Based on the Social Venture: All India Movement (AIM) for Seva

Part I: Foreword

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new term that defines an old and familiar phenomenon. We all recognize the names of powerful leaders who have left an indelible imprint on our minds and hearts, such as Susan B. Anthony, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. These individuals were extraordinary. They altered the way we view the world and challenged us to reject the status quo of the time. They were harbingers of change! Through unyielding passion for a cause and relentless tenacity, these social giants put themselves at risk for a higher purpose, a higher calling, a desire to solve what appeared to be an unsolvable social problem.

Today these social change agents are called social entrepreneurs, and we are beginning to recognize that these modern-day pioneers are motivated by many of the same factors of the social pioneers of old. Social entrepreneurs such as:

- Muhammad Yunus (Grameen Bank, Bangladesh)
- Fazle Abed (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, or BRAC)
Chief Fidela Ebuk (Women’s Health and Economic Development Association, Nigeria)
David Green (Project Impact, USA)
Liam Black (Furniture Resource Centre, UK)
Jeroo Billimoria (Childline, India)

have all, with vision, perseverance, and focus, ignited organizations to solve complex social problems such as poverty, access to healthcare, education, and global warming. And they have done this both programmatically and systemically.

According to David Bornstein in his 2004 book *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, pages 3–6, social entrepreneurship is growing fast worldwide. There is a significant increase in the number of social entrepreneurs starting ventures to solve societal problems. Not only are the numbers increasing, but the breadth and scope of the missions of these entrepreneurs and the speed at which social change is taking place are cause for much speculation.

The stakeholders of social entrepreneurship—the organizations that fund such ventures, governments, international institutions, academics, and corporate philanthropists—are all asking the same questions: Why do they do it? How are they doing it? While there is not much debate going on about the value created by social entrepreneurs in terms of social impact, the concept of social entrepreneurship and what a social entrepreneur actually does is largely ill-defined. According to Roger L. Martin and Sally Osberg in their article “Social Entrepreneurship: The Case for Definition” (*Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2007), “Social entrepreneurship is attracting growing amounts of talents, money and attention. But along with its increasing popularity has come less certainty about what exactly a social entrepreneur does. There is widespread agreement that it’s time for a more rigorous definition.” According to the article “Investigating Social Entrepreneurship: A Multi-Dimensional Model” in *Journal of World Business, 41*, 2006, by Jay Weerawardena and Gillian Sullivan Mort, “A consensus is emerging that understanding social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs is important. Although there is a substantial amount of material on the subject, there remains a need to develop a coherent theoretical framework in the field of social entrepreneurship.”

This module is a contribution to the process of developing an understanding and a contextual framework from which to map the social entrepreneurship process. Clearly, if we want to stimulate the growth of new social ventures that can solve our toughest problems around the world, we need to understand the key success factors, that is, what it takes to build a successful social enterprise. To that end, we will review the prevailing theory and definitions of social entrepreneurship to arrive at characteristics and behaviors of this new breed of social entrepreneur. Of course, social entrepreneurs exemplify these characteristics in different ways and to different degrees; but it is assumed that the closer a person gets to satisfying all of these conditions, the stronger the social impact will be. It follows then that when the goal is to understand the social entrepreneurial
process, developing a framework based on social entrepreneurs who exemplify many of these exceptional behaviors is a good place to start. To that end, this module features a powerful social enterprise called the All India Movement (AIM) for Seva that is boldly leading a movement to transform India. Using AIM for Seva as a basis, we have developed a new conceptual model of the social entrepreneurial process from which we can begin to understand the challenges and complexities of social entrepreneurship.

### Part II: Behaviors of Successful Social Entrepreneurs

According to J. Gregory Dees in his article “The Meaning of Social Entrepreneurship” (Original draft: October 31, 1998. Reformatted and revised: May 30, 2001), social entrepreneurs are engaged in the following core activities:

- Playing the role of change agents in the social sector
- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value)
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand
- Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created

Dees defines each element as follows:

- **“Being change agents in the social sector”**

  Social entrepreneurs are reformers and revolutionaries, but with a social mission. They make fundamental changes in the way things are done in the social sector. Their visions are bold. They seek to create systemic changes and sustainable improvements. Although they may act locally, their actions have the potential to stimulate global improvements in their chosen arenas—whether it is education, health care, economic development, the environment, the arts, or any other social field.

- **“Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value”**

  In for-profit ventures, the mission is to create economic value, to create wealth. Entrepreneurs are focused on developing an effective business model that supports the greatest return on investment. Even with passion for the business, the for-profit entrepreneur is focused on creating value for a customer in a manner that delivers bottom line
profitability. This is the essential difference between a for-profit entrepreneur and a social entrepreneur. For a social entrepreneur, the vision to effect social change is first and foremost. The vision and the passion to make a social impact is so strong in this new breed of social entrepreneurs that they are developing a fearlessness and willingness to sacrifice everything to achieve their goals.

■ “Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities”

Social entrepreneurs must be opportunity-focused, flexible, and tenacious. While social entrepreneurs have a clear vision of how they will achieve their goals of social impact, the new breed of social entrepreneurs is always flexible and willing to pursue new opportunities when they emerge. Grounded in a vision and a mission, these entrepreneurs have established criteria by which they will evaluate new opportunities and will be persistent in identifying new ways to achieve their goals.

■ “Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning”

Entrepreneurs are innovative. They break new ground, develop new models, and pioneer new approaches. However, innovation can take many forms. It does not require inventing something wholly new; it can involve applying an existing idea in a new way or to a new situation. Entrepreneurs need not be inventors. They simply need to be creative in applying what others have invented. Their innovations may appear in how they structure their core programs or in how they assemble the resources and fund their work. On the funding side, social entrepreneurs look for innovative ways to ensure that their ventures have access to resources as long as they are creating social value. This willingness to innovate is part of the modus operandi of entrepreneurs. It is not just a one-time burst of creativity. It is a continuous process of exploring, learning, and improving. Of course, with innovation comes uncertainty and risk of failure. Entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and learn how to manage risks for themselves and others. They treat failing at a project as a learning experience, not a personal tragedy.

