

**'A book of hope, inspiration, and a
beacon of what's possible'**

From the foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu



The Rise of the Reluctant Innovator

When problems find people, amazing things can happen

Edited by

Ken Banks

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS BOOK

'This important, timely book gives the reader an invaluable insight into the workings of the world of social entrepreneurship. It is a must-read for students, practitioners, policy makers and anyone with a passing interest in how to work for the greater good.'

Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder of the World Economic Forum and Co-Founder of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship

'This book's vivid, engaging stories – of ordinary people who have devoted their lives to solving problems and injustices they never expected to encounter – make a major contribution to understanding what social innovation is all about. This is an inspiring and essential read for everyone who cares about our flawed, messy, beautiful world and believes in its myriad possibilities.'

Hannah Bloch, Mission Projects Editor, *National Geographic* magazine

'Ken Banks, whose own career has taken him from offshore banking to launching a brilliant communications tool for Africa, takes us on a social innovation journey. We meet ten entrepreneurs who happened on life-changing ideas – from solar lighting for African maternity wards to film subtitles to promote literacy in India – and then fought against every kind of obstacle to make them happen. Inspiring and instructive.'

Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC Technology Correspondent

'Ken Banks offers us inspiration, wisdom and reluctance in just the right measure to help make lasting social innovation a discipline that others can help create and sustain, rather than having it remain an unfulfilled pipe dream.'

Cheryl Heller, Founding Chair, MFA Design for Social Innovation at the School of Visual Arts, New York

'Ken's work has transformed the lives of many people and shown how the appropriate application of technology can change the world for the better. In this important book he has generously brought together tales from other "reluctant entrepreneurs" to show how inspiration and application can begin to address the world's pressing problems. It's a great read, and a vital message.'

Bill Thompson, Writer, broadcaster, commentator for *Click* (on BBC World Service radio) and Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Art

'There's a lot of hyperbole at the intersection of technology and social entrepreneurship, but you won't find any in here. This important book describes how pressing social problems are being creatively solved with appropriate technology by gifted people. Inspirational stuff!'

Alex van Someren, Managing Partner of Early Stage Funds,
Amadeus Capital Partners

'If these ten extraordinary people are defined as reluctant then the world needs more of these Tesla-esque entrepreneurs, thinkers and doers who have engineered similarly game-changing innovations whose impact will be as profound as the enigmatic Nikola. Bravo to their brilliance.'

Toby Shapshak, Editor, *Stuff* magazine

'Many of us are looking for ways to combine our passion and purpose in life and this book provides some great tips. This book is filled with stories that inspire us to remember the road is not always easy and tenacity and time are critical parts of the journey. The great news is that it really is possible to change the world – one marvellous reluctant innovator at a time!'

Grace Killelea, Founder and CEO of Half the Sky Leadership Institute
and 2011 Multichannel News Wonder Woman

'This book is a refreshing antidote to pessimism about the potential of individuals influencing "social change". The author of each chapter has a personal story to tell, but each in such a way that it helps us to better understand the different ways it is possible to make that change happen.'

Dr Elizabeth Harrison, Reader in Anthropology and former Head of
International Development, University of Sussex

'What an inspiration! This book is a testament that we can all make a much bigger difference in the world than we ever dreamed possible. It has encouraged me to take bigger and bolder steps in my own foundation, "Together we can Change the World", and in my business as well. Read it and treat yourself to a new way of thinking.'

Scott Friedman, Chief Celebration Officer at Scott Friedman & Associates and
author of *Celebrate! Lessons Learned from the World's Most Admired Organizations*

'*The Rise of the Reluctant Innovator* tells the poignant stories of entrepreneurs with such perseverance and passion that will be an inspiration to all those hoping to make a difference in the world. And it is an important reminder of the sacrifice that community leaders and development professionals make as they tackle the most pressing problems plaguing the world today.'

Priya Jaisinghani, Deputy Director of Innovation and
Development Alliances, USAID

'The Rise of the Reluctant Innovator gives an incredibly rare, personal and enlightening account of social entrepreneurs around the world. Their innovations demonstrate how technology can be a potent force for positive change in the world.'

Katie Jacobs Stanton, Vice President of International Market Development, Twitter

'A revelatory view of world-changing innovators. Read these pages to find that life-passions are revealed in the most unconventional manner, and discover the path to success consists of battling enormous obstacles.'

