



The Oxford Impact Investing Experience:

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Generating impact economies versus bubble economies. How the Oxford Impact Investing Programme (OIIP) can help build the next gen of impact investing savvy social impact professionals.

I have always been, an impact driven individual. As long as I remember myself, I wanted to help others. As a childhood cancer survivor and young adult with a disability I idealised a world where diversity is the key to prosperity.

Over the past years I have worked for multinational companies such as Nestlé, international organisations such as the United Nations as well as diverse actors from across the social impact and international affairs ecosystem. After working and serving communities on the ground but also at the headquarters level, I realised that we need to influence how funding for social and environmental impact is distributed, and in what way, in order to generate meaningful change. I am currently working for a non-profit organisation, We Share Ventures, that funds early-stage social entrepreneurs, using a revolving funding model, giving them the chance to survive and create impact in the seed phase of their development.

I sit at the supervisory board of the Centre for Access to Football in Europe, one of the UEFA core CSR partners for disability inclusion in football.

Just before the pandemic, I realised one of my childhood dreams: I was one of the main speakers during the 2019 United Nations Human Rights and Business Forum in Geneva, talking about the business case for disability inclusion.

During my master studies at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, I learnt about global challenges and how to address

them, how to bring all the actors on the table and to be a true international professional. However, as I started working in the social impact and sustainability ecosystem on diverse international cities such as Geneva, Brussels, The Hague, I was confronted by the limited access to capital this ecosystem has.

I soon realised that the problem is not the lack of capital but the fact that the social impact and sustainability ecosystem has no access to knowledge on how to mobilise capital and unlock it to serve the communities, the people and the environment we have been serving with boots on the ground or at the policy making arenas.

On the other hand, international and local interventions with focus only on injecting grants and donations in development and emergency contexts have been proven to create bubble economies, heavily depended on this international aid. How can we generate impact economies that ignite financially sustainable economic activities and serve the communities in the same way or maybe better than we have done all these years?

I always tried to diversify the income streams of the organisations I was working for and to transfer value and expertise by fostering partnerships between diverse sectors, such as the private and civil society sector. But this is not enough. KPMG in multiple publications¹ mentioned donors' efforts to find value for their money and returns on investment when it comes to social outcomes.

Imagine the potential for success once we upskill social impact professionals in understanding and managing impact investing mechanisms. We could exponentially and sustainably increase the positive outcomes we work on and minimise the negative outcomes we want to avoid. Because these professionals are engaged with community facing projects and with the knowledge and use of impact

¹ KPMG, 2018, <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2018/09/ngos-and-impact-investing.html>

investing, they can sharply increase the probability for success.

When I received the acceptance letter from the Oxford University Impact Investing Programme I was thrilled and filled with excitement for the potential of this programme. I was ready to embark on a journey to mobilise capital for good and stimulate sustainable and self-reliant impact economies for the communities I would like to support.

During the course, I had the chance to learn from my classmates and join our forces to innovate solutions and challenge the answers we were given. The diversity of the group and expertise in class helped us address and develop solutions, products and strategies based on universal design. I had the chance to bring in my expertise in corporate engagement, partnerships, government affairs and impact management amongst others including topic specific knowledge such as disability (inclusion), employment, migration, health, education, sustainability, policy making, venture philanthropy; especially because the case studies we discussed in class addressed global challenges and were thematically diverse.

However, the most important aspect of this programme for me would be the sectors leaders, speakers and of course our professors that led us into critical thinking and decision-making empowerment every step of the way! Impact investing is a topic that requires theoretical and practical competence, hands on approach and lobbying expertise, empathy and financial excellence. We learnt from the best practitioners and continue to learn as we enter a community of accomplished alumni!

Where I want to go from here:

During this programme, I learnt how to help in ways I never imagined existed. I met professionals that complement my skills and where my skills could be applied best. One of my dreams is to use impact investing as a tool to unlock private capital for the communities that need it the most. I belong myself in one of these communities. I am one of the 1 billion people with disabilities, a diverse and powerful human capital² with the ability to change our economies into more inclusive and enabling environments for all.

One of my wishes is to foster financial and non-financial support for this community while generating awareness in the impact investing ecosystem on disability investing. Join me in transforming traditionally philanthropy focused ecosystems into a mosaic of dynamic funding solutions!

² 2019, Making the future of work inclusive of people with disabilities, International Labour Organization