

DOING GOOD

Change makers

UnLtd South Africa – finding, funding and supporting passionate change makers in the Western Cape. By Nicole Honey

Awidening gap between rich and poor, growing unemployment, the toll of HIV Aids, inadequate education, pending ecological crisis – the list of social problems is long and well documented. Less well publicised are the social entrepreneurs who are emerging in nations across the world using business as a means to tackle social problems.

Social Revolutionaries

These modern-day heroes are creating hope in hopeless situations through enterprising solutions with a measurable impact to transform their communities, improve people's access to opportunity and deliver environmental sustainability.

However, driving social change while balancing budgets is no easy feat. Pitfalls include devising business models that address a social need, often-times providing services to the very poor at affordable rates, or for free, while generating enough revenue to sustain and expand the operation. Other hurdles involve accessing funding from investors sympathetic to the nuances of social enterprise and in many instances setting up operations in remote or challenging environments.

Support from an organisation that understands and can assist entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of the social business arena can be invaluable in the early phase of business development.

Providing Support

Inspired by UnLtd, a UK non-profit organisation, Heather Brandon and Kathy Watters founded UnLtd South Africa in 2009. The organisation supports Social Entrepreneurs from start-up to investment readiness by providing a mixture of financial and non-financial support, tailor-made to each individual's stage of development. A typical award consists of a cash grant alongside coaching, mentoring, access to training, events and networks.

The UK organisation that developed the model was formed in 2000 and with the help of an endowment from the British lottery has supported more than 12 000 social entrepreneurs since inception, sparking what has grown into a multi-billion pound industry in Europe. The model has since been replicated in India, Thailand and now in South Africa.

To date UnLtd South Africa has worked with over 30 social entrepreneurs and their award winners are active in the Western Cape and expanding to into Gauteng.

Get Involved

There are a number of ways to get involved whether you are looking to volunteer your time as a mentor, fund an award to an up-and-coming social entrepreneur or are looking for support for your own social enterprise. Visit the UnLtd South Africa website to find out more about these opportunities and sign up for their newsletter or find them on facebook.

Visit: www.unltdsouthafrica.org



CASE STUDY

TRADE-MARK

Josh Cox is the founder of non-profit organisation TRADE-MARK – a social business that aims to break the poverty cycle by identifying trades people who have the skills, vision and drive to build a business and provide them with the resources they need to succeed.

The idea for TRADE-MARK was seeded in 2008 when Josh struck up a friendship with a skilled painter and paver from Diepsloot, a township outside Johannesburg. He had done some work with Josh, but was now struggling to get business. Josh provided him with a reference letter and business cards – these two simple tools resulted in jobs of up to R30,000.

This got Josh thinking. There are hundreds of reliable, qualified trades people in the townships who are eager to work, but without the ability to market themselves effectively, many struggle to maintain a sufficient stream of clients and earn a steady income. And so, TRADE-MARK was born.

The Business Model

Josh's vision is to empower skilled trades people from townships to build sustainable self-supporting businesses using TRADE-MARK as a web-based platform. By way of

a rigorous selection process, TRADE-MARK recruits highly experienced tilers, painters, carpenters and pavers and connects them to homeowners who need work done.

TRADE-MARK obtains referrals for quality tradesmen through township-based churches and through home-owners who have used a tradesman in the past. The vetting procedure begins with the completion of an application form, then a face-to-face meeting, and finally a site visit to verify quality of work. The tradesmen are evaluated on their time keeping and professionalism.

The organisation provides web-based marketing for successful applicants through a website designed to generate leads for the tradesmen. Individuals seeking contractors, enter their request for a quote online, TRADE-MARK then connects the client to their network of tradesmen who then take over negotiations. Once the quote is accepted, a contract is entered into between the client and tradesman.

TRADE-MARK monitors the process and once the job is concluded, the client completes a feedback form. This feedback enables TRADE-MARK to rate its tradesmen and this gives them an incentive to perform. The feedback is shared with the tradesmen, enabling them to learn and improve. They also provide business resources to enable trades people to develop entrepreneurial skills that foster personal growth in a supportive environment.

TRADE-MARK charges clients a 10% fee of the cost of the job – an amount homeowners are comfortable to pay for the peace of mind of having these services vetted and monitored.

Photo: Bevan Davis



Josh Cox is addressing the issue of unemployment head on with his NGO, TRADE-MARK

UnLtd South Africa

In 2011, Josh was awarded a level-1 grant from UnLtd South Africa. Josh received a donation of R20 000 that enabled him to have a marketing strategy developed, set up the website and cover below-the-line marketing activities. He also received mentorship on a weekly basis that assisted him with the financial model, a business plan and a funding proposal. UnLtd South Africa also provided assistance with marketing and introductions to a network of social enterprise experts.

Expansion Plans

TRADE-MARK is currently operating in Somerset West, Strand and Gordon's Bay and plans to expand nationally. The long-term goal is to develop a holistic approach to raising up successful entrepreneurs from the townships, focusing on their marketing needs and linking them to business skills and life skills training and industry associations.

Visit: www.trade-mark.co.za

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UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Y-AGE

ENGAGING SA'S YOUTH

In October 2012 Y-AGE was launched to rekindle the fading optimism of South Africa's youth and channel them towards entrepreneurship with the intent of creating jobs.

162 590

Youth who have indicated interest and interacted with the Y-AGE portal.

20 132

Applications received. 11 000 have been assessed, and successful applicants belong to the first class of Y-AGE.

6 000

Applicants selected for workshops. 2 400 are female.

In response to the unemployment challenges confronting youth, the Y-AGE programme is suitable for these categories of entrepreneurs:

1. People with existing businesses, but no funding.
2. People with business ideas, but no business acumen.
3. People with inventions that need to be taken to market.
4. Collapsed businesses that can be resuscitated.

Visit www.y-age.co.za or call +27 (0)11 966 4180.

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EO TURNS 25

May marked the 25th anniversary of Entrepreneurs' Organisation (EO), a global network of entrepreneurs that promotes entrepreneurial education. Founded in 1987 by young entrepreneurs, EO has extended its invite-only membership to over 8 000 business owners in 40 countries.

EO South Africa context

The Cape Town chapter of EO South Africa consists of 46 members and the Johannesburg chapter of 88 members with an average of 40. The number of employees that report to these industry leaders is 8 139, illustrating the impact that entrepreneurs can have in South Africa.