



Bringing grassroots action to life.



creative action
I N S T I T U T E



2016 Annual Report



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What does it mean to bring grassroots action to life?

For Creative Action Institute, it means digging deep to connect with the force that drives each of us to create a better world - where gender equality is a reality, the marginalized find their voice, and communities work in harmony to preserve their natural heritage. It means cultivating the courage and innovation to build resiliency in the face of the ever changing tide of modern challenges – together.

Grassroots action comes to life in young Tanzanian women as they turn the tables on “Open Day” – traditionally a day when they are assigned the status as future wives – by singing their dreams, dancing their determination, and actively envisioning a different future through dramatization for an entire community.

In Guatemala, where one in three indigenous women have no access to health and family planning services, grassroots action comes to life in a cohort of organizations determined to increase their impact by training with CAI.

Following our trainings in Cameroon, environmental leaders have hungrily embraced the creative methods they have learned through our trainings and quickly applied them in the field. Through participatory processes and arts-based methods, they have been able to more effectively share knowledge and build partnership with communities and collaboratively respond to the threats posed by climate change.

Our friends, partners and supporters in the US and around the world are the engine that pushes us ever forward, sometimes into uncharted and exciting new directions. We’re so grateful for your support and can’t wait to discover what lies ahead on this journey of transformation.

I hope you’re inspired to find out more about CAI and our work in the field, as we teach, learn and connect to bring powerful community movements to life that evolve and endure.

Warmly,


Clare Dowd
Executive Director

Program Overview

107

COMMUNITY
PROJECTS

40

TRAININGS

2639

DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES

1.5M

INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES

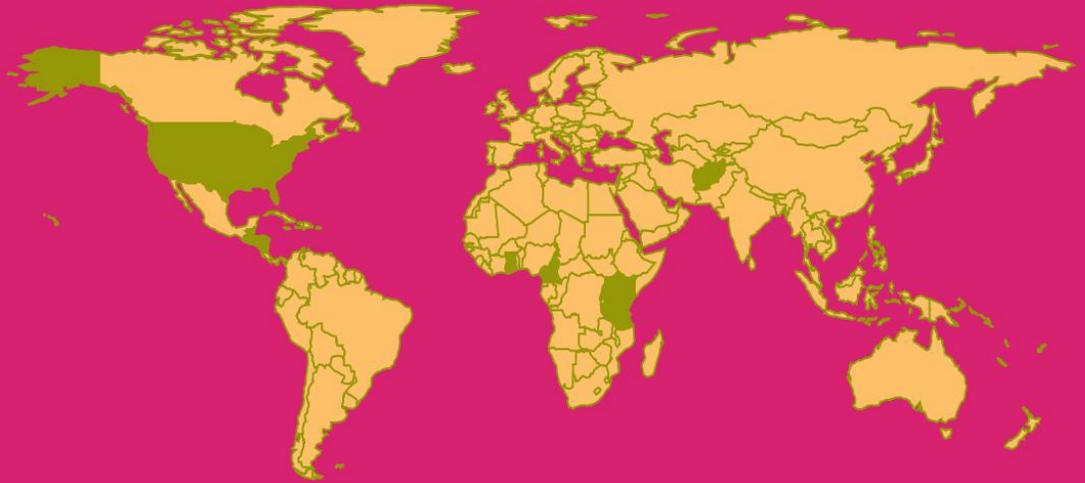
156

COLLABORATING
ORGANIZATIONS

WORKING IN

12

COUNTRIES



In 2016, CAI's programming in **environment**, **gender**, **health and equity**, and **social justice** accelerated initiatives in marine and terrestrial conservation, youth leadership, the human rights of girls, women and indigenous populations, and sexual and reproductive health advocacy. 40 CAI trainings generated 107 community projects that ultimately reached 1.5 million people around the globe.



Project Media

To watch highlights of 2016, go to bit.ly/CAI2016Highlights.



Program Focus: Environment



Overview	26 Trainings	56 CAI Coached Community Projects	93 Organizations
	933 Direct Participants	1.4M Indirect Beneficiaries	Working in 8 Countries

Organizations around the globe grapple with the challenge of managing natural resources so they can be protected as needed, consumed sustainably and support local livelihoods. CAI equips local organizations to better navigate this sensitive dynamic with tools that engage local communities in sustainable solutions.

