

# innovations

TECHNOLOGY | GOVERNANCE | GLOBALIZATION

## Meaningful Markets

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Ben Cohen The Definition of Business

Jan Chipchase and Panthea Lee Mobile Money: Afghanistan

Bill Drayton Collaborative Entrepreneurship

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### *Case Narrative*

Vijay Sathe The World's Most Ambitious ID Project

*commentary:* Robert Klitgaard

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### *Analysis*

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Aneel Karnani Social Entrepreneurship: Beyond the Hype

Marc Epstein and Eric Bing Delivering Health Care to the Global Poor

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The Technology Revolutions That Do Not Happen

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Each issue of *Innovations* consists of four sections:

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3. **Analysis.** Accessible, policy-relevant research articles emphasize links between practice and policy—alternately, micro and macro scales of analysis. The development of meaningful indicators of the impact of innovations is an area of editorial emphasis.
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# Scaling Social Impact

## When Everybody Contributes, Everybody Wins

Over the last decade, the notion of “scaling what works” has emerged as a broadly shared priority across the social sector. Still, the challenge of making powerful social innovations travel to where they are most needed continues to stymie social entrepreneurs and their supporters. Many frustrated attempts to scale social programs can be traced to an over-reliance on the conventional wisdom of the business sector, where efforts at scaling-up typically focus on increasing the size of organizations. However, a new paradigm has emerged in recent years that focuses on scaling social *impact* without necessarily increasing the size of the *organization* behind it. Indeed, Richard Bradach may have framed the current moment best when he wrote recently that “finding ways to scale impact without scaling the size of an organization is the new frontier for work in our field.”<sup>1</sup>

This emerging paradigm holds the promise of shaping strategies that succeed, thanks to the defining characteristics of the *social* sector, leveraging the collaborative potential of mission-driven innovators while keeping organizational footprints—and attendant resource needs—to a minimum. More and more social entrepreneurs are learning to embrace this approach, but strategies based on old business-derived growth models remain prominent; much work is still needed to complete the paradigm shift. In this essay, we summarize our thinking on the new “scaling for impact” paradigm, and share some of the key stories and insights that have come from Ashoka’s Globalizer initiative. We then outline two emerging frameworks that might well transform the social sector landscape.

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## THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGE OF SCALING SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Beginning with early calls more than a decade ago, interest in scaling social change has blossomed in recent years to include a plethora of studies and papers on nearly every aspect of the question. Many people start to see the challenge of scale in the social sector when they recognize the stark contrast between social and business entrepreneurship. Great business ideas go global to serve customers; at their full potential they become ubiquitous. For example, people everywhere happily use soft contact lenses without having any idea where they first came from. Meanwhile, equivalent market forces are not at work in the social sector; even now, great social innovations too often remain local.

Once they observe this discrepancy between sectors, many social entrepreneurs naturally turn to the business world for guidance. Thus, most scaling models focus on increasing impact by increasing the size of the organization behind it, and this offers much initial comfort to their adopters: extensive supporting research, easy application of conventional metrics, the ability to retain operational (and emotional) control over the enterprise, and comfortable familiarity for funders well-versed in business concepts. However, comparatively few of these models have succeeded in helping a social innovation truly take off around the world. While business entrepreneurs are compensated for the greater complexities of a growing organization with new revenue streams and economies of scale, social organizations generally find it increasingly difficult to secure funding for each new subsidiary and experience much smaller economies of scale than their business counterparts. Furthermore, the field of social entrepreneurship is increasingly realizing that “better management practices can create only incremental, not breakthrough social change. . . even the best businesses cannot tell us how to change the world, because that is not their primary purpose.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Steve Collins, the founder of Valid Nutrition, is one such social entrepreneur who has been frustrated by attempts to adapt traditional business models to scale his impact. Several years ago, Steve revolutionized the treatment of severe acute malnutrition by developing a new method involving individual portions of “ready to use therapeutic food” administered directly by community members. This approach eliminated long trips to overcrowded in-patient treatment centers, reduced contamination risks, and ultimately cut death rates *five-fold* while dramatically increasing coverage.<sup>3</sup> Based on these results, and the knowledge that demand for treatment still far outstrips supply, Valid Nutrition felt a burning obligation to extend the impact of its work as widely as possible. Making use of the corporate expansion model prevalent in this industry, and eager to maintain tight control over quality, it built a factory, hired a distribution team, and established an entire supply chain under direct Valid Nutrition management.

