

An Autumn of Action *for*

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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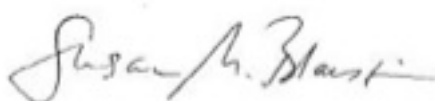
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we enter 2014 full of hope and propelled by an ambitious agenda, we thought it a fitting moment, on this New Year's Day, to share with you a few highlights of the busy season just concluded at MCI. None of the many projects MCI has undertaken would have been accomplished without both our powerful team and your own keen interest and invaluable support.

I want to salute you all, as we begin our closing year at MCI, for your commitment to devising innovative and sustainable solutions to extreme urban poverty, which in the course of MCI's nine years has unquestionably become one of the most pressing issues of our time. We and our partners in all of the Millennium Cities are so very grateful to you, for your ongoing interest and commitment.

With my very best wishes for a joyous, peaceful and fruitful new year,

Dr. Susan M. Blaustein



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INVESTMENT DAYS & DONOR ROUNDTABLES

In early October, MCI organized Investment Days and Donor Roundtables in support of the Millennium Cities of Mekelle, Ethiopia, and Kumasi, Ghana, held in their respective national capitals, Addis Ababa and Accra.

The Donor Roundtables, organized by Dr. Mounie Maoulidi, MCI's Associate Director for Research, brought to the attention of international development partners each city's MDG-based development priorities, which the cities themselves determined as an outcome of MCI's extensive research over the years, as well as the estimated costs of filling the gaps in each MDG-related sector.

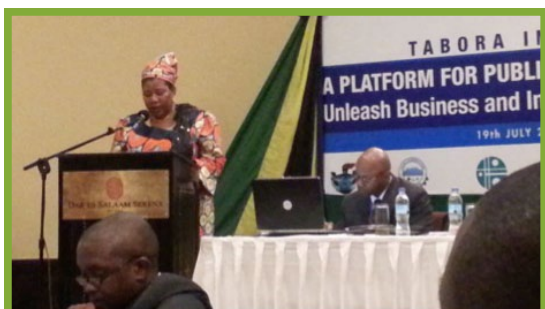
The Investment Days were culminating events under our Regional Partnership to Promote Trade and Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, a three-city, 30-month project funded by the Government of Finland and led by an eight-person, international team headed by MCI Senior Researcher/Advisor Dr. Karin Millett.



MCI associates at the Kumasi Donor Roundtable



Investors and other guests listen to presentations at the Mekelle Investment Day



A Tabora representative highlights opportunities at the Tabora Investment Day



Employees produce bikes at Kumasi's bamboo bike factory, which MCI helped get started

These two events followed a wonderfully successful Investment Day in Dar es Salaam, hosted earlier this year by MCI and the City of Tabora, Tanzania, to promote private sector opportunities in the Tabora region.

The Mekelle Investment Day showcased promising investment opportunities and engendered a lively dialogue about incentives for and constraints on private sector development in this city of roughly 300,000.

The "Kumasi Investment Roadshow" in Accra, attended by some 90 prospective investors, was followed by a trip the next day to Kumasi, to give domestic and international investors a first-hand look at opportunities in real estate, construction and agro-processing, including in the bamboo bike factory that MCI helped to develop.

MCI's three investment promotion specialists - Moges Mesfin in Mekelle, Deo Msilu in Tabora, and Bennet Niboi in Kumasi - and MCI Regional Coordinators Joy Morabu and Abenaa Akuamoah-Boateng, were instrumental in the success of these events.

PROGRESS IN NEONATAL SURVIVAL

While in Kumasi, I visited one of two Israeli-built neonatal triage units that MCI helped bring to Kumasi, located at Suntreso Hospital. We saw new mothers bonding with and learning how to nurse and care for their premature babies, with the help of nurses trained under the program designed and led by neonatologists from Ben Gurion University.

