

ULUSLARARASI SOSYAL ARAŐTIRMALAR DERĐİŐİ THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

Uluslararası Sosyal Arařtırmalar Dergisi / The Journal of International Social Research
Cilt: 14 Sayı: 77 Nisan 2021 & Volume: 14 Issue: 77 April 2021
www.sosyalarastirmalar.com Issn: 1307-9581

HOW CAN SOCIAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN COVID-19 WORLD AND BEYOND?

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Abstract

COVID-19 exacerbated socio-economic challenges faced globally, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations, thus raising questions about the sustainability of the current development model. Since the popular use of sustainable development concept in the Brundtland report in 1987, the operationalization of the three pillars of sustainable development namely social, environment and economy, as a conceptual framework gained traction on a global stage with the introduction of United Nations Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and later with the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Current socio-economic situation has increased interest in social entrepreneurship and social marketing as enabling tools to achieve the sustainable development because of its contribution towards all three fundamental pillars. This research provides an overview of the literature and assesses the macro and micro level contributions of social economy actors and social marketing. Local and international actors that work towards promoting sustainable development agenda and aim to create positive behavioural changes, can utilize the unique features of social economy with its sustainable and inclusive economic practices, innovative approaches of social entrepreneurship and social marketing in addressing societal and environmental challenges.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Social Entrepreneurship, Social Marketing, COVID-19.

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Introduction

In December 2019, from a seafood market in Wuhan, China, emerged a new infectious disease later recognized by World Health Organization (WHO) as COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019). Whilst the world thought nothing of it at first, by March 11 2020, it was declared a pandemic by WHO with more than 1/3 of humanity entering some form of lockdown as referenced by Neilson and Woodward (2020). Lockdown measures included banning of flights, introduction of curfews and other restrictions on daily life, schools transitioning into online learning, closing of malls, businesses, shops and places of worship and banning all public gatherings in addition to other measures, all aiming to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus.

United Nations' Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as cited in Saxena et al. (2020) described the pandemic as the biggest challenge the world has faced since the Second World War and that "the new coronavirus disease is attacking societies at their core, claiming lives and people's livelihoods." The global impact of COVID-19 is disproportionately effecting¹ the most vulnerable people around the world, heightening the existing income inequalities, making the world's richest people richer and poor even more impoverished.

Roy (2020) described the pandemic as a portal in her writings stating "historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew". As COVID-19 pandemic revealed vulnerability of our economic and social structures around the world, we raise the question whether a post pandemic world could be a portal that will allow us to reshape current structures by promoting a more inclusive and sustainable economic models with introduction of innovative approaches such as social entrepreneurship and social marketing.

This questions automatically lead us to exploring sustainable development as a concept which was described in the in the Brundtland report (1987), defined as development that meets the needs of current generations without jeopardizing the needs of future generations, with three main pillars namely: society, environment and economy, as outlined in a venn diagram developed by Barbier (1987). Since then, the operationalization of sustainable development as a conceptual framework gained traction on a global stage with the introduction of United Nations Millenium Development Goals in 2000, which transformed into the Sustainable Development Goals later in 2015. United Nations provided a global platform to solve worlds common challenges manifested within the SDGs, ranging from ending poverty and hunger to providing quality education, reducing inequalities, strengthening institutions and international partnerships to reach our common global goals. Emergence of COVID-19 pandemic added a new layer of complexity to pre-existing problems, especially adversely impacting global health, economy and social well-being.

An academic review of sustainable development literature after two decades by Vallance et al. (2011) provides further evidence that despite the original definition having a clear social mandate, attempts to operationalize the concept overtly focused on economic development and environmental dimensions, hence neglecting the human dimension. A failure of this approach to generate impactful change over the past decades has led to a revival in the concept of 'social sustainability' (Vallance et al. 2011). We argue in this research that revival of sustainable development not only led further exploration of the concept of social sustainability but also of social entrepreneurship and social marketing as two distinct tools in contributing to sustainable development agenda globally.

Parallel to the rise of sustainable development approaches, social economy organizations have developed rapidly in the last thirty years and have become an important part of the political, economic and social structure of Europe (EC, 2013) including a mixture of organizational structures from associations, foundations and social enterprises and cooperatives. OECD (2020,2) reported that "the distinctive feature of the social economy is its focus on economic practices that are sustainable and inclusive: (i) by addressing societal (i.e. social and/or environmental) needs; (ii) by organizing participatory economic activities building on local roots and democratic governance; and (iii) by working in close co-operation with economic actors and relevant stakeholders". Social enterprises within this ecosystem emerge as transparent and innovative

¹United Nations (2020) states that the world's most vulnerable countries categorized in three groups: Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) lack the capacity to respond to a global pandemic. Moreover, UN report states that these countries (91 in total) with a combined population of over 1 billion will be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic with potentially devastating impacts on human health, social and economic effects of the virus and containment policies through months and years to come.



form of organization, whose primary purpose is to create social impact rather than profit for owners and shareholders. Social enterprise use its profit mainly to achieve its social goals and ensures accountability in its activities (Uygur and Franchini, 2019,20). They aim to create permanent solutions to societal problems by gaining the support of the communities they are serving in the long term (Peattie and Peattie, 2009).

