

FOREWORD BY **IDRIS** AND **SABRINA ELBA**

**MICHAEL SHELDRIK**

**FROM**  
**IDEAS**  
**TO**  
**IMPACT**

A PLAYBOOK FOR  
INFLUENCING AND IMPLEMENTING  
**CHANGE** IN A **DIVIDED WORLD**

**WILEY**



## **Praise for *From Ideas to Impact***

“In these challenging times when politicians are failing to provide leadership, when multilateral peace and security institutions are wrecked from within, *From Ideas to Impact* is timely and offers pathways to solutions, solidarity, and partnership from ground up, from periphery to center.”

**—Jose Ramos-Horta**

*President of Timor Leste and  
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate*

“Mick Sheldrick was with us at the beginning as we shaped the Bridgetown Initiative. In the face of unprecedented challenges, his book bridges idealism with essential pragmatism and outlines how everyone can participate urgently in the crucial task of acting today to save tomorrow. A must-read for those ready to turn solidarity into impactful action.”

**—Mia Mottley**

*Prime Minister of Barbados and Co-Chair  
of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocates*

“Democracy requires committed citizens who take action and work for what they believe in . . . Mick has made an impact on many lives through his work combating climate change, giving more children access to education and achieving the end of extreme poverty. He has also inspired thousands of others to drive the change they seek.”

**—Erna Solberg**

*former Prime Minister of Norway (2013–2021)*

“I know Mick Sheldrick well as we are both board members of the Ban Ki-moon Centre, and I admire his manifold activities in the field of sustainable development, education, and information. In addition, he is an excellent organizer. In a world testing the resilience of institutions like the United Nations, Mick Sheldrick masterfully unveils

their enduring impact on our daily lives notwithstanding geopolitical tensions. With flair, he distills compelling insights, guiding readers to unearth common ground in our turbulent era. This is a book for the times: sharp and incisive.”

—**Dr. Heinz Fischer**

*former President of Austria (2004–2016)*

“Get ready for a must-read! Michael Sheldrick shares the story of the inspiring South African advocates who fearlessly catapulted period poverty and girls’ education to the political stratosphere. This timely book serves up practical lessons for anyone seeking to make a real difference.”

—**Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**

*former Deputy President of South Africa and  
former head of UN Women*

“Drawing lessons from our work together with former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, this book offers actionable steps to make a difference and drive social impact. It brings the sustainable development objectives at the heart of the global community where each citizen has a role to play for the planet, prosperity, and people.”

—**Jean Todt and Michelle Yeoh**

*UN Special Envoy for Road Safety, and Oscar-winning  
actress and UN Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador*

“This book postulates bringing civility back to society through consistent, ethical action, and by appealing to our shared hopes over fears, thereby, equipping policy entrepreneurs to overcome division and create a more just world for all.”

—**Tony Tersigni**

*EdD, FACHE, Executive Chair of Ascension Capital*

“To create the world we owe future generations, we need to think differently and act now. And yet most people, including leaders, succumb to the prevailing sense of powerlessness and apathy. Mick’s book *From Ideas to Impact* is a clarion call to action. He provides an

easy-to-read, inspiring guide on how we can all lead change, and accelerate progress to a greener, more equitable future.”

—**Simon Mulcahy**

*President, TIME*

“Behind the glitz of their concerts and festivals, Mick Sheldrick and the Global Citizen community have built an impressive campaigning model based on popular engagement, strategic storytelling, and coalition building. Aspiring changemakers the world over have much learn from their example.”

—**Mark Malloch-Brown**

*President of the Open Society Foundation and  
former Deputy Secretary-General of the UN*

“Michael Sheldrick brings a new take to the struggle to move beyond no longer competitive fossil fuels and onto cheaper, cleaner renewables from the outlier in the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ world. But his scope is far broader—how do you make progressive policy in only partially progressive societies, where private individualism still has a deep hold? And his argument should remind us all that we need to keep tethered in the unique past that shapes every policy struggle worth fighting.”

