



Building
Assets to Better Lives

wmionline.org

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Message from the President

It's February again, and sadly I must report that, for the first time in 13 years, I have had to postpone my annual program visit to East Africa. Like the rest of the world, beginning in March of 2020, East Africa closed its markets and borders to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Although the virus spread slower than anticipated in sub-Saharan Africa, the lockdowns had a disproportional economic impact on the rural areas where our loan programs operate. A large percentage of WMI businesswomen are in the agricultural sector, selling their products at open-air local markets that were shuttered for an extended time. Inventory was stolen or rotted; prices dropped substantially; cross-border sales dried up; schools were closed and petty theft by idle students increased. Many of our borrowers' businesses slowed or even shut down temporarily. Several of our borrowers who run small private primary schools were forced to shut their doors for the better part of the year, eliminating income from school fees. Our borrowers who supplied schools and other institutions with food and other goods suddenly had no market. Transport costs doubled as taxis and motorcycle transport operators were required to enforce social distancing rules.

As our well-laid plans for 2020 dissolved, we quickly pivoted to respond to the pandemic. We refocused our fundraising to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to our staff, and infrared thermometers, masks, hand sanitizer and foot pedal-operated hand washing stations for our hub and sub-hub locations. In Uganda, we distributed emergency food and aid packages to local orphans. At our hub in the Maasai Mara area of Kenya, we also responded to a request for an emergency food distribution outreach to our borrowers as well as needy families in the community. Food insecurity was widespread, so our local staff purchased flour, sugar, cooking oil, beans, maize, rice, and greens in large quantities and divided it among households based on the number of children.

Our loan programs were put on hold for a good portion of the year. Women who had received loans in October 2019 and January 2020 witnessed major disruption to their businesses, resulting in slow loan repayments. We turned our efforts to helping 450 of our borrowers with severe damage to their businesses, by restructuring their loans through term extensions or wrapping the balance due into a new loan, so the borrower had the working capital to replace lost inventory, plant new crops or replenish depleted raw materials to start their operations again. In some cases, the situation was so egregious (watchmen stealing women's entire bean, onion, or tomato harvest) that loan forgiveness was the best alternative. Through a foundation grant and other donations, we created a fund to cover loan losses throughout all our programs. After halting loan issuance for six months, we began issuing loans again in October 2020. Although COVID infection rates are again rising, we believe it is critically imperative that we continue to make loans to women on the edge of poverty to support their businesses. Without that, we are certain that our borrowers and their families will spiral downward into the poverty we have worked so hard to alleviate over the past 13 years.

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 by empowering rural women and providing the skills they need to support their families. Thank you so much for your loyal and ongoing support!

Robyn Nietert, President

2020 Program Highlights

New Loan Program in Kenya

In January, we opened our latest program, located in the Maasai Mara area of western Kenya with forty inaugural borrowers. The women were well organized into their own self-help group and had solid business ideas and start-ups. Unfortunately, COVID soon shut down all the small businesses in the area and the country's tourist industry came to a halt. Our borrowers have slowly persevered this year to pay back their loans and we hope to re-issue loans to the existing borrowers and expand the program to new borrowers in 2021.



Program Expansion in Tanzania

In conjunction with our British partner, Weston Turville Wells for Tanzania (WTWT), and local partner Korongoro Community Trust (KCT), WMI expanded operations to four villages in Mto wa Mbu ward and five villages in Esilalei ward. Both are Maasai communities outside the Ngorongoro Conservation area. The area suffers from a very dry climate. Lack of education and extreme poverty has resulted in poor nutrition, poor health, and lack of economic opportunities. Each of the nine new groups has 30 women, who received loans of \$70. In addition to our regular business training, the women received needed numeracy and literacy training.



New Loan Hub in Kyegegwa, Uganda

Our western Uganda partner, BCDC, joined forces with us to support a new loan program 25 miles from our main program in Mubende. We were contacted by a nascent bee-keeping co-operative and tiny lending program the Mpasana Balema Tukwatanize Association had instituted on their own with small amounts of cash saved by women in their lending circle. Most of the ladies in the group has some type of disability and their motto is "Disability is not Inability to Development." We provided grant funds for loans and BCDC is providing the training and supervision. 48 loans were issued in 2020. A 2021 grant will increase the loan amounts by an additional fifty dollars.



