



***Social entrepreneurship  
in education***

***Empowering the next generation  
to address society's needs***



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Our work in education supports multiple higher education partnerships between UK universities and international universities and our [Social enterprise in schools](#) resource pack has now been translated and is being used around the world to support young people to engage with social enterprise.

Our previous publications include:

- a ***Vision of Social Enterprise in Europe 2020*** which considers the evolution of social enterprise into the mainstream economy
- ***Think Global Trade Social*** which examines the role of social business in achieving progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- surveys providing crucial evidence about social enterprise in countries such as Pakistan, Ghana and Myanmar
- *Activist to entrepreneur: the role of social enterprise in supporting women's empowerment*
- *Social enterprise and higher education.*

More information about our work in social enterprise can be found at:

[www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise](http://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise)

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### As a team

With different and complementary interests in social enterprise education, by blending international networks and insights, and supporting the British Council's leadership in global social enterprise development, Richard and Mark have sought to produce something thought-provoking and well-informed which will promote rich debate and further enquiry.

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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our approach</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Why do we need social entrepreneurs?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Why do we need education?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Entrepreneurship education</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Case study: Playground heroes</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Entrepreneurship as a human right</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>The beginnings of social entrepreneurship education</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Case study: Victoria Park Primary Academy</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Case study: Greece</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Taking social entrepreneurship education mainstream</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Case study: St Albert's Café Connect</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Financing social entrepreneurship education</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Case study: Bamboo schools</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Measuring attainment in social entrepreneurship</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Schools as social enterprises</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>The future of social entrepreneurship education</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Basic bibliography</b>	<b>46</b>

# Foreword

Addressing the daunting social and environmental challenges facing our societies and planet will require a generation of social innovators and change makers.

The British Council believes that there is great potential in supporting the large numbers of young people who are interested in developing socially entrepreneurial solutions to such problems through our education systems.

Social entrepreneurs are agents of positive change who address challenges through an enterprising approach. They develop businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose, reinvest profits into their mission, and are accountable for their actions. They create jobs and bring hope to our most disadvantaged communities, delivering social, environmental and economic value. Through their innovative approaches to reduce inequalities, social enterprises might even provide a model for rebalancing how money and power are controlled.

Education too seeks to reduce inequality but unfortunately it remains a privilege that is still beyond reach for many children. Meanwhile, youth unemployment continues to rise globally, and the jobs that young people can secure in many parts of the world are often poorly paid. The result is increasing income inequality and an ever widening divide between rich and poor. And this is taking place at a time of profound technological, social and environmental change. It begs the question: how could our education systems better prepare our children to meet the challenges that await them in an uncertain future?

This is the context that inspired this think piece, which sets out to explore whether social entrepreneurship could be integrated into education systems and what education leaders make of this prospect. It considers how this would create opportunities for young people to solve global issues and equip them with a lifelong capacity to address problems. And it asks what a social enterprise curriculum might comprise and how it could be delivered at scale through our education systems.

In the course of writing this paper, the authors sought the opinions of expert leaders about how to provide a new generation with the skills they will need to succeed in the 21st century and to prepare them to solve some of the world's most urgent problems. They found a growing body of evidence suggesting that young people place increasing importance on values and ethical practices in the workplace. And they explored examples of social enterprise education being piloted in countries such as the UK, Morocco and Lebanon.

This think piece draws on the views of leaders in education and social enterprise and aims to serve as a platform for debate and discussion amongst stakeholders and policymakers and as a contribution to any road map for future policy and strategy. Yet to be clear: it is an opinion piece not robust research. It represents the views and findings of the authors and their interview respondents, not of the British Council. We hope that it provokes reflection, challenges current thinking and stimulates future research and innovation.

**Juliet Cornford**

Global Social Enterprise Advisor, British Council

# Executive summary

We are living through the most rapidly changing time in human history. Technology, societies and the planet itself are transforming at a dizzying rate. Among the many challenges this creates is the challenge of educating the next generation. How do you create an education system for a future that is so hard to envision? What do we need education to achieve?

This short paper doesn't pretend to give a conclusive answer to these enormous questions. But it does consider the key role that social entrepreneurship could play in providing at least part of the answer.

Entrepreneurship, at its root, is about creating value. At its best, it is about creating value for other people, as well as for the entrepreneur. It is about creative problem solving; about spotting new opportunities; about successfully navigating shifting sands; and about getting things done. Entrepreneurship involves many of the skills our young people and our world will need in the coming years. So, should entrepreneurship become a central part of our children's education?

Too often, the value of entrepreneurship is only considered in its narrow economic sense. It can create wealth for the individual at the expense of society or the environment. Everyone we engaged with for this paper believes this approach in education would be hugely damaging. Economic value that comes at a high social environmental cost disengages young people more than it empowers them. If we build that imbalance into our education system, we are building it into the foundations of our society.

Social entrepreneurship by contrast is explicitly about creating value for others: economic, social and environmental value. This is the entrepreneurship the world needs more of in order to tackle a myriad of global problems.

Social entrepreneurship is slowly making its way into the education system. In universities, the concept is starting to gain some traction, and there are some dazzling examples in schools too. But the concept is still relatively new and education systems can be notoriously slow to change. We hope this paper will act as a catalyst.

## Why is profit still our main criterion for measuring success?

The year 2008 was a watershed. The folly of pursuing profit at any cost was suddenly evident for all to see. Yet, nine years later, the entrepreneurs grabbing the headlines are still those pursuing profit alone. They remain the main role models. Why does economic value remain the dominant narrative when there are such complex societal issues to address? When there is a great body of evidence that suggests wealth does not deliver happiness or well-being, why does it remain the main measure of business success?

We add a 'social' label to distinguish entrepreneurs who choose to primarily pursue value for others. Perhaps it's time for social entrepreneurs to become the mainstream and economic entrepreneurs to have the label? For those who do not pursue social value to be considered the outliers instead? Our findings suggest that those who pursue social, environmental and economic value will be considered the entrepreneurs of the 21st century. Society needs a new set of role models.

## What is education for?

If social entrepreneurs are the new role models, what role should they play in education? Well, it depends on what we think education is for: a question under fierce debate. Is it about attainment? Employability? Citizenship? Self-determination? Human advancement?

We asked people to think about a higher purpose of education – something timeless, something which was usefully detached from the valid but diverse outcomes of participating in education systems, which do change over time. Something that both professionals and those outside of education systems seem to agree on is that historically, education was about how to live a good, meaningful and fulfilling life.

Our respondents agreed that this core objective should not change otherwise young people might feel lost or make choices which do not fulfil their true potential. Without education more people struggle, do not have the same opportunities as others, are vulnerable or unfairly advantaged depending on their background, rather than their own interest and efforts. What living a good, meaningful and fulfilling life actually means has changed over the years but definitions often include: employment, personal development, active citizenship and self-determination. Some of these have become recognised human rights. As has education itself.

The right to meaningful work is one of those factors defined as a human right. In much of the world this continues to be defined, primarily, as meaningful employment. But as technology advances and society changes, traditional jobs are disappearing and the boundaries between employment and self-employment blur. In some countries, the boundaries barely exist at all with upwards of 40 per cent of the population engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activity, much of it within the informal economy. What does employability mean in such a world? Is entrepreneurship a human right? Could social entrepreneurship offer an answer? What does citizenship mean in a world where governance, participatory democracy, family and community are also changing? A world of digital communities where individuals can be at once more connected and more isolated than ever before? A world where population growth, environmental degradation, religious extremism and finite natural resources create challenges for humanity on an unprecedented scale? A world where corporations and brands challenge nations for power? Could social entrepreneurship offer an answer?

Could social entrepreneurship education provide a framework to develop the skills and understanding to live a good, meaningful and fulfilling life in the 21st century?

This paper argues it could and recognises too that our current education systems require radical reform. The world has changed dramatically and our education systems have not.

## Emerging ideas about systems change

There is change already happening in our education systems. Frequently when we debate education this is quickly turned into an argument between two viewpoints. These are typically about what we should learn and how we should learn. Such debates can focus on traditional versus more progressive approaches, fact acquisition versus skills acquisition, and direct instruction versus enquiry-based learning.

Whatever we are learning, and however we are learning it, can be more meaningful if it can be put in, or draw from context, community, society and other sources.

**‘Entrepreneurship education and education often focus on skills without recognising the influence of structural conditions and environments.’**

Support advanced learning and training opportunities (SALTO)<sup>i</sup>

**‘66 per cent agreed that national education systems did not encourage individual ideas and dreams’**

HISCOX DNA of Entrepreneurship<sup>ii</sup>

Some go so far as to challenge the power balances in education systems, suggesting children themselves should guide their own learning. But there needn't be competition between these views. As always, the best approaches manage to find a balance.

We found that creating entrepreneurial opportunities for children and young people in school, early and throughout their education, provides one way to blend traditional and progressive approaches, generating powerful learning that embeds both knowledge and core skills.

Although not yet widespread, there are examples of social entrepreneurship education already fulfilling this potential. There are pockets of excellence: pathfinders to a systemic solution. We found shining examples of co-production between teachers, children, entrepreneurs and the community. We encountered examples of social entrepreneurship used to teach literacy and numeracy as well as creativity and innovation and as a way to create value for people and planet. We found examples of bottom up innovation and top-down systemisation and we reviewed examples of organisations that deliver education through a social enterprise model. We heard of children as young as three learning, through experience, the rules and language of entrepreneurship.

Through our interviews we found that for these exemplars to scale or spread requires intervention and coordination beyond and between the organisations involved. Successful adoption will require the expertise, influence and resources of teachers, social entrepreneurs, funders and governments.

Many of the best examples of social enterprise education use the expertise and skills of social entrepreneurs themselves. Yet not all social entrepreneurs are born teachers so achieving a balance between educators and social entrepreneurs in the delivery of social enterprise education varies across the world, with different approaches taken in different places. Teachers do not have to be entrepreneurs to use entrepreneurial experiences to teach problem solving and values for example. On the other hand, this experiential learning needs to be stretching and allow for the possibilities of failure and being unable to find the answer, which can be uncomfortable for teachers and highlights just one area where partnerships with entrepreneurs can be useful. We found that role models can provide enormous value, but that not all social entrepreneurs can teach. And what about regions where social entrepreneurs are thin on the ground? There needs to be a model of social entrepreneurship education that can be replicated in these areas too.

Our research suggests that there is a danger teachers are seen as part of the problem, lacking entrepreneurial skills or experience. In much of the world teaching is not a natural or obvious home for those with a passion for entrepreneurship or innovation. Teaching often attracts those who enjoyed and thrived in traditional education. But teachers are the beating heart of our education system. It is the skill and expertise of teachers that facilitates children's learning. And if the benefits of social entrepreneurship in education are to be enjoyed by more than a small number of fortunate children then, our informants argued, teachers need to be at the heart of that delivery.

We found that teachers were much harder on themselves than experts in the field when considering entrepreneurship. The experts we spoke to all recognised the need for greater investment in the continuing professional development of teachers. It is by investing in teachers' understanding and experience of social entrepreneurship in their training, and throughout their careers, that we can maximize the number of children understanding and experiencing social entrepreneurship.

Our findings also highlight the danger in thinking of social entrepreneurship as a subject that can simply be brought into the academic curriculum. There is a reason why many of the most successful entrepreneurs, social and economic, struggled at school. Many of the skills and gifts that make a great entrepreneur are not highly valued within a traditional school environment, yet they may resonate with children who do not feel engaged by school or by some educational approaches. Social entrepreneurship education could be an opportunity for those children to shine, not another subject to fail. Achieving such a change may require drawing on the insights and experiences of social entrepreneurs. The best examples we found of successful and transformative education were where values and entrepreneurship were embedded into the fabric of the school, not taught in isolation.

There is a balance to be struck between traditional and progressive; between utilising the skills and resources of teachers and those of social entrepreneurs; and that balance may be quite different in different countries and contexts.

