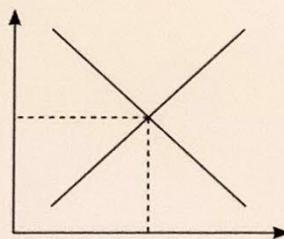


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Stewardship, Sustainability, Inequality and Climate Change

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Abstract: It is abundantly clear that the world faces a global calamity if climate change is not addressed in new, major ways by all countries. This paper addresses several of the author's personal experiences regarding this crisis. After briefly highlighting academic sources on the issue, we summarize three small NGO start up cases and their efforts to respond to natural disasters by reducing inequalities. Finally, a plea is made for better, more sane efforts by everyone on the critical issues of climate, inequality, and stewardship. The plea is for nations and their governments, businesses, religious organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to all more strategically and assertively ramp up goals, plans and systems for a better global future.

Keywords: Climate Change, Stewardship, Non-Governmental Organizations, Microcredit

Literature Perspectives on Climate Change

For decades, data and theoretical constructs have been emerging regarding what used to be called “Global Warming,” before it was reframed as “Climate Change” when the original assumptions revealed that climate was not a linear path growing from increasingly hot temperatures alone, but from a range of phenomena that made their assertions more complex. Thus, the writings of economists and climate scientists years ago consist of multiple, yet debatable studies by researchers such as Callendar in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society* (1961), theoretical physicist Kaplan (1958), and the physicist Platts in *Scientific American* (1959). In particular, Platts offered the first suggestion that greenhouse gases could dramatically increase the amount of CO₂ due to rising industrial production in developed nations. These three each offered pioneering conceptual frameworks and early examinations of potential shifts in the world's atmosphere toward hotter land masses, oceans and air, eventually dubbed the “Greenhouse Effect.” However, it took four more decades until 2001 when scientific consensus was fully agreed upon by the majority of the world's researchers.

The emergence of new data and arguments, increased, thanks to the availability of computerized programs that could track shifts in oceanic plankton, the dramatic growing presence of methane in the air, evolutionary changes in continental ice sheets, and exponential increases in carbon dioxide. All this led to reframing the issue as not simply the phenomenon of global *warming*, per se, but of multiple and complex climate changes of various kinds. These pioneering views include the studies of eminent figures such Keeling (2008) on climate extremes, Arritt and Rummukainen on climate modeling (2011), and studies at the Max Planck Institute by Jungclaus and colleagues, among many others (2013).

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They confirm such changes as the fact that many extreme temperature conditions (hot and cold) are becoming more common. Global precipitation is continually shifting, leading to both more and less rain and snow. Tropical cyclone activity has increased during the past 20 years with greater storm intensity, a measure of strength, duration, and frequency. Average drought conditions across nations throughout much of the world are becoming major problems, whether in poor, sub-Saharan Africa or wealthy regions in California. Ocean coasts and river flooding increase and decrease in frequency and magnitude, varying by global regions. Climate change is defined not only by varying average temperatures and precipitation, but also by the type, frequency, duration, and intensity of weather events such as heat waves, cold spells, storms, floods, and droughts. Climate changes affect ecosystems by altering the water cycle, human habitats, animal behavior such as nesting and migration patterns, and the timing of natural processes such as flower blooms. Changes that disrupt the functioning of ecosystems may increase the risk of harm or even extinction for some species. More frequent wildfires are more intense and can significantly disrupt ecosystems, damage property, put people and communities at risk, and create air pollution problems even far away from the source. This is the reality we humans face in 2021.

A major interest for this author is how changing climate may alter human life, especially in communities of the global poor. Linking the two problems is increasingly being studied by experts as the world faces the emerging crises of climate impacts on people already experiencing inequality. Addressing climate problems and their connectedness to economic inequities has been extensively explored with studies from prominent academicians. They include literature such as that from London School of Economics, MIT professor, and best-selling author Thomas Piketty (2014) and his colleague, Emmanuel Saez of Harvard, World Bank researchers Hallegatte and Rozenberg (2017), Stanford's Deffenbaugh and Burke (2019), and others. General data on global inequality has been studied by numerous research such as the work of Paul Schultz (1998) in the *Journal of Popular Economics*. Combined with thousands of other studies, such research suggests that today's atmospheric changes are connected with economic problems and inequality for many societies. Growing evidence suggests that climate problems may be facilitating increased human suffering, indeed, the destruction of societies.

