

## Champions for Social Good Podcast

### A Blueprint for DIY Humanitarian Organizations: A Conversation with Dr. Chris Stout, Center for Global Initiatives

**Jamie:** Hello, and welcome to the Champions for Social Good Podcast, the podcast for people dedicated to social impact. I'm Jamie Serino, Director of Marketing with Blackbaud's Corporations and Foundations Division. I'm here today with Dr. Chris Stout. Dr. Chris Stout is the Founding Director of the award-winning nonprofit Center for Global Initiatives. He also serves on the faculty in the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago and their Center for Global Health. Chris has traveled to more than 95 countries and has been honored with numerous humanitarian and four additional doctorates for his work. In addition, he's authored more than 35 books, including "The New Humanitarians: Inspiration, Innovations, and Blueprints for Visionaries." Welcome, Chris.

**Chris:** Thanks a lot, Jamie. It's great to be on.

**Jamie:** Yeah, it's great to have you, real fascinating individual with just a few achievements there, [chuckle] I had trouble getting through the intro. Quite an impressive list of achievements. And that's just the tip of the iceberg there. So if you could start off, maybe, telling us a little bit about yourself, and the path that you've taken through life.

**Chris:** Sure, Jamie. I wish I could tell you that it's been sort of the result of a really well-designed and planned and executed set of specifics and directions, and it really hasn't. I'd done a blog a while back on LinkedIn called "The Accidental Humanitarian" and I really oftentimes sort of felt like, that really sort of spoke to kind of how I wound up doing a lot of the things that I've been up to for the last 15 years. But basically, long story short, I started off as an undergraduate in computer science, of all things, and architecture, and then migrated into psychology, and really found that I enjoyed that. What everyone does with an undergrad degree in psychology is apply to graduate school. So that's what I did, and had visions of being in private practice and seeing adult patients, wound up, and after I got my doctorate and my license, seeing children and seeing in-patients. And I'd always kinda paralleled to that, had sort of this itch of liking to travel and go other places, and meet new people. And once I got my feet underneath me after graduate school, and getting started in my academic and professional activities, I wanted to have an experience with a humanitarian organization.

**Chris:** So, connected up with Flying Doctors of America and did a trip about three weeks in Vietnam in the late 1990s, and just really... Felt like that was an impactful experience and I'm really... I think a lot of people feel like sometimes they get more out of that experience emotionally and in their core, than maybe what the work was that they did. And sort of one thing led to another. I did some stuff with the World Economic Forum and got to rub elbows with a lot of really amazing people that had started non-governmental organizations and 501c3s. And one thing led to another and I'd sort of had this history of climbing, and met some people in Africa that we kept in touch and tried to do some work with, and realized that in addition to sort of like my day job and activities, I really sort of had this itch that I wanted to scratch about getting more involved in humanitarian work.

**Chris:** And one thing led to another and my mentor basically said, "You involve yourself in these projects and there's things that you're kinda starting on your own, but you actually really need to... Do you want to get donations, and really kind of make it a real thing, you need to create a 501c3." So he's an attorney. His wife was an attorney, and they collaborated and helped us get through the IRS vetting process, and just actually, it's our anniversary in 2007, we officially became the Center for Global Initiatives, and officially became a 501c3, and we've been involved in a variety of different kinds of projects prior to being official and since being official.

**Jamie:** That's great. Congratulations.

**Chris:** Thank you.

**Jamie:** Happy Anniversary.

**Chris:** Yeah, thank you.

**Jamie:** Well, I'm glad you segued into that. So I wonder if you can tell us a little bit more about the Center for Global Initiatives, and what you guys do, and how you guys help and maybe also a little bit of advice for people in starting off their own 501c3.

**Chris:** Yeah, I'd be happy to. I tell you, it really was kind of a situation in which... In clinical work, there's something called "informed consent" where you tell a patient sort of what to expect either in a research project or a certain kind of treatment. And I felt like no one ever gave me informed consent about starting a 501c3. [chuckle] Because if they would've I would've been going, "Well, maybe this isn't exactly what I wanna be doing." But there's really a lot of moving parts to it, and a lot of rigors, and things like that. Our attorney, mentor, colleagues, that our volunteer... I should probably also say the Center for Global Initiatives is an entire volunteer organization. So we have our friends globally that we partner with, which I will talk about in a little bit. But everybody here is stateside, our attorneys, our web designer, all of our staff, so to speak, our directors are all volunteers, myself included. We don't get salaries or anything like that. We all have day jobs and do this as sort of our passion project and something that we feel can be kind of helpful to the world.

