Chapter 7

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY

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IN THIS CHAPTER

Defining community
Understanding why community is important to social entrepreneurs
Cultivating and continuing community connections

Everyone seems to agree that community is important for social entrepreneurs, but what is it and how does it come into play? This chapter explores the concept of community, its current complexities and challenges, and its key roles in determining and defining the success of social entrepreneurs.

DEFINING COMMUNITY

The idea of *community* is as much a part of American life as apple pie. But ask anyone what the word means, and answers will vary. Some believe their community is the neighborhood where they now live or where they grew up. Some find community in their voluntary face-to-face organizational memberships centered around key interests (Rotary Club, local opera company); others feel themselves part of a wide amorphous community (of Italian Americans, avid fly fishermen). Still others claim smaller networks tied to special events in their lives (breast cancer survivors, mothers against drunk driving). Regardless of the many definitions assigned to *community,* the word always brings to mind an ideal of relationships as well as an image of actual places or means of communication (face-to-face, chat rooms, mailings, and meetings).

Fundamentally, community makes us think of connections of place, people, history, and purpose. Community is a self-defined and self-limiting group of people who interact around their perception of shared goals, interests, and meanings. Often such groups determine ways to govern themselves or to manage tasks they see as essential to the group's purpose and integrity. Motivations of members come from reinforcement through effective communication, common assumptions about learning and teaching, and shared stories of success and failure. More often than not, communities also derive much of their sense of value in the group through their feelings of uniqueness or special qualities that set them apart from other such entities.

COMMUNITY IS . . .

Community is a group of individuals who decide that as a collective association, they can self-identify through shared experiences, values, goals, and sense of purpose in history.

core concept

Often membership and continuity come from identifying problems and working toward solving them together. Within any community, norms and expectations emerge, change, and sometimes overlap or conflict. Nevertheless, members of such groups remain connected through sustaining dialogue, a desire for action and change, and a sense of distinctive identity that sets them apart from other communities.

If social entrepreneurs are to become social change agents, they have to identify the people in the communities whose interests are most related to their purposes.

Being a social entrepreneur means being innovative, opportunity-oriented, resourceful, and value-creating. At the outset of any social enterprise related to economic, medical, educational, or social needs, social entrepreneurs are outsiders to those communities most affected. Therefore, attention to just what a community is, how it changes, and how needs are defined is critical to the success of any social entrepreneurial effort.

To think seriously about just how communities identify themselves within and around any specific interest, human collective, or geographic region calls for persistence and a willingness to learn. Each entity that calls itself a "community" is likely to start its self-definition from a set of needs, principles, or limits of space generated by insider views. For example, within an urban area, there may be no reality to "the homeless" as a general community; instead, transient individuals may align themselves by age, time on the street, or neighborhood. Similarly, any public housing projects may be seen by civic and police authorities as a single community, whereas local residents perceive certain spaces within the project as constituting different communities. It is easy for bureaucracies to define and identify "a community," but only rarely do such official labels come close to matching the self-designated idea of a group.

COMMUNITY TYPES

core concept

Community types vary by defining features and shifting boundaries, goals, and self-identities. As these alter, so do communication means and channels. Similarly, alliances among communities may shift. Therefore, social entrepreneurs have to spend a lot of time "staying in touch" with communities.

Exhibit 7.1 gives some idea of the many kinds of communities that include individuals who pursue shared purposes and who demand accountability. Most of these groups align themselves not only through a sense of common interests but also through perceptions that their achievements and needs are not adequately recognized by others. Over

Types of Communities	Defining Features	Examples
Geographical	Historically isolated and underresourced or abused areas	South Bronx, NY; bayou communities of lower Mississippi River; communities with abandoned toxic sites
Marginalized	Stigmatized groups often viewed as nonconformist particularly with regard to work, personal and residential maintenance, and sexual practices	Homeless groups, AIDS "victims," public housing residents
Age groupings dependent on working population	Populations segmented by virtue of their need for services, support, and control they seem unable to provide for themselves	Preschool age groups, school dropouts, youth too old for after-school care and too young for employment in the nonschool hours; the infirm and the elderly
Special interest groups	Affiliations that advocate for recognition, preservation, or expansion of issues or entities that cannot speak for themselves	Groups such as those urging preservation of virgin redwood forests, passage of a particular ballot measure, or ban of specific commodities or actions
Groups that self-identify through religious, ethnic, racial, or national membership	Alliances built through a sense of common history, often shared hardships, and hopes for a better future	Ethiopian Jews, Christian Indonesians, British Muslims, Native Americans, African Americans, Australian Aboriginals, Irish Americans, Polish Americans
Affiliate groups aligned through pursuit of similar activities	Devotion to what are often leisure activities or specialized ways of carrying out particular types of work	Medieval musical instrument groups, scuba diving clubs, bikers, artists or craftsmen such as organ makers or fine-print and handmade paper enthusiasts

EXHIBIT 7.1 Communities likely to work with or need social entrepreneurs.

time some of these groups split into smaller communities with more intensely specialized interests or a sense of loss of purpose of those advanced by the more general community. For example, recreational bikers who previously advocated creation of biking routes for leisure activities have in several urban areas, such as San Francisco, had break-off groups aggressively move to force the city to make it safe to commute to work by bicycle.

