



Stanford eCorner

Social Entrepreneurship is Growing

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2938/Social-Entrepreneurship-is-Growing>

Nika Water Co-Founder Jeff Church shares the factors causing the coming wave of social entrepreneurship, including young people, the Internet, celebrities and baby boomers.



Transcript

I think we are at the beginning of a really powerful and really exciting wave of a social entrepreneurship. And unlike a lot of things that are on the horizon, that are kind of looming in their - kind of they're not so good, there are dark clouds on the horizon, this is a really powerful positive thing. And it's a powerful and positive thing because you can really be part of this movement. I think it's going to be moving for long period of time and it has to do with five principal things. The first is you guys, young people. Young people today want to be part of something bigger than themselves and they also want to make a buck. And you can do both. You don't want to wait 30 years to do that and you don't have to wait 30 years, so you can kind of get right at it. The second thing is the Internet. The Internet brings these global issues to our laptops 24/7.

They come at right hours, we can't turn them off. Now you heard about - you've all heard of Kony 2012 pretty much, the Invisible Children, I mean, that went viral - over 80 million people watched that video in one week, because of 17 to 29 year olds texting it, facebooking it, tweeting it, kind of doing everything with it. And these issues they're coming to us and now there is a vehicle to communicate and to inform that didn't exist before. The third thing is also the Internet. The Internet makes all of us be academic researchers from our laptop. There is no excuse whether it's a new business you're starting, a non-profit or for-profit whatever it is, there is no excuse for any of us not to be experts before we put a business plan together, before we talk to an investor, before we do anything like that, because we can get right, we can get incredible amounts of information right from our couch with our laptop. I'm looking at - I'm researching to bringing a coffee product in from Haiti, where we would bring it and help the local people there, donate the profits back to Haiti. And in the period of three days, I was able to talk with USAID people, I was able to get growing reports, I was able to communicate in ways that I would never been able to do, 20 years ago. The fourth thing is celebrities. Celebrities are increasingly using their platforms to pontificate for their causes and what's important to them.

And, when Bono gets up and talks about ending AIDS, there are millions of people listen. And millions of people listen not only with their hearts, but they open their wallets and they listen that way too. And finally, the fifth thing is my generation, the baby boomers. As the baby boomers are retiring, a lot of them are giving back significant portions of their net worth. You probably heard about what Warren Buffett and Bill Gates are doing with challenging the billionaire families to give back half of their net worth over the remainder of their lives. I think there are up to 70 families that have agreed to do that. And what's really amazing about that is when that money comes back in, that money just doesn't come in and say okay, do what you want with that, guys. Now these are people that created value, created businesses. They want to hold people accountable. They want - when we look at projects that we want to do, I look at P&Ls of the projects.

I force them that - to go through that discipline that governments just aren't really equipped to be able to do effectively. So, I think this whole wave is a really powerful thing. But you might ask, is it really important? And I say, heck, yes, it's important.

And the reason it's important, isn't part of the graph. If you look at this is a 30 year graph of - the pink line is the percentage of foreign aid as a percent of gross national product of Africa. And you can see it's rising, rising, rising and then you can see per capita GDP dropping, dropping, dropping and they're not only not correlated, they are inversely correlated. And the point is governments; it doesn't work when governments give money to other governments. There's corruption, there is issues, there are challenges to get in the way, it's got to be bottom up. It's got to be a hand up versus a hand out. And that's really our - that's really our model.

It's got to be people like you and I, getting on our social media and really making it happen that way.