

So, how did it start?

I was born in Minneapolis, MN with a loving family and every opportunity known to man. My parents loved me, my community accepted me, and I excelled in school. I was also born with a radial clubbed hand, which causes my left arm to be slightly shorter than my right and me to be missing two fingers on my left hand.

I lived in South Africa from 2011-2013 and have had the privilege to work with two hundred of the sweetest children with disabilities you will ever meet at a school called Tembaletu in Cape Town. When I first realized what life is like for children with disabilities in South Africa I was appalled. In large parts of Africa, tribal religions are practiced in which disability is seen as a curse or as if the child is possessed. This causes an entire family to be ostracized from the community, and unfortunately happens globally, not just in Africa. As a result these children are often thrown away as infants and if their disability is discovered later in life, they are physically chained or restrained to the back of their homes. These children are abused, neglected, malnourished, uneducated and unloved. They have no one to stand up for their rights or provide for their needs. Acknowledging the fact that the only thing that separates my fate from the fate of these children is the fact that I was blessed to be born in a first world country is what has inspired me to start a non-profit organization called Uphold.

The last thing that under-developed countries need is another American group to build a facility with no community buy in or governmental assistance and have it shut down in a matter of years. I've seen firsthand the horrible situations that children with disabilities in under-developed countries face, and how once one of their needs is met, it doesn't change much due to the mound of other needs that are required. Short term projects and missions trips can help temporarily or to sustain existing projects, but a long-term, holistic approach is what will really put an end to the injustices these children face.

Uphold seeks to help people help organizations to help children with disabilities. There are thousands of non-profit organizations in under-developed countries that work with children, but they are each going in their own direction and fighting all of their battles on their own. By creating a synergy with organizations in the same geographical regions we can help them to work together to overcome various struggles and increase their effectiveness. We make this possible through global awareness campaigns, facilitating Uphold disability networks in specific geographical regions and funding the synergy of those networks to expand outreach to more children with disabilities.

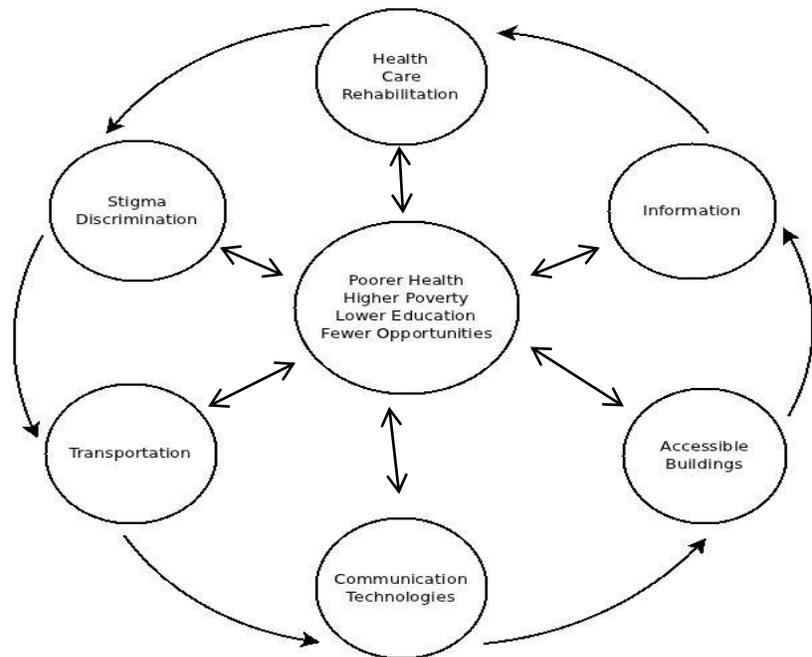
We uphold children with disabilities. We uphold organizations. We uphold justice.

So, How bad is it?

- 650 million people in the world live with a disability—that's 10% of the world's population, and this is only the sum of the people we *know* about!
- The UN estimates the actual number to be around 1 billion, leaving this as the largest minority group in the world receiving the least amount of attention.
- 80%, or 520 million, of those live in under-developed countries.
- There is an 80% mortality rate in developing and under-developing countries for children with disabilities—often due to a “weeding out” process in which they are intentionally neglected, abused, starved or thrown away.
- 90% will never go to school
- 3% literacy rate in males with disabilities, only 1% for females with disabilities.
- People with disabilities are three times more susceptible to violence rape and less likely to receive police intervention.

So, why hasn't anyone done anything yet?

In addition to the normal challenges of poor health, higher poverty, lower education and fewer in opportunities, there are a plethora of additional needs facing children with disabilities in under-developed countries that feed into one another and force these individuals into a further state of need. As soon as one of these areas of need is met, the lack of the other areas keeps these children in their current state.



So, what's the plan?

Vision:

A world inclusive of all people with disabilities.

Mission:

To create a movement of people in developed countries that are dedicated to put an end to the injustice facing children with disabilities in under-developed countries through promoting and supporting the synergy of existing specialized organizations.

