



社會創業論壇
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Social Entrepreneurs Newsletter

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What is a Social Entrepreneur?

Don't assume you know it and be prepared to be surprised

In Hong Kong at this moment, there is still much misunderstanding about this apparently simple term – social entrepreneur. It is complicated by the lack of a proper translation in Chinese. The common translations are: 社會企業家, 社會創業者, 社會創業家; but none of these capture the real meaning of social entrepreneur as it is used in the English language world.

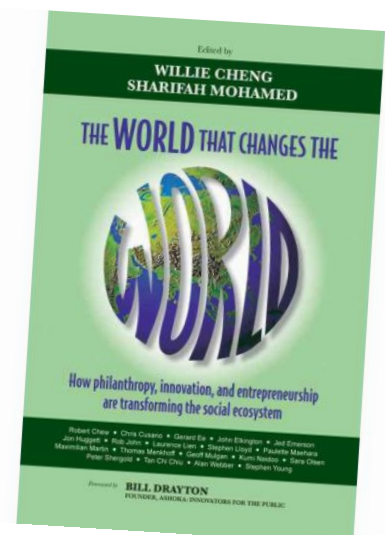
Worse still, partly because of the inadequate translations, people tend to associate social entrepreneurs with social enterprises. It is true that some social entrepreneurs create powerful social enterprises in tackling burning social issues, but social entrepreneurs also use a variety of organizational forms for the purpose, such as charities, for-profit organizations, foundations, voluntary organizations, government units/agencies, formal and informal networks, etc. etc. To think that social entrepreneurs only used social enterprises for driving social change is a gross misconception. But the Chinese translation ‘社會企業家’ indeed conveys the message that social entrepreneurs are ‘experts’ in founding social enterprises.

In the book **The World that Changes the World: How Philanthropy, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship are Transforming the Social Ecosystem** edited by Willie Cheng and Sharifah Mohamed (Singapore: Wiley, 2010), there are three chapters under the heading of ‘Social Purpose Entities’, namely,

Chapter 4 **Charity – No Charity for Charities**

Chapter 5 **Social Enterprises – Fulfilling the Promise of Social Enterprises**

Chapter 6 **Social Entrepreneurship – Of Pattern Changers and Changemakers**



The subjects of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs are treated as distinct forces in driving social change, and for good reasons. What follows are excerpts from the chapter on social entrepreneurship written by **Chris Cusano** who lives in Thailand and is the **Change Leader, ASEAN, Ashoka: Innovators for the Public**.

(The book is available for public viewing at the THINK Café, 19/F, Kyoto Plaza, 491 Lockhart Road, Causeway Bay, and available for purchase from nancy@genesismarketing.com.hk)

Social Entrepreneurs are Pattern Changers

By Chris Cusano

Over the last 30 years, social entrepreneurship has evolved from an obscure concept recognized by a few thought leaders to a widespread phenomenon embraced by people worldwide. What distinguishes social entrepreneurs from other social leaders is their pursuit of pattern change.. They seek to change the **rules, systems, relationships, economics, incentives, and behavior** in order to uplift the lives of their specific clientele in society. (In Chinese we may say 移風易俗, but it is even more than that. – KK) Inspired by these social entrepreneurs, people from all walks of life are becoming changemakers themselves.

To social entrepreneurs, change means a fundamental shift in how society deals with an issue. Change must always go beyond raising awareness of a problem, or offering services to a finite number of clients, these may be necessary steps in building a social solution, but they are not sufficient to ensure lasting change.

This, of course, is an immensely complex and difficult set of tasks, which is why social entrepreneurs are rarely found and are often misunderstood. In its work searching for social entrepreneurs worldwide, Ashoka identified five general kinds of pattern change that characterize the vision and the efforts of most social entrepreneurs who are elected as Ashoka Fellows. The nicknames for the five types of pattern changers are

- Architects
- Master Organizers
- Matchmakers
- Maverick Reformers
- Invisible Hands

Architects

The Architect has a vision that entails creating an entirely new field of social work. The Architect's vision for pattern change requires the birth of new professions, new institutions, and new economic transactions.