### **Social entrepreneurship as a bridge**

In our interviews several contributors prefaced their support of entrepreneurship by saying, 'it's not a panacea'. However, one suggested that if there is a panacea to the world's problems, it is perhaps education. Society, it seems, increasingly expects this of education systems. The world's education systems need to be designed with this in mind. Respondents felt education should be re-designed and adapted to fit a much more ambitious challenge than in the past. One strong recurring theme was that we are still using education systems designed for a different time and, in many cases, a different country. Integrating social entrepreneurship, with its focus on tackling social and environmental challenges, would be a smart move. But how?

### **'Education systems default and look to history for their direction.'**

Interviewee, UK

**'Only by letting thousands and millions of entrepreneurs try new ideas to innovate, to create businesses that put those ideas to work in a competitive and open way – only by doing those things are we going to be able to tackle some of the world's biggest problems.'**

Angel Cabrera, Chair, Global Agenda Council on Entrepreneurship

We found that the greatest value is often created when social entrepreneurship is used as a bridge -- a bridge between traditional teaching methods and new experiential learning and between schools, businesses and communities. Through this process, teachers and entrepreneurs, along with brokers and facilitators, create new value in the education process. This value is the learning young people need; the deep core skills necessary to live a good and meaningful life in the 21st century.

**'In our school we are trying to create the citizens of tomorrow, not the citizens of yesterday our country is currently producing.'**

Social entrepreneur, Thailand

Building these bridges and the others created by teachers, entrepreneurs and communities is a chance to create values-driven entrepreneurial opportunities for children, especially at a younger age, and to build on these throughout school and beyond. It provides opportunities for them to learn lifelong lessons about creative value for others. It can equip and inspire them to become the change makers and value creators our world increasingly needs, in whatever career they eventually choose.

Contributors were clear that social entrepreneurship has huge potential to engage teachers and young people, and to transform education for good. It can build the social capital of children across the world to work with others from different backgrounds and ages. It can build the social capital of teachers and entrepreneurs, helping them find a common language. If we build on the current pockets of good practice, we can create genuine, systemic change.

## How do we get there?

If we are to realise this vision, however, there needs to be research to provide considerably more evidence for the impact and effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education. Education policy and practice is increasingly driven by evidence and, so far, there is insufficient robust evidence to justify large-scale public investment – however compelling the narrative.

This is where other funders have a role to play – piloting innovative approaches, spreading ideas between countries, enabling successful models to adapt and evolve for radically different contexts, and gathering the evidence of impact and efficacy to persuade governments to invest.

The very concept of education was once a social innovation now it is a human right. In some countries, it is still far from universal, but it has achieved unparalleled social impact across the world. Social entrepreneurship itself is not new, but the idea of fostering and supporting it is a relatively recent phenomenon. By drawing together the vision of social entrepreneurs and the expertise of teachers with far-sighted funding and rigorous research, the ground can be laid for systemic change on a global scale.

### **In order to achieve this, we make the following recommendations:**

1. Raise awareness of the impact social entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship in education systems can have with funders, educators, social entrepreneurs, academics and governments.
2. Actively engage social entrepreneurs and education pioneers to challenge the narrative about entrepreneurship, wrestling the meaning away from a narrow focus on economic value.
3. Engage forward-thinking funders to invest in expanding and developing social entrepreneurship education with a view to creating systemic change.
4. Gather robust evidence on the impact and efficacy of social entrepreneurship education to justify public investment.
5. Open the doors to designers. Engage education pioneers, social entrepreneurs, philanthropists and policy makers. Create the conditions for questioning the fundamentals of most education systems with a view to better preparing young people to meet the challenges they and society will face.
6. Introduce and integrate social entrepreneurs into the design and delivery of professional development for educators globally. Incentivise and facilitate behaviour change. Foster new relationships with a wider peer-group for this development.
7. Set high standards. Equalise the expectations we place on children with those we place on educators. Set a global standard for every teacher to be able, willing and actively committed to finding opportunities to create social impact across the curriculum.
8. Align social entrepreneurship education with national education policies, making it easier for governments to engage and easier for schools to assimilate.
9. Develop success measures based on outcomes and impact. Embrace failure as an opportunity to learn.
10. Particularly in low-income countries, move towards wider financing of the education system, as in other areas of international development. Incorporate social enterprise models to reach the base of the pyramid more effectively.
11. Invest in learning which can reach a global professional workforce such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

# Introduction

Social entrepreneurs are people who see something wrong with the world and then develop innovative ways to put it right. They are social change makers who are fundamentally using entrepreneurial approaches to tackle complex social problems. They are working towards a world that has a fair and equal society where the potential of all people is fully realised. They might find a way to employ homeless people, provide affordable sanitary products to poor women, or ensure disadvantaged producers receive a fair price for their labour. They combine insight, compassion and imagination to solve social and environmental problems.



Many social entrepreneurs choose to use social enterprise as a way to tackle these problems – using a commercial business model for a social purpose.

Social entrepreneurship is nothing new – people have been trying to make the world a better place for a significant portion of human history. But only relatively recently has it been considered something to be encouraged, studied, understood and taught.

There is still an argument raging about whether social entrepreneurs are born or made. The right environment and support can help develop the skills and knowledge a social entrepreneur needs and they can also inspire and encourage more to come forward. There is a bigger, more fundamental role though; one that is equally concerned with making the world a better place.

The development of human rights has played a significant role in how education systems look globally. Primary education has expanded widely, with considerable investment and research into early years and primary education methods. Though secondary education is less widespread in terms of access, its design and delivery are based on relatively similar structural approaches,

around schools, classrooms, national curricula and a balance of academic subjects. Even education systems designed for high-income countries can be dominant and influential actors in low and middle income countries, through the NGO, faith and private sectors for example. Education systems operate at a massive scale, and arguably have remained largely unchanged at a fundamental level since the 19th Century. Can this global education system provide today's children with the skills they need to thrive in our modern world? Can it provide the solutions to the social and environmental problems facing us in the 21st century? Our findings suggested that social entrepreneurship education offers one possible answer to both these questions.

In recent years, universities have stepped into this field offering masters and undergraduate degrees as well as extra-curricular activities. The British Council report *Social Enterprise in a Global Context: the role of Higher Education Institutions*<sup>iii</sup> engaged more than 200 bodies in 12 countries. It found that 75 per cent of the institutions surveyed are actively involved with at least one social enterprise and over half of these are also engaged in an international social enterprise partnership. Surprisingly perhaps, it discovered that only two per cent of HEIs had not previously worked with a social enterprise or had no plans to work with one in the future. But arguably, based on those interviews, the area where education could have the greatest impact on social entrepreneurship, and the area where social entrepreneurship could have the greatest impact on education, is in schools.

Social entrepreneurship in schools is an area of enormous potential, but one that has received little attention until now. This brief paper is an attempt to shine a spotlight on this opportunity and to catalyse research, investment and action.

# Our approach

Since social enterprise in education is a relatively new area for research though one that is attracting growing interest, we sought the opinions of educational experts and social entrepreneurs globally. Contributors were sourced via an open social media call and via our existing networks. We also interviewed experts who emerged from the literature review. This paper is a thought piece and should not be classified as robust research. It is designed to serve as an introduction and draws on the views of a small global sample of experts.

The views and opinions expressed in this piece are not intended to reflect the views of the British Council as a leader in global education but those of the authors and contributors we interviewed. A piece like this, we hope, helps extend the discourse researchers and academics are having with other practitioners and stakeholders. The tone is, at times, deliberately provocative. We hope this will prompt fresh debate and new research, perhaps from different perspectives. We hope it will assist leaders like the OECD to make progress on some of the key themes emerging from their work. And we hope it shines a spotlight on the expertise and enthusiasm of practitioners.

To take the dialogue about social entrepreneurship in education beyond our own experience as social entrepreneurs and education practitioners we took a three-stage approach:

1. We conducted a literature review to stretch our thinking and identify thought leaders;
2. We conducted short questionnaires amongst education professionals and social entrepreneurs to gain a broader, practitioner perspective and identify further innovative thinkers; and
3. We conducted in depth interviews with over 30 leading thinkers on social entrepreneurship and education from across five continents.

The literature review considered sources from around the globe and the reader will see opinions and references throughout the text referring to this and reflecting this range of perspectives. Although it is possible to define social enterprises, this definition will be pressure tested as you consider how social enterprise fits in very different legal frameworks, societies and cultural frameworks around the world.

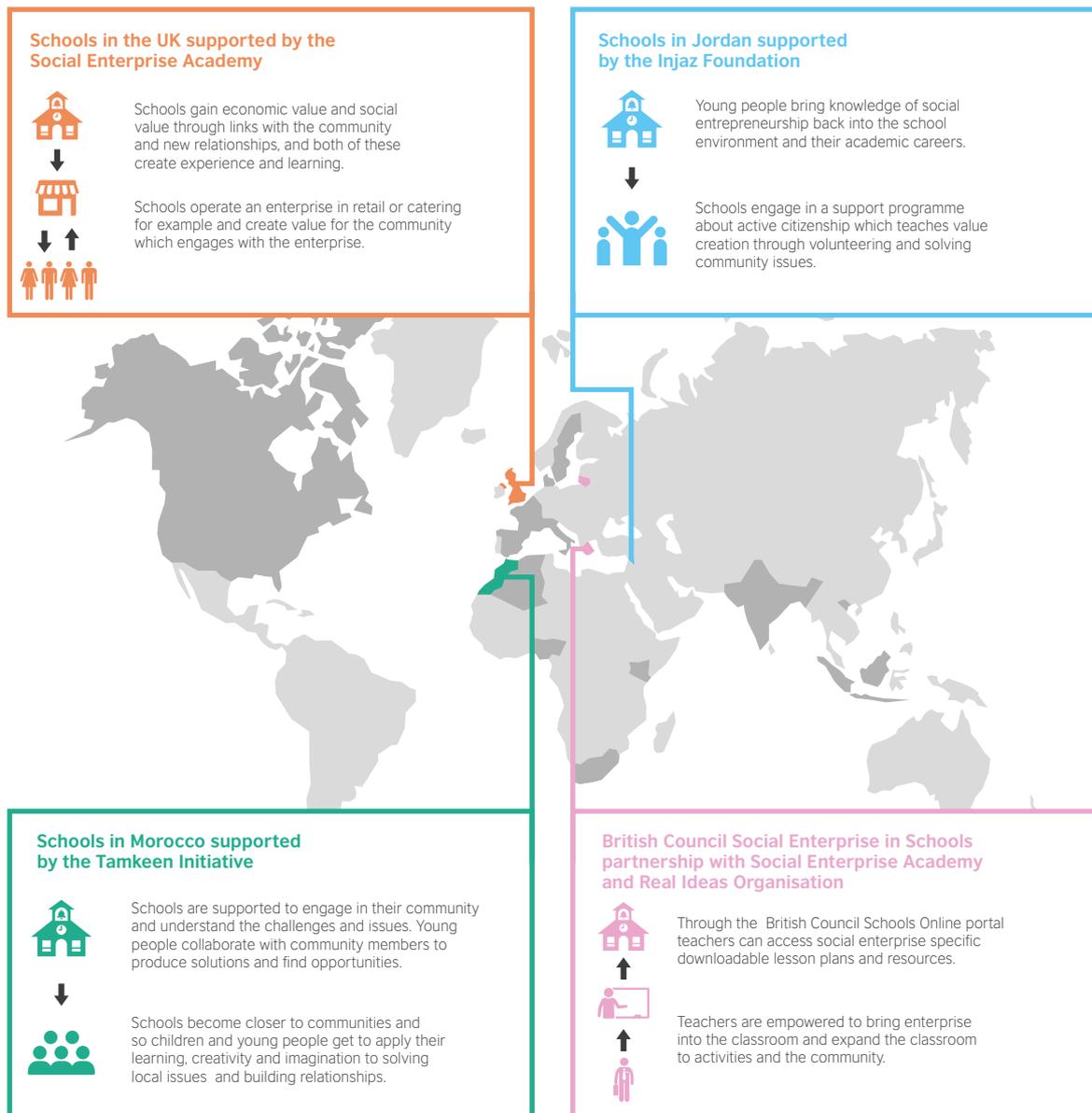
Our review highlighted that there has been a big investment into the amount of literature connected, though not always directly, with this topic in the last decade. Ten years is still a relatively short time for research to create far reaching change in professional practice.

