



WOMEN'S
MICROFINANCE INITIATIVE

Building
Assets to Better Lives

wmionline.org

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Message from the President

It's February again, and I've just returned from my 13th visit to our loan programs in East Africa. And, once again, I am so amazed by the physical changes I encounter from year to year – new housing and shops that weren't there a year ago line the village roads. Although we can't claim credit for everything new, there is no doubt that we provided the impetus for economic change. Over the years, WMI has invested over \$475,000 in infrastructure development, and through our loan fund, we've seen an enormous physical, social, and psychological change as well. Our loans have enabled these rural women to start or expand businesses. They've made profits and plowed them back into their businesses, built permanent housing, and educated their children. They are more confident. They are healthier. They feel a sense of pride in ownership.

Three key pillars provide the structure that makes possible WMI's powerful impact on reducing poverty and improving household living conditions for rural women and their families. The first is the **Revolving Loan Fund**. This \$1.2 million fund has enabled almost 19,000 women in rural villages to obtain loans to start or expand their businesses. An integral component of the loan is our on-going training program, along with peer-to-peer mentoring, which ensures that the women learn the financial and marketing skills necessary to run a successful business. These businesses become permanent fixtures in the village. In our longitudinal study, we found that some 95% of the businesses were still operational after five years. Although we originally conceived of our program as being a two-year loan and training facility, we are finding that providing ongoing financial services to qualified borrowers benefits both the borrowers and the local programs.

The second pillar is **Infrastructure Development**. Building a local meeting hall in a rural village has an impact far beyond sheltering borrowers from rain when they come to pay their loans. The ladies in the remote centers pool their funds to buy the land and WMI finances the construction. Investing in the land gives borrowers a stake in maintaining and managing the new buildings wisely. Along with each meeting hall we build a latrine to improve sanitation facilities. The pavilion compounds have become a source of pride in the villages: the ladies are so gratified to have a place to call their own where they can meet and conduct their activities. They are also rented for events like weddings and government meetings – thus generating income streams for the loan program. To date, we've built a central office and meeting facility compound and seven sub-hub pavilions in Uganda, and expanded existing office/meeting facilities in Kenya.

Third, and often key, is our support of **Special Projects** that either spark or complement the work we are doing. They range from a small grant to support women who wanted to start a mushroom cooperative to paying for solar power for village medical facilities. We've supported both physical and mental health initiatives and funded after school groups to teach young teens about positive behaviors. Over the years, we've funded a number of these small projects (usually around \$1,000 each), investing a total of \$55,000.

WMI does not work alone. All of these accomplishments are a team effort. We would like to express our profound gratitude to everyone who helps make the WMI loan program a success. This includes all the rural women who provide local leadership and staff the loan hubs, our colleagues at our banking partners, most especially, Postbank Uganda (PBU), our U.S. and Africa-based college interns and fellows, the WMI board and volunteers, and all the WMI donors who share our vision to combat poverty through empowering rural women and giving them the skills they need to support their families. Thank you so much for your loyal and ongoing support!

Robyn Nietert, President

Program Highlights

Program Expansion

In the Fall, we assessed the potential for a new program in the Maasai Mara area of western Kenya in Aitong village. The women were well-organized into their own self-help group and had solid business ideas and start-ups. Our expert training team from Buyobo traveled by bus to Aitong and conducted a three-day training session in December, with the program launch scheduled for January 2020. Forty women will be offered loans in the pilot project.

Electrification of Dispensary

As part of WMI's mission of women's empowerment, our economic model puts control of the WMI loan hubs in the hands of the rural women we serve. The interest from the loans is managed by our local partners and they select community projects to support with any revenue left over after paying the loan program operating expenses. In Tloma, Tanzania our partner women's association, Ganako Women's Community Organization (GWOCO), voted to use some of their income after expenses to electrify the local dispensary. Tloma dispensary is the only local health care provider available in Tloma village in Karatu, Tanzania. Doctors and nurses are stationed there 24/7 and are responsible for making sure adequate health services are provided to the community. The electrification was gratefully welcomed by the community, especially women, who use it extensively for pregnancy check-ups, childbirth, and infant care.

