



# **Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions**

## **Country Brief: East India**

**August 2016**



**INSIGHT  
WITH  
PLYMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY**

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## About the British Council

The British Council was founded to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this work cultural relations.

We work in over 100 countries, connecting millions of people with the United Kingdom through programmes and services in the English language, the Arts, Education and Society. We believe these are the most effective means of engaging with others, and we have been doing this work since 1934.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

## About Plymouth University

Plymouth University is one of the leading modern universities in the UK, ranked in the top seven institutions under the age of fifty by Times Higher Education. The University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2012, and was the first in the world to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark in recognition of working as a genuine social enterprise, caring for communities, and protecting the planet. The study has been led by SERIO, an applied research unit based at Plymouth University, in collaboration with colleagues from the Institution's Futures Entrepreneurship Centre

## Using this report

### Overview

This research seeks to identify the benefits and challenges of partnership between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs) with a particular focus on those operating within an international context. Specifically it explores:

- Existing partnerships between HEIs and social enterprise across twelve countries, spanning four continents;
- The benefits of existing cooperation between social enterprise and HEIs;
- The impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders; and,
- The role of HEIs in supporting an increased awareness of social entrepreneurship as a career option, and in assisting start-ups and early growth.

In May 2016, the British Council published the core research report<sup>1</sup> emanating from this study - *'Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions'* – which placed a deliberate focus on the macro international landscape for engagement between HEIs and social enterprise. In contrast, this report on India provides a specific country focus, enabling a more granular view of social enterprise activity among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As noted in the *'global research report'*, the disparity across countries in terms of the number of HEIs (and therefore the potential for a skewed sample) meant that the research focused on specific regions within three of the largest countries. In India, this encompassed the ten states of East India, namely: Odisha (Orissa), West Bengal, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. A similar report has been produced for each of the eleven other countries that participated in this study.

It is expected that the findings of this research will:

- Facilitate dialogue, networking and knowledge exchange, opening up avenues for greater international cooperation between HEIs, and a stronger global narrative on social value and the contribution of this activity to achieving social development goals.
- Assess and promote the role of HEIs in social enterprises and the benefits of existing co-operation, based upon an analysis of opportunities and challenges related to collaboration.
- Provide a body of evidence which supports and informs further research and collaboration opportunities.

All research outputs from this study, including this report, will be made available on the British Council Social Enterprise webpage: [www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports](http://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports)

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to hereon after as 'the global research report'.

## Introduction

### Outlining the research

This research is set against a context of global growth in higher education, and seeks to understand and enhance the role of international cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs). The study, led by Plymouth University for the British Council, is one of the first to attempt to identify the range of HEI activity in the social enterprise sector. Specifically, the study maps and explores existing partnerships between HEIs and SE; the benefits of existing cooperation; and the impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders.

One of the challenges of conducting social enterprise research on a global level is that the term is governed by different legal frameworks, terminology, and cultural approaches. For this study, the researchers adopted the [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk) definition, which considers a social enterprise to be:

*“A business that trades to tackle social problems, improve communities, people’s life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community”*

### Study approach

The global research was undertaken with over two hundred HEIs drawn from Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom and the USA. These twelve countries were selected to provide a wide range of different geographical locations, higher education structures, and levels of economic development and rates of growth. The study comprised three core methodological stages:

Approach	Overview
<b>Desk-based review of social enterprise activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This included academic and grey literature, as well as media sources such as HEI and news websites, blogs, and third party partner organisation websites.</li> <li>▪ The review was supported by consultations with British Council representatives from each country and explored country-specific issues such as variations in the definition of social enterprise, legal structures for the sector, and challenges to growth.</li> </ul>
<b>HEI survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An online survey was sent to all known HEIs in each country to map social enterprise activity, and to explore the benefits and challenges of partnership working.</li> <li>▪ The survey was disseminated to 993 HEIs, yielding a return of 205 (a 21% response rate).</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth semi-structured interviews with up to three HEIs from each country, to capture their social enterprise activity and partnerships in more detail.</li> <li>▪ This data was combined with analysis from the preceding two stages to formulate a series of case studies of practice.</li> </ul>

With specific regard to India, 152 HEIs from the ten states of East India were invited to complete a survey, yielding a return of 10 – a response of 7%. Where possible, the survey was targeted toward named contacts with knowledge of, or responsibility for social enterprise at their institution. Whilst this approach was felt to provide the most rounded view of cross-institutional engagement and practice, it should be noted that any views expressed may not necessarily reflect the official stance of their HEI.

The survey findings have been exemplified and elaborated upon through the inclusion of case studies of practice from three Indian HEIs, and consultation with representatives from the British Council team in India.

### **The British Council's social enterprise programme**

Social enterprises address social and environmental problems through innovative solutions that improve people's lives in our communities and societies. The British Council's global social enterprise programme draws on the UK experience in social enterprise to promote its growth around the world. We build capacity in the sector, forge international networks, and support policy leaders to create ecosystems in which social enterprise and social investment can thrive. Our work supports positive social change, inclusive growth and sustainable development while building trust and creating opportunities between the UK and other countries.

