

---

# VG UPDATE

A Publication of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund

Vol. 12 No. 2

June 2005

---



## The Tibetan School Pilot Project

*Maggie Ford, Development Committee Convener*

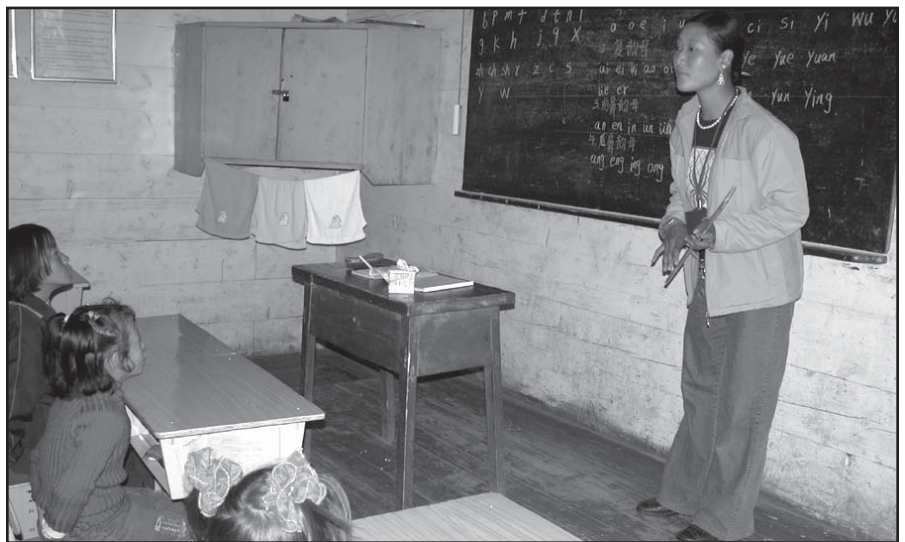
Thanks to the generosity of many donors to a pilot project, VGIF is able to support new growth at a site that was funded in its early years. Our investment then was sound; it is even more so today.

We sent special requests for this project's support to 100+ randomly selected members. More than 25% responded – a fantastic return for such a first effort! We raised nearly 1,700 USD – about 34% of the total budget request – and the Projects Grant Committee (PGC) funded the balance to ensure the ongoing success of this very special project.

Not only does that mean that the Chungba Primary School Project was funded, it also means the PGC's available funds went that much further. VGIF truly is an organization that maximizes its limited resources. Most importantly, 100% of your contributions go to the projects and people VGIF supports – there is no administrative overhead.

So what is VGIF supporting? The goal of the Chungba Primary School Textbook and Library Project is to purchase the necessary textbooks and learning resources to advance the children's math learning and to create a school library. Established by the Shenpen Fund in 2002, the Chungba Primary School with 253 students ages 7 to 12, is the first school in a rural Tibetan mountain community, innovative because of its admission requirement for 50% girls in an area where girls traditionally receive no education.

The Chungba School's success has been unprecedented among the 52 primary schools in the country because the children, who are attending school for the first time in their lives, have consistently scored the highest in the region on country standardized tests. Remarkably, this success was achieved with very limited teaching and learning materials. The goal of this project is to address the challenges that both children and teachers face because of a lack of adequate textbooks and to expand the children's worldview by creating a library which will expand their knowledge of other



*New teaching resources supplied by VGIF will enhance classroom learning in Tibet.*

subjects including history, geography, science, and technology. This project will not only meet the children's basic education needs but will satisfy and encourage the hunger and enthusiasm for knowledge and learning that the children have displayed since the founding of this school.

Presently, the curriculum at the Chungba Primary School consists of the bare minimum of math, Tibetan, and Chinese. With the introduction of textbooks and reading materials, the children will begin to learn subjects like science, history, geography, social studies and the environment. The addition of these essential new subjects will greatly enhance their knowledge of the world around them and their place in it. The project will also increase the children's knowledge of their Tibetan cultural heritage. The learning resources will promote the use and relevance of their native Tibetan language in the ongoing struggle for cultural survival.

What's next? VGIF is gratified by the generosity of its members, both in supporting the Chungba Primary School, and in demonstrating unequivocally that, when presented with a specific project in which to invest, you step forward. Watch these pages for more information, visit the website [[www.thegildersleeve.org](http://www.thegildersleeve.org)], or contact me directly [[development@vgif.org](mailto:development@vgif.org)] for more information.