For the most part, these diverse experts connect their studies to the deleterious effects that changes in world climate have in tearing at economies everywhere. We briefly highlight a few illustrations of this in Europe, the USA, and the Global South.

The evidence is convincing that 2020 was the hottest year on record, and that various deleterious effects from such changes have accelerated in recent decades. In Europe, the worst flooding in hundreds of years occurred in 2021. Severe droughts and heatwaves over the past 5-7 years is the most extreme in more than 2,000 years. Add to this the toll of early human deaths, forest fires, economic damages from agriculture's decline, and increasing deforestation because of drought, and clearly, things are becoming precarious, according to Carrington (2021). Results suggest such crises

damage human beings, including middle classes and even worse, those barely surviving at the bottom of the social pyramid.

Across the United States, there have been 285 recorded natural disasters in recent years from the shifting climate that each exceeded at least one billion dollars, totaling over \$1.8 trillion. Just last year in 2020 there were 22 different billion-dollar disasters (Smith, 2021). In 2021 so far, there have been unprecedented U.S. wildfires from droughts that have driven hundreds of thousands from their homes and destroyed a million acres, along with numerous houses and businesses in a dozen cities. The entire American West is suffering from the worst drought in some 500 years as farmers lose their crops, wildlife is killed, reservoirs are nearly empty, economies tank, and tourism shrinks. At the same time, 2021 has witnessed devastating, freezing rain in places like Texas, cyclones, hailstorms, tornadoes, heatwaves, and terrible hurricanes impacting Southeastern states and going up the East Coast that have flooded subways and torn away bridges and roads, while causing thousands of deaths, power outages, business closings, and collapsed infrastructure.

In developing economies, the situation is worse. Fragility, droughts, floods, civil conflicts, and the displacement of millions because of climate change is taking a heavy toll on the masses. The U.S. military describes these effects of climate change as “threat multipliers” and catalysts for conflict, in the U.S. State Department’s “Global Fragility Strategy.” With federal partners such as USAID and other agencies, climate and environmental degradation are identified as key drivers of such fragility, often leading to societal breakdowns, political conflicts, hunger and increasing levels of poverty (U.S. Government, 2020).

I’ve personally seen the example of how Al Qaeda has exploited environmental deterioration in sub-Saharan Africa by moving its forces south into nations like Mali, taking territory, crops, slaves, while closing schools and government operations as the depressing heat and lack of water suffocates everything. French and American security experts suggest the terrorists are exploiting openings for recruitment and influence. Such difficulties led to a Malian coup d’état in the past year. Actually, there were two such military disruptions within 24 months.

Internationally, extreme weather contributes to violence and conflict and in fragile states leading to the displacement of 80 million people from their homes, the highest level in human history. Perhaps by 2050, over 140 million people may be driven from home because of scarcity and conflicts over water, food, and climate-driven natural disasters. Making it all worse, perhaps by 2070, some 20 percent of the planet could be too hot to be habitable.

On the other hand, global changes suggest rising ocean levels are endangering large cities like the shipping ports of Mumbai, Guangzhou, and Rio de Janeiro, which when they fully occur would shred the economies of millions of people and businesses. With tens of millions of small or microentrepreneurs already losing incomes, hundreds of millions more are increasingly vulnerable.

Regarding human health, we're seeing ever-increasing forms of disease, some of them clearly attributable to climate change. While COVID-19 has not yet been clearly tied to climate issues, other problems like Zika and malaria have been.

With such a backdrop of climate challenges, this paper now turns to the author's action research efforts in seeking to analyze and reduce the devastating effects of negative weather impacts on the Third World poor who are largely victims of such destruction, including field work in Honduras, Mali, and Thailand. In essence, this paper asks what individuals can do using their own skills, passions, and resources to perhaps reduce the human suffering and inequality effects in several poor nations?

Hands-On "Micro" Attempts to Alleviate Inequality from Climate Change

In the pages that follow, we draw on the author's action research efforts in seeking to analyze and reduce the devastating effects of negative weather impacts on the Third World poor who are largely victims of such destruction, including field work in Honduras, Mali, and Thailand. These three nations cases show ways of working to practice stewardship and counter injustice because of climate change. Each will be briefly highlighted.

