

Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Post Covid-19 Recovery in Zambia

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ABSTRACT:- Young entrepreneurs' involvement in social entrepreneurship is gaining momentum, more so after the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of their active participation in social enterprises is tremendous. Social entrepreneurship applies the principles and guidance used by start-up founders and entrepreneurs to a business that directly generates social change or impacts a social cause. A social entrepreneur is primarily motivated by a desire to alleviate some kind of systemic social or cultural problem. As younger generation creates and leads social enterprises, self-identity that entails their leadership can bring benefits to various stakeholders. In particular, the engagement of younger generation in social entrepreneurship leading to positive innovative developments that bring impact not only to the founders but also to the employees, volunteers and recipients of the product and services offered by the social enterprise. In this context, the paper explains the importance of youth social entrepreneurship post Covid-19 in society-building, looking into how it creates values to its participants in regard to personal growth and development. The objective of this paper is to elucidate the emergency of social entrepreneurship post Covid-19. The paper maps the characteristics of social entrepreneurs to the characteristics of young people with focus on the development of personal, social and role identities. The paper also explains the significance of young social entrepreneurs' participation in social activities for the income generation and how it directly and indirectly contributes to a balanced societal development.

Key Words: Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise, Youth, Youth Entrepreneur, Covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth social entrepreneurship has emerged as a light of hope, giving innovative answers to the varied difficulties faced by communities globally. Social entrepreneurship has taken centre stage in the post-pandemic recovery process in Zambia, a country known for its robust entrepreneurial culture and resilient youth population. The COVID-19 problem has definitely exacerbated Zambia's already-existing socioeconomic inequalities, disproportionately hurting the most vulnerable elements of society, particularly youth. Young Zambians have endured enormous problems as a result of limited access to employment possibilities and healthcare facilities amid this unparalleled global health catastrophe.

Despite these difficulties, a wave of youth-led social enterprises has emerged, exhibiting extraordinary resilience and inventiveness in dealing with the pandemic's consequences. These young social entrepreneurs are not only delivering important services and establishing job possibilities for their peers, but they are also promoting a sense of community and empowerment among their peers. The transforming significance of youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia's post-COVID-19 recovery is examined in this article. It tells the amazing stories of young Zambian social entrepreneurs who are making a real difference in their communities, revealing their motives, obstacles, and objectives.

That said, Entrepreneurship has been defined as a means to create something different and innovative, acquiring and utilization of resources to implement a differentiated venture, exploiting opportunities to make profit, and taking calculated risks in venturing into untapped territory to create value.¹ While Social entrepreneurship is the use of entrepreneurial principles to organize, create, and manage a social venture to address social issues and achieve a common good. Social entrepreneurs are driven by a mission to create sustainable solutions to social problems.² It involves using entrepreneurial skills and principles to produce and accomplish undertakings that have a positive social or environmental impact. Add the youths to this context, it

¹ Kuratko, Morris and Covin (2011:9)

² Dees, J. Gregory. *The Social Entrepreneur: A New Breed of Leader*. London: Routledge, 2001

implies that young people are encouraged to start businesses or projects that address social issues or community needs.

The phenomenon of youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia is seeing notable growth and vitality, as it endeavors to tackle a range of urgent social and environmental issues prevalent within the nation. A growing number of young individuals in Zambia are initiating social enterprises with the aim of delivering cost-effective and easily accessible services to marginalized areas. These initiatives also seek to foster educational and career prospects for the youth population, while simultaneously promoting the use of sustainable agriculture methods. Two notable authors³ have introduced us to the question that all changemakers attempt to answer: 'How can people adapt rapidly, on an ongoing basis, to an ever-changing array of unforeseeable and increasingly critical problems?' To answer this question and using Zambia as a measuring backdrop, this article will look into the importance of youth social entrepreneurship post Covid-19 in society-building, and how it creates values to its participants in regard to the development of personal, social and role identities.

1.1 Brief overview of the rise of youth social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship as a movement developed in response to major global forces that have shifted the patterns of life around the world, creating more opportunities for people to cause change. America experienced many of these changes over a century ago: the emergence of the private sector, rapid developments in industry, urbanization, and the rise of new wealth up to the early 1900s created new social problems, and Americans responded with programs and organizations to address these needs. In Saenz and Dolan's book,⁴ a historical overview of the evolution of social entrepreneurship, tracing its roots back to the early days of philanthropy and social reform is provided. They argue that social entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful new force in society, offering innovative solutions to complex social problems. Another writer, Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, avers that social entrepreneurs are playing a critical role in creating a more just and equitable world.⁵ While Dees⁶ elucidates that social entrepreneurship is a response to major global forces that have created new opportunities for people to cause change. He discusses the rise of the private sector, rapid developments in industry, urbanization, and the rise of new wealth in America during the early 1900s, and how these changes led to the emergence of new social problems. He also discusses how Americans responded to these challenges with the development of social programs and organizations.

Social entrepreneurship today is a response by the global citizenry to changes that have happened, and are happening, on a global scale. Large-scale changes over the past half-century, such as the collapse of authoritarian and communist regimes, resulted in newfound freedoms for many across the globe. These freedoms have led to greater wealth, longer life spans and better communications around the world. Bornstein argues that social entrepreneurs are not just businesspeople who happen to be working on social issues, but rather a new breed of leader who is using business principles to address social problems in a creative and innovative way.⁷ Leadbeater, Freiberg, and Somerville⁸ on the other hand actually provide a practical guide to starting and running a social enterprise and they discuss the key steps involved in developing a business plan, raising capital, and building a team. They also provide advice on how to measure social impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of a social enterprise.

