



LEADING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

FRONT COVER

Tucked in the valleys of northeastern Afghanistan, a bridge made of wood and cable wire is suspended above the Pandjchir River, connecting the village of Malespe to a refugee camp. Photographer and Ashoka Fellow, Reza Deghati, captured this shot in 2000. Born in Tabriz, Iran, Reza is a world-renowned photographer. For over 20 years, he has developed sustainable, professional media institutions that have helped thousands of Afghan citizens by founding Ainaworld -- powerful institutions that have allowed everyone to make a change for the future of Afghanistan. They include a national women's radio station that reaches over 5 million people daily, a women's magazine, the children's magazine, *Parvaz*, the creation of over 30 educational films that have been shown across the country, as well as photo and video training workshops. Through the gift of knowledge, Reza is freeing millions of previously cut-off Afghans and giving them a voice. In 2020, Reza Deghati dedicated his art to capturing the historical events the Patriotic War in Karabakh and other parts of Azerbaijan through his lens.



LEADING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS



ASHOKA EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER

1700 North Moore Street | Suite 2000 | Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Tel: (703) 527-8300 | Fax: (703) 527-8383 | www.ashoka.org

Managing Editor: Karyn Kessler

Campaigns Manager: Jean-Pierre Greenlund

Copy Editors: Katherine Doley, Danielle Kichler, Carson McBain, Lauren Seals, Katherine Vorderbruggen

Production Artist: Sima Designs

Contributors: Hanae Baruchel, Flavio Bassi, Ioana Bauer, Bob Bharji, Iman Bibars, Reilly Brooks, Bill Carter, Maria Cerdio, Divyadarshan Chandrasekar, Franzi Charen, Amy Clark, Ovidiu Condurache, Rana Dajani, Katherine Doley, Claire Fallender, Michael ElNemais Fawzy, Konstanze Frischen, Caroline Garrett, Nikki Gravning, Jean-Pierre Greenlund, Juliana Guitierrez, Sara Jog, Yewon Kang, Immy Kaur, Danielle Kichler, Hae-young Lee, Alison Lingane, Andrea Margit, Carson McBain, Zeynep Meydanoglu Michelle Miller, Shantanu Paul, Todd Pavel, Samara Randhawa, Rafael Murta Reis, Ahsan Rony, Kelsey Sakumoto, Anamaria Schindler, Lauren Seals, Yashveer Singh, Katherine Vorderbruggen, Michael Zakaras

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Help Change the World

Isn't it now obvious that we live in an everything-changing—and everything-connected—world? That you are reading this book suggests strongly that you are a successful player in this, our new reality—i.e., that you are a changemaker.

There is a bidding war for those with this superpower, certainly no job scarcity. However, the other half does not have these skills. They therefore face the reality of the world saying to them: “Go away; we don't need you; it's your fault; and your kids have no future.” This is “the new inequality”. It is unethical. It leads to depression and straight on to a permanent fury and then the destructively divisive “us versus them” politics that has swept across the world in barely seven years.

The only cure is to ensure that everyone masters change-making. That's Ashoka's “everyone a changemaker” (EACH) purpose.

Ashoka can do so because it is home for most of the world's truly leading social entrepreneurs—in every field, from every continent. Three-quarters change policy in their field (e.g., environment, human rights) at the national and/or international level within five years of launch. Moreover, the Fellows encourage many others to stand up and become change-makers – both as role models and because, to succeed, they must – and do – find local changemakers in community after community who adopt and spread their models.

Ashoka builds this community extremely carefully. It uses a rigorous, highly refined, five-step process which focuses sharply on five key criteria: (1) A big, pattern- or framework-changing new idea; (2) creativity in both goal setting and problem solving; (3) entrepreneurial quality; (4) the social impact of the new idea; and (5) ethical fiber.

Once Fellows are elected, Ashoka makes sure that they have the support and full freedom – including the ability to work

full-time—they need to launch their visions and succeed. This includes providing a launch stipend to the degree it is needed for an average of three years, organizing a wide range of high-leverage supports, and – most importantly – engaging them in a local-to-global collaborative fellowship of their peers.

Ashoka is now adding two new groups to its 40-year-old community of leading social entrepreneur Fellows. It chooses both with closely similar criteria and selection rigor. The first are the Ashoka Young Changemakers. Each of these teens has had a dream, built a team, and significantly changed his/her world. The second group, elected into Ashoka's Entrepreneur-to-Entrepreneur (E-2) partnership, are leading big pattern-changing business entrepreneurs who want to have equivalent social impact. Both have their changemaking superpower and are key EACH co-leaders.

As the rate of change and therefore the EACH revolution accelerates, the needs/opportunities before us multiply. That's why we are expanding our core community and are working together in new ways. We hope this book will help you envision attractive fits for you.

In this volume, you will find profiles introducing a sample of the ideas and leading social entrepreneurs recently elected by Ashoka. Almost all the profiles are of Ashoka Fellows just launching their work. We also occasionally elect Senior Fellows, who have already had profound social impact. They are grouped according to six broad fields: Civic Engagement, Environment, Full Economic Citizenship, Health, Human Rights, and Growing Up. Following these individual profiles, you will find introductions to some of Ashoka's newer directions and descriptions of and reports from organizational foundations.



EVERYONE A GIVER

The Only Antidote to “Us versus Them”

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Every social entrepreneur, indeed, all of us, share a deep, defining purpose: A world where *everyone* is treasured. Which requires *everyone* to be a giver. In the new reality where everything is changing faster and faster, that means *everyone* must be a changemaker.

The old ways no longer work. This is, for example, the first generation that does not have the option of being valued if they but diligently follow the rules. As change accelerates, fewer and fewer situations have rules. And everyone must daily navigate rapidly morphing complex chains of contexts unimagined but a few decades ago.

Not doing harm is, of course, not enough. Contributing to the new reality requires sophisticated new abilities, qualities almost the exact opposite of what was required before. And the required level of these new competencies is increasing exponentially year after year.

Every human has the capacity to play. The Fellows have demonstrated this time and again at large scale—with probably every disadvantaged community and with all ages, genders, beliefs, etc. globally.

Indeed, most of humanity has made enough of the transition to be able to contribute, to be a giver, to create and adapt to change. One of the reasons behind this success is that, once in the new game, which is organized on a “fluid, open, integrated team of teams” basis, each team member and group works to help all their teammates be the best possible players. As the game accelerates, the players become more skilled at helping one another become better players. The invention of the globally unifying worldwide web is a good example. So is the Ashoka community.

Those skilled in the new everything-changing game are doing very well. Demand for us way exceeds supply—so our incomes are going up, and there certainly is no job shortage! More important, we flourish because we are able to express love and respect in action every day—and at significant levels. As all the prophets and now the scientists make very clear, this is what brings longevity, health, and happiness.

However, those without these new abilities cannot play. Their incomes are falling, and their job opportunities fast

disappearing as the world for which they were prepared is in an exponential death dive—causally the mirror of the explosive acceleration of the world of change. The long-dominant world of repetition (from guilds and assembly lines to banks) is but a tattered ghost.

Consider one statistic: In 2000, the fast-changing half of the United States had economic output per capita roughly equal to that of the non-changemaking half. By 2016, the ratio had become 2:1.

The results for those without the abilities now needed are cruel. Their lives and those of their families, friends, and neighbors are failures. They went out to play baseball, where they are skilled; but the game is now chess, and no one told them.

Instead, society (you and I) is saying to them, “Go away. We don’t need you. It’s your fault. And your kids don’t have a future.” And, indeed, they can’t move to Palo Alto because they can’t contribute in the changemaking world. They’re stuck. This is deeply unethical.

How do these people respond?

One response is to blame themselves. This has led to four (4) years of lost life expectancy (chiefly among those in middle age) in one generation in the low-changemaking half of the U.S. This is slow suicide through smoking, alcohol/drugs/opiates, obesity, and—most of all—despair.

Their second response is to blame others. In company, which builds belief and dispels guilt. The fury underlying this blaming is profound. It is as understandable as it is ugly.

Enter the demagogues. They provide the scapegoats. They target vulnerable “others”. In Cambodia, it was everyone urban (owning glasses could be a death warrant). Current scapegoat victims include immigrants, African-Americans, and Muslims/other religious minorities.

This “us versus them” politics has spread like wind-driven wild-fire globally over the last seven years—from the Philippines and Poland to Brazil and the U.S.. That’s because “the new inequality” between those who are welcomed contributors in the new everything-changing reality and those who are locked out is growing deeper and deeper exponentially.

“The new inequality” is poison.

A turning point like this is an opportunity for any disadvantaged group to leapfrog ahead. Unfortunately, most instead fall quickly further behind. Moreover, they may become a scapegoat “other”. And because their deeply divided societies can’t solve problems, they suffer disproportionately again.

The only alternative is a world where everyone has the abilities to be a giver. I.e., in the new reality, an “everyone a changemaker” (EACH) world. This is, of course, Ashoka’s goal.

Is your daughter practicing changemaking? Does she confidently know that she is a changemaker? If she thus has her power, she and you know she will be a powerful giver in life and that the world will always want her. In other words, she will have a happy, healthy, long life. If you can’t answer “yes” to these questions, you have urgent work to do.

The same is true for any young person about whom you care—and for your coworkers, your friends, and you.

The organizations you lead need even more help. They must (1) help all their people become changemakers, and (2) organize in fluid, open integrated teams of teams.

This moment feels to me quite like the few years before the American civil rights movement and, a bit later, the women’s movement took off. Decades of underlying change and preparation had created new realities, but few people saw the signs. And then, suddenly, these movements broke through to their five turning-point years when society changed profoundly.

The key to society’s tipping is enabling everyone to quickly see the new game— and the hundred things they now can and need to do. You and all of us in the Ashoka community are uniquely well-positioned to ensure that, indeed, everyone has this life-giving opportunity.

To serve this historic turning point, what are the Ashoka community’s unique strengths? The first is its roughly 4,000 Fellows. (As you know, three-quarters have changed the patterns in their field at the national and/or international level within five years of launch.) In any field, Ashoka can therefore reliably map where the world must go by seeing where our Fellows’ innovations point. So far these prescriptions fit tightly with what is required in an everything-changing world where each change begets yet more change. The Fellows also bring myriad proven ways of getting there.

Second, Ashoka knows how to engineer such society-wide mindset change, which is very different from leading other sorts of change. Indeed, it has already done this once: It set out very consciously decades ago to introduce the construct of social entrepreneurship. It now empowers people everywhere—because they know that it is feasible, normal, and respected to see a problem, to care, and to go out and change the world.

Third, the Ashoka community is where the co-leaders of such a global mindset change movement can be found. Ashoka Fellows, partnering top-quality business entrepreneurs, staff, and Ashoka Young (teen) Changemakers are all people who have given themselves permission to and who know how to change their world.

Moreover, we are now well into the work—and learning fast. On May 23 and 24, 2019, several years of brilliant, focused work by Ashoka’s Brazil leadership, fully co-leading Fellows, and a dozen “jujitsu partners” (the most ethical, entrepreneurial, and powerful organizations in the sectors key to redefining what constitutes success in growing up—i.e., education unions, publishers, education schools, and select cities or states) joined by Brazil’s first Ashoka Young Changemakers came together. They captured Brazil’s attention at all levels. Since then, one change has triggered the next, be it education publishers and education schools shifting their strategies and offerings to “everyone a changemaker” or parents groups stepping up. (See the section on Ashoka Young Changemakers on page 82.) Or the union of those running the country’s 5,700 school districts helping spread the “every young person must be a changemaker” message. With this team of partners, our movement can now create news, orchestrate events, and reach millions. There are solid beginnings of such teams on most of the other continents, all learning from Brazil and from one another.

If we all work together, we now have the teams and the tools to end the new inequality, to in fact give everyone the ability to give, to be powerful, to be a changemaker!



Bill Drayton
Ashoka: *Everyone a Changemaker*
May, 2021



Letter from Ashoka

Dear Friends:

In your hands is a glimpse of hope for the future. This latest edition of *Leading Social Entrepreneurs* features a sample of recently elected Ashoka Fellows who have become part of the largest global network of social entrepreneurs. In the following pages, you will read about new innovations for existing institutions and new structures to bring about the “Everyone a Changemaker” world.

For 40 years, Ashoka has pioneered the field of social entrepreneurship in pursuit of social impact for the good of all. Ever since, we’ve bet on the optimists and the courageous who see the world not as it is, but as the sheer potential for what it could be.

Ashoka’s global network ensures that no entrepreneur feels isolated, even in the current circumstances. Their work and success are based on the expansion of opportunities for everyday citizens to become changemakers. To accomplish this, the Fellows utilize the vast network to share ideas, seek innovative solutions, and funnel the knowledge they hold into the fellowship community for the betterment of society.

Paweł Grabowski believes that the quality of a society is defined by the way it takes care of its weakest members. In Poland, the welfare system does not emphasize end of life caregiving, leading to many elders dying an undignified death. The Prophet Elijah Hospice Paweł developed is a new model of innovative care that cuts costs 1/3 lower than the traditional hospice care by leveraging the public’s engagement and cutting administrative costs. It also opens up employment opportunities via the role of ‘caregivers’ in a region where unemployment is very high. As of March 2020, Paweł’s organization has improved the well-being of over 430 elderly people and over 600 primary caregivers.



Giving the power back to the community is why Immy Kaur of the United Kingdom co-founded Civic Square, a strategy to organize residents, provide a space for collective action, and emphasize community well-being, not just profit-driven urban renewal. Immy envisions a method of development to answer urban decay without relying heavily on governing councils, gifts of grants, and absentee landlords who skyrocket housing costs solely in the name of profit. New methods of land and ownership are being explored, such as affordable land leasehold through which land is licensed by the local council and therefore immune from developer speculation, profits from land going into a neighborhood trust or ‘citizen dividend’, and overall focus on long-term local capital circulation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these inequalities, vulnerabilities, and risks Ashoka Fellows already

confront—while they react to the immediate crises, they must also brace their communities for the unforeseen long-term calamities worsened by the pandemic. In the face of this global crisis, it became crucial to be cognizant and active towards achieving the end goal of racial equality. Looking inward to answer the call of allyship with Black communities, and looking outwards to foster justice with the overarching goal of peace will require continued changemaking.

Access to affordable medicines, elders' well-being, urban land ownership by local councils are three of the cases, and you will see many others in this reading. We invite you to support Ashoka by sharing these stories and helping us continue to provide the necessary strength to overcome the multitude of work we have ahead of us.



Ashoka will continue to develop solutions with social entrepreneurs holding lived experience.

Thank you, always!

Anamaria Schindler

Anamaria Schindler
President Emerita



LEADING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

A Representative Sample of New Ashoka Fellows and Ideas

2020 Edition

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The Social Entrepreneurs and Their Ideas

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A group of five women wearing hijabs are sitting on a blue mat on the floor in a library. They are looking towards the right side of the frame with various expressions of interest and engagement. The woman in the center is wearing a beige hijab and a blue and white checkered shirt. To her left, a woman in a grey hijab is smiling. To her right, a woman in a red hijab is also smiling. In the background, there are yellow shelves filled with books. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation and learning.

Civic Engagement



Rana Dajani

 Jordan

 @Prof_RanaDajani
 welovereading.org

Nurturing Enthusiastic Readers

Dr. Rana Dajani has sparked a social movement that harnesses the power of reading as a tool to heal communities while raising the health, educational, and social status of women and children in Jordan and beyond.

THE NEW IDEA

How different would your life be if you had never been read to as a child? Beginning in Jordan, where people have been displaced by war and ongoing civil strife, Rana initiated a cultural movement of community reading designed to offer multiple layers of social benefit for others—early literacy development for children, leadership opportunities for women, intergenerational bonding for the community, and engagement on issues of health and the environment through authorship for aspiring writers.

Rana launched *We Love Reading* (WLR) as a community-based, grassroots program aimed to foster the love of reading among children. The program worked by training local men, women, and youth to hold read-aloud sessions for children ages 0-10 in public spaces in their neighborhoods and in their native language. Today, these participants, known as *We Love Reading Ambassadors*, commit to reading aloud to children and training others to spread an enthusiasm for reading throughout their communities. In 2019 alone, WLR Ambassadors trained over 7,500 adult readers and read to half a million children through more than 150,000 reading sessions.

We Love Reading has also expanded into a technology-enabled, global movement operating in 56 countries with the ultimate goal of enabling children and youth to think for themselves, empathize with others, and respectfully communicate their thoughts.

We Love Reading builds in leadership opportunities and research-driven program interventions focused on improving

the early literacy experiences of children and the adult leadership development of women Ambassadors. The network is now connected through a gamified digital application designed for Ambassadors to set and track their reading journeys and measure their community impact.

In 2019, to advance community engagement with important social and cultural topics, WLR Ambassadors gave out 266,213 books and authored 32 children's books covering a range of themes, including: resource conservation, anti-littering, empathy and social cohesion, nonviolence, refugees, gender, and disabilities. As the WLR movement continues to expand, Rana's team has produced two guidebooks for Ambassadors—"How to Write Children's Story Books" and "How to Do Randomized Control Trials"—as a commitment to the model and the movement's ability to measure its impact on the world.

THE PROBLEM

As a mother, Rana noticed how many parents do not read aloud to their children and how reading for pleasure is often perceived as a luxury in the Arab World. Rana grew up in Jordan, which had largely overcome historically high levels of illiteracy, but continues to confront problems related to children's lower levels of reading comprehension and overall disengagement with literature. Rana noticed another part of the problem as well—a lack of fun, relatable, and culture-relevant reading materials readily available for those who are interested in reading.

"We use *We Love Reading* as a steppingstone to falling in love with your identity, which is so important for psychosocial health. When you know who you are, you don't get lost."

RANA DAJANI IN NYT ARTICLE, APRIL 17, 2019, RACHEL CERNANSKY

The New York Times



Rana reading a WLR book out loud.

And looming over the experience of these long-time citizens of Jordan is the very different experiences of young people growing up in refugee camps—generations beginning with the Arab-Israeli conflicts and now compounded by the creation of camps for refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria. For these young people, *We Love Reading* offers an opportunity to fill in gaps to schooling and early childhood experiences created by the severe disruptions of war, displacement, and trauma.

Starting with the fractured and literature-deprived communities in Jordan, Rana has introduced a simple model and activity for healing, connection, and positive self-development through *We Love Reading*'s inter-generational invitation to get lost in—and find each other through—a book.

THE STRATEGY

We Love Reading connects with local organizations who already work on the ground in certain neighborhoods to disseminate a call for volunteers to join WLR's two-day training program. The only prerequisites for volunteers is that they have to know how to read in their local language and they need to be at least 16 years old. Trainings and interactive workshops are provided to Ambassadors and volunteers on a range of topics, including literacy practices, the importance of reading aloud, guidelines for managing a local library, and facilitating reading circles in one's neighborhood. It also covers entrepreneurial topics such as leadership, public speaking, confidence building, and communication, all delivered through interactive workshops and debates.

To ensure the movement is replicated without forgoing

quality and to ensure that volunteers stay motivated, Dr. Dajani has also created a virtual community, connecting WLR Ambassadors all around the world. Through the app, Ambassadors achieve different status levels by reaching incentives set up in a gamified digital platform. The game is the Ambassador's tracking tool where they can set their own goals and select the reading journeys they want to pursue. It is also a tool to share experiences among Ambassadors in the same country and beyond, making volunteers feel they are a part of a trans-boundary social movement.

THE PERSON

Rana's mother instilled in her a sense of profound commitment and responsibility towards her family and community. Her father was an exemplary model of physician by day, captivating storyteller by night.

For Rana, being a community leader evolved from a curious reading habit, fueled by her father's stories, into learning and reading sessions for her siblings and kids. She took the responsibility of widening her younger siblings' learning opportunities by organizing summer camps, scientific trips, and city exploration tours for them, as well as telling them all about the books she had read.

Rana earned a doctorate in Molecular Biology and has explored different ways of linking science and society—for example, explaining evolution from an Islamic perspective and using tools from drama and novel writing to spur interest in learning science. To keep *We Love Reading*'s tools and thinking up to date, Rana's organization conducts ongoing research with faculty at half a dozen universities in the Arab region as well as in Europe and the United States.


“...the *We Love Reading* project...is active in 56 countries worldwide, has trained over 7,000—mostly women—volunteer readers, and has brought the joy of reading to nearly half a million children, including tens of thousands of young refugees in Jordan and beyond.”





Mauricio Parilli

 @Maupar

 aprendoyemprendoca.com

Venezuela

Autonomy to Young People

Mauricio's vision expands the opportunities for entrepreneurship to young people in Venezuela, making them the driving force for the country's social, political, and economic renaissance.

THE NEW IDEA

Mauricio is offering a future Venezuela in which disengaged young people become the country's greatest contributors through a new entrepreneurial system and set of public policies that accept and support young people (8-26 years old) as leaders, innovators, and businesspeople. Along the way, he is changing older people's expectations about the age at which young people can take on responsibilities normally reserved for older adults, and he is building up a new generation of empathetic contributors committed to social innovation.

To take just one example, Mauricio began mentoring Isabel Ávila when she was 17, and in two years, she became the youngest person in Venezuela to ever win a seat on her Municipal Council in the Caravajal region of Trujillo State.

Now the President of that Municipal Council, Isabel has successfully pushed for the passage of the first public ordinance in Venezuela that allows people as young as 16 to create their own companies. The ordinance also formally incorporates the participation of young people in the Council's mechanisms for consultation and formulation of new public policies.

Through these changes to the law, Mauricio believes that young people will be afforded more opportunities to solve social challenges, develop new services, and invent new products with high technological value.

To fully realize the potential of youth to address difficult problems in Venezuela, Mauricio knows that the young people themselves need to hold new expectations about what it means to be successful as entrepreneurs. To that end, he has created curricula and guides to support would-be entrepreneurs and launched a successful nationwide series of local,

leading-to-regional and then national competitions to select and support youth-led initiatives with the most social impact.

THE PROBLEM

Mauricio's idea to make young people the driving force in Venezuela's future comes at a time when older Venezuelans have pushed the country past the point of economic and social collapse. According to a survey on living conditions in Venezuela in 2017, the last reliable national assessment, 87 percent of Venezuelans were living at or below the poverty line, defined as the point at which chronic malnutrition becomes a certainty. Furthermore, in 2017, the school dropout rate for children and teens ages 13 to 17 was more than 38 percent and growing.

Given the chance to make a better life elsewhere, more than 3 million Venezuelans have chosen to flee the country and its political gridlock, economic hardships, and social disruption since 2015. The majority of those leaving the country each year? Young people under the age of 25.

“Mauricio Parilli’s [work]... is an advance towards closing the gap in care for people with disabilities, under a more inclusive and respectful vision of human rights.”

EL CARABOBEÑO
EL DIARIO DEL CENTRO

Against this backdrop, Mauricio is implementing his vision by communicating the high stakes involved for Venezuela's young people if they leave or stay disengaged and he is explaining how they could, instead, be the citizens responsible for leading a successful rebound for the country. Where he sees low participation among young people in addressing community problems, Mauricio is providing tools to stimulate innovation, cooperative work, and public advocacy so that these detached citizens become committed contributors to solving community problems.



Young people from the Bolívar state of Venezuela participating in the second edition of the Young Entrepreneur program.

THE STRATEGY

Mauricio's organization, *Aprendo y Emprendo* (I Learn and Begin), reengages young people as potential entrepreneurs through comprehensive training and intervention programs, peer-to-peer mentorship, and growing connections to a global network. These components, along with a long-term commitment to changing Venezuelan laws to accept and protect young businesspeople, Mauricio is building a widescale, entrepreneurial culture among communities in Venezuela.

“People always say that Venezuela is the country of young people, but in truth we are not giving them space. Sometimes they say you are too young for this or you don't know anything. This project seeks to break with that and be a platform for young leaders with high potential,” explains Mauricio Parilli, director of *Aprendo y Emprendo*.



One of the organization's initiatives, “Learn and Launch,” establishes training centers that provide a winning formula—legal support, financial expertise, and mentorship—to help young entrepreneurs who want to launch new ventures. This support comes from Mauricio's partnerships with community centers, universities, media, and investors as he promotes opportunities for young entrepreneurs and seeks to change Venezuelans' openness to the participation of young people in the country's recovery.

For example, in an early part of the training, participants learn about finance business operations and then apply the exercises at home where they are able to influence parents' awareness and perspectives. In a deeper level of the training, young people and their parents are recognized and supported through an “Entrepreneurial Ecosystem” program that provides help with the coordination, legal aspects, and business design to get a young person's new organization or company off the ground.

In a country where young people often have to stop studying to earn money for their families and where parents expect their children to work in common jobs, Mauricio knows that the younger generation is willing to change, has valuable perspectives in entrepreneurship, and empathizes more with social problems. However, they need role models and examples to inspire courage and know-how. To position this next generation as influential role models, Mauricio's organization also offers a cascading, peer-to-peer model where young people take on the responsibility of training others.

Finally, Mauricio connects young participants in a global network where they can interact with young entrepreneurs beyond their local communities and, from there, contribute to a global and national movement aimed at generating youth-driven solutions to social problems in communities, with the capacity for replication.

By 2019, despite the country's difficulties, Mauricio's organization had created a network of support for youth entrepreneurship efforts in 10 states of Venezuela. Given the collapse of the national financial sector, half of the seed capital for these most promising ideas had come from a family business owned by Mauricio and half from embassies, corporate donations, and university research and training grants.



Mauricio working with group on overcoming difficulties in financial business operations.

“Pérez has just turned 19 years old and already employs 14 people in Panastería, the name of his company. He studied bakery and pastry at the University of Zulia, and barista at the Itinerant Coffee School in Maracaibo. He did so before...participating in an entrepreneur camp, through the Young Entrepreneur program –[organized] by the Aprendo y Emprendo organization.”

EL UNIVERSAL

To date, Mauricio has organized 12 Learn and Launch initiatives and 10 competitions to raise start-up capital for the most promising new enterprises. 41 new, youth-led ventures were launched as a result of these supports and all achieved financial sustainability within 16 months of start-up. Two-thirds of these ventures are for-profit and one-third are not-for-profit. By the end of 2019, approximately 700 young entrepreneurs had become part of a growing network of young entrepreneurs dedicated to opening up new opportunities for more young people to launch their own successful ventures across the country.

Now one of Mauricio's goals is to pilot “Learn and Launch” outside Venezuela, starting in Colombia, where the majority of the young people who recently fled Venezuela now live.

THE PERSON

Supported by a family committed to social service, Mauricio stepped out as a serious changemaker as soon as he left childhood. When he was 12, he started organizing other young people to collect funds which were used to recover public spaces that had become polluted with garbage. At the age of 15, he created conversational “Snack Spaces”—groups that gathered to solve problems at his school. When he realized that the new LOPNA (Children, Youth and Adolescents Law) did not consider the capacities of the young people as a factor of change, he joined the national Youth Animation Center where he developed projects for young people to report on problems in their schools and communities.

At university, he earned a degree in Political and Administrative Sciences with a specialization in Public Management and went on to earn a Master’s in International Cooperation from the Complutense University of Madrid.

Mauricio began to pursue his life’s work in Trujillo State in 2008 with a statewide effort to mobilize more than 1,500 youth in support of a referendum to ensure youth access to services, expanded educational opportunities, and a guaranteed role in consultation and formulation of government policies. While the statewide referendum failed, Mauricio persisted and saw that it was taken up and adopted in one municipality where young people gained a strong voice on the Municipal Council. That led, in turn, to adoption of a city ordinance that put in place the key provisions of the referendum that had failed at the state level.

The next key step in Mauricio’s learning came from a successful effort to support the start-up of approximately 1,000 youth-led enterprises to serve as suppliers to and distributors for one of Venezuela’s leading companies.

Then, Mauricio stepped back and realized that lasting change would require more of an ecosystemic approach to supporting youth as leaders in Venezuela. Therefore, he started the civic association, *Aprendo y Emprendo*, with a commitment to social responsibility programs focused on strengthening the capacities of entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation in young populations between 8 and 26 years old.



Michelle Miller

United States

 @teamcoworker

 <https://home.coworker.org>

Asserting Workers' Voices

Michelle Miller is building a 21st-century labor movement that uses digital organizing methodology to give voice and shift power to workers.

THE NEW IDEA

The power of organized labor in the United States has been in steady decline since the 1980s, in large part a result of the deliberate dismantling of unions that continues to this day. Not surprisingly, during this same period, despite worker productivity rising 74 percent, median income for Americans has stagnated. Now, as technology transforms employment at exponential rates, rising inequality and poor working conditions are likely to worsen unless workers have more voice in shaping their workplace.

After a decade working in labor organizing, Michelle founded *Coworker.org* as a digital civic infrastructure that helps workers engage their employers, address job problems, and advance solutions as changemakers. The core of the idea is to spark and advance effective workplace democracy that ultimately reduces inequality—using technology and the internet as tools for mass participation and collective action. The how-tos are centered around investing in the capacity of workers to participate in driving better business decisions—including everything from more tolerant workplace environments to pay raises—and then leveraging patterns and victories to inform broader policy. The mass organizing potential of the web is merged with the training, expertise, data, and feedback loops that Michelle and her team can provide.

Coworker.org began creating prototypes to support worker-led change in 2013, and since then, more than 700,000 people working in food service, retail, technology, and gig/contract industries in more than 30 countries have used the network—including major campaigns at Starbucks, American Airlines, Google, Publix, and more.

