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Scale the Impact of your Market Systems Program Through Volunteer Engagement

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Scale the Impact of your Market Systems Program Through Volunteer Engagement

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Skills-Based Volunteering is...any time someone uses their abilities, talents, networks and resources to get a volunteering commitment completed (Realized Worth)
Introductory Remarks

Opportunities for Volunteer Cooperation Organizations:

• Clear focus on sustainability and scale
• Identify and cultivate new partnerships
• Engage a new and dynamic community of volunteers

Opportunities for MSD Practitioners:

• Draw new talent into programs
• Identify new and interesting partnerships
• Facilitate knowledge exchange
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INVESTING IN PEOPLE
TO CREATE A THRIVING AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD.
Grow young leaders
Support Founding-stage social entrepreneurs
Advocate for policy change
By addressing the funding gap and other challenges, social enterprises can eliminate hunger, increase health education, employment opportunities, community safety, and access to basic financing. They simply need the right support.
EWB – Our Approach to Supporting Social Enterprises

Philanthropic capital investments between 40,000 and 100,000 USD for three to five years

Smart, passionate problem solvers embedded within social enterprises for 1 to 3 years

Steady resources and strategic support to keep ventures focused on social impact and build their internal capacity to grow beyond our support.

EWB invests capital, talent and mentorship to ignite founding-stage social enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa.
EWB – Fellow Deployment Program in a Nutshell

- **Volunteer Profile:** Canadians with 3-5 years of Professional Experience
- **Duration of Placement:** Min. 1 yr. - Max. 3 yrs.
- **Skills:** UX/UI Design, Accounting, Financial Modelling, Fundraising, Marketing, HR, Gender operations, M&E, etc.
- **Countries of Deployment:** Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia
- **Talent Retention:** Stipend, PD Budget, Tech Budget
- **Number of Volunteers sent to date:** 1390 volunteers placed within 230 local businesses over 18 years
- **Operating Model:** Innovation and Strategic Relevance of Fellow contribution rather than volume of placements
FarmDrive, Kenya

FarmDrive uses simple mobile phones, alternative data, and machine learning to close the critical data gap that prevents financial institutions from lending to creditworthy smallholder farmers.

FarmDrive designs loan products and generates credit scores for Kenyan smallholder farmers using proprietary algorithms, making it more cost effective for financial institutions to lend to individuals who have been considered unbankable.

Increasing access to credit and finance for smallholder farmers through a mobile algorithm
Skills-Based Volunteer Placement Example: FarmDrive

FarmDrive, Kenya

Volunteer Cale Ettenberg:

- **Improved farmer location data** by developing an algorithm that uses local school data to determine the location of a user's farm → helps FarmDrive model local environmental conditions, an indicator of crop productivity, which **helps inform credit scores** and improve the success of the algorithm.

- Provided an **improved user experience** for FarmDrive's farmers → **increased user retention** on the platform.

**Increasing access to credit and finance for smallholder farmers through a mobile algorithm.**
Keys for Successful Skills Based Volunteer Placements

Pre-Departure:
- **Preparing volunteers for right mindset**: not just an overseas volunteer placement, leadership, cultural sensitivity, systemic change, training
- Placement **intentions set early on**: placement impact plans, awareness of limitation of placement, mission drift plan
- Mechanisms for **course correction** are clear: clarity of management structure, what happens if things are not going well
- **Quality Recruitment** is Key: diversify recruitment base, resilience, adaptability, culture fit
- **Matchmaking** process requires hands on participation of both organizations

During Placement:
- **Support** for both volunteers and social enterprise during placement
- Keeping volunteers **engaged and motivated** (training, retreats, check-ins)
- **Monitoring progress** towards placement intention
- **Transition Planning**
- Being **proactive** when relationships are stagnant
Prototype Stage

- Aim: develop technology proof of concept; establish business model; generate financial plan; generally launch the venture
- Fellow profile: Generalist, Can juggle with multiple roles, broad skill-set, typically engineers

Proof of Concept Stage

- Aim: develop viable product from the technology; build products or services for early-customer prospects to test; develop marketing and sales plan for the product launch; and enable the company to achieve revenue tractio
- Fellow profile: Sector expertise (e.g. UX/UI designer, data analyst), finance, marketing, etc.

