

Etienne Ndatimana

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SUMMARY

International development professional with two decades of experience and specializing in strategy development, blended finance, program management and investment advisory. I have a track record designing and successfully managing multi-country programs, leading country teams and operations, mobilizing strategic partnerships, providing policy advisory, and structuring innovative financing mechanisms including impact investing and blended finance for agriculture, trade, renewable energy and last mile logistics. I have worked with multilateral organizations including IFC/World Bank Group and United Nations among other international development organizations. Through public speaking engagements and webinars, I have contributed my voice in advocating for increased investment in food systems and smallholder farming in Africa. I support startups through angel investing and pro bono advisory services aspiring entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Languages: English, French, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda

Countries of experience: Benin, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

Other countries visited: Senegal, Namibia, Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, USA, Netherlands

Education: MBA (Finance), BCom (Business Administration)

EXPERIENCE

Program Director

Sep. 2024 – Present, Nairobi

IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative

- Steer the design and implementation of value chain transformation programs in the East Africa region (Budget: \$24m)
- Provide strategic engagement and management guidance in convening and expanding regional Food Systems Transformation Alliances
- Establish regional and local finance and investment partnerships relevant for agri-SMEs
- Develop tools and processes for IDH's work around investment advisory support for SMEs in the region
- Maintain strong ties with program donors and grow the pipeline of potential program partners

United Nations - Consultant

2023 – 2024, Kigali & Nairobi

International Trade Center (ITC) – Value Chain Finance Expert

- Carried out analysis of agricultural value chains financing modalities in East Africa (EA)
- Facilitated stakeholder sensitization and consultation workshops on value chain financing in EA
- Prepared a report on existing and proposed financing modalities for coffee, cocoa, avocado and leather value chains in EA

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) – Investment Policy Expert

- Carried out a regulatory landscape analysis to identify inhibitors and enabling factors for investment in agriculture
- Designed and led a market survey to understand challenges that agri-SMEs face in accessing finance
- Conducted stakeholder consultations with public and private sector actors, development partners and CSOs to validate policy interventions aimed at solving access to finance challenges for women and youth owned agri-MSMEs
- Authored a policy brief with recommendations to the Government of Rwanda on enabling investment flow for women and youth owned agri-MSMEs in the rural areas of the country.

Director | Head of Program and Operations, Aceli Africa Program

2019 - 2023, Nairobi

Global Development Incubator (GDI)

- Regional Lead coordinating implementation of program activities in East Africa (Budget: \$45m)
- Member of Kenya Country Leadership Team, Global Development Incubator.
- Contributed in developing fundraising proposals and partnership engagements that helped raise over \$60m of donor funding
- Recognized for exceptional leadership in setting up a pioneer \$100m-plus blended finance program unlocking agri-SME financing in Africa.
- Conceptualized and directed the build out of systems and processes that underpin the Aceli Africa success to date.
- Led business development and program partnerships with impact lenders and non-banking financial institutions.
- Led product design of smart subsidies for agri-lenders including origination incentives and first loss cover.
- Directed product enhancements to promote green finance and inclusivity (smart ag, women and youth).
- Developed and implemented a hiring plan, growing the team from 2 to 20 people with the first two years of program implementation.
- Led annual (2021 & 2022) market studies assessing and reporting on the state of agri-SME lending in East Africa.
- Shared lessons learnt on early successes and challenges of the innovative business model in blended finance ecosystem

Investment Advisory Manager

2018 - 2019, Nairobi

Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund

- Initiated and led a strategy refresh that saw a significant increase in SMEs supported to become investment ready.
- Trained dozens of SMEs (agribusiness, renewable energy, SaaS) in pitching to investors and helped organize a data room.
- Organized two deal room events in Kenya and Tanzania.
- Successfully completed a few capital raising mandates on behalf of SMEs.

Country Representative & Loan Portfolio Manager

2014 – 2017, Nairobi

Root Capital

- Managed a cumulative loan portfolio of approximately \$50m in agri-commodities.
- Improved the success of loan recoveries and contributed to the organization's bottom line.
- Significantly improved portfolio quality through strategic deal sourcing and post-investment care.
- Introduced Root Capital lending in Madagascar, a challenging market for international investors.
- Provided outstanding team coaching and mentoring.

Operations Officer

2008 – 2014, Nairobi

International Finance Corporation (IFC)

- Designed and launched enterprise support projects in Burundi and South Sudan. Both are Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries - FCAS (Budget: \$8m)
- Helped in the design and implementation of an SME supplier development project in Rwanda (Budget: \$2.5m).
- Mobilized external partnerships to support capacity building for SMEs in corporate supply chains.
- Co-created and implemented a technical assistance project in Benin that provided management training and facilitated access to finance for over 80 private water operators in collaboration with the World Bank country team.
- Recruited and provided oversight for implementation partners including local and international consultants.
- Initiated partnerships with KCB and Equity Bank, two leading commercial banks in East Africa, for TA support to SMEs.
- Organized and moderated numerous training workshops for over 1,000 entrepreneurs in East and West Africa regions.
- Provided input into the customization of IFC's Business Edge training content for SME owners and managers.
- Contributed in developing and disseminating lessons learnt from program implementation.

Director of Finance and Administration

2006 – 2008, Kigali

Ikirezi Natural Products Ltd

- Developed the chart of accounts and developed financial management policies and processes.
- Lead annual budgeting and periodic financial performance reviews.
- Provided sound financial management and enterprise compliance with funders and tax requirements.
- Deputized the Managing Director in steering the enterprise forward.
- Actively participated in planning and executing a staff hiring and development plan.

Client Relationship Officer/Research Analyst

2004 – 2006, Nairobi

Corporate Africa Limited

- Supported businesses in developing financial models and refine business plans.
- Organized management training for women-led agribusinesses in East Africa.
- Conducted research and sector studies to support in-house investment advisory services.

EDUCATION**Master of Business Administration, Finance**

University of Nairobi • Nairobi, Kenya • 2008

Bachelor of Commerce, Business Administration

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa • Nairobi, Kenya • 2004

CERTIFICATIONS**Design Thinking: from insights to viability**

Stanford Graduate School of Business • 2022

- Practical concepts and application of human-centered design in creating innovative solutions

Associate's certificate in Project Management

The George Washington University in partnership with IFC • 2010

- Certified in a standardized and evolving set of project management principles

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Panelist at AGRF2022 on bridging capital supply and demand for agri-SMEs: Challenges and Opportunities, September 2022
- Panelist on Africa Future Lab for Innovation and Policy in the Food and Agriculture sector, SEED promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development, July 2022
- Guest Speaker on Scaling Up Private Sector Investment for Smallholder Farmers at #COP26, IFAD, November 2021
- Contributor in the Private roundtable on Blended Finance to Support SMEs in Africa, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), April 2021
- Speaker on Achieving SDGs through Food Systems Transformation, SAFIN, November 2020

VOLUNTEERING

Business competition judge

Africa Business Heroes Competition

2022 – 2023, Virtual

Founding Member

Nairobi Business Angel Network

Since 2021