



THE BOSTON PLEDGE
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THE BOSTON PLEDGE

THE INCUBATOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA . . . REMINDS US THAT, "OUR
REAL AWAKENING . . . TAKES PLACE WHEN WE
DEDICATE OUR LIFE TO AN EXALTED IDEAL."



THE BOSTON PLEDGE

WE INCUBATE PUBLIC SERVICE

“How much humankind can achieve has never been limited by our means, only by how far our vision could stretch . . . With our egos outside and the divine within, the possibilities are limitless . . .”

Partha S. Ghosh, chairman The Boston Pledge

“

Since the dawn of civilization, with the increasing influence of emerging technologies, the world has been shrinking. Paradoxically, the socioeconomic disparity between the advanced and the other regions has been gradually widening. In order to reverse this “self-choking” trend as a first step we are focused on creating a bottom-up socioeconomic fervor in Bengal. Gradually we will spread the fruits of this experience across the Indian subcontinent and to impoverished regions around the world. The Boston Pledge (TBP) humbly serves with the goal of catalyzing the sustainable development of global equity. It is an *incubator* of voluntary public service. Ambitious as our vision might appear, it is our strong conviction that transcending the constraints of self-interest and focusing on empowering people at the grass roots level will make a big difference.

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\$1.00/day

+ MISSION

Create and continually develop a process through which people in privileged regions can engage with the issues of socio-economic development in the undernourished areas of the world.

Draw and deploy spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and financial capital to encourage education, culture, sports, public health, environment, and entrepreneurship.

Evolve a multidisciplinary, multiethnic network, the members of which will truly dedicate their inner selves to the service of humanity in celebration of unity in diversity.

YOU CAN HELP IN MANY WAYS

Pledge your support, even as little as a \$1.00/day that you would otherwise spend on a cup of coffee; provide a one time gift; commit your time and skills to building TBP; participate in a project; or assist in fundraising and/or recruit members.

www.bostonpledge.org

WHO WE ARE



+ THE WORLD AT A CRITICAL CROSSROAD

Despite powerful technologies and global socioeconomic advancements, our world is confronted with an increasing disparity between developed and less developed nations. Living with such huge economic gaps and in ecological crises makes our civilization both fragile and dangerous. The disturbing events of the 21st century provide ample evidence that people from developed nations must reach out to improve the lives of those from underprivileged states. The benefits of progress in certain pockets of the globe must be shared universally for the survival of humanity.

In this quest, America, with its diverse population, is uniquely positioned to mobilize immigrant communities in efforts that will benefit their own ancestral roots.