Very quickly, however, this approach encountered problems: revenue growth did not keep pace with costs, and the task of directly managing so many processes overwhelmed Valid Nutrition’s core team. Furthermore, Steve’s team was frustrated that their highly centralized organizational model failed to adequately promote

local economic autonomy and empowerment—a core value of their community-based care ideal. Steve had bumped into one of the central difficulties in scaling social impact: as you serve increasing numbers, the complexity of your work increases faster than your organization’s ability to manage it.

SCALING IMPACT BEYOND THE ORGANIZATION:  
A PROMISING NEW PARADIGM

Valid Nutrition is certainly not the only social organization stymied by attempts to scale impact by growing the organization. Indeed, a consensus is emerging: social entrepreneurs who wish to scale-up effectively must learn to transition “from an enterprise to an ecosystem.”<sup>4</sup> Here is one indicator: when Greg Dees first wrote about scaling pathways in 2004,<sup>5</sup> 77 percent of social entrepreneurs were using “branching” (setting up new offices of their organization) as their primary scaling mechanism, but in the past two years, that figure fell to 45 percent and then 33 percent among the two cohorts of Ashoka’s Globalizer Fellows. At the same time, the percentage of Globalizer Fellows working through partners to extend their impact started at 70 percent in the first year and jumped up to 86 percent in the second year. This change in approach, though unfamiliar and therefore daunting to social entrepreneurs and funders alike, holds tremendous promise because it focuses on spreading impact through others in ways that businesses simply cannot do.

For Steve Collins, the move from enterprise to ecosystem has involved isolating the key values at the absolute core of his mission and actively seeking out other actors who could integrate these values into their own activities. Realizing, for instance, that the National Association of Small Farmers in Malawi shared his goal of developing local economic resilience, he worked with this group to explore how much of his factory’s input needs could in fact be sourced locally. Now, the association coordinates production and quality testing among dozens of local small farmers to ensure that Valid Nutrition fulfills its production needs locally to the greatest extent possible. This frees up organizational resources that had previously been directed to managing procurement, and extends local empowerment further up the supply chain. Furthermore, when the time came to increase production beyond the capacity of Valid Nutrition’s first plant, Steve and his team decided once again to seek out ways to expand their impact without adding organizational capacity. They partnered with independent factories in Kenya and Ethiopia, ensuring that these manufacturers embraced Valid Nutrition’s approach to local sourcing and capability building by partnering with small farmers’ associations based on the model they had established in Malawi. Having thus dramatically increased both their output and local economic development with minimal organizational growth, Valid Nutrition deepened its partnerships with UNICEF and other large aid providers to distribute products far beyond its own organizational reach. Finally, recognizing that the full problem of malnutrition is too great for any non-governmental organization to tackle successfully, Steve has turned his attention to influencing the private sector. By demonstrating and rigorously document-

ing the business feasibility of his innovative approach and engaging major industry players in active dialogue, he hopes to spur the food industry to tackle malnutrition directly. In all these strategies, Steve is mobilizing diverse and substantial global resources toward a market-based solution that his team alone could never hope to see through.