Key Initiative



Gulf of Honduras Creative Conservation



Belize
Guatemala

Initiative Overview: The Gulf of Honduras is home to some of the world's greatest biodiversity, but is under serious threat as a result of human behavior. The Belize Barrier Reef has been on the World Heritage Endangered Site list since 2009 and experienced a third coral bleaching event in 2016. It continues to be affected by oil drilling, overfishing, and pollution. It is also effected by upstream ecosystems where mining, timber and unsustainable agricultural practices are taking a toll.

2016 marked the final phase of accelerating efforts to protect and manage marine and forest ecosystems of Belize and Guatemala in



partnership with a cohort of six leading conservation organizations. We deepened creative strategies and provided coaching, co-facilitation, skill building clinics and field artist support to design creative community outreach projects in the field, engaging over 20,000 people.

“This experience has equipped me with a variety of styles and approaches that can be tailored to any education organization.”

– Julio Cheb, Community Outreach & Livelihoods, Ya’axche Conservation Trust

Impact Highlight: Field-tested open-source Creative Conservation Curriculum

CAI is proud to share the culmination of this three-year collaboration, an open-source Creative Conservation Curriculum. Partner organizations in Belize and Guatemala are applying the curriculum, which covers 25 activities and 30 case studies as a valuable tool in their educational and outreach strategies. Designed for a wide range of contexts, including primary school classrooms, youth, indigenous women, non-profit staff and fishers – the curriculum features adaptable and accessible activities to engage communities for decades to come. The curriculum can be accessed [here](#).

Impact Highlight: Elevating environmental awareness through photography

In partnership with FUNDAECO, Belize Field Project Manager Isabel Carrió and Field Artist Min Lee instructed students from Escuela Sarstoon, INEB Augusta Blanco Rubio, and INEB Creek Chino High Schools in photography techniques to illustrate conservation messages. Student photos were displayed as part of **Transforming Communities**, a photo exhibit celebrating three years of intense collaboration, discovery, and learning. The exhibit at **The Mexican Institute in Belize City** celebrated and shared the success of the Creative Conservation Project.



Project Media

Visit bit.ly/CreativeConservation to learn more.

Key Initiative

{ Creative Environmental Leadership: Building Innovation and Resiliency }

Guatemala
Nicaragua
Honduras
El Salvador
Cameroon
Ghana

CAI provided skill building clinics for a cohort of organizations trained in Creative Leadership as grantees of New England Biolabs Foundation (NEBF) to strengthen collaboration, communication and problem solving skills and the capacity to design projects and community workshops that advance conservation in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Cameroon and Ghana.

Impact Highlight: Discovering strategies for community support forest management in Cameroon

Cameroon is challenged by deforestation, poaching, desertification, poor sanitation and water services and a lack of government support. Our partners learned to master facilitating and designing participatory workshops. Out of all our fieldwork, we are seeing some of the most significant impacts in Cameroon - affirming our belief that investment in creative engagement provides an incredible return.



Before training with CAI, **Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch** attempted to impose a forest management plan onto a community, with little buy-in. After training, their approach shifted to gathering community input around their initiatives and using traditional song, dance and appreciation exercises in meetings. **The result: a new forest management plan successfully co-drafted with the community, along with greater trust, communication and participation.**

"The training with CAI was amazing, and we can't wait to start training youth leaders and communities. Thank you for the opportunity to benefit from the reawakening and deepening of our creative potential."
- Franklin Ngalim,
Founder/President, The Greens

Impact Highlight: Examining the intersection of environment and gender in Ghana

24 staff representing 13 NEBF grantee organizations based in Ghana working in conservation, gender equality and youth development convened for the second year of Creative Facilitation and Collaboration training. As in Cameroon, conversations during this training often explored the intersection of conservation, gender, and youth. In one activity, participants broke into four groups to identify intersections of gender and climate change in Ghana and develop theater skits to illustrate those intersections. At right, a young woman participates in a skit focusing on tapping into women's knowledge regarding mitigation strategies around climate change.



