

The Greater Contribution

2011
ANNUAL REPORT



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Mission Statement

Founded in 2006, The Greater Contribution (TGC) is a non-profit, all volunteer organization founded by a small group of women seeking to make a 'greater contribution' to the world by helping people suffering from hunger, poverty, disease, natural disasters and war. We do this by raising awareness and funds for micro loans that help poor women and their families work their way out of poverty, and by being a vehicle for other individuals and groups who want to make a greater contribution to our world.

We are an all-volunteer organization, a 501c3 California Public Benefit Corporation, EIN #26-0597892. We focus on very low cost fund raising efforts, avoiding unnecessary expenses so that almost 100% of donations go to those in need.

President's Letter



Dear Friends,

Another year of providing life-changing micro loans is behind us and through your ongoing, generous support, we continue to provide more and more micro loans to the poorest of the poor in East Africa.

With our field partner, Women's Microfinance Institute (WMI), we have given micro loans to **620 women in 2011**. With each woman supporting an average of five family members, this means that **3,100 people have benefitted from this program in 2011**.

From the very first days of The Greater Contribution (TGC), my colleagues and I saw this endeavor as a means for two important things to happen. The first, of course, was to engage in the fight against poverty, to help the deeply impoverished people of the world—nearly half the world's population that is struggling to survive on less than \$2.00 a day. Secondly, we knew that those who joined us in this fight would also receive a benefit. We knew that TGC would be a vehicle for people like you to make a 'greater contribution', to make a meaningful and real contribution toward making the world a better place. I continue to be honored and impressed that so many of you are committed to doing just that with The Greater Contribution. Thank you.

We continue to see the success of our work in the following remarkable data collected by our field partner. This data is collected as each woman applies for her successive loans and it tells a wonderful story.

- 99% of Borrowers doubled their income in the first 6 months of joining the loan program.
- 100% of Borrowers increased savings.
- 75% of Borrowers transitioning to independent loans report they are earning at least \$3,600/year. 40% are generating very large annual incomes of over \$6,000/year. A startling 10% are earning over \$8,000/year.
- 99% of Borrowers have improved their household meals.
- 85% of Borrowers have improved their business skills.
- 20% of Borrowers have begun to hire employees to help with their businesses.

As remarkable as the numbers are, they alone don't tell the whole story. In addition to the economic growth of individuals and their families, we know that the impact of the micro loans has extended into the villages and communities as well.

For example, in Buyobo, Uganda (the program headquarters) three new elementary school classrooms were constructed with funds raised by the local women and decorated with assistance from U.S. high school interns! These three replace one very decrepit classroom. None of this would have been possible without the increased standard of living being enjoyed by the women as a result of the micro loan program that you have helped to provide.

Teachers use the huge painted wall map of Africa for geography lessons. All classes have regular library hours, when students can check out one of the 2,000 donated books collected by supporters. The teachers are extremely grateful for all of the support. They held a meeting to report that student performance on the national exam given at the end of 7th grade has vastly improved in the past year.

The women in Buyobo are going beyond the improvement of their own standards of living to give back to their community in a very important and tangible way.

Further evidence of the changes taking place in the villages we support is seen in Robineh Wamanga and Beatrice Bukowa, who are members of the loan groups in Buyobo and Bududa, Uganda respectively. They have each been elected as the women's representative to the district government: Robineh in Sironko and Beatrice in Bududa, and both credit the micro loan program for giving them the confidence to run for office. Our hope is that their participation in local government will help raise awareness of the critical need for access to financial services for rural women, and also highlight the achievements that rural women can attain when provided with the requisite resources.

So, although we are a small organization (less than \$250,000 in annual revenues), we are nonetheless extremely effective. We are training impoverished women in business skills, giving them a chance to develop a two-year credit track record, providing ongoing support, then transitioning them to bank loans and the formal economy, thus having a positive ripple effect on their communities.

Working through village-level organizations run by the local African women lets us take a bottom-up approach that values the culture, point of view, ideas and input of the populations we serve. By providing resources to the vibrant networks village women have built over decades of mutual reliance, we are leveraging traditional concepts of social capital to bring access to financial services to the poor in a very personal way. Respecting the people and environment where we work has allowed TGC to develop a methodology that is equitable and effective.

Every time that I have visited our borrowers in Africa, they repeatedly tell me, "*Thank the kind people in America and tell them, we hope they are blessed in the same way that they have blessed us.*"

Thank you for being a part of The Greater Contribution family. You are a critical part of our community. Your support is what makes all of this change and growth possible and like our African brothers and sisters, I believe that you are being blessed for all the good you are doing.

Gratefully,

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. Her corporate work focuses on helping individuals create more effective working relationships and she is recognized for her expertise in Emotional Intelligence. She lives in Thousand Oaks, California with her husband, wildlife photographer Geoffrey Glassner.



Pellie Anderson oversees Digital Marketing, Social Media, School Outreach and Donor Appreciation for

TGC. 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, especially empowerment. Pellie prosecuted criminal cases in Northern California for thirteen years. She specialized in domestic violence cases, always concerned with the safety and quality of life of women in her community. She continues to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence issues within our community.

After leaving the DA's Office, she became a small business owner and pastry chef, hoping to make the world a better place one cake at a time. Even while making pastries and cakes, Pellie remained committed to women's causes around the world. Hanging up her chef's toque upon her move to Southern California with her husband and two teenage children, Pellie sought again a more meaningful and personal contribution to the world at large, especially to women of the world.



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. Jason is a native of California and lives with his wife and two children in Camarillo, California.



Elena Standel currently serves as Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator. She has more than twenty years

of experience in human resources, both in management and leadership roles with medium to large international companies. As a strategic partner with senior management, she designed and implemented HR programs and processes in support

of business goals. She focused on employee relations, performance management, recruitment and employee development programs.

Elena works for DBM as a career consultant, providing career transition coaching and training to individuals looking for new opportunities.

Elena has been a volunteer for The Greater Contribution for approximately two years, most recently as the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator. 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, develop their own jobs, and lift their families and communities out of poverty. This is a real success story, and she wants to continue supporting this effort.

Elena earned her Bachelors Degree in Industrial Relations from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, and a Certificate in Personnel Management from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is bilingual/bicultural in English/Spanish, lives with her husband in West Hills, and has three daughters and two grandchildren.



Stephanie (Steph) Young Gonzaga is delighted to be able to leverage her experience and love of IT toward supporting the micro loan

models of TGC. She finds great satisfaction in the opportunity to give back to the community through this organization. She is responsible for developing the strategic technology direction of The Greater Contribution and guiding its digital branding and Internet presence.

Our Board of Directors

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. In her free time she enjoys traveling to the beautiful islands in the Philippines and relaxing on the spectacularly gorgeous beaches located there. From the University of Phoenix, Stephanie holds a BS in Business Administration, an MS in Computer Information Systems, and a Doctorate in Leadership and Organizational Management with a specialization in Information Systems and Technology. She is a member of IEEE and WITI.



Mary Kay Donahoe has been drawn to serve on the Board of Directors by the exciting possibilities of this unique and simple solution to the complex problems in struggling countries.

Mary Kay has been a successful business woman for over 35 years in the Real Estate industry. As a Broker Associate at Prudential California Realty in Westlake Village, she has won many awards throughout her years in real estate sales. Enhancing her expertise she has earned professional designations as a licensed Broker (Advanced qualification beyond the salesperson), one of the first as a GREEN broker (specialty training in environmental issues), ePro (computer marketing), Fine Homes Marketing and relocation specialties to name a few. She donates a percentage each of her commissions to The Greater Contribution.

Founder and President of the

Democratic Women's Council of the Conejo Valley since 2004, Mary Kay has brought volunteers of much description together with concerned women in the local community. In addition to The Greater Contribution, areas of interest range from Toy's for Tots and the local food bank to water wells in Africa, women's legal issues and girls' schools for Afghan refugees.

Mary Kay lives with her husband of 30 years, Jim Donahoe, in Westlake Village. She is a mother and a grandmother many times over. She loves to travel and spends part of each year on her beloved Maui.



Kerrie Sadler is excited to lend her communications skills and compassion as a member of the TGC board. A native of Ohio, Kerrie lived and worked in New York City and Chicago for 20 years before moving with her family to Los Angeles in 1997. Her communications career has included working for The New York Times Magazine Group, and for ABC News and Sports, which enabled her to travel worldwide. She is communications manager for the New West Symphony, and has worked as Communications and Alumni Relations Coordinator at Oaks Christian School.

