Introduction
Chapter 1. General introduction

In their 2011 *Harvard Business Review* article, Porter and Kramer propose ‘the big idea’ which focuses on the connection between societal and economic progress (2011, p. 5). They recognise that combining the two is not a new idea, as ‘a whole generation of social entrepreneurs is pioneering new product concepts that meet social needs using viable business models’ (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 10). They also observe that ‘[i]ronically many of the shared value pioneers have been those with more limited resources - social entrepreneurs and companies in developing countries. These outsiders have been able to see the opportunities more clearly.’ (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 15). The current financial crisis might act as a stimulant to look differently at economic activity (Fleming, Roberts, & Garsten, 2013; D. Poon, 2011). It seems to open up new avenues for research, drawing more attention to the social aspects of business.

Although this is certainly not the first call to look at social entrepreneurs in developing countries, it is novel in proposing that large, multinational companies can learn from entrepreneurs in severely resource-constrained environments. More generally, entrepreneurship has been described as an engine of economic growth (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006), and as the most successful approach to overcoming poverty at the grassroots level (Dixon & Clifford, 2007; Kolawole & Torimiro, 2005). This is also reflected empirically as there are ‘a growing number of initiatives all over the globe [that] seem to be defying the obstacles that have prevented businesses from providing services to the poor’ (Seelos & Mair, 2005a, p. 242). These initiatives have collectively been dubbed ‘social entrepreneurship’ (ibid) and interest in this phenomenon is still rising, given that ‘the number of conferences and business plan competitions on social entrepreneurship are growing rapidly, the number of courses offered on university campuses is expanding, and social entrepreneurship is getting a lot of press’ (Stanford Technologies Venture Programme, 2011).

Social entrepreneurs connect social and economic aims sustainably in their activities (Basu, 2012; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). Although there is anecdotal evidence of how social entrepreneurs come into existence and how their actions connect to wider social change, more insights are needed (Gibbs, 2009). Several authors have raised issues that could add to our understanding, focusing on the way in which small-scale social
entrepreneurs are able to stimulate environmentally-oriented sustainable development (Hall, Daneke, & Lenox, 2010) and the role and function of social entrepreneurs for development (Naudé, 2010). Underlying these issues is the question of how social entrepreneurship can be stimulated in developing countries, given the absence of structures and resources that support traditional entrepreneurship in better endowed environments, like venture capital (Seelos & Mair, 2005b) and incubators. This question is even more relevant given that most theories on entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship in existing literature are based on data from Western studies. As entrepreneurship is a phenomenon inherently embedded in its context (S. L. Jack, 2002), entrepreneurship in developing countries might well be different.

The aim of this thesis is to provide insights into how social entrepreneurship in the resource-constrained environments of developing countries can be stimulated, in order to develop more effective interventions to stimulate autonomous social entrepreneurial development. This leads to the following main research question:

How can the emergence and development of social entrepreneurship in severely resource-constrained environments be stimulated?

**Insights from theory**

A distinction has to be made between entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. Being a social entrepreneur seems to be equivalent to having social change as the primary focus (Seelos & Mair, 2005a; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006) and even to ‘placing a social agenda before financial goals’ (Thompson, Kiefer, & York, 2011, p. 205). There is general consensus in the literature (see e.g. Dorado, 2006; Santos, 2012; J. Thompson & Doherty, 2006) that there are many gradations in social entrepreneurship, presenting a gradient from a pure profit motive to a purely social motive (Seelos & Mair, 2005b). Although attention for the social agenda is essential when studying social entrepreneurs, we argue that there should be an equally strong focus on income generation from the social entrepreneurial activities. Without sufficient income generation, the entrepreneur will stop her activities (see Chapter 2 for a more elaborate discussion).

