

Incubation model helps social entrepreneurs

ACCRA, Ghana - A social incubator programme that helps social entrepreneurs scale their business models in Africa, is making an impact on the lives of over a million children across seven African countries.



More than one million African children have benefitted from social enterprise development in Africa in the last five years, according to a new report released by [Reach for Change Africa](#). The non-profit organisation, which, this year, is marking its 5th anniversary themed *Accelerating Impact. Driving Change*, also reported that over 300 early-stage social entrepreneurs were supported to develop organisations that are improving the lives of children, youth and women in seven African countries.

Since it was first launched in Accra, Ghana in 2012, Reach for Change Africa has provided crucial business development support for social entrepreneurs who, in turn, used their social businesses to impact over one million children.

As a result, over 435,000 African children were protected from mental abuse and threats, over 308,000 children were provided with high quality education, and over 156,000 children were supported to develop and live healthy lives.

“The social enterprise movement is really starting to take off in Africa, and we are honoured to be a part of this movement for change,” said Amma Lartey, Reach for Change Africa’s regional director. “With the right supports, social entrepreneurs have the potential to lead Africa’s development and impact millions along the way.”

Reach for Change Africa is a non-profit organisation that runs incubators, accelerators and other customised programs to help local social entrepreneurs develop sustainable organisations that impact the lives of children, youth and women.

In the report, a number of social entrepreneurs from the seven countries where Reach for Change Africa operates, explained how the organisation's programs helped them to develop their social ventures.

Scalable model

"Being in the incubator has helped me develop a scalable model," said Carolyn Ekyarisiima, the founder of Apps & Girls in Tanzania. Apps & Girls is a social enterprise that is bridging the gender gap in ICT through coding clubs, workshops, exhibitions, hackathons, bootcamps and competitions for girls and young women. Since joining the Reach for Change Incubator, Ekyarisiima has scaled her organisation from just one location to 21 clubs in Dar es Salaam.

"This year, I spoke with my mentor at Reach for Change about the possibility of franchising my social enterprise and got great feedback. This led me to apply for the NEXTGEN franchising competition and because of the great influence and impact of the Reach for Change Incubator, I was among the winners! Now I am looking into scaling Apps & Girls across all of Tanzania and other African countries," she added.

The Reach for Change incubator also helped James Kofi Annan build a social enterprise that's fighting child-trafficking in Ghana. "I owe a debt of gratitude to Reach for Change. Its incubator program brought direct benefits to me and to Challenging Heights. Today, Challenging Heights is a well-respected global leader in the fight against child trafficking." said Kofi Annan.

From the age of six to 16, James Kofi Annan was enslaved, starved, abused and forced to work in appalling conditions. After managing to escape and turning his life around, Kofi Annan was determined to prevent other children from experiencing the same thing. He founded Challenging Heights, an organisation that rescues and rehabilitates children from slavery, identifies and educates vulnerable children and establishes income-generating initiatives in at-risk communities and empowers youth and families to help prevent child trafficking.

Since joining the Reach for Change Incubator in 2013, Kofi Annan has more than quadrupled Challenging Heights annual budget and is implementing a five year strategic plan, developed with support from Reach for Change. Most importantly, he has impacted the lives of over 8,000 Ghanaian children.

The five year anniversary report also details Reach for Change's plans for the future. Over the course of the next five years, the organisation plans to run additional accelerators to increase the number of African social entrepreneurs that they reach, enriching the social enterprise ecosystem across Africa through research, and implement new programming, such as the rapid scale program for more established social entrepreneurs in the growth phase of their development.

To read the full impact report, visit: <http://Africa.ReachForChange.org/impact>.

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