Celebrating 15 Years of Exceptional Impact
TO OUR SUPPORTERS,

WOW! 15 years. We can hardly believe it. Many of you have been on this journey with us since the beginning, while others have joined us along the way. Whether you were our first customer, or just placed your first order this year, you are a part of this community – devoted to connecting Ghanaian craftswomen to the tools and support they need to realize their personal and professional dreams. The goal is economic empowerment, a mission we reinforce with programs that enhance skills, strengthen families, and improve health. After 15 years, we remain deeply proud of the exceptional impact we’ve created by building enduring relationships founded on transparency, trust, and respect.

Over the past fifteen years we have marveled as the perseverance and hard work of the Mamas has transformed their lives. The sustained income provided by Global Mamas has allowed the Mamas to transition from the stress of living day to day, always putting out fires, to the peace of mind and financial security realized from having a steady income. Although we still celebrate the transition from a hand powered sewing machine to an electric one, now we are celebrating as the Mamas become college graduates, licensed drivers, and land owners. Another major achievement is how the steady income has allowed the Mamas to think about health care for their families. They are transitioning from reliance on emergency health care to educating themselves on preventive health care measures, investing in improved nutrition for their families, and proactively screening for diseases that respond to early detection like breast cancer and diabetes. Our commitment to the environment has also evolved, including our shift to organic cotton fabric and focusing on using more recycled and repurposed materials.

This year alone we celebrated many exciting achievements that we want to call out to you:

• We realized our best annual sales yet (read more on pages 4-5).
• Five long-term employees earned internal promotions (read more on pages 8-9).
• We honored the impact the Mamas are having on future generations (read more on pages 14-15).
• The Mamas set and achieved longer-term goals (read more on pages 12-13).
• Through targeted training we continued to improve quality in production, which resulted in 468 bonus payments made to the Mamas.

Of course, one of our top priorities since day one has been providing sustainable livelihoods through the sale of handmade products. That means paying promptly and fairly. You might be surprised to know that one of the many compliments the organization receives from the Mamas is for prompt payments on orders and paying monthly salaries on time. It is not uncommon in Ghana for salary payments to be delayed – even for government workers. Not at Global Mamas. This year $329,051 was paid in prompt wages to the Mamas. We are proud that the Mamas continue to earn approximately one-third of our total sales, which for 2018 were $1,114,587. Over the last 15 years, with your support and partnership, we have realized $11,241,285 in sales and paid out $1,754,970 in wages to the Mamas.

Each year we celebrate how approximately 30% of total sales is paid to the Mamas in wages, but perhaps you are curious about where the other 70% goes.

• 20% goes for raw materials (mainly organic fabric, but also dyes, tags, zippers, findings, packaging, and more).
• 30% covers our operational expenses in Ghana (rent, non-production staff, capacity building programs, and more).
• 20% is invested in marketing and operational expenses in North America & Europe (rent, staff, trade shows, marketing materials, shipping, credit card fees, and more).

As a non-profit, every dollar from a sale is accounted for. Whenever we have a dream for growth, that means we have to fundraise. We are so grateful for our many donors who have supported our ongoing projects and expansion over this last year (pages 18-19). Thank you for believing in us.

Every year, the Mamas share personal achievements they are proud of. To close this letter we want to highlight what the Mamas are excited about this year:

• Investing in their kids’ educations
• Producing high-quality products
• Supporting their families
• Repaying debt & saving for the future
• Training new young women to sew & batik
• Finding creative solutions to challenges
• Managing their growing income
• Being promoted to higher-level positions
• Developing new technical skills
• Taking charge of their health & nutrition
• Supporting extended family members
• Purchasing equipment for their businesses
• Buying land and constructing homes
• Expanding their businesses

Thank you once again for your support as we embark on another 15 years!

