



Global Grassroots
CONSCIOUS SOCIAL CHANGE FOR WOMEN



GLOBAL GRASSROOTS 2021 MID-YEAR UPDATE

Initiating Change From the Inside Out

A year has passed since the brutal murder of George Floyd by a white police officer on a street corner in Minneapolis. While the ages-long oppression, discrimination, and violence facing BIPOC communities in the U.S. and beyond have become increasingly visible, there is much more work to do to overhaul the oppressive structures and underlying belief systems that continue to undermine true justice and progress.

Last July, Global Grassroots made a renewed commitment to conscious change -- within ourselves, our organization, and our world – towards this end. We have started with ourselves, with a willingness to be vulnerable, listen deeply, learn from one another, seek out wise teachers, and make difficult, but necessary changes. And we agreed to keep you updated.

As we reflect back on the last year, we wanted to share our progress. For 15 years, we have celebrated and invested in the leadership and social change solutions of African women and girls as our core mission. But we realized that as an American-founded organization, with an all-white senior staff and governing board based in the U.S., we were not living our values at the highest levels. Starting from within our own ranks, we began a process of internal evaluation, bringing on advisors in liberatory power dynamics and transformative systems change to ensure our approach was led by our own local staff and informed by our broader community in East Africa. We reaffirmed our values and examined how we could do better to live those values within our organization and work.

Guided by our commitment to the wisdom and power of marginalized communities to determine their own priorities and solutions, to a culture of wellbeing, and to a mindful approach toward systemic change, we collaboratively designed a vision to transition to an all Africa-led Global Grassroots. We are now implementing on that vision. In just under a year, this has included:

- We shifted all our major functions except fundraising to Africa, more than doubling our staff in Rwanda and scaling back our U.S.-based staff.
- We have invited three new board members to join us from Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Africa, and are on a path for our board to have a majority representation of African women by the end of 2021. We are also expanding our African advisory council.
- We are establishing a new Rwandan NGO and hiring a new East Africa Director, who will lead all programmatic, strategic, spending, and operational decision-making from our new, official headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda.
- We are completing the 12-month certification of all our program staff in Africa as Conscious Social Change facilitators of our curriculum, so that we no longer rely on foreign trainers. And as we go, our facilitators are also reviewing and refining the curriculum in the ways they believe will maximize its effectiveness, responsiveness and cultural relevance in the communities where we work.
- We are overhauling our monitoring and evaluation plan and have invested in an ethical digital storytelling training for all our staff to ensure we approach impact assessment, learning, and storytelling as an empowering partnership with our local change agents.

As we initiate change from the inside out first, we also know we will only reach the level of collective wellbeing and equality we need for all people to flourish by also dismantling and repairing the systems that have created so much harm. We know we have much more to do as individuals and as an organization on a societal level too. We believe this work must start from within. Science increasingly affirms that the inner work of mindfulness trains our brains in ways that are essential to our capacity to lead, understand others, and solve problems more effectively and compassionately. And so we remain committed to our ongoing transformation as well as our contribution towards our greater collective self-awareness. We look forward to continuing to share our progress on these many fronts and to share the stories of courage and impact from the conscious change leaders we support across East Africa.

With deep respect,



Gretchen K. Steidle
Founder & President



*“Diversities will always exist.
Ubuntu (I am because you are)
should be our identity.”*

- Gyslaine Uwitonze,
East Africa Senior Program Officer



COVID-19 UPDATE

Globally, the COVID vaccine has been administered at a ratio of 150 doses per 1,000 people, but in sub-Saharan Africa only eight doses per 1,000 people have been distributed. With vaccine equity top-of-mind as only the more privileged parts of the world start to move towards normalcy, Global Grassroots is doing its part to mobilize resources that serve to empower communities to protect themselves. Throughout this challenging year so far, we have discovered how agile and effective our Conscious Social Change model is, allowing us to embrace principles of interconnection over division, collaboration and compromise versus competition, and inclusivity that honors the wisdom of all people rather than imposing the agenda of a powerful few over those at the edges.

Within our Women's Water Leadership portfolio, we currently have nine teams in their first year of operations that we are mentoring as they near graduation from our incubator and reach self-sufficiency in serving 18,000+ people in Rwanda and Uganda with safe, clean water access. Further, we are preparing to initiate 5-7 new ventures as part of our Accelerator portfolio this year and we continue to partner across all water teams who are actively responding to the pandemic with ongoing soap making enterprises, hygiene training, and handwashing stations that serve 600+ households.



