



Featured program for December 2014

## Women's Microfinance Initiative Transition to Independence



*Dining for Women*



Changing the world one dinner at a time

# Introducing the WMI program

The Women's Microfinance Initiative establishes rural village-level loan hubs administered by local women to provide capital, training, and support to women in the lowest income brackets in East Africa so that they can engage in income producing activities.



"Where once the poor were commonly seen as passive victims, **microfinance recognizes that poor people are remarkable reservoirs of energy and knowledge**. And while the lack of financial services is a sign of poverty, today it is also understood as **an untapped opportunity to create markets, bring people in from the margins and give them the tools with which to help themselves.**"

- Kofi Annan

# What are we supporting?

The DFW grant will be used to expand the Buyoba, Uganda loan hub to 320 women in surrounding remote villages. Every two years when the loans are repaid, the money returns to the loan pool to fund another 320 women.

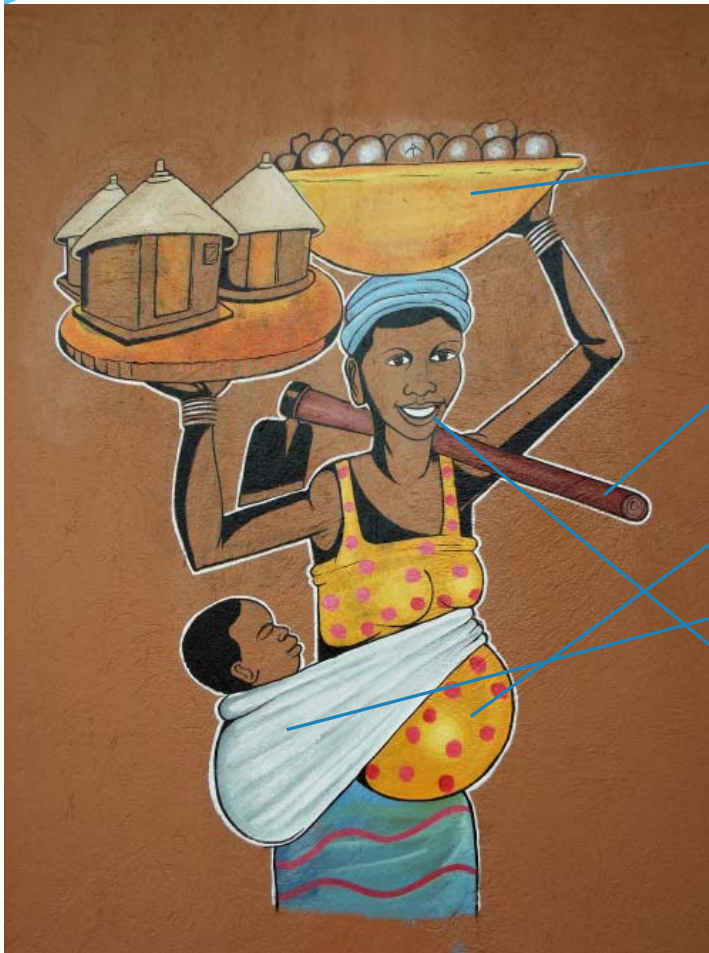


Women use the funds to start or improve a business venture – a shop or market stall, a sewing machine for a tailoring business, farm animals (goats, chickens, cows), vegetable gardening – that will **help them become self-sufficient.**

DFW's grant will pay for salaries/stipends, operational supplies, loan issuance/training costs, and capital for the loans.