Social marketing on the other hand is a approach that implement marketing strategies to create, communicate and deliver value in order to effect target groups' behaviors positively (Cheng et al., 2010: 2). Social marketing, a concept first defined by Kotler and Levy (1969), was born with the proposal to expand the marketing framework to use classical marketing tools to increase social welfare. Kotler and Lee (2008,8) state that social marketers aim to influence behaviors under four headings: accept an offered behavior, reject a potential harmful behavior, modify a routine, abandon a harmful behavior. These four headings can support the measures taken to curb the spread of COVID-19 and the used to support achieving SDGs. In this context, social marketers and behavioral insights teams have important responsibilities in terms of both saving human lives and contributing to social and economic sustainability.

In conclusion, upon reviewing the social economy and the role of social entrepreneurship and social marketing in advancing sustainable development globally, we will present a set of recommendations for global actors including governments, businesses, experts and academicians that can be implemented within their local context.

2. COVID- 19's Impact around the Globe and An Opportunity For

2.1 COVID-19's Impact around the Globe

World is witnessing unprecedented challenges with the emergence of a new infectious disease in Wuhan, China, later recognized by World Health Organization (WHO) as COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019). According to Chakraborty and Maity (2020), the rapid spread of coronavirus outbreak is posing enormous health, economic, environmental and social challenges to the entire human population, exposing fundamental weaknesses and systemic problems that preexisted globally. Nations around the world are struggling to slow down the transmission of the disease, according to the WHO figures collected over the past year, the COVID-19 outbreak has already affected over 130 million people, killing more than 2,8 million people throughout the world. Ever since, the virus has developed thousand of different variants with most commonly known versions including Brazil variant (also known as P.1), South Africa variant (B.1.351) found in at least 20 other countries and the most recently mutated variant from UK (B.1.1.7) now spreading to more than 50 countries (Roberts, 2021).

On the other hand, WHO announced that as of 18 February 2021, at least seven different vaccines across three platforms have been rolled out in countries. According to Weintraub et al. (2020), higher-income countries tend to have higher vaccination rates than lower-income countries for routine vaccinations (other than COVID-19), and coverage disparities within countries split along economic lines. Despite the calls of equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination this trend seems to continue as countries scramble to get available vaccines to protect their population. In an article by Lederer (2021), U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly critiqued the "wildly uneven and unfair" placement of COVID-19 vaccines in a at the U.N. Security Council on 17 February 2021, saying 10 countries have administered 75 percent of the vaccines and that 130 countries have not received a single dose of vaccine, declaring that "at this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community."

2.2 Questions around Our Current Economic Paradigm

The coronavirus pandemic drove most countries into recession in 2020, with per capita income shrinking by the largest amount across countries globally since 1870 and costing the global economy US\$10 trillion (UNDP 2020). It is important to note that income inequalities that persisted before the coronavirus outbreak, has been exacerbated at extraordinary rate making the world richest people richer and poor even more impoverished.

The global impact of COVID-19 is disproportionately effecting the most vulnerable people around the world. International Labour Organization (2020) warned that with the sharp decline in working hours globally, 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy² – that is nearly half of the global workforce, are at an

²Laborers that from the informal economy are categorized as mainly unskilled and labor intensive jobs with low pay and that offer little or no protection.



immediate danger of losing their jobs and their livelihood. Even in the world's largest economy, the United States (assessed based on nominal GDP), more than 11 million Americans remain unemployed and many shops and restaurants will never reopen as a result of the pandemic (USA Today, 2020). Meanwhile, America's 614 billionaires saw their net worth grow by a collective \$931 billion from mid-March to December 2020, which again raised questions as seen previously with Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011, with regards to exuberant concentration of wealth at the hands of few billionaires who form the top 1%.

2.3 Calls for More Equitable and Sustainable World after the Pandemic

People around the world are calling for a change. A survey conducted by World Economic Forum (WEF) and Ipsos with nearly 21,000 adults across 28 countries, found that 86% of people demand a more equitable and sustainable world after the pandemic (WEF, 2020). WEF set a call for a 'Great Reset' after the crisis to highlight the urgent need for action by global stakeholders to improve the state of the world in ways to achieve a more equitable and sustainable growth. WEF (2020) calls this a unique window of opportunity to shape the recovery, offering unique insights to help inform global leaders 'on the direction of national economics, the priorities of societies and the nature of business models'.