THE PROBLEM

Old frameworks that provided for workers' voices, information, influence, and protection no longer serve most jobs. Labor protection systems are structured by country, but multinational corporations shape working conditions across borders through franchises and software-controlled, disaggregated supply chains. In the United States, new employment structures and government directions mean regulatory agencies can't or won't enforce standards to ensure access to collective bargaining, unemployment insurance, health and safety protections, and more. Meanwhile, labor unions have been drastically weakened and generally rely on an exclusive representation model that doesn't fit most workers. In the end, for most people in the country, the experience of work is essentially an authoritarian regime.

“Front-line workers at grocery and retail stores have used them effectively during the pandemic. Eight out of every nine American workers don't have a union to represent them in workplace disputes. So thousands of them have been flocking to the nonprofit website Coworker.org in their fight for a fairer workplace... The site has become an effective tool for workers across the country.”



What's more, innovation and investment in the future of work has primarily focused on the interests of corporate owners, such as lowering costs, increasing efficiency, surveilling, expanding markets, and reducing liability. Together with the decline of organized labor, these forces leave workers more vulnerable and isolated than ever and contribute to an American inequality crisis that has reached a boiling point and that lies at the heart of numerous societal ills.



After using the Coworker.org platform to draft the petition, IBMers compel CEO Ginni Rometty to affirm IBM values.

THE STRATEGY

The broad strategy for *Coworker.org* is to facilitate the space, the network, and the expertise that enables more democratic decision-making within the modern workplace to the benefit of workers. This manifests itself in three complementary strategies: (1) build a critical (and growing) mass of workers who campaign for workplace improvements in a highly visible way; (2) invest in the leadership of individuals and groups of employees by providing education and training, strategic support, data analysis, and workplace advocacy tools; and (3) grow a broader ecosystem that advances a healthier future of work.

Coworker.org was designed to make it as easy as possible for any worker, anywhere, to take action to improve working conditions and wages. The fundamental guiding premise is that workers should have a voice in determining workplace policies—what Michelle and others refer to as “workplace democracy.” That voice can take many forms: informal employee committees, company-wide surveys, *Coworker.org* peer networks and petitions, collective bargaining, worker-ownership. In just a few clicks, any employee can launch a campaign. *Coworker.org* provides the infrastructure, expertise, guidance, data analysis and public visibility to do so effectively.

There are a number of design principles that make *Coworker.org* stand out and strategic. **First**, the organization stays open and relevant to the needs of today: Workers in any industry and any position can take initiative, including those in the growing (and disconnected) “gig economy” where employment matters are often unique – for example, how to bargain with an algorithm that plays the role of a manager. Or, how to develop policies for a workplace that lacks a physical space. **Second**, *Coworker.org* has network aggregation power: In an economy when most people in large companies never see more than five percent of their coworkers, the use of the internet exponentially increases the ability of an employee to reach thousands of others and collaborate toward shared goals. *Coworker.org* is like a massive digital version of the workplace cafeteria. **Third**, the organization’s stays committed to grassroots, worker-led change: *Coworker.org* emphasizes peer-to-peer connection and experimentation, then feeds back learning and victories to the worker changemaker community. And **finally**, a smart use of media brings broad public attention to campaigns and the worker-leaders championing them.

The list of worker-led victories is long and impressive, exemplifying itself in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic for employees across the nation. Essential/frontline workers have been in the national spotlight as companies have designed their ongoing protocols to balance profit and safety of employees. *Coworker.org* played a critical role in organizing voices during the mass reopening of stores the United States in late spring and this work continues throughout the crisis. For example, Starbucks employee advocacy in July 2020 ultimately led to Starbucks being the first national restaurant chain to require customers wear masks while in their locations. The utilization of *Coworker.org* for petitions arguably has saved the livelihood of employees.

Previously, tens of thousands of Starbucks workers had used *Coworker.org* to expand paid family leave, update its scheduling technology, and allow employees to have visible tattoos. REI committed to a wage increase for employees and is also posting worker schedules further in advance. Each of these and other victories has led to significant improvements for employees across the United States and signals that companies would do well to incorporate worker voices earlier and often in their decision-making.

In addition to growing the number and scale of worker-led campaigns, Michelle and her team are working with a broader ecosystem of groups concerned with workers and the future of work. Grassroots worker centers and advocacy groups partner with *Coworker.org* to reach new communities and test new strategies. Michelle offers workers a conduit to share their insights with reporters, academics, labor leaders, business innovators, philanthropists, social impact investors, and policymakers. *Coworker.org* invests in research on the digitization of society and has led participatory research projects, published papers on worker power, and presented at major events. They advise labor groups around the world, foundations and social impact investors, and government agencies. *Coworker.org* co-hosted a national town hall on worker voices with then-President Obama and has briefed members of Congress and congressional staff on the impact of mass data collection, artificial intelligence, and the growth of platform monopolies. They have linked workers to other efforts for equality, civil rights, and healthy, thriving communities and have, in turn, enabled organizations to learn from frontline workers.

Depending on how fast *Coworker.org* and its allies can work, in the next 5-10 years, Michelle aims to see millions of people in independent, informed collectives; taking leadership in their jobs; asserting agency to shape decisions; and expanding access to social, community, and cultural benefits from changes brought on by automation and machine learning. This includes reforming labor and employment laws given what the organization is learning from frontline workers and given the new frontiers in our economy. For example, as worker-generated data—e.g., the real-time data generated by millions of ride-share drivers all over the world—becomes increasingly valued (and monetized), legitimate questions should be raised about who owns that data if it's being produced by workers in their own vehicles and with their own smartphones.

Coworker.org's metrics for success look at the numbers of people taking leadership for change in the workplace; the scale and success rate of their ideas; the attention to worker perspectives and needs in media, corporate, and government conversations and decisions; and how individuals and groups move along a path of increasing innovation, strength, and success as civic advocates for their community.

“Across the U.S., from urban centers to rural communities, many people feel as though the scales are tipped against them. Coworker.org co-founder Michelle Miller’s childhood in the coalfields of West Virginia showed her the promise of economic security brought by a strong labor movement as well as the scarcity communities experience when industry leaves.”

Forbes

Of course, workplace organizing has risks—people need to be able to advocate for positive change without losing their jobs, for one—and using media to connect with peers to stand up for improvements should bring support and not attacks. People who take a stand for equity and justice (especially women, and particularly women of color, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized people) face increased hostility from political movements as well as concerted online harassment. One key area for *Coworker.org* moving forward is to understand more about the groups and forces that want to undermine human rights efforts and erode the potential for worker-led initiatives, so that it can help workers make progress safely and successfully.

Coworker.org's budget for 2019 was \$1,454,000. It began in 2013 with an annual budget of \$200,000 and was able to raise twice that amount from grants and partnerships with other nonprofits in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Michelle is keenly aware that civic infrastructure for workers can't rely only on grants, so over the next 2-4 years, she plans to experiment with revenue models that can provide educational, networking, media, legal, and other resources to peer groups of workers, such as mutual aid, shared costs, co-ops, data licensing, and/or contracts with social responsibility investors. She will test to see where there is traction to create sustainable funds for infrastructure that can be shared by hundreds of thousands, and eventually millions of workers.

“...A pair of tech-savvy activists with labor roots, Michelle Miller and Jess Kutch, launched Coworker.org, which creates networks of employees and provides them with tools so they can push for pretty much anything they feel would improve their working lives. Tired of finding hypodermic needles in store bathrooms, Starbucks employees used Coworker.org to petition the company for needle disposal containers.”

Bloomberg

THE PERSON

In the summer of 2012, Michelle was asked to meet with workers preparing for a visit from philanthropists, policy-makers, and advocates in large shipping facilities for companies like Amazon and Walmart. The workers mentioned that their hours were long and backbreaking, and they described

freezing winters, passing out in the summer, skipping bathroom and food breaks, and hiding injuries. Further, the pay they received was only marginally better than what they'd get in fast food or retail work. They also described the transformation they'd experienced since they had become leaders in the fledgling group called Warehouse Workers for Justice, where they were learning how to change the current conditions.



Michelle is a child of the West Virginia coalfields—her grandmother is a miner's widow who survived on her husband's Black Lung benefits and who reminded Michelle daily that survival was a collective endeavor. She spent years in the labor movement herself, recording and shaping the stories of members into documentary film, art, or curricula that would help other workers learn from their experiences.

All this informed her decision to create *Coworker.org* with her co-founder, Jess Kutch. Her years spent with workers who shared their visions and hopes, as well as their descriptions of the ingenious and generous ways they support one another, led her to this point. And as Michelle says, “I know how to do this work because they taught me how. My responsibility is to share it back and help us all do a little better.”



Alison Lingane

United States

 @projectequity
 project-equity.org

Security and Stability through Employee-Owned Business

Alison Lingane is building economic demand for employee-owned businesses and facilitating the transition of companies to this more equitable model.

THE NEW IDEA

Project Equity is facilitating the transition of small businesses to employee-owned companies in order to grow community wealth and address racial income and wealth gaps in the United States. Alison and her team do so by raising awareness of the benefits of broad-based employee ownership, by working directly with business owners and employees to facilitate the transition, and by leveraging the public sector (beginning with cities) to encourage and promote this under-represented, highly impactful business model.

With major forces from globalization to AI bringing uncertainty to the future of work, employee-owned businesses offer a powerful opportunity to address the wealth gap while bringing stability and quality jobs to millions of workers. Furthermore, the United States is at the beginning of a “Silver Tsunami,” with nearly 2.5 million baby boomer business owners considering whether, how, and to whom to sell their business.

Data consistently show that employee-owned companies increase job quality, invest locally, and have demonstrable positive impact on job creation and business retention. Job stability is also higher, given lower employee turnover rates. *Project Equity* is focused on making transitions as easy as possible, while simultaneously building demand so that employee ownership moves from a misunderstood outlier to a common, celebrated path toward an economy that works for everyone. *Project Equity* is now collaborating with major California cities on ways to accelerate employee ownership and was involved in drafting recent federal legislation (the 2018 Main Street Employee Ownership Act) to advance business transitions to employee ownership.

“Alison Lingane is [a] national leader in the movement to harness employee ownership to maintain thriving local business communities, retain selling owners’ legacies, and address income and wealth inequality.”

Forbes

THE PROBLEM

In the United States, the income and wealth gap between the one percent and everyone else has reached its widest point since the Gilded Age. The implications are manifold, including rising economic anxiety and uncertainty that cuts across the political divide. More and more American communities are full of hard-working people fighting for economic security in the face of low-paying jobs. Indeed, one-quarter of all jobs in California pay less than the average cost of living (including food, shelter, healthcare, transportation, and childcare). Meanwhile, nearly half of Americans cannot cover a \$400 emergency expense.

The underlying causes of this inequality are multidimensional and often the result of deliberate economic policy and business practices. Several factors in particular stand out:

1. Decreased power of labor - The decrease of unions and the increase of so-called “absentee ownership,” along with corporate consolidations, enable companies to make decisions that are disconnected from workers’ and community needs.

2. Shrinking middle - Due to globalization and the outsourcing of jobs in key sectors, many U.S. communities have knowledge workers at the top and low-paid service workers at the bottom. The resulting “shrinking middle” of small businesses, manufacturing, and other employers that traditionally provide better wages and benefits alongside professional development opportunities go far to explain the missing rungs in the ladder of economic opportunity.



Future employee-owners of Adams & Chittenden Scientific Glass Cooperative meet with Shared Capital and Project Equity to discuss their transition loan.

3. Racial wealth gaps - Starting with little or no wealth and facing ongoing barriers such as modern-day redlining, marginalized communities now face even fewer avenues up—either through employment or through starting their own businesses.

Business transitions to employee ownership are a powerful market-based pathway to address the wealth gap, but significant barriers remain. One-third of business owners over age 50 report difficulty finding a buyer for their company, yet few consider selling to their employees. Over 85 percent of business owners don't have a succession plan in place, and only a small percent have a successor in the family. As a result, most of these companies will quietly close or be sold to a larger company or out-of-area buyer, laying off employees as they consolidate. These patterns will exacerbate the wealth gap by further concentrating business ownership.

THE STRATEGY

Project Equity envisions a society where people of color, immigrants, and low-wage workers have the stability, security, and means to fully participate in the American Dream. It is working towards this goal by spreading awareness and demand for employee-owned business models and addressing the major

barriers to employee ownership. Their goal is to remove major roadblocks and create a well-established market for employee ownership where both the private and public sector have adopted it as a preferred model for achieving strong businesses and economic equality. Alison and her team have identified several key leverage points to build this market.

A critical component of *Project Equity's* work involves educating business owners and small business support providers on the value of transitioning to employee ownership. They share compelling evidence that employee-owned businesses outperform their competitors, particularly during economic downturns, because employees feel more invested—literally—in the company's success. *Project Equity* has a dedicated media strategy, and its research is now regularly cited—including to frame the need for the recent Main Street Employee Ownership Act (passed by Congress in August 2018) that makes it easier for small businesses to transition to Employee Stock Ownership Plans and worker-owned cooperatives.

To help business owners navigate the unfamiliar process of transitioning to employee ownership, *Project Equity* has developed and refined a range of offerings to demystify and streamline the process. Topics include financial feasibility, transaction details and financing structures, ownership culture and governance training, consulting and more. To date, they have worked directly with over 30 businesses across the United States, including those in places as diverse as California, Minnesota, Nevada, Michigan, and North Carolina. They are developing partnerships and plans to expand to 10 regions across the country to help scale their employee ownership transition services.

Project Equity helps others understand the implications for business retention as local businesses close or are bought out by distant owners. Cities are particularly concerned as a significant portion of their tax revenue comes from business taxes. Thus, *Project Equity* works with local governments to facilitate economic development plans, which includes employee ownership as a solution to business retention and economic inequality. Beginning in key California cities, such government partnerships significantly legitimize employee ownership while also creating an important “market-making” channel that builds demand for this transition and the surrounding support network. Additionally, in 2019, *Project Equity* co-convened the Government Equity Summit with

Nexus Community Partners to provide elected officials with tangible tools and strategies for retaining assets while advancing equity. Integrating business retention and employee ownership into city offerings mainstreams employee ownership and begins to anchor it in the public sector as a pathway to scale.

“[Project Equity] is working to raise awareness of the issue [of retiring business owners struggling to sell their companies]. It is urging local governments to measure the impact on their tax base by using business license data to track how many businesses are more than 15, 20 or 25 years old so that local business and political leaders can get involved.”

The Washington Post

At present, businesses have few options for financing a democratic employee ownership transition, so employee ownership is not yet a viable option for a typical small business lender. *Project Equity* is working to remove this barrier. Its first step has been finding a lender and developing a model. It has done so with a 40-year-strong CDFI (Shared Capital Cooperative) which has made its first \$4 million transaction funding and plans to expand. Using this model and the tools it has helped refine, *Project Equity* plans to educate mission-aligned lenders and investors about the value and feasibility of financing employee ownership transitions and how they can get involved. In the long term, *Project Equity* wants to eliminate capital access as an obstacle to employee ownership.

THE PERSON

For Alison's family, education and access to asset building was the path out of poverty. Within three generations, her family transitioned from immigrant farmers who could barely scrape by to members of the middle class, through education, stable jobs, and access to home ownership. As Alison grew into young adulthood, she learned that her family's "bootstrap" opportunities—including access to bank loans to become homeowners—weren't available to everyone, especially people of color.

In her early 20s, she led youth job training programs but saw that training young people for dead-end jobs (as many programs did at that time) doesn't address the cycle of poverty. So, she launched a new program that the young people could be promoted into with a focus on designing and launching microbusinesses. It was powerful to watch young people pitch the offerings they had developed to local store owners, then be invited to display their products in those same stores, and to see the impact of validation—both for the young people and for the broader community—about their strengths, capabilities, and potential.

Inspired to learn to scale impactful programs, Alison got an MBA, then gained experience through leadership roles at mission-driven companies. At InsideTrack, a company that has coached over a million college students to keep them on track for graduation, she intimately saw how poverty thwarts educational goals. For example, it's hard to submit your class discussion responses through the online forum when your power has been shut off or to attend class when you suddenly have to care for your sister's kids because the police picked her up.

When Alison first met her co-founder, Hilary Abell, who taught her about employee ownership, it just clicked. Employee ownership creates jobs that provide financial stability through better pay and asset building. And it invites—and expects—people to bring their full potential. She co-founded *Project Equity* with a personal mission to support working families to create more stable jobs and build wealth.



Growing Up



Michael ElNemais Fawzy

Egypt

 @MElnemais

Communal Care for Mental Health

Michael is helping Egyptian families and school authorities to recognize, understand, and deal with a range of developmental behaviors in young people in ways that do not leave them isolated or withdrawn from school and other social activities.

THE NEW IDEA

What if—rather than shaming and stigmatizing—communities rallied together to protect and support young people suffering with mental health challenges? Michael believes the best way to reverse this common course is to shift the attention away from “problem children” while, instead, focusing efforts on the training and community building needed for the most influential adults in these children’s lives.

In Egypt, children who need mental health support are generally ostracized, isolated, harassed, and left out of formal schooling and the community. Children with even slight developmental or mental challenges are often kept home from school so that “normally functioning” children can attend, and developmental differences among adolescents often lead to teasing and bullying.

The solution Michael came up with integrates the adults in a child’s life—parents, teachers, social service providers, and ultimately a young person’s friends and classmates—uniting them in a plan to improve the environmental conditions needed for children to be accepted and nurtured as they grow up.

Michael’s initiative, “Hope,” offers a new, dynamic and adaptive resilience intervention program for communities and children who need mental health support. Through partnership among schools, parents, and healthcare professionals, *Hope* promotes resilience in children (ages 5-14) to stop preventable mental health issues from developing and fosters a team-based, context-aware approach to protect and support vulnerable children when they do need mental healthcare.

THE PROBLEM

As a general rule, Egyptian parents will not trust strangers to treat their children. Thus, part of the reason appropriate support for children with mental healthcare needs is limited in Egypt is because there are not enough trusted, trained specialists in communities. One underlying cause for this shortage is the fact that there is no specialized child psychiatry degree in Egypt. People wishing to pursue this lengthy course of studies must have the desire and the means to go abroad, leaving their communities in the process.

“The child population between 0 and 17 years of age in Egypt represents 37.1% of the total population (~ 33.4 million people), one in ten of which will experience poor mental health.”



**Central Agency for Public
Mobilization And Statistics**

Beyond the lack of trusted healthcare providers, schools also want for necessary resources to meet the needs of this special population of learners. Children and young adults in Egypt (ages 5-17) comprise approximately 25 percent of Egypt’s population; yet, fewer than 2 percent of health professionals working in Egypt’s primary and secondary schools



Fellow Michael Elnemais Fawzy promoting a team-based, context-aware approach when children need mental healthcare.



Michael brings the community together in support of children and adolescents who need mental health support.

have completed comprehensive studies dealing with young people's mental health.

Faced with these obstacles, Michael decided to focus his attention on coming up with a solution that could be embedded in the routines and daily lives of the families, teachers, and fellow students who are part and parcel of young people's daily lives.

THE STRATEGY

The *Hope* model unites and invites adults surrounding vulnerable children together as a team to provide protection and support. Starting on the school premises in underserved, rural areas, participating adults are trained to know the difference between challenging but typical developmental behaviors and those that may cause concern. When there is reason for intervention, the different parties work together to buffer and protect the child in all the settings where they have interactions. All are equipped with appropriate tools, including positive reinforcement, safety and inclusion, child psychology, or positive parenting.

Michael is currently in the process of expanding the scope of his work through partnership with Masr El Ataa (Egypt Gives), an initiative under the Egyptian General Medical Syndicate, with the longer-term goal of integrating it into the Egyptian

teacher training and the public schooling curriculum. As news of the success of his approach has reached educators in countries across the Middle East and North Africa, Michael is creating a Resource Bank as a starting point for others to replicate and adapt his approach for use by schools and parent associations across the Arab World.

THE PERSON

As a child, Michael was an avid puppeteer, conducting puppet shows in his local church. His dexterity, creativity and empathy caught the eye of the staff at the Cairo Opera House, and soon after Michael was staging regular shows there for school groups as well as morning and afternoon performances designed for family entertainment.

His interest grew beyond operating puppets to exploring stage décor, researching a wide range of puppetry techniques and materials, as well as script writing.

What started out as a simple means to entertain people evolved into a deeper desire to convey messages to his audiences. And, as he moved forward in his life, he continued to think of the ways in which an individual's context—like a metaphorical “stage” composed of stage lighting, characters, décor, etc.—affected one's ability to succeed.

At university, Michael focused on psychology and human rights—completing training in psychiatry and postgraduate studies at the Indian Law College. His research on the quality of life of children in Egyptian mental health facilities underscored that these children often had to fight on two fronts: illness, on the one hand, and marginalization as a result of societal stigmatization and ensuing maltreatment, on the other.

In 2014, he launched his new organization, *Hope*, and began to test out a new approach, one that would unite families and schools and could be replicated in areas with the greatest needs, beginning with poor communities in remote rural areas. With the core method demonstrated, he is now moving from power prototypes to changing the system to a world where all kids are treated with kindness and respect.



Carolina Contreras

Dominican Republic

 @missrizosalonrd

 www.missrizos.com

Beauty Standards, Restyled

Carolina Contreras strengthens the identity and wellbeing of people of the African diaspora, beginning by confronting deeply held discrimination against the beauty with which they are born: their natural hair.

THE NEW IDEA

Carolina utilizes hairstyling as a social vehicle to confront racial discrimination, implicit bias, and related invidious practices. Specifically, a means of addressing broad issues related to race and color, she has launched *Miss Rizos Hair Salon* in Santo Domingo as a community-level intervention to eradicate discrimination against the natural hair characteristic of Afro descendants. Realizing that not much information about this taboo subject existed online in Spanish, Carolina also curated the *Miss Rizos* blog as a form of compiling knowledge, anecdotes, and advice. The salon now naturally styles the hair of 1,000 clients every month, building their confidence in their natural beauty and identity. At each salon, employees are trained to explain how the Constitution of the Dominican Republic can be used to fight hair-texture discrimination Afro-Dominicans face in schools, the workplace, and within the community.

Since the salon's launch, Carolina's approach to confronting social discrimination has been adopted by the Peace Corps for its training sessions. Carolina has expanded to form a network of salons, including a second *Miss Rizos* salon in the Washington Heights neighborhood in New York City, and she has secured the support of social influencers like Lin Manuel Miranda. Her online presence in a *Miss Rizos* blog intersects multiple social networks, which has led to her being measurably recognized as an influencer in more than 30 countries. She is also featured periodically in mainstream networks like CNN and the New York Times and is actively leading her network to advocate for more anti-hair-texture discrimination laws in key cities.

THE PROBLEM

While Afro-Dominican activists have made important strides, lack of acceptance and discrimination are still tremendous problems due to deeply entrenched societal norms that uphold whiteness and European custom as the standards of beauty, professionalism, and success.

The population of the Dominican Republic is 92 percent Afro-descendant, yet Afro-Dominicans have historically had to assimilate their Afro-textured hair to succeed within a society dominated by European beauty standards stemming from colonialization. The dichotomy of hair in Latin America at large is infamously categorized into good hair, "pelo bueno," which is straight hair, and bad hair "pelo malo" which is hair that is curly or tightly coiled. Ostracism begins at an early age, with Afro-Dominicans bullied and asked to leave their classrooms for not having their curls properly "tamed." Signs and posters in classrooms indicate how students should wear their hair, showing natural curls as the "wrong" way to appear at school, "Many people believe it's an act of rebellion," Yaritza Reyes, Miss Dominican Republic Universe 2013 says, "it's not rebellion, it's nature."

"Her salon wasn't just about styling hair—it's also empowering women and giving them the tools they need to love their curls, beyond products and combs. Contreras has become quite a force in the natural hair community for fighting stereotypes and uplifting women[...]"

Forbes

CELIA SHATZMAN

With 57,000 hair salons for styling straight hair and just 10 for curly hair in the Dominican Republic, the message is clear: conform to a straight-haired, Eurocentric image of beauty and propriety, or risk ostracism from society and exclusion from professional success. With a lack of Afro-Dominican representation in the media, politics, and positions of power,



Carolina leads the natural hair revolution.

Afro-Latinos in particular rarely see role models who look like them in the face of the dominant messages of attractiveness for men and women, which often has negative effects on self-esteem and self-acceptance.

THE STRATEGY

The Miss Rizos strategy is comprised of three parts: the salons, the online community/offline movement, and self-empowerment workshops.

Within the salons, clients can not only get their hair cut, but also receive knowledge on protective styles alongside services by the hairstylists like wash-and-goes, simple braids, and detangling. Instead of viewing their knowledge of care-taking of natural hair as a professional insight, they openly share their regimen suggestions with clients to foster the client's relationship with their hair, leading to overall self-empowerment and agency.

Carolina's online work as a social influencer/blogger speaks to a universal discrimination against African descendants in the Americas. In early 2019, New York passed the CROWN Act, banning discrimination based on hair texture. Carolina argues that the fact that this law needed to be passed speaks to the severity of the issue, and that salons like *Miss*

Rizos are needed as a comprehensive resource for the future. The existence of a salon for the Dominican-American community in New York City by a Dominican-American social entrepreneur is an impactful act of advocacy in itself in the face of gentrification.

The workshops and online entries curated by Carolina through *Miss Rizos* emphasize the holistic nature of taking care of textured hair, and how it seeps into other aspects of life from reducing waste to healthy eating to mental health.

“I don’t think it’s just that I’m Dominican, and so I want to erase my negritude and claim my Europeaness,” she said. “It’s more that society, including the world at large, and not just the DR, is sending me these messages about what success looks like.”

CAROLINA CONTRERAS

Carolina also has a deliberate education effort beyond social media influence to target mindset change around textured hair in the education sector. For example, her comic book, “Super Rizadas,” depicts the story of Sara, a young girl dismissed from her classroom for showing up with her natural hair. As Sara makes her way from the principal's office, a curly-haired superhero explains to her Article 39 of The Constitution of The Dominican Republic which states that all people are born free and equal before the law; Dominicans may not be discriminated against on the basis of gender, color, age, disability, nationality, family ties, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion, or social condition. Sara then returns to the office and enlightens the principal that not permitting her to attend classes because of her curly hair is an act of discrimination and a violation of her constitutional rights. The principal concedes, and Sara returns to class for the day's lesson. This issue of the comic has been printed over 2,000 times and distributed to teachers and youth organizations across the Dominican Republic. The art



Fellow Carolina Contreras in front of the Miss Rizos Salon in Santo Domingo, one of the locations embracing natural hair.

imitates life as Carolina had a 16-year-old girl write to her this similar experience, and how she advocated for herself with Carolina's written guidance.

Now viewed internationally as a branded cultural reference point for standing up to discrimination, Carolina plans to expand her anti-discrimination work throughout the Dominican Republic, encouraging more women to set up *Miss Rizos* branded salons and replicating her workshops in local schools and churches, with a goal of getting the Ministry of Youth to accept her self-empowerment workshops as a mandatory part of the national education curriculum.

THE PERSON

Born in the Dominican Republic, Carolina migrated with her family to the United States at the age of six and grew up in a poor, multicultural community outside Boston. In high school, she started a program called *Atrévete Latino Youth*, coaching fellow students on how to create good study habits, set and achieve realistic goals, and deal with issues related to peer pressure or family drug and alcohol abuse. At university, she founded a program to teach English to the Spanish-speaking custodial staff, a program that she has helped replicate at other U.S. universities.

When Carolina returned to the Dominican Republic to explore her roots, she first worked for a nonprofit that advocated for sex workers and those affected by HIV/AIDS. It was through this experience that she came to learn just how pervasive the perceptions were that associated Black people with prostitution and violence and White people with being successful decision makers.

Around this time, Carolina decided to cut off all her hair, something she had dreamed of doing for years but always postponed. In response to this bold move, women stopped her in the street to ask how she dared to do it and what kind of hairstyle she would adopt.

Carolina turned her studio apartment into a mini beauty parlor to give her blog followers haircuts combined with empowerment talks, and soon after, she progressed to renting a small space to launch her *Miss Rizos* Hair Salon. It is located on the same street in Santo Domingo where, more than two hundred years ago, Africans were brought to market and sold as slaves.

“I always say the first step is there has to be an internal switch, where you're like, I'm important, I'm worthy, I'm beautiful and remind yourself constantly of those facts. Everything else will follow once you feel that way.”

Forbes

CAROLINA CONTRERAS

A photograph of two women on a boat deck, both wearing red and white Sea Ranger life jackets. The woman in the foreground is looking directly at the camera, holding a black helmet. The woman in the background is smiling and holding a white helmet. The word "Environment" is overlaid in large white text across the center of the image. The background shows the rigging of a boat and a clear sky.

Environment



Abel Cruz

 @AbelCruz

 www.lossinagua.org

Peru

Unconventional Water Solutions for Conventional Water Shortages

Abel is helping Peru's citizens harness the power of the environment to tackle water scarcity.

THE NEW IDEA

Abel Cruz is equipping water-scarce areas—where people are reliant on imported, terribly expensive water for drinking and growing crops—with a simple, yet powerful tool to harvest water from an unlikely source: the air itself. He installs nets that capture droplets of moisture from the fog as it drifts across the dry landscape. Each fog-catching net can harvest up to 400 liters of water a day, and excess water is stored in tanks for later use. As a result, families can significantly reduce their cost of living, become more self-reliant, and grow crops that were previously impossible to cultivate.

“With large sheets of mesh strung up on hillsides, it is possible to harvest the thick mists that drift across the arid Peruvian landscape. Tiny droplets condense on the netting and dribble down into pipes that carry the water into containers where it can be used to irrigate crops or even as drinking water.”