Juergen Griesbeck, the founder of streetfootballworld, has undergone a similar shift in focus during his scaling journey. Juergen's vision is to connect all the organizations around the world that use football (soccer) as a tool for development. Through these connections, organizations refine and supplement their programming with the best practices of others, collaborate on shared projects, and tap into investors they could not access individually. Originally, streetfootballworld set out to function as the central hub directing all major activity among all members of its network. However, this meant it had to grow in size along with the network's growth, which seemed unrelated to the impact it wanted to have. So Juergen decided to decouple the size of the network from the size of its core by empowering network members to transact and collaborate directly among themselves. He has since shifted his focus to pioneering new ways for network members to cultivate their own local ecosystems, learn directly from each other, and jointly pursue shared funding and program goals. Now, Juergen is adamant: "this network approach is *part of the impact.*"

For Steve, Juergen, and the growing ranks of social entrepreneurs who want to scale their impact without necessarily growing their organizations, a robust body of scholarly work has begun to emerge around models and strategies to accomplish this. Indeed, from Dees's early elaboration of the multiple "pathways to scale" beyond simple branching and franchises,<sup>6</sup> to Bradach's recent call to create "100x the results with 2x the organization,"<sup>7</sup> significant progress has been made. Still, Ashoka Fellows have been calling for scaling guidance that has a more directly *problem-solving* orientation, and to learn firsthand from the struggles and triumphs of their peers who have already walked the path.

#### THE ASHOKA GLOBALIZER: PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Two years ago, acting on the need for firsthand guidance on scaling-up, Ashoka created its Globalizer program. Our mission was to identify Ashoka Fellows, such as Steve Collins and Juergen Griesbeck, who could be role models and thought leaders in this area, bring them together with global business entrepreneurs who have mastered the old scaling strategies, and jointly develop practical wisdom on scaling strategies explicitly for the social sector.

These social and business entrepreneurs constitute the Globalizer's community of practice. They cut across all thematic/issue areas in both sectors, and come together at Globalizer Summit events around the world. Once there, they engage in three days of structured interactions in order to share and develop knowledge around emerging scaling pathways, exchange practical advice to support each oth-

## The Globalizer Initiative at a Glance

Launched in 2009 with financial support from the ESSL Social Prize.

Functions as a cross-sector, tightly-knit community of practice, involving (to date):

35 Ashoka Fellows, from 22 countries, selected based on the global social impact potential of their innovations

40 “Panelists,” senior entrepreneurs from business and social sectors who have scaled their innovations significantly

50+ volunteer advisors, including business leaders, McKinsey consultants, and senior Ashoka staff

Globalizer community meets at traveling “Globalizer Summits” for intimate one-on-one or small-group conversations to provide strategic advice to each other and build knowledge for the field.

ers’ endeavors, and distill their stories to share with the sector as a whole. Before each summit, participants spend several months preparing with teams of advisors from Ashoka and our business sector partners, working to isolate or “unbundle” the core elements within their theory of change and refine strategies for scaling these up.

In the process of bringing these social entrepreneurs together and pushing them forward, we have developed practical insights at two distinct levels:

1. A set of strategic imperatives that must be explored by any social entrepreneur seeking to scale
2. Emerging mechanisms for scaling impact beyond one’s organization

### Strategic Imperatives for Entrepreneurs Seeking to Scale

Through two Globalizer summits and a host of global conversations, the central tenet of scaling for impact has been clear: let loose a well-defined idea to create a movement or mission-aligned ecosystem, rather than only growing the organization behind it. Out of the many sessions organized around this theme, two strategic imperatives have shone through: *liberate the core* and *become a magnet*.

*Liberate the core.* To really help an idea travel, social entrepreneurs must return to the essence of why they started their work. Too often their organizations have grown opportunistically—expanding and evolving based on funding or connections available at a given time, rather than with a clear focus on their original mission and full market potential. As one Globalizer participant put it, “I started the organization to work on a problem. Somewhere along the line, building the organization became larger than the mission. This was hard to get out from.”



Two further nuggets of practical insight have emerged from discussions around this imperative. First, and often most difficult, the *role of the founder must change*. At a certain point, founders must empower their team to lead operations, and institutionalize implicit knowledge to focus time and energy on spreading the vision. For charismatic leaders who have nurtured their innovation from infancy, this transition can be more difficult than anything that came before. One social entrepreneur described it as a process of “killing idols, whether individuals or the organization.” Although it can be an excruciating task, creating impact outward from the founder is essential if it is to spread beyond the organization.

