THE HASSENFELD FAMILY CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AT MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

The students of Environmental Studies 380 ("21st-Century Global Challenges") -
Winter Term 2011

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Introduction

On January 3, 2011, the 21 students in “21st-Century Global Challenges” were given a charge:

To engage the Middlebury College community in answering a really exciting set of questions: if Middlebury were to establish a world-class center for social entrepreneurship, what should be its mission, what would it offer to students and other members of our community, and how would it complement other current assets at Middlebury College and the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS)?

This report is their response to that charge. The best measure of its success will be if it helps leaders at Middlebury and Monterey - leaders among faculty, staff, students and alums - to further refine a collective vision for such a center in the months ahead.

A word about the exact nature of the students’ charge and the resulting structure of this report. The students’ work was shaped by the following directive from Alan Hassenfeld:

The Hassenfeld Family Center for Social Entrepreneurship will encompass the following components:

A grants program. On an annual basis, the Center will award approximately $400,000 in grants to worthy social entrepreneurs who have attended the [World Youth Peace] Summit and have gone back to their home communities to set up their own “Pathways to Peace” initiatives.

An annual gathering of gifted social entrepreneurs. On an annual basis, the Center will host a four-day meeting for social entrepreneurs, including those who receive Center grants. This annual meeting, which will be very high-profile, will be held on the host campus.

Annual “Pathways to Peace” lecture. Along with bringing Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Vice President Al Gore and General Colin Powell to the inaugural Summit, the Center will host an annual “Pathways to Peace” lecture on the host campus. The annual lecture will be delivered by a world leader.

The structure of this report (after Section I, a brief proposal for a mission and objectives of the Center) reflects this directive. Section III covers grants, section IV covers the annual gathering; section V covers the lecture.

Having said that, the students from the very start were not constrained by this directive. They saw these three components as starting points for their collective deliberation. For example, their proposal for the annual gathering includes a proposed summer school. Moreover, the students
came up with a fourth component, data-driven development, for which they make a powerful case in section VI.

The report includes three final parts. Section II offers ideas for the physical center itself. Appendix 1 copies my recent essay in the Middlebury Campus on social entrepreneurship in the liberal arts. Appendix 2 includes selected sources about social entrepreneurship that proved useful to the class and may prove useful to readers of this document.

My own role in this document was limited. After the class ended and before it was shared with others, I took on the role of proofreader and editor, all with a light touch. I agree with much of what is envisioned in this document for the Hassenfeld Center, but by no means do I agree with all of it: this is very much the students’ work. Overall, I think it is excellent.

As a class, we’d like to thank many people who helped us in January. First, we thank all of the visitors to the class: George Overholser, Jesse Fink, Rashmir Balasubramaniam, Margaret Crotty, Liz Robinson, Danny Growald, and Lawrence Miller. Each of them was fascinating and inordinately helpful. We’d also like to thank our Middlebury colleagues who helped shape the vision of the center in January - and, as we distribute this document in late February, are now helping to bring the center to fruition. They include President Ron Liebowitz as well as Dave Donahue, Tracy Himmel Isham, Jessica Holmes, Randy Kritkauskys, Liz Robinson, Tiffany Sargent, and Erin Quinn. We look forward to working with them and many others at Middlebury, MIIS, the University of Hartford (soon to be an ally in all of this!), and the states of Vermont and Connecticut in the months and years ahead.

We particularly thank Dan Doyle. He brought to Middlebury the wonderful charge of envisioning the Hassenfeld Center. Moreover, he generously gave his time and ideas to the class while he was on the Middlebury campus during Winter Term’s final week. During the class, we studied the importance of empathy, commitment, and intentionality. Dan embodies and lives by these essential human traits.

I was honored to work with these 21 students this past Winter Term. As I shared with them on the last day of class, I approached this academic year - and this class - with some trepidation. Their energy, sense of commitment, and flexibility along the way restored my sense of what is possible in a Middlebury classroom. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Jonathan Isham, Jr
Professor of Economics
February 24, 2011
I. Overview

What is the proposed mission for the Hassenfeld Center?

The Hassenfeld Family Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury College empowers blossoming social entrepreneurs to identify challenges and pursue lasting change. The Center seeks to promote social entrepreneurship worldwide through education, collaboration, and grants for exceptional projects. The Center uses a student- and youth-focused structure to approach both global and local challenges, based on the liberal-arts perspective.

What are the four proposed objectives of the Center?

To help consolidate on-campus initiatives at Middlebury related to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; to foster creative growth and innovative thinking among Middlebury students and partners; to provide blossoming social entrepreneurs worldwide with necessary tools and resources; and to lay the groundwork for future innovations designed to improve well-being worldwide.

Why should Middlebury commit resources to a Center for Social Entrepreneurship?

Middlebury College is in a unique position to become one of the first undergraduate institutions with a program focused solely on developing social entrepreneurs. As such, it would pioneer the education of young leaders in social and environmental equity and facilitate off-campus fieldwork and student-led programs.

The justifications for bringing such a center to Middlebury are multiple. First, the interdisciplinary nature of Middlebury College’s education promotes a holistic understanding of global issues. Students majoring in Microbiology routinely take Philosophy or Women and Gender studies classes, and some of the most popular majors on campus (Environmental Studies, International Politics and Economics) inherently take interdisciplinary approaches. Consequently, our students and graduates are armed with a unique, multi-faceted comprehension of pressing global issues that a center for social entrepreneurship demands. Next, with one of the leading language programs, a significant portion of the student body is proficient in at least one language other than their native one. As fieldwork is crucial to cementing the tools and theory gained in the classroom, and addressing global issues on the ground requires communication, no other campus is better suited to immediately develop effective social entrepreneurs. Third, the Middlebury network of institutions all over the world including its new partnership with the Monterey campus and the many existing Middlebury schools abroad will provide the Center with invaluable resources.

Following the model of social entrepreneurship labs at Stanford, Harvard and Princeton (see the Gordon Bloom video in Appendix 2), social entrepreneurship will expand our way of learning by transforming our knowledge in this field into application. In addition, such a curriculum seeks to cultivate social entrepreneurship projects with a process that requires reflection and redevelopment. Students will finish this program with a better and more experienced understanding of this field - and of themselves.
Why should the Hassenfeld Family support a Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury?

Middlebury has established itself as one of the leading liberal-arts colleges in America. As a leader of colleges across the U.S., Middlebury is in a position to initiate innovative, large-scale programs that do not yet exist at peer institutions. Several leading research universities have established centers for social entrepreneurship and innovation, but with a focus on graduate and business studies these institutions fail to reach emerging “champions” at vital stages of their education. Middlebury has an opportunity to be the first undergraduate institution to recognize that social entrepreneurship has a place not only in the liberal arts, but also in undergraduate education. The Hassenfeld Center for Social Entrepreneurship will pioneer the education of young leaders in social and environmental equity and facilitate off-campus fieldwork and student-led programs. It will exponentially expand Middlebury’s reach and impact, establishing Middlebury as a liberal-arts college with a noteworthy global impact.

