Social investments: A social innovation approach and the importance of active ownership

Robert Jonsson and Erik Jannesson

Linköping University Post Print

N.B.: When citing this work, cite the original article.

Original Publication:

Copyright: RESER (The European Association for REsearch on SERvices)
http://www.reser2014.fi/

Postprint available at: Linköping University Electronic Press
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:liu:diva-112598
Social investments: A social innovation approach and the importance of active ownership

Robert Jonsson, Erik Jannesson
Linköping University

This paper is about social investment funds as a tool for directing financial means for welfare services supplied by local authorities. The empirical context is a municipality in Sweden. Through the fund social welfare agencies can get investment loans through which innovations in welfare services may be developed and integrated into the organizational practices. The aim of the paper is to contribute with an understanding of significant organizational conditions for the development of multiplier effect of social investment in a municipal context. The result highlights the importance of (1) a project manager with a focus on method development, (2) learning and transformation of method development into multiplier effects, and (3) management that direct attention toward the creation of multiplier effects.

1. Introduction – Social investments and the goal to create multiplier effects

The basic purpose of public organizations in Sweden is realization of societal interests via decisions in democratic assemblies. The implication is that activities of public organizations often have several different overall mission and goals (Lind; Ivarsson-Westberg, 2011). The Swedish municipalities of today have four main assignments: democracy, supplier of service, authority and being a society actor (Montin, 1997; Jonsson et al, 2002).

Infrastructure investments, business establishments and employment issues, as well as tourism and the establishment of training programs, housing for the elderly and mentally ill have become important parts of being a society actor. Particularly in the light of structural problems and setbacks related to the traditional financial governance (Jonsson, 2013). But the achievements of municipalities do not only have concrete effects, it also has more implicit consequences as it influence attitudes in society. This is something that happens both consciously and unconsciously (Jonsson et al, 2002). One important tool in this is the use of social investments and more particularly the establishment of social investment funds.

A social investment fund gives monetary resources to projects to enable them to invent new and more efficient practices and organizations for welfare services. These can in turn be institutionalized in the regular operations without increasing costs. In the paper, the terms method development and social innovation are in a sense used synonymous for that kind of progress. The argument is that both method develop-
ment and social innovations in a social investment context aims at creating multiplier effects, i.e. effects that are formed and developed, value added and leveraged from a specific project to continuous operation. Whether it is merely refinements of existing methods - method development - or development of a new method or knowledge - social innovation - the organization need an ability to convert these to multiplier effects. Hence, it does not happen automatically. It requires a well thought out organization and management for this to be possible (Jonsson et al, 2014).

Method development, social innovation and multiplier effects are things that earlier have been of subordinate importance in the municipal context (Larsson, 2008). But with the introduction of social investment funds as a new resource allocation system this has started to change. To handle this, as well as the method development, an ability to "walk on two legs" is required. First, the individuals in the project need to have the ability to act action-oriented and secondly, they must have an ability to reflect. The latter is a prerequisite to problematize and consequently developing new methods and social innovations (Larsson, 2008).

For method development and social innovation to be translated into regular operations it requires that individuals learn something. However, it is not enough that individuals learn something theoretically; it also requires that individuals are able to apply the lessons learned and to allow them to it (Ellström, 2009). An individualized learning in development contexts is no guarantee of long-term effects. To convert method development to multiplier effects it requires individual learning in theory and practice, but it also requires an organizational learning (Brulin; Svensson, 2011).

We are well aware that the concept of social innovation sprawl, but in recent years there has been studies to homogenize the use of social innovations. The basis of what we today call social innovations is based on Joseph Schumpeter’s research. He broadened the concept of innovation to not only include technology development (Rönning et al, 2013). Cajaiba-Santana (2013) has through literature studies from two previously dominant perspective, actor and structure, developed a conceptualization with focus on social investment as a process. Bonificacio (2013) also clarifies the concept of social innovation by arguing that it includes an organizational process. In this paper, we take note of the Cajaiba-Santana claims – that it is important that we continue to study social innovation from a process perspective. Social change takes time and consists of social processes is important.