Mental Health and Literacy Training

WMI again supported efforts with our partners in Tanzania (WTWT) and Kenya (Lewa) to improve literacy and provide needed health education and mental health counseling. This year we provided adult numeracy and literacy classes to women in the Mto was Mbu and Esilalei loan groups in Tanzania, teaching them to speak, understand, read and write Swahili, which helps them with their businesses, sales and recordkeeping. They also attended classes to help them understand and avoid illness. Lewa, Kenya also received a small grant to provide mental health counseling to women who wanted to learn better skills to deal with family disagreements and the stress of managing their households.



Rukundo Girls Empowerment Program

WMI has supported the Rukundo Girls Empowerment Program for several years as it successfully trains female primary school students. This year was especially challenging in that schools were closed and gender-based violence increases when girls are at home as do unwanted pregnancies. Workbooks were put together for self-education and the girls were kept active with entrepreneurship activities, like the basket weaving shown on the right.



Sewing Machines for Cooperative

The first group of women in several of our Karatu Tanzania locations finished their two-year loan program cycle and graduated from the basic loan program. The staff organized a ceremony to honor their achievement, with congratulatory speeches by local government officials. WMI partner Judy Lane helped us fund the purchase of four sewing machines for a new cooperative venture they proposed. The local manager of our bank partner, Exim Bank, offered the graduates fee-free bank accounts, which the ladies greatly appreciated!



2020 Program Accomplishments

Loan Program

- Because we halted loan issuance for almost six months our results were lower than previous years. Even so, in 2020, WMI provided 7,600 loans totaling \$900,000, bringing the total value of loans issued since 2008 to over \$8 million. This year WMI added 1,500 new borrowers, bringing our total number of borrowers since 2008 to over 19,200. 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 385,000 individuals and improve their lives.



- We continue to improve operational integrity and financial controls at our headquarters in Buyobo. The staff has become so adept at budgeting and reporting that the 2021 Budget was prepared in record time. In 2020, we engaged a CPA to analyze operations and provide recommendations for the necessary enhancements to comply with Uganda audit standards. With our headquarters office becoming a registered NGO we are preparing to comply with employment tax reporting requirements.
- 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. Our program in Buyobo, the largest and most complicated, has had the support of an in-house Fellow since 2011. Our very talented Fellows were critical to developing the capacity of the WMI Loan Program by building and implementing effective program reporting, budgeting, accounting, and loan tracking systems, as well as providing a link with WMI in Washington. We are happy to report that, as fabulous as they all were, they are no longer necessary to ensure smooth operations. The now equally talented Buyobo staff can stand on their own! Milly Walimbwa, our Finance Manager, supported by our consulting CPA, has taken charge of day-to-day financial operations.
- A special grant was made to provide personal protective equipment to reduce the spread of COVID. Foot pedal operated handwashing stations, like the one shown here, sanitizer, mask and thermometers were made available at loan collection sites. Our entrepreneurial ladies got out their sewing machines to make masks which they sold outside the building on loan collection and training days.



Infrastructure

- Continuing our goal of supporting the hubs through proper infrastructure, in 2020 we constructed our eighth sub-hub meeting pavilion/office, including latrines (a very big plus for village-level infrastructure) in Gombe, Uganda. The women of Gombe purchased the land and WMI built an office/meeting pavilion and a three-stance latrine. The new building, shown under construction on the cover photo, was completed in time for the January 2021 training sessions. The buildings are used for loan collection and training activities and provide a venue for village level meetings. Two more Uganda pavilions, in Kyibboko and in Bulaago, are slated for construction, and we are exploring building one for our program in Karatu, Tanzania. Each new pavilion will follow the same blueprint (originally designed by WMI Advisory Board Member Sally Kelly).



- In 2021, we plan to begin retrofitting seven of our meeting pavilions for solar power. Our use of solar power began back in Buyobo, our first village loan program, in 2010. Although there is a power line into the village, the grid is very unreliable, with rolling brownouts a reality of village life. Beyond office needs, solar power extends the use of the meeting spaces into the evening and provides light for night-time security. And, although it wasn't something we originally planned for, our buildings with solar power have become phone and computer charging stations, enabling the community to power-up. Although rural life in Uganda is still quite basic – cooking on charcoal and wood fires, latrines for sanitation – mobile phones and laptops are ubiquitous in East Africa, used not only for communication but also for financial transactions. Many of our meeting pavilions are in villages with no access to utility power.

