



EMPOWER'S UNIQUE FUNDING MODEL: **SCALING IMPACT BY NUMBERS, DEPTH, INFLUENCE,** **AND SUSTAINABILITY**

A PORTFOLIO SNAPSHOT **2019-2024**





Introduction

For the past 25 years, EMpower has supported local organisations in emerging markets with a long-term and flexible approach. Recognising that real change takes time, we invest **patient capital** combined with a hands-on approach over a **ten-year horizon**. We prioritise sustainable growth over short-term returns because we know this has a multiplier effect on marginalised young people and their communities.

This patient capital is combined with flexible funding to the organisations we support, making EMpower's investments a lever for change. It builds the resilience of community-level organisations, allowing them to sustainably transform the lives of the young people they work with, leading to a larger impact.

We can back our winners—by building trusting relationships with our grantee partners, enabling them to plan better and cross learn, leading to improved efficiencies and sustainability in the long run.

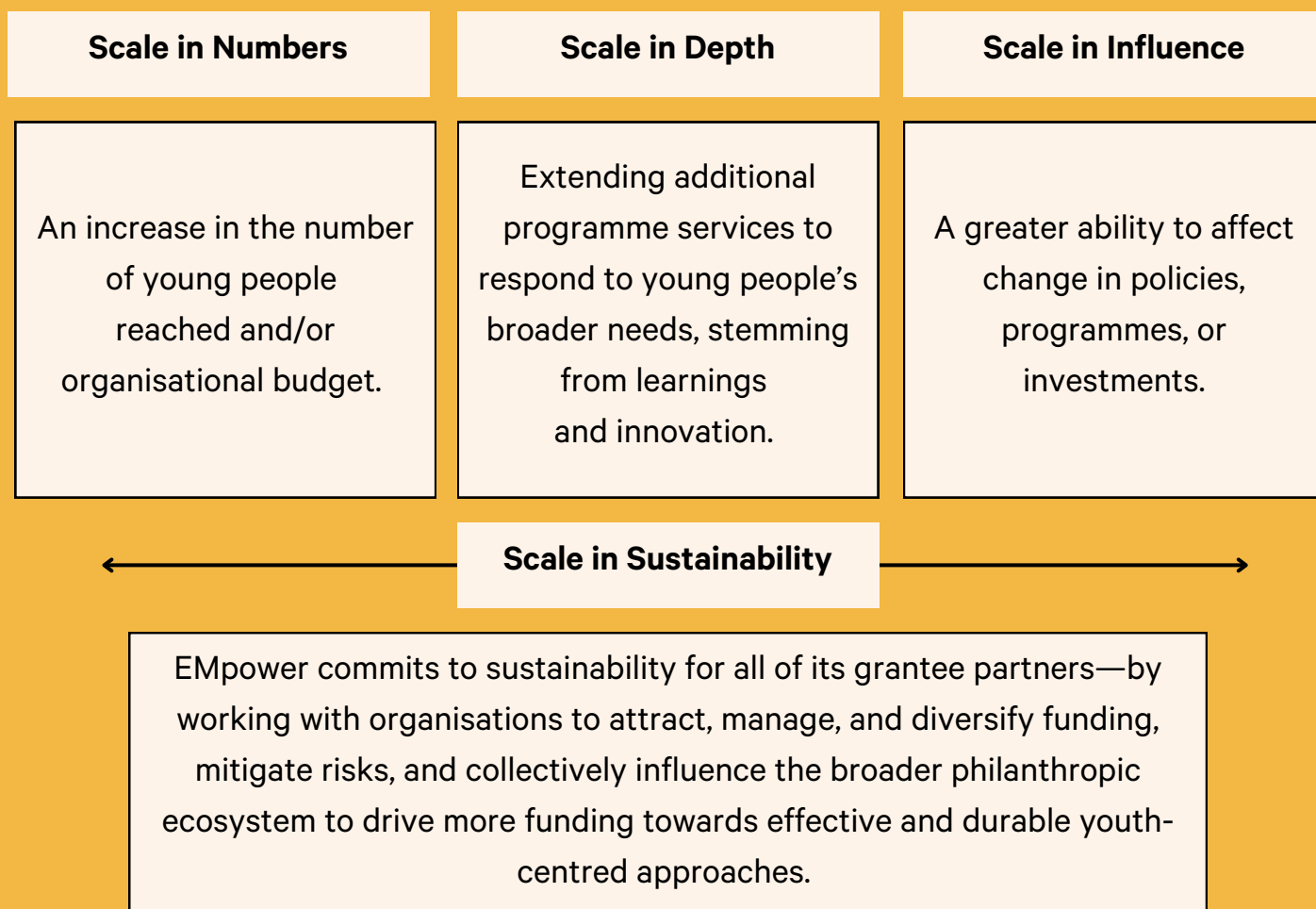
In an independent survey of 300 funders by the Centre for Effective Philanthropy, EMpower is consistently ranked in the top 10% across non-financial support areas and in the top 3 for how we help grantee partners strengthen their impact evaluation.

