



# Social Entrepreneurship: A Needed Tool for Contemporary Community Development Education

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## Abstract

Community development education (CDE) can learn from the field of social entrepreneurship to catalyze transformational change in communities. Social entrepreneurship does not aim to incrementally improve unjust equilibriums, but aims to transform them into new and more just equilibriums. As CDE seeks to instruct students to address social, economic, and environmental change, social entrepreneurship supplies another tool for instructor, student, and professional toolkits to improve community well-being. This article begins by outlining fundamental concepts from the fields of community development and social entrepreneurship. Intersections in the respective literatures for each of the fields are then discussed. This article continues with aims to inform an emerging national research agenda for CDE. In that light, Martin and Osberg's (2015) social entrepreneurship process is presented alongside examples that can be used by students, instructors, and professionals in courses and in the field. Furthermore, the article highlights critical perspectives to help both fields get beyond better – to disrupt unjust social equilibriums.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurship education · Social enterprise · Community capitals · Sustainable livelihoods · Asset-based community development · Social innovation

## Introduction

How do we get beyond better? This is the foundational question of social entrepreneurship (Martin & Osberg, 2015), but is not readily apparent in community development education (CDE). Intrinsicly, CDE addresses social, economic, and environmental change, which are also at the heart of social entrepreneurship. Yet, both fields still have much to learn from each other. This perspective article contends social entrepreneurship offers CDE an effective language and tools for educators,

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students, and professionals to help community development get beyond better – to disrupt unjust social equilibriums.

Today, CDE heavily relies on concepts such as capitals, livelihoods, and resilience, as well as couples these concepts with overtly positive terms such as assets or sustainability. Often-taught frameworks, such as community capitals and sustainable livelihoods, are very comprehensible and useful tools for spurring change. Unfortunately, these frameworks remain limited in their capabilities to substantially address unjust social equilibriums (e.g., poverty, hunger, etc.). Thus, social entrepreneurship offers complementary approaches and tools to community development educators to help cultivate impactful future professionals and scholars.

This perspective article explores the intersections between community development and social entrepreneurship as expressed in the literature. Leveraging scholarship from both fields, crossovers between the two fields are discussed. Discussion is undertaken to address three out of the six aims of the (draft) national research agenda for CDE: (1) “Identify core competencies, curriculum and specializations for CDE” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2); (2) “Explore methods to position CDE to be more relevant to diverse audiences and actors” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2); and, “Examine and implement values and critical theories in CDE” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2).

The article begins by outlining concepts to be covered prior to identifying overlaps. The article finishes by returning to the three aims of the research agenda. Global examples of social entrepreneurship models for change are offered as well prior to the concluding remarks.

## Community Development: Outlining Concepts

Community development has been conceptualized as an ideology, process, program, and outcome (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). Community has also been conceptualized as solidarity (Bhattacharyya, 2004) including individuals bound by place, interest, and identity, among others. Development is seen as agency (Bhattacharyya, 2004) and empowerment (De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998) for/among the community. Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2012) summarize the concepts together well: “Community development ... allows people to establish ways to create the community they want to live in” (p. 297). Thus, community development empowers individuals to strive for better and just economic, social, and environmental equilibriums.

Community development as a field has shifted away from only leveraging needs-based approaches to focus more on community assets, which is also expressed in CDE (Block, 2009; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; McKnight & Block, 2010; Missingham, 2017). Asset-based approaches strive for inclusive public participation of community members (Pstross et al., 2014; Talmage & Knopf, 2017). Through participative processes focused on assets, community members are seen as the experts and agents of change; this thinking runs contrary to many needs-based approaches relying on the interventions of outside experts (Nel, 2018; Pstross et al., 2014). Asset-based approaches strive to enable self/community empowerment as well as autonomy away from potential dependencies on organizations for care and community well-being (Nel, 2018). Frameworks like

community capitals, sustainable livelihoods, and others inspired from them (e.g., community resilience frameworks, see Cafer et al., 2019) strive to promote social justice and equity (Cafer et al., 2019). While they have positive aims, asset-based approaches focused on livelihoods and capitals have received well-deserved critiques for capitulating to and reinforcing neoliberal thinking (Aimers & Walker, 2016; MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014).