As indicated above, creating value in resource-constrained environments sets social entrepreneurs in developing countries apart from entrepreneurs with access to subsidies, business networks and capital. These social entrepreneurs need to ‘make do’ with the resources at hand, using creative ideas and approaches to use available resources in a new manner: a process called bricolage (Baker, Nelson, & Carolina, 2005). Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010) proposed an extended framework for social bricolage that we use to further define the process of social entrepreneurship. In addition to ‘making do with resources at hand’ (using untapped or underused sources to create a new service/product), they argue that social entrepreneurs demonstrate ‘refusal to be constrained by limitations’
(trying out solutions to counteract or subvert limitations of the local environment) and ‘improvisation’ (improving through best-fit approaches, trial and error) (Di Domenico et al., 2010, p. 698). Di Domenico and colleagues also argue that social bricolage entails three further principles unique to social entrepreneurship: ‘social value creation’, ‘stakeholder participation’ and ‘persuasion of other actors to contribute to social value creation’ (Di Domenico et al., 2010, p. 698).

The principles of stakeholder participation and persuasion of others are congruent with a popular topic in entrepreneurial literature in general, namely network building. The effect of networking on entrepreneurial success has long been a topic of interest and is seen as conducive for entrepreneurial activities (Anderson, Dodd, & Jack, 2010; Elfring & Hulsink, 2003; Granovetter, 1985; Hite, 2005; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Slotte-Kock & Covielo, 2010; Woolcock, 1998). With a growing interest in entrepreneurship in developing countries, several authors argue that the development of networks also helps the resource-constrained entrepreneur to conduct successful income generating activities (e.g. Bhagavatula, Elfring, van Tilburg, & van de Bunt, 2010; Mair & Marti, 2007, 2009).

In addition to a larger body of literature highlighting the use of networks to acquire tangible resources, a smaller portion also focuses on ‘social resourcing’, namely social entrepreneurs using their social connections to access support and experience of other people (Di Domenico et al., 2010). Despite the extensive research on entrepreneurial networks, ‘the academic community has not yet identified what kinds of networks bring a competitive advantage to entrepreneurs’ (Bhagavatula et al., 2010, p. 245). There are also many calls for more empirical, longitudinal research (S. L. Jack, 2010; D. A. Smith & Lohrke, 2008) to understand the dynamics and change processes inherent in entrepreneurial networks (Davidsson & Honig, 2003).

In the process of network building and getting acquainted with others, it is generally accepted that trust plays an important role (e.g. Kohtamäki, Kekäle, & Viitala, 2004; Malecki, 2012; D. A. Smith & Lohrke, 2008). Trust is able to reduce complexity (Luhmann, 1979), overcome uncertainty and risk (Li, 2012) and lower transaction cost in networks (Howorth & Moro, 2006; Smallbone & Lyon, 2002; Welter, 2012). Despite these conducive effects of trust, ‘little research, to date, has addressed how, and for that matter, why, trust evolves during the entrepreneur’s network development process’ (D. A. Smith & Lohrke, 2008, p. 315). The dearth of empirical studies might be due to multiple interpretations of trust and ‘the interdependence of trust with context’ (Welter, 2012, p. 193). Despite these ostensible challenges, more research on trust in entrepreneurial development and network building is needed (D. A. Smith & Lohrke, 2008; Welter & Nadezhda, 2012; Welter & Smallbone, 2006).

Having an entrepreneurial network and trust relations are no guarantee of social entrepreneurial success (Bhagavatula et al., 2010). Indeed, every individual, regardless of
their profession and activities, has a network of trusting relations. Bhagavatula et al. (2010) argue that it is also important to consider the development of human capital (defined as the process of acquiring and processing knowledge) to understand entrepreneurial development. The importance of acquiring and processing knowledge – learning, in more colloquial terms – is recognised as important in entrepreneurship literature (Cope, 2005). Many authors indicate that learning and the use of cognitive abilities to overcome challenges positively correlate with entrepreneurial success (e.g. Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Santarelli & Tran, 2012; Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011). Franco & Haase even typify entrepreneurship as a ‘never-ending, dynamic learning cycle’ (2009, p. 629). These ideas are fully congruent with three of the principles of social bricolage as mentioned above: improvising and combining the resources at hand in new products and services to create social value. Yet, despite the recognition of entrepreneurial learning as an important process, this area is still in its early phase of development and needs more research (Blackburn & Kovalainen, 2009; C. L. Wang & Chugh, 2013).

