

The Elders Council for Social Entrepreneurs

Join this global network of support!

It all started when three Ashoka Fellows, Andrea Coleman, Mel Young and Chris Underhill, met for dinner in 2017 to discuss the question of growing old as a social entrepreneur. They each felt that because the concept of social entrepreneurship was relatively new, there was no clear path or support for social entrepreneurs who were coming to the end of their careers or who were exiting their organization. This was completely opposite to the traditional business sector where there was plenty of advice and written material. As the conversation continued, they also realized that older social entrepreneurs had much to offer and that this wisdom should not go to waste.

The idea was raised with Ashoka Fellowship staff who were very interested and organized a retreat for older social entrepreneurs. This took place in September 2019 at The Camp, Aix-en-Provence, France. The meeting was a success and a declaration was duly made by the participants of a mission of: *“To build a global network of social entrepreneurs where elder members support one another and share their wisdom across the social entrepreneur ecosystem. To make sure all social entrepreneurs in the world are aware of the existence of the network and how they can benefit from joining”.*

Membership will be open to all social entrepreneurs over the age of 55 and any social entrepreneur who is interested but not over 55 can become an associate member.

It will work on two main themes:

- 1. The first theme being the support of social entrepreneurs who are over 55. This theme will incorporate self-help activities, systems of mutual support and solidarity.*
- 2. The second theme will focus the wisdom of the elders on the wider community of social entrepreneurs, offering whatever support is needed, including mentoring, advice on boards, fundraising experience, and a whole range of expertise accumulated through the years.*

A number of meetings both in person (when possible) and virtual will be held starting with social entrepreneurs in Europe whilst moving rapidly to other regions of the world. Meetings will be formulated around the two themes with social entrepreneurs receiving and offering support according to need. A website will be designed so as to manage the database implied in the activities described in both themes.

There are a number of organisations promoting social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, and it is the hope of the working group to **create partnerships** with these organisations, including the Ashoka Fellowship, the Skoll Foundation and the Schwab Foundation, among many others. In order to make a start and, especially to develop the resources in the database, it will be necessary to **acquire funds** of approximately £50,000 per year for three years. The organization will be registered in the UK.

Looking forward we will immediately be **reaching out to Elder Social Entrepreneurs** wherever they may be and when possible convening them both physically and digitally. We see that there is a great interest in the Elders Council and no doubt in time gatherings will take place in several languages starting with English. During COVID-19 the gatherings will take place virtually and in order to manage volume and size it may be necessary to have more than one gathering in any given region.

Interested? Contact:

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Want to work with us?

Find out more and sign up at: <https://fellowship-europe.ashoka.org/elders-council>