The group made some powerful insights as a result of the skits:

- Women and children bear the brunt of natural disasters.
- Women hold traditional knowledge about sustainable farming.
- We need to relearn, remember and respect our ancestral practices.
- We need to recognize and value the knowledge and expertise of women in managing and conserving natural resources; dealing with and preventing disasters; and incorporating sustainable farming practices.
- It is critical that women have the education and opportunities to be decision makers and electing women into positions of power.

Taking this last conclusion back to their community as well as CAI tools, one of the participating organizations utilized theater and the World Café activity engaging 80 parents, teachers and students to discuss taboo issues of early marriage and keeping girls in school. **All 80 parents in attendance unanimously made public commitments to take an active role in their daughters' education.**



"The training shapes your creativity and builds one's facilitation skills using simple and innovative tools that guarantee change.

The methodology was new, very impactful and inspiring."

- Daniel Obloni Kweitsu,
A Rocha Ghana

Program Focus: Gender, Health and Equity



Overview

9 Trainings	51 CAI Coached Community Projects	18 Organizations
1,599 Direct Participants	11,240 Indirect Beneficiaries	Working in 5 Countries

According to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, empowering women and girls has a multiplier effect. It has economic, social, educational, and health benefits for families, communities, and the world. CAI supports organizations advancing gender, health, and equity by equipping them to empower girls and women.

Key Initiative

{ East African Girls' Leadership Initiative }

Kenya
Uganda
Tanzania
Rwanda

Initiative Overview: In East Africa, young women fight against family pressure and societal expectations for safety, self-determination and access to education. CAI partners with AMPLIFY in tandem with local organizations and schools to implement a series of Mentor Trainings and a five-day Summit that helps girls from rural and poor areas hone their leadership skills as community advocates and trains partner staff as mentors to provide support and guidance to the girls. The EAGL Initiative extends beyond the Summit into a robust year-long program empowering girls and women to effect change in their schools and communities through creative social actions. When given the opportunity, support, and resources, adolescent girls can transform their lives and their communities.



The East African Girls Leadership Summit

For girls, about girls, and driven by girls, the five-day 2016 East African Girls' Leadership Summit brought together 35 girls and 15 women mentors representing 10 partner organizations from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda to envision their collective future together. Participants were introduced to **The Girl Declaration - a call to action for global investment in girls**. Girls developed theater skits illustrating the five primary Declaration Goals: **Education, Safety,**

Economic Security, Health and Citizenship. Together, they explored potential obstacles, creative ways to address them and their own personal commitments to achieve each goal within their communities. EAGLS Participants gave themselves a 100% rating for knowing how to advocate for their rights after training.

The Mentor Effect: How to amplify girls' empowerment? Just add women!

The power unlocked when girls are trained as leaders is exponential when coupled with the knowledge, experience and support of local women guiding them through their journey as advocates for gender equality. The courage required to confront culturally taboo issues is enormous. A mentor who provides acceptance and support every step of the way, even in the face of opposition from family members, teachers or local leaders, is the vote of confidence girls need to step forward and speak out.



At the 2016 Summit, 15 women staff of partner organizations received intensive training to become mentors, guiding the girls in mobilizing their communities through creative actions. The mentors receive CAI coaching throughout the year. In 2016, CAI provided over 20 hours of mentor coaching support in workshop replication and creative action recommendations in the field.

Creative Community Actions

Once the girls return to their communities following the summit, they receive support from their mentors. They also receive access to tailored Creative Action Toolkits to implement creative social actions and scale their impact. This year, Toolkits focused on teaching and promoting the **Girl Declaration**, including **Words on Fire: Poetry for Girls Education**, inspired by girls' rights advocate and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai; and **Ribbon Trees for Girls' Rights**, inspired by the global climate change movement.

They also have access to mini-grants, thanks to the support from PaperSeed Foundation, for the design and implementation of creative community social actions that advance girls' rights. In 2016, girls and their mentors engaged thousands of community members and students across Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania with more than 25 creative actions highlighting girls' human rights, gender-based violence, and access to education.



On average, 35 girls will teach 10 peers; and each school will engage at least 30 community members and youth in 2017.

