



# impact



## HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP TO AID RWANDA'S POOR

Opportunity International is partnering with World Relief and HOPE International for a first-ever bank merger in Rwanda. The new Urwego Opportunity Microfinance Bank (UOMB) will bring the benefit of safe and secure financial transactions to poor entrepreneurs for the first time.

With a central location already open in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, UOMB will expand banking



Trust Group meeting near Musanze, Rwanda

operations and open ATMs in offices across the country using innovative biometric fingerprint technology. The essential financial services that UOMB provides, including microloans and savings accounts, are critical to efforts to build up Rwanda and help the economy shift from cash-based to savings-based.

## Microschools of Opportunity

*New frontier in breaking the chain of poverty*

Given the opportunity to learn, even children living in debilitating poverty will have the chance to create a better future. This is the premise of Microschools of Opportunity™—our new initiative focused on bringing the transformative power of education to those who need it most. In the developing world, children often lack access to education even where public schools are available. Prohibitive fees for tuition, lunch or uniforms, safety concerns—especially for girls—and transportation issues are common problems. Building on the proven success of microfinance programs, Microschools of Opportunity provides specialized loans to “edupreneurs” who open schools for these children.

According to Christopher A. Crane, President and CEO of Opportunity International, “Transforming the precarious lives of poor parents and their children requires three elements: **microloans and savings accounts** to build a business that will allow them to reliably provide food and shelter, **microinsurance** so a death or illness

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*“If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”*

—Romans 12:8:8

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In 2006, the power and promise of microfinance became clearer than ever. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a microfinance practitioner brought global attention to microfinance as a long-term solution to world poverty.

Also in 2006, Opportunity International continued to be a major player in microfinance, experiencing unprecedented growth and success. We made more than \$466 million in small loans—a 35% increase over 2005—to 960,829 clients. Because of the leverage we are able to achieve, for every \$1 donated, \$1.63 went to programs helping the poor.

This remarkable progress was possible only because of our donors, clients and staff who fuel transformational change. You and they are the *Economic Heroes* of Opportunity International. You give us the confidence and determination to accomplish a bold new initiative—the commitment to benefit 100 million poor people by 2015 by mobilizing \$1 billion.

From a business perspective, the numbers from 2006 provide sound evidence that microfinance works. From a service perspective, the results are even more powerful. I have witnessed directly the ways in which Opportunity International breaks the debilitating cycle of poverty. To know that we can help millions make this transformation is heart-lifting beyond measure.



As an innovative way to bring financial services to those without access to banks, Banco Oportunidade de Mozambique and Opportunity International Bank of Malawi have purchased armored vehicles to serve as mobile bank branches.

Mobile branches enable Opportunity to reach clients in rural areas where setting up a full branch is not cost-effective. Staffed by client services officers and loan officers, these mobile banks are accompanied by an armed security guard to ensure the safety of the staff and to protect the assets.

## Microschools of Opportunity *(continued from cover)*

doesn't throw them right back into poverty, and **education**—the element that has the most hope of eliminating the cycle of poverty for the next generation.” Microschools answer this critical need and lay the foundation for the future.

Drawing on our vast experience from providing loans to pioneering educators, Microschools of Opportunity is piloting a program of loans for schools in Ghana. Groundbreaking research has shown that these “schools for the poor” outperform their public school counterparts across Africa, India and China. In 2006, James Tooley, Ph.D., a leading educational expert who inspired our initiative, found that, “...schools for the poor are superior to government schools, school teachers are more committed and education outcomes are better.”

With the aim of educating one million children over the next three years, Microschools of Opportunity will greatly expand the impact of our school loans. And, this innovative program has limitless potential to reveal and nurture the future *Economic Heroes* that dwell in every community.

# Princess Anne visits Ghana

## *HRH opens the latest Opportunity bank branch*

In May, Princess Anne, Patron of Opportunity International UK, visited Ghana to launch our new bank branch in Madina. While in Ghana, she saw firsthand the impact of Opportunity loans on clients' lives, attending a Trust Group meeting and visiting with a current loan client, Pamela Ayithey.

"The Opportunity clients and their families that I have met have reaped important benefits from their loans in terms of their living conditions and day-to-day life. What is equally exciting to witness, however, is the obvious confidence and sense of pride that has developed in those who've transformed their own lives by their own efforts," Princess Anne said. "...I'm delighted to offer my continuing support to help in this endeavor."



After the success in Ghana, Princess Anne lent further support to our programs by adding a trip to visit Opportunity's partner in Peru. There she expanded her view of Opportunity International through encounters with our clients in a different land and of another culture.