—**Carl Pope**

*senior climate advisor to former New York City  
Mayor Michael Bloomberg and co-author of  
New York Times bestseller Climate of Hope*

“Michael leads by example, inspiring everyone he meets including prime ministers, presidents, philanthropists, and rock stars, with his clear goals and strength of purpose. And in the book, Michael insists that what he has done others can do. . . . At a time of global polycrisis, Michael gives us more than reasons to be hopeful; he actually tells us how to go about effecting meaningful change in our world.”

—**Melissa Parke**

*former Minister, Australian Government and Executive Director,  
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*

“In his new book *From Ideas to Impact: A Playbook for Influencing and Implementing Change in a Divided World*, Michael Sheldrick provides an inspiring road map for global citizens seeking to make an impact. Michael’s book gives hope to those who are frustrated with the growing challenges faced by social entrepreneurs, urging them to master the art of policy entrepreneurship. *From Ideas to Impact* is a valuable guide for those ready to bridge the gap between great ideas and policy impact, inspiring action for a better collective future.”

—**Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede**

*Nigerian investor and philanthropist*

“In a world facing immense challenges, it can feel impossible to affect policy but Michael breaks things down, gives compelling examples, and empowers us all to do what we can in our own spheres of influence. He should know, he’s been doing it for over 15 years as a co-founder of Global Citizen.”

—**Dr. Márcia Balisciano**

*Director of Benjamin Franklin House  
and Chief Sustainability Officer, RELX*

“Michael Sheldrick challenges us to go beyond the rhetoric of empty promises and the ubiquitous calls to action. *From Ideas to Impact* is a must-read for current and aspiring development leaders and practitioners.”

—**Glenn Denning**

*Professor of Professional Practice at Columbia  
University’s School of International and Public Affairs and  
author of Universal Food Security*

“It is very rare you come across a book, which has all the hallmarks of becoming the standard reference for its industry, in this case civil society organizations. Mick Sheldrick, cofounder of Global Citizen, interlaces global climate politics, organizational playbook ingenuity,

and personal ‘war story’ observations in a writing style as if you were in the room. A book to cherish and an act hard to follow.”

—**Frank Van Gansbeke**

*executive scholar in residence at Middlebury College*

“Coming up with ideas is easy but making an impactful difference is hard. In *From Ideas to Impact*, Mick Sheldrick not only provides a road map for the journey to transformational change but the book also serves as an instruction manual for making it happen. As co-founder of Global Citizen for over a decade, Mick has catalyzed civic actions and policy advocacy to bring about collective impact. In these pages he shares inspirational stories and provides examples of how to accelerate global social impact by driving systemic policy changes. I’m a better leader because of Mick’s wisdom. This book allows Mick’s wisdom to be shared with the world. Read. Learn. Act!”

—**C.D. Glin**

*President, PepsiCo Foundation and  
Global Head of Social Impact, PepsiCo Inc.*

“Real power comes from movement building that gets citizens involved in diverse forms of personal action at massive societal scales. We grow bold leaders and lasting action from the roots. No organization has done this better than Global Citizen, and Mick Sheldrick’s *From Ideas to Impact* shares the secret sauce behind these efforts and insightful curation of other changemaking we all can learn from.”

—**Jad Daley**

*President and CEO of American Forests*

“Michael Sheldrick charts a course through some of the most challenging issues of our time. . . He illuminates successful efforts in translating seemingly abstract concepts, such as ‘just transition,’ into impactful policy changes that enhance people’s lives and help advance social justice.”

—**Gilbert F. Hougbo**

*Director-General of the International Labour Organization*

“*From Ideas to Impact* outlines practical steps to influence policy, emphasizing that impactful leaders are cultivated, trained, equipped, and empowered. Philanthropies can support policy entrepreneurs if they are willing to rewrite their playbook and embrace a new era of effective, sustainable change.”

—**Dan Pallotta**

*entrepreneur and author of Uncharitable:*

*How Restraints on Nonprofits Undermine Their Potential*

“This very timely book has practical advice for those who are distressed about the way the world is going and want to know how to help do something about it. This book reflects knowledge and understanding of working through extraordinary achievements in international conflicts, and is a must-read.”

—**Dr Sue Boyd AM**

*former Australian diplomat*

“A world in which yesterday’s playbook of big-tent consensus building no longer works. Thankfully, Michael draws on his deep experience and that of others to lay out how to make positive change happen. This kind of thinking is needed more than ever.”