Serving others has always been important to Kerrie, be it through community, school, church, or arts-related volunteer work. An avid choral musician, she has worked extensively as a volunteer for the Los Robles Master Chorale, with whom she is also a singing member. She is a resident of Westlake Village with her husband, John, and has two grown children.



Bonnie Neuer contributes her knowledge of volunteer engagement and donor appreciation to TGC, and is a voice to spread the

word of what micro loans can do to the lives of women in poverty. Bonnie feels passionately that if more people knew about micro loans, they would know how easy it is to enable so many more people to rise above extreme poverty, be healthier, better educated, and thus create a happier world.

During her 17 years with LAUSD, Bonnie organized and led an active volunteer program for elementary schools, and has, herself, been volunteering for both local and international charities for the past 20 years.

Bonnie is currently a Realtor Associate with Troop Real Estate in Westlake Village, and has been with Troop for the past 11 years. During this time her charitable involvements have included: Yearly food drives for Manna Food Bank, American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, Thousand Oaks "Relay For Life", Westlake Village's First Annual "Relay For Life", Wellness Community Christmas fundraiser 2009 – 2010 and Planning and fundraising for the Red Rhino Orphanage Project in Kenya. This orphanage officially opened in August 2010 and was planned and started by Bonnie's nephew, Greg, when he bought a plot of land 40 miles outside of Nairobi in 2002.

Bonnie is a member of the Conejo Simi Moorpark Association of Realtors, and has contributed her time and effort to the Association of Realtors through the Rules and Regulations Committee, the Scholarship Committee and Toys for Tots.

Bonnie lives in Thousand Oaks with her husband, has two sons and three grandchildren, all being 5th, 6th, and 7th generation Californians!

Milestones

Many Lives Impacted by Micro Loans

In 2011, micro loans funded by TGC enabled 99% of our Ugandan borrowers to miraculously double their income in just six months. TGC funded 620 such micro loans in 2011. Each of our borrowers takes care of an average household of five adults and children. That means over 3,000 people were able to begin their journey out of extreme poverty in 2011. The investment of between \$100-150 in each of these women has paid off this year in the following ways:

- 100% of Borrowers increased their savings;
- 75% of Borrowers transitioning to independent loans report they are earning at least \$3600/year; 40% are generating income over \$6000/year, and amazingly 10% are earning over \$8000/year. This is amazing since over 97% of our Borrowers' income before receiving micro loans is around .50/day, which translates into less than \$200/year.
- 99% of Borrowers have improved their household meals;
- 75% of Borrowers have acquired additional farm animals;
- 85% of Borrowers have improved their business skills;
- 20% of Borrowers have hired employees;
- 97% of Borrowers have indicated that the loan program has had a positive impact on their lives.

First Annual “A Woman’s Worth Event”

On May 5, 2011, The Greater Contribution started a new tradition with “A Woman’s Worth,” our first annual event to celebrate the women who overcome adversity and extreme poverty through the power of micro loans. Larry Janss graciously shared his beautiful and unique Four Friends Gallery in Thousand Oaks, California for this special event. It featured our special



Sylvia started a pharmacy with her micro loans.

guest speaker, micro loan expert Julia Wilson. Julia was an advisor to Nobel Peace Laureate and the father of Microfinance, Muhammad Yunus, and she was the former Executive Director, West Coast for Grameen Foundation. Julia shared with us a global perspective on micro lending and its significant impact on working women in the developing world. Her compelling stories of women’s businesses starting and thriving in the developing world, reminded us all of the power of these small loans to empower and support women and their families on their journey out of extreme poverty.

An evening of great food, wine, and beautiful jewelry



Karon Wright and Julia Wilson.

handmade by Esther, one of our African entrepreneurs, was enjoyed and shared by like-minded people who are committed to making the world a better place for those currently living in extreme poverty.

TGC looks forward to sharing new triumphs by the African entrepreneurs supported by TGC at the 2012 “A Woman’s Worth” event.

