

A Season of Progress *for*

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 2014

Millennium Cities Initiative

EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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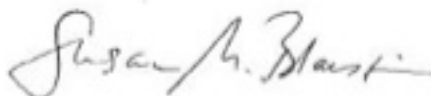
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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

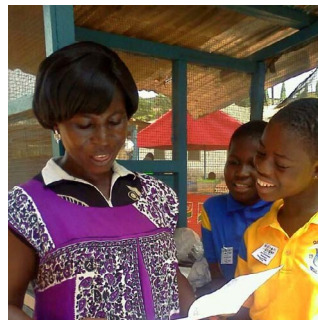
As classes start up again at Columbia, marking new beginnings, as we prepare to bring MCI to a close at the end of the calendar year, I am delighted at this opportunity to update you on some of the progress MCI and our wonderful partners have made this year in the Millennium Cities, none of which would be possible without your continued support.

With my sincere thanks for your ongoing interest in MCI and the Millennium Cities, and with my very best wishes,

Dr. Susan M. Blaustein



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REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE TRADE & INVESTMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA CLOSES WITH TANGIBLE LEADS FOR THE 3 PARTICIPATING MILLENNIUM CITIES

The Regional Partnership to Promote Trade and Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, expressly designed by MCI to strengthen the capacity to assess and promote opportunities for private sector development in the Millennium Cities of Kumasi, Ghana; Mekelle, Ethiopia; and Tabora, Tanzania, came to a close at the end of June.

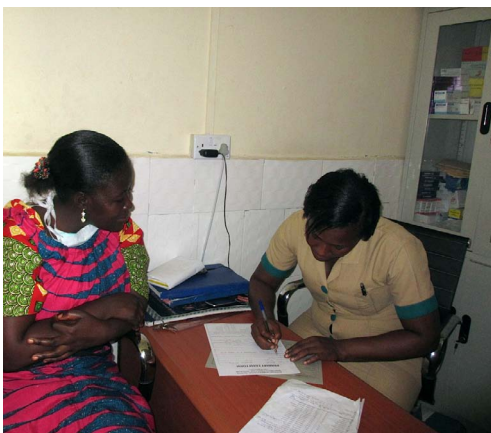
This three-year effort, financed by the Government of Finland and facilitated by MCI, is summarized in a [Final Narrative Report](#), prepared by MCI's Senior Researcher/Advisor Dr. Karin Millett, that notes many of the project's achievements, including identifying specific investment opportunities and promising sectors ripe for development; creating and disseminating promotional materials and hosting events for prospective investors that showcased these opportunities; building capacity for investment promotion and facilitation within each municipal authority; and developing a reservoir of tools and resources to help cities attract, secure and sustain significant private investment, domestic and foreign.

Dr. Millett and MCI targeting consultant Mr. Rene Samek traveled to Kumasi and Mekelle in June, joining the Millennium City teams in each city to hand over activities relating to investment promotion to local officials. Representatives from the business sector participated in closing workshops, offering recommendations to build on the cities' efforts to attract prospective investors. City officials in Kumasi and Mekelle also presented their respective three-year strategies for building on the progress made in the course of the Regional Partnership. We are pleased to report that Kumasi, Mekelle and Tabora all have tangible, promising leads that may well result in substantial investments in real estate; garments, shoes and marble; and agro-processing and transport, respectively, ultimately creating jobs and enhancing economic development in each city.



Ghanian women sort palms, part of the process in cultivating oil palm - a promising sector poised for investment, as identified by the project.

BANTAMA MARKET CLINIC IMPROVES HEALTH & WEALTH FOR WOMEN MARKET TRADERS



Paperwork completed at Bantama Market Clinic.

In January I shared with you all the exciting news about our new women's clinic in the Bantama Market, which MCI was able to establish right in the heart of Kumasi, with support from the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and Health Directorate (KMA and KMHD, respectively).