**Chris:** And one of the things that when we first started it, it was basically... I'd done this travel and made relationships and as we started to get into more resource poor areas, people would say, "Hey, could you help us out with this project? Hey, we would like to do this. Hey, we would like to do that." And because they were friends and colleagues, it's been like, "Yeah, sure. Let's see. I may have a network that could help us do that or help you do that or who do I know? How do I know? What kinds of resources there might be," things like that. And that all went along just swimmingly for about three or four years and we've got projects in Tanzania, and Bolivia, and Cambodia, and India, etcetera, not a ton of places but pretty much ensconced in the places where we've got things.

**Chris:** And then I guess our reputation kind of grew a bit and we had some new friends contact us that were from Ukraine and they wanted to do a project there and they were wanting it to be funded by a USAID grant. And one of the obligations of the grant was that it was gonna be a three-year duration and then it would require some assessments that would be done at these places, called inter-knots, in Kiev probably three to four times a year and each one of those visits would probably take 10 days to two weeks and as we were kind of vetting it with my board, it was sort of like, we couldn't... We're looking at each other going, "Well man, I don't have that kind of vacation time." And "Wow, my family would just really be upset if I was gonna say, 'Well hey, I'm not going on vacation with you guys at all this year but I'm gonna go to Ukraine four times or something like that.'"

**Chris:** So we really kind of realized that we couldn't, in that sense, scale and the way that we had wanted to do. And then it was sort of like this, I don't know, kind of like a Waterloo/epiphany 'cause first of all we're going, "Oh man, this is not cool." But then on the other hand, we got to noodling on it and thought, "You know, there have been a lot of learning experiences that we've had. There's been a lot of things that we've built. There's been a lot of resources that we've come upon and catalogued and organized that other people could use." And that kind of our shift in philosophy was that we wanted to do what we're kind of jokingly referred to as open-sourcing humanitarian intervention, and what we mean by that is that as bizarre as this might seem, those of your listeners that work in the humanitarian space will know that this is exactly the case. But sometimes it's really hard to just do good in the world. There's lot of regulations. There's lots of red tape. There are certain places where there's concerns about corruption.

**Chris:** There's just lots of hassles to do things and I have had dozens of conversations with people that say, "I wanna do this project in Timbuktu or wherever and I don't want to build a website. I don't want to submit my materials to the IRS to get 501c3 status. I don't want to develop a board of directors. I don't wanna learn how

to manage volunteers. I don't wanna get a new phone number and rent office space and do these umpteen kinds of things infrastructure-wise that you really kinda have to do to be a legitimate entity to do these things."

**Chris:** So we then came upon this idea of open-sourcing the hard work and all the stuff that we've done is public domain available to anybody that would like to come to our website anytime that they like and download to their heart's content. And the idea is, is that it's hard enough to do good in the world without having to worry about what your social media platform or what's this or what's that. So we provide a variety of different kinds of tools. Our specific sweet spot is global health and education. So that's the primary, the kinds of stuff that you'll find on our website. You won't find a whole lot about engineering or digging wells or building bridges or good roads, which are also important, but that's not our area of expertise. So you can come to our website. People can come to our Tools section for example and they can download a spreadsheet that has eight different tabs in it that provide information about fundraising, about getting funding from a variety of sources if you're a 501c3, or if you're not a 501c3.

**Chris:** All these kinds of things that we kind of did in our process of building our 501c3 and we make them available to others. We help people. I did not know that... Because of my naivety that when you have a non-profit in the United States, you file taxes, but you don't file taxes like the rest of us do as individuals with 1040s. You do something called a 990 and that looks... We're based out of Chicago and that's very different in the state of Illinois than it is in other states, and there's a federal version of it too, and it's sort of like I had no idea how to do that and a lot of other... When we were filling out our application, a lot of people... You say, "Well I can answer this question two or three different ways, I'm really not sure what they're trying to get at." So what we do pro bono for people just for asking is to say, "Would you like to have help filling out, if you do wanna become a 501c3, of how to fill out the IRS forms for that. Would you like to see a sample of what a 990 tax form looks like submitted to the federal government?" And just kinda take the question marks and clear the fog and help people kind of understand a variety of the kinds of aspects that really it takes either to develop your own 501c3 or we can act as a financial fiscal intermediary and help people do the projects that they really wanna do without having to go through all the hassle of actually becoming a 501c3 and building out all that infrastructure.

