



# ORGANIZING FIELDS towards a breakthrough in social entrepreneurship

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## Three stories

About new worldviews transforming our economy, doing business and organizing

At a subterranean, perhaps teleological level, every social movement or entrepreneurial experiment in time animates new modes of expression, making available to a later generation a larger range of political ideals and moral resources (Turki, 2014). Studying these game-changing cases, unveiling their underlying worldviews, entrepreneurial tenets and organizational designs, aims to disclose this enlarged area of organizing ideals, ways of acting and thinking.

Each case study tells a story of a social enterprise aiming for positive social and ecological change. Evidence-based practices can empower people and organizations to overcome the limitations they encounter in taking up their social responsibility (Hoffman & Badiane, 2010). Each case study can serve that purpose from its own worldview, defining the value it wants to add, and how it wants to be organized. Depending on its worldview, what it wants to achieve, where it wants to add value, the availability of resources and in relation to the parties involved, it works out its way of organizing.

With these stories I want to inspire entrepreneurs wishing to transform toward social entrepreneurship and to fill in the vacuum of in-depth knowledge about how social enterprises are organized, the description of each case is valuable in itself. Each case study is described in as much detail as possible, using the voices and words of the social enterprise and the people involved. Stories are personalized; people are referred to in the way we spoke, often using their first names. This brings them and their stories close by and recognizable for many, which is one of the aims of this research: inspiring people and organizations. I therefore chose a narrative way of telling the case stories, hence illustrating the differences between them.

The Foundation for Integrated Fisheries (SGV) is a loose association of people who think and work on the development and realization of a way of fishing in harmony with the sea and society in both a scientific and an almost poetic way. The people value their fishery traditions and cultural heritage, while at the same time negotiating with the government over regulations and the use of new fishing equipment and technology. Fishing equipment includes that designed to fish for one species only, without affecting the environment.

Enviu has a strong core and is surrounded by a large community that thinks and works with the members of the organisation. Their activities, starting businesses that contribute to quality of life and ecological sustainability, can be characterized by a combination of pragmatism and idealism. Enviu is all about realizing big dreams one step at a time. It is an energetic, positive, inspiring and surprising organization.

The Festival sur le Niger operates in between Malian culture and more Western ways of organizing. The organisation balances the traditional and the contemporary, togetherness and individuality, and art, science and entrepreneurship. This cultural festival has thoroughly changed people and life in Ségou and made it a lively and attractive place to live in and an interesting place to visit.

Through all these different ways of organizing, a shared new cosmology of organizing shimmers. A universal new way of organizing not in the sense of a new design that can be copied, but more in the sense of common ground that can foster a wide variety of ways of organizing. This specific quality of a new organizational cosmology can be described as an adaptive, responsive and creative way of organizing. This new cosmology of organizing is diametrically opposed to the existing one – where

the current one evokes uniformity and singularity, the new cosmology evokes plurality and multiplicity. Organizing becomes inclusive, diverse, layered, unique, situational and vivid. More like life itself – a continuous development of being – it is a cosmology that calls for a dynamic and situational way of organizing.

The narrative and exploratory description of the cases helps to foster a profound understanding of these game-changing social entrepreneurs, their worldviews, entrepreneurial models and organizational designs. In addition, they serve as examples of the way a new cosmology of organizing can play out in day-to-day social entrepreneurial practices.

Although each case study is told in its own way, they all follow roughly the same structure: successively describing the case's worldview, multiple valuing and way of organizing.

# 1 Foundation for Integrated Fisheries (SGV)

Vulnerability instead of controllability (Jaap Vegter, SGV).<sup>1</sup>

This case study unveils basic tenets underlying cutting-edge social entrepreneurial organizing that change organizing into an act of moving along and contributing to and with the environment rather than controlling and using it. These tenets change the organizational design radically, and root it in vulnerability and trial and error, moving slowly, with incremental and experience-based acting, harmony and harmonizing, and in a deep understanding of being part of something that leads one, rather than the other way around.

‘Salt organizing’ comes from ‘salt living’, a term most people in the northern Netherlands are familiar with. Salt living is in opposition to freshwater living, or living on the land where controlling things lies at the base of acting. Controlling the sea is not possible; you have to live with the tides, with what nature allows you to do. My visit to a family of fishermen in the northernmost part of the Netherlands actually holds one of the essences of what salt living stands for. I remember driving to a little village in the eastern part of the Waddenzee. Straight on through the endless flat green countryside, I make my way to the home of the Westerhuis family.

In the kitchen I meet the mother and daughter of the family; the father and son, whom I’ve actually come to see, haven’t arrived yet. The women and I sit and wait for them. They take it for granted, this waiting, and assume that it isn’t an issue for me either. Normally, I might think something along the lines of “but didn’t we agree on two p.m.?” or “am I going to make my next appointment now?” But for some reason or other it feels quite natural to fall into line.

We strike up a conversation. I ask the mother what it’s like being a fisherman’s wife. “Well,” she says, “you just do what you have to do”. Because I don’t know anything about fishing, I ask what that’s like. And she tells me how she used to wait on the quay for her husband, to collect the shrimp he had caught and take them to auction later in the day. Asked how often she did that, she replies that it depended on the tide and the season. Sometimes he was away for several days, sometimes less, and he always came in at high tide. It could be early morning, late afternoon or the middle of the night: being a fisherman’s wife is a 24-hour job.

Once a week she took the shrimp to market to sell, loading 36 crates onto the trailer. She was always sold out by around 2 p.m. Didn’t she want to take any more with her, I asked. “Couldn’t fit any more in the trailer,” she replied.

Nowadays her husband fishes for eels, which she sells from home, mainly to Germans. “What does she do to attract customers?” I ask. “Nothing,” she answers, the customers know her. Sometimes she doesn’t even pick up the phone because there are too many of them.

After an hour or so her husband and son come in. Mr Westerhuis senior tells me his life story. Now and again I ask a question and, as with his wife, occasionally I sense his surprise at my questions. He and his son work with the SGV. When I ask why they consider sustainable fishing important, the only answer he can come up with, echoing his wife, is “it just IS important, it’s our way of life”. Later on, he adds that he wants his son to be able to keep fishing viably.

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<sup>1</sup> Jaap Vegter, the initiator of Stichting Geïntegreerde Visserij

He describes how they skirt around the eel nets to identify the best place to haul them in, where the eels are. If there aren't enough eels, they sail on or move the nets to another area. Over the years they get to know the rhythm of the fish. But it still comes down to keeping a close watch. And every year it's different.

What strikes me is that their lives are largely governed by the rhythm of the sea and the fish stocks. The son has recently started collecting oysters as well, to a greater or lesser extent depending on demand from the catering trade. He could collect a lot more, but there's no demand. I suggest looking for other customers. Yes, the SGV is on the case, but they haven't had any luck yet. He moves with the rhythm of the market, just as he moves with the rhythm of the sea.

So don't they control their own fate at all, I wonder. Of course they do: they decide when to switch to different species that aren't regulated or graded. They decide which permits or quotas to keep or sell, but in their day-to-day lives they dance to the rhythm of the water.

On the drive back to Groningen I ponder on this further. This family is well aware that times are changing in fishing too and that many fishermen, thanks to modern technology, are no longer dependent on the tides. Westerhuis senior and junior have not chosen that option.

Salt living puts one's actions into a wider perspective. A perspective that requires an agile and nimble attitude, that makes you part of nature in a way that you have to live with nature by listening, understanding and respecting it. This is the way SGV wants to operate as a coastal fishing venture with respect for nature, employment and fishing culture.

Jaap Vegter, the founder and initiator of SGV, explains that working with the sea is possible only if you acknowledge your own vulnerability. If you know that the sea is bigger and stronger than you are and that you need to accept that; you have to be prepared to follow, to anticipate. You watch and react, you accept that you can't impose a model or order on the sea.

The best answer the fishermen have found to deal with this is by being flexible; flexible in terms of species of fish, fishing methods and the times when they fish.

That flexibility and that diversity in terms of activities puts them in a healthy position workwise, so the cooperative makes sure that the fishermen combine and share their permits and quotas. As a result, they are able to work with the seasons and, as individual businesses, are not tied to one particular species of fish or catching method.

What applies to your business also applies to your village or community? If everyone does the same thing, you make yourselves unduly vulnerable to outside influences. If everyone does something different, you become stronger, healthier and less dependent. You don't deny your vulnerability as a community. No indeed, you live with it. You organize your resilience in such a way that you are able to take advantage of shifts and changes, time and time again, as a matter of course. The SGV cooperative aims to make a contribution here too.

In today's society, says Jaap, we have forgotten what it is like to be vulnerable. We imagine ourselves to be bigger than the sea, and that sometimes seems to be the case. Larger ships don't capsize so easily. And if nothing goes wrong for long enough, we start to believe that we are stronger than the sea. But it's more complicated than that, and not just at sea.

It is also about doing business differently; in harmony with the environment, with something bigger than ourselves. And you can do that only by understanding and accepting your vulnerability, your

dependence. That dependence leads you to connect with something bigger, to understand it and plumb its depths, and find ways of working with it instead of trying to control it – to devise and shape ways of working in partnership with the environment.

In the same way, the Westerhuis family do not attempt to tame the sea but make use of it, living and acting in harmony with it. This is virtually the direct opposite of what most people in business do at present. They try to bend the environment to their will, to distort it, or to subordinate it to what they think are their needs.

## 1.1 Worldview: Salt Living

The way ex-fisherman Henk Rispen talks about his experience of the mud flats during his many years at sea shows how ‘salt living’ plays out in day-to-day fishermen’s practice. Henk expresses his relationship with the sea and how the sea tells him what he needs and wants to know. It tells him where to fish; it gives him joy and teaches him about the development of the sea and sea life over time.

It (the Wadden Sea) is such a beautiful area, it makes fishing a fine occupation. Some people just look at catch weight and profit. I enjoy the water, it tells you where the current is, where the food is. Spoonbills, all sorts of birds, I know them all.

In the past an awful lot of sardines were caught and then the price went down. One or two fished on for a while, then that was that. Sprats (a small species of herring) used to be caught as well. In the last ten years they haven’t really been fished any more, now they’ve gone, just disappeared, without even fishing for them. We had bream as well, a little present at the end of the year. Little terns (birds) too, there’s a lot less of them. They used to hunt the bream, but now they’ve gone, the birds have gone too. They’ve retreated inland. In the Holland provinces now, they’re making little islands for them to brood on, what nonsense! That’s not normal.

You used to sail for an hour, an hour and a half, on the heels of pintails, now you don’t see them anymore. There used to be a lot more jellyfish, blue jellyfish. If there was no current you couldn’t fish. Now they’ve gone. There’ve been no green sea slugs for the last five years.

Bristle worms are still there, but only a fraction of what was there before. Normally, they were there every year. No one knows what happened, why things changed. Sole, brill and turbot are still there as well, but less of them. There are fish there, but they don’t come to the coast. Shrimps are the only lot who aren’t bothered by anything.

The way Henk describes the sea, the birds, the comings and goings of different fish, the joy he draws from being at sea expresses how he lives with the sea. He works with the sea, connects with what happens in and around it, and shows his gratitude for what it brings him – like that little treat of bream at the end of the year.

As Henk describes it, the Wadden Sea and life in and around the sea are in danger.<sup>2</sup> SGV believes it is possible to fish and revitalise nature at the same time. According to ‘salt living’ fishermen, the sea

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<sup>2</sup> Research done by Imares, part of Wageningen University and Research Centre, IJmuiden; interviews with Paddy Walker of the Wadden Association and Nathalie Steins of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

and others are working together for the benefit of all. It is perfectly possible to fish on the mud flats if you go about it in harmony with the environment. Led by Jaap Vegter, the fishermen are exploring ways of improving their fishing activities: operating on a smaller scale in accordance with salt living, in any case; taking greater account of the seasons; and, of course, using fishing gear that leaves the sea bed intact. Jaap Vegter says there are many more improvements to be made:

Exactly what they are, we've still to work out. So we're experimenting with fishing for different species and with different fishing methods. We are constantly studying the effects of the options we are trying out by taking samples and conducting measurements, but also by talking to nature conservationists and combining their knowledge and experience with our own. In the process we are gradually developing a sustainable way of fishing.

The core of SGV is formed by a group of fishermen who work together on a practical and viable future for coastal fishing with small vessels, based on the principles of salt living, from small or large tidal ports, from the islands or the beach. They believe the future is not in larger catches, but in quality and a wider variety of fish, crustaceans and shellfish; that is, flexible working with nature, the sea and the seasons, taking into account the wishes of society. The vision is for vibrant ports with activity that fits into the coastal landscape and employment for coastal residents.<sup>3</sup>

Because the mud flats are a protected area of special natural interest, SGV explores ways of fishing in harmony with the sea. It does so by developing fishing gear, respecting the seasons and responding actively to changes in fish stocks by scaling its fishing efforts up or down and by catching different species. By working in partnership with fishing communities, the state, nature conservationists and the supply chain in an ongoing dialogue, they pursue their unique form of sustainable development in which the sea sets the tone.

Fishing for different species, such as smelt and Japanese oysters, requires cooperation with people and organizations other than just fishermen. The Dutch are not keen on exotic fare such as oysters, which is one reason for working in partnership with restaurants. Chefs often want to serve something more exciting than a salmon steak. Another reason for working with restaurants is to give fish from the mud flats more cachet on the market.

Gaele Postma, fisherman and fish shop owner: "We land our fish fresh every day. You can't get fresher. And the mud flats are a unique area. The fish from there is a delicacy in our view, and should be marketed as such. Not sold in bulk but delivered fresh every day to restaurants and the better fishmongers, that's our aim."

