

## Project: Esperanza

**Plan:** The goal of Project: Esperanza is to get groups and communities of women in Nigeria and Venezuela to rise out of poverty. Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in Africa and Venezuela is one of the poorest countries in South America. According to the World Bank Group, “Nigeria has the largest poor population in Sub-Saharan Africa (79 million extreme poor). It accounts for around 20% of the total poor in the region and is one of the economies with the largest number of extreme poor in the world.”

Additionally, according to World Atlas, “Venezuela is the poorest country in South America, with a per capita GDP of only \$3,374. Unfortunately, the country is currently amidst a major socio economic crisis. The crisis has moved beyond unemployment and poor economic performance is now affecting the quality of life of all citizens on even a basic level. The UN estimates that 94% of Venezuelans are currently living in poverty.” There are many reasons why people are in poverty in African countries and in Latin American countries. Two of the main reasons are government issues/corruption and a lack of education.

Roughly 10.5 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 in Nigeria are not in school. One in every five of the world’s out-of-school children is in Nigeria (“Education”). There have also been lots of political and social conflicts that have been occurring in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. Additionally, Venezuela is going through its own socio economic issue that is affecting people all over the country. In 2016 there were over 600,000 people, 15 years of age and older, who were illiterate in Venezuela (“Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)”). While education and government issues seem irrelevant they actually go hand-in-hand with the poverty crisis that these countries are facing. There is no debate that there is a connection between these countries having the highest rate of poverty while also being countries with high rates of illiteracy and corruption. Without education people are not able to get well paying jobs. Without knowing how to read, write, think, and properly communicate, finding a good paying job can be especially hard. With government corruption, many different issues start to occur with the financial system of the country, availability of jobs, unequal distribution of wealth, scandals, and so much more. According to the Borgen Project, “As has been proven multiple times, corrupt or destabilized governments often prove disastrous for the economies of the countries they oversee, which can only have a negative effect on the poverty level in the country.”

The best thing to do to reduce the rate of poverty in these countries is to educate and to help people achieve financial independence. But, more specifically, to help the women. Women are critical in the reduction of poverty. Women bear children and if the mother is educated, they are more likely to send their children to school or to educate them themselves. Additionally, children tend to stay close to their mothers so if the mother has financial independence then they are more likely to teach their children how to achieve the same level of independence. Mothers are crucial in the plan to help reduce poverty in these countries because they are extremely influential in teaching their children, which sets up the next generation to not fall into poverty. They are influential

in teaching the other mother's/ women around them, which spreads the word, and overall they benefit and uplift the economy in any country.

Project: Esperanza plans to help these countries reduce poverty. The goal is to educate groups of women and to help them to become financially independent. Project: Esperanza is a non-profit organization that will open up a project building in Nigeria and in Venezuela. This building will serve as a school and a creative workspace for the people. We will teach the women financial literacy, how to create art, reading, writing, math, and more. We will also have a section in both buildings where the mother's can leave their kids. Almost like a daycare. This will drastically help to reduce the illiteracy rate. However we cannot try to tackle one side of the problem without addressing the other. After all, one of the main reasons why many people in both countries do not attend school is because they have to work and provide for their families. Project: Esperanza wants to tackle both parts of the problem. The women who attend the school and who participate in the art classes/workshops will have the opportunity to sell their art to countries all over the world through our resources and help. The women in these countries have beautiful cultures, ideas, and stories; they just need an opportunity. That is where Project: Esperanza shines. We can give these women the resources and the opportunity to better themselves. We will set up a business here in America where we get the artwork from these women and we sell it here on our website, and in partnership with other businesses. All proceeds will go back to the women who create the art work and we will even open it up so that people can order commissions from these women.

The donations that we receive for the organization will go towards their education, utilities of the business, art supplies, shipping, running water, electricity, AC and heating, and food for the women. We will give them a chance to be educated and to make more money doing something rewarding and fulfilling, than they would skipping school and having to work for less than a dollar a day. It is all about creating opportunities for these women, and creating a safe building where both problems of poverty -education and government corruption- can be helped is providing them with that opportunity.

While we are not solving the government issues of these countries, we are educating the people. Regardless of what the government does, if the people stand up and demand change, change will come. We cannot overthrow the government, but we can educate the people of the country to know that their voice matters and that they can choose to not stand for the injustice and corruption of these government officials. Additionally, we are taking these women from having to rely on the government for financial aid, and education, and we are giving them an outside source that can give them the tools to take their future, finances, and education into their own hands.

