



10 YEARS AS AN
AFRICAN CHAMPION
FOR AFRICA'S BUSINESS
CHAMPIONS



We believe skilled people build thriving businesses, thriving businesses create quality jobs, and quality jobs drive prosperity and dignity.

AMI enables ambitious leaders, businesses, and the continent's future workforce to thrive.

We provide learning that equips Africa's entrepreneurs and growing companies with the tools and training they need to perform and succeed.



Table of Contents



Letter from Our Co-Founders	3
Data: 10-Year Overview	5
10 years of Highlights	7
Data: Focus on 2023	8
5 Insights: What We've Learned So Far	12
5 Actions: How We're Leveraging these Lessons	34
An Ambitious Team for an Ambitious Africa	47
Decoding Our Impact: The Data Fine Print	49

A LETTER FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS



For Kenyan entrepreneur Boniface Odera, business has always been about people. Specifically, jobs – for his community in a low-income area of Nairobi.

Odera's business, Mukuru Talent, supplies sports equipment to schools and sports clubs across Nairobi. In 2023, after professionalising and growing his business through AMI's Grow Your Business programme, he created 32 new jobs and increased revenue by 76%. Of his 48 employees, 80% are women.

Boniface's story plays out every day across Africa in the thousands of businesses we support. And it goes to the heart of what inspired us to found AMI a decade ago.

As we celebrate our 10th birthday this year, we're reflecting on what we've learned about driving business outcomes through skills development. We're also raising our ambition, as we prepare to scale our proven model for massive jobs and livelihood impact in the decade to come.

When we started this journey, the impact sector's response to Africa's ticking time-bomb of youth demographics was to train young people for jobs that didn't exist. It wasn't working.

It seemed clear to us that getting young people into work, and catalysing African economies and livelihoods more broadly, would require new jobs. Millions of them. That would need a vibrant business sector, with hundreds of thousands of growing, job-creating SMEs, along with larger business champions – staffed by high performing leaders, managers and employees – to build markets, innovate and position the continent for success on a global stage.

Like Boniface, we knew that business is fundamentally about people. Performing people build thriving businesses, and thriving businesses create jobs, prosperity and dignity. Africa has no shortage of talent. But to harness that talent, to build the business champions of tomorrow, there was an urgent need to rapidly improve the performance of business owners, leaders and employees at every level.

We knew that traditional training couldn't achieve this. Our approach had to be obsessively focused on practice – providing business owners and their teams with practical tools to underpin the daily habits and behaviours needed to build strong companies.

It needed to be rooted in the realities of Africa's dynamic economies. No more 'fly-in-fly-out' workshops with expensive foreign trainers. Critically, it had to scale. The challenge – and our ambition – was too significant to replicate the status quo. We needed a whole new approach to training for business outcomes that could ultimately reach millions.

So that's what we did. And that's what we've been doing ever since.

“

AMI tools have been key to our progress. They've helped us understand where we are, where we're headed and how best to navigate that journey. Sharing this knowledge and these tools with my team has streamlined our workflow and helped us grow.

Boniface Odera
Mukuru Talent, Kenya



We've learned so much over the last decade, supporting over 37,000 businesses that have created cumulatively over 97,000 direct and indirect jobs, and generated average annual revenue growth of 18% since the Covid crisis. That's more than \$130M in incremental revenue for businesses supported in the last ten years. Women business leaders may be benefitting most - our most recent data show women - and youth - outpacing the average on almost every business metric.

We've built a model we know can be rapidly scaled in the next decade.

For every \$1 spent on AMI programmes last year, SMEs we supported generated \$48 in SME revenue and \$12 in additional income for African workers. In total, we impacted over 220,000 livelihoods in 2023 alone. It's a hugely impactful and efficient model.

As we look ahead, our team is focused on scale. How can we provide millions of business champions like Boniface with the tools they need to grow and get Africa working?

We are working with governments and development partners to get our tech-enabled methodology into the hands of thousands of other business support providers across Africa.

We're also ramping up our work with larger enterprises to deepen the bench of talent for Africa's business champions, expanding into important new markets, such as Nigeria and Ethiopia.

We have much to celebrate - but much more to get done.

In this report, we reflect not only on learnings (we've chosen five) but on five places we're taking those learnings to amplify impact. We call these insights our 'Ten from Ten'.

As we keep growing, our commitment is to keep measuring our impact rigorously and sharing what we discover.

We hope these data and insights can go well beyond AMI to help shape the whole ecosystem, building a robust business support sector that will drive impact at scale for Africa's business champions, creating millions of new jobs in the decade to come.

Rebecca

Rebecca Harrison
Co-Founder & CEO

Jonathan

Jonathan Cook
Co-Founder & Chairman



10 Years as an African Champion for Africa's Business Champions

2013 - 2023

Through our evidence-based business growth programmes, delivered in 39 countries since 2013, AMI has achieved exciting results for businesses across Africa:

37,000+

businesses supported



\$130M+

added to African economies in 10 years!¹⁰

48x ROI
in SME revenue¹

For every \$1 invested, \$48 in SME revenue returned

12x ROI
in employee income

For every \$1 in training costs, \$12 in SME employee income generated²

97,000+

direct and indirect jobs created³

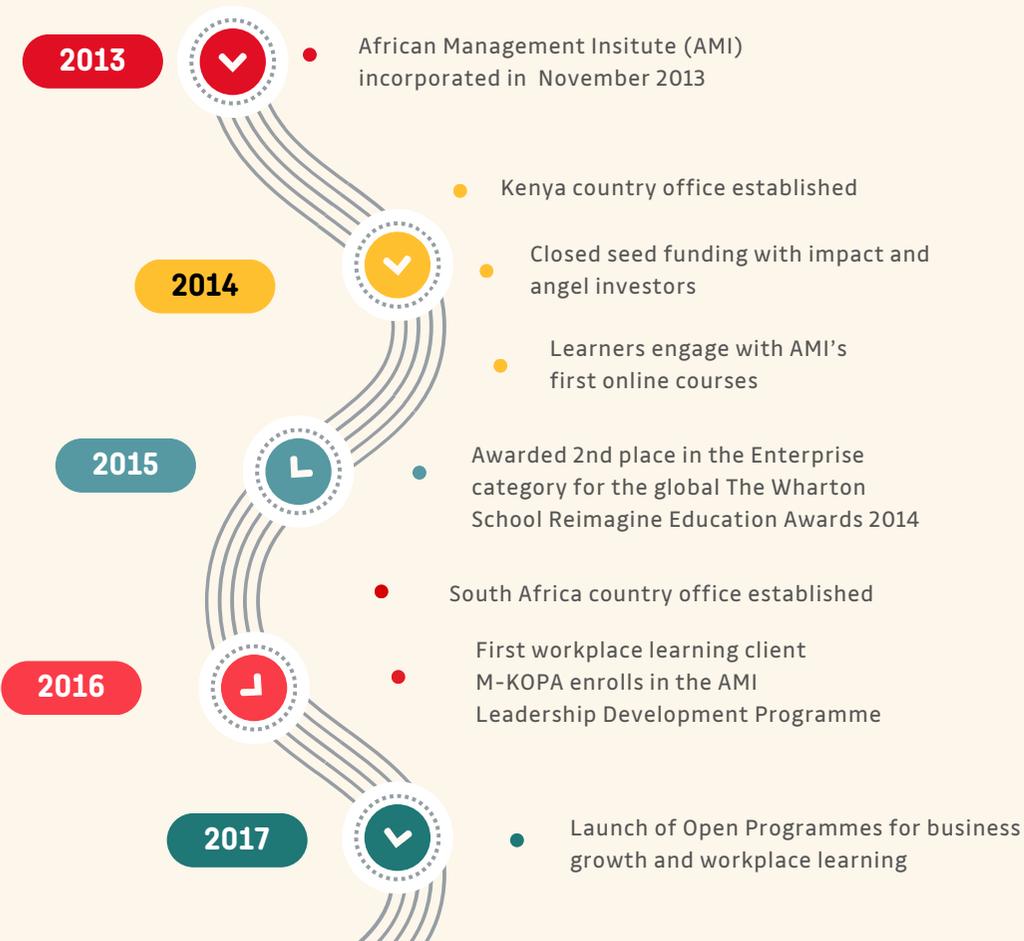


1,464,800
livelihoods improved⁴

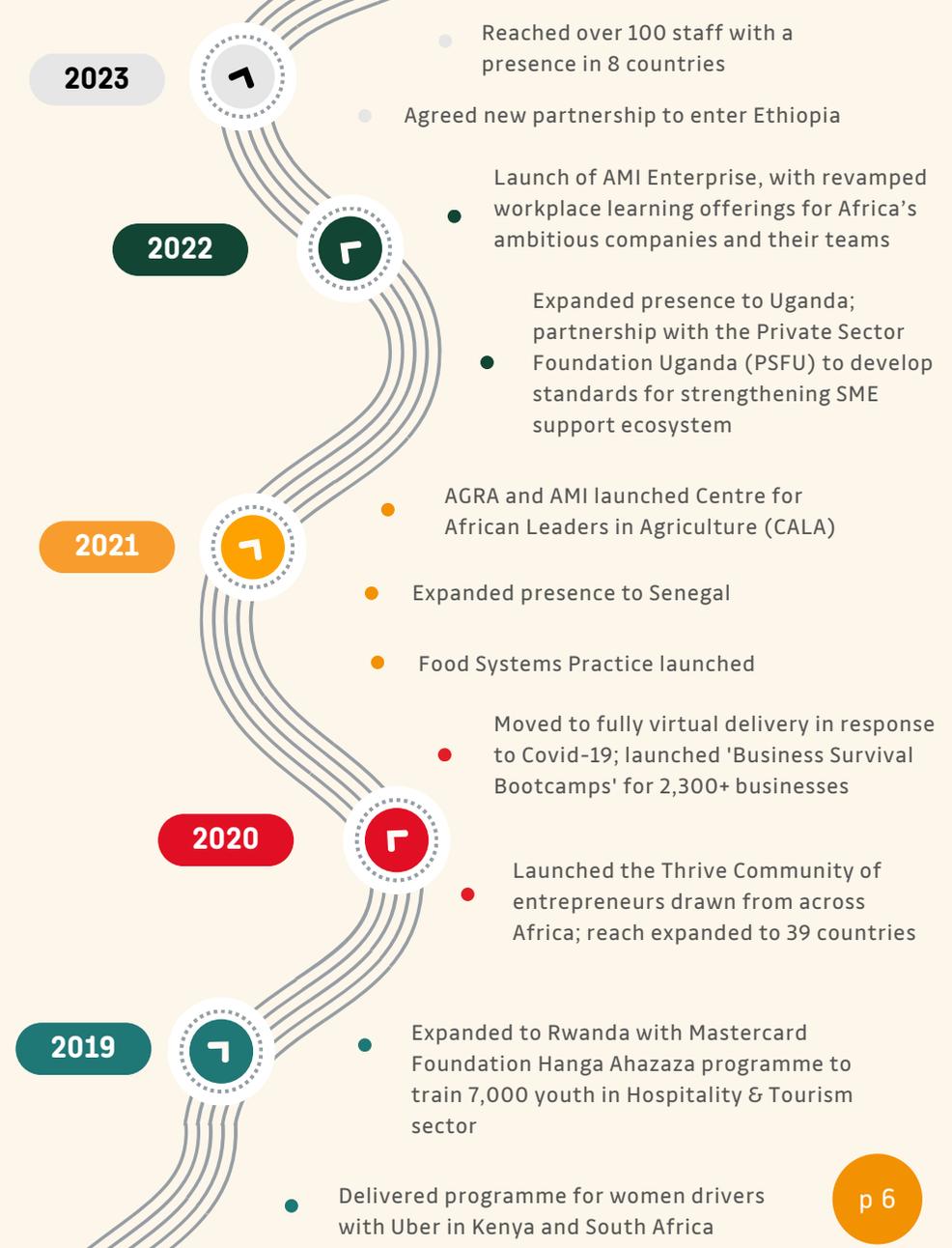
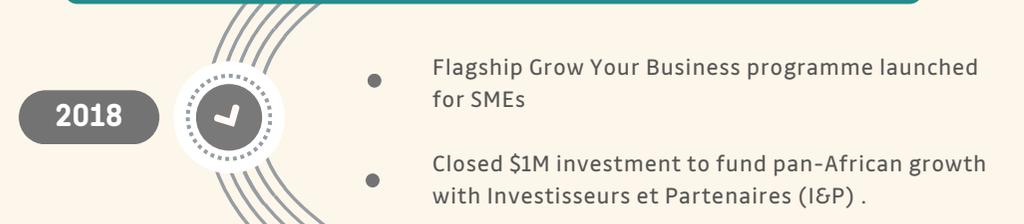
- Women-led businesses exceed the average in job creation
- Youth and women exceed the average on revenue growth

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS 2013-2023

In 10 years, AMI has reached over 94,000 individuals in 39 African countries



In our first five years we trained over 20,000 individuals through 70 blended learning programmes in 13 African countries



2023 Impact

AMI's ANNUAL IMPACT OVERVIEW



In 2023, AMI reached over 3,700 businesses through our programmes. SMEs in our business growth programmes averaged an 18% annual growth rate and created on average one new job every year. Almost 40% of these SMEs accessed finance. Overall, our programmes had an impact on an estimated 221,669 livelihoods. Critically, this impact was delivered more cost effectively than ever before.

Youth and Women-Owned Businesses

This year's youth and gender data is remarkable, with women-owned businesses accounting for more than half of those supported, and women and young people outpacing men for the first time on almost every growth metric.

High Return on Investment

Businesses generated \$48 in revenue for every \$1 invested in an AMI programme, with an estimated 25% of that going direct to employee incomes (x12 livelihood RoI). That's sector-leading impact and cost efficiency.

We also see our top performers generating outsized impact, emerging as Africa's future business champions.

Entrepreneur Approved

Would this growth have happened without AMI's support? We're running an RCT to test for that. But meanwhile, 88% of entrepreneurs say they either would not or may not have achieved this growth without AMI's support.



2023 Impact

IN NUMBERS



Revenue & Job Creation



3,744

businesses reached

in 34 countries across Africa



Participating businesses reported a median Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of

16.92% CAGR



Top 50

performing businesses created on avg.

