

The Sport Science Physical Activity Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership

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Deliverable 4.1 Surveys finding report

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Key words

Social entrepreneurship, social impact, changemakers, leadership

Description

This report aims to provide a comprehensive review of social innovation and entrepreneurship education. The primary goal is to enhance essential skills for SSPA students by analysing existing programs through desk research and interviews. The focus will be on the educational pathways of successful social enterprises. This review will guide the development of a practice-oriented course addressing identified gaps for social entrepreneurs.



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Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
HEI	Higher Education Institution
I+E	Innovation and Entrepreneurship
SSPA	Sport Science and Physical Activity
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader



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1. Introduction

The Sport Science Physical Activity Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership (SPIEP) recognizes the transformative potential of sports and physical activity to address societal challenges and foster positive change. Traditionally, Sport Science and Physical Activity (SSPA) education has primarily focused on developing expertise in athletic performance, exercise physiology, and sports management, among others. However, the evolving landscape of the 21st century demands a more holistic approach. Graduates are increasingly expected to not only possess specialized knowledge but also demonstrate entrepreneurial acumen and a commitment to social impact.

Entrepreneurship and social innovation training are no longer optional extras but essential components of a well-rounded SSPA education. These skills empower students to:

- **Create sustainable and impactful ventures:** SSPA graduates can leverage their knowledge to develop innovative programs and services that address community needs, promote health equity, and enhance social well-being.
- **Generate new career pathways:** Entrepreneurial training opens doors to self-employment, social enterprise development, and leadership roles in non-profit and community organizations.
- **Drive social change through sport:** By understanding social innovation principles, students can design and implement initiatives that use sport and physical activity as tools for community development, inclusion, and empowerment.
- **Adapt to the evolving sports industry:** The sports and physical activity sector is rapidly changing, requiring professionals to be adaptable, resourceful, and capable of identifying and seizing new opportunities.

Work Package 4 (WP4) of the SPIEP project aims to conduct an in-depth review of existing social innovation and entrepreneurship education programs to identify best practices and develop recommendations for curriculum enhancement. This report will outline the existing best practices identified via surveys, interviews and extensive desk research. Ultimately, this



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research will form the basis for designing a targeted curriculum of a social entrepreneurship course targeted towards SSPA students which will equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to become impactful social entrepreneurs and leaders in the field.

2. Framework for Research

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze social innovation and entrepreneurship education programs, particularly within the social problem solving, human centered design, design thinking and social impact & innovation. The methodology combined extensive desk research, including a detailed review of online MOOC programs and their pedagogical elements, with qualitative data gathered through personal interviews with social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, a larger survey was conducted to validate the findings and suggestions derived from the desk research and interviews, ensuring a robust and well-rounded understanding of the field. The overall framework applied was as under:

Platform Functionality Assessment: This section investigated the specific features and functionalities of popular MOOC platforms (Coursera, edX, Udemy, etc.). We analyzed how these platforms structured content delivery, facilitated student engagement, and supported the development of entrepreneurial skills. This included examining the use of forums, quizzes, project assignments, and other tools that contributed to the learning experience.

Curriculum design and delivery: This involved a systematic review of publicly available online courses, focusing on their curriculum design, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. We analyzed how these programs integrated theories of social innovation and entrepreneurship, and examined the effectiveness of their delivery methods, such as video lectures, interactive exercises, and peer-to-peer learning.

Course Segment Deconstruction: We dissected the content of selected MOOC courses, focusing on key modules such as business planning, social impact assessment, fundraising, and marketing for social ventures. Especially, we have dived into the role played by case studies in social entrepreneurship education. This allowed for a detailed analysis of the skills and knowledge being imparted, and how these segments aligned with the needs of aspiring social entrepreneurs in the SSPA sector.



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Skillset Inventory: Based on the analysis of MOOC content and program descriptions, we compiled a comprehensive list of skills targeted by these programs. This list included technical skills (e.g., financial modeling, data analysis), soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork), and entrepreneurial skills (e.g., opportunity identification, risk assessment). This curated list informed our evaluation of the program's effectiveness in developing relevant competencies.

Entrepreneurial Experience Evaluation: We conducted in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs who had completed relevant MOOC programs. These interviews explored their experiences with the courses, their perceived effectiveness in developing entrepreneurial skills, and their suggestions for improvement. This qualitative data provided valuable insights into the practical application of the knowledge gained through online learning.

Quantitative Validation Survey: To validate the findings from the desk research and interviews, we developed and distributed a larger survey to a broader audience of social entrepreneurs. This survey was designed to gather quantitative data on the effectiveness of MOOC programs, the relevance of the skills targeted, and the feasibility of the suggested improvements. This survey was spread across various social media channels and via our communication channels to seek social entrepreneurs' responses to assess quantitatively, the outcomes of desk and personal interview research. Unfortunately, at the time of the submission of this report, we didn't receive enough responses and thus, we will continue to push the survey further among the identified channels and update the report on the webpage in the next version.

Let's explore each of these above in greater detail and discuss their role in delivery quality learning opportunities in social entrepreneurship and innovation.



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2.1 Platform functionality assessment

With the growth of e-learning, many platforms now offer educators the chance to reach a global audience. However, the key factors to consider include:

- **Revenue Sharing:** How the income generated from course enrollments is split between the platform and the course creator.
- **Teaching Tools and Functionalities:** The features that support course creation, student engagement, and overall learning management.

This report reviews major platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, edX, and LinkedIn Learning help educators choose the best option based on their needs.

Platforms Overview

The platforms evaluated are among the most popular in online education. Each platform has a unique value proposition regarding cost structure, audience reach, and the technical and pedagogical tools they offer.

Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org/>) partners with leading universities and institutions worldwide to offer a wide range of online courses, specializations, professional certificates, and full degree programs. Known for its academic rigor and quality content, Coursera provides educators with robust course creation tools, comprehensive analytics, and a global student base. This platform is ideal for educators who wish to leverage institutional prestige and advanced learning technologies.

