

## A Centennial Cross-national Venture Creation Model for Social Entrepreneurs

### First Author (Afsa MUKASA MATSUKU)

Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

[afsa.mukasa@strath.ac.uk](mailto:afsa.mukasa@strath.ac.uk)

### Second Author (Katerina NICOLOPOULOU)

Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

[katerina.nicolopoulou@strath.ac.uk](mailto:katerina.nicolopoulou@strath.ac.uk)

### Third Author (Sreevas SAHASRANAMAM)

Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

[sreevas.sahasranamam@strath.ac.uk](mailto:sreevas.sahasranamam@strath.ac.uk)

.....

### Abstract

Although scantily documented in specific contexts, the entrepreneurial process in cross-national frameworks embeds accelerating synergies from networks which increasingly break barriers. In response to McManus (2001), this empirical study demonstrates a gender-driven venture creation process that addresses informality. Descriptive phenomenology is engaged in a participatory research construct to showcase interactions at complimentary layers of political, economic and social engagement in a narrative dominated by eight interdependent levers. The findings attest that despite pre-existing and emerging barriers: women make great leaders and accelerators in organization, with an under-utilized capacity to positively transform society especially in the developing world. By integrating practicality of businesses with technicality of professions, they unlock and capitalize on the huge potential that lurks between formal and informal sectors. Significance of the model also lies in reduced over-regulation whereby social capital plays a leading role backed by financial capital in a balance between where solutions are needed the most and where opportunity creates greater multiplier effects. It embeds unique attributes that enable role formation and reciprocal combinations which ultimately drive venture success. Both historic and futuristic, it exhibits a high level of precision and replicability further evidenced by a wide coverage of sustainable development goals. Beyond the complexity of globalization it promotes global equality.

### Keywords:

BPW International, Gender-based, Social Entrepreneurship, Uganda, Voluntary Organizing

### 1. Introduction

Intermediary organizations play a critical role in service delivery, more so in economies that constantly grapple with severe institutional voids (Mair & Marti, 2009; Sydow et al., 2020). In the works of McManus (2001), efforts were made to ascertain the effect of *female* networks and networking on entrepreneurial activity (Granovetter, 1973), however the results were inconclusive: prompting a call for further empirical investigation. We build upon this research but in a different context: thereby also exploring the fundamental question of place. *Where* ventures *do* or *should* take place is neither well established nor adequately examined (Wigren-Kristoferson et al., 2019; Creswell, 2017).

This empirical study recounts a gender-driven cross-national model (Kakabadse et al., 2018; Murzacheva et al., 2020; Rosca et al., 2020) towards addressing informality and is uniquely positioned as such. The narrative describes the formation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) International, a century old global social network that is present in over 140 countries on all continents, as one of the key non-profit trade support institutions that play an intermediary role in voluntary organizing. We document its formation in Uganda in 2013, followed by the establishment of a community secondary and vocational school in 2016 in a farming village in one of Uganda's central districts: Wakiso.

Based on the human-centric motivation of societal transformation (Alvord et al., 2004; Bornstein, 2007; Tsui et al., 2004) the model is rooted in a capabilities approach (Sen, 1999) of opportunity creation (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Of particular interest is the dissemination of public goods within institutional voids wherein the entrepreneur is often equally resource constrained (Guma, 2015). We not only pivot around what, how and why entrepreneurs set out to achieve, but oscillate further into *where* (Creswell, 2017) they go about it. The study demonstrates how entrepreneurial ventures (Gartner, 1985) are enabled by breaking or amalgamating barriers at different political, economic and social levels of engagement within today's integrated global society.

What we know is that team characteristics, compositions and combinations (Shane & Venkantaraman, 2000) lend an edge to the exploration and exploitation of opportunities as antecedents to the venture creation process. Much dialogue about this has been encouraged (Zahra & Dess, 2001). Additionally, overcoming uncertainties that arise out of the liability of newness and information asymmetry can be immense (Levie et al., 2014). However, what we do not know much about is the interplay between often complementary and sometimes divergent levels of political, economic and social engagement in determining *where* the said venture creation process occurs in order to achieve optimal outcomes: especially in the context of developing countries.

While social innovation develops and deploys solutions that tackle systemic social and environmental problems, challenges faced by social entrepreneurs during resource acquisition remain the elephant in the room as the world of investors and donors tips the scales, often rightly so, towards profitable ventures: which comparatively leaves the "power of unreasonable people" (Elkington & Hartigan, 2007) out in the cold. Given the current tide as headlined by crises among numerous other critical global challenges - it is important to revisit, showcase and enhance entrepreneurial processes under the very circumstances laid out above - in order to emphasize the relevance of capitalizing on the huge untapped potential that is rife within local communities: especially those that operate within the informal sector at the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP).

The article is organized as follows: first, the introduction above sets the scene and defines the boundaries and context of the study, followed by a literature review that positions it within the rightful discipline's landscape. Thereafter the methods employed while carrying out the research are explained, and analysis of what occurs at the different stages of the process is documented. The findings herein evidence that the model goes beyond addressing informality and has huge unexplored and underutilized capacity to create positive societal impact across the board. We conclude by inviting additional research that recalibrates similar problem solving models in order to catalyze economic growth and development.

## 2. Review of the Literature

Extant social entrepreneurship (SE) research examines the phenomenon of social embeddedness and how it enables community-based networks to grow and support or constrain entrepreneurship (Granovetter, 1973 & 1985). Societal transformation (Drucker, 1985; Tsui et al., 2004) is the primary goal of all ventures be it social or commercial, rooted in the creative destructive processes of opportunity exploitation (Schumpeter, 1942). Through engagement and recognition of markets along political, economic and geographical boundaries, it is a problem solving mechanism that aims to provide solutions to societal needs or demands: also the basis for project management. The plurality of actors in this conversation is increasingly led by societal sources of capital and relational ties in embedded networks (Granovetter, 1973, Aldrich & Kim, 2007; Wigren-Kristofferson et al., 2019).

However, although consensus on the conceptual relevance of SE has been more or less achieved, its theoretical foundation is yet to be crystallized due to knowledge fragmentation in its multifaceted and multidisciplinary nature (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006; Nicolopoulou, 2014; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), including alliances such as in project management (Packendorf & Lindgren, 2014). It is certainly more pronounced in instances where both government institutions and the private sector are an integral part of the process, but have not adequately enacted their primary responsibility towards society (Sen, 1999). Current research recognizes that entrepreneurship is not a vacuum and importantly for this study, occurs through the venture creation process (Austin et al., 2006; Dorado, 2006).

In a new crisis-defined environment, it is therefore fundamental to re-examine the nuanced elements that characterize activity in the most affected communities and regions. In so doing, voluntary organizing (Elkington & Hartigan, 2007) is part and parcel of SE process and norms. Within this realm, female social entrepreneurs are increasingly researched (Marlow & McAdam, 2013) as a vital denominator that facilitates resource mobilization from tacit knowledge spillovers and exchange (Hill & Mudambi, 2010; Subramanian et al., 2016). In addition, place-based models specifically align with the unique fabric of host communities by soaking in local content and utilizing local products. After all, place is bounded, full, and subject to forms of interpretive understanding (Creswell, 2017).

