Village Enterprise
ANNUAL REPORT 2017
Dear Friends and Partners,

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary year, we are filled with gratitude for you—our founders, donors, funders, and volunteers—for your role in transforming the lives of rural Africans. Through your financial support, time, and advocacy, Village Enterprise is making great strides toward our mission of ending extreme poverty through entrepreneurship and innovation.

Since 1987, we have helped improve the lives of over 850,000 women, children and men. In 2017 alone, Village Enterprise started 3,532 businesses and positively impacted the lives of over 70,000 rural East Africans. The United Nations’ #1 Sustainable Development Goal is to end extreme poverty by 2030. For the first time in history, the end of extreme poverty is within reach, and Village Enterprise is on the frontlines!

2017 was a year of transformative growth. We concentrated our impact in the areas we currently work as well as entered new regions in Southwest Kenya and Northern Uganda. We formed new partnerships with the Lwala Community Alliance, Cartier Foundation and the Greater Impact Foundation, and we expanded our relationship with existing partners such as Geneva Global, the Arcus Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Society.

In addition, we completed a large-scale, independent, three-year Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Village Enterprise program collecting data from 5,774 households. The RCT provides solid evidence that our Graduation program is a cost-effective, scalable, and sustainable solution to increasing the income and savings of the very poor.

On the strength of the RCT results, Village Enterprise was selected from 80 organizations to participate in the first-ever Development Impact Bond (DIB) for poverty alleviation in Africa. USAID Development Innovation Ventures, DFID (UKAID) and an anonymous philanthropic fund will provide $4.2 million of outcome funding and investors will provide the working capital. Instiglio will perform the role of project manager and process evaluator, and Global Development Incubator (GDI) will act as the trustee of the Outcome Fund. Impact will be assessed through an RCT conducted by IDinsight. The DIB will launch in November 2017.

In other “firsts” this year, we completed a feasibility study to explore expansion through partnerships in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; received new endorsements from The Life You Can Save and ImpactMatters, and participated in the invitation-only Partnership for Economic Inclusion hosted by the World Bank.

As we become increasingly recognized as a thought leader in the poverty alleviation sector, we have forged new strategic alliances that significantly expand our reach, achieve greater impact, and provide long-term funding to scale beyond our founders’ wildest dreams. At the same time, we would like to acknowledge the critical role that individual donors play in our current success and future growth. Our donor loyalty and retention rate are unparalleled, and the unrestricted dollars that individual donations provide allow us to invest in the people, systems, and technology to consistently deliver quality programs.

We are grateful for your support of our efforts to create hope and opportunity for those who are most in need. We look forward to continuing our collaboration!

With appreciation,

Dianne Calvi
Debbie Hall

Celebrating three decades of ending extreme poverty through entrepreneurship and innovation.

39,207 Businesses Started
Charity Navigator 4-Star Rating
850,000+ Lives Impacted
Protecting Bonobos in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Arcus Foundation engaged Village Enterprise to conduct a study in the TL2 (Tshuapa-Lomami-Lualaba) region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to determine the feasibility of establishing our program there. This biodiversity hot spot is home to the endangered bonobo great apes. Bonobos, who are only found in the DRC, are humankind’s closest living relatives, and are endangered due to poverty and conflict, which fuel the hunting of wild animals (bushmeat) for food.

Village Enterprise is assessing the feasibility of introducing our program into the TL2 region. In April, our staff travelled there on a fact-finding mission that included journeying by motorbike, canoe and on foot to conduct focus groups with community leaders, and learn about the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of the bushmeat value chain.

Though we have not fully determined Village Enterprise’s future role in the TL2 region, we are excited to have the opportunity to explore our program in this new and very difficult context. Final feasibility results will be submitted to the Arcus Foundation this fall.

Innovative Collaboration Integrates Poverty Alleviation & Community Health in Kenya

In January, Village Enterprise and the Lwala Community Alliance launched a new partnership to tackle the most intractable challenges faced by people living in poverty in southwest Kenya. This first-of-a-kind project augments Lwala’s pioneering community-led holistic health model with Village Enterprise’s expertise in microbusiness development. This collaboration was seeded when Village Enterprise won the “Design Out of Poverty” contest at last year’s Sankalp summit in Nairobi.

