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Oral History Conversation with Ben Alemu

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(Devin) Ben, before we begin the conversation proper

00:00:03.450 → 00:00:05.130
and just by way of an introduction to scholars

00:00:05.130 → 00:00:08.730
who would be listening to the record of
this conversation can you please give us

00:00:08.730 → 00:00:12.650
a brief overview of what Theravision Health Informatics does and what kind of

00:00:12.660 → 00:00:15.390
social impacts you're trying to achieve with SendforC?

00:00:15.390 → 00:00:17.930
(Ben) Awesome, so Theravision Health Informatics

00:00:17.930 → 00:00:24.320
is a health technology firm that partners with hospitals to really bring technology

00:00:24.330 → 00:00:30.150
to patients that expedite their recovery
so we're partnering with the U.C.S.D. Health U.C. Irvine Heath

00:00:30.150 → 00:00:33.160
help their patients
walk more in the hospital

00:00:35.490 → 00:00:42.360
(Devin) And then in terms of what are you really trying to do to improve social impact with SendforC as well?

00:00:42.770 → 00:00:45.700
(Ben) SendforC is really
the key to the puzzle, because that's

00:00:45.700 → 00:00:51.490
a very participatory group and by engaging youth and social entrepreneurship we hope
Oral History Conversation with Ben Alemu (+ Christopher Rodriguez & Pedro Cantoran)  11 April 2018

that they also start businesses and teaching programs so that they in turn involve even more people. So that’s kind of like a growing network of service.

So was there any program or something that you were involved in the past

that gave you the inspiration to start SendforC and the whole engagement process?

So, is like a really interesting origin story because there’s like

a high school project. So, the alumni of our high whose name is Kevin who was a graduate student at Berkeley he came back to our school and said I have an idea for this volunteer program where college students teach high school kids about science and research and he kind of invited us to start it with him, so it wasn’t really my idea. It was kind of an initiation

that he wanted to get us all involved in

You can come in Andy, one of our USD student

So, was there anything from like you, so what was his name the guy that came

(Ben) Kevin

(Kevin) okay. So, besides Kevin was there any like childhood experiences or anything from your past that kinda gave you some connection towards SendforC or any other organization that you work with?
(Ben) So, myself, Andy, and Kevin came from the same high school. I can’t speak for everyone but my experiences high school seemed very disengaged from actual learning, it be more like cramming before an exam learn a lot of information, forget it the next day and like maybe some people like that but I was very discouraged. But when I looked around me and people didn’t really take learning seriously So, I was really excited when people came together to say we want people to use learning to foster social innovation among the youth now was really enticing idea even though none of us really know what that meant or how we even do that. It was really audacious idea.

(Devin) How did you initially gather more like grow your following when you first established in everything and how did you get other students interested and to feel as deeply about it as you did?

(Ben) So, I really helped us out was having a call to action and for us thankfully due to Facebook you kinda of post like these Facebook pages where there’s a lot of incoming students. So, I listed in 2014 and I said hey we’re SendforC we want to use science to make an impact. We’re going to compete in this NASA competition in these two categories
e-mail me your idea we might build some of these projects. So the fact that there was an invitation for other people to get involved, both those projects would end up being completed and we won that NASA competition. So that’s really an interesting way that even us as eighteen/nineteen-year olds we’re not doctors, we’re not engineers, we’re not working professionals but even these partially formed ideas, we as young people could still develop them and it’s a really interesting idea. I think, so (Devin) So, initially the response even just of like social media postings and everything, you initially had a really strong response right just of that (Ben) Around thirty to forty people but then there tends to be a lot of people who just show up then they don’t come back and it’s like this long process of churn and like getting stable teammates volunteers but that was that at the very beginning. (Daniel) So, with the volunteers, from what understand you’re kinda pairing high school students with college professors or people you know there in the fields, so how do you find those professionals that are willing to give you time out of their day to help you in your cause? Thankfully there’s a lot of working professionals that are really excited about our mission for
a lot of different reasons maybe you could kind of talk about what attracted you SendforC.

(Chris) Well your question earlier about like what sparked his interest a lot of us may not have had.

You know a solid academic and how would you put it

(Ben) background maybe or experience

(Chris) mentor, so that’s really the impetus for it. My interest at least.

(Ben) You want to talk about what attracted you for SendfC

(Andy) Well I mean I actually found out through one of his Facebook posts. He send out an e-mail like a call for a mechanic coordinator and I looked into it because I was just looking for experience in that point. When in actually when in and actually read what they were doing and actually like looked into the organization I really I kind of just like connected with it because I really do think that it really helps out. There you really help these kids that don’t have the same opportunities other people do and kind of brings them into like it brings them it helps them. It helps them
have seen opportunities, it helps them kind of work their way out of what they what

00:06:26.910 --> 00:06:31.690
they’re stuck in and that really, that
they really kind of spoke to me I really.