■ “Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand”

Social entrepreneurs do not let their limited resources keep them from pursuing their visions. They are skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources from others. They use scarce resources efficiently, and they leverage their limited resources by drawing in partners and collaborating with others. They explore all resource options—from pure philanthropy to the commercial methods of the
business sector. They are not bound by sector norms or traditions. They develop resource strategies that are likely to support and reinforce their social missions. They take calculated risks and manage the downside so as to reduce the harm that may result from failure. They understand the risk tolerances of their stakeholders and use this knowledge to spread the risk among those who are better prepared to accept it.

■ “Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created”

Because market discipline does not automatically weed out inefficient or ineffective social ventures, social entrepreneurs take steps to ensure that they are creating value. This means that they seek a sound understanding of the constituencies they are serving. They make sure they have correctly assessed the needs and values of the people they intend to serve and the communities in which they operate. In some cases, this requires close connections with those communities. Entrepreneurs understand the expectations and values of their “investors,” including anyone who invests money, time, and/or expertise to help them. They seek to provide real social improvements to their beneficiaries and their communities, as well as attractive (social and/or financial) return to their investors. Creating a fit between investor values and community needs is an important part of the challenge. When feasible, social entrepreneurs create market-like feedback mechanisms to reinforce this accountability. They assess their progress in terms of social, financial, and managerial outcomes, not simply in terms of size, outputs, or processes. They use this information to make course corrections as needed.

According to Dees, “Social entrepreneurship describes a set of behaviors that are exceptional. Social entrepreneurs are one special breed of leader, and they should be recognized as such. This definition preserves their distinctive status and assures that social entrepreneurship is not treated lightly. We need social entrepreneurs to help us find new avenues toward social improvement...” (J. Gregory Dees, Original Draft: October 31, 1998. Reformatted and revised: May 30, 2001. “The Meaning of Social Entrepreneurship.” Retrieved March 11, 2008, from http://www.fuqua.duke.edu/centers/case/documents/dees_SE.pdf.)

In this next section, we will provide a brief snapshot of a unique and ground-breaking social entrepreneur who exemplifies these exceptional behaviors and has leveraged a unique set of resource combinations and strategic alliances to launch a movement to change a nation. This social entrepreneur is a model for this new breed of social change agent and is the basis for the development of a new framework for the social entrepreneurial process.
Part III: The Social Entrepreneurship Framework

Based on the AIM for Seva model, the following social entrepreneurship framework has been developed to help explain the social entrepreneurial process.

Social entrepreneurship begins with the social entrepreneur, the individual, the person who possesses many innate characteristics that drive that individual to create an organization that can solve a problem and effect change. These internal drivers are indicated by the inner circle. The outer circle depicts the qualities that attract volunteers, staff, strategic alliances, and partnerships to the entrepreneur’s cause.

The second step in the process is developing the vision, which includes the identification of the problem and the development of local and global solutions that can transform people and thereby transform nations.

The third step is developing the social venture model, the way in which the social entrepreneur will deliver the services to meet the

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Spotlight: The AIM for Seva Movement—A Case Study

AIM for Seva is a movement initiated by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a visionary and a powerful thinker and writer. From the outset, AIM for Seva was envisioned as a nationwide movement. It started as a program for integrated community development and soon gathered momentum to become a nationwide movement, touching the lives of over 400,000 rural and tribal people across 12 states. The organization has achieved Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

AIM for Seva creates a world of caring and compassion and empowerment for underprivileged children from remote parts of the country and makes them feel loved and secure. Many of these children come from poor families, and some come from dysfunctional homes. As a result, they cannot afford the cost of education. Their homes are located in rural, tribal, or hill regions, which make schools inaccessible to them. Moreover, poverty and lack of guidance force most of them into child labor. The objective of this movement is to help today’s children become responsible citizens of tomorrow and contribute to their family, society, and country.

**Vision**

AIM for Seva’s vision is to bridge the urban rural divide through a network of seva (service). The final goal is to create a national movement of caring to transform society.

**Mission**

To provide better educational opportunities for children in rural India and to help them find income-generating activities that ensure a bright future.

Source: www.aimforseva.org
needs of the targeted constituents that is sustainable, scalable, and integrated. In order to deliver the services to achieve the vision, the social entrepreneur must be effective in marshaling and managing resources both internally and externally—the fourth step.

This social venture framework is itself integrated and holistic with each factor driving and having an impact on the other. An effective social entrepreneur recognizes the linkages and is adept at refining the model as resources and the needs of the constituents change.

**Part IV: Applying the Framework**

In this next section, we will focus on the elements of the basic conceptual model and discuss each element in the context of an exemplary model of social innovation, AIM for Seva. We will first look at the vision behind the visionary and discuss how this noteworthy social entrepreneur is driven by a global vision, one that is sustainable and scalable and has the inherent power to transform nations.

**The Visionary—Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati is a powerful leader, a keen observer of humanity, and a highly effective change agent. He has initiated and participated in international forums such as these:
The United Nations—The Millennium World Peace Summit, New York, September 2000
The World Council for Preservation of Religious Diversity, Bangkok, June 2002
The Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders, Geneva, October 2002
World Youth Peace Conference, Kyoto, Japan, October 2004
White House Prayer Breakfast, Washington, D.C., May 2005
The Hindu Jewish Leadership Summit, New Delhi, February 2007, and Jerusalem, February 2008

Swami Dayananda is an eminent scholar and distinguished teacher of Vedanta, the ancient wisdom that provides the knowledge required for human beings to grow and realize their fullest potential. He has been teaching Vedanta for more than five decades in numerous locations and venues around the world. Specifically, Swami Dayananda has conducted public seminars at many universities and temples throughout the United States, Canada, England, Sweden, Brazil, Germany, and Australia. He has established four primary educational institutes of Vedanta and Sanskrit: three in India (Rishikesh, Nagpur, and Coimbatore) and one in the United States (Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania). As a teacher of teachers, Swami Dayananda also has designed and taught six in-depth adult resident courses, each spanning 36 months: four in India and two in the United States. He has graduated over 400 qualified teachers from all over the world who are dedicated to his vision for the AIM for Seva movement.