The Lwala Community Alliance is a Kenyan-founded health and development non-profit that serves 20,000 people in Migori County, a region with particularly high rates of HIV and child mortality. Lwala is best known for its success in increasing skilled delivery rates for pregnant women, reducing infant mortality, lowering rates of teen pregnancy, and raising primary school completion rates for girls. With a new grant from The Greater Impact Foundation, Village Enterprise will train 4,200 new entrepreneurs and jump-start 1,400 new businesses over the next three years, reinforcing Lwala’s health and educational impact.

Partnership Expansion with Geneva Global’s Speed Schools in Uganda

In 2016, we expanded into the remote Nyowa district in Gulu, Uganda, to partner with Geneva Global on their successful Speed School program. Speed Schools cover three years of curriculum in just one year, and are designed to address the needs of refugees and other children who are behind in school. Village Enterprise implements the economic development component of the program by helping parents and caretakers create a sustainable income and savings stream to support their children’s continuous education.

This year, building on the success of last year’s pilot, Village Enterprise further expanded into the Nwoya region to create 339 new businesses. In addition, we were engaged by Geneva Global to conduct a week-long ‘social and economic empowerment’ technical assistance training for eight Geneva Global implementing partners and to develop a practical, interactive training manual on social and economic empowerment.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2018

2018 brings more exciting developments including the much-anticipated distribution of our RCT results, launch of the first Development Impact Bond in in Africa, expansion into the West Pokot region of Kenya, and a new partnership with Mercy Corps with funding from the Mastercard Foundation to create youth-based agribusinesses in Northern Uganda.
The fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2017 was one of exceptional funding growth for Village Enterprise. We surpassed our ambitious goal to raise $2.9 million by over a half million and exceeded the prior year’s revenue by 74%. Income from foundations and corporations were the areas of highest growth, due largely to new three-year grants from Cartier Philanthropy and the Greater Impact Foundation, which we have strategically pursued for program sustainability. Individual donors and family foundations continue be critically important as they provided almost half of our total budget and the majority of our general operating (undesignated) funding.

The second phase of our partnership with Geneva Global for their Speed School project generated increased revenue of 59% over the prior year to expand our footprint in Northern Uganda. Focusing on consulting and technical assistance work, the Village Enterprise Accelerator was responsible for a 68% rise in earned income and utilized our organizational strengths to support the work of partners in East and Central Africa.

Expense growth over the prior year was tied to programmatic expansion, as well as the establishment of small satellite offices in Nwoya and Kampala, Uganda, and Migori and Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi and Kampala offices facilitate our collaboration with partners and are not a base for program expansion. FY17 expenses rose by 32% over the prior year, primarily driven by growth in program services, which increased by 42%, while fundraising expenses declined and management expenses remained stable. We continue to invest in both human capital and technology as a means of simultaneously improving our program and increasing our efficiency. The transition to Salesforce as a donor management platform and the introduction of Wrike project management software are examples of new tools which have increased our expenses, but also delivered significant organizational benefits that support future growth.

Financials

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“OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, WE’VE SEEN THE PART THAT VILLAGE ENTERPRISE HAS PLAYED IN ALLEVIATING EXTREME POVERTY—IT’S REAL, IT’S TRANSFORMATIVE, AND IT’S GETTING BIGGER EVERY DAY.”

Andy Bryant, Segal Family Foundation
Endorsements

This year, Village Enterprise earned new endorsements as well as retaining previously earned ones. Village Enterprise is the only Graduation program that has been endorsed by all of these rigorous charity evaluators.

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**THE LIFE YOU CAN SAVE: NEW TOP CHARITY FOR 2017**

Village Enterprise is now a top charity of The Life You Can Save (TLYCS).

The Life You Can Save (TLYCS) believes that living an ethical life involves using some of our wealth and resources to improve the lives of those living in extreme poverty, and helps donors find effective charities with high impact interventions. TLYCS is based on the Effective Altruism philosophy of Peter Singer.

“We’re confident that Village Enterprise offers our supporters one of the best giving opportunities for 2017 and hope you’ll spend some time learning more about the organization’s Graduation program approach to achieving lasting economic empowerment and security.”

Peter Singer

**IMPACTMATTERS: OUTSTANDING QUALITY & EVIDENCE OF IMPACT**

Village Enterprise has received a top rating in a rigorous Impact Audit with ImpactMatters, a new organization founded by Yale economist Dean Karlan, founder of Innovations for Poverty Action.

