

N: Could you comment on the mission of the Global Business Incubator and how the initiative was created?

BN: Certainly. Through the work I had done previously here in NYC with NYU it became increasingly apparent that the driving force behind simple small business and job creation was the idea of empowering individuals to understand how to do it, to understand the process by which they themselves can participate, the importance of entrepreneurship, not as the simple subject of creating a new company, but as a way of thinking. So it was this combination of different forces and factors that begin to be apparent and as we harness together here in coordination with Mayor Bloomberg's initiatives, we began to produce some very incredible results. In little less than 2 years, the company that I was affiliated with and guided in our incubator raised an excess of 29 million dollars in excess capital, created nearly 500 new jobs, and had nine of those companies graduate from the incubator and go independent and operate on their own. It wasn't an accident that we were capable of doing that, but as a result of that and my ability to meet the Ambassador and South-South News, it became apparent to me that it wasn't a NYC challenge, that it was truly a challenge of the world. One of the most exciting things as a faculty member at NYU Poly, most of my students were from foreign countries, so it became increasingly apparent that one of the real opportunities was a kind of global market environment for small businesses. The ability of a country like Bangladesh to sell products in the Dominican Republic, and vice versa. Those opportunities are really the driving forces behind the success of small business. Hopefully South-South News and our Global Business Incubator will be successful in enhancing that global collaboration of markets and of people.

ND: So you have a wide experience in the private sector and academia, and now you are entering something that is often called international development. You were the director of the business incubator, also a faculty member of NYU, now you're directing the Global Business Incubator. How are you bringing all of these experiences together, and what do you think will be the most useful and the most efficient part of that experience that you will be able to apply in this new process?

BN: I think that the thing that I learned most effectively was to not enter with a lot of rules and a lot of details, but rather draw upon the talents and the existing structures of countries and people. There are certain rules that you have to do, as an example, if in your business you are not making something, but selling it for a profit, your probability for continuing are limited. But much beyond that, every country and market and individual is a unique challenge, so one of the themes from our GBI is to assist in the drawing out and coordination of existing cultures and trends and things that exist in countries already rather than try and change things. We try and enhance things that are being done, so they can be done more efficiently. So if I had to state it, our goal is to somewhat be a modifier of talent and forces, so that the global initiative is individual to the location, but collective to the global network.

ND: Thank you so much. As always, we have multiple questions from our GFDD team. Asuncion has a question for you.

AS: Dr. Niswander could you explain to us the thematic and geographic scope of this new initiative of the GBI?

BN: Well it's interesting, when I met the Ambassador, the focus of South-South News was one assisting an indentified group of less than developed countries, and helping them advance, our focus is for the most part those countries that were in the categories of focusing on the opportunity and need to develop most. However, as a result of my efforts and my works on large countries and large companies, we are being pursued fairly aggressively from a large Russian group and also in China. So there was this empowerment for jobs, doesn't limit itself to those smaller, less developed countries, it's everywhere. So our focus is global, our thematic is a couple of elements, it is entrepreneurial thinking and living - not just starting new companies, but helping existing companies think creatively so they can be more competitive.

We have a second sector which is education and we call it "skills transfer." As an educator, one of the elements that I identified early on and am somewhat frustrated with in the education environment, is that if you don't focus on the skills that we need in the commercial marketplace, it makes it difficult for students to find employment, because employers are not going to hire people just for the sake of hiring people. They need them to have skills that produce real benefits. So one of the thematic focuses of our program is skills transfer. And as a subset of the skills transfer, one of the things that I've identified in the course of my entrepreneurial existence and my professorial activity, is that the source of these skills should come from an area that is right now too often dismissed. Those are the aging and retired people, who've lived a life of experience who have the kind of knowledge that they can pass on, But for a variety of reasons, they are not focused on as a resource, and I happen to believe that this is one of the fertile areas for us to look at promoting skill transfers in countries. If I come into a country as a US English person, the people may or may not understand and/or believe what I am saying. But if I'm working with a group of retired successful businesspeople from that culture, who they themselves have experience and things to pass on, then I think that you will see that the efficiency and impact will be great. As a son of a rapidly aging father, I find the wisdom that he transfers to me now in his life is overwhelming. I think that should be the case around the world rather than the exception.

