



Bridging the “Pioneer Gap”:

The Role of Accelerators in Launching High-Impact Enterprises

A report by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs and Village Capital

With the support of:



Ross Baird
Lily Bowles
Saurabh Lall

The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)

The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) is a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship in emerging markets. ANDE members provide critical financial, educational, and business support services to small and growing businesses (SGBs) based on the conviction that SGBs will create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth, and produce environmental and social benefits. Ultimately, we believe that SGBs can help lift countries out of poverty. ANDE is part of the Aspen Institute, an educational and policy studies organization. For more information please visit www.aspeninstitute.org/ande.

Village Capital

Village Capital sources, trains, and invests in impactful seed-stage enterprises worldwide. Inspired by the “village bank” model in microfinance, Village Capital programs leverage the power of peer support to provide opportunity to entrepreneurs that change the world. Our investment process democratizes entrepreneurship by putting funding decisions into the hands of entrepreneurs themselves. Since 2009, Village Capital has served over 300 ventures on five continents building disruptive innovations in agriculture, education, energy, environmental sustainability, financial services, and health. For more information, please visit www.vilcap.com.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- I. Introduction
- II. Background
 - a. Incubators and Accelerators in Traditional Business Sectors
 - b. Incubators and Accelerators in the Impact Investing Sector
- III. Data and Methodology
- IV. The Landscape of Impact-Focused Accelerators
 - a. Geographic Scope
 - b. Organizational Structure
 - c. Funding Sources
- V. Enterprise Pipeline and Selection
 - a. Sector and Impact Objectives
 - b. Enterprise Stage of Development
 - c. Enterprise Recruitment and Selection
- VI. Services and Benefits
 - a. Duration and Frequency of Program
 - b. Services Provided
 - c. Post-Program Support
- VII. Accelerator Networks
 - a. Types of Formal Partnerships
 - b. Partnerships with Impact Investors
- VIII. Metrics and Evaluation
 - a. Financial and Social Performance Data Collection
 - b. Accelerator Graduate Performance
- IX. Measuring Accelerator Performance: First Steps
- X. Conclusions and Next Steps
- XI. Recommendations

Acknowledgments

Appendices

List of Surveyed Accelerators

List of Surveyed Investors

References

Executive Summary

Over the past several years, researchers and practitioners have increasingly highlighted a consistent gap in capital and support between social enterprises and impact investors, a gap which incubators and accelerators can play a critical role in bridging. These organizations support early-stage social enterprises by providing them with a range of services, such as business development support, mentoring, infrastructure, as well as access to networks of investors, foundations, and corporations. This report represents the first quantitative assessment of the impact accelerator landscape, with data from 52 organizations globally, collected by ANDE and Village Capital between November 2012 and February 2013.

We present findings in 6 key areas:

- **The Landscape of Accelerators:** While nearly 75% of all accelerators in our sample rely on some level of philanthropic support, about one-third are structured as for-profits, suggesting that they expect to develop sustainable revenue streams in the future. Currently, over 50% of all funding for accelerators is from philanthropy.
- **Enterprise Pipeline and Selection:** Employment, economic development, health, clean energy, and agriculture are the most common impact areas that accelerators focus on. These accelerators typically spend 1-2 months recruiting each cohort, but are not as selective as traditional business accelerators.
- **Services and Benefits:** The majority of accelerators provide the same set of core services – mentorship, access to investors, networks of partners, and business skills development. About 50% also provide direct funding to the enterprises.
- **Accelerator Networks:** Accelerators also seek to develop formal partnerships with a range of different types of organizations, including impact investors, commercial investors, foundations, governments, and universities. However, many impact investors prefer to maintain informal relationships with accelerators, though they do not commit any capital to the accelerator's operations or its enterprises.
- **Metrics and Evaluation:** While the majority of accelerators collect financial data, almost one-third do not collect any social performance data. Additionally, 23% of the accelerators in our sample did not collect data on the status of their graduate enterprises, making it difficult to assess their performance.
- **Measuring Accelerator Performance:** We found that selectivity and partnerships with in-country commercial investors are associated with higher accelerator performance. However, we did not find any relationship between accelerator performance and the level of philanthropic funding.

This report is the first step of our broader initiative to strengthen incubators and accelerators in the impact investing ecosystem. We believe our research will provide significant value for the enterprises, investors, and funders that support accelerator services, in addition to the accelerators themselves. Our work will provide answers to critical questions that will allow entrepreneurial firms to make more educated decisions about whether to join an incubator, and if so, which one. It will inform accelerator managers about best-in-class practices and provide mechanisms to improve their performance. Finally, foundations, investors and development institutions will be able to assess the impact of their investments and identify strategies to scale or replicate successful incubator models.

I. Introduction

Bridging the “Pioneer Gap”

Despite an age of unprecedented global wealth, billions of people worldwide live in poverty. Over the past decade, however, governments, the nonprofit sector, and the business world have proactively explored the ability of small and growing businesses (SGBs) to reduce poverty, particularly in emerging markets. The promise of market-based solutions to social problems has generated much excitement about “impact investing”—an investment strategy seeking positive social/environmental returns beyond financial. According to a 2013 JPMorgan/GIIN study, a total of \$17 billion is expected to be deployed into socially beneficial sectors in 2012-2013.¹ However, this capital is not yet reaching many of the innovative SGBs that can contribute to poverty alleviation through the jobs they create, and the products and services they provide. While social enterprises continue to emerge (Village Capital alone has seen over 5,000 applications from impact-focused entrepreneurs worldwide over the last three years.), many innovative companies in their early stages have found difficulty in getting off the ground. They are still not able to access and take advantage of this new flow of capital or other support and resources they need to succeed.

A 2012 report from Monitor-Deloitte and the Acumen Fund highlights this paradox—“The Pioneer Gap: While thousands of early-stage innovators seeking impact launch companies worldwide, very few are able to build the teams, find the customer base, or raise the investment necessary to scale.”² The “Pioneer Gap” specifically refers to the burden shouldered by enterprises that are pioneering new business models for social change. Monitor-Deloitte and Acumen identify four stages that these firms typically progress through, from the blueprint stage, to validation, preparation, and finally, scale. The “Pioneer Gap” occurs between the early stages in an enterprise’s growth, when it is not considered investable by many impact investors.

The “Pioneer Gap” hypothesis is supported by additional research on this sector. In an industry survey conducted in 2012 by Village Capital, of over 300 self-described “impact investment” funds, fewer than 10 invested at less than \$250,000/company.³ Additionally, a Monitor-Deloitte study of African impact investors found that only 6 of 84 invested at the early stage.⁴

Impact investors cite “lack of appropriate capital across the spectrum” and “lack of investable enterprises” as the top two barriers to deploying more impact investment, suggesting that the bottleneck of (a) not enough quality companies in the early stage and (b) not enough effective support to produce later-stage investable companies is thwarting the growth of this sector.

The Role of Accelerators

Over the past several years, actors in the impact investing sector have developed a growing recognition that early-stage support—specifically, in the form of business incubators and accelerators—is a key intervention to addressing the “Pioneer Gap.” Business incubators and accelerators support early-stage entrepreneurs by providing them with: (a) business development support (e.g. consulting, technology assistance); (b) infrastructure support (e.g. access to office space, shared back-office services); (c) network support (e.g. access to potential customers, investors, mentors), and (d) financial support (in the form of grants/investments). This study surveys 52 impact-focused accelerators worldwide, to better understand their characteristics, operations, and performance.

Incubator or Accelerator?

In traditional business sectors, “incubators” and “accelerators” generally focus on different stages of enterprise development - incubators typically serve earlier stage enterprises (pre-customers and pre-revenue), while accelerators support enterprises with existing customers and revenue. However, we have found that these differences are less distinct for the impact investing sector. For the purposes of this paper, we will use the term “accelerator” to describe an organization that provides some subset of the support outlined in this report, at any stage of development.

Social Entrepreneurship or Impact Investment?

Several terms over the past thirty years have been used to describe market-based solutions to social problems: “social entrepreneurship”, popularized by Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka; “impact investing”, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Global Impact Investing Network, Base of the Pyramid businesses, coined by Prahalad & Hart, and several others (e.g. “Triple-bottom-line investing, Inclusive Business.”) Given that accelerators are typically both enterprise and investor facing, for this report, we will use “impact investing” & “social enterprise” to encompass all business activity that seeks to use markets to address social problems, as well as investment strategies that proactively seek social/environmental returns in addition to financial returns.

This research is particularly timely. Over the past five years, the number of accelerators has grown significantly—73% of accelerators surveyed are fewer than five years of age. While the role of accelerators in entrepreneurship has been studied to some extent—and we will review the existing literature in the next section—studies are largely limited to accelerators focused on technology companies in developed markets (U.S. and Europe). Very little research exists on accelerator activity in emerging markets, and almost none on the role of accelerators focused on impact investment. With over 40 impact focused accelerators founded in the last half-decade, an accurate assessment of what accelerators are doing and where is necessary—so that we can eventually understand how accelerators are doing in addressing market-based solutions to poverty.

ANDE and Village Capital believe there is a pressing need for a more holistic, evidence-based approach to leverage the potential of incubators and accelerators, and to understand what makes them successful. This report “Bridging the Pioneer Gap,” builds on an earlier piece of research conducted by Village Capital, and represents the first data-driven analysis of the social enterprise accelerator landscape. Through a comprehensive survey of accelerators’ pipeline, services, networks, and outcomes, we expect findings to be relevant to accelerators, impact investors, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, and the broader field of SGB development.



II. Background

a. Incubators and Accelerators in Traditional Business Sectors

The study of social-impact focused incubators and accelerators is in its infancy. However, the collected research on business incubators and accelerators in developed markets provides a basis for guidance in this study.

