**Special Thanks**

Share the Light: Buy a Prosperity Candle!

Celebrate a woman in your life with the gift of a candle. Every candle purchased empowers a woman rebuilding her life after conflict, trauma, or disease.

[prosperitycandle.com](http://prosperitycandle.com)
Enter discount code USA TODAY for 10% off your purchase!

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**ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ EDUCATION**

An extra year of education can increase a girls’ income by 10 to 20%.

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**The Girls in Rural Economic Development Project** is spearheaded by the cargo council on Global Affairs with generous support from the Nkwo, Bill & Melinda Gates, and United Nations Foundations.

Chaired by Catherine Bertini, executive director of the World Food Programme (1992-2002) and 2003 World Food Prize Laureate, the project shines a light on the experiences and potential of rural adolescent girls living in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The project will culminate in the next volume of the Girls Count series, including recommendations directed to national developing country policy makers about why investment in rural adolescent girls is key to sustainable economic and social development.

The rural population of developing nations face extreme poverty, with 70 percent of the approximately 1.4 billion people living on less than $1.00/day located in rural areas. Rural dwellers are often isolated from good jobs, schools, and services, with limited infrastructure to improve their access.

**Harness the potential**

Girls are the backbone of rural economies in the developing world. They labor in fields and off the farm—fetching water and firewood for their households and caring for their younger brothers and sisters. The lucky ones also go to school. These girls have great potential as leaders and contributors in agricultural transformation, non-farm work, education, and entrepreneurship. However, they are some of the most invisible people in the world. In secret, where women are barely heard, rural girls’ rights and needs are often not considered.

As these girls do so much, investing in them can help harness their great potential and transform their impact on their families, communities and countries—not to mention the girls themselves.

**What is needed?**

- **Equitable access to quality primary and secondary education, vocational and agricultural training**—structured to develop skills that are meaningful in rural environments.
- **Access to quality health information and services.**
- **Adequate nutrition, with a particular focus on ensuring enough food so rural adolescent girls can learn, grow, and act.**
- **Personal security—in schools, at home, and in the community.**
- **Social connections with peers and role models, particularly adult women, to support rural girls’ learning and empowerment to pursue their goals and act on their choices.**
- **Training and opportunities for non-farm employment so rural young women can pursue employment to raise rural family incomes and sustain rural communities.**
- **Equitable access to assets, such as land, credit, and savings, is necessary to capitalize on these opportunities.**

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**Philoanthro-Teens: The Next Generation Changing the World**

Meet the emerging generation of philanthropy in the United States.

Today’s youth could change the landscape of giving in their lifetime. They are global in scope, ready to get involved with international humanitarian causes, and identify with commercial brands that share the same aspirations.

Twin sister Jillian and Sydney Meditis are fourth graders in New Jersey. Jillian patents her school’s softball league and literary magazine; she plays soccer and basketball; Sydney is a dancer, plays guitar and violin, and loves to write and draw.

At an early age, Jillian and Sydney decided to help girls around the world and engage friends in their efforts. For their birthday, rather than presents, they asked people to donate to Girl Up, a global advocacy organization that helps American girls channel their energy and compassion to raise awareness and funds for United Nations programs that help girls in developing countries.

When Katherine learned from her mothers about their struggle for peace for many kids around the world, she wanted to help. Katherine started making gift certificates to raise $10 at a time—enough to purchase an anti-malarial bed net, deliver it to a family in Africa, and educate communities on its importance and use—through Nothing But Nets, a global, grassroots campaign to end malaria in Africa, where a child dies every 45 seconds from the disease.

From that starting point, Katherine and her family have raised more than $10,000 over four years to send life-saving mosquito net to families in Africa. Their hard work is helping thousands of children sleep safely.

The virtuous cycle

Girls may be the answer to some of the world’s most challenging problems. Research shows economically investing in girls’ development can create a virtuous circle that improves health and prosperity for entire communities.

Girls who are educated are healthier and have fewer children than their peers. As a result, they invest more of that money back into their families, which accelerates the benefits of the initial investment, improving the lives of a whole new generation.

Girls in the United States are creating their own virtuous cycles to create a better world. They influence their families and friends, and their purchasing power could help steer the decisions of major corporations. More than 1.6 million girls and young women, who have been surveyed said their daughters influence the family’s charitable giving. Fifty-seven percent of girls and young women said they have made purchases of some portion of the proceeds to charity. More than half (56 percent) said they have talked with others about causes in which they are interested.

With many consumer companies increasingly engaged in the youth market, this is marketing intelligence that will make many sit up and take notice.

Today’s emerging philanthro-teen is giving, collaborative, Ellison Franks, who want to turn into action. The organizations that are working to help resolve major problems around the world are finding ways to channel the same energy. Philanthro-teen represents the future of America, and they are already working to build a better world.

CALLED TULLER  
calledtuller@comcast.net

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**ANNOUNCING A NEW INDEPENDENT SUPPLEMENT BY MEDIAPLANET TO USA TODAY**

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**Girls are the backbone of rural economies**

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**SPECIAL THANKS**

**Aid for Africa**

Aid for Africa is a unique alliance of US-based charities and their African partners dedicated to helping children, families, and communities throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Aid for Africa’s Girls’ Education Fund helps these girls go to school and succeed in life.

Consider the facts in Africa:
- One out of every two women is illiterate.
- One in 16 women dies during pregnancy or childbirth.
- 12 million women live with HIV/AIDS.

But through education, facts can change:
- African girls who go to school and find work, spend 50% of their income on their families.
- Educated women have smaller, healthier families.
- A girl who stays in school is three times less likely to contract HIV/AIDS.

Learn more and how you can help at [aidforafrica.org](http://aidforafrica.org) and [girlsforafrica.org](http://girlsforafrica.org).

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**Girls are the backbone of rural economies**

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**SPECIAL THANKS**

"An Independent Supplement by Mediaplanet to USA Today"