

## **Becoming a social entrepreneur: Individual and collective learning in communities of practice**

Morteza Eslahchi

Ali Osman

Stockholm University, Sweden

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### **Abstract**

*This article aims to analyse how one becomes a social entrepreneur. For this purpose, we interviewed the founders of five social entrepreneurial organisations active in the field of social integration in Sweden. To analyse our data we found situated learning theory in communities of practice to be a relevant lens. The results indicate that these social entrepreneurs' previous participation in integration activities was a critical factor in generating ideas for new and innovative activities. Moreover, the network of individuals and organisations that they obtained in this period assisted them on the way to learn essential skills and develop their social entrepreneurial organisations. Becoming a social entrepreneur thus seems to be a result of both individual and collective learning processes that entail learning from concrete experiences embedded in specific organisational settings.*

*Keywords: social entrepreneurship, communities of practice, adult learning, situated learning, experiential learning, organisational learning*

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## **Introduction**

This article aims to analyse and understand the process of learning to become a social entrepreneur. We are particularly interested in how the founders of five social entrepreneurial organisations (six individuals) became successful social entrepreneurs within the field of social integration in Sweden. There is currently no consensus on how the concept and phenomenon of social entrepreneurship is to be defined (Alegre et al., 2017; Saebi et al., 2018). In this article, we define social entrepreneurship as pertaining to non-profit organisations that apply innovative practices to solve sophisticated and complex social problems (Austin et al., 2006; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Hill et al., 2010; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; Luke & Chu, 2013; Newbert, 2014; Peredo & McLean, 2006). This definition is in line with Choi and Majumdar's (2014) conceptualisation that considers social entrepreneurship as a conglomerate of several sub-concepts such as social value creation, the social entrepreneur, the social entrepreneurial organisation, market orientation, and social innovation (Choi & Majumdar, 2014, p. 364). In this context, individuals and social entrepreneurs play a crucial role because they are the source of action (Chell, 2007, 2008). Many scholars have acknowledged their importance since it is, in fact, social entrepreneurs who initiate an idea and actualise it in the form of an organisation (Bornstein, 2004; Light, 2009; Thompson, 2002). Hence, we analyse the learning processes in becoming a social entrepreneur in relation to the process of creating a social entrepreneurial organisation.

This article's focus is not, however, to examine whether learning to become an economic entrepreneur is different from learning to become a social entrepreneur. Rather, the focus is to explain in detail how the informants of this study learned to become social entrepreneurs. There are some studies on entrepreneurial learning that are primarily about economic entrepreneurship, but few in the context of social

entrepreneurship. According to Wang and Chugh (2014), most of these studies predominantly use experiential learning theories that focus on cognitive aspects of learning, emphasising the role of self-reflection.

**Although the number of social entrepreneurs is increasing, the empirical works that study their learning processes are relatively limited** (Barinaga, 2013; Cope, 2003, 2011; Howorth et al., 2012; Valchovska & Watts, 2016; Zhang & Swanson, 2014). Moreover, research on social entrepreneurship is primarily dominated by the business and management disciplines. Educational researchers have also not paid **detailed attention to the learning processes and outcomes generated by, and inside of, social entrepreneurial organisations.** Short et al. (2009) analysed a sample of 152 articles on social entrepreneurship and found that only 5 per cent of the articles were published by educational researchers and scholars working on adult and organisational learning. **A closer examination also reveals that most of these articles are about social entrepreneurial organisations that work with marginalised groups' education and are not about the learning processes of becoming a social entrepreneur.**

A number of empirical works from various international contexts **emphasise that the driving force behind a social entrepreneur is believed to be the desire to improve life for a marginalised community or society in general** (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Morris & Lewis, 1994; Seelos & Mair, 2005). In other words, social entrepreneurs start their journey by recognising a social problem that they try to solve through various activities that require intense involvement with society. **This suggests that the social aspect is important in the context of social entrepreneurship.** For instance, after analysing the life stories of 18 social entrepreneurs from eight different countries, Yitshaki and Kropp (2011) conclude that awareness of social injustice is the main pull factor regardless of country of origin or cultural background. Similarly, another study examined 37 social entrepreneurs in Nigeria and concluded that their passion for social issues was a critical factor in their organisations' success (Thorgren & Omoredede, 2018).

