Martin Fisher is the co-founder of KickStart International, an award-winning social enterprise which has helped over 488,000 people escape poverty permanently. He and co-founder Nick Moon, have created an innovative approach to fighting poverty that brings together the power of technology and the entrepreneurial spirit of the world’s poor.

After receiving his Ph.D. in engineering from Stanford, he won a Fulbright Fellowship to study the Appropriate Technology Movement in Kenya. A ten-month fellowship turned into seventeen years of fighting poverty in Africa. The lessons about what works, and what does not, formed the foundation of KickStart.

Martin leads a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary team to create, market, and sell several money-making tools. The most successful have been KickStart’s MoneyMaker irrigation pumps, with over 153,000 sold to date. Individually, people who purchase and use KickStart’s pumps see an average ten-fold increase in farm income. Combined, users of KickStart tools are generating over $98.6 million in new profits and wages each year.

Martin holds a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell class of 1979. He earned a M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering in 1980, and a Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics in 1985, both from Stanford.

Martin is a frequent conference presenter on topics of social entrepreneurship, agriculture in the developing world, poverty alleviation, water usage, and related issues. He serves on the Board of BuildChange, the advisory boards of both the XPrize, and the Global Social Benefit Incubator at Santa Clara University.

KickStart International is an award-winning, U.S. based, nonprofit social enterprise with a revolutionary solution to alleviating poverty. They design and mass-market, simple, money-making tools and technologies that open up business opportunities to poor entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world. Their mission is to get millions of people out of poverty quickly, cost-effectively and sustainably. And, in doing so, change the way the world fights poverty.

KickStart’s best selling devices are their human-powered “MoneyMaker” irrigation pumps. These very low-cost ($35 and $100) pumps are sold in local retail shops, and they enable poor farmers to move from rain-fed, subsistence agriculture, to commercial irrigated farming. The pumps pull water from shallow wells, rivers, or ponds and pressurize it through a hose pipe to irrigate up to two acres of land. The farmers can now grow high value fruits and vegetables, and sell them throughout the year. In the dry seasons there are few other crops on the market, the prices are high, and the farmers are able to generate extra income. On average, they increase their net annual incomes by over $1,000 and this increase takes their families out of poverty forever. To date over 97,500 farmers in Africa are using MoneyMaker pumps, lifting over 488,000 people out of poverty permanently. Presently over 1,200 more farmers are buying pumps every month. Through the efforts of KickStart 153,000 children are now in school, and the businesses that people have created with our tools account for nearly $98.6 million in new profits and wages in the local economies.