

# Global Giving

## MATTERS

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This issue's feature story examines the Medersat.com initiative in Morocco. Othman Benjelloun, Chair of the Banque Marocaine du Commerce Exterieur, and his wife Dr. Leïla Mezian-Benjelloun created Medersat.com as an integrated approach to community development with education as a focus. The effort faces challenges, including limited capacity in some communities to use the support they have received. But the large number of requests for involvement from national and international organizations and the growing impact of the programs – which reach almost all regions of the country – indicate that the Medersat.com approach is working.

**James M. Brasher III, Director,  
Global Philanthropists Circle**

*Global Giving Matters* presents best practices and innovations in philanthropy and social investment around the world. It is an initiative of The Synergos Institute's Global Philanthropists Circle and the World Economic Forum, under the direction of Adele Simmons, Senior Advisor to the Forum, and James M. Brasher III, Director, Global Philanthropists Circle. Lynn Peebles is the lead writer. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors provides support for its distribution. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, to unsubscribe, or to designate someone else in your organization to receive it in your stead, contact us at [comments@globalgivingmatters.org](mailto:comments@globalgivingmatters.org).

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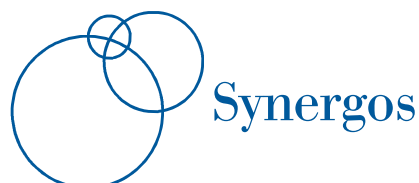
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## Feature: Medersat.com – Bringing schools and community development to rural Morocco

Until a few years ago, Daabza was typical of many isolated villages in the hilly, drought-prone terrain of northern Morocco: no running water, no electricity, and few hopes for a better future. The people of Daabza, like the parched earth they inhabited, were thirsty – not just for water but for knowledge and opportunity.

Today, like the desert after a rain, Daabza and dozens of other villages or *douars* throughout the Moroccan countryside are finding their landscape transformed by the presence of a network of rural community schools designed to bring not just education, but the tools for sustainable development.

Through the **Medersat.com** project launched in 2000 by the **Banque Marocaine du Commerce Exterieur (BMCE Bank) Foundation**, 55 remote villages across the kingdom that were previously languishing without schools, power, or reliable water supply, now possess all of these. In each location, professionally trained teachers drawn from the surrounding region instruct students in their mother tongue, whether it is Arabic or the indigenous Amazigh language spoken in many parts of Morocco, as well as French.

After hours, the schools become bustling centers for adult education and training, village meetings and local enterprise. The aim is to address the endemic isolation, poverty and illiteracy that afflict rural Morocco by making the schools a hub for wider community development, while respecting local cultural heritage and language.

### Origins

“Medersat.com was established to give all children and adults in these areas a real chance to reach a level of education that will enable them to become positive forces for development and to be able to contribute to an environment of openness and tolerance in their own communities,” explains **Othman Benjelloun**, Chairman and CEO of BMCE Bank. He and his wife, Dr. **Leïla Mezian-Benjelloun** are members of The Synergos Institute’s Global Philanthropists Circle. Dr. Mezian-Benjelloun serves as President of the BMCE Bank Foundation and leads the foundation’s programs involving Amazigh language and culture (see sidebar page 6).

One of the largest corporations on the Casablanca stock exchange with total assets of over \$5 billion, the BMCE Bank Group is a powerful and familiar presence in

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### Medersat.com: What's in a Name?

Medersat.com, the name chosen by BMCE Bank Foundation for its network of rural community schools, is rich in associations. The term *medersatkoum* means “your school” in Arabic. Medersat.com also evokes the *medersa*, the place of learning in traditional Arab society; the Mediterranean locale; connection to satellites and new communications technologies, hence the dot.com; and the assets shared by the village community.

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Moroccan society, employing nearly 3,000 people in more than 200 branches throughout the kingdom.

As a forward-thinking leader of Morocco's financial services industry, Benjelloun has played an instrumental role in modernizing his country's banking sector and promoting a competitive Moroccan economy. Now, he has turned his hand to reforms in his country's education system that may prove as far-reaching as the innovations he pioneered in the private sector.

