



ACUMEN
THE HUMILITY
TO SEE THE
WORLD AS IT IS,
THE AUDACITY
TO IMAGINE
THE WORLD AS
IT COULD BE

Photo: A view of a Siembra Viva farm, Colombia.

AGRICULTURE

Acumen catalyzes entrepreneurial solutions to help move smallholder farmers out of poverty. Our companies provide farmers with access to agricultural products and services that improve productivity, income and access to markets.

\$33.6M INVESTED
IN BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATIONS
9 COUNTRIES
IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIES
24 COMPANIES
PROVIDING CHOICE NOT CHARITY
13.9M LIVES IMPACTED
JOBS CREATED & HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED

THE PROBLEM

Most of the world's poor, nearly 2.5 billion people, live off the land. These smallholder farmers survive by farming small plots of land about the size of a football field. Their 500 million farms produce up to 80 percent of the food supply in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, yet they themselves are barely surviving. That's because the majority of smallholder farmers lack direct access to markets and must rely on middlemen for everything from purchasing inputs to selling their yields at less than fair market prices.

THE OPPORTUNITY

A growing number of entrepreneurs are developing and delivering new technologies, innovations and business models—from improved seeds and mobile platforms to microloans and direct-purchasing programs—that can help smallholder farmers increase their incomes and work their way out of poverty.

THE SOLUTION

We believe the pathway out of poverty for smallholder farmers requires investing in companies that 1) provide smallholder farmers access to better products that allow them to sustainably increase production and sell more crops, and 2) integrate farmers into global supply chains by enabling them to bypass middlemen and sell their products directly to buyers at fair market value.

AREAS OF INVESTMENT

Our investments focus on three major sub-sectors critical to integrating smallholder farmers into global sustainable supply chains.

AGGREGATORS

We invest in companies that provide smallholder farmers with consistent demand for their agricultural outputs by procuring products directly from them, integrating them into global supply chains, and helping them improve their farming practices.

AG-ICT

We invest in information and communications technologies (ICT) that enhance farmer productivity by facilitating access to information such as market pricing, weather information, farming tips and other information.

FINANCING

We invest in companies offering financing solutions for farmers, such as affordable insurance and loans so they can purchase important inputs on credit and pay back on their own schedule.

OUR APPROACH

We believe entrepreneurs play an important role in finding new, effective ways to profitably serve smallholder farmers—some of the hardest-to-reach low-income customers in the world. Unlike a traditional nonprofit or a VC firm, we invest philanthropic dollars, rather than give them away, into early-stage companies whose solutions are geared toward improving farmer productivity and incomes.

OUR PARTNERS

Our partners share our belief that business can play an essential role in addressing social issues and that everyone, no matter where they live, should have an equal opportunity to pursue a better life.



BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation



Smallfoundation

OUR TEAM



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COMPANIES

LATIN AMERICA (\$2.7M)

Cacao de Colombia - Producer and marketer of premium chocolate sourcing cacao directly from farmers in Colombia

Gigante Central Wet Mill - Centralizing coffee processing for smallholder farmers in Colombia

Siembra Viva - Connecting smallholder farmers to end consumers through technology in Colombia

Wasi Organics - Producer and marketer of organic snacks sourcing raw materials from farmers in Peru

EAST AFRICA (\$14.1M)

EthoiChicken - Breeder and seller of high-quality, affordable chicks to rural farmers in Ethiopia

GADC - Training and connecting cotton and sesame farmers in Uganda to global markets

Juhudi Kilimo - providing microfinance loans to smallholder farmers in Kenya

KZ Noir - Connecting smallholder coffee farmers in Rwanda to global markets

Virtual City - Mobile platform streamlining the smallholder farmer value chain in Kenya

Western Seed - Improving farmer productivity through affordable hybrid seeds

PAKISTAN (\$5.1M)

Micro Drip - Affordable, high-quality drip irrigation systems in Pakistan

NRSP Bank - Financial services for rural communities in Pakistan

WEST AFRICA (\$5.8M)

Esoko - mobile platform linking smallholder farmers to planting tips, market prices and weather information in Ghana

Farmers Hope - Producer and distributor of affordable organic fertilizer in Ghana

INDIA (\$3.3M)

BASIX Krishi - providing banana, potato and fish farmers with end-to-end solutions, from inputs to market access, in India

Sahayog Dairy - Procuring milk directly from low-income dairy farmers