Grounded in this knowledge, Swami Dayananda's vision is that as human beings, our nature is to be compassionate and that if we can grow as people, become more compassionate, and become contributors rather than survivors, we can collectively create solutions to our toughest problems. He focuses first on the individual in trying to understand the dynamics that cause many of the world's challenges today. In his view, while it is quite useful to give someone food and shelter to survive, it is better to go one step further and give people enough support so that they can become contributors. Instead of providing food and shelter to generation after generation of people living at the poverty level, Swami Dayananda focuses on helping each individual grow to become a contributor to his or her family and community. Understanding this need and helping people become contributors to society is the mission of this powerful and unique social entrepreneur. The mission is to transform India by helping to transform its people.

As the social entrepreneurial model suggests, the personal nature of leadership in social entrepreneurial ventures is essential. Achieving
the level of impact that Swami Dayananda and other pioneering social entrepreneurs have reached requires an exceptional set of leadership qualities that go well beyond what is seen in many for-profit ventures. A key driver for the success of the AIM for Seva organization is its leader. Management, staff, volunteers, and constituents are working hard and sacrificing a great deal because of Swami Dayananda. When asked what it is about him that inspires such a movement, the answers are the same:

- “He is a charismatic communicator with a great sense of humor.”
- “He uplifts and inspires anyone with whom he comes in contact.”
- “He has an uncanny ability to help people become more objective so that they can live happier, more fulfilling lives.”
- “He is brilliant, intuitive, charismatic, and selfless.”
- “He is a powerful leader, able to inspire and transform people’s lives.”
- “I don’t know that I have the energy to do what he does. At 78 years old, he travels all over India, visiting the most remote areas to inspire and to support the poor.”

Swami Dayananda Saraswati has enriched the lives of countless people with his knowledge, wisdom, and compassion. He is the catalyst, the spark, that has ignited a movement responsible for the transformation of a nation based on compassion and service to others.

### Applying the Framework: The Social Entrepreneur

The new breed of social entrepreneur who has the potential to change the world is a charismatic leader with the ability to transform others. The success of the social enterprise depends largely on the power of that leader and his or her ability to galvanize a large group of people to push their boundaries and give selflessly and tirelessly to help others.

Of course, these exceptionally charismatic and inspirational leaders must have a strong vision. In the next section of the framework, we will focus on the vision. From where does the vision come? Are all visions alike? How do pioneering, groundbreaking social entrepreneurs formulate a vision in their mind and effectively communicate that vision to effect change on a large scale?

### The Vision—Being a Contributor

Drawing on his knowledge, his compassion, and a worldwide network of students and supporters, in November 2002, Swami
Dayananda initiated a national movement of caring to transform the Indian society. The movement is called AIM for Seva. *Seva* is a Sanskrit word with no English equivalent. It roughly means “service,” but it has a deeper meaning. The essence of the word *seva* is caring for others and helping others without regard for oneself, in terms of remuneration, credit, or any other form of gratification. The objective of this movement is to help the poor and marginalized people across India to become responsible citizens of tomorrow and contribute to their family, society, and country.

The vision behind AIM for Seva is based on the fundamental knowledge of what it means to be human. Human beings have a basic instinct to survive. Just like all living beings, we are programmed to survive. Minimally, when we think about survival, we think about the basics: air, water, food, and shelter. Unlike other living beings, in addition to this basic urge to survive, all human beings are self-judging; as a result, human beings have a desire to grow and become better. For many of us, survival is not enough. Except for those in extreme circumstances, are we satisfied saying that we are survivors and therefore we are happy? Many of us are not. More interestingly, many of us are satisfied saying that we are consumers and therefore we are happy. However, the reality is that no matter how much we consume, we still are not happy. It has become increasingly clear that as humans, we cannot live happily as mere survivors, people who take care of their own needs, or as consumers, people who consume beyond their needs. Inherent in our nature is a need to be a contributor. The human being needs to contribute something, to go beyond being just a survivor. But living at a level beyond mere survival means going beyond the survivor psyche. In other words, a person cannot be self-centered and be a contributor. So what is the contribution?

In a recent lecture, Swami Dayananda explained:

There are a variety of contributions. All that counts is whether you have reached the level of being a contributor. To reach that level your psychology, your way of thinking and your way of looking at yourself, others, and the world has to undergo a change.

A true contributor responds to the human society and to the environment. One rises above the psyche of a survivor when one contributes something to the world. Living begins when one contributes something that will bring about more joy, more happiness more light and more freedom. Until then one is merely “getting by.” Just getting by is not really living. To live is to be a positive contributor. Seva work provides an avenue, an occasion, an opportunity for people to care for others and therefore to care for themselves. Something happens to a person when he or she is able to do something for someone else. It is not pride. It is something natural, an inner expansion that is an indication of growth because the essential nature of a human being is fullness, wholeness. This wholeness finds expression when one is able to help others one does not even know, except to know that

At AIM for Seva, caring for others is essential and the foundation for what the organization does. In fact, the concept of caring and giving is recognized and valued around the world. Even President Clinton initiated a powerful campaign of “giving” based on these principles. Indeed, even one caring person can make a difference in the world. What is unique about Swami Dayananda’s vision is the way in which these caring people, these contributors to society, do their work. Of course, the more they give of themselves, the more they grow; but what distinguishes this vision of caring is the concept of subhiksa. Subhiksa is another Sanskrit word that roughly translates as “to give help in such a way that the person helped is in a position to help others.” It is somewhat like the familiar ancient Chinese proverb *Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.* At AIM for Seva, it is not just teaching a person how to fish, it is teaching that person how to fish and empowering that person to teach others how to fish. AIM for Seva fosters caring and giving so that the recipients can in turn care and give. This is the power behind the movement.

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**Applying the Framework: The Vision**

Social entrepreneurs are reformers and revolutionaries. They make fundamental changes in the way things are done in the social sector. Instead of the traditional models used to combat poverty, this new vision is based on helping to transform the people living in poverty to become contributors to society. Social venture visions must be bold, go beyond the symptoms, and address the underlying problems in order to effect sustainable change in the world.

The next question is this: How do charismatic change agents with powerful visions adopt powerful missions and business models to create social value and, in the case of Swami Dayananda, transform an entire nation? In this next section, we will focus on the process of translating a global vision into a business model that is sustainable and scalable, with the infrastructure and organizational dynamics for significant social value.

