1. **Title**

   Close the Gap – Sustainably bridging the digital divide

2. **Short bio**

   Olivier Vanden Eynde founded Close the Gap, an international social enterprise, in 2001 as a spin-off at the Solvay Business School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium. Close the Gap creates a win-win between companies and non-profits in Sub-Saharan-Africa to provide affordable IT solutions to disadvantaged communities. Today, Close the Gap is considered one of the largest ICT suppliers worldwide for budget-limited not-for-profits in developing countries.

   In 2019, as an extension of the ecosystem, Olivier founded Close the Gap Ltd. as a separate impact company in Kenya, with patient capital investment from Belgium and the Netherlands. This new venture is about launching an Innovation Hub and early-stage incubator in Mombasa, including an education and makerspace component. The same year Close the Gap’s special purpose vehicle has joined as an anchor investor BID Capital Partners. BID is a commercial, purpose-driven enterprise with offices in Uganda and Rwanda, facilitating access to finance for 240 SME’s in emerging markets. Olivier joined the Board of Directors of BID. The same year Olivier acquired a ITAD business in Belgium, CTG Circular BV which is now Close the Gap’s end-to-end supply chain in control of the whole process of IT Asset Disposition with a refurbishing capacity of 150,000 IT devices/year.

   To ensure the success of these recent extensions to the Close the Gap social enterprise ecosystem, Olivier Vanden Eynde and his family moved to Mombasa in the summer of 2019.

3. ***Access to digital’ - Achievements***

   “Over the past 16 years, Close the Gap has collected almost 1 million ICT devices. With this material, we could support almost 6000 projects in over 50 countries, mainly in Africa but also in Europa and Asia. In total, we reached more than 3.2 million beneficiaries, effectively contributing step by step to bridging the digital divide in the world. More than ever, we believe that access to digital solutions is a key enabler for people in developing and emerging countries to improve their lives and realize their full potential. That’s why we decided to concentrate our activities in Africa (where the impact actually happens), with our own Circular Economy Hub in Nairobi and Innovation Hub in Momasa, to emphasize and increase our impact.”