Definitions of Scale Achieved through our Partnerships Model

EMpower serves as an **incubator** that facilitates innovation and identifies opportunities that can scale up over time. As an **accelerator**, we ensure our grantee partners are transformationally different at the end of 10 years, allowing us to collectively share innovations and best-in-class models with others.

We invest in high-performing local organisations in emerging markets, providing cash grants, and working to strengthen their capacities. We help amplify their voices, connect them with other organisations to share learnings, and build a movement for change.

With nearly 25 years of experience walking alongside local organisations through long-term partnerships, EMpower has learned that scale takes many forms. We understand that scale includes depth, influence, and sustainability. For long-term, sustainable impact in the lives of young people and their communities, we must look beyond just numbers.





Facilitating Scale through our Unique Funding Model

Patient Capital

EMpower provides partners with up to 10 years of financial support, offering stability for local organisations to innovate, refine, and strengthen their programmes.

Flexible Funding

While some funders cover only programme costs, EMpower supports grantee partners in investing in institutional capacity strengthening, enhancing their impact and long-term sustainability.

Innovation

EMpower acts as an incubator, supporting high-performing organisations in trying new things. We understand risk and reward and while other funders may shy away from supporting innovative pilots, EMpower does not. Our long-term, trusting relationships enable partners to pilot and refine new initiatives with lesser risk over several years.

Support to Scale Effective Models and Scale Sustainably

As an accelerator, EMpower helps organisations scale their work and increase sustainability, shares effective innovations across regions, and helps local organisations increase their impact.

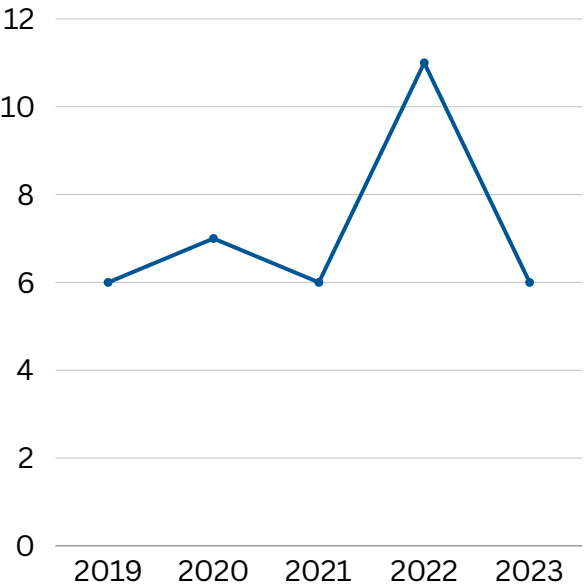
A Portfolio Snapshot of EMpower's Long-Term Partnerships (2019-2024)



Since 2000, EMpower has awarded 10 years of funding to 52 local organisations, investing \$20,400,000 over 10 years and benefitting 676,000 young people.

This portfolio snapshot from the past five years examines 36 organisations that received their tenth year of support from EMpower within the past five years, representing 70% of all EMpower's 10-year partnerships to-date, and illustrates what we were able to achieve together and to identify EMpower's value-add beyond just financial support.

Number of Grants Awarded Per Year

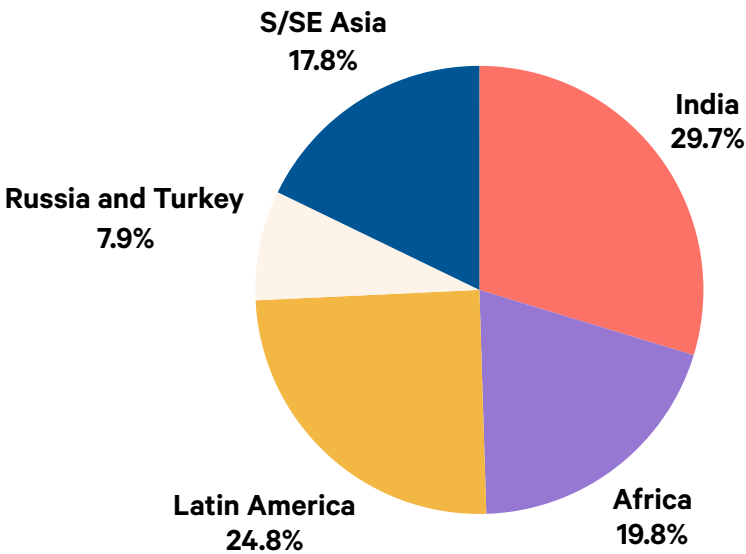


Quick Numbers

In the past 5 years...

- EMpower invested a total of \$14,100,000 in these 36 organisations over the lifetime of their partnerships.
- On average, each grantee partner received an average of \$380,000 in their 10-year journey with EMpower.
- EMpower made a total of 387 grants to these 36 partners, with approximately 10.5 grants to each partner during the course of their 10 years with EMpower.
- This group of 36 partners reached over 450,000 participants directly, averaging 13,000 direct programme participants per partner over their 10 years with us.

