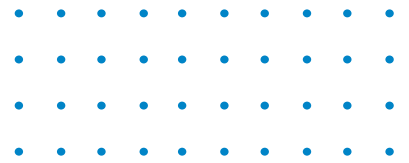


# A Time to Become an Influential and Resilient Social Entrepreneur



How do you survive and thrive in social entrepreneurship amidst a global pandemic?

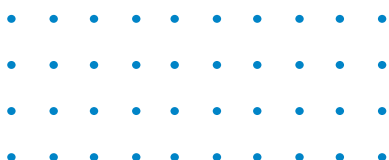


## A Time to Become an Influential and Resilient Social Entrepreneur

How do you survive and thrive in social entrepreneurship amidst a global pandemic?

On Friday, 24th July 2020, The Newmark Group CEO, **Gilbert Manirakiza** engaged in an enlightening conversation with the Regional Director for Ashoka East Africa, **Vincent Odhiambo**. In an informative session, the fireside chat delved into how social entrepreneurs can grow their influence and resilience amidst uncertainty. This conversation was a timely conversation considering the devastating impact felt due to COVID-19 pandemic, especially economic and social disruptions, and the wave of uncertainty about the future.

During this pandemic, social entrepreneurs have demonstrated the value of their creative problem solving, entrepreneurial mindset, collaborative impact and empathy based action in responding to COVID-19 disruptions and building resilient, equitable and sustainable social and economic frameworks. It's not just about, "what's in it for me, or how can I make profit" but rather addressing root causes of the challenges brought to surface from the pandemic, creating long-lasting systemic change and wide scale impact. It is also worth noting that in these efforts, there is a strong inclination for collaboration between social entrepreneurs and companies. This is not surprising because, according to a survey done by Ashoka Africa, 97% of social entrepreneurs in Africa see business as strategic partners. This is why it is important for social entrepreneurs to think outside the box during such time to extend their influence and help build resilience for their ventures and communities addressing the gap the pandemic has exposed our systems, tapping into opportunities that lie in crises and how to tap into them.



## In the webinar, Vincent offers four tips on how to increase social entrepreneurial business scalability and get more investors:

### Focus on impact



As a social entrepreneur, what do you want to achieve? This will help you define your purpose and why you want to venture into innovation and even collaborative partnerships. A clear vision backed by requisite sets of skills, a committed team and good grasp of the ecosystem you're in and the players is a good recipe to start with. This powers innovation and creativity.

### Explore sustainable revenue generation stream(s)



There's some level of timidity in exploring new income generating opportunities in the Africa ecosystem. Moreover, these opportunities tend to be limited. However, this is the time for social entrepreneurs to start navigating different funding avenues to sustain their businesses.

### Business scalability



How do you scale your business in the midst of a pandemic? Understand and research on available tactics and strategies you can innovatively use to grow your business.

### Passion



What drives you? Why do you want to venture into social entrepreneurship? "To become an Ashoka fellow, you need to understand yourself as a change maker," said Vincent. Social entrepreneurship requires you to evaluate what long-lasting change you wish to bring and determine how sustainable that change is. Finding your passion births change but the passion needs to be paired with the right technical skills and more often a capable team.

## The role of academia in social entrepreneurship and vice versa

Academia and Social entrepreneurs have a unique relationship in shaping the field and nature of emerging social enterprises. While academia help with the research, the practice helps generate practical knowledge, case studies, etc. It is therefore important that there is opportunity for the two sectors, in collaboration with other players in the broader ecosystem, to have conversations leading to actionable decisions. One such space is the Annual Africa Conference on Social Entrepreneurship which is a partnership between Ashoka East Africa and the Tangaza University College. The partnership surveys the critical role of academia in social entrepreneurship. Universities are playing a key role in informing policy makers on how they can support social entrepreneurs.



## Tools for successful social entrepreneurship collaborations

- **Create win—win situation;**

This means knowing and understanding the where, how, when the collaboration will bring business value to them. It is the same thinking the partner should apply in figuring out the value they are bringing to your social focus. Generally, how do the two entities stand to benefit their objectives and goals and their target/customers?

- **Stay on the mission and the end game;**

Don't shy away from unconventional partnerships because of fear of losing your mission. More companies are moving away from traditional CSR to more sustainable solutions and this requires entrepreneurial thinking which aligns with such mission statements.

- **Develop a sustainable hybrid financial model;**

This means creating tracks that can attract funding from different sources.

- **Commit to Integrity and ethical business practices;**

This dictates that both parties know and understand the importance of acting above board and being reputable because of ethical practices.

## Creating Systems Level Solutions for most pressing needs across Africa through Social Entrepreneurship

The COVID-19 pandemic has unearthed gaps that can be addressed by focusing on systems change in any of the following ways:

### 1. Market dynamics and value chains: This can be in 5 different ways:

- Increasing access to goods and services
- Creating new markets
- Creating value where a value didn't exist
- Generating income for the poor
- Changing the flow of market information

### 2. Public policy and industry norms

Over 80% of Ashoka Fellows see working with public policy as an important part of their work with 60% of them training people for direct action towards policy reform.

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- Ashoka Fellow Ann Njogu led the movement to enact ratification of the 2006 Sexual Offenses Act which is used as a framework to comprehensively address the problem of gender-based violence in Kenya

### 3. Bringing full inclusion to a disadvantaged group and foster empathetic ethics

55% of Ashoka Fellows achieve national impact to fully include marginalized groups in society within 10 yrs of election (49% after 5 yrs).

- *Fredrick Ouko of Action Network for the Disabled ANDY, and now RIZIKI Source, is working towards the inclusion of youth with disability in all aspects of society particularly in employment.*

### 4. Business-social congruence

At 10 years post-election, 59% of Fellows receive revenue through a for-profit element while more and more Fellows are incorporating Hybrid models that continue to blur the traditional difference between business and social sectors.

- *David Kuria of Ecotact works with the both the private sector and the public sector (County Council governments) to provide sanitation services to the public*

### 5. Global culture that values change making and social entrepreneurs

Over 75% of Fellows see being a social entrepreneur as an integral part of their identity (90% in Africa).

Fellows contribute directly to building an Everyone A Changemaker world through

- Direct training (83% after 10 years)
- Creating programs on social entrepreneurship in universities or other non-profits (52% after 10 years)
- Speaking in public about social entrepreneurship (65% after 10 years).

- *Ashoka Fellow Mwalimu Musheshe, Co-Founder and Vice Chancellor Africa Rural University*



There's a huge appetite for social entrepreneurship not only because there's a need for entrepreneurial innovations but also because how we do business is changing and corporations are appreciating the need to think long-term. The African environment is ripe for social entrepreneurship which should be an encouragement for any entrepreneur. Social entrepreneurs should also capitalize on legal frameworks and policies that can help them gain more partnership opportunities."

Learn more on Social and Business Co-creation in Africa in the attached document.

**NB:** An Everyone a Change maker World is a world where everyone has the skills and capacity to come up with a solution for a pressing problem and a supportive network.