



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In 2019 we made big strides together. We more than doubled our annual reach and opened opportunities for families across 102 new villages to drive change. 196 young leaders were elected to serve as facilitators who mobilized dozens of their neighbors to take action and shape the future of their communities across Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and beyond.

I'm proud of our work across the region. We continued our partnership with the Government of Rwanda towards a national program that will bring Spark's unique FCAP (Facilitated Collective Action Process) to every village across the country, upwards of 12,000 villages and 11 million lives. We served refugee and host communities in northern Uganda, where one of the largest refugee crises has unfolded. Nearby in Burundi, a country with one of the world's weakest economies, we saw villages launch businesses from farms to transportation services, stimulating the local economy and enabling families to meet critical food and health needs. Our partners in West Africa used the FCAP to support villages to protect their land from illegal corporate land grabs and bolster local action.

As we look ahead into 2020, it is more important than ever to show our continued solidarity with friends around the world. Together we partner with villages across seven countries, we make up a team who hail from ten countries and our global supporters come from dozens more. Our greatest threats and opportunities are ones that cross borders. This moment in our world proves double sided, COVID-19, a threat to all, and an opportunity to build a more resilient economy and equitable social structure. All the young leaders across East and West Africa who are stepping into leadership roles for the first time ever to facilitate the FCAP, all the families who decide together to give their wealth to drive community-driven change in a country not their own, to everyone who has lifted their voice and wallet to make this work possible, you give me hope that together we can, and already are, building a better world.

In immense gratitude,



SASHA FISHER

Executive Director & Founder



ABOUT SPARK MICROGRANTS

Spark’s Facilitated Collective Action Process (FCAP) works to build the civic and economic power of families facing rural poverty. Villages that benefit from Spark’s approach tend to be sidelined from decision-making that affects their livelihoods. Whether from a mining company’s land grabs, a non-profit imposing a seed varietal or a national government forcing participation in a program. Community members of all genders, ages and ethnicities deserve their right fulfilled not just to participate, but to drive local change.



THE FACILITATED COLLECTIVE ACTION PROCESS

Spark’s Facilitated Collective Action Process (FCAP) curates village ‘town-hall’ style weekly meetings, in which village members come together to participate in village planning. Through this process, each village democratically elects an inclusive leadership committee, establishes a village savings account, and decides a project of their choice, and implements the project with an \$8,000 microgrant. Each community receives an additional two years of management support and facilitation from Spark and our partners to ensure sustainability of the process.



FCAP IMPACT

As a result of the FCAP, communities become more self-reliant and continue their own development with a new platform for strengthening cohesion and increasing civic engagement. For every one project stimulated by the FCAP, a community launches another, showing a 2x impact multiplier. Across the board, 85% of villages continue to meet regularly. 85% of these projects are profit-generating, ranging from agricultural to transportation businesses, and families see an 80% increase in household assets. Spark’s process isn’t just local, it’s inclusive; 56% of ideas come from women, 44% of leaders are democratically elected women and 100% of villages have youth in leadership.

UPDATE ON COVID-19

Although COVID-19 did not reach the countries in which we work in 2019, it has had a profound impact on all of us. In light of the global pandemic, Spark took immediate actions to protect our community partners and staff through instituting a work from home policy and shifting from in person village meetings to remote support. The families we serve; refugee families living in settlements and families facing extreme poverty, are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Through a rapid text program Spark has heard from participant families on how the crisis is impacting livelihoods, and how families are managing amidst isolation. The survey revealed that 64% of families have already felt economic hardship due to COVID-19, and the two largest concerns families have surround food security and cohesion. In response to COVID-19, Spark is providing remote support to bolster prevention work, support families to manage amidst the crisis and support recovery work through using the FCAP as an economic and social stimulus post COVID-19.

1 PREVENTION

FCAP youth facilitators are leading communities through the creation of preparedness plans, including measures to prevent the spread and manage community relations (already in effect). Gather rapid feedback from families on their experience to track effects of COVID-19.

2 MANAGEMENT

Support communities through economic hardship with the continuation of the FCAP including community savings and community projects with social distancing.

3 RECOVERY

Spark's FCAP will be an important part of COVID-19 recovery work as an economic and social stimulus to areas facing the worst poverty. To prepare for rapid replication of the FCAP across hundreds of villages, Spark is building a mobile-enabled training program for youth facilitators.