"I am so happy for these new soap making skills. I am a mother of three children and I normally cultivate land for feeding my family members. Yesterday, when I attended the soap making training, I took a sample home. We used it for mopping, washing dishes and clothes, and bathing and saw the improvement of hygiene. I gave it to one of my neighbors who came to visit us and she told me that everyone at her home was surprised to hear that I was the one involved in making it. I plan on continuing to make soap, promoting hygiene, and making an income for my family from selling it."

*–Phoebe Mukarugina
Team Trust Each Other II*



Investing in our Values

In order to scale our impact and influence, we have focused our efforts on building organizational capacity that best reflects our values and where we work. As a result, we have hired three wonderful new team members in Rwanda in addition to adding three exceptional female African board members. Our Kigali office welcomes Esperance Ineza, our East Africa Administrative and Finance Officer, Genevieve “Atosha” Iranyuze, Program Assistant, and Alain Placide Nsabimana, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer. Alain Placide’s role is critical, in particular, as we continue to strengthen our monitoring systems to improve programs and share key learnings with our sector community as thought leaders. We have also welcomed a new Director of Development and U.S. Operations, Zara Bott-Goins, who comes to us with 15 years of experience building the foundation of support for mission-driven organizations across East Africa.

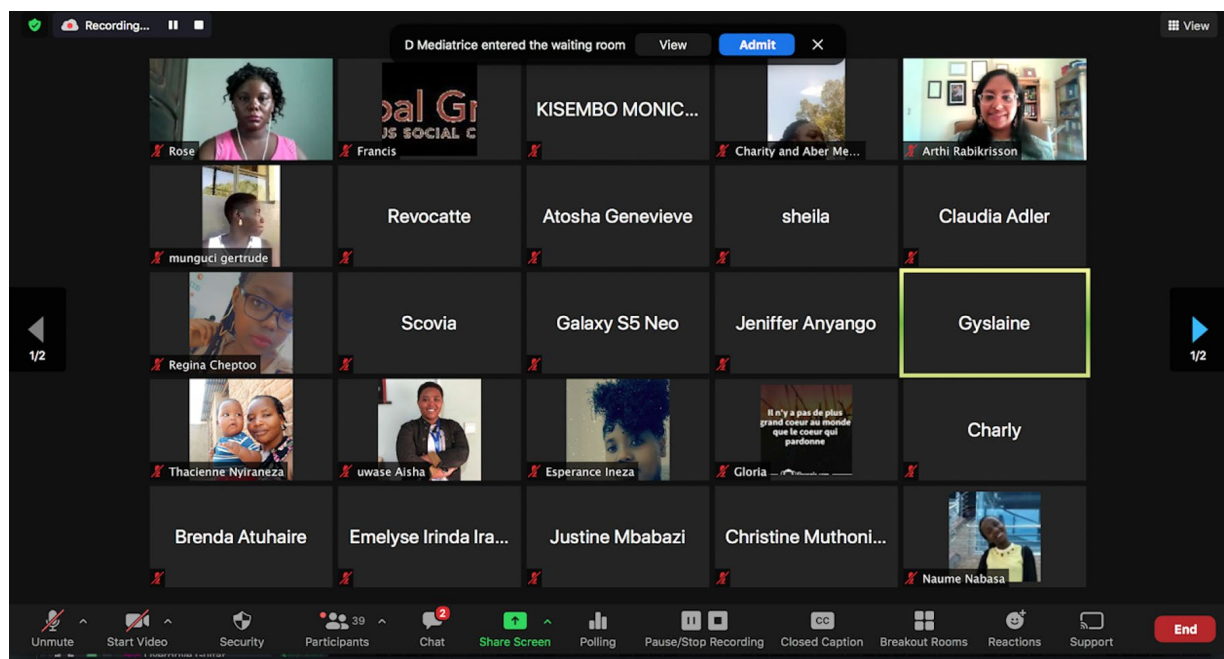
Our three new board members hail from across the continent including Sharmila Bhatt in Tanzania, Arthi Rabikrisson in South Africa and Marie Odette Kansanga Ndahiro in Rwanda. They collectively bring vast knowledge of the African continent in addition to financial and business expertise, fundraising acumen, big ideas, and dedication to our mission. We continue our search for board members among the extraordinary women leaders of Africa, and anticipate achieving our goal of reaching a majority representation of African women on our board by the end of 2021.

