

The Greater Contribution
2010 Annual Report



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MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 2006, The Greater Contribution is a non-profit, all volunteer organization founded by a small group of women seeking to make a “greater contribution” to the world.

We are committed to compassionately serve the poorest people and communities worldwide through a network of women, raising awareness and funds and using micro loans to support the fight to end poverty by 2025.

We are a 501c3 California Public Benefit Corporation,
EIN #26-0597892



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends:

2010 was a very productive and gratifying year for The Greater Contribution and the people we serve.

Because of the support that you have provided, we can point with pride to strong successes in the deeply impoverished countries of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. With your support, in 2010, 600 micro loans were provided to families in Zambia and 120 micro loans to families in Uganda. These families are now starting micro businesses and thus providing sustainable incomes for their families. They are now able to provide regular, nutritious meals, medical care, decent shelter, and education for their children.

Our loan program has expanded into rural Uganda this year, as a result of my profoundly inspiring trip to Africa in the spring of 2010. We are especially excited about our new partnership with Women's Microfinance Initiative (WMI), our new loan administration group in rural Uganda. We are thrilled to partner with them, utilizing the experience of their two year micro loan program which boasts an impressive repayment rate of 100%. This program is producing exciting results in improving the lives of the women borrowers and their families. The women enter the program living below the extreme poverty level (established by The World Bank) of \$1.25/day, but amazingly two years later they leave the program with a stable business and earning \$5.00/day. A unique feature of this program provides them the opportunity to become integrated into the regular economy by transitioning to a conventional bank, making room for more first time borrowers to access funds in the micro loan program.

On my recent trip to Africa, I observed for myself the power of our loan model at work. I spoke with women and men whose lives have been dramatically transformed. Prisca, mother of eight, is typical of the women I met. She has a vegetable shop and a small food service business. She used to deal in produce before she got the loan and would buy coffee, beans and maize to then sell later at a higher price. She used to earn 50,000 shillings (\$22.00) per month from her produce sales. Since she received the loan, her business has expanded; she has been able to purchase items for her home and family, including a turkey and a goat. The loan has also helped her to pay school fees and provide medical treatment for her children. She now earns about 100,000 shillings (\$45.) per month – more than twice her previous income.

We see that this new loan program is making profound differences in, not only the lives of our women borrowers, but in their communities as well. More details of the positive impact of our funding of micro loans are summarized in the pages of this report. We hope you will feel as good about our work as we do!

The strong foundation for all of this work is you. You help us with your resources and your immense good will. You make all this happen by your remarkable, faithful generosity. We are profoundly grateful.

Sincerely,

Karon Wright

President and Co-founder

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Karon Wright is the President and Executive Director of The Greater Contribution. She is a passionate advocate for the poor and is a frequent speaker about the fight against poverty. She feels a deep compassion for all the poor around the world and knows that poverty can be eradicated in our lifetime if we all work together. She recently received the Vibrant Giver Award for women who are changing the world in the ways they give back. In addition, she is an Executive Coach and Organizational Effectiveness consultant.



Kathy Tamashiro, Vice President of the Board of The Greater Contribution, has been in healthcare for over 25 years. Twenty-one of those years, she worked in leadership positions for Blue Cross of California. Since transitioning careers in 2002, Kathy's professional work has included working for The Palms at Bonaventure, Assisted Living Community, as the Administrator and Sales and Marketing Director.



Pellie Anderson is a member of The Greater Contributions' Board of Directors. She coordinates Community and School Outreach and Donor Appreciation. The Greater Contribution has afforded her the opportunity to raise awareness about the extent of world poverty, its effects on women and children, and the positive impact micro loans can have upon women and their families in developing countries. Her background is varied, but she has always focused on women's issues. Pellie prosecuted domestic violence cases for thirteen years. She then became a small business owner and pastry chef. The Greater Contribution has allowed her the opportunity to make a meaningful and personal contribution to the world at large, especially to women.



