

Skoll Foundation's Definition of Social Entrepreneurship

We define social entrepreneurship as having the following characteristics:

- “The **identification of a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium** that causes the exclusion, marginalization or suffering of a segment of humanity;
- The **development, testing, refining and scaling of an equilibrium-shifting solution**, deploying a social value proposition with the potential to challenge the stable state;
- The **forging of a new stable equilibrium** that unleashes new value for society, releases trapped potential or alleviates suffering. In this new state, an ecosystem is created around the new equilibrium that sustains and grows it, extending the benefit across society.”
- “Unlike social-service providers, social entrepreneurs explicitly aim to **permanently transform** a miserable or unfair societal condition.”
- “Unlike social advocates, social entrepreneurs **act directly**, creating a product, service, or methodology that spurs the transformation of the status quo.”

Source: Roger Martin and Sally Osberg, *Getting Beyond Better: How Social Entrepreneurship Works*, October 6, 2015.

Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship Criteria



These criteria apply at the point of Awarding a Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, not when a Social Entrepreneur is nominated, which typically will be a year or two prior to the granting of the Award.

MISSION: An Awardee must be on the path to **permanently transform** a miserable or unfair societal condition—an “equilibrium change”—not simply addressing its effects.

INNOVATION: The organization has a **unique and effective** approach that fundamentally disrupts an unsustainable and unjust equilibrium to solve social and/or environmental problems.

EVALUATION AND LEARNING CAPABILITIES: Candidates for the Skoll Award have relatively mature **systems for evaluating the performance** of their programs, with evidence of a **learning culture** based on using evidence of impact to produce results and refine programs for achieving maximum impact over time.

GROWTH TRAJECTORY: The Award is designed for social entrepreneurs who intend to lead their organizations through **significant future growth in impact** rather than to honor prior work. Typically, evidence of 3+ years of impact results beyond proof of concept and a clear scaling plan for extending the influence of the organization’s model over next 3-5 years is required. Demonstrated organizational readiness to execute plan is critical.

ECOSYSTEM INFLECTION POINT: The issue is ripe, there is favorable national and international climates, including recent policy change and/or increased attention and funding. Ecosystem actors will also demonstrate demand for the organization’s innovation.

COLLABORATION: Organization can identify **key strategic partners who extend its work and /or impact**, typically candidates have extended beyond local networks to establish meaningful connections that can execute on the organization’s model outside of one region. Partnerships either complete or extend some part of the value chain (enable delivery of services, help reduce costs, diversify manufacturing) and there are ongoing collaborations.

LEADERSHIP: The Skoll Award is intended to recognize both the organization and its leader. The leader tends to be the founder or co-founder, who has had a **prolonged and pivotal role in the organization’s strategy and success**. We have a preference for local leaders who identify solutions to a local problem that impacts other regions.

ORGANIZATION: Candidates have a **well-developed staffing structure** in place as well as a **Board of Directors** that meets regularly and has executive decision-making responsibility.

FUNDING MODEL & REVENUE: The Skoll Award supports organizations focused on social impact through a variety of business models. The majority of Skoll Awards have been granted to non-profits, e.g. US 501c(3) or their equivalents. Typically, successful organizations with activities primarily in developed countries have an annual revenue of at least \$2.5 million (USD) while those with operations primarily in developing countries have an annual revenue of at least \$1.5 million.

ISSUE AREAS: Skoll’s mission is to support social entrepreneurs solving the world’s most pressing problems. We define these broadly to include: **Economic opportunity, Education, Environmental sustainability, Health, Peace and Human Rights, and Sustainable Markets**.

SKOLL LEVERAGE: The organization will benefit from engaging with the Skoll Foundation by collaborating with our network of entrepreneurs and by accessing media and fundraising opportunities as well as other strategic opportunities provided by Skoll. Awardees actively participate and engage with the Skoll community of social entrepreneurs and thought leaders.

EXCLUSIONS

We do not fund in the following: Individuals; Programs promoting religious or ideological doctrine, and those principally sectarian in nature; Lobbying (beyond that allowed by law for charitable organizations); Film financing; Endowments, Cash reserves or deficit reductions; Government agencies; University-based projects. Public schools and school districts; Land, site acquisition or facilities construction; Institutions that discriminate on the basis of race, creed, age, gender or sexual orientation in policy or practice; Grant-making to other organizations or individuals; Event sponsorship; Political campaigns; Organizations whose mission and work focus on a single municipality, province or state; Local offices of parent organizations or specific programs within organizations; Seed funding for a new organization with less than 3 years of operations.