



Sowing the Seeds of Growth

Village Impact Report | Feb 2022 | Vol 11

Letter from the CEO

Thanks to your support, Village Enterprise continues to grow exponentially despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Our ability to increase our scale and impact demonstrates the commitment of our entire team, the willingness of team members to pitch in when needed, and the strength of our organization.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year in June, we've started 2,442 businesses and trained over 7,300 first-time entrepreneurs in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. We wouldn't have been able to achieve these results without the support of our partners.

- In Kenya, we worked with Catholic Relief Services on the USAID-funded Nawiri project to end childhood malnutrition, the government of Kenya on the World Bank-funded Kenya Social and Economic Inclusion Project (KSEIP), the government of West Pokot on the Open Society Foundation-funded Economic Justice Program, Wasafiri Consulting with funding from Shack-Dwellers International to scale microbusinesses for healthy and sustainable food systems, and UNWomen on a Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)-funded project to empower female entrepreneurs through climate smart agri-businesses.
- Working with the government of Rwanda, we successfully launched two cohorts of 1,680 first-time entrepreneurs.
- In Uganda, we wrapped up the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs-funded Park Action Project and embarked on a partnership with the Ngogo Chimpanzee Project on an Arcus-funded conservation program. In October, we hosted partners from a few of our women's

empowerment-focused projects at our second annual Voices of Tumaini virtual event.

To drive this expansion of our impact, we recruited and onboarded over 140 new full-time staff members since July 2021. We welcomed a new Vice President of Digital Solutions, Scott Isbrandt, who is working closely with our technology team to create an activity plan for the development of digital solutions for the next 18 months.

Despite significant delays due to the pandemic, IDinsight completed data collection for an independent randomized controlled trial assessing the outcomes of the Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond (DIB) over the summer 2021. The results are meaningful, positive, and statistically significant, demonstrating that the Village Enterprise program has improved the lives of 95,000 East Africans during the pandemic through this novel and complex financing structure. The DIB was a demonstration project and collective effort showing how results-based funding can drive outcomes and innovation. We look forward to sharing those results next month!

I continue to be immensely grateful to the amazing team of staff and board members that make this work possible as well as our funders and partners that continue to put their trust in our organization.

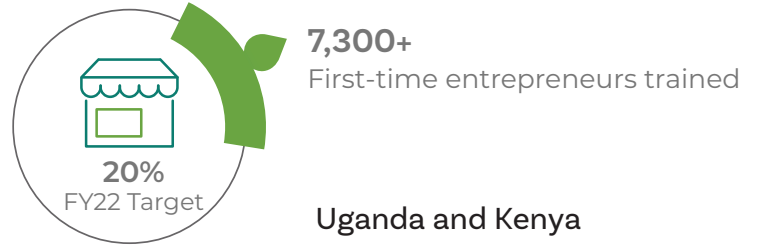
Thank you,

Dianne Calvi
President and CEO



Performance Dashboard

FY22 Outputs to Date



FY21 Cycle 1 Metrics

July 2020 - July 2021

Our monitoring and evaluation systems track our core programmatic components, including using mobile phones and TaroWorks for data collection and Salesforce's relational cloud-based database for information management.

