Addressing Harmful Practices Through Social Innovation

A UNFPA Innovation Guide for "YOU" and Startups

Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls

UNFPA

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Foreword

"...without innovation, there is no way we can overcome the challenges of our times... we can do things differently, and do different... Now is the time to make innovative thinking the new normal..."

- António Guterres, UN Secretary General

UNFPA has set its sights on achieving three ambitious results that will change the world as we know it by 2030. With the clock ticking towards the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNFPA is focused on making the world a safer place, where a 10-year-old girl can live free from violence and other harmful practices and achieve her fullest potential.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence, which has impacted the lives of millions of women and girls across the world, especially in Africa. Recent data shows that FGM prevalence in Africa has a significant impact on the lives of young girls and without concerted action, more than 50 million girls in Africa are at risk of undergoing this harmful practice by 2030.

I strongly believe that innovation is a key accelerator to achieving these ambitious SDG targets. UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), with support from the UNFPA/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM and the Spotlight Initiative, is taking bold steps towards mainstreaming innovation across its programmes and operations in the region to achieve these transformative results.

Innovators in Africa still face challenges, including a lack of investment and requisite skills, limited entrepreneurship support, poor market access, and a relatively young innovation support system. Yet, I am encouraged by the potential for growth and scale exhibited by young people leading change in their own ways.

The social innovation toolkit — Addressing Harmful Practices through Social Innovation — A UNFPA Innovation Guide for "YOU" and Startups — provides valuable resources for young people, especially adolescents and girls, to develop their innovative ideas and accelerate collective efforts to end harmful practices like FGM and child marriage. The interactive, self-help toolkit provides practical guidance and connection to social enterprise growth support within and outside Africa.

I hope this toolkit will encourage the development of new ideas and create an opportunity for young people, especially adolescents and girls, to build their capacity and become active participants in their own development.

UNFPA will continue to work with young people as active agents of change to end harmful practices across Africa. I implore you to take advantage of this toolkit and other initiatives to support this collective effort.

All the best as we join forces to make the world a safe and innovative space for women and girls.

Lydia Zigomo
Regional Director,
UNFPA East and Southern Africa

Hello social entrepreneur. Welcome!

We're happy to see you. We believe you're here because you want to contribute to solving a social problem that will make the world a better place. If so, you're part of a growing network of young entrepreneurs and innovators looking to make a positive impact on themselves, the people around them, and their communities.

DO YOU WANT TO BE AN ACTIVE AGENT OF CHANGE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY AND PEERS?

If YES, turn the page.

WILL YOUR IDEA OR SOLUTION CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING THE SDG FOR HEALTH OR GENDER?

If YES, turn the page.

ARE YOU PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN DOING SOMETHING TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ALL HARMFUL PRACTICES SUCH AS FGM (ONE OF UNFPA'S TRANSFORMATIVE RESULTS)?

Have you ever thought about FGM?

If YES or if you're just curious to learn more, turn the page.

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA?

If you've already participated in a UNFPA Hacklab or other hackathons around FGM, go straight to Stage 4.

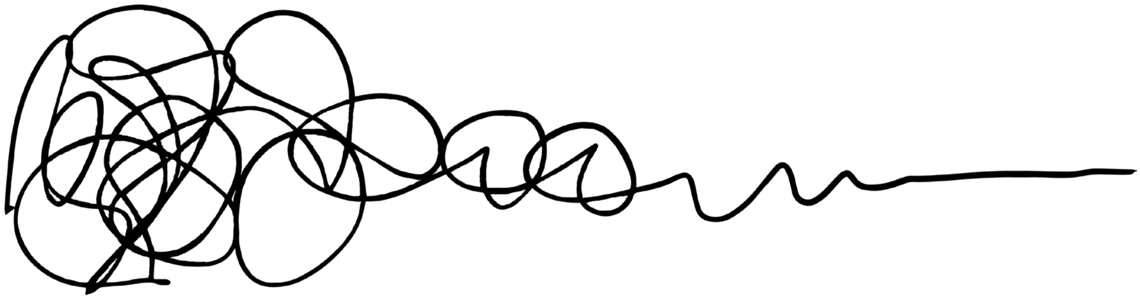
Otherwise, let's get going with Stage 1.

Stuck for ideas?

Browse this list of 100 Bold Ideas to Improve Women and Children's Health and Rights in the Developing World for inspiration.

WAIT, BEFORE WE BEGIN...

You're starting a journey here and, even if you know where you want to go and how you might get there, the road to your destination is not a straight one. In fact, it'll probably look something like this...



This is normal! You're not following a simple checklist (although we'll give you those too), you're going through a complex – and thrilling – process, and this guide is here to help you along your way! Don't be scared. All successful innovation solutions started this way. You're off to a good start!

You'll see that the guide is divided into ***two parts***: the Stages (Part 1) and the Building Blocks (Part 2). Part 1 will take you through the different stages of building an idea into a product and taking that product into the world, and Part 2 introduces you to the all-important building blocks that make up a business.

You should also know that we're not going to talk about funding or financing immediately. Just like you're probably not only motivated by money, your new idea is about more than JUST money.

Come up with an exciting, convincing idea, show people that you can make that idea happen in reality, and the money will come along much easier down the road.

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE GUIDE

Navigation Bar

You can navigate through the document with the links along the side of each page. The pink dots indicate where you currently are.

Signposts

Throughout the guide you'll find various icons that will help you better understand the text and what to do:

Take action

This indicates an activity for you to complete that will help you along your journey.

Self assess

This is where you check your understanding to confirm that you're ready to move on to the next stage.

Insights

Here you'll find additional information that will help you to better understand a concept or apply it to your work.

Innovation in action

This is a mini case study from the social impact sector that illustrates a key point, question, or exercise in the section.

Lost? Get some direction

Once you get to the end of a stage, you might find you're totally lost or need to double-check what you think you know. Check-ins give you direction on where to retrace your steps in the stages or get more mapping information from the Building Blocks.

Expand your knowledge!

You'll also find boxes with helpful definitions and further resources.

Definition

A clarification of an important term in the text.

Further resources

A curated list of more detailed guides, reports, open license toolkits, and FAQs that allow you to go more deeply into topics discussed in the section.

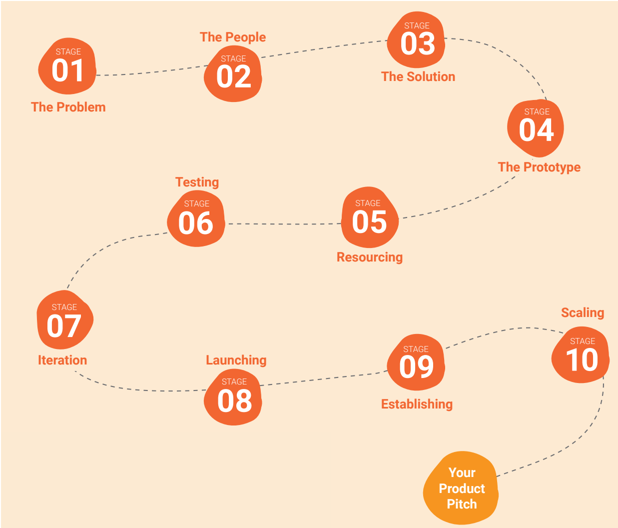
Useful acronyms and abbreviations

A few terms you might come across in the text.

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
LNOB	Leave No One Behind

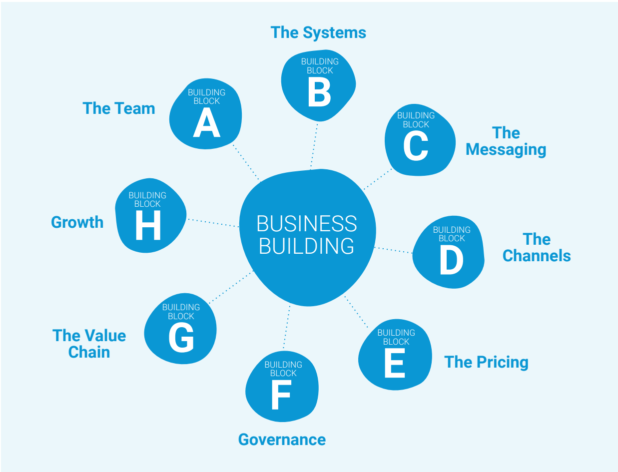
YOUR MAP TO THE GUIDE'S TWO PARTS

Part 1:
Product Building



We'll start with your product, because we know you're really excited about creating a solution that addresses your users' problems.

Part 2:
Building a Business



This product is built on a solid foundation: your business. These are all the functions that support the development, deployment and distribution of your product, in a financially sustainable way.

In growing your offering to your customers and users, you will constantly move between working on your product and working on your business – and you will do the same in this guide.

Are you ready to get started? Let's go!

Part 1

Product Building

(THE STAGES)

PART 1:

PRODUCT BUILDING

(THE STAGES)

PART 1 | **Stage 1:**

THE PROBLEM

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Two weeks to two months

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1 **Introduction**
What is FGM?

2 **Identifying a Problem**
Getting context on the problem space

3 **Writing a Problem Statement**
Zeroing in on your problem

Innovation in Action: Murara Health Centre

Think Big: Build your pitch

Introduction

As a social entrepreneur or innovator, you'll be plugged into a global community of innovators solving some of the world's most pressing problems.

In 2015, the UN acknowledged the importance of addressing these problems by initiating the 17 SDGs, and social entrepreneurs and innovators wanting to make a positive impact can generally align their solutions to one or more of these goals.

To achieve some of these SDGs by 2030, the UNFPA has identified three Transformative Results (TR). These are:

1. ending maternal deaths,
2. ending the unmet need for family planning, and
3. ending gender-based violence and all harmful practices.

Addressing each of these is a big task, which is why there are many initiatives underway to see these results realised.

However, for this guide, we're going to focus on those social entrepreneurs and innovators who want to make a positive impact on TR 3, namely: ending gender-based violence and all harmful practices, and, in particular, ending FGM.

What's in a word?

Different communities have different terms and language conventions around FGM. For example, in some areas, FGM is referred to as "to purify" and in others people don't consider it mutilation at all. Speak to your regional and local FGM experts for insights and direction on language use in your area. But for the purposes of this guide, we'll be referring to "Female Genital Mutilation" and its abbreviated form "FGM".

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WHAT IS FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION?

FGM refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The procedure is mostly carried out on girls from infancy to age 15, although some women undergo the procedure after this time.

An estimated 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to FGM, and it's believed that if FGM continues at current levels, 68 million girls will have been cut between 2015 and 2030.

The cost of FGM is high, both to the individual and the community. Not only is it a human rights violation, but girls and women suffer psychological and physical distress and severe sexual and reproductive health consequences. It's also often a precursor to early marriage, which usually ends a girl's education and economic prospects, directly impacting the country's economy.

FGM is a vast topic, interconnecting and influencing many aspects of a society and an individual's life. In fact, it's the kind of problem that requires ***systems change.*** We'll talk more about what this is shortly.

HOW FGM AFFECTS THE SUBREGION

The reasons why FGM is performed vary from region to region, but it also changes over time and circumstance. A combination of social, cultural, and economic factors, as well as traditional and/or religious beliefs motivate the practice in different families, communities, and regions.

Within the East and Southern Africa region, the prevalence of FGM also varies. In Ethiopia, the national prevalence is 65.2%, a rate that follows a pattern of ongoing decline. In Eritrea, FGM prevalence has been in consistent decline for the last 25 years, and in Uganda, FGM prevalence has dropped from 1.4% in 2011 to 0.3% in 2016. Tanzania has also recorded a steady decline in FGM within its borders, with the latest data pegging the practice at a prevalence of 10%.

But although rates of FGM are declining in many African countries where it's practised, population growth rates in various settings mean that the absolute number of girls who will be cut will continue to grow if the practice continues at current levels.

Another problem that's emerging as a trend within practising communities is cross-border FGM to avoid prosecution. It's estimated that a quarter of the 200 million girls and women affected are from the East African border areas in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. These countries have very porous borders, meaning that people move freely from one country to another with little to no restrictions, so it's easy to see how the border areas of these five countries have a higher prevalence rate than the national averages.

In these five target countries alone, FGM accounts for approximately 25% (48.5 million) of the girls and women who have undergone FGM globally.

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The abandonment of FGM has long been a priority for governments around the world and for international organisations. Several countries have laws criminalising FGM, some have allocated specific budget lines for FGM interventions, and others have put in place multisectoral mechanisms to ensure co-ordinated efforts to end FGM.

In 2015, after approximately 20 years of country- and region-specific interventions to end the practice, the United Nations made the eradication of FGM a specific, targeted ambition within the SDGs (Global Goal 5.3).

Through the Joint Programme to Eliminate FGM, UNFPA and UNICEF have been supporting governments, civil society, social movements, religious and traditional leaders, and communities in 17 countries to strengthen legal frameworks, policy development and implementation; improve access to quality healthcare, protection, and social services; and raise awareness of the harms the procedure can cause.

With cross-border FGM there's a greater need to harmonise legislation to allow cross-border collaboration and co-ordination in anti-FGM activities, to empower women and girls to make independent decisions, and to work with men and boys to promote gender transformation that leads to the abandonment of FGM.

THE BIG PICTURE REQUIRES VERY BIG THINKING AND EVEN BIGGER COLLABORATION

As you can see, the matter of FGM isn't an isolated problem that can be "fixed" with one solution. It's a problem deeply woven into the social, cultural, religious, and regulatory fabric of the East and Southern Africa region. It's a whole-system problem that requires systemic change –and we do this through something called "systems change".

Systems change happens when you confront the root causes of a problem rather than just the symptoms, and then instigate change by transforming regulatory structures, customs, mindsets, power dynamics and policies, and by strengthening collective power through the collaboration of diverse people and organisations.

We'll be talking more about systems change in the very last stage – Scaling. But for now, as you think about problem-solving in the FGM space, consider the whole ecosystem in which you're working. Strive to learn more about – and connect with – researchers, activists, networks, and organisations working in this space to establish yourself in the community and garner support.

Now that we've talked broadly, let's zero in on specifics and where you can start making an impact in this complex space. We'll do this by first identifying the specific part of this big problem you'd like to solve.

Learn more

Get a deeper understanding of FGM www.unfpa.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-frequently-asked-questions#UNFPA_terminology

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Identifying a Problem

It's important to spend time in the ***problem space*** to ensure you're solving the right problem. Too many entrepreneurs get so excited by their idea or solution that they forget to check if they're solving the *right* problem and may even forget the people they're meant to be solving the problem for!

Identifying the right problem to design a solution for is key to the success of your venture and will save you precious time, energy, and money down the line – not to mention maximising the benefit to your users.

Problem space
The problem space is the problem and everything related to the problem.

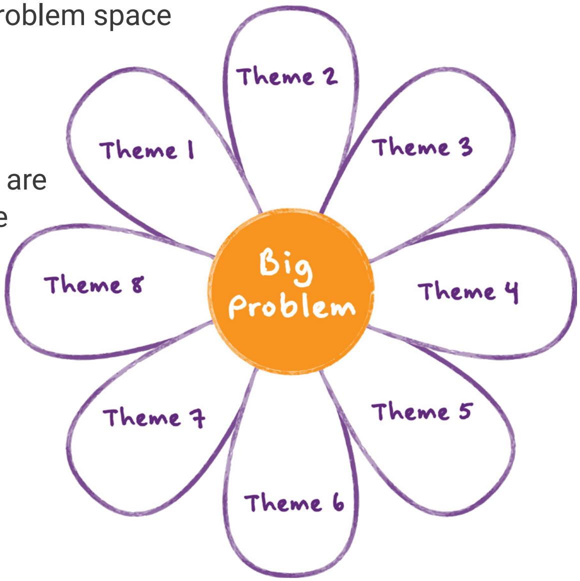
To start identifying a specific problem in the FGM space, use the Context Map brainstorming tool to help you surface key dimensions of your problem.

FINDING YOUR PROBLEM

The purpose of the Context Map is to help you capture ideas and themes so that you can identify a problem or problem space that you find challenging and exciting.

The Context Map looks like a flower with eight petals – the centre of the flower is the big problem, in this case FGM, and the eight petals are the themes, examples and situations that come to mind when you think of this problem.

You can make as many Context Maps as you like as you try to find those all-important issues, problems and themes.



TAKE ACTION

Use the Context Map to understand the world of your user

- Place someone who is affected by FGM at the centre of each map. This could be a girl or a woman who has experienced FGM, or someone who is likely to be affected by it in some way. It could be a family member, a community member, or a service provider. This is the start of ***human-centred design***, something we're going to be talking about a lot.
- When you fill out the "petals" of the map, try to see from the perspective of the person, community, or organisation at the centre of the map.
- It doesn't have to be pretty! Your Context Map can get as messy and wonky as it needs to be as you start diving into the problem space.
- Make as many Context Maps as you like until you find a problem that speaks to you.

Don't worry if you find this difficult to do at first. It's meant to challenge your perspective and sift through as much data as possible to identify the most important problems connected to the FGM space.

Human-centred design

This is a way of thinking and designing that places the people you're serving and trying to solve for (including important stakeholders) at the centre of the design, innovation, and implementation process you undertake.

ZEROING IN ON YOUR PROBLEM SPACE

What problems or themes were you most interested in? What got you fired up? If you're working with a team, which problems or themes had you talking or debating the most?

Once you've answered these questions, you'll know what problem you and your team are most passionate about and where you want to make the biggest impact.

Now it's time to formulate your problem statement.

Go deeper into the problem space

The Context Map is only one of many tools to investigate your problem space. Follow these links to explore other methods of zeroing in on your challenge.

- *How Entrepreneurs Can Find The Right Problem to Solve*, by Harvard Business Review https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/how-entrepreneurs-can-find-the-right-problem-to-solve
- Align on your impact goals with Design Kit by Ideo http://www.designkit.org/methods/align-on-your-impact-goals.html

Writing a Problem Statement

Using all the information you gathered above, you're now in a good position to build your first problem statement.

WHAT IS A PROBLEM STATEMENT?

A problem statement defines the heart of your passion and is the start of your journey. It's the "why" of what you're doing and the impact you'd like to see, and when you start finding investors it's what you're going to sell them on.

As you can see, it's a very important part of an innovation or entrepreneurial process – if not *the* most important part.

A problem statement is first and foremost ***human centred***. In other words, it puts the person experiencing the problem at the centre of your solution. You started working with human-centred design in the Context Map.

Problem-solving doesn't follow a linear process

"Linear" means "straight" and, much like a straight line, a linear process is one in which something has a definite start and end point, and every step taken from start to finish follows on directly from the one before.

Do you remember that squiggly line in the intro? Problem-solving is more like that squiggly line. Instead of moving from one step to another until we reach the end, we may have to look back and review, update or redo pieces of work as we learn more and access more information.

Over the next few stages, you're going to learn so much that you may have to return and rethink the problem space you've chosen to work in. That's okay! It's just part of the messy and exciting process of being an innovator.

TAKE ACTION

Get writing: Defining the problem space

To start collecting the elements of your problem statement, answer the following questions:

1. What is the problem?
2. Why is it a problem?
3. Where is the problem observed?
4. Who is impacted?
5. When was the problem first observed?
6. How and how often is the problem observed?

Once you've answered these questions as succinctly as possible, combine them to form a short, sharp paragraph. For example:

"More than 127 000 women who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of Female Genital Mutilation and more than 10 000 girls living in the United Kingdom may have undergone FGM. Since the early 2000s, legislation against the practice has been tightening in the region: FGM is illegal in the UK and considered a form of child abuse. The government quickly realised that without co-operation at community level, they would not be able to discourage FGM, which is carried out in secrecy in the UK. Local authorities need to work co-operatively with community-based organisations to enable them to lead the necessary change in attitudes in affected communities."

Adapted from the Tackling Female Genital Mutilation Initiative's (TFGMI) Communities Tackling Female Genital Mutilation in the UK, Best Practice Guide, 2016

"I LIKE, I WISH, I WONDER": VALIDATING YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT

Validate your problem statement by asking people to give you feedback on it.

Gather valuable insights by sharing your problem statement with friends, family, and people in your network who are familiar with the problem.

Ask your validation group to frame their feedback about your problem statement using statements that start with these three terms: "I like", "I wish" and "I wonder".

"I like" surfaces what they like about your problem, "I wish" surfaces what they think could be improved about your problem statement, "I wonder" surfaces what they think is missing from it.

Now that you have insight from within your network, it is time to get some empirical data and evidence to support the problem validation. Now it a good time to do some research. Search sources and refer to the resource materials provided in this toolkit to answer the following questions:

1. How big is this problem outside my immediate environment?
2. Have others identified this as a problem?
3. Are there any innovation solutions addressing this problem?
4. How have they approached the solution? Are there gaps that you can fill in?
5. Is partnership an option? What can be learnt from the existing solutions?

Taking their feedback and insights into account, is it worth reworking your statement?

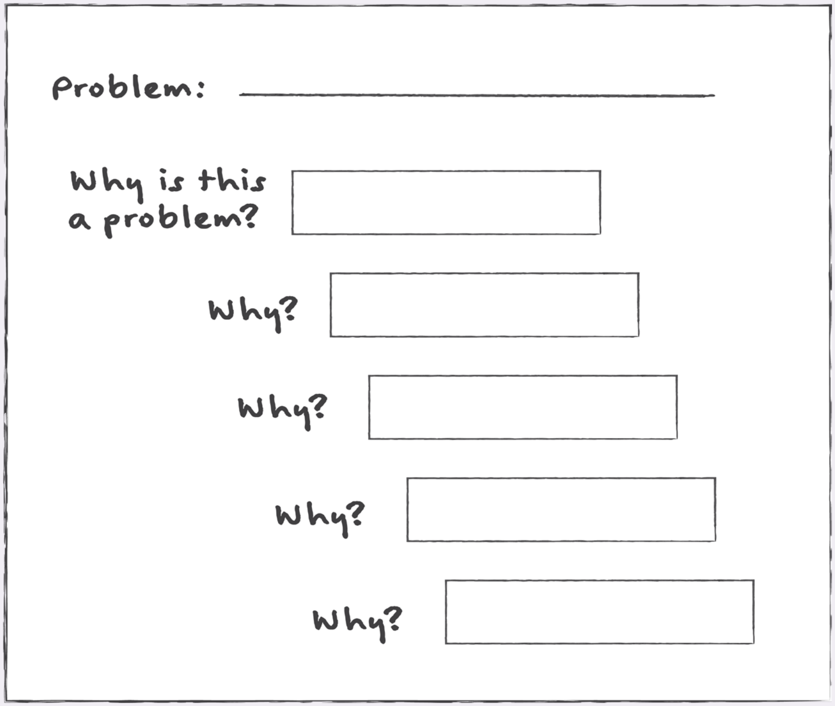
SELF ASSESS

The Five Whys

When you're deeply invested in solving a problem, it can be difficult to be objective about whether you're really seeing it from all angles. That's why it's good to check your understanding and perspective on a topic as you engage with it.

A good way to sense-check whether you've understood your chosen problem – and whether it's the right problem to solve – is using the Five Whys.

Developed by Japanese inventor Sakichi Toyoda, the Five Whys exercise challenges you to look beyond the surface of a problem to discover its root cause. You can do this exercise by yourself or with a team.



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TAKE ACTION

Get asking:
Why this problem, why now?

1. Grab a piece of paper and write your problem at the top of the page, and five "whys" down the left-hand side.
2. Consider the problem you've identified and ask yourself or the team *why* this is a problem.
3. Write your answer next to the first why. Ask yourself or the team why *this* problem is true.
4. Write that answer next to the second why, one row down.
5. Ask yourself or the team why this problem is true.
6. Write that answer next to the third why, in the column.
7. Repeat this process until you have filled in something next to each why.
8. Each additional problem gets its own column and five rows of "whys"!

Once you've populated the board, look for commonalities and themes. Do these resonate with the research you've done and does your problem statement align with these? Are you on track with your understanding of the problem? Do you need to revise it?

Further resources
Ready to capture everything you've learned in one sheet? Try Mitre's Problem Framing Canvas: https://itk.mitre.org/toolkit-tools/problem-framing/

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

Murara Health Centre

THE SITUATION:

In 2012 the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) and Save the Children undertook a year-long, global exercise to map existing adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) programmes implemented in humanitarian settings since 2009. Their aim was to document good practices and pilot the best of these in an existing programme.

THE SOLUTION:

A small-scale pilot project at Murara Health Centre in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was initiated to operationalise these learnings. The project aimed to:

- improve adolescent (10–19 years) knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours around select sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues, and
- improve the capacity of Murara Health Centre to provide high-quality SRH services.

THE RESULT:

Documented improvements particularly among in-school adolescents (aged 12–14 years) in knowledge and attitudes, including confidence in demonstrating correct condom use and confidence in seeking SRH information and services when needed.

What we can learn from this:

- Identifying the right problem using data.
- Solutions don't always have to be new but can build on work that has already been done.
- Innovation can look very different in a low-resource environment.
- Innovation isn't about being fancy; it's about identifying the problem and solving it in a way that delivers results to the people who matter.

Read more

CASE STUDY: Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Programming in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

https://www.unhcr.org/media/32370

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Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences (You can type your answer into the space provided or write on another sheet of paper):

Why is this problem important?

Why is it important that we solve it now?

Where are the people affected by the problem and are there a lot of them?

PART 1 | **Stage 2:**

THE PEOPLE

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Two to three months

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1 **Introduction**
Developing empathy

2 **Getting to Know Your User**
Creating and validating your persona

Innovation in Action: Drones for Health

Think Big: Build your pitch

Lost? Get Some Direction

Introduction

In Stage 1 you identified a good problem to solve and even went so far as to validate your problem statement with peers, friends, and family. Congratulations! Big journeys start with the first, small step.

But problems don't exist in a bubble – they're part of an environment and the people who populate and engage with that environment.

At the heart of your problem and its solution is a person, the one who experiences the problem and who will be using your solution.

Everything about your innovation revolves around them, so you need to get to know them better since, without a deeper understanding of them and their reality, you're unlikely to create a solution or product that will solve their specific problem. This is why we adopt the principles of human-centred design and empathy.

DEVELOPING EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It's a core value in the design process because if you see things from your user's perspective, you'll be better able to create the best innovation for them and their needs, which means you'll be able to build something meaningful for them.

In Stage 2, you'll start developing this empathy for the human at the centre of your solution by exploring their mind, heart and the world around them.

Getting to Know Your User

Unlike the traditional entrepreneur who creates an innovation assuming a marketplace that can afford it, social innovators/entrepreneurs create innovations for those who are underserved, neglected, or disadvantaged (This is the principle of "Leave No One Behind" or LNOB).

While innovators/entrepreneurs use innovation to make a profit, the social innovators/entrepreneur's primary aim is transformational benefit to society.

This doesn't mean that social innovators/entrepreneurs can't generate an income or make a profit and that entrepreneurs don't create innovations that benefit people, but it does mean that the people you're solving for will differ.

So who are you here for? Who is the person at the heart of your problem statement, and what is their lived experience?

If you engaged deeply enough with your chosen problem or challenge in Stage 1, you're likely to have a clearer picture of the kind of person you're solving for.

Don't worry if you're still unsure. The design thinking process isn't linear, and you're likely to jump backwards and forwards many times as you refine your ***business case.***

Definition: Business case

A business case captures the essence and reason for starting a project. It can come in the form of a written document or a presentation.

Definition: Design thinking

Design thinking is an innovation process that considers all the variables over the course of defined steps to determine whether a solution is worth exploring.

The design thinking process uses the principle of human-centred design to get feedback, inputs, and insights from the people at the centre of the challenge to iterate the solution until it best solves their problem.

Confused? Don't worry about it, we'll be talking more about human-centred design and design thinking in Stage 3.

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CREATING A PERSONA

Developing a deeper understanding of your target user means you'll be better able to design an innovation that'll satisfy their needs.

Creating a persona is often the first step designers use to answer the question, "Who are we designing for?"

TAKE ACTION

Get building: Your first user persona

There are many templates you can use to build out this persona, but whichever you choose (see the box of resources after this section for suggestions) there are a few basic inputs that must be covered:

Make them real

Name your persona and give them a face.

Fill in the demographics

Give them an age, a sex, gender or sexual orientation if this is applicable, and say whether they're married or single, live with any disabilities, have children or not, where they live and how they get around.

You're building out a persona in the context of FGM, so be sure to weave in considerations such as whether or not this person has experienced FGM, either personally or in their family and close friends circle. If the persona has experienced FGM, how might it be affecting their health or family life?

Understand their background

What is their culture? What are their beliefs? What is their environment like and, if applicable, where do they come from?

Feel their pains

What do they worry about? What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties?

See through their eyes

What are their attitudes to these pains? What do they do about them?

Go into their hearts

What are their hopes, goals, and dreams? What do they want to see in the future?

Resources

Ecosystem Mapping with Design Kit from Ideo
https://design-kit-production.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/Design+Kit+Method+Worksheets/DesignKit_ecosystemmapping_worksheet.pdf

Miro: A buyer persona template
https://miro.com/aq/ps/buyer-persona/

Free user templates and examples through Xtensio
https://library.xtensio.com/user-persona-template-and-examples

Some things to remember!

