

Impact Report



Batonga

2022
Q3



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Introduction

Dear Friends,

As we share our achievements and learnings from Q3 and wrap up our activities for 2022, the spirit of the holiday season and the success we've experienced are reminders of the sincere gratitude and appreciation I have for Batonga's team, participants, mentors, and supporters.

Our team's commitment is unwavering and their passion is contagious. I feel incredibly fortunate to have such knowledgeable and dedicated colleagues who are constantly working to improve our programs and develop innovative new ways to empower women.

To give an example, the team recently identified an opportunity to equip young women with critical digital literacy skills and engage them as content creators of a girl-led podcast program. Their idea was recognized at MIT Solve in September and won the Vodafone Americas Foundation's Innovation for Women Prize as well as the GSR Prize for Innovation in Technology.

I am also proud to highlight this quarter:

1. Batonga's continual process of learning and adaptation of content to meet the needs of women and girls;
2. The launch of programs in the north of Benin in the remote, high-need region of Atacora;
3. Outstanding attendance rates among the Adolescent Girls Leadership Clubs, averaging 98 percent, and increased profits among the Young Women Business Circles, a 16 percent gain over the last quarter; and,
4. The addition of several new key team members including Absa Gueye, Program Manager for Women's Economic Empowerment, Senegal; Oumou Mbaye, Program Manager for Adolescent Girls Leadership, Senegal; and Thierno Ba, Finance Officer, Senegal.

We could not make this progress without the support of friends who help fund our human resources as well as the critical capacity building efforts that have allowed Batonga to grow intentionally and sustainably.

Thank you for your belief in our mission and for making this important work possible. I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

With gratitude,

Stephanie Lord
Interim Executive Director



Batonga's Programs reach Atacora

Batonga reaches 13 new communities in Atacora

Batonga held an official ceremony to celebrate the expansion of its programs for adolescent girls and young women to 13 new communities in Atacora, located in Northern Benin. On July 29th, in the village of Natitingou, Batonga convened local community members, leaders, officials, partners and authorities of the communities to participate in the festivities and presentation of its programs. It was an opportunity to share insights and provide a platform for program participants to share their experiences.

Partnerships are key

The decision to scale and extend its programs to 13 new communities in Atacora is rooted in Batonga's mission to equip the hardest-to-reach girls and young women with safe spaces to access the knowledge and skills they need to be agents of change in their own lives and communities. Upon joining forces with Mastercard Foundation in 2021, Batonga developed ways through its community mapping and survey process to extend its proven program models beyond its original 15 communities in central Benin. To help introduce and adapt its model to suit the needs of the region, the Batonga Foundation partnered with Havre de Paix, an NGO based in Atacora that works to improve the overall wellbeing of their region and the living conditions of marginalized girls and young women in particular.

“We are so excited to be on this journey with Mastercard Foundation, a partner whose values and mission align with our own. Our launch in Atacora, an extremely remote and underserved region of Northern Benin, will allow us to have an even greater impact and reach many more adolescent girls and young women in rural Africa.”

– Angélique Kidjo,
Founder, Batonga
Foundation



“Reaching girls and young women in the most remote parts of Benin and helping them discover their potential is the noble option chosen by the Batonga Foundation. We want to build awareness of our programs and build fruitful partnerships for the betterment of girls and women. Every girl and every woman in Benin is a leader who contributes to the socio-economic development of the country.” – Ella Wama, Benin Country Manager, Batonga





International Day of the African Woman

Celebrating the Resilience of African Women

The International Day of the African Woman, celebrated annually on July 31st, seeks to improve the lives of African women and promote their freedom. Recognizing that African women have been disproportionately affected since the onset of COVID-19, the Batonga Foundation hosted 10 days of online activism to highlight the resilience of African women with a series of activities including a webinar and community events under the theme “Resilience: rebounding and reinventing oneself after the global pandemic.”



Adolescent Girls Leadership

Artistic expression an integral part of programming

Art is a powerful tool for expressing and defending the interests of the most disadvantaged people. It transcends language barriers, because an artwork can touch anyone regardless of their origin or the language they speak. Ahead of the International Day of the Girl, Batonga began planning artistic production contests in its clubs to serve as a springboard for the participants to find a way to express their experiences and their needs, while delivering messages of equity and social justice. Initiatives that promote the use of art to defend the rights of adolescents and young girls will continue to be multiplied and highlighted by Batonga.

