

Sunpower's entrepreneurship development and technology transfer in developing countries

■ Introduction

Sunpower Corporation (Sunpower)¹ was established in 1976. Mr. Takuya Kawamura, the son of the founder is its president. Its business is to assist overseas business of other companies and the sale and export of recycled car parts and tires. The company also put weight on the aspect of social business. It has the headquarters in Yokohama and offices in Aomori, Akita, Morioka, Sendai, Fukushima, Yamagata, Niigata and is expanding in other countries. Presently, the company has Sunpower Senegal (100% subsidiary), Grameen Japan Sunpower Auto (joint venture with Grameen), Sunpower Auto Botswana, and Sunpower Social Business Fund Botswana. The company intends to set up more companies in developing countries.

Mr. Kawamura was skeptical about capitalistic management style due to his years of working overseas and was impressed by *Creating the World without Poverty*², the book written by Professor Muhammad Yunus, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. (Professor Yunus will be covered in the next chapter.) The book made Mr. Kawamura involve himself in social business.

Sunpower places priority not on revenue and profit but on the number of employments of handicapped people with difficulty in getting jobs at ordinary companies. The creation of jobs for handicapped people may well be the reason of existence of the company. Since it is a company, aiming for revenue and profit is necessary, but they are not the final objective of the company. Sunpower's objective is to hire maximum number of people that cannot get a job elsewhere. Sunpower looks for people with handicap (intellectually and mentally), people that cannot get out from their homes, single mothers, people older than 65 years old, foreigners from developing countries, former prisoners, etc. As of 2021, 27 out of 50 employees (more than 50%) belong to such group of people. The rate is almost double that of two years ago. The target for 2022 is 60%. 2021 was the first year to hire a former prisoner. The company is planning to offer jobs to homeless people in 2022 in cooperation with local

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governments and a law firm. The target number of employment for people that cannot get a job is 200 in 2025, 1,000 in 2035, 10,000 in 2050.

Professor Yunus has a great influence on the management style of Mr. Kawamura. One such an example is Three Zeros³ (zero poverty, zero unemployment, zero carbon emission) proposed by Professor Yunus.

In 2018, Mr. Kawamura established Grameen Japan Sunpower Auto Limited (G Japan Sunpower Auto) in Bangladesh to handle the import and sales of auto parts and car repair as a joint venture with Professor Yunus. In order to achieve zero net carbon emission, G Japan Sunpower Auto will introduce skill to repair hybrid cars and EVs by transferring technology from Japan.

Sunpower is also providing employment opportunities for people with difficulty in getting jobs and trying to develop young entrepreneurs to achieve zero unemployment. Hiring people with handicap is one of the company's missions. They are aiming at becoming a social business that first go after those goals and then try to generate profit and secure enough salary for employees. To sustain this cycle, they repeatedly hire capable young people, such as, graduates of International University of Japan (IUJ) from developing countries, train them, let them work in Japan and support them set up businesses in their home countries. This way, they can create jobs in those countries and achieve "zero unemployment" and "zero poverty," goals dictated by Professor Yunus. They try to give opportunities to people regardless of their country of origin or if they have a handicap or not.

■ Professor Muhammad Yunus

Professor Muhammad Yunus⁴ was born in 1940 in Chittagong, Bangladesh. He is the founder of Grameen Bank and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. He got involved in poverty alleviation while he was a professor at Chittagong University when great famine in 1974 made him engage in social activity.⁵ He learned that some people in the village of Jobra, near Chittagong University, were unable to escape poverty only because they borrowed small amount of money from a money lender. The total amount that 42 villagers borrowed was about \$27. Professor Yunus paid the lender \$27 out of his pocket and that was the start. To loan small amount of money without any collateral, later to be called "micro credit" or "micro finance" was going to be popular all over the world. The "Grameen Bank" that Professor Yunus established in 1983 meant "Bank of the village" in Bengali. Grameen Bank grew up to become a national bank to provide

service to poor people in Bangladesh. It is notable that, of 8 million people who borrowed from the bank, 97% are women⁵. The bank is unique in other ways. The bank is owned by borrowers, and they choose 9 out of 13 board members. The bank is lending more than \$100 million to the poorest customers without collateral but astounding 98.96% of the borrowers made the repayment in time in 2016³. Grameen Bank now has more than 50 affiliate companies⁴.

■ Social Business

The objective of social business² is to create social benefit for the life of people that are involved. Social business means companies that work to solve various social problems such as poverty, healthcare, energy problems, etc., and not to generate profit. For example, providing nutritious food at extremely cheap price to poor and malnourished kids or to develop renewable energy system at the right cost and sell it to villages in rural areas.²

Social business, too, hires employees, creates goods and services and provides them to customers at appropriate prices. Its goal is solution of social problems, but it needs profit to achieve the goal. It does not depend on donations or subsidies from governments but try to cover cost and generate profit by providing goods and services. This is how social business differs from philanthropy or NPO. It is a business in all respects except that its final objective is not maximization of profit but “solution of social problems.”

According to Professor Yunus, there are two types⁵ of social business.

Type I is a business that focuses on the solution of social problem and aims for “no loss, no dividend.” The investors reinvest all profit to expansion or improvement of business. Sunpower and G Japan Sunpower Auto are Type I.

Type II is commercial company owned by poor people. When the profit is distributed to poor people, it is poverty alleviation and solution of social problem. The Grameen Bank of Professor Yunus is a social business of Type II.

7 Principles of Social Business⁵

Professor Yunus, together with Mr. Hans Reitz, the founder of Grameen Creative Lab⁸, proposed “7 principles of social business” and defined social business that he was involved. The principles represent basic characteristics of Type I social business. In

creating a joint venture with Professor Yunus, stockholders should observe the 7 principles. Of the 7th principle of “do it with joy,” Professor Yunus said that conventional business tended to keep distance with joy, but there was joy in social business.

1. Business objective will be to overcome poverty, education, health, technology access, and environment, which threaten people and society; not profit maximization.
2. Realization of financial and economic sustainability.
3. Investors get back their investment amount only. No dividend is given beyond investment money.
4. When investment amount is paid back, company profit stays with the company for expansion and improvement.
5. Be environmentally conscious.
6. Workforce gets market wage with better working conditions.
7. Do it with joy.

Three Zeros³

Recently, Professor Yunus is also proposing Three Zeros. Climate change and concentration of wealth are big issues for the society’s future. The two issues are also intertwined. Professor Yunus is aiming to achieve below three zeros with social business.

- Zero wealth concentration for ending poverty
- Zero unemployment by unleashing entrepreneurship in all
- Zero net carbon emission

■ Meeting with Professor Muhammad Yunus⁶

Mr. Kawamura learned about Professor Yunus by reading his book *Creating a World Without Poverty*² while he was working in the U. S. Mr. Kawamura was working in the U. S. auto industry and was seconded from an American company’s subsidiary in Japan to its headquarters in the U. S. It was when he was about 30 years old. The auto industry was in deep trouble and he observed the capitalism at its worst and the disconnection between happiness in life and success in academy, career and work. He read Professor Yunus’ book under such a situation and was strongly impressed about social business.

He definitely wanted to meet Professor Yunus.

Therefore, for him to get the opportunity to meet Professor Yunus in February 2017 was a dream come true. It so happened that one of Mr. Kawamura's friends was a businessman that knew someone close to Professor Yunus. He was able to meet Professor Yunus for one hour when the professor was coming to Japan. Mr. Kawamura enthusiastically talked about the business of Sunpower, that he was so much impressed by the professor's book, and that he wanted Sunpower to set up a joint venture in Bangladesh. Professor Yunus was interested in environmental issues and in recycle business of auto parts and proposed to do market research together with a staff of Grameen. The team of Mr. Kawamura and Grameen did the joint market survey in Bangladesh in May 2017. Grameen Communication did joint research with Kyushu University of Japan in the past and Mr. Kawamura, too, contacted the university and the research were done with all of them.