Research has also shown that we know little regarding the creation of method development and social innovations that lead to multiplier effects. According to Cajaiba-Santana (2013) and Rönning et al, (2013), we need to increase understanding of social innovation from a procedural point of view. What we know is mainly related to the large EU project (Svensson et al, 2013). We know far less about this in relation to social investment funds in a municipal context – for obvious reasons because it is a new resource allocation system.

Finally, it needs to be highlighted that capability of handling both action and reflection is a key success factor in carrying out development work in project form (Löfström, 2010a, 2010b). But that does not seem to be enough to create multiplier effects. Brulin and Svensson (2011, 25) argues that the development-oriented learning that takes place in the form of projects need to be regarded in an organizational context with an emphasis on active ownership. With active ownership they mean “that there are strong players who can create the conditions for a project driven forward and tak-
ing responsibility for the results taken care of and will be a long lasting impact”. The active ownership is a complex phenomenon in a municipal context because it is based on different logics (Jonsson; Arnell, 2006; Jonsson, 2008) and domains (Adolfsson; Solli, 2009). Hence, this paper argues that we need better understanding of the interplay between social investment and the active owners in a municipal context. The paper aims to contribute with an understanding of such significant organizational conditions for the development of multiplier effects of social investment in a municipal context.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section presents the what and why of social investment funds in a Swedish local government context. After that the methodological approach is highlighted. The fourth section contains a theoretical presentation on project management, learning evaluation, and active ownership. In the fifth section the empirical data is presented, focusing on a particular investment fund and one of its projects. In the sixth and final section the paper concludes with reflections regarding significant organizational conditions for the development of multiplier effects on social investment in a municipal context.

2. The what and why of social investment funds

As indicated, social investments is about using early interventions, often organised as projects, to decrease the risk of people ending up in an unwanted situation, e.g. dropping out of school, ending up unemployed, committing criminal acts, using drugs etcetera. It is mainly about developing a more efficient service that in turn creates opportunities for individuals to improve their lives, e.g. through increased school attendance, self-esteem, enhanced CV or improved family situation. In Sweden, the municipality of Norrköping started its own fund for social investments in 2010. The purpose of it is described as follows (Norrköping, 2014):

The purpose of the fund is to find preventive practices in Norrköping that break negative events at an early stage. The starting point is thus to find the local residents who are more at risk of being socially excluded and give them the right help to avoid falling off.

For the municipality, the financial benefits might involve reduced need for resources, such fewer placements of children and young people, reduced inputs from the overall student health or fewer investigations of the school psychologist.

For the individual the benefits are about a future with education, a job an own income. Simply, a better life.

When the effects of these investments are beginning to appear, when the municipal costs are reduced as a result of the investment, the units’ financial space shall be reduced by the same amount. The surplus should then be highlighted in the annual accounts and earmarked to be used for future social investments. Because of that, the fund will be continuously replenished and new social investments can be made.

Both the financial and social benefits should be assessed for all investments. When an investment generates financial and social benefits, it might be time to

3
implement the developed method in ordinary activities.

The assumption is that social investments, i.e. early interventions, are more financially advantageous than trying to “save” people at a later stage (Nilsson; Wadeskog, 2008). Hence, social investments are important from a social and financial perspective, as well as for the municipality and the nation as a whole (SKL, 2014). With that said, it is also important to note that funding for social investments is still a very small part of the total investments in a municipality; investments in fixed assets dominates.

From the beginning of the 2010’s, we can see that there are a number of municipalities in Sweden that have or want to implement some kind of social investment fund. One reason is that it gives an opportunity to increase the ability to handle welfare resources both within and between time periods. Hence, this new resource allocation system helps municipalities to act as a more conscious community stakeholder and to provide more efficient service through method development and multiplier effects.