According to a new meta-framework (Shepherd et al., 2019) the opportunity creation process from initiation, engagement and performance continues to drift away from primarily looking at entrepreneurial or team characteristics alone (Shane & Venkantaraman, 2000), and instead adopts a number of tools and approaches that recognize additional critical elements within the natural economic and social environment. It is geared towards helping entrepreneurs make the right decisions in order to minimize failure - albeit as a fundamental antecedent of innovation (Austin et al., 2006) - and maximize the possibility of success.

## 3. Materials and Methods

Numerous studies call for more empirical studies within the field of social entrepreneurship (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 20016; Creswell, 2017; McManus, 2001; Mair & Marti, 2009). We heed this call by reexamining voluntary organizing in a case study of BPW Uganda. We engage a qualitative approach (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) using descriptive phenomenology (Groenewald, 2003), owing to limited theory development from within the African region.

For this study, primary data was collected from 2013 to 2019 with the cofounders of this voluntary social initiative, as well as the innovative team which was fully engaged on the project since its inception. An inductive approach and step-by step narrative of what actually occurred underpins the application of knowledge from practice to further substantiate theory development (Gioia et al., 2013; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Engaged scholarship in a participatory action research construct denotes considerable attention to rigor and validity. Live records and imagery gathered during the process invite the reader to relate closely with the data and draw suitable conclusions. Where substantive, secondary data obtained from the organization's websites and social media is also included. On the whole in order to support achievement of Vision 2030, the seven principals of responsible research in business and management (RRBM) are taken into consideration.

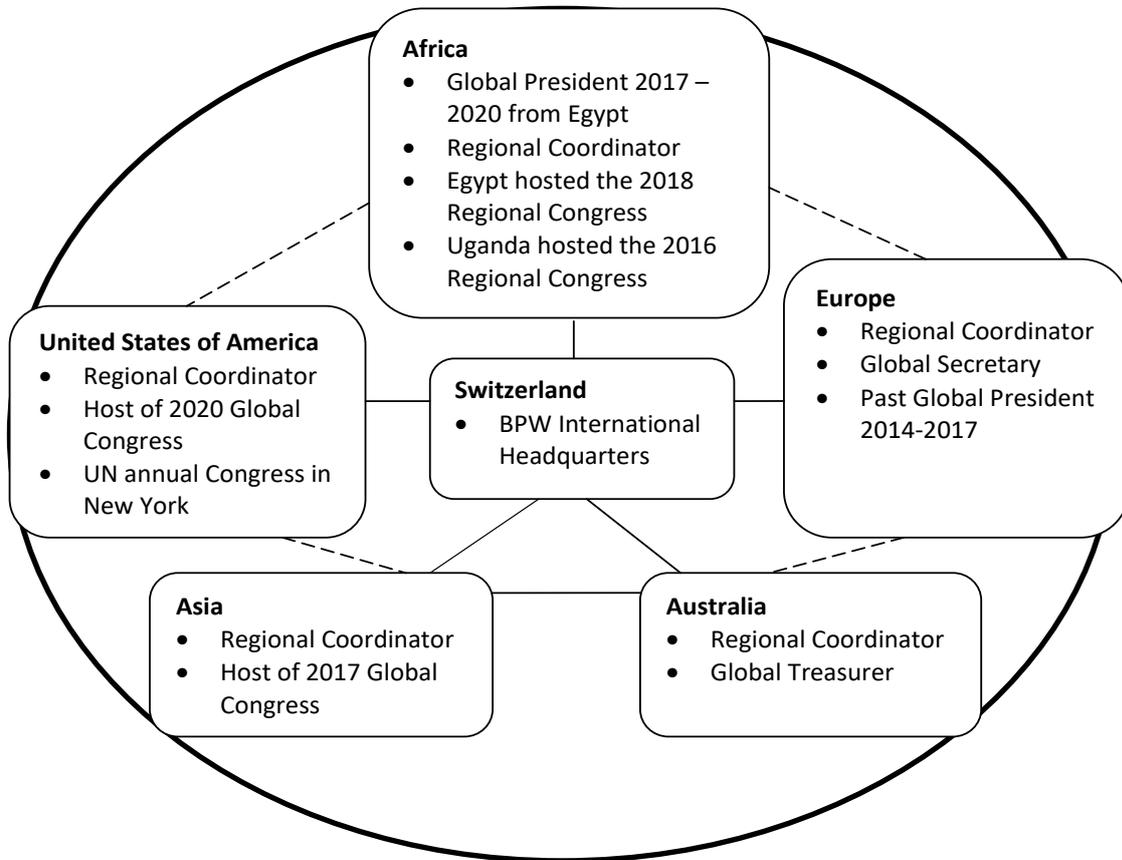
#### **4. Business and Professional Women (BPW): a nonprofit global community**

A hundred years ago... BPW was founded in 1919 by Lena Madelin Phillips, a lawyer, then after passing the bar in 1917. It started as "The National Federation of Business and Professional Women" club and became popular because of its timely contribution towards women's voting rights in the United States as declared in 1920. BPW International formed thereafter in 1930 in Geneva, Switzerland as a vehicle for societal transformation (Alvord et al., 2004; Tsui et al., 2004). Its primary objective is to develop the leadership potential of women through skill building, advocacy for women's rights, and mentorship.

The organization brings together a network of both nascent and successful business women from all sectors with professionals from various disciplines: based on a common belief that these two categories of the working population have much to share, learn and gain from one another. The benefits can either be tangible by widening the resource base and markets for products and services, or intangible through the exchange of knowledge and shared experiences, or otherwise. Forming strategic alliances within each member country, the group is also globally affiliated with the United Nations by consultative status and representation ([www.bpw-international.org](http://www.bpw-international.org)).

The organizational structure (Shantz et al., 2020) combines internal fluidity with a horizontal set-up and follows firmly on national policies within strict guidelines (see Fig.4 below). Regional coordinators and country presidents collectively formulate the secretariat as highlighted by a thick line to depict strong bonds, working relationships and collaboration, while dotted lines represent bridging and linking that occurs with members worldwide (Shane & Venkantaraman, 2000). Registered with lean management structures, the network is replicated on all continents; a minimum of 20 members per group. Several in-country groups form a federation.

The wide definition of allowable projects encompasses global sustainable development goals (SDGs) (BPW International, 2020b). A charter and bylaws provides the framework and guiding principles on all group formations, registration, operations and expectations from all members. Global representatives and events are agreed upon through a voting exercise on a rolling basis (BPW International, 2020a): mostly triennially. Conversely, the group is also characterized by minimal regular reporting, quarterly at most, allowing the secretariat to keep track of members' enrollments, activities and global landscape. The headquarters does not necessarily fund projects; groups do it either solely or unilaterally through collaboration with other individuals and organizations within national or international alliances.



**Fig.4: A Global Web depicting the fluid yet firm BPW organizational structure**

What sets the network apart is the nature of members it seeks: responsible representatives of society with significant career experience. More often than not, they are financially independent. This combination of female-led fluidity within a structure firmly rooted in the charter and global consultative status presents uniqueness and sets BPW apart from other organizational models.