New Meeting Space and Latrines

Continuing our goal of supporting the hubs through proper infrastructure, in 2019 we constructed our seventh sub-hub meeting pavilion/office, including latrines (a very big plus for village-level infrastructure). The women of Mutufu purchased the land and WMI built an office/meeting pavilion and three-stance latrine. The buildings are used for loan collection and training activities, and also provide a venue for village level meetings. Two pavilions, in Gombe and in Kyibboko, are slated for construction in 2020. Each new pavilion will follow the same blueprint (originally designed by WMI Advisory Board Member Sally Kelly).



BeadWORKS

WMI partners with BeadWORKS, which helps pastoralist women in northern Kenya translate their traditional skills into much needed income. Like WMI, BeadWORKS is geared to rural women who need to access program services in the villages where they live and manage their households – their lack of mobility frequently isolates them from participating in outreach programs. With over 100 women already participating in the business, WMI provided materials to support the training of an additional 440 women across nine rural conservancies so they can make beaded accents for goods that BeadWORKS markets. The women work at home and this makes it possible for them to earn income and retain their traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle.

Bee Cooperative

Our western Uganda partner, BCDC, joined forces with us to support a bee keeping cooperative run by disabled ladies in nearby Kyegegwa community. We provided grant funds for loans and BCDC is providing the training and supervision. Twelve loans will be made each quarter for a total of 48 loans in the first 12 months. If all goes well the program will expand next year.

Outreach to Hearing Impaired Students

In 1997, Budadiri Girls' Primary School head teacher Sister Kassedde introduced the Hearing Impaired/Special Needs Unit to assist pupils with developmental issues. It is the only school in the District that specializes in these issues, making it a very valuable resource for the surrounding communities. Experiencing first-hand the important work the school is doing and how it indirectly supports the women in the loan program, prompted WMI to work with our local partner, the Buyobo Women's Association, to make an annual donation of materials and supplies to support both the Hearing Impaired/Special Needs Unit and the traditional education program. For the Hearing Impaired Unit Students, we provided bar soap, sugar, flip flops, and biscuits, all of which our summer interns individually packed for each student. Additionally, maize flour and grains were delivered for school lunches.



2019 Program Accomplishments

Loan Program

- Under the leadership of the Buyobo Women's Association, in 2019, WMI provided 7,300 loans totaling \$1,000,000, bringing the total value of loans issued since 2008 to over \$7.2 million. This year WMI added 2,500 new borrowers, bringing our total number of borrowers since 2008 to over 17,500. Each loan positively impacts at least 20 people, (including nuclear and extended family members, suppliers and employees), thus WMI has been able to reach over 350,000 individuals and improve their lives.

- We continue to improve operational integrity and financial controls in our largest hub, Buyobo, with the installation of CCTV security cameras to record loan operations and the development of custom software to automate the bank reconciliation process. We plan to re-look at off-the-shelf loan tracking software for Uganda. Our partner in the Lewa loan program instituted successful use of such software this year. Additionally, we hired an assistant Financial Manager to provide back-up on record-keeping and management.

- Our default rate in Buyobo remains low at 1.7%. We attribute this success to the loan group cross-guarantee requirement and the powerful impact of social capital.

- WMI President, Robyn Nietert (pictured at right in Kyegegwa, Uganda) made her 13th annual field visit to the loan hubs in East Africa. Her field visits provide continuity and encouragement to the borrowers who turn out to greet her and thank WMI donors for their continued support.



Community Engagement

- We continue to support many of our very successful outreach projects. In Uganda: **Boys and Girls Group, Village Health Teams, Keep Buyobo Clean, Tea and Bun for Teachers, School Lunch** for P6-7 students. In Kenya: **Mental Health Counseling**. In Tanzania, **Adult Literacy and Health Training**.

