

# IMPACT

 A publication of Opportunity International

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## The heart of Opportunity



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON LONDEN

**I**n tiny weekly gatherings in homes, small stores, meeting rooms or under the generous shade of a large tree, Opportunity International's work of transformation takes place — far away from the public eye. At each of these Trust Bank meetings, anywhere from 15 to 40 meet to deepen their skills and repay their loans. Their relationships, knowledge and influence serve as an engine of real and lasting change for poor people around the world.

And the ignition of that engine — the heart of Opportunity International's work — is the loan officer. Of Opportunity's more than 5,400 employees, nearly 4,000 are loan officers.

To each client, a loan officer serves as a powerful mentor. The loans have to be paid, but much of the time and energy in Trust Bank meetings revolve around building clients for a stronger future through training in basic business practices such as bookkeeping, inventory,

**Opportunity International loan officers, such as the Philippines' Vangie Banate (right), provide the mentoring that transforms not only businesses, but also families and whole communities.**

marketing and customer service.

"Loan officers are the building block for all that we do," agrees Opportunity International President and CEO Chris Crane. "They serve as the steady, powerful catalyst for transformation in the client as well as the community."

Opportunity invests heavily in the success of these *catalysts* — preparing loan officers well for their role in transforming clients into powerful community leaders.

Yet Opportunity's priority is to recruit and train leaders across the board — not only loan officers, but every leader: from client to loan officer to manager to board member. These leaders are specifically trained to implement

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## I N S I D E



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The heart of Opportunity International



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World leaders pledge extensive aid to Africa



**5 Growing leaders**  
Women's Opportunity Fund

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A governor's family meets the Trust Bank they helped fund

## Debt Cancellation

At this month's powerful G8 Summit\*, world leaders made history by pledging to double aid to Africa over the next five years, committing to increased attention on HIV/AIDS, and canceling 100 percent of the multilateral debts owed by some of the world's most highly indebted poor countries.

As a result, these nations, most in sub-Saharan Africa, can now apply their debt payments toward education, health care and other development programs. Another 20 countries may become eligible for the debt cancellation as well, pending strict guidelines.

The decision was heralded by aid organizations and will serve as a powerful catalyst for Opportunity International's work worldwide.

\* See "History-Making G8 Summit" on page 4.

**In the Philippines alone, Opportunity serves more than 440,000 poor entrepreneurs.**

## From the CEO's desk



CHRIS CRANE  
President &  
Chief Executive Officer

**W**ith the recent spotlight on the G8 Summit in Scotland, global poverty is making headlines. The world is paying attention and looking for solutions. Let's help point that attention toward the transforming power of microenterprise development.

Opportunity International has seen microenterprise development work. We've seen lives changed. Now we simply have to get the word out.

You, too, are part of spreading the word about the transforming power of microenterprise development. (See "Top 10: How to raise awareness" on page 4, for ideas on how you can help even more.)

Together, we are making a difference for the hardworking poor of the world.

*Chris*

## Microcredit honor

Opportunity International President and CEO Chris Crane was recently named to the advisory committee for the 2006 Global Microcredit Summit ([www.microcreditsummit.org](http://www.microcreditsummit.org)), to be held in Nova Scotia on November 12, 2006.

## Heart of Opportunity (continued from page 1)

microfinance programs with a primary focus on the poorest, on women and on transformation. Stronger leaders mean a greater capacity for change at all levels of a community.

Alba Argentina Cáliz, 22, is a loan officer in Honduras who started first as a client. "She understands the clients," says her regional manager, Alda Cáliz. "She has been in their skin."

As such, Alba's clients trust her and ask her advice on everything from business to personal issues.

Opportunity International loan officers are recruited from the local community, and many come out of a life of poverty themselves. Though highly educated — university degrees in business and economics are common — loan officers endure long hours and difficult circumstances to serve their clients. Some must supervise as many as 15 or more Trust Bank meetings involving hundreds of clients every week, often in hard-to-reach areas.

"There are many, many people down here who need us to come into these areas and work," agrees loan officer Moses Luwemba, who travels many hours to Trust Bank meetings in rural Uganda.

