

Project Report

Results from 3 projects GPFD supported from the D-Prize pool

Autumn 2025

Context

We're excited to share results from three projects that Global Partners for Development recently supported.¹ All are community-led. All focus on helping poor families in rural East African villages meaningfully increase income or decrease expenses. To date, over 200 households, or just over 1000 people, have significantly better livelihoods thanks to these three projects.

Improving economic wellbeing has a *powerful* ripple effect. Rising incomes decrease childhood malnutrition, because mothers can afford to give their children three square meals a day. Education increases, because families can afford school fees. Crises can be weathered, because families have savings. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Donors who support Global Partners - *THANK YOU!!* Without you, the impact described below simply would not happen. In many ways you are a catalyst for this change.

1. Jagguza – Uganda

Nakabuye Joanitah knows firsthand what life is like without economic opportunity. She grew up impoverished in Kasanda, a rural town in central Uganda. She remembers Grace, “a mother in our community who struggled to provide for her stunting children. When drought destroyed her crops, Grace had no income and savings, leaving her unable to afford basic necessities.”

Joanitah set out to help women like Grace start small income-producing enterprises.

This approach is well-researched. Researchers call this “poverty graduation”. It’s been studied by institutes housed at MIT and Northwestern. It’s been deployed by large NGOs like BRAC and the World Bank to lift millions out of poverty. Now, Joanitah is bringing the model to her home.

She started by recruiting 90 women from her village, where many people live on less than \$1.25 per day. Participants received training to design and run micro-businesses such as tailoring or food processing. They formed groups of three, and each group opened a savings account and received seed capital. They continued meeting monthly for mentorship.

Results: All 90 women are now earning income. Based on similar efforts elsewhere, Joanitah expects incomes to rise by at least 65% in the first year. Early signs are strong:

- Children in participating families now eat three meals per day.

¹ Original list of projects and expected outcomes [here](#).

- School fees are paid on time, so children stay in class.
- Business groups hold \$4,500 in savings.

What's next? Support from Global Partners “allowed us to move from concept to execution.” Joanitah says. She wants to do more. She launched a new NGO named Jagguza Capital, focused on expanding the poverty graduation model. She aims to grow from 30 to 120 micro-businesses in the next year. She has already raised another \$20,000 from outside donors. This early traction would not be possible without initial support from Global Partners.



A woman operating a small business hair salon, which was started through Joanitah's work

2. Wealth Village – Burundi

“My childhood memories are still marked by extreme poverty. I saw with my eyes girls giving up on their dreams and getting married prematurely due to the lack of the basic needs within their families”, Olivier Mukunzi, a local community leader, explains. This is daily life in Rutovu, a remote commune in the south-eastern Burundi, where 90% of people are subsistence farmers.

Olivier was unwilling to wait passively for his neighbors' economic lives to improve. Like Joanitah in Uganda, he sought to bring the “poverty graduation” approach to his area.

“Our target are women who live on less than \$1.90 a day, and who are unable to provide for their family's basic needs”, Olivier says. He starts by recruiting participants, then providing business skills and financial literacy training tailored to women with little formal education. After creating a business plan, three women join together to launch an enterprise of their choice. Each team receives a small seed grant in stages as they make progress. Mentorship continues for a full year. “Ongoing mentorship is critical for business survival” says Olivier.

Results: Olivier has trained and supported 30 women with his initial project. Incomes are on track to significantly increase, and Olivier expects this to ripple into the following metrics:

- 20% increase in daily meal consumption (nutrition)
- 20% increase in general household consumption and expenditures (eg, school fees)
- 12% increase in household savings (economic resilience)

What's next? Olivier is also looking to continue the momentum he started with his initial Global Partners supported work. He has formed an NGO named Wealth Village, which will be the vehicle for him to professionalize and expand his work. He has recruited a co-founder with a graduate Economics degree from the University of Burundi (Olivier is himself has a Statistics degree). He thinks he can reach at least 200 women next year, and is already fundraising from outside sources to fuel that momentum. Olivier dreams that eventually this could be large enough to be embedded into World Bank Burundi or UNFPA.



Olivier hosting a financial literacy workshop, part of the poverty graduation model he deploys

3. Kuwala Clean Energy – Malawi

“Only about 4% of rural households are connected to the electrical grid”, says Gabriel Kamowatimwa, a local leader from Zomba, in southern Malawi. The remaining options - kerosene lanterns, candles, or homemade torches - are technologies that have been obsolete in developed countries more than 100 years ago.

Gabriel knew household solar lamps were a better alternative. “Households can save up to 15% of their income”, he explains, noting the high recurring cost of kerosene. “Solar lights significantly reduce respiratory and eye health issues caused by kerosene smoke and dim lighting” For children, reliable solar lighting increases study hours by 1-2 hours each evening, improving academic performance and offering a brighter future. Solar lighting also boosts household productivity by extending evening hours, allowing small-scale economic activities to thrive. The only problem - no one was distributing solar lamps in rural Malawi.

To fix this, Gabriel mobilized a small team of solar field agents. Initially he tried recruiting members of the local water point committees - the idea was that those who manage access to water may also be equipped to manage energy access - but this didn't work. He pivoted and recruited and trained his own small network of agents directly instead. Then he bought solar lamps from the urban center, and sent his field team out to make sales.

The act of selling, rather than giving away lamps, is critical. A number of large-scale research papers show that when households purchase lamps, they take greater care of them. And a bonus - Gabriel is also creating jobs.

Results: In the first three months, Gabriel and his team have provided solar lamps to over 90 households. Repayment rates are excellent (Gabriel designed a repayment structure that worked with families' existing economic situation), and families are reducing or entirely foregoing use of kerosene lamps.



The story of Mr. Joseph Kalambo

Joseph Kalambo is a father of four, and lives in Havara Village in Malawi. After purchasing a solar lantern from Kuwala Clean Energy, he expressed his gratitude, saying, “I am very thankful to Kuwala because what has happened today. Every day we were buying batteries,

and they never lasted. I am hopeful that the solar lantern I bought today will last me many years, maybe five, and that it is not fake or temporary. If it is durable, more people will buy your products, and your company will do impactful work.”

What's next? “We aim to transition from a pilot project to a scalable, community-based clean energy enterprise”, Gabriel says. He has formed a social enterprise, Kuwala Clean Energy that will eventually reach “more rural households across Zomba District and beyond”.

The young entrepreneur is off to a great start, as Kuwala has been accepted into the Mastercard Foundation’s FAST Build Program and will receive up to \$10,000 in funding; *and* will be pitching for another \$30,000 from the Sahara Impact Fund.



A happy customer of Kuwala Clean Energy