



CAPABILITY STATEMENT

ECONOMIC LIVELIHOODS & VSLAS



FY23 ECONOMIC LIVELIHOODS SNAPSHOT

115,240 PEOPLE benefited directly and indirectly from **1,440 SAVINGS GROUPS** in **15 COUNTRIES**.

3,914 PEOPLE participated in small business and income generating activities.

7,148 BUSINESSES FORMED OR SCALED UP through a private estate donor.

Who is World Renew?

World Renew is a faith-based international development and humanitarian organization, working since 1962 to address the root causes and impacts of poverty, disaster, and injustice. With a USD \$45.6 million budget in 2023, we work with 67 local partners and have a long-term presence in 19 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, bringing permanent, sustainable change to vulnerable communities and working towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We provide consultation, technical assistance, and funding to strengthen the capacity of our partners as they implement programs that integrate food security, health, economic opportunities, peacebuilding and justice, disaster response and preparedness, and gender equality. As an industry leader in local ownership of programs, we use Participatory Learning and Action methodologies so communities can identify challenges, evaluate their assets, and generate their own solutions.

Our Economic Livelihoods Work

For over 40 years World Renew has expanded the economic opportunities to the most vulnerable, particularly women. Our participatory community-led approach ensures the voices of the most vulnerable are central to the project design to ensure markets work for them. We provide training to partners and communities, support the formation and sustainability of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), and leverage access for the marginalized to a pro-poor market environment. We provide training in financial literacy and business management to support participants in starting their own businesses or increasing their participation in income generating activities and increase access to credit which is a key enabler for reducing poverty and enabling business startup. We also facilitate connections with markets and support the creation and sustainability of cooperatives so that community members can earn a fair price for their products and effectively engage with market systems.

Key Programming Approaches

- **A savings approach:** World Renew responds to community needs using VSLAs, which help urban and rural households build resilience and smoothen their erratic and often seasonally driven income. VSLAs also facilitate community mobilization for sustainable agriculture, empowerment of women and marginalized people, social justice, healthcare improvements, and peace-making.
- **A microbusiness approach:** Participants receive training in business management and gain access to markets through innovative market partnerships with local companies or social enterprises who invest in entrepreneurs.

- **An empowerment and advocacy approach:** Initiatives empower and build the resilience of participants, particularly women, by strengthening their leadership skills, financial literacy and decision-making power, improving ownership and control of resources, improving family relationships within the home, and improving access to social and financial capital. Cluster Level Associations (CLAs), made up of representatives from 10 VSLAs, are a platform to advocate for government services and resources for community issues across different sectors.

Our Expertise in Economic Livelihoods

World Renew has extensive economic livelihoods expertise, both in-country, and through North American-based resources. WR country directors are trained to respond to chronic and acute poverty in a range of settings, including post-disaster, conflict, refugee influx, and crop failures. They lead a range of community-based financial initiatives including VSLAs, self-help groups (SHGs) with CLAs, credit unions and Savings and Credit Co-ops (SACCOs), and linkage with formal financial institutions such as the Equity Bank in Kenya. Major donors funding VSLA programming include Global Affairs Canada, Growing Hope Globally, and private estate donors, funding programs like the 5-year CAD \$7.1 Million GAC Livelihoods program in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Mali, Honduras and Tanzania. Research papers for the broader development community include [Where Next After VSLA?](#) available on our website.

Evidence of Impact

From 2020-2023, World Renew implemented the \$3.34 Million CAD Humanitarian, Early Recovery and Development (HERD) Food Security Initiative for COVID-19 Affected Communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, funded by CFGB via GAC, reaching 2,609 households (1,258 Female-headed) and serving 15,340 people (8,037 female). As a nexus project in Nigeria and Madagascar, in addition to gender-sensitive food security and enhanced women's decision making, the project aimed to restore agricultural production for women and men affected by COVID-19. It then increased their diversified gender-sensitive livelihood

opportunities related to that agricultural production, such as selling rice, oil, yams, vegetables or other livelihoods such as cloth, knitting, trade or value-addition. The project worked through 22 VSLAs in Nigeria and 33 in Madagascar to ensure access to credit and savings, as well as providing skills training to support these livelihood ventures. As a result of this project, in Nigeria, 1,091 Households (849 male-headed, 242 female-headed) and 5636 participants (1222 women, 1737 girls, 1012 men, 1665 boys) received gender-sensitive technical support to reinforce livelihood training. 744 (729f, 15m) participants are now practicing restored agricultural livelihoods, and 878 (848f, 30m) are practicing non-agricultural livelihoods. The project is ongoing in Madagascar until the end of 2024.

Best Practices and Innovations

- **Integrated Economic Empowerment:** Holistic interventions integrate VSLAs with agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS awareness and women's empowerment, ensuring engagement of youth and people with disabilities. Our VSLAs and CLAs have been linked to increased women's decision making, improved gender equality, and reduction of gender-based violence and early marriage.
- **Scaling and Clustering VSLAs:** By transitioning from VSLAs into more mature SHGs, and linking groups together in CLAs, SACCOs, or People's Institutions enables members strengthen their voice for increased advocacy and reach, and these groups have proven to sustain themselves long after projects conclude. Connections to formal financial institutions, providing market linkages, or increasing mobile technology for VLSAs facilitates bridging from the community to broad amplifiers and markets.
- **Disaster Response through Livelihoods:** In responding to disasters, such as in Rohingya refugee camps, VSLAs are part of integrated project implementation which help in building community economic strength and resilience in fragile contexts.

