



Women's Bank Annual Report 2018



WOMEN'S BANK 2018



Dear Women's Bank supporter,

What is the connection between Finland's Susanne Lehtinen from Åland and Nepal's Bimala Koirala? The answer is Women's Bank.

Women's Bank is a unique Finnish innovation that brings together women from affluent Finland and five developing countries to beat poverty and provide more opportunities for women, children, and families. The division of labour is clear as hundreds of volunteers in Finland raise money, which is in turn is used to carry out projects in Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Central African Republic, and Uganda.

One of the values of Women's Bank is resourcefulness. That is something truly indispensable as fundraising is demanding work. Another of our values is joy. Joy is what drives us to work together. The drive for voluntary work comes from within us; from the significance and meaningfulness of our actions. Resourcefulness and joy go hand in hand.

Joy is also brought about by success. During its 11-year existence, Women's Bank has already raised a total of 14.361 million euros. In 2018, a total of 1.78 million euros were brought in. Achieving these results has required hundreds of events, gatherings, and campaigns. For new ideas, only the sky and good practices are the limit.

The Women's Bank strategy does not involve pop-up stops in the project countries; rather, the projects run for at least three years, often longer. Their progress and costs are monitored. Transparency is most important values of Women's Bank.

Both donors and volunteers have the right to know how the money is used.

Project country visits by volunteers are useful and joyful gatherings as meetings, reports and numbers turn into human faces. We have ever so much in common.

Reetta Meriläinen
Chair, Women's Bank Steering Group



A Women's Issue is an Issue for All of Us

To create opportunities for women is to create opportunities for the success of families, communities, and entire nations. In my opinion, it is only fitting that Women's Bank, which focuses on lifting women and families up from poverty, has risen from a country like Finland where women were successfully involved in the world of business and work even long before our independence, being at the very hub of helping to lift our country out of poverty.

Women's Bank is an unusually exemplary success story and there is a worldwide demand for its campaigns and projects.

It is with particular pleasure that I, too, have joined in promoting Women's Bank activities during my time at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and I would like to express my appreciation for your tangible and sustainable actions among people in need of help.

Improving the status of women is strongly linked to the structures and activities of the rest of society. The improvement of family economies by allowing women to enter the workforce of society calls for a change of attitude, but also for the development of various services, such as day care.

In terms of education, working life, and social status, the women of the developing world are painfully disadvantaged and so development work that is both earmarked and target-oriented plays a key role in responding to these challenges. Improving the status of women also reduces the likelihood of armed conflict in the regions in question. Women have played increasingly important roles in the resolution of armed conflicts and hopefully they will continue to do so. As Minister of the Interior, I think successful conflict resolution is also often reflected indirectly in the number of asylum seekers in Finland and Europe, so in my view this is a matter that affects us all.

Women's Bank is a positive and recognised brand. The name of the organisation is known even if its activities are not. Nevertheless, there are still plenty of opportunities for growth. The resources for development work cooperation by Finland

and other similar countries are modest and unfortunately recent years have seen the policies of even major countries turning to austerity. However, with global cooperation, strong conviction, and new ways of action we can still continue to reach our goals for the improvement of the status of women as well.

Kai Mykkänen
Minister of the Interior

AS WOMEN'S SKILLS AND INCOME IMPROVE





Photo: Paula Saastamoinen



Photo: Heili Blåfield



Photo: Johanna Sallinen



Women's Bank Activities 2018

In 2018, Women's Bank volunteers organised several national events and tours, as well as numerous local activities.

The Women's Bank Winter Conference was held in Kotka

The year began with the Winter Conference of Women's Bank volunteers, arranged in Kotka. In addition to current affairs, the programme featured travelogues by volunteers who had been to Uganda and Nepal. Over dinner, it was time to meet Kotka City Council Chair **Nina Brask**, and **Salla Piipari-Huovila**, one of the Council members.

