

■ 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



women in progress

CONNECTING CULTURES



2008 ANNUAL REPORT: CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS

Dear Friends and Supporters of Women in Progress and Global Mamas,

In 2008 Women in Progress (WIP)/Global Mamas celebrated its five year anniversary. This is a significant milestone—one that could not possibly have been reached without the partnership of the women producers in Ghana, our volunteers, supporters and retail partners throughout the world. To celebrate five years in Ghana, we reflect below on how we have performed toward the major goals we set for ourselves when launching the organization in 2003:

■ Do More than Offer Workshops

We value group training and believe it is an important component of delivering economic development services, but we knew there had to be more. When we launched the organization the women of Cape Coast said to us: "You can teach us marketing or bookkeeping, but if you don't help us to find new markets for our products, we won't be here tomorrow." This led to the development of our International Trade Program to provide access to new markets and the launch of Global Mamas. With six founding producers in 2003, sales of Global Mamas handcrafted goods have grown from \$22,000 to \$577,000 and comprises more than 80 small businesses.

■ Provide Hands-on, Implementation-focused Training

The women of the Global Mamas network are very talented in their fields, yet they often struggle with business expansion. Many had access to one-day seminars on business management and growth, but very few NGOs offered long-term support focused on implementation of new ideas. Through our extremely talented volunteer and intern network, we have been able to offer women business owners hands-on, ongoing, one-on-one consulting services that have true impact on their businesses.

■ Grow Steadily with a Commitment to the Long Term

With the Cape Coast textile program operating successfully, we knew we had to replicate our business model in other communities. In 2006 we launched Global Mamas in Krobo-Odumase with a community that produced recycled glass beads and proved that our model could thrive in other communities. This paved the way for launching our programs in three new communities, with four more planned for 2009.

■ Track True Economic Growth

When we competed for donor funding in the early years, every grant application wanted to know "How many people will you serve?" Because our approach was not based on offering large group training sessions, the number of women served by Women in Progress was lower than other organizations. Donors were surprised, and even uninterested, when we instead talked about measurable increases in revenue, profitability and new jobs. Though we might have changed our model to be more competitive for grant funding, we stayed true to our values and continued our focus on generating true economic growth versus tracking people served. We are proud of the results.

■ Create a Self-sustainable Organization

We were 100% committed to creating an organization that would not be reliant on grants and donations for continued operations. We wanted to create an organization that women could count on for decades, not months. To ensure this sustainability, we made a commitment to have each location fully self-sustainable within two years. Even better, the women of Global Mamas make a financial commitment to the sustainability of the organization through a profit-sharing model. Today every single location of Women in Progress/Global Mamas is self-sustainable. We very much value donations to launch new programs rather than finance ongoing operations.

Hitting the five year milestone is very rewarding for us. It has not been easy, there have been many bumps along the way, but we are very proud of the organization as it stands today and we believe we are poised to have another five years of success. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you again for your support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renae".

Renae Adam
Cofounder

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristin".

Kristin Johnson
Cofounder

WIP'S APPROACH

MISSION

Women in Progress (WIP), also doing business as Global Mamas, is a non-profit organization which envisions women in Africa to be economically independent. WIP's purpose is to reduce the economic inequality of women by helping to significantly increase the revenues and profits of women-owned businesses.

This in turn increases wages, generates new jobs and improves the standard of living for women, their families, and the larger community. WIP believes that helping women gain economic independence is the most effective way to create prosperous communities.

PROGRAMS

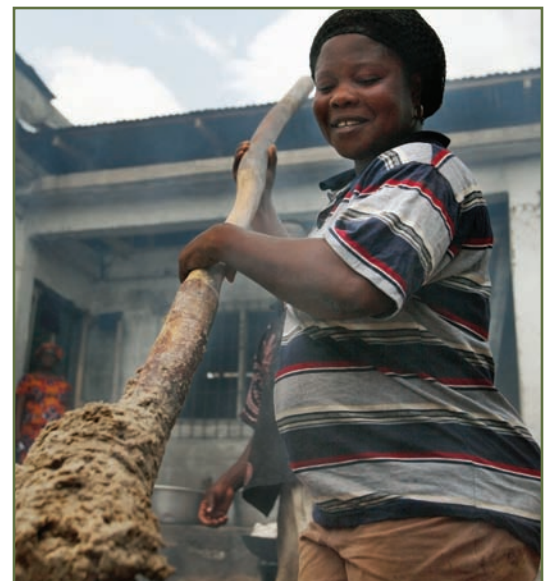
WIP helps small woman-owned businesses in Africa to access global markets and manage their growing businesses. WIP enables the economic independence of these women by promoting their traditional skills in producing handmade products under the brand name Global Mamas. WIP provides direct access to markets in North America, Europe and Australia. WIP works extensively with each business owner on new product development and quality control. WIP also provides artisans with personalized, hands-on business assistance and computer training to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs to better manage their growing enterprises.