Maintaining open lines of communication with a community also means keeping up with how communities perceive other such entities. In addition to having a sense of themselves as a particular community, each also will have ideas about other communities that it sees as congenial, related, antagonistic, or destructive of its own. All communities also may hold firm ideas about those communities with whom they will build bridges or from whom they will accept help.

To create lasting influence, social entrepreneurs have to recognize that factors inside and beyond communities are always in flux. Often communities have had few successful ways to build ties to institutions, both public and commercial. Deprivation, marginalization, and absence of local role models for such bridging often keep members of a community locked in a cycle of interdependency and distrust of outsiders. They have little tolerance for outsiders who want to tell them what their needs and values *should* be. Social entrepreneurs have to be particularly alert, therefore, to see needs and capacities through community eyes. Doing so enables new opportunities for building social enterprises.

The success of such opportunities depends on acknowledging local felt needs. Such acknowledgment brings social entrepreneurs back to one of the earliest observations of community. The French count Alexis de Tocqueville noted on a visit to the United States in 1831 the "common" sense of groups that aligned around problems that they as key actors felt they had the power to resolve.[1] Both the creation and implementation of ideas for reform or changed values must be accountable ultimately to those most directly affected.

The history of each community and its point of emergence and peaks of intensification can tell social entrepreneurs a great deal about ways to access and mobilize resources from within the group. Often communities take special turns in their sense of purpose at points of crisis or threat to something they view as essential to their very being; many times several communities will be similarly affected by an external event and formerly distinct communities will then pull together.

For example, when underground fires from an oil refinery threaten the health of a public housing unit, a community of activists there may build bridges to an environmental group urging higher gasoline taxes, reduced automobile traffic, and safer routes for commuting to work by bicycle. Similarly, a community of professional artists working with local youth in

housing projects may align with environmentalists urging low-density housing on the land of a former military base. The goal of the artists is to obtain rehearsal and performance space in an area scrambling to turn every possible vacant space into housing. The intentions of environmentalists are to limit growth, reduce automobile traffic, and keep open space. Social entrepreneurs have the opportunity in such bridge-building between communities to help develop innovative solutions.

WHY DOES COMMUNITY MATTER TO SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS?

Communities make up social units that are neither government nor business. All human beings need community in one form or another. The history of humankind tells of the many ways in which communities have formed, shifted in structure, and adapted to local environments, from urban or rural, tropical to arctic. Whereas community was formerly inevitably tied to place and condition of birth and remained part of one's identity throughout life, today membership in communities is largely voluntary and can be changed quickly. But it is still the case that these groupings offer opportunities to shape values and work together, build social and ecological environments, and have a sense that their joint existence matters. Potentially, within communities, every member has the opportunity to make a difference.

For the profit-making world, the diversity of these communities can represent niche markets, such as religious groups, professional associations, recreational devotees, and age or social class groupings. For social entrepreneurs, these communities represent webs of relationships that embody communication capabilities and multiple kinds of talent and knowledge that can be assets for bringing about social improvement. Working with those resources that build the systemlike linkages within communities makes the difference as to whether social entrepreneurial efforts succeed or fail.

But social entrepreneurs have to believe that community matters. And this is made all the more difficult because often those communities most in need neither communicate nor function in ways familiar to outsiders who wish to work with them as social entrepreneurs. Respecting community needs and values has to remain just as vital as generating financial support and developing a smooth-running organization. This means that the efforts ordinary entrepreneurs put into developing their business—planning, doing market research, and mobilizing talents—must for social entrepreneurs be complemented by time-consuming resource-building with communities.

EFFECTIVE SOCIAL ENTREPRENURS NEED THREE CRITICAL ABILITIES

core concept

Effective social entrepreneurs need *three critical abilities:* the willingness to

1. See capacity where others may see ineptness and dependence
2. Bring disparate communities together around solutions no one else has tried
3. Maintain teamwork through mutual trust and sense of possibility, even in the face of overwhelming obstacles

As they work with clients all over Boston and with international groups, such as Amnesty International or national organizations such as United Negro Colleges Fund on specific projects, the young people at Artists for Humanity expand their ideas of just what constitutes a community. They hear other groups talk of common hardships and experiences that bond them, of their wish to be better known and supported.

Since young people come to Artists for Humanity from all parts of the city, they learn about one another's neighborhoods and how many adults in each area may be alike in their common disdain for the arts and artists. They think of ways to bring together constituencies that otherwise never acknowledge one another. A mural commissioned by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in connection with the opening of an exhibition of paintings by Monet allows the young artists at Artists for Humanity to link two such groups. They go to the museum, study Monet's work, and re-create a portion of his *Water Lilies* at the entrance to a bank located in a neighborhood of residents who otherwise might not have been reached by the Monet exhibition.

