



Academy for  
Creating  
Enterprise

# ANNUAL REPORT

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2023

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# ACADEMY MESSAGE

The Academy for Creating Enterprise ignites the entrepreneurial mindset in faith-driven people through training and support to create more abundant lives. In turn, Academy members implement the training they receive to grow a business and develop the financial freedom to spend time on the things that matter most.



Robert Heyn, Executive Director



Shaun Ritchie, Board Chair

## 2023 | NUMBERS THAT TELL A STORY



New Businesses Created



Academy Graduates



New Chapters

We sincerely thank you for your vital role in transforming lives. To learn more about the Academy's initiatives and how you can contribute, please reach out. Your involvement holds the power to make drastic, positive change in the lives of Academy members. Whether you are new to the Academy or a longstanding supporter, your sponsorship and commitment can actualize extraordinary efforts, bringing hope and strength to our members in 2024.

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
**Shaun Ritchie - Board Chair**  
**Eric Loudon - Vice Chair**  
**Doug Holmes - Past Chair**  
**Stephen W. Gibson - Founder**  
**Robert Harbertson**  
**Joe & Jolene Swenson**  
**Reyna Aburto**  
**Rich Andrus**  
**Lyle & Cricket Parry**  
**Andy Barfuss**  
**Brian & Louise Murphy**





President Bong Avancena (Philippines),  
Moringa Powder Farm



Guest and Academy members  
on our Brazil in-country visit



Members in Chiapas, Mexico,  
in START NOW training



Clifford Adjei (West Africa),  
owner of a beverage business

# WHERE WE SERVE

The work of the Academy is moving forward in 14 countries and seven areas throughout the world: Mexico, Central America, South America Northwest, South America South, Brazil, West Africa, and the Philippines.

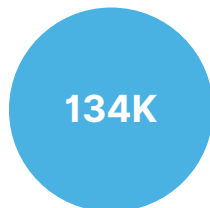
In 2023, the Academy opened a brand new area—Central America—and welcomed two new countries: Nigeria and Guatemala!



## GLOBAL NUMBERS



New Businesses  
Created Since  
2019



Academy  
Graduates Since  
Inception



Current Chapter  
Support Groups



**7 Areas and  
14 Countries**

# AFRICA WEST



After finding herself employed but still not turning a profit, Cecilia had the desire to change her situation and make enough money to take care of her family and pay her tithes. This motivated her to start her own business: a business selling cold drinks in the street. Once the Academy opened a chapter in her stake in Ghana, Cecilia immediately joined and started learning new ways to grow her business through her participation in chapter meetings. She now has two additional sellers!

“My motivational rule of thumb is ‘Start Small, Think Big,’ and my favorite rule of thumb is ‘Keep Good Records,’” Cecilia shares. “Everywhere I go, I carry my record book along! I own a business now and I sell for profit. I’m glad I can take good records on my own, too. With the profit I make, I am able to take care of my family and save something towards the growth of the business. **I can say there is more peace in my heart since I started making money on my own, and this is something I’m grateful for.** I can pay my honest tithes now, and I can boldly declare that I am a full tithes payer.”

*Cecilia is featured on the cover.*

**2023**  
Statistics

260

New Businesses  
Created

207

New Graduates

16

Total Chapters



# THE PHILIPPINES



Mary Anne

Struggling to find good jobs, Mary Anne and her husband turned to Academy training, where they were inspired to start their own business and believed they could with the little capital they had. After their initial success in making and selling candies slowed down, the couple decided to implement the Rule of Thumb “Differentiate Your Business” and started selling delicious street food that appealed to both children and adults.

Of their journey, Mary Anne declares, “**The result of our efforts is that we have improved our lives and gradually changed our standard of living because we started from nothing.** Before, we used to think about our daily expenses and where to get them. Now, we can meet them. Before, we only borrowed money when our children got sick. Now, we have savings, and we have sent our eldest to private school. Because we only sell from Monday to Friday, we can take a day off on Saturday and Sunday to go to church. Before, we could not tithe. Now, we can do it. So if we are here now, it is with the help of what we learned from ACE and SGMB; they are the ones God used to help us. We are so blessed to have this activity in the Church.”

**2023**  
Statistics

1,790

New Businesses  
Created

2,600

New Graduates

215

Total Chapters



# SOUTH AMERICA NORTHWEST



Without savings or a job and needing medical insurance, Diana considered her available resources and how she could best cover her expenses and debt. Residing in a national and international tourist location, Diana decided to list her apartment on Airbnb. As demand and income grew, Diana started renting out other apartments that she acquired and refurbished.