## The landscape for social enterprise

### Country overview

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world; with more than 700 universities, 11,000 diploma-level bodies and 37,000 colleges. Despite this, fewer than one in ten young people have access to tertiary education in India, and demand for places consistently outstrips supply. For example, in the 2010/11 academic year, almost half a million prospective students applied for a place at one of the seven prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); despite there only being 10,000 places available overall. This has led to an increase in the number of students opting for the more expensive route of international study.<sup>2</sup> In 2013, there were over 28 million student enrolments in India, representing around 2.2% of the total population.<sup>3</sup> This is lower than the 3.6% mean average number of student enrolments as a proportion of the total population across all 12 study countries reported in this research.

There is no nationally recognised definition of 'social enterprise' in India, although the term is widely used and understood. There appears to be a tendency to combine social enterprise with other forms of micro and rural enterprise, such as artisan and handicraft programmes and micro-level income generation. This is thought to be due to the perception that social enterprises in India exist solely as a way to address poverty as opposed to other forms of social problems.<sup>4</sup>

### Approaches to social enterprise

The social enterprise sector in India has experienced considerable expansion over the past decade and the sector is now relatively well developed with enterprises active across all major sectors of the economy.<sup>4</sup> There is widespread poverty present across India, nearly half of the population live below the poverty line, and so social enterprises are being used to address some of the country's most pressing development needs.<sup>5</sup> Types of enterprises characterising the sector tend to reflect the diversity in India's regions and the unique challenges and opportunities associated with each area. Historically, the states comprising Eastern India - the focus of this study - have tended to be low contributors to national GDP and there have been few opportunities for economic growth. However, with increased understanding about the potential for social enterprise, this is changing. For example, the state government of West Bengal are pushing an agenda for policies supportive of business and entrepreneurship and have since seen a considerable growth in SDP (State Domestic Product).<sup>4</sup>

The regulation of social enterprise sectors varies between countries and whilst some countries like the UK and US offer a vast array of legal structures, in India there are just three types of legal status that social enterprises can opt for: non-profit/ public charitable organisation, for-profit social enterprise or the hybrid model.<sup>4</sup>

### Support for social enterprise

Evidence suggests that there are a growing number of forums and networks dedicated to advancing the social enterprise sector in India. For example, the Sankalp Forum is the largest social sector gathering in Asia; they host events, share updates, and exchange challenges and opportunities with social entrepreneurs across the continent. Similarly, the National Association of Social Enterprises (NASE) is a prominent support network in India and this voluntary, non-political,

<sup>2</sup> British Council (2012). Education Intelligence: Country Brief: India.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016). Enrolment by level of education. Available at: [http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT\\_DS](http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT_DS)

<sup>4</sup> Swissnex India (2015) Social Entrepreneurship in India: Unveiling the unlimited opportunities.

<sup>5</sup> Asian Development Bank (2012) India: Social Enterprise Landscape Report.

non-profit organisation has a four-pronged approach that includes collaboration, advocacy, education and an aim to standardise governance and SE practice.

In terms of financial support, the availability of impact investment funding for social enterprises in India has increased considerably and there are now a range of impact investors engaging with enterprises at different stages of development. For example, the Unitus Seed Fund is the largest provider of funding for new start-up ventures in India; the Aavishkaar Fund, Indian Angel Network and Ventur-East support enterprises in the growth stage; whilst those who have reached the scaling stage can access funds from the Acumen Fund, Khosla Ventures or Omnivore Partners.<sup>4</sup>

Although there are a number of business incubators and accelerators present across India, the number who focus exclusively on incubating social enterprises are few. This may be due in part to the common misconception in India that the sole purpose of a social enterprise is to alleviate poverty, as opposed to having diverse social purposes and operating in a range of sectors. Of the social enterprise incubators that are in operation in India, UnLtd India and Villgro are among the most prestigious.

The Government of India is providing an increasing level of direct and indirect support to the social enterprise sector, encouraging cross-sector collaboration and the development of new start-up ventures.<sup>6</sup> Most recently, the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship drafted a 2015 Policy Framework for Entrepreneurship, which includes the description of various actions to be undertaken in relation to social enterprise. For example, they aim to facilitate social entrepreneurs' access to finance by creating a social venture fund; encourage universities to include social entrepreneurship within the academic curriculum to actively promote the sector; and support the development of new start-up ventures through incubation and innovation hubs.<sup>7</sup>

### **The role of HEIs**

The higher education sector is becoming a prominent source of support for social enterprises in India, particularly in helping develop new start-up ventures. For example, there are now more than 80 student incubators across India's HEIs, developing new businesses in the areas of innovation, technology, manufacturing and entrepreneurship.<sup>4</sup> Although these incubators do not tend to focus exclusively on social enterprise, evidence suggests that a large proportion of the incubates are enterprises with a social impact. HEIs are particularly supportive of business plans focused on alleviating particular societal problems.

There are also a growing number of institutions embedding social enterprise into the academic curriculum and collaborating on local and international research opportunities. The Tata Institute for Social Sciences was one of the first to introduce an academic SE course, launching their MSc in Social Enterprise in 2007, and other universities such as Azim Premji University have now followed suit. In addition, research institutions are using their expertise to support the social enterprise sector. For example, Madurai Kamaraj University is one of the research partners for Aravind Eye Care, one of the most successful social enterprises in India and the largest eye care centre in the world.