"Commercial banks do not come here. We, the microfinance institutions, must reach the grassroots. And only when we reach the grassroots will these poor people be able to sustain themselves and their families."

**B**efore Opportunity's loan officers can educate their clients, they must be educated themselves — a process that never really ends:

- In **Uganda**, loan officers undergo extensive training in HIV/AIDS education to give clients the tools to prevent infection and to continue with their lives if they become infected.

"We expect that this is going to help not just the clients, but the families as a whole," says Robinah Babirye, Uganda's HIV/AIDS project coordinator for Opportunity International. "It will [help] the whole community, because HIV is a community problem. It's not a family problem, it's not an individual problem, but it affects the whole community and ultimately the whole country."

- Opportunity International's program in



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON LONDEN

Alba Argentina Cáliz

**Honduras** was a key contributor to the development of a Transformation Training Library. This library is made up of more than 400 curriculum modules to be used by loan officers worldwide — teaching clients invaluable skills in business as well as in personal development. The Transformation Training Library is a resource offered to Opportunity's 41 programs throughout the developing world.

- In a major push to enhance leadership development, all nine Opportunity programs in the **Philippines** participated in a summer leadership camp. The six-day boot camp on the Philippine Island of Bohol featured extensive leadership training — including the teaching modules developed in Honduras.

- In the Russian language, **Fora** means "opportunity" — an appropriate name for the Opportunity program in Nizhny Novgorod, **Russia**. While managing the transition to a formal financial institution, FORA personnel provided extensive education to loan officers and staff. "We developed a lot of training programs for our staff, for loan officers, for top-level management," says Tatyana Yurina, executive director of FORA. "It gives us a confidence that our transformation will be successful."

Continuing education is central to the growing success of Opportunity International, but more essential than skills is the driving passion of loan officers to serve their clients and their world.

"I do this job because I feel it is a calling," Moses Luwemba says. "I am called to come and serve poor people. I ride several kilometers to reach these people, because if we don't move out to these people and touch them and lift them up, then no one is going to do it." ●

# Making a lasting difference

## LOAN OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

*Opportunity International loan officers are making a real difference in their communities all around the world. Every year, we select four as regional Loan Officers of the Year — true models of dedication. To meet them via video link, go to [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under “Who We Are/Resources.”* 

### AFRICA

Helping others succeed is high motivation for **Angella Kamahoro**, in her second year as a loan officer in Mbarara, Uganda. “I desire to help the economically active poor — especially women — [climb] out of poverty,” she says.



Angella Kamahoro

Angella uses her university degree in financial services and business computing to interpret complex business issues. And it’s working: Her 381 clients experienced a 100-percent

loan-repayment rate over the last six months — with profits poured back into their growing businesses.

In addition to offering business training, Angella teaches her clients about nutrition, childcare and personal communication. And about HIV/AIDS — a “must” across this continent so devastated by the disease.

### ASIA

When **Michelle Escobar** first began her work with Opportunity in January 2003, she was not sure she could do the job. Yet she gained confidence from



Michelle Escobar

seeing how her hard work and heart for her clients made a difference.

She has earned two awards for being an outstanding loan officer, even receiving monthly incentive pay for her outstanding work. Michelle gives all of her incentive pay to her mother, so that her younger sisters can attend school.

Michelle currently serves 496 clients in 19 Trust Banks, each with a 100-percent repayment rate. Michelle’s leadership fully emerged after the devastating December 2004 typhoon swept through her native Aurora district of the Philippines. Every member of her Trust Bank there suffered, and Michelle counseled and guided them through the aftermath.

### EASTERN EUROPE

**Marina Morozova** loves helping ordinary, hardworking people in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. Her 291 clients — 90 percent of whom are women — know that time spent with Marina means not only financial support and sound



Marina Morozova

business advice, but also the chance for heart-to-heart conversation.

Marina started out as an office manager and was promoted to loan manager and then senior loan manager. Her business advice ranges from explanations of complex government regulations and politics, to even the choice of what goods will sell best.