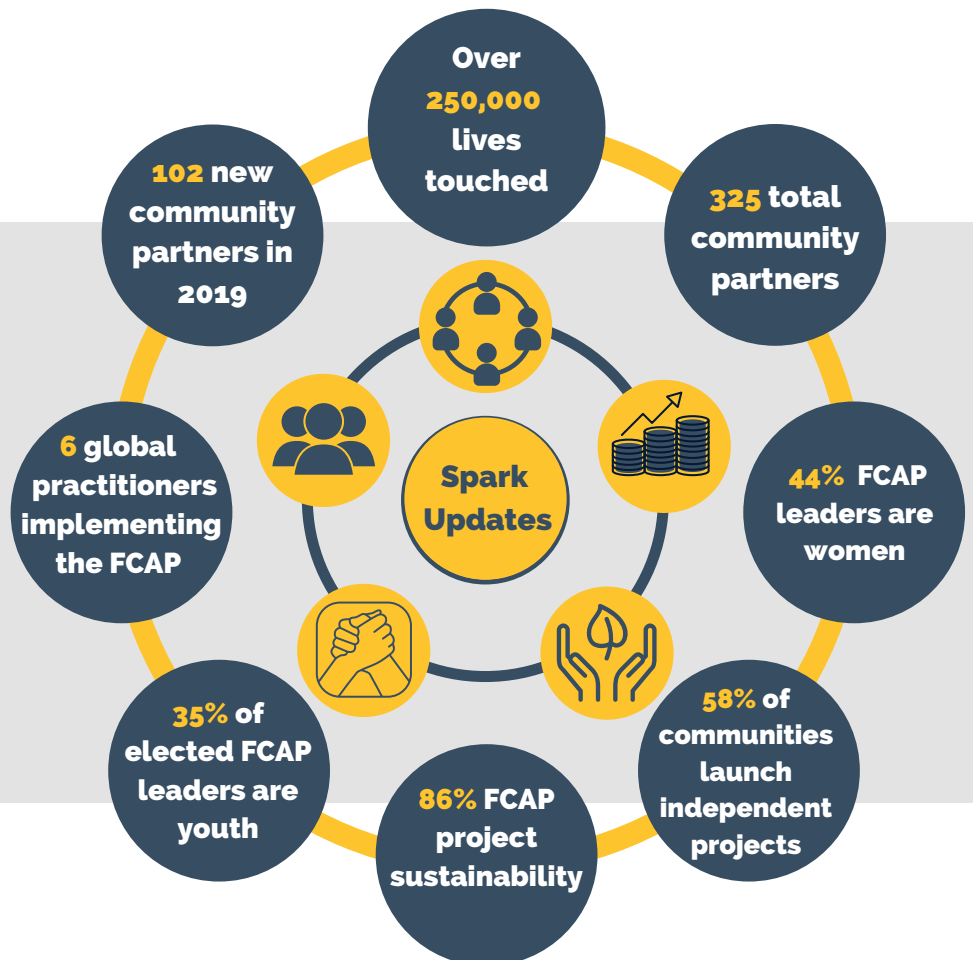


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, Spark MicroGrants completed the transition from direct deployment of the Facilitated Collective Action Process (FCAP) to a service provider. Today we train partner organizations, supplying civil society groups and governments with the tools to implement the FCAP. With an updated MOU with the Government of Rwanda, Spark and local government officials facilitated the FCAP in nearly one hundred new villages across three new sectors. In West Nile, Uganda in collaboration with the local civil society organization CEFORD, all twelve communities within the FCAP refugee integration pilot successfully launched projects and many have advocated to local government for additional resources. Finally, Spark held the second annual FCAP Community of Practice Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, bringing together a network of practitioners from seven countries actively using the FCAP to develop a set of collective standards and share local innovations.

We closed the year in a strong position with over \$2.7 million dollars raised, our highest growth year to date. Our learning agenda was supported by an external firm completing midline data collection and mid term report comparing FCAP and non-FCAP villages in Rwanda illuminating resilience and economic benefits of the process. The technology team built out program dashboards for our staff and implementing partners including mobile phone SMS Data dashboards used in the field to enhance rapid data collection and transparency initiatives.

2019 UPDATES



2019 HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY

GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA PARTNERSHIP

Government of Rwanda signed agreement with Spark to integrate FCAP into annual village planning process nationally.

APRIL

FCAP GRADUATION IN BURUNDI VILLAGES

Three communities working with Spark and FVS-AMADE graduated from the FCAP and are still meeting regularly with active projects.

AUGUST

WEST NILE ADVOCACY

Nine out of the twelve communities in the West Nile Pilot successfully advocated to local government in Uganda for additional resources to support their community projects.

OCTOBER

ISE VISIT

The Institute for State Effectiveness brought practitioners from Afghanistan to meet with Spark to both share learnings on best practices in Community Driven Development.

JANUARY

MOBILE DATA PILOT

All facilitators equipped with simple phone data reporting decreasing reporting time from 30 minutes to 4 minutes.



RWANDA DISTRICT WORKSHOP

MAY

DISTRICT WORKSHOP

Districts contributed 5% of their tax dollars to the FCAP program with a commitment to continue so on an annual basis.