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<sup>6</sup> British Council (2015) Social Enterprise: An Overview of the Policy Framework in India. Available at: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/social\\_enterprise\\_policy\\_landscape\\_in\\_india\\_british\\_council.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/social_enterprise_policy_landscape_in_india_british_council.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Available at: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/social\\_enterprise\\_policy\\_landscape\\_in\\_india\\_british\\_council.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/social_enterprise_policy_landscape_in_india_british_council.pdf) <http://www.skilldevelopment.gov.in/assets/images/Skill%20India/policy%20booklet-%20Final.pdf>

## Overview of social enterprise activity

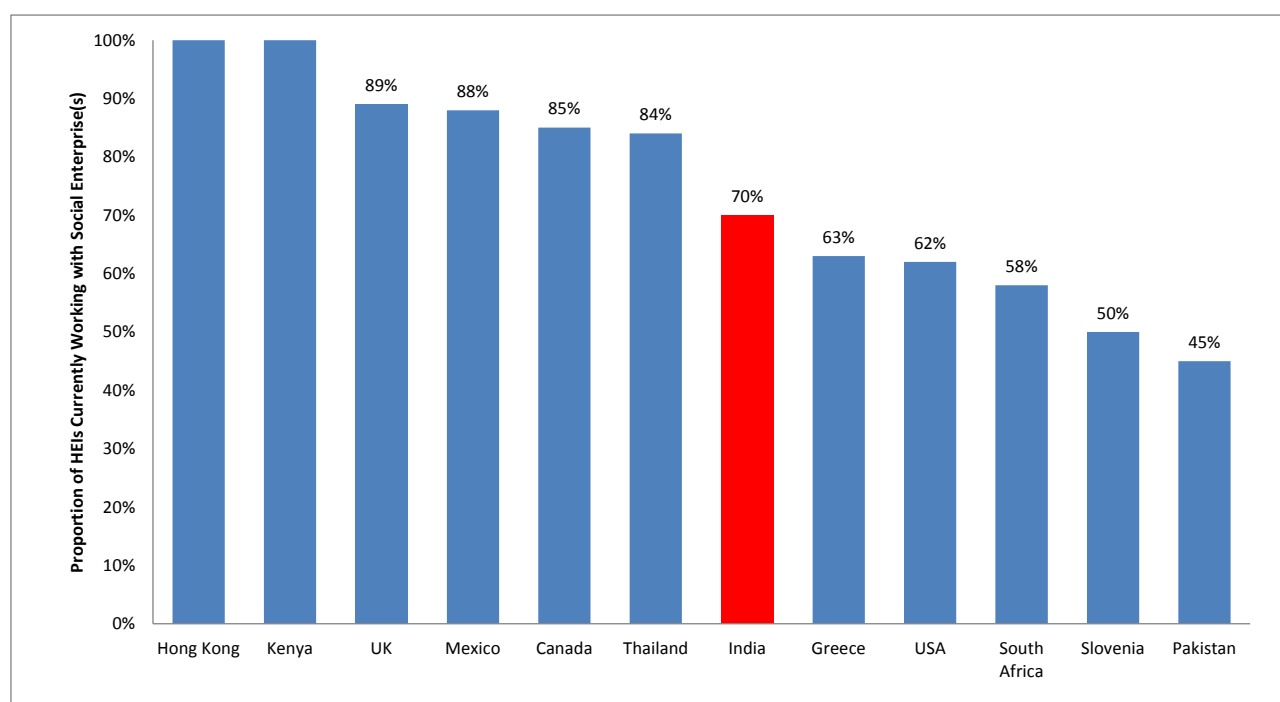
### Introduction

This section firstly summarises the scale and characteristics of HEI and SE partnerships in East India, followed by a review of priority areas, and discussion on the benefits and approaches to supporting social enterprise. Where appropriate, the analysis draws on findings from the eleven other countries of focus in order to provide a comparator position to East India (see 'Using this report').

### The scale of social enterprise activity

Although the social enterprise sector is thriving in India, and HEI involvement with social enterprise is prevalent, the survey yielded a relatively small sample from East India (10). As illustrated in Chart 1, the responding HEIs comprised a majority that had active partnerships with social enterprises (70%/ 7). Notably, of the remaining three HEIs, two stated an intention to work with social enterprises in the future (20%), and one had never worked with social enterprises (10%).

**Chart 1: Proportion of institutions from each country currently working with social enterprises**



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016  
Base: 205

With regard to the number of active partnerships across responding East Indian HEIs, those who were working with social enterprise at the point of the survey, tended to have fewer partnerships than the global average; a total of five institutions engaged with between one and five partnerships, whilst one stated that they had between six and ten.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> One respondent was unsure how many social enterprise partnerships the HEI currently had.