The critical focus of researchers, prominently Vanderstraeten, McMullen, and Sherman, stress that any accelerator has a relatively high financial cost for funders (as a percentage of funds deployed, compared to traditional venture capital) and time-cost for participants; as a result, they stress the upfront importance of performance evaluation for accelerators, yet recognize that measuring performance is often challenging.⁵

Lalkaka states that the performance of a business incubator should be measured by “the survival and growth of the businesses it incubates.” However, there is little consensus among researchers on the best measures for enterprise growth.⁶ Various studies suggest growth in sales, employees, cash flow, and assets as measures of success. Vanderstraeten and Matthyssens review the literature on incubators and accelerators, and suggest the following two measures of performance: (1) Number of companies which have had an IPO or were acquisition targets, (2) Number of companies which have not had an IPO or been acquired, but are still active.

There is some consensus on the key factors that lead to accelerator success:

- **Organizational Resources:** Some research suggests that ‘resource dependency’, or the funding structure for accelerators can have an impact on their performance. Chandra and Fealey suggest that over-reliance on philanthropic support can have a negative relationship with accelerator performance.⁷
- **Selection:** A number of studies confirm that enterprise selection has a critical relationship with accelerator performance, and a rigorous selection process enables incubators and accelerators to evaluate key enterprise characteristics. Screening best practices include evaluating managerial, product, and financial characteristics, as well as market dynamics.⁸
- **Quality of (and Access to) Services:** The same researchers suggest that access to professional management services, as well as other supporting resources (administrative support, accounting, marketing, legal support), are considered important—yet the *quality of services* and *period of engagement* have a stronger relationship with the success of an accelerator.⁹
- **Networks:** Haanasalo and Eckham argue that the most important factor for incubator success is organized networking, with the most critical service being a strong network of experts, potential investors, and business contacts.¹⁰

Yet to date, conclusive evidence on accelerator performance is mixed in traditional business sectors. Both Ferguson and Löfsten suggest that startup companies with accelerator intervention have a higher survival rate¹¹ and rate of sales growth¹², compared to similar startup companies without exposure to an accelerator. Conversely, Amezcua studied a nationally representative sample of firms in the US and found that in fact, incubated firms fail 10% sooner than their non-incubated counterparts. Incubated enterprises demonstrate short-term employment and sales growth, but fail sooner, suggesting that the protective environment of an incubator may actually inhibit the firms from developing resilient routines and competencies¹³. In this same vein, in his study of business incubators in Europe, Ratinho found that there is often a mismatch between the services that incubators offer and the needs of participating enterprises¹⁴.

Underscoring all these findings are the relative paucity of significant research conducted on accelerator inputs and enterprise outcomes—necessitating an exploration of the “impact investing”/“social entrepreneurship” landscape.

b. Incubators and Accelerators in the Impact Investing Sector

According to our findings, the number of accelerators serving impact enterprises has grown rapidly in the last five years (over 70% of the accelerators surveyed were founded in 2008 or later). Despite this strong growth, limited research and data-driven analysis of accelerators' role in the impact investment ecosystem exists. This report is a first step towards generating a greater understanding of accelerators in the impact investment sector, and is part of a broader strategy to analyze, evaluate, benchmark, and strengthen accelerators. This report is not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of impact accelerators, but rather an initial assessment of the landscape of these organizations.

We have divided this report into six sections:

- **The Landscape of Accelerators:** We present an overview of the data collected from 52 incubators and accelerators between November 2012 – February 2013, focusing on key descriptors such as organizational structure, finances, geographic scope, and human capital. This overview presents a valuable landscape of a growing group of accelerators proactively seeking impact beyond financial returns.
- **Enterprise Pipeline and Selection:** We discuss key impact areas, the stage of the enterprises they support, and their recruitment and selection processes.
- **Services and Benefits:** In this section, we examine the various services that accelerators provide to their enterprises, the duration of their programs, and the frequency of the mentoring sessions. We also study post-program support that accelerators provide.
- **Accelerator Networks:** We review the various kinds of formal partnerships that accelerators typically seek, with impact investors, commercial investors, foundations, governments, and universities. We also present findings from our survey of investors, about their connections with accelerators.
- **Metrics and Evaluation:** We discuss accelerators' efforts to collect financial and social performance data from their enterprises, and identify gaps in current practices.
- **Measuring Accelerator Performance:** In this section, we examine which factors (in terms of organizational age, structure, selection, services, and networks) are associated with improved accelerator performance, drawing from the literature on traditional incubators and accelerators. We do not suggest any potential causality through this analysis, but expect the findings to provide guidance to more rigorous evaluations of social enterprise accelerator performance in the future.

Based on our findings, we highlight common conclusions and trends that we hope can help funders, investors, and enterprises better leverage accelerators to drive enterprise impact and growth. We conclude by providing a series of recommendations for these various groups.

III. Data and Methodology

Village Capital launched the first phase of this project in Spring 2012, gathering initial data from accelerators in the impact investment sector, and joined ANDE in Summer 2012 to integrate initial findings into a broader research strategy on accelerators. In October 2012, Village Capital and ANDE shared findings from an initial survey of 25 accelerators at SOCAP, and other conferences, in the report “Bridging the Gap: The Role of Accelerators in Impact Investing”.

Based on the feedback from various stakeholders, including impact investors, accelerators, foundations, and academics, Village Capital and ANDE revised the survey in October 2012, sending it to 50 additional accelerators identified through our networks in mid-November 2012. The 25 original respondents also received a supplemental survey to enable comparable data points from the first research report. In January 2013, we identified a further 122 incubators and accelerators through F6S, a website that serves as a bulletin board for upcoming incubator and accelerator programs for startups. We asked all accelerators surveyed upfront for “impact objectives beyond financial returns,” and allowed accelerators to state that they “have no impact objective beyond financial returns”, in order to enable a comparison of impact-focused accelerators to non-impact focused programs.

Initial feedback from the first report also focused on investors: given 98% of accelerators surveyed listed “access to investors” as a primary benefit of the program, industry feedback suggested that an appropriate study of the accelerator landscape should also focus on investors’ engagement with accelerators. We surveyed 60 impact investors on different variables surrounding their relationship with accelerators.

After significant follow-up via e-mail and phone from December 2012-February 2013, we closed the surveys in mid-February 2013, with a final response rate of 33% (65 out of 197 accelerators). Additionally, we received a 60% response rate for the investor survey (36 out of 60 investors surveyed).

We dropped 7 incomplete responses due to insufficient data, leaving us with 58 complete responses. However, only 6 accelerator respondents identified themselves as having “no impact objectives beyond financial returns”, which was not a sufficient sample for a reasonable comparison between impact-focused and non-impact focused accelerators. We dropped these 6 observations, and have focused on examining the 52 social impact-focused accelerators in this study.

In our findings, we provide descriptive statistics on key aspects of accelerator characteristics and performance, and also conduct some preliminary analysis of the factors that may contribute to better performance. We used t-tests to compare accelerators’ performance in different categories related to organizational structure and funding, selection, services, and networks. Given the relatively small sample size, and the fact that all the data are self-reported, we are cautious about making strong inferences at this stage.

However, we suggest that these findings will be helpful in pointing the way for further, more rigorous analysis of incubator and accelerator performance. We are currently developing a more extensive analysis on this topic by building a longitudinal dataset of social enterprises—both accelerator and non-accelerator graduates—to find relationships between accelerator interventions and enterprise performance, as well as an evaluative framework to assess accelerator performance.

IV. The Landscape of Impact-Focused Accelerators

a. Geographic Scope

Of the 52 accelerators surveyed, 27% are open to enterprises across the globe (e.g. the Unreasonable Institute and the Global Social Benefit Incubator are open to ventures worldwide) ; 31% operate are open to ventures from specific regions (e.g., GrowthAfrica is open to ventures from East Africa; Agora Partnerships is open to ventures across Central America and Mexico), 35% operate nationally (e.g. Artemisia is open to ventures in Brazil; New Ventures-Mexico is pan-Mexico), and 8% operate in specific cities (e.g. the SEHub focuses on Singapore-based ventures). The majority of accelerator operations in this study are Africa-focused.

Figure 1: Geographic Scope

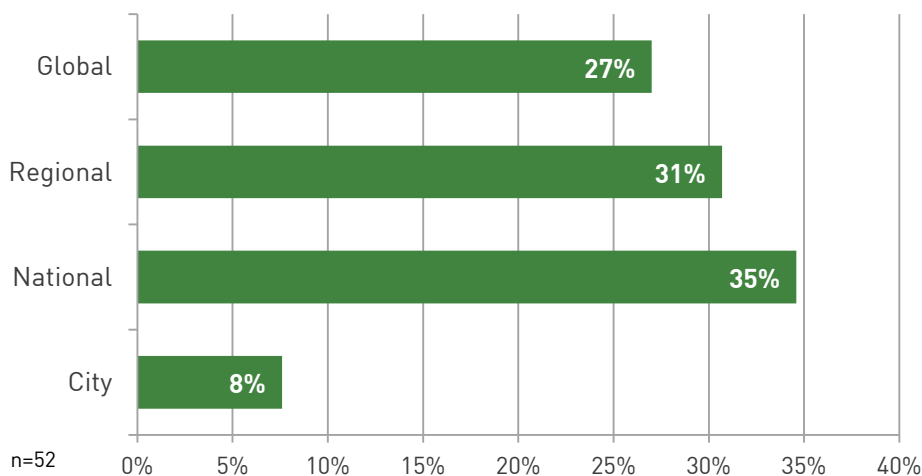
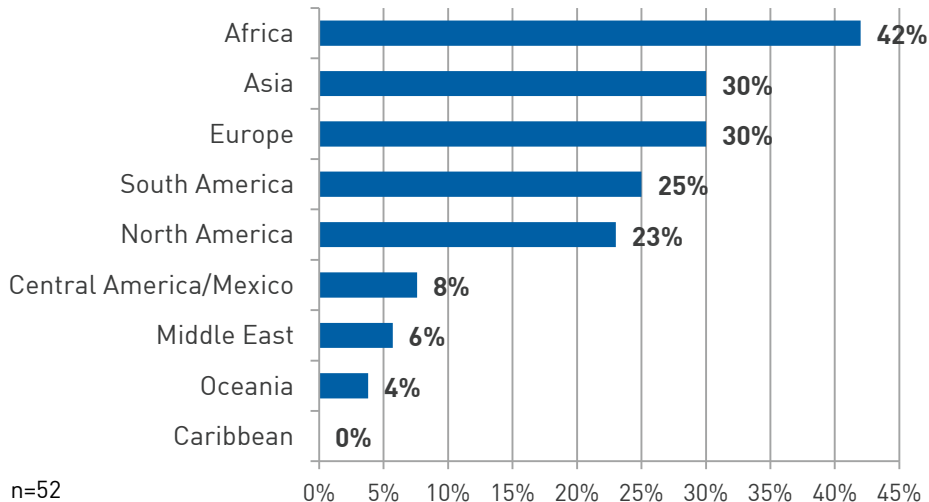


Figure 2: Geographic Focus



Human Capital

With the growing awareness of accelerators' valuable role in impact investment, these organizations are attracting significant human capital and resources to their operations. On average, accelerators employ about 11 staff members (8 full-time and 3 part-time employees).^{*} Older accelerators (those that were founded before 2008), are considerably larger, with an average of 27 employees, compared to younger accelerators (that have about 6 employees), suggesting that accelerators have the potential to scale. As newer accelerators become more established and strengthen their operations, we expect them to develop the resources to attract and retain strong talent.

