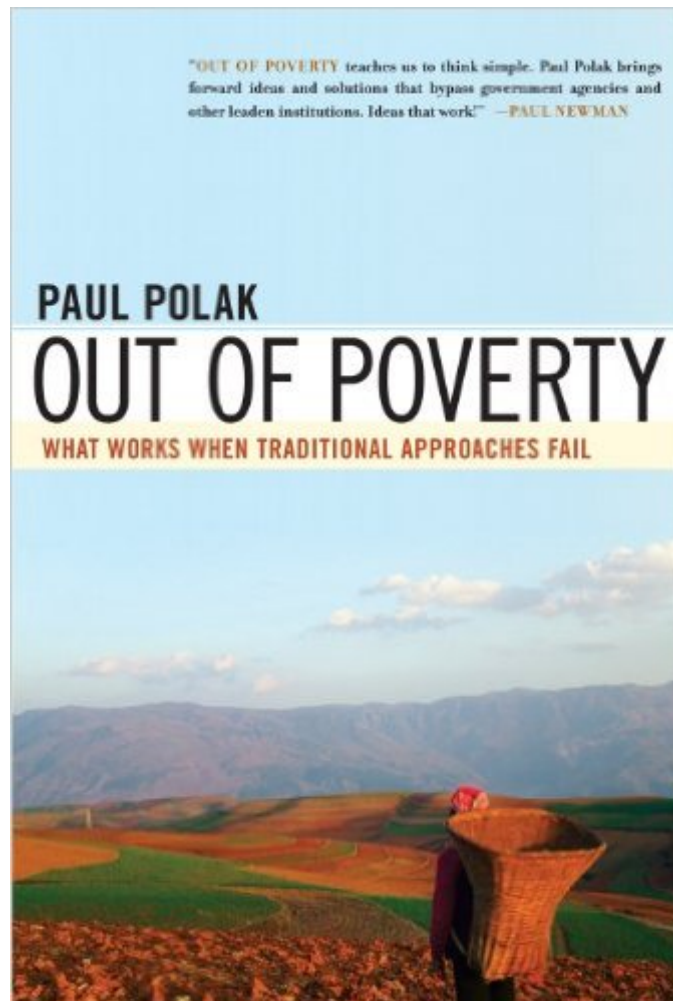


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Out Of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail



Synopsis

Based on his 25 years of experience, Polak explodes what he calls the ""Three Great Poverty Eradication Myths"": that we can donate people out of poverty, that national economic growth will end poverty, and that Big Business, operating as it does now, will end poverty. Polak shows that programs based on these ideas have utterly failed--in fact, in sub-Saharan Africa poverty rates have actually gone up. These failed top-down efforts contrast sharply with the grassroots approach Polak and IDE have championed: helping the dollar-a-day poor earn more money through their own efforts. Amazingly enough, unexploited market opportunities do exist for the desperately poor. Polak describes how he and others have identified these opportunities and have developed innovative, low-cost tools that have helped in lifting 17 million people out of poverty.

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Customer Reviews

Paul Polak is an extraordinary man. A Czech Holocaust refugee as a child and a practicing psychiatrist throughout the 1960s and 70s, Dr. Polak turned his attention to the challenge of ending global poverty in 1981. In that year, he founded the International Development Enterprises (IDE), a Colorado-based nonprofit organization distinguished by its successful launch of the treadle pump that enables farmers to irrigate very small plots of land at minimal cost. IDE's mission more generally is to fashion and develop new tools to help poor farmers and other "dollar-a-day" families in developing countries work their way out of poverty. Now nearing 80, Dr. Polak has relentlessly pursued this mission for the past three decades. In *Out of Poverty*, Dr. Polak interweaves the IDE

story and the principles that guide it with that of one Nepalese family who moved from poverty into the middle class. The fundamental precepts of Dr. Polak's work are clearly laid out in the introduction:"1. The biggest reason most poor people are poor is because they don't have enough money."2. Most of the extremely poor people in the world earn their living now from one-acre farms."3. They can earn much more money by finding ways to grow and sell high-value labor-intensive crops such as off-season fruits and vegetables."4. To do that, they need access to very cheap small-farm irrigation, good seeds and fertilizer, and markets where they can sell their crops at a profit."Much of Out of Poverty deals in detail with the challenges entailed in implementing these principles. Irrigation, including the story of the treadle pump, gets the most attention. Dr.

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