Milestones

High School Students Step Up to Support TGC

In 2011, two high school groups stepped up to make their contribution to the fight against poverty. The students of Newbury Park High School TGC Club and Westlake High School Amnesty Club both held fundraisers to support the women in our micro loan programs. We especially appreciate the presidents of these clubs, Malina Munshi and Stephanie Yang, who really stepped up with their enthusiasm, compassion and leadership this year. Due to their fundraising efforts, 15 more women and their families received the benefit of micro loans and have begun their journey out of poverty.



Newbury Park High School members of The Greater Contribution Club.

We believe, as Children's Defense Fund Founder and President Marian Wright Edelman believes, that "Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." Both of these clubs showed their commitment to doing just that. We hope they carry their support of TGC and communities in need with them throughout their lives.

Welcoming New Board Members

The Greater Contribution welcomed three new board members in 2011: Kerrie Sadler, Bonnie Neuer, and Mary Kay Donahoe. 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 support a greater number of women with micro loans in the years to come.

TGC Joins the Visions and Voices on Facebook.



The Greater Contribution is excited to finally become a part of the global communications movement that Facebook has become. Pepperdine business students first provided a framework for our launch into social media. We are grateful to Esther Malwitz, who helped us launch our official Facebook page in Fall of 2011. Pellie Anderson now coordinates with our dedicated volunteer, Petra Elias, to bring our followers up-to-date photos and stories of our women entrepreneurs and their businesses, in order to challenge followers to get involved and share their voices about ending extreme poverty in the world. We look forward to continuing to share stories of success and triumph over poverty in the years to come. Share our message of hope and possibilities and join the conversation at <http://www.facebook.com/thegreatercontribution>.

"LET THE FUTURE SAY OF OUR GENERATION THAT WE SENT FORTH MIGHTY CURRENTS OF HOPE, AND THAT WE WORKED TOGETHER TO HEAL THE WORLD."

~ The End of Poverty —Jeffrey D. Sachs, President and Co-Founder, Millennium Promise

A Unique Micro Loan Program

The Greater Contribution loan programs have proven especially successful in assisting women break the cycle of extreme poverty, because they are not just given loans, but are empowered, supported, and trained.

Empowerment and support are key components to creating successful entrepreneurs. Through our partnership with Women's Microfinance Institute, the micro loans TGC funds are provided to groups of 20 women at a time from the same village. The women meet every two weeks. During those weekly meetings, the women discuss not only their business challenges, but family and personal issues. The women provide support for each other and share ideas for solutions to business challenges. By sharing personal issues, as well as cross guaranteeing each others' loans, the women have been able to create a solidarity of purpose among the group. In addition, a loan coordinator meets one-on-one with each woman once a month to provide mentoring and any individual attention they might need. Women therefore feel more empowered



and self-confident in meeting their personal and business challenges.

Additionally, each group of 20 women receives extensive business training before they begin their businesses. Many women have never touched money, let alone managed it, so this training is critical to the success of their businesses and their ability to truly work their way out of poverty.

The local trainers work with each borrower to prepare a business plan. Even though these are micro-enterprises, the plan provides a basic roadmap for the borrower to reach her economic goal. Simple marketing, business operations and management concepts are taught. The training also includes group activities that allow the women to practice techniques for promoting their businesses. Bookkeeping is emphasized, and the lesson on “income minus expenses equals profits” usually draws applause.

This is a unique and important aspect of our micro lending program. As many women living in developing



Olive Wolimbwa (far left) and her trainers in Wabulenga Village.

A Unique Micro Loan Program



Women in Wabulenga Village being trained.

countries have operated some type of micro business to scrape together income for their families, very few have ever heard of the benefits of record keeping. Additionally, the women are provided essential items such as notebooks, pencils and calculators to enable them to keep track of their business finances.

In addition to this training that individual borrowers receive, a very powerful part of our program is the fact that these east African women run the program themselves. While TGC and our lending partner WMI provide training, guidance, monitoring and a highly-structured program, women administrators in the villages run the day-to-day operations of the loan program. We do not! This provides yet another level of training in running a business. WMI has 20 trainers trained through the World Bank “Training-to-Train” Program, who orient all new village hub programs and who train the trainers in the new hubs.

