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# Transformative Learning for The Development of Student Activists' Spirit of Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract: Every individual goes through the learning process. The output of the learning process are the changes in behavior both in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. One of the outcomes of joining student organizations is the formation of soft skills in students. This study aims to describe the values possessed by student activists of the STKIP PGRI Tulungagung Student Activity Units (SAUs) and to propose a Social Entrepreneurship (SE) training which utilizes transformative learning method for those students. The research method used is descriptive-qualitative, and the object under study is the soft skill possessed by student activists of the Student Activity Units (SAUs) of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung. Data collection method is in-depth interviews, the research instrument is the researcher, and the data analysis technique uses the Grounded Theory method. The conclusions of this study are as follow: 1. Student activities in the student activity unit (SAUs) can shape students' soft skills and provide an understanding of social activities that provide experience and form a sense of togetherness, a sense of solidarity, and the unity to advance together in helping people who face problems. 2. Transformative learning is expected to be an alternative learning model employed in social entrepreneurship training programs for SAUs student activists. The SE training help generates a community where social issues are transformed into social acts and develops students' engagement with the field at large and fellow actors and provides an invigorating creative environment.

Keywords: Transformative Learning, Social Entrepreneurship Spirit

### INTRODUCTION

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The result of my observation—based on a literature study examining entrepreneurship courses' syllabi and lesson plan at several private universities both in Tulungagung, Kediri, and Blitar—shows that social entrepreneurship is still not widely known to the public in Tulungagung, both in theory and practice. One probable cause is the exclusion of social entrepreneurship in the entrepreneurship curriculum and courses, as well as the lack of training/workshop/seminar on social entrepreneurship. On the other hand, I believe that it is crucial for college students to possess the spirit of social entrepreneurship, as students are the one at the front line of development in Indonesia and Tulungagung in particular. It is expected that with the rise of social entrepreneurship spirit in Tulungagung, figures who will turn social problems into business opportunities while also concentrating on community empowerment will be discovered. The spirit of social entrepreneurship is undeniably needed in this era of globalization to fend the negative impacts of said time.

Here, the potential of student activists from Student Activity Units (SAUs) becomes prominent, due to the fact that entrepreneurship education is already carried out through the Student Activity Unit (SAUs) by instilling entrepreneurial values in its activities. Entrepreneurship education is the process of changing the mindset of college graduates from job-seeking to become job creators, which is generally given both through intra-curricular activities; namely through formal university courses, as well as through extracurricular activities and habituation. The Student Activity Unit (SAU) is a forum for student activities that serves to develop students' talents, interests, and expertise. The number, shape, and type of Student Activity Units (SAUs) in each university depends on the purpose and students' necessity. The existence of SAUs is not only based on the principle of benefits but also based on educational principles. These educational values have an important role, that is educating students towards achieving the vision and mission of education of the university. In addition, SAUs also instill

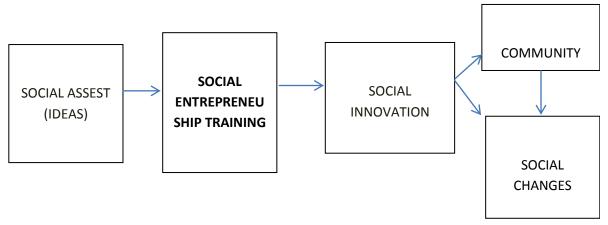
social values such as mutual respect, cooperation, caring for others, independence, unity, and solidarity.

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The right learning method is needed so that the change of the students' mindset into one of an agent of change can be achieved. To encourage the growth of social entrepreneurship spirit, an entrepreneurship education program which integrates social entrepreneurship materials is needed. This educational program is expected not only to help foster the students' social entrepreneurship spirit from early on but also to be a guideline that assists the development of their social entrepreneurship skills. Social entrepreneurship training program that I envisioned is a social entrepreneurship education program that is located outside of the classroom courses, more specifically through a social entrepreneurship training program which utilized the principle of transformative learning. Its development goal is to optimize student activists of the Student Activity Unit (SAU) who already have experience in managing events by applying entrepreneurial values. Moreover, almost all Student Activity Units have social activities which are the social assets needed for social entrepreneurship.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the values possessed by student activists of the STKIP PGRI Tulungagung Student Activity Units (SAUs) and to propose a Social Entrepreneurship (SE) training which utilizes transformative learning method for said students. I argue that the training can be an alternative instrument that assist in stimulating the development of individual social ideas into a social innovation, more importantly in the way that transformative learning method changes students' perspective from a focus on the self to that of the community. The SE training help generates a community where social issues are transformed into social acts and develops students' engagement with the field at large and fellow actors and provides an invigorating creative environment. Moreover, the student activists are chosen as the target of this training program due to the social asset they already possess.