Arguably one of the few positive impacts of COVID-19 globally was on the environment. Not surprisingly, reducing human economic activity during lock-down period had a positive effect on preserving the environment and resetting some of the environmental degradation that has taken place globally over decades. Separate studies conducted by Arora et al. (2020) and Bar (2020) showed that there have been improvements across various environmental indicators including reduction in urban air pollution, especially in the form of CO₂, SO₂, NO₂ and particulate matter, improvement in water quality in rivers, reduction in noise pollution, increase in wildlife preservation and protection of the ecosystem, which are all ultimately connected to well-being of humans and our planet. However, it is interesting to note that we needed a pandemic to show us that our current model of managing the world is not working and that we need to adopt activities that foster human development and are also social equitable and environmentally sustainable.

We need to approach post COVID-19 transformations with reserved optimism, as the aftermath of 2008 financial crisis showed that main contributors to crisis we rewarded with bail outs and bonuses³ meanwhile we did not see any structural changes in the business models. For this reason, we explored how social entrepreneurship and social marketing is already making a difference in promoting sustainable development for lasting positive changes.

3. Sustainable Development

The term sustainable development emerged into prominence in the Brundtland report in 1987 described as development that meets the needs of current generations without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. However, the first reference can be found in the 1980 publication of 'World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development'. Jacobs (1999) and McKenzie (2004) leveled criticism against the Brundtland (1987) definition, mainly in relation to the vagueness of what sustainability and sustainable development actually mean. This view is further supported by Paehlke (2001; in Missimer, 2015) cited in who argues that sustainable development is amorphous concept that can mean anything.

At its core, sustainable development has three main pillars namely: society, environment and economy, which was graphically represented in a venn diagram developed by Barbier (1987). Elkington (1990) adopted this concept to business literature by coining the term triple bottom line (TBL-Figure 1), which similarly promotes a sustainable business model focused on People, Planet and Profit. Both models depicts sustainable development as an intersection of the goals attributed to three interlinked systems: environmental, economic and social arguing that achieving outcomes in one system without considering impact on others would result in unsustainable practices.

³President Obama called financial institutions "shameful" for giving themselves nearly \$20 billion in bonuses post 2008 financial crisis as the USA government was spending billions to bail out financial institutions (Story & Dash 2009).



Figure 1: Triple Bottom Line

Source: <https://www.sentinelassam.com/editorial/the-triple-bottom-line-485671>

As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁴, United Nations has endorsed sustainable development paradigm on a global stage, renaming its millennium goals as sustainable development goals (SDGs) in 2015 as shown in figure 2, providing a global platform across nations to solve global challenges ranging from ending poverty and hunger to providing quality education, reducing inequalities, strengthening institutions and international partnerships to reach our common global goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Figure 2: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Source: United Nations Website (2020)

⁴Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Retrieved online on 4.03.2021
https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E



Barbier (1987) explains that achieving “sustainable development involves a process of trade-offs among the various goals of the three systems” as “it is not possible to maximize all these objectives all the time”. An example of this is economic systems that generate efficiencies and reduce poverty but cause environmental degradation which ultimately results in unsustainable and undesirable form of development.

A review after two decades by Vallance et al. (2011) provides further evidence that despite the original definition of sustainable development having a clear social mandate, human dimension has been neglected due to overt focus on bio-physical environmental issues or the issue being included within ‘development’ and ‘economic growth’ discourse. A failure of this approach to generate impactful change over the past decades has led to a revival in the concept of ‘social sustainability’ (Vallance et al. 2011). Social sustainability policies must address social challenges including social inequality, poverty reduction, migration, empowerment of marginalized communities and building social capital and contribute to social economy.

4. Social Economy and Its Enterprises

The concept of social economy first emerged in France in the 19th century and gained popularity in the 1990s. Social economy organizations have developed rapidly in the last thirty years and have become an important part of the political, economic and social structure of Europe (EC, 2016). Today, associations, foundations and social enterprises, especially the cooperatives defined by certain laws within the European model, are gathered under the roof of social economy.

The mission of the social economy is the expansion of democracy, governance and social support mechanisms (Alter, 2007; EC, 2016; OECD, 2020). Social economy actors perform very important functions as organizations that find solutions to the problems of people, support people to participate in economic activities and develop social responsibility. Therefore, these features contribute to the 3Ps of sustainable development.

After the Covid-19 outbreak, the growing social problems in our world have mobilized many parties that have legal power and financial resources for the solution. However, we cannot solely rely on governments, development aids, private sector, and philanthropist to come up with solutions to worlds problems. Corporate scandals like Enron, mortgage crisis and income / wealth inequality in USA that led to Occupy Wall Street movement, emission scandal of Volkswagen and finally Covid-19 Pandemic created a large mistrust in governments and large corporations. We need more bottom up approaches that develop innovative, effective, financially sustainable solutions at a local and global level. This is where social entities come in to the picture.

