

Here comes the next wave!

As I write this (August 7), Israel and the Palestinians are at war in Gaza, ISIS is sweeping across Iraq, Boko Haram is terrifying Nigerians, Syrians are tearing their nation apart, and Vladimir Putin is raising fears of a war in Ukraine and another cold war with the West.

Yet, this weekend (August 8-11), high school students from 16 countries are gathering in Moscow for the 12th annual SAGE World Cup. Nelson Mandela's grandson, Ndaba Mandela, is scheduled to be the keynote speaker.

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I celebrated my 60th birthday Christmas Eve 2004.

Seven months later the doctors told me I had prostate cancer.

I've been lucky. We caught it early, surgery removed all traces, and I've been cancer-free since.

But during the emotional months before surgery, I promised myself to make the best possible use of whatever time I'd have left . . .

I'd already spent more than 25 years in the field of social enterprise, most of them working upstream, trying to give nonprofits a sense of what might be possible. I left it to others to guide them through the challenges of organizational change and business planning.

By 2005 I'd delivered keynote speeches or conducted master classes in more than 40 states and nearly two dozen countries. I knew I could go on doing that sort of thing. I still had the energy -- and the phone kept ringing.

But I also knew the field was changing . . .

We'd already seen three waves of social entrepreneurs. The isolated visionaries of the 1960s and 1970s (*Jim Boyle and Lori Sweeney, Earl Copus, Jr., Margaret Cossette, John DuRand, Bill Kling, Rev. William Lindner, Jim McClurg, Paul Nicholson, Mimi Silbert and John Maher, Richard Steckel, Bill Strickland, Hugh Westbrook and Esther Colliflower, and a few others*) were followed by a larger wave of pioneers during the 1980s and 1990s (*Rick Aubrey, Fr. Greg Boyle, Kathleen Buescher, Peter Cove and Dr. Lee Bowes, Jed Emerson, Rich Gilmartin, Charlie Graham, Carla Javits, Charles King and Keith Cylar, Bobbie Lenz, Kevin Lynch, Kevin McDonald, Dave McDonough, Barbara Massey, Gary Mulhair, Dale Novotny, Richard Oulahan, Bob Russell, Jim Schorr, Billy Shore, Rick Surpin, Tony Wagner, Julius Walls, Jim Westall, Michael Ziegler, and dozens of others*).

As we entered the new century, a third wave arrived and an “industry” began to emerge as a trade association (The Social Enterprise Alliance) took shape and hundreds of nonprofits and others launched social enterprise strategies.

. . . and when I looked around during the summer of 2005, I realized a fourth wave was already heading toward shore. These entrepreneurs ranged in age from 13 to 30 -- junior and senior high students, undergrads and graduate students. Their passion for social change was exciting -- and I thought I might be able to help, that my years of experience might give them some perspective as they started on their journeys . . . so, for the past nine years, I’ve spent most of my time with them.

Among other things, I taught graduate students at Carnegie Mellon for three years and I’m just beginning my third year at Pepperdine. But the most rewarding adventure began in 2006 when I found myself staring from a podium in Brooklyn at about 150 of the most impassioned young people I’d ever seen . . .

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They were all high school students, from across the United States, competing in the national SAGE tournament for the right to represent their country at the SAGE World Cup in Shanghai. The electricity in the room was palpable and continues to energize thousands of volunteers every year -- business mentors and college student advisors who work closely with SAGE teams . . . and business, civic and educational leaders who serve as judges for national and international tournaments.

Prof. Curt DeBerg (*photo at right*) and a corps of volunteers from California State University, Chico founded the organization in 2002 (even today, everybody involved in SAGE, including DeBerg, is a volunteer).



“Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship” now has programs in 21 countries, each with a national coordinator, and expects to have more than 30 within the next year (*a list of current and potential SAGE countries appears at the end of this essay*). According to the SAGE website, the participating students are “a global community of teenagers sharing a common purpose: To make the world a better place.”

How? By helping “create the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders whose innovations and social enterprises address the major unmet needs” of society.

The SAGE model is similar to interscholastic sports. There are two tracks: “Social Enterprise Businesses (SEB),” which *directly* address social needs through their products and services; and “Socially Responsible Businesses (SRB),” which *indirectly* address social needs through their charitable and voluntary endeavors. A group of at least three teenagers forms an independent team or recruits an ally such as a teacher, business leader, or local nonprofit. If the team is affiliated with a high school, it can be part of an existing class or an extra-curricular program. The team launches either an SEB or an SRB in September or October and in late spring or early summer of the following year travels to a regional tournament to submit a written report and an oral presentation documenting the success of its efforts for a panel of judges. The winners move on to a national tournament, where the top finisher in each track qualifies for the World Cup.