Graph 1. SE Training implementation's result scheme.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

# Social Entrepreneurship

Hibbert, Hogg, and Quinn (2005) define social entrepreneurship as the use of entrepreneurial behavior that is more oriented towards achieving social goals, does not prioritize earnings, and profits derived are used for social purposes. (Sofia, 2015). Meanwhile, the notion of a social entrepreneur is someone who understands social problems and uses the ability of entrepreneurship to make social changes, primarily covering the fields of welfare, education, and health (Cukier, Trenholm, Carl, & Gekas, 2011). This conclusion is also in line with Irma's

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(2015: 5) opinion that social entrepreneurs are agents of change who are able to carry out the ideals of changing and improving social values and being inventors of various opportunities for improvement (Sofia, 2015). Nicholls also defines Social Entrepreneurship as the "Innovative and effective activities that focus strategically on resolving social market failures and creating new opportunities to add social value systemically by using a range of resources and organizational formats to maximize social impact and bring about change." His description highlights the flexible and dynamic nature of SE as an economic endeavor. SE has at its core the breaking out of old system and institution, utilizing various different forms in term of organization and strategy (Nicholls, 2006).

Nicholls & Cho (2006: 99)(Nicholls, 2006) further explained that social entrepreneurship is a dynamically developing phenomenon that is related to the community as a whole (stakeholders) and has a relationship with the organizations around it. In addition, the importance of the growth of social entrepreneurship is part of a social criticism that is developing globally. Furthermore, they also reveal that in social entrepreneurship there are three points that need to be clearly established, i.e. (1) "Sociality" which signifies the reach of the goals of an organization in applying the forms of social values; (2) "Innovation;" the innovator behavior that entrepreneurship emphasizes, and (3) "market orientation", which distinguishes social entrepreneurship from other social organizations. Given the market orientation, the entrepreneurial dimension requires rationalization of strategic operations in response to exogenous variables as competitive market pressures. Many social organizations place their goals on the assumption of dysfunctional or non-existent markets, but social entrepreneurs continue to recognize the value of market orientation that provides the upper hand for the most effective dissemination of resources to achieve social goals. Here, we can conclude that there are three dimensions of social entrepreneurship that are interrelated, namely sociality, innovation, and market orientation, as shown in Figure 1 below:

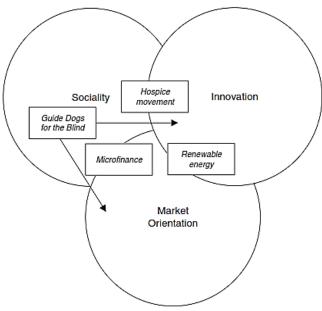


Figure 1 Dimension *Social Entrepreneurship* (source: Nichollas & Cho, 2006: 103)

Meanwhile, (Corner & Ho, 2010) examines four recurring patterns on how Social Entrepreneurship opportunities are recognized and developed and come into conclusion that the empirical reality of social entrepreneurship is more of a collective endeavour rather than a matter of individual genius. The first pattern is that of 'opportunity development' where actors aware

of social issues identified and nurtured an organic phenomenon. The second one is 'collective action,' in which opportunities are developed by multiple actors who combine their respective knowledge from different fields and angles. One important note made by Corner and Ho is that it is unlikely that knowledge necessary for the development of an opportunity is possessed only by one individual actor, stressing on the idea of coalescence of thoughts within the creative process. Third is 'experience corridor', an acknowledgment the crucial role of the actor's prior experiences that are brought to the table. The last one is 'spark,' or the moment when insight surfaces and engendered opportunity development. In Corner and Ho's investigation, the mentioned patterns appear to be most influential in deciding which opportunities are advanced in particular, chosen time. If we look closely, it is clear that collaborative action is at the core of the venture (joining ideas and experiences), and that acknowledgment of 'social others' and how their issues connect to that of the actor(s) is a decisive factor. Holding into this, it is also indubitably important that social entrepreneurship education pays more attention to the collective domain of SE in practice. Here, transformative learning model plays an important part to change students' perspective in facing business venture.

