

# Social Enterprises and Poverty Alleviation

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**Course Code:** SPRn4485

**Course Title:** Social Enterprises and Poverty Alleviation

**Number of Credits:** 8 ECTS

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Compulsory/Optional:**

## Introduction

Poverty is undoubtedly one of the major causes of social exclusion in many countries, particularly developing countries, and eradicating poverty effectively has been a major challenge. Giving due importance to the problem, the MDGs (millennium development goals) have set the first priority to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger from the world. Though many societies have achieved impressive successes in poverty reduction during the last few decades, the Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 announced that over 836 million people in the world are still suffering from extreme poverty in 2015, with limited access to a decent living environment, clean drinking water, sufficient food and adequate housing and sanitation. Definitely, this situation would be further increased due to the economic crises generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation challenges the conventional state-driven efforts of poverty eradication such as providing subsidies, financial support and welfare programmes, while the social enterprise model gains recognition as an innovative method of poverty alleviation and socio-economic value creation in both developed and developing economies. The Social Enterprise Coalition defines social enterprises as "using commercial means to achieve social goals". Social enterprises, through their innovative business plans, aim to solve social problems and improve public welfare. Social enterprises exist in many economic sectors. In Europe, they are active in a wide spectrum of activities and in many different fields ranging from social and welfare services, poverty alleviation, education, housing, health, renewable energies, utilities, environment, culture and tourism. Thus, social enterprises do not pursue purely for their own profit maximization purposes. So, unlike traditional business enterprises, social enterprises are proven to play an important role in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges, fostering inclusive growth, increasing social cohesion, nurturing local social capital, supporting democratic participation and delivering good quality services.

In this background, this course is designed with the purpose that students will use the social entrepreneurship model to address society's most pressing social problems including poverty and unemployment. The aim of this course is to provide students with substantial knowledge about the concept of poverty and existing conventional strategies of poverty alleviation and equip them with the required intervention skills to help individuals, groups and communities to recognize community-level social enterprises through which they are capable of achieving self-progress.

## Intended Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, the students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept of poverty and the conventional strategies that aim at poverty alleviation

- Describe the change agent role of social enterprises in creating innovative responses to poverty alleviation
- Learn business and entrepreneurship skills to help build a sustainable business model that addresses societal problems.
- Explain the existing challenges, constraints and sustaining a social enterprise
- Conceptualize and develop a social enterprise model to alleviate poverty in a given context.

**Course content/Course Description:**

Concept of poverty, conventional strategies of poverty alleviation, Introduction to social innovation/entrepreneurship and change making, identification and developing a social enterprise, mainstream capital funding and poor, role of micro credits and managing credits, empowering women and youth social entrepreneurship, networking poor for creation of social enterprises, managing social enterprises, cross-sector partnerships (public, private, and/or non-profit institutions) and value creation for socio-economic change, Case studies of success stories; Grameen Bank and BRAC

**Method of delivery**

This course will use lectures, book/article reviews, case discussions, and student presentations to deliver the course content. Active class participation is essential; every student is requested to ask questions and actively participate in discussions/seminars on each topic.

**Course assessment**

In-course 50% (active participation in class-20%, social change group project-30%)  
 End Semester examination (Essay writing)- 50%

**Grading**

The following scale is used to determine final grades.

A	(85-100%)
B	(75-84%)
C	(65-74%)
D	(55-64%)
E	(Below 55%)

**Recommended readings**

Bornstein, D. and Davis, S. (2010). Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know by Susan Davis, Oxford University Press.

Gergen, C and Vaneuerek, G. (2011). Life Entrepreneurs: Ordinary People Creating Extraordinary Lives Wiley.

McGrath, R.G. and MacMillan, I.C. (2010). Making Social Ventures Work. Harvard Business Review, Boston, MA: Harvard University Publishing.

Shapiro, Ruth A. (2012). The Real Problem Solvers: Social Entrepreneurs in America. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wei-Skillern, J., Austin, J., Leonard, H., & Stevenson, H. (2007). Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector (ESS). Sage Publications

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