



Global
Mamas

Annual
Report
2014

Reflections from the Global Mamas Leadership Team

At Global Mamas we take prosperity seriously. It is, after all, our mission. We believe that prosperity goes beyond financial well-being to also encompass both health and happiness. We have learned over the last eleven years that what these three states of being mean are relative to every person. But never has the relativity of prosperity been more obvious to us than over this last year. We have faced challenges that have taught us a lot about ourselves as an organization and as a community. We have turned our focus inward, evaluating where we are currently and where we are heading.

Reflecting on Our Past and Dreaming About Our Future

As the first step of our inward focus, the Global Mamas Leadership Team gathered this September for our first ever strategic planning retreat. Robin Ross, a past Global Mamas volunteer, returned to Ghana to facilitate the process. It was amazing to have the entire leadership team together, face-to-face, to celebrate our tremendous growth, reflect and learn from our experiences, and chart a course for the future. The final result was the development of a 3-year vision and strategy that will focus more of our attention internally as we stabilize operations to effectively manage the incredible growth experienced over the past eleven years.

3-Year Strategy

STABILIZE!

Stabilize our incredible growth focusing on operational sustainability, financial health and building a solid foundation for future growth.

Growth is Good - But We Need to Pause and Take a Deep Breath

Since 2003, we have grown from \$22,000 to just over \$1,000,000 in revenue in 2014. We have experienced this growth thanks to you – our customers, donors and volunteers – and we are grateful. This growth has enabled us to expand our programs to benefit over 400 women in Ghana, who work together to achieve prosperity for themselves, their families, and communities. However, our internal systems to effectively manage operations have been stretched too thin. Over the next three years we will clearly define roles, further develop our skills, and expand our staff to ensure we continue to:

- 1. Offer steady, living wages that allow the Mamas and our staff to improve their standard of living.
- 2. Provide the Mamas with relevant and meaningful capacity-building programs.
- 3. Produce high-quality products.

We are extremely committed to long-term relationships with the Mamas – ones that can be relied upon year after year!

Re-Setting our Calendar – Thank You Design Team!

Another goal of our stabilization strategy is to get the right products to the right people at the right time while maintaining our high quality. Over 60% of our revenue is generated through sales of our adult and children’s apparel. This is great news because apparel products are what the Mamas most love to sew. However, the seasonal demand for our warm-weather clothing creates several frantic months each year where demand exceeds supply. We all recognize this as a promising challenge to have, but a challenge all the same. The Global Mamas design team has responded to the challenge and is re-setting the production timeline. Finalizing our product line earlier in the year will allow us to deliver our products when our customers want them, while leveling out production throughout the year in a calm and strategic manner.

Gratitude

To compound our internal challenges, the Ebola epidemic spreading through West Africa for much of 2014 has been devastating. Our hearts and prayers continue to go out to our sisters and brothers struggling with the horrors of this terrible disease. We have recorded no cases of Ebola in Ghana and for that we are extremely grateful. We are relieved that the stress and tension of the unknown is waning, but the ongoing economic impact remains a challenge. Due to the drastic drop in tourism in Ghana, we experienced a \$60,000 reduction in sales at our Global Mamas Fair Trade Store in Accra. We want to thank our customers who purchased the overstock, thereby allowing the Mamas to maintain steady production during the second half of the year. We are also grateful to our volunteers and donors. Your contributions will allow us to maintain our training programs in 2015. And to all prospective volunteers and interns – come back! We miss your energy and your talent – both of which are instrumental in helping us to achieve our mission.

Looking back on this challenging year, we are proud to say we came out of it stronger, with a focus on our long-term goals. We are looking forward to a prosperous 2015 in partnership with you.

Sincerely,



The Global Mamas Leadership Team

Renae Adam, Gladys Adimer, Dorcas Baiden, Jessica Fox, Alice Grau, Laura Henslin, Kristin Johnson, Rosemary Kemetse, Amos Kporshiebu, Anna Rose Ott, Nick Ruffalo, Patience Treve, & Wisdom Tamakloe



Some past and present members of the Global Mamas Leadership Team at the 10-Year Anniversary Party that was celebrated in Ghana in September of 2014.

Prosperity is Financial Well-Being.

Equipment Revolving Loan Fund Supports Business Growth



Elizabeth Arkaah (second from left) with her staff receiving her new serger into their workshop.