It wasn't easy to engage social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in this debate about education systems, even though entrepreneurship has so much to offer. We expanded the literature review to look at blogs and online commentary, to identify individuals who are taking a personal interest in this, perhaps because of their own experience and their own children. Some of the literature we reviewed revealed exciting and controversial themes, which we followed through into interviews. These were areas right at the cutting edge of research, without as many additional sources to build up a deeper picture. As a result, we didn't feature them strongly, but they deserve focus in their own right. For example, we looked at the connection between faith and entrepreneurship pioneered at Baylor University in the USA. We sought to build case studies from relatively large education systems moving through change, including UN agencies for example. Change in education systems remains controversial. In our case, the examples we found were very early in their implementation phase and the agencies were not ready to be scrutinised as a significant case study. We found that change in education systems is as complex as it is controversial, and there is a risk of oversimplification or taking things out of essential context when transferring best practice. One of the key themes that emerged from the wealth of data and analysis that the OECD is providing and convening in this area is the implied and direct recommendations about the professional development of teachers.

Even though the inclusion of social entrepreneurship in education systems is at an early stage and there is no quick fix, we were encouraged by the range of stakeholders we reached. They suggest there is certainly sufficient knowledge and ideas out there and that we should now open the debate and be bolder in our thinking. They encouraged us to both recognise and challenge the critics and skeptics and said that exciting developments can emerge in this area.

### What can it look like?

We gathered insights from around the world, countries highlighted below. What ways exist or could be created to enable young people to learn about and from creating value for other people?



In summary we reached people through the literature review and questionnaires designed to identify a range of people to invite into conversation with us. We reached 26 social entrepreneurs and 20 education professionals with our targeted questionnaires leading to 33 interviews. A summary of the stakeholders we interviewed includes:

**Adnane Addioui**, Co-founder, Morocco Center for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, Morocco

**Ahmed Abdelhakim Hachelaf DSc**, Visiting Research Scholar, Maxwell School, Syracuse University

**Alex Pitt**, Investor, International and UK, Morocco

**Caroline Pontefract**, Director of Education, UNWRA, Switzerland

**Chris Durkin**, Associate Professor, Northampton University, UK

**Christina Gholkna**, Teacher, Greece

**Dirk Van Damme PhD**, Head of Innovation and Monitoring Progress Division, OECD

**Dovilė Dilienė**, Kaunas Food Industry and Trade Training Centre, Lithuania

**Ivan Diego**, Project Management Coordinator, Valnalón, Spain

**Jason Weisenthal**, CEO, Wallmonkeys.com, USA

**Johnny Girges**, Doctoral student, Sagesse University, Lebanon

**Justin Kasia**, Director of Business and Enterprise, Social Enterprise Society of Kenya, Kenya

**Ketan Makwana**, CEO, Enterprise Lab, UK

**Konstantinos Stergiou**, teacher, British Council, Greece

**Lindsay Hall**, CEO, Real Ideas Organisation, UK

**Lisa Worgan**, Head Teacher, Victoria Park Academy, UK

**Louise Thomas**, Senior Programme Lead, [The] Innovation Unit, UK

**Maria Seery**, Head Teacher, West Dunbarton School, UK

**Martin Lackéus**, doctoral student, Chalmers University, Sweden

**Mitchel Neubert**, PhD, Professor of Management, Baylor University, USA

**Mohammad Baraket**, social entrepreneur and teacher, Afghanistan

**Molly Rubenstein**, Innovation Center Programme Manager, USA

**Monika Stankeviciute**, NVO Avilyls, social entrepreneur Lithuania

**Mr Mechai**, head teacher and social entrepreneur, Bamboo schools, Thailand

**Nadia Gasper**, social entrepreneur, UK

**Neil McClean**, CEO, Social Enterprise Academy International, UK

**Rami Shishan**, Private Sector Partnerships Officer, UNHCR, Jordan

**Robert Ford**, Principal, Wyedean School, Gloucestershire, UK

**Shana Dressler**, Executive Director, Google 30 Weeks Programme, USA

**Shraddha Jain**, Teacher, India

**Svetland Beneckiene**, Vilnius Municipality, Lithuania

**Theodora Toli**, Teacher, Greece

**Trinh Pann**, Teacher, Vietnam

**Vahini Reddy PhD**, Director Evolve Excellence, India

**Yorgui Teyrouz**, President Donner Sang Compter, Lebanon

The resulting paper is an attempt to reflect, and reflect upon, the experience and expertise of these professionals as well as to suggest where the discourse might go with them and others.

# Why do we need social entrepreneurs?

The world is changing at an unprecedented rate, and that rate is accelerating. Technology, societies and the very environment we rely upon are all transforming rapidly. Humanity has an ever-evolving array of social and environmental challenges to meet: poverty, inequality, unemployment, climate change – an inter-related set of ‘wicked problems’. Nations must now collaborate in ways they have never needed to before.

Though far from easy, precedents are emerging. As an example The Paris Climate Agreement that followed on from the agreement on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the case of the SDGs one core weakness of the Millennium Development Goals is addressed. Instead of focusing exclusively on ‘developing countries’, the SDGs reflect the complex nature of sustainable development and it needing systemic responses. And so the SDGs are a challenge for every country and involve all sectors.

Globalisation is now deep-rooted into our societies with both positive and negative effects. Whereas capitalism could once be tempered by nation states, globalisation has led to nation states becoming dependent upon it and challenged by it. Technology enables people to be both better connected and uniquely disconnected, simultaneously.

Many of the systems and structures our civilisation is built upon are creaking under the strain: political structures; economic markets; education systems. Nation-states are finding themselves out-flanked by multi-national corporations and an internet that doesn’t recognise national boundaries.

Those interviewed felt there was an urgent need for people with the skills, passion and the ambition to address these problems but that the approach of governments around the world was to search for economic solutions and continue to grow the Gross World Product. Economies have been structured to encourage the pursuit of profit at all costs without actually building the human capital we need to tackle the future. Strongly held views highlighted that any review of literature will reveal just how much of a premium has been placed on economic development and an economic lens to the growth of nations.

The media represents entrepreneurs as a caricature of this, celebrating their fame and fortune, much more than their actual motivations, experiences and success stories and this must change. Social entrepreneurship and education are natural and useful bedfellows.

**‘Entrepreneurship and education are two such extraordinary opportunities that need to be encouraged and interconnected if we are to develop the human capital required for building the societies of the future.’**

Klaus Schwab, World Economic Forum

This economic system was brought almost to the point of collapse in 2008. And yet a decade on there has been no fundamental reform.

The World Economic Forum has made it clear that business should not fundamentally be about financial profit. Its motto is ‘entrepreneurship in the global interest.’ But, by and large, financial profit is the single measure of business success. The ‘value’ of a company fluctuates according to its financial profitability. Even at a national level we rank countries according to their GDP.

Prioritising economic value over social or environmental value distorts the way businesses are set up and run. Entrepreneurship, at its root, is about creating value. At its best, it is about creating value for other people and the world, as well as for the entrepreneur. It is about creative problem solving; about spotting new opportunities; about successfully navigating shifting sands; and about getting things done.

**‘It is not about the fame, glory or money. It’s about building products that transform the world and drive humanity forward.’**

Harvard Business Review

But when the only value that matters is economic, entrepreneurship can create more problems than it solves.

We recognise the model of social entrepreneurship when it balances financial, social and environmental value. Such businesses are ‘social enterprises’. Social enterprises reinvest the money they make back into their business or the local community. This allows them to tackle social problems, improve people’s life chances, support communities and help the environment. So when a social enterprise profits society profits. This means that the entrepreneurship the world actually needs is labeled as ‘other’. The majority of the world recognises entrepreneurship that focusses purely on financial value as the norm, even though this model has proved unsustainable. As one of our interviewees suggested,

‘Perhaps it’s time for social entrepreneurs to become the mainstream and “economic” entrepreneurs to become niche.’

The European Union restated its commitment to such a ‘social economy’ at the heart of its strategy, as recently as May 2017 in Madrid. Those pursuing social, environmental and economic value are the real entrepreneurs of the 21st century. This will be increasingly recognised, not as ‘other’ but as entrepreneurship.

Social enterprise is growing in both recognition and scale. EU data tracking the impact of the global flow of credit collapse from 2007 shows that almost half of “mainstream” investments failed, as the mainly economic value models faltered, yet only two per cent of impact and social investment deals failed, suggesting fundamentally stronger fundamentals of social

enterprises in some markets. And yet, social enterprise still accounts for only a tiny fraction of the world’s economy. There aren’t enough social entrepreneurs and new ones are not emerging at fast enough rates to meet the scale of the challenge. Less than three per cent of the world’s population is engaged in social entrepreneurship, compared with over 40 per cent engaging in economic entrepreneurship in some countries<sup>iv</sup>.

If social enterprise is to become the norm, if its values are to be embedded across all businesses as illustrated by the growing movement of B-Corps and the improved corporate social responsibility practices of mainstream businesses, social entrepreneurship needs to become the way in which children and young people learn about business and enterprise. Social entrepreneurship education needs to be mainstreamed.

Arguably, education needs social entrepreneurship just as much as social entrepreneurship needs education.



# Why do we need education?

**‘The best thing we might do is nurture resilient young people. This is the one thing we are definitely not doing. In fact we exclude this with our narrow curriculum.’**

Interviewee, Sweden

The invention of a formal education system transformed the world. It is one of the foundation stones of modern society. Education is protected as a human right. But what are we educating our children for in the 21st century? There is a body of evidence that suggests that employers are struggling to recruit young people with life skills. At the British Council we frame these around core skills, we define these as:

- critical thinking and problem solving
- creativity and imagination
- digital literacy
- student leadership
- collaboration and communication
- student leadership.

The quality of a country’s education system is largely measured by the attainment of children in a narrow set of tests. The resulting Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings are pored over by policy makers and national curricula adjusted to improve performance. But while maths, science, and reading are all competencies our children and our world need, they are at best a fraction of what is needed by a happy, healthy, human being, or indeed a happy, healthy society or planet.

**‘This is a story about whether an entire generation of kids will fail to make the grade in the global economy because they can’t think their way through abstract problems, work in teams, distinguish good information from bad, or speak a language other than their own.’**

OECD

This quote is taken from an OECD presentation, quoting a Time Magazine article of May 2016. We found the OECD to be bold and disruptive in their research and proposals for education systems, drawing from a diverse network across sectors. This thinking leads Andreas Schleicher to say,

**‘We live in a fast-changing world, and producing more of the same knowledge and skills will not suffice to address the challenges of the future. A generation ago teachers could expect that what they taught would last their students a lifetime. Today, because of the rapid economic and social change, schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we don’t yet know will arise.’**

OECD

For many people, education's primary function is to build a better and more stable society. Education is seen as a means to reduce poverty; ensure equality of opportunity; embed national values and citizenship. But what does citizenship mean in a world where governance, and participatory democracy, family and community are also changing? A world of digital communities where individuals can be at once more connected and more isolated than ever before? A world where population growth, environmental degradation, religious extremism and finite natural resources create challenges for humanity on an unprecedented scale? A world where corporations and brands challenge nations for power? Arguably it is here we see the role of education in supporting stable societies globalised, populated world. A consensus of opinion emerged from the interviews that a narrow focus on attainment in a limited series of tests leaves little space for these laudable but harder-to-measure core skills and the knowledge outcomes linked to uncertain future application or curriculum design.

**'The assessment metrics we use are poor proxies for what we used to want, and terrible for what we want in future.'**

Interviewee, UK

Even when our success criteria for education are focused purely on the outcomes of the individual child, attainment is an inadequate measure. At best, attainment enables some young people to progress into higher education and some professional careers. In many cases, it develops young people with a sense of entitlement; young people who have worked hard for good grades and then feel they deserve the glittering career they've been promised. Ironically many of our respondents felt that it can create the opposite of a work ethic, and a barrier to a successful or happy work-life. At worst, the system writes people off as failures because their skills do not fit a narrow, academic measure of success.

