

## **Characteristics and Definition of Social Entrepreneur**

François Brouard, DBA, FCPA, FCA  
SCSE/CSES, Sprott School of Business, Carleton University

---

Brouard and Larivet (2010) have analyzed several definitions of social entrepreneurs to identify primary and secondary characteristics and to present a definition from those characteristics.

### **Characteristics**

Primary characteristics of Social entrepreneur (SE\_NEUR) are:

- (B1) SE\_NEUR is defined as an individual
- (B2) SE\_NEUR is a change agent and a leader with a vision for change
- (B3) SE\_NEUR tackles social problems
- (B4) SE\_NEUR wants to achieve social value creation and sustainability
- (B5) SE\_NEUR is more concerned with caring and helping than making money
- (B6) SE\_NEUR possesses an entrepreneurial spirit and personality (passionate, dedicated, persuasive)
- (B7) SE\_NEUR sees and recognizes new opportunities
- (B8) SE\_NEUR displays innovativeness and proactiveness

Secondary characteristics of Social entrepreneur (SE\_NEUR) are:

- (B9) SE\_NEUR may provide a blend of business and social principles
- (B10) SE\_NEUR may gather together the necessary resources
- (B11) SE\_NEUR may want to put new ideas into concrete transformational solutions
- (B12) SE\_NEUR may connect the economy (market forces) and the community
- (B13) SE\_NEUR may weight the social and financial return of each investment
- (B14) SE\_NEUR may display reasonable risk-taking propensity
- (B15) SE\_NEUR may be motivated by long-term interest
- (B16) SE\_NEUR may operate in all sectors

## Definition

Building upon these characteristics,

*Social entrepreneurs are any individuals who with their entrepreneurial spirit and personality will act as change agents and leaders to tackle social problems by recognizing new opportunities and finding innovative solutions; and are more concerned with creating social value than financial value.*

More information in:

Brouard, F., Larivet, S. (2010). «Essay of clarifications and definitions of the related concepts of Social Enterprise, Social Entrepreneur and Social Entrepreneurship», in Fayolle, A. and Matlay, H. (Ed.) *Handbook of Research in Social Entrepreneurship*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 352p. (Chapter 3 - p.29-56)