

Dear Crossroader,

This Impact Insider is to thank *you*. We want to recognize the individuals and organizations who share our vision and support the work we do. The past few years have been a challenge, but we are blown away by the response of our donors, corporate and foundation partners and volunteers. In the midst of a global pandemic, high levels of inflation, climate change and a surge in gender-based violence, *your support means the world*. See for yourself your impact below!

## RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS | ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

### ENDING PERIOD POVERTY: SANITARY PADS FOR ALL

In Ivory Coast, even if school is free and mandatory until the age of 16, many young girls miss days of school due to menstruation.

“Girls are dropping out or missing weeks of school because it is too expensive to buy a pack of sanitary pads, sold here for the same price as a kilo of rice,” explains Program Officer Marlyatou Dosso. “When there is a choice to be made, the parents buy what is needed to feed the family.”

Crossroads recently partnered with CEFCI (*Le centre féminin pour la démocratie et les droits humains en Côte d'Ivoire*) to fund a production unit to create washable sanitary pads at a municipal high school, while **providing employment for vulnerable women** in the region. A trainer traveled to the north-east of the country to teach the participants how to sew.

After setting up a dedicated room and installing sewing machines, the latter were able to make some **675 menstrual kits** that included four washable sanitary pads, distributed to high school girls.



“Ivory Coast is the country in West Africa with the highest rate of pregnancy in schools,” underlines Marlyatou, hence the importance of discussing the menstrual cycle, sex and gender equality with all members of the community. The team also met with young boys to educate them and lift the taboo around menstruation.

With this project now closed, the seamstresses still have access to the equipment and continue to manufacture sanitary pads. “Our partners can now replicate this project in other regions,” shares Marlyatou proudly.

**\$13,000**

Provides a community in Ghana with **running water** and trains **120 members** to produce and sell liquid soap



**\$15,000**

Supports the creation and distribution of **reusable sanitary pads** to 1,500 school-aged girls in Ivory Coast



**\$46,000**

Supports **400 women farmers** and their families in Senegal with food kits and funds to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and climate change





## MY VOICE MY HEALTH | THE DAMCAM PROJECT

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BY YOUNG PEOPLE

For over three years, *My Voice My Health* has been an ambitious and successful collaboration between Crossroads, individual and institutional donors, Global Affairs Canada and three local partners; APROFES, CONAFE and ActionAid Senegal.

**The goal?** To raise awareness and improve the health and sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR) of 30,000 young people between the ages of 10 to 19 in Kedougou, Senegal, with limited access to health care and education due to the poverty of the region.

The project is especially reducing the barriers girls face when accessing care, creating stronger social and economic support systems for marginalized girls while building capacity in the health system. Advocacy sessions involve youth peer leaders, community leaders and local government officials.

One of the main innovations of the DAMCAM project are the **Mobile Learning Laboratories** (MLLs). These labs incorporate digital literacy and skills to successfully extend access to SRHR information and services for youth.

Since the start of the project, 29 girls' clubs have been set up in the communities of Kedougou. A total of 740 teenage girls are active members of these Clubs and have been trained on reproductive health, child rights, gender, female leadership and communication techniques.

- **Emma Sandona**, Project Officer

Since the beginning of the project, 15 MLL sites have been created, equipped with **225 digital tablets** and other technological equipment.

In the coming years, we look forward to furthering more relevant SRHR services for marginalized youth across other regions and pursuing activities that promote their wellbeing and resourcefulness, which are essential for sustainable development. We are immensely grateful to the **Slaight Family Foundation** for their transformational gift of \$1M towards this project. Thank you for your generosity!







AUGUST 2023

## WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

# JUDGE MY ABILITY, NOT MY DISABILITY



In the Kibosho district of Tanzania, NAGFEM (Network Against Female Genital Mutilation), TUSONGE and Crossroads are helping **marginalized women become entrepreneurs** and grow their business through a micro-finance program.

Agness Tarimo is thirty years old. She is a survivor of gender-based violence who rebuilt her life through a village community bank (known as a VICOBA) and the *Judge My Ability, Not My Disability* project. After fleeing an abusive husband, Agness acquired a loan of 75,000 shillings (approximately \$50 CAD) from her local VICOBA. With this money, she rented space at a roadside store to sell poultry feed.

The profits are used to educate her three young children and to purchase more feed. This system of women's social and economic empowerment supports **sustainable livelihoods for marginalized women** among whom are those living with disabilities or with family members who have a disability.

## OUR RESILIENCE PLAN DEPENDS ON YOU

With your help, Crossroads has empowered **thousands of women and girls**. You are truly making a difference by fuelling resilient communities. Please connect with us for funding opportunities at [donorrelations@cintl.org](mailto:donorrelations@cintl.org). Thank you!