### A call for action on rural education crisis

The vehicle for this new rural educational initiative is the BMCE Bank Foundation, which Benjelloun established shortly after assuming leadership of the bank in 1995. Circumstances in Morocco at that time presented a clear demand for action, with nearly three-quarters of rural residents illiterate (among women, the figure is as high as 90 percent) and 65 percent of the rural population living below the poverty line.

Spurred on by developments such as King Mohammed VI's appeal for all sectors of Moroccan society to take concerted action on education, and by a new national charter on the subject, Benjelloun decided that the time was right for a bold new approach to the problem, and that the rural areas were the most compelling priority.

The Benjellouns both had long been active in support of higher education in Morocco, he as co-founder and former Chancellor of Al Akhawayn University, and she as head of the **Benjelloun-Mezian Foundation**, which provide scholarships to Moroccan students worldwide and help train the country's future generation of leaders.

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#### Morocco: Vital Statistics

Total Population (2001)	29.6 million
Rural Population (as percent of total) 2001	43.9%
Population living below the national poverty line 1997-2000	19.0%
Population under 15 (as percent of total) 2001	32.3%
Male adult literacy (age 15 and above) 2001	62.6%
Female adult literacy (age 15 and above) 2001	37.2%
Internet users 2001	1.4%
Personal computers in use (per 100 people) 2001	1.4
Population with sustainable access to an improved water source, rural 2000	56.0%
Population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban 2000	98.0%

Source: *UNDP Human Development Report 2003*

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But the growing crisis in rural communities convinced them of the need for a new commitment, focused on primary education at the village level. For the BMCE Bank Foundation, this meant an "evolution from . . . providing ad hoc social assistance and grants to NGOs and individuals nationwide, to adoption of a more integrated approach to development focused on education and environmental protection," Othman Benjelloun recalled in a recent interview with *Global Giving Matters*.

Accordingly, the foundation began to plan in earnest for its new initiative, Medersat.com, designed to integrate education into sustainable, humane rural development. At the Second Mediterranean Development Forum in

Marrakech in 1998, on the podium next to World Bank President James Wolfensohn, Benjelloun announced the foundation's ambitious plans to build 1001 new community schools in rural areas by 2010.

### Mobilizing partners for change

Through the BMCE Bank Foundation, Medersat.com has succeeded in mobilizing a wide variety of partners and collaborators around a common agenda. For expertise in matters of pedagogy, adult literacy and teacher training, for example, the foundation has relied on Morocco's **National Education Ministry** and the **Rene Descartes Paris V University**. It turned to the **United Nations Development Programme** for model programs and for technical and financial support for sustainable environmental management and income generating activities. Moroccan water and power agencies are donating services to connect rural communities with safe drinking water and reliable sources of electricity. And telecommunications firms are partnering with the foundation to help bridge the "digital *wadi*" that prevents rural communities from participation in the global knowledge society made possible by the Internet.

The principality of **Monaco** provided key early financial support for two of Medersat.com's rural community schools in the southern regions of Essaouira and Taroudant. In the north, Spain is supporting an additional two schools in the regions of Al Hoceima and Nador, and the Spanish **Telefonica Foundation** is helping finance a school in Tangier. **Senegal's Health and Education Foundation** has joined the foundation in opening the first Medersat.com school outside of Morocco, in the capital city of Dakar (see sidebar on next page).

In another partnership with the BMCE Bank Foundation, the **Laureus Sport for Good Foundation** has contributed \$100,000 to integrate physical education and sport in the curricula of the Medersat.com network, with a pilot project in the Marrakech region. The UK-based organization uses the power of sports to help address social concerns across the globe. This diverse group of partners assembled by the BMCE Bank Foundation has contributed to extending the impact of the schools in the network and helping to improve the rural population's living conditions.

From the outset of the Medersat.com experiment, Benjelloun said that the bank, through its foundation, has seen its role as one of a catalyst for change in rural communities. "It was a question of mobilizing energies. That was always the idea, that we have the credibility, we have financial power to . . . rally all these people."