The first World Cup took place in Kansas City in May 2003 with teams from just four countries. The next two were in Kansas City and San Francisco, but beginning in 2006 the World Cup began traveling the globe: China (2006), Ukraine (2007), Nigeria (2008 and 2013), Brazil (2009), South Africa (2010), the United States (2011 and 2012), and now Russia. There are more than 11,000 students in SAGE programs today, about 200 of them at the competition in Moscow. Next year's World Cup will be in South Korea.

SAGE is built on a sturdy set of assumptions:

- People are increasingly aware that the social problems we face are worldwide and interconnected
- At the same time, entrepreneurship has become broadly accepted as a productive way to address them
- And, best of all, we are blessed with a global community of teenagers ready and willing to help



The young people participating in SAGE have a growing understanding of the challenges that threaten our planet and are increasingly knowledgeable about conditions in other countries. Modern communications technology enables them to collaborate across borders, and because they are no longer isolated from each other, they have a heightened sensitivity and respect for cross-cultural differences -- and a genuine desire to work together to address social needs.

I served as SAGE Board Chair for three years and also worked with Curt, Chief Operating Officer Rob Best and a dedicated group of volunteer Board and staff members to migrate from a single competition that focused primarily on socially responsible businesses to the new, two-track model.



During the transition, we presented special cash awards called "The Arthur Boschee and Evelyn Ball International Awards for Social Enterprise," named after my father and my wife's mother, both of whom were successful entrepreneurs.

During the five years the awards were presented, Gold, Silver or Bronze medal winners came from Canada, China, Nigeria (*twice*), Northern Ireland, the Philippines (*twice, including the 2007 Gold Medal winners pictured with me at left*), Russia, Singapore (*three times*), South Africa, and the United States (*three times*).

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BREAKING NEWS (AUGUST 12, 2014):

The winners in the Moscow tournament were announced last evening at a gala celebration covered by multiple media outlets. Ireland captured the World Cup in the social enterprise category, with City High School of Pittsburgh finishing second (Mona Abdul-Halim, one of my graduate students at Carnegie Mellon, helped start the City High program four years ago). Nigeria placed third and South Africa fourth. In the socially responsible business category, China took the Cup, with Nigeria second, Canada third and Russia fourth.

Ireland's winning social enterprise, Greener Globe, developed and sold two products to encourage water conservation. The combined net income during the 2013-2014 academic year came to nearly €11,000 (approximately \$15,000). **Aquacica** is a timed showerhead with LED lights integrated to encourage consumers to take shorter showers and prevent unnecessary water waste. It's powered by the kinetic energy of the water passing through the showerhead, reducing CO2 emissions and saving electricity. The company's **Water Leak Detection System** is intended to monitor and prevent water leakage (and thereby prevent any resulting damage) in the domestic, industrial and agricultural sectors. Greener Globe intends to expand both products into the U.K. and European markets in the near future.

Eight special awards were also presented, each corresponding to one of the eight Millenium Development Goals:

- To promote gender equality and empower women (Pakistan)
- To reduce child mortality (Singapore)
- To improve maternal health (Singapore)
- To combat HIV and other diseases (Ukraine)
- To ensure environmental sustainability (Russia)
- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Philippines)
- To achieve universal primary education (Ukraine)
- To develop a global partnership for development (Nigeria)

The first five listed above were social enterprises, the other three socially responsible businesses.



The government of Nigeria has pledged to install SAGE in every one of its more than 500 secondary schools, an ambition that gives weight to a comment by Rich Shields, former Financial Management Officer at the United States Embassy in Nigeria, after last year's World Cup in Abuja: "In my humble opinion, the U.S. Mission accomplished more with a few hours of our time and a couple hundred bucks than we accomplished with the entire foreign aid budget for Africa in a year!"

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CURRENT SAGE COUNTRIES: Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Ghana, India, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States and Zambia. Eleven others are expected to join the global network soon: Armenia, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Macedonia, Nepal, New Zealand, Georgia, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad/Tobago and Vietnam.

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS TO DATE (SELECTED LIST): Allstate, Bank of the West, California Society of CPAs, Deloitte, Elkes Family Foundation, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Genentech, Intel, Macy's, Mitsubishi Electric America, Sierra Health Foundation, Staples Foundation, Target, Umpqua Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, the Arata Brothers Trust, the Harold and Louis Price Foundation, the Ken Grossman/Katie Gonser Family, the Kobe Bryant Family Foundation, and the Pasternak Family Foundation.