

**Entrepreneurship at the Base-of-the-Pyramid**  
**In Post-Earthquake Haiti: A Ten Year Case Analysis**

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**Abstract:** This research draws on Base-of-the-Pyramid theory and social entrepreneurship practices to report and analyze the processes used in implementing a social innovation strategy for Haiti after the massive 2010 earthquake. It includes a needs assessment, designing of new strategies, mobilizing young college-age students from across the U.S., generating a coherent and feasible plan, and training potential young social entrepreneurs in skills for effective service. We will address the strengths and weaknesses of this social venture from its start-up, evaluate subsequent actions, and identify what could have been done better. It will draw upon participants' experience, along with interviews of founders, leaders and in-country partners of a new NGO, referred to as Haiti Forward. The case is a ten-year long analysis of social science, business and other disciplines.

**Keywords:** Base-of-the-Pyramid, Social Entrepreneurship, Haiti, International Development

Is the traditional university dying even while throngs of university students apply to be accepted? I'm not sure, but it is becoming clear that today's applicants are seeking something beyond huge salaries, and security. Whether colleges of social science or business schools, change is accelerating. Top departments of social science disciplines such as psychology, sociology and international studies are evolving. For instance, Berkeley's Institute of International Studies is world famous for educating students for global education and careers. Likewise, Columbia University carries out hands-on global programs in Ghana, Jordan and China. In business, the focus is expanding beyond traditional courses of finance, supply chain, accounting, information systems, marketing, and HR/organizational behavior. Haas, Yale, Stanford, and Michigan's Ross School are all revolutionizing their programs to address students' desire to learn about sustainability, poverty elimination, ethics, Bottom-of-the-Pyramid, CSR, peace, environmental and social impact management. Stanford has its Challenge for Charity, UNC its Sustainability Lab, Case Western its Business as an Agent for World Benefit Institute, and so on. Most of these programs have occurred as responses to student demands, whether new programs or courses. Then there are initiatives like the MBA Oath Project, Grey Pinstripes, the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders, the Aspen Institute, the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education, as well.

Over the decades I have labored to mobilize students, alumni, faculty from the social sciences and the business community in empowering the poor around the world. We use social change models and concepts such as entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, cross cultural management,

Third World development, economic self-reliance, and organizational change tools to design projects that are sustainable over the long term.

In exploring how college students and professors could come together to address the suffering of the global poor, this paper draws on “Base-of-the-Pyramid” (BOP) logic to address demands of the Caribbean poor, in this case the struggling nation of Haiti. According to BOP theory, there are new opportunities among Third World societies in which community development can increase and new societal potential may be accelerated, even in times of abject poverty, disaster and struggle to survive. This was the case in Haiti after it suffered a massive crisis following the 2010 earthquake. With my associates we sought to build capacity through the creation of a new development ecosystem that would give voice to the poor. It helped heighten survivors’ ability to analyze their predicament and begin to dig their way out of a disaster. It happened from the low and miserable base of the economic and political pyramid in Haiti as people began to take control of their own futures. By linking social science, business and development paradigms, U.S. university students connected with Haitian stakeholders from decimated communities so as to begin new lives (London and Others, 2014).

For purposes of this paper, I will take both a descriptive and normative approach, which summarizes the application of social entrepreneurship in Haiti. My work at this began in 2010, and summarizes efforts into 2020 with teams and multiple evaluation trips. Clearly it is still a work in progress. The paper is an analysis of social action, of a project that is yet emerging, not a final assessment. The flavor will be one of advocacy and passion, not theory and conceptual reasoning. My hope is to explicate the potential power business school faculty and students possess in improving society beyond the traditional corporate paradigm.

### **Social Entrepreneurship, Passion and Compassion**

Management and organizational behavior today are in flux. One of the exciting developments has been the fact that the Academy of Management has held some of its recent annual meetings with themes such as “Capitalism in Question,” “The Informal Economy,” “Dare to Care: Passion and Compassion in Management Practice and Research,” and “Doing Well By Doing Good.” The

academy's leaders articulated their vision of the conference as an opportunity to "consider whether our research and the knowledge we produce contribute to the wellbeing of the larger society in which we live and work" (AOM, 2010).

The event's goal was "to dare managers and management scholars to care more deeply about our roles – to have passion about what we do and compassion for the people for whom we do our work. "Dare to care" orients managers to a focus on enabling others to create, produce, and deliver goods and services that enhance the wellbeing of, and generate value for, all the stakeholders involved (notably customers, employees, investors, and the public). Daring to care encourages management scholars to expand their focus toward an understanding of how solving organizational problems might ensure a sustainable future" (AOM). I believe this to be an exciting and path-breaking new agenda for management scholars and practitioners.