- Get as specific as possible. The persona you identify and build out in this process will exemplify the ultimate user of your innovation.
- If you don't use a template, write out the answers to the questions above. One to three pages should be enough, but go as deep and specific as you can.
- If you don't know the answers to these questions, it means you need to do more research into your user. Do desk-based research or connect with the local and regional experts and communities who work in the FGM space for more information.
- Build out as many personas as you like but prioritise one.

SELF ASSESS:

Validate Your Persona

Sometimes creating a persona from what we know isn't enough. After all, how can you be sure that you and your team have really captured the true essence of your user and their main pain points? How can you be sure you're not guessing?

Just like you used research and data in Stage 1 to understand and choose your problem space, use research and data to validate your persona and their key pain points.

Research the available data

Explore and check your theory about your user and the society and region in which they find themselves against data generated and collated by organisations such as UNFPA and World in Data.

Connect with your prospective users

Get prospective users to answer a few questions about themselves, tell you stories about their experiences, or give feedback on your persona and problem statement. By doing this, you'll not only validate your persona but add to your data and knowledge base about the problem space.

- ***Invite users to a short in-person interview:*** Interview between eight and 12 users who best represent your persona.
- ***Conduct surveys online:*** Use platforms such as Typeform and SurveyMonkey to share a set of questions with a larger audience.

Research resources

Our World in Data
https://ourworldindata.org/

UNFPA
https://www.unfpa.org/

Definition: Validate

In design thinking terms, to "validate" something like an opinion, a theory, an idea, or a product or service means to check that these are aligned with user expectation, need and experience.

But don't rush ahead! Both these options require a lot of preparation. We'll talk about that next.

Examples of the kinds of FGM-specific questions you could ask

Depending on whether you're speaking to girls, parents, community members or medical practitioners, you may need to ask these questions differently, or ask different questions.

- Do you understand what FGM means? What is it called in your community?
- Has FGM affected you or your family? Would you share in what ways?
- What do you think about FGM? What is your family's attitude towards FGM?
- Are you aware of the mental and physical health issues associated with FGM?
- What is your understanding of body rights?

*Adapted from: http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Question-Guide-FGM.pdf

Go gently: Conducting sensitive user interviews

Although every innovator/entrepreneur should treat their respondents with respect and gratitude for taking the time to engage with the enquiry, as a social entrepreneur working in the space of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in general and FGM in particular, you face a unique context that demands extra care and consideration.

Author and human-centred thought leader Douglas Ferguson says:

"When you're designing products or experiences around health care, medicine, mental health, end-of-life, or other potentially sensitive issues, it's essential to take a thoughtful, considered approach to how you talk to users to avoid creating additional anxiety or trauma.

"The researcher's desire to get feedback and information has to be tempered by humble and deep respect for the person's situation."

Being a human-centred designer in the design thinking process means that you always place your user at the centre of everything you do, and the interviews are no different.

In the next section you'll be starting your first persona validation and learning more about how to conduct these interviews ethically within a sensitive context such as FGM.

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TAKE ACTION

Get prepared: Your first user validation

After you've collated your questions and are preparing to connect with your users, consider the following:

- The **limitations your user faces** in answering your questions or getting to the interview. What are you doing to accommodate these?
- **How will you create a safe space for the interviews?** Where will your user feel most comfortable? Are there hubs in your area that can accommodate the interview and provide privacy? Does your user need guardians present?
- **Get informed consent.** There is a lot to consider here, such as telling your user who you are, what you are doing and why you're doing it, what you need and what they can expect.
- **Watch your language.** Different communities have different terms and language for talking about FGM. Research what terms your user will be familiar with and use this in all your dealings with them.

IMPORTANT! Jump to Stage 6 – Testing, paying particular attention to the sections "The ethics of testing in the FGM context" and "Planning your test", and then check out the links in the Resources box here before coming back to continue with your interviews.

If you want to approach your users with respect and care and maximise your time with them you ***MUST*** familiarise yourself with this section before continuing.

Resources

Learn more about validating customer personas. https://www.inacademy.eu/blog/validate-your-customer-persona/

How to conduct sensitive user interviews by Douglas Ferguson. https://voltagecontrol.com/blog/how-to-conduct-sensitive-user-interviews/

Tips for conducting interviews about sensitive topics. https://commonslibrary.org/tips-for-conducting-interviews-about-sensitive-topics/

How to conduct research on sensitive topics. https://dscout.com/people-nerds/conducting-research-sensitive-topics#3

TAKE IT WIDER: CONSIDER SYSTEMS MAPPING

Every person experiencing a problem is situated in a wider community and ecosystem. There may be other organisations trying to solve the problem or other important stakeholders you need to speak to for your solution to stand a chance of success.

So, when you speak to your primary user and/or customer, remember to also ask questions that give you a sense of this broader context. Once you have some data, you may want to consider conducting a systems mapping exercise.

This tools matrix developed by social change influencers FSG, a global non-profit consulting firm, will give you tips on where to start when mapping a system: https://www.fsg.org/blog/tools-supporting-systems-thinking-and-change/

You'll spend more time thinking about systems change at Stage 10: Scaling.

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

Drones for Health

THE SITUATION:

Botswana has a very high maternal mortality ratio, one that's almost double the average for upper-middle income countries, due to postpartum haemorrhage, complications after abortion, and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy. But many women face difficulties in reaching the life-saving medical care they need because of the far distances to their communities and health facilities, high transportation costs, and bad roads.

THE SOLUTION:

The Drones for Health project which will use battery-powered drones to deliver life-saving maternal health supplies and commodities to hard-to-reach communities and health facilities.

Read more

Piloting drones to deliver life-saving products for women in rural Botswana
https://www.unfpa.org/news/piloting-drones-deliver-life-saving-products-women-rural-botswana-0

THE PROJECT AIMS TO:

Run proof-of-concept and viability tests in two phases in four villages. Phase three will involve developing the business model, identifying sustainable partnerships, and scaling up the innovation solutions to the Ministry of Wellness and Health.

THE RESULT:

Successful test runs have been carried out in all four targeted villages, with the drones delivering dummy specimens.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- When you build empathy for your user you can better serve their needs.
- We'll learn more about partnerships, business models, and scaling in later stages.

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Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences:

Who experiences this problem?

Who cares about having this problem solved?

What can the people or organisations who care about seeing this problem solved contribute? Will they pay for it? Or will they contribute their own time and energy?

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Lost? Get Some Direction

- Did getting to know your user change anything in your problem statement? That's okay, we call this "iterating". GO BACK to Stage 1 and rework your statement.
- If you haven't yet jumped to Stage 6 and read the section, "The ethics of testing in the FGM context", do so now. You ***MUST*** familiarise yourself with this section before continuing if you are to approach your users with respect and care and maximise your time with them. GO TO Stage 6

PART 1 | **Stage 3:**

THE SOLUTION

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Two weeks to two months

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

Introduction

At this stage, you must begin to feel comfortable calling yourself a social innovator. As a social innovator/entrepreneur, you're passionate about making a real impact on the people and world around you. You're probably really excited to get going on building the innovation you believe is the solution people need, so it must be strange to only start talking about it at Stage 3!

However, one of the biggest mistakes that innovators and entrepreneurs make is to start with the solutioning process before understanding the problem space better. They're so excited about their idea that they don't take the time to understand if it will matter to the people they believe they're helping.

That's why we started with Stage 1 and Stage 2 first: understanding the problem and getting to know the people who experience this problem as a lived reality, so that when we finally start working on a solution it's one that matters to them.

Taking that deep dive in those first two stages – even going through each twice, iterating and building on your problem statement as you learn new information – adds to your insight and provides structure and direction for your solution.

But even when you think you have a solution, you're only at the start of the very exciting process of bringing it to life. So let's do this together! Not only will we be helping our community and creating jobs for ourselves and others, we'll be having fun as we do so.

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THE IDEA-GENERATION PROCESS

Bringing your solution to life is the ***innovation*** process. And a good place to start when explaining the innovation process is through two important concepts that form its foundation.

We've already touched on both in Stage 1 and Stage 2, so you'll be familiar with them: human-centred design and design thinking.

Human-centred design

This is a way of thinking and designing that places the people you're serving and trying to solve for (including important stakeholders) at the centre of the design, innovation, and implementation process.

This means that at every step of the design process, you're checking in with users and integrating their feedback.

When you adopt the principle of human-centred design you commit to defining and solving problems from your user's perspective. Can you see how Stage 1 and Stage 2 made use of this principle?

Definition: Innovation
Here in the idea stage, you're currently at the beginning of the process we call innovation. Innovation is the whole picture, from the practical implementation of ideas – its creation and design to its executive and value creation – that results in the introduction of new products or services or the improvement of existing products or services.

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Design thinking

This is a problem-solving process that's highly user-centric and ***iterative***. It's called "design thinking" because it's based on a process that's traditionally used by industrial designers to create products. But it's such a successful system, that it's adopted by problem solvers in every industry.

There are six basic steps to the design thinking process:

1. ***Empathise***
   Get to know your user and understand their wants, needs and objectives.
2. ***Define***
   Define the problem space from the perspective of your user.
3. ***Ideate***
   You know who your user is and what their problem is, so now you can come up with solutions and innovations to help them.
4. ***Prototype***
   Build out the solution.
5. ***Test***
   Test the solution.
6. ***Implement***
   Get your solution out into the world!

Can you see that you've already started on your design thinking process while using human-centred design principles? In Stage 1 and Stage 2, you already started building out your problem statement (define) and getting to know your user (empathise).

Definition: Iteration
When we talk about "iteration" in the design thinking method, it refers to the repetitive process of incorporating new and relevant feedback to update and refine a solution.

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You might notice that we swapped our stages around and it raises that important point about the design thinking process: it's not strictly linear.

Because it's based on human-centred design principles, it means that as we progress towards refining our solution (prototype) we're always going both forwards and backwards to check in with our users (test and empathise), and iterate the prototype.

If the users don't like or understand the solution we've come up with, we need to go back and consider a different solution (ideate), and so on.

It's a very dynamic and exciting process that can look something like this:

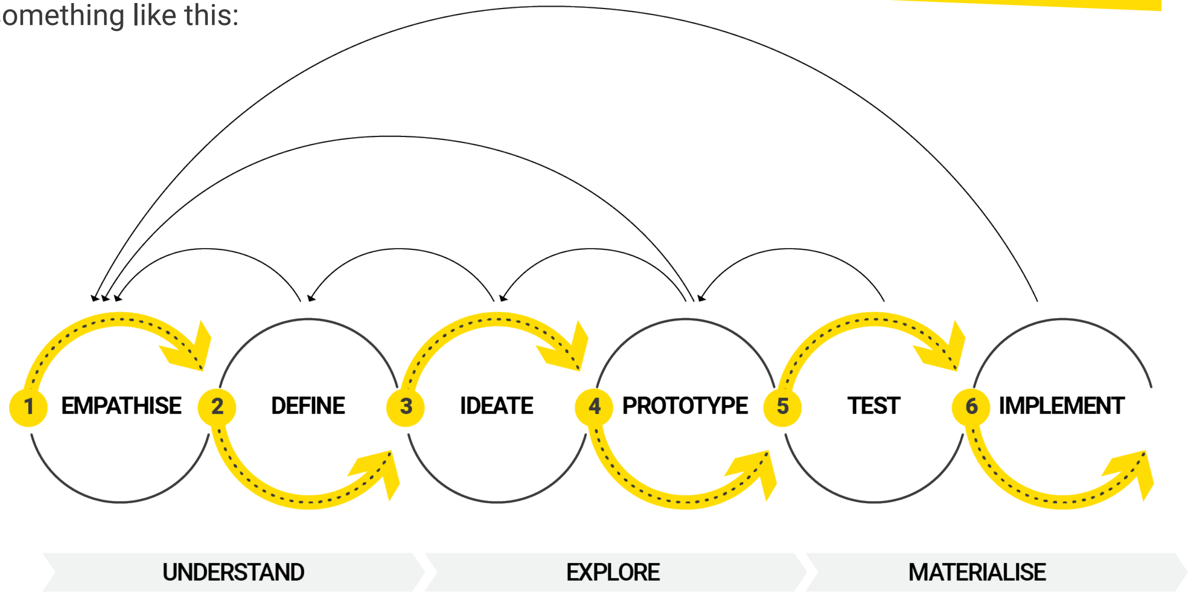
Resources

Learn more about design thinking:

Hasso-Plattner-Institut School for Design Thinking https://hpi.de/en/school-of-design-thinking/design-thinking.html

Ideo: https://designthinking.ideo.com/

Learn more about design thinking for social enterprises and innovation with SocialUp http://toolkit.designthinking-socialup.eu/en/



Just like we did with [Stage 1] and [Stage 2] (define and empathise), we'll be taking a closer look at the rest of the design thinking steps. For now, since we're in the solutioning space, let's focus on the "ideate" phase.

Think of human-centred design as being the engine oil that makes the process machine of design thinking work.

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Finding Your Solution

Innovators see the opportunity gaps that others don't. They see the possibilities of what could exist, and seek to innovate a creative solution that will best close that gap. They're not magicians, they simply use structured processes, like the ones you're going through, to develop skills that allow them to determine clear patterns that others do not see.

As a social innovator/entrepreneur, you'll be the one seeing the opportunity gaps that exist in the fabric of your society.

As you go through your design thinking process using human-centred principles, you will be fine-tuning a solution that best serves the person at the heart of your problem statement.

Solutions fall roughly into two categories: products and services

A product is a tangible object that you can see and touch. Think of a mobile phone or a car; it's a physical object that your user can walk away with and typically requires very little to no input from you further.

For example, if your mobile phone or car breaks you don't take it back to the seller to fix, you take it to a service provider who specialises in mobile or car repairs.

A service covers all those intangible offerings such as skills, expertise and time. If we look at the example above, the mobile or car repair shop is providing you with a service of the skills and expertise to fix your tech.

But sometimes it's a combination. For example, you could provide feminine hygiene products and offer a service alongside it that educates about how to use them and menses, busting sexual and reproductive health myths and empowering women.

You might already have a good idea of what your solution is. If so, which category does it fall into? Give this a good think through, because how you bring your solution to your market will differ depending on what form it takes. We'll talk more about this in Stage 8.

If you've got your idea and don't need to generate new possible solutions, jump to the section "validating your idea".

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IDEATION

Maybe you came into this programme with a solution that's stood the test of Stage 1 and Stage 2, or maybe you have one in mind right now that you want to develop as we progress.

But what happens if you don't have a solution yet? Or you want to explore more options than you have? That's okay! Time to ideate!

What is ideation?

Ideation is a framework where you can let your imagination run wild to generate new and bold ideas. There are three parts to ideation:

1. generation (of new ideas),
2. development (of your chosen ideas), and
3. communication (of that idea).

How to ideate – an example of how to generate ideas

Once you've got and refined your problem statement and have built empathy with your user, you'll have a clearer idea of what to solve for and who the solution must serve.

But how do you come up with ideas? In the next section, we're going to practise generating ideas and, once you're comfortable with this process, you'll find other exercises to try in the Further Resources box in this section.

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Get ideating:
Bold imaginings

Set it up:

- Get set up with a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper and if you have a team gather them together with Post-It notes and markers.
- Write your problem statement (from Stage 1) at the top and keep your persona (built out and validated in Stage 2) close by.

Get going:

- Each person in the team writes out an idea per sticky note and places it on the board, giving a short description of what they mean. The team can ask clarifying questions but don't critique the ideas now.
- Set a time for the contributions according to the size of the team but keep it limited. Two to three minutes for a team of five is a good starting point.

More tools and ways to ideate

Learn more about ideation through the Interaction Design Foundation https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/ideation

Five ideation techniques by Ignitec https://www.ignitec.com/insights/five-ideation-techniques/

Try the Design Expedition Guide with d-School https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/ideation

Get some great ideation tools from the SocialUp http://toolkit.designthinking-socialup.eu/en/concept-priority-map

Wrap it up:

- Cluster ideas that are connected and give each cluster a theme.
- Vote on which idea to take forward.

Can you categorise whether your idea is a product, a service or whether it's a combination? Get as clear as possible, since how you market your solution later will depend on what form it takes. We'll talk more about this in Stage 8.

At this stage, you're still playing with ideas and maybe even gathering more information, so have fun with it! Use the links provided to source new ways of ideating.

Unsure of your idea or it feels a bit weak? Remember that design thinking is a very fluid process

Remember, even the solution you choose now may not make it through further development and you're likely to go through many rounds of ideating, prototyping and testing until you find something that's solid/viable/marketable.

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Developing Your Solution

Now that you've chosen your solution, it's time to put it through some toughening up.

To do this we use the "desirability, viability, feasibility" framework. Ask yourself these questions about each aspect of your proposed solution:

- **Desirability: Do they want this?**
  Is your solution the product or service that your user really wants or needs? Are you really solving the right problem? Remember what we said in Stage 2 about really getting to know your user and solving their *key pain point* from their perspective? This is where your answer is tested.
- **Viability: Should we do this?**
  Will your product or service be sustainable and even profitable? Most typical innovators/entrepreneurs would look at profitability first and foremost, but modern entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs know that to be sustainable, the solution must contribute to the community or society in some way.
- **Feasibility: Can we do this?**
  Can your product or service be created with new or existing technology available to you or do you need to borrow, build, or buy them? Do you have the resources to build your solution and can it be built in a way that strengthens you, your team, and your business? Or will the risk of bringing it to life be too great?

Further resources

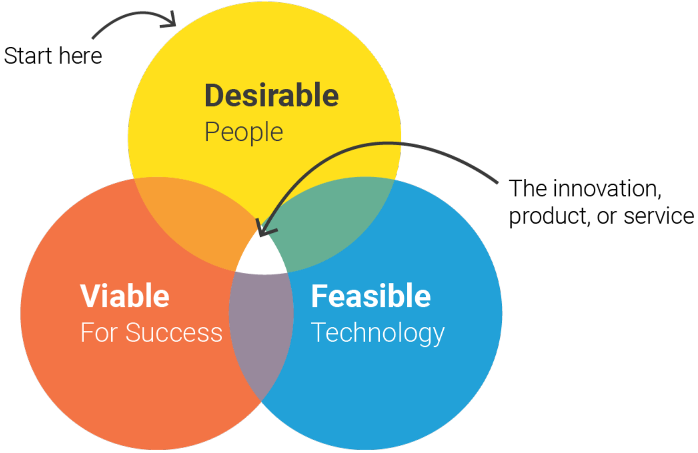
Learn how to make sure your solution is feasible and viable
https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/from-prototype-to-product-ensuring-your-solution-is-feasible-and-viable

Ready to bring the work you've done in Stages 1, 2 and 3 together on one page? Download the Ideahackers' Problem-Solution Fit Canvas: https://www.ideahackers.network/problem-solution-fit-canvas

The innovation Venn diagram created by Ideo is still considered one of the main pillars of innovation. This is an important part of developing your solution – if you miss the mark on any one of these points, your solution is bound to fail.

HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

- the needs of people
- the possibilities of technology
- the requirements for success



Check the resources box to discover how to test for these and be prepared to keep touching on this framework during the implementation phases of Stage 6 and 7.

Remember!

Like with anything connected to the design thinking process and human-centred design principles, you must expect to make continual adjustments as you learn and get feedback from your users and other stakeholders.

Communicating Your Solution

You've generated an idea or solution and you've developed it by considering its desirability, viability, and feasibility.

Now it's time to start structuring how you might communicate this to your future stakeholders and collaborators, and you do this with a ***value proposition*** – a simple statement that communicates the benefit of your product or service to your users.

CREATING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

There are many ways to write a value proposition, but four main pieces of information must always be communicated:

- who your user is,
- what their main problem is (this can be implied through the solution),
- how your solution will solve that problem, and
- why you are the business to solve that problem.

You've done all the work in stages 1 to 3 to answer the first three questions, but what about you and your solution makes you stand out? Why will your user choose you? What is that ***star quality*** that differentiates you?

Your star quality

Your solution's ***star quality*** is that aspect of it that makes it most valuable for your users.

In traditional entrepreneurship, a value proposition answers the question, "Why is someone going to *buy* my product or service?" Value in this instance is created by focusing on *one* of the following factors:

- being **cheaper** (more affordable),
- being **better** (increased quality),
- being **faster** (saving time),
- being **new** (novelty or innovation), and
- being **accessible** (local).

Traditional entrepreneurs single out one of these factors to define their star quality – the element that makes them stand out from the crowd and differentiates them from their competitors.

But in social entrepreneurship, a value proposition answers the question, "Why is someone going to *use* my product or service?"

The solution's value in this instance is created by *usefulness* that is *accessible*. (This doesn't exclude your product or service from generating income, it's just that the emphasis isn't on profit. We'll talk more about funding and other resources in Stage 5.)

Moreover, as a social entrepreneur, you're most likely working in areas that are under-resourced and under-represented, so the idea of competitors in your field is unlikely to be key.

But you will be seeking to attract funders and investors, and when you pitch them your value proposition you'll need to shine that star quality above competing ventures looking for that funding.

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TAKE ACTION

Get thinking:
Find your star quality

- Take a minute to write down all the aspects of your business that are special or valuable to your users.
- Choose the main aspect, that one that makes you feel the most excited and proud, and highlight it as your star quality.

Writing out your value proposition

It's time to write out your value proposition. Don't worry about getting it right the first time; it'll take a few revisions before you and the team are happy.

Besides, it's likely to change – a company's value proposition is its heart, its reason for living and serving its users. Just like its users' needs change over time, so its value proposition will change and adapt over time.

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TAKE ACTION

Get writing: Your value proposition

To recap. Your value proposition must include:

- who your user is,
- what their main problem is (this can be implied through the solution),
- how your solution will solve that problem, and
- why you are the business to solve that problem.

Keep it simple and keep it to the point. Try using this LaunchLeague format as a kick-off:

“[Company name] provides a [description of value] [product or service] to [target customer and need]. We are able to do this because of [star quality].”

An example of a value proposition might look like this:

“Trello helps teams move work forward. Collaborate, manage projects, and reach new productivity peaks. From high rises to the home office, the way your team works is unique – accomplish it all with Trello.” *(Trello is a visual tool for managing tasks and projects.)*

“HotJar – Understand how users behave on your site, what they need, and how they feel, fast.” *(HotJar is heat-mapping and behaviour-tracking software.)*

“Freshly: Chef cooked, healthy meals delivered to you.” *(Freshly offers prepared meal kits.)*

SELF ASSESS:

Vitamin Pill or Painkiller?

A good way to check whether you're on track with the right solution – that is, the right product or service for your user – is the "Painkiller or Vitamin?" exercise.

Using everything you know about your persona and coming from a human-centred design perspective, this exercise asks if your solution directly addresses their main pain. In other words, is it a "need to have" (painkiller) or "nice to have" (vitamin)?

PAINKILLER	VITAMIN
"Need to have"	"Nice to have"
Solves unmet customer needs	Improves an existing solution
Want to use	Should use
Google Maps Amazon Echo Lyft/Uber	To-Do List Apps Fitness Trackers Nextdoor

For example, think of the difference between providing sanitary pads (a product painkiller "need to have") and an app that educates users about menses and the female body (a service vitamin "nice to have").

It's not that the "vitamin" app is any less important. In fact, you could argue that it plays an invaluable role in empowering girls and women over the long term, positively affecting the whole system. Just like adopting a sustained intake of vitamins over time can make you healthier and stronger, these vitamin solutions play an important role in keeping the whole organism healthy.

But vitamins are optional. You can use them or lose them, and that's not what you want for your solution, because it means that you're not addressing your user's main pain – a pain that needs an immediate and effective painkiller.

If you want users to adopt your solution, if you want to make an impact, and if you want to get funding, you must focus on painkiller solutions that address the most pressing pains your users experience. Ultimately, you want to say to your user: "You have this specific pain and my solution takes that pain away."

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

Grace Health

THE SITUATION:

According to the World Health Organization, half the world lacks access to essential health services, and girls and women are particularly disadvantaged by discrimination rooted in sociocultural factors.

THE SOLUTION:

Access girls and women at scale and in the privacy of their homes through their phones.

Grace Health is a health app founded by Thérèse Mannheimer that provides a digital health clinic with a virtual “Female Health Assistant”. This chatbot helps girls and women with a range of issues, from menstrual cycle tracking, pregnancy and fertility resources, and insights into sexual health and contraceptives.

The app uses only a small amount of storage and mobile data, is inexpensive, and provides a 24/7 chat service with personalised, private, and impartial advice and information.

THE PROJECT AIMS TO:

Break taboos around female fertility in the privacy of the user’s home, increase health and SRH literacy, and provide trustworthy referrals to specialists in the user’s region.

THE RESULT:

Grace Health is the leading women’s health app in East and West Africa, with 1.2 million registered users.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- Empathy for the under-resourced user’s need for privacy and easy access (low data use, low cost) defined the solution.
- A product can become a service: the app is the product and the service it provides is access to reliable healthcare.
- As you think about your solution, consider how you might partner for impact.

Read more
Grace Health
https://www.grace.health/

Lost? Get Some Direction

- If you're finding it difficult to understand who would use your solution and why, GO BACK to Stage 2: The People.
- If you want to understand more about why and how people pay for products and services, GO TO Building Block E: Pricing.
- If you want to learn more about value propositions GO TO Building Block C: Messaging.

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PART 1 | **Stage 4:**

THE PROTOTYPE

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:
Two weeks to several months, depending on type of prototype. Stage likely to be repeated several times.

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1 **Introduction**
What is a prototype?

2 **Your First Prototype**
Start at the very beginning

3 **Your Prototype and Lean Innovation**
Your minimum viable product (MVP)

Innovation in Action: Sanitary pads

Lost? Get Some Direction

Think Big: Build your pitch

Innovation in Action: Uteroo

Introduction

Congratulations social entrepreneur! You're on your way to seeing your idea come to life.

In Stage 3 you took all the information and data you and your team collected in Stage 1 and Stage 2 and identified a solution to your user's key pain point. You then thought that solution through from all angles using the viability, desirability and feasibility framework, defined your solution's star quality, and wrote it a value proposition for the world to see.

Now it's time to start bringing that idea to life, and the way we do this is by building a prototype.

WHAT IS A PROTOTYPE?

A prototype is an early sample, model, or release of a product or service that's built to test its concept or process.

In keeping with the iterative and human-centred nature of the design thinking process, a prototype aims to get a basic prototype of your offering out to users as soon as possible to test it for strengths and weaknesses, using their feedback to strengthen the weaknesses and improve the strengths.

Doing this helps in three big ways:

- **It saves time, money, and energy.** It's very costly on your resources to build a product or service to completion, only to find in the final stages that your users don't like it, can't use it, or don't understand it – and then having to start from scratch.
- **It makes your product or service stronger.** By engaging your user from the start you gain valuable insights into making it better for them.
- **You get very real, very quickly.** In the world of ideas, you can easily find yourself drifting into a fantasy about the impact you might have as a social entrepreneur. The sooner you get your prototype out to a select group of your end users, the sooner you'll know whether you have a viable solution in your hands.

Your First Prototype

If you thought ideation was fun, get ready for some prototyping! From here on out, we'll be talking about bringing your idea to life, a process that starts with creating a prototype of your solution.

This prototype can have many forms, starting with a scribble on a piece of paper or a playdough sculpture, and evolving to become more substantial as you get funding to build it out into the real world.

We'll be discussing how this process unfolds in the following stages, but for now we'll start at the very beginning.

START AT THE VERY BEGINNING

In innovation and the design thinking processes, building a prototype can start with something as basic as a pen and a piece of paper.

Paper prototyping is a very basic, cheap, low-stakes and effective way to:

- design and visualise your idea,
- decide on key features,
- build team cohesion around the chosen product and service,
- highlight gaps in the solution, and
- define how it will be delivered and live in the environment it will occupy.

Although "paper prototyping" has traditionally involved using only pen and paper, you can use anything that gets your creative juices flowing. Here's how to do it...

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TAKE ACTION

Get building: Your first prototype

1. Gather your tools

Collect paper, scissors, tape, glue and colourful pens, strings and stickers, Lego blocks, and playdough…anything that can be used to depict your prototype.

2. Get building together

Either by yourself, in one big team, or in smaller groups of two or three, create a representation of your solution using what's available to you. It might be a Lego product, it might be a playdough depiction of a process, or a drawing of a system.

Whatever feels comfortable for you and your team is what you'll use to visually represent your solution and your desired outcome for it. So go big! Taking everything you've learned in Stages 1, 2 and 3, include every one of your wildest imaginings for the most perfect outcome of your solution.

Definition: Collaboration

The process of two or more people, entities or organisations working together with a shared vision towards a task or a goal.

Collaboration is key

If you're working with a team, make sure that everyone is open to contributing and building on suggestions.

Use the prototype to spark discussions, questions and ideas among the members of your team.

3. Test, learn, and make it better

With your value proposition at hand, prepare a short, informal presentation of your prototype for friends and family, and invite them to offer feedback using the "I like, I wish, I wonder" format.