Although these studies show an understanding of the importance of social context, they do not explain the learning process of becoming a social entrepreneur, which is the focal point of this study. By analysing the learning processes of social entrepreneurs, this study hopes to

contribute to a better understanding of not only social entrepreneurial learning but also social entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon.

### **Situated Learning in Communities of Practice**

Learning processes can be understood and examined from different perspectives, including social, cognitive and emotional dimensions (Illeris, 2002). In this study, we build upon situated learning theory to deepen our understanding of social entrepreneurial learning processes (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Downplaying transfer models of learning, Lave and Wenger believe that learning cannot happen when knowledge and social practice are considered as separated from one another. As Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 50) argue:

*learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. This world is socially constituted; objective forms and systems of activity, on the one hand, and agents' subjective and intersubjective understandings of them, on the other, mutually constitute both the world and its experienced forms.*

In addition, we use the notion of community of practice to make sense of becoming a social entrepreneur as a learning process that takes place within social situations. In other words, learning processes are a fundamental aspect of becoming (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Wherever people interact with each other in activities and share a similar repertoire, there is a community of practice (Wenger, 2018). A community of practice does not need to be a structured group in the form of an organisation; it is thus not necessarily equivalent to an organisation per se. The distinction between the concepts of organising and organisation means that any community of practice requires a certain level of organising, but not necessarily in the form of an organisation (Malm & Thunborg, 2018). Through participation in communities of practice, we learn to become a citizen or a member of society or, in the case of this study, to become a social entrepreneur. Becoming is a never-ending process; we are always in the process of becoming, and more importantly, we are never alone in this process—becoming is always a social process (Sztompka, 1991).

In situated learning theory, learning is understood to occur in social situations and in interaction with others (Sense, 2015). Learning is then located or rooted in a community of practice whereby actors constitute each other, learn to become part of a practice, and mutually develop the practice they are involved in (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Knowledge is perceived as dynamic because social practices continuously change. Thus, learning ultimately is an integral aspect of social practice in situated learning theory. In other words, knowledge is temporary, arbitrated and socially constructed within a community of practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Farnsworth et al., 2016). Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasise a trajectory process of participation and learning. This trajectory begins from an individual's legitimate peripheral participation (a novice in a community of practice) to become a full or core member of a practice. They perceive legitimate peripheral participation as a 'way to speak about the relation between newcomers, and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and community of knowledge practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As new members gain more experience through their participation, they gradually move from peripheral positions and roles to more central roles within the community until they become full members (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As with any theory, there are some limitations with situated learning theory. For instance, according to Edwards (2005), it centres on how one moves from a novice in a community towards being a full member by learning already existing knowledge in a specific community in a specific context and does not explain how a community of practice can learn anything new (Cairns, 2011). Another critique is that its scope is focused on what is done (the process of learning) and does not pay much attention to what is learnt (the outcome of learning), and it perceives all learning as good (Edwards, 2005; Hughes et al., 2007). Despite its limitations, we chose situated learning theory as it was relevant to this article's focus—the situated experiences of a group of individuals becoming social entrepreneurs.

## **Method**

A significant difference between the cognitivist perspective of learning and situated learning theory is that situated learning theory perceives learning as a process connected to and embedded in everyday practices in workplaces or other social contexts. These processes can either

be studied in real time by using the ethnographic method or semi-structured interviews, which focus on the learning processes of the individual to become, in our case, a social entrepreneur. In this study, we used semi-structured interviews to delineate and understand individuals' learning processes of becoming social entrepreneurs.