Kurtulus and Inci (2021) states that societies could no longer remain silent against the social and environmental damage caused by capitalism as a result began to form social economy entities that produces solutions within this framework. In EU, there are 2.8 million social economy entities, dealing with different social needs and acting in various intervention areas, accounting for 6.3% of EU employment (OECD, 2020). Social economy actors are mostly based in health and education to banking and utilities sectors. Most of them are micro and small non-profits (GEM, 2016), but others are large enterprises with international outreach (OECD, 2020).

A social enterprise is a transparent and innovative form of organization whose primary purpose is to create social impact rather than profit for owners and shareholders. Social enterprise use its profit mainly to achieve its social goals and ensures accountability in its activities (Uygur and Franchini, 2019, 20). These enterprises aim to create permanent change in the areas they operate, to spread the solutions they have found for social problems and to eliminate the problem by gaining the support of the society in the long term (Peattie and Peattie, 2009). There are two important reasons for the growing interest in the social enterprises. The first of these is the inevitable increase of social problems and in turn, social enterprises explicitly target the public good (Lan et al., 2014). Social enterprise attempt to remove existing barriers for solving social problems. Social economy actors strive to bring three rational activities together: to produce a social service or product with an innovative approach; to build a viable and effective economic model within the framework of limited profit; to include different stakeholders and especially consumers of products and services in this new model (Fraisie et al., 2016). Social enterprises have gained popularity and started to increase in number, with their innovative approaches and bringing a new perspective to capitalism. However, their increasing numbers, especially in Europe, have led to the emergence of competing social



enterprises in the same commercial field. This competitive situation has revealed the possibility of both weakening of the actors in the social economy and growing by combining.

There are strategies implemented by social economy actors in order to create a stronger structure. These are mergers, takeovers, federation or regional network structures. When these growth strategies are implemented with rational process management, a cost-effective system is created (Fraisie et al., 2016). Financial returns can be increased by developing systematic partnerships such as bidding jointly in public tenders. Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) calls this strategy "coopetition", put forward by social economy actors who combine their talents and resources in a certain pool. For example, education federations in France bring market intelligence together to be used in services for children and support local associations to provide services to relevant local authorities (Petrella and Richez-Battesti, 2013; in Fraisie et al., 2016). Social economy actors and governments also rely on social marketing approaches to address societal issues which will be discussed in next section.

5. Social Marketing

Cheng et al. (2010, 2) describe social marketing as "a process that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate and deliver value in order to influence target audience behaviors that benefit the society". Social marketing, a concept first defined by Kotler and Levy (1969), was born with the proposal to expand the marketing framework. The reason for this need for expansion is the increase and change of human needs and expectations. According to Kotler and Zaltman (1971), social marketing is the use of classical marketing tools to increase social welfare. Kotler and Lee (2008, 8) mention that, "social marketers are selling behaviors". Similarly, a parallel concept called 'nudge' within the behavioral economics and behavioral science were popularized by Thaler and Sustein (2008), which suggests using 'choice architecture' and positive reinforcement to nudge people to desired behaviors without restricting their freedom of choice. In their seminal work, they make recommendations for using nudge theories to better health, well-being, financial decisions, preservation of our environment on an individual, government and a national level. In fact, countries around the world have adopted these principles and started setting up their own behavioral insights units also known as Nudge units in countries including but not limited to UK, USA, Germany, Singapore, Turkey and Qatar. Dessart and Bavel (2017) argue the application of social marketing and behavioral sciences to policy act as two converging paths towards better policies. There are clear benefits for a multi-disciplinary approach in further embedding of social marketing principles and methods within the recent trend of behavioral economics to drive better public policy and results.

As mentioned Kotler and Lee (2008), social marketers focus on creating positive behavioral changes. These behavioral changes are defined under four headings: accept an offered behavior (e.g., using masks), reject a potential harmful behavior (e.g., refuse being in crowded places in times of pandemic), modify a routine (e.g., doing exercises at home), abandon a harmful behavior (e.g, quit smoking to strengthen immunity against coronavirus). Prior to COVID-19 pandemic social was already used to combat prevalent diseases such as AIDS, high cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes is included in social marketing activities (Cheng et al., 2010).

In the Covid-19 process, enterprises broadcasted social distance and quarantine-themed creative advertisements and social media messages. For example, lock down orders across the United States, changed adverts of Dick's Sporting Goods to reflect indoor, backyard, or other social-distancing-appropriate activities (AW360, 2021). Many brands continued their product and service promotion activities during the Covid-19 process, as well as published social media posts and advertisements to inform consumers about disease-fighting methods. In addition, in this process, depending on the quarantine of large masses, brands focus their product / service options on products that can be used at home and internet shopping, which they broadcast in both traditional and digital media; it constitutes a mix of conventional marketing and social marketing activities (Cilizoglu et al., 2020).

