

EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SOUTH AFRICA
TALENT HWATI

September 2015

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SCALING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY FOR GREATER IMPACT

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY 2015, WITS BUSINESS
SCHOOL, JOHANNESBURG

The theme for this year's annual conference on the social economy was "scaling the social economy for greater impact". The conference was hosted at the WITS Business School and it was co-organized by KAS, Centre for Entrepreneurship of the Wits Business School and the People Bottomline which focused on exploring the challenges related to scaling of the social economy in South Africa. Scaling is considered as one of the most antagonistic topics as far as social economy is concerned and this conference was indeed efficacious.

On the 10 and 11th September, the DG Auditorium at the Wits business school was filled with prestigious delegates from around South Africa encompassing of social entrepreneurs, political representatives; diverse government bodies; nongovernmental organizations, CEO's, directors, representatives and founders of different companies and organizations. Delegates gathered during this conference to explore on the challenges related to the scaling of the social economy in South Africa and come up with possible solutions and policy implications on aiding to the development and growth of this sector of the economy.

This was indeed a great success story which was depicted from the number of delegates who attended close to 200 joining the 3rd annual social economy conference. This was a platform in which delegated exchanged their views on what is meant by scaling from different viewpoints, how does one

know when they are ready to scale and if the approach they are using is the right one? And also how does one know if they are extending the reach of their mission rather than confusing increased size for increased impact and a more inclusive economy? Topics covered included: Scaling of community projects, mobilizing communities to scale up social economic projects, branding and messaging when scaling up, new and innovative teaching methodologies and models in business, using social media as a web to help you scale, due diligence and financing-what are investors looking for? Just to mention a few.

KAS plays an active role in events such as this, hosting discussions and debates, and presenting platforms for think-tanks in order to broaden knowledge are a few activities that KAS engage in. At the KAS stand an array of publications were presented and handed out to delegates. These publications ranged in subject matter from addressing social market issues, to land reform and different economic models.

One of the main aims this year was also to revisit the social economy declaration of 2013 and reexamine some of the policy recommendations proposed, if some of them were achieved. Quite a remarkable number of these recommendations were achieved since the last annual conference on the social economy. However for those that seemed to have been lagging behind there was a re-introduction of policy evaluation and further endorsements. Strong emphasis was placed on innovation and inclusiveness

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of all the people of South Africa especially the youth and the unemployed during the scaling process.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor of WITS Professor Tawana Kupe gave a welcoming speech. He highlighted the role of the social economy in local economic development and according to him; he depicted the role of the social economy on the possibility of global renovation of entrepreneurship and the emphasis on social economic inclusion, addressing inequality and poverty. He also reminded us of taking note of inclusive growth as a broad area to social economy, efficient market competition and not forgetting the issue of solidarity, social justice especially in the local economy. On a lighter note he encouraged the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung to continue cooperation with WITS as a host of the social economy conference.

Mandla Nkomfe, former MEC for Finance in Gauteng and political advisor of the Honorable Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Pravin Gordhan) gave a speech on behalf of the Minister. Mr. Nkomfe depicted areas of recommendation that needs attention as far as "The Role of the Social Economy in Local Economic Development" is concerned namely planning; regulatory certainty and resources. He also illustrated that there is need to pay particular attention to: 1. public participation, 2. resource allocation, 3. basic service delivery, 4. demonstrating good governance and institutional capacity. His further considerations included Government and private sector assisting with growing the township economy, the growth of the township economy with the help of job creation in the townships as well as helping the township residents to have easier access to shops.

Ian Furh, founder and owner of Sorbet Beauty spoke about the qualities you need to become an entrepreneur, creating a cooperate culture as well as what is the purpose of work which was under "success is about making a difference".

He explained that an entrepreneur needs intuition and a pioneering spirit; he/she

needs to create the map as they are the first in the territory and they need courage and stamina for the long haul. He defined entrepreneurship as the "desire to serve the needs of other people". He further elaborated that in order to have a flourishing business, one needs to know that community is everything. A strong community is the foundation of a successful business and there is need to establish trust, respect, sharing, caring, honesty, integrity as well as racial and cultural tolerance. Ian further defined the meaning of success as "making a difference in other people's lives".

Some of the major topics presented by guest speakers during the conference included: Creating ways for community based projects; Community built support agency; Supervisory and Developmental work; How to effectively support community based projects; Taking up enterprises from a very entry level; Youth empowerment programme Enterprise developments and Educating people on social enterprises

Finally, in the words of Resident Representative of KAS in South Africa, Dr. Holger Dix, during his opening address "As a German political foundation, we believe in the social market economy, it is working well in Germany however our aim is not to encourage South Africa to copy the model as is. We share our experience of social market economy but it is up to South Africans to draw their own conclusions and to decide what works for them. We want to encourage creating strong and effective enterprises in the economy, a social market economy that gives priority to developing the economy and aiding to GDP i.e. Job creation and also social enterprises should be well involved in the economic future of the country."