- **The Orphan Outreach Program**, launched by WMI's 2018 summer interns now provides resources to orphaned children in Buyobo and the surrounding communities. In Uganda, children who have lost at least one parent are considered orphans. Most of these children live with relatives or other adults in the community; however, they often face issues of mistreatment, neglect, and hunger. WMI launched the Orphan Outreach Program which provides a safe, afterschool haven, with access to adult counselors, academic assistance, and school supplies. Today, 32 children come to Buyobo each week to participate in the program.

- **Table Tennis**. Kevin Mafabi, a top Ugandan table tennis player with connections to the village approached us about starting a table tennis training program for children in Buyobo. WMI granted funds for the purchase of a table, 20 learner racquets, and a box of balls. Mafabi will work with the local children to identify and nurture talent, expose the children to competition across Uganda, teach discipline, and perhaps to create some table tennis champions. 65 children have registered for the program.



2019 Resource Fellow and Interns

- **Caitlin Seandel** completed her two-year Fellowship in August of 2019. Following in her footsteps is the equally talented **Kaycee Corcoran**. Kaycee came to us after a two year stint with the Peace Corps in rural eastern Uganda, so is very familiar with daily life and culture here. She brings the additional talent of having taught alternative gardening to combat climate change, especially drought and methods to improve household nutrition through diet changes.

- WMI sponsored 9 volunteer interns in Uganda this year. From March through August 2019, Buyobo was abuzz with the myriad projects, analyses and workshops being conducted by a phalanx of very talented college interns and recent graduates. They hailed from: Univ. of Wisconsin; Univ. of Manchester (England); Notre Dame; Berkeley; University of Strathclyde (Glasgow); and Princeton. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to these very passionate, talented and committed young adults who dove right in and managed everything from a primary school musical competition to revamping the web site to producing a high quality Fact Book that documents the impact of the loan program.



2019 Program Results

Annual Impact Survey. Our college interns managed a massive data analysis to document the loan program's impact. They reviewed 2,423 borrower surveys, which were conducted during the prior 12 months, to develop a nuanced picture of the wide-ranging outcomes. For the eleventh year in a row, WMI survey results show that the loan program continues to have a significant impact in reducing poverty and improving household living standards for rural families. The results are published in an annual FactBook, posted on the WMI website, which provides some fascinating insights into the lives of the rural women we serve. It documents just how profoundly the loan program disrupts the cycle of poverty.

Some highlights include:

- **Savings rates more than doubled**
- **Income increased over 500%**
- **98% loan repayment rate**
- **98% of borrowers report improved health**
- **99% of borrowers were able to purchase livestock**
- **Every single borrower (100%) who is supporting a student's education reported that the challenges of paying educational fees have been alleviated by her business and her loan.**

After 12 years of providing loans to rural women in East Africa, WMI has invested more than \$7,200,000, served over 17,500 women, and reached 350,000 ancillary beneficiaries, making a significant financial and social impact in rural Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Through the work of this program, rural women have been empowered to step into their potential as business owners, heads of households, and community leaders. This has opened up opportunities for a better future for our borrowers, their families, and their communities. It is an initiative we look forward to supporting for years to come.