### Building a record of achievements

Medersat.com was launched in the 2000-2001 academic year with the construction of 16 schools. Now in its fourth year of operation, the project has accumulated an impressive list of accomplishments. To date, \$15 million has been committed by the foundation and its partners and 55 rural community schools have been built throughout Morocco. More than 5,400 primary students and 1,100 preschoolers have been enrolled in these community schools, which have also provided literacy training to 5,000 adults.

Beyond the obvious benefits of basic education, 20 *douars* have benefited from development projects carried out by foundation's partners to connect residents to water and power supply. Another key goal of Medersat.com, to strengthen community institutions by giving village residents a central role in the planning, implementation and assessment of development activities, has led to the establishment of 50 local management committees.

Through a partnership with two microfinance organizations, the foundation has launched a pilot program to provide microcredit to residents of two villages, Aït Iktel, in the province of El Haouz, and Aït Lhaj Taher, in the province of Essaouira, in connection with Medersat.com's ongoing community development projects there. Plans are underway to extend the pilot into seven additional rural locations where community schools are up and running.

The foundation's partners in the pilot program are the **Zakoura Foundation**, which has a successful record of providing microcredit and a range of support services to women in Morocco, and **PlaNNet Finance Maroc**, which offers specialized technical assistance to microfinance institutions and lines of credit to the villages participating in the pilot project. To date, microcredits totaling more than \$53,000 have been extended to 370 clients in Aït Iktel and Aït Lhaj Taher.

The result has been that in village after village, the Medersat.com schools are raising expectations, opening up a whole new world of possibilities and empowering residents to realize their dreams for a better future.

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### Forging partnerships beyond Morocco's borders: Medersat.com in Senegal

Located near an ancient baobab tree where elders pass on their knowledge and wisdom, Medersat.com's first community school in Senegal provides tangible evidence of a common vision of rural development.

Opened in March 2003 in the village of Mbissao, about 65 kilometers northwest of Dakar, the school-which serves 100 primary school children and their families-

is the fruit of partnerships that cross borders between the private sectors, foundations, and national governments of Morocco and Senegal.

Mbissao's school was commissioned by Senegal's Health & Education Foundation, an NGO run by **First Lady Viviane Wade**. The BMCE Bank Foundation provided architects, engineers, and financed the school, and collaborated in various areas such as curriculum, training and community development.

As in Morocco, the arrival of Medersat.com in Mbissao has brought the fundamental elements for community development: roads, water and electricity to light classrooms and power the computers that are a hallmark of the BMCE Bank Foundation's schools.

"On the first day of school, it was difficult even to get them to sit down," said **Warietou N'diaye**, head of Medersat.com in Senegal, of children who had never seen a school before, much less attended one. "Now my pupils know how to turn on their computers and click on the mouse."

The project reflects a determination on the part of Morocco's King Mohammed VI and Senegal's **President Abdoulaye Wade** to forge closer ties in accordance with the goals of **NEPAD**, the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It is also an expression of the desire of BMCE Capital, the largest investment banking group in Morocco, to be a good corporate citizen. As part of its international expansion, BMCE Capital opened an office in Dakar, its first in Senegal, in March 2003.

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### Daabza: a snapshot of Medersat.com in action

A good illustration of the profound impact that community schools are making on village life can be found in Daabza, about an hour's journey from Fez in the Middle Atlas region of Morocco.

Prior to 2001, the majority of Daabza's children had never seen a school, much less attended one. At a very young age, most went to work in the countryside, tending fields or herding goats. Those who were lucky enough to attend classes were forced to walk several miles over rough trails to the nearest school. In this drought-stricken region of Morocco, water was often rationed; keeping the *douar* supplied with sufficient water meant endless treks down the hill to the village well on donkeys.

When the foundation decided to build a school in Daabza, the *douar* donated the land and provided much of the labor for construction. In keeping with Medersat.com's philosophy, the school was situated in the physical center of the community with the aim of making it a key driver in local development. The architectural style and building materials reflected local traditions. What emerged was a complex of buildings that feature domes and graceful arches, punctuated by paved courtyards open to the sky.