As they work on the mural, they meet residents who reveal their own past work in the arts and their enthusiasm for finding art from young people and within the museum reaching into their communities.

The young artists realize they are members of *many different communities.* In many cases they plan the work of Artists for Humanity with neighborhood members; they link their creation of outdoor murals with local summer day camps that use the mural creation as an outing for their charges. The students who helped found Artists for Humanity with Rodgerson remember their own days in middle school, and they plan a Saturday program primarily for youngsters who attend middle schools in the city. They find a community of curators and gallery owners throughout the city who share their interest in representing art in different places and in new ways. They link up with schools that offer the curriculum of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) and become a site where students can see entrepreneurship at work in a social enterprise.

INTERVIEW

SUSAN RODGERSON SPEAKS

Old warehouses line the streets of the wharf area in Boston. Within one of these, young people from across Boston's poorest neighborhoods come in the afternoons to the studios of a nonprofit youth-based arts organization—Artists for Humanity. This social enterprise began in 1990 when Rodgerson was a visiting resident artist in Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Boston. There she worked with students to create a mural in the school library. Once Rodgerson's residency ended, six of the students sought her out to ask for more opportunities to learn and to do art.

These six students and Rodgerson created a nonprofit organization the next fall, and Artists for Humanity opened its doors to young people willing to come to their wharf warehouse three afternoons a week to learn with professional artists working in several media—photography, ceramics, painting, sculpture, and silkscreening. The young students who founded the group with Rodgerson learned along with others and also joined with her in planning just how the organization could work with paying clients. As each year passed, and the students stayed in school and continued to study art, Artists for Humanity brought in more and more contract work—murals in connection with special community events or exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, commissioned portraits of key figures in the history of blues and jazz, and textbook cover and greeting card designs. After a period of apprenticeship, all new students coming to Artists for Humanity received an hourly wage for their work on both contracted projects and their own creative work.

Rodgerson brought together professional artists, students with poor schooling resources, and landlords worried about a deteriorating neighborhood. All benefited from creation of a social enterprise that no one had envisioned.

Q: What is it about Artists for Humanity that makes young people want to come here?

Rodgerson: Young people need positive ways to practice adulthood—to earn money, give of themselves, participate in a venture they invent. They value knowing they can play a part in the business world and in the community. Beyond earning income, the kids get pleasure out of sitting down in a board room and discussing who they were and what they have to offer society . . . how they fit into the world of business.

Q: What are the integral parts of your program?

Rodgerson: We teach microenterprise; we teach young people how to create a job for themselves, how to create a life for themselves. Young people come here to learn from the professional artists of our five studios. We require that young people who are interested in jobs here participate in a volunteer program for two months. At the end of two months, the

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young people who decide to stay have self-selected for this program. They study, learn, and are given opportunities to work on projects and a place to work on their own. At the end of four years, young people have really developed their own identities and their own vision.

Q: How did you come to the decision that Artists for Humanity could not be donor-driven, just another charity-supported nonprofit offering at-risk youth a place to go after school?

Rodgerson: We have to ensure some stability for the learning that young people from urban environments can do in the arts. Being solely donor-dependent puts us at the mercy of funders who often change their priorities every year. It's also the proverbial catch 22: No one wants to give you money if you need it; they only give you money when you have it. So we decided we needed to earn money. It's also necessary to realize that young people deserve full-time evidence of faith in them. What young people really need are adults who can participate with them in the process of educating and growing and becoming. We see ourselves as participating in an exchange that separates us from the traditional nonprofit in that we have a service to provide and we are willing to earn income. While we have a social, nonprofit, community value, and we'll always need income from foundations and grants to continue to grow, we realized we had to work toward a balance between earned income and foundation giving.

Q: What's your answer to your critics who feel that you should not pay young people who work at Artists for Humanity? What was the critical factor that led you to decide to expand your revenue base beyond the usual sources of government grants, foundation handouts, and corporate gifts?

Rodgerson: We have the voice of the youth at our fingertips. The foundation of our program is that we arrange for young people to be in a corporate environment, a business environment, be equals in a sense that they have something to give and they are reimbursed for that—not unlike a typical designer or a businessperson offering a product or a service. Year by year, these young people build a portfolio. We can benefit the young through real experience, through positive ways to practice adulthood.

Q: Who are the communities who work with you? How do you decide on community links and partnerships?

Rodgerson: These young people have worked with national and international companies, like Gillette and AT&T International. They've created T-shirt designs for students at the Sloan School of Management. They've also designed public service announcements for the Department of Public Health and public art displays for Amnesty International. I believe that you can turn a variety of business engagements to learning opportunities to benefit the youth through experience.

Q: How have your ideas of community changed since Artists for Humanity began in 1990?

Rodgerson: Artists for Humanity represents several different kinds of communities at work. Foremost to the young people who come here is the sense of community they create through their study and work in the arts, their exhibitions, and their contacts with the businesses of Boston. They see *community* as a sense of mutual commitment to the social enterprise they have helped build and want to continue for the next generation.