## Perspectives

by Barbara Carey, President, 2005-2008

The successes of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund during the past year are entirely to the credit of its generous donors and its energetic team of leaders from around the world. At the April Annual Meeting, VGIF was able to award 28 grants in 21 different

countries for a total of over 120,000 USD – more grants and a larger total amount than ever before in a single year. This represents the income from endowments combined with 900 contributions from individuals and groups. Virginia Palmer's generous establishment of an endowment to pay VGIF's overhead continues to make it possible to devote all of VGIF's income to support project grants.

We haven't taken a census of the numbers of individuals helped by last year's 100,000 USD in grants; nor the number of new businesses those funds brought into being; nor the number of families rescued from poverty and injustice through projects shepherded by devoted indigenous leaders who designed the projects and put them into action. We can-



*New computers arrive at the Women's Education and Resource Center in Benin.*

not begin to estimate the numbers of individuals who took every penny and made it grow a thousand times over to make the world a better place. We would never have known to instruct women in pickle making and marketing; or to create and disseminate soap operas on the subject of domestic violence; or to start a bug club for children in two countries to learn and exchange information. Part of the genius of VGIF is its respect for those to whom its resources are offered: people know what they need and how to make their lives

better. We supply the funds - they do the rest.

Seventy people have committed themselves to do the organizational work of VGIF for the next year. You will see elsewhere in the *VG Update* reports of two volunteers who made on-site visits to review completed projects. I am honored to be a part of this wonderful effort with such generous and purposeful individuals. Thank you for entrusting me, and all of us, with your confidence and your continuing support.

## MEMBERSHIP

*Jeanie Page Randall, Convener*

Every year the Board of Directors of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund hears the annual reports of the Committees at its April meeting. This year the Membership Committee is pleased to report that it is continuing its Strategic Plan activities and its goal of increasing membership to 2,000. However, it is Fund policy to remove from the membership list those who have not contributed to the Fund for three years. This always results in a loss of numbers but, interestingly, not a lowered contribution amount. Every year more money is contributed for the work of VGIF. This factor must mean that those who contribute annually or who are new members are committed to supporting the work of the Fund through its Project Grant activities.

Members of VGIF are contributors to a very special mission. They do not expect membership services like those of most organizations. Instead, members ARE the "services" of VG because they alone supply the monetary base needed to provide locally based grants that improve conditions for women and children year after year. While the Membership Committee authorizes the production and publication of a number of items to be used to encourage membership growth, the goal of all VG Committees is to make possible an ongoing source of funding for the hundreds of grant applications that arrive each fall.

As I leave the position of convener, I extend my gratitude to those who have served on the Committee during the past six years and to all members of VG whose willingness to share their expertise, time, and money have made the work of the Membership Committee truly successful. We are often asked to give to groups that help women who do not have the same opportunities we have. What makes VGIF different is the lesson we have learned from Virginia Gildersleeve herself: some women do not know that the door to a better existence even exists. She taught us to make global awareness of that door our goal, and that is both the "cost" and the reward of our membership in the Fund.

### It Happened at the April 2005 Board and Annual Meetings

- Authorized the formation of a planned giving society
- Approved joining the Council of Organizations of the United Nations Association of the U.S.A.
- Approved the funding of 28 project grants for a total of over 120,000 USD
- Approved the establishment of a special marketing committee
- Authorized the first printing of the VGIF brochure in Spanish
- Approved house-keeping changes to the Bylaws
- Elected the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee

#### Individual Membership

Argentina	3	Ireland	3	Turkey	1
Australia	63	Northern Ireland	8	Uganda	3
Bangladesh	3	Israel	1	U.S.A.	812
Belgium	1	Japan	88	Zimbabwe	1
Cameroon	2	Kenya	2	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1142</b>
Canada	46	Nepal	1		
China	1	Netherlands	9	<b>Group Members</b>	
Costa Rica	1	New Zealand	11	Australia	13
El Salvador	3	Nigeria	10	Canada	23
England	17	Norway	2	Costa Rica	1
Ethiopia	1	Pakistan	1	El Salvador	1
Fiji	1	Panama	1	Fiji	1
Finland	2	Philippines	4	Ireland	2
France	1	Scotland	6	Northern Ireland	3
Germany	9	Singapore	1	Japan	1
Guatemala	1	Sri Lanka	3	New Zealand	2
Iceland	3	Switzerland	6	USA	89
India	9	Togo	1	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>

### UPDATE OF GRANTS PREVIOUSLY FUNDED

*Zoë Kelly-Nacht, VGIF Intern*

#### #1861 Women and Child Development Charitable Trust (WCDCT), India

This three month self-help project trained 60 women from the region of Tamil Nadu in the making of jute products, such as bags, purses, and dolls, to improve their economic stability and independence. In the last month the selling of their products achieved 80% of their original sales goal, greatly enhancing the individual incomes of the women involved. The money goes towards the education and health care of the children of the beneficiaries. Although the members of this organization were not directly affected by the Tsunami, they worked with other NGOs in the area to provide relief assistance for the victims.