As noted, two asset-focused frameworks are popular in CDE: (1) the community capitals framework; and, (2) the sustainable livelihoods framework. The community capitals framework outlines multiple intertwined asset categories called *capitals* (Emery & Flora, 2006; Gutierrez-Montes et al., 2009; Pigg et al., 2013). The human-focused domains of the capitals include social, political, human, and cultural forms, while the material-focused domains include natural, built, and financial forms of capital (Dale & Newman, 2010; Pitzer & Streeter, 2015).

The community capitals framework offers CDE students, who will become future scholars and practitioners, a measurement approach and discussion platform to explore the assets of communities. The framework becomes limited if the interlocked nuances of the capitals are overlooked. Additionally, the different forms of capital can be inappropriately collapsed into checkboxes like many related approaches, such as triple bottom line approaches (Elkington, 2018). Finally, students must understand that capital is not inherently positive. For example, too much bonding social capital may be expressed in white supremacy groups, drug cartels/gangs, and mob/mafia organizations (Agnitsch et al., 2006; Flores et al., 2013).

The sustainable livelihoods framework leverages *all* community members as experts and aims to be especially inclusive of the poor and often-marginalized individuals/groups (e.g., women, older adults, youth, ethnic/religious minorities, LGBTQIA + individuals, among others) in community development processes and programs. The emphasis on *all* is poignant and forefront, so that community development outcomes positively impact *all* residents rather than reifying the already high well-being of community elites. The sustainable livelihoods approach does not only focus on bolstering assets but also on building community resilience to rebound from shocks and stresses to community systems, which impact individual and community well-being as well (Gutierrez-Montes et al., 2009; Moser, 2008; Nel, 2015).

This approach may not be the boon it aims to be. The approach can be undermined by institutional limitations, mismanagement, and corruption, pressures from the elites to maintain their wealth and power, and social prejudices that create access barriers to even basic community resources, such as clean water or food (Jackson, 2020). In this light, competition may also ensue regarding perceptions of one's livelihood compared to another, as well competing claims on particular community resources may persist for generations. Thus, while the approach focuses on assets, the livelihoods focus can be seen as needs-focused, without an intentional community-focused mindset built into processes, planned outcomes, and community member motivations.

## Social Entrepreneurship: Outlining Concepts

*“For social entrepreneurs, simply making things better isn’t good enough. They imagine the future as it should be, and they ask “Why not?” Then they*

*get to work, determined with every stride forward, with every inevitable setback, to get beyond better”* (Martin & Osberg, 2015, p. 199).

Borrowing from the literature on economic development, social entrepreneurship can be conceptualized as the shifting of social equilibriums (Light, 2008; Martin & Osberg, 2015). The concept of social equilibrium borrows from economic equilibrium language (e.g., where supply meets demand) to unearth the forces at play in social systems (Fararo, 1993; Martin & Osberg, 2015). Social equilibriums have actors and institutions that have various levels of control of and interests in community resources/capitals (Fararo, 1993; Martin & Osberg, 2015). Like economic equilibriums, social equilibriums have macro- and micro-expressions (see Table 1). Unfortunately, few scholars have directly connected social equilibriums and community well-being as related concepts (e.g., Maclean et al., 2012; Tonon, 2012).

Equilibrium shifts can vary from small to large, disruptive or balancing, and positive to negative (Shockley & Frank, 2011; Talmage & Gassert, 2020; Talmage et al., 2019a). These shifts result from pattern-breaking ideas that can even move the most intractable unjust social equilibriums (Light, 2008; Martin & Osberg, 2007, 2015). In this light, social entrepreneurship is not to be diluted by including any and all actions of social change. Simply helping communities get by or get a little better is not good enough. Social entrepreneurship is transformational and systematic change; social entrepreneurship is about getting beyond better (Martin & Osberg, 2007, 2015).

Unjust social equilibriums are pervasive. Poverty, food insecurity, climate injustice, human trafficking, pollution, barriers to quality mental and physical health care, and many other intractable social problems persist across the world, lowering the well-being of communities. The roles of social entrepreneurs are to first identify unjust social equilibriums and then leverage pattern-breaking ideas to create new equilibriums with substantially higher levels of well-being for communities (Martin & Osberg, 2007, 2015). These ideas are implemented utilizing a variety of strategies spanning nonprofit, for-profit, public, and other enterprise sectors/forms (Dees & Anderson, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2015; Peredo & McLean, 2006). The social entrepreneur, also called a changemaker, aims to create a measurable and scalable blueprint for other communities who bear unjust social equilibriums needing meaningful change (Bornstein, 2007; Drayton, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2015).