Under the leadership of our stellar Regional Coordinator for West Africa, Ms. Abenaa Akuamo-Boateng, the market clinic concept, construction and operations came to fruition on the basis of a series of in-depth consultations with women traders in Bantama, which MCI conducted so as to better understand their needs and aspirations. Since the clinic opened in September of last year, it has conducted health assessments for 381 market women, all of whom now have electronic medical records, enabling them to be reminded of follow-up screenings or visits as needed for their medical conditions. The clinic continues to serve these busy market women, now providing breast and cervical screenings and physicals; family planning and reproductive health; treatment for minor ailments; child welfare services for the children of market traders and others in the community; and community outreach and follow-on care.

One truly innovative offering for all patients who undergo the free health screenings: access to a Social Capital Credits scheme, created by MCI Advisory Board and Urban Design Lab advisor Dr. Geeta Mehta. The program encourages women to earn "social capital credits" by performing deeds beneficial to themselves or the community that can then be traded, whether for supplies for their children's studies, their market stalls or as collateral toward loan applications to MCI's partner nonprofit Self Help Ghana to help them grow their businesses, offered at Ghana's lowest interest rates. Thus far, 13 groups of 3-5 women have received small loans totaling GHS 25,500 (\$8,037.35), with a total recouped of GHS 5,100 (\$1,607.47), and another 13 groups have applied for loans.¹ [Read the "Bantama Market Clinic Report,"](#) prepared by the visionary behind this project, MCI's Abenaa Akuamo-Boateng.

¹Ghana Cedis were converted to US dollars on 3 September 2014, based on the currency rate of USD/GHS = 0.31519.

KUMASI DEVELOPS AN EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR MATERNAL AND NEONATAL CARE

MCI has established a strong model to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes – both still major health concerns in Kumasi and across the developing world. We have brought in expert trainings for midwives in ultrasound technique, to ensure healthy pregnancies and to identify pre- and neonatal emergencies, and have educated health workers and new mothers in Kangaroo Mother Care, a skin-to-skin approach proven to be a game-changer in neonatal care, particularly for preterm babies.

MCI also facilitated the establishment of Mother-Baby Units (MBUs) attached to two area hospitals, Suntreso and Kumasi South, designed and built by MASHAV, the Government of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, where new mothers can have their newborns treated for non-life-threatening issues and can receive guidance on nursing, health and nutrition.

This past spring, MCI chronicled the MBUs' successes in the increasing utilization rates and the concomitant decrease in overcrowding at Kumasi's sole tertiary care center, in our report, "Kumasi Neonatal Units 2013 Report," authored by MCI's Abenaa Akuamo-Boateng.

In recent months, Ms. Akuamo-Boateng also coordinated a refresher training for staff at Suntreso and Kumasi South, for practitioners already trained by MCI in the use of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Helping Babies Breathe™ (HBB) neonatal resuscitation protocol and in other infant care techniques.

All these trainings, aimed at improving infant survival, as part of Kumasi's efforts to attain MDG4, have been enabled by MCI partners Johnson & Johnson, the Connecticut-based non-profit AmeriCares, the two local hospitals and the Kumasi Metropolitan Health Directorate (KMHD).

Ms. Akuamo-Boateng also coordinated more comprehensive, first-time trainings for staff in HBB techniques at Kumasi's other five facilities, Maternal and Child Health Hospital, SDA Hospital, Manhyia Government Hospital, Tafo Government Hospital and KNUST Hospital. As MCI comes to a close, we are highly confident that KMHD and all local stakeholders will continue to build upon these successes in their tireless efforts to improve maternal and newborn care.



Abenna Akuamo-Boateng provides new mothers with supplies at one of the Mother-Baby Units.



Kumasi mother holds her baby, Savior, who is alive because of MCI's "Helping Babies Breathe" program.

KWAO TSURU CHPS HEALTH ZONE OPENS IN ACCRA

In partnership with longtime NGO partner Global Communities (formerly CHF), MCI has just opened a new Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) clinic in Kwao Tsuru, a low-income, high-density settlement in Accra's New Town.

CHPS Health Zones typically provide select pre-natal care, treat minor ailments and screen for infectious diseases such as malaria and cholera, referring patients to a hospital for more urgent care. Health Zone nurses also make the rounds of the neighborhood, reaching out to educate individual households regarding basic hygiene and other disease prevention methods.