This is an aim that appeals to restaurateur and chef Henk Markus:

The initial incentive to work with local and organic produce came from Wakker Dier (the Dutch animal welfare organization). They threatened action if the duck liver pâté wasn't taken off the Christmas menu. I didn't respond to that. But later on, Wakker Dier had got me thinking, I decided to use more organic and local produce. I've always been interested in regional produce; people underestimate the excellent products that we have around us here. It's just a pity that most producers have trouble working together. You have to go all over the region, there's no umbrella organization. You have to build up a network yourself and find out who does what.

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<sup>3</sup> SGV website

In finding good local products, restaurants encounter the same hurdles as SGV. There is no network or natural way of cooperating. Most ecological food producers in the region still follow a traditional business model that makes them see each other as competitors instead of joining forces to change the regime for the good of them all. As Markus explains, he would benefit from cooperation, as would the fishermen, since another problem they have to face is that of delivering what they have promised or what is expected. In bad weather, small boats can only fish close to the coast or perhaps cannot even sail at all. And then your catch is limited or non-existent. And again, cooperation is the solution.

“We can only solve that”, says Jaap, “in partnership with the restaurants and fish shops, in the same way that we do with the fishermen and nature conservationists when it comes to fishing more sustainably. For example, we are holding a dialogue with various chefs to find recipes for less well-known species of fish, brainstorming with restaurateurs about putting seasonal produce on the menu and talking to people in the community about ways of delivering the fish on time to the shops and restaurants. Step by step, we’ll get there.”

SGV is based only on the recognition of one’s own vulnerability and the need, precisely for that reason, to act and work in interaction with the environment. Being vulnerable, accepting and facing it and coping with it appears to be one of the main principles underlying SGV. This vulnerability is related to the unpredictability of the sea.

Jaap Vegter has this to say: “It leads to humility in how you relate to nature. Vulnerability instead of manufacturability. A fisherman can fish safely, but nature will trick you if you’re not careful. You cannot make appointments or agree on procedures with nature.”

The Dutch tradition regarding the sea is different. Jaap Vegter says the following about this: “Here on the clay the monks arrived and made the first dikes and salt marshes, the idea of social engineering par excellence. A huge achievement. That still is reflected in our society.” This is what the fisherman call ‘freshwater thinking’. Freshwater thinking comes from the Dutch tradition of controlling water. Building dykes and damming lakes and parts of the sea is all about constraining nature. Freshwater thinking, in contrast to salt water thinking which is about adventure, risk and vulnerability, is about control, manufacturability, taking away fear, avoiding risks, prevailing over the sea and nature. The fishermen of SGV perceive that people tend to prefer to turn their back on the sea and its dangers as they prefer an artificial environment over a natural one. Most people have a static environment rather than a dynamic one and favour independence over being dependent, control over surrender and see themselves as apart from nature instead of as part of it.

In order to take care of the future of the communities and nature, another thinking pattern is needed. In the dialogue (theme: vulnerability) we delve into this idea of salt living in relation to social entrepreneurship, attempting to bring the tacit to the surface.

Only a few people are capable of salt-thinking and salt-perceiving. That is something fishermen can teach us. Salt living is realizing that things are out of your hands, that you have to deal with nature and society as it unfolds. This contrasts with freshwater (inside the dike) thinking where you assume you can regulate things and can oversee and cope with the consequences of using nature and people. To really understand the effects of human action on nature and society we need salt-thinking because that enables you to recognize the measure of all things and the ratio between scales. Most people are afraid of salt-thinking (Klaas Laansma).



The participants in the dialogue think that the 'salt way of living' is more relaxed. Surrendering to the rhythm of the sea, to the limits nature sets, is less distressing and makes you worry less rather than more. Being in control takes a lot of energy, far more than taking life as it comes. The same goes for the boundaries nature sets in the species of fish available, or in the amount of mature fish per season; taking that for granted makes life easier, but only if you can subordinate yourself to nature, based on the attitude that you are part of nature. You have to relate to nature, to understand her, you have to know the landscape to recognize its dynamic, you have to connect to the larger system to sense it, acknowledging and surrendering to nature is conditional for restoring our natural environment.

Most shrimp fishermen aren't part of SGV and use large trailers and trawlers to bring in as many shrimps as they can. *During my research the shrimp fishermen are on strike, in protest against low shrimp prices, and four people are spending two days pole-sitting. As I drive into Zoutkamp I can see them there. It is just one of the many forms of action taking place. Everyone is talking about it, so their story slips into my research, setting an example of freshwater thinking in fishery. They have been on strike for weeks now. Because most fishermen are self-employed, at first going on strike seems to me to be a slightly odd thing to do. But it does make sense because none of them are fishing for shrimp at present, in the hope of bringing pressure to bear on the fish dealers. The fishermen are demanding agreements on prices and quantities.*

*Shrimps are the weeds of the sea, you can catch as many as you like. And if everyone starts catching more, the prices go down and you have to catch even more. The shrimps are not running out (although they do get smaller if you keep on fishing for large volumes), so the spiral can go on and on. And that's just what has happened. It is good for the consumer and the trade because shrimp prices are low and great for maintaining strong competition.*

*However, it is not so good for nature and society. The damage caused by shrimp fishing lies not only in the quantities caught but also in the damage done by the nets to the sea floor, as well as the turmoil that constant fishing brings to the sea and the people involved – people who work 80 to 90 hour weeks or longer. The Wadden Sea and the fishing community would certainly welcome an alternative because more agreements and more self-regulation are good for the sea and for society.*

*This is no simple matter for several reasons. The fishermen are not always so united and the Netherlands Competition Authority (NMA) prohibits price and catch agreements. The free market mechanisms must remain in operation, so there is no place for sector-wide agreements.*

*On ecological grounds, however, agreements with the entire sector would be a good idea. The shrimp fishermen have been investigating the possibility of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for some time now. However, they can only obtain this if everyone works together and is subject to the same agreements. One aspect of MSC certification is agreeing when to fish more or less depending on current fish stocks. One way to do that is to conclude agreements on fishing times, to give the sea bed a rest and the shrimp population time to recover by regularly abstaining from fishing.*

*In practice, the optimum catch quantities appear to be more or less the same in order to obtain a good price and to fish in an ecologically responsible manner. That's nice, you might think – problem solved. This is not the case, however. According to the NMA, no agreements can be made on fish that don't have a quota, that is, fish without a government-imposed catch limit. Self-regulation of*

***the sector is in principle contrary to the free market mechanism: you cannot drive prices up by orchestrating a shortage, even though that may be precisely what nature needs.***

***So it's a stalemate: nature calls for collaboration and agreement, the economy for competition. Nature asks for less, the economy for more. Nature and society benefit from collectivity, the economy from individuality.***

***Shrimp fishing is controlled by governmental rules, the rules of the free market and the rules of the MSC. This is considered a typical freshwater way of thinking – not agile or nimble at all. All rules are set to control the playing fields: the market and nature. Even MSC certification, meant to mitigate the harm done to the seas, is agreed upon based on objective, measurable, and standardized agreements. This is considered typically freshwater thinking because they require a reaction to specific situations based on having a relationship with the sea and understanding what is needed in the short and long run.***

All people and organizations participating in the dialogue are aware of the importance of collectivity in relation to a 'salt way of living'. Entrepreneurs, policy makers, administration and conservationists are all in favour of intense cooperation with all parties involved.

My dream is that people, all being part of the system, sit together and start thinking about the Wadden Sea. What is needed and what is important? How can we make use of the sea, and where do we cross the line? Put the outcomes down as an inspiration for policy and regulation and legislation (Klaas Laansma, policymaker).

Cooperation is considered crucial; cooperation in the sense of giving, sharing, trust and self-mastery and restraint as opposed to a more hierarchical way of cooperating based on regulations, permits and top-down management. Cooperation serving the whole, nature and society doesn't exclude people or organizations. During my research I came across several partnerships which, at first sight, maybe not have been very obvious but which turned out to make a great deal of sense within the worldview of SGV.

***In Dokkum I spoke to Jan-Michiël van der Gang, who has a menswear shop. I talked to Van der Gang because he is a co-initiator and organizer of the Oyster Festival (now the 'Admiralty Days').***

***When I arrive in Dokkum the weather is lovely, there are a couple of attractive streets full of shops and my visit happens to coincide with a fair. Walking into Van der Gang's shop, I find a number of people gathered around over the next issue of the Dokkum magazine, which is published jointly by local businesses, hotels and restaurants and tourist organizations. They are gathered around a large table in the centre of the store, using the space as a meeting room. At the same time customers are strolling around to find something to their liking. Shortly afterwards, an acquaintance of one of the shop assistants comes in and seats himself at the other end of the table. Someone offers him a cup of coffee and they start chatting about this and that. They use the shop as their living room to catch up on the latest news.***

***Later, Jan-Michiël tells me that he has introduced many people to each other around that particular table in his shop. And it often happens that all sorts of new activities and businesses spring up as a result of these meetings.***

***Jan-Michiël is a member of the Dokkum Business Society, which aims to build a structure that can generate initiatives to strengthen Dokkum as a whole. One of its initiatives is the fair in the main***

*street of Dokkum that I mentioned before. For the same reason he is involved in several government associations and local organizations responsible for organizing a wide variety of activities, including the Oyster Festival, in which shops and local activities, catering and education, tourism and healthcare work together to improve the quality of life in Dokkum and the surrounding area. Many of these initiatives arose at the large table in Jan-Michiel's shop with people sharing dreams and stories. Some of them get taken up, others don't. Sometimes the spark is there right away, and sometimes not until years later. You need to have patience, to wait until the time is right. The time needs to be right and, in practice, that means waiting until 'things come together' as Jan-Michiel puts it. And by 'things' he means, for example, interests, policies and readiness to invest. You need powers of endurance and the ability to see a speck on the horizon. You need the nerve to let long-term goals take precedence over short-term profit now and then.*

*And you need to be able to combine things, as with the Oyster Festival, which combines the traditional (the craft of the fisherman), the environment (sea and town) and the contemporary (trendy dishes). This way of starting initiatives aligns with 'salt living' and changed Jan-Michiel's perspective on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs do business as part of a greater whole. As an entrepreneur, you have a role in society and you interpret it in your own way, in partnership with others. It is something you work on consciously. You try to do the right thing for the community and for your own business, because you believe that those things go hand in hand. "That's certainly not easy, but it's the only way to take your place in the greater scheme of things as an entrepreneur," says Jan-Michiel.*

*His cooperation with SGV also sprouted from that table, resulting in the fishermen's participation in the various fairs and local activities – telling fishermen's' stories, teaching people how to clean fish, and serving delicious seafood together with local chefs and restaurants.*

Jan-Michiel's story is typical of the SGV community. People, entrepreneurs, not-for-profit organizations and local government all working together to preserve the Wadden Sea, to support regional development in an area that can be characterized as greyed and deflating.

What stands out in many of the stories I heard and the activities I saw is the inclusiveness that is exercised here. SGV is a combined entrepreneurial and conservational fishermen's initiative. To reach their goals the obvious route to take would be to cooperate with the government to get the necessary permits, to work with conservationists to agree on ways of fishing and with chain partners to ensure marketing and sales. The usual way of working would have been to draw up a plan, find the necessary partners, obtaining their commitment and executing the plan as agreed.

SGV chooses another route, the 'salt route': starting an experiment, sharing dreams and stories with anyone who crosses their path, seeing where things come together, where the spark ignites, going where the energy takes you, and making use of the variety in nature, in ideas, capacities, organizations, people and goals. Perceiving their environment as they do the sea, as an environment you have to work with as it is, following the process as it unfolds and with an open mind looking for possibilities in any natural or societal reality, event, relationship or idea that can be of mutual interest. It is always within the frame of the greater scheme of things and from the scope of the well-being of society and nature in one and the same movement.

That is the worldview that SGV's actions are based on and from which their organizations originate.

### **SGV's worldview**

#### **Salt Living**

- Vulnerability instead of controllability
- Being part of nature and society
- Taking your place in the greater scheme of things
- Taking forward what is unfolding
- Non-exclusive relationships
- Acknowledging your connectedness with nature and society, living with the unpredictability of things
- Following the rhythm of life:
  - the tides, seasons and the unexpected
  - initiating, meeting, sharing and acting when the time is right to move things forward (when things come together)
  - taking life as it unfolds
  - being creative with what nature and society offer you.

**Figure 1.1**                      **Worldview SGV**

## **1.2 Salt Valuing**

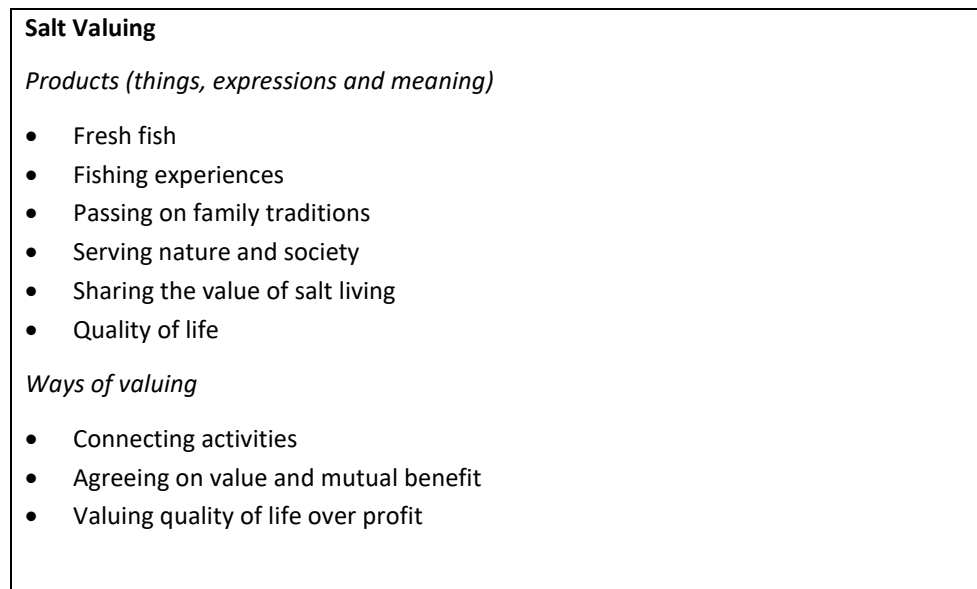
SGV's organizational design concept is based on the worldview of 'salt living'; acknowledging the vulnerability of life, seeing it as a strength and turning it into the major asset of SGV entrepreneurship. Thus, understanding and living this principle throughout changes the concept of organizing entirely.

