

The Starfish Community
*“Ordinary People Making an
Extraordinary Difference”*



CONCEPT DOCUMENT
Condensed Version
August 2009

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

A World of Accelerating Change

Where are we now?

- Acceleration of Knowledge
- Acceleration of Communications
- Acceleration of Social Networking
- Acceleration of Globalization and Decentralization
- Acceleration of Natural Disasters

A Starfish Mass Movement

Where are we going?

- The Rise of Social Networking
- The Decentralized Starfish Network
- The Nature of Mass Movements
- A Decentralized Starfish Mass Movement

The Starfish Community

What are we doing?

- People Groups and Tribes
- Operational Concepts for the Starfish Organization
- Services to the Starfish Community

Joining the Starfish Community

How can you get involved?

- Starfish Community Participation
- Contact Information

Executive Summary

The world, as you know it, will not exist in 10 years. The top 10 jobs of 2020 do not even exist today.

By 2010, it is estimated that technical knowledge will be doubling every 72 hours. Everything is changing; people, information, technology, communications, economies, and even the global climate. The world is shrinking, challenges and opportunities are growing, and change is accelerating. Where are we going? What does this mean to you, your family, and the nation you live in? One thing is for sure, life, as you know it, will never be the same.

A global shift is occurring in communications, information sharing, and social networking. This shift is leading to profound changes in how we live, learn, and solve problems. In order to manage an overflow of information, the struggle for years has been to build a bigger database with more information that could be accessed at a faster rate. Now, there is an emerging realization that people are the “database” and social networks are the “software” to access that database.

The Starfish Community Concept Document has been written to share a little about this global shift and what it could mean to the hundreds of millions of people that live in abject poverty and need. It will also help us, as caring individuals, understand a new way to make an extraordinary difference. Changes in technology and information sharing now enable us to operate in a more unified fashion. As the old saying goes, many people working together make the job light. Working together is the key. We all need a place to plug in....and preferably a place we can connect with our friends. That is what this document is all about.

This document sets the stage by introducing our world of accelerating change. By looking at a few key domains of change, we begin to understand the scope and depth of our current challenges and future opportunities. Some will resign themselves to routines and rituals to escape the overload. For others, they will charge forward, perfectly at home in the chaos. Purpose and meaning will provide a beacon for all. We have all been given a gift that we can employ to help others. Our purpose at Humanitarian International Services Group (HISG) is to provide a platform where we can all work together and use our gifts to help those in need. We specialize in connecting resources to needs.

In order to work together more effectively, we must understand how emerging social systems have increased our ability to interact. We do this by exploring three types of social interaction concepts including the rise of social networking, decentralized starfish-like organizations, and mass movements. By combining and leveraging the attributes of each, we hope to catalyze, support, empower, and influence the emergence and establishment of a decentralized starfish-like mass movement that will enable ordinary people to make an extraordinary difference.

To support this outcome, HISG is using the Internet and social networking concepts to evolve our own organization from a centralized hierarchical infrastructure to a decentralized starfish-like network. Our hope is to identify and connect our global “tribe” who rally to the common cause of liberating the poor.

The HISG transformation is occurring at many levels, from our operational structure to knitting of the network. Each change is designed to support the overall Starfish Community through establishment of common Internet-based platforms for increased communications, information sharing, and resourcing to creating a common picture that we can all use to self-synchronize our efforts relative to community

development and disaster response operations. Relief and development models have been designed so that a comprehensive range of private sector practitioners can all work together to achieve sustainable and transformational change at the community level. Training and best practices ensure success. Performance metrics and an outcomes based approach ensure our partnering is not just talk but actually makes a difference.

In the final section, we provide step-by-step guidelines (with flowchart) for anyone interested in participating in the Starfish Community. There are no fees, no legal agreements, and no papers to sign. The Starfish Community is about friends working together to help the less fortunate. Participation is as easy as going to www.StarfishCommunity.net and learning about the community. The more you learn, the more opportunities there are to get involved. A contact list of HISG members has been provided at the end of this document. Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions or want more information about how to plug in and get started today.

The HISG Starfish Community is about ordinary people, like you and me, making an extraordinary difference in the lives of the poor and needy. Join the Starfish Community today, and bring your friends!



A World of Accelerating Change

Where are we now?

*Come gather 'round people wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.
Bob Dylan*

We are living in an age of accelerating change. There is a global **acceleration of knowledge** that is unbridled by wisdom. In the late 90's we were told that knowledge on the face of the earth was doubling every eighteen months. A recent Internet video states that by the year 2010, technical knowledge will be doubling every 72 hours! I think it's obvious to all that the rate of change is escalating. How do we live in these times of change? One thing is for sure; life, as we know it, will never be the same.

Change is accelerating, but what does that mean? Yes, knowledge is increasing. But there are a lot of other things that are accelerating as well. **There is acceleration in communications.** In less than thirty years we have gone from the introduction of the cell phone to 3.3 billion subscriptions. In less than twenty years, the Internet has gone from commercial introduction to 1.5 billion users. These innovations have drastically changed the way we communicate and share information on a daily basisglobally.

There is acceleration in social networking. A social network is a social structure made of nodes (which are generally individuals or organizations) that are tied together by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, kinship, dislike, conflict or trade. The resulting graph-based structures are often very complex.

Social networks are the current rage of the Internet. With the Internet now providing the ideal platform for networking, the top three social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, and Reunion) have grown to over 220 million users with over 500,000 new accounts being added **daily**.

