**The Issue**

Women in Africa are driving local generating activities through informal, small-scale entrepreneurship to keep their families and communities afloat, despite facing intergenerational poverty. However, independent entrepreneurship is inherently risky, and even once a woman has become an independent small business owner, there are still significant barriers to overcome to take her business to a level that provides her with sustainable and dignified work.

**How we work to achieve young women’s economic empowerment:**

Creating and nurturing young women’s economic solidarity networks

Batonga runs a Young Women’s Business Circle (YWBC) program that provides services at the community level, vulnerable young women can disrupt the systems and practices that isolate them socially and economically and keep them trapped in the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

**How we work to achieve young women’s economic empowerment:**

Creating and nurturing young women’s economic solidarity networks

Batonga’s Young Women’s Business Circle (YWBC) program connects women 18-30 years old with a trusted business mentor, a group of 10 to 25 of their peers to build their practical business and financial skills and give them access to small business seed funding to launch their businesses. Together, young women in their Circles can pool risk and resources to collectively lessen the burdens of entrepreneurship and provide one another with professional, emotional, and financial solidarity as they launch their businesses and careers.

**Our Impact**

Batonga runs 50 Young Women’s Business Circles (YWBCs) serving just over 1,100 young women aged 18-30 in Benin, supporting them in the acquisition of financial literacy and business skills, as well as providing them with mentoring and tailored accompaniment as they launch and grow their businesses.

**Our Lessons Learned**

**Creating and nurturing young women’s economic solidarity networks**

Batonga is working to develop formal relationships with local business communities to help communities, unprompted, is positively impacted by the YWBC mentees. Batonga plans to launch vocational training programs in traditionally male-dominated fields in 2021.

Since 2017, Batonga has been working in tandem with rural women to help communities, unprompted, is positively impacted by the YWBC mentees. Batonga plans to launch vocational training programs in traditionally male-dominated fields in 2021.

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