Sincerely,

The Global Mamas Leadership Team

Renae Adam – Executive Director
Gladys Adimn – General Manager of Krobo
Benedicta Arthur – Production Manager of Cape Coast
Dorcis Balden – General Manager of the Accra Store
Patience Essibu – HR Director and General Manager of Cape Coast
Alice Grau – Creative Director
Kristin Johnson – Financial Manager
Amos Kporsiebu – Production Manager of Ashaiman
Nick Ruffalo – Designer, Photographer, and Production Adviser

“Global Mamas is shaping visions and influencing the society [of Ghana] in a massive manner. The year ahead will be greater than the year behind.”

Patience Essibu
HR Director

Members of the Global Mamas Leadership Team participate in a team building session with organization-wide managers.
Celebrating 15 Years of Exceptional Impact

The Global Mamas community is now over 350 strong.

Founded in 2003 by 6 Mamas,

In 2018:

The Mamas made 222 products
Handmade in 7 locations & sold in 21 countries

$1,114,587 in total sales. With $329,051 paid to the Mamas in wages.

60% made from recycled or repurposed content

56% 15% 26% 4%

On average Global Mamas producers make 2.5 X minimum wage

(Amazing, considering that 84% of the Mamas have not studied beyond high school.)

60% of the Mamas are able to save for the future.

86% of the Mamas are able to cover their family’s living expenses.

89% of the Mamas are able to cover their family’s medical expenses.

148 children. Mamas pay for the education of

36 workshops were presented to 756 attendees

Education = Success

100% of Global Mamas producers receive ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

60% made from recycled or repurposed content

36 full time workers,
76 part-time workers,
62 apprentices,
and each other.

98% of participating Mamas achieved their SMART Goals

187 people. The Mamas financially support

On average Global Mamas producers make 2.5 X minimum wage

(15% 26%)

4%
Each year Mamas are recognized for their achievements at our Global Mamas of the Year Celebration. This year’s event took place at our Ashaiman location, with representatives from other sites present. Many congratulations to all of the winners. We are sorry you couldn’t join us, but hope these pictures will give you a little insight on the fun:

1) Leadership Team members Dorcas Baiden (General Manager of the Accra Store), Amos Kporshiebu (Production Manager of Ashaiman), Gladys Adimer (General Manager of Krobo), and Patience Essibu (HR Director) were all present to celebrate and recognize award winners.

2) Rebecca Ackumey (Ashaiman Seamstress), 2018 Global Mama of the Year, is handed the plaque by last year’s winner, Vida Donkoh (Cape Coast Seamstress).

3) The celebration included treats, dancing, and LOTS of laughter.

4) Dorcas Baiden awarding Jennifer Aheteku (Inventory Manager of Ashaiman) the “Honesty” award for demonstrating honesty and transparency in every way. Other award recipients were:
   - Betty Cato Cudjoe (Cape Coast Batiker) - Growth
   - Lawrencia Kumah (Krobo Jewelry Assembler) - Unity
   - Doris Bodua (Krobo Jewelry Assembler) - Good Character

We send appreciation to the Callan Family for once again providing the winners with meaningful prizes in honor of our beloved Melanie Popowich.

Cynthia Essiaw, who has been a seamstress with Global Mamas for eight years, bought land last year. In order to make her dream reality, Cynthia set a SMART goal at a goal-setting workshop. Breaking this large savings goal into achievable increments helped her track her progress. She worked diligently to gather the money and her dependable orders from Global Mamas allowed her to make continuous headway. Being a landowner means that she can now start saving to build a home. She says, “I’m proud to work for Global Mamas, and I’m happy to have met my goal.”

Deborah Asmah has been a seamstress since 2004. When she became a Global Mama in 2007, she was able to learn new skills and expand her business further. Deborah operates in her own workshop with two workers and two apprentices. After she acquired this workshop, she started saving to buy her own land, “It was a hard process but in the end I did it, this is mine, I got it for myself.” Her next goals are to build a house on her land and to open a second workshop of her own.

Beadmaker Comfort Amanor has been selling her beads to Global Mamas since the Krobo location opened in 2005. When she decided to work towards buying land, she developed a savings plan so that she would have the discipline to accumulate the needed funds. She was relieved when she met her goal this past year. Comfort shares, “I am so proud of myself and of the land that I was able to buy.” She plans to build a home for herself and her four children in the coming years.

