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Principles of Social Enterprise: Offering Freedom to Women in West Bengal's Sex Trade

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International Community Development

24 April, 2017

Preface

Kundulla is a beautiful woman whose smile lights up a room and whom I had the pleasure of meeting in July 2016 while in Kolkata completing fieldwork for my thesis. However, her journey to get where she is today has been filled with hardships. Below is her story as told by Annie Hilton, co-founder of Freeset Global:

A remarkable woman of hope whose life inspires hope and whose love gives hope to many, many others...

The eldest daughter of a simple villager, Kundulla grew up too fast. At 13 she was told by her father that it was time to get married. They were poor and often didn't have enough to eat and so one less mouth to feed would be better for the family. He asked her if she liked any of the village boys and on her wedding day [she] thought she was marrying a boy she knew. With [her] head covered by her wedding sari at only 13, she looked into her bridegroom's eyes and saw an older man leering back at her...not the young man she thought she was marrying. As is the custom, she was taken to her new home where life was dictated by her new mother-in-law. She tried really hard to please her husband and his mother but it wasn't easy.

A few months into her new life, she was told to go to the field that the family owned. There she saw a group of young men who quickly gathered round and she began to feel intimidated. One spoke up and simply said, "Your mother-in-law has sold you to us for the afternoon." Gang-raped, she hid until dark and then fled to her uncle's home, too ashamed to go back to her own immediate family, let alone her husband's home. Her uncle took her in and cared for her. After a few days, he sat down and talked with her and said it would be better for the family if she left the

village as this had brought shame on them all. He promised to find her a job in the city of [Kolkata] where she could start a new life.

Her own uncle, whom she trusted, sold her into a brothel to begin her new life. For years and years Kundulla still sent money back to her family in the village, never once mentioning where or how she was earning the money. As she grew older it was harder and harder to attract customers and she hated what she was forced to do just to provide for her and her family back in the village. One day, another sex-worker told her of a meeting where some foreigners were going to talk about opening a small factory in the area. She went, listened and bravely decided to join a freedom business and learned how to sew jute bags for a living instead.

Twelve years later, Kundulla is a woman of [Christian] faith, a woman of vision with the biggest smile and the burning desire to see women set free from the sex-trade. She no longer sits at a machine sewing, but now spends most of her day at the drop-in-centre in the main lane of Sonagacchi (Kolkata's largest red-light area). She is in the frontline...visiting brothels, using her own life story and sharing her faith to encourage other girls and women to "leave the line" (the sex trade).

Now with her head held high she makes regular visits home to her village and still supports family. Her parents passed away and she has inherited a small plot with an old building on it. Two years ago, she proudly took her friends, those same foreigners that she has been working alongside all these years, to her family home in the village. A few days later, she walked into their kitchen, sat on the floor and simply offered her land and the old building to them. Her desire simply to see another freedom business unit started in her own village so that young girls won't

get sold, married off young or discarded but that they might have a chance at a

better life than she had.

Her generosity and her dream have inspired the birth of Freeset Fabrics, a new

weaving unit [started in 2014] offering a choice to girls from her village and the

surrounding area for a better life. [She is] a remarkable woman of faith, hope and

love. Her life teaches grace and forgiveness. Her life inspires hope, a tangible hope

for those still in line and for those vulnerable in the village. (Hilton, "Kundulla's

Story")

Kundulla's story exemplifies the ability of social enterprise to be a viable alternative

to the traditional non-profit, and that it can successfully and sustainably empower the poor

and marginalized.

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Introduction

Capitalism is a doubled-edged sword. In the right circumstances, it has allowed even the poorest of individuals the opportunity to leverage market forces to change their plight in life. Yet, those same market forces have also served to oppress countless others. Undoubtedly, it is more common that the forces of capitalism work to consolidate wealth and power, making the rich richer at the expense of poor and marginalized populations (McFague 99). However, what if capitalism and market forces could be harnessed in a way that uses its ability to empower rather than oppress poor and marginalized populations? Indeed, over recent years, such a hybrid business model has gained traction: social enterprise.

The aim of this paper is to look at social enterprise and how it can be used as a form of community development. More specifically, how social enterprise can be used to bring women out of the sex trade in West Bengal. Many of these women have either been trafficked or forced into the sex trade as a result of poverty, while others have joined voluntarily. Yet regardless of how they joined the trade, an alternative solution to traditional aid should be implemented in order to provide sustainable, alternative employment and social services to this population of disenfranchised women. Social enterprise is this alternative. Understanding how social enterprise functions, and its ability to provide a positive economic alternative for these marginalized women, will provide significant insight into an excellent alternative to the often negative impact of capitalism and market forces. Thus, this paper will provide some key insights and findings related to this phenomenon within a specific population in a small geographic area.

The Social Enterprise Alliance defines a social enterprise as "an organization or initiative that marries the social mission of a non-profit or government program with the market-driven approach of a business" ("Social Enterprise"). I am intrigued by social enterprise because of its ability to meet both physical and social needs by empowering people to provide for themselves in a dignified way. One of social enterprise's greatest strengths is its ability to be contextualized to meet the needs of any culture, geographic location, or social justice issue. Although social enterprise has the ability to impact many populations, for the purposes of this paper, I will focus on women in India's sex trade, specifically in West Bengal.

I first visited India in December of 2006 and it is a place to which I have continued to go back. India's vibrant culture and welcoming people have always drawn me in. My trips to India in 2006, 2008, and 2009 totaled about six months of living in the country. With each trip to a new location, I was able to gain further insight and understanding into Indian culture. It was during my visit in 2008 that I had an experience that changed the trajectory of my life and has served as the catalyst for this research. I was with a team of Americans in Agra, the home of the Taj Mahal, and we had spent the afternoon in pairs walking around the area surrounding the Taj Mahal. Afterwards, as we debriefed, a quiet guy name Richard shared that as he walked alone, an older Indian man walked up to him while pushing a bicycle with a little girl balanced on the seat. She was no older than two. When the Indian man approached, he made Richard a proposition. He offered the little girl in exchange for 1,000 rupees—at the time that was equivalent to $20. In the moment, Richard was dumfounded, and said no. But as he relayed his story to us, he was filled with

uncertainty. Should he have bought the little girl and taken her to an orphanage? What will happen to her? But it was too late; we would never be able to track them down.

Although I was not the one approached, the memory continues to haunt me. This vision coupled with my newfound awareness of human trafficking and the growing sex trade set me on a journey to find an effective, sustainable approach to helping oppressed populations—something I believe social enterprise can accomplish. To reiterate, business has had a turbulent relationship with poor and marginalized populations, more often with the rich accumulating more wealth at a disproportionate rate. In India, it is no different. According to Forbes, India ranks number four in the world for the most billionaires (Sola), yet the depths of poverty within the nation seem almost insurmountable. Market forces and poverty are the two greatest driving factors for women joining the sex trade. Sonagachi embodies this fact. It is a destination for traffickers to bring women from West Bengal's poor rural districts, as well as women from other Indian states, Nepal and Bangladesh. As if women were not already marginalized enough in Indian culture, their marginalization increases exponentially once they join the sex trade, whether willingly or not.

