

The Harvard Social Entrepreneurship Collaboratory (SE Lab)

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A university incubator for a rising generation of leading social entrepreneurs fusing theoretical and practical approaches

Hauser/Harvard SE Lab Website:

<http://www.ksghauser.harvard.edu/programs/SELab/index.htm>

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The Social Entrepreneurship Collaboratory or 'SE lab' is a new learning lab launched at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in Spring Term 2005 led by Professor Gordon Bloom and a group of Hauser Center and Harvard faculty which included Dutch Leonard, Mark Moore, and Christopher Winship. The development of the lab at Stanford and Harvard Universities and the pedagogy are described in a chapter contributed by Bloom to the edited volume *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change* (A. Nicholls ed., Oxford University Press, 2006).¹ Also see [Hauser Center Working Paper #31](#).

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Inspired by the work of pioneers like Bill Drayton (founder of Ashoka) and Muhammad Yunus (founder of Grameen bank, Nobel Laureate for Peace 2006) the SE Lab is a laboratory workshop where student teams create and develop plans for U.S. and international social entrepreneurship (SE) initiatives. Proposed initiatives may be new entities or innovative projects, partnerships, and/or other arrangements that will have an impact on existing organizations and social outcomes in the U.S. and internationally. Issue areas include but are not limited to: environment; poverty alleviation/microfinance; global health; human rights, gender/racial equality; education; corporate social responsibility; economic development; international conflict resolution, social innovation (and other, student-identified issue areas).

The SE Lab combines academic theory; frameworks; and traditional research in organizations, management and public policy with field work; action research; peer support and learning; and participation of domain experts and social entrepreneurship practitioners.

Project development will vary with the skill set and experience of each individual and team, but will include: defining the problem/opportunity; articulating mission and vision; design and development of an innovative and feasible solution and determination of an applicable theory of change; market research and industry analysis; creation of an advisory, governance and management structure; determination of strategic partners and assets, funding strategy; development of a basic financial and operating model; and development of measurement and evaluation framework. Teams will draft a business plan or briefing book for their initiative and will present their projects in the SE Lab, and if desired compete for awards and recognition in the marketplace of ideas. As appropriate, participants may also elect to pursue funding, and the implementation of a pilot project.

The Spring Term 2006 SE Lab was comprised of 50 students representing 20 degree programs from Harvard and 5 other Universities, demonstrating interdisciplinary approaches to global problem solving. The SE lab generated 20 promising new projects tackling a wide range of social issues from fighting pediatric cancer to financial literacy, support of the arts and peace building in the Middle East. Former Harvard President Larry Summers visited the SE Lab to hear student briefs of their projects, and commented "This has been enormously impressive. I feel better about Harvard and better about the world for having heard you describe these projects. They give one the sense that the world will be a better place. Your efforts embody the KSG as a place of ideas and ideals."²

¹ Bloom, Gordon. "The Social Entrepreneurship Collaboratory (SE Lab): A University Incubator for a Rising Generation of Social Entrepreneurs." *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*. Ed. Alex Nicholls. Oxford University Press, 2006, 271-306.

² Gewertz, Ken. "'Caring' entrepreneurship at KSG: Where business and social awareness meet." *Harvard Gazette*, May 25, 2006. Available at: <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/05.25/11-entrepreneur.html>