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“It’s A Ripple Effect”: Global Mamas in a Developing Ghana

Mara Dold
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School for International Training
Study Abroad – Ghana (Arts & Culture)
Fall 2009

“It’s A Ripple Effect”: Global Mamas in a Developing Ghana

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Abstract

1. Title: “It’s a Ripple Effect”: Global Mamas in a Developing Ghana
2. Author: Mara Dold (doldma01@gettysburg.edu; Gettysburg College)
3. Objectives: The objectives of this study were four-fold:
 - i. Participate in workshops offered by Women in Progress to learn traditional handcrafts.
 - ii. Learn about the foundation of Global Mamas and its evolvement over the six years since its inception.
 - iii. Find out what Global Mamas is doing for its women (financially, socially, the benefits and drawbacks, personally, etc.).
 - iv. Understand what it means to be a Global Mama from the perspectives of the founders and of the Global Mamas themselves.
4. Methodology: My research took place almost entirely in Cape Coast but was supplemented with time in Krobo-Odumase and Accra. I worked exclusively with the nonprofit and fair trade international organization Women in Progress, specifically focusing on the women working for their brand name product line Global Mamas. I was a part of 2 batik workshops and 1 bead making workshop, led by Ghanaians hired by Global Mamas. Participant observation and informal interviews went hand in hand during the workshops. I had many an informal discussion and just 5 formal interviews overall. Book research was key to my more general findings and internet sources served as very influential in gaining information for my narrow focus on the one organization. I was able to learn about various positions within Global Mamas, including but not limited to the directors, managers, volunteers, batikers, and bead makers, through my different methods of gathering information in the field and outside of the field.
5. Findings: Book research brought me to learn about the economics, gender issues, and work roles as an outsider in the community of nonprofit organizations. There is more to fair trade than fair wages and it takes a well-rounded organization driven towards human equality to be recognized and deemed such by the Fair Trade Federation. Over the last six years, Women in Progress/ Global Mamas has made leaps and bounds in accessing new markets for their client community and in doing so, has become a self sustainable and constant evolving international organization dedicated to bettering the livelihoods of women across Africa. I was introduced to the handcraft techniques of batik and bead making and became familiarized with ways to join the Global Mamas cooperative or make a difference from outside of the immediate production centers in Ghana.
6. Conclusion: Giving names and faces to the products created by Global Mamas is one way that social advocacy, awareness, and recognition are promoted. The women working for Global Mamas are given opportunities through the organization that most cannot access so it becomes their responsibilities to share the knowledge and act as inspiring examples for aspiring younger generations. This in turn will facilitate the process of development and connect cultures from overseas. Further studies are needed to explore the benefits of such a system in comparison to those of large multinational corporations.

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Katrina and Jacey, I never thought I’d miss you two so much but that just goes to show that home is where the heart is (and that we really are ‘tricklets’).

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To the people of Ghana: You’ve shown me what love for one’s culture looks like and I’ll keep that with me always. So *medase* (thank you) and *yɛbɛhyia* (we will meet again).

Introduction

“We believe the world will be closer to social and economic justice if businesses are self sustainable, women enjoy their full human rights, and people understand and respect diverse cultures.” – Objective of Women in Progress (womeninprogress.org)

With different parts of the world progressing at various paces, it is important to see development but similarly necessary to hold on to and maintain traditional values of one’s culture. Globalization has helped link nations and continents together, especially through international markets, yet producers don’t always reap in the benefits. Women in Progress (WIP), marketing handcrafted African goods with the label Global Mamas, aims to connect cultures in a just way.

A fair trade and nonprofit organization, Global Mamas endeavors to share the unique handcrafts produced by small women business owners with other parts of the world, and in turn, issue fair payments aiding the economic growth and self sustainability of their makers. Deemed an international NGO in 2003, WIP/ Global Mamas has found access to new markets for the women, as promised. Over 175 types of merchandise, from apparel to beauty products to home accessories are sold to customers in North America, Europe, and Australia. The co-founders have been successful in forming a “partnership of the women producers in Ghana, [the] volunteers, supporters and retail partners throughout the world” (womeninprogress.org).

The justification and aim of my study coincide with one another. I wished to learn why Ghana is considered and titled a ‘developing country’ and believed that one of the best ways to do so would be to look at a nonprofit claiming to be devoted to achieving economic independence by empowering low-income female artisans. Rather than report a general,

overarching summary of the nation's development, I chose to pinpoint one growing organization, grabbing my interest amongst others because of its international trade component and gender specific approach to business expansion.

WIP gives the women the skills training and development programs needed to operate and advance their businesses but is atypical in that it challenges them to implement the lessons. The results have been astonishing thus far; Global Mamas producers are earning over ten times the amount of an average businesswoman in Ghana and the producers are earning over 30% of the total revenue gained annually (womeninprogress.org). Taking steps to advance in positive directions, "Women in Progress/ Global Mamas is part of an ever-increasing global consensus that suggest empowering women is the key to eradicating poverty" (Feth). Carrying out the vision of the organization is multi-faceted and arduous but certainly achievable. My research findings may not be entirely original but my intentions with reporting on this thriving NGO are to spread awareness and suggest ways to get involved to make a difference in the lives of the Global Mamas and humankind as a whole.

Methodology

I traveled to Cape Coast unsure of my exact project topic but knowing I had great interest in two specific nonprofits. After making contacts in the area, I chose to focus solely on Women in Progress/ Global Mamas. With my concentration on this one organization, my research turned more or less into ethnography: “the detailed study of small groups of people within a complex society” (Henslin 176). I spent most of my time with a limited number of informants so I could gather as many details as possible about their work histories within developing Ghana.

The data collection methods I used were observation, participation, participant observation, informal interviews, formal interviews, and research through book and internet sources. The participant observation in my workshops and informal interviews I conducted went hand in hand. Formal interviews only took place following face-to-face interactions and I conducted them with pen and paper. I did not feel comfortable contacting any of the Global Mamas for interviews prior to meeting them for two reasons: I wasn’t confident I could fully explain my research objectives over a phone call and I early on reached a road block in my research when I had tried to set up an interview with a co-founder over the phone and was denied. By definition, “ethnographers attempt to achieve an understanding of what the social processes and actions mean for the people involved in them” so my efforts were directed towards seeing experiences from the subject’s point of view as best I could (Henslin 177). Much of my project was an observation study so the content of my findings is based on the amount of my involvement dedicated to the Global Mamas I had the pleasure of meeting.

