

Thank you for all your support!

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[www.worldconnect-us.org](http://www.worldconnect-us.org)



World Connect  
2010 Annual Report

[www.worldconnect-us.org](http://www.worldconnect-us.org)





Dear Supporters,

Hello and welcome to World Connect circa 2010. You'll notice significant changes since our last annual report, not the least of which is that at this time last year we were addressing you as Infante Sano, a Dominican Republic nonprofit that focused exclusively on the health of mothers and newborns in hospital settings. In addition we had a kids-run program, called Kids to Kids which was started by savvy middle schoolers who related to what kids their age – despite cultural differences – might need in order to enjoy happy, healthy and fun childhoods.

As always, our focus is still women and children's health and wellbeing. Our Kids to Kids organizers continue to raise funds, select projects and financially support their contemporaries in 10 countries, six of which were new adventures in 2010. And World Connect is thrilled to have served more than 80,000 at-risk women, children and youngsters in 11 countries, and there's more...much more to come.

What has changed, however, is our thinking about expertise on women's needs: where that knowledge comes from, how it's delivered and who best makes those decisions. To be honest, we looked over our shoulders at the success of the Kids to Kids program and we began to examine our own lives in the way our younger colleagues had done instinctively. We parsed out the elements that were important in running our own homes, the steps we needed to take to deliver on our own aspirations and how we best manage to care for our friends and families. We factored in respect, dignity and compassion and realized that at the core, we, each of us, are our own experts. Why, then, should women in poorer countries be any less wise?

We began listening in a different way too. We started to rely more heavily on our unique, informal partnership with Peace Corps. In-country Peace Corps volunteers who acted as our eyes and ears on the ground: listening for need, witnessing progress, identifying leadership and directing us to nascent organizations and newly emerged leaders who know best what to do with the small amount of seed money we supply. We call it micro granting and we've

decided to give rather than lend the money because we believe that investing in the ideas of communities and leaders is more effective than creating and reinforcing debt through loans. Micro grants demonstrate trust, confidence and partnership – all key ingredients in supporting the implementation of sustainable solutions. World Connect sees our investments as critical funds that support community-led, early initiatives and propel proven plans to reach a wider target population.

Since March of 2010, World Connect has been funding innovative, grassroots projects selectively and quickly.

To understand what we accomplish and how we do it, please read Beatha's story *below*. In so many ways, she is typical of the women we serve: down on her luck, pivotal to her family's survival, critical to the wellbeing of her community.

*Letter continued on page 3*



#### *Beatha's Story*

Beatha is a 38-year-old widow and mother of four children aged 16 to 22. Her story is typical. Her story is typical. Like many Rwandan women she is poor, a subsistence farmer with just a primary school education. She suffered through the 1994 Hutu/Tutsi civil war. Her husband passed away from AIDS; she too is HIV positive and needs daily medication to prevent the disease from progressing.

Since her husband's death she has been her children's sole provider. Her three oldest are in secondary school, her youngest is in primary school; they receive aid for school fees, uniforms and notebooks in order to attend class. She has experienced periodic bouts of depression, and occasionally has had to rely on others to care for her children.

Since joining the World Connect funded IGANABIKORWA (Moving Forward Cooperative), Beatha's life has significantly improved. She is more social and enjoys meeting people. She has a community with which to discuss issues and find ways to solve them. And she is excited and grateful to have learned how to make and market *igitenge*, the locally preferred fabric for clothing and home decoration, and is looking forward to learning how to make soap.

These are skills that will help Beatha to generate income, which will benefit her family. She hopes one day to have enough money to renovate her mud-brick home and take care for her children's financial future.

We call it Beatha's story but, really, it's World Connect's story as well. What we hope to illustrate by it is how a small amount of seed money, in this case \$2,100 wisely spent, changes lives and gives hope beyond what even we imagined.

We are aware of the demands on your time, your kindness, but while you are making those all-important decisions please keep in mind that you won't find World Connect's name on any fancy offices abroad nor will you find us toting up much in the way of overhead or ample salaries. We are a lean, mean, supply team and we pride ourselves on doing a great deal with very little. We are honored to be your philanthropic choice, and we are dedicated to making every dollar count. You, dear friend, are essential to Beatha's continued progress and to the welfare of the many women like her. And you can help us write the story of Beatha's children and thousands like them.