Consider Middlebury’s mission statement:

“We strive to engage students’ capacity for rigorous analysis and independent thought within a wide range of disciplines and endeavors, and to cultivate the intellectual, creative, physical, ethical, and social qualities essential for leadership in a rapidly changing global community. Through the pursuit of knowledge unconstrained by national or disciplinary boundaries, students who come to Middlebury learn to engage the world.”

With this statement, Middlebury has made a commitment to provide knowledge without boundaries, and the Hassenfeld Center will foster this growth. Middlebury’s liberal arts education has armed students with a unique, multi-faceted comprehension of pressing global issues. Subsequently, following Middlebury’s commitment to experiential learning in the Strategic Plan, the next step to further the global education of Middlebury students is the provision of opportunities for fieldwork to apply knowledge gained in the classroom. Middlebury’s network of international institutions through the Language Schools, Monterey, and faculty connections can provide contacts with expertise in their host cultures that will connect eager social entrepreneurs to communities that demand change. Addressing global issues on the ground requires communication—no other campus is better suited than Middlebury to immediately develop effective social entrepreneurs.
II. A physical center on the Middlebury campus

Why is a Center needed at Middlebury?

“The problem solving patterns and insights emerging from the field of social entrepreneurship can be grasped only by stepping back. Universities need to take the lead in assembling this knowledge, classifying and analyzing it, and disseminating it so people can make use of the lessons.” (David Bornstein and Susan Davis, Social Entrepreneurship, Oxford University Press, p. 89). A physical Center would be a place that gathers, synthesizes, and contributes to the resources that are available to Middlebury students and social entrepreneurs. It is a gateway for social entrepreneurs to seek out guidance in developing their ideas.

How would the Center complement current resources at Middlebury?

There are currently numerous initiatives on the Middlebury campus that fall under the auspices of the Project for Creativity and Innovation, which aims to give students “the ability to take intellectual risks, to think creatively, and to create new knowledge and thought […] to meet 21st-century challenges.” A physical center would be an ideal complement for these existing entities, bolstering their presence and impact on-/off-campus while providing additional, effective outlets for student innovation and creativity.

What would the administrative make-up of the center look like?

We envision a center that is run day-to-day by a director who would report to the newly created position of “Vice President of Creativity in Innovation”. This new VP would be a member of the President’s staff and would therefore ensure a major role for the center in campus planning as well as greater coordination with other aspects of the college. In addition to overseeing the center, the VP of Creativity and Innovation would also be in charge of Education in Action as well as The Project on Creativity and Innovation. There could also be student interns that would help coordinate and run the center on a daily basis, as well as a special events coordinator to help organize the yearly symposium, lecture series, and any other programming affiliated with the center. We believe the role of Middlebury students in the everyday operations of the center, similar to the Admissions Senior Fellows program, is fundamental to its success.

What would the physical center look like?

Ideally, the Center would have a physical space - a building that the college already possesses that could be outfitted for the center to utilize. We want this building to foster innovation and creative thinking; therefore it would contain smart classrooms - namely including video conferencing technology and a smart board - to capture conversations and brainstorming sessions for any willing participants (from
inside or outside the Middlebury Community). Video conferencing capabilities will allow speakers and outside social entrepreneurs to interact with and inspire people at the center without traveling all the way to Middlebury. The Center would be a place where aspiring social entrepreneurs can go to develop their creative ideas.

Who will utilize the physical space of the Center?

Depending on its size, the Center could play host to several groups and individuals. The VP of Creativity and Innovation would have office space. It would be possible to provide space to an “in-resident” expert on the yearly theme around which the Center revolves. Middlebury has experience offering tenant space to students (Old Stone Mill) that wish to further pursue creative projects but require more physical space to do so. Students at Middlebury also tend to gravitate to public spaces that are available for studying, such as Hillcrest, Bicentennial Hall, and RAJ. By setting aside public study space in the Center, awareness would be raised for what actually occurs there and students would become even more interested in getting involved.

How will social entrepreneurs outside the Middlebury community learn about and engage the Center’s resources?

1. An engaging and useful website.
2. A smart classroom with video conferencing technology to get people, who are unable to physically be at the Center, involved in discussions and idea facilitation.
3. Engaging campus visitors during the Symposium, language school, Bread Loaf writers’ conferences, guest lectures, sports events, alumni weekend, parents weekend, revisit days, admissions tours, graduation, etc. will get the buzz about the Center flowing even faster throughout the world.
4. Promoting the Center at Middlebury’s global locations, such as the Monterey Institute and Middlebury Schools Abroad, will also play a large part in engaging the greater global community.
5. Middlebury’s new language learning software program will also engage a large variety of people throughout the world.
6. Advertising the Center and its mission in publications such as the N.Y. Times, U.S. News, etc. will continue to spread the buzz throughout the world about the Center.

How will the physical center facilitate creativity and innovation and the implementation of ideas?

*Incubation chamber*

The ‘Incubator’ is one of the key components of this center. As a vision, the ‘Incubator’ will be a free-form room—as free as the ideas that will flow within. Perhaps without tables or chairs, students, faculty and community members will be invited to join each other for 30 minute sessions of innovation. Participants will have the opportunity to share new ideas, bounce thoughts off the wall, critique the ideas of their peers and point each other in the right direction. Equipped
with a smart board and recording technology, all notes will be saved and posted after the session, while some participants may even request an audio recording of the session. This is a critical piece of the center. Idea generation and exploration is a crucial step in entrepreneurship and we must offer the unique opportunity for pure innovation.

**Library**

This unique section of the library would provide a concentrated selection of books that promote creativity and innovation. A micro-version of this already exists on the 3rd floor of the Old Stone Mill with books and publications for aspiring social entrepreneurs and innovators. The collection of books could be supplemented by magazine subscriptions to Discovery and Entrepreneur Magazine, among others. The indices to these magazines can often provide information about unique job opportunities and help Middlebury students plug into the world of innovation.

One of the largest hurdles to beginning your own venture or following a passion is the fear of failure. Sharing stories of the successes and failures of entrepreneurship can help ease anxiety and lower this barrier to entry.

**How open is the Center to the outside/global community?**

Middlebury is highly committed to the global community, which is emphasized by its international dimensions- international students range from over 70 countries, and Middlebury’s Language schools comprehensively teach 10 languages. Middlebury’s vision of the Center includes promoting social change projects by innovative social entrepreneurs to the most impoverished places around the globe, thus interaction with global communities is paramount to the success of the Center.