There are many organisations active in the field of integration in Sweden. We used our definition of social entrepreneurship as a criterion to choose social entrepreneurs to interview for this study. We thus first selected organisations that were registered as non-profit, which meant that many for-profit organisations were excluded. Also, we were interested in organisations that had an innovative solution for integration. The organisations that we chose had an approach towards integration that is called 'two-way social integration'. Two-way social integration refers to activities that involve both newly-arrived immigrants and refugees to Sweden and persons who are established in society—mostly, but not necessarily, ethnic Swedes. The activities offered by these organisations were based on a relationship of equality in the form of friendship between newly-arrived immigrants and refugees and people established in society. These organisations created various forms of activities that the participants could take part in to get to know one another. This approach is practised even though there is an established system that creates mentorship programs for immigrants and refugees, which however may not stress a relationship of equality between them and their mentors.

Since this study focuses on becoming a social entrepreneur, we were interested in social entrepreneurial organisations whose founders led the organisations from the beginning until the interview date. Moreover, we were interested in well-established organisations; we thus chose organisations active in more than one city in Sweden. After using these criteria, the founders of five organisations agreed to participate in our study. One of the organisations had two co-founders, so a total of six interviews were conducted. The social entrepreneurs will be referred to as Founder 1, Founder 2 and so on in the text. The interviewees consist of five women and one man. Their average age when establishing their organisations was 27. Five founders have university degrees within the social sciences, while the remaining founder did not pursue further education after finishing high school. On average, they had less than three years of professional work experience before starting their

organisations but had extensive experience with volunteer activities in different organisations.

One of the organisations was registered in 2008, two were registered in 2013 and two in 2014. At the time of the interviews, the number of full-time paid staff in the organisations varied from four to ten, with one or two interns. Between 20 and 50 volunteers were active in each organisation.

A semi-structured interview guide was used in the interviews. Every interview started by asking the interviewees to introduce themselves. This initial question aimed to see how they identified themselves and what they would say about their educational background, previous work experience and previous participation in volunteer activities. Next, they were asked to recount their journeys from the very early stage of initiating the idea for their organisation. This included retelling their **experiences in the different phases of establishing their organisations** and focusing on the challenges they encountered and how they surmounted them. In total, 6 hours and 20 minutes of audio material was recorded and fully transcribed. The shortest interview was 45 minutes, and the longest interview lasted 88 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English with non-native speakers. The excerpts below have not been edited so as to preserve the interviewees' own words.

## **Results**

As explained in the introduction, the process of becoming a social entrepreneur is best analysed in relation to the process of creating a social entrepreneurial organisation. Thus, this study's results will be presented in two different parts: 1) the generation of the idea and 2) establishing and developing a non-profit social entrepreneurial organisation. The first part of the results will explain how the founders' lived experiences were paramount in the generation of the idea that birthed the organisation. In the second part of the results, the importance of the social entrepreneurs' experiences and their networks, which they acquired through their previous participation in establishing and developing their organisation, will be explained.

### **Generating the Idea**

Two common themes were identified in the narratives. These two

themes are highly significant for our understanding of how they created their ideas and their learning processes to become social entrepreneurs. The first theme helped define the founders of the organisations as well-travelled citizens who had experiences of living, studying or working in different countries.

*Founder 5: I travelled to 13 different countries. I learned so much about the world during that time. It was a very important time in my life, and it affected me as a person very much.*

*Founder 1: I had travelled a lot abroad to experience different things. Then I realised that it is easy to go to different places but much harder to create an actual impact in terms of difficulties and understand the actual problem. Through my travels and meeting different people, I realised the importance of being a host.*

*Founder 6: When I was a student, I went to Italy for a while, and as a part of our course, we got the opportunity to meet native speakers and talk to them. It was very helpful for me to learn the language*

According to the interviewees, the experience of being a foreigner or an outsider in another country helped them to see Sweden with new eyes. This led them to a series of realisations about how the Other (i.e., the migrants/refugees) in Sweden was discursively constructed, how the practice of integration was organised, and how immigrants/refugees were defined and constructed as a problem.