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE SUMMIT

JULY

RUKOZO STUDY

An external midline evaluation of Spark communities in Rukozo, Rwanda showed a 20% increase on household animal assets.

SEPTEMBER

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE SUMMIT

Spark hosted a summit for all FCAP practitioners to develop shared standards and local innovations.



ISE VISIT

NOVEMBER

GRADUATED STUDY

Spark completed a three month graduated community assessment, with findings demonstrating that communities continue to meet with 92% having active savings groups.

FCAP Graduation: Spark partnered with FVS-AMADE, a local Civil Society Organization in Burundi, in 2014 to implement the FCAP across nine out of eighteen provinces across the country. To date, Spark and FVS-AMADE have facilitated the FCAP in twenty-seven communities in Burundi. This year, three of those communities successfully graduated from the FCAP, meaning that they completed the last phase of the FCAP focusing on ensuring sustainability so that communities continue to collaborate after graduating from the process.

Achievements:

- Three Burundi communities graduated from the FCAP - Shuza, Ruyange, and Buramira.
- Shuza implemented a cow-rearing project to increase food security and household income. In 2019, this community graduated from the FCAP process with their project resulting in a 400% increase in the number of households that have manure for their farms, and a 300% increase in the number of households that have milk.
- FVS led almost all aspects of the FCAP independent of Spark, adapting the data collection process with communities as well as financial record-keeping of village grants to best compliment their existing operations.

27
Community
Partnerships
to Date

3
Communities
Graduated
From FCAP

43,753
Lives
Touched

Funding for Burundi proved a significant challenge in 2019. However, Burundi is still one of the highest need countries in the world, ranking as one of the bottom five countries on poverty, maternal mortality, and happiness. Despite these conditions, FVS-AMADE is facilitating six of the twenty communities in Burundi with independent financing. Their team is eager to receive increased funding to expand the FCAP in 2020 after the presidential elections are concluded.



"I gained so many things thanks to the FCAP. I gained skills because I knew how to plan a project and do everything planned. Before the arrival of Spark in our community, I used to do pig rearing projects but I didn't know how to plan it and what the modern pig rearing projects look like. But now I know it and I am implementing it"

- **Tuyisabe Ernest, community member
Musanga, Burundi**

RWANDA

Background: Spark and the Government of Rwanda are currently implementing the FCAP across 135 villages in Rwanda, working our way towards one example sector per district towards national replication. Three of thirty sectors have been saturated and the Government and Spark are laying the groundwork for replication across the rest of the country.

Achievements:

- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the development branch of the Government of Rwanda, the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA). The MOU includes which has opened the door for more work in institutional strengthening and collaborative planning for government village planning initiatives.
- As a result of the government partnership, the FCAP is now being co-led and facilitated by local government staff (Social and Economic Development Officers), improving partner ownership of the process.
- The Rwanda team hosted a district consultation workshop for government officials on Spark's village planning framework policy, aimed at boosting government engagement in FCAP implementation and strategy.

94

**New
Village
Partners**

3

**Sectors
Saturated**

64,430

**Lives
Touched**

There are were a number of ways in which Spark was able to expand and replicate the FCAP with efficiency in Rwanda this year. We professionalized and improved our training and tools, such as visual guides and training evaluations for community based facilitators (CBFs) so they could be more independent in implementing the FCAP. We also integrated government staff who have now been trained on the FCAP into this facilitation process and now supervise CBFs, co-lead their trainings, check-ins, and field visits.



UGANDA

Background: The Uganda program in 2019 focused primarily on the new Refugee Integration Pilot. At the beginning of the year, Spark in collaboration with Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD) began the implementation of the FCAP across twelve refugee and host communities in a non-permanent context for the first time. The pilot has been responded to by the World Bank, UNHCR, and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), who have referred to Spark for learnings and program updates in the region for their policy and programming.

Achievements:

- Across the twelve pilot communities, there were thirteen community savings groups formed, seven goat rearing projects (with 331 goats already procured), one grinding mill built, one school constructed, two wholesale businesses started, and one village savings and loan association created.
- Nine out of the twelve pilot communities successfully advocated to local governments, OPM, religious institutions, and NGOs such as GIZ and local organizations. Through this advocacy, communities received land for animals, building supplies, and meeting spaces.
- Spark continued to support communities in Northern and Eastern Uganda that are currently finishing the FCAP, and thirteen communities graduated in Uganda in 2019.



At the start of the FCAP, West Nile community partners had low engagement and participation rates. Women's leadership suffered as well. Some of the communities were reluctant to work together and one of the mixed refugee and host communities wanted to work separately, not on common goals. Refugee families and host families have had rising tensions in resource sharing from land to aid funds and roll over tensions from families in the settlements persist. Through the first phase of the FCAP, a series of community building sessions were introduced with emphasis on mobilization and engagement. Refugee families and host community members have now come together to collaborate on joint projects. The FCAP gender empowerment trainings and changed timing of elections and community meetings have improved female engagement and leadership.