An important part of social marketing, which is designed to convince the target audience to adopt, change or abandon a certain attitude, thought and behavior (Cheng et al., 2010), is social advertisements (Aydoğan, 2018). Today, advertising is used for not only the financial interests of private companies, but also by public institutions, non-governmental organizations and private companies to improve the living standards of individuals in social life and to raise awareness (Birgul, 2016). In this context, a new type of advertising called social advertisement has emerged. Social advertisements are advertising activities carried



out for the benefit of society or for the emergence of positive social behavior (Guz et al., 2002; in Birgul, 2016, 33).

Advertisement based on persuasive communication use various types of attraction in order to influence their target audience. Advertising attractiveness is defined as the motivation created by the advertisement (Russell & Lane 1996; in Aydoğan, 2018). The main purpose of advertising attractiveness is to encourage individuals to change attitude and behavior. It achieves this by using the emotions of the target audience and drawing their attention to the messages in the advertisements. The attractiveness used by advertisements to cause such changes in individuals is rational, moral and emotional attraction (Kotler and Keller, 2012). There are two types of emotional attraction, positive and negative. When positive emotional appeal is used in social advertisements, it is stated that if the target audience exhibits expected behaviors and attitudes, they will regain their health, live in a clean environment and encounter events that will benefit them. Social advertisements with negative emotional appeal include results that will harm the target audience, such as a decline in agricultural activities, drought, disability, illness or death. In this context, important and impressive messages are given to the society about sustainable development and sustainable environment.

Marketing communication efforts have a large share in the successful implementation of social marketing. It is of great importance to choose and use the campaign communication channels determined in order to achieve the targeted change of opinion, attitude and behavior within social marketing campaigns (Birgul, 2016). Hastings et al. (2004, 969) warned social market practitioners for triggering negative feelings about the source and provoked accusations of hypocrisy in social advertisements. In a similar study, it was emphasized that negative emotional content should be used carefully in social advertisements (Brennan and Binney, 2010; in Aytekin and Yakin, 2015). It is possible that such content may have the opposite effect to what is expected or may be misunderstood.

One of the techniques used for attracting attention in social advertisements is "guerrilla marketing". Guerrilla marketing is a marketing practice that aims to convey the messages to the target audience in striking and unusual forms and tools (Kaleli, 2018). The most important underlying reason is that the classical advertising applications offered in classical advertising channels are not found as interesting as before by the consumers. In fact, many advertising and marketing applications are not read or watched. The consumer has become insensitive to this data flow, which is mostly one-way. Aware of this situation, large companies are trying new and extraordinary practices that will surprise the consumer and attract attention to the product. Guerrilla marketing, a technique that aims to address the emotions and the unknown in the human inner world, is also frequently used to direct behavior or to bring a new positive behavior. In this context, guerrilla practices are quite common both in non-profit social marketing activities aiming to realize positive attitudes for the welfare of society, and in commercial enterprises that mainly carry out social responsibility activities for the aim of increasing profitability and corporate image (Kaleli, 2018). The guerrilla social marketing practices carried out by the Indian police department in the first months of the Covid-19 epidemic attracted the attention of not only its own society, but also the whole globe. "Corona cops" application (GQ, 2020) set a good example for countries all over the world, where police officers in multiple Indian cities started to wear red helmets that resemble the microscopic coronavirus, in an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of its spread during the country's sweeping COVID-19 lockdown.

In the context of COVID-19, social marketers, behavioral insights teams and government officials (including health and police) have important responsibilities in terms of both saving human lives and social and economic sustainability.

6. Contribution of Social Economy Enterprises and Social Marketing to Sustainable Development

Despite considerable progress in achieving key targets, overall the world remain short of delivering its commitments to sustainable development by 2030 according to United Nations Economic and Social Council (2020). In addition to this, Covid-19 threatens to reverse much of the progress that has been made in achieving the UN SDGs (Chamberlayne, 2020).

Littlewood and Holt (2018) state that with 17 SDGs United Nations and 169 associated targets make it challenging to understand how social enterprises can contribute to the achievement of these goals. However, conceptualization of Elkington's (1990) triple bottom line approach summarized by 3 Ps namely People, Planet and Profits may provide further insights into how social enterprises can contribute towards SDGs.

Social enterprises are designed to create permanent changes in communities they operate in by spreading the solutions they have found for social problems and eliminating the problem with the support of the society in the long term (Peattie & Peattie, 2009). Therefore, social enterprises are organizations that serve many SDGs in accordance with their founding philosophy. Similar to social enterprises, social marketing activities can also positively contribute in achieving wider SDGs. As discussed previously, social marketing is an approach that tries to make a better world possible by enabling attitude and behavior changes in individuals, bringing social benefit to the forefront and creating awareness (Yesilyurt, 2021). The power of social marketing to create social awareness and to create favourable public opinion offers an important functionality for addressing SDGs. Therefore components of social marketing mix (4P-product, price, place, promotion) contribute directly to effectiveness of social enterprises and other social economy actors, thus contributing indirectly to SDGs. Therefore, it can be argued that both social economy actors and social marketing will contribute to SDGs collectively as described in Figure 3. These contributions are further explained in the next section on a macro and micro level.

