



PARTNERING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL – TRANSFORMING LIVES

YOUR IMPACT

Celebrating in Burundi

The drums are a drummin’ in Bujumbura! We are so excited to announce that PEER Servants has a new microfinance partnership in the beautiful country of Burundi. That has led to much celebration in Burundi – and Boston, and many other places as well!

The Materially Poorest Country

The first thing that strikes one in visiting Burundi is not the country’s material poverty – it is the pride of the people in their culture and their warmth to visitors. Burundians have so much to offer the rest of the world.

But material poverty in Burundi is very severe. According to the World Bank, the country’s 2016 nominal GDP per capital was \$286 per annum, making it the world’s materially poorest country. Imagine being able to eat meat only at Christmas each year. That is reality for many rural Burundians.

Burundians in rural areas have little access to financial services that could help them save, borrow, and be insured from the many risks they face. There is next to no training in how to start or grow a business.

Our Partner: Hope Fund Burundi

Hope Fund Burundi (no ties to our good friends at HOPE International) is an indigenous Burundian microfinance organization that has been serving the materially poor for over ten years. They now provide a safe and secure place to save for over 15,000 depositors. The average savings balance of each client? \$25! They also provide micro-loans averaging \$300 to over 1,000 borrowers.

Where did Hope Fund find its capital to grow to its current size? One might think the board and management would have looked outside the country, but they did not! The vast majority of capital has come from within Burundi. Those who save provide the capital for those who borrow. In addition, benevolent shareholders buy shares in Hope Fund Burundi but insist the organization keep the dividends to expand their services to the poor. Hope Fund Burundi is a great example of an organization that mobilized its own people to give before asking for help from others.

A Much Brighter Future

Now Hope Fund Burundi wants to expand its services deeper and deeper into Burundi’s rural population. They will continue to raise significant funding from within Burundi, but the needs are so great that they cannot rely on that alone. PEER Servants was honored to be invited by the very capable and visionary board and management of Hope Fund Burundi to walk with them in extending more of the kingdom of heaven, in its fullness, to the Burundian people. Together, and with those God will bring alongside of us, there is a much brighter future.

One of the first areas in which we will partner is lessening Hope Fund’s dependence on a very unreliable power grid by transitioning all branches to solar power. The cost? \$20,000. We would also like to provide thousands of dollars in additional loan capital. Interested in contributing? Send in your tax-deductible donation marked for “The Burundi Fund” and 100% of it will go to make the future much brighter for many in Burundi. Thank you!



Quarterly News

Fourth Quarter 2017

Celebrating 25+ Years of Partnership!

How we thank God for 25+ amazing years of extending more of the kingdom of heaven to earth! Through your prayers and financial support, God is at work enabling tens of thousands of the materially poor and non-poor to experience economic, social, and spiritual transformation. Thank you!

If you would like to send a tax-deductible donation to PEER Servants, you can direct 100% of your gift to any of our Microfinance Partner Funds. See the back side of the newsletter for contact info. Thank you for your generosity. **God bless you!**

Todd G. Engelsen

Todd G. Engelsen
President



10/28 - Fall Fundraising Banquet

Please join us for an evening of global food, music, and fellowship as we honor “Ate” Ruth Callanta from the Philippines and raise \$25,000+ to invest in the materially poor. Check our website (peersevents.org) for full details. Please RSVP by October 15.

WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE



2017 Lydia Award Recipient

Maria Delfina Hernández is a successful Guatemalan businesswoman working as a garbage recycler in one of Latin America's largest dumps. Thanks to the services and support she receives from Vida Nueva, PEER Servants' Guatemalan partner, she employs a dozen people, buys from forty others, and sells through yet forty more! Congrats to Maria as the very deserving recipient of the 2017 Lydia Award.



Overcoming Adversity in Sri Lanka

Meet the man Sri Lankans call "superman"! Retnasingam lost his sight and much of his hearing while being assaulted in Sri Lanka's long civil war. What would have led many to revenge ultimately led Retnasingam to God. He became not only a follower of Jesus, but a pastor, and with the help of HEED, PEER Servants' Sri Lankan partner, a very successful farmer as well!

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS



Have you ever seen anyone get passionate about internal controls? Meet Aime Nzogang! Aime went to Burundi with a team to provide excellent training on the potential risk of fraud in the absence of tight internal controls. He lives in Cameroon, is one of many African PEER Servants volunteers, and a founding member on Team Burundi.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

We'd love to hear from you!

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Meet some of the students, teachers, staff, and investors at the official opening of a new school for tribal children in the southern part of the Philippines. CCT's education arm, the Visions of Hope Foundation, is extending access to education to hundreds of children at risk and has asked PEER Servants to adapt its partnership model to serve in the area of education. (Picture Credit: Donna Simpaio)

Beyond Microfinance: Education

Extending the kingdom of heaven to earth is a huge task. Microfinance is a great tool to use in extending the material, social, and spiritual aspects of heaven to the materially poor, but what about the children of the micro-entrepreneurs? Do we really want them to grow up and need micro-loans to provide for their families? If we are to avoid this, high-quality education will be key.

CCT's Work in the Philippines

The Center for Community Transformation (CCT), PEER Servants' partner in the Philippines, established a large microfinance organization that generated significant surplus. Part of the surplus went to support the Visions of Hope Foundation (VOH), CCT's education arm. VOH's goal is to offer high-quality education to the children most at risk – children living on the streets, in historically-oppressed indigenous tribes, and among their materially poorest micro-entrepreneurs.

VOH's results are nothing short of miraculous. As children who were living on the streets experience God's love in a safe, nurturing environment and have access to quality education, their lives are transformed. The same is true of the tribal children. VOH just dedicated a beautiful new school building for tribal children in Mindanao in September 2017 (see picture above). Their curriculum is culturally-sensitive and Christ-centered. PEER Servants is partnering with VOH to build a Science Lab for these tribal children. When asked what they want to become when they grow up, we want to hear "microbiologist", "chemist" and "doctor" to complement the usual responses of "soldier", "policeman", and "sailor". (Interested in contributing towards the \$10,000 needed for the Science Lab? Please donate to "The Philippines Fund.")

Beyond the Philippines

CCT is not the only PEER Servants microfinance partner transforming the futures of children through education. Potter's House in Guatemala, YGro in Sri Lanka, and the Christian Service Society in India all have various forms of education programs as well. These programs are working with parents and students to equip the children and youth for what lies ahead.

An Education Arm of PEER

As our partners have ventured deeper and deeper into education, they have invited PEER Servants to walk with them. That has led PEER Servants to establish an education arm to support our partners in their education initiatives. Our goal is to establish a global peer group of educators – learning from and teaching each other how we can best use education to extend more of the kingdom of heaven to the next generation. Our first team of educators went to the Philippines in August 2017 to get a firsthand tour of VOH's amazing work. We returned inspired and a tad overwhelmed at how large the task is that lies before us. As the VOH staff often says, "The cost is great, but the cause is greater!"

Are you a teacher or passionate about education? Does being part of a global peer group of educators coming together to extend God's kingdom through education excite you? Would you like to hear more? Reach out to us at serve@peerservants.org and we'll keep you posted on developments and opportunities to serve in this area.

VOH's tagline is "Every Child is a Vision of Hope." Come hope with us and join a global community that will enrich the lives of many children while having your own life enriched as well.