*Founder 1: I also realised how segregated Stockholm is. In 2014 we had an election, and the issue of integration was a hot topic. And it annoyed me that people who had such strong opinions about the issue of whether to open the border or close the borders did not really know anyone who was new in Sweden. So, I think that just seeing it black or white without knowing the problems does not help. If more people really knew what the problems were, then they could help. You cannot say that there are no problems or there are only problems.*

*Founder 3: I thought about why I should go somewhere else when we had so many different problems here in Sweden. For example,*



*in my social network, I could see people who I knew talked about immigrants in a negative way. I think all of these things together made me stay here and try to impact Swedish society.*

*Founder 4: It was very unfair that people could not get a job for a living because of the language, not because of lack of skills. It was also at that time that the issue was very hot in the media, so I started thinking about why it should be very difficult and what I can do to make a difference.*

In addition to the international experiences, the second theme identified in the narratives is that they had extensive experience with various volunteer activities, especially with other organisations involved with social integration in Sweden. These experiences included voluntary participation in activities such as helping immigrants and refugees with their homework, assisting them in daily matters, or teaching language courses. According to the social entrepreneurs, these previous experiences put them in a position that allowed them to tailor better responses to integration than institutions or organisations that had only an abstract understanding of refugees' and immigrants' challenges. They suggested these responses can be more innovative and effectively include refugees and immigrants in Swedish society.

*Founder 3: I think my experience from [X] was the base. I was really tired of hearing how people just talked about the ups and downs. I do not believe that there is one solution to the whole problem. But you can at least do something. It was the core reason that I had. The evaluation that we had from [X] showed that it had some problems, therefore we built our organisation upon this idea.*

*Founder 6: I used to work as a second language teacher in one of the most segregated areas of the country. After two years of working there, I realised that we needed something to complement our work regarding language acquisition. It was more like that I realised that there was an urgent need for some additional activities that could help people to learn better.*

These experiences demonstrate that the founders were not novice actors in working with civil society or understanding how civil society worked in

Sweden, particularly in the integration of immigrants and refugees. Their concern with integration was not solely the result of an emotional reaction to immigrants' and refugees' challenges and difficulties in Sweden. Instead, their active participation in the field equipped them with inside knowledge about how to deal with the problem and how to identify innovative ways of promoting integration compared to already existing programs. What they learned through their previous engagement in various integration activities was a critical factor in tailoring better responses to integration. Hence, their learning trajectory for becoming a social entrepreneur was preceded by a relatively long time of participating as a volunteer or employee in different organisations that were actively involved in the process of social integration in Sweden. Gaining this knowledge and domain expertise through actual experiences from the integration field was also explicit in the narratives. According to the interviewees, one can gain a theoretical understanding of social integration from, for example, reading books or watching the news, but one cannot understand what is going on without first-hand experience.

*Founder 5: You must have great communication with the group that you want to work for. You must talk with them, not for them. It is very important and helps you a lot, especially when you are developing your idea. It is not enough to assume, expect or think. It is so much easier just to ask them what they think is the best solution for their problem. Then it is much easier to incorporate it with the solution in order to help them to be empowered. Providing aid is not a long-term solution.*

*Founder 1: If you do not know the problem, then go and work for a while in places that help you to understand the problem. If you do not know the problems, then probably your solutions are irrelevant. So, I would say before starting something, understand the problem; otherwise, it is possible that your solutions create more problems. And after that, just do it! If you think that you have an idea that can solve the problem and create value, then do it, do not wait for others.*

*Founder 3: Make sure you understand the challenges and talk to the people that you want to work for to understand the situation better. You do not want to end up doing something that is not really useful. Do not underestimate the importance of working at the local level.*

What all the six social entrepreneurs have in common when it comes to their decision to start their activities is that they saw and believed that the traditional ways of fostering integration in Sweden did not work. They identified a need for more innovative ways to facilitate integration. Hence, their drive to become social entrepreneurs within the integration area was not accidental but rather a consequence of their lived experience. Furthermore, a sense of frustration about how the integration process was organised, and their belief that they can do it better than other organisations and institutions, contributed to their social entrepreneurial drive. Moreover, what motivated the founders to get into the field of integration as social entrepreneurs was their critique of the discourse and practices of discursive integration. This critique is based on the experiences they gained by participating in the previously established practices of social integration for refugees and immigrants in Sweden.

