



BOILERPLATE

About Opportunity International

Opportunity International provides small business loans, savings, insurance and training to over two million people working their way out of poverty in the developing world. Clients in over 25 countries use these financial services to start or expand a business, provide for their families, create jobs for their neighbors and build a safety net for the future. For more information, visit www.opportunity.org.



OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL FIRST PRINCIPLES STATEMENTS

Our vision is a world in which all people have the opportunity to provide for their families and build a fulfilling life.

Our belief is that small-scale entrepreneurs can be big change agents in overcoming global poverty.

Our mission is to empower people to work their way out of chronic poverty, transforming their lives, their children's futures, and their communities.

Our method is to provide microfinance services, including lending, savings, insurance, and transformational training, to people in need. To do this, we build and work through sustainable, local microfinance institutions.

Our motivation is to respond to Jesus Christ's call to love and serve the poor.



CORPORATE BACKGROUNDER

Opportunity International provides small business loans, savings, insurance and training to people living in poverty in the developing world. Clients in almost 30 countries use these financial services to start or expand a business, develop a steady income, provide for their families and create jobs for their neighbors. Motivated by Jesus Christ's call, Opportunity serves all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or gender.

Opportunity International – U.S. raises funds from individuals, corporations, foundations and government programs to support global operations with over 40 partners in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Opportunity – U.S. also works with fundraising partners in Australia, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom. Contributions are leveraged with savings deposits and commercial borrowed funds to create a self-sustaining approach to help solve the world's poverty.

History

Opportunity International was founded in 1971 by two visionary leaders who were moved by the hunger and poverty of people in developing countries. Al Whittaker, former president of Bristol Myers International Corporation in America, and Australian entrepreneur David Bussau sought a solution that would transform people's lives without creating dependency.

Opportunity was one of the first nonprofit organizations to recognize the benefits of providing microloans as capital to those working their way out of poverty. When clients build businesses with Opportunity loans, they often set into motion monumental changes. Family income rises. Children are well fed and go to school. Homes are improved. Women gain status. For clients around the globe, these transformations take place every day – beginning with loans as small as \$80.

Opportunity offers a mix of loan products, including group and individual loans, and allows clients to access larger loans as their businesses grow. In 1992, the Women's Opportunity Network was formed and started an innovative group-lending methodology called the Trust Group. A first point of entry, the Trust Group joins together 8 to 30 entrepreneurs who elect leaders and pledge to guarantee each other's loans. Because the group guarantee replaces the need for collateral, credit becomes available to those previously locked out from formal financial services. Each week, as Trust Groups gather to repay their loans, Opportunity provides educational sessions to develop business skills and enhance personal growth. Today, Opportunity has developed more than 400 transformational training and development modules that run the gamut of topics pertinent to clients across the globe.

In 2000, Opportunity International began building scalable, sustainable and accessible banks throughout the developing world to provide savings and other financial services to people who have never had access. To date, Opportunity has built 17 banks in 16 countries. Whether full

service, mobile or satellite kiosk, innovative bank branches bring hope through economic opportunity to families in isolated rural communities. For Opportunity clients, savings bring stability and a means to move away from subsistence living. Interest-bearing savings accounts provide a secure, convenient way for clients to manage money and prepare for both crisis and business opportunities.

In 2002, Opportunity International began offering microinsurance. Opportunity's MicroEnsure, the world's first and largest microinsurance broker, provides protection against the many risks faced by those living in poverty. Innovative products cover policyholders with crop, loan, health, life and property insurance – offering clients a safety net when an unexpected hardship or disaster occurs. With average premiums of about \$1.50 per month for a family of five, MicroEnsure is making affordable life insurance available for the first time, exclusively to people living in poverty. Other innovations include policies covering persons infected with HIV/AIDS, weather-indexed crop insurance for rural farmers and affordable health insurance for the economically marginalized, with a special focus on adolescent girls. MicroEnsure currently offers insurance in 10 countries. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided a generous grant to enable the agency to enter new countries and provide insurance to many more people.

Technology is a critical tool in Opportunity International's fight against poverty. Over the last 10 years, Opportunity has invested more than \$20 million in the use of electronic and mobile technologies to reduce transaction costs and bring services to the most marginalized and remote clients. Cards using biometric technology provide convenient and secure access to finances, even for those who are illiterate or lack formal identification. New technologies in development will use cell phones, and satellite and broadband Internet to further increase Opportunity's reach.

Staff

Opportunity – U.S. employs approximately 100 staff nationwide to support its fundraising efforts. Internationally, Opportunity is dedicated to recruiting and developing staff from the countries served. Its diverse global team has grown to over 10,000 employees, with nearly 6,000 loan officers in the field. By providing exceptional training, opportunity for advancement and competitive pay and benefits, Opportunity is equipping local, talented staff to become leaders in building the economies of their own communities.

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