



June 3, 2014

Dear VGIF members and supporters,

Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) continues to share the international community's deep concern for the wellbeing and safe return of the more than 200 girls who were kidnapped from their school in northeastern Nigeria. Our board, staff and volunteers are joining in the global call for every one of these girls to be brought home to safety and receive the strength and community support so important to their healing. We maintain that the rights of the girl child need to be upheld so that these girls, and the millions of others like them, are able to pursue their education in a safe, encouraging environment. In this, we also share the global community's profound frustration with the systems of discrimination, inequality, and fundamentalism that allow such violations of girls' rights, not only in Nigeria, but all over the world.

As an international grantmaking organization, VGIF is committed to supporting local efforts that promote the self-empowerment of women and girls, which in turn fosters gender equality. Our focus is to provide the resources that allow our grantees to create opportunities for women and girls to lead safe, healthy lives, and the ability to reach their full potentials. We focus on sustainable changes that advance women's and girls' rights to economic, political, and social justice all over the world.

Our grantees design and implement projects that address the many complex issues facing women and girls, including those which impede upon girls' education. Many of our funded projects have focused directly on the rights of the girl child, like the International Federation of Women Lawyers in Awka, Nigeria, whose project introduced child rights laws by creating 3000 brochures for schools and initiated an intensive media outreach to advocate for children's rights. Another project, organized by Kids Hope School in 2010, trained women and girls on women's rights related to abuse, poverty, and trafficking in girls. In Pakistan, our grantee Social Transformation and Educational Prosperity –STEP, launched seminars for mothers to stress the importance of girls' education. As we remain hopeful that the girls from Chibok are reunited with their families, we are inspired by the many effective projects our grantees implement to strengthen women's and girls' rights in their communities.

VGIF sends its sincere support and ongoing encouragement to our grantees, beneficiaries, and members all over the world who are impacted by the systematic gender discrimination and violence that prompts tragedies like the kidnapping in Nigeria. We will continue our work to support women's and girls' rights initiatives, partner with grassroots women's organizations, and together, work towards a world where schools are safe spaces for learning and growing.

Jeri Rhodes
President