

Bottom-Up Methods for Combating Poverty and Inequality: Reducing the Gaps Between Haves and Have-Nots

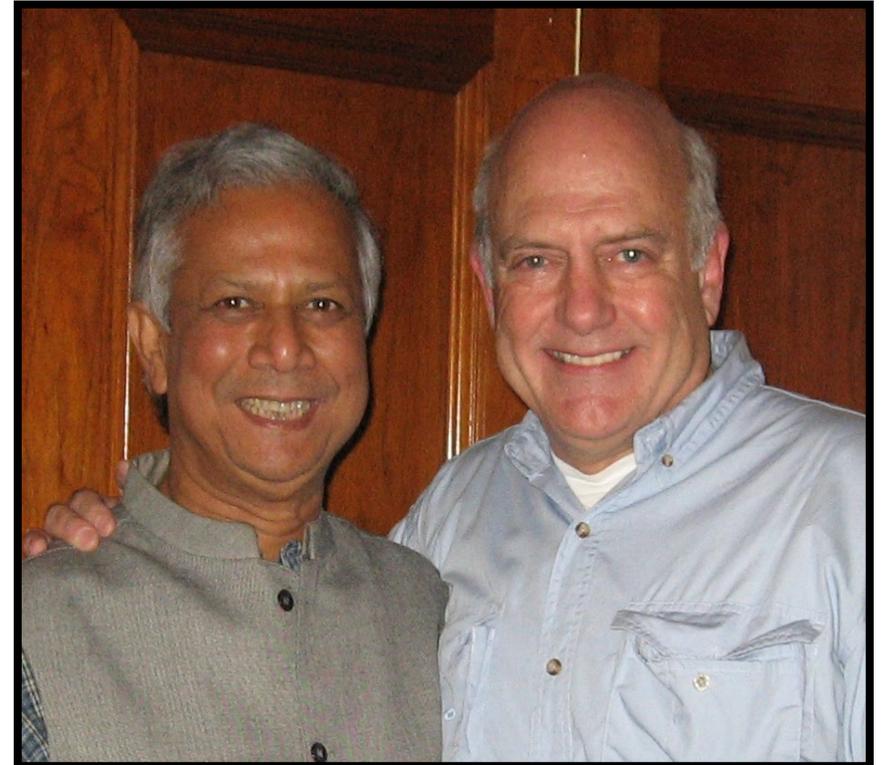
Warner Woodworth, PhD
University of Utah

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Creating Social & Economic Impacts

(W.W. & Muhammad Yunus of Grameen)

- ❑ Acknowledge my collaborator, Dr. Yunus
- ❑ My crazy life as a revolutionary, a Social Entrepreneur
- ❑ 41 NGOs, dozens more humanitarian programs/projects
- ❑ Mobilized & trained 3,200 volunteers to 62 nations
- ❑ 12 books, over 200 articles
- ❑ Established BYU's Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance
- ❑ Institutionalized long-term programs with over a hundred global groups
- ❑ Collectively raised \$1.3 billion



Extreme Poverty

- The ugly specter of extreme poverty has afflicted humanity for millennia. Consequences & impacts are manifold.
- Specific factors include suffering from hunger, joblessness, disease, a lack of education, homelessness, civil war, & in particular, the disempowerment of women.
- Thousands of research studies have documented the implications of being poor & subsequent issues of inequality that arises from social injustice & poverty. Gaps between the Haves & Have-Nots continue to assault people's well-being, including that of women, men, & children, the latter being the most vulnerable victims of such difficulties.
- The 2007 worldwide "Great Recession," combined with the 2020-2022 global coronavirus pandemic, made things worse for hundreds of millions of people.