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## Transformative Learning Model

The transformative learning model is a learning model based on a constructivist paradigm that actualizes each individual by building knowledge through their experiences in the outside world. Transformative learning refers to the process of acquiring knowledge that is socially constructed by a group of individuals. Among the many scholars who published the theory of transformative learning was Jack Mezirow (b. 1927). He often based his ideas in this field on Jürgen Habermas's critical theory (b. 1929). Besides being influenced by Habermas, Mezirow's writings were also inspired by the theory of Paulo Freire (1921-1997) on conscientization which he also considered as a parallel process for the transformative learning model he described (Mezirow, 1978).

Transformative learning tries to develop an individual's awareness concerning their position vis a vis a broader political and economic power. What Freire terms conscientization above is the process of providing facilities for the understanding and belief that the relationship of domination and alienation can be modified. The purpose of transformative learning is not only for personal transformation but also for social transformation. This method of learning is intended so that individuals can become creative producers for themselves and the community and become active agents in the transformation of political and economic relations within society. Furthermore, according to Mezirow, transformative learning is a process of influencing change in a concrete frame of reference. Throughout life, we develop various concepts, values, feelings, responses, and associations that shape our life experiences. The frame of reference helps us to understand our experience in this world. Life experience itself according to Mezirow consists of two dimensions, namely habit of mind and point of view. Our habit of minds is extensive and are attitudes that can be articulated through viewpoints. For example, consumerism is a habit of mind that is articulated through the point of view of purchasing products. The point of view is generally more accessible than the habit of the mind, which is described to be longer lasting and more difficult to change than the point of view. Transformative learning is linked to changing the terms of reference through critical reflection on mind habits and perspectives. For example, reflecting consumption and production patterns critically can have an impact on our consumptive behavior.

Transformative learning aims at revising old assumptions and ways of interpreting experiences through critical reflection and self-reflection. The purpose of transformative learning



is similar to the definition of participatory group learning proposed by Patricia Cranton. Cranton expands Mezirow's theory that emphasizes self-reflection and student responsibility for learning purposes. Cranton discusses the underlying assumptions that transformative learning groups will cause individual and social change. Participants can and will engage in collective action after setting collective goals in groups. Educators in this situation are responsible for creating a conducive and open environment for self-reflection. The primary purpose of transformative learning is to empower individuals to change their perspectives. According to Taylor (Grainger, 2015), transformative learning offers learning theories that are uniquely mature, abstract, ideal, and grounded in human nature of communication. This statement is consistent with the opinion of Mezirow (Mezirow, 1997) (1996) that transformative learning is a theory that is only partly a process of development, but more So A Method Where "Learning Is Understood As The Process Of Using Previous Interpretations To Interpret New Interpretations Or Revisions That Mean The Experience Of Someone To Guide Future Actions."

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research method is descriptive-qualitative, the object studied are 10 student activists of the Student Activity Units of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung. Data collection techniques are in-depth interviews, the research instrument is the researcher, and data analysis techniques used is the Grounded Theory method.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

# SAUs and Social Capital

The Student Activity Units are student organizations that are tailored for the specific talents and interests of students. The following is the data presented regarding the Student Activity Units of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung attended by the respondents, along with the scope of its activities.

