmers for their first crop. I saw the wonderment and relief on the faces of farmers – I realised we did not understand poverty. I felt then that it should be a mandatory requirement of business to think about this approach – it allowed families to create income. I felt proud – [the company] is a pioneer – we should now be promoting this to other companies on the international stage.”

“In Rwanda I watched the forest walk backwards day by day, watching water in the lake drop inch by inch as water was taken for drinking. It goes back to my time in India, the whole business of mankind’s balance with nature. Part of the world, the developed world has produced amazing things and is obsessed by consumerism, yet there are billions of people without. We have one global society floating on one shining blue planet floating in the cosmos. That was the beginning of the end of mainstream engineering for me.”

Some of the social intrapreneurs were also sent to a local environment for business reasons and experienced their epiphany moment during their visit, realizing the potential for societal value creation. An important insight for anyone wanting to create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurs inside their company.

In sum, social intrapreneur’s behaviour can be characterized as being persistent and having a learning orientation. The learning extends to really understanding the social or environmental issues social intrapreneurs want to address and this often involves visiting the areas and communities where they want to make a difference.

Skills

Skills are also called talents and describe learned capacity to perform a task with a minimum outlay of time and energy. The common skills we recognized with social intrapreneurs were entrepreneurship and communications – both together created the necessary trust that social intrapreneurs need to earn in order to pursue their ideas internally.

Many of our interviewees honed their entrepreneurial skills at an early age, learning how to sell goods and services and to address client needs.

“From age 15, we all had jobs – greengrocer, gas station, started making dresses for friends. So quite young we learned you could earn money and use it to do what you wanted to do.”

“While I was in school, I had a part-time job on a market stall – sold pots and pans, M&S seconds, fabric – that whole commerce side of things really. I enjoyed it and it attracted me. So from an early age – 12, 13, 14 – I was learning about making money and being entrepreneurial.”

Marketing and communication skills appeared to help several of our subjects build a business case for their project and engage the support of others.

“Whilst I was there I got more interested in marketing – really understanding what consumers needs and wants were – understanding customer/consumer dynamics.”

Other specialist technical skills in fields such as IT and engineering appear to have aided a number of our subjects in preparing an in-depth business case for action, designing or implementing a project.

“I loved engineering – I’m a learning junkie – you learn new stuff every day.”

“It was one of those environments where if you tried something, you could do more of it if you succeeded. From that I decided to do economics at A levels and maths – decided I wanted to go to university and do business. But I wanted to do a sandwich degree – 2 years study, 1 year working, and another year study. Whilst I was there I got more interested in marketing – really understanding what consumers needs and wants were – understanding customer/consumer dynamics.”

Social intrapreneurs also appear skilled at working in partnership with other organisations, these can be key to establishing credibility and gaining expertise needed for building the business case for action on social/environment issues and to implement, or provide external validation for, social innovation programmes.

Our interviewees reported numerous collaborative relationships with other parts of their business but also with NGOs, governing bodies, educational institutions and even commercial organisations as benefiting their projects in various way – see Table 2 for some of the examples quoted.

“Work with NGOs ensured quality market research – probably the most extensive quality market research done into that business segment in India. Indian management went to stay with villagers to understand them.”

“Everything I do is checked by an accredited third party. If you get caught through greenwash, the damage is massive.”

Table 2:

NGO	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	EDUCATIONAL	COMMERCIAL
SecondNature – an environmental ngo; Not-for-profit consultancy: Forum for the Future; Hadoti Hast Shilp Sansthan (Indian NGO providing welfare services); WWF Australia; Microenergy International	GTZ: German Government developmental agency	University of Birmingham Late C K Prahalad (U of Michigan professor and business guru)	Media partners (Guardian and Daily Telegraph)

These entrepreneurial as well as communication skills combined with a deep knowledge of their business helped them to gain the trust of their employer. This trust then was considered essential for the necessary leeway to experiment with new ideas; and to gain the support of key corporate decision-makers who determine strategy and have the power to invest resources in social innovation projects. Social intrapreneurs have an ability to find and inspire champions to give air-cover and sponsors to sanction resources.

“I was lucky – I had two or three senior directors who believed in me. One I’d worked for ten years – he knew me as a character – knew [this person] doesn’t set herself up for failure.”

