

Personal Statement  
ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD 2014

## JULIA RUNGE GROWING HOPE

My project deals with social entrepreneurship, which is based on an utterly new form of economic thinking; it is not profit-oriented but prioritizes solving social problems. One woman who has made this kind of thinking her guiding philosophy is Chido Govera.

As an AIDS orphan in Zimbabwe, she learned at the age of seven how to use agricultural waste as a substrate for edible mushrooms and was able to secure an income to feed her family in this way. When the returns from selling mushrooms were sufficient to send her brother to school, Chido realized that she could and wished to achieve more. Today she has taught not only African orphans but many hundreds of people in poor regions throughout the world how to cultivate nutritious edible mushrooms, thus providing them with better lives. As she gained more experience, she was able to hone possible cultivation techniques (for example, using coffee grounds as a substrate) and inspire entrepreneurs throughout the world with her vision.

For us, the luxury of a consistent source of food (supermarkets, etc.) is as much an everyday experience as throwing away food. Garbage is simply garbage, and the awareness for a meaningful use of our resources has apparently been dulled. To us it may seem banal to produce mushrooms through by using old coffee grounds. For people like Chido, it is an opportunity to have a more secure life. These kinds of ideas and attitudes enable us to advance into a new era of using resources responsibly.

The concept of cultivating mushrooms on the basis of waste supplies like coffee grounds is an outstanding example of a creative and sustainability-oriented Entrepreneur 4.0. Whoever wishes to change the future must not be afraid to think in unconventional dimensions.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Julia Runge, 2013