Jason Boling Treasurer of The Greater Contribution, joined the Board of Directors in 2009. Jason has worked in finance for over 17 years, and is currently the Vice President of Finance for a public company in Calabasas. He is a CPA, and earned his business degree from California State University Northridge. Upon learning about The Greater Contribution and micro loans, Jason realized he had found the opportunity he had been looking for: to empower people to be entrepreneurial and give them the ability to create jobs and help break the cycle of poverty.



Elena Standel Elena Standel is currently on the Board of Directors serving as Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator. She has more than twenty years of experience in Human Resources, both in management and leadership roles. Currently, Elena is working for DBM as a Career Consultant. The Greater Contribution has given her the opportunity to learn the power of micro loans in the fight against poverty. She believes that women in the poorest countries of the world need to be given the opportunity to better themselves, become entrepreneurs and lift their families and communities out of poverty.



Stephanie (Steph) Young Gonzaga is a member of the Board of Directors for The Greater Contribution. She is currently Technical Coordinator. She is delighted to be able to leverage her experience and love of IT toward supporting the micro loan models of The Greater Contribution, and finds great satisfaction in the opportunity to give back to the community through this organization. Stephanie has over 20 years of IT leadership and business experience in the financial sector, and is a former Sr. Vice President and CIO for a commercial mortgage company in Calabasas, California, where she was responsible for enterprise IT strategy and architected the development of the firm's state of the art technology platforms.

2010 MILESTONES

2010 brought many exciting opportunities and changes to The Greater Contribution.

SHARING OUR MESSAGE

Our message of empowerment and hope was shared with the community. In March 2010, President Karon Wright spoke to a sold-out auditorium at the 1st Annual TEDx Conejo Valley Conference. TED provides opportunities for the progressive and innovative thinkers of our time to share their ideas and messages. Karon shared with community members about the power of non-profit micro lending to raise individuals' and families' standard of living in the most impoverished areas of the world, specifically in East Africa. She relayed the message that everyone has the power and means to get involved in the movement to end world poverty. Through contributions to The Greater Contribution, loans as small as \$50, can allow a woman living in extreme poverty to start her own business and continue to expand it, enabling her to provide the basics to her family, like food, clothing, medicines and proper shelter.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FORMED

President Karon Wright made our organization's first trip to East Africa to assess the success of previous micro lending efforts in association with FINCA and assess possible future partnerships. She visited lending sites in Tanzania and Uganda on her trip. In Tanzania, where The Greater Contribution had provided funding for micro lending to FINCA over the past several years, she observed the diligent, hard work that FINCA loan officers

put in every day to ensure that their borrowers were educated in small business practices, meeting with borrowers to ensure their businesses were thriving, and ensuring that loans were made and paid back in a timely manner. She also visited Buyobo, Uganda and met with Women's Microfinance Initiative (hereinafter, WMI) Program Director Olive Wolimbwa, and their borrowers in the area. She observed the abject poverty in which people in this rural village lived: houses with only mud floors, children with no shoes, families living with not enough food to feed their families daily.

However, she also talked to micro loan borrowers who had been living well below the extreme poverty level of \$1.25/day/person before micro lending had become available, who had started small businesses, such as selling bananas, selling cooking pots, selling local produce, starting hair salons.



Karon walking with women in Buyobo, Uganda

She heard first-hand accounts of how their lives had been transformed in less than two years through the power of micro loans. One woman expressed, "I have a job and can touch money. Before the loan, that was just a

dream. I am never worried about fees and how to get medical care, now I can buy the medicine myself.” Another borrower exclaimed, “I am happier because it has helped me in health care, in providing food, and I am getting smarter! This loan has made my life better in a way that I can now support my family.”

They smiled with pride as they showed off their small businesses to her.