BY MIGUEL TRANCOZO TREVINO 23RD FEBRUARY 2020

25 percent of Peru's population lives in high-altitude areas near cold, offshore Pacific Ocean currents. The majority of

people living in these dry areas face issues of water affordability and availability. From about April to September, the Peruvian and Chilean coastlines are blanketed in a thick, seasonal fog called La Garúa, but this water source had been overlooked until Abel began his work. He discovered that these high altitudes are ideal locations for installing fog water collection systems. In ideal conditions, efficient fog collectors can harvest up to 10 percent of the moisture in the air.

To demonstrate his approach, Abel set out to install over 2,000 fog catchers in 14 rural communities along Peru's southern coast. He documented the benefits this brought to more than 30,000 people, particularly noting that the availability of this new resource led over 1,000 families to start new enterprises in these rural areas. In response, the Government of Peru has recognized fog water collection as a valid system for rural areas in a formal Ministerial Resolution.

Abel's organization, *Peruvians Without Water*, is working with universities, private companies, and governments to spread his vision of installing a diversified mix of renewable sources of water and energy to serve communities facing issues of water and power scarcity. Beginning with his success installing community-based fog collectors in Peru, Abel has expanded his methodology and technology to safely capture fog, rain, and sewage water in Peru and beyond into nearby Bolivia and Colombia, and also in Mexico.

THE PROBLEM

In Peru, 3.8 million citizens suffer from lack of access to drinking water, and in Lima alone, this number is 2 million people. Located in a coastal desert which receives less than an inch of rain per year, Lima is one of the driest capitals in the world. Those who live on the city outskirts must buy expensive water that is trucked in, but many people in poorer communities are only able to afford the minimum amount of water one person needs, just 40 liters per day.

Beyond human consumption needs, these communities need access to water in order to raise farm animals or grow crops. Among those surviving day to day without clean water, approximately 1 million live in deplorable conditions where they are exposed to diseases through contaminated water they are forced to find and use. The result is poverty, malnutrition, illness, and early death.



Abel with small scale model of fog harvesting system.

Adding to the problem, the cost of purchasing water is 5-15 times higher than what it costs those who have a home water access connection. Thus, disadvantaged populations who live without readily available water sources end up paying much higher prices, which not all can afford. Furthering the challenge, citizens living in these areas are generally neglected by the state and, given their complicated geography and distance from public services, these Peruvians living without water find it difficult to gain the kind of economic resources that would make it possible for them to build homes on land that is connected to the water grid. Indeed, they are often forced to migrate to even more remote areas in search of better opportunities for land and water.

THE STRATEGY

Born and raised in an upland rural community himself, Abel knew that fog water collection could be a viable solution but that he would need to start by building support for this idea by approaching and convincing one farmer at a time. Across different communities, he found farmers who were willing to let Abel apply what he had learned through his own experiments of building dependable fog collectors. That way, neighboring farmers could see the results for themselves before deciding whether to get involved.

One by one, he demonstrated the viability of his fog-catching nets to farmers. In one case, he convinced a farmer to install five fog catchers, and thanks to the additional water, the farmer was able to raise 1,000 chickens whose eggs he sold at the market. Another farmer decided to use the collected water to cultivate aloe for sale. Farmers began installing their fog catchers on nearby land that they had previously written off as desert and were able to plant crops there.

Abel's next step was to systematize this learning so it could be shared with others. He created a community engagement plan which allowed local communities and others to replicate his approach. Abel's materials provide a step-by-step guide for designing and implementing a location-specific plan for fog water collection and more. The steps generally explain **1)** how the particular conditions

of each community could be collectively assessed and a location-specific strategy developed; **2)** how the community could be advised about the best building materials to use and specifications for the fog-catching device, water catchment, storage areas, and water distribution; and **3)** how the community would need to be trained regarding how to maintain the system."

"The fog nets mean we have practically no water costs in the winter months, it's a saving of around 60% in our cost of living,"

theguardian

ARTEMIO ALFARO, A PERUVIAN FARMER WHO BENEFITS FROM WATER COLLECTED FROM THE FOG-CAPTURING NETS.

In southern Peru, Abel is spreading his idea through regional government departments located between the Pacific Ocean on one side and the highlands on the other. The governments in Tacna and Moquegua have begun to finance expansion of



Ashoka Fellow Abel Cruz installs a net to harvest water from Peru's coastal fog.

fog catching projects in areas where Abel has already demonstrated its success.

At the federal level in Peru, Abel is consulting with the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. He seeks to influence public policies for the gathering of water from unconventional systems in the rural and peri-urban sectors, with the goal of creating a system of water catchments and storage that can offer an uninterrupted supply of water for communities engaged in small-scale agriculture and breeding of small animals.

He is also using global platforms to bring attention to his idea. Recently, Abel won the Google prize. With the prize money, he improved his technology for environmental monitoring and analyses and was able to widen his community engagement strategy to consider eco-friendly forms of renewable energy beyond fog water. The result was 53 acres of land

equipped with both water and energy utilities, including fog water collectors that could measure fog density, as well as solar panels and biodigesters. That has led to collaborations with corporations and international development agencies.

THE PERSON

Abel was born in the ancient, proud town of Cusco, south of Machu Pichu, to Inca parents who were community leaders. Since there was no water near their house, each day Abel had to walk 300 meters to get to a water source. At age 10, already concerned about access to water, he created a system to collect water from a river using gutters to funnel it toward their home. He also cleaned the water, removing particles and dust naturally by using a rattan plant that had spiny, thorn tips. When it rained from September to April, he collected water from canals and thresholds using banana leaves.

When Abel moved from Cusco to Lima to attend college, he lived in a settlement where the community's only source of water was through expensive purchases of trucked-in water. He was appointed a community leader with the responsibility of figuring out how to find more affordable water. He experimented to find a solution until, one day after fencing a plot of land, he noticed that the fence net was full of water. That reminded him of the fog-traps he had seen growing up in Cusco—a technology that his Inca ancestors had used.

He spoke with other settlement leaders and they agreed to place fog-traps—6 vertical nets that measured 6 meters wide and 4 meters high—to catch water. Abel kept on experimenting with different designs and materials for the fog traps. He eventually won a grant to install 20 fog-catchers to serve a community of 150,000 people. This success convinced him to launch his initiative, *Peruvians Without Water*.



Ahsan Rony

Bangladesh

 @ahsanrony09

 www.thegreensavers.org

Greening the Cities

Bangladesh's cities have lost their gardens and trees. Rony is making them green through the ministrations of his new Plant Doctors and by energizing the public, starting with kids.

THE NEW IDEA

Dhaka, Bangladesh's biggest city, is one of the world's most densely populated (10 million people) and least green (only five percent). This hurts both public health and the environment.

Rony has set out to green all of the explosively growing cities across the country. To succeed, he recognized that he had to give each city's people the ability to grow gardens successfully in all sorts of places, from heavily trafficked streets to rooftops. And he had to give them a new vision and matching motive energy.

Key to both is the new profession he has created, the "plant doctor." After training and certification, plant doctors help every type of client develop and maintain successful gardens. They are required to train the client or staff members, not just provide direct service. As the client experiences the pleasure of growing living things and gains confidence, they become new recruits for Rony's growing force of greening champions. Indeed, each new garden also quietly invites emulation.

The plant doctors are a permanent driving force – seeking out new clients, advocating, and making the greening work. Dhaka alone has over 100 plant doctors -- and growing. Rony helps new graduates, but most are now running profitable small businesses. Everything else Rony does helps the plant doctors and vice versa. As a result, Rony's work will never peter out.

To help spread knowledge of how to do urban gardening, Rony created the first open-source, open-to-all, and comprehensive database on urban greenscaping. His organization, *Green Savers*, also actively uses all sorts of channels, from the press and digital media to neighborhood meetings, to spread

its vision and the how-to competency that must accompany it.

Who in society will be the most persistent and persuasive champions of greening once exposed to Rony's greening-vision? Hands down, it is children and young people. Once they start pressing, adults will follow. Therefore, *Green Savers* also focuses on kids. It engages community leaders, schools, and youth to establish Green Clubs in schools. Each Green Club is created and operated by students, who meet at least monthly to plan environmental protection and climate change awareness and action activities for their school. Green Club members run an Oxygen Bank, where students make small donations as payment for the oxygen that they now get from trees for free, and they use the money to plant trees and create green spaces on the school's grounds. Any student in grades 6 through 10 who contributes 10 Taka (equivalent to less than \$1 USD) to the Oxygen Bank is welcomed as a Club member. There are already 20,000 members. The result? Schools expand their vision and launch initiatives such as community rooftop gardens. In the long term, children become active forces of environmental change who contribute to a culture and community of greenspace planning at an early age through the experience of owning, managing and tending to school gardens and participating in school leadership teams. It connects with the students' values and given them an opening to be powerful changemakers for the environment. And, of course, they take their fervor for gardens and their changemaking power home.

“We are ingraining the concept of being environmentally friendly in the minds of our students. After 10 years, I hope that each and every one of my students will come to love and care for nature. I hope that they transfer this knowledge to their families and the general public, since that is how we can achieve a healthy life in the future.”

SHARIFUL ISLAM, A TEACHER AT VIQRUNNISA NOON SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, A SCHOOL IN THE GREEN SAVERS NETWORK.

Dhaka Tribune



Fighting climate change one plant at a time, a plant doctor cares for a tree.

THE PROBLEM

The severe shortage of greenspaces in Bangladesh's densely populated cities threatens public health, aesthetics, and the environment. Greenspaces, including parks, forests, tree-lined streets, and even gardens, help improve the air, soil, and water quality. They also reduce a city's dependence on imported food, demonstrably improve the health and the well-being of city dwellers, and combat the urban "heat island" effect. However, most residents in Dhaka do not connect the challenges they face with the lack of greenspace around them and are thus not motivated to increase the city's greenspaces.

There is also a web of institutional barriers. Government at all levels has many structures committed to economic development, and they are supported by many powerful and well-organized constituencies. The environment, let alone urban greening, has nothing remotely equivalent. Indeed, before Rony, there were only a few greenhouses in Dhaka and they served only a tiny elite.

Moreover, garden work was perceived as being near the bottom in terms of prestige, the opposite of much sought-after white-collar office jobs. And perhaps a bit like a village's landless laborers. This framing is a barrier both to recruitment and to the public hearing such workers and opening its mind to new ways of seeing the city, their neighborhood, their homes.

THE STRATEGY

Rony fosters a culture of environmental stewardship on multiple levels. He begins by creating a communal, cultural,

and professional infrastructure to transform metro areas into "Garden Cities." By collaborating with universities, professional gardeners, schools, young people, and the general public, he is building a powerful community of citizens and organizations that is united by their commitment to green their city.

To cultivate and build the supply of urban gardening services in Bangladesh, Rony created the profession of plant doctors. He partnered with agriculture universities to co-create a curriculum and attract able youth who graduate from the program with a Diploma of Gardening. To help destigmatize the pursuit of a gardening career, Rony gave it this university foundation and framed the role as a "doctor".

Plant doctors work with families and communities to help grow and sustain green spaces. These doctors host citizen workshops to demonstrate how to start and grow urban gardens. They pay "house calls" to people's homes to maintain plants' health and intervene with emergency "ambulance" support when a plant is doing poorly. During a house call, Rony requires that someone from the household be present to shadow the plant doctor in order to develop the capacity to take over maintenance of the garden. The goal of the plant doctor is to help the client grasp and experience the happiness and health that gardening and green brings – and the competencies required. They are quiet, gentle movement missionaries as well as doctors. Day after day they help more and more people develop an affinity for gardening and a growing awareness of the need to maintain green areas.

"[Green Savers] launched an android application-based online service called Plant's Doctor. Users of the application can get necessary information about rooftop or balcony gardening, knowledge about plant disease and treatment, says Ahsan."

NEWAGE Bangladesh

Through his services, Rony has been able to fund and re-invest the revenue generated into employing more plant

doctors. Many of them are now running their own microenterprises, having created over 5,000 urban gardens in the city of Dhaka and engaging with tens of thousands of school students across the country.

For those who cannot afford plant doctor services, Rony provides free, easily accessible (e.g.: Through YouTube and other social media channels) videos at low or zero cost for people ready to start and develop their own urban gardens. His materials, which are fun, engaging, and high quality, invite and enable anyone to become involved in the movement.

A second key dimension of his work is to empower young people as protectors of the environment by spreading Green Clubs and Oxygen Banks to as many schools in a metro area as possible. Rony now has more than 100 schools in Dhaka as part of his network and approximately 300 schools in other areas of the country. With the support of the Department of the Environment, Rony's goal is to leverage this broader access to establish Green Clubs and Oxygen Banks in every school across the country.

According to Shariful Islam, a teacher at one of the schools in Rony's network, *"We are ingraining the concept of being environmentally friendly in the minds of our students. [...] I hope that they transfer this knowledge to their families and the general public, since that is how we can achieve a healthy life in the future."*

To shift public attitudes about the importance of urban greening, Rony is undertaking awareness-raising campaigns, each focused on creating more greenspaces in a specific area of a city. The goal is to convince residents in different parts of these large metro areas of the benefits and value of collectively taking up gardening, as a first step to greening their city. News of pending events become a trending hashtag on social media, helping generate local community interest and support, as well as encouraging more young people to form Green Clubs and launch Oxygen Banks to further green the areas where they live.

THE PERSON

Rony grew up in rural Bangladesh in a family that was dependent on agriculture and the land around them for survival. Their daily lives were deeply interconnected with nature. He learned how to grow his favorite fruits and vegetables and

often played in the surrounding rural landscape of farmland, forests and lakes – developing a lifelong respect for green spaces and the many ways that humans depend on the environment.

He became the first person in his family to break the rural agricultural lineage when he moved to the capital to pursue a degree in Anthropology at Dhaka University. In Dhaka, one of the most densely populated cities in the world, Rony was shocked by the extreme contrast to his hometown. In particular, he noticed the skyrocketing of new construction projects, which came at the expense of the few green spaces that were left.

When he was about to turn 18, Rony was tutoring younger students after school to help pay for his tuition. One day a student shared that he had zero interest in gardening but loved strawberries. Rony gave him seeds, soil, and taught him how to care for his strawberry seedlings, and soon the student was showing off his new strawberries to his teachers. At the school's invitation, Rony began giving presentations to students and parents about creating a home garden and felt the initial spark of what would become a lifelong dedication to building urban greenspaces. Teenage Rony began to be approached by others at the university asking for his support to grow plants, fruits, flowers and vegetables.

Rony decided to start a seed business on the Dhaka University campus, where seeds were needed for research purposes. He grew this business and, in the process, converted many people into becoming planters and growers of their own produce. Seeing the need for more gardens and green spaces, Rony turned his attention to studying why Bangladesh's major metropolitan cities were losing their green cover and what was preventing people from using the growing number of vertical spaces to create more localized gardens.

After graduating, Rony launched *Green Savers* to build an integrated movement with the vision of making Dhaka a garden city and creating a cultural shift to embrace urban green space in other cities across the country.

Rony is looking to replicate his model through partnering with institutions in other key cities such as Sylhet and Chittagong, while simultaneously continuing to generate new methods and exciting approaches to urban gardening that can be open sourced and accessible to all citizens.



Juliana Gutiérrez

Columbia

 @LowCarbon_City

 <http://lowcarbon.city/en>

A Sustainable Future for Cities

Beginning in Medellín, Colombia, Juliana created the Low Carbon City movement with its empowered citizen “Ambassadors” to launch and lead successful city-based campaigns all over the world to cut urban greenhouse gas emissions, 70 percent of the world’s total.

THE NEW IDEA

Juliana is taking on the biggest source of climate change—the cities—which produce the majority of all greenhouse gas emissions. Activated and sustained through a powerful citizen-created and -led movement, Juliana’s engagement strategy moves city by city and as a global alliance. Her local climate “Ambassadors” are key.

Unlike other like-minded organizations in Latin America, the *Low Carbon City* movement goes beyond educating people about climate change. Its all-in approach engages city dwellers of all ages and backgrounds, as well as all types of organizations—from companies to governments—to take on this time’s most urgent climate challenge. Juliana translates technical language about climate change into information that’s easy to understand and links citizens with experts to exchange knowledge, co-create climate solutions, and influence progressive policy changes. Climate Ambassadors push for metro-area, eco-friendly infrastructure and practices, such as sustainable transportation, zero-waste products and practices, and greening through communal gardens, tree planting, and parks.

Juliana’s unique approach allows Ambassadors in one city to share solutions and practices with Ambassadors in nearby cities within the same metropolis. Over 120 municipalities, designated as “Ambassador cities,” are using the *Low Carbon City*’s governance model. It relies on citizen Ambassadors in each city to lead the application of Juliana’s methodology. Linked together through a network of metro and global networks, these citizen-led efforts then have the power to make

policy changes at the national level and to show Ambassadors in other countries how to pursue maximum impact of the social mobilization efforts they undertake in their own cities.

While *Low Carbon City* campaigns are aligned with and driven by local citizens and neighborhood groups, Juliana ensures that the overall campaign objectives—including growing the number of low carbon cities—are moving and measured, city by city and overall. Now it is tracking 568 forums, projects, workshops and urban interventions. *Low Carbon City* has mobilized more than 48,000 citizens to tackle carbon emissions in over 120 municipalities worldwide. Its goal is to have 500 Ambassador cities in the network by 2024. Juliana’s localized and integrated approach allows community issues to surface, city-based solutions to be proposed and tracked, and agreements that are made with city governments, local businesses, and others to be made transparent and shared.

THE PROBLEM

Cities consume between 60 percent to 80 percent of energy worldwide and generate about 70 percent of the world’s GHG emissions, yet cities only occupy 3 percent of the global surface.

“Cities consume between 60 to 80% of energy worldwide and generate about 70% of world’s GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions.”



UN-HABITAT

In Colombia, and Latin America in general, climate change competes to be a priority on the public agenda as many of these countries struggle with other major social challenges such as poverty, violence, drugs, unemployment, and migration. According to the Survey of Climate Change Perception in Colombia from the Science and Technology Observatory in 2015, 80 percent surveyed weren’t aware of climate change.



The community in an Ecozone in Envigado plants a garden to help green the neighborhood.

Moreover, most Colombians who said they were aware also claimed they felt either “poorly informed” or “not at all informed” about climate change.

Though most are significantly unaware, city dwellers are increasingly very much affected. Heat waves, violent storms, increased pollution, and damage to the energy and water systems lower the quality of life and increase political division.

THE STRATEGY

The *Low Carbon City* movement differs from other efforts because of its emphasis on empowering citizen engagement in every sector. Juliana’s approach tackles three main categories: spreading knowledge about climate change, connecting citizen-led initiatives, and co-creating solutions in all efforts to raise awareness about climate-friendly lifestyles. As climate change is not typically a part of standardized education, Juliana’s movement fills an important gap. In doing so, she focuses more on solutions and the attraction of engagement than on the problem.

The network of Ambassadors leads and implements projects throughout their urban community. Anyone currently driving a climate mitigation venture can apply to become an

Ambassador on *Low Carbon City*’s website. Once plugged into this community of climate-passionate changemakers, Ambassadors can leverage its network effect to implement innovative projects, workshops, and campaigns. One case in point—an Ambassador-led neighborhood sustainability initiative in Quito, Ecuador won recognition at the UN-hosted World Youth Conference on Habitat and the Right to the City for its youth-driven carbon reduction work.

The network drives outreach efforts to activate additional citizens to take climate action. The *Low Carbon City* movement connects people to its network by hosting webinars, public art interventions, storytelling competitions, sustainability workshops, and courses on urban agriculture. Once directly engaged in the network, urban citizens have access to educational resources and materials to expand their opportunities to fight climate change.

Low Carbon City also co-designs solutions with schools, companies, and governments to reduce emissions. The 1000 Children for 1000 Solutions program, co-designed by *Low Carbon City* and a network of schools, is an educational model that teaches children how to live sustainably and encourages them to lead and create solutions for reducing CO₂ emissions beginning in their school.

City-based action notwithstanding, Juliana knows that in order for our global community to stand a chance in counteracting climate change, governments and big corporations also need to act. Working with companies such as Comfama in Medellín and STC in Beijing, Juliana has developed service projects to help them reduce their climate footprint through 10 different carbon reducing products. Juliana developed a “Carbon Neutral” seal for companies who host events to fundraise for urban climate mitigation and purchase carbon credits to offset emissions created during their events. The money raised at these events, seven of which have been held so far, pays for tree planting and/or other carbon reduction projects in the city. In 2019 alone, *Low Carbon City* generated and compensated 17 tons of CO₂.

In order to create holistic, sustainable changes, Juliana has worked with the public sector to develop carbon emission reduction efforts. The *Low Carbon City World Forum*, a three-day co-creation venue, brings together different actors, including local governments, to develop and implement solutions. During the first annual forum, a main avenue in Medellín was closed as a pilot pedestrian-only area and was, subsequent to the forum, converted into a permanent pedestrian area with bike lanes. The forum also instigated the process which resulted in the Decarbonization Policy of the Metropolitan area of Medellín, which aims to reduce the average emissions in the city by 2030. Juliana participated in the final policy deliberations where she included the provisions of citizen participation and education, measurable targets and goals, and open data and education.

Juliana also helped develop a sustainable policy plan for the Valle de Aburrá region (including Medellín and 9 other municipalities) in response to the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Spring air pollution crisis to improve air quality. The policy recommendation incorporated accountability measures for all actors involved—public or private—and prioritized seven institutional recommendations to decrease air pollution causes. The region now has follow-up and control mechanisms with clear indicators of environmental health.

“Low Carbon City works for the collective construction of solutions that educate the population [and] generate changes with companies, governments, universities, and communities.”



A PROMINENT NATIONAL NEWS OUTLET THAT COVERED THE IV WORLD FORUM OF LOW CARBON CITIES IN 2019

Today, *Low Carbon City's* network includes nearly 800 climate experts from 73 countries who are connecting with its citizen base. They work alongside local leaders co-designing and



Low Carbon City takes their participatory lessons into public schools for students and teachers alike to learn about climate change and climate change alleviation measures.

helping implement solutions that will build resilient and low carbon cities around the globe. These cities increasingly offer a new social infrastructure that supports both citizen leadership and business and government initiatives to make cities safe for the planet.

THE PERSON

When Juliana was five, she would accompany her parents, both medical doctors, on their trips to vulnerable communities in the countryside. At the time, the trips mainly meant a fun time to play with her friends surrounded by nature, but as Juliana grew, she gained first-hand consciousness about the inequalities in her home country; she had opportunities her friends did not. This impact carried on to her academic years when she had leadership roles and worked for students' rights. At 15, she graduated from high school and was a volunteer at the Red Cross. Torn about what she would do next at such a young age, she applied to study in a range of majors at various universities around the world. She had hoped that the admission decisions would help her narrow her path.

Ironically, she was accepted nearly everywhere she had applied, and ultimately her passions aligned best with the study of global affairs. At university, she led efforts to provide financial scholarship and grants to students from less

financially advantaged families. At the age of 19, Juliana joined AIESEC (International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences)—a critical turning point for her—and did volunteer work with Amnesty International in Chile.

In her graduate research, Juliana focused on “Cities and Climate Change,” and discovered the great potential cities have to become the driving force of solutions to this global problem. However, she realized that the existing language used to talk about climate change and most of the field’s organizations were too specialized to effectively appeal to most people. Establishing in 2015, Juliana decided to create her own initiative where the citizens would have the leading role, and formalized *Low Carbon City* as an NGO in 2017.



Through these experiences and continued research, Juliana has expanded her focus to climate change governance and refined her idea for a citizen-led *Low Carbon Cities* movement, including many of the tools that the movement’s Ambassadors now use to co-create solutions with different city stakeholders. Today, Juliana is a well-known leader in the city of Medellín and has rapidly growing global reach.



Full Economic Citizenship



Apar Gupta

 @internetfreedom
 <https://internetfreedom.in>

Maintaining Internet Freedom

Apar is addressing the most critical threats to the digital freedoms of India's citizens by building a broad and independent citizen movement. He is creating a model for digital rights advocacy that is driven by the public, for the public.

THE NEW IDEA

Advocacy for digital freedom in India isn't new. What is new is Apar's approach—creating the first public-centered and member-driven organization in India that mobilizes citizens to become champions for digital rights and net neutrality across the country. Born out of the SavetheInternet.in campaign in 2015 for Net Neutrality, the *Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF)* unites organizations and citizens from a wide variety of sectors into a powerful, end-to-end attack and quick adapting voice of planned public advocacy for a free, open internet.

In 2019, India had the second-largest number of internet users in the world. As more people have gained access to the internet, liberties guaranteed by the Indian constitution continue to come under threat as authorities seek to manage this huge population of digital users. To hold those in positions of power accountable, the IFF's members engage with policy-making institutions to advance human freedoms in the digital age through education, communications, organization, and litigation.

THE PROBLEM

While the frontiers of emerging technology open new dreams, possibilities, and opportunities for India, these technologies present known and potentially serious risks that could be weaponized to derail the constitutional rights and freedoms of the public. Unless digital rights and their structural defenses advance in stride with technology, all, but especially those who are already marginalized, could be further disempowered through suppressed freedom of expression,

compromised net neutrality, lost access to information and allies, surveillance, internet shutdowns, arrests for online dissent, and breaches of privacy.

India had more internet shutdowns than any other country in 2018, according to a comparative study by Freedom House. Government authorities do this for a variety of reasons, such as to prevent riots, address matters of national security, and deter cheating on school exams. With 128 internet shutdowns in 2019 alone and with over 1 billion personal data breaches of India's national identification system, citizens face huge risks to their fundamental privacy and freedoms. Yet, a large portion of the public is relatively unaware of potential threats that exist online. Existing research about the topic is also prohibitively academic in nature and fails to convey laws and rights in an easily understandable manner.

While there is growing interest in protecting digital freedoms in India, many organizations fail to harness the power of collective action as they are subject to numerous government restrictions. They thus lack the capacity to step in effectively when people's rights are threatened or dismissed. Furthermore, most organizations are dependent on foreign funds to operate, which makes them vulnerable under the Foreign Currency Regulation and limits their ability to contribute to research and new knowledge generation.

To advocate effectively, public campaigns require substantial citizen sector mobilization with broad reach and continued access to resources and data, sustained over months and years. Apar has overcome these hurdles by uniting thousands of Indians to stand up together—to plan, to act, to protect one another.



Apar, pictured second from left, with fellow lawyers appearing before the Supreme Court arguing for privacy as a fundamental right in 2017.

“Watchdog groups, however, have noted with concern the Modi government’s tendency to use sweeping policy instruments for political ends. “In terms of being a singular act of web censorship, it’s impacted more Indians than any before,” said Apar Gupta, executive director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, which promotes digital liberties in India. The current political climate in India is one in which nationalist sentiment is likely to be accommodated above other considerations, Mr. Gupta said.”

The New York Times

THE STRATEGY

The Internet Freedom Foundation is a big, broad, highly organized movement determined to achieve long-term systemic changes that advance digital rights. When someone joins, they are plugged into a community of organizations and citizens who are passionate about changing policy and behavior in order to protect the personal liberties for all of Indian society.

Whatever the campaign may entail, the IFF follows a clear, strategic process for mapping out steps to achieve policy goals. Participants are thoroughly educated about their fundamental rights through comprehensive and concise explanatory videos, articles, and the like that can be shared easily to establish clear, accessible information about rather complicated issues. With the understanding that campaigns are long-term commitments, volunteers’ and members’ experience from one campaign often informs the next and this strengthens the collective’s advocating power over time. To maximize collective advocacy, Apar organizes IFF members into groups based on the issues that they care most about,

rather than their geographic location. Broadly, these groups focus on four key topics: privacy, freedom of expression, innovation, and net neutrality. From there, they initiate a three-step approach—campaigns to engage broad public audiences, institutional engagement through tools like petitions, and litigation to write permanent changes into law.

Through its litigation work, the IFF is providing critical citizen oversight of government activities. When citizens’ constitutional rights are threatened, members pursue aggressive litigation against the state. For example, in 2020, the IFF successfully helped litigate the restoration of 4G connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir where the state had slowed internet speeds amidst ongoing conflict. The IFF has also intervened in legal cases related to WhatsApp privacy, CCTV surveillance, and the accessing of citizens’ social media accounts by Aadhaar (the world’s largest biometric ID collection system). They are currently engaged with eight open cases, three of which have reached the Supreme Court level.

The IFF seeks policy change through many channels. Recently, it helped organize an online campaign to repeal criminal defamation and consolidate civil defamation laws which generated thousands of signatures and the support of 54 organizations—including India’s major publishing companies. It carried this forward to Parliament where, working with MP Tathagata Satpathy, the IFF drafted reform legislation—the Protection of Speech and Reputation Bill, a clear blueprint for defamation reform in India.

The IFF uses the web for many purposes, including to provide new, immediate, and continuous reports on web rights, areas of concern, and major campaigns across the country. Starting with a thumbnail summary, the organization provides access to full reports and encourages all members to document experiences, plan together, and offer feedback to one another and the organization. This allows citizens to directly access the developing campaigns and hashtags that provide essential information in situations where the safety and privacy of others may be in danger.

As advanced technology becomes increasingly integrated in all sectors, the IFF in turn enforces transparency. Using the Right to Information Act, the IFF monitors how the state is using technology and “blows the whistle” when authorities infringe on citizens’ rights.

For example, during the initial COVID-19 lockdown in early 2020, the Delhi Police used aerial drones with facial recognition capabilities for surveillance of protests, riots, and people's whereabouts in containment zones. These drones were active night and day, collecting video and photo data on citizens without any public disclosure of who could see the information or how it was being used. The IFF demanded that the government halt this mass surveillance and breach of privacy, forcing the Delhi Police to admit that they had used drones without any legal guidelines in place.

