

Institution: Edinburgh Napier University		
Unit of Assessment: UoA17 – Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Influencing organisational strategy to support responsible business practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: December 2013 – October 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Miles Weaver Kenny Crossan Hock Tan Jackie Brodie	Associate Professor Lecturer Lecturer Associate Professor	July 2012 – present Sept 2005 – present December 1993 – present Jan 2005 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Weaver, Crossan and Tan's research into private and third sector collaboration to support responsible business led to changes in strategy at three Scottish organisations: a fund manager; the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce; and Scotland CAN B, leading to new business partnerships and employment. It led to Edinburgh becoming the first UK city to be awarded a global sustainability status, providing the city with enhanced reputation, visibility and credibility and a competitive edge over other European cities. It also led to a Weaver and Brodie scheme with cross-sector partners to support young professionals to join charity boards, which has benefitted over 35 charities.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Using an operational research approach, Weaver, Crossan and Tan developed a model for strengthening the relationships between businesses, communities and the third sector, to support more responsible business practice, particularly to release more resources from 'for-profits' into communities.</p> <p>Weaver's research background is in supply chain modelling, using an operational research (OR) approach, and after joining Edinburgh Napier he began to look at how OR could address the 'grand challenge' of sustainability within business and in collaboration with stakeholders. In 2013, he presented an assessment of the contribution, concepts and research issues relating to OR for sustainability to the 26th European Conference on Operational Research in Rome (with colleagues from the University of Manchester, Edinburgh Napier and Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland) [R1]. In 2015, Weaver, Crossan and Tan showed how the 'systems thinking' approach used in OR could be used to connect and align Corporate Social Responsibility responses to social need in Scotland (Presentation at the 27th European Conference on Operational Research, Glasgow) [R2].</p> <p>In 2015, Weaver, Crossan and Tan were also commissioned by the Scottish Government [P1] to report on the landscape for cultivating responsible business practice in Scotland, share good practice (5 cases) in the context of the Scottish Business Pledge [R3]. The pledge aims to encourage and support businesses to adopt best practice and progressive policies, on areas such as the living wage, gender pay gap and environmental standards.</p>		

Between 2015-2017, Weaver, Crossan and Tan conducted a Community Operational Research study using Soft System Methodology to investigate how third sector fund managers can better engage with the private sector to address existing and emerging community challenges [R3]. The study found a perceived lack of connectivity and alignment of objectives between and within public, for-profit, and the third sectors in Scotland and proposed a new 'Connect model' to help bring more resources into communities, particularly from the private sector. This research was developed through an Innovate UK funded Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Impact Fund Partners, a Scottish fund-manager (at the time called Voluntary Action Fund) [P2]. The study involved over 240 participants from Scottish businesses, the third sector, fund managers and umbrella bodies, local and national government and their agencies and public sector bodies.

The Connect model asserts that there is both a need to invest in building social capital between stakeholders and to establish a 'shared space' where businesses, communities and citizens can come together to collaborate on initiatives and actions [R4]. The shared space concept recognises that, as the for-profit sector controls most resources, they need to be part of any solutions. Yet, it also incorporates the view that, for businesses to fulfil their role as responsible actors in society, they need to empower communities to identify issues and be part of co-creating the solutions.

This work was recognised at the forefront of using systems-based approaches to building a meaningful engagement between business and communities [R5] and to attain the Sustainable Development Goals across partnerships [R6] with directions to build knowledge and practical application in these areas.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R4] submitted to REF2; [R6] downloaded 109 times.

[R1] Weaver, M., Quariguasi Frota Neto, J. & Bonfiglioli, A. (2013). OR for Sustainability: Assessing Contribution, Concepts and Research Issues. Paper presented at Euro/Informs 26th European Conference on Operational Research, Rome, University of Sapienza.

Paper can be supplied by HEI on request.

