

When women win, everyone wins.

Our pathway
to 2030
and beyond



HAND IN HAND
INTERNATIONAL



What we'll achieve together

Across the world, over 400 million¹ women are trapped in extreme poverty – most of them living on subsistence incomes in the informal economy. Yet if women had the same access to business opportunities and jobs as men, the impact would be seismic: household poverty would fall dramatically, and global GDP could increase by as much as 20%².

Why do we believe investing in women's ability to start and grow small businesses is one of the most effective ways to tackle poverty? Because the world's poorest women are already active in their economies, and their potential is enormous.

"It is a joy to know I am able to provide a living for the two ladies who work for me."

Charity, Tailor, Nairobi

One in four³ Sub-Saharan women is an entrepreneur. They are farmers, food vendors, hairdressers and shopkeepers. What's missing is access to the opportunities, skills and resources needed to move beyond subsistence and build thriving businesses. With the right support, women aren't victims of poverty; they are a powerful force for overcoming it.

At Hand in Hand, we work with women to tackle the barriers that hold them back: low literacy, gaps in confidence, limited business and technical skills, and lack of access to finance and markets. Locally led and delivered, we adapt our approach to different contexts and value chains. The result is transformative: we typically double incomes in communities where poverty is widespread.

¹ World Bank, 2025

² Global Gender Gap Report 2024, World Economic Forum

³ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2017

"If women had the same access to business opportunities and jobs as men... global GDP could increase by as much as 20%."

Crucially, unlike many NGOs, we avoid one-off asset transfers. Instead, we work alongside women to navigate and reshape existing systems. By connecting women to commercial credit, markets and established value chains, we help create businesses that can sustain and grow long after our direct support ends.

Our ambition goes beyond moving women past the poverty line. Through our grassroots accelerator, we support the 98%⁴ of micro and small business owners excluded from traditional incubators built for businesses 10x their size.

We know that when women get the chance to grow their businesses, they build resilience, create jobs and strengthen their communities.

⁴ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2022

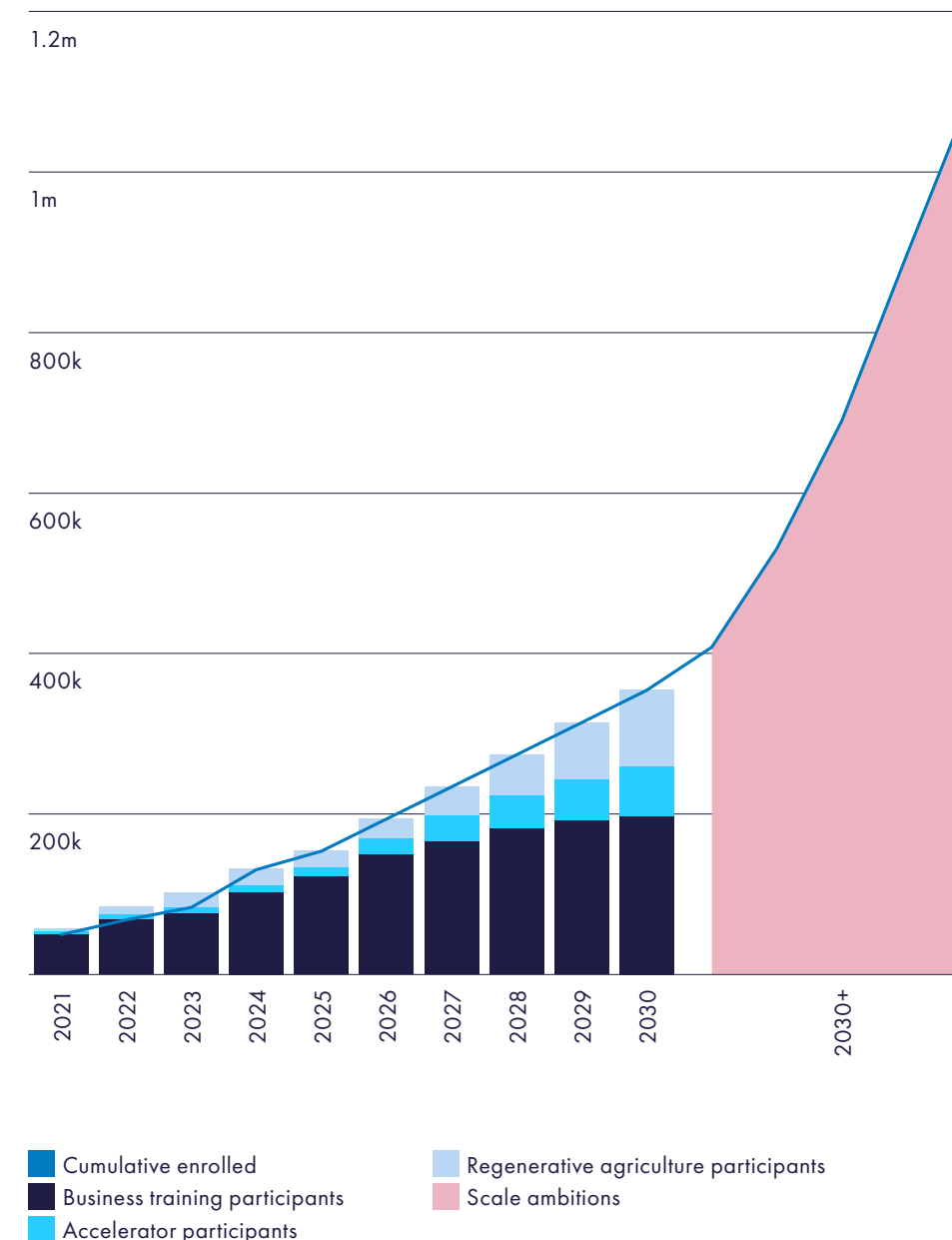
By 2030, we will have increased our reach tenfold in just a decade. But our ambition doesn't stop there. In the decade that follows, we aim to go further still, connecting millions more women with the tools, skills and resources they need.