Percentage of Sunset Budget Allocated by Region

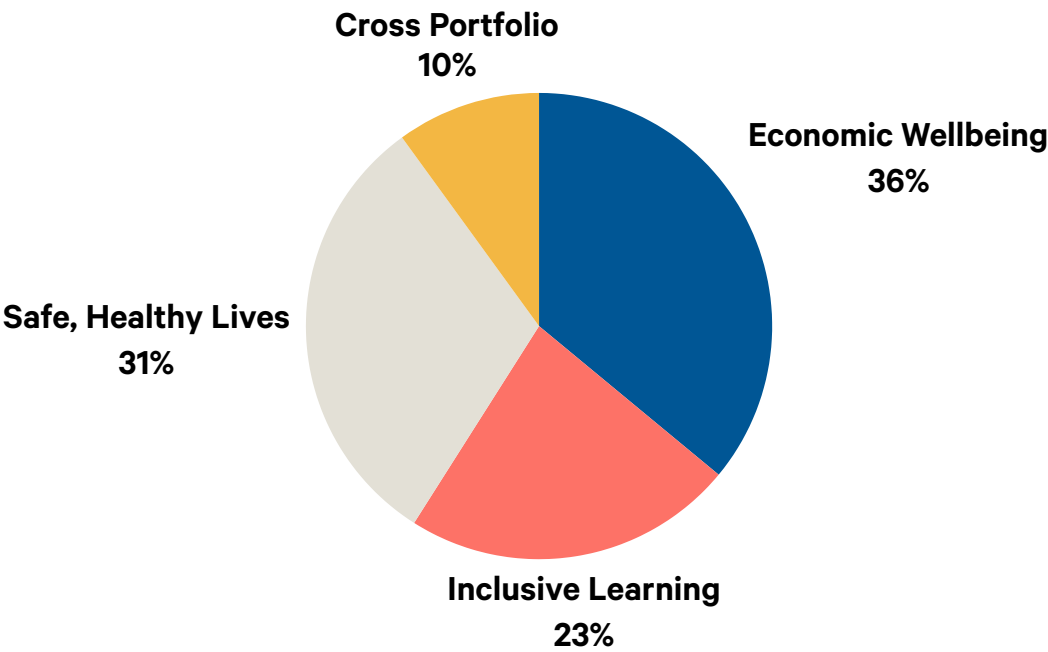


A Portfolio Snapshot of EMpower’s Long-Term Partnerships (2019-2024)



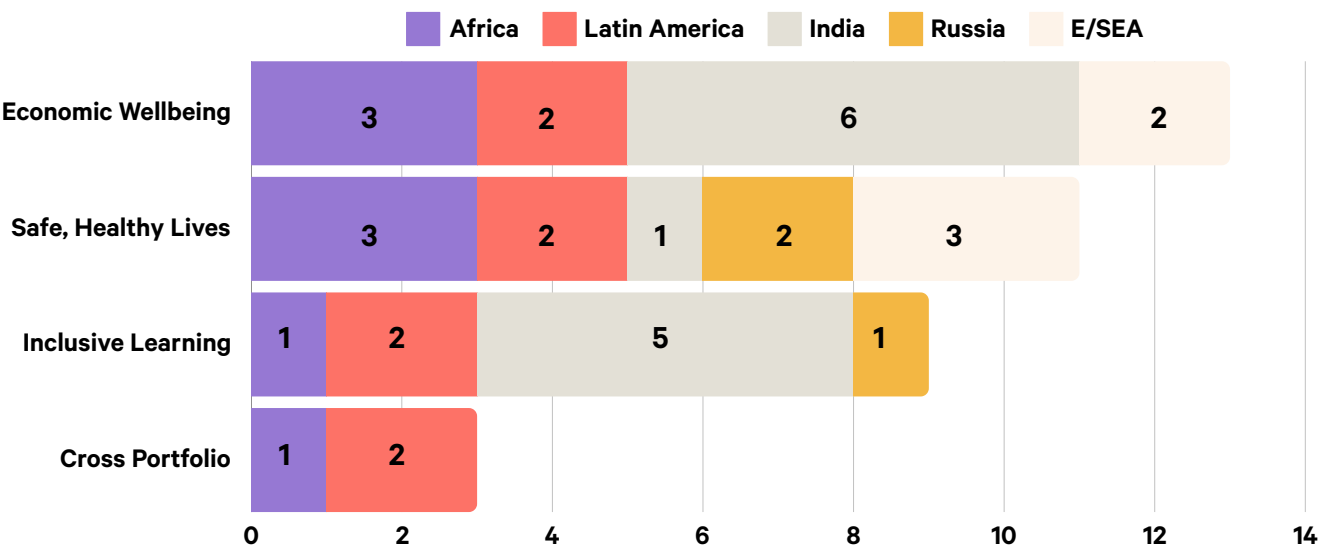
Percentage of Sunset Budget Allocated by Portfolio

EMpower has three programmatic focus areas: economic well-being, inclusive learning, and safe, healthy lives.