**Jamie:** Yeah, that's great. So there's a few things there. So for folks that don't want to form that 501c3, they can go to your website, they can check out some resources there. So just some questions around that, what is interesting is... What I've seen in the sector is a sort of tightening up around goals and where money is being directed to in a sort of like... So I think that supports more of like... I don't know, for lack of a better term, like the paperwork part of it, but on the other side of that coin is the complete sort of DIY attitude that's out there now of like, "Hey, I see a problem, I'm just gonna try to solve it or work toward solving it." So do you see those two things and in a way, do they ever conflict, and do you guys sit in the middle of that or what are your thoughts on that?

**Chris:** Yeah, that's... Excellent question, Jamie. I think it's something that I think a lot of people wrestle with, I think it's certainly something that we have concerns about, and I'll tell you very frankly there are entities that... We've seen this in our newspapers here in the Chicago area that funneled money to nefarious causes [chuckle] and it's sort of like, "Hey, I thought I was supporting this and lo and behold, I'm supporting that." So there's entities like GuideStar and others where people can look, and vet a charity or a charitable organization or a foundation if they're not familiar with it or if they're not sure... It's kind of like the good housekeeping seal of approval. "Is this legit? What's the third party that's gonna do this because I don't have the time, I don't have the wherewithal, I don't know the difference between a great thing like a Red Cross and something else that sounds just like the Red Cross, but I saw it at a bake sale or something." So there's those kinds of tools out there.

**Chris:** On the 'do it yourself' thing, I love that you said that. We actually have a spot on our website called DIY Humanitarianism. And the idea behind that is exactly what your point was that people have a desire to do things. A lot of the people that I interviewed for the New Humanitarians book felt like they wanted to be more activist, and more involved and have more skin in the game than just writing a check for a cause that they cared about, or maybe they saw... Maybe they've got personal experience with it, maybe they have some other

kind of connection or even some other kind of expertise, where they could bring more to it. And again, maybe they have the time or the bandwidth or the gumption, or the grip, or whatever it takes to do that. So in those instances, they started their own 501c3s and doing fantastic work.

**Chris:** And again, I think there's a group of people that are kind of in between and maybe it's not... I can volunteer and that's great, maybe volunteering also is my entry into seeing if I really like this and trying it on and seeing how things work or saying, "Hey this isn't for me and this isn't what I wanna do." So on the 'do it yourself' side, I think a lot of people, maybe through their religious affiliation in their churches, maybe through their work, maybe through their Rotary clubs and their Lions clubs, and their whatever service organizations and things like that, we also help those folks, for example, we have a relationship with a wonderful organization called Fly For Good. One of the biggest problems that most volunteers have in the sense of going over and being involved in a service project is the airfare to get there, it's even... I heard someone say, "I feel like I got duct taped onto the wing. I had such inexpensive seats." But even with being duct taped to the wing, it can still be pretty expensive to go.

**Chris:** And a lot of these folks are retired, a lot of these folks might be students or graduate students, or whatever. It's not like you have a big disposable income to pay even for a coach ticket to Africa or to some place, but usually, once you're in country, costs are very, very minimal, the movement, board, so to speak, because you're in a very basic settings, and food and the stuff like that isn't the problem. So Fly for Good, for example, is sort of like a humanitarian Expedia, or Travelocity or something. So you can come to our website or if you have your own 501c3 or church group or whatever kind of nonprofit, you can develop a relationship with them as well or we can skip that step for you and you can just do it through our center. And as long as you're going on an international mission, it's not like you could go to a reservation in South Dakota, and do something, that's one of their criteria, it has to be overseas.

**Chris:** Then you can put in what your trip is and what you're wanting to do and where you're wanting to go. And they also allow you an extra baggage allowance, which oftentimes you're bringing materials, maybe it's books, or meds, or durable medical equipment, which is nice 'cause that's at no charge. And a lot of times, trips, especially if they're smaller, things can... Flights can get cancelled and weird stuff can happen. So they have a... I think it's about half the price of a regularly ticketed... If you do it through normal channels, if you needed to change your flights or something. And I've used them personally, probably at least four trips to Africa. I had one trip that got kinda sideways and they were just super helpful at fixing things and getting things straightened out and stuff. So yeah, highly recommend them and again it's like one of those things.

