



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2017 WUN Conference

Thinking Differently:
Does Social Justice exist in the Y?
Should it?

Bob Gilbertson
YMCA of Greater Seattle President/CEO
WUN CEO Elect

Does Social Justice exist in the Y? Should it?



- The short answer is “yes” in some Ys, and “no” in others

Some U.S. Examples (not an exhaustive list)



- **Gang and Youth Violence Prevention:**
Chicago, San Francisco, Old Colony, Seattle, and a few others
- **Low-Income Housing:**
New York, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, and a few others
- **Child Welfare, Foster Care:**
Sarasota, Seattle, and a very few others
- **Drug & Alcohol Treatment and Mental Health:**
Seattle and a couple other YMCAs
- **Summer Learning Loss Prevention:** 25-40 YMCAs
- **Quality Early Learning:** 100+ YMCAs (Head Start-like)
- **New Immigrant Welcome Centers:** Houston, Toronto, Montreal, New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and others
- **Health Inequities:**
An increasing number of Ys working in this space, still too few
- **Open Resistance to Trump:** immigration, civil rights, war mongering, tax code changes, Ys in Sanctuary Cities

Membership in the 21st Century – North America



Question of Equity: Volume of Y membership serving the poor? The U.S. average is 15%.

Belief: The biggest single opportunity for the Ys in the U.S. is to serve more of the poor through membership.

The ugly truth: Ys in the U.S. are supporting inequity with membership levels at only 15%.

Philanthropy



- There is a business case for membership serving “those who need us the most”.
- There is a philanthropic case for much of the rest.
- There is also government support for many of the areas mentioned.

Thinking differently: The biggest opportunity for U.S. Ys in membership is to significantly grow the number of people “who need us the most” (the poor) in the ranks of membership.

Membership Model Change: Economic Integration



- There is value for members who are different to get to know each other.
- The Y is known for its egalitarian approach to building community.
- Big attraction to Millennials.
- Links to the creative class – Amazon example.
- May not work outside of larger cities and coastal cities.
- Is consistent with the American constitution, ideals, and dream.

Taking Action



- Y leadership must be bold, take risks, and commit to Social Justice and Social Change.
- Financial feasibility cannot be the strongest indicator for action.
- Institutional support will come from other sources if the right direction is taken.
- Take risks in 'bite-sized' trials.

Framework for Model Changes



Jim Collins Principles:

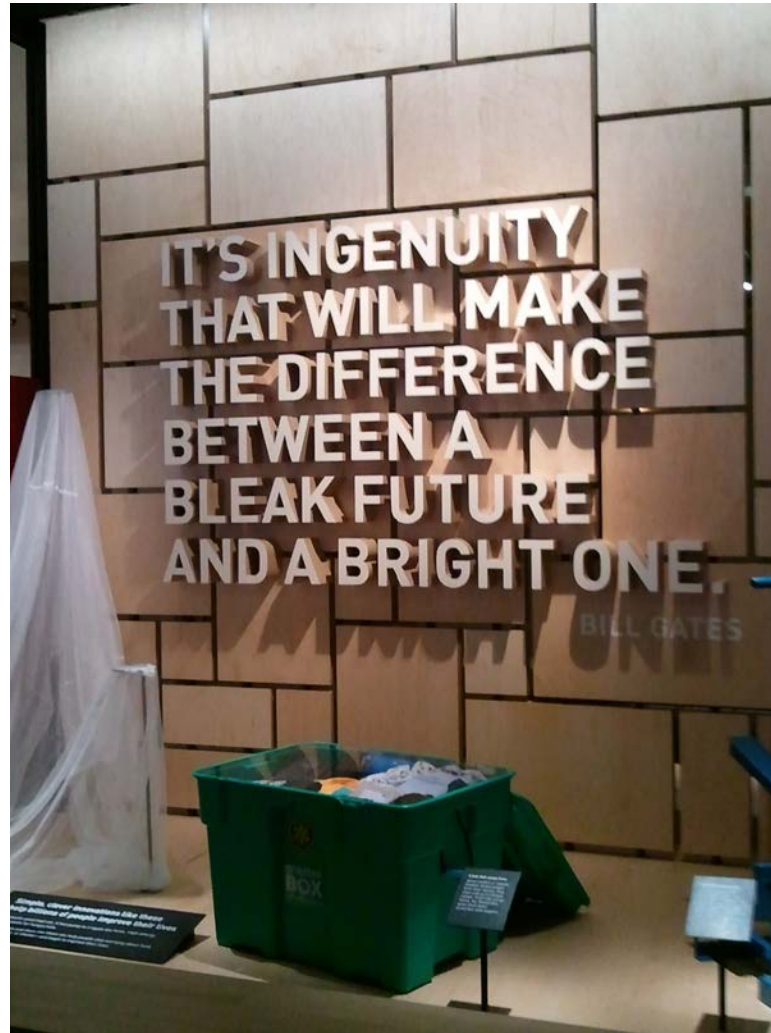
- Best in the world, uniqueness, differentiation
- Passion and inspirational work
- Sustainable model, economics

Skills for 21st Century Leadership



- See opportunities in everything.
- Identify uniqueness... Successful social entrepreneurs differentiate.
- Embrace change... It is life's inevitability.
- Appreciate the value of diverse teams... Advance rapidly.
- Take risk, try and fail rapidly, be resilient. The results will be the next best _____.
- Inspire and empower those around you.

Bill Gates:





Q&A

THANK YOU