The bricolage-principle ‘refusal to be constrained by limitations’ has a learning component as well because the entrepreneur needs to find new ways to overcome these limitations. However, this bricolage principle also strongly implies that the individual entrepreneur has the possibility to purposefully effect changes in her environment or, in other words, has ‘agency’ (Bandura, 2006). Di Domenico et al. even argue that ‘in social entrepreneurship the concept of agency is crucial in resource acquisition and construction’ (2010, p. 700). During the emergence of social entrepreneurship, it is intriguing to consider the moment in time in which the entrepreneur has sufficient agency to go against the inevitable limitations of her environment. In other words, and rephrased to fit the context of this thesis: when do individuals become social entrepreneurs? Structuration theory provides a promising theoretical perspective to study this: it recognizes that entrepreneurs and their actions create their environments and, at the same time, are directed by them (den Hond, Boersma, Heres, Kroes, & van Oirschot, 2012). It provides insights into how entrepreneurs explore and influence their environment, and why they take certain decisions (cf. Sarason, Dean, & Dillard, 2006).

In contrast to the growing interest in social entrepreneurship and its facilitation, there is still little research on how people can be stimulated to become social entrepreneurs by external actors. There is a small body of literature on how institutional social entrepreneurs in developing countries operate (e.g. Mair & Marti, 2009; Sperandio, 2005), but very little on how individual social entrepreneurship can be stimulated. Indeed, the role of external actors was not mentioned at all in a 2011 review of the various strands in the academic discussion of social entrepreneurship (Pierre, Von Friedrichs, & Wincent, 2011). More recently, some studies have focused on teaching social entrepreneurship to Western students, covering topics like enhancement of social entrepreneurship self-efficacy and
identity (I. H. Smith & Woodworth, 2012) and increasing social entrepreneurship self-efficacy with ideas of bricolage (Kickul, Janssen-Selvadurai, & Griffiths, 2012). Taking a broader outlook, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are often seen as social entrepreneurs stimulating local development (S. H. Lee & Phan, 2008; Mair & Marti, 2009) but, also here, there is little detail on how that development should be stimulated.

Despite the growing number of conferences and competitions on social entrepreneurship (Stanford Technologies Venture Programme, 2011), ‘social entrepreneurship research remains in an embryonic state’ (Short, Moss, & Lumpkin, 2009, p. 161) and the research that is available has mainly been exploratory or descriptive. Recent insights into factors that play a role in entrepreneurship have often been derived from comparative descriptive statistics, based on projects like the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor\(^1\), (see, e.g. N. S. Bosma, 2009; Kwon & Arenius, 2010; Naudé, 2011; Shane, 2009; Tang, Kacmar, & Busenitz, 2012). These data sets offer great opportunities for research but also have a drawback: they provide data on entrepreneurs who have already started and, thus, can only be used for ex-post evaluations, resulting in both selection bias and hindsight bias (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Many authors call for more studies on the full dynamics of the entrepreneurial process (Aldrich & Martinez, 2005; Corner & Ho, 2010; Hoskisson, Covin, Volberda, & Johnson, 2011).

**Research Framework and research questions**

From these theoretical explorations, the research framework and study questions for this thesis are derived. The research framework (Figure 1) presents the social entrepreneur (largest rectangle) as a bricoleur embedded in a resource-constrained environment where s/he needs to make do with the resources at hand to simultaneously pursue the goals of earning an income and addressing social challenges. The social entrepreneur and the environment mutually influence each other. The social entrepreneur engages in network building, trust building and learning in order to produce both tangible and intangible outcomes. These outcomes are a product of the entrepreneurial development process that started at some time in the social entrepreneur’s personal history: something triggered the individual to go through a transition and start entrepreneurial activities. It is assumed that a third party can facilitate both the transition process and the further development of the social entrepreneur by helping in network building, trust building and learning.

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\(^1\) [http://www.gemconsortium.org/](http://www.gemconsortium.org/)
When observations can be started before the individual describes herself as a social entrepreneur (i.e. before the transition phase), the process of entrepreneurial development can be studied in its entirety. As explained above, three processes are important and will be taken as study questions:

- How do social entrepreneurial networks develop over time and how does that influence entrepreneurial success?
- How does trust building develop over time and how does that influence entrepreneurial success?
- How do learning processes develop over time and how do they influence entrepreneurial success?