Ron Layton founded **Light Year IP** <http://www.lightyearsip.net/> to promote the idea that **intellectual property** could be a powerful tool in creating international trade that would alleviate poverty in some of the world's poorest countries. For example, in the past cooperatives of Ethiopian coffee farmers, despite growing some of the world's best coffee, were forced by market dynamics to sell beans at very low prices to the long chain of middlemen who would eventually deliver the beans to European and American consumers. The coffee retailed at a premium, touting its origins in Harar or YirgaCheffe, two of Ethiopia's famous coffee-growing regions. Layton asked: **Why should not the farmers actually control the use of those geographical designations as their unique intellectual property?** The real test came when Ethiopian farmers challenged the purchasing policies of global coffee empire **Starbucks**. The farmers were earning between 60 cents and a dollar for coffee that was being retailed at US\$26 per pound in Europe and America. Starbucks was initially prepared to mount a legal battle, but the image of a major public company fighting with desperately poor African farmers would have been a potential public-relations disaster. In 2007, Starbucks and the Ethiopian government reached a licensing agreement that gave Ethiopia greater control of how Starbucks used the regional brands.

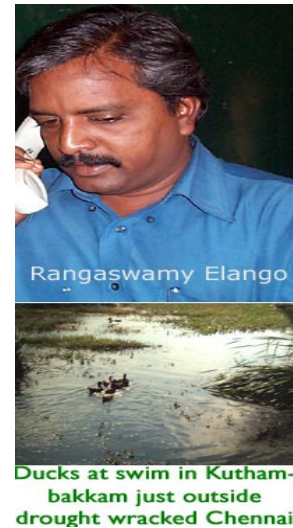
Ron Layton is an Architect with a vision for pattern change on a global scale: his concern – inequity in international trade – is global by nature and therefore demands a global solution.



Master Organizers

Master Organizers focus on helping to bring true citizens to a segment of the population that has suffered from systematic discrimination. This could mean an ethnic or religious group, or a gender group, or anyone who is otherwise unable to take an equal place in society.

For example, **Elango Rangaswamy** is a social entrepreneur from Chennai, India, whose work in developing the governance, self-reliance, and political representation of Dalit villages has earned him widespread acclaim. <http://www.ashoka.org/news/5190>



Rangaswamy's work is not focused on a single penetrating idea or solution – the problems confronting the people he serves are too complex and intractable to be cured by any magic formula. Instead, through a variety of activities, he is strengthening his clients' ability to respond to the many obstacles they face. The Dalits, also known as the Untouchables, are a class of Indian citizens who have historically been excluded from the caste system, meaning that they are considered to be below even the lowest-caste manual laborers. They suffer crippling discrimination from this social prejudice. Rangaswamy started by running training programs for newly elected village council heads from Dalit villages, and selecting the most promising ones as role models, he trained them to create and implement successful development projects in their villages, such as improving housing conditions, combating illegal moneylenders and alcohol vendors, improving roads and irrigation, and providing education and job training for the young.

Essentially, Rangaswamy is **an innovation machine**, churning out and implementing solutions to whatever problems his clients have, delivering these solutions through a carefully assembled network of honest, well-trained local leaders.

Matchmakers

Matchmakers are distinguished by the particular cleverness of their approach to problem solving. They are able to build organizations and movements based on alliances between groups of people who may never have recognized their potential to work together.



One great example is **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)**. <http://www.madd.org/>

In the 1980s, drink-related traffic deaths in the US increased to the point where the number of people killed on American roads each year was equal to the number of American soldiers killed during the entire Vietnam War. Yet, no amount of law enforcement or public-service messaging seemed to help. One woman, **Candy Lightner**, whose 13-year daughter had been killed by a drunk driver, recognized that in their common grief, it was the **mothers of the victims who had the strongest drive to combat the problem**. She started MADD, which began advocating for stricter enforcement of existing laws, as well as new laws prescribing tougher penalties on drunk drivers. It became a leading advocate for a nationwide minimum drinking age of 21. As MADD grew, it became a partner to the police, to schools, to the courts, and to legislators across the country. MADD is a **grassroots movement par excellence**.

MADD's Matchmaking strategy and efforts have had a huge impact. Since 1980, the year MADD was founded, alcohol-related traffic fatalities have decreased nearly by 50%, and MADD has helped save over 383,000 lives.