15.4 jobs each

& grew revenue at an average of

169% in 1 year



Spotlight On Women

2023 saw exciting gains in results for women-led businesses, performing better than male-led businesses' averages in all highlighted data

50%

of all programme participants were women



Spotlight On Youth

Youth businesses outpaced the average

Women-led businesses created an average of

1.4 jobs



81%

youth participants - (age 34 and below) across programmes



24.6%

average annual revenue growth for youth-led businesses, far exceeding the **average of 18%**

26% of all jobs created were for women

20%

median annual revenue growth for women-led businesses **ahead of the average of 18%**



37.7%

women-led businesses accessed finance

Access To Finance



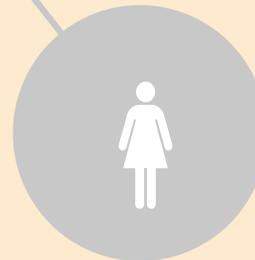
39.5% businesses accessed finance



77% of those accessing finance accessed loans



Average finance amount accessed =
\$30,800
with a median amount of **\$4,405**



\$33,667 average value of finance accessed for women-led businesses
vs. \$26,833 for male-led businesses and **\$45,737** for co-led businesses ⁷



5 Insights

FROM 10 YEARS OF AMI



WHAT WE HAVE
LEARNED SO FAR



1

Data shows what truly works: It validates our approach, verifies our impact & targets our support

When AMI started ten years ago, development funding in this sector was largely focused on training young people for jobs that simply didn't exist. We made a strategic decision to go 'demand side', focusing our research-backed skills development methodology on business growth programmes that would support small businesses to actually create new jobs. And from day one, rigorous impact measurement has been part of our DNA. We've since developed a powerful data-set on what works to grow African businesses and create new jobs.

Each year, our team of data gatherers, under the supervision of an experienced M&E team, contacts businesses that participated in our programmes in the previous three years. We analyse the data gathered, and validate or remove extreme outliers.

In addition, our flagship Grow Your Business programme is currently the subject of a randomised control trial (RCT), in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with preliminary results expected in 2025.

Our data shows clearly that AMI's MSME interventions are creating jobs, with participants on our flagship MSME programme, Grow Your Business, creating over 97,000 jobs in, and increasing their revenue at an average rate of 15-20% per year since the Covid-19 downturn.

Youth-led and women-owned businesses are now performing above average in revenue generation. And women supported by AMI are catching up to men on access to capital (32% of women-led MSMEs accessed capital versus 35% of men-led MSMEs).

Analysing our data also helps us to identify the best performing firms and steer them into opportunities for faster growth. The top 10% performing businesses in 2023 (by job creation) created an average of 15.4 jobs each and grew at a mean of 169%. Gathering data of this nature, disaggregating by location, entrepreneur age, gender and performance levels, doesn't just show us that our approach is working at scale; it helps to direct our future efforts and resource investment.



The practical tools and strategies provided by the programme have been instrumental in transforming our theoretical knowledge into actionable business practices. One significant lesson was the importance of focusing on what our customers need rather than just what we want to sell. Using the growth tracker tool from the programme, we've been able to clearly visualise our business plans, track progress, and focus on key areas for improvement.

While my MBA provided a strong theoretical foundation, the 'Grow Your Business' programme made that knowledge practical and applicable to our daily operations.



Lumosi Aboka

Owner, Johari Solutions,
Grow Your Business Programme,
Kenya



In 2023, we graduated 447 entrepreneurs from the Grow Your Business Programme





From Medical Expert to Business Leader: Liberian medical entrepreneur creates 14 new jobs

Dr. Nicole Cooper founded Wellness Partners Clinic in Monrovia, Liberia, in 2021 with the vision of creating a chain of clinics that offer high-quality healthcare services.

The clinic initially offered specialty care, laboratory services, pharmacy, imaging, and overnight facilities. Despite her medical expertise, Dr. Cooper struggled with the business aspects of running a clinic due to her lack of formal business training.

To address these challenges, she enrolled in the AMI Aspire programme delivered in partnership with Stanford Seed, seeking to enhance her business management skills.

The programme provided a structured learning environment that bridged the gap between her medical knowledge and the necessary business acumen to manage and grow her clinic effectively.

During her time in the Aspire programme, Dr. Cooper gained insights into corporate governance which prompted her to

establish a board of directors and initiate regular quality reviews.

These changes were crucial for periodic assessment of the clinic's performance, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements.

"Establishing a board was a game changer for us," Dr. Cooper shared. "It allowed for a structured approach to governance that helped us tackle our challenges more systematically."

A key tool she utilised from the programme was the nine-box analysis, which significantly enhanced staff management by identifying underutilised resources and better distributing workloads.

"The nine-box tool was instrumental in reshaping how we manage our team. It helped us ensure that everyone was in the right place, contributing effectively," explained Dr. Cooper.

The mentorship provided within the programme also played a critical role, especially during the major financial restructuring and pricing scheme review at the clinic.

"The mentorship I received was invaluable. It provided a sounding board and practical advice that was crucial during our restructuring phase," Dr. Cooper remarked.

In the last year, Wellness Partners Clinic was able to create 14 new jobs and increased their revenue by 71% which allowed them to offer new services at the clinic, such as overnight support or X-ray services.

Looking ahead, Dr. Cooper is enthusiastic about the future prospects of Wellness Partners Clinic.

71%
revenue
increase

14
new jobs created



“

I'm looking forward to applying everything I've learned to not only expand our services but also to enhance the quality of care we provide across Liberia.

— ●
Dr. Nicole Cooper

*Founder, Wellness Partners Clinic, Liberia
Aspire Programme Participant*

2

Segmentation ensures MSMEs get the support they need

MSME growth programmes can't expect to drive change with 'one-size-fits-all' business support that disregards a business's size, stage and location or an entrepreneur's profile.

AMI carefully segments MSMEs along various dimensions, including past performance and growth aspirations. This approach enables us to refine programming to make sure it's focused on the growth needs of a specific segment. This is particularly critical for access-to-finance support.

Unfortunately, we still see frequent examples of development actors offering a highly diverse set of MSMEs the same, undifferentiated 'pitch training' to help them secure finance, regardless of whether

they are suited to loans, equity investment or other instruments.

In contrast, AMI clearly segments and differentiates our offer, to ensure that earlier-stage businesses receive appropriate pipeline-building support to achieve investability, while more mature enterprises get higher-touch, investor-readiness support. This approach has delivered impressive results, as seen in our work with Aceli Africa and AGRA's Agribusiness Dealroom.

Our goal is to continue to advocate for rigorous segmentation in Technical Assistance (TA) programmes, and to radically enhance the TA offered to MSMEs in finance-readiness programmes and beyond.



Securing funding was a major milestone for us. It allowed us to expand our facilities and support more farmers, which in turn boosted the local economy.



Avit Theophil

*Co-Founder & Director,
YES Group, Tanzania
AgriXcel Programme*



Aspire programme participant
Delali Pearce-Kporha founded
Macht Energy Ltd, in Ghana.



Harvesting Success: Focused support enables YES group to access finance

YES Group was founded in 2015 with a clear vision: to improve the livelihoods of young people and women in the Kagera region of Tanzania through sustainable farming. This vision led to the creation of the Youth Entrepreneurs Special Group (YES Group).

Avit Theophil, the Co-founder and Director of YES Group, recognised a pressing need in his community. Farmers, especially youth and women, were cultivating sunflowers but lacked the means to process the seeds into oil or sell their crops effectively. To solve this problem, Avit and his team bought small machines that could process sunflower seeds. This not only helped farmers produce sunflower oil but also created a market for their crops, ensuring they could earn a steady income.

As YES Group began to grow, Avit realised that to take his organisation to the next level, he needed more advanced business skills and a robust strategy. Avit joined AMI and AGRA's AgriXcel programme where he

saw an opportunity to gain essential knowledge in business management, financial planning, and market strategies.

