At The MATCH Fund, we like to say, “if you’re not part of the solution, you’re funding the solution.” Heading into 2017, we can’t imagine it any other way. Why? Because the barriers—failed peace negotiations, unspeakable violence, and deep-seated discrimination—faced by women and girls around the world are astounding.

But so are the solutions.

In Colombia, women are assembling politicians at the base of a volcano, taking over the airwaves, and casting their votes for a better world. In Ottawa, girls are running a lemonade stand (like a boss.) And these are but a few examples.

The solutions driven by women and girls at the grassroots level are what inspired us to launch The MATCH Fund’s new strategic plan. They are why Suzanne Johnson Harvor co-founded The MATCH Fund in 1976 (read about her legacy in this issue) and they are why you support The MATCH Fund today. Together, we may not have all the answers, but we can invest in the women who do.

Things women in Colombia are voting for:

- Ser Libre
- La Paz
- Dignidad
- No ser Madre
- Elige

[Image of post-it notes with various messages related to women's rights and equality in Colombia]
GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS FOR PEACE

It seemed as if Colombia would finally see peace after a 50+ year conflict that killed and displaced more than 7 million people. In the last 10 years alone, half a million Colombian women have been victims of sexual violence. Led by women’s groups, LGBT groups, and conflict victims themselves, September’s landmark peace agreement was one of the first to include victims’ voices and to imbed concrete steps for women’s and LGBT rights.

But everything changed on October 3rd when the deal was halted by popular vote.

The MATCH Fund’s Fund Director
Beatriz Gonzalez Manchon

Looking at a map of October’s popular vote gives valuable insight into what’s at stake here:

You’ll notice that, for the most part, people in the big cities and in areas owned by large landowners voted “no” for the peace agreement. These are the people least touched by the conflict.

But the areas where the majority of the conflict victims are and where the atrocities were the worst, those are the places that voted overwhelmingly for peace. These women—the victims of years of conflict—they believe in peace. They believe in it so much that they were willing to work toward it, no matter what imperfections this peace agreement might have had.

At The MATCH Fund, we will continue to respond to the needs and priorities of our Colombian partners on the ground, as they are identified by the women themselves. We need to take our cue from them.”

Asociación de Víctimas por la Paz y el Desarrollo (ASVIPAD)

ASVIPAD convened nearly 100 women in Pasto, Colombia, a southern city that sits at the base of a giant volcano. These women—women whose family members disappeared in the conflict or who are survivors of sexual violence—are holding government leaders accountable via a series of town hall discussions. Together, women urge local politicians to honour commitments to victims—both in the short term and in the long term—for justice, reparations, and peace.

Corporación Vamos Mujer

Meanwhile, high up in the mountains of Colombia’s Antioquia region, women’s voices dominate the airwaves. Corporación Vamos Mujer’s weekly radio program about women’s issues has recently become a platform for peace. Women are discussing what needs to happen for peace to thrive—not just as a future government agreement but as a lived experience for the people on the ground. And one more way to ensure that women’s voices are heard: Corporación Vamos Mujer helps women vote and run in local elections.
CHANGE FOR SOLUTIONS

Jacqueline, Lucy, Alisson, Maya, Merryn, Charlotte, Isabel, and Silvia: these are the names of the 10-year-olds who dream of a better world for women and girls. They call themselves “Stronger Together.” Gathering in a home in Ottawa, they discuss what it’s like to be a young girl living in Canada and what it must be like for girls their age living in other countries around the world. Wise beyond their years, they talk about everything from double standards to objectification (We’re not kidding. These girls are smaaart.)

The girls, all who dream of being doctors and vets ran their very first fundraiser for women’s rights: a stand selling lemonade, bracelets, bookmarks, and homemade snacks. The quiches in particular were a hit. All the change they raised (over $500 of loonies, toonies, nickels, and dimes in one morning!) went toward The MATCH Fund.

As for the girls? They proved that age doesn’t matter when it comes to putting change into the hands of women and girls working at the grassroots.

EVERY NICKLE AND DIME IN A 5 POUND BAG
Proceeds from a lemonade stand that a group of 10 year old girls raised for The MATCH Fund in the Summer of 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We think you’re pretty amazing. So your trust means a lot to us.

DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE
Imagine Canada’s Standards Program awards accreditation to Canadian nonprofits that demonstrate excellence in five areas of operations: Board governance, financial accountability & transparency, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement. We are pleased to announce that The MATCH Fund now has full Imagine Canada accreditation. Which means that it’s another way for you, our supporter, to trust in us.
REMEMBERING SUZANNE JOHNSON HARVOR†

On June 26, 2016, The MATCH Fund lost our co-founder, Suzanne Johnson Harvor, who died at the age of 84. Suzanne—a woman who gave her life to both civil rights movements and to women’s movements around the world—was one of the most inspiring activists we have known.

Rising to the challenge of the United Nations’ Decade of Women (1976-1986), Suzanne co-founded The MATCH International Women’s Fund with Dr. Norma Walmsley. Together, they paved the way for our wildest dreams: establishing a talent bank of Canadian women entrepreneurs, healthcare workers, and teachers and creating a “switchboard operation” to connect women around the world with financial resources raised entirely by Canadian women.

Suzanne said, “I have always contended that Canadians have a role to play in supporting women to bring about amazing change in their communities.” So, from her kitchen table, she engaged women across Canada to support women-led solutions at the grassroots level: ending female genital mutilation in Malian villages, building battered women’s shelters in India, and helping women access abortions in Peru.

The MATCH Fund is Suzanne’s gift to Canadian women. She always meant for this work to live longer than she ever would. Especially now—especially today—Suzanne would tell us to work harder than ever. She’d tell us to march for justice. To go outside of our comfort zone to do what is right. To raise hell for equality. To support each other. Suzanne Johnson Harvor was a grandmother to us all. We mourn her death. And we will fiercely carry on her legacy.

† This article is adapted from the essay, Remembering Suzanne Johnson Harvor: A Grandmother to Us All written by Jess Tomlin (the Executive Director of The MATCH Fund) and by Otis Moore (Suzanne Johnson Harvor’s grandson.) To read the piece in its entirely, please visit http://matchinternational.org/suzanne/

INTRODUCING OUR NEW WEBSITE AND STRATEGIC PLAN

At The MATCH Fund, we have three confessions to make: 1 we’re all dreamers; 2 we’re all optimists (in spite of it all) and; 3 we don’t sit still—not when it comes to getting more money for women, girls, and trans* people who are working on homegrown solutions to the problems they face.

And we have a hunch that this describes you, too. You’ve cheered us on while, for forty years, we’ve funded the women-led solutions (Traveling human rights tents! Pop up boxing rings!) that give us all goosebumps.

Now more than ever, The MATCH Fund is committed to investing in the women who have the solutions. That’s why we recently launched our new website and 2016-2019 strategic plan, reflecting our bold direction, our dreams, and our greatest strength: you.

Trans* (with an asterisk) is a term that acknowledges the many identities within the gender identity spectrum such as gender queer, gender fluid or two-spirit.