



CULTIVATING GROWTH AT THE GRASS ROOTS

THE BOSTON PLEDGE

Paying it Forward

Harnessing the Power of Micro-movements
in an Era of Economic Turbulence

The Boston Pledge in association with Tufts Gordon Institute
Presents its Annual Conference on

December 4, 2010 | 2:30pm – 5:30pm

The Boston Pledge

*Uncovering the Power Within,
Incubating Services for Public Good*

Born in the first year of this millennium, The Boston Pledge (TBP) is a non-profit organization that brings together outstanding professionals committed to public service from various spheres of life and professional disciplines to directly address bottom-of-the-pyramid issues. TBP has the strong conviction and overarching belief that by (1) transcending the constraints of self interest and the limits of national borders, (2) providing outstanding leadership to channel intellectual know-how and financial resources to individuals, groups, or government bodies working for the betterment of society, and (3) focusing on empowering people at the grass roots, we will be able to create a virtuous dynamic that could build a more equitable and sustainable society in the long term.

Our mission is to continually develop and perfect a dynamic process to enable people in privileged regions to engage with socioeconomic issues in less privileged regions for the purpose of encouraging all round holistic development and creating a multidisciplinary and multiethnic network for service to humanity. While many humanitarian organizations offer invaluable services following disasters, natural or moral, our goal is to proactively reach out to those regions that need improvement and address root issues for community rejuvenation, before problems turn into insuperable quagmires. Specifically, our focus is on education, health, small-scale industry development, cultural renaissance, and service-sector revitalization.

Toward this mission, we view TBP as an incubator of voluntary public service. From Boston to Kolkata, TBP is currently working on several different initiatives including (1) entrepreneurial development to facilitate bottom-up enterprising (2) remediation of arsenic in ground water, and (3) rural development in different parts of the world.

At the core of our work, we celebrate the thoughts of one the greatest philosophers and public servants of the nineteenth century, and a luminary in The First Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda: "Our Real Awakening takes place when we dedicate our life to an Exalted Ideal."

In Conversation with Partha Ghosh...

Ranjani Saigal, 11/24/10



As a Global Citizen, Partha Ghosh is addressing business leaders in Calcutta on Bottom up Entrepreneurship

(This article is sponsored by [Attorney Rachel C. Tadmor](#))
([Click here to learn more about the conference](#))

Partha S. Ghosh is the chairman of The Boston Pledge. As a true global citizen, policy advisor and a strategist for Corporates and Governments he is known worldwide as an innovator of Business and Economic models. He teaches Globalization & Economics at Tufts Gordon Institute, Innovation & Strategic Technologies at the Fletcher School, and Leadership at MIT. Mr. Ghosh was a partner at McKinsey & Company and is the founder/Managing director of Strategy/Policy advisory firm Partha S Ghosh & Associates.



THE BOSTON PLEDGE

(About The Boston

Pledge: The primary goal of The Boston Pledge is to bring about bottom-up socio-economic revitalization in emerging nations. In particular, we are working towards developing vibrant communities through education...[More](#))

It is ten years since the Boston Pledge made a promise under your leadership to stimulate economic development at the bottom of the pyramid. What would you consider your most significant impact thus far?

We are just about entering our tenth year and will look forward to celebrating our 10th anniversary on September 24, 2011. Our fundamental emphasis has been on the process (as opposed the end product itself) of inculcating within our members the spirit of public service and in turn ensuring that in the conduct of our work we celebrate highest levels of excellence. We all know that millions of NGOs are working very hard across the world, and as you also know \$ Billion of resources have been spent to serve the people in economically challenged environments. Yet the size of poverty has increased and the gap between rich and poor has widened. Consequently we at the Boston Pledge believe we need a different approach. An approach, which will get large percentage of the top 30%, engage with the remaining 70 percent.

In view of the above, the biggest achievement thus far I believe has been that we have been able to cultivate within our members and the people we have served this spirit of "direct engagement", while pursuing our professional lives. As a result the following three points are at the core of our being:

1. We do not believe we are doing any favor to anyone, but we are doing favor to ourselves, - as we look for opportunities of serving those individuals who are subsidizing the privileged world by them being on the sidelines and making their sacrifices.
2. Given the size and complexity of poverty, we are developing the organization to be sustainable not be limited by specific numbers either in terms of funds and or resources or by numbers of people we have served. Even we have served say million people, the size is miniscule relative to the size of the challenge.
3. We want to attract professionals who will invest their skills and will to serve those people who we could reach out to and genuinely feel they are honoring themselves by working at the base of the pyramid. In the process we believe a movement will begin which will have the domino effect some day. We are far from that state, but we are optimistic that when it will happen the process will explode. Which means we have to be *genuine and pure* at the core.

