

Workshop #12: Business as Mission

Presenters: Robert Ulysses and Ted Boers

Facilitator: Doug Seebeck

Recorder: Roxanne deGraaf

Notes and Key Concepts

“Most Exciting Elements” of the *Nouveau Kiskeya* Equity Partnership Initiative in Haiti:

- The quality of jobs being created (more than 500 workers at peak so far), with wages far above minimum wage (5 times the local average wage)
- That the government is involved and supportive of the efforts
- God’s Involvement clearly throughout the whole process
- The “Right People and Right Resources at the Right Places, at the Right Times”
- A model cross-cultural partnership between Robert and Ted
- Strong Faith of those involved, despite dire reports for Haiti’s future
- Clear vision from Robert and Ted for the future of the partnership and Haiti
- Profits reinvested in Haiti as non-profit venture to also build-up people in surrounding areas
- Involvement of Haitian Diaspora and opportunity for them to return to Haiti

Key Lessons:

- Nothing happens without doing something, it takes faith and action.
- We often think God is too small.
- God will open doors, when the time is right; “You don’t need a crowbar to open God’s doors.”
- The success for God’s projects requires us to put ego aside, give control to God.
- Look for potential in all of God’s Creation.
- Successful partnerships require understanding and trust between the key partners, built on a one year relationship in this case, with daily communication, transparency and reliability. “They did what they said.”

Applications for others in Mission/Business/Development:

- Look at this as a prototype, a case study for other cross-cultural partnerships and business-mission ventures of any scale (not just large projects like this).
- Local Ownership, Local Vision, Local Passion are absolutely critical for success. Find this before moving forward, as a first step of the process.
- Facilitate and encourage the relationship before getting to the \$ and the business plan.
- Look at the for-profit model for improved accountability, oversight, and ownership to projects (compared to a non-profit structure).
- Recognize that developing trust is a journey: where North Americans often impose ideas, honesty of local person is questioned, and they need to learn to trust together.
- Recognize women’s role in relationship building, utilizing strengths of intuition and friendship.
- Clearly identify the risks of Business as Mission activities such as equity partnerships and loan fund investment into communications up front, for more realistic expectations.
- Encourage businesspeople to keep their business heads attached, as they find their hearts engaged in missions.
- Share these lessons learned and models like this through:
 - Mentors to guide new partnerships
 - Clear steps and procedures defined to follow to avoid some of the stumbling blocks.
 - Interactive orientation and training of North Americans
- Relationship, relationship, relationship is essential for the successful “business as mission” partnership.