"The programme was a game-changer for us," said Avit. "I learned about the importance of critical business documentation required to access finance, which had been a significant barrier for us."

The practical tools and templates provided by the programme for business planning and financial forecasting were invaluable. These tools included a business model canvas, financial projection templates, and market analysis frameworks.

With this newfound knowledge, Avit secured increased funding from local banks, which recognised the potential in YES Group's improved business strategy.

Since completing the AMI programme, YES Group has achieved remarkable success.

One of the most significant outcomes was the introduction of an organic fertiliser product in 2022, which attracted considerable interest and helped YES Group reach a larger market.

This strategic shift not only enhanced YES Group's market position but also allowed them to provide better support to local farmers and increased the YES Group's revenue by 39%. Farmers in their community now had access to improved seeds and inputs, as well as training on organic farming techniques, which improved their productivity and income.

"Our new business strategy made us more efficient and effective," Avit noted. "It also allowed us to better support our farmers with training and resources."



Avit Theophil,
Co-Founder & Director of
YES Group, Tanzania at his farm.

3

Diagnostics enable targeted business support: Defining winning behaviours and practices

Beyond segmenting by business type, we go further and identify the specific needs of each business, using our research-based diagnostic tools. Across our MSME growth and workplace learning offerings, we start interventions by helping businesses identify the most critical behaviours and practices they need to adopt in order to succeed.

We then equip MSMEs with the practical tools they need to implement their plans. These tech-enabled and data-driven tools allow us to offer highly personalised support, even when we're reaching thousands of businesses at a time.

We're excited about how AI will turbocharge our ability to deliver deeply personalised business support at massive scale in coming years.

For managers and leaders in larger firms, we run diagnostics with whole teams to understand how they match up to the 'winning behaviours' required for successful business performance within their specific context.

We also design team workplace learning focused on closing the gaps – an approach that resonates deeply with business leaders who care about results.

This is proving particularly successful in more mature markets such as Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and more recently Nigeria.





The programme was a game-changer for my team. By doing the programme together, we were able to work towards the vision of our business and take it to the next level. One of the most significant impacts of the programme was that I now have a team that can support me in achieving my business goals.

The vault of tools provided by Aspire was also incredibly beneficial, as it allowed me to assess the health of my business, identify areas that needed improvement, and learn how to work on those areas.



Wamuyu Ndegwa

*Founder & Creative Lead,
Tira Studio, Kenya*

Aspire Business Growth Programme



From Fashion to Management Finesse

Vivo Fashion Group's management learning journey

In the fashion world, the final product often gets the spotlight, while hardworking teams behind the scenes go unnoticed. These teams bring Vivo's creations to life, making sure affordable, stylish, and high-quality clothing is available for all women.

For over a decade, Vivo Fashion Group has been making women feel confident, comfortable, and fashionable without breaking the bank. Founded by Wandia Gichuru and Anne Marie Burugu in 2011, Vivo is East Africa's fastest-growing fashion business. The company designs and manufactures all their clothing in Africa and is now East Africa's largest ladies' fashion brand.

With branches across Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, Vivo felt the need to improve their management approach to maximise business growth. They identified issues within their management team, such as missed deadlines, turnaround times and poor communication.

To address these challenges, Vivo partnered with AMI and introduced the Management Development Programme. Fourteen managers joined this six-month programme to develop essential skills for handling workplace challenges.

Before the programme, some team leaders struggled to motivate their teams, leading to communication problems and missed deadlines. The programme's tool, "Getting The Message Across," helped managers improve their communication skills, making it easier to convey messages and link outcomes to objectives.

Vivo values customer satisfaction, but delivering consistent service across multiple branches was challenging. The programme helped Emily Gor, the Regional Manager, create a community of problem solvers.

"Continuous customer service training has improved our readiness to respond to client inquiries and concerns," said Gor.

"As a result, the motivated sales team has increased customer satisfaction to 85%, sales conversion rose from 14% to 15%, and the average basket size grew by 113%. Additionally, 95% of the stores achieved at least 80% of their monthly targets."

The programme addressed operational inefficiencies, leading to better productivity and financial savings. It helped the team reduce stock discrepancies by 70%, minimising losses and improving processes.

Vivo managers continue to implement the practices they learned ensuring ongoing improvements in their operations and team dynamics.

The results show that AMI was the right fit: 93% of participants feeling more effective at work and 100% indicating they would recommend AMI.



“

This experience reminded me of our shared humanity and the importance of our emotions. The emotional intelligence aspect had a lasting impact on me. It's about creating workplaces where being predictable and open leads to trust and acceptance, allowing for better conversations.



Jocelyn Muoki

*Brand Marketing Manager,
Vivo Fashion Group*

Management Development Programme



4

Localisation is key: Delivering sustainable impact through local knowledge and partners

We now have a physical presence in ten countries across Africa. Our country leads and representatives work closely with local stakeholders, including governments, to ensure we achieve meaningful reach and follow a context-driven approach. Here are a few examples:

RWANDA

In Rwanda, our work is based on deep relationships with business networks and women's associations, who drive managers and entrepreneurs to our programming - a total of 7,200 MSMEs and 3,100 managers from larger businesses since we entered in 2019. We've also worked with the Rwandan Government to understand how our approach can support its own initiatives.

Now, after five years in-country, we've been contracted by the Development Bank of Rwanda to embed our business growth methodology across their network of government-employed Business Development Advisors. This type of local partnership ensures existing resources are leveraged and maximised for sustainable and systemic impact.

FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

In Francophone West Africa, our Senegal-based teams have been adapting AMI's approach to the local context, through an extension of our MIT randomised control trial, together with Agence Française de Développement's Innovation Fund. We've also partnered closely with local players Teranga Gestion to reach 266 entrepreneurs through our Boostpreneur initiative.

In 2024, we'll apply our proven MSME growth methodology in new Francophone markets with the support of Vitol Foundation, using a 'training of trainers' approach.

