



THE BATONGA FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION TO COMMEMORATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

COTONOU, BENIN, September 19, 2022 — To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Girl (IDG), the Batonga Foundation is calling on local, national, and international institutions and partners to join them in forming an alliance to accelerate the rights of girls in remote areas to reach their full potential, make their voices heard, and overcome challenges they face to understand their rights, gain self-confidence, and plan their own economic future.

In partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, the Batonga Foundation will mobilize several international institutions and national organizations to create a forum to not only reflect, but also to assess the achievements made over the last 10 years, and more importantly to determine what actions can be taken to continue the growth and leadership development of girls in remote areas. Key participants in this alliance include PLAN INTERNATIONAL Benin, UNFPA, UNICEF, NGO Havre de Paix, the Savalou Youth Council, and the Association of Communal Councils of Children of Savalou, among others.

"For the Batonga Foundation, mobilizing multiple organizations around girls' rights is an opportunity to pool together a wide-range of technical and financial resources to strengthen investment in girls' education and well-being," said Florence Bio Idrissou, Adolescent Girls Leadership Program Manager.

This year's celebrations, to be held under the global theme, "Our Time is Now – our rights, our future," provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to take stock of the major advances as well as the challenges faced in empowering girls over the past decade. To kick off the celebrations, leading up to an official commemorative ceremony on 11th October 2022, the Foundation is spearheading several online activities alongside the coalition from 1 – 10th October 2022 to engage the public and civil society organizations on the need to highlight and amplify the voice of girls and young women.

Other initiatives include a webinar and a national televised debate on the Office of Radio and Television of Benin (ORTB), on empowering girls and young women, an art competition, and a series of local community events with several Adolescent Girls Leadership Clubs in Benin. The activities lined up are also intended to demonstrate how mobilizing resources can help provide leadership opportunities while finding new ways to disrupt gender norms that prohibit advancing girls' rights.

To date, the Foundation's programs have empowered over 6,000 adolescent girls and young women in 53 communities in rural Benin with plans to extend the reach and impact to rural communities in Senegal under its partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. Under the program, the Batonga Foundation and Mastercard Foundation are embarking on a year-long collective campaign that seeks to establish concrete actions that will put girls in the driver's seat of change, mobilize resources for girls' education and well-being, and strengthen services for girls in crisis situations.

"Creating platforms that accelerate the participation of girls and young women, showcases their agency, and amplifies their voices is critical to building a stronger and more resilient future for girls, young women, their families, and communities," said Serge-Auguste Kouakou, Senegal Country Head at the Mastercard Foundation.



Detailed activities to commemorate the 10th anniversary celebrations

The Batonga Foundation invites the general public and the media to join them for the official ceremony on 11th October in Savalou, Benin. Activities include presentations and special performances by the Adolescent Girls Leadership Clubs, exhibitions from local businesses, and products from the Young Women's Business Circles.

Other activities planned for this year's celebrations include:

- 10 days online campaign and messaging "*Our Time Is Now – Our Rights, Our Future*"
- Webinar: "*Our Time Is Now – Our Rights, Our Future: 10 Years of Mobilizing for Girls' Rights, Challenges and Opportunities*" (**October 6**)
 - Invited Guests: UNFPA, UNICEF, Plan International Benin, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance, the US Embassy, NGO Havre de Paix, the Savalou Youth Council, the Association of Communal Councils of Children of Savalou
- Televised debate on "*10 Years of Mobilizing for Girls' Rights: Challenges and Opportunities for The Inclusion of The Most Excluded*" (**ORTB, October 7 & 10**)
- "*Our Time Is Now – Our Rights, Our Future*" Artistic expression competition (**Distinguished jury selection of top entries, prizes awarded – October 11**)
- Official ceremony held in Savalou, Benin for International Day of the Girl (**October 11**)

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About Batonga

Batonga empowers young women and girls to discover their limitless, untapped potential and transform it into social and economic power. Batonga envisions a safer, healthier, and more equitable world in which all girls and women can thrive.

For more information and details on the events, visit batongafoundation.org

Facebook: [The Batonga Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/BatongaFoundation)

Instagram: [@BatongaFoundation](https://www.instagram.com/BatongaFoundation)

Twitter: [@BatongaFdn](https://twitter.com/BatongaFdn)

Hashtags to include: #InternationalDayoftheGirl #TimeIsNow #OurRights #OurFuture

#BrighterFutureForGirls #BatongaFoundation #BatongaBenin #BatongaSenegal #MastercardFoundation

About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation works with visionary organizations to enable young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. It is one of the largest, private foundations in the world with a mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion to create an inclusive and equitable world. It was established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company. The Foundation is an independent organization, and its policies, operations, and program decisions are determined by its own Board of Directors and senior leadership team. It is a registered Canadian charity with offices in Toronto, Kigali, Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Dakar, and Addis Ababa.



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