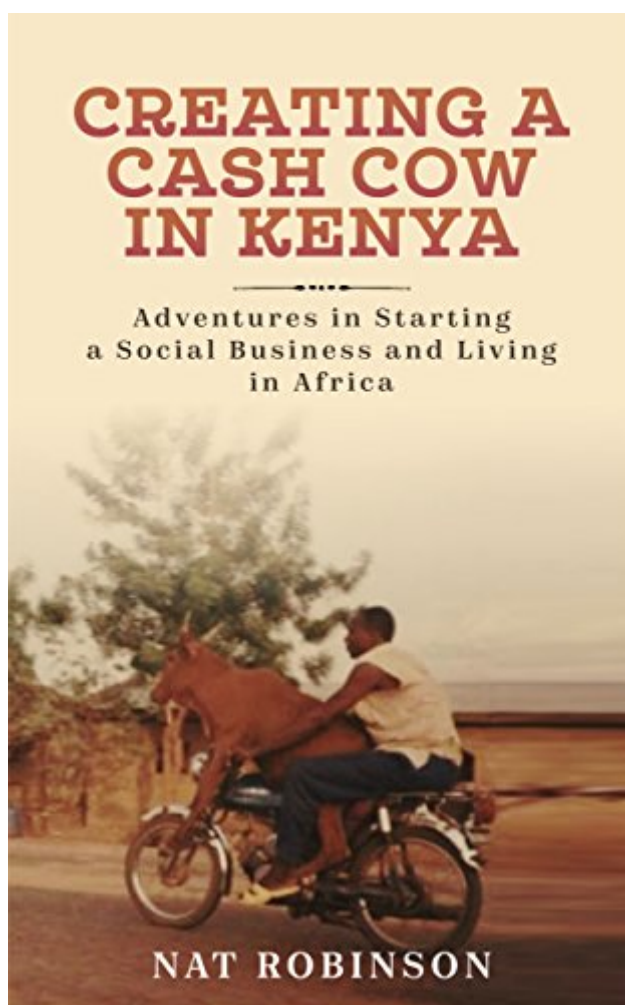


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Creating A Cash Cow In Kenya: Adventures In Starting A Social Business And Living In Africa



Synopsis

What started as an eight-month assignment turned into a six-year adventure and the creation of a social business to help Kenya's farmers lift themselves out of poverty. The social business, Juhudi Kilimo, provides microloans to enable smallholder farmers to buy productive assets, such as cows, tools and so on. Since its foundation in 2009, Juhudi Kilimo has provided over 50,000 loans worth \$30 million and financed the purchase of 23,100 cows by some of Kenya's poorest farmers. In its six years Juhudi managed to rack up an impressive list of international investors – The Rockefeller Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Acumen Fund, Soros Economic Development Fund, Grameen Foundation, Deutsche Bank and Kiva.org. The company also won a Charles Schwab Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award and part of CIO Magazine's top 100 list. The challenges faced by the company in its early years reveal a dark underbelly of investor greed, corruption and the deep multicultural misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts. The company was driven by a young entrepreneur from the US, who admits he had no idea what he was doing but learned along the way. The lessons he presents here can help guide those starting new ventures or trying to defy the odds with a new social business in East Africa. The business stories are intertwined with his adventures, racing camels, running from rhinos and much more.

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Customer Reviews

Disclaimer: I am a friend of Nat Robinson. I think this is the first book of the new genre about entrepreneurs who actually make an impact doing business in Kenya. So far the most similar books to this talk about how aid is broken. This one talks about entrepreneurship and even how social impact is broken. It was shocking to find out how Nat was treated by his supposedly social impact investors. I don't want to give away the suspense so I'll let you read the book and find out what I mean. The first few chapters were a bit slow, but pretty soon I couldn't put the book down on my plane ride. Some reviewers have said this book should be mandatory. I don't think it should be mandatory, but it is a fantastic story and inspiring. I don't think this book would help someone run a business in Africa any better, that can only come with personal experience. It's not prescriptive. It's descriptive. I don't think Nat left with all or any answers. It was more like there were more questions on questions upon questions.

A must-read tale about working and living in Africa. Robinson beautifully tells the story of what it truly means to start a social business in Kenya, encountering moments of success, impact, greed, corruption, and at times, hair-pulling frustration. He speaks of his experiences with the kind of candidness, humility and humor that will keep you turning the pages - hungry to know what happens next. Will Juhudi make it to the next phase? Will he get eaten by that rhino? The adventure never stops!

I co-founded a startup in Kenya in 2010 and ran into Nat and his colleagues many times over the years. Throughout that time, I never knew the ups and downs he was weathering -- he always projected calm and certainty. Having read this, I now see that Nat's experiences matched many of our own, and I now wish we'd spoken more over those years to swap notes. Nat artfully mixes stories of personal adventure with experiences and lessons that will resonate with any entrepreneur, especially those operating in emerging markets. Highly recommend this book. Thanks for sharing your story, Nat.

In a world where the do-gooders (impact investors and development organizations) are often in the spotlight claiming how much impact they have in developing and poor nations, Nat brilliantly (and sometimes jokingly) provides the viewpoint of the entrepreneur on the other end on his daily battle

to bring the business to commercial viability, raise money, hire and train people, and survive numerous hardships in the ground. It's a reality check, a wake-up call for a nascent industry to correct its course before they do more damage than good. Creating a Cash Cow in Kenya should be mandatory reading for anyone in the industry, or for those who want to be part of it one day.

"Creating a Cash Cow in Kenya" is a fun and entertaining book for anyone that loves travel and adventure. Within the first couple of chapters, I had to put the book down multiple times just to laugh about some story he told of his first few weeks in Kenya. It is also an informative book and a "must read" for anyone moving to Kenya or starting a social enterprise. Nat is surprisingly honest when talking about the highs and lows of raising money and managing people. Finally, it is an inspirational book as Nat describes taking a dream of running a microfinance company to help poor farmers in Africa - and he does just that!

This book is a real examination of the challenges involved in starting a successful socially-oriented business in a country like Kenya. Nat isn't afraid to share the details of contracts with investors, the names of employees who stole from his company, and the times he made mistakes as a leader. The book also shares positive lessons for creating a social business and many anecdotes that illustrate how special it is to live and work with Kenyans in their beautiful country. I would highly recommend it to anyone who wants to work in the social entrepreneurship field or start their own company.

A great read! The book is a well-told and engaging story of the 'nitty gritty' of starting a social business in Kenya. Nat accurately and succinctly describes the ups and downs of trying to create sustainable change for smallholder farmers, and dispels many myths about social enterprise along the way. He also vividly describes life as an expat in Nairobi, which is a large part of the experience (and the most fun one as well!). I think it's a must read for any entrepreneur, social or otherwise, trying to build something new from the ground up. Well done Nat!

Very funny and entertaining book about the journey of Juhudi Kilimo- from small startup, to attracting funding from big foundations like Rockefeller, Ford, Soros....and the drama and politics involved with that funding. The really funny anecdotes and side adventures as the author explores Kenya make the book interesting and tick along. And, the question about keeping the agency funded (and loans originating, and staff with jobs) keeps you wanting to turn the pages. Great book,

doesn't hold back, highly recommend!

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