Increased connectivity is accelerating globalization resulting in a flat and decentralized world. As Thomas Friedman describes in "The World is Flat", globalization is leveling the playing field, in terms of commerce, to the point where all competitors have an equal opportunity. A one-man shop in India can effectively compete for business against a large corporation in America. Ori Brafman, in "The Starfish and the Spider", adds that the Internet is now enabling organizations and networks to decentralize their operations through distributive networks. These decentralized networks can create dis-economies of scale that can disrupt whole industries. A shy engineer named Craig Newmark never dreamed that the introduction of his website called Craig's List could single handedly nearly bankrupt the entire newspaper industry.

There is acceleration in natural disasters resulting in chaos and disruptions to social structures. In the last 4 years, we have experienced four natural disasters with some of the greatest loss of human life in history. They include the 2004 Asian Tsunami (225,000+ dead), the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake (80,000+ dead), the 2008 Nargis Cyclone (100,000+ dead), and the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake (80,000+ dead).

As of 2006, there were over 20 million refugees in the world. In addition, there are currently reported to be over 25 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees within their own country, with 70-80% being women and children. The Sichuan earthquake alone added another 3+ million IDPs to the list. Most are still living in tents this winter (2008-2009).

Presently, there are an estimated 130+ million orphans in the world with less than 400,000 being adopted on an annual basis. These numbers appear to be escalating out of control. The years 2007–2008 saw dramatic rises in world food price, bringing a state of global crisis and causing political and economical instability and social unrest in both poor and developed nations. Over 1.1 billion people live in extreme poverty earning less than \$1 USD per day and over half the population of planet earth live on less than \$2.50 USD per day.

“What can I do?” you may ask. “I’m just one person.” The answer is – a lot! You can make a big difference! If each one of us was to do somethinganything! And if we all worked together, we can have an extraordinary impact! And that is precisely what the Starfish Community is attempting to do--help ordinary people make an extraordinary difference in the lives of the poor and needy people we serve in over 80 nations. That is what this concept paper is all about. Emerging technologies and societal trends are setting the stage for a new way of impacting the world. We are now able to effectively network people and resources across a wide range of private sector skills with participants from businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGO), faith-based and civic groups, and academic institutions.

HISG is using the Internet and social networking concepts to evolve our own organization from a centralized hierarchical infrastructure to a decentralized starfish-like network to support the Starfish Community. Simultaneously, we are working to understand the causal factors and principles that impact the emergence of mass movements in order to better influence the direction and outcomes of such a movement.

Our ultimate goal is to combine and leverage the attributes of social networking, decentralized starfish networks, and those of an emerging mass movement. By doing so, we hope to catalyze, support, empower, and influence the establishment of a decentralized starfish-like mass movement that will enable ordinary people to make an extraordinary difference on a daily basis!

A Starfish Mass Movement

Where are we going?

In some ways, the Starfish Community can be explained as a connector of networks. Relational networks of the community encompass nearly every nation of the world and a significant number of the more than 12,000 ethno-linguistic people groups. As a connector, the community mobilizes resources across the whole private sector including businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based and civic groups, and academic institutions. Relief and development models provide the framework for identifying and mobilizing 26 different categories of subject matter expert skill sets. Expanding social networks represent a broad range of private sector skill sets and participants from around the world. The growing question is, “How do we optimize networks and connections to make a bigger difference?”

With this in mind, understanding the interactive dynamics of large social networks will help us to interact more effectively and to accomplish more working together. The purpose of this section is to explore three significant types of social network concepts including:

- The Rise of Social Networking
- The Decentralized Starfish Network
- The Nature of Mass Movements

Following a review of these concepts, we will explore a convergence of their attributes and characteristics from an operational perspective with the intent to leverage aspects of each for greater impact. By doing so, we hope to catalyze, support, empower, and influence the establishment of a decentralized starfish mass movement.

The Rise of Social Networking

Why do people join a social network? Eric Hoffer, in “The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements” states that community and equality are the passion of the masses. For some it’s about business, for others it’s about sharing a common cause, but for most, it is simply about belonging and equality. Research in a number of academic fields has shown that social networks operate on many levels, from families up to the level of nations, and play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals.

In its simplest form, a social network is a map of all relevant ties between the nodes being studied. The network can also be used to determine the social capital of individual actors. These concepts are often displayed in a social network diagram, where nodes are the points and ties are the lines.

Building Connections

Networks and communities are built on connections. Better connections usually provide better opportunities. But, what are better connections, and how do they lead to more effective and productive networks and communities? How do we build connected networks that create and take advantage of opportunities in their region or marketplace? How does success emerge from the complex interactions within networks?

A vibrant community network is generally built or “knit” in four phases, each with its own distinct relational linkages. Each phase builds a more adaptive and resilient network structure than the prior

phase. Network mapping can be used to track progress through these four stages.

1) Scattered Fragments - Experience shows that most communities start as small emergent clusters organized around common interests or goals. Usually these clusters are isolated from each other. They are very small groups of 1-5 people or organizations that have connected out of necessity. If these fragments do not organize further, the community structure remains weak and under-producing.

2) Single Hub-and-Spoke - Without active leaders who take responsibility for building a network, spontaneous connections between groups emerge very slowly, or not at all. We call this active leader a *network weaver*. Instead of allowing these fragments to drift in the hope of making a lucky connection, network weavers actively create new interactions among them.