I ran into a handful of difficulties during my research period. It took me a while to solidify my project topic so initially, being able to make effective use of my time was crucial to

me gaining as many insights as possible with my limited number of informants. The first setback to occur in my study was being unable to set up an interview with co-founder Adam. I spoke to her directly over the phone yet she did not agree to a meeting or to an interview after explaining my proposal for conducting the study. She instead suggested that I sign up to intern or volunteer through WIP but afterwards realized that neither of those options would be feasible with my time range allotted for the project. Learning the foundation and developments of the organization was important to me so I later tried to set-up an interview with second co-founder Johnson, from the distribution end of the scale, which also failed. I first called the U.S. information line and was able to obtain an e-mail address for Johnson. After sending an e-mail describing my interest in learning more about Global Mamas from her standpoint, I never received a response e-mail which was disheartening. Not being able to successfully meet or interview either of the founders was overall the most upsetting part of my research since I found out the Cape Coast general manager is in contact with them daily, through phone or e-mail.. I believe that I found out as much as possible with the current internet sources yet I wish that I had my own findings about the pair.

I ran into two more hardships with the formal interviews. More minor, the first time I met at Mary's batik workshop with questions, she wanted to have the interview inside of her workspace as I had already taken a class there and it was a comfortable setting for both of us. However, the padlock on the door was rusted shut so I returned two days later, after the locksmith was called to remove the lock from the door, to conduct the interview. For my bead workshop, I left my Cape Coast alcove for Krobo-Odumase. I had my interview questions written out for the bead maker I was to learn from yet I was unexpectedly met by a man named Moses. I had constructed many questions about female empowerment and women work roles

and though it would have been interesting to get a male perspective, Moses knew limited English. Though we were able to communicate well throughout the bead process, when I asked questions about his history as a bead maker, I had to rephrase my queries a few times over before we reached a mutual understanding. It may have been more effective for me if I had brought along an English-to-Krobo translator but the thought didn't cross my mind knowing I would only spend one day in the area.

Another hurdle for me was finding someone who could act as my advisor for my independent study. After several days on the field and interactions with Global Mamas in various staff positions, I decided my best option would be to approach Cape Coast general manager Alice Grau. Though only working for Global Mamas on contract for just under a year so far, Grau helped me set up my batik and bead workshops and gave me a look into the under workings upstairs in the main office, her infinite duties at Global Mamas, and what the volunteer program entails. Overall, I still took an unaided approach to finding my data and besides asking for an interview and workshop recommendations, I went about my research with very little guidance, but by choice.

Resource-wise, no books exist with focus on just Women in Progress/ Global Mamas so outside of interviews, facts specific to the nonprofit were principally found on the internet between the organization's two primary web pages and recent reports posted by newspapers, journalists, and consumers from the U.S. I made most use out of the resources online because they were up to date though the books were definitely more objective and therefore more valid and reliable for my findings. I used textbooks for my broad research on ethnography, women's rights, economics, and Third World poverty but because of the layout of my findings, the references are generally clustered together: first books, then web pages, then informants. I had

difficulty interweaving them because of the design in which I present my findings even though I acquired a balance between the three in the product of my study.

Findings

Part One: Background

Nonprofit & Fair Trade

Currently in its sixth business year since establishment in Ghana, Women in Progress/ Global Mamas is an international nonprofit “taking small steps towards helping end Africa’s dependence on foreign aid and creating a sustainable society” (globalmamas.org). All proceeds made from the purchase of the handcrafted products go to the women producers and development programs installed by the organization. Fair trade is about its products, prices, and community impact; “it uses a fairer system of exchange to empower producers and to create sustainable, positive change” in the lives of the underprivileged in developing countries such as Ghana (fairtradefederation.org). WIP and the Fair Trade Federation have a partnership promoting fair trade, fair pay, and respect for culture, “safe and empowering work conditions,” relationship building, and “opportunities for economically and socially marginalized producers” in the system of international trade (fairtradefederation.org). What makes this business so effective is that the middle man is absent from all levels of the operation so the organization retains all proceeds and the women producers are paid accordingly.

Set apart from other Ghanaian NGOs, Global Mamas features an assisted-implementation approach with a long term focus (Feth). Concerned not just with present conditions but also those of the future, “Global Mamas helps the women find export markets AND assists them in managing their growing businesses by providing hands-on personalized assistance in implementing practical business strategies into day-to-day operations” (globalmamas.org). This difference has marked growth from one woman ventures to the establishment of small businesses led by confident entrepreneurs.

Global Mamas is a fair trade manufacturer and distributor as recognized by the United States' Fair Trade Federation (FTF). In order to be accepted as a fair trade organization, there are several criteria that need to be filled. A few include fair wages, long-term trade relationships, opportunities for employee advancement, and engagement in environmentally sustainable practices. Global Mamas was recognized as such after "a thorough investigation [...] ensured the African women who comprise the Global Mamas cooperative [were] the primary beneficiaries of the proceeds from clothing sales" (globalmamas.org). Some benefits of fair trade are that low-income artisans are being rewarded with "a living wage for their work" which exceeds the nation's minimum wage ten-fold, providing economic security (womeninprogress.org). A partnership is formed between the producers in Ghana and the marketers in North America and other continents. Original and unique handicrafts from Ghana are being sold around the world, promoting awareness, entering broader marketplaces, and sustaining the income of these women in progress.

Upon researching global visions and strategies through the outlook of women's rights, I came across the term 'glocalization.' Glocalization, according to Adeleye-Fayemi, means that "events and processes at the global level affect women's situations at the local level at the same time as women's local activities affect global processes" (38). I found this term perfectly relatable to WIP's approach; by seeking out global markets, Ghanaian women are exhibiting traditional talents and imparting artistic culture whereas purchases made from overseas are providing income and sustenance for the products' creators.

Economics, Work, & Gender

By recognizing women for their specialized handicrafts and giving them the opportunity to increase capital, Women in Progress is offering an opportunity for change and

entrepreneurship. This organization “has directly enhanced the wages, standard of living, and confidence of over 400 low-income women in Ghana by helping woman-owned businesses expand their operations” (Feth). Evidence of the organization’s entrepreneurial success was clear at my batik workshop with Eli-Emma Batik & Tye-Dye. The two female owners make batik for Global Mamas but they additionally run their own shop inside of the Cape Coast castle dungeon and have a workshop directly next to the Castle Restaurant. I was amazed at the rate of batik production over the course of my three hours of participation and observation; over 15 batiks, each six yards long, went through dying, drying, wax removal, further drying, and folding. With five apprentices, including Elizabeth, my workshop instructor, each woman was designated to a specific step of the process enabling such a high production rate.

Eli and Emma are businesswomen in every sense of the word. They are two batikers who have been with Global Mamas since the start and have crossed former boundaries that inhibited their creative sales. They became close friends after meeting each other through work on an assembly line. After enrolling and then completing school for batik, they opened up their own store, Eli-Emma Batik & Tye-Dye, which is the one on the waterfront by the castle today. They struggled at times with late payments from larger customers yet now their business is booming with cloth production, store sales, apprentices, and workshops (globalmamas.org). As proven by their means of production, “incentives may shape the opportunities open to entrepreneurs, but their endowments influence the productivity of their efforts” (Fields, Pfeffermann 156).