The market research revealed that it was hard to get the right auto parts in Bangladesh. There were many auto parts sold in the market but most parts were made in China or in other country than Japan, even though most cars running in Bangladesh were Japanese. The parts sold were labeled as genuine parts but in fact they were not. There were many customers that wanted to buy genuine parts to fix their cars in the right way. There were many repair shops and parts stores but they did not handle genuine parts from Japan. Only the labels claimed them to be genuine. This situation was not acceptable in terms of safety. The team concluded that there should be a company to handle genuine parts with the right quality and reported it to Professor Yunus. From there, things started to move fast and establishment of a joint venture between Sunpower and Grameen was decided.

Professor Yunus said, "I am often invited to Japan, and meet lots of different people on each occasion, so it is very difficult to remember where I met whom, and in what particular circumstance. However, in the case of Mr. Taku Kawamura, it was different... what emerged and caught my attention was the kind of leadership I saw from Kawamura san... I saw how he inspired a lot of very patient followers... I came to see that these people were earnest and serious about making a commitment... and I was very happy with this outcome." (See Appendix 2.)

■ G Japan Sunpower Auto

Background of Joint Venture Establishment

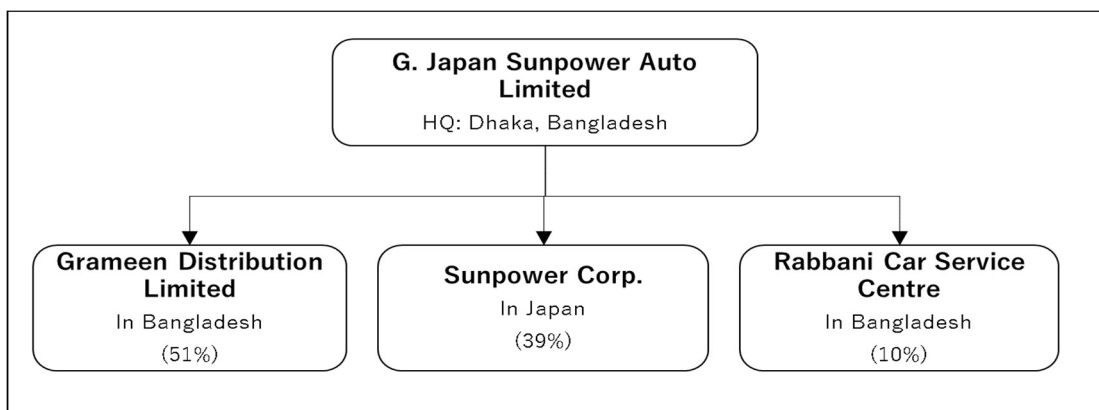
As the result of afore mentioned market research in Bangladesh, the Memorandum of Understanding about the joint venture was signed on the Day of Social Business in July 2017 in Dhaka. This was the day for Professor Yunus to invite people engaged in social business and United Nations to hold an international conference and the announcement of the joint venture was made on the occasion. The team of



Picture courtesy of G Japan Sunpower Auto

Grameen Distribution Ltd. visited Japan in August of the same year to observe the recycling process of auto parts. One year later in July 2018, G Japan Sunpower Auto was formally established as a social business company. The headquarters was located in Dhaka of Bangladesh with 51% of the shares owned by Grameen Distribution,⁷ 39% by Sunpower and 10% by Rabbani Car Service Centre. Grameen Distribution had factories of mobile phones and other products and experience of manufacturing. Sunpower had the technology and network in Japan. Rabbani had the skill and experience of operating a repair shop. The three companies utilized their different strengths and managed the company.

Figure1. Structure of G Japan Sunpower Auto



(Data from Sunpower and modified by the author)

Objective of the Business

The business objective of G Japan Sunpower Auto is development and improvement of auto parts market. There are many counterfeit parts sold as genuine parts. This company aims to make consumers able to tell the difference between real genuine parts

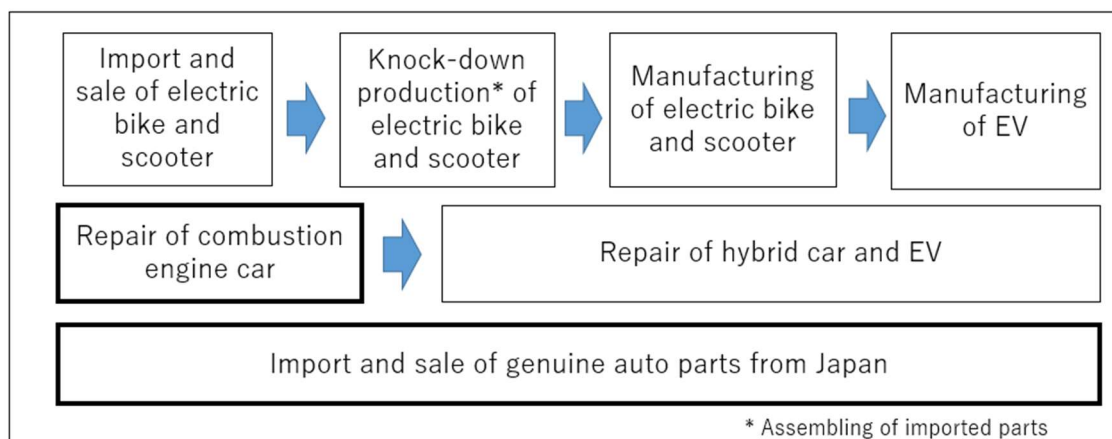
and those that are not.

The second objective is to realize technology transfer from Japan to Bangladesh because the company is a joint venture with a Japanese company. The technology to be transferred is not just about repair of conventional combustion engine (gasoline engine and diesel engine) cars but of hybrid cars and EVs. Hybrid cars occupy almost 40% of passenger car sales in 2020 in Japan (refer Appendix 6). In Bangladesh, more than 90% of cars are with conventional combustion engines. Hybrid cars are less than 10% but the ratio is expected to increase in the coming years. By introducing technology from Japan, the repair of hybrid cars and EVs become easier and safety will improve. The production of EV is also under consideration. Current plan is to start with electric bikes and scooters for underdeveloped villages. The company will partner with Chinese and Asian suppliers of electric bikes and scooters to import completed products. Later, it will start assembling main parts in Bangladesh to eventually do the entire manufacturing to achieve the technology transfer of EV manufacturing to Bangladesh.

The third objective is to develop young generation and support their independence. In Bangladesh, many young people are forced to live below poverty line and are unable to get education or jobs. This company intends to train young people so that they acquire the skill to repair cars and also the skill to set up a company. This way, they can leave the company in the future, go back to their villages and set up repair shops there. Also, by teaching the skill to repair Japanese cars, some of them could go to Japan to supplement much needed young skilled labor.

The human resources that are capable of maintaining and repairing cars and the service of selling genuine parts and high-quality service are the main KPI (Key Performance Indicator) of G Japan Sunpower Auto.

Figure2. Business Steps of G Japan Sunpower Auto



(Data from Sunpower Co., modified by the author)

Challenge

G Japan Sunpower Auto has both corporate and individual customers and provides same repair service for cars owned by both of them. 80% of customers are companies and 20% are individuals. Rabbani Car Service Centre was originally a company providing car repair service to all Grameen Group companies but G Japan Sunpower Auto is now serving non Grameen Group companies, too, and the ratio is half and half.

In Bangladesh, there are some large companies that compete with G Japan Sunpower Auto. One of them is Navana Ltd.,⁹ which is a large company in Bangladesh. Another is Rangs Motors Ltd.,¹⁰ which is also a large company. These companies are well established in the market and are popular, too. Navana, especially, was established in 1964 and has a long history. In comparison, G Japan Sunpower Auto has just started and its name recognition is low. If G Japan Sunpower Auto sells the same parts at the same price, buyers will choose Navana. It means G Japan Sunpower Auto has to adopt different strategy. Its name may not be well known, but it can differentiate itself by specializing in repair of Japanese cars and offering high quality service. Most of the cars in Bangladesh are Japanese. In repairing Japanese cars, availability of Japanese genuine parts makes a difference. On the other hand, Japanese genuine parts are more expensive than non-genuine parts made in China and other countries. That is the difficult part.

