

# Understanding Our Economy

## Putting Competition To Work For The Greater Good

(NAPSA)—The real needs of real people. According to one of the world's great thinkers, that's where we need to focus our efforts—instead of on the abstract concepts of money and the financial system.

Buddhist writer Daisaku Ikeda reminds us that money is just a bartering tool with no real value in itself.

To help revive the economy, he suggests that we need the creative energies that competition unleashes, but he proposes competition aimed toward contributing to human well-being instead of pure financial gain.

Setting out his thoughts for 2009, Ikeda calls for a new way of thinking, a shift based on the idea of “humanitarian competition.” As opposed to the traditional forms of competition—military, political and economic, all of which can be described as win-lose games—he proposes humanitarian competition as a new standard; competing to do good, to give the most to society.

Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International (value-creating society), is not alone in calling for a fresh perspective on what we work for and what we value in life. Business schools are now encouraging students to compete in designing projects that, as well as being profitable, bring societal benefit and maybe even some fun, too.



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**Both Buddhist teachings and U.S. business schools propose competition that benefits society as a whole.**

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Ikeda also urges us not to get lost in generalizations about the state of humanity and the world. Instead, our own local community and neighborhood—even our own home—is the place to start.

“Rather than making the great leap to the ‘vast and complex phenomena’ of life,” writes Ikeda, “we should start from the concrete realities of the ‘tiny patch of land’ where we are now.”

It is only by paying close attention to those realities, he concludes, that we can turn to face the challenges right before us, tackle them with all our might and have a big enough heart to contribute something, even a word of encouragement and a smile, to others whose situation may be even tougher than ours.

To learn more, visit the Web site at [www.daisakuikeda.org](http://www.daisakuikeda.org).