**Chris:** There's no magic that we know about them or whatever, it's just it's they're a great partner and we, through the process of building our site up in our organization, found them, highly recommend them. They have our Good Housekeeping seal of approval. And we don't get any kickbacks, we don't have an affiliate relationship with them or anything like that, we don't have anything like that on our site. So people can feel like if it's on our site, it's on our site because we like it, it's not because we're getting a commission or anything like that, it's just it's all very, very, very transparent. But our site, we really wanna be this collection of tools for folks to be able to come in, do the kind of work they wanna do, not be hassled by it, not spend days on Google trying to find things and just really making it easy for people to do good in the world.

**Jamie:** Right. That's fantastic. And do you ever work with companies or corporations, is it just on the individual level or do you find yourself working with companies and corporations that are also looking to do a similar thing of connecting their people with causes and they're raising their hand about something, who else is raising their hand about something?

**Chris:** At minor levels, we've done it with students and universities and graduate schools which aren't really corporations. And we've done it... I also serve as Vice President of research in data analytics for ATI Physical Therapy. And they have a program called "Mission Works". And we've worked collaboratively with them as well for staff to be able to go on a mission works trip providing physical therapy and orthopedic rehabilitative services, where donors like Aunt Sally and Uncle Charlie may wanna donate for it. Mission Works isn't a 501c3. So, that's one of those instances where we act as a fiscal intermediary. We don't take a percentage, we

don't take a commission or anything like that. We do totally transparent accounting and spreadsheeting of all people's donations. And then people could make donations that funded the staff member's ability to then go over, and ATI and their program covers half of that person's costs.

**Chris:** So, it was really kind of a cool way where people could feel they could get donors, not have to worry about that whole hassle, 'cause that wasn't what they wanted. Their goal wasn't like, "Oh gosh, I really wanna get donors for things. That's really what I wanna do." Of course not, they wanna go do the service and go have that experience. So, we help those kinds of things to be an accelerant and to augment it to make it a lot easier for folks. I would be more than happy if your listeners have connections with companies. We just really haven't sought out companies. Again, we tend to be kind of more, people knock on our door and we open up and see how we can help rather than us specifically going out and looking for folks.

**Jamie:** Okay, that's great. So, in the work that you're doing, how do you measure success?

**Chris:** Well, I think accountability is a big issue. And I think that's a big issue with donors, with any kind of entity. I think there's much more of... It's a very nice and reasonable desire for any donor to kinda say, "Hey, what does my dollar pay for? What benefit? What bang literally for the buck does this occur?" And I see it a lot of times, we've just come through the holidays and you see... I see things like Goodwill vans driving down the street and they'll have a very large picture of someone that works at Goodwill. And that person saying to you, "Thank you for helping me have this position" and stuff like that. I love that because it really humanizes it, it really brings literally a human face to what kind of outcomes are and things like that. There's also though a group of folks that like to see pie charts and spreadsheets. [laughter]

**Jamie:** Right. [chuckle]

**Chris:** So, we kinda like to do both. So, on our website and through other things that we do, we have a free monthly newsletter and we've got a Facebook site and a variety of other kinds of things that are more image-friendly sorts of things, rather than spreadsheet-friendly sorts of things where people actually get to see... We did a project, well we built a kindergarten back actually before we became a real entity in 2005. We just collaborated with a colleague of mine in Tanzania who said, "We've got these kids that will have a much... They're orphans. They have a much better likelihood of being able to get into what we would think in the west of an elementary school if they had some kind of preparatory kindergarten-like education." So, I just collaborated with my friends, I'd done a lot of work back in my clinical days with schools and school districts and principals and special ed directors, and things like that. So, I pinged them, explained to them what we were looking for.

**Chris:** We all collaborated and put this stuff, a packet of paper materials together 'cause he did not have... I couldn't email it to him or anything. So, did that and said, "This is very western focused, so please bring the cultural aspects in your area to this and make it your own. These materials are for you." He then did his component of that. Submitted it to the Ministry of Education in Tanzania, and within a years time, we had a certified kindergarten.

