

Social Entrepreneurship: Opportunities and Challenges in East Africa

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Abstract: Social entrepreneurship is the creation of social value through innovative entrepreneurial business models (Seelos & Mair, 2004). Social value is about satisfying basic humanitarian needs such as abject poverty, needs which typical business entrepreneurship cannot or doesn't satisfy. Situations such as this are growing everywhere, even in countries such as the U.S. Consequently, social entrepreneurship is a growing sub-field within the entrepreneurship field. In response to this trend, the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) just recently added social entrepreneurship to its list of membership interests. Universities, for example Oxford and Harvard, have set up research centers that focus on social entrepreneurship. There is also an expanding number of corporate and philanthropic foundations devoted exclusively to social entrepreneurship. The Skoll Foundation is one of the leaders. Recently, the Nobel Prize for Peace has gone to social entrepreneurs, such as Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank. Social entrepreneurship is extremely important in developing countries such as Kenya in East Africa. But how does one succeed as a social entrepreneur, especially in East Africa? This paper examines existing literature to provide some answer. It studies four successful social enterprises, including the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya.

Key words: entrepreneur; entrepreneurial; entrepreneurship; management and institutions

JEL codes: M13, M1, O17

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is the creation of social value through innovative entrepreneurial business models (Seelos & Mair, 2004). Social value is about satisfying basic humanitarian needs such as abject poverty, needs which typical business entrepreneurship cannot or doesn't satisfy. For example, people may be too poor to buy goods and services produced by traditional entrepreneurs. Situations such as this are growing everywhere, especially in developing countries. Consequently, social entrepreneurship is a growing sub-field within the entrepreneurship field. In response to this trend, the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) just recently added social entrepreneurship to its list of membership interests. American and European universities are beginning to set up research centers and chairs that focus on social entrepreneurship (Urban, 2008). Three such centers are at The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University, The Hauser Center for Non-profit Organizations at Harvard University and the Center for Economic

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Self-Reliance at Brigham Young University. There is also an expanding number of corporate and philanthropic foundations devoted exclusively to social entrepreneurship. Probably the most famous of these is the Skoll Foundation, which also sponsors the Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship. Others include the Ashoka Foundation which appoints Ashoka Fellows, and the Cisco/Kellogg-sponsored Acumen Fund, which is New York-based but specializes in supporting social enterprise to eradicate poverty in developing countries (Credit Suisse, 2010). Additionally, in the last 10 years the judges for the Nobel Prize as well as the Right Livelihood Award have recognized the contributions of leading social entrepreneurs and awarded three of them these honors. One recipient is Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank.

Deficits in political, economic and social development in East Africa create social problems that attract social entrepreneurs. Take the recent political upheaval in Kenya (East Africa) following the 2007 elections. Social entrepreneurs found an opportunity to help Kenyans who had been left homeless, hungry and jobless.

The opportunities for social entrepreneurship in East Africa are abundant, given the political, economic and social environment in the region. But so are the challenges. Like commercial entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship requires an appropriate “context”. The absence of political stability and legal transparency, which are commonly known, can thwart the chances of a successful social enterprise just as it does a traditional, commercial enterprise. For example, a social entrepreneurial venture undertaken by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to promote organic exports from East Africa highly succeeded in Uganda although it appears to have succeeded only slightly in Tanzania (SIDA 2008). Why did this happen? As Boris Urban (2008) states, it is time to ask such questions about social entrepreneurship in Africa. This paper attempts to identify and examines patterns of successful social entrepreneurial ventures in East Africa.

The paper focuses on three cases of successful social entrepreneurship in East Africa: The Green Belt Movement in Kenya, ApproTEC, also known as KickStart, in Kenya and Tanzania, and Yehu Microfinance in Kenya. The paper also examines Grameen Bank, mostly because of its growing influence on the thinking about how to design business models with a prominent concern for social value. In order to examine these cases the paper extensively relies on a framework developed by Alvord, Brown, and Letts (2004) in which they identified common patterns in internationally well-known social enterprises. Furthermore, the paper relies on existing literature in terms of reports by social entrepreneurs and published research papers.