Table 1. Name and Activities of the Student Activity Unit (SAU)

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No	Name of the Student Activity Unit (SAU)	The scope of activities of the Student Activity Unit				
1	Dance "Acarya Nirwasita"	Dance SAU "Acarya Nirwasita" is a place designed for students who are interested in dance. Its activities include introducing and learning the dances which are mostly made by the SAU members themselves. The medium is also expected to foster a sense of love for art, especially dance.				
2	Music Arts	Music Arts SAU is a forum for students who have an interest in the field of music. One of the activities is 'Friday Night' which is held once a month in front of the Joint Secretariat of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung. Friday Night was conceived by the intent and purpose of (1). Strengthening togetherness among members of the Music Art SAU (2). Improving the musical quality and capability of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung students (3). Establishing synergies and collaboration between organizations (4). As a place to express themselves through music.				
3	Theater	Theater SAU is a forum for students who have an interest in theater. One of the activities held was a theater festival between high school/vocational high school students within <i>Karisedenan</i> Kediri				

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4	KOPMA (Students' Business Union)	The "KOPMA" SAU is a forum for students who have an interest in the field of cooperative business. One of the activities held is managing students' cooperative shop.
5	Pramuka	The " <b>Pramuka</b> " SAU is a place for students who have an interest scout.
6	KSR	The "KSR" SAU is a forum for students who have interests in education and social movements.
7	PIK	The "PIK" SAU is a forum for students who have interests in education and social movements about sex education, anti-drug socialization, and other social problems targeting teenagers in high school and junior high school
8	MC (Master of Ceremony)	Student activity unit "MC" is a forum for students who have an interest in becoming a professional Master of Ceremony
9	Pecinta Alam	The "Pecinta Alam" SAU is a place for students who have interest in nature. Activities that are often carried out are reforestation, planting and coral growing, sea cleaning, nature conservation, rock climbing and mountain climbing.
10	Shoter	The "Shoter" SAU is a place of aspiring students interested in photography. The mission of this unit is to train students into a professional photographer.

From the data above, it can be gathered that the scope of activities of the SAUs at STKIP PGRI Tulungagung aims to develop students' interest in the arts, education, economics, social and sports. The results of interviews with activists indicate that the values obtained by students from the active process of the SAU activities are as follows:

Table 2. Social activities and embedded values of SAUs

No	the Student Activity Unit	Embedded value	Value code	Social activities carried out
1	Dance, Music	1. Cooperation	A	1. Live Music to raise funds from
	Arts, Theater	2. Creativity	В	the community for caring about
		3. Confidence	C	disasters that occur in Indonesia
		4. Communication	D	2. Dance and theater performances to raise funds from the community for caring about disasters that occur in Indonesia.
2	Kopma	1. Cooperation	A	1. Social service to an orphanage
		2. Confidence	C	2. Raising social funds for natural
		3. Communication	D	disasters
		4. Employment	E	
		5. Dare to take risks	F	
3	Pramuka, KSR,	1.Confidence	C	1. Blood donation
	PIK	2. Communication	D	2. Raising social funds for natural
		3. Troubleshooting	G	disasters
		4. Leadership	Н	3. Socialization of the dangers of
		5. Social care	I	HIV
				4. Social services at institutions about the dangers of drugs

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4	Pecinta Alam	1. Confidence	C	1. Social services in forms of
		2. Communication	D	cleaning the beaches
		3. Troubleshooting	G	2. Planting coral on Sine beach
		4. Leadership	Н	3. Reforestation in sub-district
		5. Social care	I	Besuki, Pagerwojo, and Kalidawir
		6. Concern for nature conservation	J	
5	MC	1. Cooperation	A	The Master of Ceremony for
		2. Creativity	В	live music, dance, and theater
		3. Confidence	C	activities to raise funds from the
		4. Communication	D	public for disaster relief that
		5. Troubleshooting	G	occur in Indonesia.
		6. Think critically	K	
		7. Open	L	
		8. Sensitive	M	
6	Photography	1. Cooperation	A	Raising humanitarian funds with
	(Shoter)	2. Creative	В	the technique of selling photos
		3. Confidence	C	from an event.
		4. Communication	D	
		5. Sensitive	M	

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that student activists of SAUs possess soft skills that are developed from the organizational process. This soft skill is a social capital owned by students who can be developed into an agent of change in community development activities, especially in the social and economic fields. Based on data about social activities held by SAU activist students, the attitude formed from these activities is the sense of togetherness, sense of solidarity, and mutual advancement to help others and solve problems that transpire. These values are the social capitals that students can use to develop themselves both as students and after graduating from college. Soft skills formed from activities in SAUs are needed by students to deal with the adverse effects of globalization such as (1) the fading spirit of cooperation, caring and social solidarity; (2) the occurrence of self-indulgence (individualism); and (3) the attitude of secularism. (Asri, 2013) For this reason, compared to other students, this particular group of people has a bigger potential to be influenced into becoming social entrepreneurs, therefore is the right target for the proposed social entrepreneurship program. These social values possessed by students can be developed so that it changes into the spirit of social entrepreneurship. It is easier to transform student activists' mindset into that of inspirers, innovators and problem solvers in society contrasted to regular student.