“In the early days it was fair to say that they just let me get on with it. The trust I’d built up with the other directors meant they trusted my judgement. It takes a lot of personal passion and commitment and convincing.”

“Managers have always given me leeway because they know I deliver.”

Trust is linked to a general tolerance of experiments which has been cited as a feature of long-lived companies (Arie de Geus “The Living Company” 1997) and those which are generally innovative.

Social intrapreneurs clearly have entrepreneurial and marketing skills. They know what people want and how to address their demands profitably. At the same time these skills help them to generate the trust necessary to embark on new ideas with the support of senior executives.

Is there anything you disagree with in the description of the Mindset, behaviours and skills of social intrapreneurs and anything missing from your experience?

6. HOW COMPANIES REACT

There appear to be a spectrum of corporate reactions to social intrapreneurship:

- Hostility – active rejection
- Ignorance - unawares
- Indifference
- Bemusement
- Guarded tolerance
- Smother accidentally – don’t intend to suppress – but do
- Mature empowerment

This is reflected in a number of obstacles described by interviewees - see Table 3 for examples of key obstacles:

Table 3:

- Limitations of middle and senior mindsets (don’t ‘get’ Social Intrapreneurs’; either/or thinking; sustainability seen as ‘left wing’; short-term thinking; Resistance to criticism of consumerism within the advertising industry
- Internal political climate (no senior sponsor; other business priorities seen as more important); change in success criteria (profitability more important) linked to loss of sponsoring CEO; ; internal scepticism as to how [the social intrapreneur’s] ideas would work; difficulty in releasing corporate assets; silo thinking; inappropriate scale of KPIs (focus on business vs. group);
- External socio-economic climate (e.g. recession, socio-political environment)
- Stakeholder conflict (clients vs. NGOs)

Social Intrapreneur personality issues (need to keep developing new projects => restlessness)

Why should companies encourage Social Intrapreneurs and embrace them?

Companies need to S.T.I.R to understand how social intrapreneurs can contribute to profitability and, therefore, what is the business case for encouraging social intrapreneurs: STIR is a mnemonic for Sustainability, Talent, Innovation, Reputation. See Table 4.

TABLE 4

Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New insights into issue of sustainability (may not be very aware of implications for their business) • May save / make money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% of CEOs interviewed for the Accenture / UNGC 2010 Ceos’ survey say that sustainability issues will be critical to the future success of their business; and 91% report that their company will employ new technologies to address
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		sustainability issues over the next five years
Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances employee motivation and morale – both for S Is themselves – but also potentially for others concerned by Sustainability / who care about values of their employer 	<p>intrapreneurs enjoy a high level of engagement with their work and employer. Different strands of research suggest that organisations which foster employee engagement enjoy a wide range of positive business outcomes:</p> <p>Separate research by Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson) has linked engagement with employee wellbeing and positive financial outcomes (operating income, earnings per share).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations which provide opportunities for ‘good work’ – i.e. work that is ‘rewarding for employees, employers and society’ - create benefits for their businesses as well as their employees, according to research by The Work Foundation
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional source of creativity and innovation May create new partnerships for business to create new business opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make yourself attractive to external partners / proposals eg Procter and Gamble – Used to be all from inside company – now goal that 50% of innovation from outside – Gallup research in 2006 suggests that engagement and innovation are linked; “passionate workers are most likely to drive organisations forward”.
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible reputational benefits – as an international company which empowers its employees; but also for resultant products and services which the social intrapreneurs generate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vodafone and ADP for example have had international profile and publicity from the creations of the social intrapreneurs.

The societal case for social intrapreneurs comes from having more people working on solutions to the challenges of sustainable development, which which can be taken to scale as part of large successful corporations; and can then inspire copy-cat initiatives and further social intrapreneurs.

Have we captured the main obstacles for social intrapreneurship; and the key elements of the business case and the societal case for social intrapreneurship?

7. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS – INSIDE COMPANIES

Companies themselves create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship – or, at the opposite extreme, a disabling environment. Harnessing the talents and commitment of all employees, for sustainability is part of the mindset, behaviours and skills of companies at the more advanced stages of Corporate Responsibility maturity (Porritt and Tuppen; Dunphy et al; Googins and Mirvis; Zadek 2004).