When we grow as the result of your thoughtful contribution, it will serve to deepen our resolve and expand our work. Please do keep in touch with us in 2011. Here's just some of what's on our to-do list:

- Recreate our brand to accurately reflect the dynamism and nimbleness of who and what World Connect has become.
- Provide language and vehicles by which we (and we hope you) will spread the word of this feisty, turn-on-a-dime, nonprofit that can and does.
- Launch a state-of-the art, interactive website which will afford more transparency into our programs and funding.
- Formalize some existing partnerships and as a result grow our base of support.
- Expand to support a minimum of 250 new projects.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss our work and how your support will help us continue to live our mission. Please contact me, without hesitation, if you have questions or suggestions. Your feedback is invaluable.

Warmest Regards,



Sarah K. Henry  
Executive Director

## Q & A with Sarah Henry - Executive Director

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### **Q. When did the organization change its name from Infante Sano to World Connect? Why?**

World Connect changed its name from Infante Sano in March of 2010. This name change signifies that we have evolved beyond working exclusively in Spanish speaking countries and specifically with infants. The name World Connect indicates a larger expansion in the scope of our work and in the way we carry it out - we are connecting communities. For nearly a year now our work has included programs for women, children and youth in 11 countries.

### **Q. Did the name change indicate a change in programs? How?**

The name change coincided with a change in our program model and how we function. When we considered how we could best use our limited resources we quickly realized that our most successful projects were the ones where we supported locally driven change. We discovered that if we let people lead their own change, they owned it, and made the necessary adjustments along the way to make the project even more successful and sustainable. Our re-invigorated model recognizes that the real expertise and ingenuity to solve local challenges lies in the knowledge and talents of locals, both individuals and groups. Our role is to collaborate to bring local, innovative ideas to life. To identify local ingenuity in the form of grass roots projects and project leaders, we rely on Peace Corps Volunteers who are integrated into 77 countries around the globe. We pride ourselves on being quick to both recognize innovation and to respond to it.

### **Q. Why does World Connect give grants rather than engage in lending?**

Micro lending certainly has its place and we respect the organizations that have successfully used business principles to encourage entrepreneurship. But our mission is a different one, as are our goals: we are supporting ideas for social betterment and encouraging leaders who are capable of pioneering local change. With a small amount of seed money, we are building on local capacity and growing confidence and leadership. The success of one community serves as a model for others, inspiring hope and illustrating that anything is possible. We believe strongly that given the opportunity people can do extraordinary things. World Connect provides micro grants instead of microloans because we want to spark social change at the grassroots level, and support people to

become leaders in their own communities. The vast majority of our grantees are already living below the poverty level and many of them in conditions of extreme poverty; we want to level the playing field. We want money generated for projects to go directly into community hands. It is our core belief that if given support our grantees will be changemakers in their communities. In the countries and places where we are working, people know what needs to be done, but lack the necessary resources to make it happen. That's where we come in! We support local leaders, both adults and youth with BIG ideas of ways to improve the health and wellbeing of women, children and youth, but lack the resources to bring those ideas to life. We spark change on a community level, and promote collective and sustainable social innovation.

**Q. What would you say your biggest successes were in 2010?**

With a core staff of just four people we were able to begin the considerable work of reconfiguring our model and processes, therefore beginning a rebranding process. We learned from, launched, implemented and collaborated on 220 grass roots projects in 11 countries, including six countries that were new to our work. In the immediate aftermath of the crippling earthquake in Haiti we sent nearly \$1.5 million in essential, life-saving equipment to a Partners in Health Hospital, and began rebuilding a leveled elementary school for more than 100 students. On the domestic front, we brought on four new dynamic and talented board members.

**Q. What makes World Connect unique?**

- We are connectors. We connect people to resources and each other.
- We are leveraged. Thanks to our partnership with Peace Corps Volunteers in-country who identify, vet, monitor and evaluate projects, we are able to maximize every dollar.
- We are quick. We respond rapidly to get money and resources into the hands of those who need it most.
- We are inspiring innovation. We focus on lasting solutions to local challenges.
- We are nimble. Thanks to our scaled down staff and energetic board we are able to capitalize on new information by making swift improvements.