2. Social Entrepreneurship: What Is It Any Way?

Even though there is a growing interest about social entrepreneurship, there doesn't appear to exist a common definition of this concept. Nevertheless, social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship. It is entrepreneurship that focuses on social problems. Morse and Dudley (2002) stated that social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship combine a spirit of enterprise and a spirit of community in order to bring about community improvement. This concept of social entrepreneurship is complicated by the fact that nearly all legitimate enterprises, i.e., socially and legally sanctioned enterprises, are connected with a certain degree of community spirit, to the extent that any enterprise satisfies a community need. Traditional enterprises provide employment opportunities and pay taxes. Other things being equal, traditional entrepreneurship and the market system can take care of all people's needs. Also, again other things being equal, the government can use tax revenues to finance and provide purely public goods, goods that are consumed collectively, such as police protection.

Now, there is no country where all things are equal for traditional entrepreneurship and government to produce and cater for all social needs. This is particularly true in poor developing countries. First, there aren't enough traditional entrepreneurs (Seelos, Mair, 2004). This is a problem many governments try to address. Where government programs aren't working fast enough to create new entrepreneurs, there is a need for social entrepreneurs. Essentially, social entrepreneurship addresses failures in market and public sectors.

Social entrepreneurship is not the only way humanitarian needs such as lack of healthcare, education and food can be addressed. Food, medical services and other afflictions of the poor can be directly met through donations of money and materials. Enlightened philanthropy, corporate social responsibility and civil society organizations have been making donations towards the alleviation of human miseries for years. All these arrangements are humanitarian needs-oriented. But they aren't necessarily socially entrepreneurial. Social entrepreneurial initiatives create social value; they bring about lasting improvements in the well-being of those afflicted by poverty, disease, and hunger.

3. Patterns in Well-known Social Entrepreneurship Ventures

S. Alvord, D. Brown and C. Letts (2004), all associated with the Hauser Center for Non Profit Organizations at Harvard University, did a study in which they identified four key patterns in highly successful and well-known social entrepreneurial ventures. They based their study on seven cases. Two of these cases operate in Africa, and one specifically in East Africa (The Green Belt Movement in Kenya). The cases also include the now world-famous Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. With the exception of one case, the Highlander Research and Education Center, operating in the Appalachian region of the United States, all seven cases relate to developing countries. Furthermore, with the possible exception of the Green Belt Movement, which also focuses on sustaining the environment, all seven cases are centered on the eradication of poverty.

The seven cases are not only means to fight against poverty, but their approaches are highly entrepreneurial in the sense that they all embrace very innovative components. Innovation is considered by Schumpeter (1947) and many other observers to be the foundation of entrepreneurship. These social entrepreneurial ventures attack poverty, and do so in an innovative way. For example the Grameen Bank identified the demand for very small loans among poor people and created a mechanism for delivering such loans. The key innovation of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, was building local capacity. Poor people, at grass roots level, were organized to plant trees to protect the environment and to improve their own well bring. All seven cases had leaders who were able to create bridges across diverse and often antagonistic groups. In the case of the Grameen Bank, Mohammad Yunus, its founder, was able to build lasting relations with business leaders, both in Bangladesh and abroad, government officials at different levels, donors, and academicians. Most importantly, Yunus was trusted by poor villagers and he trusted them. In the case of the Green Belt Movement, Wangari Maathai, was an activist within women groups in Kenya. She was also highly respected internationally for her long-standing commitment to environmental causes. To launch the Green Belt Movement Wangari Maathai needed and was able to get support from many stakeholders.

The establishment of sound organizational structure was also critical in all seven cases. There was a critical mass of passionate and capable staff. The staff on the payroll was critical, but so was the presence of volunteers. Grameen Bank had a large staff because they distribute loans to poor villagers. The Green Belt Movement relied on a small cadre of highly passionate staff who worked directly with local groups. In all seven cases the founders

had a long term vision for their social enterprises. But also they had to find ways for scaling up the social impact of those enterprises. Grameen Bank hired more staff, while the Green Belt Movement involved more external actors. Additionally, both social entrepreneurs developed new products. In the following section we discuss how these patterns contributed to the success of four social enterprises, including Grameen Bank and the Green Belt Movement.

