



**CO-OPERATIVES UK**

THINK PIECE 8

## The collaborative entrepreneur

*Dr Rebecca Harding, CEO Delta Economics*

“Today’s policy focuses entirely on individual entrepreneurs without understanding how they build businesses and create change through co-operative relationships.”



## Executive Summary

The UK is fascinated, rightly so, by entrepreneurship. At the same time, we are also in the grip of a destructive myth of ‘lone ranger’ entrepreneur, cast as predatory but heroic individuals, who, against the odds, shifts markets in the pursuit of personal gain.

The Apprentice and Dragons Den perpetuate the myth that there is a heroic entrepreneur set against a “You’re Fired” or “I’m out” culture. The message is one of separation rather than collaboration and this does untold damage to the cause of promoting entrepreneurship at a time when it is more needed than ever.

This report, as a short provocation, draws on survey research with 2,500 growth-oriented entrepreneurs across thirteen developed and emerging world countries: the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The headline results of the survey, based on this sample, are:

- Following a business idea or dream is the most important motivation for entrepreneurs followed by a desire to have autonomy over time and to pursue a market opportunity. Making lots of money is substantially less important at just 55% of respondents.
- Making a difference emerges as more important than making a market. One of the most commonly stated reasons for starting a business, cited by 46.6% of entrepreneurs from all countries, is “making a difference”. Of these, nearly 43% said that making a difference was their primary motivation.

- Respondents in Germany and South Africa emerge as the most collaborative in terms of motivation to make a difference. Three out of five (60%) of growth oriented entrepreneurs in Germany are primarily motivated to start up in business in order to make a difference ('value driven'). 84% of entrepreneurs in Germany say that this is a motivation, whether primary or not ('value creating').
- The UK appears on this sample as the closest of any country to the average for the thirteen countries, with around half of entrepreneurs (49%) reporting that making a difference is a motivation. Overall, one in four (27%) entrepreneurs are primarily motivated to start up a business in order to make a difference.
- 48% of all EU entrepreneurs cite making a difference as a motivation for starting up their business.
- Respondents in India, Italy, South Africa and Brazil stand out for the prominence of environmental impact among 'value-driven' entrepreneurs as being a motivator for going into business.

Rather than this being a trade-off, there is higher perceived business performance among more collaborative entrepreneurs:

- They are more innovative as enterprises than those businesses who do not have making a difference as their primary aim. This holds in a similar and more emphatic fashion for entrepreneurs in the 'BRICSA' nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
- Value-driven entrepreneurs are also more satisfied with both their tangible and their intangible business performance than their mainstream counterparts.
- Collaborative entrepreneurs create 2 jobs for every 1 created by their mainstream counterparts.

What emerges is a picture of the real motivation of entrepreneurs that is complex, rather than simple, and social as much as financial. The collaborative entrepreneur is a mix, to different degrees, of four core characteristics: innovator; risk taker; rule breaker; and a co-operator.

The conclusion is that we are losing out in economic terms and in terms of prospects for recovery by promoting a narrow and misleading concept of lone ranger entrepreneurs. The opportunity to embrace wider entrepreneurship is an opportunity to harness what entrepreneurship itself at its heart aims to achieve, which is to improve the world around.

## Introduction

With the need for economic recovery more pressing than ever, it is time to understand Britain's entrepreneurs, how we compare and what makes us tick.

I am one myself and since I started my own business six years ago, I have never felt comfortable with the conventional stereotype that is our national image of would-be entrepreneurs. This has been a myth of entrepreneurs as predatory but heroic individuals, who, against the odds, shifts markets in the pursuit of personal gain. This came nowhere close to capturing the mix of motivations, opportunities and necessities that led me to set up in business – nor did it describe who I wanted to be.

The business has done well, but there were also tough days some years back when we were close to failure. It was at one of these times, on a long weekend walk with the dog on the Sussex Downs, that I decided that I was not willing to be cast in this mould of the lone ranger and that I would do something to change it. Why? Because the 'myth of the lone ranger', as we might call it, gets in the way of the teamwork and co-operation that is key to making any business fly. As an image of entrepreneurship, it is self-limiting, inappropriate and off-putting to all but the few that might fit the mould.

Running an economics research agency, I was also in a unique position to test my own personal experience in a wider, objective setting to see whether the way that entrepreneurs are perceived, and see themselves, is a factor that can influence economic productivity and growth. Rather than make assumptions, I have used my research skills to see what the data says, both for the UK and for a dozen partner nations too.