**Q. Can you give some idea of what to expect in 2011?**

You can expect the same spunky can-do attitude and values. We want to live the word connect in our new name. To do that we are completely redesigning

our website to make it more interactive, fun, and transparent. We intend to give our donors the ability to directly connect to the projects that appeal to them most. And we want to exchange successes in women's and youth programs to innovators and go-getters around the globe. We want to give voice to women and children who haven't been heard, by telling their powerful and life changing stories.

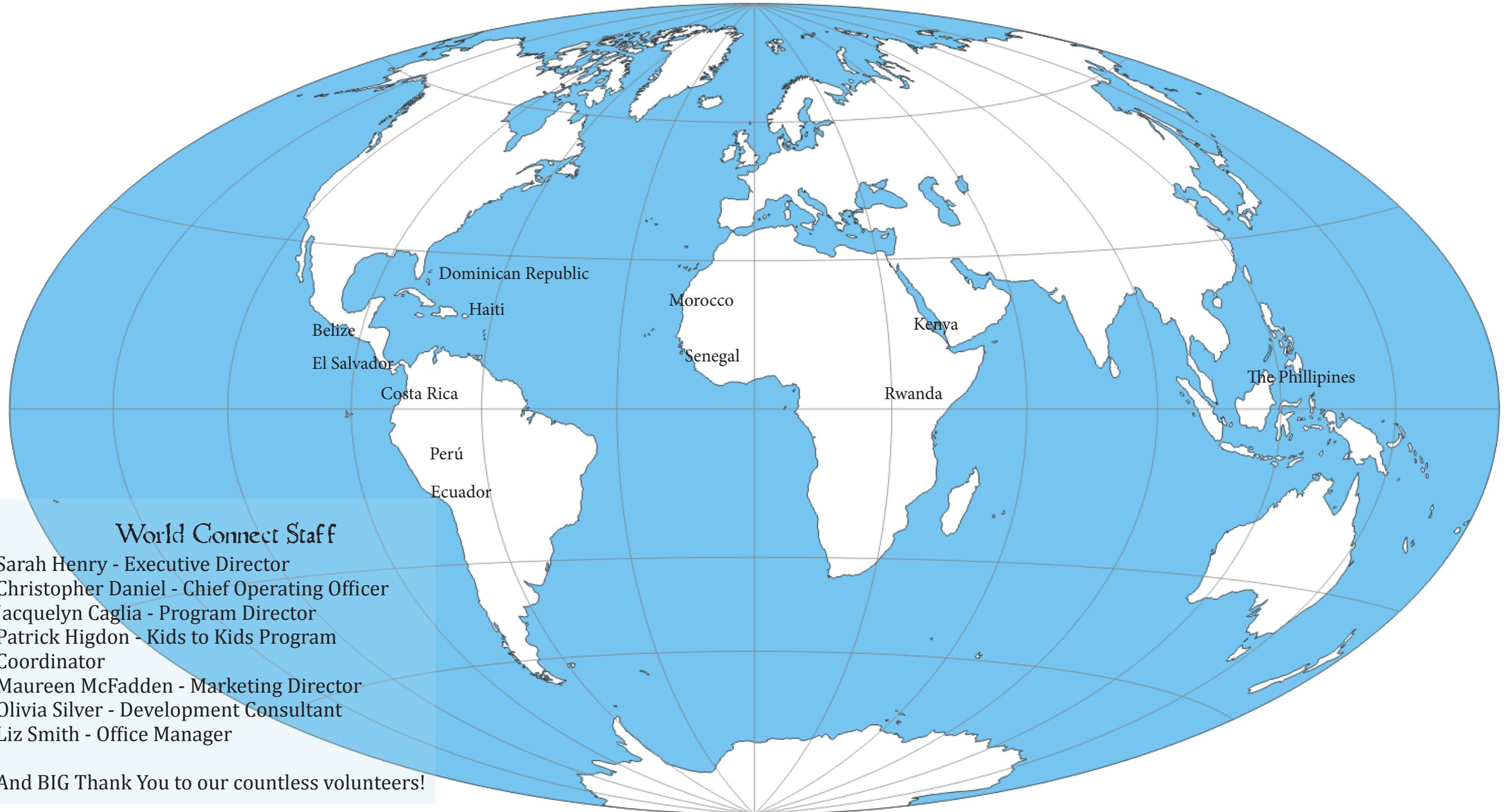




## World Connect Mission

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of women and children in underserved and under-resourced communities **worldwide.**

## Where We Work



### World Connect Staff

Sarah Henry - Executive Director  
Christopher Daniel - Chief Operating Officer  
Jacquelyn Caglia - Program Director  
Patrick Higdon - Kids to Kids Program  
Coordinator  
Maureen McFadden - Marketing Director  
Olivia Silver - Development Consultant  
Liz Smith - Office Manager

And BIG Thank You to our countless volunteers!