Traditionally, marginalized persons have been aided by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international aid agencies, and government programs. However, the growing issue of girls and women working in West Bengal's sex trade warrants an alternative solution. The sex trade is fueled by demand and this demand is met by a supply of girls and women who are physically or economically forced into that role. Since women entering the sex trade is primarily an economic issue, the solution should also be economic because it needs to fill the gap caused by poverty that the sex trade is filling. Business has marginalized people, but it also has the ability to empower the marginalized. Social

enterprise has entered the development field as this empowering, economic alternative. The principles and practices of social enterprise are effective in helping rescue women from prostitution and slavery. Freeset as a case study example demonstrates the effectiveness of the social enterprise strategy. In order to better understand social enterprise and how it can be used to bring sustainable freedom to women working in West Bengal's sex trade, I will begin with an overview of social enterprise and its evolution, its existing forms, strengths, and weaknesses. This overview of social enterprise is needed in order to layout the argument that social enterprise is in fact an effective, positive economic alternative to capitalism and traditional aid. Additionally, by looking at its history we are able to see where it can lead us in the future. Following this overview, I will provide five principals of social enterprise I have derived from my research that I believe, if put into practice, will create an organization that is relevant, effective, and sustainable. This paper will conclude with a case study of Freeset Global, a social enterprise in West Bengal. It is easy enough to take a stance on a topic such as social enterprise, but to see its principals embodied in an organization like Freeset, who is having a great impact on women in West Bengal's sex trade, provides the greatest support for using social enterprise as a vehicle of empowerment and a form of community development.

I want to preface the remainder of this paper with my vocabulary preferences. From this point forward I will refer to the sex trade as "the trade" and women engaged in the sex trade as "women of the trade" rather than a sex worker or prostitute. Additionally, rather than saying "she was accepting customers," or "she engaged in prostitution," I will refer to their activity as "working the line." I prefer these phrases because there is less of a negative

connotation associated with them, and because they still emphasize the economic role the trade plays in the lives of these women.

Setting the Foundation

Before proceeding, it is important to set the foundation of this paper by first examining the complexities of India's cultural norms and practices that make Indian women vulnerable to exploitation. We can then analyze how those norms and practices impact women joining and staying in the trade. Geert Hofstede developed cultural dimensions by which national cultures may be evaluated. Such cultural dimensions can provide us with perspective during our first glimpse into Indian culture. Based on Hofstede's research, India scores highly on the power distance dimension, "the extent to which the less powerful members...within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede et al. 61). Within the family structure, the respect that children and young adults have for their parents and elders incarnates this power gradient (Hofstede et al. 67). Additionally, India has a median score on the collective/individualism index. It is a collective society in which "people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty" (Hofstede, "What about India?"). However, Hinduism, the dominant religion, creates a strong individualistic characteristic that underlies the collective culture because of the belief in reincarnation. Reincarnation is heavily reliant on an individual's actions, which are believed to have direct ramifications on their rebirth. Finally, India scores low on the indulgence index, making it a culture of restraint, which "reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms" (Hofstede et al. 281). This index, in particular, plays a prominent role in marginalizing women in general, but especially those who have been involved in the sex trade.

The culture in India is greatly influenced by pride and status. Therefore, one of the greatest obstacles facing any organization trying to work alongside a low status population is the relative disempowerment experienced by these marginalized sectors of society. Jana et al. describes sex workers in Sonagachi, one of Asia's largest red-light districts and the location of my case study, "as an outcast group" with "little societal value" ("The Sonagachi Project" 410). Thus, perceptions on both the community and individual levels need to be shifted if sustainable empowerment in the lives of women in the sex trade is ever to be achieved. Through studying a successful HIV prevention program in Sonagachi, Jana et al. identified "redefining the problem in a way that does not stigmatize individuals" ("The Sonagachi Project" 412) as a key component of their success. In the case of a social enterprise offering alternative employment for women in West Bengal's sex trade, women are characterized as active, capable participants in their lifestyle change rather than as a victim. This change in perception offers a degree of hope and self-confidence to a highly stigmatized and disenfranchised population as they establish themselves and take on roles as seamstresses, administrative support staff, management within social enterprises, and a variety of other jobs. Through these roles, the larger community also begins to perceive them as individuals deserving of change and respect.

Furthermore, the male dominance in India is deeply engrained in society, which is fueled by the belief that having sons provides a "way to go to heaven after death and guaranteed financial security" (Rahi 171). Gender discrimination "strongly affects women's health, financial status, education and political involvement" (Rahi 171), placing women in a fundamentally disempowered position. As second class citizens, Indian women are often victims of domestic violence at the hands of their families or husbands, which further

diminishes their personhood through reduced self-esteem, insecurity and emotional

disturbance (Rahi 173). They also face further violations when they work outside the

home, as they are often sexually harassed in the workplace (Rahi 172). In her study

"Reasons for Women's Entry into Sex Work," Sunny Sinha found that although the majority

of women in her study chose to work in the sex trade as a last resort, "repeated experiences

with discrimination, exploitation and oppression [in the] workplace makes these women

believe that sex work gives them more control and autonomy over their lives" (Sinha 226).

In addition to workplace discrimination and exploitation, women may choose to enter the

sex trade despite its risk and stigmatization because of poverty, failed marriages, lack of

education, peer influence, and the relative flexibility and higher pay it can provide (Sinha

224, 226-229). Creating a social enterprise to prevent women from joining the sex trade or

to bring them out of it, "should be based on the understanding of the local context that

shape the lives of these women" (Sinha 232), especially given the differing reasons that

women enter into sex work. Additionally, since Kolkata has the highest concentration of

women working in brothels in India (Sinha 217), it is a strategic location to offer freedom

through social enterprise.

It is important to clarify that not all women working in the sex trade are victims of

sex trafficking. In order to achieve a positive individual and community impact, the

complexities regarding the status of women in West Bengal's sex trade must be understood

as it plays a critical role in the formation of a social enterprise created to empower them.

Therefore, a clear understanding of the differences between prostitution and sex trafficking

is essential. A social enterprise that offers employment to women who were once in the

trade has to recognize that not all of their employees were victims of sex trafficking. Some

women chose to enter the sex trade. As Kate Butcher states, "millions of women have made the decision to sell sex, usually but not always, on economic grounds. Selling sex is a pragmatic response to a limited range of options" (1983). Labeling all women in the sex trade as victims forces their identities to be altered from one in which they knowingly and willingly make their own decisions, to one in which they are powerless and in need of rescue; Or, as Butcher states, "By merging trafficking and prostitution, the agency of sex workers is overlooked" (1983). Yes, there are women working in the trade who are victims, but this is not universal. The existence of both types of women must be recognized in order to allow for partnership with all women wanting to leave the sex trade through alternative forms of employment (social enterprise). If the social entrepreneur neglects to validate the agency of women in the trade by recognizing that not all of them are sex trafficking victims, then rather than empowering them they will further solidify their disenfranchisement.