—**David McNair**

*Executive Director at ONE.org,*

*co-founded by Bono*

“Parts of the world are literally on fire, while the news media reports on political and economic elites generating more problems than solutions. . . . *From Ideas to Impact* describes what has worked, what has not, and why in order to get past the cynicism that could otherwise prove ruinous. As a leading global changemaker himself, Sheldrick is exactly the right messenger for this crucial message.”

—**Evan Lieberman**

*Total Professor of Political Science and Contemporary*

*Africa and Director of the Center for International Studies at the MIT*

“This inspiring book by Mick Sheldrick reminds us not only to have faith in the power of idealism and collaboration but also provides a super useful toolbox for civil societies across the world to achieve game-changing results in their work even as the odds are stacked against them.”

—**Dino Patti Djalal**

*former Ambassador of Indonesia to the US and  
founder of the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia*

“A highly readable and accessible study of the role of advocacy in bringing about fundamental change in our societies and achieving global public goods. Strategic thinkers, policymakers, activists, and philanthropists will all benefit from this lucid and practical guide to an increasingly important dimension of today’s world.”

—**David Donoghue**

*former Permanent Representative of Ireland to the  
UN and Co-Facilitator of SDG 2030 Agenda*



**FROM  
IDEAS  
TO  
IMPACT**



FOREWORD BY **IDRIS** AND **SABRINA ELBA**

**MICHAEL SHELDRIK**

**FROM  
IDEAS  
TO  
IMPACT**

**A PLAYBOOK FOR  
INFLUENCING AND IMPLEMENTING  
CHANGE IN A DIVIDED WORLD**

**WILEY**

Copyright © 2024 by Michael Sheldrick. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.  
Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 750-4470, or on the web at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permission>.

Trademarks: Wiley and the Wiley logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:***

ISBN 9781394202348 (Cloth)

ISBN 9781394202393 (ePub)

ISBN 9781394202409 (ePDF)

Cover Design and Image: Wiley

*For my daughter, Miki Grace Yun Sheldrick, whose generation  
our actions will shape.*

*And to Grandma Joyce Grace, who has always advised to focus  
on the present, and not to worry about things we cannot change.  
Thank you, Grandma.*



# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>		<i>xvii</i>
<i>Prologue</i>		<i>xxi</i>
	Introduction: Harbingers of Hope	1
<b>PART 1</b>	<b>An Eight-Step Playbook to Master Policy Entrepreneurship</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	The Visionary: Setting the Foundation for Change	11
<b>Chapter 2</b>	The Diplomat: Catalyzing Impact through Pragmatism	45
<b>Chapter 3</b>	The Implementer: Enforcing Accountability and Follow-Through	65
<b>PART 2</b>	<b>Success Stories of Policy Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	Advancing Access: Equal Education for All	77
<b>Chapter 5</b>	Empowering a Community: Just Transition beyond Coal	101

<b>Chapter 6</b>	Building Bridges: Small and Mighty in a Warming World	127
<b>Chapter 7</b>	Finding One World: Lessons in Collective Action	153
	Conclusion: Being Part of the Solution in a World on Fire	179
	<i>Epilogue</i>	197
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	199
	<i>Annex: Summary Eight Steps for Policy Entrepreneurship</i>	205
	<i>Endnotes</i>	211
	<i>References</i>	257
	<i>Index</i>	265

# Foreword

We have known Mick for more than four years now, and to say he's had an impact on our lives is an understatement. We met on a visit to Sierra Leone with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), looking at the effects of Ebola on rural people and farmers. We instantly hit it off. We remember thinking despite how intense, emotional, and humid the visit was, Mick always had a smile and a sense of hope. A kind of glass-half-full guy. We welcomed this, but it shouldn't be any surprise that an Aussie, a Brit, and a Canadian are getting along.

When writing this foreword, we thought about how we would introduce Mick to one of our close friends. As Sabrina puts it: "Mick, over the years, has taught me almost everything I know about advocacy. I sometimes wondered if he would become impatient with all my questions and curiosity over the years, but he's never given me the inclination that he might. Instead, he's always there for you, sharing the wealth of knowledge he has accumulated throughout his career without any second thought. He's as generous with his mind as he is with his heart, always doing the good work, making personal sacrifices with the support of his beautiful wife Wendy (Xinyi). One of the biggest lessons Mick taught me about advocacy is just showing up is half the work, and this stuck with me because Mick, of course, always shows up."