On the second day, there was a panel discussion on empowerment and compassion. The panel comprised **Reetta Meriläinen**, the Women's Bank steering group Chair, the Pastor of the Year **Juha Tanska**, and **Marjaliisa Koskensalo**, a provider of emotion-focused art therapy. The discussion was led by the journalist **Ulla-Maija Sievinen**.

40,000 euros raised by golfing

Finland's largest charity golf tour, Women's Bank Open 2018, kicked off in May. By the time the tour concluded in September, nearly 40,000 euros had been raised. This translates into 1,300 Professions for women in developing countries.

The golf tour involved more than 1,200 players in 25 individual competitions. The tour winners were **Antti Ihalainen** (Pickala

Golf (PGC)) and **Antero Lindström** (VaGo), who accumulated 71 points from five individual competitions. **Maria Elemo-Räisänen** (Sarvik Golfklubi (SGC)), who golfed in eight individual competitions, was named the Most Active Individual Player.

Women's Bank Walk brought in 82,000 euros

Women's Bank Walk, arranged in September, brought over 82,000 euros, or more than 2,700 Professions. The number of event participants stood at 2,000, coming from 75 localities. The northernmost place for the walk was Utsjoki while the southernmost place was Kirkkonummi. Abroad, the Women's Bank Walk was held in 22 locations, including Croatia, Germany, Greece, and Spain.

Several individual walks were also held in conjunction with the Women's Bank Walk campaign. **Johanna Sallinen** walked a distance of about 250 km from Porto, Portugal, to Santiago de Compostela while **Marjo Piipponen** walked in northern Karelia towards her multi-year target of raising 70 Professions.

New Chairs to steer the management group

At the beginning of September, the

Women's Bank management group got new Chairs as **Liisa Kapanen** and **Paula Pauniahio**, both active Women's Bank members, took over.

Liisa Kapanen has been involved in Women's Bank activities since 2013. She has been a member of the corporate fundraising group and is the former Chair of the Helsinki local group. In December 2018, she received an Honourable Mention in the Citizen Forum's national vote for the Volunteer of the Year.

Paula Pauniahio acquired a Women's Bank share in December 2009 and shortly thereafter joined the corporate fundraising group. In addition to business cooperation and other activities, she has been involved in developing the Women's Bank communications strategy.

The Autumn Conference gathered volunteers in Helsinki

In October, Women's Bank volunteers gathered in Helsinki for the traditional Autumn Day Conference. Among other things, the event focused on networking and the significance of various cooperation projects. The Autumn Conference also presented results from the work carried out in the projects in 2018.

Local events of all kinds; Women's Bank volunteers visit Nepal

In addition to national events, Women's Bank activities were organised by active local groups across Finland. Events of all kinds were held. Professions for women were raised by singing, dancing, skiing, hiking, doing arts and crafts, coding, writing, blogging—and even having a sauna. Local groups also arranged handicraft and reading circles and bazaars.

A new Women's Bank local group was established in Kalajoki and it wishes to extend you a hearty welcome. In November, a group of nine Women's Bank volunteers travelled to Nepal to meet women involved in the projects. The memorable trip made the visitors both laugh and cry and gave them the increasing confidence that help is truly making a difference.

Many thanks to our corporate partners

Corporate cooperation is an important and significant part of Women's Bank activities. In 2018, numerous businesses across Finland were involved in Women's Bank activities.

Project-specific Women's Bank donations were provided by Handelsbanken (Uganda), Kaiko Clothing Oy (Nepal), Novita Oy and Suominen Oyj (Cambodia). The main national cooperation partner of the Women's Bank Walk was BDO Oy. The walking events were also supported by numerous local partners.

The Women's Bank Open cooperation partners included 25 golf clubs, but also Mercedes-Benz, travel agency Golfresepti, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Oy Karl Fazer Ab, the Finnish Golf Union, GoGolf Oy, Suomen Golfpiste Oy, GameBook Oy, Honour-Golf magazine, Viking Line Abp, Pelican Selfstorage, Continental, the Expo and Convention Centre, PGA Catalunya Resort, Sixt car rental, and FORE Turku ry. In addition to these, Sokos-Hotels were involved in five individual competitions as local partners.

