**IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**OCTOBER 2017**

**BACKGROUND**

World Connect is a US-based non-profit organization that advances international development and inspires global engagement with a simple, authentic approach to community building. World Connect seeks field partners around the world who can source essential, locally-led, development projects–water and sanitation infrastructure, health services, schools, electricity, business enterprises—and invites them to apply for project funding. World Connect receives 100+ applications per year, provides project design, management, and monitoring support, funds direct to community, and ultimately, lets local communities lead their own way to development progress. The combination of our emphasis on local leadership, project design, management, and monitoring guidance, and trust and continued partnership with field partners, has led to consistent success in both the achievement of project goals and broad social impact.

World Connect originally launched its model in 2009 in eight countries, awarding 40 grants with $18,000, at an average of $450 per project. Early results showed high rates of project achievement, high rates of community engagement, and all of this was achieved at low cost, largely because of the organization’s decision to work through existing strategic partners already on the ground, rather than build up an overseas office presence. The organization continued to build on the model, adding 27 countries over the past eight years and lifting the $500 cap on grants in 2012. Over the past five years, World Connect has launched 583 new projects across 35 countries with an average grant size of $2,500. While World Connect has demonstrated its effectiveness at sourcing strong field partners and launching effective initiatives at low cost, it is imperative to assess the impact of our projects beyond project completion to further validate our approach as well as position the organization for strategic institutional funding. Our assessment is ongoing, but the following analysis is the first comprehensive effort to analyze our impact.

**METHODOLOGY & RESULTS**

World Connect assesses whether to invest in a project based on a thorough application submitted online that requires the validation of project leadership (a local project leader and an intermediary field partner who endorses the project leader). After extensive vetting of projects, World Connect invests directly in project leadership, rather than outsourcing project design, materials, or management. World Connect routinely and rigorously monitors our projects for completion and achievement of goals through mid-project progress reports, final reports, and in-person site visits conducted by one or more World Connect staff member(s). Since 2012, we have launched 583 projects and received formal, final project reports from 506 (85%). Our reporting rate increases to 95% when we include all other reporting (progress reports, site visits reports, and voluntary post-project reporting). From this, we have determined that 93% of completed projects achieved all or mostly all of their goals, based on local partner self-reporting validated by our established field partners (e.g. active and former Peace Corps Volunteers in most cases) and World Connect staff site visits. We do this with an organization of five people and a budget of just over $1M by collecting and validating data and feedback directly from project participants and local partners, as opposed to employing rigid evaluation designs that would not fit our project model, capture the complexity of our impact, and/or be cost effective.

To monitor projects, we require mid-project progress reports and final reports from our partners. We created a simple electronic reporting tool and an automated reminder system that prompts report submission. Our reports are simple to complete and our automated reminder system optimizes responsiveness. Our reports are also designed to facilitate community-level input. Often, monitoring can seem objectifying and this can negatively impact interest in reporting and/or accuracy of results. Our goal is to make our field partners feel like partners, not like subjects, and we believe this is a key not only to project success, but also to reporting success. In progress and final reports, we collect data on community engagement and leadership, achievement of project indicators, resources used, as well as a detailed final budget and testimonials from the established field partner, the project leader, and project participants. We also conduct periodic site visits to validate results and assess sustainability as well as other outcomes from projects that may not have been captured in reports received. World Connect uses standardized site visit report forms, and online progress and final report forms with which we collect consistent data on project impact, sustainability, growth, and future plans that may be catalyzed by the original grant from World Connect.

Over the last five years, World Connect has made site visits to 166 (141 distinct) projects from among the 583 projects we’ve launched since 2012. Of the 166 site visits, we conducted 38 (23%) ex post, which we define as greater than one year after completion, and determined that 79% of projects visited at 1yr+ showed sustaining impacts such as continued use of funded infrastructure, technology, skill, business continuity and expansion, etc. Of the 141 distinct projects visited, we identified 39 (28%) that were on a strong, positive growth trajectory, and World Connect made additional investments in those projects. From a review of this data, we approximate that 3 of every 10 projects launched by World Connect scales up, grows, expands, or is replicated with additional funding. Impact has been demonstrated on health systems, education systems, gender parity, and economic development.