Mick gets it—policy isn’t just a set of distant rules and regulations; it’s about changing lives. In Sierra Leone, we felt this truth deeply. We met an incredible woman named Isatu, who was raising four children while trying to keep the family farm going. When Ebola struck, she shared a heartbreaking story—her husband and everyone else left as markets closed, and the country became isolated.

In that crisis, IFAD stood by Isatu’s side—the one organization that remained when all else crumbled. IFAD became her last hope, ensuring her children could still attend school.

This encounter fueled our determination to help IFAD in any way possible. But the need is overwhelming, and we realized that relying solely on charitable donations wouldn’t be enough to tackle the immense challenges at hand.

Through Mick, the Global Citizen team, and IFAD, we have seen the power of influencing big policy change up close. Imagine this: it’s January 2021, and we are all on a Zoom call with French President Emmanuel Macron amid the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic—a situation eerily reminiscent of the challenges those farmers in Sierra Leone faced during their Ebola outbreak. Markets had shut down, leaving many poor farmers and communities isolated. In the midst of this call, something extraordinary unfolded. President Emmanuel Macron’s commitment would change lives. He pledged to increase France’s support for IFAD by tens of millions of euros. This wasn’t just an impromptu promise; it was the result of persistent advocacy, a blend of behind-the-scenes efforts, public pressure, and citizen action—a true testament to the power of making our voices heard. But we didn’t stop there.

Fast-forward two years to the 2023 Global Citizen Festival in New York, and Macron stepped up his support even more. He pledged a groundbreaking \$150 million—the largest ever—to IFAD. This historic investment is set to help empower 100 million farmers in some of the world’s poorest rural communities.

In the end, effective policy is all about making things better at their core. It’s about justice, meeting basic needs, and being there when disaster strikes. Good policy guarantees there is always

someone ready to stay behind and help. If you want to make a difference, advocating for these meaningful policies is one of the most powerful ways to help.

In this book, Mick lays out a guide, encouraging everyday heroes with bright ideas to drive the change they seek. The world is evolving, driven by science, technology, and communal wisdom. Today, even if we don't always realize it, more of us can contribute to addressing our most pressing challenges than ever before. We don't have to stay on the sidelines; we can influence decisions at the highest levels of power. This book unveils eight powerful ways to do just that.

Mick argues that a better world is possible, but it requires action from both citizens and leaders. "We" are our last best hope.

Yes, the world is in chaos, and we can't ignore it. As we write this, 122 million more people are struggling to find food than in 2019 [1]. One in ten people goes to bed not knowing where their next meal will come from. Dire predictions about the consequences of runaway climate change confront us daily. The reverberations of past injustices and traumas give rise to fresh conflicts. History casts its long shadow over our current moment.

But in a world that sometimes feels adrift, we find in Mick's teachings a lighthouse. The fight for progress is ours to lead, and now, more than ever, we have the power to act. What can be done, must be done. By embracing the wisdom in these pages, we can rekindle trust in our institutions and offer a beacon of hope to those searching for it. Because, in the end, the most potent antidote to disillusionment is not just to dream of action but to live it.

Idris Elba

Actor, Artist, and Philanthropist

Sabrina Dhowre Elba

Advocate, Entrepreneur, and Philanthropist



# Prologue

“It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.”

—Gandalf the Wizard, J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

Have you ever wondered how to bring about meaningful change in today’s divided world, especially when tempting alternatives for validation exist? In today’s social media–driven era, seeking affirmation from like-minded individuals through quick posts is easy. It is easier to opt for simplistic, ideologically pure solutions than it is to embrace practical but imperfect ideas when facing complex problems. And it can feel more satisfying to our moral consciousness to reject compromise outright than to find common ground. However, this pursuit of the instant dopamine boost that comes from feeling “right, righteous, certain, and safe” hinders meaningful change. It may even cause more significant harm in the long run [1].

