Within this book are unforgettable testimonials and photographs of women from across the globe. In many ways these women couldn’t be more dissimilar – they come from different backgrounds, different industries, and different generations. But they are united in their dedication to empower one another, to create opportunities, and to lift up their communities as they lift up themselves.

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation."

- African Proverb
Thank You!!!

FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE
“WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY.”

CHINESE PROVERB
“I’m committed to helping educate women across the globe because education gives women the ability to make informed choices. Choices allow women to seek opportunities. Opportunities give women freedom and empowerment. No woman should be denied an education and with buildOn’s help, education can become a reality for those who don’t have access today.”

Jill Bornstein
Ridgefield, CT

“A woman with a voice is, by definition, a strong woman.”

—Melinda Gates
“Oprah Winfrey once said, “I’ve come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that’s as unique as a fingerprint – and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you.” I support International Women’s Day efforts because women have so much to offer the world and often times they don’t get equal opportunity to be heard or showcase their gifts. Last year I was fortunate enough to spend time in a rural impoverished Nicaraguan community. During my stay abroad, I learned so much about the work that needs to be done to level the playing field for women. I was quite intrigued by the strong, bold, and courageous women that labor very hard to maintain their households and take care of their families. With so many stereotypes of gender roles, and the perspective that women belong at home and men should be at the office, I want to be a part of the solution to break this cycle. Let’s empower women today and tomorrow across the globe to live their best lives!”

Nelvia Bullock
Account Executive - Consumer Group, Autodesk
San Francisco, CA
“If educating every girl will start a chain reaction to end most global issues affecting women – gendercide, sex slavery, oppression, and intense wartime brutality, etc. – then there is much to be done. When girls and women are educated they better their lives and that of their families, communities, and countries. As a college educated woman, I am very clear about the value of education and I believe strongly that every girl in the world deserves the opportunity to go to school. As well, I am part of community of millions of college educated women who believe the same. Through the Circle of Sisterhood, sorority women across North America are standing together to remove barriers to education for girls worldwide. As the most educated women in the world, we believe strongly that when every girl has access to education, the world will be a better place. We will continue to work to that end.”

Ginny Carroll
Founder, Circle of Sisterhood
Indianapolis, IN
“Providing women with the opportunity to become educated is a crucial step towards ending the global education crisis. When a woman is educated, she becomes empowered to change not only her own life, but also the lives of those around her: her children, her family, her friends, her community. Give one woman a quality education and see her influence broaden society. Thank you buildOn for the work you do, and for recognizing the power of educating women across the world.”

Nicole Cribbins
New Canaan, CT
“I believe every individual should have the opportunity to assemble a toolkit full of knowledge and experiences to build a life of joy, achievement and security for themselves and their families. Benjamin Franklin once stated that “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” Through my experience as a banker, community volunteer, and mother of two teenage daughters, I have experienced firsthand the power of education and the importance of diverse leadership in building a better world. It is exciting to witness the personal growth experienced by women through buildOn and the enrichment it brings to communities across the globe. I am honored to be a part of the buildOn journey and I am inspired by the impact that education has on widening opportunities and breaking cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement.”

Susan Davis-Gillis
SVP, Consumer Banking Leader, Synchrony Financial
Stamford, CT
“The education of women and young girls is both a moral prerogative and an economic necessity. Equality is a basic human right, and while as a nation we have made great strides, gender equality still remains an unfulfilled promise for many women in this country and most certainly in our developing countries across the globe. A nation thrives when all of its people can participate and contribute equally to the health and productivity of their citizenry. Yet women today are much more likely to live in poverty, and in some nations have little or no access to education and job training, affordable housing and credit – the very apparatus needed to lift oneself out of the grips of poverty. While legal and policy reforms remain a necessary focus, education remains the greatest tool to equality and empowerment of women. An educated woman is an empowered woman. The education and development of women provides them more autonomy to better manage their own lives and opens the doors to opportunities for financial independence and for the development and attainment of personal ambitions. Through education women are better able to contribute to the health and productivity of their whole family and their communities, and most importantly, they are able to set the example for future generations of women.”