Additionally, our East African staff successfully completed an eight-week capacity-building program in digital storytelling led by Susan Patrice, documentary photographer and our former Communications Officer, deepening their intentional photography and narrative skills to better tell the important stories of our women change leaders. In May, all of our East Africa staff completed an intensive 50-hour Conscious Social Change training in our core curriculum led by our founder and President Gretchen Ki Steidle. This training, part of a larger 12-month certification program, helped build understanding of our philosophy and approach, foster connection, strengthen mindfulness practice, and draw insights into possible programmatic changes that may be needed in future programs. Each trainee participated as if they were a social venture team to ensure that they could experience the program the way our Global Grassroots change agents experience it. They are now preparing to spearhead our newest training programs for our women and young women alumni.

Young Women's Alumni Engagement Program

Our Young Women's Alumni Engagement Program (YWAEP) held its inaugural meeting March 27th. The YWAEP is meant to build support and connections among our 200+ graduates of our Young Women's Academy since 2012 by building an online community during this pandemic period as well as providing an opportunity for select participants to receive funding for continuance of their social ventures.

Our inaugural meeting was a success with over 50 alumnae gathering virtually from across East Africa, and as far away as Japan and Turkey. These meetings that cover topics such as social entrepreneurial leadership, project management, and Conscious Social Change methodology, will continue to be a connective gathering space providing support, bonding, and potential funding for a few expansion ventures moving forward.



Alumni Spotlight: Grace Uwizeye

Grace Uwizeye, a 2012 graduate of Global Grassroots' Young Women's Academy has used her Conscious Social Change training to become a deeply respected leader in her community with the work she is doing as Founder and Director of a nonprofit in Gahanga, Rwanda called [Nyampinga Ushoboye](#) ("Miss Capable"). Grace experienced first-hand the struggles that teenage and single mothers face, having herself been raised by her grandmother. She felt compelled to find a way to contribute her skills, passion, and leadership to improving the lives of young women in her community.

Nyampinga Ushoboye provides a full spectrum of services for young women facing challenges with teen pregnancy, sexual assault and domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, and mental health. Grace has built an ecosystem of support for these young women with programs like the Young Women's Economic Empowerment Program that provided sewing machines and training for single mothers to increase income for their families, a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights campaign in Gahanga, and forming support groups to help young women find sisterhood, resources and confidence.

We are overjoyed to see the important work that Grace is doing to uplift her community and we are eager to amplify her voice, passion, and mission. Her motto is "Leave your comfort zone. Leave a legacy". Visit Nyampinga Ushoboye's website to learn more about the impactful legacy she is building.





DEEPENING INVESTMENT, COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

ACCELERATOR-INVESTING

Global Grassroots has continued to deepen its investment and collaboration within our existing communities of women change agents in 2021. As a result, our women-led teams are creating profound ripple effects on health, equity, and well-being in their broader communities. These teams are already serving a combined 10,651 people with sustainable and safe access to clean water. Further, teams have trained 6,760 people to date through a range of educational workshops focused on gender equity, hygiene, family planning, income generation, and nutrition.

We have now completed our search process to form the portfolio of the next five to seven teams in Rwanda that will enter our Accelerator program in 2021, which we expect will reach another 12,000-15,000 people with clean water access. They include: Invincible, Hold Each Other Jali, Trust Each Other, Eternal Beauty, Hold Each Other Gahanga, We are Together, and Cleanliness as Heritage.

We are particularly excited to engage with Team Trust Each Other and their services in the Nyarugenge District. Here, near the Nyabarongo River, there have been many crocodile attacks on community members trying to collect water from the river. This area is also home to a community of widowed and single-mother families who struggle with distance and cleanliness of water sources in the area. Team Trust Each Other is eager to install a pipeline and water tap not only to bring safe, clean water to these families but also to expand their social transformation activities focused on reproductive health and WASH training.



Team Hygiene & Culture

Jali Sector Expansion Project

Team Hygiene & Culture (H&C) launched their first water venture in 2016 with a mission of providing a new, clean water source that would lead to improved hygiene. They focused their efforts on hygiene, family planning, and gender equity training for the community. As a result, 90% of the community gained access to clean water; a dramatic increase in accessibility. In 2019, H&C received an expansion grant from Global Grassroots that allowed them to extend their reach and impact even further.

