



Building  
Assets to Better Lives

[wmionline.org](http://wmionline.org)

# 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



## Message from the President

Dear Friends:

Last month, I made my fifth trip to East Africa to visit many of WMI's 10 hub programs, meet our new borrowers, caucus with hub managers, and work with both Post Bank Uganda ("PBU") and Co-Operative Bank of Kenya ("Co-Op Bank") on our Transition to Independence partnerships. PBU has proven to be an excellent banking partner for the transition to independence program. It has worked closely with WMI's Local Director, Olive Wolimbwa, to streamline operations and make certain that the ladies transitioning to bank loans understand the banking process. WMI is now very pleased to be working with Co-Op Bank to transition WMI borrowers in the Kenya loan hubs to formal banking services starting in 2012.

In Kampala, the WMI team met with PBU management to discuss PBU's assessment of the first year of independent banking by WMI loan program graduates. The bank deemed the program an unqualified success - it is one of their best performing outreach initiatives. PBU just joined the Global Alliance for Women's Banking and its profile on the Alliance web site highlights the transition program in Buyobo as PBU's premiere vehicle for financial empowerment of village women. From the regular reports we receive, we knew the transition program was moving on quite well; but, we did not expect to have reached these levels of integrating WMI borrowers into formal banking so quickly.

## Loan Program Operations

In 2011, we completed our fourth full year of operations, and it was a year of many accomplishments for the women in the WMI loan program. Here is a quick review of their progress:



- 99% of Borrowers doubled their income in the first 6 months of joining the loan program;
- 100% of Borrowers increased savings;
- 75% of Borrowers transitioning to independent loans report they are earning at least \$3,600/year; 40% are generating very large annual incomes of over \$6,000/year; and, a startling 10% are earning over \$8,000/year;
- 75% of Borrowers have acquired additional farm animals;
- 99% of Borrowers have improved their household meals;
- 85% of Borrowers have improved their business skills;
- 20% of borrowers have begun to hire employees to help with their businesses;
- 97% of borrowers indicate the loan program is having a positive impact on their family.

## Loan Program Expansion

During 2011, WMI expanded the loan program dramatically. By the end of the last loan quarter of the year, WMI had funded almost 3,700 loans, bringing lending to over \$550,000 since WMI launched in 2008.

New loan hubs were added in Konokoya and Gulu, Uganda and all of the training was completed for the contemplated January 2012 launch of the new loan hub in Shikokho, Kenya. Additionally, Olive Wolimbwa and her team traveled by bus from eastern Uganda to central Tanzania to complete the preliminary site work to launch a new hub with Maasai women in Alailelai village, also scheduled for January 2012. Olive and a dedicated team of 10 experienced trainers from Buyobo, Uganda visit all new loan hubs, train the new borrowers, and orient the Head Co-ordinators. Sometimes this means an arduous two-day journey using erratic public transportation; but, the peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge is crucial to the success of the loan program. As the staff in these new loan hubs become more experienced, they in turn will be able to go out to mentor loan hubs added in the future.

As the loan program expanded in 2011, so did WMI's focus on building human capacity in the villages where it operates:

- Ten new trainers went through the World Bank developed "Training-to-Train" program, increasing WMI's capacity to effectively train new borrowers;
- Advanced business planning classes for experienced borrowers were arranged through Carmelo Cocuzza at FinAfrica in Kampala;
- Three new classrooms were constructed at Buyobo Primary School through volunteer donations, village support and intern labor;
- A Bun and Tea Program for the teachers at Buyobo Primary School entered its second year;
- Full sets of reading and math books for 60 students, grades 1 – 6 were delivered to Buyobo Primary from a Williamson, NY school district;
- Fifty-eight boxes of children's books donated by WMI supporters were shipped gratis by British Airways and arrived in Kenya for use by village children in WMI's Siaya loan hub;
- Thousands of eyeglasses were donated to the larger Buyobo community through intern collection efforts.

## Loan Program Accountability and Impact



WMI has run a very structured program since its inception. In 2011, we continued to survey borrowers on a regular basis and analyze that data so that we remain accountable for program operations and so that we can measure loan program impact. This year we expanded the fact book analysis and supplemented it with a presentation on the transition to independent banking program.