So we have education and the last thing is in the area of marketing itself. At the end of the day, it comes down to all of these initiatives and all of these activities have to find buyers for goods. Interestingly enough, those markets are available everywhere in the world. As an example, I had a group of Saudi Arabian women in my class who created markets focused specifically on their marketplace in Saudi Arabia, but when they began to learn the rules of empowerment of women around the world, suddenly there were 10 or 20 markets for their products and services around the world that were very attractive, not just to the Saudi Arabian space. So marketing and selling are the third leg of the seat. It's critical, why? Without benefits, this idea won't hold together. There has to be commercial and financial impact to all of this. I love the programs that are being funded around the world, but as a seven time entre start-up guy myself and somebody who spent my life creating my own road, no matter what it is, it still have to produce the revenue and resources that keep it

alive. That is where profits and revenue come in. So that's a key ingredient. So if you tie them all together, the biggest force that we want to communicate to the people we're working with is effective collaboration. So it's a collaboration of universities and educators, it collaboration of governments, a collaboration of professional service providers, and a collaboration of existing profitable businesses. Those forces have to come together and see a wind for them as well as for their people. If you don't do both, the chances of it really picking up are slim. I say that not from the fact of anything other than that life is about a limited amount of time and to effectively maximize the amount of dollars that you can generate, so you have to keep that in mind.

Just one last item, and I've spoken about this many times to the mayor of New York, who interestingly enough has a 60 billion budget, here in NYC. The suggestions was that if NY wanted to create a dynamic small business environment, they should consider dedicating a portion of those 60 million dollars in annualized purchases to buy products and services from their small businesses.

AS: Do you include innovation in your formula? How does it play out?

BN: Well in the education area, in innovation, the key to a successful business or any type is to be able to see an opportunity. So innovation could be something as simple as the coating on the surface of this table. Is there a more efficient or effective way to do that? In my class, I reference this as the factors, functions and features in the innovation. Factors are "can you do it cheaper, can you do it with more style, can you do it faster or more simplistic?" Functions are things around "can you add dimmers on a light switch that will allow it to be more effectively controlled?" So innovation is the key driver to entrepreneurship, the interesting element that is an all-time, forever, everyday thing. The world that we live in is now characterized by rapid and dramatic change, that won't stop. So what people have to understand is that in order to be successful and empowered in the world they live in, they have to constantly be looking at things for improvement, enhancements, making them better. Whether they are working for a large company – a good example is the current messages coming out of Detroit and the auto industry, where the unions and the people got together and began to address the fact that they have to produce better cars for lower cost. It was this collective collaboration that produces the results. So innovation is the driver to all market today, tomorrow, and forever.

ND: Could you comment on some geographic areas of areas of production or work or study that Global Business Incubator has already started to work in?

BN: One the areas I was lucky in, one of the incubators that I started was in the area o renewable energy. I started a partnership with the company the acronym NICERTA in the area of renewable energies and clean technologies. If you are going to create jobs and a sustainable business for tomorrow, your focus should be on something that is simultaneously going to provide maybe some other benefits. One of the areas that we hope to create viable sustainable businesses is in the area of renewable energies. It can be something so simple as a modification. So energy, sustainable tourism. We are looking at areas that already in existence. So all of the creative subject areas – fashion, food – areas

where people in lesser areas still possess these skills knowledge and awareness. No matter where you go in the world – fortunately or unfortunately I have not seen some of the harsher place in the world – but most of them, when talking to people about them, they still have an element of style and their own presence. And it is that presence of creativity that you need to harness and kind of tease out of those areas into the world. So I think it's that capturing what exists and moving it into the 21st century that I think the GBI will really find its greatest ability to move quickly and efficiently.

ND: So what you are saying is all of these elements are somehow present, there is creativity, there is tradition, there is wisdom, there is capacity. So what you're trying is to put all of these together and make people aware of them, and then bring partners together – public private – and then really make it grow.

BN: Out there in those pockets are great success stories yet to be found. And so the modern technologies and what we're doing in GBI lends itself to making that happen. So the belief is – at least my own personal one, and I've trying to convert as many people as I can – one the greatest drivers of the success of GBI is the early success of the people that we work with, to the extent that they show promise it will provide amazing impact on the attitudes of individuals about the promise of tomorrow. In the end, we all know that when you wake up in the morning and you have hope, it's a good day. If you wake up in the morning and you don't have hope, it's going to be a bad day or maybe less. So the idea in the end is to send a basic message – it's not political it's not financial, it's empowering individuals to understand how they can take on the world and win that. So that's, more than anything, what GBI is focusing on.