To conclude Project: Esperanza consists of two parts. An educational system based in Nigeria and Venezuela and a business based in America.

What the educational system provides:

- A learning building in Venezuela and Nigeria

- Clean running water, food, resources, supplies to the women
- An area of recreation for their children
- Education for the women and their children
- A space for the women to develop and to learn about art
- A safe building for connections and to reach out and support the communities that the buildings are located in
- Reach-out opportunities to connect the two groups women in both buildings
- Mental Health Officials to assist with the mental health needs of the women at the center
- A safe space for the women and their children to go to

What the American business provides:

- A way for the women to sell their art work
- A chance for financial independence
- A safe way to provide for their families
- An escape from having to rely on the government for financial support
- A honest, and supportive business that puts the money in the hands of the women that created the artwork

There are many organizations that are in place that teach women, let them sell the work that they created - whether that is jewelry or art-, and there are groups and organizations that work to create safe spaces for the women in these countries. However, more than often these organizations only tackle one part of the problem. As mentioned above, the two main causes of poverty in these countries are a lack of education and government corruption so both of these problems need to be fixed to leave a lasting solution.

What Project: Esperanza wants to do is combine the best parts of all these organizations together to create a solution that will tackle as many of the problems as possible. For example, the educational building will provide education but it will also provide fresh water, a daycare, resources, food, and supplies so that the women won't have to rely on the government for aid. The educational center will also do community outreach, this will uplift the areas that the women live in so that they and their children can live better lives. It is proven that when women do better, children often follow suit. All of these ideas and programs put together, will create generational change.

**Main Objective:** To create a building where women can go to get free education. They will learn a variety of things to not only know how to read, write, think and do math, but they will also learn about the government, history, the world and more. We will also have an art department/ workshop that will teach the women how to create art, and it will give the women a safe space to be creative. We will then take the art that they created and sell it to countries all over the world. The money will go directly to the women that created the work, and all donations to the organization will fund the education, and resources for the building and for the women.

**Main Target Group:** The women of Nigeria and Venezuela.

**Selling Point/ Target Market:** We would market ourselves to receive donations as a company that educates women in Nigeria and Venezuela while also raising awareness to the effect that poverty has on the people in these countries. Additionally, we will market the women's jewelry by making it known that we are a non-profit organization and that all of the money donated goes into the education building and the women who created the artwork. We will open up the website so that people can order commission and we will treat it like a regular e-commerce business. We will have a business plan, marketing strategy, and a financial plan to make sure that this has the best chance of success possible. We will treat the education building like an actual school as well. We will have resources and opportunities for the women that attend there, and we will have activities for their children as well. The two different schools will be connected by the business and the women from each school will be able to reach out to each other for advice, help, encouragement, and overall empowerment.

## Works Cited

- Chrol, Jenna. "5 Youth Art Programs Alleviating Poverty Worldwide." *The Borgen Project*, Borgen Project, 30 Oct. 2019, [borgenproject.org/5-youth-art-programs-alleviating-poverty/](https://borgenproject.org/5-youth-art-programs-alleviating-poverty/).
- "Education." *Related UNICEF Websites*, 2 Mar. 2021, [www.unicef.org/nigeria/education#:~:text=Even%20though%20primary%20education%20is,months%20receive%20early%20childhood%20education.](https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education#:~:text=Even%20though%20primary%20education%20is,months%20receive%20early%20childhood%20education.)
- Nag, Oishimaya Sen. "The Poorest Countries In South America." *WorldAtlas*, WorldAtlas, 22 Oct. 2019, [www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-poorest-countries-in-south-america.html](http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-poorest-countries-in-south-america.html).
- SCHOCH, MARTA, and CHRISTOPH LAKNER. "African Countries Show Mixed Progress towards Poverty Reduction and Half of Them Have an Extreme Poverty Rate above 35%." *World Bank Blogs*, 22 Dec. 2020, [blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/african-countries-show-mixed-progress-towards-poverty-reduction-and-half-them-have-extreme#:~:text=Nigeria%20has%20the%20largest%20poor,extreme%20poor%20in%20the%20world.](https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/african-countries-show-mixed-progress-towards-poverty-reduction-and-half-them-have-extreme#:~:text=Nigeria%20has%20the%20largest%20poor,extreme%20poor%20in%20the%20world.)
- "Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)." *UNESCO UIS*, 12 Apr. 2017, [uis.unesco.org/en/country/ve](http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ve).