**'We both write people off too quickly and funnel them generally into even more formal education. I fear this is less about creating employable young people as it is delaying unemployed young people. Ironically those we write-off are those that are going to rely on their entrepreneurial and deep core skills earliest while the awards continue to follow those suited to the system.'**

Interviewee, Spain

While parents can be complicit in this drive for academic attainment - a simple yardstick to measure their children's progress in an uncertain world - others have recognised that academic success is no longer sufficient for success in life. In some countries, affluent parents are choosing to send their children to inner-city schools which only a decade ago they would have shunned. This is not because these schools have become academically brilliant, but because they have been most influenced by immigration and the changing world around them and now offer what these parents believe is the best preparation for life in a global community. Should this remain an experience afforded to a few? Social entrepreneurship in education will always recognise and value diversity in communities and in the pursuit of creating value. A wider application of these approaches in education will seek out diversity in places which are not 'naturally' shaped by so much change around them.

In low and middle-income countries, the education system should be a vital part of the development story. Education professionals in low and middle income countries frequently said that the education system in these countries is based on a model imported from colonial powers a century ago and poorly adapted to the needs of the children, the country or the modern world. Lack of available investment compounds the problem. Parents with the means to do so send their children to better-resourced, private schools to maximise their chance of success. But too often personal success means leaving their country and finding work abroad, not leading change and development locally. Arguably, the education system in many low and middle-income countries is failing the majority of children and failing to deliver the skills and resources those countries need.

**‘Education is mainly interested in the historical context of where we are. The future has become totally unpredictable. We are locked into the employment = work = income paradigm and challenging this is seen as destabilising.’**

Interviewee, Kenya

Over time, the concept of a meaningful life has evolved and, in many countries, has narrowed to a focus on jobs and careers. For governments funding education, the main objective has often become limited to ‘employability’. Relevant to the timing of this piece, our literature review and data within this reflects and reacts to a massive increase in underemployment and unemployment, especially among young people, a group which has just left formal education. As an obvious and socially and economically expensive issue, chronic youth unemployment and underemployment provides the imperative for a wider focus in education. The success criteria: will young people emerge from the education system ready to become valuable employees? The careers advice schools provide young people reflects this. But with youth unemployment above 40 per cent in

some countries, and with automation and artificial intelligence reducing the need for employees, how relevant is employability? Across the literature review there was a focus on both employability and recognition that education systems have to prepare young people for an uncertain future, including jobs which have not yet been created and problems not yet foreseen. Employability therefore acts as a catchall for making young people as ‘ready as possible’ without actually being able to totally qualify them. These are evidenced by studies into wider behaviour and attitudinal factors such as “The Enterprising Child” by Gribbs in 2006 and how investment into core skills and entrepreneurship nurture this from an early age. Education professionals in low and middle income countries often reported that their national education system was based on a model imported from colonial powers a century ago and poorly adapted to the needs of children, their country or the modern world.

In some countries, like the UK, zero-hours contracts are blurring the lines between employment and self-employment. In other countries, such boundaries barely exist at all with upwards of 40 per cent of the population engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activity, much of it within the informal economy. What does employability actually mean in such a context? And with talk of a guaranteed state-funded income now mainstream political discourse, what will work even look like by the time today’s children are ready for a job?

The world is fast changing, unpredictable and uncertain. How can education systems not just adapt to this changing world but lead the change and harness it for good?

Former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown is the UN Special Envoy for Global Education. He wrote that ‘education has been slow to change – classrooms have not changed much since the 19th century.’ And yet, if they are to rise to the new challenges of the 21st century, change they must. ‘For anyone who cares about education, our task is clear: to furnish millions of poor people, especially in the remotest parts of the world, with the innovations they need to transform and improve their lives through learning’. In low and middle income countries classrooms have developed towards a basic standard set in high income countries with

teaching still being classroom and desk based rather than how industry has changed and how we educate young people to fit these changes.

**‘The impact of not having a general environment of investing in education is that sector leaders become cautious. In the long-term this has worse consequences than cuts, because it cannot be reversed with just an injection of cash.’**

Interviewee, UK

The UK Government, Department for Education, aspires to lead the development of education systems and sustainable economic development in tandem.

**‘Education is such a crucial part of our industrial strategy. Education is at the heart of our plan for Britain. A true meritocracy. Opportunity as the glue that brings the country together. A strong, modern economy facing out to the world. A global Britain that lives up to its values.’**

The Right Hon. Justine Greening MP,  
Secretary of State, Department for  
Education, UK

While those we interviewed argue there needs to be a lot more research into the impact of social entrepreneurship in education, it is clear that because of the valuable experiential learning and stretch it can offer to teaching means there is a strong fit with such a government objective.

When things are risky, the default is to proceed with caution. Some interviewees expressed opinions that when things are uncertain proceeding cautiously can actually be dangerous.

If things are so unsure, if we don’t even know what problems young people will need to face, our approach should reflect more of the core skills they need. Uncertainty needs creativity, boldness, experimentation and collaboration. If we want young people to graduate from education systems as active, open and assertive citizens, we have to invest in creative, bold and collaborative education systems.

**‘Traditional education has so many benefits in terms of delivery, efficiency and organisation. Instead of either/ or approaches, we should build bridges. Creating opportunities for young people to create value for others, and then reflect on what they learn and the value for them is that bridge building activity.’**

Interviewee, UK

There is change already happening in education systems. Frequently this becomes a polarised debate between traditional and more progressive approaches; fact acquisition versus skills acquisition. But there needn’t be competition between these views. As always, the best approaches manage to find a balance.

We found that creating entrepreneurial opportunities for children and young people in school, early and throughout their education, provides one way to blend traditional and progressive approaches, generating powerful learning that embeds both knowledge and core skills.

Our education systems need to prepare children for a world we cannot predict; for a world with unprecedented social and environmental challenges; for a world in which they may need to create their own job and where that job is valued by more than money.

This is where education needs social entrepreneurship.

# Entrepreneurship education

**‘What we need is an entrepreneurial society in which innovation and entrepreneurship are normal, steady and continual.’**

Interviewee, Vietnam

Social entrepreneurship in education is still relatively rare, but entrepreneurship has achieved a level of educational legitimacy.

The majority of literature advocating entrepreneurship in education is based on the premise, not that everyone needs to become an entrepreneur, but that all members of our society need to become more entrepreneurial. This is echoed in what entrepreneurs write and say about their own understanding of entrepreneurship, including when Mark Zuckerberg describes creating change, not just companies. It is a key message of the World Economic Forum in its push for a more entrepreneurial society, which by necessity means a much wider application of entrepreneurship as a way to develop a skillset, the ‘enterprising child’ and ‘entrepreneurial society.’ Success then is not creating more companies or even more jobs; it is about developing a more entrepreneurial society, starting as early as possible.

Globally, around 45 per cent of jobs (OECD), and in some places as high as 75 per cent in emerging and transitional economies (EU Stats), are currently created by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Statistically, almost half of today’s children will be working in businesses that directly rely on a knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship. Governments recognise the importance of creating a strong ‘ecosystem of support’ for new businesses to start and grow. And, with the public sector shrinking in many countries since the global crash of 2008, and charities and NGOs looking more and more to income generation to deliver their objectives, entrepreneurial skills are becoming increasingly valuable because both revenue streams and outcomes are linked to an ability to create value through problem solving, creativity

and collaboration. In the past the focus was on core skills but increasingly it’s on the core competencies of a sustainable enterprise.

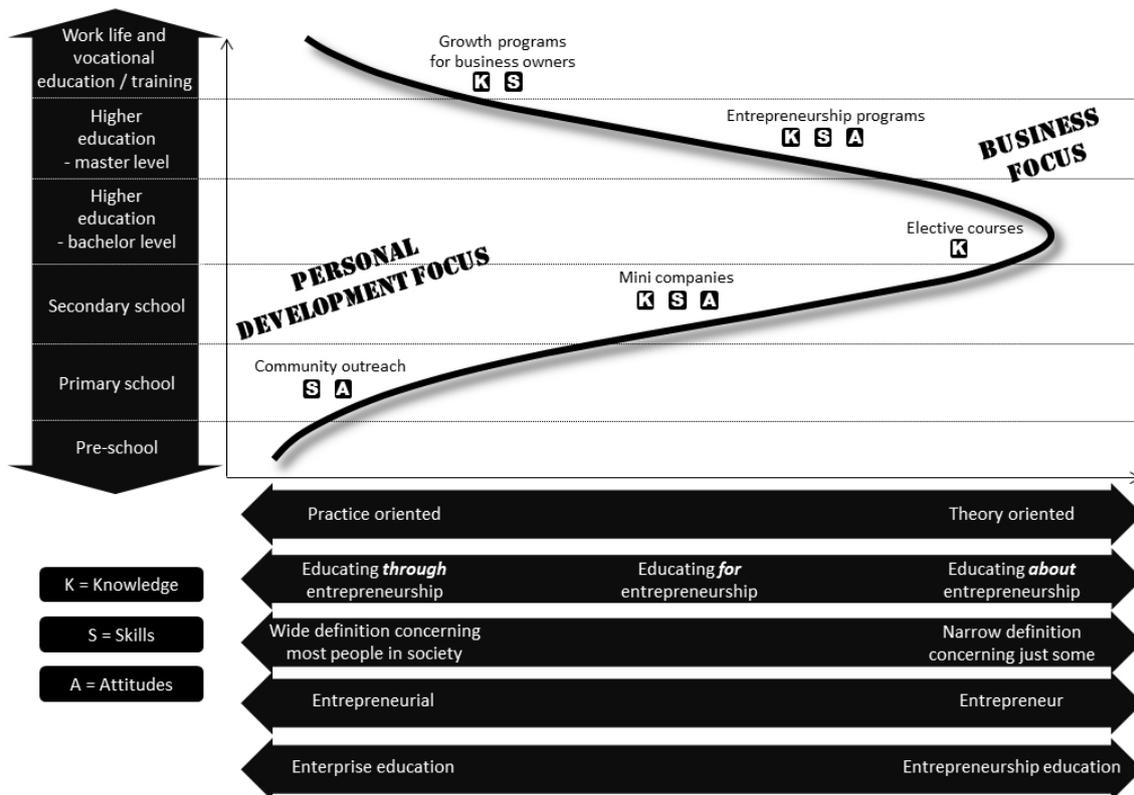
Universities and higher education institutions are integrating entrepreneurship into their programmes. Some 80 per cent of universities worldwide deliver some form of entrepreneurship learning, and 75 per cent support student-led initiatives (British Council).

Entrepreneurship education is needed throughout the education system and beyond, but exactly what is needed differs. The diagram below reveals some of the ways in which those needs change.

There is movement towards integrating entrepreneurship into schools. The EU has a policy on entrepreneurship in high schools. The concept of the ‘enterprising child’ is increasingly understood. Despite this, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, an annual, global study, highlights entrepreneurship education in primary and secondary schools as the biggest weakness in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Evidence suggests that we should integrate entrepreneurship into education much earlier, particularly when we consider how children and young people develop core skills and when entrepreneurship isn’t just about creating economic value or companies. This is a theme which emerges across blogs, including the OECD, in work by Martin Lackeus. And arguably, the broad approach taken towards education at primary and even secondary school is much better suited to introducing social entrepreneurship than the narrower, subject-specific focus at university.

In some communities, particularly in rural areas, or areas of high unemployment, entrepreneurship education has relevance and a potency that much traditional academic education lacks.



Lackéus, M. 2015. *Entrepreneurship in Education - What, Why, When, How*. OECD Publishing: Paris: Background paper for OECD-LEED<sup>vii</sup>

**‘The focus in Europe is whether or not to go to university. Here in Vietnam, many people leave school before starting a secondary level. Agriculture is a big part of the economy. Many of those that leave school become farmers. Many NGOs then train them to run farms as a business when they are older, sometimes still at an age when they would otherwise be in school. Incorporating practical learning, linked to entrepreneurship, would engage more people to stay in school and prepare them better for leading agriculture development.’**

Interviewee, Vietnam

Where young people are leaving education early, under pressure to earn a living for their families, entrepreneurship education may provide a more relevant framework for learning. Teaching English in this context would improve export competencies. A more practical application of maths and science would facilitate viable agri-business models, leading to financial inclusion and job creation. In areas of the world where people are poorest, or where unemployment is highest, entrepreneurship education will have the most immediate impact.