So how does a social investment fund work from a financial perspective? The Swedish municipalities are used to allocate financial resources to plan and administer annual recurring activities, and monitor and report what has been done (Knutson et al, 2006; Brorström et al, 2014). Municipalities in Sweden have been inspired by the traditional investment budgets when trying to streamline the management of welfare resources both within and between time periods. The social investment fund could be seen as an answer to the continuous cuts in budgets for welfare services while the demand increases.

As mentioned, a social investment fund provides financial resources to projects. In some municipalities this is done via a loan. Hence, the project is required to generate a return so they can pay it back. An example of this is provided above (the quotation from Norrköping). In other cases the project is given a donation without any restriction of repayment. This in turn means that the financial resources in the fund decreases with time, which is not the idea in the loan-based fund.

The municipalities that were first with resource allocation based on social investments met opposition. The arguments against social investments is that it is not possible to take up a welfare investment in an asset register, which is quite possible in areas such as school buildings, streets and bridges. There is a material uncertainty regarding the asset’s value, which is one of several reasons for social investments not yet being included in the balance sheet in Swedish municipalities. It is, however, important to note that although there is uncertainty associated with social investment, the traditional budget process also contains uncertainty. Primarily they tend to focus too much on the next time period, which provides obstacles and uncertainty regarding long-term consequences.

Traditional budgeting combined with social investment means that the focus moves from being just about the costs of operations for a period, to also include discussions regarding the consequences. Also, social investments put method development and learning in forefront. Bengtsson (2013) argue that a key motivation behind the state and local government involvement in activities and investments is a pursuit of financial efficiency. Swedish municipal budgets and annual reports reveal that this is not always the case. In operating budgets, as well as investment budgets, there are municipal financial calculations that provided the principal base for the financial action plans. An explanation for this is that the municipality is regarded as an organization focused on results and balance sheet. A municipal calculation tells you what the so-
cial investment is expected to result in relation to the municipality’s financial state-
ments. A socio-economic calculation on the other hand provides answers to what the
social investment will mean financially in the short and long term for the society
(Eklund, 2012). The latter ones is, however, not that common.

3. Methodology

The theoretical approach in the paper combines theories from institutional organiza-
tion, project research and evaluation studies with focus on learning evaluation. The
literature review has contributed to the conceptual and theoretical framework needed
for the analysis in our study. However, the study is based on an abductive process
(Alvesson; Sköldberg, 2008) and the collection of the empirical data has therefore
had substantial influence on the theoretical framework (and the other way around).

Empirically we have chosen the social investment fund of Norrköping, i.e. the first so-
cial investment fund in a Swedish municipality. The reason is based on the approach
to study social investments from a process perspective. That requires a fund that has
been running for as long as possible, making the social investment fund in Norrkö-
ping the obvious choice. At the mid of 2014, six projects had received financial re-
sources. We chose to focus on one of these, and more specifically the only one that
had reached the point where money were about to be transferred back to the fund.
The project is called “Every child should be in school”. Hence, the study’s contribu-
tion is primarily applicable in the context of municipal context, but the reader should
be able to see a larger and more general use than that.

A mix of sources has been used to collect the empirical data. One is publically avail-
able documents regarding the social investment fund as a whole as well as the par-
ticular project in focus. Primary data have been derived through (1) taking part in lo-
cal conferences and group discussions among politicians, civil servants and profes-
sionals in the different sectors of welfare services, and (2) via interviews with people
working with the social investment fund as well as people within the project.

In a summation of the epistemological beliefs and methodological approach it be-
comes clear that the study contributes to the understanding of important organiza-
tional conditions for the development of multiplier effects on social investment in a
municipal context. Worth mentioning is also that the study is part of a larger study
funded by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. It focuses on
organization and management of social investment funds in a municipal context.