Don't respond verbally to the feedback, but take notes and use these to iterate your prototype, adapting and reshaping your ideas to make your product or service even better. While you make changes, consider the following:

- Which aspects of your prototype did the audience focus on? Why?
- Which elements of your idea did you and your team leave out of your prototype? Why?
- Which parts of the prototype exist today, and which parts need to be built? Which pieces cannot exist today?

While you tweak or rebuild your prototype to improve it, remember to keep checking that you're creating a painkiller and that every one of the features this painkiller offers is answering a specific pain your user experiences.

4. Decide on your core features

You and your team have explored all aspects of the solution and have received feedback on your first prototype. It's time to decide on what the core features of your solution are. In other words, what is at the very heart of making your solution work? Make a list and keep this in mind as you move to the next section.

Learn more

What is Paper Prototyping, by Interaction Design Foundation

https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/paper-prototyping

As you build, consider this great piece of advice from *The Foresight Training Handbook*:

"Don't take all your prototype pieces literally – use them as symbols to have important discussions about what you're building.

"For example, fold a long piece of string in half to show that the solution should take place in a short timeframe, or use Lego blocks to symbolise milestones."

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Your Prototype and Lean Innovation

In the section above, you and your team imagined what you believed to be the most perfect version of the final product. Now you're going to learn to strip away fantasy features to get to the very real basics of your offering.

LEARNING TO GO LEAN

The word "lean" means "bare" or "thin", and it's come to describe an approach to design that's based on three ideas:

- deliver value from your customer's perspective,
- engage only in what brings value to the end product, and
- continuous improvement.

Anything that doesn't serve these three tenets is considered waste.

The idea of "lean" actually comes from the car manufacturing industry, but it works so well as a design principle that it's now also used for business and innovation.

It's proven to be a revolutionary principle that's accelerating how big and small companies innovate.

In the past, businesses didn't focus so much on the user of the product they were selling. Instead, they focused on their idea and writing business plans for it, getting the team together, making impressive investor pitches and building the product. After years of setting it all up, they'd finally take their solution to market only to find that no one wanted it. What a waste of resources!

We avoid that mistake by engaging design thinking processes powered by the principles of human-centred design *and* lean thinking.

This means that as you build your prototype, you're going to build it with your user in mind, attaching only what adds value, and adopting a mindset of continuous improvement – what you've come to know as ***iteration***.

Your prototype will go through many iterations and, by the end of it, you might barely recognise what you started with.

YOUR MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP)

A minimum viable product, or MVP, is a version of your solution – your product or your service – that has just enough features to be usable by early users who then provide feedback for product iteration and development.

Although the term MVP was coined in 2001, it was popularised by Eric Reis, an innovation thought leader and author of *The Lean Startup*.

Reis wanted an innovation system that eliminated waste with "lean thinking": focus on your user, do away with extraneous elements of your solution, and get it to market quickly to test that you're on the right track.

According to Reis, "The minimum viable product is that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort."

If you were to build an MVP – whether you're coding an app or creating a material product – what features would be the most important to give your user a clear idea of its worth in their lives? Let's discover and define what those features are in your current prototype...

TAKE ACTION

Get reviewing: Refining your MVP

1. Take the list you made of the core features in the previous section and compare them to the principles of lean innovation. What must stay and what must go?
2. Now rework your paper prototype to represent your MVP.
3. Draw up a list of what you will need to build this out into the real world. Look back at the "desirability, feasibility, viability" work you did in Stage 3 to confirm your resource requirements – what will you need to build, borrow, or buy? (see below.)

Now that you have a good idea of the solution you're going to build to test with users, we'll be moving onto Stage 5: finding the resources to make this a reality and then making it a reality.

Remember! As we're following the design thinking process that adopts human-centred design and lean principles, we're always checking in with our users to make sure that we're on the right track to serve them better.

The success of "lean" thinking is that it is constantly validating its assumptions and solutions against user feedback and incorporating this feedback to improve as it goes.

"The fundamental activity of a startup is to turn ideas into products, measure how customers respond, and then learn whether to pivot or persevere. All successful startup processes should be geared to accelerate that feedback loop."

– Eric Reis,
The Lean Startup

Something to think about: Build, borrow, buy

We'll be talking about resourcing in Stage 5, but for now cast your mind over some of these resourcing concepts…

Build: What elements of your product or service you'll need to build from scratch, whether that's the code to build a website or a part of a product that doesn't exist yet.

Borrow: What elements of your product or service can you "borrow" from the existing marketplace? Is there a neat solution a competitor uses that you can improve on? Are there free or freemium services like MailChimp, Google or Miro that you can use?

Buy: What elements of your product or service will you need to purchase to make your solution a reality? Do you need material to make an item of clothing, or plastic containers to complete your offering, or drones to transport your product?

WHAT MIGHT AN MVP PROTOTYPE LOOK LIKE?

It can take any number of shapes depending on what you're designing and what resources are available to you. (Which we'll talk more about in Stage 5.) But in general, MVP prototypes take one of the following shapes:

A paper prototype: You did this in Stage 4, but at this point a paper prototype really is something drawn on a piece of paper. A good way to use it to share concepts is as a storyboard, but since you're taking this outside of your design space to engage with users, make sure that it looks as professional as you can get it.

A physical model: This is a 3D model of your product and can be made with anything from craft board to material to a 3D-printed object. It's great for product development since it helps you identify flaws and check user interaction. It can vary in functionality, ranging from a basic representation of your solution to a full working model.

A wireframe: This is most often used for websites, software and apps as a digital outline and framework for how the product will work.

A video: This could be used in the form of animations to show your product or a series of stories to describe your service.

Learn more

The Lean Startup
https://theleanstartup.com/

A guide to MVPs by Eric Reis
http://www.startuplessonslearned.com/2009/08/minimum-viable-product-guide.html

Learn about building MVPs with Udemy
https://www.udemy.com/course/test-your-idea-and-build-an-mvp-in-4-weeks-without-coding/

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USE WHAT YOU HAVE TO BUILD YOUR MVP

You're on your way, social entrepreneur and innovator! So far you've learned:

- what problem you're solving (Stage 1),
- who you're solving it for (Stage 2), and
- how you plan to solve it (Stage 3 and Stage 4).

The next step is to build your MVP using the resources available to you. Of course, it's possible that building your MVP will require more resources than you think you currently have.

If you feel you need to learn more about Resourcing before you head into building your MVP, GO TO Stage 5 now.

Remember! A minimum viable product is a version of your solution – your product or your service – that has *just enough features to be usable* by early users who then provide feedback for product iteration and development.

Imagine it like this: If you were going to build a car for the very first time, you wouldn't build a sports car; if you were going to start a clothing line, you wouldn't sew thousands of items in hundreds of different styles before you knew if anyone liked your style. You'd build the most basic vehicle and choose your signature item.

So keep it simple!

We'll be exploring more steps along your design thinking journey next – testing your prototype with users and iterating it based on their feedback. Do the best you can but don't overthink the first draft – there will be many changes as you go.

Tips!

Progress over perfection is key.

This will take time so add patience to your list of entrepreneurial character strengths.

Always bear in mind that learning is its own goal.

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SELF ASSESS:

Got What it Takes to Build?

You have a good idea of what your MVP might look like and you've thought briefly about what it would take to get your product built with the "build, borrow, buy" exercise. You're slowly building your knowledge base about the realities of being an entrepreneur.

In the next stage we'll talk more about resourcing but before we do, take a moment to consider the landscape of the qualities, skills, and assets you and your team have at your disposal to bring your product or service to the world.

A good way to do this is using a variation on Rockets and Anchors, an exercise that's part of a stock-taking drill in ThinkWrong, a design thinking methodology by SolveNext.

Rockets are all those skills and assets at your disposal that you think will help you build and market your prototype.

Anchors are those things you feel might work against you. An example of a Rockets and Anchors list might look like this:

ROCKETS	ANCHORS
A computer	Slow to follow up on leads
Access to materials to build the MVP	No car
Digital skills	No money
Marketing course	Don't have a network
I know someone at the community hub	Doing it by myself

Now draw up your own list, either by yourself or with your team. Try to be as honest as you can and push yourself to think from every angle.

Don't worry if it feels a bit thin. We'll be coming back to this exercise after we learn more about resourcing.

Learn more

Learn more about the ThinkWrong methodology by SolveNext and check out their great resources https://solvenext.com/

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

Uteroo

THE SITUATION:

Stigmas around menstruation mean that girls and women don't speak about their cycles or experiences, which means serious SRH conditions are not addressed.

THE SOLUTION:

Much like Grace Health, Uteroo (founded by Software Engineer Pabi Moloi) brings the information to its users in app form, tracking menstrual cycles and providing valuable SRH education while doing so.

HOW THE PROTOTYPE WAS BUILT:

Pabi coded the backend, and then collaborated with a UX (user experience) designer to build a user interface (the part of the app that your user sees) that would delight her prospective customers. She and her designer also ran in-person interviews and online surveys to confirm their personas and use cases.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- Collaborate with those specialists who have skills you don't to build a prototype.
- Creating and validating personas to confirm the solution and prototype are on the right track is essential.

Read more

Uteroo – Empowering Women's Health and Wellness
https://www.builtinafrica.io/blog-post/south-african-femtech-company-empowering-womens-health-and-wellness

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

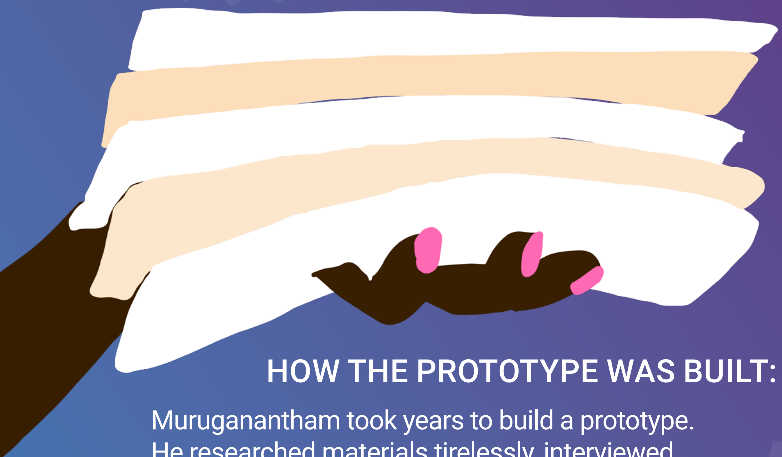
Sanitary Pads

THE SITUATION:

Under-resourced women in India couldn't afford expensive, modern sanitary pads for menstruation and so would use rags.

THE SOLUTION:

Arunachalam Muruganantham reverse-engineered a Western sanitary pad, found local materials, and devised and built simple machines that could be operated by women in the community to create something similar locally.



HOW THE PROTOTYPE WAS BUILT:

Muruganantham took years to build a prototype. He researched materials tirelessly, interviewed manufacturers and materials experts, built many basic variations of pads, and tested them with women. This was difficult to do since there was so much stigma around this, he struggled to get them to agree and even when they did couldn't get detailed feedback. Out of desperation, he even tested them on himself using a soccer-ball bladder filled with goat blood tied around his hip, with a tube running to his underpants (talk about building empathy!).

MURUGANANTHAM'S AIM WAS TO:

Empower women across India with the use of his custom-made machines, the materials, and the knowledge of how to make their own sanitary pads.

THE RESULT:

More than 2 100 production centres have started across the country and the idea has spread to other developing countries such as Nigeria and Nepal.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- Product building from scratch can take a long time and require a lot of research.
- Social innovation in under-resourced areas isn't always about "faster, bigger, better" as it is with traditional innovation in well-resourced areas. It's more about simplicity, affordability, accessibility, scalability and empowerment. We'll be discussing scale for impact in Stage 10.

Read more

Launch Pad

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/13/magazine/design-issue-sanitary-pads-india.html

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences.

Describe the most important and exciting features of your prototype.

What is unique about your prototype (compared to similar offerings)?

Why would users choose to use it over alternatives available to them?

Lost? Get some Direction

If you're finding it difficult to decide what the most important feature of your product or service is, GO BACK to Stage 3: The Solution.

After working on your prototype and defining your solution better, do you need to rework your value proposition and star quality? GO BACK to Stage 3: The Solution.

If you're finding it difficult to answer questions about your team, GO TO Building Block A: The Team.

If you came from the introduction and feel like you want to revise how you got to your product, GO BACK to Stage 1: The Problem.

PART 1 | **Stage 5:**

RESOURCING

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Ongoing

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1 **Introduction**
What is resourcing?

2 **Find Your Collaborators**
Discover who is there for you

3 **The Four Levers for Business Growth**
A business overview

4 **Early-stage Funding**
Where the money comes from

Think Big: Build your pitch

Innovation in Action: WHISPA

Think Big: Build your pitch

Lost? Get Some Direction

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Introduction

Now we're getting to the business of building your innovation! In Stage 4, you worked on your paper prototype and started thinking more about what resources and skills you might need to further build out your MVP and future business.

A business is the vehicle you build to take your solution to your users. Although you might be a superstar social innovator/entrepreneur, no one can build a business by themselves. In fact, you may not even be able to build your MVP by yourself!

To do both you need resources, and in Stage 5 we'll take a closer look at what these are and refine your initial thinking around them.

Once you're done with this section, you'll have a better understanding of what's required to build your prototype and your business, and how to better leverage those resources you already have.

Even if you don't need the resources or funding at this point, it's a good place to start thinking about it and as you progress through the next stages to keep the information you learn here close to you – you'll be using it a lot shortly!

WHAT IS RESOURCING?

When we talk about resourcing, we're talking about those networks and assets you mobilise to build, grow and run your business.

Think about the activities in your business:

1. What ***resources*** do you need to do this?
2. What ***tools*** could you use to do this?
3. What ***partnerships*** would you like to do this?
4. What ***people*** do you need to do this?

When you know what networks and resources you need, you'll know what steps you must take to bring your solution to life.

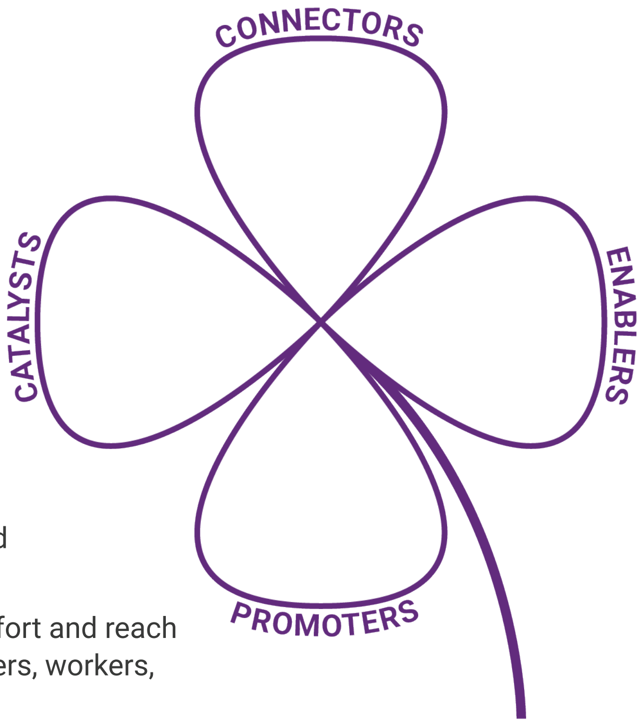
Over the course of this stage, we're going to look at the environment you find yourself in to identify your network and collaborators, and take a deep dive into the ***four levers for business growth.***

Find Your Collaborators

In human-centred design, we start our design process by focusing on the humans at the centre of the problem we're solving for. But human-centred design also means looking at the people you'll need to take along on your journey – collaborators you need to engage with to make your prototype a reality. One easy way to visualise this is a ***crowd clover***.

TAKE ACTION

Get exploring: The Crowd Clover



Use this tool to visualise the network that can support your product or service and help you plan which of these to leverage.

Each leaf of the clover represents a different network or group of individuals or stakeholders in your environment:

- ***Catalysts*** provoke new insights and possibilities.
- ***Connectors*** grow you, your idea, effort and reach by providing access to other partners, workers, funders, resources, etc.
- ***Enablers*** help you realise your idea through action by encouraging and supporting you.
- ***Promoters*** broadcast and circulate you and your idea with other networks.

Tips for using Crowd Clovers!

- Don't be shy! When thinking about your network actors, include all types of relationships you can think of, from your public work spaces to your private connections (family, friends, coworkers, mentors), as well as organisations and online and digital connections.
- Remember: If you note an organisation, include the name of the contact you're thinking about. Always consider the person you want to connect with.
- Overlap the leaves – you'll soon find that the collaborators you're considering fall into more than one quadrant.

Ask yourself:

- Which leaf was easy to fill out and which was difficult? Taking some time to consider this will give you a clearer idea of where you need support and where you can draw support from.
- Where was your clover lacking? Where do you need to bulk it up?
- How can you fill it out? Who do you know that can act as a connector to a broader network?
- Do you have a good balance of formal and informal relationships?

You should now have a great overview of the different people and groups that will help you realise your MVP – and where you need to bulk up. The more support you have, the better. Keep this in mind as you work through the four business levers next.

Stretch your stakeholder knowledge

Explore your stakeholder network further using the Stakeholder Map from SocialUp

http://toolkit.designthinking-socialup.eu/en/stakeholder-map

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The Four Levers for Business Growth

As an innovator/entrepreneur, you've got the passion to find solutions and the perseverance to bring those solutions to the world. But it can be a very rocky road. If you've started out on this journey by yourself, it can feel especially lonely and all the information you must navigate is quite overwhelming.

Understanding resourcing and how these levers grow your business can help with this.

But, while this understanding is important to get direction on your next steps and what's required to turn your prototype into a viable and sustainable business, it also helps in another important way: it helps you see and understand the support network available to you.

As you work through the following levers, pay particular attention to how entrepreneurs support each other, how many tools you can access for free, and how collaboration and partnerships can make you and your business stronger.

1. RESOURCES

All resources can be broken down into three broad groups: tangible, intangible and funding.

- ***Tangible resources*** are all the assets that have a physical form and can be seen, touched, and felt.

  The tangible resources for a *product-based business* might include the raw material and machinery to build the product, the vehicles to transport the product, and a website or a store from which to sell the product.

  The tangible resources for a *service-based business* might include a building or a vehicle to operate from; or the computers, handsets, and apps to distribute the service.

  Tangible resources also include your ***tools*** of trade and ***people***.

- ***Intangible resources*** are all the assets that cannot be seen, touched, or felt, such as intellectual property, patents, trademarks, ownership of designs, logos and brands, and inventions – all of which are invaluable to the entrepreneur.

  These intangible resources are covered in the Building Blocks section, and if you're interested in learning more about these now, take a look at Building Block F: Governance.

- ***Funding resources*** are the monetary resources necessary to start and operate a business. This is often considered the biggest challenge entrepreneurs face, since without money you might not be able to access some of the basic resources you need like raw materials.

  This is such a big part of your resourcing conversation that we'll unpack this more on its own in the section "Early-stage funding" later in this stage.

Further resources

Learn more about the fundamentals of resource planning

https://openstax.org/books/entrepreneurship/pages/14-1-types-of-resources

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2. TOOLS

A tangible resource, tools are those devices or objects that are used to make something or accomplish a task.

A tool can be a *physical* device like a piece of equipment, smartphone or laptop, or *digital*, for example a spreadsheet template, website or piece of software.

Tools and resources can take various forms, and can be:

- Digital or online
- Physical
- Paid for or free or in-kind
- Shared or owned
- Protected or secret
- Networks or communities

The great news is that many of these tools and resources are free, and you may already have access to more of them than you think!

Free tools for entrepreneurs

A list by Growth Supply https://growthsupply.com/free/all/

A list by Medium

https://medium.com/swlh/400-free-resources-and-tools-for-entrepreneurs-freelancers-and-startups-ac24b2a3048c

Or simply Google: "Free tools for entrepreneurs"

For example:

- When you email your users, you can use a free service like Gmail or MailChimp.
- If you want to ideate with collaborators remotely you can use Miro.
- If you want to build a website you can use WordPress.
- If you want to create a logo you can use Canva.
- If you want to connect with your team you can use Slack.

There are so many options! Check out the resources box for more ideas.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are formal relationships where two or more people or businesses work together for mutual benefit.

The Launch League Idea-stage Programme says:

"Some entrepreneurs are nervous about partnerships, but the truth is that if you start and manage them properly, partnerships can be an important growth engine for your business.

“Parties are *active participants* and *co-operate*, sharing resources, information income, and responsibilities.”

Here’s an example:

Let’s look at the winners of the UNFPA’s 2022 FGM Innovation Hacklab, an event that supports Africa’s young people and youth organisations in developing ground-breaking innovative solutions to end FGM.

Read more about the FGM Innovation Hacklab organized by UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP) and the global UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation here.

https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/news/innovative-solutions-ending-female-genital-mutilation-africa-win-seed-funding-and-support-unfpa

GO TO Building Block G to learn more about partnerships in business.

Glory Mlagwa of Ennovate Ventures in Tanzania is building a a platform to disseminate community health information on FGM through media, visual arts and community outreach sessions to help her country reach zero FGM by 2030.

Glory understands that to reach this goal the community has to work together, and so her partnerships might include publishing houses to utilise their community newspapers and radio or TV broadcasts, art departments at universities and schools, and community hubs.

The other winner, Mack Marangu from of Enlightened Generation International in Kenya, is building a mobile application to track school attendance by girls most at risk of undergoing FGM because he knows that school absence is one of the signs indicating that a girl is about to undergo FGM. This app will be able to scale easily, reaching many communities in Kenya, and gathering real-time data that can inform action to end FGM.

For this to work effectively, however, Mack will have to form partnerships with schools, their principals and their teachers.

Something to think about: In-kind resources

In-kind resources are those donated goods, services or volunteer work that’s given to support a project. As a social entrepreneur looking to make a positive impact for public good, specifically with regards to FGM, you may be able to access skills, materials and networks from those people and organisations aligned with your cause.

4. PEOPLE

We've talked a lot about human-centred design and what that means for developing your solution. Now you must think of your business as a solution and see that at the heart of this business, the very reason for its existence, is, you guessed it, *people!*

The *"people"* lever may be last on the list, but it's as important as the funding conversation. In Stage 4, we looked at the skills you and your team members have that make it possible to make or run this prototype.

But this powerful lever isn't just about skills; it's about the entrepreneurial spirit you bring to the mix.

Without the right people – those humans with the right skills and the positive character traits to make this work – your prototype is unlikely to grow into a sustainable innovation solution.

Skills versus character traits

While skills refer to task acuity, character is the mental and moral qualities distinctive to a person. For example, a typical startup list of skills and positive character traits held by teams and team leads could look like this:

Skills	Character traits
Management skills	Passion
Networking skills	Risk-taking
Financial management skills	Flexibility
Ideation skills	Self-confidence
Negotiating skills	Grit or Resilience

This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but it should give you an idea of how to stream you and your team's skills and character traits to get a better understanding of what resources you hold with regards to your "people" lever.

TAKE ACTION

Get thinking: Make your own skills/traits list

1. Using the template above and working separately, each team member writes a list of skills and character traits they believe exist in the team currently. If you're by yourself, simply draw up a list of your own skills and character strengths.
2. If you're in a team, name those who own the skills and positive traits you list.
3. When you're done, and if you're working in a team, work on a whiteboard and collate your lists, taking note of those that overlap and discussing why you identified the traits and skills that you did.
4. Identify the skills that are lacking, and which traits might need to be strengthened.

Later in this section, we'll run a sense check about what makes an entrepreneur, and you might want to come back and update this list.

Resources

- GO TO Building Block A to learn about building your team.
- Learn more about identifying and developing character strengths with CharacterLab https://characterlab.org/

Using this lever

Knowing what you *do* have will make it easier to see what you *don't* have and which resources, tools and partnerships you must investigate to build your people lever so that it is strong enough to build a business.

Don't worry if you find more weaknesses than strengths! We can't be perfect at everything. A strong team is a diverse team, and you can find the people – the co-founders, partners and team members – who have complimentary skills and character traits.

Learn more about character traits

- Skip to the "Self assess" section.
- Harvard Business Review's 10 Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/characteristics-of-successful-entrepreneurs
- An interview with Fred Kiel on MindTools https://www.mindtools.com/blog/putting-a-price-on-character/

The difference between character and personality

Character is very different to personality. Character is a person's inner self and internal motivator, while personality is a person's interactive mask with the external.

"Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open."

– Elma G Letterman

Something to think about

Having leaders of good character matters to the success of your innovation and business. In 2015, Fred Kiel, a business researcher and author of *Return on Character*, discovered that those leaders who displayed high levels of integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion see an average return on assets nearly five times as much as those with low character ratings.

TAKE ACTION

Get mapping: Order your resourcing

Taking everything you've learned and considered in this section, build a resourcing map for your MVP and list what you already have and what you would like to have.

As you fill this map out, you'll notice that you may need and use different tools, resources and partnerships in different aspects of your business, and not every area of building your MVP or business will need all four inputs.

Remember, you don't just get one shot at this. You will keep updating this list, building on it and improving as you go. We're still in the design thinking process, iterating and adapting as we learn.

Here's an example of what your resourcing map could look like:

MVP RESOURCING MAP

Business function	Resources	Tools	Partnerships	People (skills/character traits)
Producing the product or service				
Distribution to users				
Sales (if applicable)				
Managing operations				

Once you've completed this list, prioritise your needs in order of importance for building your MVP, taking into account the realistic cost factors to consider for each.

However, bear in mind that although it may seem intuitive and necessary to prioritise funding at this point, it may not be necessary or even helpful. We'll discuss this next.

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PART 2: A B C D E F G H

Early-stage Funding

Starting out from scratch has many advantages: you get to forge a new path, build new products and services, tap into markets, and connect with users, solving their problems and making a meaningful impact in ways that no one else has.

However, being in this position also makes it harder to access the funding you'll need to finance the build of your MVP and the business that will scale it beyond your immediate network. Most traditional marketplace entrepreneurs face this problem, and the reason for this is neatly summed up by The World Bank: "Too small for venture capital and too risky for the bank."

But social entrepreneurs face an even greater challenge in securing funding. As the Early-stage Social Enterprise Funding Report writes,

"Social enterprises often operate in resource-constrained contexts and deploy novel business models, strategies and technologies. This amplifies both the perceived and actual risks of investing in these businesses."

Does this mean you're stuck with nothing? Of course not! Here are some options you could consider at this stage of your journey.

SELF-FUNDING

Personal savings: You tap into your personal savings to cover the initial costs of developing your MVP. Most entrepreneurs start a side hustle to save for their venture.

Bootstrapping: From the idiom "to pull yourself up by the bootstraps", this is about using tenacity (sometimes called "sweat equity") and the bare minimum resources and money to build your business.

This could look like using all those freebies we spoke about earlier, tapping into the resources provided by tech hubs in your area, plugging into networks, and using the "free" resources available to you, for example using your current living quarters as a business and production space or your car as a distribution vehicle.

Using a credit card to avoid taking out a direct loan is also considered "bootstrapping" but you must be diligent with paying it off monthly.

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FUNDING FROM OTHERS

Friends and family members: This is a great way to get funding since your friends and family most often believe in you and your vision. However, just like with any other investor, there is a right way to go about approaching them – a strategy with boundaries that honours the relationship and sets clear expectations for both parties. See the resources box for contracting templates and more information.

Take a look at this:

A template for lending from friends and family
https://loanback.com

Crowdfunding: This is when you use social media to communicate your idea and vision to a broad marketplace that can support it through donations via an online platform. Think of it as a way for people far outside your network to "invest" in your business without owning any part of the business or needing any guarantees of its success. There's a lot to consider here and your comms and branding will have to be first class to attract widespread interest. Check the resources box for more info.

Take a look at this:

A crowdfunding guide by Fundable
https://www.fundable.com/learn/resources/guides/crowdfunding

Grants: These are funds given by an entity such as a government body, charitable foundation or grant-funding institution to a person or an entity for a purpose linked to public benefit. Grants don't have to be paid back and, as a social entrepreneur looking to make an impact for public good, you're in a better position than traditional entrepreneurs to apply for this. The downside is that it's very difficult to get a grant, the paperwork is exhaustive, and the requirements are tough to meet.

Take a look at these:

Find grant opportunities in Africa with Opportunities for Youth
https://www.opportunitiesforyouth.org/

ESARO Innovation Seed Fund
https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/innovation-0

UNFPA Equalizer Fund
https://www.unfpa.org/unfpa-equalizer-accelerator-fund-new-approach-creating-impact

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Bank loans: You may be able to take out a personal or business bank loan to fund your venture, but most social entrepreneurs are not in a position to do so. Bank loans are most often used to cover the initial outlay on primary tangible resources, such as buildings, land, and equipment. It's unlikely that you'll need to think about this now, but if you want to give it a go make sure you're clear about the terms of repayment and that you know how to maximise the influx of cash.

Tip!

When you're raising money from other people and financiers, they usually want to know that you intend to grow your business. Go to Building Block H: Growth for more guidance on the topic.