This report, as a short provocation, is the fulfilment of that commitment, to see if I could do something about this: on behalf of entrepreneurs who see themselves in a more rounded way than ministers and the media would allow; on behalf of those who are discouraged from entrepreneurship, including significant numbers of women, because they don't feel that they fit the mould; and on behalf too of the UK economy, which needs a dose of mass entrepreneurship now more than ever, because, in economic terms, perpetuating the myth of the lone ranger is equivalent to the practice of self-harming.

**“ Entrepreneurs, far from being individualistic, are motivated for what might be described as co-operative reasons and actually rely heavily on a social ecosystem that supports them.”**

It is time to understand what truly drives entrepreneurs to achieve great things and what supports them in that quest. This pamphlet argues that entrepreneurs, far from being individualistic, are motivated for what might be described as co-operative reasons and actually rely heavily on a social ecosystem that supports them.

While the pursuit of money is an objective, it is only one of many motivations. That doesn't make their enterprises any less business-oriented, or clearly, any less successful, it is part of who they are as entrepreneurs. The sample focused with care on high growth entrepreneurs across the mainstream of small and medium-sized enterprises.

I have been closely involved in surveys of enterprise, from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and at Delta Economics. I wanted to look more widely at social purpose of enterprises, partly as a response to the narrow debate around the potential for social enterprises in the UK. I uncovered what I called the hidden social enterprises: those businesses within the mainstream population who were for-profit, but who were set up primarily with a social rather than an economic purpose.

Now repeated in a recent Cabinet Office report, using the same underlying methodology, it shows that there has for some years been a willingness across a wide range of small business to see themselves in a collaborative light.

Unfortunately the phrase “social enterprise” has become value-laden. The Hidden Social Enterprise work was an attempt to say that actually 25% of entrepreneurs in the mainstream business population have social objectives as their primary motivation and that this does not in any sense conflict with the profit motive, and, in fact is enhanced by it. Even so, it is not useful to call these businesses social enterprises, simply because they are “hidden” and do not really self-identify as social enterprises. They are simply entrepreneurs with a social as well as an economic purpose. And there are a lot of them out there.

So to give them a name is something I do with a degree of reluctance, both because any label can work for some people but not for others, but also because the term I would most like to be able to give them is, simply, ‘entrepreneurs’. But for now, in a UK setting, the label ‘entrepreneurs’ remains captive, thanks to a cluster of voices in policy, finance, academic and media life, to the myth of the lone ranger. For that reason, I describe what emerges from the survey as the ‘collaborative entrepreneur’, for whom social relations are a deep and enduring source of support and a deep and enduring motivation for starting and succeeding in business.



## Entrepreneurship as economic fairy dust

In the words of Ben Verwaayen, then the CEO of British Telecom, “It takes a dog, a chair and a computer to participate in the global market: the dog to wake you up, the chair to sit down on and a computer to connect to the rest of the world.”

“ **Entrepreneurship has become a kind of fairy dust for economic policy makers – revered, desired and critically unquestioned.**”

This statement was in 2005 and was aimed at suggesting that the developed world needed to wake up to the challenges of a young and highly skilled labour force in the emerging economies. The statement still holds true, but could be seen more as heralding in an era of entrepreneurs.

Policy makers across the world, inspired by the rapid productivity growth seen in the United States during the 1990s, put in place during the early part of the 21st Century structures to support start-up firms, develop venture capital structures and incentivise business investment, link industry and universities more closely together, provide enterprise education and, more recently create mentoring structures so that “new” entrepreneurs can emerge and take the economy forward.

Entrepreneurship has become a kind of fairy dust for economic policy makers – revered, desired and critically unquestioned.

In truth, much of this focus by Government, arguably, is employment policy rather than business growth policy. It focuses on creating start-ups that will survive the first two years of existence – through “mini-jobs” and self-employment. Nowhere is this clearer than under the Hartz IV reforms in Germany or the current welfare reforms in the UK. The entities set up under such schemes may well be successful, and some may become high growth, but in essence they are measures to help people back into work through some form of individualistic activity and takes the form of income replacement rather than a return on investment.

Since the financial crisis it has been tempting for governments anyway to leave wider entrepreneurial policy to the private sector. It is argued: growth-oriented business will grow anyway; entrepreneurs break rules to create new markets so the only policy that is necessary is a smart regulatory system; if the business is commercially viable it will be able to access finance.

Yet in spite of all of this there is a genuine curiosity about entrepreneurs. The Apprentice and Dragons Den perpetuate the myth that there is a heroic entrepreneur pitched against a “You’re Fired” or “I’m out” culture. The message is one of separation rather than collaboration and this does untold damage to the cause of promoting entrepreneurship.

