



SUMMARY OF THE SUPPORTING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS: WHAT WORKS FORUM

What is a social entrepreneur?

Participants expressed key common characteristics and behaviour to describe what they believe is a social entrepreneur. A summary of characteristics/ behaviour includes:

- Leader and pioneer in social change
- Doer/ makes the impossible happen
- Compassionate thinker
- Boundary pusher/ edge dweller
- Challenges ingrained institutionalized views on creating change
- Bold risk taker
- Focused
- Selfless
- Determined
- Driven to build and harness team/ communities to make things happen
- Hard worker who does not stop until the shared vision is achieved
- Vessel to articulate the truth of needs
- Visionary activist
- Has business/ community skills to create sustainable people-centered solutions
- Active citizen
- Encompasses ideas/ creative/ Innovative
- Excellent facilitator
- Problem solver
- Identifies opportunities
- Initiator
- Resilient
- Relentlessly pursues financial and social outcomes
- Connector of people and ideas

Charlotte Young describes two types of social entrepreneurs- those people that are part of the problem, who come from disadvantaged and deprived communities and those who come from a professional environment, who identify a problem and realize if they don't respond, nothing will happen. She also mentions social entrepreneurs are focused, driven and active individuals who are emotionally connected to an idea.

They can mobilize people around them to turn their passion into reality. They can "take existing ideas and apply a different configuration to make it work," as well as identify underutilized assets and turn them into resources.

Auckland
Tuesday 9 Feb 2010

hosted by

PricewaterhouseCooper



Why are social entrepreneurs important?

Social entrepreneurs are regarded as the important innovators and change makers of our society. They have fresh ideas combined with the energy and passion to turn them to reality. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo and break through systematic barriers." They "counter balance the financial only model of change."

As visionaries, they see the problems and societal needs and catalyze their communities towards action and provide solutions. They drive and inspire communities to create the change that government and corporations do not see the value in doing. We need social leaders and heroes to open our eyes to the real societal problems and to initiate positive change. Social entrepreneurs are able to serve the poor more effectively than business and can feed ideas into national programmes.

Steve Lawrence comments "Australia and NZ are very top down. There's nothing necessarily wrong with government funding, but top down solutions don't usually work. They struggle to gain the traction that we need from them. Social entrepreneurs can create a bottom up energy which Charlotte Young describes can have a transformative effect on community. For example, Chrissy Townsend (38 year old, SSE student), victim of an extremely deprived London community who had only learned to read and write at 37, was able to mobilize her community to lobby the town hall to provide a bus route in her community. She also established a community centre, a community hairdresser, a job placement agency and a rent centre providing legal advice and assistance. Social entrepreneurs are able to "fill the gap between the public and community sectors and address issues which both sectors struggle with. They can also "move our thinking away from dependency towards self sufficiency".

Social entrepreneurs are important for the future of our young leaders of NZ and help us to realize the potential in the future. They are important for the development of our people, ideas and economy.

How can we support social entrepreneurs?

"Social entrepreneurship cannot be done in isolation. It is not just for the poor and disenfranchised. Everybody in our community can benefit from this." – CE Skylight

Social entrepreneurs can often feel isolated and experience a lack of support. There are many ways in which the private, public and community sectors can assist the needs of social entrepreneurs including moral, educational, resource-based and financial support.

Simply by listening to their ideas, encouraging their vision, and empowering them can establish a mutual commitment between social entrepreneurs and supporters and accelerate ideas into the implementation phase. We can challenge habits that aren't working and adopt a philosophy of openness towards working in partnership and potential investment. Removing bureaucracy and changing government organizational culture can also have positive effects. Steve Lawrence stated "Social entrepreneurs need the freedom to be able to listen to market needs and end-users rather than be dominated by investors and governments.



We can provide support in the form of education and training such as recognized tertiary courses and business planning and development coaching. Capacity building can be achieved through mentoring and small group peer support for ongoing learning. Designing capacity building programmes that are customized, flexible and responsive to their needs” are effective ways to assist personal development.

Access to resources including technology, infrastructure, network contacts, shared resources, online directory of potential partners and spaces for generating and nurturing ideas such as incubators and think tanks can have great impact. Similarly, professional services such as “financial advice,” “legal and pro bono services can enhance their success.

Having available seed funding, venture capital, and long term funding solutions would provide immense support. There needs to be a link between government, private and philanthropic funding and needs. We can attempt to change bank managers thinking regarding risk and challenge them to take risks by providing funds to social entrepreneurs.

There is also a need to create a better understanding across all sectors on societal change, to think long term sustainability and foster a culture of innovation in order to advocate the work of social entrepreneurs. We need to learn how social businesses can be created and supported and develop a set of criteria for social enterprise best practice. As a way of advocacy, we can celebrate and award their success and bravery and provide them opportunities to tell their success stories through media. Hopefully this will generate a raise in social normality and the status of social entrepreneurs.

In nurturing social entrepreneurship, we can support innovation amongst our young people and identify and support community leaders who have the potential to create social change. Creating a platform for these people to share and expose their ideas locally, nationally and internationally can become the driver of a sustainable social innovative culture in NZ.

What support is available for NZ social entrepreneurs?

The current support system in NZ recognized by participants includes:

- Local councils and boards
- Community groups
- Online learning and communities
- Tertiary programmes e.g. University of Waikato/ University of Auckland/ UNITEC
- Government agencies
- Multiple funding/ Grant bodies/ Willing philanthropic trusts
- Other social entrepreneurs
- Peer learning/ Like minded people
- Informal mentoring



- NZ success stories
- Pro bono professional support
- Networks/ Networking meetings
- Websites such as www.socialnetworking, www.nzcsi.org
- Leadership coaching such as www.mindfuladventures.co.nz/ Spark leadership programmes
- Academia and research
- Social media
- Overseas case studies
- Socially responsible businesses
- Vivian Hutchinson's SE group
- National attitude Give it a go!
- Developing recognition/ increasing opportunities for people to engage

Other participants find there is currently very little support and encouragement in NZ. An interesting comment made is that people in the mainstream are still working out what is a social entrepreneur. This suggests there is immense potential in this space and much more support can be provided to NZ social entrepreneurs and their work.