Weavers of Hope: From Poverty to Prosperity

Bella Rios and Madison Hokans-Csurilla
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Prepared by:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To better understand and communicate its socio-economic impact, All Across Africa requested a study to understand how an artisan’s length of employment influences benefits over time. Researchers interviewed 115 artisans of varying employment lengths in Rwanda and Uganda between June-August 2018.

Socio-economic impact accrues over length of employment, but indicators of social impact shift over time as artisans lift their households out of poverty.

• Within two years, artisans report improved nutrition for their families and develop personal agency.
• Beginning about the third year of employment, artisans report improved housing and significantly increased savings.
• After five years of employment, sixty-seven percent of fifth year artisans improved their homes and saved 2.3 times more income per month than artisans with less than five years of employment.

Length of employment predicts deep and lasting socio-economic impact for artisan beneficiaries. Following Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, the lives of short term artisans (1-2 year) and their families are improved through satisfaction of immediate and physiological needs.

After 3 years of employment, artisans demonstrate confidence in their ability to satisfy basic needs which enables them to invest in their futures. Financial literacy and optimism transforms the lives of long term artisans (4-5+ year) and their families through increased savings and enhanced housing.

These findings illustrate the robust character of All Across Africa’s social impact model, and reveal the long-term impact of steady employment on artisans and their families as they progress from poverty to prosperity.

Prepared by:
Short Term Impact to Long Term Transformation

Short term AAA artisans begin the climb from poverty to prosperity. Their lives are improved through nutrition, agency, and financial literacy. Socio-economic impact accrues over length of employment. Experienced artisans transform their lives through increased savings and improved housing.
## Long Term Artisans Enhanced Housing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1-2</th>
<th>Year 3-4</th>
<th>Year 5+</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artisans have yet to change their homes</td>
<td>62% improved their homes</td>
<td>67% improved their homes</td>
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</table>

### Savings Increased Throughout Employment

- **Average Saved:**
  - Year 1-2: 6,500 RWF/month
  - Year 3-4: 14,748 RWF/month
  - Year 5+: 15,124 RWF/month
Within the first three years of employment, AAA improves the standard of living by enabling artisans to satisfy basic needs such as proper nutrition and education. Prior to AAA employment, artisans generally sold woven products in local markets for low prices that left their households below the poverty line. AAA shifts this unjust equilibrium through increased income and job stability that equips artisans to begin the path out of poverty.

A majority of AAA female artisans quickly become the primary income earners in their households. AAA provides financial training that encourages artisans to start savings and enforces this through a cooperative savings account. For the first time, women exercise agency over financial decisions and improve their families’ standard of living. Artisans report an immediate increase in confidence and respect upon joining AAA.

AAA artisans address their families’ basic needs like food and education in the first year of employment. New artisans earn income to provide their families with a more balanced diet and occasionally purchase more costly items such as meat, fish, and condiments. Many artisans are starting to pay for their children’s school fees and supplies whereas children were unable to attend school previously.

Artisans prioritize family well-being and now afford household necessities through an increased, stable income. These early years of employment enable artisans to fulfill their family’s basic needs and begin savings. In alignment with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, newer artisans (year 1-3) spend money on goods that satisfy their immediate and physiological needs. First to third year artisans also develop personal agency as they become the new financial providers of their families.

This newly employed AAA artisan is the primary income earner of her household.
NUTRITION ENHANCES HEALTH

Fulfilling Basic Needs

Proper nutrition includes physical and economic access to food and is a critical foundation for holistic wellbeing. Physiological needs are at the base of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to achieve full human potential.

Following one year of employment with AAA, 78.5% of first year artisans reported that their nutrition either somewhat or substantially improved using their AAA income.

Artisans purchased more:
- Starches (cassava, sweet potato, maize, and rice)
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meats and fish
- Condiments like sugar, oil, and salt

With increased income, artisans have cash to purchase more food and costly items such as meat, fish, and condiments at their own discretion. During the short-term employment period, artisans direct their spending towards immediate and physiological needs of their families, starting the climb towards prosperity.