A reliable water supply was provided with the assistance of a foundation partner, the **Drinking Water Utility (ONEP)**. When the doors of the school finally opened in 2001, one of the school's two teachers, Abdesselam, had to show the children how to operate the faucets; without running water in their village, they had never used a water tap.

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### Education and mother tongue: safeguarding Amazigh language and culture

Until the advent of the Medersat.com school program, Moroccan children of Amazigh, or Berber, heritage were unable to receive classroom instruction in their mother tongue. That's all changing, thanks to the advocacy of Dr. Leïla Mezian-Benjelloun and the BMCE Bank Foundation.

The foundation believes that using and developing native language skills is a way to respect and preserve cultural heritage while also providing a better way to teach more widely spoken languages and open doors to the global knowledge society.

Under the leadership of Dr. Mezian-Benjelloun, who is president of the foundation and heads its Amazigh education initiative, Amazigh has been introduced into the school curriculum for the first time in the modern history of Morocco. Through the foundation's Medersat.com school program, children in rural communities receive instruction in their native tongue, whether that happens to be Arabic or Amazigh, as well as French.

The innovative approach pioneered by Dr. Mezian-Benjelloun, herself of Amazigh heritage, has spurred the National Education Ministry to begin teaching Amazigh on a pilot basis in the country's public school system. The foundation has developed a series of Amazigh instructional materials, which use the Berber's traditional Tifinagh alphabet.

Moroccans of Amazigh origin have also been encouraged by King Mohammed VI's decision to create a Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, charged with promoting and safeguarding Berber culture and language. Dr. Mezian-Benjelloun serves on the Institute's board of directors.

Amazigh is a name given to the original inhabitants of North Africa and their descendants. Amazigh populations are prevalent in many parts of Morocco, particularly in the Rif, Middle Atlas and southern regions of the kingdom.

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### Taking Stock of Medersat.com

Committed for rural schools and their communities	\$15 million
School complexes built, equipped and supplied with water and electricity	55
Geographic spread of Medersat.com schools	15 regions and 30 provinces of Morocco
Teachers/community development facilitators recruited and trained	237
Primary school students enrolled	5,419
Pre-school students enrolled	1,120
Adults given literacy training	5,000
Development projects (power and water supply) implemented with partners	20
Villagers' local management committees established	50
Microcredit extended to 370 clients in 2 villages	\$53,250

As of February 2004

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Because Daabza is not connected to the electrical grid, the school uses a solar photovoltaic system developed for the BMCE Bank Foundation by the Benjellouns' son, **Kamal Benjelloun**, anthropologist and environmentalist, founder of the New York-based **Strategic Defense of the Environment Group (SDEG)**. Kamal Benjelloun and SDEG have been influential in shaping the foundation's support for environmentally sound development policies. The solar panels provide the power to light classrooms and run the bank of computers that are a standard feature of all Medersat.com schools.

Soon after the school opened, a representative of the BMCE Bank Foundation met with the villagers and reflected on the nature of the partnership that Medersat.com has struck with rural communities across Morocco. "We'll finish the work and give you the keys, because these are your walls, your land, and your

children," she told the assembled citizens of Daabza.

### Lessons learned: the strategic value of shared experience

Given the ambitious and unprecedented scope of the project, Othman Benjelloun observes that it was inevitable that some unexpected challenges would arise. Among these were the following:

- At a time when the foundation was attempting to roll out a complex national program, it didn't anticipate the flood of interest from national and international organizations, whose requests for information overwhelmed the small staff.
- The decision to expand the model to include pre-school, and the incorporation of Amazigh language instruction demanded a much greater level of specific expertise than originally planned.
- Difficulties in implementing an IT program in rural areas were greater than expected.
- Rural populations were not always prepared to embrace the new dynamic introduced by Medersat.com into their communities.

Nevertheless, four years into its bold experiment in rural education and community building, the BMCE Bank Foundation has received validation of its Medersat.com

approach from a wide variety of partners and stakeholders, and is working to develop a “global life size model” in Morocco of 1,000 rural community schools.