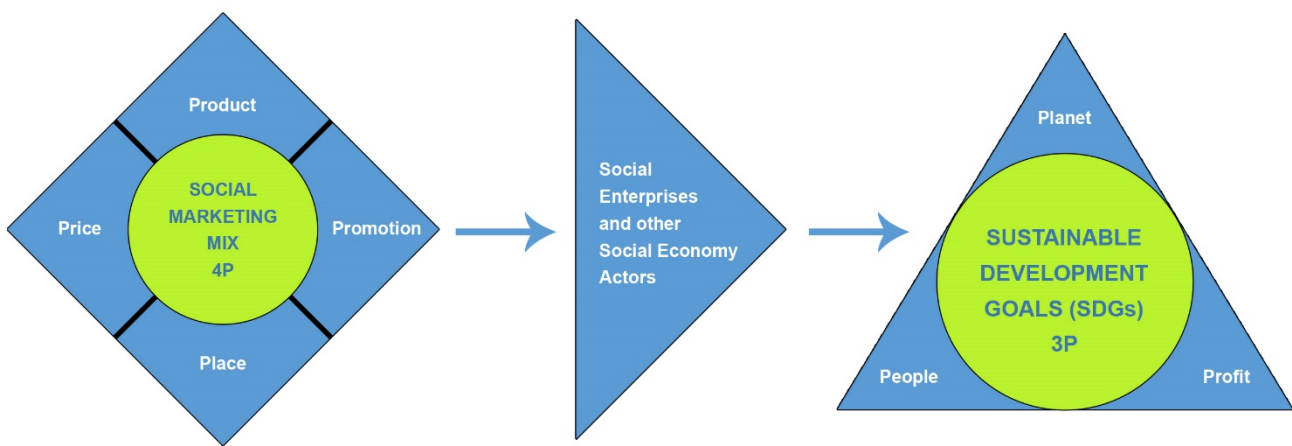


Figure 3: Contribution model of Social Marketing and Social Enterprises to SDGs

6.1. Macro Level Contributions

Social marketing has the capacity to contribute directly on a macro scale to the three pillars of sustainable development. In this context, social marketing offers three important benefits to achieve SDGs: i) creating social awareness, ii) creating public opinion, and iii) revealing the necessary behavioural changes in the society. Social solidarity created by social marketing is the most important added value in achieving the goals in order to create environmental awareness in people, to support vulnerable groups and to grow the social economy. Value of social marketing approaches in addressing local and global challenges were further highlighted within the context Covid-19 pandemic which was addressed in the earlier chapters. However, what happened in the Covid-19 process showed the whole world how difficult it is to achieve desired results due to human factors that contribute to the spread of the virus, at the same time revealing the value of social marketing activities. Although WHO, public authorities, non-governmental organizations and private sector organizations emphasize the use of masks, social distance and hygiene on every occasion, society were not always cooperating and complying with these preventive behaviours. As a result, the epidemic has spread all over the world, deaths have increased and the living conditions of vulnerable groups have deteriorated with economic downturn.

The second difficulty observed during the Covid-19 outbreak has emerged in ensuring social solidarity. For example, in Turkey, opposition groups launched a counter social media campaign called #zirnikyok against the Turkish governments aid campaign to support unemployed and underprivileged individuals (Senturk, 2021). In Germany, 18,000 people who opposed the measures brought by the government held a rally in Berlin, despite the severe conditions of the epidemic (BBC, 2020). As these negative examples during the epidemic process show, the effort to convince people and societies is very important and should be supported by effective social marketing campaigns to be carried out at a macro level.



Many published reports (eg UN, 2020; EU, 2020) show that the number and influence of social economy actors are increasing globally. In our view, future points towards a new system in which classical economy actors and social economy actors will meet the economic expectations of the society together. Rather than a competitive approach between the two groups, an integration and cooperation can be expected. The first reason for this opinion is the fact that social economy actors will continue to depend on classical economy actors in high value added products such as high technology products that require large capital and R&D. In the short and medium term, technological products and products with high added value will continue to be produced by profit-oriented organizations. The second reason is that more businesses and governments apply “open innovation” which benefits from social economy actors, especially when developing a new product or service that aims to address societal issues (OECD, 2011). Therefore, the expansion of open innovation practices in social issues and the support of social economy actors to these efforts will also improve the integration between the two groups. Integration and harmony emerging between profit-making economic actors and social economy actors will support the three pillars of sustainable development.