3) Multi-Hub Small-World Network - The transition from network weaver to network facilitator is critical. The weaver is identifying and mentoring new weavers who will eventually take over much of the network building and maintenance. If the transition is not made, the community network remains dependent on the central weaver and his/her organization. At this transition point, the weaver changes from being a direct leader to an indirect leader, influencing new emergent leaders appearing throughout the community. This transition is necessary for the network to increase its scale, impact, and reach. Now that other hubs [network weavers] are emerging in the network, the various weavers begin to connect to each other, creating a multi-hub community. Information percolates most quickly through a network where the best-connected nodes are all connected to each other.

4) Core/Periphery

The end goal for vibrant, sustainable community networks is the core/periphery model. These relational linkages emerge after many years of network weaving by multiple hubs. It is a stable structure that can link to other well-developed networks in other regions. The network core in this model contains the key community members, including many who are network weavers, and have developed strong ties amongst themselves. The periphery of this network contains three groups of nodes that are usually tied to the core through looser ties:

- Those new to the community and working to get to the core
- Bridges to diverse communities elsewhere
- Unique resources that operate outside of the community and may span many communities

The periphery allows us to reach ideas and information not currently prevalent in our network. The core allows us to act on those ideas and information. The periphery is the open, porous boundary of the community network. It is where new members/ideas come and go. The periphery monitors the environment, while the core implements what is discovered and deemed useful.

To summarize, starting with a disconnected community, network builders can start weaving together the necessary skills and resources to build simple single-hub networks, followed by a more robust multi-hub network, concluding with a resilient core/periphery structure – all maximized for innovation and implementation.

The Decentralized Starfish Network

The Starfish and the Spider

Most of us know that a spider is a creature with eight legs coming out of a central body. If you chop off the spider's head, it dies. It could maybe survive without a leg or two, and probably even stand to lose a couple of eyes, but it certainly couldn't survive without its head. The spider has a centralized control system that is similar to most organizations.

A starfish, at first glance, is similar to a spider in appearance. Like the spider, the starfish appears to have a bunch of legs coming out of a central body. But that's where the similarities end. The starfish is decentralized. The starfish does not have a head. Its central body is not even in charge. In fact, the major organs are replicated throughout each and every leg. If you cut the starfish in half, the animal doesn't die, it regenerates.

Starfish have an incredible quality to them: if you cut a leg off, most species will grow a new leg. And with some varieties can replicate themselves from a single piece of a leg. They can achieve this magical regeneration because in reality, a starfish is a neural network – basically a network of cells. Instead of having a head like a spider, the starfish functions as a decentralized network. The starfish doesn't have a brain or a central command. Similar to the starfish, there are a host of emerging organizations that function in a decentralized manner like the starfish. Examples include such entities as Visa, Skype, Craig's List, Wikipedia, Alcoholics Anonymous and Apache Software, to name a few.

Legs of a Starfish Network

In his book “The Starfish and the Spider” author, Ori Brafman, identifies five legs upon which a decentralized network stands. As with the starfish, it can lose one or two legs and still survive. But when you have all five legs working together, a decentralized network can really take off.

- Leg 1 – Circles
Circles are important to nearly every decentralized network. They provide the vehicle for independent and autonomous operation. Once you join, you are an equal and it's then up to you to contribute to the best of your ability. Circles are not lawless; rather, they depend on clearly defined norms or values.
- Leg 2 – The Catalyst
A Catalyst is any element or compound that initiates a reaction without fusing into that reaction. In a decentralized organization, a Catalyst is a person who initiates a reaction, gets the organization going, and then fades into the background by ceding control to the members. In letting go of the leadership role, the Catalyst transfers ownership and responsibility to the circle or decentralized organization. Once the Catalyst moves on, however, their presence is still felt as they provide the inspirational motivation to continue to spur others to action.
- Leg 3 – Ideology
Ideology is the glue that holds decentralized networks together. It is more than a sense of community or the desire to create a better world. It is a common set of beliefs or values that inspire members to fight and sacrifice of themselves for a common cause. These common beliefs define the norms or values of the network, which in turn, dictate the cultural DNA. Since there is no central command and control structure in a decentralized network, a clearly defined ideology is central to controlling behaviors. The greater the common cause and the stronger the ideology, the longer the network lasts.
- Leg 4 – The Pre-Existing Network
Almost every decentralized network that has made it big was launched from a pre-existing platform. But gaining entrance into a pre-existing network is not as simple as just showing up with a good idea. Centralized organizations are not setup to launch decentralized movements. Without Circles, there is not the infrastructure for people to get involved and take ownership of a new idea. Circles provide the vehicle to put people together in a close-knit community of empowered members with shared values and a belief that everyone is equal. Loose knit social networks provide the ideal breeding ground for decentralized circles and typically have a higher tolerance for innovation. Typically it takes the special skills of the Catalyst entering the social network to birth a

decentralized movement. But today, the Internet also provides an ideal launch pad for new starfish networks by enabling rapid and simple communication and active participation.

- Leg 5 – The Champion

The Champion is a restless pioneer in promoting a new idea. Catalysts are charismatic, but champions take the necessary steps to move the network forward to the next level. Catalysts inspire and naturally connect people, but there is nothing subtle about the Champion. Champions tend to be more like salesman than organizers or connectors. But as a salesman, they help people get involved in some type of structure or activity

When a Catalyst joins up with a Champion to architect a movement, create self-empowered circles, tap into an ideology whose time has come, and draw upon a pre-existing network, they can change the course of history.