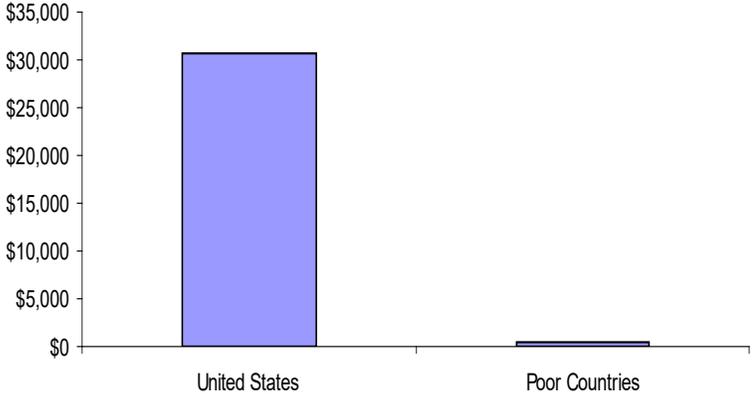
Development From Below



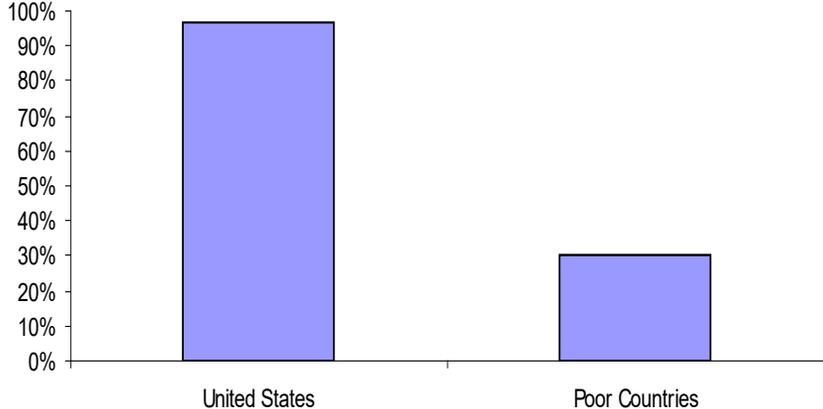
- My paper will spell out critical factors giving rise to what the United Nations articulates as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address issues which lead to disparities between rich & poor, men & women, adults & children, urban living & rural, plus more.
- Rather than top-down, macro approaches by the World Bank, USAID, or the United Nations, we will analyze small, bottom-up interventions.
- Several strategies will be analyzed as counters to reverse the plight of the poor, drawing on the author's four decades of designing interventions that address past & current crises. Multiple tools & methodologies will be examined. They involve the work of U.S. college students, MDs, wealthy donors, public school teachers, entrepreneurs, nurses, professors, & others.

Global Realities: The Great Divide

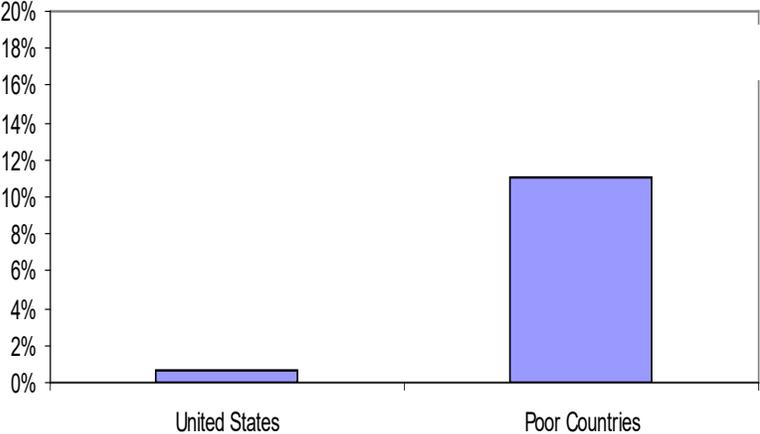
Per Capita Income



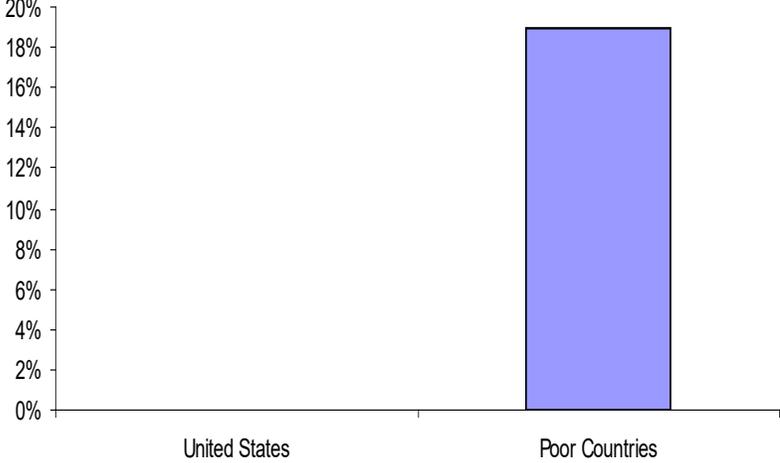
Literacy Rate



Deaths of Children Under 5



Children under 14 in Workforce



What is our stewardship?