[R2] Weaver, M., Wimbles, K., Paxton, S., & Parkin, J. (2015). A Call to Address Grand Challenges: A Conversation between the OR Community and the Voluntary Action Fund (Scotland). Presented at 27th European Conference on Operational Research, Glasgow, Scotland. **Paper can be supplied by HEI on request**

[R3] Weaver, M., Tan, H., Crossan, K., & Paxton, S. (2016). Cultivating Responsible Business in Scotland through the lens of the Scottish Business Pledge. Edinburgh: Voluntary Action Fund as part of the Responsible Business Forum.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298354369_Cultivating_Responsible_Business_in_Scotland_through_the_lens_of_the_Scottish_Business_Pledge

[R4] Weaver, M. W., Crossan, K., Tan, H., & Paxton, S. (2018). A systems approach to understanding the perspectives in the changing landscape of responsible business in Scotland. European Journal of Operational Research.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0377221717310615>

[R5] Weaver, M. (2017, March). Keynote: Applications of "Systems Thinking" to co-create business-community value. Presented at Applications of Systems Thinking, CAN-Mezzanine, London, Operational Research Society.
<http://researchreposito...ier.ac.uk/Output/815677>

[R6] Weaver, M., Tan, H., & Crossan, K. (2020). Systems and Systemic Approaches for Attaining the SDGs Across Partnerships. In W. Leal Filho, A. M. Azul, L. Brandli, A. Lange Salvia, & T. Wall (Eds.), Partnerships for the Goals: Encyclopaedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Cham: Springer.
https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-71067-9_92-1

Funded Projects

[P1] Weaver, M., (PI), Tan, H., Crossan, K., Responsible Business Forum, Scottish Government, December 2015 – February 2016, £3,500.

[P2] Weaver, M., (PI), Tan, H., Crossan, K., Innovate UK (50% Scottish Funding Council and 50% Technology Strategy Board) [Partnership Number: 9740], Grant Amount: £83,333.00. A further 1/3 of the costs were supported by the Voluntary Action Fund, Fife, Grant Amount: £40,833.17, February 2015 – February 2017, Total Funding: £124,166.17.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Responsible Business Forum: Weaver, Crossan and Tan were commissioned by the Scottish Government to help promote the Scottish Business Pledge through a Responsible Business Forum, which was hosted at Edinburgh Napier University Business School in 2016, supported by the Voluntary Action Fund, Scottish Enterprise and Business in the Community (Scotland). Weaver, Crossan and Tan presented their report on responsible business in Scotland at the event, which was attended by more than 100 businesses. At the time of the forum there were just over 200 signatories, but by 2019, this had risen to over 500 businesses making the Pledge **[IM1]**. While we cannot make a direct link between the event and report and subsequent signatories, the event had a clear purpose to reinvigorate the Pledge and encourage more businesses to sign up.

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce: In 2018, Weaver and Tan presented their research to the Inspiring Communities Group at Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, which brings together private sector and charity members of the Chamber to form meaningful partnerships for mutual benefit. Weaver was subsequently invited to become a member of the group. Weaver's research helped the group develop a new methodology for their work **[IM2]**. Weaver connected the Chamber with Scotland CAN B, and the Chamber subsequently led a successful bid to have Edinburgh designated as the UK's first CAN B city and only the second in Europe **[IM3]**. Cities CAN B is a global movement of cities looking to be more prosperous, sustainable, inclusive and resilient, by bringing together all sectors with a focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Winning CAN B status led to the Chamber receiving a year-long programme of mentoring and support from the Co-founders of the Cities CAN B movement (Rio and Santiago CAN-B, Latin America). Chamber Director of Policy, Joanne Davidson says that, while this cannot be valued in monetary terms, the Chamber believes the designation provides Edinburgh with "*an advantage in terms of reputation, visibility and credibility and also believe that it will be a draw for businesses, giving the city a competitive edge over other parts of Scotland. This designation would not have happened without the chain of events put in motion through Dr Weaver and his research.*" The Chamber has adapted its strategy and structure as a result and has employed a new member of staff to oversee this aspect of their work **[IM4]**.