RESEARCH AND LEARNING

Spark's Research, Evaluation, Learning, and Monitoring (RELM) team conducted five studies in 2019 that influenced programming and FCAP adaptation from learnings and outcomes. These were the Rukozo focus groups, Rukozo midline survey, West Nile focus groups, Rukozo project updates, and the graduated communities study. Each of these had unique learnings that contributed to program design and strategic planning (further discussed below).

The RELM team also reevaluated and updated our data systems, introducing a new citizen text platform. The team redesigned our Theory of Change (page 11) and worked to better define the outcomes and sustainability of the FCAP. This was guided by three main evaluation questions as well as studies aimed at answering key programmatic and thematic questions. Learnings from these were then used to ensure our M&E tools are capturing the appropriate types of outcomes.

STUDY OVERVIEW

KEY DATA POINTS

Rukozo Focus Groups: Conducted to gather feedback on the FCAP process in Rwanda communities, identify preliminary increases in livelihoods that community members are experiencing, and understand how communities define a “strong” community.



of surveyed Rukozo community members experienced changes to their livelihoods

Rukozo Midline Survey: An external evaluation of twenty-one communities in the Rukozo sector of Rwanda, which gathered preliminary learnings on civic engagement, cohesion, and livelihood outcomes in communities approximately one year after starting the FCAP.



more community assets in animal ownership in Rukozo

Rukozo Project Updates: To better understand how the microgrant has been used in the twenty-one Rukozo sector villages in Rwanda, and any immediate outputs and/or outcomes of the projects and microgrant.



increase in pigs from communities with pig rearing projects in Rukozo

Graduated Communities Study: Conducted to assess whether FCAP community projects and meetings were still sustaining one year after graduating from the process.



of communities continued to have active savings groups one year after graduating

West Nile Focus Groups: To explore the livelihood strategies, state of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, process of pathway selection and changes from being part of the FCAP process.

