



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Academy for
Creating
Enterprise



OUR MISSION

Igniting the entrepreneurial mindset in faith-driven people through training and support to create more abundant lives.





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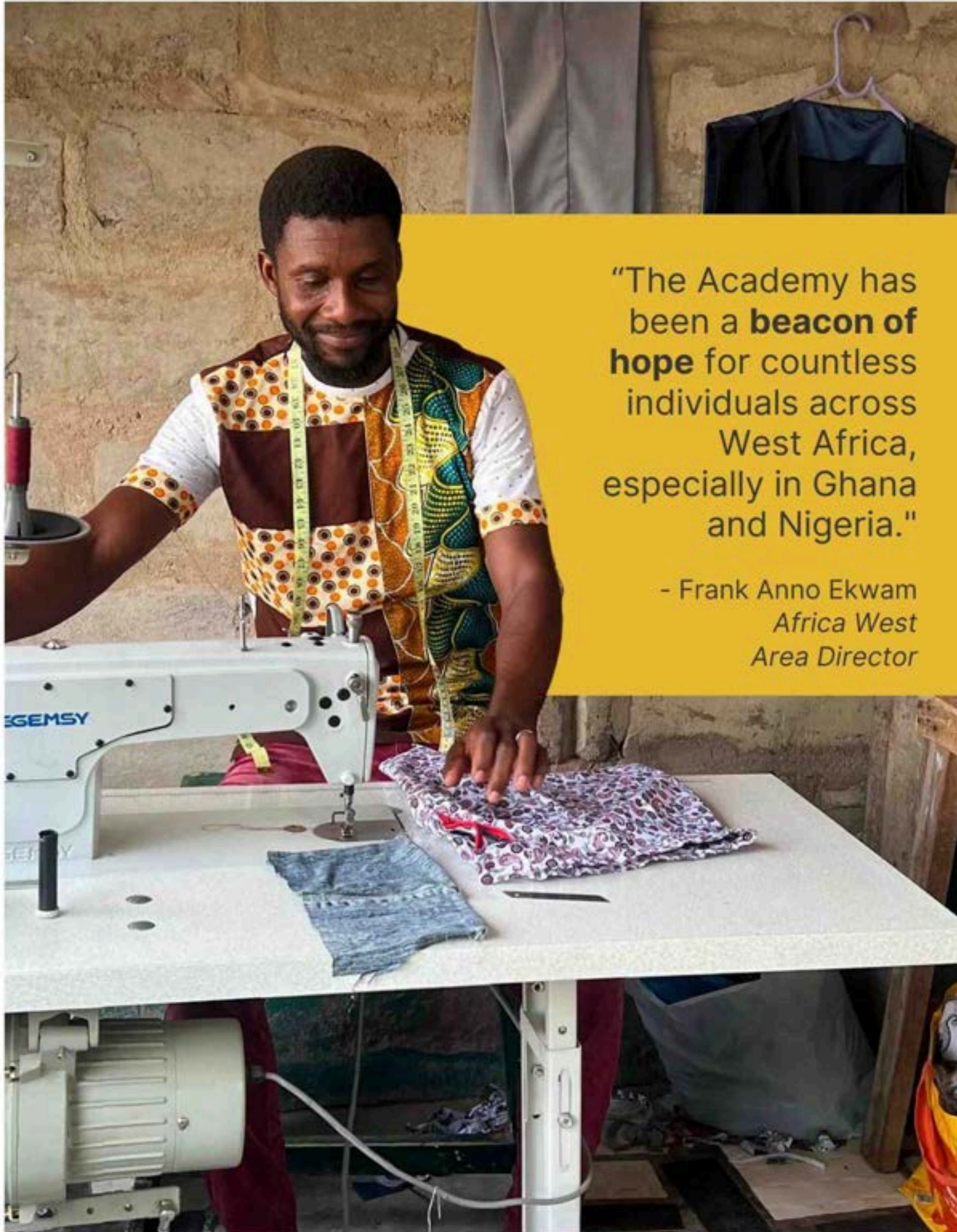
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“The Academy has been a **beacon of hope** for countless individuals across West Africa, especially in Ghana and Nigeria.”

- Frank Anno Ekwam
*Africa West
Area Director*

ACADEMY MESSAGE

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

2024 has been a landmark year for the Academy for Creating Enterprise. We celebrated our 25th anniversary and reached a historic milestone with our 1,000th chapter in Africa, bringing our global total to 1,109 chapters by year-end.