4. A theoretical approach – The project management
and the importance of active ownership

The lack of active ownership related to development work, often in the form of pro-
jects, is a common explanation for why development work does not lead to sustaina-
ble efficiency. Previous research has shown that there is a lack of management work
related to long-term actions. Management teams have acted as reference groups
that have been focused on short-term results and an overall focus on here and now.
Henceforth, Brulin and Svensson (2011) sought active owner who demands and at
the same time try to decrease the vertical uncertainty between owners, management team and projects. Carlström (2005) uses the concept of collaborative ability to pay attention to the attitude demanded by the collaboration. Collaborative capacity is an ability to listen to the views of others while there is an ability to convey messages based on different logics and perspectives to interact in a fruitful way.

According to Svensson et al (2013) it is important that the management team act professionally towards the projects management and teams, with a focus on a close dialogue and learning. If the interaction between the political leadership and the management of social investment is based on a quest for results, methodology and multiplier effects there are good conditions for learning in the projects and in the organization (Jonsson et al, 2014).

The active ownership means that, both during and after the project time, taking interest in the results and the learning that is generated in the projects. Besides that the active ownership is about taking responsibility for learning, methodological developments and creating of multiplier effects (Ellström, 2009).

How the management of a social investment fund is designed is a matter for each individual municipality. Regardless, it is important that the management team has the opportunity to disseminate information between investment projects and to the organization. It is important that the management team in the form of active owners creates opportunities to, when necessary, define the projects and link projects with base organization. Löfström (2010a, 2010b) uses the concept of boundaries, both structural and conceptual to deepen reflection about creation and termination of projects. Dealing with limits and uncertainties associated with development projects is important for the management team, but also for the project and the political leadership.

To know if the development is on track, the expected results are achieved and to continuously have a focus on learning, Svensson et al (2013) recommends a process-based learning evaluation. By including a learning evaluator early in the process, the focus can be set on how to measure the results and effects. A learning evaluator contributes to methodological development and helps to focus on how development can be translated into regular operations (Brulin; Svensson, 2011).

Through the literature review, a number of important organizational conditions for the development of multiplier effects in relation to social investment in a municipal context have been identified. The various organizational conditions that the literature has shown are important to facilitate the development of multiplier effects in a municipal context. A good project team with a collaborative ability and a good project manager is the basis for method development to take place. For it to be formed and increased, value added and leveraged it is also required that the project team is interested in spreading lessons, a learning evaluation and active ownership.

Learning evaluation in social investments is a prerequisite for monitoring the results, facilitate method development and contribute to the understanding of how multiplier effects can be created. To facilitate the work of the learning evaluation, it is advantageous that there is a forward elaborate evaluation plan. The plan is the basis, but because it is about development flexibility is important, which means that learning is the focus. To manage the complexity inherent in municipalities it is important that the active ownership reduces vertical uncertainty and thus makes it easier for project manager to highlight methodological development.
5. Empirical results - the project team and the owner of the project are responsible for creating multiplier effects

In this section we focus on the social investment fund in the municipality of Norrköping, and more specifically the project “Every child should be in school”. We start of by describing the context in which the fund was established. The project is than describe based on the summation of the previous section, i.e. in turn it will cover the social investment project, the learning evaluation and the active ownership.

Norrköping was seen in the early 2010’s as a vibrant cultural centre, including a symphony orchestra, a regional theatre, unique petroglyphs and a football team playing in the top Swedish league. The proximity of the archipelago and that Kolmården Zoo is located within the municipality of Norrköping was something that was emphasized. On the website (www.norrkoping.se) the municipality was presented as a supplier of services, an authority and as a society actor that supports work, business, culture and sport.

