



# Women's Microfinance Initiative

## Uganda



2016 Annual Factbook

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“Standard of living  
has changed”

“I am able to take care  
of myself and my  
children”





# I. Introduction

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“I am now respected by the community.”

“I now live a better life.”

“Women can educate children.”

“I am self-reliant.”

These are direct quotes from just a few of the thousands of women who participate in the WMI loan program in Uganda. These firsthand accounts, as well as the data presented in this factbook, demonstrate that WMI has enabled village women to significantly better their own, their families', and their communities' lives.



## A. Methodology

The Women's Microfinance Initiative is a non-profit organization based in the United States that provides small loans (up to \$250) to women in rural East Africa so that they may start or expand small businesses. Loans are issued to small groups of 20 borrowers, all of whom guarantee each other's repayment. Over the course of the 24-month loan program, borrowers receive four, six-month term business loans, of increasing amounts. During this period, WMI provides borrowers with training in financial literacy,

business management, and record-keeping to ensure that borrowers have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. After successfully completing the WMI loan program, borrowers graduate to financial independence. Women use their business profits to provide their families with better education, healthcare, and meals.

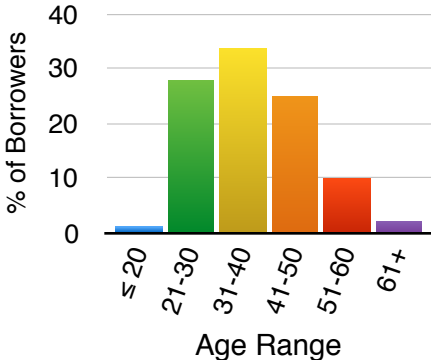
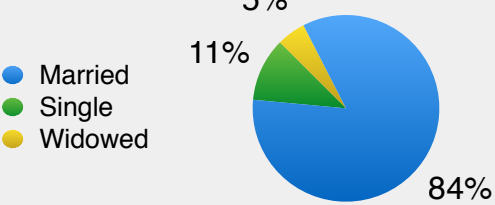
WMI partners with local, women-focused, community-based organizations (CBOs) to operate each Ugandan village loan hub. The CBOs supervise local data collection utilizing borrower surveys that are completed every six months, starting with a baseline survey when borrowers enter the loan program. The data is compiled and analyzed annually in the U.S. The data presented in this fact book was collected from July 2015 through April 2016. Data was collected from 2,630 individual surveys from the loan hubs in Uganda. This factbook was prepared by this summer's WMI Bethesda interns, Sarah Barakso Martin, Marlee Grant, Devoe Arnold, and Madeleine Scanio.



## II. Borrower Profile

### A. Household Demographics

The majority of borrowers are between the ages of 21 and 40; nearly 15% are 51 or older. Women in this senior age group are eager to start businesses, as they typically no longer have smaller children at home that they must care for and their now grown children may help with the business. More than three-quarters of the women are married. The table below presents basic borrower information.

<p><b>Age</b></p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>% of Borrowers by Age Range</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Range</th> <th>% of Borrowers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>≤20</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21-30</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31-40</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>41-50</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51-60</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>61+</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Range	% of Borrowers	≤20	1%	21-30	28%	31-40	34%	41-50	25%	51-60	10%	61+	2%
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<p><b>Average Household Size</b></p>	<p>6 people; 33% have 8 or more household members</p>														
<p><b>Average Number of Orphans in Household</b> <i>With few institutions or resources available to provide for children who lose their parents to illness or conflict, it is common for women to open their homes to care for orphans</i></p>	<p>1 orphan</p>														
<p><b>Average Household Members with Malaria in Past Year</b></p>	<p>0 people</p>														
<p><b>At Least One Case of HIV/AIDS</b></p>	<p>8% of households</p>														

## B. Household Profile

79% of the women in our loan program live in semi-permanent homes constructed with mud walls that must be regularly smeared with a manure-based compound. Roofs are typically tin or grass. This style of home presents numerous health risks, including potential illness from insects attracted to the manure walls and grass roofs. The other 21% of women live in permanent homes with brick walls, which are healthier, sturdier, and safer. Power sources are rudimentary and indoor plumbing is practically non-existent.

<b>Lighting Source</b> <i>Over two-thirds of households use an open-flame lighting source</i>	Kerosene Lamp: 42% of households Candles: 26% Electricity Pole: 16% Other: 16%
<b>Toilet Facility</b> <i>Latrines and pits, whether shared or owned, are the most commonly used toilets</i>	Own Latrine: 79% of households Own Pit: 12% Shared Latrine: 5% Other: 4%
<b>Cooking Fuel</b> <i>All women use fossil fuels to cook meals</i>	Collected Wood: 79% of households Charcoal: 23% Bought Wood: 5%
<b>Water Source</b> <i>Access to clean water is one of the most pressing issues in rural communities</i>	98% untreated



