



◀ (©) ▶ PANORAMA GLOBAL

## Case Study

# Amref Health Africa

## Organizational Snapshot

**Organization name:**

Amref Health Africa

**Primary countries/region where we work:**

35 African countries

**Thematic area of work/sector:**

Healthcare

**Year we received the Scott grant:**

2021

## Regional and Philanthropic Context

Amref Health Africa, the continent's largest Africa-based health development organization, operates across a wide regional landscape, implementing more than 180 programs in 35 African countries and reaching 40 million people annually.

With 10 program offices across Africa and 10 resource mobilization offices in Europe and North America, we operate at a scale that few Africa-led organizations have achieved—and at a moment when that scale is being tested.

The global health funding landscape is contracting. Traditional donor dependency is a structural risk. The MacKenzie Scott gift arrived at exactly this moment—and we used it to fundamentally change how we are built.

## Navigating Change: The Role of the Scott Grant

We made two bets with the Scott gift. The first: \$10M into a fundraising investment fund to build our own donor base. In two years, annual unrestricted income from individual donors jumped from \$1M to nearly \$6M—with total projected returns of \$19M. One unrestricted dollar became six. That is what financial autonomy looks like in practice.

The second bet was structural. We had launched Amref International University in 2017 but stalled on accreditation because our infrastructure did not meet Kenya's standards. We used \$25M—half the Scott gift—to build the first phase of a campus designed to train 3,000 health professionals.

**This investment unlocked a 50-acre land gift from former President Uhuru Kenyatta and co-financing from Proparco to support further expansion.**

The results are not abstract: over 2,000 health professionals trained, 70% women, more than 95% staying in Africa. Enrollment growth has expanded academic and research programs, supported by inclusive scholarships. Africa is training its own health workforce—on African terms.

## Strategies for Maximizing Impact & Insights for the Field

Unrestricted capital is not a gift without guardrails; it is a bet on leadership. When funders trust locally led organizations to make strategic decisions, those organizations can move fast, take calculated risks, and build for permanence rather than project cycles.

The MacKenzie Scott gift did not simply fund our programs; it funded our future. This catalytic investment transformed our ability to innovate, lead, and respond to changing landscapes. It offers a blueprint for how catalytic philanthropy can accelerate autonomy and systemic change.

Our experience demonstrates how philanthropy, when strategically deployed, transforms dependency into independence and seeds lasting impact across Africa.

## AMIU's Impact at a Glance (2017–2025)



**2,000+**

**Health Professionals Trained**

**Building Africa's healthcare workforce with 70% female graduates and a 64% completion rate**

**72%**

**Employment Within One Year**

Graduates securing meaningful employment rapidly, with 100% employed within three years and 95%+ remaining in Africa

**3,804**

**Current Student Enrollment**

Remarkable growth from just 256 students in 2017, representing 32 countries, with 11% international diversity

### Academic Excellence

- **36 academic programs** now established
- Ranked **4th in Kenya** (2025 THE Impact Rankings)
- Research publications **increased from 12 to 28** (2022–2024)
- Hosts biennial **Primary Healthcare Congress**
- Launched dedicated Primary Healthcare journal

### Inclusive Impact

- **70% female students** breaking barriers in healthcare
- **2% students with disabilities** supported
- **340 students on scholarships** (partial or full funding)
- **11% international students** from across Africa and beyond
- **95%+ graduates remain in Africa**, serving communities that need them most

#### Training Excellence

Over 2,000 health professionals trained with exceptional completion rates and gender equity

#### Career Success

Most of the students secure jobs in the first year after graduation, and 100% by end of year three

#### Research Leadership

Research publication growth, 12 in 2022 to 28 in 2024 hosting continent-wide healthcare conferences.

From **256** students in 2017 to **3,804** today, AMIU demonstrates how strategic investment in health education creates lasting change across Africa. Our graduates don't just find jobs—they create jobs, transforming healthcare delivery in the communities that need it most.

© Amref Health Africa

**Cover Image:** Members of the Sanitation Club at St. Peter and Paul Primary School, Bunyagabu District, Western Uganda, demonstrate how a tippy tap works.

© Amref Health Africa / Ambrose Watanda

Amref Health Africa participated in the Global Health cohort of Panorama's Collaborative Learning for Impact Philanthropy learning community. Funding for the initiative was provided by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.