John Siceloff, Emmy Award Winner and Founder/CEO of CatchTheNext.org

'These real – occasionally raw – stories do more to capture the life of the committed social entrepreneur than anything else I've read. Inspiring, yes, but even better, it works as a real world case-based manual for how to create change for the better.'

Kevin Starr, Managing Director, Mulago Foundation

'It seems that around the world we are witnessing a new collective consciousness of sorts. There is a heightened awareness of the need to help others. We feel compelled to have a real impact on the "bigger picture" and to do more for the "greater good". Social entrepreneurship is on the rise, and this book shines much needed light on how to transform inspiration into innovation.'

Darice Fisher, Public Relations and Media Expert

'Ken Banks is the quintessential explorer, driven by curiosity and purpose, strengthened by obstacles, and culturally mindful. In *The Rise of the Reluctant Innovator*, Ken – a collaborator by nature – has swung the spotlight onto the heroic work of a group of driven individuals who are creating a better future for people and communities around the world. Transcending trendy terms and structured models around social entrepreneurship, Ken's common theme is one of possibility and empowerment – anyone can effect social change. I believe this collection of stories of passion and impact will leave people hungering for more and will inspire more than a few readers to explore their passions and translate them into incremental stories of meaningful change.'

Alex Moen, Vice President of Explorer Programs, National Geographic

'The Rise of the Reluctant Innovator is required reading for any student or anyone interested in technology-based invention to improve peoples' lives, and social innovation as a potential life path. Its honest stories of unforeseen challenges and unexpected opportunities from the people encountering them both are an inspiration and refreshing reality-check.'

Joshua Schuler, Executive Director, Lemelson-MIT Program

‘Ken Banks has assembled compelling, insightful first-person accounts from remarkable people pursuing social change through technology. The book will be inspiring and informative to many others on similar paths.’

Jonathan Donner, Technology for Emerging Markets Group, Microsoft Research

‘Read this book and be inspired. And ask the question it poses: Can I, in however lesser-a-way, also find my passion, become a social entrepreneur and make our world a better place?’

Robert Chambers, Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex

‘As a pioneer in this field Ken knows more than anyone what it is to be a reluctant innovator. This is an inspiring book introducing us to those who have changed their worlds with their simple, elegant ideas.’

Chris Locke, Managing Director, GSMA Mobile for Development

‘As a social entrepreneur, educator and facilitator I believe these times call for innovation from all points in the spectrum, especially those of us that are unreasonable enough to hope we can make change in the world. Thank you for this book – it is just what the field needs!’

Rebecca Saltman, Disruptive Innovator and Educator,
A Foot in the Door Productions

‘A fascinating and insightful work. This book will serve as a guide and source of inspiration for all who seek to change the world.’

Terry Garcia, Executive Vice President of Mission Programs,
National Geographic

‘Why would anyone trade a life of comfort for the muddy boots of change-making? Ken Banks shows how global challenges trouble the waters of our conscience, and compel a new generation of innovators to action.’

Andrew Zolli, Executive Director and Curator, PopTech

‘The world’s most challenging problems are being taken on by people motivated by their personal passions, informed by their deep understanding of local realities and shaped by their frustration with inadequate solutions. Ken Banks and the other remarkable innovators here offer inspiration and insight into building practical solutions while calling into question established wisdom about social innovation. This is a must-read book for anyone who wants to solve problems with global implications through local knowledge and involvement.’

Ethan Zuckerman, Director of the Center for Civic Media, MIT

Despite the tens of billions spent each year in international aid, some of the most promising and exciting social innovations and businesses have come about by chance. Many of the people behind them did not consciously set out to solve anything, but they did. *Welcome to the world of the reluctant innovator.*

'This important, timely book gives the reader an invaluable insight into the workings of the world of social entrepreneurship. It is a must-read for students, practitioners, policymakers and anyone with a passing interest in how to work for the greater good.'

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Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC Technology Correspondent



Ken Banks, founder of kiwanja.net, devotes himself to the application of mobile technology for positive social and environmental change in the developing world. He is a PopTech Fellow, a Tech Awards Laureate, an Ashoka Fellow and a National Geographic Emerging Explorer, and has been internationally recognised for his technology-based work.



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