Consider these scenarios:

- Tragic events spark social media solidarity, only to return to business as usual after the fact, even among those who criticize others who didn’t post in solidarity.
- Advocates of genetically-enriched Golden Rice face criticism for promoting genetic engineering despite its potential to

address vitamin deficiencies in regions plagued by malnutrition. This is so even as many of the foods we consume are genetically modified [2].

- Affluent nations renege on climate aid promises while emerging economies respond with, “F\*\*\* you, I won’t take any action to reduce our emissions then”.<sup>1</sup> The impasse, if unbroken, dooms us all to collective environmental catastrophe.
- Politicians in wealthy nations call for a universal end to fossil fuel production [3]. Meanwhile, poorer countries question how to prosper if their natural resources are not exploited further, having never had the same opportunity to grow rich from such output [4].
- Coal workers share concerns about climate change, yet they also worry about their families and livelihoods, feeling demonized and alienated [5].

Despite our divisions, however, there is hope. Worldwide, people from all walks of life demonstrate that systemic change is achievable and flourishing through united voices, cooperation, and solidarity—often hidden from view but undeniably present. Deforestation in the Amazon has fallen to its lowest levels in years [6]. For the first time, women are represented in every single parliament worldwide [7]. More than a century of research has finally culminated in the world’s first malaria vaccine [8].

Numerous studies indicate a shared belief in the power of working together to address our challenges [9–10]. A significant global population supports bold policy changes for the benefit of our planet and its inhabitants [11].

The challenge lies in the sense of powerlessness that is prevalent among too many everyday citizens and even our leaders [12]. When people lack agency they become susceptible to distractions to fill the void, such as policing one another’s social media posts. But it doesn’t have to be this way.

---

<sup>1</sup>Based on a conversation with an ambassador of a wealthy nation at the UN.

In this book, I will demonstrate how we can unite relevant stakeholders, bridge differences, and contribute to implementing the policies needed to address our shared challenges together. By the time you finish reading, you will be able to identify *how* you can contribute uniquely to the policy process and understand how to transform well-meaning intentions into positive impact.

With more of us ready and able to support policy change, we have the potential to craft fresh impact narratives that can inspire broader change far beyond our initial contributions. After all, a single compelling story of change can ignite countless other tales of success, nurturing even greater hope. It all starts with us. As Eleanor Roosevelt once wisely advised, “The way to begin is to begin.” So let’s get started.



# Introduction: Harbingers of Hope

In 1750, Benjamin Franklin wrote to a colleague, asserting, “Nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue.”<sup>1</sup> He underscored that leaders possessing these qualities were more vital to a nation’s strength than wealth or arms, which could lead to ruin when managed by ignorance and wickedness. He concluded by recognizing the transformative impact a wise leader could wield, even in some cases single-handedly saving entire cities from destruction.

Fast-forward to today, and we find ourselves in dire need of such wisdom and virtue, particularly regarding effective policy implementation. We grapple with widespread misinformation online, unfulfilled political promises, corporate interests conflicting with the public good, and policies that often seem to deviate from their intended impact. Agreed on in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the United Nations (UN) 17-point plan to end extreme poverty, mitigate inequality, and address climate change by 2030—have only achieved 12% of their targets [1]. Trust and solidarity have reached alarming lows when we need them more than ever to address shared challenges such as climate change, political conflicts, and economic disparities.

---

<sup>1</sup>From Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Johnson, August 23, 1750. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The heartening news, however, is that despite the negative headlines often prevalent in the media, studies also reveal that a significant number of people worldwide consistently express a desire for global solidarity, identify as global citizens, and still believe in the potential of our institutions to address pressing global issues [2–4]. They believe this even as a vast gulf exists between what they hope for and the present reality—as we face a crisis of implementation.

So long as there are individuals willing to work together to find solutions, we have yet to reach a point of no return. However, I don't need to remind you of this. If you have chosen to read this book, it is likely because you may already believe in an idea or potential solution to one of our many shared challenges. Perhaps you are searching for guidance on how to implement it.