Three years passed since G Japan Sunpower Auto was established and things did not progress as planned in the first two years due to pandemic caused by Covid-19. The repair shops do not yet have enough equipment. Companies like Navana and Rangs Motors have shops that are fully equipped, so the difference is making things difficult for G Japan Sunpower Auto.

Strength of G Japan Sunpower Auto

On the other hand, the advantage of G Japan Sunpower Auto is the strong network of Grameen Group companies. Grameen Group has a long history in launching new business. Grameen Group also has many bases in rural areas, which can work as an advantage. At the same time, G Japan Sunpower Auto has the know-how to recover high quality auto parts. The company can get good auto parts from Japan. Rabbani Car Service Centre has skills of car repair and customer service. If they combine these strengths, the potential to succeed in Bangladesh is high.

Technology Transfer from Japan

In the process of running a social business, technology transfer¹¹, or the transfer of technology of one country or a company to people in developing countries is an extremely important issue. Technology transfer enables G Japan Sunpower Auto employees to acquire skill and opportunity for them to get a job at a higher position. If that person goes back to his/her hometown and establishes a repair shop of G Japan Sunpower Auto, jobs are created in that place and standard of living improves. That is how technology transfer is critical for social business.

In Bangladesh, there are many Japanese cars and the skill to repair the cars are quite available and the technology to maintain and repair gasoline engine cars is also in place. A competitor company such as Navana already has engineers with high level skill to repair Japanese gasoline engine cars. In order to avoid direct competition with them, G Japan Sunpower Auto is planning to transfer technology to repair hybrid cars and EVs. There are 3 steps in the process of transferring production management technology of manufacturing sector through technology mediator. The first step is “Selection and acquisition of technology,” the second step is “application and adjustment of technology” and the third step is “dissemination and retention.” (See Appendix 7.) G Japan Sunpower Auto is in the middle of the first step with Sunpower in Japan working as technology mediator and trying to acquire skills to repair hybrid cars and EVs. G Japan Sunpower Auto can provide online training and face-to-face training, invite trainers from Japan, etc. through Sunpower in Japan and training itself is not an issue. However, the pandemic stopped the implementation of training plan and the training is behind schedule. If there were not for Covid-19, they planned to invite the factory manager of G Japan Sunpower Auto to Japan with a three-month visa and do the car repair training in the field and classroom. Everything was set but the pandemic made it difficult for Bangladesh people to enter Japan and there was no way around.

Face-to-face training or training by inviting Bangladesh people to Japan was postponed but online training is about to begin around November 2021. It is not possible to use an actual car in the training, but there is the benefit of being able to show the process to many employees at once. A menu of hybrid repair technology was compiled around the end of 2020 to early 2021. They are planning to implement the training based on that menu. The teaching will be provided by a professor of an automobile college in Chiba Prefecture by paying him a fee. The teacher was chosen because he had the experience of teaching car maintenance in Africa and the Philippines for many years and is knowledgeable about the situation in other countries. This person

will become a Japanese executive of G Japan Sunpower Auto from 2021, in addition to the role as an instructor. It is part of an overall effort to accelerate the technology transfer. There are not many people who can teach in English and has an experience of living in developing countries. If an instructor is also interested in the philosophy of social business, then that person is extremely valuable.

Another issue regards to soft skill (humanity, way of thinking, etc.) Since G Japan Sunpower Auto is a joint venture with Grameen, the philosophy of Professor Yunus and social business is well understood. Therefore, there is no plan to transfer “soft skill” from Japan at this time. If the business gets traction in the future, however, some elements of practices in Japan may be shared. Sunpower in Japan may put more weight on the happiness of employees and their family while in developing countries their desire for success is the priority because unemployment rate is higher. They are planning to communicate on how annual income and fringe benefits are decided in Sunpower.

In ordinary companies, they look at sales and profit as the goal of the company. In Sunpower, they look at the annual income of employees. They try to increase the sales to increase the annual income of employees. Both of management plan and financial statements are treated differently. Rather than increase of profit, the increase of overhead is important. If the salary is not increased and sales and profit go up, that is not a good management at Sunpower. Sunpower makes it sure that employees are treated fairly, that they are not exploited for the sake of profit.

The future of G Japan Sunpower Auto

G Japan Sunpower Auto will aim to sell high quality genuine parts, and to repair hybrid cars and EVs, as well as to manufacture EVs. To achieve that goal, it has to secure the technology and build the organization of the company.

The company has to establish the brand that delivers high quality and reliable parts in the auto sector. A dream of Mr. Rabbani, the Operation Director of G Japan Sunpower Auto, is to make G Japan Sunpower Auto recognized by Bangladesh people as the most reliable company to provide auto parts, maintenance and high-quality service and make the company the market leader.

G Japan Sunpower Auto is still a young company. To put the company in growth path, it needs people with skill of new technology such as hybrid cars and EVs. Once such people are hired in enough number, then the next stage is to hire people with

disability and difficulties of various kinds.

■ **Non-Japanese employees of Sunpower in Japan**

In Sunpower, 13 young people from developing countries are working. The number of non-Japanese people are about 1/4 of the entire workforce in Sunpower. This is because Sunpower is a social business company and actively hire and train people with handicap and from abroad. (See Appendix 4.) Sunpower hires capable people from developing countries, train them in Japan so that they will establish a business of Sunpower in their home countries. That business will hire local people and will then support the development of the country. This is the realization of “zero poverty” and “zero unemployment” as proposed by Professor Yunus. Below are actual examples of the non-Japanese people that work in Sunpower.

Ashain

Ashain is from Sri Lanka and is in his thirties. He studied IT in Sri Lanka and worked in an insurance company and a financial institution. Later, he came to Japan with his spouse and learned 2 years each in a Japanese school and a vocational school in Sendai and joined Sunpower in April 2021. He decided to join Sunpower when he heard the company presentation by Mr. Kawamura in the vocational school and felt that he could one day do business that relates to both of Sri Lanka and Japan.

It is only half a year since he joined the company but he is working in Fukushima Branch of Sunpower, sorting tires and visiting dealers to collect tires that are acceptable under Sunpower’s standard. Because he was working as a salesperson at an insurance company before, meeting customers and talking with them is something he is quite capable of.

Ashain loves Sunpower because all employees can work together as if they were a family regardless of nationality. If you work hard, you always have a chance. Ashain got the license to drive trucks so that he could drive it to collect tires. Before, he only tried to do what was told to do. In Sunpower, he learned not just to do something that was told to but to think (what has to be done) by himself.

He intends to work for 5 to 10 more years to learn tire business and how to manage companies and then go to Sri Lanka and set up a Sunpower company. There are many people in Sri Lanka that are capable but without a job. He wants to help such people.

His Japanese is already at an advanced level but he wants to improve it further and also learn accounting and management. When setting up a company, the most important factor is people. He said that he wants to learn and practice human resource management with a smile on his face.

Niraj

Niraj is from Nepal and is in his twenties. Half a year passed since he joined Sunpower in 2021. He came to Japan from Nepal right after his graduation, so he does not have a work experience in Nepal. He heard about Japan from his friends and decided to come to study in Japan. He studied Japanese for two months in Nepal but continued his study in Japan in a language school. Afterwards, he studied in vocational school and joined Sunpower. He first met Mr. Kawamura in the company introduction session in the vocational school. He learned that in Sunpower, people can work regardless of nationality, and that it is a social business and applied for the company to learn more about them.