## Changing History One Woman at a Time

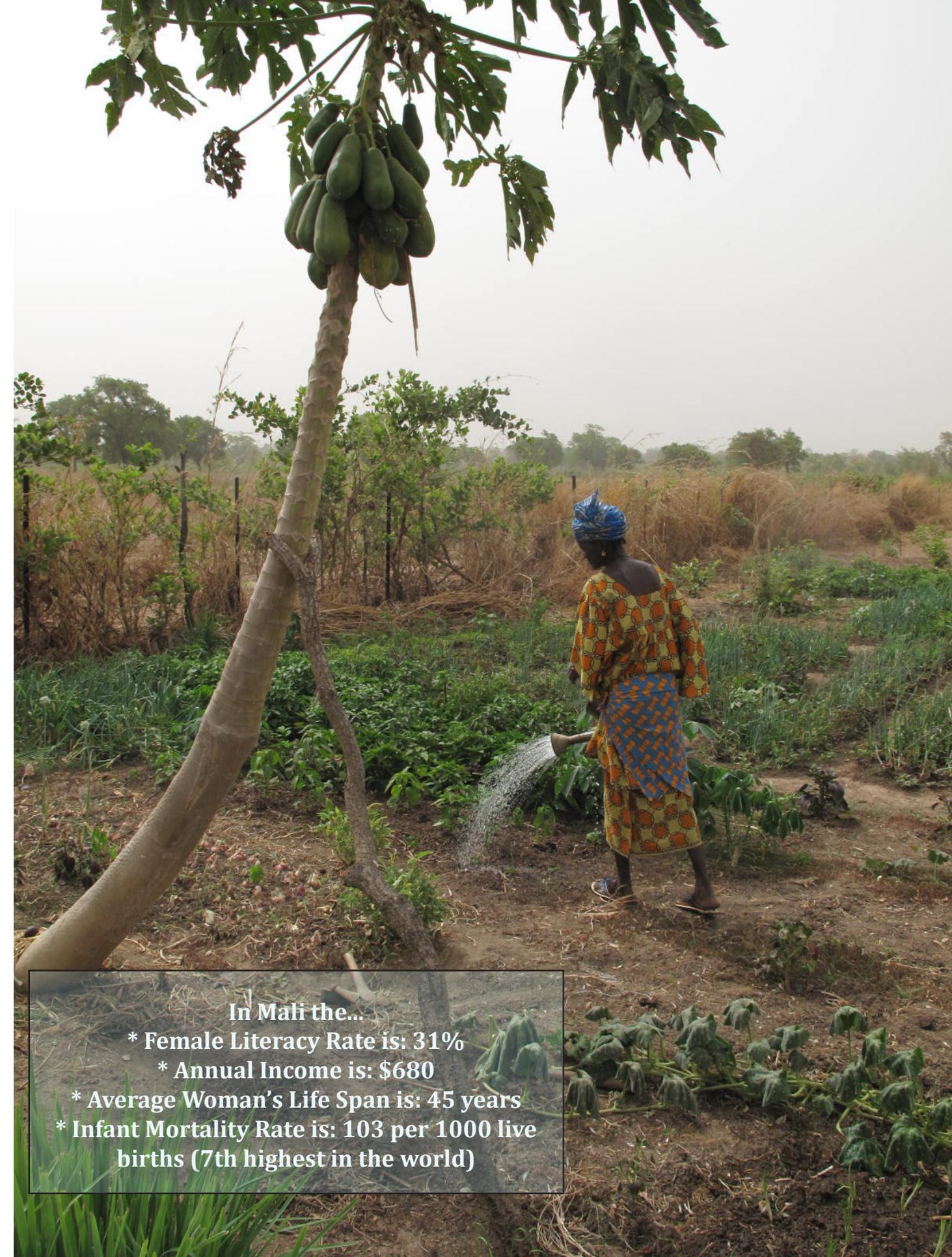
What can \$2,300 buy? In Socourani, a small farming village of 400 residents in the Koulikoro region of Mali, it buys self sufficiency, confidence, productivity and self-esteem – everything that comes through the magic of literacy, a gift that until World Connect intervened, not a single Socourani woman had ever experienced.