Because healthier infants can now be seen and treated at the Suntreso Mother and Baby Unit (MBU), the intensive care unit at the tertiary care center in Kumasi has been significantly decongested and can focus more on the sickest neonates. The Director of Health for Ghana's Volta Region has been so impressed by the neonatal survival training and the MBU model that MCI has brought to Kumasi that he is now replicating it across the Volta Region.



New mothers care for their newborns at Israeli-built Mother and Baby Units in Kumasi

NEW WOMEN'S CLINIC IN A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN KUMASI MARKET

As an outpost of Suntreso Hospital, at MCI's initiative and with Abenaa Akuamoah-Boateng's leadership, the Kumasi Metropolitan Health Directorate has opened a very small, very busy women's clinic right in the middle of the Bantama market, wedged in between the shoemaker and a tomato vendor's stall.



The lively Bantama market, in downtown Kumasi

We've so far registered several hundred women vendors, all of whom now have electronic medical records, as their baselines get taken in the course of their medical exams, the first in years for many of these hard-working market women, who come each day from the countryside to sell their fresh-from-the-farm products.

The day Abenaa and I visited, the Kumasi Metropolitan Health Director had sent nurse practitioners to carry out the first cervical screenings these women had ever undergone; this will be a weekly service at our clinic, which otherwise will do breast screenings and family planning, treat minor ailments, carry out physicals and arrange referrals for those requiring further pro bono care.



Public health nurses at the new Bantama women's clinic

Not surprisingly, for women with little-to-no medical care, in our first weeks of operation we've already identified significant health issues - primarily, hypertension, STDs and findings requiring follow-on breast and cervical diagnosis and treatment. Our current challenge is to create a miniature health system capable of delivering comprehensive women's healthcare to these busy women, helping them take full advantage of Ghana's national health insurance program and the availability of trained residents at Kumasi's teaching hospital. The enthusiastic partnership in this project of Kumasi's Metropolitan Health Director, himself an obstetrician/gynecologist, has been instrumental in accomplishing as much as we have and will be vital to the market clinic's ability to provide quality services with the appropriate follow-on care.

KUMASI GIRLS' CLUBS – STRENGTHENING GIRLS' LITERACY & ADVOCACY SKILLS



Kumasi students rehearse for the Stand Up for Girls celebration

We also visited one of our Girls' LitClubs, located at the Martyrs of Uganda Junior High School, as the girls created posters and practiced their own advocacy speeches for the Stand Up for Girls Rally, organized by MCI's Social Sector Associate Sheila Effah-Kyei, together with our New York-based partner LitWorld, to celebrate the United Nations' second International Day of the Girl.

LitWorld runs Kumasi's 11 LitClubs, for which it has created the curriculum and trained local female teachers to lead the clubs and serve as role models. Located in Kumasi junior highs, all of the LitClubs focus on strengthening literacy skills along with the girls' confidence, self-esteem and outreach, via the Internet, to the world beyond Kumasi and to the inexhaustible educational resources now available to them.

SOCIAL CAPITAL CREDITS SCHEME TO BE PILOTED IN KUMASI

Thanks to Prof. Geeta Mehta, Urban Design Lab faculty and MCI Advisory Committee member, MCI also held a series of focus groups in Bantama to test-market the Social Capital Credits (SoCC) scheme she has developed. The program, which we hope to roll out in the coming months, offers a way of trading services and goods for health care, mobile phone credits, payments into Girls' Scholarship Funds – whatever the women want and most need. With several of our girls' clubs nearby, we are hopeful that the girls, too, can capitalize on the SoCCs program, by trading babysitting for phone or Internet credits or school supplies. It's a very exciting program, and we're honored to be piloting it in Kumasi.



Prof. Geeta Mehta brainstorms with Kumasi women about a social capital credits scheme

NEW YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCRA



Participants at the first Nima-Maamobi East Girls' and Ladies' Forum

While in Ghana, together with urban planner Joe Melara, our MCI Accra Project Manager, and MCI Associate and fellow urban planner Rashid Al-Hassan, I met with the Board of our new partner in Accra, a wonderful youth organization in the vibrant Nima neighborhood called, Voices in Community Empowerment, or VOiCE.