He is now engaged in tire export job in Kawasaki city of Miyagi Prefecture. He works in tire yard, sorting tires by destination country for export, inserting tires within other tires to squeeze as many of them in a container and planning the timing of the next shipment. Occasionally, he carries tires in a truck and visit customers. Working and talking with colleagues is fun because he can learn new Japanese words but it is a physically challenging job. There were 8 people in the workplace until September 2021 but due to transfers, the number was reduced to 5 since October. All other colleagues are Japanese and communication is in Japanese every day. He got a driver's license for trucks.

He said he likes Sunpower because he can get promoted if he learns more about the job regardless of nationality and if one works hard, new opportunities can be given. His senior colleagues consider that he is a very quick learner and is ready to learn new things because of his young age.

He is not yet sure about his future but assumes that he will work in Japan for a few more years to learn about Sunpower and social business so that he could establish his own social business in the future.

Waiba Mina

Waiba Mina is from Nepal and is in her twenties. She is a cheerful person that enjoys

talking to people. She joined Sunpower in April 2019 and is doing accounting job in the headquarters in Yokohama. She used to study management in a university in Nepal. She got interested in Japan when her friend invited her to attend a meeting by a company that arranges study programs in Japan. She had a good image of Japan since it was the same Asian country. Initially, her family was against her study in Japan, but she felt that she also wants to go to Japan if her friend was going. She could speak some Japanese because she went to a Japanese school for half a year after classes in the university in Nepal.

She studied international business for 2 years in a vocational school after coming to Japan. She was impressed when she heard about social business from Mr. Kawamura in the company's presentation. It was also inspiring to hear that the company is setting up companies in Africa and providing jobs to people that could not get a job in other companies.

Now, she is working in the accounting because it relates to what she was studying, but there are many things she learned by doing a real job. She is working in an accounting and general affairs section. She spends half of her time in accounting and the other half on producing invoices, etc. There are four Japanese including the president in the headquarters and she was the only non-Japanese, so she was a bit nervous at the beginning. She also had to speak Japanese. She mixed Japanese and English, when communication was difficult.

Still, people around her were very kind and they were always ready to teach her many things. She likes the fact that human relation in Sunpower is very good. Branches and the headquarters are far apart in distance, which sometimes makes the communication difficult for her, but people around her are ready give help in times of difficulty.

In the future, she wants to start a business for women in Nepal. It is difficult for women to get a job in Nepal. When she goes back to Nepal, she wants to set up a company to produce handmade mats (her mother used to make them), for example, where women can work. Many women are producing this mat in Nepal and she thinks that there can be good demand for them in other countries. The accounting job that she is doing now could help her when she sets up a company in the future. For now, she is focusing in saving enough money for her future business.

■ From graduate school to social entrepreneur

Chidzani

Chidzani is from Botswana. He had a job of financial accounting in a healthcare industry since 2014 in Botswana. He got a scholarship of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan and came to Japan in 2018. He entered International University of Japan (IUJ) in Minamiuonuma, Niigata and studied finance and management in the MBA course. He got his MBA in June 2020 and joined Sunpower. He left Japan in April 2021 and returned to Botswana. He is not an employee of Sunpower anymore but works with the company together.

By learning in IUJ, he became passionate about entrepreneurship and industrialization. Botswana's main business is export of raw material and there is little manufacturing. He wanted to develop manufacturing in Botswana, increase employment and eradicate poverty. He wanted to find out how Japan was successful in this regard. Most cars running in Botswana were Japanese. There were many Japanese electric appliances, too. He thought about learning the secret of success and apply the principle in Botswana to develop the country. He wanted to create businesses, develop industry, give hope to people young and old, increase employment and reduce poverty. Before, he just wanted to create a company to become an entrepreneur in Botswana but now he also wants to make society and people happier.

He got interested in Sunpower when Mr. Kawamura made the company presentation in IUJ and learned about the company for the first time. He did not know about social business but he did have the desire to improve the society and help people. After listening to the presentation, he found that what he wanted to do and social business were the same thing. He also was interested in the fact that Sunpower had a joint venture with Professor Yunus. Chidzani knew about Professor Yunus through Internet since he was 14 years old. He was a great fan of Professor Yunus. He thought that his entering IUJ and meeting with Mr. Kawamura were both connected with Professor Yunus. Later, he could actually meet with Professor Yunus through an online meeting.

As Professor Yunus set up Grameen Bank to support poor people's businesses with micro credits, Chidzani wanted to combine micro credit with Sunpower's business and realize it in Botswana. Specifically, his business plan was to sell used tires of Sunpower in Africa and provide micro credit to Botswana's women with the profit coming from the tire sales. The plan was not to buy tires from Sunpower but to find buyers for the tires and get the commission. The company's name was Sunpower Social Business Fund Botswana and it was registered in May 2021. Currently, Chidzani is the only employee of the company. Due to pandemic caused by Covid-19, the company is facing various difficulties. The cost of tires is increasing and the business is not doing well. He has to visit other African countries to find customers of Sunpower tires but cannot go

out of country due to Covid-19. If the Covid-19 situation stabilizes, however, the business can start getting sales.

The goal of 5 to 10 years from now is to provide micro credits for many women in Botswana by utilizing the profit from tire business. He got 5 rounds of training regarding how to start micro financing business from Grameen Trust. He even got the chance to make presentation of his business idea in front of Professor Yunus in 2020 and in 2021.

Tsholofelo Badubi

Tsholofelo is from Botswana. He was working for Investment and Trade Center in Botswana before coming to Japan. He got a degree in IT and wanted to set up his own company but he did not have much experience of real business and wanted to get more knowledge and skill and decided to enter the MBA course of IUJ in 2018. He learned how to communicate with diverse students coming from 60 different countries in IUJ. He also learned how to deal in business through presentations and discussions in the classes. This experience definitely helped him later when he joined Sunpower and had meetings with people from different countries.

After 2 years in IUJ, he met with Mr. Kawamura and learned about the philosophy of Sunpower, its business and future plan and wanted to join the company. He graduated from IUJ in June 2020 and he joined Sunpower as an intern for half a year. He was the very first intern of Sunpower. He worked at yards in Niigata, Sendai Kawasaki and then went to Sakata, Fukushima and the headquarters in Yokohama to learn and experience the business of Sunpower. He started to think not just the profit but how the business can affect the lives of individual workers and how it can contribute to the society. The learnings at IUJ and the experience at Sunpower complemented each other. He produced the marketing plan that will fit the situation of the market in Botswana.

In December 2020, he went back to Botswana and registered his company in January 2021. Due to Covid-19, the cost of importing goods from Japan skyrocketed and the first container is yet to come. When the container comes to Botswana, he intends to do his best in selling them in the capital city of Gaborone. In the future, he wants to become a business specialist to bridge Botswana and Japan. There are many things that Botswana can learn from Japan and he wants to bring many businesses and technology from Japan.

Looking forward, he is focused on IT and robotics because these sectors are critical in improving developing countries. He is planning to establish a platform for kids and

young people to engage in coding and robotics, in addition to the business of Sunpower. It is still at a preparatory phase, but the plan is to generate profit from Sunpower business and invest it in IT businesses.

There are two challenges in his business. One is to reach an agreement with Sunpower on his business plan. Initially, Sunpower wanted Sunpower Botswana to search customers in Botswana. Sunpower was to send containers with used tires to customers in Botswana and Sunpower Botswana was to get commission for the job. Tsholofelo, however, is now proposing Sunpower to send container to him and that Sunpower Botswana will sell the tires directly to customers. He wants to change the structure of the business so that it is more aligned to the local situation

The second challenge is financing. While Sunpower may provide certain amount of assistance, he will still need the capital to start a business. Many businesses are on hold due to pandemic and cost of import has increased. The biggest challenge is the capital.

