

## INTERDISCIPLINARY PARTNERSHIP MOVING THE NEEDLE ON POVERTY

*Two unlikely partners dissolve siloes and jumpstart progress*

**Waycross, Georgia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:** In an anti-poverty ecosystem where political, geographic, and sectoral siloes stand tall, interdisciplinary collaboration often means little more than exchanging dollars or, at best, words. Great ideas get lost in translation gaps, stuck on the back-burner, and trapped in brains with no platform. As the national political landscape grows increasingly polarized, there is a growing need for independence-building organizations to become truly collaborative.

Two groups (one private, one public—one urban, one rural—one national, one southern) endeavor to shake up the status quo to solve a chronic social condition.

Enter *Darwin*, a center for social impact, and *action pact*, a frontlines anti-poverty organization.

“We’re redefining collaboration” says Laura Kisailus, the founder of *Darwin*, whose career path straddles the advertising, tech, nonprofit, and federal sectors. Throughout her career, Kisailus has personally witnessed the dichotomy between for-profit efficiency and public bureaucracy. “Our clients told us that they were ready to stop talking about knocking down silos and wanted to start doing it. So we did.”

*Darwin* has conceived and implemented a dual-phased pilot project to solve poverty. The project embodies the principles of interdisciplinary collaboration to give service providers and recipients a role in designing an effective system. Project implementation is made possible through partnership with *action pact*, an outcome-oriented community action agency in Southeastern Georgia led by Bryan Singleton.

The first phase (already complete): a mission to discover the state of affairs of the nation’s largest social services network chartered to eliminate poverty. In 2018, *Darwin* released a [report of their insights](#) and *unpack™*, a set of actionable systems innovation models for anti-poverty organizations. *Action pact* jumped on board as the first early adopter for these solutions.

The second phase: *Independence Design*. After an insight-rich [strategic branding engagement](#) with *action pact*, Kisailus is ready to “go deeper now.”

*Darwin* and *action pact* have seen first-hand that services claiming to “have been designed for the people” have not “been built by the people.” These two groups will gather historically

412.450.0599

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detached groups of stakeholders around a new table that reflects the diverse array of political opinions, geographic regions, economic circumstances, and leadership arenas.

Kisailus vows to “look beyond the data, look beyond the numbers... to truly understand what’s needed” for funders, frontline staff, and most importantly, the people being served.

In this engagement, Individuals receiving services are not only invited to the table, but will be given a seat at the head. By conducting inclusive and interactive research on what it’s like to navigate and receive services, this pilot initiative will give clients a voice and role in the systems that serve them. The project will result in an empathetic strategic blueprint to reshape the experience of climbing out of poverty—informed by the people, for the people.

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### **About Darwin**

As a [center for social impact](#), *Darwin* partners with changemakers locally, nationally, and globally to solve complex issues. In addition to a focus on poverty, *Darwin* has an [extensive portfolio](#) including transformations in public health, aging, economic development, and conservation.

[Founded by a trailblazer](#) convinced the pace of progress can be accelerated, *Darwin* assembles the sharpest minds and introduces new methods to bridge the gap between intent and outcome.

*Darwin’s* management and design experts inform solutions that reframe narratives, rethink systems, maximize capacity, and modernize policy. Since 2014, the team has worked at the intersection of changemaker and policymaker to provide impact services: strategy, design, media, transformation. To date, *Darwin* has kept their promise to move society forward™ by aligning over 87,000 people, accelerating 30 missions, and impacting 9 issue areas.

### **Press contact**

Laura Kisailus  
Darwin  
412.450.0599  
[laura@madebydarwin.com](mailto:laura@madebydarwin.com)