



## How an idea can transform markets

### Michelle Velez

Michelle Velez is a fellow at Endeavor Mexico, which operates in 20 markets around the world, transforming economies by providing mentorship for entrepreneurs to foster sustainable economic growth in emerging markets. Program beneficiaries inspire other entrepreneurs and leading companies that have the potential to employ thousands of people.

In 2013, Endeavor Mexico entrepreneurs employed 15,600 people and achieved combined sales of US \$780 million. Michelle supports the Endeavor Mexico selection process by writing the company profiles for each applicant, ensuring a solid first impression for the mentors and panelists who evaluate the company. Michelle has been inspired by how Endeavor transforms companies, thanks to the strategic advice of the mentor network. She explains, “It is rewarding to work one-on-one on the company profile with the entrepreneurs. Over the course of a few weeks, they receive vital feedback that strengthens their business model and refines their strategy, leaving them with a clearer path for the future of their business.”

*Background:* graduated from Villanova University in 2014 with a double major in environmental science and Spanish, and a business minor

Even those who are not selected to join the Endeavor network have already received invaluable feedback throughout the application process. “I have been inspired by new tendencies in entrepreneurship, as an increasing number of companies are focusing on important public health and environmental issues. It is encouraging to see how a new generation of entrepreneurs is increasingly aware of the importance of incorporating things like social justice and environmental sustainability into their business models, because I believe that is the key to improving our future.”

Michelle has seen how an idea can transform markets. She is enjoying learning more about the business perspective of international development, as well as about Mexican culture. “Beyond my work at Endeavor, it has been rewarding and exciting to experience Mexican culture, and also to grow closer to the many relatives I have here in Mexico.” Michelle especially enjoyed participating in the traditional Day of the Dead celebration at the start of November.

#### **Endeavor, Mexico**

a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting economic growth via mentoring and entrepreneurship



# HIV research, testing, and education-prevention in Lima

Vidya Visvabharathy

I started working in Lima at Impacta-Perú in early September as a member of the community education unit. Impacta-Perú collaborates on numerous global HIV clinical trials that focus on variability, vaccine treatment, and prevention.

The organization brings patients, particularly gay and trans men (who may be HIV positive, negative, or at high risk of contracting HIV) to our clinic to receive free testing, treatment, and preventative materials. I provide support at various community outreach programs and events, helping to raise awareness about the realities of HIV and the services we offer at Impacta. I distribute materials and inform the community about our investigations and projects. Right now, we are working to enroll more patients in our CUTHIVAC clinical trial, a global study that seeks to find a vaccine against HIV working with healthy, HIV-negative study participants. Impacta's participation puts it vanguard of international HIV/AIDS investigations, and much of its work is sponsored by the National Institute of Health.



I am the first PILA fellow at Impacta-Perú, and am grateful that they have warmly welcomed me. The staff is compassionate, friendly, and fun to work with. I translate documents and conference materials, and oftentimes get to give mini-English lessons to co-workers who are curious about learning the language. Many of my co-workers go to patient homes all over Lima to recruit them to come to the clinic and enroll in our studies.

## Impacta, Perú

a nonprofit organization whose research focuses on human behaviour and public health, employing multidisciplinary teams to promote human and social welfare

Selfie with my co-worker, Lucho, on the set, filming a campaign, "Chapa el micro," to encourage enrollment in one of our treatment studies

A few days a week, I accompany my co-workers on their trips to patient homes, and get to hear the patients' unique, often painful accounts. They courageously battle this disease that still has no cure. I am also a study coordinator for an investigation that seeks to define the relationship between interpersonal violence, drug use, and HIV and other STDs amongst the incarcerated in a women's prison in Central Lima. It has been a humbling experience to hear patients' stories, interacting with the women at the prison facility, and seeing the effects of HIV across various groups of people. I am very pleased to be part of Impacta's mission, and am ever so grateful to PiLA for providing me with the opportunity. My experience with Impacta gives me a strong base of nonprofit public health knowledge to work with when I start my Masters in Public Health program next year.

**Background:** graduated from Fordham University in 2013 with a B.A. in Spanish and sociology

# Exploring the potential of innovative companies

Santiago Guerrero

Santiago Guerrero is a fellow at Endeavor Chile, Patagonia, where he combines his passion for international development, business analysis, and Latin America.