Number of Sunset Grants Awarded by Region within each Portfolio

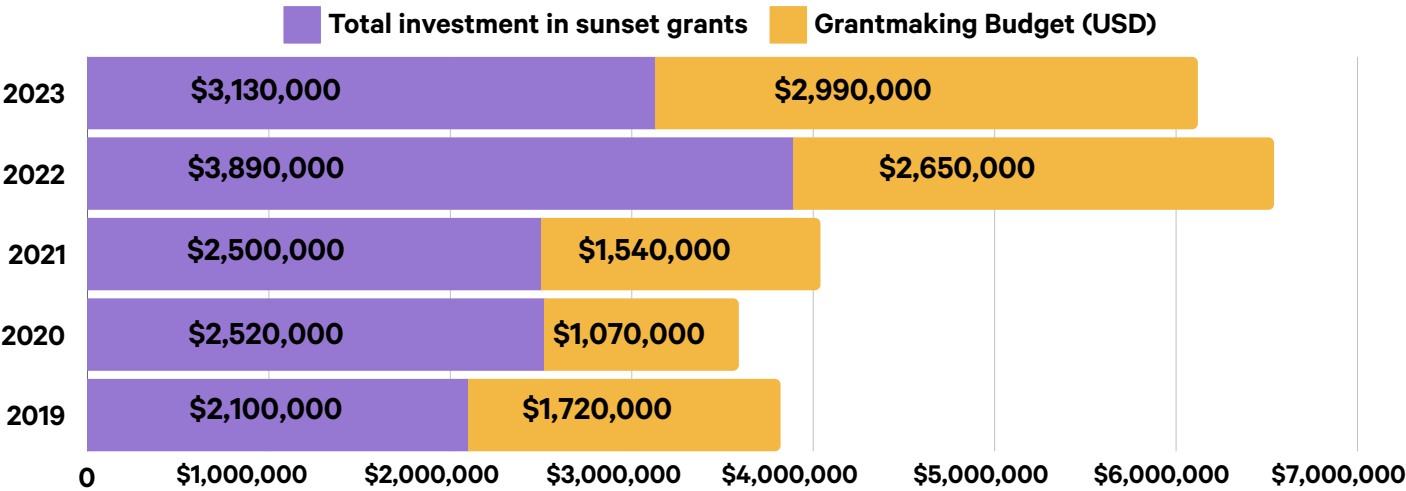
Over the past five years, 30% of the total budget for sunset grants was allocated to India, 25% to Latin America, 20% to Africa, 18% to East and Southeast Asia, and 8% to Turkey and Russia.



A Portfolio Snapshot of EMpower’s Long-Term Partnerships (2019-2024)

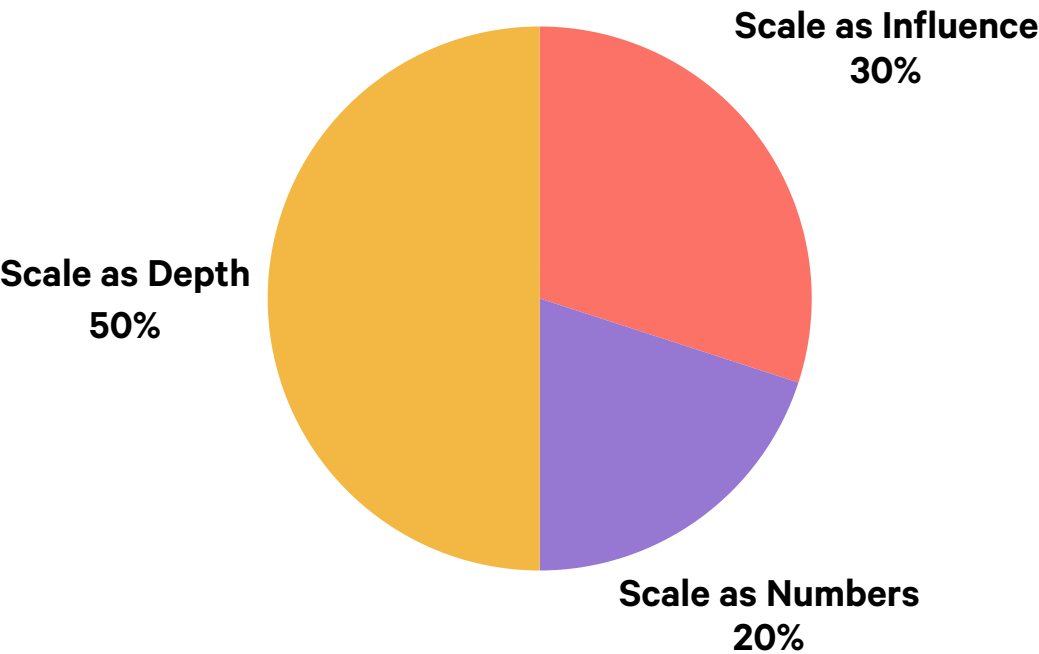


Sunset Grants as a Proportion of Total Grants Awarded



The grantmaking portfolio was skewed towards a larger investment in final grants and constituted over 50% of total dollars awarded for each of the five years, ranging from 51% in 2023 to 70% in 2020. EMpower intentionally makes final grants larger, as part of our investment in their sustainability.