Here's an update on the Leadership Clubs' activities this quarter:

July

- 103 active Girls Clubs
- 98.32% attendance
- 483 home visits conducted to check-in on adolescent girls and their families

August

- 97% attendance
- 303 home visits conducted to check-in on adolescent girls and their families

September

- 98.68% attendance
- 60 new Girls Clubs created, raising the total number of active Clubs to 163
- 212 home visits conducted to check-in on adolescent girls and their families
- Art contests launched in 22 Francophone countries

Attendance is defined as participating in at least one full session per month.

163 Total Active Adolescent Girls Leadership Clubs

Adolescent Girls Leadership

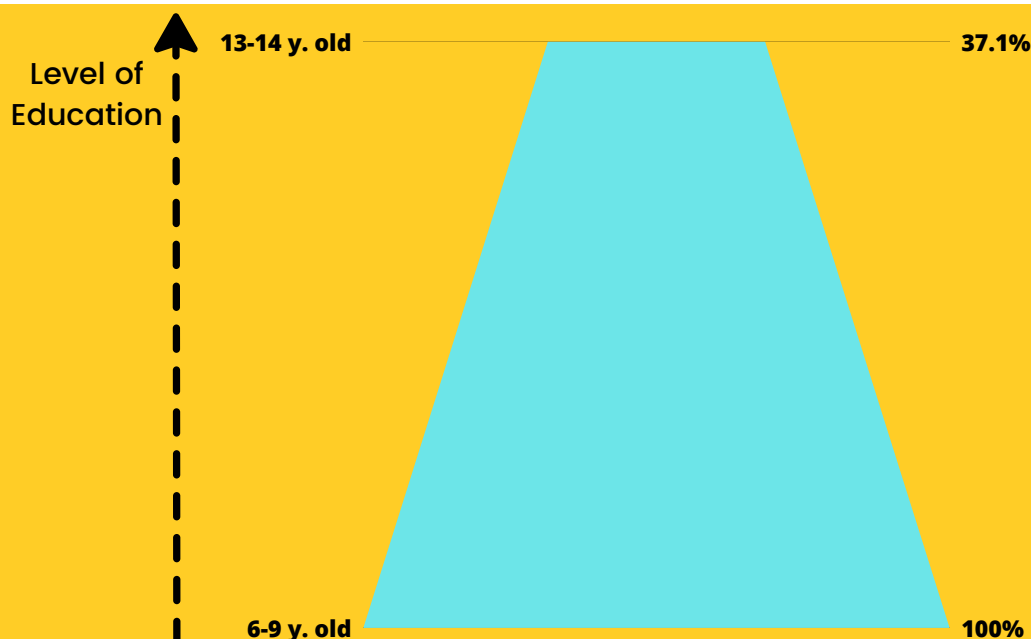
Batonga's Commitment to Systematic Information-Gathering

Batonga is continually compiling information and data to inform its work. Data reports this quarter reveal several key learnings critical to the Adolescent Girls Leadership program.

Batonga utilized the **Girl Roster™**, a tool designed by the Population Council to elicit foundational information to intentionally link girls- especially the most marginalized adolescent girls- to the vital resources, facilities, and services to which they are entitled but often have limited or no access. The Girl Roster™ enabled Batonga to see how many girls there are in each community, broken down into different age groups, education categories, and family situations, and indicated the need for (i) specific content on child marriage and sexual and reproductive health; (ii) additional sessions for out-of-school girls (62.92% dropout from age 13-14); (iii) strategic partnerships and referral systems to facilitate access to sexual health services for girls.

Batonga also conducted a **pre-test** to gather information about girls' existing attitudes and knowledge levels by capturing self-reported attitudes and behaviors regarding savings, reproductive health, basic financial literacy, and attitudes about the acceptability of certain harmful practices towards women and girls, among other things. Batonga's pre-test showed the need to create safe spaces for women and girls, and strengthen knowledge and skills related to rights, sexual and reproductive health, soft skills, and future planning. Also, results stress the importance of protecting adolescent girls who face abuse and violation of their rights (child marriage, child labor, abuse and harassment, physical violence, etc.).

