



Introduction

For us to evolve as a society, (particularly in disadvantaged societies, poor and excluded) our concept of what it means to help it needs to make an immediate and profound change.

In this new dimension of aid it is necessary to establish a real and reciprocal relationship between helping and being helped. That dynamic of going back and forth must be genuine; it is based on a fair deal for both parties. The commitment is the essential ingredient and a new interpretation of the aid.

We grew up listening that politicians, the government or the state are the ones responsible for all the ills that afflict us. We understand "society" as an abstract concept which makes it seem that we are not part of it. Although the community, organizations or individuals themselves cannot take care of issues related to the state, there are definitely other alternatives where participation is needed it. In addition, if they are not carried out is only because of the lack of commitment or because we have not managed to develop it. The term society is even more abstract when we use to justify our inaction and citizens' apathy. There is no real possibility of profoundly changing the lives of the people who live in these neglected communities, until the change comes from those who are in a position to make such an impact on the lives of the needy.

To expect major changes in the aid system, we need to first educate the people who know the most and to those who have the most. The people in these excluded communities cannot succeed alone without the support and the help of those who know and have most. Worthwhile results are only possible if we can get out of the current cast of thought, engagement, management and effort of each of us involved in this process.



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How it has been designed and managed, the help is not going to those who need it the most, but to those who already have access to the system or are almost in it. We are used to confusing the relevant aid with welfare or paternalism, that is, to give things, to give what is left over or to provide technical assistance, they are inefficient and without knowledge of the facts.

There is a need for more experts, programs with an impact, the use of unconventional alternatives and a different commitment to all the resources available so they can actually reach those who need it the most and in the most effective way. It is so obvious and unfortunate that there is not many effective programs that help people get out of the situation they're in. Organizations and institutions at the end of year are left with millions of dollars that are not used because they do not know where to invest them. It is necessary to reflect and to encourage us to rethink some issues related to the how help system is being implemented not only in El Salvador, but also everywhere else. My expectations are high for what you do from here on because what you do can change the lives of hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of children and residents of underserved communities.

The main objective of this paper is that the aid system be more efficient by using certain parameters for the resources available to reach the most neglected and excluded people totaling more than 50% of the country's population, mostly young children and women, in a very vulnerable position, with a weak social fabric. In order to substantially improve the quality of life for the residents of the community we as a foundation have developed, the Infinity Model, which is an integrated program with a diverse range of activities that directly address the areas of education, health, training, credit, work and family to name just some of the hardest neglected communities. This model aims to improve not only the lives of the people in La Campanera and Santa Eduvigis in the municipality of Soyapango, but also from other places living in similar situations.



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To aspire for poverty to be eradicated from El Salvador in a few years may not be reasonable. However, to try to improve the levels of poverty for people so they can live with more dignity it should not be a dream.

Despite the great advances and inventions that have occurred throughout history, very little progress has been made to improve the conditions for those who do not have access to anything. With some important modifications to the current system of aid and optimizing the utilization of its resources, hundreds of thousands of Salvadoreans, perhaps millions could substantially improve their quality of life.

From the experiences in South Africa and Zambia, but especially in El Salvador, we have outlined a series of recommendations that we believe are necessary and should be taken into account by the system of support through its programs and organizations. These recommendations will help to make the resources that are available to the needy, more efficient and allow them to substantially improve their living conditions.

The help system consists primarily, of the resources contributed by public and private national and international organizations and institutions; and in exceptional circumstances, also of resources from society at large to meet the needs and wide-ranging programs.

Following I will list the main sources of funds that are specifically aimed at improving the quality of life for those living in the most excluded communities

1. The government has a number of instruments through its programs and institutions that are part of its existing social policy.
2. International organizations through direct loans or grants, that are made available to the incumbent government as resources and programs of various kinds. At other times, these

resources are outsourced or run in conjunction with foundations or organizations that act locally in order to carry out the programs that they want to support.

3. While in many cases, local foundations receive international support, they also rely on substantial resources that come from local enterprises within the country.
4. On rare occasions, a significant amount of resources from a large part of society is received by the help system to remedy a particular situation.
5. Institutions and organizations such as churches, universities, and clubs, among others, also contribute and are part of the help system.

To enter a community requires a great deal of engineering. Achieving substantial changes in the conditions of life requires singular nobility. Crazy people are not those who try, but those who live in their own world and do not see that this is worth it and above all, that change is possible.

1.- To enter the most difficult places

The current programs cannot overcome the barriers that have been raised by the neglect of these places.

The most difficult places are the most neglected and few people dare to enter them. The quality of aid has a lot to do with being willing to enter those environments that we want to change. We need to match things from that starting point and adapt the programs to the needs of the neighbors in order to help them with the transition and with the access to better living conditions

2.-The presence in the community

Most programs lack impact because they generally reach the communities as if they were a blank page, where they could write whatever pleases them.



Any organization that aspires to make an impact in the community should have a significant presence there. A continued and compelling presence allows the organization to strengthen the bonds of trust and affection that are needed to carry out the activities that will facilitate better living conditions of the people in these excluded places.

