

Impact and learnings from AECF and other portfolios

This month the **Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)** publically released its findings from data collected over six years of funding inclusive enterprises in Africa. AECF's first ever public Impact Report shares a wealth of insights about a diverse portfolio that has funded 208 enterprises. In October, the Practitioner Hub has partnered with AECF to bring you the key lessons from the report as well as to take stock of emerging results from other portfolios. Vineet Rai, founder of Aavishkaar introduces the latest impact report from this innovative investment fund; a summary of results from the SEED initiative draws on a decade of enterprise support; and videos from entrepreneurs tell us how they feel about concessional support.

[Read the AECF Impact Report and all related blogs](#), opinions and analysis from both the AECF team and external experts.

6 years, 208 enterprises, AECF shares results so far



Over 208 enterprises have been supported by AECF. Financial services projects struggle with high costs of expansion into rural areas, though can generate high development impact.



AECF funds enterprises in Africa that offer Pay-As-You-Go solutions to the BoP

- What does it take to run a successful challenge fund? AECF has learnt a lot from what works and what doesn't over the last six years. Fund Director Hugh Scott outlines the [top 10 learnings from running a challenge fund](#).
- AECF has awarded more than US\$240m in grants and non-recourse loans to support innovative business ideas in agriculture, agribusiness, energy, adaptation to climate change and access to information and financial services. Here, AECF summarises the impact their grantees are having in key sectors:
 - ❖ **Agri-business:** Agriculture-induced growth has the greatest potential to generate benefits for the poor, which is why the AECF portfolio is weighted towards agribusiness projects. Monitoring and Results Manager, Kyle Alexander explains how [the fund supports both consumer- and producer-focused enterprises and the different types of impact they are having](#).
 - ❖ **Financial services:** All AECF-funded projects with a financial services component reached around 1.3m people in 2014. Joel Moktar tells us how these projects are reaching the poor and why the [fund is looking to focus more on energy and agri projects that have a financial component](#).
 - ❖ **Energy:** AECF finances projects that have the [potential to reach people in ways that large-scale government investment in grid extension cannot](#). Francesco Mattoli Bisleti describes how these projects are using Pay-As-You-Go energy solutions to reach the BoP.

- **EDITOR'S CHOICE:** The AECF report is also Caroline Ashley's Editor's Choice for October because, as she puts it 'this is not just any annual report'. Caroline gives a frank review of the report drawing on her experience across challenge funds to highlight [10 reasons why the report is so welcome](#) for those working in the inclusive business space.



AECF has just released its first public Impact Report

Emerging results and lessons from other portfolios:

- Leading impact investment fund Aavishkaar aims to create disruption by making investments in rural India. With the release of its 2015 impact report, [CEO Vineet Rai reflects on the "uniqueness" of Aavishkaar's impact and whether it is actually bringing about transformational change.](#)
- The SEED Initiative supports innovative enterprises in Africa with funding and business support. Its recently launched 10 year Flagship Report presents the successes and impacts of the enterprises it has supported. [What impact are SEED enterprises having, how has SEED support helped them grow and what lessons can they take into the next decade?](#)
- More than 200 enterprises have received SEED awards in the last decade. This year 27 enterprises have been awarded. [Marion Muller vom Berge gives us the details.](#)
- Carolin Schramm got the rare opportunity to check in with two inclusive businesses nearly two years after they received support from the DFID Business Innovation Facility pilot. [She was able to capture their reflections on camera on how concessional support has helped them grow their businesses.](#)
- The BoP Innovation Center helps enterprises **develop food products for the BoP** by partnering with them on its 2SCALE programme. Having conducted 20 pilots in Africa, the programme is beginning to see tangible impacts. [Here, BoPInc's Marjolein Koornstra shares insights from three successful pilots.](#)
- Hystra compares the performance of 15 successful agribusiness organisations worldwide and draws out [13 insights on creating more wealth along the value chain](#), running cost-efficient operations and sharing value back with farmers sustainably.



The 2015 SEED award winners



The Likie distribution model for Supermom in Ethiopia, supported by 2SCALE

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

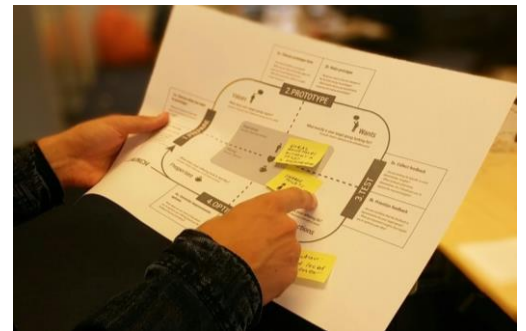
- DFID's [Connect to Grow](#), designed to create partnerships between Indian enterprises and enterprises in Africa and South Asia, is now responding to a number of enterprises who are actively looking for suitable partners to help their businesses grow. [Connect Team Leader David Irwin explains how you could benefit from the initiative.](#)
- The first edition of Inclusive Business Accelerator's Inclusive Business Matchmaking Marketplace took place in Ho Chi Minh City on 25 September where 15 Vietnamese inclusive business ventures pitched their plans to a group of local and international investors. [Find out how you can get involved next time.](#)
- Companies and social organizations can now participate in Minka-Dev's on-line market of inclusive business opportunities in [Mexico as the venture expands across the continent.](#)
- In the next month, BoPInc innovation experts will share insights on their inclusive innovation journeys via blog posts on their experience in developing innovation in BoP markets. [Nicolas Chevrolier introduces the series here.](#)
- **For fund management teams:** Sweden's International Development Agency (Sida) recently announced a [call that seeks innovative proposals from entity/entities that can design and implement the next phase of the challenge-fund 'Innovations Against Poverty' \(IAP\)](#), bound for launch in 2016.
- **EVENT: The Huddle: "From Local Pioneers to a Global Movement"**, an event from UnLtd India and the GSENI will bring together influencers from around the world to explore issues facing social entrepreneurs at the earliest stage of their entrepreneurial journey. Follow on #2015huddle
- **EVENT: Inclusive Business leadership: An executive education program for corporate changemakers** is taking place in Johannesburg, South Africa, on November 9-13. Get involved!
- **APPLY:** Santa Clara University's Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship is seeking social entrepreneurs who are addressing poverty (in any region and sector) to benefit from [pro bono executive mentorship and training through the Global Social Benefit Institute \(GSBI\) programs.](#)



CONNECT TO GROW
Supporting enterprise growth through innovation and south-south partnership

Are you looking for a new and effective way to grow your enterprise?

[Register today](#) on the Connect partnerships marketplace.



BoPInc Innovation experts will share insights in an upcoming series

Our monthly series only go to those who have signed up as members on the Hub. Pass this on to others and encourage them to [sign up here for free](#)

The Practitioner Hub is sponsored by [Ashley Insight](#). We welcome feedback on our publications – please contact us at enquiries@inclusivebusinesshub.org