4. Grameen Bank, Green Belt Movement, ApproTEC, Yehu Microfinance

According to Alvord, Brown, and Letts (2004) the following four broad patterns run through the seven highly successful social ventures they had studied and analyzed: a true innovation that made the venture truly entrepreneurial, leaders with long term vision and capacity to build bridges across different stakeholders, organizational structures that matched chosen innovations, and well-articulated ways to scale up the social impact of the initiative. As indicated earlier, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya were included in the seven well-known and highly successful social entrepreneurial ventures that were studied by Alvord and his colleagues. In this section we discuss more extensively the factors that made them successful. To see how these same factors have led to success in a few other social entrepreneurial ventures in East Africa, we also discuss ApproTEC (Kenya, Tanzania and Mali) and Yehu Microfinance (Kenya and Uganda). For clarity, we discuss these factors separately. Table 1 below provides a summary of the four patterns in terms of Grameen Bank, the Green Belt Movement, ApproTEK and Yehu Microfinance.

4.1 Innovations to Eradicate Poverty

The innovation to eradicate poverty is by far the greatest distinction about the social entrepreneurial ventures being discussed here. It is abject poverty that attracted the attention of the founders of each of the four initiatives.

Grameen Bank started out as a deliberate effort to find a way for helping poor people in Bangladesh. Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Prize laureate, the founder, was head of the Rural Economic Development program at a university in Bangladesh. In a research project seeking ways to reduce poverty, he found out that group lending could rescue poor people from exploitative money lenders. The groups could get small loans without offering collateral. There was no need for the traditional collateral because group members put enough social pressure on one another to repay the loan.

Yehu Microfinance, which started in Kenya, but now operates in Tanzania and Uganda, was inspired by and modeled after the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Yehu Microfinance was founded by Louis Pope, an industrialist and CEO in the United States. Concerned about poverty in developing countries, Pope had joined and became a Board member of CHOICE Humanitarian, a charity non-governmental organization (NGO). This organization sent volunteers to Kenya, among other countries, to work on development projects such as constructing school facilities. This is the modes operand for most development NGOs. Pope felt that this approach, while commendable, provided no lasting solution to poverty. Helping poor people to help themselves was a better approach. He persuaded CHOICE Humanitarian to initiate a microfinance project. Relying on personal resources, Pope decided to operate the microfinance project independently from CHOICE Humanitarian, mostly because he wanted to concentrate on the extremely poor people in Kenya's Coast Province, areas that were not being served by urban-based microcredit organizations. Many NGOs have been criticized for not being able to reach those who deserve their benefits most (Bars, Fafchamps & Owens, 2005). He was able to capitalize on the "Harrambee" (Self Help) movement being promoted by the political elite in Kenya at that time to organize groups of poor

women who would be able to borrow small loans without collateral.

The Green Belt Movement was founded by Wangari Maathai. She was a longtime activist in two movements, the environment movement and the women movement. She was able to combine these two interests to organize groups of poor people to begin planting trees to both protect the environment and to create a source of income for themselves. Maathai's innovation was to use tree planting to build local capacity for self help. Poor people can come and work together to improve their well being.

Table 1 Patterns in Four Successful Social Entrepreneurial Initiatives

	Innovations	Leadership	Organization	Scaling Up
Grameen Bank (M Yunus, Bangladesh Nobel Laureate)	-Group lending for poor people without collateral. -Bank staff help villagers form groups	-Well-educated founder -had contacts in NGOs, government and academia and poor villages	-Large staff to deliver services to borrowers	-Created new microcredit packages -Expanded staff to reach more clients
Green Belt Movement (Wangari Maathai Kenya, Nobel Laureate)	-Grassroots mobilization -Leadership development through environmental activities	-Well-educated founder had leadership roles in academia, government and women groups	-Small staff that worked closely with village representatives	-Developed new programs for skill building in village groups
ApproTEC/KickStart (N Moon and M. Fisher Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)	-Developed and promoted inexpensive and easy to fix farm tools for poor people to buy and use to grow four crops a year instead of one	-Founders former volunteers for international NGO -Had contacts in Bangladesh and East Africa to develop manufacture & produce inexpensive farm tools	-Small staff to design farm tools, train manufacturing personnel and monitor farm tools usage	-Developed even cheaper farm tools -Small profit made on farm tools used to expand production to reach more poor farms
Yehu Microfinance Trust (L. Pope Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)	-Group lending to poor people without collateral. - Focused on rural poor people not served by urban-based microfinance organizations. -loan insurance	-Founder was a successful CEO with great leadership skills. Also member and Board of Trustees of Choice Humanitarian -Set up Foundation to raise funds.	-Minimal staff, mostly family and volunteers from his alma matter (BYU) -Lately recruited Kenyan CEO with local contacts	-incorporated client reps on advisory board -new loan programs e.g., meat goat loans -Attracted Unit us.