Finally, Batonga conducted a **gender analysis** in September to gather information on women's access to and control over resources, to build more efficient and equitable programs. Batonga's gender analysis draws attention to the urgency of continuing to strengthen its programs for girls and women, reduce the existing gender gap, and promote social justice and equity.

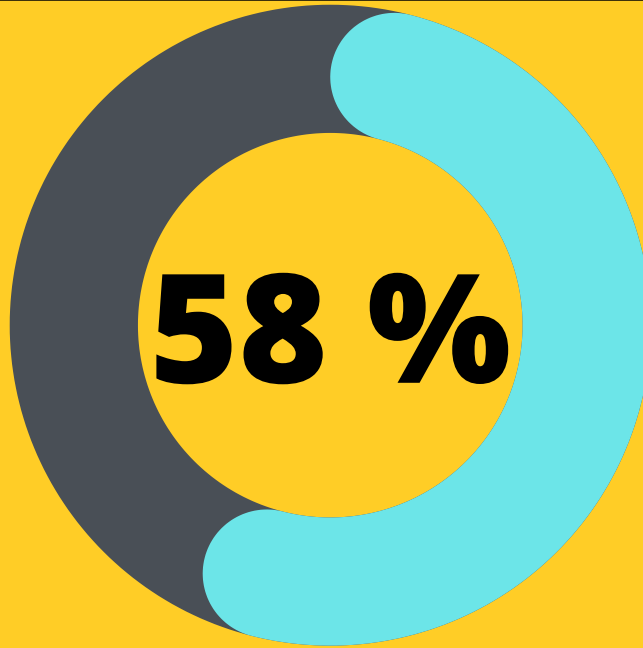


Creating additional sessions is necessary for the 62.9% of girls who drop out of school between the ages of 6-9 and 13-14.

Expansion of Activities

Adolescent Girls Leadership

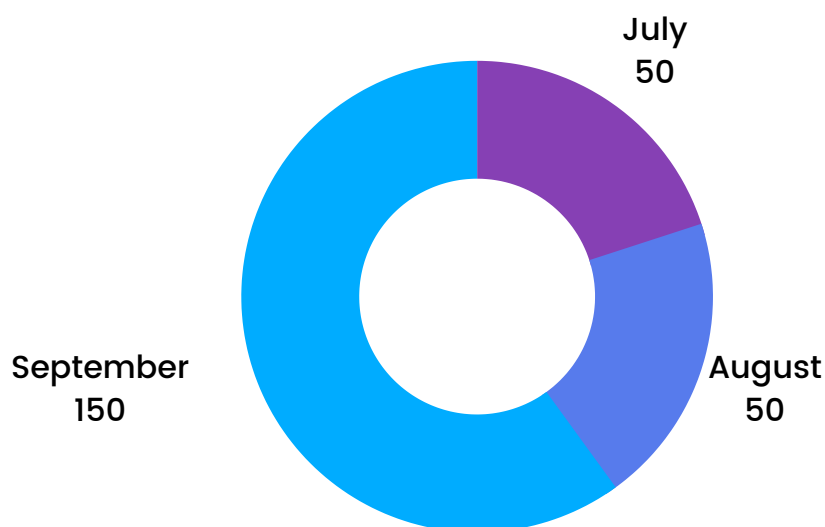
New Active Clubs



A 58% increase in the number of AGL Clubs with 60 Clubs added in the center and north of Benin

Women's Economic Empowerment

New Young Women Business Circles



150 Active Young Women Business Circles

100 Circles Added

Women's Economic Empowerment

Young Women Business Circles Growth

July

- 50 active Young Women Business Circles with a total profit of \$1,232
- 90.27% attendance
- 100 new Business Circles set to launch

August

- 99.40% attendance
- Quarterly training for business coaches on market research, cost analysis, financial management, and rural marketing.
- Substantial increase in profits due to the trade and agro-pastoral fair in Collines. Products sold included spices, antiseptic leaves and soaps, akoto soap, soybean flour and meat, seasoned table pepper, kalalou, grilled peanuts, gari and tapioca. The 10 circles that participated made a net profit of \$493, up 51.69% compared to the previous month.