“There are amazing stories out there to be told and shared, and to learn from,” says Benjelloun, who sees great strategic value in sharing the lessons learned from Medersat.com. He is getting the word out in a variety of ways: through regional and international conferences, by participation in global philanthropy networks such as the Global Philanthropists Circle, and through sponsorship of a series of engaging informational videos on Medersat.com created by his daughter, **Dounia Benjelloun**, a documentary film producer who divides her time between Morocco, Paris and New York. For information on Medersat.com, or to obtain copies of the videos, please contact the BMCE Bank Foundation by email (fondation@bmcebank.ma), phone (+212 (22) 977-500) or fax (+212 (22) 972-421).

For Othman Benjelloun, the sight of a child working on a computer in a rural classroom who six months previously might have aspired to nothing more than herding goats, is a source of “extraordinary contentment.” In a distinguished business career marked by international acclaim, Benjelloun deems Medersat.com his proudest accomplishment. “I have done industry, banking, insurance and telecommunications, and this is the project of my life,” he says.

## Global Giving Roundup

*Overviews of best practices around the world and links to learn more about them*

*Links to websites with more details are available at the online edition of Global Giving Matters at [www.globalgivingmatters.org](http://www.globalgivingmatters.org)*

### **Schmidheiny's \$1 billion gift creates new philanthropic model for Latin America**

**Stephan Schmidheiny's** decision to donate the entire equity of his Costa Rican-based **GrupoNueva** business holdings to a newly established trust fund called **VIVA** (Vision and Values), has created a novel mechanism to foster stronger alliances between corporate and civil society in Ibero-America. Under the new arrangement, VIVA becomes the owner of GrupoNueva and the chief financial backer of the **AVINA Foundation** ([www.avina.net](http://www.avina.net)), established by Schmidheiny in 1994 to promote sustainable development in Latin America, Spain and Portugal. (See *GGM* Issue 5, April-May, 2002, for an interview with Schmidheiny). The AVINA Foundation has invested more than \$280 million in support of partnerships between business leaders and civil society to promote social development. VIVA will function as a lean, virtual trust, overseeing what Schmidheiny hopes will be a “virtuous cycle” of cross-fertilization between the business operations of GrupoNueva and the philanthropic aims of AVINA. **Peter Fuchs**, a former head of the International Red Cross and close associate of Schmidheiny is VIVA's president. Schmidheiny himself plans to have no direct role in management of any of the three institutions in the future. (INCAE press release October 9, 2003; GrupoNueva press release)

### Outlook upbeat for socially responsible investing in Asia

While the bulk of the funds and investors involved in socially responsible investing (SRI) are still to be found in developed nations, the emerging Asian market has substantial potential for growth, according to an industry association from the region. Currently, SRI in developing countries is embryonic, representing only about \$2.2 billion of the \$2.4 trillion global market. Only \$1 billion in SRI assets are actually held by investors in developing countries. Still, Asia's shifting demographics, rising middle-class prosperity in a region shrugging off the effects of the recent economic crisis, and increased social, environmental and ethical awareness are key factors that will accelerate SRI growth, predicts the **Association for Sustainable and Responsible Investment in Asia** (AsrIA – [www.asria.org](http://www.asria.org)). AsrIA concludes that conditions are particularly favorable for the growth of SRI in China, India, Thailand and Malaysia. (*Origo Fourth Sector News*; World Business Council for Sustainable Development)

### Europe's first center for social entrepreneurship launched at Oxford

In its largest grant to date, the California-based **Skoll Foundation** ([www.skollfoundation.org](http://www.skollfoundation.org)) has donated \$7.5 million to launch the Skoll Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University's Saïd Business School in England. The Center will provide scholarships to five MBA students annually, each of whom will be expected to focus their studies on applying entrepreneurial strategies to create social change and to develop a plan to address a specific social problem. The Skoll grant will also finance research projects, a lectureship and an international forum on social entrepreneurship (see below). The foundation, founded and chaired by **Jeff Skoll**, former president of online auction site eBay, chose the Saïd School in part because of its diverse student body: 70 percent of its students are from outside Western Europe. (*Philanthropy News Digest*, November 25, 2003; Skoll Foundation press release, November 24, 2003)

