

Fundraising Script – Kouraj Design

I am here today to ask for your help. But before I do that, I want to tell you the story of how I came to be here.

The very first thing that happened was this: I met and fell in love with a beautiful Haitian woman. Before too long, I was father to two remarkable half-Haitian children. I lived in New York City with my wife and my family. XXXX studied to complete her PHD, as did I while working for XXXXX.

And then one horrible day, Haiti, my wife's homeland and a place I had learned to love through her, was devastated by an earthquake. Our family wanted to do something to help. But what?

Before too long we decided to travel to Haiti to check in on family and do a needs analysis. Our goal was to find projects on the ground that needed help. We would leverage our contacts within the NYU community and a few real, practical, and life-sustaining things would happen – NYU mechanical engineers could draw plans for bridges, NYU geologists could find water, students could build houses. The possibilities were endless.

When we landed, we went to work. We talked to people and organizations. We interviewed women and men and NGO workers. Pretty much everyone said the same thing over and over again: Thank you so much, but we don't need a big idea right now. We just need a job. But what can you do, we asked the women. We can sew, they said. We make beautiful things, even here, surrounded by chaos. Get us some material, a sewing machine and a safe place to work, and we will make beautiful things for you to sell in American. That's what we want, they said. We want to work and thrive, and support our children and families, by doing what we do well. Then we will thrive. Our community will thrive. Things will get better. But we must work.

And so we looked at each other. And then we looked at our new and remarkable friends. And we said OK. We will help you create a workshop where you will

create beautiful things, and we will sell them. All the money made will support you, the women workers. We will help you create something irreplaceable: A livelihood and with it, a new future.

Last year my wife and I donated \$10,000 to get Koura Design off the ground. I won a NYU Reynolds/John Wood fellowship in Social Entrepreneurship and gained insight into building social good organizations from the ground up. And today we have space, and sewing machines and 15 very special women making bags. New York City professionals have donated their bag design skills, their graphic design and web skills, their marketing and copy skills and their business smarts, to make the women's dream a reality. But now we need more.

- We need a generator so we can keep working when the power goes out.
- We need better sales strategies
- We need to build an effective web site that sells bags.
- The designer and I need to travel to Haiti six times a year to adapt designs, mentor the women, and monitor the organization's growth.
- We need to buy fabric from Haitian suppliers, so we can control the look of our products rather than depending on donated material as we do now, and also to support another local Haitian business.
- We need better marketing materials for our products.
- We must prove this local model works so the women can open more workshops.

This is a social good start-up. I am so committed to this cause, I have left my full-time job to get this off the ground and thriving. But now we need real help.

I am here today to ask you to be a part of this very simple idea by making a donation that will get Kouraj Design off the ground, and change these women's lives and the lives of their families forever. A start-up donation from you will help them rebuild homes, educate their children, imagine a future, rebuild their self-worth and pride. It will nurture hope and the power of creativity and help us prove once more that it takes just a little bit of good will to rewrite the world.

\$10,000 buys the future for real women and their families. Will you help?