** We excluded a large accelerator with 280 employees for this estimate. If included, accelerators in the sample would have an average of 17 employees.*

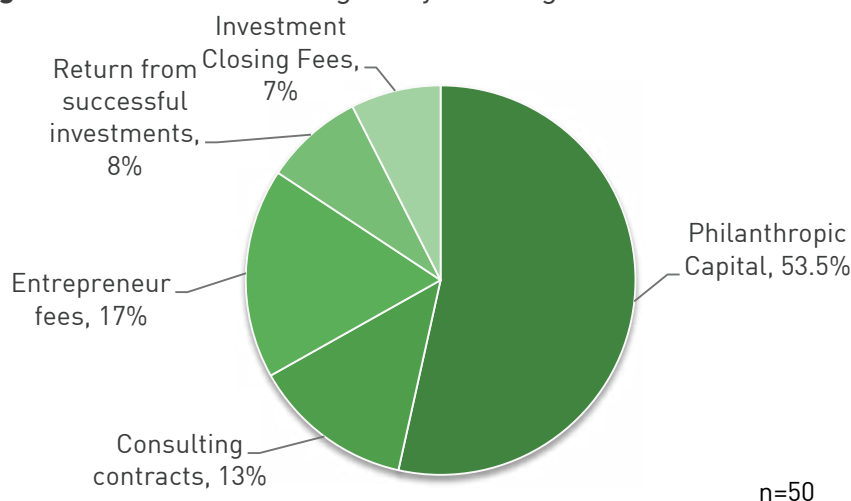
b. Organizational Structure

As a baseline analysis of accelerators, we first analyzed organizations' founding, structure, and sources of funding. As mentioned before, accelerators are relatively new—72% were founded in the last five years, though the oldest in our sample was founded in 1996. Perhaps counter-intuitively, impact-focused accelerators seem more focused on developing revenue streams beyond philanthropic support than traditional business accelerators: while research on incubators and accelerators in traditional business sectors suggest that the majority are structured as non-profits¹⁵, interestingly, 38% of the accelerators in our sample are set up as for-profits, 44% as nonprofits, and 17% as hybrids.

c. Funding Sources

Accelerators appear to have sufficient resources to operate—but are by no means self-sustaining. In fact, 57% of the respondents stated their financial condition as “operating smoothly”, while 16% report operating with a surplus. Only about a quarter of the respondents said they were “strapped for cash”.¹ Accelerators' current sources of revenue include, in order (with detail on each below): (1) Philanthropic capital; (2) Program Fees (3) Consulting Contracts; (4) Return from Successful Investment; and (5) Investment Closing Fees.

Figure 3: Accelerator Budgets by Funding Source



Philanthropy

Even though almost two-thirds of the accelerators we surveyed report being structured as for-profits or hybrids, 74% of all accelerators rely on philanthropic support for their operations, and 54% of the total amount of capital currently used by accelerators is from philanthropic sources. This finding suggests that while many accelerators expect to develop revenue streams in the future, the majority of them are also likely to rely on grants to support some portion of operations for the foreseeable future.

Entrepreneur fees

About one-third of the accelerators surveyed charge participants fees, while an additional 17% plan to have fees in the future. On average, accelerators charge \$1,300 per enterprise, ranging from \$120 to \$5,000 (excluding 3 outliers that charge \$10,000 or more).

¹ We received 37 responses for this question (71% of the sample).

Consulting contracts

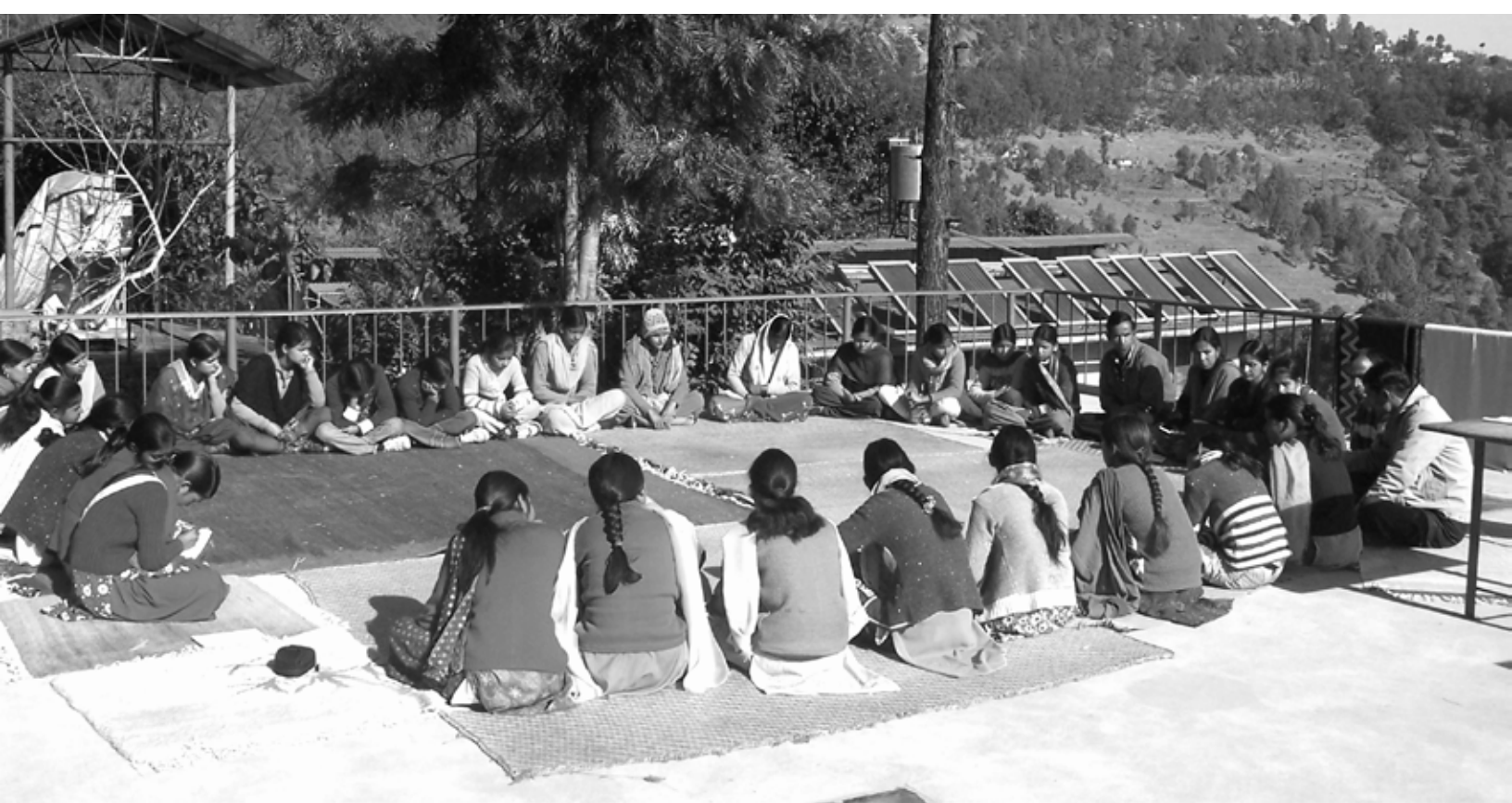
The second-highest source of accelerator budget is revenue from consulting contracts. Accelerators have a unique position of high exposure to a large volume of enterprises, and are able to monetize their expertise in two ways: (a) research on knowledge and insights gained from enterprise exposure, and (b) direct business development assistance provided to entrepreneur graduates.

Returns from Investment

Returns from investments represent a small overall percentage of revenue (8.2%), though nearly half the accelerators surveyed report taking some equity in the enterprises that go through their programs. This is fairly unsurprising given that the sample of accelerators is relatively young, and liquidity events from impact investments are rare, and can take several years to materialize.

“Success Fees” From Investment

98% of accelerators promote access to investors as a valuable service of the program, and many monetize this service through charging “success fees” for investments brokered. While this remains the lowest budget line-item of all accelerator budgets, nearly 7.5% of all accelerator budgets are funded by success fees.