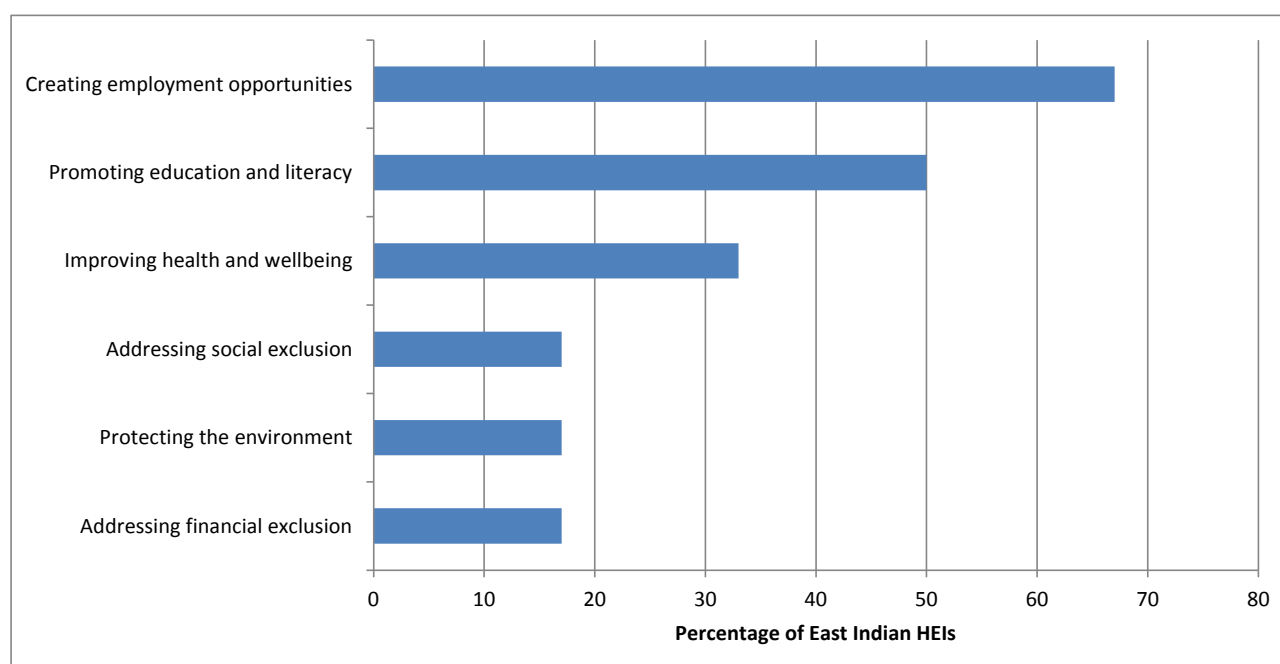
## International activity

Regarding the geographical scope of engagement amongst East Indian institutions with a current partnership(s) with social enterprise, all seven HEIs indicated that this included a partnership within their own country. However, one also specified that their work with social enterprise(s) had included international activity, for example working on a sexual health project in collaboration with the United Nations Agency for International Development. This individual HEI reported that they had worked on between one and five international projects, and these partnerships accounted for approximately ten per cent of their total work with social enterprises. Although this HEI was motivated to work internationally because of the additional opportunities it brought to the institution, understanding the global perspective with a local focus was cited as the main challenge they faced with international collaboration.

## Priority areas

Reflecting views held across all twelve study countries, the most commonly cited social purpose that East Indian HEIs would be most likely to support<sup>9</sup> was the creation of employment opportunities, as cited by four institutions (Chart 2). Three were also drawn to supporting social enterprises which focused on promoting education and literacy. Furthermore, East Indian HEIs identified a number of specific areas of community development as social purposes they would likely support, namely improving health and wellbeing (cited by two institutions); addressing social exclusion (1), protecting the environment (1), and addressing financial exclusion (1). Taking into account some of the societal challenges local to India may be appropriate when considering these findings. For example, as noted in *'The landscape for social enterprise'*, nearly half of the Indian population live below the poverty line and there is a pressing need to source solutions for this issue. Similarly, given the common perception in India that social enterprise exists primarily to address poverty; it is perhaps unsurprising that HEIs are supporting SEs that create employment opportunities and are working to improve the widespread issue of poverty across the country.

**Chart 2: Types of social enterprise East Indian HEIs would be most likely to support**



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Base: 6

<sup>9</sup> HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second choice they would be most likely to support.

## Motivations for engagement

East Indian HEIs outlined a range of motivating factors that underpinned their engagement with social enterprises. Of those providing a response, three reported that they would be particularly motivated<sup>10</sup> to engage with social enterprise because they felt that such partnerships provided opportunities to help the HEI innovate. As reported in *'The landscape for social enterprise'* many of India's HEIs are now providing incubation facilities, supporting start-up enterprises with a particular focus on using innovation and technology to address local societal challenges.

This was followed by a motivation to address local and regional needs, and build SE partnerships if such practices were included in the HEIs' mission or strategy; both of which were cited by two institutions. In addition, one HEI also cited a motivation to collaborate with social enterprises in order to develop research opportunities.

*"Partnership working allows us to focus on knowledge creation which increases recognition for the institution"*

*"Through working with social enterprises, our HEI is able to improve the social and economic wellbeing of local communities"*

*"Our social enterprise work has carved out our role in social enterprise development and community involvement. It is the best example of being consistent with our vision and mission"*

## Working with and supporting social enterprise

East Indian HEIs currently working with social enterprise(s) were asked to indicate the ways in which this took place, and to exemplify the associated type of support they provide.

