



## Social Enterprise Program

Rethinking plastic through social entrepreneurial innovation.

“The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.”  
-Robert Swan OBE

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# Rethink Plastic through Social Entrepreneurial Innovation

Plastic is integrated into almost every aspect of our lives. Plastic is wonderful because it is versatile and durable. Unfortunately, plastic does not naturally decompose or biodegrade. We believe that plastic pollution is a consequence of a global disposable lifestyle. We buy products, like water bottles, sodas and snack-food packs without considering the environmental cost. We once thought that we could use these plastic products once and throw them away without causing harm to humans and animals. We now know this is untrue!

You can help save the environment by creating innovative change. With a little imagination and creativity, you can develop solutions that make a big difference.

We aim to bring together young entrepreneurs like you, to solve the plastic problems with corporations, influencers, and strategic innovators.

## **What is a social entrepreneur?**

A person who establishes an enterprise with the aim of solving social problems or effecting social change. Anyone can be a social entrepreneur provided they have an understanding of the social problem, a method for generating a solution, a business/sustainability plan, and an action plan.

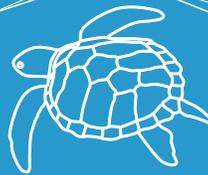
## **What is a social problem?**

A social problem is an undesirable social condition that affects many people in a society. Homelessness, drug addiction, and environmental pollution are examples of typical social problems.



### **PLASTIC POLLUTION**

is a global social issue that impacts both our ocean and our health.



### **8 MILLION TONS**

of plastic waste enter our oceans every year.



### **50% OF ALL PLASTIC**

we produce is used just once and thrown "away".



### **80% OF ALL TRASH**

in our oceans is plastic.



The ocean provides

### **50%+**

of the oxygen we breath.



### **MARINE ANIMALS**

are mistaking plastic for food - and it's killing them.

## **Program Design**

This program is designed to teach you to solve the social problem of plastic pollution, while developing your social enterprise. You will work with a peer team and a Social Enterprise Program (SEP) mentor to conduct research into a social problem, use critical thinking to identify and develop a solution for that problem, and then develop and execute a business action plan. By the end of the program, you will have created a sustainable social enterprise capable of making a difference in your community.

# Task 1: Research the Problem

Use the form in Appendix A to complete the following task.

## Objectives

1. Develop research questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how).
2. Distinguish between fact and opinion.
3. Apply research method to social problem.

This task will help you to understand how our reliance on plastic products has created negative effects. The first step to creating a successful business is to research the problem. For example, you might learn that students and faculty throw away hundreds of water bottles in a day. You might design a business that sells reusable bottles with your school logo. Your social enterprise would earn money while also greatly reducing plastic waste in the school community.

Your research on plastic pollution starts with the general information on page 4 and will continue with the following steps.

To best identify solutions, you should take the time to do further research on your own to understand the social problem from your perspective.

## Step 1: Webinar

To learn more about the problem, you will meet with your SEP mentor and scientific expert in a webinar. Before this meeting, you might want to write a few questions to ask the expert. Be sure to take notes during the webinar. It is important to understand your industry as much as possible by researching online to maximize your time with the industry expert. More hints on research strategies are described below.

## Step 2: Distinguish Fact from Fiction

When you conduct research, you are looking for facts that explain something about the problem that you are studying. In this case, you want to use sources that provide facts about the plastic industry, general use of plastics, and the disposal process. Remember to search for potential opportunities in your community for your enterprise.

Be careful when conducting research! Too often, sites offer information about a topic because they have something to gain from the information. To determine the “good” from the “bad”, please watch the following videos. These will help you understand how to determine important information that you will use in your business development. The videos are:

[How to Choose your News - Damon Brown \(5 min\)](#)

*Your research on plastic pollution starts with the general information on page 4 and will continue with the following steps. To best identify solutions, you should take the time to do further research on your own to understand the social problem from your perspective.*

### **Step 3: Conduct Research**

The best way to begin is to create a research plan. This includes gathering your sources and bookmarking them on your computer, creating questions that you want to know about the topic, and writing notes about facts. Then, begin your research by trying to answer the questions that you developed. This exercise will help you to find the facts first.