As the first of a series of programs to celebrate Global Mamas’ 10-year anniversary, we launched an interest-free equipment loan program in December 2013. This program was custom-tailored based on feedback from the Mamas to provide them with the equipment most needed to increase productivity. As most Mamas are paid per item made, this increased productivity means the Mamas can bring home more earnings to support their families.

Sergers (known as knitting machines in Ghana) were selected as the focus of this loan program. Knitting machines are an essential tool used by the Mamas to create seams and edging on clothing, bags, and other Global Mamas items.

However, many of the Mamas lack access to these crucial machines, requiring them to spend valuable time waiting in the market to pay for the use of public knitting machines.

The lack of knitting machines can create a costly and time consuming bottleneck in our production process. The Mamas let us know through roundtable discussions that purchasing their own knitting machines would not only save them time and money, but also improve the quality of items they make in their shops.

To implement this loan program, we asked the Mamas to complete an application in which they told us why they needed a knitting machine, the

purpose the machine would serve for them, and how they would pay Global Mamas back for the machine. These applications were reviewed by Global Mamas’ office manager Patience (shown below).

Global Mamas also reviewed the financial records of each applicant and completed site visits to ensure that all applicants were in compliance with the fair trade principles set forth by the Fair Trade Federation and World Fair Trade Organization, which Global Mamas follows.

Applicants selected to participate in the program were then counseled through the loan process. All participants were asked to sign a contract acknowledging that they would repay the interest-free loan through deductions from the payments they receive from Global Mamas for their work.



Patience preparing a serger for delivery.



Sabina Assimoku, one of the recipients of a serger loan, with her children; they will also benefit from increased productivity.

To ensure success for each Mama participating in the program, we only accepted applicants with strong financial records with Global Mamas. Moreover, the program was structured to address the challenges the Mamas face when balancing the desire to invest in their businesses and the need to support their families. Creation of a payment plan based on automatic deductions gave these Mamas access to business growth without having to save up the money for the machines themselves.

I can now do my own knitting and get extra income from the knitting I do for others.
- Elizabeth Arkaah

Finally, as a result of successful development and implementation of this first equipment loan program, each of our participants received a new knitting machine shortly before Christmas!

Measuring Our Impact

The women in the Global Mamas community are realizing prosperity for themselves and their families. Many women expressed pride in achieving financial well-being. Utilizing their additional income, the women:



BECAME DEBT FREE

Paid college tuition for their older children and themselves



PAID MEDICAL BILLS

Provided financial support for extended family members



PURCHASED EQUIPMENT AND LAND

Paid school fees for their own children and other children in their community

To be prosperous is to be happy.

Felicia "Mami Adjo" Adjo Otu, Global Mama since 2011



Over 98% of the Mamas' children go to school (an increase of almost 3% from last year!)

I feel happy when I see people wearing our products. It makes me feel confident.

Florence Worwornyo, Global Mama since 2012

2014 Accomplishments

In 2014, the Mamas supported

273 PEOPLE

outside of their immediate family

and were able to send

234 CHILDREN

to school

Their handmade products were sold in

22 COUNTRIES

around the world

Prosperity is having some money in hand to use for health and for my family.

Grace Joe, Global Mama since 2007

Global Mamas is very proud that 94% of the Mamas feel comfortable voicing their concerns and issues within the organization. 98% of Mamas would recommend Global Mamas as an employer.



Prosperity, to me, is being able to save money to build my house.

Alex Odonokor "Happy" Sackey, Global Papa since 2009



40 Mamas gained pride by setting and realizing their goals through our peer mentor groups.



Global Mamas made 8 equipment loans to the Mamas and realized 100% repayment rate. Read more on page 4.

Global Mamas facilitated 5 health workshops that covered topics such as Ebola prevention, breast cancer awareness and nutrition. Learn more on page 8.



81% of Mamas said they could pay for all the medical care that was needed for themselves and their family this year.

In 2014, the Mamas earned **\$317,441.77**

This was **32%** of Global Mamas total revenue.

In 2014 Global Mamas provided income to **417 Mamas** (and a few Papas)

Global Mamas provides

100%

of direct employees with health insurance.



75% of Global Mamas producers have the security of health insurance (an increase of almost 5% from last year).

Prosperity is Health.

Volunteer Brings New Health Education Program to Mamas



Adrienne presenting about healthy local food options.

In late 2013, we heard from Mamas that they were especially interested in learning more about their health—an important part of our definition of prosperity. With this feedback in mind, we recruited Adrienne McConnell, a New Mexico native studying for a master’s in community health education, to intern at our Cape Coast location.

