

Wells Mountain Initiative

Building a Global Network of Grassroots Leaders

2020 Annual Report



LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

Dear friends.

Along with much hardship and loss, this past year we saw a number of important realizations come to light within the global conversation. Three topics stand out in particular, given that they have long been central to WMI's work:

Global Connectedness - We are far more connected as a global community than perhaps we ever realized. The well-being of people around the world impacts us directly.

Systemic Inequity - There is great disparity in people's access to health, resources, education, and opportunity within nations and on a global scale. These disparities not only hurt individuals but hobble nations' ability to overcome challenges and provide for their people.

Grassroots Leadership - The importance of community-based work cannot be overstated and should not be undervalued. Community members have an incredible breadth of knowledge and understanding of how to impact their own localities. When local knowledge is paired with individual commitment and motivation, education, volunteer experience, resources and a professional network, there is no limit to the impact an individual can have.

WMI has spent the last 16 years building a global network of grassroots leaders. These nearly 500 WMI Scholars are well on their way to addressing the world's biggest issues. They are uplifting their communities, advancing access to healthcare, education, civil rights and opportunities. And their work impacts us all. When all people have opportunities, we all benefit by living in a safer, healthier and more just world.

There is much to do, but we are hopeful and looking ahead. We thank you for your support and we look forward to working closely with you and all of our supporters as we continue to grow.



VISION STATMENT

Young people are able to realize their full potential and become leaders in creating the changes they want to see in their communities and, ultimately, the world.







EDUCATION

COLLECTIVE ACTION

GRANTS

ABOUT WMI

Wells Mountain Initiative (WMI) fosters social change at the local level by building a global network of grassroots leaders (WMI Scholars) who are catalyzing community transformation across 47 developing countries.

We find talented people in the most remote corners of the world and partner with them throughout their lives to lead effective change. We identify young people who have proven to be unstoppable in the face of adversity and are deeply committed to leading change in their community. We fund their undergraduate studies, help them lead social service projects during their academic career and stand alongside them to address any challenges so they successfully complete their studies.

Post-graduation, we provide life-long support, which includes training and technical assistance, regular national and global convenings and community development grants. Through our efforts, we foster a small, but mighty, global community of engaged leaders and social entrepreneurs who are tackling issues such as gender inequity, educational access, health disparities and climate change. We enable individuals across movements, sectors and countries to work to strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of the communities in which they live.

















OUR PROGRAMS

EDUCATION

We fund WMI Scholars' undergraduate education, offer skill-building opportunities and provide on-going career counseling to ensure that young people successfully complete their studies. Through intensive community service projects, WMI Scholars garner hands-on leadership development alongside their academic career. We also provide flexible tuition support that enables first-generation college students more chances to complete their studies and succeed.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

We bring WMI Scholars together through multi-day conferences and national fellowships and scholar-led online training so they can share strategies, implement projects and scale their impact. Annually, we host a Global Training Academy, and every three years, we host the Dream Big Conference. We provide hands-on training and technical assistance as WMI Scholars implement their social entrepreneurship projects, engage in cross-learning and gain inspiration from their peers in other nations and regions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

We provide grants, technical assistance and strategic networking opportunities to help people design and launch their social entrepreneurship efforts, including locally-led businesses and nonprofits. We bring them together with national experts and other WMI Scholars to help build and grow ideas and increase their impact.



WMI Scholars span 47 countries with 242 Student Scholars pursuing their undergraduate degree and 237 Graduate Scholars working in their home regions after completing their undergraduate degrees.

Scholars collectively serve **76,700** people per year through paid or volunteer roles.

WMI Scholars have started **72** WMI-funded social entrepreneurship projects in **18** countries.









THE WMI MODEL

Recognizing that poverty is the result of global structural inequity, our strategy is to equip grassroots leaders with the tools, resources and peer support to lead community drivern solutions.

WMI's model is unique in three ways:

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Our work is based on the conviction that local leaders are best positioned to lead change in their own communities. WMI Scholars lead in the face of daunting challenges and are implementing fresh and creative solutions to the world's most pressing problems. As a US-based organization, we know that our role is to help people lead, rather than implementing top-down solutions. Many WMI Scholars run nonprofits or businesses that hire locally, generate wealth and foster solutions.

GLOBAL PEER-TO-PEER COLLABORATION

Often the most talented leaders operate in isolation, with few resources, tools and networks to ensure that their change efforts are sustainable. While education is a life-line out of poverty, sustainable social change requires committed, resourced individuals working collectively together over time. Through seed funding to support initiatives and regular strategy convenings, we help sustain and amplify locally-led change.

BUILDING SECTORS

We focus on building local leadership in high-need sectors such as health, education and the environment, so that WMI Scholars can bring badly needed resources to under-served regions and communities. For instance, many WMI Scholars start the first health clinic or school in their village. Gender empowerment is an approach that cuts across all of the sectors; we support the leadership of women and girls and prioritize gender empowerment projects.



SCHOLAR IMPACT

Over a third of WMI Scholars have launched a nonprofit or business that collectively employ over **275** people, and serve over **12,000**

68% of graduate scholars **volunteered** in the last year for a total of **20,745** hours **55**% support the education of someone else, supporting over **352** individuals in 2020 alone.