### Two global initiatives provide final push for eradication of tropical diseases:

#### End to guinea-worm disease within reach

The global campaign spearheaded by former US President **Jimmy Carter** to eradicate guinea-worm disease is nearly at an end. As of January 2004, the eradication effort is fighting the last one percent of the disease remaining in the world, making guinea-worm likely to be the second disease eradicated from the world (after smallpox) and the first to be eliminated without "magic bullet" vaccines or medications. Eradication strategies focus on safe water supplies and public education. Whereas there were 3.2 million cases in 1986, in 2001 the number was less than 100,000. In February, Carter paid a visit to the village of Dashie in Ghana, the most endemic guinea-worm country in West Africa, to urge the nation's leaders to finish the job of eliminating the illness. The Atlanta-based Carter Center ([www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org)) has been instrumental in mobilizing a multi-sector global partnership to combat the disease. In addition to funding, water wells and vehicles from the government of Japan, the campaign relies on major assistance from numerous private and corporate donors. Among the contributions are water filtering fabric from **DuPont**; larvicide from **BASF**; Tylenol® and

other medical supplies from **Johnson & Johnson**; piping from **Hydro Polymers**; funding from the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, and field support from volunteers from **Japan** and the **US Peace Corps**. A weblog containing President Carter's journal of his visit to West Africa is available at the Carter Center website. (World Health Organization press release, February 4, 2004)

### ...Pfizer expands donation of anti-blindness drugs for trachoma

**Pfizer Inc.** ([www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)) is to donate 135 million doses of its antibiotic azithromycin to the **International Trachoma Initiative** (ITI – [www.trachoma.org](http://www.trachoma.org)), another multi-sector global effort to curb trachoma, a disease that has blinded 6 million people in developing countries. ITI was founded by Pfizer and the **Edna McConnell Clark Foundation** ([www.emcf.org](http://www.emcf.org)) in 1998 and began work in Morocco and Tanzania in 1999. It has since expanded to include Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Sudan and Vietnam, with Mauritania and Senegal soon to be added. Pfizer's previous donation of 8 million doses of azithromycin to ITI has helped reduce the prevalence of trachoma by 90 per cent in some countries. Administered in a single dose that lasts for 10 days, the drug is easy and effective to use. ITI aims to eliminate almost all blinding cases of trachoma by 2005. (*Washington Post*, November 12, 2003)

### Ex-Marxist rebels lead a new revolution in Bogota – social capitalism

In Colombia, a group of former Marxist guerillas who once plotted to overthrow the state are now embracing a new style of capitalism, which seeks to funnel profits from business enterprises into social programs. Backed by the conservative government of President Álvaro Uribe, **Nuevo Arco Iris** ("New Rainbow" – [www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co](http://www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co)) was founded to coordinate the reintegration of former rebels into society. Although it has nonprofit status, it uses a standard business model to operate a range of ventures, including a 35-room hotel in downtown Bogota, a national construction firm that has built 600 homes, and an agricultural brokerage firm. Other deals are in the works, from a string of Internet cafes in Costa Rica to a partnership that makes light fixtures for export. Proceeds from these businesses are channeled into social programs that teach children about conflict resolution, and train human rights workers to run crop substitution programs for coca farmers. Run by **Antonio Sanguino**, 37, the former leader of a band of ELN rebels who disarmed a decade ago, Nuevo Arco Iris provides permanent jobs for about 200 people, 115 of them ex-guerrillas. The venture, with a budget of about \$500,000, receives support from governments of various countries, including **Spain** and **Netherlands**, as well as from the **European Community** and contracts with organizations such as **United Nations Development Programme**, and is just about breaking even. (*New York Times*, February 6, 2004).