Adrienne’s Mama-centered approach began with meeting the women and understanding their health challenges. Mamas shared that they were

most interested in learning about nutrition, breast cancer, menopause, and communicable diseases, particularly Hepatitis B and HIV.

Adrienne collaborated closely with Cape Coast office manager Patience and Mama liaison Anna Rose to tackle nutrition first via a workshop addressing local foods that would resonate with Mamas. Patience and Adrienne also forged a partnership with a nutritionist from the University of Cape Coast, Rebecca, to give the presentation in Fante, the local language used in Cape Coast.

In mid-April, Rebecca presented on nutrition to Cape Coast’s 40 Mamas and quality control staff members and, with Adrienne’s help, answered many questions from the audience. The Mamas greatly appreciated the lesson; as quality control employee Esther shared, “I was really happy to see the presentation and I learned a lot of new things.” As a part of the workshop, Rebecca and Adrienne distributed handouts about nutrition for women to take home and share with their families and friends. While in Cape Coast, Adrienne also



A Food Pyramid drawn by the Mamas representing local foods.

“Prosperity is having some money in hand to use for health[care] and for my family.” - Grace Joe



The Mamas attend a nutrition workshop presented by Rebecca.

shared her nutrition lesson with two friends of Global Mamas: Judith, a souvenir shop owner and former Global Mamas producer, and Eli, an owner of a small restaurant near the Cape Coast volunteer house.

In late April, Mamas at our Ashaiman location also heard Adrienne’s nutrition presentation. With inventory control manager Dorcas providing translation support to the local language of Twi, Adrienne and the Mamas created a food pyramid



Adrienne teaching nutrition to Judith and Eli.

based on typical Ghanaian foods for a practical lesson in healthy eating.

Besides nutrition, Adrienne also taught classes about breast cancer and menopause. With this new program in place, and the help of an incoming Peace Corps volunteer that will be stationed in Krobo, Global Mamas plans to continue health workshops and build relationships with local experts and NGOs to address Mamas’ priority health concerns.

YOGA MAMAS!



Chisa Togo, a Global Mamas JICA volunteer, first introduced yoga to the Mamas at our Krobo office. Based on its popularity we invited volunteer Jane Good to expand the program by holding full yoga training sessions at all of our locations. Yoga has been shown to release stress and tension in the body as well as improve concentration. Since much of the Mamas’ work is done at a sewing machine or at a table assembling beads, regular stretching (especially during the work day) helps the Mamas relieve tension resulting from their sitting position. The Mamas love being able to use what they learned throughout the day so they feel fresh and revitalized.

Prosperity is Happiness.

Mama of the Year Martha Rhule on Happiness



Martha in front of fabrics she was sampling for the 2015 product line, including her winning design Pebbles.

Martha Rhule is one of 66 female business owners working to jointly produce the Global Mamas product line in Cape Coast, Ghana. Three years ago when Martha walked into our Cape Coast office she was a talented batik artist but she was struggling to find work. “When I came to Global Mamas,” Martha recalls, “I saw a picture of a woman batikting. I asked myself, ‘can I really do it?’ I thought I couldn’t. I was anxious and nervous. But a quality controller named King encouraged me, he said ‘don’t stop, you can do it.’” Martha has been grateful for King’s words of encouragement and has been ‘doing it’ ever since.

First, Martha ‘did it’ by taking on the most complex

colors and stamps in Global Mamas’ product line - if your Global Mamas fabric is silver, odds are Martha’s hands batiked it. Martha ‘did it’ when she won the annual Design Competition; look for her winning Pebbles stamp in the 2015 catalog! And once again, after a nearly unanimous vote, she was awarded Global Mama of the Year. But the best thing Martha did in 2014? Each word she spoke and each dollar she saved was directed toward her goal of creating opportunities for women to achieve prosperity. In the words of production manager Wisdom Tamakloe, “Martha is very very rockin’.” Amid all this praise, Martha remains humble and wears the smile of a woman who thanks God every day.

“Wherever you find yourself, don’t let the situation suppress you. Lift yourself up. You will become what you want to be.”

– Martha Rhule, 2014 Global Mama of the Year

When asked, Martha can recount more than a few stories that illustrate her achievements are as evident as her challenges: “My father was a rich man, but he didn’t care for me. He could have sent me to high school but did not. When I was ten years, I began caring for myself. I was going to school and at the same time, making salted fish in the morning, evening, and weekends.” After completing elementary school at the age of 15, Martha closed her books and set out to learn a trade to better support herself, mother and sisters: “I was good at English; my teachers asked me to go back to school while I was learning to sew, but it was better for me to complete a sewing apprenticeship.”