The new Health Zone is the first of its kind in Kwao Tsuru, with medical staff assigned by the Ghana Health Service. Global Communities provided a grant for building the structure, and MCI provided the furnishings and medical equipment. We anticipate that residents will now have improved access both to basic healthcare services and to useful information that can help them reduce the number of everyday hazards that continue to put the community's health at risk.

NEW YOUTH CENTER OPENS IN ACCRA

The East, North and Central Ayawaso Sub-Metropolitan areas of Accra contain a high youth demographic that struggles with un- and underemployment and a lack of capital that might enable them to start small businesses.

Particularly in the underserved neighborhoods of Nima and Maamobi, the youth have become increasingly disillusioned, both with their livelihood prospects and with their lack of meaningful inclusion in the decision-making that affects their community.

To thrive in this challenging environment, spaces for youth development and recreation are essential – but virtually nonexistent, due to land ownership, space and funding issues. MCI partnered with the Nima-based youth NGO Voice in Community Empowerment (VOiCE) to find a venue where youth might create and participate in activities that meet and advance their own developmental needs and recreational interests. After an impressive, youth-led renovation of a neighborhood building that VOiCE had been given permission to use, the Ayawaso Community Youth Center opened its doors on July 20 as the only official venue for youth in the area.

The Center contains a hall for forums and other activities, a small conference room and two modest office spaces that will serve as VOiCE's headquarters. VOiCE will also manage and charge for the use of the Center, generating revenue to pay for its maintenance, with all activities benefiting youth development and empowerment held at no cost.

In general, MCI's partnership with VOiCE has been extremely gratifying: with minimal financial resources, mobilized by the leadership and vision of MCI Accra Project Manager Joe Melara, we have made it possible for this highly motivated group to sponsor forums for young women focused on girls' education and to initiate community clean-ups, alleyway paving and solid waste disposal programs, all filling critical gaps in the provision of public services to these chronically impoverished, largely Muslim communities.



Nima youth gather in front of newly renovated Youth Center.



VOiCE volunteers join other Accra youth in solid waste disposal programs to help clean up their neighborhoods.

NEW “SEE AND TREAT” CLINICS FIGHT CERVICAL CANCER IN KISUMU



Cure Cervical Cancer celebrates with local graduates of cervical cancer screening and treatment training.

In April, Dr. Patricia Gordon, a senior radiation oncologist at Beverly Hills Cancer Center, brought her Cure Cervical Cancer (CCC) team to Kisumu, to establish and equip four “See and Treat” clinics there, with support from MCI's Beldina Opiyo-Omolo and the American non-profit International Medical Corps. The clinics are designed to provide cervical cancer screenings and treatment for women in the area, where cervical cancer is rarely diagnosed in time to act and is consequently one of the leading causes of women's death.

While in Kisumu, the CCC team trained 14 healthcare professionals from local hospitals, equipping them with skills to perform low-cost, high impact screenings and treatments for women in and around the city. Following the trainings, CCC team members helped the healthcare professionals set up their own clinics, where such screenings and treatments have continued and are ongoing. More than 770 Kisumu women were screened in the course of CCC's whirlwind visit to Kisumu, and another 80 women received required additional treatment – all in large measure thanks to MCI's aggressive mobilization strategy, which alerted area women in advance of the “See and Treat” sessions. CCC, which had earlier established successful ongoing “See and Treat” clinics in the Millennium City of Mekelle, Ethiopia, is now planning a refresher training in Kisumu for later this fall.

COMMUNITY UPGRADES IN KISUMU'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENT SPURS ECONOMIC VIABILITY

For a number of years, MCI has worked in partnership with the Dutch development agency CORDAID to improve conditions in Manyatta, Kisumu's largest informal settlement. This year, MCI Public Health Specialist for Kisumu Beldina Opiyo-Omolo launched an innovative Group Savings & Loan (GS&L) program that we hope will create opportunities for many neighborhood residents, particularly for Manyatta's women.



GS&L group shares progress update with representatives from our sister Millennium Villages Project.