As a member of the "Selection and Growth team" of Endeavor Chile, Santiago screens and interviews innovative companies to evaluate their potential to become innovative, scalable, and successful enterprises. If they do, he organizes meetings with mentors with specific areas of expertise to help them grow and scale the companies.

Endeavor breaks down barriers that prevent emerging-market entrepreneurs from reaching their high-impact potential. Hailed by *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman as the "the best anti-poverty program of all," Endeavor identifies entrepreneurs of leading high-growth innovative companies in emerging markets. These entrepreneurs are given world-class strategic advice, access to key networks and other tools that will help them to succeed.

With Endeavor's guidance they expand employment, generate wealth and inspire others to innovate. Often overlooked, these local entrepreneurs are now contributing to private sector development in their countries.

## Endeavor Chile

a global nonprofit that transforms emerging countries by supporting high-impact entrepreneurs



Santiago has been living in Chilean Patagonia for about four months now. Overall, it has been a both challenging and inspiring experience. Even though Santiago is from Ecuador, the PiLA fellowship offers the experience he needed to understand how NGOs and businesses work in the continent he loves the most.

*Background:* from Tulcán, Ecuador, Santiago graduated from Dartmouth College (2014), majoring in economics with focus on international and public economics

## Support PiLA!

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**Donate Now**

Dear Friends of PiLA,

This issue addresses the activities of a handful of our over 50 fellows currently serving across the region. As 2014 winds down, we call on you to **make a tax-deductible gift to support PiLA's mission**. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, PiLA depends on the generosity of visionary individuals—like you—who share our commitment to positively impact life throughout the region. With your support, in 2015–2016 PiLA will continue to place fellows in year-long service posts across Latin America and the Caribbean. Please join the many generous individuals and organizations that support PiLA's critical work to match talented and motivated recent college graduates with NGOs that are grappling with the myriad cultural, social, economic, and political issues that impact the lives of people across the region. Your help is essential to make PiLA's work possible. Please also share this newsletter with family and friends!

To make your gift today, mail a check payable to Princeton in Latin America, 194 Nassau Street, Suite 211, Princeton, NJ 08542–7003, or donate via online here: [www.princeton.edu/~pila/support/](http://www.princeton.edu/~pila/support/). Your gift at any level is critical to the continued success and growth of PiLA. We thank you for your commitment and generosity of spirit.



# Notes from Colombia

Guy Mental

It takes 24 hours in Colombia to get a sense of what sparked the literary genius of Gabriel García Márquez. The fundamental trope of magical realism is that while nothing may seem to make sense to the reader, for Gabo's characters, where paradox reigns, everything appears to be completely in order.

Although the oldest democracy in South America and one of the continent's richest in terms of natural resources, Colombia has a high degree of income inequality. In Bogotá, 40 percent of total income is controlled by seven percent of the population. While education may be free and compulsory for all, school supplies, uniforms, and transportation are often too expensive for poor families; this leaves millions of children without hope of attending school. Similarly, while health care is free, medicines are costly, which exposes poor families to dengue fever, malaria, and other common maladies.

As a PiLA fellow with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice, my daily challenge is to bridge the gap between these two very different worlds in Bogotá. Focusing on four key thematic areas—human rights and access to justice; the environment; free expression, media, and information; and health and development—I have the privilege of working alongside some of Colombia's most talented attorneys, as we attempt to address the roots of poverty and misfortune at the community level.

A sense of hope and promise prevails here. With peace talks progressing between the Santos government and the guerrilla movement, civil society seeks to transition from the wreckage of warfare and begin to address some of the country's most pressing sociopolitical problems. In my short time here, the Vance Center's Bogota-based affiliate has helped to organize a climate change march, and to petition the government to provide more services to some of the country's most impoverished communities, seeking to rebuild public confidence in the rule of law after decades of conflict. As the country inches toward a peace agreement, the Vance Center has shifted focus to issues of transitional justice, to ensure that the countless victims of a decades-long conflict are not forgotten when both sides finally lay down their arms.