Olive Wolimbwa coordinates all trainings in the various Ugandan villages where loans are administered, and she visits each village and village trainer once per quarter to ensure all is going well. Significantly, trainers for each new borrower group were first borrowers themselves,

and have been chosen by the local community group. Just like the women they train, they first received a series of micro loans and built their businesses based on the training in our program. Having had success in their own businesses, they have the opportunity to pass on their business knowledge to new borrowers by becoming trainers themselves. Each new loan group has the advantage of a trainer who can speak from experience when they teach topics like marketing, accounting, and other good business practices to borrowers. We believe the support among new and experienced borrowers strengthens the bonds within their communities and creates greater opportunities for the success of each successive borrower.

With all of this training and support, it is no wonder that there is an 100% loan repayment rate, which means more successful businesses and the ability to re-loan that money many times over. Equally important, the women in our program truly are working themselves out of poverty. Our records show that women enter our program earning less than \$37/month then increase their earnings up to \$150/month in two years, significantly improving the quality of their lives and the lives of their families.

The Journey

www.GreaterContribution.org

START

Rural woman living in poverty



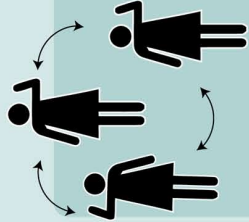
Joins a 20-member TGC Loan Group



TGC trains new borrowers in business skills...



...and record keeping.



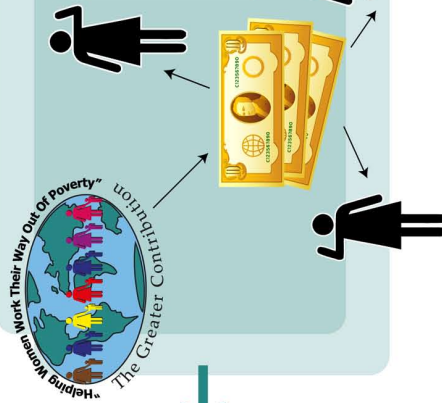
Loan Group members guarantee each others' loans.



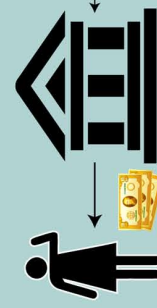
Borrower can get follow up loans every 6 months to help her business grow; after 18 months loan amount can increase to \$250



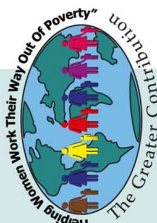
Borrower starts business and works her way out of poverty



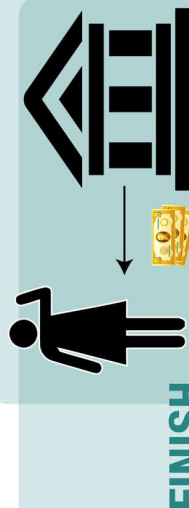
Each group member receives a TGC loan of up to \$150 for a 6 month term



After 2 years, Borrower transitions to an independent loan issued by the bank for up to \$500 for a 1 year term; TGC guarantees the loan 100% and the group cross-guarantee is eliminated



After 3 years, Borrower transitions to an independent loan issued by the bank for up to \$1000 for a 1 year term; TGC guarantees 11% of the loan - Borrower makes 20% deposit and 20% collateral pledge



FINISH

After 4 years, Borrower graduates to independent loan issued by the bank for up to \$2,500 for a 1 year term; TGC does not guarantee any portion of the loan - Borrower makes 20% deposit and 20% collateral pledge

This borrower's loan funds are now available to loan to a new woman living in poverty

Women's Stories of Progress

The Joy of Transportation

In the United States, we take for granted that our cars, subways, buses, and planes can transport us anywhere, any time. If we live in large cities, public transportation conveniently takes us to school, to work, and to restaurants. In other areas of the country, most of us own at least one, if not two or three cars, to take us to the grocery store, to the movies, and to take our children to and from school. If we own a business, access to vans, trucks, trains, and boats is readily available to us to obtain supplies and transport our goods as near or far as is necessary. However, in rural Uganda, means of

transportation by motorized vehicle is rare. No public transportation exists in or between the rural villages. So, when a villager acquires a motorized vehicle of any kind, it is cause to celebrate the opportunities and freedom that it brings. So it is with Joy.

