

ABOUT QUALITY, EQUITY-ACCESS, DIFFERENCE and DIVERSITY

We define **equity** as the multiple means of access to all kinds of physical, material and spiritual/moral resources. It refers to fairness and principles of social justice that "render everyone their due" (Aristotle). Viewed in this context, equity relates to **access of entry**, for example, to learning processes, opportunities, and resources. It also refers to the need for **equitable processes** and for ongoing access to products and material resources during the whole period of an activity. Equity penetrates all aspects of the daily lives of social entrepreneurs and their communities.

Equity-access requires recognition of the fact that each one of us as individuals or a group *is* different and that this **difference** needs to be valued. Equity also relates to **diversity** which recognises that people have a multiplicity of viewpoints and responses to contexts; and the fact that they tend to do things differently within legitimate policy and civic frameworks. Diversity itself requires an acknowledgment of difference across cultural, social, gender, 'class' and racial boundaries.

Diversity (or equity) does not compromise **quality** or the integrity of a social entrepreneur. Rather, any definition of quality must include a commitment to equity and the manifestation of diversity. (Equity is not therefore like the recession social enterprises and organisations have to have).

To be a social entrepreneur is to demonstrate a strong commitment to equity-access, equal opportunity, diversity, social justice, affirmative action, and quality; and for AISE members this applies particularly to their activities associated with research, learning and skills development, and technology applications for communities. It may be assumed that acceptance of these values is required for membership in our networks; and that at the very least these values enhance and support the development of reflective professional social entrepreneurs who are people-centred, collaborative, and sensitive to emerging issues in the contexts of their work.

[Source: Leo Bartlett, Unpublished material, July 1999]