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2019 Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
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Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
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4-15-2019

Social Entrepreneurship as a Path to Alleviate Global Socio-Economic and Environmental Issues

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Social Entrepreneurship as a Path to Alleviate Global Socio-Economic and Environmental Issues

Abstract

This project focused on the work of eight students who are part of the Global Scholars program for the 2018-2019 school year. As a team, we traveled to Australia for 10 days in January 2019 to partner with two different nonprofit social enterprises, and five students from Central Queensland University. The primary research question we reviewed was, 'How can social entrepreneurship save the Great Barrier Reef?'. To answer this, we conducted ethnographic research and the collection of 75 surveys from various individuals and interviewees. Once back at Boise State, we conducted archive research, analyzed our data, and made recommendations to the partner organizations on how they can increase their business operations, resulting in greater impact and positive results on saving the Great Barrier Reef. Conclusions emphasize that no single social enterprise model is sufficient to tackle environmental issues, but that as part of a greater initiative, each model can play a significant role.

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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PATH TO ALLEVIATE GLOBAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



GLOBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM (GSP)

GSP is an international service learning project for students interested in learning about global socio-economic and environmental issues, and actively participating in addressing them. The GSP is administered through the International Business Program of COBE at Boise State University. Previous GSP scholars have worked with organizations in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Puerto Rico.

PROJECT GOAL

Partner with social enterprises in Australia aiming to save the Great Barrier Reef. This international social entrepreneurship approach to conservation management provides students with an alternative perspective to addressing environmental issues, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through sustainable based market-oriented solutions.

- Field Work
- Consulting work
- Publication (academic)

WHY THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is being heavily damaged by land-based pollution made worse by an increase in extreme weather events as well as topsoil erosion and pesticides (Kroon, 2016).

The GBR is under pressure from a plethora of stressors including cyclones, nutrients from river runoff, and warming events that foster mass coral bleaching.

METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods applied ethnographic study

- Observations
- Participant Observation
- Surveys- 75 Completed
- Semi-Structured Interviews with Key Informants
- Market Archival Research



CONCLUSIONS

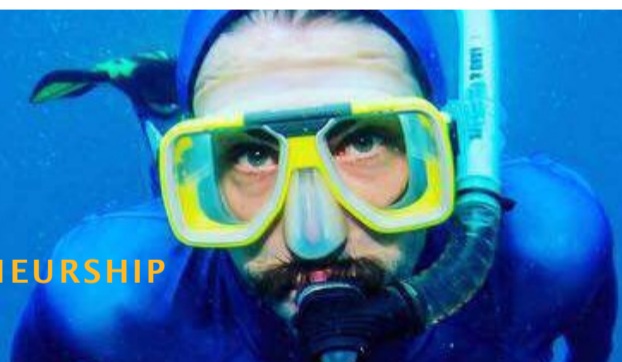
- The Great Barrier Reef is being positively impacted by both of these companies in their efforts. No singular model can be chosen as the primary way to save the GBR, rather, it must be a multitude of organizations and institutions using a mixture of the various business models.

- Social innovation and social entrepreneurship do assist in the fight to conserve the GBR, but it will be a combination of government involvement, formal and informal institutions, alongside an immense amount of public awareness to help save it.

- SE and SI's most influential role within sustainability efforts may lie in their ability to reach constituents through cause-related marketing, and provide consumers a platform to 'help' through their spending choices.

FINDINGS

TOOLS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The most beneficial ways to help save the Great Barrier Reef is to raise awareness through strategic marketing efforts. Nearly 40% of survey respondents thought the GBR was already dead.

The social innovation and social entrepreneurship approach to saving the GBR may ultimately be most influential by having both models educate consumers about the issue and on how they can help. Our interviews confirmed that people would be willing to donate or show support through their 'conscious consumer' actions of buying either beer or food boxes.

Intervention Model (Food connect/soils): Rather than create funds to be dispersed to causes post-production, the intervention model is a catalyst for changes imply by existing and altering the state of a specific social issue.

Donation Model (GBC): Donation based model from the social enterprise to its partner organizations encourages cross-promotion and increased revenue directly, with more funding going towards GBR conservation efforts indirectly.

GOOD BEER COMPANY (GBC)

The GBC is sustaining business practices by producing and selling the Great Barrier Beer, while at the same time funding the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) to continue their work and progress forward in their sustainability efforts.

The GBC through donations to the AMCS has contributed to the hiring of more employees to further their actions towards saving the Great Barrier Reef.



FOOD CONNECT (FC)

FC supply local jobs and provide nutritious produce alongside reducing pesticides that flow into the Pacific Ocean, harming the Great Barrier Reef. They assist locally sourced farmers to halt the erosion of topsoil by using environmentally safe production methods that maintain and re-nourish the topsoil in their areas.

FC's social impact aims to provide better income and incentives for local farmers that supply ecologically fresh food to help create a fairer food system that is also healthier for the environment.



RECOMMENDATIONS

FC
- Created a Key Performance Indicators (KPI) metrics to articulate how they could market the positive work they were doing socially, environmentally, and within the community directly, and the GBR indirectly.

GBC
- Identified target consumers who would be most likely to support the cause
- Suggested cause related marketing tactics; donations are 100% reliant on scalable sales.

REFERENCES
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