#### #1876 International Federation of University Women (IFUW), Perth, Australia

This project funded one of the three-day programs at the IFUW Triennial in Perth to introduce participants to the IFUW Communication Plan and focus on developing their skills to enhance communication internally, externally, and horizontally. The funding subsidized travel of members to participate in workshops and for training materials.

#### #1910 Esho Banchte Sikhee (EBAS), Bangladesh

Sixteen seminars were conducted in human rights training and craft making. The human rights discussions were held to make the women aware of their entitlement under Bangladeshi law to equal treatment by the government, regardless of sex, race, or religion. They were then trained in making household necessities such as floor mats. Writing materials were distributed to approximately 1,000 students to help continue their education.

#### # 1948 Women's Education and Resource Center, Benin

Five computers were set up in a center focused on educating rural women and girls in computer technology. While a tutorial program has begun, formal classes will soon commence. The Association des femmes juristes will conduct a seminar.

#### # 1955 Women Support Cooperative, Nepal

This project was successful in providing non-formal education, ranging from tailoring and animal husbandry to small business enterprise for a large number of women participants from several villages in the Kathmandu district. In addition, 45 women took part in training in mushroom cultivation and vermin composting. *[photo at left]*



**GRANTS FUNDED 2005-2006**

*Fay Kittelson, Executive Secretary*

**#1980 Action for Women and Children Organization (AWCO), NIGERIA** \$5,000

This project improves the well being of 75 women and their children through sustainable change in their socio-economic lives. Two cassava grinding machines and one grating machine in each of two villages will be purchased with proceeds of sales going towards school and medical fees for children (mostly girls), operating and maintenance expenses, seed money for women cooperatives, and staff salaries.

**#1983 Muslim Women Action Against Traditional Practices, GHANA** \$5,000

This project will work for the abolition of Female Genital Mutilation through promoting awareness of its psychosocial consequences and the education of parents, community, health workers, and those who carry out the practice and also provides for the protection of the human rights of women. The money will be used for awareness campaign workshops in addition to reproductive health, literacy, and skills development.

**#1992 People's Association for Rural Development (PARD), INDIA** \$5,000

The project aims to improve the living condition of 50 impoverished women through skills training in footwear and leather goods manufacture and marketing. Grant money will be used for training expenses, establishment of a co-op store, purchase of raw materials, marketing, and administrative expenses.

**#1995 Wahanda Women Development Group, KENYA** \$2,770

The project will introduce fish farming to group members as an alternative means of food production and income generation in addition to providing training for women in basic nutrition and gender equity. The money will be used for the construction costs of two fish ponds and related equipment.

**#2013 Stichting Kraktie, SURINAME** \$5,000

Submitted by the secretary of Stichting Kraktie, a VGIF member, this project will stimulate pre-school children (ages 3 to 6) to acquire enough facility in Dutch to become successful once they become old enough to attend primary school, thus having a continuing effect on their success as adults. The grant money will purchase one computer and printer, additional training materials, and provide local transport to six participating villages.

**#2022 Tajikistan Branch of International Association, "Women of Orient", TAJIKISTAN** \$4,000

This project is designed to increase the education of the female population of Penjikent District on reproductive health, including issues of contraceptives, abortions, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases by training 20 people in several villages. Money will be used for training 20 trainers, training materials, and miscellaneous conference expenses.

**#2035 Sierra Leone Association of University Women, SIERRA LEONE** \$5,000

Grant money will provide a micro-credit revolving loan plan for low income women with related training in budget planning, record keeping, and market skills.

**#2040 Platform of Women's Empowerment and Rights (POWER), BANGLADESH** \$4,600

The project goal will improve the lives of 100 illiterate poor women by extending them capital of \$30 each for agro-production activities. The grant money will be used for five-day training expenses in agro-production skills in addition to the production capital for the participants.

**#2055 Doctors on Call for Service, RWANDA** \$4,775

The project will stimulate communal life for street children by providing all-round training in literacy, joinery, tailoring, animal husbandry, agriculture, and the arts. The money will be used in all the training areas for materials and medical care.