**5. Venture Creation Process I: The Sub-national Entrepreneurial Process  
A Case study of Business and Professional Women (BPW) Uganda**

BPW Uganda was founded in 2013 by Afsa Mukasa Matsuku a seasoned banker, small business entrepreneur and researcher in business and management studies, together with Professor Maggie Kigozi a trained medical doctor, distinguished member of the Ugandan business and civil society, director of PEPSI trading as Crown Beverages Uganda Limited, pioneering director of the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), Head at Akina Mama wa Afrika, avid farmer, Chairperson of the Africa Scout Foundation... among a host of other accolades and achievements, and Rukmini Bonthala an ardent health professional, pharmacist, entrepreneur and yoga enthusiast ([www.facebook.com/bpwuganda/](http://www.facebook.com/bpwuganda/)).

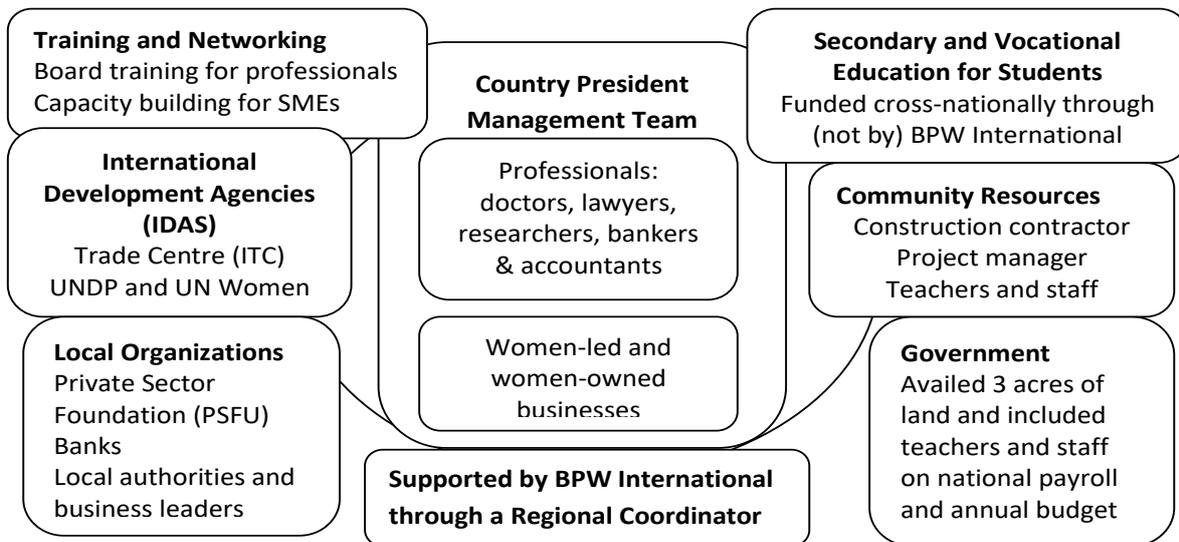
The 3 founders approached and carefully selected 17 members who then formed the initial group of 20 individuals that was registered at BPW headquarters, regionally at continental level, as well as legally within the country. Although affiliated, the group is not aligned with nongovernmental organizations (NGO) umbrella as delineated by a separate registration process (URBS, 2019; UMIA, 2020).

The network has a desire *to positively impact women’s mindset through continuous nudges and visualization of the relationship between behavioral change and transformation* (Duflo, 2012). The mission is to disseminate knowledge amongst members, most importantly by recognizing the vital untapped potential held within the informal sector in order to introduce and encourage them to embrace a culture of positive transformation (Alvord et al., 2004; Drucker, 1985; Tsui et al, 2004). Fostering collective action enables women to tackle challenges of daily life and reach for higher goals. Fig.5 below shows the multi-pronged approach used to deliver on this goal.

**BPW Uganda**

Motivated by the desire for societal transformation

“To positively impact women’s mindset through advocacy and representation at all levels”



**Fig. 5 BPW Uganda: Simultaneous synergies aimed at societal transformation**

Chief among the objectives is to deliver three broad pillars of advocacy (BPW International, 2020b): board training and certification that enables more women to play a leadership role in various organizations, support for women-centric national policies, and impactful private business engagement through Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU). Key activities include widening access to finance, training on legitimacy and operating standards quality assurance, access to international markets for export promotion, and other business mentorship usually delivered in partnership with International Trade Center (ITC).

The aim is to fight poverty at the bottom of the pyramid (Banerjee & Duflo, 2007; London, 2016). A multipronged approach is employed; first the group strives to unlock and direct dormant and inadequately exploited government resources (Clarke, 2011) to those who need them the most, secondly broad government as well as local community representation within its membership hastens dissemination of vital information about benefits of any ongoing social and economic activities, and lastly alliances with several International Development Agencies (IDAs) add a voice to the various initiatives. For instance, by playing an active role in facilitating televised walks aimed at reducing the gender pay gap and speaking publically against gender-based domestic violence (see Images 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 in the Appendix).

Similar to the international construct, the novelty of BPW Uganda lies in members with an intrinsic technical and/or financial capacity. They combine requisite local knowledge from seeding micro businesses - that if prosperous weave an unshakeable confidence within local communities - with a service oriented approach, thereby forming networks which enable access to and visibility within national and international frameworks (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006; Aldrich & Kim, 2007). The management structure strictly fits within the group charter and overall guiding principles; a President flanked by 2 Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, Coordinators and other positions as the situation demands. At country level, members second and select suitable candidates from amongst themselves.

Originality and diversity of entrepreneurs from as far as Australia highlights the common thread of humanity through issues that challenge us all beginning with mindset. Among other BPW groups, they too are keen on educating the girl child and implement similar projects. The BPW approach is primarily hinged on social capital.

## **6. Venture Creation Process II: A Multi-level Entrepreneurial Process The establishment of a Secondary and Vocational School in Kyasa**

### **6.1 Justification**

Kyasa is a farming village located in Namayumba sub-county, Wakiso district, Uganda. It is situated at about 60 Km distance northwest of central Kampala. Straight line distance to the district headquarters (Google Earth, 2020) is within a 30 Km radius. Over 90% of the district's population estimated at 1.2 million is rural with 60% (720,000) at school-going-age (Ssemukasa & Kearney, 2014). It holds the new and largest Kitalya prison where government plans to relocate inmates from Luzira, a central area within Kampala city that has become a high-end residential neighborhood bursting with commercial activity. The village is home to various small businesses, medium sized maize mills, Robusta coffee processing and other manufacturing plants. It is also well served with primary schools. However, before 2017 the entire sub-county lacked a secondary school within a 10 Km radius. As at date they only have just the one, elaborated in this article. Additionally pre-school is nearly non-existent: the reason it was considered as good a place to focus on, as frankly any other of a handful of areas with similar characteristics in the country.

### **6.2 Project Initiation**

Project ideation and design thinking for setting up the school was a member-led process, the details of which were unveiled and further crystallized during the BPW Africa Regional Congress, held in Kampala from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (see Image 6.1 in the Appendix).

To allow for visualization of the proposed opportunity (Clarke, 2011) for the village, one of the key activities scheduled during the conference was a group visit to Madhvani Group’s Kakira sugar factory, an established family business housed within a large sugarcane farmers’ village estate in Eastern Uganda (Forbes, 2014). In addition to having 12 primary schools, the estate houses a large community secondary school which provides locals including more than 10,000 staff as well as their children with world class education (<https://www.madhvanifoundation.com>). In Uganda, this foundation serves the wider national tertiary sector through bursaries.