WMI's Project Directors, Montana Stevenson and Ainsley Morris, spent the first half of 2011 in Buyobo, Uganda working with WMI borrowers, trainers, coordinators and PBU staff to prepare a Transition to Independent Banking Manual that now serves as a guide for graduating borrowers who are moving on to financial autonomy.



We were also fortunate to have John Finch, an anthropologist from George Washington University, travel to Buyobo, Uganda, WMI's first loan hub (established 2008). He interviewed village elders and compiled a short history of Buyobo, including the way WMI loans have transformed the economy and culture of the community. He published his findings in a booklet that will be distributed to primary schools and local libraries in the Buyobo area. The booklet is available on our website and we hope you will take a few minutes to read this fascinating study of Buyobo and the impact of the WMI loan program. <http://www.wmionline.org/History-and-Culture-of-Buyobo.pdf>

On the Home page of our website you will also see our *Meet the Borrowers* video series, created by intern Erin Kelly. In the latest installment, we introduce you to Alice Monje, a mother of nine, whose WMI loan enabled her to start a poultry business that has transformed her family and her future. Alice lives in rural Buyobo, Uganda and was one of WMI's first borrowers. She has now graduated from the WMI program and transitioned to banking services with PBU, where she has obtained an independent loan of \$750 USD to expand her business! <http://www.wmionline.org/>

## Financial Support

WMI continued to expand support from foundations, corporations, giving circles and other non-profits. This year WMI was very gratified to receive a pledge of support from The Greater Contribution, a non-profit located in northern California, in the amount of \$50,000. The IMF Civic Fund, Towards Sustainability Foundation, Boeing Company and Global Giving all issued major follow-up grants to WMI. Additionally, the US Ambassador's Fund issued a major grant to install solar power in the WMI building in Buyobo.

In the fall of 2011, Greenlight Apparel joined the WMI team, pledging 12.5% of its profits to WMI. In 2011, WMI became eligible for the Federal Combined Giving Campaign and participated in presentations and charity fairs at a number of federal agencies.

Individuals distinguish themselves year after year as the mainstay of WMI's financial support. This year two people made extremely generous donations of \$15,000 or more. Honored with an annual cocktail party, the WMI 500 – a group of women pledging \$250 a year to WMI for at least 2 years - expanded its membership role in 2011 resulting in contributions of over \$15,000 to WMI.

WMI's strategy in 2011 was to seek in-country partners to affiliate with particular loan hubs so that there would be multiple avenues of support for funding loans and developing administrative capacity in the hubs. This has worked extremely well as WMI counted as partners: Arlington Academy of Hope, Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, BIDE, Barbara Wybar and the Bududa Vocational Centre, Judy Lane and the Maasi Sustainability Initiative,

Mpambarra-Cox Foundation, East Africa Center for Progressive Development, Child Development Organization (Uganda), and Laikipia Community Empowerment Centre. These divergent streams of support converged into a mighty river in 2011: WMI raised just shy of **\$200,000** this year. This is \$30,000 more than in 2010! These funds were truly a godsend for the women and families WMI serves. That amount of money goes a long way in the developing world and it was put to work effectively and efficiently by WMI's board and the dedicated local staff in the loan hubs.



## Thank you!

Pretty terrific results! That's what we think looking back on everything you have helped WMI achieve in 2011. Sure, we're small – in fact we rank amongst the very smallest category of NGOs (less than \$250,000 in annual revenues) - but, that doesn't prevent us from being extremely effective or from implementing big ideas. Together we are doing something no other microfinance initiative is doing – we are training impoverished women in business skills; giving them a chance to develop a two year credit track record; providing ongoing support; then transitioning them to bank loans and the formal economy. We are shifting the power center from the banks to the villages. We are harnessing the borrowers' collective strength to negotiate favorable bank terms on behalf of one of the most disenfranchised populations on earth: rural African women.



A dedicated volunteer Board of Directors has been together four years implementing, refining and focusing WMI's operations and expansion. A very talented volunteer Advisory Board of experts has devoted countless hours to developing WMI's capacity and brainstorming growth strategies. Thank you!