The role of an external actor is implied whenever we ask how social entrepreneurship can be stimulated, yet extant theory provides little insights on how the process can be facilitated, and even less on how people can be stimulated to go through the transition process. This leads to the next study question:

- How can a third party facilitate the transition to social entrepreneurship and how can it facilitate network building, trust building and learning processes?

In addition to these four descriptive study questions, more theoretical insights are needed to explain how social entrepreneurship emerges and develops, leading to the following study question:

- To what extent can the emergence and success of social entrepreneurs be explained from the perspective of strong structuration theory?
Addressing these study questions to capture the process of entrepreneurial development in its entirety places a number of demands for the data set. Two demands are critical: we need a dataset that 1) includes individuals from the very start of their entrepreneurial endeavours, even from before they called themselves social entrepreneurs; and 2) provides longitudinal data. Given that such a data set does not exist, we started action research to generate the required data. This action research was aimed at the development of an approach to stimulate social entrepreneurship in Bangladesh. This approach was called the Social Entrepreneurial Leadership approach (SEL approach, explained below). In order to answer the study questions, we first needed to show that the SEL approach was able to stimulate effective social entrepreneurship, meaning that the social entrepreneurs involved could produce outcomes. This leads to the first underlying study question:

**What are the effects of the SEL approach on the entrepreneurial development and the outcomes produced by the participating social entrepreneurs?**

Although it is comparatively easy to assess traditional entrepreneurship by measuring outcomes on economic parameters like turnover and profit, assessing social entrepreneurship should involve additional parameters to do justice to its social goals (Korsgaard & Anderson, 2011). These social goals are hard to define, as they differ from one social entrepreneur to the other. Zahra et al. (2009) suggested measuring social entrepreneurial output in terms of Total Wealth, comprising both economic wealth (tangible outcomes like products and clients served) and social wealth (intangible outcomes like happiness and general well-being). However, they also point out that although the Total Wealth standard can be useful for scholars, it is imprecise (Zahra et al., 2009). Still, in other fields than entrepreneurship, there are validated instruments to measure happiness, well-being and other intangible outcomes (given below, under methodology) and various development practitioners (see e.g. ADB, 2008; Carney, 2003; ELDIS, 2012; IFAD, 2012; Scoones, 1998) have been using evaluative frameworks to assess both the tangible and intangible the outcomes of their programmes. The second underlying study question then becomes:

**How can the total outcome of social entrepreneurship, including both tangible and intangible outcomes, be measured?**

**Research approach**

Action research has previously been successfully applied to entrepreneurship research (see, for example, Leitch (2007) and Tasker, Westberg, & Seymour (2012)). Action research has been found to be helpful in studying the development of social entrepreneurship because it facilitates interaction between researchers and practitioners, allowing for comprehensive
understanding of entrepreneurs in their environment (Tasker, Westberg, & Seymour, 2010). It facilitates the study of the emergence of new processes that cannot be captured with pre-set research methods (ibid) and encourages the integration of different perspectives (Kemmis, 2006). The action research approach (more elaborately described in Chapter 2) allowed us to study the processes involved in social entrepreneurial development while they were developing, and to continually monitor the effects of interventions and tailor them for maximum effectiveness.

We started an action research project with the aim of developing an approach that would stimulate the emergence of social entrepreneurship in the resource-constrained environment of a developing country. More specifically, the action research environment is set in the rural areas of Jessore district, part of the larger Khulna division in western Bangladesh, close to the border with India (see Figure 2). A local NGO situated in Jessore district, People’s Resources in Development Enterprise (PRIDE), was the partner in this action research project. The contact with the staff of this NGO was established during previous research projects (see textbox 1), and the staff were experienced with working in rural areas.

The first years of the research project were primarily used to learn. In 2006-2007, two individuals from villages around Jessore were identified who were (1) doing some income generating activities and were relatively successful compared to the other people in their villages in the sense that they had a network of contacts with other people and organisations; and were (2) willing to experiment in order to find promising methods to achieve a higher level of income for themselves and for other people in the village. As the research was still experimental, and we mainly wanted to learn, it was deemed ethical to pay the two participants a small monthly stipend for their investment in the project. In 2007-2008, the project was extended to include four more participants. True to the action research spiral, we were continuously monitoring, consulting with participants and other

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2 In their article in the methodological journal International Journal of Action Research, Tasker et al. focus on the use of action research in studying social entrepreneurship; they do not present findings on social entrepreneurship itself.