ApproTEC's founders, Nick Moon and Martin Fisher, launched their organization after recognizing the limitation of traditional practices in development NGOs. The two men were volunteers for ACTIONAID, a British charity NGO. ACTIONAID manufactured farm equipment and donated it or sold it at heavily subsidized prices to poor farmers. The founders felt that ACTIONAID's approach was not providing a long lasting solution to the poverty problem. "We were creating dependency and all too often left things no better off" (Rangan, 2003). AproTEC's innovation introduced three incremental changes: their farm tools were easier to fix and maintain, the tools were not given away for free, and ApproTEC's staff regularly visited poor farmers to provide advice on how to use the tools. ApproTEC's innovation led to improved incomes because poor farmers were now able to grow four crops per year instead of one.

4.2 Transformational Leadership in the Service of the Poor

Passion about a social concern and garnering support from diverse and often antagonistic stakeholders are critical for launching a social enterprise towards alleviating that concern. Grameen Bank reflected Mohammad Yunus' passion about doing something for the rural poor in Bangladesh. Even though he belonged to the professional elite, and was highly educated in the West, he empathized with the poor. He used his university position to research the root causes of poverty and look for a solution. He began to trust rural community groups and the latter did the same. To launch and develop the microcredit project for the rural poor, Yunus needed the support of many stakeholders. The list included the academic community, himself being a leader at a university.

But he also garnered the support of government officials. Grants from governments, domestic and foreign, along with those from international NGOs, such as the Ford Foundation, ultimately led to the formation and expansion of the Grameen Bank. Yunus was able to positively influence an assortment of stakeholders, exhibiting a great degree of “bridging capacity” (Alvord, Brown & Letts, 2004).

Yehu Microfinance was founded by Louis Pope. He was already a CEO of a major corporation in the U.S. Pope had joined CHOICE Humanitarian, a charity NGO, to help with poverty eradication in Africa. The development projects sponsored by CHOICE Humanitarian in Kenya led Pope to think about microfinance as a better approach to the eradication of poverty. Although Pope incubated the microfinance project while still connected with CHOICE Humanitarian, Yehu Microfinance developed as a separate organization (NGO), outside CHOICE Humanitarian. Pope wanted Yehu Microfinance to concentrate on the extremely poor people in Kenya's Coast Province. As Yunus in Bangladesh, he began to work with local community/village groups to help the very poor. In return the village groups began to understand him. In order to launch Yehu Microfinance Pope had to rely on personal resources. Family and friends chipped in. He relied extensively on volunteers.

The Green Belt Movement in Kenya was founded by Wangari Maathai. She was already a charismatic leader and activist within women groups in Kenya. She was also highly respected internationally for her long-standing commitment to environmental causes. Before launching the Green Belt Movement, Maathai was a professor and department head at the university of Nairobi. She had also been a member of parliament and government minister in Kenya. Her good political and leadership skills played a critical role in galvanizing government and community support for her organization in the highly contentious political and social environment of Kenya. This is in spite of the fact that Maathai (now deceased) was a Kikuyu, easily the most dominant ethnic group in Kenya. Although recognized as one of most successful social entrepreneurship initiatives in the world, Alvord, Brown and Letts (2004) found that the impact of the Green Belt Movement has been markedly compromised by tribal frictions in Kenya. This forced her to rely more on international support, especially support from environment and women organizations.

ApproTEC was founded by two volunteers of the Britain-based charity NGO, ACTIONAID, which had development projects in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. One of the founders, Nick Moon, had already owned and operated his own company in the U.K. He left the company to volunteer on development projects, first in Togo and later in Kenya. The other founder, Martin Fisher, initially went to Kenya on a Fulbright scholarship to study how development agencies apply technology to solving poverty problems in developing countries. Fisher and Moon met at ACTIONAID and passion to eradicate poverty brought the two together. Disillusionment at ACTIONAID, because of this NGO's “development philosophy” (Rangan, 2003) forced the two men to launch ApproTEC. However, they persuaded ACTIONAID to support their new organization with a \$500,000 grant. Close contacts with other international development agencies, such as the USAID, brought them more funding. To develop and promote their low-cost, low-maintenance and easy-to-use farm tools, ApproTEC worked and continues to work with external actors. Some of their tools, for example, the irrigation pump, were adapted from the one used in Bangladesh.

