"I changed my life when I started selling bras!"

When I explain what Free The Girls does, one of my favorite things is the moment the other person realizes the huge impact the simple act of giving away a gently-used bra has on an entire family on the other side of the globe.

“A bra? And she can change her life? That’s crazy!” It is crazy. It’s crazy how something so simple can be transformed into something extraordinary.

This thread runs through our entire organization. Small, simple, seemingly insignificant acts create a ripple effect that can be felt across multiple continents, affecting generations and entire communities. Even the women in our program can feel it. The wonder in their eyes when they’re told that people care about what they have to say is powerful. One woman in Uganda even told me, “Why would anyone care about me? I’m just a simple woman.” But no, she’s so much more than a simple woman – she is an extraordinary person who exemplifies hope and strength and is a beacon of light for others in her community.

We’ve had quite a busy year! This past year we launched Export Freedom, a campaign where a person can sponsor a box of bras for $50 and be given updates on their specific box from the time it is packed up to the moment it is put into the hands of a survivor in Africa or Central America. One box is half a month’s inventory for our women’s micro-enterprises – that’s quite a lot for a simple $50 donation. We also welcomed our very first college chapter, FTG @ UGA. Within their first year of operating, they have almost 500 members and have collected almost $7000 and almost 900 bras! That’s pretty extraordinary for a group of college students busy with classes, jobs, and life to make time to impact their world. And we had our very first graduation party in Maputo, Mozambique. Many may consider it a simple event but for the graduates who were dressed in caps and gowns, given certificates, flowers, and a celebratory cake, this will likely be the only grand ceremony they will ever participate in. And the smiles on their faces are exceptional.

We are living in tough times, but how reassuring to know that our simple acts of generosity have a lifelong, generational impact. So for all of you who have financially supported Free The Girls and the women over this past year, thank you so much. For all those who have donated bras, we are grateful. For the friends who shared us on social media, organized a Bra Drive or a fundraiser, introduced a friend to us, or even talked about us, it has made a difference. Your donations and your actions have made an extraordinary impact across the globe.

Thank you, obrigada, webale, and gracias!

Courtney Skiera-Vaughn
Executive Director

2,800 POSTCARDS HANDWRITTEN and sent to those who donated bras
192 CHURCH OR FAITH PARTNERS received our new prayer guide

96 BRA DRIVE FUNDRAISERS created through our website with $37,153 RAISED through these fundraisers across 5 COUNTRIES
183,000 BRAS COLLECTED LAST YEAR
34 NEW DROP-OFF LOCATIONS
2016
96
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF ALL DONATIONS GO DIRECTLY TO THE PROGRAM

SIMPLE TO EXTRAORDINARY
120 | EL SALVADOR
48 | UGANDA
685 | MOZAMBIQUE
139 CHURCH OR FAITH PARTNERS received our new prayer guide
919 BOXES PACKED UP
853 BOXES SHIPPED
12 PACKING PARTIES WITH 340 VOLUNTEERS
59 BOXES OF BRAS DONATED DOMESTICALLY to women’s correctional facilities, shelters, pregnancy assistance centers
500 MEMBERS OF OUR FIRST COLLEGE CHAPTER FTG @ UGA
27,040 SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORTERS REACHED
1 NEW CNN STORY

92% OF ALL DONATIONS GO DIRECTLY TO THE PROGRAM
OF ALL DONATIONS GO DIRECTLY TO THE PROGRAM

59 BOXES OF BRAS DONATED DOMESTICALLY
to women’s correctional facilities, shelters, pregnancy assistance centers

EXTRAORDINARY

OF ALL DONATIONS GO DIRECTLY TO THE PROGRAM
Before I was dependent on other people, and now I finally feel independent.

13 Graduates at 1 Graduation Party
6 are currently pursuing adult education and are eligible for education reimbursement
1 in University studying Journalism
13 Currently in the Mozambique Program
7 New Women in our Program
1 Inheritance Project Grant given
4 Women built a house or purchased land

Export Freedom Mozambique
9 People Sponsored 12 Boxes

Progress out of Poverty Score
index measuring where household is living in relation to poverty line
Average increase of 65% for our graduates
98% likelihood of new women entering into the program to be living off of less than $2.50 a day

7 New Women in our Program
4 Women built a house or purchased land

AVERAGE INCREASE OF 65% FOR OUR GRADUATES
98% LIKELIHOOD OF NEW WOMEN ENTERING INTO THE PROGRAM TO BE LIVING OFF OF LESS THAN $2.50 A DAY

PROGRESS OUT OF POVERTY SCORE
index measuring where household is living in relation to poverty line
2 WOMEN WORKING PART-TIME IN THE STORE WHILE ALSO STUDYING.

1 WOMAN IN UNIVERSITY STUDYING ACCOUNTING

1 WOMAN BECOMING CERTIFIED IN HAIRDRESSING AND COSMETOLOGY

3 NEW WOMEN FULL-TIME IN THE STORE

4 WOMEN WHO RUN THEIR OWN STORES NOW THAT BUY WHOLESALE

8 BOXES OF BRAS DONATED TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND SAFE-HOUSES IN UGANDA

“Freedom is to live at peace and be able to achieve what I want to achieve.”

EXPORT FREEDOM UGANDA

13 PEOPLE SPONSORED 23 BOXES
"I'd be dead or in a worse situation. I wouldn't be here, and I wouldn't have recovered."