As you read the materials, make note of patterns of facts. For example, do most of the articles suggest that water bottles are the biggest landfill problem? Check the resources. Are they from government agencies or university ecological sites? If so, they are likely to be factual. If they are sponsored by environmental non-profit groups, check those facts with government or university sites. Write a short summary of what you discovered. Decide what information might be useful to you in creating your business and put a star by it.

After conducting research, you will have a lot of ideas about businesses that you could start. Write these down as you will use them later.

#### **Guiding questions - begin with these:**

1. How do microplastics affect the ocean's food chain?
2. Which industries create the most plastic pollution?
3. Which items are responsible for the majority of plastic pollution?
4. What needs are plastics fulfilling? Whose needs are plastics fulfilling? Are these needs essential for life or for convenience?



# Task 2: Identify Problems and Solutions

Use the form in Appendix B to complete the following task.

## Objectives

1. Using research results, identify a specific community issue.
2. Identify challenges in the business design.
3. Design a solution(s) to reduce/prevent the identified problem.

## Step 1: Create a Problem Statement

Using the notes that you took during Task 1, identify one or two problems that the over-consumption of plastics is creating in your community. Write a very specific problem statement that identifies the exact problem, where it occurs (could be your whole community, school, sports league, or home), and note the impact that it has on the community.

Example: Our school's sports teams use approximately 1,000 disposable plastic cups during practice and games over the course of...1 game, 1 year, which would take over 450 years in a landfill to decompose.

[MWA Today Article](#)

## Step 2: Identify Challenges

With a problem statement written, it is easier to consider how a business might address the problem. There are often laws or community attitudes that prevent a company from solving a social issue. Using the information below, explore how different types of businesses have created solutions to the plastics problem. Choose a few articles below from industries that interest you. Write down the challenges that they experienced while developing their business solutions.

### **Step 3: Design a Solution**

The best solutions are those that have been well-researched and carefully planned. Effective solutions do not need to be complicated or expensive. This part of the exercise will help you to create a vision for your enterprise. Consider the needs in your community, your skills, and your resources as you brainstorm potential solutions.

**(Refer to Finding Solutions on the Life Cycle of Plastics)**

### **You can do the following to create social change in your community to reduce plastic pollution:**

Develop social media campaigns.

**(refer to POF materials on how to launch a social media campaign)**

1. Create a new product that repurposes or replaces plastic.
2. Design an Outreach Initiative to get corporations to take a pledge to join #socialcampaign to support reducing plastic pollution.
3. Re-create a service from a new creative perspective. For example, an existing service is to place signs in grocery stores saying “Stop using plastic bags. Bring your reusable bags”. A new perspective would be to sell affordable reusable non-plastic bags with creative designs.



# Task 3: Create the Business Plan

Use the form in Appendix C to complete the following task.

## Objectives

1. Identify a business model/setting.
2. Create a pricing plan.
3. Design a marketing plan.

## Step 1: Identify your Business Model

Now that you are ready to create your business model, you have some important decisions to make. Identify the specific service or item that you will sell. Be clear about what the consumer/company will get for the money that is paid. Then, decide how you will produce and/or deliver your product. Will you work with others or alone? Can you work from home using your computer, will you sell to peers/friends directly, or will you sell your product to businesses? These are the first decisions for you to make. Consider what your resources and skills are. Think about how you want to market and sell your products to others. This will help you to create the structure of your business.

## Step 2: Create a Pricing Plan

This will require some active research. You can ask your friends and family members how much they would pay for your product or service. Explore how much others charge for similar products. Once you have an idea of the price of your product or plan the service. The price of the product should include cost of production of your item, including human labor and, where applicable, how much it would cost to deliver your item. This exercise will help you settle on a cost for your product and provide some idea of potential for profit.

