



**Christian Economic
Development Network**

**PURSUING WHOLENESS IN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
CONNECT, LEARN, REFLECT**

2024 CED SUMMIT
April 9-10, 2024

About the CED Network

The purpose of the Christian Economic Development (CED) network is to create a space where Christ-centered organizations and individuals can share best practices, learn from each other's challenges, and encourage each other in our pursuits of transformational economic development.

We accomplish this through peer learning activities including in-person events and webinars and resource sharing.

We're motivated by Christ's love for us (1 John 3:1, 4:19-21), Christ's response to those in need (Psalm 113:7-8, Luke 4:17-19), and the desire to see His Kingdom flourish here on earth (Matthew 6:9-10).

2024 CED Steering Committee

Community of Practice Chairs	CED Administration
<p>Chair for Microfinance & SME: Gillian Foster Wilkinson, HOPE International</p> <p>Chair for Integral Mission: Alexis Beggs Olsen, VisionFund</p> <p>Co-Chair for Integral Mission: Dan Williams, HOPE International</p> <p>Chair for Savings Groups: Courtney Purvis, World Relief</p> <p>Co-Chair for Savings Groups: Anne Figge, Five Talents</p> <p>Chair for Business Training & Mentoring: Debbie Velis, Partners Worldwide</p> <p>Co-Chair for Business Training & Mentoring: Mark Goeser, Hope Ventures</p> <p>Chair for Agriculture: Jared White, Plant With Purpose</p>	<p>CED Operations Manager Lizzie Stoltzfus, HOPE International</p> <p>CED Events Support Paige Synder, HOPE International</p>

About the 2024 CED Network Summit

The annual CED Network Summit, hosted by HOPE International, is an opportunity to foster deepened collaboration and relationships among Christ-centered economic development practitioners.

Tuesday, April 9	Wednesday, April 10
Full-day lateral learning sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, breakfast and lunch included ○ <i>Optional dinner with colleagues</i> 	Two half-day workshop options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, breakfast complimentary in hotel, and lunch included in session ○ Option 1: Holistic Agriculture Interventions ○ Option 2: MFI/SG Linkages: Practical issues and Opportunities

CED Summit Agenda – Tuesday, April 9

Day 1

8:00 am	Breakfast service (in meeting room)
8:30 am	Welcome & Conference Overview
9:00 am	Devotions Dave Evan, formerly of Food for the Hungry, WorldVision, and LifeNet International
9:30 am	Session 1: Measuring Holistic Impact Bruce Wydick, University of San Francisco
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>
11:00 am	Session 2: Spiritual Metrics – Moving from theory to practice - David Bronkema, Eastern University and Accord Research Alliance

	- James Waters, Kingdom Impact Ltd
12:30 pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Invitations to CED Communities of Practice (CoPs) CoP Chairs
2:15 pm	Session 3: “Bridging the Gap: Linking Savings Groups to Formal Financial Services for Deeper Impact” - Christy Stickney, VisionFund - Lisa Kuhn, VisionFund
3:15 pm	Break
3:30 pm	Session 4: Business Training - Debbie Vellis, Partners Worldwide - Mark Goeser, Hope Ventures
4:30 pm	Recap & Reflection
5:00 pm	Closing
5:30 pm	Dinner (Optional)

CED Summit Agenda – Wednesday, April 10

Day 2

	<i>Complimentary Breakfast in 1st floor hotel restaurant</i>
8:30 am	Welcome & Devotions (Discovery Bible Study) - Anne Figge, Five Talents
9:15 am	Transition/Break
9:30 am	Workshop Options (Choose one) 1. Track 1: Holistic Agriculture Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritually Integrated Ag Lending – Blessings Kana, HOPE International: <i>Blessings will be talking about dignity and spiritual</i>

integration in agriculture finance, highlighting a Scripturally-based training developed by HOPE which has been successfully implemented in Burundi and being expanded to other crops and locations. We will be reviewing solid survey data and feedback from farmers talking about how the scriptural integration helped them see that farming is something God has given them to do, and is not a curse.

