

Development of the HUB Network

HUB Developmental Process: Stage 1

The HUB and The People that Make it

The Hub developmental process starts by choosing a location, central to a specific target community, preferably possessing simple amenities such as basic electricity, water and internet services, and easy access by the surrounding community. The selected communities are selected due to connections made through research into local artists and art based community activities. There may be cases in which some of these basic requirements cannot be met which does not stop a HUB from being developed. HUB is a highly flexible and malleable mechanism, which is adapted to any surrounding, being composed primarily of its members and governing principles. G.A.I.A will have the means and specialists necessary to develop HUBs in any and all situations and environments as needed. There is always room for growth, but small and simple beginnings will never be despised. In some areas it might be necessary to build from scratch to meet the required local needs.

The new location will possess the simple necessities required to give opportunities for willing local artists to begin in this initial developmental process by bringing their already created traditional art to the table to be documented and stored according to G.A.I.A's documentation, storage and organizational standards.* These local artists will have been selected, and given the vision and importance of what they are engaging in, and how it will benefit their own personal income, and that of their family, village, community and the overall social and economic wellbeing of their whole culture now and for future generations. These first essential members will be each HUB's "nucleus" and foundation.

The initial art products, after being properly documented will be uploaded to G.A.I.A's data center and forwarded to G.A.I.A's eCommerce team* to be uploaded on the different eCommerce platforms* that are used for G.A.I.A to market and sell these items on the international eCommerce market. This will be in accordance to and in agreement between G.A.I.A and the artists as far as total selling price, and percentage to be directed back towards the hub of each sale. Of course this initial process will highly favor the individual artist with the profits for these first precious and christening products of the infant and developing HUB. The artists will be paid out for each sale on a periodic payout schedule, and what is kept for the local HUB goes into the local HUB account* for future local development and resource purposes, needs and community projects. Each local HUB account's proceeds stay within the local jurisdiction of each HUB to be used at the discretion and agreement of each local HUB's membership.*

This initial process could take on a few different formats. Depending on funding, resources and the needs of each community it could be seen fit that G.A.I.A would initially purchase all the art products brought to the table for the needs of the individual artists and their families. This could secure these first products to start off the marketing and advertising process for the specific HUB. This kind of step could alleviate any stress or mistrust of the first members and free them up to create for the HUB and also speak well to the surrounding communities about the local HUB. This step would also give an opportunity to teach the new members about the workings of their HUB, allowing opportunity to vote on topics such as profit allocation and pooling for purchase of new materials for future art projects. Also allowing them to see the direct effects of the processes within as each receives their own personal dues, and get to see increase in the collective bank of their HUB. Within all this we would be able to select keen individuals and possibly begin to train those who could manage different areas of the HUB on a local level.

The question remains as to how to treat payment and profit within each community. It is conceivable at some point that by bringing all the art production into a systematic flow in which the HUB is the provider and merchant for everything that is required for the production and sale of the products, and that this should allow for an openness for the collective members to share profits in the form of some sort of wage. This wage could be paid by hourly rate so that there are not “free loaders” which could develop in the HUB. Another alternative payment could be piece wages, in which each artist makes a wage based on units produced. This would also ensure that there are not supper artists who take all the profits because of their skill, or more favored style. All this would be to engender a true sense of cooperative involvement and sharing which should be very encouraging to each community.

G.A.I.A's Peripheral Support To Hub

Each HUB will require a corresponding “in town” or close to warehouse for secure storage of arts produced and materials to be used. This location will be for purposes of security and shipping and receiving and is owned and run by G.A.I.A. The warehouse will also require an onsite administrative office and some sort of onsite or nearby safe and simple accommodation for G.A.I.A administration personnel. Each HUB will have its own simple onsite office and small intermittent storage as well which will be used to interface with G.A.I.A's town office and warehouse.

It is important to mention here that G.A.I.A in its unique form, differing from other cooperative structures, will always maintain an overall supportive presence on many different fronts within, and covering each and every HUB's needs. This is seen as a vital factor of the utmost potential and sustained success and vitality of every HUB, which has shown to have lacked in many other cooperative structures.