*Case Study: Safe Births in Kenya*

*In 2012, World Connect provided $1,780 for maternity equipment (ie. birthing bed, delivery instruments, baby scale), at a health dispensary in Singorwet. Prior to this project, only one in 25 women in the community gave birth at the dispensary; the rest gave birth at home, which posed a high risk of infection for the mother and her newborn. World Connect awarded a second grant of $4,300 to the dispensary in the same year to construct a maternity ward and doctor's house, which triggers the provision of an on-site doctor provided by the Kenyan government. Four years post project, a doctor lives in the doctor's house and works at the dispensary. The average number of women who give birth at home decreased by 59%, the average number of women who give birth at the dispensary increased by 175%, and the number of pregnant women attending all four recommended antenatal care clinic visits increased by 75%.*

*Case Study: Water and Sanitation in Rwanda*

*In 2014, a first grant of $6,800 was made to the community of Banda to install a water pipeline, tank, and eight water taps, which were installed in three months. A second grant of $8,000 was made to build a public latrine and 18 household latrines in 2015, also completed in three months. At two-years post-project the community reports an 85% reduction in diarrheal disease and a 94% reduction in parasitic infections and was recently cited by the government as the #1 rural community in the country for clean water access.*

There are many unique elements to World Connect’s project design requirements that lead to success. One of them is the requirement of community-level financial participation. World Connect requires local communities contribute 25% of project costs, either in cash or in-kind. As of 2015, we require that 10% of the total project costs must be a community cash contribution; the rest can be made in-kind. 100% of communities contribute to their World Connect projects. So, for every $1 that World Connect invests in local communities, $0.18 of community cash is mobilized, and this increases to $0.43 when in-kind contributions are considered. This valuation is likely under-reporting the huge amount of time that our Project Leader partners commit to ensuring successful projects, significant qualitative evidence of community in-kind contribution beyond what is reported across the portfolio, and unreported local investment.

*Case Study: A Greenhouse in the Dominican Republic*

*La Guazara is a community dependent on agriculture, but due to an unpredictable climate, its production was irregular. An association of 35 members, including 5 women, looked for land where they could build a greenhouse. In 2015, with $3,600 grant from World Connect they built a 700 square foot greenhouse in 10 days and increased their agriculture production by 80%. They were 10 times more efficient per acre per seed and doubled their profit. They also diversified their crops alternating tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers in order not to exhaust the soil. Each member of the association saw their salary increase by 35%. One female farmer used her earnings for breast cancer treatment and medical care. Another woman farmer set up a frying business at home which generated more income, improving family nutrition and sending the children to school. Another young woman farmer was able to continue her education at University and would like to study English now.*

*Case study: Bishop Abiero Secondary School*

*In 2012, World Connect awarded a grant of $3,585.27 to an all-girls school in Kenya to install a wind turbine that brought electricity to the school. In 2015, World Connect gave the school a second grant, $10,000, to upgrade their energy grid to solar. The increases in infrastructure reduced time spent by students collecting water and increased available electricity so that students could study at night. Profits earned from excess energy generated go toward the school fees for girls who cannot afford tuition and expenses. In addition, the illumination of the school has served as a source of inspiration to the broader community and has raised the reputation of the school in the eyes of the community. Because of increased light, more parents are more confident about the safety of the school, and enrollment has increased by 157 students since the installation of electricity.*

In addition to the investment of project-affected communities as demonstrated above, World Connect’s investment often catalyzes external investment from government agencies, other NGOs, foundations, and other local organizations. Of the 138 distinct projects analyzed, eight communities received external funding to expand or replicate their initiative, a total of $607,910. World Connect originally invested $77,763 in these eight communities, this leveraged 8x World Connect’s original investment. This number is likely under-reported, as we’ve only recently put in place systems for monitoring external investment leveraged directly from the success and momentum of World Connect projects. Our data leads us to believe that for every $1 that World Connect invests in local communities, at least $1.26 of external money is leveraged.

*Case Study: Beekeeping in the Dominican Republic*

*World Connect invested $6,250 in a 20-person beekeeper association in the Dominican Republic so the group could purchase 5 mobile honey extractors to increase their efficiency in honey production. The group increased their productivity by 160%, which positioned them to apply for and receive a $310,000 business development loan from the Dominican government. They project $100,000 in annual revenues from increased honey sales, an increase of 3x over what they were earning prior to this project. As reported to World Connect by the group, this was the biggest growth year in 20 years of operations.*