**The Problem**

The process starts with a clear understanding and articulation of a problem. Either an unmet need or a persistent need is not being fully addressed. To adopt a mission and develop a sustainable model to
address the problem requires an in-depth understanding of the people, the politics, and the existing providers.

For example, when Swami Dayananda adopted the mission for AIM for Seva, he was acutely sensitive to the needs of Indian society. Having grown up in a small village in the Kaveri River delta, he understands and empathizes with people in rural areas. Swami Dayananda was struck by the fact that people living in rural areas suffer from a lack of education, health care, and job opportunities while those in urban areas experience the benefits of a growing economy. Instead of focusing on just one particular rural area or adopting a single mission to provide education or health care, Swami Dayananda turned his attention to the challenges his country was facing from a national perspective. The facts are quite compelling.

“Fueled by 8.6% a year growth, the world’s largest democracy is becoming a global power and the world will never be the same. . . . Even if you have never gone to India—never wrapped your food in a piping-hot naan or had your eyeballs singed by a Bollywood spectacular—there is a good chance you encounter some piece of it every day of your life. It might be the place you call (although you don’t know it) if your luggage is lost on a connecting flight, or the guys to whom your company has outsourced its data processing. Every night, young radiologists in Bangalore read CT scans e-mailed to them by emergency-room doctors in the U.S. Few modern Americans are surprised to find that their dentist or lawyer is of Indian origin, or are shocked to hear how vital Indians have been to California’s high-tech industry. In ways big and small, Indians are changing the world. That’s possible because India—the second most populous nation in the world and projected to be by 2015 the most populous—is itself being transformed.” (Michael Elliot, June 26, 2006, “India Awakens,” *Time*, 167(26), 36.)

Demographic evidence suggests that India’s economic boom will continue. About one third of India’s population is younger than the age of 15. Over the next five years, India will be responsible for nearly 25 percent of the increase in the world’s working-age population, according to an October 2007 World Bank report.

Yet while India is changing dramatically, the gap between the haves and the have-nots is widening. India’s 2001 census showed that 30 percent of the population lives on less than $1 a day and 78 percent lives on less than $2 a day. In 2004, 83 percent of Indian wage earners in the countryside earned less than 61,125 rupees a year, about $1,540, according to a new study by IIMS Dataworks, a New Delhi–based market research firm. By mid-2007, the number of working people aged 18–59 in the lowest-earning section of society had increased to 86.4 percent, the survey found. In contrast, the ranks of the lowest-paid workers in India’s urban areas fell to 73.2 percent of the working population from 79.5 percent three years earlier.
The gap is widening and so is India’s risk. With only 17 percent of Indians in their mid-20s and older having a secondary education, according to the World Bank, how will Indian companies and global companies seeking a presence in India find educated workers to drive economic growth?

According to Paul Beckett and Krishna Pokharel in New Delhi and Eric Bellman in Mumbai (The Wall Street Journal (Europe), November 27, 2007), “Education reform is crucial if the government wants to gain the benefit from its youthful population and not simply end up with more uneducated workers to employ. Change also is needed to meet the rising demands and aspirations of India’s own citizens, even the poorest of whom now view education as the ticket out of the slums or impoverished hamlets. The Indian government, economists and business leaders all have identified the need for better education, especially at the elementary and high-school levels.”

### Applying the Framework: The Problem

The magnitude of the problem has to be assessed. In for-profit ventures, we talk in terms of market demand, market potential, and the number of customers who will buy a product or service. In a social venture, the focus is on the number of people who are affected and the short- and long-term consequences of the problem from a global perspective. Most importantly, the social entrepreneur must determine the root cause of the problem and adopt a mission or a solution that reduces the need or eliminates the problem altogether.

### Developing Local and Global Solutions

The challenges are quite clear. But as a new breed of social entrepreneur, Swami Dayananda looks at the situation from a national and global perspective. He is not interested in acting locally; he is seeking a national solution that can be replicated globally. He states, “The key to India’s long-term economic growth and the growth of other developing nations is children. Providing the infrastructure support to help children grow to become contributors in society drives overall GDP. The need is obvious. We cannot just go into the rural villages and provide food and healthcare; our approach must be holistic. We must nurture, educate, and support the children to become valued employees and contributors to society. This is how we can solve the problem!”

AIM for Seva’s mission is to create a world of caring and compassion for underprivileged children from remote parts of the country to
make them feel loved and secure. Many of these children come from poor families, and some come from dysfunctional homes. As a result, they cannot afford the cost of education. Their homes are located in rural, tribal, or hill regions, which makes schools inaccessible to them. Moreover, poverty and lack of guidance force most of them into child labor. Through AIM for Seva, these children are provided basic amenities such as food, clothing, and shelter; a healthy and clean living environment; and a value-based education. Grounded in the principle of *subhiksa*, the objective of this movement is to help today’s children become responsible citizens of tomorrow and contribute to their family, society, and country.

Initiating the movement in India, Swami Dayananda is successfully harnessing a well-established value for service and duty, which is inherent in the Indian culture. AIM for Seva is transforming India child by child, district by district, state by state. The movement is about Indians helping Indians to become contributors, thereby bridging the economic gap between people so that India as a country can thrive and grow.

**The Social Venture Model**

AIM for Seva has developed a business model and is implementing innovative programs, organizational structures, and resource strategies around this basic principle of *seva*. This sustainable, holistic, and integrated business model is the basis for the organization’s ability to achieve deep, broad, lasting, and cost-effective social impact.

AIM for Seva’s social venture model is centered on building student homes (*chatralayas*) to transform the lives of less privileged children who live in rural and tribal areas. The strategy is for each *chatralaya* to be a nucleus around which an entire infrastructure will be built, serving the outlying communities. Specifically, these student homes serve as a hub for all AIM for Seva activities: education, health care, and women’s empowerment programs.

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**Applying the Framework: Developing a Local and Global Solution**

A social entrepreneur must develop solutions that are aligned with the cultural mind-set and values of the people engaged in the process of change. The solution must address the problem at its core and focus not only on the physical needs of the constituents being served but also on the human need to grow and become better. The solution must include innovative programs that are sustainable based on a holistic, iterative, and interconnected model of service delivery.