## Researching entrepreneurship for this report

To test these competing conceptions of business success, we need a more comprehensive definition of what entrepreneurs are, how they are motivated and what they achieve.

This report is rooted in part on previous research and in part on observation, including drawing heavily on the Hidden Social Enterprise work that Delta Economics conducted and published with IFF Research in 2010. However, the new survey work that is reported here is based on a larger sample of growth-oriented entrepreneurs.

In total 2,500 entrepreneurs of businesses that were older than 2 years but younger than ten years were interviewed by telephone between October 2011 and May 2012. These businesses came from 13 developed and emerging world countries: the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. They had already achieved turnovers of £250,000 or above (or national equivalent) and thus were set on a "growth path" and not those who fell within a labour market policy category even if this was where they originated. The research did not set out to interview entrepreneurs with a particular focus (social, environmental or economic) but it did set out to find out about motivations for setting up a business in the first place.

## What motivates entrepreneurs?

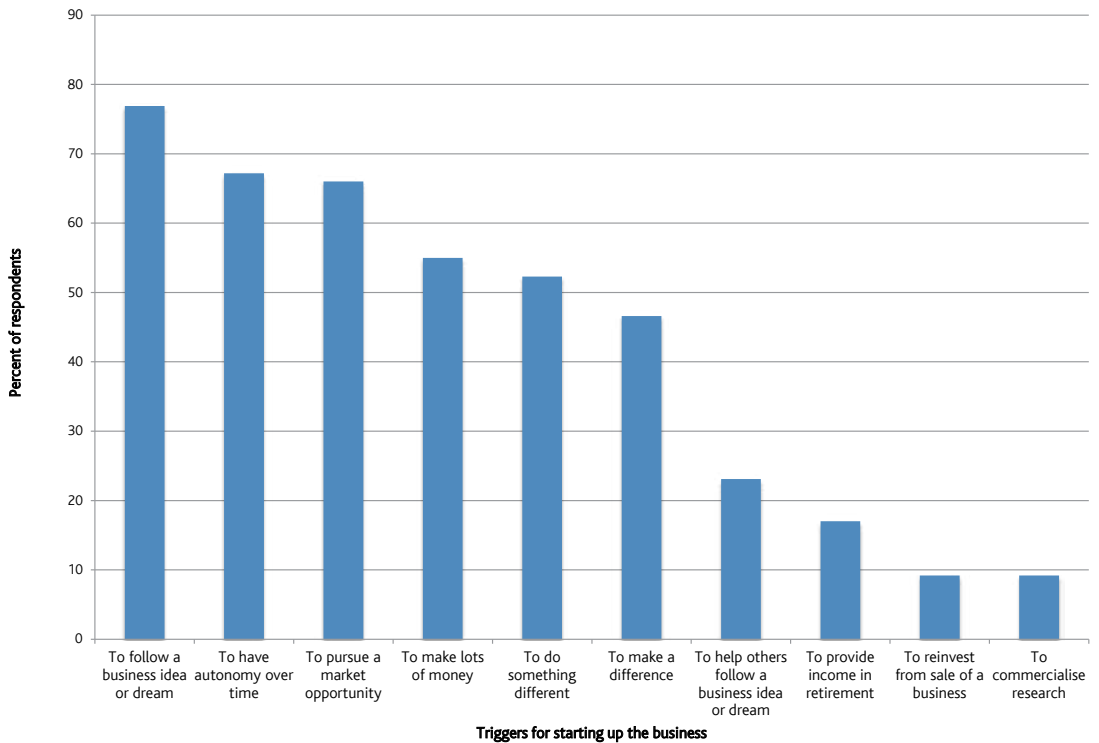
The headline results of the survey are clear and striking. Following a business idea or dream is the most important motivation for entrepreneurs followed by a desire to have autonomy over time and to pursue a market opportunity.

Making lots of money is substantially less important at just 55% of respondents. Making a difference emerges as more important than making a market. One of the most commonly stated reasons for starting a business, cited by 46.6% of entrepreneurs from all countries, is "making a difference". Of these, nearly 43% said that making a difference was their primary motivation.

**“ Most entrepreneurs are not motivated just by money and that those who are motivated for collaborative ends, to make a difference, tend to be more successful.”**

It is interesting too, how these results, strong across all countries, play out in individual nations. In Germany, 84% of the respondents said that making a difference was a motivation. Of this 84%, half (50%) of these entrepreneurs said that their goal was to have a strong and positive social impact while just under half (46%) said they were motivated by the desire to create jobs.