### 6.3 Community Engagement and Project Implementation

The project budget was drawn and shared through formal liaison with BPW International representatives where a donor was identified. The donor was particularly interested in setting up either two hospitals or schools in Africa or a combination of both. However they neither wanted to engage directly with government institutions nor to operate the venture - let alone having any physical presence. BPW Uganda therefore locally organized and applied for over 3 acres of land from the government, which was availed through a gradual but timely process. The concept was discussed in detail and subsequently signed off with the Regional Coordinator for Africa together with the overall secretariat. Financial capital was then guaranteed by the donor agreement signed directly between BPW Taiwan and BPW Uganda.

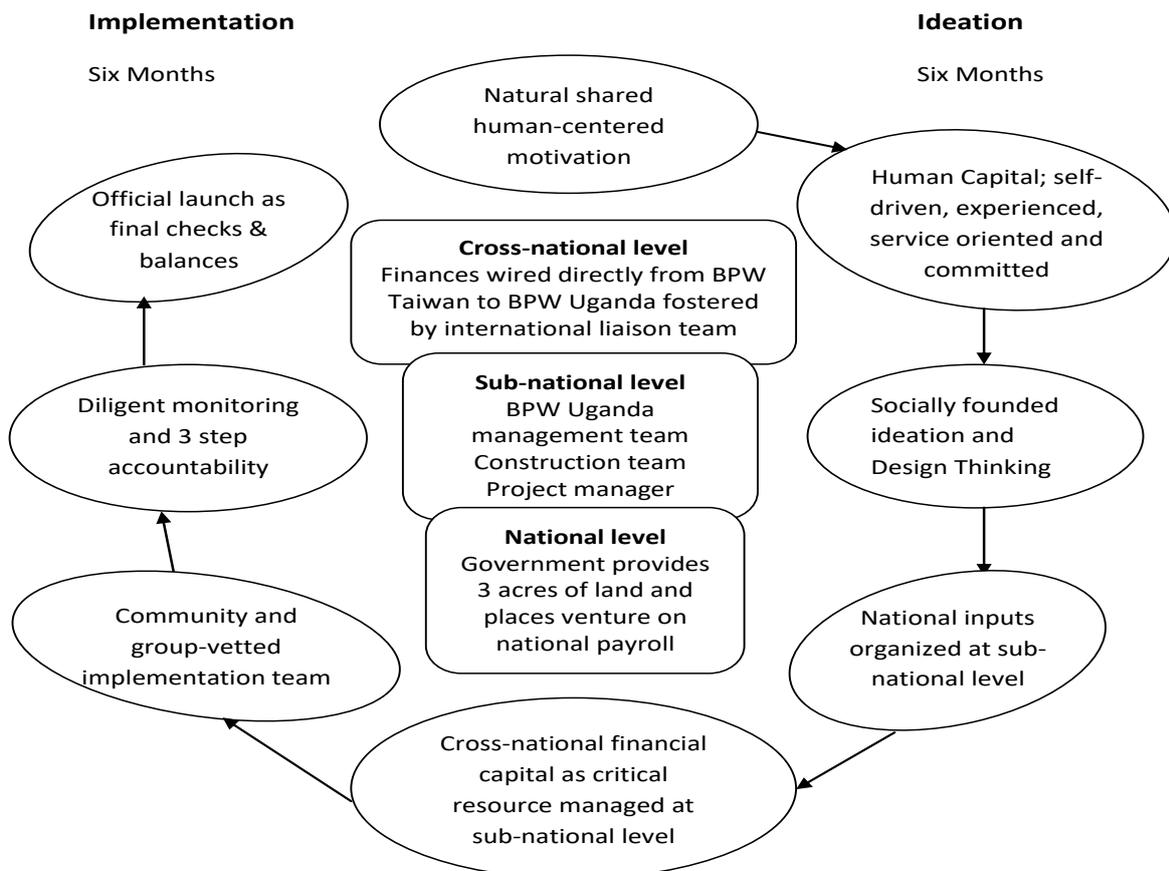


Fig. 6: Venture Creation Process: Kyasa Tzu Xing Secondary and Vocational School

The above-mentioned preliminary steps took place over a period of 6 months while the entire process from ideation to successful launch took a little over 12 months. As shown in Fig.6 above, the sub-national appears lodged between national and cross-national layers gluing resources and processes together: playing a vital intermediary role (Aldrich & Kim, 2007).

An embedded approach (Dodd et al., 2021) was engaged to source a local project manager based on trust gained from previous work done within the same local area using a community-led procurement procedure. A local construction firm from a neighbouring area was also identified through the same procedure. The two worked with a local architect to draw the construction plans and also obtain local authority approvals. Specific consideration was made to source local building materials and for intended school goers who were otherwise unengaged to be hired as workmen and trained on the job; thereby creating the first automated monitoring process on the ground.

Official reporting was done through emails by attaching bank statements, other transaction records such as receipts and construction site visit photographs, and minutes as recorded during group meetings. Whereas the donor required no additional accountability, an independent audit firm was engaged: deemed vital in ascertaining transparency. In fact outstanding issues were revealed regarding the construction agreement and tax exemptions and actioned timely. Cost over-runs emerged at about 75% completion: extra water piping and tanks, additional nursery school expansion costs, and excess labor costs in form of transport and lunch allowances had not been fully accounted for in the original budget. On the back of audit report information that had not been previously shared, the donor agreed to cover the excess position thereby enabling the implementation process to conclude.

#### **6.4 Social Venture Launch and Performance**

By the time the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) highlighted that 2 more acres of land were needed in addition to what was priory acquired, the project team was ready: not only to express intent but to hand over the new school to the government. Too struck with luck to press the issue further as it turned out they were indeed asking themselves to comply, to its due credit, the proposition was promptly considered.

The school offers the national curriculum as well as vocational training such as brick making, furniture workshops, weaving and sawing, basket making, hair braiding and styling among others. Students pay a small administrative fee as a standard requirement in all public schools while the community provides much needed support including teachers and staff.

Over 90 students enrolled for the first academic term of 2017 while the school was officially opened on 27<sup>th</sup> February of that year (see Images 6.1 and 6.2 in the Appendix). The opening day was attended by the international and regional representatives, donors, local leaders, parliamentarians, cabinet ministers, students naturally, along with other dignitaries.

Most notably, the first cohort of 22 students to complete Ordinary Levels *ever* in Kyasa did so in 2019 after the school passed all test center criteria as laid out under the MOES: a journey of one hundred years since BPW was founded by a highly educated female civil rights activist back in 1919. As at March 2020 when Covid-19 was officially declared a pandemic (WHO, 2020) causing school closures everywhere, the total number of students stood at over 215.

