

Social Entrepreneurs

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Fazle Abed, BRAC, Bangladesh

BRAC is a development organization dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor, and helping them to bring about positive changes in their lives by creating opportunities. The organization's priorities are focus on women, grassroots empowerment, health and education, farmers' empowerment, inclusive financial services and self-sustaining solutions. Besides Bangladesh, BRAC spreads antipoverty solutions to 10 other developing countries. It reaches an estimated 135 million people with over 100,000 employees worldwide.



Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Microventures, Philippines

Hapinoy is formalizing, integrating, and supplying goods to more than 10,000 small stores in the Philippines. It provides business coaching, leadership training, and store branding to women micro-entrepreneurs in remote areas. By aggregating demand and delivering supplies directly, store owners receive a 5-15% cost savings on products plus access to a greater variety of goods, such as medicines and mosquito nets.



Rick Aubry, New Foundry Ventures, USA

New Foundry Ventures has 25 years' experience seeking social change by creating and supporting nationally scaled social businesses throughout the US that create jobs, provide greater access to healthy food, good credit, and energy efficiency for low- and moderate-income communities. It partners community-based organizations and businesses, and acts as a strategic adviser to non-profits, foundations, corporations and governments.



Debbie Aung Din and Jim Taylor, Proximity Designs, Myanmar

Proximity Designs works to increase the productivity and incomes of rural households in Myanmar by designing and selling simple, highly efficient agricultural products. Proximity's success is rooted in the extensive distribution system it has developed in order reach even the most isolated customers.



Jim Ayala, Hybrid Social Solutions Inc. (HSSi), Philippines

At least 20 million Filipinos lack access to electricity, and tens of millions more have unstable and inconsistent power connections. HSSi has pioneered an innovative "ACCESS" program to provide rural Filipinos with solar and crank powered technologies for development. HSSi arranges financing through community organizations, organizes local technical support networks, and provides user training to ensure long-term sustainability. To date, HSSi has collaborated with over 40 community organizations across the Philippines to connect about 30,000 individuals to solar power.



Marcela Benitez, Social and Economic Recovery of National Rural Villages at Risk of Disappearing (RESPONDE), Argentina

RESPONDE promotes the social and economic recovery of rural communities in Argentina at risk of disappearing due to poor services and migration. Its programs foster the entrepreneurial spirit of villagers and the sustainable development of their communities. In addition, Marcela created a social venture developer for rural villages: "clinch" that connects philanthropic families, organizations and companies who wants to make real, big dreams with little resources.



Jane Marie Chen, Embrace, USA

Embrace Innovations has developed an innovative, low-cost infant warmer to help the 20 million premature and low birth weight infants born annually. The warmer works without a constant supply of electricity, making it suitable for rural areas. Embrace has impacted over 40,000 babies across 10 countries since its launch, and has been recognized in the World Health Organization's compendium of medical devices for global health. The vision of the organization is to develop a line of disruptive healthcare technologies for developing countries, focused on reducing infant and maternal deaths.



Mois Cherem Arana, ENOVA, Mexico

In Mexico, 69% of the population does not have access to computers or the internet, severely limiting opportunities in education. Enova's solution to this challenge is the Red de Innovación y Aprendizaje (RIA), or the Learning and Innovation Network. RIA represents a chain of 70 educational centers, and 25 Digital Libraries, that provide underserved Mexican communities with quality educational opportunities and access to information technologies. A successful collaboration among social, public, and private sectors, RIA has served more than 450,000 people in low-income communities since 2007 and graduated 130,000 students, with 3000 new members signing up weekly.



Veronica Colondam, YCAB Foundation, Indonesia

YCAB Foundation was founded to empower underprivileged youth to be independent through education and economic empowerment. Over the years, YCAB Foundation has impacted more than two million people, and evolved to be a sustainable social enterprise. YCAB pioneered social investment in 2009 through its education-linked micro-loan, where education attainment is the precondition of loan.



Anne Githuku-Shongwe, Afroes Transformational Games, South Africa

African youth present an interesting paradox to the continent's future: the mobile revolution has created massive potential to inform, connect, and educate youth; on the other hand, these 400 million youth are disempowered, jobless, and considered a threat to the stability of countries or a burden to states. Afroes is utilizing interactive mobile learning strategies to teach youth about entrepreneurship and leadership, and to empower them as citizens to address their countries' challenges.



