



Putting Together The Pieces Of A Puzzle

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"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

In order for the challenge of inclusion to be resolved, everyone needs to think it is important. We live in a world that works naturally – economically speaking. This phenomenon at play is called the "Invisible Hand." However, why is it that we keep running into issues of fragmentation? Before we as change agents dive into defragmenting nations and countries as a whole, we need to start defragmenting mindsets. We need to address the selfish notion that:

"If it is not happening to YOU...it doesn't mean it is not happening."

Currently, media coverage on the Baltimore riots and the Nepal earthquake is surfacing in the United States. Historically speaking, news stations such as CNN and FOX tend to cover and report crises, natural disasters and other horrors leeching onto our world. Yet, it lacks to showcase global triumphs, humanitarian efforts, and the like. Does negativity sell? One may argue that it is difficult to understand the troubles going on in other parts of the world due to cultural and language barriers, but I would like to argue that we have more commonalities than differences. We are human. We laugh in the same "language," we hug, rejoice and cry in the same "language." The only barrier that we truly face is our naivety. In the hopes for achieving growth and sustainable development for all and in South America, it is crucial that we do three things. First, we need to come to an understanding that innovation must be inclusive. Second, it is of the utmost importance to address the resources dilemma, and thirdly, we need to create a framework to move towards a more empowered South America.

Some of mankind's best inventions are products of a collective effort between the arts and sciences. We must address a simple social barrier to foster communication and be inclusive in terms of perspective, expertise and values. In 1959, C.P Snow's lecture "The Two Cultures" came into prominence in which he addresses the widening gap between those in the sciences and people who are philosophical in nature. On a global scale, this absence of balance results in socioeconomic divisions, which prevents inclusive innovation from happening. Moreover, Professor Victoria Vesna at UCLA believes that we as a society must make the move into a "Third Culture" by stating "the source of these communication problems can be traced to the fact that most of the philosophers under attack in the scientific community do not work closely with scientists and that scientists are equally isolated from the movements of philosophical thought and contemporary artistic expression."



Thus, in order to redirect innovation to foster growth and ideas, we need more opportunities for collaboration from various fields, and this can begin by teaching younger generations of the importance of cross-functioning spaces. Diane Gromala suffers from chronic pain, but her journey and her TED Talk on bettering her disorder relays the importance of mixing art and science, and how inclusive innovation will better a society. In her talk, she spoke about hiring a diverse team including: a physician, computer scientist, designer and animator to create a product with healing capabilities. Diane's team tinkered with Virtual Reality. In her Virtual Reality "game" someone with chronic pain enters a space that reacts to the patient's heartbeat and breathing. Through the variation of the human senses, her products show positive results in reducing pain for the subject.

The United States and other countries want to shift their education efforts on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields due to thoughts of a more technologically savvy society, yet they dismiss the importance of arts and humanities. In Universities all over the United States, students trying to enter fields of art are looked poorly upon and most are scared to continue their passion because of the idea that their professions will not pay off. As a society, we are silencing the voices and passions of those who will work to balance our scientific endeavors. Before defragmenting the world, we need to assimilate those outcasted, in this case those who are impoverished and those outside of STEM, into the social frame to transcend limitations and embark on new waves of innovation that would flourish in the global market.

The next issue we must face is the ever so pervasive resources dilemma that seems impossible to overcome. First and foremost, one needs to define what a resource actually is. Does it have to be tangible in order for it to be utilized and be effective? The short answer is no. A resource can be presented in various ways such as a document, a mentor's advice, currency or a school diploma. A resource ultimately provides access to those who strive to self-develop or want to advance professionally in order to make a difference. A resource unlocks doors that were initially obstacles in one's path to success, and Singapore is making note of this.

Today, Singapore gains high praise for ranking among the top performers in educational attainment. The late Lee Kuan Yew's investments and his successors' investments have contributed to developing their countries only available natural resource: it's people. The secret is out. Education is indubitably the best way to increase one's success in this fragmented puzzle and to eliminate the challenge of inclusion. However, not everyone will get the opportunity to obtain the schooling they deserve and hunger for even after heavy sacrifices have been made. Without fully addressing the resources dilemma, the challenge of inclusion will always be an anchor to our progress.

"You broke the ocean in half to be here. Only to meet nothing that wants you." - Immigrant

My personal battle with the challenge of inclusion stems from my upbringing as a first generation Mexican American. After families immigrate and risk everything to come to the United States in hope of achieving the coveted American Dream, they then are indirectly told that they are not worthy of being here through the countless amounts of doors closed in their face. It is a shame that time and time again, the vibrant people of South America and Mexico are all categorized into



one stereotypical brown pool. I would like to argue that we are the most common causality of the challenge of inclusion even when we are working hard to come out on top. In Alina Tugend's article, "The Struggle to Be First: First-Gen Students May Be Torn Between College and Home," she points out that "If you're a first-generation student, you're more likely to feel like you can't fit in – and more likely to leave." This is how the achievement and opportunity gaps begin to widen. Statistics show that 60 percent of first-generation students who drop out do so in their first year and most of the times it is due to the lack of assimilation, financial burdens and the fear that "they'll evolve into someone the family no longer recognizes." Similar to how a campus needs to understand the challenges of first-generation student, the world needs to understand the challenge of inclusion, more specifically, the challenge of South America's inclusion into the global landscape.

Last but not least in tackling the challenge of inclusion, it is crucial to discuss how to empower and develop a framework of assimilation for South America. To empower a country, it is necessary to raise individuals' awareness that South America is facing fragmentation. Film has been an extremely powerful medium that has been used in Argentina especially when it comes to fusing art and politics. In my film studies at UCLA, I learned how film was utilized like a tool in the sixties to showcase the division between Argentinian people (powerless) and the "System" with a capital "S" (powerful). Do countries looking in believe that South America is still overcoming social unrest? If we were to create a roadmap for inclusion, where would we start? Personally, it is important to show how South America values its people and is willing to invest in them financially and professionally. It is time to piece together a country with so much to offer to the global markets.

In conclusion, the challenge of inclusion is preventing global nations from integrating and flourishing as one, but the first step is realizing that this issue is important. Educating the upcoming generations on how they can be agents of change can begin the path of innovation and entrepreneurship, which is essential for the sustainable growth of South America. As a country, it is fundamental to promote the importance of various perspectives and not limit their most importance resource in focusing on one area, when the true key to success is the building of cross-functional spaces. I would cherish the opportunity to continue discussing my perspectives and opinions on this issue, and hearing how I can contribute to defeating the challenge of inclusion with the other passionate leaders at the conference.