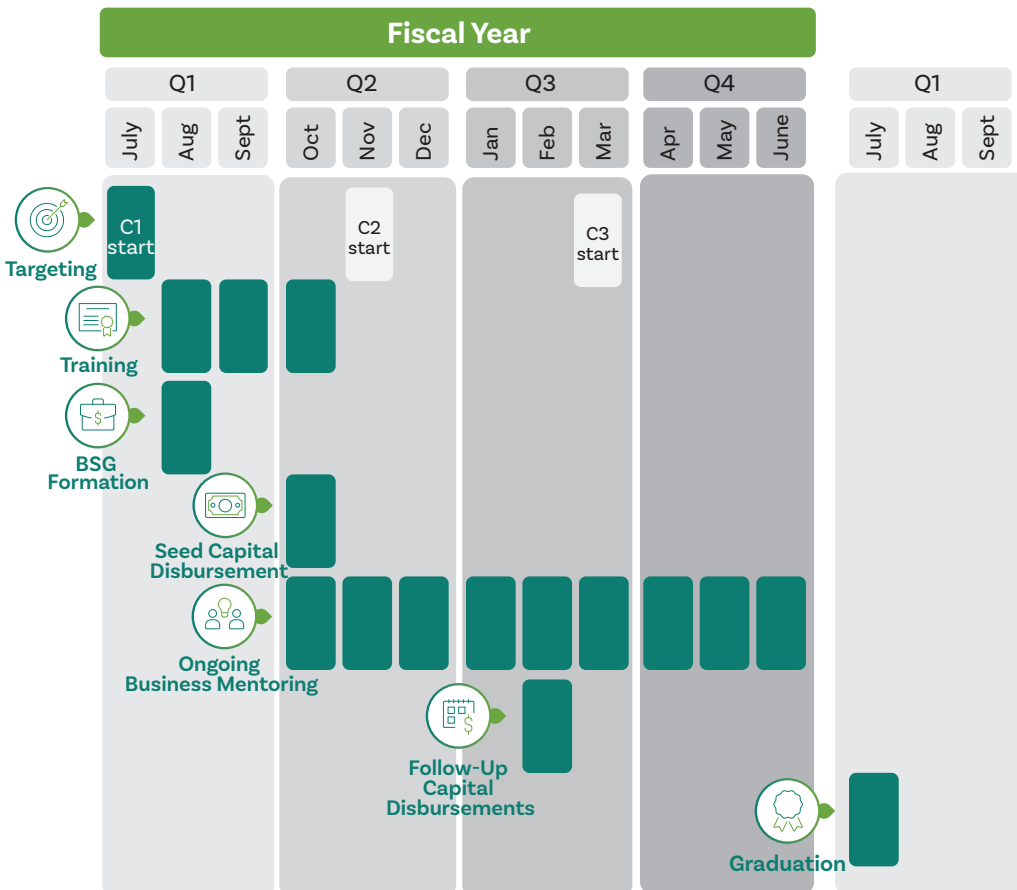
We share data in real-time with staff at all levels of the organization through customized dashboards. Access to timely and relevant data empowers staff to respond quicker, iterate more rapidly, and manage adaptively.

Village Enterprise program participants showed resilience despite the continued economic challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Households saw an average increase of their consumption and expenditure by 21% (\$50) from baseline to endline, and 96% of households reported feeling better off after participating in the Village Enterprise program compared to a year prior. Household savings increased by an average of \$46 (419%) a year after the Village Enterprise program. Participants increased the amount of animal protein consumed in their household on a weekly basis by an average 90% at the endline. Additionally, participants saw an improvement in the value of their household assets increasing by 62% (\$223) on average from baseline to endline.

Uganda and Kenya

Key Outputs	FY21C1
Newly reached villages	93
Program participants trained	2629
Lives impacted	17480
Training sessions provided	1487
Businesses started	939
Business savings groups (BSG) established	167
% of women participants	84%

Key Outcomes	FY21C1
Average BSG savings at endline	\$805
Average increase in household savings	\$46.28 (\$11.04 to \$57.32)
Average % increase in household savings	419%
% Increase in consumption and expenditure (C&E)	20.7%
Average increase in annual per household consumption and expenditure (C&E)	\$50 (\$242 to \$292)
Average increase in weekly animal protein consumption	90.1%



FY21 cycle 1 (FY21 C1) program participants entered our program in July 2020.

FY21 C1 endline data collection happened in December 2021. Our enumerators observed strict health and safety measures while in the field.

Results-Based Financing

Village Enterprise launched the first DIB for poverty alleviation in sub-Saharan Africa in fall 2017. The DIB directs funding towards measurable results: increases in consumption and assets of first-time entrepreneurs living in extreme poverty

Despite significant delays due to the pandemic, IDinsight finished conducting data collection for an independent randomized controlled trial, assessing the outcomes of the Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond (DIB) in Summer 2021.

The results are **meaningful, positive, and statistically significant, demonstrating that the Village Enterprise program has improved the lives of 95,000 East Africans during the pandemic** through this novel and complex financing structure. The DIB was a demonstration project and collective effort showing how results-based funding can drive outcomes and innovation and ensure development organizations manage for impact by:

- **Maximizing impact for development funding.** By tying funding to measurable results, RBF ensures that funding creates a real impact, providing a greater guarantee of value-for-money compared to traditional funding that funds activities or inputs.
- **Incentivizing innovation to increase impact.** By shifting the focus from activities to outcomes – that is, by reimbursing results rather than receipts – impact bonds give service providers more flexibility to innovate and iterate to get results, and provide additional impetus to improve programming.
- **Expanding funding with new forms of capital.** By creating an investment opportunity that includes a financial return, impact bonds invite the private sector to participate in ending poverty.

