OUTCOMES

How we measure the outcomes of our work to support entrepreneurs that change lives.
Our **mission** by July 2018 is to use entrepreneurship to help improve the lives of one million people living in poverty in a significant and measurable way.

In this document we unpack this mission.
We have made this document public, because we are open to your thoughts on how we can effectively measure our outcomes. If you have an idea about how we can improve what we do, or you think we are doing things wrong, please get in touch with Aaron, our Chief Impact Officer at aaron.tait@ygap.com.au.
What we do

At YGAP, we are entrepreneurs that change lives. Funded by our social enterprises and fundraising campaigns in Australia and the United States we find and accelerate impact entrepreneurs who have launched ventures that exist to improve the lives of people living in poverty. We currently do this work in through our Spark* Accelerators in Kenya, South Africa and Australia.

This is how we accelerate entrepreneurs that change lives:

**FIND**

We conduct national searches in each of the countries we work in for local entrepreneurs with startup ventures that exist to change the lives of people living in poverty. Hundreds apply for each intake and the top fifteen are selected.

**ACCELERATE**

The selected startup entrepreneurs go through an intense entrepreneurship accelerator where they access our training curriculum and rapidly improve their ideas to make them more scalable, sustainable and quickly able to impact hundreds of people in their communities.

**SUPPORT**

After the accelerator, we provide up to three years of support in the form of free lawyers, website and graphic designers, mentors, business advisors and small injections of $250 to help overcome barriers or test ideas. We also give some of our best entrepreneurs larger grants of $5,000 - $25,000 to help them grow their impact.

**CONNECT**

Once an entrepreneur is growing a proven and sustainable idea and impacting thousands of people, we connect them to impact investors and organisations like Acumen, Ashoka and the Unreasonable Institute who can help them get to the next level of impact.
The numbers of entrepreneurs we find and support.

Since 2011 we have supported 185 impact entrepreneurs.

The percentage of entrepreneurs who are still running their ventures one year after working with us:

Since 2011, this number stands at 95%.

The percentage of entrepreneurs whose ventures improve the lives of more than 50 people living in poverty in a measurable and significant way after working with us:

Since 2011, this number is 90%.

Outputs

For us, outputs are important (what we do) but outcomes are more important (what changes for people living in poverty because of what we do).

The key outputs that we create through our Spark* Accelerator include:
Our mission over the next three years is to use entrepreneurship to **HELP** improve the lives of one million people living in poverty in a significant and measurable way.

**What do we mean when we say HELP?**

ATTRIBUTION is a word that is often discussed in the field of international development. It is also something that we have thought a great deal about in our work.

In more traditional forms of philanthropy it is easy to attribute an outcome to an action. For example, if a foundation were to give money for a library in a small town, there could be clear attribution. The foundation could release a report with a photo of the newly opened library, as well as some insight into the number of people utilising the new facility.

An outcome that emerges from an entrepreneur that we back through the Spark* Accelerator is slightly different. As a hypothetical we support a Kenyan entrepreneur called Beatrice. She runs a company that creates high quality teas from local herbs and spices. She has been running her company for two years and has been employing three other women. Within a year of coming through the Spark* accelerator she is employing twenty women. Thus seventeen extra jobs have been created by Beatrice’s tea company.

We would believe here that we **HELPED** Beatrice create seventeen new jobs. Of course there are other people that helped as well. The schools that educated these women so that they could work for Beatrice helped. The impact investor that invested $50,000 in Beatrice’s company also helped. The fair trade store in Canada that started to import Beatrice’s teas also helped.

We cannot attribute all of her outcomes to our support. We can’t say that Spark* created seventeen jobs, because Beatrice did that. But we do believe, (and more often that not, so does Beatrice), that we really helped her grow her company.
Our mission over the next three years is to use entrepreneurship to help IMPROVE THE LIVES of one million people living in poverty in a significant and measurable way.

Poverty is being forced to make the decision to pull your daughter out of school to help in the family farm.

Poverty is having a strange pain in your stomach and not having enough money to get it checked out.

Poverty is only being able to pick up small jobs here and there, and never being able to save any money in a bank.

Poverty is living in a place where you don’t have electricity, or a toilet in your home, or having to walk two hundred metres to line up for dirty water.

It takes years, generations even for a family to move out of poverty or to move into what people call the middle class, where you have a good house, can send your kids to school, afford to go to the doctor, and save a bit of money for a rainy day.

When an entrepreneur that Spark* has backed creates a good job, or improves the education of a child, we can’t say that someone has moved out of poverty.

But we can say that their life has improved. And we also know that it is much easier to make that long and tough journey out of poverty if you have an education, or a job, or good health, or a good home.

And these important changes are worth fighting for.
Our mission over the next three years is to use entrepreneurship to help improve the lives of one million PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY in a significant and measurable way.

Poverty is defined in a number of different ways in the field of international development.

While it is a very complex challenge, we try to keep things simple and say that someone is living in poverty if they are suffering from one or more of the following situations:
They do not have access to a good job.
By this we mean that someone cannot earn an income four to five days a week, in a safe environment and be paid a fair wage for their efforts.

They do not have access to a good education.
By this we mean that they can’t afford or get permission to go to school, there are no schools around them, or the quality of education they receive in school is unacceptably low.

They live in a house or situation that makes very difficult.
By this we mean that you are not safe in your home, or you can’t turn the lights on, or drink clean water, or access a clean toilet.

They are at great risk of suffering from disease or violence:
Many people around the world don’t live with the safe feeling that if they get sick from a parasite like malaria that they can go to their local hospital and get life saving support. Others know that the water they are drinking is making them sick, but they are thirsty and there are no other options. Or they live in a situation where they are often beaten, or trapped in situations of slavery.
The entrepreneurs we support through the Spark* accelerator achieve powerful outputs with their ventures that brings changes to people living in poverty.