ImpactMatters was founded to help donors identify nonprofits that offer the best return on charitable dollars, as well as to help nonprofits strengthen their production and use of evidence to deliver effective programs. Organizations are rated in four key areas: quality of evidence, cost of impact, quality of monitoring systems, and learning and iteration.

“Village Enterprise has an exceptionally strong record of iterating its program based on high-quality data.”

Impact Matters Audit

**CHARITY NAVIGATOR, GUIDESTAR, TOP NONPROFITS: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY**

These new endorsements augment our fourth year with a 4-star Charity Navigator, as well as our top Guidestar Platinum and Top Nonprofits Ratings.
The Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond (DIB) is the first-ever outcome-based impact bond for poverty alleviation in Africa. DIBs are a new kind of results-based funding mechanism to attract new sources of capital to solve global challenges, and, at the same time, give outcome funders assurance that they will only have to pay back investors when we achieve measurable results. DIBs favor partners that can offer the best value-for-money in achieving development results.

Village Enterprise was selected from over 80 organizations evaluated based on the strength of our Randomized Controlled Trial’s evidence. Through this DIB, Village Enterprise will receive working capital up-front from socially-motivated investors. USAID Development Innovation Ventures, DFID (UKAID) and an anonymous philanthropic fund will provide the funds to pay back investors after we’ve successfully increased the food consumption and net assets of our business owners. Ongoing rigorous measurement improves learning and growth towards delivering ever-more effective programs.

Why we are excited about this project:

• With positive results from our RCT conducted by Innovations for Poverty Action, we are creating a demonstration project on how to scale up a cost-effective Graduation model while ensuring quality of implementation at scale.

• The DIB is attracting new investment capital and giving outcome funders the assurance they are funding a poverty alleviation program that works based on measurable results.

The Village Enterprise Accelerator

In 2016, we launched the Accelerator to step-up the pace of poverty alleviation through partnerships, innovation and research. In 2017, we strengthened the Accelerator’s foundation to prepare for rapid scaling. Key accomplishments this year included:

Expanded the scope of our program with existing partners Geneva Global, the Arcus Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Society. (See program highlights).

Piloted and tested new innovations from our field staff such as linking Business Savings Groups to formal banks in Uganda and a new visual business planning tool.

Hired Liz Corbishley as the Accelerator’s first director, located in Nairobi.

Held our 8th annual “Innovations Summit”, our weeklong team-wide gathering to reflect on the “big picture”: what we can learn, hone, and create, to deliver the gold standard in Graduation programs.

Engaged the International Centre for Social Franchising (ISCF) to help us develop our Accelerator strategy and plan for future growth.
The Need

Village Enterprise is committed to achieve the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 1.1: End Extreme Poverty by 2030.

767 million people in the world are extremely poor according to the World Bank. This means that they live on less than $1.90 a day. Over half of the extreme poor reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. While 100 million people escaped extreme poverty between 2012 and 2013, the number of extreme poor in Sub-Saharan Africa is still staggering at 389 million. This is more people than in all other regions combined.

Village Enterprise works in remote rural areas of East Africa where nearly 60% of the population lives below the extreme poverty line. Without an adequate source of income, the rural poor are unable to provide basic needs for their families—food, education, adequate housing, and access to medical care, and the cycle of poverty is frequently carried down through generations.

The good news is that there has never been greater attention placed on alleviating global poverty than now. As recently as 1981, 44% of the world’s population lived in extreme poverty. Today, it’s less than 10% and falling. For the first time in history, ending extreme poverty is within reach and Village Enterprise is at the forefront of achieving that goal.

“This is the best story in the world today.”
Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank
We believe in the power of the entrepreneurial spirit to transform lives. Our mission is to end extreme poverty through entrepreneurship and innovation.

To accomplish this, Village Enterprise implements a cost-effective, group-based, one-year graduation program for rural Africans who live on less than $1.90 per day. We call this a ‘Graduation model’ because the intent is to help them graduate out of extreme poverty. By combining highly effective targeting to reach the extreme poor with business creation through a cash grant, business and financial literacy training, mentoring, and access to savings groups, Village Enterprise provides participants with a sustainable path out of extreme poverty. Village Enterprise entrepreneurs are able to provide better nutrition for their families, send their children to school, improve their living conditions, and, for the first time, build household savings.

Integrated conservation training ensures that new business activities promote environmental best practices. Examples of businesses include farming, livestock, small retail stores and restaurants, tailoring, and beekeeping.