Social Enterprise

Charity and development work have long existed in response to social problems, and have been recognized by state agencies and NGOs. Social enterprise is an alternate approach to solving social issues through business ventures. While services and advocacy are needed to address social problems, they are often only superficially addressing the issue. For instance, contraception, classes, food, clothes, and educational expenses for these women's children may be provided, but they still would have to work in the trade because the root of the issue is largely economic (Butcher 1983). Since these women have "dirtied" themselves by being involved in the trade, they are rendered unemployable by normal businesses. Yet the issue still remains, these women need a way to provide for their

personal needs, the needs of their children, and their larger families. Therefore, an economic solution such as social enterprise is necessary.

India is a patriarchal society that places social restrictions on women, which lowers their self-confidence and makes them less employable (Datta and Gailey 574). Yet social enterprise, with its dual business and social missions, can empower women by allowing them the "ability to take action" (qtd. in Datta and Gailey 574). As Data and Gailey explain, "women around the world are creative and hardworking, and they will find ways to gain access to the resources they need to care for their families" (583). If the only option, or the highest paying option available is to work in the trade, then women are faced with a difficult choice. They can either choose to support their families, or face homelessness and hunger. Through their research, Datta and Gailey concluded that social enterprises have empowerment elements embedded in their business models (582) that makes social enterprise a welcome approach to addressing social issues faced by women who want to leave the sex trade or are at risk of joining.

However, the question must be asked: Can business and ethical principles serve the greater public good? "Service as a Bridge" by Gregorio Guitian aims to answer this question by outlining commonly held views of what ethical principles and business practices are and how service can bridge the two. Guitian's application of service in filling the gap between ethical principles and business practices are based on Catholic Social Teachings grounded on the "inviolable dignity or intrinsic value of the individual" (Guitian 63). Respect for human dignity is a trait shared by both religious and non-religious entities and individuals, ethical business practices are composed of common values, which are realized through service. Guitian defines service as "an act of assistance to others and the community that

stems from an internal commitment to assist or help others through one's area of work" (63). Since social enterprise combines business and social services, an understanding of how the two are melded together to create ethical business practices that serve and benefit both the business and society is necessary when creating a sustainable and effective social enterprise.

In "The Legitimacy of Social Enterprise," Raymond Dart uses Suchman's typology of legitimacy to analyze the past, present and future of social enterprise. According to Dart, "Legitimacy tells us the way we believe things should be, apart from any other rational or functional calculus" (416). The author concludes that social enterprise has taken root as a legitimate approach to address social issues that have conventionally been addressed by traditional nonprofits. Their legitimacy stems from our strong faith in market-driven solutions that has continued to grow. This is especially true within the United States and United Kingdom, where welfare ideology is no longer favorable. Dart further explains the legitimacy of social enterprise when he states, "As business becomes a more preeminent organizational model and as increasingly wide swaths of human society become conceptualized as markets, then the businesslike hybrid face of social enterprise is legitimate and in fact responsive to the times" (421). The existence of social enterprise is meaningless if it fails to establish itself as a legitimate solution to existing social needs. Therefore, determining the legitimacy of social enterprise is critical to my research because if it fails to be legitimate, then my research fails to be necessary.

Much debate still exists regarding the nuances of social enterprise, yet most agree that it is an enterprise attempting to meet a social need. As authors Perrini, et al., state, it is "an innovative use of resources to explore and exploit opportunities that meet a social need

in a sustainable way" (515). In their research, Perrini, et al., sought to uncover the complexities of social enterprise and "how social entrepreneurial opportunities are identified, evaluated, exploited and scaled up" (515). In doing so, they identified a model that depicts the process of recognizing the seed of a social enterprise, planting and growing it. An identified opportunity, as Perrini, et al., explained, greatly "reflects the entrepreneurial awareness of the need for challenging mainstream views surrounding a social burden" (521). Next, evaluation helps to determine viability, after which the opportunity can be formalized. This formalization includes setting milestones and outlining the organization's principles and values (Perrini, et al.. 522). This is proceeded by exploiting the opportunity and scaling it up in order to achieve the greatest social impact. When seeking an answer to whether or not social enterprise is a viable option for providing freedom to women who want to leave the sex trade or to those at risk of joining, it is essential to understand the life process of a social enterprise. Therefore, the model of a "process-based view of social entrepreneurship" by Perrini, et al., provides a framework in which social enterprises can be evaluated.

Another question regarding what social enterprise has to offer in terms of development begs to be answered. In his article regarding the role of Indian microfinance institutions in social development, Srirang Jha identifies four areas of development that socially-focused businesses can impact: financial literacy, education, training and preventive health care. These important areas of development can be addressed through social enterprise, creating a larger individual and community impact, as it facilitates "livelihood sustainability…and social development to empower the marginalized sections of communities across the globe" (Jha 15).

Forms of Social Enterprise

Social enterprise, like most approaches, should not be implemented as a cookie cutter solution to address social issues. It is adaptable and it should be individualized to address a specific problem within a specific culture or geographic location. The form, in terms of organizational structure, legal status, and type of business, will largely depend on the environment in which it is planted. For example, in "A Comparative Analysis of the Global Emergence of Social Enterprise," Janelle Kerlin identifies seven geographical regions where she examines the differing regional approaches to social enterprise. She analyzes the purpose, desired outcomes of each region, and how it is sustained. Her findings support the position that a social enterprise must match its context. For "where there is not a match, implementers [will] be alerted to the need to adjust the activity to make use of the dominant strengths of the region. Such matching and adjusting of transferred social enterprise initiatives to their new environment may lead to their improved sustainability" (Kerlin 178). Kerlin's findings further highlight the need for different forms of social enterprise. The first phase of determining form is deciding legal status as either a for-profit or non-profit entity. The second phase is determining the type of business that will be most impactful and sustainable.

A social enterprise may exist to provide a service or goods. Some have a narrower scope of operation and only provide the business function while outsourcing the social aspects to their non-profit counterparts or better equipped outside organizations. However, others have a more robust scope of operation and provide the business function alongside social programs to provide holistic services to the populations they are working to empower. In her article "Implementing a Social Enterprise Intervention," Kristin

Ferguson proposes an alternative model to traditional outreach programs and business-only social enterprises called the Social Enterprise Intervention (SEI). The SEI "serves as a portal into the formal economy by training [marginalized populations] in market-based skills and providing a supportive environment in which to hone them" (Ferguson 106). Ferguson, whose article specifically addresses youth homelessness, argues that traditional social programs are not sufficient to catalyze homeless youth out of street life. Outreach programs meet the immediate needs of those served by providing food, clothes, showers, etc., but they do not provide an alternative to the high-risk survival behaviors in which homeless youth participate. Additionally, job training programs are not as effective as they could be because most homeless youth lack engagement with agency-based services (Ferguson 108). Such programs often neglect the health and mental issues amongst street youth. The SEI model addresses the issues that outreach programs and existing job training programs lack by providing an alternative to high risk behaviors and addressing the health and mental issues of its participants. Freeset Global, the case study in this paper, uses the SEI model, which we will discuss in greater depth later on.