# Case study

## Playground Heroes

A British Council programme with the Ministry of Education in the State of Mexico provided training to 300 students from higher education institutions as part of their 'social service commitment'. (It is compulsory for many university students in Mexico to complete a certain number of hours of volunteer work.)

Through the programme, these students, who are all training to become English teachers, received face-to-face and online training to learn about children rights, social enterprise and the ways in which schools and students can improve their community. The university students were also supported to learn about social enterprise via master classes and webinars drawing on UK expertise.

After they had completed their training, these future teachers then drew on the social enterprise lesson plans and activities accessible via the British Council's 'Schools Online' portal to deliver six lessons in local primary schools. During these lessons, they helped the pupils to identify a social issue in their community and develop an enterprising solution to it. They taught the children how to write a business plan, undertake market analysis and deliver a project presentation, and ultimately how to create business solutions to social problems.

**'Playground Heroes is a fundamental project for the community. In addition to bringing English language instruction to primary schools in the public sector, the programme aims to leave a mark on the lives of children by making them aware of their own value and the importance of their ideas to improve the environment in which they live'**

Clara González



# Entrepreneurship as a human right

Education is recognised as a human right in the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Arguably, entrepreneurship is also a human right or, for many people at least, the means to realise their human rights.

For 'opportunity entrepreneurs', those who become entrepreneurs by choice, entrepreneurship is the means to achieve their right to self-expression as a way of expressing their creativity and applying their talents. It controls of their future. In hard places higher proportions of people become entrepreneurs out of necessity. For these people entrepreneurship itself is linked to basic human rights: the right to life, to food, to clothing.

But there people told us there is resistance to entrepreneurship in schools.

**'School is an opportunity to expand minds. To narrow a focus on entrepreneurship is itself a narrow view, as is the assumption that there should be a premium on entrepreneurial logic.'**

Interviewee, Spain

Article 26.2 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights is very clear. Education systems everywhere should be promoting, developing and protecting these human rights. A narrow view of entrepreneurs, one focused on profit for example, also limits the role that entrepreneurship can offer in education systems. Social entrepreneurship often impacts on the human rights of the leaders and beneficiaries through its wider focus.

Uniquely, social entrepreneurship offers a new form of education that is wider and potentially more useful.

Economic value at the expense of social and environmental value disengages more young people than it inspires. Few people become teachers because they are driven purely by financial profit. If entrepreneurship education is to be embraced by more than a handful of teachers and children it needs to consider social and environmental as well as monetary value – a triple bottom line.

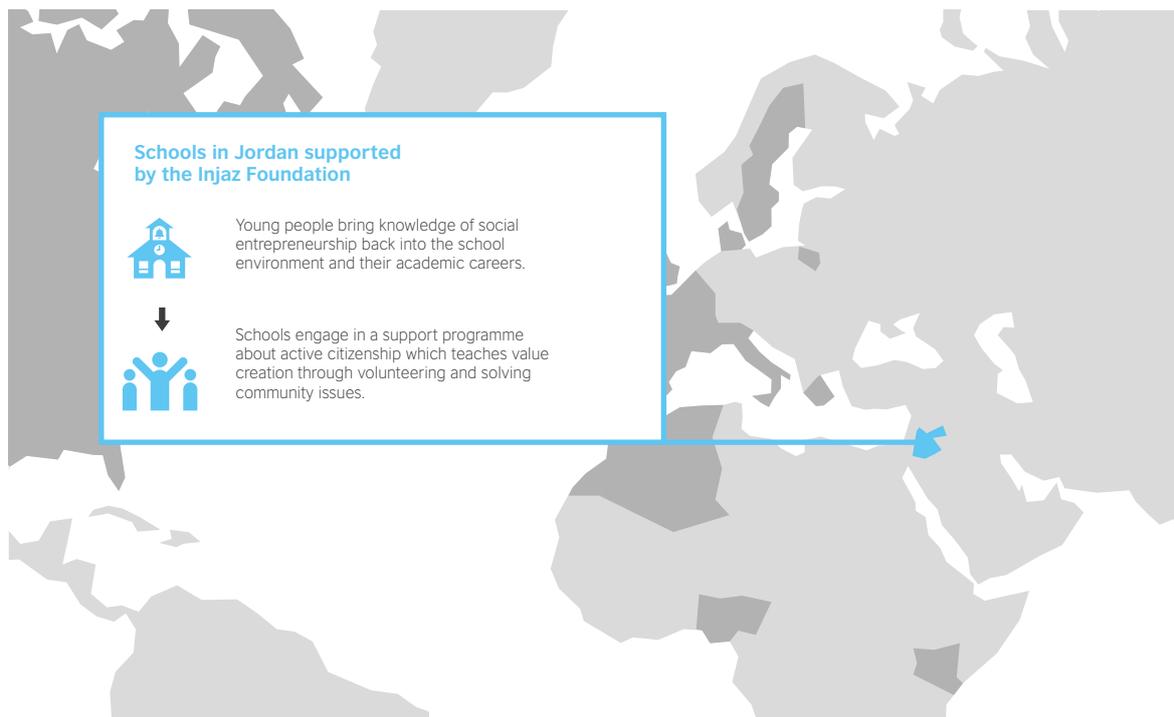
Social entrepreneurship is appealing in a way traditional entrepreneurship is not. Social entrepreneurship can be integrated into education systems as an 'ethos'. In conversation with Dirk Van Damme of OECD and Martin Lackeus of Chalmers University we approach this from two angles. The OECD is leading deep research into education systems and recognises that this must then flow into the professional development of teachers. In our interview with British Council supported teachers in Lithuania, the teachers revealed that in their view professional development occurs mainly 'on the job' and after qualification over a number of years. This includes mastering mainly the dynamics of teaching young people, planning, discipline, adapting and nurturing different learning styles etc. The mastery of these things leads to wider development of professional practice. This is why social entrepreneurship can be integrated as an ethos, and a way of working, a way of teaching, a way of creating a learning environment, rather than just a syllabus or curriculum item. This is because it needs to enable teachers to master the dynamics of education and develop confident professional skills and behaviours. This then raises the question of how we systematically support professional development in education systems.

## Lebanon and Jordan

In Lebanon and Jordan we saw very creative responses to the increase in population caused by migration, pushing systems to their limits and making room for radical thinking.

In some cases this echoed and validated the theme from academics about the priority for professional development.

In others, including Jordan, the focus on social innovation was also extended more into community development experiences, embracing the learning from volunteering for example not just enterprise.



# The beginnings of social entrepreneurship education

**‘My greatest challenge has been to change the mind-set of people. We see things the way our minds have been instructing our eyes to see.’**

Muhammad Yunus

Social entrepreneurship education, perhaps uniquely, has the ability to solve the two interlinked problems discussed so far: the problem of an unsustainable global economy that needs to be rebalanced towards social and environmental value; and the problems of the 21st century. It can create opportunities for children and young people to experience what it is like to create value for other people.

Although not yet widespread, there are examples of social entrepreneurship education already fulfilling this potential.

We found shining examples of schools integrating social entrepreneurship into small business projects. More commonly, schools disaggregated the experience of running a social enterprise into different opportunities to develop the skills required for social entrepreneurship such as nurturing empathy through volunteering. There were also programmes that helped students to understand problems and see opportunities by supporting schools to operate innovation labs, maker-spaces and laboratories. The learning created was high quality, influencing the whole curriculum.

Many of the best examples of social entrepreneurship education have been instigated by social entrepreneurs. They bring the innovation, vision and expertise of the social enterprise sector into schools.

The Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) is one such example. Based in South West England, they have developed the Social Enterprise Qualification, which provides a framework for young people to set up and run a social enterprise and to receive a recognisable qualification to validate their achievements. Working in partnership with forward-looking funders, schools and colleges RIO were able to bring social enterprise education to over 1,000 young people in 2016. Crucially, they focus on developing the understanding, skills and enthusiasm of teachers as well as pupils. This ensures the impact continues to be felt in schools after the intervention by RIO. To take social enterprise education to scale however requires the support of governments.



# Case study

## Focus: Victoria Park Primary Academy, Smethwick.

Over the last five years, the Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) has worked with over 350 schools and engaged with more than 10,000 young people in real and purposeful learning experiences. RIO believes that schools can transform learning by applying social enterprise principles to create exciting and innovative curricula.



© Real Ideas Organisation

At Victoria Park Primary School in Smethwick, RIO have played a key role in supporting the school to embed innovation and social enterprise learning across its curriculum, helping the school to achieve its Outstanding Ofsted rating transforming it from a failing school to an OFSTED rated outstanding one. Over the last six years, Victoria Park Primary Academy has worked with RIO to develop its approach to learning; they have fully engaged in the concept of social enterprise learning and taken on the principles of social enterprise as a pedagogical approach for the whole school. Social enterprise learning sits across of the year groups from foundation through to Year 6.

The school is now nationally recognised across the education sector as using social enterprise as a mechanism to internally improve teaching and learning. In his book, *The Art of Standing Out* (where RIO has been cited as a key partner) Andrew Morrish, Executive Head of the Trust, outlines the use of innovation and social enterprise as a cornerstone of educational practice.

All teaching staff are engaged in social enterprise learning and it is embedded across the curriculum with all children taking part in real challenges, which supports them to develop real world skills and enjoy learning. The school continually reviews the effectiveness and quality of the social enterprise learning to ensure it is 'full on and immersive', which produces outstanding learning results.

The Trust has appointed a Director of Curriculum Innovation, who has a focus embedding social enterprise across the Trust and continually developing the NICER@curriculum which is based on a series of social enterprise challenges inspired by the pupils themselves. Victoria Park Primary have a social enterprise lead, whose focus is to drive social enterprise activity and lead the work around the school's award winning social enterprise, Ballot Street Spice. Launched officially in September 2014, Ballot Street Spice exists to create meaningful learning for the school's pupils as well as employment opportunities for the parent community, by selling unique spice blends. The whole school is engaged and pupils are able to become part of Ballot Street Spice as a 'Spice Ambassadors' – making decisions on the future of business and developing real ideas.

**'We often hear about young generations needing to be more entrepreneurial, so creating a climate in our schools where real, purpose driven businesses are grown sets a great example and provides invaluable learning. At the same time using school facilities, communication channels and reputations to support community business means challenges faced by local people can be tackled in innovative new ways.'**

Hayley Mapp, Head of Victoria Park Primary Academy.

Pupils have responded positively to enterprise learning and by engaging in real and purposeful learning making decisions, taking responsibility for their actions, rising to challenges and making a difference whilst developing skills, knowledge and understanding by applying their learning in a real world context.

Their approach to learning has had a radical effect on teaching and learning standards, and has meant that the school have been able to maintain higher than the national average in their SAT results for the last few years.

**‘Social enterprise is what we do. It’s what makes us unique as a trust. Pupils need to be taught how to use 21st century skills, which enables them to think actively in social contexts to achieve complex and difficult learning challenges. We are passionate about creative learning, ensuring that ensures pupils are always immersed in a dynamic, exciting and vibrant curriculum. As a family of schools, we believe that learning should be evidence-based and research-driven. Our staff are committed to making marginal gains in their teaching through action research and believe that continuous improvement is at the heart of all that we do. This allows us to work towards our mission to become the best we can be.’**

Andrew Morrish, Executive Head, Victoria Academies Trust

Through real and immersive learning experiences, the Trust has developed vibrant relationships with local organisations and businesses that supports learning and this added value for the school ensures young people have a strong sense of their place in the world and helps them to see the relevance of their place in the world and also see the relevance of the more abstract elements of English and Maths curriculum. They have a real context to apply learning, which helps them to achieve better results. By engaging in social enterprise challenges, young people must develop skills that help them to overcome real challenges meaning they are better equipped for real life and the future.