Maybe later…

The following two investment sources are unlikely to be available to you now, but they're good to know about.

Angel investors: These are usually people who have accumulated wealth and want to use it to build a legacy by supporting causes that matter to them. They most often provide ***equity***, ***mentorship***, and other support in exchange for some part of the business itself.

Venture capitalists: VCs are large funds looking to invest in high-return, high-risk startups and growing companies, and most often take a stake in the company they invest in.

Resources

- Learn more about funding resources, by OpenStax
https://openstax.org/books/entrepreneurship/pages/14-1-types-of-resources
- The Importance of Financing Readiness, by LaunchLeague
https://launchleague.co.za/2022/06/29/stop-prepping-smmes-for-investment-practice-financing-readiness/
- Early-stage Social Enterprise Funding Report
https://launchleague.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Early-Stage-Social-Enterprise-Funding-Report.pdf

PLANNING FOR PAYMENT

Throughout these stages you've heard that social entrepreneurs are not excluded from making money or turning a profit on their products or services like traditional entrepreneurs.

But since social entrepreneurs usually aim to solve the problems of the world's poorest, they face a challenge particular to them, especially in the early, market-building stages of their ventures: Who will pay for the product or service?

Over the course of this section, you'll build a clearer idea of who your future paying customer might be. But even if you think you'll never be able to sell your solution, it's important to act as if you might and that includes considering the costs and possible customers.

The value of this is threefold:

- You'll know exactly what your solution costs are – from materials to your time – and therefore exactly what financial resources you will need to make it a reality.
- If you know what it costs, you'll know how to price it.
- You'll be better equipped to approach funders and investors. Even grant funders want to know if you've considered whether your solution will have any component of financial sustainability.

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TAKE ACTION

Get thinking: Find your paying customers with the Pay/Pain Quadrant

The Pay/Pain Quadrant is a brainstorming tool to help you understand which of your stakeholders and/or customer segments are most likely to contribute financially to your offering.

Set it up:

- Get set up with a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper and if you have a team gather them together with Post-It notes and markers.
- Write your problem statement (from Stage 1) at the top and keep all your Context Maps close by.

Get going:

1. Think of all the stakeholders touched by your social enterprise. Write one down per sticky and add it to the board.

   These stakeholders could include your user and their immediate social circle and various other organisations and institutions working in the space. Try to be as specific as possible (e.g. write "the head of sanitation provision in the provincial Department of Housing" rather than "government").

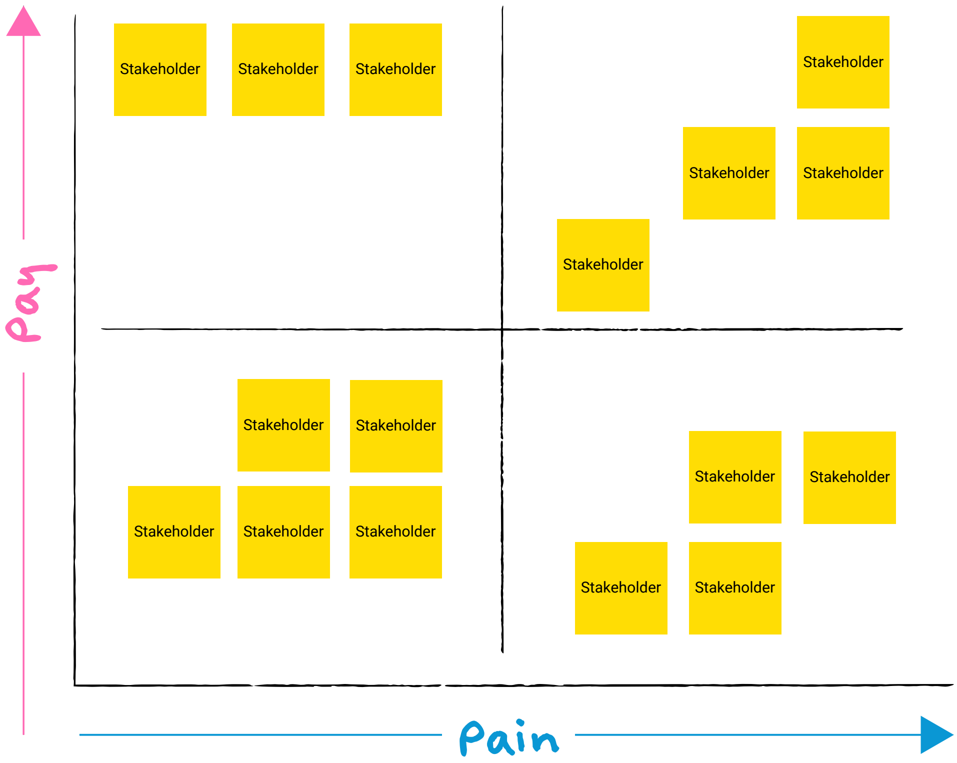
2. Now draw a classic quadrant graph; on the x (horizontal) axis write "pain" and on the y (vertical) axis write "pay".

   The ***pain axis*** represents the degree to which the issue defined in the problem statement is a pain point for a particular stakeholder.

   The ***pay axis*** represents the ability of each stakeholder to pay to have their problem solved. This ability comprises two dimensions: the amount of money the stakeholder has access to and the discretion to spend that money.

   Don't discount a stakeholder that doesn't have a lot of money, just place them closer to zero (the bottom) on the y axis.

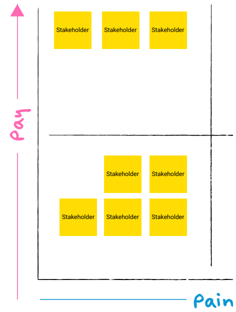
Problem Statement



3. Start placing the stakeholder sticky notes onto the graph, considering the two dimensions: 1) how much “pain” is this issue causing for the stakeholder and 2) what is their spending power?

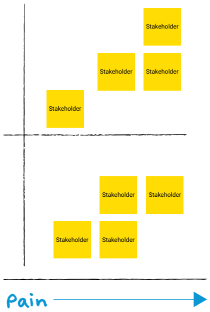
   Be as honest as you can with yourself. As a social entrepreneur, it’s very tempting to imagine that all your stakeholders see your problem as a priority in their lives — but this won’t be the case.

Now analyse your graph:



- **The left-hand side of the graph.** Take off all the stickies representing stakeholders that fall in this area from the mid-point left. Even if they have lots of money to spend, the problem you've identified is not causing enough pain in their lives for them to prioritise it.

- **The right-hand side of the graph.**



Stakeholders in the top-right quadrant are your "business development focus" list, as the issue is a pain point for them and they have money to spend on it. For your social enterprise startup, these people are the short-term priorities in your sales strategy.

Stakeholders in the bottom-right quadrant are your "market development focus" list: these are people who have the ability and incentive to pay a little bit for your services and at scale have the potential to be your main revenue stream. These are the customers your enterprise needs to strengthen its value proposition to secure its long-term viability.

Learn more

GO TO Building Block E: Pricing to learn about costs, revenue streams, and pricing your product right.

Something to think about

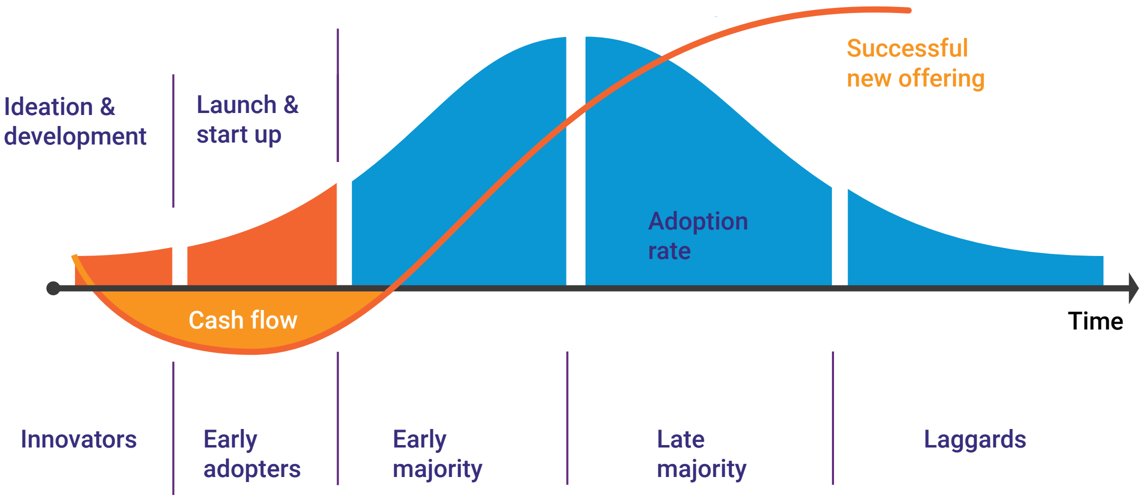
In many early-stage social enterprise business models, the top-right funders are willing to subsidise the bottom-right client segments so that the venture can reach economies of scale.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

When you start out, you're going to be putting in more cash (resources) than you're getting out. This is true for any entrepreneur in the early stages of their venture, so don't feel like you're falling behind when this happens.

Unfortunately, there's no way to predict how much you're likely to spend, since each innovator and entrepreneur will face different costs based on what service or product they're developing and what resources are available to them.

However, because the life cycle of a startup is so similar across the board, analysts have been able to plot an estimated resource-need pathway for most ventures. Here's how it looks:



Of course, every venture doesn't follow the same path, but this is a good framework to plot your progress against. At the very least, it should help you feel more secure when you experience the financially tough early stage – it's perfectly normal and, if your solution is the right one, it will even out in the end.

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences:

1. Who will pay for this solution?

2. How much do you think they will pay?

3. How will they pay?

4. Describe what makes you (and your team members, if relevant) the right person to solve this problem.

5. Describe which people and organisations you might partner with to make this solution possible.

6. If there is any person or organisation that has already endorsed your solution, mention them here.

PULLING THE POSSIBILITIES TOGETHER

Many entrepreneurs use a combination of these resources to build their first business, and these will change over time and according to what the businesses' needs are.

For where you are now, it's likely that you'll use a combination of personal savings, bootstrapping and loans from friends and family.

What do you think? Will your product or service be fully funded, something that customers will pay for, or a combination of funding and sales?

TAKE ACTION

Get reviewing: Rethink your stocktake

In Stage 4 you were introduced to the idea of a "stocktake" with the Rockets and Anchors exercise.

Now that you have a much clearer idea of the resources, tools, partnerships and people (including skills and character strengths) you need to build your prototype and the business around it, repeat that exercise.

Get as specific as you can with names and numbers. Ask yourself:

- How different do the two stocktakes look?
- Are you learning more?

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SELF ASSESSMENT

Are You Really an Entrepreneur?

Earlier in this section, we spoke about the character traits that make a great entrepreneur. Of course, there's no blueprint for this "perfect" go-getter, everyone brings unique qualities and strengths to their business.

But whether you're working in the general marketplace or for social good, most successful entrepreneurs have a few character traits in common. Can you identify at least three of these qualities in yourself?

Passion

Entrepreneurs have the energy to maintain belief in their product or service and business through all the inevitable ups and downs. They know that their passion is what convinces others.

Risk-taking

This is not about acting impulsively. Great entrepreneurs see the risk and understand it – but then calculate the opportunity cost of not taking it on. They're the ones who go where others fear to tread.

Flexibility

An entrepreneur is agile, can work with the messiness and uncertainties of learning, and guides their business to adapt to a changing environment, always meeting their customers where they're at.

Self-confidence

An entrepreneur believes in themselves – this is not about having a big ego, but in believing in your ability to deliver the goods or make a plan.

Management skills

A growing business, especially one that's being bootstrapped, requires a lot of energy to follow up on all the tasks happening at once. Juggling these successfully is important – but knowing when to delegate tasks when they're out of your skillset or schedule is even more important. Remember, diversity is strength and not everyone can be good at everything.

Networking skills

Connecting with people and adding value to others means the entrepreneur always has their network to draw on.

Financial management skills

Bringing in money, managing expenses and planning around cash flow are all critical to an entrepreneur's success. Are you flexible enough to know when you need help?

Grit/resilience

Entrepreneurs chase opportunities and keep going when things are tough. Bringing your solution to the world is a long-term game; you have to be able to go the distance.

Growth mindset

Great entrepreneurs build the best product or service for the user and are always looking for ways to improve their offering. This means that they're always tapping into their curiosity and appetite for learning to adapt and grow.

Learn more about yourself

Fill in the Launch League Entrepreneurial Characteristics worksheet to determine where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and what you need to look for in collaborators. https://launchleague.co.za/resource/entrepreneurial-characteristics-worksheet/

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

WHISPA Health

THE SITUATION:

Nigeria still has one of the highest rates of new cases of HIV infections annually in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as millions of unintended pregnancies and abortions in that same time. These problems are worsened by the society's cultural and religious biases towards young people accessing any form of SRH healthcare.

THE SOLUTION:

WHISPA, a mobile app that provides quality sexual health products and education in a culturally sensitive manner to improve health-seeking behaviour. The app connects users to telemedicine doctors, allows them to book appointments for contraception, screening and STI tests, and provides a platform for them to buy SRH products that are delivered in discreet, unmarked packaging.

HOW WHISPA ACCESSED FINANCIAL RESOURCING:

WHISPA won non-equity funding (in other words, they get funding without giving up a portion of their business like you might with VCs and Angel Investors) through Google for Startups, and its US$3 million Black Founders Fund Africa.

They then won a grant through the Jua Fund, a venture capital fund created by African industrialist Adam Molai. They were one of five recipients to win the inaugural $2m Jua Fund where they pitched their ideas to a high-profile panel of judges. The fund provides equity, mentorship and advisory support, and connects winning enterprises with investors.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- There are funds and grants you can access if you're willing to do the work to research which best suits your offering and secure a pitching space.
- Social entrepreneurs can access these to support their growth.

Read More

WHISPA

https://www.whispahealth.com

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RECAP

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences.

1. What is it about you that makes you the one to implement this solution?

2. What resources of your own are you willing to put into making this idea happen?

3. What resources do you have access to that you will put towards implementing this solution?

Lost? Get Some Direction

- Considering the resources at your disposal, do you need to rework your MVP? GO BACK to Stage 4: The Prototype.
- Not sure you've got the right solution? GO BACK to Stage 2: The People and Stage 3: The Solution.

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PART 1 | **Stage 6:**

TESTING

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Two days to two months.

This stage may be repeated several times.

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

Introduction

In lean innovation and the design thinking process, you test your prototype or assumptions with real users to validate your design decisions *before* additional investment starts on your product or service development.

Testing helps you:

- identify problems quickly,
- make incremental changes to your prototype,
- gather great insights and data from your users,
- deliver a better product or service, and
- build your case with stakeholders.

Using your MVP to test and iterate quickly means that you don't waste resources (time, money, energy, and networks) building a product or service that no one will use later.

Instead, you engage with your user from the start and throughout the design process to make sure that what needs to be discarded or changed gets discarded or changed quickly. In other words, you learn to *fail fast and move on*.

That might feel alarming. But all entrepreneurs need to learn the value of failure. It doesn't mean the end of the road, it's simply a learning moment asking you, "What next?"

Do you remember the entrepreneurial character strength of grit and perseverance? This is what you need it for. When you face the difficulties of bringing your solution to the world, you don't give up at the first sign of difficulty – or the second or the third or even the hundredth. You just learn to adapt to new information.

Steve Jobs, the founder and visionary entrepreneur behind Apple, once said:

"I'm convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance."

When you go into testing your prototype you may be faced with many moments of disappointment or surprise that something you thought was perfect wasn't how your user experienced it. Don't let it get you down. You'll get better and stronger at this as you go.

You're probably very eager to get started, but before you do, you *must* familiarise yourself with the ethical considerations of testing in an FGM context.

The Ethical Considerations of Testing in the FGM Context

As a human-centred designer, you're committed to always placing your user at the centre of everything you do, and the testing interviews are no different. But there's an important difference between traditional user testing and testing in your context.

While every entrepreneur should treat their respondents with respect and gratitude for taking the time to engage with the enquiry, social entrepreneurs working in the context of FGM face a unique responsibility to provide extra care and consideration to not retraumatise, revictimize, or trigger their (potential) user during the testing phase.

Therefore, consider the following as you set about planning and running your tests.

BEFORE SETTING UP YOUR TESTS

You've chosen to solve a problem around a deeply complex issue, and how you proceed with user engagements will require much research, collaboration, respect and consideration. Start preparing for your engagements by doing the following:

1. Connect with your network

If you haven't already, now is the time to find and connect with the community hubs and experts in your region who specialise in FGM. Listen to their guidance and insights and turn to them if you need support in research, finding private spaces, and understanding the language and societal norms present in your region. Not sure why this is important? Read on…

2. Understand that you're working in a unique context

In Stage 1, we briefly discussed FGM as a human rights violation that affects girls and women psychologically and physically, often leaving them with severe sexual and reproductive health consequences.

The reasons for FGM in your area may differ from the reasons in another area, but hopefully you conducted enough research in your problem space to have a good idea of your user's lived reality and the ideologies supporting it.

Before you set up an interview to validate your persona or test your prototype, have a clear awareness of your user's:

- religious and cultural environment (including stigmas),
- language and language use around FGM,
- age and legal standing, and
- guardianship requirements and level of autonomy and/or who to obtain consent from.

3. Your user may face limitations in access

As a social entrepreneur, your user is more likely to be in areas that are under-resourced and under-represented. Considerations in this area include:

- How will you access them in a way that can offer the best feedback on your prototype?
- If it's a digital MVP, do they have internet and device access?
- Are there language barriers between you?
- Where is it easiest for them to conduct the test?

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SETTING UP YOUR TEST

1. Create a safe space for the interviews

You will need a private, safe space for your users to feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts and experiences; one that supports confidentiality – so they won't be looked at or overheard.

Where will your user feel most comfortable? Are there hubs in your area that can accommodate the interview and provide privacy? Does your user need guardians or peers present to feel comfortable?

Connect with your FGM expert and community hubs for advice and guidance.

2. Get informed consent

You must get informed consent from your user or their guardian *before* you validate and test. ***Informed consent*** means that your user is given enough information to make an informed decision about participating in your test, understands the information they are given about it, and are in a position to participate.

For example, if your solution is aimed at solving a problem specific to young girls, you will need to get informed consent from their guardian or primary caregiver.

There are three stages to getting informed consent:

- **Giving information:** who you are, what you're doing as an innovator and why you're doing it, what your solution is (or why you need to validate your persona), why you're testing what you're testing, and how their comments or feedback might be used.
- **Confirming comprehension and voluntariness:** you provide the information in a language that your user understands, and they are made aware that their involvement is 100% voluntary and that they can decide at any point to retract their involvement without any repercussions.
- **Obtaining consent:** you list the exact questions you will ask, your user reads the questions, and explicitly agrees to answering those they want to answer. Agree on what information should remain confidential, and what (if anything) they are comfortable with being shared publicly.

Your user must be given enough time to consider your proposal and questions and, importantly, decide on whether they want to participate. In some cases this consent will be obtained before test day, in others it'll be something you get on test day. Your local FGM expert will know what is best.

3. Confirm how you will manage their data

User feedback doesn't require identification of the user, but your user won't know this. Set them at ease about what personal details *will* be collected (age, environment, cultural background, stories etc) and *won't* be collected (names, addresses, identity numbers, photographs, etc).

Understand and familiarise yourself with your country's data protection laws if there are any. In some cases this information will need to be given before test day to build trust, in others it'll be something you can give on test day. Your local FGM expert will know what is best.

4. Research your language use

Different communities have different terms and language used around FGM. For example, in some areas FGM is referred to as "to purify" and in others your respondents might not consider it mutilation at all. So don't assume you can use the term "Female Genital Mutilation". Speak to your regional and local FGM experts for insights and direction.

5. Test run your interview

Practise your validation interview or user test with a friend to iron out any insensitive questions or language that might make your user feel uncomfortable.

Resources

- Use this template from the University of Oxford as a starting point for your consent form. Work together with your local FGM expert, edit the information so that it's applicable for your region and your user. https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/files/writtenconsentformtemplatedocx
- Learn more about informed consent and download further templates from University of Oxford. https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/consent#collapse281101

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DURING THE TEST

The ethical considerations continue in the running of interviews on sensitive topics and include sticking to your script, showing your user respect and care, and empowering them in the language used and the autonomy they own. We'll discuss this in more detail in the section "Running a test".

Read more

- How to conduct interviews on sensitive topics and more about informed consent https://commonslibrary.org/tips-for-conducting-interviews-about-sensitive-topics/
- Read *Ethical Considerations in Research on Female Genital Mutilation*, in particular Chapter 3 for greater insights into the sensitivity and conscientious approach required of you in user tests. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240040731

Definition: Ethics

From the Greek word "ethos", which means "way of living", ethics are the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour and actions.

Planning to Test

You've just worked through the substantial considerations you need to take into account when setting up and running ethical interviews as a social entrepreneur working in the FGM space.

The following sections on planning and running a test, and the data management thereafter, are applicable to social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in general. But as you read and work through these, remember to always filter the information through the lens of someone working in the FGM space.

Align your test to your MVP

Choose which testing scenario would best suit your MVP. For example, in Stage 4 we discussed the forms your MVP could take, such as a paper prototype, a physical model, a digital wireframe or a video – the test you choose for each of these will require the appropriate premises, devices, and tools to conduct each.

Remember:

- You can test multiple versions of your prototype if you have them, but be careful of overwhelming your user,
- The more interactive your prototype is, the better results you'll get.

Prepare your premises

Prepare the applicable spaces. In your case, you will do so with guidance from your local or regional FGM expert or community and the information in the "Ethical considerations of testing in the FGM context" section.

Set your questions

The success of your test depends on the specificity of information you want to obtain from the interview and the questions you ask about it.

Of course you want to know if your user likes the product or service, but what about it are you testing? The usability? The features? The accessibility? Do they understand the copy and the instructions?

Ask yourself:

What specific information do I need to know about my product? For example, “Does this prototype app work?” is too vague. A better question is, “Can my user navigate the app intuitively?”

The more specific your questions, the better the feedback and data you will gather. A good way to break down your questions is the following:

- **First impressions:** What do you think this prototype is? Who do you think it’s for? What doesn’t make sense?
- **Usability assessment:** These are your usability questions specific to your prototype that confirm what works and doesn’t work.
- **Holistic experience:** This is your user’s overall impression of the prototype. What did they like or dislike? How did they feel about it? What made them feel safe or unsafe? Would they use it and what might they change about it? What would they like to see added or removed? Make use of the “I like, I wish, I wonder” format.

Get permissions

At this point, traditional entrepreneurs will seek permissions to access users that they might be accessing through networks or work groups. In your case, you will be working closely with your local or regional FGM experts and community to gather any permissions to contact your user base and, once you have, to get informed consent from them.

Recruit your users

This is where you make first contact with your user and, in the context of FGM, you must work closely with the experts and communities in your region to do so in the correct manner. You'll be looking to recruit between eight and 12 users.

Test your test

Run your test with a family member, friend, colleague, or innovation peer to check for weak spots in your questioning and to confirm your use of language and space management. How did you do? Go to the Self Assessment section below to find out before continuing.

Further resources

A useful tool that can help you shorten and clarify your thoughts about why and what you are testing is the Strategyzer Test Card.

When deciding what to focus on when testing, it suggests that you start with your riskiest assumption: These are the beliefs about your product or service that would have the biggest impact on the success of your solution if they were wrong.

For example, you might have assumed that young women are comfortable entering information about their FGM experiences into a mobile app.

The Strategyzer Test Card asks you to complete four statements:

1. We believe that…
2. To verify that we will…
3. And measure…
4. We are right if…

This short blog post helps explain how you would complete a Strategyzer Test Card:

https://isaacjeffries.com/blog/2019/3/26/how-to-fill-in-a-strategyzer-test-card

Progress, not perfection

The aim of your test is not to do it perfectly, but to learn. Don't worry if you make mistakes or forget something; testing gets easier the more you do it.

Running a Test

You've been through a lot to get to this point, and you should be very proud of yourself. Just remember, that in the design thinking process you'll be looping back to test your solution after you've iterated more than once.

We're going to talk about what iteration is in the next stage, but for now let's focus on your big moment.

We discussed the ethics of engaging with users in the FGM space at the start of this section. If you're still unsure of this, go back and reread that section.

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STRUCTURING YOUR TEST

PHASE	DURATION (APPROX)	ACTION
1	5–10 minutes	**Introduction:** Welcome your user, reiterate who you are and what you're doing, explain what you need from them, confirm the signed consent forms and reconfirm how you will be using their data and how long the test is likely to take.
2	5–10 minutes	**Warm-up:** Introduce your prototype and ask your user to explain to you their first impressions.
3	30–60 minutes (depending on the number of questions)	**Body of the session:** Ask your prepared questions.
4	5–10 minutes	**Review:** Feedback what you heard your user say to check your understanding, ask them if they have any questions.
5	5 minutes	**Close off:** Tell your user that the interview is over, thank them and ask them if they would like to be kept up to date with the service or product.

TESTING TIPS

1. Be on time

Make sure you are at the venue or virtual space to welcome your users, and that the space is prepared for them well in advance.

2. Stick to your script

Your user agreed to a list of questions, so ask only those questions. If they open up on their own volition to share more information accept that but do not push them.

3. Watch your language

Safety is also felt through how you speak to your user:

- **Autonomy:** Let the respondent know what you are doing and that they are free to stop the interview at any point. Keep checking in with them that they are at ease at ease and remind them that they can end the interview at any point. They hold all the power. The minute your user or their guardian calls the interview finished, is the minute the interview is over. No argument.
- **Respect:** Follow the custom of interaction and language guidelines set out by your local or regional FGM expert.
- Assure them that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Thank them for being willing to share their stories and insights.

4. Taking notes

The aim of the test is to collect data so how you gather this data is extremely important. We'll be discussing this next. But while you take notes, consider what:

- they ignore
- confuses them
- delights them
- contributions they make

> **Resources**
>
> Learn more about testing with Usability Hub
>
> https://usabilityhub.com/guides/prototype-testing

5. Be flexible

If an element of the prototype isn't working or is being ignored, or if it's creating confusion or discomfort, consider removing it altogether. Use a prototyping technique called "rapid iteration" which means to make changes on the go – you practised this in your paper prototyping in Stage 4.

GATHERING DATA

You've done a lot of work to secure the opportunity to collect the data you need from your interviews – probably more than most marketplace entrepreneurs.

Therefore, it's important that when it comes time, you're ready to record that data.

If you're doing your testing remotely, you could use several free and freemium online platforms that will help you test and collect data as you go. Some examples of these could include Typeform and Figma.

Most often, however, designers use some of these basic data-gathering tools.

A prototype rubric

Create your own paper or digital rubric which helps to capture observational data as your user answers your questions and tests your prototype. A prototype rubric might look something like this:

PROTOTYPE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR AN EDUCATIONAL CARD GAME				
First impression of the box	I love the shape and colours.	I don't like it / I don't know what this is.	I don't play card games.	I've seen this somewhere else.
Response to pictures	I love that the pictures remind me of my home and friends.	I don't recognise anything.	These pictures are not appropriate.	I don't understand them.
Language	It was easy to understand the language.	I don't understand all the words.	I don't understand any of the words / I don't read.	This language is bad.
Are the rules easy to understand?	Yes, it's easy to use.	I read the rules but I don't understand them.	These rules are wrong because...	These rules are missing something...
Would you play this game with your friends?	I would play this with my friends.	I am too shy to play this with my friends.	I am not allowed to play this game with my friends.	I don't want to play this game.
Notes:				

Can you see why it's so important to be clear about your objectives and questions going into the test?

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I like, I wish, I wonder

You were introduced to this in Stage 4. For the purposes of data gathering, prepare a sheet of paper or a digital document with three columns to jot down the feedback in these three categories.

Feedback capture grid

Divide your piece of paper into four sections and write “likes”, “criticisms”, “questions” and “ideas”, one in each quadrant. As your user gives feedback, list their comments in each of the relevant sections. This is a useful tool to keep you on track for covering all aspects of the required feedback – if one area is empty or looking a little thin, focus on that section until you’re satisfied your user has expressed themselves fully.

Likes	**Criticisms**
Questions	**Ideas**

Learn more about how to collect data

Go deeper into these and other data-gathering techniques:

Learn more with The Interaction Design Foundation https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/test-your-prototypes-how-to-gather-feedback-and-maximise-learning

Fill in your own Prototype Report Card with Design Kit https://design-kit-production.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/Design+Kit+Method+Worksheets/DesignKit_prototypereportcard_worksheet.pdf

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THE NEXT STEP

Testing goes hand-in-hand with iteration. You test your prototype so that you can collect feedback to iterate your prototype or, put another way, to make relevant changes to it that will improve it for future users.

The testing-iteration-prototype loop can repeat itself as often as you like until you're comfortable that your MVP is ready to be rolled out to a wider audience.

In the next stage, we'll discuss putting the data you collected during testing to use in improving, or iterating, your prototype.