**#2056 S.P.Y. Reddy Youth Association, INDIA** \$1,500

This tailoring and embroidery project trains five destitute women at a time (a total of 25 women) on an hourly basis for six months, with the vision of enabling them to purchase their own tailoring machines and to set up personal tailoring centers. Funding will be used to buy sewing and embroidery machines and all the necessary materials.

**#2070 Kager Self Help Group, KENYA** \$4,150

The project will provide bicycles and train 84 women on their use to better transport farm produce to market centers. This will allow faster and more reliable transportation and reduce injuries for women carrying heavy loads. The grant money will purchase 42 bicycles and pay for maintenance training and miscellaneous administrative expenses.

**#2075 Economical Housing & Agricultural Development Society, INDIA** \$3,300

The project seeks to empower women through pickle making as a means of income generation and provides awareness of nutrition, health and hygiene, credit, and savings. Grant money will pay for the necessary materials, equipment, and

*(continued on page 7)*

## ON-SITE VISIT PROGRAM

*Evelyn Cumming, Convener*

The On-Site Visit Committee was established to organize visits to project venues and report to VGIF about the progress, participants and results of projects funded by VGIF. We thank our first two visitors, Joyce Lockard and Marina Nazarenko, for taking time from their personal travels to visit two recently completed VGIF projects in Mbale, Uganda and Feodosia, Crimea, and for reporting their personal experiences to us.

If you will be traveling near one of the 2005 Project Grants locations we would appreciate your adding a brief visit to your itinerary. Reports from visitors will be posted on the VGIF website [[www.thegildersleeve.org](http://www.thegildersleeve.org)].

Because VGIF policy directs the organization to use its funds for the worthy projects it supports, financial assistance for these visits cannot be provided. Please write to: VGIF, 3 West 29th Street, Suite 1002, New York, NY 10001 U.S.A., or e-mail: [vgif@vgif.org](mailto:vgif@vgif.org) with your offer of a visit. The committee will then make every effort to arrange an on-site visit. Please allow ample time for arrangements to be completed.

## Excerpts from On-Site Reports

### ***Mbale, Uganda - Joyce Lockard***

My two-day site visit on behalf of VGIF to the Uganda Gender Rights Foundation (UGRF) in Mbale, Uganda was one of the high points of my two months in Uganda in Feb-April this year. My husband and I lived in five developing countries for a total of twenty years and that experience enabled me to relate quickly to the desperately poor circumstances of the people in UGRF. I found good people genuinely struggling to bring about change in the oppressive traditions of their people. Shem, the UGRF Coordinator, met me and took me to eat lunch of crushed steamed plantain called matoke (a starchy cooking banana), the basic food in most of Uganda (Ugandans eat more bananas than anyone else in the world).

We drove to the office of UGRF. As I entered the house, a great volume of singing burst forth from eight or nine people waiting inside. They were the volunteers who performed the gender rights drama, production of which is funded by VGIF. One of the rooms is used for sewing classes. It has three manual sewing machines on simple stands. The third room is for storage of millet flour that is cooked into porridge for lunch for the volunteers and sewing students when they are there. Cooking is done out back over a wood fire.

The major activity, but not the only one, is the

repeated presentation of a drama in the slums of Mbale. The objective of the drama is to sensitize both men and women to the common practices that make abuse of women and girls a part of their daily lives. The drama has been presented 32 times so far. When I asked about details of the play, the volunteers immediately put on portions of two skits from the drama. In one, a man beat his wife with a four-foot long, two-inch diameter stick, because he came home late and found his food was cold. He was drunk. In the second skit a father was determined to marry off his early-teenage daughter to get the "bride price" of cows, while his wife wanted the girl, who was cowering on the floor, to continue in school. I have no doubt that this "soap opera" is riveting for the people who watch it.

Shem drove me around Mbale to see the places in the slums where they give the drama. We got out and walked at one point and a local council member came up to Shem and asked him when the play could be performed again. When I returned to the little inn for the night, I was given a kerosene lantern because the power was off all over Mbale. Uganda doesn't have enough electricity to supply even the 4% of the population that is connected to power, and different areas are cut off every day and night.

The next day Shem and his friend Alfred drove me to see the country north of Mbale, close to Kapchorwa where the Sabiny tribe is the last group in the area practicing female genital mutilation. Women do most of the farm work. Most girls drop out of school when they reach puberty. I read that only four percent of Ugandan girls who start primary school actually complete high school.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to go to Mbale and will certainly check with VGIF when I go overseas again to see whether there is a project I could visit.