Being part of the whole, being dependent, thoroughly changes a person's or an organization's position. People and organizations in the SGV community consider themselves strong and able to cope with the current economic and ecological crises just because they cope with their vulnerability. They don't deny, defeat or withstand these crises, but rather face them as something they are part of, something they have to live with by understanding and relating to it – relating to the causes, dynamics and the unpredictability of it exactly as they do in their way of fishing.

If the weather is bad, you don't go out; you simply find another activity to make your living. If there is little herring out there, you change to what is abundant. The SGV fishermen and community members believe that knowing how to live in vulnerability is of great value for our society. In this, they compare themselves with the Inuit and the people living in Patagonia, indicating that if these still rough regions that are not yet tamed or controlled by men, and the people living in them and dealing with vulnerability, were to disappear, we would lose valuable knowledge and experience. And it is exactly that wisdom that they consider necessary to deal with the current ecological and economic crises.

Acknowledging your vulnerability takes away the idea that it is up to you alone to act, to rule or to steer. Everything you do can only be understood in context: the natural context as well as the societal context. Everything you do affects the whole, the other, your colleagues, your community. The SGV community, with everybody playing a role in their activities as a co-worker, a customer, supplier, or administrator, thinks of SGV activities as more than mere fishing. They see themselves and other participants as keepers of the philosophy of salt living, as storytellers about the fishing

communities and life at sea, as nature conservationists, as researchers developing new ways of fishing. That is what they consider as core values of SGV. That is what their value model is based on.



**Figure 1.2**      **Ways of valuing SGV**

Step by step, SGV finds ways to get its activities valued; first of all by the government which allows them to share permits and quotas. The government has asked SGV to work out a new way of administering their fishing, enabling the government to monitor an agile and nimble way of fishing. Together with conservationists, pollution control, declining fish stocks and misbalanced ecosystems are measured and researched. Restaurants, chefs and small retailers are buying an increasing variety of fish from the Wadden Sea, passing on the fishermen's stories to their customers.

SGV has launched its own brand, 'van de kust' (of the coast) to allow fishermen to obtain a fair price for their products. Henk Pilat of the Wadden Group Foundation emphasizes the importance of such a brand. The brand connects the stories of the Wadden Sea and the fishermen and their way of life with the products. People like to be touched by something that is more than just the thing itself. They want to share that experience. They want to feel involved in the life and experience of the fishermen. A brand enables you to add these layers.

It is not only about getting a good price. The fishermen want to make a living. They value their family history and want to pass that on to the next generation. They value family life, living a good life. This is far more important to them than striving for profit maximization only. Making this possible is also part of SGV's aims. Telling stories for the community, giving people a real fishermen's experience or collecting oysters and eating them on the mud flats is part of SGV's activities, thus enabling the SGV community to share their worldview, the importance of salt living. The community values this and gradually the philosophy becomes viable through community contributions and people willing to pay for that kind of service.

There is still a lot of work to be done, as becomes clear in the dialogue on 'entrepreneurial fishermen'. SGV needs to evolve further into a group of people recognizing market opportunities related to quality and craftsmanship; people and organizations working together to create that kind of opportunity by offering seasonal variety so that sustainably caught fresh fish can be eaten year-round. To develop that kind of activity on the market requires time and patience and a different view

on the market (Jaap Vegter), regarding the market more as a space where, based on dialogue and cooperation, value can be generated, shared and exchanged.

Intermediaries can consult and work with customers and fishermen to come up an offer that is fair to all parties involved, including nature (Harry Smit, CEO fish auction); thus, changing the game on the market where supply and demand meet to set the price, or where traders are merely looking for the cheapest deal. For that, supply chains need to be organized differently; they need to be organized in the same vulnerable way (Henk Markus).

### 1.3 Salt Organizing

Recognizing your vulnerability as a basis for action or entrepreneurship puts you automatically in a position where any action acquires meaning in relation to the context and actions of others in that same context. Isolated actions are non-existent since everything comes together in the same space. Relating to that context in terms of getting acquainted is conditional in order to take it seriously and understand that you contribute to it (for better and for worse).

To act in such an environment, to make a living in it, demands that you be connected to become as agile and flexible as possible. The more variation in activities, the better. So instead of fishing for huge amounts of a single species (which is the usual approach in fishery these days, partly due to governmental policies granting permits for one species for one fisherman only), the SGV fishermen choose to fish for small amounts of a wide variety of species.

SGV is the story of fishermen recognizing market opportunities based on their knowledge of and intuition with regard to nature and the quality and variety of fish it has to offer. This changes the organizational playing field into a field that exceeds the organization's boundaries and that provides ground to nourish diversity, turning core business into a mosaic of activities. The organization thus becomes an organizing field in which all kinds of alliances can occur, creating all kinds of things, expressions and meaning that can be valued in just as many ways.

The question of how to transform an organization into salt organizing was addressed at the dialogue on vulnerability. How may one transform what inspires you into an agile leading process that takes the place of a management plan? (Herwil van Gelder, councillor at the municipality of the Marne). SGV looks for a type of organizing that evokes dynamizing and energizing rather than fixation and limitation.

A comparison of current organizations with the way SGV is organized was summarized as follows:

We are talking about two sorts of uncertainty: one comes about due to fixation and the other due to mobility. Laws are frozen and nature is mobile. Both demand action. But the answer to something that is fixed is completely different from the answer to something that is mobile. There are two different control mechanisms. One is with a group that is interconnected and maintains the balance through diversity and dialogue. The other is where everything is completely under review, under control, and one person can decide yes or no (Dialogue on vulnerability).

SGV is based on diversity and keeps its balance through dialogue, thus being prepared for situations that are constantly changing and where standards or agreements are not easily created. This may be likened to operating on a playing field where many factors play a role and many different players are

involved, so no one can oversee the whole on their own. This requires a set of organizing principles that are:

- more process-oriented than transaction-oriented
- more dialogue-based than hierarchically based
- more steering through learning than by plans
- and more building on trust than on rules (Dialogue on vulnerability)

The SGV community is organized into three circles. There is a core group of fishermen that are actually members of the cooperative. They share quota, permits and fishing equipment. Other fishermen join SGV on a looser basis, working with them every now and then, or supporting their way of working. SGV works closely with nature conservationists, the MSC and governmental institutions to build its case as solidly as possible founded on evidence-based practices, developing appropriate administration systems and redefining rules. It also cooperates with local retailers, museums, restaurants, chefs, retail associations, wholesalers, marketers, auctions and community members, each performing various roles, either as a customer, partner or supply chain partner.

Freshwater organizing	Salt organizing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on control and predictability</li> <li>• Aims for fixed goals</li> <li>• Single-purpose organizations</li> <li>• The organization is autonomous</li> <li>• Causal reasoning</li> <li>• Rule over the environment</li> <li>• Transactional</li> <li>• Unlimited expansion</li> <li>• Up-scaling small business into large businesses</li> <li>• Connecting with chain partners</li> <li>• Competing with other businesses</li> <li>• Following the rules as given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on vulnerability and unpredictability</li> <li>• Copes with dynamics</li> <li>• Multipurpose organizations</li> <li>• Organizing is interdependent</li> <li>• Multifactorial reasoning</li> <li>• Being part of the whole/environment</li> <li>• Mutuality or interdependency</li> <li>• Self-mastery and self-restraint</li> <li>• Connecting small-scale businesses through voluntary cooperation based on shared values</li> <li>• Connectedness with a wide variety of partners: entrepreneurial, community, conservation, people and (non) governmental</li> <li>• Sharing business with others</li> <li>• Moving with agility in between the rules</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.3** Organizational concept SGV

We took a conscious decision not to think everything through and organize it in advance. Precisely because we don't know how new ways of fishing or marketing the fish will work out, we say let's just do it and then find out as we go along what works and what doesn't; where we can improve or perhaps where we need to stop doing something (Jaap Vegter).

It is the partnership with the community, the supply chain and nature conservationists that sets SGV apart from other fishermen. SGV's members do rely on standard answers and are prepared to try out untested ideas. Working in partnership makes them strong, as does the constant discussing of their plans and continual re-evaluation of all the interests involved, with the aim of arriving jointly at the best decisions for community, mud flats and fishermen alike. Finding a balance between doing certain things differently and discussing them at the same time appears to be bearing fruit. Customers can see what they are doing and what they are capable of. That makes it easier to sell them something. Moreover, nature conservationists know that they are sharing all of their information with them and laying it openly on the table; what they are sure about and where they have doubts. That gives them the confidence to say "OK, go ahead", even though the precise outcome is not known. In that sense, SGV is perhaps more an economic movement than simply a business. Step by step, it is finding out how sustainable fishing can also be profitable for everyone in the supply chain, and for nature.



## 1.4 Summary

The objective of this chapter is to ascertain how game-changing social entrepreneurial organizing practices are organized. It describes five different social enterprises that differ widely in their ways of organizing, although they have one thing in common: they intend to change the entrepreneurial organizational ways of thinking and acting.

The Foundation for Integrated Fisheries, SGV, positions social entrepreneurship within a worldview called 'salt living'. This worldview implies that social entrepreneurial organizing is subject to the dynamics of the sea or to the dynamics of a greater, more powerful system of nature and society. This influences the design of organizational concepts as being in interaction with others in a dynamic environment. It requires an organizational design that is able to be responsive and resilient to that dynamic environment and to interact with it. SGV translates this worldview into an open and nimble way of organizing, seeking cooperation with a wide variety of people and organizations and considering them part of their organization in realizing their goals: small-scale fishing making a living for many fisherman and preserving nature at the same time.

SGV chooses to operate on a small scale since it considers salt living to give way to the sea and the society and cultures they live and work in. Listening, seeing and feeling them, being responsive to them, finding out step by step how to act in harmony with them and achieving the most efficacious result for all involved: nature, society and culture. This case study illustrated a social organizational concept that is small scale and locally organized; a concept that has evolved by trial and error and in interaction with many.

## 2 Enviu: Organizing of the Crowd

"We are strong believers in the economy of the crowd; an inclusive economy where starting new innovative business creates value for people and planet. Together we can build this economy that is all about passion, trust, entrepreneurship, collaboration and sharing."<sup>4</sup> The idea of the economy of the crowd stands at the base of the birth of Enviu.

SGV's organizational design is local, small scale and barely defined. Tapworld's organizational design is large-scale, global and highly structured. Enviu's ambition is also to operate on a large scale and internationally. Where Tapworld's organizational design is created top down, Enviu's organizational design and actual organizing emerges bottom up. Its way of organizing is closer to that of SGV, and is just as agile, learning and open. It is also very global, being more a collection of locally based, owned and designed start-ups scattered all over the world. The case of Enviu again demonstrates the enlargement of entrepreneurial ways of thinking and acting towards more transformative and sustainable ways of organizing, hence contributing to the aim of this research. The combination of the three cases so far already unveils several examples of how social entrepreneurs respond contextually by bringing in culture, nature and people, which is the objective covered by this chapter.

Enviu is run by a huge community of volunteers from all over the world, co-thinking, co-designing and co-operating with Enviu to start up new businesses that make a difference through activities and

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<sup>4</sup> [www.enviu.org/about-us/our-vision/](http://www.enviu.org/about-us/our-vision/)

products that actually contribute to the well-being of people and the environment, and do so in a sustainable and socially just way.

The underlying mindset for every activity Enviu undertakes is how to maintain our standard of living by enabling access to quality of life for all while alleviating poverty and restoring our ecosystems.

The idea of the organizing of the crowd is twofold: it is about working with the community and for the benefit of the community in harmony with its environment. Involving the community in Enviu's day-to-day activities as such is improving the quality of life of the people participating, as are the results of these activities.

### **2.1.1 Worldview: Economy of the Crowd**

Long before I started this research, I had met Stef van Dongen, Enviu's founder, at various events. At most of these he was a speaker and almost every lecture started with his story of how he decided to start Enviu. It goes like this: Stef van Dongen comes from a family of entrepreneurs and originally intended to become a millionaire by his thirties. After a trip to Indonesia where he narrowly escaped death during a volcanic eruption, he decided that life was too short not to follow his passion. He resolved to follow his heart, his love for life, nature and people, and his conviction that it must be possible to create a business based on having a positive impact and making a profit at the same time.<sup>5</sup> In 2002, Stef started Enviu, expressing the company's ambition as follows: "We want to change the world and entrepreneurs are the ones that can make that happen. If what you do creates value, it has impact." He saw what Google did as an example. Google changed the world of information technology with only a handful of people. So it is possible to make a difference, to evoke a huge change with a small team. The big difference between Google and Enviu is that Google is stock market driven and Enviu is impact driven.

Enviu and the businesses they start evolve from the wisdom and the energy of the crowd. Enviu, according to Stef, is an organization based on love and sharing. He believes that the best way to make a difference is by co-creation: bringing together knowledge, understanding and expertise from all over the world, to find the best possible solutions to improve quality of life for many.