## 7. Analysis

The venture creation process from initiation through to performance (Shepherd et al., 2019) is illustrated in Fig.6 in the above section. Next, eight levers of engagement over the course of the process are identified as: business, professional, government, civil society, local community, formal and informal sectors, and gender as the driver of all these. The levers are enabled and accelerated by social media as a descriptor of the social, political and economic environment (see Fig.7.1 below). The model is primarily based upon social, human, physical and financial capital and resources, and lastly interactions between sub-national, national, and cross-national borders: intangible layers that when itemized represent unique characteristics, attributes and barriers (see Fig.7.5 below).

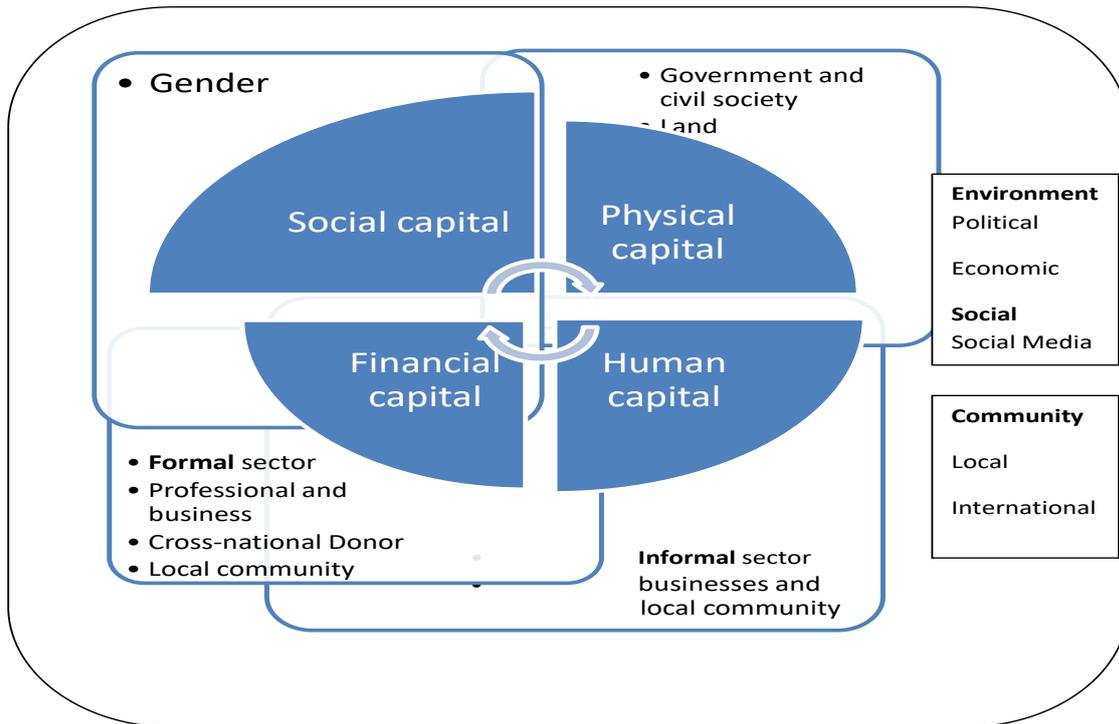
### 7.1 The role of organizational structure in social venture creation

What is in a name? Out of Uganda's total population of about 44.27 million (2019), only 1.2 million registered businesses give rise to only about 800,000 private entities that contribute towards tax (Uganda Revenue Authority, 2020). The factors behind this status are severally debated (Kistruck et al., 2015; Shantz et al., 2018). Voluntary organizations are *legitimized* as formal; either as local community-based organizations (CBOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and - rarely - charity organizations (URSB, 2019; UMIA, 2020). While similarly engendering community engagement and representation at ministerial, parliamentary and legislative levels and incorporating ideas from the local community during drafting of policies, they categorically differ from the formation and strategy behind BPW.

Most CBOs are run by locals, especially youth, who struggle to implement projects due to a) poverty, b) lack of established sources of income and c) overreliance on the very government institutions that they are created to assist, to avail the requisite resources for carrying out the related duties. This conundrum slows down the progress of otherwise well intentioned formations. In comparison, a notable compensation construct in NGOs is often countered by bold vertical hierarchical linkages with authoritative reporting lines: which breed political tensions and internal conflicts. Whereas the latter is a deterrent, the former is good for the community within which the NGOs exist. *Notably though, both considerably drive venture costs upwards and thereby lessen capacity and capability to effect real change.*

Consequently BPW Uganda was initially filed as a nonprofit however owing to limitations within the country's institutional policy framework it was later registered as a company limited by guarantee (URBS, 2019). Contrary to vertical hierarchies, both venture creation processes as detailed in section 5 and 6 are at no increased risk owing to a more fluidly embedded and horizontal approach (Shantz et al., 2013).

We observe that whereas voluntary efforts increasingly make sense (Phills et al., 2008) as cast by the media which is currently awash with community outreach projects triggered by the pandemic, the public is increasingly concerned with organizational culture and practices. Users of products and services are also getting more concerned with not only what, but how and why entrepreneurship takes place. Lastly, it is also becoming increasingly difficult to hide or disguise activities from the watchful eye of the public, or to fend off inquisition into issues surrounding policies and processes of venture creation. The more diverse across age, gender, nationality, culture, religion, race and other categorizations organizations are the better for all stakeholders and global economy at large.



**Fig.7.1: Levers of Engagement**

## 7.2 The role of gender in entrepreneurial organizing

Women play a pivotal role by bringing together business actors with professionals thereby arming both informal and formal sectors (see Fig.7.1 above) with the necessary tools required to exploit their full potential. *BPW acts as a Trade Support Institution (TSI)*: bridging the gap between the locals and international players such as the International Trade Center (ITC), International banks, Telecommunication Companies, and foreign manufacturers. They are pacemakers and accelerators first by gaining support from the political wing and then bridging civil society with the private sector (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006). Women's interoperability as multi-taskers (Alsos et al., 2013; Marlow & McAdam, 2013) leans more towards a natural sentiment rather than a learned ability or capability. This high capacity and huge capability for co-creation is further exemplified below.

Popular slogans "*time is up*" and "*I can't breathe*" which emerged from painful experiences draw emphasis as tools for dynamic social advocacy. In this case, the female-led "Me Too" movement founded in 2006 paid it forward. It preceded and successfully egged on "Black Lives Matter" since 2014 (Brush et al., 2019). As highlighted in 7.2 above, both movements similarly evidence dual missions from a singular unifying human-centric motivation as well as knowledge spillovers (Hill and Mudambi, 2010). Both fight for people's voices to be heard and for freedom to exercise their rights without judgment regardless of gender and race respectively, among other barriers. These developments attest that social entrepreneurs are increasingly willing, if not overly passionate, to create networks across boundaries and barriers in order to voluntarily effect change regardless of countless limitations.

### 7.3 The role of social capital in entrepreneurial motivation

This model is largely driven by social capital while financial capital plays a supportive secondary role. Social embeddedness and local social capital bring a local sense of responsibility for entrepreneurs (Granovetter, 1985; Sahasranamam & Nandakumar, 2020). Although each BPW group mission differs in accordance with varying national or regional conditions, the motivation is unifying across the board: highly desirable in this case given that education is a basic human right. A core sense of purpose helps to attract the right actors, solidify the group’s confidence, and foster real connections with those who see value in helping others (Shepherd, 2015). A simple but effective official visit to Kakira markets the venture and ensures solid buy-in at all levels (Clarke, 2011), further supported by the socially embedded and highly synergized voluntary construct as increasingly viable with millennials and adults alike.