It is clear to see that there is definitely a marked difference between the current and past generation of youths. The younger generation of the past relied heavily on the help of the government and relations to meet their day today needs. This is understandable because most of the resources in those days were held in the hands of the authorities in charge. It was extremely difficult for one to step out and start something of their own or even think outside the box because there was limited support from the masses. Further, the education curriculum of those days did not factor in the aspect of entrepreneurship. Great ideas simply died a natural death because the youths were not raised to be innovators or trendsetters but mere followers. Most if not all youths in those days trailed in the footsteps of their ancestors and those around them. It was a constant repetition of what had already been done, whether it was working or not. There is a popular saying in the 'bemba' language (one of our local languages in Zambia) that states, 'umwana atasha nyina ukwipika' translated, 'a child praises the mother's cooking skills'. The underlining meaning being that as long as that child does not travel and taste other people's cooking, they will always think their mother's cooking is the best. And that's exactly what was happening in the olden days, people did not know any different, they simply followed blindly the traditions of old.

³ Bornstein and Davis in their book in titled 'Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know'

⁴ "The Rise of Social Entrepreneurship" by William Saenz and Katherine E. Dolan (2008)

⁵ "The Global Impact of Social Entrepreneurship" by Muhammad Yunus (2010)

⁶ "Social Entrepreneurship: A New Breed of Leader" by J. Gregory Dees (2001)

⁷ "The Social Entrepreneur: Changemakers and Social Innovation" by David Bornstein (2004)

⁸ "The Social Enterprise Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Building a Sustainable Social Enterprise" by Chuck Leadbeater, Jay Freiberg, and Paul Somerville (2010)

It is a whole different story for the current generation. In recent years, there has been a notable surge in the involvement of young individuals in social entrepreneurship initiatives. This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the digital age has empowered the younger generation with unprecedented access to information, enabling them to identify and address social issues more effectively. They are not limited to a particular geographical area in terms of information, it is simply a mouse click away. The world is now on the fingertips of whoever cares to explore...and there is no need to even move physically. The interconnected global community has facilitated the sharing of ideas, best practices, and success stories, inspiring young entrepreneurs to venture into socially impactful enterprises. They have become the trendsetters of today having turned the tables around to a point where parents are now learning and looking up to their children.

The rise of youth social entrepreneurship is also a response to the changing socio-economic landscape, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in existing systems, leading many young people to seek innovative solutions to address societal challenges. Whereas the youths of old were settled in the old way of doing things, the current ones are pushed to do something about the situation because they recognize the fact that their parents are not at the stage of being creative or innovative, thus it is up to them to do something about the kind of future they want to have. The disruptions caused by the Covid 19 crisis prompted a reevaluation of traditional business models, with an increasing emphasis on sustainable and socially responsible practices. There are two major sources of change; evolution or revolution and the pandemic was more of the later where the world was forced to think outside the box, dropping old practices that were not working and adopting whole new practices to fit the new normal.

SE offers an avenue for young people to create meaningful experiences as it leverages the youth's capacities to effect positive change in the communities. In recent years, SE has become an alternative means for young people to develop and exercise leadership and agency because SE enables youths to act as active agents of change in their neighborhoods and broader communities.⁹ Importantly, SEs serve as a platform that exposes participants to crucial social issues and social inequality¹⁰, through which youths could develop effective agency by participating in tackling social injustice¹¹. Moreover, recent studies found that participation in SE could enhance youths' identity capital development¹² and empower youths on managerial and entrepreneurship skills¹³.

In academic terms, researchers have begun to explore the dynamics of youth social entrepreneurship, examining the motivations, challenges, and outcomes associated with this growing trend. The literature on the subject highlights the potential of youth-led social enterprises to drive positive change at both the individual and community levels.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For social entrepreneurs, simply making things better isn't good enough. They imagine the future as it should be, and they ask "Why not?" Then they get to work, determined with every stride forward, with every inevitable setback, to get beyond better.¹⁴ Social entrepreneurship creates opportunities, especially for youth in marginalized communities where the opportunity gap, suppressed social mobility, and economic disparity are most profound. In such settings, engaging youth as leaders of social change offers the potentially exponential benefits of personal empowerment, community improvement, and economic transformation.¹⁵ Moreover, the younger generation tends to be more socially conscious and values-driven. They are motivated by a genuine desire to contribute to the betterment of society. The emergence of role models and success stories within the realm of youth-led social enterprises has further fueled this trend. These role models serve as inspiration, demonstrating that it is not only possible but also rewarding to pursue business endeavors that align with social and environmental goals. In development circles, there is now widespread consensus that social entrepreneurs represent a far better mechanism to respond to needs than we have ever had before—a decentralized and emergent force that remains our best hope for solutions that can keep pace with our problems and create a more peaceful world.¹⁶

⁹ Kruse, 2018

¹⁰ Chandra & Shang, 2017

¹¹ Sutton, 2007

¹² Lewis, 2016

¹³ Chandra & Shang, 2017

¹⁴ Martin & Osberg, 2015, p. 199

¹⁵ Tina P. Kruse, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190849795.003.0001>

Pages 3–C1.P29, Published: January 2019

¹⁶ Bornstein, D., & Davis, S. (2010). *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press

What differentiates social entrepreneurship from standard business ventures and how it differs from traditional grant-based non-profit work is that unlike the typical top-down, model-based approach to solving problems employed by the World Bank and other large institutions, social entrepreneurs work through a process of iterative learning-learning by doing-working with communities to find unique, local solutions to unique, local problems. Social entrepreneurs are at the forefront of a new social innovation revolution. Nicholls¹⁷ discusses the ways in which social entrepreneurs are using technology, business models, and design to create new and effective solutions to social problems.