Recognizing the impact that land ownership has on a woman’s status and financial security, we intend to support more Mamas with their goals to become land and home owners.

The tradition in Ghana is to pass land down through the men of the family. Buying land can be a difficult process, and it can be even more complicated for women. Although it’s rare in Ghana for women in the craft industry to own land, the Mamas don’t let the odds stop them. Recently, several of the Mamas have been able to achieve their dream of buying property of their own, and others are on their way.
At Global Mamas we are committed to the growth of our employees and Mama producers. We provide capacity-building trainings throughout the year to enhance skills in everything from computer literacy to leadership. Several of our employees, who have worked especially hard over the years building their knowledge and exhibiting their dedication, were recognized in 2018 with promotions.

In Cape Coast, our oldest location, three team members have been promoted. Suzzy Korsah, a member of the quality control team for over 10 years, was promoted to Production Assistant. Her leadership skills and dedication were recognized when she was promoted to Production Assistant. In her new role, Abigail enjoys growing her knowledge of sampling through mentorship with our designers and the Mamas. She now manages new batik stencils and sample development. Abigail even created her own design, the popular Two Birds print. Training has been difficult at times but, she shares, “I like all of it; at first it was a challenge, but now I am confident.”

Beyond our Cape Coast office, we’ve also seen advancement in our Krobo and Ashaiman teams. Mabel Nartey started out as a jewelry assembler at our Krobo location and was promoted to Assistant Manager this past year. Mabel’s work ethic caught the eye of Gladys Adimer, General Manager of Krobo, who targeted her for mentoring and trained her to complete higher level managerial tasks like quality control, packing orders, and issuing checks.

Having a good mentor was also important for Jennifer Aheteku to grow into her current role. Jennifer started out in Ashaiman as the Inventory Assistant, working under Dorcas Baiden. When Dorcas was promoted to General Manager of our Accra Store, Jennifer was prepared to step into Dorcas’ old role. Jennifer now manages inventory, tracks purchases, and handles HR issues in the office. Jennifer is committed to the mission of Global Mamas and works hard to manage her many responsibilities. In Jennifer’s words empowerment means, “even if it is very difficult, stand firm to make sure you are ready for anything; it is up to you to make decisions, not anyone else.”

Global Mamas’ commitment to mentorship and training, together with our talented employees’ drive to reach their full potential, allows individuals to be recognized for their achievements and continue growing within our organization. We are thrilled that our capacity-building programs provide a platform for everyone to become more empowered.
“I am able to send my daughter to high school. I dream that she will be an important person in the future, someone who is able to achieve goals that I was never able to achieve.”

Lydia Tetteh
Ashaiman Batiker

“I was sick last year, and I was able to use some of the money [I earned with Global Mamas] to get the necessary treatment.”

Lawrenca Kumah
Krobo Bead Assembler

“I am proud that I did not get a reject last year. That means I got a bonus every month.”

Molly Linda Djan
Cape Coast Seamstress

“When you ask a question, I bring my mind, you bring your mind, and we solve problems together.”

Mary Koomson
Cape Coast Batiker
Acheiving Goals; Realizing Impact

The most exciting moments at Global Mamas are when goals are achieved – either at the organizational or individual level – and we all get to celebrate together. As an organization we are intentional about creating opportunities, beyond our commitment to providing steady work, which can support the Mamas in achieving their goals. This ranges from peer group mentorship through our SMART Goals program, to business training workshops, and includes access to our Equipment Revolving Loan Fund. Over the years, many Mamas have taken advantage of these resources and this year in particular we wanted to share just a few of the goals that have been achieved.

A TIME OF TRANSITION

If you’ve been following our progress on the Fair Trade Zone, you may know we are closing our Ashaiman office to transition to a new location in Akuse, a small town located near the land purchased for our future campus. Anticipating added travel time, several of the Mamas from the Ashaiman office were reluctant to change locations, but at the same time didn’t want to lose their partnership with Global Mamas. With our full support they made the decision to create their own in-home businesses, allowing them to work remotely. Global Mamas staff have set about making sure sure these Mamas have the tools and support they need for their businesses to thrive.