Udemy (<https://www.udemy.com/>) is one of the largest and most diverse online course marketplaces. It operates on a pay-per-course model, which allows instructors to set prices and offer promotions. With its user-friendly course creation interface, powerful marketing tools, and detailed performance analytics, Udemy is well-suited for independent instructors looking to reach a broad audience without the need for institutional backing.

Founded by MIT and Harvard, edX (<https://www.edx.org/>) is a nonprofit online education provider that offers university-level courses to learners around the globe. Emphasizing academic excellence and innovative course design, edX collaborates with prestigious institutions to offer courses that can lead to verified certificates, MicroMasters, or even full



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degree programs. Its advanced course development tools, integration capabilities, and deep learner analytics make edX a strong option for educators in higher education.

Formerly known as **Lynda.com**, **LinkedIn Learning** (<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>) leverages the professional networking power of LinkedIn to offer courses primarily focused on career development and skill enhancement. The platform integrates seamlessly with LinkedIn profiles, providing personalized course recommendations and access to a professional audience. Educators benefit from high-quality production support, targeted audience engagement, and sophisticated analytics tools, making it ideal for those focused on professional and corporate training.

Comparison

	Creation	Revenue Sharing	Teaching Tools & Functionalities
Coursera	Only industries and university can be partners and propose courses (https://www.coursera.org/partnerships)	Revenue sharing varies by offering: - Degree Courses: Universities typically receive about 60% of the revenue. - Certificate Courses: Revenue is generally split evenly between Coursera and the partnering institution.	- Access to a global audience through prestigious university and organization partnerships. - Robust course creation tools including video lectures, assignments, and discussion forums. - Assistance with course marketing and enrollment management. - In-depth analytics to track learner engagement and performance.



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Udemy	Instructors create an account and then plan, register, and launch the course. Free course available on how to create a course (https://www.udemy.com/course/official-udemy-create-course)	• Instructors earn up to 97% of revenue when students enroll via the instructor own promotional links. • For sales through Udemy own marketplace, the revenue is typically split 50/50 between Udemy and the instructor.	• Intuitive course creation suite that supports video, quizzes, and interactive assignments. • Powerful marketing features including promotional emails, affiliate programs, and discount strategies. • Access to a vast and diverse student base. • Detailed performance analytics to monitor course sales and student engagement.
edX	Organizations need to partner with edX to offer online learning content (https://business.edx.org/partner)	Revenue sharing models can be complex and vary by agreement. Generally, edX may take around 50% of the revenue.	• Comprehensive course development tools supporting video lectures, graded assignments, and interactive discussion forums. • Options to integrate with external tools for a richer learning experience. • Ability to offer verified certificates and academic credentials. • Detailed learner analytics to monitor progress and course effectiveness.



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Instructors need to apply and be selected (https://learning.linkedin.com/instructors)	• Instructors are typically paid an advance (ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000) to cover production costs and as an advance on teaching fees. • Additional royalties may be provided based on course viewership and participation metrics.	• Professional-grade production support, including collaboration with LinkedIn production team. • Direct integration with LinkedIn, which offers personalized course recommendations to a professional audience. • Post-production support, editing, and publishing assistance. • Advanced analytics and reporting tools to gauge course performance and learner engagement.
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2.2 Curriculum design and delivery

Based on the nature of these courses (from platforms like Udemy, Coursera, and edX) and common educational practices, here's a structured summary of their pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, curriculum design, and instructional strategies:

1. Pedagogical Approaches

These courses typically adopt a blended learning and constructivist approach, with an emphasis on real-world application. The key methods include:

- **Experiential Learning** – Courses encourage hands-on learning through case studies, projects, and simulations.
- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL)** – Many courses use real-world social issues as the foundation for learning.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach** – Social innovation and entrepreneurship require knowledge from multiple disciplines, so courses integrate business, sociology, public policy, and technology.
- **Self-Paced Learning** – Udemy and edX focus more on asynchronous learning, while Coursera blends synchronous and asynchronous elements.
- **Collaborative Learning** – Some courses (especially on Coursera and edX) use discussion forums, peer feedback, and group projects to encourage interaction.

2. Assessment Methods

The courses assess learners through a mix of formative and summative assessments:

- **Quizzes & Multiple-Choice Tests** – Used for knowledge retention, mainly in Udemy courses.
- **Peer-Reviewed Assignments** – Coursera and edX often include assignments where learners review each other's work.
- **Case Study Analysis** – Learners apply theoretical knowledge to analyze real-world cases.



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- Project-Based Assessments – Many social entrepreneurship courses require students to create a business model or innovation proposal.
- Discussion Participation – Some courses grade students based on engagement in forums and discussions.
- Capstone Projects – Some advanced Coursera courses include final projects where students design social innovation initiatives.

Curriculum Design

The curriculum is structured to move from foundational knowledge to applied learning, often following this sequence:

- Introduction to the Field – Overview of social innovation, sustainability, or entrepreneurship.
- Theoretical Frameworks – Exploration of key models, such as design thinking or business model canvases.
- Practical Tools & Strategies – Hands-on approaches for impact measurement, funding models, and scaling strategies.
- Real-World Applications – Case studies, guest lectures, or expert interviews.
- Capstone or Final Project – Application of learning through a project, business plan, or social innovation prototype.

Courses from universities (like those on Coursera and edX) tend to be more structured and rigorous, whereas Udemy courses are often shorter, self-paced, and focused on immediate skill-building.

4. Instructional Strategies

Different platforms and courses employ varied instructional methods, including:



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- Video Lectures – Core method of content delivery, often with interactive transcripts.
- Readings & Supplementary Resources – Articles, research papers, and reports to deepen understanding.
- Discussion Boards & Peer Interaction – Encourages learners to engage in reflective discussions.
- Live Sessions & Webinars – Some Coursera courses include live Q&A sessions with instructors.
- Interactive Exercises & Simulations – Gamified learning experiences, especially in design thinking courses.
- Guest Lectures & Expert Interviews – Insights from practitioners in the field.
- Hands-On Assignments – Action-based projects, such as designing a social business model or conducting impact analysis.

Summary

- Udemy courses tend to be self-paced, video-heavy, and assessment-light, making them ideal for quick learning.
- Coursera courses are often university-led, incorporating structured syllabi, graded assessments, and sometimes even peer collaboration.
- edX courses are similar to Coursera but often more research-intensive, with strong academic rigor and real-world case applications.