Enviu develops world-changing businesses that have a positive social and environmental global impact, seeing them through from initial idea to launch. "Together with our community of over 10,000 people from over 30 countries, we generate innovative business concepts and build partnerships to address local social and environmental issues. To realize our start-ups we work with entrepreneurs, businesses, investors, governments and various other stakeholders."<sup>6</sup>

"It all starts with a social or environmental problem in the world that needs a good business solution. To generate ideas, we mobilize the expertise and creativity of our community (crowd sourcing)."<sup>7</sup>

The people in Enviu's community share their knowledge, experience, energy, and network and give their time voluntarily, all to support Enviu in changing the world in an entrepreneurial way. Talking to Reinke Keizers-Bouma, a volunteer at Enviu, she tells me how important she believes its volunteers are to the organization. Her story is representative of that of many other volunteers that I met in this

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.stefvandongen.com/?p=181>

<sup>6</sup> <http://enviu.org/about-us/>

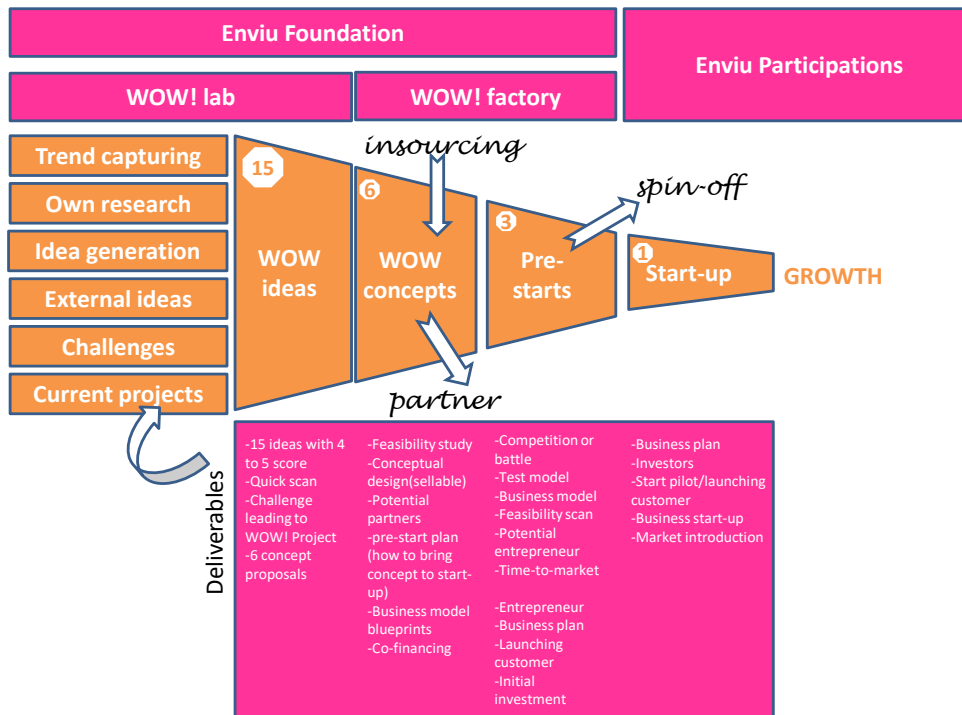
<sup>7</sup> [www.enviu.org/how-we-work/](http://www.enviu.org/how-we-work/)

case. She describes volunteers as the lifeblood of Enviu. The blood in its veins. What gives the organization life. Without the community, Enviu would never be able to do what it does; it might not even exist. I want to know exactly what she means by that. One obvious reason for her comment might be that Enviu doesn't have the money to pay everyone and that it needs a lot of people to help it achieve its ideals. But that's not what she means. We search for the words that will make her meaning clear. Words such as 'anchored' and 'rooted' in society crop up. But also 'dialogue' and 'designing things together'.

I'm keen to pin it down, so we cast around for some examples. I recall one given by another volunteer who told me that what is special about Enviu is that it gets people involved, in an undemanding way, in some of the toughest problems of this day and age. Ecological damage, threats of energy shortages and unfair distribution of the world's resources tend to make people passive rather than active. Say you go out and a meter on the dance floor shows you how much energy is being generated – you become aware of the energy issue without it immediately becoming a big deal. You want to participate, spurred on by options and opportunities rather than by blame and difficulties.

That is partly what she means. But another vital aspect for her is that the energy that Enviu needs to help it bring its ideas to life can only be obtained from people; from their participation, their enthusiasm, their ambassadorship, their conviction that things can be done differently. Whether an idea 'makes it' and leads to a business depends on the amount of energy that people are prepared to put in. But that's not all. This participation by volunteers is vital not just to generate energy but also to reinforce the quality of an idea. To match it as closely as possible to what is going on and is possible in society. To get a clear picture of what works and what doesn't. These people represent the voice of the community, provide energy and add knowledge and experience that do not exist within Enviu's core organization. It is only through this process of co-creation with the Enviu community, and hence with the volunteers, that Enviu can achieve success. It is all about deployment of the wisdom and the energy of the crowd for the well-being of as many as possible, as Stef van Dongen says.

Enviu uses a four-stage process for creating new businesses, starting with idea development and followed by concept development, pre-start and start-up.



**Figure 2.1** Enviu incubator process (Van Dongen, 2011)

The role of the community varies in the different phases of the process. Until the start-up, the driving force behind the process is the interaction with the environment, the community that provides knowledge, experience and energy, and receives them in return. What you give in this phase is not lost but is enriched with the ideas, knowledge and energy of others. Everyone becomes better, wiser and happier as a result of this joint creative process. Until the start-up the idea is, in a sense, owned by the collective or community; owned in an intellectual and emotional sense. Physically, it is Enviu's. And necessarily so, because this is the only way to organize a start-up in which the concept becomes the property of a business. In today's economy, it's rare to see a collective development lead to a business. Much more often, you see a future entrepreneur anxiously hugging his idea to himself, for fear of competition for example. The assumption is that, if everyone can do what you do and knows what you know, the added value of your product or service will be diminished. At Enviu, they change that way of thinking around. Sharing increases the added value and acceptance of your product. That is what Stef calls entrepreneurship based on the economy of the crowd.

#### Enviu's worldview

##### *Economy of the crowd*

- The crowd serving well-being for many
- The community enables the flow
- Acknowledging the wisdom of the crowd
- The crowd as source of
  - ideas
  - knowledge/experience
  - support to get things done
  - energy to keep things going

- Sharing as the underlying principle for progress and innovation
- Abundance as a starting point

**Figure 2.2**      **Worldview Enviu**

### 2.1.2 Valuing of the Crowd

Focusing on access to quality of life means measuring the output of the company in terms of increasing well-being of people instead of doing well through continuous growth of capital or profit. Stef van Dongen: “Quality of life is that people know who they are and determine their own happiness and in any case can make sure they provide for their basic needs. It is also about personal development, and living in harmony and mutual trust with the people around you. About being able and allowed to practice meaning, and some degree of spirituality.”

Others define quality of life as living in a safe and durable place, having sound relationships, caring for the environment, being recognized for who you are as a whole human being, having access to goods and services like transport and education, and feeling protected.

There is no clear definition of what quality of life is or should be. The idea of well-being is an open concept that can be interpreted in various ways. There is no judgement on what people see or experience as quality of life as long as it doesn’t conflict with the basic values of Enviu: well-being for many and restoring the earth.

Restoring ecosystems doesn’t mean, according to Enviu, stopping using them. You can use them as long as you make sure they can recover from what you took. Sources must be and remain sustainable.

To find the best ideas, to create solutions with the largest impact, to solve technical problems and to design just organizational models, Enviu uses the power of the crowd. A large community from all over the world co-thinks, co-designs and co-creates the Enviu businesses. People get acquainted with the Enviu community in various ways. Some sign up spontaneously on the basis of others’ stories, others apply for specific projects, or come in with a developed idea or business case. Enviu aims to be an inspirational, energizing and innovative space. For that, it organizes all kind of virtual and real-life meetings and events, using many different media, continuously inviting people to participate. Examples are brainstorming on societal challenges, possible applications of new technologies or new business models, or think-tanks to develop a specific concept, expert meetings to solve a problem in one of their projects, and contests to design prototypes of sustainable houses, for example.

People get involved in the Enviu community for various reasons: out of interest in a specific topic, the energy that they get from working with like-minded people, to contribute to a better world, to be acknowledged for their talents, to get their idea realized. All motivations are welcomed, again as long as they don’t violate the underlying values of Enviu: contributing to well-being of people and restoring nature.

If people join forces they can move mountains. The Enviu crowd operates on a global and local level, and consists of people from all over the world, rich and poor, old and young, men and women, coming from different cultures, academic or practically trained, with a scientific or indigenous education, all contributing from their own skills and experiences, and all driven to make that necessary change towards a more sustainable world.

The leading principle underlying this organizing of the crowd is the conviction that companies can and should make that difference; that eliminating poverty and restoring ecosystems can best be done in an entrepreneurial way.

Enviu believes in the power of the crowd; together anything can be done. In 2011 Enviu started a crowd-funding project to set up an investment fund for new start-ups. By January 2012 they were able to launch the following press release: “Enviu, a sustainable business developer from the Netherlands, raised 100,000 Euro using equity-based crowd funding platform Symbid. Enviu attracted 372 investors from all over the world, breaking the national record. Enviu will use the 100,000 Euro to invest directly in new start-ups developed. This success shows the promise of using crowd funding as way of raising capital for small companies.”<sup>8</sup>

In 2010/11 Enviu launched two businesses, continued two previous launches to a more durable phase and generated five ideas, four concepts and one pre-start (OS House).<sup>9</sup>

Organizing the four phases of the development process is, like the Enviu community itself, discovery driven. It does plan ahead, but it just as easily lets that go. Every day has its cheerful moments and its moments of grief. That isn’t easy for everyone. Often analytical and linear thinkers have difficulties with this way of organizing things as they come, based on new insights evolving in the moment. At the same time Enviu really needs these thinkers to make sure the arguments underpinning their reasoning are correct and complete.

In this Enviu process, people have different roles and responsibilities. Some are more process-oriented, while others focus more on content. In the first stages everyone can participate, but as the process progresses you need more specific expertise. At the beginning you want diversity, at the end maximum expertise.

Global networks contribute in local clusters. People should be able to choose for themselves where they participate in the process, not the choreographer, who only invites. People participate in the process because it gives them energy, or because they learn something or pick up ideas they can work on for themselves or with other people in the Enviu community or beyond. The process is a learning process in itself that is continuously improving.

People from both the local community and the global community collaborate online and offline in the various stages of business development. All working from inspiration and joy, across generations, using the creativity of young people, the experience of older people and the energy that comes from collaboration to make something happen that brings the realization of quality of life for many within sight.

An important indicator to see if an idea is strong enough to pull it through the whole process is if it generates energy in people. Do people like it, do they want to spend time to make it happen, do they want to invest? Is the idea or concept really taking off? Is it contained by the crowd?

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<sup>8</sup> Enviu press release, 6 January 2012 <http://enviu.pressdoc.com/>

<sup>9</sup> Organization in 2011, Enviu presentation: we start world changing companies, 2011. In the 2012 annual report 9,600 community members were registered, 1,500 of them are core members, coming from over 30 different countries

Besides containment, ownership is an important indicator. Is the owner of the idea living up to it, and is there an entrepreneur that really wants to make it happen?

Last but not least is the WOW! factor of ideas and concepts. Is it innovative, is it really going to make a difference, is it going to have a big impact for many? Just a good idea is not enough. It needs to generate an impact, preferably a huge impact on restoring the environment and increasing quality of life for all. Only then is an idea or concept WOW!

Staf van Dongen compares the Enviu business development process with inviting people on the stage to dance together, showing each other and the world the best of themselves, contributing to innovations and innovative processes based on what they feel they are good at. So it is not the organization, the employee who determines who can do what best. That is left up to each participant and a process of self-organization and learning. People are invited to join but the way to do so is up to them. The Enviu process from inspiration, ideas, concepts, pre-starts and start-ups is designed in a way that facilitates this self-organization and enables and empowers people to share their input (talents, skills, ideas, networks) for the benefit of the whole. They trust that in the end all will benefit from the experience and the outcome.

This trust is based on the idea of abundance. Acting based on this principle of abundance is also the main pillar underlying the organization's belief that it is possible to eliminate poverty, to restore the ecosystem without losing our current standard of living as we know it in the West. In so doing, Enviu changes the zero-sum game that underlies most entrepreneurial thinking: if I take a bigger share of the pie, the others will have a smaller one. Enviu claims there is enough for everybody, we just have to change the way we think about property and to join forces to make it happen.

One of the notions that Enviu changes is the idea of property as a condition for using things. They change that into defining ownership in terms of having access to utensils. Exactly in the same way that the Enviu community shares ideas, knowledge and networks, they bring buying access into transactional thinking: many people can buy access to one and the same object which is shared in use. That doesn't decrease quality of life, but does decrease the impact on the environment. Enviu is unconditional in compliance with the principle of impact first. This implies that alleviating poverty and restoring ecosystems is their core business.

Since Enviu develops a wide variety of concepts for various mostly mixed markets (government, NGOs, business and consumers), they come up with a wide variety of compositions of blended values, including a wide variety of investment and charity concepts and ways of selling, hiring, accessing, sharing and giving products and services, leading in combination to a sustainable business case.

As already mentioned, in 2012, Enviu experimented for the first time with crowd funding. The business model of one of Enviu's companies, Three Wheels United (India), is based on the company's purpose of improving the living conditions of 200,000 Indians.

Their goal is to replace polluting two-stroke engines with cleaner four-stroke engines. This ensures that taxis (rickshaws) can drive 30 to 50 percent more miles per gallon of gasoline. An adjusted design of the rickshaws makes it possible to use them as a mini supermarket and to rent out the sides as advertising space. Together, this enables drivers to raise their income by up to 70 percent. Having 50,000 converted tuk-tuks on the road within five years would serve the purpose of Three Wheels United.