The second insight is the need to *ride your own wave before you jump into another pond*. Taking time to test and refine a core operational (and revenue) model before attempting further expansion *always* pays off. This is naturally more difficult for those working to scale their impact beyond their own organization. But this is the very reason that it is crucial to align on shared goals and outcomes in order to build coherence across an ecosystem of mission-driven actors. Take Steve Collins’s example: his early investment in rigorously documenting the feasibility of Valid Nutrition’s business model is allowing him to focus the resources of major industrial players directly on malnutrition, creating a quantum leap in social impact.

*Become a magnet*. Scaling impact beyond one’s organization represents a radical jump in efficiency. But, like any scaling program, it requires additional resources to succeed. Paradoxically, it can be much harder to secure funding for such a strategy than for more traditional approaches, as most funders are still rooted in the old paradigm of growing organizations in order to scale their social impact. Still, to become a real magnet for growth, social entrepreneurs must transition their business model from one where they are at the center to one where they have a network of actors (funders included) who all revolve around a common mission.

In trying to fulfill this daunting imperative, members of the Globalizer community urge other social entrepreneurs to *know when to go elephant hunting*: sometimes one risky breakthrough is worth more than 1,000 small successes. Several Globalizer Fellows credit a single crucial relationship that catapulted their impact far beyond what they could have built incrementally. Passing up smaller opportunities in order to doggedly pursue (and then carefully manage) these partnerships can pay enormous dividends. At the same time, these social entrepreneurs all caution against becoming overly dependent on one powerful partner. Their advice: immediately help any such collaborator to see itself within the larger mission-focused ecosystem in order to spread its power and influence across a larger number of stakeholders.

Several social entrepreneurs have also begun embracing education as a magnet for spreading their vision. Whether by starting their own training campuses or partnering with academic institutions to shape formal curricula, this approach

allows them to attract increasing numbers of changemakers who contribute new ideas and resources to the mission.

Finally, it is important to *find ways to creatively recover some of the value you create*, ideally as close as possible to your impact/beneficiaries. For example, street-footballworld found that network members were more than willing to cover the costs of organizing all gatherings and exchanges. Thus, asking collaborators to materially support valuable processes can sometimes be the easiest way to *transform beneficiaries into co-creators*.

## EMERGING MECHANISMS FOR SCALING IMPACT BEYOND THE ORGANIZATION

As the Globalizer community explored mechanisms to extend social impact beyond the organization, two approaches stood out. These are not new pathways per se but ones where the key principles needed for adoption and widespread use have not yet been developed adequately. They are:

1. Open-source changemaking
2. Smart networks

We now briefly describe each of these pathways to scale and propose the building blocks of an intellectual framework that will be critical for entrepreneurs to use in refining and adopting them. By developing these mechanisms, we don't mean to imply that social entrepreneurs must choose between them, or indeed between these and other approaches. Indeed, over 75% of the Globalizer Fellows are using a combination of different scaling models, which may be necessary, given the complexity of the systems they're trying to change. Nor do we imply that these principles are iron-clad and comprehensive; they are merely a beginning, an evolving framework based on what our community is seeing, learning, and doing.

Yet we also believe that both pathways have the potential to strongly impact the way social entrepreneurs scale-up in the future, and that the principles below not only get at how to make them work but also are key to the very nature of the leadership that social entrepreneurs provide.

### **1. Open-Source Changemaking**

In a world of constant change and multiplying problems, two approaches—working behind closed doors, and leadership by an indispensable individual—are becoming relics of the past. An article in *Management Innovation Exchange* noted:

The job description of the leader has officially changed from “smartest guy in the room” to chief promoter of the idea that “nobody” is as smart as “everybody”. . . It's the leader's job to invite as many smart people into the room as possible, to create opportunities for and channel contributions from the broadest mix of people—wherever they sit in the organization (or the world).<sup>8</sup>

We must open up opportunities to increasing numbers of people to collaborate for a common purpose: the heart of all social changemaking.