Anshu Gupta, Goonj, India

Goonj channels excess resources in urban households to impoverished rural and disaster-prone areas. Materials include clothes, furniture, and electronic equipment. Goonj collects and delivers 1000 tons of material every year through an extensive network of 500 volunteers and 250 partners across 21 states of India. Goonj also supports village and slum communities in infrastructure/local development projects.



Sameer Hajee, Nuru Energy Group, Mauritius

Nuru Energy co-created with households earning less than \$2 per day, a unique off-grid mobile-money enabled, recharging platform that uses either human energy or solar power to fast recharge Nuru Energy's portable LED Lights (5 lights recharged in 20 minutes) as well as mobile phones and other USB-charged devices. Nuru Energy deploys its innovative technology via a network of micro-franchises operated by village level entrepreneurs (VLEs), who sell Nuru Lights and then provide recharging services for a small fee.



Njideka Harry, Youth for Technology Foundation (YTF), Nigeria

Since 2001, YTF has worked in regions of Africa plagued by poverty and pervasive unemployment, especially among youth and women. YTF Academy provides beneficiaries with life skills and resources to join the economic mainstream. Since inception, 40% of YTF Academy graduates have been employed by local companies in YTF's partner network, and are being paid three times the average salary.



Renat Heuberger, South Pole Carbon, Switzerland

South Pole Carbon creates solutions in the fields of climate change and renewable energies. By providing access to climate finance, South Pole Carbon has enabled over 250 projects worldwide ranging from renewable energy to waste treatment and forestry, thereby reducing millions of tons of CO2 and creating thousands of jobs worldwide. South Pole Carbon enables corporates to create shared value by investing into climate-friendly projects within a corporate's own supply chain. With "Gold Power", South Pole Carbon has launched the first global renewable energy label.



Bedriye Hulya, B-fit, Turkey

B-fit is working to empower women in Turkey through exercise and entrepreneurship. In Turkey few gyms or exercise facilities are available exclusively for women and those that do exist are aimed at high income customers. B-fit provides affordable gym memberships to women and uses the gym as a platform for workshops and activities to empower its members. B-fit gyms are staffed entirely by women and are run by female franchisees. Today 260 women are being supported to start and run their own b-fit club and more than 200,000 women have B-fit gym memberships.



Jane Hunt, Fitted for Work, Australia

Fitted for Work helps disadvantaged women get and keep work by providing a dressing service that supplies work-appropriate clothes, interview coaching, transition to work and mentoring programs. Once the woman is in work she is assisted to maintain work through career development programs. Since 2005 Fitted for Work has helped more than 13,500 women prepare for and get work. 75% of the women transition to work within 3 months of accessing Fitted for Work's programs.



Jonathan Hursh, INCLUDED, People's Republic of China

INCLUDED works to ensure migrants are integrated into cities. It promotes collaboration across sectors, brokers access to better services, and provides opportunities for advancement. It is building out a network of 10 cities and 100 community centers strategically linked across the world so that it can help cities figure out how to deal with their mass influx of migrants, as well as help migrants deal with the challenges of becoming urbanites. INCLUDED has created the first ever center for migrant slums and design platform, both of which are focused solely on this soon to be one-third of the world's population. As eager contributors to society, migrants create some of the most powerful and diverse cities in the world.



Jordan Kassalow, VisionSpring, USA

VisionSpring is a cost-effective global social enterprise that exists to close the eyeglass-market gap in the developing world by delivering high-quality, affordable, glasses to the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) market. VisionSpring has sold more than 1.5M pairs of glasses by activating the BoP market by training and deploying alternative workforces, and by advancing the three core tenets of their business model: 1) customer driven approach, (2) creation of economically viable businesses, and 3) scaling impact through partnerships. rural areas that are reached through an innovative mobile optical store model.



Runa Khan, Friendship Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Friendship delivers effective development solutions using a holistic needs-based approach to the most marginalised communities in remote isolated areas of Bangladesh. Founded in 1998, it started its journey with the provision of basic healthcare services through the innovative concept of a floating hospital. The programmes are extended today to cover Disaster Management and Infrastructure Development, Education and Good Governance, Sustainable Economic Development and Cultural Preservation. These programmes are interrelated to facilitate an overall improvement in the lives of Friendship beneficiaries, allowing them to rise from poverty with dignity.



Mads Kjaer, MYC4 A/S, Denmark

MYC4 believes “business must be for a profit, but profit must be for a purpose,” and has applied this mind set to help improve access to capital for African entrepreneurs. MYC4 is, via Internet, providing businesses in Africa with direct access to capital on fair and transparent terms as well as providing investors with access to risk/return-adjusted. MYC4 presents an opportunity to make a difference as well as the potential to make a profit. An average loan on MYC4 is €1,700 crowd funded by 50 online Investors.