Irrespective of country, these are ordinary businesses. They are not co-operative businesses or wider social enterprises, even if the results might read as if they were. They are predominantly private limited companies, together with a few partnerships. Nor is this a simple re-statement of the Corporate Social Responsibility mantra or indeed a pious and shallow re-writing of their own true personal greed. It is an affirmation of the fact that most entrepreneurs are not motivated just by money and that those who are motivated for collaborative ends, to make a difference, tend to be more successful.



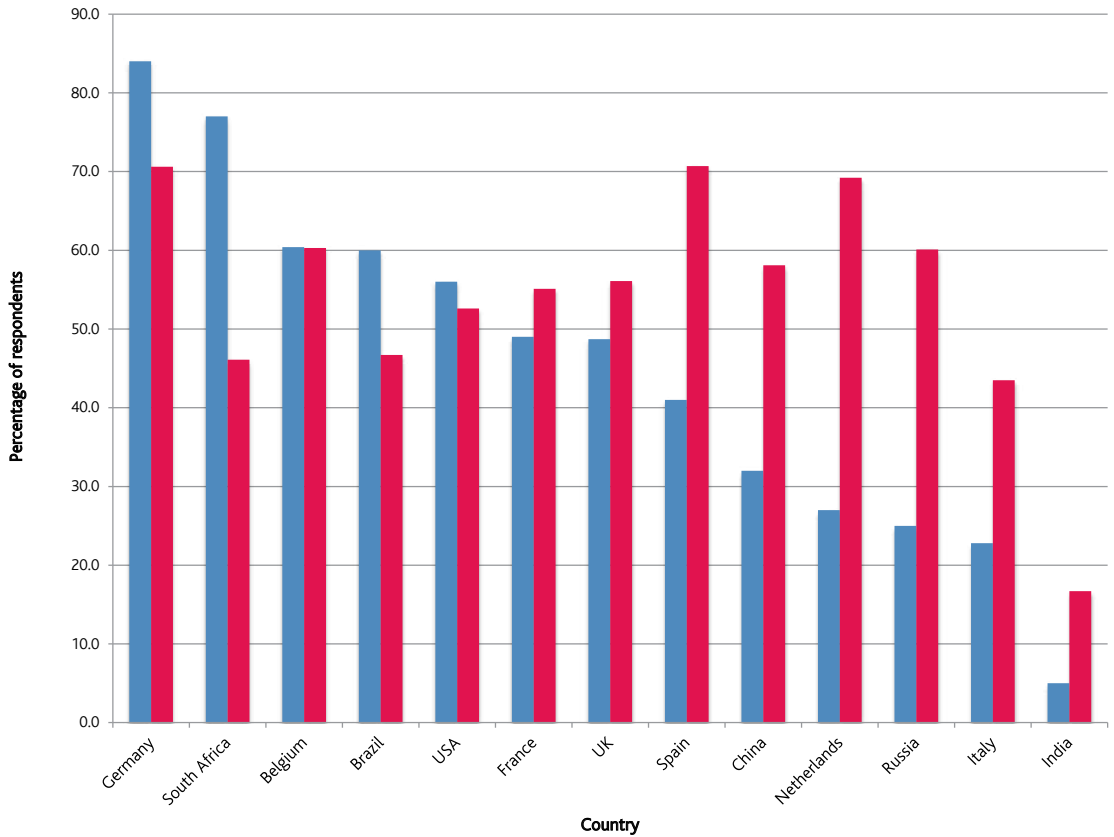
**Figure 1: Triggers for starting a business**

Source: Delta Economics, n=2400

The fact that such a large number of entrepreneurs from a global sample wanted to make a difference suggested that there was scope to look further into this group so the survey asked a subsequent question of those who wanted to make a difference: was this your primary objective. Of the 46.6% who said that it was a motivation, as reported above, nearly 43% said it was the primary motivation. In other words, just over a fifth of the whole sample were motivated primarily by the desire to make a difference.

To look at how this plays out across countries, the results are shown in Figure 2 in relation to two categories of collaborative orientation:

- Value creating: those who answered that making a difference was a motivation
- Value driven: those of these who answered that making a difference was the primary motivation.