As the scholarly field of social entrepreneurship began to coalesce, two schools emerged: (1) the social innovation school; and, (2) the social enterprise school. In

**Table 1** Example macro- and micro-expressions of social equilibriums

Macro-social equilibriums	Micro-social equilibriums
World hunger	Food insecurity, deserts, and swamps
Climate change	Local drought and threats to agriculture
Global unrest	Migration and refugee resettlement
Pandemics and health care disparity	Health care access, choice, and affordability
Economic collapse	Poverty, unemployment, and housing insecurity

overly simplistic terms, the social innovation school focuses on groundbreaking ways to address social issues, while the social enterprise school focuses on applying earned-income generation strategies (e.g., for-profit) to fund social missions. The social enterprise school can include nonprofits exploring new revenue sources to supplement/replace dependence on philanthropic and grant funding. The social enterprise school can also include for-profit enterprises with social overlays. For social enterprise, social impact need not be large-scale shifts in equilibriums (Dees & Anderson, 2006).

Social innovation's definition parallels the definitions of community development compared to social enterprise. Cahill (2010) notes: "Social innovation is an initiative, product, process, or program that profoundly changes the basic routines, resource, and authority flows or beliefs of any social system (e.g., individuals, organizations, neighbourhoods, communities, whole societies)" (p. 259). Transformational change of systems is the primary focus of the social innovation school (Dees & Anderson, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2015). The most notable example of social innovation is the global microfinance revolution, exemplified by Muhammad Yunus (He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006) and his Grameen family of ventures. Another well-known example is the Barefoot College begun by Bunker Roy. Such transformation is not as prevalent as social enterprise. Bornstein (2007), Martin and Osberg (2015), Ashoka (Ashoka.org), and the Skoll Foundation (Skoll.org) have collected and uplifted examples to draw on in classrooms and workshops. Still, searching for social innovation often requires looking outside of traditional sectors and institutions to find restless people in communities who understood their unjust equilibriums and thus catalyzed change (Bornstein, 2007; Martin & Osberg, 2015). For the purposes of this article, the social innovation school holds greater promise today for CDE as it relates to consequential changes in community well-being. The social enterprise school retains its merits as a tool for the community development toolkit alongside other economic development strategies (e.g., Dahlstrom, & Talmage, 2018), but it has not brought forth revolutionary shifts that substantially impact community well-being on a grand scale.

More recently, scholars have questioned the inherent positive assumptions about social entrepreneurship's impact on community well-being (Ashdown et al., 2020; Talmage & Gassert, 2020). For example, drug cartels have both social and economic missions as well as ethical and moral codes (Canales, 2013). Additionally, many vaping (i.e., e-cigarette) companies touted social value propositions to end tar-filled cigarette smoking; however, their practices led to a new generation of tobacco users who might have otherwise never touched a cigarette (Talmage & Gassert, 2020). In a recent article in a special issue of *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, Talmage and Gassert (2020) elucidated key themes related to the more nuanced or dark side forms of (social) entrepreneurship. Particularly, they highlight that harm to well-being can occur despite good intentions. Critical perspectives are needed to examine the relationships between power, intentions, and harm when enacting social and economic change. Across the special issue on unsettling entrepreneurship education, calls were made for more critical perspectives across the field of entrepreneurship in order to better educational practice (Berglund et al., 2020). Furthermore, critical perspectives push scholars and students to not see the entrepreneur as hero or

sole driver of development (Jones & Spicer, 2009; Talmage & Gassert, 2020); community development has already done well in that regard. Thus, this article aims to unsettle CDE by pushing for greater inclusion of social entrepreneurship in the field of study.

## Overlaps in the Literature

Entrepreneurship matters to community development and vice versa (Lyons, 2015). Both have often overlapped in each of the respective bodies of literature; however, they do not cross consistently. A brief look at *Community Development: The Journal of the Community Development Society* reveals high popularity of crossover in 2004 and 2015 when the journal hosted two special issues on entrepreneurship (Bradshaw, 2004; Fortunato & Alter, 2015). Other crossovers have been more sporadic (e.g., Dahlstrom, & Talmage, 2018; Sharp & Flora, 1999). At the time of this writing, the still young journal of *International Journal of Community Well-Being* has published three articles concerning entrepreneurship (McCunn et al., 2020; Musikanski et al., 2019; Talmage et al., 2019b); none of which have directly speak directly to social entrepreneurship. The lack of overlap is unfortunate for CDE; students are not being provided with strong access to literature on social entrepreneurship.