The Village Enterprise DIB was the first-of-its-kind pilot of an ‘outcomes fund,’ and provided lessons on how to make the model more scalable and replicable - **Stay tuned for the results and learnings that will be shared early March.**

In September, Village Enterprise Vice President of Impact, Celeste Brubaker, presented at the Government Outcomes Lab’s Social Outcomes Conference 2021 at the University of Oxford. Her session, [Collaborating to Innovate: Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond](#), highlighted learnings that will guide the design of future impact bonds.



Innovations in the Field



During the past quarter, the Technology Team conducted focus group discussions in each of our countries of implementation as part of the Digital Framework Activity Plan, a user-centric approach to sustainable digital development. During the focus groups, Village Enterprise staff identified key entrepreneurs’ needs, which were then

grouped into five principle need categories: increased learning, training, and mentoring; improved market access; improved access to financial services; increased literacy and numeracy skills; and access and affordability.

To better understand price trends and device specifications to target for the digital application process, the Technology Team examined local market dynamics for mobile phones and spent time in Village Enterprise communities of implementation to learn more about access and affordability and to discuss potential digital solutions.

As a result of the focus groups, research, and one-to-one conversations, the Technology Team created an activity plan for the development of digital solutions for the next 18 months. Some of these activities include the design of a Village Enterprise mobile phone-based application and development of educational multimedia content.

With our new Vice President of Digital Solutions, Scott Isbrandt, wrapping up his first quarter with Village Enterprise, we expect to share more good digital development news in the coming months!

Contexts for Implementation



Food Security

Scaling Microbusinesses for Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems

Village Enterprise is working in partnership with Wasafiri Consulting and Shack Dwellers International to conduct research on how micro-businesses can be supported to play a more active role in Kenya's food system transformation. The objectives are to identify factors that influence business owners to consume certain foods in their households and whether the enabling environment can incentivize these businesses to produce and trade healthy and sustainable foods. The research team aims to generate policy briefs and reports to inform targeted development actors, researchers, businesses, and government agencies as a means of catalyzing a broader, collective effort towards healthy and sustainable food systems in Kenya. The Village Enterprise team is currently working to process and analyze the data collected last year and identify engaged stakeholders for key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Reducing Persistent Acute Malnutrition through Entrepreneurship

Over the past year, Village Enterprise partnered with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to pilot [the Nawiri project](#), an adapted poverty graduation program to combat malnutrition in Isiolo County, Kenya. In November 2021, members of the USAID BHA visited the project, holding a series of meetings and calls with project stakeholders to discuss progress and implementation, publishing their findings in their [monthly newsletter](#). The result was incredible: we started 204 businesses and 20 business savings groups with \$19,258 in savings, allowing 810 children to receive better nutrition and increased access to healthcare. Due to this success, CRS and USAID BHA approved plans for expansion to Marsabit County, Kenya. This expansion will enable us to implement our adapted poverty graduation model among 4,200 households and start 1,400 businesses with a budget of about \$1.2M.



Government

Economic Justice Program

Following the successful pilot completion and development of [Kenya's first county poverty graduation policy](#) in West Pokot, Village Enterprise recently embarked on phase two of the Economic Justice Program. This project, funded by Open Society Foundations, intends to build upon the success of [the pilot](#), scale the program for greater implementation, and develop a sustainable transition plan to ensure the government's implementation has long-term success. The West Pokot County Assembly included this project as part of their budget for the 2022-23 financial year, allocating \$4.5M Kenyan Shillings (US\$39,600) to activate committees that will give the policy practical effect by the end of this year. Leveraging the upcoming election in Kenya, Village Enterprise hosted two radio interviews with the Director of Budget from the county government to increase constituent advocacy in favor of this policy.

Kenya Social Economic Inclusion Project

Alongside the Boma Project and the Global Development Incubator, we've been working with the Government of Kenya to pilot the Kenya Social Economic Inclusion Program (KSEIP) in five counties. We aim to build the Kenyan government's capacity to implement economic inclusion activities and integrate the poverty graduation model into existing social protection programs, training 3,750 first-time entrepreneurs with opportunities to scale. We developed an operations manual, monitoring and evaluation framework, communications strategy, and human resources plan, hiring and training 75 business mentors, five supervisors, and a Project Manager, Isaiah Lekesike.