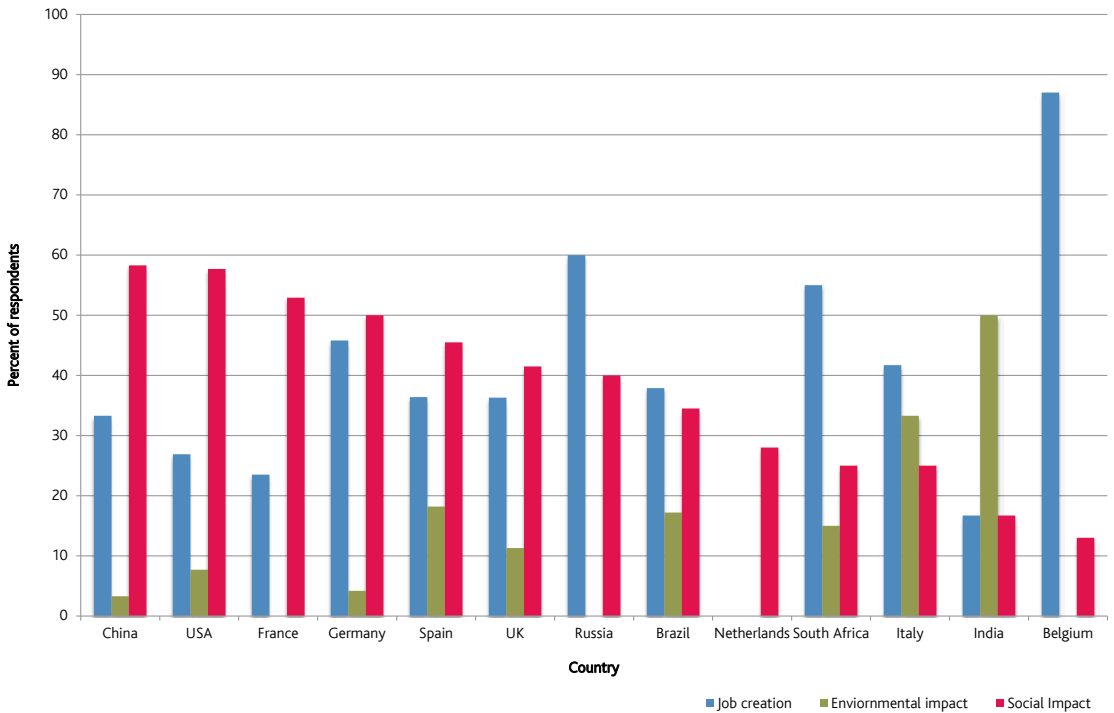


**Figure 2: Making a difference as a trigger for starting a business**

Source: Delta Economics, n = 501

Here, Germany and South Africa emerge as the most collaborative in terms of motivation to make a difference. For Germany, 84% of entrepreneurs say that this is a motivation (value creating) and of these, 71% report that it is their prime motivation (value driven). Overall, therefore, on this sample, a remarkable three out of five (60%) of growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Germany are primarily motivated to start up in business in order to make a difference.

The UK appears on this sample as the closest of any country to the average for the thirteen countries, with around half of entrepreneurs (49%) reporting that making a difference is a motivation. Overall, one in four (27%) entrepreneurs are primarily motivated to start up a business in order to make a difference. The figure is 48% for the EU as a whole; overall just under one in four (24%) are motivated primarily by the desire to make a difference. This is slightly lower than for the UK sample and substantially lower than for those in Germany, suggesting that policy makers in the EU could learn from best practice in these countries.



**Figure 3: The impact that value-driven entrepreneurs want to make**  
 Source: Delta Economics

So what does it mean to make a difference? The survey then explored this in further depth, in relation to three primary categories – social impact, environmental impact or job creation. For the UK, as for Germany, the most commonly cited factors are social impact and employment. India, Italy, South Africa and Brazil stand out for the prominence of environmental impact in this sample of value-driven entrepreneurs as being a motivator for going into business.



## How does a collaborative motivation correlate with business performance?

In economic modelling, the traditional approach is to assign narrow and simple motivations to business firms.

For all too many commentators on business life and markets, this is how it should be: a narrow focus on profit and growth. The assumption is that wider issues are either trade offs, in which case they are costly and the business sub-optimal, or instrumental factors in business growth, in which case their value is neatly subsumed anyway within that same simple focus. In short, beware those who claim they are being collaborative because that is what they want to do.

In reality, this is not how it works. Nor how it should be expected to work. Entrepreneurs, no less than other people, are able to operate with complex purposes and diverse motivations. What is interesting therefore to test in the survey results is the correlation between a collaborative motivation, i.e. to make a difference, and perceived business performance, at least as viewed by the entrepreneur.