The open-source model is a powerful way to do this because it taps into people's natural motivation. As TED's Chris Andersen points out, three things appear to be driving open innovation: (a) a *crowd* of people who share a common interest, even if they relate to that interest in different ways (as innovators, evangelists, even skeptics); (b) an interest that is *visible and open* to all to enable people to demonstrate the full extent of their creativity; and (c) a *personal desire* within participants to improve their ability to contribute to something larger than themselves.<sup>9</sup> Andersen's conclusions are in line with emerging thinking from behavioral economics and psychology, which shows that people perform best (and often irrespective of financial considerations) when they are challenged appropriately but can respond on their own terms and in a way that both recognizes them for their mastery and makes a larger contribution to the world.<sup>10</sup> In other words, your stakeholders do things for you not because they have to, but because they want to. Open-source communities tap into all of these underlying elements of motivation.

The open-source approach has five basic principles.

*Ensure trust and transparency.* People are more likely to contribute their ideas if they are confident that others won't exploit the contribution. An effective open-source strategy sets up norms and protocols governing *each* transaction, which sets up a foundational culture but also makes clear to every user just how their and others' contributions are treated.

*Foster a culture of meritocracy.* Because all contributions are transparent and open to discussion, usually the best idea wins. Indeed, the best open-source platforms have a clear ladder of engagement (i.e., "White Belt" to "Black Belt") in which users understand what they need to do in order to progress. This can be extremely obvious (e.g., sellers' ratings in eBay) or more subtle (e.g., the more active moderators in Wikipedia become more influential over time).

*Open up to possibility.* It is a fact of our world that we do not know where the next innovation will come from. Being open and transparent creates unforeseen windows of opportunity, with myriad unforeseen outcomes. On the flip side, however, it also requires giving your own contribution away without expecting a quid pro quo return. There can often be a "long tail" in open-source work: return on investment accrues over time.

*Seek rapid diffusion.* Because the frameworks you use to communicate can be opened up to everyone for feedback, innovation happens quicker and ideas spread faster. A great example of this is the well-known story of Ashoka Fellow Darrel Hammond's KaBOOM! It builds playgrounds in low-income communities across the United States with the goal of giving every child a safe space to play within walking distance of their home. When KaBOOM! made the decision to open-source its playground model, it found that in a single year (2009), *other* people built as many playgrounds as KaBOOM! itself had built in the previous 14 years.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, today "local communities build 10 KaBOOM!-influenced playgrounds for each one KaBOOM! builds itself."<sup>12</sup>

*Encourage mutability.* Because the world is so vastly diverse, the same idea looks different in different places. These differences can be harnessed as innovations across the community. By its very nature, open source makes it easy to start variations (translations, geographic adaptations, new beneficiaries) that ultimately enhance beneficiaries' satisfaction.

#### *Open Source and the Social Entrepreneur*

Given these principles, how do the roles of social entrepreneurs change as they open-source their innovations? The primary conceptual shift is realizing that they must move from being “king of the hill” to becoming the hill itself. From eBay to Facebook to Wikipedia, the best open-source approaches focus on transforming beneficiaries into co-creators, to becoming the platform upon which users innovate and shape how everyone uses it. Ecosystems and platforms are more inclusive than organizations, and perhaps even more so than movements.

#### *Open Source and Your Organization*

Another critical step is to open-source change within the organization itself. Several Globalizer Fellows realized that they no longer had the right people on the team. In other words, the team that enabled them to reach their current level of accomplishment may not help them get to the next level of impact. As one social entrepreneur noted, “The team working on liberating the core won't help us become a magnet. I might need a parallel structure, even maybe a new organization.” And you know you're succeeding when the best new ideas for progress come not from you but, increasingly, from others in your organization.