Ferguson's article demonstrates the importance of creating a business plan that is appropriate and most effective for the specific social need that is being addressed. Throughout my research, I spoke with many social enterprises of varying sizes, from different geographical locations, and with different social focuses. Vivid Roots is a social enterprise in Idaho started by four college friends who desired to provide clean drinking water in developing countries by promoting an active, adventurous lifestyle and using a portion of their profits to partner with organizations such as "Rotary clubs and the non-profit Water for The Americas to implement sustainable clean water systems in developing

countries" ("About Vivid Roots"). Storyville Coffee in Seattle, WA is an upscale coffee shop that gives all of their profits to organizations working to end human trafficking. Street Bean Coffee, also located in Seattle, employs homeless youth in order to provide them with training in both hard and soft skills. To Write Love on Her Arms sells clothes merchandise, often travels with music festivals such as the Vans Warped Tour, and is "dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide" ("Learn"). Roma Boots in Dallas, TX uses a one-for-one model and donates a pair of rain boots filled with school supplies for every pair purchased. They also invest in education within the communities they work in order to break the cycle of poverty (Bistrian). So! Nutritious employs at-risk women and youth in a factory making soy beverages that provide nutrients the Cambodian population is lacking (Taylor). Freeleaf, located in China, makes rope products using a traditional Chinese knot and employs women wanting to leave the trade or who are in at-risk situations (Pyles). Beauty for Ashes, a gift and accessory manufacturing company in Nepal was created meet a need, which was employment for women transitioning out of recovery homes after leaving the trade (Nash).

Each of these social enterprises varies in their organizational structure and whether they are for-profit or non-profit. By no means is this an exhaustive list of the different types of social enterprise. Rather, it is a list of organizations I interviewed as research for my thesis. Another type of social enterprise that I was unable to gain firsthand knowledge of—but has gained international attention—is microfinance. Microfinance provides loans to poor individuals who do not have access to traditional commercial loans and are often offered at lower interest rates than a community moneylender.

Weaknesses

Authors Dacin et al. in their article, "Social Entrepreneurship," offer a critique of current social entrepreneurship research and areas for future research. They describe the main mission of a social entrepreneur as "creating social value by providing solutions to social problems" (1204). As they delved deeper into the nuances of social entrepreneurship, they identify an aspect that can be problematic. It is the tendency for social entrepreneurs to be categorized as "heroic". It is easy to idolize those whom we view as important and successful and social entrepreneurs and their admirers are not excluded from this tendency. Yes, social entrepreneurs are developing innovative solutions to social issues and a portion of them may even spend a majority of their lives in developing nations, but focusing too much attention on their "heroism" negates the importance of collective action and implies that the world can be saved by one person (Dacin et al. 1205). While there is a tendency for outsiders to categorize social entrepreneurs as heroic, it is also an inner issue that needs to be addressed as well. Samuel Bistrian, founder and CEO of Roma Boots, describes the inner dialogue he experienced as he set out to start the social enterprise:

> I started Roma while having a very good job at Neiman Marcus and that job left me sort of empty and unfulfilled. I remember in fact asking myself that main question when I left Neimans, "Why am I doing this? Am I trying to build a name for myself? Is it because I feel like it's a good marketing ploy right now since socially conscious brands are becoming trendy?" And I couldn't say yes to any of those questions, and I said, "Is it because I feel like doing something more for humanity?" To that question, I was able to say yes.

Having this type of honest inner dialogue is beneficial for all social entrepreneurs in order to mitigate the hero-complex. In the instance of a foreigner establishing a social enterprise in West Bengal, a heroic identity may hinder their work because the focus is on the individual social entrepreneur rather than the organization they are trying to create and the community they are trying to empower. This presents a potentially great risk in an area such as West Bengal where there is a history of foreigners exploiting the local community for their own benefit.

Another potential risk is caused by the hybridity of social enterprise. According to W. Smith et al., "Despite the variety of types [of social enterprises], a unifying characteristic of these organizations is the multiple and often conflicting demands that surface through their commitments to both social missions and business ventures" (409). These conflicts revolve around performance measures, the sense of belonging and the ability to learn and grow. Learning to address and balance these conflicts in a manner that is in line with their mission is critical, as the primary motivation for social entrepreneurs is based on their moral and ethical perceptions (B. Smith et al. 678). Despite an initial altruistic motivation, motivations can morph over time into more self-centered ones. In their study, B. Smith et al. evaluate the role of moral intensity and the desire for control in scaling decisions. Although there are many combinations of moral intensity and desire for control that effect the type of scaling decisions made in a social enterprise, a social entrepreneur who desires to expand their impact quickly and has a smaller desire for control will use open modes of scaling. On the contrary, if a social entrepreneur's desire to control is predominant, they will tend to use closed modes of scaling to ensure the majority of power and decision making remains within their control. As notoriety and recognition in the media for socially-

focused business continues to grow (B. Smith et al. 685), a social entrepreneur may be tempted to hoard power, especially if she has felt undervalued in her selfless dedication to bring about social change. The risk of centralized control is that social entrepreneurs are "influential actors that drive or motivate behavior" (B. Smith et al. 686). Therefore, their motivation can either hinder or promote the expansion and positive impact of a social enterprise.

Authors Schaltegger and Wagner, in their article "Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Innovation," breaks down sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation. According to Schaltegger and Wagner, "[Sustainable entrepreneurs] create the market dynamics of environmental and societal progress" (223). Sustainability in social enterprise is critical, especially when working with a disenfranchised population such as women in West Bengal's sex trade. As stated earlier, one key component of success is changing the perceptions that the women hold of themselves, as well as that of their surrounding community. However, this change is a slow process and if social enterprise is to enact such a change, it must be sustainable. The leaders of social enterprises—especially when the company is a startup or small—greatly influence the company's identity and are often the face of the business (Schaltegger and Wagner 226). Sustainable enterprise includes creating a company that can survive once the leadership changes. The social enterprises working amongst women in the trade in West Bengal are founded and largely led by foreigners, often creating the risk of a large vacuum of leadership once leaders return back to their home countries. Yet, this risk can be mitigated by creating a sustainable enterprise that is not centered around foreign staff or any one particular leader.

Social Enterprise Principles

Through my fieldwork, interviews, and research, I have recognized that social enterprise, despite its many definitions and forms, can be effective in successfully and sustainably helping rescue women from prostitution and slavery. However, its impact as an agent of community development expands beyond. Whether a social entrepreneur is seeking to rescue women from prostitution and slavery or help homeless youth get off the street, if they put the following principles into practice, they will create an organization that is relevant, effective, and sustainable.

Keeping the Focus on the Mission

One of the risks associated with social entrepreneurship is derived from the fact that it combines a social mission with revenue generation. While the mission should be the main priority of a social enterprise, profit goals may undermine community development aims. If this occurs, the organization may cease to be a social enterprise and instead, evolve into a business with a social focus. However, both a mission and profit focus are needed to run a sustainable organization. Kevin Lynch and Julius Walls describe this paradox on *Mission, Inc.*: "Without your mission, your commitment to the common good, your desire to cure an ill, you are not *social.* But it is equally true that without margin, you cannot define your organization as an *enterprise*" (29). With this risk in mind, it is important to articulate at the outset why and how an organization is a social enterprise. Furthermore, transparency, accountability and a system of checks and balances should be installed to ensure that the mission remains at the forefront of all decisions made for the business.