Early Post-Revenue Stage

- Aim: assemble a team; achieve higher levels of revenues and operational efficiencies; establish business partnerships that will enable scale and unlock the next phase of fundraising
- Fellow Profile: Sector experience, fundraising, operations management, monitoring & evaluation, gender inclusion, environmental sustainability, etc.
For every dollar we invest in a social venture, we unlock 16$ from investors & grantors in subsequent rounds.

Through their work, our ventures have improved the lives of 11,014,521 beneficiaries.

Our ventures have contributed in generating 14,111,886 USD in revenue both in their local economies and in international markets.
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Winrock International’s Experience in Agriculture Market Systems Development
Winrock International

- US-based non-profit; practice areas in agriculture & enterprise, civil society & education, environment, US programs
- 6,200 volunteer trips since 1991

WINROCK INTERNATIONAL: 28 Years of International Volunteer Activities

59 Countries
Project Snapshot: Value Chains for Rural Development Project (VC-RD) (Myanmar)

- USAID-funded, $27M, 2014-2019

- Target value chains: coffee, soybean, sesame, melon, ginger

- 60 volunteers engaged in analyses/assessments, co-design, demonstrations, capacity building, and market linkages
Leveraging Volunteers to Catalyze Myanmar’s Coffee Sector
Coffee Sector: Volunteer Inputs

First volunteer visited Myanmar in 2013:

たり 166 farmers (emerging leaders)

identified the potential for specialty coffee

discussed the benefits of establishing a coffee association

made linkages in the US upon his return
Coffee Sector: Volunteer Inputs

28 subsequent volunteers have contributed:

- Organizational development support
- Demonstrations, technical assistance, course development
- Cross-border relationship development and exchanges
Coffee Sector: *Unexpected* Volunteer Inputs

Outside of their assignments, volunteers have also contributed:

- **Ongoing mentoring**
- **Linkages** to other volunteers, international buyers, markets, and other relationships
- **Awareness and exposure** between Myanmar, US, and int’l audiences
Coffee Sector: Impacts

Volunteers contributed to tangible results:

- **Myanmar Coffee Association formed**
  - developed and supports coffee clusters
  - provides technical assistance and training
  - supported the creation of the Myanmar chapter of the International Women’s Coffee Alliance
  - facilitates marketing and exchange activities

- **New businesses established (and thriving)**

- **Coffee producers achieved $2.99M in exports**
Lessons Learned & Recommendations

• Volunteer assignments should be demand-driven and appropriate.
• Support ongoing initiatives.
• Select the right volunteer(s).
• Identify appropriate beneficiaries and local champions.
• Require that beneficiaries contribute their own resources.
• Volunteers must be prepared and able to adapt.
• Leverage the “people-to-people” aspect of volunteerism.
Lessons Learned & Recommendations

For organizations:
Choose experienced partners to manage the volunteer component.

For prospective volunteers:
Be selective about the organization and project(s) you volunteer with.
Thank You!

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WUSC Uniterra

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Jennifer Snow  
Winrock International

For more information about SEEP’s Member-led Webinar Series contact Carla De Chassy: dechassy@seepnetwork.org

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SEEP Announcements

IWD Twitter Chat: Innovation & Technology | March 12, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm EST

SEEP Members - Call for International Women’s Day Activities
Are you hosting an event? Publishing a ground-breaking report? Pioneering gender-transformative solutions? Send an email to membership@seepnetwork.org with the subject line, 2019 IWD Submission

Read New Releases from the SEEP Resource Center!
Explore more resources at: www.seepnetwork.org/Resources

• Promoting Responsible Finance and Sustainability in Azerbaijan: Lessons for Emerging Microfinance Associations
• State of Practice: Savings Groups and the Role of Government in Sub-Saharan Africa