As shown in Table 1, and somewhat echoing the global findings, the most common approaches cited by six institutions each, were through institutional commitment to working with or supporting social enterprises within the HEI's mission or strategy; through the provision of incubation facilities; through a project, partnership or other joint activity; and through supporting student-led social enterprises. This was exemplified by the provision of expertise, training, collaboration or research opportunities, a dedicated social enterprise support service, and access to facilities, each of which were reported by two institutions. As noted previously, the provision of incubation facilities was particularly evident in India, in comparison to the global average, reflecting institutions' commitment to support new start-up enterprises.

Contrary to the global findings, however, East Indian HEIs did not commonly hold an institutional membership of a social enterprise network (cited by three institutions); and were less likely to support HEI- or staff-led social enterprises, which was only reported by only one HEI. This may be somewhat due to their particular focus on student-led ventures, and incubation of student start-up enterprises; as opposed to other forms.

<sup>10</sup> HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second most motivating factor.

**Table 1: Approaches to working with social enterprise<sup>11</sup>**

Approach	Percentage	
	East India	Global
Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy	100%	81%
Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop	100%	68%
A project, partnership or other joint activity with one or more social enterprise(s)	86%	96%
Student led social enterprises	86%	78%
Institutional membership of a social enterprise network	50%	70%
HEI/ Staff-led social enterprises	20%	67%

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

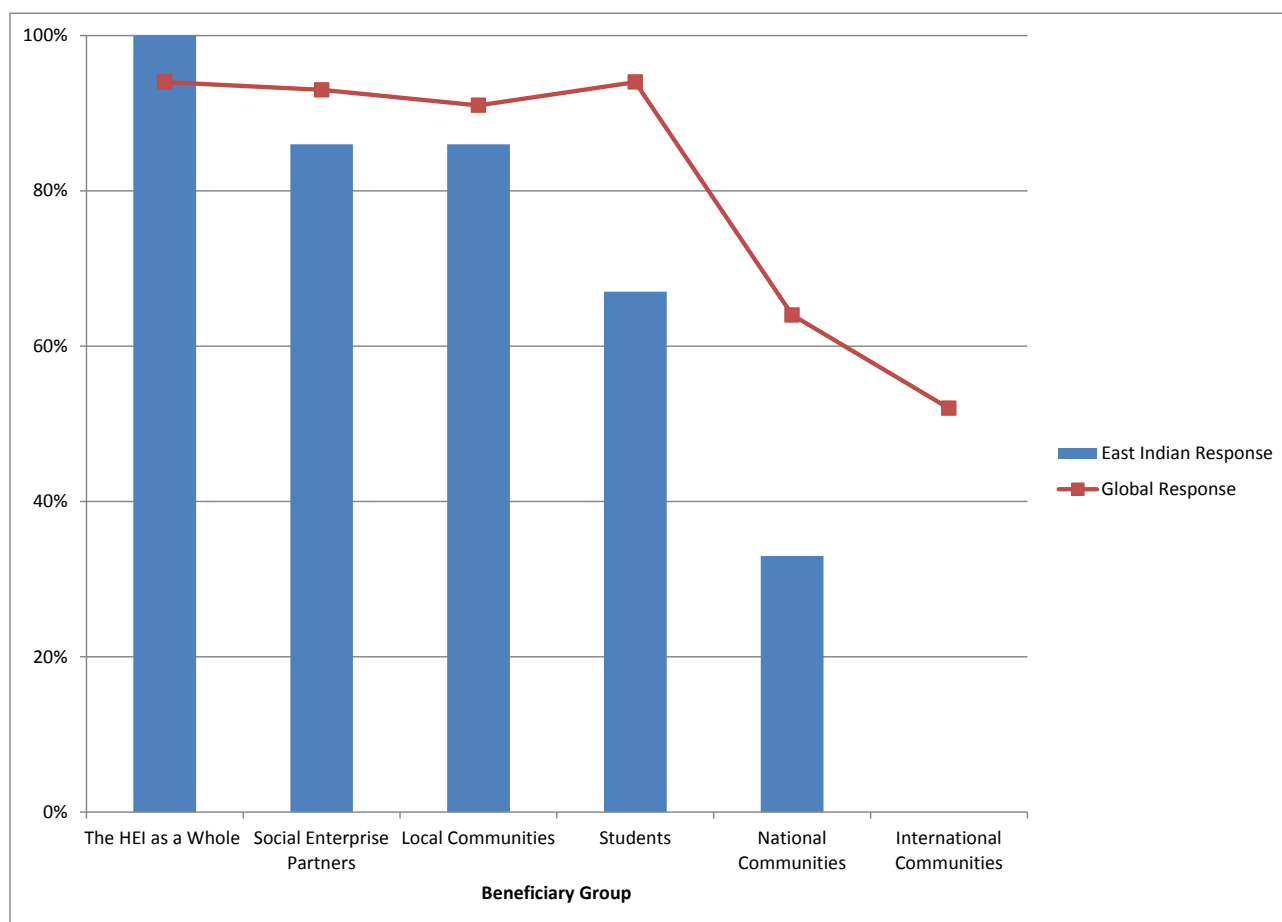
Base: 7 except 'Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy', 'Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop', and 'Institutional membership of a social enterprise network where B=6; and 'HEI/ Staff-led social enterprises' where B=5

### Benefits of partnership working

East Indian HEIs with current partnerships identified that their work with social enterprise(s) had created benefits for a range of groups. This is presented in Chart 3, and benchmarked against findings from the global research report, indicated by the red trend line.