The following diagram illustrates this simple but powerful mission.
THE STORY OF A CHILD’S LIFE...

came under AIM for Seva’s shelter
and lives in a Chattralaya (Student Home).
Ramu studies in a local school

...AND HOW IT CHANGES WITH AIM FOR SEVA.

He is not very good in studies
He goes for vocational training
He gets a good job
He plans to go for higher studies

Ramu becomes an educated citizen of India
And helps in the development of our economy
Of self and family
He improves standard of living

Ramu and his family live happily ever after.
This holistic and integrated social venture model has propelled the organization to achieve a strong presence in 12 states, serving over 400,000 people in seven years. With 50 student homes as the nucleus, AIM for Seva is currently operating the following:

**Education**
- Provided 10 schools in four states, serving more than 10,000 children
- Provided 100 nursery schools and evening study centers for over 3,000 children in eight states

**Health Care**
- Provided seven health care centers in four states, serving over 80,000 patients
- Served over 16,000 patients in hospitals in three states
- Held medical camps in six states, serving over 17,000 patients

**Women’s Programs**
- Provided 250 self-help groups

**Disaster Relief**
- Served 131,000 people after the tsunami in 2003

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**Developing the Social Venture Model**
When we talk about business models in for-profit ventures, we talk in terms of how the venture will make money. Moreover, in for-profit
ventures, there are clearly defined criteria by which to evaluate a potential opportunity. Examples of for-profit opportunity evaluation criteria include a clearly defined, reachable, and receptive target; market potential of $100 million or more; an emerging and favorable industry structure; a high customer pain point or need/value for the product; and a recurring revenue potential. By contrast, in a social venture, the business model is focused on how to deliver services that are consistent with the social mission and that provide the greatest social value to clearly defined constituents. Clearly defined criteria upon which to evaluate the success and long-term viability of programs are essential to success. These criteria also drive the service delivery requirements and the day-to-day management of each program. In the case of AIM for Seva, the strategy for transforming India is based on building student homes and building an infrastructure around those student homes. The organization has developed criteria by which to evaluate, execute, and manage these homes as well as the infrastructure programs built around them. These criteria are critical to AIM for Seva’s success and provide insights upon which other ventures can model their organizations:

- Fully integrated value chain: Creating a value chain to maximize the benefits to all constituents
- Vision-based service delivery: Providing opportunities for constituents to become contributors while serving the basic needs of constituents
- Needs of constituents: Providing all necessities
- Scalable programs and initiatives: Implementing programs and initiatives that can be replicated across India

In the next section, we will provide an analysis of the AIM for SEVA social venture model, highlighting the three criteria upon which the organization chooses, implements, and manages its core activities: student homes, education, and health care.

**Student Homes**

Twenty years from now, India will address the same issues of poverty (80 percent of the Indian population living in rural areas earning less than $2 per day and an uneducated, unskilled labor force ill-equipped to provide the workforce needs of its corporate sector) unless today’s children are empowered to become tomorrow’s contributors. It is that simple. This is the rationale for the AIM for Seva mission and the basis for centering the movement on children.

Unlike primary schools, there is often only one secondary school for a group of 10–15 villages. The challenge for many of these students is that public transportation is rarely available, requiring students to walk five or more miles each day to go to school. By the time a child reaches the age of 12, economic pressure on the family forces the child
to drop out of school to pursue the most menial jobs to help feed the family. Mired by poverty and lack of support, most of these children are raised in dysfunctional homes that affect not only the child’s ability to get an education but also all other aspects of the child’s life. Under such circumstances, what are the chances of these children becoming responsible, employable wage-earning adults?

The central business model for AIM for Seva is to provide children living in remote areas access to education by bridging the distance between remote areas and available schools. AIM for Seva builds student homes, one for girls and one for boys, near an existing school. AIM for Seva’s student homes provide support to approximately 50 students per home. Each home provides food, clothing and shelter, including:

- All academic expenses—fee, books, notebooks, etc.
- Evening classes.
- Culture/value education.
- Sports and yoga.
- Picnics and pilgrimages.
- Daily routine, etiquette, and communication skills.

Boys at the Solan Student Home learn a variety of subjects, including science and computers.

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Boys and girls learn and play together; girls in Manjakkudi prepare for class.

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The goal is to build at least one chatralaya, or “home,” for students in each of the more than 800 districts in India.

**Fully Integrated Value Chain**

From the location, design, and construction of the building to the uniforms the children wear to their values classes, the students are provided a fully integrated value chain. Over the past seven years, AIM for Seva has established 50 student homes in 12 states. Based on an analysis of need and the availability of resources, AIM for Seva chooses a particular location to establish a student home. Swami Dayananda appoints one of his students to be the managing director of that home and to establish relationships with the people in the community. That student becomes the AIM for Seva leader and representative whose goal is to transform the community, leveraging the student home as the hub. The first step is to understand the challenges and capabilities of the people in the district and to create linkages to engage the community in the construction of the student home. The process begins with persuading parents to allow their children to live in the student homes so that the children have access to education. These parents are grateful for the opportunity because of the reputations of Swami Dayananda and the AIM for Seva organization.

The second step is to leverage the skills and abilities of the community to create income-generating opportunities by employing local people to help in the construction of the student home. Once the student home is built, AIM for Seva identifies local villagers and provides them with training and development to serve as the resident teachers for the schools. Another link in the value chain is formed by providing a villager with a well-paying and meaningful career. In addition, local women are trained in sewing techniques and provided with materials so that they can earn a respectable wage handcrafting the uniforms for 50 students. Through each step of the construction, management, and maintenance of the student home, a value chain is created to afford the community an opportunity for economic growth.

**Vision-Based Service Delivery**

The vision of AIM for Seva is what makes the organization unique. The concept of providing services to people in a way that empowers them to help others is what can transform a nation. Underlying all of the activities, programs, and services is the concept of *subhiksa*. For example, students are taught about the value of *seva* and *subhiksa*. Because the students are grateful that their basic needs are being met and that they have access to education, they embrace the concept of service and are committed to giving back. The resident teachers not only are trained to teach about values and service but also are taught how to facilitate interactions between students to give them opportunities to help others. For example, in the boys’ homes, the older boys...
support and care for the younger boys. The resident teacher facilitates opportunities for the older boys to embrace the concept of *subhiksa* in meaningful and memorable ways. In this way, before leaving the student home, each child has already experienced the joy of becoming a contributor by helping another child become a contributor. This is inherent in all of the AIM for Seva services.