GLOBAL MAMAS

In 2003, WIP launched the Global Mamas network with six producers. Today the Global Mamas network is comprised of 86 individually-owned businesses working together to penetrate larger markets while maintaining their operational independence. The women are provided fair and deserved payments for their high-quality work. Sales of the Global Mamas' products provide dignity to African women who are now able to earn a living wage.

WIP provides artisans in the Global Mamas network with financial and management support, including:

- Coordination of the production of over 175 products in hundreds of designs for over 250 customers in North America, Europe, Australia and Ghana.
- Up-front payments for the production of the high-quality goods by financing cash flow.
- Sourcing of raw materials in bulk through a Raw Materials Revolving Inventory-Fund resulting in reduced costs and increased product quality.
- Management of and training in quality control.
- Practical, hands-on training in new product development, strategic planning, bookkeeping, and marketing.



RESULTS & GOALS

2008 Organization Accomplishments

INCREASED REVENUES & WAGES

- WIP facilitated \$584,122 in sales of fair trade products in Ghana, North America, Europe and Australia. This was achieved on behalf of the 86 businesses in the Global Mamas network.
- The women of the Global Mamas network collected \$192,844 in payments, which accounts for 33% of total product sales. Because raw materials are provided in advance through a Raw Materials Revolving Loan Fund, payments to the women were mainly profit.
- Including business owners, employees and apprentices, sales of Global Mamas products and cultural workshops directly enhanced the wages, standard of living, and confidence of 464 low-income women in Ghana.

JOB CREATION & BUSINESS EXPANSION

- Since inception, WIP has created over 272 new jobs in Ghana by helping women-owned businesses expand their operations.
- The women in the Global Mamas network worked to expand their businesses. New revenue was used to purchase new equipment, install electricity and phone lines at their homes and workshops, open and expand savings accounts, repay loans, rent permanent business locations, and expand their product lines.

IMPROVED STANDARD OF LIVING

- The women in the Global Mamas network improved the standard of living for themselves and their families. Utilizing their additional income, the women paid school fees for their children, adopted orphans, provided financial support to extended family members, paid medical bills, rented larger living quarters, and purchased land. Many women also felt great relief in achieving financial stability.

PROGRAM EXPANSION

- WIP partnered with another NGO, Village Exchange Ghana, to launch Lady Volta Batik, a new Global Mamas batik and sewing center in Ho. The new center provided nine new jobs to women in the community.
- WIP partnered with Trashy Bags in Dworwulu to help its sixty workers access new markets outside of Ghana.

EXTENSIVE TRAINING

- Through an extensive volunteer network, WIP provided hundreds of hours of hands-on business assistance and computer training to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs to better manage their growing enterprise.

MARKET EXPANSION

- WIP opened an office in Accra to serve as quality checkpoint and shipping consolidation center for the export of Global Mamas products being produced in multiple locations.
- Global Mamas opened the first fair trade retail store in the capital city, Accra, to increase sales of fair trade products within Ghana. The store in Accra provides a needed outlet for products that are not export quality. The store has been so successful that its revenues cover all operational costs of our Accra headquarters.

2009 Objectives

- Launch the Global Mamas program in at least three new communities focusing on skin care and recycled paper products.
- Transition supply chain management and assembly of beaded products from Global Mamas staff to the locally-operated Madizu Fair Trade Company in Odumase-Krobo.
- Launch glass recycling and grinding program which will not only turn waste into usable raw materials for making beads, but also enable the bead makers in Ghana to access cheaper glass powder, improve production efficiencies and benefit from safer working conditions.
- Develop and launch a new wholesale website to provide better service Global Mamas' international retailers.
- Identify like-minded distribution partners to continue the expansion of sales of Global Mamas products throughout Europe and Asia.
- Raise funds to expand the Global Mamas Raw Materials Revolving Loan Fund to ensure the stability of growing demand.

esther gyepi-garbrah

2008 Global Mama of the Year: Cape Coast



Five years ago, before joining Global Mamas, Esther Gyepi-Garbrah, a seamstress in Cape Coast, Ghana, was deeply in debt. Sidelined by injury and years of unpredictable payments by customers, Esther was unable to consistently pay off a continuously growing loan. Her business lacked promise, as it was limited to the work she could produce out of her bedroom with an older, manual sewing machine.

