



BERRETT-KOEHLER PUBLISHERS  
BK BUSINESS  
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 650  
San Francisco, CA 94104-2916  
Fax 415.362.2512  
www.bkconnection.com

Peter Cavagnaro, Publicity Manager  
Phone: 415.743.6469 Email:  
pcavagnaro@bkpub.com

For Immediate Release

# Out of Poverty

## *What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail*

### by Paul Polak

*“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**

There are 800 million people in the world who live in rural areas in developing countries and make their living from small farms. The scattered quarter-acre plots where they scratch out a living usually have poor soil and no access to irrigation, and they usually can't produce enough to keep from going hungry. While the typical response to these farmers' plight has been to try to donate them out of poverty, massive global aid initiatives have produced little, if any, results. In fact, in some areas where this approach has been tried, such as sub-Saharan Africa, poverty rates have actually gone up.

In *Out of Poverty*, designer, entrepreneur and self-described “troublemaker” Paul Polak exposes what he calls the “Three Great Poverty Eradication Myths”: donations alone will end poverty, national economic growth will end poverty, and Big Business, operating as it does now, will end poverty. Instead of relying on the resources of governments, relief agencies, corporations, and private citizens, Polak points a way forward to a more promising, proven alternative that actually draws on the entrepreneurial spirit of the poor themselves.

Polak is the founder of International Development Enterprises (IDE), an organization that, with very little fanfare or notice, has helped lift 17 million people out of poverty. The IDE model is simple, but revolutionary: identify market opportunities in high-value, labor-intensive cash crops for the world's poorest rural farmers and provide them access to affordable agricultural tools tailored specifically to their needs. Throughout the course of this impassioned book, Polak tells fascinating and moving success stories about the people he and the IDE have helped. He devotes special attention to the story of Krishna Bahadur Thapa, a Nepali farmer who went from barely surviving to earning \$4,800 a year—solidly upper middle class by local standards.

—over—

Bold, spirited, and, at times, even humorous, *Out of Poverty* is a call for a revolution in the way we view the poor. As a result, it will be received as one of the most important contributions on the subject in recent times.

\*\*\*\*

*"Paul Polak listens to people few of us ever hear from—the world's poor `one-acre farmers'—and comes up with simple, practical solutions for helping them better their lives. His work is profoundly inspiring. Even if you don't normally read books about development and poverty, read this one!"—Lori Pottinger, Director of Africa Programs, International Rivers*

*"Paul Polak's life of global engagement testifies to his dedication to helping the rural poor develop concrete ways to fight poverty. His book is the pragmatic idealist's view of how things can be done."—Suresh Kumar, Special Advisor, The Clinton Foundation*

*"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, Inventor of the Apple computer and Cofounder, Apple Computer*

\*\*\*\*

**Paul Polak** is the founder of International Development Enterprises, which currently assists rural farmers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. He is the recipient of the *Scientific American* Top Fifty award for agriculture policy and the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. In 2007, IDE received a \$13.4 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Polak currently heads D-Rev: Design for the Other 90%, which helps multinationals profitably develop affordable products to help the world's poor.

***Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail***

**By Paul Polak**

**Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

**ISBN: 978-1-57675-449-8**

**Cloth**

**\$27.95**

**Number of Pages: 248**

**Publication Date: February 18, 2008**

**Paul Polak is available for interviews. Please contact Peter Cavagnaro at (415) 743-6469 or [pcavagnaro@bkpub.com](mailto:pcavagnaro@bkpub.com) for questions about the author and *Out of Poverty*.**