Percentage of organisations that reached each type of scale

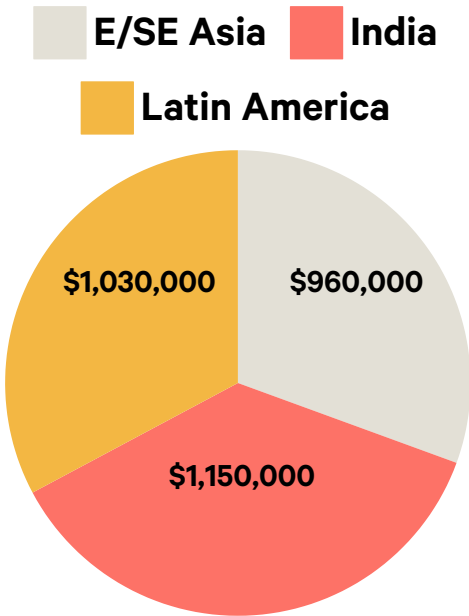


Scale in Numbers

Twenty percent^[1] of our portfolio partners achieved scale in numbers, meaning that with EMpower’s support, the organisations were able to dramatically increase the number of young people reached and, in most cases, their institutional budgets as well.

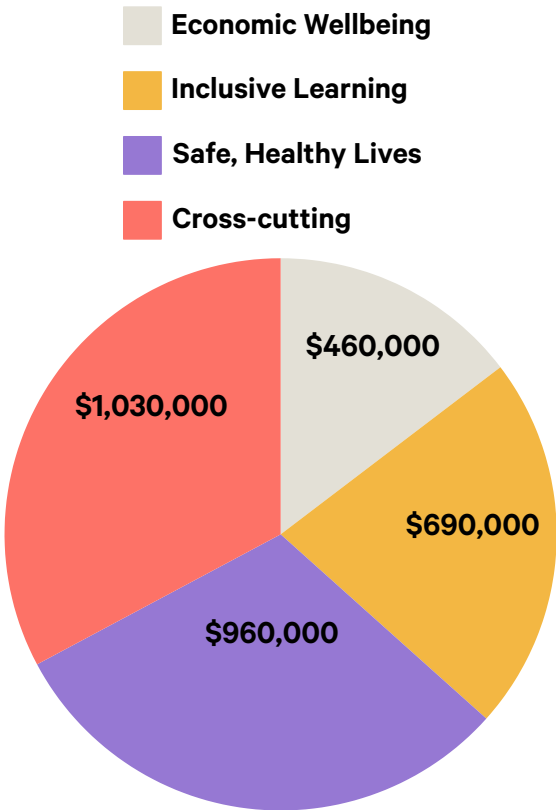
Scale in Numbers: Investment in USD by Region

In total, EMpower deployed USD \$3,140,000 to these organisations over the course of their partnerships with us.



Scale in Numbers: Investment by Portfolio

The largest investments were in grants that have cross-cutting portfolios and safe, healthy lives. These grants tend to reach the largest numbers of young people. Economic well-being is the smallest percentage of the investment because these grants tend to be cost-intensive, higher touch, and therefore have fewer direct programme participants.



^[1] These organisations include Roots of Health (Philippines), VANGO (Vietnam), Azad Foundation (India), Feminist Approach to Technology Society (India), Ibtada (India), Centro Yanapanakusun (Peru), and Fundación Tiempo de Juego (Colombia).

Scale in Numbers

How Our Partners Achieved Scale in Numbers

Roots of Health provides young people with lifesaving information about sexual and reproductive health and rights. During its partnership with EMpower, the organisation more than quadrupled its budget from USD 98,000 to USD 460,000, with EMpower's grants accounting for less of its annual budget over time, 12% in its first grant to 9% in its final grant. Its annual reach grew from 1,200 to 8,500 young people.

As one of its first institutional donors, EMpower enhanced Roots of Health's credibility and supported the development of its first girls-only programme and refinement of its comprehensive sexuality education programme.



“I aim to continue to be part of this organisation in hopes to further its cause and help the future Filipino youth during this important time in their lives.”

Sophie
Programme Participant

Tiempo de Juego equips underserved young people with the skills to creatively and effectively combat violence. During its partnership with EMpower, Tiempo de Juego's organisational budget grew from \$211,000 to \$1,085,000, with EMpower's grants representing less of their annual budget over time, 14% in its first grant to 5% in its final grant.



Their annual reach expanded from 900 young people in one community to over 8,000 per year in three Colombian states. EMpower's long-term funding and thought partnership fuelled this growth, enabling Tiempo de Juego to pilot its life skills programme in schools, sharpen its focus on girls and gender, and develop a comprehensive organisation-wide monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework.

“In general, funders that finance projects do so for limited periods, and this hinders the continuity of the processes. In the social sector, where initiatives require a long time to consolidate, the prolonged commitment of an ally like EMpower allows testing and iterating the solutions proposed to a social problem and having a complete perspective of its scope. Thank you very much for your support over the years!”