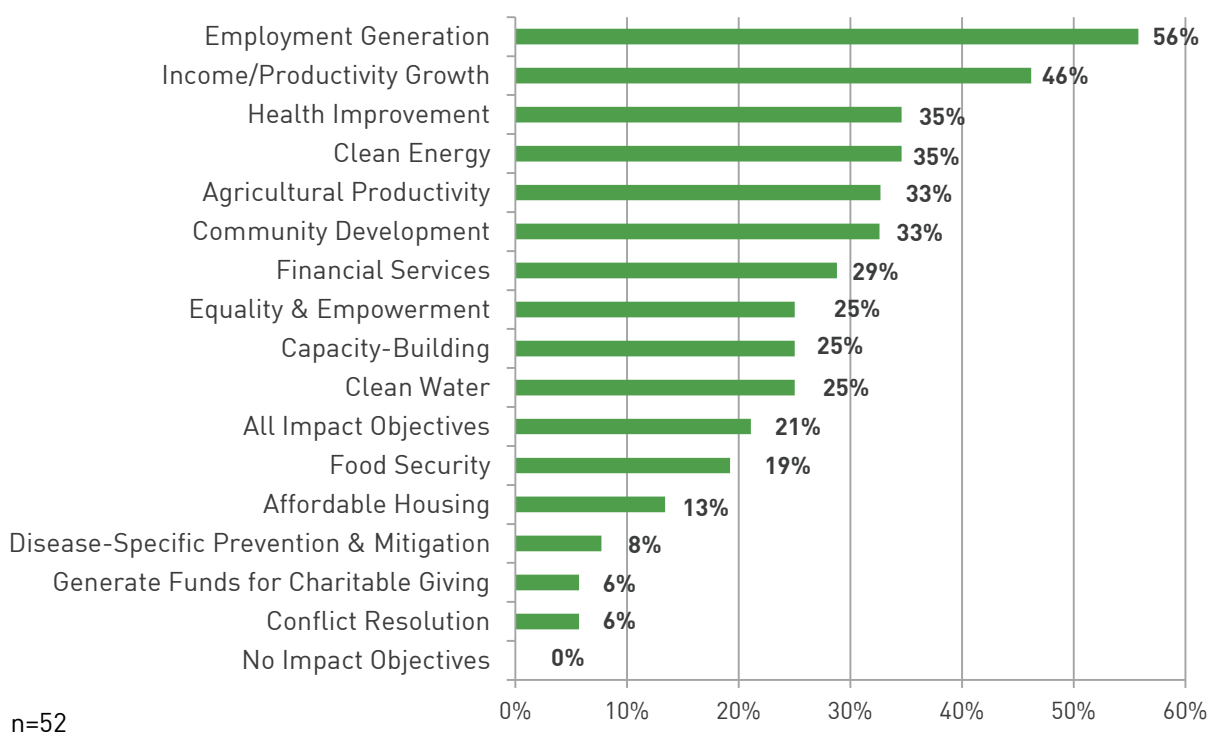
V. Enterprise Pipeline and Selection

a. Sector and Impact Objectives

20% of accelerators focus on entrepreneurs from one particular sector, 40% work with entrepreneurs from several specific sectors, and 40% of accelerators are not sector-specific. As certain sectors continue to grow, we expect to see more specialization among accelerators.

We focused our study specifically on incubators and accelerators that claim to have at least one impact objective beyond financial returns. Based on our sample, the types of impact objectives can be broadly categorized under two categories: “Employment” and “Products and Services for the Underserved”. The majority of accelerators surveyed (56%) focus on employment generation and income and productivity growth (46%), aiming to stimulate socio-economic development by supporting SGBs. However, a significant proportion also focuses on supporting enterprises working in health (35%), clean energy (35%), and agriculture (33%). This finding is consistent with previous data that suggest these three sectors are the largest and fastest growing in impact investing (ANDE, 2012).

Figure 4: Impact Objectives



b. Enterprise Stage of Development

The accelerators surveyed work with enterprises in a range of developmental stages, ranging from the idea stage to the growth stage (Figure 5). To focus on specific areas where accelerators have intervened in ventures, we clearly defined four areas of enterprise development and identified the percentage of accelerators that self-reported working with ventures in each stage (some accelerators reported multiple stages):

- **Idea stage** (40% of accelerators): The proverbial “idea on paper”; ventures at this stage do not yet have a working prototype, good/service/product, or customer.
- **Prototype stage** (75% of accelerators): the most common stage for accelerators, “prototype stage” is a phase where accelerators have a working “minimum viable” model of their good or service, but do not yet have revenue.

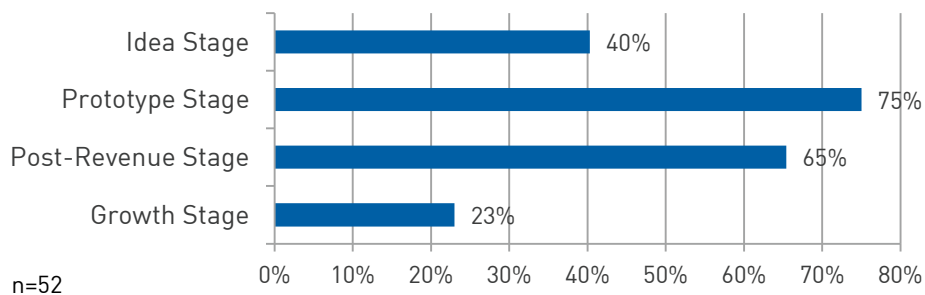
- **Post-revenue stage** (65% of accelerators): Ventures have customers and typically functioning revenue models; however, their business model is not yet at scale, and they are not yet cash-flow positive, and they typically have not raised significant financing outside “friends and family.”
- **Growth stage** (23% of accelerators): Ventures are operating business models at scale; they typically are cash/flow positive and/or have raised significant outside venture financing.

Of particular note is a less-clear distinction between incubators and accelerators in the social enterprise space than in traditional business sectors, where these roles are more clearly defined. Social-enterprise focused accelerators tend to work across a fairly wide spectrum of enterprise development stages, perhaps reflecting the relatively limited pipeline of firms.

Figure 5: Enterprise Development Stages



Figure 6: Enterprise Stage of Development



c. Enterprise Recruitment and Selection

The 52 surveyed accelerators have worked with a total of 20,216 entrepreneurs in their history. Accelerators devote a significant amount of resources upfront to the recruitment and selection process. While 7% of accelerators spend less than a month on recruitment activities, 33% spend between three months and one year on recruitment. Most commonly, 60% of the accelerators surveyed spend between one and three months recruiting each new cohort.

Accelerators recruit entrepreneurs through a host of different channels. The most common sources cited by accelerators include:

- 1) Referrals from entrepreneurs affiliated with the accelerator,
- 2) Impact investors (individuals and investment funds),
- 3) Commercial investors (individuals and investment funds that do not self-identify as impact investors,
- 4) Entrepreneurial associations (fellowships, scholarships) in the social impact space,
- 5) Entrepreneurial associations that do not identify with social entrepreneurship or impact investing,
- 6) Universities,
- 7) Industry associations focused on specific sectors,
- 8) Sector-specific conferences (e.g., agriculture, education),
- 9) Social entrepreneurship or impact investing conferences,
- 10) Inbound requests from program marketing efforts and social media,
- 11) Outbound direct, “cold-call” recruitment (e.g., finding and contacting entrepreneurs on the web, Facebook, LinkedIn)

But not all sources are equally helpful. In order, accelerators ranked the following sources as most helpful:

- 1) Referrals from entrepreneurs affiliated with the accelerator (“helpful” by over 50% of the organizations surveyed)
- 2) Inbound requests from program marketing efforts (30%);
- 3) Referrals from entrepreneurial associations (19%);
- 4) Referrals from upstream impact investors (15%).

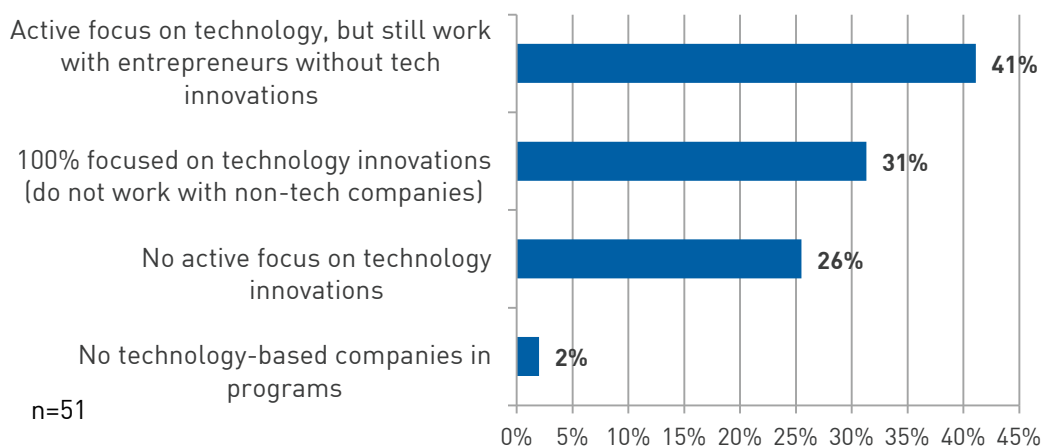
Interestingly, social entrepreneurship and impact investing conferences were listed as the least helpful. This finding is somewhat surprising, considering the prevalence of conferences in the sector that promote themselves as a means of identifying entrepreneurs. However, it may also be the case that social enterprise conferences typically feature more successful and mature enterprises, making them a less useful source of early stage companies that might apply to participate in accelerators.

Technology and “Invention-Based” Enterprises

While accelerators do not necessarily need to be focused on technology/invention, we studied the degree to which accelerators were actively focused on “invention-based enterprises” (which we define as enterprises that have a core technology that was invented/created by the founding team, who owns or seeks to own core intellectual property on the invention).

25% of accelerators surveyed focus exclusively on working with enterprises that have technology and/or an invention at the center of their enterprises, while another 41% have an active focus on technology (but still work with non-technology or invention-focused entrepreneurs). Only 31% have no active focus on tech innovations, and only one accelerator had no technology-based companies in its program.