Although open source is not a panacea, and indeed it could be just one element of a scaling strategy, it can be a tremendous accelerator of innovation as well as a great strategy for building stakeholder loyalty. Success is measured not in terms of achieving measurement indicators or fulfilling a project plan but in the growing number of users who become co-creators. If you feel that you are spending all your time pushing a rock uphill rather than being a magnet attracting others to you, then you aren't doing it right. On the other hand, you know you are succeeding when your beneficiaries-turned-co-creators further innovate your original contribution beyond your own wildest dreams. When everybody contributes, everybody wins.

## **2. Smart Networks**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be marked by integrated thinking, interdependent action, and international systems change. It is no longer either feasible or perhaps even desirable for a single person, organization, or group to achieve large-scale complex social change alone. What is required now is tapping the power of interconnecting networks to generate lasting results.

Smart networks can help us achieve the scale we need. Smart networking means leveraging or collaborating across networks in ways that are greater than the

sum of their parts. By contrast, “unsmart” networks are those that are not coordinated or that rely too much on one central member.

Five basic principles also apply to smart networks.

*Ensure diversity at the core.* The core or center of the network is better when it is more diverse because that makes it possible to reach out to new ideas and resources from multiple avenues. On another level, it’s also important to expand the network’s periphery—the people on the edge of the network—both to bring in new perspectives that could lead to breakthroughs, and to provide pathways for spreading new ideas and practices. Greater diversity at the core leads to better participation of diverse communities at the periphery.

*Expand virally.* This happens by engaging groups beyond the current membership. By helping people explore many collaborative projects that together give rise to rich insights and creative breakthroughs, smart networks open new pathways for success. For instance, Juergen Griesbeck’s streetfootballworld limits the number of new network members but empowers all its members to create their own football-for-development ecosystems, with the other members providing guidance on governance, ecosystem culture, and quality control.

*Be “glocal.”* Smart networks must operate on many levels (local/regional/international) to be transformative. Learning and breakthroughs flow from local practice and are re-mixed through analysis and comparison with other projects. Global networks, in turn, also infuse local projects with new perspectives and ideas. The core orientation of streetfootballworld is that change happens locally but the architecture for coordination among the network members needs to be designed from a global perspective.

*Give to get.* Smart networks require generous sharing to provide value to others, which makes these networks powerful, cost-effective tools to increase access to information, financing, and other resources. For instance, Kovin Naidoo, a Globalizer Fellow from South Africa, once spent a large amount of time and organizational energy leading a coalition that was instrumental in sealing a very large grant for substantial work across South Africa—but his organization, the International Centre for Eyecare Education, didn’t receive any of the funds. However, other members of the coalition later approached them to carry out significant aspects of the work, and they ended up getting a better outcome than if they were one of the initial grantees.

*Foster network leadership.* Smart network leadership requires a readiness to develop a common agenda, agree on mutually reinforcing activities, and commit to continuous follow-up. Such leaders—network weavers, if you will—actively set up these systems and shape the different interactions between members (collaboration, communication, learning) to move toward the larger mission.<sup>13</sup> Yet successful network leaders also see their role as moving away from the core in due course, becoming another node in the network rather than the hub itself, as figure 1 shows.<sup>14</sup>

## Scaling Social Impact

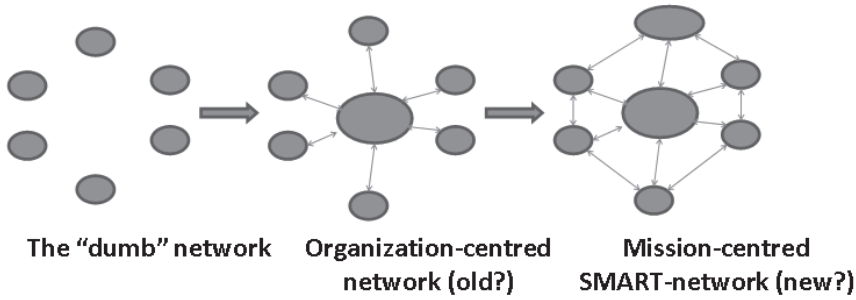


Figure 1. The Evolution of a Smart Network.