**A Group-Based Approach**

**TARGETING**
We identify individuals who live under $1.90 a day and who have no prior business experience using a participatory wealth ranking exercise and verify eligibility through the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI).

**BUSINESS SAVINGS GROUPS**
We organize participants into Business Savings Groups (BSGs) of 50 people each at the beginning of our program. BSGs are a self-managed form of microfinance where members save money together every week and can loan out accumulated capital to each other, thus providing members with a buffer from life’s unexpected events and access to growth capital. Our Business Savings Groups serve as a safety net as well as our exit strategy.

**TRAINING**
Within the BSG, we empower groups of three individuals to create, operate, and sustain income-generating businesses. Training occurs at the BSG level and includes modules on financial literacy, viable business opportunities, leveraging existing resources, marketing, profit and loss, basic accounting, savings, and conflict resolution skills to improve management and operational capacity.

**SEED CAPITAL**
Each qualified business creates a business plan and receives a $150 cash grant over two disbursements to jump-start the enterprise. Our local business mentors guide groups to select an enterprise that is best positioned to flourish given the team’s skill set, local market conditions, risk factors, and profitability.

**ONGOING MENTORING**
Through a strong network of business mentors (field staff who live in and around villages served), we provide monthly mentoring to help the new entrepreneurs gain confidence, overcome initial challenges, expand, and ultimately become self-sufficient.
What Makes Village Enterprise Unique?

Village Enterprise delivers a cost effective, innovative and results-oriented Graduation model that makes us unique in our sector:

**Targeting the extreme poor and most vulnerable.** A rigorous targeting methodology ensures that we serve those at the very bottom of the pyramid. 80% of our participants are women.

**Cost effective graduation out-of-extreme poverty program.** Achieving results at significantly lower costs than other graduation models.

**Focus on microenterprise.** Business generation creates new incomes and savings for our entrepreneurs. Business groups of three individuals each bring diverse skillsets, spread risk, build social capital and produce cost efficiencies.

**Grants, not loans.** Allowing new business owners to immediately reap the benefits of their profits.

**We succeed where others dare not go.** Working in poorer and far more remote villages than are typically served by other NGOs and microfinance organizations.

**Rigorous monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.** Early adopters of smartphone-based data collection and reporting tools like TaroWorks.

**Local East African leadership model.** 95% of our field staff are African.

**Innovation and collaboration in our DNA.** Village Enterprise’s Accelerator is both an on-the-ground community-based implementer in rural Africa and a Silicon Valley, innovation-driven social enterprise.

**Quality at scale.** Other models build systems for scale; we ensure quality at scale by integrating talent with technology at the grassroots level.

**We cannot end extreme poverty alone.** Village Enterprise partners with other NGOs, government agencies, foundations, research institutions, corporations, religious institutions and giving networks.

**Endorsed by experts.** Village Enterprise is the only Graduation program that has been recognized by Charity Navigator, The Life You Can Save, and ImpactMatters, as a high impact, cost-effective, and transparent organization.
Our Impact

In 2017, we completed a large-scale, independent, three-year Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Village Enterprise program. This RCT, which was designed and conducted by academics from the University of Chicago, Princeton, Oxford and Yale, was unique in its breadth and complexity and involved over 5,774 households in 138 villages and five separate treatment arms.

This study rigorously evaluated the impact of delivering the Village Enterprise microenterprise model as well as those of delivering cash alone, and each compared against a control group that received no treatment. For each variant, the RCT evaluated the marginal benefits of additional extensions. This included savings group formation in the Village Enterprise model as well as a short behavioral intervention alongside the cash transfer. Additional study arms were formed for operational research.

Data from Village Enterprise’s RCT shows:

• The Village Enterprise program is an extremely cost-effective approach to poverty alleviation with a benefit-cost ratio comparable to the best performing Graduation pilots

• Village Enterprise microenterprise programming performed better on both income and consumption than cash only

• Confidence in the effectiveness of Graduation programs in lifting people out of extreme poverty is increased.

We look forward to sharing the endline results of our eagerly awaited three-year study. RCT results are being used as the benchmarks for the Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond (DIB).

MEET BETTY, SHE IS 1 OF …

39,207  
New Businesses

156,239  
New Business Owners

850,500  
Lives Impacted

“We are happy.” Betty Amase says with a smile as she describes the life she imagines for herself and her three daughters five years from now.

“I have a motorbike,” she continues. “I drive it to town, each day to sell my vegetables at the market.”