Esteban Reyes
Executive Director, Tiempo de Juego

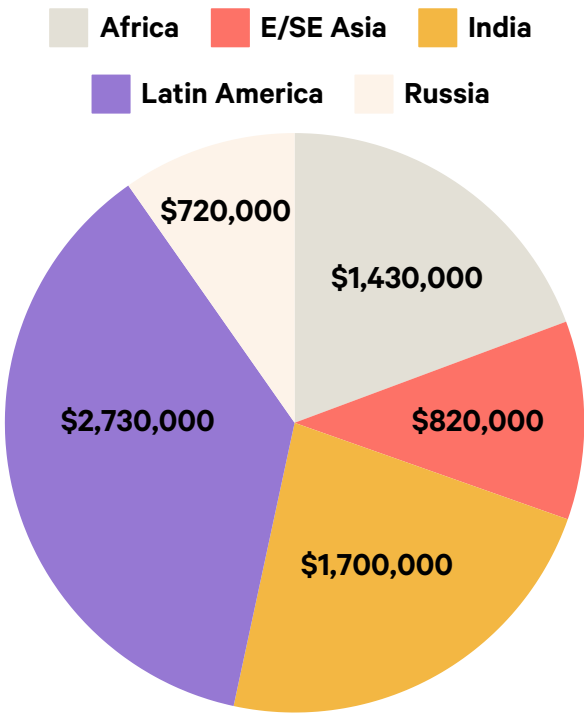
Scale in Programmatic Depth

Scale in Depth: Investment by Region

EMpower works with local organisations to ensure their programmes are responsive to young people’s holistic and evolving needs. Doing so leads to new beliefs and behaviours not only for individual young people, but also for their parents, teachers, siblings, and communities, this is scale in programmatic depth.

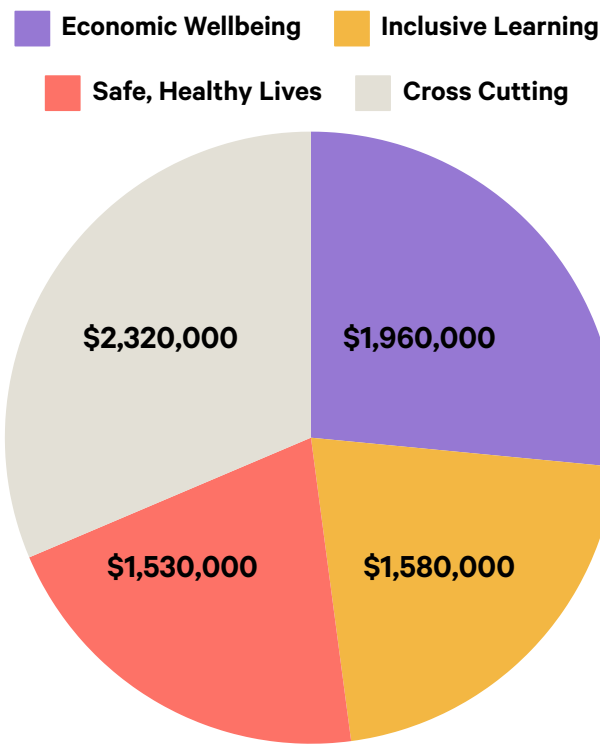
Fifty percent[2] of our portfolio partners achieved scale in programmatic depth, meaning that with EMpower’s support, they developed deeper, more robust, and holistic programmes for young people.

In total, EMpower deployed USD \$7,400,000 to these organisations over the course of their partnerships.



Scale in Depth: Investment by Portfolio

The largest investment in scale in depth was in partnerships that had cross-cutting portfolios. This is because as programmes increase in depth, they often expand from a single focus to a broader based approach to respond to young people’s evolving needs—for example, a livelihoods programme that adds a comprehensive sexuality education component after observing that adolescent pregnancy is a major reason why girls and young women have to drop out of programming.



[2] These organisations include United Through Sport (South Africa), Urban Agriculture Network (Ghana), East Bali Poverty Project (Indonesia), ZOTO (Philippines), Akshara (India), Chintan (India), JOSH (India), Saath (India), Swechha (India), Alternativa (Peru), Kallpa (Peru), Onda Solidária (Brazil), CEDECUR (Colombia), Fundación Nordelta (Argentina), SiKanda (Mexico), Amandla EduFootball (South Africa), Upsala Circus (Russia), and Galaxy Fund (Russia).

Scale in Programmatic Depth

How our partners achieved scale in programmatic depth

United Through Sport (UTS) in South Africa uses a sports-based programme in schools to help students in townships strengthen key life skills like teamwork and non-violent conflict resolution. With EMpower's support, UTS piloted, and then strengthened, an after-school tutoring programme that increased middle school students' ability to qualify for and succeed in top high schools.



UTS achieved scale in depth by expanding the focus of its programmes and deepening its work with girls. UTS' work with girls is now a throughline in all its programmes. At the organisational level, EMpower helped UTS through executive coaching, fundraising support, and training to strengthen the skills of mid-level managers.

“The 10-year funding commitment is something we have never received from any other funder. Such a long cycle is key to assisting young organisations' growth and development. The capacity support, organisational support, and flexible funding are also aspects we rarely receive from other funders.”

Nick Mould
Director & Co-Founder



Over a 10-year partnership, **Zone One Tondo (ZOTO)**, Philippines, scaled in depth after recognising a need among young people and developed a job-readiness programme. They incorporated sexual and reproductive health topics to help young people make informed decisions.