The results, set out in Table 1 and 2, show a consistent trend of higher perceived business performance among value-driven entrepreneurs - i.e. those who have making a difference as their primary aim:

- They are no less market-focused. They are over 10% more likely to say that pursuing a market opportunity was a trigger for setting up a business, with over 80% saying this was also a motivation.

- They are more innovative as enterprises than those businesses who do not have making a difference as their primary aim. This holds in a similar and more emphatic fashion for entrepreneurs in the 'BRICSA' nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). EU entrepreneurs followed similar patterns with 66.2% of value-driven entrepreneurs who were innovative in some way
- Value-driven entrepreneurs are also more satisfied with both their tangible and their intangible business performance than their mainstream counterparts.

	Developed		BRICSA	
	Value Creating	Value Driven	Value Creating	Value Driven
Product/service is different to competitors	52.20	57.00	51.40	62.00
Spend signification amount of turnover on R&D	30.70	33.30	39.60	52.80
Have new approach to market or technology	42.70	49.90	44.00	59.30
Product/service is new to customers	39.30	45.00	51.30	61.20
<b>Not innovating</b>	<b>23.90</b>	<b>19.00</b>	<b>20.20</b>	<b>16.00</b>

**Table 1: Levels of innovation, value creating and value driven entrepreneurs in developed and BRICSA countries**

Source: Delta Economics

	Developed		BRICSA	
	Value Creating	Value Driven	Value Creating	Value Driven
Salaried job creation	37	39.7	41.6	44.7
Non-salaried job creation	11.6	12.6	16.5	19.8
Positive environmental impact	32.4	43.1	56.1	50.1
Welfare of employees	70.1	80	63.4	72.6
Social impact	38.5	38	50.4	63.7
Building brand	38.5	55.7	51.6	56.5
Protecting intellectual property	30.2	29.7	37.4	17.7
Paying shareholder dividend	26.1	28.1	51.7	24.9
Healthy cashflow	42.7	43.8	48.8	38
Profitability	36.6	50	45.5	39.5
Money value of business	34.8	38.6	60	43.9
Market share	31.4	34.7	37.5	34.1

**Table 2: Business performance, 'good' or 'very good' in developed and BRICSA countries**

Source: Delta Economics

More than this, the survey also finds that a comparator, or 'mainstream' entrepreneur will create about 6 jobs on average in the first year of trading and a further 12 after three years of trading. In contrast, a value-driven entrepreneur will create 9 jobs in the first year of trading and expect to create a further 30, on average across the sample after three years of trading. In terms of actual jobs in the business now, value-driven entrepreneurs employ on average nearly 28 people where their mainstream counterparts employ 14.

This is clear evidence that a collaborative enterprise mindset is a powerful force for employment creation. They want to have colleagues to work with and they help to sustain those colleagues in work. Remember, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of levels of turnover growth between mainstream and value-driven entrepreneurs. In simple terms, a collaborative entrepreneur will create two jobs or more for every one created by his peers. This holds true across all the entrepreneurs in the survey, as well as the sample across EU countries.

**“A collaborative entrepreneur will create two jobs or more for every one created by his peers.”**

Arguably then, the collaborative entrepreneur performs better in terms of social outcomes and the same in terms of economic outcomes.

## So, what is an entrepreneur?

The question of whether there are common characteristics which entrepreneurs share is not a casual one. If in practice we are talking about a completely diverse group of people, there seems little point in seeking to understand or support them as a group.

On the other hand, if there are some core similarities, then the opportunity for effective public policy, finance or simple recognition is greater. What is remarkable about entrepreneurs, irrespective of their national or socio-economic background, is that they do emerge as distinctive, as a group of people.

As successive empirical studies have shown, most notably the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, they are more likely to know another entrepreneur than the general population, less likely to be risk averse, more likely to think that they have the skills to start a business and more likely to see business opportunities. This survey suggests too that there is commonly a collaborative motivation at work among entrepreneurs – not for all, by any means, but widely shared and enough to be a leading driver of behaviour for a significant number.

Beyond these outline traits, there are, at heart, four characteristics that then make up the overall “genus” of the collaborative entrepreneur. Although I use the phrase to distinguish it from the concept of ‘lone ranger’ entrepreneurs, my claim is that these hold true as four common characteristics of entrepreneurs, in a mix, of course and to different degrees, regardless of the form that their entrepreneurial activity takes.

1. They are innovators. They want to make a difference by bringing a product or service to market. How they go about doing that and how they distribute their surplus (either back into their own or a corporate organisation or to the community, stakeholders or shareholders) is immaterial. They are natural change agents either in the economic or the social space.