SELF ASSESSMENT:

Test Yourself

It's all very well testing your solution with users, but how did you fare in the testing process?

Test your test with a family member, friend, colleague, or innovation peer to check for weak spots in your questioning and to confirm your use of language and space management and then answer the following questions, giving yourself a point for everything you did.

I introduced myself.

I explained the reason for the test.

I explained what I needed from them as a test user.

I introduced my prototype.

I allowed my user to tell me their impressions without leading them.

I asked my prepared questions.

My user was comfortable.

I checked my understanding by feeding back what I heard them say.

I closed off the interview.

I asked them if they would like to stay in touch with the development of the prototype.

0–7: You need to prepare more for the real test with your user. Go over the "Planning to Test" and "Running a Test" sections again.

7–9: You're getting there, but you'll need to pay close attention to the areas you didn't do well in.

10: You're ready to test!

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THINK BIG

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences.

1. What do your users like best about your product or service?

2. What have you done to make it easy for your users to use it?

Lost? Get Some Direction

- If you came here from Stage 2 to learn about interviews before validating your persona, GO BACK to Stage 2 and continue your journey…
- If your users aren't excited to use your product, GO BACK to Stage 3: The Solution.
- If your users are finding your product difficult to use, GO BACK to Stage 4: The Prototype.
- If you want to know more about how you will make your product and get it to people, GO TO Building Block G: The Value Chain.

PART 1 | **Stage 7:**

ITERATION

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Ongoing, once testing starts. May happen at longer intervals once the product/service matures.

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1 **Introduction**
Learning is its own reward

2 **Iterating Your MVP**
Build, measure, learn

3 **Preparing Your MVP for Your End Users**
Stepping up implementation

Innovation in Action: myPaddi

Think Big: Build your pitch

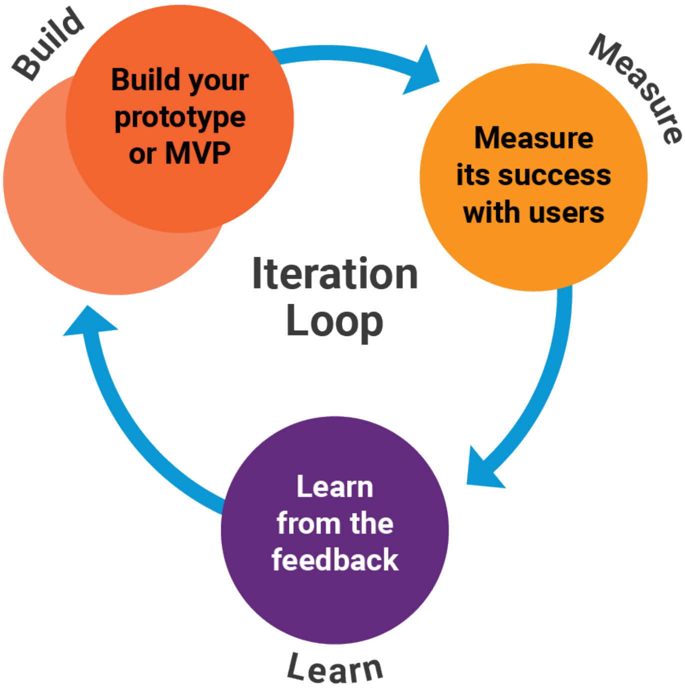
Lost? Get Some Direction

Introduction

In Stage 4 you learned about lean innovation, where the priority is to deliver value from the user's perspective, to engage only in that which brings value to the end product, and to adopt a principle of continuous improvement.

As you know by now, that continuous improvement is called iteration, and it's one of the main principles of design thinking.

Eric Reis' lean technique for startups sums up the iteration process up like this: build, measure, learn.



When we test our prototype with users like we did in Stage 6, we're gathering information about what works and what doesn't work for them.

This information is your data and it's the measurement tool you use to evaluate the direction you're taking when you build your MVP.

In other words, you learn from the feedback and make the relevant changes – you iterate!

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LEARNING IS ITS OWN REWARD

Throughout the design thinking process we're testing and exploring our assumptions and collecting this data to improve on our thinking and our offering. This is why the character trait of "growth mindset" is a powerful one for entrepreneurs – you need to be okay with being wrong and with learning from your users.

The data you gathered in the testing phase in Stage 6 is the information you'll use to improve your MVP.

Don't discount the feedback you received. Remember: You're a human-centred designer putting your user at the heart of your solution. What you're building is an evidence-based solution – and the evidence you'll be showing future stakeholders is how well your users respond to it.

This section talks about how to use the data you collected to iterate the prototype you tested.

Iterating Your MVP

If everything went well in Stage 6, you have plenty of information from your users. But data is only as good as the ability to interpret it, apply it and use it to inform good decision-making.

ANALYSING THE DATA

Before you can do anything with the data you collected, you need to collate it (put it all together).

In the next step, we'll go about building a data framework.

TAKE ACTION

Get framing: Understand your data

Gather all the information you collected in Stage 6 and create a simple analysis framework by synthesising all the data you collected. In other words, grouping the feedback into themes and patterns. Look for points of commonality and how these stack up against the questions you want answered.

Your framework can include anything that works for you, but an example could look something like this. (If you used the rubric data-gathering technique in Stage 6, this will feel familiar to you.)

PROTOTYPE NAME: MENSTRUATION-TRACKING APP			
Question asked/point of enquiry	Didn't work/No	Worked somewhat/ Maybe	Works well/Yes
The user interface was intuitive			
The calendar was easy to find			
The words were easy to understand			
Other notes:			

This documenting process can take some time, depending on how much feedback you received, how many prototypes you tested, how detailed your questions were and if you're doing this alone.

If you're in a team, you can split collating of the feedback between you and then reconvene to discuss your findings.

After you've synthesised the data, you'll have a good idea of what needs to change. You've tested your assumptions and evaluated the data, now it's time to take what you've learned and decide whether to iterate – or stop what you're doing.

PERSIST, PIVOT, PERISH

The point of data collection through testing is to decide whether your prototype is working or not and, if any element is not working, to let it go.

That could even mean trashing your whole prototype. This might feel harsh, but remember that in lean methodology we use only that which adds value to the end product – and anything that doesn't serve this is considered waste.

A useful lean technique for decision-making at this point is "persist, pivot, perish".

Persist means to keep going with what you're doing, ***pivot*** means to change direction, and ***perish*** means to die – in other words: your prototype is a no-go.

Persist: Your prototype was validated!

There may be an element here or there to update, but overall you're on the right track with your prototype, and the tests confirm that it will show real benefit to your user.

Definition: Pivot

In the traditional sense of the word, a pivot is the central mechanism around which something turns. In business, "to pivot" means to change some aspect of a product or service.

Pivot: Some of your prototype was validated

You're on the right road, but you're on the wrong bus. Maybe the problem you want to solve is the right one, but the solution you've chosen isn't exactly what your user wants.

An example of this might be an app you want to build to empower your users with information about FGM but you discover that they don't have access to the internet or devices. An example of a pivot may be changing your solution to a service they can access from the community hub closest to them.

Perish: None of it was validated

This is when you find through testing that your users can't use your product or service and/or it's not solving the right problem. It might be a great idea, but it's not one that will serve your user at all. Time to let it go.

If your evaluation of the data has produced a "persist", move on to the next section. If it's produced a "pivot", review a new angle by going back to Stages 3. If it's produced a "perish" go through Stages 1 through 3 to review your problem space, solution and prototype choice.

Don't lose heart!

If your prototype produced a "perish" verdict, don't become disheartened. Entrepreneurs are always building new businesses around new solutions. They're constantly on the move, identifying opportunities and building out ideas that work until they don't – and then moving on from those to find new opportunities. Social entrepreneurs are no different.

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ITERATING

The end of one iteration becomes the starting point for the next round of designing. If your prototype survived its first tests, it's time to implement the changes.

Some of the changes suggested by users may be easy to make, but others may require further ideation and brainstorming. Don't hesitate to revisit Stage 3. Remember that the design thinking process is one that bounces backwards and forwards as we integrate learnings.

The build-feedback-iteration loop can happen as many times as you feel you need, to build the MVP you're happy to take into the world.

However, you're not striving for perfection and you must be cognisant of the resources available to you. You've still got a long way to go and the people you've tested with are only a very small percentage of your end user.

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Preparing Your MVP for Your End Users

You've come a long way and have learned a lot over the course of the stages. Your MVP has gone through a number of iterations and is ready to be introduced to the world.

But this in itself is a process. This section will talk about how to plan and prepare for it.

YOUR SOLUTION ROADMAP

A solution roadmap is a step-by-step outline of how your MVP product or solution will be introduced to the world. Think of it as a strategic plan of action for how it will meet its users and evolve further as you learn and gather resources for its development.

Having a solution roadmap helps you stay on track towards a goal for building out your MVP, but it also offers other advantages:

- If you're working in a team it keeps everyone aligned about priorities, progress and steps, with a single source of truth.
- If you're working with other stakeholders and other networks, it acts as a showcase for your short- and long-term goals. This will show that you've thought your process through and make it easier to obtain buy-in from them.

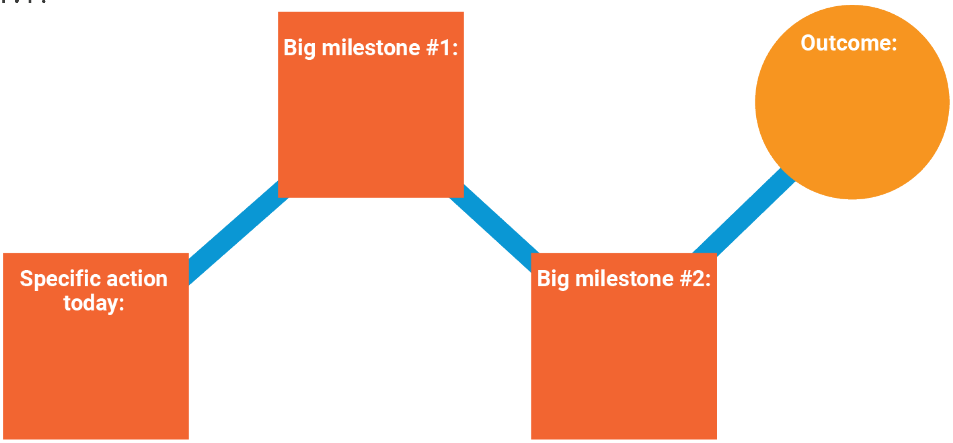
An easy first step to visualising a solution roadmap is to create your first ***change path***.

TAKE ACTION

Get roadmapping: Change paths

The purpose of a roadmap is to plot the actions or events – the paths – that need to happen to take your idea from vision to reality.

Using a large piece of paper, pens and markers, draw up your first draft of a change path for your MVP:



Tips for creating each of your roadmaps or change paths:

1. **Start at the end.** Place your end goal in the large circle and ensure that each step tracks against this.
2. **Identify the tangible steps** towards your goal. A tip to consider: Include the launch of your product or solution. We'll be talking about this in Stage 8 and it's the first and most important step to bringing your offering to market.
3. **Remember your resources**. Take what you learned in Stage 5 and ask yourself what resources you need at each step. What skills do you need and what networks can you make use of?
4. **Go deep.** Put in as many steps as you need to plot the change path. Can you identify blocks of work that need to be done and build "mini" change paths around these?
5. **Put in a timeline.** This will change, but it will give you a good overview of what might be possible.

USE SOME TOOLS

Once you've plotted out a paper-based solution roadmap, you can transfer this information to an online roadmap.

By this stage, you may already have a small team working with you and these digital resources are especially helpful for teams so that everyone's on the same page about the goals, and the roles and responsibilities of each team member to achieve these.

Try some of these tools:

- Clickup
  https://clickup.com
- StoriesOnBoard
  https://storiesonboard.com
- Monday.com
  https://monday.com
- Wrike
  https://www.wrike.com

You'll be using this roadmapping technique throughout the rest of the stages so find something that works for you and your team.

Read up more

Learn about product roadmaps with Atlassian

https://www.atlassian.com/agile/product-management/product-roadmaps#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20product%20roadmap,how%20they%20will%20be%20achieved

Keep updating your solution roadmap. Nothing is set in stone. Your roadmap will change as you learn more about building out your MVP, get real user feedback from it, and as you learn about launching and marketing your solution.

YOUR IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

You've plotted out your roadmap. Now you need to implement it – and that takes more than just you. Implementation is a complex process that requires the input and skills of many people. So if you've been working alone up until now, this is where you'll start inviting in those team members who can bring your roadmap to life.

Don't worry if this feels daunting. Even one other person to help you with project management and finding other team players will be good. But you must start somewhere.

For now, you simply need to understand that the main elements of implementation include:

- **Distribution:** This is who gets your solution to your users.
- **Partners:** Those who will help will help you on this project, whether it's networks and community hubs or peers and other socially minded people.
- **Capabilities:** The skills you need to execute this roadmap.
- **Funding:** The financial resources you need.

TAKE ACTION

Get reviewing: Map the piloting team

You'll use this to discover what team you need to build and what resources you'll need for implementation, and gain an understanding of how things might impact each other.

To do this, draw four columns on a sheet of paper and head the columns with "distribution", "partners", "capabilities" and "funding".

Using the information gathered in your Solutions Roadmap from above and your up-to-date Resourcing Map from Stage 5, plot out what you have and what you'll need to bring your solution to market. What special permissions or skills will you need that you or your team don't own?

A map might look something like this:

	DISTRIBUTION	PARTNERS	CAPABILITIES	FUNDING
What we have		A connection at the community centre.	Microsoft/Excel skills.	Pooled savings. A grant application.
What we need	Storage space.	A community centre to sell our product. Permission to sell.	Someone with sales skills. Someone with marketing skills.	A loan agreement with friends or family.

Once you've compiled your map, start assigning blocks of work to those in the team who have the needed skill sets or connections, and list the areas where you will need to find someone for the job.

If you're working alone, you'll have a very clear idea of which people you will need to onboard to help you. If this feels overwhelming, start with just one person – a co-founder or a project manager with a similar passion for impact – who can help you move forward.

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Tips for mapping your implementation team

- If compiling an implementation team for your whole roadmap is too overwhelming, try blocking your roadmap into bite-sized sections and compiling an implementation team for each section.
- You might go into a lot of detail in some areas and others might be very simple. Go as deep and broad as you feel necessary.
- Remember what you learned about entrepreneurial character traits in Stage 5? Consider these traits when looking for co-founders and team members.
- Assign a project manager for launching your product. We'll talk more about this in Stage 8.

Something to think about

No matter how much you might want to work alone, it simply won't be possible to do so if you want to bring your solution to your users and make the impact you desire.

You must've heard the old African proverb: If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together – Ubuntu.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Setting Measures for Success

In setting your roadmap, you've started setting indicators for what success looks like. Setting measures for success is a good way to check that your MVP is prepared for what you want it to deliver.

In Stage 8, you'll learn how to use these indicators or measures in a tool called "monitoring and evaluation" to improve your product or service even more.

But first, let's start defining and setting those measures.

TAKE ACTION

Get thinking:
A first look at success

Taking what you learned from your roadmap, start thinking about what events and actions you would consider signs of success. They may be very similar to what you surfaced in the roadmap, you may go broader. Think big.

Set it up:

- Gather your team around a whiteboard with Post-It notes and markers.
- Write the phrase "I know we'll be successful when..." at the top of the board.

Get going:

- Each person in the team writes out an idea per sticky note and places it on the board, giving a short description of what they mean by success. The team can ask clarifying questions but don't critique the ideas now.
- Timebox the contributions according to the size of the team but keep it limited. Two to three minutes for a team of five is a good starting point.

Wrap it up:

- Gather the ideas and place them along a timeline, much like the roadmapping, from the first possible success you might experience from those listed to the last.

What does this story tell you about what success looks like? Does it align with your roadmap? Keep these measures close by. You'll be using them again in Stage 8.

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INNOVATION IN ACTION

myPaddi

THE SITUATION:

While solving for the problem of unintended pregnancies in Nigeria, founders of MOBicure Dr Charles Immanuel Akhimien and Dr Emmanuel Owobu, realised that there was a conversation around how unintended pregnancies came about and that this conversation wasn't happening.

Read more

myPaddi: creating safe spaces for young people

https://techcabal.com/2021/07/02/mypaddi-is-creating-a-safe-space-for-young-people-to-talk-about-sex/

THE SOLUTION:

The myPaddi app ("paddi" means "best friend") was rolled out to provide a safe space for young Nigerians to talk about sex anonymously and freely (in an area called The Zone) and provide access to accurate and judgement-free SRH information.

HOW MYPADDI WAS TESTED AND ITERATED:

The Zone was created first, but it soon became clear that users were looking for reliable information about their sexual and reproductive health. Akhimien and Owobu responded to this user need and added doctors to The Zone.

That was a good step, but users soon made it clear that there were questions they wanted to ask the doctors in private. myPaddi responded and the "chat-a-doctor" feature was added – users could subscribe and get in touch with healthcare specialists privately.

That's when the app really exploded. Users were wanting more than "just" SRH inputs – they were looking for mental health support. myPaddi iterated once again, and therapists were added to the mix.

Things were looking great, but before long a new user need became clear: getting SRH products was still difficult, and so myPaddi opened an online store. Since then, it's made more than 10 000 deliveries.

myPaddi has continued expanding as it responds to user needs, adding podcasts and games for its growing user base

THE RESULT:

Tens of thousands of young people across 16 African countries are now active on the app.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- Iteration never stops.
- If you listen to your user and build your solution according to what they need and want it will remain relevant.

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THINK BIG

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences.

1. What resources would you need to turn your prototype into something lots of people might use?

2. How long will it take you to get to a product or service you could charge money for, and why?

Lost? Get Some Direction

- If you want an overview of how you will make your product and get it to people, GO TO Building Block G: Value Chain.
- If you want to know more about how to get the cost and pricing of your product right, GO TO Building Block E: Pricing.

Launching

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Two to six months' preparation, happening simultaneously with prototyping, testing and iteration.

Two weeks to two months launch-focused marketing drive, repeated each time you enter a new market.

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

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Introduction

You're at a very powerful step in your solution's life: the launch phase. This is the point at which your solution leaves the nest and launches into the world, like a rocket into space or a boat out to sea.

It's the first phase in the business life cycle and it's usually signalled with a ***launch***: the co-ordinated marketing effort to debut a new product or service.

This is the moment in time when the market and your potential users hear that there is a new solution or product available for them.

The value of a good launch phase

Whether you're a traditional entrepreneur or a social entrepreneur, a good launch phase:

- **Connects you to your users** so that you can learn even more about what they need.
- **Lets the community know** that the product or service is available.
- Gives you **the opportunity to collect data** in the form of feedback from early users.
- **Helps you make your mark** in the industry as an entrepreneur.
- Sets your social impact venture up as a player in the market, further **building your networks** and gaining you helpful connections for the future.
- Helps you **refine your value proposition** and work on building the sustainability of your offering and business.
- Shows you **what you're capable of** before you scale.

In this stage of your journey, you're going to learn more about how to maximise your launch phase and that starts with preparing for and executing on a good launch.

Preparing for a Successful Start to Your Launch Phase

Because you're a human-centred designer you've already done the hard work in understanding your user. You've validated that the problem you're solving for is the right one and that the solution you've chosen – your product or service – is right for them.

But as you start building your business, you need to understand how your offering and your user will interact in the real world.

UNDERSTANDING THE USER LANDSCAPE

If you haven't yet explored the Building Blocks, now's the time to start acquainting yourself with this information-packed section.

Here are a few questions you must take into consideration as you move into the launch phase and start planning your launch day:

- How will users access your product or service? (Building Block G)
- Who is going to help you sell or distribute your service or product to your users? (Building Block D & G)
- Where will your product or service live and how small or big will your range be? (Building Block G)
- How much will they be able to pay for it? (If anything.) (Building Block E)
- What messaging will you use to market your product or service? (Building Block C)

We're going to delve into your **business model canvas** next.

Something to think about

Just like you build an MVP to test your solution, it's best at this stage to think small and realistically about what you will be able to deliver. As a social entrepreneur you'll be eager to see impact as soon as possible, but you can't be everywhere all at once. We'll talk more about wicked problems, scaling and systemic change in Stage 9.

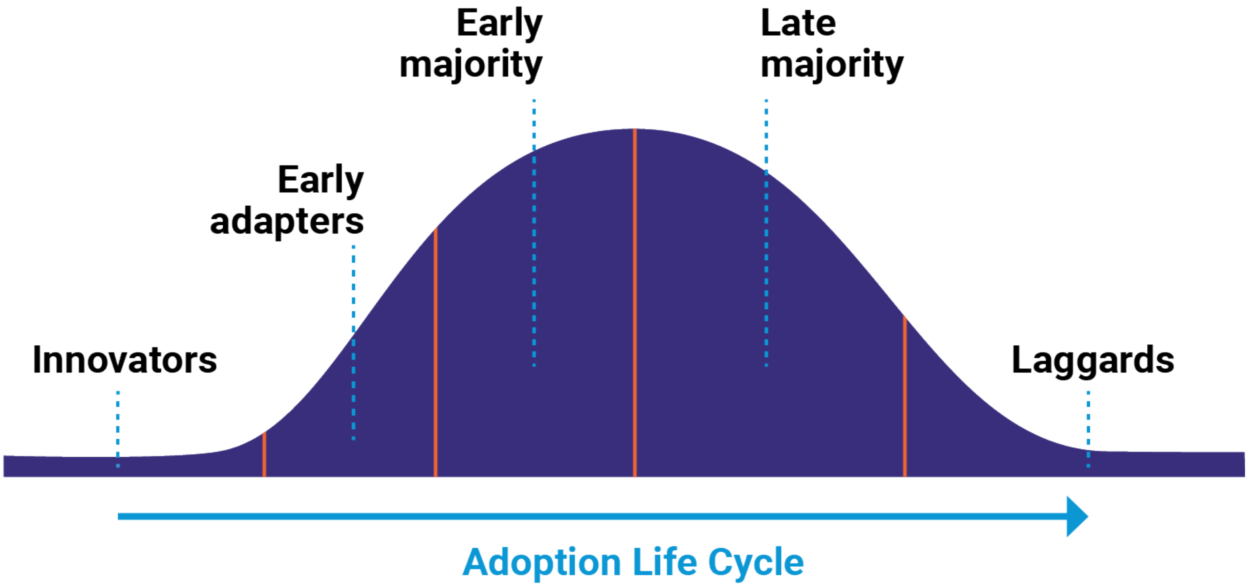
The adoption life cycle

The technology adoption life cycle is a model that categorises consumer responses over the lifetime of the new product or service. It's typically used to plot how users interact with new tech, but it can be applied to any disruptive innovation.

If a product or service requires your consumers to change their behaviour it's considered a disruptive innovation. The more disruptive your product, the more you will need to influence and convince your potential users to buy into it or purchase it.

As a social entrepreneur in the FGM space, your product or service is likely to be considered a disruptive innovation, since so much of the impact will require some kind of behaviour change.

If you understand this model, you'll know what the customer landscape looks like, which means you'll know how to navigate it, how to approach your users, and who your biggest champions will be.



These five profiles are briefly summed up as:

The innovators. They engage with new ideas quickly and don't typically care how well the product is marketed. Engage the innovator to test your product or service, get feedback for iteration and reassure others that you have a viable business.

The early adopters are the visionaries who see the potential in your solution and are willing to take risks on innovative products or services they see as game changers.

The early majority are the pragmatists who make decisions based on how others have decided before them. They're not risk takers and prefer to wait to see how others find new products before committing themselves.

The late majority are the conservatives. They're not comfortable with innovation, are loyal to what they know, and don't want to pay too much for new products. They will wait for everyone else.

The sceptics/laggards only use a new product or service if it becomes a necessity or if it's embedded without them realising it.

For where you are in your journey, you'll be looking to engage the innovators first. Get them excited about your solution and they'll help you win over the visionaries who will give you some good references for your later growth when you start engaging the early majority and the mainstream.

But slow down! It'll be a while before you have to start worrying about scaling. For now, focus on your innovators and ask yourself:

- Who are they?
- How can I reach them?
- How do I speak to them?

What is a business model?

A business model summarises how you will get people to use and pay for your product or service.

It describes the processes, systems and strategies for finding your users and customers, creating your product or service, and getting that product or service to those users and clients. It considers what resources you will need and what money or surplus resources you will create. Understanding these flows is what will help your social enterprise sustain itself over time.

You will learn a lot about how your business model might work during the launch phase of your product or service. Go to Part 2: Business Building for more guidance on designing a business model.

Something to think about

Understanding early adopters, getting them on board and getting them excited, is very exciting. But don't rely on them forever. If you're only focused on servicing a small group, you're unlikely to make the impact you'd like to see.

Build Your Pitch

Answer the following questions in one or two well-considered sentences.

1. What would your product or service tagline be?

2. How are you going to reach your customers?

Who is selling to your customers and how are they doing it?

Planning Your Launch Day

Once you've understood the business-building aspects of your launch phase, you're ready to launch your offering.

It can be tempting at this point to take it easy and hope that word of mouth is all you need to do the job, but launching is about so much more than just debuting your offering and making a good first impression. To do it effectively, the process takes as much thought and care as everything else you've tackled up until now.

But remember! You don't have to wait until you have everything perfectly right. You'll learn along the way.

1. Set the date

When you have a goal, you know what to work towards. Setting a launch date for you, your team, stakeholders and collaborators means that you're more likely to make this a reality because you'll have something to work towards.

> **Do this**
>
> Read through the rest of this section and then make a roadmap for your launch, plotting out timelines for each of the launch implementation goals you need to hit so that you're always on target.

2. Set your measurements for success

In Stage 7 you learned about setting measures for success. Do the same for your launch. Ask yourself what you would like to learn and/or achieve with the launch. The following list is an example of what you could measure to determine the success of your launch:

- how many people clicked on your digital channels,
- how many people attended your in-person launch event,
- how much money you made or what funding opportunities were unlocked,
- how many users you connected with, and
- what community or social impact connections you made.

There is no set agenda for what valuable measurements look like, because it will change from solution to solution, launch to launch, and organisation to organisation.

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3. Determine your launch channels

A launch channel is the place you'll launch your product or service. These can be both online and in-person. Most successful product launches combine channels, for example, using email and social media such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram to advertise their in-person event.

When you think about which channels to use, ask yourself:

- Where would I like to have an in-person launch?
- What is available to me for an in-person launch?
- What social media channels do I use all the time and which ones do my users use?
- Are there influencers and social impact champions in my community and region who are aligned to my message that might get involved?

Once you've answered these questions, you'll have a clearer idea of what your channels are.

Definition: A launch

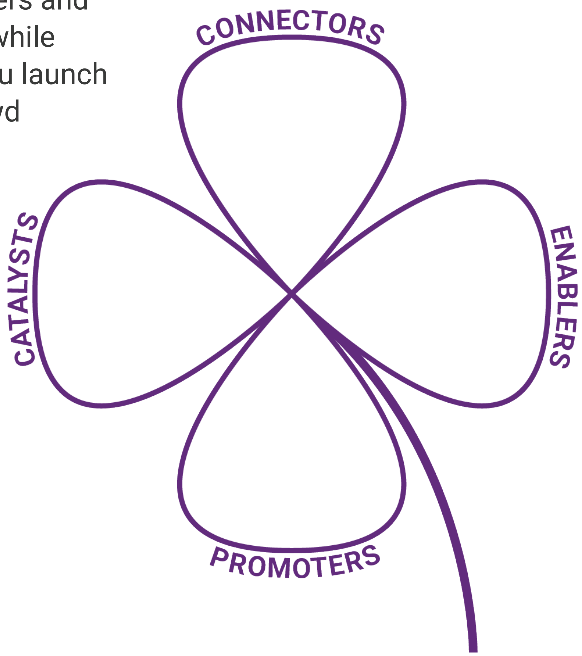
When people talk about "a launch", they're referring to the day on which you debut a new product or service to the market.

Much like an MVP, you can also trial a launch with something called a "soft launch". This is when you do everything you plan to do on your launch, but you only use channels or send invites to a restricted audience (usually people who are very supportive of you) to test for weaknesses before going fully public.

TAKE ACTION

Get plotting: Find your channels

- Look to the partners, stakeholders and collaborators you worked with while building your product to help you launch your product. Look at your Crowd Clover and Resources Map in Stage 5 and your team implementation map in Stage 7 – who can you collaborate with and which of their channels could amplify your message?
- Build a new Crowd Clover of the channels for your launch.



4. Craft your messaging

Marketing refers to all those activities you'll undertake to promote your product or service. Think of all the adverts you see every day. This is marketing, and it requires a broad range of skills, from design and copywriting to photography and maybe even videography.

How your core message is shared depends on the channel you choose. A 300-word article you craft for a newsletter is not going to be the same as an Instagram Reel.

"Marketing involves considering and addressing the entire customer experience, it provides the right context for people to understand the innovation, and it helps identify new partners and channels necessary to engage with customers at the right place, time and manner."

