



# **Women's Bank work and results**

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## Impactful work towards equality

**Women's Bank** is a Finnish organisation that has raised

# 22 M€

in support of women since 2007.

Every year we offer training and support for entrepreneurial activities to some

# 30,000

women in developing countries.

Of all women supported by **Women's Bank**

# 90%

now enjoy a better livelihood.



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Nurse **Anita Owaruhanga**, 31, runs her own clinic in south-western Uganda with support from Women's Bank.  
PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN



## Women's Bank creates opportunities for women

**IN A WORLD** filled with worry and fear, Women's Bank provides you with hope and good news. Our work has yet again produced impressive results. Warm thanks goes to our donors, our volunteers, people at Finn Church Aid and its partner organisations, and all the incredible, tenacious women whose livelihoods we strive to guarantee.

One of the stories that makes me extremely happy is that of **Sharmila Lama** from Nepal (page 5). Now owner of a successful crafts business, Sharmila is a great example of how the impact of Women's Bank's work stretches across generations.

Providing better income opportunities for women helps to support entire families and communities. We know that the first thing women typically invest in is education for their children. This is also true for Sharmila, whose daughter is now studying at university.

I have personally seen how important it is to bring women together. Savings groups, cooperatives and entrepreneurship training provide women with an opportunity to become members of peer networks where they can share experiences and best practices. Women become empowered and no longer stand alone.

Our work produces magnificent results: The savings and loan groups and cooperatives raised an impressive capital of more than three million euros last year; a strong indication of their sustainability.

By helping women come together, acquire skills and exercise their rights, we can build a firm foundation for

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**Providing better income opportunities for women helps to support entire families and communities.**

stronger societies. The same sense of togetherness is tangibly present in everything we do at Women's Bank. Thank you for being part of this unique and powerful network. Every act counts.

We are very proud to share the results of our work and hope you enjoy the read. ●

**Saara Lehmuskoski**  
Chair of  
the Steering Team



PHOTO: VILLE MAALI



# Empowerment through work

**WE CREATE** income and business opportunities for women in Africa and Asia. We offer training in business and vocational skills to support women-led businesses and strengthen women's awareness of their rights. Our programme work has supported women improve

their financial position and increase their decision-making power in families and communities. By supporting Women's Bank, you help us build a more equitable and sustainable world. ●

In 2022, support provided by **Women's Bank** enabled



**29,000**

women to improve their position and livelihoods.



**112,000**

family members to live a more secure life.



**18,660**

women to run a small business.



**14,290**

women to take out a loan to improve their livelihoods.

## Having a business helps to earn a living

**SHARMILA LAMA** from Nepal was forced to leave her small daughter with relatives when she left for Kuwait to find work. "It was the hardest decision of my life to leave my daughter in Nepal, but I had no choice," Sharmila says.

In the end, Sharmila came home empty-handed. She lived hand to mouth for years until she heard about Women's Bank, an organisation that offers women vocational training and help with starting a business.

This opportunity seemed very attractive to Sharmila who was very good with her hands and dreamed of starting a small bamboo handicraft company. She seized the opportunity, completed business coaching and craft skills training programmes, and joined a women's cooperative.

Now Sharmila runs a successful crafts business and is able to provide for her daughter. Next, Sharmila plans to train and hire other women to work in her company, because she doesn't have enough time to finish all the orders on her own!

PHOTO: MONICA DEUPALA





# Join us to change the world

**WOMEN'S BANK** volunteers in Finland and abroad are organised into more than 40 local groups that raise funds and host a wide range of activities to raise awareness of Women's Bank and our work.

National teams in Finland provide volunteers with invaluable support in communications, local activities and cooperation with businesses.

Next Generation is a group for young adults that seeks to expand operations and gain popularity among young adults.

Volunteers traditionally organise three national campaigns each year. For those who enjoy more physical activities, Women's Bank Walk and Women's Bank Golf campaigns offer a great way to promote global equality in the summer and autumn.

Our Women's Bank Read campaign always features a famous author who co-hosts literary events with us around Finland. Funds are raised through events and book sales. In addition, around twenty book clubs in different parts of Finland meet throughout the year.