Cindy Estrada
Vice President, UAW General Motors Dept.
Detroit, MI
“I feel very fortunate that education has always been an important value in my family and that I have had the privilege of a quality education, which has provided me with numerous opportunities in life. On a recent buildOn Trek to Malawi with GE Capital WCS, I met many women in the village who have not been as fortunate to have access to education, but whose spirit and strength are eye-opening and inspiring. I have no doubt that with buildOn’s support these women will be empowered, will emerge as leaders in their communities, and that they will in turn empower and educate further generations of women. Thank you buildOn and GE Capital for letting me be a part of this amazing and worthwhile movement.”

Jennifer Fenge
Senior Counsel, GE Capital, Working Capital Solutions, Darien, CT
Sonu’s Story: Beyond the Statistics
The numbers are staggering – 31 million girls of primary school age are not in school. Of those girls, 17 million are expected to never enter a school. The consequences of this are huge and they are not limited to girls and women.

However shocking these numbers may be, they also run the risk of failing to connect us to the problem. It would probably take you half a year to even count to 31 million. How could you really understand the gravity of this many girls who are deprived the basic human right of primary education if you can’t even really comprehend the number?

Instead of numbers, I would like to connect you to just one woman whose lack of education has left her extremely vulnerable. Last month I met a young woman in the Far Western region of Nepal named Sonu Sarki. Sonu is unsure of her own age but I estimate her to be around 18 years old. She is a Dalit, which is the untouchable caste in Nepal. She has never been to school. Instead she worked as a child laborer doing domestic work at the age of 9. When speaking to her, it became clear that she hasn’t mastered one language completely. Instead, she mixes Nepali, Hindi, and another language used in the hilly areas to communicate. In just the last six months, Sonu has almost lost her life twice.

The reason? She is extremely vulnerable due to her complete lack of education. Last year, a man tricked her into agreeing to marry him and she left with him for India for the ceremony. Along the way, an organization specializing in human trafficking intercepted them at the border and the man’s intentions of selling her as a sex slave surfaced.

Sonu herself understands, “If I was educated, no one would be able to cheat me.” You see, without any education Sonu was not able to critically evaluate the man’s intentions. She trusted him blindly.

Written by Rosann Jager
buildOn Chief Program Officer, International Programs
After being intercepted at the border, Sonu had nowhere to go but to the home of the trafficker who promised to marry her. Without education, she is dependent on men (either a father, brother, or a husband) to provide for her. First, her lack of education left her vulnerable to believing the trafficker’s lies. Next, it forced her to stay with his family since she had no way to support herself. It was at his family’s house that she almost lost her life again. The trafficker beat her regularly and then one day he tied her arms and legs and was about to drown her in a nearby river when his brother stopped him.

After the rescue, Sonu continued to suffer both physical and mental abuse. She overheard the trafficker’s family making plans again to sell her in India and she finally ran away to the village of Shanti Katan in the Far Western Region of Nepal. This is where I met Sonu. I was there to break ground on buildOn’s 744th school worldwide.

Sonu and thousands of women, who have been deprived of education are partnering with buildOn in seven different countries to build schools in their villages. The women are full partners in the projects. They, alongside the men in the community, sign a covenant agreeing to send their girls to school. They serve on Project Leadership Committees to drive the school construction projects. They break gender barriers by doing “men’s job” like mixing cement to help build the schools for both their sons and daughters.

In buildOn adult literacy programs they are not only learning to read and write, they are starting small businesses and gaining independence. They are beginning to control their own lives and are a driving force in the development of their villages. They are decreasing their dependency on men and they are educating their daughters so that they are never in this situation.

With the help of buildOn, Sonu is now one of these women who is being empowered to change her own life, the lives of her children, and her village.
“With education, a woman gains hope and a crucial first step towards freedom. A woman who can think for herself and take care of herself can provide a better life for her children; she can resist oppression; she can enrich her community; and she can inspire others. Research has shown that teams of men and women are more successful than teams made up entirely of men, or teams made up entirely of women. Educated women can step up and truly be on the team – whether in the workplace, in government, in civil society or in family life – to the benefit of all of us.”