Update: Currently, the team has facilitated 2,391 people from five villages with access to clean water. They have leveraged their reach to provide four train the trainer workshops on the topics of gender equity, family planning, and nutrition, in

which 21 couples became facilitators. Included in their nutrition training, 576 women and 708 men have been trained on how to grow a kitchen garden for balanced nutrition leading to the construction of 52 gardens with an additional 38 gardens constructed by the community.

With their track record of improving water access from 26% to 77% due to investments into expansion project in new villages, reducing malnutrition from 55% to 5% and reducing waterborne illness from 36% to 15%, this team has been recognized by their community and regional leadership office as a respected social change group contributing significantly to community wellbeing.



Team Vision

Jali Sector Expansion Project

Team Vision, launched in 2017, has a mission to improve the wellbeing and health of families by helping women with water-related income-generating activities. They were successful in supplying clean water to more than 3,200 people, providing family planning sessions for more than 180 couples, and creating a lending circle that grew to include 193 women. In 2019, Global Grassroots provided an additional grant to Team Vision to add two 5,000 liter water tanks which allow them to serve an additional 1,992 individuals.

Update: Through perseverance and hard work, this team is now providing clean water to 90% of their community leading to a 60% reduction of water-borne diseases among 45 households surveyed in the span of a year. In response to the COVID

pandemic, they are providing ongoing support in the form of food, water, and sanitation supplies to at-risk community members. Seventy-eight couples have been trained as trainers on family planning methods, and the number of women surveyed who are participating in community savings groups has doubled. The team is particularly proud to share that six team members were selected to join COVID-19 prevention and awareness efforts in neighboring communities.

Team Vision is now excited to look ahead as an independent venture, planning to continue building on their successes by mastering soapmaking to train single mothers on this income-generating skill and to reach more young women in the coming year of operations.



Team Hard Workers

Expansion Project

Team Hard Workers, founded in 2007 and led by a group of ten women in Gahanga Sector, is one of Global Grassroots' longest operating water ventures and has seen four expansions as they work to eliminate disease, violence, and poor hygiene resulting from unclean water. Team Hard Workers' mission is focused on ending the sexual exploitation of vulnerable women, including the blind and disabled, in exchange for water delivery and addressing waterborne illnesses.

Update: As of March 2021, they are managing four water sites with eight tanks and four water pipelines, supplying water to more than 12,000 people. The team is providing hygiene training focused on handwashing and other practices, and has produced a total of 180 liters of liquid soap monthly for sale at low-cost, serving more than 150 households, including direct installation of handwashing stations. Thirteen vulnerable

families are receiving two jerry cans of free water per day, and each family receives two liters of liquid soap for their hand washing.

Team Hard Workers has been able to raise sufficient revenue from the soapmaking project to help sustain their venture. Looking ahead, they aim to build-out local partnerships to revitalize nearby existing water wells to improve water access for surrounding communities. The team is creating partnerships with district leaders, local banks, and the municipal water company, all of whom want to work with the team towards greater expansion in the area.

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Team Unite Jali

Jali Sector Expansion Project

Team Unite Jali launched in 2016 with the mission of improving the lives of women and girls in their community. Not only did they provide 3,000+ people with clean water close to their community, but they also facilitated income-generation through small community-based businesses. In addition to improved access to water, Team Unite Jali has focused their efforts on family planning and gender equity through services to 60 families who experience domestic violence. Their hope is to help transform the way women are valued in their community while also working to promote hygiene practices to decrease the spread of disease.

Update: In 2021, Unite Jali's expansion project has allowed them to extend their pipeline from

the existing site to a holding tank 2 km away to bring water closer to two nearby communities, serving an additional 621 households, or 2,484 people with access to clean water, increasing water access from 30% of households to nearly 70%. This team is also very proud of their gender equity and family planning training that provided 43 couples with a safe space for important dialogue around these issues. Ensuring that their venture was reaching everyone in the community, Team Unite Jali is also providing 28 vulnerable households with free water and soap in addition to soap sales to 80 households. In the coming year, Unite Jali plans to continue water sales, gender equity training, and family planning sessions with a more youth-focused approach.

Unite Jali's Community Impact

Mukarusagara Eugenie is a mother of six children ranging from ages 3 to 14 and a widow struggling to make enough income for her family. Her first two children dropped out of school to support the family, which deeply distressed her. The Unite Jali Team witnessed her challenges and wanted to help by providing two jerry cans of water per day to the family along with liquid soap that the team had learned to make themselves. Eugenie went on to help deliver water to other single mothers for a fee as her own business.