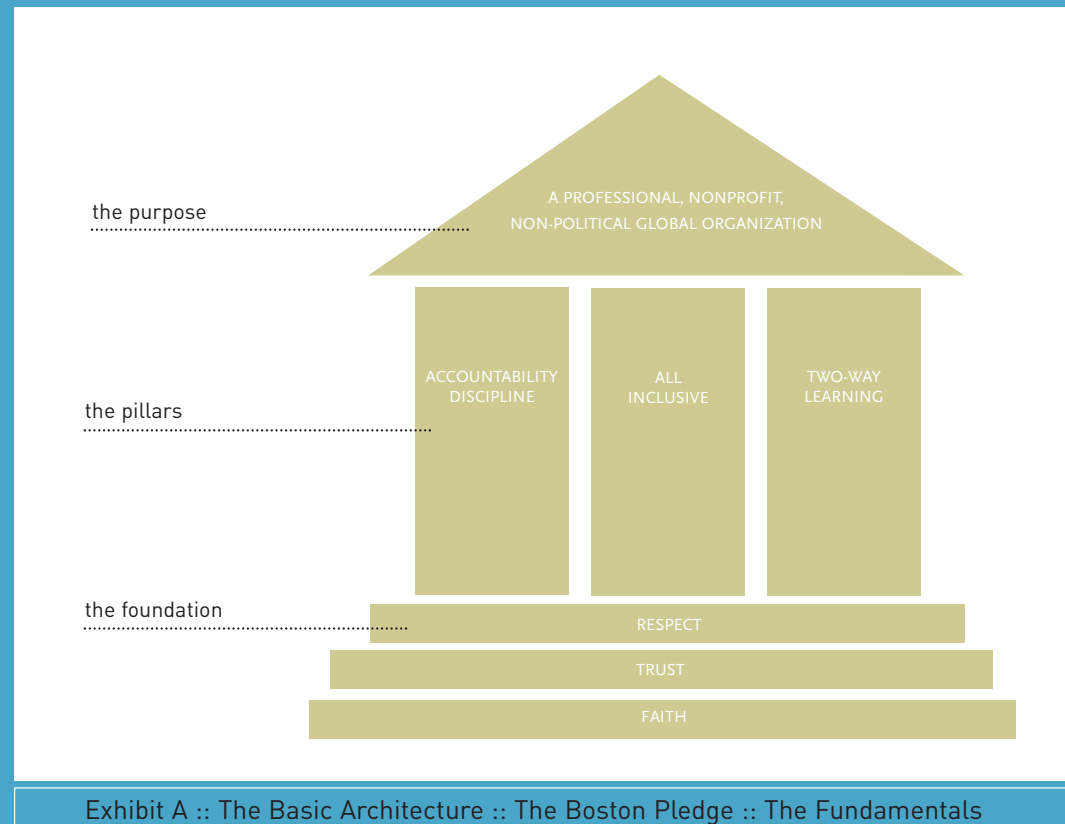
TBP was born at the dawn of the new millennium in a city with a long history of nurturing revolutionary movements. TBP evolved out of the first North American Bengali Conference, organized in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 2001. The Renaissance seminar was one of the outstanding sessions of the conference and was the time at which the seeds of TBP were sown. Since then we at TBP have evolved into a global organization in which people from all walks of life have joined us in promoting the common goal of securing economic equity and cultural well-being for our less privileged brethren.

+ THE FUNDAMENTAL MOTIVATION OF THE BOSTON PLEDGE

Its foundation reflects the respect, trust and faith TBP members have in the cause and in each other, as well as the three essential pillars that define our values—*Discipline and Accountability, Inclusiveness, and Two-way Learning* (in other words, humility vis-à-vis whom we aspire to serve).

+ THE BASIC ARCHITECTURE

Most humanitarian organizations offer invaluable services following disasters, but end up serving the symptoms, not the causes. TBP aspires to proactively seek out and resolve socioeconomic issues in underdeveloped regions worldwide, and to provide appropriate resources to rejuvenate such



economies before problems turn into insurmountable quagmires. Our specific goals are to enable grassroots stimulus in education, health, and small-scale industry development; and to facilitate socio-cultural enrichment.

While governments and other institutions struggle to find ways to transcend political boundaries, TBP, representing multiple professional disciplines, plans to complement government/institutional initiatives by focusing on the empowerment of the common man. As a nonprofit organization, TBP inspires creative initiatives from people who wish to express their passion for public good. Together we can work effectively toward a sustainable development of the planet.

THE OVERARCHING RULES

The development of The Boston Pledge is being guided by several overarching rules:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1 *Always place the interests of the people we are trying to serve above all other considerations.*
- 2 *Work with a unified non hierarchical approach, without egos, with a full commitment to preserving and enriching each others' involvement.*
- 3 *Have faith in the natural reverence that TBP's work will secure in driving the development of TBP; not be influenced by quick wins, or easy paths to popularity.*
- 4 *Focus on reaching everyone who would be interested in the TBP initiatives, whether that individual is around the block or across the world.*
- 5 *Follow the highest standards of professionalism in whatever task we undertake, however minor.*
- 6 *Maintain objectivity and global perspective; remain unbiased by any partisan and/or personal agenda.*
- 7 *Compliment and enrich, not compete with or undermine similar initiatives taken by other organizations.*
- 8 *Be responsible custodians of the commitments made by individuals and/or organizations, whether in the form of wisdom, wealth or work.*
- 9 *Work closely with governments, but avoid political affiliation.*
- 10 *Strive for complete transparency in everything we do.*