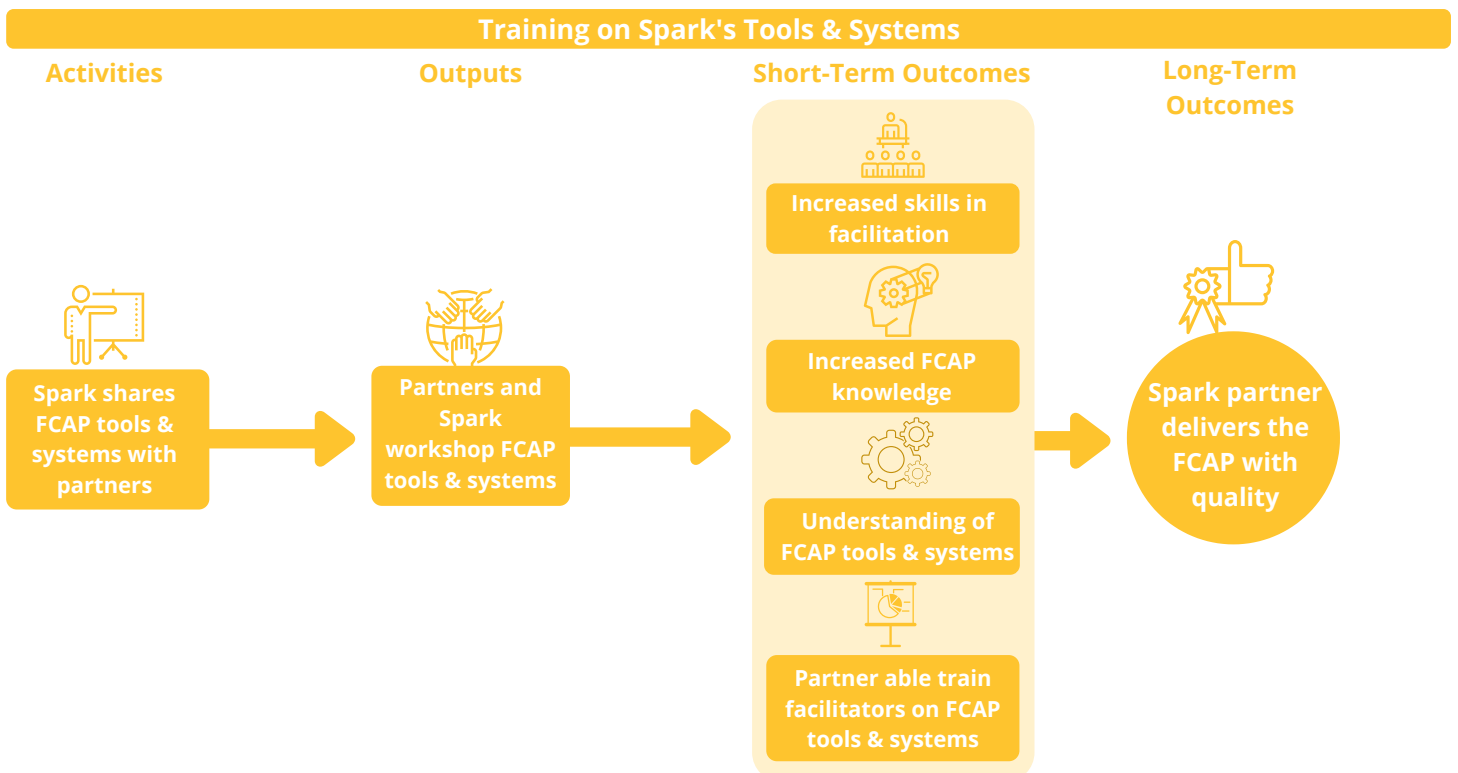
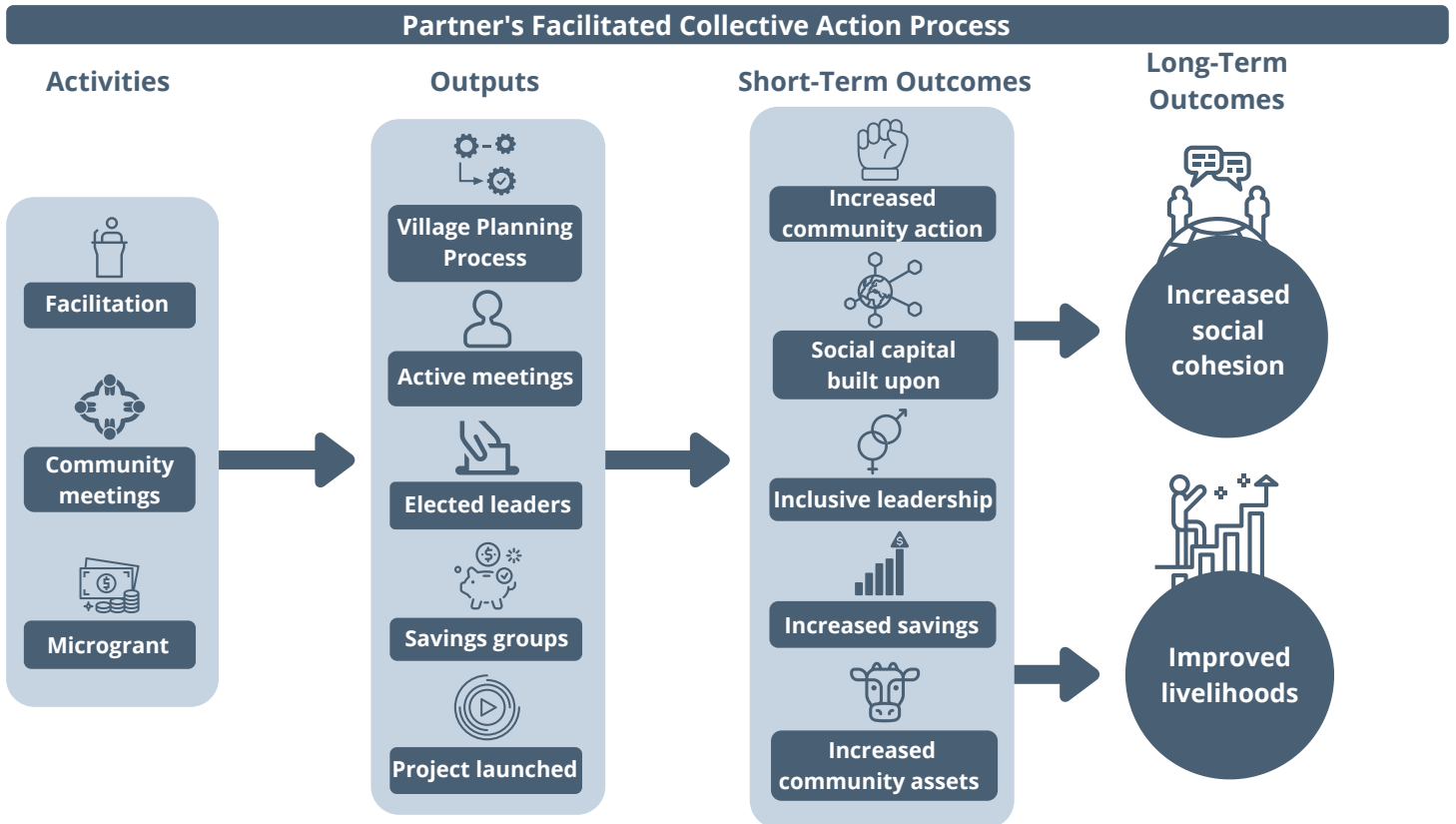


Reported no conflicts between refugee and Ugandan community populations in first six months of the FCAP

THEORY OF CHANGE

Spark's Theory of Change was updated to portray the impact of the FCAP and our new partner training approach. Today our impact is achieved through training partner organizations, quality implementation of the FCAP by partners and the long-term outcomes of increased social cohesion and improved livelihoods. The core of the FCAP process in our Theory of Change is around sustainability.