You cannot keep expecting change from the outside to be durable and substantial; we should be and develop the programs from the communities.

3.- A Community House for all

Enter a community requires a great deal of engineering. Achieving substantial changes in the conditions of life requires singular nobility. Locos are not what they try, but those who live in their world and not see that this is worth it and above all, that change is possible.

There are institutions and organizations such as schools, churches and boards to name just a few, which are very important within communities. But the community is not confined of just them and that is why instead of dividing the aid, it becomes necessary to reach as many neighbors as possible with the programs, using different mechanisms available to give everyone a chance to improve their quality of life.

In relation to the way of communicating the information, there are some communities that are better organized than others, and that is why if the circumstances call for it, we will have to go house to house and passage by passage to engage the leaders, boards, principals, teachers, schools, gangs, churches, pastors, businessmen, parents, neighbors, etc..



The work of convincing the community to engage in the participation with the neighbors is hard. It will take time and is different from the known, is expensive, is quiet and difficult to measure for organizations. What took so many years and generations, it cannot be change so quickly.

These communities require a level of involvement, management, effort and great commitment from the organizations, which also needs to redesign part of its operational framework to address such critical situations.

4. Committed participation

The despair that people from these forgotten communities show, is like an armor that has a lock with two keys. They have one of the keys, and the other one we all have it.

The engaged participation of the residents is the most efficient way and perhaps the only one that will help them overcome, as their conditions start to improve, all of this state of despair. But people cannot succeed alone. We need of those who want to get their feet dirty and are ready to leave their mark.

Neither the good intentions of a government, nor the money from international organizations and not even the best programs can achieve the change without the close involvement and participation of those who help and of those who are being helped

5- Integration of the outsiders with the insiders

Taking into consideration this kind of vicious circle that takes place in communities where outsiders do not enter and where insiders do not go out, it is imperative to provoke integration among the two sectors.



It is essential that the organizations promote within their programs, the integration of those who have had access to the system and the development of their potential, and those who have not enjoyed the same opportunities. It is important to take advantage of that knowledge and those resources that has been acquired by individuals, groups, private and public organizations, from the different sectors of society. This is extremely beneficial and effective to achieve substantial changes in the lives of the people in need. The active players are both the insiders and the outsiders.

To integrate these two sectors through participation and involvement of the different social forces must be encouraged from all levels and becomes part of the culture itself. It is everyone's commitment.

All of this contributes to strengthening of the social fabric by helping to eliminate the existing prejudices and creating a stronger identity as a society.

6.- Integration of traditional and nontraditional resources

So much research and so many reports floating around only to tell the poor that they are wrong and the rich that further investigations are needed.

The needs suffered by the most neglected communities are so extensive that they go above the means provided by the help system. The only way to substantially improve the living conditions of the people in these places is to appeal to traditional and nontraditional resources.

Although the community, organizations or individuals themselves cannot often take care of issues related to the state, there are definitely other options for participation (non-traditional resources) that if not done is only because of the lack of commitment, or because we have not learned to develop them. They are often available and are not used or are misused.



7.- Community House as the epicenter of development

The lack of opportunities and benefits is due primarily to the fact that the system excludes those who are not prepared. Today, by making all the knowledge and resources available to everyone, we are trying to improve the real possibilities and expectations of each of those who want to get involved.

To find a physical space that serves as a unifying factor in the community should be a priority. The possibility of having a communal house is essential not only as a place to carry out the planned activities, but also because it has to become the epicenter of development of the neighbors who live there.

8.- The actual impact over formal questions

It is very possible to improve the living conditions of the most excluded if they think first of them, but it is almost certain that if the programs and organizations give priority to other issue that will lead to inexorably failure.

Organizations must identify, support and develop smart programs that at the same time will prioritize the benefits that those programs will provide, even above the bureaucratic constraints that the organization may have. Basically, it means to put the key issues before the formal ones. While it is important that there be transparency in the management of the funds, it is even more important the choice that is made of the activities and programs that enhance the quality of life for the people in the community.

Programs should have clear and specific goals that are capable of causing substantial and lasting changes in the beneficiaries' life. The efficiency of a program should be measured by the real impact that these changes provoke and for the creation of development opportunities.



9. Research – Professionalism

Despite the great advances and inventions that have occurred throughout history, very little progress has been made to improve the conditions for those who do not have access to anything.

We need more experts in the design and implementation of programs and if there is not any then they need to be made. It is essential to address these issues with greater thoroughness and professionalism.

It would be advisable to also appeal to professionals to dedicate to doing some research. These investigations would be carried out in position, in order to make it easier for those live in conditions of need, access to health care, education, labor, etc.

To create the conditions for transition are essential in order to generate access to the system for those who are not prepared. This transition can also become an alternative in itself where they can improve their lives and values and the the area where they live could improve.

If there is no science or discipline yet to understand these issues, one should be create it. It should focus exclusively in improving the lives of millions living in poverty who find it impossible to access the health system, education system, etc.