According to Benjie Montemayor, CEO of Opportunity International Savings and Loans, Ghana (shown above, right), Princess Anne's visit was a smashing success. "We are extremely appreciative that Her Royal Highness came to Ghana to inaugurate our new branch in Madina, the ninth branch we have so far opened. Our clients (mostly poor women), staff, friends in the banking and microfinance community and even in the government, were terribly impressed. It was simply unprecedented! Her visit generated great interest from the public and clients on the opening of our Madina Branch, and widespread awareness of Opportunity International as a leading player in microfinance. HRH helped to rekindle ties between Ghana and the UK by coming during the 50th anniversary celebration of Ghana's independence."

Opportunity already serves over 100,000 active loan clients in Ghana through five branches. The new branch means thousands more lives can be transformed with basic financial services and business training, tailored to the needs of poor families.



**Julie Hindmarsh, past chair of the Women's Opportunity Network committee, received a warm welcome to a Trust Group meeting and a tour of the market where many of the women run their businesses in Accra, Ghana.**

### *Charitable gift annuities*

Tom Klein (a pseudonym) had recently become passionate about Opportunity International's mission and wanted to support it generously. However, at age 50, and with college expenses and retirement looming in the not-too-distant future, a large outright charitable gift simply didn't work.

Instead, Tom chose to participate in Opportunity's Charitable Gift Annuity program, through which he gave \$25,000 to Opportunity in exchange for Opportunity's promise to pay him back a set dollar amount each year for as long as either he or his wife are living (an annuity). Since Tom further chose to defer the onset of his yearly payments until age 70 (his planned retirement age), he qualified for a 16% annuity, which will pay \$4,000 annually for life. Tom and his wife will use this income to supplement the retirement income from his 401(k) plan and their other investments.

When both Tom and his wife have passed away, Opportunity may use all remaining funds to assist poor entrepreneurs in developing countries around the world. This charitable gift provides Tom with a 2007 federal income tax deduction of nearly \$14,000, which further helps to offset his current income.

*For information about charitable gift annuities contact Chuck Day, Director of Gift Planning Services, at [cday@opportunity.org](mailto:cday@opportunity.org) or (630) 242-4136.*

## Women in Opportunity— expanding our reach

The Women's Opportunity Fund has a new name: Women's Opportunity Network (WON). This change reflects expanded initiatives and increased focus on women's philanthropy as a way to enhance Opportunity International's fundraising and program development efforts.

"Our new initiatives include mentoring women and building a virtual network that connects women across the globe," said Julie Hindmarsh, clinical instructor at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and past chair of the Women's Opportunity Fund committee. "We want to offer prayer and financial support, and focus on developing programs that meet the specific needs of women."

Because many women feel strongly connected to their giving choices, Opportunity International is a natural fit. "Women supporters share an emotional bond with Opportunity's clients, 85 percent of whom are women," said Hindmarsh. "They dream the same dreams and pray the same prayers for their children. We believe connecting these women in a supportive circle of hope can be transformational to all involved and will motivate more women to join us."

Progress is already being made with a new mission statement, meetings to attract women leaders—spearheaded by board members Diana Negroponte, visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution, and Deborah Farrington, founding partner, StarVest Partners, LP—and plans for a follow-up gathering at the Board of Governors meeting in October.

*For more information about the Women's Opportunity Network, please call (800) 793-9455 or email [getinfo@opportunity.org](mailto:getinfo@opportunity.org).*

# Listening to clients in the Dominican Republic

For more than 25 years, ASPIRE, Opportunity International's partner in the Dominican Republic, has been granting loans and providing extensive training in business and life skills for poor entrepreneurs. ASPIRE's current focus is the development of a system to better understand how clients view these Opportunity products and services. The new program, "Listening to our Clients," involves interviewing and surveying clients to determine their satisfaction level and how well expectations are being met.

As a result of this research, ASPIRE has made changes in loan products to give clients greater flexibility, mainly in relation to loan totals, terms and time limits. For example, those clients with a good payment record in at least two continuous cycles are offered lower interest rates for renewed loans. In general, the information gained allows for a greater agility in granting loans to clients.

Opportunity International is determined to practice wise stewardship of the precious resources with which we are entrusted. With extensive, ongoing research and careful management we are able to provide the loans that bring maximum benefit to clients. We practice internal self-review and constantly assess our adherence to our mission of providing transformational products and services for poor entrepreneurs.