Economic growth is the escalation and evolution of, in this case, a production network and the succession of opportunities of employment and earnings. Development is different in the sense that the progress leads towards preferred goals, most importantly enhancing the state of humans. Because people are both the means and the ends of development, it is necessary that

development be a “human-centered process” (Ostergaard 1-2). From the combination of both concepts, economic development is gained. In other words, what comes about are “positive changes and progress in the human condition through economic means” (Fik 22). The establishment of Women in Progress and its development since its African foundation in spring of 2003 has devoted its purpose to the economic development of females across Ghana. In the scope of gender development over time, though often unnoticed, women “perform the major part of the world’s labor and [...] they do so under very underprivileged conditions” (Ostergaard 5). Women are representative of “powerful human resources” and the most recent female labor statistics of Ghana show that (Ostergaard 5). Female economic activity is up to 80.1%, sixth among 156 nations worldwide (*Ghanaian Labor Stats*). Because women are incorporated in fields of labor ranging from farming to textiles to informal roadside sales, they are juggling dual responsibilities as family is central to most Ghanaians’ values. Co-founder Renae Adams believes the women who are earning incomes change “the socio-economic balance in these societies. It reduces the traditional economic inequality between men and women” (M’vunganyi). Global Mamas is molding a sustainable society and “taking small steps towards helping end Africa’s dependence on foreign aid” by “helping women to help themselves” – and that’s the difference (globalmamas.org).

Female Empowerment

Inequality can be sustained by a society’s norms and values even though it may be recognized that the roles of males and females are unjust. Hierarchies are formed and gender stratifications have common tendencies to favor male dominance. Women are in a developing stage in various African countries, and as Aslanbeigui’s title announces, this is an age of economic transformation; “Only if women organize to voice their needs through labor unions,

political office and women's organizations will they be able to become equal players in the transformed world economy of the future" (Aslanbeigui, Pressman, and Summerfield 6).

Though not every woman wants to, Global Mamas gives the option and offers the challenge to each woman to open her own business. This is essential because "when people are empowered as individuals, they can speak out against injustice, and they can begin to change the institutions, laws, customs, and norms that harm girls and women" (Crawford, Unger 567-8). The transformation from traditional gender roles to contemporary equal work positions come about reciprocally "as speaking out leads to greater feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment" (Crawford and Unger 568). As one journalist notes, "It's a ripple effect. By helping a few industrious women Global Mamas is helping to improve the lives of many" (*Helping Women Help*). Providing economic opportunity for women in Africa, Women in Progress joins the "global consensus that suggests empowering women is the key to eradicating poverty" (Feth).

Global Mamas can be distinguished through my research as following the empowerment approach, one of the five techniques that differentiates practical and strategic gender needs. By definition, the empowerment approach "focuses on increasing women's control over the choices in their lives. It seeks to increase their self-reliance and self-confidence so they will become more active players in society" (Ostergaard 174). In turn, women are expected to take steps from what they have learned and experienced to bring about a new direction in their social and economic activity. The socioeconomic status, "a combination of income and wealth, occupation, and education," of the women employed by Women in Progress is definitely on the rise, as noted by the most recent 2008 annual report by Global Mamas (Marger 382; womeninprogress.org).

Potential Drawbacks

From time to time, negative side effects come about from development strategies used to “solve the problems of poverty in Third World countries” (Ostergaard 1). Women play a key role in sustainable development yet when this is recognized, the poor and underprivileged can surprisingly become even poorer. This can happen by giving jobs to a select handful of people and seeing their wages increase ten-fold which may further increase the gap between the rich and the poor. Also, development is often advantageous exclusively for men yet “should this be recognized, the proposed solution is often the initiation of special ‘women’s projects,’ which tend only to marginalize women further as a ‘special group’ within society” (Ostergaard, 2). Truthfully, “a gender hierarchy is part of all societies regardless of their level of technological development or the complexity of their social structure” (Marger, 15).

The patterns and processes of social inequality are never fixed; the conflict between femininity and masculinity, learned patterns of behavior, and norms of societies are varied, abundant, and always evolving. It is the social and cultural differences amongst sexes that constitute gender and these differences “are a product of socialization, discrimination, and other forms of social control” woven into the values of each culture (Marger 316). The empowerment approach originates from grass roots organizations and experiences held by Third World women like those of Women in Progress/Global Mamas. Development doesn’t necessarily help everyone if it is forced on the people from those outside the immediate culture. Also, these approaches maintain that “women want to be integrated into the mainstream of Western-designed development” (Ostergaard 175). The reason that this potential problem isn’t applicable to Global Mamas is that these women are hired through either an application process or are

offered work by the organization leaders. They have the choice to submit an application for work and the choice to deny the position. They are urged to speak up if they don't like the work assigned to them because the organization exists to better their livelihoods. Though definitely a westernized organization through technological use, an annual clothing line, and international market contacts, Global Mamas are rightly hired, trained, paid, and treated making this 'woman project' a desired option for sustenance.

Part Two: Global Mamas (the organization)

Foundation

Women in Progress/ Global Mamas was brought into being in 2003 by two former Peace Corps members. The mission this organization was founded on is as follows: “to achieve economic independence of women and alleviate poverty at a grassroots level in developing nations through the sustainable growth of small women-owned businesses and at the same time establish mutual understanding among people of diverse cultures” (Feth). Little has changed in the mission statement from year one but much has changed in the lives of the women working for this nonprofit. The female co-founders had both spent time in Ghana during their government tenure, making connections and developing relationships with many women, a handful of batikers in particular. After returning to their homes in the United States, the two “got burned out by corporate America” so they brought their passion for business right back to where they had formerly served, eight years prior, to form an international nonprofit: “a cooperative, dedicated to the economic empowerment of women” (*Helping Women Help*). WIP started in May 2002 as a U.S. nonprofit and while one of the co-founders stays at home base in Minnesota, the other is in Ghana fueling the local NGO titled Global Mamas. Established in 2002 but kicked off the ground fully in early spring of 2003, the initial growth of the nonprofit is due to its first private donations. Now, Global Mamas is backed by fewer donations and uses its proceeds from purchases by valued consumers and business with retail partners on other continents. WIP started off with just 6 producers and as of the 2008 WIP report (which means even more growth has occurred over the past year), 83 individually-owned businesses have joined hands with WIP (womeninprogress.org). Truly, these are women in progress.

