

From the Philadelphia Business Journal

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Philly women's group funds 13th foreign village bank

Nov 5, 2015, 2:49pm EST Updated: Nov 5, 2015, 3:40pm EST



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Women in the Nairobi, Kenya area now have another opportunity to obtain a loan and start their own business following last month's opening of a village bank – the 13th funded by WIL of Greater Philadelphia since it got its start eight years ago.

The milestone is part of a larger celebration for the organization, made of about 70 members – all women except one, that transitioned from funding all of its projects through mostly its \$200 annual membership dues to a traditional nonprofit model following obtaining a 5013c status last November.

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The change simplifies the donation process for WIL – which then allows them to likely double the number of village banks it can open each year.

"Lately we've tried to raise two banks a year," said [Bryna Scott](#), the chair of WIL's fund development committee. "With this new fundraising effort, we hope to open at least four or five and also raise the amount of money for our empowerment projects...by the end of 2016."

The group has yet to decide on the site of its next bank – all are located in developing countries, although it is considering Bangladesh or Ghana, where WIL already has one setup, said [Loretta Raider](#), the nonprofit's president.

"They really provide the seed money, small loans for the women to open different businesses," Raider explained.

- [***Report rips wages paid by Pa. nursing homes***](#)

Approximately \$5,000 from the group helps the launch of the village bank, which then loans women several hundred dollars to start their own business.

Raider and Scott, who are set to [celebrate the 501c3 status at the FringeArts theater Thursday night](#), said the funds help the women gain financial independence, create a business plan and build awareness of women's rights issues abroad. Scott even recalled a Haitian woman who referred to the FONKOZE, an NGO providing microfinance loans and support services that WIL teamed up with, as her husband.

"It's about transformative leadership for women," Raider said. "We try to address inequalities, and improve women's lives and their families."