Local banks are participating in the project, providing drivers with affordable loans to purchase a tuk-tuk. At present, drivers often rent their tuk-tuks on a weekly basis at inflated prices. The project also ensures that drivers have access to social services and insurance. As a shareholder, Enviu receives a share of the margins.

Three Wheels United makes a contribution, for example, as an intermediary in the provision of financial services. Enviu's profits are ploughed back into investments in new companies in India and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> In most cases Enviu builds up business models for a group of entrepreneurs (organizations or people), not just selling a product but also enabling people to buy and exploit it, as in this case enabling rickshaw drivers to buy a rickshaw and exploit it in various ways. In this way, different companies benefit from a new product or service that in the end reduces air pollution in overcrowded Indian cities and alleviates poverty among rickshaw drivers. In this example, Enviu developed the idea of less polluting rickshaws into an entrepreneurial concept for rickshaw drivers, local bankers and insurance companies, and Three Wheels United.

Enviu also works the other way around. This is what Vincent van der Meulen<sup>11</sup> did when he started thinking of affordable housing for people leaving slums. "At the moment the market is there, and Enviu wants to make a difference for those people, we have a kind of moral obligation to address those things." So he took up his responsibility as an architect, designing houses that contribute to sustainability and improvement of quality of life. The idea was to get free ideas, free designs for houses, into the world, so everyone can benefit.

#### **Valuing of the crowd**

##### *Products (things, expressions and meaning)*

- Startups
- Consulting other companies in setting up social enterprises based on their four-phase model and experience
- Invented products that are sustainable or that contribute to sustainable solutions
- Improving quality of life of its community members:
  - increasing energy and inspiration
  - feeling rewarded
  - the ability to contribute
  - being a member of a meaningful community
- Improving quality of life of many, the start ups are working in
- Giving access to products: things and expressions (instead of selling ownership)
- Making a living
- Mitigating pollution and climate change

##### *Ways of valuing*

- Sharing/giving/trade/exchange of abundant sources
- Agreeing on value and mutual benefit based on impact

<sup>10</sup> Information based on Rabobank newsletter for starting entrepreneurs. [www.ikgastarten.nl/nieuws/3416-enviu-maakt-tuktuk-schoner.html](http://www.ikgastarten.nl/nieuws/3416-enviu-maakt-tuktuk-schoner.html)

<sup>11</sup> Interviewee Vincent van der Meulen: Architect and partner at Kraaijvanger [www.kraaijvanger.nl/en](http://www.kraaijvanger.nl/en), <http://www.kraaijvanger.nl/en/projecten/?architect=vincent-van-der-meulen> Initiator of OS House



- Co-ownership or shares

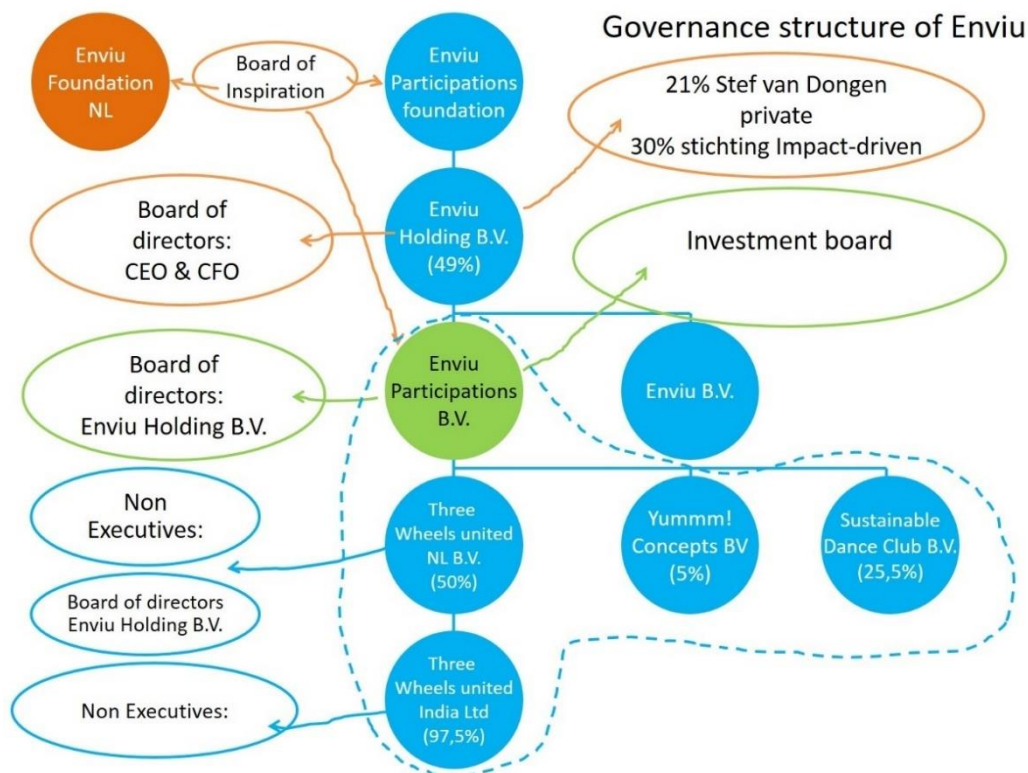
**Figure 2.3** Ways of valuing of Enviu

Enviu looks for social or ecological problems and solves them as a starting point for new entrepreneurial activities, finding ways to exploit them in a way that everyone benefits based on valuing services, products, ideologies, use, social and natural impact, all costs and benefits.

### 2.1.3 Organizing of the Crowd

Someone told me: The world is dancing the waltz, everyone in its own space. But Enviu are street dancers, dancing all over the place (Stef van Dongen).

Enviu is a hybrid organization blending a foundation (breeding ground for ideas and concepts) with a participation foundation (financing concepts and pre-start-ups), a holding company (partial owner of the start-ups) and various BVs<sup>12</sup> (new businesses partially owned by the holding company, idea owner, community, investors and other people or parties considered involved, entitled or contributing to the business). The Dutch tax authorities recently approved this hybrid organization.



**Figure 2.4** Enviu, a hybrid organization (Enviu, 2011) <sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> BV: Besloten Vennootschap, similar to a limited company

<sup>13</sup> Organization in 2011, Enviu presentation: we start world changing companies, 2011.

For current organizational model see: <http://enviu.org/about-us/organization/>

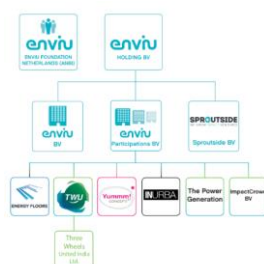
Enviu had an income of EUR 1 million in 2011 and 1.4 million in 2012. In the second quarter of 2011 they raised EUR 3 million of capital in start-ups. It had a team of 20 full-time employees, supported by an average of 60 interns per year and a worldwide community of more than 8,000 people.<sup>14</sup>

Enviu is convinced that property should change from ownership to access. Stef wants Enviu to facilitate access to business development. He is still struggling with how to apply the idea of access instead of ownership in the property structure underlying the Enviu organizations. Meanwhile he aims to design the Enviu organization based on the newest, cutting-edge concepts that are accepted by tax and government regulations right now.

The organizational form evolved step by step over time, and will evolve further into the future. Ideally Stef would like the company to belong to everybody. However, when money is involved you need a structure, if not only for tax reasons. Tax regulations in the Netherlands do not allow organizations to combine for-profit and not-for-profit activities. In addition, investors, charity organizations and partner organizations do ask for an official structure. The current hybrid organization allows Enviu to combine their various activities, for-profit and not-for-profit. It enables many people to become co-owners of Enviu or one of the start-ups. For every business launched by Enviu, the distribution of shares is thoroughly thought through. Basic principles underlying that dialogue are based on honouring the contribution of everyone involved: originator of the idea, co-thinkers and creators, investors, Enviu and organizations and people who are involved in making the new business a success: (local) entrepreneurs, the community, organizations in the chain and customers or their representatives.

Stef van Dongen is one of the shareholders in the Enviu holding company. In his particular case, a distinction is made between sharing profit and having a say in the company: “Stef has a major say (50%) but not a majority interest in profit (30%). The foundation owns 50% of the Enviu shares, Stef 30% and the employees, only two now, get a half percent. If all goes well, that number will increase.”<sup>15</sup> Jesse van der Zand explains that most of the people working with Enviu are not particularly interested in having shares. They enjoy working with Enviu, but do not care so much for organizational issues and control. They prefer to be more self-organized and less encapsulated in the structure.

People work for Enviu because they are appreciated for their talents and ideas and because they can do things their own way. People can organize themselves and over time Enviu has become more and more professionalized in self-organizing. Enviu aims to become more of a platform which invites and



<sup>14</sup> See the 2012 annual report for the latest facts and figures: <http://enviu.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Enviu-Annual-Report-FINAL-webversie.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Jesse van der Zand, Legal and participations, Enviu

facilitates people to work together. With the latest initiative of Enviu, “Enviu in the world”, they facilitate local Enviu organizations to go through that process to find their own way of self-organizing.

Status is not an issue at Enviu. People here are sensitive to success. They are very proud to work in this environment; with these principles they consciously choose. It is absolutely not done to talk about each other, as I often see in other companies, with disastrous consequences.

I consider that an indication of the standards and values we live up to. People feel connected to each other and to the organization, there is a sense of belonging, which I find a relief compared to the detachment I see in our society. No one has a lease car here. That makes sense, according to people here. They are conscious in life which is considered to be about more than just consuming (Cornelis den Boer).<sup>16</sup>

In the eyes of Enviu, changing the world can only be realized by people sharing their capabilities, ideas and enthusiasm, driven to make a difference for the whole together. Therefore Enviu is also driven by care for people. Stef van Dongen emphasizes the importance of spirituality in education, meaning a shift in orientation from functional to personal. Children need to discover what drives them, what they are passionate about, and must be empowered to develop and use their talents for what they believe in. Teach them to look at the world in a more holistic way, understanding that owning money and things is not the only key to well-being. Young people coming from university are looking for meaning, for freedom, for ways to contribute to something they consider worthwhile. Enviu offers them that opportunity. Being part of the Enviu community gives them a feeling of being someone who can make a difference, based on who they are and what they believe in.

Natalja Heybroek, an intern at Enviu, studies international business management. This curriculum focuses on “the basics of how it normally happens in existing companies”. Owing to her internship she is able to understand and work with business concepts that go beyond what she has learned so far. When I ask her if she can bring her new insights into the school programme she responds:

Maybe in ten years ... At the moment it is very structured, there is no room for these things. There is one course, ‘current issues in business’, where sustainability is a subject. But still not in the innovative way Enviu is dealing with it.

Consultant Cornelis den Boer<sup>17</sup> explains his involvement in Enviu on the basis of his stage of life:

I know three phases: earning, learning and returning. I am in the latest phase of my life. Until my retirement I was dedicated to profit optimization. Now I want to use my knowledge to contribute to the development of a new economy.

Caspar Dickmann, chairman of the board, elaborates<sup>18</sup>:

In a new economy, learning, earning and returning coincide.

And that is exactly what Enviu does.

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<sup>16</sup> Interviewee Cornelis den Boer, Advisor to Enviu, former director of ING bank

<sup>17</sup> Cornelis den Boer is one of the consultants who support Enviu based on their long experience in business. Den Boer was a director at ING until his retirement.

<sup>18</sup> Caspar Dickmann, CFO in Greenhouse, chairman of the board of inspiration (supervisory board) at Enviu.

The organization is constantly changing. It learns quickly and is adaptive. Change is easy, because everyone is fairly new, and for the ones already there for a while, change has become a natural attitude. Change is part of the organization, as well as sustainability.<sup>19</sup>

Wanting to make a difference, changing the world, and the open and adaptive organization is what attracts many people to Enviu. Stef sees his team as a group of choreographers that lead people who want to dance to change the world. People who want to dance because that is how they feel inside. Not because they want to be seen by others. For example: sometimes investors arrive in a Porsche. Fine, but only if that Porsche represents their passion and not if it stands for status, or to make an impression on others with something that isn't yours by heart. Van Dongen says that: "The choreographers are the ones that contain the organization's culture, they must be pure." People working for and with Enviu have to believe, indeed, that sharing leads to something, since Enviu is based on sharing. Sharing ideas, knowledge, capital, based on the assumption that through sharing the value of it will increase.

When I ask Stef how he sees ownership of, for example, an idea in this sharing community, he answers:

Yes, everything is for everyone. But you have to understand and own what is yours before you open it to others. You can make that claim of ownership before sharing. Others will add what is theirs. You always get something in return: that can be money or an improvement of your idea, a better draft design. I firmly believe in that.

Everything that is shared will grow, improve or be enriched.

Enviu works with people who are talented, people with character, who are able to confront their ideas with what Enviu is doing. People who are free and value the importance of meaningful entrepreneurship. People aiming to make a difference so we all can live on this planet without poverty and in harmony with nature.

Without the community Enviu wouldn't exist. The community keeps the organization on its toes. They bring in their ideas, share their doubts and insights about the ideas, concepts and start-ups, but also about Enviu itself. About the way things are organized and conceptualized, and the way they are involved and rewarded by the organizations. They do so explicitly by giving feedback, but also through spreading the word. They connect people from their network with Enviu; based on their experiences and stories, they invite and enthuse people to join the community. They feel entitled to act on Enviu's behalf in the sense that they are part of a platform, or a movement that aims to contribute to a more sustainable world.

From all over the world people come here to join Enviu. Sometimes just to spend a couple of days, to participate in a workshop or brainstorming session, or to participate for longer in a specific project. Some even come in with a concrete idea for a project. If they meet the WOW! requirements, these concrete projects are submitted to the community. If enough community members want to take it further, the project will flow into the Enviu WOW! process. If no one responds, the project will not be picked up by Enviu. That's the way the energy works.

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<sup>19</sup> Natalja Heybroek, an intern at Enviu, studies international business management and specializes in sustainability.

