

# Social Entrepreneurship: Innovating in the Social Sector

ECON17  
LEAD19  
POEC17

*Student consultants will...*

Adams



**BART**

a college prep charter school

*...design an app to facilitate  
teacher evaluations at BART  
and other Massachusetts  
public schools*

Bronx



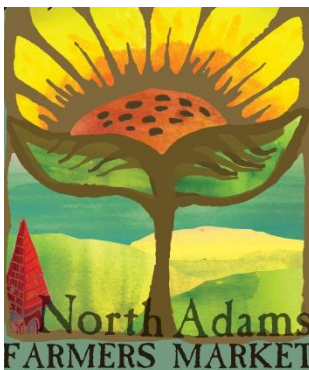
*...develop a plan  
to grow a catering  
business that employs  
formerly incarcerated  
individuals*

New York

**DataKind**  
USING DATA IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY

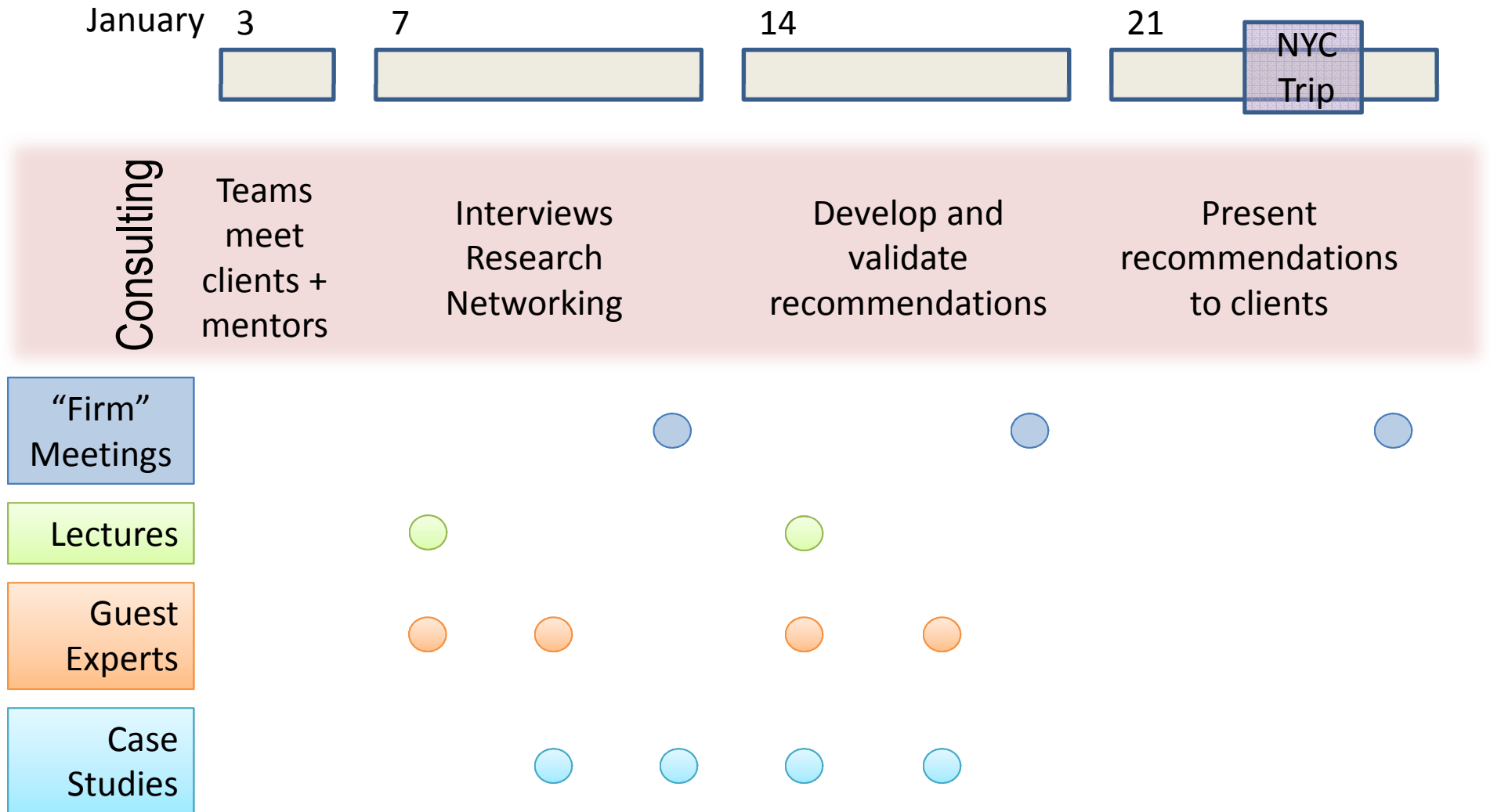
*...construct a business  
model for a start-up that  
enlists data scientists to  
solve social sector  
challenges*

North Adams



*...identify strategies to  
increase the appeal of  
the North Adams  
Farmers Market to  
residents on public food  
assistance*

# Social Entrepreneurship Course Overview



# **Social Entrepreneurship: Innovation in the Social Sector**

ECON17, LEAD 19, POEC17

## **Projects Overview**

### **Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School (BART)**

#### **Background**

Founded in 2004, the Berkshire Arts & Technology School (BART) is the only public charter school in Berkshire County. BART is a college prep charter school that serves grades 6 through 12. The current enrollment of around 300 includes students from North Adams, Adams, Pittsfield, and 9 other communities in Berkshire County. The school has an application pending with the State of Massachusetts to increase its maximum enrollment from 308 to 363 students.

