

*Guest Blog Post written by Natalie Cassedy for TBLI CONFERENCE™ NORDIC 2016. Views and opinions are that of the writer and are not the official views of TBLI CONFERENCE™.*

The benefit of impact investing is that it provides long term solutions to economic problems in impoverished areas of the world. The purpose of this is to invest in a company or idea that will lead to economic growth in the region. The control is with the local people, so that can utilize their local resources and create something sustainable and profitable.

Helinä Piik is the Founder and Executive Director of Better World Events, an Event series in developing areas in the world. This organization is a platform for people in these areas to come together and share their ideas on improving the world. She was the moderator for Impact Investing in BoP Markets discussion, and TBLI spoke with her after the panel to gain more insight on her background and the topic of Impact Investing.

### **How did you discover the TBLI conference? And how did it appeal to you?**

Ms Piik found the TBLI conference because she followed the path of positive change. In Geneva, she spoke with a man at an event who was working on a water purification system and he led her to the UN Conference in New York. This conference focused more on donations, and she realized that this did not align with her beliefs on how to accomplish things.

“...I learned that this environment was not for me, because my thinking is so much more business like, the ideas at the conference did not balance with how I believe you should get things done.”

However, here she spoke with someone about the impact investing he did in Africa and he told her to get in touch with Robert Rubinstein. Before she knew it, she was invited to the TBLI Conference in 2015 and she was going to moderate a session.

"And then Robert asked me to moderate a discussion, when you say yes to crazy suggestions amazing things happen."

### **What did you take away from the session on Impact Investing in BoP Markets?**

The Bottom of the Pyramid market is massive, it consists of millions of people. It is important to think of the local communities, listen to them and support them. Instead of focusing on the western world and only our own countries, and we need to think about someone on the other side of the planet who we may not have met before. These people are the ones who we want to have our actions to have an impact on.

“So for me, this is where we should be putting all of our efforts in. The BoP market and seeing them as more than just consumers and investment objects, but as investors. The topic, the title was semi vague so that's why I wanted to turn it around and see that mass, the BoP market, as investors as well.”

The panel she moderated discussed some of the problems that people see with impact investing, including corruption and transparency. The panelists agreed that in order to invest in a BoP market, you need to have people on the ground who can see the day to day operations of the company. The more transparency, the less corruption there will be.