**Jamie:** Wow, nice.

**Chris:** Yeah. And that again isn't necessarily a spreadsheet kind of thing, but we've got these great images of how the school started off and kind of how the school's evolved and things like that. And on the more economic side of things, my same colleague that I worked with, he's a priest now and he's also a chaplain at two hospitals in the same geographic area, the Moshi Region of Tanzania. And we had tried sending materials over real costly stuff, we'd send seven boxes, crates worth the stuff. Five boxes would get there, it would take forever, it cost a fortune so we thought "We're gonna provide funding." And then what he then does is does a translation from US dollars to Tanzanian shillings and then gives us an accounting as to how the dollars were spent. Because I have no idea how to best spend the dollars, he does. And we have this 20-year relationship of trust. So, they were dealing with at the hospital just a really severe malaria outbreak. So, a lot of people here would just wag their finger and say, "Well, you know, you should have chemically treated nets and that helps

you diminish malaria" And it's not like "Yes, yes yes. I totally get that, totally agree with that. But that does nothing to help the person that's bedridden with malaria right now. We need to treat those folks."

**Chris:** And that's kind of our sweet spot. We do as much as we can for prevention and all that, but who's the people that come in and fix the people that didn't have the benefit of prevention? So we funded protocols of treatment, for the picture side they sent us pictures of that. That's actually on one of our Facebook sites. But it was just really amazing to me, Jamie, 'cause I had no idea what the results would be, and long story short, for the dollars that were sent, the purchase of medications there-in-country were so economical that an entire protocol for a person to go through treatment was 73 cents. 73 US cents, not even a US dollar.

**Jamie:** Oh, my God. Wow.

**Chris:** So we then called that the 73 Cents A Life Project because it was sort of like, at this level, and that's why even with our fundraising and stuff like that, we say, "You know, if you can just give \$1, that'll make a big difference. [chuckle] That's a big deal." So it's those kinds of things where then we can go back to our spreadsheets and pie charts, and things like that, and be able to say "Here's where... This is how we stretch a dollar." [laughter] We are able to through collaboration, through not being west-knows-best-know-it-all and telling who's in country how to do their job. Our job is to create tools and to do fundraising projects and things like that. Their job is to be good stewards and administrators of the funding that comes over and report back for us. That sort of a thing.

**Chris:** They had an issue awhile back of... They just... They had a problem with getting food, they needed grain. And they even gave us, Jamie, an accountability of how much the liters of petrol cost to drive the truck to go get the bags of grain. [chuckle] And it's sort of like stuff that we would just take for granted of just gassing the car kind of thing, that they're so resource poor that that was a big deal that they needed to have fuel, and it was... They were lucky that they had access to a vehicle. So the person was, "I'm gonna just let em' have the vehicle, and use the gas, and not replenish it." So it's those kinds of things. Again, we're very very smart.

**Jamie:** And they just voluntarily... They just decided... Did you ask them to report on that or they just voluntarily said, "We're gonna report on it."?

**Chris:** Totally them.

**Jamie:** Wow.

**Chris:** Yeah. Totally... And I think again that just speaks to our frontend job was having relationships with people and it wasn't... It's everybody we work with are basically, we feel are our friends. And we don't have the hubris that, unfortunately, I think other organizations... There's not as many and this is diminishing, but I sort of feel like you're a guest in somebody's house, and you bring them a gift, and they give you hospitality, and you don't say, "Hey, I think you should redo the carpet in here." And, "Hey, I think you should change the wallpaper, and rearrange the furniture." Yeah, you're a guest in somebody's house, so we really do the part that's part of our role and then we collaboratively work with them if they say, "Hey, we're thinking about changing the carpet, could you help us out with that?" "Sure, we can help you out with that."

**Jamie:** Yeah, I think that's fantastic because... And I think a lot of our listeners would like to hear that but I think that some may say if they are on the giving side, if they're may be a foundation, some may struggle with the organizations they work with and with measurement. And sometimes, it's a resources issue, they're giving to an organization that hardly has any people. And they're just lucky to get the job done, and then to go back and measure and... Or some don't have the mentality or some get push back, and then, of course, there are a bunch that are... They are measuring and they are doing it, and there is this great collaboration there. So you had a sort of gift there with these people who were very measurement-oriented, and very resource driven. Do you ever have a struggle with like, "We need to be measuring this"? Because you did mention clearly by showing the value of what was happening, you were able to get more money, you were able to continue funding, you were able to show people, "Yeah, 73 cents, this is what it gets you."