– Denise Lee Yohn,
Brand Leadership Expert

TAKE ACTION

Get crafting:
Understand your message

- To craft your message go back to Stage 3 and review your star quality and value proposition.
- Go to Building Blocks C and D for more information.

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EXECUTING A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH

Launch day is the goal date you set for all your online channels to release your marketing material and for your in-person event to kick off.

You'll have worked very hard to get to your launch day, so make the most of it by making sure that:

- Everybody in your team knows their role in the launch.
- You have the resources to respond to user feedback.

Post-launch: Analysis and Iteration

Iteration doesn't stop in the testing stage. The point of a launch phase that attracts your early adopters is to learn quickly from their experience and feedback and iterate your offering accordingly.

You do this by keeping track of what users are saying to inform any changes or improvements you might make to your product.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

Tracking your solution's effectiveness is called "monitoring and evaluation" or M&E, and an M&E Framework is an outline for how you do this. There are many different types of frameworks but you can build your own. A basic framework will include:

- **An indicator.** In Stage 7 you plotted out a basic solution roadmap and thought about what some early measures of success might look like. An "indicator" is this measure of success.
- **A data source.** This is where you're getting your information from, such as online metrics or user feedback.
- **A baseline.** What the current value of your indicator is at the time of noting.
- **A target.** What you want that value to be.
- **Frequency.** This is how often it's measured. At this point it's good to review your roadmap and plot the frequency of your M&E into it.
- **Action & Responsibility.** This is the action taken to address this data and who is responsible for this action.
- **Outcomes.** This is what your business wants or needs to achieve. For example, you might be using product sales or user satisfaction as indicators.
- **Output.** This is what your business uses to achieve those outcomes. For example, a more intuitive use of a product to ensure customer satisfaction.

Here's how a basic M&E Framework might look:

	DATA SOURCE *How will it be measured?*	**FREQUENCY** *How often will it be measured?*	**BASELINE** *What is the current value?*	**TARGET** *What is the target value?*	**ACTION & RESPONSABILITY** *Who will use this data? When and how?*
Outcomes					
Indicator 1					
Indicator 2					
Etc.					
Outputs					
Indicator 1					
Indicator 2					
Etc.					

TAKE ACTION

Get plotting: Make your own framework

Use a sheet of paper to draw out this framework, print it out or build your own table on a word processing app, and then:

- Decide:
  - what indicators matter in this phase,
  - who will project manage the M&E, and
  - what data sources you will use.
- Update your solution roadmap to reflect M&E frequency and decide on this frequency with whoever is managing this part of your business.
- Make your own M&E Framework.
- Don’t forget to integrate customer feedback into your solution roadmap!

SELF ASSESSMENT

Is This a Startup or an SMME?

You've probably heard the terms "startup" and "SMME" used interchangeably, but even though they may look similar – built from nothing, trying to grow and make money – they're very different things.

Startups are built to "fail fast"; in other words, if the business doesn't deliver the entrepreneur will end the project quickly and move on to the next thing. Do you remember the "pivot, persevere or perish" model? Entrepreneurs don't try to make an unsuccessful idea live. They're those "disruptive innovations" you learned about earlier.

SMMEs (small, medium and micro enterprises), on the other hand, are small businesses that are tightly structured, follow a tried-and-tested business model, often serve local market needs, and follow a gradual and carefully considered growth plan. They're often businesses built on selling more of an existing product or service, maybe just tweaking it here or there for novelty.

Here's a good comparison grid created by LaunchLeague.

	SMME	Startup
Geographic Perspective	Local	Global/multinational
Business Model	Traditional business model, works from day one.	Adapting business model/new product in search of what works.
Scalability	Limited – usually enabled by people, stock, or equipment.	High – usually tech- or IP-enabled.
Growth Rate	Gradual	Fast
Financing	Should generally generate revenue immediately.	May require financing and significant time to start generating revenue.
Risk and Returns	Business risk, but potential to generate low, steady returns.	Market, technology and business risk. Has the potential to generate significant returns at points in time.

Let's Talk Financing, LaunchLeague

INNOVATION IN ACTION:

FemConnect

THE SITUATION:

In South Africa up to 30% of girls miss school on a monthly basis because they cannot afford sanitary towels. This is referred to as “period poverty” and it impacts many SDGs, including Goal 4 (quality education) and Goal 5 (gender equality).

THE SOLUTION:

To tackle this issue, Asonele Kotu founded Femconnect, an SRHR advisory and menstrual health platform that uses its website and app to connect potential donors to those who need sanitary towels, and provides medical advice by connecting users with a virtual consultant.

HERE’S WHAT ASONELE HAS TO SAY…

About learning:

“We never actually knew when our app was ready to launch, we just went with our gut feel. Our first prototype was more of an idea but it gave us something to start with, something that we could learn and test from.

“In our second round we approached the development differently, going for a website instead, testing that for UX and look and feel. Only after we got that right, did we work on version two of the app, which we’re still tweaking as we learn what works and what doesn’t. We’ve realised that there’s a lot of trial and error involved in building an application.”

About the channels they used to launch Femconnect:

“At first it was all through social media, posting the work we do in our communities. Then we started doing in-person events and campaigns where we invited the media to come and see what we were doing. We didn’t have money for paid media so I used my PR background to send press releases, but often no one would respond or even come to our events.

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"It was only when we partnered with a major shopping centre for a Woman's Month campaign that we garnered enough attention for journalists. Suddenly we were in the press and being invited for interviews wanting to know who we are, what we do, and why we do what we do."

About who did the marketing messaging:

"We did it ourselves. The only time we had help with amplifying our marketing reach was for a national march we did in August 2022 because we wanted the government's attention and we wanted people to sign our petition against period poverty. We asked an agency to create a video and a landing page for us, but the messaging and content of all the material was done by me."

About iteration:

"The launch phase gave us a lot of insights from user feedback! It helped us shape what we thought people wanted to what people actually wanted. We got feedback (some good, some critical) that we used to improve the good areas and fix the not-so-good ones."

Advice from Asonele

"It's an exciting but not-so-easy space to navigate as a small business or social enterprise. But there are also so many opportunities for young people. You need to keep strong and never give up on that vision. There will be times when people will tell you that you're wasting your time and that there's no money in SRHR.

"But keep going and do what you do because you believe in yourself, because you care about your purpose, and you know the win will be so sweet after many years of hard work.

"Don't forget you are changing the landscape for future generations – it's not easy, but it's definitely a rewarding journey."

– Asonele Kotu, founder of Femconnect

Read More

The startup connecting girls and women to sanitary care
https://techcabal.com/2020/07/08/femconnect-southafrica-sanitary-care-contraceptives/

Definition: Femtech

"Femtech" is a term that was coined in 2016 to describe that subsector of health technology that addresses everything to do with female health and wellbeing, from fertility solutions and menopause, to SRH and breast care.

Lost? Get Some Direction

- If you are not sure who your users are, GO BACK to Stage 2: The People
- If you are struggling to bridge the gap between piloting and launching, GO BACK to Stage 5: Resourcing
- If you want to learn the basics of sales and marketing, GO TO Building Block D: Channels

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ESTABLISHING

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:

Three to 10 years

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

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Introduction

As you learned in Stage 5, a business is the vehicle you build to take your solution to your users. Since then, you've learned about what it takes to build a business – the resources you need and the people and teams you must collaborate with towards this.

In a traditional business, the establishing phase is the stage when the organisation is settled and growing, acquiring new clients (and the costs to do so!) and cementing itself as a force to be reckoned with.

You may be ways away from this, but much like the roadmaps you learned to build in Stage 7, where you started with the end in mind, it's good to know not only what you're working towards – but how you're working towards it. In many ways, this is what Stage 9 and 10 will be about.

You'll get an overview of the product/service life cycle – and as your idea matures into an established product, your business matures too. We will touch on what to think about when building a business and how it scales out. As you go through these stages, make full use of the Building Blocks section of this guide which gives an overview of all the aspects you need to consider when starting and growing a business around your product.

Visit the Building Blocks section now if you're curious to see what it's about.

THE MATURE PRODUCT

The launch of your product or service is an exciting time: what you are offering is something new and interesting. If your solution is a good answer to the problem, lots of people start using it. Customers and funders may

Over time and if you're lucky, your solution becomes the new way that things are done. This is very satisfying. It also attracts imitators and competitors. It might become more difficult to sell your product or service.

> "A new product needs to be explained, while a mature product needs to be differentiated."
>
> – Investopedia

As a product is working towards becoming established, your business will be focussing on making it as predictable and consistent as possible. This can take years, which should also coincide with steady growth for your product and business.

When growth starts tapering off and competition rises, you may find that the business needs to innovate around the product or service again. You might try changing the model completely: for example, you may decide to make your core product free and charge for add-on services to generate revenue. But, ultimately, your product will reach the end of its life cycle.

IS THE END OF A PRODUCT THE END OF THE BUSINESS?

As a social enterprise, the goal for your product is to put itself out of business: you are imagining a world where a girl won't need what you're offering because FGM is no longer a problem.

But it is also true that issues are complex and interlinked. Your business may still find a purpose beyond its first product: whether that's an app or an advocacy campaign. Your business may, over its own life cycle, create, launch and retire many products and services aimed at empowering young women.

Further reading
Should Social Enterprises Compete or Cooperate?
by DoBetter

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The Stages of a Business

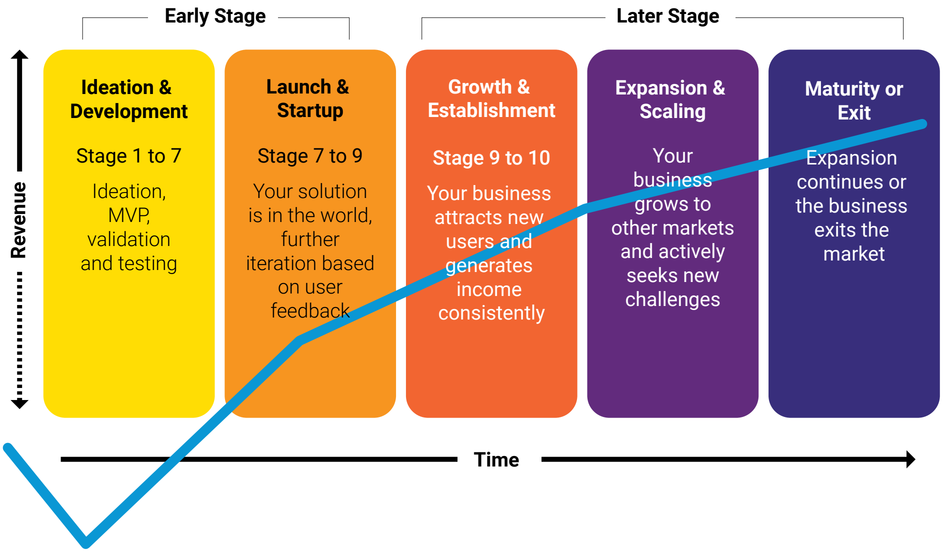
Most businesses follow a typical life cycle from beginning to end. As you can see in the diagram it's very much like any organism's life cycle: it starts small and grows stronger until one day it reaches the end of its life.

Of course, not every business in the world follows this path, some might skip a stage, others might go backwards and others might loop back a few times. But understanding the general life cycle will help you see the bigger picture of where your business is and where you might want it to go.

There are also other advantages to knowing where your business is in its life cycle:

- **You'll know what access to financing is available to you** since the type of financing available to entrepreneurs depends on the business stage they're in. We'll talk more about this in the next section.
- **Each stage is supported by different networks, communities and mentors.** Knowing which stage you're in will help you identify where you can find the necessary support and information.

As you can see, this guide deals primarily with the Ideation and Development stage, touches on the Launch & Startup stage, and will give you a taste of the Growth and Establishment stage, which is the future of your product/s and, ultimately, your business. Each stage is complex and the resources available to learn more about each are vast.



Where do You Start?

Well, the good news is that you've already started! At the heart of every business is the problem it's solving – and you've not only found your problem to solve, but you've tested it and its solution with users, launched an MVP from this and kept iterating.

But there is another truth to starting, growing and establishing businesses: there's no one way to build a business and almost everyone who starts a business, starts small and with one or two people.

As you've already found, it's a lot of hard work and the grind will get even harder as your business grows. At the start, you and your co-founders are going to have to take on managing all the functions of your business. This isn't unusual and is, in fact, ideal.

Michael Gerber, a small-business ***thought leader*** says that all entrepreneurs should work on their business, rather than just in it. he says:

"Everybody who goes into business needs to be three-people-in-one: The Entrepreneur, The Manager, and The Technician."

Definition: Thought leader
In business, a thought leader is someone who is recognised as an authority in a field, industry or theory. These can be people or even businesses.

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According to Gerber:

- **The Entrepreneur** is the innovator, the grand strategist, the creator of new methods for penetrating or creating new markets.
- **The Manager** is pragmatic, doing all the planning, bringing order, striving for predictability.
- **The Technician** is the doer.

For a while, you and your co-founders are going to have to be all three, and probably all at the same time.

It's a grand journey and, if you see it through, one that can be highly rewarding – with all the successes and failures, learnings and experiences, you'll gather along the way.

Further resources

- *An Introduction to Business* https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-business
- GO TO Building Block H: Growth for more links about scaling and growth

As you think about starting a business, take Gerber's advice and ask yourself two questions:

- How can I get my business to work, without me?
- How can I systematise my business so that it could be replicated and scaled? (We're going to take a look at scaling next.)

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PART 1 | **Stage 10:**

SCALING

TIMEFRAME ESTIMATE:
Two to 20 years

NAVIGATING THIS STAGE:

1. **Introduction**
   Scaling for social entrepreneurs

2. **Impact: Scaling Out, Scaling Up, and Scaling Deep**
   Understand your scaling partners

3. **Preparing for Scale**
   What you'll need to go big

Innovation in Action: CHIL AI Group

Think Big: Build your pitch

Lost? Get Some Direction

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Introduction

You've established your business and things are looking good! You're reaching your users and it's time to reach more; maybe you've moved your social impact venture into a business model that generates revenue and you want to extend your offering and find more consumers.

Well done, you've entered the expansion phase of your business' life cycle.

We call this expansion ***"scaling"***, and ***"to scale"*** in traditional business terms means to grow it in such a way that its income increasingly outpaces its costs.

But as a social entrepreneur looking to make an impact on society at large, scaling takes on a more complex conversation – and it's a conversation you started engaging with from the very start of this guide, even if you're not aware of it.

Scaling for social entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs, especially those dealing with complex social and cultural problems such as FGM, are doing more than just building and scaling a business to get a product or service to more people.

What they're ultimately aiming to do, is change mindsets and behaviours through a disruptive innovation in a way that becomes widely adopted and leads to transformative impact.

But this isn't easy to do.

In a 2015 report *Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support it,* researchers Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore write:

"Leaders of social change and innovation often struggle to expand their impact on social systems … From a social innovation perspective, large-scale change will necessarily involve changes to rules, resource flows, cultural beliefs and relationships in a social system at multiple spatial or institutional scales."

This is no small task. Large-scale systems change isn't the job of one person, one team, or or even one community hub. It requires a collaborative effort between people like yourself and other disruptors, organisations and foundations, to affect this change, shifting behaviours and cultural beliefs, and changing rules and resource flows.

In this section, you'll learn about how social entrepreneurs can maximise their reach and impact and how traditional businesses prepare for scaling.

Additional resources

Looking for a local physical hub where you can join a programme? Visit Afrilabs' database of member hubs and filter the list for your region: https://afrilabs.com/hub/

Looking for virtual programmes and other opportunities for African entrepreneurs? Keep an eye on https://www.opportunitiesforafricans.com/

Need support in scaling?

If you've gotten this far in your product journey you may have been part of an ideation or an incubation programme at one of your local hubs or on a virtual platform.

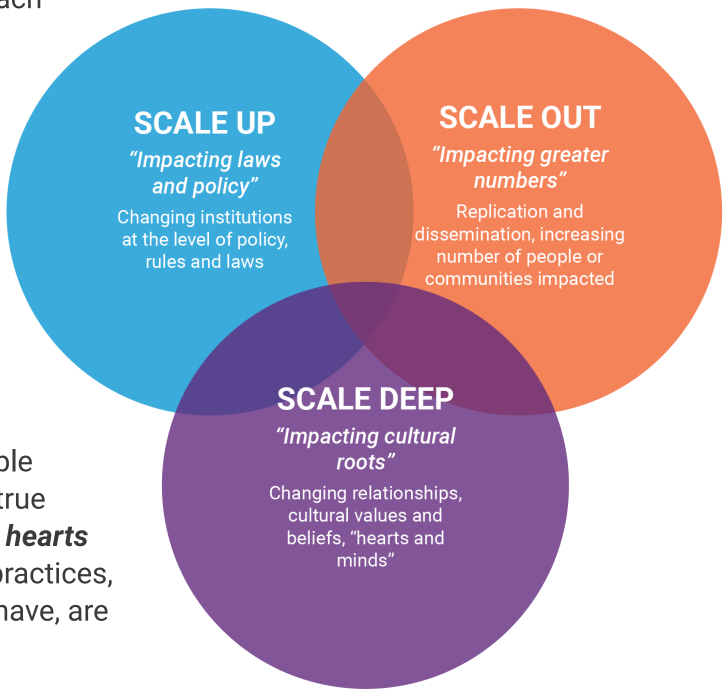
When your product and business have reached the scaling stage, you need a different type of support: one that is more tailored to you and your growth plans. You would want to look for an acceleration programme.

Impact: Scaling Out, Scaling Up and Scaling Deep

The McConnell Foundation, publishers of the *Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep* report, proposes three approaches to scaling for social impact entrepreneurs. These are scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep, and believe that systemic change is likely to require a combination of these.

Scale Up: This is about reaching everyone affected by the problem you're solving for and doing so by addressing ***legal and policy change*** at government level. For example, your innovation could be serving girls as its primary user, but unless the laws change to shift the legal age of FGM or marriage you might never see the change you want.

Scale Out: This is where you try to reach more people through the traditional business sense of scaling – ***replicating your product or service*** to reach more people across a wider area. For example, you might have a product that works in one community and you scale to increase your volume and distribution to reach more people in other communities.



Scale Deep: Laws may change and disruptive innovations may be available to change lives, but sustainable and true change only happens when "***people's hearts and minds***, their values and cultural practices, and the quality of relationships they have, are transformed".

Table 1. Types of “scaling” and their main strategies

	DESCRIPTION	MAIN STRATEGIES
Scaling Out:	Impacting greater numbers. Based on the recognition that many good ideas or initiatives never spread or achieve widespread impact.	Deliberate replication: Replicating or spreading programmes geographically and to greater numbers. Spreading principles: Disseminate principles, with adaptation to new contexts via co-generation of knowledge.
Scaling Up:	Impacting law and policy. Based on the recognition that the roots of social problems transcend particular places, and that innovative approaches must be codified in law, policy and institutions.	Policy or legal change efforts: New policy development, partnering, advocacy to advance legal change and redirect institutional resources.
Scaling Deep:	Impacting cultural roots. Based on the recognition that culture plays a powerful role in shifting problem-domains, and that change must be deeply rooted in people, relationships, communities and cultures.	Spreading big cultural ideas and using stories to shift norms and beliefs. Investing in transformative learning and communities of practice.
Cross-cutting strategies for scaling:	Cross-cutting strategies were those approaches all participants reported using to scale their initiatives, and were not specifically associated with scaling out, up, or deep.	Making scale a conscious choice. Analysing root causes and clarifying purpose. Building networks and partnerships. Seeking new resources. Commitment to evaluation.

Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Tamarack Institute, 2015

Over the course of this guide, you've researched and – hopefully – connected and collaborated with the experts, community hubs and networks in your region who work in SRHR and the FGM context.

If you haven't done so yet, it's worthwhile considering that you're working on a complex problem that needs an understanding of all of the factors involved in its creation in the first place.

Being open to learning from those in the field to gain a deeper understanding of the problem space, having the patience to engage with systems change, and the flexibility to adapt to new information (and change your angle if needs be) are all imperative traits for a social entrepreneur.

As we discuss preparing to expand your business in a more traditional sense (scaling out), consider how you and your product or service can scale up and deep through the help of other organisations and foundations to affect greater impact.

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TAKE ACTION

Get impacting: Understand your scaling partners

To help you visualise and identify who your greatest collaborators may be in achieving sustainable impact as a social entrepreneur, go back to Stage 5 and find your Crowd Clover. With everything that you've learned, can this be updated?

Once you're happy, create your own "scaling" table and plot out your collaborators and network according to which role they play in scaling for impact in your region or country.

Don't be shy to think big.

	Who and what role they play	How we might work together
Scaling Out Affecting greater numbers by replication or dissemination		
Scaling Up Affecting laws and policy change		
Scaling Deep Changing hearts and minds		

A deeper dive into scaling for social impact

Read the *Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support it* report by the McConnell Foundation

https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ScalingOut_Nov27A_AV_BrandedBleed.pdf

Preparing for Scale

In the previous section, you learned about how differently social entrepreneurs and traditional entrepreneurs would view scale. However, none of that discounts the scaling of your business and, as you can see from the above model, "scaling out" disruptive innovations in the social impact space is a vital cog in the wheel of change.

However, much like the previous Establishing stage, it's unlikely that your business will reach this point of scaling soon – and that's for the best. Any seasoned traditional entrepreneur will tell you that scaling too fast can actually kill a business.

If expansion happens too quickly without the right people and operations in place, entrepreneurs can quickly find themselves losing everything they worked so hard to achieve. If they haven't prepared their business' capacity and capability to scale, it simply won't cope with the increased demand.

If you want your business to scale well, you must ensure that your operations and infrastructure have the capacity to manage and deliver on the influx of new users and customers, and that your people have the capacity and skills needed to rise to this challenge – all without increasing your costs significantly.

Scaling your business successfully relies on careful planning and preparation to ensure your operations are in place and your people are enabled to deal with the growth. Here are five important steps to expanding your reach safely.

1. Strategise

This is the careful planning that you must do to gain clarity about where you want to go and why. Scaling is not always the answer and certainly, for social entrepreneurs trying to do so when it isn't accompanied by scaling up and scaling deep, it could end up exhausting you, your funders and your resources.

2. Evaluate and plan

If you decide to go ahead, do thorough research into what scaling would mean for your business. Do a stocktake on your operations, people and finances to get a clear view of what you have in hand and what you would need to keep delivering the value your users and customers have come to expect from your organisation and solution.

3. Automation

Although "growth" and "scaling" are used interchangeably there is a difference. Growth involves attracting new users and customers, but it generates big costs doing so. Traditional business scaling is about gaining new users and customers without incurring extra costs, and it does so by maximising efficiencies such as automating tasks and benefiting from economies of scale.

It's the difference between doing your bookkeeping manually and using an app. Or writing up each new emailer from scratch or using a template.

If you want to scale, you must do an audit of your operations and identify the areas that can be automated.

4. Find the right people

You can't be everywhere all at once. You won't be able to grow your business without the right managers and leaders to help you do so. Scaling may also need people with more skills and specialisations.

5. Secure the funding

Even though scaling shouldn't exceed your revenue it still takes money to scale – you may need to hire more people and buy tech that allows you to scale and so on.

In your planning phase, do an analysis on what finances you would need to unlock scale and where that money is likely to come from: is it going to be funded by business revenue, debt, grants or funding – and what are the risks and benefits for each?

Remember: to scale, revenue has to exceed cost, otherwise you're growing at best and setting your business up for failure at worst.

Learn more

- The meaning of scalability in a business or a system https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/scalability.asp
- *Why We Didn't Fund Your Scaling Plan* in Stanford Social Innovation Review
- GO TO Building Blocks G: Value Chain and H: Growth for more information and links about scaling and growth.

Definition: Economies of scale

The cost reductions that occur when companies increase production. One way this happens is that fixed costs, such as marketing, administration and human resources, can be spread across more units and so become "cheaper". Another way is that the cost of your material for your product will most likely come down if you buy in bulk.

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INNOVATION IN ACTION:

CHIL AI Group

THE SITUATION

Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women and the leading cause of death among women with cancer in sub-Saharan Africa. The tragedy of this is that cervical cancer is one of the most preventable, but poor access to screening for its primary cause Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and treatment means that women in under-resourced environments suffer disproportionately.

THE SOLUTION

Ugandan-based healthtech group CHIL AI Group, created by Dr Shamim Nabuuma Kaliisa, took it upon themselves to solve this problem, starting off by manufacturing less-invasive cervical and breast cancer self-testing kits and developing an AI-powered mobile app named Keti.

Through this app, women could consult with oncology experts, have samples collected and sent to laboratories, have their test results interpreted and then be advised on what next steps to take.

Read more:

I'm every woman

https://techcabal.com/2020/09/02/chil-ai-group-full-fledged-tech-shop-for-african-women/

SCALING OUT

Importantly Kaliisa doesn't believe that empowering women stops there. Other innovations developed by the CHIL AI Group aim to create an even broader impact by targeting the agritech and fintech sectors.

To further healthcare for women, CHIL AI Group developed a smart card savings plan to help cancer patients afford upfront medical costs and started utilising drones to transport specimens from remote rural villages directly to laboratories.

THE RESULT

To date, more than 82 000 women are treated annually with the help of 200 online doctors and 102 partner hospitals across the world, and the self-testing kits are in use across 25 countries.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- True scale for impact is a matter of partnering for skills, materials, reach and channels.
- Scaling out is a very successful format for impact through numbers reached and countries replicated in.

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THINK BIG

Build Your Pitch

1. What type of scale would be best for your solution?

2. What is it about the problem and the system around it that makes this the best scaling strategy?

2. Think about how you might achieve this type of scale and briefly describe it.

Lost? Get Some Direction

- If you've learned something in this stage that makes you think your idea could have even more impact, GO BACK to Stage 1: The Problem.
- If you want to know more about how to situate yourself in a system and work with strategic partners, GO TO Building Block G: The Value Chain.

Your Product Pitch

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have thought (and, hopefully, worked) yourself all the way through a product innovation process!

As you have been going through *Product Building* you have been answering Bigger Picture questions.

And here's the result of all that! In answering these Bigger Picture questions, you have started to draft the outline of a pitch.

WHAT IS A PITCH?

A pitch is a way of communicating what is valuable and exciting about the solution you are building. It talks about what the problem is and why you are solving it. It explains how you will be tackling the problem.

It also needs to talk about how you will get people to choose and use your solution, and the model for how you will make your solution financially sustainable.

You will use your pitch, or parts of it, to speak to the following people:

- business partners
- employees
- users
- customers, and potentially
- grantmakers and/or investors

You will need these stakeholders to buy into your solution and the business that you build around it: This will make your vision a reality in the world.

THE 3 Cs

Your pitch should be:

- **Compelling:** Show that the problem is important and that there would be great benefits to individuals and society if the situation could be improved.
- **Credible:** Back up what you say with research and data wherever possible.
- **Convincing:** Give evidence that it is possible to solve the problem, and that your solution and team can contribute to doing that.

Your pitch draft

Pull through all the answers you gave to the Big Picture questions into this document. It will look very rough, but it is a draft of what your pitch might look like.

Copy this outline and work on it to create a pitch that is compelling, credible and convincing.

Here is the story of your pitch:

The problem that we will be tackling is a big and important one, and this is why:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- Why is this problem important?
- Why is it important that we solve it now?
- Where are the people affected by the problem and are there a lot of them?

There are many people who badly want to see this problem solved, these include:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- Who experiences this problem?
- Who cares about having this problem solved?
- What can the people or organisations who care about seeing this problem solved contribute? Will they pay for it? Or will they contribute their own time and energy?

Our product/service is something that lots of people will chose to use, and this is why:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- Describe the most important and exciting features of your prototype.
- What is unique about your prototype (compared to similar offerings)?
- Why would users choose to use it over alternatives available to them?

The people who have used our product so far love it:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- What do your users like best about your product or service?
- What have you done to make it easy for your users to use it?

There are customers for this solution and here's a bit more about them:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- Who will pay for this solution?
- How much do you think they will pay?
- How will they pay?

We know how to grab the attention of our users and reach our customers:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- What would your product or service tagline be?
- How are you going to reach your customers?
- Who is selling to your customers and how are they doing it?

We are the right team with the right networks to deliver this solution:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- Describe what makes you (and your team members, if relevant) the right person to solve this problem.
- Describe which people and organisations you might partner with to make this solution possible.
- If there is any person or organisation that has already endorsed your solution, mention them here.

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This is what our roadmap to launch looks like:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- What resources would you need to turn your prototype into something lots of people might use?
- How long will it take you to get to a product or service you could charge money for, and why?

Our vision for having this solution make the biggest possible impact on the problem is:

Answers (only) to these questions:

- What type of scale would be best for your solution?
- What is it about the problem and the system around it that makes this the best scaling strategy?
- Think about how you might achieve this type of scale and briefly describe it.

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Now that you're convinced, this is our ask*

***The "ask" is the reason you're pitching your business and depends on who you're talking to.**

- If it's a potential business partner, your ask might be "will you join me?"
- If you're presenting in an incubator or accelerator, you might ask for mentorship or introductions to people who could be partners or customers.
- If you're presenting to an investor, you will need to ask for an amount of money and have a financial model and growth plan to justify the amount you are asking for.