THE PERSON

Early in life, Apar was intrigued by technology—computers, video games, television. He sought out any opportunity to explore this interest, assembling computers, learning how to code, and navigating the early world of internet chat rooms. In order to spend more time in front of computers, Apar established a computer club at his school where he got his first experience organizing and leading a group of people with a common interest.

In college, Apar chose to study Law. He was drawn to the social sciences and discovered that he could combine this humanistic interest with his passion for technology. He particularly liked Moot Court—the exercise of hypothetical court practices for aspiring lawyers—and he often won mock trials. Apar went on to become a mentor to many younger students, and he began organizing large groups of students at his college to demand better facilities and more transparency from the administration. Taking an interest in defense of others' rights, he became a go-to person for advising students on what actions to take when they got into disciplinary trouble. In those days, when IT regulations were still relatively new, he also wrote a book on the IT Act that was issued by legal publisher Wadhwa & Company.

After law school, Apar grew increasingly involved in public interest law having to do with digital freedom. He created his own firm, and his passion for litigation and technology was evident in the portfolio of clients he developed, including the Internet and Mobile Association of India. In his first court case, he represented a cartoonist in a Public Interest Litigation case against Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, which was being used by the government

to vaguely criminalize online dissent and threaten freedom of expression. Subsequently, Apar went on to file a petition with the Public Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) against Section 66A, which contributed to the collaborative Shreya Singhal vs Union of India case and led to the Supreme Court's landmark decision to strike down Section 66A of the Act as unconstitutional.



A product of Columbia Law School and before that, Mount St Mary's school in Delhi, Gupta says, "It is true society will be incredibly digital, but if you divorce it from civil rights and constitutionality, you will get something very unjust. We want to push this back."



Buoyed by the confidence and momentum of seeing fundamental civil rights on the internet progressing, Apar joined forces with a group of prominent young activists to launch the highly successful SaveTheInternet.in campaign to spread awareness of net neutrality issues. The formation of the IFF evolved from the campaign, driven by Apar's concerns that Indians' constitutional rights were increasingly threatened. Moving forward, Apar continues to establish strong systems and processes that strengthen both digital rights and the IFF's essential bulwark—a growing, well rooted digital activism movement in Indian society.



Immy Kaur

 @ImmyKaur
 <https://civicsquare.cc>

Community Over Profit

Immy envisions an approach to long-term urban renewal through which marginalized communities rely less on governing councils, gifts of grants, and landlords and more on themselves to effect regenerative change.

THE NEW IDEA

Immy’s work is based on the centrality of land to sustainable urban communities and the infrastructure that helps them thrive. It reverses the effect of prevailing “renewal” practices that use the land to extract value primarily for the benefit of more affluent outsiders, not the people who currently live in those communities.

To effect this change, Immy places the needs of local neighborhoods in the driver’s seat in forging partnerships with municipal authorities and private developers. The organization she leads, *CIVIC SQUARE*, creates a stream of highly replicable new ways for communities to fund community-owned upliftment that improves wellbeing, creates entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, and improves the physical environment of the local neighborhoods.

Immy’s “laboratory” for testing, verifying, and then sharing proven and replicable methods is located in Birmingham’s Ladywood neighborhood. Her vision—changing land ownership patterns, full transparency, publicly shared IP, collaboration with citizen groups, local authorities and private developers—is already spreading in the West Midlands and has stirred interest across the UK and Europe.

THE PROBLEM

Local authorities have the power to decide what public investments in city infrastructure will be made. In the UK, these local authorities have been under increasing pressure for some years, brought on by reduced funding from

the national government. As a result, these authorities have increasingly prioritized profit over community ownership.

One effect is that landlord absenteeism has risen as those wealthy enough to purchase property have focused on extracting higher rents, attracting the more affluent along with the services to cater to their needs. In this new context, the economy hums but current residents suffer and face higher costs if they stay as well as reduced access to affordable community services, e.g., childcare and other family services.

Birmingham, where *CIVIC SQUARE* is headquartered, is home to one of Europe’s largest local authorities. However, as the result of years of profit-dominated public-private redevelopment efforts, more than half of the land and buildings in and adjacent to the Birmingham city center are now owned by absentee landlords. One effect of this concentration of absentee landownership has been to thwart community-preferred solutions based upon more informed participation of local residents.

But something else has changed in Birmingham and many other urban areas across the UK—there is a new generation of young people from diverse backgrounds born and growing up in the country’s city centers who value the vibrancy of the heterogeneity of these communities and are willing to push back with new solutions.

Immy Kaur was born and grew up in Birmingham in a Sikh household, and it was to this new generation of residents that she turned when she launched her *CIVIC SQUARE* vision:

“A bold approach to visioning, building and investing in civic infrastructure for neighborhoods of the future.”

C I V I
 C S Q
 U A R E



CIVIC SQUARE Impact Hub meeting in Birmingham.

THE STRATEGY

CIVIC SQUARE's approach begins with finding new ways for existing communities to control the land on which their communities live, and thereby determine the purposes to which that land will be put. One way that Immy does this is through a new type of lease—the affordable land leasehold. The local council leases land for a nominal amount to a community trust made up of the community's members. Housing units can be built and sold on that land, and the resulting profit—called the “citizen dividend”—goes into a shared neighborhood trust. Local residents then decide how to spend that money in light of shared priorities with a focus on reinvestment in the community's continuing long-term needs to generate a stable and predictable long-term revenue stream with priority on capital circulating locally.

In the next step, CIVIC SQUARE works with the community trust holding the long-term affordable land to create an array of opportunities for the community's members. To this work

Immy and her team bring experiences with co-building open initiatives such as #RadicalChildcare, DemoDev, and Open Project Nights that incubate community-generated solutions.

The resulting success of these efforts, both in Ladywood and with other citizen groups in the UK who have taken up similar work with local authorities, has led the West Midlands Combined Authority to name CIVIC SQUARE as a strategic partner in doubling the size of the region's social economy by 2029. It is advising citizen groups in undertaking similar efforts in Scandinavia and Western Europe.

“The reality is testament to the power of that civic spirit: #radicalchildcare and creative resistance, for instance, are actively improving the lives of locals, one by redesigning the support system for working families, the other by giving citizens a voice.”



THE PERSON

Born in Birmingham and raised in the traditions of the Sikh community, Immy felt a constant challenge about how she fit in, given conflicting expectations from her family and friends. Her passion for sport provoked family disapproval, and her strong commitment to her studies found her sometimes at odds with friends in her social circle.

From her grandparents she learned of the struggle during Partition and their consequent resettlement to the UK. Her father also shared his own struggles growing up with racism and discrimination. After graduating from university and a period of work, Immy travelled to India, where she worked with women's empowerment projects and founded a sewing studio to help girls become self-sustainable.



Immy Kaur at Impact Hub Birmingham based in Digbeth.

Armed with this understanding, Immy realized that Birmingham was where she should launch her life's work. She moved back home with a new mission: to empower the new and more diverse generation of people who had grown up in central city neighborhoods to be a force for social change.

Immy founded Birmingham's first TEDx event in 2011 and TEDx Brum proved successful over the next four years in creating and fostering a social climate calling for social change in the city. She co-founded *Impact Hub* in Birmingham in 2014 to accelerate this momentum, and this experience further sharpened her thinking, with the result being the launch of *CIVIC SQUARE* in 2018.



Abhinav Agarwal

 @anahad_ngo

 <https://anahad.ngo>

Power to Folk Musician

While 70 percent of the Indian music industry is comprised of folk music, less than 2 percent of its total revenue goes to folk musicians. Abhinav is opening up economic opportunities for India's 8.7 million folk musicians who live under the poverty line.

THE NEW IDEA

Though folk music has traditionally been seen as a powerful vehicle to promote social cohesion, in India the industry has slowly diminished as fewer musicians are able to make a living by engaging in the art form. Abhinav's *Anahad Foundation* has created a new demand and value for cultural folk music by helping musicians establish a self-sustainable economic environment through which they can record and distribute their productions directly to the public without an intermediary. In this process, Abhinav is reestablishing a folk music industry that is musician-led and responsive to the growing, collective voice of poor, marginalized musicians.

Driven initially by a desire to record the folk music of his small-town, childhood community, Abhinav collaborated with engineers and producers to find a way to raise the production value of local folk music to that of accepted industry standards. The result was a "backpack" studio: a lightweight, state-of-the-art recording studio that runs on batteries and can shoot 4K videos. This portable studio includes DIY instructions for artists to record themselves. Once the recording is done, the music can be sent through wireless connection to a centralized hub where the music is converted to digital forms and readied for distribution.

Abhinav is developing musicians' technical and production skills and knowledge through each step of the music creation and distribution process, while bringing their collective voice to bear on ending industry practices that have made it impossible for these folk musicians to earn a living. At the same time, Abhinav is building a brand for the folk musicians who take advantage of the networked, community-based

"backpack" studios in order to compete with other music forms dominating the industry. For example, he helps the local folk musicians build their own websites, digital streaming pages (YouTube, Spotify, etc.), and other platforms to be able to showcase their art form to a larger audience.

"Developed by Latin Grammy winner Gael Hedding for Anahad, the portable recording studio [is] designed to meet rural Indian challenges such as lack of electricity and the unwillingness on the part of musicians to leave their hometowns (and daily livelihoods) to travel to studios in cities."

OZY

THE PROBLEM

In India today, 26.4 million people living under the poverty line identify as being artists and, out of these, 8.7 million are folk musicians. Most of these musicians in India come from rural or tribal communities and rely on music and other art forms for their livelihoods. The reality, however, is that many of these musicians are unable to earn a steady income. As a result, they struggle to gain the respect and recognition they need from their communities. Furthermore, the caste structures in India associate folk music practitioners as coming from a lower caste, which restricts their access to the professional expertise and experiences needed to be successful not only in performing, but in mastering the technology, business, and legal dimensions of the industry.

Exacerbating this, musicians possessing the skills and talent to create their own music don't have the means to produce high-quality recordings, are unable to access the market to sell their music, and find it difficult to produce new and original compositions. In an increasingly globalized world, the rapid advancement of technology has further widened the gap between the mainstream music industry and tribal folk



Dapu Khan and Group, recorded by Anahad Foundation

music, which makes it even harder for musicians to compete against newer forms of music and delivery. As a result, folk musicians often migrate to work in other fields, and valuable cultural heritage is lost.

Another deterrent to folk musicians' success is an Indian law stating that folk music written more than 70 years ago is categorized as public property. As a result, older composers and/or their heirs cannot demand royalties when key parts of their original music are performed by others. These musicians are financially exploited because they don't know how to protect their intellectual property rights. Too many are unaware of copyrights or of how recording labels work.

Looming over these obstacles is the reality that local folk musicians haven't had the ability to record and produce their music at standards required by the industry for digitization and dissemination. However, Abhinav and his colleagues have found a solution to the recording quality problem and are spreading it to Indian folk musicians.

THE STRATEGY

Abhinav's "backpack" studios are being rolled out through partnerships with state government skill development programs. Without burdening the communities to purchase and own the studios themselves, he has crafted musician-run community studios that allow local folk musicians to record their music. To help these musicians break into the mainstream music production and sales scene, Abhinav helps them

build their own websites and digital streaming channels, and he works to connect folk musicians with award-winning singer-songwriters. He has created a popular YouTube channel called "Equal Studios," where folk musicians from across the country closely collaborate with each other and contemporary artists to produce new styles of music and reach wider, more diverse audiences.

The *Anahad Foundation* works exclusively with folk musicians living under the poverty line, targeting those who stand to gain the most. Every musician in the program participates in localized workshops that teach them about intellectual property rights and copyright laws so that they are fully aware of their legal rights as artists. Abhinav requires every person to be registered "on the grid" with a bank account and national identification, which enables him to open doors for them in terms of accessing credit and social services. The experiences during these workshops strengthen their sense of self-worth, identity, and respect in the community.

"Folk music is the melody of the human soul. It talks about the happiness, celebration and positivity amid trouble. Till the human soul is alive, folk music will flourish."

YOURSTORY

INTERVIEW WITH ABHINAV AGARWAL, AN INDIAN MEDIA COMPANY THAT SPOTLIGHTS ENTREPRENEURS, CHANGEMAKERS, AND EMERGING TRENDS FROM INDIA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

To strengthen folk musicians' protections and cut out middlemen in the long term, Abhinav has established the Performance Rights Organization (PRO), ensuring that all folk musicians who produce music through the "backpack" community studios are entitled to royalties when their music is bought across digital platforms and performed at in-person venues such as festivals and concerts.

To date, Abhinav has worked with over 1,200 artists from 46 different community groups and helped open market channels by recording 96 music videos across 5 different states in India. This has increased the income of these artists on average of 7-fold and a 4-fold increase in the demand for concerts. As a result, many artists have started to entrepreneur on their own, with many establishing folk music schools and other forms of local business both to make their art sustainable and to pass on their skills to younger generations. Abhinav has also created a first-of-its-kind fellowship for youth interested in music to encourage specialization in folk music and is encouraging local folk musicians to self-organize for the preservation of their culture.

THE PERSON

Abhinav grew up in Bulandshahr, a small village in western Uttar Pradesh which was known for its rich culture and folk music. These songs were used to welcome new seasons, celebrate important events, and express connection to nature. Immersed in the natural world, music and folk tales from generations before him, Abhinav learned that folk music and nature are deeply intertwined. He picked up his first instrument when he was 4 years old and had the support of his parents from very early on to pursue music.

“Trained in classical [vocals in the Agra Gharana tradition] and the tabla, Agrawal [...] got engaged with music early at the age of 9. ‘Music for me is a deep connection with nature. The urbanization in my town led to fading of music culture especially the local folk forms. I love the Kajri, Chaiti, Hori and Dadra folk music and have been singing these from an early stage. My quest to record my guru’s compositions and music led me to this journey,’ said Agrawal.”

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Abhinav always felt strongly about preserving folk music and culture. His village began to feel the effects of urbanization when he was a young student, and he witnessed the visible decline of nature and local culture. Concerned by a water contamination problem in the village that was polluting its environment and threatening the villagers’ health, in his early teens, Abhinav self-organized youth in his community to develop a water filtration system to address this issue. Their filtration system won a national science competition and was subsequently included in suggested guidelines for future town planning.

Realizing that urban planning is an effective way to preserve culture, Abhinav studied landscape architecture so that cities and villages could be designed in a more sustainable way. At the same time, he continued to develop his musical skills by playing in bands. On weekends, he took the train to meet folk musicians across the country to learn more about their lives, their connection to music, and barriers to the preservation of folk music.

To ensure that musicians receive the royalties they deserve, he founded the *Anahad Foundation* in 2013, while he was in the 3rd year of college. Realizing that he needed greater exposure to the folk music industry to bring this vision to life, Abhinav pursued a master’s in music business administration at the Berklee College of Music’s campus in Spain. Dissatisfied by the program’s lack of focus on social impact, he convinced the college to hire a specialized instructor so he could develop his understanding of the system that was undermining folk musicians. His thesis explored ways technology could empower them.

After returning to India, Abhinav worked with a team to develop the “backpack” studio and began advocating for the preservation of India’s folk music heritage. Today, he partners with the Indian Institute of Technology to promote research in ethnomusicology, folk music, instruments, and other areas of interest. To reach every community and enable them to showcase their music, Abhinav is seeking out more partnerships so that self-reliant, decentralized models can enable these artists to generate a livelihood, innovate and preserve their art forms.



Ryan Gersava

Philippines

 @virtualahan

 www.virtualahan.com

Digital Roles, Full Lives

Beginning in the Philippines, Ryan ensures that the most excluded populations of society are given equal opportunities for high-level work in the new digital economy, using a model that integrates wellbeing sessions and community-building with digital job skills training.

THE NEW IDEA

Ryan sees the growing demand for digital workers as a historic opportunity for previously disadvantaged groups, including Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), to gain employment. Through his organization, Virtualahan (Virtual School), Ryan identifies and addresses missed opportunities in employers' management practices, upskills marginalized communities to boost their personal and economic capacity, and pushes for progressive changes in government policies.

Ryan's method was initially tailored for PWDs, but it now also serves other socially marginalized groups, including ex-convicts, recovering drug addicts, and former sex workers. In addition to removing barriers to immediate employment, Ryan and his team are fostering a community culture that promotes self-care, empathy, and personal advocacy to build toward a future in which these populations can easily find jobs, launch their own initiatives, and share their success stories with others.

Through virtual training and coaching, Ryan and his team impart digital literacy and life coaching to any Filipino with access to broadband internet and a computer. This method is a cost-effective and accessible way for those who cannot physically work in a traditional office setting to learn how to perform high-value work from their homes. Virtualahan also provides wellbeing and community building sessions to aid participants in overcoming the debilitating effects of social and economic exclusion. Over time, these experiences allow them to transform their negative experiences into powerful testimonials and connections with others.

Beyond preparing the workforce, Ryan also recruits strategic partners (drawn from business, government, and citizen sector organizations) who can adapt and adopt more inclusive policies and practices. Using e-learning as a cost-effective tool to spread Virtualahan's vision and educate companies on inclusive workforce practices, Ryan brings employers into contact with potential employees from the excluded groups and co-creates more successful approaches to recruitment, support, and mentoring of disadvantaged groups.

Because the Asia-Pacific region's supply chains are tightly interwoven, Ryan's success in the Philippines has triggered enthusiasm to integrate his approach in neighboring countries—in some cases, by the same companies that he originally partnered with in the Philippines.

“[Virtualahan] is breaking down employment barriers for people who are socially excluded in the workplace and working toward the future of work where no one is left behind.”



RIZAL RAOUL REYES, BUSINESS MIRROR

THE PROBLEM

Filipinos with disabilities face considerable challenges in securing a job that accommodates their needs. This lack of opportunity has resulted in considerable underemployment for PWDs. According to an early study, only 32.5 percent of the 1.4 million employable PWDs in the Philippines are able to secure jobs. Half of this 32.5 percent were underemployed, self-employed, unpaid family workers, or vulnerable workers. Without viable, secure options for employment, Filipinos with disabilities are in danger of extreme poverty and all the attendant social risks.



An in-house psychologist leads a life-coaching and wellbeing session for PWDs, emphasizing emotional intelligence and dignity.

Twenty-five percent of the Philippines' disabled population lives in the country's ten largest cities, the largest portion of which reside in the "metro Manila." Consisting of approximately 4.4 million people and interlinking the cities of Manila and Quezon City, this metro has widespread broadband access. Despite this access, which allows PWDs in urban areas to upskill to meet growing demand for a new digital workforce, what they need first is a comprehensive and realistic path to opportunity and employment.

Two powerful forces are opening doors. First, the Philippines plans to expand broadband access to 50 percent of the population by the end of 2021, and 90 percent by 2027. Second, North American and European multinational companies increasingly require suppliers and subsidiaries to favor the disadvantaged in hiring policies. Ryan sees this as an extraordinary opportunity for those he serves to gain internet access and jobs with prospects if he helps them develop the inner strengths needed. These populations need digital skills training, broadband connectivity, social support structures, and life conditions that make regular daily work possible if they are to take advantage of this window of opportunity.

Ryan believes that most people experience disability one way or another in their lives and that the conversation around disability vis-à-vis employment needs to shift to recognize this reality. The traditional view of PWDs as those who are blind,

deaf, or handicapped fails to recognize those who struggle with "invisible" conditions such as mental or chronic illnesses. Ryan argues for the spectrum of disability to be redefined in such a way that all can recognize their vulnerability to temporary or long-term disability at least once in their life. From this premise, Ryan is pushing for broader change in the mindset of employers and employees alike wherein a time of disability no longer prevents social and economic mobility.

THE STRATEGY

Backed by his Virtualahan team, Ryan set out to show how every PWD can achieve deep personal growth, using end-to-end tools that lead to sustainable and scalable workforce inclusion. Virtualahan's training skills program runs six to eight weeks, followed by sustained social support and assistance throughout the job application process. Students from low-income backgrounds can apply for scholarships to cover their up-front costs, with the understanding that they will pay back the money within ten months of being employed. By doing 80 percent of their activities online, including training and employment support, the Virtualahan team has designed an accessible, low-cost model that is highly scalable.

A vital feature of Virtualahan's training skills program is the active role of the participant. Going beyond formal skills training, participants engage in wellbeing and community-building exercises to identify, address, and overcome obstacles for their future success. They are responsible for organizing the skills portion of their training and for choosing the topics. Overall, the program equips citizens with the life skills to become changemakers and leaders in their communities. Rallying behind one another, many of Virtualahan's graduates have created their own initiatives and support groups, including an emotional support group for quadriplegics, an empowerment campaign for young deaf girls, and workshops to deal with the psychological stress of chronic or terminal illnesses.

Virtualahan graduates have reported a 70 percent increase in their overall self-confidence. In a study conducted by doctoral candidates at the University of Manchester, 98 percent of Virtualahan graduates felt a strong sense of belonging in their community, 84 percent learned to become self-sufficient, and 92 percent credited Virtualahan with helping them



A Virtualahan client receiving training in digital job skills

accept their condition. These statistics translate into tangible results for graduates, who are gaining greater socioeconomic mobility thanks to the Virtualahan program. Currently, the average daily salary of a Virtualahan graduate is \$20.12 USD—almost three times the national average of \$7.91 USD.

Virtualahan's commitment to participant selection, comprehensive training, and initiative-taking community members has made its approach hugely attractive to its students as well as would-be adopters. Three national government agencies in the Philippines are currently adopting Virtualahan's overall approach and training curriculum for digital literacy skill development for PWDs and other excluded groups. They are also localizing the model to target additional vulnerable groups. Davao City, for example, has launched a Virtualahan initiative with prison inmates. While in Cebu City, the local government is customizing a Virtualahan program for former drug dependents. In Sultan Kudarat, the method is being employed with a focus on at-risk youth.

Ryan is spreading his model to other countries as well. Virtualahan has formed partnerships with companies and organizations such as Accenture, HSBC, and BMW in a number of other countries, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Germany.

THE PERSON

Ryan is the youngest of ten and spent his childhood in a town called Sultan Kudarat—one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines. Growing up, his family had to move several times due to financial problems and conflict within their community. When he was seven years old, his family was forced to live under a shacked-up tarpaulin at the back of a church for three years. Despite setbacks, his parents always placed great importance on their children's education. Ryan and his siblings were always at the top of their class—they had to be, since being short of number one in the class meant losing a full scholarship, their ticket to an education.

During Ryan's first year in college studying medicine, he discovered that he was positive for Hepatitis B. Upon advice from a peer, he kept his diagnosis a secret due to the career-threatening implications and quickly brought the disease under control so that he was not a threat to colleagues or patients. As he continued studying medicine, Ryan was awakened to the negative stigma that surrounds those with disease and disabilities, even amongst doctors and medical professionals. Despite graduating from the program with impressive marks, Ryan failed to secure a job in his chosen profession due to his medical record.

Unable to achieve his professional ambition, Ryan decided to work online where his condition wasn't factored into his employability. It was at this point that he began to focus on the wealth of opportunities in the digital economy, the plight of people whose "disabilities" currently excluded them from the workforce, including the kinds of people he had known growing up with far greater challenges than his own. Ryan decided to focus his life's work on addressing this problem and launched Virtualahan with his siblings.



A female doctor with short dark hair, wearing a white lab coat, is smiling warmly at a young child. The doctor is wearing pink gloves and is holding the child's hand. The child is wearing a light blue hospital gown. The background is a bright, clean hospital room with a window. The word "Health" is written in large white letters across the center of the image.

Health



Paweł Grabowski

Poland

 @Fundacja_HPE
 <https://hospicjumeliasz.pl>

Grace, Love, and Life in Last Years of Life

Paweł has introduced a new approach to end-of-life care in rural Poland, triggering fundamental improvements in how these services are provided across the country, in other EU member states, and elsewhere across the world.

THE NEW IDEA

At the heart of Paweł's approach is a question: can we understand death as an opportunity to bring comfort, dignity, and honor to ourselves and our families? Paweł believes it is not only an opportunity; it is a basic human right.

Reversing cultural tendencies to isolate the dying and overlook the fears or burdens of death on families, Paweł's new model brings palliative and hospice care to people in rural areas. Beyond access to these end-of-life services, however, he is establishing new national and regional standards for care; building supportive coalitions of medical professionals, government actors, and local communities; and engaging parents and young people in culture-shifting conversations about death and dying.

Paweł has created a new societal role and profession: Caregivers. They are recruited from the local community, professionally trained, and compensated by the government medical system for performing end-of-life services for the dying and their families. In rural Poland, this work can entail everything from chopping firewood and stoking the stove, to ordering and installing a breathing machine and diesel generator along with the fuel to run it, to relieving family members at times from the responsibilities of around-the-clock care.

The effect that the Caregiver has in increasing one's quality of life and the amount of time spent comfortably at home translates into savings that hospices can use to further support Caregivers out in the communities—for example, supplying a breathing machine when it is needed. And more importantly, it allows the hospices to become places where more

specialized care can be delivered and where the community can access more education, training, and reassurance about end-of-life care.

THE PROBLEM

In Poland and in neighboring countries, the percentage of the population age 65 and over will increase by more than 50 percent in the next 15 years. Currently, only one in five people living in rural areas of these countries has access to elder care or end-of-life care. Further, elderly people in rural areas face additional challenges, such as unstable connections to electricity, limited or no access to public transport, and in some areas, inadequate safe drinking water.

Even where hospice facilities are available, eligibility requirements for state-funded palliative and hospice care are quite narrow. For example, in 2017 in Poland, 83,000 people received state-funded palliative and hospice care, but 90 percent of these were for people suffering from cancer. At the same time, approximately 45,000 people in Poland die from heart and kidney diseases each year, but these illnesses are not eligible for state-funded end-of-life support. Being terminally ill in such conditions is especially bitter. Because the care system is not working for all, individuals have no choice but to rely on their families and social networks to provide makeshift hospice care for them. In the countryside, often the only person who can provide such support is one's elderly spouse who may have his/her own health risks.

“Death, severe illness and suffering are always extreme situations. For the suffering of the sick, perhaps the most difficult is the dependence on other people. However, according to Dr. Paweł Grabowski, much can be done to make these experiences less painful for the patient.”

Aleteia



Dr. Pawel visiting with a patient in a rural hospice.

Only recently has professional credentialing for palliative and hospice care received the legal attention it deserves. Previously, there was a gap left within legislation barring medical practitioners in other fields from providing care in this field. For example, Paweł, who was trained as a head and neck surgeon, was denied in providing palliative care due to his standing credentials as a surgeon. He had to petition and get both laws and regulations changed before he was able to complete his hospice training, but his efforts opened opportunities for other medical professionals to follow his example.

THE STRATEGY

Paweł launched the pilot of his new idea in a rural region near Poland's border with Belarus, an area chosen by Paweł for its remoteness from Poland's medical system, as well as for the opportunity it provided to showcase success to Poland's neighbor to the east.

His proof-of-concept model, The Prophet Elijah Hospice, provided the best possible palliative and hospice care available in Poland. This new model offered help to all who needed it and expanded the community of providers to include not only doctors and nurses but also psychologists, physiotherapists, and—the newly added role—Caregivers.

“In many houses in our area people prepare for death, they want to talk about it... So it's natural thing for people to want to discuss death.”

Like other rural areas in Poland, unemployment was very high in this rural site for the Prophet Elijah House. The possibility for community members to be trained and compensated as professional caregivers has been an important addition to household budgets and a critical step for popularizing his approach in the wider community. Paweł understood that the new role of Caregiver would bring paid, meaningful work to communities and that this work would translate into big differences in the lives of families. For the patients, many of whom were living in isolated areas, the most important function of the Caregiver was human contact.

Paweł has been able to successfully demonstrate and spread his new model among medical communities, communicating his example of the Project Elijah Hospice as a “hub” that relies on the new role of Caregivers as “spokes.” This illustration has been important not only to explain the superior quality of service now provided, but also to demonstrate the savings gained by eliminating hospice operating costs. His organization now provides training and other educational resources to key partners in the medical community, including the Supreme Medical Chamber and the International Federation of Medical Students Association. Through these and other partnerships, it prepares hundreds of students and medical practitioners each year for careers in palliative and hospice care.

THE PERSON

During a medical examination when he was a young man, Paweł's heart stopped beating for 45 seconds. It was an experience that, looking back, he believes helped him appreciate the fragility of life and the realization that it can end at any moment.

He was trained as a medical surgeon, specializing in diseases of the mouth, jaws, face, and neck. However, early in his career, he was drawn to the problem that a significant number of his patients couldn't be cured with surgery and that their cancer would drastically reduce the time they had to live. He wondered what happened to these people once they were released from the hospital after surgery. It was then that he hit upon the idea of preparing a "reverse business plan" for a hospice that could work anywhere—even in poor, rural areas. To do this, he knew he would need to come up with original solutions, like creating a new profession of trained Caregivers. He left Warsaw with a small amount of seed funding and set out to start The Prophet Elijah Hospice in a distant part of eastern Poland where he sought to help patients whose lives he could not add years, but whose last years he could add life.

“In our foundation we provide care for those who are living through loss... sometimes the patient has already died several years ago and we still come and visit that person’s family and home to drink some herbal tea and to still discuss [memories of their loved one]. The family is also our patient, we take care of the family even after the patient’s death.”

ASHOKA FELLOW, PAWEŁ GRABOWSKI

More recently, a mini-documentary of Paweł's activities in October 2019 aired during the evening news on Poland public television and was watched by 1.83 million people. The work is also supported by an annual conference in Michałowo, the place where the first Prophet Elijah Hospice was based. In the past eight years, more than 10,000 participants from countries around the world have attended these conferences.



Jeesun Lee

South Korea

 www.seoulrh.com

All Doctors, All Dimensions Rehabilitation

Dr. Jeesun Lee is changing how South Korea treats people with disabilities, both medically and socially.

