

April 2010 Newsletter

Spotlight on Nicole Amaral, Endeavor, Santiago, Chile

On Monday morning, I made my way to Endeavor on the metro and a bus, like I had every day since I started my PiLA fellowship last June. But instead of checking my email and starting my work on a new entrepreneur's company profile, I helped clean up the overturned bookshelves, fallen frames and plaster. The news finally confirmed the size of the quake—8.3 in Santiago and 8.8 near the epicenter further south. It was one of the strongest in recorded history. Looking out the window from our office on the 16th floor, Santiago looked almost the same—a true testament to years of strict building codes and anti-seismic construction—but the images of devastation in cities and towns outside and south of Santiago, and even in the poorer sectors of the city, were already all over the news and engraved in our memories for a long time to come. Endeavor Chile, where I had spent the last eight months, was a chaotic frenzy of phone calls and visitors, as we spent the next week trying to locate our volunteers, family and friends. And as we worked that week to determine what our organizational response would be, I struggled with meshing my last eight months with what my own response would be to the uncertainty that lay ahead.

Since arriving at Endeavor in June, I had been learning about what it means to be a high-impact entrepreneur. Endeavor has created a network of volunteers all over the world that help this special type of entrepreneur in Chile and in Endeavor's other locations in Latin America and the Middle East grow their ventures from promising companies, to businesses with the potential to make an impact on their country's development. I had worked with 20-something year old entrepreneurs who were making reusable bags and reducing plastic bag consumption in Chile, with a veterinarian turned entrepreneur who had started Chile's largest zoo from an animal shelter and is educating

Chile's youth on animal and environmental conservation, and even with an architect who patented her own LED lighting technology and is selling Chilean technology all over the Middle East and Europe. For each of these entrepreneurs, I wrote a profile on their company and on their story. I learned business terms that I didn't imagine I would ever use as a political science major and began to understand the hurdles and roadblocks that entrepreneurs in developing countries often face. I was even lucky enough to help Endeavor Chile organize an International Selection Panel in Patagonia, where each of these companies I had worked with for weeks as I wrote their profiles, were selected and are now re-

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Nicole with Endeavor entrepreneurs

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Nonetheless, nothing I had experienced or learned thus far prepared me, or anyone else, with a clear answer as to how an organization that promotes high-impact entrepreneurship should respond in this kind of crisis. And while in the first few days after the quake I was itching to get on the first bus, car or boat that could take me to the most affected areas to start helping in an immediate and tangible way, I learned a lesson in patience and in taking time to assess need—however contrary that seemed to the natural human reactions to act instantly and emotionally in a crisis.

I listened in on conversations in my office between the staff who were working on putting together Endeavor's plan— one that reflects Endeavor's spirit and focuses on doing what it does best: organize and mobilize experience. I listened, as we discussed what we were not: the Red Cross or a UN office. We had no infrastructure or experience for distributing supplies or organizing emergency aid. But I also came to realize that what we did have could be equally as powerful. What Endeavor has is people, a whole network of consultants, entrepreneurs, lawyers, professors, students, and even psychologists spanning across Chile. In the span of a week and a half, Endeavor launched a new program that would send willing volunteers and entrepreneurs into the most affected areas to provide pro-bono consulting and advice to small business owners, helping them get their businesses off the ground again. While amazed at the rapid, but well-thought out strategy we had devised, I was still unsure of how to contribute as a foreigner in a reconstruction and aid campaign characterized by the slogan "Chile ayuda a Chile". Sometimes I felt relegated to a role as an observer, perhaps because I let myself be. Nonetheless, I soon found my own way of helping: keeping my everyday activities at Endeavor—like writing profiles, pushing forward our annual survey, collecting metrics, and interviewing MBA students interested in internships with our entrepreneurs—on track allowed others to put more time into Endeavor's reconstruction effort.



With the Un Techo Por Mi Pais group

"High-impact" entrepreneurship has always been a difficult criterion to explain and to pin



Nicole in Torres del Paine

down with words, but it's often easy to spot when you see it. Though the earthquake has ripped apart and washed away homes, lives, and livelihoods, it has also put a spotlight on regions and industries often forgotten. Perhaps from now we'll find and promote as many high-impact entrepreneurs wielding a hammer or dragging in a fishing net, as we do ones graduating from Santiago's best universities. Regardless, I have a feeling that Endeavor—and the next PiLA fellows here in Chile— will be looking in new places and with fresh eyes at what it takes to be high-impact and how an support a different class of entrepreneur.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of PiLA,

We are excited to announce that PiLA has given 23 fellowships for 2010-11. This is our largest class of fellows yet and we are proud of the impressive list of these accomplished young people. To encapsulate the outstanding nature of these fellows, as well as all of our current and past fellows, I can do no better than relay to you something told to me by one of our benefactors (who said this after reading the last newsletter): "It is inspiring to read about the transformative experiences of PiLA fellows. It is reassuring, too, to see the good that one person truly can accomplish and the change that she can effect. They give me hope for the future!"

In order for PiLA to continue to offer this many placements and to support the fellows in the best way we can, I would ask you will to consider making a donation this year if you have not already added your name to our list of supporters. To our current donors, I extend a warm thank you—we could not run this thriving and growing program without you!

It occurs to me, in writing this note, that I have not shared with you this particular anecdote, passed along to me by a current Endeavor fellow. Apparently, the Endeavor staff call our fellows "PiLAs," not just PiLA fellows or fellows and often ask: "will we receive another PiLA next year?" I love the idea of this nickname—after all, as you know, "pila" means "battery" and I like to think of our fellows as being charged up and ever-ready (forgive me the pun) for their work in Latin America.

Next month, we have Orientation, at which time, I will have photographs and biographies of all our new fellows. So, the May newsletter will literally show you our 2010-11 roster and I hope you will be excited to learn about them. I know that I have greatly enjoyed becoming acquainted with them during this placement process!

Best wishes,



Claire Brown '94
Executive Director

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