Mission

Global Mamas is the brand name associated with the handmade “goods produced through the efforts of Women in Progress” (globalmamas.org). The 2008 WIP Annual Report notes their approach as follows: “WIP’s purpose is to reduce the economic inequality of women by helping to significantly increase the revenues and profits of women-owned businesses” (womeninprogress.org). WIP takes steps toward social equality through fair trade. Also, as a nonprofit, about a third of all revenue is put directly into the hands of the producers of Global Mamas’ merchandise. The vision of WIP, for women in Africa to become economically independent, is well in progress now six years after its founding. Skills training, increased wages, and international marketing (amongst various other significant growth factors) have guided Ghanaian handcrafters in positive and prospering life directions.

Developments

Each year, WIP/ Global Mamas reports on the new transformations that the organization has undergone throughout the course of its last 12 months. In the most recent report from 2008, the co-founders took a look back at the growth which has occurred since its initiation. The goals, as stated by the annual report, are to do more than offer workshops, provide hands-on implementation-focused training, grow steadily with a commitment to the long term, track true economic growth, and to create a self-sustainable organization. WIP has successfully developed an international trade program with foreign markets in North America, Europe, and Australia; “sales of Global Mamas handcrafted goods have grown from \$22,000 to \$577,000” between collaborations of over 80 businesses (womeninprogress.org). Instead of one-and-done business seminars with each of the women, Global Mamas offers ongoing services through the expertise of volunteers and interns that come to Ghana. Production centers have expanded from Cape

Coast to Krobo-Odumase, Ho, Dworwulu, Ajumako, Damongo, and Teshie-Nungua for specialization of the different handcrafts sold in stores. Rather than seeing how many women WIP can reach out to in terms of numbers, the focus has been on (and is still on) economic growth - creation of new jobs, and measurable profit and wage increases. Last but certainly not least, self sustenance is a key advancement that has been made with the growing acquisition of revenue from six years of business achievements. Since given the first grants and donations to steady the organization at its inception, Global Mamas is no longer in need of such financial aid and can launch more production centers and build up its current product without reliance on outside sources. Increased revenue and wages, job creation, business expansion, improved standards of living, program growth, extensive training, and market expansion all came about in 2008 (womeninprogress.org). WIP challenges its development with expansionist objectives at the conclusion of each flourishing year.

Production

Beads, batik, tie dye, shea butter, sewing, African black soap, water satchet transformations, and weaving: All of these techniques and products are readily available *by* Global Mamas *through* Global Mamas. Men's clothing, women's clothing, children's clothing, purses, bags, key chains, ornaments, kitchenware, beauty products, jewelry, and accessories galore – just a brief listing of various goods produced and distributed. There are women at production centers, personal workshops, and small businesses in the north, on the coast, in the east, and in the capital city practicing their artistic skills, business skills, and people skills while getting paid fair wages. The handcrafts are in higher demand each successive year which leads to constant economic growth.

Presentation

Global Mamas has two store locations in Ghana: one in the tourist-friendly Cape Coast and the other in the lively district of Accra called Osu. Business in stores comes mostly from tourists, especially Westerners. The Cape Coast store location is popular because of the ecotourism factor. The slave castle dungeons and beautiful waters bring tourist activity and travel to this region of Ghana. The first floor of the store is fully stocked with Global Mamas merchandise and up the staircase is the office of the general manager. In the office, there are computers and desks for volunteers and vast inventory that's organized to be either exported or set aside for the local stores. What I found interesting about the upstairs office and workspace is the resemblance and correlations to the setup of a fashion design studio. Mounted on bulletin boards on the wall are American magazine cutouts as examples with potential for the new 2010 line of clothing. It is obvious to me that the Global Mamas designs are trying to appeal most to their out of country consumer crowd yet at the same time, the apparel maintains the African culture with time-honored batik techniques and manual stitching. One journalist describes the shop layout in Osu as "home to thousands of handmade goods blending together traditional African design with modern day style" (Feth).

Besides the racks, shelves, and colorful displays of products in the Ghana retail shops (see Appendix 1A), there is an internet site which shows pictures of each product, just like a contemporary Western clothing company. The prices run fairly high for Ghanaian standards yet each piece is truly one of a kind. One can make a purchase over the internet or check the store listings in the U.S. that sell Global Mamas merchandise. What is most fascinating about the Global Mamas website (www.gobalmamas.org) is that you can view pictures and read a mini-biography about each Global Mama. Because all products purchased are labeled with tags that have the names of the female makers, you can look up the woman on the website to see who the

proceeds are immediately affecting. Furthermore, there are simple step-by-step instructions for how to make a variety of the handcrafts like tie dye, black soap, and glass beads. In addition to the main label web page, Trade for Change has a site and claims to be “the most comprehensive online retailer of Global Mamas products” (tradeforchange.com). Because of the American founders, skilled volunteers and interns, and trained staff, Global Mamas has been able to generate internet sites that enable easier and more widespread market connections on an international scale.

Global Involvement

New programs are interwoven into WIP at an annual rate and the installation of the Business Development program has helped make international trade not only possible, but a huge reason for the growing accomplishments of Global Mamas. The International Trade program, developed after the success of the former program, is led by volunteers who are assigned to one of these subsequent aims: new product creation and research for export, trade marketing strategies, quality control program execution, expansion of production, introduction of more small businesses to the co-operative, classification of essential financial resources for the global market, formation of fitting relationships from the entrepreneur to the global distributor, or web page design. When WIP was in its start-up phase, the co-founders realized that it would take more than just a local market to satisfy the handcrafters of Cape Coast. The women declared “You can teach us marketing or bookkeeping, but if you don’t help us to find new markets for our products, we won’t be here tomorrow” (womeninprogress.org). Now, more than simply sharing their creative talents with people in their country, stores in three continents sell this line of products to share cultural artistic tradition and sequentially add to the economic success of female entrepreneurs across Ghana. The idea that the Global Mamas label

encompasses both fair trade and non-profit characteristics not only makes the purchase that much more desirable but also, as I have felt firsthand, guilt-free as the women benefit directly from the consumption of their beautiful handcrafts.