While I am proud to play a small part in this historical undertaking, my contributions pale in comparison to what the people of Colombia have given me through their example. Despite heartbreaking structural poverty, particularly in Bogotá's impoverished south, people have shown tremendous courage and resolve. Their optimism inspires me every day, pushing me to look for the good in everything and everyone I meet. As one bike shop owner told me, "Every day we wake up and recognize that things are not ideal, but still we smile."

In popular polls, Colombia has been repeatedly voted one of the world's happiest countries, although analytically, this would seem to be counterintuitive. Not so long ago the country was seen as one of the most dangerous in the world, and while crime rates are down and presidential elections come off peacefully, many still feel insecure walking the streets at night. Religion plays an important role in many people's lives, but this does not explain people's hope for a better tomorrow. National athletic success—as with Colombia's strong showing in the 2014 Copa Mundial—may bring the country together, if only briefly, and politically speaking, Colombia is just as divided as its northern neighbors. But given all its problems, how do Colombians find it within themselves to continue to sustain hope for the future?

It may take all my time here to formulate an answer to this question. People in Colombia are both well-educated and brutally realistic. Given the history of narco-terrorism, paramilitary violence, and incessant guerilla warfare, for Colombians the future is not some vaguely defined concept; rather, it is the next hour, day, and week. People here have learned not to take anything for granted, and for this reason, every step forward expresses great hope and anticipation. Colombians have somehow found a way to look beyond the tremendous obstacles they face, and to find hope in even the smallest things, a lesson from which we all might learn.

**Background:** Guy Mental (Georgetown '14) is working with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice in Bogotá, Colombia



## Get together with former PiLA fellows

Over the last several months, members of the staff and Board of Directors have been organizing get-togethers with former PiLA fellows in an effort to strengthen the ties of our organization's family.



An event on September 18 was held at Salvation Tacos on 39th St. in Manhattan, and was attended by fellows Nora Christiani, Matt Doup, Stephanie Margulies, Kaya Ten-Pow and Natalia Shoup. Board members Mary Connell Lifton, Christina Caspersen, Peter Johnson, Tim Kingston and David Atkinson, and Executive Director Michael Stone also attended. On October 9, David Atkinson met with Dobrimir Parushev and Tim Cheston at The Asgard Irish Pub and Restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and on November 30, he got together in Washington, DC, with Emily Hedin, Lindsey Doyle, Sarah Schaffer, and Mario Moreno at the Steel Plate, the restaurant owned by former fellow Christina Lara and her husband Diton Pashaj, who were most gracious hosts. Also attending this last event was Theresa Williamson, founder and director of CatComm in Rio de Janeiro, and David's old friend and colleague from the Inter-American Development Bank, Joel Riley.

These events produced lively conversations and provided an opportunity to share with the fellows ways in which we believe they can help to strengthen our organization.

**Former fellows, tell us your story.** It's a good one, and it explains why PiLA is such an important organization and why someone should support it. We have experienced remarkable growth in our program, reaching a total of 50 fellows in the current class, and our strategic plan calls for 100 annual fellowships by 2020. But to do so requires a substantial increase in staff and significant improvements in our overall management, including outreach and communications, all of which in turn require a major fundraising effort that would provide us with the resources necessary to strengthen our institutional capacity. PiLA is keenly aware that one way to encourage donations is to explain the impact our program has on fellows, partners and the communities they serve.

**Former fellows, help us with the selection process,** from reading applications to interviewing candidates.

**Give.** Give as much as you feel comfortable giving, but please give. What we seek from our fellows is a high level of participation, which sends an important message to major donors so they can see that PiLA receives the support of young men and women at the beginning of their careers, as individuals who have both served and benefitted PiLA.

**Network.** There are now over 180 former PiLA fellows, and we want to encourage a sense of community and stewardship to ensure that PiLA can continue its work and provide the same opportunities that you enjoyed to future PiLANistas.

Calling all PiLANistas: Pay it forward! Join us by making a recurring gift to support the work of current and future PiLA fellows. Your donation will make a difference.

Gifts can be made online at [www.princeton.edu/~pila/support/](http://www.princeton.edu/~pila/support/) or by calling [609.258.9200](tel:609.258.9200)

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