The perceived levels of benefit amongst East Indian HEIs somewhat echoed global views. Of those providing a valid response, the HEI as a whole was identified as the primary beneficiary of partnership working by all seven responding East Indian institutions. This was followed by recognition of benefit for the social enterprise partners and local communities which were each cited by six HEIs. This generally reflected the global findings of 94%, 93%, and 91% respectively. Acknowledgement of the advantages of partnership working for students was notably less (cited by four HEIs) than what was identified on a global scale (94%); and perhaps less than expected, given East Indian HEIs particular focus on developing student-led enterprises. Similarly, East Indian HEIs were less likely to report national communities as a beneficiary, with only two selecting this group, compared to a global average of 64%. Furthermore, perhaps reflecting the focus on addressing societal challenges present within the country, no HEIs identified international communities as beneficiaries, in comparison to 52% globally.

<sup>11</sup> NB: Percentages may vary due to differing base numbers and have been provided so that a global comparison can be made, however caution should be exercised when interpreting this data because of the small sample from India.

**Chart 3: East Indian views regarding the key beneficiaries of HEI/SE partnership**

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

East Indian Base: 7 except 'Students', 'National Communities' and 'International Communities' where B=6

Global Base: 157, except 'Social Enterprise Partners' where B=156; 'Students' and 'Local Communities' where B=155; and 'National Communities' and 'International Communities' where B=148

### Embedding social enterprise in higher education

Reflecting findings from the eleven other participating countries, East Indian HEIs that had active partnerships at the point of the survey commonly used social enterprise to support the delivery of extracurricular activities (6). For example, as described in 'Case study 2', the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIMC) host the annual TATA Social Enterprise Challenge, a national competition conducted in partnership with TATA, to find and nurture promising new social enterprise start-ups in India.

Furthermore, three responding institutions indicated that social enterprises were involved in both the delivery of curriculum teaching, and incorporated SE across all courses. One HEI also reported that they offered an accredited social enterprise course.

## Good practice in developing partnerships

### Introduction

As noted previously, the research sought, in part, to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, and to inform further collaboration opportunities (see *'Using this report'*). In support of these objectives, the survey asked HEIs to share examples of good practice stemming from their experience of developing partnerships with social enterprises.

HEIs in India provided a range of good practice approaches that could be shared more widely, which were broadly categorised as follows: involving local communities; focus on impact and sustainability; student involvement; and capacity building. These are discussed in turn, and exemplified by quotes from responding institutions.

### Involving communities

The importance of involving local communities in social enterprise partnerships was highlighted as key to good practice amongst Indian institutions. In line with the global findings, HEIs in East India recognised the need to work with local communities to maximise the social value of interventions, help overcome barriers, and enhance levels of trust, which in turn increases the opportunities for communities to become independent.

*"Get into the field, learn to dirty your hands, bring sincerity and immersive commitment for any fruitful result"*

*"Communities, as a result of their engagement with social enterprise, are able to become self-reliant"*

### Focus on impact and sustainability

As identified in the global research report, measuring the impact of social enterprise was identified by East Indian institutions as an important step in communicating its social value and a useful way to demonstrate the significance of HEI involvement in partnerships. HEIs in East India proposed developing tools to help HEIs stay committed, for example through the use of action plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Furthermore, they supported the integration of social enterprise skills into the curriculum to ensure sustainability and longevity of partnerships.

*"Helping social entrepreneurs measure the impact of their work on society would be a great value addition"*

*"Stay in touch with the social enterprises and maintain a focus, but don't look for short term benefits from such activity"*

*"Ensure complete integration of skills training into mainstream education, and link it with employability, to make education more relevant and sustainable"*

## Student involvement

Although students were not identified as the primary beneficiaries of partnership working (see *'The landscape for social enterprise'*), involving students in HEI/SE partnerships was perceived by East Indian institutions as a cost effective way to support the development and growth of social enterprises, whilst also offering practical experience to students to solve real-world problems.

*"Our students have developed a system on open source software to help social enterprises develop their inventory management system and respond to their customers' needs without any cost to the enterprise"*

*"Our students offer pro bono services to NGOs and women entrepreneurs under a programme called 'Initiatives for Community Action' (INCA). Students undertake projects to assist these organisations with marketing and logistics issues and help them prepare financial projections"*

## Summary

The social enterprise sector in East India is relatively well-developed and present across all major sectors of the country's economy. Similarly, the higher education system in India is amongst the largest in the world; and so the two working together are making strides in addressing the societal challenges present across East India. For example, as outlined in *'The landscape for social enterprise'*, there are a number of national networks in operation to encourage knowledge sharing; nurture the development of the SE sector; and educate the future generation of social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the survey found that social enterprise activity amongst East Indian HEIs was relatively commonplace, with seven out of ten institutions reporting having an active partnership (70%). This is benchmarked against a 75% level of active engagement from across all twelve study countries.

With regard to the geographical scope of engagement, all seven East Indian HEIs with an active partnership indicated that this included a partnership within their own country, whilst one stated that their partnership also involved international activity. Underpinning this engagement was a motivation to innovate; address local and regional needs; and build SE partnerships if such practices were included in the HEIs' mission or strategy. East Indian HEIs also reported how the opportunity to develop research would further encourage them to develop partnerships.

