



OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCES 2021 WEGO AWARD WINNERS

CHICAGO, December 16, 2021 – For decades, Opportunity International has created and supported projects that increase inclusion and chart a pathway out of poverty for women. This year, Opportunity recognizes Sinapi Aba as the winner of the fourth annual Women and Girls Opportunity (WeGO) Awards for increasing access to financing, financial literacy, business training, and gender-equity strategies for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owned by women.

Sinapi Aba's pilot project "Women in Business Entrepreneurial Mentoring" matches emerging women entrepreneurs with female entrepreneur mentors who are running successful businesses. Mentors provide support and guidance to the women entrepreneurs and facilitate learning using practical examples from their own experience. They teach the mentees business skills and how to think like an entrepreneur. The pilot project engaged 52 mentors and 103 mentees, all of whom were empowered to enter the profession they learned. Sinapi launched a second cohort in April 2021, expanding to more locations and increasing the number of young women participating to 225.

The WeGO Awards were established in 2018 to celebrate and promote innovations in economic empowerment for women and girls around the world. The program honors staff and clients across Africa, Asia, and Latin America who are working selflessly to overcome significant challenges to economic and educational advancement for women and girls. It calls attention to the groundbreaking work that deserves expansion and replication.

- Second place goes to MyChoices Foundation's project "Operation PeaceMaker," which works with Opportunity's local Indian microfinance partners to reduce domestic violence through thousands of empowered community women called PeaceMakers, who are trained in family and marriage counseling.
- Third place goes to "Women as Agents of Change" initiative that empowers women to become last-mile financial service providers in rural India. The program's agent banking model uses networks of female banking agents equipped with tablets and smartphones to provide banking services in hard-to-reach communities where there are no branches.

The WeGO Awards accept submissions from Opportunity partners around the world, which a panel of women then evaluate based on criteria related to technology, scalability, sustainability, the need to include men in social change, and the challenge of focusing on the next generation. The three winners were selected from a pool of global submissions and voted on by the public.

"The WeGO Awards spotlight programs and partners around the world that are empowering women and girls to break the cycle of poverty and chart a brighter future," said Lydia Baldrige Meier, senior vice president, Philanthropy Services. "We are proud to honor all of our partners during another challenging year."

ABOUT OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL

Opportunity International is a global non-profit celebrating 50 years of equipping people to work their way out of poverty. Opportunity provides 19.4 million families with innovative financial resources, training, and support to grow their small businesses and send their children to school. In 2020, Opportunity International and its partners released \$2.3 billion in capital across 30 countries and helped fund 8,800 schools that reached 2.8 million children. Discover more at [opportunity.org](https://www.opportunity.org) or join the conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).