

Reports from Grantees

Every group that is awarded a grant in the Open Meadows' granting cycles is asked to send a brief report describing their activities using the funds. With each Newsletter describing the grants a few reports are highlighted. The recent reports offer an interesting variety of peace loving, peace seeking, peace-keeping efforts by women of all ages and backgrounds. "Join Us and Change the World," says the slogan of **SCHOOL GIRLS UNITE. VOCES de CAMBIO**, considered the most pressing concerns in Guatemalan society and selected domestic violence for their Radio and Theatre Project: **Speak Up!** Vital in this now global movement opposing violence against women is **No! THE RAPE DOCUMENTARY** produced and directed by Aishah Shahidah Simmons.

SCHOOL GIRLS UNITE is a non-profit group "dedicated to raising funds and awareness for the education and rights of school girls in developing countries." In 2004 in the Washington D.C. area, a group of 7th graders formed declaring "Our goal is for every girl in the world to get an education." Their sister organization is in Mali, West Africa, (Les Filles Unies pour l'Education) where only 30% of girls get beyond the 5th grade." Through fundraisers **SCHOOL GIRLS UNITE** raises the money that pays for school fees, supplies and textbooks for 70 girls in Mali, where it costs about \$60 a year to send a girl to school.

A small grant of \$500 given **SGU** by Open Meadows funded two short videos one of which was crucial in persuading Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Rep. John Sorbanes and the legislative assistants of Senators Mikulski and Cardin to agree to co-sponsor the International Child Marriage Prevention Act. Clearly, the activism of school-girls should not be underestimated. "Start by visiting or calling us at 1-800-Kid-Power. Inspire others to get involved! Make a video for our web site! Hold a fundraiser! Write to your Congressional Representatives! If you think you are too small to make a difference, you've never been in bed with a mosquito." <http://www.schoolgirlsunite.org/>

Starting in September 2007 a group of young women graduates of **VOCES de CAMBIO's** fifteen week writing and photography program, met in 8 day-long sessions (two Saturdays a month for four months). They studied various forms of expression, learning "basic principles of theatre and performance" with emphasis on building confidence, vocal projection and control. After deciding that domestic violence was exceedingly important in Guatemalan society, they decided to focus on that issue in their theatre and radio project and to produce Public Service Announcements on domestic violence. They identified three major types of abuse: physical, verbal, and psychological, wrote scenes for five different radio spots, 45 seconds long, learned how to record and edit their work, while one student talented in graphic design produced labels for the recorded CD's. They invite people to listen to the PSA's on their website: <http://www.vocesdecambio.org/>.

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NEXT DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS IS FEBRUARY 15, 2009

For more information about the Open Meadows Foundation and its application process, please:

*Visit our website at:
<http://openmeadows.org>

*Call us at 718-885-0969

*Email us at:
openmeadows@igc.org

* Write for a brochure at:
Open Meadows Foundation
PO Box 150-607
Van Brunt Station
Brooklyn, N Y 11215-607

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS WERE GRANTEES OF THE FALL 2008 CYCLE:

Cervical Cancer Coalition of Tennessee

Whites Creek, TN - \$1268

To support The Witness Project of Davidson County outreach and education about cervical cancer screening in the African American community.

DIVAS for Social Justice

Brooklyn, NY - \$1600

To support the Through My Lens Project, a collaborative media program with the Brooklyn Young Mothers Collective to produce four documentary style Public Service Announcements.
<http://www.divasforsocialjustice.org/>

Empowerment Resource Center for Women, Inc.

Atlanta, GA - \$1350

To support the Condom Dealin' Skills Program providing what-if scenarios for women which focus on the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
http://www.empoweryoungwomen.org/EYW/default_eyw.htm

Girls At Work, Inc.

Goffstown, NH - \$1600

To support the Building Relationship by Building Together program, a girls-at-risk mentoring program teaching woodworking to expand awareness of alternative career opportunities and receive guidance from a mentor throughout the school year.
<http://www.girlswork.org/>

Magambo Women Development Organization

Budaka, Uganda - \$1600

To support the Mushroom Farming Project through the construction of the mushroom rooms and purchase of seeds as well as of tools and equipment.