In line with aspirations to address local and regional needs, the most commonly cited social purpose that East Indian HEIs would be most likely to support was the creation of employment opportunities which is perhaps understandable given the widespread poverty present across India. Furthermore, three institutions reported that they would prioritise working with social enterprises that promote education and literacy, reflecting intentions to increase success in education and training – a widely accepted route out of poverty.

Consistent with the global findings, HEIs in East India identified a number of different ways in which they approached their work with social enterprise(s). All six responding institutions reported that this was through institutional commitment to working with and supporting social enterprises within the HEI's mission or strategy; provision of incubation space where new social enterprises can develop; facilitating student-led enterprises, and through a project, partnership or joint venture, such as the provision of expertise, training and/or research opportunities. However, contrary to global approaches, East Indian HEIs were less likely to hold institutional membership of a social enterprise network, or facilitate HEI- or staff-led social enterprises. With regard to which groups were felt to be most likely to benefit from partnership working, the majority of institutions in East India indicated that the HEI as a whole, social enterprise partners, and local communities were the primary beneficiaries of HEI/SE partnerships.

Looking forward, there is a strong social enterprise community across East India, and HEIs are establishing their place within this. Whilst many East Indian HEIs with an active partnership reported that they provide incubation space for new start-ups; and all responding institutions involve social enterprises in extracurricular activities; there remains future opportunities for HEIs to broaden their engagement. For example, developing HEI- or staff-led enterprises, or offering an accredited SE course as part of the academic curriculum; both of which were less commonly cited approaches in East India. This may help to extend East Indian institutions' impact and would contribute in further strengthening their promotion and development of the SE sector as a whole. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that the size and defining characteristics of India's HEI and SE sectors varies between regions. Given that this study focused solely on HEI/ SE partnerships in East India, further research is now needed to explore how institutions in other areas of India are supporting the development of the social enterprise sector.

## Case studies

### Case study 1: Centurion University of Technology and Management

#### Institution overview:

Centurion University of Technology and Management is a multi-sector, private state university located in Odisha, Eastern State. Established in 2005, Centurion University aims to be a globally accredited human resource centre of excellence, catalysing sustainable livelihoods in the less developed markets across the globe. There are between 15,000 and 20,000 students currently enrolled for higher education and around 17,000 students for short-term training through its social enterprise, Gram Tarang.

#### Approach to social enterprise:

The university was set up to support marginalised communities in rural and remote areas, and they work with social enterprises to address local, regional, and national needs. Social enterprise is incorporated across Centurion's curriculum and extracurricular activities and they are continually seeking ways to reach more beneficiaries with their work.

#### Skill training and financial inclusion:

As the social outreach body of Centurion University, Gram Tarang is involved in 'skill training', aiming to equip young people with the skills and education needed to gain subsequent meaningful employment. Gram Tarang has various social enterprises under its overall banner and delivers social enterprise on a large scale. One of these is the Employability Training Service which provides socio-economically disadvantaged rural youth in India with placement opportunities for skill building and vocational education. They collaborate with multiple government and industry partners to provide young people with training and work placements in order to improve their employment and life prospects. More than 70,000 young people have been trained through this service to date, with 78% of these now in gainful employment that would otherwise have been unattainable for them.

Gram Tarang Inclusive Development Services is a social enterprise promoting financial inclusion in rural areas. With the support of various banks and technology partners, the enterprise elects and trains Business Correspondent Agents (BCAs) in rural villages. They provide them with laptops, smart card readers and other banking technology, enabling them to run their own local banking system with access to loans, savings accounts and other transactions. To date, more than 6,000 BCAs have been trained, bringing local banking to more than three million rural households.

#### Opportunities and challenges:

Centurion notes that their Gram Tarang Enterprises act as an Action Research Project, converging teaching with training and production. They help to create a social entrepreneurial ecosystem and a meaningful framework for education delivery at the university. Their social enterprise work increases the visibility of the university at a national and international level amongst other organisations, ministries and states; and has helped them to secure a top 'A' grade from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an organisation providing accreditation to higher education institutions in India.

They perceive lack of funding and bureaucratic hurdles to be the main barriers experienced when working with social enterprises because levels of understanding and perceptions of social enterprise at the political and bureaucratic levels is quite antiquated. They suggest that there is a trust deficit and quantifying the 'genuine impact' that social enterprises produce remains an ongoing issue. Centurion University suggests that more research, financial support and long-term industry partnerships would help them increase their level of engagement with social enterprises. They need comprehensive impact assessments of their programme interventions and activities through social enterprises in order to facilitate access to corporate social responsibility and foundation funds.

**Contact information:** [www.cutm.ac.in](http://www.cutm.ac.in)



## Case study 2: Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIMC)

### Institution overview:

The Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIMC) is a public business school located in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Founded in 1961 it was the first Indian Institute of Management to be established, and currently has around 1,000 students enrolled. The mission of the institute is to develop innovative and ethical future leaders capable of managing change and transformation in a globally competitive environment, and to advance the theory and practice of management.

