

FROM STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS: BERNARD ONYANGO IS CHANGING LIVES | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY

# FACING IT

QUARTERLY

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# From Struggle to Success

How Bernard Onyango Is Changing Lives Through Entrepreneurship

In the heart of Mathare, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, Bernard Onyango grew up surrounded by crime, drugs, and the weight of poverty.

Raised by a single mother, he saw firsthand how limited opportunities kept families trapped in struggle. But even in the darkest moments, he carried an unshakable entrepreneurial spirit—a desire not just to survive, but to create something bigger than himself.

## The Turning Point: Finding Empower Hope

Bernard's breakthrough came when his sister, an Empower Hope Ambassador, encouraged him to join the program. Skeptical but willing to try, he enrolled in Ambatana Community Business, Empower Hope's business and financial literacy training program, where he developed an idea that would change his life: iLoop, a digital platform that connects fish farmers directly with buyers.

Through mentorship and training, Bernard learned how to refine his idea, create a solid business plan, and pitch to investors. His confidence paid off—he secured funding to launch iLoop, and his journey of transformation began.

We sat down with Bernard to hear more about his experience.

**EMPOWER HOPE:** Can you tell us about your initial thoughts when joining the Empower Hope business program?

**BERNARD ONYANGO:** At first, I thought it was just another program that wouldn't lead to anything. But after a few

sessions, I realized how much I had to learn. It was a wake-up call.

**EH:** What inspired you to focus on farm to vendor transport?

**BERNARD:** Helping my cousin outsource fish, I saw how farmers struggled to sell their stock while buyers paid unfair prices. iLoop was my solution to fix that gap.

**EH:** How did it feel pitching your idea to investors?

**BERNARD:** It was nerve-racking! But I reminded myself why I started. Speaking with confidence paid off—I secured funding, and it changed my life."

## iLoop: More Than a Business

Bernard built iLoop to solve real problems—streamlining the fish supply chain, reducing inefficiencies, and ensuring fair pricing for farmers. Since launching, iLoop's revenue has grown tenfold, and Bernard has created jobs for seven young people in his community—many of whom were once unemployed.

But for Bernard, business is more than profit—it's purpose.

- **Empowering the community** – Hiring from within Mathare to create jobs where they're needed most.
- **Faith-driven leadership** – Integrating ethical and biblical values into his business, ensuring fair wages and dignity for workers.
- **Giving back** – Tithing faithfully and using iLoop as a platform to share the love of Christ.
- **Environmental responsibility** – Organizing tree-planting initiatives & community clean-ups for a sustainable future.



# Community Engagement Day

For years, Empower Hope has worked tirelessly to support young adults in under-served communities, but we needed a permanent space to make an even greater impact. After much prayer and searching, we found the perfect location in Githogoro Slum, Nairobi, just 10 minutes from Huruma Slum, where we've been serving for years. Here we observe the stages the center has been through over the years.

Youth in slums face immense challenges:

- Limited access to clean water, electricity, and sanitation
- Food and job insecurity
- Disruptions in education
- Pregnancy and HIV/AIDS
- Crime, drug use, and unsafe living conditions

The Empower Hope Leadership Center is a game-changer, providing vocational training and job opportunities, mentorship, community-building, education, and scholarships.

In February, we held a long-anticipated Community Engagement Day. Members of the community joined us for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and dedication of the center, learned about plans for programming, toured the brand new facility, and enjoyed a time of fellowship with our staff and volunteers, including representatives of Empower Hope USA, who were in Nairobi for annual strategic planning sessions. Praise the Lord!

## Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

With the profits from his business, Bernard moved his mother into a better home, now rents his own apartment, and funds his siblings' education.

**EH:** What has been your biggest success so far?

**BERNARD:** Creating employment. Hiring seven people, most of whom I grew up with, means a lot to me. It's life-changing.

But he's not stopping here.


**EH:** Where do you see iLoop in the future?


**BERNARD:** Expanding into a group of companies, employing thousands. I also want to venture into green energy with zero-emission power boxes. My vision is to create jobs and sustainable solutions.


With the profits from his business, Bernard moved his mother into a better home, now rents his own apartment, and funds his siblings' education.

## WILL YOU HELP EMPOWER THE NEXT BERNARD?

Bernard's story isn't just about business—it's about transformation. Right now, there are countless young people like him—brilliant, driven, but trapped by circumstance. They just need an opportunity.

 **\$50** provides discipleship & mentorship for a young adult in poverty

 **\$100** funds a business training course that could change a life

 **\$500** helps launch a small business, creating jobs and lasting impact

**You have the power to change someone's story.** If you only give once this month, would you consider giving to Empower Hope today? You will be investing in this generation of leaders who will empower the next. Thank you for your support!



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*Your Spring 2025 Update on our work in Kenya*

MAILING PANEL

[VARIABLE DATA]



## Come With Us

Join Us in Kenya for the Adventure of a Lifetime!

**T**he Empower Hope Vision Trip is an opportunity to experience the work our team is doing in the communities we serve in Kenya. Anyone who is adventurous and interested in our work is invited to learn more about this opportunity to go deeper with our team—and catch the vision!




For details, visit [empowerhope.org/vision-trips/](https://empowerhope.org/vision-trips/)

## We are grateful for you!

We rely on the generosity of our supporters and sponsors to grow and sustain our ministry to the people of Mt. Elgon and Nairobi, Kenya. Because of you, we can continue to pursue our mission!



### Ways to Give

-  **GIVE ONLINE**  
Visit [empowerhope.org](https://empowerhope.org) for details
-  **MAIL A CHECK**  
Please make checks payable to Empower Hope USA and mail to:  
100 South Queen Street, Ste 222,  
Lancaster, PA 17603
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Contact us about donor advised funds and other planned giving options

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