Perhaps, community development has not been able to contend with economic development in the entrepreneurship literature, or it has not been able to gain a unique foothold. Community development can easily be seen as a process that intertwines social and economic equilibriums. For example, entrepreneurship literature containing community development often concerns building small, social purpose, and community-based enterprises (Spilling, 2011; Torri, 2010; Wallace, 1999; Young, 2006). Notably, the entrepreneurship literature appears more focused on for-profit revenue modalities to fulfill social missions (i.e., the social enterprise school) than social innovation (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020). This focus on the financial benefits of social enterprise is also prevalent in the literature on community capitals (Emery & Flora, 2006) and livelihoods (Khan & Jackson, 2004; Torri, 2010). Again, these overlaps are historically rooted in neoliberal values and thinking prevalent across both fields.

Arguably, community development's greatest contribution to the entrepreneurship literature arguably may be its intentional focuses on the engagement and inclusion of all community members in development efforts (e.g., Eversole et al., 2014; Kolawole & Ajila, 2015; O'Shea & Alonso, 2013). Entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship also can be tools for capacity building in communities, decreasing reliance on outside experts (Korsching & Allen, 2004). Also, comingling social entrepreneurship and community development may help expand both beyond market-based and solidarity-based paradigms found in the respective fields (Burkett, 2011; Sievers, 2016). Innovation in community development theory and practice is required alongside critical perspectives of innovation in the community development context.

A cursory scan of the overlapping literature will reveal a notable gap. What appears underrepresented is an explicit focus on innovation in community

development drawing on social entrepreneurship. Exceptions exist in the community development literature, but these examples are generally case studies that cannot or are not intended to scale (e.g., Schmidt et al., 2011; Talmage et al., 2020a, b). This begs the question: Is CDE today under-resourced in skills and knowledge, confining its examples to micro-community and enterprise level interventions when teaching future CD professionals?

## Informing the CDE Agenda with Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship consists of uniquely human behaviors and qualities that can be refined and taught (Thompson, 2002). Social entrepreneurs are changing the world and have been for a long time (PBS NewsHour, 2015; Roberts & Woods, 2005). Roberts and Woods (2005) aptly note: “The title of ‘social entrepreneur’ may be new, but these people have always been with us, even if we did not call them by such a label” (p. 48). These individuals likely have been a part of community development, but their stories were not captured for use in CDE. Therefore, social entrepreneurship can help CDE “identify core competencies, curriculum and specializations” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2).

Social entrepreneurship should not be considered a subfield of or specialization for community development. Still, various students, scholars, teachers, professionals, and practitioners may find themselves stronger or in need of development regarding different parts of its processes to increase community well-being. Critical perspectives on processes and impacts are also needed in CDE to avoid naively and overly heralding social entrepreneurship as only a force for positive social change (Talmage & Gassert, 2020; Talmage et al., 2019a). The social entrepreneur does not easily enact these shifts in a vacuum or alone; they catalyze and inspire change. Martin and Osberg (2015) write, “When an equilibrium is sustained by conventions practiced broadly across a society, it will not shift unless a critical mass of people across multiple communities commits to the change” (p. 103). Such notions ring true to the need for social entrepreneurship processes in CDE and communities today.

Martin and Osberg (2015) have uncovered four recognizable processes/milestones for shifting unjust social equilibriums that social entrepreneurs leverage for change: (1) understanding the world; (2) envisioning a new future; (3) building a model for change; and (4) scaling the solution. These four can be considered important competencies that can be infused into CDE curriculums to improve students’ capabilities to positively shift equilibriums to improve community well-being. While there are other processes (e.g., Thompson, 2002), Martin and Osberg (2015) in their book *Getting Beyond Better* offer tangible examples of pattern-breaking ideas that have led to scalable models for meaningfully shifting unjust social equilibriums. Educators are also pointed to Bornstein’s (2007) *How to Change the World* and the Skoll Foundation’s YouTube channel. Links to examples are provided for use in CDE programs.