**How will a center benefit the Middlebury community? To what degree will Middlebury be integrated with the Center?**

The Hassenfeld Center for Social Entrepreneurship has the potential to amalgamate the existing Middlebury organizations without undermining their integrity or programming. Unifying the proactive organizations, such as Middlebury Solutions Group, Middlebury Entrepreneurs, and Sunday Night Group can promote a cohesive understanding of Middlebury’s overall goals. Though the groups would not be subjected to surrendering their status as individual groups, students, faculty, and community members can visit the Center and learn what the organizations as well as social entrepreneurs who may be grant recipients are doing.

**How much will the Middlebury town community be involved with the Center?**

The Hassenfeld Center for Social Entrepreneurship will not only offer its services to Middlebury students, but also to the neighboring community. Those with initiative and pioneering ideas, or even just the drive to do good are welcomed at this Center, where ideas will be cultivated into potential projects that can be implemented by blossoming social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs will learn to enact leadership in their fields of service through the curriculum and development services provided by the Center. Community members will be eligible to apply and receive grants. They will also be able to attend guest
lectures as well as idea discussions on campus. Visiting speakers, whether at Middlebury High School or another venue, will also be encouraged to engage the local community of Middlebury.

**How do similar organizations on campus already foster social entrepreneurship?**

**Old Stone Mill**

Allows students to apply for a space in the Old Stone Mill Building under the pretense that their initiative must be non-academic and must be of their own design.

**Education in Action (EIA)**

Through the *Alliance for Civic Engagement (ACE) and Careers in the Common Good* as well as other programs, EIA helps students find opportunities to implement real-world application of liberal arts learning -- locally and around the world to volunteer, to craft international immersion experiences, to begin career exploration, to find internships and externships, to prepare for graduate study, to identify fellowships, and to locate funding for projects.

**Center for the Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity**

Encourages scholarship that considers race and ethnicity as intersecting with class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, dis/ability, language, communication, migration and the environment. Work supported by the Center situates these discussions in local, regional, global, and transnational contexts. The CCSRE draws on Middlebury College’s expertise in international studies, environmental studies, and language and communication to support critical inquiry on race, ethnicity and diversity.

**Sustainability Integration Office**

Works with students and faculty in many different ways, from supporting independent research projects to working alongside administrators and facilities staff in the creation of green campus infrastructure such as the biomass gasification plant. It is also responsible for conducting an annual greenhouse gas inventory, which tracks Middlebury College’s carbon dioxide emissions and helps in the campus’ effort to be carbon neutral by 2016.

**Rohatyn Center for International Studies**

Disseminates current research through our Working Paper Series, and also administers institutional grants in international studies, an undergraduate international research travel grant program, and a sponsored internship program. Works with the Career Services Office and other campus organizations to expand opportunities for internships and other types of direct experience that give students a sense of how the world looks and works from perspectives other than their own.
III. Grants

“On an annual basis, the Center will award approximately $400,000 in grants to worthy social entrepreneurs who have attended the [World Peace] Summit and have gone back to their home communities to set up their own “Pathways to Peace” initiatives.”

Alan Hassenfeld. October 22, 2010

What are the successful grant-giving programs in place at Middlebury today?

Davis Projects for Peace
Students with a creative idea for fostering peace and understanding can apply for this $10,000 grant which has made it possible for their ideas to become reality. The result: the student-led creation of a public library in war-torn Guatemala, unity concerts for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians outside the Capital in Washington D.C., and more. Unfortunately, however, the Projects for Peace program only selects one project a year and this year alone there are over 20 applicants.

Stonehenge Idea Competition
Middlebury also has significant experience distributing grants through what we like to call an “idea competition”. Stonehenge, a current program at the college, awards grants of up to $3,000 to Middlebury students in one of four categories: Art, Environment, Business, and Vermont Public Policy. After all the entries have been submitted, the top five in each category are selected to present at a symposium. Stonehenge has seen great success as students find new and innovative ways to tackle long-standing challenges.

We propose that a similar structure could work very well within the Hassenfeld grant-giving program. One potentially very large grant (to the degree of approximately $40,000) could serve as the prize for a similar idea competition. Not only would this inspire only the best, most innovative projects, but it would attract attention to the new Center and create buzz around what is certainly going to be an exciting program. The top five proposals could present during the annual conference and summer school program.

Mini-grants (ACE and EC)
Middlebury provides grants through the Alliance for Civic Engagement (ACE) office and Environmental Council (EC) that offset small scale expenses such as transportation, living and admission fees. These grants provide “flexible funding” and require applicants to submit a proposal that describes their project. The EC grant will be provided specifically for service projects that address environmental issues preferably along the lines of transportation and food. However, the mini-grants from the ACE office cater to less specific funding needs. Even though these grants are small, they range in the level of funding they can provide. “The Tormondsken
Family Internship and Service Fund” represents the largest mini grant provided by Middlebury College. In addition, Sustainable Study Abroad grants are available to students undertaking social projects while studying abroad.

*Online Fundraising (MiddSTART)*

Online fundraising can be a highly successful and easy way to support social entrepreneurship work. In January 2011, Middlebury launched an online fundraising site after which the center could model its own program. MiddStart allows parents, alumni, and friends of the college to donate money directly to student projects. Similar to micro financing sites like Kiva, MiddStart features a range of student projects in need of funding. Currently, for example, one can donate money to help support the construction of a solar powered home or contribute to a student’s creation of an online bicycle networking website. With the tagline “MiddStart connects our people to our passions,” the project is dedicated to keeping donors informed about the progress of the projects they have supported. Students are required to regularly update the status of their projects. Donors are sent email notifications about these updates, enabling them to stay connected.

**How might the grant money from the Hassenfeld Center be allotted?**

Social entrepreneurs’ monetary needs are as unique as their ideas. We believe that the model of the Davis Peace Projects best fits the grant-giving capabilities of the Center. We suggest that rather than instituting fixed dollar amount grants, we should structure our grant program to be contingent on the funding requests of those we assist. One approach is to provide ranges or threshold classifications (such as large, medium, and smaller grants) in order to provide structure and signal reasonable proposal sizes. As part of the grant proposal submitted by each entrepreneur, the center would require a detailed budget describing the needs for and uses of the provided resources. The center would work to ensure these budgets are directly in support of each project’s stated objectives while ensuring adequate capital is available as contingency in the event that the project encounters unexpected, yet reasonable funding needs during the course of its (often highly experimental) execution. We also believe that in the selection of the grants there be a distribution of grants given to World Youth Peace Summit Delegates, Middlebury College Students, University of Hartford students, and other New England representatives such that all members are able to benefit from the process.

