

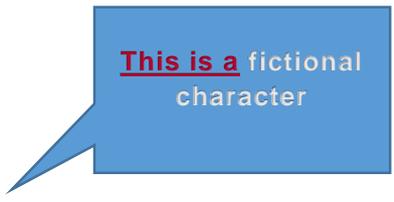
# Social Entrepreneurship in Health services

## Maria's story

### Introduction

Contrary to all statistics, the psychologist - psychotherapist who was born with spastic paraplegia manages not only to move on in life, but above all not to rush and enjoy the journey.

Many times she was upset and cried and she thought of giving up so many others. She fell. She was scared. Got up. When she was called to face obstacles she did not give up, she tried, she succeeded and, finally, she continued. Maria is a person with a bottomless appetite for life, she carries a huge power of soul.



This is a fictional  
character

*"My disability created opportunities that I might not have had if I had been born normal. It was the one who taught me to believe in human power, and that what others consider adversity is an opportunity for me" she said.*

Next to her, are always her two sticks. She does not go anywhere without them. She moves slowly in a world that is constantly in a hurry and often remains hostile or indifferent towards people with "special needs".

However, that did not stop her from studying Psychology at Panteion University, and also in 2012 she received a Master's degree in Health Psychology from the University of Surrey in England. In recent years she offers counselling and psychotherapy services to individuals and groups, through her social Counselling and Support Center for People with Disabilities, people with mental disorders and socially excluded groups and their Families Experiencing Social Stigma, Isolation and Exclusion from the labor Market, (such as People with Mental Retardation, Mental Illness etc.)

*"I was very hurt in my life. I asked for help once, I got it and I felt it was time to give it back. Somehow, at 17, I decided to become a psychotherapist. I never regretted it," she said.*

In the early years in her career she worked as a psychologist in general and special education schools. Thus began her professional journey as a psychologist.

*"I have always been fascinated by the infinity of human potential," she says.*

We had the opportunity to have a conversation with Maria and ask her about Social Entrepreneurship and the skills someone needs to become one. In the following paragraph is what she told us.

## Interview with Maria

### **How can people with disabilities claim the dream in entrepreneurship?**

*Maria: People with disabilities are equal to all other citizens of the country. So, if there is a dream in entrepreneurship they can claim it too. I have been always moving (slowly) with sticks in my life; however, I have not been prevented from making my dreams come true. Disability should not prevent someone from claiming the dream in entrepreneurship.*

### **What are the characteristics of an entrepreneur with a disability?**

*Maria: Due to the problems he/she faces due to his/her disability, the activity of an entrepreneur with a disability cannot be unlimited. It is obvious that this entrepreneur will engage in similar professional activities. I know many entrepreneurs with disabilities who changed their business based on their disability. Like many who engage in fields that are closely related to disability (trade in wheelchairs, pharmaceuticals, etc.). Therefore, if you ask me to tell you specific characteristics of the entrepreneur with a disability I would tell you with confidence that they have a greater perception and sense of humanity and certainly less ingratitude.*

### **What do you think the profile of the social entrepreneur should be?**

*Maria: Social entrepreneurs are not the citizens who wait for positive change to happen, but those who bring it. Anyone can be a social entrepreneur: a young person, a student, a group of citizens who want to tackle a local problem, a public or private sector worker who wants to do things differently, a socially vulnerable group, a retiree, an unemployed. Anyone who dares to try to create business opportunities for himself and others, focusing on people, the planet, but also profit, is a potential social entrepreneur.*

### **So what are the characteristics of a social entrepreneur?**

*Maria: A social entrepreneur emphasizes the change of a given social situation, identifying needs and giving practical solutions to social problems. By combining innovation and ingenuity with market opportunities, the social entrepreneur ensures that he has a comparative advantage in his field of employment. As a person who is not afraid to take the risk of an initiative, the social entrepreneur often implements his/her ideas without always having covered all the necessary resources in advance. A social entrepreneur is characterized by a*

*healthy energy, monitors and evaluates the results of his/her actions, while always sticking to his/her goal, even under adverse conditions.*

## **What are the steps an individual should follow in order to become a social entrepreneur in the field of health services?**

Let's have a look...

