



2012 ANNUAL REPORT



VGIF provides small grants for grassroots projects which empower women and girls in developing countries.

VGIF is a membership organization that partners with women's groups across the globe to sponsor projects that improve the lives of women and girls. Desmond Tutu has said: "If we are going to see real development in the world, then our best investment is women."

Thanks to the generosity of our members, VGIF has been making these investments in the 43 years since it was founded. VGIF grants address local problems with local leadership, and they directly impact the lives of women and girls. VGIF members also advocate for women in many forums including the UN's Economic and Social Council and its Commission on the Status of Women.



Left (Uganda) Raising cows for food security and economic empowerment

Top right (Burundi) Treating patients in maternity hospital

Bottom right (Georgia) Creating television programs about sexism and homophobia

Cover (Nepal) Learning advanced weaving techniques

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

What a joy it is to reflect on VGIF's accomplishments in 2012.



Eileen Menton at the United Nations

At the April Board meeting, VGIF approved funding for 35 grants, totaling 223,377 USD, a record amount. In each case, women have joined together to address the needs of women and girls in their communities, targeting a wide array of issues, including human rights, violence prevention, craft/business skills training, women's literacy, inheritance rights, maternal and reproductive health, breast cancer education, hygiene, medicinal plant education, and drought resistant agriculture and livestock farming. I am proud that our members continue to make a difference in these issue areas through their ongoing support of VGIF's grant making.

In June 2012, I was part of a Friendship Tour sponsored by the Rwanda Association of University Women. During the tour, we met with representatives from three VGIF projects. For example, we heard how the Rwanda Association of University Women has developed a career counseling guide for secondary school girls in a country with no school guidance counselors and how they have provided literacy training for more than 250 women who did not have the opportunity to attend school as children. These women can now read to their children and are able to increase their family's income because of their new skills.

VGIF continued to be an active member of the non-governmental organizations' community at the UN

in order to ensure that the voices of our grantees are heard. At the UN Commission on the Status of Women, VGIF sponsored a parallel event "Rural Women and Girls—Issues in Reproductive Health" and sponsored a Going for the Grants Workshop, attended by 33 representatives from 17 countries.

It is my pleasure to once again share the results of our work in this annual report.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen Shelley Menton".

Eileen Shelley Menton
President, 2012–2014



Fay Kittelson, VGIF's Executive Director, retired in June 2012 after serving VGIF for 21 years. Working closely with the Board of Directors, committees, and volunteers, she oversaw the growth of VGIF. The number of grants increased from around ten to more than thirty with a substantial increase in total funding. She worked tirelessly on behalf of our grantees and took a personal interest in their progress. Fay continues to be an active member and generous supporter of VGIF.

Highlights from 2012

VGIF funded 35 grants in 21 countries. These grants addressed a diversity of issues from agricultural and vocational training, to women's and children's rights, to health and reproductive health. Through VGIF projects, women across the globe found economic and personal empowerment. VGIF was also active with other NGOs advocating for women's rights at the United Nations.



NEPALESE WEAVERS LEARN BUSINESS SKILLS

VGIF supported advanced weaving of dhakas (tablecloths, shawls, scarves) in Nepal. Master weavers taught participants how to work with complex patterns and with silk, wood, and bamboo threads. They were also taught accounting, marketing and planning so that they could run a self-sustainable business. Participants were able to formally register as a cooperative for the production and sale of dhakas. They developed marketing strategies to sell dhakas locally, in nearby cities, and internationally.

The father of one of the weavers said: *“My daughter Kamala is deaf and cannot speak. We used to dream that somehow she could do something by herself to become independent. When she joined the training, we were not sure because she had left school. The weaving group have given her lots of support. She learned and became successful. We are very happy that a girl who cannot speak and listen became a skilled weaver and has started to earn money.”*



GUATEMALA

Midwives on the way to a mobile (remote) clinic. VGIF equipped eleven clinics so that the midwives could bring care to underserved populations in remote areas. VGIF also provided lab equipment and supplies for midwives to perform basic tests on site and identify high risk patients for referrals. Ten midwives and fifteen apprentices who spoke the native Mayan language were trained during the project. One physician remarked: *“It’s incredible that a group of poor women could bring such resources to the community.”*

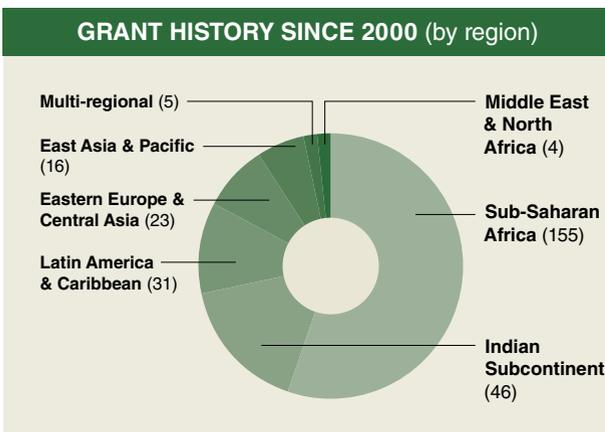


NIGER

The goal of this project was to empower women through literacy and business activities. Women were trained in making soap and in starting their own businesses. Encouraged to make business decisions themselves, they sold soap to their village and to retailers in other villages. The project sponsored by Microcredit in Africa, Inc., also established fish farms and taught literacy, sewing and knitting to different groups of women. HIV/AIDS awareness and malaria prevention were included in the trainings. Sales of products are helping to sustain the project.

AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Grantee Olivia Mugabirwe addressed the VGIF parallel event at the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2012. Ms. Mugabirwe spoke about her project to marshal community resources in order to prevent teenage pregnancy in Uganda. Each year VGIF sponsors one of its grantees to participate in CSW, bringing local expertise directly to this global forum. VGIF has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, and VGIF representatives and interns regularly attend UN briefings and prepare reports and blogs on their findings.



2012 GRANTS (by country)*

Burundi	Liberia (2)	Uganda (5)
Cameroon	Malawi	Zimbabwe
Congo	Nepal (2)	Multi-regional
DRC	Niger	
Georgia (2)	Nigeria (2)	
Guatemala (2)	Peru	
India (3)	Philippines	
Israel	Serbia	
Kenya (4)	South Sudan	

*Includes multi-year grants.
Countries not followed by numbers have 1 grantee.

2012 Financial Report (USD)

Revenue	2012	2011
Contributions, unrestricted	92,249	112,874
Contributions, restricted	1,320	13,700
Bequests	282,692	1,501,000
Other	4,716	5,075
Investment Income	1,184,808	86,557
Total Revenue	1,565,785	1,719,206
Expenses		
Program Services	408,387	238,288
Administration	252,185	140,891
Fundraising	113,043	98,825
Total Expenses	773,615	478,044
Adjustment to Bequests Receivable	(106,380)	—
Increase in Net Assets	684,470	685,790
Total assets	14,889,989	14,142,515
Total liabilities	106,629	44,945
Net assets (See Note)	14,783,360	14,097,570

Note: In 2009, VGIF received a \$10 million bequest from a long time benefactor. In order to exercise its fiduciary duty of prudent management, VGIF established the Virginia Palmer Fund and adopted a spending policy related to this gift and earlier gifts from the same benefactor in order to guide its future fiscal operations. (Further details on the plans for the Palmer Fund are outlined on the next page of this report.)

VGIF is a public 501(c)3 charity. Gifts to VGIF are deductible on US Federal and State income tax returns as permitted by law. Figures in the Financial Report are from the independent auditor's report. Copies of IRS Form 990 are available on the website.

VGIF: Building A Stronger Future

As the letter from our President outlines, great things continue to happen at VGIF.

The number of grants in 2012, as well as the total amount granted, would have astounded our founding members. When VGIF started its work in 1969, it was a small organization that accomplished its goals solely with the efforts of its board and other volunteers. VGIF continued in this mode for its first 30 years but then started growing, in terms of both funds collected and grants provided. Part-time paid staff was added to support this larger operation. At the same time, the VGIF Board of Directors, other volunteers, and VGIF members continued to constitute the operational core of the organization.

In the years 2001 and 2006, Virginia Freese Palmer made two large donations to VGIF with the intent of supporting VGIF's administrative costs in order to free up funding for its grant making program. Ms. Palmer also included VGIF in her will and we received a significant bequest following her death in 2009, opening up completely new possibilities for the organization. After careful consideration, the VGIF Board of Directors decided to embark on an ambitious capacity-building effort. This growth in its operations will significantly expand its grant giving in a sustainable way.

The Board established the Virginia Palmer Fund which includes Ms. Palmer's gifts, as well as subsequent bequests for the purpose of supporting VGIF's future operations. The capital in the Palmer Fund will not be used to fund daily operations. Returns from its investments will be used to cover administrative expenses and will enhance our ability to provide more grants for women in developing countries. As we move forward, it will not be possible for us to fully fund our grant making strictly on investment income. The generous annual contributions of our members will continue to play a key role in supporting our efforts on behalf of women and girls.

VGIF has begun a two-year transition period. In June 2012, Executive Director Fay Kittelson, who was a mainstay of the organization for 21 years, retired and in October 2012, the Board committed to moving from an operational board to a governance board. Given the growth in our grant making, it is no longer feasible to be primarily volunteer-operated. Throughout the transition to a new Executive Director and board and staff operating style, we have continued to strengthen our programs that support our mission.

Although the world has changed dramatically since 1969, VGIF's mission is as relevant today as it was at its founding. As the latest report from UN Women states, "there is progress for women and girls in various parts of the world but that progress is slow and uneven." VGIF's strengths include its deep appreciation of grassroots projects for women and girls, its long and successful history of making grants to women's organizations, and the dedication of its members. As we approach our 45th anniversary, VGIF's new organization will build on the knowledge and successes of the past. We hope you will continue to join us on this exciting and important journey.



**Virginia Palmer
(1922–2009)**

Virginia Palmer was an active member of VGIF for many years. She was First Vice President for four terms, a board member for seven terms, and a convener and member of committees. Virginia was also a friend and mentor to many VGIF members. Most importantly, she was an extraordinary woman with the foresight to envision VGIF's future and with the generous spirit to help move the organization forward.



OFFICERS

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USA

Bonnie Lincoln
Vice President, Project
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Terry Oudraad
Vice President, Human
Resources, Netherlands

Jeri Rhodes
Vice President, Strategic
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Rita Skillman, USA
Fay Weber, USA
Leslie Wright, USA

Above: Ugandan schoolgirls learn to grow vegetables in urban environment.



Changing lives, one community at a time.

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