

Choice of business activity (product and/or service)

“Whenever society is stuck or has an opportunity to seize a new opportunity, it needs an entrepreneur to see the opportunity and then to turn that vision into a realistic idea and then a reality and then, indeed, the new pattern all across society. We need such entrepreneurial leadership at least as much in education and human rights as we do in communications and hotels. This is the work of social entrepreneurs.” Bill Drayton a social entrepreneur, author and founder of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public

<https://harappa.education/harappa-diaries/social-entrepreneurship/>

Author David Bornstein said: “What business entrepreneurs are to the economy; social entrepreneurs are to social change.”

<https://netimpact.org/blog/Four-Types-Social-Entrepreneurship>

Social entrepreneurship can be an activity or an initiative whose purpose is not to earn a profit, but instead, to solve a social-related problem and/or implement a positive change in society. The main goal of a social enterprise is to have a social impact. It can provide services or goods for the market/society, using the elements of entrepreneurship and innovation, but using its profits to enact social change.

Social enterprise is a broad term covering a number of areas and sectors: business, non-profit, and government. Social entrepreneurship combines business skills and personal values in order to achieve financial, social, and/or environmental benefits.

The European Commission uses the term 'social enterprise' to cover the following types of business

- Those for who the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation
- Those whose profits are mainly reinvested to achieve this social objective
- Those where the method of organisation or the ownership system reflects the enterprise's mission, using democratic or participatory principles or focusing on social justice

Many social enterprises operate in the form of social cooperatives, some are registered as private companies limited by guarantee, some are mutual, and a lot of them are non-profit-distributing organisations like provident societies, associations, voluntary organisations, charities or foundations.

Despite their diversity, social enterprises mainly operate in the following 4 fields

- Work integration - training and integration of people with disabilities and unemployed people
- Personal social services - health, well-being and medical care, professional training, education, health services, childcare services, services for elderly people, or aid for disadvantaged people

- Local development of disadvantaged areas - social enterprises in remote rural areas, neighbourhood development/rehabilitation schemes in urban areas, development aid and development cooperation with third countries
- Other - including recycling, environmental protection, sports, arts, culture or historical preservation, science, research and innovation, consumer protection and amateur sports

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises_en

Dr Joe Johnson defines 4 types of social entrepreneurs:

1. The Community Social Entrepreneur

Seeks to make improvements in a community, can be small changes that empower people of the community. Social entrepreneurs on this scale are usually individuals or small organizations. They work directly with the people of the community and can almost immediately see the changes. The solution has a long-term prospect. Community members or local organisations can carry on these types of projects and make them sustainable.

All you need to do to start this type of endeavour is find a local isolated social problem and apply yourself to solving it.

2. The Non-Profit Social Entrepreneur

Non-profit social entrepreneurs are focused on social, not material gain. They reinvest any profits into the business to facilitate the further expansion of services. Non-profit social entrepreneurs are usually companies and organizations that choose to use their power for social good. What profits their enterprise makes, they reinvest into the business, either to employ more people, or to provide trainings, etc. While the results often take longer to manifest, they can take effect on a larger scale. Joining a local non-profit or training program is usually a reliable way to start.

3. The Transformational Social Entrepreneur

The idea behind this type is to create a business that can meet the social needs that governments and other businesses aren't currently meeting. It can be what non-profits evolve to with sufficient time and growth. They become larger organizations with rules and regulations - sometimes growing to the point of working with or getting integrated into governmental bodies. Accelerators like The Social Innovation Warehouse are great examples of this social entrepreneur type. They specifically empower other impact-driven entrepreneurs to create positive change. This then creates a system of interconnected businesses focused on social benefits.

4. The Global Social Entrepreneur

These entrepreneurs seek to completely change social systems in order to meet major social needs globally. This can be big companies when they become aware of their social responsibility and begin concentrating on positive change as opposed to just profits. It's also where the largest charity organizations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, stand. The global need in

question can be anything from free access to education to clean water. This is usually a lofty goal that spans continents and links many organizations and interests together. However, if global social entrepreneurs fail to meet the needs and gather sufficient support, their failure has a bigger impact than those of smaller organizations. These organizations are usually tied to a particular cause and work with other social entrepreneurs to make it happen.

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How to Pick a Social Entrepreneurship Idea

1. Define your passions and areas of interest.

Are you an activist in any local charities? What causes are close to you? Which social injustices do you see in your community? Define what you're passionate about and proceed to step two...

2. Identify existing market gaps.

Once you know what you're passionate about, it's time to decide what the gaps are in existing products/services and determine how you can fill those gaps. If the food pantry you volunteer at can't disseminate fresh, donated produce before it spoils, think about how you could provide a service that makes it faster and easier to get fresh produce to the underserved communities in your area.

3. Identify your key strengths and skills.

Are you an excellent writer or a salesperson extraordinaire? List your strengths and skills, and define how they can serve your mission. This is also an excellent time to identify your weaknesses, so you know who to call upon for help. Do a SWOT analysis – first to identify YOUR strengths, weaknesses, etc., and later, when you have an idea for your social enterprise, do another SWOT analysis of the idea.

4. Decide on a business model.

Being a social entrepreneur is not always the same as starting a non-profit. Determine whether you'll monetize your idea, how you'll monetize your idea, and decide on a business model. It's important to understand how your business will be structured.

<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/social-entrepreneurship>

Here are a few social entrepreneurship ideas and examples that can help to develop an idea that's all your own:

- Talent for a cause

Use some skill/talent that you already have for a cause of importance, like raising money for houseless shelters. You can raise money by singing, baking, making DIY jewellery, etc. and then monetize this talent to raise money for a cause. If you decide to sell DIY crafts, Etsy is a valuable marketing tool.

- Educational travel

Educational travel involves having hands-on learning experiences that broaden perspectives and help people understand different world views. If you want to become a social entrepreneur, educational travel will be useful to understand the various environmental, economic, and social situations of different countries.

- Employment Services

A social entrepreneurial venture for employment services can involve offering free resume help, job training, mock interviews, or simply helping people find career opportunities. You can create a business dedicated to providing these services or launch a side project.

- Micro-lending and Mentorship

Micro-lending is giving small loans to people or businesses that don't have access to additional lending resources. As a social enterprise, you can set up a micro-lending business that serves people who cannot secure loans from other sources. By doing this, you may give small businesses the capital they need to expand or help an aspiring entrepreneur get their foot in the door. You can also provide mentoring services by working with aspiring entrepreneurs that may not have access to the tools and resources that help people prepare for a business career. As it is a social entrepreneurship venture, you'll likely provide these services free of cost to ensure fair access for all.

- A cooperative marketplace

Creating a cooperative marketplace can involve selling products crafted in a socially conscious and ethical manner in an attempt to not contribute to fast fashion, unethical working conditions, or environmentalism. Second hand and upcycling shops are also a very popular option nowadays.

These are only some ideas, that can help aspiring social entrepreneurs. As you can see, the options are diverse, but you can also add something of your own.

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