



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

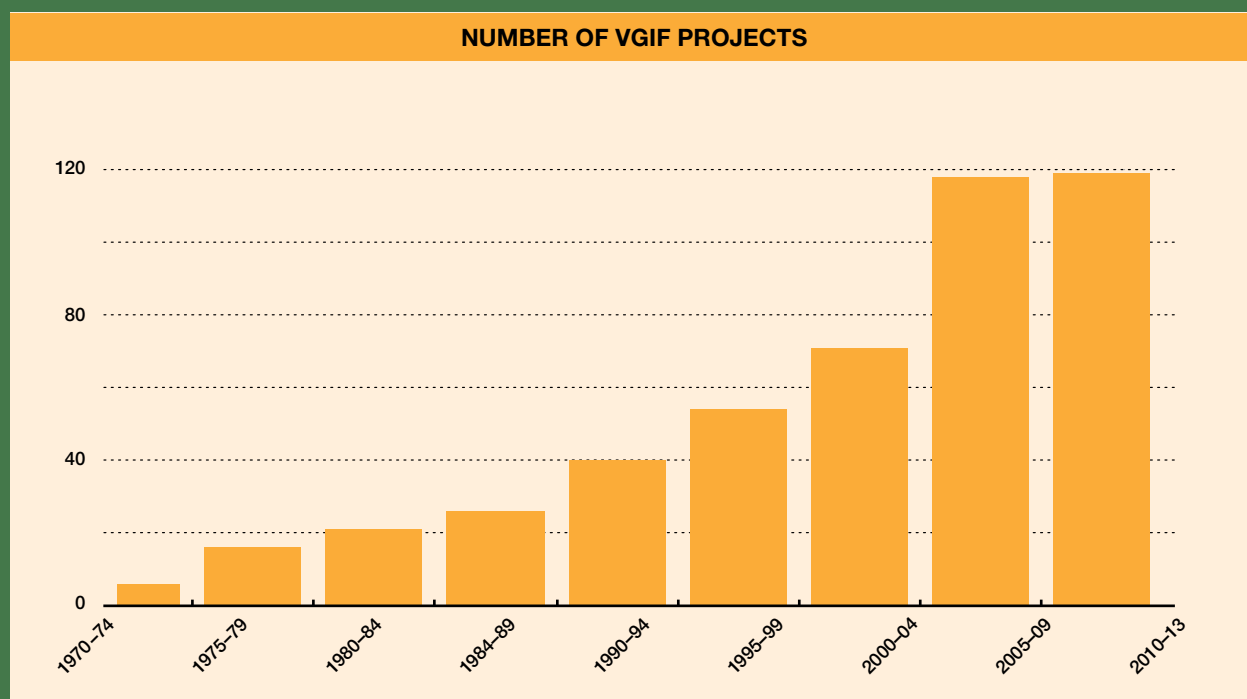


The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) provides small grants for grassroots projects that empower women and girls in developing countries.

VGIF is an international women's fund based in the United States. We believe that small grants can and do change lives, especially when they are designed and implemented by women leaders working for and with local women and girls.

VGIF grantees challenge discriminatory norms and attitudes across a variety of topic areas, including education, health, and human rights. Strategies used to combat inequality are as diverse as the grantee communities and include public awareness sessions, vocational skills trainings, leadership trainings, and many more.

Over the past 45 years, VGIF has steadily increased its number of annual grantees and reached a total of over 475 projects in 89 countries. Our generous members, donors, and volunteers have made VGIF's growth possible and have contributed directly to life-changing projects around the globe.



Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

VGIF members continue to make a difference in the lives of women and girls worldwide through their ongoing support of VGIF's grantmaking.

In April 2013, the VGIF Board approved 36 one-year grants in 19 countries, a grant to the International Federation of University Women for its Bina Roy Project in International Development, and two new multi-year grants. It also approved continuation of four multi-year grants approved in prior years, for a total of 285,828.75 USD — a record amount.

