TODAY WE STAND TALL BECAUSE YOU STOOD BESIDE US.

We’ve moved mountains to get where we are today.
For over 37 years we have been working together to improve the conditions women face around the world – to support their efforts for increased economic independence, to assist them in regaining their right to a life free from violence, to foster their political and community leadership and to nourish the drive for change within us all.

But there is always more work to be done. That’s why, on October 29th 2013, we launched The MATCH International Women’s Fund to strengthen our support for women’s rights organizations working for change in their communities.

Community is vital at home and around the world.
We enjoy our rights as women in Canada because of the historical work of civil society in our country – work that still continues to this day. This need for a strong civil society is even stronger in parts of the world where women continue to be marginalized, are living in poverty and are not free to enjoy even the most basic of their human rights.

Many women do not have the support they need.
Despite their critical role in driving change in their communities, one quarter of women’s rights organizations operate on an annual budget of $5,000 USD or less. More than half have never received funding that lasted for longer than one year. One in five women’s rights organizations face the very serious threat of closure because they don’t have access to funds to keep their doors open and the lights on.

Changing laws, harmful cultural practices and deeply embedded traditions or beliefs does not happen overnight or even over the course of one lifetime. Innovation doesn’t occur when the focus is on paying the rent and not planning for the future.

The difference we can make.
Did you know that only 8% of Canadians’ charitable giving goes toward international development? And of that, only a fraction to women and girls and even less so to women’s rights organizations? Together we can change this reality.

Women’s funds are filling the gap left by traditional approaches to development by putting money into the hands of women working in their communities, especially those that serve the most marginalized populations and that are often unreached by bilateral agencies, governments and international NGOs.

The MATCH Fund has two priorities: to hold ground and break ground for women’s rights.

Holding ground means advocating for a complaints mechanism that victims of violence and harassment can access. Breaking ground means using technology in new ways to name and shame perpetrators and demand changes to police practice.

Holding ground means protecting a young girl’s right to education by ensuring she has the resources to stay in school. Breaking ground means rewriting the very textbooks she learns from so that she can redefine what is possible for women.

Holding ground means supporting organizations that continue to provide women with basic support and services. Breaking ground means supporting organizations that take new and innovative approaches to bring about lasting social change.

In 1976, you stood by us when we said women’s voices and ideas were critical to creating a more equal world. And we thank you for continuing to stand beside us today as we strengthen our commitment to women around the world.
YOUNG WOMEN LEADING CHANGE
This September, MATCH partnered with the Nobel Women’s Initiative to host the second annual 2013 ‘Young Women’s Rights Activists: Conversations in Canada’ speaking tour. This year’s event, ‘Young Women Leading Change’ featured three international women’s rights advocates: Su Thet San from Myanmar, Gabriela Rivera from Guatemala and Josephine Gekpelee from Liberia. Speaking in Regina, SK and Ottawa, ON, these three young women led inspiring discussions about their work promoting girls’ education, supporting survivors of sexual violence and bringing a voice to silenced minorities in their communities.

During the tour, our international participants were joined by young Canadian leaders of the Idle No More movement, advocates for reproductive rights and champions for eliminating violence against women- at home and in the streets.

BREAKING GROUND: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS IN WEST AFRICA
In late October, The MATCH Fund was fortunate to host Abigail Burgesson in Ottawa. Abigail is the Special Programmes Manager at the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF). In 1999, MATCH provided AWDF with a seed grant to kick-start their efforts in supporting women’s organizations across the continent. Since then, AWDF has supported over 800 women’s organizations in 42 African countries through over $17 million USD in grants.

Today, AWDF supports many ground-breaking organizations across Africa that are working to change the perceptions and attitudes toward women in their countries. A recent focus of AWDF and its partners has been the role that female writers and directors can play in reshaping the narrative around women’s rights in the booming West African film industry. Last year, the Nigerian film industry, or ‘Nollywood’, the third largest film industry in the world, surpassed Hollywood for the number of films released. Yet negative stereotypes of women abound in these films and television dramas. With its partners, AWDF is working to change these portrayals.

While in Ottawa, Abigail attended several events, including this year’s WUSC International Forum where she and Jess Tomlin, Executive Director of The MATCH Fund, engaged the audience in a conversation around funding for women’s rights. Abigail shared stories of success and reflected upon areas where great improvements still need to be made. From both speakers, the message was clear: women’s rights organizations play a critical role in improving the lives of women and girls, yet they lack the support they need to achieve their full potential. We need to do more to raise awareness and provide them with the resources they need to continue their essential work.

HOLDING GROUND: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
Every person has the right to a life free from violence. Yet, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, forty-eight women are raped every hour. That’s why The MATCH Fund is working with a local women’s organization in the DRC to ensure survivors of sexual violence are able to access the support they need to cope with the physical and psychological impacts of rape.

MATCH’s partner, Parlement des Femmes Albinos du Sud Kivu (PAFESKI), is training local midwives in South Kivu to provide medical service to survivors of sexual violence. Midwives are the ones with the best access to women in rural areas where hospitals and city centres are a long and dangerous walk away. By providing midwives with this training, PAFESKI is helping to ensure survivors of sexual violence have the services and support they need to reduce further physical trauma and overcome the complex psychological impacts of rape.
CELEBRATING THE LAUNCH OF THE MATCH FUND

Staff, Board Members and supporters gathered on a cold evening in late October to celebrate the launch of The MATCH International Women’s Fund. This intimate event, hosted by one of our Founding Members, Ms. Shirley Greenberg, served as an end to a day filled with celebrations across Canada and around the world.