Norrköping has undergone great trials. Most prominent during the 1900s, industry restructuring as the textile industry in central Norrköping was driven out. The old industrial properties, which are centrally located along the River, constituted a unique cultural heritage. Today several of the old industrial buildings are used by Linköping University and local companies. The structural change meant that Norrköping no longer only was regarded as an industrial city. Norrköping was instead described as a city with many small companies within many different fields. In the end of 2013 Norrköping was the seventh largest city in Sweden with its more than 130 000 inhabitants. The structural transformation has meant that the municipality has more structural underlying problems compared with other major municipalities in Sweden.

Norrköping was a few years into the 2010’s, organized based on assignments. This way of organizing the municipality’s management had been in use for about 10 years when the social investment fund became a reality. The underlying idea of the organizational model was to provide an equivalent service in the entire municipality – based on assignments. During the 1990s and a few years into the 2000s, Norrköping was instead organized in smaller parts based on geography.

At the beginning of 2011, Norrköping began to work with the social investment fund. At the start the fund had a total of SEK 40 million available. In the mid of 2014, about 80 % of that amount was actively used in the six projects. One project was reaching its end and repayment to the fund from the responsible authorities has begun to take place. As described earlier in the paper, the social investment fund is based on a reversal model - when the budgeted results have been achieved, there is a repayment to the fund. If a situation arises where social investment project does not achieve the goals and a refund cannot be done, there is a direct write down of the social investment. If that happens, the city council have to decide whether the fund will be reduced by that amount, or if financial means will be added to the fund to keep it at a 40 million level.

It is the council who is ultimately responsible for the social investment fund, but the management of the social investment fund have the operational ownership. It is the management team who accepts proposals for investment and follows the various
projects in relation to effects. Since 2014 they also focus on methods development in relation to multiplier effects.

.5.1. The social investment project – Every child should be in school

The social investment project “Every child should be in school” is a collaborative project between two of the organizational units within the municipality: the Education office and the Social services. The target group is the children in the municipal elementary schools. However, children in schools that perform teaching on behalf of the municipality, a minority, are not included. In the mid of 2014 the project was in its final phase.

The objectives of the project were split into three levels: individual, group (school) and organization (municipality). At the individual level, the goal was mainly through increased self-esteem reduce exclusion. Absenteeism at the end of the project was expected to be zero. At the group level, the goal was to increase the knowledge of school absences and successful practices and methods to reduce school absenteeism. At the organizational level, the goal was to find ways for better synergy realisation between organizational units.

At the start of autumn 2012, the project was structured on the basis of five teams. The teams were directed to different geographical areas in the municipality. Each team had its own manager and the teams consisted of social workers and educators. After more than half a year the problems with the teams working in different ways where highlighted. Particularly there was no one with a holistic view of the project that could coordinate the work. In light of this setback, it was decided to appoint a project manager working half-time. After the project manager was in place, another important change was made. Instead of working towards geographical areas the team where organized from different missions (remember – the municipality as a whole was organized around assignments). The teams’ various missions became outreach- and attendance promotion, support for early intervention and treatment provision. This generated a more focused use of the resources.

.5.2. Learning evaluation – Discoveries during the project

When the project started, it contained guidelines regarding follow-up. They were mainly focused on the objectives with the use of questionnaires as the main method for gathering data. Besides that, medical records and registration of school attendance was used. The latter was documented via an IT support system named Dexter. This was a completely new system, and therefore there was uncertainty among the schools on how the system should be handled. The project has therefore put a lot of effort on increasing the use of it. A high level of use means better data to analyse patterns in absenteeism; a prerequisite to be able to find all students that needs support. Data from the project shows that the registration in Dexter is increasing and all schools are expected to use it fully at the end of 2014.

As the project progressed the project manager and the management team of the social investment fund acclaimed a need for an ongoing learning evaluation of the project. It was thought that such an evaluation would give better insights about the con-
sequences of the processes within the project. Two experts from the two participating office’s (the Education office and the Social services) was asked to follow the project in more detail and present progress reports for the fund’s management team. The interim reports were official and was also presented at the municipality’s website. The follow-up in relation to the objectives show that the project is successful. Attendance has improved during the project and the invalid absenteeism has decreased. Despite this, it is interesting to note that the first reports highlighted performance monitoring, but with time the evaluations got more focused on how the method development would be put into the regular organization after the project ends.