*Children view a performance about gender rights presented by UGRF volunteers in Mbale, Uganda*

### ***Feodosia, Republic of Crimea - Marina Nazarenko***

On January 9, 2005, I visited the Zabota Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children in Feodosia, Republic of Crimea. The grant from VGIF was received in April 2003. They keep very diligent track of how finances are used. The grant money has helped with programs for disabled children. This includes organized celebrations, sports equipment, medical supplies, and other necessities. Currently the center supports 285 handicapped children. Each child goes through four months of rehabilitation at the center. At the moment, two groups of 7-8 children each are undergoing rehabilitation. The children like to participate in educational activities at the center because they are able to communicate and relate to one another and feel like valued and respected individuals. The center facilitates studies from 1- 6 p.m. weekdays with Saturdays and Sundays free. However, some parents (depending on their schedules) bring their children to the center during the weekends because the children enjoy it very much. Four specialists work with the children: a psychologist, an organizer (also a teacher) with vast experience in working with disabled children, a physical education teacher to assist children with their exercise needs on an individual basis using gymnasium facilities, and a technical assistant .

The facility consists of two game rooms, one big room, a physical training room, a computer room, and a rehabilitation room. Some of the decoration includes pictures drawn by the disabled children. Elsewhere, there is a huge yard, shared by pensioners and disabled adults and a designated area for disabled children to play in with a separate entrance to the facility .

I attended a New Year's celebration for the disabled children. The hall was completely filled. There were a lot of children and many dressed in New Year's celebration



*Children enjoy a rehabilitation play session at Zabota Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children in Feodosia.*

clothing. A play based on Hans Christian Anderson's 'Snow Queen' was produced by a local children's theatre group. Songs, dancing, and games included all the disabled children who were able to participate. The children were extremely happy - they felt comfortable and respected, actively participating in all parts of the festivities. There was truly a feeling of celebration in the air. All the children received gifts of toys and sweets.

From discussions I had with parents, I discovered they were extremely grateful for Lyudmila Parshina's work with the children, particularly her attention and care for them. It was evident that a long-term, trusting relationship has been built over the years between Lyudmila and the parents as well as the children.

### **We Have a Job for You**

***Maggie Ford, Marketing Committee Convener***

And it isn't stuffing envelopes. VGIF has many opportunities for volunteers that span the world.

We need help in research – which countries need the kind of assistance that VGIF can provide? How do we choose among many worthy nations and projects? How can we best use the limited resources we have to effect change for women and children around the world?

We fund projects around the world. We need independent observation of current projects – how are they doing? Do they require any further help or guidance that VGIF could facilitate? Have past projects continued to thrive?

We receive more than 250 project grant applications every year. We need previewers to take the first look at project requests and recommend moving them forward for a full review by the Projects Grants Committee. Equally important, we need previewers with connections in those applicant countries who may be able to tell us more about the cultural situation, the project, the national economy, and available support for women-owned/managed businesses.

We have members across the globe. We publish our information in English and will soon publish the brochure in Spanish. Are there translators who could help in moving from one language to another for select recruitment materials in order to spread the word of our work and the importance of financially supporting it?

We do our work by committee. We would be a healthier organization if our committees were composed of members throughout the world so we can better understand cultural variations and make our written contacts more effective.

If we've piqued your curiosity, please write VGIF at [vgif@vgif.org](mailto:vgif@vgif.org). We'll attempt to answer your questions and find a volunteer "home" for you.

**Grants Funded 2005-2006, continued**

raw materials in addition to a revolving fund for purchase of food ingredients and training allowances.

**#2081 Philippine Association of University Woman (PAUW), PHILIPPINES \$5,000**

This project helps depressed women and out-of-school youth improve their literacy and economic status through attendance at a series of skills training sessions in fashion jewelry, soap making, candle making, chocolate candy making, cosmetology, and computer literacy. The grant will be used for training and workshop expenses in addition to materials for each of the training sessions.

**#2083 Friends of the Children of Lascahobas, HAITI \$5,000**

The primary goal of this project is to help women develop a business to support themselves and their children by learning how to choose and run a business, how to budget and save money, and how to work together for common goals. The grant money will provide a 50 USD credit to 100 women who are required to save one dollar each month in the group's shared credit union account.