Major Funding Support

WMI raised over \$215,000 for village women in East Africa through many generous grants and donations in 2019. Special recognition goes to the following:

Foundations and Corporations

Dining for Women
Toward Sustainability Foundation
The International Foundation
Lillian Feder Foundation

Program Partners

Barbara Wybar and the Bududa Vocational Centre (Konokoya, Uganda)
Mpambara-Cox Foundation (Kabale, Uganda)
Nick Smith and Buseesa Community Development Centre (Buseesa, Kibaale, Uganda)
Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (Lewa, Kenya)
Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church (Shikokho, Kenya)
Judy Lane and the Alailelai Maasai Sustainability Organization (Alailelai, Bugar, Tloma, Tanzania)
Rachel Blackmore and Weston-Turville Wells for Tanzania (Arusha, Tanzania)
Nancy Peed and Arua Women United for Poverty Eradication (Arua, Uganda)
Andrea Sedlock and Rukundo International (Kabale, Uganda)

Individuals through Combined Giving

Combined Federal Campaign (under the auspices of Aid for Africa)
Global Giving
IMF Helping Hands Program
Network for Good
World Bank Community Connections Fund

We are extremely grateful for all donations, and especially thankful to those who have provided on-going support to WMI. As long-time supporters know, WMI is managed by a volunteer group of professional women. Donors can rest assured that their financial contributions are not supporting large salaries for US staff or office overhead!

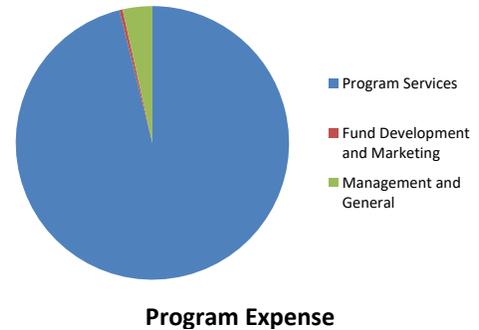
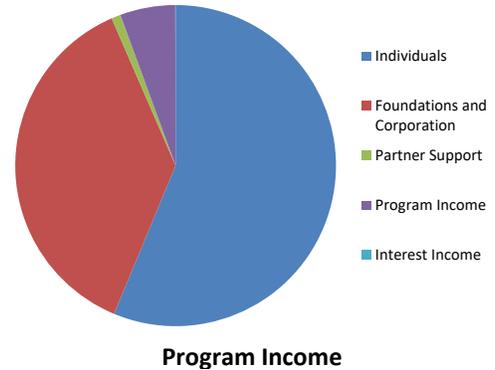
WAYS TO SUPPORT

Make a tax-deductible donation online at www.wmionline.com or send us your check payable to Women's Microfinance Initiative to PO Box 485, Cabin John, MD 20818.



Financial Report

	2019	2018
REVENUES		
Individuals	\$ 121,121	\$ 101,646
Foundations and Corporation	\$ 80,077	\$ 52,182
Partner Support	\$ 2,000	\$ -
Program Income	\$ 11,980	\$ 3,750
Interest Income	\$ 76	\$ 77
TOTAL	\$ 215,254	\$ 157,655
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$ 179,745	\$ 154,566
Fund Development and Marketing	\$ 719	\$ 957
Management and General	\$ 6,564	\$ 8,616
TOTAL	\$ 187,028	\$ 164,139
NET REVENUE/EXPENSES	\$ 28,226	\$ (6,484)
ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 199,841	\$ 170,186
Prepaid Expense	\$ 2,553	\$ 2,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 202,394	\$ 172,186
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable	\$ 2,146	\$ 164
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 2,146	\$ 164
NET ASSETS, UNRESTRICTED	\$ 200,248	\$ 172,022
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 202,394	\$ 172,186



Treasurer's Report

WMI continues to raise funds successfully for its operations and has significant sustained grant support. This year we were honored to receive the following grants: \$25,000 each from Dining for Women and Toward Sustainability Foundations, \$22,000 from the International Foundation and \$10,000 from the Lillian Feder Foundation. Our newer programs in Uganda and Tanzania are supported on a significant cost sharing basis with our NGO partners. Individual contributions provided 60% of revenues while foundation and corporate support provided 40%.

Program Services include loan fund grants, infrastructure grants, special projects, training support, and some minor operational support. In 2019, \$88,839 was allocated to our loan funds, \$35,657 to meeting shelters and community buildings, \$28,043 to special projects, and \$7,644 to Local Operations (borrower training and program oversight).

