

Making the Planet More Habitable: **Business Perspectives for Social Economy**

Editor

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MAKING THE PLANET MORE HABITABLE:
BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY

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For a more habitable planet...

PREFACE

It would be better to make our planet more habitable for future generations. That way, every human being would have fair access to the goods and services they need in order to sustain and survive. Unfortunately, due to rapid growth, industrialization, urbanization, and other developments, human beings around the world have faced many social and environmental issues which have increased gradually, such as global warming, environmental pollution, endangerment of biological diversity and ecosystems, rapid consumption of natural resources, food security, healthy water shortage, and many others. These are global problems that concern all of humanity.

In line with globalization and environmental changes, profit-oriented business enterprises should fulfill their social responsibilities while continuing their economic activities. It is necessary for business enterprises to assist in increasing the quality of life of societies, contribute to economic development, provide social benefits, protect nature, consider the needs of future generations while meeting today's needs, and contribute to the solution of social and environmental problems. It has become imperative for for-profit and not-for-profit businesses to consider practices that would sustain life and make our planet more livable in the future.

This book focuses on sustainability, social development, solidarity, social justice, social welfare, accessing goods and services, and meeting the needs of future generations. All of this relates to an economic model: the social economy model. Under the social economy model, the need for social goals would be prioritized. While trying to achieve a balance between the economic, social, and natural environmental elements of the enterprises in the context of sustainability, business enterprises would have different business perspectives when considering the social economy, particularly for social and environmental issues.

The following book, titled ***MAKING THE PLANET MORE HABITABLE: BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY***, consists of ten chapters:

- The chapter "*Social Economy and Sustainable Development*," contributed by Cem Cüneyt Arslantaş, aims to explore the history of social economy, the model itself, and social economy organizations. The concept of the social economy was first initiated during the 1970s. Social economy is meant to serve people, guarantee social welfare, and solve social and economic problems. Examples of social economy organizations include: cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, and social enterprises. Profit is not a primary goal for social economy organizations. Social economy organizations offer

alternative solutions to social and environmental problems. Thus, this chapter discusses and argues how the social economy can contribute to sustainable development and would be an indicator of equitable distribution of wealth, social justice, and balanced development.

- The chapter “*Non-Profit Organizations: A Path for Social Economy*,” contributed by Kerem Toker, argues that the social economy is based on non-profit organizations that are established as voluntary initiatives and operate in line with voluntary participation principles. Therefore, the chapter covers the structure and management principles of non-profit organizations, as well as their relations with the public, the government, the target audiences, and donors.
- The chapter “*Sharing Economy Business Model in the Social Economy: Opportunities and Threats*,” contributed by Hakan Aydın, discusses how sharing economy business models provide such opportunities as increasing the efficiency of social economy organizations, providing a new transformation in the social economy, and contributing to the achievement of social and financial goals. The chapter also emphasizes that sharing economy business models which provide significant social, economic, and environmental opportunities would include threats, such as public health and safety, employee rights, unfair competition, and increased consumption.
- The chapter “*Social Entrepreneurship*,” contributed by Merve Koçoğlu Sazkaya, discusses the concept of social entrepreneurship and activities carried out by business organizations which attempt to solve social and environmental problems. As globalization introduces many problems for humanity, this chapter provides examples of social entrepreneurship activities that business organizations can carry out which would contribute to solving social and environmental issues, besides their normal profit purpose activities which produce financial gain for their shareholders.
- The chapter “*Social Enterprise: A New Form of the New Corporate Social Responsibility*,” contributed by Özgür Atılğan, asserts that business enterprises have attempted to undertake corporate social responsibilities to solve social problems and increase social welfare, and argues the gradual transformation of corporate social responsibility into a social enterprise.
- The chapter “*Social Leadership*,” contributed by Dilek Dönmez Polat, aims to explain the subject of social leadership and examine the links between social economy and social leadership. The chapter was inspired by an observed changing role of leadership. It is argued that leaders cannot remain indifferent to what is happening around their

environment. That is, while social and environmental problems have been experienced all over the world the concern that the resources on our planet will not be enough for future generations necessitates that leaders take on social responsibilities.

- The chapter “*Organizational Dimensions of Social Sustainability from a Social Economy Perspective,*” contributed by Zeynep Görmezoğlu, discusses the fact that social sustainability focuses on how societies and individuals live and emphasize social values such as equality, basic needs, working conditions, human rights, participation, and fair pay. In addition, the chapter examines the following organizational dimensions of social sustainability for business organizations: employee participation, employee cooperation, equal opportunity, employee development, health and safety, and external partnership. On the other hand, it can be argued that the priority of both social economy and social sustainability is to meet the needs of people and society, to increase the level of life and welfare, and to ensure its development and sustainability.
- The chapter “*Social Marketing Activities: Measuring Non-financial Disclosures*” contributed by Recep Pekdemir, aims to answer the question of: “Who is doing what to influence behavioral changes for both societal gain and financial gain?”. For this purpose, the history and background of the concept of social marketing activities are first revisited. Financial and non-financial disclosures of business enterprises are next examined. Then, a proposal of an index to measure social marketing activities of profit-purpose business enterprises is developed and tested on a banking corporation in Turkey. The chapter concludes that such an index could be exercised to measure the social marketing activities of profit-purpose business enterprises.
- The chapter “*Frugal Innovation: A Solution for Desired Balance?,*” contributed by Güney Çetin Gürkan, argues that the inequality in income distribution between countries and regions has increased, making it difficult for human beings to access goods and services. The chapter also emphasizes that frugal innovation could contribute to achieving the desired balance which would meet the needs of low-income segments of the population.
- The chapter “*A Catalyst for Social Economy: Society 5.0,*” contributed by Kerem Toker, argues that our planet has been witnessing a digital transformation that could bring novel and innovative solutions to social, organizational, and managerial problems. One of those would be Society 5.0, which could bring digital solutions to these problems by combining the virtual and real worlds in solving social issues.

In sum, the book covers such subjects as: sustainability, sustainable development, social sustainability, social economy, social development, non-profit organizations, sharing economy business model, social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, social leadership, organizational dimensions of social sustainability, social marketing activities, non-financial disclosure measurement, frugal innovation, and Society 5.0.

All business enterprises should be expected to participate in sustainability efforts in today's circumstances; they should balance the sustainability issues' economic, social, and environmental factors. The book emphasizes that business organizations should take responsibility for solving social problems and protecting the natural environment, in addition to their economic responsibilities, to find answers to social issues, provide social benefits, and sustain lives on a more habitable planet in the future. For this purpose, the book aims to provide different perspectives for those business enterprises to contribute to the social economy model, in which the needs for social goals are prioritized.

I was honored to have edited the book ***MAKING THE PLANET MORE HABITABLE: BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY***. I am tremendously grateful to each of the authors for their valuable contributions. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the publisher, Istanbul University Press, who has made the compilation of this book possible.

All comments, ideas, and suggestions based on the contents of this book would be welcome from anyone who has found this book beneficial in any way.

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