To build this psyche it is not easy. I believe we have been able to develop this dynamic within The Boston Pledge. It requires lot of hard work to get egos out of the system and then create the space for instilling genuine faith in social service. I think this is the biggest achievement of The Boston Pledge so far.

Our work across various parts of the world is indeed "work in progress" and I believe our journey thus far has constituted a series of micro initiatives of modest impact. The people we serve are so challenged, it is very difficult to say that any one state they have reached is an ideal state. On the other hand our Entrepreneurship Springboard Program (ESP) has led to close to 500 entrepreneurs go through the discipline of 500 business plans which are very grass root oriented of which perhaps close to 100 have been launched. For example we work with one village Lakhikantapur which is South of Calcutta



Partha addressing The Boston Pledge Annual Conference on Global Economic Renaissance at Bentley University; Dr. Sam Pitroda, Chairman of India's Knowledge Commission and Co-Chairman of TBP is in the background.



The Boston Pledge Members with Kapil Mandal

near the Bay of Bengal, - where we are helping its leader Kapil Mandal to create eco friendly forward looking socio economic dynamic which is home grown, forward looking yet rooted in the heritage of the community. We will like Kapil to then become model for million villages around the world.

I hope we have not disappointed you. The most critical requirement in The Boston Pledge model is that we directly work with the people we serve across borders. Our skills and wills are at work to drive the wheels of micro ventures, which then solicit micro funds, which are the essential lubricants.

During the recent years, there has been a significant shift from the idea of Philanthropy to the idea of Social Enterprise as people are trying to remove economic inequalities. How would you categorize the work of The Boston Pledge?

I think we view our role as a catalyst for bottom up socio economic development. Top down development has elements of elitism, and the fundamental belief that the answer is there at the top and it is for people at the bottom to receive the favors / the answers the privileged at the top is offering. Our model is the inverted pyramid model where we view the base to be at the top where we want to plant incubators of the future. Many of The Boston Pledge business winners have launched eco friendly enzyme based chemical processes to convert garbage into fertilizers, to reuse plastics and electric motors for extending the life of materials. We at the Boston Pledge have tremendous faith in innocence of people at the base and of course we want to eradicate ignorance.

Social entrepreneurship, as soon as it gets linked with capital markets or the capitalistic forces as we know them today, sooner or later, fundamental tensions surface where the profit motives of the investor and social motives of the compassionate public servant end up in conflict with each other.

The Boston Pledge in contrast, believes the best nutrient for our professional development is our time spent in public service. As the time spent in the gym is good for physical health, we *believe time spent on the base of the pyramid is good for spiritual, intellectual and economic health of professionals*. One has to have full faith in this equation I am proposing. We at The Boston Pledge are living and celebrating this equation. We are all volunteers, we are inclusive – as long as people can contribute their real skills, and they are willing to place public service at the center stage of their heart after pushing out his/her ego. It is indeed a powerful state one could be in, and *believe me it is a very peaceful and graceful place to be*. We are thinking of organizing four times a 3 hour workshop for people who want to acquire this powerful state of being.

During the recent years, there has been a significant shift from the idea of Philanthropy to the idea of Social Enterprise as people are trying to remove economic inequalities. How would you categorize the work of The Boston Pledge?

Thanks to Andrew Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth we have learned why one must give back after you have had a successful economic career. I think his thesis have inspired thousands of Americans to develop the spirit of philanthropy as we have seen through the creation of Foundations such as Ford Foundation, Clinton Foundation to Gates Foundation and thousands in between.

But what we believe in, when we launched The Boston pledge movement in July 2001, that "why must you wait to do good to society until you realize your financial success. If you could take a mortgage to build a big house, why wouldn't you serve social issues in anticipation of your future success? If you have the skills, which will lead to your material success, why not use part of the skills and perhaps small amount of your financial resources to create the future as you will like to see at the base of the pyramid.

