



## **Social Enterprise and Other Funding Innovations**

The Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas (FWCC SoA) intends to find new sources of funding to sustain the staffing and programs necessary to advance our mission, in alignment with the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (Goal 3).

We are inspired by other faith-based organizations that have sponsored social enterprise projects as a means to increase their visibility, build important relationships within and between constituent groups, and generate revenue by offering goods or services to their membership and to the larger community. The term “social enterprise” refers to a commercial venture that generates income while equitably and ethically advancing other social, environmental, or cultural objectives.

Examples from initial brainstorming of potential SoA projects include North American distribution of fair-trade coffee grown by Honduran Quaker coffee producers and creation of a virtual Spanish and English language school staffed by Friends as instructors.

We intend to observe the following guidelines in considering other potential SoA projects:

**Friends Testimonies:** our ultimate goal is to successfully establish new sources of funding for FWCC SoA, but only in keeping with Friends testimonies. A project should have the effect of both generating income for FWCC operations *and* enhancing the livelihood of local producers or service providers.

**Create Partnerships:** partnering with an existing enterprise is preferable to starting a new project. While we should be open to God’s leading as we pursue all possibilities, we should be alert to opportunities where FWCC’s involvement would expand the market for a good or service while enhancing the business success of an existing, like-minded entity.

**Due Diligence and Feasibility Study:** a detailed business plan with pro-forma financial statements will be created for any serious project proposals. Plans should be submitted for further review to one of several organization offering technical assistance and support to social enterprise projects (e.g., Ashoka, the Social Enterprise Institute, and the Wharton Program for Social Impact).

In addition to social enterprise, we should strengthen our traditional, donor-focused fundraising by implementing the following values:

**Concrete:** making it possible for friends to contribute directly to certain programs. For example, we might publicize what it costs for a Friend to travel in ministry in the Visitation Program, and allow Friends to contribute to a particular individual. This connection of donors to a specific outcome is one of the strengths of funding mechanisms such as Kickstarter ([www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)).

**Horizontal:** creating sister meeting relationships that might include financial assistance for FWCC participation, travel, and Quaker Youth Pilgrimage activities. For example, FWCC SoA could set a target for establishing a sister meeting relationship between 100 Monthly Meetings in the US and Canada with 100 Meetings in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America. The thrust

would be that these "sisters" would be helping one another, in concrete ways, to draw closer together. At the same time, this program would also be helping all participants to better understand the work of FWCC SoA by means of direct experience.

**Friends are needed to bring their expertise and excitement in service on a small committee that will research and discern possibilities, develop and vet a business plan, and raise initial capital to begin a pilot social enterprise project in 2015.**