

# Social Entrepreneurs: Change Agents

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kamaila A. Sanders, The University of Pennsylvania

**SUBJECT(S):** Entrepreneurship

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9, 10, 11, 12

## ≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will learn some of the definitions, characteristics and benefits of social entrepreneurship. They will begin with an activity that serves as a metaphor to highlight one of the social issues a social entrepreneur may be concerned with. Then students will read the Knowledge@Wharton article: “Social Entrepreneurs: Playing the Role of Change Agents in Society,” and answer questions to help them better understand the topic.

## ≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Entrepreneurship, I. Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

## ≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- “V is for Visionary: Five Lessons from Tech Titan Josh Kopelman”
- “Teen-led Businesses Tackle the Problem of Food Waste”
- “Tackling the Problem of Hunger in America”
- “Social Innovator Hannah Herbst Uses Water Power to Tackle Energy Poverty”
- “Social Entrepreneurship Spotlight: The Face Inside Your Coffee Cup”
- “Philanthro-teen Shannon McNamara: Educating Girls in Tanzania”
- “Mark Cuban’s ‘Mini-Me’ on What It’s Like to Work with an Investor”
- “Mara Steiu Wants You to Learn About Money — and Then Take Action”
- “ManCans Founder Hart Main Is Well Prepared for College Life”

- “Grassroots Goal: HIV Prevention on the Soccer Field”
- “Get Your Lemonade, Here! And Business Tips from Mikaila Ulmer”
- “Future of the Business World: A Lemonade Stand Inspires a Finance Project in Colombia”
- “Exploring Social Entrepreneurship: ‘My Generation Is Full of Activists and Humanitarians’”
- “Claire Sliney on Inspiring Change through Her Oscar-winning Documentary”
- “Building an Ethical and Efficient Recycling Supply Chain in India”
- “Building a Network: ‘One Simple Connection Can Lead to So Much’”
- “4 Questions for Gen Z Mask Entrepreneur Elvis Zhang”
- “‘FishFlops’ Style Inspires One Teen to Save Her Money and Pay It Forward”

**Common Core Standard(s):** Vocabulary acquisition and use, knowledge of language, comprehension and collaboration, presentation of knowledge and ideas.

**Objectives/Purposes:** In this lesson, students will learn multiple definitions of the term social entrepreneur, as well as how social entrepreneurship may benefit society and the entrepreneur.

**Knowledge@Wharton Article:** [“Social Entrepreneurs: Playing the Role of Change Agents in Society”](#)

**Other Resources/Materials:** Four sets of Lego building box sets (or something that requires directions to be built)

**Activity:**

1. (10 mins) Divide the class into groups (based on the number of box sets you have). Give each group one of the Lego box sets and tell that group to build what they see on the box. The trick is that only a few of the groups should have instructions on how to build the Lego set and the rest of the groups either have partial instructions or no instructions at all. Do not tell students that some groups have instructions and others do not. During the simulation, some groups may notice that some groups have instructions and get upset. That is ok. Allot about 7 -10 minutes for students to build their Lego sets and tell them that the first group to finish wins. The simulation usually works out in a way that the group with the instructions is the only group to complete their box set.

After time is up, have each group show what they have built and how they built their model. This is when the class will find out that some students had directions and others did not. Take this

opportunity to explain how the simulation is a metaphor for real life relating to privilege (the fact that some people have the directions to be successful in life and others don't).

2. (15 mins) Have students read the article: "Social Entrepreneurs: Playing the Role of Change Agents in Society." As they read, have them take notes on the following questions:

- The article mentions that there are many different yet similar definitions of social entrepreneurship. Provide a few of the definitions mentioned in the article.
  - Social entrepreneurship is a process where the creation of new business enterprise leads to social wealth enhancement so that society and the entrepreneur benefit.
  - It is the melding of enterprise and innovation often associated with the private sector with the grassroots accountability necessary to sustain solutions in the public sector.
  - Being a social entrepreneur must include doing things in a way that has never been done before.
  - A different kind of social leader who applies practical solutions to social problems by combining innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity; you innovate to find a new product, service or approach to a problem.
  
- What are some of the characteristics of social entrepreneurs?
  - Innovative
  - Imaginative
  - Play the role of change agents in the social sector
  - They do things in a way that has not been done before
  - May be for profit – not for profit
  - Accountable to the constituents they serve
  - Create social enterprises that are able to sustain themselves financially and further their cause
  
- What are some of the benefits of social entrepreneurship?
  - Creation of jobs
  - Increased productivity
  - Enhanced national competitiveness
  - Better quality of life
  - An alternative to governments undertaking the task of solving societal problems

- Discuss these quotes:
  - “There are some organizations dedicated to raising funds but the involvement of communities-in-need is still minimal,” she notes. “So it is a scenario of constantly giving the fish and not teaching people how to fish.”
- What are some examples of products or services that social entrepreneurs have introduced?
  - Non-toxic landscaping and native plants that are not detrimental to local ecosystems
  - Increased wind energy marketing to expand the market for clean energy
  - Contract cleaning company that provides training and employment for economically disadvantaged workers
  - Company that uses fair trade chocolate

After students have finished reading, lead a discussion to go over their answers to the questions.

**Tying It All Together:** (15 mins) The article mentions that AAvishkaar is a for-profit social venture capital fund “with a belief that over time, helping to create opportunities and remove poverty could be a good business.” It is founded on the belief that people with the least resources often are the most innovative, but their creativity often goes untapped because they lack access to capital and business skills.

Have students work in groups to create a social enterprise event or business that works to solve this problem and provide these kinds of people with opportunities to showcase their skills and talent. Encourage students to be specific as to who they are targeting and have their event or business make sense. For example, if they are working to benefit women in Tanzania, they need to factor the local conditions into the equation. Also, make sure students keep in mind other characteristics of social entrepreneurs so that they have a revenue stream built into their business if necessary. Have each group present their ideas to the class.

**Practice Outside of the Classroom:** Tell students to pay attention to the problems or issues they notice in their local communities. Encourage them to do some research and investigation to better understand the problem and maybe even work to do something about it. Encourage students to become agents of change, starting with themselves.

Explore the Wharton Global Youth Program and Knowledge@Wharton business journals for related articles and conversation starters:

- “Rye Barcott of Carolina for Kibera: A Marine’s Take on the Power of Social Entrepreneurship”
- “Video and Transcript: Katherine Klein on Social Impact and ‘Finding Opportunities to Make a Difference in the World’“
- Social Entrepreneurship Spotlight: The Face Inside Your Coffee Cup
- “Building a Network: ‘One Simple Connection Can Lead to So Much’“
- “Social Entrepreneurship 101: Building Companies that Make a Difference”

**What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:** If you do not have access to Lego building sets or something else that comes with directions for building, skip that part of the activity. I found that students really enjoyed the Lego activity and it was a great way to illustrate some of the social challenges social entrepreneurs are trying to alleviate. It is a great simulation because in this case, students personally gain experience in what it is like trying to do something that you have no idea how to do, and it highlights the concept of privilege in a way that students can easily grasp.

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