In facilitating numerous medical interventions, coordinating Girls' and Mothers' LitClubs and training more than 100 Community Health Workers in Manyatta, Ms. Opiyo-Omolo recognized a keen need and desire for greater access to economic opportunity there. Having previously been trained in GS&L, a program developed by CARE International and implemented across East Africa to help individuals save and access small loans, she recommended that MCI introduce this innovative program to respond to the expressed need in Manyatta.

Since its launch in Manyatta at the end of 2013 with a five-day training, MCI's GS&L program has witnessed remarkable success. It has also proven innovative, as the first to use mobile phones to record data on attendance, savings, loans, fines and meeting summaries.

Through the second quarter of 2014, 123 participants, comprising eight savings groups, had a cumulative savings of KES 710,766 (@ \$8,003.23), while the average loan outstanding is KES 8,187 (\$92.19). This translates into average savings per member of KES 5,799.00 (\$65.30), with the groups realizing a 45.8 percent return on their savings.² When the first cycle of the program culminates in December, we anticipate program participants will have incurred significant additional gains, and judging from the discussions taking place within the savings groups, they will already be making use of their new resources to support their families, grow their small businesses and create new ones.

LITCLUBS REVEAL THE POWER OF LITERACY AT ALL AGES

In March, Girls' LitClubs in Kumasi and Kisumu celebrated the 5th annual World Read Aloud Day (WRAD), created by MCI partner LitWorld.

In Kumasi, Girls' LitClub members took to the streets to promote literacy and to share stories, which they did with seemingly everyone from primary school students and teachers to food vendors, telecom workers and car dealers.

In Kisumu, all the LitClubs assembled at the National Library for a citywide Spelling Bee, debates on issues relating to public education and a reading contest. In April, 25 graduates from a Kisumu Girls' LitClub hosted their first "Teen LitClub." Led by Kisumu LitClub Coordinator Phoebe Darya Bosse, the girls gathered for a discussion of some of the most challenging issues facing their age group, including relationships, teenage pregnancies, bullying and sexual abuse.



Kisumu Mothers' Club participants work together to foster independence and build community.

In another expansion of the original Girls' LitClubs program, nearly 40 Kisumu-area mothers assembled in an improvised, highly successful Mothers' Club session on financial literacy, to be followed by further Mothers' Club trainings in GS&L, later this fall.

²Kenya Shillings were converted to US dollars on 3 September 2014, based on the currency rate of USD/KES = 0.011260.

KISUMU NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS FACILITATE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

As I write this, we are eagerly awaiting the publication of the latest volume by The Earth Institute's Urban Design Lab (UDL), MCI's longtime partner, which brought nearly 30 faculty and students to Kisumu last winter at the invitation of local officials, CORDAID and MCI.

The volume reflects the thoughtful, creative and round-the-clock work of six Urban Design Lab design teams, which devised amazing, richly-conceived, synergistic proposals to address many of the community's pressing housing, sanitation, energy, gender and income-related issues.

City planning officials as well as Kisumu's own Maseno University faculty participated in this large team effort, and I will be returning to Kisumu soon, together with UDL faculty/MCI Advisory Board member Prof. Mehta, to join CORDAID and our partners in presenting the proposals to Manyatta stakeholders, Kisumu City officials and to the Governor of the newly designated Kisumu County.



Preview of Urban Design Lab's courtyard designed for women's empowerment, in upcoming UDL/MCI publication.

ABOUT THE MILLENNIUM CITIES INITIATIVE

The Millennium Cities Initiative was established to help selected, under-resourced municipalities across sub-Saharan Africa eradicate searing urban poverty and attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MCI assists the "Millennium Cities" – generally regional capitals near to the sites of the Millennium Villages Project (MVP), MCI's sister integrated rural development effort – in identifying critical gaps in realizing the MDGs, as well as the financing, programs and partners capable of filling them. MCI's extensive network of partners around the world – including investors, philanthropists and entrepreneurs; nonprofits and corporations; and governmental and multilateral institutions – joins MCI in the belief that, for the first time, our generation has the opportunity to complete an urban transformation across Africa and beyond.