EMpower helped ZOTO strengthen young people's knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, human rights, and disaster risk reduction associated with natural disasters like typhoons.

“[A former gang member,] I will continue to train until I become a police officer. I have experienced hardship before I changed myself. I hope that one day I can pay back the people who have helped me, by helping other youth in return. I want to show my fellow youth from urban poor communities that we have a bright future waiting for us if we strive for success.”

Ericson Casimero
Programme Participant, ZOTO

Scale in Programmatic Depth



Onda Solidária works with marginalised young people in rural Brazil, helping them stay in school and perform better. Our partnership led to a strong gender component in its sports programme and deepened after-school offerings to include life skills, academic support, employability skills, and comprehensive sexuality education. Onda scaled in programmatic depth by providing more well-rounded support to young people that addressed their varied and multiple needs.

EMpower also supported Onda in strengthening its monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) capacities, developing its first safeguarding policy, and enhancing its ability to mobilise resources for financial sustainability after the end of our funding relationship.

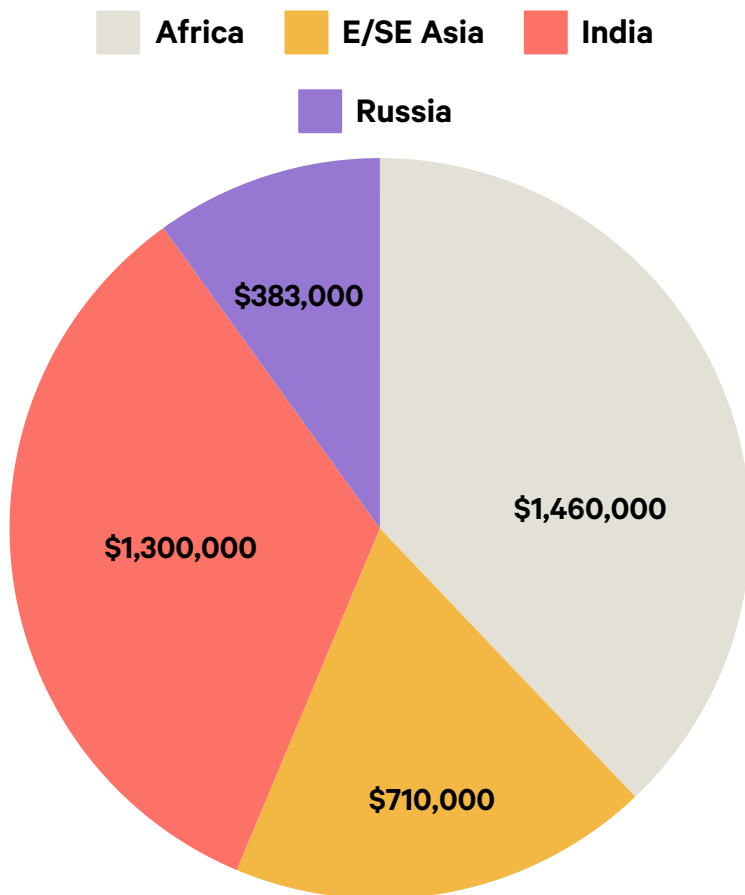
“As an organisation, EMpower has been and continues to be fundamental for our sustainability and growth, supporting us from the beginning of the partnership with tools and strategies that have helped us plan, reflect, and thrive both locally and globally...We strongly believe in EMpower's partnership model, which adopts a horizontal and empowering vision with organisations, aiming for continuous medium- to long-term work, generating significant impact on partner organisations and communities.”