Over 20 years later, Martha’s perseverance and deeply seated work ethic earned her a scholarship to complete an accelerated batik apprenticeship. With a stroke of good fortune and a knack for positioning herself on paths of success, Martha inherited a batik workshop and opened Martha’s Batiks. Today, Martha runs a thriving business with two fulltime employees and produces top-quality batik cloth for private sales and Global Mamas orders. Perhaps because of her beginnings, Martha’s dream is to open a vocational school and teach unemployed women how to batik and sew. She is determined to send her twin sister’s daughters to university and centers all her efforts towards seeing their graduation day.

Martha speaks with a voice lined with laughter that makes it obvious she is thankful for the present and is looking forward to the future: “whoever comes along my way, I encourage them to work

hard and press on. I am really, really happy. I am happy where I am now.”

Global Mamas defines prosperity as financial well-being, health and happiness, but to Martha, “being prosperous means having a good heart, and the rest will follow.” We are deeply honored to work with such a prosperous woman.



Martha accepting her 2014 Global Mama of the Year award.

Prosperity is Happiness.

Teamwork and Recognition Improve Morale in Ashaiman



Grace & Fausty of Batik Team 1 showing off their beautiful work.

Global Mamas opened our Ashaiman location in 2013. Over the past year, this location has seen a complete transformation from a site that was struggling with low productivity and morale to taking its place as one of our most efficient sites. The path to success has often been an uphill battle, but the introduction of a new team-based structure and performance pay in 2014 has benefited production. Even more importantly, it has increased the job satisfaction of the Mamas.

Changing the work environment to one that is team based has been a long process that continues to evolve with constant feedback from the Mamas. Initial team compositions were proposed to the seamstresses and batikers based on an assessment of skills and motivation. The Mamas were then given a chance to offer feedback and fine-tune the teams to determine who they wanted to work with on a daily basis. Initially, the Mamas only wanted

to work with their closest friends and have been surprised by how happy they are to work in a team that shares their same work style. Each team has given itself a name such as Modern Ladies and Peace & Love.

The team structure has helped everyone to feel valued and that they are part of the Global Mamas family.

At the same time the team approach was introduced, Global Mamas launched a new compensation system based on performance. A Mama’s salary is made up of a base pay to ensure she always receives a living wage and is supplemented with performance pay that is based on quantity and quality of items produced by each team. These incentives have had a tremendous effect on motivating the Mamas, as well as promoting an even greater sense of pride for their work.

The outcomes of this new structure have exceeded all expectations. The team structure has encouraged a community environment and a spirit of collaboration. In cases where one or two teams are being extremely productive, they give presentations to help teach their techniques to the other women. While Ashaiman once suffered from low attendance, the women now wait outside the doors in the morning to be able to get started as early as possible. Perhaps the most transformative element of this change is that this structure has not only promoted financial well-being, but also happiness.

“When we work in a team we motivate each other to do better.” - Faustina “Fausty” Tetteh

Contributions

A special thank you to the many people who contributed time, money, and passion to improving and expanding the Global Mamas community in 2014.

DONORS

Special Recognition

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VOLUNTEERS

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Our Mission


The Global Mamas community works together to create a life of prosperity—financial well-being, happiness, and health—for African women and their families. We achieve prosperity by creating and selling handmade products of the highest quality.


Our Values

- We believe in the strength of community.
- We have a long-term commitment to each other and to the organization.
- We are innovators dedicated to quality, creativity, and continuous improvement.
- We are committed to achieving economic self-sufficiency, as individuals and as an organization.
- We are part of a global community that creates positive change through the work we do.

How You Can Get Involved

 **Donate** - Fund the sustainable growth of businesses and women's empowerment in Ghana with a tax-deductible donation. www.globalmamas.org/Info/Donate

 **Purchase Products** - By purchasing Global Mamas products, you are offering women in Ghana the opportunity to achieve prosperity. All proceeds go directly to the women and nonprofit programs that assist them with business development. www.shopglobalmamas.com

 **Volunteer in Ghana** - Volunteers work directly with the women of the Global Mamas community to expand their businesses. Through a short-term volunteer assignment, you will be able to use your skills to make a difference in the future of the women and their families. www.globalmamas.org/Volunteers

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