

History

The movement of Partners Worldwide all began with a simple question: “Is there a way for business people to become part of the solution to ending poverty, instead of being seen as part of the problem?”

In 1994, a group of Christian businesspeople visited a community development project in Kenya run by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). The businesspeople learned about many of the challenges faced by people in developing countries. As they discussed what they saw, one thing became clear. In these communities there was a high rate of unemployment and under-employment that affected the entire community.

The Lord convicted this group to go beyond financial contributions, to become personally involved in the work. Stewardship was not just about finances, it was about using all the gifts God had given them; gifts of business skills, experience and management expertise. This group of businesspeople worked together to start an organization that would encourage business and professional people to become involved in business growth and job creation in developing countries. Job creation proved to be an important part of developing a sustainable solution to help end the cycle of poverty.

In 1997 Partners for Christian Development [now Partners Worldwide] was formally established within the CRWRC. God has blessed the efforts and dedication of our volunteers and staff. Partnerships were developed and relationships were being built between Christian brothers and sisters around the world.

In January 2005, it became clear that there was a need for an expansion of our business ministry. It was through this calling that we were led to choose a new name that better reflected our mission and purpose. We changed our name to Partners Worldwide. Our new name better identifies us to the business world and identifies our work as a global ministry. Partners Worldwide will continue to increase our mentoring relationships with those in developing countries. It is through this work that we can make a difference in helping businesses grow and transform lives.

In 2009 we transitioned into our new headquarter facility which serves as the Global Service Center for Partners Worldwide. Now, we offer plenty of space to connect businesspeople, to use as a site for business training and presentations, and to more effectively operate with our growing domestic and international staff. This building is a tremendous blessing from God, and would not be possible without a lead gift from Richard and Helen DeVos and generous support and vision from a core group of leaders.