Ricardo Calçado,
Founder & Director, Onda Solidária

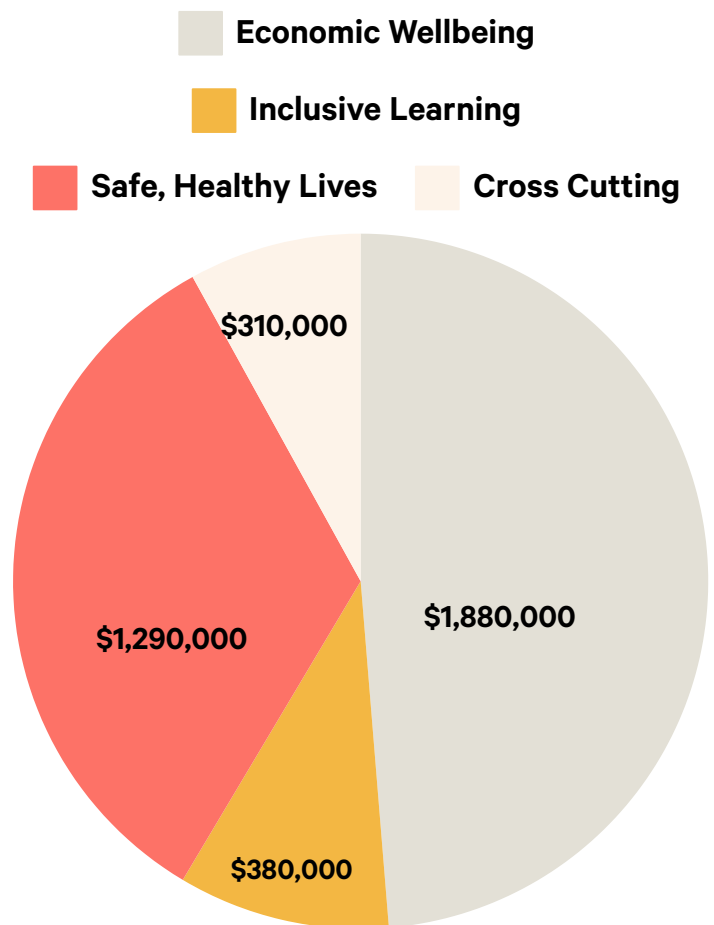
Scale in Influence

Thirty percent [3] of our long-term grantee partners achieved scale in influence, meaning that by partnering with EMpower, they developed a greater ability to affect change in policies, programmes, or investments within the larger ecosystem. In total, EMpower deployed USD 3,900,000 to these organisations over the course of their partnerships with us with the largest investments.

**Scale in Influence:
Investment by Region**



**Scale in Influence:
Investment by Portfolio**



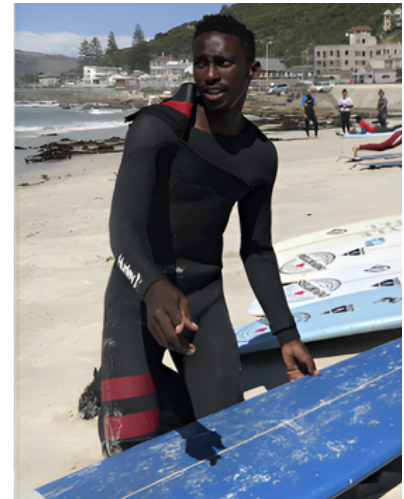
[3] These organisations include Mamelani (South Africa), NEWIG (Ghana), NORSAAC (Ghana), Waves for Change (South Africa), Blue Dragon (Vietnam), KOTO (Vietnam), CORO (India), CREA (India), Jan Sahas (India), Lend a Hand India (India), and Big Change (Russia).

Scale in Influence

How our partners achieved scale in influence

Waves for Change uses surfing to reach the most isolated young people in townships and to address the trauma they have experienced, helping them build resilience and supporting their educational and professional aspirations. EMpower was one of Waves for Change's first international donors and our first grant supported an independent evaluation that validated the impact of their surf therapy model, helping W4C secure larger donors. EMpower's support of key staff positions enabled close relationships with the government, and the organisation attained recognition from the Western Cape Departments of Health, Social Development and Basic Education as a top service provider for marginalised young people.

Waves for Change now reaches over 40 communities in South Africa and has connected 8,500 young people to the healing power of the ocean. They scaled in influence because of their partnership with the local government, which increased the organisation's visibility and led to its significant expansion.



“My involvement in Waves for Change opened so many doors. I'm now a mentor, surfer, surf instructor, lifeguard, and life coach. But I never thought I would be here.”

Mentor, Waves for Change

As one of **Lend A Hand India's (LAHI)** first major donors, EMpower helped elevate their job-skills training programme. LAHI developed a module on alternative income generation and shifted gender role perceptions that inhibit young women from entering non-traditional fields. EMpower supported LAHI to pilot its train-the-trainer programme that helped tens of thousands of government school students improve STEM skills and enter technical fields after graduation. EMpower supported this work to be scaled up to two other Indian states and enabled LAHI to pilot a coalition-building initiative to train a network of organisations in India—including two EMpower grantee partners in Rajasthan—to develop and implement multi-skills training for youth in school. This is scale in influence because it enabled the programme to be implemented in government schools.



“EMpower has always encouraged us to promote unconventional skills for young girls.”

Raj Gilda,
Co-Founder & Vice President, LAHI

Scale in Influence

KOTO, Vitenam, empowers marginalised young people through holistic hospitality training. As one of KOTO's first international donors, EMpower supported its expansion from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City and helped refine recruitment strategies to include more young women and ethnic minorities.

KOTO complemented vocational training with life skills, health, and community service. EMpower's investment in monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes, staff development, strategic planning, and income-generating social enterprise activities enabled KOTO to be recognised as Vietnam's first social enterprise and a leader in providing hospitality training to young people at both national and international levels—all of which increased influence on the field.



“

“I still remember my first time coming to KOTO, it took two hours to finish my interview as I could not share anything with the staff here. I was really nervous and afraid to raise my voice. I did not know how to express my desire to study at KOTO. Fortunately, the staff were patient and slowly led me with their questions and advice. This made me feel touched and more determined to enter KOTO.”

Do Le Minh,
Programme Participant, KOTO





This analysis was made possible by EMpower Team members Nisha Dhawan, Henna Hemnani, Adam Heuman, Tanvi Mishra, Caitlin Mitchell, Sara Saad, and Cynthia Steele. We sincerely thank Nick Koh, EMpower Board Director, Hong Kong, for reviewing this document.