And that advice pays off. “After the first loan cycle,” she says, “they feel more confident. And

what is more important — they trust our organization. This trust is evidenced in new people whom our clients bring to the program. *FORA* [Opportunity’s program in Russia] is not just a financial organization, but a reliable partner and friend.”

### LATIN AMERICA

For the past seven years, **Maritza Alvarez** has kept a complicated travel schedule as she journeys into the Honduran mountains to reach



Maritza Alvarez

her 15 weekly Trust Bank meetings. Some days she travels up to four hours, then meets with anywhere from one to three Trust Banks. But she keeps up that pace because she loves it. “My clients are like my family,” she says. “I start out every week by first praying for each of them.”

Maritza teaches different training modules to her clients based on their needs, eventually covering all topics — from budgeting and business planning, to health, communication and childcare.

Opportunity is like a member of the family for Maritza. While a teenager, she grew up helping her mother, an Opportunity client, with the family’s street-vending business. Maritza then graduated from school as a certified accountant and returned to Opportunity to apply for the position of loan officer.

“I have liked being a loan officer,” Maritza says, “because I have been able to help these people improve themselves, be independent and have leadership in their communities.” ●

# History-making G8 Summit

Some of the loftiest goals are what most inflame the heart: **Bring about world peace ... feed the hungry ... end global poverty.**

Opportunity International knows about lofty goals. We've committed ourselves to tackling some of the biggest ones, and we start in the smallest of arenas. By helping struggling micro-entrepreneurs provide for their families and then branch out to help their communities rise out of chronic poverty as well, we are indeed chipping away at what might otherwise seem unattainable.

Opportunity is helping to transform entire communities, one at a time. Yet we are only one organization. That's why we partner with other likeminded groups. And that's why the recent G8 ("Group of Eight") Summit ([www.g8.gov.uk](http://www.g8.gov.uk)) was so significant. At the July 6-8 meeting in Scotland, world leaders discussed global poverty, with a focus on *Africa* and on *climate change*.

The results? Regarding climate change, these leaders of the world's wealthiest democracies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) committed to exploring clean-energy technologies and emissions reduction, with further discussions to occur later this year, at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Montreal.

Regarding Africa's overwhelming needs, G8 leaders agreed to commit resources toward peacekeeping, effective governance, health and

education (including HIV/AIDS), and fair trade. Aid to all developing countries will be increased by \$50 billion, with aid to Africa doubled by 2010. And, most significantly, G8 leaders cancelled 100 percent of the multilateral debts of many highly indebted poor countries.

These two topics — climate change and Africa — tap into the very heart of Opportunity International. Opportunity serves more than 89,000 microentrepreneurs in Africa, more than any other organization. This is the continent with the highest proportion of its people living in despair.

Yet there are signs of hope, specifically that Africa's agenda for development is increasingly African-led.

Opportunity is especially encouraged at the commitment to tackle HIV/AIDS. In Africa, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has singlehandedly erased years of progress that many poor entrepreneurs have made: Available money that would routinely be invested back into a small business is instead funneled toward medicine or, in the worst cases, funeral expenses.

That's why many of Opportunity's programs offer innovative microinsurance, which helps guard the hard-won gains of the entrepreneurial poor against personal or environmental disaster.

Climate change is also a crucial reality for our clients, many of whom live in areas that are vulnerable to the rising ocean levels caused by global warming: small island nations, coastal regions whose arable land will be

flooded with salt, countries already threatened by repeated flooding. Many of our entrepreneurial clients found their families and businesses decimated by the 2004 tsunami and typhoon, so they well understand the fragile balance of nature and climate.

Without a doubt, the G8 Summit will have far-reaching effects on Opportunity International and our more than 675,000 microentrepreneurs. But also on the world.