### Approach to social enterprise:

IIMC promote social enterprise through curriculum courses, encouraging students and staff alike to be involved in new initiatives. Faculty members are actively involved in mentoring social enterprises incubated on campus; and the university involves students in developing and implementing cost-effective solutions to social enterprises' unique challenges.

### Incubation:

The university runs an incubator known as the IIM Calcutta Innovation Park (IIMCIP) which was founded in 2014 and has a strong focus on social entrepreneurship. Here social enterprise is promoted in various ways, including through awareness campaigns, sourcing and incubation. IIMCIP provides incubates with office space, mentorship from faculty, entrepreneurs and investors with expertise; and they also facilitate access to various funding opportunities. The social entrepreneurship programme of IIMCIP focuses on four broad areas – affordable healthcare, clean energy, education and livelihood.

In collaboration with the TATA group, IIMC host the annual TATA Social Enterprise Challenge, a national level competition to find and support India's most promising social enterprises. Challenge winners are awarded with cash grants, incubation, further funding opportunities and mentorship. Bodhi Healthcare, an enterprise providing quality medical education to less literate healthcare workers with pictorial e-Learning content, is a previous TATA Challenge runner-up. IIMC provided the enterprise founders with mentoring, supporting them in the early start-up phase and helping them to identify market opportunities to scale-up.

IIMCIP also offers virtual incubation. One such example is Organic Thali, a social enterprise working with farmers in Andhra Pradesh, promoting and facilitating organic farming practices. The university has also been working with organisations such as GNRC Hospitals, an affordable healthcare provider in Assam, who engaged with the university by developing research on their unique operating model and by providing training support to the enterprise's staff.

### Promoting the sector:

IIMC note that social enterprises have low visibility in the country. In order to address this problem, the Innovation Park started an initiative called "Thinking Social" under which various seminars and roundtables are conducted in different parts of the country to promote the cause of social entrepreneurship. The seminars are held in academic institutions in four regions of the country; whilst the roundtables are held for the benefit of the corporate sector, regulator and operating entities to highlight the challenges faced by social enterprises.

The university also runs the Initiatives for Community Action (INCA) programme where student volunteers offer free management consultancy services (including HR, marketing, logistics and financial projections) to NGOs and social businesses. IIMC perceive the need for more seed funding and grants to enable them to increase their level of engagement with social enterprises. The incubates need seed funding for solution development and pilot launches, and HEIs only have limited funding to offer themselves.

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### Case study 3: Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB)

#### Institution overview:

Founded in 1987, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB) is the business school under the Xavier University located in Odisha, India. Through the single vision of 'Magis' i.e. pursuit of excellence, XIMB focuses on three areas: academic excellence, personal values and social concern. Their mission is to develop competent, committed and compassionate leaders who will make a difference among those they work with. At present around 1,000 students are enrolled in different schools of Xavier University.

#### Approach to social enterprise:

Faculty at XIMB are working on an innovative model of start-up labs through which they will be leveraging technology, designing and developing an app which will work as a virtual start-up lab. This app will act as an interface between potential social entrepreneurs, experienced social entrepreneurs, and different HEIs. Through this they hope to create a network of academic institutions in and around the local region of Bhubaneswar, all supporting, promoting and developing the social enterprise sector

#### Community engagement:

Various faculty members are involved in several social action research projects. One such project is 'Making Management Education Relevant for People doing Business on the Street' (also known as 'Business on Street', BOS). XIMB's focus when conducting action research on 'Business on Street' (BOS) are the street vendors (owners of unorganised mini enterprises from economically weaker sections of society) and their interactions with other stakeholders of the local community such as commercial banks, the municipal corporation, academic institutions and the state government. For example, the Xavier Vending Zone provides street vendors with a place to market their produce to people in the neighbourhood. The zone is strategically located on a main road that connects various large organisations, providing vendors with the opportunity to sell their goods and services to a broad customer base that includes students, academic staff, researchers, construction workers and other visitors to the region. Some of the visible results of the action research include:

- Xavier Guarantee Fund (XGF), created by the contributions made by a group of faculty members and management to meet the needs of the micro and mini enterprises in the neighbourhood. The fund is driven by the social objectives without ignoring the economic aspects of money management.
- Vendor-Lite: An android app conceived and designed by XIMB faculty and developed in association with an XIMB alumnus, vendor-lite is a free mobile-based accounting application for street vendors and very small businesses. It acts as a tool for vendors to take control of their financial discipline and literacy.
- Business on the Street: a website to facilitate the street vendors in Bhubaneswar, using technology to give them an internet presence, providing them with extra reach and thus increasing their income level.

#### The challenges of collaboration:

XIMB identify various challenges to their work with social enterprises. Many of the street vendors they work with stopped their formal education early and work long hours every day; and so struggle to find the time to go to university and take advantage of the learning opportunities from XIMB. Academic pressures also limit the extent to which the university can carry out the social enterprise work they aim to. With staff having to balance the usual teaching and research commitments alongside extracurricular social enterprise endeavours, this limits the amount of dedicated time that can be spent on the action research.

The university also notes that they are under constant pressure to prove the relevance of their action research, as the conventional accounting and finance research world do not always appreciate the value of their work with street vendors. They note how this particular challenge is being addressed by involving faculty members from other functional areas like marketing, communication, IT, rural management, and also the student community; in addition to presenting at different conferences and speaking about the action research in different forums.

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