Palestine

Growing up in Gaza Strip studying law, Ayah al-Wakil understood how the Shari’a courts did not always reflect the interests of women. “I became determined to improve women’s lives in my hometown.” In 2015, al-Wakil attended a training with the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, supported by UN Women. “The training changed my life—I learned every essential skill during that year, from filing cases to arguing in court to defend women’s rights, skills that I still use every day,” she says.

Timor-Leste

Rosalina Moniz, an outspoken women in her 50s from western Timor-Leste, is the survivor of years of domestic violence. She often felt as if there was no way out. Rosalina has been living on her own for several years now, and used a micro-grant and training from UN Women and its partner organizations to start numerous small businesses from brick-making to food conservation. One such project was a garden started with nine other people. “We still talk about other things we can do as a group to earn money, and the more people join, the more ideas we have.”

“If you find yourself in a place that allows you to make a real difference in other women’s lives, obstacles will not stop you anymore.”

– Ayah al-Wakil

“When you are going through something in your marriage, you think about the kids and how you are going to feed the kids if you don’t have [your husband] anymore.”

– Rosalina Moniz
In the Turkana county of northern Kenya, Paulina Epung'u walks for miles and queues at water points on a regular basis. “This is my routine three times a day,” says Epung'u, aged 58 and a mother of seven. “I have to fetch water for our use and for the goats and sheep too, as they are too weak to walk.” Due to gendered inequalities, women like Epung'u bear the brunt of the impact of the ongoing drought in the region. UN Women is working with Kenya’s National Drought Management Authority to ensure that all interventions to address the drought take into considerations the unique vulnerabilities of women and girls.

“A lot of people had to start again [...] but we are keeping the faith, the women are upbeat.”
— Jennifer Pascal

“Whenever the [water] pump breaks down, we have to dig along the dry river beds for remnants of light showers”
— Paulina Epung’u

“Livelihoods were lost! The income we make from the farm, that is how the women feed their families and send their children to school,” says Jennifer Pascal, whose farm was destroyed when Hurricane Maria tore through Dominica. UN Women has been supporting women farmers’ groups to get labour and equipment to bring their farms back into production. Pascal explained that what the women of Dominica want is assistance to get back on their feet and work, not handouts. “We are asking for short crop seeds to get back on our feet,” she said.

Dominica

Kenya

Photos: above left: UN Women/Justin King; above right: UN Women/Kennedy Okoth