Maverick Reformers

Unlike many of the other categories, Maverick Reformers often take on a challenge in which they have complete professional and technical expertise. True to their name, Maverick Reformers **take on a dysfunctional public system or service and make it perform better, more transparently, or more justly.**



A classic Maverick Reformer is **Arvind Kejriwal**, a former tax examiner who left India's civil service to spearhead a national movement, and then an international movement, for the right to information. <http://parivartan.tripod.com/> As an insider to one of the world's largest and sometimes most inscrutable bureaucracies, Kejriwal knew first hand how citizens were put at a disadvantage when dealing with the machinery of the state. Thus when a citizen applied for a building permit, once the application was lodged, all subsequent steps were in the purview of the government alone; to the applicant, the file had fallen into a deep black box. Kejriwal saw the opportunity to combat corruption by arming citizens with the legal rights and procedural tools to unlock the black box and open it to the daylight. When the Indian federal **Right to Information Act** was passed in 2005, Kejriwal and his colleagues scored a major victory for Indian democracy. In 2008, of 52,000 cases filed with the courts seeking access to information, 70 percent were ruled in favour of the citizens. This number represents a dramatic change in the relationship between the people and the bureaucracy.

In a sense, all Maverick Reformers are in the transparency business, turning the black boxes of institutional systems into citizen-oriented service providers.

Invisible Hands

The Invisible Hand is someone who changes the dynamics of an economic system to address structural inequities. These people tend not to be widely known, preferring to focus their energy on a few calculated interventions with the potential for enormous social benefit.



One such example is **Sasa Vucinic**, a Serbian journalist who left his native country during the outbreak of war in the 1990s. Horrified by how the press was being manipulated, he began thinking about how the independence of media was being compromised worldwide. Eventually, he founded the **Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF)** (<http://www.mdjf.org/>) to correct what he perceived to be a fundamental flaw in the media industry: **the trend toward consolidation of ownership, and therefore a homogenization of news.** MDLF provides financing to small media outlets around the world, such as radio stations, newspapers, and independent printing presses. By offering soft loans and patient capital, drawn from philanthropic funds and for-profit investors, MDLF helps small media outlets remain commercially viable in an otherwise hostile marketplace. Vucinic and other Invisible Hands create pattern-changing solutions that benefit people who will never know that they are benefiting from such investments. Newspaper readers in Moscow and radio audiences in Jakarta will never have heard of MDLF, or of Vucinic himself.

MDLF measures its impact through the success of the independent media outlets it supports. According to MDLF: In 2008, more than 32 million people in developing democracies got their news from 37 MDLF clients and after five years with MDLF, current clients on average have increased their sales by 370%.

From Persons to People: Everyone a Changemaker

Social entrepreneurs not only drive change through their own work, but they are also becoming role models for other citizens who wish to improve the world. That is why Bill Drayton has come to the conclusion that 'Everyone a Changemaker' is social entrepreneurship's ultimate goal.

Quote of the Fortnight

名句精選

“The most powerful force in the world is a pattern changing big idea, if it is the hands of an entrepreneur of equivalent ambition.”

Bill Drayton

Website of the Fortnight

精選網站

www.ashoka.org

Ashoka: Innovators for the Public

Founded by Bill Drayton in 1984, Ashoka is the world's leading organization promoting and supporting social entrepreneurs worldwide.

In this site you can assess the 4-page profile of all its 2,500 Ashoka Fellows who are inspiring millions of changemakers around the globe.

Book of the Fortnight

新書精選

**Everyone A Changemaker:
Social Entrepreneurship's Ultimate Goal**
By Bill Drayton

Reprint of an article in the winter 2006 edition of

Innovations

Published by MIT



Free download of the full text is available from

<http://www.ashoka.org/files/innovations8.5x11FINAL.0.pdf>

Video of the Fortnight

錄像精選

“Social entrepreneurs are real visionaries – people who want to change the world. That doesn't mean they necessarily develop complex, global solutions to large-scale issues; often, social entrepreneurs simply take a problem in their own community and make a commitment to tackle it. This may lead to something bigger, or it may not....”

Watch this 10-minute video and be amazed and inspired by the examples of ordinary people doing extraordinary things:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Rlz_kDiEvY