Olga Hartwell
VP, Senior Tax Counsel, General Electric
Greenwich, CT

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

— Alice Walker
“Educating women has a transformative impact on so many aspects of society and makes great economic sense for a family, a community, and a nation. Educated women are less likely to die in childbirth; a mother’s education improves child nutrition; and girls with higher levels of education are less likely to marry early and have children at an early age. Education narrows the pay gap as well. The list of benefits continues. This is why I support buildOn’s Adult Literacy Program.”

Randi Hedin  
Co-President, RPX Research  
Woodinville, WA
“After visiting Malawi with buildOn in 2013, I was personally empowered by the women in the village. The women of the village worked tirelessly to provide a stable foundation for both their families and the overall community. Although this was one village in one country, we know this is a universal motivation by women all around the world. Education will provide women the opportunity they want and deserve to enrich themselves and the next generation.”

Patricia Hubbard
President, West Coast MKTG INC
Mill Valley, CA
“Every person deserves the opportunity to learn, to dream, and to live a life without fear. Education is the key to understanding ourselves and others. We can make a difference by supporting women’s education. We can change the world by giving women the chance to gain an education and use knowledge to empower themselves and those around them.”

Suzie Ivelich
Managing Director, Landor, San Francisco, CA
“I know I am very fortunate to have grown up in a society that not only allowed me to go to school, but put no restrictions on what I could study or what career path I could take. I was able to explore many different areas before deciding on what was best for me. That freedom of choice is something that most of us who grew up in the First World take for granted. Far too many other women around the globe are not given those same opportunities. The next Marie Curie may not even know she’s interested in science because she’s never been given the chance to study it. The next Maya Angelou might not know how to read. But these circumstances are preventable, as long as we are proactive. So, when it is in our power to help less fortunate women and give them the chance to learn, how could you not? When you come to the aid of one woman, you not only help her, but, in turn, her whole family and, then, her whole community. Bit by bit, that can change the world.”

Juliet Izon
Entertainment Editor, Niche Media
New York, NY
“Education provides a woman with a sense of self-worth. My sister and I were blessed with parents who taught us to believe in ourselves and recognize our self-worth from a very young age. It was their confidence in our abilities that encouraged us to take risks and embrace challenges; however, it was our successes in education that empowered us to become independent, thriving women. Educating women opens worlds, transports us and allows us to dream far past our present circumstances. When women trust their enlightened minds, it leads us to new ideas, new territory and new experiences. I believe that when women are given the opportunity to learn, it ignites a passion, a flame that cannot be stifled by naysayers or oppressors. The pride and liberation that comes from accomplishing any degree of education leads women to greater and increasing challenges. As women confront each new educational step, it creates an inspirational path to guide other women and grant them the confidence to accomplish what may have once seemed impossible. It is not only our obligation to support other women in their educational endeavors, it is our honor to support them and encourage their deep understanding of self-worth.”

Kyle Schauenberg In honor of her sister Kimberly Kopnitsky Chicago, IL
“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan
“The minute a little girl is born, she is already the woman she will be. So to empower a little girl is to empower the woman she will become.”

- Diane Von Furstenberg

“There is no doubt that women hold the key to improving not just their own lot and that of their family, but of their entire community. Breaking a cycle that keeps them from doing that is simple, and the beauty of buildOn is it asks nothing more than to let people live up to their own potential. I can’t imagine anything better than that.”

Amanda Lang
Sr. Business Correspondent, CBC News Network
Ontario, Canada
“Comprising half the global population, women across the world have a great deal to offer society. How much of these invaluable societal contributions are realized comes down to our access to the skills we learn and the training we receive. Nowhere is this more important than in the developing world, where adequate skills based training is often entirely absent for women. Increasing this access has a double benefit. Firstly, women gain independence as individuals, and both they themselves and their society as a whole are better able to visualize, and realize, the benefits they offer to the group. Secondly, the entire society does in fact become more productive, as this underutilized resource is used creatively. Women often offer differing but complimentary skills within a given society. It is our duty to help them realize this potential for themselves, and for their communities as a whole.”