Now few years ago the movie "Pay it Forward" definitely reminded us of the fundamental belief with which we began The Boston Pledge mission, and we thought in reverence to that spirit we could engage in a dialogue in our Annual conference on December 4th which will help us to explore ways to motivate and inspire ourselves so that we could genuinely live "the pay if forward" spirit.



Partha Ghosh at the Award Ceremony of The Boston Pledge's Entrepreneurship Springboard Program

Who do you think would benefit the most from this conference? What would the conference specifically offer?

This conference is focused on motivating professionals, young and seniors irrespective of their professional inclinations to engage with the challenges of imbalances of the 3Es – Equity (widening gap between rich and poor), Ecology (melting ice on top of the mountains and glaciers) and Ethics (erosion of moral and civic values), which might stifle the progress civilization has made in the past 50,000 years. In the process it is my hope like-minded people will come together to deal with these challenges.

The conference seems to play on the word Micro. What is the significance of that word?

Microscopic forces are pure and most powerful. In physics, chemistry and biology we have been continually inspired by the wonders of these powers. It is our belief in communities also when small group of people come together with the purity of purpose however microscopic they may be when they gel they scale rapidly. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity is an excellent example how a large organization with base in 160 countries was built with humble beginnings on streets of Calcutta.

We want to share with our supporters in the conference that however micro may their contributions be we should feel not handicapped by the size of the contribution, but be inspired by the creative and imaginative forces that such offerings might unleash.

It is often felt that the techniques taught in top Business Schools are designed address the needs of the top one percent. Yet many argue that these techniques work for transforming the world of the bottom of the economic pyramid. Any comments?

Excellent point. I think business school education is increasingly oriented to serve Wall Street requirements, which rewards the process of how you could speedily multiply the wealth of the investors. That approach does not work at the so called "Bottom of the Pyramid".



TBP member Rex du Pont at the 2010 Entrepreneurship Springboard lecture in Dorchester, MA

First we do not use the term "bottom" as it sound elitist as if people from the top have to reach to the bottom to bring about social change. We call that area of the pyramid as the base of the pyramid. Now for any building if the base is weak it does not matter how strong the top is, the building is fundamentally fragile. Unfortunately we have reached that point in our development, all our economic equations as result of business school curricula is focused on serving institutions at the top of the pyramid. Why shouldn't they, as business schools have become places where students go to improve their economic standing in society. The economics of top schools are such, - that to afford good teachers, for the campuses to provide corporate like teaching environment they need to charge high tuition fees which only rich students can afford – leading to what I call the "cycle of elitism"

If business schools are focused on serving students coming from the base of the pyramid not to graduate a few to go to the top, but to help them inspire the base for bottom up economic progress we have to fundamentally recast the curriculum with fundamental emphasis on (i) compassionate leadership, (ii) economics of inclusion as opposed to economics of exclusion, (iii) personality development which can bridge the base the and the apex of the pyramid, (iv) who will find ways to solve problems at the base to create jobs, not eliminate jobs at the middle, (v) create wealth where purchasing power is small or near zero. Business schools in contrast end up teaching how to take coal to New Castle and or take sand to the sea beach. Business school graduates must learn how to build oasis in the middle of deserts, not just how to build another high-rise in Manhattan.

I believe good education whether it is scientific, technology and/or economic or management, must focus on developing personalities who could work with, serve and inspire those people who are under privileged or underserved. If we could make such a shift the world in the next 100 years will be different. Only then the Millennium Challenge my friend Jeff Sachs is championing will come true. We at the Boston Pledge is trying to develop that kind of psyche in our members and then pass on that spirit to the people we serve close to the base of the pyramid, so they in turn can take the spirit forward.

The area of micro-finance which for many was seen as the poster child for success in this space has landed itself into many controversies. What do you consider as errors in the space? What needs to be done differently?

Micro finance without compassion and without mentoring does not work. To think of the base as an opportunity to create wealth for the people at the top of the pyramid is fundamentally flawed, - just the opposite of what we must do. Micro packaging and micro finance when viewed from capitalistic point of view essentially end up taking advantage of poverty to sell products and services at higher unit prices. And when they cannot afford to pay back we end up disturbing their innocence by putting them into shame resulting to suicides. Once again capitalism when not guided with ethical guidelines, - end up demoralizing and de-motivating people and creating tensions which create ruptures in the social fabric of innocent communities – which ultimately become permanent scars. Once trust is broken between different segments of society it is very difficult to get back to the starting point. I think the states in India, which have suffered the onslaughts of greedy micro finance initiatives, will find it very difficult to fix the internal tensions created.



