

Remember 'social enterprises'?

Written by Inge Hill



Social enterprises do not yet feature centrally in our enterprise and entrepreneurship education. Do you wonder why, as I do? In a nutshell, social enterprises are businesses that make profits but have defined in their constitution how the profits will be used for defined beneficiaries, with directors not being in a position to take all profits. The CIC (community interest company as legal form) allows directors to take a small share of the profits.

My inspiration for the interest in social enterprise comes from having met founders in 2001 and 2002 and research participants. In my first

research project on start-ups, I came across a creative start-up in Birmingham in her late 20s who had founded a social enterprise, including a community cafe, offered an exhibition space to local artists. She expressed her frustration that her university education had not told her about what a social enterprise is.

Inspired by this comment, ([Hill, 2016](#)), I was the first to outline in every chapter in my start-up practice based guide on new venture creation what is different when starting a social enterprise. Having had the 'social enterprise bug' in the early noughties, when running my business I invested into the SFEDI accreditation for social enterprise support in 2009. For four years I then worked as an adviser for ERDF-funded programmes and directly with clients.

Today, there is still the opportunity to make supporting social enterprises a profession with a qualification in the UK.

As a passionate educator for and through enterprise, and in times of financial hardships and limited funds, starting a social enterprise is an option more than ever before. We have many external conditions such as

- Post COVID-19,
- Post-Brexit,
- Fuel and energy price increases,
- Cost of living increases,
- Wars and natural crisis

that require different ways of thinking and doing business – to benefit communities, for example, and to benefit the planet and support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015).

Catalyst2030 <https://catalyst2030.net> is a social enterprise that has members from across the world – and most members are young people who started social enterprises, and educators like me, passionate to make a difference with enterprise focusing on having a social impact first and foremost. I am a proud member, we develop tools and help for

- businesses to manufacture and deliver more sustainably and
- educators to help others to understand the SDG's better and deliver on the targets – for the benefits of us all.

Join in and contact me to learn more about social enterprise education and/or education for the SDGs!

Remember, we welcome proposals for workshops, sessions and Pecha Kuchas at the IEEC conference that focus on the SDGs and enterprise education. Please look out for the call for sessions next month.

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https://www.enterprise.ac.uk/remember_social_ents/