

Impact Report

2022

Q1



Batonga



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Introduction

Dear Friends,

These are exciting times for Batonga: we are expanding into new communities in Benin and Senegal!

The first three months of 2022 has been about doing the preparation work to identify new program participants - adolescent girls and young women- in our new target communities.

Main activities of the quarter included:

- Meeting with community leaders in the new communities in central and Northern Benin
- Securing a new partner in northern Benin - a women-led local organization called Havre de Paix
- Recruiting new mentors, business coaches, and business circle participants
- Training survey enumerators to conduct pre-test surveys using the Girl Roster app

We are so excited to share this first quarter's many highlights as we continue to grow the impact of our programs and advocacy initiatives. In an effort to learn more about the new communities we will be working in, we led the Girl Roster, a survey process that gives us valuable social and demographic data on the girls and young women in those communities. Through its results we can prioritize reaching adolescent girls who are least likely to have access to resources and education. We also conducted a pre-test survey for our women's economic empowerment program: there too, the results will help us better understand the needs of the young women we serve.

The preliminary results and analysis have yielded some interesting challenges as well as opportunities as we make necessary adjustments to our program models to the realities of the complex socio-demographics of these new communities. Read up to find out more!

Finally, it has been a wonderful experience to have the team all together again in our new offices in Benin! We were able to welcome our regional partners to the new space and plan the next phase of this expansion. We look forward to sharing more in Q2!



With gratitude,

Emily Bove
Executive Director



Expansion Planning

Step 1: Collecting Data

Batonga spent the first decade of our work focused solely on the needs and priorities of adolescent girls. To provide continued support as they transition to become young women, we have to meet them where they are and understand their needs. As we have seen, learning directly from the young women in these communities will help to guide our work which is the reason we take the time to survey as many women as possible. These efforts will allow us to launch some new activities this Spring as part of our women's economic empowerment program in Benin.

Collecting evidence for our Young Women Business Circles

To reach more young women in the new communities being explored, we launched a two-day training session for eight women on Batonga's mission and values. The women were trained by two supervisors in our new offices in Cotonou on how to collect census information and to conduct door-to-door interviews.

Over six days, the women conducted **280 surveys in Bohicon and Savalou of potential new participants** who may become members of the new Young Women's Business Circles in their villages.

Batonga is planning to enter 38 new communities in Atacora, Savalou, and Bohicon.

Our YWBC participant recruitment in Bohicon and Savalou resulted in 2381 potential new Circle Members.



“We often start the collections in the morning. When we arrive in the communities, we introduce the Batonga Foundation, its work, its vision and why we do Girl Roster. We collect information by asking questions about the girls, their ages, their schooling, reproductive health, their realities. We keep notebooks to take notes and android phones to fill out the mobile survey application.”

-Solange, Girl Roster surveyor, Batonga Community Facilitator

Step 2: Using the Girl Roster to Identify new adolescent girls

To ensure that we are reaching the adolescent girls and young women that will benefit the most from our programs, Batonga uses a cell-phone based application called the Girl Roster when entering new communities. Thanks to the Population Council for developing this important tool which is key in helping us collect information for our programs.

The Girl Roster is designed to pose a series of pertinent and non-invasive questions in order to ascertain the educational, marital, and familial status of girls in a given household. The application allows surveyors to anonymously collect household demographics and GPS locator information which in turns helps create maps of our communities. This step will help our team adapt our model to the individual needs of each community.

“We pair up for door-to-door visits in households. Pairs are often formed with staff, facilitators, mentors, business coaches and potential mentors and business coaches. We take into account origin and language spoken when forming teams. Among the challenges we often face in collecting data, I can give as an example the time when a woman in her household refused to give me the information. I then realized that the presence of her husband was what made her refuse, so I asked the husband's permission for her to speak to me alone.”

-Germaine, Girl Roster surveyor, Batonga mentor



New Communities, New Partners

Meeting the Community Leaders

We will be entering 38 new communities this year, including 13 in Atacora, 14 in Savalou, and 11 in Bohicon. This will bring us to a total of 53 communities being served across Benin. In February, Batonga staff visited 26 prospective villages in Bohicon and Savalou in order to meet with local leaders and begin the recruitment process for community staff positions. Traditional and locally-elected leaders were presented with Batonga's mission, vision, values and history of impact and were fully engaged in the process of finding and recruiting the community staff of mentors and business coaches.



Meet our new partner in Northern Benin!

