

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GUIDE



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM

DO GOOD THROUGH GOOD BUSINESS.

An introductory guide for students interested in setting up a social enterprise.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A social enterprise is a business that profits society with a social and/or environmental mission. If you have ever read the Big Issue, eaten a bar of Divine chocolate or taken a sip of Lemonaid, you already have supported the work of a social enterprise, and perhaps you were not even aware of it? These three enterprises all use their profits to benefit people.

The idea is to change the way we think about profit. Instead of mainly profiting a CEO and company shareholders, the profit is invested into a social cause that is embedded within the enterprise's operations and play a central role in the enterprise's vision statement. This means that a social enterprise's main focus is its social and/or environmental mission, rather than financial gain, and this challenges the way the world does business. The more people who chose to start up social enterprises, the more social and environmental issues can be addressed, and the simplicity of perceptions like 'charity is good' and 'business is bad' can be turned on its head.

WHY START UP A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Although the movement is still fairly young, with over 100,000 social enterprises registered in the UK it is clear that this is a growing industry, contributing £60 billion to the economy and employing over two million people.

By putting good values at the heart of business, we often see greater diversity within social enterprising. Women are far more prominent as founders and leaders; ethnic minorities hold greater significance; people of all abilities are welcome; and those who may have challenges of finding a place in society can find opportunities with a social enterprise.

“Social enterprises are businesses that are changing the world for the better. Like traditional businesses they aim to make a profit but it's what they do with their profits that sets them apart - reinvesting or donating them to create positive social change.”

- Social enterprise UK

ANYONE CAN START A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Woman Power!

40% of social enterprises are led by women.

Room for Everyone.

35% have Black Asian Minority Ethnic directors and 40% have a director with a disability.

Supporting our environment.

88% of social enterprises actively aim to minimise their negative impact on the environment, whilst 65% have an increased focus on sustainability and providing services and products that are friendly to the environment.

STUDENT-LED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

As part of our work at SOS-UK, we always aspire to introduce social enterprise ideas to universities and colleges across the UK. We have already worked with some incredible students and have been lucky enough to be part of their journey toward creating social and environmental change through social enterprise.

Since 2017, the Student Eats programme has supported students with developing growing sites, setting up food coops, preserve making enterprises or farmers' markets. In total 65 social food enterprises have been set up with a joint mission of providing healthy, ethical, and affordable food to students and local communities, whilst contributing to changing our current food system. These enterprises have achieved an amazing amount, and truly encapsulate all the great impacts of running and being part of a social enterprise.

Together, our student-led social enterprises have:

- Sold over £150,000 worth of sustainable food.
- Diverted 11.5 tonnes of food from landfill.
- Created, expanded and improved 58 food growing sites.
- Enabled over 3100 young people to improve their employability skills.
- Dedicated over 37,000 hours of time volunteering.

Starting up a social enterprise on campus can be an incredible force for change, and a great way to engage students, staff, and the local community with social action in a way that can benefit everyone involved. With more and more students growing and selling sustainable food, there are many opportunities to expand that impact further - across enterprise, community, wellbeing, education and sustainability.

Brief Guide for Starting Your Own Enterprise

Just like starting your own business, starting your own social enterprise can be a daunting task. Fortunately, since the main drive of social enterprising is to benefit society, there is a lot of support out there.

SOS-UK have created three handbooks with specific guidance on setting up a food enterprise on campus. These contain an easy guide on how to get started, useful information and a couple of inspirational case studies from our successful student-led enterprises.

Grow to Sell

Setting up a social enterprise selling fresh, campus grown produce can act as a great educational tool and community builder, whilst providing students with opportunities to develop their skills, as well as providing fresh and nutrient rich food to their community.

Preserve to Sell

Setting up a preserve making enterprise on campus can provide fun and engaging activities that everyone to take part in. Teach students about the ancient art of preserve making and basic cooking skills and spark conversations around the journey of food, seasonality, and food waste.

Cook to Sell

Setting up a social enterprise serving up delicious and nutritious food is a great way to bring people together share skills and engage people with food and its impact of our health and the environment.

In the UK, you also have [The School for Social Entrepreneurs](#) (SSE). Here you can find useful information and general guidance on where to start.

FUNDING

Trading is a central part of your income, but you may need to source additional funds to be able to sustain your enterprise, especially in the start up phase. This could include grants, crowd funding and/or sponsorships. Ask your students' union about how they can support you, or if they provide funding to set up a student enterprise society. Keep in mind however that as a social enterprise your main focus should be to be self-sustaining through business, rather than being supported via charitable donations.

CREATE A BUSINESS PLAN

You need to have some form of business plan to get your ideas down on paper. A Business Model Canvas is a great tool that can help you visualise how your enterprise will generate income, sell products etc. This will help your understanding of the different elements of running a business and build a framework that will support your enterprise journey.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING...

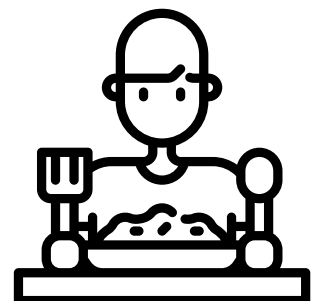
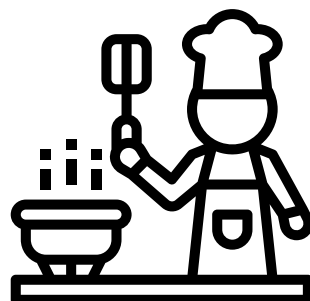
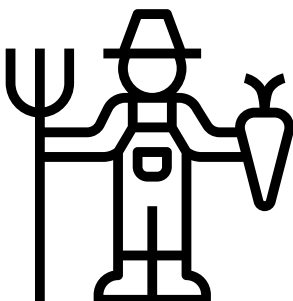
...is to start. It only takes one idea and a will for action, to become the beginning of something that can benefit a small community in a big way. The most important thing is to start, to give it a go and persevere.

Need more support?

Contact foodandfarming@sos-uk.org.

or

check out our training opportunities at the
[SOS-UK learning academy.](#)



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GUIDE

Since 2017 SOS-UK's Student Eats programme has worked with almost 80 student and staff groups to help them establish sustainable food social enterprises on campus. These have included zero waste shops/stalls, vegbox schemes, growing to sell and food preserving enterprises, pay-as-you-feel cafes, beekeeping and many more.

We have been working with universities and colleges across the UK to bring social enterprise ideas to life. These enterprises have changed their local food systems and encouraged students and staff to choose ethical, healthy and affordable food.

**SETTING UP A SUSTAINABLE FOOD ENTERPRISE IS GOOD FOR YOU,
GOOD FOR YOUR INSTITUTION, GOOD FOR YOUR COMMUNITY**

Sign up to our SOS-UK [Food and Farming newsletter](#) to receive news, updates and information of funding, opportunities, conferences and so much more to support your enterprise journey!

WWW.SOS-UK.ORG/project/food-and-farming



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM

