

Adjacent opportunities (19.2)

Emergent aventura extraordinaire

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When Karen Tse invited my wife, Laura, and me to work with her world-class social entrepreneurial organization, International Bridges to Justice (IBJ), as part of our Creating Good Work Initiative, we were truly honored. It was not just that the work IBJ was doing to end the use of torture as an investigative tool had been heralded far and wide as a hallmark of humanity. It was also the emergent impact it had on the lives of millions who would inadvertently become ensnared in a government's willingness to sacrifice its humanity for expediency. It is a thought worth the reflection.

During the final days of our nearly month-long International Bridges to Justice journey, our *Aventura Extraordinaire*, on the banks of Lake Geneva, Switzerland, my mind was blown by the enormity of this effort Laura, and I had advertently stepped into. I had a feel for the work being done by IBJ but, after our few weeks with them, that feeling had become tangible and transporting. I had not just been moved by the experience, I had been taken to someplace beyond what I had ever envisioned. It's a place I love to be.

Ending torture as an investigative tool is not inconsequential work. Because of its success, IBJ has mixed all the ingredients necessary to bring about a cultural shift for future generations. Working in 42 countries, this is pragmatic labor that is tectonically shifting the continental thinking of those believing in geographic maps.

Unfortunately, the solidity of inconceivability ravages the possible. It is this unwillingness to see beyond what we think, now, that keeps us from ending suffering and shifting the world in which we live. That much is clear from the work being done here which is innovative, bleeding-edge and visionary.

This is not meant as a condemnation of those comfortable with the world as it currently exists. Rather I find it to be a personal challenge to that comfort. A personal choice to see that comfort as being an example of my own intransigence to what feels inconceivable, but which actually is quite fluid and constantly shifting. An open heart to the adjacent and possible.

By recognizing that fluidity, I find myself eager to remix the formula, reformulate the ingredients into a porridge that is not only healthy and wholesome, but far more easily consumable by those who haven't had the benefit of (not to mix food metaphors too badly), drinking the Koolaid. I guess I haven't just had a sip of IBJ, but have taken the full baptismal dip. Come on in. The temperature is just heating up.

Our weeks here were filled with finishing up a number of million dollar proposals: one to the Finnish government dealing with justice rights for LGBTI and women and children, another for the folks at TED talks, still another for the Skoll/Sundance Stories of Change opportunity. Giving meditation instruction to all the interns and employees and then making the connection to situational and environmental awareness to those IBJers heading into dangerous locations. And finally launching one of my original intents for making this trip, to interview about 20 of IBJ's 59 leading JusticeMakers located in those 42 countries around the world, from Boliva to Russia to Indonesia, in which they are having an impact.

This work to end torture as an investigative tool requires a 24/7 focus. This is evident in the midnight phone calls from founder Karen Tse upon her arrival in Myanmar, which had already been reinforced by the daily calls from her while on a week's well-deserved vacation. Her singular attention somehow doesn't relax on a beachside resort. I'm not sure it can when you realize that there are people around the world who have no other champion other than IBJ. If this work doesn't get done, think of all the pain and suffering that will continue and continue and continue. Finding an end to this human catastrophe is possible, but the same level of thinking that got us here, ain't going to dig us out. But a deeper level of interaction among hearts may.

Within the Buddhist perspective, heart and mind are the same, so what emerges out of an interaction of hearts that are ready for the meeting. Creating opportunities for this deeper level of interconnection is surprisingly part of IBJ's answer. In addition to their on-going and highly successful ground work, IBJ is in the process of building the *JusticeHub*. According to the TED Prize documents being submitted by IBJ, Karen was a finalist two years ago, *JusticeHub* is an integrated platform for the exchange of global justice solutions. By interconnecting the worldwide justice community, *JusticeHub* will enable real-time information-gathering and emergent collaboration on both the local and global scale. Part Wikipedia, part GitHub, connecting people to create and improve open-source software, *JusticeHub* serves as a central nervous system for a vital, interactive ecosystem of justice. The *JusticeHub* is the great emergent "force multiplier" affording efficiency and effectiveness in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)16, which addresses peace and justice.

Ah, UN SDG 16. IBJ's journey is not without its rewards; in 2015, the UN made justice rights one of its global Sustainable Development Goals, in part because of IBJ's influence. This goal speaks directly to justice rights in countries from Asia to the Americas, and challenges transgressors to restore and honor them. The movement IBJ launched 17 years ago, is now being led

globally by this intrepid group of people holed up in these cramped offices located in one of Geneva's more colorful neighborhoods. To be clear, in this famously multi-ethnic city, colorful has everything to do with ambiance and nothing to do with that multi-ethnicity.

Which, to a certain extent, describes IBJ's approach to justice. It is for everyone, not just those who can afford it. If you believe that providing access to justice and ending torture as an investigative tool is important, IBJ can always use your financial support – www.ibg.org. But it can also use your willingness to act.

Catalyzing good work is what Laura and I intended when we launched our Creating Good Work Initiative. If you feel so moved to benefit others then get up and act. Complacency only allows for injustice to accrue. It's part of the reason why we're up against these situations today. We've gotten way too comfortable in our own little cocoons to want to risk being open to the plight of others.

There are few more satisfying things to do with this life than being of benefit to others. There are lots of opportunities to do so, plenty of need that can benefit from the knowledge, expertise and wisdom that you possess. And the profound effect that can emerge from taking that action is just one step away from where you sit right now.

We learned a tremendous amount from this Aventura Extrodinaire. We couldn't be more appreciative of the generosity of those who helped us with our crowdfunding effort to make it here. That deep appreciation also extends to the open welcome and amazing work of those here at IBJ. Creating Good Work is something we can all choose to do. The people here at IBJ know that and are acting on it. May their work be an inspiration for others to step directly into the world and meet it with their open hearts.



Fig. 1: An emergent aventura extraordinaire