### 7.4 Robustness in entrepreneurial performance

In addition to standard approaches to risk management i.e. phased disbursements and independent audit, *monitoring and control* is assured at five distinct points *in a more natural and less regulated construct*. It starts at engagement phase within the embedded approach as laid out at the beginning of implementation where community-led procurement derives monitoring and in-community reporting, thereafter at resource acquisition where the national and cross-national spheres act as each other’s neutral supervisors intermediated by actors at sub-national level (see Fig.6 in section 6). Next, when cost over-runs occurred, the additional in-country audit process and accountability helped the project team and donor to cement trust and gain agreement for additional funding. Finally, monitoring and control culminates at the launch: where BPW Uganda is gauged on how well they performed by a physical, visual examination of the project.

### 7.5 Resource acquisition, allocation and effectiveness

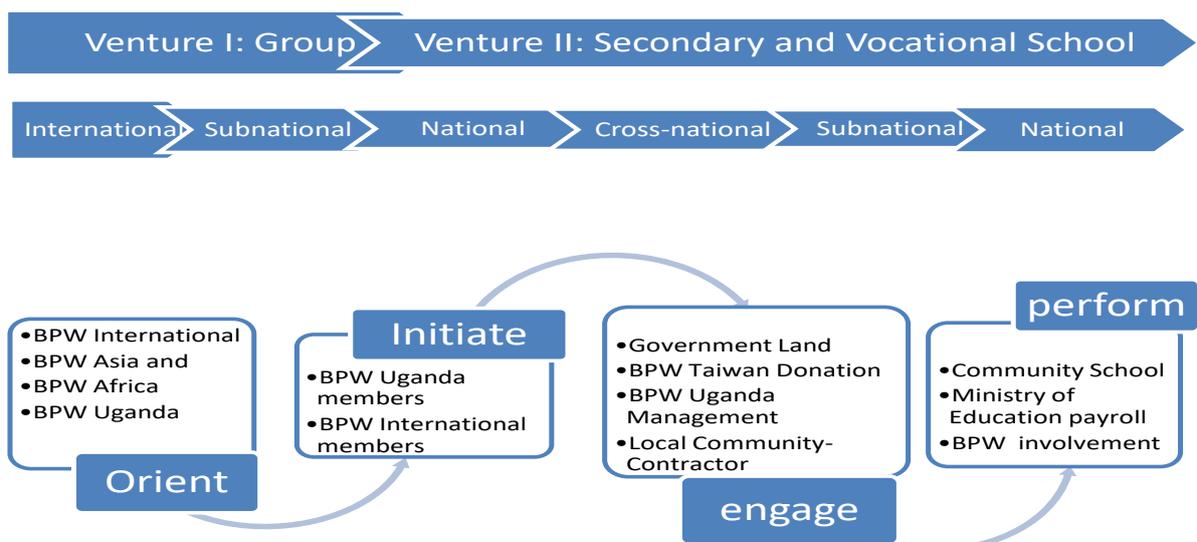


Fig. 7.5: The Centennial Cross-national Venture Creation Process in BPW

The overarching self-checking process is elaborated in Fig.7.5 above. Both the levers (as explained in Fig.7.1) and layers of engagement *a) form unique and reciprocal combinations b) automatically break the barriers of segmentation where necessary, c) behave as processes that self-audit and d) seamlessly intersect within the natural social, political and economic environment: thereby enabling success in venture creation.* A flow of shared responsibility between and along the tiers is based on these unique attributes and their measured complimentary ability which affects role formation. A natural order and flow is affirmed and reaffirmed at different stages of the process. Fig.7.1 further shows that the levers also embed strong synergies in reporting lines that extend beyond the boundaries of the venture via social media – the dangers of which are immense especially when dealing with the general public. The inherent precision in this process causes the different tiers to seamlessly act in sync: breeding alternative but equally as (if not more) effective accountability mechanisms.

Another important gain here is that in the nonprofit construct (Nissan et al., 2012) a donation *legitimizes* the venture creation process. Neither debt nor equity financing are featured here: maintaining an enviably low investment cost. More so, given interest of local authorities in this project, no excess regulatory fees are incurred since no time is wasted on bureaucracy.

## **7.6 The dark side**

Although the non-compensation element of non profits has positive cost implications, the significance of cost effectiveness is double edged and conversely problematic. Due to scarcity of resources, worker's insurance costs are also not met despite notable risks such as health, accident or impairment. Although nothing adverse happened in this instance and even if jobs created for the long run may far outweigh the risks, there is still cause for concern. Further inquisition into how best to ensure that such critical cost is expended is warranted. Additionally, social embeddedness is not an ideal process: it is adorned with several imperfections. In this instance immense challenges associated with the public education system include obsolete curricula, underpaid staff and limited institutional capacity. As well, factors beyond the group's control may emerge in case of unforeseen circumstances including changes in the relevant government policy. The prevailing Covid-19 health pandemic further reveals a relatively weak technological outline of this project in line with Subramanian et al. (2016). All these denote missed opportunities and critical needs.

## **7.7 Ensuring venture sustainability**

Where the entrepreneur is resource constrained the question of *sustainability* arises (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). For the foreseeable future, sustainability is a national responsibility: achieving the purpose of government towards the local community. The value of education cannot be over emphasized: it enables societies to break generational poverty cycles and allows them to contribute positively to societal wellbeing. The project is an all round conduit for success now and more so for the future: as the school continues to expand, it may well be able to generate adequate income at a much later stage. Ultimately, high demand is exemplified by constant growth in student numbers: an overarching transparent confirmation of achievement on the goals and objectives of the BPW model. Significant job creation is also achieved: the headmistress, teachers and staff are all registered on the government payroll as lifelong pensionable beneficiaries from the national tax base. The venture helps to curb community vulnerability and enhance its resilience towards other challenges. It brings new generational hope and adds great value to the farming community of Kyasa.

## 8. Findings and Discussion

Gender leadership and voluntary organizing: the BPW model clearly demonstrates that regardless of differences in race, age, culture, geographical boundaries and other categorizations which often present barriers and limitations: *women-led venture creation models have the ability and capacity to engage, influence and play a leading role in addressing societal grand challenges* (Duflo, 2012; Kim & Starks, 2016; Kakabadse et al., 2018). Key factors that explain how the model vitally compliments the how and why of venture creation, with *where* it takes place are discussed below.

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the fact is that *more women play significantly in micro-entrepreneurship and the informal sector than their male counterparts* (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019). Therefore for actors targeting poverty eradication, that is where the action is and should continue to be targeted. It is where place meets time.

In bottom of the pyramid (BoP) communities world over, the model inadvertently addresses informality and poverty, both of which disproportionately affect women. It also automatically pays specific attention to inequality in the broad sense with *positive consequences in other areas such as increased access to finance for women, closing the gender pay gap, increased trust-based and informed decision making and address overall leadership challenges in society regardless of gender*. Executing more ventures on the African continent promises greater opportunity for accelerated global development.