2. They are risk takers. Normally, they take that risk by themselves. Many entrepreneurs regard risk as part of the excitement of their work, whether it be in setting up a business or in paid employment. Many are prepared to risk both their finances and their reputation in order to bring an idea to life. Why? In most cases, it's because entrepreneurs have a deep conviction that it is the right thing to do.
3. They are rule breakers. By this, I mean that they have an entrepreneurial state of mind. They push the boundaries of accepted norms, of behaviour or of business practice. In the words of one senior human resources professional, "they are a pain to manage and a pain to keep in the business. But the rewards of keeping them are so great that we have to do everything [we can] to keep them."
4. They are co-operators. As will be evident from the survey findings, entrepreneurs are not just often oriented to make a difference to those around them, but they are heavily reliant on social capital too. They draw on and give back in terms their relationships. While there will be entrepreneurial loners, there are more who are able to collaborate with others in order to compete as a business. This can mean that the question of where an entrepreneurial individual ends and an entrepreneurial team starts is a subtle one, reflecting as much as anything how leadership is conceived and co-operation is legitimised in different settings and cultures.

Even so, an entrepreneur can live or work anywhere. What's entrepreneurial about him or her is inside the mind and body – not tied to their nationality or their cultural or economic setting. They are positive, energetic and persistent in the pursuit of solutions to economic or social problems that they see. They may create new markets but, more accurately, they enable change – they are the world's change-agents.

## What is entrepreneurship?

Given this broad definition of the entrepreneur, then, what is required to breed a culture of entrepreneurship? Without any doubt, an entrepreneur can be stalled or stopped if he or she lives in a country without the appropriate structures and systems to give the entrepreneur the tools to create and prosper.

Likewise, if an entrepreneur finds himself in a country that is chaotic in terms of government – or without the economic tools to underwrite his or her dreams and potential, it's unlikely that anything great will happen. In sum, the world needs people who are entrepreneurs and societies that cultivate entrepreneurship.

It would be at best disingenuous (and at worst ill-advised) to recommend that rural areas of poor countries import structures to support entrepreneurship that are better suited to the urban context of more developed nations, such as venture capital or science parks. In such a case, entrepreneurship has to be elemental in nature. Thus, it may be appropriate to recommend that women in rural Africa be trained to use computers or that they join co-operative credit unions where, with other women and men, they learn skills of financial literacy and enterprise management – or indeed that they engage in social ventures in the interests of the welfare and long-term wealth of their communities – as much as they should be seen as a ready source of new micro-enterprises. Such co-operative and social ventures have been successful – with more co-operative enterprises per capita for example in the BRICSA countries than back home in the UK - and provide real and transferable lessons for entrepreneurship and business collaboration more widely.

Entrepreneurship is about how entrepreneurs create value, in a social, an economic, corporate or, increasingly, an environmental setting. The required checklist for entrepreneurship includes free and fair access to the marketplace (rule of law), access to finance, appropriate business structures, easily acquired skills and education, effective innovation systems and so on. The greater the degree to which these exist, the more probable the existence of entrepreneurship. And, just as the shortage of any of these can inhibit entrepreneurs, so can systems – even in highly developed countries – that are designed to block entrepreneurial thinking. For example, there is little chance of creating an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship in a rigid, hierarchical, “control and command” business, howsoever networked and flexible individual employees might be. The challenge for business and for policy makers is not so much to create the right sorts of entrepreneurs but rather to create the right conditions for entrepreneurship.



## Implications and conclusions

The challenges that we face as a world over the next century are so substantial that we cannot afford to ignore them. Change is not just perpetual, it is paradigmatic. Technological change is so rapid and so global that, while it creates new opportunities, these are no longer restricted within borders. The BRICSA (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) nations have entered a world economic order from which they have been excluded for too long. Climate change and inequality are endemic.

As such, this throws down the gauntlet to those in the policy arena to say that they need to ditch the model of the lone ranger entrepreneur and look more broadly at what constitutes an entrepreneur: an over-strong focus on making money may actually deter some people who might set up businesses for other reasons. Similarly, the investor community, not least the private equity sector, should not just look at the financial motivations of the entrepreneur but accept that they may well get better returns if they look at a broader set of goals and how they are achieved.

As John Studzinski put it in a recent national media article: "business is a constructive enterprise that aims to be socially useful. Making a profit is not an end in itself: job creation, client satisfaction and product excellence are just as fundamental." His argument is that policy and business needs to focus as much on the latter as it does on the former and that we have much to learn from countries such as Germany.