Sew Right

Corrales, NM - \$1500

To support sewing classes in Custom Interior Design Fabrication for felon and mentally ill Mothers and their teen daughters in foster care.
<http://www.sewrightinc.com/>

Singleton Moms

Scottsdale, AZ - \$1000

To support Resources such as transportation to doctors, house cleaning, baby sitting, etc. for single mothers with cancer.
<http://singletonmoms.org/>

Studio L. Productions

Oakland, CA - \$1000

To support the development of a web site on homeless women and the Video: **Bound**, a documentary exploring homelessness, vulnerability, and visibility/invisibility.
<http://ellenlake.com/indexfilmvideo.html>

The Wig Bank of Caldwell County

Lenoir, NC - \$1500

To support the Teaching Adolescents Breast Examination project which will provide life-saving information and training.
<http://wigbank.org/>

The Women's Debate Institute

Denton, TX - \$1000

To support the program: Promoting Diversity in a Community of Debaters by providing travel money for Urban Debate League high school Students to attend the Women's Debate Institute.
<http://www.womensdebateinstitute.org/>

Twegate Women Group

Mbale, Uganda - \$1550

To support the Piggery Farming Project with the purchase of 20 pigs, the improvement on the constructed piggery shed, the veterinary services, and the training of the women in piggery skills.

The Jeanne Meurer Indigenous Women's Fund

Daughters of the Earth

Moorhead, MN - \$1000

To support the revitalization of the different Native American Cultures through bi-weekly indigenous language classes (Lakota, Dakota, and Ojibwe) and ceremonial lessons six times a year.

Donor Directed Funds

The PatsyLu Fund

for Women's Music Projects

Chattanooga Girls Choir

Chattanooga, TN - \$1500

To support the CGC's Ruth Dyer Scholarship fund for tuition costs for talented girls who otherwise would not be able to participate in this vocal music education and choral performing experience.
<http://www.chattanooga-girlschoir.com/>

Columbus Women's Chorus

Columbus, OH - \$1000

To support the music materials and costs for Traveling Together, a joint concert between the Columbus Women's Chorus and Windsong of Cleveland, a feminist Chorus.
<http://www.cwchorus.org/>

Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica

Rome, Italy - \$2000

To support Music for the Mind, a program which collects and sends second hand music, books, and CDs to countries where there are Women in Music organizations. For the year 2008/2009, the countries chosen are Costa Rica and Georgia.
<http://www.donneinmusica.org/>

The Susan F. Eastman Fund for Environmental Activism

Full Bloom Productions

Eureka Springs, AR - \$1000

To support the production of the video: *The Disappearance of the Bees* (sequel 2) which explores the pesticides/chemicals killing the bees and gives concrete solutions for what each person can do. The video will be housed on YouTube.com. The first video: *The Disappearance of the Bees* (sequel 1) can be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_XnvZAcM0U

Full Bloom Productions web site is:

<http://www.FullBloomProductions.org/>

The India Fund

Andhra Pradesh Medical and Health Weaker Section Dev. Society

Ongole, India - \$1400

To support an educational awareness building for tobacco/beedi women workers regarding their rights and health hazards as well as supplying the women with proper instruments, masks, and aprons.

People's Action in Development

Tirupati, India - \$1200

To support campaigns and workshops for women achieving their rights and political empowerment.

People's Organization for Welfare and Education in Rural

Thiruvannamalai, India - \$1400

To support nutritional security among Dalith women and children through the development of mushroom culture in four villages.

Sri K.Pitchi Reddy Educational & Welfare Society

Vempalli, India - \$1428

To support a Handloom Weaving Program for widows and destitute women through the purchase of handlooms and start-up supplies.

Women's Action for National Integration

Pedakakani, India - \$2000

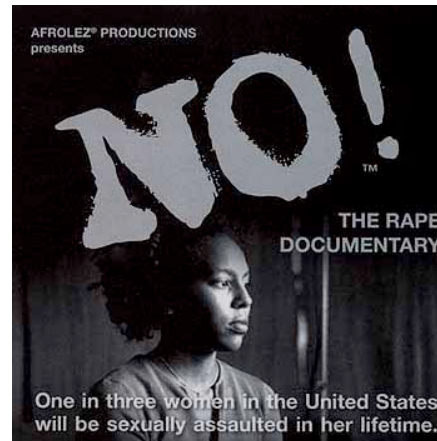
To support the development of 10 Education and Training Centers for the Girl Child of Women Sex Workers.