Figure 7: Focus on Technology and Innovation



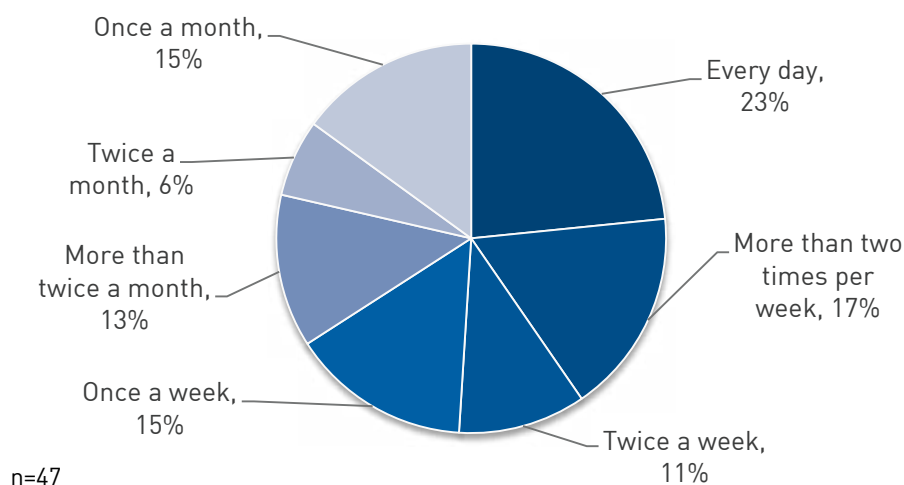
Based on our sample, accelerators in the impact investment sector appear to be less competitive in terms of selection—with an average acceptance rate of almost 21%—than accelerators in the traditional business sector, which accept about 5% of applicants.¹⁶ The exact reasons for the lack of selectivity are unclear, though it is possible that there is simply a much smaller pipeline of socially oriented enterprises. Additionally, it is possible that, due to the high percentage of accelerators earning revenue from entrepreneur fees, investment returns, and success fees, accelerator managers may admit enterprises more readily in order to bring in more revenue. Philanthropic support may also be linked to the number of entrepreneurs supported, which would also encourage accelerators to accept a greater percentage of applicants. But selectivity matters: in Section IV we compare accelerators that accept 10% or fewer of their applicants, to less selective accelerators, on the basis of key performance characteristics.

VI. Services and Benefits

a. Program Duration & Frequency

The average duration of surveyed accelerator programs is six months.² The frequency of meetings during this time period varies widely, ranging from every day (26%) to once a month (14%), with many different meeting frequencies in between (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Frequency of Program Sessions

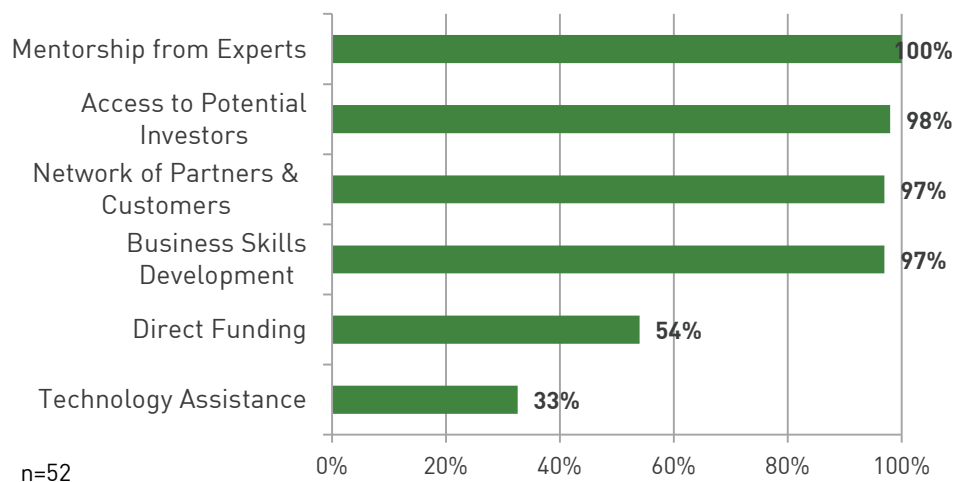


b. Program Services & Benefits

83% of accelerators describe their support approach as “high-touch”. In this case, social impact-focused accelerators appear to be similar to the majority of incubators and accelerators in traditional business sectors that provide “high-touch”, highly tailored services to a small group of enterprises.

Almost all surveyed programs provide the following benefits: mentorship from experts (100%), access to potential investors (98%), network of partners and customers (97%), and business skills development (97%). The majority of programs provide direct funding (54%), while a minority provides technology training and assistance (33%).

Figure 9: Accelerator Services and Benefits



² We excluded two outliers that have 60- and 84-month engagement periods. If we include those organizations, the average duration would be over nine months.

Other self-identified benefits of accelerators include: media exposure, brand recognition, access to a co-working space, referrals to vetted talent and human capital, exposure to relevant and timely R&D, and membership in an extensive alumni network consisting of other like-minded entrepreneurs, service providers, and investors.

However, the existing literature reinforces that just because a service is provided, it does not necessarily mean that the service is of high-quality. We expect to dive deeper into this issue through the next phase of our research strategy by collecting enterprise-level data from ventures who have participated in accelerators, and comparable enterprises that have not received accelerator support.

c. Post-Program Support

The majority of accelerators (66%) offer post-program support to all of their graduates at no cost. 28% percent of accelerators provide post-program services for free on a case-to-case basis, while 4% provide services on a case-to-case basis for a fee. (2% do not provide post-program support at all due to a lack of bandwidth or resources.)

Of the accelerators that do provide post-program services to their entrepreneurs, 21% of accelerators offer services between one and six months after an entrepreneur graduates from their program, and 9% offer support between six to eight months. The majority (70%) offer services beyond nine months, and may extend as long as the entrepreneurs' ventures exist.

The types of post-program services offered to entrepreneurs include: public relations opportunities, connections with investors, board participation, HR/recruitment support, regional meet-ups, alumni networking, and online communities listing funding and promotion opportunities).



VII. Accelerator Networks

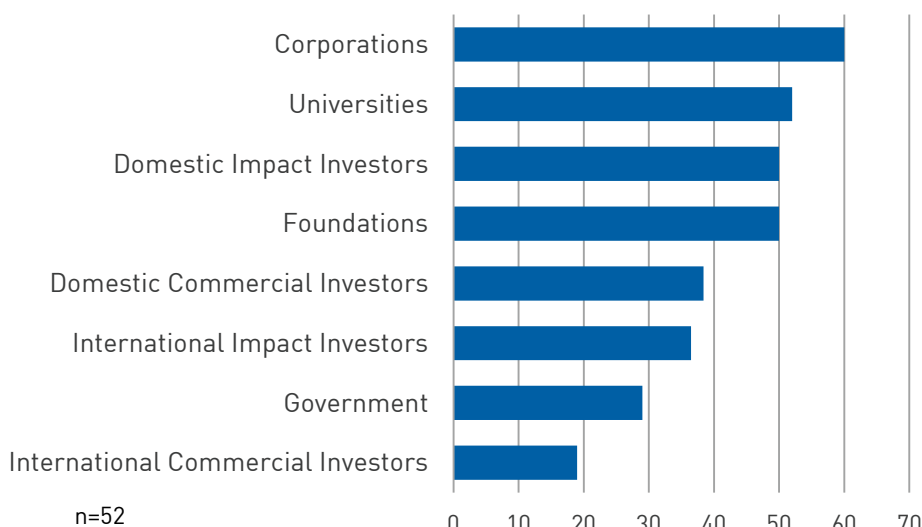
a. Types of Formal Partnerships

Many accelerators have formal partnerships with other organizations, which we define as:

- 1) **“pipeline/deal flow partners,”** which recommend enterprises for the accelerator program and attend events/pitchfests, but do not commit financial support to either the accelerator or the entrepreneurs,
- 2) **“enterprise support partners,”** which pre-commit capital to enterprises, but do not fund the accelerator program’s operations,
- 3) **“organization support partners,”** which fund accelerators’ organizational/operational expenses, but do not fund the underlying enterprises, and
- 4) **“enterprise and organization support partners”** which commit capital to funding both the accelerator’s operations and the underlying enterprises.

Accelerators have formed partnerships with five main groups: (1) Corporations, (2) Universities, (3) Investors (4) Foundations, and (5) Governments (Figure 10)

Figure 10: Types of Organizations With Which Accelerators Have Formal Partnerships

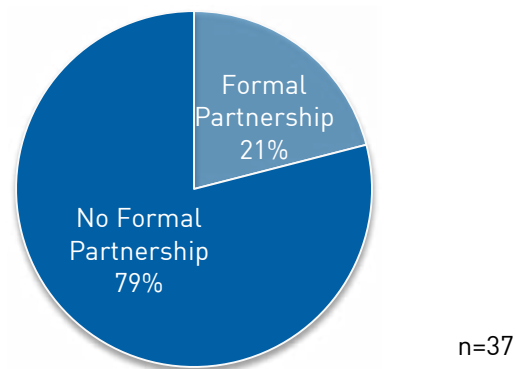


b. Partnerships with Impact Investors

To corroborate our data from the accelerator survey and to better understand accelerators’ connections with impact investors, we also collected data from 37 impact investment funds. Only 21% of the investors we surveyed had established formal partnerships with accelerators. The most common reasons for not partnering with an accelerator included:

- “Mandate fit.” (43% of investors surveyed). Impact investors viewed accelerators as valuable “feeders” for their pipeline, but did not consider it within their mandate to fund them directly.
- “Not additionally useful.” 23% of investors also stated that they were able to meet their current investment goals without relying on accelerators.
- “Interested, but no current partnerships.” 16% of the investors stated that they were interested in pursuing formal relationships with accelerators, but had not done so yet.

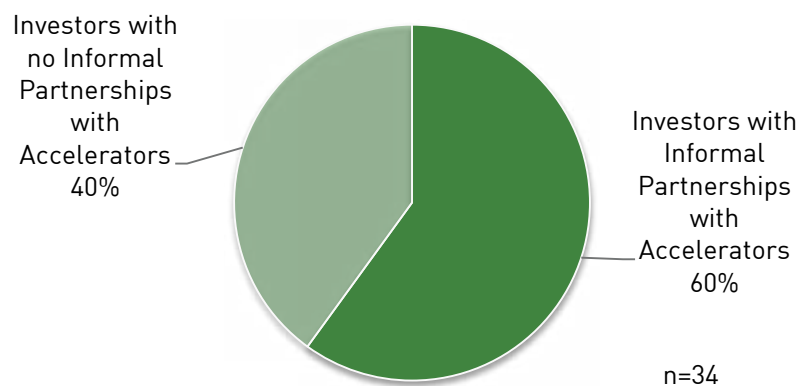
Figure 11: Impact Investors that have a Formal Partnership with an Accelerator



Despite the lack of formal partnerships and funding from impact investors, 60% of the investors in our sample did report having informal partnerships with accelerators. We define an informal partnership as one in which an investor “regularly communicates with accelerator staff, attends events, or stays otherwise informed, with a primary goal of obtaining deal flow, but does not fund the accelerator directly.”