### **Establishing and Developing a Non-Profit Social Entrepreneurial Organisation**

In the narratives of the social entrepreneurs, it is clear that they had an idea about how to meet the challenges refugees and immigrants face in Swedish society. Based on their ideas, they started some limited activities to facilitate refugees' and immigrants' social integration. In the beginning, these were only voluntary activities that the founders did on the side of their primary occupation. They started their journey by operationalising their ideas as simple activities without having a clear plan to establish a formal organisation.

*Founder 4: I started connecting people on Facebook. So, it was a person who wanted to learn Swedish, and I connected that person with a friend of mine... in the beginning, it was more like using my personal network. People that I knew or a friend of a friend. Then we grew, and after that, I had to go to SFI (language courses for immigrants) [for recruitment].*

*Founder 6: I first started administering and coordinating volunteers that came to our school to help.*

*Founder 5: It was first a single activity, and I had no plan then for creating an organisation.*

As mentioned earlier, according to situated learning theory, there is a difference between ‘organising’ and ‘organisation’. This distinction is apparent here since, in the beginning, the social entrepreneurs did not aspire to start an organisation, and their activities started as part-time voluntary activities alongside their regular occupations. So, they first organised communities of practice and later established them as formal organisations. From their narratives, two main reasons can be identified for why they decided to register an organisation instead of continuing their informal activities voluntarily. The first reason is that shortly after starting the activities, they grew to a level that could no longer be driven by part-time voluntary work, even when involving the help of other volunteers. The founders realised the necessity to work full-time with the organisation.

*Founder 5: The main challenge was that we had to put a lot of time into the activities, and it was hard to combine it with a full-time job. We needed lots of volunteers and coordinating volunteers itself takes lots of time. Volunteers also need to be taken care of. So, the more volunteers you have the more jobs you have to do for handling and coordinating them, and then less time you have to plan for the activities that volunteers want to help with. So, it was hard to make a balance about how to grow the activities.*

*Founder 4: It grew in a way that it was necessary to be structured because otherwise, it would not work. I think we had to make this decision because, for example, when we communicated with others, how could we introduce ourselves? That we were an organisation or what!*

The second reason why the founders registered their activities as organisations is that they, at some point, either were offered some funding by other organisations or realised they needed funding in order to continue. In Sweden, it is necessary to be registered as an organisation to receive financial aid.

*Founder 1: After a while, I was approached by an organisation, and they said this is a good idea. Why don't you register it as an organisation? Then we can maybe fund you. And I did it. I registered it as a non-profit organisation. But yeah, I did not intend to start an organisation when I started.*

As a result, the founders chose to start non-profit social entrepreneurial organisations since their intention was not to run a for-profit business. However, this process took some time. The period from starting informal voluntary activities until registering a non-profit organisation ranged from 3 months up to 4 years. According to the founders, the decision to start a non-profit social entrepreneurial organisation was also encouraged by others. In some cases, these individuals helped the founders to navigate the bureaucratic, administrative and legal aspects of registering an organisation.

*Founder 2: The chairperson of the network that we were a part of in the beginning advised us to do so [register an organisation]. He said if you want to be successful, you need to do that.*

*Founder 6: It was not actually my idea to register an organisation. It was a volunteer that told me that it had potential, and I needed to formulate it in a more structured way.*

Having the support of others indicates that the founders' previous participation in similar activities within the integration field was critical for the start-up and launching process. This is because the founders' activities initially started from within the network of individuals they had created before—without which the launching process would have been challenging.

