

Our Impact to Date



373,986
First-time entrepreneurs
trained



118,537
Businesses started



2,373,291
Lives changed

Our Five-Year Impact



83%
Increase in consumption
and expenditure



933%
Increase in savings

A High Social Return on Investment



\$1 USD → \$5.34
For every dollar donated
to Village Enterprise, our
entrepreneurs generate
\$5.34 of lifetime income

 PANORAMA GLOBAL

Case Study

Village Enterprise

Organizational Snapshot

Organization name:

Village Enterprise

Primary countries/region where we work:

Sub-Saharan Africa

Thematic area of work/sector:

Livelihoods

Year we received the Scott grant:

2023

Regional and Philanthropic Context

Village Enterprise works with households living in extreme poverty in last-mile rural communities in Africa. Between 1990 and 2020, the world made historic gains in reducing extreme poverty, with rates steadily declining across most regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and climate shocks reversed progress, while traditional bi- and multi-lateral funding declined sharply, culminating in the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) dissolution in early 2025.

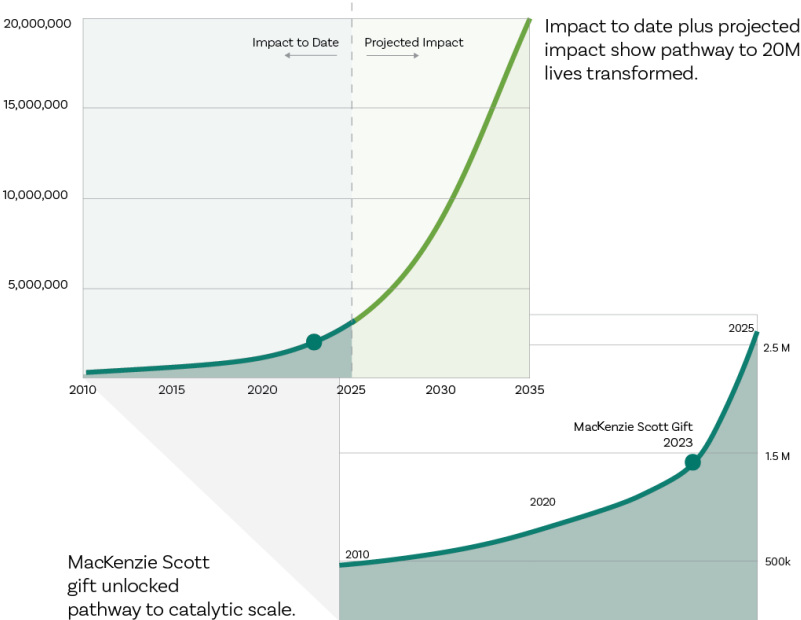
In response, African governments are stepping into leadership of their poverty reduction agendas, advancing national strategies, social protection reforms, and long-term plans. This shift offers hope, as locally designed and led solutions create the most just and sustainable foundation for ending extreme poverty.

Navigating Change: The Role of the Scott Grant

We aim to impact 20 million lives by 2035 through poverty graduation and entrepreneurship. Before USAID’s dissolution, we were shifting toward massive scale with partners and governments, while using direct implementation to generate innovation and evidence.

When we received the MacKenzie Scott grant, we strengthened essential systems and held the remainder in reserve to support strategic programmatic priorities. As a result, when USAID programs (representing 30% of 2025 revenue), were suddenly lost, we maintained momentum, protected life-saving interventions, supported governments in advancing social protection strategies, and continued catalytic investments with partners. Thus, the stability provided by the Scott grant allowed us to stay firmly on course toward our goals, even in the face of unprecedented disruption.

Village Enterprise Lives Transformed



Above: Graphic depicts the efficacy of the MacKenzie Scott grant on the Village Enterprise scaling trajectory. © Village Enterprise

Strategies for Maximizing Impact & Insights for the Field

Upon receiving the Scott grant in 2023, we employed three sequential strategies. First, we fortified our financial base as we designed our next phase of impact, with the idea that once our scaling strategy was ready to activate, we could draw on these funds. Next, we invested in the staff, systems, and infrastructure required to sustain scale. Finally, we directed funds to our highest-priority, “No Matter What” initiatives, allowing rapid learning and iteration.

This approach enabled us to maintain momentum, respond to disruptions like lost USAID funding, and catalyze additional investments.

As a result, our MacKenzie Scott grant and other large, multi-year unrestricted commitments were critical in pivoting quickly and preserving strategic, life-saving work. This demonstrates that **proactive, flexible funding is more cost-effective than reactive or stop-start programming.**

Based on our experience, we encourage philanthropists to **reconsider the common practice of disbursing only a small portion of their capital each year to preserve the principal.**

While this approach aims to maximize future giving, it can overlook a more powerful effect: the compounding impact of acting boldly today. **A dollar deployed now often generates more value than one held for the future, as early intervention creates “impact interest” that grows over time.** Acting immediately addresses pressing challenges before they escalate, prevents more costly problems later, and, most importantly, improves or saves lives that cannot wait.

Ultimately, bold, trust-based, multi-year funding enables organizations and governments to act at scale. **Flexible resources support transformative change, systemic solutions, and exponential impact, rather than incremental gains, ensuring that communities facing urgent challenges can benefit immediately.**

Cover Image: Summary of Village Enterprise impact based on internal Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning and longitudinal studies, and rigorous, independent evaluation.

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Village Enterprise participated in the Youth Development cohort of Panorama’s Collaborative Learning for Impact Philanthropy learning community. Funding for the initiative was provided by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.