

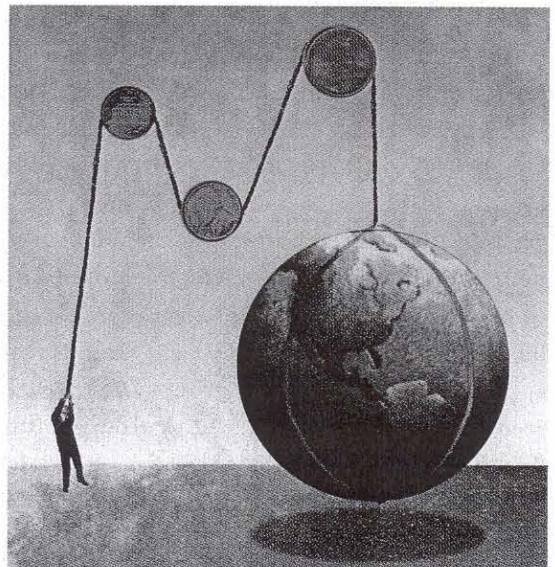
THE CHANGE MASTERS

BY CHERYL DAHLE

HOW DO YOU SOLVE THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS? WITH CREATIVITY, PASSION, AND THE SAVVY TO TURN SCARCE RESOURCES INTO BIG IMPACT. MEET THE WINNERS OF THE 2005 FAST COMPANY/MONITOR GROUP SOCIAL CAPITALIST AWARDS.

How long has it been since you were surprised by *hope*? As you browsed the morning newspaper, when did you last feel a sense that the world was becoming a better place? That the forces propelling the future were on the right track? That the *power of imagination* was serving those with healing ideals rather than those with darker agendas? Overwhelmed as we are by images of bad news, it is easy to tacitly *embrace* the notion that humanity's only possible trajectory is downward. ■ But that simply is not true. The proof lies in your hands, in the pages that follow. Here you'll read about the winners of FAST COMPANY and Monitor Group's second annual Social Capitalist Awards: 25 organizations that are using creativity, business smarts, and hard work to invent a brighter future. These *social entrepreneurs* are more than architects of change with grand, skyscraper-scale visions; they are general contractors of getting stuff done. They will surprise you with hope and delight you with results. ■

"Whatever our professions, we are all citizens, and we all care deeply about unmet social needs—which is precisely where social entrepreneurs make their essential contribution," says Mark Fuller, Monitor's chairman. "But good intentions are not enough. To put that vision into action, their efforts must meet the harsh test of performance, and their labors the *demanding standards* of accountability." ■ Consider the work of Endeavor Global, a New York-based nonprofit that seeds economic growth in developing countries by supporting the work of large-scale entrepreneurs. In 2002, 97 companies funded by Endeavor



has created a variety of innovative approaches to workforce development, mostly in East Palo Alto. He ran a youth-employment program and a staffing company before Springboard Forward.

HOW: The point is to create opportunities for individuals while meeting employers' needs. Partners such as Home Depot and Stanford get higher employee-retention rates; their workers build skills and, ultimately, wealth. Once the benefit to companies is widely recognized, Springboard Forward envisions competition among businesses for the better-trained workers it produces.

DATA POINT: Within six months of joining the program, 50% of participants are promoted and/or given more responsibility. —CDP

TransFair USA

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
www.transfairusa.org

SOCIAL IMPACT: A+
ASPIRATION: A-
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A
INNOVATION: A-
SUSTAINABILITY: B+

WHAT: Fair-trade advocate. Allows farmers in developing countries to sell crops for a livable wage by giving them collective power.

WHO: After graduating from Yale, CEO Paul Rice, now 44, shipped off to work with rural Nicaraguan coffee cooperatives. "I witnessed a cycle of poverty where farming communities were forced to sell their products below the costs of production because they couldn't access market information."

HOW: TransFair USA has emerged as a powerful consumer brand in its own right. This matters because companies like Procter & Gamble, Starbucks, Wild Oats Markets, and Dunkin' Donuts want a "Good Housekeeping" seal on their sustainable products that customers will recognize and respect.

DATA POINT: TransFair USA has helped channel \$45.6 million in income to family farmers in 26 countries that otherwise would have been lost to middlemen. —RU

Vera Institute of Justice

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
www.vera.org

SOCIAL IMPACT: A-
ASPIRATION: B+
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A-
INNOVATION: B
SUSTAINABILITY: B

WHAT: Legal conglomerate. Vera works toward justice by incubating programs to serve those entangled in the justice system.

WHO: Former public defender Christopher Stone, 48, joined Vera in 1986 for what he thought was an 18-month stint. Instead, he stayed 18 years.

HOW: Vera faces a unique dilemma: "A public defender's measure of success is how many acquittals he gets," Stone observes. "But the same government is also funding the prosecutor's office, whose measure of success is convictions. They're a zero-sum set of indicators." The folks at Vera look for new yardsticks that help everybody win—for example, measuring the relationship between crime rates, prosecutions, convictions, and rehabilitation sentences. Then they help governments create new processes to make these indicators a reality.
DATA POINT: Since 1967, Vera has spun off 15 nonprofit groups to serve crime victims and help former prisoners get jobs. —AO

Witness

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
www.witness.org

SOCIAL IMPACT: B+
ASPIRATION: B+
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: B+
INNOVATION: B
SUSTAINABILITY: B+

WHAT: Video reformer. The brainchild of rocker Peter Gabriel, Witness helps activists capture human-rights abuses on camera.

WHO: In 1995, Gillian Caldwell, now 38, was in Russia investigating an organized-crime ring peddling both Siberian tiger pelts and women. Witness gave her a video

THE RISING STARS

These relatively young groups didn't make our Top 25—but they have enormous potential.

Digital Divide Data

NEW YORK, NEW YORK • www.digitaldividedata.org

Technology training. Aims to advance poor people in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos through sustainable technology-related enterprises. Provides training and employment on data entry and digitization projects, plus services including medical care and job counseling.

Girls for a Change

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA • www.girlsforachange.org

Women's advocacy. Mobilizes professional women to help urban middle- and high-school girls become change agents and problem solvers. Each year, 1,000 girls participate in teams to identify and take action on community needs, advised by adult women.