



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



*In October 2014, the VGIF Board of Directors approved new mission and vision statements:*

### **Mission**

VGIF provides grants globally to fund locally generated projects that advance the rights of women and girls.

### **Vision**

VGIF envisions a world where gender equality prevails and where women and girls can access or create opportunities for themselves and the greater community.

### **By the Numbers**

From grant cycle 2008–2009 to 2013–2014, VGIF invested close to **840,000 USD** in **136 one-year projects** and **6 multi-year projects**, reaching more than **51,000 women and girls**.

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VGIF is an international women's fund that provides small grants to women-led grassroots projects in low- and middle-income countries around the globe. These projects are developed by the women themselves and focus on issues that they have identified in their communities, such as the need for economic empowerment, access to education, health care, leadership training, and much more. Since VGIF was founded in 1969 we have supported over 500 projects in more than 90 countries, and our grantmaking continues to grow.



## Letter from the President

### Dear Friends,

VGIF may look a little different than we did in 1969, but our energy still comes from our support of women who have taken charge of changing their lives for the better.

During the year 2014, VGIF celebrated our 45th anniversary of grantmaking. The support from donors and benefactors allows us to continue funding projects that make a difference and we are grateful for that support and encouragement.

The most exciting aspect of our work are the stories from our grantees about how the projects they've developed and implemented are changing their lives. This annual report shares only a few of the amazing and inspirational experiences our grantees have realized through the support VGIF has provided.

During the last few years, VGIF has worked hard to increase our interaction with grantees. Through mid-year and final evaluation interviews, the staff engages extensively with our current grantees. In addition to gaining an understanding of the work our grantees do, many positive relationships have developed and this has helped us share the learnings from the women we support with other grantees.

As part of our ongoing work with the United Nations, in late 2014, VGIF submitted a statement to the 59th session on the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW59) for the annual meeting in March 2015. This statement was based on a survey of nearly 40 grassroots women leaders who are part of our grantee network. They identified three topics out of twelve crucial areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action which they determined are

essential if the global community is to make progress on gender equality. The topics, Women and Poverty, Education and Training of Women and Women in Power and Decision Making, reflect the priorities in the lives of the women we support. It should not be a surprise that our grants reflect these priorities.

VGIF has expanded our grants portfolio by adding several multiyear grants. To better manage the different types of grants and fund more single year grants, our grantmaking processes continue to be analyzed and refined. The Project Grants Committee, with support from staff, spent considerable time and effort clarifying our policies and finding ways to make the selection process more effective. Since this is central to our mission, we will continue to find ways to keep our funding focused and relevant.

The work of VGIF could not be done without the efforts of many people: our board and committee members, staff, our Executive Director, Elisabet Eklind, our grant previewers, site visitors, volunteers and the UN interns who come to work with us for one or two semesters each year. I offer my personal thanks for the hours, expertise and commitment to all those who contribute so that VGIF can make a difference.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeri Rhodes".

**Jeri Rhodes**  
President

## Highlights from 2014



Rural Women's Empowerment and Development

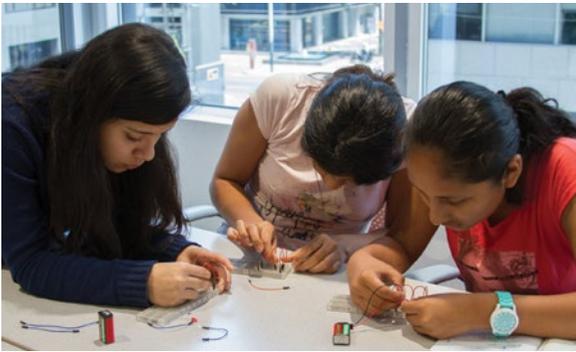
### MEETING VGIF GRANTEES FACE-TO-FACE

In addition to mid-year and final reports, site visits yield a wealth of information about project implementation and outcomes and provide great opportunities for VGIF to understand the context in which our grantees operate. Site visits are conducted by volunteers who live and/or work in the geographic area of the grantees.

In February 2014, VGIF supporter Katie Carlsen visited **Let Little Children Come to Me (LLCCM)**. Through their “Widows Beekeeping Project”, LLCCM trained women widowed by the Rwandan genocide in beekeeping to improve their economic status. The increased earnings helped participants cover household expenses and their children's school fees. Katie noted in her report that beekeeping is traditionally considered to be a male activity in Rwanda due to negative stereotypes around women's involvement. The project

resulted in the female beekeepers gaining a “new sense of respect from the community” after people realized that their preconceived notions were inaccurate. It was also reported that community members—especially local men—asked to get involved in the project!

In June 2014, VGIF member Julie Pennington visited **Rural Women's Empowerment and Development (RUWEDO)** in Kenya. Their project, “Women's Food Security and Economic Empowerment”, trained 60 women in advanced farming skills to improve their agricultural production, food security, and economic status. RUWEDO noted in their final report that the project enhanced the participants' social status and “[the women] are now recognized and respected by community members. Two of the women were even elected as village elders.”



### PROGRAMMERS OF THE FUTURE

**Women in Technology Peru** taught teenaged girls development languages (Javascript, CSS, and HTML) and programming essentials through their project, “Coderise Girls Peru.” The girls gained skills to build web applications and connected with technology and entrepreneurship mentors around the world. One trainer said, “They are more confident, with higher self-esteem, more outgoing and share an optimistic vision of the future.”

