



Social Leadership Café – Big Thinking for the World’s Biggest Problems

Catalyst in Partnership with The Hunger Project - 19 June 07

Summary Paper - v01



Background

The Hunger Project is the foremost leadership training and education organisation working in the developing world to end hunger. The core of The Hunger Project’s work is the recognition that people themselves – the illiterate, the malnourished and subjugated – are the key resource to ending hunger. The Hunger Project is working in 13 countries across Africa, South Asia and Latin America and has trained more than 150,000 volunteer leaders - all on an annual global budget of just US\$15 million.

The Event

In June 2007 more than 150 people came together for Catalyst’s first ever ‘Café’ format event. In this people engaged in dialogue with one another in an intimate café style environment to develop shared ideas and understanding on the issue of world hunger and the role of social leadership in addressing it. Café attendees sat in a round table environment to share their thoughts on why they were there and what they could do, both individually and collectively to help The Hunger Project end world hunger. The evening started with four remarkable speakers from The Hunger Project:

Cathy Burke - CEO, The Hunger Project Australia. Introduced the organisation and its work.

Rita Sarin - The Hunger Project Country Director for India. Rita spoke of the paradox that was India:

- 228 million hungry people living in one of the world’s fastest developing nations;
- 47% children suffering from malnourishment;
- Social conditioning that kept women uneducated and unheard.

Rita spoke about the need to change India’s social conditioning from within – and this was where the Hunger Project came in – by training local leaders to encourage and implement change in their communities.

Shailaja Narayana – A local grass-roots leader and trainer In India who had become involved in The Hunger Project in her village. In 2003 Shailaja attended a Hunger Project training workshop which taught her how to be a leader and importantly, how to mobilise her friends and relatives within her local community. As a result of Shailaja's efforts, her village now has a fresh water supply and she has mobilised others to take up their own challenges.

Rick Ball – MD Investment Banking at Morgan Stanley and Board Member and personal investor for The Hunger Project Australia. Rick spoke about his involvement with THP and its ability to give people the opportunity and insight to create things for themselves rather than being the passive recipients of donations.

The Café

Café guests were asked to examine and share their thoughts on the questions below via 15 minute café table discussions. Guests changed groups for the second question and were welcomed by hosts at their new tables.

Outcomes

Examples of the ideas which were created in this short and punchy workshop are:

Question 1: *Why does ending hunger matter to me and who would I become if I made hunger a personal priority?*

- Tolerating hunger limits what is possible for humanity
- Creating a greater feeling of connectedness to humanity
- Building a bigger world family
- Building a sense of empowerment, integrity and passion for life
- Feeling connected v just thinking of being connected
- The feeling of “personal affluence guilt”
- Equality and social justice creates stability in communities
- To give back “because we can”
- The power of the ripple effect

Question 2: *How can your leadership, personally and collectively, enable The Hunger Project Australia to generate \$10 million per year to increase the scalability of this approach around the world?*

As individuals:

- Empowering others through word of mouth – talking about the project to friends, family, colleagues etc
- Using personal networks to motivate people
- Creating intentional conversations with people about the project
- Taking the discussion home to partners, children etc
- Mobilising personal teams at work, clubs, sporting groups etc to sponsor a particular project

Collectively:

- Develop education programs – target children through all levels of the community– what is hunger? What can we do to stop it?
- Work with restaurants to provide a tip for THP on bills
- Create innovative fundraising ideas which allow networks of people to participate while generating money

- Draw up lists of potential corporate contacts from groups
- Develop email and banner campaigns that can be distributed by key networks
- Personalisation through exchange – encouraging people to travel to the regions, see the work first hand and report on it when they return home
- Develop video packs featuring speakers such as Rita and Shailaja to tell their stories to potential corporate sponsors
- Organise and promote a “roadshow” featuring people like Rita and Shailaja to talk to media, at public events, dinners etc.
- Develop a “contribution trading” model like “carbon trading” – charity credits

Where to from here?

The underlying theme was that everyone wanted to feel more connected to a bigger ‘world family’ and had a sense of social responsibility that they wanted to transform into action. The challenge going forward will be in transforming those ‘big picture’ thoughts and values into achievable ideas and actions.

More than 60 of the participants expressed interest in taking part in a new initiative - The Hunger Project Australia ‘Venture Group’ – whose aim is to expand upon the ideas raised in the café and develop some real actions that will help The Hunger Project achieve its goal for raising \$10 million per year.

Feedback

Some fantastic ideas and feedback came out of the café. See the Appendix for a sample of comments.

About The Hunger Project

The Hunger Project (THP) is a global, strategic non-government organisation (NGO) that works to ignite hungry people’s own capacity to end their hunger. The core of the work is in the recognition that people themselves are the key resources in ending hunger. The Hunger Project works in 13 developing countries across Africa, South Asia and Latin America and has trained more than 150,000 volunteer leaders who are mobilising and empowering 22 million people to become self-reliant in feeding themselves and their families. The Hunger Project’s annual budget is currently US\$15 million per year (with the aim of increasing to US\$50 million within five years including \$10million in Australia). The Hunger Project can achieve its goals because money is not the fuel feeding the engine. Through working to create a shared vision, commitment and strategic action in communities, the hungry people themselves step into leadership and create initiatives and long-term sustainable outcomes.

Visit: www.thp.org

About Catalyst:

Catalyst is a not-for-profit organisation promoting a culture of philanthropy in professional Australia. Our vision is that every professional has the opportunity to meaningfully explore for themselves how they might contribute in society.

We see philanthropy as more than just giving money or even volunteering time and skills. For us, it extends to the provision of leadership in society and social innovation.

Visit: www.catalystnetwork.com.au

About the Café Methodology

This was based on the World Café methodology.

See: www.theworldcafe.com

Appendix – Comments from Café Participants

“Brilliant! Inspired! The Philosophy of The Hunger Project resonates” – Renee

“The idea of moving from table to table really opens your mind and allows ideas to come forth by having strangers talking about their opinions, thoughts and ideas” – Petra

“Contact with “actual” members/leaders of The Hunger Project was very inspiring” – Liz Quinn

“Good event and format – an effective vehicle to connect like-minded people” – Robert

“Interaction was brilliant – the café theme really worked.” – Brien

“Some fabulous ideas generated for fundraising for The Hunger Project” – Shrav

“Really enjoyed the format which forced us to openly discuss issues – an awesome concept achieved by The Hunger Project” – Chloe

“Gave me an opportunity to look at the other side of the world – and I know I can do something about it” – Carl

“The café workshop worked – it opened up conversations and allowed ideas to flow.” – Ben

“I found the presentations by those who are affected by The Hunger Project very moving and inspirational.” – Simone