4.3 Organizational Structures Designed To Match Core Innovations

Any innovation to eradicate poverty can only be implemented when there is staff and other organizational arrangements. In each of the four social entrepreneurial initiatives being discussed here there was a critical mass of capable staff. Within the staff, passion about the social cause of eradicating poverty was important. The staff on the payroll was critical, but so was the presence of volunteers. Few social enterprises succeed without support

from volunteers and philanthropists (Dees, 2007). Grameen Bank always had a large staff, now over 20,000 (Grameen Bank, 2010), because its core innovation is to package small loans and to widely promote them to groups of poor people throughout the rural areas of Bangladesh. Unlike a traditional bank, borrowers and savers don't come to the bank. Bank staff meet the poor at whatever convenient place the village groups can find within their villages. The bank's approach also includes closely working with the villagers on the deployment of the loaned funds. The "misuse" of loan funds has been one of the major problems that microfinance organizations in Africa have faced (Sigalla & Carney, 2009). To minimize this problem Grameen Bank provides extensive staff training. This is what makes the loan program to experience minimal default rates.

Yehu Microfinance, which is registered as an NGO in Kenya, operates in very much the same way as the Grameen Bank does. But the organization started much more slowly and relied a lot more on volunteers, especially from the founder's family in the U.S. and his alum-mate, Brigham Young University. It still had only 40 paid employees by 2007, serving 13,000 clients. That number had risen to 20,000 clients at the end of 2010. Yehu Microfinance has its main office at Mombasa in mostly rural Coast province. But its clientele is the rural poor outside of Mombasa. There are ten branch offices and numerous sub-branches located in villages 1 to 2 hours from the main office. This enables the organization to "offer friendly and accessible customer service" (Yehu, 2011).

The Green Belt Movement has a small staff and has relied a great deal on volunteers, enthusiasts of both the women and environment movements, with which Wangari Maathai, the founder, has long been associated. The core staff employed by the organization largely operates through representative of local groups, for example a local church, to promote tree planting skills. Because the scope of the Green Belt Movement is tree planting in villages and urban parks, working closely with government agencies, such as the police, sanitation, and zoning, has been critical for the Green Belt Movement. It was pointed out earlier that this has not been always easy because of political, religious and especially tribal divisions in Kenya.

ApproTEC's organizational structure has, what can be described as a "network organizational structure" (Anand & Daft, 2007). The founders, Nick Moon and Martin Fisher, rely a great deal on outside actors in their approach to the eradication of poverty. To design some of the farm tools they are known for, such as the inexpensive irrigation pump, they consulted with local machine shops and farm equipment designers in Bangladesh. While they help train the machinists to manufacture the tools, the machine shops where the tools are manufactured are independently owned. ApproTEC's core innovation calls for inexpensive farm tools being made available to poor farmers, but not without charge. The founders believe that poor people aren't motivated enough to use tools that they get for free. So, the tools are sold. They are sold in independently-run retail stores. As a result, many of the core activities in ApproTEC's innovation strategy are carried out by outside actors. So, the organization maintains a small staff, mostly for training outside groups. They train employees for equipment manufacturers. More importantly, they train the purchasers of the farm tools in how to use the tools.

4.4 Poverty Eradication Has No Quick Fixes: Scaling Up the Social Impact

Social Entrepreneurship is entrepreneurship in the first place. Joseph Schumpeter (1947) and many others define successful entrepreneurship in terms of venture growth. In the case of social entrepreneurship, expanding the social impact of the venture is the most visible sign of success. Obviously there are different ways a social enterprise can scale up its social impact. Alvord, Brown and Letts (2004) have identified three patterns in scaling up social impacts in social ventures: expanding coverage to provide services to more people, expanding the range of services/products to the initial group or groups targeted by the venture, and activities that change the behavior

of other actors who directly or indirectly influence a given social problem.