None of this would be possible without the financial contributions and hard work of WMI's thousands of supporters. Please accept our heartfelt thank you on behalf of the thousands of impoverished women and families in east Africa that WMI serves. You are the heartbeat of WMI. Every contribution, large or small, every act of kindness you offer and every outreach gesture you make is gratefully received and put to good use.

There is a lot of discussion in NGO circles about the parameters of "North-South Partnerships" – the context in which developed countries offer aid in the developing world. Numerous research studies and academic articles focus on how to develop a standardized framework for this outreach. Your participation in WMI has helped us forge a distinctive path in how to reach out to women living in extreme poverty. Working through village level organizations run by women lets WMI take a bottom-up approach that values the culture, point of view, ideas and input of the populations we serve. By providing resources to the vibrant networks village women have built over decades of mutual reliance, WMI is leveraging traditional concepts of social capital to bring access to financial services to the poor in a very personal way. Respecting the people and environment where we work has allowed WMI to develop a methodology that is equitable and effective.

We hope that you have experienced the joy you have given to poor woman entrepreneurs and their families through the many videos and photos posted on the WMI web site. WMI loans bring hope to areas of extreme rural poverty and it's that indomitable spirit of hope what we seek to capture in the plethora of web site media.

With sincere gratitude,

**Robyn Nietert**  
**President**



## 2011 Program Accomplishments

- This year WMI issued 1,986 loans amounting to \$308,000 – more than doubling the amount in 2010. To date WMI has issued 3,663 loans. The impact of the loan program is immediate and dramatic. Incomes double and savings rates improve. Women report feeling more self-confident and organized. Reports revealed that families are pulling together to support the businesses and husbands are helping their wives not just with their businesses, but with household chores as well. Children are eating more nutritious food and school fees are being paid.
- Expansion-wise, WMI added 2 new village hub locations and finished the groundwork to launch 2 new hubs in January 2012.
- In January 2011, the first borrowers moved on to independent borrowing, completing the cycle of WMI's transition to independence program. Six borrower groups are now in independent borrowing, and ten groups graduated to transition bank loans.
- On the fundraising front we have had our best year, raising nearly \$200,000. Added to the totals of \$52,000 for 2008, \$104,000 for 2009, and \$163,000 for 2010, the grand total for funds raised to date is over \$500,000 for program operations.
- WMI was fortunate to have 10 talented college interns in Bethesda this summer and their research and data analysis provided a wealth of information on how the WMI loan program is changing lives. Copies of the new Fact Books are available on the web site at: [wmionline.org](http://wmionline.org).
- WMI sponsored 23 volunteers in Buyobo this year, including the 8 summer interns from Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD.





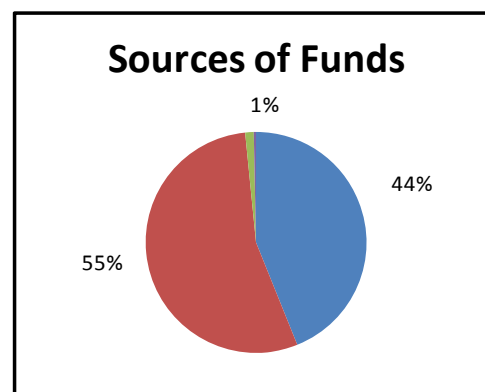
## Goals for 2012

- Assist 16 additional groups of women in their transition to independent banking in Uganda, providing them support and working with PBU to ensure a mutually beneficial program. Ten groups will move from the transition program to fully independent banking. Assist 4 groups in Kenya in transitioning to formal banking with Co-Op Bank.
- Develop additional business training modules for the women moving to independent banking.
- Develop a community service organization for the women moving to independent banking so that they can start projects to support their local communities.
- Explore holding an annual leadership meeting for key personnel in WMI's CBO partners who are managing the new village hub loan program.
- Train at least 10 new trainers among the ten village hub locations.
- Develop accurate operating budgets for the new village hub locations.
- Identify two new village hub locations and village-level partners.
- Continue high school internship program.
- Expand the loan program quarterly, adding up to 40 borrowers per hub operation.
- Expand speaking opportunities at high schools, colleges, and universities.
- Initiate a second woman's giving group.