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2.3 Course Segment Deconstruction

We conducted an extensive search for courses on the topics of Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, offered by these online learning platforms. These courses provide valuable knowledge and skills for individuals interested in creating positive social impact through innovative approaches. We didn't discover any interesting courses on LinkedIn which were encompassing the full range of topics covered by the other 3 platforms.

The specific keywords used for searching these courses were linked to general entrepreneurship, innovations, skills as well as course/training options:

General Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Social Business Model, Social Ventures, Changemakers, Social Leadership

Skill-Based Keywords: Business Planning, Social Innovation, Social Impact Assessment, Project Management, Strategic Planning, Community Engagement, Social Impact, Social Problem Solving, Design thinking, Human-Centred Design

Education and Training Keywords: Online Course, MOOC, Training Program, Curriculum, Skill Development, E-learning

Platform	Course	Summary	Key topics	Link
Udemy	Social Innovation Academy	This course provides a comprehensive overview of social innovation, covering topics like identifying social problems,	1. Introduction to Social Innovation 2. Identifying Social Problems 3. Developing Innovative Solutions 4. Implementing and Scaling Solutions 5. Measuring Social Impact	Link



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		developing innovative solutions, & implementing them effectively.		
Udemy	Social Innovation	This Udemy course offers a broader perspective on social innovation, exploring various approaches and strategies for creating social impact.	1. Understanding Social Innovation 2. Models of Social Change 3. Strategies for Social Impact 4. Case Studies in Social Innovation 5. Future Trends in Social Innovation	Link
Udemy	Social Innovation Master Class TM	This Udemy course is designed as a masterclass, providing in-depth knowledge and practical skills for advanced social innovation practices.	1. Foundations of Social Innovation 2. Advanced Problem-Solving Techniques 3. Systemic Change & Policy Influence 4. Financial Models for Social Ventures 5. Real-World Applications & Case Studies	Link
Udemy	Practical Social Entrepreneurship	This Udemy course focuses on the practical aspects of social entrepreneurship, guiding learners through the process of launching and managing a social enterprise.	1. What is Social Entrepreneurship? 2. Developing a Social Enterprise Model 3. Funding and Revenue Strategies 4. Impact Measurement and Reporting 5. Scaling a Social Business	Link



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Udemy	Social Impact/ESG in Product Management	This Udemy course explores the intersection of social impact, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors, and product management, offering insights for creating sustainable and responsible products.	1. Introduction to ESG Principles 2. Social Responsibility in Product Design 3. Sustainable Business Practices 4. ESG Metrics and Reporting 5. Future of ESG in Product Management	Link
Udemy	Master Course in Social Entrepreneurship 2.0	This Udemy course is a comprehensive master course on social entrepreneurship, providing advanced knowledge and skills for aspiring and practicing social entrepreneurs.	1. Entrepreneurial Mindset for Social Impact 2. Market Research for Social Enterprises 3. Fundraising and Grant Writing 4. Building a Strong Organizational Structure 5. Growth Strategies for Social Ventures	Link
Udemy	Social Entrepreneurship Fundamentals	This Udemy course covers the fundamentals of social entrepreneurship, providing a solid foundation for understanding the field.	1. Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship 2. Designing a Business with Social Impact 3. Funding Opportunities for Social Enterprises 4. Managing Teams in Social Ventures 5. Case Studies of Successful Social Enterprises	Link



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Coursera	Social Innovation	Offered by the University of Cape Town, this Coursera course introduces the concept of social innovation and its application in addressing social challenges.	1. What is Social Innovation? 2. Understanding Community Needs 3. Innovative Approaches to Social Change 4. Scaling Social Innovations 5. Measuring and Sustaining Impact	Link
Coursera	Innovation Through Design	Offered by the University of Sydney, this Coursera course explores the role of design thinking in driving social innovation.	1. Introduction to Design Thinking 2. User-Centered Design for Social Good 3. Prototyping and Iteration 4. Implementing Design Solutions 5. Evaluating Design Impact	Link
Coursera	Creating Change Through Social Entrepreneurship	This Coursera course focuses on creating change through social entrepreneurship, providing strategies for developing and implementing impactful social ventures.	1. The Role of Social Entrepreneurs 2. Identifying Problems and Solutions 3. Funding and Business Models 4. Measuring and Communicating Impact 5. Policy and Advocacy for Social Entrepreneurs	Link
Coursera	Design Thinking for the Greater Good	Offered by the University of Virginia, this Coursera course explores how design thinking can be used to create innovative solutions for the greater good.	1. Principles of Human-Centered Design 2. Defining Social Challenges 3. Ideation and Brainstorming for Change 4. Prototyping and Testing Solutions 5. Implementing and Scaling Design Solutions	Link



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Coursera	Social Entrepreneurship	Offered by the University of Pennsylvania, this provides a comprehensive overview of social entrepreneurship, covering various aspects of building and managing a social enterprise.	1. Foundations of Social Entrepreneurship 2. Developing a Social Venture 3. Legal and Financial Structures 4. Leadership in Social Enterprises 5. Expanding and Sustaining Impact	Link
Coursera	Social Business Model	Offered by Copenhagen Business School, this Coursera course focuses on developing and planning social business models for sustainable impact.	1. Business Model Innovation for Social Impact 2. Value Proposition Design 3. Financial Planning for Social Enterprises 4. Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships 5. Measuring Success in Social Businesses	Link
edX	Introduction to Corporate Sustainability	Offered by Imperial College Business School, this course introduces corporate sustainability and its role in social innovation.	1. Principles of Corporate Sustainability 2. Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) 3. Sustainable Business Strategies 4. Risk Management in Corporate Sustainability 5. Measuring and Reporting Sustainability Performance	Link
edX	Introduction to Corporate Sustainability & Social Innovation	This edX course provides a broader introduction to corporate sustainability and its connection to social innovation.	1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) vs. Social Innovation 2. Integrating Sustainability into Business Models 3. Creating Shared Value	Link



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			4. Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making 5. Future Trends in Corporate Sustainability	
edX	Disciplined Approach to Social Entrepreneurship	Offered by Curtin University, this edX course focuses on a disciplined approach to social entrepreneurship, emphasizing strategic planning and execution.	1. Strategy and Planning for Social Entrepreneurs 2. Financial Management for Social Enterprises 3. Impact Assessment and Metrics 4. Marketing and Outreach for Social Change 5. Scaling and Replicating Social Business Models	Link

The desk research revealed a substantial and diverse offering of online courses related to social innovation and entrepreneurship, available across various MOOC platforms.