00:06:32.730 --> 00:06:33.710
I had seen a lot of people had

00:06:33.720 --> 00:06:40.010
a just been stuck in the same. The same
cycle and they’re helping break the cycle

00:06:40.130 --> 00:06:42.490
giving them a different opportunity.

00:06:42.490 --> 00:06:46.860
(Amy) In terms of like working with younger students in high school

00:06:46.880 --> 00:06:52.460
do you guys do rotational programs so like mentors have different opportunities to work with

00:06:52.470 --> 00:06:56.230
others students, not just the same group or how does that work?

00:06:56.230 --> 00:06:59.840
(Ben) So kind of the model is once we talk with the school and kind of secure like

00:06:59.850 --> 00:07:04.590
a classroom, a time, and like interest students. They get to pick what they want

00:07:04.600 --> 00:07:07.390
to study so it’s kind
of like predefined like

00:07:07.400 --> 00:07:13.010
a menu of options. Do you want to study in the computer science truck or biology or

00:07:13.020 --> 00:07:16.840
engineering so based on their
interests they’re pair of

00:07:16.850 --> 00:07:20.370
a core of mentors and
they develop projects throughout

00:07:20.380 --> 00:07:25.020
a year or two years based
on what they define. So,

00:07:27.900 --> 00:07:31.840
(Devin) You talk about how well initially you guys got involved in the NASA project
and one of the first things that you did, do you still compete in similar projects like as they work on these couple projects every year or two
do you still do similar competitions in such?

I post a lot of opportunities that I try to encourage our volunteers and our students to get involved but literally every week. I like try to post different links and opportunities.

So, I hope people are applying

So, it’s kind of at their own will if they are just kind of interested in doing a certain project or something. Is at their own will to get involved.

We’re focusing on rebuilding right now

more than encouraging outside competitions kind of things. We are in rebuilding phase.

What is your ultimate goal in your rebuilt?

There’s a lot I mean funding, recruitment for students, partnerships with you know other people who are sort of passionate about education and curriculum building just every asset or facet of education really.

Do you see this like students they’re working with right now coming back in the future and maybe serving as mentors themselves?

That’s definitely a nice
cycle for sure and we have a couple that are like that.

00:08:53.190 --> 00:08:55.620
(Ben) Yeah like three of our original students they are now

00:08:55.760 --> 00:08:58.770
college students as
incoming freshman at

00:08:58.770 --> 00:09:05.080
U. C San Diego and S.D.S.U. What is really cool it that they are majoring in the same things

00:09:05.090 --> 00:09:09.570
they pick our program. So, hopefully that
had a lasting influence

00:09:09.570 --> 00:09:12.410
(Devin) Have you seen anything like direct results of

00:09:12.820 --> 00:09:17.200
like students that you’ve worked with and that have been in your program and then have gone

00:09:17.240 --> 00:09:22.830
on to like majoring in the same kind of field or something? Like, do they a lot better or

00:09:22.840 --> 00:09:26.980
are they more involved so far
kind of things?

00:09:26.980 --> 00:09:31.350
(Ben) Maybe, that is because they are incoming freshman

00:09:31.350 --> 00:09:37.440
(Chris) It’s very early because the project is three or four years old yet, so to get that sort of data or follow
up is still

00:09:37.450 --> 00:09:43.040
kind of just happening. We like to claim that type of success, right?

00:09:43.050 --> 00:09:47.250
But that it’s kind of hard to put
that on paper right now. This early

00:09:47.700 --> 00:09:51.480
(Natalia) But how do you know that you're going in the right direction?

00:09:51.480 --> 00:09:58.580
(Chris) Great question, return volunteers, return mentees continued relationships with schools these are all sort

00:09:58.590 --> 00:10:04.750
of more holistic indicators of our success.
Because each program is sort of tailored towards that student or that school.

You may have an increased G.P.A.

or test score be an indicator for this student. You may have a Startup as an indicator of success for this group of students so because of that it's very difficult to define what success is and we also don't really want to do that because you know that there's a lot of sort of controversy behind how effective our G.P.A or SAT scores and things like that and like everybody is measure differently and we sort of going to support the idea that you know you define what is success for you for this particular endeavor or outcome.

(Natalia) So, Theravision Health Informatics and SENDforC have different approaches, one is a social enterprise and another one is a company.