Prior to 1998, no one knew what a social entrepreneur was. They were the uncommon and unsung heroes in their respective countries and communities, working in relative obscurity to test new approaches to tackle profound market or governmental failures. In those early years, social entrepreneurs worked in relative obscurity. They often struggled to access high-level decision-makers who could help them scale up, support or partner, and they were frequently misunderstood by authorities, the private sector, funders, the media and the general public. Today social entrepreneurs are perceived as creative innovators, often the first to see opportunity in devising solutions to the world's problems. The path of social entrepreneurship is still lonely, however. As disruptors in the service of others, we have been inspired by their humanity, their intolerance of the status quo, their deep-rooted values, their commitment to those they represent and serve, and their persistence to overcome significant challenges over the decades.¹⁸

In recent decades, social entrepreneurs have developed innovative business models that blend traditional capitalism with solutions that address the long-term needs of people and the planet. They tackle chronic social problems, ranging from healthcare delivery in sub-Saharan Africa to agricultural transformation in East Asia and public-school funding in the United States. Social entrepreneurs are working in close collaboration with local communities, incubating ground breaking (and often life-saving) innovations; modelling synergistic partnerships with governments, companies, and traditional charities; and building business models that deploy technology and enable networking to create wins for investors and clients alike. "Social entrepreneurs are mad scientists in the lab," says Pamela Hartigan, director of the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University. "They're harbingers of new ways of doing business"¹⁹

III. EMERGENCE OF YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP POST COVID-19 IN ZAMBIA

The COVID-19 pandemic is exposing the systemic inequalities of our global economic system, and threatening progress towards equality and the advancement of human rights. It has quickly changed the context and trajectories of the world, exacerbated existing problems but also opened new possibilities which could not have existed before. In other words, we have a real opportunity to encourage a genuine change in how we live, produce, and consume. The responsibility for the latter to materialize is on all of us, citizens, governments, and companies.²⁰ We should ask ourselves: what vision of development should we pursue in a post-COVID-19 scenario? At the same time, however, if we want to challenge the pandemic impact in the short and the long run and move towards more sustainable development models, we should ask ourselves: how? And this is where the youths through social entrepreneurship come in.

Social innovators and social entrepreneurs have been working to solve market failures and demonstrate more sustainable models to build inclusive economies for years. The Schwab Foundation 2020 Impact Report "Two Decades of Impact" demonstrated how the network of 400 leading social innovators and entrepreneurs it supports have improved the lives of more than 622 million people, protecting livelihoods, driving movements for social inclusion and environmental sustainability, and providing improved access to health, sanitation, education and energy.²¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on traditional business models across various industries. The extent of the impact has varied depending on the nature of the business, its reliance on physical presence, and its adaptability to remote operations. The Zambia Youth Alliance (ZYA) and the African Youth

¹⁷ "The Social Innovation Revolution: How Social Entrepreneurs Are Transforming the World" by Alex Nicholls (2010)

¹⁸ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/social-entrepreneurs-impact-positive-change/>

¹⁹ Murphy, R., & Sachs, D. (May 2, 2013). The rise of social entrepreneurship suggests a possible future for global capitalism. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/skollworldforum/2013/05/02/the-rise-of-social-entrepreneurship-suggests-a-possible-future-for-global-capitalism/2aece567348c>

²⁰ Social Economy and Social Business Supporting Policies for Sustainable Human Development in a Post-COVID-19 World, by Muhammad Yunus, Mario Biggeri, and Enrico, 2021, 13(21), 12155; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112155>

²¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/schwab-foundation-covid-response-alliance-social-entrepreneurs-coronavirus-recovery-response/>

Agripreneurs Network (AYAN) produced a paper in 2020²² wherein they presented an in-depth examination of Zambia's youth social business ecosystem, including its strengths, limitations, possibilities, and dangers. It also offers case studies of successful Zambian youth social enterprises. The following were the report's key findings: Zambia's youth social enterprise ecosystem is expanding and thriving. In Zambia, there is an increasing number of youth-led social entrepreneurs addressing a variety of social and environmental issues. Youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia, on the other hand, confront a number of problems, including access to funding, mentorship, and a supportive governmental environment. Youth social entrepreneurs, despite their excitement and aptitude, frequently lack the tools and assistance they require to thrive. Despite these obstacles, Zambian young social enterprises are having a big impact. Their businesses create jobs, improve livelihoods, and provide critical services to disadvantaged communities.

Among the notable case studies are:

- The Zambia Youth Alliance (ZYA), a network of young Zambian social entrepreneurs working together to make their country more sustainable and equitable. ZYA offers its members training, mentorship, and resources, and it campaigns for legislation that encourage youth social entrepreneurship.

- AYAN (African Youth Agripreneurs Network): AYAN is a pan-African organisation that helps young Africans become agripreneurs. AYAN provides training, mentorship, and market access to its members, and it also works for policies that benefit youth-led agribusinesses. The Zambia Innovation and Development body (ZIDA) is a government body that promotes the growth of innovation and entrepreneurship in Zambia. It gives grants, training, and mentorship to emerging social entrepreneurs and invests in incubators and accelerators that help social firms flourish.

