

Pour changer ou pour durer ? Le développement durable en questions 13^{ème} Congrès RIODD [16-18 octobre 2018]

Appel à communications spécifique à la session : « **Social business in developing countries : which political aims, business trajectories and integration within local economies?** »

As part of the 13th RIODD Congress (16-18 October 2018, Grenoble), several "special" sessions will gather communications that will contribute to the debates on the central theme of this Congress "To last or to change? Sustainable development in questions".

Convenors of this special session

Céline CHOLEZ
Grenoble INP, PACTE

Pascale TROMPETTE
CNRS, PACTE

Since the early 2000, initiatives labelled as "social business", led by private actors and investors, provide products and services for the poor inhabitants of developing countries. With the support of developing programs (as Millenniums Goals) and international aids institutions such as the WB, innovative solutions for BOP (bottom of the pyramid) markets [Prahalad : 2010], carried by both multinationals (through CSR) and start-ups supported by responsible finance actors, target access to essential services (lighting, water, health, food) and promise a reduction of poverty.

First criticized for its mercantile approach, these initiatives moved to integrate so-called inclusive models combining the involvement of local actors in the value chains (for example as intermediaries in the supply chains or as producers) and the search for a global financial balance of the solutions developed [Cholez et al. : 2010]

Controversies about BOP markets have been structured around the critique of the real capacities of the market to achieve the poverty reduction goal. [Walsh et al.: 2005; Crabtree: 2007; Karnani: 2007; Landrum: 2007]. But what do we know exactly about the careers of these social businesses in the specific context of developing countries? Based on a strong belief in entrepreneurship dynamics, these social businesses are subjected to ambiguities between accountability requirements (success stories, communication, ...) and the necessity of invisibility (with a lack of concrete experiential learning). **Contributions based on in-depth empirical studies about the "real stories" of these social businesses from their conception to their deployment in local economies are encouraged. Several dimensions could be presented:**

- Which actors in the eco-system are involved in the development of these market-based solutions? What role is played by the major international institutions, the international and local NGOs, the governments of developing countries [Elyachar: 2003, 2005]? How committed are design, philanthropic and research communities [Maurer: 2012]?
- What exactly can be reported about the concrete implementation of these innovations in the field (actors involved, local adjustments, forms of assessment)? How do local populations finally use these services or devices? What is the experiential learning about issues such as the distribution of economic, social and moral added values [Elyachar : 2005]? What hybridization exists between formal and informal practices, between labelled new technologies and local trading networks [Dolan et al. : 2012]? What kind of change can be observed, notably social change when a large part of these initiatives are associated with women empowerment projects [Banerjee et al.: 2013]?
- Are these social businesses in competition with well integrated local solutions? How do they fit with more or less controlled trading chains? With very low cost offers, that are, although of low quality, spread in the deeper countryside thanks to import circuits?

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1. Send it by e-mail (with the title « Submission to the special session “Social business and DC” ») to the convenors of the session before April 22th: Email : celine.cholez@grenoble-inp.fr and pascale.trompette@umrpacte.fr with a copy to riodd2018@sciencesconf.org
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