Although some authors (ie. Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Fraisse et al., 2016) have stated that an ecosystem should be established among social economy actors, the product and service traffic flowing in the supply chain to be created between them will be limited. When the volume of classical economy and social economy is compared, it is clear that the main major supplier between the two groups will be the classical economy actors. Therefore, commercial integration and solidarity between the two groups is the most correct formulation. In fact, it is an indirect CSR activity that profit-oriented organizations prefer social enterprises as suppliers in areas such as security, catering and cleaning services thus financial supporting them. This choice will mainly bring two benefits to for-profit organizations: i) they can achieve their business goals at a higher rate by focusing mainly on technology and product development, which are their core business; ii) By including social enterprises in their supply chains, they can also achieve CSR targets to a large extent. This strategy will support them to focus their attention and energies on core business issues and ease their CSR burden. At the same time, with the aforementioned formulation, social economy actors will guarantee their economic sustainability, which are their biggest risk factors. Social enterprises that have ensured their own sustainability can also support macro-scale sustainable development goals in a much longer-term and efficient manner. In addition, the support of social economy actors to their sustainability with the ecosystem they will create among themselves will support their creation of resources for greater social goals and the speed of achieving sustainable development goals will increase. By adding social enterprises to the global supply chain, it will be possible to support sustainable development goals on a global scale. In this context, social marketing and social enterprises will contribute the following:

- a) Economic opportunities for vulnerable individuals and communities within local and global contexts can be created, thus contributing to global efforts to eliminate poverty.
- b) Various types of resources (revenues from sales, public subsidies, donations, volunteering) coming from different sources (public sector, enterprises, foundations, individuals) can be mobilized and reinvest those resources to support projects across all SDGs not just in areas to reduce poverty, eliminate hunger and provide decent work and economic growth across (OECD 2020).
- c) Range of services provided by social economy organisations in the health sector and social services reduce the direct impacts of any crisis, especially for the most disadvantaged groups, helping people to cope with the crisis (OECD 2020). For example, in the UK, during the COVID-19 crisis, over 30% of all National Health Services community nursing and other services were provided by social economy actors (SEUK, 2020). Moreover, social marketing efforts can be used to actively promote healthy lifestyles, disease prevention and physical activity.
- d) Partnerships across public, private sector and the civil society to help deliver products or services that mitigate impacts of crisis for vulnerable populations may be developed.
- e) Partnerships across public, private sector and the civil society to help deliver “green products and services” that protect the environment may be developed.

6.2. Micro Level Contributions

One of the issues that sustainable development goals of UN has been critiqued for its ignoring the potential of micro, small and medium sized (SMEs) social economy actors to contribute to realization of that goals (Social Enterprise UK, 2015). According to GEM (2016) study large majority of social enterprises



around the globe are micro businesses that employ less than five persons. Therefore it is of utmost importance for all stakeholders to realize the contributions of social marketing to the social and commercial effectiveness, sustainability and long term social impact of the social enterprises.

Social enterprises invariably support at least one of the three pillars sustainable development in terms of social responsibility themes. In this framework, well-planned social marketing campaigns that will increase the commercial and social success of social enterprises will indirectly serve the three pillars of sustainable development. In order to reveal the expected contribution from social marketing, descriptive research, application and evaluation processes should be carried out successfully in campaigns (Lefebvre, 2000). Social marketers can benefit from behavioral theories both in the descriptive research phase and in the implementation and evaluation phases (Luca and Suggs, 2013).

Social marketing can contribute to the sustainability of social enterprises on a micro-economic scale by supporting their business activities. Social marketers can support their financial sustainability by increasing the demand for health and environmentally friendly goods and services produced by such initiatives. In addition, by contributing to the increase in the turnover of social enterprises, it can enable them to support the three pillars of sustainable development more. In any case, it can be argued that social enterprises should benefit from social marketing activities for targeted success (Hamby et al., 2017). In fact, looking at social enterprises from the perspective of social marketing can help to understand the contribution of social marketing to the goals of social enterprises. In this way, social marketing can be more effective and successful by finding an application area within social enterprises (Madill and Ziegler, 2012).

The most important functions of social marketing in social enterprises (Archana et al., 2015) are: i) creating and measuring social value for vulnerable groups and the general public, ii) ensuring the support of target groups, iii) ensuring the sustainability of business activities and revenues. Social marketing supports the design, production, branding and packaging of healthy and environmentally friendly products (product component of 4Ps) in social enterprises. Social marketers implement functional pricing strategies (price component of 4Ps) such as, "differential pricing" (three-tier based fee structure-free, cost based or in full), "pay as much as you wish" (this strategy promotes higher contribution from those who can afford to pay above the retail price), barter (product to product exchange in rural areas). Consignment sales agreement within the framework of distribution (component of 4Ps) activities (offers low cost products and services to disadvantaged communities via distribution agreements). Identify disadvantaged groups as sales personnel and distributors through network marketing. Collaborations with many strategic organizations to reach more people and decision makers and gather more community support (Lefebvre, 2013; Sorawadee et al., 2017).

It creates awareness of social problems, differentiates products and social enterprise from its competitors in the market, educates consumers and integrates them into the social goals (promotion component of 4Ps) of social enterprise (Mitchell et al., 2015). It raises the awareness of consumers and turns them into customers valuable products and services produced by the social enterprise.