Partha Ghosh working with young children at the Lakhikantapur- 100 KM south of Calcutta



Winning picture of a painting competition for children at the base of the pyramid, organized by The Boston Pledge.

How have you defined the success matrix for The Boston Pledge? Based on the matrix, do you think the organization is successful? Any areas that did not come up to expectations?

Success matrix is a business school term. It makes lot of sense when I consult with our clients at the top of the pyramid. When we are talking of compassion and mentoring we are working out of unlimited reservoir in our heart and head, and we want to extend that to countless number of people.

So we have unlimited capacity and we have unlimited goals; as a result we do not count. Our only success matrix that we are concerned with - is what we do that has to be genuine, has to be innovative, and celebrate excellence. We do five to six workshops a year around the world at the bottom of the pyramid one annual conference for the top of the pyramid e.g. December 4th conference and we reach out to 500 to 600 people every year from Boston to Beijing in a borderless fashion. As long people engage with us with trust we are comfortable based on how we deliver and execute. We follow the fundamental principles of Geeta – “focus on the quality of the process, not the results”

How can Lokvani readers help The Boston Pledge?

Lokvani is an excellent organization with excellent readership. I think if we could enjoy the good wishes of your readership, if we could benefit from your and their imaginative capacity to serve some of the most difficult challenges of our times the imbalance of the 3Es we will indeed be humbled. The Boston Pledge members will welcome new members, will welcome financial contributions so that we could spread the Gospel of micro-power and our belief in “if it is to be, it is up to me”. We do want to pay it forward.

[\(Click here to learn more about the conference\)](#)



Schedule

2:00-2:30 PM Registration

2:45-2:50 Jerry Brightman - Welcome

2:50-3:10 Partha Ghosh - An Inquiry into the Power of
Micro-Movements: The New Possibilities?

3:10-3:40 Jeffrey Sachs - The Millennium Challenge
Eric Giler - Reality of Development

3:40-4:30 Panel 1: Idea to Reality
Raj Sisodia - Conscious Capitalism (Context)
Kimberly Wilson - Arts of Micro-finance
Dilip Mathur - The Dream Weavers
Pamela Goldberg - Catalyzing Self Expression

Break Exotic refreshments

4:50-5:30 Panel 2: Dreaming and Making it Happen
Mary Viola (Moderator)
Chitro Neogy - On the Boston Pledge Experience
Jenna Sirkin - Breaking the Poverty Cycle
Apparao Karri - Power of Social media
David Mok - Micro-volunteering

5:30-5:40 Jerry Brightman/Partha Ghosh: The Road Ahead

Paying It Forward: Harnessing the Power of “Micro-movements” in an Era of Economic Turbulence

The Boston Pledge “2010”Conference team

We at The Boston Pledge view the future with a reasonable degree of optimism and a sense of opportunity. This view may seem difficult to understand as humanity struggles through “the current global recession.” Countries around the world are burdened with historically high unemployment rates, sovereign debt crises, shortsighted leadership choices, and most damaging, a decadence of ethics in the governance of macro and micro processes—both corporate and government—while imbalances in equity, ecology, and energy continue to intensify. How can we feel optimism in the midst of this struggle, and where do we see the opportunities?.

This optimism stems from one fundamental faith that each person has the divine power to unleash extraordinary forces that could refresh and reset our individual and collective priorities. In the process, our readjusted focus could well chart a more enlightened and equitable course for the future of civilization. History has repeatedly taught us that out of a crisis comes an opportunity for change. Why not act on that opportunity now?

We believe that the time has come when we have to recommit ourselves to the fundamental principles that constituted the “American Dream” and had roots in earlier world civilizations—that with hard work, with social consciousness, we can achieve prosperity (socioeconomic progress that reaches large sections of society) and self-fulfillment. Once, the dream was pure and selfless. Over time, this originally spiritual quest has mutated into a material one, where self-fulfillment is too often equated with the attainment of wealth and power in society. Instead of pegging our dreams to personal material success, could we once again uncover new pathways to self-fulfillment through inner development and new forms of positive sum relationships with each other, and could we let economic equations follow?