Impact Highlight: Fighting FGM in Kenya



Although female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in Kenya, it's still widely practiced in many Maasai communities. EAGL Initiative partner Asante Africa hosted a community forum with parents, elders, school staff and local officials. Wearing tee-shirts proclaiming "Let's Stop FGM Completely," girls opened the forum with a spoken word poem, followed by a theater skit (shown in photo above) about a young woman who is taken to the hospital after her mother practices FGM. **By the end of the forum, all 257 parents made public pledges to end the practice of FGM.**



Project Media

Visit bit.ly/FGMSpokenWord to watch the spoken word performance.

Impact Highlight: Combatting Gender-based Violence in Kenya



Fortress of Hope Africa is a partner organization based in Nairobi that empowers marginalized adolescent girls. Residents, shown at left, dramatized gang rape at local "hot spots," where these violations were taking place. The theatrical event and dialogue was attended by local authorities, elders and community chiefs. **Following the event, the local authorities made public commitments to work together to more effectively prevent sexual attacks.**

Initiative Overview: Equality can only be a reality when girls and women have the means to make healthy decisions. Guatemala has the highest birth and maternal fatality rates in Central America - and teenage pregnancy is on the rise. Local organizations recognize that empowering girls and women is critical to changing these realities. In 2016, CAI trained young women leaders from seven organizations in creative leadership and facilitation to accelerate community education initiatives and increase the capacity to advocate for policies that support girls' and women's health.

Impact Highlight: Let Girls Lead

Throughout 2016, CAI conducted workshops and skill-building clinics with multiple cohorts of organizations in Guatemala that focus on reproductive health, girls' leadership, and gender equity. Among the participants were youth leaders with **Let Girls Lead** in Quetzaltenango.

"It was a dynamic and participatory process. It is necessary that we all have a process such as this, where we refresh ideas, techniques and models of learning and facilitation."

**- Ana Lourdes Tojin,
GoJoven Guatemala**

Young women leaders, shown below, are applying their knowledge in the field with immediate benefits:

- A creative and inclusive shift in recruitment, education and organizing strategies.
- An integration of dialogue, arts and cultural-based approaches to engage new members.
- The breaking through of convention and drawing out of the unique strengths of each member.
- The analysis of gender inequality root causes.
- The development of strategic outreach campaigns through radio dramas, compelling visuals and community workshops.



Program Focus: Social Justice



5 Trainings	45 Organizations
107 Direct Participants	Working in 1 Countries

Social justice means that all people have equal rights both in law and in practice regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, age, or any other category. CAI is equipping an array of organizations to advance their social justice work.

Key Initiative



Creative Leadership for Social Change



United States

Initiative Overview: Social justice organizations in the United States address a wide array of issues from environmental education, youth development, refugees, girls' empowerment, food justice, violence prevention, racial justice, forest conservation, immigrant rights, elder care and LGBTQ rights. CAI provided accessible one-day trainings to equip social justice leaders with creative tools to advance their work. This included:

- **Creative Tools for Building Allyship & Solidarity:** Exploring strategies, actions and approaches to more consciously lead as allies of marginalized groups.
- **Creative Systems Thinking & Design:** Learning to identify values, patterns and structures that make up a system and points of strategic intervention.
- **Creative Leadership & Community Engagement:** Shifting ways of thinking and working to navigate 21st century challenges.

"The modeling of each technique was effective - I feel equipped to successfully use and adapt them."
- Sutton Kiplinger, The Food Project

Program Partners

48 Cantones
A Rocha Ghana
Agrointroductions Ghana
Ahado Youth Conservation Club
Akili Dada
Amigos de Santa Cruz
AMPLIFY
Asante Africa
Asociación AMA
Asociation Mangle
Center for Indigenous Knowledge & Organizational Development
Cameroon Gender & Environment Watch
Community Action for Development
Conservation Alliance
Conservation Foundation
CSARD
CUAV
Echami

Ecologic
Forests, Resources & People
Fortress of Hope
FUNDAECO
FUNDAHMER
Girls to Lead Africa
GoJoven
Herp Conservation Ghana
Kalesea Foundation
Kenya Education Fund
KOMERA
Let Girls Lead
Malkia Foundation
Maranyundo Girls' School
Nature Care Cameroon
OCEANA
Pan-African Organization for Research & Environmental & Rural Development Foundation