Women living in poverty should not have to wait another generation for opportunity. As we look beyond 2030, we are adapting how we work to achieve exponential scale and impact – helping millions more women build resilient businesses, create jobs, and lift their families and communities out of poverty for good.

Amalia Johnsson

Hand in Hand International CEO





Our goals

By 2030, Hand in Hand will have reached an additional 160,000 people and built the partnerships and systems needed to reach women at significantly greater scale. To achieve this, we will focus on increasing our reach and deepening our impact.

Focus area 1

To increase our reach, we will:

Grow and diversify our funding – securing \$50 million to fuel our work;

Build transformational corporate partnerships that connect women into existing market systems at scale;

Establish an alternative finance vehicle to supercharge women’s business growth;

Test two new areas for geographic expansion and grow our work in Uganda, working together with our global network partners.

Focus area 2

To deepen our impact, we will:

Innovate within our programmes to ensure we are delivering for all women, including those at risk of being left behind, for example young mothers, out of work youth and women in Afghanistan;

Maintain outstanding results for women business owners, at every stage of their journey;

Strengthen market systems to increase our impact for the women we serve and their communities.

Core enablers

And to help us get there, we will:

Build our brand and evidence, demonstrating we’re the go-to partner for women’s entrepreneurship;

Invest in our team and global network, supporting our people with processes and systems (including tech) that help us collaborate better and go further, faster.

"I want my children to grow up knowing
their mother never gave up..."

Chandrika, Tanzania



Why our mission matters

No one should be trapped in poverty because of where they are born. Yet millions of people in some of the world's toughest places face limited opportunities, where daily life is often defined by survival: long walks for water, missed meals and preventable illness – with no safety net.

Rising poverty

Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Middle East and South Asia. Today, seven in ten of the world's poorest people live in Africa – up from four in ten just a decade ago. Nearly three-quarters live in rural areas. Conflict, political instability, drought and climate shocks make it harder for those in poverty to earn a living.

Women are hardest hit

They often have limited decision-making power, carry the greatest burden of unpaid care, are less likely to have completed their education, and face significant barriers to finance and markets. These challenges are even greater for women facing multiple layers of disadvantage – including young mothers, youth, women with disabilities, or women in areas affected by conflict.



Our vision

A world where everyone has the means and the power to shape the future they want.



Our mission

Every day we equip under-served women with skills and resources to earn more money, ignite local economies and lift nations out of poverty.



Reaching more small business owners like Alice

When COVID-19 cost Alice her hotel job in Nairobi, she returned to her rural village with her husband and three children, relying on a single cow and a small plot of land to survive.

After receiving Hand in Hand training, Alice began earning a steady income from dairy farming. Through our grassroots accelerator programme, she secured a \$3,290⁵ loan, bought a second cow and doubled her income.

Today, Alice runs a successful dairy business and bakery, supplies local schools, and employs two people in her community.

⁵ In line with World Bank methodology, all figures in this strategy are expressed in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars



12.6m
jobs created across
our global network
since 2003



136%
average increase
in monthly net
enterprise income



53%
of members
able to withstand
a financial shock



94%
enterprise
survival rate after
training ends



80%
women able
to make household
decisions

In the last five years, we:

Reached 45,000 smallholder farmers with regenerative agriculture training

Around 70% of the business owners we support are smallholder farmers, facing extreme weather and degraded soils. We have reached over 40,000 farmers with techniques that improve soil health – boosting yields and incomes.