Women's Bank also offers interesting volunteering opportunities for specialists who share our passion for equality and sustainable development. The development team consisting of volunteers and Finn Church Aid's programme professionals supports Women's Bank's project work around the world.

Occasionally, Women's Bank offers opportunities for volunteering abroad. Through our Skills Donation programme, professionals from different fields are invited

## Become a volunteer

- Women's Bank has more than 40 local groups.
- You can also become a member of our national teams or take part in campaigns.
- Next Generation is a group especially for young adults.
- Read more: [naistenpankki.fi/en/join-us](https://naistenpankki.fi/en/join-us)

to apply for volunteer positions in our programme countries and work together with our local partners.

From the range of roles and activities available at Women's Bank, everyone is bound to find something that appeals to them. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, share experiences and learn new things. Women's Bank brings together like-minded people eager to join forces to build a more equal world. ●

Text:  
**Kaisa Majava**  
Co-chair of the management team



1.



1. Women's Bank volunteers organise hundreds of events around Finland every year.

PHOTO: MAIJA PARTANEN

2. Women's Bank's new coffees and teas are now available in stores around Finland – and naturally in

2.

3.



volunteer events!  
PHOTO: MAIJA PARTANEN

3. Anneli Taina (left), Pirjo Lahtinen and Eeva Syrjä took part in the Women's Bank Walk event in Tampere in autumn 2022.

PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN

# Results of our work in 2022

In 2022, we directly reached 29,000 women in five countries in Africa and Asia. Our support to women included vocational training and support for starting a business, thereby supporting women to create a livelihood for themselves. Women’s Bank’s projects are marked with pink dots on the map.

## Uganda:

10,486

women improved their livelihoods

**UGANDA IS** Africa’s largest refugee-hosting country with more than a million refugees, most of them women and children.

We support women’s entrepreneurship in refugee settlements, in the slums of the capital Kampala and in the nearby town of Mityana, where we run a chicken farm as a social enterprise.

Savings and loan groups, as well as vocational skills training, have proven to be an effective way to provide women with income opportunities. In just one year, the groups managed to double their savings to more than 710,000 euros!

10,486

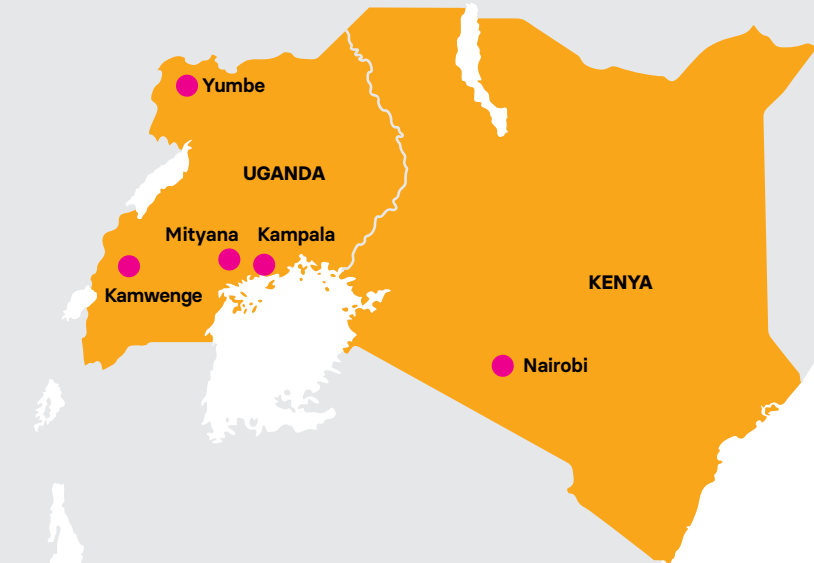
members in 397 saving and loan groups.

711,210

euros in savings.

5,632

enterprises creating 1,828 new jobs.



## What are savings and loan groups and cooperatives?

- They are groups for women that encourage women to save and build financial, entrepreneurial and leadership skills.
- All women save money into a joint fund and take out loans when their turn comes.
- Last year, women were able to raise a staggering 3 million euros in capital!
- There are 577 savings and loan groups, and cooperatives have nearly 27,000 members.

## Kenya:

257

women improved their livelihoods

**IN KENYA’S** capital Nairobi we launched a circular economy project to provide employment and business opportunities for women living in the slums. We train women to sort, process and utilise waste materials.