**"OUR GOAL REQUIRES  
LISTENING AND  
DISCERNMENT AT  
EVERY STEP."**

*—Adrian Merryman, CEO  
Opportunity International Network*



A young potter at work is pictured in the small ceramics shop Genoveva Frias Galvez started with her husband. "The loans from ASPIRE have changed my life," says Genoveva. She and her husband have devoted themselves to working independently, although she continues to support her family as a household employee. Her hope for the future is to expand the business and focus exclusively on the work she knows best.



Abigail Bach, Regional Director, Opportunity International, meets with children in the Dominican Republic who have been helped by Compassion International, a child sponsorship organization. Opportunity has formed a partnership with Compassion and launched a pilot program in Uganda that provides microloans to caregivers of Compassion children. Plans are in place to expand to other African nations including Rwanda, Kenya and Ghana.

# Opportunity adds two advisors to board



**Carly Fiorina**  
Former chairman and CEO  
of Hewlett-Packard (HP)



**Dikembe Mutombo**  
Houston Rockets center

In May 2007, Opportunity International welcomed two new *all-stars* to its Board of Advisors: Carly Fiorina, former chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Packard (HP), and Dikembe Mutombo, Houston Rockets center and president of a foundation in his own name that works to improve the health, education and quality of life for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Best known as the first woman to head a Dow 30 company, Fiorina has been recognized for her contributions in improving communities through technology. In 2002, she was honored with the *Appeal of Conscience* award, and in 2003, she received the Concern Worldwide *Seeds of Hope* award for her worldwide efforts to make global citizenship a priority for business. Fiorina is also the author of *Tough Choices*, her autobiography.

“Microfinance is one of the most effective strategies for empowering women, and empowering women is the enabling factor in promoting all kinds of positive change in the world. I am pleased to serve on Opportunity International’s Board of Advisors and to support its work to empower poor women around the world,” says Fiorina.

Off the basketball court, NBA great Mutombo is widely known for his charitable works including providing funds to build a hospital in his native town of Kinshasa in the DRC, an accomplishment noted by President George W. Bush in his 2007 State of the Union address. Now, Mutombo is turning his efforts toward microfinance, actively assisting Opportunity in launching our new partner in the DRC.

The July 2007 issue of *Vanity Fair*, which focuses on Africa, features Mutombo as an example of Africans who are changing the status quo in terms of poverty and disease. Of his true nature, the magazine writes: “Nearly everyone who has played in the NBA in the last 15 years knows what it’s like to get ‘rejected’ by the ball-swatting, finger-wagging iconoclast known as Deke, but thousands more people, from Kinshasa to Soweto, have felt his embrace.”

Welcome, Carly and Dikembe.

“...BEFORE THIS DAY IS UP, 25,000 PEOPLE  
WILL DIE OF HUNGER...WHAT AMERICANS  
NEED TO KNOW IS WE CAN CHANGE  
THIS BY MAKING THESE LITTLE GRANTS  
AND LITTLE LOANS.”

—Tony Hall, Opportunity International Ambassador



Tony Hall, three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, former Congressman, U.S. Ambassador and Opportunity International’s Ambassador—as heard by nearly 2.5 million viewers in the San Diego area on a show featuring Opportunity International’s efforts to end global poverty through microfinance.



Bill Pollard visits with Judy Ann Nankunda, an Opportunity client in Uganda. Orphaned when her parents died of AIDS, Judy Ann apprenticed as a hairdresser with another long-time Opportunity client, then received a loan for her own salon.

## Our donors in action

To say that Bill Pollard takes an active role in Opportunity International is an understatement. Now Chairman Emeritus of the ServiceMaster Company, Bill has been a long-time volunteer, contributing his time, talent and treasure in countless ways. Bill recently returned to Africa to check on progress and offer counsel for Opportunity's programs in Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique.

While in Africa, Bill sponsored an invaluable retreat for the leadership of our new implementing partner—Opportunity-Kenya—teaching the principles that he developed and practiced throughout his long, successful career. He then met and shared insights with a newly formed group of service providers in Bushenyi, Uganda and advised the leadership for Opportunity's quickly growing startup, Banco Oportunidade de Mozambique.

Bill was pleased with progress despite ongoing challenges. "The trip reaffirmed for me the importance of the Trust Group concept and the way that accountability and sharing bring dignity to the lives of the members," said Bill. "I was impressed with the joyful spirit and genuine appreciation of the young people amidst very difficult circumstances."