Joy is one of our borrowers in Buyobo, Uganda. Through your generous support, Joy is one of the fortunate villagers who obtained micro loans to start and grow her small business. With the micro loans, she was able to start a small business selling fish. Proceeds from her fish business have enabled her to save enough money to buy a motorcycle. The motorcycle allows her to more quickly and easily obtain fresh fish from market and transport her inventory back to the village for sale. So far, she is one of only three women in her village to enjoy the freedom and opportunity that a motorcycle can bring. You can see from the beaming smile on her face the pride she has in her accomplishment and “the joy of transportation.”



Joy, smiling on her motorcycle.

New Village Benefits from Micro Loans

January 2011 brought new hope to a new group of hardworking, deserving women. In the village of Wabulenga, Uganda, A new loan group of 20 women began their journey out of poverty. Their two year journey began in January when each of the new borrowers received her first micro loan to start a new business. Saina used her loan to start a retail shop. Lovisa sells charcoal for fuel. Tibiwa opened a hotel in the village. Lamba learned to market her skills as a tailor. Each embarked on her own individual journey, but each is supported by their fellow borrowers in their loan group and continued support of our donors.

As the year progressed, we began receiving compelling reports of the impact that the micro loan program was having on our new borrower's lives. Here are some of the compelling stories of the women who began the loan process in January 2011.

Women's Stories of Progress

Tibiwa started a hotel with the loan she received January 2011. She indicated that “The problem has been money but now with TGC money things are moving on well. My children are now at school and they all have shoes. No more begging....”



Jane, who sells onions, appreciates the training and extended loan repayment period. She states in her own words, “I have been in different micro finance institutions and lending organizations but I have never seen an organization like TGC. The [loan repayment] period is so nice the interest is affordable with the rural woman. The reason why we were failing to pay was that they didn’t train us before giving the loan. I am glad about the training of TGC has made me a wonderful woman in the business. Since I got the loan I have been able to pay back the loan and make some savings for the future use thanks to TGC.” [sic].

Joyce started a retail shop with her first loan. She states, “My business is in a remote area and most of the shops around are of poor quality. Even the people around them prefer buying things in urban areas or in town. But thanks to TGC! When I got my first loan, I went and bought all the essential commodities and stocked my shop. I can tell you now that people who were buying in town now they are my customers.” All her children are able to go to school and eat well every day.



Income and Expenses

THE GREATER CONTRIBUTION

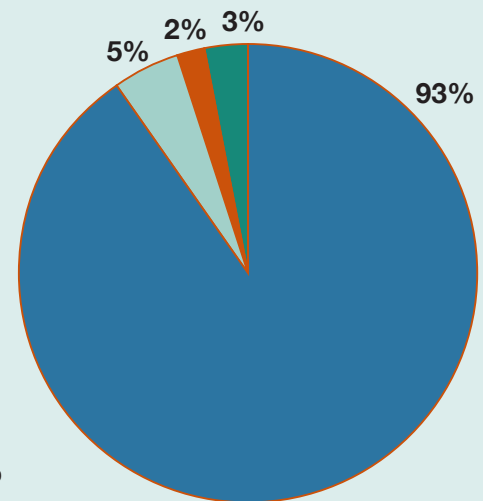
Income and Expenses
January – December 2011

Source of Funds

Direct Public Support \$ 53,979

Uses of Funds

Funding Micro loans.....	\$ 50,000	93%
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 2,572	5%
Operating Expenses.....	\$ 846	2%
Insurance.....	\$ 1400	3%
Travel	\$ 0	0%
Other Business Expenses	\$ 0	0%
Use of reserve for future operations.....	\$ (839)	-3%
Total Uses of Funds.....	\$ 53,979	100%



“GIVE A MAN A FISH, HE’LL EAT FOR A DAY.
GIVE A WOMAN MICROCREDIT, SHE, HER HUSBAND,
HER CHILDREN AND HER EXTENDED FAMILY
WILL EAT FOR A LIFETIME.”

—Bono

Ways to Continue to Support **THE GREATER CONTRIBUTION:**

Helping Women Work Their Way Out of Poverty

- Become a Sustainer's Club member—monthly donations that support women year-round.
- “Like Us” and “Share” our messages on Facebook, www.facebook.com/thegreatercontribution
- Give the gift of a micro loan: send gift cards to your friends and family
- Host a House Party
- Join Students Stepping Up
- Volunteer

Visit us @ www.greatercontribution.org and on Facebook 