The Nature of Mass Movements

In a time of accelerating change, social structures around the world are under attack. Families and communities are being disrupted and undergoing decay. Natural and man-made disasters, food shortages and global migration all feed into and heighten the problem. The global environment is ripening for the emergence of mass movements. The purpose of this section is to understand the contributing factors and principles that impact the emergence of a mass movement and how we might be able to catalyze and influence the direction and outcomes of such a movement. Our hope is that we might catalyze a mass movement that will provide a platform for “Connecting Resources to Needs” for the poor and underprivileged people in developing nations.

Adherents to Mass Movements

It is imperative that we understand the strength and depth of the convictions of adherents to mass movements. Awareness of their commitment helps us to understand the influence and impact they have within their social structures. Adherents typically embody the following characteristics:

- A readiness to “die” for the cause
- Proclivity for united action and self sacrifice
- Blind faith, uncompromising, and single hearted allegiance
- Enthusiasm, and willingness to attempt the impossible
- Intense fervor and reckless abandon, willing to sacrifice the present in preparation for the future
- Bold and immediate hope for the future
- A collective spirit of community and corporate success
- Every Mass Movement is in a sense a migration – a movement towards a promised land

Environmental Factors that Set the Stage for a Mass Movement

There are a host of environmental factors that help to set the stage for the emergence of a mass movement. In his book “The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements”, author Eric Hoffer provides a comprehensive list to include:

- Boredom, Frustration, Discontentment, Disillusionment with Status Quo
- People wanting to escape from an Unwanted Self
- Disruption of the social glue that holds groups and communities together
- Lack of Community and Equality
- A new mass movement can quickly emerge where one already exists
- The right leadership is necessary. A mass movement is pioneered by Men of Words, materialized by Fanatics, and consolidated by Men of Action.

Not all mass movements need to be negative. Accelerations in information, technologies, and the Internet have already created a rapid and positive mass movement, or migration, for billions of people to a new way of communicating and sharing information on a global scale. Similarly, these advancements can enable a correlating mass migration in the way ordinary people are able to help one another. As a result, our intent is to facilitate and influence the emergence of a mass movement that enables a global tribe of like-minded practitioners bound by a common cause to serve the poor.

Activities that support the emergence of a Mass Movement

Many factors ultimately impact the emergence of a mass movement. Leaders cannot create the conditions that make a mass movement successful. There must be intense dissatisfaction with things as they currently exist. The right leaders often wait years for the environment to ripen and bring forth a movement. Breeding discontent or championing the reasonableness or legitimacy of a new way cannot initiate a mass movement. When the environment is ripe, the following types of activities will help influence launch and direction of a mass movement:

- Create an immediate and audacious hope for the future
- Define a common enemy to rally the troops
- Create a link to the glorious past
- Define the source of irresistible power that people believe in
- Help people escape from self
- Create community and equality
- Create unity of action and self-sacrifice
- Define the Doctrine
- Substitute for or transition from an existing movement
- Identify and connect the inspirational and operational leaders

Operational Concepts Related to a Starfish Mass Movement

The purpose of this section is to combine and leverage the characteristics and attributes of the three types of social network concepts from an operational perspective. By doing so, we hope to understand the mechanisms of how to catalyze, support, empower, and influence the establishment of a decentralized starfish mass movement. This section will be focused on addressing the following operational concepts: (Specific issues related to Starfish Community operations will be addressed in detail in a later section.)

- Culture and Ideology
A group's ideology is composed of a set of shared values or common beliefs that define the cultural DNA of the group. People of a common cultural DNA will typically gravitate to one another and sometimes talk about being of the same "tribe". The stronger the ideology, the more influence it has over actions, even to the point of people being willing to give up their life for the cause. In addition to ideology, the culture of the starfish network must promote community and camaraderie.
- A Common Cause
Different adherents may engage for different reasons but they all have a common cause or outcome they are working together and joining forces to achieve. The common cause or defined outcome must be specific enough to cause defined action but broad enough to cover a wide range of potential skill sets of the adherents that join the network or movement.
- Structure
The structure of the starfish network should be decentralized with independent and autonomous Circles or cells being empowered by leaders and catalysts. With a lack of hierarchy, all members of the network are considered equal and work together for a common cause.

- Leadership and Management

In all three social network concepts explored, a small loose connection of people can have a large amount of influence and power. The amount of power and influence leaders exercise is determined by the strength and trust of the relational connections. Leaders are necessary to inspire and lead the people into united action. Management and decision-making needs to be decentralized to the front lines where knowledge, creativity, innovation, and ownership are greatest. If we converge all the requirements, we end up with Inspirational Leaders and Operational Managers.

- Knowledge, Information, and Communications

In a starfish network or mass movement, knowledge is greatest on the front line, at the edge of the network. When it comes to social networking, innovation and creativity lie at the intersection point of different social clusters. The operational focus should be for information to be shared between individual members and decentralized throughout the network. Communications across the network should occur directly between members versus through intermediaries or through an established chain of command.

- Finances and Resources

As organizations or industries decentralize, profits decrease. In a pure starfish network or mass movement, there are no paid positions or titles because they create turf wars and focus on interests of personal gain and betterment. Individual units (Circles, cells) should be largely self-funded with unit leaders primarily responsible for acquiring and managing their own funds. The overall power or influence of the network or movement is proportional to the strength of the relational connections and the number of members or adherents. The ideal situation is that it costs nothing to add a member and with every new member, there are more resources within the network.