I would argue that true entrepreneurship policy is one that combines both the public and the private sector to provide access to ideas, finance and opportunities. This is not about the individual at all. In fact, entrepreneurs are only one part of a wider co-operative value chain that generates competitive advantage and both economic and societal value. Some of this is measured in terms of return on investment and percentage growth, but much of it is actually measured in terms of the change that was created – the creation of a new market, the achievement of business objectives and wider social value, or sustainability in all its guises. We need to look at the ecology of entrepreneurship, including both its species and its habitats.

**“Entrepreneurs are only one part of a wider co-operative value chain that generates competitive advantage and both economic and societal value.”**

In terms of business support, for example, we know the results on sharing for all entrepreneurs – that they generally find advice and support from each other more helpful than advice and support from “institutional” structures like banks and business advisers.

This tends to be mutualistic - i.e. a potential investor or entrepreneur provides advice for free but gets back something that adds value to them in some way.

In some cases, this may open up opportunities for formal business co-operatives. In terms of business finance, countries such as Germany and Italy recognise the potential for self-help and mutual aid among small businesses, in the form of co-operative guarantee societies. Around 8% of all small and medium-sized enterprises in the European Union participate in these, improving access to finance and the terms on which it is delivered. In terms of business to business collaboration, the USA leads the field in terms of purchasing co-operatives, in which entrepreneurs pool their budgets and make a commitment to win better value over time by working together. The UK has a poor record on both, with policy focused on the supply-side of finance and auction models of business procurement rather than open to the idea of demand-side collaboration.

The answer, however, is not a simple one of more co-operatives. Rather it is the recognition of the extent to which business entrepreneurs are able to co-operate and the potential in turn that this offers to widen the participation and the social and economic contribution of entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs.

The collaborative entrepreneur is not the minority. We are the mainstream. It is worth emphasising that the research I have set out above was not trying to interview a special group of entrepreneurs - these were the ones we found through rigorous sampling and they are orthodox and reflective of the mainstream.

Today's policy that focuses entirely on the individual entrepreneurs without understanding how they build businesses and create change through their co-operative and at times symbiotic relationships with others actually reduces the chances of creating a vibrant recovery.

**“The collaborative entrepreneur is not the minority. We are the mainstream.”**

And creating that entrepreneurial economy has never been more important than it is now. Against a backdrop of sluggish growth in the developed world and slowing growth in the emerging world, the importance of the quest for a sustainable recovery cannot be understated.

If countries and companies can learn to better understand, manage, and support entrepreneurs – and if countries and companies can mesh the need for a robust world economy with the need to include more countries of the world in that economy – then the future for entrepreneurship will be a bright one. Indeed, it may be that in the hearts and minds of our future collaborative entrepreneurs lie the solutions to economic inequities, environmental catastrophes, and fearful communities beset by terrors of many kinds. For if there is one irrefutable truth about collaborative entrepreneurs, it is this: they aim to leave the world better than they found it.



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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Rebecca is an independent economist, Founder and CEO of Delta Economics Ltd and the World Entrepreneur Society. Until March 2007 she was Director of The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) UK, Executive Director of GEM worldwide. Rebecca has been a Visiting Professor at Birkbeck Management School and the Max Planck Institute for Economic Systems Research in Jena, Germany. Previously Rebecca was a Director of Research at Deloitte, Chief Economist at The Work Foundation and she has held senior academic roles at the University of Sussex (Science and Technology Policy Research Unit, SPRU) and the University of Brighton. Additionally, she has been a senior researcher with the Institute for Public Policy Research. Rebecca is a Director of the German British Forum. In June 2008 she was awarded the Prowess Women's Enterprise Researcher of the Year award. Rebecca has been a specialist adviser to the Treasury Select Committee on Regional Productivity between 2004 and 2005 and Chief Policy Adviser to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Entrepreneurship (APPE) (2007-2009).

## Co-operatives UK

Co-operatives UK works to promote, develop and unite co-operative enterprises. It has a unique role as a trade association for co-operatives and its campaigns for co-operation, such as Co-operatives Fortnight, bring together all those with a passion and interest in co-operative action.

Any organisation supportive of co-operation and mutuality can join and there are many opportunities online for individuals to connect to the latest co-operative news, innovations and campaigns. All members benefit from specialist services and the chance to network with other co-operatives.

[www.uk.coop](http://www.uk.coop)



Entrepreneurs are not heroic individuals. They are team players. In *The Co-operative Entrepreneur*, Rebecca Harding reports on the motivation of entrepreneurs, drawing on comparative data from countries worldwide.



## **CO-OPERATIVES UK**

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