

Fr. Phil Cooke, SJ, visits social enterprises on Cullion, an island in the Philippines. (Courtesy of Miller Center)



Social Entrepreneurship: Not Just Business as Usual

By Brian Harper

Father Phil Cooke, SJ, never imagined he would run the University of Detroit Mercy's Center for Social Entrepreneurship.

"Had you told me I would work in technology and business," he says, "I would have thought you were crazy."

Yet social entrepreneurship, a bold new frontier that uses business practices to address social issues, is the avenue through which Fr. Cooke is responding to one of his life's most vital questions: How do we best work *with*, not simply *for*, the poor?

This question led Fr. Cooke to accompany marginalized populations in Guatemala and on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Still reflecting on how to help the poor "get the best out of themselves," Fr. Cooke went to Berkeley, Calif., in 2012 to pursue a Licentiate of Sacred Theology. In California, he discovered Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship

and, in 2014, moved to Silicon Valley to begin a fellowship with the organization.



Courtesy of Miller Center

Located on Santa Clara University's campus, one of Miller Center's initiatives is the Global Social Benefit Institute (GSBI) Boost. GSBI Boosts train entrepreneurs in the "blueprint

stage" of developing an idea to serve the greater social good, says Pat Haines, Miller Center's senior director of marketing.

"For three intense days, we go on location and help social entrepreneurs understand marketing, financing, business models, and impact models, and how they can take that idea and move it forward," says Haines.

Through Miller Center, Fr. Cooke met Raul Diaz, a Nicaraguan entrepreneur living amidst tobacco factories. Determined to teach youth to sustain themselves with healthy products, Diaz and Fr. Cooke led 12 social ventures through a GSBI Boost in Nicaragua.

Haines saw how Fr. Cooke was affected by this GSBI Boost and another on Cullion, a Philippine island where leprosy was eradicated only 10 years ago.

"Social entrepreneurship really

The Integrative Justice Model

- Authentic engagement with non-exploitative intent;
- Co-creation of value;
- Investment in future consumption without endangering the environment;
- Interest representation of all stakeholders, particularly impoverished customers; and
- Focus on long-term profit management rather than on short-term profit maximization

253+
SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURS

Graduated from
GSBI Boosts



Fr. Nicky Santos, SJ, presides at Marquette University's Tuesday night Mass each week at Saint Joan of Arc Chapel. (Courtesy of Marquette University)

was the vehicle that allowed him to put the Jesuit philosophy of serving the poor in action,” says Haines.

Another Jesuit involved in social entrepreneurship is Fr. Nicky Santos, SJ, a marketing professor at Marquette University in Milwaukee. A native of Pune, India, Fr. Santos co-directs Marquette's social innovation initiative with Dr. Jeanne Hosenlopp, vice president for research and innovation. He teamed with Dr. Gene Laczniak to develop the Integrative Justice Model (IJM), a normative ethical framework that presents five ethical guidelines for engagement with low-income populations.

“We thought it would be timely to develop an ethical framework that could give guidance to companies that wanted to engage low-income markets in a way that was fair, ethical, and a win-win for both,” says Fr. Santos.

He has already seen examples of companies adopting social entrepreneurship practices, including the Dannon yogurt company and Grameen Group's efforts to fill nutritional deficits in Bangladeshi children, as well as Fr. Cooke's work with Catholic Relief Services.

Father Santos hopes to develop an IJM assessment tool for organizations. He also worked with Kelsey Otero, Marquette's social innovation coordinator, and a Miller Center team for a GSBI Boost in Milwaukee last November. Father Cooke and Miller Center will run a GSBI Boost in Detroit April 20 to 22, and the two Jesuits will collaborate with Miller Center and other Midwest Jesuit universities at a Marquette social entrepreneurship conference June 8 to 10.

“We're drawing everybody interested in doing this kind of work and implementing it within their univer-

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at www.scu-social-entrepreneurship.org. To get involved with UDM's Center for Social Entrepreneurship, e-mail philcookesj@gmail.com. To learn about social entrepreneurship opportunities in Milwaukee, e-mail nicholas.santos@marquette.edu.

sities to address poverty within their regions,” says Fr. Cooke. “We can build our capacity together.”

Partnerships like these include laypeople with business acumen, who Fr. Cooke sees as ideal mentors to new social entrepreneurs, future GSBI Boost facilitators, and investors. Though years of experience in business and with the poor brought these Jesuits to social entrepreneurship, anyone can get involved.

“You don't have to be an entrepreneur or businessperson,” says Fr. Cooke. “All you need is desire.” ❖