

Preface

After more than 20 years of studies of entrepreneurship, by and large in business (theoretically as well as practically), Björn Bjerke (one of the authors of this book) had an opportunity in August 2003 to study in more detail a special type of entrepreneurship, which has come to be known as social entrepreneurship. Bjerke did not know much about the phenomenon in the beginning, but was very interested to learn what it was. The possibility was provided through a research grant from the Swedish Knowledge Foundation and he was free to set up the Research Project as he liked. It proved to be a challenge and a rewarding research trip. This trip consisted of two stages. Mathias Karlsson (the second author of this book) joined Bjerke at the second stage. This stage started in 2008.

This book tells the story about what we think we have learnt on this research trip. In other words, it is about social entrepreneurship.

We will talk about the work behind the book as the Research Project and the two parts of this project as Stage 1 and Stage 2. A brief summary of the project is provided in Appendix 1.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK AND ITS IDEA

This book is built up as a number of sections. Chapters 1 to 5 outline our basic concepts. Chapters 6 to 8 provide some summarizing analyses and draw conclusions from our work. The main part of the book ends with Chapter 9, where we discuss some theories in more detail and reflect on some general ideas that we have picked up from research elsewhere, and which have guided our work. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed description of how the Research Project was designed. Appendix 2 provides a comment on the possibilities of and limitations to one of the subprojects that we studied in Stage 2 of the Research Project. Appendix 3 provides a description of some social entrepreneurial activities which we came across during our research trip, but which we did not study in detail during the Research Project. Appendix 4 provides an input to the role women can play in social entrepreneurship.

It is possible to write *about* entrepreneurship (that is, discuss the content and the importance of entrepreneurial phenomena), *for* entrepreneurship (that is, discuss what is required and what is necessary to *become* an entrepreneur) or *in* entrepreneurship (that is, discuss what is required to become a better entrepreneur, if you already are one). This book is a book *about* entrepreneurship or, more precisely, a book *about social* entrepreneurship in general with focus on such social entrepreneurs that operate within the citizen sector of a society in more or less public places.