MH: Could you comment on the strategic process that GBI implements to develop public-private partnerships?

BN: That one is the key and it's a tough one. The nicety of the elements that we are working on is the tactics of the public private partnership need to address a kind of multiple layer collaboration. It has to be clearly understood the benefits that can be realized by all of these collaborations. So everyone in the mix, it has to be something for all of them. Governments have to win, professional service providers have to win, universities have to win. So it's this kind of detailed communication of the benefits impact you want to convey, so that they will be the driver in funding these public-private partnerships. If you could get an educational environment that was driven and supported by existing experienced people who are trained and educated on how to deliver messages to their own people. You have education at a lower price, you have efficiencies pick up in the ability to communicate. When those jobs that are then created, and are translated – and I've done this often here in NY – one of the elements I did, I would go around and survey our members. "You've raised 29 million, how much did you spend on salaries?" There was roughly 16 to 19 million dollars spent on salaries. Then I very quickly did the math on tax rates on individual earnings in NYC, which translated into slightly over 1.1 million dollars that these people paid the city in income taxes.

Back to your point, the way I convinced the city was to educate them on the financial bottom line, which for them was the 1.1 million in tax revenues for the \$80 or 90,000 that they provided me to start the incubator. So it's that clear understanding of impacts for all the players. And it has to be that way. You can't expect lawyers, and accountants and finance people to participate if all you're asking to do is give away their services. If they have an opportunity to participate in a really exciting, growing new business, which then adds to their bottom line, everybody gets on board and begins to play the game. So it's a bottom-up kind of tactic. Empowering the individual, while empowering the collaborating parties.

ND: We're talking about private sector, academia, education, public sector. What piece of advice would you have for the private sector to be more efficient and to be more agile in business incubation? And then you as a part of academia and in the US educational system, where often business incubator and the ability of people to be entrepreneurial is questioned, how much is education really providing. What advice would you have for the educational system to incorporate it better so that when people are graduating that they not only have degrees but are really capable of incubating something really innovative?

BN: I spent a good deal of time thinking about it and talking about it, so thank you for the question. The essence of the marketplace – one might look at the US as the largest marketplace and be the communicator. I've had the good luxury of speaking to the president of the Dominican Republic and I spoke to him in a similar fashion. The commercial marketplace has to join the academic and education marketplace. You shouldn't be hearing from corporations that the graduates from the local universities do not have the skills that they want in their business. That to me is unacceptable. That means both sides have to find a way to come together. One of the greatest elements in education is an orientation toward action learning, participation in the real world, applying them to real things. If you solve problems for business, they will value you. If you don't, they won't have any reason to deal with you. If universities want to be totally appealing to the students and people of the world, they should show very quickly that they are an accelerator to the employment community. That's broken down right now. I've taught maybe 1,800 students in my time at NYU, and I would argue that a large number of those people approach me on how to help them get a job. In the academic world, it's about linking the universities and the educators to the businesses and organizations that need the talent. So there's a much more dynamic interrelation of those institutions. They should be helping each other and not standing alone in an independent fashion. Action learning should be the driving force behind education – experience. My pitch to all of my students was "look in the mirror, look at your resume, and tell me what skills you have that you can sell to somebody." Just recently I had a gentleman bring a resume, and he had the resume and he had places he worked, so I asked him to go back and list for me all of the skills that he learned in all of those jobs. He came back with a certain enthusiasm because now he could talk about dealing with people in a retail environment. So its skills that have to be focused on, and they have to be focused on by both sides, the commercials, the governments, and the academic institutions.

ND: So it's really about bringing all the sectors together and then really being relevant to all that's happening in the world.

BN: Exactly. For the individuals, for the disenfranchised people of the world, all they want is a chance to make enough money to live tomorrow. That's all they want. A very simple thing. So if we approached our situation by viewing them as a leveragable resource that we could put together in some way, shape or form, then everyone is thinking the right way. You don't think about "can the government give me money?", what you should think about is "can the government help me achieve the skills I need to make a living in the world we live in?"

[Ambassador Lorenzo and ending niceties]