THE NEW IDEA

Dr. Lee has introduced a new paradigm to the conventional hospital system in South Korea through the establishment of the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) service, which focuses on patients with disabilities and life-altering medical conditions, especially children and adolescents. Working in the medical field, Dr. Lee noticed that if a child developed a disability, the entire family's stability could collapse while trying to provide care. The needed integration of treatment and care was not available, so she decided to design a new model of care that redefines the roles of hospitals and medical workers.

Her CBR model offers a holistic approach to rehabilitation. Focused on the concept of "recuperative care," CBR provides a seamless web of care for people who need rehabilitation services that is connected with their communities, responsive to different demographic groups, and easily embedded into family life.

Following the successful opening of South Korea's first ever "day ward" to provide medical care for children with disabilities, Dr. Lee launched therapy programs to invite and engage the outside community. Later developed into the CBR model, the therapy programs prioritize the engagement of a patient's family to bridge reintegration. The therapies revolve around rebuilding family bonds through trips and family-school programs, all coordinated through Dr. Lee's Support Center.

Not only does CBR connect with families, but it also links communities across the full rehabilitation system. For instance, Dr. Lee dispatches medical staff to patients' schools to provide guidelines and foster an inclusive community. CBR extends further beyond patient stabilization after trauma to

include convalescence and reintegration therapy, leading to new roles for citizens. Dr. Lee's unique model acknowledges a continuum of need for patients and transfers decisions related to convalescent care away from hospital-centered, temporary treatments to life-long, community-integrated solutions. This approach works not just for young people, but for South Korea's aging population as well. Her inclusive and responsive models have already spread and are now reflected in the Public Rehabilitation Children's Hospitals across the country, enabling greater equity, inclusion, and vitality for individuals, families, and communities.

Dr. Lee aims to operationalize the CBR model in other countries as a low-cost intervention. She believes they can, step by step, build capacity just as she has done in Korea over time. To accelerate this global impact, Dr. Lee is in the process of establishing a brand-new rehabilitation center in Korea that will be the first full-scale lab for rehabilitation research and development, education/training, international collaboration, and community/family engagement.

"Jeesun Lee [...] has defined the concept of rehabilitation therapy system with a focus on recovery of a person's life and life-long management, and has worked hard to establish a community-based system...for the under-privileged patients, such as children with disabilities and patients who have to search for a new hospital at the end of each treatment, [which enables the patients.]"

THE DAILYPOST

THE PROBLEM

Medical stabilization has its roots in Korea's modern history—its medical system having been structured on the need to provide medical stabilization and physical rehabilitation for wartime veterans. Today, however, the demographics have



Dr. Lee and her staff engage with their young patients during rehabilitation sessions.

drastically changed. There are more than 90,000 children and adolescents in the county classified as “severely disabled” who need medical treatment and ongoing support. Compared with the adult population, the ratio of children and adolescents living with severe disabilities is significantly higher.

Yet, out of 30,000 medical institutions throughout South Korea, only 200 are children rehabilitation hospitals. And the government has not provided them with the resources that would be needed to meet the affected families’ short- and long-term needs. As a result, children and adolescents with disabilities are generally excluded from the country’s rehabilitation care system.

These Korean youth face a lifetime of changing needs as they grow. Without an approach that goes past immediate medical stabilization, they generally live shorter lives with low vitality. Furthermore, when children with disabilities miss the opportunity for well-timed care, their disabilities often become permanent and families bear the weight of isolation, social stigma, and community exclusion.

In addition, the Korean population is aging, with rural Koreans often needing interventions that differ from those of the “retired” South Koreans living in the urban areas. The current

lack of services in the field of community care means that aging patients do not receive adequate outpatient support including home-visit rehabilitation, social services, and reintegration efforts.

The conventional hospital system forces most patients with disabilities to “bounce” from one hospital to another because rehabilitation facilities that treat patients immediately after a serious incident try to discharge their patients as quickly as possible to save money, regardless of their condition. In hospitals that specialize in nursing and primary care, patients face the opposite problem: nursing hospitals aren’t incentivized to make recovery a top priority since they can charge more for patients with severe disabilities. Consequently, there is no continuum of care nor a comprehensive medical delivery system encompassing acute, convalescence, and nursing treatments to aid the

full recovery of many different patient populations. This lack of coherent or patient-focused planning forces patients to become chronic “rehabilitation refugees.”

THE STRATEGY

Dr. Lee is building a movement of Community Based Rehabilitation centers across nine metro areas in South Korea to open doors to equal care and social reintegration. In each metro, she is establishing a new medical hub that incorporates her key insights, but that has the flexibility to address its community’s unique rehabilitation needs.

In the process of expanding the CBR approach throughout South Korea, Dr. Lee is investing heavily in strengthening community-based institutions and bringing together inter-generational initiatives, schools, medical teams, and governments to improve the lives of people with disabilities and chronic conditions. To bridge the gap between hospitals and local communities, the CBR model relies on a multi-stakeholder coalition which includes patients’ families. Thanks to the unprecedented collaboration between these various actors, medical staff can be directly dispatched to schools to educate students about issues faced by their differently-abled peers. By promoting empathy and acceptance, these interactions help reduce bullying of students with disabilities in the school community.



Jeesun tends to a pediatric patient in rehabilitation.

Empathy is critical in the hospital system, too. To foster an empathetic culture, Dr. Lee has created “book clubs” for hospital staff to catalyze the study of empathy. Her approach encourages internal leadership and the organic spread of an empathetic mindset from medical staff to each other and patients.

Dr. Lee and her colleagues work with patients who have life-altering medical conditions such as strokes, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy, developmental disabilities, and musculoskeletal disorders, by promoting a successful return to family and society. This year alone, over 105,000 people have received treatment, 38 percent of whom are under the age of 13. Dr. Lee’s hospital staff provide holistic care and are democratizing patient access to specialists in a wide range of fields including psychiatry, physical therapy, social work, and speech therapy. In 2019, Dr. Lee’s team worked with over 48,900 minors with disabilities—about 54 percent of the 90,000 severely disabled youth in Korea.

Dr. Lee’s guiding principle is to not discharge someone until they are ready, even if they are financially unable to pay. Costs are covered for those who qualify as low-income—meaning that they don’t have to pay their deductible—after

undergoing an evaluation screening with a social worker. This financial support programs provides access to care patients otherwise couldn’t afford.

To assist patients with reintegration into their local community and society after going through treatment, a significant challenge, Dr. Lee has designed various programs to overcome obstacles. Her programs help patients both recover their physical functions and cultivate a resilient, positive mindset to support them through future unknowns. To date, 648 people have reconnected to their communities through these programs, 42 percent of whom are younger than 19. Reintegration sessions for these young people primarily focus on developing social adaptation skills and returning to school to continue their education. For older citizens, Jeesun runs therapeutic activity-based workshops, offers the chance to work, and connects those who are disabled with personalized aids and financial assistance.

“It opened up a new path for our rehabilitation therapy. It was the first to open a “Children Rehab Ward” and introduced the “Integrated Management System for Children with Disabilities.” It is also the first in Korea to introduce robotic walking equipment for treatment usage.”

新東亞

LEADING MAGAZINE SHIN DONGA

Lee has become the gold standard of disability care for the Korean government. To date, more than 100 hospitals have visited to learn from Dr. Lee’s model, including the government-affiliated National Rehabilitation Center. Through her Education and Research Center, she spreads the model and trains students majoring in rehabilitation medicine from 50

universities. Jeusun is also rigorously publishing research papers, creating manuals, and hosting seminars to influence the rigid medical sector. As a result of her continuous work, she is now helping the government establish Public Children's Rehabilitation Hospitals across the country by 2022.

THE PERSON

Lee suffered severe anemia throughout her childhood and often had to skip school when she was hospitalized. Even after her condition improved, such experiences made her deeply empathetic toward people living with illness and disability and contributed to her decision to become a doctor.

In 1988, after finishing her medical studies in rehabilitation medicine, she helped to found Seoul Rehabilitation Hospital under the social welfare foundation, Angels' Haven. She had two mandates from the chairman of the foundation at that time: 1. Never turn away patients, even those who cannot afford the care, and 2. Make the best rehabilitation hospital in the world. Her long service as a medical doctor known for her empathy and ability to deeply listen has led Dr. Lee to develop her humane, 360 degree vision of rehabilitation care and to become a powerful thought leader who is tearing down walls and changing in the field.

Over the years, Dr. Lee has been encouraged by what she has been able to establish. Through the dissemination of her model, she is changing the societal framework by involving the private, governmental, and public sectors to work together in an effort to make real, sustained, and comprehensive care available to individuals, families, and communities.

After visiting Uzbekistan to provide medical support early in her life, Jeusun realized that it only takes one medical expert to ignite a reformation of rehabilitation medical care in marginalized regions of the world. Since her visit, she has dispatched colleagues to provide medical training and spread her rehabilitation model and system abroad. By partnering with KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) and social welfare organizations, Dr. Lee has built a new, international network to provide trainings across 11 countries.



Germana Soares

Brazil

facebook.com/
uniaodemaesdeanjos

Mutual Support for Families in Crisis

Directly affected by the Zika crisis in Brazil, Germana is leading a movement to guarantee lifelong access to healthcare, education, and peer support for families with children who were born with disabilities.

THE NEW IDEA

When Germana's son was born in 2015 with microcephaly—a neurobiological disability related to Zika Virus Congenital Syndrome (ZVCS) that's characterized by an abnormally small head—she realized that the critical medical and communal support necessary for raising a child with disabilities wasn't available to families like hers.

When the Zika virus struck Latin America that year, the abrupt surge of babies born with this new disability created an unprecedented situation, but no organization in Brazil was addressing this sudden outbreak. Determined to create a brighter, more inclusive future for the generation of children born with ZVCS, as well as all children living with disabilities, Germana founded *União das Mães de Anjos (UMA)*, meaning Union of Mothers of Angels—Brazil's first State organization to address the uncharted territory of the Zika outbreak. UMA provides these underserved families with peer-to-peer support and collectively pushes for equal access to healthcare and education.

Germana has brought new leadership and tools to the disability movement. Built on a replicable organizational structure made up of nine branches spread throughout the State of Pernambuco, UMA can reach remote areas of the State where the most vulnerable populations live. Members gather to share the news, distribute legislative updates, and organize local actions to press for access to medicines, medical procedures, and government benefits to which they should be entitled. Other grassroots disability organizations have allied with UMA and often adopt its organizing strategies through their parallel federal, state, and local chapters.

In addition to its grassroots membership of affected families, UMA has forged a broader coalition of influential institutions such as the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), the Public Prosecutor, the State Department of Health, and various media outlets. UMA is working to destigmatize the way governments and societies address people with all types of disabilities, while also demanding accountability from the state to address the public health issue of microcephaly.

Prior to Germana's work, financial aid through the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) was legally available to low-income families raising children with disabilities, but many families who qualified didn't know about this national benefit program or how to access it. During the "first wave" of microcephaly births, only a fraction of the 89 percent of families who qualified for the monthly \$65 USD actually applied. Those who did apply had to deal with the INSS's prior wait time of four months to secure appointments to receive payments. With most mothers having to quit their jobs to take care of their children and many fathers unemployed, waiting four months was simply not economically feasible.

“My life changed a lot after [my daughter] came into my life. I learned to fight. Not to give up on my rights and the rights of my child. Because, since she could not walk or talk, I would be walking and talking for her. And fighting, alongside my sisters in struggle, for the rights of our children.”

INGRID ADRIELLY, A MEMBER OF UMA.



In response, Germana's team pressured the INSS until, ultimately, they sat down and co-created a better process that made the funds far more accessible for the affected families. UMA quickly realized that most of these families were spending 70 percent of their income on rent alone—leaving very little to pay for essentials like food and medicine. UMA

collected and presented this compelling data to the federal public housing program Minha Casa, Minha Vida, which it successfully leveraged to change rent laws. Under the new legislation, federal assistance for families of children with disabilities is prioritized and the quality of life for these families has improved now that they can allocate more money to meeting their basic needs.

As the first generation of children with ZVCS are growing old enough to attend kindergarten, the movement Germana has built is pushing for classroom inclusion of these children as well as kids with other disabilities who face similar challenges. She is leading the charge in guaranteeing disabled children's rights to enroll in public schools and by extension to be accepted in society.

THE PROBLEM

In Brazil, there is very little government support for families affected by the permanent disability of a child or young person, and a strong stigma against people with disabilities persists. This situation disproportionately affects mothers with kids who have disabilities. With little or no information on what to do, limited access to medical care, and few childcare options, these mothers typically become full-time caregivers. Mothers who stay home to care for their children are often unable to work and must rely on the limited support provided by social welfare, which places further economic hardship on the family.

When the mosquito-borne Zika virus exploded in Latin America in 2015, Brazil was hit particularly hard, and thousands were infected. During that year alone, nearly 2,800 babies were born with microcephaly in the country, including Germana's son. Zika disproportionately affects poorer communities with open sewers and inadequate sanitation, as standing water is an ideal breeding grounds for the species of mosquito that transmits Zika. These families face harsh circumstances, with nearly 60 percent of Zika-affected families earning \$22 USD or less per month.

The long-term challenges for a child born with Zika syndrome are daunting. They experience significant neurobiological disabilities that affect vision, hearing, and swallowing, and they may be unable to walk or speak. Trouble swallowing leads

them to aspirate, which can induce pneumonia. Parents need access to specific medications and related healthcare services and must provide around-the-clock care.

“According to the Ministry of Health, between 2015 and 2018, approximately 3 thousand children with microcephaly associated with Zika were registered. Of these, 300 died. Children born in that period still need special care today.”



Furthermore, Brazil's daycare and public education systems are not structured to accommodate children with disabilities. Germana experienced this issue firsthand when her attempt to enroll her son in a daycare center was met with resistance. Most facilities are not equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities, and teachers are unwilling or unprepared to take on the responsibility of caring for children with disabilities—those with Zika syndrome as well as other disabilities such as autism. This situation discourages families from putting children with disabilities into daycare centers and schools, which is detrimental to their cognitive and social development as well as acceptance in society.

THE STRATEGY

UMA serves as a support network for families impacted by Zika and as a way to exchange information, raise awareness about rights, and strengthen community voices among mothers and families of children with disabilities. Through the network, Germana identifies the most pressing challenges and gaps for families with disabled children in terms of their access to healthcare, medications, and government aid. With her home team of mothers campaigning for change, she connects with different actors—private and public—to create solutions.



UMA provides support for families of children with disabilities.

The knowledge acquired by UMA's nine branches throughout the State of Pernambuco is distributed within and beyond the network. Each branch is responsible for organizing the community and exchanging information about legislation, access to medicines, proper medical procedures, and government aid benefits they are entitled to in order to defray the costs of care and ongoing treatment of disabled children. This is done to combat the systemic inaccessibility of critical information, ensuring awareness of their rights. UMA also provides both peer-to-peer personal support along with collectively organizing which actors and institutions need to be lobbied if they are to win the legislative changes they require.

To get going in her efforts, the first thing Germana had to do was create a way to find families affected by Zika and other disabilities. She formed the UMA network from the ground up by partnering with local radio stations and traveling throughout the State of Pernambuco to meet with and mobilize families to join the movement, both rural and urban. Her outreach strategy was so effective that the governor of Pernambuco consulted her to learn how she had achieved such strong ties with these underserved families. The UMA network started with a foundation of 130 active families and has grown steadily as the idea has gained traction.

Most children whose mothers belong to UMA see speech, occupational, and physical therapists every day through UMA's services. Kids with ZVCS can also access child neurologists and orthopedists to assist with their developmental needs. To increase access to these critical resources, UMA successfully pushed Pernambuco's Public Health System to

hire more neurologists—more than doubling the count from 12 to 27 in the state.

At the federal level, UMA coordinates strategic activity of their nine branches alongside other organizations as they relentlessly seek to influence legislation to support lifelong access to services and increased support for caregiver families. Germana has influenced and supported the creation of analogous organizations in other States; together with UMA, these organizations are committed to advancing rights for all disabled people.

Germana has achieved important victories in the fight for better healthcare and living conditions.

Families with disabled children now have free access to anticonvulsant drugs through the Public Health System, and all health centers in Pernambuco are required to provide the DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough) vaccine for children's immunizations. Another major victory for UMA was securing access to the Benefit of Continuous Provision (BPC)—a specific type of government financial aid for people with disabilities about which many were unaware. Now, thanks to UMA's influence on the Minister of Health, the government has initiated a "fast-track" process in the States of Pernambuco, Bahia, Maranhão and Rio Grande do Norte that granted about 800 families access to BPC.

Germana is now focusing on inclusive education. Representing UMA, Germana advocated for months to legally compel schools to accept and accommodate students with disabilities by participating in numerous public hearings and appealing to the Court of Justice, the Brazilian Bar Association, and municipal councils. Her efforts yielded an official document requiring the schools to accept those children with the appropriate infrastructure, and her family together with four other Zika-affected families in Pernambuco became the first in Brazil to send their children to daycare. She then mobilized the State Department of Education to create widespread, inclusive programs for enrolling children with disabilities in the public educational system—accepting children with ZVSC as well as other types of disabilities. She has since observed that schools which accept Zika-affected children tend to also include a higher percentage of autistic children.

Leading by example, Germana and other parents are shifting the mindsets of families that still feel hesitant about letting

their children attend daycare. Socialization with other kids is critical for the cognitive and social development of a child with a disability. In the long term, this integrated approach fosters a broader culture of inclusion among children of the same age, who will grow up to shape societal attitudes in the future.

UMA is now Brazil's main reference in fighting for the rights of people living with ZVCS, with more and more organizations forming across the Northeast region of the country, including other States that bore the brunt of the first wave of the Zika virus. It is the nature of the organization—that it is by families, for families—that allows it to lead advocacy work and serve as a source of mental and emotional support for family members of those impacted by ZVCS.

THE PERSON

Germana was born in Jaboatão dos Guararapes, a small city in the State of Pernambuco where domestic violence and drug trafficking was common. When she was 5 years old, she lost her 3-month-old baby sister due to poor conditions at the hospital and a delay in emergency care. This loss impacted her greatly and left her with a profound understanding of life's inequalities.

“We’re over that time when a family of a baby with micro[cephaly] was considered ‘poor and sad’. In reality, it was never like that. We want to show everyone our strength.” GERMANA SOARES

huck

In primary school, Germana suffered prejudice from both students and teachers due to the darker color of her skin. In sports and when putting on plays, she would often be excluded. As an adolescent, she started to understand the context of that prejudice and learned to successfully stand up for herself and defend her peers. Germana became a respected leader of her class and felt responsible for creating bridges of dialogue between students and teachers. She



Ashoka Fellow Germana Soares advocates for guaranteed access to healthcare and education for children born with Zika Virus Congenital Syndrome.

most enjoyed the annual competitions to collect food and clothes for donation and in her three years of high school, Germana's team collected the most among her peers and won the competition each year.

After graduation, Germana studied History at a public university and became a teacher at a public elementary school. The school was in an underserved area, with inadequate conditions in terms of school structure and management, and Germana quickly began to observe the larger problems of the Brazilian education system. In response, Germana decided to create new opportunities with her students, incorporating activities that involved the arts, culture, and play. For example, she introduced various recreational activities that took place in museums and cultural spots, giving her students contact points in the city to broaden their perspectives. Over time, other teachers at the school started to replicate her ideas. Soon after, she moved out of the city, married, and began her studies in Marketing. The economic crisis in Brazil hit while she was working in sales for a large company, and Germana was laid off.

When she was 12 weeks pregnant, she contracted the Zika virus, but the doctors who attended her claimed that there was no risk to the baby and gave her the standard treatment for Zika, similar to what is given to people with dengue. Yet a few days before she gave birth, her husband read an article about the relationship between the Zika virus and cases of babies with microcephaly that was beginning to emerge in Brazil. In November 2015, Germana gave birth to Guilherme, her first child, who was born with microcephaly. The birth of her son changed Germana's life, setting her on a path to create the nationwide movement for the rights of children with disabilities that she leads today.



Claudia Thomas Riche

Haiti

 <https://nech-cieh.org>

Strengthening Haiti's Health Care through Collaboration

Through education and community partnerships, Claudia is cultivating the first coalition of nurses with a medical mission to improve patient welfare and public health in Haiti.

THE NEW IDEA

Imagine a Haiti known for its high-quality public health care. Claudia sees this future and believes that Haitian nurses will be the ones to make it a reality. Through partnership with the Ministry of Health, ongoing education, and community-based engagement strategies, Claudia is professionalizing and vesting Haiti's healthcare frontline—licensed nurses—to improve patient welfare and public health for all.

Haiti's fragile healthcare system does not utilize its most powerful and skilled force of healthcare workers—licensed nurses—to support, build, and transform the country's healthcare. Claudia strongly believes that nurses can and must take their place as leaders of healthcare change and that nurses must act as agents of transformation and lead the innovative solutions necessary to address the nation's greatest public health problems.

Through her organization, *the Nursing Education Collaborative for Haiti (NECH-CIEH)*, Claudia is creating a professional network of nurses—by nurses, for nurses—who go out into the community, help train other nurses, and teach and promote good healthcare practices. By doing so, she is bridging traditional healthcare delivery and community development and is empowering nurses to lead positive change beyond a perception of nurses as little more than “helpers” to physicians.

On a national level, Claudia's published nursing standards are the first to be distributed to all 900+ healthcare facilities in Haiti. By partnering with the Ministry of Health, 1,000 copies of the 72-page manual with follow up clinical training and professional development plans are underway for further clinical practice advancements.

“The NECH-CIEH –a non-profit organization that partners with the McGill University in Montreal, Canada... offers an opportunity for Haitian nurses and their North American counterparts to work together on projects aimed at promoting nursing as a profession... another major objective of the NECH-CIEH is to collaborate with nurse educators in Haiti to develop a system for continuing nursing education...”



THE PROBLEM

Haiti ranks at the bottom of health indicators in the world. 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Malnutrition affects half of all children, and less than half of the population has access to clean water. Less than a half of medical facilities are considered adequate, and less than 10 percent of people living in rural areas have access to such facilities.

There are approximately as many practicing nurses in Haiti as there are doctors, but the resulting ratios (between 2.4-2.6 per 100,000 people), coupled with the poor condition of public primary care facilities, translates into poor availability of quality care in urban areas and little or no access to primary care in rural areas.

Although equal to doctors in numbers and with the skilled training that allows them to independently treat a wide range of primary care issues, the nurses have not been deployed to the communities to play this role. Instead, their roles have been restricted to directly supporting doctors in treating patients or playing supporting administrative roles. Very few occupy leadership posts. Consequently, nurses are unable to operate independently and advocate for the communities they serve, as well as the critical need to grow the numbers and improve the skills of trained nurses.



Fellow Claudia at the 7th Annual NECH-CIEH workshop on November 7th, 2020 covering topics such as prevention/infection control, CPR, oxygen therapy, and more.

“The voices of Haitian nurses have been largely absent from the published literature and the vast majority of research to understand nursing care issues in Haiti has been published by non-Haitians.”

CLAUDIA THOMAS RICHE

THE STRATEGY

Claudia created a collaborative network of nurses as a first step towards positioning nurses to lead and promote better health practices in communities. She began by tapping into the collective knowledge that nurses already have. For example, nurses from different hospitals meet virtually every week to discuss their “dilemma” cases and share their notes with nurses working on the same kinds of dilemma cases. Her organization, NECH-CIEH, also offers videoconference

lectures to multiple healthcare sites on topics the nurses request. The presentations are delivered by nurses to nurses in French and cover a range of topics such as vital signs, neurological triage, nutrition, and transformational leadership. All lectures are recorded and made available for download.

The next step in her work was improving communications across the nursing profession by coordinating an annual workshop series, “Working Together for the Future of Nursing Education in Haiti,” which convenes participants from the full spectrum of nursing professionals, from students and clinical practitioners to the deans of Haitian nursing schools, heads of hospital nursing departments, university professors, and health ministry officials. This allows nursing professionals to network, share experience and expertise, and identify and plan joint projects and collaborations.

Now nurses are leading initiatives in hygiene, healthcare, and community development. For example, they launched the Handwashing Initiative, in which nurses conducted a research study in twelve of the major hospitals in all ten of the country’s geographic departments, in collaboration with the Director of Nursing Care at the Ministry of Health.

To promote better habits and disease prevention, NECH-CIEH nurses are also training other nurses and hospital staff in effective handwashing techniques; through collaboration, nurses have installed alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers, soap dispensers, and baskets of handwipes for cleaning infant scales and other equipment. Nurses are trained to serve as hand hygiene ambassadors and educators at each of the facilities.



Haitian trainees at a NECH-CIEH session promoting hygiene via selling soap in their community.

“NECH-CIEH holds workshops where nurses meet with economists, psychologists, and other support personnel. They design and conduct research projects and learn to write articles for journals and present at conferences. They engage in data-driven discussions. All nurses should be involved in these activities.”

The New Humanitarian |

Most recently, Claudia has expanded the reach of this initiative at the community level through the Haitian Women’s Soap Project, through which nurses train local women on how to make and market an affordable multi-purpose soap in their local communities. This allows Haitian nurses to become more deeply involved in their communities, educating their neighbors on the role of basic hygiene in preventing disease,

and integrating a culture of health and cleanliness into people’s everyday lives.

To translate these changes into new standards, practices, and mandated proficiency at the national level, Claudia is working in partnership with the Director of Nursing Care at the Ministry of Health to improve and enhance the nursing curriculum, with a mutual goal to identify and fill the gaps between what nurses learn in school and what they need to know to be effective in clinical practice and community outreach. Further, Claudia secured financing and oversaw print publication of the first-ever compilation of a 72-page manual of nursing standards for Haiti: *Normes pour la Pratique des Soins Infirmiers* (“Standards for the Practice of Nursing”). Copies have been distributed to all 900+ healthcare facilities in the country.

THE PERSON

Claudia was born in Haiti. The daughter of a teacher and a nurse, Claudia saw through her mother’s work the many ways in which nurses could go beyond doctors to provide hands-on patient care. When she was six, her family moved to Montreal, Canada, where she grew up and completed her training to become a licensed medical nurse.

In 2004, Claudia decided to return to Haiti to take a position coordinating an advanced nursing course at Groupe Haitien d’Etude du Sarcome de Kaposi et des Infections Opportunistes (GHESKIO). Founded in 1982, GHESKIO had been the world’s first medical institution dedicated solely to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Right away, Claudia noticed how severely the work of nurses was oriented around the work of doctors. From her perspective, this orientation held nurses back from all they could do for patients, for other nursing professionals, and for the public.

Claudia realized that to change the perception of nurses and their standing among healthcare providers and society, she needed to get nurses together. She founded NECH-CIEH as an organization designed by nurses, for nurses with a mission to improve patient care and public health through nursing education and community partnership.



Bob Bharij

United Kingdom

 @FDNforChange

 foundationforchange.org.uk

Addicts Reclaim Freedom

Bob believes that the only reliably effective and lasting approach to treatment for substance abuse and recovery is to offer someone the opportunity to “go deep” into their lived experience so they emerge as the leaders of their own change.

THE NEW IDEA

Conventional responses to substance abuse focus largely on managing symptoms. Private treatment programs are about getting clean, and recovery is about staying clean—usually by engaging in prescribed behaviors or routines with other recovering addicts. Little time is spent addressing an addiction’s root causes, and funding is generally dependent on demonstrating forced, short-term “success stories” rather than effective, post-treatment support for long-term, reintegration achievements.

Rejecting the social care sector’s tendency to infantilize addicts, Bob knows that those in recovery must be invited—and challenged—to reclaim their agency. Rather than approaching them as victims who need fixing, Bob’s *Foundation for Change* offers a new approach through which addicts are viewed as protagonists who can learn about the harm that structural othering does and use that knowledge to plot a new path free from substance misuse.

Bob and his team believe that systemic marginalization and trauma are inextricably linked. Sexism, racism, classism, homophobia—each of these undermine a person’s well-being. Substance misuse is just one of the ways people try to cope. In his approach, shame is no longer associated with treatment and recovery. The way that the program’s courses unfold discourages participants from remaining in social bubbles with other recovering addicts. Instead, they are empowered to apply what they learn to reintegrate into their homes, workplaces, and communities. In fact, participants come to view community engagement and employment as signs

of personal stability and pride which are success measures incorporated throughout the program.

“I believe that everyone has a story, that every body tells a story. People need to build a relationship with themselves, their bodies, and the world around them, and that making sense of the past is crucial in moving forwards into the future.”

BOB BHARIJ

77 percent of all enrollees have completed the course successfully without relapse. In this process, 60 percent earned credits from the Open College Network, and 63 percent participated in a post-course work placement. These numbers are exceptionally high for the addiction care field.

THE PROBLEM

A decade of government austerity has meant that treatment and recovery programs have had to rely more heavily on private sector support. But that type of funding is nearly always tied to evidence of need and impact, which leads to box-ticking for sets of metrics that tend to assess short-term, cosmetic “success stories” rather than long-term, holistic care that is more fundamental to durable recovery.

Those who successfully complete publicly funded treatment programs also find minimal post-treatment support. Across England, those in recovery are afforded just one hour of after-care per week. And because that one hour includes neither job training nor career advice, far too many are left with little choice but to seek jobs that provide a paycheck but little else.



Foundation for Change participants reflect on their experience in a Feminism for Change course.

THE STRATEGY

There are three key elements to the *Foundation for Change* approach—providing structure and support, contextualizing addiction and trauma, and changing the lens through which those in recovery understand their past and plan their future.

