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Impact investing is no drag on returns: Study

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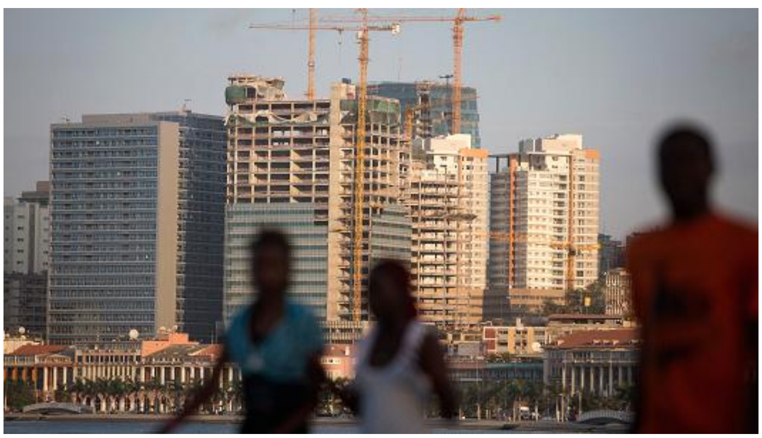

Simon Dawson | Bloomberg | Getty Images

New skyscrapers being built in the business district of Luanda, Angola

There's now more data to support the idea that doing well and doing good are not mutually exclusive.

A new study from investment consultant Cambridge Associates and the Global Impact Investing Network shows that private equity and venture capital funds with so-called impact missions produce roughly the same returns as funds just trying to make as much money as possible.

Some 51 impact funds, which bet on businesses that help people or causes, launched between 1998 and 2010 returned an average of 6.9 percent per year to investors through June 2014 versus 8.1 percent for 705 nonimpact funds.

However, a more representative sample are funds raised from 1998 and 2004 as they have mostly cashed out of their multiyear investments. The seven impact funds launched from 1998 to 2001 gained an average of 15.6 percent versus 5.5 percent; nine impact funds launched from 2002 to 2004 gained 7.6 percent versus 7.7 percent.