Impact Stories

Voices from the Field

North Macedonia

Elena Kochoska is an advocate for persons with disabilities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and works at the local organization, Polio Plus. She participated in training and mentoring sessions on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)—analyzing a budget to ensure women’s needs are met—organized by UN Women and supported by Switzerland. “I try to use gender-responsive budgeting in my everyday work now to meet the needs of women and men with disabilities,” says Kochoska.

“[The] political participation of persons with disabilities [is] critical for establishing a democratic and just society.”

– Elena Kochoska

Bangladesh

Rubia Aktar, 28, migrated to Abu Dhabi in 2011, but quickly found that the job was not as promised. “I came back to Bangladesh empty-handed; I had no savings and didn’t know what to do next.” Through the UN Women programme “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh, which is supported by Switzerland, Aktar accessed economic reintegration training and a small grant. With this, she and four other women are able to earn a steady income through their small tailoring shop, which they hope to expand in the future.

“[The programme] has had a positive influence on social cohesion, because women now meet during the training sessions in the fields.”

– Rubia Aktar

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Above left: © UN Women Europe and Central Asia/Rena Effendi; above right: UN Women/Tapati Saha

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Serbia

“In my community, most people believe that women are not as logical as men are. This tells you that some jobs are just not for you.”

—Ileana Crudu

For three years now, Gentiana Sinjari has been working hard to transform a piece of land into an agritourism business to benefit the people of Shkallnu, a rural area near the city of Durres. In order to install an irrigation system, Sinjari was able to benefit from a government grant scheme that was put in place as a result of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). Local and national government personnel in Albania received training on GRB as part of UN Women’s regional programme, which was possible as a result of support from Switzerland.

Albania

“It was impossible for me to build [a necessary irrigation system] by myself.”

—Gentiana Sinjari

“I am proud if people say that I code like a girl because I know I can rock the world with my code!”

—Ileana Crudu

“In my community, most people believe that women are not as logical as men are. This tells you that some jobs are just not for you.” Ileana Crudu, now 19, participated in a summer camp with GirlsGoIT, a UN Women programme supported by Switzerland that teaches young women ICT skills. Crudu is now a relentless ambassador encouraging girls to study technology and continues to advocate for girls’ and women’s participation in the ICT sector. She now studies Artificial Intelligence in the Netherlands, and is a mentor at the camp in the summer. “Now I want to contribute to the advancement of other Moldovan girls in the field of ICT,” says Crudu about her experience.