Key findings include:

- **Emphasis on Foundational Skills:** Most courses prioritize core business skills like business planning, marketing, and financial management, which are essential for any entrepreneurial endeavor.
- **Growing Focus on Social Impact:** An increasing number of programs integrate social impact assessment and ethical considerations, reflecting the growing importance of social entrepreneurship.
- **Varied Pedagogical Approaches:** Courses employ a range of pedagogical approaches, including video lectures, case studies, peer-to-peer learning, and project-based assignments. The effectiveness of these methods varies, with interactive and applied learning generally receiving higher student ratings.
- **Skillset Alignment:** The analyzed courses collectively target a broad range of skills, encompassing technical, soft, and entrepreneurial competencies. However, the depth and emphasis on specific skills vary significantly across programs.



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- **Limited Sport-Specific Content:** Courses that explicitly address the unique challenges and opportunities within the sport and physical activity sector are relatively scarce.

Specifically, it was evident there these courses leveraged varying pedagogical approaches to deliver the learning content.

In conclusion, while online platforms offer valuable resources for aspiring social entrepreneurs, there is a **clear need for specialized programs that cater to the specific needs and context of the sport and physical activity field**. The insights from this desk research will inform the subsequent stages of this study, including the interviews with social entrepreneurs and the development of recommendations for the SPIEP curriculum.



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2.3.1 Role of case studies in social entrepreneurship and Innovation education

Case studies are an integral part of many social innovation classes. In addition to theoretical content provided in online lectures, case studies provide the opportunity for real-world application based on explicit examples of how social innovation has been successfully implemented in different situations. The intention is to help learners transferring their theoretical understanding into practical terms. Together, case studies can be considered as a link between the theoretical knowledge delivered in online courses and practical application.

Function/objective of case studies	Description
Application to real world setting	Case studies help transferring theoretical knowledge to practical application based on real cases
Develop problem-solving skills	Case studies support engaging learners in critically analyzing real-world problems and challenges associated with social innovation and develop critical thinking skills to approach problems/challenges with innovative solutions
Learn from failures/success	Case studies can be both successful and unsuccessful allowing learners to benefit from past experiences and best practice examples
Interdisciplinary thinking	Social innovation requires input from different fields (e.g. technology, authorities, business, community, ...). Cases studies illustrate how different elements do interact in a real-world context
Inspiration and motivation	As case studies derive from real-life stories they can motivate and inspire learners to start acting and pursue their own social innovation ideas
Learn about stakeholder engagement	As for interdisciplinary thinking, case studies typically span different fields and are associated with different stakeholders (e.g. other businesses, government, community, ...).
Adaptability and Scalability	Social innovation needs to be adapted based on e.g. target groups, cultural background or political systems in different regions. Case studies provide insights into adaptation mechanisms and strategies that help to adapt and scale up a social innovation project



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2.3.2 Specific case studies in online social innovation courses

To gain a deeper understanding of the pedagogical approaches employed by the identified social innovation and entrepreneurship courses, we conducted a detailed analysis of their utilization of case studies. This section presents a table summarizing the case studies featured in the shortlisted courses, examining their focus, learning objectives, and pedagogical integration. By dissecting these case studies, we aim to identify best practices and assess their relevance to the development of social entrepreneurship skills within the Sport Science and Physical Activity (SSPA) context.

Course platform	Social innovation course title	Case study included?	Type of case study	Relative contribution of case studies to the course
Udemy	Social Innovation Academy	Yes	Examples/Interviews from experts elaborating on - Social innovation journey - Idea creation - Idea prototyping - Sustaining social innovation initiatives - Up-scaling journey Overall 49 case studies	High “learn from experts” content in each module
	Social Innovation	Yes	Interviews with social innovation Entrepreneurs (Grameen-Bank and BRAC)	Low Only two interview sessions at the end of the course
	Social Innovation Master Class TM	Yes	The course itself is the case study describing a social innovation project from Germany on urban gardening	High Whole course based on a real social innovation project
	Practical Social Entrepreneurship	Yes	One example on the relation between technology and social innovation	Low One short case study example at the end of the course



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	Social Impact/ESG in Product Management	Yes	Case studies on - ESG integration in product management - Product design innovations - Ethical Marketing Approaches - ESG performance reporting - Impact Investing in Product Management - ESG Risk Mitigation	High Case studies included in each course chapter
	Master Course in Social Entrepreneurship 2.0	Yes	Case studies on social innovation and social entrepreneurship	Low Case studies are considered in one out of 8 modules
	Social entrepreneurship Fundamentals	Yes	Examples and case studies about social entrepreneurs and social enterprises (Grameen-Bank and BRAC) Same case studies as for the course "Social innovation"	Low Only two case studies at the end of the module
Coursera	Becoming a changemaker: Introduction to Social Innovation	Yes	Case studies on - Problem identification ("Mothers2Mothers") - Resource inquiry ("The Street Store")	Low Only two case studies integrated in 2 out of 6 course modules
	Innovation Through Design: Think, Make, Break, Repeat	Yes	One case study on design research	Low Only one case study on design research integrated into the course (5 modules)



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Creating Change through Social Entrepreneurship	Yes	Case studies on - Problem identification (Health leads) - Creating community connection (Ciudad Saludable) - Design process (Hippocampus Learning Centers) - User and customer communication and interview (Daily table) - Outcome measurement (Saoufra) - Financial viability (Aravind Eye Systems) - Funding resources (DBL fund) - Organization structure (B Labs) - Pitching and communication (Student Pitch) - Impact expansion (Catalyst 2030)	High Many different case studies each covering one field of the course
Design Thinking for the Greater Good: Innovation in the Social Sector	Yes	Case studies on different topics (e.g. agriculture) integrated across different modules of the course	High Several case studies from different fields integrated into the course
Social Entrepreneurship (<i>University of Pennsylvania</i>)	No	---	Low No case studies outlined in the course schedule
Social Business Model and Planning for Social Innovation	Yes	Case studies for some of the modules (e.g. RubyCup Team, Hueforbi, Bybi, Den Sociale Kapital Fond,...) Interviews with CEO of some of the companies	High Case studies included in most modules and several subsections