Key Social Science Interventions

- Key interventions will be explored, including NGOs I have developed with colleagues to partner with villagers for improving their quality of life. Our work is not done *for* or *to* them, but in *partnership* with them: Needs assessed, alternatives explored, co-planned designs, collaborative implementation.
- Strategies include doing village banking through microfinance, building village schools & educating poor children, installing clean water systems, launching square-foot-gardening techniques, implementing literacy programs for indigenous women, creating rural healthcare systems, establishing methods for social entrepreneurship, organizing worker-owned cooperatives, & more. Over recent decades, we have ensured that such approaches are sustainable for the long-term.
- Our practical & theoretical NGO work in Haiti, Mozambique, India, Honduras, Mali, and elsewhere will be briefly summarized, with particular attention paid to the logic of why & how they have succeeded in raising hundreds of millions of dollars while empowering tens of millions of extremely impoverished families to move up the “food chain” toward greater equality & social justice.
- My paper will conclude with assessing potential additional innovations now emerging that will further strengthen the social & economic impacts analyzed. Each will offer additional steps toward ensuring a better future for those who suffer from both poverty & resulting inequality.



***Global Suffering:
Over 2.5 billion people—
almost half the world's
population--live on less than
\$2 per day***

***A critical need is not being
adequately met...***

5 Mini-Cases

- Mozambique: Care for Life
- Honduras: HELP International
- Haiti: Sustain Haiti
- India: Rising Star Outreach with Lepers
- Mali: Ouelessebougou Alliance

Inspiring students, colleagues, entrepreneurs, home makers, healthcare workers, to leave comforts for the jungle

How we as social scientists may partner with village elders, women & youth in suffering global communities

Using tools to improve the quality of life for the Third World

The Setting

Not done by top-down campus bureaucrats that use university funding for U.S. programs.

Instead, they have been designed & self-financed by professors & supporters seeking authentic learning that build authenticity & empathy for students

They go live among the poor for a semester, a year, or longer



The Schools: BYU & University of Utah



- BYU: A school founded by pioneers who in 1847 fled the USA because of religious persecution; Built 400 pioneer communities in the West; & where I worked as an action researcher at the Marriott School of Business for 3 decades to mobilize students, alumni, & faculty in empowering the poor.

- At times I also taught & recruited volunteers from the University of Utah, Claremont, Michigan, etc., to join our movement

The Strategy

Today I'll describe & analyze several university action research cases in which the author, colleagues, students & business entrepreneur partners in the U.S. designed classroom projects to:

- fight poverty, develop models for implementation through partnerships with the poor
- implement them in the Third World
- after several years, each entity was eventually spun off as a non-governmental organization (NGO)
- The total today is 41 NGOs operating in 62 nations, each with indigenous staff

Marriott School as Incubator for Social Change

Areas of Focus:

- Facilitate development of students as international social entrepreneurs
- Use academic work to build a better world
- Design action research methods
- Apply concepts/theories to human problems
- Empower students as global change agents
- Foster microcredit, microentrepreneurship, as well as train individuals in nonprofit & social innovation skills through the Ballard Center

Classroom Theory & Design

Projects started in my courses where I use international development theories plus practical business models & concepts such as microfinance, conflict & negotiation, change management, leadership, social innovation, grassroots entrepreneurship, motivation theories, planning, decision making, economic development, & cross-cultural management.

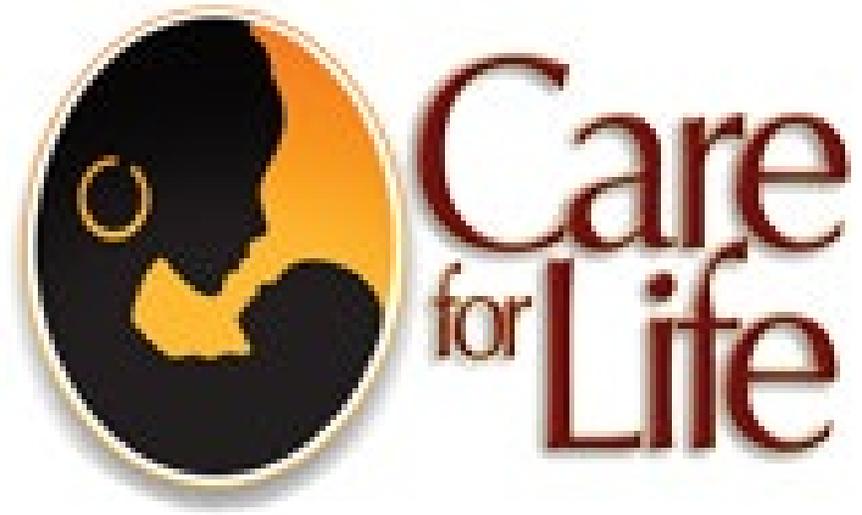
Teams of students & I design projects & then roll them out, recruiting others from across campus to become engaged, especially from the social sciences, but also law, medicine, & public administration.