Betty proudly shows off her produce

She learned that during a two-year lending period, 85% of the borrowers had been able to raise their standard of living from less than \$1.25/day to \$5/day. More children had shoes; more houses had concrete floors, instead of mud. More families were living with dignity. All because micro loans had given them the opportunity to start new businesses and provide better, more sustainable lives for their families. Another aspect of WMI's micro lending program that

impressed her was that it was a two-year lending program, with loans borrowed, and paid back every six months. At the end of the two-year micro lending period, the borrowers would be earning interest on savings at a local bank, and be allowed to continue borrowing with the bank at lower interest rates. Thus, borrowers would be incorporated into the formal economy, rather than remaining dependent upon a cycle of micro lending. As a result of this powerful visit, which showed such promise and history of success, The Greater Contribution decided to partner with WMI in Uganda. The Greater Contribution began supporting their micro lending in the Spring of 2010. During 2010, The Greater Contribution funded 120 loans to women in communities in and around Buyobo, Uganda. We look forward to funding even more loans in Uganda as the program expands to other communities needing the opportunities that micro lending can provide.



Karon with graduates from micro loan program

NEW SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

2010 brought the expansion of The Greater Contribution's programs to local high school groups in the Conejo Valley. Westlake High School, in Westlake Village, California, began

a club dedicated to raising awareness and funds for The Greater Contribution. Students in the Spring of 2010 raised money to fund micro loans for five families. As a result of the enthusiasm and success of the Westlake High School club, The Greater Contribution expanded in Fall 2010 to two more high schools: Newbury Park High School and Oak Park High School. Students at each of these schools have been educated on the issues of poverty faced by families in the developing world and the power and success of micro loans to assist them in working their way out of poverty. Each of the school clubs has committed to an awareness campaign and fundraising efforts, the results of which we look forward to in the early part of the New Year. We truly appreciate the enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment of the young people in our local area to extend their compassion and influence outside their comfortable surroundings and help others, whom they will never see.

WELCOMING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Finally, The Greater Contribution welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors in 2010: Pellie Anderson; Elena Standel; and Stephanie Gonzaga-Young. Each of them brings a unique background and experience, which we believe will contribute to the continued achievement of our goals and our ability to fund even more micro loans in the future.

VISIT OUR REDESIGNED WEBSITE AND KARON'S BLOG

Our website, www.GreaterContribution.org, was redesigned this year in order to better promote our message of transformation through micro lending. More pictures and

stories of the success of our borrowers in East Africa are featured. We have added a new feature, "Karon's Blog," where our president will be discussing issues relevant to micro lending, and our mission. We hope our supporters take the opportunity to join in the conversation.

With the support and advice of Pepperdine University business students, we have developed a social media strategy that will be implemented in the New Year. Already, we have a Facebook page, where we will be posting more stories about our borrowers, upcoming special events, and news and information relevant to micro lending. Supporters and others interested in our work just need to "Like" us on Facebook to get the most up to date information.

"Never doubt that a small
group of thoughtful,
committed people can
change the world..."

Indeed it's the only thing
that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

LIVES TRANSFORMED THROUGH MICRO LOANS

Where We Lend

About 175 miles outside of Kampala, a five hour drive, down a dusty, dirt and weather-worn road, sits the village of Buyobo. Like many rural villages in Uganda, its streets are lined with small, mud and thatch houses that are locked in a cycle of constant construction and destruction. Electricity is rare; candles are the light of necessity. Clean drinking water and proper sanitation are just as scarce. It seems like a place the world forgot. This is where our borrowers live and hope and dream for a better life. This is where, (and in villages like it), our commitment to empowering and supporting the most impoverished communities of the world took The Greater Contribution in 2010. These are the areas where other micro lenders are not working.

Our Ugandan borrowers are women, ranging in age from 18 to 65 years old. Most of them are married and providing for five or more household members. Many of the women have taken in orphaned children from their village, straining their ability to provide for all in the household. The average income of these families is well below the extreme poverty level (set by the World Bank) of \$1.25/day.

Our borrowers have a strong work ethic and are constantly concerned about the welfare of their families. They typically grow their own food. They value education for their children, and prioritize paying for education when they have the money. Nevertheless,

most of them are unable to provide their children with well-balanced meals, medicines when they are sick, or shoes for their feet. Sickness and disease are always present. While they are aware of the dangers of malaria, most families are unable to afford mosquito nets for all members of their household.

