



MEET MADINA NAMANDA

Amidst the expanse of prickly green leaves and hazy blue sky, a lone woman can be seen moving along with ease. Guided by instinct and experience, she spots what she is looking for – a perfectly ripe pineapple. She gently bends and with one quick turn of her wrist, cuts the fruit free. She grins with satisfaction and proceeds to collect a few more before heading back to share her prize.

Juice drips from fingers and face upon biting into the golden sweetness. A taste made ever sweeter by the success of the fruit bearer.

Madina Namanda is a long-time FINCA client and a shining example of how the right combination of hard work, business instinct and access to capital can lead to great success.

The mother of four owns and operates a thriving wholesale, commercial pineapple plantation near her home in Kitengeesa, Uganda. Twice a year her husband, two hired workers and, when not busy with school, her four children, harvest the pineapples by hand from her 12-acre property. The fruit is then prepared for shipment to clients throughout Uganda and even as far away as Kenya. Her efforts bring in over 12 million shillings, about \$4,500 USD, in net profit per year.



Fifteen years prior, Madina gave little concern to business or financial matters. Profits and savings were not something she thought much about, quickly spending what little extra she had on treats for her children. But this changed when she became involved with FINCA and realized life could be different – that through loans and savings she could greatly improve her quality of life.

Her first loan was for 100,000 shillings (\$40 USD), which she used to purchase necessary items for her family. Since then, Madina has been through 47 loan cycles with FINCA, using the funds to grow her many business ventures. She currently operates a 12-acre pineapple plantation, a 3-acre coffee plantation and a commercial poultry farm.

Never one to miss an opportunity, Madina jumped at the chance to take part in a government managed water program. With the assistance of a 200,000-shilling (\$80 USD) loan from FINCA, water pipes and a water meter were installed on her property, allowing her to act as a clean water distribution

site. Community members pay her a small fee for 20 liters of clean water.

Access to capital has allowed Madina to purchase land, a truck to transport her crops, hire field staff, purchase a personal vehicle, install a 4-light solar system for her home, build a two-storey chicken shelter and send two of her children to university. However it is her hard work and keen business sense that has allowed her to increase her savings in the bank. At 45 years of age, Madina already has her eyes fixed on retirement – one where she can tend to her chickens and enjoy the sweet taste of pineapples and success.



Empowering Women, Changing Lives



WHY WOMEN?

FOR A BEAUTICIAN IN AFGHANISTAN, a mother in Guatemala or a farmer in Uganda, dreaming about a better life may mean trying to get books for their children and providing clean water and nutritious food for their families. These modest goals may be easy for you to achieve, but many poor women in the developing world don't have the means to earn income or receive capital to fulfil these goals.

Despite having multiple roles in society – as consumers, business owners and employees, mothers and caretakers – there is a large gap of economic equality between men and women. A woman's chances of receiving credit are markedly lower than a man's, and yet, in an increasing number of families, the woman provides a substantial portion—or all—of the family's income.

Is this gender gap warranted? We don't think so. Over the past 30 years, FINCA has found that women are responsible borrowers, diligent savers and competent managers who use their income to benefit their business, family and community.

Our formula to empower these women is simple: with your support, we give a small loan to a hardworking woman to start or expand her small business. She uses the profits from her business to fulfil one of her modest dreams: tuition fees for her children or roofing for the family home. As her business succeeds and she pays the loan back to FINCA, those funds go back to work to making another woman's dream come true.

Our commitment to empower women remains strong with more than half of the clients we serve are women.

With access to FINCA's financial services, 72 percent of these women are able to become primary breadwinners for their families, putting food on the table, enabling their children to attend school and providing a safe home for their families.

When women are empowered to work and create their own businesses – through access to finance, education, markets – the talents of half of the world's population are unleashed and economies grow. That is smart economics, and everyone benefits.



MEET JULIA MARIA IXCHOP US DE VENTURA

Julia Maria Ixchop Us De Ventura never stops working. Every day, she bustles to make hot meals in her packed restaurant in Guatemala City.

From 7 am to 1 pm, she, along with her husband and one employee, make a variety of Guatemalan food.

"I only take Christmas and Easter off," she says.

Julia's drive to provide for her family didn't just come out of her passion for cooking; it also came from necessity. Like so many female FINCA clients, Julia had to become the primary breadwinner for her family.

Eighteen years ago, when Julia's husband could no longer support the family due to his alcoholism, she decided to work outside the home for the first time in her life. She began to sell food on the street outside the market to



make ends meet. The work was tough, and though selling food helped to feed her growing children, she couldn't afford their school fees.

With Village Bank loans from FINCA, Julia expanded her business and placed her six children back in school. As her dishes gained fame, she was able to rent a space inside the market. Eventually, she upgraded to FINCA's individual loans,

which have helped to pay for her stove and pans and for renovating the seating area of the restaurant.

Julia takes pride in serving as the lifeline for her family. Her husband, who has been sober for 12 years, works side by side with her every day to help put their children through school, renovate their home and support their aging parents."



HOW FINCA HELPS WOMEN

Every year, FINCA helps millions of women improve their lives through financial products, such as loans, savings, microinsurance, and mobile banking. The story of Noor Zia, a mother of six in Afghanistan, is like the story of so many of our clients throughout Latin America, Eurasia, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. With a large family to support and no job, Noor decided to invest her limited savings to purchase cosmetics to start a beauty salon at home but struggled to make ends meet.

Here is how FINCA helped her.



Access to financial services

Noor invested her first FINCA loan of \$100 in her business by expanding the inventory of her salon.



Helps her family

With the profits from her growing business, she purchases a sewing machine for her husband, a tailor. Noor is also able to pay for the tuition fees of her children.



Expands her business

After paying off her initial loan, Noor's business steadily grows over the years and her income has increased from \$250 to \$400 a month. She receives additional FINCA loans to open her first salon in the market.



Creates employment

Noor hires her first employee and helps to train an additional 70 beauticians. She also helps others in her community by counseling small business owners on FINCA loans.



Empowerment

Noor has become an empowered member within her family, providing income, stability and a bettered quality of life for her children.