The following slides describe several NGO strategies

Case 1: Mozambique Care for Life (CFL)

- Centuries of Portuguese colonial exploitation
- Inter-African conflicts
- Internal civil war between Frelimo & Renamo movements
- HIV-Aids crisis
- Families decimated
- Launch by my Brazilian students & Arizona donors





How to Strengthen an Impoverished War-torn Society?

- Explore the problems
- Inquire about openness to change
- Do a needs analysis
- Generate financial resources
- Mobilize U.S. development experts
- Work with villagers as partners
- Create a climate of experimentation
- Work slowly and evaluate constantly
- Realize the people must own these efforts

CFL: Problems of Poverty, Lack of Education, Family Dysfunctions, Psychological Depression



Processes for Rebuilding Communal Institutions & with Strategies that Move the Beira Region to a Better future?

Stages:

- Entry, exploring possibilities with locals in a single village
- Design early steps
- Experimentation
- Ongoing evaluation
- Change through one person, one family, one village at a time
- Modification & replication in other villages
- Scaling up projects into ongoing programs

CFL Village Entry

- Humble development
- Initial inquiry
- No donations or handouts
- Explore partnership of equal responsibility
- Self management of community leaders
- Joint empowerment for men & women
- Ongoing project assessments
- Outside data collection weekly
- Feedback results to all

Design of Family Preservation Program

Eight Areas of Emphasis



Sampling of Results:

Children 6-18 Attending School

- Before FPP - 40%
- After FPP - 74%

Drinking Treated Water

- Before FPP - 16%
- After FPP - 84%

Sleeping Under Mosquito Nets

- Before FPP - 27%
- After FPP - 93%



Case 2: HELP Honduras (*Help ELiminate Poverty*)



Honduras has Struggled in Past Decades

- U.S. foreign policy exploitation
- Juntas, revolutions
- Economic collapse
- Civil conflicts & power struggles

HELP International Began Assisting the Honduran Poor in 1999



I led a team of 46 college students to launch innovative programs in Central America

HELP's Basic Principles



Partnerships



Local Solutions



Redefining teaching and learning

Mutual Understanding



Self-Reliance



Vision



Train and Mobilize
Volunteers



Our mission is to provide a life-changing experience through service to the poor

Students Were Trained to Offer Basic Microenterprise Skills & Loans



“Oscar” worked hard to feed his family & save enough money to buy tools & equipment for a metal furniture shop. He heard about HELP International & applied to participate. After he attended small business management classes, a HELP consultant helped him plan for expansion & receive a loan. His business tripled in 6 months & kept growing to have 11 staff.



Other Students Learned How to Teach English as a Second Language



HELP Continues Expanding to New Countries

(3,100 students from 28 universities)

- Latin America: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, El Salvador, Brazil
- Africa: Uganda, Kenya, Liberia
- Fiji in South Pacific, Belize in Caribbean, Refugee camps in Greece, etc.
- Asia: Nepal, India, Thailand
- Learning from & serving the poor, training microentrepreneurs, aiding farmers, working in orphanages & rural health clinics, teaching Square-Foot-Gardening, English & computer skills, volunteering in schools, building homes, etc.

Case 3: Sustain Haiti Crisis Intervention

- Following the 2010 Haiti Earthquake
- Small group of BYU students designed a response: Rebuilding orphanages & homes, microenterprise for jobs, clean water access, reopen schools, square foot gardens, etc.



Rebuilding Rural Haitian Schools



Sustain Haiti Built Clean Drinking Water Systems in Towns & Trained Square Foot Gardening Methods



Case 4: India Rising Star Outreach

Founded by my friend Becky Douglas in Georgia, she sought my students' help to design & roll out a new NGO that serves lepers.



Tamil Nadu Region's Leper Colonies



The Indian leprosy colonies have tragically emerged as refugee camps for people forced to leave their homes & often their families after being diagnosed with leprosy. In the recent words of one patient: “Even our own parents & siblings despise us.” Seeking relief from the bitter social stigma, they gather together in remote places where they do their best to cobble out a meager living.