Part Three: How To

Batik

Though originally an Asian art, batik has moved to the continent of Africa where Ghanaians produce vast quantities of this fabric with styles and colorations distinct by region. For both batik workshops I participated in, I was given two yards of calico fabric. Calico is the best fabric option for batik because the dyes can fully soak through the material providing deep and vibrant colors that withstand wear and discoloration. For my first workshop, the fabric was pre-dyed pink but I started with the original white cotton cloth for my second model. The first step in each of my lessons was choosing the stamps for printing. There were many Adinkra symbols to choose from but also some popular culture references, especially at the larger Eli-Emma Batik & Tye-Dye Workshop, such as peace signs, flowers, turtles, and hearts (see Appendix 1B). At Mary Koomson's workshop, I used stamps made out of wood. For her own batiks, she uses those made of foam. Mary admitted to me that the wooden ones are solely "used for white people" workshops because they're easier for beginner printers. The foam stamps take more technique because if you press too heavily, you run the risk of saturation. Oppositely, if you press too lightly, the design won't be fully printed on the cloth. It takes time and many mistakes to learn the perfect pressure application which is why most batikers are apprentices first or attend vocational schools specializing in the specific handcraft. For foam stamps, sketches are outlined on thick pieces of sponge and then cut with razor blades in the desired design. After deciding on a pattern, the stamps are dipped into a boiling pot of wax. The heated wax used for stamping is a combination of beeswax and paraffin wax. A further difference between the wooden and foam stamps is that you need to dip the stamp into the wax after each print with the wood whereas the foam holds more wax so you can make a succession of three to six prints

before re-dipping. After fully completing the stamping on a flat piece of fabric, any mistakes can be fixed with what Mary referred to as a “pencil.” I watched her cut a thin pointed piece of foam, dip it in the wax, and draw in any details that weren’t translated from the print to the fabric.

After the fabric wax is applied, the dyeing process begins. Cold water is mixed with a powdered dye, caustic, and hydro-chlorate. It is repeatedly turned and flipped in the bucket of dye so that all parts of the cloth are newly saturated in the chosen color (see Appendix 1C). Oftentimes, the color of the dye does not reflect the color the fabric will be after it is dried. The sunlight can affect, and in most cases lighten, the color that the fabric is soaked in. After several minutes of this dye drenching process, the fabric is carried, still dripping with excess coloration, to somewhere to dry. In both instances of my participation, the cloth was hung on the clothesline until dry. Because the clotheslines at both workplaces are strategically situated in direct sunlight as to enable the rapidity of drying, each batik took less than 30 minutes to completely dry out. In the case of rookie workshops, the calico is dyed just once symbolizing that the finished product will be two colors as the areas that are stamped maintain the original cloth color. In more advanced batiks, the wax stamping and dyeing is repeated in the same manner to produce three or more colors. Whichever color is lightest of the chosen dyes should be first and then the next lightest etc. until the conclusion of the final darkest dye.

The batik isn’t complete until the wax from the stamping is removed and in order to do so, the newly dyed fabric must be fully submerged into a boiling pot of water. Mary dunked and turned the fabric with her bare hands (see Appendix 2A) whereas my instructor Elizabeth at Eli-Emma’s used a long staff to rotate the cloth (see Appendix 2B). While revolving in the water, the beeswax and paraffin wax blend from the prints melts off due to the heat and rises to the top of

the pot. At both workshops, the wax was collected from the crown and put in a separate bucket. The reason for this removal is because wax serves as one of the recyclable supplies in the batik process. Once it re-hardens, it can be re-melted in the next pot of wax for stamping. What I learned from both my workshops through Women in Progress is that batik is a process of practice, patience, and by the end, perfection. The women batiking for Global Mamas have been hand-selected not only for building empowerment, entrepreneurship, and economics but also because of their high skill levels, creative artistic expression, and knowledgeable background concerning the well-liked patterned craft.

Make Beads

I moved from Cape Coast to a small city in the eastern region called Krobo-Odumase for a bead making workshop with Global Mamas beadmaker Moses. The majority of Ghanaian bead making has historically been, and is presently continued, in Krobo. Beads are used for various ceremonial purposes like birthing rites, dikpo rights, weddings, and funerals by the Krobo people. Certain colors and types of beads are worn for specific occasions and the significance of beads is engrained in Krobo culture because of these passages and life cycles. Global Mamas bead makers focus their skills on four handcrafted types: powdered glass beads, painted glass beads, translucent beads, and seed beads. In my workshop, I made flat disk-shaped beads that were larger than seed beads but a combination of powdered bead and seed bead processes. When I arrived, the moulds had already been formed and fired but I was a full participant in the rest of the process.

For making moulds, a slab of clay is flattened and rounded to about a 1-2 inch thickness. A rounded peg is then inserted into the soft clay. The peg is pressed into the clay either shallowly or deeply and either few times or many depending upon the size of the beads and the

amount being produced in one mould. After reaching the desired size and number, the moulds are laid out for several days in order to fully dry and harden. Upon drying out, the moulds are fired in a heated firewood kiln. Moses's handmade dome-shaped kiln was constructed of clay and he burned wood through the back in order to create an oven-like environment for the moulds and beads.

Next, thin dry stalks of cassava leaves are inserted into the middle of each and every peg imprint and then cut with a razor blade to rise just above the mould surface. It is necessary that cassava leaves be cut and wedged through the center of each individual bead depression to ensure that the beads will have holes in their centers once fired. The powder used to fill the bead moulds is made from pounding recycled glass bottles into fine dust. To do this, Moses and I made use of a large wooden staff with a metal head, termed a metal pestle, and a small metal mortar (see Appendix 2C). Similar to pounding fufu, the glass pieces are rhythmically ground to a dust after several minutes of a repeated up and down motion with the pestle while standing. The powder is then sifted through a sieve so that any large pieces can be re-added and re-pounded into dust of the same fine consistency. Once enough powder is produced, colored dye powder is added to the glass powder. For the beads I made, I added a few pinches of yellow dye to get a golden shade.

The dye powder, acquired from the marketplace in Krobo, is integrated with the glass powder through mixing the two by hand in a bowl. Once the color is consistent throughout the blend, you scoop up a handful of the mix and completely cover the mould. You shake the mould as to settle the powder into the depressions and then gently tilt the mould for the excess powder to slide off the top (see Appendix 3A). Moses and I tapped the bottom of the mould twice to

make certain the powder sank evenly in the bead indents. I then lightly blew whatever dust still stuck to the top and set the mould aside for the next stage of the process: firing.