September

- 150 active Young Women Business Circles
- 99.84% attendance
- Slight decrease in income compared to August, highlighting the positive effect of the trade and agro pastoral fair and the need for more opportunities for young women to sell their goods.
- Training on Digital Savings for YWBCs in partnership with Dream Save LAB: 10 Young Women Business Circles received tablets to access digital savings and enable them to have a better view of the progress made toward their financial goals.

51.69%

Increase in the profit of the 10 Circles that participated in the trade and agro-pastoral fair in Savalou, showing the importance of market access activities.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Increasing Access to Markets

The positive effect of the agro-pastoral fair in Collines underlines the need to increase opportunities for the promotion and sale of YWBC products and provide access to physical and online markets.



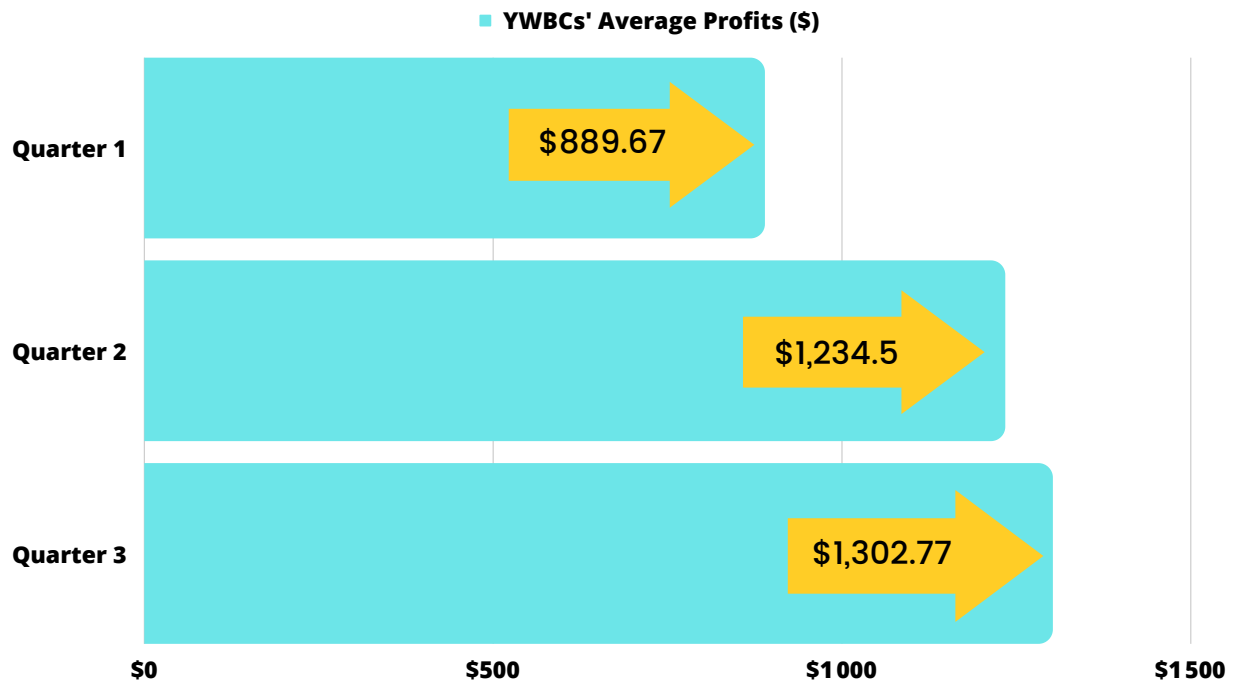
Pop-up market during the celebration of the International Day of the African Woman



3,834

Number of women who attended at least one session during the month of September – 99.84% an impressive rate of attendance.

Women's Economic Empowerment



Connecting Young Women and Girls to Technology

Recent studies show that digital literacy and access to technology enhances young women and girls' confidence and decision-making abilities, increases civic engagement, and employment opportunities and workforce participation.

However, young women and girls in rural Benin are being left out of the digital literacy transformation that is happening globally. Lack of access to digital safe spaces and training on digital literacy is preventing rural and off-grid African girls from expressing themselves, acquiring new knowledge and skills, generating and saving income digitally, and learning from each other.

