

CGS Founder Dr. Marilyn Fitzgerald has followed a singular passion – helping others help themselves – throughout her adult life, which has led to extensive involvement in both domestic and international humanitarian work. Whether participating in community projects or traveling the world as a consultant and volunteer, she is driven by a relentless curiosity and creative imagination seeking to better understand and contribute to answers addressing the ever-present questions of “what-if?”



What if there were no wars?

- What if there was world peace?
- What if there were no hungry children?
- What if there was so much poverty?
- What if all humans had an equal opportunity to prosper?

- What would it require of each of us to contribute toward a fair and equitable world?
-

To answer this question, Marilyn has focused her efforts to understand, pursue, and educate others on the positive and favorable impact of microfinance and social business. She believes they are integral to answering this critical question and the catalyst for bringing about a better tomorrow for those seeking a hand up toward sustainability. As a humanitarian and in promotion of sound humanitarian practices, Marilyn has dedicated her education and utilized her listening skills as a psychologist to better understand the reality of the world. She has combined empathy with an MBA to better integrate business concepts to the world of humanitarian aid. To more fully understand the impact of humanitarian efforts, she conducted field research studies regarding the sustainability of humanitarian aid programs. The results of this research, addressing the unintended consequences of humanitarian aid, appear in *The Relationship between Negotiation and Sustainability in Humanitarian Development Aid Projects*. The research and field experiences are further intertwined and elaborated on in her new book, [*If I Had a Water Buffalo: Microfinance as a Means to Sustainability*](#).

As a humanitarian and in promotion of sound humanitarian practices, Marilyn has dedicated her education and utilized her listening skills as a psychologist to better understand the reality of the world. She has combined empathy with an MBA to better integrate business concepts to the world of humanitarian aid. To more fully understand the impact of humanitarian efforts, she

conducted field research studies regarding the sustainability of humanitarian aid programs. The results of this research, addressing the unintended consequences of humanitarian aid, appear in *The Relationship between Negotiation and Sustainability in Humanitarian Development Aid Projects*. The research and field experiences are further intertwined and elaborated on in her new book, [*If I Had a Water Buffalo; Microfinance as a Means to Sustainability*](#).

Dr. Fitzgerald is founder and president of Common Ground Solutions, LLC, a consulting firm excelling in program evaluation to determine the best practices used in effective, sustainable projects.