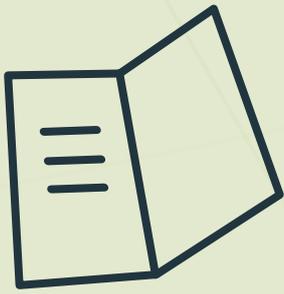**WORKSHEET**

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

A worksheet to help you identify the social or environmental problem you're looking to address, and to dive deep in understanding as much as you can about it.

THIS WORKSHEET WILL HELP YOU TO:

✓ **BUILD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL CHANGES YOU ASPIRE TO**

✓ **DEVELOP A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS THAT WILL GUIDE YOUR WORK**

✓ **IDENTIFY MEASURABLE INDICATORS TO HELP YOU STAY ON COURSE**

✓ **AGREE THE STEPS NEEDED TO MAXIMISE YOUR SOCIAL IMPACT**

✓ **COMMUNICATE ACHIEVEMENTS IN CLEAR AND COMPELLING WAYS**

ABOUT THE WORKSHEET

This tool covers one of the first steps we recommend any social entrepreneur take before building their social enterprise.

Understanding the problem you're trying to solve is the most important part of starting a social enterprise: it provides clarity, direction and meaning for yourself, staff, stakeholders, clients and customers. It gives you something clear to focus on and work towards. And it's at the very basis of understanding what success looks like (ie. the problem gets addressed).

On the flipside, misunderstanding the problem you're trying to solve can lead to poor direction, customers and clients who are disengaged, and most importantly, no impact!

So, what is problem are you trying to solve or address with your social enterprise? Can you clearly define and describe your problem, and can you prove your problem exists? We'll help you answer these and other questions, below.

HOW TO USE IT

"If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions."
— Albert Einstein.

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions. Use the space provided to place your answers.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU ARE TRYING TO ADDRESS?

WHAT IS/ARE THE TARGET GROUPS AND THE BENEFICIARIES INVOLVED?

(beneficiaries are those experiencing the social problem you are trying to solve)

IN WHAT WAYS ARE THE TARGET GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM YOU'RE EXPLORING?

(Think about how people experience the problem, and describe its effects and their needs arising)

WHERE ARE THEY LOCATED?

(In what geographic location are they? Be specific, you can't serve everyone in this demographic, at least at the beginning)

WHAT ACTIVITY DO YOU SEE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM?

(Write down what you think the beneficiary has to do (or receive) in order to address the problem. This could be a guess at this point, and that's ok. After this activity you can spend more time looking at the types of actions you can take in your enterprise)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

After collecting the information you need about the problem, it's time to articulate the problem in a clear statement. This is a useful exercise because it helps to concentrate your thoughts in one place, and provides a one-line statement that you can use to clearly articulate your problem to others.

Take what you've written above and distill it in a few words in each of the categories below. Remember, be specific.

PROBLEM:	
BENEFICIARIES:	
LOCATION:	
ACTIVITY:	

Next, you can insert what you've outlined above in the statement below:

_____ in _____ needs to _____ so they can _____.
[beneficiary]   [area, place]   [do this]   [address this problem]

And that's it! Now you have a problem statement! What do you think? Will this make it easier for you to explain your idea to others?

WORKED EXAMPLE

We'll look here at the issue of seniors' loneliness and isolation.   In this instance, the social entrepreneur found data that proved social isolation and loneliness were serious contributors to mental and physical decline in the elderly. They wanted to start a social enterprise to address that issue.

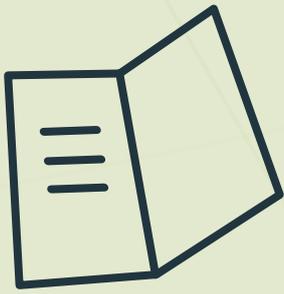| PROBLEM:	Isolation and loneliness (which causes health issues)
BENEFICIARIES:	Seniors (over 65 years old)
LOCATION:	Minnesota
ACTIVITY:	Shared youth and seniors apartment living

Next, use what you've outlined in the statement below:

_____ in _____ needs to _____ so they can _____ .
[beneficiary]   [area, place]   [do this]   [address this problem]

Seniors in Minnesota need to live in co-housing arrangements with youth so they can eliminate isolation and lonliness.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Thanks for taking the time to check out this guide.

Motivated to learn more? The Social Enterprise Institute has put together a wide range of practical courses and resources to help you plan, start and grow a successful social-purpose business.

Visit socialshifters.co to discover more.

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The Social Enterprise Institute is the world's school for social enterprise. We bring all the knowledge and tools you will need to start, manage, and grow an amazing social enterprise... plus a supportive global community of peers, instructors, and coaches.

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