

A Journey of Defining the Social Impact My Organization Will Have

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SENT 2020 Participant
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In September, NBA held its annual SENT Seminar virtually. SENT Seminar is designed for Disciples and their leadership teams who are starting new health and social services ministries. This three-day event introduces social entrepreneurs to a variety of resources and trainings that will help their organization succeed, including financial literacy, marketing and communication, and leadership skills.

The following reflection is from Managerrie Winston, founder of Be The Change, a new social enterprise launching in Houston, Texas. Be The Change is an organization working to provide Social Emotional Learning resources and materials to disadvantaged youth with the goal of improving their coping skills to help them to succeed in school, work environments, and other personal relationships throughout their lives.



Attending the 2020 SENT seminar was a life-changing event for me on my journey to becoming a social entrepreneur. I've always had a passion for community and a sense to fix issues that affect people on the margins of society; but knowing what that looks like when trying to do the work is often a frustrating stage in the development of a social change organization. While sharing my journey of creating a non-profit organization that focuses on the social emotional health and self-awareness of at-risk black and brown children; I was introduced to the National Benevolent Association's SENT Seminar and this experience has laid the foundation for my organization to "Be The Change."

The amount of valuable information given during the SENT seminar left me with an outline of the steps I need to take in order to set forth and change my future. The first session I attended was, "Developing Your Why" led by [Rev. Darnell Fennell](#). Of course I know why I want to do the work, but understanding *why* there is a need for the work and providing the push to connect with other people in my community that can also

help me live into the “why” of my organization was beneficial information to hear. This session offered a space to explore a deeper reasoning to root myself in the community doing this work, I’ve committed to keeping the “why” front and center in everything my organization sets forth to do.

Dr. Jennifer Madden’s session on developing a business plan gave me a wealth of insight to creating an effective social impact plan. Questions that I hadn’t asked myself about my organization like: *How does my business create value? How will my business have more impact with less?* pushed me to a higher thinking. Dr. Madden’s session provided strategies and a mindset to do sustainable work with a proper plan in place to ensure success within my social enterprise.

Design thinking with Victoria Sun Esparza was my most memorable session. Besides Victoria being a great engaging presenter, the concept of “Human-Centered Design” was eye opening. Victoria gave us the vision that we are all designers creating experiences for the public. We are impactful and we must be intentional of how we design our organization’s experience to the public. I learned that in order to solve problems I must seek the experts, who are the people in the field experiencing issues my organization seeks to remedy. This will allow me to see their problems in different forms and allow these experts experiencing the issues firsthand to be a part of my organization’s design process. Understanding this theory has already made my work more impactful and is allowing my organization to “Be The Change.”

The SENT seminar was a change agent for my organization. From developing and understanding my “why,” to fundraising techniques, developing a social impact business plan and introducing the concept of “Human-Centered Design.” I am not only thankful for the information the SENT seminar provided but my organization is equipped to go and “Be the Change” making an impact within the community I serve.

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve “the least of these.” Learn more at www.nbacares.org.