Enviu learns step by step how to make their ideas valuable for potential customers through action learning.

Action learning is organizing the community on the basis of a problem. Finding the solution creates support for it at the same time. Civic driven change, organizing communities bottom up so that they become stronger. People examine the problem and at the same time their own role in it. They study and are studied at the same time (Stef van Dongen).

Enviu assumes that involving people in the co-creation process will lead to participating in promoting, buying and selling it. People participating in the development of an idea are potential users of products and services coming from it, based on the value they see in it, projected in or created with it.

Hence it is conditional not to exclude anyone from the process of co-creation.

Global networks, local clusters, people should be able to choose themselves where and how they participate in the process. The choreographers (people working at Enviu, GS) are just the ones inviting by doing an open invitation (Stef van Dongen).

Reasons people step in are to get energy, to learn or perhaps to pick up something, or any other reason one can think of. Enviu wants projects that people enjoy, projects that make everybody happy, keep people motivated and involved.

In the past, cooperation was done mostly face to face and offline. More and more, Enviu is shifting towards online contact where people can tag their own areas of interest, meet each other on various online platforms and participate in meetings and brainstorming sessions.

The people empowering Enviu are busy people. They are studying or working. So you have to find efficient ways of participating (Josine Janssen, Enviu).

The Enviu offices are an open space where people can come in and work with Enviu projects for some time: "that is conditional if you want to work with the crowd."<sup>20</sup>

Stef proposed the idea of offering a share in the business to the volunteers who contribute during the development phase. None of them has shown any interest in this to date. Perhaps taking part in a development is recognition enough in itself. What is important, according to Stef, is that the entrepreneur who ultimately markets the idea should remain dedicated to the values behind the product or service. Profit remains a means rather than an end, and contributing to quality of life for the many is vital. The entrepreneur who fritters that away risks losing the trust of the community that invested in the idea, and possibly the rationale behind it as well.

Enviu's approach shows how sharing can be part of the economy – in the development of a product, but afterwards as well.

Organizing of the one	Organizing of the crowd
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<sup>20</sup> Stef van Dongen

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed roles and structure</li> <li>• The organization is run by its shareholders</li> <li>• Scarcity and routine based dynamics</li> <li>• Closed organization with clear fixed boundaries</li> <li>• Internal and external cooperation based on mutual interests and goals</li> <li>• Resources and people are a means</li> <li>• People are employees</li> <li>• Added value of people is their functionality in the process</li> <li>• Participation based on selection by the organization</li> <li>• Single focus structure</li> <li>• Hierarchical steering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible and changing roles and structure</li> <li>• The organizations is run by the community</li> <li>• Abundance and diversity based dynamics</li> <li>• Open organization with dynamic fluid boundaries</li> <li>• Internal and external cooperation based on shared values and dreams</li> <li>• Profit is a means</li> <li>• People are co-creators</li> <li>• Added value of people is who they are: their talent, enthusiasm, inspiration and spirituality</li> <li>• Participation based on open invitation and people's own choice to participate</li> <li>• Hybrid structure</li> <li>• Self-organization</li> </ul>
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**Figure 2.5** Organizational concept of Enviu

#### 2.1.4 Summary

This chapter covers objective three, investigating five case studies from Africa, Asia and Europe showing how social entrepreneurs respond contextually by bringing in culture, nature and people. Where Tapworld and SGV emphasize bringing nature into the entrepreneurial realm, Enviu focuses on bringing in people.

Enviu's organizational concept is based on the crowd. It is designed to involve the crowd in deciding what to do and in realizing new social enterprises each making different contributions towards increasing quality of life in an ecologically sustainable way. Like Tapworld, Enviu operates worldwide, but it differs from Tapworld in that it has many different activities and ways of operating depending on local needs and situations. Enviu's crowd (over 10,000 members) is spread over more than 30 countries. So each idea is enriched by many different people and cultures, unlike SGV and Tapworld, which are ignited by a small group of people at a specific place and time. Every start-up Enviu ignites has its own dynamics and its own approach. Enviu's organizational concept is very dynamic with a small but sustainable nucleus. The Enviu organization is designed to allow people to develop, to bring in their whole being and to act in a meaningful way to realize meaningful things. As such, the way of organizing itself is designed to increase the quality of life of people and organizations participating in it.

The Enviu case illustrates a large-scale organizational concept consisting of many local organizations ranging in size from very small to medium-scale. It illustrates a way of organizing that evolves in the making and by trial and error and remains very dynamic and learning over time.

### 3 Festival sur le Niger

Wisdom is the fruit of '*L'arbre à parole*', the tree under which people sit and discuss. The skin of the fruit is just simple friendly talking, but the fruit itself is a serious dialogue and leads to wisdom (Dr Simaga).<sup>21</sup>

In line with OS House, the organizational design of Festival sur le Niger was developed by bringing culture into the entrepreneurial organizational space. Where OS House builds on communities and associations, Festival sur le Niger builds on a local cultural concept: Maaya. Maaya is the Malian concept of humanism, an integral concept of humanity concerning the relationship between the individual and the community. It resembles the more well-known South African Ubuntu.

The five case studies together unveil a serried range of practices demonstrating diversity in bringing nature, culture and people into the entrepreneurial organizational space. This range substantiates the way the domain of entrepreneurial organizing enlarges and becomes transformative and sustainable. Tapworld brings in biodiversity to contextualize its entrepreneurial activities in order to transform agriculture and fuel production into abundant resources. SGV is contextualized by the sea and local culture of fishery, transforming fishery and culinary activities into nature preservation. Enviu is contextualized by an international crowd, local entrepreneurs and technological innovation transforming entrepreneurship into carbon and energy reduction. OS House is contextualized by local culture, people and people's associations transforming entrepreneurship into inclusive economic action and low footprint migration. Lastly, Festival sur le Niger is contextualized by Maaya, turning entrepreneurship into local and social development and regional artistic development. The five cases together indicate how to enlarge the social entrepreneurial space of organizing, the underlying aim of this research.

Festival sur le Niger is an annual art festival held in Ségou, a city in the south-west of Mali. It takes a four to five-hour drive along the river Niger to cover a distance of a little over 200 kilometres from Bamako to Ségou. Sitting in the back seat of the car, I see the landscape passing by; despite the continuous presence of the river, it gets dryer and dryer. Sand is everywhere, appearing in dozens if not hundreds of different colours and shades. Mamou Daffé, the initiator of the Festival sur le Niger, and Moussa Fofane, my interpreter, are my travelling companions. I notice the landscape changing into a void lined with market stalls mainly selling mangoes, and small clumps of houses, meanwhile listening to a discussion between Mamou and Moussa. They are discussing politics, since they see an ongoing influx of refugees from Ivory Coast due to the riots around the elections (2011). More specifically, they are discussing democracy and the need for an African form of democracy based on the idea of inclusion. 'The winner takes all' leaves many people out of decision-making. In their opinion, that doesn't work in Africa, where every decision is throughout negotiated with all community members or their representatives. Every voice must be heard, and can enrich decisions as such, but leads at least to the acceptance of it and support for implementation.

The idea of inclusion, not only in decision-making, but also in establishing development and in benefiting from it, is a recurring theme in their conversation. Many interviews, meetings and encounters later, I recognize the idea of inclusion as one of the main principles of the set-up and operation of the Festival sur le Niger.

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<sup>21</sup> Dr Simaga, a pharmacist, expert on Maaya and Godfather of the Festival sur le Niger.

### 3.1 Worldview: Maaya Entrepreneurship

The Festival sur le Niger is a theatre, music and visual arts festival held annually in the town of Ségou in Mali. Its aim is to foster the social, cultural and entrepreneurial development of the region.

The Festival is a yearly, multidisciplinary cultural event in Ségou where artists of all kinds perform, exhibit and play music. One of the festival's aims is to stimulate the interaction between traditional and contemporary art by presenting the two side by side on stage, by holding expert workshops and by initiating co-productions. Another aim is to dialogue about a topical theme at a scientific symposium held simultaneously.<sup>22</sup> Exchanging knowledge and experience at the symposium during the festival reflects on today's society, traditions, current developments and the role of art in society.

During the Festival sur le Niger, Ségou turns into one big festival site with stages and exhibitions all over and numerous restaurants and little shops on almost every corner selling everything you could wish for. Everybody in town participates in their own way. Some attend the performances, others perform, some work as technicians, others provide food and beds for foreign visitors.

Ségou is located on the banks of the river Niger. It is a lively city that does honour to its early history with some beautiful sandstone buildings, just as I imagined them from Maryse Condé's (1987a, 1987b) novels *Ségou*, sited next to dilapidated colonial buildings.

The festival takes place next to the river and on a stage built above it. The reason for initiating the festival is described on the festival's website as follows:

Despite its potential, for years Ségou remained a city with few prospects for its young artists and cultural entrepreneurs. All over Mali young artists looked to Bamako, as the centre of the nation's cultural life, which left a creative void in small cities like Ségou. Worse, many artists and other talented young people abandoned their cities and regions to move to Bamako to present their works and acquire new skills. Many even left their country and Africa entirely. For far too long the only choice for many was between flight to the West or the abandonment of their careers and dreams.<sup>23</sup>

The festival was first held in 2005. The Foundation Festival sur le Niger was created in 2009 in order to capitalize on and sustain the achievements of the Festival sur le Niger in order to further contribute to the promotion of culture, heritage preservation, promotion of the local economy of the region, the structuring of the cultural sector, cultural production and the decentralization of cultural life, to remedy this lack of opportunity.<sup>24</sup>

Although this might be the underlying drive, it all started less pretentiously with a group of hotel owners coming together wondering how to attract more visitors to Ségou, staying more than just a day on their way to Timbuktu. Many ideas were passed around, even an African carnival. It was Mamou Daffé who favoured the festival and enriched that idea with and for the benefit of the whole community. His underlying idea was to contribute to social development by inserting art, science, entrepreneurship and local tradition.

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<sup>22</sup> In 2013 the theme was governance and culture. The 2014 theme is cultural diversity and national unity.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.festivalsegou.org/home-eng>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.festivalsegou.org/english/fondation.html>



True artists have the magic of showing or telling people who they are and what their personalities and their environment are like, in a way people can understand. So art communicates to you. Showing there are other realities surrounding you, it helps you to see the possibilities for improving your own situation. In Mali's recent history, if we have to tell the truth, in the change towards democracy in this country, artists took the first step. They opened people's eyes to what was going on in society (Abdramane Dicko).<sup>25</sup>

The Festival sur le Niger is an entrepreneurial process aiming for social development. It is a community based concept of entrepreneurship that combines local Maaya culture with a more general concept of entrepreneurship. Combining these two concepts generated a form of social entrepreneurship that is greater than the sum of its parts and that improves both Maaya and entrepreneurship. By elevating them to a more abstract level where they form a new concept of entrepreneurship creating social development. This blend, called Maaya entrepreneurship, evolves from the ongoing two-in-one movement: serving humanity and letting the community serve you, as a basis for this model of entrepreneurship.

During the week of the festival, Ségou becomes the festival. Mohamed Doumbia, administrator of the Festival sur le Niger, explains what makes the festival one of a kind:

The festival differs from other tourist attractions because it always changes, innovates. The nature of the festival is local, national and international. To keep it working you need to change things at all three levels, to remain attractive at all levels. And it also works the other way round; the cooperation between the three generates the innovation.

Community members work voluntarily for the festival, selling tickets, building stages or doing whatever needs to be done to get the festival in place. The volunteers describe the festival as a whole. In the programme traditional and contemporary art are combined, as are big productions and small ones. There is something for everybody out there. "If you are a starting singer, there are opportunities to express your talents. At night the well-known singers perform for everyone," (Mrs Sidibé Bana, Siriman Sakho)<sup>26</sup>. Besides performing arts, there is room for exhibitions by visual artists and there are workshops where national and international artists work side by side.

Another aspect of the festival is the contribution it makes to the cultural development of the region. By giving contemporary art a prominent place in the programme, it makes a statement. Traditionally, art in Mali is part of daily life, performing at ceremonies, festivities or producing handicrafts.

Art needs to be untangled from society, from communal traditions, in order to transform into an independent activity, to become an act of an independent artist. That is what contemporary artists like Hama Goro (visual artist), Adama Traoré (performer) and Kardjiguée Traoré (dancer) strive for. They consider that a necessary step towards the development of African contemporary art. Even more traditional artists like the musician Abdoulaye Diarra acknowledge the importance of gaining more freedom in the artistic arena. So art and artists need to develop a separate meaning for art, distinct from its meaning in traditional daily life. This untangling from traditional values is necessary

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<sup>25</sup> Abdramane Dicko, economist at USAID and volunteer member of the organizing committee of the Festival sur le Niger

<sup>26</sup> Mrs Sidibé Bana, a lawyer, and Siriman Sakho, an engineer and manager of the festival. Both are volunteers at the festival.

to reconnect with local culture from a different, more autonomous perspective. Untangling art doesn't necessarily mean cutting it loose from society or the tradition it originates from. It is about creating a free space where art can find its own quality, its specific contribution to today's society.

There are various routes to take to untangle and reconnect to society in a new way. Hama Goro, an artist and initiator of the Centre Soleil d'Afrique (a visual arts centre), expresses this opposition beautifully based on his personal experience:

Traditionally, art is part of day-to-day life. It reflects the important things in life and symbolizes important transformations in life. Being an artist is something that is given to you by birth. You perform your art for and with the community. I look at art differently. I want to express what I experience, what I see, what's in me and I want to create my own reflections on society. That is not always understood by my community. Some of them think I am lazy, or accuse me of leaving tradition behind. That's not what I want. For example, I use a very traditional language to express myself, the language of the Bogolan. I transformed this traditional form of storytelling, symbolizing community and family needs into an abstract form of visual art. The tradition is my source. I am rooted in the tradition of my country and I am educated in western art. In my work these two visions on art interact.



