**Kiva.org Analysis**

I joined two teams on Kiva. One is “Friends of Bob Harris” with 849 members and the other one is “Google Ann Arbor Kiva Ninjas” with 19 members. The two teams started at approximately the same time in the year of 2009. Since their foundations, the first team has made 58,006 loans added up to $1,567,150 and the average number of loans per member is 68.3, and the second team has made 1,575 loans added up to $40,625 and the average number of loans per member is 82.9. And also, the first team has been on the leaderboard for a very long time. The first team has a long and clear mission (in terms of mission, I refer to “We Loan Because”) implying that the purpose of the founder of this team is to help people in poverty and attract more people to make microfinance on Kiva while the mission stated by the second team “We loan because we can”, is very brief and not explicit. The first team has 3,943 messages on its board in total as I started to write this reflection while the second team only has 15 messages. During my observation, the first group generated 61 new posts in total while the second has no new posts at all. Neither of the two teams has entry barriers for newcomers. However, anyone who wants to post a message on the message board must make at least a loan.

Above are some general information about the two teams and I will talk more in detail about their community types and my recommendations based on common identity and bond theory in what follows.

From the name “Friends of Bob Harris”, the mission statement and the content of the messages on the message board of the first team, I find this community a combination of bond-based community and identity-based community and it is closer to a bond-based community. Firstly, the name conveys others two implications. One is that this is a team found by an individual and the word “friend” indicates that this team is based on friendship. And also, two factors make the team developing the identity-based feature. One is the mission statement with two clear goals which are helping people in poverty and encouraging more people to join Kiva and the other factor is the growing size of the community. Also, from the messages on the message board and the behavior of the core members, I identified “Friends of Bob Harris” as a community with both bond-based feature and identity-based feature. The contents of message are mainly about introducing a borrower and reporting their own loans. Meanwhile, there are a lot of messages about personal topics. For instance, India posted a message, “Shirt-sleeve weather in southern Indiana!” to talk with Rachel Bigby about the weather in southern Indiana. Recently, the topics are more focused on reporting their lending in the “palindromic” project (make 2 loans on the day Feb. 2nd, 3 loans on Mar. 3rd and so on). The captain of “Friends of Bob Harris” is Bob Harris whose last message post was Jan 27, 2012. By reading through a large amount of messages on the board, I found several members more active than others including Gail, Tony, Heather, Edith, Helen, William and several other members. Their messages are of various types. For example, Gail reported his 2/2 lending and thanked Michelle for explaining the word “palindromic”. Based on the common identity and bond theory, I think it is crucial for the captain to rephrase the mission to make it more explicit to reduce the off-topic discussions because I found a lot of messages not related to the microfinance. Since the core members play a critical role of guiding peripheral members, they are supposed to center on the topic in order to reduce the amount of off-topic messages generated by peripheral members who imitate their behaviors. In addition, I think a separate board specifically for off-topic discussions will be beneficial for it helps to maintain the bonds between members without distracting other members from concentrating on the common objectives.

The second team I joined is “Google Ann Arbor Kiva Ninjas”. I categorize this team a bond-based community because they consider themselves as “Ann Arbor Googlers looking to make a difference through the power of micro-lending.” Their mission statement is very short and not specific. They have 19 members in total therefore it is easy for everyone to be acquainted with each other. The captain of “Google Ann Arbor Kiva Ninjas” is Kate who had posted 4 messages out of a total number of 15 and her last message post was Mar 7, 2011. Only three people have ever posted messages on the board and the contents were all closely related to the topic except for the first greeting made by Kate. They seemed to have stopped any activity from Dec.12th, 2011. Compared to the first team, this team is less successful in terms of maintaining a positive relationship between members. Since this is a bond-based community, it is necessary for members to develop an interpersonal relationship to perceive the common goal. However, the interaction between team members is quite disappointed. Therefore, I suggest they firstly develop a stable interpersonal relationship by featuring each message with several intended readers. For example, similar to what the first team is doing, instead of simply report the lending history or achievement, the member should specify several readers. By doing this, the team members could probably feel more familiar and closer to each other and then contribute more to the team they perceived as their own group.