Mulugeta

Mulugeta is from Ethiopia. He graduated from IUJ in June 2021. He worked as a manager in a pipe manufacturing company before coming to Japan. He came to Japan in 2019 and got a master's degree of economics through international development program of IUJ. After getting a degree in June 2021, he performed 6 months internship of planning and implementing training courses of programming in a company in Tokyo. After finishing this internship, he will become an employee of Sunpower from January 2022 to work in International Marketing and Sales Department. He came to Japan to gain international experience and luckily got a chance to study in Japan with scholarship of JICA.

The JICA scholarship was established with the aim of developing African young business leaders that could connect Japanese companies and Africa. Mulugeta thought about how to achieve this objective. He can go back to Ethiopia and set up his company or to join a Japanese company to develop the market in Africa. His Japanese was not good enough since he only studied Japanese for one year in IUJ. He wanted to stay in Japan a bit longer to learn Japanese and Japanese style of business. He learned from job Career Support office of IUJ that Sunpower was doing business in Africa and applied to the company. He is planning to work in Japan for a while to improve his Japanese and get business experience to establish Sunpower Ethiopia later.

He decided to join Sunpower first because it was both Japanese and international company. Sunpower did business in different countries and was going to expand even

more. Unlike other companies, it cared about social issues as CO2, poverty, and unemployment. As a social business, it was training people and supported to make them capable of creating business by oneself. This in turn will hire more people. This idea was the second reason that appealed to him. Mr. Kawamura used to say “think about it yourself” to provide employees the opportunity to become an entrepreneur and to grow. These were the reasons why he chose Sunpower.

From the very start, Mulugeta’s goal was to become an entrepreneur. He is now planning to work hard in Sunpower for two years for the company and for himself. Taking the opportunity, he will try to gain experience of overseas marketing and then establish his own company. He intends to start a business of used tires and used auto parts in Ethiopia. Like in other countries, cheap price is a powerful weapon in Ethiopia. With good supply chain and distribution channel, he sees that the potential of the business in Ethiopia is quite high.

When he applied for JICA scholarship, his objective was to establish a new company. He got the knowledge in IUJ. He learned about business style in Japan through an internship. Now, he will gain experience of overseas marketing by working in Sunpower and learn more about Japanese language and culture, too. He is proud to start as an entrepreneur with all these assets.

■ Issues related to the development of young social entrepreneurs

According to Mr. Kawamura, there are some issues related to the development of young entrepreneurs in Sunpower.

Period of training

Sunpower accepts interns, but usually, internship period is limited to around 6 months at most. Even if they are hired as full-time employees, they may have to go back to the home country within a year because of family reasons and so on. 6 months to one year is not enough to train people through actual work. Past cases can be learned by reading, but entrepreneurs have to plan the vision of the future and forecast future finance. The training of these aspects is quite difficult to complete in short period according to Mr. Kawamura.

Mindset

There is also the need to acquire the entrepreneur's mindset. Creating a company, how to control his own mind, how to react to difficulties, leadership, are some of the points that are still weak among people who try to become an entrepreneur in the developing countries as Mr. Kawamura sees them. Their mindset is still that of an "employee" and not of an entrepreneur.

This tendency may largely be coming from the environment and education. School education, including conventional business schools' education, tends to assume that students are going to join companies and work there as employees in the future. Around them, most people are employees. It will be difficult to develop a mindset as an entrepreneur if one lives and gets education in such an environment. Mr. Kawamura hopes that the educational curriculum will be further enhanced to foster entrepreneurs. It will also be difficult for the young people who wish to be a social entrepreneur to break from the assumption that one's goal is to maximize the profit of the company, compete with others to get promoted and go for ever higher amount of income. Mr. Kawamura wants to give more importance on "human side" such as "sincerity, honesty, and gratitude", when developing social entrepreneurs.

Financing

There is also the tendency to expect and assume financial assistance. It is certainly necessary to secure the initial capital by identifying a Japanese company that can provide the fund. However, the definition of fund for entrepreneurs of social business and the fund for people without the right mindset is different. Latter people tend to rely on other people's money and do not spend enough time considering the business risk. They are insecure and try to get fund from Japan and if the business fail, they think that's not their fault. They were interested in social business and there was an opportunity, so they set up a company, but gave it up because there were difficulties and might end up joining other company. Mr. Kawamura says that commitment is important. Therefore, he sometimes encourages his counterpart to borrow money locally even when money is available from Sunpower if he thinks that the business is not backed up with commitment. If they borrow money locally, they have to repay it and feel the risk more strongly. On the other hand, there is usually a low interest loan for entrepreneurs available locally. Entrepreneurs should find it out by themselves and commit themselves to the business. The fund should be managed by entrepreneurs that are ready to accept risk.

When Japanese companies supply business fund, the business tend just to stop when the fund is used up. Japanese companies want to support entrepreneurs, but if they support someone without commitment, the money does not produce any return. Mr. Kawamura thinks that if this pattern is repeated, the money will stop coming. The money is absolutely necessary, but the important thing is to make the entrepreneurs not reliant on the money and make them seriously examine what the best way to spend the money is.

Dependence

In joint ventures in developing countries, the local businesspeople tend to depend on advanced countries, which has to take lead in order to move the business forward. This does not apply to all local operators of Sunpower, but there is such a tendency according to Mr. Kawamura.

The entrepreneurs in developing countries may tend to expect the advanced countries and people with wealth to help them. Sunpower wanted to help them with technology transfer rather than money.

In order to develop young entrepreneurs, Sunpower also tries not to hire people in developing countries but to make them do business as an entrepreneur, without being dependent on Sunpower in Japan and to implement business by themselves. For Sunpower, it is important to make them understand that they have to earn the cost of the office and their own salaries by themselves.

To start a social business, it is important to be self-sufficient. If profit is not there, the business is not sustainable and solution of social problem, the very objective of the company, cannot be achieved. When starting a business, the entrepreneur should believe and agree with the objective and mission of the business and he/she should be truly committed to solving the social problem through the business, because that makes a difference in overcoming difficulties and obstacles in the future.

The entrepreneurs first learn business and skills, so that they could later think how they can do business locally by themselves without being dependent on Sunpower in Japan. To reach this stage, it is important to teach and make them do small things step by step and not to give up, according to Mr. Kawamura.

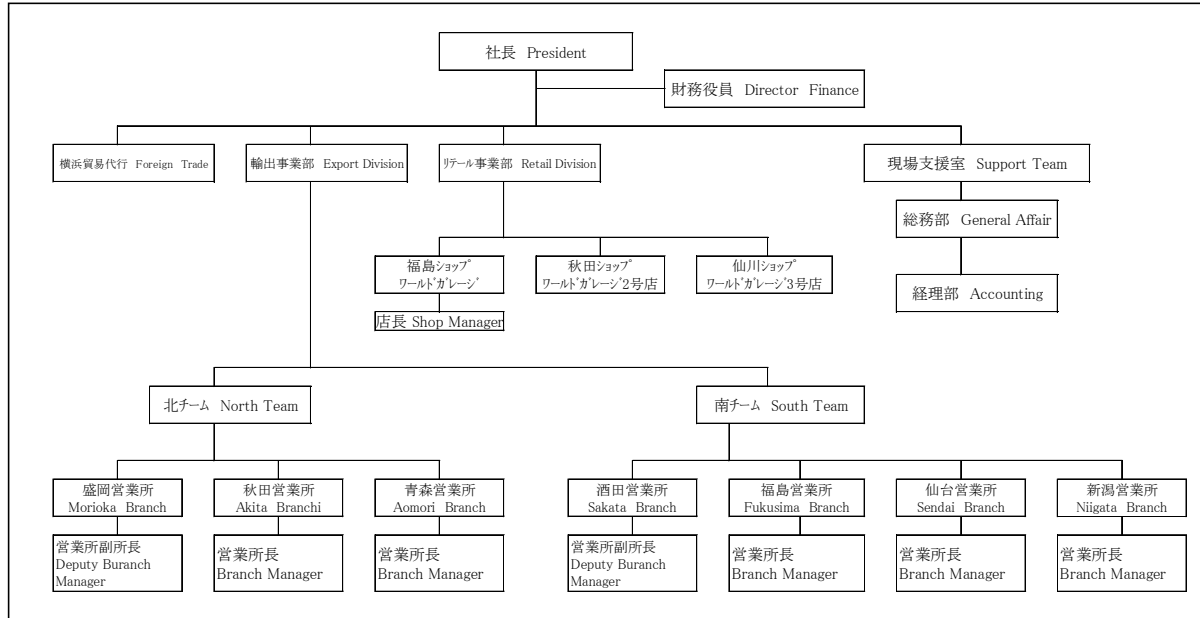
Mr. Kawamura thinks that, to develop young entrepreneurs, both the guidance of educational institutions and of companies like Sunpower are needed. Both of them should educate entrepreneurs about human relation based on trust rather than self-interest and

management of which objective is not “maximization of profit.” The quality of management comes to the surface in times of trouble. It is the companies that treat employees with respect and consider the quality of their management carefully that can survive in difficult times. What matters is not just the short-term result or profit but the unwavering vision and objective of the business. Mr. Kawamura wants to develop that kind of social entrepreneurs.