Janet Longmore, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT), Canada

DOT operates at the intersection of the potential of youth and the enabling power of technology. DOT places youth (university and college graduates) at the center of economic and social change in their communities as they help their peers find jobs, start businesses and become engaged citizens. Localized DOT programs and a network of private and public sector partners support youth as they lead change. 4,000 DOT youth leaders have reached 800,000 peers and community members.



Jamie McAuliffe, Education For Employment (EFE), USA

EFE’s mission is to create job opportunities for unemployed Arab youth by providing demand-driven skills training linked to job placements in the private sector. With a network of 6 locally-run affiliates in MENA, EFE partners directly with employers to identify skills needs and secure hiring commitments for graduates. EFE has placed over 4000 young women and men in jobs at more than 1200 companies since 2006.



Rebecca D. Onie, Health Leads, USA

Founded in 1996, Health Leads envisions a healthcare system in which patients’ unmet resource needs are addressed as a standard part of quality care. Health Leads’ programme integrates into the workflow of a hospital or health center and enables providers to prescribe food, housing, job training or other resources for their patients. Patients take these prescriptions to the Health Leads desk in the clinic waiting room, where college student Advocates fill them by connecting patients with the resources that they need to be healthy. Last year, the organization trained and mobilized nearly 900 college volunteers serving 11,000+ low income patients and their families in six US cities.



Suzana and Claudio Padua, Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPE), Brazil

Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPE) promotes conservation and sustainable development in impoverished communities throughout Brazil. To achieve its mission, IPE carries out a number of activities, including research of rare or endangered species, environmental educational programmes, sustainable alternatives for income generation of local communities, policy advocacy for biodiversity conservation and sustainability, carbon offsets and reforestation of degraded areas, and partnerships with the private sector to improve their overall social and environmental responsibilities.



Sue Riddlestone and Pooran Desai, BioRegional Development Group, United Kingdom

BioRegional Development Group designs and delivers real life sustainable communities and businesses, including the award-winning BedZED eco-village in London, where BioRegional has its main base. Sue and Pooran have established seven associated companies, including green property developer BioRegional Quintain, a kerbside recycling company for SMEs, and a clean tech company for the paper industry. BioRegional has sister organisations or representative offices in North America, China, Greece, Mexico and South Africa.



Juliana Rotich, Ushahidi, Kenya

Ushahidi is a non-profit technology company, started in 2008 in the midst of Kenyan election violence, which seeks to build tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers for individuals to share their stories. Ushahidi specializes in developing free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. With these tools, Ushahidi has strengthened democracy by verifying election results across Brazil, facilitated market efficiency by mapping bio-gas market prices, and it has helped aid workers in Haiti and Japan reach those affected by natural disasters.



Linda Rottenberg, Endeavor, USA

Endeavor is leading the high-impact entrepreneurship movement. With over 20 offices throughout Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, South-East Asia, Europe and the US, Endeavor has supported 766 entrepreneurs leading 476 companies, collectively generating over US\$ 5 billion in annual revenues and over 200,000 jobs.



Chuck Slaughter, Living Goods, Uganda

Living Goods empowers networks of 'Avon-like' micro-entrepreneurs who go door-to-door teaching families how to improve their health and wealth while selling life-changing products like simple treatments for malaria and diarrhea, fortified foods, safe delivery kits for pregnant mothers, clean burning cook stoves, and solar lights. By combining the best practices of microfinance, franchising, direct selling and public health, Living Goods is creating a fully sustainable distribution platform to improve the health, wealth, and productivity of the world's poor.



Thorkil Sonne, Specialist People Foundation, Denmark

Specialist People Foundation believes people with autism have special abilities that uniquely qualify them for certain types of work. Through the operational arm, Specialisterne, people with autism are trained and accommodated to excel in data and testing jobs in the labour market for partners like SAP. The goal is to enable 1M jobs for people with autism and similar challenges.



Gary White, Water.org, USA

Water.org has successfully demonstrated that the poor can move from being beneficiaries to customers. Water.org underwrites the start-up costs microfinance institutions incur developing water and sanitation loan products, and provides expertise in how to structure the loans. Since its launch in 2003, more than 1 million people have gained access to safe water and sanitation through Water.org's flagship WaterCredit initiative.