There are several examples of the work to create a transition from project the regular organisation. Most of them have its base in concrete routines for the schools to work by to be able to handle the problems on their own. Hence, the creation of routines is a way for the project to facilitate the creation of multiplier effects. Since this facilitation has been considered important it has consumed a considerable amount of the resources in the project. For example, one person has had these routines as the main task since the internal reorganization of the project, and a lot of meetings and discussions around these have been conducted.

One concrete routine that has been highlighted is the need for an appointed person in every school responsible for the children’s attendance. A lot of schools have already chosen to follow this recommendation. Project members have also conducted meetings with these to inform them on their ongoing work as well as the routines that they have establish based on the experience from the project. The later consist, among other things, of routines for establishment of (1) a plan to deal with the absence of a specific child, (2) three part conversations between the child, parents and Social services, and (3) a better collaboration and information exchange between the school and Social services.

Another example of the work to ease the creation of multiplier effects is the full-day conference that was arrange in the spring of 2014. It had the theme "All children in school" and focused the learning that has come out of the project. The project has had an experimental approach since an established method was lacking. During the conference the conclusions from the project was therefore discussed. Several of them were in the form of concrete recommendation (with related tools) to the schools.

As mentioned, the learning evaluation has contributed to the focus on the transition from project to the schools. But the evaluations have also shown that the one important lesson on the group level (schools) is that there are many causes of absenteeism, and that they in turn often are complex. The project teams’ conclusion from this was that each child’s situation must be explored and that it is important with a large amount of flexibility in the daily operation, i.e. the activities must be adapted so that they fit the individual child. Another lesson is the importance of asking for the child’s experiences; they give a lot of useful information that can be used to tailor the support. For this knowledge to be used as a base for action in the schools after the project, i.e. to implement the methodology development, the project management highlighted that there needs to be staff in the schools that understand and use the developed processes to manage school attendance and absenteeism. Giving a person at each school the responsibility of overlooking the attendance of the children is one important part in this, but other roles are important as well.
.5.3. The active ownership – Continuous feedback and focus on results

In Norrköping, the management team of the social investment fund consist of the managing director of each office as well as two officials who work with the social investment fund. The management team also includes a few appointed politicians. This is considered important for the continuous dialogue between the politicians and the officials. The management team is chaired by the municipal financial manager. One important reason for this is to signal the importance of the fund. Another is the fact that he was the one that developed the model on which the fund is based. The model’s structure is similar to how municipalities in Sweden manage investments in fixed assets. In the latter case an investment is made and when it is in place the concerned part is charged with a capital cost (interest and depreciation). Social investments works in the same way but with an important difference: social investments are not charged with any internal interest.

When the social investment fund had just been created, the management team followed the projects with a focused on performance monitoring; are they reaching the objectives? With time they noted that this was not enough; they felt that they needed more information on the progress, especially when one of the projects reached its finalization. Among other things they needed information on the transition between project and ordinary operation, i.e. how the projects are preparing for multiplier effects. The need for a continuous learning evaluation for every project grew stronger, and the usage of it right from the start in new projects. This was sought to create the attention of the projects towards results, methodology development and conditions for multiplier effects.

In relation to the project “Every child should be in school”, the implementation of a learning evaluation came as a result of a dialogue both between and internally in the management team for the fund and project respectively. The management of the fund, both officials and politicians, have also shown an active interest in the project’s continuous results. The manager of the Education office and the Social services respectively (the two involved offices in the project) have come to take a particularly active role in this; requesting information from the project, being there as active support and showing that they care about the results. With a learning evaluation as the base this has meant a focus on the development of method and structures that can be used after the project. One concrete consequence of this is the full-day conference mentioned in the previous section. The conference was not an event organized by the project; it was set up as a collaboration between the project and the management team. This shows that the management team finds the project important and want to create the best opportunities possible for multiplier effects.