**How will the Center maintain ties with the grant recipients once they have been given their funding?**

As a grant-giving program, we are committed to the longevity and success of all our projects. Each grant recipient will maintain contact with the Center both before and after the inception of his or her project, ensuring that the best possible result is achieved. Recipients will have a contact person at the center as well as a mentor, to whom they will keep in regular contact. Additionally, we are prepared to commit to successful projects by providing additional funds midway through the project if it is deemed necessary. A committee will exist that reviews requests for funding throughout the year. If the Center is unable to provide additional funding, they will provide the necessary resources for individuals to find other forms
of funding.

We envision that Middlebury students will be involved in promoting the longevity of grant recipients’ projects. Middlebury students, equipped with necessary on the ground skills to help and guide the projects, will commit to engaging and supporting projects in their different phases of life. Additionally, we see the Center providing an adviser to each project either from within the Middlebury College community or from the global community to which Middlebury is strongly connected. Grant recipients will also have the opportunity to communicate with grant recipient alumni, giving them the opportunity to ask their most relevant questions. This adviser, with experience in the field relating to the project will be there to answer questions, provide advice, and oversee the completion of the project.

**How can the Center ensure that promising projects have the necessary long-term capital to continue after their grant is exhausted?**

The Center can work actively to connect those projects it funds with a robust network of philanthropists who partner with the center and are willing to build on the center’s initial investment with their own contribution of “patient capital.” The reputation that the center builds is key to providing credibility to its recommendation. The data collected and analysis the center conducts on each project can serve to further buttress the case for a project’s continued funding.

The Center can assist by providing education on how to write a grant and can serve as a resource in suggesting a filtered subset of grants that are highly relevant to the project it funds.

The more quality publicity the center affords its grant recipients, the more likely they will receive long-term funding. Featuring grant recipients (and their ideas) on the website, in press releases, and video clips when the projects are at an appropriate stage is recommended. Employing a model akin to *MiddStart* in which featured entrepreneurs pitch their idea to small donors on the internet can provide a capital boost while employing a proven grassroots strategy (not altogether dissimilar from Kiva).
IV. Annual forum of social entrepreneurs and summer school

“On an annual basis, the Center will host a four-day meeting for social entrepreneurs, including those who receive Center grants. This annual meeting, which will be very high-profile, will be held on the host campus.”

Alan Hassenfeld. October 22, 2010

What is the annual forum?

The Annual Forum of Social Entrepreneurs will bring together Hassenfeld Grant recipients, graduates of the World Youth Peace Summit, the World Scholar-Athlete Games, social entrepreneurs, leaders from the Middlebury community, and any interested parties from across the world. Every effort will be made to make the event extremely international in focus. The Forum will seek to educate and inspire attendees, as well as facilitate connections between social entrepreneurs. This Forum could potentially be an important part of the Summer School proposed later if the two events coincide.

What is the structure?

Forum activities could include but are not limited to: lectures, workshops, screenings, panel discussions, luncheons/dinners, and sporting events (such as a halftime presentation). A keynote address would be given at some point during the forum.

When will it take place?

There are two possible times when this gathering could occur. One option would be to make it part of the final week of the summer program. This would be advantageous in that it would include top social entrepreneurship students, but it would not allow current Middlebury students to take part. The second option would separate these two events and host this high-profile gathering during the school year when students and faculty are on campus. Assuming that this gathering would be distinct from the “Pathways for Peace” lecture, we would separate these events by several months. We recommend separating the forum from the summer school to allow maximum ancillary benefits for Middlebury College students, faculty and staff.

Where will it take place?

The location of the gathering would depend on the selected time to host it. If the forum was held during
the summer program, which potentially could be in Burlington, then it would make the most sense for the forum to take place there, allowing for greater public participation. If the decision was made to organize the gathering during the school year, then Middlebury would host this gathering of experienced and stimulating individuals. Additionally, as it has been discussed, the University of Hartford may be a more viable option in hosting a large gathering of this sort.

**Who will participate and/or attend?**

If the gathering takes place at some point during the summer school, then students at the school would attend, along with all the recipients of grants from the given year with the potential for attendance from members of the surrounding community as well. If the gathering takes place during the school year, then Middlebury students, faculty, and staff would be encouraged to attend, along with community members. The forum would include both public and private events and would make a special effort to reach out to local high schools.

**Who will be invited to present?**

The center would seek to involve a wide range of accomplished and inspiring social entrepreneurs who are at various stages in their careers. Individuals who would present could be anyone from students who have completed or started a project that addressed a global challenge, a professor who specializes in a specific global challenge, or a successful social entrepreneur who is somehow connected to Middlebury network. Grant-giving individuals and organizations would also be encouraged to attend, making the forum a networking opportunity between these individuals and social entrepreneurs.

**Who will coordinate the gathering?**

The gathering will be coordinated by the staff of both the Center for Social Entrepreneurship as well as the School for Social Entrepreneurship. Interested Middlebury students would also be encouraged to assist in the gathering’s organization.

**How does this forum relate to the proposed Summer School?**

In order to incorporate an annual gathering of social entrepreneurs, the Summer School would invite well-known social entrepreneurs to a high-profile four-day conference during the culmination of the program. Summer School students, recipients of grants from the Hassenfeld Center and the general public would all be strongly encouraged to attend. The conference would provide an opportunity for accomplished social entrepreneurs from numerous lines of work to inspire students and the public through lectures while also offering support and advice through workshops. These would include high-profile social entrepreneurs not able to dedicate as much time as other social entrepreneurs involved with the school in its earlier weeks. Past Hassenfeld grant recipients would be able to present their work thus increasing the prestige of successful projects and inspiring those who have yet to put their ideas into action. Students who had graduated from the summer program would also have the opportunity to pass on key information learned...
both at the Summer School and in the execution of their projects.

**What does the Summer School seek to do?**

The Summer School hopes to give students the tools they need to become effective social entrepreneurs as well as empathetic and conscious citizens. This school seeks to educate some of the brightest and most motivated young people from around the country about their own agency and how to develop the ideas that will drive the next generation. This school will teach students the nuts and bolts of social entrepreneurship with a combination of lectures, discussions, and workshops that elucidate significant social challenges and encourage creative thought. The Center will bring together an outstanding, diverse group of faculty and presenters to educate, challenge, and advise the students. Students will develop their own ideas and initiatives with the help of this talented support network. By bringing together a diverse mix of experienced and budding social entrepreneurs from all walks of life, we can create a fertile environment for the creation and development of ideas.