The range of accelerator/investor engagement is wide across the board. Some accelerators are in sync with impact investors: 32% of investors report that up to 20% of their portfolio was sourced from accelerators. Yet a plurality of impact investors do not rely on accelerators for “deal flow” - 47% of investors report that 0% of their current portfolio was sourced from accelerators.

Figure 12: Impact Investors with Informal Partnerships with Accelerators



Co-Working Spaces

Many accelerators’ work is made financially viable due to operating out of free or affordable co-working spaces. In fact, 61% of accelerators surveyed maintain a formal partnership with a university, organization, or co-working space (e.g. the Hub) to lessen the cost of their operations.

Our findings underscore the critical need for philanthropic support for accelerators in the near term, but also raise important questions about aligning the services that accelerators provide with the needs of impact investors. Many impact investors do not look to accelerators for deal flow, and the majority do not contribute to accelerators’ budgets in any formalized and consistent way. We suggest that accelerators need to more accurately calculate the specific value that they add for investors in terms of lower searching and due diligence costs, and design their pipeline and curriculum in collaboration with experienced investors. ANDE is pursuing additional research on developing a framework to analyze the value created by accelerators (described in Section X).

VIII. Metrics & Evaluation

Based on our analysis, metrics and evaluation is a key target area for improvement for impact-focused accelerators. Most notably, a significant proportion of organizations that we surveyed do not track financial or social performance data on an ongoing basis, making it difficult to assess performance and establish benchmarks for the sector.

a. Financial and Social Performance Data Collection

We asked accelerators to report on the status of their graduate enterprises. While the majority of accelerators (96%) never collect financial data from enterprises, 23% do not track the status of their graduate enterprises, which makes it difficult to evaluate their performance. We noticed the following gaps in accelerator data analysis:

- **Lack of any data collection:** Of the accelerators we surveyed, 4% do not collect any financial performance data from their enterprises, while 20% do not collect any social or environmental performance data (Figure 13 & 14). We find this discrepancy surprising, given the impact-oriented focus of these accelerators. Potential interventions to improve the impact-oriented data collection with accelerators could be support for the introduction of standardized reporting frameworks (such as IRIS and GIIRS) also used by investors and capital providers in the sector.
- **Data tracking venture performance over time:** Additionally, 14% of the respondents only collect financial data at a single point in time (e.g. at the beginning or end of their program), and 15% only collect social and environmental data (n = 48) at a single point (Figure 15). This makes it difficult to assess whether there is any change in the social or financial performance of the enterprises that go through these programs.
- **Accelerator-driven data collection mandates.** Finally, 28% of respondents consider reporting by their program participants to be “optional”³. The majority of the accelerators that do require reporting expect enterprises to provide data for at least one year after the end of their programs, and about one-third require reporting as long as the enterprise is in operation.
- **Data collection methodologies.** The primary method of collecting data also varies widely, with 64% of accelerators collecting data through in-person interviews or during site visits, 52% via phone, and 50% via email or online mechanisms. The variety of methods used in data collection also affects how reliable and unbiased the data are.

³ 43 accelerators responded to this question (83%).

Figure 13: Financial Performance Data Collection

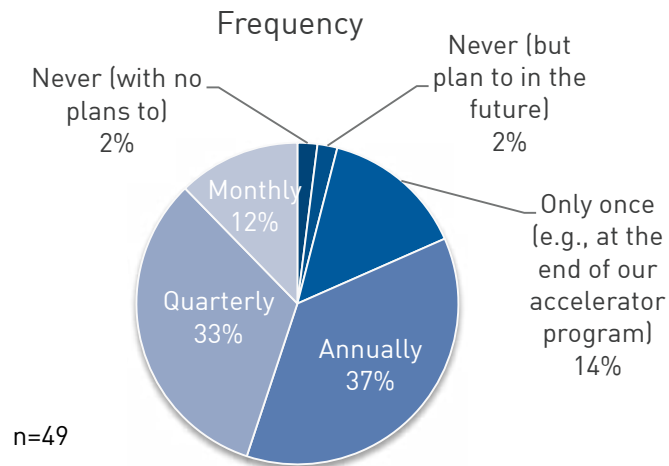


Figure 14: Frequency of Social & Environmental Performance Data Collection

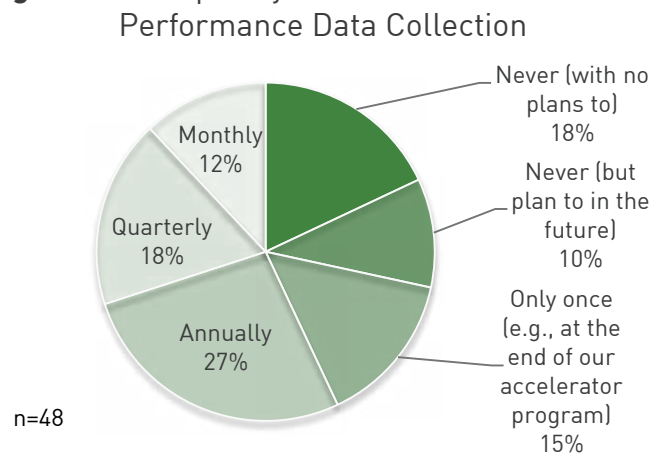
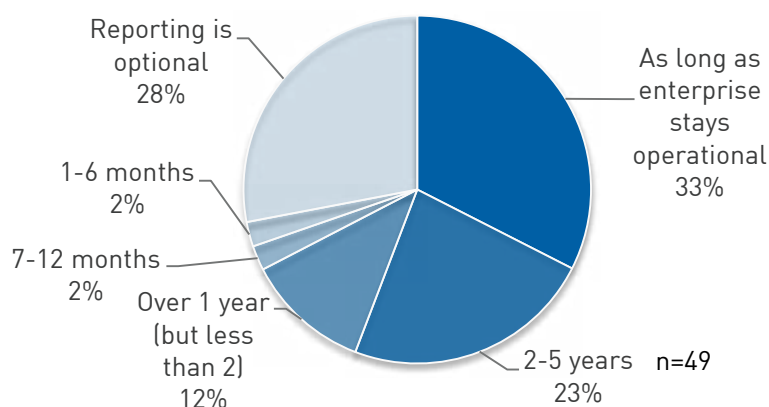


Figure 15: Data Reporting Period



b. Accelerator Graduate Performance

About 77% of the accelerators in our sample track the status of their graduate enterprises, though their data collection methodologies are varied and incomplete. We analyzed the performance of ventures that graduated from the accelerators that do collect data (n=40). 31% of the enterprises are reported to be profitable and/or have received major investment, another 46% are still in operation but are not yet profitable and/or have not yet received major investment, and about 10% of the enterprises are no longer operating. There is no data available on 13% of the enterprises, even for the accelerators that do track their enterprises.

IX. Measuring Accelerator Performance: First Steps

Based on research on incubators and accelerators in developed markets, we analyzed among the sample size of this study 4 key factors that typically affect accelerator success: **Organizational Funding Sources, Selectivity, Services, and Networks**. Additionally, we also analyzed the variable of **Accelerator Years in Operation** to compare older accelerators (those that have been in operation for over 5 years) to younger accelerators. We used the following two (self-reported) variables as measures of accelerator success, consistent with the literature on incubators and accelerators¹⁷. We conducted independent sample t-tests to compare average performance measures across different categories for these factors.⁴

- **Enterprise Success Rate:** Percentage of graduate enterprises operating at a profitable level, and/or having raised major investment (\$500,000 or more)
- **Enterprise Survival Rate:** Percentage of graduate enterprises that “are operating at a profitable level, and/or have raised major investment (\$500,000 or more) OR “Are still operating, but are not yet profitable and/or have not yet raised necessary investment” (i.e., inclusive of previous category)

Accelerator Years in Operation

While there are many accelerator characteristics that can influence their performance, on average, we hypothesized that older, more established accelerators would perform better, given their experience and track record. As mentioned previously, 72% of accelerators are relatively young (under 5 years old). The research seems to suggest some validity to our hypothesis: older accelerators do perform better in terms of their enterprise success rates, with an average of 46%, compared to only 25% for younger accelerators, a difference that is statistically significant at the 5% level. However, we do not observe any statistically significant differences in terms of survival rates, with older accelerators achieving an 80% survival rate, compared to a 76% survival rate for younger programs. A more thorough study would investigate whether the discrepancy in results is due to graduates of older accelerators having more time to develop successful business models—the enterprise-level study we are proposing as a follow-up to this initial study can more thoroughly investigate this hypothesis.

Table 1: Comparing Accelerators by Age

	Accelerators founded before 2008 (n = 11)	Accelerators founded after 2008 (n = 29)
Avg. Enterprise Success Rate	46%	25%
Avg. Enterprise Survival Rate	80%	76%

Organizational Funding Sources

In our sample, we found that about two-thirds of respondents relied primarily on grants for their operations (defined as over 50% of annual revenue). However, we did not find any significant differences in this study in the enterprise success rate or the enterprise survival rate. On average, grant reliant accelerators had an average enterprise success rate of 29%, and a survival rate of 74%, while those that were not, had a success rate of 35%, and a success rate of 82%.

Table 2: Comparing Organizational Funding Sources

	Majority Philanthropic Support (n = 27)	Majority Non-Philanthropic Support (n = 13)
Avg. Enterprise Success Rate	29%	35%
Avg. Enterprise Survival Rate	74%	82%

⁴ The Independent Sample t-test is used to compare averages for two groups of cases (e.g. for-profit/non-profit), to see if any differences are statistically significant. A result may be significant at the 10%, 5% or 1% level, which means that you are 90%, 95%, or 99% sure of a difference between the means in this sample, respectively. We provide sample means for various categories, along with sample sizes in parentheses.