Of her experience, Diana says, “Since I have been a member of the Academy, I have not stopped attending training courses, which has allowed my rental business of furnished apartments, Hope Beach House, to continue improving. I have been able to better manage my finances, keep records of both my personal and business expenses, and receive a percentage of the income to cover the medical insurance for both my daughter and me. **I know without a doubt that having this business has not only made me more self-reliant, but those with restaurants and parking lots in my area were also blessed.** I know that every course given by the Academy has been inspired because, as stated in D&C 104:15, ‘It is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.’”

**2023**  
Statistics

5,290

New Businesses  
Created

16,500

New Graduates

385

Total Chapters





# MEXICO



Noticing a business opportunity in his line of work, Sergio started training with the Academy. Sergio felt motivated to launch his business idea into a company. With trial and error, Sergio found success by implementing Academy principles like “Sell What People Will Buy” and addressing business needs such as investing in advertising.

Sergio shares, “**Entrepreneurship has given me greater opportunities to serve.** Previously, I had worked under a boss and could not spend a lot of time with my family. [Now], my efforts have helped me to build better financial stability for my family. Having our own business unites us more as a family. Together with my wife and children, we look forward to a more prosperous future of living our faith and religion. We hope soon to create employment opportunities that can help others. I know today that optimal results do not happen by accident. Rather, they are forged through effort, perseverance, and faith.”

**2023**  
Statistics

560

New Businesses  
Created

2,600

New Graduates

180

Total Chapters



# SOUTH AMERICA SOUTH



After working many years as an employee, Abigail decided to start her own business sewing and selling dresses. During this time, Abigail learned about the Academy and contacted area leaders with the hope of having the Academy come to her home country of Argentina. A year later, Abigail became one of the first Academy members in her country.

Abigail says, "I feel very happy because I can interact with other entrepreneurs. Starting my own business has helped me to know what information they are going to need to be able to grow their business faster. One of the things I have learned at the Academy is the importance of knowing the break-even point for my business, which helps me to know how much I need to sell to cover all business expenses. One of the things that I thought was fantastic about being in the Academy was the concept of having written agreements. The truth is that would never have occurred to me, and it solves problems beforehand. Right now, I'm working on keeping good records. **Due to the Academy, I can say you will have the support you need, and you will be helped in the creation of a successful business.**"

**2023**  
Statistics

240

New Businesses  
Created

780

New Graduates

19

Total Chapters



# BRAZIL



For a long time, Clarissa and her husband had been trying to open a business. After moving their young family, Clarissa and her husband had the idea to sell snacks and sugarcane juice. They found an ideal location for their new business and developed a presence in the area. After a while, the couple faced financial management challenges. During this time, Clarissa was introduced to and joined the Academy. While advancing through Academy training and participating in her monthly chapter meetings, Clarissa learned how to address and overcome challenges in her business.

Now, Clarissa operates her business in two locations and has a team of four employees! To her, the Academy has been a constant source of knowledge and inspiration. Having gone through the Academy program herself, Clarissa gives back by mentoring other Academy members through her volunteer role as the chapter leader in Olinda, Brazil. Clarissa is immensely grateful to the Academy for the support she has received in overcoming the challenges that have come her way.