Foundation for Change participants enroll in one of three courses: Psychology for Change, Knowledge for Change, or Feminism for Change. Each course requires attendance at lectures and discussions for 8-12 hours every week. The message this demanding curriculum sends to participants is clear: “Our expectations for you are high, and we trust that you will meet them.” A combination of group sessions and biweekly one-on-one tutorials

creates space for participants to build resilience as they learn more about trauma and its impact. Participants are invited to see their potential more clearly and visualize healthier paths forward. They are given opportunities to develop skills as well, such as learning how to give and receive constructive feedback, analyzing problems from multiple perspectives, and sharing one’s story confidently.

All *Foundation for Change* courses culminate in formal recognition of the participants’ success at the Foundation’s annual birthday celebration with its board and donors. Qualifications from the Open College Network provide something tangible for course graduates to take pride in and celebrate. The high percentage of post-course internships and work placements—all of which the Foundation organizes with network partners across greater London—translates into stability and purpose for graduates as they continue their recovery.

Several leading UK institutions with a long-term commitment to Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery—Shoreditch Trust, St Mungo’s, and the Wandsworth Drug and Alcohol Community Service—have been trained to apply the *Foundation for Change* approach. Local authorities in the London boroughs of Hackney and Wandsworth help to fund the Foundation’s work. A forthcoming qualitative study from City University London recommends that the Foundation’s methodology be scaled to the UK’s homeless sector.

“Thirty percent of adults — or almost 88,000 people — in treatment for substance abuses in England — are women, according to the latest statistics from the UK’s National Drug Treatment Monitoring System.”

VICE

High rates of relapse expose the inadequacies of this approach. For example, available results from Public Health England reveal that only 42 percent of people enrolled successfully completed the training provided by the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program from April 2018 to March 2019. Of those who did, the percentage who sustained sobriety for at least six months is lower still. In 2017, for example, only 7 percent of opiate users, 37 percent of non-opiate drug users, and 39 percent of alcoholics sustained post-treatment recovery for at least six months.

THE PERSON

Bob was born in the UK to parents who had migrated from East Africa. The family's home situation was abusive, and Bob's mom chose to divorce and raise Bob and his brother alone. She encouraged both her sons to do what they loved. Her encouragement gave Bob confidence and helped him change direction when he needed it most. At school, Bob felt the sting of racism among his peers on the playground and was bullied by his classmates. And from a young age he knew he was gay—something that was difficult to reconcile with the culture in which he was raised.

Bob's study of Psychology at university and subsequent yoga training laid the foundations for a healthier personal relationship between body and mind. He subsequently spent time with a Buddhist monastic order in Ladakh, India and, upon returning to the UK, set up a foundation to support the monks' expressed desire to learn English.

At the same time, Bob went to work for the UK charity, *We Are With You* (formerly Addaction), which works across all the areas of treatment, research, family support and professional education related to substance abuse and recovery. Over the following decade Bob was able to refine his own thinking, and to identify and recruit people who also saw the need to move the field in a new direction. This led directly to his decision to launch *Foundation for Change*.



Pavitra Mohan

India

 <https://bhs.org.in>

Democratizing Village Healthcare

Dr. Pavitra Mohan has created a replicable primary health care system for citizens in poor, remote communities of India through a new network of tribal, nurse-led clinics.

THE NEW IDEA

Steering away from hierarchical and rigid, doctor-led health delivery structures, Dr. Pavitra Mohan is building a network of affordable and decentralized primary healthcare clinics in India's remote, last-mile regions. Overcoming the absenteeism of medical staff and the irregularity of medical services in these remote areas, Dr. Mohan's solution, Basic Health Services (BHS), takes a new approach—the building of community AMRIT clinics and the training of tribal nurses drawn from and living in the clinics' communities. In turn, these nurses recruit a network of public health workers in even smaller, far-flung settlements from the village, each 4-5 km apart and connected by unpaved roads. Together, the networked health care providers offer a “circle of care” through a full, continuum of preventative, promotive, and curative services at the village-level that connect to the state health infrastructure.

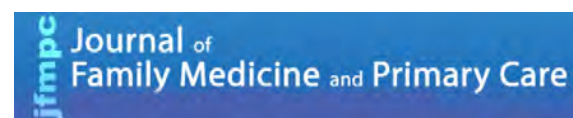
Located in South Rajasthan in the Salumbar block of the Udaipur district, today, six AMRIT Clinics provide care to about 125,000 people. The clinics have recorded 180,000 patient visits (including repeats), providing consultation, basic laboratory testing, treatment for illness, safe childbirth services, hospital referrals, community education, and emergency management.

While nurses are at the heart of his community-based model, Dr. Mohan has also addressed the challenge of recruiting doctors through a Fellowship program. Created in association with the Academy of Family Physicians of India and Equitable Access to Health Care Consortium, the Fellowship enables young medical graduates to engage in a long-distance diploma program with field work in AMRIT Clinics.

To make the services both available and affordable, Dr. Mohan has chosen to connect AMRIT Clinics with livelihood-sand financial inclusion organizations, Aajeevika Bureau and Rajasthan Shram Sarthi Association (RSSA), led by another Ashoka Fellow, Rajiv Khandelwal. Together, the partner organizations bring low-cost and high-quality health care to remote, rural, and underserved populations -- including those that depend on migrant labor.

One example among the many things BHS does in partnership with the Bureau to make its services affordable is its approach to full tuberculosis (TB) patient treatment plans. While TB treatment plans generally require 6-8 months of medical care, Mohan's team noticed that most patients of AMRIT Clinics were opting out after 3-4 months and returning to work, aggravating the risk of a relapse. Working together with the RSSA, Dr. Mohan designed a monthly health loan program to provide 3,000-5,000 INR (\$40-65 USD) to cover patients' essential costs. These loans are then considered repaid upon the patient's completion of the treatment at an annual interest of 8-9 percent. This flexible payment model syncs with the acute cash flow volatility faced by migrants and the new loan process has led to a high treatment completion rate: 52 out of 54 patients are now completing their full course of treatment.

“The primary healthcare models will move from the current paradigm of reactive care to proactive care, and from fragmented to integrated and accountable care. This will require a cultural shift from hospital- and physician-centric to person- and population-centric care. Such shift will strongly integrate public health functions with primary care.”





Basic Health Services volunteer giving training in Manpur Village.

These impressive outcomes have resulted in BHS being invited by the state Government of Rajasthan to manage one Primary Health Centre (PHC) and by a large NGO, Sewa Mandir, to run their community hospital under the aegis of AMRIT Clinics.

THE PROBLEM

India counts 104 million people, 8.6 percent of India's total population, as "Tribal." Many live in remote areas, are burdened by poverty, and migrate to find work. In fact, tribal populations make up a significant share of the more than 120 million migrant workers who seasonally travel to cities to work in the construction trades and other occupations where heavy manual labor is required.

Families in these tribal communities across India are burdened by poverty and geographical isolation. Historically dependent on forest produce, unfriendly forest laws coupled with rampant deforestation have resulted in a near loss of traditional livelihoods. Pushed deeper into poverty, the men often migrate to cities, ending up in low-paying and exploitative, unskilled jobs. In the absence of the primary male member and constrained by low mobility, tribal women face significant challenges in seeking timely healthcare for themselves and their families. Further, erratic and volatile cash flows ensure that nutrition and health are hardest hit, with most delaying medical attention until later in the disease cycle.

As a result, these communities have the country's worst

health outcomes. Among the statistics, a February 2020 article in the *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* found that 30 percent of all malaria cases in India and 50 percent of the deaths caused by malaria occur in the tribal population. Furthermore, the under-five infant mortality rate in the tribal population is 57.2 percent.

THE STRATEGY

Recognizing that young, tribal nurses are the most likely to stay and work in rural areas, the optimization of human resources in AMRIT Clinics starts with the recruitment and upskilling of these healthcare professionals. Through an intensive induction and monthly refresher trainings, nurses are trained in critical tasks for which their formal training would not have equipped them, such as diagnosing, analyzing, and making decisions on cases, patient communication and counselling, and following standardized protocols.

“[I]n early 2013, AMRIT Clinic opened in Bedawal with a small team of qualified nurses and healthcare workers, who constitute the core of AMRIT Health Services (AHS) in the villages. They are supported by a doctor who visits once a week and is also available for telephone consultations on other days”

3 Quarks Daily

SCIENCE ARTS PHILOSOPHY POLITICS LITERATURE

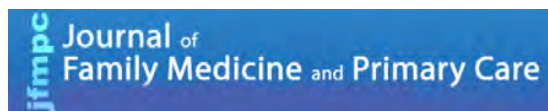
Each clinic is managed by three female nurses who are backed up by a proficient, three-tier system of upward and downward support. Upwards, doctors visit the clinic once a week and are available for teleconsultation with nurses 24/7. Downwards, the nurses supervise a cadre of trained community health workers who flank out into villages to influence positive health behaviors such as family planning, childcare, nutrition and hygiene practices. They deliver antenatal and postnatal care and follow up on chronic patients. Further

downstream, community health volunteers or Swasthya Kirans (“light of health”) interface between the communities and the clinic staff. They are drawn from the local community and run health education and counselling services. Most importantly, they build the fundamental trust necessary for uptake of the clinic’s services. Because each clinic is staffed by three nurses, each takes turns to visit villages and keep their ears to the ground.

With new technologies placed in their hands (such as those that allow the accurate detection of malaria) and doctors available over WhatsApp for consultation, nurses at AMRIT Clinics experience autonomy that they would not find in other private hospitals. Accommodation is made available to them, breaking through the mobility barriers that obstruct female nurses to travel and serve in remote areas.

Most tribal patients are now accessing formal healthcare in their neighborhood for the very first time. Areas served by AMRIT Clinics show a greater adoption of healthy practices, for example, family planning and birth control, measures to ensure safe pregnancy or abortions, early care-seeking for suspected tuberculosis, and acceptance of referrals to more specialized facilities. Cure rates for tuberculosis patients have increased from 45 percent to 70 percent over the past three years and one clinic has the proud distinction of having increased childbirth rates from 5 percent to about 50 percent after five years.

“Primary healthcare models of the future will empanel a defined catchment, stratify the population by risk, and will be responsible for providing comprehensive care to that population.”



THE PERSON

As a child, Pavitra was deeply influenced by his grandfathers—one a scholar of Sanskrit and the other a freedom fighter who

campaigns alongside Gandhi. Surrounded by deep spiritual conversations and philosophy, Pavitra’s growing years were infused by Gandhian thought.

Wanting to serve the nation, Pavitra was inclined to join the army, but a chance viewing of a Hindi film based on the life of a compassionate doctor kindled his interest in the medical profession. While preparing for admission to Wardha Medical College—set up by Mahatma Gandhi—Pavitra studied philosophy and this further fueled his passion for community medicine and his commitment to the India “that lives in its villages.”

After completing his MD, Pavitra was given charge of the nursery of a well-known government hospital in Delhi. With high mortality rates—4 out of 10 children dying—Pavitra insisted on simple practices such as using sanitizers, washing hands, and ensuring maintenance of appropriate temperature. After initial resistance, the staff complied, and the mortality rate went down significantly to just 10 percent. For Pavitra, the experience demonstrated how, through collective action and implementation of simple solutions, significant impact is achievable.

In 2001, he was part of a research team set up to study the “role of counseling [services] in ensuring families bring their children to Public Health Clinics when they fall ill.” The study took him to almost every clinic in the district, providing deep learning and insights into rural mindsets where healthcare is concerned. The study also brought home the glaring gaps in the system as well as the inability and lack of will to address them.

Pavitra set out to explore the models that existed. While the reach of auxiliary nurses and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers was huge, he saw their limited capacity to respond beyond data collection and inputs in maternal and child healthcare. Hospitals set up in rural areas by dedicated doctors offered another option. But they were capital intensive and centralized. Telemedicine could not penetrate remote outposts of the country with no connectivity. Neither did they offer the needed personal connection. After years of listening and reflection, Dr. Mohan founded Basic Health Services to demonstrate and entirely new, comprehensive, highly effective system for delivering healthcare.

Human Rights


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Ioana Bauer

 Romania

 @IoanaBauer

 www.eliberare.com/en

Dismantling Systems of Human Trafficking

To combat human trafficking made possible by many elements of society, Ioana is taking the whole enabling system apart. Who has the most influence on young people? Their peers, teachers, beauticians, and others. Ioana is changing how each of these elements sees the world and their roles.

THE NEW IDEA

Romania has the highest rate in Europe of trafficking of its children and young women, and it is also the primary avenue through which traffickers bring de facto slaves—some as young as 12 years old—into Europe from the rest of the world.

Ioana came very close to experiencing this in her teen years, and she saw how profoundly damaging it is to those who fall victim to its enticements.

She also came to understand how all the elements work together and realized that, to have anything more than a palliative impact, she would have to change the whole system that, consciously or not, facilitates the trade.

Put yourself in the position of a vulnerable young woman in her teens. There's a lot to be frustrated about. The idea of getting a good-paying job and seeing a new part of the world is pretty enticing. Your peers think this is a cool idea. Others don't see the danger or have come to accept it, community leaders and teachers very much included.

To have any serious impact on the trafficking, Ioana understood that she had to change the culture in which vulnerable young people are growing up.

Who is most influential in a teen's life? Her peers. Therefore, Ioana has a whole series of thrusts designed to build awareness among teens so that they protect one another. She now has mandatory anti-trafficking courses in all high schools. She also has a program that has trained over 6,000 teachers so

far to understand the system, spot the symptoms, and know how to intervene. These teachers are helping build their students' understanding so they can act as collective antibodies.

Where do teens have a space where they can talk openly? Many can talk more openly in a beauty salon than either at school or at home. Therefore, Ioana has recruited beauticians against trafficking. They hear the conversations of their young clients. They can participate. And, with training, they can spot the danger signs and know how to intervene. This is a new and very satisfying role for the beauticians. They also get some glossy magazines from Ioana for the coffee tables in the waiting spaces of their salons. (This is strikingly similar to Truckers Against Trafficking that Ashoka Fellow Kendis Paris has made into a very powerful national phenomenon in the U.S.)

Each of these pieces (and more) is important. However, they need to come together and each reinforce the other. Ioana accomplishes this through meetings of the key actors, community by community, so that they can consciously become a team and help one another.

One can't defeat a giant, society-wide pattern of behaviors if one doesn't change the whole system. That is Ioana's core insight. And she's now demonstrated how to do that. The result is that her model has been copied by some 20 other countries.

“Romania has become a major transit for the sale of people into the European Union. Victims as young as 12 years old are trafficked into Romania from destinations as far-reaching as Honduras, Afghanistan, the Congo, and China.”





eLiberare's magazine: Aripi

THE PROBLEM

Romania is the epicenter of trafficking in Europe. It has the highest number of identified labor and sex trafficking victims in Europe, nearly half of whom are minors. Of Romania's human trafficking victims, 45 percent were recruited by an acquaintance or friend. Globally, human trafficking is an industry worth 150 billion dollars annually and directly impacts at least 40 million people who are currently living in some form of slavery.

Traffickers exploit the vulnerabilities and socioeconomic isolation of those dreaming of a better life, leading many to become subjected to forced labor, sexual exploitation, or forced begging. Despite the pervasiveness of the issue, Romania's government and state institutions inadequately enforce international standards for preventing and ultimately eliminating human trafficking. Corruption, lack of training, and, in some cases, even alleged complicity has resulted in very few convictions for alleged traffickers. Judges in Romania also lack the needed, specialized training for dealing effectively with trafficking cases, leaving many victims without proper witness protection and restitution while offering perpetrators easy sentencing deals.

Cultural stigma further exacerbates the problem of trafficking in Romania. Harmful stereotypes and myths desensitize society to cases of exploitation, thus preventing neighbors from taking action. Common perception and thought patterns such as: "Only promiscuous girls and uneducated people can be lured in by traffickers" and "As long as the trafficker offers them a better life than before, it cannot be considered exploitation" create a culture of not seeing, of not acting. Members of the community, who do not have the necessary pattern-recognition framework may well think nothing of a sudden disappearance. That means that good people ultimately cannot play a role in stopping the slavery system.

Those who are vulnerable due to any cause or combination of causes—for example, poverty, job loss, illness, subpar education, abuse, and/or the death of a family member—need those around them to help them see and avoid the risks.

THE STRATEGY

Ioana is tackling the trafficking system at its roots—at the citizen level—by concentrating on shifting mindsets and behaviors of individuals through lobbying efforts, education initiatives, and public campaigns. To build a protective barrier between vulnerable individuals and human traffickers at the communal level, *eLiberare* follows a five-step strategy.

“Ioana Bauer helps prevent human trafficking through information and awareness efforts, prevention, identification and referral workshops, external assistance for reintegration, but also through advocacy and public policies. Along with 5,000 teachers, it modified the national curriculum to include antitrafficking prevention classes, reaching over 600,000 young people.”

Biz[®]

Ioana and her team begin by mapping the ecosystem to pinpoint where their intervention will have the greatest impact. Next, they conduct rigorous research to identify and empower groups of stakeholders who would be the most impactful in driving change. Third, *eLiberare* connects with these key stakeholders to co-create tools for anti-trafficking partners in order to address the specific needs of the given at-risk group. To ensure these mechanisms are used by anti-trafficking stakeholders, Ioana reinforces their involvement with tailored incentives. These incentives can be as simple as distributing *eLiberare's* magazine "Aripi" to beauticians, or giving highly-appreciated diplomas to first responders who complete anti-trafficking trainings. The last step is knowledge and material circulation, including through digital outreach, to achieve significant penetration of the market with a given tool.

Recognizing the key role peers can play in preventing trafficking, *eLiberare* has persuaded the government to require anti-trafficking classes for all teenagers in Romania. Ioana designed engaging sessions that help students see how the whole system works—from the initial enticement on the web—and how to help protect their friends. She also follows up to ensure the classes are given and issues certificates of completion. Over 600,000 high school students have undergone this training and thousands of certified teachers have been trained to recognize warning signs and respond to human trafficking threats.

eLiberare's tools are designed to spread. Ioana has translated the course materials into English and is piloting education awareness programs in 18 other countries. Through her five-step learning process, Ioana has developed trafficking prevention and early identification training materials for society-wide use. They include, for example, "Hidden in Plain Sight", a manual for community members, and "Trauma-Informed Care" manuals to train first responders. Through her training and subsequent campaign efforts, *eLiberare* has ensured that every Romanian embassy in the EU has a professionally trained person available to identify victims of human trafficking and prevent further exploitation.

To drive the national movement, *eLiberare* also lobbies for policy changes to address trafficking. They launch highly creative, accessible social media campaigns that have reach and are effective for building support for desired changes from a broad public audience. This support becomes behavior and

policy change. Once recent campaign was effective in targeting targeting young people and potential victims reached 150,000 people offline and 727,700 online—with 84 percent of viewers reading the whole page.

Ioana is also leading her anti-trafficking community groups to **1)** create alternative employment for people who might otherwise fall victim to trafficking; **2)** encourage community members to be alert for signs of trafficking activity and report any suspected changes, e.g., prolonged absence from schools; and **3)** build a movement making it illegal for private companies to engage in any way with trafficking activities.

THE PERSON

At 16, Ioana took the path that many Romanians of her generation followed and moved abroad for a better future. It was during this time that Ioana was most vulnerable to potentially being trafficked. Despite the various unverified jobs she took on to survive, exploitation remained at bay.

Once Ioana completed her bachelor's degree remotely, she studied in America with plans to move up the corporate ladder. As she maintained ties with her home country through volunteering and donations, it became increasingly apparent that efforts to prevent the problem of violence against women and to abolish human trafficking often went ignored.

The catalyst for Ioana's work occurred during a conference, where Ioana listened to a trafficking survivor recount a similar experience she had—a girl from a loving family who had lost her dad to cancer, accepted an offer from a friend to go abroad and study, and got caught in the nightmare of exploitation.

Within six months, Ioana shifted her life focus to interning in a shelter for survivors of human trafficking in Greece. She repeatedly heard from survivors that they had known human trafficking existed, but never thought it could happen to them. Ioana witnessed how the enticement/entrapment system worked up close and began to see how Romania, with the highest levels of slavery in Europe, impacts the international slave trade. Recognizing far more comprehensive approaches within the community are required for combatting human trafficking around the globe, she asked the social entrepreneur's question: "How can I spike this system?"



Pablo Lecuona

Argentina

 @pabloltfl

 <https://tiflonexos.org/>

como-nos-financiamos

Building Connections through Translating the Inaccessible

Pablo has created a digital problem-solving hub, Tiflonexos, where Spanish speakers with severe visual impairments from around the world can gather knowledge and increase technological access to foster autonomy and self-reliance.

THE NEW IDEA

Imagine if someone suddenly removed 80 percent of what you would have read or watched today. What impact would that have on your day? Now imagine that experience for a lifetime. What impact would your lack of access to information have on your ability to experience—let alone change—the world? On your relationships with those around you?

People with visual impairments need full access to information and reading materials in order to reach their personal potential, to feel true autonomy, and to participate as active citizens in their communities. Having lost his sight as a child, Pablo knew very directly that there was not enough being done to change laws, build communities, and support access to information for people with visual disabilities of all ages. Beginning in Argentina, Pablo founded the civic association and virtual social community: *Tiflonexos*—an integrated network of “hubs” for access to adaptive technologies, free and accessible books, community engagement, and for gathering the voices of citizens with visual disabilities around the world.

Pablo’s *Tiflonexos* began as a small book exchange program, Tiflibros, for people with severe visual impairments. Using a scanner and a program called Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Pablo’s organization can make any printed text accessible to visually impaired learners. How it works: after scanning text, the OCR program converts it to a format that’s recognized by word processors and screen reader programs. Then, using a screen reader on their computer, cell phone, or other device, a visually impaired person can listen to an audio recording of the text and/or print out a copy in braille.

“Tiflonexos, with few resources but titanic effort—managed to extend its networks throughout the world with the proposal of promoting tools that the Internet makes possible and the use of screen reader programs to produce and exchange accessible digital books for the blind.”



Today, *Tiflonexos* has become a reference organization for adapted reading material that focuses on the user. Having expanded to include more than 55,000 books adapted to braille and other accessible formats, this lending library makes materials available for uploading and downloading for a growing number of individual members and 400 organizational members in Latin America. These include associations of the blind and national libraries from the Dominican Republic to Peru.

THE PROBLEM

For people with visual disabilities, a lack of access to information and reading materials prevents their full engagement at school, work, and in the community in the most basic ways. In Argentina, Pablo noticed that government attempts to improve access repeatedly fell short.

For visually impaired school-aged children to learn effectively, they need to be able to follow along with their teachers and classmates. However, in the decentralized education system of Argentina, reading materials are generally chosen by individual teachers and, more times than not, the materials selected aren’t available in formats appropriate for students with disabilities. The Argentine Government has attempted to provide braille texts for school children, but these attempts have been unsuccessful due to delayed publishing cycles for



Pablo and Sylvia Forbin, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) deputy director, at a WIPO committee meeting to discuss implications of Marrakesh Treaty.

new and updated content. The result: students are left trying to follow along in school with texts they cannot make out or severely outdated braille alternatives.

The education system's inability to meet the needs of the visually disabled directly impacts their employment opportunities following graduation. According to data provided by Argentina's National Rehabilitation Service, 80 percent of all visually impaired people do not have a job. Data released by the World Blind Union indicates that only 5 percent of published books are available in accessible formats, and alarmingly lower in developing countries. In Latin America it is estimated that not even 1 percent of Spanish language reading materials are accessible to people with visual disabilities. Without an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge through truly accessible reading materials, people with visual disabilities become "quite invisible," Pablo states.

THE STRATEGY

Pablo's own experience with visual disability has guided his design of solutions that suit users' short- and long-term needs. First, to make resources as accessible as possible, Tiflolibros library membership is free for Spanish-speaking individuals with visual disabilities around the world. Each

member can request the books they want and upload accessible works themselves. Additionally, Tiflonexos offers its members a variety of opportunities for skill development for autonomous living, peer support, access to adaptive technologies, leadership development and project support, as well as job and scholarship information.

Pablo developed a program in Argentina called Access Points to grow membership and encourage participation in *Tiflonexos*. These Access Points are physical and digital hubs where *Teflonexos*-trained managers help sight-impaired individuals solve problems they're facing, provide orientation for new members, and offer internet access.

To build networks and empower community members, *Tiflonexos* offers a virtual meeting place where individuals and organizational members can exchange information about their experiences and partner in matters related to autonomy. Participants can volunteer through the network to help troubleshoot member access issues, consult with banks or other service/business owners on projects to improve accessibility, and coordinate with educational organizations on schooling issues.

On a larger scale, Pablo collaborates with the World Blind Union to influence public policy. He has joined campaigns to provide political defense and technical advice to the governments of the region. In one case, the team promoted the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Treaty of Marrakesh, which eliminated legal barriers to the production and distribution of works in globally accessible formats. Pablo then collaborated with Latin American countries to ratify and enforce the treaty. Together with the Unión Latinoamericana de Ciegos (Latin-American Union for the Blind), Pablo has visited several countries to implement the goals of the treaty by coordinating with local organizations and government officials.

With a growing body of knowledge about the needs and wants of visually impaired people, Tiflonexos has entered into agreements with 40 magazine and book editors whom Pablo trains on how and what to write for people with visual disabilities. Additionally, the organization has created and distributed Accessible Reading Resources Kits to schools and libraries all over the country. In each kit, all Tiflonexos-produced



Fellow Pablo's work through Tiflonexos has resulted in 40 magazine and book editor agreements who Pablo trains on how and what to write for people with visual disabilities.

adapted materials cost 10 times less than the average market price.

Tiflonexos has also acted to influence public policy so that citizens with visual disabilities are further recognized. Before Pablo's active influence on Argentina's legislation, people with visual and reading disabilities were required to make copyright payments in order to have published materials converted to accessible formats. Pablo joined in legislative discussions which ultimately ending in these payments being waived.

THE PERSON

Pablo was born into a family of professionals and avid readers. Despite receiving an early diagnosis that he would lose his sight during childhood, Pablo's mathematics professor mother and engineering father chose to send him to a traditional school and arranged for him to work with a special education teacher. Pablo strongly felt his parents' support for his own autonomy.

Though he felt the support of his family and school community, in fifth grade Pablo had a less accommodating teacher. The lack of support in the classroom forced Pablo to develop alternative strategies, like borrowing his classmates' notes

because he had trouble reading the teacher's writing on the chalkboard. These moments of necessary adaptation significantly influenced his life and taught him the importance of an educational environment that could support visually impaired students. Access to educational materials continued to pose a challenge year after year; printed braille books generally arrived six months after the beginning of the school year, and the content was out-of-date.

Outside of school, Pablo started to participate in the Argentine Library for the Blind (BAC) as a teenager. He was invited to lead several projects—one of his first steps as a young leader at the BAC was the development of a small reading group for exchanging books. The initiative succeeded and eventually became the concept for *Tiflolibros*.

Collaborative Entrepreneurship

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The Power to Change the World

As the world hastens through the turning point years from millennia of organizing around repetition to the new everything-changing and -connected reality, the changes needed to get there become ever clearer. Ashoka has a unique ability to see these paths forward—in part because the patterns that cut across the work of its roughly 4,000 Fellows, the world's top systems and frame change, big-scale social entrepreneurs (i.e., committed to the good of all) are reliably predictive.

The challenge then is how in fact to get all the world to hear and to change.

Over the last six-plus years, Ashoka, led by its São Paulo team, has found the answer. A critical step is to identify the most powerful (and ethical) organizations relevant to the needed framework change, help them grasp their new everything-changing strategic reality, and to shift their core strategy in time. When they do, they become “jujitsu partners”. They give Ashoka’s vision and its practical grasps of the necessary steps ahead the power to truly change the world.

Here are some of the early results from Ashoka’s jujitsu partnership with Santillana, the largest education publisher in Spanish and Portuguese.

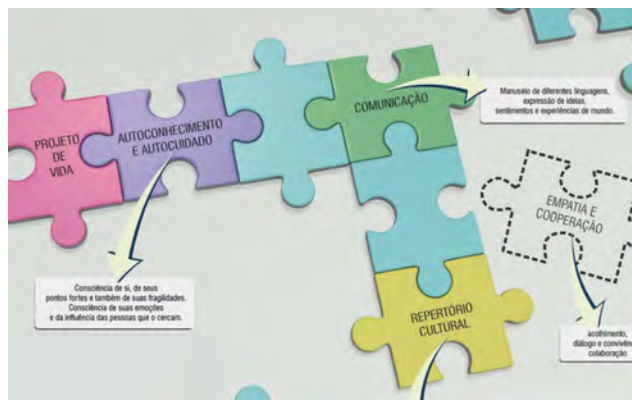
The Value of Your Voice

Brazil’s Ministry of Education has approved “Everyone a Changemaker” learning materials that have been co-authored by Ashoka for up to 1.5 million high school students.

Brazil is undertaking a national effort to reform its school curricula so that teaching no longer fragments knowledge by disciplines, students learn to master empathy, and learning is built around students’ life projects. Which, in an everything-changing new reality, gives them the key to a good, contributing life -- being a confident changemaker. As part of this effort, Ashoka is partnering with the Santillana Group, one of Spain’s largest publishers and owner of Moderna, the leading educational publisher in Brazil, to incorporate an Everyone a Changemaker framework into textbooks and educational platforms for public and private school systems.

For more than six years, Ashoka in Brazil has been establishing strategic partnerships with governments, schools of education, teachers’ unions, media, and publishers to change the definition of what constitutes success in growing up. Santillana is present in 132,000 schools in Brazil that serve 27 million primary and secondary students taught by 1.7 million teachers.