In my courses and global work, I often draw on the concept of Stewardship to undergird efforts for building better societies. Dictionary usages define the term as the acceptance or assignment of responsibility to shepherd and safeguard the valuables of others. For this paper, the concept simply means we should have a sense of responsibility, a commitment to take care of the earth. Many recognize the word by drawing on the Biblical injunction for believers to be good stewards of God's work after he created the earth. In a way, it refers to the role individuals and communities play in caring for and seeking to manage our common natural and cultural wealth, both now and for future generations. More specifically for my purposes, it can be defined as efforts to create and nurture responsible practices for reducing global warming, educating members of society to feel and practice care, convincing business to care for Mother Earth's land, seas and air, and to aid impoverished nations, in particular, to not only survive, but thrive, rather than become beset with suffering and economic decline.

This ideal of stewardship undergirds the work I have done mobilizing American college students to engage in service to the poor and disenfranchised, especially those suffering the ravages of climate change and its violent, numerous devastations.

With the above definitions, we turn to three instances of aiding poor communities damaged by effects of climate's destruction.

Case 1: HELP International in Honduras

This non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) HELP International (2021), was created at the Marriott School of Business (2021) in Utah, USA where I taught MBAs for four decades in using business models for social change at BYU (Brigham Young University, 2021). One of the earliest began in spring 1999 in response to the late 1998 Hurricane Mitch disaster. Due to climate change, Mitch flooded large areas of Central America, leaving thousands of dead, many missing, and a million people homeless. The country of Honduras was hardest hit, with experts declaring it had been set back half a century. I decided that we could reframe my soon-to-start course and so we launched HELP Honduras initially. But as we spread to other parts of Central America and beyond, it was soon dubbed HELP International.

After considerable debate, I proposed a new BYU course titled OB 490: “Becoming a Global Change Agent/Social Entrepreneur.” It included students from such programs as MBA, MPA, MACC, management undergraduate students, and others from across campus in the social sciences, engineering, law school, and so on. As the semester of January 1999 began, I inquired of students as to whether we should feel any sense of stewardship to reach out and help the victims of Hurricane Mitch. After considerable debate, we agreed that such a proposition had merit, and our learning and work began.

We formed the class as a “self-organizing system” into eight teams to cover various aspects of the project. Each team did research on their topics, including learning Spanish, raising money, building relationships with NGOs in Honduras, establishing a game plan, and more. After three months, each group presented to and trained their colleagues, and prepared documentation for a volunteer participant manual. The strategy was designed so that after the semester ended, the first team of leaders would fly to Honduras to lay the groundwork for other teams that would be established in-country and they would also arrange housing and other logistical things that would be needed in the coming months.

Hurricane Mitch had devastated much of Honduras, as well as other regions of Central America during late 1998. As a response, the course was a dynamic, participatory experience. All told, some 79 individuals, either registered for the course, or attended twice a week as auditing students. We formed teams to plan the logistics of going to Honduras, where the needs were great, and to explore what microfinance institutions (MFIs) were in the country, which ones we could partner with, and determine additional relief and humanitarian aid we might offer to poor families.

University administrators, faculty colleagues and community professionals generally opposed this project. They claimed I would not get more than a half dozen students to go, we would not raise sufficient funds, as well as their assertion that large relief organizations would take care of everything. In their view, we should simply stay comfortable on campus, and let USAID, the U.N., World Bank, churches and the Red Cross solve people’s pain.

But they were wrong. We raised \$116,000, sent 47 volunteers to live in Honduras working for the summer, and we created 46 new communal banks with our partner, FINCA International. We understood much about how climate change was wreaking havoc globally, especially with impoverished regions where floods were growing, jobs were diminishing, schools were destroyed, and poverty was slashing people's quality of life. We also gave FINCA \$40,000 to recapitalize village bank groups whose microenterprises were destroyed by Hurricane Mitch. Thus, in reality, we helped to create a total of almost a hundred village banks all together. These young social entrepreneurs became quite skilled at generating social impacts very rapidly.

They selected the name H.E.L.P Honduras for the new NGO (meaning “Help Eliminate Poverty”).” Arriving in Central America, we were shocked at the destruction's impacts, even later after a few months' time. Even though we had seen TV footage, read press reports, and searched the internet to gain a comprehensive understanding of the crisis, we were not prepared for what we encountered in-country. Many hurricane survival victims were cramped into temporary lean-to shelters, make-shift “houses” of blue plastic tarps that were gradually being shredded by the strong blasts of evening winds. Dead bodies were still being found under the bushes along the banks of the main river that meandered through the capital city, Tegucigalpa.