### Colombian actor rescues child soldiers from life on the streets

Meanwhile, it's not just an older generation of combatants whose reintegration poses challenges for Colombian society. Some of the poorest youths showing up on the streets are former child soldiers pressed into fighting or recruited by violent insurgent groups. As Colombia's government slowly tries to turn the corner in the civil war, these

child fighters have been deserting the rebel armies in ever greater numbers. For these dislocated and desperate young people, most in their teens, help is coming from an unexpected quarter. The Colombian actor **Manuel Busquets**, beloved by soap opera fans throughout Latin America, has taken on the cause of the child soldiers and has created a program of drama instruction for kids whose previous experience was limited to the theater of war. Busquets, who frequently portrays rich and powerful characters in his television roles, in real life is the son of a wealthy executive of Standard Oil. The program he fashioned a few months ago to teach child soldiers about his profession has won acceptance from the government, and has come to the attention of the **International Organization for Migration**, which has expressed interest in financing an expansion of Busquets' theater classes. (*New York Times*, January 24, 2004)

### GEXSI offers new, improved marketplace for social investment

The **Global Exchange for Social Investment** (GEXSI – [www.gexsi.org](http://www.gexsi.org)), piloted in 2002, went operational last November and has established offices in Berlin and London. GEXSI, developed by the **Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship** and a consortium of other institutions, grew out of a concern that high quality social initiatives were going unfunded because investors could not find or properly evaluate them. GEXSI is seeking to remedy that situation by facilitating productive, transparent and reliable linkages across the spectrum of players in civil society and private sector institutions. It hopes to mobilize a variety of resources for social investment including commercial finance, official development assistance, investment guarantees, voluntary philanthropic giving, corporate social responsibility programs, ethical venture capital funding, and other sources of finance and in-kind support. GEXSI has several private sector founding consortium members. Financiers include **Deutsche Bank**, **Foursome Investments**, the **Open Society Institute**, and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. Advisors include **Bain & Company** and **PricewaterhouseCoopers**. The leader of public sector support for GEXSI is Germany's foreign aid agency, **GTZ**.

### Broadcast CEOs join global battle to combat HIV/AIDS

Top executives from more than 20 worldwide media organizations have joined a global awareness campaign that aims to reach people everywhere – especially youth – with information about how to prevent and treat HIV and to help battle AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. The **Global Media AIDS Initiative** arose from a partnership between the **Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS** (UNAIDS) and the **Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation**, and uses tools of the information age to combat ignorance that fuels the spread of the disease. Among the companies committed to the scheme are **China Central Television**, the **South African Broadcasting Corporation**, and **Time Warner**. The **BBC World Service Trust** also plans to develop educational campaigns in eight African countries, working with local media and governments. Most outlets plan to put out the message through public service announcements, expanded news coverage and documentaries, with some intending to weave it into their entertainment lineups. The director of the UNAIDS, **Peter Piot**, said that when it comes to prevention, the media could save as many, if not more lives than the doctors. (*BBC News*, January 16, 2004)

### “Digital pony express” connects rural Cambodia to the Internet

Without electricity or telephones, villagers in the remote northeastern corner of Cambodia have joined the online world via a development project that connects 13 rural schools to the internet – and links villagers to wider social and economic opportunities. Once a day, five motorcycle riders equipped with wireless “Wi-Fi” units make a slow circuit through the villages, permitting the exchange of email between the wireless unit and computers at the local schools, powered by rooftop solar panels. At dusk, the motorcycles converge on the provincial capital, Ban Lung, where an advanced school is equipped with a satellite dish, allowing a bulk email exchange with the outside world. The “**Motoman**” project is sponsored by **American Assistance for Cambodia**, a group based in Phnom Pen, and is run by **Bernard Krisher**, the Far East representative of the Media Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In a country in which telecommunications monopolies inflate the price of satellite dishes and uplink fees far beyond what is affordable to villagers making an average of \$1 a day, the Motoman system offers rural residents access to a range of otherwise inaccessible services. These include telemedicine through a linkup with the staff of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, who donate their time to the project. Sponsors hope the project will bring economic benefits by connecting rural residents to wider markets for their products as well. In the rural center of Rovieng, for example, women weavers sell their raw silk scarves and ties through [www.villageleap.com](http://www.villageleap.com), a website operated by Krisher’s group. The weavers now have among the highest incomes in Rovieng. (*New York Times*, January 26, 2004)