In the well researched document, [“Co-operatives and poverty reduction: Evidence from Sri Lanka and Tanzania”](#), By Johnston Birchall and Richard Simmons, it is noted from the

experience of managers and common members of the researched cooperatives that a major disadvantage for standard cooperatives is a lack of support from external sources.

“These financial advantages are all internal to the organisation. By contrast, the biggest financial disadvantage was external to the organisation – co-operatives across all four sectors in our two case study countries told us that a lack of financial backing was problematic. External assistance would be welcomed, although most were not looking for free handouts, just greater access to loan finance. Help was also needed with: increasing capacity to meet demand for training; financing of capital projects; and providing skills and technical resources. **There was a felt lack of marketing support; there are limits to the amount of income that can be generated from local markets, and access to new markets were needed.**”

What has been documented from situations showing this lack of external support has been that cooperative movements tend to reach out to governments and other authoritative organizations, which does not seem to guarantee the success of these structures. The document also goes on to explain.

“Another external disadvantage is the relationship with government. Some respondents complained that government undermines the self-responsibility of co-operative members through paternalism, undermines democracy and accountability through political interference, and weakens members’ commitment through damaging their sense of ownership of their co-operative. Lack of trust arises from poorly governed co-operatives or corrupt co-operative leaders. In one sense the government is too intrusive in the co-operative’s affairs, and in the other it could be argued to be too lax in regulating cooperatives that are being run badly. Poor internal governance also led to a reputation for inflexibility; a co-operative respondents were asking for help in designing structures for good governance, and help in improving co-operative leadership.”

G.A.I.A’s aim is not only to guide each HUB and its members to growth and success, but as well to continually offer support and funding however possible to each and every HUB. As part of G.A.I.A’s commitment, no HUB will ever lack a personal representative from G.A.I.A’s own members, as a member of its own local HUB, whether on site or remote. Each HUB will always have access to G.A.I.A through this representative and also through other communication methods established for the purposes of expressing the needs of the HUB which cannot be met strictly by internal means.

Also as part of G.A.I.A’s commitment is the continual drive to research and solicit philanthropic support on behalf of its network of HUB’s, to aid in the development of new HUB’s, and to allocate towards localized community projects and support submitted by existing HUB’s.

Also G.A.I.A's primary role will be to continually pour its energy and effort into the marketing and advertising of each HUB's products on a global and international marketplace. G.A.I.A will always be searching its network to ensure each HUB is performing at peak potential by finding ways to interface and collaborate with other HUB's to ensure a top level of synergistic activity⁴. G.A.I.A's effectiveness in providing this usually lacking means of support is in that it has no political agenda or government attachment. Its nature is as a charity and is not out for profits for itself. G.A.I.A's only motive and directive is to help alleviate poverty and unlock the binding hold it has upon each community it involves itself with.

HUB Developmental process: Stage 2

The second stage of a HUB's developmental process will be in growing its membership, thereby strengthening each HUB's local member support and increasing its potential and mobility by providing a usable and saleable pool of resources. Together the nucleus members of the new HUB and G.A.I.A will continue to search out more willing local artisans to receive the vision of the HUB and join in its membership.

Here is where the collective membership of the HUB will begin to take its true formation, as any locally available resource from the collected voluntary members will be pooled together coupled with a matching, or greater if deemed necessary, donation from G.A.I.A to supply these artists with what is going to be required to start production of new products to be entered into G.A.I.A's marketing network stream, and start generating income for the local HUB and its members.

G.A.I.A's matching donation will be highly valued as a very important step as it will help create a cooperative cohesion between its members and G.A.I.A. This display of external support will engender the trust needed to allow for its members to voluntarily pool their resources together for the common production of goods, and to give tangible confirmation that they are not merely an internally isolated entity left to fend for themselves, but that they are being brooded over by G.A.I.A in its infancy and beyond.

HUB Developmental Process: Stage 3

At this point the HUB is put on the map of G.A.I.A's global network and becomes a G.A.I.A recognized PPOI⁵. As seen in many cooperative and similar business structures in poverty stricken regions, there is no ability to see or be seen, beyond the tiny sphere of its locality's impoverished situation. This in itself is a setback and frustrating poverty trap. In this day and age successful business is reliant on global and international exposure. If a business is strictly dependent on the local commerce of an impoverished population, then it can only marginally skip along that poverty stricken pool, and only until its weak momentum ceases.