Christina Leman-Hamlin
Darien, Connecticut
“Education goes beyond a degree or a diploma. It’s a catalyst for change. Educating just one woman and giving her a voice births new ideas, creativity and healing both personally and for others. Through this voice comes the power to transform her community, which creates a ripple effect throughout the world. We should work together to make sure each and every woman at least has the access to education that will ultimately benefit us all.”

Jordi Lippe
Health, Wellness, Travel and Lifestyle Contributor
New York, NY
“I am a firm and passionate believer that strong, confident, educated women make our world a better, smarter and kinder place. But this does not happen on its own. My own journey began as a Ukrainian student boarding a plane to the United States with only $100 in her pocket on my way to earning my PhD in Physics, up to me leading an Investment Firm. I had unbelievable family, friends, mentors and supporters that made this journey possible. I am committed to doing my part to ensure that my 10-year-old daughter, and every other little girl in the world, are educated and empowered so that they too could build their own path in life.”

Oksana Malysheva
Principal, Linden Education Partners LLC
Chicago, IL
“Women are the backbone of their communities. Educating women empowers them to break out of poverty and build a better life for their families. I met an amazing woman last summer while on a buildOn Trek in Burkina Faso, and got to know what education promises while living in her household for the week. Ruth, our host mother, has had 9 children, 8 of them still living. Ruth never attended school and cannot read or write her name. That didn’t stop her from lining up to put her thumbprint on the buildOn Covenant, promising to provide the hard labor necessary to build a school. Ruth rose before dawn to carry water, feed the animals, and prepare breakfast for her extended family. Then she went to the worksite, where she made repeated trips to fill cans of water and carry them on her head to where we mixed cement. With a laugh, she took the shovel out of my hands and dug in herself. Ruth was everywhere on the worksite, smiling and pitching in. Ruth told me that she did this to make sure that her daughters would have choices in their lives, and she hoped education would bring a better future for her family. Later, she returned to the fields, where she tended to her crops before cooking for her family yet again. Today, her daughters are learning to read and write, and are empowered to gain access to later marriages, better jobs, healthcare, freedom from violence and more.”

Pamela Martinson
Partner, Sidley Austin LLP
Palo Alto, CA
“A young mind is a powerful thing—full of imagination and big ideas that haven’t yet been reined in by societal expectations, financial limitations, or the day-to-day stressors that bog down adults. But those minds need guidance to make their dreams a reality, and education is the support system that can get them there. With education, it’s those minds that will change the world.”

Ashley Mateo
Deputy Digital Editor, Shape.com
New York, NY
"Women, like men, should try to do the impossible, and when they fail, their failure should be a challenge to others."

— Amelia Earhart
“It is my honor to participate in buildOn’s Inaugural International Women’s Day Campaign. This investment will develop women leaders in our buildOn community by providing adult literacy classes for women in villages where buildOn is building schools; and by funding buildOn’s apprentice program where women are given the opportunity to learn valuable construction skills, earn a certificate and have the opportunity to secure a job with a skilled labor team. I am a business technology executive who strongly believes in the power of mentorship. My entire career has been spent building organizations that offer opportunities for people to achieve their potential. One of the core missions of buildOn is to raise the self esteem of today’s less privileged youth through service and education. This is what grabbed my attention.

And here is why: I believe that to love others you need to love yourself. That is all about self esteem. So the opportunity to participate in a charity that mentors the youth of today in a meaningful way by providing opportunities to serve the elderly and less fortunate, along with participation in the building of schools globally for the underprivileged, is a home run! The moment of truth happens when these students see their potential to make a difference in someone else’s life. Envision the joy in the heart of a lonely senior citizen visited by a buildOn student, and the satisfaction and reward felt in the heart and soul of that student. Imagine the 780+ schools built around the world and the 100K+ children, parents and grandparents that get to attend, learn and feel HOPE every day. I honestly am so moved by the profound impact buildOn is having on society.”