Product and service cooperation was provided by Caps Look entrepreneur Iina Lappalainen, House of Elliott Oy, LUMI, Saintex Oy, Sokos Hotel Presidentti, Finland-Honduras society Suomi-Honduras Seura ry, and development aid shop society Tampereen kehityskauppa ry.

Many thanks to all our cooperation partners for their valuable support!

Text: Heidi Jääskeläinen, Liisa Kapanen, Susan Mykrä, Ulla Räisänen

WOMEN'S BANK KEY FIGURES 2018

Fundraising income

Donations 2018 (€)	1,8 million
Number of Women's Bank monthly donors	3 234
Donations by monthly donors (€)	622 000
Number of Women's Bank shareholders	1 624
Donations by shareholders (€)	80 000
Corporate donations (€)	125 000

Events

Number of national events	100
National events income (€)	122 000
Number of local events	500

Work in Finland

Number of Women's Bank local groups	44
Number of active volunteers	1 000
Number of personnel	2

Operating costs

Administrative and operational costs (%)	16,6
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The costs consist of Women's Bank communications, fundraising, and volunteer network operating costs and administrative costs (including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), rents, insurances).

Project work 2018

Number of countries	5
Number of projects	12
Number of people involved in projects	26 800
Number of beneficiaries including families	135 000
Project costs (€)	1,4 million

*Preliminary figures Q1/2019.

Updated figures after Financial Statements: www.naistenpankki.fi/en/faq

I want to move forward with my life



The Jeep drops us off in the central square of the village of Ghushel. From there, we start to walk towards a house we can high up in the distance. We are deep in the middle of the most beautiful Nepalese countryside. At times, the narrow path goes perilously close to a steep gorge; we cannot afford to take even the smallest misstep. There is no other road to the house.

After about 45 minutes, we arrive at the house, where our hostess **Sunita Thapa** gives us a hearty welcome. Her mother-in-law and a few village women are also bustling around the yard. Her children, a 15-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl, are still in school at the village centre; her husband is at the market buying goods for a new house.

"We're building a new house up there," explains Sunita Thapa, gesturing towards the mountain top.

"Even higher than this?" I wonder to myself in surprise.

Sunita Thapa is one of the members of a cooperative women's group supported by Women's Bank. She got married when she was 15 years old and has lived in this dwelling far from the village centre ever since. The holding cultivates mustard, maize, cauliflower, and green vegetables. These are taken to the village by foot and then they are transported collectively to be sold at the market in a nearby city.

In addition to cultivated patches, the holding has five water buffaloes that provide milk to take to the village to sell further. There is work to be done from early morning until late evening with hardly any free moments in

between.

Despite the hard journey, Sunita goes to the village every other day. Being the secretary of the village cooperative, her duties include not only participating in meetings once a month, but also preparing the meetings, planning trainings arranged by the cooperative, and supporting other village women who are even more vulnerable than her.

Despite her busy life that seems so hard, Sunita thinks she is lucky.

"As a member of the cooperative, I am bolder and more independent than before," she says. "The women's group has had a major impact on my life. I have learned many things and I am no longer as dependent on my husband as I was before. Through the cooperative, we can save and loan money for ourselves, create our own solutions, and invest in our own businesses."

Sunita's dream is to become one of the most successful women in the cooperative and move forward in life, thus guaranteeing her children a better and safer future.

"I want to expand my cultivations and continue to participate in the work for women's benefit," she says.

"Women are capable doing the same things as men, but in order to do so, we need each other. That is why being in the group is important to me."

Text: Tiina Toivakka. Photo: Maria Miklas

Volunteering empowers the volunteer too

Volunteering on the Costa del Sol through joy

The first Women's Bank local group established outside the borders of Finland has been active in Fuengirola, Spain since 2015. Events are arranged for both winter residents and tourists, so you can get to know with this casual crowd even while on holiday.