Having worked closely for several years now with VOiCE's founders and leaders, MCI and VOiCE are collaborating now and over the coming months on a solid waste disposal project and on organizing community-wide forums for young women and girls to air and discuss issues of importance to them.

The first "Nima-Maamobi East Girls' and Ladies' Forum" was held in mid-December at the Nima East Youth Community Center, with 72 girls and young women participating in a lively, women-led dialogue focused on educational opportunities and constraints, and on some of the daily challenges facing young women living in the community.

ACROSS THE CONTINENT: REBUILDING COMMUNITY IN KISUMU'S MANYATTA NEIGHBORHOOD

In Kisumu, Kenya, our MCI team, led by Beldina Opiyo-Omolo and Zach Okoth, is hard at work on the health, finance and education pieces of the empowerment puzzle, with our urban Community Health Worker (CHW) and Group Savings & Loans (GS&L) training programs for the women of Manyatta, a downtown slum where MCI has been working these last eight years.

We plan to introduce our nearby girls' clubs and the Social Capital Credits scheme in Manyatta in the coming year. At the request of the City of Kisumu and other development partners, the Urban Design Lab (UDL) has agreed to work in Kisumu this year with MCI, to focus on housing and community upgrading in Manyatta.

Together with the talented UDL faculty, I will be accompanying 25 young architects/urban designers on a weeklong trip to Kisumu in early January. We look forward to seeing the CHW and GS&L projects in action, spending time in the neighborhood and consulting with longtime Manyatta residents as to their most urgent priorities regarding housing and community upgrading, to help the UDL team arrive at solutions that will improve public safety and hygiene while enhancing the potential for neighborhood-based income-generating activities.



MCI's Beldina Opiyo-Omolo leads a GS&L training in one of two Manyatta neighborhoods

GIRLS' LEADERSHIP SKILLS TRAINING IN MEKELLE



Girls in Mekelle engage in dialogue with leadership trainers

The second training, held in September, incorporated female teachers and members of the local Women's Association, all of whom then had the opportunity to participate in our separate teacher training the following week, expressly so that these teachers and female role models, encouraged by their enthusiastic administrators, might follow up and replicate this valuable program on their own.

In Mekelle last summer and fall, MCI's former social sector specialists Joanna Brucker and Aberash Abay organized and led two highly successful, weeklong Girls Leadership Skills Trainings. Each training resulted in an advocacy video made by the girls themselves, on the importance of safe, separate latrines in the schools and of safe drinking water and hygiene.



Participants in Girls' Leadership Skills Training in Mekelle

FINAL CAPSTONE SEMINAR FOR THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE TRADE & INVESTMENT

Coming full circles, as part of wrapping up our Regional Partnership to Promote Trade and Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, after the highly successful investment days in Addis and Accra, MCI brought to New York delegations from the three participating Millennium Cities – Kumasi, Mekelle and Tabora, Tanzania, for a culminating “Capstone Seminar.”

The mayors, our own investment promotion specialists and other key technical people presented to members of the project Advisory Group summaries of their progress to-date, as well as some of the specific impressive investment profiles they have developed in the course of this 30-month project.

All these materials, which we expect will be useful to other Millennium Cities and to municipalities worldwide, will soon be available on MCI's website, and are also available on a (tiny!) USB, if you are interested.

Our Advisory Group members – including the project's initial authors, my former Co-Director Karl Sauvant and former Senior Investment Advisor Joerg Simon, as well as representatives from the World Bank Group, KPMG and the project funders, the Government of Finland – were all deeply impressed with how far each of the cities has come in this short period of time, with their sophisticated knowledge regarding how to target, attract and follow up with prospective investors; how to evaluate possible investment projects in terms of their cost-benefit potential, job-generating capacity and their ultimate sustainability; and how to close deals and manage successful investment projects.

Again, in closing, our very best wishes, from *all* of us at MCI,
for a wonderful new year!



In Mekelle, participants share smiles and enjoy time together in Girls' Leadership Skills Training