Leading with the social component instead of the financial as is normally the case, guarantees *reduced overregulation. The stringent regulations in the financial sector while necessary continue to constrain growth*. In addition, the model also attests that social entrepreneurs are willing to voluntarily effect change even within existing limitations, even as seen for example in the USA. An existentially complimentary and effectively interwoven mechanism, the model demonstrates remarkable precision and supports rapid creation of successful ventures.

The relationship between embeddedness, social capital and networks as driven by more effective levels of social bonding and bridging (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006) is increasingly strengthened through the use of *social media*. The attributes, sequence and interplay between characteristics and responsibilities of each lever across the layers of engagement demonstrated in Fig.6, 7 and 8 significantly delineates a symbiosis which aligns with Shepherd et al. (2019)'s: *celebrating the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship*.

Value of observations: the revelations *contravene a long-held misconception by global actors that channel over 80% of resources through private multinationals or large international and national organizations based on financial or political muscle respectively*. We argue that vertical models failed due to weak institutions and delivery mechanisms sometimes orchestrated by initiators, recipients, as well as the various bureaucratic and therefore costly budgetary processes and workshops. These are often lined with hidden motives, not to mention the influence of mis-education that already plagues hard-done-by local communities. The recommended model recognizes and emphasizes an evolutionary world without borders in so far as the circular economy relates to social entrepreneurship. In practice it allows intermediaries to use and re-use knowledge and other resources. Such replicability is evidenced by similarities in group activities on all continents: whereby the fix does not lie in the creations alone but in the wider natural economic and social environment in and of itself.

Cementing its relevance and usefulness, the model delivers on a broad range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key among them SDG 4, 5, 8, 10 and 17: quality education for all, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequality, and partnerships to achieve the goal respectively. Indirectly the model addresses SDG1: no poverty (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011).

Based on the results of this study, we firmly believe that on top of addressing informality, gender-driven models are far more capable of providing solutions for other challenges faced by our society today, such as those associated with income inequality, racial segregation, domestic violence, mental health, ill-communication and online bullying (although women are just as equally culpable as men on this one!) and a host of other issues.

We therefore argue that the next step in this discussion will emphasize within the vision and mission of organizations, *a dimension of place* different from physical location alone or market-segmentation and other existing descriptors, and in some cases limiting dimensions. Rather, as a key driver of the venture creation process to strike a balance between where goods and services are needed the most and where they will either start or are already guaranteed to create greater multiplier effects.

*In order to successfully drive the sub-Saharan region to its economic promised-land: women, particularly those actively engaged in social entrepreneurship by playing a bridging role, must be at the forefront of ongoing efforts.*

## **9. Conclusion**

As stated in the opening sections of this article, we answer to a call for additional research (McManus, 2001). Our findings are that women networks are accelerated by social media: high level of autonomy creates vibrant alliances a) between business and professional women and b) across borders: answering McManus in the affirmative. The question of *place* as an increasingly important determinant for effective problem solving (Creswell, 2017), is also addressed. Place-based social entrepreneurship approaches allow for maximum exploitation of community potential.

It is therefore not hard to imagine the sheer amount of lost opportunity that lurks amongst global communities hiding under intangible and diverse, yet uniquely interconnected and naturally well endowed layers of engagement. We therefore call upon additional research that delineates how best similar women-led models can be reconstructed to address multiple targeted societal problems.

In closing, this voluntary organizing model addresses informality by encouraging freedom of engagement (Sen, 1999). It emphasizes embedded networks within *context* (Wigren-Koosgard, 2019; Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006) thereby fostering a positive mindset amongst social entrepreneurs and creating reliable synergies as catalysts for poverty alleviation and effective delivery of economic growth and development (Shepherd et al., 2019).

This journey of a hundred years sets a precedent that serves to further the promise of social organizing and innovation for many more years to come.

**10. References**

1. Aldrich, H.E. and Kim, P.H., 2007. Small worlds, infinite possibilities? How social networks affect entrepreneurial team formation and search. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 1(1-2), pp.147-165.
2. Ahlstrom, D. and Bruton, G.D., 2006. Venture capital in emerging economies: Networks and institutional change. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 30(2), pp.299-320.
3. Alvarez, S.A. and Barney, J.B., 2007. Discovery and creation: Alternative theories of entrepreneurial action. *Strategic entrepreneurship journal*, 1(1-2), pp.11-26.
4. Alvord, S.H., Brown, L.D. and Letts, C.W., 2004. Social entrepreneurship and societal transformation: An exploratory study. *The journal of applied behavioral science*, 40(3), pp.260-282.
5. Banerjee, A.V. and Duflo, E., 2007. The economic lives of the poor. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 21(1), pp.141-168.
6. Bornstein, D., 2007. *How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas*. Oxford University Press.
7. Bosma, N., & Kelley, D. (2019). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report: 2018/2019. In *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*.
8. Brush, C., Edelman, L.F., Manolova, T. and Welter, F., 2019. A gendered look at entrepreneurship ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 53(2), pp.393-408.
9. Clarke, J., 2011. Revitalizing entrepreneurship: how visual symbols are used in entrepreneurial performances. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(6), pp.1365-1391.
10. Cresswell, T., 2017. Towards Topopoetics: Space, place and the poem. In *Place, Space and Hermeneutics* (pp. 319-331). Springer, Cham.
11. de Bruin, A. and Teasdale, S., 2019. Exploring the terrain of social entrepreneurship: new directions, paths less travelled. In *A Research Agenda for Social Entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
12. Dodd, S., Anderson, A. and Jack, S., 2021. "Let them not make me a stone"—repositioning entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business Management*, pp.1-29.
13. Dorado, S., 2006. Social entrepreneurial ventures: different values so different process of creation, no?. *Journal of developmental entrepreneurship*, 11(04), pp.319-343.
14. Duflo, E., 2012. Women empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic literature*, 50(4), pp.1051-79.
15. Drucker, P.F., 1985. Entrepreneurial strategies. *California Management Review (pre-1986)*, 27(000002), p.9.
16. Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P.R., 2012. *Management research*. Sage.
17. Elkington, J. and Hartigan, P., 2008. *The power of unreasonable people: How social entrepreneurs create markets that change the world*. Harvard Business Press.
18. Gartner, W.B., 1985. A conceptual framework for describing the phenomenon of new venture creation. *Academy of management review*, 10(4), pp.696-706.
19. Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G. and Hamilton, A.L., 2013. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), pp.15-31.
20. Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), pp.1360-1380.
21. Groenewald, T., 2004. A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 3(1), pp.42-55.
22. Hill, T. L., & Mudambi, R. (2010). Far from Silicon Valley: How emerging economies are re-shaping our understanding of global entrepreneurship. *Journal of International Management*, 16(4), 321–327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2010.09.003>
23. Kakabadse, N.K., Tatli, A., Nicolopoulou, K., Tankibayeva, A. and Mouraviev, N., 2018. A gender perspective on entrepreneurial leadership: female leaders in Kazakhstan. *European Management Review*, 15(2), pp.155-170.
24. Karakire Guma, P., 2015. Business in the urban informal economy: Barriers to women's entrepreneurship in Uganda. *Journal of African Business*, 16(3), pp.305-321.
25. Kistruck, G.M., Webb, J.W., Sutter, C.J. and Bailey, A.V., 2015. The double-edged sword of legitimacy in base-of-the-pyramid markets. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30(3), pp.436-451.
26. Levie, J., Autio, E., Acs, Z. and Hart, M., 2014. Global entrepreneurship and institutions: an introduction. *Small business economics*, 42(3), pp.437-444.
27. London, T., 2016. *The base of the pyramid promise: Building businesses with impact and scale*. Stanford University Press.
28. Mair, J. and Marti, I., 2009. Entrepreneurship in and around institutional voids: A case study from Bangladesh. *Journal of business venturing*, 24(5), pp.419-435.