- Training

Training must occur for transfer of cultural DNA, sharing of information, and utilizing an established process or platform. Lessons learned and best practices optimize performance.

- Operations

Small Circles of 6-12 people are the key to action, creativity and ownership. Circles should be able to operate independently with autonomy. Leveraging the power of the Circles across a network or mass movement is enabled through information sharing and communications. Information sharing provides for a common picture, allowing adherents to self-synchronize their efforts without any chain of command. Circles establish a strong sense of community and equality necessary for adherents. The operational imperative is for all newcomers to find an immediate place to plug in. Assimilation is ensured through a sense of belonging and a defined ideology that controls behavior. Small Circles should be used to address issues and resolve challenges. Circles provide an ideal venue for problem-solving and innovation.

- Performance

Performance in a decentralized network or movement is measured by the strength and vitality of the Circles or communal structure established. For a social network, it may be the strength and centrality of the connection. If the focus of a group of circles is community transformation, then performance metrics must be chosen that are relative to the success of the community.

- Change Management

Decentralized starfish networks and mass movements are both marked by their ability for rapid and drastic adaptation and transformation. This is enabled by spontaneous intra-network information sharing and empowered Circles that can operate independently. Decentralization involves chaos, but also provides a platform for creativity and innovation, essential for growth and adaptation.

The Starfish Community

What are we doing?

In the previous, we explored the different characteristics of social networking, decentralized starfish networks and the emergence of mass movements. The attributes and characteristics of these social network concepts were then combined and viewed from an operational perspective. The purpose of this section is to explain how the Starfish Community is evolving with the intent to facilitate the emergence of a mass movement built around a common cause. The following concepts are included:

- People Groups and Tribes
- Operational Concepts for the Starfish Organization
- Services to the Starfish Community

People Groups and Tribes

There are over 12,000 distinct ethno-linguistic people groups in the world. Though each may have its own unique customs and culture, globalization is having an interesting impact. People living outside their native culture are finding like-minded people from totally foreign cultures that seem to be of the same tribal mindset or cultural DNA. There are new “tribes” emerging that transcend local culture. These new tribes have their own unique set of customs and culture that are global in nature with relational bonds that can even supersede local cultural ties.

The Starfish Community is helping to connecting a global “tribe” with a common cause to help widows, orphans and the poor. The community provides a platform to identify like-minded tribal members all over the world and connect them together into a decentralized starfish community that can share information, communications and resources. This community transcends all sectors of society and encompasses representatives from across the private sector, including businesses, NGOs, faith-based and civic groups, and academic institutions. It costs nothing to join the community and with each new member the resources across the network grow.

Not all people we meet will become part of this tribe, have the cultural DNA of this community, or fit into this network. But our hope is that all who want to participate will have a place to immediately plug in, become part of the community, and help change the world. We want to birth a movement out of the Starfish Community where ordinary people can make a significant difference in the life of someone in need.

Operational Concepts for the Starfish Community

In the previous pages, we addressed the operational requirements to catalyze, support, empower, and influence the establishment of a decentralized starfish mass movement. Concepts were provided in the context of an operational nature in order to identify potential areas of support and focus for the Starfish Network to catalyze a movement. This section will be focused on addressing specific issues related to operations using the same categories.

- Culture and Ideology
 - Culture
 - Work together with friends
 - Work hard and have fun
 - Share resources

- Learn from mistakes
 - Communicate openly and speak the truth
 - Share the credit (don't plant your banner)
- Ideology
 - Liberate the poor
 - Community and equality
 - Trust and commitment
- Common Cause
 - Common cause is to “Connect Resources to Needs” for the poor and underprivileged.
 - Our common enemies are ignorance, hopelessness, apathy, lack of resources, and lack of preparedness.
- Structure
 - Circles comprised of 6-12 members that are working together towards a common cause.
 - Are able to operate independently and with autonomy.
 - Can be formed by anyone, anywhere.
 - Members determine what type of project they would like to focus on.
 - Any Circle can communicate with and work with any other Circle anywhere in the network.
 - There are no limitations or controls on who or how they can interact.
 - Provide the infrastructure for people to get involved and take ownership of a new idea.
 - Provide close knit community where everyone is equal.
- Leadership and Management

The primary focus of Inspirational Leadership will be to:

 - Clearly define, promote, and embody the values, or cultural DNA of the network.
 - Develop, cultivate, and address relational issues related to trust and unity.
 - Weave the network into Small Circles of committed adherents focused on common issues.
 - Facilitate network expansion once it expands beyond single hub and spoke.
 - Bridge networks for increased creativity, innovation and resource sharing.
 - Provide a platform for network leaders to interact, build trust, and collaborate on projects.
 - Provide platform for networks to collaborate on problem solving, creativity and innovation.
 - Inspire network adherents to unified action.
 - Globally monitor locations where environmental factors are ripe for a mass movement.
 - Present our common cause (Connecting Resources to Needs) in such a way that it ensures an “immediate hope” for the discontented, frustrated, disenfranchised, and disillusioned.