## Understanding the World

The renowned innovation scholar Von Hippel (2006), in his case for democratizing innovation, noted that a substantial amount of innovation results from dissatisfied users. Relatedly, social entrepreneurs do not sit by and acquiesce to unjust social equilibriums. They first must understand the many facets of those unjust equilibriums building social inertia before taking any explicit actions towards change. Social entrepreneurs must be willing to question assumptions in their pursuit of understanding (Martin & Osberg, 2015).

Martin and Osberg (2015) note three tensions that social entrepreneurs must balance. First, they must abhor the unjust equilibrium, whilst also appreciating how it came to be. Those benefiting from unjust equilibriums are the least likely to spur change. The many forces, threads, and/or processes that led to injustice must be identified to meaningfully change them. Second, social entrepreneurs must balance expertise with apprenticeship. They must acknowledge what they know and not yet know about the community and unjust equilibrium. They must learn from others in the community while also leaning on their own talents and expertise. Third, the social entrepreneur must balance experimentation and commitment. They experiment with different possibilities for change, but eventually must commit to what they come to believe will work. For an example to use in a course or program, readers are pointed to Tostan, an organization founded by Molly Melching that has disrupted female genital cutting and other equilibriums in North and West African countries through community empowerment programs (Skoll.org, 2013).

## Envisioning a New Future

Community visioning has long been a part of CDE along with other skills located between community building and community mobilization (Hsia, 2020; McGrath, 2015). For social entrepreneurship, visioning for mobilization is not for “moving the needle” but for crafting a new and more just equilibrium (Martin & Osberg, 2015). New equilibriums need not require paradigm shifts, but require substantial changes in the social systems of communities.

Riders for Health in The Gambia provides an excellent example for CDE classrooms regarding how a vision of a new future led to greater access to quality health care for millions of individuals, subsequently increasing community health and well-being (Skoll.org, 2011). The social entrepreneurs behind Riders for Health recognized large disparities regarding access to health care, especially among The Gambia’s rural communities. Ambulances and health care vehicles continued to be purchased by The Gambian government, but they continued to break down, impeding delivery of needed services. Riders for Health coalesced a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that commissioned a fleet of motorbikes (and later other vehicles) that it would maintain (not The Gambian government). These motorbikes were deployed to provide care for individuals who were in need across the country. The new social equilibrium shifted by Riders for Health showcased care for individuals



who were neglected in the previous social equilibrium as well as engagement with multiple stakeholders such as financial institutions, governments, and other organizations in new ways, reconfiguring a significant part of the country's health care system (Skoll.org, 2011).

Martin and Osberg (2015) hold two requirements for visions for new futures. First, they must be systemic and focused. Constituents (hopefully, those marginalized) will be targeted to benefit from the new equilibrium while other actors will need to be accounted for and understood. The beneficiaries targeted are not static. As improvements are made for some, improvements need to be made for all. Helping only some of those impoverished does not eliminate poverty. This sort of visioning helps address the second aim of the national research agenda for CDE – “Explore methods to position CDE to be more relevant to diverse audiences and actors” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2) – by not halting impact when a single audience is served.

Second, the new equilibrium must be well-articulated, compelling, and sustainable to gain buy-in and transform the social system. This future state must not be an incremental improvement (i.e., better); it must be substantially superior (i.e., beyond better). Outcomes of the social entrepreneurship process must be explicitly new and specific. Still, the shared vision of a future state must be adaptable regarding methods and actors involved in the pursuit of the vision. Martin and Osberg (2015) write, “A vision is not something to be changed lightly. But social entrepreneurs show remarkable versatility in adapting the way they deliver on their visions” (p. 121). Again, the second aim of the CDE national research agenda applies, as new actors must be included when visioning and enacting transformation change.

## Building a Model for Change

Is CDE stunted? CDE needs to be identifying and showcasing all the tools available for transformational change in communities. Traditional “tried and true” methods sometimes are not effective at addressing intractable complex social issues. Powerful models for change are needed, and Martin and Osberg (2015) have identified several models that social entrepreneurs have leveraged. Their models borrow from public sector and private sector practices. While their categories are not encompassing of all possibilities, they have identified value-based mechanisms towards greater community well-being focused on expanding value and/or lowering costs.