**Needs of Constituents**

A key criterion for the development of programs is the ability to comprehensively address the constituents’ needs. Although a good start, it is not enough to provide homes near schools; all of the needs of a child must be addressed before that child can grow to become a contributor to society. Children are given the nurturing and support they need beginning at the age of 3 throughout their formative years up until the age they are ready to assume a responsible position in society. Focusing social programs based on long-term constituent support is the core of the AIM for Seva social venture model. An example of this concept follows.

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**Spotlight: The Village of Manjakkudi—A Profile**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati grew up in a small, remote village of Manjakkudi near Kumbakonam in the Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu, India’s southernmost state. Manjakkudi, surrounded by paddy fields and coconut trees, is on the banks of a canal that leads from the river. When Swami Dayananda was a child, only a temple, a few houses, huts, and a school made up the village of Manjakkudi. Today Swami Dayananda’s organization operates three government-aided schools, educating 5,200 students from ages 3–16 and a college for 1,000 students. In this small village, young children are nurtured, developed, and supported through young adulthood until they get their first job.

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**Scalable Programs and Initiatives**

Since building student homes near existing schools is the central focus of the AIM for Seva strategy to transform India, with only one secondary school for a group of 10–15 villages, there are not enough schools around which to build student homes. A needs-based analysis revealed certain districts within certain states that lacked secondary and higher education schools to provide rural children with the education and support they needed to engage in the mainstream economic structure. For its mission of empowering children to be scalable, AIM for Seva developed a partnership with the government to build new schools or manage existing ones. As the social venture model is centered on children and education, to achieve scalability, AIM for Seva is currently operating ten schools in four states, serving
more than 15,000 children including the village of Manjakkudi. In addition, the organization is managing 100 balwadis (nursery schools) and evening study centers for over 3,000 children in eight states.

### Applying the Framework:
The Social Venture Model

A social entrepreneur must develop a social venture model that focuses on the served constituent in a way that addresses long-term needs, that creates a value chain to broaden the impact to other members of the community, and that is grounded in the vision and mission of the organization. Creating programs based on these criteria, managing programs to achieve these desired results, and measuring the success and viability of services delivered based on these criteria are essential to achieving scalable and sustainable social impact.

### Resources

Integral components of the social entrepreneurial model are the resources and the unique ways in which social ventures must identify, gather, and marshal resources to achieve their mission. In for-profit ventures, the term *bootstrapping* is often used, which means being parsimonious with resources, “thinking cash last,” and starting the venture with limited resources. Literally, the term means pulling oneself up by the bootstraps with existing resources, people, and money until able to sustain oneself using the profit earned through the sale of a valued product or service.

In social ventures, the reality of acquiring and marshaling resources is more challenging. In this next section, we will focus first on the people that are AIM for Seva and then on the challenge of acquiring and allocating financial resources.

### The People

*Extraordinary, devoted, selfless, hard-working, and compassionate* are just a few of the words used to describe AIM for Seva’s management team, staff, and volunteers. Interestingly, these are many of the same adjectives used to describe their leader, Swami Dayananda. And that makes sense because the majority of AIM for Seva workers are students, former students, or people otherwise committed to Swami Dayananda. This devotion is an essential aspect of the AIM for Seva model. AIM for Seva has achieved significant social impact in 12
states in seven years because wherever the need is most compelling, Swami Dayananda has tapped into a worldwide network of supporters to answer the call. This is quite compelling because in most cases, AIM for Seva workers work for a nominal stipend and many work for no compensation at all, simply out of dedication to the vision. Doctors sacrifice time and well-paying jobs to provide health care in the mobile medical units. Former corporate, government, and military leaders have adopted the vision for transforming India and are committing their time, expertise, and resources to manage AIM for Seva projects. Swami Dayananda’s students, grounded in the principles of seva and subhiksa, are on the front line, actively addressing the needs of the communities.

Although all are committed to the vision, the challenge with such a diverse background of people is consistency in approach and style and, therefore, program delivery. A key area of focus for AIM for Seva is providing training and development for its people to maximize their effectiveness and overall personal growth and development.

**Sustainable Funding Strategies**

The challenge for many entrepreneurial ventures is funding. Most for-profits fund their ventures from the three Fs (friends, families, and fools), and some attract equity financing from high net worth individuals called angel investors. A few have a business model suitable for venture capital funding; but in all cases, it is about start-up and operating expenses through breakeven. For social ventures, funding strategies are more complex; and like most social ventures, AIM for Seva is challenged and is continuously testing new sustainable funding strategies. Currently, the model is based on forming partnerships with individual donors, specifically non-resident Indians (NRIs), corporations, and the Indian government in order to expand its reach and scope.

Specifically, AIM for Seva is engaged in ongoing fund-raising activities. The primary donor strategy is to focus on NRIs, Indians who have left India and succeeded in the United States or other countries. Because of the value of “giving” inherent in the Indian culture, these NRIs are committed to the AIM for Seva vision of subhiksa. Central to the AIM for Seva donor funding strategy is the commitment by donors not only to commit dollars but also to commit time and energy to the children. To that end, because of the charismatic leadership of Swami Dayananda and through outreach and fundraising efforts in India and through AIM for Seva in the United States, NRIs have funded the majority of the student homes over the last seven years. Besides funding construction of the student homes, they also have contributed to the ongoing operating expense of the homes. But with 50 student homes built in seven years, the challenge for AIM for Seva is sustainability.
Corporate Partnerships
As a social entrepreneur who exemplifies the behavior of recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities, Swami Dayananda is currently focusing his organization on forging partnerships with corporations. Indian corporations clearly see that their long-term growth is achievable only when there is a focus on India’s children.

Corporations such as Emirates Airlines are leaders among corporations in India that believe in the vision of subhiksa and are committed to investing in that vision. Emirates Airlines recently donated the land and built a student home in the village of Dharmapuri, a remote district on Tamil Nadu, and has committed ongoing operating expenses. In addition, Emirates Airlines features its AIM for Seva partnership on its in-flight video to motivate others to become contributors.