**Figure 3.1** Works by Hama Goro, exhibited at Gallery Kôré during the festival in 2011

By opening the space of art to artists working from a more contemporary concept, the basic tenets of Malian art transform. At the festival the traditional and the contemporary come together, one does not replace the other, they simply influence and enrich each other, enlarging the artistic space. "The day when there is no difference any more between art from different countries and continents, then art would have achieved its main objective. But this is not true; there will always be a difference between arts. Art is a form of social consciousness. Creativity is always a reflection of the person's social environment. The artist's style is the result of his personality, not the result of a will that has been imposed on him. That is why in Africa there will always be artistic expressions that differ from art in France, or anywhere else (Oumar Kamara).<sup>27</sup>

The work of musician Abdoulaye Diarra, lead singer with the Balanzan Band, gives a more specific example of what Oumar describes:

Last October we made our first CD with a mixture of traditional and modern music. We create our own songs based on stories from and lives of important people in villages around

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<sup>27</sup> Oumar Kamara is an artist and historian

Ségou. We sing about the history of the communities, playing traditional music with a touch of modern style jazz and rock. We missed only the first edition of the Festival sur le Niger. Since then we have joined in every year, mostly on the smaller stages but last year we played on both the smaller and the large stage. At the beginning we won a prize, which was important, because with that money we could buy instruments. And the festival helped us to create networks.

Talking about his work, Diarra shows the importance of the festival for the development of their band. The festival enables them to perform not only to a local but also a national and international audience, at the same time opening doors to other stages and a huge network of musicians and performers all over. But most of all, the festival envisions the way contemporary art found its way into Ségovian society alongside more traditional art forms. This contribution of the festival goes beyond the bounds of the event itself.

Besides its contribution to cultural development, the festival contributes to the social development of the region. Wandering through the streets of Ségou, talking to people about their lives and the things they do, the spirit of the Festival sur le Niger can be felt almost everywhere, and throughout the year. A lot of what Ségou's inhabitants do to make a living is related to the festival. The festival has been held for ten years now. It has grown into an internationally recognized event with over twenty thousand visitors a year. New hotels are being built, many businesses have spun off from the festival and Ségou has been put on the map for travellers and tourists. But more than that, Ségou has been seeded with small entrepreneurs running businesses they can make a living from. The businesses that arose in the wake of the festival are diverse in nature, ranging from food and restaurants, lodging and crafts to technical installation, shops and galleries. In addition to the craft of weaving, other specifically regional types of craftsmanship were revived and helped people to make a living. An example is Bogolan, a traditional dye technique using clay to colour and design textiles.





**Figure 3.2** Bogolan cloth by artists at Ndomo<sup>28</sup>

Another example of increasing business opportunities coming with the Festival is its programme of accommodating festival-goers with Ségovian families for a fee, which is brought up by Kalifa Touré, the general secretary of religious association in Ségou and a member of the ethics committee of the Festival sur le Niger:

For example, regarding the fact that not all visitors can go to hotels. They have asked the population to make rooms in their houses available for foreigners. Of course, they could have asked hotels to build more rooms as well and that is the case, but that is still not enough and they did not put the emphasis on that. They put the emphasis on broader sharing of the income. So making sure that people from Ségou who don't have hotels can also gain an income from the festival. And that goes beyond money, because these are links, networks created between these people and guests that evolve during the festival.

In addition to the festival, the Gallery Kôrè and the cultural centre Kôrè were founded, enabling artists to exhibit and perform in the Ségou area all year round. The cultural centre houses a studio facility, so recordings can be made in situ. Moussa Berté, manager of the Gallery Kôrè, describes its activities:

Our objective is the promotion and development of visual art through multimedia and the exhibiting of visual art. We organize workshops, capacity-building of local actors, invite national and international artists to work and exhibit with us and of course we sell works of art to visitors to the gallery.

### **Maaya Society**

Serving humanity is not a choice once you acknowledge interdependency as a natural state of being. Serving humanity differs from serving a person or a group of people in the sense that whatever you do needs to contribute to the interaction between all of the people and the environment they are part of. Adama Traoré, director of Acte Sept, a school and theatre for the performing arts, tells the following old tale that explains the natural interdependency between all creatures:

It is about two salamanders that are fighting in the house. The chief of the house calls his dog: "I am leaving for a few days so you have to keep the house in order." Besides the

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<sup>28</sup> Ndomo is a centre where young people are educated in the craft of Bogolan, using clay to color textiles and to paint traditional symbols of family life on household materials. Normally, after mastering the Bogolan technique and symbols, students learn how to use them to provide for their own livelihood. At Ndomo they work the other way around. After being trained in the traditional skills, having mastered them, they are allowed the freedom to vary the symbols and techniques; a freedom that enlarges step by step, to the point where some of them actually grow from craftsman into artist.

fighting salamanders, he also leaves his mother in the house – she is spinning cotton to make clothes. Because she is old, she needs a fire to keep her warm. When the two salamanders start fighting, the dog goes to see the cock and asks him to help the dog find a solution to the salamanders' fighting. The cock says: "two salamanders fighting is not my thing. And what has this to do with me anyway?" After that, the dog asks the sheep, the cow and the horse for help. They all say the same thing: "I've nothing to do with it, it's none of my business". So the dog can't solve the issue of the fighting salamanders and they keep on fighting. While fighting, they fall into the old lady's basket of cotton. Clambering out, they take part of the cotton with them and run around the house. That's how the cotton gets set on fire, which leads to the house burning down. The chief's mother is too old to get out in time, so she dies. When somebody dies, it is important to inform the families and villages in the region. The only one who can do that is the horse. So, all day long, the horse goes from village to village telling people about the death of the old lady. At the end of the day he is exhausted, but the funeral is able to begin. For a funeral you need food. The first day you don't need that much food to serve the first group of visitors. So it is enough to kill the cock. Three days later, you kill a bigger animal for the next group of visitors - that is the sheep. And a week later they kill the cow for the last ceremony.

This little tale describes beautifully how the interdependency between different people works. We are all related as members of humanity, and although you might not be aware of that as yet, you would do well to act accordingly.

The Festival sur le Niger is established by combining elements of Western entrepreneurship with the local concept of Maaya. Maaya is an integral concept of humanity concerning the relationship between the individual and the community. Through Maaya, people understand the importance of that relationship and learn how to act accordingly. The principles of Maaya are applicable to every aspect of life: work, leadership, politics, education, festivities, day-to-day life, art, science and so on.

Maaya emphasizes the unbreakable bond between individual and community and gives people a framework to hold on to, provides them with a 'design for life'. The Festival sur le Niger is organized on the basis of Maaya and demonstrates that this approach to entrepreneurship is a catalyst for social, cultural and economic development.

Maaya can be identified as the sum of values, rules and attitudes based on the following general principles: humanism, respect for human beings and humanity, a sense of sharing and generosity.

There is a very famous Malian singer, a griot, who said: some people would spend the night without eating, while others have too much to eat during the night and throw it away. Even though you don't have enough food, your dignity wouldn't allow you to ask for it. It is Maaya that makes the other give it (Soumana Kané).<sup>29</sup>

Soumana Kané clarifies the relationship between the self Maaya (refusal to beg) and the Maaya of others (who offer without compromising the others' dignity), two sides of one relationship, in balance, to the benefit of the whole. Maaya enables every person and community to be respected and demands that every person and community respects the other.

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<sup>29</sup> Soumana Kané, a teacher, expert on Maaya and leader of the festival's traditional troupes committee

Maaya connects the individual with the group, with the community, on the level of values. This relationship between the individual and the group, between 'I' and 'We', is expressed in many ways. For example, in the way someone is naturally connected to the values of the community he originates from. He will always act based on that connection with others and will be treated and addressed as part of his community.

In order to relate to someone, you need to understand the community he is part of. Maaya asks that people are open and listen carefully, so they can come to a profound understanding of the values of the other person and the community he originates from. This mutual understanding on the level of values opens up the possibility of connecting to the unknown, to outside worlds, and can be a source of personal and social development.

The following attitudes are considered to form the base of being Maaya:

#### *Dambé*

This is the system of positive values you share with the group you originate from. It stands for your roots and contains the customs you are bound by. These values define who you are, give you dignity and connect you to your roots. Dambé places a person within the collective. It grounds a person in his community.

#### *Horonya*

Where Dambé makes you part of a bigger system, Horonya is what you might call *noblesse oblige*. It is your honour always to represent your community. Wherever you are, wherever you go, you are a representative of your community. You cannot divorce yourself from your communal values; when you express yourself you do so in relation to the values of the community you are part of. It is your honour and pride to speak and act with the voice of the whole.

#### *Maloya*

This is more a regulating principle meant to prevent you from getting into situations you are not able to live up to. Maloya could be translated as shame or humiliation, a state of being you want to avoid at any cost. Shame is a feeling that is related to the outside world; it is a feeling of being disgraced by the other.

#### *Samè*

*Samè* is the ability to understand other morals, or the values other communities live by. By understanding the other, you can take account of the impact your actions or speaking up may have on the other. This understanding helps you to avoid shame or humiliation. But it also enables you to open up to the unknown, to meet the stranger and to connect with the 'other'.

#### *Soro*

Literally meaning 'revenues' in the broad sense, tangible and intangible, including wealth and material sufficiency, Soro is about what accrues to you and/or your community. It is the result of what you do, within the context of your family and community, or the way you have been acting. What you gain is the result of collective action, so you need to be humble about your part in it.

#### *Kari, Wageya*

Displaying your (material and relational) availability to the other, to the Community – it is about sharing, being generous with your Soro. It is the joy of giving; it is your wish to share, to enable

others to live, to develop, to be part of the community. It is your obligation to share with your community, but always as a voluntary gesture coming from you. Not because you are asked to so. It is returning the favour you were granted, that helped you become what you are now.

#### *Diatiguiya*

This is the virtue of hospitality, being sociable and open to others, welcoming others to your community, to your house. Leaving no-one out.

#### *Sinankunya*

A very old system of joking relationships that creates links and correspondences between names, between ethnic groups and between different professions. Sinankunya is a way of acting that allows people of different status and from different groups to connect and communicate openly with each other. It relativises hierarchy and opens the door to change and bringing in cultures and communities.

Looking at each of these principles in turn, a general idea of Maaya emerges, as a set of principles or a cultural concept that enables a person to be embedded in a community, to connect to others, to help others, to mobilize others with respect to their culture and that of others. In the combination of being open and welcoming to the other, the stranger, lies the possibility of developing the community as a whole by connecting with values and attitudes that are different from one's own.

Maaya invites you to balance the best of both worlds, of We and I, of standing your ground and being open, always respecting differences. The principles of Maaya may lead to reluctance to change, and they often do as Hama Goro explains in his story, reject making contemporary art. At the same time it is possible to play them out to support change and development, and the Maaya way to make that happen is organizing consensus for an innovative idea.

You cannot take a shower without becoming wet. What is not good, the bad characteristics of tradition wash away with the water of modernity. So you are cleansed of the bad aspects of traditions, you become a new person. You will be modern and traditional at the same time (Dr Simaga).<sup>30</sup>

Based on Maaya, all decisions have to be made with everybody involved, nobody can be excluded. Within the boundaries of an organization, that might not be easy, but since organizations are part of the community, decisions concerning the community should be taken in consensus (Benkan) with the community. In the case of the Festival sur le Niger, Mamou and the founding team members have to gain the consent of the community. And that is done by excluding nobody, listening to them all, never imposing, simply proposing and asking the help of the right people in analyzing everything you hear, to come to the right understanding to base your next steps on. The way to do that is described by one of the participants in the dialogue:

The other thing is that a person should have the will to lead, to pave the way. When problems occur and are solved successfully, this person should have the humility to say, this

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<sup>30</sup> Dr Simaga, a pharmacist, expert on Maaya and Godfather of the Festival sur le Niger.

is not mine. What happens is not the fruit of my action; it was a common action that led to this result’.

Consensus is the fruit of being related to the community, of listening and having conversations with them.

After the process of getting consent, that community will help you to avoid making mistakes and to keep acting in alignment with the consensus achieved. They monitor whether the general values are still being preserved. The network around you (people representing different interests, who were involved in coming to a consensus and others who make the implementation possible) will make you aware, warn you, and correct you. This way of working improves and constantly educates the people involved in the Festival sur le Niger.

To commit the community to the festival, it was necessary to get them engaged in something in between tradition and modernity, in two ways: allowing its members to enter the free space where they could explore contemporary art as artists and as sponsors. Second, to allow the community to mingle some of the more general entrepreneurial principles with Malian values.

It turned out to be a long and difficult route to explain, to convince all stakeholders to express support for a festival that aimed to develop art, culture and the local economy and could actually contribute to their well-being. Only once the first results had been achieved and the benefit for each participant had been demonstrated, were the majority ready to step in. Although still hesitant, they were able to give the initiative the benefit of the doubt. Another very difficult challenge was overcoming the resistance towards contemporary art. Since the combination of contemporary and traditional art is the heart of the festival, community support for it is vital.

The community, and some of the local and participating artists, had to overcome their doubts about the importance of introducing contemporary art in a local festival.

Because the community had agreed unanimously on the festival, it was possible to overcome this issue. At the same time Mamou Daffé and his staff made sure that art brought in some money for artists, while gaining recognition for them and advocating the development of the cultural professions. In discussing the festival with the community and the artists, Mamou had been clear about his intentions: bridging tradition and modernity. Although not everybody was happy with that, the whole community allowed him to proceed on that basis. Thanks to this consensus, the resistance to contemporary art could be dealt with by bringing it back into a community dialogue. Having a consensus on values is vital in order to achieve social and cultural development. Any change that is not rooted in an agreement with the community will be resisted. Without this consensus, the traditional cannot be transformed to meet today’s local and global requirements.

