

# REWILD SCHOOL

## THE SIDEKICK MANIFESTO

Local leaders with local solutions to local problems will end poverty.

We will not.

Make the following promises:

- I will ride in the sidecar. I will listen to how those already doing the difficult work of building a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities define and determine how to end poverty.
- I will ignore sirens singing songs of scale. Building dignified relationships is a mutual process of learning about and from one another. This takes patience, humility, and authenticity—these things cannot be rushed or easily scaled.
- I will question the utility of my utility belt. Technology and gadgets are sometimes helpful, but they do not address the root causes of poverty. Poverty is about power and politics.
- I will be the perpetual understudy. A lack of self-critique is a crucial reason good intentions often fail. I will always be listening, learning, and seeking a deeper understanding of my role in the story of poverty's end.

- I will welcome my sidekick slaps. I will make mistakes. When I do, I will take responsibility, hold myself accountable, and act differently.
- I will step out of the spotlight. Sustainable solutions to poverty come from within, are bottom-up, and flow from local leaders taking the risks of holding their politicians accountable and challenging the status quo.
- I will exercise narrative humility. I cannot know another's story of material poverty. I don't know how it began or how it will end. It is not my story. Before sharing it with others, I will seek permission: No More Stolen Stories.
- I will explore my dark side. I will ask, "Do I want poverty to end? Who would I be without it? What would I do? Do my politics and consumption patterns perpetuate poverty? Am I complicit in its persistence?"
- I will read Ivan Illich's *To Hell with Good Intentions* repeatedly. Politicians, celebrities, and billionaire philanthropists will tell me I can be a hero. I cannot. The poor are not powerless or waiting to be saved. Illich will check my delusions of grandeur.
- I will hang up my cape. In my search for meaning and significance, I will learn to turn inward and activate my agency before trying to eradicate another's material poverty—which I cannot.