REPORTS ON PAST PROJECTS cont.

"YES, YOU CAN!" a program of **GEEZ LOUISE**, a feminist agency working with women of all ages, focused on ten young women from 13 to 17 years old, referred by the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court diagnosed as substance abusers with mental health problems. The young women attended a 20-week program concerning substance abuse along with weekly AA meetings.

The Director, Lori Rinehart said that some of the steps required intense emotional work. "Step 5: we share with another person and the Universe all those things inside of us for which we feel shame and guilt was the beginning of a deep discussion. Many of the experiences that the young women felt shame about were things that happened to them - not things they had done! A great deal of healing started that night."

<http://www.geezlouisie.org/>



Aishah Shahidah Simmons submitted the report on her completed documentary: **"NO!"** The National Sexual Violence Resource Center -- the comprehensive center for information, research, and emerging policy on sexual violence intervention and prevention in the United States -- designated screenings and discussions of **"NO!"** in community settings as the Featured Event during their 2007 Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign. The grants from small funders like Open Meadows led to a major grant from the Ford Foundation, which supported the international marketing and distribution of **"NO!"**

Aishah Shahidah Simmons' report notes, "As a completed documentary, **"NO!"** has been screened and used internationally as an educational organizing tool with racially and ethnically diverse audiences at community centers, colleges/universities, high schools, juvenile correction facilities, rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, conferences, and film festivals throughout the United States, and in Italy, Spain, Rwanda, South Africa, Hungary, Jordan, Peru, Nepal, Congo, Uzbekistan, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Turkey, Venezuela, Brazil, France and Mexico."

<http://NOtherapedocumentary.org>

HERvoices received a grant to support **HERvoices**: Wajir's Peace Group, a presentation of the personal stories of the indigenous Somali Muslim women peacemakers in Northeast Kenya. Their story is a model for peacemaking in Africa.

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In the Northeast corner of Kenya where the majority of Kenyan citizens are ethnically Somali, three tribes engaged in violent warfare over sparse resources and controversial traditional/colonial geographical boundaries throughout the 1990's and early 2000's.

In the small town of Wajir, in the Wajir district, a predominantly nomadic region, a group of women emerged as the leaders of a successful, nonviolent, and collective peace-action.

"When the fighting came to the marketplace and restricted trading between the women, we knew we couldn't wait for the men to stop the conflict," explains one of the founders of the cross-clan movement. "If your house is on fire, do you wait for someone else to put it out? No, you move quickly and do what you can."

Wajir's movement is a remarkable story of a group of women, normally marginalized in a predominantly Muslim community, who directed their community through an inclusive and effective, nonviolent peace process.

<http://www.hervoices.org/>

In conclusion we mention support to **Rompiendo el Silencio** [Shattering the Silence] for the photographic aspects of the launching of the printed version of the magazine that celebrates lesbian culture in South America: "RS magazine, La cultura lesbiana se Hace visible." The internet version is found at:

<http://www.rsmagazine.cl/>

Rompiendo el Silencia's web site:

<http://www.rompiendoelsilencio.cl/>

We thank those women who reported so specifically on the activities of their award winning groups and wish them all success in their next ventures.

For more information about any of the projects, please e-mail Nancy Dean, editor of this newsletter, at enndean@mindspring.com

DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS ARE FEBRUARY 15 AND AUGUST 15

Open Meadows Foundation is a grant-making organization for projects that are led by and benefit women and girls. Open Meadows Foundation funds projects that do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender identity and expression, sexual identity and expression, age or ability. It offers grants up to \$2000 to projects that:

- * Are designed and implemented by women and girls;
 - * Reflect the diversity of the community served by the project in both its leadership and organization;
 - * Promote building community power;
 - * Promote racial, social, economic and environmental justice; and
 - * Have limited financial access or have encountered obstacles in their search for funding.
- Organizational budget should not exceed \$150,000.

!Small and start-up organizations are strongly encouraged to apply!

Proposals from organizations not previously funded have priority.