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edX	ImperialBusinessX: Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics	Yes	Case studies involving different companies such as Campbell's, Dunkin Brands, Verizon, Salesforce.com, FIFCO, Barclays.	High Course is based on "real-world experiences" with a number of different companies included as case studies
	Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics	Yes	One big case study (Mercato Metropolitano) for one entire module of the course Additional interviews and guest speakers from different enterprises No specific case study for the field of social innovation	High Regular involvement of real-world examples as integrated via interviews, guest speakers and case studies
	CurtinX: Disciplined Approach to Social Entrepreneurship	Yes	Selco (India), Friendship (Bangladesh), Edible Garden City (Singapore), and Greenbatch (Australia) are social enterprises tackling energy access, community development, urban farming, and plastic recycling, respectively.	High Several case studies from different fields integrated into the course



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Characteristics of case studies included in social innovation courses

Overall, 16 courses were found that had a direct link to social innovation. With one exception, case studies were included in all courses found on Udemy, Coursera and edX emphasizing the importance of real-world examples for education on social innovation. The integration into the courses was very heterogeneous. In some courses, case studies were only representing a very limited proportion of the overall content and appeared only once in the course and only in specific modules. Other courses applied a more regular and systematic integration of case studies across modules across sub-modules. It needs to be noted that especially for courses with a low relative contribution of real-world content, lectures on social innovation were not always connected to a case study.

Interestingly, most courses with a high relative contribution of case studies to the overall content used different enterprises as examples in different modules. Only one course clearly considered one case study as an example throughout the social innovation process (Social Innovation Master Class TM). One more course at least considered the same company for one full module of the course (*Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics*). Most courses mentioned the companies/enterprises used as case studies in the module description.

There was substantial heterogeneity in the type of case studies. While many referred to small-to-medium enterprises or start up's also big players such as Salesforce or Barclays were involved. Similarly, the markets of different case studies were heterogeneous spanning the healthcare sector, finance, governance, agriculture or technology). While examples from the field of health were included there was only one case study connecting sports and health. In general, sports and physical activity seemed to play a minor role for the reviewed courses. The method of integrating case studies was typically by exemplary video lectures for a specific company/enterprise. Some courses further integrated interviews with founders (e.g. CEO) or recorded lecturers from guest speakers.

Together, the results highlight the importance of integrating case studies into online courses for social innovation. Small enterprises/startups are most frequently used as examples which appears reasonable when considering case studies as role models. The field of sport remained almost unconsidered across courses leaving a large gap for social innovation case studies addressing physical activity in general and sports in particular for health.



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2.4 Skillset Inventory

We conducted a comprehensive overview of the skillset development opportunities offered by various courses on social innovation and entrepreneurship. It includes evidence of skillset inclusion, expected proficiency levels, and pathways for students to become social innovators or entrepreneurs.

Skill Inventory Table

Skill	Courses with skillset focus	Expected level
Social Innovation	Social Innovation Academy, Becoming a changemaker: Introduction to Social Innovation, Social Innovation MasterClass TM	Beginner
Social Entrepreneurship	Practical Social Entrepreneurship, Master Course in Social Entrepreneurship 2.0, Creating Change through Social Entrepreneurship	Intermediate
Design Thinking	Innovation Through Design: Think, Make, Break, Repeat, Design Thinking for the Greater Good: Innovation in the Social Sector	Intermediate
Corporate Sustainability	Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics	Beginner
Social Impact/ESG	Social Impact/ESG in Product Management	Intermediate
Strategic Planning	Social Business Model and Planning for Social Innovation	Intermediate
Ethical Leadership	Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics	Beginner
Impact Measurement	Disciplined Approach to Social Entrepreneurship	Expert

The courses offer a wide range of skillset learning opportunities, including:

- **Social Innovation:** Understanding the principles and practices of social innovation, including how to identify social problems and develop innovative solutions that can create positive change in communities.



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- **Social Entrepreneurship:** Developing entrepreneurial skills to create and manage social enterprises, focusing on business models that prioritize social impact alongside financial sustainability.
- **Design Thinking:** Applying design thinking methodologies to solve social problems, which involves empathizing with users, defining problems, ideating solutions, prototyping, and testing.
- **Corporate Sustainability:** Learning about sustainability practices within corporate settings, including strategies for integrating social and environmental considerations into business operations and decision-making.
- **Social Impact/ESG:** Integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into product management, ensuring that products and services contribute positively to society and the environment.

These topics are divided into various learning pathways offering foundation to advanced expertise. The pathways to becoming a social innovator or entrepreneur through these courses include:

- **Foundational Knowledge:** Courses like "Social Innovation Master Class TM" and "Introduction to Corporate Sustainability, Social Innovation and Ethics" provide foundational knowledge, helping students understand the core concepts and frameworks of social innovation and sustainability.
- **Practical Application:** Courses such as "Practical Social Entrepreneurship" and "Creating Change through Social Entrepreneurship" focus on practical applications and real-world scenarios, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge to actual social challenges and develop hands-on experience.
- **Advanced Skills:** Advanced courses like "Master Course in Social Entrepreneurship 2.0" and "Disciplined Approach to Social Entrepreneurship" offer deeper insights and advanced skills, enabling students to tackle complex social issues with sophisticated strategies and tools.

Students can expect the following learning outcomes:

- **Innovative Thinking:** Ability to think creatively and innovatively to address social issues, using a variety of problem-solving techniques and approaches to develop



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effective solutions.