“We have a big house!” adds Betty’s daughter Rachel. “And a cow grazing in the yard!”

“I see that I’m empowered.” Betty says with finality.

Betty’s husband left several years ago and she struggled to care for their three daughters. The girls had to drop out of school. Each day, Betty fought to provide enough food for their one simple meal per day.

Betty’s fortunes began to turn when she was invited to join the Village Enterprise program. Together with her two co-business owners in Ushindi (“victory” in Kiswahili) Business Group, Betty has planted and harvested local greens that she sells in Kitale town. Thanks to her thriving small business, Betty generates enough income to feed her family two meals a day as well as take care of their needs. She is sending her oldest daughter to university and is saving to return Rachel to secondary school. Rachel, inspired by her mother’s resilience and success, has high hopes for her own future. “I am going to study business administration and start a business, just like my mother,” she explains.

Betty’s business allows her to provide for her family. More importantly, these opportunities have broken the cycle of poverty. The next five years look bright for Betty and her daughters. So do the next ten years. And the ten after those.

“VILLAGE ENTERPRISE HAS GIVEN US OPPORTUNITY, SOMETHING WE NEVER HAD BEFORE”
Lead Donors & Partners

Visionary Level $100,000 & Above

Individuals
Katie and Brian Boland
Bill Elmore

Institutions
Anonymous
Cartier Philanthropy
Geneva Global
Greater Impact Foundation
Younger Family Fund

Leadership Level $25,000 - $100,000

Individuals
Anonymous
Len Baker and Mary Anne Nyburg
Ken and Cheryl Branson
Pat and Debbi Brown
Jennifer and Dale Fuller
Debbie and Russ Hall
Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trusts
Larry and Sue Langdon
Mandy Lowell and Charles Munger
DeeDee and Burt McMurtry
Laura Ellen and Bob Muglia
Linda and Ted Schlein
Cynthia and Bruce Sewell
Hagit and Oren Zeev

Institutions
Anonymous
Arcus Foundation
Boeing Corporation
Budongo Conservation Forest Station
Charles Abbott Associates
Evolved Enterprise
FHI360
John F. and Mary A. Geisse Foundation
Imago Dei Fund
Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund (SV2)
The Segal Family Foundation
UNFCU Foundation

Major Level $5,000 - $25,000

Individuals
Emeka Ajoku and Affi Ekerenduh
Ken and Hillary Altmann
Anonymous (3)
Jeff and Christina Bird
Barbara Bishop and Michael Leavell
Katie and Mark Bowles
Jane and Robert Burgess
Joe Chernesky and Mona Sabat
Rob and Stacey Chess
Chris and Jessie Colburn
Rebecca and Cy Colburn
John Cope
MJ Elmore
Lynn and Steve Freeman
Jay and Joyce Friederichs
Edward Friederichs
Norm Godinho
Lisa Guerra and Charles Kung
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Lisa and Cal Huntzinger
Joanne Kagle
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Beth and Guy Kawasaki
Rich and Gina Kelley
Peggy and Pedro Lizard
Anjanette and Greg Lundell
Geri and Scott Mecomber
Jane and Michael Marmor
Jackie and Lee Mighdoll
Andy and Mary Naegeli
Susan Packard Orr and Lyn Orr
Marcia and Bill Pade
Al Pierce
Spyridon Triantafyllis
Kim and John Whitcombe
Greg and Cheryl Wood
Susan and David Young

Institutions
3rd Creek Foundation
Cogan Family Foundation
Gravity Payments
Heaven’s Helping Hands Foundation
Menlo Church
Parnccut Family Foundation
Trinity Presbyterian Church
West Foundation
Zatisi Catering Group

Other Institutional Donors
Impact Makers Table
Aid For Africa
Piedmont Community Church

Matching Gifts & In-Kind
3i Leadership Consulting
Amazon
Apple
Bain and Company
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Baxalta
Boeing
C(3) Wines
Google
Intuit
Martin+Mo
Mayer Brown
Microsoft
Netflix
Oracle
Salesforce.org
Visa

How Can I Support Village Enterprise?