What are the main differences between starting both companies? The really interesting part and I recommend everyone who is watching this or interested in business studies. Start a pet project that's
a passion and stick with it for three to four years. So, like SendforC was very nebulous and it didn’t exist at the beginning so we had to create the whole foundation for SendforC, which at least for me and others that’s like twenty-five to forty hours a week for four half years. So you have to train everybody, recruit them, onboard them get grant money, get these working professionals, organize equipment, teach at the school like it’s, like so intense training. So creating Theravision and getting it in a really hot direction in three to four months it was really easy because of all that training and documentation we already both. So, I don’t know if that answers like the complete question but that kind of professional training facilitated other projects in other companies (Ben) Yeah, so that’s actually like a really true dark side of Startups and other projects. At least for me is like the first year and a half for SendforC you know that is kind of doing well based on the people who are coming back and the words we get
but I don’t consider that like actual true accomplishment because that’s not
directing serving our mission. So we have sustainability and like documentation
training. So I got the sense that everything I did, it’s like this castle of sand that
could fall apart at any moment like if I
don’t do any task or answer the phone call
or answer the email some stuff
probably won’t happen so that’s
a lot of product stress and worry that it keeps knocking out at you day after day
and that for all of us what students you probably have other things that should
take up your time and I know definitely for me secondly the academic components
suffered a lot until I said no, learned to say no and told people to asked me if they need help for their stuff.
(Devin) What really kept you motivated throughout all of like the
stress and the hardships of it, what was like your ultimate motivation that really kept you
determined to keep it going, keep it growing and everything?
(Ben) So, at least like my interpretation of what I believe SendforC is and I think everyone else has their
own vision of SendforC which I think is really powerful. Is this idea that
young people could change the world than

00:13:51.810 --> 00:13:57.770
a like a really insidious idea that when
people start getting evolve in SendforC

00:13:57.780 --> 00:14:02.800
I see what kind of impact they have
when they teach and while they’re teaching

00:14:02.840 --> 00:14:06.590
they understand how to start
their own projects so it’s like

00:14:06.600 --> 00:14:11.900
a cascade of different projects and programs
these people have created. So part of it is

00:14:11.910 --> 00:14:17.130
like seeing how much enjoyment the people
get out of it and how much growth I see

00:14:17.140 --> 00:14:20.320
in other people so even though
the fact that it’s like

00:14:20.330 --> 00:14:24.760
a really tiring and it seems like there’s
always worse up to do.

00:14:24.760 --> 00:14:29.280
It’s really encouraging to see how people get enjoyment from it

00:14:29.280 --> 00:14:37.100
(Amy) Like right now, I mean we discuss that is just been four - five years since you introduce SendforC

00:14:37.100 --> 00:14:42.940
Do you see this growing outside of San Diego?

00:14:42.940 --> 00:14:50.040
(Chris) Well yeah and actually because it’s a college-student base model that’s really like the I wouldn’t
say genius because

00:14:50.050 --> 00:14:53.750
there’s many of the other words that imply the same model but that’s where the

00:14:53.930 --> 00:14:59.710
potential is really to grow it at every
chapter that we can that also has an

00:14:59.750 --> 00:15:02.710
underserved community because that’s the
that’s sort of the key element of SendforC
is that we're trying to get students who are or who have the means academically and the passion to help bring up under-served students who are also at risk students so wherever there is at risk here or you know students who need academic boost there's got to be a college nearby and we're hoping to have students that would want to take on our mission sort of evangelize and so we do have a chapter at U.C. Berkeley who's actually kind of our tip of the spear right now on their partnered with a charter school up there and they're supposed to start their curriculum in September or October you know there are several but and we have some fledgling chapters other colleges but mainly right now, it's U.C.S.D And love to start a chapter U.S.D. If we can do some recruiting. So it's possible. (Devin): Is active growth like something you guys are really working on or you're trying to focus on really growing your current project before?

(Chris): Growth is just so difficult because when you initiate growth sometimes it goes in directions you weren't
expecting and then you have to sort of

manage our growth so you couldn’t you could recruit students and people who are

passionate but they’re also going to need mentoring. How do they build curriculum? How

do they go fundraise? How do they engage other students in schools? So every bit of us

that we put into growth, it takes a bit from like a core mission like writing

a grant or talking to

a principal. Things like that so it has to be sustainable for us too and for every

for every hour that maybe one of our volunteers puts in it’s like two or three

hours we’re putting in that they don’t see. See like Ben was talking about he

was busy last year like you mention and for all of us who sort of lead any

nonprofit or any organization, there’s so much work we’re doing behind the

scenes that people just don’t see and what they what they do see is what you put on

paper or that our connection with the students or whatever. So as much as we can

handle with you know his other company, my working full-time and you know people’s
studies and stuff like that it’s whatever we can really handle still the live

somewhat of

a balanced life you know. (Devin): How did you actually get involved in the project and everything?

(Chris): Me specifically?
(Devin): Yeah
(Chris): So I was just finishing my M.B.A at Rady

business program. And Ben posted it’s actually funny. Ben posted an initial request for

a campus coordinator and I applied to because I like SendforC’s mission

And I read about it and whatever. I liked how he put his email. Ben’s very good with

words and with text and stuff. So I was like oh this could be cool let me apply, and I remember him saying ‘I don’t think this is the greatest fit for you and I’ll keep you posted for something later.’ Something along those lines. My ego was struck

immediately as like what I’m just finishing but yeah you got to just kind
of read behind the lines or whatever. And I was like wow ok we got

00:18:02.500 → 00:18:05.410
a lot of work experience and I was in the military and in the N.B.A.