Action:

1. Awareness: People don't help because they don't know. The HIV/AIDS crisis, poverty, malnutrition and starvation, lack of education and resource are all issues in the public eye, this isn't. Once upon a time, those were all unaddressed issues as well. People *wanted* to help once they find out about these issues, as they will with creating a better world for children with disabilities, leaving awareness as one of the main objectives of this organization. As individuals, we can only reach "x" amount of people, but if we empower 10 others, we'll reach "10x" people. Through our awareness campaigns there will always be a "way to respond". Yes, financial donations are great, needed, wanted and welcomed. However, if people were to take that passion that was placed within them to stop this cause and combine it with others' passion, a greater impact both personally and financially would occur.
 - a. Media/Film: Documentary style short film shedding light on this issue, social media campaigns, photo books highlighting disability in a positive way
 - b. Events: By getting this cause in the hearts of individuals we're not just asking for a once-off hand out, we're empowering people who can run with this cause for much longer.
 - i. Universities: students may not have the deep pocket books that can immediately empower these organizations in synergy, but they have the passion, time and energy to dedicate to reaching out to the people who do. In a matter of years they *will* be in the skilled labor market, and by raising awareness to this issue during their young adult years, we're able to develop a long term passion for this issue.
 - ii. Churches: the body of Christ is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to social justice issues and social change. It was the early church that first formulated schools, built hospitals and organized adoption of children that were orphaned. There is a mission and a mandate on the church to go into *all* of the world and tangibly love the people that Jesus refers to as "the least of these." Children with disabilities in under-developed countries are the epitome of the least of these, and it is an honor to be able to work together as a global church to see this injustice stopped.
 - iii. Focus group events: this issue isn't something that doctors or educators can become passionate about. This is a social justice issue that needs

people from *every* walk of life. As a part of the awareness movement, we will hone the passion from individuals that are deeply moved by this injustice and utilize that to spread further awareness within their circles of influence. Business functions, interest groups, and friendship circles are key elements to focus on, as it will provide a way for a personal connection with this cause, rather than just a mass rally.

2. Synergy: Team work makes the dream work. No organization has the capacity to turn this issue around on their own, but when we're strategic in partnering organizations that specialize in various outreach approaches we create a "specialized" holistic approach to this issue. By taking a specialized holistic approach it will help these existing organizations to make their current projects more effective, empowering them to work together as a team to combat normal issues in the NPO sector and enable them to expand to include children with disabilities in their work. Initial focus will be on organizations that specialize in the following areas:
 - a. Medical: surgeries, rehabilitation, pre-natal care and prevention of disability
 - b. Education: inclusivity in mainstream schools as well as special needs classes
 - c. Cultural/spiritual stigmas: churches and organizations that can explain that disability is *not* caused through a curse or a demon through relationships and local awareness.
 - d. Community Upliftment/Poverty eradication: meeting basic needs and building community relationships
 - e. Family outreach: empowering the families to care for their children to the best of their abilities and become advocates for the rights of children with disabilities.
3. Funding: We don't raise awareness to gain sympathy, we raise it to inspire action. Awareness of this issue ignites a passion to follow the moral responsibility we all feel to help others. Despite the desire to start new initiatives in under-developed countries, the most effective altruistic approach to this is funding existing successful projects to ensure their continued success as they work together. Funding for this synergy will be obtained through:
 - a. Grants
 - b. Corporate Sponsors: Continuing with our heartbeat of networking and synergy, Uphold is dedicated to facilitating a network for like-minded, well-meaning, successful businesses. In addition to focusing on the opportunity to expanding their social responsibility profile, this network serves as a great opportunity for them in future *for profit* endeavors. Through this Uphold will continue to build a sense of community within our corporate sponsors and expand that into more future corporate sponsors.
 - c. Uphold Fundraisers: As an organization we will head up large scale, quarterly fundraisers as means for people who want to get more involved to get their hands dirty in the planning, leading and participation of a fundraiser in their area. Awareness breeds fundraisers, which breed more awareness, which will create more fundraisers.
 - d. "Glocal" Initiatives: Local solutions and responses to global needs. Not everyone can move to an under-developed country to have a physical impact on this

cause, but *anyone* can have an impact on this issue from the comfort of their home country. Individuals are encouraged to utilize their talents and passions to make a difference in their country financially to make a difference in these countries practically.

So, how can I get involved?

As an organization, there are a few practical ways to get involved that we've thought of, but we're open to other ideas

1. **Spread the word:** Tell your spouse, parents, friends, children, cousins, cousin's cousins, cousin's cousin's friend's brother both about this cause and Uphold. You don't know the full potential of what one person's abilities and connections can do to help in the start-up of an organization and mission like this. Anyone can use their gifts, talents and specializations to impact this issue. Raise awareness on your campus, at your church, within your business or network of friends. Let us know what's on your heart for awareness, and we'll work together to make it happen!
2. **Lend a hand:** Research, events and administration don't just fall together! If you have a couple of hours and extra energy to spare a week and want to get involved, we'd love to have you on the team!
3. **Invest:** Start-up costs of an organization are high: travel costs, printing, legal fees, down payments for fundraisers and staffing costs need to be covered before being able to have a substantial impact towards the Uphold Synergy Networks in under-developed countries. We rely solely on the generous support of people who believe in the vision, mission and mandate of Uphold, and are appreciative of each and every investor. Ways to invest include
 - a. **Planting a seed:** A personal, once off gift to send this NPO running.
 - b. **Corporate giving:** As a company, join other businesses that are dedicated to making more than a profit, but a change in the lives of others. By becoming a corporate sponsor you will not only be changing the future for children with disabilities, but you will be aligned with other entrepreneurs with similar morals at the Uphold Corporate Sponsor Networking Events.

Okay, I'm in! Now what?

Email the director at Kelsey.elizabeth.lindell@gmail.com and we'll get you on board! We can't wait to go through this adventure with you!