

St. Martha Home

Psychosocial support and new opportunities for young forcibly displaced women in Douala.

A photographic visit

 **alboan**

ONG JESUITA FUNDAZIOA

Since the start of the crisis in 2016 in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, over 712,000 people have been forcibly displaced along the country –and more than 4,000 civilians killed. As a result, at least 2.2 million people were in need of humanitarian aid in 2021.

Forcibly displaced women often face a lack of resources and support, therefore, becoming more vulnerable to gender-based violence, as well as economic and sexual exploitation.

Aiming to contribute to overcome the atrocities lived after fleeing their communities, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) offered in 2021 a new home and an array of psychosocial and livelihood activities for twenty young displaced young women at St. Martha's Home in Douala, Cameroon.

The program also aims to contribute to the girls and women's educative, social and economic reintegration – with the support of JRS USA and Alboan, in collaboration with Caritas and the Jesuit Parish Our Lady of the Annunciation in Bonamoussadi.



6 girls returned to school.



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Before I heard of JRS, I worked with a lady in a restaurant. She overworked me and didn't give me my wages. I learnt she was giving my wages to my mother according to their agreement. I felt as if my mother had sold me. It was very painful.

Whenever I complained that I did not want to continue working with that lady, my mother would scold me. I asked the woman to pay me, and she said no. I left and went to stay with my uncle.

I knew I would not go to school again.

I heard about St. Martha, and I decided to come to gain confidence in myself, start a new life and go back to school. Nowadays I am going to school. I found hope.

Elina



The rest are learning new professional skills in different training centers.







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I had lost hope during the crisis because I saw many of my friends killed. I lived in fear. I was almost raped when I was heavily pregnant. Thanks God, I escaped.

Nevertheless, the shock precipitated a premature delivery, and I lost my twin babies. I have lived with that pain and I used to cry almost every day.

In St. Martha, I have found a home and I am very happy with my training in Catering and Hotel Management.

I have always wanted to be able to cook good food. My dream is to sell in a restaurant one-day.

Shekina



Safes spaces as St. Martha Home allow women and girls to heal and transform oppression and trauma from the past in empowerment, healing, resilience and new opportunities of future.

Discover the daily life at St. Martha Home.







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Due to the situation in which I found myself during the anglophone crisis, I could even date three men. Not because I liked it but for survival, because I wanted to make a living for my younger sister and myself.

I knew it was wrong, and I could get sick. So, when I heard about JRS's program, I did not hesitate to join the group.

I am happy and grateful for the new life and hope ahead.

I also want to live a positive life to be an example to others.

Nelly



Images: JRS / Irene Galera
Names have been changed to protect privacy.

