

## Investing in Girls and Women is Critical

A host of studies have shown conclusively that increased female access to education generates far-reaching benefits, what UNICEF calls a “multiplier effect.” According to UNICEF in its 2005 report on the Millennium Development Goal to achieve universal primary education, “Educated girls are likely to marry later and have fewer children, who in turn will be more likely to survive and be better nourished and educated. Educated girls are also more productive at home and better paid in the workplace, and more able to participate in social, economic and political decision-making.”

If given the opportunity through education and economic empowerment, women become important agents of change in their community, setting off a domino effect of social development. Yet women continue to face gaps that cause them to consistently trail behind men in formal labor force participation, access to credit, entrepreneurship, school enrollment, income levels and ownership rights. As the World Bank stated in its 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, “This is neither fair nor smart economics: Under-investing in women limits development, slows down poverty reduction and stunts economic growth.”



Gender equality is therefore not only a goal in itself, but it is also a prerequisite for achieving all global development goals. An essential part of TRF’s work is increasing awareness about the importance of helping women in Latin America and the Caribbean reach their full potential, and mobilizing resources for programs addressing women’s empowerment through education, health and/or job training.

“We have found that support tends to be more heavily focused on Africa and Asia,” said TRF Executive Director Marcela Lopez-Macedonio. “This points to the lack of awareness about the prevailing need for initiatives that empower girls and women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Supporting the development of girls and women is a crucial step toward eliminating poverty in the region.”

In 2013 alone, TRF supported thousands of at-risk girls and women in **24** countries through projects addressing the following development issues, among others:

### Estimated Female Beneficiaries by TRF Program Area:

- Capacity Building: **10,150**
- Potable Water and Sanitation: **30,990**
- Healthcare and HIV/AIDS: **60,148**
- Financial Inclusion: **14,343**
- Education and Job Skills: **60,704**
- Women’s Empowerment: **15,986**

### Countries with TRF Projects Supporting Girls and Women:

Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, & Venezuela

**Learn more** about TRF’s work to empower girls and women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Call us at (212) 675-6170 or **send us an email** to find out how you can partner with us to create lasting change.