The call for proposals was launched on October 29th and will close on December 6th 2013 in commemoration of Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

The Fund will support organizations that are governed, directed and led by women with a demonstrated track record and community support. The primary focus of these organizations will be the advancing women’s equality and human rights through innovation.

In the coming weeks, it is expected that applications will come pouring in from around the world. Thanks to your generosity and support, many of these organizations will undertake ambitious projects that will create lasting change for women in their communities.

ONE DONOR’S COMMITMENT TO WOMEN’S RIGHTS

When Georgina Costuros passed away, her sisters Carla, Aureene and Wanda reflected on their sister’s life. Her compassion, generosity and deep awareness of the needs of others led them to include The MATCH Fund in Georgina’s estate. We are honoured that her legacy is a part of our extraordinary group of Founding Members.

Legacy gifts have a lasting impact because they help The MATCH Fund build long-term relationships with women’s organizations around the world. Should you like to learn more about The MATCH Fund’s Legacy Giving Program, please give us a call at 1.855.640.1872.

RECOGNIZING THE STRENGTH OF OUR FOUNDATION

We would like to thank and celebrate the leadership of the Founding Members of The MATCH International Women’s Fund. These donors have made substantial financial contributions that will help secure the long-term grant-making ability of The MATCH Fund. Thank you to Ms. Shirley Greenberg, Ms. Marjorie Blankstein, Ms. Janice Sutton and another founding donor who wishes to remain anonymous for their extraordinary generosity and commitment to improving the lives of women and girls. These incredible women represent both long-time and new supporters.

Over the coming year, The MATCH Fund will be seeking additional Founding Members. If you would like more information about becoming a Founding Member, please contact our Executive Director, Jess Tomlin, at jtomlin@matchinternational.org or our Fundraising Coordinator, Julia Ehrhardt, at jehrhardt@matchinternational.org or 1.855.640.1872.

“Things such as sanitary napkins so girls can attend school might seem mundane and embarrassing but they are essential. I see a great future for The Fund and for the women that it will help.”

-Susan Tanner, MATCH Fund Advisor

DID YOU SEE THIS?

Last month, UN Women unveiled a new campaign that put a grey issue in black and white – literally. Using the results from the popular search engine, Google, UN Women illustrated the beliefs and perceptions that have existed toward women, contrasting powerful images with stark and frightening text. View the full campaign at www.unwomen.org

The MATCH International Women’s Fund | 1404 Scott Street | Ottawa, ON | K1Y 4M8
tel: 1.855.640.1872 | e-mail: info@matchinternational.org | website: www.matchinternational.org
WOMEN’S RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

Early and Forced Marriage in the Spotlight
Worldwide, an estimated 51 million girls below age 18 are married. A further 10 million underage girls marry every year -- that’s one every three seconds.

On September 27th, 2013, over 100 countries co-sponsored a resolution at the Human Rights Council calling for the elimination of child, early and forced marriage. At this event, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. John Baird, stated that child marriage prevented economic and social development and confirmed that ending child marriage is a top foreign policy priority for the government of Canada.

This is a great first step in improving the lives of women and girls around the world. This commitment will require a strategy that includes prevention, treatment and long-term behavior change approaches. Every day in developing countries, 20,000 girls below age 18 give birth. These young women are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or child birth as those over the age of 20. And girls under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in labour. We must be sure not to turn our backs on these young women and address this deeply entrenched and harmful cultural practice in a holistic way.

A Global Response to Ending Rape in Conflict
Late in September, the issue of rape and gender-based violence in conflict was brought back onto the table when 113 countries signed on to The Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. With more than half of all UN member states showing support for the declaration, some believe this move is indicating a global change in attitudes.

Furthermore, on October 18th the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2122 which supports abortion services to girls and women raped in armed conflict.

November 25th The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marks the start of the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. A key focus this year is on rape and gender-based violence in post-conflict settings. We hope that attention will be given to the role of women’s voices in national peace-building talks. More women around the table will ensure that women’s rights remain a priority after the dust of conflict has settled.

MEET THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE MATCH FUND TEAM

Julia Ehrhardt is excited to be joining the MATCH team as the Fundraising Coordinator. Julia brings a wealth of experience having worked at the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, Parkinson’s Society Ottawa and SOS Children’s Villages Canada. She brings great skills in fundraising, event management and communications. Julia graduated in 2010 from Queen’s University with a Master’s in English Literature.

We are thrilled to have Amina Doherty recently join our team as a grants consultant to guide us in launching The MATCH Fund. Amina is a founding member and past general coordinator of the FRIDA | Young Feminist Fund. Amina supports several community-led media platforms across Africa and the Caribbean and brings to her activism a passion for music, art, travel, photography, fashion and poetry. She has facilitated several learning initiatives on women’s rights, youth development, resource mobilization and economic justice. She currently lives in Kingston, Jamaica.

THE MATCH FUND BOARD MEMBERS 2013/2014
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