1. The conference team made up of David Mok, Lorie Lin, Rob Frohman and Rui Li worked with Partha S Ghosh The Chairman and one of founding members of The Boston Pledge to develop the theme of this paper for the 2010 Annual Conference of The Boston Pledge.

Throughout history, sparks of individual brilliance have triggered new forms of social progress. In that spirit, today as we struggle within the narrow constraints of shortsightedness and self-interests, we have to envision the future with a new mindset. With that mindset, we can first view socioeconomic issues not as a hierarchy of economic opportunities but as possibilities at the base of the inverted economic pyramid. By drawing on the power of inversion, we can access a wider platform of virgin opportunities. Second, we can engage with opportunities to do social good not only in the spirit of “paying back” (Gospel of Wealth, Andrew Carnegie), but also in the spirit of “paying it forward.” Third, we will recognize that possibilities are limitless through the creative fusion of micro-venturing, micro-volunteering and micro-finance, what we term “micro-movements.”

Economic Turbulence Today: The Arts of Being in the Twenty-First Century?

At the individual level, we often forget that we have the power to assemble and disassemble our outer conditions—by our inner thoughts, by choices we make, by actions we take—for the greater good of civilization. As we step into 2011, we should remind ourselves of the power we have within us, which could indeed open up new vistas full of possibilities.

Advanced technologies have exposed us to unprecedented opportunities to address the turbulent current state of our planet by applying our intelligence and creativeness to settle down to a social dynamic that celebrates a cherished ancient ideal. By realizing the power of self-expression by serving the environment around us, we enable equitable opportunities for collective advancement.

The time has come when we must apply our scientific and technological genius to re-engineer our industries to create future products and processes that are ecology- and energy-friendly and most important, to enable equitable and sustainable wealth creation processes.

The time has come when we must forget our self-interests in the grandeur of our vision, in a larger ideal, in love of truth and love of humanity. We are indeed at a point in time in the development of a global civilization when we need a generational shift in our state of being, in our ways of becoming, and in our thinking.

The Next Currency: How Do We Reward Change Makers?

In view of the historic transformational opportunity ahead, an urgent question emerges that challenges the very socioeconomic framework we have built. How can we give incentives to change makers to develop innovations while facing the very realistic constraints of tight budgets, high opportunity cost, and frequently inefficient practices? More important than ever, how should our top innovators be rewarded when they excel in solving social problems, in arenas such as conflict and poverty alleviation?

Throughout history, change makers have often tended to be martyrs who were rewarded late in their lives or often only posthumously. In today's society, when we have new tools at our disposal to assess and predict the effectiveness of change makers, we at The Boston Pledge believe that these people should be celebrated for their clarity of action and vision early in their development of social value creations.

The cost of innovation and social change is high. Throughout much of human history, our society has been fixated upon money as the primary measure of value and the medium of exchange. A lackluster hedge fund manager in New York makes staggeringly more income than a gifted schoolteacher working in Brazil makes. When someone asks the question "So how much do you make?" seldom is that person looking for an explanation of how the respondent makes a difference in the community.

Embracing Complexity: Small Local Change to Stimulate Big Distant Change (butterfly effect)

Indeed, change involves a complex set of variables. How do we create this complexity with simple actions? Social and financial systems are complex, and solving problems within them often requires an empirical approach. Even when, with the best intentions, we try to address complex social issues, attempting to solve them with a centralized solution often falls short. With thousands of organizations at work world wide, we have, as a whole witnessed only the widening gap between rich and poor.

We believe development issues are best addressed by creating micro-initiatives, which are adaptive and self-energizing, and by fostering an environment of innovation in which homegrown solutions can emerge; these local, micro-level solutions could lead to outcomes that may prove to be more effective than the centralized solutions imposed from outside. We at the Boston Pledge through our Entrepreneurship Springboard Program (ESP) continue to be impressed with the depth and breadth of innovation in economically challenged communities.

Often, we find that micro-changes locally can have a distant and significant impact, especially if those changes resonate within the communities that need them. This conference will explore ways to organize and scale such phenomena and ways to enable communities to solve their problems. Further, we will explore ways to foster environments that permit these solutions to continue to grow on their own and create a domino effect across similar environments worldwide.

Why “Pay It Forward”?

What is the brave future we envision? How could we together implement the emerging dream to create a positive, bottom-up socioeconomic buoyancy?

