


an economy — especially into the hands of women — builds families and gives women a voice in their communities. Purely social ventures just won't work, Lajeunesse maintains. People need a sense of ownership, of partnership and revenue, for an effort to be successful.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Recognizing that social entrepreneurship is a growing segment of the business world, Rollins is increasing its related offerings. Over the past year, the college presented a speaker series that brought in leading experts to discuss education, sustainable agriculture, microfinance, and other elements of social entrepreneurship. Rollins also has active partnerships with global social entrepreneurship pioneers, such as Ashoka, which invited a select group of students, faculty, and administrators to join those of other top educational institutions at a recent retreat at Duke University.

The college is currently working toward establishing an official institute that is dedicated to social entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprise, and will serve students as well as the community by providing curricular education supplemented by co-curricular experiences, including conferences, speakers' series, seminars, internships, community outreach, networking, and research.

"There are so many students here who want to use their education and business savvy to do something real, to help people," says Garton. "We are actively doing something locally to raise awareness and expertise of social entrepreneurship."

The move toward social entrepreneurship and the solutions it seeks to provide boil down to this: significant change in this world requires money. Social entrepreneurship begins where social programs and charitable efforts often fall short, with knowledgeable business leaders recognizing that sustainable profit is key to initiating long-term societal change. 

» LOCAL LEADERS WITH GLOBAL REACH



PROYECTO TITÍ (2)

While they don't fit the standard definition of social entrepreneurs, there are other initiatives that embrace some of the movement's concepts, bringing positive change to our local community, as well as to other nations.

Long-term conservation success involves science as well as "community programs that involve local people in culturally relevant, action-based programs," says Dr. Anne Savage. A senior conservation biologist at Disney's Orlando-based Animal Kingdom, Savage is the founder of Proyecto Tití, an organization dedicated to protecting endangered cotton-top tamarins, a primate found only in Colombia.

When a colleague and his wife were hanging around the Proyecto Tití office with her one day, the wife started looking for things to crochet. She used an old cassette tape for starters, then Savage spied some plastic bags. What if they were cut into strips? The light bulb went on. If local women could make *mochilas* — a multi-purpose carry-all bag common to Colombia — out of plastic bags, they would have opportunities for employment as well as funding for Proyecto Tití, and what would otherwise be harmful litter would be recycled into something useful.



The enterprise started with about 15 women and now has more than 300. Workers are paid by the piece, and their earnings enable some of them to buy homes for their families. Their handmade "eco-mochilas" are sold in the country, on Proyecto Tití's website, and at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

Disney isn't the only example of a large local company helping to make a difference. Approximately 30 percent of Rosen Hotels & Resorts' employees are from Haiti or are of Haitian descent — a fact that owner Harris Rosen takes to heart. Not only does the company offer language development and continuing education programs to its associates, but Rosen also has been spearheading efforts to improve Haiti's quality of life for more than a decade. His Harris Rosen Foundation has provided residents with food, water filtration systems, and educational and medical supplies. Its latest effort, Relief-Rebuild-Sustain, was established in response to the earthquake that devastated the nation last year. A major component of the program is the Little Haiti House project, an effort to provide affordable, sustainable prefab housing to victims of the disaster.