Opportunity International is extremely fortunate that Bill Pollard has chosen to work with us and honored to share a common vision with someone who exemplifies servant-leadership. According to Bill, "Opportunity International is an organization that delivers on its promise. I don't consider myself as a donor, but more as an investor—an investor in the resources God has provided to me. With Opportunity, the returns are there, especially in the lives of the people who benefit."

# Board of Governors calendar

BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
**October 5–6, 2007**

#### INSIGHT TRIPS

Space is limited so please contact Wendy Cox if you are interested in traveling on an Insight Trip: [wcox@opportunity.org](mailto:wcox@opportunity.org).

**February 6–10, 2008**

*Nicaragua Governors Insight Trip*

**April 8–16, 2008**

*Peru Governors Insight Trip*

#### FAMILY WEEK

**June 22–28, 2008**

*Governors Family Week—Honduras*

*See article on next page for highlights from the 2006 Family Week.*

#### WEBINARS—2007

**September 13**

*Embassy Outreach—  
Governors Traveling with a Mission*

**October 16**

*Highlights from the  
2007 Governors Annual Conference*

**November 13**

*Sharing our Vision:  
a Message from our Leadership*



**Opportunity International**  
GIVING THE POOR A WORKING CHANCE

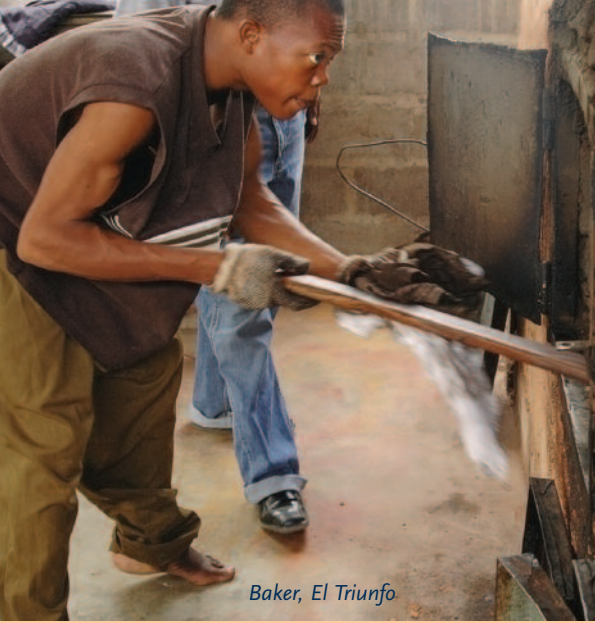
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Baker, El Triunfo

“IT WAS MOVING TO SEE FIRSTHAND THE  
**SIGNIFICANCE** OF OUR SMALL **LOANS**  
IN EL TRIUNFO, HONDURAS. NOT ONLY HAS DON MARIO’S  
OVEN BROUGHT PROSPERITY FOR HIMSELF AND  
HIS FELLOW BAKERS, IT HAS HAD A **UNIFYING** AND  
**TRANSFORMATIVE** EFFECT ON THE ENTIRE VILLAGE.”

—Stacy Ryan, Board of Governors member, on recent Family Week



**Opportunity International**

GIVING THE POOR A WORKING CHANCE

2122 York Road, Oak Brook, Illinois 60523

Sharing their time and skills is essential for members of Opportunity’s Board of Governors, and participating in Insight Trips is just one way that governors fulfill this commitment. These educational trips allow governors to meet personally with clients and leaders in the developing world to learn firsthand about the incredible transformation these poor entrepreneurs have achieved.

governorsfamilyweek

INSIGHT TRIP—HONDURAS

## Baking bread and building community

In El Triunfo, Honduras, coconut bread has been a tradition for hundreds of years. Before Opportunity first came to the village, Don Mario woke up at 2:00 a.m. every morning, along with the other village bakers. Each of them gathered wood to build fires and bake their own bread. “We worked alone,” Don Mario recalls, “and we produced little.” Don Mario dreamed of a community oven where people could work together and create a better yield.

Years later, Don Mario’s oven stands tall and wide in the village center. Opportunity recognized the *Economic Hero* in him and provided loans to build an oven large enough to bake bread for everyone in the village. Now the bakers work together and even produce enough bread for export to other communities.

All are welcome to use the oven and every morning the El Triunfo women bring their pales of dough. They knead the dough, smack it into neat round buns and talk while they work. Audilia Aranda, another Opportunity client, brings her bread to the oven even though she has her own kitchen. She doesn’t want to miss a day of sharing, saying, “Don Mario’s oven has brought our village together.”



In the collaborative spirit of Opportunity’s microfinance programs, Don Mario built a community oven for all to benefit. Here he holds trays ready to be baked.