# **STEPS:**

## **FIRST STEP: Search for ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Look for opportunities to create value the health services field.
2. Build future scenarios to help guide effort and action.
3. Combine innovation with profits.

The Greek social enterprise sector has been completely restructured over the last decade. While organisations meeting the EU operational definition of social enterprise could be found in former decades too, social economy was formally institutionalised in the country only in 2011.

When applying the EU operational definition of social enterprise to the Greek context, multiple similarities and several divergent approaches can be identified regarding how social enterprises are conceived and institutionalized. Both the EU operational definition and Greek law have built their concept of social enterprises around the same threefold structure, involving social, economic and inclusive governance criteria. Despite many similarities of content, organisational models and aims, a notable difference in Greek legislative and administrative documents is the **preferred use of the term 'social and solidarity economy organisation' over 'social enterprise'**. Despite broadly matching, legal typologies covered by the Greek **Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)** do not fully correspond to the criteria of the EU operational definition of social enterprise.

**TIP:** Search in detail legislation in your country connected with this specific field. For support go visit local organization that offer entrepreneurial guidance. In Greece the official site for Social and Solidarity Economy is <https://kalo.gov.gr/>

Therefore, if you want to get the real job search, social enterprises in your local environment, and get in touch with those who are dealing with the field of health services.

The list of social enterprises in all partner countries are available at: <https://entre4all.eu/en/>

## SECOND STEP: BE AWARE OF SPECIFIC SKILLS NEEDED FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN HEALTH SERVICES

### ICT SKILLS

Basic ICT skills are essential for Social Entrepreneurship in Health Services. The training material for the acquisition of digital related skills targeted to the needs of adults with disabilities is included in the General Modules as, Module 2- DIGITAL COMPETENCES.

Specific ICT skills in the field of Health Services are:

- Digital Communication skills through Social Groups – Forums, groups, chat etc.
- Digital Communication skills for online sessions using Skype, Zoom, etc.

### SPECIFIC SOFT SKILLS

#### Interpersonal Skills

- **Empathy** – In health care, it's important that you can empathize with patients and the difficult situations that others are facing. According to an article in the British Journal of General Practice, empathy is often cited as a core aspect of effective, therapeutic consultations, though there is limited research into its impact.
- **Communication Skills** – Being able to communicate well with patients and colleagues is vital. According to an article in the Journal of Ambulatory Care Management, patients' perceptions of the quality of the healthcare they received are highly dependent on the quality of their interactions with their healthcare clinician and team. This suggests that strong communication skills are vital for effective patient care and satisfaction.
- **Be a Team Player** – As part of a team you are going to need to co-operate with others by encouraging and supporting your colleagues.
- **Face and solve conflicts**
- **Listen actively**

#### Personal Skills

- **Strong Work Ethic** – You will often have to go 'above & beyond' in the care and service of others. Healthcare careers tend not to be standard 9 to 5 shifts.
- **Dealing With Pressure** – Pressure is a daily part of many healthcare jobs.
- **Positive Mental Attitude** – Positive mental attitude is vital in careers where there is suffering and distress. You need to remain positive to ensure this
- **Flexibility** – Can you cover an extra shift? Can you stay late? Again, these aren't 9-5 career fields.
- **Self-Confidence** – Nobody wants to think they are being cared for by a novice, so you need to project self-confidence in your abilities no matter how experienced you actually are.
- **Dealing With Criticism** – You don't know everything, and in healthcare things are always changing. You need to have the ability to accept and learn from criticism.

## SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

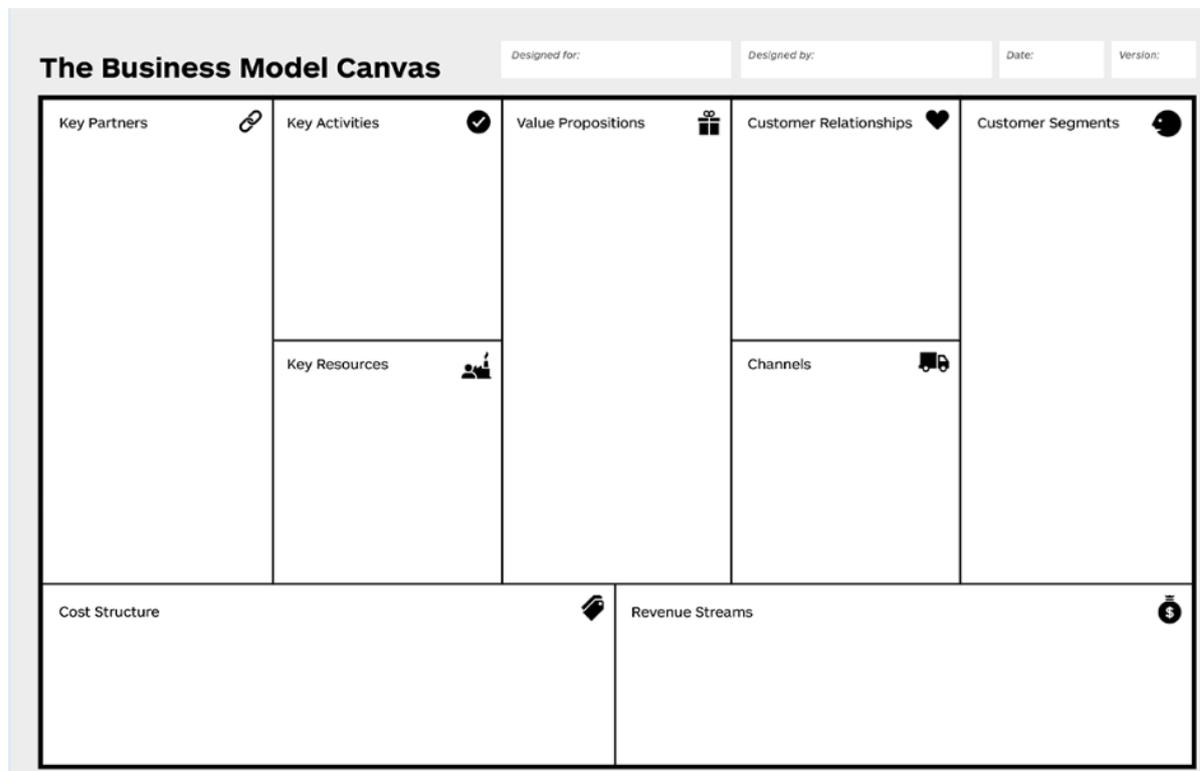
- **Time Management** – Important in any career, but lives could literally depend on how quick you act and how well you manage your time.
- Innovative decision making performance management - Strategic thinking
- Information management - identifying information needs, acquiring information, organizing and storing information, developing information products and services, distributing information, and using information
- Financial management - dealing with and analyzing money and investments for a business to help make business decisions. An example of financial management is the work done by an accounting department for a company.
- Risk management - risk management refers to the practice of identifying potential risks in advance, analyzing them and taking precautionary steps to reduce/curb the risk.
- Quality management - Quality management is the act of overseeing all activities and tasks that must be accomplished to maintain a desired level of excellence. This includes the determination of a quality policy, creating and implementing quality planning and assurance, and quality control and quality improvement

## SPECIFIC MARKETING SKILLS

- Good oral and writing skills
- Good communication skills - Be a great communicator
- Specific marketing policy, Strategic thinking - Know what it means to see the big picture and think strategically
- Creativity – Specifically in Social media marketing is not just cold hard tactics. It means understanding the creative process that provides creative content that engages with your customer and touches their hearts and not just their minds. Have an open mind and always be able to come up with fresh ideas.
- Using the right tools - Be able to match the right tools with the task lying before them (for example software tools)
- Analytical skills - Analyze the outcomes of their actions to improve their future results.

## THIRD STEP: CREATION OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS PLAN

- Vision and objectives / detailing goals
- Preparation of a business plan for a social - entrepreneurial idea in the field of Health Services (market analysis, competitive landscape analysis, implementation plan, financial plan, advertising, measuring performance, providing guidance, growth and pricing strategy, risk analysis...)



You can also watch this video, in which is explained how you can create a Business Model Canvas:

- *The Business Model Canvas - 9 Steps to Creating a Successful Business Model - Startup Tip* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP0cUBWTgpY&t=87s>