

What You Can Do

You are already part of the solution as you educate yourself about extreme poverty around the world, and the situation in Uganda. If you choose to purchase a necklace, you are also assisting a Ugandan woman to feed, clothe and educate her family for a better future. But over a billion people, one out of every five on the planet, live on less than a dollar a day so the solutions must also be bold and systemic.

There are many ways to get involved. While BeadforLife works by employing one woman at a time, we recognize that many of the causes of poverty are caused by structural inequities – policies or practices that make it incredibly difficult for people to change their circumstance without outside opportunities. Because of this, we strongly encourage people, both Ugandans and North Americans, to get involved in ways that help address some of the deepest roots of poverty. Below are many ways to get involved, ranging from simple actions to long-term campaigns. All of them need many people and voices working together for a better future.

Please join us!

1. Get More Involved with BeadforLife

Host a party, hold a community event, buy gifts for friends, sponsor a student for vocational training, or fund community development projects in Uganda. All are great ways to partner with Ugandans who are working to lift themselves out of poverty. Whatever your level of involvement with BFL, we encourage you to take the next step as a member of the Bead Circle working to eradicate poverty one bead at a time. www.beadforlife.org

2. Educate Yourself and Others

Learn more about extreme poverty and what it will take to end it in our lifetimes. The world has a clear roadmap to halve the number of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015 – what is lacking is the political will to implement it.

- Read *The End of Poverty* by Jeff Sachs and find out more about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to combat extreme poverty at www.un.org/millenniumgoals
- Host a dinner party or community event to educate others about extreme poverty. Listen to people's fears about poverty then brainstorm ways to be involved.
- Present information about the fight against poverty at a local school.

3. Buy Fair Trade.

Make your dollars count by purchasing items for yourself or others that also benefit impoverished people worldwide. Fair Trade is a certification meaning that the product you buy was made in an ecologically sustainable way, and fair wages were paid to the producer. You can find Fair Trade items at:

- **eConscious.org** – "Giving, it's the new getting."
- **FairTradeFederation.org** – A listing of organizations selling Fair Trade products
- **WorldofGood.com** – Online catalogue of ethically sourced products from around the world.

4. Support the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are 8 concrete goals to dramatically fight extreme poverty (defined as living on less than \$1/day) by 2015. The goals and strategy to achieve them are based on research and evidence about what really works to end poverty.

All that is missing is the critical awareness about the MDGs and the global political will to support and fund the programs necessary for them to succeed.

- To find out more about the MDGs, visit www.un.org/millenniumgoals.
- To get involved in support of the MDGs, go to www.millenniumcampaign.org

5. Education for All

Research shows that educating children, particularly girls, is one of the best ways to fight poverty. Every additional year of education a girl receives means her children are likely to be healthier and her household income higher – investing in girls' education can create positive development trends for an entire country. Yet many countries struggle to fund primary education and for many poor families, the high fees for tuition, books, or uniforms make education beyond their reach.

Supporting access to Universal Primary Education (UPE) for every country in the world would have a dramatic impact on poverty and the chance for young people to get a basic education and not be trapped in illiteracy forever.

- See the website of Results (results.org) for their Global Education for All Initiative.
- You can also support young people's vocational education through BeadforLife. Vocational training is one of the surest ways out of poverty. Students learn practical skills that lead to living wage jobs. www.beadforlife.org/vocation.htm

6. Promote Fair Trade with Africa

Farming and agriculture is the primary industry in Uganda supporting 80% of the population. Many farmers grow export crops like coffee or cotton as well as subsistence crops. But they face an uneven playing field selling to international markets because of agricultural subsidies that wealthy nations provide to their own farmers.

African cotton farmers grow their crop for a third the cost, but struggle to compete with US agribusinesses who receive a \$230 subsidy for each acre of cotton grown. Cotton subsidies were meant for small farms, but 75% go to corporate farms in the top 10% of producers. Eliminating these and other unfair agricultural subsidies would help both farmers in Uganda and small farmers in the US who would be better able to compete with the huge corporate farms.

- Contact your congressperson and share your support for fair trade practices without unfair agricultural subsidies.
- Learn more at Oxfam America's website by searching for fair trade. www.oxfamamerica.org

7. Think Big and Believe It Can Be Done

Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to remember that solving large international problems like extreme poverty is complicated, will take a huge effort, won't happen overnight, and *is possible*. This is a time when we need bold initiatives, creative thinking, and citizen action to make a difference.

It is through ventures like BeadforLife and thousands of other small grassroots projects that people's hearts and minds are inspired, we feel our collective power, and true change actually takes place.

Think big and believe it can be done.