A number of sessions and papers at recent conferences have emphasized using business schools and research to understand and practice the values of caring in our disciplines. Titles included phrases like "Navigating the Tensions in Poverty Alleviation Research: Scholarly Rigor vs. Practical Relevance;" "Base-of-the-Pyramid Interventions," "Social Capital and Social Exchange;" "Ten Years of Daring to Care: The UN Global Compact (2000-2010) — What Has Been Achieved;" "Daring to Measure Social Impact: Performance Management in the Social Sector;" "Sustainable Global Enterprise: Building Research on Caring and Daring MNEs;" and "Social Repair Through Micro-Business."

My paper attempts to build off the mission and agenda of social science and these AOM trends, doing so by describing and capturing the spirit of social entrepreneurship in my labors with students and colleagues in accelerating the next generation of changemakers and advancing the wellbeing of society. We draw on social sciences and management concepts to generate real change.

### **A Personal Context: Past Academic Incubator Experience**

At times it is suggested that real insights about social innovations come from one's own experience. This certainly seems to be the case when one talks of trying to change the world. Thus, I will speak from my own life, my personal practice, rather than abstract theories and/or

the observations of others. But I do so while realizing my many limitations and the awareness that we must all continue to learn, to question, and to critique our life's work. Hopefully, these personal illustrations will show the tremendous possibilities of generating action-based learning and research, not only for academic purposes, but for engaging professors, students, and alumni in reducing human suffering and building civil society around the globe.

The context for this paper is related to a variety of social enterprises emerging from my action research courses over some 40 years (Smith and Woodworth, 2012). These began back in 1980s when a small group of students and I gathered data on poverty and unemployment in the Philippines, and then collaborated with Filipino managers, academics, and church representatives to plan and roll out a microcredit nonprofit in that country we can simply refer to as "*NGO A*," to ensure confidentiality. In spite of criticisms from academic colleagues, deans and other campus administrators, our little start-up survived, growing to have some 600 employees operating a dozen offices throughout the Philippines, as well as Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Thus far, we have raised some \$141 million, trained over a million microentrepreneurs, and created over 200,000 new jobs through self-employed microenterprises. Developing "*NGO A*" successfully over 30 years helped me learn that we as academics can change the world, not just teach theoretical courses, do research and publish.

Two further examples are those of local college students and me establishing "*NGO B*" in 2003, using the university as an incubator to recruit, train, mentor and give \$500 microloans to Latino immigrants in our local valley of the United States where the school is located. Going stronger today with financing from banks and credit unions, this experiment has convinced me that we can generate changemakers locally, as well as globally.

Then there is the case of "*NGO C*," that has operated in 17 nations from Fiji to Tanzania in which some 3,200 university students from 15 or so schools across the United States have been implementing programs such as social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, literacy and computer skills, microentrepreneurship training, and so forth.

A final case is the launching of "*NGO D*," a major microfinance institution (MFI) accelerator which I co-founded and served as the first board chair—along with some entrepreneurial friends of mine, showing how like-minded business executives can come together, share how their best

practices can be integrated in assisting small MFIs around the world to rapidly scale up with our financial backing. We learned how to be laser-focused, bring together a mix of management competencies with young students' energies, and become a major player around the world in scaling up the global field of microfinance. Over 15 years, we garnered loan capital for some 20 MFIs which totaled over \$1.2 billion in loans and investments in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. With the financing we did, these once small MFIs rapidly ramped up from their early years when they had a total of less than 300,000 clients, today they have an astounding 40 million borrowers (NGO D).

While there are many other such social entrepreneurship startups my students and I have launched through the years, brief descriptions of these four may serve to suggest the feasibility of academics taking these kinds of risks to utilize our academic potential in combating poverty through our teaching and research.

Let me clarify that when I discuss social entrepreneurship, I seek to take a broad perspective. Essentially, I mean the mix of individuals who see social problems that may not be addressed by either government or business. Thus, such individuals question "Why?" and begin to take action. At times they are referred to as change agents, "movers and shakers," radicals, social innovators, positive deviants, the "crazy ones," and so on. Often, they see a societal need, collect some initial data, try to understand the causes of social problems, and then design new institutions to respond. Such new entities may be referred to as non-government organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs), social enterprises, non-profit organizations, and other terms depending on the country or culture. In some instances such entities may seek a financial return, as well as having not-for-profit characteristics which seek to do good. For purposes of this paper, I will generally use the term NGO to characterize my cases which have grown out of an academic context.

This emerging field of social entrepreneurship has evolved in the management literature gradually over the years, but is currently accelerating dramatically. Back in the early 1980s William Foote Whyte (1982) called for the creation of new "social inventions" to address societal problems, perhaps one of the earliest articulations of the need for social innovation. Whyte was widely recognized for his classic research and his being elected president of the Industrial Relations Research Association, as well as the American Sociological Association. By

the mid-1990s, no less a figure than Peter Drucker argued in the *Harvard Business Review* that social entrepreneurship would become the second careers of masses of professional or knowledge workers (1999). This literature has exploded since (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Bornstein, 2004; Dees, 1998 & 2007; Light, 2006); Mair and Marti, 2006).