Donate
Online or via check or credit card
Consider a gift of appreciated stock or mutual funds
Check out corporate matching

Volunteer
Your time or services.
Find out about Planned Giving opportunities.
Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For More Information, please contact Lucy Valentine Wurtz at lucyw@villageenterprise.org, or visit us at villageenterprise.org.
Our Team

U.S.
Caroline Bernadi  
Senior Director of Institutional Giving
Dianne Calvi  
President & CEO
Kelsey Ingram  
Executive Assistant & Office Manager
Kathy Perkes  
Director of Finance & Human Resources
Lindsay Cope  
Associate Director of Institutional Partnerships
Lucy Valentine Wurtz  
Development & Communications Director
Shwetha Shivarama  
Development Manager

Kenya
Carolyne Wafula  
Field Coordinator
Dinah Adori  
Finance & Administration Associate
Donah Chilo  
Monitoring & Evaluation Associate
Eric Ombagi Onchoke  
Finance & Administration Associate
Immaculate Nduku  
Human Resource Officer
Linnet Ayuma  
Finance & Administration Manager
Liz Corbishley  
Accelerator Director
Nancy Chumo  
Assistant Country Director
Nancy Shikuri  
Field Coordinator
Nathaniel Kimutai Maiyo  
Field Coordinator
Tobias Ouma  
Field Coordinator
Tadeo Muriuki  
Country Director
Violah Kishoin  
Innovations Coordinator

28 Business Mentors  
3 Enumerators

Uganda (Soroti)
Anthony Omongin  
Field Coordinator
David Arach  
Innovations Program Associate
Emukok Sam  
Human Resource Officer
Gerald Kyaliisiima  
Field Coordinator
Isaac Otim  
Senior Field Coordinator
Omiat Samuel  
M&E Program Associate
Stellah Ikiring  
Finance & Administration Assistant
Winnie Auma  
Country Director
18 Business Mentors  
5 Enumerators

Uganda (Kampala)
Zach Hoins  
Chief Operating Officer
Simone Shaheen  
Strategic Partnerships Manager

Uganda (Hoima)
Celeste Brubaker  
Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning
Cissy Nakayimba  
Finance & Administration Assistant
Dennis Kwaligira  
Finance & Administration Associate
Francis Mukonyezi  
M&E Program Associate
Geoffrey Kajuma  
Field Coordinator
Martin Mutebi  
Field Coordinator
Mildred Wengonzi  
Innovations Program Associate
Nafees Ahmed  
Technical Assistance Manager
Peter Dema  
Assistant Country Director
Solomon Tumusiime  
Field Coordinator
16 Business Mentors  
5 Enumerators

Uganda (Nwoya)
Zita Akwero  
Field Coordinator
Stephen Onekalit  
Project Officer
10 Business Mentors  
4 Enumerators (part-time)

Village Enterprise Fellows
Hannah McCandless  
Communications Fellow
Meghan Bodo  
M&E Fellow Princeton in Africa

Board of Directors
Emeka Ajoku, Treasurer
Jamie Austin  
Barb Bishop
Katie Boland  
Pat Brown
Dianne Calvi, President & CEO
Joe Chernesky  
Joe Dougherty
Jay Friedrichs  
Tim Geisse
Debbie Hall, Board Chair
Aleksandra Peters  
Tim Tight, Secretary
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Advisory Council
Brian Boland  
VP of Publisher Solutions, Facebook
Charlie Bresler  
Executive Director, The Life You Can Save
Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg  
President, AWARD, African Women in Research & Development
Jessica Jackley  
Social Entrepreneur, Co-founder of Kiva
Traolerance Addy  
Founder & President, Plebys International
Our Story

Since 1987, we have created over 39,000 sustainable businesses, trained over 156,000 entrepreneurs, and transformed the lives of over 850,000 East Africans.

1987-2000
Founding Phase

1987
Village Enterprise Fund (VEF) was founded by Brian Lehnen and Joan Hestenes who were motivated by their Christian faith to help the poor start micro-businesses.

2001
2008
Decision to focus efforts on East Africa. First paid staff hired.
10,000 businesses started.

2001-2009
Growing

2001

2008

2008

2010-15
Innovating

2010
Dianne Calvi, first CEO hired and first 5-year Strategic Plan developed.

OUR VISION

A world free of extreme poverty, where people have the economic means to sustain their families
Scaling for Impact

In the next five years, Village Enterprise will make a significant contribution to the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goal #1 of ending extreme poverty. Village Enterprise is scaling our impact exponentially through expansion of our field operations and leveraged partnerships, transforming us from an organization that lifts hundreds of thousands out of extreme poverty to one that reaches millions.

OUR MISSION

To end extreme poverty in rural Africa through entrepreneurship and innovation