**#2092 Fiji Association of Women Graduates, FIJI \$5,000**

The project will sponsor a science, engineering, and technology workshop for girls and their teachers from five remote junior secondary schools (10 in total) in order to foster an interest and understanding of the physical and applied sciences. The funding will be used to subsidize air fares, land transport, accommodation, and subsistence for 20 people for 5 days along with miscellaneous administrative expenses. Funded from the Erna Hamburger Fund

**#2094 Rural Development Women Welfare Society, INDIA \$3,260**

The project will train 25 women in candle making, literacy, and leadership skills as a means of gaining employment opportunities and socio-economic empowerment. Money will purchase equipment and raw materials in addition to cover start-up costs for each of five groups on a revolving fund basis.

**#2105 Farmers Development Association, NIGERIA \$4,800**

The project will support workshops and field based training for rural women farmers in organic farming techniques. Better sustainability, soil conservation, and environment preservation is expected. Produce will be sold to generate income, feed beneficiaries, and used for stock. The money will be used for hall rental, workshop materials, cassava cuttings, maize seeds, and yam seedlings.

**#2130 Nyasura Women Group, TANZANIA \$4,950**

This project aims at offering high quality computer literacy training to high school and intermediate college female graduates so that women can have a competitive edge in job markets. In addition a fully equipped computer training center will be established, offering subsidized training to the prospective students. Ten computers, two printers, one scanner, one photocopier, two binding machines, one fax, ten power backups, and paper will be purchased.

**#2153 Studio Mobile Accent on Action, GEORGIA \$5,000**

Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian versions of 18 video films will be created as part of educational programs for ethnic minority women and girls in Georgia, dealing with issues of gender and women's rights. The funding will be used to purchase a computer and monitor, accessories, a video editing card, and VHS tapes.

**#2161 Women's Center Mansura, UZBEKISTAN \$3,655**

The goal of this project is to decrease the number of cases of domestic violence against women and children in the Urgench District through education and psychological and legal assistance. Seminars, written materials, video, and round table discussions are planned. Grant money will be used for writing needs, publication and transport expenses, and equipment including a computer, laser printer, copier, and fax.

**#2168 The Professor Khun Duangduen Bisalputra Foundation, THAILAND \$4,625**

This project promotes indigenous women as trainers and leaders in sustainable self-sufficiency by addressing issues of agriculture nutrition (cultivation of pesticide-free herbs and kitchen gardening), home economics, and budgeting. Grant money will be used for training materials and equipment, expenses for community outreach, domestic transportation, and miscellaneous administrative costs. Funded from the Asian Regional Fund

**#2175 The Burundi Association of University Women, BURUNDI \$4,600**

The project goal targets the needs of 100 internally displaced women by mobilizing them for collective work in cultivating and raising livestock as well as agricultural harvesting. Money will be used for training activities, sensitization campaigns, and for purchasing tools, seeds, fertilizers and livestock (chickens, goats).

**#2183 Thikana, BANGLADESH \$3,000**

The organization trains women in handicrafts and provides arrangements to market them, promoting employment while

### Grants Funded 2005-2006 continued

providing informal education for their children. Grant money will purchase all the necessary materials for the handicraft training.

#### #2189 Community of Women Living With HIV/AIDS, NIGERIA \$5,000

The project addresses the needs of women living with HIV/AIDS by providing skills training and education, as well as sensitizing the community to this issue through advocacy programs. Funding will cover the expenses of educational seminars and training sessions.

#### #2192 Shenpen Fund, TIBET \$5,000

With the vision of achieving a broader education than functional literacy, this project provides textbooks and a library facility for the Chungba Primary School in a remote mountain community in Tibet. The money will be used to purchase a wide variety of textbooks, novels, and encyclopedias, as well as to construct bookshelves to store these additions.

#### #2195 Polytechnic Institute Tomas Katari, BOLIVIA \$4,975

This project aims to better the living conditions of marginalized migrant communities by providing women with technical skills training (in food production, handicrafts, and small business management). Training programs that encourage greater social awareness are expected to expand understanding of employment alternatives. Money will be used to purchase materials for training programs as well as for administrative purposes.

#### #2200 (ADEW) Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women, EGYPT \$2,120

This shelter and accompanying integrated service program is directed towards supporting women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse, providing advocacy and listening sessions to address the numerous difficulties these women face. Grant money will be used to rent facilities for this initiative and for training purposes. \$297 funded from the Leaders Fund

**International Federation of University Women (IFUW), SWITZERLAND \$5,000**  
Annual funding set aside to support the IFUW Triennial Conference 2007 in Great Britain.