Like so many VGIF-funded projects, the “Widows Beekeeping Project” in Rwanda has both improved the livelihoods of local women and directly challenged gender norms. Marcelline, one of the project participants, said that she was discouraged from beekeeping because “no one had ever seen women beekeepers” and that there is a traditional saying that “women who are in their menstrual periods can't approach the hives otherwise the bees will leave.” Marcelline did not listen to the skeptics and is now the Vice President of the cooperative. She can support her household and has been able to buy a piece of land, where she is planning to construct a small house nearby a main road which will be rented for small business activities. And, male beekeepers from nearby areas have visited the project site to learn from the women.

In 2013, VGIF continued to collaborate with other women's organizations at the United Nations and with the feminist and human rights funding community. At the 57th Commission on the Status of Women, VGIF presented a parallel event featuring

three grantees, and one of our grantees was a featured speaker at the NGO Consultation. In April 2013, I had the opportunity to represent our grantees at the UN Economic and Social Council special high level meeting on financing for sustainable development. On their behalf, I urged the UN and development community to bring small NGOs and women's organizations into the process of developing the post-2015 development agenda. VGIF also strengthened its ties with other international women's groups, including the International Federation of University Women and the International Network of Women's Funds. And, VGIF grants were included in the International Human Rights Funders database of Human Rights philanthropy.

In May 2013, VGIF welcomed Elisabet Eklind as our new Executive Director and began the process of rebuilding the staff and allowing the Board to move to a governance model. This report reflects that effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to have served 6 years as President of VGIF. I look forward to seeing VGIF continue to strengthen its impact on the lives of women and girls in developing countries.

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

Eileen Shelley Menton
President, 2012–2014

Highlights from 2013

VGIF funded a total of 42 projects including 36 one year projects, 4 ongoing multiyear projects, and 2 new multiyear grants. Spanning 22 countries, these projects addressed topics ranging from income generation to science education for girls. Our grantees employed creative and innovative strategies to improve women's and girls' lives, like a soccer initiative for girls that fostered leadership and mentoring, and bicycle "ambulances" to help pregnant mothers access health services. Through projects like these, women and girls in communities all over the world have gained valuable skills, services, opportunities, and most importantly perhaps, hope.



ENABLING EMPOWERMENT

The women and girls participating in Enabled to Enable's "Income Generation and Skills Training Project" in Nigeria may be physically disabled or lacking income opportunities, but they have plenty of determination. Now, they are equipped with skills in sewing for interior decoration, bead-making, and knitting, and they are training their peers through a mentorship program. Doors have opened to new possibilities for 104 women and 96 girls; doors to healthy lives, higher education, and productive employment.

Promise Johnson Bassey, a young woman participating in the project, said: *"I no longer feel like taking my life because I am disabled. We no longer have to go to bed hungry and I now have friends in school. Thank you for bringing this training."*



LEADING THE WAY

In northern Ghana, young women from 10 schools have gained self-confidence and become leaders and mentors among their peers. The Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre's goal was to increase girls' leadership skills and participation in school governance — a goal they exceeded, impacting 40 girls directly and almost 1,000 women and girls indirectly.



HOPE FOR BETTER HEALTH

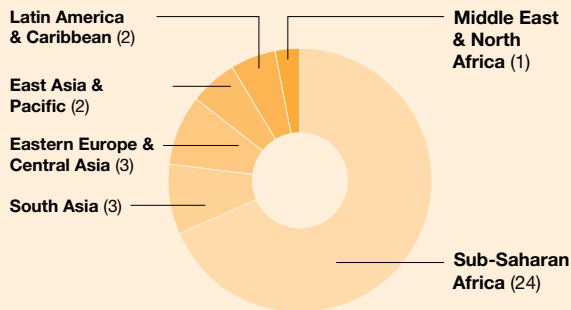
Multi-year grantee Hope Foundation for Women and Children of Bangladesh is training young women to become health care providers in their own communities. Women are also being trained as community health educators to increase health outcomes in the short and long term.