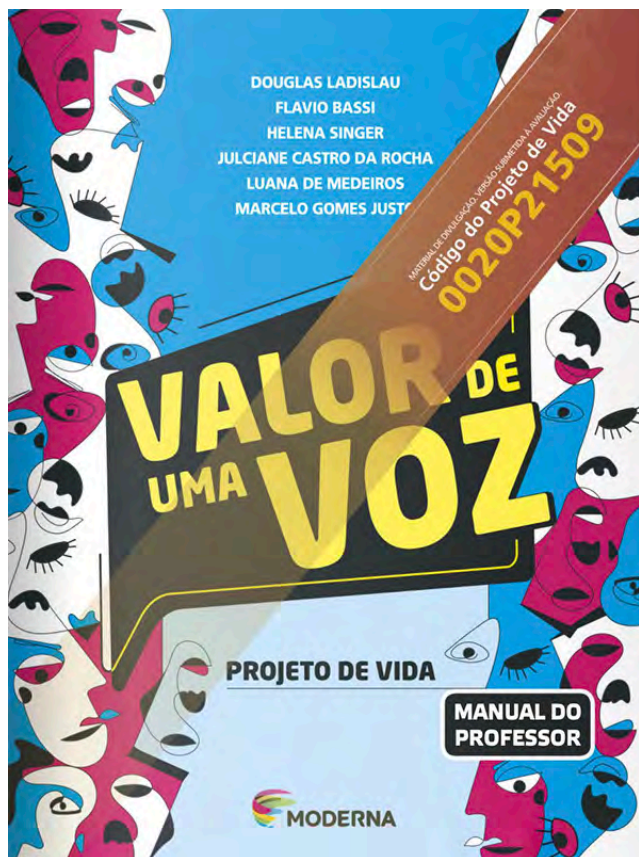
“The partnership between Ashoka and Santillana isn’t ordinary,” said Luciano Monteiro, Santillana’s Institutional Relations Director. “This book results from a unique



co-creation approach. Our collaboration is based on a shared vision and mutual trust. Our efforts to create learning resources that emphasize care, solidarity, responsibility towards the other and the environment reflect the values we cherish.”

Santillana and Ashoka are collaborating on educational materials and methodologies that develop three competencies: personal (self-awareness), social (empathy and interpersonal relationships), and planning (imagining the future while practicing changemaking). Last October, Brazil’s Ministry of Education approved Everyone a Changemaker educational materials that were co-authored by Ashoka as part of Programa Nacional do Livro Didático (PNLD) that purchases textbooks for nearly 30 million students and supplemental resources for teachers in public schools.

Over 50 percent of the students use at least one educational resource developed by Santillana,” said Monteiro. “This book is an opportunity to affect the lives of about 8 million Brazilian students. The partnership with Ashoka brings Santillana into the changemaking know-how. The gain for Ashoka,



we assume, is precisely the outreach scale that we provide, which can accelerate the vision of Everyone a Changemaker.”

The educational materials, titled *The Value of Your Voice*, comprise a student textbook, a teacher’s guide, and three video tutorials that can be used in Brazil’s three-year high schools. *The Value of Your Voice* provides dynamic and modular learning tools that millions of students can use to take action in their schools and communities. Ashoka and Santillana, the publisher of these materials, agreed to adopt the Everyone a Changemaker framework as the narrative backbone of the book.

This effort sets new standards for textbooks that speak directly to the students and stimulate teachers to put students in charge,” said Flavio Bassi, Vice President of Ashoka Latin America. *The Value of Your Voice* will potentially reach



Rhenan, founder of Brejinho Creek Revitalization Project and elected to Ashoka Young Changemakers at 13, and other Ashoka Young Changemakers have their stories featured throughout the book.

1.5 million students across the country in the next year, helping high school teachers and students establish a new pathway towards changemaking and students’ self-development.

These educational materials can also be chosen by teachers throughout Brazil to support an independent study track called “Life Project” that was included in the high school curriculum by the Ministry of Education in 2017. The Life Project independent study aims to develop students’ socioemotional skills so they can envision and design a dream for their future, and make changes to their world that allow them to realize their dream and build a better world for all. Any young person who has thus had a dream, built a team, and changed their world has what is now the key to a good life -- being a changemaker for the good.

Santillana, now positioned as the first publisher to support schools, parents, and young people in seeing this new, essential path to success in growing up, has decided to bring this approach to the Spanish-speaking countries, starting with Argentina and Spain. That it has stepped into this first actor position is more than a brilliant strategy for the company; it greatly strengthens other categories of core Ashoka partners in that work -- education unions, general publishers, education schools, and cities/states. And it is a model for education publishers from Jakarta to London.

Older People: Givers

Throughout most of human history (and prehistory), three very large classes of humans have been relegated to secondary roles: Women, children/teens, and older people. And they have accepted frameworks that say they don't have or are losing qualities that would justify equality.

Perhaps these debilitating stereotypes and role definitions could be explained in a world where hand-to-hand combat was important. However, they are disastrously destructive in the world's new reality -- a place where everything is changing faster and faster and where all of us are intimately and instantly interconnected.

In today's reality, everyone must be a powerful changemaker in order to be able to contribute, to be a part of society. These ancient barriers need to be replaced by their opposites.

Indeed, this is what the world's leading social entrepreneurs, the Ashoka Fellows, are doing. One-third of the Fellows focus on kids; and over 90 percent put them in charge. That's the only way they can learn and practice being the changemakers they must be to have a good life.

The same is true for older people and women. Don't think how to help an older person; instead, ask how that older person can help the world.

Ashoka and the "everyone a changemaker" global movement are very much focused here.

STARTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The first major framework Ashoka and the movement have focused on is a redefinition of what constitutes success in growing up. It is not learning a set of skills that will lead to a job and a lifetime of repetition. That world is dead, and repetitive jobs of all sorts are dying at an exponential rate. Just as the new everything-changing and -connected world is growing exponentially.

Any young person who doesn't know confidentially that they are a changemaker in their teens, preferably early teens, is on a path to failure in life. Imagine the level of change and interconnection to which they must contribute by the time



they're 35! That requires every youth culture to be "everyone a changemaker" cultures.

There are two fundamental reasons for focusing first on young people. It is ethically criminal to allow any young person to go into life without the ability to contribute, ensuring a life of marginalization and failure. That's what we are guaranteeing right now for millions of young people.

Second, once society recognizes that mastering the sophisticated abilities required to be a changemaker is essential for success in life for young people, all the adults are going to know in two minutes that that is true for them as well. And for their organizations and all the people in them.

NEXT: OLDER PEOPLE

Now, Ashoka's Next Now cutting edge has taken up and is working towards similar global thrusts for women and older people. This paper will introduce you to some of the thinking of the group working on older people/longevity. The first step is to fully understand the strategic situation and the main avenues for structural and framework change. The goal is to have a clear map of how older people (and all people) will best fit in the new reality. What abilities do they have to bring, and how does the whole structure of society need to change to enable them in fact to play dramatically different roles? Getting answers and seeing this way forward starts with mapping the work of the current Fellows and electing

at least 10 new Fellows focused on these deeper structural questions in each of the next four or five years (thereby strengthening the core leadership of this part of the “everyone a changemaker” movement).

Once one has that map, Ashoka has the ability in fact to change the world quickly once it is clear where the world needs to go. Learning in part from the patterns of prior great framework transformations, over the last five years, Ashoka has developed, tested, refined, and is now using what it calls the “collaborative entrepreneurship jujitsu” (CEJ) approach to getting the world quickly to see and adopt new patterns. One key element is going to the most powerful relevant organizations (also chosen for ethical fiber and likely collaborative fit) and helping those organizations see the change in their strategic environment in time for them to shift their core strategy. When they do so, they and Ashoka have the same purpose and many ways of collaborating. These collaborations are among these “jujitsu partners” as well as between them and the several elements of the Ashoka and “everyone a changemaker” movement.

What are some of the key elements in the redesign of what life should be like for older people? Here’s a quick summary of some of the key insights.

A REDEFINED LIFECYCLE

Historically, old age has been perceived as a time of decline. This is a destructive and inaccurate framework. Many Fellows are showing what the alternative looks like and how to get there. This overview memo is followed by a special Next Now paper summarizing the Fellows’ work and Next Now’s thinking regarding how to change this framework. It also deals with the closely related, key element of caring. And it provides a fuller introduction to Next Now, which is Ashoka’s next-generation way of finding the most fundamental framework-changing ideas and entrepreneurs and then engaging them individually and together.

CARING

Almost everything about caring and older people needs to change. The healthiest thing we can do is to stop pushing older people away and instead welcome them as powerful givers and changemakers -- as carers. In a world where every year, everyone must learn higher and higher levels of change-making abilities, this is the area where demand is building rapidly. Older people are particularly well-suited to contributing.



Ashoka Fellow Jeeseun Lee supports the rehabilitation of a man in Korea.

When older people are changemakers, aren’t they going to be dramatically more effective in helping young people and one another be changemakers? And indeed, everyone?

Almost everything about how we currently provide care for older people needs radical revision. Who the caregivers are and how we treat them. insurance, finance, housing, how health care is provided, and much more.

OLDER PEOPLE: CHANGEMAKERS

The new reality is an everything-changing and everything-connected world. This strategic environment is not just different; it is fundamentally opposite to what went before. These are hard *facts*.

Like everyone else, older people must master the four changemaking abilities and *know* that they are changemakers. And all the cultures of which they are part need to be “everyone a changemaker” cultures in which all the people are changemakers and the architecture is a “fluid, open, integrated team of teams.”

To the degree that older people are given the opportunity to break out of the old self-defeating stereotype and take on the new power of being a changemaker, that will allow them to leapfrog out of a trap and into a very satisfying life of giving and therefore of happiness, health, and longevity.

To the degree that older people do not make this transition, they are going to be trapped on the wrong side of “the new inequality”. This divides those who have the abilities and are playing in the new game and constantly growing those abilities in this team of teams environment. Those who do not make the transition will be literally unable to contribute. Worse, as those in the game become more and more skilled, this second group will fall further and further behind.

Therefore, ensuring that all older people make this transition quickly has to be the most urgent priority. It flows into and is also strengthened by the others. But this is the heart of the matter.

It's so easy to envisage all the things that an older person with these abilities, with this superpower can contribute. They can do the most valuable thing in the life of a grandchild -- giving that person their first steps into being a changemaker, a giver, a good and therefore happy, healthy person.

Second, in a world desperate for people with these abilities, they will have the (very satisfying) knowledge that they will always be needed and wanted. And they will, in fact, experience so many opportunities.

GETTING THE STRUCTURES RIGHT

This is a very different world. The mental, financial, and a hundred other structures from the past all must change.

Here's an example. Because we have gotten the pricing wrong, there are far too few jobs. Through payroll taxes and other interventions, we have driven up the cost of labor and (responsive to power lobbies) have reduced the cost of energy, materials, and other natural resources. The result is a dramatic, completely unnecessary structural job shortage. Older people are, of course, one of the chief victims.

Therefore, it's critical for older people (and all other marginalized groups) to get this pricing fixed. (Ending payroll taxes and substituting budget neutral taxes on energy, materials, and natural resources would create 45 million full time equivalent

jobs in the U.S. and sharply encourage conservation as well.) (See www.getamericaworking.org, an organization affiliated with Ashoka.)

Consider the damage done by this one (unintended) bad price incentive patterns. How can we structure society to do a far better job with the full array of old and many new incentive patterns? And how can we create decision-making that will adjust the information and incentives flows as change and connection continue to accelerate exponentially?

The faster things change, the shorter the half-life of any solution is. Solutions are still important, but the decision-making framework is becoming more important every day, and solutions less so.

How can we build decision-making structures that will reliably be helpful to older people (and the other disadvantaged groups)? Here we can get help from the work of a rapidly increasing number of Fellows working to ensure Good Tech. I.e. to deal with the structural challenges of AI/the web. For example, how can one make sure that the rapidly multiplying number of algorithms and self-correcting algorithms in a world of accelerating artificial intelligence does not have bias against older people? One Fellow has a rapidly spreading 90-percent AI system that audits algorithms of all sorts to catch these sorts of problems. Another Fellow has brought together community groups and leaders on the one hand and scientists and tech creators on the other systematically to also seek out unfairness, untruths, and bias. Another has engaged scientists as part of their professional responsibility in reviewing the scientific factual accuracy of reporting, regardless of media. (This is one of many examples of Ashoka's advantage as the largest community of the world's leading social entrepreneurs—in every subject matter and geography.)

The above are all important building blocks in what Ashoka hopes will soon be a coherent vision for the lives and contribution of older people in this new, far more promising world. Once we know where the world must go, we will shift into the work of ensuring that it gets there – using the collaborative entrepreneurship jujitsu methodology to tip the world.

Report from Ashoka's Next Now: Longevity

Ashoka's Next Now is demonstrating better ways of finding and engaging the world's best new ideas and entrepreneurs; seeing and developing the deeper patterns; and then using



Danish Ashoka Fellow Ole Kassow, founder of Cycling Without Age, peddles a trishaw in Minnesota so senior citizens can feel the joy of cycling.

Ashoka's new ways to tip societies. It is showing how to do this in four key areas, one being longevity.

ASHOKA NEXT NOW

The Next Now team catalyzes all of Ashoka to invent and change by finding the most powerful social entrepreneurs and partners and then all together taking on four of the world's greatest challenges. This is how entrepreneurs learn.

This team (of four teams) then has two mandates, both critical for Ashoka and its "everyone a changemaker" movement: (1) Quickly seeding and then discovering/defining where that field must go in the new reality of an everything changing and connected world – and then make the needed changes happen, and (2) helping all parts of the Ashoka movement to collaborate in developing much-improved approaches for search and engagement—and for our working together as a "fluid, open, integrated team of teams" globally. The goal is to have all Ashoka adopt these much improved approaches.

Next Now has chosen four areas that are hugely important, that are becoming more so, and where Ashoka would benefit greatly by expanding the number of Fellows and partners dealing with each of these issue areas. The four fields are: Tech and Humanity, Gender, Aging/Longevity, and Climate. A paper that highlights early mapping in Aging and Longevity field follows.



Ashoka Fellow Anne Basting empowers the aging and their caregivers with practices rooted in creative expression.

Searching globally, using new tools and deeper questions, and drawing on Ashoka's world-wide highly skilled presence, each of the four teams will launch ten top social entrepreneur Fellows and their pattern-changing ideas each year for five years. Consider the impact on each field, given that three quarters of Ashoka Fellows have changed the patterns of their field at the national and/or international level within five

years of launch. And then multiply that impact as they collaborate with one another, with almost 4000 other Fellows, and with Ashoka's many (carefully chosen) partners. Each of these steps, synapses, and Ashoka reforms helps open the door to solving these challenges, showing how to take on all the future challenges.

NEXT NOW/NEW LONGEVITY

For the first time in history, there are more people above 65 years old than there are below five. This unprecedented demographic shift requires us to rethink the very fabric of our society. From business to public policy, education, employment, housing, finance, family life, healthcare, transportation, you name it – there isn't one aspect of our lives and economies left untouched by this shift.

While aging is a natural phenomenon, it is also a social creation – how we think, talk, act; the influence of history, culture, language, science, religion; our habits, routines, shared beliefs and individual expectations; our society's policies, programs, systems, institutions, agencies, organizations.

The current mental model for aging is so entrenched that it has largely escaped scrutiny. It claims that we typically reach our peak performance between the ages of 28 and 45, after which we begin a steady decline in old age and obsolescence (see Figure 1).

Such a perception of unavoidable decline creates a world view where we prize security above all. It is leading us down a destructive path where the older we get, the more socially isolated we become – a reality made tragically visible by Covid-19. We have over-commoditized our care systems for the elderly, segregated young from old, and largely eroded older people's agency.

“In overseas nursing homes that have implemented the TimeSlips programme, it was observed that there were more frequent staff-resident and social interaction, and social engagement...staff who participated in the programme also had more positive views of the residents with dementia.”

today

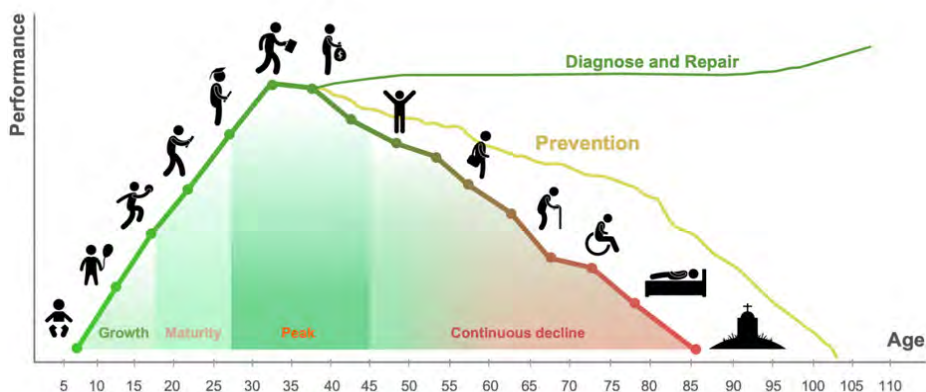


Figure 1 Stages of Human Life and Interventions. Alex Zhavoronkov

Now more than ever we need social entrepreneurs to redefine success as we age. For 40 years Ashoka has believed that the most powerful lever for social progress is an innovative idea in the hands of a leading social entrepreneur—Ashoka Fellows. We have bet on the optimists and the adventurous among us who see the world not as it is but build it as it should be. We have supported more than 3,800 Ashoka Fellows across 90 countries, guiding them to grow unexpected ideas into transformative social progress (three-quarters of Ashoka Fellows change national or international policy within five years of joining).

The defining challenges of our times, such as this unprecedented demographic shift, however, require not a solo entrepreneur changing a big system but a team of the world’s best social entrepreneurs working together to redefine the paradigm. There is no more powerful engine available to keep the world’s systems moving in the right direction than collaborative entrepreneurship. Powered by Ashoka, Next Now/New Longevity is working precisely on that.

Luckily, roughly 80 Ashoka Fellows, have already anticipated this Big Shift. Over the last year, we have looked closely at all their proven ideas and brought them together to unearth a few future-defining patterns across their work. Above all, Ashoka Fellows are leading the way towards the New Longevity, a critical new paradigm essential to building an Everyone a Changemaker world. A mindset where aging is synonymous with growth, not decline. Ashoka Fellows have redefined longevity to mean not the number of years one lives, but the ability to find maximum growth, security, and happiness at any stage of life, and to manage the transitions between these stages in ways that enhance both security, growth and agency.

From Today’s Paradigm...

- Security over growth
- Three-stage life ending in obsolescence / retirement
- Social isolation
- Young and old segregated
- Retirement monolith
- Difficult transitions
- Commoditized care
- Careers neglected, undervalued

...to Tomorrow’s Paradigm

- Growth throughout life
- Multiple stages that sustain lifelong fulfillment/contribution
- Rich networks
- Young and old integrated
- New roles and options
- Skillful transitions
- Natural care
- Careers protected, rewarded, integral

Ashoka Fellows point to several growing economic trends: new professions, new services, and technologies that serve the particular needs of senior citizens; and new forms of employment that not only keep seniors connected and engaged, but find real value in their knowledge and experience. Sergio Serapiao from Brazil and Marc Freedman from the USA are key architects of this transformation. Meanwhile, Fellows like Ximena Abogabir reframe the expectations, attitudes, and actions of aging individuals by driving a “Plan for 100” movement in Chile. You may not make it to 100, but the point is to have a real plan for security, growth, and happiness beyond age 60.

Marc Freedman, *Encore* (USA)

Marc has primed American seniors, public organizations, and citizens for the Big Shift by drawing seniors’ strengths: a lifetime of experience and advanced empathy. Matching seniors to young people not only creates mentors, but has paved the way for intergenerational changemaking.



Ximena Abogabir, Travesia100 (Chile)

What if everyone envisioned a century-long life? Ximena found that 65% of Chileans wish to continue working, after retirement age, not just for income but for meaning and connection. Her programs and digital platforms allow seniors to take stock of their needs and abilities and present them to employers seeking to add the senior advantage.



Anne Basting, TIME SLIPS (USA)

Dementia, memory loss, and cognitive decline all demand new ways of thinking and communicating. Anne's motto is *Forget memory, try imagination!* Bonds of love, trust, and dignity can be sustained through shared creativity just as well as shared memory. Creativity is therefore a fundamental skill both for individuals and for institutions. Anne's methods are in use in more than 20 countries.



Sergio Serapiao, LAB60+ (Brazil)

Sergio works with major employers such as banks and tech companies to create senior-specific roles, products, and services. He has created a "gig economy" platform for seniors, which allows them to work on a flexible schedule. A paycheck is nice, but Sergio measures success in terms of health and well-being, including social connection.



Anil Patel, CARERS WORLDWIDE (India)

Caring is a universal phenomenon, and untold millions of children and adults worldwide dedicate their lives to the well-being of another, often to the detriment of their own health and security. In addition to direct programs that improve the lives of tens of thousands of carers, for the first time, informal family carers are being counted by census and included in policy formulation.



We are also seeing important patterns in the ways our Fellows are redefining care. Caring is rooted in the experience of millions of ordinary people learning and doing in "situations of care" — often with great creativity. They may be unpaid family carers in Canada or Bangladesh, or the staff of nursing homes in the American Midwest. Care establishes its own context, and is a powerful re-organizer of human relationships, whose moral fibers take on new meaning: trust, respect, dignity, communication, service, friendship, empathy, love. Developing the ability to care means developing and spreading these positive values.

Al Etmanski, PLAN (Canada)

Al created a system of mutual support among families with disabled children, then used their collective insight to shape new models of financial planning, while informing new areas of law and public policy. He later addressed employment and savings. Today, as a veteran social entrepreneur, Al is developing the concept of *Natural Caring*, a recognition that all human well-being—including that of the elderly—depends largely on family, friends, neighbors, and community.



We are well on our way to identifying the new paradigms that will define the Longevity field in the future. The teams of Fellows listed above are our inaugural Next Now/New Longevity co-creator team. Together, we are narrowing in on the one or two things that must happen if the world is to make this leap. And then we must make them in fact happen. Which is when the full entrepreneurial force of the hundreds of top entrepreneurs collaborating comes into full play. If we can together make those few critical things happen in seven to ten key places on the planet, we will tip the world.

This will only be possible if we continue to find, select and engage the most innovative social entrepreneurs and partners shaping this field. In 2020, a year where the whole world was shaken by the global pandemic, the need for more solutions that reimagine caring and longevity could not have been made clearer. This year we welcome five new social entrepreneurs into Ashoka's network who are shaping the New Longevity in France, Poland, Canada, South Korea, and Venezuela. Help us find the next generation of partners for Next Now/New Longevity.

The Next Generation's Best Changemakers

Ashoka Young Changemakers are their generation's best changemakers.

They have had a dream, built a team, and changed their world. Having done so, they know they are changemakers: and they want to keep growing their changemaking superpower—and help everyone else get this extraordinary, life-changing gift.

They are selected by Ashoka using a process very similar to the one it uses so reliably to find the world's best adult social entrepreneurs, the Ashoka Fellows. The chief difference between the Ashoka process for Fellows and for Ashoka Young Changemakers (age 11–20) is an added step: the Ashoka Young Changemakers (AYCers) are interviewed by a small panel of AYCers from other parts of the world. Not surprisingly, this has proven to be, in many ways, the toughest step—and also the one most useful to the candidates.

There is one big difference in what Ashoka seeks other than the stage in the human life cycle involved. AYCers are selected not only for their remarkable qualities, but also to be very important co-leaders in the everyone a changemaker global movement. They need to decide that this is a sufficiently important and natural fit for them that they will commit to the time involved—even though their life already includes studying and the venture they have launched. AYCers are, in fact, critical for the movement. There are three reasons:

- What significant social change movement in history has not had young people play a central role? The values involved are especially clear and important to young people. A new field has room for new leaders. Young people have far, far less to unlearn than any adult. And, as one Ashoka young person said to a business person from Texas who doubted that young people could do these things: “There is a difference between you and us. If it doesn't work, we can just start over.”
- No animal species would exist if the adults did not spend much of their life force helping the young grow up. In other words, at the deepest level, adults are moved, sometimes to tears, when they experience a young person who totally has her power and is using it for the



TransEnd Team with members of their 2000-strong network of transgender people in Bangladesh

good. They are experiencing in that moment what the deepest success in life is. That is a power that no adult in the “everyone a changemaker” movement has.

- Who could conceivably be half as good at providing leadership for young people? (Or, for that matter, influencing parents or teachers?) Who else knows the forces facing a young person who is ready to step up with her dream, her team, to change her world than someone who has had to face down the old youth culture, the adults, and all the bureaucratic barriers the adults have created (the “insurance problem,” “the janitors won't allow it,” etc.)? And who else has the savvy and credibility of having done it and truly knowing how to do it? This understanding is revelatory for adults even more than for young people.

Here are two stories of Ashoka Young Changemakers at work—Manat from the United States (but also working in India and Palestine) and Tanha from Bangladesh.



MANAT: OBJECT & FIRST STEPS

United States

Finding herself ‘uncool’ in middle school, thanks to her interest in STEM, Manat began questioning gender stereotypes that rob young people of opportunities to explore their passions. This led her to launch Object, at the age of 12, as a support system for young girls to build self-efficacy in their chosen fields.

Object, as in “objecting to female stereotypes,” hosts monthly workshops for girls of ages 8-15 with successful women speakers from various fields - Olympic medalists to city mayors to authors and start-up CEOs. The guests share their story, lead an activity to give girls exposure to their field of work, and mingle with girls over food. Starting with support from her friend and parents, Manat did her first workshops and soon built a team of five other young girls who coordinate



Young girls engaging in activities during an Object event

social media, speakers, outreach, and organization building.

As of Summer 2019, when she was elected an Ashoka Young Changemaker, Manat had connected over 500 girls with women role models in various fields - sports, politics, entrepreneurship, among others. Their work has since expanded to India and Palestine, reaching over 2500 young women prior to the pandemic, and many more virtually since.

Manat represents a generation of young people determined to build each other up so everyone can be successful, happy, and healthy. Recognizing that the world today needs everyone to have her changemaking superpower, Manat created First Steps, a campaign that chronicles the stories of young changemakers and the earliest steps in their changemaking journey - making these stories more accessible to other



Participants at a monthly Object Workshop

young people out there who may have the drive but not the know-how of launching impactful initiatives. With stories about the first days, weeks, and months of changemaking in a variety of fields, Manat is helping readers and viewers make a difference in their community, and in the course of doing so, become confident, life-long changemakers who a fast changing world will always seek out.

Since her election, Manat has been an invaluable co-leader in Ashoka’s “everyone a changemaker” movement. She has worked closely with the leadership team at the American Federation of Teacher in creating webinars for their members across the country on ‘Fostering Changemaking in the Classroom’ and adding knowledge resources on the topic to AFT’s ‘sharemylesson’ online platform for educators.

She teamed up with Ashoka Fellow Riccarda Zezza to create the ‘Parenting Changemakers’ videos and resources to help parents learn the ‘how tos’ of supporting their kids (and themselves) get started on their changemaking journey. As a student journalist herself, Manat has brought the stories of young changemakers and the core message of the larger “everyone a changemaker” movement to further thousands of young people through publications like the Log Angeles Times - High School Insider.



Young girl listing her ‘superpowers’ during an activity at a monthly Object workshop



TANHA: TRANSEND & GENDER-DIVERSE CHANGEMAKERS

Bangladesh

As a child, having encountered transgender women who visited her neighborhood for events, Tanha asked her mother and learned that Bangladesh has over a million transgender people, most of whom are marginalized. She began talking with transgender people at bus stops and parks. Her empathy grew as she came to understand the number and complexities of issues faced by the transgender community in South Asia.

This deep understanding led her to create TransEnd. It empowers the transgender community in Bangladesh through education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Tanha gathered a team of five passionate and driven peers. Their first activity was to survey members of the transgender community in their area to better understand their needs and identify opportunities for solutions. Learning from this effort, the team worked on training and securing employment in the fashion industry – modeling, sales etc. – and had their first success, eight eligible transgender people with new jobs.

From that initial win, Tanha has grown TransEnd into a trust-based network of over 2000 transgender people from different parts of Bangladesh – coordinated by the ‘gurus’ of each group. Transgender people, abandoned by their families, have little to no choice but to move into living with transgender social groups for their survival. These groups are led by a guru whose identity is shared externally only with those who the group holds in high confidence. With this network at the center, TransEnd has worked on a series of awareness activities designed to build an army of allies. Their social media campaigns that use stories, animated videos, creative posts, webinars, and celebrations reach over 100,000 people every month.



Tanha with members of their TransEnd network during a business opening event

Tanha’s team is steadily building new alliances, career openings, and needed services. It has built strong bridges to the LGBTQ movement. In early 2020 Tanha launched a logistics startup ‘TransPort’ which trains and employs members from the transgender community as delivery personnel and back-office managers. Third, through collaborations with mental health organizations, TransEnd has built ‘Project One Nation’. It trains volunteers to be mental health first responders for three hotlines dedicated to the transgender community.

“Bangladesh has never been part of the [International Day Against Transphobia] celebrations before, but this year, TransEnd is taking this initiative for the first time”

The Daily Star

After interacting with other young changemakers at Ashoka, Tanha realized the transgender community had to find their own power as changemakers. With this insight, TransEnd has collaborated with several organizations to conduct workshops for transgender people interested in becoming changemakers. She then offers follow-up support including mentorship and seed funding for participants. Moving forward, Tanha is looking to create other forms of access to credit for the transgender community, predominantly unbanked and considered un-bankable. Through this support system for gender-diverse changemakers, Tanha is making the ‘everyone’ part Ashoka’s ‘everyone a changemaker’ movement a demonstrable reality in Bangladesh.