Women have managed to turn the city’s huge waste streams into a livelihood by selling plastics for recycling or by finding employment in the sector’s companies.

Last year, women also set up a joint savings and loan group.

263

women took part in vocational skills training.

1,092

tonnes of plastic and other materials were recycled.

1,615

family members have a more secure life.

# Nepal: 8,302

women improved their livelihoods

**COOPERATIVES** were an effective way of improving women's livelihoods and position in Nepal. With our support, the funds available to women every day increased by 30% in Lalitpur compared to 2021, while in the Sindhul region, women's income rose by 10%. Women were also empowered to take an active role in issues that matter to them. The results show that long-term work creates sustainable structures.

# Myanmar: 1,807

women improved their livelihoods

**THE WOMEN'S** savings and loan groups and joint ventures we support have helped women improve their income opportunities regardless of the country's unstable conditions since the military coup. Women have also taken a more active role in local decision-making bodies, reflecting their growing empowerment.

8,165  
members in 20 cooperatives.

1.3 M€  
in capital for cooperatives.

590  
companies, 126 of which  
were founded last year.

1,578  
members in 90 saving and loan groups.

645  
women participated in entrepreneurship  
and vocational training.

265  
companies, 149 of which  
were founded last year.



# Cambodia: 8,127

women improved their livelihoods

**CAMBODIA IS** one of the countries most severely affected by climate change globally. In poor rural regions where people rely on agriculture for their livelihoods one flood or drought can destroy everything. We support women's access to livelihoods, particularly through saving and loan groups and cooperatives. We train women in the use of climate-resistant farming techniques and crop varieties. We also offer vocational education and training to young people.

5,114  
members in 17 cooperatives.

71  
young women enrolled  
in vocational education.

255  
companies, 149 of which  
were founded last year.





## Five reasons to support women's work

### 1 Work is a human right, not accessible to all

Every woman should have financial independence and the power to make their own choices. Yet, for many women, access to employment remains a distant dream, unachievable due to poverty and inequality.

- 2.4 billion women lack the same economic opportunities as men.
- In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working.

### 2 Invisible work deprives women of opportunities

Women carry out three times more unpaid household work than men on average. Especially in developing countries, the time girls and women spend on household work is time away from gainful employment, studying and participation in society.

- Globally, women spend up to five hours a day on household and care work.
- This means women perform a huge amount of work, but only get paid for a fraction of it.



With support from Women's Bank, **Jane Malebere**, 58, started her own sewing business in the Kamwenge area in southwestern Uganda. "Now I can provide for my children," Jane says. PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN

### 3 Without work, women are disadvantaged

If women depend on others for income and security, they are unable to make their own choices. Women and girls typically drop out of education when they get married or have children.

- Two-thirds of the global illiterate population are women.
- One in three women in the world has experienced intimate partner violence.

### 4 Work and income give women the freedom to make their own decisions

Having an occupation and an income opportunity allow women to choose their own paths. Having financial independence and skills encourage women to participate in society in other ways, too.

- An educated mother is more likely to invest in the education of her children, to take care of their well-being, and to have fewer children.
- Gainfully employed mothers are major role models for girls.

### 5 Moving forward without half of the world's population is impossible

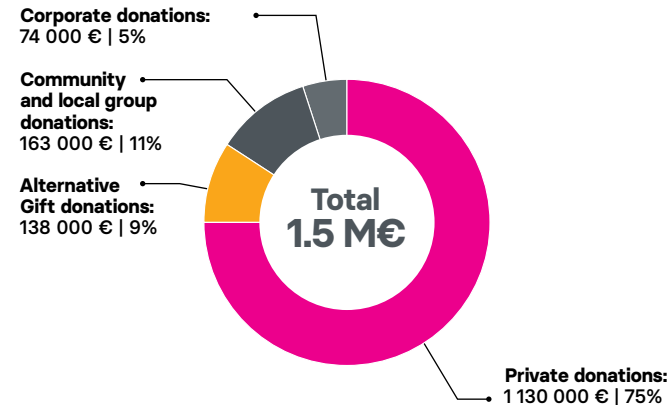
Supporting women's work and entrepreneurship is one of the most effective ways to increase equality in families and societies. It empowers women and unlocks their enormous potential. The world needs skilled women!