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. The Orphan Outreach Program provides a safe, afterschool haven, with access to adult counselors, academic assistance, and school supplies. We provided a special food and clothing allotment at a Christmas party in their honor.



- **Table Tennis**. In January, we started a new table tennis program for Buyobo village youth. It was the brainchild of Kevin Mafabi, a top table tennis player in East Africa and certified coach, who has family roots in the village. Kevin's cousin, board member June Kyakobye, was a Uganda National Table Tennis Player, representing the county at various local and international tournaments. WMI is providing the equipment and Kevin is managing the program with the aim of qualifying some of our Buyobo youth for scholarships to play on secondary school and university teams. Through Kevin's initiative, the International Table Tennis Federation just awarded our club a grant to purchase additional supplies and protective gear. Combined with a WMI grant, the children, who have been out of school, now have the opportunity to start training again.



2020 Resource Fellow and Interns

- **Kaycee Corcoran** completed her year-long Fellowship in August of 2020. Kaycee came to us after a two-year stint with the Peace Corps in rural eastern Uganda, so was able to hit the ground running and provided exceptional support during the pandemic.



- **Cindy Matsiko and Luke Baxter.** Because of the quickly spreading corona virus, WMI was not able to host summer interns at our loan hubs in East Africa. Instead, we were able to organize a remote college internship program. The two interns were Luke Baxter, who came to us from Princeton University, and Cindy Matsiko who is a student at the University of Maryland. In their daily Zoom sessions, Cindy was able to provide Luke with a taste of Buyobo as she has family roots in Buyobo. In addition to producing a high-quality Fact Book that documents the impact of the loan program, the interns were able to make two videos for WMI.



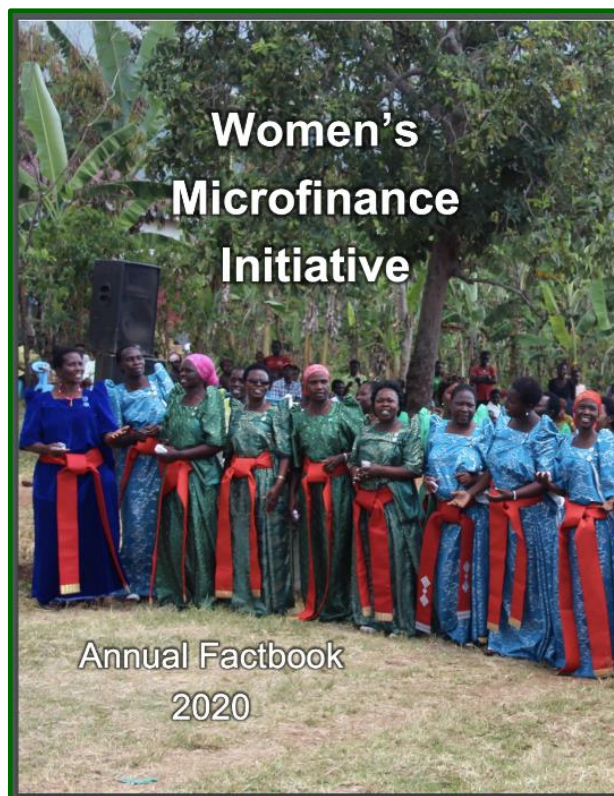
2020 Program Results

Annual Impact Survey. Every year WMI surveys borrowers to collect data on program impact. During the summer, WMI's college interns analyze the data from program participants throughout East Africa to assess how the loans are empowering rural women and improving household living standards. COVID meant that our usual cadre of summer interns could not work in Uganda, but we were fortunate to have our two remote interns in the U.S. and our Fellow in Buyobo, working via Zoom, analyze 800 surveys that had been collected between July 2019 and January 2020 when the virus closed most of our operations. For the twelfth 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:

- **Incomes increased from under \$70/month to \$100-200/month,**
- **98% of borrowers report improved meals and health,**
- **100% of borrowers had an easier time paying medical fees,**
- **Increased used of private taps for water, signaling home and sanitation improvements,**
- **A majority of the community believed the loan program has improved their quality of life and created a sense of unity and community.**

After 13 years of providing loans to rural women in East Africa, WMI has invested more than \$8,050,000, served over 19,200 women, and reached 385,000 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 2020. Special recognition goes to the following:

Foundations and Corporations

Dining for Women
Lillian Feder Foundation
The International Foundation
The Tawingo Fund
Toward Sustainability 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
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 U.S. staff or office overhead!