Scotland CAN B is a nationwide programme combining the Scottish Government's vision, for the country to become a leader in innovation & entrepreneurship, with B Lab, a global movement to drive business as a force for good. It was launched with the support of the Scottish Government in 2018. Weaver and Tan became involved in the development of the programme from its conception, taking part in activities and incorporating the programme's ideas into their teaching. Edinburgh Napier University is a knowledge partner in the programme and hosted the launch of their B-Leaders event in June 2018 and a Next Generation Business conference for students in March 2019 and 2020. Scotland CAN B credit the support from Edinburgh Napier University as important in developing their organisation. Weaver took part in a weekend event for those involved in sustainable business and contributed research insights to the group. Scotland CAN B cite these insights as directly leading to a change in their strategy, moving from a purely training focused approach to one which now includes initiatives aimed at changing the business culture in Scotland **[IM5]**. As a result of the link with the Chamber of Commerce, facilitated by Weaver, Scotland CAN B was invited as a partner in the global Cities CAN B bid.

Impact Funding Partners (IFP): The research involving the Scottish fund manager led the organisation to rebrand from Voluntary Action Fund to become Impact Funding Partners and refocus their work to increase partnerships with business and diversify their income. IFP credits the research with helping them change their culture to work more like a business while retaining a focus on societal impacts. It helped them see how to, says Chief Executive of IFP, Keith Wimbles, “*position [themselves] more strongly to compete and tender for different contracts*” [IM6]. Wimbles says that, following the research project: “*I felt more confident going out and speaking to businesses and I’ve continued to do that with new contacts. We have built about 15 strong relationships with businesses.*” [IM6]

Charity Board Initiative: Since 2013, Weaver and Brodie have run ‘Get on Board’, a scheme which supports students to become board members for Scottish charities [IM7]. Following his research on the Connect model, Weaver decided to incorporate private sector businesses, to support further links between the for-profit and third sectors. Launched in 2017, the Charity Board Initiative now involves six universities in Scotland, with corporate partners, Anderson Strathern, Santander, and RSM and charity partner, Inspiring Scotland. 218 students have completed this programme (as of 31/05/19) and there are over 35 charity partners [IM8]. This example of cross-sector collaboration was awarded a HEA Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) in 2020 [IM9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[IM1] Scotland CAN B – Year 1 Impact Summary May 2019, p18.

https://canb.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/FinalReport_May14_compressed.pdf

[IM2] Minutes of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Inspiring Communities Group meetings held on 5 December 2018 and 16 April 2019.

[IM3] Article in Business Insider ‘Edinburgh first UK city to be chosen for select sustainability network’ 26 September 2019.

<https://www.insider.co.uk/news/edinburgh-first-uk-city-chosen-20242882>

Article in Business Comment, Special Report: Innovation & Sustainability, ‘The Best City we CAN B’ Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, December/January 2020, p22.

<https://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/bc62-LR.pdf>

[IM4] Testimonial from Joanne Davidson, Director of Policy at Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

[IM5] Testimonial from Elle Adams and Kali Gibson from Scotland CAN B.

[IM6] Testimonial from Keith Wimbles, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Fund, now Impact Funding Partners.

[IM7] Article in Third Force News ‘Guide offers support and guidance for new trustees’ November 2020

<https://tfn.scot/news/guide-offers-support-and-guidance-for-new-trustees>

Article in Holyrood Magazine ‘Charity boards need an injection of youth’

<https://www.holyrood.com/comment/view,comment-charity-boards-need-an-injection-of-youth-16908>

[IM8] Article in Third Force News ‘All Aboard’ February 2021 p.26

<https://tfn.scot/2021-02/b6kGo1tlaSX7ewy5>

[IM9] The ‘Get on Board Competency Pathway’ and ‘Charity Board Initiative’, Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE), Awarded by the Higher Education Academy, 2020.

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/cate-team/get-board-edinburgh-napier-university>