- **Entrepreneurial Skills:** Development of skills necessary to start and manage social enterprises, including business planning, fundraising, marketing, and leadership.
- **Strategic Planning:** Understanding how to plan and implement strategies for social impact, ensuring that initiatives are well-organized, sustainable, and capable of achieving their goals.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Learning to lead with a focus on ethics and sustainability, making decisions that prioritize the well-being of people and the planet.
- **Impact Measurement:** Skills to measure and evaluate the impact of social initiatives, using tools and methodologies to assess the effectiveness and reach of projects and programs.

After this thorough characterization of the available courses and the skillset development and learning objectives for the students partaking in these courses, we decided to conduct interviews with two award winning experienced social entrepreneurs to validate our findings and to discover what challenges still remain towards becoming social innovators and changemakers.



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2.5 Entrepreneurial Experience Evaluation

Following the extensive desk research, it was time to jump into explorative discussions with experienced entrepreneurs. In order to conduct incisive interviews, we prepared a well structured interview questionnaire covering the journey of the social entrepreneurs from the beginning of their journey until the success as impactful leaders. The questions dived extensively into their entrepreneurial development via learning as well as experience on the job.

1. Key Learning Gaps in Their Journey

- *What were the biggest learning challenges you faced when starting your journey as a social entrepreneur?*
- *Were there any skills or knowledge areas you felt underprepared for when you began your social enterprise?*
- *Looking back, what do you wish you had known before you started your venture?*
- *How did you recognize these learning gaps during the early stages of your venture?*

2. Bridging the Learning Gaps

- *How did you overcome these gaps in knowledge or skills—did you take formal training, learn on the job, or seek mentorship?*
- *Were there specific resources, such as books, podcasts, or online content, that helped you bridge these learning gaps?*
- *Can you describe a particular moment or experience where you realized that you had gained a significant new skill or insight that helped your venture move forward?*
- *Did you participate in any social entrepreneurship networks, and how did they contribute to your personal growth and the development of your enterprise?*
- *In what ways did failure or setbacks contribute to your learning and growth as an entrepreneur?*

3. What Works Now

- *What practices or strategies are working well for you today in terms of scaling your impact and running your business?*
- *What lessons from your early days are you still applying in your business now?*
- *How do you currently continue learning and staying up-to-date in the social entrepreneurship field?*
- *Are there any tools, frameworks, or methodologies that have been particularly valuable for your work?*



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- *What systems or processes have you put in place that allow you to continually learn and grow within your social enterprise?*

4. Suggestions for Future Entrepreneurs

- *If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring social entrepreneurs, what would it be?*
- *What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?*
- *What qualities do you think are essential for a future social entrepreneur to have, and how can they cultivate these qualities?*
- *Looking ahead, how do you think the social entrepreneurship landscape will evolve, and what skills will be most in demand?*
- *What are the most important things future entrepreneurs should focus on in the early stages of their journey?*

5. Training and Course Recommendations

- *Are there any specific training programs or courses you would recommend for someone considering social entrepreneurship?*
- *What type of skills or knowledge do you think social entrepreneurship courses should focus on?*
- *In your opinion, are there enough quality training programs available for social entrepreneurs, or is there a gap in the educational offerings?*
- *What kind of practical, hands-on learning opportunities would you suggest aspiring entrepreneurs seek out in addition to formal education?*
- *Have you ever attended an incubator, accelerator, or boot camp? If so, how did it shape your entrepreneurial journey?*

6. Personal Reflection and Insights

- *What has been the most rewarding part of your social entrepreneurship journey so far?*
- *How do you manage the emotional challenges that come with balancing social impact with business growth?*
- *Have there been any mentors or role models who influenced your approach to social entrepreneurship?*
- *How do you define success in social entrepreneurship, and has your definition evolved over time?*
- *What would you do differently if you had to start over today, knowing what you know now?*



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7. Impact Measurement and Sustainability

- *How do you measure the impact of your work, and what tools or methods do you use?*
- *What challenges do you face in sustaining your social enterprise, and how do you navigate them?*
- *How do you ensure that the social and environmental impact of your venture is aligned with its financial sustainability?*

8. Advice on Collaboration and Networking

- *How important have collaborations and partnerships been in your entrepreneurial journey?*
- *How do you build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders, including investors, communities, and beneficiaries?*
- *Can you share a story of a key partnership or collaboration that significantly contributed to your success?*

During these interview, we delved into the experiences and insights of six accomplished social entrepreneurs, exploring the critical learning gaps they faced on their journey and how they overcame these challenges. As social entrepreneurship demands a unique blend of skills, passion, and resilience, we seek to understand how these individuals bridged gaps in knowledge, the strategies and resources they found most effective, and how they continue to evolve in their work. By incorporating a variety of question types, you can also gain a comprehensive understanding of their journey, not just in terms of practical skills, but also in their mindset and approach to social impact.

We also sought their advice for aspiring social entrepreneurs, touching on what training, skills, and courses future changemakers should prioritize. Through this conversation, we planned to uncover the practical wisdom, lessons learned, and key recommendations that can help others succeed in the ever-evolving field of social entrepreneurship.



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Interview with CEO of Magrid Ms. Tahereh Pazouki

Highlights:

Q: What were the biggest learning challenges you faced when starting your journey as a social entrepreneur?

A: One of the biggest challenges was understanding how to effectively balance social impact with business sustainability. While we were driven by our mission to improve early math education, ensuring financial stability and scalability was something we had to learn on the go.

Q: Were there any skills or knowledge areas you felt underprepared for when you began your social enterprise?

A: Yes, particularly in business development and team management. While we had strong expertise in education and cognitive science, building a sustainable business model and building a competitive team was something I had to learn along the way.

Q: What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?

A: Many focus too much on the product and not enough on the business model. Ensure your impact is sustainable.

Q: What has been the most rewarding part of your social entrepreneurship journey so far?

A: Seeing children improve their math skills and gain confidence in learning is incredibly fulfilling.

Q: How do you manage the emotional challenges that come with balancing social impact with business growth?

A: Having a strong support system and reminding ourselves of our mission helps us stay motivated.

Q: What challenges do you face in sustaining your social enterprise, and how do you navigate them?

A: Ensuring financial sustainability while maintaining affordability is a key challenge, but strategic partnerships and diversified revenue streams help.