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Appendix1. Sunpower Organization Chart (as of Dec. 28, 2021)



(Data from Sunpower Co., and edited by author)

Appendix 2.

Interview with Professor Muhammad Yunus (October 22, 2021)

(Q.1) How did you get to know Sunpower? Could you tell us the background and situation when you met Sunpower CEO, Mr. Kawamura, and started to work with Sunpower?

Professor Yunus: I am often invited to Japan, and meet lots of different people on each occasion, so it is very difficult to remember where I met whom, and in what particular circumstance. However, in the case of Mr. Taku Kawamura, it was different, because we first met when he came with a group of businesspeople to meet me, and to introduce me to them. At first, I just took him to be one of those businesspeople, I hadn't realized that he was any different. It took me quite a while to register his distinctiveness from the people that he had brought along. He came from an academic background, you see. The others were normal businesspeople, keenly focused on the business imperative of making money, yet also clearly interested in how their business could be more broadly helpful in bringing good things to society. Exactly how they had come to be connected, I wasn't sure at the time, but what emerged and caught my attention was the kind of leadership I saw from Kawamura san.

So, there was a quick discussion, each one telling me about their particular dreams and aspirations. It turned out that they were all involved, one way or another, in the businesses of automobiles - the car business. Even so, I didn't understand all the details, nor really why they wanted to talk to me. These, after all, were not the kind of businesses that I would have been involved in at the time. Nevertheless, I was struck by how enthusiastic they were. They were so eager to understand what I had to say about their businesses that one meeting led to another and yet another, such that several more separate meetings ensued on other occasions. That everything would work out as it did, was not immediately evident. In fact, it was not until Mr. Kawamura brought a group of businesspeople to Bangladesh to visit, and to let them see how Grameen Bank operates, and how social business really functions, that I sensed any inkling of a turning point being reached. I had an especially long session with them, answering noticeably more questions than usual. They couldn't speak English. They were all speaking Japanese. There was an interpreter translating, so it was a slow process finding out and clarifying whether their understanding of what I was saying, really matched what I had said. Here Mr. Kawamura was prominent as the intermediary, his explanations guiding the interpreter, and winning

the confidence of everyone. It was only after this process of getting to know each other that this group of businesspeople expressed some desire to associate with us somehow. Mr. Kawamura was very obviously interested in bringing about some cooperative involvement, though I remained without any idea of what exactly he had in mind.

What became clear when they were talking about cars, was the fact that Bangladesh imports considerable numbers of used cars from Japan. It was a connecting issue, though quite how it could relate to our work of social business remained obscure to me. It was not until discussions shifted focus to auto spare parts, for the engines and ancillary items, that my interest perked. Here, I began to see, was an area that offered scope for doing something together. My ideas had yet to fully crystallize as to how it could be done. It took time, but gradually, and in no small part because of Mr. Kawamura's determination and persistence, I saw how he inspired a lot of very patient followers; themselves already respected and successful businesspeople. In the beginning, I had thought it was just an orientation of some businesspeople, and nothing more than that. Now, however, I came to see that these people were earnest and serious about making a commitment. Thereafter, I paid close attention to every step of what I anticipated they were leading up to. What emerged finally was a business model designed around the importation of automobile parts and components into Bangladesh. That was the beginning of the Grameen Japan Sunpower Auto Limited, and I was very happy with this outcome.

(Q.2) I suppose you have been getting a lot of offers for joint ventures, but what are the conditions for you to give the go signal?

Professor Yunus: People often get very enthusiastic on hearing about social business, and many immediately say they want to do something. This is understandable, because the concept appeals on two fronts – some see it as a money-making business opportunity, while others may see it as just a charity program. So, in my experience, many did not grasp what we said in its correct proportions. I don't mind it. This is how it always starts out. It takes time to make the concept clear, and to iron out all the misconceptions. We have to run through a series of discussions with those who come to us, each discussion addressing aspects of creating a social business. Some stay on, complete the first round, second round, and continue until gradually they understand how various aspects must interlock. From our side, we start with open arms that emphasize you are welcome, but caution that we are not sure whether candidates will make it all the way, because they likely start with sizeable misconceptions about the whole process.

Although, in the beginning they may seem to have understood it, closer inspection

often shows only a tentative grasp of what is really involved when it comes to concrete details. Because of this risk, we are careful to clarify all the ramifications of involvement. In some ways we don't expect them to jump at the opportunity, indeed if somebody seems overly eager, this will make us doubt whether they grasp all that is necessary. In order to reach a point of understanding, several matters need careful thinking through, and it is practically impossible to do this quickly. I suppose some may understand from the outset, but we would be reckless to take this for granted.

Eventually, after working through all these steps, we are left with a select group of people in whom we are confident of their conscientiousness. We know that they are serious enough to recognize the importance of taking the right kind of procedural steps, and that they can be relied upon to follow tasks through to ensure successful completion. That's how it happens. That's not one step. Completing the whole procedure requires a measure of resilience and tenacity. Only then, as with the case of Kawamura san, can we establish trust. It doesn't happen overnight!

(Q.3) Among all the social business companies you have established so far, what is the positioning of Grameen Japan Sunpower Auto Limited? (What characterizes the company compared to other social business companies?) What do you think are their advantages and challenges?

Professor Yunus: Well, it remains a somewhat small company, and, in a way, it is still a struggling company – not everything that it has done has proven to be for the best. We've brought in a lot of processes and not all have turned out to be appropriate. Many initial concepts had to be abandoned because reality on the ground proved different to our expectations. For example, initially we didn't feel comfortable with anything other than genuine parts from Japan. We thought everybody preferred it this way, and that they would not go for sub-standard, non-proprietary, or second-rate parts. But the reality was different. It transpired that many people are willing to accept the quality trade-off provided by cheaper non-original parts. That came as a big shock. Instead of genuine parts, they prefer alternative non-proprietary equivalents, there being plenty of them in the market from various countries, including some even produced in Bangladesh.

That was one aspect that we didn't think through properly, because most of the parts are changed by the workshops, not by the owners of the cars themselves. The owners see only whatever bills are sent. As to the actual part that is installed, they never see it, and have only vague notions of there being any quality difference whatsoever. Workshops know that if a sub-standard part should fail, the owner is still happier to come back to

them, confident that the repair will be affordable. The failure can even be discretely blamed on another component. Conversely, any workshop charging the high prices involved for the fitting of genuine parts runs the risk of owners avoiding ever coming back to them. This is my understanding.