**When will it take place? How long does the program last?**

The program would take place at the beginning of the summer to attract undergraduate and graduate students. Sessions would ideally last 2 to 4 weeks. The length of the program, however, is open for debate. A two week long program would allow students to engage in other opportunities such as internships during the remainder of the summer; however, it would significantly reduce the amount of content and actual assistance that the summer school could provide. A three to four week program, on the other hand, would provide more opportunities for students to learn and truly develop their ideas, but on the flip side, less time to engage in other summer plans.

**Where will it take place?**

The Summer School would preferably take place on a college campus with available dorm rooms. The advantages of hosting the program in a major city instead of on the Middlebury College campus include accessibility, increased community involvement, greater national press coverage, and flexibility concerning the start and end date of the program.

Alternatively, the program could be housed on Middlebury’s Breadloaf Campus. The various Breadloaf campuses and other locations directly connected to the college may be a great way to further involve the college community. Specifically, hosting the program in Burlington, VT may be of interest due to its close proximity to Middlebury and the ability to acquire support from the state of Vermont. This provides a favorable synthesis of proximity and accessibility for both the center’s faculty and potential students.

**Who is eligible to take part?**

At the school’s inception, it would be open to blossoming social entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 27 (tentatively), focusing on undergrads and those who have recently graduated. While Hassenfeld
grant applicants/recipient would be encouraged to apply, the program would also be open to students without a specific vision for a particular project. Students would be required to submit an area of interest and potential project proposal along with their application. We envision an enrollment of roughly 40-50 students, with potential for expansion in the years following the school’s opening. A possible goal during the scale-up, in addition to increasing the number of students at the school, could be to provide separate programs for different age groups, similar to the current structure of the Bread Loaf School of English.

**How much does it cost? Is financial aid available?**

Our estimate of the program cost, including room and board, is somewhere between $2,000 and $5,000. Coming up with a more exact estimate requires a higher level of detail in regard to the length of the program, location, cost of room and board, etc.

Tuition will cover all of the costs of the program divided by the number of participants. A certain proportion of our annual budget (say $30,000 - $50,000) will be allotted to need-based financial aid for qualifying participants. As the program grows and funding begins to come from different sources, we would make it a top priority to make admissions need-blind, but considering the limited budget of the center as a whole, we will need to be need-aware at the start.

Summer interns for the center would be used to provide as much of the administrative support for the program as possible in order to minimize costs. Other cost-cutting measures such as asking speakers to donate their time will be considered to make the program as affordable as possible. Prospective program sponsorship from the city of Burlington (in return for a variety of public lectures during the program) would also make the program more affordable.

**What would the structure of the program look like?**

The curriculum will have three foci that will be integrated through the program.

*Academic Instruction*

The first area of focus will combine social entrepreneurship with topics within the liberal arts. Departments at Middlebury that could be integrated into this program include but are not limited to: History, Environmental Studies, International Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, Economics, Education Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Philosophy, and Sociology/Anthropology. Professors from these departments would be invited to deliver a single lecture during the program and then spend time interacting with the students personally. This focus helps students to gain a functional knowledge of global issues as well as a cohesive understanding of social entrepreneurship.

*Practical Skills*

The second area of focus will be teaching practical skills that social entrepreneurs need to be successful. Important areas of focus will include but not be limited to: nonprofit finance, grant writing, fundraising, leadership, public speaking, and more. These will be taught both by
Middlebury professors and by local entrepreneurs, business owners, educators, and politicians. The Center would make it a top priority to bring people with unique, exceptional knowledge in each category to the Center to offer a top-notch experience in each field.

Proposal Writing

The third area of focus will be developing a proposal for a new project. Students will be asked to suggest a topic proposal as they apply for the program and will need to arrive at the program with a clear area of interest, if not a specific proposal. As the program progresses, students will build and modify their plan based on the topics covered and feedback given by the faculty. This third area will be tightly integrated into the second focus. For instance, when students are focusing on public speaking, they would be required to speak on their proposed program. Ideally, this will intertwine development of their plan with the development of their entrepreneurship skills.

The program will culminate with students presenting their finalized proposals on the last day of the school.

Who are the instructors? Who supports them?

Ideally, the school would have 2-3 core faculty members who would serve as permanent mentors for enrolled students for the duration of the school. These faculty members could be anyone from Middlebury professors to experienced social entrepreneurs who have spent time in the field. As the weeks progress, speakers who work in realms either inside or outside of academia would come in for lectures and workshops with the students. Based on the multi-disciplinary background of speakers brought in, a liberal arts bent would serve as the backbone for the program.

How does this program differ from other currently established schools for social entrepreneurship?

This program would fill a niche currently unfulfilled by other social entrepreneurship schools around the country: currently, there are few opportunities for undergraduates to further or even begin their education regarding SE. This program would offer an opportunity for younger students to broaden their skill set and learn about their potential role in addressing various global challenges. The advantage of Middlebury being a well-rounded liberal arts college is that the professors, students, and general structure of the college provides a strong base in an incredibly diverse set of academic foci. Professors with an expertise in multiple areas would be able to pass along their knowledge to the students enrolled in this school.

Momentum is building among members of the Middlebury network and many are seeking to increase opportunities and awareness for SE on campus. Various offices, programs, foundations, and student-organizations are unknowingly united behind a common goal of, in the most basic definition, working towards improving the lives of those in need. This center and this program could act as an umbrella to both physically and metaphorically unite many of the current efforts on campus and provide a forum for collaboration.
This program would not be limited to only Middlebury students, there would be an open application that would be available to aspiring social entrepreneurs around the world. The program could potentially capitalize on the intensive world-renowned language programs at Middlebury. Finally, this school could act as a funnel towards encouraging motivated individuals to become involved in the “Sustainable Community Commitment” project abroad that is one of the proposed pillars of the center. Middlebury is an ideal location to construct this center and a Middlebury summer school for social entrepreneurship not only because of the strong academic background of the school but also because of the powerful desire on campus to create more venues to inspire and coordinate social entrepreneurship efforts.
V. “Pathways to Peace” lecture

“Along with bringing Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Vice President Al Gore and General Colin Powell to the inaugural Summit, the Center will host an annual “Pathways to Peace” lecture on the host campus. The annual lecture will be delivered by a world leader.”

Alan Hassenfeld. October 22, 2010

What would the be structure of this annual lecture?

There are two possible formats in which the center could promote the Pathways to Peace lecture.