Their mission and goals—embedded in learning and earning through the arts for social improvement—can best be met by expanding their ideas of communities. While they value intensely their ability to earn money as they work in the arts during the after-school hours, they also see this ability as enabling neighborhoods, which gain positive role models in the young artists. Students who have worked with Artists for Humanity become impassioned when they talk of how important it is for young people to give something back to their community and to younger students.

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Rogerson's case illustrates many ways of identifying community assets and pulling communities together to meet several needs. Moreover, this case demonstrates the power of *the force of experience* within communities. Local knowledge provides the special understanding that can make solution of previously insurmountable social problems possible.

Community assets can be tapped by mapping those associations available within a local area and also by working to learn how associational groupings create networks or webs of interaction. How do youths who have dropped out of school connect and communicate, and with which other groups do they associate? Such questions are central for every target group of interest to social entrepreneurs. In addition, who are the guides to these associations in the local area? Who are those who know the history, purposes, places linked to communities? Who has the trust of the locals?

Community assets come in the form of leaders, local wisdom, inside knowledge about place and time, and means of communication. Is there a local newspaper certain communities read, or a Laundromat bulletin board residents regard as the place to learn what is going on? Are there trusted elders or key young people who know the pulse of community life? Such assets enable social entrepreneurs to know how to learn about needs and to build ideas into working projects of creativity and values.

But even with inside knowledge of assets, social entrepreneurs will quickly learn that targeted communities will by no means agree on what constitutes "social values." In addition, the idea of "value" for these communities may well differ markedly from the way that social entrepreneurs envision social value or improvement. Central to unlocking ideas about social value is the sense of *need* that different communities hold. What is it that these groups believe is most needed, and where do they see untapped resources? Drawing this information out before taking up the role of change agent is analogous to market research necessary for a commercial venture: What is it that people see as their needs, and what are they willing to do to meet these? In both cases, this early market investigation is critical. Finding ways to tap into this information helps ensure that social entrepreneurs also learn about opportunities as well as resources that may exist within the targeted communities.[2]

LINKING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH INSTITUTIONS

Once social entrepreneurs have engaged with community members to identify needs and resources, forming *working partnerships* and *strategic alliances* across communities can be complemented by linking with institutions.

core concept

To link communities with *institutions,* social entrepreneurs need both imagination and patience. Institutions, such as government bureaucracies, schools, and transport systems, are often seen as alien or in opposition to community goals and needs. However, communities need to find ways to work with institutions in new ways, so that needless energy is not spent in railing against perceived "enemies." Social entrepreneurs can become the brokers who bring about innovative alliances between institutional forces and the needs, as well as the strengths, of the community. Often this bridge-building has never occurred before, because of limited inspiration, bureaucratic barriers, or long-held misperceptions between communities and institutions.

INTERVIEW

ANNA SJOLUND LINDSTROM SPEAKS

Halfway around the world, in a state system where the public sector provides much more substantial support for community activities than is the case in the United States, is a collection of buildings called The Dairy. In Lund, Sweden, this site is at the edge of a highly cosmopolitan city that is home to one of the oldest universities in the nation and a favorite tourist spot for Europeans.

Initiated 20 years ago as a way to save the dairy processing plant, today's social enterprise of The Dairy has become a laboratory for spawning entrepreneurial pursuits by young people of the region. Supported by a yearly budget of approximately $250,000 from the city, The Dairy houses a concert hall outfitted with the latest in sound and lighting equipment, 17 soundproof rehearsal rooms, a small theater, and a café with performing space. Three for-profit cultural organizations—a film group, an organization of musicians, and supporters of jazz and classical music, and a similar organization for rock and folk music—constitute the core of The Dairy's administration. These organizations have annual membership fees and bring film events, concerts, and recitals to The Dairy. Each organization has three representatives on the governing board, which was headed in 2000 by 20-year-old Anna Sjolund Lindstrom, a member of the rock and folk music organization.

Initiated and redesigned in 1990 as a place for cultural events for community members of all ages, but especially young people, The Dairy is open daily, with showings of two films every day except Monday, a café with three large television screens for viewing special sports events, concerts nearly every week, and several annual events, such as a Hip Hop Festival. A host of young volunteers usually headed by a teenager who works directly under Anna manage the cloak room, take tickets at the door, oversee the scheduling of use of soundproof practice rooms (for which each band pays approximately $60 each month).

Daily the venue buzzes with activity, as young people move in and out of practice rooms, come for instrument lessons, or stop by to check the upcoming calendar of events. Private music teachers may use the facility's practice rooms to teach lessons, but they must book these rooms in advance or operate on a regularly scheduled basis. Each month the facility's events range across the fields of interest of the three supporting cultural organizations, from classical music concerts to small jazz ensembles. Only the film program operates at all times; the administrative board otherwise ensures equitable programming and access to space by the other two cultural organization's members.

Q: What needs of the community did The Dairy set out to fill, and how was community defined by the founders?