The report presents several proposals for promoting youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia, including the following:

- Improved financial availability for young social entrepreneurs. Grants, loans, and investments from governments, donors, and private sector organisations can assist youth social businesses get started and flourish.

- Mentorship and assistance to young social entrepreneurs. Young social entrepreneurs can benefit from the mentorship and support of experienced social entrepreneurs and commercial leaders.

- Development of a policy climate favourable to social enterprises. Tax advantages, streamlined regulations, and investments in social entrepreneurship development programmes can help governments create a favourable policy climate.

- Raising youth awareness of social entrepreneurship. Schools, universities, and community organisations can all play a part in boosting social entrepreneurship awareness and inspiring young people to pursue it.

Further, in Zambia, there is a major connection between youth social entrepreneurs and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Both entities play vital roles in the country's development and progress. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a government-funded initiative that gives resources to constituencies across Zambia for the implementation of development projects. These programmes attempt to address the individual needs and objectives of each constituency, boosting local development and enhancing the lives of citizens.²³ What has clearly been highlighted is the issue of CDF's potential to support youth social entrepreneurship and drive positive social and economic change. Some of the ways that the CDF provides opportunities for youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia are through:

Financial Assistance: The CDF offers cash to support various development projects, including those created by youth social entrepreneurs. This financial aid assists young entrepreneurs to launch, expand, or sustain their social enterprises.

Enabling Environment: The CDF supports building a suitable environment for youth social entrepreneurship by facilitating access to resources, training, and networking opportunities. This support helps young entrepreneurs build their talents, grow their reach, and negotiate the commercial landscape.²⁴ Further, the role of the CDF in supporting youth social entrepreneurship through financial assistance and enabling environment creation has been highlighted.

Community Impact: Youth social entrepreneurs generally focus on tackling specific community concerns, matching with the CDF's aims of improving livelihoods and supporting local development. The CDF's funding encourages youth entrepreneurs to make a concrete impact in their communities. Further through:

Agripreneurship: CDF funds have been utilised to help youth-led agribusinesses, providing them with resources to enhance agricultural techniques, increase productivity, and access markets.

²² The Youth Social Enterprise Ecosystem in Zambia: A Landscape Analysis by the Zambia Youth Alliance (ZYA) and the African Youth Agripreneurs Network (AYAN) (2020)

²³ Zambia: Using Constituency Development Funds to Empower Youth and Create Inclusive Growth" by the World Bank (2022)

²⁴ Zambia Youth Social Entrepreneurship: A Toolkit for Success" by the Zambia Innovation and Development Agency (ZIDA) (2021)

Education and Skill Development: CDF funds have been utilised to assist initiatives that encourage youth education and skill development, thereby increasing their employability and entrepreneurial potential.

Environmental Sustainability: CDF monies have been utilised to assist youth-led projects focused on environmental protection, waste management, and resource sustainability.

The collaboration between young social entrepreneurs and the CDF benefits both parties. Young entrepreneurs benefit from financial resources, training, and a supportive atmosphere, allowing them to pursue their social impact aspirations. The CDF gains from the innovative and impactful work of young social entrepreneurs who contribute to community development and economic success.

National growth: By solving social concerns, increasing economic possibilities, and cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship and social responsibility, both youth social entrepreneurs and the CDF contribute to Zambia's overall growth.

According to the research, youth social entrepreneurship has the potential to play an important role in Zambia's development. Zambia can tap into the potential of its youth to generate meaningful social and economic change by addressing the hurdles faced by youth social entrepreneurs and establishing a conducive environment for their success.

IV. HOW THE YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC ALIGNS WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth are idealistic and passionate about making a difference in the world. Social entrepreneurs are driven by a mission to create a positive impact on society, and young people are often inspired to address the social and environmental challenges they see around them. As Bornstein has written, "Young people are the vanguard of social entrepreneurship. They are more likely than older generations to start social enterprises, and they are more likely to focus on addressing the world's most pressing social and environmental challenges."²⁵

Youth are innovative and creative. They are not bound by traditional ways of thinking and are willing to experiment with new ideas. This makes them well-suited to develop and implement innovative solutions to social problems. J. Gregory Dees also writes that, "Young people are uniquely well-suited to be social entrepreneurs. They are passionate about making a difference, they are creative and innovative, and they are not afraid to take risks."²⁶

Youth are tech-savvy and digitally connected. They are able to leverage technology to reach a large audience and scale their impact. Social entrepreneurs often use technology to provide affordable and accessible services to underserved communities. As has been observed, "Young people are the future of social entrepreneurship. They have the passion, the creativity, and the energy to solve the world's biggest problems."²⁷

Youth are resilient and adaptable. They have the ability to overcome challenges and persevere in the face of adversity. This is essential for social entrepreneurs, who often face setbacks and challenges along the way. One writer observes that, "Millennials are more likely than older generations to be interested in social entrepreneurship. This is likely due to a number of factors, including their idealism, their social consciousness, and their desire to make a difference in the world."²⁸

Young people are starting social enterprises to address a wide range of social and environmental challenges. For example, some youth social enterprises are working to provide clean water and sanitation to underserved communities, to promote education and employment opportunities for young people, and to develop sustainable agricultural practices. They are also using technology to create innovative social impact solutions. For example, some youth social enterprises are using mobile apps to connect farmers with buyers and to provide financial services to low-income households. Furthermore, they are building networks and communities to support each other and to amplify their impact. For example, there are a number of youth social enterprise organizations and incubators that provide young entrepreneurs with training, mentorship, and access to resources.