For example, let’s look at Beatrice’s tea company again. She has created seventeen new jobs which is great. There are other positive outcomes that we could look at here, such as how many people living in the households of these seventeen women are also benefiting. Or maybe Beatrice goes and gives motivational talks once a week at local schools, encouraging girls to start their own businesses. There is the packing company that has contracts because of her, or the trucking company that also picked up a few extra jobs transporting her tea around town. All of these excellent secondary benefits that come from her tea company.

But we are focused on the most significant one.

The seventeen good jobs created. So this is what we record.

Beatrice, together with our Chief Impact Officer, and our local country CEOs make a decision on what is significant, and as new outcomes emerge from the entrepreneurs we back, we consistently expand or retract our decisions on what we do or do not deem to be significant.

So, for some examples.
Jobs:
An entrepreneur provides a week of work for builders as they build a new office. *Not significant enough for us to document.*

An entrepreneur runs a motivational career day for three hundred high schools students. *Again, not significant enough for us to document.*

An entrepreneur takes a former prisoner through a month long job training program and then sets them up with a traineeship with a local supermarket. *Yes, we would document this as one person’s life being significantly improved under the JOB bucket.*

Education:
An entrepreneur conducts a motivational speech for fifty high school students encouraging them to work harder in school. *Great, and no doubt very inspiring, but we would not document this.*

An entrepreneur brings a box of books and stationary to a school as a donation. *No, we would not document this.*

An entrepreneur runs a lunch and after school tuition program that documents improvements in attendance and academic outcomes of students. *Yes, we would document this as student’s lives being significantly improved in the EDUCATION bucket.*

Health:
An entrepreneur provides one packet of sanitary pads to a high school girl living in a rural school. *We would not document this.*

An entrepreneur conducts a twenty minute awareness campaign to one hundred people at a village market about HIV/AIDS. *Again, this is great and might make a real difference, but we would not document this.*

An entrepreneur signs up a mother to an SMS education platform, where until her baby is five the mother receives SMS information blasts twice a week, and can ask questions to nurses through the platform. The platform is shown to dramatically reduce the infant and maternal mortality rates in the regions that it is active. *We would document this as significant.*

Home:
An entrepreneur conducts a street cleanup with some volunteers. *We would not document this.*

An entrepreneur provides accommodation for a week to refugees who have just left a crisis area. *Again, we would not document this.*

An entrepreneur provides high quality solar panels, wiring lighting and power plugs to a home and the household pays this setup off over the next year at a fair interest rate. *We would document this as a significant improvement for the family enjoying this new light and electricity source.*
Our mission over the next three years is to use entrepreneurship to help improve the lives of one million people living in poverty in a significant and **MEASURABLE** way.
We love the IRIS catalogue that is put out by the Global Impact Investing Network.

(If you don’t know about IRIS you can check it out here: iris.thegiin.org)

How it works is that we collect data from our entrepreneurs, then we figure out with them which IRIS metrics align with the outcomes they are creating. Usually we limit it to the two most significant outcomes emerging from their work.

We keep a big database that has their name, the impact before they started working with us, the IRIS metrics we are helping them track and their latest numbers.

Every three months our entrepreneurs fill in an online form with their latest impact numbers, or our local country CEOs will organise a phone call or Facebook chat with them to collect these numbers. We work to visit as many of the entrepreneurs projects as we can throughout the year as well, conducting checks with the entrepreneurs about whether they are measuring the right outcomes, their numbers are accurate and they are aware of the negative impacts that their work may be having.
We think that the support we provide to our entrepreneurs is very effective, and are always working to improve how we deliver this support and measure its effectiveness. What we often hear from the entrepreneurs themselves is how important Spark* has been to their ventures. Here are a few of the many testimonials we receive from across the globe.

“Always great to chat to a strategy mentor like you. At times I feel I’m losing it, but these chats always help me get my venture back on track.”
- Eliot Chisango

“Thank you so much for all the incredible information you’ve invested in me. Everyday as an entrepreneur I use every single thing I learnt at Spark. I can see my strategy so clearly now and I’m a lot more confident of my impact.”
- Murendeni Mafumo

“Because of Spark* I just landed a chunk of funding. I am so excited and focused!”
- Martha Chumo

“Sometimes I have to pinch myself to see if its true, because at times it doesn’t seem real how far I have come since I joined Spark* eighteen months ago.”
- Sitawa Wafula

“I cannot express enough the absolute joy that I have, for the visibility that Spark* has given me and for the networks and collaborations. You have surrounded me with the right people to fulfil my vision, put me in relationships with people who are like-minded and pointed me toward a new mission for the people that I work with. Asanteni Sana!”
- Teresa Njoroge

“Thank you Spark*! Your support has made such a huge difference to our work. We are more strategic and sustainable and are changing more lives.”
- Maria Omare

“By the way, I was on this ten week accelerator. There were ten sessions. I went to two, realised it was no-where near as good as Spark* and missed the rest. I snuck in for the big pitch day on the last night, and we won out of the 25 companies! Thank you Spark!”
(We won’t give the name of this cheeky entrepreneur.)
- Martha Chumo

“I am very chuffed about Spark* Beyond my expectations. Thank you.”
- Paul Talliard
So that’s how we do it.

Think we are missing something or could be measuring our outcomes more effectively? Please get in touch with some constructive criticism or some great ideas about how we can get better.

Together, for a better world.

Please shoot our Chief Impact Officer an email at aaron@sparkinternational.org if you want to get in touch with some ideas or have a chat.