Working from home gives the Mamas several personal benefits such as reduced travel expenses and defining their own schedule. They train and partner with additional women to build their production capacity. Stella Dela is one of the Ashaiman Mamas who made the change from the office were reluctant to change locations, but at the same time didn’t want to lose their partnership with Global Mamas. With our full support they made the decision to create their own in-home businesses, allowing them to work remotely. Global Mamas staff have set about making sure sure these Mamas have the tools and support they need for their businesses to thrive.

Lydia Asare with the machine she purchased through the Loan Fund.

Although it might not always be the most efficient option, at each of our locations we try to be flexible with how we operate. This allows each individual Mama to decide what makes the most sense for herself, her family, and community. As we complete the transition to the new Akuse location, we look forward to finding additional ways to make this change beneficial for everyone.

EQUIPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Our Equipment Revolving Loan Fund was established over a decade ago to provide Mamas with access to more efficient production equipment for their growing businesses. With many immediate needs riding on every paycheck, it’s often hard for Mamas to accumulate enough capital to make a significant investment. Small bank loans may sometimes be available, but can be hard to obtain or have restrictively high interest rates. Through the support of our donors, we have been able to offer Mama business owners access to new sewing machines, batik equipment, and other production tools.

What is a revolving loan? When a donor gives Global Mamas $300 to purchase a new sewing machine, we reach out to the Mama who is next in line and interested in upgrading her equipment. Together we review the Mama’s typical order size and determine a payment plan that is feasible given the Mama’s expenses. Most Mamas repay these interest-free loans within a year. Once the money is repaid the money goes back into the fund to support the next Mama. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

This past year, Global Mamas was able to help five Mamas acquire new, high-quality sewing machines through the equipment loan program. Cape Coast seamstress Lydia Asare was able to pay off her new machine in just six months. She was happy to be able to get a new machine through the program since she wouldn’t have been able to make such a large payment on her own. Lydia has been sewing for Global Mamas for almost nine years, eight years working as an employee for another Mama and one year as a business owner. Her new machine has allowed her to increase her workload and therefore, her income. In the future, she is looking forward to increased orders so she can support her family and eventually save up to build her own home.

"I save up to protect [my daughter's] future.”

Our Krobo office has traditionally focused on transforming local recycled glass beads into jewelry and ornaments, but in recent years we expanded employment opportunities by adding jobs for weavers to convert our fabric scraps into items such as our popular trivets and woven pillow covers. These new Mamas started setting SMART Goals just one year ago and several have already achieved their savings goals.

Patience Teye and Abigail Ami Atter both set goals to save enough money to send their daughters to secondary school. They set intermediary goals to track their progress along the way, and checked in with their group regularly for accountability. By the end of 2018, they each met their goal and were able to start their daughters off well for their journey ahead. Patience says, “I save up to protect [my daughter’s] future.”

The most common SMART goals made by the Mamas focus on the education and empowerment of their children. We hope you will join us in celebrating the Mamas and their achievements.
The impact of Global Mamas reaches far beyond the Mamas themselves. While many Mamas have not completed a formal education themselves, across the board their top priority is to put their children through the best schooling they can afford. Ghana’s public education system is very competitive and can be very expensive. The likelihood of a child leaving school increases as they age, and by university, gross enrollment is only 16%. The Mamas desire to improve these odds and spread prosperity through their families, their communities, and future generations.

By investing in education, the Mamas contribute to the empowerment and advancement of women and children in Ghana. In 2018, the Mamas sent 248 children to school, including not only their immediate offspring, but also nieces, nephews, and even family friends. Many of their children are now working on advanced degrees or have graduated and are in the workforce.