Victoria Park Primary Academy have embraced this approach to learning and have demonstrated success because it creates real outcomes for both pupils and teachers, it fosters energy and a buzz around education, and has become more about simply achieving educational outcomes. Social enterprise learning has connected young people and their teachers to their true interests and passions, which overall makes both the teaching and learning real, inspiring and exciting.

In Scotland, the Social Enterprise Academy (SEA) established a similar programme, enabling children as young as three to set up social enterprises and integrating the language and concepts of social entrepreneurship into children’s experience from a young age. SEA has been able to achieve greater scale, however, through one crucial difference. The initiative has been supported by the Scottish Government with substantial funding, enabling SEA to reach over 900 schools across Scotland by between 2008 and 2016. Arguably aligning their Social Enterprise Schools programme to the Scottish Government’s ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ was crucial in obtaining this support. Teachers have witnessed a different, deeper and more meaningful connections being made between subjects and their application. Schools have developed new, sometimes unexpected, and wholly useful connections and relationships outside their usual circle, with local businesses for example, and gained new understanding of their role in the local economy.



Communities have had new and practical ways to be engaged in schools, beyond the narrow access of league tables and the review parents receive for their child. After all, the Igbo and Yoruba Proverb from Nigeria is even more relevant now,

**‘It takes a whole village [community] to raise a child.’**

In most of the examples we have come across, social entrepreneurs have played a crucial role in integrating social entrepreneurship into schools. Sometimes this is through creating the opportunities, as RIO and SEA have done. Sometimes it is through taking advantage of opportunities created by others.

In Wales, the development of social enterprise education has largely resulted as a consequence of introducing a new Welsh Bacallaureate qualification for 14-19 year olds. Entrepreneurship is included as part of this qualification, with social enterprise receiving a specific mention. This has led to a number of charities coming forward with ‘enterprise challenges’ for Welsh Bacallaureate students, raising funds for the charities and introducing the students to the concept of enterprise for social good.

Where governments haven’t supported the development of social enterprise education, some funders and intermediaries have stepped in to the breach to develop and spread good practice.

Schools across the UK have recognised the value of this kind of education. For example they have invested in it, where organisations like RIO and SEA have been able to develop an evidence base that the approach works. They have lent their support and expertise to a British Council initiative to develop a global ‘social enterprise in schools’ resource, offering activities and lesson plans. Now we can see schools across the world beginning to engage with these innovative approaches to learning.

**‘Problem-based learning is unsurprisingly really becoming active in places where schools are close to the problems in their communities. That is not necessarily Europe or the US and more likely to be places which have not had a leading role in education before.’**

OECD

**‘We found that students that had been through our programme in the 8th, 9th and 10th grade were more likely to be in work a year after they finished university. Seventy per cent of our students were in work within a year versus the 27 per cent normally for those universities.’**

Teacher, Jordan

# Case study

## Greece

Youth unemployment and a weak economy have been well documented challenges for Greece in recent years.



The British Council in Greece in responding to this crisis is supporting young people to engage as Active Citizens, developing their life skills through a 'developing social entrepreneurs' programme targeting students aged 10-15. Students are engaged in social action projects and finding entrepreneurial solutions to issues affecting individuals and their communities. The programme has been designed and framed around the British Council's Social Enterprise in Schools resource pack.

The programme was piloted in several secondary education and VET institutions in Greece to students 16-18 years old. During this pilot phase, approximately 7,000 students had the opportunity to participate in a number of interactive workshops providing them with core social entrepreneurial skills, enhancing their imagination, innovation and creativity, stimulating their active participation within the social the economy and encouraging their critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making.

Social enterprise was new to most students but was quickly embraced with the most popular topics among students including innovative ideas regarding recreational facilities, stray animals and urban infrastructure. They shared a real sense of excitement and achievement that their ideas could become reality and have a real social impact.

**'The overall programme was very creative. The students were asked to act like adults. All the activities introduced them to the process of critical thinking! They had to think about issues that often they are not aware of as they live in very protected environments.'**

Emma, teacher

**'I was concerned from situations I hadn't thought of before, all of them so close to my house and my school. I changed my mind about things, I discovered different sides of myself and I understood that if we want to change our community we can!'**

Stefania, 17 year-old student

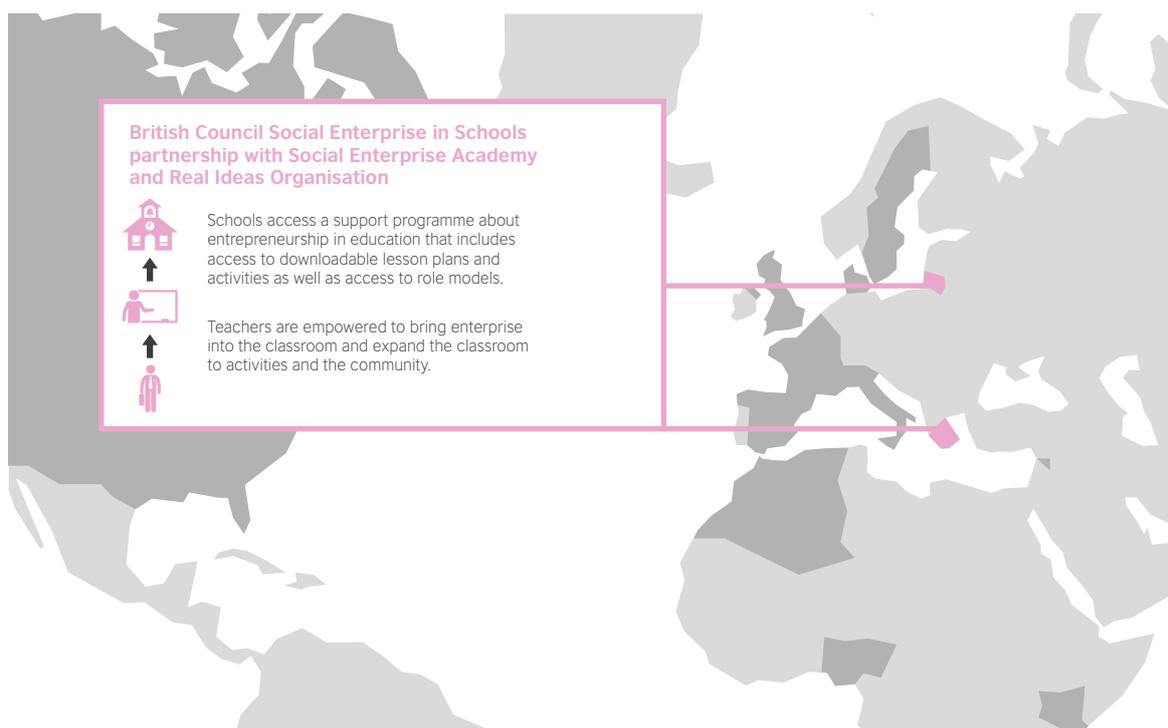
These examples of social enterprise education in action have achieved significant impact on the children and young people they have worked with, but as yet, they remain small pockets of excellence within the context of global education. How can social enterprise education reach the scale to deliver systemic change? How can it reach the majority of the world's children, rather than a fortunate few?

## Greece and Lithuania

Education Systems vary significantly around the world, even if they share characteristics such as the focus on the classroom and importance of central planning and resource management

We found teaching professionals very positive about the effect these programmes were having in very different countries, Lithuania and Greece for example

Where local enterprise and entrepreneur partners were less feasible its clear online support, tools and facilitated experiments and practical activities can become a creative learning environment based on experience and problem solving in a community.



# Taking social entrepreneurship education mainstream

The examples of social enterprise education in practice allow us to draw some important conclusions. Firstly, if social enterprise education is to scale it needs the support of governments.

In much of the world, the nation state is the primary coordinator, commissioner and funder of education systems. But this can leave education shackled to short-term political priorities, rather than long-term global priorities. Democratic systems produce politicians largely driven by outcomes that can be delivered within a four or five year election cycle. Arguably, education needs to be freed from these political constraints in order to focus on the real job of enabling children to learn the skills and values to become fulfilled individuals and create a happier, more sustainable world.

As long as governments retain control of education however, they are a key partner in helping to shape an education system that is fit for the 21st century. And making the case to governments for social entrepreneurship education will almost certainly require at least some alignment of any such programme with the immediate educational priorities of that government, demonstrating that short-term outcomes such as attainment in literacy and numeracy will improve, alongside employability, and the more aspirational aims of a more sustainable and fairer economy.

Many of our informants noted that governments are not the only stakeholders required to take social enterprise education from its current niche to the global mainstream.

## The role of social entrepreneurs

We captured the views of over 30 entrepreneurs in online questionnaires and about a third of our interviews were with social entrepreneurs. There are many social entrepreneurs that focus on transforming education. Of the 3,000 entrepreneurs in the Ashoka network, 1,000 focus on education for example.

Many of those we engaged whose work focuses on education felt that education systems had failed them personally. This is a powerful motivation for improving education systems for others. However, across the entire group no one placed a big emphasis on secondary education before university having equipped them with what they needed or left a lasting impression on who they are, rating the development they had experienced as an entrepreneur as providing the lion's share of this.

To a large extent the skills and expertise in social entrepreneurship are held by those setting up and running social enterprises. They are not held within government, and they are not held within the education system. These skills and expertise need to be harnessed.

Social entrepreneurs are already leading change in education in two ways: by trying new approaches and by offering schools something they are unlikely or unable to produce internally.

## Case study of leading new approaches

Educate Me Foundation aspires to redefine education in Egypt. Founded in 2010, it started as a fundraising effort to reinstate financially underprivileged children in a school environment. It has transformed towards developing its own learner-centred, skills-based educational model, tackling an insufficient public education system. In 2015, this award-winning enterprise took its first steps to becoming a government-certified community school and developing its professional development programme. This trains and develops public school teachers all over Egypt. In six years, Educate Me has served over 4,000 direct beneficiaries including teachers, children, and parents and indirectly impacted 40,000 through its programmes.

### **Case study of providing something schools are unlikely or unable to produce internally**

Take!TGlobal (TIG) is one of the world's leading networks of young people learning about engaging with and working towards tackling global challenges. This award-winning enterprise serves youth, educators and organisations in their individual and collective efforts to create solutions for the world's greatest challenges. TIG is scaling internationally to achieve the impact in its vision, and interestingly this has attracted criticism which affects those seeking to influence education. TIG was seen by some as only serving the interests of developing nations and in need of a wider appeal to attract a more global membership. Another concern was the need to initiate selective sponsorship onto its website in order to fund its increasing impact, and its need to incorporate a more exclusive approach to its membership, without being seen as a 'sell-out.' In the last ten years, Take!TGlobal has overcome these perceptions and challenges, to become a thought leader and influential organisation while nevertheless having to remain vigilant and sensitive to scaling in education systems.

If we limit social enterprise education to experiences that can be delivered by social entrepreneurs themselves, however, we immediately rule out the potential for it to become mainstream. To achieve the impact needed social enterprise must operate at scale. The routes to scale may themselves be as controversial as the change they propose.

This think-piece argues that social entrepreneurs can undoubtedly provide enormous value and inspiration as role models, but not all social entrepreneurs can teach. Social entrepreneurs are a diverse community. Those leading social enterprises may not be as entrepreneurial as leaders of charities and social entrepreneurs are not always in the independent sector, such as those driving change in public services for example. Even in countries where social enterprise is an established sector, there are a limited number of experienced social entrepreneurs, and most of them are too busy running and building social enterprises to deliver

programmes to large numbers of schools. We must look wider to find the role models, again not limiting the potential of different experience to create great learning environments. Governments, such as that in Scotland, do and should invest in these initiatives. In Scotland's case social entrepreneurs are paid as trainers of teachers for example. And what about regions where social entrepreneurs are thin on the ground? There needs to be a model of social entrepreneurship education that can be replicated in these areas too.

Moreover, the provision of education by 'non-state providers' is often resisted, and the resources available to social enterprises are tiny compared to the resources of the state.