Linda McGuigan
Volunteer
Boston, MA
“In everyone’s lives they will encounter their own obstacles. While we cannot break down every one, we can empower today’s girls to not see their gender as one of their obstacles, but rather as a beautiful part of their identity. My mother raised me in a home that valued education and taught me to learn to love to learn. She felt that becoming an educated woman would provide the foundation for a bright future. I have always loved school, and through my mother’s encouragement, I have found success. I see this continuing in my daughter and granddaughter, and I have hope that this pattern continues. Women who came before my generation began to break the barriers of what a woman’s role in the world was and could be. Women of my generation were able to take on roles of leadership in a man’s world. We need to empower the women of this and future generations to see the world where the possibilities for themselves are endless. It is the foundation of these prior experiences that empower today’s girls to be their own agents of change. I say, you will be successful not in spite of the societal norms set up you by your gender, but because you were born who you are. And within that, the possibilities are endless.”

Raisa Medvinsky
Office Administrator, Williams, Williams, Ratnner & Plunkett, P.C
Detroit, MI

“How wrong is it for a woman to expect the man to build the world she wants, rather than to create it herself?”

— Anaïs Nin
“Nelson Mandela once said “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” It was also said “A strong woman stands up for herself. A stronger woman stands up for everyone else.” (Unknown)

My job as a mother is to want the very best for my children and to teach my daughter to value herself, aim for the stars, and, in the words of Cinderella, to have courage and be kind. But what if I was not so blessed? What if I myself did not know right from wrong? What if I thought it was acceptable to be married at the age of 8 to a man I did not know? Or to be “OK” with only ever being a secretary or nurse because I was a woman? It was education that gave me my voice and will give my daughter her voice and I believe that we should and must do better to help others. It is my privilege and honor to support buildOn in their endeavors to bring education to all and I am delighted to have been nominated by GE International, Working Capital Solutions.”

Alexandra Munro
Integrations Project Manager,
GE Capital, Working Capital Solutions
“It is not only a privilege for me to support the International Women’s Day buildOn campaign, I view it as my responsibility. I grew up at a time when access to education was not an issue. In fact, there was an expectation set by my parents that I would attain the grades that would allow me entrance into a top university. However, I was also keenly aware that my mother was the first generation in our family to earn a degree in the 1950’s, while neither of my grandmothers were afforded the opportunity to pursue an education. We have come so far. The privilege of an education, sadly remains out of reach for far too many women and girls around the world. I believe we are a global society, and as such it is our responsibility to support organizations and campaigns that seek to provide access to education to women. We know that educating women makes a difference. The difference is felt by the woman, her family and their communities. Ultimately the world will become a better place when equal access to education is afforded to all! We must to do what we can to make this dream a reality!”

Katherine Nicholls
Chief Executive Officer, Niche Media
New York, NY
As the African proverb says “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation).” This quote came to life for me on two buildOn Treks, the first to Nicaragua and the second to Malawi, when I saw the power of women in some of the poorest nations in the world. Their passion and drive fuel their families and their communities. Whether they were cooking meals (as early as 4a.m.), digging trenches for their children’s new school or learning how to read and write in buildOn’s Adult Literacy Program, they did it with a quiet fortitude that radiated purpose. It is imperative that we empower all women across the globe to educate themselves and their children. I will never forget their strength, nor their smiles.

Catarina Schwab
Founding Partner, Chief Business Officer at NPX, LLC
San Francisco, CA
“I support buildOn and its global educational efforts, as well as International Women’s Day because I strongly believe that in order to promote just and democratic societies, women must be part of the decision making process and leadership. It is therefore imperative that girls receive equal access to education and that they are encouraged and supported in their educational endeavors. Without education women are faced with a bleak future; without educational access for girls, societies are faced with that same bleak future. If you evaluate all the regions in the world where poverty, hopelessness and violence abound, you will find that women are absent from the public square. The educated woman is a powerful force for good in society, and although we must be mindful of cultural differences, we can never excuse the denial of education for girls because the consequences are dire for those societies.”

Jodi Shelton  
Founder, President and CEO, Shelton Group  
Dallas, TX
“A **WOMAN** IS THE FULL CIRCLE. WITHIN HER IS THE POWER TO CREATE, NURTURE AND TRANSFORM.”

— DIANE MARIECHILD
“I am committed to empowering and educating women across the globe as I feel that it is every person’s right to be educated and to be able to fully understand what is going on around them – not only in their own communities, but globally. Education is the stepping stone to making smart and informed decisions.”