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENDER EQUALITY CHAMPIONS

The **Resilience Initiative** council is a group of dedicated major donors at Crossroads. We are immensely grateful to these individuals who are helping us raise transformational gifts to support our partners in sustainable development projects. *Thank you!*



### Susan Green (Chair)

Myriam Carius  
Cassie Doyle  
Susan Edwards  
Yohan Mohammed  
Kathleen Peace  
John Wonfor

## KAREN TAKACS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FUND

Since 2015, the Karen Takacs Women's Leadership Fund has provided financial support to organizations and women entrepreneurs in eSwatini, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso and more.

The fund was established eight years ago to celebrate the transformative leadership of the late Executive Director Karen Takacs. Each year, a **\$10,000 grant** was awarded to emerging women leaders in Africa.

We would like to thank all the donors who contributed to the fund and to recognize the tremendous work of the **Volunteer Advisory Council**, who ensured that every initiative selected was aligned with Karen's vision and values.

### Darlene Bessey (Chair)

Christine Campbell  
Agnès Van't Bosch  
Richard Veenstra  
Susan Watts  
Joan Fair

### Pasty George

Maude Gilbert Vanasse  
Christine Herr  
Christine Messier  
Betty Plewes  
Emma Sandona

\*Special thanks to Pam Joliffe, Karen's wife who collaborated every step of the way to support the enduring legacy of women's leadership in Karen's name



**International Day of the Girl Breakfast**  
October 5th - [cintl.org/news/events/idg-2023](http://cintl.org/news/events/idg-2023)

## WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?



## I AM A CROSSROADER FOR LIFE

I think I can legitimately call myself a Crossroads lifer. My parents helped found Crossroads in Canada in 1958, where our living room served as the National Selection Headquarters. Little did I know I would someday **become a Crossroader myself**, and it would be one of the most significant experiences of my life.

Following my project in Lesotho in 1971, I volunteered with Crossroads when their office was still in London ON, and eventually followed in my father's footsteps as Chair of the Board. As we started our family, my wife Dora and I became annual donors. Now retired, we chose to remember Crossroads with a gift in our wills.

The selection of **Crossroads for a legacy gift** was made for several reasons. First, I have monitored Crossroads' activities throughout my life, and have been impressed with its ability to evolve over time, to maintain a mission and a vision that, as it relates to today's world, is relevant and compelling. Even more important, is the opportunity to give thanks for the tremendous impact the organization had on my life's path. For those of you who feel the same way about their Crossroads experience, what better way to pay it forward than to give future Canadians that same opportunity—a true legacy gift?

I am proud of Crossroads International. Since its founding, it has organized **more than 10,000 volunteer mandates** that have strongly impacted the lives of countless thousands—not just program recipients, but also volunteers like you and me. I am comforted knowing that our legacy gift will further the vision of ONE WORLD that Dr. James Robinson gave our family over 60 years ago.

*- Rick Lane, long-time donor and Crossroader*

## BECOME A CROSSROADER FOR LIFE, AND BEYOND

## BRIDGES OF FRIENDSHIP

It was my great privilege to participate in Operation Crossroads Africa in 1966, when 30 Canadians joined American youth to work alongside African Crossroaders on projects of construction, sports, medical aid and social work, in 24 countries. My group helped to build an elementary school in Dahomey (now Benin). **This experience was life changing** for a 20-year-old from Dewberry, a small village of 200, east of Edmonton!

Differences of climate, culture, politics and faith were eased through personal relationships, communicating mostly in French, a second language for me. **"Bridges of friendship"**, as Dr. James Robinson expressed, brought inspiration, challenge and joy! Our work together demonstrated equality of gender and race and the desire to learn and serve.

I had brought a ukelele and played with our group, sharing "Four Strong Winds" and francophone songs from Quebec. Personally, I struggled sometimes with negative thoughts about not being as intellectual or informed as others, and would withdraw. The time with Crossroads helped me to **engage more confidently** that summer and beyond!

I appealed to church groups to help fund the trip, (only \$425 because our Canadian committee, in connection with the United Church of Canada, provided the remaining \$1,075)! I spoke 50 times to share my story. What an incredible growing experience! I became more aware and concerned about exploitation and injustice in so many areas of the world, especially through colonization. Crossroads continues to provide opportunities for those living in situations that limit and even oppress them. **I will continue to support them**, with thankfulness for what was offered to me in 1966!

*- Isabelle Johnson, Crossroader*



Please remember Crossroads with a gift in your Will.

Thank you! [cintl.org/legacy](http://cintl.org/legacy)

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