Tata Consulting Services, one of the leading employers in India, also has invested in the AIM for Seva vision. The company donated computers and other equipment to create state-of-the-art computer labs for AIM for Seva student homes in several districts in India.

Partnerships with corporate leaders such as Emirates Airlines and Tata Consulting Services are integral to the sustainability of AIM for Seva’s business model. The focus now is for these two companies to serve as role models for other companies. With their example, these companies can inspire other organizations to adopt student homes and take on the responsibility of funding the operating expenses as their subhiksa, their corporate social responsibility.

Government Relationship
“We work with the Indian Government and they trust us,” says Swami Dayananda. “The government knows that when they partner with us, they will achieve results.” As an NGO that has achieved Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, AIM for Seva is a preferred NGO partner to many social initiatives around the country. With programs in education, health care, and women’s empowerment, the Indian government relies on the proven AIM for Seva social venture model to deliver substantive social impact. Moreover, AIM for Seva is particularly attractive to the government because of AIM for Seva’s efficient utilization of its resources. It is considered exceptional among India’s NGOs that 82 percent of AIM for Seva’s funds are allocated to specific projects to support constituents and only 16 percent go toward administrative expenses and 2 percent are earmarked for other operating expenses. After the 2003 tsunami, AIM for Seva was among a few organizations that committed 100 percent of funds received to disaster relief efforts.

To illustrate how important marshaling of resources is to the success of the AIM for Seva mission, the following spotlight is provided.
To improve the public health care system in India, local governments are partnering with select NGOs to operate Community Health Centers (CHCs). To be eligible to undertake these responsibilities, an NGO must be a registered trust or society, have a minimum of 1 million rupees, have experience in the health sector, and have direct experience in administration. The government’s role is to provide specific terms of reference for the organization, to select the NGOs through district committees, to provide grants and funds to the organizations, and to monitor and evaluate daily activities. Because of AIM for Seva’s reputation and track record and its network of experienced and qualified supporters, Shamalaji Hospital, a 30-bed facility serving 100,000 people in 80 villages in Gujarat, where no other health care exists, was transferred to AIM for Seva by government order in 2002.

Dr. Haren Joshi, a 65-year-old vascular surgeon occupying the chair of surgery at Frankfurt Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recently returned to India to serve as Administrator/Director of the CHC on behalf of AIM for Seva. Well-qualified and experienced, Dr. Joshi began this project in 2003. Based on his experience and qualifications, the government of Gujarat gave this CHC to the AIM for Seva Trust, asking the organization to run it. Dr. Joshi’s motivation was to support Swami Dayananda’s vision and to serve the Indian community, especially the poor. According to Dr. Joshi, “When we took this CHC, it was run by the government and was in very bad shape with limited patient services, very poor maintenance. At present we have 100–125 inpatients, with at least 10 admissions daily.”

Applying the Framework: Resources

The key to acquiring resources to achieve a mission is relationships. The new breed of social entrepreneurs must have a charismatic leadership style to inspire people to do their best and to develop partnerships with corporations and governments in a way that adds value to everyone. Earning the trust of constituents is only one aspect of social entrepreneurship. The key success factors for any social venture model lie in earning the stakeholders’ trust of the mission, employees, volunteers, corporations, the government, other NGOs, and everyone else who is touched by or who can influence the ability to effect change. According to Heidi Neck, Assistant Professor at Babson College, “the current momentum around social entrepreneurship is exciting but the sustainability of ‘doing good’ can only be achieved if it delivers some type of value for those most involved. In other words, social ventures must deliver value for key stakeholders. What the value is and
Putting It All Together

It is clear from the AIM for Seva social venture model that everything in social entrepreneurship is connected, requiring a holistic approach where everything is interrelated and interdependent. This fact becomes obvious when talking to anyone associated with the AIM for Seva movement. It is the foundation for the fullest realization of the AIM for Seva vision, as seen in the village of Anaikatti near Coimbatore.

Leveraging existing infrastructure and relationships, AIM for Seva has transformed the district of Anaikatti. Anaikatti is home to one of the four educational institutes Swami Dayananda has established in the world for the study of Vedanta and Sanskrit. For over 20 years, Swami Dayananda has had a strong presence in the area and has developed an in-depth understanding of the needs of the 75,000 people who live in the surrounding villages. With resident Vedanta students ready to serve the vision and strong relationships with government officials, Anaikatti was a perfect area for fully executing the AIM for Seva social venture model. As such, the organization started with the development of student homes around which to support the comprehensive needs of the population. AIM for Seva is operating three tribal student homes, two for boys and one for girls, serving a total of 250 children. The next component of the model was development of the AIM for Seva hospital in Anaikatti. The 23-bed hospital has state-of-the-art technology and provides health care to over 500 people each week. AIM for Seva also operates a mobile medical van that provides treatment and dispenses medicine to the 83 tribal hamlets throughout the Anaikatti area. In addition, AIM for Seva is operating one of its most successful programs for the empowerment of women: women’s self-help groups, which is highlighted next.

Spotlight: Transforming the Village of Anaikatti through Women’s Self-Help Groups—A Case Study

As in many developing countries, women in India have been suppressed and neglected. As part of the vision to transform India, AIM for Seva has embraced the women’s self-help
movement as one of its core activities built around the student home hub. It is a vital spoke in the wheel of transformation of India. Specifically, women below the poverty line (BPL) are the target group of a government-sponsored program called Self-Help Groups (SHGs) that concentrates on the social mobilization of women by empowering them through education and economic opportunities. AIM for Seva, Anaikatti is approved by the Tamil Nadu Women’s Development Corporation to implement the SHG program in five local government agencies within the Coimbatore District. Because of its vision and the social venture model that drives it, the AIM for Seva organization is achieving significant results through 250 women’s SHGs. The next paragraph describes how they work.