Leslie Sloane  
Principal, Vision PR  
New York, NY

“I raise up my voice—not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back”

- Malala Yousafzai
"When I was growing up, my parents taught me that I could do anything I put my mind to. They believed very strongly in education and the role it plays in empowering us to make decisions, ensure success and plan for the future. As a result of their faith in the vital role of education, I attended college, developed skills and went on to pursue a career. Someday, I hope to teach my children the same valuable lesson my parents taught me. Education is the root of development and knowledge is power. In society, women have the ability to influence their families, peers and communities. Education will enable women to be change agents within these groups. To empower women in developing nations by improving literacy, providing work opportunities and encouraging contributions to society, we can start to turn the tide of poverty. These women will be able to do anything they put their minds to!"

Alexandria Sullivan
Program Director,
Document Management & Collaboration, John Hancock
Boston, MA
“Women are our first teachers. As daughters, mothers, sisters, friends and wives, women shape those around them. Women love and nurture; they are supporters, encouragers, and comforters. They are creators, inventors, doers, givers, and problem solvers. When we empower and educate women, we allow them to see their worth, and enable them to inspire, act and advocate for themselves. As women gain knowledge, confidence, and strength, there are no limits to the impact they can make in the world.”

Kristin Thomas
Wardrobe Stylist - Kristin Thomas, Love Your Look
New Canaan, CT
“Educating and empowering women around the world is one of the most effective things we can do to help eradicate extreme poverty and its effects. I have witnessed first hand the impact of educating women and girls in the villages in Mali where I have helped to build schools. The girls aspire to become doctors and teachers; their mothers and grandmothers are able to contribute to the financial support of their families. When a village has schools and education, it becomes an integral part of the broader social, economic and political community; and educated women and girls take an active role in that community. Educating women and girls has a far reaching and permanent impact in helping impoverished communities improve their lives.”

Melissa Thomson
Rowayton, CT
“I am committed to empowering and educating women globally because it is a necessity for the progression of humanity. Excess female mortality is a significant problem around the world. Considering that females have a longer life expectancy, the rate in which women outnumber men around the world is not where it would be expected. Although there are cultural and economic factors that play a part in creating this gap, research has proven that the lack of educational opportunities and social inequality have been the greatest contributors to overwhelming female mortality rate. By providing opportunities for women to be educated around the world we are essentially building the capacity for women to contribute to the economic progress of their countries. Educating women decreases the infant mortality rate around the world. Educated women have greater knowledge of anatomy, hygiene and simple medical procedures that help to save their children’s lives. Thus, by educating women we are saving the lives of millions of children who are the next leaders of the world. The myth is that this will lead to overpopulation; however, when women are educated they are more likely to join the work force and choose to have less children. It is a simple matter of common sense. If we care about humanity and want the next generations to be successful, then educating women is a necessity. To have a progressive society we need educated and progressive women who are able to connect with their potential and live out their full capacity.”

Kimberly Townsend
Program Coordinator, buildOn
Chicago, IL
Verose’s Story: A Strong Haitian Woman Leading by Example
The school building worksite in Haiti can be a tough and chaotic place. There are endless hours of digging, mixing concrete by hand, and passing hundreds of heavy rocks. But every morning when our team showed up to start construction, Verose was the first to jump into the action and pass us a shovel. Her grit, determination and leadership were contagious, despite a lifetime of challenges.

“Anything a man can do, women can do,” she explained, recalling her recent separation from her husband. During their marriage, Verose was solely expected to cook, clean and do all the domestic work with no time to challenge herself outside of the home. Realizing that she was compromising her own happiness, she initiated the split. But it was not an easy task in her village, where it has traditionally been unheard of for a woman to stand up for herself.

But that started to change when buildOn arrived last year to build the first of two schools. One of the first steps in constructing a buildOn school is for the community to elect a Project Leadership Committee made up of equal numbers of men and women. Verose jumped at the opportunity to participate and has since taken on a leadership role in her village’s committee.
Verose is also sending her son and daughter to school and attending classes herself through buildOn’s Adult Literacy Program four nights a week. At 48, Verose worried that it might be too late to learn, but reassured herself, “I go anyway, because education is only going to make my life better. My parents refused to send me to school when I was young because they needed my help with farming, and I missed out on my dream of becoming a dressmaker. Now that I am beginning to read and write, I am realizing my potential as a leader and want to ensure that no children in our village have to miss out on their dreams.”