In January, Batonga partnered with Havre de Paix, an NGO based in Atacora in North Benin. Havre de Paix works to improve the overall well-being of their region and the living conditions of vulnerable and marginalized people in particular. The partnership will help to introduce and adapt Batonga's model to best suit the needs of the adolescent girls and young women in these new communities.



"The fundamental reason why we are excited and happy about this partnership (with Batonga) is that the organization's mission aligns perfectly with our beliefs and aspirations for the girls and women of our region. The condition of girls and women in our region is synonymous with early marriages, financial difficulties, domination, and insecurity. Batonga's work aims to transform vulnerability into fulfillment. We will do our best to ensure that everything goes well in this project and collaboration."

- Khadidjath Ketekoure,
President Hâvre de paix

Adolescent Girls Leadership

Here's a monthly update on the Leadership Clubs' activities

January

- 97% of all recruited participants attended at least 1 Club session this month
- Mentors conducted 562 home visits to check-in on adolescent girls and their families

February

- 95% of all recruited participants attended at least 1 Club session this month
- Mentors conducted 632 home visits to check-in on adolescent girls and their families
- Curriculum Development: Batonga is continuing to develop our new curriculum content. We are aiming to finalize our new Batonga curriculum in May. This has meant a transitional education plan for the clubs where they revisit lessons that were the most challenging from the last two years.
- Continued radio rebroadcast of the Civic education lessons during this transitional time as the new curriculum is developed.

March

- 95% of all recruited participants attended at least 1 Club session this month
- Mentors conducted 671 home visits to check-in on adolescent girls and their families

95% Monthly average attendance in our Leadership Clubs for girls aged 14 to 18.



Our OSIWA Partnership for Civic Engagement and Citizenship wrapped up for the project 'Citoyennes en Herbes' or Budding Citizens. Through interventions in local languages, nearly 2600 adolescent girls and young women were reached, increasing understanding of their rights and roles as citizens and in turn contributing to the development of their communities as a whole. We look forward to sharing the short documentary highlighting the changes in our target communities around girls' leadership and civic engagement, produced as a part of this grant.

Women's Economic Empowerment

The Young Women's Business Circles have proven to be profitable!

January

- All 50 of the Young Women's Business Circles are up and running as normal with 89% of recruited participants attending at least one session this month
- **Circle businesses made a total profit of \$762.22 in January.**
- This month marked a huge milestone: the end of the pilot phase of our Young Women's Business Circles program. To gain further insight into the impact of the program, we conducted a survey and held four working sessions between our Business Coaches and the Women's Economic Empowerment Program Manager. These sessions allowed for meaningful discussion of the difficulties encountered this year and how we can improve moving forward to improve monitoring and evaluation of income-generating activities.

February

- **The 50 Circles increased their profits to reach a total of \$928.70 in February.**
- An increase in participation from January contributed to this growth. Of the 1,121 women recruited into the program, 1,076 young women took part in at least one activity session.
- Participation went up from 89% up to 96%!

March

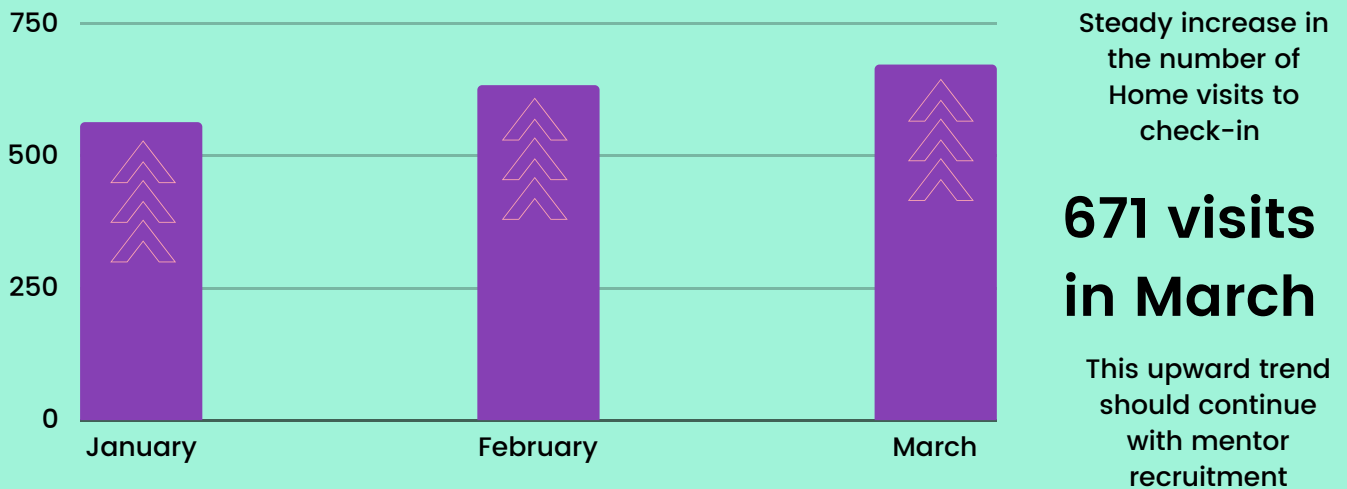
- Profits by the 50 Circles remained on an upward trend in March with a total of \$977.57.
- Even with slightly less participation in during March, (1,050 young women) the Circles were still able to increase their profits.