Grameen Bank started in a single village. It now operates in over 81,000 villages throughout Bangladesh. First and foremost, it has expanded by increasing staff, which now stands at over 20,000. Secondly, the bank has introduced many additional loan packages, e.g., housing loans and education loans. Yehu Microfinance now serves nearly 20,000 members, up from about 5000 in 2000. This has been accomplished in two basic ways: expansion of staff to reach more poor villages and creating new products. The organization has opened more sub branches, especially in recent years after the appointment a Kenyan CEO, in 2006, with very local roots. They also have created new loan packages, such as loans for goat meat (Yehu, 2011).

ApproTEC's founders proudly say that their organization has moved over 500,000 people out of poverty, 400,000 in east Africa. They farther say that over \$100 million of new income has been generated (KickStart, 2010). The organization has achieved these impressive results through reaching more poor people by expanding staff and especially by introducing new farm tools. For example, they came up with a cheaper irrigation pump which sold for half the price of the older version. An additional important contributing factor to the success of ApproTEC has been operational efficiency. They outsource most production and promotion activities. Also the founders have been able to maintain good relations with the international donor community. They state that a \$1 dollar donated creates \$15 in profit that goes back into their campaign to eradicate poverty. The Green Belt Movement has grown so much as to divide into two: "Green Belt Movement KENYA" and "Green Belt Movement INTERNATIONAL". Founded by Wangari Maathai, this organization has been responsible for planting 45 million trees in Kenya, since its inception in the early 1980s. It now operates in 9 districts in Kenya, especially in Central, Western and Rift Valley provinces. Rooted in two social movements, women and environment, the Green Belt Movement appeals to a wide cross section of the population, both in Kenya and outside. Its beginnings required a large number of volunteers. Volunteering is even enshrined in its mission. Clearly, its expansion is hugely related to the constant flow of volunteers. The donor list to the organization reads like who is who of philanthropists, government agencies, churches and other organizations.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Social entrepreneurship is more complicated than traditional entrepreneurship. It is also more complicated in East Africa than it is in developed countries such as the United States. In the U.S. a major source of funding comes from government sources. There is also funding from private foundations. The social enterprise can even tap donations from individuals. In African countries nearly all funding for social enterprises come from international sources. First, African governments face immense problems financing basic government obligations such as roads. Second, the newness of these nations remains a source of all sorts of division. We referred to how tribalism has compromised the success of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya. Winning the support of government for a social venture often is difficult, especially if the social entrepreneur doesn't belong to the same ethnic group as the one's own. The founders of ApproTEC in Kenya complained that government didn't show interest in their organization (Rangan, 2003). They were not even Kenyan.

The funding for social ventures in East Africa comes from international sources. But international organizations often find it to evaluate the need for funding. Fighting poverty is often the basis of the request. But an international organization faces difficulties determining how much of the granted funding goes towards fighting poverty and how much is put into huge salaries (Aldashev & Verdier, 2009). To address this problem, at

least partly some major social entrepreneurship foundations operate branch offices in East Africa. One such organization is the Ecumen Fund. Even more promising are a few homegrown foundations. These include the Zain Foundation set up by Sudanese Mo Ibrahim and the Africa Grants makers Network, founded in Ghana and Kenya. The founders of the Network aim to “change the narrative of Africa as helpless and hapless...tilt the balance of stories” (Credit Suisse, 2010).

Funding for a social enterprise is essential, but even more essential is human capital. East Africa needs more Wangari Maathai, the founder of the Green Belt Movement. She was challenged by tribal forces but persisted. She even uses her organization to fight poverty and other social ills, because misery has no tribal boundaries. In response to the post-2007 elections tribal war bloodshed, her organization set up “Peace Tent Initiative”, to bring the warring groups together. Wangari Maathai belongs to the elite class in East Africa, just as Muhammad Yunus belongs to the elite class in Bangladesh. They share the passion towards reducing others’ misery, which is probably the most commonly shared trait among highly successful social entrepreneurs. ApproTEC has been hugely successful, removing 500,000 poor people out of poverty (KickStart, 2010). The founders are professionals from the West. There is a need to develop avenues for attracting more people of this caliber. International NGOs, such as ACTIONAID, through which these men were introduced to East Africa should be commended and requested to do more of the same.

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