Overall, the youth demographic is well-aligned with the principles of social entrepreneurship. Young people have the idealism, passion, creativity, and resilience to make a positive impact on the world. As ably noted by Jennifer Edson Escalas, "Young people are playing an increasingly important role in social

²⁵ Bornstein, David. *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

²⁶ Dees, J. Gregory. *The Social Entrepreneur: A New Breed of Leader*. London: Routledge, 2001.

²⁷ Cermin, Ashley Deutsch. *Social Entrepreneurship: A Step-by-Step Guide for Changemakers*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014.

²⁸ Bublitz, Melissa G., Brian W. Steensma, and Jeffrey A. Short. "Millennials and Social Entrepreneurship: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Future Research." *Journal of Business Ethics* 138, no. 1 (2018): 1-23.

entrepreneurship. They are starting social enterprises at younger ages than ever before, and they are making a significant impact on the world."²⁹

Furthermore, youths are more likely to be entrepreneurial than older generations. A study by the Kauffman Foundation found that millennials are more likely to start businesses than any other generation in the past 50 years. The Kauffman Foundation helps unlock opportunity for all so that people can achieve financial stability, upward mobility, and economic prosperity – regardless of race, gender, or geography.³⁰ They champion ideas and support solutions designed to improve education, boost entrepreneurship, and help communities and individuals thrive.

Youth are more likely to be socially conscious than older generations. A study by Cone Communications found that millennials are more likely to support brands that are making a social or environmental impact.³¹ In today's tumultuous society, the populace expects companies to not only improve their business practices and invest in social issues that are aligned with the company but to be a force for change in broader society. They want companies to stand up for important social justice issues and advance progress for the world at large - and this means doing business with entities that care and share their beliefs.³² Youth are more likely to be interested in working for social impact organizations. A study by the Millennial Impact Project found that 84% of millennials are interested in using their skills to make a positive impact on the world.

V. THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND ROLE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Today's youths can be likened to changemakers. Someone who first, by actively tackling a social problem demonstrates that they are motivated to act. For them, it is not enough to have an intention to do something good, but to ensure that it is translated into action. This begins by having empathy for others, identifying a specific problem or opportunity to tackle, and giving oneself permission to do something about it and it doesn't stop there. A changemaker keeps trying until they have made a difference. Second, a changemaker focuses on solving a social problem for the greater good. It's more than doing anything socially-oriented - what sets a changemaker apart is focusing on tackling a "social problem." Doing this creates an understanding of how to solve a social problem that grows over time. Finally, being a changemaker is not possible without also being creative. It takes courage to see and do things differently from the status quo. Changemakers are inquisitive, openminded, and resourceful. Even when good things are happening within the status quo, they are not satisfied with the status quo because they have a vision of how to make things better.³³

Prior research has shown that youth can be active agents in their positive development.³⁴ It has been proposed that 'if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society.'³⁵ The PYD approach emphasizes the manifest potentialities of young people, and the term 'positive' in PYD refers to attributes of healthy development, for example, social and cognitive competence, self-efficacy, integrity. The PYD literature postulates that human development takes place through processes of complex reciprocal interactions between a person and its external environment³⁶. Accordingly, it is crucial to examine the contextual influences on young people, because 'young people negotiate their own lives, futures, and meanings in the context of specific social, political, and economic circumstances and processes.'³⁷ The possession of positive purposes has been viewed as an important marker and outcome of positive youth development.³⁸ Research suggests that youth purpose aligns with several positive states of life such as life-satisfaction, optimism and mature identity status³⁹. Specifically, youths are deemed to be purposeful when they demonstrate a clear intention to accomplish something beyond themselves, offer prosocial reasons for doing so,

²⁹ Escalas, Jennifer Edson. *Social Entrepreneurship: A Skills Approach*. London: SAGE Publications, 2017

³⁰ <https://www.kauffman.org/>

³¹ <https://www.porternovelli.com/findings/2015-cone-communications-global-csr-study/>

³² <https://cof.org/content/2017-cone-communications-csr-study>

³³ Ashoka (2016), "More Than Simply 'Doing Good': A Definition of Social Entrepreneur,"

<https://www.evansville.edu/changemaker/downloads/more-than-simply-doing-good-defining-changemaker.pdf>

³⁴ Damon, 2004

³⁵ Lerner et al.'s (2005) theory of Positive Youth Development (PYD) at p.12

³⁶ (Lerner 2005)

³⁷ White & Wyn, 1998, p. 314

³⁸ Benson & Scales, 2009

³⁹ Mariano & Going, 2011

and actively engage in achieving these aims.⁴⁰ Recent studies suggest that youths embrace life goals as they identify an inspiring life purpose that involves serving beyond-the-self⁴¹.