In 2003, Esther was invited to be a founding member of the Global Mamas network of producers, a move that has caused Esther's sales to triple at her shop, My Redeemer Liveth Fashions. While Esther cites the reliability, equality, and opportunity that Global Mamas provides as reasons for the success of her business, we know that it is Esther's skill, dedication, and heart that set her apart.

In the past five years, Esther has quickly become a leader within the organization. Because of her strong work ethic, high quality products and wonderful spirit she has been recognized on various occasions. Esther was selected with another Global Mama in 2007 to meet with President Bush when he toured Africa. This year she was awarded with Global Mama of the Year for her dedication to the organization since its inception and her desire to bring opportunities to so many others. However, Esther is humble when she is acknowledged for her accomplishments. When informed of her Global Mama of the Year 2008 status, Esther thanked the hard work of her 40 employees. And, acknowledging the promise that lie within each Global Mama, Esther hopes that the title of Global Mama of the Year is shared with each Global Mama in the future.

After having experienced her own individual success, Esther feels empowered to pass it on to others. Five years from now, Esther hopes to have her own NGO thriving so that it can assist impoverished women of Cape Coast's surrounding villages in rising up out of poverty. At Global Mamas, we know that whatever lies ahead for Esther, one thing is clear; with a penchant for business and a heart of gold, Esther Gyepi-Garbrah will continue to be successful and make waves in the lives of those around her. Julie is a pleasure; we know we can rely on her to produce high quality work every time, she keeps good records and she's always laughing," said WIP's quality control manager.

lizzy kumah

2008 Global Mama of the Year: Krobo

Lizzy Kumah is an integral part of Global Mamas. She has always been dependable in delivering her bead orders and has outstanding quality every time. Not only does she educate those that work with her, but she also extends her knowledge to anyone who is willing to learn. Lizzy keeps the success of the entire cooperative a high priority which has gained her much respect from her peers. Since joining Global Mamas her profits have increased 50%. Furthermore, without the extra income provided by Global Mamas it would have been difficult to send her children to school. Lizzy has built a successful business for herself and plans to keep it a family business.



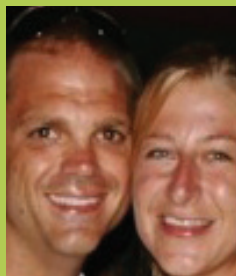
lady volta batik

Lady Volta Batik in Ho, Ghana was designed to give seamstresses and batikers in the region the opportunity to earn a fair wage creating Global Mamas clothing products. Global Mamas is constantly working to expand its fair trade business throughout the country, and the cooperative in Ho has become one of its more recent partners. With the help of its sister organization, Village Exchange Ghana in Ho, the cooperative in the region has already employed a handful of women, providing them with a wage and work environment that they otherwise, most likely, wouldn't have received in other lines of work. The cooperative tries to target young women with little or no education, since they are often the ones that experience the greatest amount of difficulty in finding work. The constant, year-round business from Global Mamas provides the workers with a steady, dependable income and also, a sense of pride in the fact that their work is going towards helping other young women like themselves.



■ volunteer highlights

WIP would not exist without the contributions of its international volunteers. Each year volunteers travel from all over the world to Ghana to help expand the work of WIP and Global Mamas.



Jill Onstot and Jon Skinner

Jill and Jon, sales and marketing specialists from Maryland, brought wonderful insight and boundless energy to WIP. Among their many accomplishments, Jill and Jon began development of a glass grinding business at our site in Krobo-Odumase. They started the business plan from the ground up and provided valuable market and operations research. The scope of their vision involves collecting bottles from Embassies in Accra, grinding the glass on site in Krobo and then selling the glass to local beadmakers. This reduces waste, creates jobs, generates income and provides a valuable resource to the beadmakers. They also did in-depth cost and pricing analysis on all of the Global Mamas products. From this information they developed a class that would help educate the women in the Global Mamas network about fair wages, managing their business efficiently and the role Global Mamas plays in marketing and selling their products. Additionally, they helped Global Mamas with search engine optimization to ensure that anyone searching the internet can find us easily. It was certainly a busy 4 months for them and it was incredibly beneficial for the organization.

