

The Oyakae Initiative

Social business for social change

"We need a new type of business...that is totally dedicated to solving social and environmental problems."

- Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Young People Making a Living by Making a Difference: umake100 is a campaign to raise the start-up funding for the [Oyakae Initiative](#), a School Ventures initiative to improve education by taking social business into low-income schools, enabling students to propel market-based solutions that create social and environmental change. These young people are transforming their own lives and communities today, and Oyakae is harnessing their potential to succeed as adults tomorrow.

What we do: In 2009, we plan to reach 10,000 students through our partner schools in Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the US. Working with mentors and teachers, we will link students to seed funding and social business 'incubation' sites in their schools. The students will create businesses that both address the social and environmental challenges in their communities and help them make a living. They will emerge from school as adults accustomed to solving problems in sustainable productive ways.

What is School Ventures? [School Ventures](#) exists to improve education for students from low-income communities. We strengthen investment in education through access to information and capital. Beyond Oyakae, our work to date includes creating the world's first [index](#) to assess investment opportunities in African education markets, an [internet portal](#) that streamlines the borrowing process for schools that serve low-income communities, and advisory services for school and school system development.

What is Social Business? Social businesses are profitable enterprises whose very existence, product or service responds to the environmental and social challenges we all face. Examples include tree farms for lumber and reforestation, water purification systems, or using battery-powered lights that replace kerosene lamps.

What is different about our approach?

The Problem: In most poor countries youth under 25 make up more than 55% of the population and half the workforce. Yet these countries are plagued by unemployment and most youth will never hold a formal job in their lifetimes. With the pressure to work and the cost of school fees, most young people do not make it to high school. The education system also poorly prepares them for productive adulthood: it is based on a colonial rote-learning model that does not build creative, analytical, problem-solving or entrepreneurial skills.

Our Solution: Low-income youth have the creativity, ideas, and potential to solve their own problems, they just need tools, resources, and opportunities. Experiential learning builds creative, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Having social business in schools prepares students with the knowledge and experience to combat poverty. We will share successful solutions from around the world so that the students can adapt these business models or create new models for their own communities. Oyakae builds local economies by creating new supply and demand of locally generated social products and services. It distributes development technologies from around the world to expand the range of solutions students can apply toward local challenges. It also strengthens the effectiveness of education by helping students afford to stay in school and prepare to make productive contributions to society as adults.

How will we accomplish this goal?

Country Coordinators: Oyakae Coordinator in each of our 4 operating countries will be responsible for building and managing partnerships with a) schools and students, b) partner organizations that offer forms of entrepreneurial training, c) the private sector companies that show students how to run businesses effectively, and d) community members who can participate in the learning and doing processes. The Coordinators will mobilize the young people, build an experiential learning curriculum with our partners and set up social business ‘incubator’ sites where students can develop their ideas.

Oyakae Community Portal: We are building a website to connect students with each other and people like you who want to contribute seed funding, mentoring, business models and ideas. Once the students’ business plans are ready, they will be posted on our website for seed funding and support.

How will we reach 10,000 students? Each Country Coordinator will work with 25 partner schools to reach at least 100 students per school per year (2,500 students per country and 10,000 in total). The Oyakae Initiative is designed to leverage the power of community organization and partnership. We believe that local communities have solutions to the problems they face. Our ambition is to provide the overarching structures and support systems that provide young people with the freedom to innovate and other people the opportunity to participate in changing lives.

Incubator Sites: Each site will have at least 50 students who are organized into ‘business groups’ of 5-10 students. Each business group will be allocated up to four mentors from different business and social disciplines. The mentors will guide the students through every step of the social business process, including creative brainstorming and idea generation, business planning, fundraising, product/service development, business operation, product/service marketing, and measurement of social impact. Learning activities will include both instructional and experiential elements and students will gain exposure to business operations in sectors similar to theirs. For example, students working on water purification will gain opportunities to visit with purified water supplier companies for exposure to ideas and approaches.

The incubator sites will also take advantage of an online community of Oyakae enthusiasts who will contribute their ideas, solutions and advice for social change. These ideas will be available for implementation and adaptation by students who find them useful.

Measuring Impact: MOVE IT Rating System: We have created a rating scale called “MOVE IT” to measure the impact of our student-led social businesses. The index is based on a comprehensive evaluation of the **M**ission (what social challenge it is addressing), **O**perations (how effective the business will be in achieving its goal), **V**iability (how sustainable the business will be), **E**ngagement (how much the business engages the students and other community stakeholders in its activities), **I**mpact (what the social impact is) and **T**arget Market (which segment of the community the business serves). When the students finalize their business plans they will be rated, and when the businesses are operating, we will continue to use this rating scale to measure their impact.

Get Involved:

The Oyakae Initiative provides a number of ways for you to be involved.

GlobalGiving Matching Grant: To reach 10,000 students next year we have to raise \$100,000. You can make a tax-deductible contribution through [GlobalGiving](#). Until December 15 your [contribution](#) of at least \$10 through GlobalGiving.com could earn us up to \$25,000! Oyakae is part of the

GlobalGiving Everybody Can Win! Challenge. The project that recruits the most unique donors will earn \$15,000, and the project that raises the most money will earn an additional \$10,000!

Win a Trip to Kenya: Use [Facebook](#) or [GlobalGiving](#) to get the most people to contribute to Oyakae on your behalf. Of the top 5 fundraisers, we will select one to join us on a trip to Kenya. You could get exposure to social business and interact with students and their mentors and schools on the ground.

Spring 2009 Internship: Work alongside a social business entrepreneur and gain exposure to social business. Help build the Oyakae program and research the most high impact social businesses around the world. The internship is open to university students at the undergraduate or graduate level, with potential for government-subsidized pay or school credit. Pending funds raised, there is also a chance to accompany us on a 2-week trip to Kenya.

Start an Oyakae Chapter: Help us build the Oyakae community by starting a local chapter in your school or university. Participate in building the social business program as a mentor, contributor, and sharer of ideas. Help us launch Oyakae in low-income schools in your neighborhood.

For further details on how to get involved, please email Melissa Richer at mricher@schoolventures.com or call our offices on (1) 703 535 3257.