Buzzards high up in the trees hovered around, waiting to get at the next torsos of rotting human flesh they knew would soon appear. Bridges and other sections of the great Pan American Highway were destroyed. There were numerous overturned automobiles, trashed downtown buildings that looked as though they had been thrown during a game of pick-up sticks, and other signs of devastation and garbage odors abounded. People were afraid, primarily women and children, especially during the night. Every time a bit of rain began falling, people ran screaming for help and safety, worried Mitch was returning to hurt them more. Hundreds of thousands of Mitch survivors struggled as they tried to cope with the psychological difficulties of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSDs).

In this situation of human anguish, we began our labors. While some experts told us nothing could be done, in fact much was accomplished. Out of the mess and the mud and the homelessness, insights were acquired. HELP volunteers lived with poor families, paying them a per diem amount for room and board which aided in the Hondurans' financial recovery. Over 20,000 hours of volunteer service were provided—to women and children in refugee camps, to shoveling out the mud, washing the walls, disinfecting them, painting and re-opening village schools, to providing manpower to local governments—cleaning streets, rebuilding bridges, assisting groups of peasant farmers who suddenly had no tools, no seed, and no fertilizer. Many hours were given in loving aid at orphanages, to the children and the Catholic nuns who were overwhelmed by the growing number of new orphans. HELP purchased tools for farmers so they could jump-start farm preparations on their tiny plots and be ready for the next growing season, and we also bought them fertilizer and seed.

Honduras, declared the multilateral aid institutions, was set back five decades by Hurricane Mitch. Seventy percent of the country's infrastructure was damaged. Nearly 90 percent of its agricultural produce was obliterated, and the large multinational fruit companies pulled out. Throughout Central America 20,000 people died, an equal amount was missing and a million were homeless. During that first summer, HELP Honduras' microcredit efforts created some 800 jobs benefiting nearly 4,000 individuals. Beyond microcredit, we taught computer skills, brought older street children into care centers, and served in understaffed rural medical clinics. One young BYU student even delivered five babies!

While we couldn't do everything to stop the destruction of climate change, we could do a few small acts of caring and effectiveness. We sought donated relief supplies from church groups in Utah, Idaho, Arizona and California. We took toys to impoverished children in the Mitch refugee camps, including lots of soccer balls and air pumps, which we gave away. We delivered quilts and baby blankets lovingly made by the hands of women throughout communities in the Rocky Mountains. We took school kits--crayons, paper, pencils, pen, tape, scissors, etc., to give children when we got their schools cleaned, reopened and ready. We assembled hundreds of newborn kits for expectant Honduran mothers. We also put together hygiene kits for refugee families—soap, towels, toothpaste and toothbrushes, washcloths, hair shampoo, and so on.

The results? Our social entrepreneurial efforts, new capital, training materials and organizing skills were supplemented with a host of other humanitarian aid products and services to help the poor get back on their feet. The needs were considerable for the thousands of families that HELP was able to assist. The result was a vision these business school students gained that, while they couldn't do everything, they could at least do something. Each had the capacity to make a difference. They learned the importance of preparation, financing, and skill acquisition. Perhaps most importantly, they learned that young college students can become empowered to serve the poor and generate long-term impacts that may eventually become sustainable. By doing so, they began to have a personal life-changing experience that would continue to be played out as other Third World crises occur in the future. For many such students, the ripple effect of HELP Honduras has continued on into the rest of their lives as social entrepreneurs.

From that humble beginning has come a much-expanded role for HELP International in spreading to other countries, gradually offering a wider range of products and services. HELP grew within BYU as a sort of business incubator where we had computers, copy machines, phones, as well as meeting facilities for recruiting and training the bulk of our volunteers. But it eventually became a university spin-off with its own small, but paid staff, office setup, and independence from the Marriott School. This allowed us to take risks, be more innovative, and solicit a growing number of college age volunteers from other schools that now totals over 3,200 students who have worked for a summer assisting the "poorest of the poor" in their struggles from injustice, inequality, and other deleterious effects of bad weather, flooding, drought, civil conflicts, desertification, and more, in the following nations in our early years: 2000 – Projects in Honduras, Peru, Venezuela, El Salvador;

2001 – Projects in Peru, Honduras, El Salvador; 2002 – Projects in Bolivia, Guatemala, El Salvador; 2003 – Projects in El Salvador, Guatemala; 2004 – Projects in Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador; 2005 – Projects in Guatemala, El Salvador; 2006 – Projects in Uganda, Guatemala, El Salvador. Many have continued on throughout Asia, Latin America, and Africa, those buffeted by climate catastrophe. As of August 2021, HELP had assisted impoverished communities in some 23 countries.