Elizabeth Assem supported her two daughters’ education through the university level, using earnings from her partnership with Global Mamas for tuition and other school fees. Her oldest daughter, Gifty, graduated from nursing school and is a full-time practicing nurse in Cape Coast. Her future aspirations include obtaining a master’s degree and helping to care for her community. Perfect, Elizabeth’s youngest daughter, has big dreams of her own. She is currently enrolled at the University of Cape Coast and studying education. She hopes to become a teacher and educate young students in Math and English. Elizabeth’s daughters embody her work ethic and strength and will serve as catalysts of change for their family and community.

Batiker, Agnes “Aggie” Cole Arthur, is supporting her daughter in University, and also her nephew, Theo. Seamstress Elizabeth Assem and her daughter Perfect.

“I sent my daughter to nursing college by paying her admission fees with the earnings [I made] from Global Mamas.”

Elizabeth Esi Arkaah
Cape Coast Seamstress

Perfect is not alone in wanting to provide other young Ghanaians with the knowledge and opportunity she was fortunate to receive. Sabina Hasford’s daughter, Gloria, is currently working towards a degree in agricultural science at the University of Cape Coast. Her professional goals are to help improve the lives of Ghananian farmers and improve the lives of children through teaching. Charlotte Bart-Plange’s son, NII, now lives in Accra after graduating from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology with a degree in fine arts; his passion is teaching children the value of arts and providing an education for them beyond technical skills. Betty Cudjoe’s daughter, Ndawewah, studied French at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and hopes to one day teach young children while supporting the education of her three younger siblings.

Beyond a heart for teaching, many of the Mamas’ children are pursuing careers in the social and technical sciences. This year, Global Mamas batiker Juliana Mustapha celebrated her daughter Aisha’s graduation from the University of Ghana in Legon with a degree in Biochemical Engineering. Aisha is now looking at employment opportunities with the Ghana Army. Aggie Cole Arthur’s daughter, Felicia, is studying sociology at the University of Ghana and after graduation plans to use her education to support those in need in her community as a social worker. Gina Afenyo’s three children, Vera, Ernest, and Dominic, are all studying in the scientific fields, with Vera planning to begin her doctorate program in 2019.

Through hard work and determination the Mamas are empowering their children and equipping them with the education and resources they need to succeed.

Aisha Mustapha graduated this year with a degree in Biochemical Engineering making her batiker mother very proud.

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Through hard work and determination, the Mamas are empowering their children and equipping them with the education and resources they need to succeed.
In Ghana over the last 15 years we have hosted over 600 volunteers and interns from around the globe. Projects have included providing bookkeeping training to the Mamas, designing new products, and facilitating preventative education for better health. Global Mamas would not be where we are today if it were not for the invaluable expertise of our many volunteers and interns. This year we want to highlight just a few of their stories and contributions to our community:

**Abbey Smith, Erika Arakawa and Ali Mefford**

In 2018, we hosted 25 volunteers. We were thrilled to host Abby Smith, from University of Notre Dame, and Erika Arakawa and Ali Mefford, from Indiana University, for their summer internships. Abby and Ali both worked on marketing projects with a focus on social media content creation highlighting the work of the Mamas. They also co-led our 2018 Design Competition which brings the Mamas’ creative talents into our new product development process.

Erika worked as a financial intern, providing the Mamas with tools to manage their professional and personal income through improved accounting systems. She also developed templates in Excel to help Global Mamas better track and manage our Equipment Revolving Loan Fund. Erika leveraged her experience in Ghana and is currently interning for Discover France in Montpellier, France. Erika shares, “Living in Ghana prepared me to live in a new country with a foreign language and motivated me to gain more international business experience.” We are grateful for the contributions made by these three talented interns.

**Jane Graham**

Jane first volunteered with Global Mamas in 2008 and has been returning each year for nearly 10 years. Jane is an incredibly talented artist and travels to Ghana during her spring break to help design and sample new batik fabrics. Jane has developed many successful prints over the years including the popular Sailing, Cars, and Hydrangea designs. When she isn’t in Ghana, Jane works as a high school art teacher and is currently developing a program for a new high school where she will teach digital photography, studio art, and ceramics. Gina Adefyio, also an art teacher, is one of Jane’s favorite Global Mamas batikers to partner with on new design development. The two have a lot in common and enjoy their annual visits. As you can imagine, Jane has built up quite a collection of favorite memories over the years, but she says this lasting friendship with Gina is by far the highlight.