**Chris:** Right, and it's a tricky thing, Jamie. On the one hand, especially in the healthcare side of things, I couldn't have predicted to say, "Hey, guys. We need to fundraise this money because..." I mean, I could say, "Hey, we need to fundraise 'cause there's this problem," but I couldn't say, "For every dollar you give it's gonna create a protocol, treat X number of people or something like that." And part of in the healthcare side of things, some of the metrics are around issues that take awhile to bear fruit. If you think of childhood mortality rates and things like that. Being able to move the needle on even a small population. It could be measured in a couple of years. There might need to be an outlook or a time horizon that says... That kind of informs the donor that, "This is the goal, this is the expectation, and this is the timeline of when we're gonna be able to report back on that." If it's a group building a bridge or drilling a well, they can say, "Well, a well is gonna probably cost X number of dollars, and it's gonna take Y number of months." And people say "Okay, great. I'll do that and I'll check back with you in Y number of months and see how the well went," kind of a thing.

**Chris:** I think that part of it can be tricky but to your point too, there can be a... I think the measurement mentality, I mean obviously I'm biased, that's what my day job is but I think the measurement mentality can be cracked in a couple of different kinds of ways. Some creative ways is actually hooking up with health economists, or students that are in health economist kinds of programs, hooking up with students that are looking for a project in a school of public health. So a lot of times, and again, I'd be happy to make connections. University of Illinois at Chicago has a tremendous school of public health. Hopkins has a tremendous school of public health, there's a number of them at major universities around the country, that can at least guide people of how... What's the least costly, most scalable kind of outcomes measurements can we deploy or can we get a student to help us out pro bono on a project or something like that, along those lines as well.

**Chris:** But I would also just circle back and say deal with whoever your partner, your in country partner is, what's the appropriate time horizon to be able to report back and what's a realistic expectation of how far of whatever dollars, or pesos, or shillings or whatever it is that it might be, might a donor be able to expect back in return. And honestly, it can be bags of grain, it can be lives saved and people can extrapolate in the frontend of it but then certainly report back with any kind of data points that they have after the project, as the dollars have been spent and the seeds have been planted or people have been treated or what have you.

**Jamie:** Yeah, I think it is important to establish that upfront, I think that really is the key there. So what kinds of things are you seeing now as the big initiatives for your group? What are the most pressing issues and what are some of the things that you're working on right now?

**Chris:** We've been partnering... I've mentioned with Mission Works and we're continuing to kind of grow that out with being able to provide the fiscal intermediary services. And what those typically are for ore physical rehabilitative kinds of things in resource poor areas. Primarily, it's been in Central and South America but I believe that there's a movement afoot to try a couple of scalable projects in Africa. One of the things about those projects is that, there are some entities. Again, everybody doing good is great, and I'm not being critical of anybody wanting to help out anybody, but one of the things that I think is changing in this area is a sustainability aspect. One of the things that... You don't want somebody to sort of parachute in, patch people up and then say, "Hasta luego" and we're never gonna see you again, kind of a thing.

**Chris:** A lot of the stuff that we're working on with collaborative colleagues, as well as with other entities is the whole sustainability aspect. Again, just using Tanzania as an example, sometimes it's issues around development of their educational programs, sometimes it's issues of that it was really a bad weather year and crops are down and people are gonna start to have nutrition related kinds of illnesses. "So can we either back stop that with getting grain and food in, or can we... Are we gonna then expect a downstream kind of problem with marasmus and other kinds of nutritional... Malnutrition kinds of issues that are gonna have to be treated in the hospital?" That kind of sustainability and sort of developing as best we can, some kind of robustness to that are the key projects that we're working on these days.

**Jamie:** Okay, that sounds cool. A question comes to mind, how do you marry that up so that the two streams we were talking about here... You have sustainability, you're saying you don't want someone to just sort of parachute in and do something and hop on out, and then you have this measurement thing but you have this DIY thing, and so how does that level set? So if you're creating an environment that's for DIY, are you creating an environment that then is a bunch of people running around doing stuff that you can't measure, that they're parachuting in and then flying out? How do you marry that up with sustainability and everything else you were just kind of running through there?

**Chris:** Excellent big question. I think part of it is, from the DIY perspective someone has a specific... In those instances in our experiences it's been because something bad has happened. There's been a conflict area, there has been, I'm not kidding, a dam has broken so to speak kind of a thing, and there's a traumatic event, either man-made or nature made, that people are saying, "We've had this earthquake, we've had this tsunami, we've had this bad event." Whatever that is, "We've got refugees now that we didn't have before." Those all tend to be... In a weird way those are time by situational kinds of things. Those are time limited kinds of things.