#### **Worldview of Festival sur le Niger**

##### *Maaya entrepreneurship*

- Intertwining Maaya with the Western idea of entrepreneurship and organizing
- Combining the traditional with the contemporary (in art and in organizing)
- Balancing the whole and the pieces
- Interdependency is a natural state of being



- Serving humanity
  - Being rooted in your community and the community's values
  - Being open for the stranger and the yet unknown
  - Understanding the other and taking account of the impact your actions or speaking up may have on the other
- Sharing with and being available for others (material and relational)

**Figure 3.3**      **Worldview of Festival sur le Niger**

## 3.2 Maaya Entrepreneurial Valuing

Being part of the community and supporting the community is the first priority of any enterprise in a developing country (Mamou Daffé).

The festival has been held for over ten years now. When I talked to people about the festival, they were all very proud of what they had achieved. Some of the artists had gained international recognition thanks to the festival. Local technicians are now equipped to run the festival completely, and craftsmen and women found a new market for their products. Although everybody credits Mamou Daffé with these successes, they all feel appreciated and rewarded for their contribution to the development of the festival.

When knowledge or experience wasn't available locally, people from further afield were invited to come and contribute and teach their skills to the local community. Step by step, the process became more and more efficient. Organizational skills like planning, producing, reproducing, distributing, control, organizing, structuring and quality became part of the way of working in organizing the festival. Maaya and effective and efficient entrepreneurship were intertwined at every stage.

A nice example is the story of Colette Traore, co-founder of a women's weaving cooperative:

Ten local women put our money together to buy a loom. That's how we started our cooperative. There were two main reasons for starting it. The first was to re-establish the traditional forms of weaving in a contemporary way and the second was to help people make a living. We produce fabrics for all kind of purposes. Clothing, tablecloths and bedding. Since the advent of the festival, we have grown considerably. For example, we supply the set builders with our materials. We create the costumes for some of the performers. For the festival, we work together with all the other organizations in the field of weaving, dyeing, sewing and so on. Together we ensure that everybody gets a fair share of the work so that nobody is excluded from the benefits of the festival.

Colette's story indicates that entrepreneurship involves not just sharing success but actually helping each other by passing on work to colleagues working in the same field.

The entrepreneurship Colette is talking about is competitive, but in terms of making a difference rather than pushing others out of the market. In fact, entrepreneurship in Ségou is more about creating a common market. That process of building an entrepreneurial playing field is explained succinctly by Mohamed Doumbia, the administrator of the Festival sur le Niger:

The whole idea has been to build on something else. For example, Mamou's enterprise ESEF, they sell air-conditioning and do the maintenance. This organization helped Mamou create the hotel. Then there was the association of hotel managers, who initiated the festival.

Initially the festival was on the shoulders of the hotel. Now the festival takes on other things, such as the cultural centre. The festival enables many people to start their own businesses. One thing leads to another and another. That's the family spirit guiding us in organizing the festival.

Looking at the businesses in Ségou, three principles for entrepreneurship appear to be key in Maaya entrepreneurship. Colette cites the importance of sharing the benefits with others in the community. It is not about making the highest possible profit for your own business, but about enabling everyone to make a living out of the festival. Entrepreneurship is about establishing something in the world you are part of. Making a profit is not the aim but the means to an end: just as the festival needs an entrepreneurial spirit to contribute to the enhancement and development of artistic expression and cultural development.

The first principle of entrepreneurship is therefore having the will to establish something with others. And the second is making a contribution to the development of an entrepreneurial playing field by inspiring and fostering new businesses.

The last principle of entrepreneurship can be found in Colette's story as well as in the history of the Festival sur le Niger. It is about combining tradition with modernity. About merging indigenous and scientific economic knowledge, intertwining traditional and modern production skills and about interweaving traditional and contemporary products and services.

Today Maaya entrepreneurship is finding its own way. Companies offer their shoulders for young entrepreneurs to stand on. Almost automatically, one activity leads to another and another. Learning is capitalized upon, better understanding of materials leads to new applications, and transforming traditional skills paves the way for new products. Maaya entrepreneurship is the spark for social, cultural and economic development based on merging the contemporary with the traditional. That is the spirit of Maaya entrepreneurship.



**Figure 3.4**                      **Ways of Valuing of Festival sur le Niger**

### 3.3 Maaya Entrepreneurial Organizing

The Festival sur le Niger turned out to be a catalyst in the social, cultural, social and economic development of the community of Ségou. An economic system based on relationships between the individual entrepreneur and the community, between entrepreneurs themselves and between traditional and contemporary artists and entrepreneurs has been established.

The concept of Maaya entrepreneurship and a Maaya way of valuing products evolved from the entrepreneurial and social activities undertaken in initiating and realizing the Festival sur le Niger. Experiment by experiment, by trial and error, the concept evolved to what it is now. Mamou tells me that looking back at his career, long before he started the Festival, his organizational style was already quite Maaya.

One of the insights that ignited Maaya organizing comes from the video clubs (Alphi) that Mamou worked for and owned. These clubs were more meeting places than shops where people came to rent a video. Many of them did rent videos of course, but the main reason for coming was to catch up with each other. Looking back, Mamou realized that facilitating the community had a huge impact on the economic success of his company.

Djibril Guissé, an expert in local economic development working for the CPEL (*Conseil pour la promotion de l'économie locale*), explains it as follows:

I think it is necessary to integrate Maaya into modern organizations. In the old days an organization was a family business structured by family commitment and values. If you break that link you lose the community's support for your activities. It is important to use this base to build a modern organization on, because the person is the centre of everything. You need

people around you that help you. What creditability and honour are for the family, should be the base for modern organizations as well.

These stories illustrate two major principles in the relationship between entrepreneurs and the community: one is to interact with the community and its members, and the second is to base the structure of your organization on community or family-like values.

Another important value in organizing is that it should be rooted in consensus. Consensus on value and intentions. In the concept of Maaya, any action to be taken is conditional upon consensus. This doesn't mean that you need to seek consent for everything you want to do; rather, you need to have consensus on the values underlying your actions. This consensus must be achieved by (representatives of) all members of the community, not excluding anyone or any group.

In initiating and setting up the festival, Mamou compares his role to that of a motor continuously driving the initiative forward to completion. "You can't let go of it," he says "not for a single moment, any transformative idea like this needs attention and needs to be energized, all the time, all the way." Getting the support of the community takes time and it helps if you are imaginative. Looking at the road the festival's founders took, it becomes clear that they had to be very inventive to overcome all kind of setbacks, times when they got stuck and were misunderstood by people they tried to involve. Overcoming that calls for imagination, for the creativity to explore alternative routes or to find solutions to the seemingly insoluble. Imagination helps to link people and thus link their ideas and opinions. This concerns the ability to elevate the various ideas to a connected story that contains all the elements brought in by people and the community and that rises above the individual stories. It is about being able to fill in the blanks in between, to imagine what emerges from a mosaic of ideas, people and opinions that creates a new story from which everybody can benefit.

Bridging two quite different concepts itself calls for imagination to figure out a way to design a blend that combines the best of both. To operationalize it, you need to imagine where people can meet in between tradition and modernity. How people can be your employees and your entrepreneurial family at the same time. But most of all, it is about being able to see what can be. To envision a concept, to express what you imagine the future will be like.

The environment is reflected in your expression, as is your personal knowledge and imagination,

says Oumar Kamara,<sup>31</sup> referring to the creative process of artists. Creations like the Festival sur le Niger can be compared to that process in the sense that they also contain the reflections of the environment, in this case Maaya and general entrepreneurial principles, and the knowledge and imagination of its founding fathers.

You need to be imaginative to let people experience your ideas. So they can imagine what it will be like once things have been achieved. You need to seduce them into following you, awaken their enthusiasm and gain their support.

Besides all that, you need the imagination to see people in their surroundings, as a person in the context of a larger group. To envision the community to which they belong, of which they are part, because the only way to really understand them is to see them in relation to their family, their

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<sup>31</sup> Oumar Kamara, an artist, historian and teacher at the University of Mali

community and their ethnicity. Even if you don't know all of the community members and their values yet, you must be able to see them, to feel and imagine where they belong.

Once people stepped in, the concept of the festival cooperating and learning becomes very important. No one knows how to translate the concept into a day-to-day reality. It needs trial and error to figure out the best ways to work along.

Tiémoko Diarra, who works at Motel Savane and is responsible for hotel reception and management, describes how he cooperates with Mamou: "When I joined the company there were only four rooms. There are over thirty now, and a conference room."

The relationship between Mamou and me developed by gaining confidence little by little. He is like an older brother to me, to all of us. Talking about the hotel management, we have open discussions about what works and what doesn't. In developing the hotel to what it is now we looked for solutions to whatever came up together. Mamou says this company is not for him but for all of us. If it works, it works for all of us, if it doesn't; it doesn't for any of us.

The proof of sharing the benefit lies, for example, in the fund he set up for the employees in case one of them has a problem. Besides that, there is a fund for doing things together. It is an open and transparent system. Everybody feels responsible. "We feel that it is not only the boss who makes a profit." Tiémoko continues, "Everybody knows whether there is profit or not, and which investments are made, or which project are started. Even if there is no money in the social fund, Mamou will take money from his own pocket to help out an employee in trouble. When I started here I was very young. So Mamou rented a house for me, paying the rent and the electricity. And I could eat at the hotel, so my basic needs were taken care of. That gave me confidence and created my desire to work for this enterprise. You feel like a co-owner of the company."

People need to be educated to realize the festival or their businesses.

Mamou makes me trust and believe that, even without a degree, I can do my work well. I just have to believe in what I am doing. Mamou says: If you believe in what you do, that normally makes it work. Since then, I believe in what he told me. That's what I mean when I speak about building mutual confidence. Even when he reads a book, he tells me about what he found out. That is how I learned to do my job. To trust him and myself in the same movement (Tiémoko).

Working with people means working with their family and their community. You can't cooperate on the base of functionality only.

A person is not only the individual but also someone who is seen within the society where he comes from. The individual is a person in its narrowest sense of the word. If you look behind that, at the family, ethnic group, caste, or region the person is coming from, then you will look at the person in its wholeness. That is how the person within Maaya is understood. (Naffet Keita).<sup>32</sup>

An organization as a family and a colleague needs to be the road others can walk on. Listening and respecting each other is crucial. "There could be problems: people could be critical, people could go

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<sup>32</sup> Naffet Keita, anthropologist at the 'Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts, et Sciences Humaines' of the University of Bamako

beyond and say things that are not normal, but you have to ignore all these and be tolerant. You have to understand that a person is more than just the words he is saying. The most important thing is to stay truthful” (Adama).

Hence decision making should be based on Samè (being able to understand other) and Horonya (the honour to represent your community). Before taking a decision you make sure that everything known about a specific subject is on the table. Everybody involved should have had the opportunity to bring in their ideas. In practical terms, this means an organization has to set a clear framework before asking people (who are involved in this subject) to contribute their ideas. After everyone has been heard, what has been put on the table needs to be analyzed. What is personal, what helps the situation and the community forward and what enriches the direction to choose. This process of sense making is collective, because no one is able to understand it all by himself. Everything needs to be understood in the cultural context of the person who brought something up. Based on all that, the leader proposes how to move forward. He does not impose things. If he makes the right analysis, and does justice to the community, the proposal will be accepted, partly as a result of his authority.

Western entrepreneurial organizing	Maaya entrepreneurial organizing
<p>Profit based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business like relationships</li> <li>• Decision-making based on hierarchy</li> <li>• People are functional, separate from who they are and where they come from</li> <li>• Functioning apart from the context</li> <li>• Competitive focus</li> </ul> <p>Task based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualistic: success is a result of personal effort</li> <li>• Servicing people’s work</li> <li>• Organization is bounded private space</li> <li>• Organization is body of knowledge</li> </ul> <p>Being focused on the own organization and oneself</p>	<p>Based on agreed values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family like relationships</li> <li>• Decision-making based on consensus</li> <li>• People are whole beings related to their family and community</li> <li>• Functioning in relation to the context</li> <li>• Focus on sharing: giving all businesses the chance to make a living</li> </ul> <p>Trust based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Togetherness: success is the result of joint effort</li> <li>• Taking care of people’s lives</li> <li>• Organization is an open public space</li> <li>• Organization is body of learning and development</li> </ul> <p>Being salient of the other and the environment</p>

**Figure 3.5** Organizational concept of Festival sur le Niger

### 3.4 Summary

This chapter’s objective is to investigate five case studies from Africa, Asia and Europe showing how social entrepreneurs respond contextually by bringing in culture, nature and people. Festival sur le Niger illustrates an organizing practice that is dominantly led by culture. Festival sur le Niger is rooted in a Maaya worldview. A worldview about togetherness and relatedness of people within the community and beyond; a worldview that includes many aspects of life including art and entrepreneurship. Combining and interweaving this worldview with a more Western view on

entrepreneurship and contemporary art leads to a way of organizing a cultural festival that brings out the best of both worlds. A social entrepreneurial concept that in itself and as a goal contributes to social and cultural development. Unlike Enviu and Tapworld, this way of organizing starts local and inspires other local and international organizing concepts.

This case study illustrates a local collection of small-scale entrepreneurial activities all bound together towards one collectively organized festival. A community of entrepreneurs enabling local and national social development and inspiring regional and international cultural and entrepreneurial organizational development.

Comparing Festival sur le Niger with Enviu and OS House illustrates the difference between in bringing people first or bringing in culture first. Enviu focuses on people, aiming to increase quality of life for individual people. Festival sur le Niger aims to increase quality of life for a community as a whole and predominantly emphasizes culture. OS House combines the two, aiming to improve quality of life for (extended) families. Bringing in nature, like Tapworld and SGV do, substantiates their aim of benefitting an eco-system which includes people.