The NGO establishes a relationship with the women in the villages and helps them form groups of 15–20—a small company, as it were. The women are instructed on how to establish bylaws, procedures, and codes of conduct and how to open a bank account. They are tasked with conducting weekly meetings, depositing money into their account on a weekly basis, and maintaining administrative records including a ledger and minutes of meetings. This progress is monitored for a period of six months. During that time, AIM for Seva partners with the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and the Women’s Development Corporation to collaborate on providing skills and entrepreneurship training and to help create a viable entrepreneurial income-generating opportunity that has an inherent and sustainable value chain. At the end of the six months, the SHG is evaluated by a committee consisting of representatives from various departments: the DRDA, the Women’s Development Corporation, the local bank, the Block Development Office, and the NGO. This committee reviews the performance of the SHG based on maintenance of its records and its savings history; if the SHG has been successful, it is recommended for a revolving loan in the amount of 25,000 rupees (10,000 rupees supported by the DRDA as interest-free and 15,000 provided by the bank with minimum interest). This amount is dispersed to group members, with interest, to help support the basic needs of the group. This continues for the next six months. During this time, the NGO is required to create awareness about various trades, helps the SHG select a trade, works on developing marketing relationship, and provides skill training to the SHG members.

Because of its vision-based approach to service delivery, AIM for Seva has developed unique opportunities for its women’s SHGs. AIM for Seva helps develop entrepreneurial income-generating opportunities based on the skill levels and interests of the women in the SHG, but also provides an opportunity based on the value of subhiksa. The ideal business model is not just one that creates income for the SHG; it also helps other SHGs earn income. A business model is developed with a forward- and backward-integrated value chain.

After one year, the SHG again is evaluated by the same committee based on the same savings, administrative, and group management criteria. If the group has been successful, it is recommended for an Economic Activity/Income Generating Activity Loan with a subsidy to launch the entrepreneurial venture.

One of the most successful business models is the 15 AIM for Seva SHGs that are engaged in milk production. Women members of various groups were motivated to rear cows for producing milk. The women acquired the cows through their respective group savings with financial assistance through bank loans. In addition, AIM for Seva has provided
interest-free loans and has donated over 70 cows since 2002 to provide more income-generating opportunities for the SHGs. To maximize the value chain, AIM for Seva has developed a business model in which the SHGs are divided into three milk societies: one for cow rearing and milk production, one for milk collection, and one for preparation of a milk-based candy (“milk sweet”). To maximize income for each society, AIM for Seva has formed an exclusive distribution relationship with Coimbatore District Co-Operative Milk Producers’ Union (AAVIN), Coimbatore, the state-owned Dairy Development Project for converting the milk into “milk sweet.”

The value chain is complete. Cow rearing is the first phase, milk collection is the second phase, and preparation of the “milk sweet” is the third phase. In all three phases of the value chain, each SHG member earns an average of 2,500–3,500 rupees per month, well above her “below poverty line” status prior to participation in the SHG.

The impact of the SHGs is significant. The women have been transformed from being poor women living below the poverty line to women in the process of enriching their lives and the lives of their children. They are empowered. They have learned to become free from debt, self-sufficient, and capable of providing for their family and contributing to their community.

**Applying the Framework: Putting It All Together**

The level of transformation that is taking place in Anaikatti is quite compelling and is an indication that the AIM for Seva vision and social venture model is working. It underscores the need for all social entrepreneurs to proactively and holistically address the core needs and requirement of their people. It is not enough to set up a school if jobs are not available. It is not enough to set up a hospital if most of the people can’t get there. It is not enough to raise a cow if there is no distribution channel to sell the milk. Today’s social entrepreneurs must tune in and fully address their constituents’ needs to achieve the results that are needed around the world.

**CONCLUSION**

In this module, we presented a new conceptual framework based on the dynamics of a pioneering social entrepreneur and his organization AIM for Seva. The power of this social entrepreneur lies in his ability to galvanize people around a vision of *seva*. With dedicated people around the world embracing the concept of “being better by becoming contributors in the world,” the potential of this movement is tremendous.
Swami Dayananda Saraswati’s vision is to replicate this social venture model around the world. In India, the movement is gaining momentum because Indians are helping Indians grow to become better human beings by becoming contributors to Indian society. “It is my hope that other developing nations will use the AIM for Seva social venture model as a catalyst for change in their countries. For example, in Brazil it can be Brazilians helping Brazilians, in Argentina it can be Argentineans helping Argentineans. Wherever the divide between the have and the have-not is increasing, this vision-based, need-focused and holistic service delivery model can transform people in a way that can transform an entire country.” (Swami Dayananda Saraswati, December 2007)

Social entrepreneurship must be nurtured if the world is to solve its growing problems. But the reality is that the greatest risk to social entrepreneurship today is the shortage of growth capital necessary to build the large number of organizations that can achieve major and visible success. It is a risk because social entrepreneurs need to be able to match the excitement and rising expectation they are generating with the financial resources to deliver. When the solutions are vision-based, needs-focused, and holistic in approach, there is an urgent need to fund these solutions.

When the greater global business community provides social entrepreneurs with the resources required to create and fund solutions to meet social and economic needs, it will become a powerful force in this new age of social entrepreneurship. Financial return on economic investment in the world’s underserved markets will be possible. Helping people lift themselves out of poverty will no longer be a wish, but a matter of installing a systematic set of processes from one country to the next.

In a speech at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2008 in Davos, Switzerland, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates summed it up: “We are living in a phenomenal age. If we can spend the early decades of the 21st century finding approaches that meet the needs of the poor in ways that generate profits and recognition for business, we will have found a sustainable way to reduce poverty in the world. This task is open-ended. It can never be finished. But a passionate effort to answer this challenge will help change the world.” (Retrieved March 4, 2008, from http://www.microsoft.com/Presspass/.)

**Discussion Questions**

Using the framework, what characteristics in the outer circle and which attributes do you think apply only to social entrepreneurs, that is, not to for-profit entrepreneurs?
1. Looking at the Social Entrepreneurship Framework, are there some characteristics in the outer circle (Visionary, Inspirational, etc.) that you think apply only to social entrepreneurs and not to traditional mainstream for-profit entrepreneurs? Explain your answer.

2. Imagine that you have finished your degree and are considering two job opportunities: a position working for a social entreprenuring organization and a parallel position working for a mainstream for-profit corporation. What factors would you take into account in deciding between the two?

3. Think of a social problem that affects your community and a way in which social entrepreneurship could be harnessed to address this problem. Using the Social Entrepreneurship Framework, describe how you would apply each portion of the framework toward solving the problem.