**Chris:** So you help patch the dam, you help deal with the sequential cholera outbreak, you get the refugees ensconced in a better, safer area. You do whatever and then that job's done. It's not the same kind of scenario in which you've established a beachhead in Guatemala where they know that four times a year people are gonna come down and work with whatever kinds of musculoskeletal kinds of traumas that people have had since the last visit, or things that may be age related kinds of things that are going on with scoliosis or arthritis, or other kinds of things with people's joints, and bones and movement. For the latter of that, that's the sustainability kind of thing, that's where you don't parachute in and out, because those are chronic problems because that's how Mother Nature and people's lives work. When it's been a conflict zone or it's been an untoward, unique weather event, or dam burst or whatever. Those are the parachute in and parachute out kinds of things, because the situation gets patched up and fixed as opposed to more chronic kind of things. So that's how we distinguish those differences. I have seen organizations that will do the fly-in fly-out in the chronic situations, and that, in my personal opinion, is a problematic kind of thing. It creates a dependency on someone, and they ain't coming back, [chuckle] kind of a thing.

**Jamie:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Chris:** And it doesn't develop the sustainability or the resourcefulness of whoever those people are. It creates this really, in my opinion, bad kinda situation of an unrequited dependency that doesn't get reconciled, unless somebody pays attention to what's going on. So that's kind of how the difference is, with those kinds of things. And either which way, there're still measurable outcomes. There's the outcomes of, like, for example, my Guatemala example, you count how many patients were treated for the two weeks that you had a team there, and you keep track of those patients, and you can follow up with some of those same patients, their arthritic knee, four months later, maybe not with the same physical therapist but with someone that has been briefed about the people they're gonna be working with, so that there's that kind of continuity as well, too. Here in the United States, with all the resources we have, we have really horrible continuity [chuckle] of care ourselves in putting things together. So it really gets amplified in areas where providers, even if they're coming in a quasi-consistent way, let's say, quarterly, to the same clinic, or the same hospital, or the same site, or the same community, there can be systems, stateside to be organized to help do that, and that's been some of the projects we've been helping out with too, like virtual medical records, and things along those lines.

**Jamie:** Oh, that's pretty cool. And that leads me to another question. The UN sustainable development goals, or the global goals, do they end up being a guide for you at all? 'Cause those were coming to mind as you were talking about sustainability and that sometimes you can work on this small issue or you can try to keep lifting yourself up up up up up, to work on what's the root cause of that. And then also, as you were saying, how can we collaborate to become bigger to work on bigger problems? The UN is certainly pushing that forward. And then, as a part of that track, it ties into what you were just talking about, they have Impact 2030, which is an effort to get corporations to mobilize their workforces, to volunteer to make some progress towards these. And I think that there is this spoken about notion now that corporations are needed to step up. They

want to. They're needed to step up. They have the sort of power, the resources, the money, to do that. So what are your thoughts around all that?

**Chris:** Oh, gosh! Great integrative question! I guess, maybe to work backwards with answering it, I know we had done some work in Kigali, Rwanda, at a hospital there, and after our time there, one of the things that I sort of kept track about, kind of the goings-on and whatnot, one of the things I thought was really interesting was that, I believe it was Heineken Brewery, had a plant there, and one of the things that Heineken was doing was drilling wells or accessing water or whatever to make water, not just to create beer, but also to have purified drinking water available to people in the community. And they were also providing in-house healthcare services to people that were employees of Heineken and their families and things. So, I like that sort of a thing. We do consultations with a number of companies here in the United States where we provide on-site healthcare services and stuff, too. It's not a developing country unique kind of thing. It's a nice model. In other places I've heard Coca-Cola has done similar kinds of things of providing potable water, period, and free of charge and stuff because they were doing it anyway.

**Chris:** And there can be cons to that, too. You might not like sugary drinks. You might not like alcoholic drinks. There's the whole ethical question about that sort of thing. But I see companies having at least that mindset coming in and saying, "We're not just here for creating profits. We're part of the community. If we're gonna come here we're gonna be part of the community." And I think that, from my perspective, I think that's a good thing. As well as having companies provide people with time off, or like what ATI does, of helping offset the costs of that, and making it easy to be a volunteer, not making it a hassle to be a volunteer, or being terrified you're doing this good project for 10 days away someplace and what's going on back at work? "Am I gonna get in trouble 'cause I went on this thing," or whatever. So, I think, all the whole corporate part, totally a fan of, and I think it's gonna get more sophisticated and clever and innovative and whatnot, would be my crystal ball guess.

