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# **IMPACTING ON SOCIETY: EXPLORING COMMON GROUND BEHIND THE POWER OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES**

### **Abstract:**

Social and ecological entrepreneurs take initiatives to set up social enterprises. Some endure, some do not; some reach a scale where questions of sustainability or replication become issues. This paper first seeks to explore if there are some common elements behind all the diverse initiatives. Drawing on primary as well secondary sources, this paper identifies four key elements. The first thing that emerges is a deep awareness bordering on engagement with some problematic aspect of social life in which the native is located. It is only then that the second element - what one may call "the churning within" - emerges. This is irrespective of clarity about the nature of change and the desired medium, but have such varying elements as values, restlessness, a missionary zeal to change, questioning life goals, leap of faith or the urge to put in action an executable idea. Interestingly, this "churning within" is quite different from the usually bandied about "passion" and "commitment". The third element appears to be an alignment of the native's chosen arena of work with her innate ability (aka KSA). But it is the fourth element - the native's ability to attract and develop intermediate levels of leadership - that distinguishes whether a social enterprise will flower or remain diminutive, if not squelch. Once this stage is reached, the entrepreneurial organization has morphed into a business organization, even if the profit motivation is not the determining characteristic.

### **Keywords:**

social and ecological entrepreneurs; social life; social entrepreneurs; intermediate leadership