Through this relationship between Unite Jali and Eugenie, she was able to save 500 Rwf (Rwandan Francs) per week in the Nyamitanga savings group. With her savings and a loan from this savings group, she started her own livestock business with one pig. Her business has since grown and she now has 12 pigs that she expects to sell, which will earn 400,000 Rwf for herself and her family.

Eugenie shared that she now feels more confident and hopeful about life. She is particularly thankful that her first two children have returned to school. She says, "I have been able to make money from water delivery because the water source was trusted and near my community. Unite not only changed my life, but also my entire family. My children are happier and can think, hope, and work towards their future".

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– Mukarusagara Eugenie



Team Bright Future

Jali Sector Expansion Project

When they launched their first water venture in 2017, Team Bright Future brought clean water to more than 2,731 people or 546 households. Bright Future also collaborated with social health workers to identify and intervene on behalf of women in the community most at risk for domestic violence and youth ages 12-18 who are at the highest risk for early and illegal marriage. Last year, the team requested and received expansion funding from Global Grassroots to share their community training services with additional community members and also received funding for their new water access point to serve 536 additional households in four villages.

Update: Bright Future is excited to share that a new school has been built in their community that will welcome 1,456 students. Their water access point served 100% of the construction activities for this facility. This water source will reduce water collection time from three hours to 45 minutes, improving school attendance tremendously.

Additional successes include training 27 couples on gender rights and domestic violence prevention, organizing water treatment and up-keep trainings

for more than 145 people, and notable increases of men collecting water rather than only women. As Bright Future looks ahead, they are excited to continue hygiene workshops at the water sites as water access continues to increase for their surrounding community.



Team Hold Each Other

Expansion Project

Team Hold Each Other is a team of 31 members working to address the issue of gender-based violence resulting from water collection, including children being abused at water access points, missing school, dropping out of school, and the trigger of domestic violence from long water collection times and poor hygiene. Launched in 2016, their first water site has been providing clean water to nearly 5,000 people. The team has also been committed to the critical issue of family planning and reproductive health education. Hold Each Other received a second grant from Global Grassroots last year to expand their pipeline 1.5 km away to Kanyinya community, Rutunga Sector, Gasabo District.

Update: Since the expansion site began operations in late 2020, the team now serves approximately 576 households (2,215 people) with clean water. They have also been very successful in providing gender equity and domestic violence training, offering a three-day workshop to 80 couples. Hold Each Other partnered with a church, a female chief council representative from Jali sector, and a child protection lawyer to provide training on children's rights to 216 parents. Water treatment and hygiene have also been a focus for the team, training 163 people at the water source site. They look forward to continuing to expand access to clean water and family planning training for couples.





Board Highlights

“After years of being a Rotarian and having had a first-hand experience in implementing WASH Projects in Tanzania and Uganda, I was looking to make a contribution to an organization that worked in my region. With operations in Uganda and Rwanda, Global Grassroots is helping women become agents of conscious social change including implementing WASH projects as small-scale entrepreneurs. It has been four months since I have joined the Board and the organization is now transitioning to African leadership, which is going to be powerful and healing by providing communities with homegrown solutions for sustainable livelihoods.”

- Sharmila Bhatt, Board Member, Tanzania

“Global Grassroots’ focus on Conscious Social Change leadership, promoting the growth of social ventures in Rwanda and Uganda, catalysing significant upliftment of the communities as a result of this, and also aiding the next generation of young women leaders to be agents of change – these are all purposeful ideas that I believe in too. The recognition by the board that the organization needed to become African-rooted even at a board level showcased to me that there was a readiness for the entity to continue its focus with African leaders and solutions.”

- Arthi Rabikrisson, Board Member, South Africa



Community

We are grateful that the training and infrastructure Global Grassroots has built over 15 years with grassroots women has created an organization prepared and determined to meet any challenge with mindfulness and resolve. Our Conscious Social Change methodology in particular has had a profound effect on women and girls during this time, helping them to realize that they have deep, valuable wisdom to share and enabling them to develop their voices in order to share it and help serve their communities.

The generous support of our community across the world sustains the impactful work that Global Grassroots is accomplishing together with our women change agents. Please consider joining our vibrant community by following us on social media, investing in our work, or connecting with us via email at zbottgoins@globalgrassroots.org. As we look towards the end of the year and beyond, we are activated and uplifted by the inspirational way we all join hands to do this hard and important work together. Please click on the social media links below to stay in touch!





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