Annual Pathways to Peace Lecture

The Pathways to Peace Lecture would bring one speaker to campus to present in a standard lecture format. The structure of the lecture would allow for a large crowd of interested individuals from the college community to gather together and learn from the featured presenter. Furthermore, due to Middlebury’s commitment to engaging the local community, we propose that the lecture be presented not only once at Middlebury, but again at other venues in the greater area. For example, the speaker could give a talk at the town hall or at Middlebury Union High School in a attempt to reach as much of the community as possible. In addition, Middlebury could network with other institutions in Vermont, such as the University of Vermont or Champlain College, to bring the speaker to their campus while in the area.

While on campus, the speaker would also be encouraged to give a workshop on their work/how they are involved in change-making. The workshops would be given in a much smaller setting and students would be required to to sign up ahead of time to participate. The workshop would give students a better opportunity to ask in-depth questions while learning. This would greatly add to the educational component of the center.

The Pathways to Peace Lecture would draw attention to one featured and successful social entrepreneur. With an undiluted focus on the sole, well-known presenter, the Center could attract significant publicity and support from the surrounding communities and universities and colleges. The unified message of one speaker would be more accessible to all members of the community than an event spanning the weekend. Additional small lectures throughout the year would ensure that education on many global issues, beyond the one presented in the Lecture, occurs at the Center.

Pathways to Peace Symposium

Middlebury has demonstrated an effective method of promoting education through and beyond lectures with a symposium structure. For example, the Clifford Symposium is an annual weekend symposium that assembles speakers from a diverse range of disciplines to inform the Middlebury
community on one topic. The speakers not only present their research and experiences in formal lectures but also participate in panel discussions, seminars, and brown bag lunches throughout the weekend to further engage the Middlebury community. The symposium structure also encourages the presentation of research by Middlebury faculty and students, emphasizing the change-making potential of all individuals.

The Pathways to Peace Symposium would be centered on a keynote speaker but would feature a wide range of presenters throughout the weekend including other social entrepreneurs, leaders in the research of global issues, Middlebury faculty, students, and alumni. Beyond the keynote lecture, it would include a diverse range of workshops and panels led by the presenters. The curriculum would address peace-related issues such as, but not limited to those listed in the Pathways to Peace Learning and Action Framework:

- Arms proliferation and armed conflict
- Poverty
- Economic development
- Education
- Energy
- Environment, natural resources and biodiversity
- Ethics
- Globalization and international trade
- Health and healthcare
- Human trafficking
- Hunger and nutrition
- Leadership and leadership development
- Natural disasters
- Religious conflict
- Sovereignty and territorial disputes
- Technology
- Terrorism
- Tolerance, diversity and cultural competence
- Space Exploration and Technology, including security issues therein

Middlebury’s interdisciplinary focus and interrelated departments could facilitate the gathering of diverse participants. Beyond the academic departments, the HCSE could collaborate with the Rohatyn Center for International Affairs, the Center for Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity, and the Chellis House (space for women’s and gender organizations to meet on campus) to bring social entrepreneurs to campus.

The Pathways to Peace Symposium would highlight the interdisciplinary nature of global challenges and facilitate communication and collaboration across fields. Additionally, it would demonstrate the variety of scales at which social enterprises and social entrepreneurs work. Spreading the lectures and speakers throughout a weekend would provide those who attend with an comprehensive introduction to global issues and the opportunity to discuss them in seminars and panels.

What kind of speakers would be brought to campus?

In line with the mission of the center, social entrepreneurs trying to solve the many different global challenges would be brought to campus to lecture and educate the Middlebury community. A social entrepreneur is defined as someone who “create[s] public value, pursue[s] new opportunities, innovate[s] and adapt[s], act[s] boldly, leverage[s] resource they don’t control, and exhibit[s] a strong sense of accountability.” (David Bornstein and Susan Davis, Social Entrepreneurship, Oxford University Press, p. 1). World leaders, such as Al Gore or Desmond Tutu, would bring political knowledge as well as experience with social entrepreneurs to the table. They would also attract a large audience. However,
the Center would not limit the speakers to world leaders, instead striving to bring influential social entrepreneurs, regardless of their world recognition, such as Greg Mortenson and Ashoka fellows, who could inform the community on their innovative work and direct experience with effecting social change. In addition, the center would also bring back past grant recipients to share their successes and failures, as well as the process of developing their projects.

**How would the center bring speakers to Middlebury?**

The Center would look to the Middlebury community, students and faculty alike, for suggested speakers. The center could model the process of bringing speakers to campus used by the Middlebury College Activities Board’s Speakers Committee. The administrative board of the Center could establish a Speakers Committee for the Center to orchestrate the request process and the logistics of the lecture.
VI. Data-driven development (D³)

A Project of the Hassenfeld Centre for Social Entrepreneurship

1. Principles

To constrain social entrepreneurship to a particular peoples, place or time would be to act in direct contradiction of the spirit of innovation, and in total ignorance of the ubiquity of struggle today. To encourage social entrepreneurship that is idealistic in nature and transient in time would nevertheless also be incongruous. Recognizing these realities, and the subsequent need for sustainable, data-driven innovation, the three pillars of the Hassenfeld Centre for Social Entrepreneurship might best be served by a fourth major initiative, proposed here under the name "Demand/Data Driven Development", or “D³”.

Prioritizing data-driven project design and evaluation in order to facilitate the scaling up of successes (and a critical understanding of failures), D3 will attempt to channel a portion of the Centre’s resources into a chosen community partner in the developing world. Recognizing the immense potential for social entrepreneurship that exists on undergraduate campuses and the pressing need for genuine face-to-face interaction with those facing the very global challenges we seek to understand, both the community partner and the Middlebury community would stand to benefit from D3.

2. Process

a. Selection

○ Selection of a community partner will ideally be conducted through a demand driven process. Before soliciting proposals however, certain criteria would have to be pre-determined. These may include:

    ■ Ideal population size
      • To be determined based on the budget allocated to D3
    ■ Spoken language
      • To be potentially constrained to languages taught at the Middlebury Language Schools
    ■ Minimum length of engagement
      • Providing a minimum but no maximum will only serve to reinforce the Centre’s commitment to sustainability
    ■ Proximate Middlebury School Abroad
      • Leverage existing networks and connections could catalyze the process and add a layer of familiarity to the project area for the Middlebury community
Local NGO involvement

- Areas with an extremely established NGO presence could hinder the ability of the Centre to implement projects
- When criteria are finalized and agreed upon by the Centre and its governing Board,
- ceaseless promotion of the initiative could begin. Leveraging existing networks of donors, Study Abroad Schools, alumni, and Trustees, promotion of the Centre’s interest (and the pre-determined criteria) would hopefully result in informal expressions of interest being made by, or on behalf of communities across the Global South.