It can be as simple as:

Sales Price of Item/Service per unit (item or hour):

Cost of production or planning:

Net Profit:

Example: Charlie and his team discovered that small stores in his community were not required to recycle plastic (e.g. water bottles, office supplies). He and his team designed office sized recycling bins to give to these businesses. For \$40 a month, Charlie and his friends collected the recycling from the businesses and delivered the waste to the local recycling plant. They provided a convenience service for businesses while educating them on ways to reduce waste.

Sales Price of Service per unit: \$40 per business + \$10 for purchase of the recycle bin

Cost of planning/action: \$1 for gas, \$10 for labor + \$3 for production of each recycling bin

Net Profit: \$29 per business + \$7 for sale of recycling bin

### **Step 3: Design a Marketing Plan**

Marketing plans are simply a plan for getting the word out about your social enterprise. This provides an opportunity to educate consumers about the social issue and sell your business solution. Think about your favorite products (games, food) and what you know about them. What do you like about them and why do you continue to purchase them?

People often buy products when there is a strong reason to do so. Using your research into the plastics problem, create a strong message about the impact that one person can make by changing a few behaviors (e.g. using the water fountain instead of bottled water). Think about ways that you can broadcast your message while sharing your passion for solving the plastic pollution problem.

Watch the following video and think about why this commercial was influential in getting people to stop littering. Notice how the message was delivered using few words.

**Public Service Announcement**

There are many creative ways that you can use social media to market your service or product.

Here is a list of ideas to help you to get started:



Create a flashmob or homemade commercial and post it to **YOUTUBE**



Post pictures of your product on **FACEBOOK**



Create a fun **TWITTER** campaign - describe the problem + product in a sentence and add a picture.



Design a **WEBPAGE** that shares your research about the plastic pollution problem and add information about your product/service.



Post pictures of your product on **INSTAGRAM** next to a picture of plastic in a landfill.

# Task 4: Execute the Action Plan

Use the form in Appendix D to complete the following task.

## Objectives

1. Interview a local entrepreneur.
2. Create an “elevator pitch”.
3. Develop a timeline.

## Step 1: Plan/Conduct Interview

A good way to learn how to start a business, is to speak with those who have started many of them. Entrepreneurs have often started a few different businesses with varied results. Most are willing to share their lessons with younger entrepreneurs. However, before scheduling an interview, you will need to develop a set of questions. Structured questions will help ensure that you collect useful information. To begin, write down any questions that you have about starting your specific business. Then, consider choosing some questions from the ones below. Remember that you can always ask other ones during the interview, especially to follow up on something that the interviewee said.

List of general questions:

- What was the first business that you started?
- How did you find your first customer?
- What challenges did you face during the startup process and now?
- How did you fund your business start-up?
- What advice do you have for a first-time entrepreneur?
- What is the best thing about owning a business?
- What is the most challenging thing about owning a business?

After you have developed your questions, practice by asking a parent or teacher to allow you to hold a mock interview. You can practice with your team members or friends too. Edit your questions based on your practice session.

Then, schedule an interview with a local entrepreneur. You can find business owners by going to small businesses in your neighborhood or asking your parents/teachers for recommendations. You might ask your friends about what their parents do. Be sure that you find someone who has a business similar to what you want to develop or who has extensive experience.

Once you conduct your interview, you will have a much better idea of how to start your own enterprise. Use the advice from the interview to start your sales campaign.

## **Step 2: Practice Selling your Product/Service**

Social entrepreneurs are passionate about their product/service and can often talk at great length about the issue and business. However, it is best to practice a one to two-minute speech that specifically describes the social problem, your product/service, and price. This is called an elevator pitch because you should be able to finish it in the time that it takes you to travel in an elevator from one floor to another.