Social enterprises' innovative and entrepreneurial problem solving approaches play an important role in the development of countries with a socially inclusive model (Ianchovichina and Lundstrom, 2009). In this context, it is of great importance for social enterprises to first identify pressing social problems within their local communities and deliver permanent and radical solutions that contribute to SDGs. At a micro level, social economy organizations are in close direct contact with demands and issues faced by local community. This makes them valuable contributors for the process of fostering innovative product or service relevant to the areas of their operations (OECD 2020). Thus, with the support of social marketing;

- a) Social marketers may identify initial social issues locally address them for the social enterprises.
- b) Social enterprises may develop local partnerships across public, private sector and the civil society to help deliver products or services that mitigate impacts of crisis for vulnerable populations as we saw in times of Covid-19. For example in Spain, *La Bolsa Social* (Social Stock Exchange), a capital support platform that has a mutual investment tool, supported start-ups working on solutions to the challenges stemmed from the coronavirus pandemic (OECD, 2020).
- c) Social marketers may rise the demand for "green products" and healthy lifestyles, so that the social economy actors might meet that needs and gain sustainability.
- d) With environment friendly products and services, education and employment of vulnerable groups, social enterprises may response urgent needs of local publics. Thus, they may start sustainable development projects locally.



7. Conclusions and Recommendations

COVID-19 exacerbated socio-economic challenges faced globally, thus raising questions about the sustainability of the current development model. Our situation has renewed calls for 'Great Economic Reset' within the new norm of Covid-19 world with increasing the need for social entrepreneurship and social marketing as enabling tools to achieve sustainable development around the world.

Ekins (1993,18) identified that "problems can only be addressed by explicitly exploring the moral and cultural issues raised by the predominant emphasis in economic thinking on individual preferences, self-interest, and competitive growth.....provide an opportunity to invest the term 'sustainable development' with some deeper human, social and institutional significance." This assessment still holds true nearly after two decades, which shows the urgency of the matter. We recognize the need to shift our moral and cultural positions away from only pursuing self-interest and unlimited growth. This is a definite requirement for reshaping our economic paradigm that enables sustainable development, supports equitable development across vulnerable communities and developed world alike, in a way that is environmentally friendly and social inclusive.

Within this moral and ethical framework, there are clear evidences to suggest that social enterprises and social marketing make substantial contributions to SDGs globally. These contributions come as a result of social economy organizations being in close direct contact with demands and issues faced by local community. This makes them valuable contributors for fostering innovative products and/or services in social and environmental fields. However, social economy actors cannot do this in isolation from the existing economic framework.

Our future points to a new system in which classical economy and social economy actors will meet the socio-economic expectations of the society together. To achieve this, we need more open innovation practices that bring in private sector, government and social economy actors together to work cooperatively in equally addressing economic, environment and social pillars of sustainable development. This cooperation requires a strong intergovernmental platform, such as UN and WEC, which is needed to drive global collective action with institutional support from intergovernmental organizations to the global leaders in government and businesses, civil society, experts, innovators, social and sustainable entrepreneurs around the world.

From a social marketing side, public sector, private sector and civil society may study and incorporate social marketing efforts to promote sustainable development across local, national and international levels. In this framework, they may integrate social marketing campaigns that use effective social advertisement messages into its social intervention programs. Thus, they can raise public awareness and support on social, environmental and economic issues that are in accordance with sustainable development goals. To achieve these goals, social marketing mix should be studied and implemented by the social economy actors.

A more in depth study of the components of social economy such as social entrepreneurship and social marketing and their theoretical and practical contribution towards promoting sustainable development are needed. Case studies on best-case examples from different contexts, sectors and countries can be collated with a focus on measuring impact including behavioral changes and tracking financial, social and environmental contributions towards SDGs. More specifically, researchers need to better understand how social entrepreneurship balance social goals with market-based activities, build system that reinvests its profits to create long-term solutions to social problems, use social marketing to foster positive behavior and monitor and measure their social impact. Moreover, more research is needed to explore the added value of coordinated actions between social economy and classical economy actors and explore ways to achieve greater cooperation. In this perspective, local governmental organizations and authorities might stimulate social economy actors to coordinate and apply tenders as a consortium. This strategy would create a human and financial resources pool for the benefit of social enterprises locally or nationally that enhance the quality and effect of the supports to SDGs. Another example of this collaboration could take place by adding social enterprises to the global supply chain of for-profit businesses as part of CSR targets of companies which would widen commitment and action towards achieving sustainable development goals on a global scale.

In summary, with one year into COVID-19 pandemic, there is heightened urgency for global action to achieve more sustainable and equitable development around the globe, and better integration of social



economic actors and approaches such as social entrepreneurship, innovation and marketing could be the answer we have been searching for.

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