The types of social entrepreneurial projects HELP has offered include microentrepreneurial training, square foot gardens, house construction, school teaching, rural health clinics, microcredit loans, orphanage and street children care, teaching English, constructing Lorena stoves and other appropriate low tech village technologies, teaching computer skills, starting women’s cooperatives, and so forth.

More information about the ongoing work of HELP International over two decades can be found at Woodworth (HELP, 2020).

Case 2: Mali Rural Village Inequality

In the *arrondissement* of Ouelessebouyou in southern Mali, West Africa, my colleagues and students have been committed for over 30 years to address the ugly effects of climate change, primarily due to several decades of a terrible drought in which, while temperatures have continued to soar, desertification of the Sahara worsens and spreads its tentacles further southward into Mali. This phenomenon reduces poverty and disempowers struggling villagers in an area that has been one of the three poorest nations on earth. For centuries, the Malian people have lived in mud huts with thatched roofs, lacking electricity, healthcare, schools, jobs and many of the features of modern society. But with recent decades of drought, lack of water and irrigation, and being disconnected to the larger, but still impoverished capital of Bamako, dozens of villages languish.

So it was, in the mid-1980s, a group of citizens in Salt Lake City, Utah formed an NGO to learn more of the plight of Malians, especially women and children. And thus, the Ouelessebouyou Alliance was borne. Since then, college students, doctors, farmers, engineers, schoolteachers, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and Christian religious congregations and Utah Muslim societies, along with other charities have mobilized their talents and financial resources to learn more and offer help. Structured as a partnership with Africa, many changes have borne fruit through three decades.

Engineers, for instance, designed new reservoirs to capture precious water during the limited rainy season for storage through the year. They dug new village wells in some 40 communities, drinking wells for people and farm animals, and garden wells for agriculture. With simple designs, wells could be established for \$2,500 each rather than the big, “gold-plated” wells proposed by Africare at a cost of \$35,000 each. Other technicians helped plan and construct new schools with 4-5 simple rooms each in every village so children from age 6 up to 14 would finally have the chance at an education.

Later, solar power technology was installed so that not only could the dark dreary rooms have more light in schoolkids' classes during the day, but adults could attend literacy courses at night.

Further details about the Alliance's three decades of stewardship involving the poor in Africa can be accessed through the author's research published in the *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, "Handout or Hand up? A Social Entrepreneurship NGO Case in Mali" (Woodworth, Mali, 2020).

Over the last several years, Alliance volunteers with professional expertise as engineers and medical doctors from Utah built a rural pharmacy to dispense medicines. Also, healthcare workers (a male and female) in each village were taught to provide simple first aid, teach the need for handwashing, dispense mosquito netting for every household, and more. Today the statistics document the improved levels of reading and writing capacities of most children, increased health and nutrition, the empowerment of women with their own cooperatives and microenterprises, and more. People are living longer, healthier lives. While the climate has not improved, at least now there are many wells for consumption, green gardens producing better fruit and vegetables, and new conservation methods encouraged by the government. Poverty still exists, but at a lower scale than decades ago. Infant and maternal mortality is considerably lower. Literacy rates for adults and children are higher. Inequality is gradually being reduced.

The evidence over more than 30 years of partnering with Malian chiefs and elders, village women, the masses of children and more all attest to the power of long-term sustainability. Clearly, Ouelessebouyou is not yet a utopia, but hundreds of lives have been saved and conditions continue to improve.

Case 3: Thailand's Wave of Hope

Following the tragic Asian tsunami that flooded hundreds of coastal towns and villages along the Indian Ocean in 2004, some 90 students in another social enterprise course of this author felt a sense of moral responsibility and stewardship to help. After quick research into where and what kind of aid was needed most, an innovative new classroom-based NGO was designed and rolled out. The author's earlier success in achieving significant, small-scale impacts through the experiences of creating HELP Honduras proved essential in rolling out this new project. Over the next few years, this start-up not only succeeded in Thailand, but spread to address other needs in Ghana, Paraguay, and more countries.