The essence of my argument is that college students, along with faculty, can become radical social innovators by inventing new courses and projects to using entrepreneurship to empower the world's poor using sustainable strategies that last. In several instances our spin-offs from my courses have led to collaboration and involvement with students from other universities that joined our on-the-ground summers of volunteering in the field. They include students from Portland State University, Stanford, VA Tech, Colorado State, University of Washington, UNC, and so forth.

With this context, let us turn to the case for this article, Haiti, where action learning and the practice of social entrepreneurship was established ten years ago.

### **The Case of “Haiti Forward”**

This mission-driven learning effort became one of my recent platforms for action from a university base. It is a program in which I worked with students in my MBA 632 Social Entrepreneurship course through Winter Semester in 2010 to design a classroom project to fight poverty, implement it in Haiti, and eventually spin it off as a social enterprise. It grew out of the design and implementation of a social entrepreneurial strategy to mobilize, train and send MBA students and others to help in the rebuilding of Haiti after the earthquake of 2010. I will show that students and action-minded business executives can come together and share how their best practices may be integrated in reducing human suffering.

Almost ten years ago in summer 2010 I was working with a team of college students and others in Haiti where we were rolling out a new project in response to the devastating earthquake that hit the country at the first of that year. My notes from August 22, 2010 suggest the sweat, smells, and noises in that setting. As I wrote, “Clouds were beginning to cluster above the silhouettes of banana trees, palms, and huge mango trees. Below, where I sat in the growing darkness was a beehive of activity: All kinds of Caribbean music blasting out of every conceivable technology,

huge trucks laden with tons of earthquake debris rumbling down the street, small motorcycles with multiple passengers crowded on a one-person vehicle. People were sauntering along through the intersection where our house was located, not only city dwellers, but peasants herding a cow or two along the “roads.” These streets had actually become jumbles of dirt, rock, and potholes. The temperature was around 95 degrees, accompanied by approximately 94 percent humidity” (Woodworth, 2010, p.21).

I was there in a Haiti town, sweltering in the heat with a number of young social entrepreneurs out to change the world. We had formed a project called “Haiti Forward” in which we had recruited volunteers, trained them, and raised money to assist the people of the impoverished nation. Haiti was already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Then, on January 12, 2010, a horrific 7.0 earthquake destroyed much of the country. When the quake struck, I wondered as a professor in a business school, what could I or should I do about this tragedy of such epic proportions. The idea came deep in my heart that my friends and I should take action.

Over the next several days, I began to talk with university associates, neighbors, church members, and professional colleagues about the growing crisis. The capital city of Port-au-Prince and surrounding towns were largely demolished. More than three million people were affected by the disaster. The Haitian government and U. S. officials reported that an estimated 250,000-plus people died, although recent numbers suggest fewer victims (BBC, 2010). Some 300,000 had been injured and one million were made homeless. It was truly catastrophic. The Haitian people needed help from lots of sources. We knew the “Big Boys” (The Red Cross, large churches, USAID, The World Bank, and governments around the globe) would rush in money, food, water and medical care. Our team began to consider what would happen after they all dropped off their supplies, spent a few weeks on the ground, and then left. I realized, as I have so many times before in crises like this one, that the hard work really begins after the initial shock wears off and the early emergency aid is delivered.

In our case, we looked at the disaster and determined that our model for helping Haiti would be different from the Big Boys. In previous years, with colleagues and earlier students, we drew upon several commonly-used conceptual stages for successfully helping communities after disasters.

## **Stages of Crisis Assistance**

- *Rescue*, in which the goal is to find those who survived the earthquake and get them out of the rubble.
- *Relief*, in which food, water and medical attention is given to everyone in need.
- *Recovery*, in which the bodies of the dead are located and buried or disposed of.
- *Rebuilding*, in which the process is carried out of reconstructing homes, businesses, schools, and other institutions in order to re-establish society.

Within a week after January 12, I began gathering a group of friends, colleagues, and neighbors, meeting together to explore how we might proceed. We decided to call ourselves Haiti Forward and we wanted to generate a long-term commitment to those who were suffering. With campus and community volunteers we identified key tasks and formed teams around those tasks: a needs assessment of the Haiti situation, logistics for how to get people to Haiti, fund-raising, recruiting of volunteers, Haitian culture and Creole language lessons, where to labor in Haiti, and what skills we could offer the survivors. We knew that large aid organizations could give billions of dollars, but they would not solve the problems of Haiti after the quake. Only the Haitians themselves would ultimately be able to solve their problems. Our objective was to empower them to do so.

