



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE NGOs

Scope

In the scope of my master thesis in Business Administration, called "The influence of Youth organizations in the promotion of Social Entrepreneurship and development of Social Entrepreneurs", I created a questionnaire that intends to study the influence of AIESEC experience in your development as social entrepreneurs /change agents.

Methodology

The questions presented will be open questions, so feel free to write as much as you want. For this questionnaire I selected 6 persons on a National (Portugal) and international level, that in the opinion of the investigator represent cases of social entrepreneurs/ change agents and therefore they fit perfectly into the desired profile.

NOTE:

I understand that due to the fact that these are open questions that you will need some time to answer it, but if you are interested we can have a talk on Skype/internet/phone to take some questions or even to have the whole interview. Either way, I would be really grateful for your time and for your support.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Therefore I would be pleased if you could answer to the following questionnaire:

1. Could you please tell me a little about yourself, (Name, Age, Hobbies, Studies background, etc)?

Name: Sarah Bostwick

Age: 26

Hobbies: sports, Latin dancing, travel, reading (esp. economics)

Studies: BA in Political Science, University of Michigan, 2005

2. Please tell me a little bit about your experiences in AIESEC (or through AIESEC) and which in your opinion were your highest moments?

I began as a student volunteer in the AIESEC chapter on campus at the U of Michigan. There I got to know the inner workings of the organization and took responsibility for various local events (annual dinner for members and alumni, leadership development conference for 8 local chapters in the region, etc). I also led a team of 3 in the area of finance and operations on the executive board. After graduation I took a position on the national team in Central America South in 2005, leading the successful merger of the Costa Rican and Panamanian offices of AIESEC. I then joined the regional board which oversees AIESEC in Latin America and supervised local projects in 17 countries related to corporate responsibility. Finally, I did an internship at UBS AG in Zurich in 2008, in which I coordinated all aspects of the bank's global partnership with AIESEC International.

3. Could you please describe of what your current job is and what are your responsibilities?



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I am a sustainability consultant at a management consulting firm called BSD Consulting. The bottom line of our work is consulting private firms on how to increase their competitiveness by becoming more sustainable in many aspects: reporting, governance, risk management, production, supply chain & human rights, stakeholder management (i.e. value creation for more than just shareholders), working conditions, responsible investment, environmental impact and efficiency, production & design. I work with clients on various projects dealing with these aspects of sustainable management. For more info, see <http://sarahbostwick.blogspot.com/2009/07/life-of-sustainability-consultant.html>.

4. Why did you decide to choose this field instead of a more traditional one?

I like it because I can directly help business fix the biggest problems of my generation - such as over-consumption, environmental degradation, corruption, income generation to alleviate poverty.

5. How did your experience in AIESEC contributed for that decision?

At a very basic level, I got this job as a result of the network of friends I made in AIESEC over the years. Beyond that, in AIESEC I was able to take the reins of a global organization at a very young age. Managing projects, leading international teams, and working with partners from multiple sectors in AIESEC exposed me to a great deal of career options and gave me the experience to identify what I am good at and where I can contribute best. This helped me choose the direction I would take later on in consulting.

6. What is for you social entrepreneurship?

Social entrepreneurship is using business and all of its resources as the mechanism to solve big, widespread social problems (which inevitably also touch the economic, legal, and political spheres).

7. What are in your opinion the main skills that social entrepreneur should have? (Please mention at least 4 different skills)

Problem-solving
Solid business know-how
Deep understanding of the market
Ability to balance vision and budget

8. Which of the skills mentioned before, did you had (or could had) the opportunity to develop through your participation in AIESEC? For each one, please also describe what you did or could have done (activity, action, responsibility, etc) to develop that skill.



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Problem-solving: Undoubtedly, AIESEC made me a master at solving problems. 90% of the time I was delegated a responsibility or leadership role in AIESEC, I had a goal with no budget, resources, guidelines, or deadlines. Usually I had no previous experience to rely on either.

Solid business know-how: Projects or activities that have an external focus in AIESEC are the best places to develop this because you have contact with people in the business world. Internally, this skill is overwhelmingly lacking because everyone in AIESEC is too young to have any real business experience.

Deep understanding of the market: AIESEC's global network affords a wealth of people who all have experience in diverse markets, and interacting with them gives me the opportunity to understand other markets. Perhaps the best way I gained in-depth knowledge of a market was in working in other countries through AIESEC both in Latin America and Europe. No amount of research can compare with first-hand knowledge of a market gained by living in it.

Ability to balance vision and budget: Like most social entrepreneurs, I don't know that AIESEC achieves this balance in many instances. However, being a project manager is definitely the best opportunity to develop this skill in the organization because AIESEC actually does many projects that have a social focus bound by financial constraints, very similar to a social enterprise only on a shorter timeline.

Thank you very much for the time you took to answer this questionnaire.
Best Regards

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