We must act on the unprecedented opportunities now available to contribute our intelligence and creativity in addressing some of the deeper issues at the base of pyramid, while cherishing the ancient ideal of “paying it forward.” The conference will explore how your offering could probably be the first domino, one that will set in motion a fruitful chain reaction. The world is waiting to hear your voice, and we at The Boston Pledge wish to facilitate this process. We believe that when we perform a good deed for someone without expecting anything in return, the multiplier effect of our humble contribution is immense, and more important, the gratification that we experience in knowing that our good deeds have been passed on through a network of self-actualization is undeniable. We believe that through a “pay it forward” mode of being, the purest form of your individual brand equity will surface, much earlier than you will ever imagine. As Queen Elizabeth the First, in her maiden speech at Oxford, said, “It is not in the seeming, it is in the being, . . . let’s wish for the best.” We at The Boston Pledge add to this statement “it is actually in the becoming.” Shall we pledge today that so that “pay it forward” becomes a natural human instinct?

Select Abstracts

“We stand on the threshold of trying economic times – but times from which some brilliant thinking is beginning to emerge especially from the variety of Micro movements we are seeing in the world today. At times like this we should heed the words of Albert Einstein who is quoted as saying that the problems we face today cannot be solved with the same type of thinking that existed when the problem arose.

As we gather today, it is our collective hope that the powerful thought leaders who are here with us will contribute their wisdom and insights beyond the economic turbulence we face today and help guide us to see a future we never imagined – one balanced with the reality of economic realities and common wisdom. It is not necessarily what our collective vision is – but what the collective vision does.”

- Dr. Jerry Brightman

“People have evolved to a higher consciousness, and business must keep pace or further lose the public trust and continue to cause damage to the planet and to society. A new paradigm for business, called Conscious Capitalism, offers a hopeful way forward, creating financial, societal and other forms of wealth while offering greater meaning to their employees.”

- Dr. Raj Sisodia

In my view, there is an urgent need to communicate with the public and help to explain where there is consensus, and where are there doubts about the issues of sustainable development.

- Jeffrey Sachs

In this rapidly changing global climate, we need to find new technologies that will help stem the tide. The technologies alone are insufficient to address changing climate needs. We need to develop and inform business leaders into environmental advocates and leaders to grow the environmental economy.

- Pamela Goldberg

An Inquiry into the Power of Micro Forces: Realizing the New Possibilities

Today, humanity faces challenges that are indeed significant and profound. We must fundamentally change our mindset in terms of what we value, how we engage with each other, and more important, how we revere the forces of nature, however microscopic they may be. Without such a shift of thinking, the progress civilization has witnessed in the last 50,000 years could be rapidly be drawn into a black hole. On the other hand, thanks to new technologies in the fields of bio-, info-, opto-, and nano-sciences, equally significant opportunities exist for creating an improved balance of the 3Es – Energy , Ecology, and Equity. It is not the deficit of means, but perhaps the deficit of leadership that is constraining humanity from making the next big leap.

Through improved understanding of nature, we have learned that microscopic mutations, natural and/or man-made, have triggered mega changes; history has repeatedly taught us that, in times of crises, a few small communities and even a few courageous individuals have triggered large-scale social changes. I strongly believe that the time has now come, when we have to agree, beyond the conventional constructs of capitalism and socialism, to a new dynamic enabled by the fusion of micro-volunteering, micro-venturing, and micro-finance on top of the base of the “inverted socio economic pyramid,”

Only though such a paradigm shift will we be able to unleash the powerful forces that will move humanity towards a more sustainable and harmonious future. Perhaps in the absence of better word, we could call the new dynamic “Cellularism.” Do we have the will and the courage to pay it forward?

- Partha S Ghosh

TBP Organizes Paying It Forward

Anil Saigal, 12/09/10

The Boston Pledge organized its annual conference titled "Paying it Forward: Harnessing the Power of Micro-movements in an Era of Economic Turbulence" on December 4th at Tufts University with more than 225 people in attendance.