6. Conclusions – Multiplier effects and the importance of an active ownership

As mentioned earlier, several Swedish municipalities have drawn inspiration from traditional investment budgets to increase the ability to handle welfare resources both within and between time periods. This has created a new resource allocation system; the social investment fund. The idea is that the fund should lead to methodology de-
velopment and social innovation, but the fund per see could also be considered a social innovation. That innovation is an important organizational tool when searching for method development and multiplier effects. But a social investment fund in itself is no guarantee for success; a well thought out organization and management is necessary for that to happen (Jonsson et al., 2014).

Given that a social investment fund is a new resource allocation system for the Swedish municipalities, there is reason to research its construction and how it is used. Therefor the aim of this papers aim is to contribute with an understanding of significant organizational conditions for the development of multiplier effect of social investment in a municipal context.

The organizational conditions that have been put forward in earlier research, as well as in our study, are important to understand and to handle. These conditions are summarized below.

- Social investment project: it is important with a project manager with a clear focus on method development.

- Learning evaluation: transformation of method development to multiplier effects is a necessity for long-term success, and learning is in important enabler in that.

- Active ownership: the management needs to manage the process and direct attention toward the creation of multiplier effects.

A good project team included a collaborative ability, and a good project manager constitutes an important base for method development to take place within the framework of social investments. For method development to be formed and developed, value added and leveraged it is also required that the project team is interested in spreading lessons, are using a learning evaluation and have an active ownership.

Previous studies (Ellström, 2009) and the reported results in this paper have shown that a project that can handle action and reflection is an important organizational condition for the development of new or improved methods. Carlström (2005) has shown that collaborative capacity of participants in projects is important. The case of “Every child should be in school” shows that via (1) the large amount of internal discussions that have taken place within the project, and (2) the dialogues between the project and representatives from the schools. But for method development to have lasting impact it requires more than that.

Learning evaluation is an important approach if development is to be realized in the organization. The learning evaluation is focused on results and how the method development can be converted to multiplier effects (see also Svensson et al., 2013). The paper, and specifically the case, draws attention to the importance of organizing for learning evaluation in the planning phase of a social investment project. This was not done in the case project – but the actors learned the “hard way” that this is important.

The single most important organizational condition, however, is the active ownership. Previous research by Bruilin and Svensson (2011) shows that we know little about the active ownership. And we know even less related to the municipality context and social investment. The paper has shown that the active ownership in a municipal context is complex. It involves different ideologies (Arnell; Jonsson, 2006; Jonsson,
2008) and different domains (Adolfsson; Solli, 2009). Also, the active ownership consists of several players - players who over time are replaced and act upon different logics. Regardless of the underlying complexity of the active ownership in a municipal context, it is the active owners which have the greatest impact on the process to multiplier effects. The other conditions are important, but the active owners are those in charge of the process. They have the possibility to create good prerequisites for the other conditions and actors that are involved. In the particular case this is done via an active support, showing that good results as well as concrete work to convert the developed method to the ordinary organization are important. The support communicates that the work is material. Without that it does not matter if a fantastic work is being done within the project; if the politicians and top managers do not care, changes in the ordinary organisations will never happen.

Even if the paper has drawn attention to important conditions for creating multiplier effects, especially active ownership, we need to know more about the active ownership in a municipality context and particularly in relation to social investments. We need longitudinal studies of social investments, active ownership and multiplier effects.

References


Authors

Robert Jonsson, PhD
Department for studies of Social Change and Culture
The Centre for municipality studies (CKS)
Linköping University
SE-58183 LINKÖPING
robert.jonsson@liu.se

Erik Jannesson, PhD
Department of Management and Engineering
Linköping University
SE-58183 LINKÖPING
erik.jannesson@liu.se