

*CASE at Duke University Coordinating Research for B Lab
and the Global Impact Investing Rating System (GIIRS)*

With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE) at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business is leading an effort to create priorities for future research for the national and global data being collected by B Lab and GIIRS. The Rockefeller Foundation is also providing support for B Lab and GIIRS.

CASE will be holding two free webinars on March 11 (12-2pm EST) and March 22 (2-4pm EST), 2011 to introduce interested researchers in academia, consulting firms and others, to the emerging data pools and their potential uses. CASE will create a more formal RFP for major research in mid to late 2011. For more information and to register for the webinars, please email: catherine.h.clark@duke.edu.

"B Lab and GIIRS are collecting a unique pool of data, which will only become more interesting as it grows," said Cathy Clark, Faculty at CASE, and director of the CASE B Lab and GIIRS Research Project. "Data on the social impact and practices of privately-held ventures and funds has been largely anecdotal until now. But with B Lab's transparent ratings system for certifying B Corporations and as GIIRS sets a new global standard for rating impact investments, we see a new field of study emerging. With nearly 380 Certified B Corporations and 25 pioneer GIIRS funds with over 200 companies in their portfolios, we'll have a substantial data set by the end of 2011. We can start to ask and answer essential questions about the emergence of a new form of capitalism which aims to generate financial returns and social impacts."

Researchers, consulting firms, banks and others have already expressed interest in this new data, which is relevant to those studying entrepreneurship, corporate finance, social entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, social ventures, social innovation, venture capital, mission-related investing, development finance, emerging and bottom of the pyramid markets, employee practices, certifications and standards, and the role of policy in influencing corporate behavior, among many other fields.

"For this field to be taken seriously, we need more rigorous independent analysis to know what, if any, difference these companies and funds are making compared to their peers. Research is the key to augmenting compelling storytelling with real data," said Jay Coen Gilbert, co-founder of the nonprofit B Lab and its wholly-owned nonprofit subsidiary, GIIRS.

"There are a few limiting factors, though, at least for now," said Clark. "Some of the data that researchers would need is publicly available on the B Corporation website, but most has been collected privately and can be shared only in the aggregate. In addition, there are always critical data points researchers want to know about that have not been collected to date. An important part of this project will be working with researchers to set

standards for data sharing and data requests, consider what kinds of questions might be added to the B Lab and GIIRS surveys to help researchers going forward, and encourage the creation of strong comparison groups from which critical questions can be answered.”

The kinds of research questions we hope to be able to address include:

- Do B Corporations create greater impact than ordinary companies?
- Does impact vary by company size, location or industry?
- Do B Corps make significant improvements in impact over time?
- Do GIIRS-rated impact investors create more social impact than other investors?
- Are there demonstrable benefits of being GIIRS-rated for impact investors?
- What, if any, correlation is there between social impact and financial performance for GIIRS-rated funds and companies?
- What investment best practices lead to the best social and financial outcomes (e.g. deal structures, vehicles, ancillary services)?
- Do B Corporations and GIIRS-rated companies successfully maintain their impact through exits and liquidity events? How? If not, why not?

To be included on our mailing list for these webinars or for any other information about this work, please email us at: catherine.h.clark@duke.edu.



CASE at Duke:

A research and education center based at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE) prepares leaders and organizations to change the world. www.caseatduke.org

B Lab

Certified B Corporations are a new type of corporation which uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. B Lab is the nonprofit organization that certifies and supports B Corporations. www.bcorporation.net



Global Impact Investing Rating System (GIIRS)

GIIRS, a project of the independent non-profit B Lab, will assess the social and environmental impact (but not the financial performance) of companies and funds using a ratings approach analogous to Morningstar investment rankings or S&P credit risk ratings. www.giirs.org