Partha Ghosh, the master mind behind the initiative, talked about the serious challenge humanity has ever faced to create a more equitable and sustainable future. "We all talk about the pyramid where the top are facing new challenges with respect to resources while the bottom is increasingly pushed into despair. However, the base cannot be weak for the economic pyramid to survive. As such, micro finance, social entrepreneurship and AID programs are necessary but not sufficient, we need a new approach - what I call direct engagement. In this world there are about 5 billion low-income people or approximately 65% of global population, who have a per capita income around \$500, in a world where the average per capita income is about \$10K/year. Therefore it is necessary to invert the pyramid where micro volunteering, micro mentoring and micro finance with micro venturing are the norm, and people at the top of the pyramid should directly engage in micro mentoring with the "pay it forward" spirit" said Ghosh. He expects The Boston Pledge to help spread this movement.

He was followed by world famous economist Dr. Jeff Sachs Director Earth Institute at the Columbia University (who joined the meeting virtually) discussed the United Nation's Millennium Challenge. He highlighted the need for people to get involved in eradicating poverty in this century. Building on Ghosh's approach he emphasized how initiatives like The Boston Pledge should work with the Millennium challenge to enable bottom up entrepreneurship.

"There are three kinds of people who say: that is impossible, anybody can do it, and finally nobody is going to buy it. Once you get past it, you build value," said Eric Giler, CEO, WiTricity. There are 1.5 billion people who do have access to electricity. While everyone uses disposable batteries, they are a hazard to the environment and cost about 3000 times more per Kwh as compared to the one from the grid.

Raj Sisodia focused on the concept of Conscious Capitalism and our Higher Purpose. "Humanity is one spirit, natural resources are finite while our inner resources are infinite," said Sisodia. Other members of the Idea to Reality panel included Kimberly Wilson, Lecturer, The Fletcher School, who spoke on the art of micro-finance; Dilip Mathur, who talked about The Dream Weavers which uses a unique village business architecture and the partnership with Jaipur Rugs; and Pamela Goldberg, Director, Tufts Entrepreneurial Leadership Program.

The panel Dreaming and Making it Happen was moderated by Mary Viola, Director of Engineering Management at Tufts University. Chitro Neogy, General Secretary of TBP, talked about the ESP India program which organizes Inspiration Workshops and Core MBA Clinics about how to operate a business. Jenna Sirkin talked about Breaking the Poverty Cycle. Apparao Karri and David Mok gave an overview of the Power of Social Media which bring anyone who 'likes' or 'follows' your cause. David emphasized that it can be used to improve visibility, familiarity, credibility and build relationships.

An inspirational conference in which Jerry Brightman, President, The leadership Group and the Master of Ceremonies kept every one engaged.

Who should Commit to The Boston Pledge (TBP)?

Have you ever imagined a world that is radically different? Have you ever dared to believe in the famous lines of Tagore below? If you have, TBP is for you.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection:
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is lead forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action--
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake.”

While this was an idealistic dream for a newly awakening country that the poet had, today something has gone utterly wrong with the rapidly changing world. We live in a world of deprivation for many and excess for a few, in a world - massively powerful and abjectly powerless at the same time, in a world that can self-destruct at the point of a few buttons. Perhaps it is time for us to really believe that we, the ones in privileged surplus environment, can contribute toward creating a world where there will be true equity, prosperity, and happiness. Realize your dreams. Join TBP. Yes, it is possible.

How could TBP help you achieve your personal and professional goals?

You must wonder, - “how I, who is so busy in a fast paced world, can be a catalyst toward change. While I appreciate the ideals and dreams behind TBP, it may be just too much for me. Is it possible to combine professional and personal goals and help the world at the same time?” Yes, it is. Many professionals and business people have begun working toward a more environment friendly and more enlightened business practices.

In the process of creating a global network of people committed to public service, TBP is committed toward harnessing all the energies released by successful people toward a common goal. You can benefit from such cooperation and make a difference at the same time.

Most importantly, as TBP brings together professionals from different disciplines and echelons of career ladders, the opportunity to learn from each other is limitless only when we approach issues with the true spirit of problem solving, to help people dream, and then enable them realize those dreams. It provides a wide and a robust platform to experiment with your inner-self, which could be often risky in the corporate environment. As people dedicate their time and passion to our mission, TBP provides a fertile ground for developing the discipline of time and communication management, building confidence in your own skills, - as to how they could be used in service of difficult problems and most importantly in the process uncover your own leadership capacities.

After all, in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: "the Future belongs to those, who believe in the Beauty of their dreams".

We will welcome your inputs to what TBP is up to. We will respect any contributions you make.

We do believe it will be a great privilege for all of us involved in expanding the scope of public good with a global perspective.