- The Centre’s governing Board and members of the Middlebury Community would then undertake a selection process, based on the various merits of the potential partners. Preference would be given to communities meeting criteria that would maximize the efficacy of D3 (proximate Study Abroad school, spoken language that is taught by Middlebury, etc.).

b. Preliminary Data Analysis

Once a location has been selected, the Centre would undertake comprehensive data collection and analysis. Students and faculty with a working understanding of the spoken language and an interest in statistical analysis and/or a given global challenge would travel to the community to conduct household surveys. Collection and subsequent analysis (at the Centre or on location) could provide the basis of:

- Summer projects
- Senior thesis work
- J-term classes
- Professor’s research
- Independent studies
- Statistics classes final projects
  - ECON 0210, ECON 0211, MATH 0116, MATH 0311
  - Survey questions would attempt to uncover the demographic, socio-cultural,
  - economic, environmental, and health related realities of life in the partner community, with the aim of identifying problems and their potential solutions.
  - For example, a J-term class on water and sanitation issues in the developing world could conduct a survey that asked the following questions, among others:

- Where does your drinking water come from?
- Do you boil your water before you drink it?
  - How long do you boil it for?
- How long does it take, on average, to collect water?
  - How many trips do you have to make a day?
● Who collects the water?
● Have you always gotten your water this way?

■ When was the last time someone in your house experienced diarrhea?
  ● When they did, did they drink more, less, or about the same amount of water?

■ Where do the people in your household defecate?
■ Do you wash your hands after you’ve gone to the washroom?
■ Potential other areas of inquiry include: food sources and availability, environmental problems (fires, flooding, erosion, deforestation), disease, HIV/AIDS and contraception (awareness and prevalence), housing, agricultural methods, education, language and culture, and women’s issues.

■ Ultimately, analysis of collected data could provide valuable insight into the reality of life in the partner community and what local know-how and culture could be incorporated into changemaking, as well as invaluable cultural experience for the students and faculty conducting the research.

■ To emphasize the importance of data to the Centre’s work, all data collection trips would be funded by the Centre, and the full set of raw and analyzed data would be housed at the Centre and made available to any visitors.

c. Projects

i. Design

■ In order to ensure that projects are addressing actual needs with the maximum efficacy and efficiency, baseline data - once collected and analyzed - will serve as the basis for all project design. Any World Youth Peace Summit delegate, Middlebury community member, or student of another undergraduate institution will receive full access to the data on hand upon request, and will be encouraged to use any and all relevant data to design and appropriate project. Any proposals received before data has been consulted will be evaluated alongside the data, to confirm that projects are based not upon assumed social problems, but actual ones.

■ In addition to ensuring that resources are not wasted and projects are truly grounded in reality, data-driven project design will also help to support a community of students the Centre feels might otherwise be excluded from grant making, etc. This constituency is mainly composed of undergraduates with the explicit intention of doing good in the world and skills and knowledge to back those intentions up, but who are unclear as to what their starting point should be. Data could provide these students with a clear picture of what life in the partner community is like, and illustrate clear channels for action.
Throughout the process of project design, the Centre will provide necessary know-how, leveraging both in-house and external resources for project designers in need of a particular expertise. This will be instrumental in maximizing the number of projects designed from the get-go with an element of sustainability; prioritizing market-based solutions, vocational training and worker skill development will be key to eventually allowing D3 to be terminated in the first partner community, and begun in another.

ii. Implementation

Throughout the process of project implementation, the Centre will provide financial support, in addition to serving as a bridge between projects that are ongoing in the partner community. Recognizing that projects will inevitably overlap - just as problems of poverty, human health and the environment overlap - constant evaluation of who is doing what on the ground and how can they be working together will result in efforts that transcend their individual parts.

An on-the-ground project manager constantly reporting back to the Centre will undoubtedly be necessary to this effort.

iii. Evaluation

Data will prove instrumental again in evaluating projects, post-implementation. Recognizing that some projects require a time lag between implementation and evaluation, some months after a project has been made to work in the partner community, the Centre will support efforts to send in surveyors again, and ask the appropriate follow up questions of those community members who were involved in a given project.

For example, a project intended to educate a given neighbourhood or area about HIV/AIDS related issues (i.e contraception, transmission, etc.) could benefit immensely from a follow up survey to recalculate the HIV/AIDS awareness rate.

This process will allow the Centre to identify and scrutinize both successes and failures, as to avoid repeating mistakes in the future and in the interests of scaling-up successes. Evaluation could also serve as a prime opportunity to document stories of success on film or other media, to house at the Centre and help inspire others.

iv. Scaling-Up
Recognizing that the Centre’s finite resources are best spent incubating and implementing small scale, innovative ideas, but also the need to scale up successes within and without the partner community, scaling-up effective projects will be the explicit intention of D3 from the start.

Ultimately, over the course of overseeing the World Youth Peace Summit, hosting the annual Pathways for Peace lecture and other gatherings of social entrepreneurs, the Centre’s contacts within global civil society will undoubtedly be substantial.

These contacts could help immensely when an innovative project, post-evaluation, is deemed a success. One can easily see a situation where what will be quantitative evidence of efficacy (post-implementation data compared to baseline data) is pitched to a larger or more specialized NGO, working in the in the relevant region to be scaled up.

For example, Charlie McCormack is a Middlebury graduate who is now the President and CEO of Save the Children US - a globally renowned NGO working in almost every country on Earth. An innovative project addressing issues of poverty, education or the environment, implemented and evaluated by the Centre, could easily be pitched to Save the Children through the Centre’s de facto connection to Charlie McCormack. Depending on the nature of the program and its success, Save the Children could have a vested interest in piloting larger versions of the program in the same area, or elsewhere, thus benefiting larger groups without draining the Centre’s ability to bolster other new ideas.

d. Termination

When a point has been reached where implemented projects have either been phased out (because of failure or because they are transient in nature), or have attained a level of sustainability on their own (i.e a market based solution), a conversation can be had about terminating D3 in the given community partner, and started up in another.

Crucial to this discourse will be members of both communities; individuals from Middlebury and the community partner should have an even say in the outcome. Still, termination does not have to be inevitable; consideration should be given to the possibility than an ideal time may arrive, however.

3. Outcomes

a. For the Community Partner
D3 will result in projects that will seek to improve a community in areas such as poverty, education, the environment, and human health, and in a sustainable manner that prioritizes the empowerment of local people and employment of local knowledge above all else.