"We do things out of joy; it's our motto," explain group leaders **Rea Willberg** and **Meeri Ferrer**.

Meeri and Rea have been involved in the group activities almost since the very beginning.

"When I reached the end of my working life, this was a nice way of keeping active and helping at the same time," Meeri says.

Rea was familiar with Women's Bank as her business was a regular donour for many years.

After retiring, she joined as a volunteer.

"We're doing good, important work to help women in the developing world," Rea says.

In the warmth of the Costa del Sol sun, people do not take any undue stress about volunteer work.

"This doesn't feel like work," chime Meeri and Rea. "We have a great crowd here and you can get help whenever you need. You can find enthusiastic people to do everything."

Maria Tammenlaakso, the Costa del Sol local group secretary, was also interviewed.

Text: Hanna-Mari Kuivalainen



World a better place through empowering women

Hanna Sumari, Espoo

I participated in Women's Bank Walk and invited a group of friends to walk along with me. Each of us donated 'Professions' for women and took our own walk on the day of the event. I also wrote about the event in my blog.

I feel sisterhood with women around the world. We share the same joys and sorrows. I think empowering women is a feminist activity. When the women and mothers in developing countries gain livelihoods, their whole families benefit by it. What I value about Women's Bank work is that I can be confident about the help

getting through.

No one can cope alone and everyone who receives help is sure to pass it on. It is great that I was able to utilise being in the public eye to help others like this. Hopefully, I have also been able to inspire people.

It is worth your while, whoever you are, to find your own way of helping. The world changes slowly but by improving the status of women it will gradually become a better one.

Text: Sara Nurmilaukas



Doing good with fair clothes

Mirjam Sokka, Kaiko Clothing

Kaiko Clothing was the dream of its founder Mirjam Sokka. After the birth of her firstborn, she returned to her studies and began refining her clothing business idea in conjunction with international business studies. The test batch was sold as soon as it was ready and Mirjam's dream began to come true.

"I was concerned about the future of people doing the sewing in developing countries and I wondered how I could combine my dream of fashion industry work with charity," she recalls. "I decided that from the onset Kaiko Clothing will contribute 7% of the profit of each product sold for the benefit of women and children in developing countries."

Women's Bank seemed like a natural fit as it supports the education of women and children and trains women in developing countries for entrepreneurship. The first donation of 5,000 euros was made in early 2018 while the second donation of over 6,000 euros was made at the end of the year.

"I greatly appreciated the work of Women's Bank," says Mirjam. "It is truly empowering for me to get to enable Women's Bank activities in developing countries through my work. I think it brings great significance to our work. The cooperation is important for our customers as well."

Text: Rita Dahl



A DONATION THROUGH WOMEN'S BANK CHANGES LIVES



Women's Bank supports the sustained livelihood and entrepreneurship of women in developing countries. When a mother has an income, she will never have to see her children starve. Thanks to Women's Bank, an increasing number of women have gained the opportunity to rise from poverty and more and more families and entire communities have grown stronger. People around the world have joined together to make this dream a reality. Will you join us in as well?

There are many ways you can help: by making a donation, becoming a volunteer or a corporate partner. There are over 1,000 active Women's Bank volunteers and more are needed. Please join! Even a small deed will have a big impact.

Women's Bank / Finn Church Aid

PL 210 (Eteläranta 8)
00130 Helsinki

Customer service

Email: naistenpankki@kua.fi
Tel. +358 20 787 1201 (Mon-Fri 9-16)

Women's Bank account numbers

Nordea: FI63 1745 3000 1321 02
OP: FI47 5789 5420 0246 76

Send an SMS by texting NAISELLE to 16499 (€20)

- only applies to Finnish mobile numbers and operators

Annual Report editorial staff

Elina Bono, Heidi Jääskeläinen, Susan Mykrä, Sara Nurmilaukas, and Ulla Räisänen

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Gita Sapkota from Nepal has been a member of the Ghushel village cooperative since its inception.
Photo: Maria Miklas