

WMI Borrower Interview

Bamboo & Banana Businesswoman



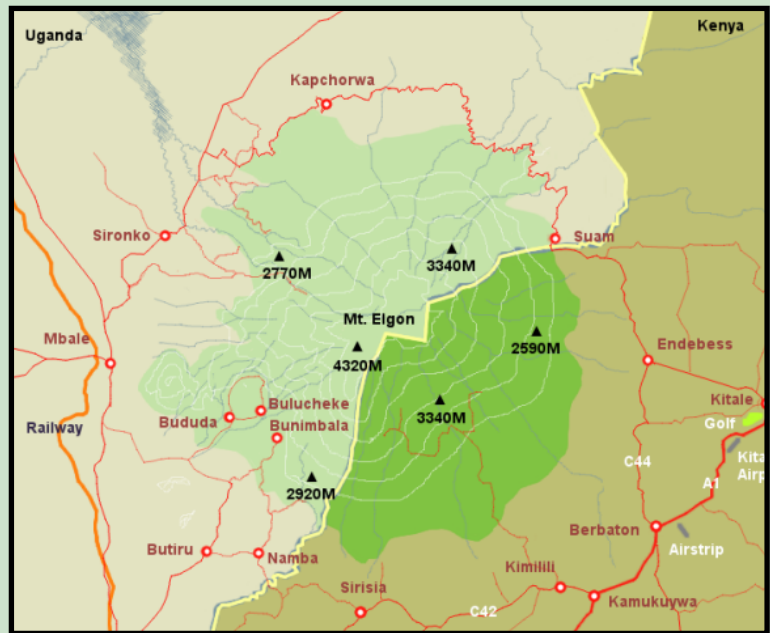
This is Josephine Nabukonde

She has been able to make significant home improvements since joining the WMI Loan Program



WOMEN'S
MICROFINANCE
INITIATIVE

Josephine is 33 years old. When she was 30 years old she started a business selling banana and bamboo in Kyibokko. To harvest the bamboo, she goes into the mountains in Mt. Elgon National Park to cut down the naturally occurring plant. In this region, bamboo is not farmed, instead it is taken from National Park. The Uganda Wildlife Authority oversees this land and it is not permitted to take the bamboo; however, the law is not enforced.



In its original form bamboo looks like sugar cane. After Josephine harvests the stalks, she will proceed to smoke and dry them in order to preserve the delicacy. She will then take these prepared stalks to the weekly market. The bamboo harvest only occurs once a year so it is imperative that preparation is done correctly.



In Uganda, Malewa is the term for smoked bamboo shoot. It typically prepared with a ground peanut sauce. This dish has cultural significance as it is used in both weddings and circumcision ceremonies.

In April 2019, Josephine joined the WMI Loan Program. She has used the money from the loan to help expand her business. Additionally, the WMI training helped her learn to save and budget expenses. She earns 500,000 UGX monthly (\$140) selling bamboo and banana.¹ Josephine's profit is 300,000 UGX (\$80).



Prepared by WMI Chef Lillian

Now she can afford to pay school fees for her four children. With the money she saved, she bought iron roof sheets, chairs, and firewood, all serving to increase her and her family's quality of life.



¹ Although this income is possible, we did not check Josephine's books to confirm