Worked with 25,000 men and communities to shift the norms that hold women back

For women to succeed, we must address the social barriers that prevent them from making decisions about their own businesses. We have reached nearly 25,000 men and community members with gender equity training, and launched one of East Africa's largest RCTs with FID and Innovations in Poverty Action (IPA) in Tanzania to test how shifting gender norms can increase women's incomes and boost their wellbeing.

Accelerated business growth for 10,000 existing business owners

Many women we work with have the potential to move far beyond microenterprise. Our acceleration programme has trained more than 10,000 people – supporting them to grow their businesses with the ambition of achieving incomes of around \$15 a day.

Built partnerships that increased our reach and impact

We have built pioneering corporate partnerships that create shared value while expanding opportunities for women at the base of the pyramid by integrating them into existing markets. These partnerships include a collaboration with Visa to support women growing businesses; risk sharing agreements with financial institutions to support 'locked out' women to access credit, and a ground-breaking partnership with The Coca-Cola Foundation helping women PET recycling entrepreneurs thrive in Kenya.

Navigating a changing global landscape: challenges and opportunities

A push toward localisation reshaping global development

We know that locally-led development – solutions that strengthen, rather than replace, civil society – is not only the right approach, but one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. This is increasingly what funders globally expect to see. Originating in India, Hand in Hand International is part of a network of independent locally-led organisations that has been delivering change directly for over 20 years.

Roll back on rights

Decades of hard-won progress on the rights of women are currently under attack. In the places we work, gender norms are deeply entrenched and fewer than half of women can make decisions about their own lives. That's why we're working with men and communities to challenge harmful norms that prevent women working because when women earn more, whole families benefit.

Climate and biodiversity

Climate shocks and soil degradation are threatening livelihoods. In Kenya, over 30% of soils are badly degraded due to intensive monoculture farming, climate change and deforestation. These challenges risk trapping farmers in poverty – but they also create an opportunity to reshape food systems through regenerative agriculture, restoring soil health, increasing yields and building resilience for future generations.

Financial and digital exclusion

Women globally face a \$3 trillion credit gap. In the communities we work in, many women lack bank accounts, collateral or credit histories. Very often they need their husband's permission to take out a loan. At the same time, women are excluded from digital spaces – getting online is costly, the internet is seen as a man's domain and women routinely face online harassment. We are stepping up our work to expand women's access to finance and build digital skills to ensure women can participate safely and confidently in the digital economy.



“Hand in Hand International is part of a network of independent locally-led organisations that has been delivering change directly for over 20 years.”

Our 2030 impact targets

What we'll measure	Businesses grown or created	Income uplift	Personal financial resilience	Women's decision making
Why it matters	In places where formal employment is scarce to non-existent, we will equip people with the tools and resources to start and grow small businesses.	Higher incomes mean women can buy healthier food, afford better healthcare, send their children to school and save for emergencies.	Unexpected bills for medical treatment, urgent housing repairs or to feed your family during a bad harvest can be catastrophic for a family without savings. Financial resilience protects women from these shocks.	Women able to make decisions about the things that affect their lives e.g. household purchases, visiting family and friends, or healthcare.
Our target by 2030	160,000	100%	50%	70%
What we'll measure	Business sustainability	Businesses accelerated	Farmers trained in regenerative practices	Lives impacted
Why it matters	For the women we work with, formal employment opportunities are scarce. When their businesses fail, families lose a vital source of income. Resilient businesses means a stronger local economy, and more security, dignity and independence.	There is a major gap in support for the entrepreneurs we work with – preventing them from scaling up their 'micro' businesses into SMEs. Our accelerator model bridges this gap, giving women entrepreneurs the same chance to scale, with the aim of moving well past the poverty line, earning up to \$15 a day, increasing financial resilience and employing people in their local community	We equip women farmers with agricultural skills to restore degraded soil, lower the cost of growing food, and earn more money.	Our impact goes beyond the individual entrepreneur. When women earn more, whole families and communities benefit. For every business created, on average, 3.8 family members' lives are improved.
Our target by 2030	90%	40,000	70,000	425,600 lives impacted

Hand in Hand's impact is evaluated in line with four of the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- Goal 1 (No Poverty)
 - Goal 5 (Gender Equality)
 - Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)
 - Goal 15 (Life on Land)
- As we strengthen our partnerships with businesses, governments and NGOs and share best practice across the sector, we also contribute to Goal 17.



The monitoring, evaluation and learning principles we follow

Hand in Hand International has built a gold-standard approach to measuring impact. Evidencing livelihoods, empowerment and enterprise-level outcomes in low-income contexts is technically demanding. Hand in Hand's MEL framework is designed to address the specific challenges of tracking entrepreneurship impact with the rigour that donors and sector peers expect.