*Women from Georgia, Azerbaijanian and Armenia study English together at the teaching center for women in Kvemo Kartli, Georgia.*

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

*Betty Bayless, Convener*

When you visit the Member Pages section of the VGIF web site, you will see a link to the *VG Flash*, the new VGIF electronic newsletter. Published monthly, the *VG Flash* contains articles about time-sensitive events as well as information not included in the *VG UPDATE* due to space considerations. You can subscribe to this publication, e-mail it to your friends or include it in your group's newsletter. If you would like to contribute an article, please submit it to [vgflash@vgif.org](mailto:vgflash@vgif.org).

New VGIF Board member and Special Committee on Public Relations committee member Marta Groisman from Argentina translated the text in the VGIF brochure into Spanish. Louise McLeod, VGIF Media and Communications Manager, will provide copies of the brochure in black and white for distribution at the AAUW Convention in June. We will also send copies to key VGIF members in Latin America and in U.S. states with Hispanic populations. Please contact the VGIF office with your requests.

### CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

*Kathleen Magill, Convener*

At the Annual Meeting in April, 2005, the proposed Bylaws amendments for Article V and VIII were passed. Article V changes clarified the duties of the Treasurer, Secretary and President. Article VIII changes increased the maximum number of members for the Development, Finance and Investment, and Project Grants committees. If there are any additional changes or proposed amendments for the bylaws, please send them to the New York office or to the committee convener ([kljbmagill@yahoo.com](mailto:kljbmagill@yahoo.com)) by October 1, 2005.



## DEVELOPMENT

*Maggie Ford, Convener*

The Development Committee had a full agenda as it recapped the past three year's activity and planned for the future: we established guidelines for accepting gifts; we provided templates for how such good gifts should be managed; and we received and distributed first gifts from the Leaders Fund. It's been a good run.

The 2004 Pilot Project to support library holdings/acquisitions for the Chungba Primary School was a success! The full story is presented on page one. What it means is that we will move forward in seeking support for other specific projects that might not otherwise be funded, thanks to your generosity and guidance.

At the mid-point in the 2000-2010 Strategic Plan (October 2005), the committee will step back in the fall and assess progress against goals and modify accordingly.

Meanwhile, we also need to know more about the areas in the world in which we currently fund and from those in which we have had few, if any, project requests.

Is there a way that we can more effectively distribute the funds available to us to the best advantage? We know from historical evidence, when given an opportunity to invest in a particular project or region, our members will do so. We also know that VGIF members are generous: over the past 3 years, the number of contributions was nearly 3 times the number of donors.

As we move forward, we'll be putting together materials that better explain the role of VGIF in the international funding community; we'll better mine our internal resources; and we'll educate our board about their fiduciary responsibilities as non-profit board members and how they can best ask others to invest in our cause.

We are also considering our next endowment opportunity – South and Central America – where we could really use member help. Traditionally, we have not received many project grant applications from this part of the world and our membership there is small. We are looking for advice and counsel on how best we can proceed to provide support to the women in the southern hemisphere. We need your help.

We are also looking at ways to raise more dollars for the projects we support. If you have any ideas/thoughts that you would like to share about funding in your part of the world, please contact me at [development@vgif.org](mailto:development@vgif.org).

### Dates to Remember in 2005

**VG Midyear Meeting** Oct. 28-29, VG Office, New York  
**AAUW National Convention** June 24-27, Washington, D.C.  
**CFUW 2005 AGM** August 18-21, Oakville, ON, Canada  
**VG Annual Meeting** April 28-29, 2006, VG Office, New York

## UN NEWS

*Virginia Maynard, VGIF UN Representative*

This year's DPI/NGO Conference, "Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnerships and Renewal," will be held from Wednesday through Friday, September 7-9. DPI has announced that "the conference will be assuming an enhanced role as the central civil society gathering prior to the Millennium+5 Summit the following week." They expect that a broad range of civil society partners at the highest levels will participate in the event. Deadline for registration is June 1, 2005, and once again participation is limited to five individuals from any one organization.

Also as part of the preparatory process leading up to the Millennium+5 Summit, the General Assembly will hold hearings with civil society, NGOs, and the private sector June 23-24, 2005.

