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Founders Pledge Endorses Village Enterprise as a Top Charity for Women's Empowerment

San Carlos, California, December 21, 2018 -- Founders Pledge, a charity through which company founders and investors commit to donating a percentage of their personal proceeds to a charity of their choice following a successful exit, announced today that they have endorsed [Village Enterprise](#) as a top charity for women's empowerment. Village Enterprise was selected along with several notable organizations including StrongMinds, Bandhan, and No Means No Worldwide, which received a provisional recommendation. Village Enterprise was endorsed as a [top charity](#) based on its rigorous evidence of impact, cost-effectiveness, and organizational readiness to absorb significant new funding.

Launched in the U.K. in June 2015, [Founders Pledge](#) now operates in 21 countries, including an active presence in the tech-laden San Francisco Bay Area. Founders Pledge makes the world of philanthropy easier to navigate by conducting extensive research to find the best donation opportunities on issues ranging from global poverty to climate change to mental health. To date, Founders Pledge has attracted \$630m in pledges and fulfilled \$91m in donations.

Founders Pledge's newest area of focus is women's empowerment, defined as simply improving women's lives in low- and middle-income countries. The World Economic Forum's yearly Global Gender Gap Report tracks the global progress towards gender parity on four dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Its 2017 report found an average gap of 32% remaining across the four dimensions with no improvement on the 31.7% average gap in 2016. If those trends persist, it will take another 100 years to fully close the global gender gap.

Founders Pledge started with a list of 163 women's empowerment charities and shortlisted 15 before selecting the final four. According to the Founders Pledge's report, "Village Enterprise excels at improving the lives of women, and has strong 3rd party evidence that its model is an effective way of addressing extreme poverty... In addition, Village Enterprise is primed to scale and could productively use up to \$28M in additional funding over the next three years."

Village Enterprise's poverty "graduation" program targets the extreme poor who live on \$1.90 or less per day and provides business and financial literacy training, seed funding, mentoring, and access to business savings groups to people living in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Entrepreneurs typically work together in groups of three to set up one business, and 10 of these groups then pool their resources to form a Business Saving Group (BSG), a self-managed form of microfinance. An average of 73% of Village Enterprise's program recipients are women. A recently completed 3rd party RCT conducted by Innovations for Poverty Action demonstrated increases in assets and consumption, as well as subjective well-being and nutrition, among program participants.

“With the profits and savings from their businesses, entrepreneurs can send their children to school, feed their families more nutritious food, and break cycles of poverty that can span generations.” said Village Enterprise CEO Dianne Calvi. “We have set an ambitious goal of lifting 20 million Africans out of poverty by 2025, and we are grateful to Founders Pledge for helping us achieve that goal.”

About Village Enterprise

Village Enterprise has started over 43,000 businesses, trained over 169,000 new small business Owners, and positively impacted the lives of over 940,000 people. Village Enterprise is one of the only nonprofits in the world that has received top ratings across all five of these rigorous charity evaluators: Charity Navigator (4 star), Guidestar (Platinum), Impact Matters (5 star), The Life You Can Save (recommended), and Great Nonprofits (highest rating).