SOUTH AFRICA

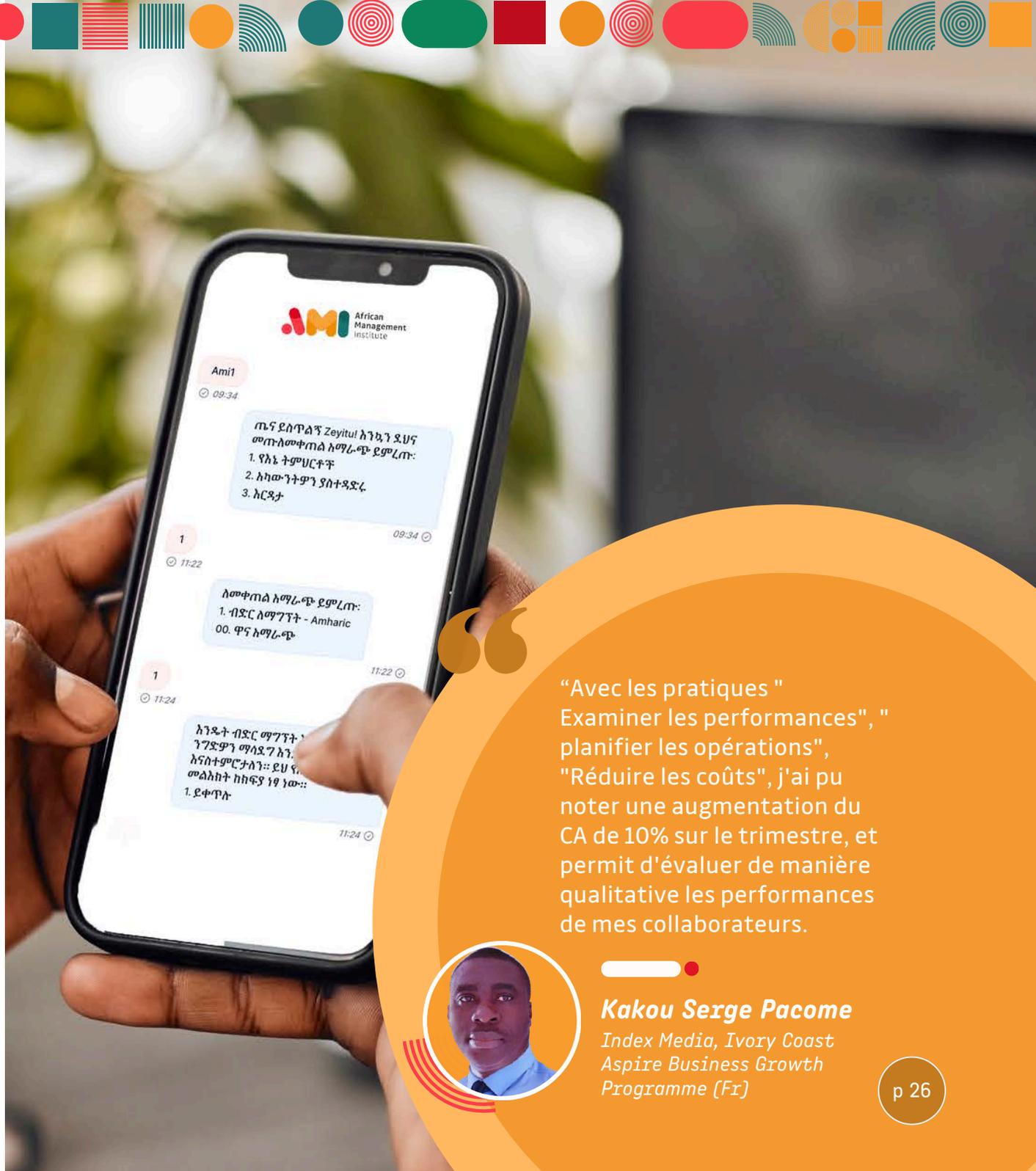
In South Africa, longstanding local laws on MSME development means that we operate within a more mature BDS market. In this context, we both offer our programmes directly, and partner with BDS providers offering complementary services, to offer a market-leading service to MSMEs and the corporate clients who support them. This has translated to exciting corporate partnerships - like our work with Zevoli Growth Partners to deliver a wraparound growth service to MSMEs in resource regions, and our programme to support the growth of food sector MSMEs, with Uber Eats.



ETHIOPIA

In some cases, localisation means innovating significantly to meet the needs of learners and achieve scale.

In Ethiopia, our newest location, we're working with a local fintech to reach hundreds of thousands of loan-seeking micro-entrepreneurs, most of whom are women. The majority have no smartphone and do not speak English. So we're extending our approach with new technologies, including SMS and omnichannel courses in local languages, including Amharic and Oromo.



AMI delivers programmes in **7 languages** ACROSS AFRICA

Arabic

Amharic

English

French

Kinyarwanda

Swahili

Oromo



“Avec les pratiques " Examiner les performances", " planifier les opérations", "Réduire les coûts", j'ai pu noter une augmentation du CA de 10% sur le trimestre, et permit d'évaluer de manière qualitative les performances de mes collaborateurs.



Kakou Serge Pacome

Index Media, Ivory Coast
Aspire Business Growth Programme (Fr)



IMPACT STORY 

Setting clear objectives helped my business thrive: Clementine's Journey to Success

Inspired by her desire to make a difference, Clementine embarked on her entrepreneurial journey, founding Noza Bamboo in 2021 after completing a bamboo-cutting workshop. Determined not to let her newfound knowledge go to waste, she set out to create a business that would benefit her and her community.

Facing the familiar challenges of a fledgling enterprise, Clementine remained steadfast, relying on patience and perseverance to navigate the hurdles of establishing her brand in competitive markets. Recognising the importance of effective management and strategic decision-making, she sought guidance from AMI in 2023.

Through AMI's Set Up For Growth Programme, Clementine gained valuable skills and insights that helped her refine strategies and serve her customers better.

This programme is offered in English and Kinyarwanda to effectively support entrepreneurs in Rwanda.

The outcomes were immediate and significant - Noza Bamboo expanded its customer base, attracted more clients, and achieved substantial profits in 2023.

"We accessed new markets with our business growth," Clementine stated. "Previously, I served one to three customers daily, but now it's between five and seven."

In 2023, Clementine's dedication resulted in a significant milestone as the business earned 300,000 RWF for the first time. This financial success not only ensured the wellbeing of Clementine and her team but also injected essential funds into the local economy.

However, Clementine's success goes beyond financial gains. With the growth of her business, came the opportunity to create jobs. Noza Bamboo now employs 16

individuals, including one permanent staff member and 15 non-permanent employees. 75% of these employees are women, providing valuable employment opportunities for young women aged 20 to 25 in the community.

Clementine's journey underscores the transformative power of entrepreneurship and tailored support programmes like AMI. As she continues to nurture her business and empower her community, Clementine encourages fellow entrepreneurs to seize opportunities for growth and development, knowing firsthand the impact they can have on both individuals and society as a whole.

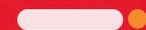
Since entering Rwanda in 2018 AMI has forged dozens of new local partnerships and reached 7,000+ small businesses like Clementine's, having a ripple effect on livelihoods that can make a big difference.





“

We accessed new markets with our business growth. Previously, I served one to three customers daily, but now it's between five and seven.



Clementine Mukantezimana

Founder, Noza Bamboo, Rwanda

Setup for Growth Programme Participant

5

Investment in women and agribusiness delivers exponential impact

We know that when women-led businesses and agribusinesses thrive, there is outsized positive impact on livelihoods. We've therefore chosen to invest extra resources into these enterprises.

We apply a gender lens to all our programming, and it's yielding strong results. For example, we ensure successful women entrepreneurs are profiled in recruitment materials, highlighting examples of previous female participants who have benefited from AMI support. Our Speak up to Lead module and other programmes promote skills – such as negotiation – that women have less opportunity to practise as a result of cultural norms.

We also invest in the development of female Business Development Services

(BDS) providers to strengthen the support ecosystem for women. And critically, we disaggregate all programme engagement and business performance data by gender to inform gender-led design.

In 2023, 50% of our participants were women, and our data showed more encouraging signs of progress among women-led businesses than ever before. Women-led businesses achieved higher-than-average annual revenue growth, at 20% median versus an average of 18.7%, and more stable growth over time (three-year CAGR of 19.9% versus an average of 16.9%).

Women-led businesses are creating jobs ahead of the average, at 1.4 jobs per business against an average of 1. They're also accessing finance at higher average values than businesses led by men (\$33,667 versus \$26,833).

These insights are explored in more depth in the gender insights paper we released in early 2024:

'Green shoots for African female entrepreneurs – with a forest still to grow'.

Interestingly, in 2023 co-led businesses accessed even higher average finance values (\$45,737), potentially highlighting the benefits and investor appeal of diverse, multi-strength leadership.