*Founder 2: The first thing that we did was to get in touch with the volunteers that we still were in contact with from before. We contacted maybe two or three of them and said we are going to start a new activity. How about brainstorming about what to do.*

*Founder 1: What I did was that I asked my students if they were interested in going to dinner or to invite people to come over for dinner and wrote down their names and phone numbers on paper. Then I asked my friends, and some were interested and said yes, I want to do this, and that is how I matched the first dinners.*

The narratives also demonstrate that the founders consulted with other, more experienced actors to develop their organisations' practice in various critical moments. In other words, experienced actors in the

field provided them with concrete advice and ideational support to establish the organisation. This support would not have been possible if the founders were not part of a network of individuals involved in non-profit organisations within the field of integration. In most cases, it was mentioned that other people advised them to register their initiatives as an organisation and even assisted them to learn the process of establishing the organisation.

The influence of other community members could also be seen beyond suggestions to form a formal organisation. In some cases, other members within the community also had an impact on how the organisations functioned. The eventual utilisation of an IT system is one example. All the interviewees said that they used free, simple, digital tools like Facebook, Google Calendar, Excel, and sometimes even pen and paper to conduct and organise their work in the beginning. As the activities grew and more people joined, they realised that they needed more advanced tools. Other members helped them learn how to implement IT systems, and in some cases, these members even voluntarily built an IT system for them pro bono.

*Founder 2: In the beginning, we used papers for doing our interviews and suddenly, we had a pile of papers in order to match people. We realised that this was too old-fashioned and complicated. It was not so easy to travel around with all those papers. A person who wanted to volunteer in our organisation came to us and asked us, why are you working with paper and not using more technically advanced tools. Then he set up a system that we are using now.*

*Founder 1: A friend of mine who was a developer helped us to build the system and create a blueprint... [which] to a great extent, eliminated the role of human factors. Before, we had to send many emails or SMS ourselves, but now, we could easily do it through our system.*

Having a network does not mean that the founders always received help and support from others or that all the advice they received from others always was helpful. There is also a clear pattern that they doubted themselves and their abilities in the beginning, but as the organisations grew and they gained more experience, they found confidence in

themselves and in their organisations. The social entrepreneurs expressed that they many times learned by doing and by trial and error. This aspect of learning is what has been studied the most by researchers who investigate entrepreneurial learning, as discussed in the introduction; given that there already is substantial literature on this topic, we did not analyse the experiential aspect of the six social entrepreneurs' processes of learning in depth.

*Founder 1: It was also many times that I learned through learning by doing when I did not know something beforehand.*

*Founder 5: In general, we learned that we had to do everything ourselves and do things step by step.*

*Founder 3: What I can recall now is that it was not easy. We first had to find out what we needed to do; then, we tried to learn how to do it.*

Working and interacting with others in social contexts is not always positive and does not necessarily lead to learning something useful. The founders expressed that sometimes others tried to discourage them, or in some cases, they received incorrect information. Looking back, they formulate this as part of the learning process that follows any participation in social activities and a price that they needed to pay in order to learn.

*Founder 2: One of the mistakes that we made in the beginning was that we trusted too much in others and not ourselves. At that time, I thought that I was young and did not have any experience, so what I did was trust others. We had lots of people that helped us, of course, but a big lesson that I learned was that you have to believe in yourself.*

*Founder 3: One thing that I can say now that I learned from it is that I listened too much to older white men when they said this is how you should do it. It was in the beginning.*

## **Concluding Remarks**

The results indicate the presence of both situated and experiential learning within the process of learning to become a social entrepreneur.