I'm far from the day-to-day work, but this is the way the situation was explained to me. It's not what we had envisaged, so this is a good example of an operational policy that we must struggle with. We have not abandoned our ideals, but we have had to acknowledge and accommodate some characteristics of local markets. This may be a small struggling company, but that doesn't mean that Mr. Kawamura is any less enthusiastic about it. He hasn't lost faith in it, nor in the people who are involved in it; everybody remaining solidly committed to making it a success. We see this is an entry point right now. Its potential is not restricted only to the existing parts business. This is the beginning of a broader relationship, one that also targets new mobility technology. For instance, there is increasing scope for the company to get involved with electric vehicles. The fact that shifting from fossil fuels to renewables is something with meaningful societal consequences, is not something that is lost on a social business such as ours. In this regard, great consideration is being given to prospects for importing electric vehicles (bicycles, tricycles, and small cars). At some point we even expect production of them in Bangladesh to become feasible. Thus, we see how, becoming established in one area, say the maintenance of cars, can open up areas in other directions too. Bangladesh has no domestic electric vehicle manufacturer, meaning all such vehicles have to be imported. By importing not only cheaper vehicles, but cheaper electric vehicles, we see how other activities become attainable. Since the imported vehicles have to be modified for the local conditions, those capabilities could serve as a beachhead to local manufacturer of completely different vehicles tailored to meet local requirements. Pursuing this type of development, we can become increasingly involved in measures to reduce fossil fuel consumption in the country, gradually replacing the ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles with those fueled by renewable energy sources.

(Q.4) From your experiences, what do you think are some of the factors essential for success of social businesses, especially those started by young people?

Professor Yunus: It depends on many things, but whatever you start, and whatever your objectives, you will encounter hurdle after hurdle, and you won't clear any of them without genuine commitment. You may imagine finding yourself having an easy stretch during which everybody loves it, and everybody admires you, but that's not

understanding the reality at all. In reality, you are always dealing with some struggle or other. People will laugh at you, because to them you appear foolish, trying to do something that doesn't make sense to them. So, sometimes the pressure to give up is immense. You can experience great self-doubts - maybe they are right, and you are wrong. In this situation, above all, you have to have a great stamina of commitment in your determination to progressively carry things through to completion.

You start with some idea, as in the case of Sunpower - spare auto parts, but your actual business inception is far away from the spare parts idea. This is just an entry point - the first point and the first orientation of it. You will find out the real business, the social business, on the other side, not this side. So, you start doing that, completely move away. Today we are talking about some automobile parts and the actual automobile itself; but sometimes it's not mobility that must concern us most. You may start with mobility, but you will reach a point where it is opportune to jump into something quite different. Now suddenly you are an energy company, not because of any restlessness but because you saw, where a real contribution comes from. Focusing your commitment on that, you became interested in making those contributions. One step paves the way to the next. In being determined to see which things work better, you grow finally into a successful business entity in the fundamental sense that you recovered your cost, and you solved people's problems along the way.

Once you have developed the prototype, by having the tenacity to deal with all these struggles, you will discover the jackpot dividend of having, along the way somehow, developed yourself. This sets you up with the capabilities and confidence to repeat the entire process. Step by step you can now make your prototype into something bigger, by adding, adapting, and multiplying. Development of the prototype is the most important and most valuable step. That's where you need a lot of patience and staying power. That's where you have to have sufficient funds so that while you spend a lot of money and while you are not getting your money back, you have enough to see your idea through to a working prototype. You will not be able to avoid some steep development costs, so you must be ready financially. Being ready means allowing for inevitable setbacks that will stymie your progress. Every case will have its particular mix of struggles: financial struggles, business struggles, market struggles, production struggles, and always an unseen struggle will emerge from some corner. That's how it goes!

(Q.5) What do you expect for the future development of Grameen Japan Sunpower Auto Limited?

Professor Yunus: I think you can see that we have a great deal of patience. If you lack patience, you risk lacking prudence too. Let's see. It is not possible to talk of future developments with the same certainty as hindsight. We know that we must take the trouble to explore possibilities and respond to opportunities that open up. Until you get there, you don't know exactly what it could be. I'll just give you an overview of the current situation to the best of my knowledge, though I don't know all the details; Mr. Kawamura is more involved on a day-to-day basis. Of course, we do occasionally meet, and we always meet up for board meetings. Nevertheless, it is Mr. Kawamura who knows the operation more intimately, so I'm sure he will be able to clarify details and enlarge on many of the aspects I've mentioned. What I will say is yes, we are still in the struggling stage, we'll see where we can go, and see how it will shape up. Not one person, either in the Grameen side, or the Kawamura side, has abandoned their commitment. We all remain determined to continue to steer the right path.

(End)

Appendix 3.

Sunpower 50 years' Anniversary Business Plan

		2022	2023	2024	2025
Sales (plan)		¥700 million	¥850 million	¥1,050 million	¥1,200 million
Profit (plan)		¥70 million	¥85 million	¥105 million	¥120 million
Number of employees		57	64.5	75.5	80.5
Annual income	Director	¥10 million			Director ¥12 million
	General Manager	¥6 million			General Manager ¥8 million
	Manager	¥4.2 million			Manager ¥6 million
	Deputy Manager	¥3.5 million			Deputy Manager, Staff ¥4.5 million
	Staff	¥3 million			Leader, Staff ¥4 million

(Data from Sunpower Co., and translated by author)

Appendix 4.

Number of employees who would likely have found difficulty securing employment elsewhere

	2020	2021	2022(Planned)
Foreign nationals from developing countries	6	13	20
Persons with disabilities and their parents	6	6	6
Former hikikomori(people who cannot get out from their homes), mental disorder (without certificate)	2	3	3
Single mothers	1	2	2
Elderly people (over 65 years old)	2	2	2
Former prisoners	0	1	1
A: Total number of employees who would likely have found difficulty securing employment elsewhere	17	27	34
B: Total employees	48	50	57
A/B*100 (%)	35	54	60

(Data from Sunpower Co., and translated by author)

Appendix 5. Overview of G Japan Sunpower Auto

Objectives of the Company

- ▶ Developing and improving auto parts market for automobile industry in Bangladesh.
- ▶ Initially company will import, initiate marketing and distributing ready to sale recycled auto parts in Bangladesh.
- ▶ Car Repair with Appropriate Hybrid car repairing technology being transferred by Japan.
- ▶ Young People Entrepreneurs Program (trained in Japan as a professional Hybrid car repairing).
- ▶ Car & Waste Tire Recycling.
- ▶ Electric Vehicle manufacturing.
- ▶ Company will train workforce to ensure quality service as well as creates employment and capacity building of the workforce.



G. JAPAN SUNPOWER AUTO LIMITED

Funding and Employment

- ▶ Initial paid up capital for the business is \$80,000.
- ▶ Authorized capital of the business is \$4.8 million USD.
- ▶ Currently more than 15 workers are working at workshop with good pay policy.
- ▶ From the first month of operation, all expenditure meetup of its own income along with profit.



G. JAPAN SUNPOWER AUTO LIMITED

Recycle Car Parts Market in Bangladesh


Actual Voice of Customers :

- ▶ Can NOT find the desired parts
- ▶ Can NOT repair cars in CORRECT ways
- ▶ Keep driving the cars with very low thread tires
- ▶ Can NOT find the accurate parts to repair the cars.
- ▶ Very limited access to the availability of the original used/second hand car parts.
- ▶ Lack of trusted source to find the Original Japanese second hand car parts.



G. JAPAN SUNPOWER AUTO LIMITED

Social Impact



- ▶ Technology transfer from Japan to Bangladesh.
- ▶ Job opportunity for the Young generation.
- ▶ New Entrepreneurship development in Automobile sector.
- ▶ Environment Friendly Workshop
- ▶ Ensure the Japanese standard quality service to the automobile clients
- ▶ Employment in Bangladesh to elevate poverty line, improving usage of technology and providing world class automobile skills to Bangladeshi workforce.