We sparked exponential job creation for women in Nigeria after taking the AMI Aspire Business Growth Programme. This includes 52 new net jobs – the majority of which went to women – alongside a 76% increase in revenue.

O moyemi Chukwurah

Founder, Brand & Stitch, Nigeria Aspire Business Growth Programme



The growth of agribusinesses also positively impacts livelihoods beyond the entrepreneurs we serve directly. In 2023, 35% of AMI-supported businesses worked in the agribusiness sector; 53% of these said they work to increase access to markets for smallholder farmers, while 26% offer training and 19% supply inputs, also to smallholders.

In 2023, we saw solid annual growth of 10.5% for our ag-sector businesses - slightly less than our average, with global macroeconomic factors affecting input supply and export markets.

Despite these challenging conditions, we were encouraged to see full-time job creation at an average of one job per agribusiness, and we know that a job created in agriculture can create as many as 15 in the value chain (United Nations and AGRA, 2022).⁹



“

Some of the useful tools were on management of money management, cash flows and talent management, especially for our teams, which also came in handy for us. I would tell other farmers that consistency is essential in whatever you're doing.

— Jennifer Katiwa

Founder, Vicfagrajoem Enterprises, Kenya
Grow Your Business Programme



Dairy Dreams and Determination: Margaret's Path to Transforming Dairy Farming in Eastern Kenya

Margaret Mutie is the founder of Ndalani Farm Produce Limited in Machakos County, Kenya. Margaret's entrepreneurship journey started as a travel consultant, a business that was disrupted due to the growing trend of online ticket booking.

She needed to find a new path, and that's when improving her family's dairy farm - that she had established in 2012 as a part-time venture - came to mind. She sold her travel agency business and decided to focus on growing her dairy farm and producing raw milk.

However, she faced challenges in the dairy industry, including low milk prices and the lack of nearby processing facilities. This is where her entrepreneurial spirit ignited.

In 2019, with the proceeds from the sale of her former business, personal savings and a bank loan, she decided to add value to her milk as well as that of other milk producers in her community who struggled to access reliable markets. She established a

processing and pasteurising plant, creating Ndalani Farm Produce Limited- whose goal is to provide affordable and quality dairy products to the border Eastern and North Eastern Kenya region.

"I am glad that during this time I had some savings to purchase the machines I needed to set up the factory, because accessing the bank loan was a very lengthy process and I only managed to access 50% of what I applied for since the bank needed extensive collateral which I did not have."

Now Ndalani Farm Produce Ltd employs a team of 15 dedicated workers and is expanding its distribution channels to reach more customers. Being one of the few dairy processors serving Machakos, Makueni, Kitui and Garissa counties, Margaret is focused on making her products both consistently available and affordable to the community she serves and has relied on her refrigerated trucks to deliver her products to last-mile vendors.

She is also training her suppliers - the majority of whom are women and youth -

on best practices for milk production to ensure she has a reliable supply to meet her demand.

Through the Agribusiness Survive to Thrive Programme run by AMI in collaboration with Aceli Africa, Margaret learned about the importance of record-keeping, the value of customer feedback to build customer loyalty, and listening to and developing her team. These lessons along with the networks she made in the programme significantly improved her ability to scale her business.

Margaret has great ambitions for the future. She looks forward to setting up an ERP system and also installing solar panels to reduce the cost of production.

"We can barely satisfy the demand for quality and affordable dairy products in this region. I am excited about what the future holds. I look forward to accessing more funding to accelerate the growth as we now have the structures to support our growth thanks to AMI".



“

The AMI programme enabled me to learn how to sell the vision and motivate my team. Production efficiency at the factory has improved by over 40%. I am also training our boda boda drivers who are part of our distribution team and this has really helped reduce waste. I now feel that I am in control of what I am doing.



Margaret Mutie

*Founder, Ndalani Farm Produce Limited, Kenya
Agribusiness Survive to Thrive Programme*



5 Actions

FROM 10 YEARS OF AMI



HOW WE ARE LEVERAGING
THESE LESSONS





1

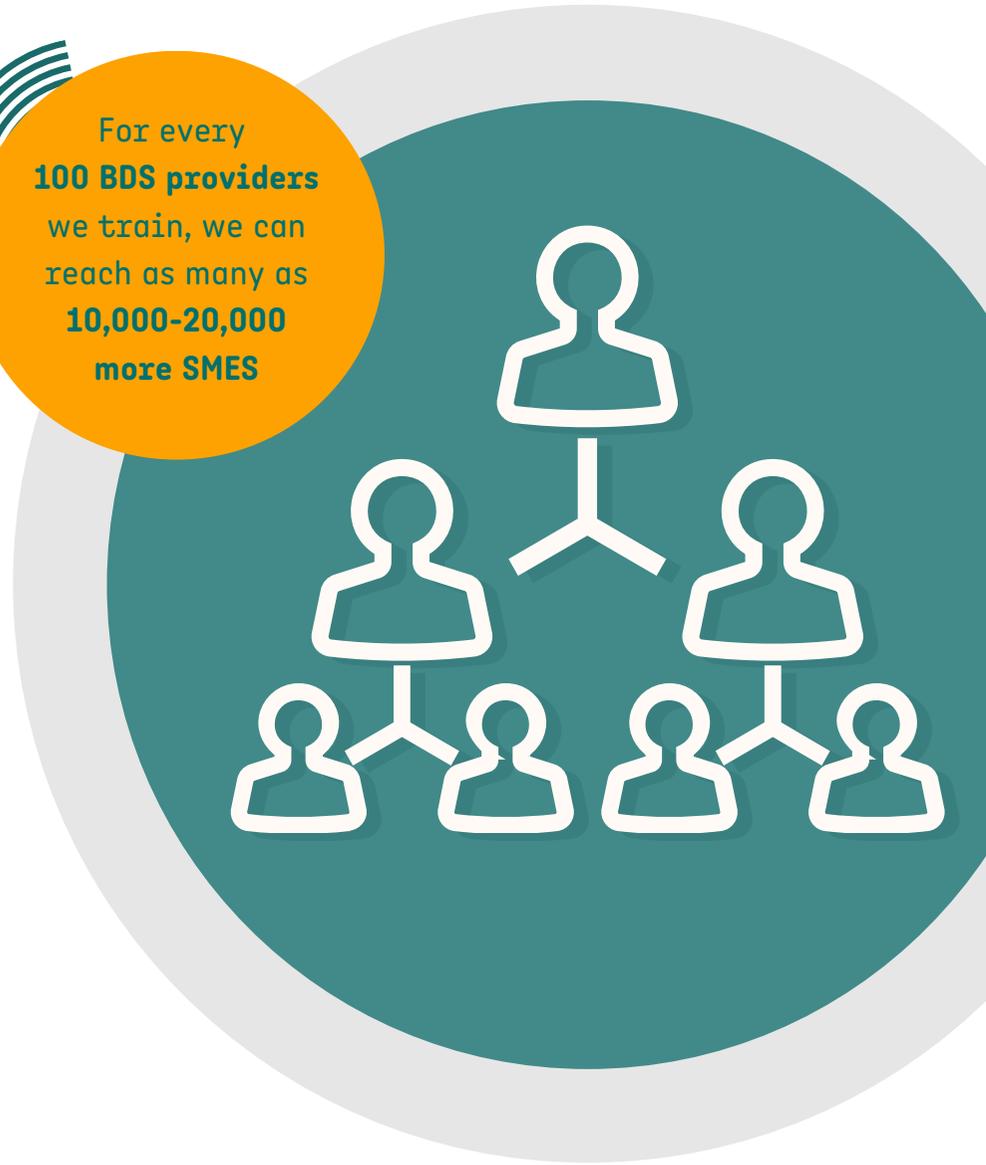
Amplifying impact through indirect delivery

To get research-backed growth programmes to every MSME in Africa, established providers like AMI need to become ‘regional champions’ – aggregating and quality-assuring a dispersed and fragmented market.