00:18:05.420 → 00:18:10.470
And stuff like that and OK whatever I didn’t pitch this to him. But I was

00:18:10.480 → 00:18:11.060
a little I was

00:18:11.070 → 00:18:15.230
a little. I was kind of like really? But he reached out later for

00:18:15.240 → 00:18:15.830
a C.F.O.

00:18:15.840 → 00:18:20.140
position and I wanted to kind of enhance my project management experience and be more

00:18:20.150 → 00:18:24.130
applicable for like you know companies and job searches and stuff. So I applied to

00:18:24.140 → 00:18:25.760
that and he said yeah you’d be

00:18:25.770 → 00:18:29.400
a great fit. Let’s interview, let’s talk about the org. Well,

00:18:30.090 → 00:18:33.970
a few months after joining SendforC and talking with he mentioned Kevin

00:18:33.980 → 00:18:38.680
and a couple other founders and then I noticed that there was a little bit of

00:18:38.690 → 00:18:41.820
a gap in leadership. There was not

00:18:41.830 → 00:18:46.350
a consistent voice speaking for SendforC. There was nobody really teaching me my job

00:18:46.360 → 00:18:52.470
and I said you know, hey who really should
be leading this org and I just pose it as

00:18:52.480 --> 00:18:57.360
a question because you got to really
collaborate on stuff like this and you know I said

00:18:57.800 --> 00:19:00.840
I'd be willing to do it if you guys
thought I'd be a good think I'd be

00:19:00.850 --> 00:19:02.340
a good fit, and we had

00:19:02.350 --> 00:19:06.380
a lot of conversations about it. They had
their own conversations and we just

00:19:06.390 --> 00:19:09.850
decided that you know Ben and I work really
well together which is really important

00:19:09.940 --> 00:19:11.110
to have a good cohesion with

00:19:11.120 --> 00:19:15.230
a team- be able to feed off each
other and stuff. And to share

00:19:15.270 --> 00:19:20.370
a vision and we do.
I also come from you know a pretty challenged background

00:19:20.380 --> 00:19:25.280
I didn't have any academic mentorship growing
up. I barely graduated high school

00:19:25.460 --> 00:19:28.920
I barely graduate in undergrad I had one
of the lowest G.P.A. at San Diego State.

00:19:28.930 --> 00:19:35.180
So I've had my struggles academically,
and I know the power that happened

00:19:35.190 --> 00:19:38.380
having somebody to kind of reach back and
say hey you know I can help you out with

00:19:38.390 --> 00:19:43.060
this or let's kind of stoke your
motivation and so you know here I am.

00:19:46.140 --> 00:19:51.380
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(Devin): I feel you all kind of said similarly on the lines like difficult, complicated

00:19:51.390 -> 00:19:55.950
past and everything especially like in school and everything. Open for

00:19:55.960 -> 00:19:58.160
anyone of you guys to answer but did you have

00:19:58.600 -> 00:20:03.110
any specific role models or anybody in specific that really helped you push yourself

00:20:03.120 -> 00:20:08.120
academically, and challenge yourself and kind of led you to these great accomplishments

00:20:08.130 -> 00:20:14.410
that you’ve made thus far. (Andy): Well personally, it was always my parents that pushed me

00:20:14.980 -> 00:20:16.750
they were college graduates. So I’m not like

00:20:16.760 -> 00:20:20.630
a first generation college student, but they were always in those that would push me because

00:20:20.640 -> 00:20:25.700
I was never academically inclined so to speak. I would always be kind of that type of guy would be like I can coast by and not do any of the work and I’ll pass it was

00:20:25.710 -> 00:20:30.110
fine, but they would always be on me to you know better myself and they were really

00:20:30.120 -> 00:20:35.270
pushed me to actually achieve better grades, better academic

00:20:35.280 -> 00:20:41.670
successes and they actually pushed me

00:20:42.050 -> 00:20:46.460
to come to college because I originally did not necessarily want to come to
college. That was not always my goal but there was a kind of push me to it and they are really what kind of motivates me.

Because they’ve sacrificed so much just to make sure I’ve been able to get here.

(Ben): Awesome, do you want to answer that? (Chris): I have zero, nobody really stepping into it to see I was doing school. My mother was just like if you’re in classes and not get you know suspended, you’re good. That kind of thing and I knew I was going to go to college directly after high school. I actually went into the military so I didn’t really have any motivation from that aspect but my motivation for going even going to college and trying was to was to come back and military to be an aviator and I remember my biggest influence was actually military officers that I work with. And they were educated and they were huge professionals and sort of that. Beat working alongside those guys was pretty powerful motivator for me to going to school and study engineering, and so that was like it was sort of
my motivation but you know that's it.
(Ben): Awesome. So I think with my family like my dad

00:22:08.190 → 00:22:09.950
came from a refugee background with

00:22:09.960 → 00:22:15.940
a tenth good education so he kind of
really moved up the ladder and taking like