29. Marlow, S. and McAdam, M., 2013. Gender and entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
30. McManus, P.A., 2001. Women's participation in self-employment in western industrialized nations. *International Journal of Sociology*, 31(2), pp.70-97.
31. Murzacheva, E., Sahasranamam, S. and Levie, J., 2020. Doubly disadvantaged: gender, spatially concentrated deprivation and nascent entrepreneurial activity. *European Management Review*, 17(3), pp.669-685.
32. Nicolopoulou, K., 2014. Social entrepreneurship between cross-currents: toward a framework for theoretical restructuring of the field. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 52(4), pp.678-702.
33. Nissan, E., Castaño, M.S. and Carrasco, I., 2012. Drivers of non-profit activity: a cross-country analysis. *Small Business Economics*, 38(3), pp.303-320.
34. Packendorff, J. and Lindgren, M., 2014. Projectification and its consequences: Narrow and broad conceptualisations. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 17(1), pp.7-21.
35. Rosca, E., Agarwal, N. and Brem, A., 2020. Women entrepreneurs as agents of change: A comparative analysis of social entrepreneurship processes in emerging markets. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 157, p.120067..
36. Sahasranamam, S. and Nandakumar, M.K., 2020. Individual capital and social entrepreneurship: Role of formal institutions. *Journal of Business Research*, 107, pp.104-117.
37. Schumpeter, J., 1942. Creative destruction. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, 825, pp.82-85.
38. Sen, Amartya K., 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
39. Shane, S. and Venkataraman, S., 2000. The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of management review*, 25(1), pp.217-226.
40. Slade Shantz, A.F., Kistruck, G.M., Pacheco, D.F. and Webb, J.W., 2020. How formal and informal hierarchies shape conflict within cooperatives: A field experiment in Ghana. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(2), pp.503-529.
41. Shepherd, D.A. and Patzelt, H., 2011. The new field of sustainable entrepreneurship: Studying entrepreneurial action linking "what is to be sustained" with "what is to be developed". *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 35(1), pp.137-163.
42. Shepherd, D.A., Wennberg, K., Suddaby, R. and Wiklund, J., 2019. What are we explaining? A review and agenda on initiating, engaging, performing, and contextualizing entrepreneurship. *Journal of Management*, 45(1), pp.159-196.
43. Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1998. *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
44. Subramanian, A.M., Choi, Y.R., Lee, S.H. and Hang, C.C., 2016. Linking technological and educational level diversities to innovation performance. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 41(2), pp.182-204.
45. Sydow, A., Cannatelli, B.L., Giudici, A. and Molteni, M., 2020. Entrepreneurial workaround practices in severe institutional voids: Evidence from Kenya. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, p.1042258720929891.
46. Tsui, A.S., Schoonhoven, C.B., Meyer, M.W., Lau, C.M. and Milkovich, G.T., 2004. Organization and management in the midst of societal transformation: The People's Republic of China. *Organization science*, 15(2), pp.133-144.
47. Zahra, S. and Dess, G.G., 2001. Entrepreneurship as a field of research: Encouraging dialogue and debate. *Academy of management Review*, 26(1), pp.8-10.
48. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mfonobongnsehe/2014/01/08/the-10-leading-family-businesses-in-africa/?sh=35ec066f7c4a> (retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021)
49. BPW International, 2020a <https://bpwinfoblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/final-nominations-for-bpwint-2020.pdf> (retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021)
50. BPW International, 2020b (<http://www.bpwgcm.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/208/2018/07/1-BPW-International.pdf>) (retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021)
51. <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/namayumba-sub-county-leaders-raise-concern-about-lack-of-secondary-school> (retrieved 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2021)
52. Uganda Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2020. [www.mia.go.ug/content/registration-ngos](http://www.mia.go.ug/content/registration-ngos), <https://youtu.be/UJLBVodJmHQ>, <https://youtu.be/ZExUJdJRA5c> (retrieved on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2021)
53. Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), 2019. [www.ursb.go.ug/business-registration-forms/](http://www.ursb.go.ug/business-registration-forms/)
54. Uganda Revenue Authority, 2020 <https://www.ura.go.ug> (retrieved 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2021)

## 11. Appendix



**Image 5.1:** BPW Uganda founders Ms. Afsa Mukasa Matsuku (left) and Professor Maggie Kigozi (right), and member Ms. Winnie Lawoko (middle)



**Image 5.2:** One of many monthly member meetings held with UN Women in Kampala  
In the Centre are UN Women Regional (SSA) and Uganda Heads



**Image 5.3:** Inaugural gender pay gap walk 2018 led by BPW Uganda President, UN Country Representative and the then US Ambassador to Uganda

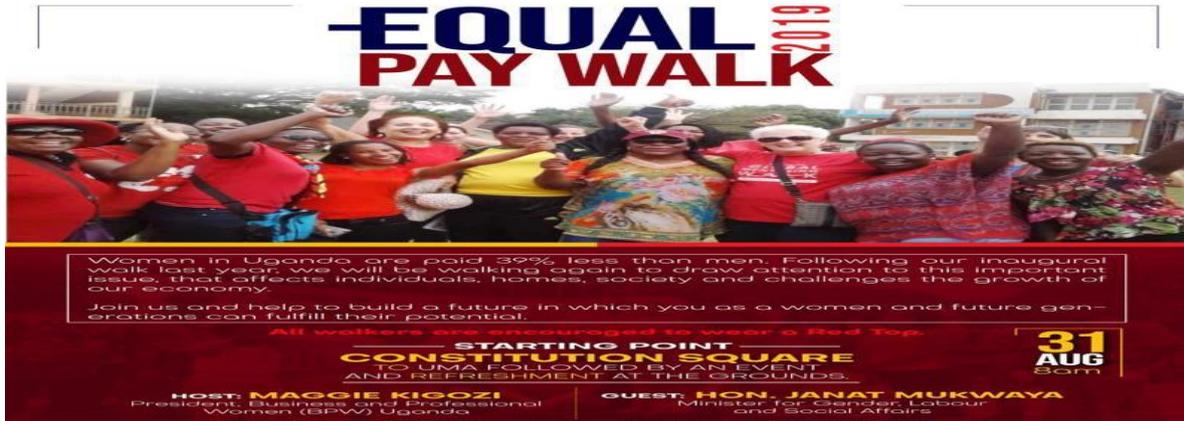


Image 5.4: The annual Gender Pay Gap Walk 2019



Image 6.1: BPW Congress held from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Kampala, Uganda  
Above - tree planting at Kakira during community school visit



Image 6.2: Stakeholders represented at official opening ceremony of Kyasa TzuXing secondary and vocational school on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017