

What is Social Enterprise

Social enterprise is not just a business model—it's a social movement. It shifts power, builds dignity, and creates opportunity where traditional systems have failed.

Social enterprises play a vital role in Canada by addressing social and economic challenges through sustainable, community-driven solutions. They create meaningful employment for marginalized groups, including newcomers, youth, and individuals facing systemic barriers, while reinvesting profits into services like housing, mental health, and skills training. Unlike traditional charities, social enterprises generate their own income, reducing reliance on grants and promoting long-term impact. As a tool for inclusion, equity, and local empowerment, social enterprises are helping to build stronger, more resilient communities across the country.

Failed Economic System

The Canadian economic system has failed to adequately reach or benefit visible minorities and vulnerable communities. Despite contributing significantly to the workforce and social fabric of the country, these groups continue to face systemic barriers to economic participation, stability, and mobility.

Visible minorities, refugees, Indigenous peoples, and low-income families are disproportionately impacted by:

- Unemployment and underemployment,
- Wage gaps and precarious work with few benefits or job security
- Limited access to capital, entrepreneurship support, and professional networks
- Racial discrimination in hiring, promotion, and workplace environments
- Higher rates of poverty and housing insecurity, often concentrated in underserved neighborhoods

These inequities are not the result of individual shortcomings—they are the product of structural exclusion, historical injustice, and policy gaps that continue to deny racialized communities full access to opportunity.

Alternative Economic Path

As the traditional economic system continues to leave behind many visible minorities, newcomers, and low-income communities, social enterprises are emerging as a powerful alternative. Across Canada—particularly in urban centers—social enterprises are creating inclusive employment opportunities for those who are often excluded from the mainstream labor market: refugees, justice-involved youth, single mothers, racialized individuals, and people living in poverty.

Unlike traditional businesses that prioritize profit, social enterprises reinvest their revenues into community impact—whether through job creation, skills training, or essential services. These mission-driven models bridge the gap between social service and economic participation by offering real work experience, dignity, and a pathway out of poverty for vulnerable populations.

A path towards equity, empowerment and shared prosperity