And don't forget to let your audience know how to contact you for more information!

THE DEEP PITCH: PREPARING FOR DUE DILIGENCE

People who are really interested in putting significant resources into your solution and your organisation – these include business partners and investors – will ask more detailed questions about how your business is structured and how it makes money.

This is sometimes called ***due diligence***.

They will ask questions about:

- Your team: their skills and experience.
- How you reach your customers and users.
- Your business's revenue streams, margins and financial management.
- The systems you use to manage your business.
- Governance, regulation, policies and intellectual property.

It is a lot to think about! Especially when you're just starting out. But if you want to see your solution be successful, impact a lot of lives and exist in the world for a long time, you need to build an organisation around it.

To get an overview of the elements of your business that you will need to work on at the same time as you are building your solution, read Part 2: Building a Business.

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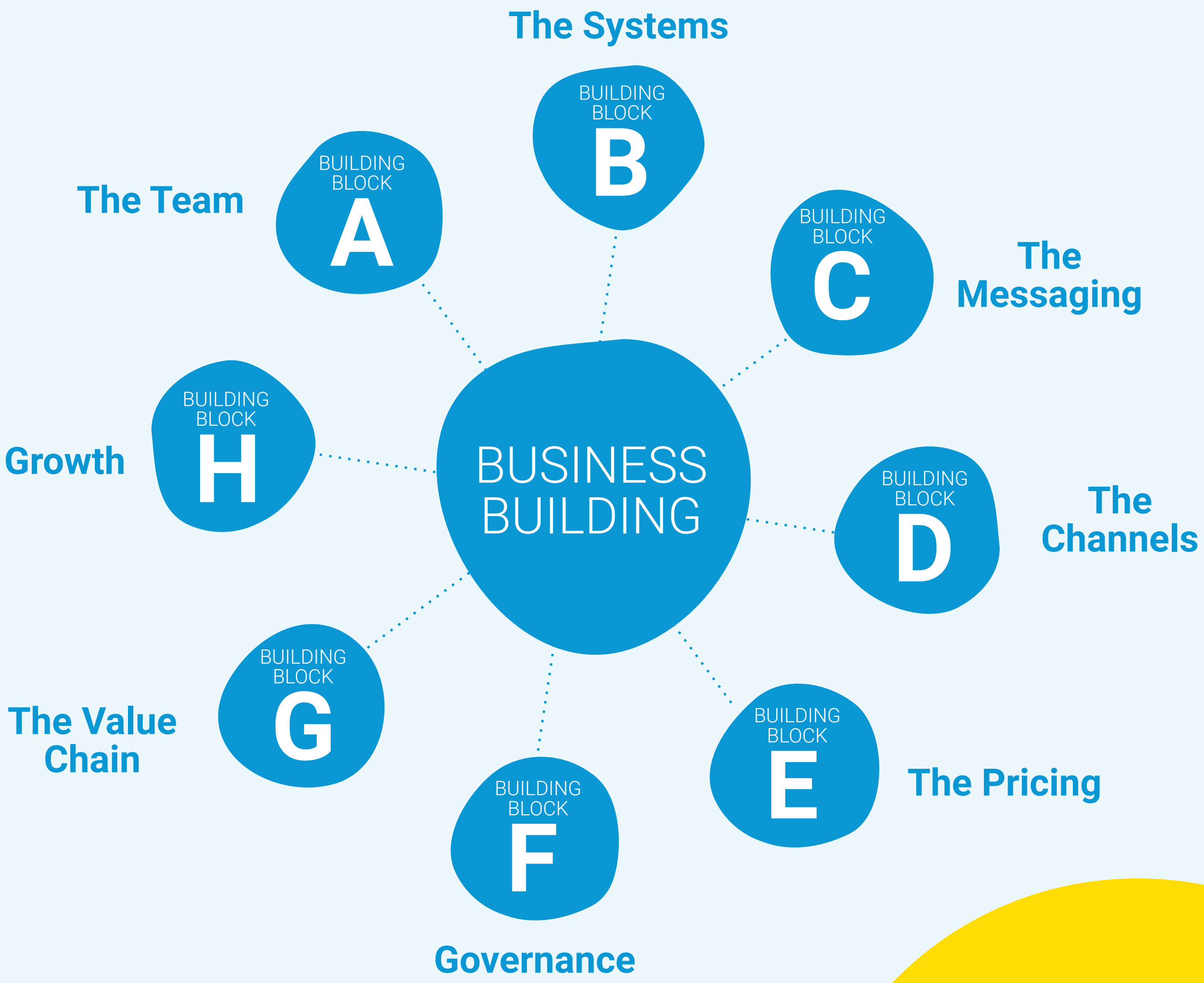
Part 2

Building a Business

(THE BUILDING BLOCKS)



PART 2:

BUILDING A BUSINESS (THE BUILDING BLOCKS)

Why the circle?

Although we've listed the Building Blocks A to H for clarity, in reality you won't experience them in a linear manner because they're all equally important and will be worked on simultaneously when building your business.

Hello, social entrepreneur!

That second word is important: entrepreneur. Because while your focus is on the social aspect of your work, to ensure your enterprise achieves a lasting, sustainable impact you'll need to run it like a business.

Yes, you're solving a social problem. And yes, your efforts will make the world a better place. But there's a lot the social impact space can learn from the for-profit environment.

That's where this book comes in.

Here you will learn about setting up a team, creating systems, and refining your message. You'll also learn about setting the right price for your product or service, identifying your customer (who may not be who you think it is!), adhering to legal regulatory requirements, and setting up your enterprise for growth.

If those sound like the sorts of things you'd expect to learn about in business school, then you're right: You are, after all, in the business of making a lasting social impact!

This part of the guide is structured as your introduction to the eight basic building blocks of setting up a business. There's a lot here for you to digest, but make use of the wealth of resources in each section to enrich your knowledge-base further. There's so much to learn and explore, and the more you know, the better prepared you'll be.

Once you've been through the eight Building Blocks, you should be in a position to start taking your enterprise to market, and making the social impact you want to make.

It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. And we're confident that you'll have the resilience and positive mindset that every entrepreneur needs. After all, as a social entrepreneur you're already, by nature, an optimist. As the old saying goes: "The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

You've seen an opportunity to solve a social difficulty.

Let's give you the tools you need to make that happen.

Overview

Before we deep dive into the eight Building Blocks, let's take a "helicopter view" as those in business like to say.

In his book *The Personal MBA,* business thought leader Josh Kaufmann says there are five interdependent imperatives to every business:

1. **Value creation:** Discovering what people need or want, then creating it.
2. **Marketing:** Attracting attention and building demand for what you've created.
3. **Sales:** Turning prospective customers into paying customers.
4. **Value delivery:** Giving your customers what you've promised and ensuring that they're satisfied.
5. **Finance:** Bringing in enough money to keep going and make your effort worthwhile.

Over the course of this guide, you've dipped into many of these aspects. You've already discovered your users and defined value creation for them, you've gained experience in marketing and communications, managing teams and resources, and delivering value by listening to your users and improving on your offering.

A business is simply doing all of this in a structured and repeatable way, and there are five essential functions in a business that create this structure, namely: Strategy, Marketing, Operations, Finance, and Human Resources.

While social impact ventures may differ slightly in what sales they make versus the impact they deliver, structuring the business to deliver on business imperatives remains the same.

Strategy

This is where you ***define*** value creation and ***plan*** value delivery.

It's the function, usually occupied by founders, co-founders, and the leaders in the organisation, that sets the vision, purpose, and mission of the organisation, decides the ***business model***, and has the overarching view of the whole company. We'll discuss what a business model is shortly.

Learn more

Strategic Management Functions
https://ceopedia.org/index.php/Strategic_management_functions

Building Block A
Building Block C

Human resources

This is ***who is in the business*** to define and deliver value creation.

A business is only as good as the people leading it, building it and making it work. This function ensures that your business has the right people, with the right skills to fulfil all the other functions. Many consider it the "heart" of the business, taking care of the humans who make the business what it is.

Learn more

Human Resources Meaning and Responsibilities
https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/humanresources.asp

Building Block A

Marketing

This is where you ***communicate*** value creation and value delivery.

It's all the activities in your organisation related to drawing customers into your business and maintaining great relationships with them so that they stay.

Learn more

Marketing in Business: Strategies and Types Explained
https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketing.asp

Building Block D

Operations

This is ***how you deliver*** value creation.

The operations function is essentially about oversight and control – all the processes, protocols, governance levers, and supply chain management – that makes the organisation run smoothly, efficiently and legally, to deliver on its purpose.

Learn more

Why is operations an important function in business?
https://www.getsmarter.com/blog/career-advice/operations-management-important-faqs/

Building Block F: Governance and Building Block G: Value Chain

Finance

This is how you ***manage the incoming and outgoing finances*** to create and deliver value.

This department is responsible for getting funds and investment, managing cash inflow and outflow, and analysing and reporting on these streams.

Learn more

The role of the finance function
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zk94cqt/revision/1

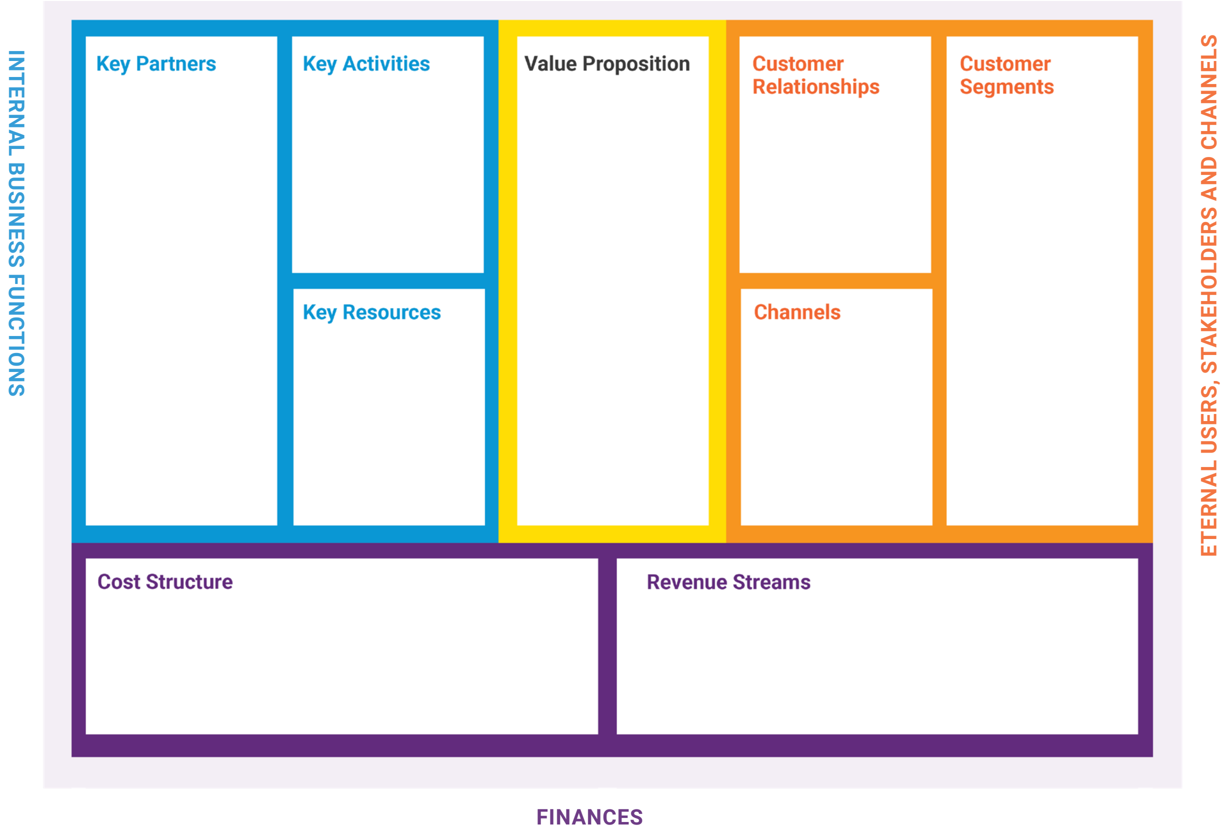
Building Block E

Building Block H

This is, of course, a very simplified view of a business structure. Each of these functions is deeply complex requiring the skills of many talented specialists.

THE BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

A Business Model Canvas (BMC) is a strategic, one-page document to quickly and easily communicate all the main elements of your business idea, product or service. Working together, these main elements describe how your business will create value, reach users and customers, and make money. It looks like this:



The right side of the BMC involves the external users, stakeholders and channels, and the left side deals with the internal business functions. Between them is the value proposition, which is the benefit of your business to your users. The base of the canvas covers the foundation of a sustainable business model: the finances.

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The BMC is free to download off the internet and there are many videos and articles that will give you advice on how to use it. Still, while it looks very simple, many people struggle to fill it in. Here are some tips on how you might use this guide to fill in your BMC.

For each of the sections of the BMC, use the information and exercises suggested in the following Stages and Building Blocks for ideas:

Business Model Canvas

Key Partners

Building Block D: Channels

Building Block G: Value Chain

Key Activities

Stage 4: The Prototype

Stage 6: Testing

Stage 7: Iteration

Stage 8: Launching

Building Block F: Governance

Key Resources

Stage 5: Resourcing

Building Block B: Systems

Building Block G: Value Chain

Building Block H: Growth

Value Proposition

Stage 1: The Problem

Stage 3: The Solution

Building Block C: Messaging

Customer Relationships

Stage 8: Launching

Building Block A: The Team

Building Block B: Systems

Channels

Stage 8: Launching

Building Block D: Channels

Customer Segments

Stage 2: The People

Stage 6: Testing

Cost Structure

Stage 4: The Prototype

Building Block A: The Team

Building Block G: Value Chain

Revenue Streams

Stage 10: Scaling

Building Block E: Pricing

Building Block H: Growth

Learn more

What is a business model? A short video by Alejandro Cremades https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNiPuTwZ4q0

The Business Model Canvas Explained by Oyem Ebinam https://medium.com/seed-digital/how-to-business-model-canvas-explained-ad3676b6fe4a

Business Model Canvas with Examples, a video walking you through completing the canvas by EPM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CakUeC1sCSs

Practice talking through your BMC (yes, pretend you're having a conversation!). See how many of the sections you can logically link together and how many different ways you can link them. If all of the sections fit and flow together smoothly, you have a strong business model.

PART 2 | **Building Block A:**

THE TEAM

Who's doing the work? Any organisation – whether it's a small business, an NGO or a social enterprise – needs to have a person or group of people who drive the operation and make things happen. Here are the key questions to ask as you put together the right team for your enterprise.

Who Started This?

IDENTIFY THE FOUNDERS

These are the people who bring the enterprise into existence. Be careful, though: just because someone has contributed a few ideas in the very early stages doesn't mean they're one of the founders. The founder is the person (or small group of people) who came up with the idea and acted upon it. They secured the funding, brought in the necessary resources, and took the enterprise to market.

An enterprise could have a single founder (like Jeff Bezos at Amazon) or co-founders (like Bill Gates and Paul Allen at Microsoft, for example). You need to identify the contribution of each member of the team who proposes or you think qualifies to be a founder. It saves you owner litigation later in the life of the enterprise.

What Skills do We Need?

ESTABLISH THE NECESSARY COMPETENCIES

Your enterprise's core competencies are the unique abilities, products and services that give it a competitive advantage in the market. Take that down to an individual level, and you'll get the measurable set of skills, characteristics and knowledge required from the people on your team. Think of these as the things you'd look for on a CV/résumé if you were to hire a person to do a particular job.

If you're a one-person enterprise, you probably won't have all the competencies required to run a business. That's okay. As the enterprise grows, you'll bring in people with specialised skills (either by hiring or outsourcing) to fill those gaps.

Who Will do What?

SET OUT THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Once you've determined the required competencies, you'll need to put a structure in place. This will change as the organisation grows, but even if you're starting small it's always good to have an idea of where you're going and how much power you want to give to your (current and future) employees.

If you're starting with a team already in place, it might make sense to create a structure based on job functions. As the team grows, these can then become divisions/ departments (e.g. Marketing, Operations, etc.).

In small teams, individuals will have multiple roles. (You could, for example, be the HR Manager, IT Manager and Marketing Manager, all at the same time!)

If you're starting as a one-person show, a hierarchical structure (with a clear chain of command) might be the natural way to prepare for growth; but if you're a small group of co-founders a flatter structure may serve you better.

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What is Your Team Like?

TRACK THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

As your enterprise grows, it will start to develop an organisational culture: a hard-to-define set of behaviours that influence how your team interacts with each other (internally) and with your stakeholders (externally).

Leaders can influence that culture by promoting the enterprise's core values, but they can't shape it. It can be positive (supportive, empowering) or negative (hyper-competitive). Ultimately, the culture comes from the group which the leader should see themselves as part of.

Keep a close eye on how it develops. Your organisational culture will determine what people think and say about your enterprise. Remember, people – potential clients, customers, sponsors, employees, etc. – are drawn to attractive cultures. Your team are your first customers. Support a winning culture and it will contribute to a winning solution.

Resources

No enterprise starts with a full staff complement. Your social enterprise will probably start as a one-person show, growing slowly as you bring others on board. So you'll need to get the basics right. These resources will give you the groundwork for starting a social enterprise when you're alone – and as your team grows!

- *How to Hire the Right People for Your Social Enterprise* by Sustainable Business Toolkit
- *How to Start up a Social Enterprise in 10 Steps* by The School for Social Entrepreneurs
- *Two Keys to Sustainable Social Enterprise* by Harvard Business Review
- *Leadership in Social Enterprise: How to Manage Yourself and Your Team* by World Economic Forum

Who's Your First/Next Hire?

GROW YOUR TEAM

As your enterprise grows, you'll need to bring in extra resources to help get the work done. The holes that need plugging might be specific or general, depending on your organisational structure. Either way, you'll do well to consider your organisational culture during your recruitment process, ensuring that you bring in someone with the necessary skills *and* the right cultural fit.

In a social enterprise, you might not be able to offer the same financial incentives as a traditional business can. That's why your focus during recruitment should be on finding candidates with not only the right talent and skills, but the same values and passion for impact. If they're fully committed to the cause, they'll go the extra mile regardless of the financial incentive.

What Kind of Leader do You Need to Be?

LEAD THEM TO GREATNESS

There are many theories on leadership types, but the four most common categories are:

TYPE	QUALITIES	PROS	CONS
AUTOCRATIC	Top-down, authoritarian	Decisions are made quickly and by one person.	Subordinates can feel micromanaged and disempowered.
DEMOCRATIC	Consultative, inclusive	Everyone is part of the decision-making.	Decision-making can be slow, and not all in the group are skilled or trained to make the decisions.
LAISSEZ-FAIRE	Delegative, hands-off	Subordinates are empowered to make quick decisions, without approval from The Boss.	The leader may appear "absent", leaving subordinates unclear on what their mission is.
TRANSFORMATIONAL	Uniting, energetic	All employees are part of the journey, constantly communicating and collaborating.	Can quickly lead to burnout.

Read more
https://www.uagc.edu/blog/4-leadership-styles-in-business

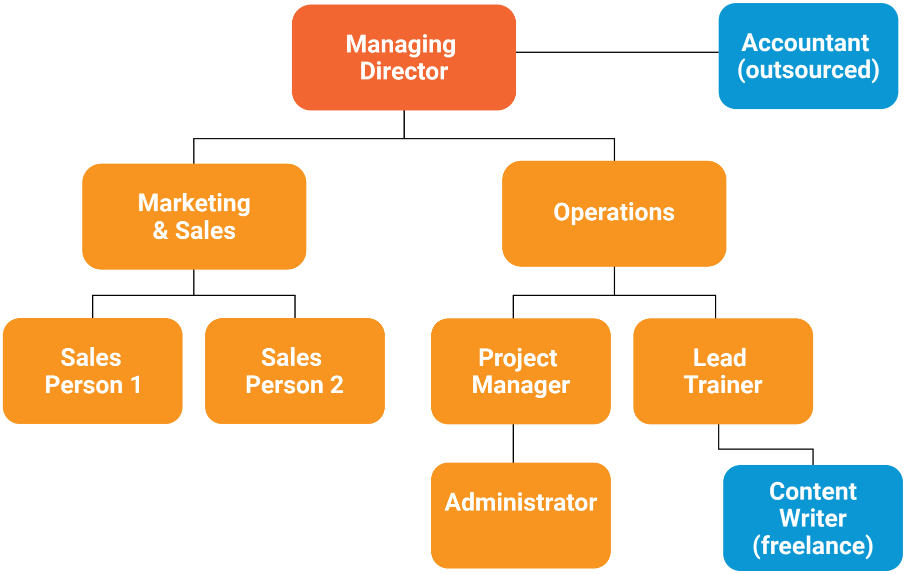
TAKE ACTION

Get organising:
Make your own organigram

It might be a while before your business gets to this structure, but why don't you try to create your own organogram with the team you currently have.

An organogram is a diagram that shows the structure of an organisation and the relationships and relative ranks of its functions and positions or jobs to be done.

In a small training company the functions might look something like this:



When you start your business, you might find that your name is in most – or even all! – of these functions, from marketing to project management. Your role as an entrepreneur is to make enough revenue to put a person in each of these roles so that you can focus solely on growing the business. This is called "working ON the business, not IN the business".

A great book about building a small business in this way is *The EMyth Revisited* by Michael Gerber.

Read more

The importance of your organisation chart: https://www.emyth.com/inside/the-importance-of-your-organization-chart

THE SYSTEMS

Any enterprise is a business, and it needs to be run as such. That means being organised and efficient, and having everyone in the organisation aligned on what needs to be done. Ask these questions as you set up the systems that save time, money, and misunderstandings.

How Will You Run the Tech Side?

USE DIGITAL TOOLS EFFECTIVELY

Digitalisation has added a wide range of tools to the entrepreneur's toolkit and, in many cases, the outputs are just about as good as if you'd outsourced the work to a professional, but at a fraction of the cost. Here's a look at some of the tools that are available (for free, or close to it).

Marketing			
Canva: Use their free templates to create slick posters, presentations, brochures, and even company logos. https://www.canva.com/	**Unsplash:** Use their attractive portfolio of free images to bring your marketing artwork to life. https://unsplash.com/	**Facebook:** Use the social media platform's wide reach to establish your online presence. https://www.facebook.com/	**WhatsApp for Business:** Use the messaging app's business tools to connect directly with your customers, clients and stakeholders. https://business.whatsapp.com/

Transactions

Payfast: Integrate with dozens of online shopping carts, and provide safe and easy payments. Mind the transaction fees, though. https://payfast.io/

Yoco: Enable credit card transactions with their easy interface. https://www.yoco.com/

PayU: Get solutions for 1-click payments, subscription payments, security, and financing. https://www.payu.com/

Project management

Zoho: Manage estimates and invoices with their easy finance tools. https://www.zoho.com

Google Workspace: Create and share documents, spreadsheets, presentations, emails and more – either free, or by upgrading to their enterprise packages. https://workspace.google.com/

Trello: Track and manage projects with their collaborative online tools. https://trello.com/

ClickUp: Manage tasks, whiteboards, Kanban boards and more. https://clickup.com/

Cybersecurity

Avast: Antivirus tools are worth paying for. Avast is a rare free alternative. https://www.avast.com/

Bitwarden: P@ssword123 won't cut it anymore. Stay safe with this free, reliable password manager. https://bitwarden.com/

Cybersecurity toolkit

Here's a mini crash course in all aspects of cybersecurity. Developed for South African small businesses, but covering all the basics every organisation should know: Keep your devices, data *and* documents safe! https://launchleague.co.za/toolkits-resources/toolkits/cybersecurity-and-data-protection/

Many enterprises now use Cloud services (Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.) to store and access their documents. This allows for easy collaboration, while adding a layer of backup and cybersecurity that you might not have if you store everything on your laptop or desktop computer.

How Will You Manage Your Information?

MAKE IT TRANSPARENT

Cloud computing services like Google Suite allow you to make your entire folder structure available to the team and partners. This allows everyone to find the information they need and to update documents in real time. For this to work well you need to:

1. have a logical and clear structure to your folders,
2. have all team members save all relevant project documents to the document folder on the Cloud server (never to their desktops!),
3. make sure the right people have the right level of access to these folders (and not access to folders they shouldn't).

MAKE IT CONSISTENT

Think of your document management as a type of communication: imagine someone else on your team looking for information on a particular project from a couple of years ago… You're going to want them to be able to find it. Calling a document Proposal_final_FINAL (2).doc won't work! Have a naming convention that includes, for example, the name of the client, the topic and the date it was produced: UNFPA_FGM innovation proposal_Feb2023.doc.

If you're working on the Cloud, always edit and overwrite the current document, otherwise you could end up with version control issues. (You can always go back and retrieve previous versions of the document under "version history".) Save a document as a PDF if you want to capture the information in it at a certain moment in time (PDFs are hard to change without special software).

How Will You Manage Your Team?

CONTROL YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

Whether you're working together in a shared office or connecting remotely, it's important to establish regular rhythms of internal communication. Meetings for the sake of meeting are a waste of time, but short daily or weekly check-ins are important for resolving issues and ensuring projects run to schedule. Speak to your team (however large or small) to gauge what works best.

You can consider using different platforms for different types of communication, for example:

- Use **WhatsApp** for quick and casual communications, such as "Running late for our check-in!"
- Use **Slack** for in-team project communication: it allows for a quick response, but also for sharing documents or updates via plug-ins.
- Use **email** for formal communications with clients and suppliers, such as sharing a detailed brief for a piece of work.

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SYSTEMS FOR ALIGNMENT

Problems with executing on ideas and operations often arise because of assumptions and misunderstandings between people working in the business or on a team.

The Culture Canvas is a free open license tool that you would work though with your team, making it clear how the collective will deal with things such as decision-making and sharing information. It asks you to think about aspects not directly related to a project, such as rituals (e.g. celebrating birthdays with cake) that help build your company culture.

A RACI matrix can help you make everyone's roles and responsibilities clear. RACI stands for:

- **R**esponsible (does the work),
- **A**ccountable (manages and answers for the work),
- **C**onsulted (gives input on the work), and
- **I**nformed (is told about the work that has been done).

The Culture Canvas and an ebook on how to use it are available here: https://culturecanvas.biz/#project-culture-canvas.

A process or project is broken down into its parts and each person is assigned an R, A, C or I, depending on their level of involvement in that task. Here's a simple example:

	Contracting	**Budgeting**	**Project management**	**Event management**
Adil, programme manager	I	C	R	A/R
Joyce, project lead	R	R	A	C
Amara, CEO	A	A	I	I

The golden rule is that only one person can be ultimately Accountable for a task (and every task must have someone Accountable for its delivery). On a small team, it's possible that someone is both Accountable and Responsible for a task.

THE MESSAGING

What's your mission? What is your organisation taking into the world, and what makes it unique, different, and worth everybody's attention? Here's how to frame your enterprise's identity in the public eye.

Why Does Your Enterprise Exist?

SET OUT YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

Why are you here and what do you hope to achieve? You need to be able to describe your enterprise's purpose in a short, simple statement. A ***purpose statement*** lays out those expectations, both internally (for leadership and employees) and externally (for outside stakeholders). It will guide all your decisions and describe how your service will positively impact the people you serve.

A purpose statement is not a mission statement. A purpose statement describes your enterprise's goal, while a mission statement describes the actionable steps you'll take to achieve that goal.

WRITE OUT YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

Try to condense your purpose statement into one, clear sentence. It needs to be tangible and direct (not "fluffy"). Include the following concepts:

- ***WHAT*** you do
- ***WHOM*** you do it for
- ***WHY*** you do it

Don't get too bogged down in the HOW at this stage. For example:

WHAT	WHOM	WHY
"We offer affordable healthcare options…	…for low-income patients…	…to reduce healthcare costs."

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Why Should Anybody Support Your Enterprise?

DESCRIBE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Your purpose statement will be shaped by your value proposition, or the benefits your enterprise promises to create and deliver. In a commercial business, a value proposition simply describes why customers should buy the company's product. In a social enterprise, however, the definition needs to be broader. Here, you'll outline how the enterprise is simultaneously creating value for both your investors/funders/donors and your beneficiaries.

WRITE OUT YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Your value proposition can be summed up in a single sentence, using this simple formula put forward by entrepreneur Steve Blank:

"We help [A] do [B] by doing [C]."

For example:

We help [women in rural areas] [access affordable healthcare] by [providing volunteer doctors every weekend].

Here's another formula, proposed by American organisational theorist Geoffrey Moore:

"For [target customer] who [problem or opportunity] we will [unique product or service] in order to [deliver outcome]."

For example:

For [people facing mental health challenges], who [are looking for an affordable counselling solution] we will [provide free access to registered counsellors] in order to [provide the mental health support they need].

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Why You, and Not Someone Else?

DEFINE YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

This is the final piece in your messaging puzzle. Define – and be able to articulate – your ***competitive advantage or star quality***. This is the core of your "elevator pitch": the thing that enables your enterprise to outperform its rivals.