Contexts for Implementation



Conservation

Adapted Graduation Model to Protect Ngogo Chimpanzees

Funded by Arcus and in partnership with the Ngogo Chimpanzee Project, we started the implementation of a three-year integrated microenterprise development and conservation program in Kibale National Park, Uganda. The project aims to protect one of the largest remaining populations of East African chimpanzees by reducing hunting pressure in the national park through a combination of poverty alleviation and anti-poaching patrols. In a different approach to many conservation projects, this one will seek to measure impact through the number of snares collected, using a tangible, measurable metric rather than relying on self-reported attitudinal change alone.

Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trade with Wildlife-Friendly Enterprises

In September, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) published a [case study](#) and [research report](#) summarizing the Park Actions Project in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda. This project, funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and in partnership with IIED, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Uganda Conservation Foundation, and other local nonprofits, allowed Village Enterprise to establish 180 wildlife-friendly businesses as a means to generate alternative sources of income. As a result, 89% of the Village Enterprise participants and 60% of the general population now have improved attitudes towards conservation work. A member of IIED, Olivia Wilson-Holt, wrote a guest [blog](#) about the project on the Village Enterprise website.



Women's Empowerment

Women's Economic Empowerment through Climate Smart Agri-Business

In August, Village Enterprise signed a contract with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and UNWomen to implement the Women's Economic Empowerment through Climate-Smart Agriculture Project. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), this project aims to enhance the capacity of West Pokot county officials to develop gender-sensitive and climate-smart policies and to increase household income for women in the agricultural value chain. Village Enterprise will share policy development guidelines, supporting technical working groups as they generate advocacy campaigns, and support 720 individuals (80% women) living in extreme poverty in climate-risk areas of Kenya to start sustainable businesses. In addition to our core programming, Village Enterprise will help to establish agriculturally-centered savings groups with a focus on sharing best practices in increasing agricultural outputs and encouraging entrepreneurs to become active participants in climate-smart policy formulation.

Voices of Tumaini Virtual Event

In October, Village Enterprise hosted our second annual [Voices of Tumaini](#) virtual event, focusing on the theme of gender equity through financial inclusion. The event featured a panel comprised of representatives from [Days for Girls International](#), [Lwala Community Alliance](#), and [The Starbucks Foundation](#), who spoke about partnerships with Village Enterprise that address the intersection of women's empowerment, financial inclusion, nutrition, and menstrual health management.

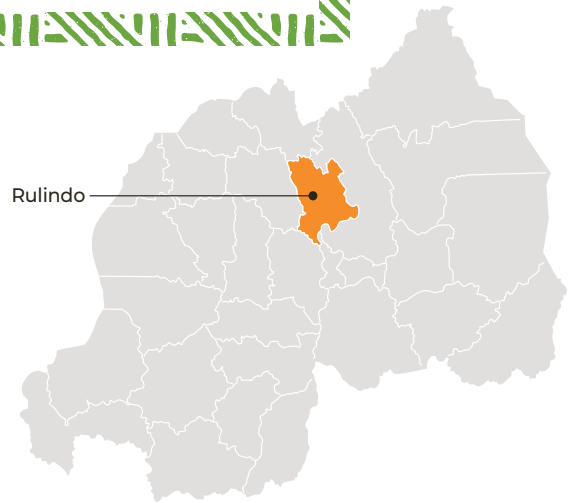
Watch the event recording →



Village Enterprise in Rwanda

In August 2020, we registered Village Enterprise as a non-government organization in Rwanda. The Rwandan government pledged to end poverty in the country by 2030 and we aim to help work towards this goal by integrating our poverty graduation into the government's social protection program. We hired a talented Rwandan staff, including Sylvere Mwizerwa as our inaugural Country Manager, and launched operations in two sectors—Goma and Sironji of the Rulindo district.

We launched our-first ever Rwandan cohort in March of 2021, empowering 840 individuals and starting 280 new businesses. Since then, we started an additional 280 businesses with plans to increase this number in the coming months.



To build a successful business, you must start small and dream big.

- Sylvere Mwizerwa
Rwanda Country Manager, Village Enterprise

A Staff Culture of Innovation



Although small in numbers, the Village Enterprise Rwanda team is uniquely made up of young, mostly fresh graduates. Since the Rwandan schooling system promotes technology use as a form of learning, our team embraces technology in every aspect of their work. From using Slack to plan tasks, collaborate on reports, and share best practices, to linking Google calendars to track field activities, our team initiates digital innovation efficiently and consistently.