# Life Challenges of Women and Girls

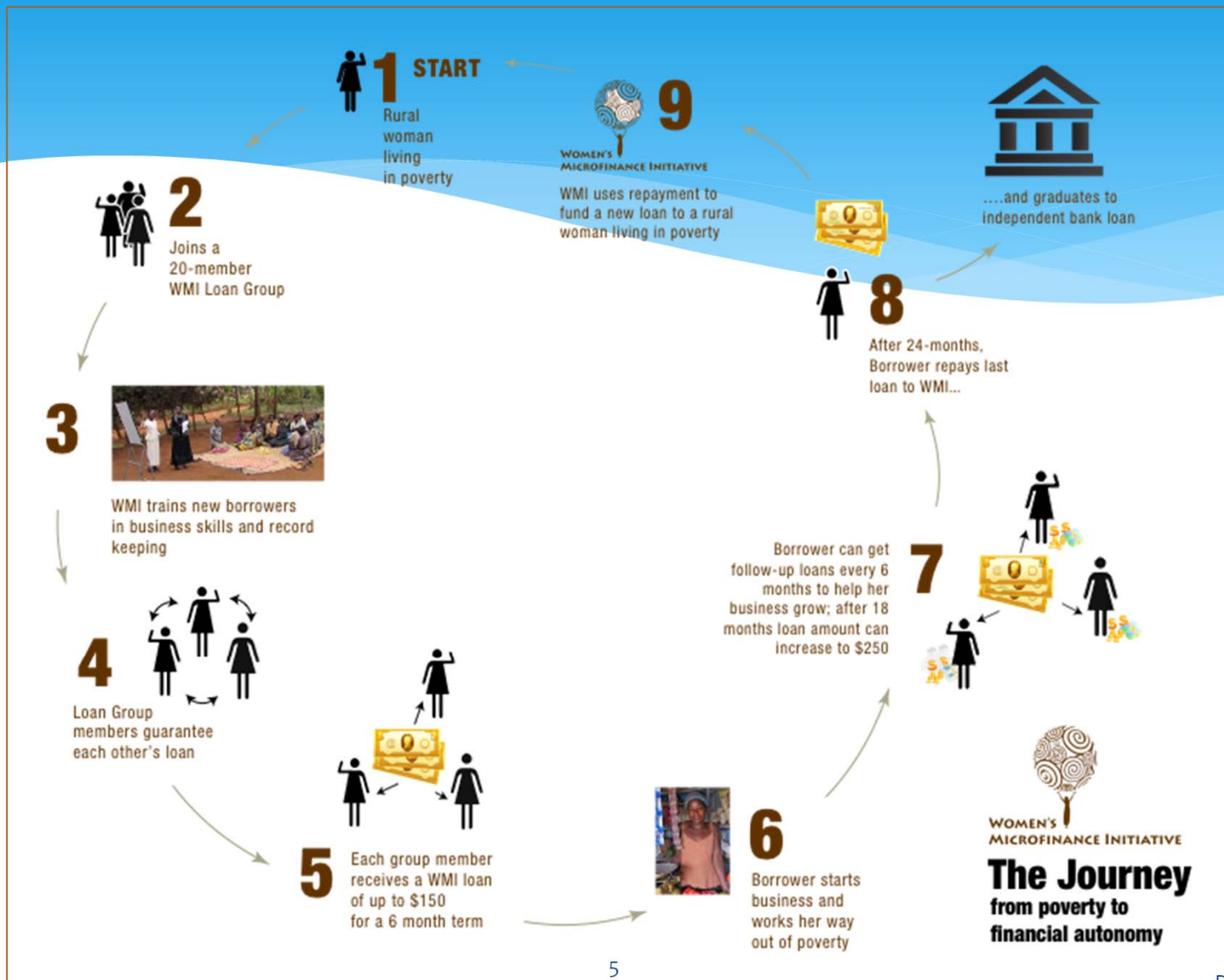
Women in poor, small villages must support their family, keep the home, provide food, water, and firewood. Without access to financial services, they are destined to continue the cycle of poverty into the next generation.



A picture of an Ugandan village woman

- **Fruit Basket** Women feed the whole family as well as relatives and friends. Meal preparation is a long process when using all raw foodstuff and charcoal or wood burning stoves/fires.
- **Hoe** Women maintain the family garden which provides food for the family plus surplus to sell. It is hard manual labor, often under a hot sun.
- **Pregnancy** Workload and responsibilities do not lessen during pregnancies, which happen often.
- **Baby** Women raise the children and tend to their health, education, and general nurture.
- **Smile** Women get little credit for work they do, and they are less valued and respected than men. Women do everything and have little voice in their own home. Still, they smile.