*Case Study: Water Access in Tanzania*

*In 2015, a severe drought hit Sukamahela in Tanzania and women rose at least twice weekly at 3 a.m. to obtain water in the nearby village. Requests for government aid and other NGO support for a solution were unsuccessful. World Connect made a $2,750 grant in 2016 to turn a defunct water pump infrastructure that had been built by missionaries into a working water pump that would increase access to water for 2,700 people. The presence of a working water pump reduced the prevalence of cholera and other water-borne diseases, girls spend more time in school, and families have more money in their pockets from the sale of water and less price gouging in neighboring areas.* *In addition, troughs were built for cattle, cutting water contamination risks. This project prompted one of the world’s largest NGOs to invest $70,000 to build a bigger water system with 9 access points to water locally, reaching more than 5,000 people.*

Of the 140 distinct projects in our site visit sample, 38 (27%) were income generating. 57% of the income generating projects were led by women. Data indicates that when women earn income they invest it in their families and their communities. We are currently analyzing how much income we have leveraged through our income generating projects, but this is a hard figure to pin down as it is constantly changing. Qualitative data across the sample indicates that our projects provide households with crucial disposable income for the first time, increasing consumption within communities and creating ripple effects in local economies, and allowing participants to start their own businesses and join savings groups. In many cases, women’s economic empowerment also leads to an elevated role and corresponding reductions in domestic violence, in the household.

*Case Study: Women Boat Owners in Kenya*

*In Kenyan fishing villages it is common for women to practice jaboya, trading sex in order to optimize their take from local fishermen. World Connect launched a project in one community with $3,400 to build four boats for a women’s association that allow the women to be boat owners and change the gender dynamics between men and women. The women increased their income by 15x, were able to stop being sex workers, and the project has been replicated in 3 additional communities. There are now 25 “No Sex for Fish” boats on Lake Victoria. One community reports a reduction from 100% practice of jaboya to 15%.*

*Case Study: Women’s Economic Empowerment in Ecuador*

*An initial $500 grant from World Connect in 2015 to a women’s group, Kallpa Warmi, an Ecuadorian women’s artisan cooperative, supported the organization of the group into a formal business partnership. A second grant of $2,800 in 2016 led to the establishment of a catering business based at two locations – one more than originally planned – leading to a scale-up that unfolded sooner than expected and a significant increase in income of 45% for members of the cooperative, whose combined revenues and other funding sources exceeded our support within months of the investment; their contribution to household income rose from 29% to 47%. In addition to the economic impact of the additional earnings for women and their families, the opportunity also influences gender dynamics, allowing women greater value because of their increased economic empowerment.*

**RESULTS SUMMARY**

* 95% of World Connect projects launched between 2012-2016 report on project results
* Of the 95% of projects reporting, 93% report achieving intended project goals
* 23% of projects launched between 2012-2016 received at least one site visit from World Connect staff to validate results in reports received
* 28% of projects visited by World Connect staff were scaled up, expanded, and/or replicated with additional World Connect funding
* 81% of projects visited at 1+ year showed sustaining impacts.
* 27% of projects generate income, 57% of these projects are led by women
* World Connect leverages 20 cents on the dollar in local community cash, (40 cents in cash + in-kind) and $1.26 in external funding
* Less than 1% of funded projects misuse or report loss of grant funds

**CONCLUSION**

World Connect has demonstrated sustained impact through our low-cost, effective approach to international development. Our approach achieves multiple impacts for extremely poor, often remote and isolated communities throughout the developing world. This is important both for the communities we serve and stable civil society also matters to global stability. The results identified here not only validate our approach to locally-led development, but also offer potential insights for other international development agencies. We have identified five key ingredients in our approach to international development that we see as essential: 1) strong field partner relationships, 2) simple, locally designed and led projects, 3) significant local investment, cash and in-kind, 4) technical support on design and monitoring planning and easy to implement monitoring reports, and 5) a commitment to follow-up with future funding and ongoing engagement through site visits. It is surprising to us, an organization with an annual budget of ~$1M, how rarely larger entities with much greater capacity to support projects on both implementation and monitoring actually visit their projects on the ground and/or conduct post-project evaluations. A 2016 review of USAID's Development Exchange Clearinghouse shows only 1% of projects included post-project evaluation with fieldwork in 20 years. In a review of 12,000 World Bank projects, only 3 (0.00025%) included post-project evaluation where participants were actually consulted on the impact of the project. In 2010, the Asian Development bank conducted 491 desk reviews of completed projects, but only 18 (3.7%) included an actual site visit to talk to participants.

