

CASE STUDY: ZAMBIA

From Pilot to Scaling Impact: Empowering Women in Zambia

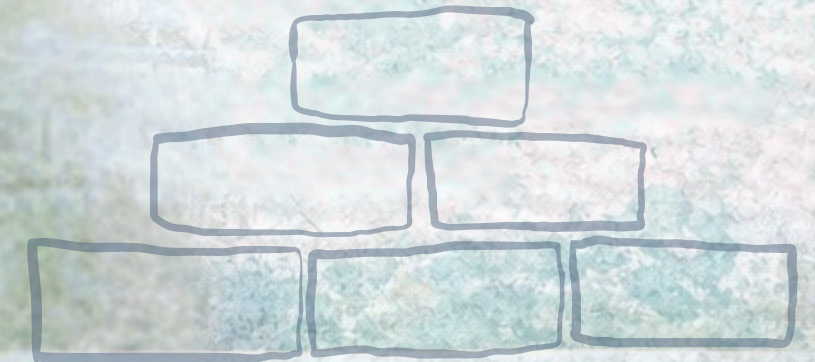
In Zambia, a bold idea is becoming a national program at scale. What began as the Supporting Women's Livelihoods (SWL) pilot - providing rural women with business capital, entrepreneurship and life skills training, mentorship, and savings support - has laid the groundwork for large-scale transformation.

Backed by the World Bank and PEI, the Government of Zambia identified barriers that were holding women back from markets and fair economic opportunity. Targeted solutions followed: tools to increase women's bargaining power, stronger linkages to markets, and cross-country exchanges to inform scale-up.

The results have been remarkable.

An independent evaluation found a 30% reduction in poverty among participants, driven by increases in business profits (80%) and savings (234%). The program also contributed to better food security, stronger mental health, and greater decision-making power for women within their households.

With a second phase now underway, Zambia is aiming to reach an additional 200,000 women nationwide. It's a powerful example of economic inclusion in action and a clear signal that investing in women isn't just the right thing to do. It's one of the smartest moves a country can make.



“ I got started in business in 2020. When I received the grant, I decided to venture into the business of brick-making. With the profit I was making from brick-making, I decided to build a house on my land. I'm so thankful to the partner organizations in my community for empowering me to start a business and have a better life.

-**Fitness Kalumbi**, participant in Zambia's Supporting Women's Livelihoods (SWL) program

Women's economic gains at scale:

+234% savings

+80% business profits