Pandrillus Foundation/Limbe Wildlife Center
Protection of Violence on Women & Children
Resource Center for Environmental & Sustainable Development
SACD
SATIIM
SEA
SEGA Nurturing Minds
The Greens
TIDE
Transform Ghana
Wetlands and Agroforestry Development Foundation
Wildseas
Wildlife Conservation Society
WINGS
Women's Justice Initiative
Ya'axche Conservation Trust

Creative Action Institute is Launched

Originally a program of New England Biolabs Foundation, ArtCorps was forged in 2000 from the idea that art has the power to break down barriers and unite across differences. Through ArtCorps, volunteer Field Artists harnessed the power of creativity to engage communities in addressing the challenges they face. One recurring challenge was equipping partner organizations with the tools to sustain the work. When the Field Artists departed, the communities they served felt the loss.

We shifted our approach, developing a rigorous Creative Leadership Certification Course to transfer the knowledge and skills to our collaborating partners, empowering them to initiate and replicate creative strategies for environmental and social outreach. With this train-the-trainer model, the name ArtCorps no longer accurately reflected our work, and Creative Action Institute (CAI) was officially launched. ArtCorps remains as the Community Engagement Program of CAI - matching artists with partner organizations to support and lead arts-based community projects as the final culmination of their training.

CAI Mission Statement: Creative Action Institute works at the intersection of creativity and social change. We build the capacity of leaders and organizations for innovation, collaboration and resilience to advance conservation, health and human rights globally.

About Our Logo

The CAI logo is an emblem embodying the power of creativity to break free of constraints - featuring the Quetzal - a bird held in high esteem in its native country Guatemala, the place where it all began.



Raising Spirits: Lighting Up the World

The North Shore Arts Association in Gloucester, MA came alive on October 15 for CAI's annual fundraising event, **Raising Spirits: Fiesta for Creative Action**. This year's theme was *Light Up the World* - highlighting the East African Girls' Leadership initiative empowering young women and their mentors in East Africa to speak out for gender equality.

Guests entered a raffle to win a Red Wine Cellar and bid in the live auction with Auctioneer Robert Fellows on a culinary Tuscan journey, *Hamilton* tickets and a week in Paris. The painting of a young EAGLS participant created during the event by North Shore artist Benjamin Stebbings, shown at right, went to long-time CAI friend Carol Seitchik. Afro-Caribbean band KOLORS provided danceable world beats, and Guckenheimer Foods wowed us all with the savory flavors of Fall.

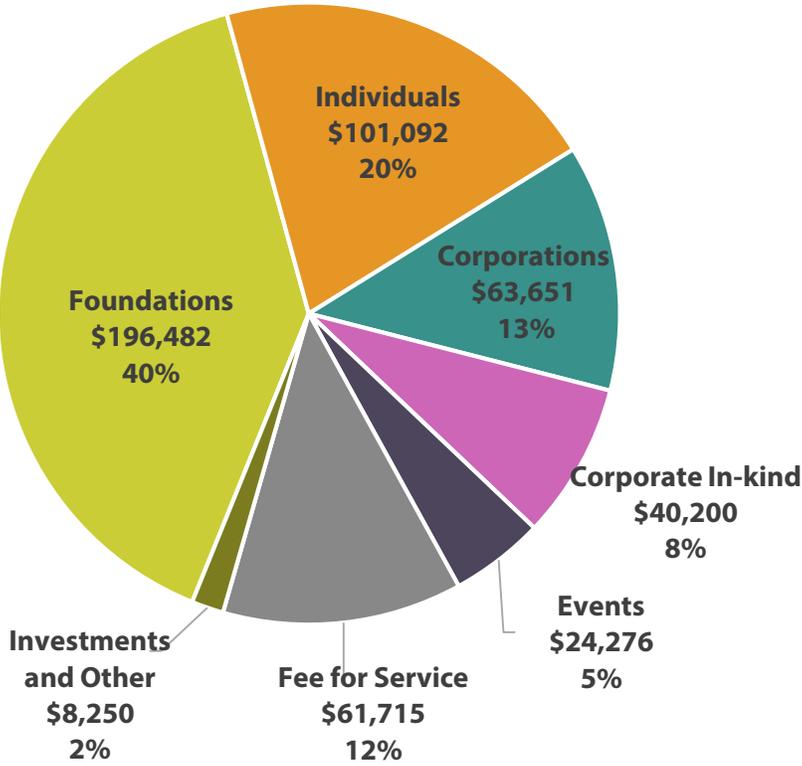


Together, we raised \$30,000 to support CAI programs accelerating environmental and social change around the world! Thank you!