Tanha is also helping build our movement by co-leading various aspects of it in Bangladesh. Recently, Tanha spoke with Y TV, one of Bangladesh’s major youth media platform, sharing her journey, helping thousands of young people imagine a new, far more powerful future. Working with the Ashoka team and other young changemakers in South Asia, Tanha is co-leading conversations with major media houses like The Daily Star and The Dhaka Tribune and other jujitsu partners in her country, helping them see the new game of changemaking and learn the ‘how tos of supporting a whole generation of young people to break out from the old game of repetition. Similarly, Tanha is a partner in Ashoka’s global Next Now initiative on Gender & Justice, where she works with many Ashoka Fellows and ecosystem partners in showing the world why changemaking is the key to success in growing up and in addressing old and new inequalities – for all.

Organizing the Movement

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Ashoka Leaders

WORLD COUNCIL



Marjorie C. Benton

Marjorie, very much a fellow spirit, has founded and co-founded many socially important organizations including: the Chicago Foundation for Women; the Women's Issues Network; and The Peace Museum. She has been board chair of Save

the Children, and she served as a delegate to the United Nations special sessions on disarmament in the 1970s, and then as U.S. Ambassador to UNICEF.



Vera Cordeiro

One of the early Brazilian Ashoka Fellows, Vera Cordeiro founded Associacao Saude Crianca which addresses the root causes that prevent poor families from providing adequate care to their children when discharged from the hospital.



Marian Wright Edelman

Marian Wright Edelman is a life-long advocate for disadvantaged Americans and is the President of the Children's Defense Fund. Under her leadership, CDF has become the nation's strongest voice for children and families.



Anupam Puri

Anupam ("Tino") Puri founded and managed McKinsey's practice in India. In 1996, he was elected a managing director, and from 1998 onwards, he oversaw all of McKinsey's Asian and Latin American practices. Tino was an incorporator

and a founder board member of Ashoka.



Sir Shridath Ramphal

Sir Shridath Ramphal is Co-Chair of the Commission on Global Governance and President of the World Conservation Union. He is Former Secretary General of the British Commonwealth, Chancellor of the University of West Indies and

former Foreign Minister and Attorney General in Guyana.



Muhammad Yunus

Nobel Prize recipient, Muhammad Yunus, provided the global leadership that made microcredit a universally accepted development tool. He went on to create a series of social businesses, including the largest telephone service in the region.

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Mining of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences
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Founder, Council on Economic Priorities

Theodore R. Marmor

Professor of Public Policy and Management and
Professor of Political Science, Yale School of Management

Offices Worldwide

Ashoka Global and North America

1700 North Moore Street, Suite 2000
Arlington, VA 22209 1939
UNITED STATES

t: 1 703 527 8300

f: 1 703 527 8383

Ashoka East Africa

Nexus Co-Working
Ground Floor, Riara Corporate Suites
Riara Road, Nairobi
KENYA

t: 245 0 202 628 738

Ashoka Argentina

Zapiola 1451
CP 1426 Caba
ARGENTINA

t: 54 11 4393 8646

e: infoargentina@ashoka.org

Ashoka Anglophone West Africa

F8 Lasode Crescent
Off Ozumba Mbadiwe Street
Victoria Island, Lagos
NIGERIA

t: 23 412 950 872

e: jnzerem@ashoka.org

Ashoka Austria and Central Eastern Europe

c/o Haus der Philanthropie,
Schottenring 16/3.OG
Vienna A-1010

AUSTRIA

t: 43 1 3840100

e: austria@ashoka.org

Ashoka Belgium

Rue Joseph II/20 Jozef-straat II1
000 Brussels
BELGIUM

t: 32 2 675 2219

e: ashokabelgium@ashoka.org

Ashoka Brazil

R. Dr. Virgílio de Carvalho Pinto
433 - Sala 8 - Pinheiros
São Paulo - SP
05415-000

BRASIL

t: 55 11 3085-9190

e: brasil@ashoka.org

Ashoka Canada

336 Adelaide Street West, Suite 606
Toronto, Ontario M5V 1R9
CANADA

t: 1 416 646 2333

f: 1 416 646 1875

e: canadainfo@ashoka.org

Ashoka Chile

Gral Bustamante 26
Providencia, Región Metropolitana
CHILE

t: 56 2 220 00232

e: bdominguez@ashoka.org

Ashoka Egypt (MENA)

25 Masr Helwan Agricultural Road
ElZiney Tower (10th Floor)
Maadi, Cairo, 11451
EGYPT

Ashoka France

Station F, 55, boulevard Vincent Auriol
75013 Paris
FRANCE

t: 33 1 40 26 30 83

e: france@ashoka.org

Ashoka Germany

Prinzregentenplatz 10
Munich 81675
GERMANY

t: 49 89 2175 49 754

e: ashokagermany@ashoka.org

Ashoka India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka

54, 1st Cross, Domlur Layout
Bangalore 560071
INDIA

t: 91 80 4274 5777

e: india@ashoka.org

Ashoka Indonesia

Jl. Durma No. 17, Turrangga
Bandung, West Java, 40264
INDONESIA

t: 62 81 1222 7201

e: indonesia@ashoka.org

Ashoka Israel

POB 170
Ein Carmel 30860
ISRAEL

t: 972 52 6967722

e: israel@ashoka.org

Ashoka Italy

Via Soperga 36 C/O COSV
20127 Milano
ITALY

t: 003 934 788 35904

e: italy@ashoka.org

Ashoka Japan

1-11-2 Hiroo, Shibuya-Ku, Room 407
150-0012 Tokyo
JAPAN

t: 81 3 6459 3144

e: japan@ashoka.org

Ashoka Korea

#507 Heyground
22-8 Sungsoo 1-Ga.
Sungdong-Gu, Seoul
SOUTH KOREA

t: 82 2737 6977

e: korea@ashoka.org



Ashoka Mexico and Central America

Av. Álvaro Obregón 168
Piso 2, Col. Roma Norte
Mexico City DIF 06700
MEXICO
t: 52 55 5256 2820
e: ashokamexico@ashoka.org

Ashoka Middle East and North Africa

25 Masr Helwan Agricultural Road
ElZiney Tower (10th Floor)
Maadi, Cairo, 11451
EGYPT
t: 2 02 253 285 86
f: 2 02 236 544 04
e: venture-assist@ashoka-arab.org

Ashoka Netherlands

Lange Voorhout 32
Den Haag, 2514 EE
NETHERLANDS
t: 221 33 825 43 43
e: info@ashoka.nl

Ashoka Nordic

Fack 46, Norrskan House
Birger Jarlsgatan 57 c 113 56
Stockholm
SWEDEN
t: 0046 72 579 7376
e: scandinavia@ashoka.org

Ashoka Philippines

c/o co.lab
Unit 301, Three Brixton Building,
#3 Brixton St., Barangay Kapitolyo
Pasig City, Metro Manila 1603
PHILIPPINES
t: 632 899 4587
e: philippines@ashoka.org

Ashoka Poland

Ul. Michała Paca 40
04-386 Warszawa
POLAND
t: 43 1 38 40 100
e: info_pl@ashoka.org

Ashoka Romania

Strada Gina Patrichi 6
București 010449, România
Găzduiți de RAF
ROMANIA
t: +40 799 827 088
e: romania@ashoka.org

Ashoka Sahel (Senegal)

Cite Sipress II Villa 176
Dakar, Dakar Fann, BP 15090
SENEGAL
t: 221 33 827 37 19
e: ctoure@ashoka.org

Ashoka Singapore/Malaysia

112 Robinson Road #10-03
Singapore, 68902
SINGAPORE
t: 65 9154 890
e: singapore@ashoka.org

Ashoka Southern Africa

Office 15, The Business Exchange
195 Jan Smuts Avenue
Rosebank
2193 Johannesburg
SOUTH AFRICA
t: 27 011 447 1758
e: southernafricainfo@ashoka.org

Ashoka Spain/Portugal

Calle de Méndez Álvaro, 9 Bajos
28045 Madrid
SPAIN
t: 34 91 448 9962
e: coordinador@ashoka.org

Ashoka Switzerland

Rue Rothschild 50
1202 Geneva
SWITZERLAND
t: 41 078 685 45 60
e: switzerland@ashoka.org

Ashoka Thailand

101/8 Phahonyothin 32 Road
Senanikom, Chatuchak
Bangkok 10900
THAILAND
t: 66 29 41 9294
e: thailand@ashoka.org

Ashoka Turkey

Asmali Mescit Mah. Mesrutiyet Cad.
Gen. Yazgan Sk. No:14
Beyoglu–Istanbul
TURKEY
t: 90 538 437 9498
e: turkiye@ashoka.org

Ashoka United Kingdom

People's Mission Hall
20-30 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1EW
UNITED KINGDOM
t: 44 20 8980 9416
e: infouk@ashoka.org

Ashoka Venezuela/Andean Region

Av Francisco de Miranda
Mene Grande Bldg, 5th Floor
Office 5-4 URb Los Palos Grandes
Caracas
VENEZUELA
t: 58 212 421 9005
e: venezuela@ashoka.org

Ensuring the Future: The Endowments

Ashoka's endowments provide an enduring base of support for innovation across the globe. Their growth also helps ensure Ashoka's long-term ability to serve a field that will be critically needed as long as society must adapt and change. Ashoka's endowments have had good results over the last 35 years. Managed with a five-year perspective by three endowment trustees, the trustees invest with a long-term perspective and are committed to maintaining the real value of the funds before agreeing to disbursements. Given by both institutions and individuals, Ashoka endowments often create a permanent statement about or memorial to someone the donor especially loves or respects.



The Amaterasu Endowment

For the support of women Fellows working outside the Americas in the areas of women's reproductive rights, women's empowerment, or sustainable community. Endowed by Katherine Victoria Randolph. Established in December 1999.



The Henry Beal Endowment

In memory of Henry Beal, a founding friend of Ashoka and, before his death, one of its Endowment Trustees. He was one of America's most inspired and effective environmental managers and leaders. The endowment is focused on environment issues and HIV/AIDS. Established in 1992.



The E. Noel Bergere Endowment

In memory of Noel Bergere who, though crippled by polio at three years old, became Master of the High Court. He was also a leader of the disabled and a patron of education in Australia. Focused on supporting a Fellow who is handicapped and/or whose work relates either to education or the law. Established in 1984.



The Joan Bergere Endowment

Joan Bergere came to America as a young musician and later helped other young musicians get their first career opening at major New York City public concerts. She was a loving parent and a citizen of the world with broad interests. Established in 1982.



The Benjamin and Anne Bloom Endowment

Ben Bloom was a successful lawyer and businessman who, as the son of immigrant parents, believed strongly in creating opportunities for others to succeed as he had succeeded. This endowment has been established to honor his desire to provide opportunities for those who are willing to work hard but need a chance in life. Anne, his lifelong partner, passed away in 2019, and thoroughly agreed with

him about providing opportunities for others. She would be honored to add her name to this endowment. Established in 1996, expanded in 2019. Unrestricted.



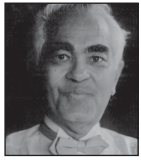
The Columbia Ashoka Fellowships I and II

The Columbia Foundation created two endowments to enable Ashoka to elect more women as Fellows. Established in 1986.



The C.M. Cresta Fund

Established in 1986. Unrestricted.



The Padma Rag Datta Endowment

Dr. Padma Rag Datta dedicated his life's work to using science to improve human welfare and preserve the environment. His father, Parasuram Datta, founded a wildlife sanctuary in Assam and was a strong believer in social justice. The family wishes that their legacy be continued through this endowment so that Ashoka Fellows may find their own path to the simple and profound acts that make a difference. Established in 1996.



The Sarah Dunbar Endowment

Sarah Dunbar had an enduring concern for downtrodden people whose environment had been destroyed or reduced by modern times, especially by war and industry. Contributing to maintaining a people-friendly environment was another of her passions. Established in 2000.



Endowment Fund B

Established in 1999. Unrestricted.



The Michael Fein Honorary Endowment

This endowment is in memory of Michael Fein and his tremendous ability to touch so many lives. He was very passionate about the social enterprises that Ashoka fulfills. Established in 2001.



The Maurice Fitzgerald Ashoka Fellowship

Maurice Fitzgerald taught in the Philippines after the Spanish American War. He loved teaching and the people of the Philippines. Created for a teaching and education fellowship. Established in 1986.



The John and Eleanor Forrest Ashoka Fellowship

John and Eleanor Forrest were the loving parents of long time Ashoka partner Jack Forrest. Established in 1986. Unrestricted.



The Fort Hill Endowment Fund

Established in 1993. Unrestricted.



The Fox Peace Endowment

The Fox Peace Endowment is inspired by the Peace Testimony articulated by George Fox in 1651 and by the commitment of Tom Fox, who was killed in Iraq in 2006, while serving as a witness for peace. Its purpose is to identify and launch social entrepreneurs and their projects dedicated to the development of structure, conditions, and communities that nurture peace.



The Buckminster Fuller Ashoka Fellowship

For Fellows working to alleviate hunger in South Asia. Established in 1983.



The General Endowment Fund for Ashoka

The General Endowment for Ashoka was established in 1998 from numerous individual contributions earmarked for endowment purposes. Unrestricted.



The Sanjoy Ghose Endowment

This endowment is a tribute to the work and sacrifice that Ashoka Fellow Sanjoy Ghose made in building a culture of volunteerism and a sense of citizen responsibility among the youth in India's northeastern state of Assam. It is a legacy of the work he began to reorient the area's youth away from violence and anarchy towards constructive and active social involvement in the face of ethnic strife, insurgent movements, and state repression. Sanjoy was abducted on July 4, 1997. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) claimed responsibility for this event.

Unrestricted. Established in 1998.



William T. Golden Ashoka Endowment

Bill Golden helped launch Ashoka in 1980.

Bill Golden held lifelong enthusiasm for science and the arts. He studied business and used his skills to accomplish useful work in diverse fields. He was himself an artist, repeatedly forging ingenious and effective ways to promote education, research, and understanding.

If asked about his purpose, Bill would answer, with a twinkle in his eye, "to do interesting things."

In common with Ashoka, Bill Golden brought opportunity to people with ideas for highly constructive ends. For over three decades, Bill was a close partner and advisor and also an Endowment Trustee for Ashoka.



The James P. Grant Ashoka Endowment

Named for the late Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and created by his friends, colleagues, and family to "continue his life's work and world vision." The endowment's purposes include supporting innovative leadership that contributes to social development among children and the disadvantaged, developing new methods and low-cost technologies to further social development, and encouraging dialogue leading to policies that improve the lives of children and all humankind. Established in 1998.



The John and Judy Harding Investment Fund

John was from the Midwest and Judy from New England. They met at a Yale-Brown football game in 1948. They brought up seven children and were engaged Catholics. He brought his experience in law, banking, and accounting with him when he moved to Omaha to become Warren Buffet's second hire. Buffet commented: "John Harding was my friend for more than 50 years. Everyone he dealt with knew he had their best interests as his only consideration." Like John, Judy lived a life

guided by values reflecting her deep New England roots. She was engaged with the elderly and the poor. She was a passionate humanitarian and social justice advocate. John and Judy lived lives of love and respect in action quietly, modestly, deeply. Both passed in 2019, marking a very deep loss for the Ashoka community. They recognized the historic turning point now before the world and Ashoka's unique ability to help it through the transition quickly, safely, and wisely. Because Ashoka will therefore have to innovate faster and more broadly than ever, they left a gift to Ashoka designed to continue their support for this innovation during five or more years of intense innovation.



The Jeroen Hehuwat Endowment

In memory of Jeroen Hehuwat, an easygoing young man, with many interests and many good friends. His greatest passion was the natural world and he loved hiking, climbing, and whitewater rafting. In April 2015, he was on a hiking and climbing expedition to Yala Peak in Nepal when an earthquake struck, causing a landslide in the Langtang Valley where Jeroen and his team lost their lives. The endowment will support Ashoka Fellows and Youth Venturers in Indonesia. Established in 2015.



The Albert O. Hirschman Fellowship

Given to honor Professor Hirschman’s long leadership in the field of practical, grassroots development. Established in 1986. Unrestricted.



The Jimmy Hopkins Fellowship

Jimmy Hopkins was a Judge in the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division. He was known as a very kind man who was a master of the law. Many of his decisions and interpretations are the basis for important legal precedent. Created for a Fellow in the legal or judicial arena. Established in 1997.



The Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund Ashoka Fellowship

For support of Fellows working in Mexico. Established in 1989.



The Abdul Waheed Khan Memorial Endowment

Abdul Waheed Khan, who was elected an Ashoka Fellow in Pakistan in 2003, was assassinated in 2013, following death threats for his work. This Endowment celebrates his life and work. Abdul is remembered by his colleagues for his gentle, empathetic, persistent and values-driven approach to finding peaceful solutions to problems. He wanted all children to learn and be prepared to succeed in the modern world.

Because of his country’s inadequate investment in education, poor communities often create their own schools, typically madrasas. Responding to what parents and local communities wanted, Abdul brought new approaches to and modern subjects to learning, including mathematics, science, computers and English. Abdul leaves a legacy of great courage and determination; a spirit that was committed to change in spite of risk; and work that will have a lasting impact through the many thousands of children who will be able to live far richer, more open lives because of Abdul. Established in 2013.



The Martin Klitzner Endowment

Marty Klitzner was an anomaly. He spent his life in the financial industry, most of it as president of Sunrise Capital Partners, a successful hedge fund. Yet he and his family lived comfortably, not opulently. The family’s extra money was for others—in the local community and world-wide. Marty was one of the most loved and respected men in the American financial community. He was known for his integrity, ready smile and good humor.

In the mid-nineties when Marty learned about Ashoka he said, “This is my kind of an organization.” Until his death in 2012, he was a fervent fan and contributor. He was delighted to have dinner with Bill Drayton and discuss their shared ideal of helping others in the most effective way.

The greed and excesses of the financial industry are a shame on it and our society. Hopefully, the Ashoka Fellows supported in Marty’s name will help start the reversal of this culture. Established in 2012.



Svayam Krishi Endowment

“The soul of India lives in its villages.”
-Mahatma Gandhi

India has 640,000 villages, which saw three revolutions since the 1970s: rice and wheat, milk and poultry. As a result, India is number one in milk production and among the top five in poultry. Smart village revolution can be next in providing holistic and integrated development.

Svayam Krishi Endowment was created to support social entrepreneurs and changemakers to build models for sustainable villages and self-reliance among villagers and to spread the models across villages in India. Sustainability means that villagers are able to meet their human potential and flourish within the village on a long-term basis rather than needing to migrate to cities for sustenance. Self-reliance means that families and individuals within the village are able to meet their needs without external assistance. The Endowment meets these objectives: (1) through the election and support of Ashoka Fellows whose work strongly supports these objectives and who will bring significant pattern change across India, and/or (2) through enabling young people in the villages to play important roles contributing to these same objectives, first (a) by helping them to dream their dream, build their team, and change their world for the better, and second (b) by enabling them to be role models and to provide active and broad-impact self-reliance leadership.

Dr. Ratnam Chitturi has taken this initiative with the hope that many others will join and contribute to this Endowment to bring a sustained benefit to rural India. Established in 2018.



The W. Arthur Lewis Ashoka Fellowship

Given to honor Professor Lewis’s remarkably broad contributions to our understanding of development and of key areas of the world. Established in 1986. Unrestricted.



The Mack Lipkin Sr. Memorial Endowment

In memory of Dr. Mack Lipkin, a much loved friend and doctor who was also a leader of the medical profession and a founding friend to Ashoka. Dedicated to innovations in the effectiveness and humane quality of health care. Established in 1991.



The Jan Schmidt Marmor Endowment

Jan Marmor was a wise counselor to her family, friends, and patients. She was a fine poet and artist. She was a close friend to Ashoka from its launch. With commitment and love she built a family that believed that “no good idea should go unexpressed—or unheard.” Established 2003.



The Francisco “Chico” Mendes Endowment

In memory of Chico Mendes, a friend and early Ashoka Fellow. Chico created an approach to grassroots organizing in the Amazon basin that Gandhi would have recognized but that was adapted to his own, very different, environment. Chico, like Gandhi, was killed pursuing peaceful change. The preferred uses of the funds are grassroots work and environmental issues, though the endowment carries no restrictions. Established in 1988.



The Helen Meresman Fellowship

In memory of Helen Meresman, the personification of breaking boundaries with determination, grace, and charm. The Helen Meresman Fellowship was established by Roger Barnett in 1997. Unrestricted.



The Jawaharlal Nehru Endowment

As the first prime minister in India, Jawaharlal Nehru was far more than a great national leader: He helped build a global community; he was a democrat; he was a historian; and he used his reflective power to hold himself to a high ethical standard. Unrestricted. Established in 2003.



The Nguyen-Phuong Family Endowment

Dedicated to supporting social entrepreneurs who operate in emerging markets; a permanent symbol of the family's keen commitment to social services in the developing world. Established 2014.



The Jacob H. Oxman Memorial Fund

In memory of Dr. Jacob H. Oxman, a devoted husband and father, and a kind, caring, generous, and principled man. This endowment is used to support an Ashoka Fellow. Any additional funds can be used either to support another Fellow or to cover operating costs. Established in 1986. Unrestricted.



Diane Pierce Phillips Ashoka Fellowship Endowment

Diane Pierce Phillips led an exemplary life of spiritual integrity and servant leadership as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer, wife and mother, registered nurse, hospice volunteer, minister of the United Church of Christ (Congregational), and spiritual director. Established in 2003. Unrestricted.



The Eiler Ravnholt Ashoka Endowment

In memory of Eiler Ravnholt, a friend and role model to the founder of Ashoka, a man of values and hard work. He was a dedicated public servant and active citizen, generous with his time, voice and heart. He was a lover of history and defender of our collective responsibility to assist those in need—his own life was shaped by the Great Depression, World War II and the GI Bill. Eiler was a fervent and loyal supporter of the vision of Ashoka throughout its existence: He will be missed by the entire Ashoka community. Established in 2012 and devoted to social justice.



The Daniel Saks Ashoka Fellowship

In memory of Dan Saks who, had he lived longer, would have changed U.S. employment policies even more profoundly than he already had. Dan was also one of Ashoka's earliest creators, beginning in 1963. This fellowship is focused on creating work opportunities for the poor or otherwise disadvantaged. Established in 1986.



The Morton Sand Memorial Endowment

Mort Sand, long a highly successful business entrepreneur, turned his energy and creativity to solving society's ills over his last decades. He helped build Ashoka's Entrepreneur-to-Entrepreneur program, created business opportunities for Brazil's street girls through three Fellows there, and was key to the launch of the Ashoka U.S.A./Canada program. The Mort Sand Endowment will be used in the U.S.A./Canada. Although it is unrestricted, the Endowment will give priority to enabling disadvantaged young people through opportunities in business. Established in 2002.



The Ibrahim Sobhan Endowment

In memory of Muhammed Ibrahim Sobhan, the first Ashoka Fellow in Bangladesh. He launched the innovative Association for School Based Education (ASBE) to improve rural primary education for Bangladeshi children attending government, non-government and community schools. Established in 2014.



The Richard H. Ullman Endowment

Dick Ullman cared deeply about others—from the wellbeing of the world (reflected in his scholarly and journalistic work in the difficult field of international relations) to that of his students (who repeatedly rated him the best professor). As a young professor in the 1960s, he encouraged one of his undergraduate students in the early thinking that eventually led to Ashoka. Over the ensuing decades he was always with Ashoka—sharing ideas, opening doors, and serving on the North America Council.

Why was Ashoka such a close fit for Dick? One reason was that he believed in and helped develop young people of values. This belief—plus, in the words of his students, his “combination of rigor and candor,” his “dry wit,” and his “genuine kindness”—changed many lives and, as a result, many important foreign policy decisions. He intuitively knew why the Ashoka Fellows are so powerful, and he recognized the importance of supporting them.

These qualities also allowed him to change the country’s course more directly. In addition to teaching at Princeton University for 35 years, he headed the 1980s Project of the Council on Foreign Relations, helped lead *Foreign Policy* magazine, and served on the Editorial Board of the *New York Times*. Established in 2014.



The Father Eugene Watrin Endowment

In memory of Father Watrin, a remarkable educational founder and builder for over 50 years in Nepal and Ashoka’s volunteer Representative there for our first 15 years. His special commitment to the Ashoka vision and to all in its community, which he did so much to build, exemplifies why he had such a powerful impact on all around him. His greatest legacy is the model of how to live life well through service that is both highly important and performed with the modesty of true caring, love, and faith. For the support of Fellows working in Nepal. Established in 2004.

Gifts with Special Impact

Please consider making a bequest to Ashoka and/or building an endowment. The impact of such planned giving is profound. (Please keep in mind that Ashoka accepts no government funding.)

About Bequests

Making a bequest to Ashoka is a very powerful, moving statement. It says that you believe deeply in Ashoka's work and that you have given this careful thought. When you specify such a gift in your will, you will also very directly and importantly be changing lives. You will, for example, be helping launch the next generation of leading social entrepreneurs—and their impacts will grow and multiply over their lives after their launch.

Bequests can be "restricted," meaning the donor specifies that the gift be used for a specific program or purpose. Unrestricted bequests allow Ashoka to focus their use where and when the need is greatest. Given that Ashoka and the Ashoka Fellows are at the cutting edge of change for the good, having freedom to innovate is especially valuable.

About Endowments

An endowment will support Ashoka's work in perpetuity. Ashoka's Endowment Trustees will maintain the real value of the endowments before disbursing to Ashoka. Endowments that give Ashoka freedom to use resources where they are most needed allow Ashoka itself to invent and also to support Fellows with the most creative, unforeseen ideas. You may also direct that the income provided by an endowment be used for specific purposes, for example, in a field such as the environment and/or a geographic region, such as Africa. Endowments are often named in memory of or to honor a person.

If you are interested in a bequest or endowment, please contact Bill Drayton, CEO, at wdrayton@ashoka.org.



Opportunities

Ashoka is working hard to support, accelerate and magnify the groundbreaking work of our ever-growing worldwide fellowship. We are fostering collaborations, opening doors to new partnerships, and building bridges across borders and to new sectors.

Volunteer changemakers can be found at every step of the way and during each phase of an Ashoka Fellow's trajectory. From as early as the nomination and selection process, through different levels of organizational growth, and with operational support virtually and on the ground, volunteers are crucial to maximizing scale and impact. They also lend their specific knowledge and skills to our global and country offices around the world, helping Ashoka staff and partners grow a variety of initiatives that underpin an "everyone a changemaker" world.

A partnership with LinkedIn has allowed us to reach a wide global audience of professionals who want to contribute their time and talents to help propel our work and that of our Fellows. Through the Ashoka-LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace, we post current needs and provide a short application that goes directly to the staff or Fellow who posted on the Marketplace. In this way, we quickly and efficiently facilitate direct and fruitful connections between volunteers, Ashoka staff and Fellows. Almost every Ashoka office has opportunities.

Needs vary widely and change regularly. Some require assistance on-site and others can be met virtually. Recent volunteer opportunities have included:

- Developing business and strategic plans
- Creating communication and marketing strategies
- Building or improving websites and their contents
- Editing books and videos
- Filming documentaries of Fellows' work
- Helping young people and adults learn

- Project managing initiatives within a variety of organizations
- Conducting impact assessments
- Documenting conditions and needs in rural areas
- Researching markets and effective supply chains for rural areas
- Providing office, HR and branding support in Canada
- Managing crowdfunding campaigns
- Writing grants and researching potential donor support
- Writing journalistic reports for papers and newsletters
- Translating documents and transcribing Fellow interviews

There is no shortage of ways in which dedicated volunteers can join Ashoka's ecosystem of changemaking. In the words of Peggy Carr, a volunteer since 1987 who has managed Ashoka's virtual communications network from our global office:

"Working with Ashoka's Fellowship team has given me the opportunity to help Fellows in a direct and personal way. Whether researching a request for information or helping Fellows network with each other, the goal is always the same—forging strong links throughout the Ashoka community, of which I am happy to be a small part."

As an Ashoka volunteer, you can tap into your own changemaking power by using your unique talents to help scale the impact of Ashoka Fellows, Ashoka Young Changemakers, and others within the Ashoka network.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ashoka.org/engage/contribute> where you will find answers to frequently asked questions and a checklist for those volunteers traveling abroad. We are also available for any unanswered questions or unique ideas you may have for contributing to our work or expanding our partnerships at volunteers@ashoka.org.

Everyone a Changemaker





“What makes Ashoka unique is its willingness to step in when the risks are greatest. They seek to help individuals before they have succeeded—when no one else is ready to help and when a little help makes an enormous difference.”

Unicef: Action for Children



“It’s nice to hear about somebody who wants to build a hospital in a slum, but [Ashoka] seeks instead entrepreneurs pursuing a new approach to prevent illnesses. Those who live for a vision and refuse to give up no matter what.”

Die Zeit



“Taking on the toughest global challenges – from global pandemics to sustainable economic development - is in Rotary’s DNA. Continuing our collaboration with Ashoka Fellows - among the very best social entrepreneurs – is a great opportunity for our members to pursue transformative projects and seek the greatest possible positive impact in the future.”

Rotary International General Secretary John Hewko



“It is not enough to have some social entrepreneurs in the world; because Ashoka already supports 4,000 social entrepreneurs and there are still problems in the world. How can [Ashoka] tackle this issue? By making sure that everyone is a changemaker. “

Folha de Sao Pablo



Ashoka: *Everyone* a Changemaker

1700 North Moore Street | Suite 2000 | Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Tel: (703) 527-8300 | Fax (703) 527-8383 | www.ashoka.org

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