Sustainability of the FCAP lies in the agency of families and organizations who change their own systems to enable the FCAP to be introduced and persist. The FCAP's dual outcomes in livelihoods and social cohesion are mutually reinforcing, while Spark's partners drive change through the adoption and quality deployment of the FCAP.



TECH HIGHLIGHTS

At the beginning of the year, the Spark product team piloted a technology platform using Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) that allowed facilitators working in remote areas to upload data and reports without smartphones or internet connection, which was often a challenge in the remote areas that Spark communities are in. This provided better and more efficient data reporting back to Spark from facilitators, as they now complete the form in an average of four minutes or less when it used to take over thirty minutes. Learnings and studies from the pilot were adapted into the development of the system, and now with the success of the program, Spark is planning on scaling it to all country programs to improve efficiency and provide more impactful data.

The Product team also successfully piloted two new SMS mobile data platforms in Rwanda that improved communication and feedback with communities and partners. With an SMS mobile data verification system, Spark was able to send faster, more efficient messages to community members on project updates, grant disbursements, and savings group information. It also gave community members an opportunity to send feedback through an easy, numbered menu system to improve learnings and better understand communities. The Product team also piloted a new SMS mobile data partner dashboard that helped our Rwanda government partners monitor community performance and sent back reports. The pilot was a success and Spark now intends to scale the platform across country programs.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

GATIBA - RWANDA

To address challenges of poor harvests and poverty, the Gatiba community collectively chose to implement a pig rearing project. At the beginning of the project, the community used their microgrant to purchase eight pigs. This has now grown to 142 pigs (three of which are now pregnant) and the project is expected to keep growing. The community has been selling the piglets to make a communal profit, as well as providing pigs to households to increase their household income. So far 132 households have received animals, which is 80% of the community that has now increased their animal assets. The community has also been using the manure from the pigs to improve crop production, as well as selling it for community profit.

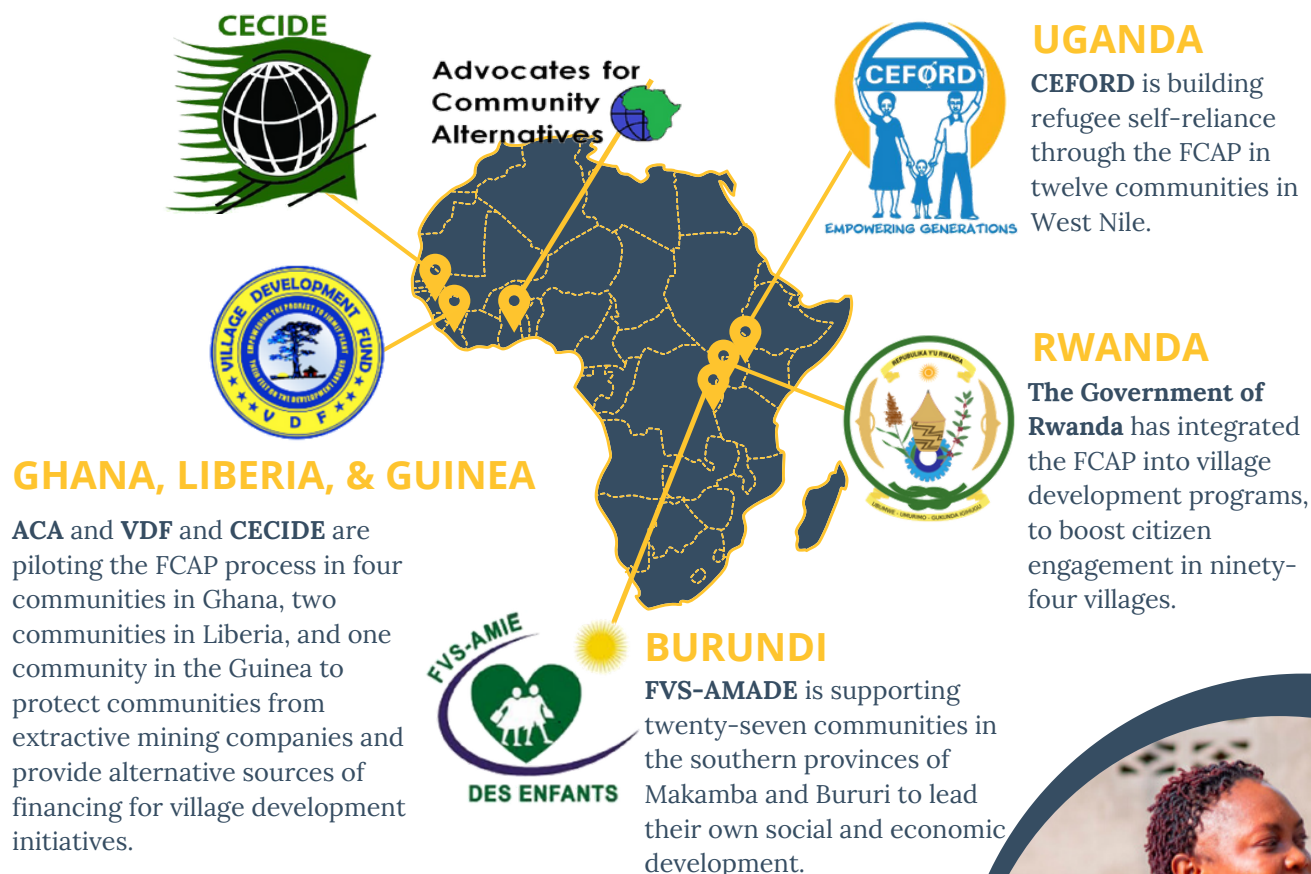
Gatiba has formed a strong active savings group with 126 members contributing monthly to a communal fund to improve access to loans and finances for community members in need. So far they have collectively saved \$928.92. With some of these funds, and from profits made from the pig project, the community has also built roofs for 131 household homes and latrines as an independent project.