Selectivity

We found that, consistent with general theory on incubators, selectivity is a key characteristic of successful incubators/accelerators in the social-enterprise sector. In traditional incubator literature, a 5% acceptance rate is considered a characteristic of a good program. Incubators in the social enterprise space are still relatively new, so we defined accelerators that accept 10% or fewer of their applicants as “Selective”, and the rest as “Non-selective”.

We were only able to gather data points from 34 accelerators for this part of the analysis, so it is difficult to draw definitive inferences at this stage. However, in conducting t-tests across selective and non-selective accelerators, we found that selective accelerators do appear to perform better, with an average enterprise success rate of 39% and an average enterprise survival rate of 91%. In comparison, non-selective accelerators have an average enterprise success rate of 24% and a survival rate of 69%. The differences are weakly significant (at the 10%) level. However, we believe more research is needed to understand why social enterprise incubators in general are not as selective, and the extent to which selectivity factors into accelerator performance. By encouraging more accelerators to collect data from their graduate enterprises, as well as developing a longitudinal dataset of enterprises, we hope to examine this issue in more detail.

Table 3: Comparing Selective and Non-Selective Accelerators

	Selective (n = 21)	Non-Selective (n = 13)
Avg. Enterprise Success Rate	39%	23%
Avg. Enterprise Survival Rate	91%	69%

Services

We received data from 52 accelerators globally. We found that the majority of accelerators provided the same core services: (1) Business skills training, (2) Mentoring, (3) Network of partners/customers, and (4) Access to potential investors. The only area of differentiation was whether or not an accelerator provided direct funding to its enterprises as part of its program.

39 accelerators responded to the question on provision of direct funding. Surprisingly, we found that accelerators that do not provide direct funding appear to have higher enterprise survival rates, though the results were not statistically significant. On average, accelerators that did not provide any direct funding had enterprise survival rates of 84%, compared to those that did (71%).

Table 4: Comparing Accelerators that Provide Direct Funding to those that do not

	No Direct Funding (n = 17)	Direct Funding (n = 22)
Avg. Enterprise Survival Rate	84%	71%

Networks and Partnerships

As discussed previously, accelerators partner with a wide range of organizations, including investors (both commercial and impact-focused), foundations, universities, corporations, and governments. We found no apparent differences between accelerators that partnered with the following types of organizations, and those that did not:

- International Impact Investors
- Domestic Impact Investors
- International Commercial Investors
- Foundations
- Universities
- Governments

When we compared accelerators that had formal partnerships with “domestic commercial investors” such as local banks, angel investors and venture capital funds in their networks, we found differences in the average enterprise success and enterprise survival rates. In this sample of 40 accelerators, those that had formal partnerships with these investors had a 41% success rate, and 85% survival rate, on average. In comparison, accelerators that did not have formal partnerships with these types of investors had an enterprise success rate of 26%, and an enterprise survival rate of 72%. The differences in the enterprise success rate were also weakly significant at the 10% level.

It is interesting to note that formal partnerships with impact investors were not statistically related to enterprise success rates for these acceleration programs, suggesting a potential disconnect between accelerators and investors with similar impact objectives.

Table 5: Comparing Accelerators that have Partnerships with Domestic Commercial Investors to those that do not.

	Domestic Commercial Investor Partnership (n = 15)	No Domestic Commercial Investor Partnership (n = 25)
Avg. Enterprise Success Rate	41%	26%
Avg. Enterprise Survival Rate	85%	72%

X. Conclusions and Next Steps

The number of incubators and accelerators providing tailored support to social enterprises continues to grow. In many countries, these incubators and accelerators are the first entry point for social enterprises into a broader ecosystem and impact investing community that can help them grow at a key stage of development, creating the opportunity for organizations to play a critical role in bridging the “pioneer gap.”

This study identified several key variables that are related to the success and failure of accelerators, as well as several key gaps that may be holding back accelerator success. We have outlined key findings below, and developed recommendations in light of these findings.

Partnership with in-country commercial investors matter

For many impact accelerator graduates, the next step in financing may not be impact investors (in an Emory-Village Capital study in 2012, fewer than 10 impact investors made investments of less than \$250,000 per enterprise). However, traditional commercial investors—banks, angel networks, and strategically aligned corporations who find a particular interest in the impact objective of the accelerator. The form of partnership that generated the greatest difference between enterprise success rates was the “domestic commercial investor”: local investors who were able to provide funding to ventures, but did not necessarily self-identify as “impact investors.”

Two relevant examples: Nigeria’s Wennovation Hub, which has partnered with Google-Africa in a goal to enable all ventures to use Google products to build their businesses, and Nairobi’s m:Lab, which has partnered with Nokia and Samsung to help mobile-based entrepreneurs addressing the poor develop products. In our own experience, Village Capital is launching a program with the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund in India to source, accelerate, and invest in education interventions that support the base-of-the-pyramid.

Selectivity matters

It stands to reason that the accelerators that select the best ventures are likely to have the best results. The collected research on traditional business accelerators suggests that programs with a lower acceptance rate and more rigorous selection process had a higher degree of success in graduate ventures. Accelerators cast a wide net in recruiting ventures, knowing that most startups fail. Our research is consistent with the broader literature on the topic, and shows that impact accelerators with a lower percent acceptance rate have a higher proportion of successful graduates. This finding provides two actionable steps for accelerators: (1) over-resource recruiting, so accelerators are not required, for business model reasons, to accept sub-standard ventures; (2) focus on the quality, not the quantity of entrepreneurs served, and develop rigorous selection processes.

Further research would explore the cumulative impact of more selective accelerators, as some accelerator programs operate a “high-volume, light-touch” model that, they believe, may lead to less selective cohorts, a higher failure rate, but more ultimate impact per dollar invested due to a high volume of graduate ventures.

Philanthropy is currently necessary for accelerators to survive (and is not statistically related to enterprise success).

Three out of four accelerators rely on philanthropy to survive, and 54% of all accelerator budgets are funded through grants. This finding suggests the following: (1) impact accelerator business models are not yet proven to the degree where they can develop sustainable revenue streams, and accelerators currently require grants to fill the gaps they are seeking to address; and (2) most accelerators are providing resource leverage on philanthropy, complementing grants with sources of earned-revenue. We believe that philanthropy will play a critical role in supporting impact-focused accelerators in the immediate future. However, donors can also encourage accelerators to explore new revenue streams that will allow them to become less reliant on grants, but not compromise their social mission.

Most impact investors are looking to accelerators for investment opportunities, but are not finding them.

While 60% of impact investors say they have an informal sourcing partnership with accelerators, 47% say they have sourced “zero” portfolio companies directly from an accelerator. This disconnect reflects a more fundamental challenge that accelerators face, balancing the business development needs of social entrepreneurs on the one hand, while also trying to meet the specific criteria of impact investors. Investors cite “lack of fit with our investment criteria” as a primary reason why they do not invest in accelerator graduates, suggesting that accelerators could do a better job proactively engaging with investors in the selection process to develop cohorts that are more ready for follow-on investment.

Accelerators might face a “free rider” problem.

At the same time, while the majority of impact investors look to accelerators as a sourcing mechanism, only 20% help accelerators fund their operations. The primary reason for non-involvement is “Mandate Fit”—investors do not view it as their role in the ecosystem to support accelerators. In the long run, as cash-strapped accelerator programs try to fund their operations, they may see a “free-rider problem” that causes mis-alignment between accelerators and investors. Accelerators, investors and donors need to find a funding model that covers the cost of quality business acceleration for entrepreneurs, maintains the impact focus, and also generates a reasonable value proposition for all parties.

We have very little systematic data on how accelerators are performing—and many accelerators themselves are not even collecting data.

These findings are from a sample of 52 accelerators worldwide; however, we need much more data on incubator and accelerator effectiveness to assess the quality of services provided as well as the importance of selection and networks. While relatively small for statistical analysis, our sample accelerators is relatively large given the stage and size of the impact investing sector so far. We believe that that expanding this dataset will allow more refined, multivariate analysis of key accelerator success factors. We suggest as follow-ups:

- In order to better assess accelerator performance, we need more and better longitudinal data on the enterprises that receive support, as well as the enterprises that apply, but do not receive support. Village Capital and ANDE are currently working with Social Enterprise at Goizueta (Emory University) to develop a longitudinal database of enterprise performance, in collaboration with several key partners. This project will address the following:
 - How do entrepreneurs that participate in accelerator programs perform differently than others?
 - Are there differences in measurable impact between general/global accelerator programs and those that focus on specific sectors or regions?
 - What specific program design choices (related to participant selection, services provided and network development) are associated with more positive accelerator impacts?

Over the longer term, this database will allow more longitudinal analysis of how various interventions can affect social enterprises at different stages of their development.

In addition, the majority of accelerators that did not collect data cited a lack of time/resources for data collection. Most accelerators are start-ups themselves, and we recommend that philanthropists or investors who support accelerators also provide support for data collection/assessment.

Finally, ANDE is also collaborating with I-Dev International to develop a common framework to quantify the value created by incubators and accelerators for investors and enterprises. I-Dev is evaluating and benchmarking 6-8 impact incubators and accelerators, identified through the ANDE-Village Capital survey, and using this framework to compare the performance of “accelerated” vs. “un-accelerated” SGBs that have received investment. Through this analysis, we hope to quantify the monetary value created for SGBs as well as investors by comparing costs associated with deal sourcing, due diligence, investment cycle, advisory services, and probability of exits.

We believe this broad, multi-pronged initiative will provide significant value for the enterprises, incubators, and funders that support accelerator services. Our work will provide answers to critical questions that will allow entrepreneurial firms to make more educated decisions about whether to join an incubator and if so which one. It will inform accelerator managers about best-in-class practices and provide mechanisms to improve their performance. Finally, foundations, investors and development institutions will be able to assess the impact of their investments and identify strategies to scale or replicate successful incubator models.

XI. Recommendations

Following on this research, we recommend several action items for various players in this ecosystem: (1) Incubators and Accelerators, (2) Impact Investors, (3) Foundations, and (4) Academics.