However, the experiential learning process is heavily embedded in the situated learning process and is not merely a cognitive process. This means that without social entrepreneurs participating in various communities of practice, there would not be any possibility for them to experience and learn. The social entrepreneurs gained knowledge about the established integration practices in Sweden and subsequently used this knowledge to generate innovative ideas on how it could be done better. This participation also enabled social entrepreneurs to create a network of individuals and organisations that was crucial to both the generation of ideas and the launching and development of the organisations. Participation and membership in communities of practice in the integration field enabled the social entrepreneurs to see what was being done in different organisations, what needed to be changed, and how it could be done more effectively or innovatively. This was necessary to be able to identify innovative ways to tackle problems concerning immigrants' and refugees' integration. However, being aware of a need, or developing innovative ideas to tackle a social matter, does not necessarily mean that one becomes a social entrepreneur or starts a non-profit organisation. Having experiences from previous participation in the field and other actors' support are crucial aspects when starting up a social entrepreneurial organisation. Hence, the six social entrepreneurs did not solely rely on their experiences as cognitive learning opportunities. They also learned in social situations through interaction with other similar organisations and individuals active in the field. In this interaction, actors constitute each other and learn to become part of a practice, which mutually develops the practice they all are involved in. Learning to become a social entrepreneur is therefore both individual and collective. This collective dimension of learning is usually ignored in both entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial learning literature.

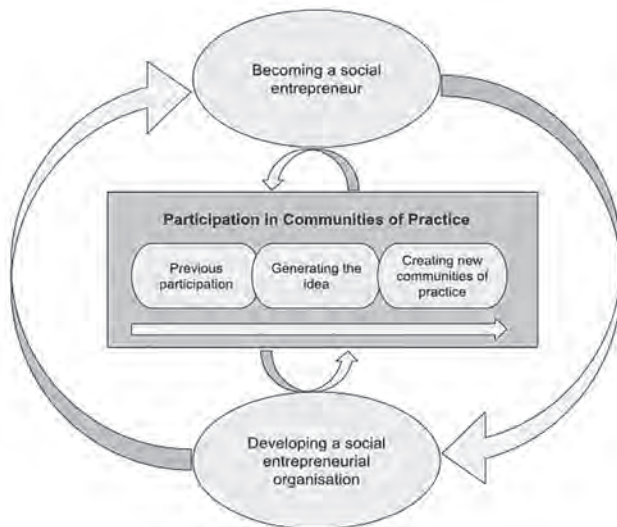
This study also expands the boundaries of the theory of situated learning in communities of practice. In situated learning theory, successful participation in a community of practice means a gradual progression from a peripheral role (in an organisation) to becoming a full member in the very same community of practice (organisation). However, as the analysis of the data demonstrated, the process of becoming a social entrepreneur differed between the social entrepreneurs in this study. They had peripheral roles in some communities of practice working in



the field of integration, but instead of staying in those until becoming a full member, they decided to leave and create new communities of practice based on innovative ideas. This analysis is partly in line with the critiques mentioned in the theory section. The six social entrepreneurs' departure from the old community of practice indicates that not all learning in communities of practice is relevant or helpful in dealing with social issues, such as integration in our case.

By distinguishing between the concepts of organisation and organising, this study has shown that the social entrepreneurs first organised the activities and later, out of necessity, decided to register their initiatives as non-profit organisations. This result supports the assumption that communities of practice are not necessarily equivalent to an organisation, meaning a community of practice can exist without being an organisation, albeit with limited growth potential.

Figure 1 visualises the process of becoming a social entrepreneur, with participation in concrete social practices at the core. Learning to become a social entrepreneur results from this constant participation in communities of practice and happens in a dialectical relationship with the development of a social entrepreneurial organisation.



**Figure 1: The process of becoming a social entrepreneur.**

**Source: Authors, based on Wenger, 1998.**

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## **About the authors**

***Morteza Eslahchi*** is a PhD student at the Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden. His primary focus of research is on organisational learning, management learning, and entrepreneurial learning.

***Ali Osman*** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden. His research interests are in education and migration, adult education, and popular education, particularly the role educational institutions play in the social integration of refugees and immigrants.

## **Contact details:**

*Morteza Eslahchi*  
*morteza.eslahchi@edu.su.se*

*Ali Osman*  
*ali.osman@edu.su.se*