Companies need to consider the creation of the “enabling environment” for social intrapreneurship, as a key milestone on the journey to embedding sustainability and empowering all employees to treat sustainability as part of their day-jobs. One leading company characterises this as an evolution from CSR to today's "way we do business" to (tomorrow's) "the business we do."

This includes “tone from the top” – corporate leadership giving employees permission and genuinely empowering employees to take the initiative; regularly emphasising the importance of sustainability to the business; and story-telling positively highlighting examples of social intrapreneurs both inside and outside the company, in order to encourage other employees. Establishing green teams and similar initiatives can create opportunities for employees to “test the waters” as would-be social intrapreneurs. More sophisticated approaches involve making social intrapreneurship an integral part of talent development and innovation. Most proactively, this would be emulating the example of a company like Google and making it clear to employees that they can spend a designated percentage of their work-time, pursuing their own ideas for projects which could benefit the company – and being explicit that this includes environmental and social performance. Perhaps less ambitiously, but more acceptable to more senior management teams, would be to build on the trend for companies committed to sustainability and corporate responsibility, actively to seek their employees’ engagement in this commitment (e.g. Wal-mart drive to get all their 2m million employees to have PSPs: Personal Sustainability Projects).

This can be promoted by:

- Offering modest Research and Development funds to employees to enable them to “buy-out” some of their own time to work up a social intrapreneurship proposal; and / or to fund other costs associated with testing out the idea. This could only staged payments, so that only the most commercially promising projects and those with the greatest positive societal impact come through to secure larger financing for launch and subsequent expansion. Vodafone, for example, now encourage employees

to bid competitively to internal innovation funds. Marks and Spencer has a similar fund for employees to bid competitively for, to help with implementation of their ambitious extension of Plan A to make M&S the most sustainable global retailer by 2015.

- Requiring New Business Development and Corporate Responsibility functions regularly to brainstorm the potential for corporate social opportunities (new products and services, access to new or underserved markets, new business models which have positive environmental and social impact – Grayson and Hodges 2004); and to publicise these ideas internally. Part of the job description of the volunteer sustainability champions in KPMG Canada is to find and encourage social intrapreneurs. Supporting social intrapreneurs could become one way for line-managers to fulfil a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) around innovation, talent, new business development and sustainability.

Social intrapreneurs do not operate in a vacuum. Maggie Brenneke refers to this as the eco-system which has other actors. In this eco-system, social intrapreneurs are surrounded by a number of other archetypes e.gg catalysts, mentors, champions, funders, technical experts. The same person may fulfil several of these roles. A Corporate Responsibility Department may play some / all of these roles. Some have previously suggested that the CR Department may become obsolete as more companies embed CR within their business purpose and strategy. A separate Doughty Centre research project with the executive search firm Odgers, suggests rather that CR departments will continue to evolve and take on different roles and become more of an internal consultancy, centre of expertise and provocation for action, rather than disappear³. The analogy would be with the evolution of the HR function from being the repository of all personnel-related matters to the situation today where it provides specialist advice and expertise, but all managers are expected to be able to handle general HR issues. The promotion and support of S.Is could - potentially – be amongst these new roles for the specialist CR function of the future. HP are collaborating with Volans and the Doughty Centre to pilot the concept of “Dynamic duos” – “Dynamic duos are inter-generational collaborations to the mutual benefit of partners as well as creating real and actionable business opportunities for their organisation.” (Elkington, Grayson and Love – forthcoming).

Support for “dynamic duos” is one programme to help social intrapreneurs.

Several other companies have experiential learning programmes designed to increase awareness of societal challenges and opportunities: PWC has run their Ulysses initiative for several years. Ulysses is “a global leadership development programme for future leaders of Pricewaterhouse Coopers. The Ulysses programme is designed to build a global network of responsible leaders who are committed to developing quality, trust-based relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders... The programme comprises five learning modules and is distinguished by an eight-week project assignment where multi-cultural teams work in developing countries in collaboration with social organisations.”

<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ulysses/index.jhtml>

³ Who should head up your corporate responsibility approach? – Odgers Berndtson and the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility (2009)

GSK has initiated PULSE to “empower GSK’s high-performing employees to volunteer using their professional expertise. Lasting for a period of three to six months, a PULSE volunteer will work full-time with a GSK partner non-governmental organisations (NGO) to make a significant impact in impoverished communities around the world.”