These are exactly the kind of communities we have committed to support through micro lending. We believed that people in these extremely impoverished areas would benefit greatly from the opportunity to begin or expand local businesses, and that the impact would be almost immediate. We were right, as you will see from the stories below.



Mary's Success Story

Mary sells onions at the Bweri Market, outside Buyobo, Uganda. After receiving micro loans, her business now generates about \$100 a month in profit, well above the extreme poverty level. With onions selling for about a penny a piece, how does she do it? Volume!

Volume! Volume! Working 6 days a week, she and her husband are constantly assessing the market. She buys from traders and farmers when prices are low, then, stockpiles onions until market prices creep up. Onions keep for a long time! Since receiving her first micro loan, she has managed to save about \$400. The business has become a family affair. Her husband helps her by tying the onions, purchasing and transporting them. Since neither she nor her husband read or write well, their elder son, who is married, keeps the books. With the help of micro loans, her hard work and enterprise have transformed their lives. Mary has 10 children and micro loans have allowed her to make enough money to pay school fees



easily. **When Mary first started in the micro loan program, her household income was about \$20 a month. Micro loans have allowed her to increase her household income by 500%.**

Kamida's Journey to a Brighter Future

Kamida's story begins eight years ago when she ran a café in the border town of Busia, where her husband is from. However, business in Busia was a failure. Being a foreigner to the town, she was alienated by the community and the competition went to great effort to stop her



from taking their customers. Eventually she was forced to close.

When her business collapsed, always enterprising, Kamida returned to her own village to farm crops, selling the surplus to traders. Although she knew that the returns from such a living were insufficient to provide for her family of six, Kamida had no other option at that time.

When our partner, WMI, came in she saw it as her chance to start over again. Kamida confronted her fears of possible failure and applied for a loan to start a new café. Kamida's efforts have paid off. The new location and her will to succeed have proved successful in attracting customers. Where before she had been unable to save even a shilling, today she is able to save up to ten thousand shillings (\$5) a day.

Kamida and her family have a brighter future now. Her children are clothed and able to attend school. During the holidays, they even help her out in the café and learn the skills of the business. Kamida's confidence and capabilities have grown tremendously, and she has endless plans for expanding her business and improving life at home.

These are just a few of our borrowers whose lives have been transformed through the power of micro loans. By contributing to micro loans, your donations really are making a **Greater Contribution!!**



Kamida selling bananas



Prisca selling cooking pots and cellphones

THE WOMEN OF BUYOBO, UGANDA AND THEIR BUSINESSES FUNDED BY MICRO LOANS



Running a local Mini-mart



Prisca selling local produce

THE GREATER CONTRIBUTION

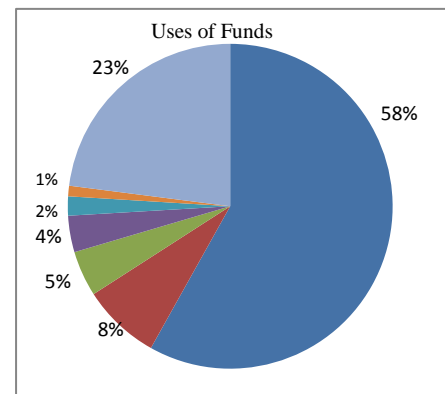
Income and Expenses January – December 2010

Sources of Funds

Direct Public Support	\$ 38,542	
Total Revenue	\$ 38,542	100%

Major Uses of Funds

Funding Microloans	\$ 22,400	58%
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 3,000	8%
Operations Expenses	\$ 1,748	5%
Insurance	\$ 1,400	4%
Travel	\$ 735	2%
Other Business Expenses	\$ 403	1%
Reserve for Future Operations	\$ 8,856	23%
Total uses of funds	\$ 38,542	100%



*A profound thank you from The Greater Contribution Board to our individual donors and donor organizations for making a **Greater Contribution** in 2010, by supporting our mission of providing micro loans to the most impoverished people in the world and empowering them to build a better life for themselves and their families.*