Maria Vidal

Maria came to volunteer with WIP at the end of 2008 when the office was buzzing with projects. With her business background, she focused on providing valuable finance and fair trade training to women in the Global Mamas network. She faced many challenges, including preparing lessons for women at various education levels, and a more difficult language barrier than many volunteers. Being from Barcelona, Spain, English was a second language for both Maria and the Ghanaian women. She employed various techniques to ensure that these challenges did not hinder the women's comprehension, and was thrilled when they lit up with understanding. Maria balanced these group lessons with one on one fair trade assessment interviews. These interviews allowed her to provide suggestions to the business women, reiterating the steps necessary to make certain that they are running a fair trade business. Aside from her main projects, Maria was always ready to help with the production of the 2009 wholesale catalog, including ironing and photographing products and preparing the digital photos.



Matthew Sturm

Matthew, from Boulder, CO, was in Ghana four months and accomplished two major projects for Global Mamas. With interests in economic development and business, his main focus was helping Global Mamas to expand their initiatives in Ghana by designing and launching a new store in less than one month. Matthew put in 12+ hour work days and was very hands-on, even helping to paint the walls and arrange displays. The store launched in Osu on August 1, 2008 and its popularity has continually grown since then. Matthew also consulted Global Mamas on taking steps to source organic cotton and low-impact dyes. He provided research detailing cost comparisons of suppliers and also analysis of the impact that these changes would have on product pricing. This information has provided the groundwork necessary for future initiatives.

Alice Grau

Alice came to WIP from the fast paced world of fashion in New York City. She brought insight from the corporate world about how to standardize and stay competitive with the finicky trends of the apparel market. Alice designed and oversaw the production of many new batik products for the 2009 wholesale catalog. She also assisted with a variety of tasks, including taking product photographs and digitally "cleaning" photos, to complete the catalog for its launch. The release of the new catalog also gave Alice the opportunity to help Global Mamas to standardize the fit of the women's apparel products. Alice will be returning in 2009 as the General Manager of our Cape Coast facilities.



Focus on Implementation & Tangible Results

While WIP's mission is not unique in Ghana, its methodology and measures of success are innovative. WIP challenges the typical NGO system by asking, "So you trained 500 people this month, and then what? So you prepared 20 entrepreneurs for export, and then what? Did they implement any of the ideas? Did they export? What real results were achieved?" WIP generates real, tangible results by taking a unique approach to economic development that is not focused on classroom training. WIP provides hands-on, personalized assistance to respond to each business' unique challenges and opportunities and, most importantly, provide access to new markets.

Commitment to Self-Sustainability

The producers of Global Mamas have seen many NGOs come and go over the years due to their reliance on outside funding. While WIP recognizes its contributors as important partners, WIP is proud to say that over 80% of its revenue is contributed by the producers of Global Mamas and amazing volunteers.

Empowerment Through Independence

Global Mamas is a network of many individual small businesses that market products under a common brand name. Strategic and management decisions are made by the producers in the network and day-to-day operations are coordinated by WIP. WIP believes that building the capacity of many small businesses will have far greater impact on improving Ghana's economic growth in the long term as compared to opening one or two factories. These business owners then serve as role models for other young entrepreneurs who will know how to take advantage of trading in global markets.

Fair Trade Plus

Because the Global Mamas network exports and distributes products directly, producers in the network earn over 30% of total revenue. Even in the world of fair trade, this is an outstanding statistic. A typical sweat-shop worker earns less than one percent of a product's sales price. WIP also ensures that fair trade principles are implemented at the grass roots level through the internal Global Mamas fair trade certification program.



■ get involved



Make a Donation

Fund the sustainable growth of businesses and women's empowerment in Africa with a tax-deductible donation. Learn more about making a donation online at: www.womeninprogress.org/donate/makedonation.asp.

Purchase Products

By purchasing Global Mamas products, you are offering sustainable livelihoods to women and their families living in poverty. All proceeds go directly to the women and nonprofit programs that assist them with business development. Shop online today! www.globalmamas.org.

Volunteer in Ghana

WIP is an international volunteer organization promoting volunteer work abroad through volunteer vacations and student internships. Volunteers and interns work directly with the members of Global Mamas to expand their businesses. Through a short-term volunteer vacation, you will be able to use your skills to help others and make a difference in the future of the women and their families in Ghana. See more online at: www.womeninprogress.org/volunteer/volunteer.asp.

Contact Us

Meet the members of Global Mamas, learn about batik, and more at www.globalmamas.org. Email us at info@womeninprogress.org.

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