Highly motivated and committed to improving the wellbeing of women and children in the community, the members of The Socourani Women's Association traditionally relied on a lone male member to do the reading necessary in managing the group's savings, earmarked for investments and emergencies. But what if the women had a safe place, a building all their own to learn to read and write at their own pace, and to model the value of education for their children? And what would it be like to become wholly responsible for their own finances?

Thanks to World Connect, they were able to find out. Shortly after World Connect's micro grant arrived, the elders planned a three-day literacy teacher training and made plans for the building that would commence once the harvest and rainy season ended. But the women couldn't wait that long. Instead, they began conducting classes after work in the evening; other villagers were trained to use construction materials and began casting bricks by hand.



One Socourani woman in particular tells the story of many. Overwhelmed by what she saw as the impossibility of reading and writing, she stayed away. Her reluctance was supported by her husband who doubted her abilities as well. Persuaded by neighbors to attend classes, however, she was soon proficient in the alphabet. In class, when she stood to sing the Bambara alphabet song she was applauded by classmates and outshone the husband who doubted her.



**In Mali the...**  
\* Female Literacy Rate is: 31%  
\* Annual Income is: \$680  
\* Average Woman's Life Span is: 45 years  
\* Infant Mortality Rate is: 103 per 1000 live births (7th highest in the world)

## Fresh Thinking in Costa Rica

In Volcan Costa Rica there were no greenhouses, nurseries, or even a single place to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Instead, residents relied on itinerant truck vendors to supply produce, often picked over and poor quality.

But with support from a World Connect micro grant for \$2,400, the local women's group got their hands dirty and turned their thumbs green, first by constructing a greenhouse and nursery and then by planting fruit, vegetables and medicinal, herbal and ornamental plants. The harvest both supplemented the family diets and generated income through sale to the larger community.

The journey to sustainable farming moved the women from site reconsideration (the original area was prone to flooding), to constructing compost boxes donated from recycled wood, to considering fees for irrigation to composting. The nutrient rich compost sludge, a mixture of leaves, cow and chicken manure, suero (the liquid leftover from making cheese), rice shells and molasses, needed to stay dry to decompose so land clearing, fence post cutting and lots of irrigation ditches became a part of the process.

So impressed by this learn-as-you-go project was The Del Monte Foods Company that it got involved by leveling the ground for the final greenhouse and donating fence building materials. Even the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock got into the act with continued advice and counsel. Just another example of how World Connect is serving as a catalyst for sustainable local change.



**In Costa Rica the...**  
\* Female Literacy Rate is: 99%  
\* Annual Income is: \$6,260  
\* Average Woman's Life Span is: 79 years  
\* Infant Mortality Rate is: 10 per 1,000 births

