

# A meeting between charity and business?

A Pari Dialogue with Dr. F. David Peat and others

10-13 September 2010

Dialoguers from the world of charity and the world of business—experts from across the globe—will be gathered at the Pari Center in the medieval village of Pari, Italy, to explore how these two worlds meet.

Development projects often struggle because underlying these initiatives is often a critical, unanswered question: What makes development work? Charity or business? Do we give, or do we invest? Opinions differ, and can be emotional. (For example: the white man's burden, W Easterley)

Really, the same question arises in business: Do we earn more by giving? In many cases, making money requires that we first give things away (Google is one of the most recognizable examples).

Where do these worlds meet? And how? With what possibilities? What results? And how can your better understanding of the intersection of these two worlds change existing economic systems, corporate for-profit objectives, as well as your vision and strategy on development?

Leading and supporting the transformations need to bring the world of charity and the world of business closer together can be daunting. This dialogue will also include exploration of how change can happen, using David Peat's "Gentle Actions" as a guide. (For more on Gentle Action, see David Peat's book by the same name and online materials at <http://www.csh.umn.edu/wsh/gentleaction/home.html>).

Tentative Timetable

**Friday September 10.** Dialoguers arrive, welcome and dinner. Introduction to the dialogue.

On the following days – **Saturday September 11 and Sunday September 12** – there will be full day and evening sessions

**Monday September 13** Dialoguers leave in the morning

The cost of participation in the dialogue will be 1,500 Euros and will include all meals and accommodation, starting with dinner on 10 September and ending with breakfast on 13 September. To ensure a place in the course a non-refundable deposit of 200 Euros is required.

For more information on **Pari Dialogues**, see the attached PDF, and please write to: [info@paricenter.com](mailto:info@paricenter.com)  
[www.paricenter.com](http://www.paricenter.com)

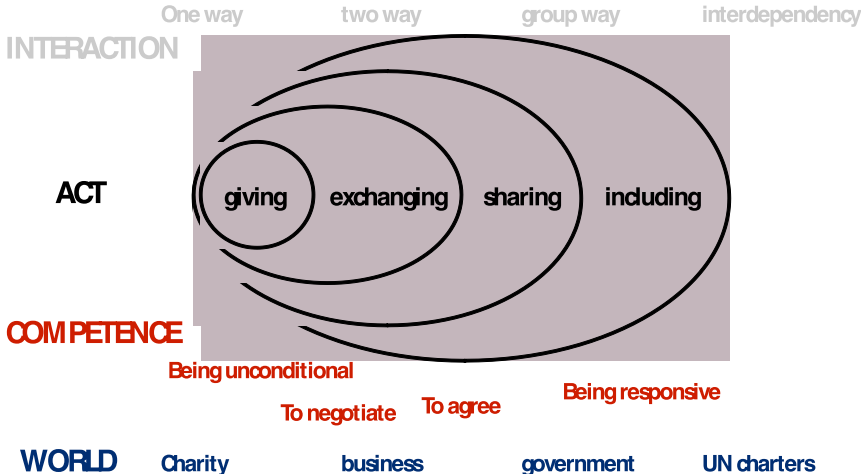
**Different worlds**

Pure charity is about giving. It’s about abundance.

Economic principles are based on reciprocity and scarcity.

We tend to divide our world in different sub-worlds all having their own rules and values...all adding to different parts of the whole. From where we are now, the insight emerges that connecting these worlds might be beneficial for each of them and for the whole. Can we smudge the lines separating the world of philanthropy and the world of business?

**Ordes of collaboration**



**The quest**

How do we free these acts, interactions and competences—in the world of business and the world of charity— from captivity within their divided worlds? And how do we build interdependent systems in which business and charity can co-exist in meaningful and beneficial ways for each part and for the whole?

**The Meeting**

- How can the world of business and the world of charity meet and learn from each other?
- What are, if any, the differences in intentions? Do these differences matter? Will the different systems evolve to connected systems despite of the differences in intention?

- Is there a hard line between the worlds of charity and business in terms of energy distribution? For individuals, creative energy is “sparked” in giving. Is giving and receiving one action: Energy given: Energy received?

### **What might happen?**

The current crises (climate, economic and social) give us the opportunity and incentive to reach deeply into the dialogue needed to figure out:

- What responsibilities companies, governments and voluntary organizations need/want to take in leading us out of these crises? Who wants to have their hands on the steering wheel guiding responsive change?
- How to design, prioritize and implement strategies that can respond to the impacts of these crises in communities? How do any of us understand what is really valued by citizens in the community?
- Ways to measure the progress of this leadership and these strategies, knowing that some community-held values cannot be measured in financial terms?

Steps have been taken in this direction. What can we learn from social venture capital, social entrepreneurialism and other strategies that attempt to combine the world of business and the world of charity? And, how can we go further?

Another perspective the meeting between business and charity can stimulate is better understanding of the differences in paradigms between the worlds they operate in: Africa next to the West, East meeting West, Africa meeting the East. Maybe the combination of charity and business bring us a perspective in economics and business that more worlds can relate to, and more dimensions (body, heart, mind and soul) can be a part of.

### **How to lead transformational change**

As a champion of these types of transformation, you need supports too. To help you move forward with new ideas in your day-to-day world, David Peat will introduce the themes of Gentle Action. This dialogue can explore the ways that you can bring about positive, sustainable change in the real world.