Areas of Growth

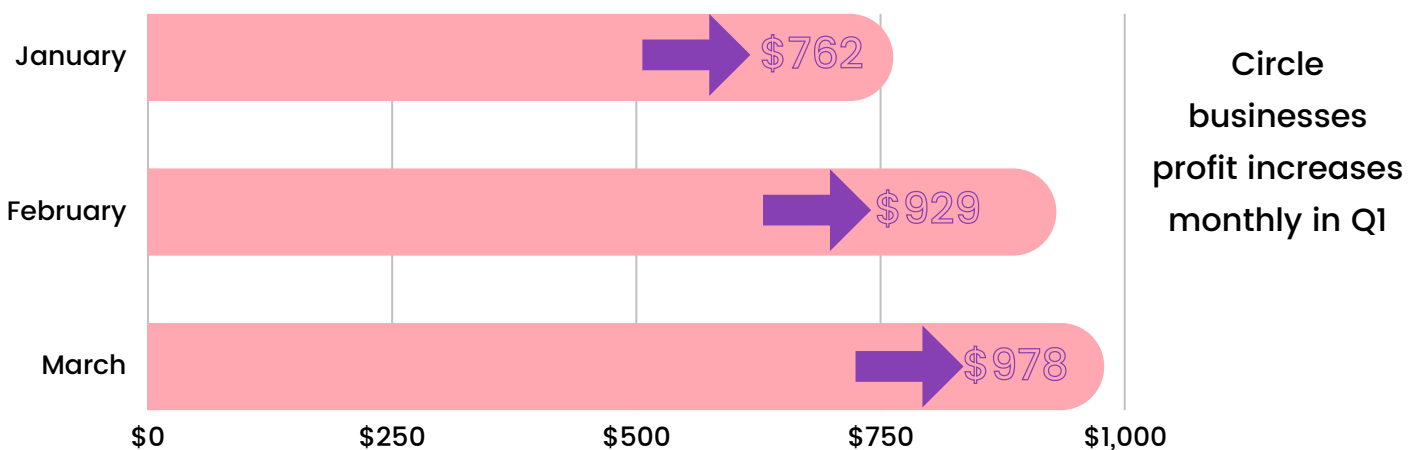
Adolescent Girl's Leadership

Mentors check-in on adolescent girls and their families



Women's Economic Empowerment

The 50 Circles had a total profit increase month after month



95%

Average Participation of the 1,121 young women recruited in a least one activity during February and March

Advocacy for Gender Equality



NOS VOIX COMPTENT

After a rigorous recruitment and interview process, **Teslanik Houndegnon** joined Batonga as the Project Manager for the Nos Voix Comptent initiative in partnership with the Global Fund For Women. Teslanik has worked to create safe spaces for youth, especially girls and women, promote education, fight against violence against girls and women, and for the socio-economic empowerment of rural women and girls. She is committed to the rights of girls and women and wishes to commit her work and voice to gender equality. Welcome Teslanik to the Batonga family!



CONVERSATIONS FOR AFRICA

The third conversation in our Generation Equality Forum series was published in March 2022 to the Batonga YouTube channel. Hosted by Frédérique Leinger, Editor-in-Chief of ELLE magazine in Côte d'Ivoire. This conversation brought together African grassroots youth leaders, Anika Dorothy Jenne, Chanceline Mevowanou and Sylvain Obedi, to discuss how the Generation Equality Forum served African youth and how future events and institutions can effectively make and hold space for African youth.



Acknowledgements

This report is made possible with contributions of our team members who work tirelessly on our programs and inform us on the progress of all ongoing projects.

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We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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