3 See footnote 7 on page 27 for information on the number of districts and divisions.
stakeholders, doing field visits and interviews, and consulting with experts from other fields, in order to improve the approach for developing social entrepreneurship.

Lessons learned led to new adaptations in the methodology, such as the development of a list of criteria for the recruitment of prospective entrepreneurs. These criteria were developed to reduce the drop-out of participants and, thus, enhance the success of the approach. In the course of 2008-2009, all participants proved able to generate revenue from the income generating activities that surpassed their monthly allowance. It was, therefore, decided that it was now possible to test the power of the approach to stimulate true entrepreneurship, without the monetary incentive that had hitherto functioned as a safety net for the participants.

In 2009-2010, we scaled up to 32 participants (from 20 in 2008) who conducted their activities without external monetary rewards. This was the first year in which we felt that we had developed an approach that was effective in fostering social entrepreneurship. In 2010-2011, the same approach was repeated by PRIDE alone. From this time onwards, we called the approach to develop social entrepreneurship, the SEL approach and its participants, Social Entrepreneurial Leaders (SELS).

Methodology and validity
The seven-year period of action research provides a large, longitudinal data set for different cohorts and repeated, detailed reflections on interventions. This data set was assembled using mixed method and multiple instruments: we used several quantitative questionnaires (explained below) and qualitative instruments comprised individual interviews and group interviews, mappings (explained in Chapter 2), photovoice (explained in Chapter 2), field observations and a monthly monitoring scheme. Table 1 provides an overview of which data were collected in which years, and on which batch of SELs. These are indicated by years in the table. Taking the batch of SELs who started in 2009 as an example, the table indicates that a baseline questionnaire was conducted when they started, in 2009. Evaluative questionnaires were conducted in 2010 and 2011. From 2009 to 2011, interviews were
conducted with SELs individually and in groups; with the SELs’ husbands and village leaders individually; with members of the SELs’ entrepreneurial networks individually and in groups. Mappings (see Chapter 2) were also conducted with the SELs. Field visits and monthly monitoring visits continued for 3 and 2 years, respectively. The only method that was not used to gather data from this batch of SELs was photovoice so that cell has been left empty.

In general, the data gathered on the SELs who started during 2006-2008 was used to develop the SEL approach. These data are only referred to in Chapter 2. However, the data gathered on these batches of SELs also helped to sharpen the questions in interviews with SELs who started later, improving the outcomes and usability of the interviews. The cells of table 1 that have an asterisk (*) indicate that these instruments were used to gather data for that particular batch of SELs, but that these data were not used for this thesis. The data gathered on the SELs who started in 2009-2010 were used as main research data for this thesis and are used in chapters 2 to 6. In each of these chapters, the sub-set of data used is explained in detail.

Table 1: Overview which data are gathered when, for which batch of SELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELs started in 2006</th>
<th>2007 to 2010</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>2006 to 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELs started in 2007</td>
<td>2007 to 2011</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2007 to 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These methods were applied, but the information acquired is not used in this thesis
** I did not do the actual monthly monitoring, but had indirect access through monthly reports sent by PRIDE and discussions with PRIDE

Besides the benefits mentioned above, action research comes with a potentially high risk for researcher bias because the researcher is not a distant observer and is actively engaged in the intervention process. With regard to researcher bias in this research, an obvious question would also be whether the author of this thesis, as a man, would be able to collect accurate data in a project that involves mainly women in a country that has clear gender-defined roles (see Chapter 2 for an explanation). The only other men involved in the research project are working with PRIDE. Being well aware of this ostensible tension with regard to the validity of this research, I want to address these issues by discussing the various strategies that have been used to enhance the research validity and minimise researcher bias.
We organised triangulation of researchers, instruments and data from the start of the research presented in this thesis. Various researchers from the Athena Institute, VU University Amsterdam were involved with the action research programme and reflected with PRIDE staff on the progress and the challenges of the SEL project at different times and intervals. This was done from a distance, via e-mail and telephone; and face-to-face during visits to Bangladesh: Jeroen Maas, Marjolein Zweekhorst, Anastasia Seferiadis and Joske Bunders all visited at various intervals, for periods ranging from one week to three months. In addition, two Dutch Master’s students each did one visit for a duration of three months. PRIDE staff had continuous access to the research area and various Bangladeshi observers were invited at irregular intervals to spend a longer period observing the SELs and their accomplishments.