Food purchases using AAA income display increased accessibility to proper nutrition for artisans and their family members. They balanced their family’s diets and increased dietary energy consumption, fulfilling basic needs.

Improvements in Nutrition for Short Term Artisans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>3.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A LITTLE</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMEWHAT</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBSTANTIALLY</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by:
FINANCIAL AGENCY

Agency Leads to Financial Literacy

Within one year of employment, 75% of artisans indicated that they quickly became primary income earners of their households. The majority of these artisan beneficiaries are females. The World Bank reports that only 26.9% of Ugandan households are headed by women. When economically empowered, women are more likely to invest in their communities and finance their children’s healthcare and education.

Newly employed artisans actively improve the living conditions of their families by directing their income towards:

- school fees
- clothing
- household necessities.

For the first time, women exercise personal agency over financial decisions in their households as the primary earners.

Personal agency is significant in the development of financial literacy, or managing personal finances.

Through increased responsibility in financial planning, artisans grow confident in their ability to influence household decisions. Newly employed AAA artisans are incentivized to begin saving to continually improve their families’ standard of living.

Prepared by:
Part 2
Long Term Prosperity: Lives Transformed

Socio-economic benefits accumulate throughout a AAA artisan’s employment that transforms the lives of experienced artisans and their families. They lift their households out of poverty and accumulate wealth that provides a better life for their children and grandchildren.

Artisans who have worked at least four years with AAA experience transformational impact through increased savings and housing security. They grow their savings over time which generates transferrable wealth and fosters a greater sense of personal agency. Increased savings unlock economic opportunity as experienced artisans invest in long-term assets such as livestock and housing.

Many experienced artisans renovate or construct their homes with their increased savings. They no longer live in small homes with dirt floors and torches. They enjoy dignified living conditions as they install electricity, expand their houses, and cement their floors. Home enhancement provides a strong foundation for their families, reducing stress and strengthening relationships.

Longer employment with AAA enables artisans to garner the trust of banks and their communities as a loan recipient. Experienced artisans prove a consistent ability to pay loan collateral. This expands an artisan’s economic opportunity to make large investments such as renovating or constructing a home. Artisans demonstrate confidence in their ability to satisfy basic needs which propels them to now invest in the long-term prosperity of their households. Experienced artisans transform their lives through increased savings and enhanced housing because they are knowledgeable about financial management and optimistic about the future.
SAVINGS ACCUMULATE OVER TIME

The longer an artisan works for AAA, the higher their savings increase.

Artisans who have worked at least five years with AAA save 2.3 times more income per month than artisans with less than 5 years of employment.

Experienced artisans also save 3 times more income per month than artisans prior to their AAA employment.

Their savings continue to increase throughout their AAA employment. Artisans who have worked with AAA for three and four years save 2.3 times more money per month than what first and second year artisans saved.

This promotes artisan morale and incentivizes artisans to continue to work with AAA in order to grow their savings. These changes may be attributed to familiarity with AAA operations and improvement in weaving technique.

Average Monthly Savings

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Prepared by:

Global Social Benefit Fellowship
Santa Clara University
INVESTING IN A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Leader of Copdar Cooperative with Livestock Purchased with Weaving Income

All the artisans interviewed with more than five years experience had invested in land and livestock.

This is a 17% increase from the percentage of artisans who purchased such assets as a form of savings and investment opportunity prior to AAA employment.

Artisans sell such assets to increase their earnings and ensure financial security. Owned property and livestock can be especially important if unplanned spending needs arise.
INCREASED SAVINGS TRANSFORM LIVES

With increased savings, artisans accumulate transferrable wealth that can improve the quality of life throughout generations.

Artisans allocate their savings towards:
- home improvement
- land and livestock
- hiring farmers
- healthcare
- their children’s education

AAA trains artisans to responsibly manage their income by saving. The company allocates a portion of income earned per product to a cooperative savings account managed by group members. The cooperative may distribute the money to its members as loans or additional income.