00:22:16.290 → 00:22:20.990
trade school community college classes, and
ending up being valedictorian of his university

00:22:21.880 → 00:22:28.830
so like really engrained and in everything
he teaches is like dedication. It's OK if

00:22:28.840 → 00:22:29.840
you don't maybe reach

00:22:29.850 → 00:22:36.740
a certain goal but you're not going to
half ass something like not really give

00:22:36.750 → 00:22:43.630
it everything you have. So far academically, like motivation he is that role model but

00:22:43.640 → 00:22:49.510
for extracurricular and like entrepreneurship
stuff I don't think I have that many role model

00:22:49.520 → 00:22:56.460
(Devin): So just kind of doing your own thing
and figuring it out yourself?
(Ben): So that's

00:22:56.470 → 00:23:00.240
like a good thing and a bad
thing because you get to iterate

00:23:00.250 → 00:23:02.530
a lot and really improve on

00:23:02.540 → 00:23:06.770
a lot of things you do very very
quickly, but the bad thing is it's

00:23:06.780 → 00:23:13.510
a huge time sink and it's very draining
so there's like great and bad aspects

00:23:13.520 → 00:23:20.350
of maybe not having direct mentors in that instance.

(Chris): Yeah, it does help to have somebody

00:23:20.360 → 00:23:24.980
who sort of give you right and left limits, like you
know maybe pair back here try

00:23:24.990 → 00:23:31.150
this or whatever.
When you're doing it on your own, you just go.
Sometimes it's not efficient and other area

00:23:31.160 → 00:23:38.080
were it lacks as a result.
(Ben): Yeah
(Daniel): Has there been any

00:23:39.480 → 00:23:44.580
specific instances or stories of you know something
that happened to you that really inspire you

00:23:44.590 → 00:23:49.110
a certain way that led you to sort of your
decisions- in the growth of your

00:23:49.120 → 00:23:55.580
organizations or beginning of them?
(Ben): All right, I got to think about that for a few seconds
(Chris): These are good questions

00:23:55.590 → 00:24:00.430
(Ben): Hmm, at least at U.C.

00:24:00.440 → 00:24:04.510
San Diego like a lot of the
stuff we've been doing,

00:24:04.520 → 00:24:08.560
a lot of my best friends have been doing
is encouraging student communities.

00:24:09.110 → 00:24:13.820
Like the computer science community, the
entrepreneurship community- we don't see

00:24:13.830 → 00:24:17.950
anything right. We started some of
the first student-run classes that U.C.

00:24:17.960 → 00:24:22.770
San Diego. We started our own company, so a lot of like when we do stuff for

00:24:22.780 → 00:24:26.640
SendforC or other students do their own state initiatives,

00:24:27.050 --> 00:24:31.530
a lot of students look to the left and to
the right. “Hey how do I start my own

00:24:31.540 --> 00:24:38.400
nonprofit? How do I that?” And once
that kind of is

00:24:38.940 --> 00:24:40.010
visualized

00:24:40.050 --> 00:24:45.110
a lot of people say ‘I want to do what you’re
doing.’ So because of SendforC other

00:24:45.120 --> 00:24:47.610
people said ‘How do I make
this student council

00:24:47.650 --> 00:24:51.980
a nonprofit? How to make the school
newspaper a nonprofit?’ So there’s like

00:24:51.990 --> 00:24:58.180
a lot of like consulting and guiding other
student groups. So then like for SendforC

00:24:58.190 --> 00:25:02.710
we have a lot of Google Docs
and documentation. So I just share like

00:25:02.720 --> 00:25:05.590
a lot of information other groups so

00:25:05.690 --> 00:25:10.070
a lot of like information dissemination
to even outside bodies is like

00:25:10.080 --> 00:25:14.330
a huge thing I’m fascinated
by. You guys want to take

00:25:14.340 --> 00:25:19.190
a stab at that question you know I’m just
me any for the first time about oh hey

00:25:19.200 --> 00:25:21.720
there. It’s today.

00:25:26.950 --> 00:25:30.390
So it was a question it. Was
a really specific. Instance or less
are still really. Really got it

in your colleagues starting pursuing
your passions and your positions.

Personally I don’t really have that I’m
more so just support I really do.

Support his mission and I can want to do
what it takes because to help him out

since we’ve known each other for what is
it seems like almost middle school waiting

freshman year of high school someone for

a long time and I know he’s always in the
smart guy really motivated guy and oh

wait he first entered into this mission it
it is speak to me and I discount what I

want to help him out and make sure that
he’s able to accomplish what he wanted to

accomplish. This

year’s over questions are to stick around.
I dunno. What is the culture like.