While only 20 percent of BART graduates have a parent who graduated from college, 100 percent of all BART graduates have been accepted into college. In Berkshire County, BART is the top school for raising student achievement. In Massachusetts, the school is ranked in the top 5 percent for raising student achievement in English and in the top 6 percent for math.

In connection with its participation in the Race to the Top program administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the State of Massachusetts has developed and is in the process of implementing a new system for evaluating educators. Over the next few years, school districts throughout the state will be required to introduce an evaluation system that conforms to state guidelines. The observation of teachers in the classroom will be a part of the new approach.

#### **Project Objectives**

The objectives of the project are to explore the feasibility of and detail the specifications for an application that could run on an iPad, tablet computer, or smartphone. The purpose of the app would be to facilitate the collection, aggregation, and interpretation of data gathered by evaluators observing teachers in their classrooms.

#### **Client**

The client for the project is BART ([www.bartcharter.org](http://www.bartcharter.org)). The primary contacts for the student team will be Julia Bowen, the school's executive director, and Ben Klompus, principal.

## **Project Scope**

For some time, periodic classroom observation has been a regular part of BART's approach to evaluating its teachers. The school has developed and refined a rubric that evaluators use while observing in the classroom. At present, the system is paper-based. Evaluators fill out a sheet of paper which is then given to a member of the administrative staff who enters the data into a spreadsheet program. The school draws on the data to inform discussions with individual teachers and also to shape professional development objectives for teams of teachers or for the school as a whole.

BART's senior leaders recognize that the school's current approach to classroom observation would benefit greatly from an app that evaluators could use on iPads, tablets, or smartphones. Such an app would make the process of data capture and storage more efficient. Ideally, it would also allow for more flexible use of the data in connection with conversations about broader school goals and objectives. Beyond the immediate use of this product at the school, BART's leaders believe that an app for this purpose might be of interest to other public schools in Massachusetts that are now designing and implementing educator evaluation programs that will include classroom observation. If the app could be marketed to other schools, the income earned from sales of the product would help BART advance toward its longer term financial objectives.

Members of the student team will need to understand the school's current approach to classroom observation and solicit input on the functionality that would be desirable to design into an app. They will also need to study the emerging framework for the state-wide system for teacher evaluation and gather information from other schools on whether the app that would be most helpful to BART might have broader application.

## **Advisor / Mentor**

Throughout its work on the project, the student team will have access to an individual from the local community who is a professional app developer. Depending on the outcome of the project, this individual may work with BART to develop the app.

Several Williams alums have affiliations with public charter schools, including schools in Massachusetts. It is anticipated that some of these individuals will be additional resource persons for the team as it assesses the feasibility of a broader market opportunity for the app.

## **Final Presentation**

At the end of the project, the student team will present its findings and recommendations to the senior leadership of BART and any other members of the school community that they choose to involve. The presentation will most likely take place at the school.

## **North Adams Farmers Market**

### **Background**

The City of North Adams, Massachusetts operates a farmers market in a central location every Saturday from the first weekend in July until the last weekend in October. The market is open from 8:00 a.m. to noon. The number of vendors in the market varies from week to week. It can be as high as 30. The core group is around 20. The vendors offer a variety of fresh and processed food items.

The city receives grant funding from the Wholesome Wave Foundation (through the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts) to double the value of SNAP benefits that eligible residents use at the farmers market. This is referred to as the SNAPX2 program. Formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded nutrition program that helps low-income individuals and families buy food. On any Saturday at the market, for example, an individual can exchange \$10 of SNAP benefits for \$20 worth of tokens that most of the vendors will accept for food purchases. The vendors then submit the tokens to the city for an equivalent amount of cash.

The city has offered the SNAPX2 program for three years, but it remains underutilized. That is, the funding available to double the SNAP benefits exceeds the amount that eligible residents claim and use in the market during a summer/fall season.

### **Project Objectives**

The objectives of the project are to understand why eligible residents do not take greater advantage of the SNAPX2 program and to offer suggestions for how participation might be increased. The client for this project uses the early months of the calendar year to plan the next season of the farmers market. Promising recommendations proposed by the student team will be considered for implementation in the spring and summer of 2013.