Students from the class and beyond were formed into action committees to determine needs in Haiti, where we should labor, what the realities were regarding our own health, security, and safety on the ground, as well as public relations group and a fundraising team. Graduate students led each group because of their more advanced education, some being more mature and experienced. Day after day we secured more volunteers, eventually recruiting individuals from coast to coast, including a housewife in Virginia to a student at Mesa Community College in Arizona signing up for our adventure.

We wanted to avoid potential volunteers who lacked real-world knowledge or who seemed to merely want to be humanitarian tourists. In particular, we sought to recruit older graduate students. Other preferences were for students who had Third World experience living abroad. A few volunteers we found were already fluent in Creole, some spoke excellent French, and still

others had other foreign language speaking competencies which enabled them to learn the basics of Creole so as to communicate, at least in rudimentary ways, with Haitians. These were uniquely qualified individuals who knew the challenges of living and working among the poor around the globe. They were aware of such requirements we had such as the ability to work hard from 6:00 AM until dark six days a week. They knew how to cope with ambiguity and change, possessing a deep commitment to love and serve the people. Many also possessed the ability to be cautious in cases of potential danger, and other such demands for not only surviving, but thriving.

Our teams met at times other than the regular class period because many some students joined the cause, but had other commitments at the appointed hour. So we met during afternoon breaks and evenings, planning our strategy in the early weeks. We invited and heard from a number of resource people who shared their knowledge of post-quake Haiti including women who assisted orphanages in Port-au-Prince, an MD who had just returned from giving medical assistance to those injured in the earthquake, a team of regional volunteers who went down to help during the initial shock period, and so forth. There had been a dozen or so local NGOs which had made quick relief trips to Port-au-Prince to assess initial damage and provide emergency medical assistance, so we tapped into their experience as we began planning.

Within two months, we began designing and conducting training sessions for all participants. Those beyond the local area viewed online training and You Tube video clips about skills needed for the various projects. Eventually we produced a training manual which was filled with educational materials, not only to be used in preparation for traveling to Haiti to labor, but to also have in country so that as volunteer assignments changed from time to time, could be utilized on the ground in better serving those in need.

We dispatched a student who had lived in Haiti a few years ago to fly down and get a hands-on sense of the situation, return, and report. We searched for Haitians in our region who could advise and/or join us, teach Creole, and provide cultural training. We dug through extensive reports from the UN, USAID, Red Cross, and other organizations to learn as much about the deaths, destruction, and areas where we could make an impact.

The more we discovered about Haiti and the disaster, the clearer it became that we needed to focus on capacity-building. To do that, we decided to emphasize four primary areas of intervention: 1) Provide hands-on education in square-foot-gardening which would give a family fresh produce for its own nutrition, plus generate a surplus to sell in the street markets; 2) Provide sanitation, hygiene and health education for survivors to cope with the danger of the new diseases after the earthquake; 3) Provide clean water technology for families and neighbors so as to avoid water-borne illnesses; 4) Provide through our own efforts, as well as existing Haitian microfinance institutions, training opportunities, loans, and other services for income generation activities.

Some individuals at the university and beyond laughed at our vision. They said we were too optimistic and naïve. Others were down-right critical, warning us that Haiti was too dangerous, that the poverty was too great, and the destruction was overwhelming. Furthermore, they claimed that Haiti would never recover, so our efforts would be futile. I wondered what they were thinking. Were they just willing to cross Haiti off the list as a failed state? Should we just wait for the Big Boys to work some kind of miracle? Would it be best to sit home and just passively change the TV channel whenever coverage of Haiti's tragedy appeared?

My feeling was that while we were just a group of average people, we had opportunities and social responsibilities to try and make a difference. We realized we could not do everything, but we could each do something. And this is what inspired Haiti Forward. We became committed to improving the lives of the Haitian people, whether others agree or support us or not.

What is Haiti Forward? We are a group of independent group of Haitians, Americans, and people of other nations as well, development specialists, housewives, students, social entrepreneurs and concerned citizens from across America. Beginning in late April 2010, we started sending teams of 5-7 volunteers almost every Monday to the Haiti headquarters (i.e. our rented house) we had in the town where we labored. We chose to labor in that town, which had about 140,000 people before the earthquake, and where an estimated 20,000-30,000 individuals were killed. It was among the hardest hit communities, being at the epicenter, which resulted in some 90 percent of the buildings, nearly all made of cement but no steel infrastructure, being either severely damaged or destroyed (Millar, 2010).

Assuming perhaps that several hundred thousand individuals were killed in the earthquake and aftershocks, it would be one of the worst disasters in human history. Still a year later, people claimed that there were many bodies disintegrating under the rubble.

Haiti was already the poorest country in the western hemisphere and had been so for decades. Now with the grinding poverty of this new crisis, everything became far worse. The gap between America and Haiti has never been greater. For instance, in the United States during 2009, New York City alone gained 105,400 new millionaires. That made a total of 667,200 throughout just the Big Apple itself (Smith, 2011). In contrast, the few lucky Haitians who actually had jobs made only about \$5 a day. That means they were trying to care for themselves and their families with a mere \$1,200 a year. To me, there was something about this that is just not right.

