

Social entrepreneurs provide sustainable solutions for Africa

Is social entrepreneurship the new face of development? A recent impact report released by Reach for Change suggests it might be.



James Kofi Annan

Social entrepreneurs across Africa are contributing to advances in education, healthcare, financial inclusion, environmental protection and other social issues. This was highlighted in the Reach for Change Africa 2015 Social Impact Report, which shared impact numbers and stories from social entrepreneurs supported in Reach for Change's programs.

In 2015, over 100 African social entrepreneurs were supported through the organization's Accelerator and Incubator programs.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions for social challenges their communities face. Social entrepreneurship is seen as an alternative to traditional development projects, by empowering local entrepreneurs to come up with grassroots solutions that are scalable, financially sustainable and can ultimately contribute to permanent, positive changes within societies at large.

Reach for Change Africa partners with corporations, non-profits and individuals to find, support and develop some of the best social entrepreneurs Africa has to offer. Through its Accelerator and Incubator programs, Reach for Change supports high-potential social entrepreneurs to build sustainable, scalable organizations that achieve social impact and contribute to systemic change.

In 2015, Reach for Change Africa received 1,953 ideas for tackling social challenges from prospective social

entrepreneurs from its innovation competitions in Ghana, Senegal, Chad, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania.

“Our 2015 Social Impact Report really emphasizes how much social entrepreneurship has grown in Africa,” said Amma Lartey, Reach for Change Africa’s regional director. “In 2015, the quality of ideas submitted to our innovation competitions improved substantially which tells us that the sector is growing and social entrepreneurs are finding creative ways to respond to social challenges through scalable innovations that have the potential to deeply impact societies.”

Change leaders

James Kofi Annan is a Ghanaian social entrepreneur working to end child slavery who is featured in the 2015 Social Impact Report. His organisation, Challenging Heights rescues children from slavery in the fishing industry, providing them with rehabilitation centre, and runs numerous programs to help prevent child slavery, through education and livelihood programs geared towards parents of children vulnerable to trafficking.

Annan is just one of the 57 Change Leaders that Reach for Change Africa supported in 2015 through its Incubator program, and Lartey says the organisation plan to support even more social entrepreneurs through various programs and initiatives in 2016.

Other social entrepreneurs featured in the report include Dominique Uwase Alonga who is helping thousands of children in Rwanda develop reading and creative writing skills every year; Evelyne Ines and Jean Luc Semedo of Senegal who were supported to develop a web and mobile application platform promotes blood donation; Faraja Nyalandu, who is providing the best educational content online to children in Tanzania; Didier Lalaye of Chad who is bringing mobile health solutions to thousands of rural children; and Naomi & Yvette Kuseyo who provide education for hospitalised children in the DRC.

“We really look forward to investing in more social entrepreneurs this year, and supporting them to take their innovations to scale” Lartey said. “Already this year we have welcomed an additional seven entrepreneurs - five in Ethiopia and two in Chad - and we will be working with these and our existing social entrepreneurs to improve their impact, operations, financial sustainability and communications.”

To further support the burgeoning social entrepreneurship sector across Africa, the report also highlights the creation of the [African Social Entrepreneurship Network](#) (ASEN), spearheaded by Reach for Change Africa. ASEN was designed to build strong national ecosystems for social entrepreneurship by establishing national networks of social entrepreneurs and the organizations that support them across Africa. These national networks aim to increase learning and innovation, funding, research and drive policy to promote further growth of the social enterprise sector. The first national network, [SE Ghana](#), had its first general assembly in 2015.

To read the full report, [visit africa.reachforchange.org/impact](http://visit.africa.reachforchange.org/impact).

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