The primary focus of Operational Management will be to:

 - Identify social needs of adherents and ensure those needs are being met by the Circles
 - Map out the social networks.
 - Create the vehicle by which all newcomers can be quickly and effectively assimilated.
 - Create doctrine, dogma and rituals to enhance identity with community.
 - Develop venue that supports centralized data fusion and provision of a common picture.
 - Provide a venue for network members to conduct resource sharing.
 - Provide adequate operational guidance and direction so members can focus actions.
 - Address issues related to financial sustainability as HISG decentralizes operations.
 - Identify ways to ensure all adherents experience success through their participation.
 - Measure the vitality of the Small Circles in relation to a sense of community and equality.
 - Identify opportunities for collaborative actions involving network leadership.
- Knowledge, Information, and Communications
 - Knowledge and information will be decentralized and distributed across all adherents to the network through such things as increased communications, interactive Internet platforms, and gatherings.

- Communications will be encouraged through facilitation of leadership venue, development and implementation of models, regional networking initiatives, collaborative projects and resource sharing.
- Finances and Resources
 - There are no fees to join the network.
 - Adherents are expected to acquire and manage their own funding.
 - Each unit is encouraged to identify and pursue options to achieve financial sustainability.
- Training
 - HISG will help provide the following types of training for the Starfish Community: Starfish Concepts, HIST (development) and IDR (relief) Models.
- Operations
 - Small Circles will be promoted and developed across the network. Circles should be used to address issues and resolve challenges that the network might face.
- Performance
 - Success will be measured by the vitality and effectiveness of the Circles.
 - Are they doing projects? Are they giving and or receiving resources? Are people being helped? Are ordinary people able to make a significant impact in the lives of others?
 - In the network, well-connected node (individual or organization):
 - Hears about, and understands, what is happening in the network before others do.
 - Influences others through direct and indirect ties.
 - Acts as a broker of key information and knowledge among various parts of the network.
 - Combines information and knowledge gathered from various parts of the network to develop innovative products and services.
- Change Management

Change management and adaptability across the network will be enhanced by:

 - The formation of small self-sustained Circles that can act independently with autonomy (is autonomy).
 - Establishing information sharing venues to decentralize information across the network.
 - Facilitating leadership venues for increased interaction and information sharing.
 - Further decentralizing operations to increase creativity and innovation.

Services to the Starfish Community

This final section provides a look at all the value added services and capabilities that HISG has developed and are now available to the Starfish Community. With each new member joining the network, the overall resources available to members will grow. Available capabilities will be explained within the following categories below and posted on the website for interested viewers and updated on an ongoing basis.

Infrastructure

HISG leadership has made a strategic decision to invest in infrastructure to help serve the greater Starfish Community. The majority of this infrastructure is operational and available.

- Texas Global Information/Operations Center
- New York Training Facility
- Colorado Operations Center
- VOIP Phone Network
- Sustainable Community Development (HISG) Model

- International Disaster Response (IDR) Model
- International Disaster Response Network (IDRN)
- Training on the HIST and IDR Models
- GOCONX Secure Email
- Asset Mapping through an online Capabilities Survey

Additional Starfish Community Networks, Alliances and Opportunities

The services outlined below are currently operational and available to Starfish Community members

- Participation in the International Disaster Response Network (IDRN)
- Hope Resource Network (HRN) - Warehouse and Logistics Partners
- Resource Sharing
 - Grant Requests
 - Business Startup Capital
 - Gift-in-Kind Materials
 - Logistics Support
 - 26 Subject Matter Expert Deployable Teams (12 HIST/14 IDR Categories)
 - Short-Term Internships (1-2 Months)
 - Long-Term Field Assignments (1-2 Years)
- Business Partners Alliance (BPA) – Engaging Business Professionals
- Angel Alert Network (AAN) – Safety and Security Initiatives

Joining the Starfish Community

How can you get involved?

The Starfish Community is a global network based on strong personal relationships. Many members of the community have been working together for years, while others are relatively new. Regardless of how long a member has been interactive in the network, we all have one thing in common-- a desire to bring hope and a future to the underprivileged of the world. As a network of networks, the Starfish Community is committed to “Connecting Resources to Needs”. The goal is to provide a venue for ordinary people to make an extraordinary difference. The following activities provide a step-by-step process for interested parties to join the community and begin making a difference today!

- Join the Starfish Community by visiting us on the website (www.StarfishCommunity.net) and learning about what we do
- Learn about the cultural DNA of this Tribe
- Form a Starfish Community Circle of Friends
- Review and Learn about the HIST and IDR Models
- Receive Training on the HIST and IDR Models
- Select a Category of Focus and Region of Focus
- Build Your Local Resource Network
- Map the Assets of your Local Resource Network by completing the online Capabilities Survey
- Determine Your HIST/IDR Focus and Grow
- Connect with Locals in Your Region of Focus
- Validate Focus, Conduct Assessments and Project Planning, Focus Actions
- Begin Resource Sharing
- Qualify to become an IDR Network (IDRN) Response Team Member
- Invite others into the Starfish Community

