

## Lessons Learned

To build a solution that works, it is valuable to know what does not work. KickStart founders [Nick Moon](#) and [Martin Fisher](#) spent many years in traditional aid programs that had little lasting effect on the people they were trying to help. Their critical and scientific evaluation of these failures helped them build what would become KickStart.

## The Poor are Not Victims

To define people by their conditions rather than their qualities is dehumanizing. When you look past the poverty, you see abilities, resources, and desires. The poor are extremely hard-working and entrepreneurial--they must be just to survive. They don't want or need to be rescued. They want an opportunity to create a better life for their families.

## The Number One Need of the Poor is a Way to Make Money.

Everyone today lives in a cash economy. When you have cash, you can get food, water, shelter, medicine, and other basic necessities. If you don't, you can't. It is that simple. The cause of poverty is a lack of money, so what a poor person needs most is a way to make more money.

## Individuals. Not Communities.

The poorest people in the world are not so different from the rest of us. They will take care of their own family's needs before they will commit themselves to efforts to better their communities. The developing world is littered with broken-down and abandoned communally-owned assets. It is a case of the "tragedy of the commons". If "everyone" owns something, then in reality no one owns it. No one is responsible for its care and maintenance. Individual ownership is the key to sustainable economic development.

## The Majority of the Poor are Rural

Worldwide, over 70% of the 1.1 billion people who live on less than \$1 per day are small-scale rural farmers who are trying to scrape out an existence on an acre or so of unproductive land. In Sub Saharan Africa - despite the more visible shocking conditions in the urban slums - over 80% of the poor are rural farmers. Clearly if we are going to tackle extreme poverty we have to tackle rural poverty.

## High Quantity = High Quality

The world's poor deserve high-quality, long-lasting tools and other products. We may have grown accustomed to products with short life spans; the poor need reliable tools that can be easily maintained and repaired with readily available replacement parts. Production by decentralized artisans results in inconsistent quality. But by centralizing production in the most sophisticated factories available, you get consistent high-quality production.

## Sell Don't Give

Those who buy the tools are more likely to use them than those who are given them. This is true regardless of where you live or how wealthy you are.

## **It's All About the Supply Chain**

The greatest invention will have little impact if it does not get to the people who need it. This is especially true when inventing for the developing world. A private sector profit-making supply chain is the most cost-effective and self-sustaining way of delivering goods and services to the poor.

## **Giveaways Create Dependency**

Aid programs that give things away offer temporary alleviation at best. At worst they create dependency and damage the local economy. Giving things away is unfair. Who decides who gets the gift and who does not? It is also unsustainable. What happens when the donor leaves? Giveaways make sense in response to a humanitarian crisis, but they are not a long-term or sustainable solution to poverty.

## **Good Governance Comes From a Thriving Middle Class.**

Poor governance is a major reason why so many countries languish in poverty. When the majority of a population is desperately poor, it is easy for politicians to buy loyalty. But the loyalty of an emerging middle class is not so easily bought. When they are no longer worried about the survival of their families, they start to demand more from their government. Politicians will need to be more responsive to stay in power. Better policies lead to more investment, which creates more jobs and opportunity. Creating a middle class is the most sustainable way to lift a country out of poverty.

## **Read More**

<http://s37132.gridserver.com/about-us/>