Table 2 contains a summary of Martin and Osberg's (2015) mechanisms (they also call levers) for change. The table also contains examples of organizations that have demonstrated the utility of these models. Links to videos about the organizations are found in the reference list. These mechanisms aid the second aim CDE national research agenda by providing new methods for students to explore. Notably, multiple mechanisms are often needed for transformational change (Martin & Osberg, 2015). Many of these approaches borrow from economic-based models, such as input substitution, but how social entrepreneurs leverage these mechanisms are particularly unique as seen in the examples provided.

**Table 2** Seven value-based mechanisms for change with examples

Mechanisms	Definitions (adapted from Martin & Osberg, 2015)	Examples
<b>Value Enhancement</b>		
Transparency Standard	A transparency standard is introduced that increases the perceived value of a good/service, so individuals are willing to pay more for the good/service	GoodWeave – Rugs without Child Labor (GoodWeave USA, 2010)
Measurement Rubric	Government action, willingness to pay, and investment are increased through the addition of a measurement rubric, which communicates value to government leaders	Pratham – Annual Status of Education Report and Read India (Brookings Institution, 2016)
Powerful Methodology	An existing asset is leveraged to generate more value through a new powerful methodology	One Acre Fund – Improving Land Use by Smallholder Farmers (One Acre Fund, 2015)
<b>Cost Diminution</b>		
Borrow an Asset	Assets used and produced by others for another particular purpose are repurposed for social aims	Imazon – Using NASA Satellites to Detect Deforestation (Skoll.org, 2012)
Investing in a Platform	To address issues with scale, a platform is constructed to decrease operating costs when ramping up	Kiva – Web-based Micro-lending Platform (Kiva, 2016)
Substitute Lower Cost Labor	Appropriately sourcing lower cost labor to reduce operating costs	APOPO – Using Rats to Detect Landmines (DW News, 2009)
Create a Low-Cost Product or Service	Equilibrium is shift created by the entrant of a substantially less expensive product or service that was not previously viable, feasible, or sustainable	Proximity Designs – Empathetic Designs for Rice Farmers (Skoll.org, 2015)

## Scaling the Solution

Social innovation should not be measured by organizational size, but how impact scales. For some social enterprises this poses a conundrum as they service at least two bottom lines (i.e., economic and social). Impact is judged by the shift or disruption in the previous equilibrium to a new equilibrium. Martin and Osberg (2015) note both processes and outcomes must be measured: “How that change rippled through the society and how it was secured” (p. 167). To scale impact, open-source rather than proprietary methods may be necessary. As a reminder, profit is not the concern of social innovation. Still, costs must decrease as scale increases, while still maintaining high value for new and current actors in the social system. Again, the second aim of the CDE agenda resonates regarding being relevant to diverse actors and audiences.

The model(s) used for change must be documented as well (Martin & Osberg, 2015). Bornstein (2007) uses the term blueprint copying to describe the importance of documentation. Three documented examples are useful for CDE when addressing scale. First, CDE can draw on the work of Partners for Health, specifically in Malawi on addressing intersectional issues of HIV/AIDS, poverty, and remote living (RuniTravel, 2011a, b). Second, the New Teacher Center founded by Ellen Moir has helped increase new teacher retention and decrease turnover (Teach Movie, 2014). Finally, the Campaign for Female Education (Camfed) has shifted education for girls in African nations by addressing cultural and social factors such as poverty (Skoll.org, 2009).

## Critical Perspectives

As contended, social entrepreneurship, specifically the social innovation school, has much to offer CDE. The examples and processes presented have led to substantial change in well-being for communities across the world. Like the community capitals and sustainable livelihoods frameworks, social entrepreneurship processes are also limited and require critical examination. The relationships between power structures, entrepreneurial intentions, and potentials for harm must all be considered when attempting to shift equilibriums. Shifting equilibriums is not easy; there are ample opportunities for error and failure across the Martin and Osberg’s (2015) four processes.