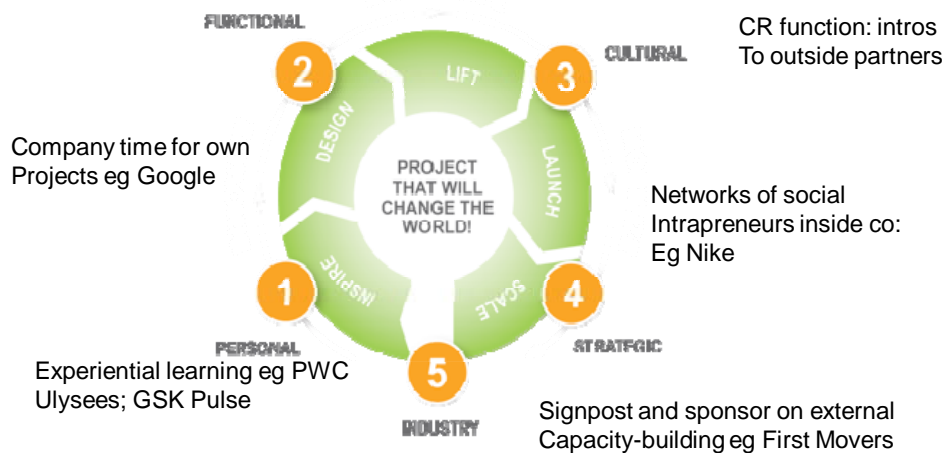
(http://www.gsk.com/community/employee_involvement.htm)

Companies can also proactively encourage their social intrapreneurs to external networks, on-line mutual support groups and developmental programmes, such as the Aspen “First Movers” programme. One aspect of networking is the opportunity to develop **self-knowledge**. (“It is important for people to understand their own thresholds, tolerance of sticking around through everything”). Social intrapreneurs have to discover whether it is better for them to stay in the company or move (to another company or strike out as a social entrepreneur or go to an NGO

Individual elements of company support are likely to be more relevant at particular stages of the social intrapreneurs’ journey – see diagram.

The social intrapreneur’s journey and enabling Environment inside company

Mentoring and Dynamic duos



Adapted from original model by Imaginals:
www.imaqinals.net – Maqqie Brenneke

How companies can create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship is the subject of a separate Doughty Centre paper later this summer.

Is the description of how companies can create an enabling environment realistic?

8. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT – EXTERNAL

Our research suggests that social intrapreneurs are currently an under-exploited category of change agents. They tend to have particular mindset, behaviours and skills. External groups such as NGOs as well as business schools might help social intrapreneurs to succeed with their ideas thus leveraging some social impact.

Peter Schwartz and Blair Gibb (1999) classify NGOs according to their interactions with corporations which go from adversarial campaigning to partnerships. A logical extension of a partnership approach would be the collaboration with social intrapreneurs. Some of our interviewees already collaborate with NGOs in the realization of their projects.

“Work with NGOs ensured quality market research – probably the most extensive quality market research done into that business segment in India. Indian management went to stay with villagers to understand them.”

“Everything I do is checked by an accredited third party. If you get caught through greenwash, the damage is massive.”

Where companies have already embraced social intrapreneurship, NGOs might help with market research, awareness-raising sessions with employees, hosting field-visits and providing technical support under contract with the company. Where a company has yet to move beyond the compliance or risk-minimisation stages of corporate responsibility the NGO may be more productive by encouraging any members of the NGO working inside large companies, to consider practising their commitment to the goals of the NGO at their place of employment..

Business schools can also provide an environment which caters for the social intrapreneurs learning needs. Our interviews clearly demonstrate that there is a demand for programmes on social innovation and social intrapreneuring, as well as change management.

“I’ve always carried on with continuing professional development – did an IOD diploma in Company Direction, became a chartered director – the triple bottom line really struck a chord. This was something I came to at university – probably only 20 years ago that people started to talk about it in the mainstream.”