VGIF AT THE UNITED NATIONS

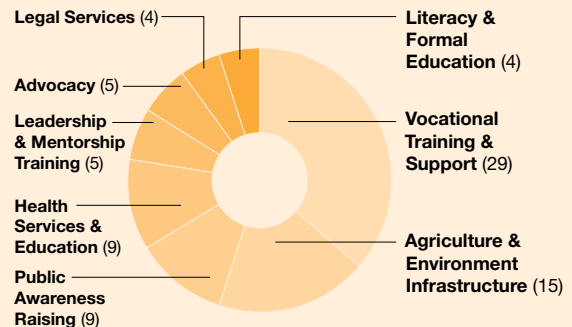
VGIF participated in the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations headquarters in New York, bringing the voices of our grantees to higher level international discussions around the issues and topic areas that deeply impact their lives. VGIF brought Iatamze Verulashvili, Project Director of the Women's Center in Tbilisi, Georgia, to speak at our parallel event, themed "Global Perspectives on Violence Against Women." Ms. Verulashvili, an expert in the field, provided insight on her work with domestic violence victims in minority communities in Georgia and shared best practices with the audience (pictured below).



PROJECTS BY REGION: 2013–2014



PROJECT ACTIVITIES



2013 Financial Report (USD)

Revenue	2013	2012
Contributions		
<i>Unrestricted</i>	93,698	92,249
<i>Restricted</i>	5,090	1,320
Bequests	17,733	282,692
Other	1,912	4,716
Special Events, net of expenses 2,572	2,218	-
Investment Income		1,184,808
<i>Unrestricted; Undesignated</i>	241,012	-
<i>Unrestricted; Board Designated</i>	864,951	-
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	73,271	-
Total Revenue and Support		
<i>Unrestricted; Undesignated</i>	1,076,667	-
<i>Unrestricted; Board Designated</i>	193,248	-
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	29,970	-
Total	1,299,885	1,565,785

Expenses

Program Services	628,925	408,387
Administration	205,142	252,185
Fundraising	78,487	113,043
Total Expenses	912,554	773,615

Assets

Change in Net Assets before		
Unrealized Gain on Investments	387,331	684,470
Unrealized Gain on Investments*	1,292,648	-
Change in Net Assets	1,679,979	-
Assets		
<i>Unrestricted; Undesignated</i>	2,624,402	-
<i>Unrestricted; Board Designated</i>	12,538,754	-
<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>	1,300,182	-
Total Net Assets	16,463,338	14,889,989
Total Liabilities	114,247	106,629
Net assets	16,349,094	14,783,360

*Note: 'Unrealized Gain on Investments' was not detailed in the FY2012 financials.

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.

Let's Do the Math: Grassroots Efforts + Women's Leadership = Impact

Studies have shown that grassroots efforts form the foundation on which larger-scale changes are being made.

While international, national and regional efforts are necessary to increasing women's and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights, the grassroots groups working in local communities play a critical role in driving positive social change. Studies have also shown that investing in women provides a high rate of return not only for the women themselves but for their families, communities and society at large.

And yet, several reports on funding have shown that **(1)** women's organizations overall remain a severely underfunded group, and **(2)** there are very few grassroots women's groups among those that do receive funding. A recent report by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) also indicates that more diversity in issue area is necessary for the establishment and protection of women's rights. **VGIF grantmaking plays an important role in addressing all these gaps in funding. We specifically target grassroots groups that are led by women and whose projects specifically benefit women and girls.**

Also, VGIF funding decisions are not restricted by a set issue area or topic priorities. VGIF awards support based on proposed projects' potential capacity to bring about sustainable, positive impact in the lives of women and girls in the local community. This approach is based on one of VGIF's core values — a belief that local women leaders are best equipped to identify their own key issues and to design and implement their own projects. The value and trust VGIF places in grantees and a focus on outcomes makes VGIF one of a kind in the field — something we can all be proud of.

Above all I have gained confidence, and [am] taking on a leadership position in my group. I learnt how to save and opened a bank account; I no longer fear the bank as I used to because I can now sign my name like any other person. This program opened my eyes.”

Josephine Angom

Participant of Volunteer Action Network, Uganda



Girls work together to gain leadership skills
(Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre, Ghana)

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Changing lives, one community at a time.

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