You know it’s like people.
You know communicate

exactly like always and
in. Which some have

a bias response all of it because it’s
a better shape for sure. Did me well I were mostly with

nonprofit I don't really I'm not really involved with the actual outreach more so

work on the financial side and for me I don't really see very many people. Do talk

with them to Messenger apps and I do have video calls with other employees or with

other volunteers but for the most part I don't really I don't really get to see

everyone very often especially since I'm based here rather than what you see as

these with a little bit of

a hassle to actually like get off campus and. Kind of. Be more involved

over there so I mostly focus on my own work and whatever you know

work is given to me or whatever that wherever that we have

a meeting it's most always to like a video call or your business video calls or

a phone call so you. So oh gosh this is like he really did it to your

friend you really want to call him out Ashton. Well what asses then you see you

know like Leadership wise or his personality
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if it really struck you and want to do

00:28:04.720 --> 00:28:11.710
it in want to help him in his goals
well ever since your late younger

00:28:12.290 --> 00:28:19.280
than that he’s been incredibly intelligent
he’s most oaken and. I mean he

00:28:19.290 --> 00:28:23.990
started this he started this of nonprofit
to help people out and that’s basically.

00:28:25.620 --> 00:28:31.020
All of us basically example that I always
use he he wants to he wants the uses of

00:28:31.030 --> 00:28:37.220
his own intelligence he wants to use he
wants that have helped other people. Not

00:28:37.230 --> 00:28:40.890
only improve themselves but improve the
world around them and that’s what I really

00:28:40.900 --> 00:28:44.710
think that it kind of defines his mission.

00:28:49.750 --> 00:28:54.920
(Devin) Did you guys want to answer
(Chris) It’s a good, it’s

00:28:54.930 --> 00:29:00.950
a good question because like he’d said
when he mentioned nonprofit groups

00:29:00.960 --> 00:29:07.020
as sort of like the core behind-the-scenes group.
Because we’re too geographically dispersed

00:29:07.030 --> 00:29:13.210
– and even you know some of
us are grad students, are already working;

00:29:13.220 --> 00:29:17.920
some are undergrads; some are just
coming into college – it’s really tough to

00:29:17.930 --> 00:29:23.710
define our own culture. You guys are
business ethics? I’m just trying to tie it to ethics.
But we were kind of all over the place. We're on slack, we're on text, we're on emails.

Sometimes we video call; sometimes we are in person and. You know I'm ten to fifteen years older than most of the group and then so we have this age you know variance and all of these things lead to a lot of different interpretations of how to help and where we are in life and so there's a lot of difficulties but there's also a lot of potential to learn individually like I don't and I share any sentiment like I've been very impressed with Ben's work ethic from the get go it's infectious and it's just nice to work with him and be doing that for a good cause but I were just as much from talking to him you know in one thousand year old student who's just figuring out their major what they want to do in life as I do you know from the other board members who are working in their companies one is in Minnesota or you know Michigan or want to disappear by the Great Lakes. So there's there's just a
lot of potential there it’s

00:30:24.980 → 00:30:28.410
a get together eight years we all look at
things are different mines but the common

00:30:28.420 → 00:30:31.920
denominator is between want to help you
want to help people who want to help

00:30:31.930 → 00:30:36.020
students who are disadvantaged and so
we have that sort of binding agent it’s

00:30:36.030 → 00:30:40.040
a good it provides almost its own direction
because we tie back to that like how do

00:30:40.050 → 00:30:45.330
we make this help some How do we
collaborate in format is to help

00:30:45.340 → 00:30:49.120
a student who doesn’t have kind of thing
so I would say the culture is centered

00:30:49.130 → 00:30:53.190
around that but it’s pretty it’s pretty
please everybody has different goals with

00:30:53.630 → 00:30:59.090
so rather than just think model of business
at the start I enable this also has

00:30:59.750 → 00:31:02.720
a lot of pros the costs of
this because we operate on

00:31:02.730 → 00:31:05.250
a student shop their model saddle

00:31:05.260 → 00:31:11.010
a lot the parents supervising corrupted
dictate. Rethink the sort of chapters and

00:31:11.020 → 00:31:16.550
kind of and for us on the one curriculum
or one partnership model so we try to

00:31:16.560 → 00:31:20.870
interview people who are allied with our
mission and say here’s an example of what
we’ve created in the pot What do you want to offer to schools so maybe someone says

I’m really passionate about three D. Printing can I teach three D.

Printing kites each data science can I teach business at that so really an integral part of that mission is to enable about openness or not and forcing like direct commands that we expect people to obey us like

a challenging trade off if we’re like their supervisors like we want them on the ground to even be initiating their own direction Ashoka complex give and take I think. So how does that tie in with your Hopefully potential growth

in. Like moving into

a new chapter is essentially across the country something like what are the the things that really keep center C like this is our organization like it has these different aspects like what are the core things that you really pass on want to be

established differently chapters so there’s five core talents that I’m really fascinated by that I think similar centricity
from other or both and I guess to be

00:32:36.400 → 00:32:36.610
like

00:32:36.620 → 00:32:41.850
a very ambitious and aspirational but the number one thing that I hope people really

00:32:41.860 → 00:32:47.580
adopt from our mission is this mindset and student created student Jevon instead