### Transformative Learning Approach

Smith and Woodworth propose that "a course can serve as an incubator... as a resource; a catalyst; and a place of idea generation, learning, and planning." (402) Extracurricular SE training and workshop may work differently compared to a formal SE university course, however, the underlying motives and structure proposed here is quite similar. Smith and Woodworth, for example, underline five pedagogical devices successfully used in SE education: readings, lectures, cases, biography assignment, and group projects. (393) Each device might be given in different magnitude during the social entreprenurship training period, as it prioritizes practical skill more than theoretical knowledge (reading and biography assignment, for example, will be given less emphasize compared to case studies and group projects). However, to some extent, the mentioned instruments are still going to be present and utilized. Furthermore, training goes

in line with Smith and Woodworth's encouragement for educators to apply group projects more into their curricula. They argue that "active engagement" and "mastery experience" play the most crucial role in SE education. Group projects "encourage students to actively engage in activities as members of the social entrepreneurship community and to provide them with opportunities to effectively put their skills into practice." (395)

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According to Pulo Freire (1970) transformative learning theory—referred to as conscientization or development of consciousness—aims to educate adults to develop an individuals and groups' critical awareness by teaching them about ways of learning. Critical awareness refers to the process by which adults learn to develop the ability to analyze, face problems, and take activities in social, political, cultural and economic environments. Learning activities help adults develop an understanding of ways of forming social structures and influencing adult thought about himself and his world. A person's experience is formed through the process of interacting with their environment. This is in accordance with Boud's opinion (Boud, David. Walker, 1994) (Mezirow, 1997) that experience can be seen as a series of continuous and complex interactions between students and the learning environment, united by a reflective process that assimilates and processes environmental learning potential and can stimulate students to take appropriate action from that experience, as reflected in the following figure 3.

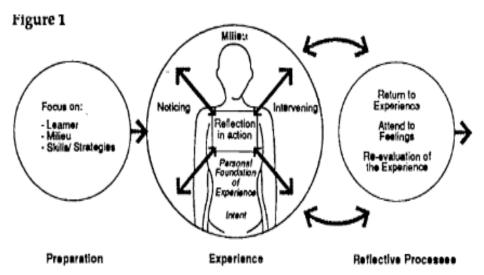


Figure 3 Reflection in action (Boud, 1994:18)

As mentioned, the university curriculum in Tulungagung in general has not been adjusted to the emerging interest in the field of Social Enterpreneurship. Meanwhile, the young generation—exposed more easily to new rising opportunities—has already shown interest in social entrepreneurship as a business and development model. As an attempt to bridge this gap between interest and lack of guidance, I propose extracurricular SE training as a possible solution.

Social entrepreneurship training will help develop students' identification and engagement with the field and give them a real sense of 'community' where they could actively take parts in social changes. As Smith and Woodworth suggest, "students are given an opportunity to begin identifying with social entrepreneurs and innovators, and, consequently, develop desires consistent with that social identity (e.g., to make a positive contribution to society)." (Smith, Woodworth, & Smith, 2018) While identifying themselves as one of the contributing social

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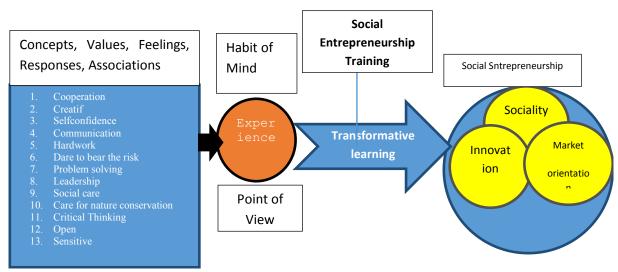
actor is important, but the knowledge that one is a part of a bigger community is even more crucial. Once again, social entrepreneurship is far from a matter of an individual genius. Instead of based on competition, cooperation and alliance between concerned individual is a more befitting base for the process of developing ideas. Involvement in training will expose students to people who harbor similar interest, concerned with similar social problem, and eager to move forward. It is more likely that student is enticed to work collaboratively while inside this setting.