# **Women's Microfinance Initiative** **Income and Program Expenses** **January - December 2011**

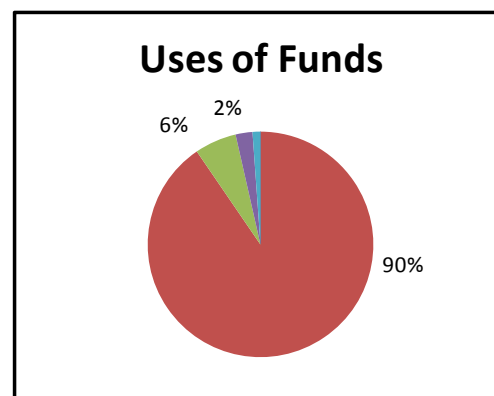
## **Sources of Funds**

Donations - Individuals	\$ 86,974	<b>44%</b>
Donations - Foundations/Corporations	\$ 108,003	<b>55%</b>
Program Income (less direct expense)	\$ 2,500	<b>1%</b>
Interest Earnings	\$ 642	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Sources of Funds</b>	<b><u>\$ 198,119</u></b>	



## **Major Uses of Funds**

Loan Funds	\$ 177,740	<b>90%</b>
Community Building	\$ 11,748	<b>6%</b>
Loan Program/Financial Literacy Training	\$ 4,766	<b>2%</b>
WMI Program Expense	\$ 2,237	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b><u>\$ 196,491</u></b>	



Source - audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2011



## Special Thanks

The WMI **Board of Directors** has guided the organization through another successful year. They have devoted hundreds of hours to program planning and development, fundraising, accounting, and outreach. Our **Advisory Board** has been especially active with volunteers assuming responsibility for major areas of operations.

**Denise Kalule**, Business Manager and Personal Assistant to the Head of Audley Limited in Uganda, was again instrumental in coordinating our development initiatives within Uganda and WMI's agreement with PBU. **Robert Israelite**, a credit specialist with CUNA Mutual Group, provided expert consultation on lending guidelines and the structure of the independent banking phase of WMI's loan program. **Barry Metzger**, a former partner at the law firm of **Baker and McKenzie**, drafted all of the banking documents on a pro bono basis; partner **Lloyd Winans** has now taken on the role of WMI's chief banking counsel. **Robert Lewis**, also a partner at Baker and McKenzie, continued to manage WMI's legal affairs and provide a wealth of resources from the law firm's skilled team of experts. **Thierry van Bastelaer**, a principal associate and economist on International Health for Abt Associates, joined WMI's Advisory Board in 2011 and has provided valuable input on WMI's economic model.

The staff of PBU worked tirelessly with WMI to finalize the independent banking agreement. Special thanks go to **Olive Namutebi**, PBU's Manager of Strategic Planning, who acted as WMI's liaison to the bank; **Paul Ndehgo**, PBU's head of microfinance initiatives; **Jimmy Adiga**, the Head of Credit; **Stephen Maasi**, the Regional Manager for the eastern District; **Emmanuel Opio Emodo**, Mbale Mbale Branch Manager; and, **Efrance Nakitooke**, Credit Assistant at the Mable Branch.

**Karon Wright**, President of **The Greater Contribution**, recommended WMI to receive major financial support from her organization. **Donna Boxer** of Chevy Chase, MD and her colleagues formed a giving circle that has pledged annual support to WMI for a 4 year period. **Amy Berger** marshaled a coordinated donation from all members of her book club in Vermont. **Sally Kelly** organized successful "friendraisers" at her home in Chevy Chase.

**Beth Tomasello, Alison Ewing, Kathy Staudaer, Lisa Mitnick and Vicki Dorman** represented WMI at local gift fairs and community events to raise thousands of dollars. The WMI Holiday Tribute Card was also a big hit this year, raising not only funds for WMI but raising general awareness of our mission. Individuals honored are listed on the web site on the WMI Tribute List.

Outstanding contributions were made by the eight Walt Whitman High School interns who traveled to Buyobo, Uganda this past summer. The trip so inspired them that five of these committed young adults are returning to Buyobo again in the summer of 2012, with a new group of Whitman students chaperoned by teacher **Bob Mathis**.