Stevens et al. describe social entrepreneurship "as a response to diminishing government involvement in the economy and society" (1051) and describe the goal of

social enterprise as creating social and economic value. Through their research, Stevens et al. aim to understand social and economic missions, and how they become interrelated within a social enterprise (1051). One of the key dimensions they identify is the degree of self-interest and "other-regarding" values held by the social entrepreneur. Self-interest undermines the social and economic missions of a social enterprise (Stevens et al. 1057), just as conversely, regard of others above the individual's own interest is constructive. In order to keep the focus of a social enterprise on the mission, it is important to have other-regarding leadership and staff in place. Luckily, according to Stevens et al. "social enterprises are started by individuals with a pro-social value posture who are not driven by private gains" (1057).

Context

The term contextualization was created in discussions regarding the Christian church and its missional efforts in the early 1970s (Chang et al. 200). According to Darrell L. Whiteman, "Contextualization attempts to communicate the Gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs" (2). While this term was coined in reference to the expansion of Christendom, it is also applicable within community development and social enterprise. Both should attempt to communicate their mission in word and deed, and establish an organization in ways that make sense to the people within their cultural context. When we fail to contextualize our development efforts—especially in cross-cultural situations—the impact of our efforts is greatly diminished resulting in wasted time and resources for all parties involved. As

Hofstede et al. explains, "Foreign money and foreign expertise are effective only to the extent that they can be integrated into local knowledge" (417).

The world is comprised of hundreds of nations, each with its own complex identity and culture. Within each nation exists further diversity. Social enterprise and community development in general, must be contextualized to the specific needs of the community with which they are trying to partner. The geographical focus, business type, local laws and regulations, and culture and values of the target population amongst numerous other issues must all be assessed if we desire to create sustainable, transformational change. Creating contextualized social enterprise will require establishing an organizational culture that will make the employees feel at ease and motivated. It also will require cultural dynamics to be considered when developing the types of products or service the company will offer. Are the products culturally relevant to the target market? Will there be any cultural complications based on the employees being hired, and can they make the products or develop the needed services? For example, if a social enterprise seeks to work amongst a largely uneducated, poor, rural population, then producing software is not a viable business solution, even though there may be a market need for software.

Relationships

In the field of community development such as social enterprise, relationships are key to overall success; Building intentional relationships is a crucial focus of social entrepreneurs (Bornstein and Davis 29). Relationships build trust and they create the most effective solutions through a collaborative understanding of the issue at hand, its root causes and strategy to overcome challenges. Through communication and collaboration with the women working the trade, their families, pimps, and traffickers, we can better

understand what led them to the sex trade, what mechanisms have caused them to remain, and how to create alternatives that they can utilize to change their lives. We also learn what types of products or services a certain population can be trained to offer through relationships. I would argue that without these relationships, contextualization will not be achieved, and "noncontextualized [social enterprise] seldom engages people at the level of their deepest needs and aspirations" (Whiteman 5).

External Partnerships

In addition to building relationships, it is important to establish partnerships with non-governmental organizations, government agencies, community groups, other social enterprises and any other type of group or organization with a mission that is in line with our own. Through these partnerships, each party is able to leverage the strengths of the others. In the article "The Symbiosis of Entities in the Social Engagement Network", authors Meyskens et al. describe these "inter-organizational network[s]" (433) in detail. The ties in this network are not uniform. Rather, their strength "depends on the level, frequency and reciprocity of relationships between organizations" (Meyskens et al. 433). This network is beneficial to its members because it allows them access to information and resources that would otherwise be outside of their reach or obtained through greater costs. As large and small network members work together these partnerships "increase member's ability to obtain their strategic objectives" (Meyskens et al. 434).

When evaluating the potential for social enterprise, questions to consider include: Are social enterprises and other complementary organizations working together as a network in order to increase their impact? How can the networking of social enterprises have the greatest success in achieving their social mission? Another factor to consider is

whether network members with similar resource requirements will compete or cooperate

(Meyskens, et al. 433). If they choose to cooperate, a greater impact may be realized.

Avoid Causing Harm for the Sake of Doing Good

By implementing the other principles provided in this paper, unintentional harm to

the individuals and communities a social enterprise is working amongst should be

mitigated. Such harms include further alienation by involving them in activities that are

taboo or ill-suited to their culture, creating an atmosphere of entitlement, or causing

irreparable damage to relationships due to cultural incompetence. However, another way

in which harm can be caused while attempting to do good is in regards to the environment,

and it is very important we are aware of this risk. In capitalistic economies, businesses

have often externalized environmental costs and the poorest global communities have

endured the consequences (Moe-Lobeda 204). As a social enterprise, we must internalize

those costs and invest in suppliers and production practices that will limit harm caused to

the environment.

As many businesses run today, external costs (waste and pollutive byproducts) are

often negated when determining the financial viability of a business venture, which should

be concerning to the community developer or social entrepreneur. If we neglect to care for

our planet, community development becomes a moot point. The health of masses will

disintegrate because of pollution and eventually there will be no livable place for us to

inhabit. Michael Schut gives hope for alternatives. He states, "And it often seems like there

is no alternative. But there are alternatives, and if we are to create them, we do need to

know some of the current systems problems" (78). These problems include externalizing

costs such as pollution and greenhouse gases and "free" services that are created through

our ecosystem, "things like pollination, soil creating, and decomposition" (Schut 79). In order to make better decisions as we plan a social enterprise, we need to weigh the issues we face and create an alternative that not only is economically and socially sustainable, but also environmentally. Ways in which this alternative can be realized is by sourcing products through environmentally conscious suppliers such as tanneries that use a vegetable based tanning product rather than chemicals, using recycled goods in products, or developing production processes that use less electricity, water and other resources. By including environmental concerns in the planning and implementation of a social enterprise the social entrepreneur can avoid causing harm while trying to do good.

Case Study: Freeset Global, Kolkata, India

In theory, social enterprise has great potential, but it must be tested in order to determine its viability as a form of community development. Therefore, in order to gain evidence of social enterprise's effectiveness and the practicality of its principals, we will look to Freeset Global as a case study. Freeset is located in Sonagachi in Kolkata, India. For the past 15 years, they have existed to "provide freedom for women from the sex trade, women who were forced into prostitution by trafficking or poverty" ("Our Philosophy"). They offer a route to freedom by providing these women with the opportunity to work and receive pay above the going market rate. They also receive training, health care, and a pension plan ("Our Story"). Furthermore, "Freeset isn't just about the transformation of individual lives; it's also about transformation of the wider community…The dream is that someday the largest, most infamous sex district in Kolkata will be transformed into a safe community that respects the dignity of women and offers new opportunities to their children" ("Our Philosophy").