00:32:47.590 → 00:32:52.080
oriented the fact that when young people teach other young people that might be

00:32:52.090 → 00:32:53.960
even better than a professor or

00:32:53.970 → 00:32:59.370
a teacher teaching while the fine rigid curriculum and having someone who looks

00:32:59.380 → 00:33:03.890
exactly like you two or three years older working with you for

00:33:03.900 → 00:33:06.230
a year or two you get to see me over

00:33:06.240 → 00:33:11.080
a long period of time I could see you grow and change so I want like this mindset

00:33:11.090 → 00:33:16.420
of students of in student creators that aren’t it is probably

00:33:16.430 → 00:33:22.580
a better and more situations and enables people to be actionable because instead of

00:33:22.590 → 00:33:25.130
them saying I have to be a working professional or

00:33:25.140 → 00:33:27.960
a millionaire to say if that were out me as

00:33:27.970 → 00:33:33.710
a sixteen seventeen eighteen on I could do
my small part so that student mission is

00:33:34.250 → 00:33:40.240
so foundational to what
we believe in so. I’m

00:33:41.180 → 00:33:47.920
just not sure I. Mean obviously
any I think. There’s

00:33:47.930 → 00:33:54.330
a. Lot of knowledge it’s. Just.

00:33:55.380 → 00:34:01.080
You you know Tina and you know
you and. Your future goals

00:34:02.130 → 00:34:02.930
move there’s

00:34:02.940 → 00:34:09.659
a lot I think pretty much every
core or. Some pretty is really

00:34:09.670 → 00:34:14.080
a collection of thirty or forty processes
and it gets really complicated really

00:34:14.090 → 00:34:20.190
quickly and all of us far recent graduates
or even star undergrads not all of us

00:34:20.199 → 00:34:26.600
knew how to do a five one c three
filing war. Our accounting sheets and

00:34:26.610 → 00:34:32.040
a lot of other stuff so pretty much everything
we had to learn from all the Sabbats

00:34:32.050 → 00:34:37.719
from all the processes and document it
sends out in student chapters but one

00:34:37.730 → 00:34:43.750
example is I’ll use for what I understand
what I want some prose to be it’s really

00:34:43.790 → 00:34:50.500
clear and focused now what I want to provoke
portray that vision but then by two

00:34:50.510 → 00:34:54.670
three years you can are starting out it's like oh we do science and we do research

00:34:54.679 → 00:34:58.080 and we do this and it’s not really clear is it a class is

00:34:58.090 → 00:35:04.260 a research is it teaching so the main thing I had to learn is about creating and

00:35:04.270 → 00:35:05.920 conveying that vision in

00:35:05.930 → 00:35:11.630 a clear way and I’m so getting better at it’s still something that can improve on so

00:35:12.060 → 00:35:19.050 So definitely clarity? Clarity. We were actually just talking about that right before we started to

00:35:19.060 → 00:35:25.750 move back from the bathroom, how do we are we marketing ourselves clearly? Like we

00:35:25.760 → 00:35:29.460 like to get feedback from anybody really so like if you guys go to the site we

00:35:29.470 → 00:35:34.300 would love to hear what you think of the site or any of our documents and we do this

00:35:34.310 → 00:35:39.160 sort of with anybody we know who’s either in education or non-profits and the

00:35:39.200 → 00:35:43.970 theme with any organization is like do people know really what you do and

00:35:43.980 → 00:35:47.640 how you do it what are you proposing for value what are you doing that other people

00:35:47.650 → 00:35:53.410 can’t do or how are you doing better than other people so our struggle as far as

00:35:53.420 → 00:35:58.830 what I’ve noticed in six months or ever has been is it clear to people how we’re
helping and who we are and why we’re doing it kinda thing and are we conveying that clearly?

Oh well for me it was a lot of the having to try to integrate a lot of the older files and like accounting sheets since I focused in on the accounting I was having trouble having to basically update everything and having to reach out to everyone and it was a little bit of a struggle because not everyone was available people were not into organization people wouldn’t reply so it was always a long miscommunication early on for at least with me so I would that was one of the biggest struggles for me in trying to get everyone to try to get everything integrated and have basically lots of communication that we can always use. And has that improved since?

A lot more than it has before sometimes it’s a little bit hard to reach out to other people because like I said people leave the organization not always like the volunteers like they won’t answer when we like request Oh hey where’s the reimbursement sheet or stuff like that and they
won't get back to you for like a week or two and then you get

a little stressful but otherwise yes it's

a lot more improved than it used to be. I kinda want to jump back

a little bit to the issue about the age difference in the company, so I know that the

whole goal of the company is to get similar age individuals to teach each other

about different aspects of science and technology. But in regards to

the leaders in the organization and the ones running everything you know I can see

just right here this big age difference so is there any type of interplay within

the company of age and like he's older so you know might have more power or

something that 'cause I know at least personally if I go into a new company as a new hire

just after graduation they're looking at me like oh you know it's the new kid he's super young he doesn't know what he's

doing so is that like you know similar interplay in your organization?