Lindstrom: Several communities, as well as the city government, local police force, and tourist commission, had needs that The Dairy came to serve. Young people wanted to have their own local venue for music, to improve their technical and artistic skills, and to build professional connections for further learning. The city and related institutions wanted Lund to present a better image of its young people to local citizens and to visitors to the city. Without thinking of doing so in advance, The Dairy actually built new communities, such as those devoted to having certain kinds of films available, as well as improved the future prospects of certain communities, such as youth devoted to particular types of music.

Q: A major problem in urban centers is abandonment of large buildings that need substantial renovation and upgrading to meet current environmental and construction codes. How is it that the old dairy came to be such a rallying focus for reconstruction and shift of function in Lund? What have been the major revenue streams for The Dairy? And what about evaluation and accountability to your various supporters?

Lindstrom: Many in Sweden have hated to see evidence of the past economic history ripped away by modern construction. Dairies, including door-to-door delivery of dairy goods, figure in the memories of many civic leaders and prominent citizens. Therefore, interest in preserving the old dairy, or *mejeriet,* was high. We were fortunate also that one young man intensely devoted to popular music led the rallies and calls for the building to be used by young people as a venue and professional development site for their musical interests. Use of The Dairy as concert hall, theater,

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and music center has ensured that the young people who run the facility bring in revenue, but each year, the city of Lund provides several hundred thousand dollars as subsidy. However, we are accountable for responsible expenditure of these funds and to staying vigilant to the widest possible range of access to The Dairy by different communities (across ages, musical and film interests, and institutional affiliation). Annually, we provide to the city an inventory of equipment, record of types of uses and number of attendees and participants, and a written and oral accounting of the year's activities at The Dairy. Many young members take part in preparation of these materials, just as they hold primary responsibilities for security, maintenance, bookings, and new enterprise developments.

Q: As is the case in some other postindustrial societies, Sweden's young are attending universities in shrinking proportions to the youth population as a whole. You seem to feel The Dairy serves a critical educational role that helps launch young people into careers and simultaneously stimulates these individuals to remain aware of the importance of sustaining social entrepreneurship. How does this happen?

Lindstrom: The labor shortage brought about by the rapid expansion of telecommunications and high-tech industries has meant that employment and the opportunity to learn on the job draw Swedish youth away from universities. Here at The Dairy, young people, including many disaffected with schooling, find professional musicians and musical technicians to whom they can apprentice. In doing so, they gain valuable experience at a place that is known throughout Sweden, and they have no trouble moving into employment in other parts of the music and entertainment industry. Just as important, however, is their development here of habits and skills that transfer well to the job and often later into further learning in higher education institutions. The fact that The Dairy is the preferred concert venue for international artists who come to Sweden translates into invaluable experience and future reference. Moreover, becuse many come here as disaffected youth, as they move into professional roles, they tend to remain alert to social needs of different communities in areas where they work.

The young managers and technicians of The Dairy work in competition with entirely adult-run concert venues and music centers elsewhere in Sweden. They must compete for the big-name stars by maintaining a steady reputation of having the best sound projection equipment, the safest and most accessible facility, and the most competent public relations staff. The Dairy attracts its audiences from not only Lund and all of Sweden but also from Copenhagen and nearby regions in Denmark, easily accessible by the bridge completed in 2000. Managers of The Dairy must therefore stay consistently attuned to the interests and needs of their three core cultural organizations, while they also look ahead to new kinds of musical attractions and possible crossover groupings that will attract new and different communities as audience members. The strong sense of organizational memory over the decade of its existence serves as constant reminder of all the ways that within one decade communities of interests around The Dairy have changed, and they are certain to continue to do so even more rapidly.

reality check

Bill Strickland created the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and later the Bidwell Training Center by staying close to his targeted communities—youth and displaced adults—and by learning their needs. As these communities changed and grew, Manchester's programs had to adapt and reach out to new partners for strategic alliance. To enhance their influence on youth, Manchester linked to local public high schools and to residency programs at local universities. Hence as these social enterprises worked as change agents for those caught in the cycle of poverty—the first constituency of need Strickland and others identified—they also played a role in changing education institutions. Through the arts, Manchester engaged public schools in innovative programs and processes by providing an arts director and leader from the guild. Higher education institutions were brought into the web of collaboration to help take learning opportunities in the arts to more professional levels than the public schools or Manchester alone could offer.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH CHALLENGES

core concept

Social entrepreneurs face five major challenges in the necessity that they work with communities. These can be thought of as the "*Dreaded Ds*:" disintegration, divisiveness, dinosaurs, diversification, and diversions.

Challenge #1: Disintegration

Since the end of World War II, experts have fretted over the disintegration of community. Since the mid-1980s, key writings have brought this concern to the public mind. Robert Bellah and fellow sociologists pointed out Tocqueville's concern that independence and individualism—especially as demonstrated in entrepreneurism—could pull apart community.[3] Sociologist Robert Putnam, through his studies of Italy and of the United States, identified civic decline or the loss of collective action in the face of several trends: the movement of women into the labor force, dramatic geographic mobility, and the technological transformation of leisure.[4]

Aside from raising the issue of general disintegration of community, these writings and others suggest the need to build "social capital"—networks of trust, values, and norms to facilitate cooperation. They also point out that formerly small tightly knit special-interest communities have now become massive groupings, such as the Sierra Club, with many members who define themselves only by paying annual dues or buying calendars.