**Chris:** As far as the UN, and Millennium Goals and things like that, back when the Millennium Goals first came out, they were very aspirational. They still are, so to speak. And they're very hard to accomplish. That's what I think institutions like the United Nations and World Bank and World Health Organization, etcetera, are there for. They're big entities. They're big institutions. They've got a big place at the table, so to speak. They've got a big pulpit that they can use for good or bad. But I think for us, we are such a drop in the UN ocean, so to speak. It just reminds me, there is one of my favorite authors and people, this guy named William Easterly who's an economist at Columbia, and he did a book called "The White Man's Burden."

**Chris:** And that book was really sort of pivotal in my thinking when I was concocting this whole idea with the center and whatnot, that it was the power of the small project and the fact that a lot of times, entities like United Nations and World Banks and whatnots get to a certain point where there's such bureaucracy and politics and whatever, that it sometimes makes it sort of hard to do the work. And we're kind of on the opposite end of that in a William Easterly kind of perspective to say, "We're the power of the small project. We're the ones that'll be there to help the people either in-country that we already have partnerships with, or help those that wanna help those to make it easier for them to be able to provide that." So we're no competition. The UN does not need to worry about the Center for Global Initiatives.

**Jamie:** Right. Right. Right. Right.

**Chris:** And we don't count on the UN to kind of do anything that we're involved with. I did a year's stint as an NGO representative back in the late 90s, coincidentally enough, on sustainability. And I sort of have this love-hate relationship with the UN. I love the spirit of it, I love the goals, the things that it's done, the accomplishments it's been able to do. But the problems are that it's a big ship to steer and it's hard to kind of hit... We talked about outcomes and results. It's really sort of hard to hit any of the outcomes and results that they want, and part of that's by design, because like we said, they're aspirational kinds of goals. But I think, working from both ends, from the big ends with lots of dollars and lots of connections and lots of really, really smart people, and the small ends of John and Jane Q. Public, in a Chicago suburb that wants to do a project to help people out in rural Haiti, those are all good things and they're all, in my book, kind of equivalent. One

doesn't trump the other. They're all good people wanting to do good work at whatever level of scale, and hopefully at the end of the day there's benefits to whoever it is that they're wanting to work with and help out.

**Jamie:** Yeah. I think that the UN is putting a notion like that forward with the goals that if there's focus, at least... So if you have small projects, big projects, but if they're all focused on one of these goals then we will make progress towards them.

**Chris:** Yeah, I would agree with that too.

**Jamie:** Yeah. And I think they're all realizing that they can't do it alone and they need these other groups out there, and people like you, corporations, and right down to the individual level.

**Chris:** Yup.

**Jamie:** Which I think we're seeing a lot of so...

**Chris:** Well, and I think we hear this, too, on your podcast with your guests. The people that you interact with and stuff, they get that. And the nice thing is, is things don't feel to me today versus maybe a decade ago as discombobulated, disjointed, working at odds, sort of a thing. And I have no idea how that happened. [laughter] But it seems better than the chaos that it used to be, I'll tell you that. So that's a good thing.

**Jamie:** Well, and that's a great note to end on there, Chris. So I wanna thank you very much for joining us today.

**Chris:** Oh, it's been a pleasure, Jamie.

**Jamie:** It was... Yeah, great conversation. I look forward to continuing our dialogue. For our listeners, I hope you enjoyed this episode of Champions for Social Good. To learn more about Dr. Chris Stout and the Center for Global Initiatives, you can visit [centerforglobalinitiatives.org](http://centerforglobalinitiatives.org). You can also check out some of Chris's LinkedIn Influencer blogs on LinkedIn and just kind of search for those through there. You can follow Chris on Twitter @drchrisstout, and you can connect with him via [drchrisstout.com](http://drchrisstout.com). So lots of ways. I encourage you to go out there and interact. And don't forget to subscribe to our podcast so you don't miss an episode. And you can keep up with the conversation between episodes by following us on Twitter @jamienserino, @microedgellc and @blackbaud. Thank you for listening.