

Kyle Lederer is a young person eager to make the world a better place; she is natural organizer with a big heart, sharp intellect, and entrepreneurial savvy. Her passion grows out of “giving purpose to people to act together for the greater good.”

Kyle decided one day to drum up support for an organization she respects –The International Justice Mission (IJM, <http://ijm.org/>). As noted on the organization’s website, the IJM is “a human rights agency that brings rescue to victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to secure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to ensure that public justice systems - police, courts and laws - effectively protect the poor.” Kyle embarked on a plan to raise funds for the IJM in 2010.

Kyle’s approach to the fundraiser she organized (which successfully netted \$3000) combined four special elements: the power of art, a good cause, a savvy approach to teamwork, and a great venue for the main event: an auction of donated artwork and jewelry held in a furniture store in Little Italy, San Diego, with a DJ and great music. How did you go about this?, I asked, to which Kyle responded: “We went door-to-door at local art galleries asking for participation and I rallied all of the creative friends I had from all over the country to collect donations. For weeks, my bedroom was overflowing with pieces of art from Philadelphia, LA, and other crazy locations. My ma even had to drive to LA to get a few pieces from an artist I met online. I love using art as a way to mobilize people’s hearts and minds.”

When asked what it was about the experience that made it work, Kyle credits three deliberate strategies. First, she rallied her friends: four strong women with complementary strengths—able to work together well as a team. Second, she made sure the motivation for participation was clear and easy to understand –identifying a worthy initiative (the international justice movement to stop modern day slavery) that is leading to positive outcomes. Third, she credits the power of social networking and her organizing team’s ability to hear no for an answer without getting demoralized.

As I interviewed Kyle, it became clear to me that she has a gifted leadership style. She is able to excite people about little contributions that, when added together, can make a big difference. She is able to help people see the larger picture of human suffering without creating “paralysis by analysis” (a sense of powerlessness people feel when overwhelmed with insights into the profound magnitude of global problems). “I know people want to be involved, there is real hunger to see change, to be engaged”, Kyle told me. At the same time this desire has to be actionable. Giving people the chance to work together on a fund raiser, targeting a worthy cause is one path forward.

“We need to lead by example,” Kyle says strongly. And it’s important, she adds, to frame the problems we face in bite size chunks otherwise we run the risk of overwhelming people. Looking forward Kyle sees potential in improving mobile communication on a global scale. She is keen to help improve the way people learn and care for themselves –creating connections for resource sharing where such connection did not previously exist. More power to her!