### **Haiti Forward Values**

For Haiti Forward, there were several main values on which we based our work. The first principle that inspired our effort was the requirement that whatever we did in Haiti would be done with local partners, NGOs that would keep our efforts going when our teams returned to the U.S. Long-term sustainability was essential to our mission. Over the summer we collaborated with more than a dozen NGOs to ensure that by meeting some Haitian needs, we would be helping to leverage their impacts. By providing them money after we were to leave Haiti, we felt confident the programs would be maintained. We also hired several part-time Haitians who we got to know, who labored with us, whose work ethic was strong, and who were 100 percent responsible and trustworthy. These actions guaranteed that our projects would continue until we could return the following summer.

Another core value was the notion of giving of our own means in behalf of the people of the community. Virtually every one of our volunteers was willing to offer their time, money and energy to the cause. Everyone raised their own funds to work in Haiti. We each spent at least two weeks in-country and a number of us spent a month or two, even up to four months on the ground in Haiti. Some left wives, husbands or children to labor down there in the trenches with the poor. Every volunteer had to come up with \$2,000 in order to serve. For many, that sum would have paid for tuition at college, a better car, or covered the cost of doing an internship with corporate America.

An additional value of Haiti Forward was that of job creation through microenterprise. Basically, this consisted of giving tiny loans to poor Haitians to lift themselves out of poverty. An MBA student who had taken my Social Entrepreneurship course from January to April during the time of the earthquake took the initiative to explore NGOs in Haiti that offered microcredit services. Our volunteers worked to prepare to offer microcredit for a village we may refer to as Village XYZ, a small, very poor community up in the mountains, which had received no aid. I had the privilege of conducting a final training session with two groups of men and one group of women whom we organized into solidarity groups. We then gave each member of each group the equivalent of a U.S. \$70 microloan that they were to pay back in full with 5 percent interest after four months.

They used these monies for various family income-generating efforts, and when the first loans were paid off, they qualified for other loans that doubled the first, growing to \$140 and so on. Ultimately, we anticipate that these peasants would be able to literally work themselves out of the poorest of the poor class and up into the Haitian middle-class in future years. In doing so, they would be able to educate their children as the first of their generation from their village to go to school. They would also have the funds they needed to get medical care when a child was sick or broke an arm.

A related thrust of Haiti Forward was to train young budding entrepreneurs who already had businesses going as to how they could increase revenues, market their products and services, and use other management tools to enhance their enterprises. For some of them and their friends, we held a Haiti Business Plan Competition activity, the first of its kind in that nation. We gave prizes to those with the best ideas for how to start or accelerate their firms. Amazingly, over a hundred Haitians participated in the venture, and a number have established their own small enterprises upon our team's return to the U.S. after that summer. We have been able to assess the results in the summers which followed, including a field study now being done by students and faculty at another school, Indiana University.

Sustainability and stewardship were other core elements of our program. We and our partners taught classes on community development and social support. In a coastal fishing village called Destra, we collaborated with an NGO called G.O.A.L.S. Together, we are sought to enhance the quality of life for some 1,500 rural villagers living in plastic tents because virtually all of their

homes had been destroyed. The young people were trained in ecological principles and the need to not deforest their environment more than had already been done, using soccer as a motivation tool. We also sought to be good stewards of the earth and nature in our core town. We worked with Haitians to establish innovative and highly sustainable square-foot gardens. The results were the creation of some 300 garden plots with produce that appeared: Tomatoes, peppers, squash, beans, onions, carrots, and so forth. Over the decade since, many families were able to draw on fresh, nutritious produce, not only in the harvest season each fall, but in the cooler winter growing season that would come.

In addition to the above four core areas of focus, several other community services that were not planned, were later offered in response to many requests from Haitians in the communities of focus. They consisted of teaching English classes, a competence people sought in the hope that as foreign aid grew, there would be a number of U.S. firms investing and building factories in the area. Hence, English skills would give individuals an advantage in obtaining employment. We also offered support for the staff and children at five area orphanages, each of which had more children than before due to parental deaths, while also suffering structural damage from the earthquake.

At the end of summer 2010 we returned home to our jobs and studies, but continued to move Haiti Forward toward a better future. In the first year, we raised over \$100,000 for helping Haiti. While in Haiti we also trained several Haitian leaders to keep our efforts at microenterprise, water purification, and square-foot-gardens going and growing in the months to follow. Back on campus during Fall Semester we reviewed the various project reports, assessed our strengths and weaknesses, and began to plan for the future.