We carried the filled moulds over to the firewood kiln. Sitting in front of the kiln, the moulds are balanced on the end of a very long metal spatula. The spatula is inserted into the dome and places the moulds in a single layer on the flat oven base surface with the flames heating the beads from the underside (see Appendix 3B). A metal sheet is then placed in front of the opening of the kiln so very little heat escapes and all the beads are cooked at equal paces. After twenty to thirty minutes, the moulds are removed from the kiln in the reverse manner of their entrance; the spatula reaches inside and pulls out the moulds one by one. I then was given two metal spindles that I used to flip each bead over in its depression. At this point, the cassava leaves are burned down to ash yet a round hole in the middle of each bead exists and the powder has melted into consistently toned beads. The moulds are each re-inserted into the kiln with the spatula for the other side of the beads to be roasted evenly. The second firing takes less time. After about fifteen minutes, the moulds are again, and for the final time, removed from the kiln. Moses poured water on the ground and set each of the moulds on the wet earth one by one using the spatula. The reason for wetting the ground is to quicken the pace of the cooling process. The moulds and beads cannot be immediately handled because the flames from the kiln are so hot that you would burn your hands if to touch right away. After about ten minutes of cooling, I removed each of the beads from their individual depressions and strung them onto a wire. Moses then brought the beads to a flat sandstone where he poured water into a bit of sand and rubbed the beads in the mix to both remove any powder that didn't melt and to create a smooth finish (see Appendix 3C). The beads are then removed from the wire and are put in a bucket of clean water to wash off the sand. The beads are taken out of the water and placed into the sunlight for

the final drying. The last step of the bead making is polishing the beads in oil for a glossy luster. Overall, the workshop lasts approximately two and a half hours. Observably, a skilled bead maker like Moses can produce more beads at much higher rates yet it is long, physically tiring, and hot work. Moses can produce between 25-30 seed bead necklaces each day or between 20-25 powdered bead necklaces a day. He prefers the decorative powdered beads because they are more popular and sell at higher prices at the market.

Volunteer or Intern

If you want to become directly involved with Women in Progress/Global Mamas, there are opportunities for volunteerism and internships. The easiest way to access either of these positions is through one of the main websites: www.womeninprogress.org or www.globalmamas.org. WIP looks for volunteers with business and interpersonal experience. On the industry side of things, volunteers should possess internet skills such as e-mail, web page creation, and familiarity with web research, server applications, and network integration. The site also suggests that a volunteer hold bookkeeping abilities, strong writing skills, and have knowledge of business marketing concepts, to name a few. The technological expertise is crucial but also key to the position are characteristics like energy, patience, enthusiasm, desire to learn, motivation, and a sense of humor (womeninprogress.org). WIP volunteers, whether young, mid-career, or retired, are placed into positions that match their projected business skills or positions appropriate for the length of volunteer time, which is between two weeks and four months. Matched with a woman-owned business, volunteers are able to teach and learn from other volunteers, staff members, clients, and the businesswomen they directly work alongside. Once admitted into the volunteer program, you “receive a description of your assigned business and location, the project’s objectives and your role on the project” (womeninprogress.org). WIP

offers three specific programs for volunteers: business development, training and support, and international trade.

Submission of the volunteer registration form is done online and about two weeks following the completion, applicants are called to discuss potential position assignments and pre-departure materials. In addition, alongside the initial application, prospective volunteers must include a \$100 non-refundable deposit. After acceptance, though an unpaid job, volunteers must pay a fee depending on the amount of time they intend on working abroad. This payment ranges from around \$1000 to \$3000 and covers the costs of support prior and during the volunteer time period, the orientation packet, living arrangements in Ghana, and project spending (womeninprogress.org).

Internships are available for undergraduate, graduate, and PhD student candidates for an international business experience that is devoted to helping the lives of developing businesswomen. The organization matches one's interests and skills with those of a small Ghanaian business. Like volunteers, interns will assist with computer, marketing, production, distribution, and designing facets of businesses backed by WIP. WIP is willing to aid in explaining the program's focus and objectives to an academic advisor or department chair or help in constructing a program suited to a student's needs if the student is pursuing academic credit from his or her institution. Volunteering or interning through WIP is ultimately an unparalleled experience, projecting the idea that prior skill areas can be honed and proposing that new ones can be developed with interactions in the small-business international market.

Help Continue the Development

In Ghana, you can help sustain the livelihoods of the Global Mamas by signing up for workshops. Cape Coast offers workshops in batik, drumming and dancing, cuisine, and fishing. I signed up and participated in two batik workshops. I was able to learn and partake in the batik process from start to finish, make my own cloth, and economically support my instructors through my workshop fee. While in Krobo, I was fortunate to have the same opportunity yet with the making of beads. All three workshops will be memorable experiences for me of my time in Ghana; I have handcrafts to bring home that I will treasure for their aesthetic, cultural, and financial contribution values.

From both the production centers or from a residency in North America, Europe, or Australia, you can facilitate these women in progress by making a donation or shopping either over the internet or in international markets carrying Global Mamas products. WIP assures that making a donation will “help women to help themselves!” (womeninprogress.org). The contributions made by donors are used for the installation and follow through of economic development programs. Any donation \$2000 or higher is set towards a particular project that the donor can view through reports by the volunteers and female entrepreneurs assigned to the work. Regular reports are posted for the donor throughout the course of the project and he or she can stay connected with the team undertaking the job to see that the contribution is being spent effectively. Another option available both in country and out of country is to make a product purchase; “Global Mamas is a company that is taking that concept of style and shaking it up a bit, turning it around, and offering something new: style with conscience” (Hawkins). Every dress, apron, shirt, necklace, tablecloth, purse, pajama short, soap, bandana, and keychain is handmade. Whether it be a laptop bag of recycled water satchets, beaded monkey, woven pot

holder, or batik skirt, every item is inventive, high-quality, and one-of-a-kind through its process of sewing, dying, or firing. Each article is merchandise “with a conscience,” putting fair wages directly into the pockets of the products’ creators (Hawkins).

Part Four: Global Mamas (the women)

Kristin & Renae

Kristin Johnson and Renae Adam are the cofounders of WIP/ Global Mamas. According to the website, the two met in Ghana while serving for the Peace Corps. Between 1992 and 1995, the pair worked on several projects together that focused on female empowerment. As their history is told, after returning to their homes in the states following their tenure, they spent eight years continuing their business learning while simultaneously “volunteer[ing] their time in finding markets abroad for several women batikers in Ghana” (womeninprogress.org). Realizing the impact their short volunteer time had on the expansion of enterprises of the women they worked with, Johnson and Adam “decided to form a nonprofit organization dedicated to the economic empowerment of women in Africa” (womeninprogress.org). Adam recognizes the women as entrepreneurs since childhood, “from when they are five years old and sell items on the street” (M’vunganyi). The passion that Johnson and Adam have for business is coupled with the natural marketing abilities of women acquired through Ghanaian daily life. The blend has been a success thus far. While the U.S. side of Global Mamas looks at markets for sales and business savvy volunteers to send abroad, the Ghanaian branch operates at the production end of the spectrum and works closely with the women handcrafters and development programs run by trained interns and business professionals.

Though not receiving a response from Johnson after trying to contact her via phone call and e-mail, I researched all that I could about her background. Johnson carries the title of International Trade Director for Women in Progress/ Global Mamas. Her business experience comes largely from her schooling history: an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management and a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from the University of Minnesota’s

Carlson School of Management (womeninprogress.org). While in the Peace Corps, Johnson devoted much of her time to establishing both the Cape Coast Women's Business Center and the Progressive Women's Credit Union. Her interest in developing companies for female entrepreneurs has carried over from her initial tenure in Ghana to her foundation of WIP and now to her involvement with a business development center, opportunity center, business certification program, website, and capital forum all directed towards facilitating businesswomen (womeninprogress.org).