- At the current rate, it will take 300 years to achieve gender equality.
- Improvements in gender equality contribute to the wellbeing of children, families and entire communities. ●



# Financial year 2022

## Fundraising income 2022



Expense rate: 18.6 %

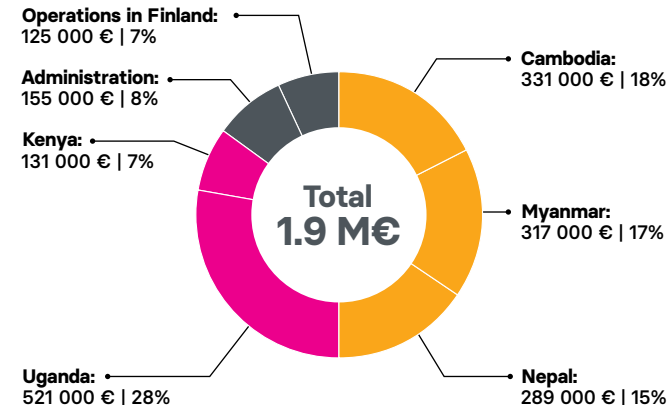
**WOMEN'S BANK** operates entirely with donated funds. In 2022, Finns donated EUR 1.5 million to our work, allowing us to provide training and support for entrepreneurship to 29,000 women in five countries.

In 2022, the costs of Women's Bank programme work exceeded income by 400,000 euros, which was covered from the Women's Bank fund that contains surpluses from previous years.

We rely on private charitable giving, especially our 3,500 monthly donors who guarantee the continuity of our work. Our warmest thanks to each donor! ●

Read more: [naistenpankki.fi/en/faq](https://naistenpankki.fi/en/faq)

## Operating expenses 2022



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**Women's Bank  
delivers your donation  
reliably and efficiently.  
Thank you for your gift.**

# What makes Women's Bank special:



## We are a strong community

Founded in 2007 by Finnish women, Women's Bank is a community of donors, volunteers, partners and women in our programme countries. We share a passion to promote women's access to work and business opportunities.



## We invite everyone to join us to promote equality

Every year we reach up to one million Finns through various communication channels and events. Everyone is invited to join us! So far, we have raised 22 million euros. With donated funds, we can support 30,000 women in Africa and Asia every year.



## We create opportunities for women

We offer vocational training and support women's business activities and networks. Women's own savings and loan groups and cooperative funds are paramount, as they enable women to take out small loans and build better financial and business skills.



## Women make change happen

Work and personal income give women the financial power to influence the direction of their lives. It also enables women to make their voices heard in their families and communities. Women's participation and a more equal position drives positive change in societies.

"Having our own income has made us women more empowered at home," says **Naume Kyomuhendo**, chairperson of a women's savings and loan group in Uganda. PHOTO: ANTTI YRJÖNEN



# Support women's work.

**ESTABLISHED IN FINLAND,** Women's Bank supports the vocational training, entrepreneurship and equal rights of women in Africa and Asia. Projects are executed by Finn Church Aid, the largest international aid organisation in Finland. We are politically and religiously non-aligned.

We support around 30,000 women every year. Join us!

- Text **NAISELLE30** to **16499** to donate 30 euros  
(Finnish mobile operators only)
- Donate via MobilePay to **41109**  
(Finnish mobile operators only)
- Donate online at [naistenpankki.fi/en/donate](https://naistenpankki.fi/en/donate)
- **By bank transfer to Women's Bank:**  
Nordea: FI63 1745 3000 1321 02  
OP: FI47 5789 5420 0246 76

**Any questions?**  
**Don't hesitate to contact us:**

020 787 1201 [naistenpankki@kua.fi](mailto:naistenpankki@kua.fi)

**Thank you** 

Money collection permit RA/2019/723, valid 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024 in Finland (except in the Åland Islands), issued by the National Police Board of Finland.



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using your phone*

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**COVER PHOTO:** With support from Women's Bank, Nepalese **Laxmi Darlami**, 42, began to grow kiwi fruit. This turned out to be a profitable business and now provides a livelihood for her entire family.

PHOTO: MONIKA DEUPALA