Q: Can you share a story of a key partnership or collaboration that significantly contributed to your success?

A: One of our most significant collaborations was with a national education body, which enabled us to scale our program across multiple schools.

Q: What are the top 3 skills now you wish you had when you started the social business?

A: Team building, Sales, Negotiations



Interview with Co-founder of ETICC Ms. Sana Hadžić-Babačić

Highlights:

Q: Were there any skills or knowledge areas you felt underprepared for when you began your social enterprise?

A: Managing multidisciplinary teams was a challenge. We work at the crossroads of technology, policy, and social impact, which requires bridging different perspectives and expertise.

Q: How did you recognize these learning gaps during the early stages of your venture?

A: It became clear when we faced hurdles in implementation. We realized that having a strong demand wasn't enough—we needed a strategy for community engagement and long-term sustainability.

Q: What practices or strategies are working well for you today in terms of scaling your impact and running your business?

A: Co-creation with communities and policymakers has been crucial. Instead of designing in isolation, we actively involve citizens in the development process to ensure real-world impact.

Q: What lessons from your early days are you still applying in your business now?

A: The importance of adaptability. Technology evolves rapidly, and so do societal needs. Staying flexible and responsive ensures that our solutions remain relevant.

Q: How do you currently continue learning and staying up-to-date in the social entrepreneurship field?

A: Through active participation in civic tech networks, attending digital governance conferences, and continuous collaboration with researchers and policymakers.

Q: If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring social entrepreneurs, what would it be?

A: Focus on user engagement from day one. The best technology or solution is useless if it doesn't address real citizen needs.

Q: Are there any specific training programs or courses you would recommend for someone considering social entrepreneurship?

A: Courses in digital transformation, human-centered design, and impact measurement can be particularly useful.

Q: How important have collaborations and partnerships been in your entrepreneurial journey?

A: They've been essential. Working with public institutions, researchers, and tech partners has amplified our reach and effectiveness.



Interview with CEO of GoldenMe Ms. Mara Kroth

Highlights:

Q: Were there any skills or knowledge areas you felt underprepared for when you began your social enterprise?

A: Yes, particularly in non-profit ventures and leadership. While we were passionate about our mission, we had to develop skills in selling our idea effectively and leading a diverse team towards a common goal.

Q: How did you overcome these gaps in knowledge or skills—did you take formal training, learn on the job, or seek mentorship?

A: A combination of mentorship and hands-on experience. Seeking advice from experienced entrepreneurs and continuously iterating our sales strategy helped us improve over time.

Q: What practices or strategies are working well for you today in terms of scaling your impact and running your business?

A: Implementing structured sales processes and investing in team development. Ensuring that every team member understands their role has helped us grow efficiently.

Q: If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring social entrepreneurs, what would it be?

A: Focus on building a strong team and mastering sales early on. Without these, even the best ideas struggle to succeed.

Q: What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?

A: Many underestimate the importance of a strong sales strategy and fail to invest in team culture early enough.

Q: What has been the most rewarding part of your social entrepreneurship journey so far?

A: Seeing our team grow and succeed while making a meaningful impact through our work for which we received the Digital Inclusion Award from the H.R.H Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

Q: Can you share a story of a key partnership or collaboration that significantly contributed to your success?

A: Partnering with a government of Luxembourg helped us refine our go-to-market and improve our project sustainability.



Interview with Founders of WeConnect Ms. Clementine Offner & Mr Ivo Silva

Highlights:

Q: What were the biggest learning challenges you faced when starting your journey as a social entrepreneur?

A: One of the biggest challenges was creating a sustainable model for intergenerational living that balanced social impact with financial viability. Additionally, understanding the diverse needs of different age groups and ensuring a seamless experience for both older and younger residents was a learning curve.

Q: What practices or strategies are working well for you today in terms of scaling your impact and running your business?

A: Establishing strong partnerships with housing authorities, universities, and senior living organizations has been crucial. Additionally, developing community engagement programs to ensure a thriving intergenerational culture has helped our residents feel more connected.

Q: What lessons from your early days are you still applying in your business now?

A: The importance of listening to our residents. We continuously gather feedback from both older and younger participants to refine our offerings and make improvements.

Q: How did you recognize these learning gaps during the early stages of your venture?

A: We realized them through early setbacks in securing housing spaces and forming partnerships with local authorities. These challenges highlighted the need for a more structured approach to stakeholder engagement and financial planning.

Q: If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring social entrepreneurs, what would it be?

A: Stay adaptable and patient—especially when working on complex social issues. Change takes time, and the best solutions often come from continuous iteration and learning.

Q: What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?

A: Many underestimate the importance of government and policy alignment. If your social venture involves housing or public services, engaging with policymakers early on is critical.

Q: Can you describe a particular moment or experience where you realized that you had gained a significant new skill or insight that helped your venture move forward?

A: When we secured our first long-term housing partnership with a municipality, it validated our approach and showed that our efforts in policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement were paying off.



Interview with CEO of ProSolve Consulting Ms. Raginee Poloogadoo

Highlights:

Q: Were there any skills or knowledge areas you felt underprepared for when you began your social enterprise?

A: Business development and client acquisition were areas where I initially felt underprepared. While we had strong problem-solving capabilities, learning how to pitch our services effectively and build long-term client relationships was a learning curve.

Q: Looking back, what do you wish you had known before you started your venture?

A: I wish I had a stronger grasp of sales psychology and negotiation tactics. Consulting is not just about solving problems—it's also about convincing stakeholders of the value of your solutions.

Q: How did you recognize these learning gaps during the early stages of your venture?

A: It became evident when we faced challenges in securing long-term contracts. We had the expertise, but converting initial interest into sustained partnerships required us to refine our approach.

Q: What lessons from your early days are you still applying in your business now?

A: The importance of adaptability. Each client has unique challenges, and maintaining a flexible yet structured approach allows us to deliver high-value services.

Q: If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring social entrepreneurs, what would it be?

A: Focus on building relationships. A strong network can open doors, provide mentorship, and create long-term business opportunities.

Q: What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?

A: Many focus too much on the product or service without considering the client's perspective. Understanding customer needs and pain points should always be the priority.