So the skills and expertise of social entrepreneurs, recognising who they are and where they may be based, need to be used to develop social enterprise education. And social entrepreneurs are vital role models for entrepreneurship that puts people and planet before profit. But if social entrepreneurship is to become integrated into the global education system, social entrepreneurs cannot be the primary mechanism for the delivery of social enterprise education.

### **The role of teachers**

When it comes to entrepreneurship there is a danger that teachers are seen as part of the problem, when they should be seen as part of the solution. In much of the world teaching is not a natural or obvious home for those with a passion for entrepreneurship or innovation. Teaching often attracts those who enjoyed and thrived in the education system, while entrepreneurs are often characterised as having struggled with traditional education. This struggle can be oversimplified and misunderstood. Likewise, the 'resistance' of teachers can be misrepresented. On its blog platform the OECD hosts a debate about teachers' 'fear of commercialism'. This is potentially understood and overcome when those that propose entrepreneurship in education move away from too narrow a focus on creating economic value or creating companies. The theme of a wider definition of entrepreneurship, and a need for a more entrepreneurial society, is represented best (currently) by social entrepreneurship. So while social enterprise education can be facilitated by

social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, the scope is again wider than this, and the key is to integrate social entrepreneurship as an 'ethos' in the professional development of teachers.

Teachers recognise that there are many similarities within education systems globally. Some see this as a barrier to getting good ideas to be replicated, because similar obstacles will have to be overcome elsewhere. Others believe the profession can drive change where there is awareness and evidence that the new approaches work. One common feature that can be seen as a paradox of education systems is the high level of centralised resource and planning control, but in reality teachers are autonomous, and work remotely from that.

We saw a creative attitude and dedicated focus to professional development in a number of cases and at scale by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) in their schools' system in several countries for example. However, we found more regularly an attitude to professional development that could be characterised as, 'You are qualified so just get out there and teach.'

**'Entrepreneurship is in the ascendancy. There is a risk that those riding this wave will gain influence, rather than more valuable entrepreneurs [e.g. social entrepreneurs]. We could give influence to a small number of actors at the expense of investing in professional development.'**

Interviewee, Spain

The obvious starting point is teacher recruitment and training. This could entail creating recruitment campaigns that are aimed at entrepreneurial individuals and incorporating hands-on experience of setting up, running, and working with social enterprises as part of all teacher training.

Broadening recruitment and training will introduce a new wave of more entrepreneurship-aware teachers into schools. However, without additional professional development for existing teachers and heads, the resulting clash of cultures is more likely to create tension, frustration, and difficulty in retaining these new entrepreneurial teachers within the profession. Investment is needed in social entrepreneurship experience and development for teachers. And, as in all sectors, especially those in public services, we should seek to release the entrepreneurial potential of those teachers already within the education system, the intrapreneurs, and those who personally have these core skills we want young people to develop.

A key theme of our literature review and subsequent conversations is the need to improve the outcomes of learning – i.e. that learning is a means to an end as well as valuable in its own right. The learning outcomes are linked to core skills. Enabling learning outcomes to link and develop core skills is actually really challenging. Those we interviewed pushed us to prioritise the professionalism of teachers as the key to making this happen. This includes simplifying what others from outside the systems can do to add value and to support teachers. Even though learning can improve, and teaching can develop, the professional teacher is highly respected. One interviewee said,

**'Teachers get trapped between the devil and the deep blue sea. Business creation is the devil. Entrepreneurship is a deep blue sea'**

Interviewee, Sweden

**‘If an increase in attainment is what society wants, then the professionalism of teachers needs to be supported and developed not the performance of children. Actors outside the system can do a lot to support the professionalisation of teachers. Professional teachers improve attainment and the development of core skills. Professional teachers create situations or contexts which are extremely meaningful for children. Role models can be overrated and can be unnecessary because this underestimates the power of children to become role models for each other.’**

Interviewee, Spain

Professional teachers can and should be supported to lead different approaches. These approaches are needed to create the learning environment to achieve new outcomes linked to core skills. These learning environments no longer need to be limited to schools and classrooms but remain the professional domain of teachers. The opportunity is to shift this focus, increasing learning networks beyond education professionals, creating a network of change agents. This challenge is the focus of education professionals globally, even though they may not be networked as such or supported to do so currently.

This global outcome is similar to the way that health professionals focus on the health outcome and companies focus on the customer’s experience. The way other professions are both supported and strive towards these outcomes, culturally, as an ethos, is very different to education systems. The productivity and performance of a professionalised system

is a key investment priority. Again this is about more than money it is also about how the professional development of the people nurturing young people is designed.

We recognise the value of children having work experience. We should also recognise the value of creating opportunities for teachers to experience work in an entrepreneurial environment, and to work in collaboration with social entrepreneurs.

Well-supported professionals can be exemplary leaders. If we no longer believe children should be trained to be robots, because the robots now fill the factories, education professionals need to be supported in much more sophisticated ways. If we enable, not just more children, but more teachers to become social entrepreneurs we release the potential for extraordinary social impact.

There is no perfect model

**‘Only by letting thousands and millions of entrepreneurs to try new ideas, to innovate, to create businesses that put those ideas to work in a competitive and open way – only by doing those things are we going to be able to tackle some of the world’s big problems.’**

Angel Cabrera

Although there are social and environmental problems facing us that are shared by every country in the world, there are also many that are unique to a particular town or community. There are some similarities in education globally, but every school is different.

If we try to apply one model of social enterprise education to every country we risk repeating the mistakes of trying to apply one model of education to every country. The strength of social entrepreneurship is that it enables individuals and organisations to use their local knowledge and experience to find sustainable solutions to the challenges faced in their communities.

# Case study

## Social Enterprise Academy: Social Enterprise in Schools Programme St Albert's Café Connect

At St Albert's Primary in Glasgow, 70 per cent of parents have little or no English. When pupils were asked what they would like to change in their community they were clear they wanted to see more connection between people, and wanted to develop a social enterprise that would serve as a catalyst for bringing people together to share experiences, make friendships and break down barriers.



© Social Enterprise Academy

Initially they created Café Connect simply as a space for people to meet every two weeks but it has evolved to become a popular hub for information sharing and skills development, with art and English classes and a partnership with local businesses to sell goods created by refugees.

The idea of schools as a critical part of community cohesion is a significant opportunity for enhancing the role of social enterprise in education. They are essentially developing social capital in their communities and becoming role models to adults and other young people.

The strength of this enterprise is that the social purpose is at the core of delivery. What pupils have seen is that they can have a direct, meaningful impact on social challenges they care about. They can also continue to build on their experience of working collaboratively, of problem solving, experimenting and thinking creatively as part of making change happen.

More broadly, the Social Enterprise in Schools programme has developed significant momentum since starting in 2007 because teachers, policy makers and politicians have seen first-hand the increase in confidence, ability and aspiration of pupils. This is particularly apparent amongst pupils not reaching their potential attainment level and for some it has been transformational in raising their self-belief, skills and employability.

With the support of Scottish Government the programme has grown substantially in scale and ambition. Reaching 700 schools so far, it now aims to extend to all schools in Scotland over the next ten years whilst also developing innovation projects exploring deeper community connections and the programme's long-term impact. Ultimately, the Social Enterprise Academy, and through its support, the Scottish Government, see the programme as a route to systemic change for more inclusive growth, social justice and an entrepreneurial economy that embraces social enterprise for job and business creation.

Particularly in the absence of appropriate professional development, many teachers find social entrepreneurship confusing. As an interviewee summarised nicely,

Proven models that can be rolled out across multiple schools can provide evidence of success and reassurance to a school that it is worth investing in. They can also help to connect multiple schools, perhaps through communities of practice. The British Councils' Schools Online platform social enterprise school packs are examples of readily available resources for global school communities to access.

Such resources could also include recognition for the efforts of staff and pupils (e.g. in the form of success stories), access to additional expertise and content, and mechanisms for building global communities of practice. Such resources could also include recognition for the efforts of staff and pupils (e.g. in the form of success stories), access to additional expertise and content, and mechanisms for building global communities of practice.

Ultimately they can package social entrepreneurship education as something tangible, accessible and exciting. Both SEA and Rio have demonstrated this. Language education has used models like exchanges and technology to connect pupils for years. We think that the development of core skills and the development of social entrepreneurship in education can benefit from this too. Globalisation will continue but there is plenty of evidence to show it needs to benefit people more equally. It also needs to reflect the diversity of the world and resonate in different places. This is because to be sustainable, we need to maximise connections and opportunities to collaborate.

Schools are a good place to start, 'safe' places to socialise prejudices and even challenge them as part of learning. We should be bold and positive, because education systems could be just as effective at reinforcing negative narratives and undermining the development of core skills. A combination of local innovation, collaboration and coordination can facilitate and build on local partnerships between schools and social entrepreneurs; national partnerships between governments and social enterprises; and international collaboration between schools and nations. It can then be embedded through professional development and through local capacity building.

# Financing social entrepreneurship education

While governments are the main funders of education, other funders will almost certainly be needed initially to fund pilot programmes and make a sufficiently strong case for substantial government investment.

Investing in education is a long-term concern. Though there can be more immediate effects, the cumulative effect of investing early and throughout is relevant to the development of core skills, which, for example, have become second nature by the time students enroll in university much as has written proficiency in their native language.

The economic payback for a government investing in social enterprise education as early as primary school could begin in 15 years, notwithstanding that it will have a positive impact throughout a child's education, as was evidence from our interviews with RIO and SEA. The Scottish Government have invested heavily here embedding education into their national social enterprise strategy. Philanthropists and foundations on the other hand can and do take a longer-term view of social impact. And they can play a crucial role in supporting the development, scaling and evidencing of social enterprise education. These grant funders can, and should, be investing in social enterprise education at this early stage of its development in order to prove its value to governments. One of the best examples we found of private investment was in the Bamboo schools in Thailand where, with the support of private sponsorship, the founders set up a loan fund of around £10k designed to enable students to borrow money to set up real social enterprises.

**‘I think we need to be encouraging more private businesses to invest in social businesses. Instead of giving money to charity, they should be buying more shares. We want to encourage more ISR, individual social responsibility’.**

Social entrepreneur, Thailand

There is also a role for social investors, particularly in countries where government borrowing-power is weak and where public spend is low. If the right metrics are identified to demonstrate the impact of social entrepreneurship education on tax revenues and welfare spending, for example, tools such as social impact bonds have significant potential in low-income countries. They would allow governments to leverage social investment to create radical improvement in their education systems.

# Case study

## Bamboo Schools

The Mechai Bamboo School is an innovative secondary educational institution which is also engaged in community development. This rural boarding school was established to become a lifelong learning centre for all and act as a hub for social and economic advancement in surrounding villages. The school has two arms: the first is an educational arm which operates the school for 180 students. The second is a community development arm which provides assistance and cooperation to small rural schools and their surrounding communities.

School fees are jointly paid by the students and their parents in the form of community service and tree planting. Parents and students are required to share the responsibility of 800 hours of community service and the planting of 800 trees per year. By the time these students have completed their secondary education; they will have planted 4,800 trees and, together with their parents, experienced the joy of doing public good.

The school curriculum is framed around the Sustainable Development Goals and they have added two to these – sharing and honesty. They are aspiring to create the ‘citizens of tomorrow’. The CEO and founder Mr Mechai Viravaidya says that universities are chasing after their graduates.

The school imparts students with life skills and occupational skills and encourages them to be innovative and to think outside the box. They are involved in many of the management aspects of the school through a Student Cabinet and student operating committees, starting with welcoming guests.

Students are responsible for all purchases of the school, conduct audits and take charge of the selection of incoming students as well as the recruitment of new teachers. To further their experience in life and occupational skills, students are given the opportunity to be trained and employed during holidays in companies, hotels, hospitals, universities and institutions caring for people with disabilities. The school has developed a small model vegetable farm, which requires little land, little water and little labour and enables the crops to thrive on extremely poor soil. This small plot agricultural concept has gained much popularity and acceptance by many small schools and surrounding communities.

A business loan fund is made available for students to engage in group businesses. This will enable them to learn about business entrepreneurship and to equip them with the option of becoming self-employed or employers after they complete their education. This experience will prepare them for their world of tomorrow without having to migrate to urban settings.