The presence of various researchers at different time slots served two purposes. The first purpose was to organise reflection on the programme from multiple researchers’ perspectives. The respective visits of the researchers provided opportunities at regular time intervals to reflect in the field with PRIDE staff on the challenges they encountered while working on the SEL programme and to tailor interventions. In addition, the researchers involved could jointly reflect on the project, and, when needed make adaptations, while being away from the field. The second purpose was to allow for multiple compositions of research teams to gather data from the field. All researchers and research teams that acquired data from the SELs and their environments are listed in the first column of Table 2.

### Table 2: Data gathering instruments used and researchers / research teams involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Maas individually*</th>
<th>Female colleague Zweekhorst**</th>
<th>Zweekhorst and Maas together**</th>
<th>Female Master’s students***</th>
<th>Female PRIDE staff</th>
<th>Male PRIDE staff</th>
<th>Female and male PRIDE staff together</th>
<th>Maas and PRIDE staff together*</th>
<th>Independent Bangladeshi observers</th>
<th>Other independent observers***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual interview group</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photovoice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field observations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Worked with four different interpreters, two male and two female, with slight differences in interpretations
** Worked with three different interpreters, two male one female
*** Worked with one female interpreter

Table 2 further indicates that each instrument has at least been used by two different researchers or research teams, minimising researcher bias for each instrument. I compared the data from different researchers (including my own) and different research teams, to
check for inconsistencies. Of particular interest were stories on the relationships between the SELs and their families, and how these developed over time, which are sensitive topics in Bangladesh. In a sense, this information can be seen as an indicator of the richness of the data acquired, especially as it spans gender and religious groups.

In addition, all instruments were triangulated. All data obtained with one instrument were checked against data from at least two other instruments. For example, data from the questionnaire were compared with field observations, the monthly monitoring, SEL interviews, interviews with husbands of SELs, and group interviews with people from their networks. In case of inconsistencies between instruments, the SELs were asked to provide further information and indicate which interpretation was accurate.

For triangulation of the data and preliminary findings, several methods were used. Interviews were scheduled to be done until saturation would be reached on a topic. These interviews would then be checked by another researcher. In addition, questions were posed in different ways: more neutral, open questions during one visit (e.g. ‘How did the training sessions that PRIDE organised help you in your development as a SEL?’) and more leading, testing questions a few months later (e.g. ‘Did you cultivate vegetables before you started working with PRIDE?’ Answer: ‘Yes.’ ‘In that case, what was the added value of the training sessions?’). We further compared the data of two yearly cycles (the SELs who started in 2009 and those who started in 2010) that had essentially followed the same SEL approach. These data were compared for consistency.

For all preliminary findings and preliminary concepts based on those findings (like the four domains of trust presented in Chapter 4), we did a member check: findings and concepts were discussed with the SELs and other people interviewed. Also, concepts based on data with one group of interviewees were tested with other groups. For example, the improved esteem in the village that the SELs experienced was verified by the people in their networks, village leaders and husbands.

Feedback on the findings was also obtained from several independent researchers who were invited to observe the SEL approach. In addition, results and their implications were discussed with those observers and other Bangladeshi NGOs, Bangladeshi government organisations and Bangladeshi private organisations, as well as with specialists in certain fields related to our research (doctors, a psychologist and two business developers). The findings and implications were also reflected upon from various bodies of literature.

Finally, with regards to measurement of both tangible and intangible outcomes of the SELs’ social entrepreneurial activities, quantitative instruments were chosen that had already been validated. With the exceptions of the trust questionnaire and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) which has been validated in a number of other countries, all instruments have been validated in Bangladesh. The initial idea was that these
instruments would have a solid construct validity that would allow us to compare our data to other databases that had used the same instruments. The following existing questionnaires were used as source materials for four research topics:

1. For questions on household composition, assets, income, savings and debt, education level, work experience, expenditure, eating patterns, connections with other people and organisations, family relationships and access to organisations:
   - questionnaires used for the 2007 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey;
   - questionnaires used in a household survey in Matlab (an upazilla4 close to Dhaka) in 1996 (Rahman et al., 1999);
   - questionnaires that had been used in research carried out jointly by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and CARE Bangladesh (2001).

