

Photographers Without Borders – Blog: Power of Empowerment

When most people think of providing aid to those in need, we often think in terms of large groups of people coming together to give tangible gifts, such as money, food, shelter, clothes, or even a job. But an undervalued kind of aid, one that can be the most rewarding long term, is the opportunity to be empowered.

Empowerment projects or programs provide individuals, families, and communities with the tools to achieve success, stability, and safety. Empowerment can come through education, like classes that teach people how to use computers, or recreation, as having fun and connecting with other people can build confidence. We've worked with many organizations that use the foundation of empowerment to help, but we are going to showcase four awesome organizations that will be featured in our upcoming magazine (out August 1st!) to show you how diverse and rewarding empowerment can be.

Life Start Foundation

The Life Start Foundation in Vietnam supports efforts that provide a fair trade shop, traditional painting, and lantern making classes. The foundation focuses on helping disadvantaged Vietnamese people and their families to become self-sufficient, especially through their The Life Start Foundation Workshop project. The workshop is designed to provide an outlet for the creation of fine arts and crafts. The success of the workshop has empowered its members to earn a sustainable income and gain a sense of independence. It was established to provide opportunities for those living in difficult situations, particularly adults with disabilities. Initiatives such as training and capacity building, together with a supportive community network, ensures both transformative change and self-sufficiency.

El Porvenir

El Porvenir has worked side-by-side with rural families in Nicaragua to construct wells, latrines, and village washing facilities, as well as support reforestation projects, since 1990. The organization addresses the lack of clean drinking water in rural communities and responds to the determination of the local people to improve their living standards. For projects, El Porvenir provides the technical expertise and training, lends tools, and funds the materials needed to complete the projects, while it's up to the village residents to elect their own project committee, provide all labor on a volunteer basis, and take responsibility for the long-term maintenance of all projects.

Give and Surf

Give and Surf directly serves a population of three hundred indigenous Ngobe community members living in the communities of Bahia Roja and Bahia Honda on Bastimentos Island. They aim to provide substantive, hands-on, real world assistance and programs to a hundred and thirty children ages three to sixteen. Give and Surf's Surf Outreach Mentorship Program (SOMP) is new, but works to empower the youth of Bahia Roja through increased understanding and appreciation of the ocean, as well as focus on character development, academics, and ESL. Students are given the opportunity to learn surfing skills within the framework of educational and character support, growing their mental and human capacities as responsible members of society.

Shiksha Alok

Shiksha Alok, meaning Education Enlightenment, was founded in 2013 by New Delhi native Shalini Srivastava, provides the women in the tiny village of Nathuakhan an opportunity to do something more than household work for the entire family. The organization gave computer classes to the women that focus on basic skills like keyboard short cuts, awareness of the internet, how hard drives work, and how to market the food they produce independently.