



社會創業論壇

Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Forum

Social Entrepreneurs Newsletter

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Who Wants to be a Social Entrepreneur?

The Challenges of Designing a Program to Inspire and Equip Aspiring Social Entrepreneurs

Editor's confessions: *From time to time, I was asked how I could find so many subjects to write about in the Newsletter. The answer is: not difficult at all.*

I am constantly exposed to so many new ideas, innovative practices, novel approaches, amazing outcomes, inspiring role models, etc. that I have actually a pipeline of topics to cover. In fact, for each issue I usually have to make difficult decisions on what to be included. Generally, I use two criteria. One, if the topic is time-related, I will publish it in a timely manner. Two, I would simply ask myself: if the coming issue happens to be the last issue, what would I put into it?

*In this issue, the focus will be the course **Who Wants to be a Social Entrepreneur?** The choice is obvious: the course will commence at the end of March and the closing date for enrollment is near. But more importantly, I would like to share with you the joy and challenges of designing and facilitating a course of this nature. Hopefully, it would enable the would-be participants to make an easier decision.*

My appeal to you: *after reading this issue, please consider seriously whether or not you want to be part of it, OR, pass it onto someone who you think might benefit from it. There is a chance that you might change someone's career and life beyond recognition.*

Since announcing this coming 6-month, part-time course some weeks ago, I have received a number of questions related to nature and expected outcomes of this course. Some are purely logistical and some are substantive. Let me first of all recap the basic information:

Course duration: 3 full days and eight 3-hour evening sessions spread over a six-month period

Course commencement date: March 31, 2012 Saturday – full day

April to August: 8 evening sessions and one full day visits to social enterprises (also a Saturday)

September: one full day to conclude the program with presentations from all participants

In addition, all graduates will be invited to attend free of charge the 2-day **Social Enterprise Summit**, end of November, 2012

Language: Cantonese will be used for the sessions, but some of the reference materials will be in English

Course facilitators: Dr K K Tse, Ms Yvonne Yeung, Mr Catus Lee

Guest speakers: at least ten leading local social entrepreneurs

Course fee: HK\$9,000 (persons qualified for the Continuous Education Fund will receive 80% reimbursement on completion of the course)

The course is jointly offered by the **Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Forum** and **HKU SPACE**.

Online registration can be done at HKU SPACE website:

<https://www.hkuspace.hku.hk/prog/workshop-social-entrepreneur>

Now, the more substantive questions.

Who should attend: The course is not for everyone. There are no special requirements as such; but anyone contemplating enrolling in this program should ask him/herself these questions:

- Am I really serious about going into social entrepreneurship?
- Am I ready to commit a significant amount of time and energy to get the most out of this course?
- Are there any social issues/causes I am particularly concerned about?
- Do I really want to make a difference in this world?

These are some of the questions one should consider before completing the enrollment form.

How the course will be run:

- First, don't expect any formal lectures or presentations. All sessions will be highly interactive and participative.
- Second, be prepared to do a lot of reading, thinking, reflecting and some writing.
- Third, be prepared to be challenged, moved out of the comfort zone, test the limits of your imagination and potential.
- Fourth, be prepared to share with fellow participants your life experience, expertise, aspirations, limitations, frustrations, secret dreams, and many more.
- Fifth, be prepared to address some real life issues and at the end of the course prepare a business plan to address one of them

What you could expect to get

- Focused knowledge -- social enterprise, social entrepreneur, social entrepreneurship, state of development and major trends in HK and the world, etc.
- Mindset and skills – entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial skills, critical management and business skills, etc.
- Network – with like-minded friends, potential partners/ advisors/ directors/ funders, social entrepreneurs, etc.
- Role models – overseas and local role models as sources of inspiration and support
- Peer support – honest and constructive feedback, mutual trust and support, life-long friendship

What are the course contents

The course is structured around the '8 dimensions of a successful social entrepreneur' as developed by K K Tse, namely:

- Passion for Life
- Passion for a Specific Cause
- A Vision of Impact
- Design of Products and Business Models
- Be Resourceful: 'No Money, No Problem'
- Leveraging Social Marketing and Guerrilla Marketing
- Building the Winning Team
- Creating an Entrepreneurial Board

Here are some highlights:

Topic

What will be doing in class

<i>Passion for Life</i> Social entrepreneurs typically possess a positive, optimistic and pro-active outlook. They recognize the world is not perfect, and are concerned about such issues as human sufferings, inequality, injustice, poverty, climate change, etc. But they do not turn a blind eye to them and have the courage and dedication to do something about them.	<i>We will highlight this to the participants, impressing on them that without strong passion, no social entrepreneur would succeed in anything significant. We will also learn from role models whose passion is inspirational and contagious</i>
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<p><i>Passion for a Specific Cause</i> Social entrepreneurs are idealistic realists. They know they could not change the world overnight. They typically focus their attention and energy on one social issue to develop innovative solution to it in an entrepreneurial manner.</p>	<p><i>We will facilitate the participants to formulate, clarify, and crystallize the social issue(s) they are concerned about and assess their level of commitment to tackling it.</i></p>
<p><i>A Vision of Impact</i> Once the social issue focus is confirmed, the challenge is to envision the impact one wishes to create. This is what Stephen Covey calls "Begin with the end in mind." The vision depicts a vivid picture of the ideal outcome to be realized within a certain time frame, say, 5 or 10 years.</p>	<p><i>Formulating a vision could be a challenge to many people. We will assist the participants to appreciate what a vision is, and what it is not, so as to dispel misunderstanding and confusion in this powerful concept.</i></p>
<p><i>Designing the Product/Business Model</i> This is by far the most challenging task of a social entrepreneur as this would make or break a social enterprise. It is particularly challenging because of its dual imperative: to tackle the social issue on the one hand, and to generate income and profit on the other. A lot of thinking, soul-searching, market and customer research, hands-on experimentation, etc. are required.</p>	<p><i>We will be devoting a significant amount of time on this topic and making use of a lot of examples to make it down-to-earth, practical, manageable, and 'pilotable'. This is the single most important skill that needs to be mastered as it is not a one-off thing and has to be used again and again.</i></p>
<p><i>Leveraging Social Marketing and Guerrilla Marketing</i> Mastering marketing is a must for the social entrepreneur. While basic marketing concepts and approaches are important, the most valuable and affordable ones are those related to social marketing and guerrilla marketing.</p>	<p><i>Again, we will use a lot of overseas and local examples to illustrate the uses. We will also highlight the importance of selling skills as part of the marketing effort.</i></p>
<p><i>Be Resourceful: 'No Money, No Problem'</i> This deals with the resources needed to start a social enterprise. Conventionally, most people focus on the need for capital, i.e. monetary capital. But what a start up needs is resources - and money is just part of it. When we say someone is beautiful, it means this person has beauty. When we say someone is resourceful, it does not mean this person has resources; in fact, it means he has little resources but has the capability to obtaining resources from diverse sources with no or low costs.</p>	<p><i>We will be showing examples of how this could be done. The more resourceful a person is, the less one needs money. But we will also explore the conditions under which a social enterprise start-up could be able to attract investment funding.</i></p>
<p><i>Building the Winning Team</i> Most people think entrepreneurs work alone. Not true. To succeed, an entrepreneur must assemble an entrepreneurial team. A successful entrepreneur needs to be a Dreamer, a Thinker, a Storyteller, and a Leader, at the same time. It is rare to find all these qualities in one person. 'Nobody's perfect, but a team can be.' The ideal size of an entrepreneurial team is 2 to 3 people.</p>	<p><i>We will facilitate the participants to self-assess themselves in terms of the key entrepreneurial skills required and advise them on how to search for members to make a great team. We will also elaborate on the role of volunteers, before and after there are paid staff in the business.</i></p>
<p><i>Creating an Entrepreneurial Board</i> In normal business start-ups, it is difficult to find suitable persons to serve as board members. But for a social enterprise, because of the social mission it would be possible to attract experienced and knowledgeable persons to serve as directors. It is up to the social entrepreneur to seek out and inspire these people to serve on the board. It is best to have all directors having a shareholding stake, however small, in the company. It means greater ownership and will make the board more entrepreneurial.</p>	<p><i>We will show some positive and negative examples and draw lessons from them. It is not easy to build an entrepreneurial board and the social entrepreneur has to work hard on it. The more one could demonstrate qualities of the preceding seven dimensions, the greater will the chances be in attracting the right directors.</i></p>

Taking part in this course will not guarantee that you will become a successful social entrepreneur. But at the very least, you would fully appreciate what it takes to become one, and gain more self-knowledge to assess your suitability to embark on this path.

If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to write to me at kakuitse@gmail.com