## How The Women of Grifo Alto, Costa Rica Now Know How to Sew

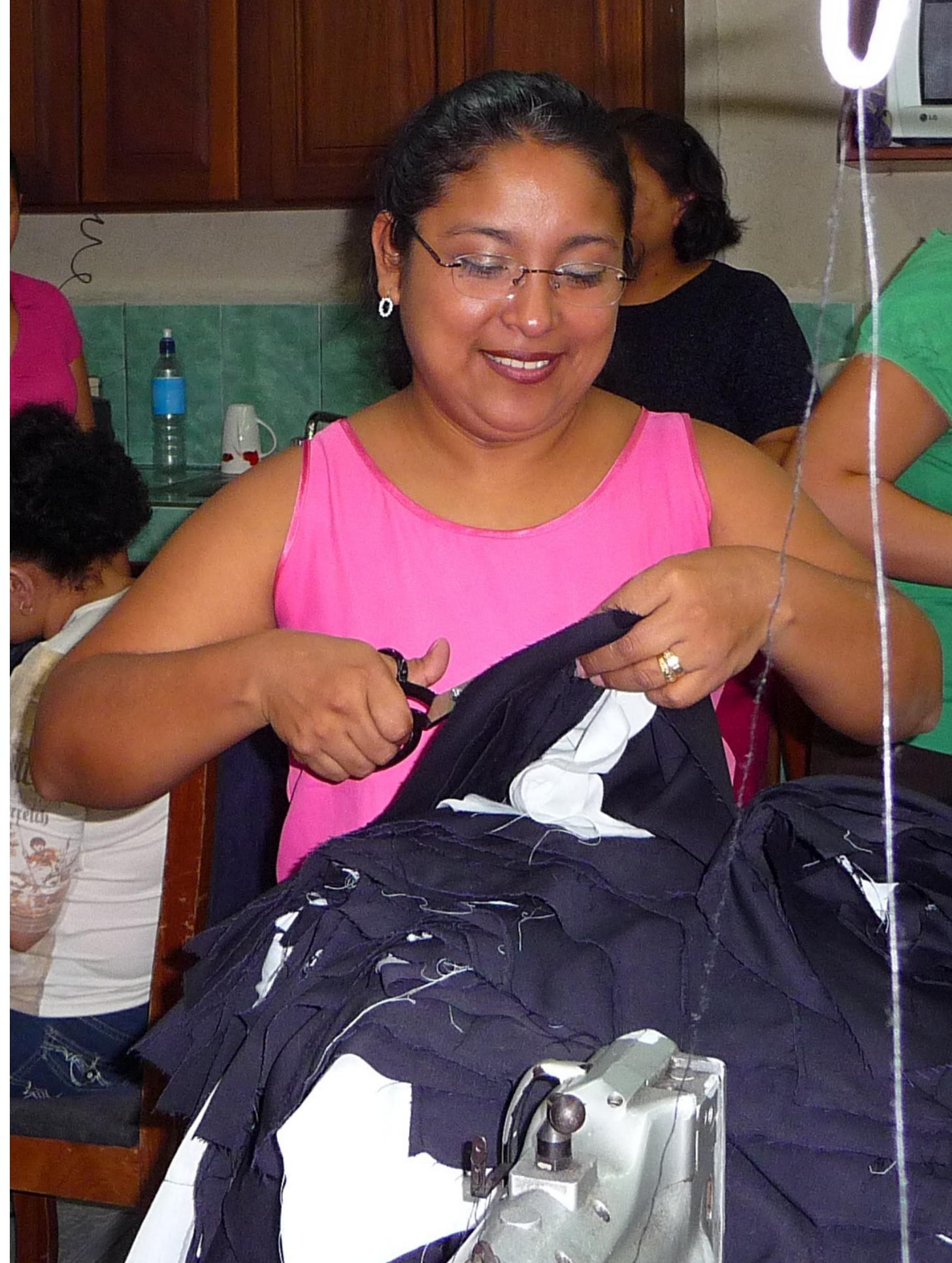
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Grifo Alto, east of the capital city San Jose, is a rural farming village with no organized opportunities for women. Despite their lack of education and job training skills, the women are motivated to learn and to improve their lifestyles and those of their families. Through the Grifo Alto Women for Progress Association, they have invested time, resources and energy into creating and succeeding at a variety of innovative projects. So when World Connect learned that the women wanted to launch a sewing collaborative, we were right by their side. The project's goal was to provide women in this rural, resource-limited community with technical skills and employment opportunities.

As often happens when initiatives are implemented, a leader emerged. Frances already had some experience starting a small sewing business out of her home. In addition to her work with the women's association and caring for her children, she spent long hours sewing on a tiny home machine meant for small jobs. Ever industrious, she was able to secure a contract with a local company to do piece work. With support from World Connect, Frances saw an opportunity to expand and share her sewing start-up with other women in her community. The women of Grifo Alto found their business plan.

With Frances at the helm the women moved the business out of her home and into a shared workshop space. They purchased four industrial sewing machines and attended small business management courses. In a few short months, the women tripled the output from their workshop. Frances and those with more sewing experience held lessons for the group and continue to mentor. Each woman is responsible for completing her weekly work load and each takes turns cooking and looking after the group's children.

Right now, each individual earns around \$50 weekly and, happily, there is no shortage of work. The women are now able to buy more food and necessities for their children. They have secured a contract with the local school to make uniforms for physical education classes. And, best of all, they are planning to expand their business and they are working on their own label to be displayed on items such as special occasion pajamas for kids.