Gatiba
community
meeting

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Our transition into a training organization started in 2017, and since, Spark has established itself as a service provider to practitioners implementing the FCAP around the world. Spark's Community of Practice is a collective of organizations that are implementing the FCAP globally, and collaboratively advocating for community-driven development approaches. As of 2019, the Community of Practice spans across five organizations and six countries, each adapting the FCAP to their local contexts while utilizing Spark's systems and support.

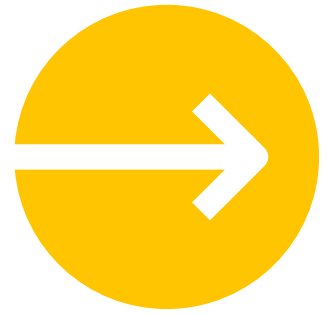


FCAP SUMMIT

In September 2019, Spark hosted its second annual FCAP Community of Practice Summit in Kigali, Rwanda. This brought together Spark teams and practitioners to discuss the FCAP and global community-driven development strategies, and gave the Community of Practice practitioners an opportunity to share their experiences and learn from each other about iterating the FCAP to different contexts. The summit focused on future FCAP strategy across contexts and partners to improve and adapt the process. The team also reviewed the multi-year strategy and developed new goals for the organization and growth for 2020. Spark intends for the Community of Practice to grow in the next few years and is continuing to develop and adapt our toolkits and trainings for our practitioners.



LOOKING FORWARD



2020 Objectives

In 2020, Spark seeks to create systems change by investing in the following four areas within the organization: Demand Building, Program Excellence, Learning and Standards, and Organizational Advancement.