**APPENDIX A: Impact Analysis Data**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2012-2016** | **All Time** |
| **OVERALL** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project Funding | $227,184.27 | $239,447.46 | $272,679.22 | $371,493.22 | $340,387.47 | **$1,451,191.64** | **$1,974,670.09** |
| Projects Launched | 95 | 106 | 117 | 143 | 122 | **583** | **1198** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,391.41 | $2,258.94 | $2,330.59 | $2,597.85 | $2,790.06 | **$2,489.18** | **$1,648.31** |
| **BY SECTOR** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Health** | 27.77% | 58.91% | 82.08% | 50.04% | 31.85% | **49.77%** | **43.42%** |
| Project Volume | 23 | 45 | 77 | 69 | 39 | **253** | **316** |
| Project Funding | $63,091.05 | $141,065.43 | $223,827.70 | $185,901.74 | $108,416.11 | **$722,302.03** | **$857,461.62** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,743.09 | $3,134.79 | $2,906.85 | $2,694.23 | $2,779.90 | **$2,854.95** | **$2,713.49** |
| **Education** | 60.63% | 24.13% | 10.67% | 25.88% | 30.95% | **29.36%** | **35.89%** |
| Project Volume | 57 | 25 | 17 | 28 | 29 | **156** | **604** |
| Project Funding | $137,749.03 | $57,782.84 | $29,102.52 | $96,153.86 | $105,350.13 | **$426,138.38** | **$708,690.96** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,416.65 | $2,311.31 | $1,711.91 | $3,434.07 | $3,632.76 | **$2,731.66** | **$1,173.33** |
| **Economic Opportunity** | 8.64% | 11.16% | 6.12% | 18.37% | 26.59% | **15.28%** | **13.85%** |
| Project Volume | 10 | 22 | 16 | 31 | 33 | **112** | **132** |
| Project Funding | $19,619.23 | $26,719.25 | $16,700.84 | $68,225.84 | $90,516.02 | **$221,781.18** | **$273,444.19** |
| Mean Project Cost | $1,961.92 | $1,214.51 | $1,043.80 | $2,200.83 | $2,742.91 | **$1,980.19** | **$2,071.55** |
| **Environment** | 2.96% | 5.80% | 1.12% | 5.71% | 10.61% | **5.58%** | **6.84%** |
| Project Volume | 5 | 14 | 7 | 15 | 21 | **62** | **146** |
| Project Funding | $6,724.96 | $13,879.94 | $3,048.16 | $21,211.78 | $36,105.21 | **$80,970.05** | **$135,073.32** |
| Mean Project Cost | $1,344.99 | $991.42 | $435.45 | $1,414.12 | $1,719.30 | **$1,305.97** | **$925.16** |
| **BY REGION** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Latin America and the Caribbean** | 55.24% | 45.64% | 55.55% | 38.49% | 16.33% | **40.30%** | **46.04%** |
| Project Volume | 58 | 47 | 66 | 63 | 32 | **266** | **751** |
| Project Funding | $125,504.57 | $109,285.24 | $151,479.12 | $143,002.88 | $55,592.84 | **$584,864.65** | **$909,055.51** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,163.87 | $2,325.22 | $2,295.14 | $2,269.89 | $1,737.28 | **$2,198.74** | **$1,210.46** |
| **Africa** | 39.17% | 47.28% | 37.38% | 46.37% | 69.81% | **49.20%** | **44.02%** |
| Project Volume | 32 | 50 | 42 | 59 | 68 | **251** | **348** |
| Project Funding | $88,981.61 | $113,207.66 | $101,927.30 | $172,266.66 | $237,621.21 | **$714,004.44** | **$869,251.21** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,780.68 | $2,264.15 | $2,426.84 | $2,919.77 | $3,494.43 | **$2,844.64** | **$2,497.85** |
| **Asia** | 5.59% | 7.08% | 7.07% | 12.73% | 12.20% | **9.49%** | **8.07%** |
| Project Volume | 5 | 9 | 9 | 19 | 16 | **58** | **75** |
| Project Funding | $12,698.09 | $16,954.56 | $19,272.80 | $47,292.02 | $41,518.69 | **$137,736.16** | **$159,326.84** |
| Mean Project Cost | $2,539.62 | $1,883.84 | $2,141.42 | $2,489.05 | $2,594.92 | **$2,374.76** | **$2,124.36** |
| **Eastern Europe** | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.40% | 1.66% | **1.01%** | **0.96%** |
| Project Volume | -- | -- | -- | 2 | 6 | **8** | **9** |
| Project Funding | -- | -- | -- | $8,931.66 | $5,654.73 | **$14,586.39** | **$18,964.14** |
| Mean Project Cost | -- | -- | -- | $4,465.83 | $942.46 | **$1,823.30** | **$2,107.13** |
| **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Women as Project Leaders** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Projects Led by Women | 48 | 52 | 61 | 64 | 56 | **281** | **585** |