Challenge #2: Divisiveness

Countering the move to larger and larger groupings is the splinter effect that develops when groups rally around narrower and narrower concerns.

These networks may be dense, but the membership may be so small that the work of keeping the group afloat falls to only a few.[5] Moreover, as the business world increasingly views niches and segmentation as positive market possibilities, a vision of the larger picture becomes harder to develop and maintain for voluntary communities.

Because social entrepreneurs tend to be action-oriented, divisiveness and the slow pace it inevitably brings tax patience. Remaining a good listener and a socially responsive partner in the face of the splintering of a community with whom one has worked to develop plans or implement strategies is difficult. It is tough to know when to introduce a reality check in such circumstances so that those threatening to splinter in the face of disagreement can foresee obstacles.

Challenge #3: Dinosaurs

While communities may be becoming more scarce or so divided as to be unable to maintain themselves in the eyes of some, organizations and institutions appear to be becoming larger. "Dinosaurs" has become a favorite term to apply to these entities, often charged with the inability to learn and therefore likely to become extinct but in the meantime to harm smaller units such as communities. Dinosaurlike attitudes on the part of governmental or financial institutions hurt communities when they are unwilling to lend money, permit long-term leases, or accept evaluations that do not show the usual "bottom line" in quantitative terms. The idea of "business as usual" within very large entities often works against the unusual ways that social entrepreneurs have to work—often with a lack of profitability, the absence of market growth, and few short-term demonstrations of success. Because social entrepreneurs often tackle hugely difficult social problems that have seemed intractable to the dinosaurs, the resistance of the latter to seeing new processes and patterns of development or means of accountability can be a tough challenge.[6]

Challenge #4: Diversification

Although diversification often is seen as a positive feature, excessive diversification creates instability. Sometimes a particular community finds its members' interests have gone in so many directions that splinter groups become the norm. Although social entrepreneurs must have talents for bridging, the overdiversification of interests and aims of communities can bring about a chaotic maze of conflicting groups. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to decide whether all these groups have legitimate claims to a separate identity and agenda and if all should have an equal standing in any move to innovate in solving social problems.

Community revitalization presents the most frequent case of conflicts among the diverse groups that feel they should have a major say in ways to renew physical spaces. Business and residential interests clash, as do practical goals that appear to conflict with artistic or aesthetic aims.[7] In-

tergenerational differences can present themselves as communities at odds over not only choices related to housing renewal but also such decisions as preserving parkland or forests or allowing continued development or logging. Environmental groups sometimes splinter in the name of protection of one animal over another.

Challenge #5: Diversions

Whereas working together in voluntary groups was for many decades a major activity during the leisure hours, many individuals now seek other kinds of diversion. Spectatorship and other passive activities, such as watching television or videos or surfing the Internet, have taken the place of community work, particulary for full-time workers.With the majority of women in the labor force, the largest segment of the population previously available for community development has no easy replacement. Moreover, as more work becomes information-based, many seek leisurely diversions that do not call for active engaged thinking; being "brain-dead" or wanting "to be just a couch potato" describes the preferred after-work state of many who work full time.

Therefore, social entrepreneurs working with communities in need may find few allies who are not members of those communities. Such assistance becomes more and more vital as market-based approaches and businesslike methods are increasingly expected of efforts to meet social needs.[8] Community members may lack necessary technical skills or experience for some specialized tasks essential to maintenance of a social enterprise.

As the cases of The Dairy and Artists for Humanity illustrate, young people may be becoming a key segment for building and sustaining communities engaged in social entrepreneurship. Their out-of-school hours exceed by a good bit those available to adults who work full time in the labor force, and the young are known to seek diversions that are unique, challenging, and high-risk—essential features of social entrepreneurs.[9]

KEY STEPS FOR CULTIVATING AND CONTINUING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

To identify opportunities for social improvement with communities as allies, entrepreneurs have to:

- ✔ Regard communities as assets for building any possible social enterprises
- ✔ Look to communities for their help in identifying needs and areas for improvement
- ✔ Be alert to the fact that an identified need does not necessarily create an opportunity

Once local community members identify and acknowledge potential opportunities, several key steps follow:

- ✔ Devise ways that key constituents from communities can see themselves as true resources.
- ✔ Work to distribute leadership and decision making among these constituents.
- ✔ Negotiate mission and goals at the outset, but remember these need to be readdressed periodically.
- ✔ Ensure that ways of evaluating both process and outcomes include community input and participation.
- ✔ Maintain communication among key players who in turn stay in touch with their constituents, so that change can be adaptive.
- ✔ Keep out front the need to agree on desired balance between social returns and investment and financial gains.