### **Client**

The client for the project is the Office of Tourism of the City of North Adams and the steering committee that that office has composed to advise on matters relating to the farmers market. The members of the latter are local farmers who sell their products.

in the market plus representatives of community-based organizations such as the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and Hoosac Harvest. The Office of Tourism is the agency of the city's government that is responsible for the market. The contact person there for this project will be its director, Veronica Bosley.

### **Project Scope**

Among the questions that the student team will want to address are the following. Why do eligible residents not take greater advantage of the opportunity to double their purchasing

power with the SNAPX2 program? Is transportation to and from the market's location an issue? Would other locations, or other days of the week and times of day, be more appealing? Or is information about the SNAPX2 program just not reaching eligible participants? What other forms of outreach should be considered?

Other questions to explore would include: what potential is there for residents to use SNAP benefits to purchase shares in community supported agriculture (CSA) operations? Could holders of CSA shares pick up seasonal produce each week at the farmers market? Further, since the city is considering the idea of extending the July-October cycle of the farmers market, what interest might there be in a market that was open for a longer period of the year?

In order to answer these and other questions, members of the student team will need to connect with community-based organizations that work with individuals and families that receive SNAP benefits. Collecting information directly from recipients of SNAP benefits is also likely to be part of the project. Finally, looking beyond the immediate circumstances of North Adams, the student team will want to contact the Wholesome Wave Foundation, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and other sources to learn of innovative approaches that have been successful in other communities.

### **Advisor / Mentor**

Throughout its work on the project, the student team will have access to an individual from the local community who will be able to provide guidance on networking with key resource people and organizations. This individual has agreed to be available on an as-needed basis to respond to student questions and requests for assistance.

### **Final Presentation**

At the end of the project, the student team will present its findings and recommendations to officials of the North Adams city government and members of the farmers market steering committee. The presentation will take place in a public venue in North Adams, such as a city government facility or the public library. Members of the community may be invited. It is possible that individuals from Adams, MA will also be interested since that community does not yet have a farmers market.

## **Osborne Association**

### **Background**

Founded 80 years ago by Thomas Mott Osborne, widely regarded as one of the pioneers of prison reform, the Osborne Association offers opportunities for individuals who have been in conflict with the law to transform their lives through innovative, effective, and replicable programs. In recognition of its past success, earlier this year, Osborne was selected as the implementing agency for a program that the nation's first social impact bond will finance. The program will provide education, training, and counseling to all adolescents who are detained at the Rikers Island facility in New York City. Goldman Sachs will provide financing for the multi-year effort, and the city will return Goldman's investment plus a return if the program meets its objectives.

As part of its effort to create employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, Osborne operates a food preparation and delivery business known as Fresh Start Food Services. Fresh Start uses a commercial kitchen facility at Osborne's main location in the South Bronx. At present the business has two, high volume institutional clients: a drug treatment center and a senior citizens center. The food business is a sector that has generally been open to hiring people with criminal histories.

Within the next few years, the State of New York will likely transfer to Osborne the Fulton Correctional Facility, which is located nearby in the South Bronx. The Fulton prison, which is being decommissioned, has a large kitchen that can also support Fresh Start.

### **Project Objectives**

The objective of the project is to develop a plan for growing Fresh Start and thereby creating additional employment opportunities for the individuals whom Osborne serves.

### **Client**

The client for the project is the Osborne Association ([www.osborneny.org](http://www.osborneny.org)). The primary contacts for the student team will be Carolina Cordero Dyer, the organization's associate executive director and chief financial officer. Ms. Dyer supervises the individual who manages the Fresh Start business.

### **Project Scope**

For some time Osborne has used its kitchen facilities to prepare and serve meals to individuals who participate in the organization's on-site programs. A couple of years ago, it decided to leverage off of this activity and begin to build a business that serves external clients. That was the genesis of Fresh Start Food Services. To this point, Fresh Start has not had a strategic business plan or a pro-active approach to soliciting clients. Currently, Fresh Start has annual revenues of around \$400,000 and five full-time jobs.

Members of the student team will assemble information on Fresh Start's current operations and develop a plan for growing the business through new client relationships. The existing kitchen can support a larger volume of meal preparation. Access to the Fulton Correctional Facility in a couple of years will enable further expansion.

In addition to marketing, the student team will review the food sourcing side of Fresh Start's business in order to determine whether there are opportunities to source food in ways that connect to the "green jobs" initiative of Osborne's workforce training programs.

### **Advisor / Mentor**

Throughout its work on the project, the student team will have access to an individual who can provide guidance and support on aspects of business plan development. This individual will most likely be a Williams alum.

### **Final Presentation**

At the end of the project, the student team will present its findings and recommendations to Osborne's senior leadership team, as well as to individuals involved in managing Fresh Start. The presentation will take place at Osborne's location in the South Bronx.

### **DataKind**

Project details will be available soon. In the meantime, check out: [Datakind.org](http://Datakind.org)