2016 Financials

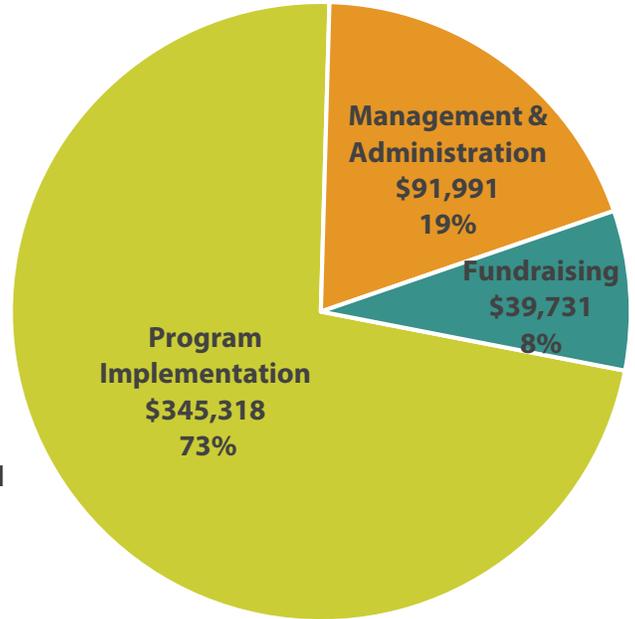
2016 Income

Total Income: \$495,666

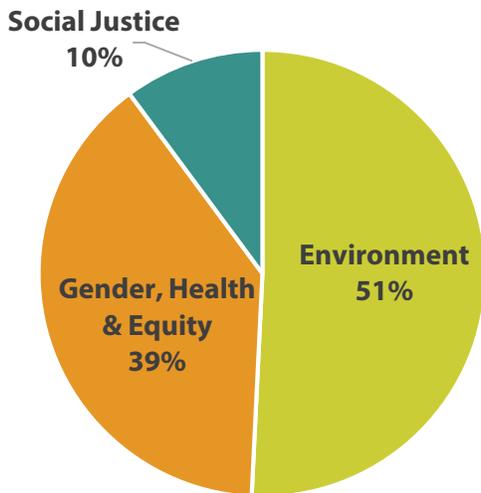


2016 Expenses

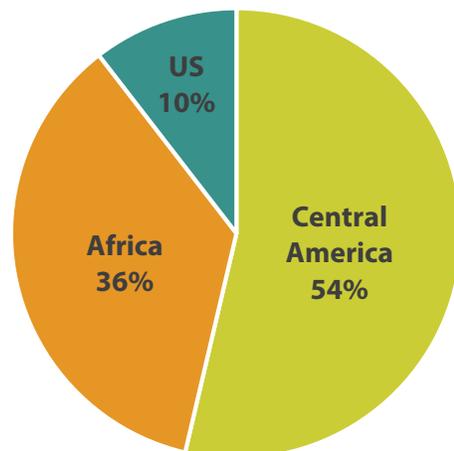
Total Expenses: \$477,040



2016 Investment by Program



2016 Investment by Geography



2016 Individual Donors

Aida & Luka Celebic
Alan Feldman & Carol Seitchik
Alicia Hutton
Amy Paulson
Andrew Willemsen & Karen Kuhlthau
Ann Sandford
Ann Vincenti-Michelman
Annie Valva
Aryeh Shell & Francisco Rocco
Barbara Manzolillo
Barbara Sampson
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Becky Kucera & Peter Hartline
Ben Stebbings
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Betsy Desmond
Bill Jack
Bob Clark
Brett Robb & Ryan Falvey
Brian Truglio & Paula Magnelli
Bruce Blakely
Bruce Werner
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Carol Shell
Catherine Gibbons
Cheryl Mazer
Christian & Marie Catherine Peyla
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Clare Dowd & Edward Lewis
Claudia Hawkes
Courtney Scott
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Dana Hawkes
Dana Rico
Daniel Preston
Danielle Ancin
David Comb
David Keefe
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Maureen McManus-Tuma
Melissa Clarke