Cautions are offered in order to speak to the third aim of the CDE agenda: “Examine and implement values and critical theories in CDE” (CDHEC, 2019, para 2). To date, no unilateral set of community development values exist; however, the Community Development Society (CDS) holds Principles of Good Practice and the International Association for Community Development (IACD) has international standards and an accreditation process.<sup>1</sup> Critical perspectives may help scholars,

<sup>1</sup> CDS: <https://www.comm-dev.org/about/principles-of-good-practice>; IACD: <https://www.iacdglobal.org/international-standards-accreditation/>

practitioners, teachers, and students examine the values these professional organizations showcase as well as generate new values as society evolves. Aptly, scholars have called for greater inclusion of critical theory to inform CDE (e.g., Noguchi, 2017). Critical perspectives help students question the role of elites in development and social change (Giridharadas, 2018). Critical perspectives question the role, motives, values, and processes of the entrepreneur (or developer) and the outcomes of their enterprises (Talmage & Gassert, 2020).

Talmage and Gassert (2020) note that unintended negative consequences can result from the best intentions. Also, failure of social entrepreneurs and their enterprises to achieve new and just social equilibriums for all community members can result. Additionally, forfeits, shortcuts, and concessions can occur even among the best efforts to achieve social good, thus bolstering irresponsible behavior, corruption, and exploitation in communities (Talmage & Gassert, 2020).

Microfinance presents a prime example regarding the need for critical perspectives on social entrepreneurship. First, critical perspectives help question the aims of microfinance: (1) help build individual capacity withing unjust financial systems or (2) challenge and reconfigure unjust financial systems (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003)? Microfinance programs can often leave the poorest of the poor behind (Mahmud, 2008). In some communities, microfinance initiatives aimed to improve the economic well-being of the poor have led to aggressive lending practices and the reinforcement of unjust social structures (Karim, 2008; Seremani, 2013). Finally, microfinance programs can be bottom-up, community-driven, but is microfinance as empowering when it is encouraged by outsiders or NGO-driven (Morais & Ahmad, 2011)?

Social entrepreneurship can be considered a form of international aid. Many social entrepreneurs are not indigenous to the communities they help. Ashdown et al. (2020) note concerns about outsiders reinforcing the White Savior Industrial Complex through helping actions, which can erode cultural capital to improve local community well-being. CDE, drawing on critical perspectives on social entrepreneurship, should caution students to consider how increasing one or more forms of community capital may come at the cost of others.

Finally, critical perspectives question notions of social entrepreneurs as heroes. It is easy for students to herald entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are prevalent in the media, and social entrepreneurs are being recognized more frequently thanks to the works of authors such as Bornstein (2007) and Martin and Osberg (2015) and organizations like Ashoka and the Skoll Foundation. Critical perspectives help students recognize social entrepreneurs as the instruments of change (i.e., changemakers) and scalable enterprises as the realized forces of equilibrium shifts. As social entrepreneurship gets infused into CDE, it may be hard to distinguish between when an individual is acting as community developer or as social entrepreneur. What has been laid out in this article contends that critical perspectives suggest that the need for such distinction may be ego-driven by the individual wrestling with their own role as a changemaker. If a definition is required, a place to unearth a distinction between community developer and social entrepreneur may be found in the assumptions named at the article's outset. Social entrepreneurship requires substantial shifts

in social equilibriums not incremental improvements; thus, social entrepreneurs play substantial roles in the enterprises of such large equilibrium shifts.

## Concluding Remarks

*“Yes, the world can get beyond better – and social entrepreneurs prove it’s possible”* (Martin & Osberg, 2015, p. 200).

Both community development and entrepreneurship are relatively new educational fields. Entrepreneurship has been taught since the late forties (Hébert & Link, 2009). The Community Development Society codified community development as a field of research and practice in 1969. In just over thirty years, social entrepreneurship has risen in prominence to contend as its own field of research and practice (Martin & Osberg, 2015). It is far time that these fields found greater intersection in order to advance CDE and social entrepreneurship education to substantially improve well-being of communities across the world.

This perspective article aimed to enhance CDE and advance the CDE national research agenda by conveying how social entrepreneurship is a complementary approach to current CDE scholarship and practice. The concept of social equilibrium is also scant in the community development and community well-being literature. This article is only a small taste of the field of social entrepreneurship. Examples from across the globe were provided for educators, students, and professionals for future use. Again, while Martin and Osberg (2015) have provided the most robust model for social entrepreneurship practice, critical perspectives remain needed to prevent harm. It is time that CDE and social entrepreneurship education overlap in order to inspire a new generation of students, scholars, and professionals to get beyond better.

## Declarations

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