## **Step 3: Timeline**

The most successful entrepreneurs are those who set goals and meet them. The best way to begin developing goals is to create a timeline. Make decisions about when to complete your interview research, schedule the interview(s), and begin your business. Then, mark those on your timeline (Appendix D).

Example: Timeline for SEP

Monday, March 1: begin research - local community for types of businesses

Monday, March 8: schedule interview and begin writing questions

Friday, March 12: finish questions and conduct mock interview

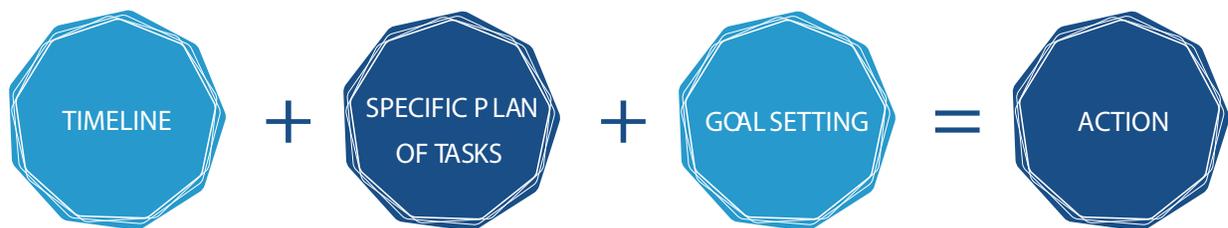
Monday, March 15: conduct interview

Friday, March 19: begin social media campaign

Monday, March 22: open for business!

## Step 4: Action

Now that your enterprise is open for business, you will need to continue planning and creating time lines. It might be that you were not able to open your business after the interview because you need to create your product. Create a timeline for the development of your product or service. By writing out due dates, you and your team members will be more likely to work together to meet them.



Assign tasks to team members or to yourself on your timeline. Remember that the tasks should be specific and should help you to complete your product production or service plan. It might be that after interviewing the entrepreneur that he/she agreed to help you with your enterprise, be sure to add all tasks and details to your timeline. This will help you to stay organized and motivated.

# Task 5: Evaluation

Use the form in Appendix E to complete the following task.

## Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the evaluation process.
2. Apply assessment skills.

## Step 1: Evaluation Plan

Imagine that you have designed your enterprise, created a strong social awareness media campaign, and even sold your product/service. You know that you are getting your message out to others and earning some money. You might even have some new ideas to improve your social enterprise. How will you know if you are successful? How will you know when the right time is to make changes?

Social entrepreneurs learn to track the success of their businesses using measures that make sense to their enterprise. If you are teaching people in the community about the harmful effects of plastic pollution, you might track how many people you have taught instead of just tracking how many presentations you have given. You might even create a survey asking them to rate your presentation afterwards.

If your business sells a product, you might track how many units you sell in a day, week, or month. This will help you to know whether you are earning or losing money. You might provide a survey to those who buy your product on your website. Successful entrepreneurs ask for and use feedback to improve their product or service.

Whether you decide to use a customer satisfaction survey or not, it is important to decide how you will measure the success of your business. A simple way to do this is to list your unit of sale (item or hour), then decide if you will evaluate how well it is selling once a month, quarterly, or annually. Create a short plan and add some goals, which can change how well it is selling as you gather business data.

Example: SEP Business X

Evaluation Plan: Assess monthly for profit/deficit, time spent, and number of people reached

Date	\$Total Sales	\$Cost	Total	Time	#People
10/31	\$1,000.00	\$240.00	+\$760	50 hours	540

## Step 2: Making Changes

After six months of business, you might discover that your product is selling very well. You will choose whether to increase production or not. It could be that the information that you gained from your evaluation suggested that you might want to educate consumers more on the hazards of plastic pollution. It is important to use the information from the evaluation to make changes.

There are times when a business does not do well and the product or service does not sell. The information from your evaluation will reveal clues as to the problem. Perhaps the product does not meet the community's need or does not broadcast a strong enough message. Learning to make changes is an important skill for entrepreneurs.