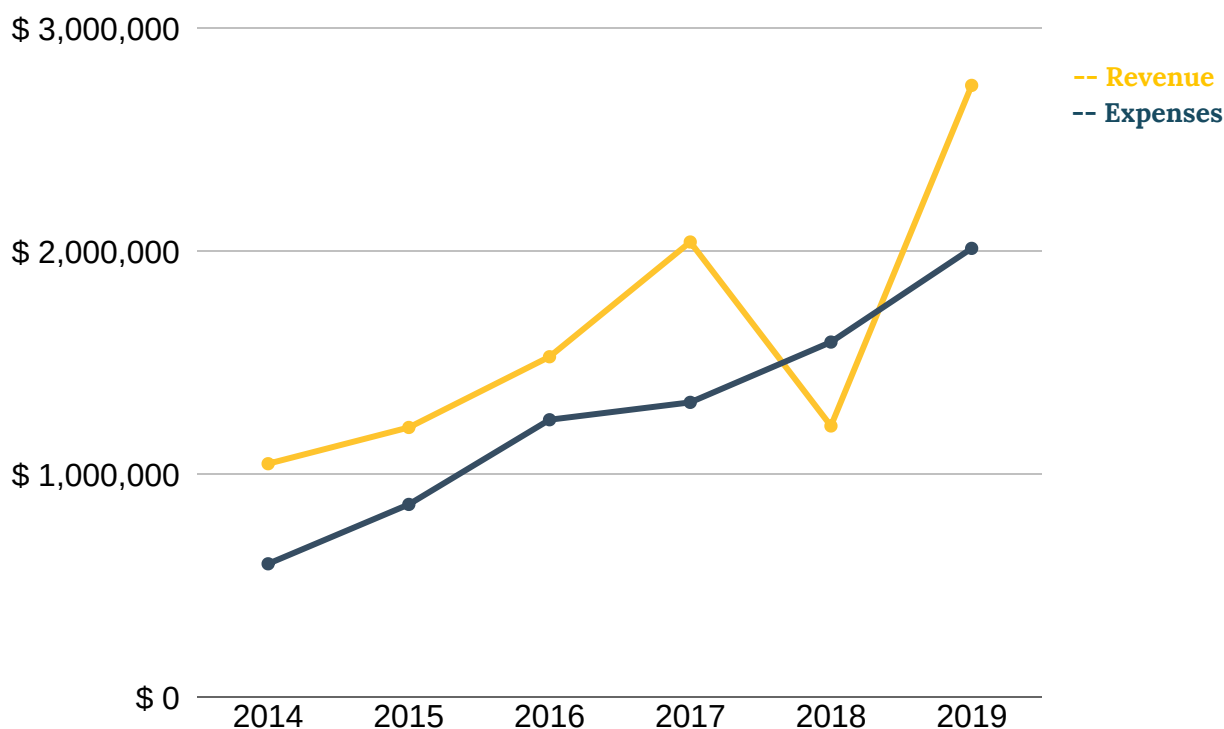


2019 FINANCIALS

Revenue	2018	2019
Foundations	\$945,000	\$2,391,811
Individuals	\$165,011	\$218,518
Corporations	\$5,044	\$133,331
Total	\$1,115,055	\$2,743,660

Expenses	2018	2019
Program Services	\$1,259,141	\$1,304,065
Management & General	\$378,122	\$547,473
Fundraising	\$58,135	\$161,269
Total	\$1,695,398	\$2,012,807

Revenue & Expenses Since 2014



*With a difficult end of 2018 regarding fundraising, Spark fell way below our intended raise goal. After 1Q19 close, Spark had made up the shortfall which led us to believe that internally Spark had been overly ambitious in the closing of grant commitments within the 2018 calendar year. Since then, we closed on the two largest grants since founding and are in the due diligence phase of our first World Bank grant.

**2019 financial data is provisional and final financials will be posted on the website and available upon request when completed.

2019 IMPACT PARTNERS



VISIONARIES-\$100,000+

Child Relief International
Imago Dei Fund
Lucille Foundation
Marr-Munning Trust
Peery Foundation
Planet Wheeler Foundation
Segal Family Foundation
Woodcock Foundation
World Centric

STRATEGIC PARTNERS- \$10,000-\$100,000

Amol Jain
Anthony Massaro
Anonymous
Anonymous
Bylo Chacon Foundation
Highwater Global
Joseph Frumkin
Julia Morgan Fund
Marcy Engel
Martin & Kirsten Segal
Maureen White
Peter Sherris
Ripple Foundation
Rob & Brooke O'dea
Sall Family Foundation
Sandra Wijnberg
World Connect

SPARK ADVOCATES- UNDER \$10,000

Amy Joelson
Alison Bialecki
Allison Devore & Ross Levinsky
Anders Jones
Arthur Gray
Basil Cowieson
Brian Hamilton
Charles Weidman
Charlotte Stone
Charlotte Trieffus
Claudia Wornum
Colette Such
Cynthia Brockwell-Carey
Dale Melcher
Dana Conroy
Daniel Baum
Daniel Pincus
Daniela Quicksilver
Danielle Roberts
Deborah Carey
Erin Friday
Gale Gottlieb
Heather Smith
James Cohen

James Meeks
Jana Haimsohn
Jason Lynn
Jeffrey Pascoe
Jennifer Weidman
Jill Gentile
John Cullison
John Estes
Jonathan Jackson
Jonathan Lewis
Joseph Boehm
Joshua Fogelson
Jude Faella
Juliane Segal Fund
Jewish Women's Foundation of New York
Kathleen Flanagan
Katie Hatch
Kim Klipstien
Kira Gidron
Kirstie Watkins
Kurt King
Laura & Alex Saltonstall
Lisa & David Issroff
Liz McKenna
Louis Thompson
Margaret Moore
Margaret Upshaw
Margot Brandenburg
Martin & Jacqui Gottlieb
Mary Berryman
Matthew Forti
Meg and Max Goetsch
Neal Lesh
Network for Good
Richard Sloan
Robert Shapiro
Robin Laudette
Rowena Luk
Sally Hayman
Samantha Smith
Sarah Graizbord
Scott Zemser
Shannon Such
Simon Morfit
Soraya Svoronos
Stephen Gleit
Stephen Kotran
Steven Fore
Susan Lennon
Thomas Dackow
Vanessa Gottlieb
Virginia Cohen
William D. Unger Foundation
Zachary Richner



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