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# The Real Problem Solvers: Social Entrepreneurs In America



## Synopsis

Today, "social entrepreneurship" describes a host of new initiatives, and often refers to approaches that are breaking from traditional philanthropic and charitable organizational behavior. Nowhere is this more true than in the United States—where, from 1995 to 2005, the number of non-profit organizations registered with the IRS grew by 53%. But, what types of change have these social entrepreneurial efforts brought to the world of civil society and philanthropy? What works in today's environment? And, what barriers are these new efforts breaking down as they endeavor to make the world a better place? *The Real Problem Solvers* brings together leading entrepreneurs, funders, investors, thinkers, and champions in the field to answer these questions from their own, first-person perspectives. Contributors include marquee figures, such as Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, Ashoka Founder Bill Drayton, Jacqueline Novogratz, Founder of the Acumen Fund, and Sally Osberg, CEO of the Skoll Foundation. The core chapters are anchored by an introduction, a conclusion, and question-and-answers sections that weave together the voices of various contributors. In no other book are so many leaders presented side-by-side. Therefore, this is the ideal accessible and personal introduction for students of and newcomers to social entrepreneurship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In the past ten years, a rich ecosystem has developed around the idea, energy, and success of social entrepreneurs. With years of experience, Ruth Shapiro captures the complexity and

complementarity of the men and women whose innovation and drive are changing the way we solve social problems and should be required reading for all." (Bill Draper Co-Chair of the Draper, Richards, Kaplan Foundation, General Partner, Draper Richards LLC, and author of *The Start-up Game*) "The term social entrepreneur has become common parlance, but there is little consensus on what it really means. This important book provides us with a clear conception of social entrepreneurship and the nuanced thinking of key leaders. The breadth and depth of the field are captured in one enjoyable and provocative read." (Melissa Berman, President and CEO Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors) "Good leaders inspire, motivate, and create alliances toward attaining lofty goals. This book is full of such people and their stories. A worthwhile read indeed!" (Henry R. Kravis, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Kohlberg Kravis and Roberts) "This book is an exhilarating read because of the people and ideas that it illuminates. There are real compelling, proven, and daring ideas here that the rest of us would be wise to embrace." (Trabian Shorters, Vice President of Communities John S. and James L. Knight Foundation) "The Real Problem Solvers provides singular insight into the aspirations, challenges, and opportunities of those who are at the front of the social entrepreneurial movement. This is a must-read for the leaders in organizations that seek societal impact at the 'blurred edge' between the non-profit and for-profit worlds." (Dominic Barton, Global Managing Partner McKinsey & Company) "Ingenuity, initiative, and determination are valued traits in any enterprise. Social entrepreneurs apply these talents to solving difficult social problems. This book showcases a number of these commendable people and inspires the reader to think deeply about his or her own contributions to society." (George P. Shultz Former US Secretary of State) "In this treasure chest of a book, Ruth Shapiro deftly presents and weaves together perspectives from leading thinkers and practitioners in social entrepreneurship. By engaging them in conversations and offering her own well-grounded insights, she deeply enriches our understanding of this important and evolving field." (Professor J. Gregory Dees, Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship) "A wonderful introduction to social entrepreneurship in the United States and the growing ecosystem of organizations committed to supporting it. Ruth Shapiro frames this book with an engaging and insightful account of the critical influences that have spurred social entrepreneurs to take on some of our society's most challenging problems. Regardless of the problems that these pragmatic visionaries seek to address, this book shows that their magic lies in combining innovation, resourcefulness, and opportunity with an unwillingness to give into setbacks." (Pamela Hartigan, Director, Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship)

Ruth A. Shapiro is the Principal of Keyi Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in creating broader

networks, understanding, and business ventures between individuals and companies in Asia, Europe, and the United States. She is Social Entrepreneur in Residence at the Commonwealth Club of California. Shapiro was the founder of the Asia Business Council where she is now Senior Advisor.

Helpful to provide insights to the goals of some prominent social enterprises. Overall found the author's focus more on the positive aspects of these entities rather than an equal critique of their successes and failures. Irrespective of this, an enjoyable read.

Can the promotion of social entrepreneurship help change the world for the better? Ruth Shapiro's book has something for everyone who is struggling with this question. I loved this edited volume format. It provides a real variety of first-hand accounts (ranging from personal start-up stories to thought-provoking questions about future directions) shared by leading practitioners, investors, thinkers and advocates in the field. The book is a wonderful resource for those of us trying to stay inspired and informed about the latest thinking on how to incentivize social problem solving.

Great book

Definitely, it is enriching my concepts of leading Companies. Every one, not only entrepreneurs, should read it. Thanks, Ruth Shapiro for putting all this information together.

A great book with practical insights on this rapidly growing area of interest; i.e. business approach to solving social ills.

As we are assailed by ever more complex social, economic and environmental challenges, this book offers inspiration that human ingenuity can triumph. "The Real Problem Solvers" shows us that change is difficult, it's possible, and it often comes from unconventional spaces. This book renews faith in the ability to change, and gives us fresh insights into the hard work of actually achieving change.

I had heard about social entrepreneurship but wasn't sure what the term meant and what people were doing in the field. This book was an amazing introduction to the field and to the inspirational people working in it. Thank you for the great overview!

This book provides an excellent resource for case based learning at the university level. It provides an introduction to social entrepreneurship through the eyes of the entrepreneurs themselves. Very stimulating for students thinking about social change and their own agency.

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