VGIF's first workshop at the United Nations, which was held in partnership with the International Federation of Women Lawyers on March 8 during Beijing+10, was highly successful. Entitled "Advancing the Millennium Development Goals through Funding and Advocacy for Women," it attracted an overflow crowd. A full report of the workshop appeared in the March *VG News Flash*. In brief, the participants were Fay Kittelson, who chaired the event, Louise McLeod, Virginia Maynard, Johanna Sterbin, and Martha Beck, Project Director of the Working Group on Girls, Cameroon, who was in the audience and reported on her VGIF-funded project. The highlight of the program was a slide presentation prepared by Louise and narrated by Fay. It included photos of eight recent projects, each visually introduced with a slide giving the name of the country, project, and brief description.

At VGIF's Annual Meeting in April, Leslie Wright was appointed a representative to the United Nations. Leslie brings excellent credentials to the responsibility. While representing the World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts at the UN, she also served as First Vice President of the Conference of NGOs, Chair of the Conference of NGOs Foundation, and Chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

### Deaths Noted

Genrose Alfano, NY, U.S.A.  
 Dorothy Flaherty, CA, U.S.A.  
 Evelyn Graff, NJ, U.S.A.  
 Marie Stark, Washington, DC, U.S.A.  
 Margaret Weeden, Australia

## TREASURER'S REPORT

*Eileen Menton, Treasurer*

Many thanks to all of you for your continued loyal support of VGIF. In 2004, we received 119,907 USD in contributions of which 9,740 USD was restricted to the Asian Regional Fund, the Erna Hamburger Fund, the Leaders Fund and the Pilot Project. We paid 99,970 USD in project grant allocations, a record amount. During the first three months of 2005, we received 50,795 USD in contributions. Our goal is to raise 120,000 USD for 2006-2007 project grants.

As of December 31, 2004, our total assets were approximately 1.6 million USD. As of March 31, 2005, our assets include in the Virginia Frese Palmer Administrative Fund and 329,416 USD in the Investment Account. As of December 31, 2004, the Erna Hamburger Fund had a balance of 58,150 USD; the Asian Regional Endowment had a balance of 54,113 USD; and the Leaders Fund had a balance of 1,980 USD. At the direction of the Board, in 2004 we set aside 5% of unrestricted funds until the Asian Regional Endowment reached an income-producing level of 50,000 USD. Thanks to the expertise of Nancy Vang, who continues to manage this portfolio, in 2004 we continued to exceed the market with returns of 5.56% for the Investment Account and 5.41% for the Palmer Account compared to a blended index (10% stock/80% bonds/10% cash gain) of 3.43%.

Thanks to the income generated by the Palmer Account, we were able to fund all expenses associated with our new office through the transfer of 94,000 USD in 2004. This included the cost of informing our members through the website and the *VG Update*, and our annual membership campaign.

Thank you for the opportunity to have served as your Treasurer for the past six years. A special thanks to Ginny Palmer, whose generous contribution radically changed the Treasurer's workload. I look forward to continuing my involvement with VGIF as a member of the Grants Committee during the coming year.

**Yes**, I want to join 1,300 members in 40 countries.

Ms. \_\_\_ Mrs. \_\_\_ Dr. \_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

25 USD annual contribution

Additional contribution

50  100  250  500  1,000  
 Other USD Total contribution \_\_\_\_\_ USD

I want to honor an individual by making a tribute or memorial gift. \_\_\_\_\_

I want to designate my gift to one of the following restricted endowment funds:

THE ERNA HAMBURGER FUND: Supports projects enhancing scientific and mathematical skills of women and girls.

THE ASIAN REGIONAL FUND: Develops a sustained financial resource for funding.

THE LEADERS FUND: Supports cutting-edge, innovative, or entrepreneurial projects.

Joining is easy: Just fill in this form and send a check, bank draft, or money order payable in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S.-based banking institution to:



VGIF  
 3 West 29th Street Room 1002  
 New York, NY 10001 USA

Or pay by credit card: VISA \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_  
 Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
 Name as it appears on your card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### For more information about VGIF consult our websites

**www.vgif.org**

General information about VGIF and how to join  
*VG Update* online

**www.thegildersleeve.org**

Find out what's happening at VGIF

*The VG Flash* -- New!!

Project Grants Library and Photos  
 Available Recruitment Materials  
 Committee Reports

.. and much more

### *VG Update*

A semi-annual publication of  
 The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund

Barbara Carey, President: U.S.A.  
 M. Louise McLeod, Editor: U.S.A.

Information for publication should  
 be submitted to:  
 Fay Kittelson, Executive Secretary  
 VGIF

3 West 29th St., Suite 1002  
 New York, NY 10001 U.S.A.  
 vgif@vgif.org

©VGIF, all rights reserved 2005