Rising Star Solidarity Group Meetings to do Microfinance with U.S. Donors

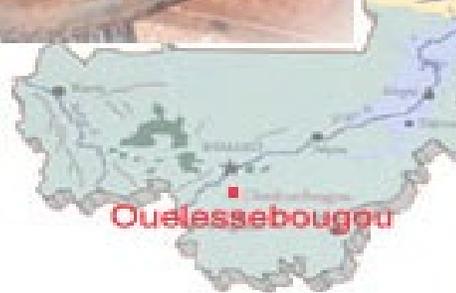
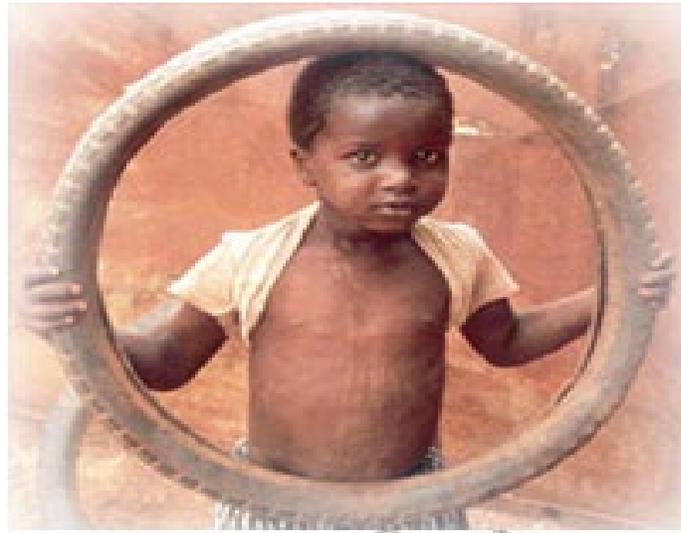


Helping Design, Raise Funds, Hire Staff & Serve Lepers Who Suffer is Meaningful



Case 5: Mali

Ouelessebougou Alliance (OA)



Women's Struggles in Mali

- Poor
- Village realities
- Lack incomes & jobs
- Hardworking
- Abused
- HIV-AIDS



OA Microfinance

The Alliance has set up a revolving loan fund—MALI FREE—which increases village access to capital in order to help them become self-reliant. Thirteen villages are offered business loans annually to support income generating projects. All current loan projects are for entire communities, with proceeds directly supporting the education & health needs in their villages.

Current projects include goat farms, grain banks, fertilizer projects (for cotton production) & other business ventures.

OA: Rural Projects

Alliance: private, non-profit org focusing on humanitarian & development in the Ouelessebougou region

Since 1985, the Alliance has worked cooperatively with villagers to:

Foster rural agriculture

Immunize children

Dig drinking wells

Train village health workers

Build schools & train teachers

Provide books & school supplies in French

Make small business opportunities accessible to villagers





Adobe bricks are handmade by villagers to build each communal school. In the past several years 12 new concrete classrooms have been added to the older mud schools for greater sustainability.

Basic Features of our Strategy

- Partner with village elders & women leaders
- Focus on the poorest of the poor
- Offer a hand-up, not a handout
- Strategic design: Water, Schools, Co-ops, Agriculture, Healthcare
- Program Implementation
- Joint problem-solving
- Evaluation
- Future scenario-building



BYU Relevant Courses

- MBA 539 Third World Development
- OB 490 Becoming a Global Change Agent
- MBA 632 Social Entrepreneurship
- Others in MPA Program, Kennedy Center for International Studies, anthropology, etc.

Assessing Results of 40 Years

Along with social impact successes, this kind of work is accompanied by various problems, some continuous, others arising as change occurs

Ongoing Problems:

- Securing new funding outside universities
- Constant need for new students with a passion to change the world
- Volunteers who can leave campus or jobs for months of working in villages

Emerging Problems:

- Rise of civil wars
- Global crises such as the COVID pandemic
- Economic issues that limit resources
- Work with a climate of experimentation: If an intervention doesn't work, throw it out & try something else

From Campus Classroom to the Jungle: Questions & Conclusions

These cases have generated what William Foote Whyte, my Cornell colleague & former president of ASA & AAA referred to as the need for us to use our science in developing new “social inventions.”

Thankfully, potential additional innovations continue to emerge that will further strengthen the social & economic impacts analyzed above.

We as scholars must work to build additional steps toward ensuring a better future for those who suffer from both poverty & resulting inequality.

I hope this is not simply a conference presentation, but a call to action. It's up to us.

We can do these things & change the world!

Thanks!

Q&A

Website: warnerwoodworth.com

Contact: warnerwoodworth@gmail.com