Artisans also save through informal and formal networks including personal or family accounts, and investment in land or livestock. Cares, a popular type of informal saving network which collects payments from its members and distributes the pooled money to a different member every week, is often preferred over traditional financial institutions because of its proximity.

Experienced artisans (those with 3 years of employment or more) practice patience and self-control by increasing their savings. Typically, the poor reduce behavior that invites risk into their lives. Savings may seem impractical if they struggle to satisfy basic needs and believe long-term goals are only achievable in the distant future. There is a level of financial stability that artisans need in order to shift their behavior in ways that support their future, long-term goals.

Artisans demonstrate hope in the future through their entrepreneurial aspirations. Of artisans who’ve worked at least five years, 18% aspire to invest in their own businesses with future earnings. This entrepreneurial spirit demonstrates that artisans feel confident in their socioeconomic status and their job security.

Prepared by:

Global Social Benefit Fellowship
Santa Clara University
BUILDING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Housing is a source of pride and wellbeing. Dignified living conditions can provide a strong foundation for families to grow, reducing stress and strengthening relationships. AAA artisans that maintain a well-established home garner respect and social status in their communities.

AAA artisans display long-term financial stability through improved housing.

The longer an artisan has weaved for AAA, the more likely they are to take the large financial risk of either renovating or constructing their home. In doing so, artisans demonstrate hope in the future and stabilization of basic needs. Through stable employment and increased savings, All Across Africa lifts rural artisans and their households out of poverty.
LIFTING HOUSEHOLDS OUT OF POVERTY

In Rwanda, the cost to build a house may vary anywhere between 300,000-2,000,000 RWF, depending on the structure and size. Following construction, an artisan may spend an additional 100,000-500,000 RWF to paint, furnish, and further improve their household through amenities like running water and energy.

Once living in small homes with dirt floors and torch lighting, many experienced artisans now live in expanded houses with cement floors and electricity. Other renovations include painting, furnishing, and construction of additional rooms or entire houses.

While newly employed artisans of 1 to 2 years have yet to improve their homes, 62% of artisans employed for 3 to 4 years have made modifications to their home.

This number increases to 67% once employed 5 or more years.

This exemplifies how artisans continue to lift their households out of poverty the longer they are employed with AAA.

Percentage of Artisans that Have Made Housing Improvements

YEAR 1-2 62%  YEAR 3-4 67%  YEAR 5+

Prepared by:
Housing as a Source of Pride and Wellbeing

“Before AAA, I felt pitied for the house I lived in. Through weaving, I took matters into my own hands. With my income from AAA, I have expanded our house and bought livestock. I now have a house that I am proud of.”

- Ruth Dobasima

Types of Housing Renovations

Experienced AAA artisans, like Ruth, commonly improve their homes and enjoy dignified living conditions.

Lighting: 11%
Painting: 22%
Flooring: 33%
Expansion: 22%

Prepared by:
LONG TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY

In keeping with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory³, short term artisans invest in their immediate needs rather than home improvements. Long term artisans demonstrate how satisfaction of basic needs and security allow them to place hope in their future achievements.

Housing is a strong indicator of long-term financial stability.

The longer an artisan has been employed with All Across Africa, the more likely they are to have the financial stability to either construct new housing or renovate their existing home. The majority of experienced artisans choose to invest in housing which portrays confidence from job security and consistent income.

The ability to construct or renovate a home is a physical asset that may be transferred to future generations. The decision to invest in housing marks the transformation to a prosperous state of living for artisans, their families, and generations to come.

This experienced co-op leader proudly presents her home which is well-furnished with cement floors, electricity, and a radio.
Appendix A: Research Methods

Researchers conducted a social impact assessment for All Across Africa in Rwanda and Uganda. Field research consisted of six weeks in Rwanda and one week in Uganda. In total, researchers collected 125 surveys and profiles with the assistance of local translators.