- **Holistic Ag interventions** – Abram Bicksler, ECHO: *Dr. Abram J. Bicksler will be sharing about Holistic Agriculture Innovations in this workshop and will provide an overview and characterization about different agricultural interventions and how "everything is connected in agriculture." We will examine the similarities and differences of promising approaches such as agroecology, regenerative agriculture, organic farming, permaculture, integrated farming, and sustainable intensification, among others that ECHO promotes, and discuss emerging trends. The goal will be to highlight the importance of Biblical holism and a systems approach to agriculture development that benefits all areas of peoples' lives*

2. Track 2: MFI/SG Linkages: “Linking Savings Groups to Formal Finance: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges”

Discussion facilitated by Lisa Kuhn and Christy Stickney of VisionFund. In this workshop, financial services providers, savings group supporters and enterprise development practices will have the opportunity to share their experiences with linkages, offer their perspectives on the potential opportunities for enhancing impact through linkages, and explore how we might collaboratively address some of the challenges and concerns with linkages.

12:00 pm

Lunch and conference wrap-up

Speakers

Bruce Wydick, Professor of Economics and International Studies at the University of San Francisco, Research Affiliate at the University of Notre Dame and the Center for Effective Global Action at UC Berkeley | Keynote speaker

Bruce's research uses econometric and experimental tools to analyze the impact of poverty interventions such as microfinance, child sponsorship, and the impact of reparative surgeries on the lives of the disabled in low-income countries. Other recent work studies the role of hope and aspirations in escaping poverty traps. His academic publications have appeared in the *Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *The World Bank Economic Review*, and other journals. Media coverage of his research has appeared in the BBC, the *Economist*, USA Today, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and other media outlets. His most recent book, *Shrewd Samaritan*, helps readers to have meaningful and effective engagement with global poverty. He is the co-director of Mayan Partners, a small non-profit organization working in the western highlands of Guatemala, and he is faculty adviser for the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at USF.



Abram J. Bicksler, Ph.D, President/CEO ECHO

Dr. Abram Bicksler earned his Doctorate and Master's degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences with a focus on sustainable cropping systems and completed his Bachelor's degree at Taylor University in Environmental Science and Biology. As a leader and researcher, Dr. Bicksler has been published in a number of journals including: *Experimental Agriculture*; *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*; *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*; the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*; *Ecosystems and People*; the *International Journal of Development Research*; and, the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, in addition to contributing to a number of FAO publications. He enjoys combining the practice of agriculture at the farmer-innovator level with the rigors of the scientific method, to enable co-creation and sharing of knowledge. in the region.



While at FAO, Dr. Bicksler guided agroecology and sustainable food systems initiatives in multiple world regions. Before serving in Rome, Bicksler led the ECHO Asia Impact Center's international staff team, coordinated and implemented regional networking and training events, initiated research culminating in multiple published studies, planned and began execution of the ECHO Asia Small Farm Resource Center, and grew the capacity of the ECHO Asia Seed Bank.

As a visionary President/CEO of ECHO, Abram has led the ECHO team in the re-imagining of ECHO as a global organization with four Regional Impact Centers (RICS) serving our diverse and growing network around the world by regionalizing our resources and approaches. Building and serving our diverse

network with excellence is at the core of ECHO, and Bicksler has woven this throughout the year-long participatory strategic framework development process to lead and guide ECHO into the next five years of its history while fundraising to operationalize new Regional Impact Centers and initiatives in areas of greatest need and potential around the world.

Blessings Kana, Senior MFI Product Specialist – Agriculture, Insurance & Savings • Microfinance at HOPE International

Blessings Kana serves at the senior MFI product specialist for agriculture, insurance, and savings at HOPE International. In his fifteen years working in financial services, he has specialized in agri-business development for small farmers with a passion to see families rise out of poverty and recognize their God-given dignity. Blessings has played a key role in growing HOPE’s agriculture portfolio and led the innovation of Scripture-based agriculture training and initiatives to reduce risks and grow more opportunities for farmers to thrive. Before working at HOPE, Blessings worked as the senior project manager of agricultural finance and insurance with VisionFund Malawi and head of agri-business with Opportunity Bank of Malawi. Blessings holds a bachelor’s degree in agriculture from the University of Malawi and a master’s degree in strategic management from the University of Derby and is a certified expert in agriculture finance & microinsurance from the Frankfurt School of Development Finance.



Christy Stickney, Director of Inclusive Finance Group at VisionFund

Christy began working in microfinance with Opportunity International in 1993 where she developed loan and savings products directed toward women micro-entrepreneurs. In 2002 she shifted her focus to affordable housing and housing microfinance, working with Habitat for Humanity International as a Regional Director, and subsequently the Director of Housing Finance for Latin America and the Caribbean. Between 2011 and 2018 Christy worked as an independent consultant for various clients including the Inter-American Development Bank and the Center for Financial Inclusion. She then returned to Habitat for Humanity as the National Director for Nepal.