Our work has now extended from direct delivery to mapping and connecting African BDS providers, and putting our methodology in their hands. Through our ecosystem-building work, we’re equipping BDS providers across the continent with our SME diagnostics, growth tools and learning platform. This massively amplifies the impact of our work.

For example, in Rwanda, as part of our work with the government’s network of Business Development Advisors, we’re training 240 Growth Guides across the country to deploy our methods and approaches, each one expected to reach 375 businesses, ultimately estimated to reach 90,000+ SMEs and channel 18,000+ SMEs to finance. Projects like this will enable us to reach tens of thousands of MSMEs, and this ecosystem-building work will be a core focus for AMI moving forward.

For every 100 BDS providers we train, we can reach as many as 10,000-20,000 more SMES



2

Setting national standards to support BDS provision

If we're to raise the bar for African BDS, we need consensus as to what and where that bar should be. We can then help BDS providers to meet these expectations.

National standards have a key role to play here, and we've worked with the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda and Mastercard Foundation to set national standards for BDS provision. We then trained 200 BDS providers in the quality standards we've developed with the government.

These 200 providers cite a cumulative reach of 46,000 MSMEs. We'll be taking learnings from this project to scale and aim to replicate this work in other markets. Our learnings in this area are explored in depth in our paper, 'Raising the Bar for BDS in Africa'.



AMI and PSFU were bringing people who help small businesses together...no one else was doing that. The challenges we all face are similar – finding more money... (but) it's not just about money; it's about understanding what businesses really need.

Paula Mugisa

Owner & Founder, Teesa Advisory Services Uganda Ltd., Uganda



Amplifying Business Development Services in Uganda

How Enigma Kreative is scaling impact

Duncan Katambo Kato, a former finance professional based in Kampala, founded business development service (BDS) company Enigma Kreative Limited during Covid to help Ugandans avoid poverty and unemployment by providing business skills and support services.

As Duncan says, “Enigma helps beautiful business stories emerge out of a difficult place.” His company achieves this by offering an “ecosystem” of services via five separate businesses, each providing a critical service at each stage to achieve a sustainable business model; skills and mentoring for youth and underserved entrepreneurs; online market access to consumers; access to capital and investment; marketing and branding; and legal compliance and business registration.

Focused on Uganda’s large population of individuals who “deserve a second chance at prosperity,” Enigma has 150,000 individuals currently active in their ecosystem across Uganda.

Many of these individuals have been referred by the first 400 businesses who completed the full Enigma Kreative cycle since launching in 2022. Enigma’s ultimate goal is to serve 1.5 million individuals across Uganda by 2028.

When Duncan enrolled in AMI’s Business Development Standards training programme - a collaboration between AMI, the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and the Mastercard Foundation - he thought Enigma’s own training materials were sufficient. Instead he learned how much more he could be offering his ecosystem of entrepreneurs.

"When you look at the models we learned, for example the financial management tools, we discovered our own models weren't as good. As we learned these new models, I decided to improve our own training. Now we are looking to see who in our ecosystem would be ready for AMI business training."

Duncan also credits AMI’s tools with helping to streamline his operations and amplify his business’ BDS focused impact.

As Duncan continues to expand his reach to new communities and inspiring change, he’s focused on carrying out an approach as a BDS provider that can cascade and be amplified to hundreds of thousands of Ugandan entrepreneurs.

"AMI's training was a revelation. It wasn't just about the skills; it was about seeing our work through a new lens, understanding our potential impact, and refining our approach to making a lasting difference."



"When you look at the models we learned, for example the financial management tools, we discovered our own models weren't as good. Now we are looking to see who in our ecosystem would be ready for AMI business training."



Duncan Katambo

Founder, Enigma Kreative Limited, Uganda



The PSFU team, BDS Providers and the AMI team in Kampala, Uganda

3

Extending our focus on 'outsized impact'

We know that certain sectors and focus areas have outsized impact on livelihoods. As a result, our focus on women and the agriculture sector will only intensify in the years ahead. We're especially excited to be launching a high-scale access-to-loan finance learning programme for Ethiopian women in 2024. Delivered with local partners, this scheme will reach hundreds of thousands of women over the next three years.

Meanwhile, in the agriculture sector, our Centre for African Leaders in Agriculture (CALA) programme, which we deliver in partnership with AGRA, goes from strength to strength. In 2024, the fourth cohort of exceptional cross-sector CALA participants will begin the programme, as we continue to support sector leaders to deliver against top national priorities in African agriculture and nutrition security.

In these and other sectors, we know our approach has the potential to generate exponential gains for people and planet. Our Future Female Leaders in Energy Access programme, for example, will reach 300 women in partnership with The University of Cape Town, The Carbon Trust and FCDO. A key priority here is to expand our leadership development activities from sustainable agriculture and renewable energy access to additional climate-relevant focus areas.





Empowering Women: Nurturing Growth and Influence in Energy

Lucy Josephat Wambura, a supervisor at Simusolar Ltd., embarked on a transformative journey within the energy sector, driven by a relentless desire for self-improvement. Her story is a testament to the Future Females in Energy Program, designed to equip young women with skills and support to lead in the Energy Access Sector.

Lucy's journey began with a nudge from her HR Manager and a positive experience in a previous AMI programme. Aspiring to become a senior supervisor, she saw the programme as a gateway to acquiring necessary skills. Guided by course conveners from UCT and supported by AMI, Lucy immersed herself in self-discovery and growth, acquiring invaluable skills that reshaped her career.

Despite balancing her workload, she navigated the programme with determination,

leveraging productivity tools and seeking extensions when needed. The programme not only equipped her with skills but also nurtured her confidence in leadership. Empowered by the 'Speak Up and Lead' module, Lucy improved her communication and decision-making skills. She formed close connections with peers, planning to meet in Dar es Salaam to strengthen their collective voice in the energy sector.

Lucy's story highlights the underrepresentation of women in the renewable energy sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite their potential, women remain concentrated in support roles.

Initiatives like the Future Females in Energy Program are crucial in addressing this gender gap, empowering women to thrive in leadership roles and drive meaningful change in the industry.

Lucy's journey is an inspiration, showcasing the power of dedicated programmes in fostering a more inclusive renewable energy workforce. It calls for continued support and investment in the potential of women like Lucy, poised to lead the sustainable energy transition.



The Future Females in Energy Program has been a game-changer for me. It not only equipped me with essential skills but also boosted my confidence to take on leadership roles.



Lucy Josephat Wambura
Supervisor at Simusolar, Kenya

Future Females in Energy
Programme Participant

4

Using segmentation to rethink technical assistance programmes & concentrate resources for maximum impact

Data-driven and tech-enabled segmentation of MSMEs will continue to inform, improve and extend our work. Many financial providers include technical assistance alongside financial support. Yet the model for this type of support is broken, leading to hundreds of millions of dollars being wasted every year.