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### *Smart Networks and the Social Entrepreneur*

What is the role of the social entrepreneur in harnessing or developing a smart network? One of the first trust-building activities is for members to work on smaller projects together, so they can express shared values and shared purpose and negotiate over the points of difference in an endeavor where the stakes are not as high. Once the network is activated, a key strategic task is to ensure that the members put pressure on each other to deliver—so that they move beyond good intentions to putting in the hard collaborative work needed for impact. And, critically, success becomes clear when the social entrepreneur not only moves away from the center of the network to become a node, but potentially moves out completely. A major goal of smart network leaders is to help others become network leaders.

### *Smart Networks and Your Organization*

To integrate the value of smart networking within the organization itself, Juergen Griesbeck ensures that all the staff members of streetfootballworld are trained to think in, and engage in, networks. Similarly, Kavin Naidoo spends 30 percent of his time cultivating networks for the mission of access to low-cost eye care for the poor, and his staff members typically spend up to 15 percent of their time doing the same. For smart networking to succeed, leaders must allocate human and financial resources among all participating organizations. But mission networkers are still a rare species, and networking is rarely included as a budget item. Thus, although networking and collaboration are high on the change-making agenda, they rarely happen in a sustained way. This must change.

## CONCLUSION

Given the increasing adoption of both open-source changemaking and smart networking as key pathways to scaling social impact, it's important to consider immediate challenges. For instance, how do social entrepreneurs learn to emotionally let go of their programs enough to let others take them in truly new and unforeseen directions? How can they operate effectively in a world conditioned to pursue iso-

lated impact, often driven by isolated investing from a donor community that (despite notable exceptions<sup>15</sup>) does not yet recognize that large-scale success will come only from collaboration? And if success does not conform to our standard modes of measurement and resource allocation, how will organizations justify spending resources on these new pathways? These are the types of challenges facing all innovators—and thus the issues that the next series of scaling innovations will most likely address.

Despite the challenges, both open-source changemaking and smart networks have much in common that points to the future of scaling social impact. A central tenet is the notion that the purpose or mission must be the center of attention, not the organization or the social entrepreneur. The social sector must move into “mission networking” rather than “organizational networking”: decentralized networks nurturing collaboration from the bottom up will have more impact than centralized organizations, even those with a brilliant strategy developed from the top and cascaded out. Second, both mechanisms are strongly opportunistic, not only taking advantage of chance encounters, breaking news, and the appearance of new talent, but also actively relying on and planning for such occurrences. Third, they are characterized by a spirit of abundance and the unconditional sharing of ideas, people, research, and time, even though this generosity may require short-term economic sacrifices. And, finally, they ride on an acceptance that may be hard for some social entrepreneurs: others might be able to do a better job. This in turn requires letting go of personal ego, brand, intellectual property, and the other elements of our organizational conditioning in order to maximize the number of changemakers across the ecosystem. As Wei-Skillern and Marciano put it, when social entrepreneurs share “the pursuit of their mission,” they “have far more impact than they could ever have on their own.”<sup>16</sup>

Al Etmanski, a Globalizer Fellow from Canada who has successfully pioneered several social enterprises over a distinguished career, goes even further:

Over the last 25 years I’ve discovered that what I thought were ecosystem approaches were in fact strategies and tactics. This lens of smart networks and open source takes me away from first focusing on strategy and tactics before going to the ecosystem, to instead focusing first on the ecosystem and *from there* defining strategy and tactics. This is a substantial change!

It will also not be an easy change. But social entrepreneurs have always been people who can see over the horizon, who can envision new possibilities such as the fact that poor people might be willing and able to pay back micro-loans. So if anyone can lead this type of change, it is the likes of Steve Collins and Juergen Griesbeck and the dozens of other social entrepreneurs who have seen beyond the horizon and are quietly shaping new pathways to scale their vision. And, in doing so, they are ensuring that the best ideas reach their full potential: solving intractable social problems and improving countless lives around the world.

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