For Incubators and Accelerators

- Invest in platforms and systems to encourage and enable quality data collection from the enterprises you support,
- Collect data from all enterprises that apply to your programs, even the ones that are not accepted or do not receive services, to more comprehensively assess performance against a control group. Simple data collection processes can be built into your application form.
- Collect data from participating enterprises for at least five years post-graduation to track progress and growth over the medium to long-term. The impact of accelerator support can take several years to materialize.
- Partner with academic institutions and industry associations to develop stronger data collection systems.
- Strengthen your processes for searching and sourcing ventures for your programs. Being in a position to select the top ventures—without compromising quality—matters.
- Develop more rigorous, multi-stage, selection processes, drawing from best practices in other sectors. Engage other ecosystem members, such as investors, foundations, and technical experts in the selection process, so that you are building a cohort that aligns with the needs of upstream financiers .
- Build networks with the local financial sector, in particular domestic commercial investors, who may be able to directly support a plurality or majority of your graduates more readily than impact investors.
- Enterprises do not need investment alone, but also, access to markets. Build networks with corporate supply chains, both domestic, and international.
- Explore other revenue streams such as investment closing fees and direct investment.

For Impact Investors

- Leverage the networks and reach of incubators and accelerators, and work in collaboration with them to strengthen your pipeline and explore potential areas for improved alignment in their activities.
- Build formal partnerships with accelerators that are closely aligned with your investment strategy and that have strong performance records.
- Invest in accelerators, either with time or money. Accelerators will be more inclined to deliver you the deal flow you're asking for—as a customer—if you help them do the work they are trying to do.

For Foundations

- Support the development and continuation of best practices among successful accelerators and incubators by contributing to their operations, development of performance management systems, and dissemination of their results.
- Emphasize quality of services over quantity of entrepreneurs served when supporting incubator and accelerator grantees.
- Build stronger networks between investors and incubators to enhance ecosystem efficiency.
- Provide support for accelerators to track enterprise performance.

For Academics

- Focus on developing methodologies to better assess incubator and accelerator performance.
- Conduct empirical research on key success factors for incubators and accelerators, including an analysis of the quality of services, the relevance of the selection process, and the effects of strong partnerships and networks.

Appendices

List of Surveyed Accelerators

Organization Name (in alphabetical order)	
1)	Agora Partnerships*
2)	Angels Initiatives
3)	Artemisia*
4)	Betaspring
5)	Global Accelerator Network
6)	Bethnal Green Ventures
7)	BiD Network*
8)	Capital Innovators
9)	Dasra*
10)	Eleven Accelerator Venture Fund
11)	Endeavor*
12)	Endeavor Global*
13)	FATE Foundation*
14)	Fledge
15)	Global Catalyst Initiative*
16)	Global Social Benefit Incubator*
17)	good.bee
18)	Groundwork Labs
19)	GrowLab
20)	GrowthAfrica / The GrowthHub*
21)	Hired by Society
22)	HUB Vienna Incubation
23)	iAccelerator, Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship, IIM-Ahmedabad
24)	Impact Amplifier*
25)	Incubate
26)	Intellectap (Intellectual Capital Advisory Services Pvt Ltd)*
27)	Invest2Innovate*
28)	Investment Ready Program
29)	iStarter
30)	LGT Venture Philanthropy Foundation*
31)	m:lab East Africa
32)	Mara Foundation
33)	Mozilla WebFWD
34)	National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance
35)	NESsT*

36) New Ventures India*
37) NewME Accelerator
38) Nxtp Labs
39) Panzanee
40) Sinapis Group
41) StarCube
42) Startup Farm
43) Startupbusiness
44) StartupYard
45) SURF Incubator
46) Tree Labs
47) UnLtd India
48) Unreasonable Institute
49) Village Capital*
50) Wennovation Hub
51) Villgro*
52) Z80 Labs Technology Incubator

*ANDE Members

List of Surveyed Investors

Organization Name (in alphabetical order)	
1)	Accion Venture Lab*
2)	Adobe Capital
3)	Anavo
4)	Angel Ventures Mexico
5)	Annona Sustainable Investments BV
6)	Bamboo Finance*
7)	Creas
8)	EcoEnterprises Fund*
9)	eVA Fund
10)	Ferd Social Entrepreneurs
11)	Good Capital
12)	Gray Ghost Ventures*
13)	GroFin *
14)	Injaro Agricultural Capital Holdings
15)	Insitor Management
16)	Inversor Fund *
17)	Invested Development
18)	Jacana Partners *
19)	LGT Venture Philanthropy*
20)	Lundin Foundation*
21)	ManoCap
22)	Oasis500 (Oasis Ventures 1)
23)	Oikocredit USA
24)	Peery Foundation
25)	PhiTrust Partenaires
26)	Pomona Impact
27)	Renewal2 Investment Fund
28)	RSF Social Finance
29)	Small Enterprise Assistance Fund (SEAF) *
30)	SITAWI - Finance for Good
31)	Social Venture Fund
32)	TBL Mirror Fund
33)	Unitus Impact *
34)	Unitus Seed Fund
35)	Vox Capital *
36)	Voxtra *
37)	Willow Impact Investors*

*ANDE Members

References

- 1 Saltuk, Y., Bouri, A., Mudaliar, A. & Pease, M. (2013) Perspectives on Progress: The Impact Investor Survey, J. P. Morgan and GIIN
- 2 Koh, H., Karamchandani, A., & Katz, R. (2012). "From Blueprint to Scale: The Case for Philanthropy in Impact Investing" The Monitor Institute & Acumen Fund.
- 3 Baird, R., Hedinger H., Seekins C. (2012). Bridging the Gap: The Role of Accelerators in Impact Investing. Village Capital
- 4 Kubzansky, M., Cooper, A. and Barbary V. (2011) Promise and Progress, Market Based Solutions to Poverty in Africa, Monitor Group
- 5 Vanderstraeten, J., & Matthyssens, P. (2010). Measuring the performance of business incubators: A critical analysis of effectiveness approaches and performance measurement systems. In ICSB conference, Cincinnati, US, June, published in conference proceedings-USB, ISBN (pp. 978-0)
- Sherman, H., & Chappell, D. S. (1998). Methodological challenges in evaluating business incubator outcomes. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 12(4), 313-321.
- McMullan, E., Chrisman, J. J., & Vesper, K. (2001). Some problems in using subjective measures of effectiveness to evaluate entrepreneurial assistance programs. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 26(1), 37-54.
- 6 Lalkaka, R., & Bishop, J. (1996). Business incubators in economic development: an initial assessment in industrializing countries. United Nations Development Programme.
- 7 Chandra, A., & Fealey, T. (2009). Business incubation in the United States, China and Brazil: a comparison of role of government, incubator funding and financial services. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 13(13), 67-86.
- 8 Khalid, F. A., Gilbert, D., Huq, A., & Melaka, U. T. M. (2012). INVESTIGATING THE UNDERLYING COMPONENTS IN BUSINESS INCUBATION PROCESS IN MALAYSIAN ICT INCUBATORS. *configurations*, 1(1).
- Aerts, K., Matthyssens, P., & Vandenbempt, K. (2007). Critical role and screening practices of European business incubators. *Technovation*, 27(5), 254-267.
- Lumpkin, J. R., & Ireland, R. D. (1988). Screening practices of new business incubators: the evaluation of critical success factors. *American Journal of Small Business*, 12(4), 59-81.
- Aerts, K., Matthyssens, P., & Vandenbempt, K. (2007). Critical role and screening practices of European business incubators. *Technovation*, 27(5), 254-267.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Haapasalo, H., & Ekholm, T. (2004). A profile of European incubators: a framework for commercialising innovations. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*, 4(2), 248-270.
- 11 Ferguson, R., & Olofsson, C. (2004). Science parks and the development of NTBFs—location, survival and growth. *The journal of technology transfer*, 29(1), 5-17.
- 12 Löfsten, H., & Lindelöf, P. (2002). Science Parks and the growth of new technology-based firms—academic-industry links, innovation and markets. *Research Policy*, 31(6), 859-876.
- 13 Amezcua, A. S. (2010). Boon or Boondoggle? Business Incubation as Entrepreneurship Policy.
- 14 de Oliveira, R. A., & Filipe, T. (2011). Are they helping? An examination of business incubators' impact on tenant firms. University of Twente.
- 15 Vanderstraeten, J., & Matthyssens, P. (2010). Measuring the performance of business incubators: A critical analysis of effectiveness approaches and performance measurement systems. In ICSB conference, Cincinnati, US, June, published in conference proceedings-USB, ISBN (pp. 978-0)
- 16 Aerts, K., Matthyssens, P., & Vandenbempt, K. (2007). Critical role and screening practices of European business incubators. *Technovation*, 27(5), 254-267.
- 17 Vanderstraeten, J., & Matthyssens, P. (2010). Measuring the performance of business incubators: A critical analysis of effectiveness approaches and performance measurement systems. In ICSB conference, Cincinnati, US, June, published in conference proceedings-USB, ISBN (pp. 978-0)

Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the participation of many organizations and individuals. First, we would like to thank Ross Baird, Huston Hedinger, and Clare Seekins for laying the groundwork for this research, by conducting an initial survey and interviews in early 2012. We are also greatly appreciative of the accelerators that participated in the first version of this study.

In addition, we are grateful to the following individuals who participated in interviews during the early stages of this research, and provided feedback on the first version of the report: Ricardo Teran of Agora Partnership, Renato Kiyama of Artemisia, CJ Fonzi and Julia Alexander of Dalberg Global Development Advisors, Vikas Bahl of Dasra, Breanna DiGiammarino of Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Rich Leimsider and John Walker of Echoing Green, Johnni Kjelsgaard of GrowthAfrica, Abigail Sarmac of Lemelson Foundation, Harvey Koh and Ashish Karamchandani of Monitor Deloitte, Paula Goldman of the Omidyar Network, Simon Desjardins of the Shell Foundation, Kelly Teevan of Rockefeller Foundation, and Rob Schneider and Christopher Jurgens of USAID.

We are particularly thankful for the participation of the 52 accelerators and the 37 impact investors that participated in this round of the survey. A full list of these participating accelerators and investors can be found in the appendices.

Last, but certainly not least, we are indebted to Halloran Philanthropies and Potencia Ventures for funding this research and allowing us to share new insights that will continue to build and move the impact investing space forward.