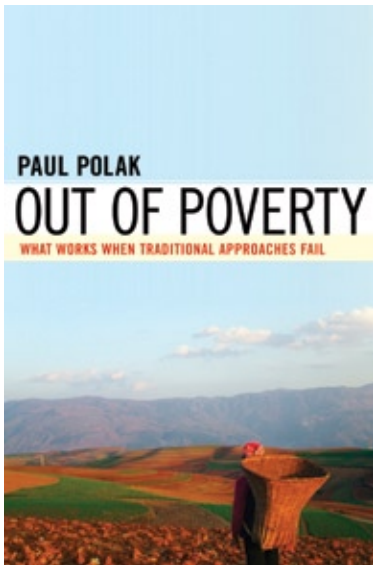


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Visionary Paul Polak Exposes the Flaws in Current Poverty Alleviation Efforts and Shows What Solutions Are Actually Working

Denver, Colo.—November 29, 2007—Paul Polak, founder of International Development Enterprises (IDE)—a global non-profit organization that has successfully helped 17 million people in developing countries escape poverty—has a book coming out in February that has already won praise from Paul Newman; Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Computer; and John Maeda, associate director of research, MIT Media Lab, and author of *The Laws of Simplicity*, among others.

In *Out of Poverty* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, February 2008), Polak demonstrates that his approach—helping small farmers increase their crop yield year-round with innovative, low-cost agricultural tools—is an effective way for the 800 million people living on one-acre farms worldwide to move out of poverty. Challenging current conventional methods for alleviating poverty, Polak exposes the “three poverty eradication myths”—that we can donate people out of poverty; that national economic growth will end poverty; and that big business, operating as it does now, will end poverty.

“While it certainly is true that powerlessness, poor health, poor education and absent transport infrastructure are important root causes of poverty,” Polak says, “there can be no question that the most direct and cost-effective first step out of poverty is to find ways to help poor people to increase their income.”

Polak and his colleagues at IDE have interviewed 3,000 small farmers around the globe over the past 25 years to help develop small-scale innovations that have worked—placing 750,000 acres of land under irrigation and proving that farmers in developing countries can generate wealth by focusing on high-value, labor-intensive cash crops. The success stories he tells feature farmers who improved their lives—including one in Nepal whose income increased 20-fold in five years using an IDE drip-irrigation system and another in Zambia whose net income doubled in one year after he bought an IDE treadle pump.

“One-acre dollar-a-day farmers and their urban brothers and sisters are already hard-nosed, stubborn survivalist entrepreneurs ready to take advantage of marketplace opportunities if the price is right, the return is high, and the risk is low,” Polak says. Through his work in the United States and abroad, he has found that the best way for the richest 10 percent of the world to bring about long-term change is by creating opportunities that encourage local entrepreneurs to become active participants in a market-driven economy.

Embracing Design to Improve Lives

In *Out of Poverty*, Paul Polak challenges us to launch a revolution in the way we in the West think about water, agriculture, markets and design. Innovative design and the ruthless pursuit of affordability, his work shows, are key to long-term impacts on poverty and to eradicating it worldwide. So far, IDE has successfully developed and distributed 200,000 of the world’s first small farm drip-irrigation systems—costing farmers as little as \$3 each—and 2 million \$25 treadle pumps globally.

But Polak insists there is much more to be done. His new organization—D-Rev: Design for the Other 90%—will help multinational corporations develop affordable products for dollar-a-day customers. D-Rev is working on a \$15 scythe for harvesting grain, a low-cost, low-pressure water sprinkler system for crops and a \$50 gasifier for generating heat. And, Polak’s wish list includes a \$4 household water filter and a \$10 solar lantern to illuminate homes.

“Revolutionary change in markets is usually based on breakthroughs in affordability and miniaturization, married to innovations in marketing and distribution,” Polak reports.

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In *Out of Poverty*, Paul Polak shares a practical guide to problem solving that helped him address the root causes of poverty and can help us improve our lives. His book also offers specific advice for everyone who wants to end poverty, including development donors, multinational corporations, universities, agriculture and irrigation research institutions and concerned individuals worldwide who would like to join the movement to support innovative design solutions that enable prosperity.



About the Book

Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail can be ordered now at Amazon.com and will be in bookstores nationwide in February 2008. To learn more, visit Berrett-Koehler Publishers at www.bkconnection.com.

\$27.95, hardcover, 248 pages; ISBN 978-1-57675-449-8

About Paul Polak and International Development Enterprises

A psychiatrist for 23 years, Paul Polak founded Colorado-based non-profit International Development Enterprises (IDE) in 1981 to develop practical solutions that attack poverty at its roots. IDE has helped 17 million farmers increase their net income by \$288 million annually. In 2003, Paul Polak was named one of the *Scientific American* "Top 50" for his leadership in agriculture policy. Polak was also awarded Ernst & Young's "Entrepreneur of the Year" in the social responsibility category in 2004. Under Polak's guidance, IDE has received more than \$40 million in funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Polak is a compassionate spokesperson for establishing market opportunities that serve the poor. He has presented to enthusiastic audiences at Pop!Tech, the Social Venture Network Conference and numerous academic and professional conferences, and his 2008 talks include speaking to 3,000 engineers and educators as the Distinguished Lecturer at the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. in June. He has been interviewed by National Geographic Weekend radio program and Wisconsin Public Radio and other shows, and featured in leading publications, including *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR PAUL POLAK'S *OUT OF POVERTY*

"*Out of Poverty* teaches us to think simple. Paul Polak brings forward ideas and solutions that bypass government agencies and other leaden institutions. Ideas that work!"

- PAUL NEWMAN

"Paul's approach to solving our world's greatest ailment is one of simplicity in design and humanity in spirit. His powerful recipe for change is clear, precise and DO-able. And we need desperately to DO it right now."

- JOHN MAEDA

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH
MIT MEDIA LAB AND AUTHOR OF *THE LAWS OF SIMPLICITY*

"*Out of Poverty* is very exciting. It matches a lot of my own thoughts about solving things. When you alleviate something but don't fix the cause it comes back. Paul Polak's approach confronts the root causes."

- STEVE WOZNIAK

CO-FOUNDER OF APPLE COMPUTER AND AUTHOR OF *IWOZ*

"After 25 years working in developing countries, Paul Polak provides a unique, practical and entrepreneurial blueprint to enable and empower the rural poor to lift themselves out of poverty. His innovative and curious mind and his courage in challenging conventional thinking offer proven solutions which unleash the capacity of the poor to create income—giving them a hand up, not a handout."

- PHILIP R. BERBER

CHAIRMAN, A GLIMMER OF HOPE FOUNDATION

"Paul Polak's approach is beautifully revolutionary because it recognizes that the poor MUST be part of the solution to end poverty and are not the causes of it."

- MAJORA CARTER

CEO, SUSTAINABLE SOUTH BRONX