We intend to harness these resources for exponentially greater impact, and believe that a nuanced approach to business profiling can unlock improved value from existing technical assistance funds. We'll work to extend the application of our segmentation framework for access-to-finance programmes, offering targeted AMI support to individual enterprises. We'll also guide businesses to relevant assistance from external partners, be that access-to-market programmes, finance or specialised sector-specific support.

Segmentation is also helping us identify job creation champions and spur them on to even greater heights. By segmenting our impact data, we know that the top 50 performing businesses (by job creation) created 15.4 jobs each in 2023 alone, while growing revenue at an average of 169%.

We aim to direct higher resource support to those top performers that have the ability to deliver rapid and positive impact on livelihoods. Such support can help close the funding gap for these businesses and fuel further job creation.

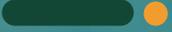


Omopeju Afanu

*Aspire Programme Participant,
Nigeria*



One of the most impactful tools I encountered during the programme was the budgeting and forecasting tool. Initially, I thought it would be complicated, but once I engaged with it, I found it straightforward and incredibly useful. This tool allowed me to set realistic growth targets and plan my finances better, enabling more strategic decision-making.



M-KOPA graduates discussing their highlights and learnings from the programme at their graduation.

5

Building the market through MSME payment

MSME payment is a key ingredient for a sustainable and quality-driven market for African business growth programmes. We know that certain MSME segments will always require some level of subsidised support.

However, others can and are willing to pay. For this reason, we take a segmented approach to seeking MSME payment. Our Aspire programme, delivered to high-growth potential MSMEs together with Stanford SEED, demonstrates that more established, growth-oriented MSMEs can and will pay for support. In 2023, we enrolled 266 businesses onto this programme, with these businesses paying an average of \$281 towards their programme fees. And when businesses fund or part-fund their own development, the investment tends to pay off; for example, those that took part in our Aspire programme in 2023 saw revenue growth of 38%, and headcount growth rates of 6%.

Larger businesses and corporates fully fund their workplace learning support from our Enterprise offering. AMI Enterprise delivers practical leadership, management and soft skill training, as well as an on-demand digital Enterprise Academy to support whole teams with ongoing learning. 93% of learners apply what they learn on the job and 86% of businesses report bottom-line improvements.





The Spring Valley team at their branch in Lavinton, Nairobi



Brewing a Better Future: The Leadership Transformation at Spring Valley Coffee

Imagine sipping a cup of Spring Valley Coffee, knowing that each bean has been carefully cultivated and roasted by a team committed to excellence not just in flavour, but in every facet of their operation. Spring Valley's dedication to improving their internal processes means every cup of coffee is backed by a company striving for perfection.

Kenya-based Spring Valley Coffee Limited, renowned for its high-quality beans and rich, aromatic coffee, was looking to inspire new management approaches. They identified important areas for growth including owning company values, fostering personal accountability and time management.

To support learning Spring Valley management enrolled 28 dedicated staff members in AMI's Management Development Programme. Aligned with Spring Valley's mission to inspire change in the world through coffee, the programme

focused on empowering managers to lead with confidence, skill, and a shared vision for the future.

The participants were highly dedicated and eager to grow within the company, and this translated into results. Feedback from team leaders showed noticeable growth in their teams, who had started using the tools and techniques learned during the programme, immediately on the job.

"Having difficult conversations, assertiveness, and delegating tasks have become part of my daily routine, thanks to the training we received," said Astin Mumbi, one of the participants.

Vivien Wanjiku, one of Spring Valley's branch managers took the practices and taught her team in the process:

"My team has become more proactive, bringing in ideas and tackling challenges together. We now have regular idea-sharing sessions that foster innovation."

This proactive approach and regular collaboration were new hallmarks of the Spring Valley team.

At the programme graduation, Spring Valley's COO Geert Hein-Jens, the COO of Spring Valley Coffee Limited, emphasized the importance of continuous learning.

"Continuous learning is important and starts from the leadership team, cascading down to everyone in the company. It creates a culture where personal growth is important; it allows you to be a better professional." he said.

The Management Development Programme has been crucial in transforming the management skills at Spring Valley Coffee Limited.

By addressing key business challenges and fostering a culture of continuous learning, the company is better positioned to achieve its mission of inspiring change in the world through incredible coffee, one cup at a time.



“

Continuous learning is important and starts from the leadership team, cascading down to everyone in the company. It creates a culture where personal growth is important; it allows you to be a better professional.

Geert Hein-Jens
Chief Operating Officer,
Spring Valley Coffee, Kenya



An ambitious team for an ambitious Africa

And finally, our most critical area of focus over the last ten years has been AMI's own team. While AMI is uniquely placed to support African businesses at scale for job creation and livelihoods impact thanks to our research-based methodology, this approach would be nothing without our incredible, ambitious team on the ground across Africa.



Decoding Our Impact: The data fine print

1. Our Return on Training Investment (ROTI) figure takes the average 3-year incremental revenue growth obtained by the businesses sampled in our annual impact data collection, divided by the cost of assistance per business.
2. Our Livelihoods ROTI is calculated by multiplying the yearly minimum wage in Kenya (\$1 992) by the total direct and indirect jobs created by our flagship GYB programme, divided by the total cost of assistance to these businesses.
3. We estimate direct + indirect jobs by referencing CDC Group's study, 'Measuring Total Employment Effects: a lean data methodology for a portfolio of investments in developing countries' (MacGillivray, A. et al, 2017). The researchers find that indirect employment effects are at a multiple of 7.5 to one direct job in 100 African businesses, supporting the anecdotal literature that indirect multipliers are greater in emerging markets than in the OECD. We've applied this effect to the 13,050 full-time jobs created through our flagship Grow Your Business programme over the last 10 years.
4. Our ten-year livelihoods improved figure considers 1) the 97,000+ direct and indirect jobs created by the businesses reached through our flagship Grow Your Business programme, and 2) total jobs improved across all our programmes. We've used an average household multiplier of 4.7 to reach livelihoods improved.
5. Our full-time jobs created figure Includes data from businesses supported in the last 3 years. Net job creation is 2,444 in 2023 when losses of part-time jobs are added. Part-time jobs are counted as 0.5 FTE. Some part-time jobs may have become full-time jobs.

6. Our Jobs improved figure includes all people trained, the employees of surviving SMEs where the entrepreneur was trained, and employees reporting to managers trained in workplace programmes.
7. 37.7% of women-led businesses accessed finance, only slightly lagging men at 39.4%. 48% of co-led businesses accessed finance, which brought up the average.
8. Livelihoods impacted in 2023 considers both jobs created and jobs improved. For jobs created, we've used the sector representation in our sample to estimate the number of entrepreneurs per sector, and then estimated total jobs created by sector using average FTE jobs (full-time jobs plus part-time jobs at 0.5 FT equivalent). To this, we've applied average household size (4.7) and employment multipliers (7.5) (CDC: MacGillivray, A. et al, 2017) to estimate livelihoods impacted. We've then added the livelihoods by jobs improved: all people trained plus employees of surviving MSMEs (minus jobs created), plus people reporting to managers trained in workplace programmes, multiplied by the average household size.
9. At the same time, we saw an average of 2.6 part-time jobs lost per business, although these losses may in part be explained by some part-time jobs shifting to full-time.
10. Our 10 year incremental revenue figure takes the average incremental revenue number for businesses supported between 2019-2023 in our Grow Your Business programme and multiplies this number by the total number of businesses reached in GYB and MEA programmes across ten years.

Connect With Us

100+ staff with offices and presence in 10 countries

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