A dynamic group of college interns and recent graduates played an important role in strengthening WMI's infrastructure in Buyobo this summer. **Eva Stevenson, Jacklyn Vouthouris, Erin Kelly and Ida Stuve** each spent over a month in the village working on projects as disparate as sketching out the wall murals for the new school rooms, revamping Olive's budget and expense reporting system, to shooting top quality video biographies of WMI borrowers. **John Finch** volunteered in Buyobo to interview villagers and prepare a booklet about Buyobo and the impact of the loan program (see separate article).

Local capacity for the loan program was increased enormously by the dedicated work of WMI's Project Directors **Montana Stevenson** and **Ainsley Morris**, who rounded out 9 months of service in the field in July 2011. Their efforts resulted in the publication of a WMI Banking Manual, which is proving to be a valuable resource for the loan program.

Not to be outdone, 10 high school and college students interned with WMI in Bethesda in 2011. They entered and analyzed data and produced the annual Fact Books on the loan program's impact. Additionally, **Elizabeth Robbins**, a senior at American University interned with WMI during the fall.

Thanks to **Kathy Staudaher** who has provided invaluable office assistance and a watchful eye on the book drive; **Beth Tomasello** who has been assisting with grant writing; **Sally Kelly** who helped organize the Annual Potluck Fundraiser; and to **Deborah Smith** for preparing financial statements and projections.

Regarding the WMI loan hubs, special thanks goes to **Olive Wolimbwa**, WMI's Local Director, and **Jackline Namonye**, WMI's Assistant Local Director, and their team of 15 staff members, who have taken on increasing responsibility for managing WMI's in-country operations. They have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills. Their resourcefulness and resilience have been key factors in the loan program's growth and success.

One final note. A special word of thanks and support to **Robineh Wamanga** and **Beatrice Bukowa**, who are members of the WMI loan groups in Buyobo and Bududa, Uganda respectively. They have each been elected as the women's representative to the district government: Robineh in Sironko and Beatrice in Bududa. They asked their WMI colleagues to support them as "sisters of the soil." Our hope is that their participation in local government will help raise awareness of the critical need for access to financial services for rural women and also highlight the achievements that rural women can attain when provided with the requisite resources.



## Board of Directors and Officers

**Robyn G. Nietert** – President. For over 25 years, she was a member of the Washington, D.C. law firm of Brown, Nietert and Kaufman, which specialized in telecommunications law, with a focus on innovative wireless technologies.

**Jane E. Erickson** – First Vice President. She is an executive with a Washington, D.C. area global health care consulting firm.

**Elizabeth Gordon** – Vice President. She has been involved in the real estate finance/development business (predominantly multifamily, seniors, low and moderate income housing) since 1985 and currently works for Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C.

**Deborah W. Smith** – Treasurer. She spent her career in corporate and personal finance, and was a Certified Financial Planner and registered securities representative.

**Teresa Ciccotelli** - Secretary. She is a retired corporate attorney with over 20 years' experience in Fortune 100 companies, most recently with Saint-Gobain's US offices in PA.

**Beatrix Van der Vossen** – Recording Secretary. A native of the Netherlands, she is Assistant to the Office of the Executive Director of the Netherlands Constituency to the IMF.

**June Kyakoby** – Special Advisor for Buyobo Project. She has been at the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) in Washington, D.C since 2001.

## Advisory Board

**Carol Booker**, attorney, Washington, DC

**Barbara Feuer**, psychologist, Bethesda, MD

**Lillian Hagen**, attorney, Bethesda, MD

**Bonnie Holcomb**, anthropologist, Bethesda, MD

**Robert Israelite**, credit specialist, Chicago, IL

**Denise Kalule**, business manager, Kampala UG

**Sally Kelly**, architect, Chevy Chase, MD

**Harris Recht**, attorney, Ridgewood, NJ

**Katherine Staudaer**, occupational therapist, Bethesda, MD

**Al Tetrault**, housing specialist, Vienna, VA

**Beth Tomasello**, attorney, Bethesda, MD

**Christine Uzzell**, information technology specialist, Bethesda, MD

**Thierry van Bastelaer**, economist, Bethesda, MD

**Carol Van Oudenaren**, librarian, Bethesda, MD

**William Wilhelm**, finance professor, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

**Mona Yacoubian**, foreign affairs consultant, Bethesda, MD

**For further information about Women's Microfinance Initiative contact us at:**

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