# How the WMI microloan cycle works



# The Program

The success of the WMI program is based on four key components that provide help and support for each borrower

<b>Loan fund</b>	Each borrower can get <b>four successive collateral-free, six-month term business loans</b> ranging from \$50 to \$250 during the two-year program.
<b>Training</b>	Every two weeks, <b>borrowers learn key business skills</b> from trained peers who are past graduates of the program and business owners themselves.
<b>Peer group support</b>	Borrowers are organized into <b>20-member solidarity groups</b> who cross-guarantee their loans and ensure all members pay on time. Groups meet bi-weekly for mentoring, knowledge sharing, record keeping, and business training.
<b>Graduation</b>	Women graduate after 2 years when their loans are repaid and are eligible for loans from a commercial bank. <b>Their first independent loan is underwritten for 1 year by WMI.</b>

# Program Budget

DFW's \$45,000 grant to WMI adds to the capital loan fund and supports program operations and training

Loan Program Expenses	
2 Head Administrators and 8 Local Coordinators - 2 subhubs	\$2,304
Allowances for trainer, form filler, and survey filler	\$576
2 Mobile telephone airtime/ data charges	\$288
Transportation (trainers & loan collection)	\$272
Loan coordinator books and registers	\$96
Supplies, training materials, and meals	\$147
Supplies and calculators for borrowers	\$840
<b>Loan Program Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,523</b>
Loan Fund Capital	
Namagumba ( 8 new groups of 20 borrowers)	\$19,200
Malare (8 new groups of 20 borrowers)	\$19,200
Loan increases for successful borrowers	\$2,000
<b>Loan Fund Capital Subtotal</b>	<b>\$40,400</b>
Miscellaneous - Currency conversion and wire fees	<b>\$77</b>
<b>DFW Grant Total</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>

# Why we Love this Program

WMI is an all-women organization that successfully gives poor village women training, support, and access to financial loans that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

- Means to a sustainable business
- Empowered as community leaders
- Admission to the formal banking environment
- Greater respect in the household and community
- Reduced danger of domestic violence





# Stories of the Women

Before WMI, Fareeda Mahyala was eking out a living making charcoal. With a WMI loan, she now sells popular shoes. With her profit, **she has purchased chickens and a goat and greatly improved her family's nutrition.**



Naome Kanenu struggled to feed her seven children in a drought-prone area. With a WMI loan, she bought water to irrigate her small garden. The plants thrived, and she opened a “pick your own” produce business with no labor costs. **Within 6 months, she was able to pay school fees and add some comforts to her home.**

# About the Organization

Robyn Nietert and a group of businesswomen founded WMI in 2007 to provide comprehensive village-level microfinance and business training to women in East Africa with a sustainable program that the women run themselves.



Graduates share their bounty with Robyn at a graduation ceremony.

**WMI is a small group of businesswomen on one side of the globe helping their counterparts on the other, not a big bank or corporation.**

Unlike conventional aid programs, a microfinance initiative **preserves the capital base of an organization by providing loans rather than subsidies.**

# Where they Work.

WMI works with women on the village level in rural areas of East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania)



Buyobo is an administrative sub-county near the Kenyan border on the slopes of Mt. Elgon. It is an agricultural area producing bananas, maize, beans and cassava as well as livestock and poultry.

# Share Your Thoughts



1. DFW has funded several microfinance programs in the past. What do you think makes WMI and many other microfinance programs suitable for DFW grants?
2. Discuss the benefits of the four key elements of the program: loan fund, training, peer group support, and graduation.
3. The graduation ceremonies for the WMI program are celebrations that involve music, singing, a parade, and involvement of the whole community. What are the ways in which the community is effected by WMI?

— Changing the world one dinner at a time

Dining for Women | P.O. Box 25633, Greenville, SC 29616 | [www.diningforwomen.org](http://www.diningforwomen.org)