Academy members showed remarkable resilience while navigating political unrest in Venezuela and severe drought and power outages in Ecuador. Their perseverance highlights the power of self-reliance, even in the most challenging of times.

In 2024, the Academy also helped launch over 10,000 new businesses and income-generating activities for impoverished families.

We also celebrated several firsts, including the first-ever Africa Academy Awards and our participation in the Light the World Giving Machine campaign with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

With your continued support, we look forward to another year of growth and lasting change.

Robert Heyn
Executive Director

Eric Loudon
Chairman, Board of Directors



Robert in Africa West



Eric in the Philippines

MEET THE BOARD

Eric Loudon
Board Chair

Shaun Ritchie
Past Board Chair

Rich Andrus
Andy Barfuss

Lyle & Cricket Parry
Jolene Swenson

Joe Swenson
Interim Vice Chair

Steve & Bette Gibson
Founders

Doug Holmes
Tanner Milne

Carrie Thompson

Brian & Louise Murphy

YEAR IN REVIEW

IN 2024, THE ACADEMY CELEBRATED SEVERAL IMPORTANT MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS.



25TH ANNIVERSARY

When Steve and Bette Gibson founded the Academy for Creating Enterprise in 1999, it was hard to imagine that a small school in the Philippines would become a global organization with members in 15 countries. Over the years, we've expanded our reach, deepened our impact, and grown our network of chapter support groups.



CENTRAL AMERICA OPENING

In 2024, the Academy expanded into Central America, opening chapters in Guatemala and Honduras. Led by area director Adrian Vargas, the region has grown to over 28,000 members and 223 chapters.



1,000TH CHAPTER

The Academy chapter support system is the foundation of our programs, where members gain business skills, receive mentorship, and celebrate their successes. In 2024, we celebrated the opening of our 1,000th chapter in Ghana, with the event live-streamed on Facebook and attended by local leaders and executive director Robert Heyn.



GIVING MACHINE & OTHER CAMPAIGNS


This year was the first in which the Academy was invited to participate in the Light the World Giving Machine initiative in partnership with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Academy offerings included pigs, chickens, a farming starter kit, a basket, and a solar-powered light. These offerings were included in seven Giving Machines throughout Utah, California, and Hawaii. The campaign was a great success, and items will be distributed to select Academy members in 2025.

In 2024, the Academy also ran successful campaigns for Mother's Day and Giving Tuesday, both of which helped raise brand awareness. The Mother's Day campaign specifically supported the women of the Academy, who represent 60% of our members.



WHERE WE SERVE

The Academy focuses on serving areas with a strong population of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and works closely with local church leadership.



“ I’m continually learning new ways to expand my business through the Academy’s principles. The Academy has been a game-changer for me, and I’m grateful for the growth and progress I’ve made in such a short time.



Helen, Nigeria

“ The Academy opened doors to other horizons and helped me see my business from new perspectives.”



Gheraldyne, Peru

THE ACADEMY BY THE NUMBERS



1,109

Total chapters
established



147,793

Total members
who have
graduated from
Academy training



10,165

New businesses
created in 2024



[Because of] what we learned from the Academy, the result of our efforts is that we have improved our lives and gradually changed our standard of living because we started from nothing."



Mary Ann, Philippines

ACADEMY TRAINING

"The Academy's programs and training provide individuals with essential entrepreneurial and self-reliance skills, equipping them to create sustainable livelihoods, support their families, and strengthen their communities for generations to come."

– Robert Heyn, Executive Director



ACADEMY PROGRAMS



ACT NOW

The ACT NOW program guides new members through four stages of entrepreneurship training, focusing on action-based learning, continuous growth, and ongoing mentorship.



WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

Academy workshops are business courses that offer certificates upon completion. Donors and supporters can volunteer to host in-person or virtual workshops.



CHAPTER SUPPORT GROUPS

Chapter support groups are the foundation of the Academy, offering members lifelong access to monthly meetings that focus on applying business principles, peer support, networking, and guest lectures.



ACADEMY AWARDS

Each year, the Academy hosts the "Academy Awards" business competition in each area to honor members' achievements. Participants compete in five categories based on their years in business. Donors and experts volunteer as judges, and winners receive a cash prize, often reinvested into their business.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

“Every principle I learned at the Academy has played a role in my success, and I feel so blessed to be able to provide for my family.”