**2023**  
Statistics

480

New Businesses  
Created

1,730

New Graduates

170

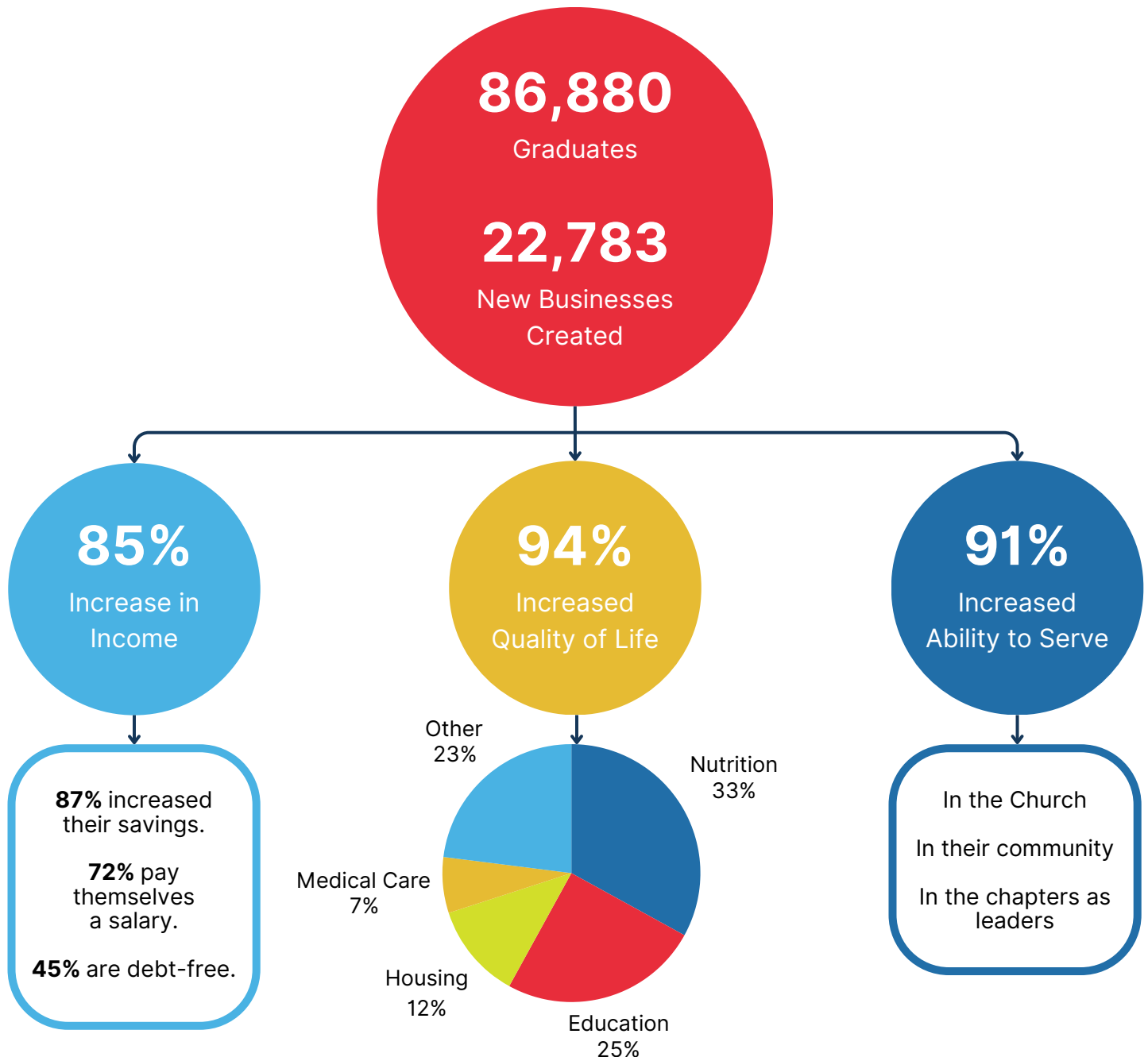
Total Chapters



# IMPACT STUDY

The 2023 Impact Survey is the Academy's second consecutive worldwide impact survey.

Administered and evaluated by scholars from the Brigham Young University Ballard School for Social Impact, this survey drew insights from 4,464 Academy members, for a total response rate of 51%.



# WHY WE SUPPORT THE ACADEMY

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“ The Academy for Creating Enterprise has been doing incredible work all over the world for over 25 years. I’ve been privileged to help teach one-week starter courses on two different trips to Brazil. Both trips we were warmly welcomed by groups of enthusiastic entrepreneurs.

We also visited local business owners who proudly told us how much their businesses improved as they applied the principles they learned at the Academy courses and in chapter meetings. It’s an honor to be associated with an organization that is doing so much good with everyone it reaches.

*Craig Earnshan*

# LOOKING FORWARD

As we embark on the journey into 2024, we are excited for the incredible milestones that lie ahead. This year promises growth and celebration as we dive in and advance the great work of the Academy together.

## 1,000TH CHAPTER GROUP

As we reflect on the remarkable strides of the Academy in 2023 with 970 chapter support groups worldwide, we are thrilled to share that we eagerly anticipate reaching a monumental milestone: the establishment of the Academy's 1,000th chapter support group! This achievement is a testament to the strength and unity of the Academy community, and we cannot wait to unveil this historic moment later this year.



## 25TH ANNIVERSARY

2024 marks 25 years of the Academy's dedication to empowering individuals and families on their journey to sustainable self-reliance. Please join us in celebrating the Academy's 25th anniversary by joining our efforts, sponsoring our members, reflecting on significant achievements, and hearing heartfelt messages from our members, volunteers, and board members. Together, let's commemorate a quarter-century of growth, resilience, and the unwavering spirit of self-reliance. **Here's to 25 years of empowerment and countless more to come!**

## IN-COUNTRY VISITS

Come and see! Experience the Academy mission in action through in-country visits—an exclusive opportunity to witness our impact and befriend our members. Immerse yourself in member businesses, participate in leadership trainings, join entrepreneurial Q&A panels, and soak in the local culture. Contact us to discover how you can play a vital role in this enriching experience!





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