

How College Students Can Change the World through Micro-credit

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This session focuses on how NGOs may tap into heroic college students as social entrepreneurs to empower women of mountainous regions around the world. Since 1989 I've been recruiting, training and sending out university students to fight poverty and provide technical assistance to impoverished areas of the Third World. This strategy has mobilized over 700 MBAs, MOBs, MACCs, MPAs, and undergrads in other relevant disciplines to volunteer as Social Entrepreneurs in organizing village banks, providing micro-entrepreneurship training, computer skills, literacy, healthcare, etc. Roughly fifty students a year are prepared to volunteer in my courses. Teams are organized to offer various services during the 3-4 months of each summer with our partner NGOs to ensure that programs will continue after the students return to campus.

Cases featured in this presentation include projects in the mountains of Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines, China and Uganda. A major thrust of these strategies is to empower women economically through education and training, helping them learn the tactics of entrepreneurship to better feed and educate their children. An extended focus combines micro-credit with women's health and nutrition in which we offer appropriate technologies such as Lorena Stoves, greenhouse installations, square-meter gardening techniques, HIV-AIDS prevention, and so forth. We work to rebuild homes after natural disasters, set up cooperatives for collective well-being, install libraries in rural villages, and build or refurbish schools, not only for children, but their mothers who attend literacy classes.