



**Resolution  
Project**

## How to Launch Social Ventures

### 1. It starts with an idea.

Every successful social venture you can think of began the same way – someone saw a societal problem and started to think of how to solve it. Decide on your mission and the impact you want to have on the world and build upon your interests, strengths, and personal experiences in order to enact it. Be tenacious and driven – you won't succeed as a social entrepreneur without real passion about your cause.

### 2. Crowdsource.

Build a community around yourself and allow your community to help you. Having a strong support system will help you in so many ways beyond just the obvious of giving you funding: work with the people around you to crowdsource ideas, get inspired by others, receive emotional support, and establish business connections. Make new connections by taking advantage of online resources like LinkedIn when looking for people you want to shop your idea and consider sites like General Assembly and WeWork, which have paid virtual memberships that give you access to their internal message board and, through it, announcements of events and meetings. Which brings us to our next point...

### 3. Utilize your networks.

You don't need all the world's best connections off the bat in order to succeed – you just need to know where to find them. Look for opportunities to meet people who can help you: conferences, panels, press releases, etc. Business plan competitions, either run through universities or entire cities, can be great for finding mentors and resources, as can nonprofits aimed specifically at social entrepreneurs like Resolution. Look at the alumni networks of the organizations you yourself are already affiliated with – if you share a hometown or a university with the person you're contacting, they're much more likely to agree to meet with you. If you have partners, don't be afraid to reach out to them to get them more involved in your organization's work – if you invite your partners to engage more directly with your organization, then they will do so more meaningfully and the partnership will be more fruitful.

#### **4. Ask for help.**

You've probably already noticed the emphasis our speakers put on mentorship and connections; but these people won't be of any use unless you talk to them. Don't be afraid to ask for things and to follow up – you'd be surprised how generous people will be with their time, spaces that they have access to, and more, to support a good idea that is solving a problem that it's likely they, too, have noticed. Don't be intimidated to approach big names, too – there's no harm in offering to buy a potential mentor from LinkedIn coffee, and even huge foundations always have small grants that might be available to you. Put yourself in a position to receive feedback and advice frequently and really take the time to note it and grow from it.

#### **5. Be self-aware**

Realize when to give up on certain aspects of your plan that aren't working before you waste countless time and resources following a dead end. Meanwhile, make decisions that are data-backed and intentional: for example, really consider which potential key stakeholder can help you the most in unlocking a bigger part of your network and remember to always have a funder's perspective at the table to remind you of the priorities that are important to the people who will be supporting you financially. Have a plan and know when to say no to ideas that don't fit into it.

#### **6. Don't be afraid to fail.**

Go fast (but deliberate) and you'll learn all the lessons you need to learn along the way; if you fall flat on your face in the process, get back up and move on. The faster you fail, the faster you can identify the mistakes you need to correct.

#### **7. Consider being an intrapreneur.**

Even if you're not an entrepreneur, you don't necessarily need to start a social venture to do social good. Consider giving your time and/or resources to other organizations supporting social justice or starting a small volunteering group within your larger corporation.

Good luck!