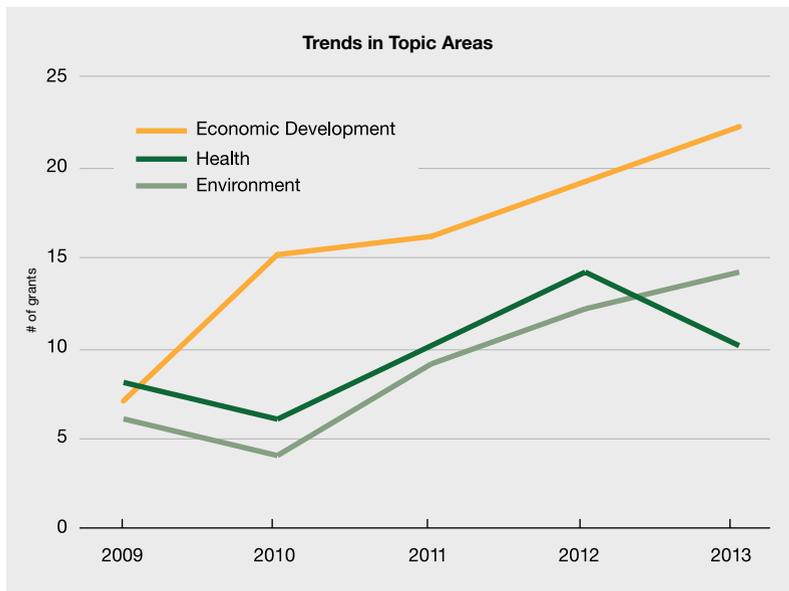


### EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH TRAININGS

**Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE)** worked with 15 female survivors of human trafficking in their project “Empowering Women Survivors through Paralegal Training.” They trained this group to become certified paralegals so that they gain a source of income to provide for themselves, and their families. In addition, training this particular group helped create a legal resource that is sensitive to the needs of victims of trafficking.

### EMERGING TRENDS IN VGIF GRANTMAKING

From grant cycle 2008–2009 through grant cycle 2013–2014: Projects with an economic development and empowerment focus saw an increase in funding. More than half of VGIF grants (79 projects) included this component, providing vocational training and businesses support to enable women to develop sustainable sources of income.



### VGIF AT THE UNITED NATIONS



VGIF participated in the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York City in March 2014. A group of 22 VGIF representatives participated in events facilitated by UN agencies, country missions, and a variety of non-governmental organizations. VGIF hosted a parallel event, “The Transformative Impact of Investing in Women & Girls: Learning from the Leaders on the Ground,” which featured insights from VGIF grantees Aruna Thapa (Nepal) and Rose Cunningham Kain (Nicaragua). This well-attended event provided a welcome opportunity to hear from grassroots leaders during CSW58.

# 2014 Financial Report (USD)

Revenue	2014	2013
Contributions		
<i>Unrestricted</i>	128,454	93,698
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	17,637	5,090
Bequests	150,000	17,733
Other	5,699	1,912
Special Events, net of expenses 21,292 in 2014	17,496	2,218
Investment Income, less fees		
<i>Unrestricted; Undesignated</i>	286,664	162,861
<i>Unrestricted; Board Designated</i>	1,571,728	943,102
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	128,322	73,271
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>2,306,000</b>	<b>1,299,885</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	736,518	628,925
Administration	215,667	205,142
Fundraising	118,434	78,487
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,070,619</b>	<b>912,554</b>
Change in Net Assets before Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Investments	1,235,381	387,331
Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Investments	(139,198)	1,292,648
Change in Net Assets	1,070,619	1,679,979
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>17,715,297</b>	<b>16,577,585</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

Total Liabilities	155,776	114,247
Net Assets		
<i>Unrestricted; Undesignated</i>	2,896,554	2,546,777
<i>Unrestricted; Board Designated</i>	13,302,267	12,616,379
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	1,360,700	1,300,182
Total Net Assets	17,559,521	16,463,338
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>17,715,297</b>	<b>16,577,585</b>

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.

# Celebrating 45 Years of Successful Grantmaking



Clockwise from left:  
Abigail Disney;  
current and past VGIF  
Presidents, Eileen  
Menton, Jeri Rhodes,  
Barbara Carey, Virginia  
Maynard; Jane Quaye;  
Mary McGovern and  
Gomathy Venkateswar

On Friday, October 24, 2014, nearly 120 members, supporters, and friends joined VGIF to celebrate its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The event was attended by established supporters and new friends from corporations, foundations, and grassroots groups who are passionate about women's empowerment. VGIF was especially happy to celebrate with former presidents, Virginia Maynard, Barbara Carey, and Eileen Menton.

Abigail E. Disney, filmmaker, philanthropist, and activist, and former VGIF grantee Jane Quaye, Executive Director of International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana) provided remarks. Abigail spoke of the political, social, and geographic

environments in which VGIF grantees operate. And Jane talked specifically about FIDA-Ghana's outreach in Northern Ghana to educate women on their legal and human rights. In her remarks, Jane told donors, "Where you have not been able to go, your money has visited. It is your vehicle to affect change!"

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Changing lives, one community at a time.

VGIF 11 Broadway, Suite 510 New York, NY 10004 (212) 213-0622 [www.vgif.org](http://www.vgif.org)