- Victoria, Venezuela





Bonifacio - Batac

PHILIPPINES

Bonifacio started his business in 2012 selling grilled fish. However, customer response was poor. He pivoted to selling frozen fish, becoming the top seller in the area. Bonifacio leaned into his Academy training when he wanted to grow his business.

Needing a way to differentiate from the competition, he purchased a freezer that displayed the fish in a more appealing way. This one change greatly impacted his business, increasing sales. Bonifacio continues to introduce new products to his customers, testing and trying what will sell.

Through his hard work, he has expanded his business to two branches in Badok and Paoay.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

728 Businesses
Created

3,738 Graduates

223 Chapters

Area Director
Phillip Tan



Jose - Mexico

MEXICO

Jose faced a difficult turning point in his business when his struggle to delegate responsibilities led to operational strain. Overwhelmed by the demands of running everything himself, he was forced to downsize, reducing his staff and limiting sales. His once-thriving business was at a standstill, and he knew something had to change.

Seeking a way forward, Jose enrolled in the Start Now course, where he found not only practical strategies but also the motivation to rebuild and scale sustainably.

He is now working toward franchising his butcher shop and is actively seeking strategic partnerships to expand his reach.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

257 Businesses Created

2,173 Graduates

195 Chapters

Area Director
Adrian Vargas



Alicia - Paraguay

SOUTH AMERICA SOUTH

In 2018, Alicia began to dream of her business, even designing the logo. She was afraid to move forward, however, because she believed it would require an excessive amount of startup funds.

In an Academy training, she learned she could begin with what she had. Alicia began searching on the internet for how to make smoothies, buying just the basics. At her first event, she sold only five smoothies; but proud of her accomplishment, she continued moving forward.

Her business now averages 100 smoothies sold each month. "In a short time, I have achieved so many things with so little capital that I am surprised," says Alicia. "I am eternally grateful to the Academy for helping me with my vision."

2024 AREA STATISTICS

146 Businesses
Created

1,088 Graduates

25 Chapters

Area Director
Luis Arzubiaga



Jose - Bolivia

SOUTH AMERICA NORTHWEST

At just 20 years old, Jose started his first business: collecting garbage. This business ignited his entrepreneurial spirit, driving him to start a second business: a cleaning and gardening company.

With the start of this new business, he began attending Academy training. As he attended his courses, his business began to improve. He attributes his business's success to applying the Rules of Thumb, especially "Focus. Focus. Focus."

He was recently recognized for his achievements during the SANW Academy Awards, in which he was awarded fourth place in the Expand Now category. He continues to apply his Academy learning to his business.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

2,606 Businesses
Created

14,098 Graduates

417 Chapters

Area Director
Luis Arzubiaga



Kamilla - Brazil

BRAZIL

When Kamilla, a mother of two, began her custom stationery business, she had only R\$55,00 (approximately \$10US) to invest in the business.

When Kamilla attended an Academy devotional in her stake, she was filled with hope. She decided to fully commit to building and growing her business. She traveled to Recife for intensive training, where she learned key entrepreneurial skills, built up her courage, and confidently began addressing business challenges.

Kamilla's business is now thriving. This success has positively impacted her family and "brought fulfillment" to her life.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

438 Businesses Created

1,636 Graduates

198 Chapters

Area Director
Alexandre Cavalcante



Nelson - Ghana

AFRICA WEST

Nelson, a young professional with nearly four years of work experience, had been longing to break free from working for others and become self-reliant. However, two major obstacles stood in his way: accessing capital and overcoming fear.

While attending an Academy business seminar, Nelson found that the message resonated deeply with him. "Corbin's [presenter] insights and expertise ignited a spark within me, and I began to envision myself as a successful entrepreneur," said Nelson. Following the seminar, Nelson carefully selected locally sourced equipment, which allowed him to allocate funds to other essential startup costs for his metal cutting business.

He now pays himself and reinvests in the business for future growth.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

179 Businesses
Created

154 Graduates

42 Chapters

Regional Coordinator
Frank Anno



Olinda - Honduras

CENTRAL AMERICA

Before her training with the Academy, Olinda had many dreams, including owning her own business. However, she was afraid and didn't know where to start.