In addition to their sewing, screen printing, and weaving factories, Freeset has two other entities: Freeset Trust and Freeset Business Incubator. The Freeset Trust "provid[es] literacy classes, child care, budgeting and debt management services" ("Our Story"). Tamar, which is part of Freeset Trust, was created to meet the needs of the women that cannot be met by the Freeset business alone. The Freeset Business Incubator's mission is "transforming communities through business" ("Home"). Their goal is to help others to replicate the Freeset business model and create other social enterprises for women and girls who need an alternative to trafficking and the trade. Freeset refers to these social enterprises as Freedom Businesses. My fieldwork was conducted in association with the Freeset Business Incubator.

Freeset offers economic independence through their business and social support through Tamar. Additionally, a key component of Freeset's long term sustainability is empowering and promoting local women and men. They offer opportunities for promotion within the business and have six to 12-month long training programs to teach and mentor locals to be involved with Freeset, either directly or through relationship if they start their own social enterprise. Additionally, co-founders Kerry and Annie Hilton are continuing to train and develop leadership and management skills among their staff so that the success and longevity of Freeset does not solely rest on their involvement.

In an interview with Annie Hilton, I asked why starting a social enterprise was the best approach to combatting the oppression of women in Sonagachi. In Freeset's situation, why was social enterprise a better option than simply starting a nonprofit that offers services? This was her response:

In our first year of just getting to know the neighborhood, the stories that we heard made us realize that it was economic poverty that kept [women] trapped there…The daughters, the grandmothers, the people we were getting to talk with, when we talked to them about it, it was like, "Well, you know my grandmother was in the trade. My mother ended up in the trade. There is no chance for me not to be because society won't let me get a job anywhere else" (Hilton).

The bottom line is that economic poverty and social norms make it nearly impossible for these women to ever choose to leave the trade. In turn, Freeset was born to offer that choice.

These women want freedom. They want the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families in a way that does not strip them of their dignity and blacklist them socially. For example, Freeset Fabrics started in 2014 in Murshidabad through Freeset's Business Incubator and currently has 42 women employed. Murshidabad is a strategic location for a social enterprise because it is a source location for trafficking victims. However, there are 500 women on a waiting list that have approached Freeset Fabrics asking for a job in their weaving factory (Salmon). These numbers are astounding and show how social enterprise is a community development approach that locals are interested in leveraging. In addition to Freedom Fabrics, a sewing factory was recently launched in Dhulian, near the Bangladesh border, and six women have begun their training. It is being led by a young Indian couple that took part a training program through the Freeset Business Incubator to learn how to start their own Freedom Business. Dhulian is a source location for trafficking girls, and this young Indian couple has started a sewing

business in order to "offer the choice of freedom to women at risk of being trafficked and those wanting to leave the sex trade" ("New Business, New Freedom").

Social Enterprise Principles in Practice by Freeset Global

Keeping the Focus on the Mission

As a social enterprise, one of the greatest challenges is keeping the balance between the mission and the allure of profit maximization. Freeset has done a great job at maintaining this balance. During my time with Freeset, the founders and staff repeatedly clarified that they exist for the women they employ. They want to provide the choice of freedom to women and girls who have never had the option before, and they would love to be out of business because there are no longer girls who need a way out. An example of their dedication to their mission is in the fact that they hire girls based on need and not skill. Profits, although important for sustainability, are not the bottom line.

Freeset is an example whereby the economic mission is a means to an end for their social mission. In order to avoid any accusations of exploitation in the communities in which they work, they have ensured that none of their foreign staff accept salaries paid by Freeset. Instead, they live on support raised through their individual networks that are established in their home countries. Freeset's structure is in line with the conclusions of a study conducted by Stevens, et al., that found that "high levels of social mission imply lower levels of economic mission and vice versa" (Stevens, et al. 1068). The co-founders of Freeset have been also very transparent about their mission as a social enterprise. Their main focus is on the social component, which leaves fewer resources and less time for the competing economic mission.

Another way to lose focus on the mission is to become too narrow-sighted. Freeset was started as a response to the oppression that fuels the trade in Sonagachi, and they recently celebrated their 15th anniversary. It would be easy for them to focus solely on Sonagachi, a destination for trafficked girls, and offer a means to freedom to only the women working there in the trade. However, the issue is much larger than urban, red-light areas. What about the source locations? Over time, Freeset realized that the women they worked with were not from Kolkata. The majority of them were sourced from West Bengal's rural districts where poverty is even more rampant. As a result, Freeset began their incubation initiative to start new social enterprises in these rural areas to employ women at risk of being trafficked or at risk of being forced into the trade due to poverty. They determined that it is much better to offer choice to a girl before her freedom is involuntarily pried from her fingers. If Freeset did not expand to meet the need within the rural districts, they would drastically limit the realization of their mission to offer the freedom of choice to women in West Bengal.

Context

Freeset's co-founders and the majority of their foreign staff are from New Zealand. Rather than creating a social enterprise that looks like a Kiwi business, the co-founders—prior to creating Freeset—spent a couple of years building relationships within the community, becoming fluent in the language and gaining a better understanding of the context and culture in which they would be working. Their dedication to contextualize their approach and social enterprise has played a key role in their growth and sustainability. A small example of how they have contextualized the daily routine of the company is their morning prayer time. The majority of Indian business owners, no matter their religion,

start their morning in prayer at their place of business, whether that is a small wood stand along the street or an actual store. With this in mind, Freeset begins every morning with a time of prayer and worship. This is one small way in which Freeset has strategically taken aspects of Indian culture and integrated them into their daily routine.

A more complex example of Freeset's contextualized approach to social enterprise requires an understanding of the culture and how it relates to women who have been in the trade. I will set the stage in order to provide context for the environment in which Freeset is operating. Women in the trade are often perceived to be helpless victims. As Swendeman et al. explained, "anti-sex work enforcement strategies advanced by abolitionists, for example, may exacerbate victimization and marginalized social and legal status of sex workers, diminish agency, and risk violation of human rights" (1012). By victimizing women in the trade, they become disempowered. Instead, methods of empowering perceptions of women in the trade must be discovered and implemented in order to facilitate sustainable change within the individual lives of these women and their greater communities. To quote Swendeman et al., "Empowerment approaches…allow sex workers to exercise agency in their lives" (1012) and expand employment opportunities (1013).

Additionally, Swendeman et al. collected data from the Sonagachi Project and interviewed women from Dubar in Kolkata that were employed in the trade. Through their interviews, they were able to gather information on how women joined the trade and why they continued to stay. They found that there were a number of reasons that women joined the trade including social and economic marginalization, bad and abusive marriages, early marriages, death of a spouse, illness or death of relatives, or through force (Swendeman et al. 1012). Despite their reasoning for joining the trade, these women often choose to stay

because the agency it allows them. By creating a social enterprise such as Freeset, that facilitates increased agency among their workers, these women will experience greater economic and social freedoms. When asked, these women no longer have to react in shame because of their profession. They are now able to respond with pride. Although their reputation still lingers, they are able to move forward. Furthermore, through work they are welcomed into a new community, meaning they are no longer isolated. Whether or not the greater society ever fully allows them to reintegrate, they will no longer be alone. Increased agency and greater economic and social freedoms result individuals whose dreams, ideas, and opinions can lead to sustainable change in their own lives, the lives of their families, and within their communities.