⁴ **Synergy** is an interaction or cooperation giving rise to a whole that is greater than the simple sum of its parts. The term *synergy* comes from the [Attic Greek](#) word [συνεργία](#) *synergia*^[1] from *synergos*, [συνεργός](#), meaning "working together".

⁵ . Philanthropic Point of Interest

Again, as presented in the above mentioned document [“Co-operatives and poverty reduction: Evidence from Sri Lanka and Tanzania”, By Johnston Birchall and Richard Simmons”](#)

Many co-operatives realised that they could not do everything on their own. Indeed, 97% of co-operatives in Sri Lanka and 94% in Tanzania said that they now needed outside help in order to raise their members’ incomes significantly further. Hence, while their overriding focus was on self-help and mutual aid, their experience also told them that there are limits to what they can achieve, stemming from factors co-operatives can themselves do little about. In their answers there was often a tone of frustration that their entrepreneurial spirit faces these constraints. Hence, there was a clear focus on building new relationships and co-operation with other actors such as government, donors, NGOs and the private sector, in order to better meet their members’ needs. We believe this constitutes a clear agenda from the perspective of the primary co-operative societies; it is up to governments and donors to respond.

G.A.I.A curbs these potential traps and above mentioned concerns, as its HUB’s and members are taken care of in the way of being made visible and available to a much larger sphere of support from an external philanthropic support network, and the burden of such solicitation not falling on a HUB’s membership but on G.A.I.A. This will allow each and every HUB to remain focused locally, and give security to forge forward with their local endeavours in creating their saleable arts.

As a recognized PPOI, the established HUB is entered into a well researched, marketed and advertised global network of not only commerce opportunities, but also a vast network of collected Philanthropic interest and support. Every PPOI will appear on an extensively researched, maintained and documented list of recipients for philanthropic needs requiring donation and support. Each HUB’s needs, cultural identity, members, beliefs, its successes and failures and especially its collective hopes and aspirations are made clearly aware to an international collection of philanthropic supporters and sympathizers.

As essential to G.A.I.A’s fundamental drive, we will always devote ourselves in actively updating and maintaining the list of PPOI’s, and as well adding to the network of potential philanthropic donors. This level of G.A.I.A’s operating will be our main employment and endeavour, continually matching philanthropic support with the in need communities under its care.

This key factor in G.A.I.A’s charity networking will allow each HUB a mobility unattainable otherwise to help with community upgrades, infrastructure implementation such as clean water electricity, schools, and shelter as well as supporting the growth of the local business of the HUB in its many different levels.

HUB Developmental Process: Stage 4 -Securing the future

There is an alarming and horribly menacing poverty trap which occurs regularly in a majority of poverty stricken populations, especially in the 3rd world amongst indigenous populations, these are known as... Criminology traps:

“Youths without access to useful education and who see little future in legitimate work are drawn to gang membership and other cultures of criminality. Emotional scars from the experience of violence reinforce this trend.

The resulting fights, thefts and criminal activities then compound the community’s poverty trap by destroying assets, diverting resources to provide for personal and property security — and even taking the lives of able-bodied young men. Most of the victims are innocent and most are poor. Worsening social and economic conditions draw more people into criminality, a vicious circle that reinforces poverty.”⁶

This worrisome trap necessitates with emergence this next vital step in securing the development of an emerging HUB. As the new members are brought into the HUB and their wares added to the pool, we look for emerging teachers and role models for these at risk youth, who given no other opportunity would most likely turn to these dark alternate paths. The talented, and seen as responsible members will be looked to and supported to start teaching selected, willing youth from the local community to engage in the traditional art form and production of their culture and ancestors. This step will connect at-risk youth deeper into their indigenous culture, giving them a net of support amongst their elders and role models. It will give them something to live for and be proud of. In time this process would look to promote these emerging, trained youth artists into the next role models and teachers for future youth of the surrounding community, always creating a positive new membership, and ensuring positive generational growth into the HUB.

⁶ <https://www.theglobalist.com/poverty-traps-global-development/>