The Academy taught her she could use her current resources (a computer and printer) to start an income-generating activity. She purchased two reams of white paper and hung a sign in her window advertising "Photocopies." At first no one visited her shop, but her business began to grow little by little in services, products, and clients.

Olinda currently has 150 active clients each day who visit her business and is paying herself a salary. Says Olinda, "I am not yet 100% self-reliant, but I am on the path to self-reliance."

2024 AREA STATISTICS

154 Businesses
Created

9 Chapters

Area Director
Adrian Vargas



Victoria - Venezuela

CARIBBEAN

In 2018, Venezuela was facing a severe economic crisis marked by hyperinflation. In search of better opportunities, Victoria's husband Paul emigrated to another country. Although Paul was able to provide for the family from afar, the COVID-19 pandemic brought new uncertainties. Victoria became increasingly concerned with finding a way to generate additional income while still dedicating time to her daughter.

After trying various activities, she discovered a passion for sewing. "I will never forget the excitement of my first sale," said Victoria. This led her to join the Academy, where she received business training and support from her local chapter group.

Leveraging that help, Victoria has turned her small sewing business into a full-fledged, sustainable fashion business, which helps support her family.

2024 AREA STATISTICS

5,607 Businesses
Created

2,472 Graduates

108 Chapters

Area Director
Luis Arzubiaga



IMPACT

"From our member self-reported impact survey, we are able to track how much our members pay themselves, how much they are able to give back in their communities, and what areas of life they are improving due to what they are learning at the Academy."

- Adrienne Ventura, *Director of Impact and Reporting*

2024 GLOBAL IMPACT

SINCE 1999, THE ACADEMY HAS BEEN MAKING A DEEP IMPACT IN THE LIVES OF ACADEMY MEMBERS.



Founders Steve & Bette Gibson learned that returning missionaries in the Philippines have **little to no access to jobs**.



Since 1991, **147,793 individuals** have graduated from Academy entrepreneurship training programs.



Steve and Bette started the Academy for Creating Enterprise **in 1991** to train individuals on how to start and grow their own businesses.



In 2024, there were **10,165** new income-generating activities started by Academy members.



The Academy has now expanded to **15 countries** around the world.

In late 2024, the Academy conducted an impact study in which **967 chapters were surveyed** and received **4,464 responses**.



Our goal is that each Academy member becomes **sustainably self-reliant**.



84% of respondents from the 2024 Impact Survey reported an **increase in their income** after Academy trainings.



48% of the 2024 Impact Survey respondents reported they are able to **pay themselves at least a minimum wage** based on their area's standard.



81% of respondents from the 2024 Impact Survey reported an **improvement in their quality of life**.



88% of respondents from the 2024 Impact Survey reported an **increased ability to give back** in their church and community.

FINANCIALS

The Academy raises its funding through generous private and foundational donors. We take our financial stewardship to accomplish the Academy's mission very seriously.



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Total 2024 expenditures
\$2,548,601

81%

Programs
Business Training, Annual Business Competitions & Awards, Chapter Training & Support, Business Conferences & Webinars
Curriculum Development, Impact Measurement

6%

General
Administrative Software, Office Rent, Equipment & Supplies, Administrative Support & Salaries

13%

Development
Marketing, Promotional Events, Major & Annual Giving expense, Grant Solicitation

GENEROUS SUPPORT

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

Your generosity fuels our mission and makes a real difference in the lives of the members we serve. Because of donors like you, we can continue creating meaningful impact. We are deeply grateful for your support—thank you for being a vital part of our community!



"We feel very fortunate to belong to the Academy. We began to see our business from a new perspective, no longer just as a source of extra income but as a real business with tremendous potential."

- Jorsan, Colombia

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the future, we remain member-focused with the goal of helping individuals create and grow their own businesses, ultimately achieving sustainable self-reliance. Join us in empowering entrepreneurs around the world to create lasting change!



Strengthening the current chapter members through additional training and support



Fortifying recently opened areas, including Africa West and Central America, to ensure long-term stability and impact



Launching our Self-Reliant by 2030 campaign, which will include the Sponsor-a-Chapter campaign and the Masters Chapter

2025 GOALS

With each new business and chapter, we are building a network of leaders who are shaping the future. Self-reliance goes beyond financial stability—it fosters resilience, strengthens communities, and creates lasting opportunities for generations to come.





Academy for
Creating
Enterprise

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