1 URBAN RENEWAL: KALIGHAT

The Kalighat project is an urban renewal and architectural restoration initiative involving one of the most historic sites in India. Located in the heart of Kolkata, the Kalighat buildings are over 600 years old and have been a significant tourist attraction for people from around the world.

Unfortunately, the area is now surrounded by urban blight. TBP, with the help of Indian state and central governments, is attempting to catalyze the redevelopment of the entire area to make it more livable and accessible. Significant progress has been made in this collaborative project, yet much remains to be done. TBP's near term focus is Kalighat, and its annual fundraiser at Boston University has been organized to benefit this project. Towards this goal, we are making use of a new book titled *In the Beginning is Desire — Tracing Kali's Footprints in Indian Literature* by Dr. Neela Bhattacharya Saxena, a TBP member, to enhance the fundraising efforts.

There are many ways you can be a part of this historic effort. Contact TBP today (www.bostonpledge.org) to volunteer your support.

2 THE ARSENIC PROJECT

One of the most serious problems of in the world, especially in poor nations, is a lack of access to clean water. TBP and its partner organizations have focused on understanding the causes of arsenic pollution, finding innovative treatments for the problem, and designing practical, scalable solutions. TBP's collaborative efforts with both domestic and foreign agencies, such as Water for People, have led to several successful fundraising events. In December 2003, TBP held a groundbreaking conference at MIT's Wang Auditorium, on "Meeting the Challenge of Arsenic in Ground-water." As part of this

event, TBP gathered a panel of US experts to discuss the crisis in the Bengal basin.

In October 2004, another informative fundraising event was held at the University of New Hampshire in partnership with New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA), and Water for People. The efforts of students and entrepreneurs at organizations such as MIT and Bengal Engineering College have become significant catalysts in developing effective methods of addressing the issue of providing clean and nonpolluted water to the Bengali population.

3 SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE DISABLED

In the spirit of empowering physically challenged people, the Perkins School for the Blind, in Watertown, Massachusetts in partnership with TBP and the Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy in West Bengal will be developing a cooperative effort to introduce well-tested teaching methods for disabled students in India and abroad. TBP is working with both sides to ensure the effective use of Perkins' programs.

THE FIRST WAVE OF INITIATIVES

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While TBP is still growing as an organization, we have already begun work in various areas in Bengal. We have received tremendous encouragement from the people and the government of West Bengal, encouraging various members to begin individual projects. *You too can contribute financially, intellectually, or physically to any one of our current programs.*

It is our sincere hope that as we build the necessary support and infrastructure of TBP, several other programs will flourish as individuals come forward to join this movement. Please join TBP today.



4 PUBLIC HEALTH

In order to develop a healthy socio-economic environment, a robust health-care system is required. While such a challenge is indeed huge, TBP wants to take a few simple steps to strengthen the current systems in place.

We are pursuing several avenues at this time, such as to:

[1] *Utilize the established network of doctors in the United States to provide second opinions through the Internet to diagnostic requests from citizens in the third world.*

[2] *Provide support to hospitals by subsidizing the costs of certain medical equipment or specific numbers of beds.*

[3] *Utilize e-mails and/or visits to improve the skill set of doctors in remote locations.*

TBP is in the initial stages of developing a team that will begin this process in a few experimental sites in Bengal.

