

## Conversation with Martín Burt

In this People First Talk, we explored approaches to activate agency and leadership from within communities using the innovative Poverty Stoplight tool. Watch the talk [here](#).

### Key ideas

- With the prevalence of technology, families who are living in poverty now have the capability to measure and assess their own poverty. This shifts the paradigm away from a top-down approach to one that honors the agency that exists within these families & communities.
- The Poverty Stoplight activates the potential of families to lift themselves out of poverty. Using simple technology, it offers a self-assessment survey with 50 indicators and an intervention model that enables people to develop practical solutions to overcome their own challenges.
- These bottom-up metrics illuminate the fact that each family may be doing well on some dimensions and not so well on other dimensions, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of “who is poor” and a more tailored approach to forming solutions.
- When the family owns their data, they have the agency to reflect and take action; instead of top-down national development plans, families create their own development plans.
- Albert Bandura, a psychologist from Stanford University, said that for people to change, they have to answer two questions: (1) Is it worth it? (agency) and (2) Can I do it? (self-efficacy)
- Agency is not only for individuals, there has to be social agency. Peer pressure and group support can accelerate motivation and action.
- For every challenge, there are positive deviants. This allows for the creation of solution banks that are built on real solutions that some families have found have worked for them.



### Martín Burt

Founder & CEO,  
Poverty Stoplight,  
& Fundación Paraguaya

“There is no substitute to empowering the head of a household. You already know what they're doing without resources and tools, but empower that woman with information and agency, the head of a household who is empowered is unbeatable.”

## Coming up next

Our next People First Talk will be with Safeena Husain, Founder of Educate Girls on August 3rd at 9:00 a.m. EDT / 2:00 p.m. BST / 6:30 p.m. IST. You can register for the talk [here](#).

For more information on the People First Community and effort, please visit [peoplefirstdev.org](http://peoplefirstdev.org) or sign-up [here](#).

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