Poverty is a world problem. Our vision is that the proven solution of microenterprise development will gain global recognition. ●

## TOP 10

*How you can help raise awareness about Opportunity International and microfinance*

1. Share Opportunity's Web site with a friend. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org)
2. Send the link of an Opportunity video to a friend. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Who We Are/Resources"
3. Host an event for friends with an Opportunity representative.
4. Write to your legislator in support of microfinance. [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)
5. Sign up for the Opportunity eNewsletter. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Get Involved"
6. Share your "Impact" newsletter with a friend.
7. Join Board of Governors, Partners with the Poor or the Women's Opportunity Fund. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Serving the Poor"
8. Send the link of an open Opportunity position to a qualified professional. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Get Involved"
9. Pray for impoverished people around the world.
10. Give a gift to honor a friend or family member. [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Give Now"

## Employment Opportunities

Do you know a marketing or sales professional with a heart for the poor? Would this person like to use his or her expertise to make a difference in the world?

Below is a list of positions available at Opportunity International:

- Marketing Communications Manager (Oak Brook, Ill.)
- Web Marketing Manager (Oak Brook, Ill.)
- Director of Marketing – Major Gifts (Oak Brook, Ill.)

- Loan Guarantee Fund Analyst, Treasury Analyst (Oak Brook, Ill.)
- Director of Marketing – Major Gifts (Los Angeles, Calif.)
- Director of Marketing – Major Gifts (San Francisco/Oakland, Calif.)
- Vice President, Marketing – East Coast

For full job descriptions, visit our Web site ([www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org)) under "Get Involved." ☺

An initial gift of \$76 finances one poor entrepreneur.

# WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITY FUND

For more information about the Women's Opportunity Fund, visit [www.womensopportunityfund.org](http://www.womensopportunityfund.org)

## Your Will Powerful tool for serving the poor

**W**ith an estimated 3 billion of the earth's people living on less than two dollars a day, there is clearly an urgent need to utilize our financial resources to help the world's poor.

The financial resource that immediately comes to mind for most people is their checking account. But perhaps the most powerful financial resource available is one most frequently overlooked: their will.

It is through our will that we distribute all of our life's assets to the people and causes we have cherished throughout our lifetime. Thus, our will is a lasting legacy of our values and priorities.

Making a gift through your will is easy. Simply instruct your attorney to include a provision (a "bequest") that remembers Opportunity International. This gift can be a specific dollar amount, or it can be expressed as a percentage of your overall estate.

All such gifts to Opportunity International are exempt from estate taxes and will be used to help the world's poor for generations to come.

For more information on including Opportunity International in your estate plan, please contact Chuck Day, director of Planned Giving, at (800) 793-9455, x4136. Or go to [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org) under "Give Now," and click on "Planned Giving." 

## Leading the way



**Robinah Babirye, Opportunity International HIV/AIDS project coordinator in Uganda, leads an HIV/AIDS training session for loan officers. Through this training program loan officers learn how to offer their clients HIV/AIDS education.**

relegated to men — such as Trust Bank president or treasurer.

These gains for women have been powerful. Yet, with women making up a full 91 percent of Trust Bank members and 54 percent of loan officers, the Women's Opportunity Fund recognized the need to do even more.

So this year we launched our LEAD Campaign (Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Development), to further build transformational leaders and grow

women and men in leadership. We will empower our clients, staff, board members and donors to become leaders in our quest for justice and equality for women living in poverty (see below).

This global effort will raise \$10 million over the next three years. For more information on the LEAD Campaign, contact Emily Fong at (800) 793-9455, x4109 or via e-mail ([EFong@opportunity.org](mailto:EFong@opportunity.org)). ●

**Read the position paper "Empowering Women Through Microfinance," found on our Web site, [www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org), under "Who We Are/Resources."**

**T**he Women's Opportunity Fund was founded in 1992 to bring economic opportunities and empowerment to women living in poverty. At that time, many microcredit NGOs were shutting out women, who make up the majority of poor individuals who are economically active.

As a result, Opportunity established its innovative group-lending methodology: the Trust Bank. Trust Banks encourage the growth of women entrepreneurs, because they are based on relationships and trust, rather than on cultural norms that exclude women.