Some of our interviewees participated in Bath University’s Master Programme in “Responsibility and Business Practice”⁴ where they learnt how to think business and responsibility together. Others currently participate in Aspen Institute’s First Mover Programme which “serves as an innovation lab for exceptional individuals in business today who are implementing breakthrough strategies to create profitable business growth and positive social change.”ⁱ

Such programmes appear to fulfil a number of roles such as mutual support and reassurance; contacts and access to technical expertise; capacity building and

⁴ (now relocated to the Ashridge Management School – also in UK)

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problem-solving; mentoring and career support; awareness-raising about sustainability issues and possible solutions; and technical and soft-skills training.

An increasing number of business schools now offer courses to MBA and other Masters' degree students in social entrepreneurship, social innovation and how to be a change-maker. Stanford's Center for Social Innovation within the Graduate School of Business for example, offers MBAs the chance to focus on social and environmental leadership during their MBA by providing "courses and activities designed to build knowledge in areas such as non-profit management, public policy, sustainable business practices, social entrepreneurship, cross-sector collaborations, and the role of each sector in creating social and environmental value."

INSEAD runs a change-makers "boot-camp" weekend, off-campus, early in the MBA programme. These type of existing courses offer a ready-made vehicle to present the idea of social intrapreneurship and to explain that being a social intrapreneurs is one of range of ways to be a change-maker for sustainable development. The Pears Foundation Business School Partnership involving three leading UK schools: Cranfield, LBS and Said Business School, Oxford aims to show MBA and other students the variety of ways that successful people can contribute to the public good at different stages in their career.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY COALITIONS

Business-led CR coalitions are defined as:

- Membership organisations composed mainly or exclusively of for-profit businesses (directly or through other, business-membership organisations)
- With a directing board composed predominantly or only of business people
- Which promotes Responsible Business practice
- And is funded primarily (or totally) from business

(Grayson 2007) There are coalitions in at least 70 countries (Grayson and Nelson - forthcoming). Additionally, there are multi-stakeholder CR coalitions such as the national chapters of the UN Global Compact in around 90 counties.

Many of these coalitions have traditionally focussed on CEOs and main board directors, and / or specialist CR directors. Many, however, also have employee volunteering programmes focussed on harnessing employee time and expertise for charitable and community projects. It could be argued that a powerful extension of the current programmes to encourage and support employee volunteering, would be to include social intrapreneurship as another example of how employees can contribute to sustainable development. It would be interesting to study any existing examples of coalitions promoting social intrapreneurship.

FOUNDATIONS AND VENTURE PHILANTHROPISTS

There is an opportunity for high net-worth philanthropists and / or grant-making foundations to fund:

- A social intrapreneurship award for individuals and companies which achieve the greatest commercial benefit and greatest positive societal impact. (This could be either a stand-alone award or as an additional award to an existing set of CR awards such as those run by Business in the Community or those of the Ethical Corporation magazine).
- Action-learning programmes to capacity-build social intrapreneurs like the Aspen Institute for Business & Society's First Movers programme.

Q8 How else could external organisations such as NGOs (non-governmental organisations), business schools, Corporate Responsibility coalitions and others, support social intrapreneurs?

9. FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research might explore more rigorously specific chains of causality between the social intrapreneur's life history (early influences, values, personality characteristics, career choices), the enabling corporate environment and outcomes for both the social innovation project (successful vs. unsuccessful) and the social intrapreneur (empowered vs. frustrated). Particularly useful would be studies on the measurement and development of the societal impacts generated, how social intrapreneurs overcome the dichotomy of either business or philanthropic benefits as well as the question of what an ideal enabling corporate environment would look like.

We have not yet found anyone from Asia – is that just because our networks don't reach very well into Asia, or is it because Asian corporate culture does not encourage brainstorming or intrapreneurship but is much more respectful of authority and hierarchy – the antithesis of intrapreneurship? Nor have we yet found any serial social intrapreneurs (and unpicked whether they are more likely to be serial social intrapreneurs inside the same firm or by moving from firm to firm? Or whether serial social intrapreneurs – if they exist – do things in same topic area eg child-labour or climate change – or pursue different themes?)

