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While the global “credit crunch” has shifted the playing field in recent years, there was a time when it seemed the world was awash in easy capital. As William Foote realized during travels in Mexico, however, small and medium-sized rural businesses in the developing world were often caught in a quandary – considered too small and risky for mainstream banks, and too large for the burgeoning microfinance movement. Returning to Boston, Foote went on to launch Root Capital in 1999 as a non-profit social investment fund targeting grassroots businesses in the “missing middle.”

By the beginning of 2012, the organization had disbursed over \$460 million in loans to sustainable enterprises in Africa and Latin America, reaching 2.6 million people in poor, environmentally vulnerable rural communities. Beyond managing two innovative investment portfolios, Root Capital has also multiplied its impact by delivering targeted financial advisory services and catalyzing a wider market in rural financing. (Presented by <http://theglobaljournal.net/group/top-100-ngos/>)