In addition, Trust Banks provide women with opportunities for leadership typically

## LEAD Campaign Crucial emphases on loan officers

- **Increase the percentage of women leaders.** Strong examples of female leadership — from loan officer all the way up to board member — encourage our female clients in their roles as business owner, wife, mother, community member.
- **Retain highly valuable field staff.** Opportunity actively trains and empowers its loan officers and seeks opportunities for career development. Many loan officers first learned of Opportunity from parents who were clients. They pursued an education and now have returned, eager to give back to help others emerge from poverty.
- **Provide tools for transformation.** The LEAD Campaign is funding the development of crucial tools for loan officers to use with their clients — both business training and personal development.

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

For more information about the Board of Governors, visit [www.opportunity.org/BOG](http://www.opportunity.org/BOG)

## Sharing their passion

You might not expect that a Wall Street broker could relate to hardworking, poor entrepreneurs in the developing world. But Brian Clark is an entrepreneur himself.

Twenty years ago, when Brian and Dianne Clark first got involved with Opportunity, Brian was just starting his own company. He recognized the same commitment and drive among the Opportunity clients they began helping to support. "No matter what the size of the business," he says, "there is great joy in knowing that you can be successful and that your success can result in providing for your family."

Since then, the Clarks have grown in both business expertise and Opportunity involvement and now serve on the Board of Governors. While networking with other governors, they even launched a research project as a way to increase corporate support for Opportunity — identifying specific banks that ultimately provided financial support.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICAH MARTY

**Brian and Dianne Clark watch Maria Antonieta Calle Tapia create beautiful jewelry, which she and her husband export to several cities in Peru. They are saving money so that Maria can finish her degree in education and pursue her dream of teaching young children.**

When the Clarks introduced the Trust Bank concept to their Bible-study group, their enthusiastic recommendation led

the group to donate \$10,000 toward a new Trust Bank in Peru. The Clarks — who live in Mahwah, N.J. — then traveled to Peru in February 2005 on an Insight Trip to see the fruits of their labor firsthand (see below).

Attracted by Opportunity's passion to change the world, Brian and Dianne Clark have met like-minded individuals in the most diverse places: both in corporate boardrooms across the United States and in thriving, home-based businesses around the globe. ●

## Seeing it firsthand in Peru

Dianne and Brian Clark thought they knew what to expect when they traveled to Peru this year on a Board of Governors Insight Trip. After all, they'd been involved with Opportunity International for 20 years. But putting faces on the client stories made all the difference.

"The people had so much joy and happiness," Dianne says. "It was amazing. Clients had this sense of hope and purpose and were clearly empowered by being part of a group. The Trust Bank is a simple concept, yet the interaction among the members adds a deeper dimension. It brings transformation."

The Clarks were especially impressed by the relationships between loan officers and clients. "The loan officers are respected and loved," Dianne noticed. "They are both respected mentors and trusted friends."

Board of Governors director Wendy Cox is



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN CLARK

**With hard work and the help of his loan officer (standing), Elizasto Yanac supports his family and 11 employees in his toymaking business in Peru, despite being crippled by polio.**

not surprised by the impact of Insight Trips

such as this one. "We can exchange facts and figures and impress people with our loan-repayment rates and the millions of dollars we are loaning people," she says. "And then you go on an Insight Trip, and you meet Maria Tapia [above], and Maria looks at you and tells you her story. And all of a sudden you just *get it*, you feel it — you feel the impact that this makes on her life." ●



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**THE OPPORTUNITY MISSION** is to provide opportunities for people in chronic poverty to transform their lives.

**OUR STRATEGY** is to create jobs, stimulate small businesses and strengthen communities among the poor.

**OUR METHOD** is to work through indigenous partner organizations that provide small business loans, training and counsel.

**OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL'S COMMITMENT** is motivated by Jesus Christ's call to serve the poor.

### STATEMENT OF INTENT REGARDING POVERTY AND WOMEN

Opportunity International—U.S. strives to reach the world's poorest people through its microenterprise development programs. Recognizing that the large majority of the world's poorest are women and that they contribute decisively to the well-being of their families, Opportunity makes it a priority to support programs that serve the particular needs of women.

**OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL HAS PARTNERS** in Albania, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Egypt, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Macedonia, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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### BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2005 CALENDAR

Governors Annual Meeting in Chicago

October 21–22

Nicaragua Insight Trip

November 9-13