G. JAPAN SUNPOWER AUTO LIMITED

Current condition of the G. Japan Sunpower Auto Limited Workshop

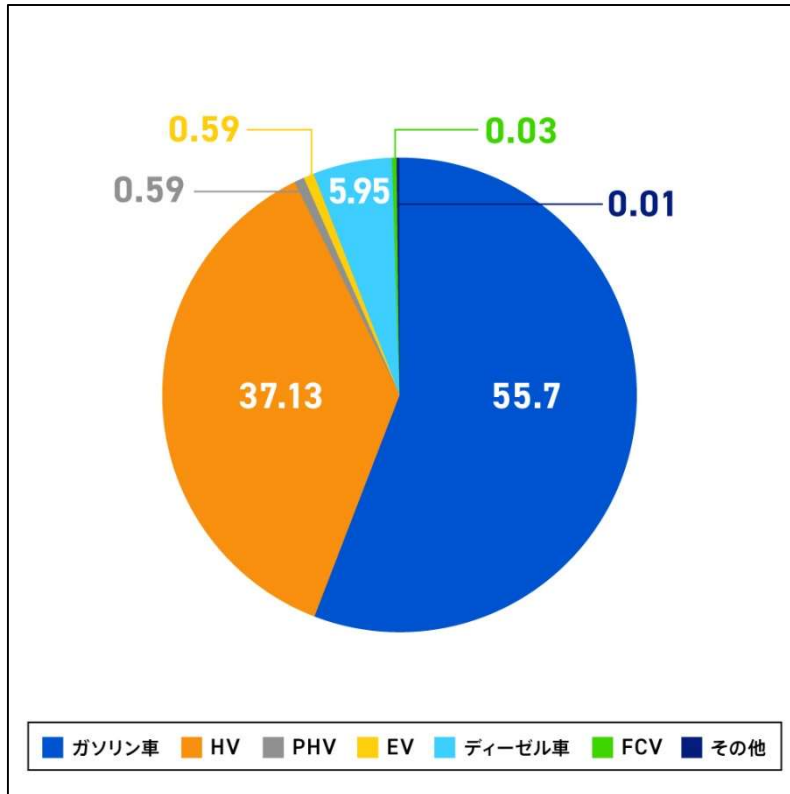


G. JAPAN SUNPOWER AUTO LIMITED

(Data from Sunpower Co.,)

Appendix 6.

New vehicle sales by fuel type (passenger cars) in Japan



	Number of cars sold	(%)
Gasoline car	1,380,762	55.70
HV	920,275	37.13
PHV	14,741	0.59
EV	14,604	0.59
Diesel powered car	147,503	5.95
FCV	761	0.03
Others	186	0.01

(Data from TEPCO website <https://evdays.tepco.co.jp/entry/2021/09/28/000020>), and translated by author)

Appendix 7.

A three-stage model of technology transfer in production control technology in manufacturing

Stage	First stage	Second stage	Third stage
Description of the stages	Selecting, implementing, and learning new technologies.	Introduced and acquired technology is examined, researched, applied, adjusted, and developed from the perspective of suitability and effectiveness.	Full-scale transfer and dissemination of technologies
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dispatch an inspection team and report on their return ▪ Invite prominent foreign experts and researchers and organize training sessions ▪ Acquire and translate documents and materials ▪ Dispatch international students and long-term trainees overseas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish committees and research groups (by industry, government, and academia, etc.) ▪ Conduct trial application, adjustment, and development at the production site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide consulting (advice and guidance) ▪ Develop human resource ▪ Establish certification system ▪ Establish award system ▪ Organize conferences and symposiums ▪ Conduct public relations activities ▪ Make proposals, declarations, and slogans

Retrieved from <https://www.sridonline.org/j/doc/j201408s08a01.pdf> and translated by author

(菊池剛『「仲介型」技術移転に関する考察～3段階モデルの構築と適用～』¹²より抜粋, 筆者による翻訳)

Appendix 8.

Activities to foster and support young social entrepreneurs at Sunpower – Examples of joint efforts with International University of Japan (IUJ)

1. Sunpower Business Model Competition(SP BMC)

SunPower held the SunPower Business Model Competition for students of international university of Japan twice, in May 2020 and April 2021. The objective is to promote and nurture entrepreneurship around the world. In 2020, they targeted at African students, and in 2021, the scope was expanded to include all nationalities. In 2020, there were 3 teams and 7 participants, but in 2021, the number increased to 7 teams and 17 participants. Each team competes for the Grand Sunpower Prize. The judges are entrepreneurs, university professors, and professionals with extensive business experience. Participating in this pitch contest is a step for graduate students to develop their entrepreneurial base.

Students who want to participate in this pitch contest should attend SunPower's information session and pre-seminar to understand SunPower's vision and approach to social business. The presentation in the contest must cover both social and financial aspects.

There are two stages of screening. The first stage is the document review, in which you are required to write a summary of your business model in no more than four A4 pages. After passing the document review, the second stage is a presentation and a question and answer session.

The winning team will be awarded the grand prize of 250,000 yen. And if necessary, one or two teams will receive support from SunPower for the actual implementation of their project. The winner of the 2021 contest, a woman from Eswatini, Africa, actually started an agricultural project¹³, and after completing her studies at the International University of Japan, she returned to her country to set up an organic growing business using hydroponics and vertical farming, which she proposed in the contest, growing strawberries, spinach, lettuce and so on.

The competition is planned to be held again in 2022, and the prize money for the SunPower Grand Prize will be increased to one million yen in 2022. They also plan to expand our activities by inviting Japanese companies that want to find overseas business partners and Japanese companies that want to use their technology and know-how to solve social issues in other countries.

2. Sunpower Social Business Club

For young entrepreneurs, in order to get their social business off the ground, they need not only funds, but also people with whom they can exchange information and mentor on an ongoing basis. Eliana from Mozambique, who completed her MBA at IUJ in 2020, originally wanted to start her own business and studied marketing, but when she met SunPower, she learned about social business and became interested in it. She joined the aforementioned SPBMC in 2020, which changed the way she thought about business. Until then, all she could think about was making a profit, but now she wants to work with SunPower on the aspect of social business.

Eliana once returned to her home country, but due to Covid-19, she was unable to come back to Japan. It was during this time that she proposed the SunPower Social Business Club to Mr. Kawamura. The human network students had gained at IUJ would be scattered after graduation. The idea is to bring together students and graduates who are interested in social business with SPBMC participants.

The Social Business Club was started in June 2021 as a private Facebook group. Eliana hoped that it would be a place where people who are about to start their own businesses could learn from their seniors and share their experiences with each other. She herself wanted to return to her home country and start her own business, but the first challenge was finances. When she asked friends, many of them said they were in a similar situation. No matter how great the business idea is, it is difficult to make it a reality if the financial and other conditions are not met. Although they can't provide funds directly, they would like to support the participants after SPBMC. That is the reason why she started this club. Many participants had great ideas and made suggestions, but few of them were implemented. Therefore, she would like to share these ideas and find companies that are interested in social business in Africa, for example, and match African students with companies that have social business ideas, so that they can put them into action.

The Facebook group has just started and has 57 members. They are not very active yet. They don't have a clear idea of what they are going to do yet. Once more people, students, graduates, and companies start to actively exchange opinions, they can make more movements.

The next goal is to create a fund. In the future, this fund will be useful to fund social businesses. Perhaps they can get funding from corporations or the government. It would also be nice to set up a social business school for Japanese who want to learn about social business. In other words, her idea for the future is to create a SunPower Social

Business School and a SunPower Social Business Fund.

There are many issues to be addressed in order to achieve this goal, but the first thing is to let more people know about the club and get them interested. The reality is that not everyone is interested in social business. People from developing countries, those who are suffering from economic conditions and Covid-19, do not have access to even the bare necessities. How can they be willing to help others in such a situation? To be willing to help, they have to change their mindset. It's really difficult. Another challenge is the financial aspect. For example, if they want to have a website, they will need to pay for its management. Another issue is how to balance costs and income. At the moment, they are working as volunteers and have no income. If they want to run it as a business, they need income. Eliana feels that the main issues are mindset and financial aspects.

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