Other research questions include:

- Nature or nurture? (*To what extent can social intrapreneurs be developed through external intervention?*)
- How easily do social intrapreneurs become “close relatives” or vice-versa? (*To what extent does this depend on the attributes of the corporate/external 'enabling environment' vs. the attributes (skills, experience, motivation) of the individual? To what extent do people have preferences for undertaking sustainability work (cf. Belbin, Myers Briggs models)*)

- If you want to promote concept to potential social intrapreneurs, what are the best ways? (*Perhaps a supporting alliance is needed between CR practitioners, HR practitioners and senior managers? Do internal/external award schemes help to incentivise their projects?*)
- What do social intrapreneurs need? Mindset, skills, resources (including allies and mentors) and how they can be acquired? Are any routes proving particularly effective in developing these?
- Do companies which are at higher stages of CR maturity provide a more supportive environment for social intrapreneurs? It could be argued that an integral part of embedding CR within business purpose and strategy is an intensive form of employee engagement and that encouraging social intrapreneurship is one sophisticated way of companies doing this?
- How do companies ensure that social intrapreneurial changes endure rather than fade with the departure of their protagonists and their supporters?

Q 9 Are there further research questions about social intrapreneurs it would be helpful to get answers to?
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10. TIPS FOR SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS

Based on our research we would offer a number of practical tips to assist would-be social intrapreneurs. We would like to be able to help. These tips for social intrapreneurs are part of our future projects, late in the year.

Be self aware: don't start unless you are prepared to see it through - but don't think you need all the answers before you start

- How important is the idea to me?
- How much personal time and energy am I prepared to invest?
- In terms of my discretionary time to push things that matter to me, where am I likely to have most effect?

Marshall your case

- Can I make a compelling business case for action relevant to the stage of CR maturity of the company?
- Show how it would save money/make money, build reputation or otherwise be beneficial for the business? How will it positively impact on environment/society?
- Check if your plan can help to advance any existing corporate programmes and, therefore, could the idea be linked to these to make adoption easier?

Recruiting supporters and neutralising opponents

- Work out where you can find champions and 'sponsors' who can provide air-cover, release resources, promote your ideas up the organisation?

- Anticipate opposition, understand and either address or counter their arguments?

Being persistent

- Be prepared for reverses and rejections

Don't take 'no' for an answer but try and modify your proposal so as to neutralise objections.

Q. 10 What practical tips would you offer to would-be social intrapreneurs?

Conclusion

Social intrapreneurs generate social innovation and change by leveraging their organization's capabilities to address societal issues profitably. They are characterized by a mindset which strives for societal value creation in a way that is attractive to business. They pursue societal value creation in a persistent, learning and outreaching behaviour and apply skills of entrepreneurship and communication. Social intrapreneurs collaborate with NGOs in order to generate societal impact and obtain missing knowledge and skills at business schools.

Corporations interested in social intrapreneurship should be thinking of providing a good environment in which social intrapreneurs can develop and test their ideas. Crucial for their success seems senior management sponsorship, an understanding how business and society can be brought together and create some room for experimentation. NGOs are invited to explore their membership for potential social intrapreneurs in order to leverage corporate activities to the benefit of society. Likewise business schools have a role to play in order to inspire and train social intrapreneurs especially on the entrepreneurial as well as communication skills they need to succeed.

In general the phenomenon of social intrapreneurs might be a visible sign of people looking for ways to reconcile their social and working lives.

The Doughty Centre would like to thank all interviewees and commentators for their input and help with this project. A full list of interviewees and commentators will appear in the published paper after the summer.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS TO READERS

1. Do you agree with our definition of social intrapreneurs?
2. Are there further social intrapreneurs you would be prepared to introduce the Doughty Centre to?
3. Do you recognise our description of types of social intrapreneurs as accurate and realistic?
4. Does the description of the Social Intrapreneurial Journey (Maggie Brenneke) resonate and do you have any particular experiences of the stages of the journey, you are willing to share?
5. Is there anything you disagree with in the description of the Mindset, behaviours and skills of social intrapreneurs and anything missing from your experience?

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6. Have we captured the key elements of the business case and the societal case for social intrapreneurship and is the description of how companies can create an enabling environment realistic?
7. How else could external organisations such as NGOs (non-governmental organisations), business schools, Corporate Responsibility coalitions and others, support social intrapreneurs?
8. What further tips would you share with social intrapreneurs?
9. Are there further research questions about social intrapreneurs it would be helpful to get answers to?
10. What practical tips would you offer to would-be social intrapreneurs?

PLEASE RESPOND TO THEA HUGHES by July 30th 2010;

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June 30th 2010