## Improving Mali's Rural Maternity Practices

Dombila, a rural community in the town of Kati within the province of Koulikoro, Mali, has about 375 women of childbearing age. Before World Connect's involvement, most of these women insisted on delivering their babies at home, which increased their risk of infection, complications, and maternal/newborn mortality. But who could blame them? The local maternity ward was decrepit and dangerous: rickety delivery tables, intermittent lighting, no running water and peeling paint on the walls. Expectant mothers were required to bring a family member with them, not just for moral support, but for practical reasons, such as gathering firewood to heat water for the birth and to bathe the newborn.

With a micro grant of \$1,255 World Connect partnered with regional experts to address these issues. With their guidance the birthing center purchased new, high quality birthing tables, and solar panels to provide more electricity and water. Going beyond the 25 percent community contribution that the micro grant requires, the community acquired additional solar panels for heated baby baths. In addition, 13 murals now decorate the facility's walls, each depicting a different preventive health measure. Mural artists were chosen through a community junior high drawing contest.

Little wonder then that as a result of this community group effort, funded by a World Connect micro grant, births at the maternity hospital have jumped and pre and post natal care are becoming routine.



First baby born with resources provided by World Connect



**In Mali the...**

- \* Female HIV Infection Rate is: 40%
- \* Maternal Mortality Rate is: 907 per 100,000 births

## World Connect Board of Directors

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Marcie Tyre Berkley

George Biddle

Stephanie Cabot

Benjamin Downs

Bill Haney - Chairman

Robert Hecht

Mary Higgins

James Hunt

Marie Langlois

Maura McCarthy

Timothy Phillips

Araceli Ruano

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World Connect Kids to Kids program funded 181 projects in 2010 for a total of \$82,900. This movement of 1,090 savvy and caring middle and high schoolers takes seriously the notion of paying forward their own good fortune. They selected from among many worthy projects for their \$500 micro grants. Here are just a few of the innovative ideas that Kids to Kids supported:

### **Some Bunny Loves Me Club**

The students at Gitarama Primary School, located in the rural hills outside Kibuye in Rwanda's Western Province, are courageous kids who are eager to learn. What stands in the way of their education and success is endless poverty and its all too familiar consequences. Many students suffer from malnutrition while others are orphaned, or live with HIV/AIDS. A Peace Corps Volunteer living in their community asked herself how she could teach the kids to help themselves and insodoing instill hope for their future?

With support from World Connect's Kids to Kids program, 15 students were chosen to participate in an agriculture club focusing on animal husbandry and composting. They were taught agricultural techniques and gardening in the hope of augmenting their meager food supply. The Some Bunny Loves Me Club's main goal is to engage students in their own food supply through hands-on, practical activities.

Each club member received a rabbit and a chicken to raise. The animals remained at the school so other students could watch and study them. Weekly, the club members studied various farming techniques; following graduation from the club, those first members were required to educate new club members. This cycle continued until all students in the school had a chance to participate and each new member benefited from the offspring of earlier livestock. Students were invited to take this information, and even some animals, home to share with their families, thus creating hope for the future while providing a tangible, impactful and sustainable project for this impoverished community.

#### **In Rwanda the...**

\* **Female Literacy Rate is: 77%**

\* **Annual Income is: \$460**

\* **Average Woman's Life Span is: 50 years**

\* **Infant Mortality Rate is: 89.6 per 1000 live births**





### Go Outside and Play

San Benito Poite, one of the most rural and secluded villages in the Toledo District of southern Belize, is a world unto itself. Forget about traveling even to the nearby seaport town of Punta Gorda, a town of about 6,000 on the Caribbean Sea and the most sizable town in the District. The distance and the expense prohibit it. To children of San Benito Poite, Punta Gorda might as well be on the other side of the moon.

But for a village dependent on itself for recreation and entertainment, San Benito Poite had no organized youth programs and no sports teams, other than village pick-up games. There was little teaching about teamwork and less about the path to healthy lifestyles. That is not until World Connect's Kids to Kids program stepped in with support and a \$500 micro grant for a project designed to open up the world of teamwork, healthy lifestyles and new horizons to a new generation of San Benito Poite's youngsters. The \$500 donation purchased two dozen pairs of athletic shoes and enough soccer balls to provide San Benito's children with world class dreams of competing and winning.