Student businesses range from vegetable growing to animal raising, food products, production of solar-powered torches and water pumps, water catchment jars, coffee mugs and the sales of goods and services. As a Lifelong Learning Centre, the school also provides business training to villagers in surrounding communities, ranging from vegetables to out-of-season lime and food processing.

The Bamboo School was able to achieve the cooperation and financial assistance from the business community (Shell and Ikea) to launch the ‘School-Based Integrated Rural Development’ (School-BIRD) Project. This project has assisted, on average, forty schools per year to become Lifelong Learning Centres and hubs for social and economic advancement with strong participation from members of the surrounding communities and the local government.



© Population and Community Development Association (PDA)

# Measuring attainment in social entrepreneurship

If social enterprise education is to be mainstreamed, should it also be assessed? Should it become part of the attainment culture? Assessing any sector or profession is controversial. If it is self-regulated there are challenges about objectivity. If it is independently assessed it can still become politicised. There is no doubt that more time and resources are devoted to school subjects that get measured. Opinions voiced through our interviews and questionnaires championed a whole system approach, where social enterprise is integrated and part of the fabric a schools' values, ethos and activities.



© Social Enterprise Academy

The risk of entrepreneurship becoming 'just another subject' is also another subject which young people can fail. This concept of failure doesn't match the value that entrepreneurship in education can offer. This experience of failing, and what to do about it, is one of the most powerful ways of seeing core skills in action and so developing core skills feels to be an important part of the change. Either way, entrepreneurship will sit alongside the need to develop basic skills and the advanced skills associated with professional careers, both of which education systems teach well and continue to improve.

**'I left school early, studied at home, and sat my GCSEs and A-Levels directly with the British Council. School taught me basic skills; the rest I have learned outside.'**

Young social entrepreneur,  
Bangladesh

In the past the expectation was that what people learned at school would last a lifetime, and there has always been recognition that school can influence adult development. Aristotle is credited as being the first to write that to give him access to the child until they were seven years old, and he would show you the person they would become. He was drawing attention to how influential early education could be. In these early years our values and ethics started to develop, and we carry these into adulthood. Later these words would be credited to Jesuits showing how dedication and understanding of a particular religion could be integrated into an influential education system. From this, we reinforce the view shared with us, that while entrepreneurship is currently most at home in the further and higher education settings, greater value can be gained by teaching entrepreneurship much earlier and more broadly. Though the impact within education systems, before further education, is relatively high among the youngest people we engaged, it tails off with age significantly. The youngest person we engaged said of education systems,

## UK

We found these worked best where there was clear and consistent national support including resources.

The approach is robust and is proving adaptable internationally where that support is different and also where the position of schools in the community is different.

Evidence shows that these programmes impact on attainment as well as facilitate much more creativity in the curriculum.

Schools experience and benefit from added value through community linkages and relationships.



**‘It has had an indirect influence on my personality and behaviour, some of which I have had to resist because it is old fashioned. I can say that the current education systems gave me a reasonable start. At some point though, it hasn’t helped me to move forward. Maybe I can say 50-55 per cent of what I have become already is because of school. I am learning and changing more since I left.**

Young youth leader, Cyprus

If we think about how we learn languages most school subjects are taught through our native language. Our proficiency, understanding and skill with our native language increases through school, even when we are ostensibly learning another subject. By contrast, when we learn a foreign language as an academic subject, without similar immersion, our proficiency remains limited. It is only if we spend time living in that country and using that language that we develop a depth of understanding and skill.

Social entrepreneurship in education systems should be based on authentic and real opportunities to experience how to create value for others in the process of solving problems with creativity and collaborating with others. It can then be embedded across the curriculum and could have the effect of becoming like the native language of core skills.

Without seeking to oversimplify what is involved, RIO shows teachers how to take a whole system approach. They start by identifying a problem in the community such as litter. Pupils might use design and technology lessons to make prototype bins and English lessons to develop communication campaigns, maths to structure pricing and cash flow for a business model. Once the solution becomes this advanced and practical the cross curriculum linkages are significant.

If social entrepreneurship is embedded into the life of the school, it has the potential to not only create impact for children and teachers but also in the wider community and the world, and certainly extend well beyond the attainment system. This is social entrepreneurship as an ethos and it is more powerful than social entrepreneurship as a subject. Social entrepreneurship in action is more powerful still.

# Schools as social enterprises

**‘If the problem you need to address is industry or system wide, you need to understand the reasons why the market or the system has failed to address it.’**

Harvard Business Review, 2012

This is a quote about business and markets, but why is it that when society has a problem, we point first to governments to solve it, rather than trying to understand why civil society has failed to address it? All of the social entrepreneurs we engaged with unsurprisingly think differently, and they believe that social innovation, led by communities and civil society, is a way of addressing complex issues. In the same way, when there is something ‘wrong’ with the education system, a default is to focus on the government. Doing so helps make education political. Throughout our conversations we were encouraged to respect education professionals and policy makers and believe that within the right conditions they would be ideal allies for social entrepreneurs, and even act as intrapreneurial change makers in the system. As a professional network, they also have the ability to scale that best practice into teaching practice globally. Education systems have not had the chance to address its problems. If we make change in education systems only a policy argument and fail to believe in and empower education systems to rise to these challenges, we will fail to build stronger, scalable foundations.

One social entrepreneur suggested the best way to affect systemic change was to get on and do it and then show the government what can be achieved and how it works in practice.

**‘You influence from the outside, do it yourself and show the government the outcomes and impact.’**

Social entrepreneur, Thailand

So what does social entrepreneurship in action look like in an education context?

In many countries around the world the state does not have the resources or the ability to provide good education to all its children. The office of the UN Special Envoy for Education estimates that 260 million children are out of school. In sub-Saharan Africa alone there are 22 million young people without access to secondary education. Where NGOs have stepped into this gap they have often been criticised for ‘importing education’ rather than building a system for the societies in which they operate.

Increasingly social enterprise is offering a solution, providing education to the ‘bottom of the pyramid’ poor. One of the world’s largest microfinance companies, Opportunity International, provides loans to education entrepreneurs to help set up new private schools serving low-income communities. They also provide business and support to ensure they become sustainable. This approach is already having a radical impact on education in some of the poorest parts of the world, driving up quality and providing education tailored to the requirements of parents, the customers.

The social impact created by social enterprise schools does not need to be limited to education however.

**‘We support schools to become community innovation hubs. These fit in well with capacity building NGOs operating in those communities. We focus on professional development of teachers to access the community as a resource, for practical learning and to solve problems. Teachers are poorly paid and their potential is not totally realised.’**

Interviewee, Morocco

Even well-resourced schools in affluent countries can create additional impact by adopting social enterprise models. They may not be selling education, as the bottom of the pyramid schools are, but by developing businesses the community needs they can engage parents alienated by traditional education, provide vital services for local people and become hubs of social innovation.

Some schools have used social enterprise to build bridges between generations, with children providing hand massage services in care homes, or growing vegetables with adults with learning difficulties.

**‘With the profits from our eggs, we hired a dance coach for the whole community and children have learned alongside people older than them and with different life experience. This created even more learning from intergenerational opportunities which are so lacking in school.’**

Interviewee, UK

Other schools are reaching out to communities on the other side of the planet, importing Fair Trade products, or supporting education initiatives.

Social entrepreneurship reaches beyond the school into the world beyond. Schools do not need to stop at providing social entrepreneurship education. They can become social enterprises. They can become catalysts for social entrepreneurship. While some will raise a risk about whether school budgets should be used for higher risk investments rather than fairly stable budgets, this may also be an incentive for investment partnerships and products so that these risks are mitigated and borne by shoulders broad enough to take them on. This is how the narrative could shift from misrepresenting the system as one of ‘failing schools’ to one which includes a different risk appetite in the pursuit of the entrepreneurial society we need.

## Morocco

In places where social entrepreneurship is itself emerging the focus is much more on problem solving and communities; we might call this a focus on social innovation as far as developing schools as social innovation hubs.

Enterprise creation is less important, and perhaps the most accessible and broad application of #SEINDU because of the wide range and depth of experiential learning that is possible.

Evidence shows a significant impact on the learning outcomes of children and communities.



# The future of social entrepreneurship education

The British Council set out to explore what role social enterprise might have in the future of our education systems globally. We wanted to gain insights into how we address many of the most pressing challenges in our world today with the understanding that we will require a whole new generation of global change makers and social innovators to achieve lasting change.

We wanted to explore to what extent our education leaders see this as part of a future education system, and what this would like. How are we creating opportunities for young people to solve global issues and giving them a lifelong capacity to deal with problems? We asked whether people felt that education could be a unifying factor that can create opportunities and solve problems. There was clarity in the responses that we received that social entrepreneurship education has the potential to help rebalance an unsustainable global economy and improve an inadequate global education system. With the support of far-sighted funders, this potential can be realised.

Schools and social enterprises already providing excellent social entrepreneurship education can become better networked, establish new partnerships and facilitate the development of social entrepreneurship programmes in new areas and new countries.

Robust data can be gathered to demonstrate the impact of social entrepreneurship education, without reducing it to an academic subject to be passed or failed. This evidence can then be used to persuade governments and other education funders and providers to invest.

The dominant discourse around entrepreneurship education can be disrupted, with a more balanced understanding that includes social and environmental as well as financial profit.

If the resources are provided, social entrepreneurship education has the greatest potential to spread and impact in the areas of the world that need it most: amongst the poorest communities where entrepreneurship is often a necessity, and where social and environmental problems are at their most extreme.

Social entrepreneurship education has the potential to release the entrepreneurial potential of millions of teachers and millions more children and young people. People who will see something wrong with the world and develop innovative ways to put it right; who will combine insight, compassion and imagination to solve social and environmental problems; who will help build a world that is more equal, more fair and more sustainable.

# Conclusions and recommendations

Social entrepreneurship represents a positive approach to what entrepreneurship could aspire to become in the 21st century. The world we live in is uncertain, but what is clear is the need for more people with the core skills and values that social entrepreneurship education develops.

Social entrepreneurship education is a bridge: a bridge between traditional teaching methods and new experiential learning; a bridge between knowledge and application; a bridge between schools, businesses and communities; a bridge between nations. Through this process, teachers and entrepreneurs, along with brokers and facilitators, create new value in the education process.

To develop the potential of social entrepreneurship education, the authors make the following recommendations:

1. Raise awareness of the impact social entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship in education systems can have with funders, educators, social entrepreneurs, academics and governments.
2. Actively engage social entrepreneurs and education pioneers to challenge the narrative about entrepreneurship, wrestling the meaning away from a narrow focus on economic value.
3. Engage forward-thinking funders to invest in expanding and developing social entrepreneurship education with a view to creating systemic change.
4. Gather robust evidence on the impact and efficacy of social entrepreneurship education to justify public investment.
5. Open the doors to designers. Engage education pioneers, social entrepreneurs, philanthropists and policy makers. Create the conditions for questioning the fundamentals of most education systems with a view to better preparing young people to meet the challenges they and society will face at a time of significant change.
6. Introduce and integrate social entrepreneurs into the design and delivery of professional development for educators globally. Incentivise and facilitate behaviour change. Foster new relationships with a wider peer-group for this development.
7. Set high standards. Equalise the expectations we place on children with those we place on educators. Set a global standard for every teacher to be able, willing and actively committed to finding opportunities to create social impact across the curriculum.
8. Align social entrepreneurship education with national education policies, making it easier for governments to engage and easier for schools to assimilate.
9. Develop success measures based on outcomes and impact. Embrace failure as an opportunity to learn.
10. Particularly in low-income countries, move towards wider financing of the education system, as in other areas of international development. Incorporate social enterprise models to reach the base of the pyramid more effectively.
11. Invest in learning which can reach a global professional workforce such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

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# Basic bibliography

We started to produce this think piece by reviewing a range of literature and blogs and attending webinars and events about the latest thinking in the area. These are summarised here,

PISA 2015: Q&A Webinar; Where did equity in education improve over the last decade

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