Special Thanks

**Don & Linda Comb
Diane Faissler
Martine Kellett**

Michael Dodge & Catherine Dean-Dodge
Michael Tobey
Molly & Peter Ettenborough
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Thomas Clarke
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Toby Claus
Tony and Cecilia Soltis
Victoria Teicher
Wendy Cook
Yael Falicov

Donor Spotlight: A Conversation with Diane Faissler

Bringing grassroots action to life is only possible with friends and supporters championing the work. Diane Faissler is one of those friends.

How did you learn about CAI?

"I'm a long-time friend of Carol Seitchik, who stewards art exhibits for New England Biolabs. As a Board Member of the organization, she reached out to me about getting involved. At that time, I was assisting in the interviewing and evaluation of Field Artists from an artist's perspective. I've been a supporter ever since – even more so as the organizational model evolved into training local change makers in creative methods."

Can you share a bit about your own artistic work?

"After 20+ years working in textbook production and editing, and being a "weekend painter," I went to art school. School and studio work consumed the next 15 years. I still am an artist in my way of being and thinking, but now express it more through writing and how I think and live. Everyone has creative potential, I just was fortunate to have time to indulge it."

What intrigues you about CAI's work?

"I've always been impressed with Clare's vitality and imagination and by how the organization accomplishes so much with so little. Further, in the countries where CAI works, they are often swimming upstream to raise awareness of taboo or poorly understood issues - environmental sustainability, women's rights, women's health. And, as people in remote regions have almost no resources for such work, the fun and exciting creative methods introduced by CAI meet with enthusiastic reception and the hunger for more and more. I find this gratifying, and keep giving to continue fueling a process that works so well. The discovery by CAI that these methods can work almost anywhere opens up unlimited opportunities."

"The discovery by CAI that these methods can work almost anywhere opens up unlimited opportunities."

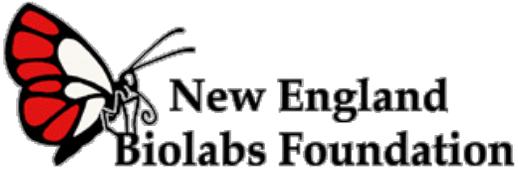
What specifically attracts you about CAI's mission?

"I believe, along with many others, that women and girls **are** the future, that the world needs their intuition and earth-groundedness. They need the chance to move freely and safely, and to be accepted for the values they bring. Access to sexual and reproductive health is essential groundwork for any greater aspiration. CAI is good at determining the local need and addressing it.

I am moved by the African young women's immediate grasping of the potential of training their peers in art-based methods as a platform for developing women's leadership - building a path to freedom and better lives."

Institutional Donors

Foundations



Corporate



THE CLARK GROUP
of Janney Montgomery Scott LLC



Rafius Fane Gallery

www.theclarkgroupjanney.com

Funding Partner Spotlight: The HOW Fund & PaperSeed Foundation

These partners provide invaluable support for the East African Girls' Leadership (EAGL) Initiative which is comprised of an annual Summit, Creative Mentor Training, year-round coaching, and the implementation of creative social actions where mentors guide girl leaders to activate their leadership skills by educating and mobilizing their communities in defense of girls' human rights.



Founded by Sasha Rabsey, The HOW Fund seeks grassroots leaders who recognize the strength, courage, and capacity of women and girls, and who address a constellation of their needs with direct service projects. The HOW Fund believes that in order to create equity for women and girls around the globe, it is imperative to invest in solutions that are holistic and comprehensive in nature.



PaperSeed Foundation

The PaperSeed Foundation is dedicated to strengthening educational opportunities for children and young people in underserved and resource-lacking communities around the world. PaperSeed envisions a world where all children have the opportunity to obtain a quality education, and believes that local leaders know best how to improve their own communities.

2016 Board and Staff

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Courtney Scott
Ann Vincenti-Michelman

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East Africa

Veronica Thamaini, Regional Coordinator



creative action
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