In August 2022 Christy joined VisionFund International, giving shape to their new partnerships strategy and expanding VisionFund’s outreach beyond its 25 MFIs to partner FSPs, NGO networks, fintechs, and World Vision field offices. VisionFund’s Inclusive Finance Group is focused on scaling impact through savings group linkages, water systems financing, and financial inclusion links to humanitarian programming. Christy lives in Monrovia, California with her husband and two teenage boys. (help!)

David Bronkema, Professor in the College of Business and Leadership at Eastern University

David Bronkema is a Professor in the College of Business and Leadership at Eastern University and holds the Eastern University Templeton Chair for Christian Service through Entrepreneurship. He teaches in the PhD in Organizational Leadership program, and has been with Eastern University since 2006, first with its international development programs and then with its Palmer Theological Seminary. Before Eastern, David lived and worked in Honduras with a Honduran Protestant community development organization, and later on coordinated the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) programs first in Central America and then also in the Andean Region. David's writings have explored the areas of spiritual metrics and the intersection of faith with business, development, justice, and anthropology, among others. David is also co-editor of the Christian Relief, Development, and Advocacy (CRDA) journal and currently chairs the Steering Committee of the Accord Research Alliance (ARA). David is married to Robin; they have three children and one grandchild, and are members of Wheatland Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, PA.



David Evans, Consultant and Fractional Leader

David is an executive leader with 40 years of experience in International Development. He is currently a consultant providing support and solutions to NGOs in resource development, program development, and management. From 2019 to 2022, he served as President of LifeNet International. From 2013 to 2019, he worked as Senior Director of Innovation in World Vision International and Chief of Party in World Vision Zimbabwe and Ethiopia. Prior to World Vision, he served for 22 years in Food for the Hungry, with his final three years as President. He has visited over 90 countries as well as lived and worked for more than 14 years in Chad, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, and Mali. In addition to his responsibilities in LifeNet, World Vision, and Food for the Hungry, he has served on more than 10 non-profit boards. His educational background includes an MS in Agricultural Economics and BA in International Studies.



Debbie Velis, Global Training Manager, Partners Worldwide CED Chair, Business Training & Mentoring

Debra Velis is truly passionate of building business networks and creating long-lasting relationships to share resources, and services for business growth and development. She has more than ten years of experience working and supporting small business owners in Central America with access to capital, business training and mentoring. She currently serves as a Partnership Accelerator at Partners Worldwide serving to catalyze powerful connections that support entrepreneurs grow their business and create more jobs!



James Waters, Director of Kingdom Impact Ltd

James Waters is the founder and director of Kingdom Impact Ltd - a set of tools designed to help Kingdom organizations measure and improve their organizational health and increase their social and spiritual impact in the world. Having partnered with Eido Research to develop world-class assessment tools, he is now building a platform that will make these accessible at scale. He also leads a learning community of Christian development organizations focused on spiritual impact measurement and is facilitating the development of common language and indicators for impact investors - the 'Christian Impact Framework'.



Previously he worked as an international development consultant and completed a PhD on the resilience of slum-dwellers in Uganda. It was there that God gave him a heart for mission as well as to help organizations be healthy and impactful. He is passionate about serving the ecosystem to document impact, share lessons and advance the Kingdom of God.

Lisa Kuhn, Inclusive Finance Knowledge Director at VisionFund

Lisa is a social impact professional and nonprofit leader with more than 20 years' experience in multi-sectoral and sustainable solutions to development challenges such as food security, women's empowerment, access to affordable and adequate health care, financial inclusion, education, and enterprise development. Prior to joining VisionFund, she had a consulting practice focused on helping organizations deliver more effectively on their missions. She served as Executive Director for the Foundation for Sustainable Development, an organization focused on asset-based community development. She has held a number of technical, policy, and leadership positions in microfinance networks including Freedom from Hunger, Opportunity International, and FINCA International.



Mark Goeser, CEO HOPE Ventures CED co-chair, Business Training & Mentoring

Mark Goeser has facilitated leadership development and relief projects in countries throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. He is the founder of Hope Ventures, a nonprofit dedicated to collaborative partnerships that help underserved communities thrive through the start and growth of businesses. Mark is a credentialed member of the International Coach Federation. He holds an MA in international development and leadership and has served as an international liaison for NOVO, a global NGO dedicated to leadership development.



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