

Partnering with Swisshand to support disadvantaged women and their families in Uganda through three microcredit programs

Grantee: Foundation Open Hand (Swisshand)

Location: Uganda, Africa

Grant Cycle: 2019 – 2024

Type of Grant: five-year program support,
Human Welfare & Rights

Website: <https://www.swisshand.ch/en/>

Foundation Open Hand (Swisshand) is an organization founded in 1968 that specializes in poverty reduction programs. Its activities include a combination of intensive training with an entrepreneurial focus, the granting of microcredits, counseling and assistance. Through these efforts, Swisshand enables primarily proactive women and their families in extremely poor regions, mainly in Africa, to become self-reliant and secure their livelihoods. Based on its experience in more than 80 program regions, Swisshand believes that individuals, families and the entire community gain self-confidence and improve their housing, health care and educational opportunities after starting or expanding their small business activities. In line with this vision, Swisshand works with local organizations to promote micro-enterprises for poverty alleviation with the aim of developing villages and small towns in rural areas. Promoting employment opportunities for disadvantaged people to improve their lives is one the main objectives of the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation** (NaEPF), which in 2019 partnered with Swisshand on a five-year program to support three microcredits for women in Uganda.

Uganda is one of the poorest country in the world: an estimate of 70% of the population lives off of agriculture and small-scale businesses, primarily throughout the peripheral rural areas, much of the average income lies scattered below the poverty line. Due to low possibilities of drought and a cooler climate, the optimal weather conditions allow for a continuous and year-long harvesting season. Such natural circumstances allow the possibility of securing a future for generations to come, through

the undertaking of a small-scale enterprise. This is where Swisshand's program plays an essential role through the collaboration with local organizations in leading microcredits, primarily for women. Similar to other African countries, in Uganda, women in the household are often responsible for ensuring the family's livelihood. Thanks to microcredit, they are able to start entrepreneurial projects and realize valuable additional income for the family. The effects are profound: not only are the families in a more advantageous financial position, but the women also profit from higher esteem within the community and self-assurance.

Overall, the project encourages disadvantaged women and families to start or extend a small business activity, thereby increasing their self-awareness, improving their housing, health care and access to educational opportunities.