

IMPACT



YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION

FALL 2020

Progress for Women and Girls.

You are ending Female Genital Mutilation in Benin. P2

You are helping build futures for refugees in Nigeria. P2

You are giving children in Honduras a better future. P3

You are giving hope to women in Colombia. P4

AFRICA:

You are ending Female Genital Mutilation in Benin



Agnès, left, and other village leaders play a key role in the success of the project.

Agnès is just one of 200 million girls and women around the world who have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Although the procedure happened many years ago, she still lives with the constant pain.

Progress is being made in Benin. The practice was officially outlawed almost 20 years ago and the national cutting rate is now at 13% and getting lower every day. But in rural areas, like Agnès' village, cutting is still a deeply rooted tradition.

As president of the Women's Association in her village, Agnès is a part of Cuso's Women Engaged for Human

Dignity in Northern Benin project and is focused on ending the practice through education.

For Agnès, education is the key to stopping the practice once and for all. She's already seeing the impact in her village. As more girls attend and remain in school, the number of voices questioning and opposing FGM continues to grow.

Thank you for creating real and lasting change for the women of Benin.



AFRICA:

You are helping build futures for refugees in Nigeria

In the last few years, tens of thousands of refugees have fled unrest in Cameroon for the relative safety of neighbouring Nigeria. Despite being welcomed with generosity and open arms, those refugees struggle with finding ways to support themselves.

In partnership with the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, Cuso International has implemented a life skill and entrepreneurship training program that has helped 500 refugees and their families start or grow successful small businesses.

Josephine is one of the women who participated in the program. She's a caterer and owns a small poultry farm. Through the Cuso

LATIN AMERICA:

You are giving children in Honduras a better future



Licidia, right, continues to grow her business with her new skills.

Licida grew up in poverty in a small village in central Honduras, an area that is surrounded by mountains and tropical forests.

Now a mother of four and grandmother of one, Licida carries with her the value of hard work and the importance of education. Like her father before her, she wants a better future for her own children. That's what led her to start a bread-baking business some years ago.

Last year, Licida learned about training being offered through Cuso and its partners. The program is focused on sharing business knowledge and skills with vulnerable people and, without any hesitation, Licida signed up.

The knowledge she gained led Licida to enter an entrepreneurship contest and secure seed money to purchase new kitchen equipment. That was just before the pandemic hit, but nothing would stop Licida. Thanks to you, she had the skills to quickly pivot her business and turn the pandemic into an opportunity for growth. With everyone in her community isolating at home, demand for bread has grown exponentially and Licida is thriving.

When women thrive, so do their children. All of Licida's children have done well in school and found good jobs. Her youngest daughter is currently finishing a degree in international trade at university.

Thanks to you, the future looks bright for Licidia and her family!

program, Josephine learned to be creative and innovative, and has built her skills around negotiation and decision-making. This new knowledge has led to more income for her and her family.

Another refugee, Hellen, had a successful fashion design business in Cameroon. Unfortunately, her business was burned down during the political crisis and she was forced to flee to Nigeria with her husband and children. Thanks to her new business skills and knowledge, Hellen will soon be celebrating the opening of her new shop.

Thanks to you, hundreds of refugees are building better futures.



Josephine working at her thriving poultry farm.

LATIN AMERICA:

You are giving hope to women in Colombia



Thanks to you, Lisangel has a secure job in Colombia.

This story about Colombia starts in Venezuela, where 24-year-old Lisangel grew up. Venezuela is a country in economic and social turmoil and, as a result, has very high rates of school dropout. Lisangel, who dreamed of being an accountant, left school after seventh grade and made her way to Colombia to earn income to send back to her family.

With limited education comes limited opportunity. Lisangel ended up in an unstable job working in an internet café. She was paid less than the statutory minimum wage and had no job security. Fortunately, a client in the café noticed her precarious work environment and told her about an employability program run by Cuso International. She immediately signed up and, along with 60 other Venezuelan migrants, gained valuable business technical and soft skills.

Lisangel now has a steady job and is able to provide for her aging parents and grandmother back in Venezuela. But she hasn't given up on her dream of being an accountant. She plans to apply for a scholarship through the company she works for and go back to school to earn her degree in accounting.

Thanks to you, women like Lisangel are thriving.

Your Impact by the Numbers

Thanks to your support, Cuso International has worked with over **15,000 volunteers** in more than **100 countries**, for nearly 60 years, to create opportunity, security and dignity for people in need—especially women and girls.

In the last year alone, you have helped:



16,498 staff, partners, volunteers and donors work together to make a difference.



66% of our beneficiaries, who are women and children. Thanks to you, we are able to help the most vulnerable members of society.



20 countries benefit from Cuso International programs.

We'd love to hear from you!



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Global Affairs Canada
Affaires mondiales Canada

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada

Cuso International is a registered charitable organization.
Canada: no. 81111 6813 RR0001 • United States: no. 42-1769535 4



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