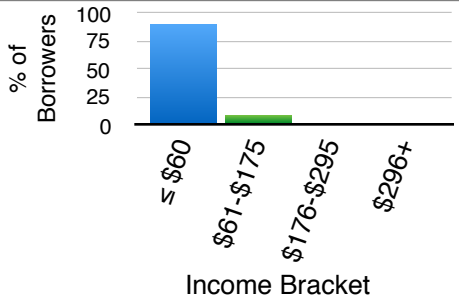
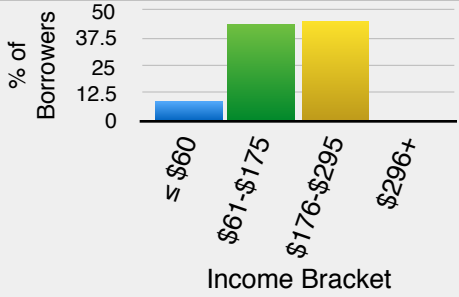
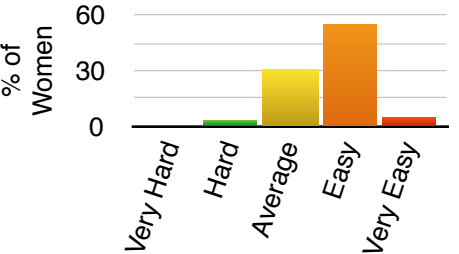


# III. Results

## A. Financial Impact

Prior to WMI operations in Uganda, only 9% of borrowers had a bankaccount upon entering the program. Extensive training in saving, record-keeping, and other business skills significantly increases their financial acumen. The large majority of borrowers save money weekly, and theyalso keeps records either daily or weekly.

WMI’s loans—beginning at \$100—as well as the training, enables them to successfully start new businesses or expand existing ones. 91% of borrowers reported that their business had expanded since their last loan, and 94% plan to take more loans. Additionally, 90% of borrowers kept the same business throughout loan cycles. The following table demonstrates how WMI’s loans helped the women to achieve financial growth.

<p>Before Loan — 90% of women were living on <b>less than \$2/day</b>.</p>			
<p><b>Monthly Income</b></p>			
<p>After Loan — 90% of women were earning <b>more than \$2/day</b> with nearly 50% earning between \$6 and \$10 a day.</p>			
<p>Savings improved 780%</p>	Before Loan	\$22	
	After Loan	\$172	
<p><b>Total Savings Amount</b></p>			
<p>Use of financial services improved 400%</p>	Before Loan	9% of women	
	After Loan	36% of women	
<p><b>Money in Bank</b></p>			
<p><b>Ease of Loan Repayment</b></p>			
<p>Robust businesses mean that only 3% of women found it difficult to repay their loans.</p>			

## B. Business Operations

Women think about their businesses, analyze their problems, and craft solutions; the program significantly improves their business skills. Furthermore, 10% of the women assess the market prices for their products and will store their products when prices are low so they can increase their profit by selling when prices are high.

<b>Business Challenges</b>	Competition: 30% of women Transport: 23% Low Demand: 17% Season Change: 14% Creditors: 13% Other: 3%
<b>Plan to Solve Challenges</b>	Change Business: 19% of women Use Friendly Language: 19% Change Location: 18% Change Means of Transport: 15% Reduce Price: 10% Other: 19%
<b>Improved Business Skills</b>	Marketing: 62% of women Budgeting: 62% Problem-Solving: 52%
<b>Keep Products off Market until Prices Rise</b>	10% of women
<b>Who Helps Women with Their Businesses</b>	Husband: 61% Children: 53% Other: 3%
<b>How Family Helps</b>	Labor: 49% Selling: 36% Encouragement: 33%



"There is friendship among people"





## Personal Impact

In addition to providing greater access to financial services and business opportunities, the loan program improves the personal lives of its participants. When asked, 100% of borrowers stated that the program bettered their lives as women. Additionally, all women reported that the lives of their family members had also significantly improved. The following table describes how women used their increased income to purchase essentials for living a happier, healthier life.

<b>Top Expenditures</b> <i>Profit from business funds daily essentials</i>	Food: 81% of women Healthcare: 73% Education: 72%
<b>Top Purchases</b>	Livestock*: 67% of women Radio: 27% Tools: 22% Television: 20% Mobile Phone: 20%
<b>Improved Personal Skills</b>	Determined: 62% of women Self-Confident: 62% Resourceful: 54%
<b>Improved Reading, Writing, Arithmetic Skills</b>	79% of women
<b>Improved Healthcare Affordability</b>	94% of women
<b>Bought More Mosquito Nets</b>	88% of women
<b>More Meals</b>	99% of women
<b>Improved Home</b>	40% of women
<b>Changed Lighting Source</b>	28% of women
<b>Changed Cooking Fuel</b>	16% of women

\*Buying livestock is a common way to save money. Because livestock do not lose value due to inflation, this method can secure against the uncertainty of unpredictable markets.

## IV. Societal Change

97% of Ugandan women participating in WMI stated that there had been improvements to their village since the start of the program.

These changes included increased accessibility to vital products and services (e.g. food, healthcare) and improved ability to provide for their community by assisting those in need.

Additionally, participants overwhelmingly agreed that the role of women in these villages had shifted dramatically; many stated that women were now more respected members of society, and others insisted that women were now noticeably more confident and driven. From the women's narratives, it is clear that the loan program has positively influenced not just individual women but entire communities, and will continue to have a lasting impact.

"Services brought  
nearer to people"

"Women do not  
depend on their  
husbands"

"Malaria cases are  
minimized"

"Every family is  
happy and  
hardworking"

"People have unity  
and peace"

