

# Re:Action Catalyst Foundation Newsletter

January 2009

As we approach the end of our first full year of operations Catalyst wanted to take this time to share with all our partners, friends, guides, and stakeholders some of our story to date and a little of how we imagine the future. Enjoy.

FAQs: Things we've been asked more than once this year...

1. What is Catalyst all about?

We are a leadership organization that is motivated by a desire to see lives transformed, particularly the lives of those living on less than one dollar a day around the world. We believe in the potential of nonprofit, economically sustainable models guided by developing leaders to take action on their dreams and bring about meaningful change.

2. Is Catalyst registered as a charitable foundation in Canada?

Not at this time. Because we direct our funding only to registered Canadian charities and don't maintain a large trust fund we are able to do all of our work without the costs or restrictions of registering.

3. What does Catalyst actually do?

We have several aspects to our efforts. Funding of Canadian nonprofits through strategic partnerships and one-time encouragement grants, mentoring of a select group of nonprofit leaders, scholarships to graduating students through the Halton Learning Foundation, our School Leadership Program for high schools, and both formal and informal consulting with a variety of organizations keep us both busy and constantly learning.

4. How do we apply for Catalyst funding?

Our next funding cycle won't be until the second quarter of 2009. In February we will post criteria and process on our updated website. In the meantime please [contact our Director](#) for an initial discussion exploring compatibility.

5. Does Catalyst support church-based projects?

Not at this time. We support our own churches with time, energy, and resources; but are not seeking partnership with churches or church movements.



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### Some things we've learned so far:

The learning curve for Catalyst has been very steep. Along the way we've picked up a lot that will inform us into the future. For example:

-Clarity: Being as explicit as possible in our priorities and agreements saves us and others a lot of time and bother.

-Directness: We've received very positive feedback when we've been up front about the likelihood of partnerships, particularly when we've said no and discouraged what would have been an unsuccessful application.

-Professionalism: The nonprofit leaders we interact with are not only passionate and committed; and most of them are highly skilled and developing.

-Strategy: There are excellent resources available to organizations willing to engage effectively in exploring their future. More groups should use them.

-Efficiency: Leaders are busy. Anything we can do to maximize their time is worthwhile.

### 2008 Highlights

- Ø -Ten days in the Dominican Republic with [Medical Ministry International](#)
- Ø -The first cohorts of our [Mentoring](#) and High School Leadership programs
- Ø -Learning from [Bridgeway](#)
- Ø -Being able to work with old friends like Stuart Taylor at [International Development Enterprises](#)
- Ø -Doing strategic work with [Micah House](#) through [World Vision Canada](#)
- Ø -The [FreeForm](#) launch event
- Ø -Completing our first funding cycle
- Ø -Finding so much common ground with [Launch](#), [Arrow](#), and [Next Level](#) Leadership People
- Ø -Planning site visits to see clients of [Opportunity International](#) and [IDE](#) in Latin America

### Some of our favourites:

Books: [Out Of Poverty](#) by [Paul Polak](#) and [A Billion Bootstraps](#) by [Philip Smith and Eric Thurman](#). These have become "fingertip" books for us as we seek to understand how to do something useful to reduce poverty globally. Excellent.

[The Imperfect Board Member](#) by [Jim Brown](#) taught us the importance of effective board leadership, and why it is so rare. Strive also has an excellent e-newsletter.

Blogs: In addition to [our own](#), there is great stuff from: [Mark Petersen](#), [Seth Godin](#), [Peter Brinckerhoff](#), [Al Hsu](#), [The Gathering](#), and [New Voices of Philanthropy](#)

Podcasts: Check out [Catalyst](#) (no relation), [Andy Stanley](#), and [Leadership Summit](#).

### Coming in 2009!

Revised Website, Clear Strategic Priorities, our Halton Scholarship program, the first Catalyst Gather, a series of board development teleseminars with Strive CCCC, furthering our high school leadership program, and lots more.