In Rwanda, researchers surveyed 81 artisans and interviewed 6 artisans for profiles. Two unaffiliated farming cooperatives were interviewed for 10 social impact assessments. In Uganda, researchers conducted 28 artisan surveys.

Country Comparison
AAA formally started operations in Uganda in 2017. All Ugandan artisans surveyed were employed for a year or less and researchers utilized this data to assess immediate socio-economic impact.

AAA began operations in Rwanda in 2010 and artisans surveyed in Rwanda had various lengths of employment ranging from one year to eight years. All data for long-term socio-economic impact was gathered from longer employed artisans in Rwanda.

A majority of Rwandan artisans have been employed at least three years. As a result, only a small sample size of first-year Rwandan artisans was available; however, this data aligns with the findings from first-year Ugandan artisans which suggests a similar trajectory for Rwandan and Ugandan artisans.
Artisan Profiles
First, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews for artisan profiles. These profiles provided a qualitative, rich understanding of how All Across Africa has significantly shaped an individual artisan’s lifestyle through economic and social empowerment.

Artisan Interviews
Researchers measured the relationship between socio-economic impact and length of employment through a quantitative survey that focused on five key areas: housing, nutrition, healthcare, savings, and social empowerment. In Rwanda, researchers interviewed artisans with different lengths of employment ranging from 1 year to 5 years or more. In Uganda, AAA has operated for a year and all artisans surveyed were employed for less than a year.

Farmer Interviews
In order to gain baseline knowledge of rural poverty in Rwanda, the research team interviewed non-AAA affiliated farmers in the Muhanga district. Farmers responded to a modified version of the social impact survey given to artisans to easily compare the two populations. As compensation, each farmer received a 5kg bag of rice.
Appendix B: Reference Survey

Name: _________________________________

Gender (Choose One): Female | Male Age: _____

Marital Status (Circle One): Not Married | Married | Divorced | Widowed

Spouse’s Occupation: Farmer | Builder | Plumber | Technician | Driver | Other | N/A

Cooperative: ___________________________

Type of Involvement (Choose One): Weaver | Co-op leader | Group Leader | Vice Co-op leader | Treasurer | Secretary | Advisor | Auditor | Other

Education

1. What is your highest level of education?
   - None
   - Primary (1-6)
   - Primary (6-8)
   - Secondary (9-12)
   - University
   - Technical

2. How many kids do you have (including adopted children)? _____

3. How many are younger than primary school age? _____

4. How many are in school?
   - _____ in primary
   - _____ in basic education (7-9)
   - _____ in technical
   - _____ in lower secondary (7-9)
   - _____ in upper secondary (10-12)
   - _____ in university
5. How many are finished with school?
   ___ finished primary only
   ___ finished basic education (7-9)
   ___ finished technical
   ___ finished lower secondary (7-9)
   ___ finished upper secondary (10-12)
   ___ finished university

Income

6. How much money do you earn per month by working with All Across Africa?
   o 1,000-20,000 RWF
   o 20,000-40,000 RWF
   o 40,000-60,000 RWF
   o 60,000 + RWF

7. Are your earnings the primary income in your household? YES/NO

8. With your income from All Across Africa, have you purchased any land or livestock? YES | NO

9. If yes, what did you purchase, and how many? (#of animals, # of plots of land):
   #goats____ #cows____ #chickens____ #pigs____ #plots____ Other:_____

10. Have you ever received a loan from
    o A bank, YES | NO
    o Your Cooperative, YES | NO
    o Cares, YES | NO
    o A Community Member, YES | NO

11. If yes, do you feel you were more able to receive a loan because of credibility from working with AAA?
    YES | NO
Savings

12. How do you save? Do you save with
   - Personal or Family Bank Account, YES | NO
   - Cares, YES | NO
   - Investments in Livestock/Land, YES | NO

13. Because of AAA trainings, do you feel that your knowledge of savings has improved?
   - I have not attended an AAA training on savings 40
   - No (0%)
   - A little (1-20%)
   - Somewhat (20-60%)
   - Substantially (60%+)