An example of this innovative mindset, Maurice Nirere, Village Enterprise Rwanda Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager, recently published a paper in the African Development Review, entitled "[Do social protection cash transfers reduce poverty in Rwanda? Evidence from an econometric analysis of Vision Umurenge Program Direct Support.](#)" He conducted an analysis to estimate the impact



of this government-funded nation-wide social protection program and to inform policymakers as to whether this program is serving its purpose of reducing and ending extreme poverty.

Snapshots from Rwanda



First Graduation of Rwandan Entrepreneurs



Nearly one year after the launch of our first-ever cohort of Rwandan entrepreneurs, these individuals are now preparing for the graduation stage of our program.

A meaningful milestone, graduation comes at the end of a year-long journey of training, launching enterprises, mentoring sessions, and business savings groups meetings, and symbolizes freedom from dependence. We equip our entrepreneurs with the resources, knowledge, and leadership skills needed to start sustainable, long lasting businesses and savings groups, empowering them to build resilience and shape better futures for themselves, their families, and future generations to come.

The creation of self-managed business savings groups serves as our exit strategy. Entrepreneurs can retain the same support network, protection against financial shocks, and access to growth capital without feeling dependent on Village Enterprise. We believe that sustainable development work means that we, as an organization, are no longer needed. Our poverty graduation program ensures that our first-time entrepreneurs are well-equipped to provide adequate nutrition for their families, send their children to school, cover household expenditures, build savings, and assets and permanently lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty.

Featured Funders



IKEA Foundation



SEA GRAPE
FOUNDATION



New Staff Hires

KENYA

Harun Merioni Saidi
Business Mentor

Michael Musa Mwinyi
Business Mentor

Jafferson Mcharo Charles
Business Mentor

Isaiah Lapanu Lekesike
*KSEIP Implementation
Manager*

Ibrahim Jarso Gollole
*Graduation Project Man-
ager*

Bill Nehemiah Milimo
Juma
Business Mentor

Tegere Alfred Machugu
*Finance and Administra-
tion Coordinator*

Jane Shana Roba
Regional Manager

Catherine Buke Duba
Regional Manager

RWANDA

Maruice Manzi
Business Mentor

UGANDA

David Bongomin
Field Associate

Augustine Mugisa Mugam-
banihe
Business Mentor

John Bosco Tibeeha
Business Mentor

Isaac Fortunate Murungi
Business Mentor

Fiona Anna Tusiime
Business Mentor

Jackson Mugisa
Business Mentor

Akullu Jackline
Business Mentor

USA

Kayleigh Mencia
*Institutional Relations
Coordinator*

Scott Isbrandt
*Vice President of Digital
Solutions*

Featured Staff



Sam Emukok

Human Resource Manager, Uganda

Holding a BA. Degree and Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resources Management, Sam joined Village Enterprise in 2016 as our very first Human Resources Officer in Uganda. In 2018 he rose to HR Coordinator, a position he held until his current promotion. In the five years, Sam has had a tremendous impact on compliance and hiring processes. In his new role, he will focus on ensuring that all HR procedures are aligned to the Village Enterprise strategy.

Dan Kezengwa

KSEIP Program Manager, Kenya

Previously a Business Mentor, Dan was promoted to KSEIP Program Manager in October. The Kenya Social Economic Inclusion Program is currently being piloted in five counties of Kenya. Dan is based in Nairobi.



Scott Isbrandt

Vice President of Digital Solutions, U.S.

Scott Isbrandt joined Village Enterprise in October 2021. He Having spent more than two decades living and working in sub-Saharan Africa, he provides us with deep, hands-on experience with our entrepreneurs, designing digital solutions as well as developing connections globally to advance our technology work through strategic partnerships.

In the Press

[Innovative Funding to Solve Extreme Poverty](#)
Invest for Good – Feb 16, 2022

[Dismantling Menstrual Taboo by Empowering Female Entrepreneurs](#)
Days for Girls International – Dec 9, 2021

[Improving Community Attitudes Towards Conservation](#)
International Institute for Environment and Development – Oct. 18, 2021

[Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Evidence to Drive Poverty Alleviation](#)
Harvard Center for International Development – Oct 1, 2021

[How Sh20,000 Grant Changed my Village Life](#)
Nation – Sept 27, 2021

[Cartier Annual Report](#)
Cartier Philanthropy – Sept 20, 2021

[Collaborating to Innovate: Village Enterprise Development Impact Bond](#)
Government Outcomes Lab – Sept 10, 2021