The fact that La Glace Village is building a second school within one year is due to exceptional leadership, a commitment to providing every child an education and an amazing ability to rally the entire community around the school – qualities that Verose personally embodies. Asked what advice she had for the girls of the village, Verose shared some wise words and her hope for the village’s future: “Our girls need to focus on their studies and work hard for their chosen profession, but so do our boys. Everyone, regardless of gender should take advantage of their education, so in the future, missing out on schooling is not even an option. It takes both men and women working together to ensure that.”
“I am inspired and humbled by the individuals who are reached and whose lives are changed through buildOn’s education and literacy initiatives. I am also inspired by the generous members of buildOn who empower communities in the US and around the globe while leaving legacies that will last for future generations.”

Patricia Tripar
Senior Manager, Banking Practice, West Monroe Partners
Chicago, IL

The world will never realize 100 percent of its goals if 50 percent of its people cannot realize their full potential. When we unleash the power of women, we can secure the future for all.

- Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
"I believe that every woman deserves a chance to be heard, an opportunity to be a leader, and the support to follow her dreams. As women, we must stand together to make a push for women globally to have the rights to education, so that we can all reach our fullest potential."

Emily Turner
Instructor, SoulCycle
New York, NY
“Education is a fundamental human right. Educating women and girls has a lasting impact that ripples through her family and community. In honor of International Women’s Day and buildOn, I am thrilled to support this campaign. As Malala Yousafzai said: “Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.” Wise words which buildOn makes a reality every day.”

Karen D. Vachon
Volunteer
Boston, MA
“Imagine the massive increased contribution to society if half of the global population were able to achieve more than they previously believed by removing self-limiting belief patterns through education. This reality is within reach by the education and empowerment of women. The impact to the globe is comprehensive. It is without racial, economic, political or religious bounds. Women’s education and empowerment in all walks of life can introduce a necessary balance in successful decision making for families, villages, businesses, and governments. Women have been shown to introduce inclusive, progressive, creative, constructive and generative solutions to problems faced in all facets of life. Each woman realizing their self-empowerment through education will be a building block upon which other women can build. The witnessing of another woman breaking through the conceived limit of possibilities will inspire the next and highlight the possibilities for all. What the standard was before will be shattered and the next level of achievement will be expectation for the next generation. Women provide unique value that needs to be leveraged in all aspects of life. Empowering women through education will also provide the self-confidence to identify and share their discovered value with others resulting in the propagation of knowledge with both women and men they encounter. Societies need to acknowledge the potential for growth and prosperity that can be achieved when women are included and valued contributors.”

Jaymi Wilson
Detroit, MI
“I DO NOT WISH WOMEN TO HAVE POWER OVER MEN; BUT OVER THEMSELVES.”

— MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
We build a better future for America’s youth while building schools in some of the world’s poorest countries.

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and low expectations through service and education. We empower urban youth to transform their neighborhoods through intensive community service and to change the world by building schools in some of the economically poorest countries in the world.

buildOn’s service learning programs empower students in 44 under-resourced high schools, located in some of the most challenged neighborhoods across the U.S. In each of these programs, youth contribute intensive local service – helping the homeless, seniors and children in their communities – to confront urban struggles with passion and optimism.

buildOn engages nearly 5,000 students in six U.S. regions: Boston, MA; Bridgeport, CT.; Chicago, IL.; Detroit, MI.; The Bronx/Brooklyn, NY; and San Francisco/ Oakland, CA.

buildOn mobilizes rural communities in some of the economically poorest countries on the planet to build schools. The villages we partner with have no adequate school structure – students are squeezed into dark and crumbling mud huts, or are taught under trees when the weather permits, or have to walk multiple miles to a neighboring village, or can’t attend school at all.

Our methodology’s true power resides in the fact that buildOn classrooms are constructed by the very people who will be benefiting from them. To date we have built more than 780 schools in seven countries: Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua and Senegal.

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