



# Quarterly Impact Report

April – June 2021



[batongafoundation.org](https://batongafoundation.org)

Paris, July 7, 2021

Dear friends,

Summer has officially started and the Batonga team is continuing to deliver impactful work and transformative change, both on the ground in Benin, but also in the virtual halls of the Generation Equality Forum that just took place in Paris.

When I look back on the past few months I realize how much has been accomplished through our Nos Voix Comptent initiative. In preparation for this important Forum, we delivered something many thought impossible: to mobilize, engage and amplify the voices of over 600+ advocates from francophone Africa. They made themselves heard, and their priorities and recommendations were delivered by our team to those who can now make a difference in their lives. The Forum led to over 40 billion dollars being committed to gender equality, and I know that those women and young women had a huge role in showing the world why it is so important and right to invest in women and girls.

We've also been focusing on women's leadership and inspiring younger leaders in Benin, where the team ran sessions of our Exemplary Women's Series this quarter, bringing inspiring women to talk to our club members. It's only when we get intergenerational dialogue going that we can start seeing the bridges of solidarity being built.

Finally, we wanted to make space in this report to celebrate our Founder Angélique Kidjo's hard work and the fact that she received the highest French Civilian Honor late June. It is so well deserved, and we send her our warmest congratulations!

Have a wonderful summer wherever you might be, and stay tuned for more exciting news in our next report!

With gratitude,  
Emily



*EBove*

Emily Bove  
Executive Director

# KEY MILESTONES

(April – June 2021)

## Participated in and influenced the Generation Equality Forum in Paris through Nos Voix Comptent

This quarter we have been finalizing our prep for the Generation Equality Forum, a global gathering for gender equality convened by UN Women, the governments of France and Mexico. As part of our "Nos Voix Comptent" ("Our Voices Count") initiative, we gathered the voices of 2,490 women and young women in 18 countries and published their priorities and needs. Since then, we have presented those recommendations to:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Parliamentarians of Benin</b></p> <p>Partnering with Plan Intl. Benin and UNFPA, 9 women leaders part of NVC met with leaders such as President of the Benin National Assembly &amp; Minister of Social Affairs to deliver their messages.</p> |  | <p><b>The Government of France</b></p> <p><b>UNWOMEN West Africa</b></p> <p><b>The Government of DRC</b></p> <p><b>The Government of Senegal</b></p> <p><b>Media (RFI Senegal)</b></p> |
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The Forum took place in Paris June 30 – July 2. During the Forum, we:

**Organized an Official Forum Event**

This event brought together feminists from different generations to discuss how to strengthen the intergenerational bond of the women's movement in Francophone Africa.

**Shared our recommendations with Melinda Gates and advocated for francophone young women's priorities**



**Met with NVC members and discussed our future strategy to continue to engage in the Generation Equality processes**



## Launching our "Conversations For Africa: the Generation Equality Series" program

Through "Conversations For Africa:", Batonga and our founder Angélique Kidjo aim to connect audiences and amplify grassroots women's priorities with high-level African public figures who can build visibility and support for issues on mass scales. We aim to radically shift the narrative about gender equality on the continent, putting leaders, change-makers and trail-blazers of African descent in the driver's seat.



### Conversation 1



Conversation #1 (May 2021)

Our first Conversation went live on May 4th, 2021 and covered the topic of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The guests were Blitz Bazawule, Ghanaian hip-hop artist, filmmaker, and visual artist and Ketty Nivyabandi, Burundian poet and human rights activist.

### Conversation 2

Our second conversation, launched on June 25th, brought together Thando Hopa (South African model, activist, and lawyer), Badara Ndiaye (Senegalese Creative Director and Visual Concept Developer), and Jessica Horn (Ugandan feminist activist, writer, poet, and technical advisor on women's rights) to discuss the topic of gender-based violence.



Conversation #2 (June 2021)

*We also launched an online learning platform with an extensive library of resources related to the topics explored during the Conversations.*

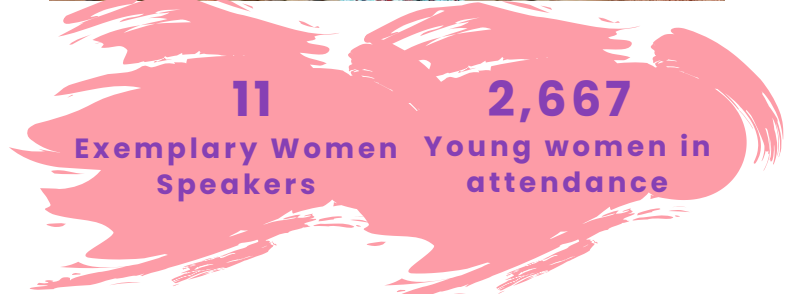
**Visit [conversationsforafrica.com](https://conversationsforafrica.com) to check it out and watch all the Conversations!**

## Hosting our 4th Annual Exemplary Women Speaker Series in Benin

For most of the girls in Batonga's Leadership Clubs, their Mentor may be the only woman in their life who is formally employed. As such, they may never be exposed to career role models. Due to this, in May 2018, we launched the Exemplary Women Speaker Series to bring provide Batonga's Leadership Clubs with a variety of professional and personal role models the girls and young women can learn from and connect with.