With training as a model, instead of a formal university course, it is also possible for students from different department and background to gather in one place, united by their interest in social entrepreneurship as an answer. Harking back to Corner and Ho's notion of 'coalescence of thoughts', what separates extarcurricular training and a formal course is its flexibility in accepting students regardless of their educational background. (Meanwhile, universities in Tulungagung would require student to come from the department of economy, or at least possess a certain level of economic background in order to join a course—as more formal course focuses on theory and research.) An individual might be more knowledgeable in the social dimension of an issue, while the other is resourceful in technology; and a richer collaboration could result out of this interaction. Furthermore, as development process is also a process of filtering of ideas and strategies, a more diverse input from varying background and the discussion that ensues could prove to be an effective way to find the best formula for a social entrepreneurship venture.

Lastly, social entrepreneurship training will help students by providing supportive environment where creative process could flourish through exchange with mentors and fellow young entrepreneurs. Here, SE training takes place at what Murray et al (Caulier-grice & Mulgan, n.d.). call as intermediaries: "individuals, organizations, networks, or spaces which connect people, ideas, and resources." (Murray: 124) An intermediary connects the 'bees'; small individual or group actors with brimming creativity and the 'trees'; bigger institution with power that could become potential stakeholders. In helping interested actors tackle social problems more effectively, intermediary emphasize on 'knowledge' and 'relationship. (Murray:125) Extracurricular SE training therefore could become a key intermediary due to:

- a. Its location within the university as an academic institution. Resources and chances for research and study of the field is abundant, so it provides sufficient grounding in terms of knowledge acquisition.
- b. As an institution, the university could also help in bridging motivated students and interested institution/stakeholders.
- c. Despite being within a traditional system, an extracurricular training is still a flexible and open enough environment. Creative thinking process is guaranteed in a more flexible relationship between mentor and student, or fellow students. A more out-of-the-box pedagogical instrument and method could also possibly be implemented.

Furthermore, in case of social entrepreneurship, it is social needs which becomes the guiding light; what Guclu et al refers to as "the gap" between an idealized world and the present reality. "Sound entrepreneurial idea responds to genuine needs." (Guclu, et al. 2) There is a huge chance that this 'ideal' vision reflects a narrow subjective value. While it is not necessarily negative—for a lot of influential social entrepreneurship do came out of the out-of-the-box personal rumination that defy the norm and system—entrepreneurship in itself is a widely collaborative act. "..... any serious venture will require the support and collaboration of others. Thus, for an idea to be promising, the entrepreneur's values and commitment to addressing a particular social need must be shared by enough key stakeholders to give the proposed venture some initial viability." (Guclu, et al. 2) In line with the previous arguments, SE training/workshop could provide both the push and space for this collaborative endeavour.



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Figure 4. Thinking framework

In addition, developing Mezirow's opinion, I believe that the transformative learning model is crucial to this social entrepreneurship training. SE training is aimed to develop the social capital possessed by students—gained through the experience of working in SAUs. The focus of transformative learning method is to change the means of students' reference frame. It is a learning model based on a constructivist paradigm that actualizes each individual by building knowledge through their experiences in the outside world. Transformative learning also refers to the process of acquiring knowledge socially constructed by a group (Suparta, 2013). The social capital that a student has from the active process of the SAUs will be transformed through the training process. It is expected that changes in concepts, values, feelings of responses and associations about entrepreneurship will materialize through this program.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Activities in SAUs are proven to grow social assets in students. The social assets owned by these students can increase their potential as agents of change. The values they hold, such as solidarity, cooperation, and solidarity, are important factors that need to be developed in a social entrepreneur. Therefore, they are the most appropriate target for education programs that aim to increase the number of students who are interested and trained in the field of social entrepreneurship. In addition, an entrepreneurship training program based on the transformative learning model can be implemented to transform these social assets into a spirit of social entrepreneurship. This social training programs will help generates a community where social issues are transformed into social acts and develops students' engagement with the field at large and fellow actors and provides an invigorating creative environment.

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