While it is likely that many initiatives will fail, the Centre’s year-round relationship with the partner community and employment of an on the ground D3 manager will hopefully ensure that failed projects are implemented and phased out in a way that minimizes disturbance to local ways of life, and focuses upon correcting any wrongs via future initiatives.

b. For Middlebury College

As stated above, D3 could do much to channel the good intentions and advanced knowledge of Middlebury undergraduates into concrete ideas and projects in the developing world. Opportunities abound for students studying any discipline; between data collection and analysis, and project design, implementation and evaluation, there exist infinite chances for individuals with everything from simply a working understanding of the spoken language to an advanced knowledge of global challenges and solutions.

c. For the Hassenfeld Centre for Social Entrepreneurship

D3 is an opportunity to pioneer a project that could be taken up by other institutions of higher education or social entrepreneurship. Few projects exist today without a pre-determined pull-out date, with an explicit commitment to sustainable, data-driven changemaking, and with a framework that sees the value in both scaled up successes and scrutinized, phased out failures.
Appendix 1: social entrepreneurship in the liberal arts

(Published in the Middlebury Campus - 1/20/2011)

This winter-term, twenty-one students and I have learned a lot about social entrepreneurship. First, the idea is not new. For three decades, leading champions of social change have promoted social entrepreneurship. Bill Drayton founded the Ashoka Foundation (1981) to support innovators worldwide; Jeff Skoll - Ebay’s first president - created his foundation (1999) to promote “a sustainable world of peace and prosperity.” Yet while social entrepreneurship is in some ways ‘old news,’ it seems to be everywhere these days. The White House already has an Office of Social Innovation; rumor has it that President Obama will commit more resources to promoting social entrepreneurship in his State of the Union address next week. Stay tuned!

The concept’s ubiquity right now is both good and bad. Good because it’s a sign that leaders who are taking on the toughest 21st-century challenges - poverty, climate change, and the lack of human rights - have found an approach that works. Bad because like many popular terms, it can mean too many things to too many people. (A critique that was also true of social capital when President Clinton embraced that concept in the 1990s.) In academic communities, we demand clarity and rigor. Is there a clear, rigorous way to define social entrepreneurship?

In our class, we’ve embraced Roger Martin and Sally Osberg’s definition from their 2007 article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. Social entrepreneurship occurs when individuals identify an unjust equilibrium - say a poverty trap - and lead a creative process whose goal is the establishment of a more just equilibrium. The definition echoes Joseph Schumpeter, the great economic historian: social entrepreneurs lead ‘creative gales of destruction’ designed to build a better world.

Yet admittedly, definitions of social entrepreneurship abound. Furthermore, too many are mushy. For some academics, this - and the term’s ubiquity - may cause alarm. It turns out, though, that social entrepreneurship has good company. Plenty of grand modern ideas - culture, governance, and markets come to mind - have scores of sloppy definitions. Needless to say, this hasn’t stopped academics from placing such ideas in the front-and-center of student inquiry.

But for those who suspect that social entrepreneurship is no more than a fad, another alarm may go off: is this really an idea that matters? In the last few years, leaders at top universities have concluded that it is. Oxford, Duke, Stanford and NYU (just to name a few) have recently established centers and programs for social entrepreneurship, which are helping scholars, students and staff to integrate social entrepreneurship into core curricular and co-curricular activities. The outcomes of such programs often inspire. For example, after engaging in Harvard’s Social Enterprise Initiative while earning her MBA, Abigail Falik started Global Citizen Year, a nonprofit which is building a movement of diverse high school graduates who spend a pre-college "bridge year" in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
But research-oriented universities with prominent business schools are one thing. Academics in at liberal arts institutions may still argue that social entrepreneurship is an idea that doesn’t belong. It’s an argument that’s not hard to make. The liberal arts are designed to stand slightly apart, to allow students to dig deep into ideas as ideas, with no regard for their practicality. Furthermore, a professor’s argument might continue, the great goals of the liberal arts - to help students learn how to reflect, to write, and to analyze as they prepare to lead a life of meaning - may well produce social entrepreneurs in the long run; it’s up to our colleagues in MA and MBA programs to teach our alums the necessary practical skills to get there. In a nutshell, let’s keep social entrepreneurship out of the liberal arts.

I’d agree with this case - if the teaching of social entrepreneurship were viewed as nothing more that providing students with practical tools. This month, I’ve concluded that the most persuasive case for teaching social entrepreneurship in the liberal arts is quite different.

It begins with an observation about being a liberal-arts teacher in the 21st century. What we do when we are at our best is to give students the time and space to reflect on their own agency in a complex world. Every student on a liberal-arts campus, echoing Yale’s Anthony Kronman, should confront, wrestle with, and ultimately celebrate that most fundamental question: “What is living for?” For example, when my own economics and environmental studies classes really succeed, it’s because the course material and the learning process have allowed students to stumble, to sometimes really falter, but in the end to confidently stand up and say: “In this class, I’ve learned a little more about the world and my role in it.” I’m guessing that that my colleagues in Physics, Philosophy, Portuguese - you name the department - feel the same way.

But the truth is, we don’t always do this as well as we should. Here’s where social entrepreneurship can come in. To carefully teach students about leading creative, even destructive processes whose goal is a better world, we must begin with the students themselves. To paraphrase the great organizer Marshall Ganz, we must help students to ask: “What is my story of self? What is the story of us? What is our story of now?” Put another way, we must ask students to first reflect - and only after to connect.

What I like most about this perspective is that it takes us back to Kronman’s question: “What is living for?” And to begin to answer that question well (has anyone really figured it out?), a student needs to explore the breadth of the humanities - in many ways the core of the liberal arts. If it were up to me, the teaching of social entrepreneurship would start with the great lessons from philosophy, religion and theories of political science.

Social entrepreneurs are already all around us at Middlebury. Think of the Davis Peace Scholars, graduates of MiddCORE, and the many young leaders aided by the Project on Creativity and Innovation in the Liberal Arts. Like Moliere's Monsieur Jourdain, who was delighted to discover that he'd been speaking prose for years, we’ve been in the business of social entrepreneurship for some time now! If we decide to commit to do more, we must begin with the core ideals of the liberal arts. The final words of the college’s mission statement are: “Students who come to Middlebury learn to engage the world.” The key to achieving this mission is to help students to engage themselves in a reflective, guided process of inquiry. Only then can they go on to be world changers.
Appendix 2: resources on social entrepreneurship

On-line biographies and/or articles of our in-class visitors

Dan Doyle
George Overholser
Jesse Fink
Rashmir Balasubramaniam
Margaret Crotty
Danny Growald

Selected videos of social entrepreneurship thought leaders

Wilford Welch and David Hopkins - talk at Middelbury College
Gordon Bloom - talk at Princeton University

Selected websites of social entrepreneurship centers on other campuses

Duke University
Babson University
Stanford University
Oxford University
American University

Selected websites of related social entrepreneurship organizations

Ashoka
Skoll Foundation
Change Agents
The Unreasonable Institute
Transformative Action