With the establishment of any social enterprise, social entrepreneurs must ensure ways to stay informed about demographic, economic, and cultural changes within communities. To gather this information, social entrepreneurs need to:

- ✔ Engage communities in ongoing appropriate opportunities for feedback.
- ✔ Be willing to find and use nontraditional means of communication.
- ✔ Remember that making fundamental changes in the ways things are done in meeting social needs within any community will not come easily.

No social enterprise can ever work with only a single community. Several communities—even at the local level—always will be involved, and more will emerge when social entrepreneurs seek out the underlying causes of problems and begin to build bridges to institutions. Because social entrepreneurs want to do more than offer quick fixes or treat symptoms, they have to go beyond the obvious and beyond single communities. They also have to pull together disparate players and think in creative ways to build and to sustain bold visions of social innovation.

Surrounding the core ideas of community for social entrepreneurs are the following direct reminders from the cases of Artists for Humanity, the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, and The Dairy.

- ✔ Ventures that have a "social mission" often compete with fully commercial for-profit enterprises. Therefore, social entrepreneurship may need to be competitive and operate as any successful business must in a time of rapid technological changes and shifts

in identities of niche markets and their interests in products and services.

- ✔ Community is almost never *local* primarily in the sense of immediate neighborhood; every community is inevitably interdependent, often with entitites not easily identifiable by outsiders.
- ✔ Communities shift not only in geographic and sociodemographic terms but also in tastes and interests.
- ✔ Social entrepreneurship efforts of all types are more likely than either government services or commercial businesses to have to take into consideration new ethnicities, stay keenly alert to local work and leisure patterns, and consider such matters as feasible transport access to their facility.
- ✔ Community building within any social enterprise needs to be a large part of the social entrepreneur's job; when established goals have to shift because of community changes, members may find new directions destabilizing.
- ✔ Exploration and invention of new groupings for responsive creativity will become increasingly the norm.
- ✔ Building local productive capacities will require imaginative and flexible ways of relating with the public sector and key institutions, such as schools, mental health facilities, and operations within the private and commercial sectors.
- ✔ Maintaining value often means staying ahead of the curve of technological change.

The struggle between institutions of depersonalization and services and the most desired features of social entrepreneurs has to move toward resolution through a vision of possibility. Positive relations of people working for a sense of well-being for themselves and those they identify as community will constitute the primary asset of social entrepreneurs. Broad goals and dynamic views of community identities and needs with regard to education, health care, social services, arts, and the environment provide the foundation for specific social enterpreneurial pursuits. New alignments of private capital and public need, as well as reduced provision of public programs and funds by postindustrial governments, will always act as dynamic forces for such efforts.

An enterprising business also must be an intelligent organization embedded in a network of other enterprising entities. This is especially the case for social entrepreneurs who want to meet community needs. At the heart of these efforts must be the time-consuming efforts that go into nurturing local talents, maintaining an alert posture toward possible new capital markets, and enabling organizational staff to sustain their own capacity for learning.

SUMMARY

This chapter has argued that community is integral to the work of social entrepreneurs—both those from within and from outside communities undergoing change through social innovations. The chapter addresses particularly social entrepreneurs who have not emerged from within the communities of social need with whom they work.[10] In these cases, understanding and accepting the types and features of communities, as well as the challenges they can present, is essential to the effectiveness and success of any social innovation. Since social entrepreneurs almost never have either policy or profit to help them along, communities constitute their greatest resource and best insurance for implementation of innovative approaches to opportunities.

action step Every social entrepreneur needs to consider six fundamental action steps in working with community.

1. Become familiar with several successful cases of social entrepreneurship that rely on in-depth knowledge and understanding of community.
2. Undertake the exercise of listing all the various communities, their types and features, to which you belong. Sketch their interlinks, if any, and consider whether conflicting or overlapping aims occur. List the different leadership and decision-making styles reflected in the communities to which you belong. Then draw several generalizations about your own communities that could present challenges to outsiders trying to bring about social improvements for members.
3. Consider any ways in which you or someone you know has innovatively created social value by taking advantage of opportunities unseen by others. What was the relationship between initiation of the idea and actual implementation, and what role did affected parties play in either of these? Now ponder the extent to which maintenance of social value in these cases depended on strong buy-in and investment by the groups affected. How different would this situation be for communities in social need?
4. Spend time talking with members of one or more communities to which you are a definite outsider. Which types of questions work best in these conversations? What are some effective ways of drawing out of community members their list of needs and their sense of local resources and assets?
5. Assess your own tolerance for listening to groups whose lifeways differ from your own in patterns of work, uses of leisure time, and buying and maintaining goods and residential dwellings.
6. Schedule an interaction with members of one or more communities. Work out ahead of time ways to run the meeting, invite mem-

bers to express their needs, and maintain an ongoing dialogue with those in attendance. Make out an evaluation checklist before this interaction, so that you can record your perceptions of failed communication as well as expressions of willingness to move forward on a mutually agreed-upon set of goals.