2. For questions on well-being and self-development:
   - the World Health Organisation’s Quality of Life (WHOQOL) test (World Health Organization, 2012);
   - WEMWBS (Tennant et al., 2007).


4. To measure trust: a questionnaire that had been applied to measure trust in Cameroon (Etang, Fielding, & Knowles, 2010).

All questionnaires were first tested with PRIDE staff, adjusted when needed, and subsequently tested with a small number of SELs and people from their networks. This sometimes led to a readjustment before the instruments were used on a larger scale (see Chapter 7). For trust, often termed an elusive concept in literature, an extra photovoice session (see Chapter 4) was conducted with the PRIDE staff to verify the meaning of trust in the Bangladeshi context, adding to the construct validity of the trust questionnaire.

Outline of the thesis

Chapters 2 to 6 are divided in two parts. Part 1, comprising Chapter 2, addresses the underlying questions and the action research experiment. Part 2, comprising Chapters 3 to 6, addresses the study questions. To do justice to the three respective processes of networking, trust building and learning, and to articulate lessons as far as possible, each process is studied from a distinct theoretical framework.

In short, Chapter 2 elaborately describes the development of the SEL approach, as well as the SEL approach in its current form, and evaluates its effectiveness as a strategy to stimulate social entrepreneurship.

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4 Layer of regional administration in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has 7 divisions that are subsequently subdivided in 66 districts and 505 upazillas.
Chapter 1

Chapter 3 focuses on the development of the SEL’s networks. Its theoretical framework is built on insights taken from social capital development (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986) and network generation in entrepreneurial settings (e.g. Burt, 2000; Granovetter, 2005). This is strengthened with emergent insights into patterns of network development (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; S. L. Jack, Dodd, & Anderson, 2008) and into specific types of network ties (Granovetter, 1973; S. L. Jack, Moult, Anderson, & Dodd, 2010; Lin, 2008; Woolcock, 2001).

Chapter 4 focuses on the impact of trust in the SEL’s development. First, it explores the functions of ‘the elusive concept’ (Welter & Smallbone, 2006) of trust in economic transactions and the different levels in which trust plays a role. At the macro level, Bangladesh is a low-trust environment (Fukuyama, 1995) which implies that the development of entrepreneurial trust provides an apparent contradiction. The framework of Lewicki et al. (1998) made it possible to study this contradiction because it presents trust and distrust as two separate dimensions.

Chapter 5 focuses on the learning processes in entrepreneurial development. A theoretical framework is built on, among others, ideas of Cope (2005), who proposes to study entrepreneurs in at least two different slots in time, before and after starting as an entrepreneur. Enriched with different levels of learning (Cope, 2005) and different learning processes (C. L. Wang & Chugh, 2013), these ideas provide the theoretical background to analyse the SELs’ learning processes.

Chapter 6 tests to what extent Strong Structuration Theory (Stones, 2005) can be used to explain the emergence of social entrepreneurship. Strong Structuration Theory recognises the dialectical relationship between the entrepreneur and her environment and can be used to understand how they mutually influence each other, and why the (prospective) entrepreneur takes certain decisions (cf. Sarason, Dean, & Dillard, 2006). This chapter accentuates the lessons from earlier chapters and adds to the theory on emerging social entrepreneurship.

Chapter 7 presents a general conclusion and discussion, and reflects on the methodologies used in this thesis. It also offers a more in-depth reflection on measuring the outcomes of social entrepreneurship (in addition to what has already been described in Chapter 2) and identifies a number of areas for further research.

The chapters in both part one and part two have been written in the form of articles that, as a series, answer the study questions. I decided to keep the articles intact, both because each article has its own line of reasoning and clearly demarcated conclusions and discussions, and to do justice to the respective publishers. This means that some parts of the chapters overlap, mainly with regard to the research settings and descriptions of the project.