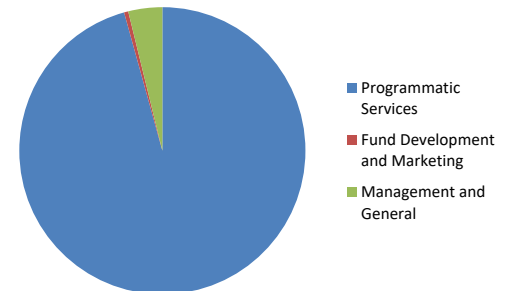
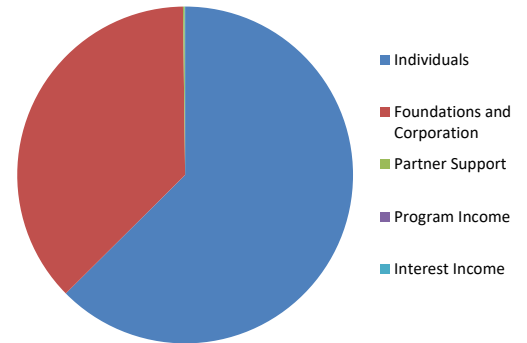
WAYS TO SUPPORT

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

	2020	2019
REVENUES		
Individuals	\$ 134,909	\$ 121,121
Foundations and Corporation	\$ 80,214	\$ 80,077
Partner Support	\$ 360	\$ 2,000
Program Income	\$ -	\$ 11,980
Interest Income	\$ 86	\$ 76
TOTAL	\$ 215,569	\$ 215,254
EXPENSES		
Programmatic Services	\$ 164,968	\$ 179,745
Fund Development and Marketing	\$ 818	\$ 719
Management and General	\$ 6,621	\$ 6,564
TOTAL	\$ 172,407	\$ 187,028
NET REVENUE/EXPENSES	\$ 43,162	\$ 28,226
ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 243,584	\$ 199,841
Prepaid Expense	\$ 510	\$ 2,553
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 244,094	\$ 202,394
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable	\$ 684	\$ 2,146
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 684	\$ 2,146
NET ASSETS, UNRESTRICTED	\$ 243,410	\$ 200,248
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 244,094	\$ 202,394



Treasurer's Report

2020 was a challenging year for non-profits, so we were very pleased to meet 2019 results through the donations of our generous supporters. Individual contributions provided 63% of revenues while foundation and corporate support provided 37%. This year we were honored to receive the following grants: \$25,000 each from The International Foundation and Toward Sustainability Foundation, \$15,000 from Dining for Women, \$10,000 from Tawingo Fund, and \$5,000 from the Lillian Feder Foundation. Our newer programs are supported on a significant cost sharing basis with our NGO partners.

Programmatic Services include loan fund grants, infrastructure grants, program support projects, business training support, and some minor operational support. In 2020, \$73,050 was allocated to our loan funds, \$40,866 to meeting shelters and community buildings, \$31,379 to program support projects, and \$19,673 to Local Operations (borrower training and program oversight). Some of our planned grants were postponed until early 2021 due to the COVID shutdowns.

WMI's IRS Administrative and Fundraising Rate (a measure of operational efficiency) is extremely low at 3.45%. Copies of the 2020 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

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)
Manuella Leparmarai Sophia – Mara Oiti Women Self Help Group, Aitong Village, Masai Mara

Program Leadership Tanzania

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

WMI Fellows

Uganda: Kaycee Corcoran
Tanzania: Jane Masila

Interns

Cindy Matsiko (University of Maryland) and Luke Baxter (Princeton)

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 working in community development and real estate finance, corporate financial planning, and personal financial planning. She holds an MBA in Finance and Investments and was a Certified Financial Planner/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

Sally Kelly, architect, Chevy Chase, MD

Jessica Littman, former WMI Fellow, Tanzania

Ainsley Morris Cohen, investment analyst, Washington, DC

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

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