14. How much did you save per month before joining AAA? _______

15. How much do you save per month with AAA? _______

16. Have your savings increased over time? YES | NO

Healthcare

17. Which class of Ubudehe are you? (health insurance payment/year)
   - Level One (covered by government)
   - Level Two (3,000 RWF/ year)
   - Level Three (3,000 RWF/year)
   - Level Four (7,000 RWF/ year)

18. If you or your family member wanted to go to private care, could you afford it with your income or savings from AAA? YES | NO

19. Have you used your income from All Across Africa to purchase medicine from a pharmacy? YES | NO
20. If yes, what type of illness was it used for? Bacterial Infection (Amoxicillin) | Cough/Flu | Diarrhea | HIV | Malaria | Pain/Head Ache (Painkillers) | Parasite | Ulcers | Other

**Housing**

21. Do you own or rent your home? OWN | RENT

22. What is the main material used for flooring? DIRT | STONE | BRICK | CEMENT

23. What is the main source of lighting? NONE | TORCH | FUEL LANTERN | SOLAR LAMP (Portable) | SOLAR PANEL (Attached to roof) | ELECTRICITY

25. Have you made any changes to your home with your income from All Across Africa? YES | NO

26. If so, what changes have been made? ________________________________

**Nutrition**

27. Do you eat food from a plot of land (owned or rented) that your family farms? YES | NO

28. With your income from All Across Africa, what additional food do you purchase? (Select each main category that applies)
   
   o No Additional Food Purchased
   
   o Cereals (eg. green banana, maize, rice, sorghum)
   
   o Tubers and Roots (eg. cassava, Irish potato, sweet potato, taro, yams, carrots)
   
   o Pulses and Legumes (eg. black beans, ground nuts, peas, soya bean, sunflower seeds)
   
   o Fruits (eg. avocado, banana, mango, papaya, tree tomato)
   
   o Vegetables (eg. beets, cabbage, eggplants, green beans, leafy greens, onions, peppers, tomatoes)
   
   o Condiments (eg. cooking oil, sugar, salt, spices, tea)
   
   o Fish
     
     • How many times per month?
   
   o Meat (eg. beef, chicken, goat, pork)
     
     • How many times per month?
o Vegetables (eg. beets, cabbage, eggplants, green beans, leafy greens, onions, peppers, tomatoes,)

o Condiments (eg. cooking oil, sugar, salt, spices, tea)

o Fish
  • How many times per month?

o Meat (eg. beef, chicken, goat, pork)
  • How many times per month?

29. Has your nutrition improved from having more income?
   o No (0%)
   o A little (1-20%)
   o Somewhat (20-60%)
   o Substantially (60%+)

**Empowerment (Social)**

30. Because you started working for All Across Africa..... (YES, NO, N/A)
   Have you deepened your friendship with other women in your coop? YES | NO | N/A
   Have you used your income to travel outside of your community? YES | NO | N/A
   Have you developed any new skills? (new designs, leadership, bookkeeping) YES | NO | N/A
   Developed confidence to speak to your husband or family in a different way? YES | NO | N/A
   Do you feel more respected in your community? YES | NO | N/A

**Skill Level:**

31. Which products do you specialize in?
   o Plates
   o Discs
   o Trivets
   o Baskets
   o Coasters
o Vases
o Planters
o Other ________

32. How many products can you weave per week? __________________________

33. How many hours do you spend weaving per week? __________________________

34. Are you a master weaver? YES | NO

35. During the last “buy day” how many products did you submit? How many of these were rejected?
____________________________________

36. Are your rejected products typically old or new designs?  OLD | NEW

37. Do you prefer weaving familiar, simple designs or learning new, challenging designs?
   o Simple, familiar
   o New, challenging

Do you have any questions, comments, or feedback about this survey and your work with AAA?

*Necessary adjustments were made for surveys conducted in Uganda such as currency and healthcare questions. Farmers received the same survey questions, replacing the term artisan with farmer, and excluding the skill level section.

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.HOU.FEMA.ZS?locations=UG