In their article "Towards Achieving Gender Justice", authors Dheeraja et al. explore the idea that an increase in women contributing to "household income can improve the access to and control over social and economic resources at the household level initially and gradually at the community level" (35). Having control over economic resources at the individual level allows women autonomy. As they gain autonomy, especially through a socially acceptable profession such as working in a Freeset factory, they also gain confidence and a sense of equality in an overwhelmingly patriarchal society. As more women become empowered and active participants in their communities, the perception by the community, especially men, begins to change. Yet, as Dheeraja et al. explains, "empowerment is a dynamic but slow process; it will take a long time to bring changes in the image and fortunes of women, particularly the poorer households" (47). Haugh and Talwar's study on the link between social entrepreneurship and social change also supports the idea that by employing women they are empowered, which impacts both the

individual and community levels. Innovative social enterprises are created to allow women to generate income, learn new skills and expand their networks (Haugh and Talwar 647), allowing them more autonomy and involvement in community and political spheres. According to Haugh and Talwar, "the process of women's empowerment enables women to individually exercise more power to shape their lives, refine and extend what is possible for them to do and hope for a better future" (646). However, the structure of social enterprises must be informed by the unique culture and needs of potential employees to ensure the best chances of participation and sustainability.

In collective societies such as India, maintaining face is extremely important to the group, and rather than having the family tainted by association with someone who has been involved in the trade, the family will often ostracize them. For example, if a girl is lured under false pretenses, accepts a job, and becomes a victim of sex trafficking, even if she eventually gains her freedom, she will not be openly accepted back into her family or community. There is a sociomoral disgust at play. Although it was against her will and in violation of her human rights, she is now connected with moral infractions that induce disgust in her community (Beck 73). Helga Konrad explains further, "Moreover, women and girls trafficked and forced into prostitution have little opportunity to reestablish a normal life in the fold of their families. Very often the families will not take them back, and if they do it is rarely for long...Often they face distressing stigmatization both from their families and from society" (270). While families and communities cannot be forced to reintegrate trafficking victims, they can be made aware of the situation and be included in the solution to prevent it from occurring in the first place. By understanding the context and the importance of community and family in this collective society, Freeset is able to help

women reintegrate back into their families and communities. However, with the majority of the women they employ not experiencing welcome reintegration, Freeset also enables them to become a part of a new family and community.

To reiterate, it is important to involve locals and their culture in any approach aimed at development and/or addressing social issues to avoid the white-savior complex, encourage collaboration and to empower the local population to be agents of change within their lives and communities. The Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) located in Kolkata's Sonagachi red-light district, exemplifies the ability and effectiveness of the local community driving prevention and development. Since DMSC is primarily comprised of women working in sex trade, they hold many advantages over other anti-trafficking organizations. The primary advantage is how they function "as a community-led strategy" rather than a top-down approach (Jana et al., "Combatting Human Trafficking" 626). This allows them the advantages of better understanding the need for "holistic responses to trafficking, from source and destination communities to reintegration" (Jana et al., "Combatting Human Trafficking" 626), the importance of confidentiality, and the ability to be present within the community. By being more present, they can more easily identify trafficking victims and as a result respond more rapidly to reduce harms sooner (Jana et al., "Combatting Human Trafficking" 626). A social enterprise seeking to offer alternative employment to women working in the trade in West Bengal will do well to learn from the DMSC and implement an approach that utilizes the community's strengths. Torri introduces the idea of a community-based enterprise (CBE), "in which the community acts entrepreneurially, to create and operate a new enterprise embedded in its existing social structure and network" (414). A CBE has a greater chance of success because other efforts

have "either ignored local cultures and values or have been simply charitable programs that failed to address the root causes" (Torri 414). Although barriers to CBEs exist, such as gender and class discrimination and the lack of support services, a community based approach strengthens social ties and fosters a greater sense of community (Torrie 426).

Furthermore, according to Corner and Ho, "At the heart of entrepreneurship, be it social or commercial, is the notion of opportunity recognition" (636). In the case of Freeset, the opportunity recognized was a group of women—a workforce--who was looking for gainful alternative employment away from the sex trade. Given the opportunistic nature of entrepreneurship, "entrepreneurs draw on means at their disposal" (Corner and Ho 646), which therefore impacts the type of social enterprise established. For instance, one of the co-founders of Freeset knew how to sew, which influenced the decision to establish a company where sewing was a main skillset. By analyzing the context in which they would be operating, Kerry and Annie created a business plan that was able to utilize their strengths and skills, as well as the skills of the women who had entrusted them with the opportunity to bring the freedom of choice to themselves and their community.

Relationships

In his book, *Unashamed*, Lecrae shared these words: "A person can be removed from slavery in an instant, but it takes a lifetime for slavery to be removed from a person" (89). There is much truth to his words. During interviews with contacts in India, we discussed the role that trauma plays within the Freeset community and the attempt to maintain a healthy and productive work environment. For many of the women who work for Freeset, they have been removed from physical, emotional, and mental slavery, but slavery has not been removed from them. It is a slow process that can take a lifetime, and it must be

accompanied by grace, love and genuine community. The wounds these women carry, whether physically, emotionally or mentally, run deep. They not only affect the women individually, but also relationally, which reflects on the social enterprise as a whole.

Disruptive behavior can reduce productivity, decrease moral and negatively impact the healing journeys in which others take part. Understanding the impact a person's experiences have on their ability to be productive and establish healthy relationships are essential. This is especially true when working with populations like women from red-light areas who have experienced trauma at the hands of family, friends, and strangers. Consequently, the Freeset staff is very intentional about building relationships with the women they hire. They spend a lot of time talking with them and their families in order to better understand individual needs and strengths and how they can work together. Additionally, through relationship building the Freeset staff is able to establish trust with these women who are very skeptical of foreigners and their intentions.

When Freeset co-founders Kerry and Annie first arrived in Sonagachi and began talking about their desire to start a social enterprise to offer alternative employment to women working the line, the women and community did not trust them. Their distrust was derived from the fact that many white foreigners had come before with the promise help, but once they took their photos they would leave. And over the years, one of the biggest hurdles the Hiltons and others working in Sonagachi have faced is the strong distrust of foreigners as the result of a critically acclaimed documentary filmed in the community. The documentary featured the children of women working the trade in Sonagachi, and they were taught photography. The documentary won many awards including an Oscar, but the community appears to be no better off than it was beforehand. Women within the

community feel as if they were used for the profit of the movie. Today, one of the girls from the documentary actually works the line in Sonagachi just like her mother did, and another works for Freeset. It is sad to hear that a documentary, which has been so heavily acclaimed, has caused so much lingering hurt and distrust within the community it was trying to help. This highlights the importance of building relationships which establishes trust, and results in fewer disappointments and a greater respect for the dignity of others.