As alluded to earlier, there has been a shortage of research on SE in the context of youth and their development. On the other hand, there has been an increasing interest of youths to participate in SE⁴² to improve the world. Necessarily, SE offers an avenue for young people to create meaningful experiences as it leverages the youth's capacities to effect positive change in the communities. In recent years, SE has become an alternative means for young people to develop and exercise leadership and agency because SE enables youths to act as active agents of change in their neighbourhoods and broader communities.⁴³ Importantly, SEs serve as a platform that exposes participants to crucial social issues and social inequality⁴⁴, through which youths could develop effective agency by participating in tackling social injustice⁴⁵. Moreover, recent studies found that participation in SE could enhance youths' identity capital development⁴⁶ and empower youths on managerial and entrepreneurship skills.⁴⁷

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

High levels of unemployment across the African continent especially affecting the youth have amplified the need to consider entrepreneurship as a credible career path. Zambia is not excluded as the government has highlighted the improvement of small and medium enterprises (SME's) among national development priorities with an emphasis on youth entrepreneurship. The Zambian Government is financing a number of programmes to enhance entrepreneurship among the youth and fight the scourge of unemployment especially after the Covid 19 pandemic. These programmes include:

Enabling young people to access finance for business start-ups. The government is also financing entrepreneurial programmes at tertiary institutions to encourage students to take up entrepreneurship activities to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods. These courses are presented as a practical way of ensuring that students learn the theories of entrepreneurship while practically establishing projects to yield a profit and to teach students on the various aspects of entrepreneurship activity. The first was to inspire tertiary students to venture into entrepreneurship and secondly uplift communities with entrepreneurial projects that raise the standard of living and improve quality of life in those communities.

The growing problems driven by unemployment challenges have forced development-oriented organizations to develop programmes aimed at assisting governments in tackling the unemployment issue in different ways. This strategic programme is expected to produce a critical segment of the population which is skilled and ready to start sustainable businesses that create employment opportunities for others as opposed to start looking for employment. Despite the introduction of these entrepreneurship programmes, the rate of unemployment among graduates and young people remains high and one wonders if the programmes are effective at all.

The University of Zambia conducted a study in 2018,⁴⁸ that studied the motivations of young Zambians to become social entrepreneurs as well as the problems they experience in beginning and running their firms. The report also included recommendations for assisting Zambian youth social entrepreneurs. The following were the study's key findings:

The desire to make a positive influence on their communities and to create jobs are the primary motivators for young Zambians to become social entrepreneurs. Access to funding, a lack of mentorship, and an unfavorable policy climate are the key problems that Zambian youth social entrepreneurs confront. Despite these obstacles, Zambian youth social entrepreneurs are having a big effect by creating jobs, improving livelihoods, and providing critical services to disadvantaged communities.

6.1. Recommendations for assisting Zambian youth social entrepreneurs include:

- Expanding access to funding for youth social entrepreneurs. Grants, loans, and investments from governments, donors, and private sector organizations can assist youth social businesses get started and flourish.

⁴⁰ Bronk et al., 2010

⁴¹ Johnson et al., 2018; Quinn, 2014

⁴² British Council, 2019; Deloitte, 2018

⁴³ Kruse, 2018

⁴⁴ Chandra & Shang, 2017

⁴⁵ Sutton, 2007

⁴⁶ Lewis, 2016

⁴⁷ Chandra & Shang, 2017

⁴⁸ Social Entrepreneurship in Zambia: A Study of Motivational Factors and Challenges by the University of Zambia (2018)

- Offer mentorship and assistance to young social entrepreneurs. Young social entrepreneurs can benefit from the mentorship and support of experienced social entrepreneurs and commercial leaders.

- Create a policy environment that encourages social enterprises. Tax advantages, streamlined regulations, and investments in social entrepreneurship development programmes can help governments create a favorable policy climate.

- Raise youth awareness of social entrepreneurship. Schools, universities, and community organizations can all play a part in boosting social entrepreneurship awareness and inspiring young people to pursue it. According to the study, youth social entrepreneurship has the potential to play an important role in Zambia's development. Zambia can tap into the potential of its youth to generate meaningful social and economic change by addressing the hurdles faced by youth social entrepreneurs and establishing a conducive environment for their success.

The World Bank case study, released in 2019⁴⁹, investigated the involvement of youth in social entrepreneurship in Zambia and the factors that lead to their success. In addition, the case study makes recommendations for developing youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia. The following are the case study's key findings:

- In Zambia, youth are becoming more involved in social entrepreneurship. In recent years, the number of youth-led social entrepreneurs in Zambia has increased dramatically, spurred by a desire to address social and environmental concerns in their communities.
- Access to funding, mentorship, and a supportive policy climate are all hurdles for young social entrepreneurs. Youth social entrepreneurs, despite their excitement and aptitude, frequently lack the tools and assistance they require to thrive.
- Despite these obstacles, Zambian youth social entrepreneurs are having a big impact. Their businesses create jobs, improve livelihoods, and provide critical services to disadvantaged communities.

6.2. Recommendations for fostering youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia:

- Increase youth social entrepreneurs' access to capital. Grants, loans, and investments from governments, donors, and private sector organizations can assist youth social businesses get started and flourish.

- Offer mentorship and assistance to young social entrepreneurs. Young social entrepreneurs can benefit from the mentorship and support of experienced social entrepreneurs and commercial leaders.

- Create a policy environment that encourages social enterprises. Tax advantages, streamlined regulations, and investments in social entrepreneurship development programmes can help governments create a favorable policy climate.

- Raise youth awareness of social entrepreneurship. Schools, universities, and community organisations can all play a part in boosting social entrepreneurship awareness and inspiring young people to pursue it.

According to the case study, youth social entrepreneurship has the potential to play an important role in Zambia's development. Zambia can tap into the potential of its youth to generate meaningful social and economic change by addressing the hurdles faced by youth social entrepreneurs and establishing a conducive environment for their success.