To practice, imagine two different scenarios: One where so many products sold that there is more demand than supply, and the second where few products are sold and there is an oversupply.

### Scenario 1: Too Much Demand

In this case, imagine that you have more demand for your product than you can supply. Write three solutions to this problem.

1.

2.

3.

## Scenario 2: Not Enough Demand

In this case, imagine that there is little to no demand for your product. Write three solutions to this problem.

1.

2.

3.

Considering these scenarios help in creating evaluation plan. Critical thinking like this is important to help you work through problems that will develop when running your business.

# Appendix A

# Appendix A

## Task 1: Research

*Step 1: Webinar Questions (to ask during webinar)*

1.

2.

3.

Webinar Notes (write at least 3 things that were interesting to you)

1.

2.

3.

## **Step 2: Collecting Facts (Hazards of Plastic Pollution)**

*Resource 1: Website or Author/Title*

Facts:

Additional questions (if you have them):

*Resource 2: Website or Author/Title*

Facts:

Additional questions (if you have them):

*Resource 3: Website or Author/Title*

Facts:

Additional questions (if you have them):

*Resource 4: Website or Author/Title*

Facts:

Additional questions (if you have them):

# Appendix B

# Appendix B

## Task 2: Identify Problem and Solutions

### *Step 1: Create a Problem Statement*

Problem Statement: The social issue that is creating problems in your community or globally.

Include the following: a clear description of the problem and where it is occurring.

Example: Our school's sports teams use approximately 1,000 disposable plastic cups during practice and games which would take over 450 years in a landfill to decompose.

**MWA Today Article**

Problem Statement:

### *Step 2: Identify the Problem*

Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Article/website:

Notes from the article (challenges + solution, business model, interesting facts)

Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Article/website:

Notes from the article (challenges + solution, business model, interesting facts)

Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Article/website:

Notes from the article (challenges + solution, business model, interesting facts)

## Task 3: Design a Solution

### *Step 1: Create a Problem Statement*

Using your research, brainstorm a list of possible solutions that can be used as a solution to your proposed problem statement. Be as creative as possible. Do not judge any of the choices, just write them all down, even the most ridiculous option. You can start with ones listed in the materials (design a product, service, create social media campaigns).

### Brainstorm List

Using the list of solutions above, rate them according to the ones that you think that you can do to those that would be difficult.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

# Appendix C

# Appendix C

## Task 3: Create a Business Model

### *Step 1: Identify Business Model*

Use the following exercises to develop your idea of “business”. There are many decisions to be made.

1. Will you sell a product or provide a service?
2. How many people will work with you in the business?
3. What responsibilities will each person have?
4. Who is the target for your business (e.g. friends/peers/students, anyone)?
5. What resources do you have? Resources are a place to work, computer skills/access, funds to start, help from parents, or access to materials?
6. How will you market your products/services?
7. Time to provide the service or space to store a product.

### *Step 2: Create a Pricing Plan*

An important decision in creating a business plan is how to price your product or service. You will have collected research on comparable products or services already. For now, these comparables will be an estimate but it is important to practice thinking about these factors. Below is the example used in the recycling of materials. Now, try creating your own.

Sales Price of Service/Product per unit: **\$40 per business + \$10 for purchase of the recycle bin**

Cost of planning/action: **\$1 for gas, \$10 for labor + \$3 for production of each recycling bin**

Net Profit: **\$29 per business + \$7 for sale of recycling bin**

Sales Price of Service/Product

This is how much you plan to charge per “unit”. A “unit” can be an hour of service, one item that you produce (one cup), or a collection of items/experience/service.

Cost of planning/action:

Sometimes there are costs for making an item or traveling to a place. You want to factor that in, especially if you are going to hire friends to work with you or need to purchase materials for your product.

Net Profit: This is how much money you have left over after paying for production or services from others.

Sales Price of Service/Product per unit:

Cost of planning/action:

Net Profit:

### *Step 3: Design a Marketing Plan*

Using the ideas in the course materials or new ones, design a plan that will help you to market your item.