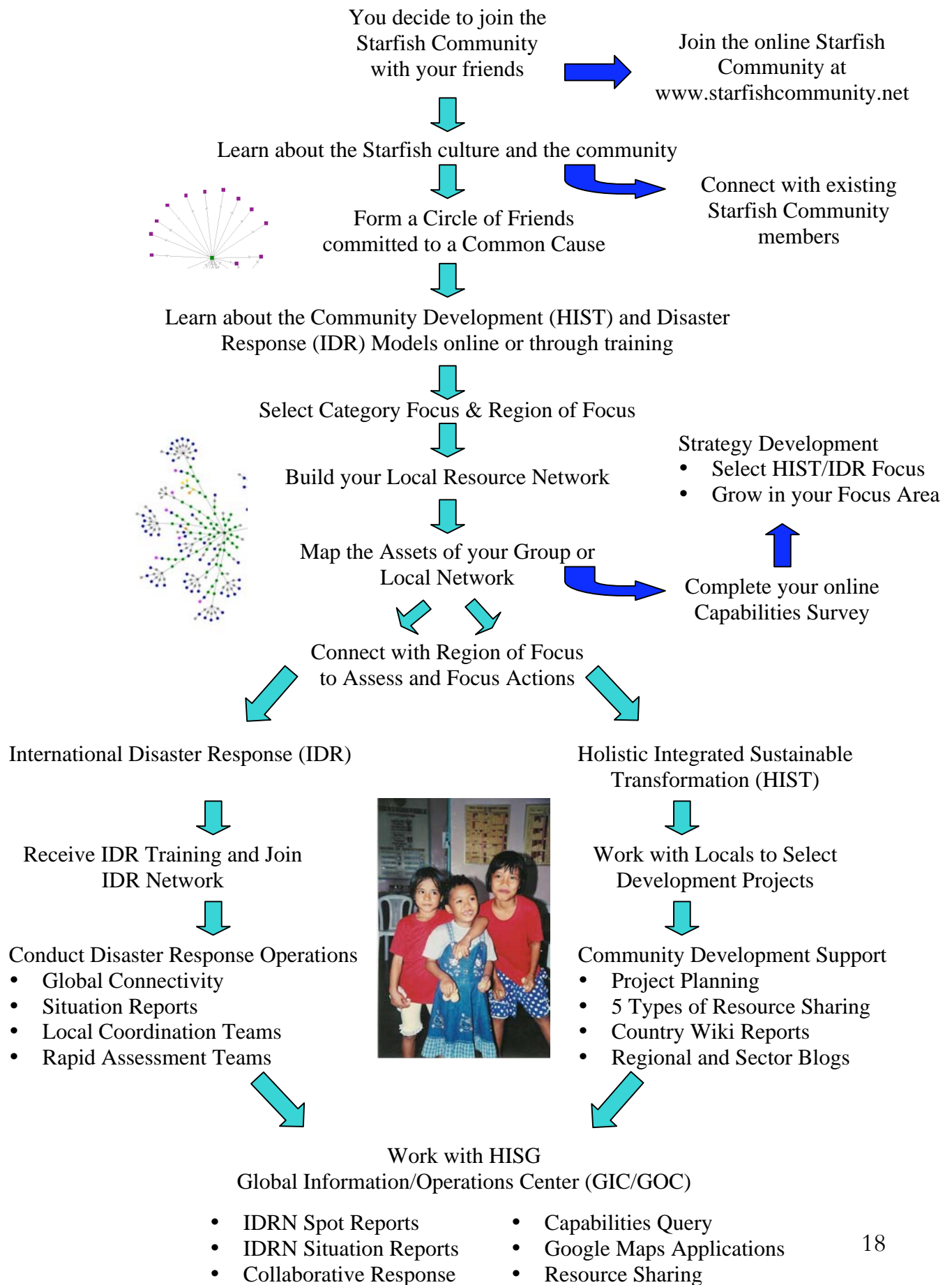
Contact Information

The following information is provided to help those interested in joining the community or those who are already members get help. Please make contact with the appropriate individual first and if your communications attempts fail, then contact anyone of us and we will follow up.

- Catalyst – Kay Hiramine, KHiramine@HISG.org, 1-719-332-5006
- Executive Director – Mike McCausland, MMccausland@HISG.org, 1-719-337-4913
- Disaster Response Director – Keith Stone, KStone@HISG.org, 1-214-801-2000
- Intl. Director - Asia, S. America – Tom Jennings, TJennings@HISG.org, 1-719-650-4939
- Intl. Director - Middle East, N. Africa – Norm Brinkley, NBrinkley@HISG.org, 1-719-900-9197
- Training Director – Charlene Jennings, CJennings@HISG.org, 1-719-650-5228
- Hope Resource Network Manager – Scott Whiting, SWhiting@HISG.org, 1-616-502-3144
- Global Information Center Manager – Matt Wallace, MWallace@HISG.org, 1-303-222-1940



Attachment 1: Joining the Starfish Community



Attachment 2: Practical Stories

The following stories are real-life examples of Starfish Community members that have participated in community development and disaster response initiatives. They are provided as practical examples for how community members can engage and participate in resource sharing across the community.

