

FREE THE GIRLS

im- pact

[FREETHEGIRLS.ORG](https://freethegirls.org)

[INFO@FREETHEGIRLS.ORG](mailto:info@freethegirls.org)



2021

INTERNATIONAL
IMPACT REPORT



overview

HELLO THERE!

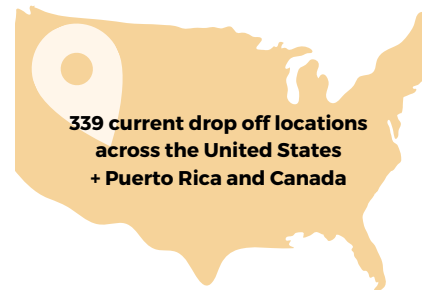
Free The Girls serves in the reintegration sector of victim-services for sex trafficking survivors. We help answer the question, "*What next?*" With up to 80% of trafficking survivors at risk of being re-exploited simply due to lack of job opportunities, we recognize the need for a tangible, sustainable way for "survivors to survive." Our solution is functional and feasible and allows independence and community inclusion, in a way that is both dignifying and informed by their history of being trafficked.

FTG's bra-selling program allows women to open their own micro-enterprises by selling a commodity that will earn a livable wage and that offers the safety of selling to other women. We partner with existing organizations in-country who are involved in the acute stages of assisting women out of commercial sex due to trafficking, and we work with both them and the women to tailor a program that is culturally relevant and crafted to provide the tools the women need to empower themselves to be truly free - *as defined by them.*

Since 2010 individuals, groups, companies, and brands have become involved in fighting sex trafficking in various ways through Free The Girls. Over 20,000 supporters from 60+ countries have participated by donating bras, bucks, or inventory; serving as drop-off locations; sponsoring events or shipments, and collaborating in ways as unique as they are. Whether it's participation in the circular economy, corporate social responsibility, or planned inventory reduction Free The Girls can offer a solution.



2021 the numbers



Inventory

194,620 gently used bras donated

29,232 new bras w/tags donated

12,202 new swimwear w/tags donated



Shipments

203,120 bras sent to **Mozambique** (a 40ft and 20ft container)

119,048 bras + **2800** units new swimwear sent to **El Salvador** (2-20ft containers)



Women in FTG

Programs per Location



Mozambique - 28 & room to grow



El Salvador - 17 incl. 3 new grads



Costa Rica - 16 incl. 5 new grads

To date over 1.75 million bras have been collected and shipped!

Mozambique

Our flagship program, the bra-selling initiative in Maputo, Mozambique has been operating for nearly 12 years. This is our largest program, accommodating up to 32 women and their micro-enterprises. Nearly all the women in the program were trafficked into commercial sex as children and due to low literacy, social stigma, and few job skills, they continued to be caught in a cycle of exploitation due to the need for survival. This program has graduated 27 women in the past 5 years and is on track to have over 90% of graduates owning property! All children of women in the program are enrolled in school (even during the pandemic!), and a quarter of the women are enrolled in adult education themselves. Current bras sales produce a wage of \$150-\$250 USD per month though high-sellers can earn up to \$400. (In 2018 livable wage for a family was defined as \$220.) On average, there is a 27.4% increase in mobility out of poverty as estimated by the PPI (Probability of Poverty Index, 2019) which dramatically lessens their vulnerability towards re-exploitation as well as their children's vulnerability towards trafficking or exploitation.

El Salvador

Because of our amazing partners at Mission to El Salvador, the program in San Salvador is our most robust. They offer a wide variety of resources for their various clients and we assist when needed in providing counseling, adult education, and literacy classes. In addition to the bra-selling program, FTG provides a job skills curriculum to both prepare the women to graduate and navigate the work force upon graduation. Gang presence is a reality for this population, so we provide scholarships for private education for the children of the women to help ensure the safety of the entire family unit. Pre-pandemic, a woman needed only to sell 3 or 4 bras a day to make a livable wage, and the resourcefulness and confidence of the women shone through the 2020 lockdown with women selling online or pivoting to open secondary businesses.

moz + el salvador

IN-COUNTRY PROGRAMMING



Costa Rica

We recently had our first graduation in San Jose, with 5 women having now completed the bra-selling program. With prostitution being legal in Costa Rica, we are often dealing with women who are second or third generation trafficking victims. These women are not in the government-regulated brothels which have certain security measures, but rather street-based prostitution, which is often violent. Costa Rica requires the import of new bras, which is ultimately beneficial for the bra sellers as they navigate a wealthier economy. We also offer English classes and focus on social support due to higher levels of isolation. Our program has doubled in the past six months, currently supporting 11 women, including our oldest participant yet at 63 years old!

Mexico

We are so excited about our newest location, FTG México! We have spent the past year setting up FTG Mexico as a registered non-profit and are in the final stages of completing that process. Due to a combination of import laws and an established culture of donating used clothing, this is our only bra-selling initiative that collects bras in-country. We have partnered with one of the few safe-houses in Mexico that works with sex trafficking survivors to assist in the reintegration process as the women and their children begin a new phase of life post-exploitation. This program in Puebla is estimated to be fully functional by mid-2022.

costa rica + mexico

IN-COUNTRY PROGRAMMING



FTG offers customized, culturally informed programs serving women in a variety of circumstances. We work with our partners to design reintegration services that take into account the cultures, languages, trauma, trafficking situations, and life circumstances of the women.

We know that the bra selling program impacts not just the women themselves, but radiates out to positively impact their children and families as well. For the sixth year in a row all the eligible children of the women across our programs are enrolled in school. Generational poverty is being broken! An example of how we are breaking this cycle of poverty is the story of Ofelia, one of the original Mozambiquan graduates. She purchased land through a matching grant as part of our Inheritance Project. Ofelia purchased one plot in her own name and, in 2021, purchased *another* in the name of her daughter!

Through the economic empowerment provided by bras, we are able to help survivors reintegrate into their communities through education, housing, food, and security. Pre-pandemic, a woman needed to sell 3-4 bras per day to make a livable wage in El Salvador, but the pandemic has created a new reality. And livable wage as defined by economists wouldn't be sufficient for a woman in Costa Rica where housing insecurity is a reality. Livable wage doesn't take into account having to move from renting a room by the night, as is typical in Costa Rica, to starting fresh, and saving enough to lease housing with a refrigerator and the ability to buy a week's worth of groceries rather than a meal at a time.

Throughout our history, it's been an increase in the number of donated bras from generous individuals and companies that has allowed us to both sustain and expand our programs. Simply put, more bras allow us to serve more women and higher quality name-brand bras are highly valued for the boost they provide to the women's micro enterprises and their economic empowerment.

thank
you.