5 ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK [EDN]

In order to facilitate grassroots economic development bottom-up entrepreneurship is essential. The government of West Bengal has utilized the private-sector support in India set up the Enterprise Development Institute (EDI) in association with TBP. In 2003, a series of successful workshops were conducted as part of a partnership between TBP, EDI in Kolkata, and Boston University. As a follow-up to this week long event TBP and The Human Network, an organization supported by United Nations Development Programme, are planning to launch a network of entrepreneurial activities to empower bottom-up socioeconomic development through targeted business development initiatives for young grassroots entrepreneurs.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

HOW YOU CAN HELP



By becoming involved in TBP you can work on projects that interest you and do good at the same time. We are working hand-in-hand with doctors, scientists, economists, educators, artists, and business leaders around the world. TBP visualizes an organization that will create a progressive network of people who will connect with each other in developing and fulfilling their professional, personal, and global goals.

WE URGE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER OF TBP TODAY AND GET INVOLVED IN THIS THE EVOLVING ORGANIZATION!

>> Pledge a fixed amount of time per week to work for the organization + Set aside even as little as a \$1/day you would otherwise spend on a cup of coffee + Become a paid TBP worker if you are a student and would like to supplement your income with meaningful work + Provide your professional expertise for TBP projects + Help TBP in its fundraising efforts + Contribute financially toward TBP endeavors. <<



+ WHY SHOULD YOU COMMIT TO TBP?

Have you ever imagined a world that is radically different? Have you ever dared to believe in the famous lines of Nobel Laureate Tagore? If you have, TBP is for you; and, if you have not, please read the lines below; you can help TBP to internalize and celebrate the meaning of the poem to create a world:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Gitanjali 35

- 1 *Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;*
- 2 *Where knowledge is free;*
- 3 *Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;*
- 4 *Where words come out from the depth of truth;*
- 5 *Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;*
- 6 *Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into
the dreary desert sand of dead habit;*
- 7 *Where the mind is lead forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action—*
- 8 *Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”*

While this was an idealistic dream that the poet had for a newly awakening country, today something has gone utterly wrong with the rapidly changing world. We live in a world of deprivation for many and excess for a few, in a world that is massively powerful and abjectly powerless, in a world that can self-destruct at the push of a few buttons. Perhaps it is time for us to really believe that we, the ones in a privileged surplus-oriented environment, can contribute toward creating a world where there will be true equity, prosperity, and happiness. Realize your dreams. Join TBP. Yes, it is possible.

+ HOW CAN TBP HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS?

You may wonder how can I, with my busy lifestyle, be a catalyst for change. While I appreciate the ideals and dreams behind TBP, it may be just too much for me. Is it possible to satisfy my professional and personal goals and help the world at the same time? Yes, it is. Many business people have begun working toward a more environment-friendly and enlightened business practices. People like Ben Cohen, the co-founder and former CEO of Ben and Jerry's, have recognized what is at stake in today's lopsided economy. Bill Gates' philanthropic projects have begun to make a difference and are slowly eradicating diseases. Would you like to join forces with them? In the process of creating a global network, TBP is committed to harnessing the energies released by successful people toward a common goal. You can benefit from that cooperation and make a difference at the same time.

Most importantly, as TBP brings together professionals from different disciplines and echelons of leadership, the opportunity to learn from each other is limitless. TBP provides wide and robust opportunity to communicate with your inner-self, a luxury that is risky in a corporate world. TBP is a fertile ground for developing the discipline of time and communication management, building confidence in your own problem-solving skills, and most importantly, becoming a member of a network that not only draws outstanding personalities but helps them test their own capacity of leadership.

After all, in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, *“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”*

And, most importantly, as one the greatest philosophers and public servants of the 19th century and a luminary in The First Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 Swami Vivekananda, reminds us, *“Our real awakening . . . takes place when we dedicate our life to an exalted ideal.”*

“ Perhaps it is time for us to really believe that we, the ones in a privileged surplus-oriented environment, can contribute toward creating a world where there will be true equity, prosperity, & happiness.

Realize your dreams.

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Yes, it is possible. ”