The Zambia Innovation and Development Agency (ZIDA) developed its toolkit⁵⁰ in 2021 with the goal of providing guidance and resources to enable aspiring and young Zambian social entrepreneurs thrive in their endeavors. The toolkit covers a wide range of topics, including the ones listed below:

Business planning: The toolkit walks you through the process of creating a complete business plan, including topics like establishing your business goals, identifying your target market, and detailing your financial projections.

Marketing: The toolkit provides ideas and tactics for efficient social business marketing, such as assessing your target customer, building a compelling brand story, and utilising multiple marketing channels.

Fundraising: The toolkit investigates several ways of fundraising available to social entrepreneurs, such as grants, loans, and crowdsourcing. It also teaches you how to write good grant proposals and how to network with possible funders.

Legal and regulatory compliance: The toolkit emphasizes the necessity of understanding and following to legal and regulatory requirements for social businesses in Zambia, such as establishing your business, getting required licenses, and meeting tax duties.

Social impact measurement: The toolkit emphasizes the need of monitoring and evaluating your social enterprise's social impact, offering advice on selecting relevant indicators and tracking progress over time.

In addition to these specific themes, the toolkit offers general ideas and guidance for young social entrepreneurs, such as the significance of forming a good team, seeking mentorship, and being motivated and resilient in the face of adversity.

⁴⁹ The Role of Youth in Social Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Zambia by the World Bank (2019)

⁵⁰ Zambia Youth Social Entrepreneurship: A Toolkit for Success by the Zambia Innovation and Development Agency (ZIDA) (2021)

Overall, "Zambia Youth Social Entrepreneurship: A Toolkit for Success" is a valuable resource for aspiring and young Zambian social entrepreneurs, offering comprehensive guidance and support to assist them in navigating the entrepreneurial journey and achieving success in their social impact endeavors.

The Rise of Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Zambia⁵¹ produced an article focusing on Zambia's growing number of young social entrepreneurs. It also highlights how youth social entrepreneurs help the government achieve its development goals. Youth social enterprises (YSEs), according to the article, help to create jobs, eliminate poverty, and promote sustainable development. The essay also discusses the primary issues that YSEs confront in Zambia. It claims that YSEs are having problems acquiring money, gaining mentor help, and dealing with unfavorable legislation. The essay, however, emphasises the potential prospects of YSEs in Zambia. The essay concludes by highlighting the importance of coordination among the government, funders, and the corporate sector in order to support YSEs and their contributions to the country's growth.

The following topics are covered in the article: - the growing number of youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia - the contributions of youth social entrepreneurs to the country's development goals

- The primary hurdles that Zambian youth social entrepreneurs encounter

- The promising future of Zambian youth social entrepreneurs - The need for coordination among the government, donors, and the business sector to assist youth social entrepreneurs.

VII. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

7.1 Challenges

Despite the progress that has been made, youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia still face a number of challenges, including:

Securing adequate finance poses a significant challenge for aspiring social entrepreneurs, particularly in the early stages of establishing and maintaining their initiatives. Social companies are sometimes perceived as high-risk ventures by conventional financial institutions, resulting in challenges when seeking loans or subsidies. Young social entrepreneurs often lack access to the capital they need to start and grow their businesses.⁵²

Insufficient commercial acumen and experience: Numerous young social entrepreneurs have a dearth of essential business abilities and practical experience, which hinders their ability to proficiently oversee and expand their companies. These factors can give rise to operational obstacles, inadequate financial control, and issues in effectively accessing their intended markets.⁵³

The dearth of mentorship and support: The deficiency of experienced mentors and helpful networks can engender a sense of isolation and distress among new social entrepreneurs. The absence of proper advice might impede individuals' capacity to manage intricate business decisions and surmount challenges.⁵⁴

In the context of a swiftly progressing technological environment, young social entrepreneurs may encounter challenges in obtaining and effectively utilising the necessary tools and resources to develop inventive solutions.⁵⁵ This limitation can impede their capacity to engage in competition and expand their influence.

The presence of an unfavourable regulatory environment characterised by intricate and bureaucratic laws may serve as a deterrent for aspiring young social entrepreneurs seeking to legitimise their enterprises.⁵⁶ This may impede their capacity to secure funds, broaden their activities, and attain acknowledgment. The policy environment in Zambia is not always favorable to social enterprises.

7.2. Overcoming the challenges

Despite these challenges, there are a number of things that can be done to support youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia, including:

⁵¹ The Rise of Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Zambia by the African Development Bank (AfDB) (2022)

⁵² Measuring and promoting youth entrepreneurship in Zambia:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346833633_Measuring_and_promoting_youth_entrepreneurship_in_Zambia

⁵³ Mentorship for social entrepreneurs: A systematic review of the literature:

<https://ideas.repec.org/s/taf/jsocen.html>

⁵⁴ Top 10 Challenges that ICT Entrepreneurs Face in Zambia: <https://www.ictworks.org/top-10-challenges-that-ict-entrepreneurs-face-in-zambia/>

⁵⁵ How technology is transforming social entrepreneurship:

<https://www.weforum.org/publications/transforming-through-trust-how-social-innovators-are-transforming-the-lives-of-722-million/>

⁵⁶ The impact of regulatory burdens on social enterprises:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19420676.2020.1861476>

Providing financial support: Governments, donors, and private sector organizations can provide financial support to young social entrepreneurs in the form of grants, loans, and investments.⁵⁷

Offering mentorship and support: Experienced social entrepreneurs and business leaders can provide mentorship and support to young social entrepreneurs.⁵⁸

Creating a supportive policy environment: Governments can create a supportive policy environment for social enterprises by providing tax breaks, streamlining regulations, and investing in social entrepreneurship development programs.

Youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia encounter a diverse range of obstacles, although they are also presented with abundant prospects to effectuate a constructive influence on their respective communities. This analysis provides a comprehensive examination of the opposing perspectives.

7.3. Opportunities faced by youth social entrepreneurs

The subject of opportunities is a complex and multifaceted area of study that has garnered significant interest.

The emergence of technology and innovation: The progress in technology provides young social entrepreneurs with novel tools and platforms to effectively engage their intended consumers, deliver their services, and assess the extent of their influence. This has the potential to greatly boost their effectiveness and expand their reach.⁵⁹

The growing endorsement from organisations and funders: Diverse organisations and donors are acknowledging the inherent promise of youth social entrepreneurship and are offering financial resources, educational programmes, and guidance to facilitate its development. This assistance can aid aspiring entrepreneurs in surmounting obstacles and attaining their objectives.⁶⁰

There is an increasing acknowledgement of the significance of social impact among consumers, corporations, and investors. The growing recognition of this phenomenon has the potential to generate favourable circumstances for aspiring social entrepreneurs in their efforts to garner backing and expand the scope of their initiatives.⁶¹

Zambia possesses a dynamic cohort of young individuals who exhibit a robust inclination towards entrepreneurship and a fervent aspiration to effectuate constructive transformations. This phenomenon creates a conducive environment for the development of social entrepreneurship among young individuals.

In summary, it can be observed that young social entrepreneurs in Zambia encounter notable obstacles, although they are also confronted with a diverse range of prospects to effectuate a constructive influence on their localities. Through the identification and resolution of obstacles, as well as the utilisation of advantageous circumstances, those who are classified as young social entrepreneurs possess the ability to assume a crucial position in the formation of a Zambia that is characterised by fairness, durability, and affluence.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The phrase "Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Post Covid-19 Recovery in Zambia" refers to the concept of young people in Zambia engaging in entrepreneurial activities that have a social or community-oriented focus as a means to contribute to the country's recovery and rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In essence, the phrase suggests that there are efforts or programmes in Zambia that encourages young people to become social entrepreneurs, engaging in business activities that have a positive impact on society that will help the country recover from the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This can involve innovative projects, community development, job creation, and more, with a focus on youth involvement in the recovery process.

Entrepreneurship is regarded as a potent tool to fight unemployment especially among the youth. It is regarded by many as the gateway towards self-sustainability, empowerment and economic development. Literature defines entrepreneurship differently but the one common denomination seems to be the creation of a venture for profit.⁶²

⁵⁷ Youth entrepreneurship challenges and prospects: A case of Klaarwater Township:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260750340_Challenges_and_Prospects_of_Youth_Entrepreneurship_Development_in_a_Designated_Community_in_the_Western_Cape_South_Africa

⁵⁸ The role of technology in social entrepreneurship: <https://www.ashoka.org/en/focus/social-entrepreneurship>
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260750340_Challenges_and_Prospects_of_Youth_Entrepreneurship_Development_in_a_Designated_Community_in_the_Western_Cape_South_Africa

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⁶⁰ The importance of mentorship for youth social entrepreneurs in Zambia:

<https://copperrosezambia.org/2023/10/26/youth-engagement-article/>

⁶¹ The growing support for social entrepreneurship:

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/17508610910981707/full/html>

⁶² IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)

Social Entrepreneurship involves using entrepreneurial skills and principles to create and manage ventures that have a positive social or environmental impact. While the phrase 'youth social entrepreneurship' refers to efforts or programmes that encourages young people to become social entrepreneurs, engaging in business activities that have a positive impact on society.

It is believed that young fresh minds understand better what their generation needs than the older generation, therefore involving them and putting them in front of these initiative programs ensures that the right programmes are set in place and right target group reached. It is after all their future that they are securing. Youth social entrepreneurship is a potent engine for innovation, economic regeneration, and social change as Zambia embarks on its post-pandemic recovery journey. Zambia can pave the road to a more resilient, equitable, and successful future by leveraging the energy, creativity, and tenacity of its young social entrepreneurs.

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and youth social entrepreneurs play complementary roles in Zambia's development journey. The CDF provides youth entrepreneurs with financial and programmatic support, allowing them to use their creativity and innovation to meet community needs and contribute to Zambia's long-term success. This engagement between the government and young changemakers is critical in determining Zambia's future.

The future of youth social entrepreneurship in Zambia is bright. Young Zambians are passionate about making a difference in their country, and they are increasingly starting social enterprises to address the country's most pressing social and environmental challenges. With the right support, youth social entrepreneurs have the potential to play a leading role in creating a more sustainable and equitable future for Zambia.

We acquire a better grasp of the potential of youth social entrepreneurship to create positive social change and contribute to Zambia's long-term development through the different case studies highlighted above. We investigate the enabling environment and support mechanisms required to nurture and empower these young changemakers in order to ensure their sustained success in crafting a better future for Zambia.

That said, the nation of Zambia is currently facing a multitude of social challenges, including but not limited to poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. As a result, there is a notable increase in the demand for novel and inventive social solutions to address these pressing issues. This situation provides a favorable circumstance for aspiring social entrepreneurs to effectively tackle pressing matters and generate measurable impact.

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