The way we work is grounded in three simple principles: collaboration, rigour and respect. We collaborate closely, drawing on the expertise of our global MEL team as well as partners like ICRW and IPA to ensure our work is evidence-led. We are rigorous, combining strong in-house monitoring across all programmes with independent evaluations, including RCTs, to understand what truly works. And we are respectful – working with communities in a way that avoids intrusive or extractive data collection, and puts people at the centre of how we learn and improve.

Focus area 1: Increasing our reach

We'll reach an additional
160,000 entrepreneurs by 2030,
while positioning Hand in Hand
International to scale exponentially,
so we can impact the lives of
millions more women over the next
ten years.

Here's how we'll do it:

1. We'll grow our funding to reach more women.

We will secure \$50 million to fuel our work, representing 36% growth on our last strategic period. We will achieve this by building on existing partnerships, securing new ones, and making a deliberate shift towards longer-term, more flexible funding for our programmes.

As part of this goal, we will grow unrestricted income by 20% year-on-year. By finding new ways to engage trusts, corporates and individual supporters, we will build a more sustainable and diversified income base. This will enable us to invest in programme innovation that responds to women's needs, provide the long-term stability for growth, and give us greater flexibility to expand into areas where the need is greatest.

2. We'll build transformational corporate partnerships that connect women to existing market systems.

By joining forces and combining skills, reach and expertise, we will help more women access formal markets and thrive within established supply chains – strengthening local economies and reducing poverty over the long term.

3. We'll establish an alternative finance vehicle to accelerate women's business growth.

In doing so, we'll demonstrate that investing in women who have historically been excluded from capital can generate both social and financial returns – reaching more women, more effectively.

4. We'll collaborate with our network to grow our work in Uganda and expand into new geographies.

By 2030, Hand in Hand Uganda will be fully operational, with a clear institutional framework and strategy for growth. Our project portfolio will have expanded from one to three projects.

Working closely with our network partners, we will test expansion into at least two new geographies, connecting underserved women to business training, finance and markets where the potential to reduce poverty is greatest.

Focus area 2: Deepening our impact

We'll continue to deliver
exceptional programmes for the
women we serve, including those
facing the greatest barriers – for
example young mothers, out of
work youth, and Afghan women.

Here's how we'll do it:

We will innovate to meet the needs of women facing the greatest barriers.

Women's needs are evolving rapidly, and we are committed to supporting all women, including those with vulnerabilities. To do this, we will test and refine interventions that can expand pathways out of extreme poverty for women on the lowest incomes, starting with a pilot focused on groups facing additional barriers to entrepreneurship (young mothers). To accelerate learning and scale what works, we will regularly draw on the perspectives of our entrepreneurs, establishing a bottom-up mechanism for programme innovation.

1. We will continue to deliver outstanding impact for women business owners at every stage of their journey.

Our core business training programmes will consistently double incomes for women at the bottom of the pyramid, while our flagship grassroots accelerator programme – designed for women excluded from traditional accelerator schemes – will support participants to reach incomes of \$15 PPP per day, five times the international extreme poverty line.

2. We will strengthen market systems so they work for more women.

Across our programmes, we will engage suppliers, buyers and cooperatives to address the structural barriers that limit women's business growth. By strengthening these market systems, we will deepen the impact of our programmes for existing participants while extending benefits to the wider community.



Core enabler 1: Building our brand and evidence

We will establish Hand in Hand as the go-to partner for women's entrepreneurship, demonstrating through our evidence and thought-leadership that investing in women entrepreneurs reduces poverty today and creates jobs tomorrow.



Here's how we'll do it:

Strengthen our brand to galvanise global support: Building on the success of our "when women wins, everyone wins," brand campaign we'll grow our brand profile to restate the business case for women's economic empowerment, showcasing our evidence and learning to gain recognition for our work, influence practice, increase visibility and galvanise support among peers and partners.

Continually innovate our evaluation approaches to maintain a gold standard: So our results capture the multi-faceted nature of our programmes while maintaining their rigour, we will apply new evaluation methodologies in our impact work, and establish three research partnerships with respected institutions.

Core enabler 2: Investing in our team and global network

We will support our people with processes and systems – including tech – that help us collaborate better and go further, faster.



Here's how we'll do it:

Improve efficiency through tech: Through 2030, we will upgrade and digitise our management systems to improve efficiency and reduce costs. By strengthening our data governance and making effective use of AI, we will automate processes, reclaim staff time – our most valuable resource – and better position our organisation for effective growth.

Leverage expertise from across our global network: We will work with our partners across the Hand in Hand network to establish a collective mechanism that sets clear, constructive minimum standards and facilitates stronger collaboration and consistency across key areas, including impact measurement, communication and governance.

When women win, everyone wins.

By joining with Hand in Hand you are supporting sustainable, scalable and locally-led change. To learn more about our strategy and how we could work together to achieve our shared goals, please get in touch.

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