1. Choose two methods for broadcasting your message: social media, posting signs in the community (if allowed to do so), word of mouth, creating a short YouTube commercial, or... add your own ideas.

2. Outline what information you would use in the plan.

Short statement about the problem of plastics pollution. Name of your enterprise or item, cost, and value of purchase (helping reduce pollution and benefit of item).

Social Issue Statement:

Name of Enterprise and Product:

Short description of the product/service:

Cost and Value of product:

# Appendix D

# Appendix D

## Task 4: Execute the Action Plan

### *Step 1: Plan/Conduct*

Once you have chosen a local entrepreneur to interview, you will want to create a list of questions to ask. As suggested in the course materials, begin with choosing a few general questions (either use the ones below or develop some of your own). Then, write a few specific questions that relate to the specific interviewee and business.

List of general questions:

- What was the first business that you started?
- How did you find your first customer?
- What challenges did you face during the start-up process? And now?
- How did you fund your business start-up?
- What advice do you have for a first-time entrepreneur?
- What is the best thing about owning a business?

General Questions to ask:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Specific Questions to ask:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### *Step 2: Elevator Pitch*

An “elevator pitch” is a one to two-minute description of the social problem, how your enterprise aims to reduce plastic pollution, and description of your product. You will want to develop an elevator speech that is appropriate for your target customer (are you selling to friends/peers or anyone).

#### Elevator Pitch Planning

In a few sentences, write a description of the problem of plastics pollution.

In two sentences, explain how your enterprise will address some part of the plastics pollution problem.

In a few sentences, write a specific explanation of your product or service.

After it is written, practice giving this pitch (read all of the sentences together). Have a friend time you and memorize as much of it as you can.

### *Step 3: Create a Timeline*

This might be a little difficult to do at first, but with practice will become an excellent skill. Begin by making a list of the tasks that need to be done for your business startup.

List of Tasks (add as many as you can, even small tasks)

Now, next to each task, write the length of time that you think each will take to complete. You will likely be wrong, but that is fine. If you are working with others, add the name of the person responsible for each task. Then, write a timeline that makes sense to you.

Example: Timeline for SEP

Monday, March 1: begin research- local community for types of businesses [two hours] - all of us

Monday, March 8: schedule interview and begin writing questions [one hour] John and Mary

Friday, March 12: finish questions and conduct mock interview [one hour]

Monday, March 15: conduct interview [30 minutes]

Friday, March 19: begin social media campaign

Monday, March 22: open for business!

### *Step 4: Action*

Action = goal setting + specific plan + timeline

Action means that you are ready to move your social enterprise from an idea into an actual business. Follow the plan that you have created and you should be able to open for business. There may be some problems for you to solve before you are ready. It might take a few days/weeks/months to create your product. This should be built into your timeline. Make a list here of problems that might prevent success. Then, next to each, write a few suggestions for how to solve or prevent those obstacles.

Potential Obstacles

1.

Possible Solutions:

2.

Possible Solutions:

3.

Possible Solutions

# Appendix E

# Appendix E

## Task 5: Evaluation

### *Step 1: Evacuation Plan*

Once you have successfully launched your business, you are ready to evaluate your success. Remember that you define success and create how you will measure it. Think about what your goals are. Are you interested in educating people about the social issue of plastic pollution? Are you interested in earning money? Then, track profits.

Build Your Evacuation Plan

How will you count your items sold or service hours?

What will you measure? Hours? Number of items sold?

How often will you evaluate the business (monthly, quarterly)?

When will you be successful? This is an important question, so create a target to meet as your first measure of “success”. It might be “after 100 hours of selling lemonade and donating 20% of benefits to charity”. Then, you will track the hours and amount of money earned/donated.

Are goals met? Consider which parts of your business are doing well (educated many people) and what needs improvement (marketing).

What changes can you make to strengthen your business?