According to our friends at Wikipedia, “[a] social enterprise is an organization that applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being.” They can be for-profit or non-profit, co-operative, mutual organization, a social business, a benefit corporation, a community interest company or a charity. They can also take more conventional structures.

What differentiates social enterprises is that their social mission is as core to their success as any potential profit.

**Podcast from Harvard Business Review**

*What Makes Social Entrepreneurs Successful?*

Sarah Green Carmichael interviews Sally Osberg, president and CEO of the Skoll Foundation and author of *Getting Beyond Better* with Roger Martin.

Back in 2007, Osberg and Martin defined social enterprise in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. “Social entrepreneurship signals the imperative to drive social change, and it is that potential payoff, with its lasting, transformational benefit to society, that sets the field and its practitioners apart,” they wrote.

People are attracted to social entrepreneurs for many of the same reasons that they find innovative business entrepreneurs so compelling, say Osberg and Martin. They’re extraordinary people who come up with brilliant ideas and against all the odds succeed at creating new products and services that dramatically improve people’s lives.

**Canadian social enterprise: a sampler**

- **Fair Trade Jewellery Co** is North America’s original fair-trade fine jeweller and a Benefit Corporation.
- Clean-energy provider **Bullfrog Power** is one of the first social enterprises in Canada. “Adhering to the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability,” says the website, “social enterprises exist to...create a better world. We use business as a catalyst or tool....”
- The **Business Development Bank of Canada** (BDC) is the only bank in Canada committed only to entrepreneurs. It has a dedicated staff to promote social entrepreneurship, plus responsible policies and practices to meet strategic objectives.

**Social enterprise law resource @UVic**

Professor Carol Liao specializes in business law, corporate social responsibility, law and economics, and social innovation. She is an advisor to The Philippe Kirsch Institute and has been sought after by a number of NPOs, corporations, and governmental bodies for her expertise in corporate governance and social enterprise law.

**Social enterprise recycling @UVic & Brazil**

Human geographer **Dr. Jutta Gutberlet** works with informal recyclers in Brazil to create or improve cooperatives and social enterprises to increase their income and quality of life.

**Day of Learning about Social Innovation and Social Enterprise**

seCatalyst’s Day of Learning combines local social enterprise experience with top-notch expertise. Session streams include Indigenous innovation, early-stage enterprises, digital storytelling and many others! There will be lots of opportunity to network during breaks and lunch, and during an early evening wine and cheese hosted by the Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone.

- May 17
- 9:30- 4:00, followed by wine & cheese
- at Vancouver Island University, Duncan

For more information and to register, go to [www.secatalyst.ca](http://www.secatalyst.ca)

**Social Innovation Zone**

The Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone is a partnership between Vancouver Island post-secondaries, students and local communities. Tune in to [www.visocialinnovation.ca](http://www.visocialinnovation.ca) during May as the team shares lessons learned and next steps in building innovation for local impact and wellbeing.

*PETER B. GUSTAVSON*

School of Business
Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation

*The world looks different from here.*

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