Students joined together to mount a rescue effort by assisting to rebuild villages in the coastal area of Khao Lak in the Pang-Na province of Thailand over a five-month period. Rather than the destructive waves that wreaked havoc in the region, we called the new NGO, Wave of Hope, signifying a more optimistic future. Volunteers gave thousands of hours of service to many different projects, and also worked with others from around the world. Many spent their days in the hot sun on house rebuilding efforts. They worked in the villages of Tap-Tawan and Lam Pom preparing and

pouring foundations, laying rebar, raising walls, building roofs, and applying plaster finishes. In all they helped in the construction of over fifty houses. A team dug trenches and laid the pipes for a whole new water system to channel clean water into homes for the first time ever.

Ample details of this effort to help Asian victims of the disaster are described in an extensive article titled “Youth-based Social Entrepreneurship: Post-Tsunami Crisis Interventions” in *Social Science Research Network* (Woodworth, 2008). Volunteers built a workshop with new equipment for wood working, and more. It was named “Thaikea,” combining the terms Thailand where the team was serving, along with the big Swedish furniture company, Ikea. They helped build dozens of wooden homes with cement foundations to replace those destroyed by the tsunami. They taught local women how to design and make their own simple furniture, constructing and painting bookshelves, chairs, and play sets for schools, and homes.

Other volunteers helped work on building new boats with local fishermen who lost theirs in the tsunami, a result that wiped out the fishing economy that had lasted for hundreds of years along coastal Thailand. They did so by crafting new simple wooden boats, applying the waterproofing caulk and painting the boats, as well as securing the necessary capital to purchase some 40 motors so livelihoods could return to normal, in fact, to be even better. Also, volunteers taught English in the schools, and to adults who wanted to learn.

Further Wave of Hope NGO management interventions have consisted of the following:

- Action Research
- Process Consultation
- Strategic Direction and Governance Discussions
- Generating Capital Resources
- Branding and Marketing Strategy
- Individual Feedback and Coaching of In-Country Leaders
- Team Building
- Cultural Analysis
- Confrontation and Conflict Resolution
- Other Business Methodologies.

Ultimately, Wave of Hope helped transform a few small Thai villages into the potential for a better future. While floods, rains, earthquakes and tsunami events will continue, a thousand Thai people’s lives have improved dramatically. Villagers who survived have developed capacity-building tools and methods to regain much their lives before the tsunami, and are gradually moving forward into a more sustainable future. Likewise, the values and work ethic of American volunteers from Brigham Young University have more meaning. Wave of Hope added to college students’ education, and generated future lives of service toward humanity. At last count, my students from Wave of Hope

have launched 19 new NGOs of their own, with a dozen still functioning after 16 years. Most volunteers now have strong family lives and decent careers from coast to coast across the USA, as well as others who are doing similarly in their home countries of Europe. Approximately a ten now serve on the boards of trustees of other NGOs.

Conclusion

Together, these three cases above illustrate small ways that individuals can band together to combat the ravages of changing climates and, in the process, diminish the awful power of nature over the global poor. Of course, macro efforts of the “Big Boys,” in large unilateral institutions such as the United Nations with its Sustainable Millennium Goals (SMGs), are inspiring, and the World Bank’s huge capital investments in combating the ravages of climate change are critical.

But I argue that each person needs to take a stand and seek to make a small difference. Such small scale, human-centered strategies that parallel classical literature on more human-centered strategies are needed. These may include the “small is beautiful” work of E.F. Schumacher (1975), concepts for “deschooling society” and “tools for conviviality” of Ivan Illich (1973), Paul Pollak’s “design revolution” methods for using business to get the poor out of poverty (2008), and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Muhammad Yunus (2010), my collaborator in bringing microcredit to millions of impoverished women in Bangladesh and beyond. Each of these social innovators has paved the way to an improved human society. They suggest values and the spirit of stewardship that can help drive a newer, better world.

The three mini cases from our efforts at BYU aren’t examples of huge, national results. But they are examples of “humble,” sustainable, long-lasting social impacts. They show we can each take action to become stewards and counter human suffering, thereby reducing inequality on a small scale, at least. They suggest that each of us has the capacity to engage in service to and in solidarity with the poor in building long-term, viable strategies so they can develop their own better futures, both for themselves now and for future generations.

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