Social capital is critical to the success of a social enterprise attempting to enter communities as tight and closed off as the red-light districts in West Bengal. In their article "The Articulation of Social Capital in Entrepreneurial Networks," authors Anderson and Jack define social capital "as sets of resources embedded in relationships" (195). Additionally, "Social capital is a productive asset, making certain ends possible which, in the absence of social capital, would not be possible, or more difficult" (Anderson and Jack 196). As relationships between social entrepreneurs and individuals within the community grow deeper, trust grows stronger, and collective action to achieve sustainable change becomes possible. This was the case with the founding of Freeset in Sonagachi. Due to prior experiences with foreigners, the community in Sonagachi was slow to trust the intentions of Freeset's founders, but as they diligently worked to build relationships within the community and gain their trust, they were able to partner with a group of local women to launch Freeset, who just celebrated their 15-year anniversary. The social capital built through these relationships has allowed them to expand their impact from the individual level to the community level, and it has even spread throughout West Bengal as Freeset is able to utilize their social capital to open new social enterprises in rural districts. Often these new ventures are the direct result of women from these rural districts challenging

Freeset to have a greater impact and using their own networks and strengths to establish new networks within these rural districts to begin starting new social enterprises tailored to the specific needs and strengths of the local communities. This embodies Anderson and Jack's explanation of social capital as a way of "generating information sources, developing resources and as a mechanism for acquiring business potentials" (Anderson and Jack 202). Social capital is a powerful asset, one that must be invested in and respected.

External Partnerships

Freeset has been in business for 15 years, but they still need external partnerships to create the best opportunities for their employees and communities. A key to their sustainability is knowing what their role is in the larger picture, learning to do the best they can within that role, and knowing when to seek help from other organizations. It is through partnerships that each organization is able to leverage the strengths of the others in order to better facilitate community development. Freeset's role is offering employment and providing social services. However, they are not trained or equipped to rescue women from brothels or provide legal assistance. Consequently, they partner with the International Justice Mission (IJM) and Justice Ventures International (JVI). IJM partners with local and national anti-trafficking police to rescue victims of sex trafficking. They also provide legal advocacy and work with communities and governments to strengthen justice systems ("How IJM Works"). JVI provides legal case work, human rights training, and rights-based ("Our Work"). Freeset also partners with other social enterprises. Near their factory in Sonagachi there are three other similar companies. They all work together to share knowledge and other resources. One way in which they partner together is by being available to offer employment to women if one of the others is not able to help. If one

company is at capacity, they will reach out to one of the other social enterprises who does have the capacity. Additionally, if a woman is hired by Freeset, and it becomes apparent it is not a good fit, rather than firing them and potentially forcing them back into the trade, Freeset will reach out to one of the other companies to see if they might be a better fit, and vice versa. Freeset and the other social enterprises they partner with may have similar businesses, but they work well together because they are not in competition, rather they work together to maximize the opportunities for the freedom they are able to offer to women in Sonagachi.

Avoid Causing Harm for the Sake of Doing Good

Freeset is committed to limiting their ecological impact as much as possible. Through quality control, they are trying to create quality products that will be long lasting. One of their products are their reusable totes for shopping that can be used instead of disposable plastic or paper bags. They also use recycled saris in the production of some of their bags. Saris are a common piece of clothing among Indian women, which is primarily a long piece of fabric wrapped around their bodies. Reusing old sari fabric gives new life to something that would otherwise be thrown away or burned creating a need for new fabric to be made. To Freeset, profits are not the bottom line. They are more concerned with the other two aspects of a triple bottom line: ecological sustainability and social impact. Their mission is socially focused, but they also want to honor the ecological system they are operating within.

One of the biggest factors as to why a girl or woman joins the trade in West Bengal is because of poverty. Rural farmers are unable to compete with international goods, their soil and water are polluted, and global warming affects the weather their crops rely on. In

essence, these girls and their families are victims of environmental inequality. As Catholic Social Teaching teaches, "God intends the goods of the earth to be for all; all people should have access to the goods necessary for their full human development" (Moe-Lobeda 213). Through employment, Freeset is chipping away at the ecological debt owed to India's impoverished by the environmental greed of the Global North. They are working to provide women in the trade in West Bengal, or those at risk of being forced to join, the opportunity to "have access to the goods necessary for their full human development (Moe-Lobeda 213). They also do their best to not contribute further to environmental inequality by using locally, responsibly sourced jute and organic cotton. Freeset Fabrics, which weaves scarves, has opted to outsource the dying of their raw materials to a company with environmentally and socially responsible practices in order to avoid polluting their local environment accidentally as a result of their inexperience with dyes. Environmental degradation is an act of oppression that primarily effects poor communities. As a freedom business (social enterprise) it is in the best interest of Freeset and the communities they are working in to make environmentally conscious business choices. Not only does it help to alleviate oppression, creating more opportunities for women to choose freedom, but it also plays a key role in the sustainability of the social enterprise.

Conclusion

When I met Kundulla, confidence, joy, love and kindness radiated from her being. I remember thinking to myself, "Wow. This woman is beautiful and there is so much kindness in her eyes." Standing before me she was not what I expected a former woman of the trade to look like. She was not a fragile or oppressed. Rather, she was strong and empowered. 15 years ago, Freeset gave her training, a well-paying job, and a new

community of women to live life with. Now, she has moved on from her sewing machine to a role where she is building relationships with women in the trade and extending to them the same choice of freedom she had received. The power of her story is that social enterprise (Freeset) was able to partner with Kundulla in changing her story from one of sadness to one of hope.

Social enterprise has the opportunity to change the trajectory of the lives of the poor and marginalized. West Bengal is a prime location for social enterprise since it is home to one of Asia's largest red-light districts and serves as the main source location for India's sex trafficking industry. Furthermore, sex trafficking and the trade are economically driven. Therefore, partnering with women to bring them out of the trade or preventing them from joining in the first place must also be economic in nature. Social enterprise is such an economic alternative that is making great strides in the realm of community development. Additionally, the principles and practices of social enterprise are effective in helping rescue women from prostitution and slavery. Freeset as a case study demonstrated the effectiveness of the social enterprise strategy. As a social enterprise puts into practices the principles of keeping the focus on the mission, developing contextualized strategies, building relationships, strengthening partnerships with other organizations and avoiding causing harm while trying to do good, they will achieve greater success and sustainability. Sustainable solutions to social issues are essential within community development because they provide the greatest impact. As women in West Bengal are offered the choice of freedom and are empowered, the impact of social enterprise grows exponentially as those same women empower others.

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Appendix A: Walk to Kundulla's House

While visiting Freeset Fabrics in Murshidabad, Kundulla and her husband invited us to their house for lunch. I took this picture as we walked to their small, well-kept, mud house. We sat cross-legged on the open front patio and were served chicken curry, dhal, and rice. As we sat eating with our hands, Kundulla's face shone with pride and joy.

Appendix B: Photo of Dhulian

I took this photo while visiting Dhulian while the new sewing business was still in the

planning stages. The small shacks in the distance are part of Dhulian's red-light district.