**Emi Yoshidomi Elliot**

In addition to hosting short-term volunteers, Global Mamas has benefitted from long-term volunteers joining us from programs such as the US Peace Corps and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Emi Yoshidomi was assigned to Global Mamas through JICA and we were incredibly lucky to have her talents for two years. Emi’s background was in clothing design, which meant she was a perfect fit to assist the Mamas in new product development. During her volunteer service Emi worked on new product design, pattern drafting, and pattern grading. One of Emi’s most successful products was the dress we named after her – the Emi dress, which was a top seller for nearly a decade. Emi also empowered the Mamas with new technical skills through personal mentorship and group training. She has a fabulous, creative eye and the Mamas loved working with her.

A fun twist to the story is that while living in Ghana, Emi met another Global Mamas volunteer, Jeb Elliott. Jeb was visiting with a short-term group from West Point Academy and the two hit it off. They are now married with two adorable children. While in Ghana, Emi observed that “people were friendlier when I spoke Fante (the local language in Cape Coast), used local transport, and ate their local food. I felt like they treated me like a local rather than just a tourist when I made that extra effort. That made my two years easier and happier.”

**Shawn Jones and Greg Coyle**

This fantastic couple ended up being a two for one. Shawn joined us as a graphic design intern while working to complete her degree requirements. She brought along her husband, Greg, a self-employed writer. Greg came for the adventure, but we quickly engaged him in several projects. Shawn worked diligently on designing our 2009 catalog, as well as the branding and packaging for what became our Slippery Slope Shea Butter and Trunk Scrub Shea Soap. Greg completed a variety of writing projects, most notably writing content for our coffee table book **Joe’s Hair That Talks**, which remains a top seller at our store in Accra.

Shawn and Greg now are both part of a dynamic creative team at CMD, an advertising and marketing agency in Portland, Oregon. They say that traveling remains a keystone of their lives, and recently participated in a volunteer trip back to Africa by way of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana.

During their time in Ghana, Shawn and Greg stayed in one of our homestay options, with Wallace and Aba Kwaw. Greg mentions that having dinner with the Kwaws each night was one of the memories he cherishes. He noted that, “trying to single out one experience from that life-changing trip is like being asked to pick your favorite child. Every day was a new adventure. A cascade of memories come to mind …including our thrilling, and occasionally dicey, expedition to Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast with fellow volunteers who very quickly became lifelong friends.”

**Shawn and Greg enjoying a fun evening.**
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Holly Wick
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Lisa Swisher & the Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church of Portage, MI
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Monica Morrissey
Ritch & Tami Adams
Laura Buhs & the Atonement Lutheran Church of Lakewood, CO

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Tim Mcdonough

"There are things that I could never do before, but after Global Mamas became my customer, I was able to do them all."

Emmanuel Ayertey Narh
Krobo Bead Producer

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OUR MISSION
The Global Mamas community works together to create a life of prosperity—financial well-being, happiness, and health—for African women and their families. We achieve prosperity by creating and selling handmade products of the highest quality.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Donate - Be a part of funding the sustainable growth of businesses and women’s empowerment in Ghana with a tax-deductible donation. www.globalmamas.org/Info/Donate

Purchase Products - By purchasing Global Mamas products, you are offering women in Ghana the opportunity to achieve prosperity. All proceeds go directly to the women and nonprofit programs that assist them with business development. www.shopglobalmamas.com

Volunteer in Ghana - Volunteers work with the women of the Global Mamas community to support them in realizing their dreams. Through a short-term volunteer assignment, you will be able to use your skills to make a difference in the future of the women and their families. www.globalmamas.org/Volunteers

Host a Prosperity Party - You can host a Global Mamas pop-up shop in a place of your choice. Earn 10% of sales for your favorite cause or as a Global Mamas gift card. www.globalmamas.org/info/prosperityparty

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