| % of Projects Led by Women | 53% [1] | 57% [2] | 62% [3] | 45% [4] | 46% | **48.20%** | **51.32% [5]** |
| **Women as Community Organization Leaders** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Community Organization Partners Led by Women | -- | 64 | 102 | 96 | 80 | **342** | **415** |
| % of Community Organization Partners Led by Women | -- | 62% [6] | 89% [7] | 69% [8] | 66% [9] | **58.66%** | **78.60% [10]** |
| **REPORTING** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Progress Reports** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Progress Reports Received | 70 | 61 | 90 | 126 | 149 | **496** | **--** |
| % of Projects Submitting Progress Reports | 74% | 58% | 77% | 88% | 89.22% | **85%** | **--** |
| **Final Reports** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Final Reports Received | 84 | 86 | 98 | 119 | 119 | **506** | **--** |
| % of Projects Submitting Final Reports | 88% | 81% | 84% | 83% | 98% | **87%** | **--** |
| **Non-Reports** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Projects That Have Never Reported | 4 | 11 | 17 | 0 | 0 | **32** | **--** |
| % of Projects That Have Never Reported | 4.21% | 10.38% | 14.53% | 0.00% | 0.00% | **5.49%** | **--** |
| **SITE VISITS** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2012-2016** | **All Time** |
| # of Projects Receiving Site Visit | 30 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 15 | **133** | **--** |
| % of Projects Receiving Site Visit | 31.58% | 26.42% | 25.64% | 20.98% | 12.30% | **22.81%** | **--** |
| **PROJECT GROWTH** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Projects Demonstrating Growth | 13 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 2 | **38** | **--** |
| % of Projects Demonstrating Growth | 9.42% | 6.52% | 7.25% | 2.90% | 1.45% | **27.54%** | **--** |
| **INCOME GENERATION** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Projects Generating Income | 16 | 7 | 17 | 6 | 11 | **57** | **--** |
| % of Projects Generating Income | 16.84% | 6.60% | 14.53% | 4.20% | 9.02% | **9.78%** | **--** |
| **PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Projects Accomplishing All or Mostly All Goals | 76 | 78 | 79 | 89 | 62 | **384** | **388** |
| % of Projects Accomplishing All or Mostly All Goals | 92% | 91% | 92% | 92% | 98% | **93%** | **92%** |
| **BENEFICIARIES** | 263,054 | 97,651 | 27,918 | 132,784 | 279,028 | **800,435** | **815,328** |
| **Direct Beneficiaries** | 13,299 | 13,160 | 7,933 | 28,522 | 11,033 | **73,947** | **76,073** |
| Male | 5,822 | 5,595 | 3,118 | 11,718 | 5,315 | **31,568** | **32,557** |
| Female | 7,477 | 7,565 | 4,815 | 16,804 | 5,718 | **42,379** | **43,516** |
| **Indirect Beneficiaries** | 249,755 | 84,491 | 19,985 | 104,262 | 267,995 | **726,488** | **739,255** |
| Male | 122,930 | 31,615 | 9,336 | 50,561 | 90,227 | **304,669** | **309,036** |
| Female | 126,825 | 52,876 | 10,649 | 53,701 | 177,768 | **421,819** | **430,219** |
| **COST EFFICIENCY** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Beneficiaries per $1 USD** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| # of Beneficiaries per $1 USD | 1.16 | 0.41 | 0.10 | 0.36 | 0.82 | **0.55** | **0.41** |
| # of Direct Beneficiaries per $1 USD | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.03 | **0.05** | **0.04** |
| # of Indirect Beneficiaries per $1 USD | 1.10 | 0.35 | 0.07 | 0.28 | 0.79 | **0.50** | **0.37** |
| **Leverage Value** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| External Dollars Leveraged (USD) | $916.65 | $50,000 | $9,986.66 | $518,706.25 | $8,300.00 | **$587,909.56** | **--** |
| CCC Leveraged (USD) | $14,987.68 | $22,483.63 | $13,214.85 | $17,327.47 | $20,763.39 | **$88,777.02** | **--** |
| Total Dollars Leveraged (USD) | $15,904.33 | $72,484 | $23,201.51 | $536,033.72 | $29,063.39 | **$676,686.58** | **--** |