WMI's IRS Administrative and Fundraising Rate (a measure of operational efficiency) is extremely low at 3.38%. Copies of the 2019 audit are available upon request.

Deborah Smith
Treasurer

WMI Program Leadership

US Leadership Team – Operations Committee

Robyn Nietert, President
Deborah Smith, Treasurer
June Kyakobye, Board Member

WMI Buyobo Leadership – East Africa Operations Management

Olive Wolimbwa, Local Program Director
Jackline Nagudi Namonye, Assistant Local Director and Head Trainer
Phoebe Irene Wetaka, Deputy Assistant Local Director
Grace Mangala, Systems Operations Financial Manager
Milly Walimbwa, Financial Manager

Country Specific Operations Support for US Leadership Team

Judy Lane and Rachel Blackmore – Tanzania
Anita Mpambara-Cox – Southwest Uganda
Nick Smith - Western Uganda
Barbara Wybar - Eastern Uganda
Nancy Peed – Northwest Uganda
Purity Mwende – Northern Uganda
Jennifer Miheso – Western Uganda

Program Leadership Uganda

Betty Bigala - Bududa Women's Development Group (Konokoya village, Bududa)
Hope Kazahura - E. Lushaya Women's Group (Kabale)
Jennifer Khawoya - Matuwa Micro Finance Women Group (Buputo)
Winnie Kyakuha and Tusabe Tadeo - Buseesa Comm. Dev. Centre (Buseesa village, Kibaale)
Olive Wolimbwa - Buyobo Women's Association (Buyobo)

Program Leadership Kenya

John Kinoti and Purity Mwende – Lewa Wildlife Conservancy Microfinance Program
Jennifer Musanga Miheso - Shikokho Chanuka Women's C.B.O (Shikokho)

Program Leadership Tanzania

Embapa Runguna - Korongoro Community Trust (Nainokanoka Ward)
Levina Emanuel - Tloma Community Organization, (Karatu)

WMI Fellows

Uganda: Kaycee Corcoran (2019-2020), Caitlin Seandel (2019)

Interns

Uganda: Will Keunster, Hilary Atayi, Noah Cha, Grace Collins, Kelly Collins, Paddy Mukasa, Caroline Plouff, Ethan Seide, and Nora Tucker

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 Lab Corp., a 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 – Assistant 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 – Secretary. A native of the Netherlands, she is retired from the Netherlands Constituency to the IMF.

June Kyakobye – 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

Lillian Hagen, attorney, SEC, Bethesda, MD

Brenda Hansen, affordable housing attorney, Bethesda, MD

Bonnie Holcomb, anthropologist, Bethesda, MD

Robert Israelite, credit specialist, CUNA Mutual Group, Chicago, IL

Hannah Kahl, former WMI Fellow, San Francisco, CA

Sally Kelly, architect, Chevy Chase, MD

Jessica Littman, former WMI Fellow, Tanzania

Archie Mears, microfinance expert, West Linton, Scottish Borders, UK

Ainsley Morris Cohen, investment analyst, Washington, DC

Olive Namutebi, Chairperson, Albinism Umbrella, Kampala, Uganda

Juliet Nyambisa, banker, K-Rep, Nairobi, Kenya

Harris Recht, attorney, Ridgewood, NJ

Thomas Richardson, IMF Representative, Vienna, Austria

Montana Stevenson, procurement manager, Danone N.A., Denver, CO

Al Tetrault, retired professor, University of Maryland, Vienna, VA

Beth Tomasello, attorney, SIECUS, Bethesda, MD

Thierry van Bastelaer, economist, Abt Associates, Bethesda, MD

Carol Van Oudenaren, MBA, retired librarian, Bethesda, MD

Jackie Vouthouris, financial modeler, New York, NY

Mona Yacoubian, foreign affairs consultant, Bethesda, MD

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

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