New strategies become the additional phases of our work in subsequent years. We continued to design innovations and recruit new volunteer managers, as well as others who went to Haiti for at least a month during each summer. We spent considerable time and energy designing a formal website which offers much more than the previous blog we used at the beginning. We also formed a board of trustees to establish overall planning and policies. It allowed us to finish the final steps of incorporating as a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

During the past nine summers there have been 140-plus volunteers in Haiti including a Haitian student going to college in the U.S. He had willingly given up his studies and visa status to return to Haiti as our in-country leader for the first several years of our Haiti Forward. He coordinated all our projects with NGO partners, as well as managed up to 21 volunteers on the ground at one time. In addition, there were another 20-plus individuals who volunteered back home in the United States. They assisted with recruiting, funding-raising, teaching Haitian culture and so forth. More individuals donated money, including some who could only afford to give five or ten dollars. Thus far, we have generated some \$370,000 since the launch of Haiti Forward.

To lay out a bird's eye view of the organization's labors, the following table summarizes the extent of our first years of services in key areas, although growth continues and the data continue to be collected through 2019.

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## **TABLE 1: PROJECT RESULTS**

*ENGLISH CLASSES:* Over the summers, Haiti Forward volunteers taught approximately 225 English classes. Although this project was not originally in Haiti Forward's plans, upon arrival in the country leaders and volunteers realized that there was a significant demand. Haiti Forward's leadership determined that teaching English would be a worthwhile project that fell within the scope of the organization's mission. News of the free English classes spread via radio and word of mouth. The classes, which are usually held at local schools and churches, were taught every weekday at 6:30 am. The classes were eventually split into beginner and intermediate levels, and more than 300 Haitians attended regularly.

*HYGIENE EDUCATION AND CLEAN WATER:* Hygiene education and clean water were some of the original planned projects of Haiti Forward. Volunteers began planning hygiene lesson plans in the United States before volunteers went to Haiti. Once in Haiti, volunteers teaching the main lesson—malaria—realized that many Haitians already knew what they had planned to teach. So they shifted their focus and developed lessons on other subjects, such as wound care, washing hands, etc. Over time, other projects were implemented that fell under the umbrella of “hygiene.” Water purification systems were set up at various locations around the city. Volunteers helped clean and organize a local hospital in area towns. Feminine hygiene lessons were distributed along with donated kits. Volunteers also traveled to various tent cities with other NPOs to distribute medical and hygiene supplies. Eventually, government organizations were able to install new access to clean water, so that effort has ended.

*MICROFINANCE:* Business education was one of the primary goals of Haiti Forward. Over the years, that aspiration gave rise to the establishment of a community microcredit bank. Haiti Forward leaders have been holding business skills training sessions in villages for almost a decade. They eventually held a business plan competitions and partnered with other microfinance institution to distribute loans. Over time reported repayment rates have ranged from 100% down to about 80%, but many new jobs emerged.

*ORPHANAGE SUPPORT:* Haiti Forward volunteers have routinely worked closely with seven orphanages, routinely visiting more than 160 children each month. Our NGO leadership partnered with a local organization, *Ayuda a Haiti*, to help distribute donated clothing, food and medicine to orphanages.

*SQUARE-FOOT GARDENING:* Square-foot gardening was one of Haiti Forward's earliest projects. One of our main objectives, as outlined in the mission statement, was to provide hands-on education in square-foot gardening. The goal of this project was to give Haitians a chance to grow nutritious vegetables for a fraction of the price they would pay at the market. It would also give them a chance to put organic waste to use by creating compost. Over many summers, more than 410 gardens were planted in surrounding communities.

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During the past decade, our efforts in Haiti were undertaken with many difficulties, generally much worse than other projects that my students and I had carried out in earlier years with other countries. In the first year we had almost daily aftershocks which frightened the Haitian people, as well as our volunteers. The sweltering heat was almost unbearable each summer. For the first few years we lived in a house without electricity (hence no fans or lights). The only way to shower was to fill large buckets with cold water downstairs and lug them up to the second floor where a person stands in a bathtub and pours the water over oneself. We hired several local Haitian women to do the cooking and house cleaning, as well as a man to guard the house while we were out working all day. The results? Nearly all volunteers had a bit of sickness, mostly consisting of the usual Third World bodily adjustments to different climate, meals, and so forth. With respect to crime, we were robbed of a few cameras and cell phones taken while we were out of the house doing service projects among the poor!

Even though I was the lead researcher and professor, I became ill with Dengue Fever on one of my summer trips in Haiti. It's a mosquito-borne viral disease occurring in tropical areas. I had taken the requisite meds to protect me from malaria and more, but somehow got sick anyway. Returning to the USA for my fall university responsibilities, I soon became very ill. I had to

cancel my teaching load and stay in bed for several months while dealing with my symptoms of high fever, rash, and muscle and joint pain. The only treatments were fluids and pain-relievers.