## Resources & Links

*Activities, websites and other cutting-edge information for global givers*

*Links to websites with more details are available at the online edition of Global Giving Matters at [www.globalgivingmatters.org](http://www.globalgivingmatters.org)*

### Wealthiest 400 could comfortably afford to give billions more

The wealthiest 400 US tax filers could have comfortably donated \$19 billion more than they actually did between 1997 and 2000 without sacrificing lifestyle, according to **NewTithing Group**, a nonprofit donor education and research organization founded by philanthropist and retired money manager **Claude Rosenberg**. The full report is available online at [www.newtithing.org](http://www.newtithing.org), which also contains PrudentPal (a web-based charitable giving planner), a guide to assessing nonprofit accountability, and an analysis of giving capacity for various wealth levels, *Wealth and Affordable Donations in Uncertain Times*. (*Philanthropy News Online*, January 8, 2004)

### Book offers insights into successful social entrepreneurs

The January 2004 *Changemakers Journal* ([www.changemakers.net/journal/04january](http://www.changemakers.net/journal/04january)) features an interview with **David Bornstein**, author of the new book *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. A journalist who specializes in writing about social innovation, Bornstein interviewed more than 90 social entrepreneurs as background for the book, many of them **Ashoka Fellows**. In addition to lively

and compelling profiles of the nine individuals ultimately selected because of their transformative impact on their communities, the book offers observations on the underreported story of social entrepreneurship, discusses what distinguishes successful social entrepreneurs (single minded desire to transform society) and provides recommendations for those interested in changing the world. The book takes a global focus, says the author, “because the world’s most creative problem solvers are to be found in poorer countries, where they have to reach far more people with less money, so they have to be especially innovative to advance solutions to scale.”

### Alliance Magazine offers in-depth look at civil society infrastructure

The March 2004 issue of *Alliance* magazine looks at the state of civil society infrastructure around the world and offers insights from the experts on building and sustaining vital and effective citizen organizations. Online, the December issue of *Alliance Extra* ([www.allavida.org/alliance/axdecc03.html](http://www.allavida.org/alliance/axdecc03.html)) includes an overview of the growing field of social entrepreneurship and provides a road map of who’s doing what in the field today. Alliance is a publication of Allavida, an international development organization working to enable local action.

### Conference highlights local resource mobilization

The Resource Alliance’s Fifth International Workshop on Resource Mobilization (IWRM) will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa on 26-28 March. Now in its fifth year, the IWRM is a key forum for training and policy discussion on local resource mobilization. Featuring up to 30 leading international experts and practitioners, this year’s program will provide cutting edge training in all aspects of resource mobilization, including fundraising, communication and accountability, and devotes a day to policy issues in the South. The IWRM is being held in conjunction with the CIVICUS World Assembly in Botswana and the two events are being held back to back. For more information, visit [www.resource-alliance.org](http://www.resource-alliance.org) or email [iwrm@resource-alliance.org](mailto:iwrm@resource-alliance.org).

### First annual world forum on social entrepreneurship set for Oxford

The newly established Skoll Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University’s Saïd Business School will host the first annual Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, March 29-31, 2004. The gathering aims to generate a new strategic agenda for social entrepreneurship by bringing together the leading thinkers and practitioners in the field from around the world. For more details, visit [www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/html/faculty\\_skoll\\_forum.asp](http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/html/faculty_skoll_forum.asp).

## Your Ideas Wanted

**Global Giving Matters** aims to present information on best practices and innovations in philanthropy and social investment around the world. We encourage you to send us:

- Ideas about issues or people you would like to learn more about
- Examples of your own philanthropy
- Comments about this issue.

Write to us at [comments@globalgivingmatters.org](mailto:comments@globalgivingmatters.org).

Global Giving Matters does not present solicitations of support for particular initiatives or organizations.

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