

Seattle Leading the Way

Luni Libes 06 November 2018

Seven years ago I was introduced to Brian Howe, co-founder of what was then a two-week-old [Impact Hub Seattle](#). Co-working was still a new idea. Accelerators were few and far between. "Social enterprise" was a term more commonly heard in the nonprofit sector than for-profits. Even the term "impact investing" had yet to take off.

Meanwhile, Ben & Jerry's had been sold to Unilever over a decade earlier, Whole Foods had their IPO almost a decade before that, and companies in the sharing economy like Zipcar, AirBnB, and Lyft were edging into the mainstream.

Nonetheless, the world of social good felt like a nascent industry back then, and into this world Brian, I, and three others held a weekend event for "social entrepreneurs" called **#SocEnt Weekend**. It was at that time that Brian and I were on YouTube with [this interview](#).

Reminiscing is often fun. More so when we can look back seven years to see what we thought might happen in 10 years in the future. The question was, **"Will Seattle Become the Capital of Social Entrepreneurship?"**

Seattle isn't the "Silicon Valley of Social Good," but neither

is San Francisco nor anywhere else in the world. Seattle is most certainly [one of a handful of cities](#) leading the way, and we may be at the top of the list, depending on the criteria.

Sometime between that meeting ages ago and now, the Kauffman Foundation sponsored a series of videos showcasing entrepreneurship in various American cities. For each city, they picked two themes that showed off something special. [For Seattle](#), that was [for-profit social good](#).

There is certainly even more going on in Seattle now than there was back then. Looking back makes it clear that the once nascent market is now established and growing. And this is without counting the global efforts of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Global Partnerships, Capria, Fledge, and others, all based in Seattle but making impact around the world.

So, if there is one big lesson in all of this growth, it's that impact isn't just a Seattle thing, not even when it's based in Seattle. Social good is a global phenomenon, and Seattle is one of the great places where it happens.