I contacted founder Renae Adam directly over the phone yet I had to resort to internet research, disappointingly, on WIP's Executive Director. Adam's business education foundations are acquired through her MBA and Masters from Arizona State University in Information Management and a Bachelor of Science degree from Boise State University for Business Administration. Adam co-founded the center and union alongside Johnson in Ghana as a Small Enterprise Development volunteer from 1992-1995. Before the highlighted nonprofit foundation became her career, Adam made advancements for corporate companies like Integrated Information Systems, American Express, and Motorola (womeninprogress.org). "Burned out by corporate America," the businesswomen returned to the place where they had felt fulfillment from empowering women: Cape Coast, Ghana (M'vunganyi). Economic independence of Global Mamas and women spread out over the continent can be achieved by "significantly increasing revenues of their businesses and enhancing cross-cultural understanding" (*WIP/GM (Ghana)*). The humane concepts of nonprofit sales and fair trade are reasons to buy the products but as Adam states in an interview, "the products are beautiful and sell themselves" (M'vunganyi). True inner transformations of the women develop with the escalation of favorable business. Adam notes in the same interview, "their confidence is almost unreal" (M'vunganyi).

I can testify to this statement with the few Global Mamas that I got to know well over the course of my research month.

Nancy

Upon visiting the Cape Coast store several times before even deciding the manner to approach my research, I was met each time by Nancy Jackson, responsible for running the shop's first level. Slowly working up the confidence to ask her for a formal interview, I used my informal interview tactics to learn how she ended up at the front desk of the Cape Coast store branch. As I browsed through clothing, I was able to ask Nancy small details about the length she had been working for Global Mamas and how she got her job. By the end of the conversation I realized that I had a lot more to learn from Jackson's experience and returned the next day to follow up with a formal interview.

Nancy 'Ama' Jackson, age "Janet Jackson is older than me," has a sense of humor and a visibly positive attitude about life. She has been working at the Global Mamas Cape Coast store as a saleswoman and cashier for just over a year and a half. Johnson and Adam lived with one of Jackson's good friends during their Peace Corps tenure so she was introduced and became friendly with the two volunteers. Nancy, with a smile lighting up her entire face, said upon presenting a letter to Global Mamas, she was soon hired. Her family and friends are "so happy" for her, being "like an international figure" because of her involvement in the global market. Nancy grew up in Cape Coast but she had lived in Accra and Kumasi for four years before coming back to her hometown. Preceding her current job, Jackson worked at White Chapel Supermarket. Now working 8am to 2pm every day, all week, and on holidays, Jackson says her "social life is moving on well...financially too. I'm very happy with it." Jackson believes that Global Mamas is "going on perfectly" by alleviating poverty in women's lives. One of the

things she enjoys most about her job is meeting new people each day; Jackson has gotten to know ministers and important figures through the organization. Her life and others have changed as Global Mamas is “able to have the woman also recognized in the international market,” something of which the value is immeasurable to anyone but the affected individual.

Rebecca

Rebecca, whose last name I didn't get to learn over the course of our two hour acquaintance, was someone I had no intention of meeting but am very fortunate that I did. Unaware of her position for Global Mamas, I met Rebecca at her office in Krobo-Odumase before my workshop with bead maker Moses. The Cape Coast store manager had contacted her to set up my workshop so prior to meeting her, I only knew that she was situated in Krobo and was responsible for bead workshop signups. On our walk to the bead assembly center, I learned that Rebecca arrived in Ghana, shortly before I had, as a volunteer through the Peace Corps. She specified wanting to be positioned in Africa but had no idea that she would end up in charge of bead orders for Accra, Cape Coast, and overseas at this international fair trade non-profit organization. It is clear to me, after analyzing our conversation, that Rebecca is making the most of her assigned duties. Similar to the co-founders, Rebecca signed up for the Peace Corps as a woman in her 30s after being fed-up with corporate America. I met Rebecca in the morning before her trip to headquarters in Accra where she was to deliver an order for shipment and samples for the new 2010 line to Adam. One of Rebecca's main projects to complete during her two year volunteer period is the acquisition of a mechanical glass crushing machine. The new machine will reduce the amount of time taken to pound the recycled bottles, the most physically exhausting part of the bead making process, which is usually manually done with a metal mortar and pestle. My time spent with this current volunteer from the U.S. is important because it gives

me tangible evidence of the roles and responsibilities given to the trained business and government professional in her volunteer tenure.

Mary

I took part in three workshops during my research and was able to find out the most, both concerning the handcraft and with personal history, from batik maker Mary Koomson. When I first met Mary after being walked to her workshop by Kennedy, an upstairs office worker in Cape Coast, she was working on scrunching pre-dyed calico in a large bowl, preparing it for one of Global Mamas' 2010 tie dye samples. I got comfortable in a chair near the entrance of the closet-sized workshop and was first quizzed on what I knew about the art before we got the lesson underway. I started my batik with pre-dyed pink cloth and worked in silence for a while, observing the workspace and her teaching techniques but mainly concentrating on evenly spacing out my prints and not dripping excess wax on the fabric from the stamp. After my nerves eased up, I started in on asking questions about her family (whose home is right behind the workshop), where she learned the trade, her feelings towards teaching workshops, former work experience, and more. Koomson is soft spoken but noticeably passionate about her work and driven towards her personal goal of constructing a new larger workshop. I respect everything she opened up to tell me about her past and enjoyed her company so I formally interviewed her as well.

A week after making my batik, on my third visit to her workshop, I sat down with Mary with my list of questions and ended up learning more than I had expected about her transformation into a Global Mama. Three years ago, Koomson was working in a supermarket to make enough money to support herself. Though selling batiks in Accra, the proceeds weren't enough to cover the necessary costs of living so she coupled the work she was passionate about

with a second job that provided funds. Now, 30 years old, Mary is dedicated fully to batik production, which I can declare is her calling. I asked Koomson what her dream job is and it became known to me that she is living her dream because she answered, “if God permits and I get more contracts then I have to open a store to sell some colors and cloths to do the batiks” as well as employ someone to sell the works.

Mary first heard about Global Mamas through a “certain woman.” She turned in an application, was called for an interview a few days later, met with Global Mama Patience, was called for a second interview, and then prepared some sample work to be reviewed. Koomson learned how to make beads, batik, and tie dye at a vocational school in Accra, about two hours from her Cape Coast hometown. Though obviously well-trained in the art of fabric dying and stamping, even submitting her training certificate with the application, she was required to go through further instruction of the same techniques to “prove you’re able [and] know something.” In addition to handcraft education, Mary is now knowledgeable about “drugs [to keep] in store in case of injury,” how to track the profit gains and losses through bookkeeping, and the impact fair trade has on her economic growth – all new skills she’s developed since being hired.