Commercial businesses will typically focus on their value to customers (e.g. "We offer the lowest prices." or "We provide a specialised service."). For social enterprises, things get more complex. Social enterprises need a competitive advantage in terms of:

- **impact** – its value to beneficiaries; and
- **profit** – its value to investors/funders/donors.

If you can express how your enterprise is better than its peers in both areas, you'll have a powerful message to take to market.

TAKE ACTION

Competitor analysis table

Competitor	Benefit 1	Benefit 2	Benefit 3	Benefit 4
Your company:				

- Think of some of the ways your business and its products/services are valuable to your customer (revisit your value proposition above for ideas).
- Write these down as benefits in each of the columns. Benefits could range from "inexpensive products" to "quick turnaround" to "easy to talk to" – think about what makes your business special.
- Enter your business name in the first row and at least three competitors under this. A competitor can be another organisation or it's an alternative product or behaviour (for example, choosing abstinence rather than a particular prophylactic to prevent pregnancy).
- Then, complete the competitor analysis table by putting a tick in each box where the competitor offers the same benefit – your organisation should have ticks in every column, but they will have gaps.

When communicating the reasons why a user or customer should choose your business, focus on the areas where your competitors have gaps, but you have ticks. These are the benefits that make your business special!

THE CHANNELS

You can have an amazing product, a worthy mission, and a pitch-perfect price point, but if you can't sell it, your organisation will go nowhere. That's true for any business, including social enterprises. To make an impact and to fulfil your organisation's mission, you'll need to fine-tune your sales and marketing channels, while growing your network of stakeholders.

Sales

Whether you realise it or not, you're always selling. You want donors and funders to buy into your cause; you want beneficiaries to use your solution; and you want the whole world to know about – and support! – your efforts.

In the social entrepreneurship space, your customer isn't necessarily the person who's paying for the product. For example, young women and girls (your customers) may use your product/service, but it could be a government or another organisation that's paying for it. Keep that in mind when you develop your sales strategy!

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INNOVATION IN ACTION:

CirMedTech

CircMedTech is a social enterprise that sells male circumcision technology to the Rwandan government as part of HIV/Aids prevention. The government is the paying customer, while the users are the beneficiaries.

Read more

https://acumen.org/?investment=circ-medtech

SafeBoda

SafeBoda was established during Covid-19 to safely deliver SRHR commodities to key target audiences during the Covid-19 lockdown. During the Covid-19 lockdown in Uganda, the delivery of essential services such as SRH and maternal health were disrupted. With the movement restrictions, Boda Boda riders became essential in delivering food and other necessities to households. For UNFPA, an ongoing partnership with SafeBoda created an opportunity to provide another essential service: delivering reproductive health commodities such as condoms to communities.

Read more

https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/news/boda-boda-drivers-deliver-contraceptives-door-during-ugandas-covid-19-lockdown

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Marketing

Do some market research to build a profile of who your customers are, knowing that the people who pay for your solution may not be the people who actually use it. This market research is vital: by defining your target market(s), you'll avoid wasting time and resources trying to sell to people who aren't likely to support your mission.

Tap into your ***purpose statement*** and ***value proposition*** (Building Block C) to create a clean, clear message that sets out your purpose in a compelling way. Why do you do what you do? How does it benefit other people? And why should someone spend money on it?

Don't just tell your story, showcase it! Demonstrate (with numbers, if possible) how your beneficiaries are getting value out of your solution, and make them the heroes of your marketing story.

Networks

Marketing will get your message out into the world. Networking will make sure it's heard by the people who really need to hear it. Build a network of current users, funders, donors, supporters and other stakeholders, and engage with them whenever possible. They'll share ideas and feedback with you, but they'll also provide you with a powerful sales tool: ***referrals***.

Ask them who they know that would benefit from your solution, and get a testimonial that you can use when approaching those referrals. People are more likely to buy – or buy into – something that's been recommended by someone they know and trust.

This is even more true when working in communities. Understanding who the influential people or stakeholder groups in a community are can be critical to the success of your projects and your whole business. For example, young women may need to hear the advice you want to give through other slightly older women: this could mean changing your business model to a train-the-trainer approach!

TAKE ACTION

Stakeholder grid

Working in social impact is complex and it can be difficult to know which stakeholder groups to prioritise.

The stakeholder grid is a management tool that can help. You want to focus most of your energy on those stakeholders in the top right quadrant: they are both very interested in your project or business, *and* very influential in affecting the outcomes or growth of your work.

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THE PRICING

You can't work for nothing. Just like any other organisation, your social enterprise will need to generate an income to ensure it keeps running and keeps delivering value to its beneficiaries and other stakeholders. To achieve that, you'll need to devise a pricing strategy. Here's how to do that.

Before you start, remember the 3 Cs of pricing:

- **Costs**: what must you spend to deliver your product/ service?
- **Competitors**: who else is offering the same thing?
- **Consumers**: who is paying for, and who is using, your product/service – and what do they think about it?

Revenue vs. Income

HOW MUCH MONEY IS COMING IN?

Pricing will have a huge impact on the money your enterprise makes, but it's part of a complex picture. Sales will generate ***revenue***, which refers to the total amount of money your enterprise makes before removing any expenses. That's very different to ***income***, which is your revenue minus the costs of doing business.

Understanding the difference between revenue and income is a key part of ***accounting***. In your organisation's income statements, revenue (positive) will typically be at the top, followed by all the costs (negative). The net result is the bottom line. Don't forget that as a social enterprise, profit is only one of your "bottom lines". Your positive contribution to society is another very important one.

Revenue Streams

WHERE'S THE MONEY COMING FROM?

Depending on your enterprise structure (see Building Block B: Systems) and on your Sales model (see Building Block D: Channels), you may have any number of different sources of revenue.

Here are just a few options:

- direct sales to individuals
- direct sales to other organisations or businesses
- affiliate sales (people who sell on your behalf)
- event hosting (training, conferences, etc)
- subscriptions/memberships
- sponsorships
- grants
- donations
- crowdfunding
- contracts/tenders
- rent (if you own property)

Can you think of any other potential revenue sources? How can you tap into those?

Costs

HOW MUCH MONEY IS GOING OUT?

Think carefully about your costs. Some will be obvious expenses, like raw materials, rent, taxes, etc. Others are not so obvious and might include things like the depreciation of your assets, interest on loans, or even the cost of your own time that you're spending running the show.

Some costs are ***fixed***, and don't often change. These include things like rent and insurance. ***Variable*** costs, meanwhile, can change more easily. These include things like raw materials, freelance suppliers, delivery costs, etc. Variable costs are easier to cut back on if your cashflow gets tight; whereas fixed costs are harder to reduce.

Pricing

WHAT'S A FAIR PRICE FOR YOUR PRODUCT/SERVICE?

Pricing is a delicate balancing act. Charge too much, and you risk driving customers away. Charge too little, and your enterprise will not be sustainable. To get that balance right, consider the pros and cons of the following basic pricing models:

	DESCRIPTION	PROS	CONS
COST-BASED	Based on the cost of production, with a "mark-up" added to ensure a profit margin.	• Simple to calculate. • Takes unknown/variable costs into account. • Ensures total profits for the enterprise.	• Ignores customer demand. • Ignores competitors. • Doesn't allow much room for business growth.
VALUE-BASED	Based on the benefits it provides or on what people are willing to pay.	• Price supports the product/brand image. • Makes the product/service seem more valuable than it is.	• Ignores competitors. • Requires aggressive sales and marketing. • Ignores production costs.
COMPETITION-BASED	Based on what your competitors are charging for a similar product/service.	• Contributes to a competitive market. • Makes you keep track of what others in the industry are doing.	• Requires a careful monitoring system. • Sometimes drives prices down, potentially forcing you to sell at a loss.

No single model is perfect, so you'll have to take all three into consideration when you set your pricing.

You may even combine these when building a sustainable business model, for example selling at a higher price to wealthy customers (value-based) to cross-subsidise your lower-priced sales (cost-based) to poor customers.

Resources

The price you set for your product or service is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a new business owner. Getting the right price is in some respects more of an art than a science, so use these resources for further guidance on how to find that magic number.

Read more

- *Seven Smart Pricing Strategies to Attract Customers* by The US Chamber of Commerce
- *Getting Your Pricing Right* by The School for Social Entrepreneurs
- *The Ultimate Pricing Guide for Small Businesses* by SME South Africa

GOVERNANCE

Governance is one of the most "boring" aspects of running a business, even so for a social enterprise, but it's also one of the most important. It represents all the systems and processes that ensure the accountability of your enterprise and help it manage risk. Good governance can be the difference between the enterprise's success and failure. Here are the key areas you should pay attention to:

Registration

OPERATE WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF (AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF) THE LAW

Most countries/jurisdictions require that a social enterprise is legally registered with the government. Getting your registration paperwork in order will help to ensure your organisation and its stakeholders benefit from, among other things, the correct tax treatment.

That registration will depend on the legal structure of your enterprise. In South Africa, for example, a non-profit (e.g. voluntary associations, charitable trusts, etc.) must be registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC); while various for-profits or co-operatives (e.g. private companies, partnerships, business trusts, etc.) must be registered with other relevant authorities. In other countries, incorporating social enterprises is not necessarily as straightforward as mainstream businesses. You should prepare for this. Engage with the business registration agency to find out what options are available to you. You can also engage other social enterprises in your community to find out how they went about their incorporation.

Legal Structure

FOR-PROFIT, NON-PROFIT, AND HYBRID STRUCTURES

In the past, there was a clear divide between for-profit and non-profit organisations: for-profits aimed to generate revenue, while non-profits engaged in charitable work and weren't in it for the money. Social enterprises blur that dividing line, using economically sustainable models to tackle social problems.

As you set up and register your enterprise, give some thought as to how you want to structure your organisation: for profit, not for profit, or as a hybrid of the two. Regardless of your choice, your approach should focus on creating social change.

TYPE	PROS	CONS
For-profit	• can take in investments and have private owners • no legal limits on income generation	• Have to pay taxes. • Cannot receive grants. • Cannot offer tax deductions to donors.
Non-profit	• can receive grants • can offer tax deductions to donors	• Limits on income generation. • Cannot take in investments.
Hybrid	• flexible funding options • no limits on income generation • can take in investments, can receive grants, can offer tax deductions to donors	• Complicated structure, with two separate entities within one organisation. • Strict legal limits on where and how the money is distributed.

Intellectual Property

PROTECT YOUR GREAT IDEAS … AND DON'T COPY OTHER PEOPLE'S!

Intellectual Property (IP) is the original ideas that your organisation – you, your team, your staff/colleagues – come up with. IP could be anything from a new invention or a new way of doing things to an artistic creation.

Some IP can be legally protected via a formal registration process. In South Africa, for example, the CIPC protects trademarks, patents, designs and some copyright. In other cases, intellectual property is covered by a kind of common law: for example, the Berne Convention on copyright is subscribed to by most countries in the world and offers basic rights and protection to the authors of creative works as soon as those books, pictures, music etc. are made.

The creator of IP is not necessarily the owner. Address this in your employee contracts, making sure that any ideas, processes, designs or products that people develop while working for your enterprise remain the IP of the enterprise.

As much as you want to protect your own IP, it works the other way too: you don't want to get caught stealing (or even unintentionally replicating) someone else's IP. Do thorough research to ensure things like your enterprise name, logo, branding, etc. don't already exist elsewhere. Like business incorporation, there should be a local copyright entity in your country to engage to find out. This is a very important step as you do not want to lose ownership of your solution because you failed to get your IP sorted. IPs are critical assets to your business that investors will be excited about.

Policies and Regulations

STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE LAW

Social enterprises are subject to strict laws and regulations, and your organisation's policies and structures (see Building Block B: Systems) must adhere to those rules. Failure to comply with those requirements will harm your ability to do your work, and could have serious legal consequences.

But how do you know if you're breaking the law? Your advisory board can help guide you along; but if you don't have one in place, it's worth consulting a lawyer that specialises in the intricacies of nonprofits, charities, public benefit organisations (PBOs), etc. This will ensure that your organisation has the correct accreditation, and that your stakeholders get maximum benefit from your work. A local incubation hub or business coach could provide some advice in this regard.

Boards

YOU DO THE WORK; THEY MAKE SURE IT'S DONE RESPONSIBLY

Good governance helps social enterprises to remain compliant with legal regulations and policies; and helps to ensure the organisation delivers on its mission while protecting the interests of its stakeholders. One person can't do all of that; believe it or not.

You'll need a ***management board*** to support your organisation's leadership and to keep it honest. When your organisation has grown to a manageable size (see Building Block H: Growth), recruit and appoint a board of trustees who will do exactly that, while acting separately from the people who do the day-to-day work.

You may also consider appointing a separate ***advisory board***. Their focus is *not* on regulatory compliance or making sure everything runs according to the organisation's constitution or governing document. They're less formal, and their role is to provide you and your enterprise with access to external networks, while contributing a sense of trust and credibility.

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Some board members might require compensation or remuneration; but – especially with a social enterprise – many will be happy volunteering their time and expertise simply to support your enterprise's social mission. (Be sure to ask them first, though!)

MANAGING RISK

One of the things a good board will do is help you to manage risk in the organisation. One of the ways to report on and discuss risk is using a risk matrix.

For example, a project risk matrix may look something like this:

	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATION
Girls are not interested in hearing about their body rights.	low	med	While our intervention would have limited success without buy-in, our consellers have already built strong relationships with the girls and report that there is a demand for more information.
The most at-risk girls are not given permission to attend info sessions.	med	high	This is a very real risk: we are working closely with a local CBO that specialises in shifting the attitudes of parents to help reduce barriers to their daughters engaging with our services.

A typical risk matrix will consider 1) how likely the risk event is to occur, 2) what the impact of that risk would be on the project/organisation if it were to occur, and 3) what the organisation is doing to try to manage and guard against that risk.

What is important is not that there are no risks; there always are. What's important is that you are identifying and prioritising risks, and have a plan for dealing with them.

Reporting

LET THE WORLD – AND YOUR STAKEHOLDERS – KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING

As a social enterprise, you have a mission to achieve a clear social impact (see Building Block C: Messaging).

But how do you know if you're succeeding? How do you know where you're going right, and where you need to improve? And – perhaps even more importantly – how do your funders, donors and other stakeholders, including you as the innovator, know that you're putting their money and resources to good use?

Clear reporting, consisting of solid key performance indicators (KPIs) and measurable metrics, will help you continue to make a case for your enterprise. Here are the key elements to consider:

METRICS

Testimonies from happy beneficiaries are great … but they're not measurable. Identify areas of change, and make sure you can put a number to your impact in those areas.

Custom KPIs are useful for your internal learning and external marketing; but investors might require standardised KPIs. Ask your stakeholders if they have any specific requirements, or choose from the Global Impact Investing Network's (GIIN) Impact Reporting and Investment Standard (IRIS).

IRIS KPIs

Did you know? In 2015 the United Nations made the eradication of FGM a specific, targeted ambition within the SDGs (Global Goal 5.3). Read more about Global Goal 5.

METHODOLOGY

Measurement and metrics let your organisation and its stakeholders know whether what you're doing is working. That relies on measuring the correct metrics – and on measuring them correctly! Spell out our methodology in your reporting, clearly laying out your targets and how you have performed relative to them. Put a number to it and explain how you arrived at that number.

BASELINES

The purpose of a social enterprise is to deliver measurable improvement to society. In your reporting, set baselines to demonstrate a "before and after" effect. What was the situation before your organisation began its work, and what is the situation now?

INSIGHT

To help you demonstrate impact, use the Theory of Change model:

My organisation's plan		My organisation's expected results	
INPUTS	**ACTIVITIES**	**OUTCOMES**	**IMPACT**
The resources I need to make my activities possible.	Every action my organisation takes to create its offering, sell it, deliver it, and nurture its important relationships.	The changes resulting from all the things my organisation does.	The ultimate impact I want my organisation to have or the problem I solve for the people I serve.

Read more

https://movingworlds.org/how-to-measure-your-social-impact-as-a-social-enterprise

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DATA VALIDATION

Be transparent about where your data comes from, and – if possible – use third parties to validate and verify that information. This will help to ensure, and improve, its quality. Store any information securely (see Building Block B: Systems), remembering to depersonalise it if necessary (to comply with privacy laws).

COMMUNICATION

Doing good work is great, but if you don't tell anybody about it, you'll struggle to gather the support you need to continue doing it.

Collect your results and present them in a regular (either quarterly or annual) report that you share with your key stakeholders. Compiling a detailed report like this can be a big undertaking, but the benefits of having a clear message of measurable results are well worth the effort. Again, this – like the other tasks – could be done better by experts in the field. If you have the funds to outsource, do.

THE VALUE CHAIN

You know what you're doing, and you know your reasons for doing it. That's your ***value proposition*** and your ***purpose statement***, or your "what" and your "why". Now let's look at the "how". How will you deliver your product or service to where it's needed, and what resources do you have to get the job done?

In traditional business, the ***value chain*** refers to the full life cycle of a product or process – including material sourcing, production, marketing, distribution, consumption, and disposal/ recycling processes. An organisation will decide to add value at one or more stages, depending on its business model.

In social innovation, you will want to consider how one or more of these aspects can be expanded, combined, eliminated or adapted to generate improvements in the lives of individuals or the broader community (in our case, those affected by FGM).

You might believe – especially when you're in the early development or ideation stages – that you don't have much to work with. Remember that not all resources are physical objects. Your relationships are also a vital part of your value chain!

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RESOURCE 1:

Materials

WHAT DO YOU USE TO MAKE YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

This includes any raw materials, operational equipment, packaging, etc. Along with those physical elements, it also includes the skills and know-how needed to operate that equipment and create the product or service. In other words, it's literally everything that goes into creating your enterprise's unique value proposition. Does that include your reputation and goodwill in the marketplace? Absolutely.

As you take stock of the materials available to you, think about ways to maximise the value you're getting out of them. Is there a more efficient way to produce your goods? Is there goodwill towards your cause that you're not tapping into?

You should consider ethical sourcing as a social enterprise. You don't want to be solving one social problem while creating another.

RESOURCE 2:

Suppliers

WHO PROVIDES YOU WITH YOUR MATERIALS?

To maximise the value your enterprise is getting out of its suppliers, it's important to first understand what "value" means to you.

Of course you'll be concerned about reducing costs in order to increase profits – and that might mean looking around to find the best deal on raw materials. But as a social enterprise, you have a "triple bottom line", which adds social (people) and environmental (planet) goals to your financial results (profit).

A supplier who gives you a good price is good; a supplier who gives you a good price while running a business that aligns its social goals with those of your enterprise is even better!

As a social enterprise, you should also pay attention to issues such as ethical sourcing. Where do your raw materials come from? Can they be traced to their source? What are the impacts of those materials on the people and communities who create or extract them?

Remember that procurement can involve complex relationships between many different parties, and there's always a risk of unethical practices slipping into that supply chain. These could range from illegal activities (such as modern-day slavery and corruption) to broader societal issues (such as negative contributions to climate change).

The triple bottom line

1. **PEOPLE:** The social impact, including your staff, beneficiaries, donors, stakeholders, and society as a whole.

2. **PLANET:** Improving your positive impacts on the environment while reducing/ removing any negative impacts.

3. **PROFIT:** The financial element, which means reducing/eliminating waste while maximising the efficiency, effectiveness and profitability of your work.

RESOURCE 3:

Distribution

HOW DOES YOUR PRODUCT/SERVICE REACH ITS BENEFICIARIES?

You might be able to achieve small-scale impact by taking your product/service to market yourself. But if you want to grow your impact, and deliver social impact at scale, you'll need some help. That help could come from the public sector (government) or from the private sector (commercial businesses).

Your relationship with that so-called "third party" is very important to the success of your enterprise. Nurture it, grow it, and regularly measure the value that it's bringing to your work – and think of ways to increase that value.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

POWA

POWA is a South African organisation that has worked to combat domestic violence for more than 40 years, offering a variety of services ranging from shelter homes to legal advocacy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, South Africa went into lockdown and incidents of gender-based violence increased, as women were confined to their homes with their abusers.

POWA worked with popular affordable tea brand Joko to reach these women "behind closed doors" with the message of #EndDomesticSilence. As Joko's ad agency Ogilvy put it: "We redesigned the JOKO box as a Trojan horse to go into millions of homes across the country." Part of the campaign included social media channels that women could reach out to for help. In addition, R1 from every sale of the purple-branded box went to supporting POWA's services.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS:

- Being innovative around distribution models can apply to both physical products and services.
- The right strategic partner, one that has aligned values and objectives, can greatly expand your reach into the communities your organisation serves.

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RESOURCE 4:

Strategic Partners

WHO CAN OFFER SHARED VALUE TO YOUR ENTERPRISE?

Some suppliers or distributors will offer purely transactional relationships. They give you the materials you need, you pay them, and that's the deal done. But when you work with other like-minded social enterprises or socially responsible businesses, you tap into what's known as "shared value". In cases like this, 1+1 = more than 2.

Here's what we mean: If a corporation uses a social enterprise in its supply chain, it purchases quality goods/services that the business needs, while also making an impact in the community. From the corporation's point of view, that increases the value of the transaction: it uses money that it was going to spend on its operations anyway, and it spends it on an initiative that achieves corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals.

Now look at it from your side of the table. What do you need from your partners? What values do you share? And how can you work together to increase the value of your interaction?

Resources

Good partnerships can help your enterprise to grow and flourish, drawing on the combined resources of both parties. These resources provide extra information about how to partner, with whom, and why.

- *The Secrets to Building Better Business Partnerships* by Forbes
- *Three Steps to Creating Powerful Business Partnerships* by Entrepreneur.com
- *How to Find the Right Partners and Further Your Impact* by Social Enterprise Alliance on Medium
- *Five Examples of Social Enterprises Partnering with the Corporate Sector* by Moving Worlds
- *The Competitive Advantage of Social Enterprises* by Stanford Social Innovation Review

FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE CHAIN

Tackling FGM is a big and complex job. Revisit the exercises you did in Stage 1: The Problem and Stage 2: The People. These will give some clues to potential opportunities and gaps in the ecosystem that surrounds your business.

Questions you could ask include:

- What other organisations are working on this problem? How is their approach similar/different to ours?
- Are there existing manufacturers, distribution channels and marketing platforms, or will I need to consider creating my own?
- Can our organisations piggyback on any adjacent sectors? (For example, women's reproductive health clinics or mobile community health workers for services, or "last-mile" logistics companies that stock small shops or women's hair salons for products.)

In the early stages of some sectors, the value chain can be quite underdeveloped. You may need to operate in more parts of the chain than you had expected. This will require stronger planning and management, and bigger budgets and teams. These are significant considerations when designing the operations around your product or service. Wherever possible, look for strategic partnerships, as these usually reduce costs and complexity.

GROWTH

As an entrepreneur, you're by nature an ambitious person. It follows, then, that at some point you'll want your social enterprise to grow from what it is now into something bigger, with a wider reach and a greater impact. The question is: When and how should you do that?

Growth vs. Scale

WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

As your enterprise expands, it's important to know whether it's growing or scaling. There's a difference.

Growth is linear. The enterprise adds inputs (see: Resources, Building Block G), and its outputs increase as a result.

Scaling, meanwhile, is when your outputs increase without a substantial increase in inputs.

As a simple example, if you write and send 100 paper letters, you've *grown* your outputs from 0 to 100 by increasing your inputs. But if you go from sending an email from one person to sending it to 100 people, you've scaled your outputs (ultimately, the effort/ input is the same either way).

Scale is elastic, so in many respects is easier to manage. (You may want to look at Stage 10: Scaling again.)

Growth requires careful planning. If your inputs exceed your outputs, your enterprise will fail.

Resources

How do you know if your enterprise is ready for growth? While your solution works really well for one community, can it scale to work for others too? These resources will provide tools and frameworks for helping you to plan the growth and scaling of your social enterprise.

- *Life Cycle Analysis for Social Enterprise Stage* by REDFworkshop
- *The Complete Guide to Growing and Scaling Your Social Enterprise* by Moving Worlds
- *Scaling Up: Catalysing the Social Enterprise* by Kearney
- *The How-To: Scaling Social Enterprise Ventures* by Entrepreneur.com

Risk Appetite

IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME?

Your ability to grow or scale your enterprise will depend on your risk appetite. There's seldom a "right" time to do it. The more you analyse the situation, the less likely you'll be to take the leap. That's why it's so important to understand your organisation's risk appetite, and to use that knowledge to judge whether you're moving too early or holding yourself back.

Risk appetite is the level of risk an organisation is willing to accept while pursuing its objectives, and before any action needs to be taken to reduce the risk. Your organisation's risk appetite is influenced by a wide range of factors, including:

- ***Your competitors:*** are they leaving you behind, or is their lack of action creating an opportunity for you?
- ***The state of the market:*** your industry might be in either a lull or a boom time.
- ***Your organisational culture:*** you might either be braver or more cautious (see Building Block A: The Team).
- ***The strength of your organisation:*** do you have the resources you need to mitigate the risk?

Read more

Growing or scaling your enterprise is a question of timing. Leave it too late and you might miss your window of opportunity; but leap too soon and you could risk the success of your entire operation. These resources will help you get an idea of when and whether you're ready:

- *The Five Biggest Risks of Scaling Up* by Inc.
- *Managing Risk with Growth Opportunities* by Forbes
- *Common Challenges Faced by Social Enterprises and Strategies for Success* by Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship

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CHECKLIST

Whether you're running a traditional or social enterprise, the scale-up journey is always fraught with risks. What's your enterprise's unique formula for success? Run through this checklist to make sure you're on track:

RISK	ASK YOURSELF...	OK?
Cashflow	You'll need to invest in additional capacity. Do you have enough (and diversified) revenue streams to pay for that? Or do you need to secure scale-up funding from external sources?	
Readiness	Are you moving too fast? Is your enterprise running at its optimal level, or could a growth phase put pressure on areas of the enterprise that aren't equipped to handle it?	
Staff burnout	Everybody's going to have to work more – and work harder. Do you need to restructure your enterprise or recruit additional staff?	
Compliance	Laws can change depending on the size of your enterprise. While you might get away with some non-compliance as a small enterprise, as a bigger organisation you'll come under greater regulatory scrutiny. What new regulations will you have to comply with when your enterprise resizes?	
New markets	You may be doing just fine focusing on a small community or a narrow part of the market. But growth means servicing new (and more) people, with new (and different) challenges. Do you know what those are?	

Insight

Risk appetite can change over time, so be sure to constantly keep track of how your organisation is shaping up.

Seeking Financing

WHO'LL PAY FOR YOUR BIG STEP UP?

When you look for funding, consider the clear options along with the not-so-obvious ones. These include…

1. **Government grants:** If you're providing a social benefit, it may be in the government's best interests to support your work.
2. **Research grants:** If your work is providing data or insights into an under-examined social issue, you might be able to tap into a research institute's financing.
3. **Philanthropic support:** Private donors or charitable foundations may see value in your business plan. They will usually provide grant funding (money that doesn't need to be repaid) and will require evidence of impact in return.
4. **Impact investment:** If your enterprise is making a measurable difference in the community and also making money, you might find institutional investors who are happy to allocate impact investment funds to helping your enterprise grow. This financing is typically structured as debt or equity (i.e. the investor takes a share in the organisation) and the investor expects a financial return as well as evidence of impact.
5. **Self-financing:** If your enterprise makes surplus money, those profits could be fed back into your organisation.
6. **Partnerships:** A strategic partner (see Building Block G: The Value Chain) might have a financial interest in sponsoring your growth.

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Making the Case to Investors

CAN YOU OFFER A RETURN ON INVESTMENT?

Startups and small businesses are (sometimes!) attractive to investors, because they offer the chance of a good return on a financial investment. As profit-making enterprises, they will – or can – make money to repay any investment in their growth. Social enterprises are a different story.

Depending on how your enterprise is set up – either as a non-profit or a for-profit, or perhaps as a hybrid (see Building Block B: The Systems) – you may or may not be able to generate the cash to repay loans or offer a financial return on investment.

If your enterprise is not structured to offer a financial return, be honest about that. It will affect which financiers or donors you approach: for example, a bank will not make a loan to a business that has never made a profit, so it does not make sense to ask them for financing if you are not generating revenue.

If you are set up as a non-profit organisation you will fund your growth with philanthropic money. Remember that grant-makers do want a return: they want to see that you have made a difference in the lives of the people you work with. You will need to make sure your impact metrics and reporting are strong: you'll have read about this in Building Block F: Governance.

If you are set up as a hybrid organisation, you will want to create BOTH a financial return and impact to attract investors. The investors who put money into ventures like yours – ***impact investors*** – expect to get back more money than they put in, and also that the positive changes that your organisation creates have grown too.

Definition: Impact investing

An impact investment is "made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return" (Global Impact Investing Network).

Read more

- *Catalysing New Markets with Early-stage Impact Investments* by Impact Alpha
- *Impact Investing in Africa* by Bridgewater Africa

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Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls

UNFPA