Over the past decade, our team and I have collected considerable data from Forward Haiti's programs including a 102 page report by an independent team of graduate students who did not go to Haiti, but instead acted as third party researchers. The diagnosis of our years reveals both positives and negatives. This outside group used "Program Theory Assessment" methods, specifically a *logic model* which lays out the expected sequence of steps going from program services to client outcomes. They assessed each of Haiti Forward's projects by asking guiding questions such as those below to develop the evaluation:

### **Key Evaluation Questions**

- Inputs:* What are resources or investments that go into the program?
- Activities:* What actions, processes, events, services, products, technologies, or other elements will be used to implement your project?
- Outputs:* What are the activities, services, events and products that reach people who participate or who are targeted?
- Outcomes:* What initial and later changes or improvements in learning, awareness, knowledge, and attitudes will have occurred under direct influence of the activities?

After each summer's intervention, we would return home to our jobs and studies, but continue to move Haiti Forward toward a better future.

Unfortunately, today Haiti still suffers (Oxfam). Many families were broken up and there were a number of attempts by foreigners to take some of the 750,000 children affected by the quake away from parents and out of the country. More than half a million people continued to be displaced, living in crowded camps under plastic tarps that were disintegrating. Shelter, schools, and other services were lacking for the masses. The government itself was crushed structurally when its office buildings were destroyed, and still today many of its operations occur in temporary facilities. Haitians lack opportunities for education, nor do they have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Cleaning up the massive amounts of debris is painstakingly slow (or nonexistent). But rebuilding has continued and it is wonderful to see the progress over the decade.

There have been a series of other unfortunate events that have made things difficult over the time period. There have been hurricanes that flooded parts of the country and exacerbated conditions of those in tent cities. Then a plague of cholera broke out in Haiti and the disease quickly spread everywhere, resulting in a hundred thousand ill and 2,500 more deaths. There have been huge political crises after various presidential elections which included guns and machetes, as well as acrimonious debates and the spreading of blame for Haiti's misfortunes. In 2016 Haiti was struck by Hurricane Matthew which leveled entire communities and caused an upsurge in the ongoing cholera epidemic which was introduced to the island earlier. Even by 2017, around 7 percent of Haiti's population (around 800,000 people) had been affected with cholera, and 9,480 Haitians had died. Collectively, such difficulties made aid and rebuilding activities either slow terribly or grind to a halt.

Making things complicated in 2018, there was a new 6.0 earthquake that hit the island, damaging or destroying 17,000 homes, as well as schools, businesses and churches. Unfortunately in July 2018, the government announced it would eliminate subsidies, allowing fuel prices to increase by up to 50 percent. It led to widespread protests and the worst civil unrest the country had seen in years. A resurgence of gang violence has led to further instability (Human Rights Watch, 2018). During that same year Donald Trump criticized immigrants from what he condescendingly called "S-Hole Countries," including Haiti, adding to the mental and emotional suffering of Haitians in the United States as well as the country of Haiti. It caused days of rioting across the island nation (Dawsey, 2018).

In the time since 2010's disaster, there have been numerous aid projects from the United Nations, the governments of France and Canada, USAID, and more. Big name Do-Gooders have spent time and money declaring their personal concerns and help: Bill and Hillary Clinton, Sean Penn who established his own NGO and lived there for months, Matt Damon who has invested in creating large new garment factories to produce apparel for world markets, and more. On the down side, thousands of Haitians ultimately fled to Latin America, and many now eke out an existence along the Tijuana, Mexico border hoping to eventually gain entrance to the United States for a better future. I've met with and interviewed Haitians from the caravans of 2018-19 arriving in Mexico and been disappointed the suffering is still so great. Late that same year, a federal judge blocked U. S. President Donald Trump's decision to terminate Temporary

Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians beginning in 2019, which would affect an estimated 60,000 Haitians who were permitted after the 2010 earthquake to stay in the U.S. (Human Rights Watch, 2018)

Since the earthquake in 2010, Haiti's politics have also been fraught with conflict and disruption. There have been eight different prime ministers in the decade, as well as four presidents in an era fraught with campaigns fights, riots, and even handguns distributed to secure people's votes for various candidates. Such crises and physical dangers were not only extremely troubling to the Haitian people as they damaged the fragile economy and created numerous crises for potential outside investors. They likewise slowed our NGO efforts to help build capacity in the towns we labored in to re-establish improvements.

Yet we have labored on, committed to continue our efforts to help the Haitian people. We are digging deeper and spreading our impacts broader each summer. Of course, the challenges are still huge and we know full well nothing about this massive tragedy will be easily fixed. Our ultimate promise is to help rebuild Haiti for the long term.

### **Challenges and Weaknesses**

As I end this paper, I want to add several caveats regarding Haiti Forward and the briefly-mentioned earlier social ventures highlighted at this paper's beginning. Lest these cases appear to all be "sweetness and light," I should acknowledge we have faced many problems.