**In Belize the...**

- \* Female Literacy Rate is : 97%
- \* Annual Income is: \$3740
- \* Average Life Span is: 76 years
- \* Infant Mortality Rate is: 17 per 1000 live births

### Trash to Treasure

In Olmos, a rural community of Northern Peru, just 20 percent of the population is served by formal waste management programs, meaning only 20 percent of people have a way to dispose of their garbage. Awareness of the three R's: recycle, reduce, reuse, is hard to come by. In fact, you're more likely to find debris-laden rivers, contaminated streams and dangerous footpaths than containers for recyclables. The average annual income in this region per household is \$1,618, compared to \$50,000 in the US (2009). But a network of 19 environmentally minded schools aims to change all of that by making going green memorable and fun.

Thanks to a \$500 micro grant from World Connect's Kids to Kids program and a Peace Corps Volunteer's tireless effort, more than 200 students from across the region traveled to a Recycling Fair where they were proud to show off artwork, purses, jewelry, even traditional regional costumes they had fashioned out of found and discarded objects. More than anything the event served as a great forum for the exchange of ideas and recognition of great practices, projects, creativity and initiative.



**In Peru the...**

- \* Female Literacy rate is: 97%
- \* Annual Income is: \$4160
- \* Average Life Span is: 73 years
- \* Infant Mortality Rate is: 22 per 1000 live births



### Mountain Summer Camp

Iztat is a small village in the rugged, rural, Middle Atlas Mountains of Morocco, where the population is largely Berber and the average annual income is \$950 per household. It's not surprising then that supervised fun time for kids is a luxury, if not a rarity. What if Iztat's primary schoolers could experience a week-long summer camp – the kind that American kids know well – with arts and crafts, theater performances, group art projects, exercise and fitness, even a field day?

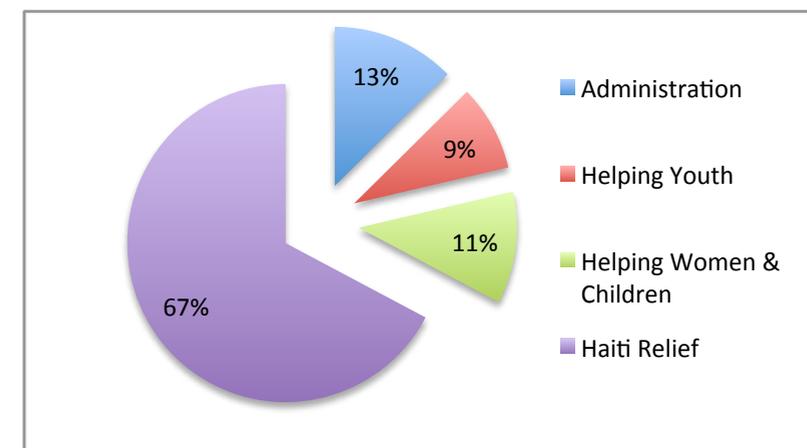
What if, indeed. Thanks to Iztat's teachers, the Peace Corps volunteer who identified the need, to the members of World Connect's Kids to Kids program and to the \$500 they raised and donated, the youngsters who experienced Iztat's first annual summer camp had the time of their lives. Happily, thanks to the donated supplies, the camp will continue every summer into the foreseeable future. Too, the 47 kids who benefited in 2010 will increase by 15 new members in 2011 and 2012 each.

**In Morocco the...**

- \* **Female Literacy rate is: 85%**
- \* **Annual Income is: \$2,790**
- \* **Average Women's Life Span is: 71 years**
- \* **Infant Mortality Rate is: 32 per 1000 live births**

Assets - Jan 1	\$397,296
 <u>Donations</u>	
Individuals	\$471,742
Family Foundations	\$402,000
Foundations / Corporations	\$85,419
In-Kind Donations	<u>\$1,432,900</u>
	<b>\$2,392,936</b>
 <u>Expenses</u>	
Administration	\$290,069
Helping Youth	\$200,763
Helping Women & Children	\$261,538
Haiti Relief	<u>\$1,545,453</u>
	<b>\$2,297,823</b>
 Assets - Dec 31	 \$508,803

**87% of our resources are used to help women, children & youth overseas**



\*2010 data is not yet audited