Wow that's...

these are really good questions and it's stuff that we wrestle and we
wrestle with. This is a nonprofit it's a student run nonprofit and we say student run because the workforce is students and you know granted I'm not a student anymore granted I'm probably going back to school anyway but you have a different set of tools to motivate people when you don't have pay or real authority you have to really encourage collaboration and you know make people feel welcome and like their contributions are important so just me being older I may have more experience just seeing what may work and what doesn’t work but at the end of the day like my opinion really isn’t any more important than Ben’s or Andy’s or anybody else or the students who are the front lines out there you know in schools and interfacing with high school or wherever our group is so I may have like a lot more work experience and also more diverse work experience or and or education but when we start talking about how to run SendforC it’s it’s just
00:39:24.530 → 00:39:27.850
bringing that and say Hey I've seen this
or I've seen that kind of thing like it

00:39:27.860 → 00:39:32.800
doesn't it doesn't have any more weight
I can I can try to do that which I have but

00:39:33.730 → 00:39:36.910
people don't want it they're not going
to do it. Like Andy was talking about my

00:39:36.920 → 00:39:40.780
communication like if some of the students
don't know or aren't interested in it you just

00:39:40.830 → 00:39:45.250
crickets you won't hear back from them via e-mail
or text so I have to try a different

00:39:45.260 → 00:39:49.390
approach or something and I struggle with
this and I actually ask Ben frequently

00:39:49.400 → 00:39:55.270
is this going to make impact like how
should I reword this I actually often go

00:39:55.280 → 00:40:01.200
through Ben so that he can apply his
filter to what my thoughts on direction

00:40:01.520 → 00:40:06.110
are. Like hey This is my thought maybe you could
word it in a way that would make

00:40:06.150 → 00:40:10.450
a better impact kind of thing so when you get into a new company you're going to you're

00:40:10.460 → 00:40:13.750
going to see that culture thing you're
talking about and your connection or lack of

00:40:13.760 → 00:40:18.660
connection between your superiors and my
experience has been the good ones will

00:40:18.670 → 00:40:21.500
ask you they're going to ask your
opinion they're going to give you

00:40:21.510 → 00:40:25.890
a second to interject or sort of you
know collect your thoughts on something

and you know I’ve been in plenty of organizations where they don’t do that and

they’re really missing out on the lot of potential. Berkeley U.C.S.D.

USD this is

a lot of brain power right you don’t want to miss that you don’t want to miss the potential of harvesting all these really great thoughts and stuff so I would be any any leader would be silly not to encourage that and that sort of atmosphere

Yeah I don’t think I have anything else to add. That’s fine.

Great questions. Well just to wrap up, what do you guys see for the future of you know both of the organizations you know where do you see it in five, ten or thirty years from now? Let’s go this way. Or do you want me to answer first?

So what’s really good is that a lot of people are getting excited about our mission here in the United States and then also in other places but it’s hard for us to kind of decide like what is too ambitious growth and what is sustainable growth so I think in the next five or ten years ideally we’ll be able to have full time paid staff so we can actually really
train everybody so that’s like

a core tenet we want and really have maybe hopefully thirty forty new student

chapters is what I push for. I agree with that, mainly with I

feel like with full time staff we’d be able to dedicate

a lot more time to the mission. Specifically like I’m still a student so I don’t always have enough time to put into it as much as I wanted so being able to have like a full-time person and that would basically have the role of training people making sure everything works smoothly would ideally be the best and once that’s in place I feel that growth would be a lot easier specifically with training of new chapters would be a lot easier. I think existence in five or ten years I don’t want to be to overzealous but just seeing SendforC still being alive in five or ten years would be a pretty big success I mean a lot of this is
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00:42:49.360 -> 00:42:51.170
a very crowded space nonprofits there's

00:42:51.180 -> 00:42:54.480
a lot of them they're all competing for
funding you're all competing for volunteers

00:42:54.490 -> 00:42:58.510
to be I'm sure has done some nonprofit
volunteer work you know people

00:42:58.520 -> 00:43:02.560
come and go and there's lots of tons there's
no shortage of great causes out there

00:43:02.850 -> 00:43:06.060
to support and that's why they're nonprofits
they don't get they don't get funding

00:43:06.070 -> 00:43:10.520
ey don't get the attention they need and
and I think just having SendforC

00:43:10.530 -> 00:43:14.870
either still alive and kicking or an offshoot
where people who have been with SendforC

00:43:14.880 -> 00:43:18.910
having started other non-profits
and organizations I think would be

00:43:18.920 -> 00:43:23.930
a success and would be a testament to you know the genius or the strength

00:43:23.940 -> 00:43:30.720
behind SendforC. Alright well thank you guys!

00:43:30.920 -> 00:43:36.790
Thank you for coming and being here and sharing
your time with us we appreciated it very much.

— End of Transcription —