First, some difficulties came down from "above," as university administrators tried to block, or at least diminish our efforts. They issued uninformed bureaucratic policies with virtually no understanding about our mission, work, or our safety protocols. They heavy-handedly ruled that no faculty or students were to raise money for Haiti on campus, start any programs, or travel to Haiti. As a result, many recruiting ads and posters across campus were torn down due to rigid decrees in an apparent attempt to block students from seeking to improve the world.

Second, Haiti Forward's recruiting of more volunteers has not been hugely successful. In other words, we have operated at about the same level each summer with a mix of new volunteers and a few returnees from previous summers. As near as we can figure, the huge national media coverage of the Haiti crisis has gradually diminished the amount of energy and interest in

volunteers going to serve Haiti in our rebuilding programs each season. Like most Americans, college students may be quite fickle regarding helping those who suffer in a crisis. Also, the improving U.S. economy appears to have attracted more students to seek corporate internships while out of school and/or jobs as they graduate. Over time, less news coverage has also led to fewer donors to Haiti Forward's programs.

A third challenge had to do with physical dangers of this kind of work. Though safety abroad has always been my No. 1 priority among the many social enterprises we have launched, several of them in various nations have had incidents that resulted in robbery. For example, with an older NGO, we were forced to pull out of Guatemala when that country became increasingly beset by crime and *narcotraficante* violence. We were robbed at gunpoint several times after withdrawing hundreds of dollars from our bank account. Likewise, we had to not return to Haiti for a short period during the presidential elections as we hoped.

Other facets of our "dark side" regarding social entrepreneurship include the difficult struggles to raise donations in the context of the ongoing U.S. economic recession of 2010-11. Also, using college students meant that we would have a high degree of turnover as volunteers returned to summer school or jobs. Thus, we were always adjusting for new participants with different skill sets. At times we may have been our own worst enemy since even though we tried to be selective, some of these university-age social entrepreneurs were young, at times naïve, and lacked management skills that only come with years of experience. In addition, the realities of sometimes initiating social innovations as a response to a crisis such as Hurricane Mitch or the Haitian earthquake always have their own unique difficulties in terms of such things as road conditions to get around in-country, crime, political unrest, and the emotional pain of those who survive disasters.

I have always sought to try and create a climate of experimentation in these NGO start-ups. The basic idea has often been to begin by generating multiple tactics and solutions. Next, they can be attempted and tested, one at a time, little by little. But I always seek to not become too invested in any single tool or method. Thus, if the first thing does not work, fine. We just toss it aside and try the next one.

Another weakness of our Haiti programs was that at times our strategizing may have overlooked a vital point or two, led to groupthink, interfered with our ability to manage our time effectively, or ignored subtle data we should have seen. Indeed, the practice of social entrepreneurship needs a good deal of critical analysis so that we as practitioners will hopefully be able to achieve better results in the future than we have in the past.

## **Conclusions**

In spite of Haiti Forward's weaknesses, however, there were and are significant successes. I hope that this case indicates that social innovation actions can succeed and have genuine impacts, even those designed and implemented by university professors and students. I think they suggest mechanisms for taking leading-edge managerial principles and concepts from academic university environments and applying them to current societal ills. Yet these social entrepreneurial models need to be integrated with new visions, radical interventions and best practices from the sectors of business and social science so as to generate innovative methodologies for fighting poverty at the Bottom-of-the-Pyramid and building sustainable communities.

Through more such processes, pro-poor applications of social entrepreneurship may transform academia into more relevant and real world approaches to education. By cooperating among multiple disciplines and with private sector companies, we will see more ethical and socially-responsible firms as they serve society's have-nots. At the same time NGOs using MBAs and social science students may benefit by more rapidly achieving scale, collaborating with other organizations to accelerate their efforts, and developing enterprise cultures of problem-solving. The resulting synergies from such innovations and partnerships has the potential for producing transformative processes for organizational design and strategic implementation of social enterprises.

Lastly, my hope is that this paper has practical impacts as a sort of invitation or call to action for university professors and students to accelerate the social entrepreneurship movement throughout higher education. Although students may seem young and somewhat naïve, they are becoming the next wave of genuine changemakers. Today's Millennials are accelerating their impacts as social entrepreneurs who actually walk the talk. "Daring to Care with Passion and Compassion"

captures well the emphasis of my work, indeed my life. I hope this becomes an inspiring story of how for 30-plus years graduate students from a range of disciplines, along with faculty, managers and their corporations, have designed and launched social enterprises, primarily utilizing the university as an incubator that has spread around the Third World. If we can do this at my university, I imagine a number of other schools with more sophistication, larger numbers, more money, and greater global perspectives, can do even more. My ultimate objective in this article is to inform and maybe inspire individuals at other schools to see new possibilities for launching their own unique approaches to the growing social entrepreneurship movement across the globe.

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