Q: Are there any specific training programs or courses you would recommend for someone considering social entrepreneurship?

A: Courses in business strategy, negotiation, and financial modeling are incredibly useful. Platforms like Coursera and Udemy offer great resources.

Q: What challenges do you face in sustaining your social enterprise, and how do you navigate them?

A: Ensuring sustainability with social impact was always a challenge for me as a solo-founder. I have spent considerable time on building relationships with the communes who remain the client!



Interview with Cofounder of IWHO Mr Adham al-Sayyad

Highlights:

Q: How did you recognize these learning gaps during the early stages of your venture?

A: As the festival grew, it became clear that successful event execution required more than just vision—it needed operational expertise and strategic relationship-building.

Q: How did you overcome these gaps in knowledge or skills—did you take formal training, learn on the job, or seek mentorship?

A: A combination of mentorship and hands-on experience helped me the most. Learning from event organizers, cultural leaders, and social entrepreneurs played a key role.

Q: What practices or strategies are working well for you today in terms of scaling your impact and running your business?

A: Strong collaborations with cultural institutions and grassroots organizations have been key. Ensuring that each event fosters dialogue and inclusivity is what makes it impactful.

Q: What lessons from your early days are you still applying in your business now?

A: Flexibility and adaptability. Cultural and social programs require constant innovation, and being able to pivot has been a major strength.

Q: What common mistakes do you see future entrepreneurs making, and how can they avoid them?

A: Underestimating the power of partnerships. Building strong, long-term relationships is essential for sustainable impact.

Q: What has been the most rewarding part of your social entrepreneurship journey so far?

A: Seeing diverse communities come together through art, music, and dialogue at the festival is the most fulfilling part of this journey.

Through interviews with social entrepreneurs from Magrid, Weconnect, Goldenme, Prosolve, IWHO, and ETICC, several common themes emerged regarding the challenges, learning experiences, and strategies for success in the social enterprise space. Founders identified significant learning gaps in areas such as team building, sales, stakeholder management, and scaling their impact. Whether working in education, intergenerational living, community mediation, cultural programs, or collective intelligence, these leaders faced hurdles that required adaptability and continuous learning.

To bridge these gaps, entrepreneurs relied on mentorship, hands-on experience, formal training, and participation in networks and incubators. Collaboration was a recurring theme, with many emphasizing the role of strategic partnerships in sustaining and expanding their initiatives. Learning from failures was also highlighted as a crucial part of growth, helping refine their approaches and strengthen their organizations.

Today, these social enterprises thrive by maintaining a strong focus on their core mission. Many continue to learn through ongoing education, industry engagement, and staying connected with local & global networks. Their advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to remain flexible, embrace partnerships, and always stay committed to their purpose while ensuring financial sustainability.

Measuring impact remains a key challenge, with organizations utilizing feedback, community engagement, and data-driven metrics to track their success. Across all ventures, it is clear that social entrepreneurship is a dynamic journey requiring resilience, innovation, and a deep commitment to creating meaningful change.

Concluding Remarks

Through our desk research and discussions with social entrepreneurs, we have identified the essential components and stages of a social entrepreneurship curriculum. Using these insights, we have developed a comprehensive social innovation course structure. We plan to further refine this structure in collaboration with social entrepreneurs and partners involved in the SPIEP project. This course is designed for aspiring social entrepreneurs, changemakers, and innovators who want to create a positive impact in society. It offers a structured approach to understanding social innovation, sustainable business models, and impactful leadership.



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Comprehensive Social Innovation Course

Course Modules

Getting Started: Igniting Your Vision

- Introduction to Social Innovation
- Understanding the Social Entrepreneurship Landscape
- Course Structure and Learning Objectives

Stage 1: Discovering the Root Problem

- Identifying Social Problems and Opportunities
- Conducting Market and Community Research
- Case Studies of Effective Social Enterprises

Stage 2: Engaging with Communities

- Understanding Stakeholder Needs
- Community Engagement and Co-Creation
- Ethical Considerations in Social Innovation

Stage 3: Crafting Innovative Solutions

- Human-Centered Design for Social Impact
- Developing Sustainable and Scalable Solutions
- Iteration and Prototyping for Impact

Stage 4: Refining and Strengthening Your Idea

- Refining Your Business Model
- Testing Your Concept in Real-World Scenarios
- Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Stage 5: Measuring and Evaluating Impact

- Introduction to Impact Measurement
- Frameworks for Evaluating Social Impact
- Data-Driven Decision Making for Social Ventures



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Stage 6: Achieving Financial Sustainability

- Building a Sustainable Revenue Model
- Identifying Funding Sources
- Financial Management for Social Enterprises

Stage 7: Securing Funding and Resources

- Exploring Grants, Investors, and Crowdfunding
- Writing Effective Grant Proposals
- Impact Investing and Philanthropy

Stage 8: Building a Strong Organization

- Choosing the Right Legal Structure
- Governance and Compliance in Social Enterprises
- Team Building and Organizational Culture

Stage 9: Communicating and Pitching Your Vision

- Storytelling for Social Impact
- Effective Pitching Strategies
- Engaging Media and Public Relations

Stage 10: Scaling and Maximizing Impact

- Strategies for Scaling Your Social Enterprise
- Partnerships and Collaborations for Growth
- Long-Term Sustainability and Legacy

Capstone Project: Creating a Social Innovation Blueprint

- Apply Design Thinking to Develop a Social Enterprise
- Create a Sustainable Business Model Canvas
- Measure and Present the Social Impact of Your Venture

As a next step, we will work on adapting this course structure to the needs of students in Sports and Physical Sciences. This adaptation will include developing relevant case studies that highlight the intersection of social innovation and sports. For example, we will explore initiatives from our SPIEP partners that use sports to promote community development,



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health, and inclusion for e.g. Fit4Cure (DK). These case studies will provide students with practical examples and enhance their learning experience by showing how social innovation can be applied within their field.

By tailoring the course content to the specific interests and career paths of students in Sports and Physical Sciences, we aim to make the learning experience more relevant and impactful. This approach will not only equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to drive social change but also inspire them to apply these principles in their future careers.



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