This book does not give guidance on all possible ways to create change. Many other resources focus on topics such as managing philanthropic programs, improving individual giving, and changing lousy consumption habits—all of which I support.<sup>2</sup> However, my specific focus here is on how to create *policy* change. Why? Because tackling the systemic challenges we face requires systemic solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic made this abundantly clear concerning action on climate change. Our collective emissions temporarily decreased by 4.6% in 2020 with the restricted mobility that came during global lockdowns [5]. This is far from the 50% reduction in our collective carbon footprint that we must achieve by 2030 to avoid catastrophic climate change. One-off changes in individual behaviors simply aren't sustainable in and of themselves.<sup>3</sup> To affect our environment meaningfully, we must implement policies that significantly reduce carbon emissions from energy, transportation, and manufacturing. This is no easy feat, but engaging in the policymaking process is worth it if

---

<sup>2</sup>One example of something we can all do is have conversations on climate change with our networks. See Hayhoe 2020.

<sup>3</sup>Research suggests that individual and family-level actions could contribute to 14% of the emissions reductions needed to achieve net zero by 2050, while collective action has the potential to account for up to 64% of the required reductions. See Bhowmik et al. 2020; Chater and Loewenstein 2023; Maslin 2021.

there's a chance of creating the scale of change we desperately need. In short, focus on policy change if you truly want to change the world. This playbook is designed to help dramatically increase your odds of success.

By “policy,” I mean a specific course of action or set of rules, guidelines, standards, or principles formulated by a government, organization, or institution like the UN. Policies can address a wide range of issues, including hunger, poverty, food waste, gender equity, conflict, environmental concerns, and the promotion of equitable access to resources such as water. They can serve as incentives, such as research and development subsidies, or punitive measures, such as regulations to combat corporate greenwashing.

And when I refer to “policy implementation,” I mean putting these policies into action, from enacting laws to negotiating international agreements to allocating a state's resources. In other words, this is about transforming a policy idea or proposal into an impact that improves people's lives.

This book does not comprehensively list every policy idea and prescription for addressing our significant challenges. Many great minds in academia and think tanks have already generated such proposals [6]. The real question I grapple with is *how* to turn such ideas into a reality—a question easier asked than answered.

Steve Jobs once observed: “There's a tremendous amount of craftsmanship in between a great idea and a great product.” The same concept applies to policy implementation—a complex process fraught with obstacles. Nevertheless, with the turbulent weather of today's challenges, we desperately need more individuals equipped with the know-how to navigate and land the plane. We need policy entrepreneurs [7-8].<sup>4</sup>

This book is designed as a practical guide for tackling shared challenges and driving policy change. Many of us may perceive international and national arenas as distant and challenging to

---

<sup>4</sup>Political scientist John Kingdon is largely credited as one of the first to coin the term “policy entrepreneur.”

engage with. However, my experiences and observations of policy entrepreneurship in action have allowed me to witness firsthand the impact individuals can make.

The first part of this book provides actionable takeaways—a playbook for action drawn from the experiences of a diverse group of effective policy entrepreneurs. This includes presidents, prime ministers, cultural icons, corporate executives, and philanthropic leaders through to union representatives, musicians, grassroots advocates, and everyday citizens who have successfully implemented positive impacts in their communities.

Many of the principles of policy entrepreneurship outlined in this book align with leadership styles that people generally prefer and trust, such as the Visionary, the Diplomat, and the Implementer [9–10].<sup>5</sup> Such trust is crucial because policy implementation requires consensus building. The Visionary can rally people around clear and transformative goals. The Diplomat excels at building strong relationships and fostering collaboration among allies and stakeholders, even those they may disagree with. The Diplomat is also an open-minded innovator who excels at finding creative solutions and leveraging diverse networks of partners. The Implementer ensures our ideas translate into tangible, powerful outcomes—changes we can touch, feel, and see, ultimately transforming lives.

The second part of this book delves into four stories that illustrate the principles and steps of policy entrepreneurship in action:

- 1. Individual activism:** We delve into how grassroots activists in South Africa leveraged the power of partnership to persuade their government to deliver on its promises to end “period poverty” and keep millions of girls in school.

---

<sup>5</sup>These leadership styles were inspired by those developed by Martijn Lambert at Glocalities. The Diplomat is a fusion of Lambert’s Connector and Networker styles. This simplified approach aligns with other descriptions of policy entrepreneurs in the field. Additionally, I introduced a fourth style, the Implementer, emphasizing accountability and follow-through as crucial for influential policy change. See Glocalities. 2022 and Kalil, T. 2017.