



**Bill Drayton**  
Ashoka: Innovators for the Public



Ashoka updates the familiar adage that teaching a man to fish is better than giving him a fish. “We say: ‘Aim higher. Transform the entire fishing industry – make it fairer and better for everyone!’ The key is to find individuals in every corner of the world with the insight and the entrepreneurial drive to apply those skills that were once the exclusive domain of business to the design of solutions to society’s problems. People ask: ‘What’s the ultimate vision?’ Simply this: a world in which everyone is a changemaker.”

### My Turning Point



One summer during college I drove to India to walk with Vinoba Bhave, one of Gandhi’s closest disciples. Armed with the principles of non-violence, Bhave asked thousands of villagers to transfer land titles to a cooperative to support the landless and untouchables. Watching him, I saw the very heart of Gandhi’s principles: effective action based on ethics informed by empathy not rules. I realized that great leaders create great change by paying utterly close attention to detail, because it is the details that add up to success and impact. Those lessons about life, change and leadership still resonate.

### My Creation

My creation Ashoka was founded in 1980. Our organization is a collaboration with 2,000 Ashoka Fellows working in 70 countries, all-volunteer board members and advisors, 300 employees in 35 offices worldwide, 500 nominators searching



for social innovators able to transform their fields, and countless volunteers who sustain every aspect of Ashoka’s work. From the outset, Ashoka’s signature product – social entrepreneurship – has represented the key to generating innovation and competition in the citizen sector, matching and often exceeding the historical breakthroughs of business in production and distribution.

### My Tips

- 🔑 Listen. It’s the fastest, most efficient, and empathetic track to learning, knowledge, and know-how, strong relationships, and success worth having.
- 🔑 Engage Youth. If young people extensively practice being powerful, including the underlying skills of applied empathy, teamwork, and leadership, they will become changemakers as adults.



🔑 Imagine. There are connections, associations, partnerships, and common ground that you probably have not begun to imagine, much less explore. They are all crucial to success.

🔑 Generate Network Effect. Building a community of changemakers around principles and good practices ensures far greater impact in solving the problems we all face.

🔑 Play. Believe Plato’s words: you learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. Implement that principle to inspire initiative, risk-taking and high spirits.

### My Wish List

- ♥ Ashoka needs 120 new staff members for responsible positions all over the world if the organization is to meet demand. We need nominators in every country to be the organization’s eyes and ears, identifying potential staff and Fellow candidates.
- ♥ We want opportunities with major media outlets to put our social change ‘products’ on display. For example, film

producers, distributors, or exhibitors could develop five-minute film shorts on social entrepreneurs' lives and work to screen at least once before every showing of the main feature.

♥ The entire social sector needs financial institutions and financial products that can serve its particular needs for credit and borrowing that are entirely different from those in the business sector.

♥ The print and broadcast media reporters could scoop the greatest story of their generation if they were to assign writers



and photographers to cover Ashoka and the entire citizen sector on regularly assigned 'social change' beats, uncovering the news and developments that are occurring daily. This is the storytelling that will change the world.

♥ Nine or ten cities around the world to adopt David Bornstein's book 'How to Change the World' as the citywide reading book for all citizens young and old alike, facilitated by library and school discussion groups, film and media events, social-business forums, young entrepreneurship clubs, and more.

## My Inspirations

My parents and their values. Gandhi, his life, ideas, and methods. Adventure, wilderness, excellence, hopefulness, fairness, gentleness, music, humor, commitment, innovation, attention, curiosity, friendship, history, love, the Ashoka Family.

## My Legacy

Universal understanding of Ashoka's vision of 'Everyone a changemaker', and of the irresistible power of innovative ideas in the hands of social entrepreneurs to solve complex, entrenched problems.

## My Links

[www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org)

[www.changemakers.net](http://www.changemakers.net)

[www.youthventure.org](http://www.youthventure.org)

[www.getamericaworking.org](http://www.getamericaworking.org)

[www.communitygreens.org](http://www.communitygreens.org)

[www.dvd.ashoka.org](http://www.dvd.ashoka.org) (there are two further videos in this series, searchable in Google video)

[video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3321985461393888643&q=](https://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3321985461393888643&q=bill+drayton)  
[bill+drayton](http://bill+drayton)

[www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/051031/31drayton.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/051031/31drayton.htm)

[www.ashoka.org/home/innovations.pdf](http://www.ashoka.org/home/innovations.pdf)

[www.howtochangetheworld.org](http://www.howtochangetheworld.org)