Reactions from her friends are positive; they “tell her she’s lucky because it’s not easy to get that job.” Mary has no children and isn’t married but her father tells her that “the work is too difficult – look for something else to do.” However, Mary expresses that she has to continue on because her future dreams concern her craft and she won’t stop the work she loves. Demanding work it is but Koomson declares, “[I] ask [for the] favor of God to give me strength so I can do all things.”

Global Mamas is an outlet for Koomson to practice her passion and be justly reciprocated for her work. Because of her economic gains over the past year, Mary has rented land for a

bigger workshop and hopes to move her supplies and business from her current workshop to the larger property within the next year. With her optimism, dedication, and persistence, I see a true woman in progress – independent, empowered, and running down her dreams.

Alice

Alice Grau grew up in Michigan and attended college at Central Michigan University, majoring in Apparel Design. For two and a half years directly out of school, she worked first in textile design in Chicago and then out of New York City with Sears and K-Mart in women's plus size apparel design. She eventually made the decision to quit her New York job and after some internet research, chose to do four months of volunteering in Ghana with WIP in August of 2008. Following the four months, Grau was hired for a year by Global Mamas to be the new general manager of the Cape Coast store. In her office on the second floor of the store, Alice is directly responsible for the 11 others working in the upstairs from 8am to 5pm every Monday through Friday. However, Grau's roles and duties extend far past the oversight of the other office workers; they also include overseeing production, the relationships of the women, the projects of volunteers, new development of new products, finances, the volunteer house, assigning volunteer projects, and working with business owners in Minnesota. What shocks me is how calm the atmosphere of the office is and how composed Grau's demeanor is considering all the responsibilities for the 26 year old on her single year contract.

Never having been to Africa before, Grau had always imagined taking part in a program like the Peace Corps. She knew that her best talents as a designer wouldn't be used through such volunteerism though and looked for a similarly good cause that would allow her to exercise her skills. She was contacted by WIP after submitting an application and fortunately was hired during a new development stage of Global Mamas making the job the "perfect combination:

design and people skills.” The reactions from family and friends about her international employment are “mostly really positive [...] supportive and not very surprised” since when she had left for her first four months, people told her “you’re staying... you’re not coming back.” Coming from corporate business, what Grau says she has learned through her position is as follows: “It made me realize that you can have a job without stress.” With her bountiful obligations as general manager, Alice has become a “stronger leader and more confident.” What makes the industry “fair is the interaction”; it’s the open dialogue between the producer and buyer that proves that fair trade “is possible with a little perseverance.” Grau sees the women “empowered by the opportunity to provide livings for themselves” and believes that with concerted efforts from the office and the producers, the women must learn that they can make decisions and if they don’t like they work they’re assigned, to develop the “mindset of coming in and saying ‘I don’t like this’.” Alice projects this ideal as a phase essential in making veritable businesswomen.

What’s the Meaning?

So, what does it all mean? Each Global Mama has her own opinion. From the standpoint of co-founder Adam, it’s “a passion and that is business, we love making business work, and we love to see the impact that it is having” (M’vunganyi). Jackson is glad that she is accepted and known both inside and outside of the community. “[I’m] so happy because I’m being recognized,” she says. People come to the store and “look for Nancy...I’m like an international figure.” Mary tells me, “It is not easy being a Global Mama [but] it’s good.” She has a quiet confidence and speaks of her experience as “anything that you learn...you can do it. If the thing is not in your mind then you can’t do it. I tell myself that I will do it and then I will know it definitely.” For Alice, being a Global Mama ultimately means “seeing that interconnectedness

can affect our immediate circle and people we never imagined we'd have a relationship with

There's a mutually beneficial relationship – like a family.” For each Global Mama, the meaning is personal yet it is clear that each path being taken is becoming life changing, and for the better.

Conclusion

I have achieved my goals in learning traditional handcrafts through batik and bead making workshops. I have learned of the origins of Women in Progress/ Global Mamas and further, looked at its evolution over the six years and the effects thus far on businesswomen of Ghana. I successfully contacted several women holding various positions within the NGO and was given an inspiring glimpse into their lives as Global Mamas. At the end of all my research, what am I exactly to conclude? It is difficult to put into words because what I have really learned comes from my experience as a whole, starting from my first week in Ghana.

Besides the fact that I have been able to recognize and see firsthand the ways that Women in Progress/ Global Mamas is implementing a hands-on approach, committing themselves to self sustenance, and building confidence through industrial independence, I have asked and have been told the ways that individuals are personally affected. Ultimately, I come to one conclusion that is such: A main reason that the Global Mamas truly do love their jobs is because their name is attached to their work. Many Third World women are employed by multinational corporations and presume unacknowledged positions on assembly lines day after day to earn incomes substantial enough to support themselves and their families. They're faceless, nameless, and not moving up on the socioeconomic ladder because the middle men are eating up all the money that should be sent back to the production end of the scale but never reaches it. Unlike these all too common operations, Global Mama products give names and faces to each item sold. The women are all recognized financially, socially, artistically, and internationally.

Further studies should examine the way the business programs are run. The best way to do this would be by full participant observation which would entail applying and being admitted into the volunteer or intern program. In addition, it would be beneficial to travel to each of the

productions centers in the different regions (i.e. Trashy Bags, Bead making, Weaving) to evaluate the workshops in comparison with those of multinational corporations running in Ghana. Getting a broader perspective would shed light onto the dissimilarities between operations from all angles of the spectrum leading to more in-depth analysis of the country's stages of development.

In my opinion, one of the most important aspects of this multi-dimensional organization is that the business owners have become role models for young entrepreneurs. It is imperative for today's youth to see the steps made by driven older generations to get out of poverty, and by doing the work they love. Women in Progress advocates for social change and by beginning with solutions to grassroots problems, overtime, a developing Ghana will become a developed Ghana with the institution and expansion of similar programs and the linking of cultures internationally.

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Appendix 1



A. Colorful display inside the Global Mamas store in Cape Coast.



B. Assortment of foam stamps at Eli-Emmas Batik & Tye-Dye.



C. Global Mamas batik Mary Koomson dyeing calico.

Appendix 2



A. Batik wax removal with hands.



B. Batik wax removal with staff.



C. Mortar and pestle used to crush glass.

Appendix 3



A. Bead moulds filled with glass powder.



B. Firewood kiln used to bake beads.



C. Global Mamas bead maker Moses removing powder and polishing the fired beads on sandstone with water.