This year, Batonga expanded our Exemplary Women Speaker Series to include 9 new business women including jewelers, specialists in agricultural product transformations, beauticians/estheticians, hairdressers, and shopkeepers!

**In May 2021, a total of thirty six (36) visits were conducted by 11 Exemplary Women Speakers** (the 9 new speakers and 2 speakers we have previously worked with) for 2667 adolescent girls across all 15 implementation communities. This brings our **total number of speaker visits since 2018 to 128.**



*Exemplary Women Speakers standing with Leadership Clubs (May 2021)*



"I spoke to the young women and girls in Batonga's Clubs about how I spent my youth having to work through a series of challenges so that I could get where I am today. They are facing many of these same challenges today so i want to help them get past this."

**- Virginie, Hairdresser in Bohicon, Benin**

## Providing Business Planning Support To Our Young Women Business Circles



*YWBC member watering Okra garden*

Batonga’s Young Women Business Circles (YWBCs) launched in Q4 2020 to give young women 18–30 in Batonga’s implementation communities a safe, women-only space to build their professional and financial skills and each received modest business seed funding in January of 2021. Since then YWBC businesses have been thriving under the management of Circle members, generating over \$13,000 in sales and over \$1,000 in profits since April!

Each Circle has made its own independent decisions about what kind of business to launch together, how often to meet, how and when profits will be divided

between members of the Circle, etc. Batonga staff neither handles nor keeps any of the Circles’ income with members themselves managing 100% of the funds.

During this quarter, we also supported 10 YWBC members in writing business plans to apply to the Tony Elumelu Foundation Seed Funding Competition.

**Over**  
**\$13,000**  
**Generated by**  
**YWBCs in Q2 2021**

## Engaging Communities For Change Through Mentor-Led Projects

Following the launch of our lessons on civic education (generously supported by the Open Society Foundation of West Africa) in the Leadership Clubs, Mentors from two decided to work together to design and launch a community sanitation and sensitization project with their Clubs. The objective of this campaign was to create an environment promoting

public health and to better fight against unsanitary and dangerous methods of waste disposal in public spaces which is a consistent problem mentors observe. Mentors reported that they were inspired to do something for their communities by the new civic education content which emphasizes the importance of finding and filling needs in your community..



*Mentor with her club cleaning up community during sanitation project.*

# MEET OUR MENTORS

**Get to know Suzanne and Solange!**

## Meet Suzanne, Mentor in Hellou village, Bohicon Benin



"My name is Suzanne and I am a mentor in Hellou. My favorite part of being a Mentor has been to see the change the Clubs have had on the young women and girls in my community. Many women in my community aren't aware of the actions they can take to defend themselves when their rights aren't respected. They feel silenced and have to put up with a lot but thanks to Batonga's Leadership Club program, these girls and young women are starting to feel valued and are gaining a sense of importance. With this new sense of value and purpose, I have seen many young women begin to take on new leadership roles within their communities and feel empowered to make their own decisions. Witnessing this change has made me so proud to be a Mentor."

## Meet Solange, Mentor in Tchogodo village, Savalou Benin

"My name is Solange and I am a Mentor in Tchogodo. This past quarter, one of my favorite lessons to teach was called *"My place in my community and in my country."* Topics such as citizenship and community engagement are often ignored in my community but thanks to this new program of civic engagement and education, the young women and girls in my clubs have gained a different perspective. They now understand that we have rights and duties towards ourselves, parents, friends, and others. Their parents testify about the change observed and congratulate Batonga for all the work we do to improve the living and working conditions for their daughters."



# Congratulations Angélique!

On July 1st, Angélique received the highest French Civilian honor from the hands of her friend and French photographer and activist Yann Arthus-Bertrand. She was celebrated for all her musical career and her advocacy work throughout the years. We are so proud to be working with this incredible woman to ensure all young African women can have a dignified and fulfilling life. Congratulations Angélique!





**Thank you for  
supporting  
our work!**

If you have any questions,  
please contact  
[info@batongafoundation.org](mailto:info@batongafoundation.org)



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