BRIDGING THE GAP

Local leaders are the best positioned to lead change in their own communities, yet local NGOs receive just .4% of direct international humanitarian assistance. Through our Community Development Grant program, we aim to bridge this gap by both supporting early-stage locally-led initiatives and connecting our scholars to the resources and funding to continue to grow their businesses and organizations

SEED GRANT

Seed Grants provide WMI Graduate Scholars the opportunity to start or expand a community service project, business or nonprofit with up to 1000 USD of funding and technical support.

GROWTH GRANT

A Growth Grant is a one-time grant, up to 5000 USD, paired with WMI strategic advisory and technical support to expand a Seed Grant initiative. The investment is used to finance program expansion, increase staffing, implement new growth-focused systems or match funding opportunities. Our Community Development grants are awarded to WMI Graduate Scholars to design, launch and grow their own community-based projects,

A SCIENCE LAB IN UGANDA

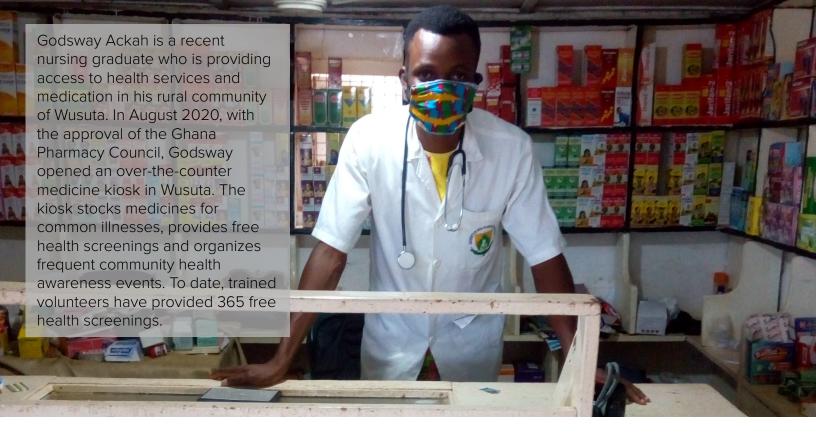
Graduate Scholar Bonny Mark Alinga received a WMI Seed Grant in 2015 to help complete the construction of Nissi College School, a comprehensive high school that he founded to support orphans and vulnerable children in the village where he grew up.

As the only high school in his village and the surrounding region, Nissi College currently serves 200 students and employs 16 faculty and staff. The Growth Grant will be used to build a science laboratory, an essential resource for all students to study biology, chemistry, physics and agriculture and a requisite facility for students to take compulsory national exams.









WMI IN HEALTH

Much of our efforts focus on the health sector and **45**% of WMI Scholars study or work in health.

30% of our Community Development Grants support health-related projects **44**% of the nonprofits launched by WMI Scholars are focused on healthcare



























COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE GRANTS

Last April, in response to the urgent need for COVID-19 healthcare information and services in areas where WMI Scholars live and work, WMI launched an emergency response grant program. With grants of up to \$500, WMI Scholars mobilized to address COVID-19 in their communities and were able to reach **90,000** individuals through **83** healthcare projects across **18** countries.















SANTHA NATHALIA

Student Scholar Santha Nathalia is studying education in Indonesia. She sees unequal access to education as one of the major challenges her country faces. She provides free exam prep for students who have to take national exams in order to continue their studies after grades 6, 9 and 12

GABRIEL MTAYA

Gabriel Mtaya, a Student Scholar of clinical medicine, is currently volunteering at a public hospital that serves a population of 721,456 people and has no running water. With the support of a COVID-19: Community Response Grant, Gabriel organized a volunteer committee to set up and maintain handwashing stations for health workers and patients.

JACQUELYNE ALESI

Graduate Scholar Jacquelyn Alesi transitioned from program manager at Children's AIDS Fund Uganda to working as a consultant and directing her own foundation. With funding from a WMI Seed Grant, Jacquelyne and her foundation are facilitating small business and backyard farming training to local women, which will be paired with start-up funding and ongoing support to advance women's initiatives in rural Uganda.

MAWIEN M. ARIK

Graduate Scholar Mawien Arik is the founder and medical director of Akougook Initiative in South Sudan, a CBO focused on education and peace-building through health care. Akougook Initiative operates a clinic providing maternal and child health with seven fulltime staff serving a population of over 300,000. This year, the clinic installed solar panels and is now able to provide 24-hour care to delivering mothers in a region where there is no access to a grid or a network.













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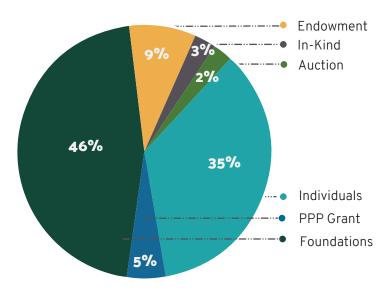
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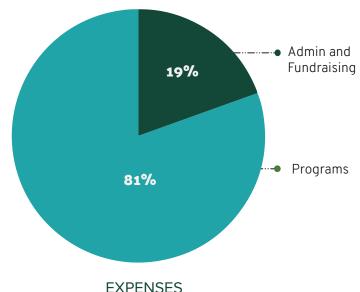
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"WMI is greatly transforming lives of many people, both directly through scholarships and grants and indirectly where dependents of beneficiaries' lives are enhanced. I'm immensely honored to be part of the change agents empowered by WMI to spearhead positive change in my local community in Uganda."

Graduate Scholar of Agriculture, Harriet Kilama Akello

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