Community Development

- **Medical Supplies in Indonesia** – A successful businessman in Indonesia built a local hospital to serve the poor. The hospital is in need of medical equipment and supplies to outfit their operations. The Hope Resource Network has contacted medical providers within the community that are now responding to the need. The Starfish Community has multiple partners and networks that provide medical supplies at low to no cost.
- **Field Assignments** – An experienced NGO worker in Europe was looking for a long-term assignment in the field. An organization in the Starfish Community built a Guest House in Darfur Sudan that was in need of a manager and hired the worker. There are many partnering organizations scattered throughout the world that are seeking personnel for long-term field assignments.
- **15 Truckloads of Shoes** – A tornado tore the roof off a shoe-manufacturing warehouse in the central United States. The business owner called and asked if the community could use the shoes. The Hope Resource Network (HRN) accepted and transported all the shoes within a couple weeks. The HRN was established to address issues such as these where it would be very difficult for a single organization to respond to or absorb such an offer.
- **Business Conference in Mali** – Local business leaders in Mali requested practical training for business startup, operations, and management. A trainer in South Africa responded by offering a one-month intensive training program. Another community member provided the funding.
- **Education in Argentina** – A small city in Argentina has been in great need of educational curriculum for many of their schools. A native from Ecuador had moved to the US and came in contact with one of the community members. A local donor responded to the need and subject matter experts reviewed two curriculum providers within the community to identify the best solution set. City leaders are now engaging this project as a pilot for their region.
- **Computers in Ecuador** – The First Lady of Ecuador requested computers for their school system. One of the community members donated 400 computers with software for school children. Another partner in the community transported the shipment.
- **Global Information Center Internship** – A college student wanted an internship that was focused on their specific area of study. The HISG Global Information Center provides summer internship opportunities and the two of them were connected. There are short-term internship opportunities throughout the Starfish Community.
- **Hope Resource Network Warehouses** – A successful business leader with significant warehouse space across the US wanted to participate in the community. They recently joined the Hope Resource Network with over 2.8 million square feet in their operation.
- **Logistics Partner** – A number of logistics partners have been excited about what has been happening and wanted to join the Starfish Community. Many have now moved multiple container shipments in response to needs within the community and have even funded the transport.
- **Medical Initiatives in Philippines** – A local doctor in the Philippines wanted to help respond to the medical needs of the poor. Through their circles of influence they mobilized medical professionals from four cities to collaborate on a week-long initiative. The military provided transport and a community member funded the project.
- **World Cup Soccer Player Benefit Tour** – Following Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, world cup soccer

players in Brazil wanted to support reconstruction efforts for local communities. A community member in Brazil coordinated the effort by raising support and managing the tour. They connected with a community member in South East Asia to support in-country arrangements.

- Students Support Efforts – A professor that teaches disaster relief operations wanted to get his students practically involved in relief operations. They talked with HSIG about supporting the Global Operations Center during disasters. Future plans call for these students to help gather disaster related information during a real event.
- HIST and IDR Training to Community Leaders – An NGO in the Southern Philippines wanted to conduct disaster preparedness and response training for local volunteers. A community member stepped up to provide the training, which was attended by government, military, police and business leaders within the community. This has opened the door to ongoing community development training and projects.
- School Supplies for Filipino Children – A housewife wanted to respond to the needs of schools children in the Philippines that had no school supplies. She worked with her local Girl Scout troop to put together simple backpacks, each containing a specific amount of school supplies. They provided over 400 backpacks that were transported by a community member and endorsed by the President of the country.
- Canada Office opens China Office - HISG Offices are located in multiple locations around the world. They function as independent and autonomous organizations that are connected to the community. Some are even launching their own satellite offices in new regions of the world. Circles birthing new Circles; simple, effective, and reproducible.
- Academic Institutions – One of the Starfish Community members is an academic institution that focuses on practical learning and holistic development. They have been interested in partnering with an organization that can provide their students practical opportunities for internships, especially in the international arena. The Starfish Community has a host of organizations with internship programs.
- Block Factory in Yemen – A business leader wanted to go to Yemen to see how he could help the poor with job creation. He toured a local community and talked with residents about a project to manufacture blocks. Working with a local NGO, he financed the project to launch the operation and he revisits the site periodically to provide business expertise to the operations.

Disaster Response

- “Let’s Save One” Campaign – A young couple was very interested in the work of the Starfish Community. As they explored the many opportunities to get involved, they were moved by the needs of a young mother in Sudan that was featured in the HISG Let’s Save One program. They provided a financial donation that helped enable a critically-required surgery. They helped save a life! Each person in the Let’s Save One program is in a life and death situation.
- Clothes for Syrian Refugees – A church member in the US was motivated by an incoming family from Syria to go and see the needs of Iraqi refugees in North Syria first hand. She was able to meet with the UN and establish the ground work for receiving container shipments of winter clothes. One Starfish Community member provided the clothing shipment and another member paid for the transport. Warm clothes are now on the way to needy refugees.
- Feeding Stations in Texas – A Starfish Community member located a community of over 20,000 people without food and water following a recent hurricane. One of the partners established a feeding station to respond to the needs of this community. This same partner has offered to train Starfish Community volunteers in food station operation to support future response initiatives.
- Myanmar Coalition – Cyclone Nargis relief efforts in Myanmar were hampered by restricted access. A community member facilitated a regional meeting in Bangkok that was attended by Myanmar leaders and a large contingent of NGOs. Another Starfish Community member funded

the meeting. The meeting resulted in the formation of a Coalition that was later recognized by the Myanmar government and accomplished many significant response initiatives.

- Myanmar Medical Teams – Starfish Community members from three nations combined their efforts for a collaborative medical response to Cyclone Nargis. Medical professional from the US, Brazil and Singapore responded as a single unit to bring medical relief and water filtration systems to the impacted people of the Delta region. Four different members within the community combined their resources to fund the initiative.
- Sichuan Province – Disaster response to the Sichuan Earthquake in China was also met with access restrictions. One of the Starfish Community members had founded the premier local response organization more than 20 years earlier. Being respected by the local government, community members were allowed to be one of the first organizations to enter the earthquake zone with the Chinese Red Cross and the Chinese Army to support the response effort.
- Gaza Medical Teams – A medical response team from Hungary approached one of the Starfish Office members for financial support to respond to the crisis in Gaza. They had gained permission to enter the region through another partner. Two member of the community responded to fund the medical response effort.