Digital literacy, a skill set that is increasingly important to girls' futures, remains starkly gender-divided in rural West Africa. Batonga is dedicated to changing this.

Stories of Impact

Social Capital and Economic Justice: Toward a Sustainable Self-Sufficiency Approach by Natacha Agbahoungba, WEE Program Manager Benin

Batonga introduced the digitization of training sessions and the practice of digitized savings this quarter. This initiative, which is in its pilot phase, was inspired not only by the feedback from the unconditional supporters of the Batonga Foundation's activities, but also by the growth in income generated by the young women in the circles.

The themes addressed in the circles' curriculum go beyond financial literacy and help build the social capital of young women in the communities. With the pilot phase of digitization, 10 circles were identified with a total of 30 young women as leaders of the initiative within their circles. These young women had left school early or had no access to school at all, but we were surprised to see their openness and adoption of the use of the tablets and the application designed to digitize the learning sessions and savings.

By pushing our curiosity a little further, we understood that these young women who regularly generate income have set themselves short and medium term financial objectives thanks to their income-generating activities on certain necessary goods such as smartphones. The majority of them had acquired smartphones to access information on time, send multimedia awareness content and voice messages. This state of affairs exposed them to the system of smartphones and new technologies, which meant that they understood very early on how the Dream Save application works, which is used to digitize the learning sessions and the practice of saving.

The impact activated by the strengthening of social capital associated with regular income generation, allows young women to be in tune with the changes and in perfect symbiosis with decision-making and power within their communities.



Young women in a training session on the Dream Save app

Stories of Impact



Young women receiving instructions on how to use the Dream Save app



Business Circle participants happy after the Dream Save training sessions

Advocacy for Gender Equality



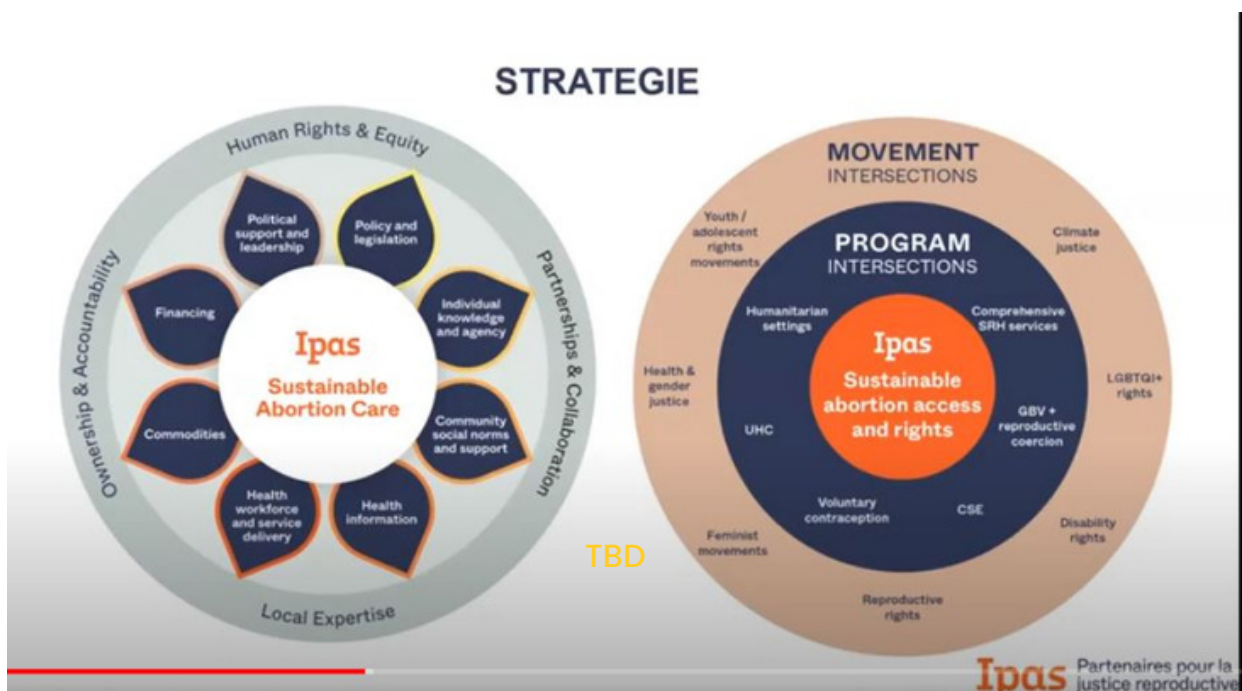
Nos Voix Comptent is a feminist movement to amplify the voices of Francophone African women. To date, the NVC program has 24 Ambassadors in 16 Francophone African countries, young leaders who support the initiative and help advocate for gender equality in their respective countries. Here is an update of the activities implemented during the third quarter:

July

- 18 Ambassadors recruited in 12 countries
- 52 participants in two virtual activities: Assessment and challenges of Francophone African countries one year after the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, and Progress made one year after the Paris Forum

August

- 107 participants on a webinar held in collaboration with IPAS Francophone Africa and the ODAS Center on "Safe abortion in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa: the issues and challenges for Generation Equality"
- Six new Ambassadors selected in four new countries



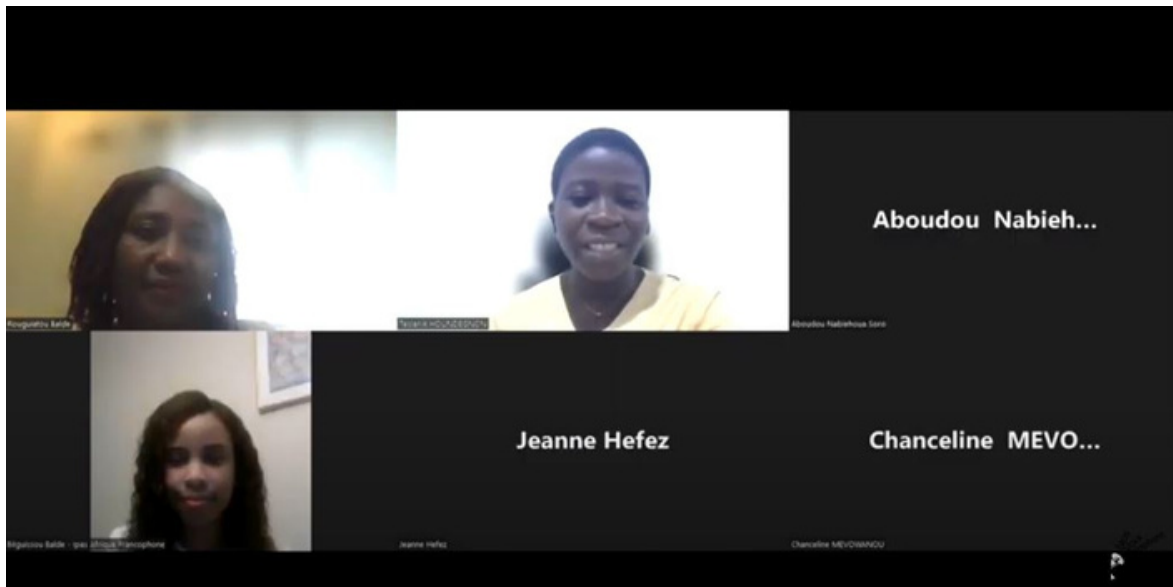
Monthly webinar in August with presentation by IPAS

Advocacy for Gender Equality



September

- 160 active members, 3 facilitated working groups
- In parallel to the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, an online conversation and webinar were held with 50 participants to discuss how to bring the voices of grassroots communities to spaces like the UN General Assembly.



Participants in the monthly webinar hosted by Nos Voix Comptent

Men and Boys Engagement

Men and Boys: Partners in Advancing Gender Equality

Batonga launched its Men and Boys Engagement initiative to give male counterparts an opportunity to advocate for and defend young women's and girls' rights in partnership with Batonga.

Following insistent requests from community members, mentors and participants of Batonga's Clubs and Circles, Batonga launched this cross-cutting initiative to support all of Batonga's programs, including Adolescent Girls Leadership and Women Economic Empowerment.

During this quarter:

- 45 male champions for gender equality selected
- Eighteen Focus Group Discussions held in 9 villages to collect qualitative data



Acknowledgements

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Thank you for your continued support of our programs.

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