Creativity in activities and means of communication will enable assets of social entrepreneurships to multiply and to generate a stronger base for collective efforts. Building capacity and enlisting new ways of extending this capacity will keep social entrepreneurial efforts constantly in change. Their dynamism and adaptive powers keep community at the center of the work and life of the enterprise.

Notes

1. McKnight draws on Tocqueville's observations for his definition of community. See John McKnight, *The Careless Society: Community and Its Counterfeits* (New York: Basic Books, 1995). Ironically, many of these same points are extended in discussions of the coming of community self-reliance in Great Britain by Dick Atkinson (*The Common Sense of Community* [London: Demos, 1994]) and Charles Leadbeater (*The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur* [London: Demos, 1997]). Both these writers emphasize the value of social entrepreneurs in tackling difficult social problems effectively and with accountability to involved communities. Other writers on community link these notions to effective leaders who work to overcome the loss of the nineteenth-century sense of community grounded in common experience in a local physical setting; see John W. Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1990), especially chapter 11. See also Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, Richard Beckhard, and Richard F. Schubert, *The Community of the Future* (New York: The Drucker Foundation, 1998), on the community of the future, and Peter F. Drucker, *Post-capitalist Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1993), on the need to restore community through the social sector.
2. The mapping of assets within communities is now often a key component of workshops on social entrepreneurship. The most commonly used resource is John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (Chicago: Asset-based Community Development Institute, 1993) and related modules on specific topics, such as "mapping and mobilizing the economic capacities of local residents"; see Kretzmann and McKnight, *A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents* (Chicago: Asset-based Community Development Institute, 1996).
3. Rarely has an "academic" volume produced such a wide readership as did *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* by Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton (New York: Harper & Row, 1985). This volume drew heavily from Tocqueville's observations of the entrepreneurial spirit of the United States as well as its propensity to community.
4. Numerous articles as well as the seminal volume by Putnam trace the causes and consequences of the perceived loss of civic groupings. See the following by Robert Putnam: *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," *The American Prospect,* No. 13 (1993); and "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995).
5. Numerous works speak to the divisiveness of contemporary societies, especially those of postindustrial economies. Some point to the need for new kinds

of leadership; see Gardner, *On Leadership;* James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995); and Larry C. Spears, *Insights on Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998). Others call for increased attention to collaboration and cultivating the "art of alliances"; see Rosabeth Moss Kantor, *Frontiers of Management* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review, 1997).

6. Those who tackle dinosaurs usually do so through promoting new kinds of bonds, often in spiritual terms, or innovative processes of organizational learning. Volumes that take the former approach often call on new metaphors—the "soul," "theater," and "the cathedral within"; see Alan Briskin, *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998); B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School, 1999); Shore, *The Cathedral Within;* and David Whyte, *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America* (New York: Doubleday, 1994). Donaldson and Dunfee argue strongly that belonging to a community creates ethical obligations and encourages societal responsibility; see Thomas Donaldson and Thomas W. Dunfee, *Ties that Bind: A Social Contracts Approach to Business Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School, 1999). Processes of organizational learning are best known through the work of Peter Senge and the Society for Organizational Learning in Cambridge, Massachusetts; see his *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990) and *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1999). But also see Douglas Hague, *Transforming the Dinosaurs: How Organisations Learn* (London: Demos, 1993), for a British perspective on dinosaurs.
7. Many softback, often short-lived publications recount diversities encountered in social entrepreneurial efforts, particularly those around housing and neighborhood revitalization; see, for example, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility, *New Village: Building Sustainable Cultures,* Partners for Livable Communities, *The Livable City: Revitalizing Urban Communities* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000).
8. Some social commentators attribute this loss of volunteerism and willingness to "get involved" during the off-work hours to the "corrosion of character" that results from new forms of capitalism; see Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character* (New York: Norton, 1998). Others feel that as longevity within a job becomes a decreasing feature of postindustrial life, the quest for diversion or the urge to jump from one thing to another is bound to affect more than the workplace; see Arie De Geus, *The Living Company: Growth, Learning and Longevity in Business* (London: Longview, 1997).
9. Shirley Brice Heath and Laura Smyth's *ArtShow: Youth and Community Development: A Resource Guide* (Washington, DC: Partners for Livable Communities, 1999), a guide for community organizations that involve young people in the arts for social enterprise, illustrates several cases in which community youth have taken charge of social innovation through entrepreneurial and educational efforts.
10. Although many of the same points regarding the importance of community to social entrepreneurship apply to insiders, most social entrepreneurs work with communities into which they were not born. Insiders share many of the challenges of those from outside the community, particularly when they have had to leave the community to obtain training, connections, and resources vital to the financial sustainability of their social innovation. Cases of "making things work" by both inside and outside social entrepreneurs illustrate the challenge common to both; see Stephen Thake and Simon Zadek, *Practical People, Noble Causes: How to Support Community-based Social Entrepreneurs* (London: New Economics Foundation, 1997), and Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity; How to Live in a Connected World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School, 1997).