



VOICES FROM THE FIELD



EUROPEAN UNION

Turkey



“I wanted to be a better father. When I joined the programme, I learned a lot about involved fatherhood. I learned about empathy, respect for diversity, developing positive behaviour in children, communication barriers, non-discrimination between girls and boys, and developing more egalitarian attitudes at home.”

- Osman Doğan

Osman Doğan is a schoolteacher in Bursa, a north-western province of Turkey. He has a 12-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old son. Together with his wife and children, they have been locked down at home during the COVID-19 pandemic for almost three months. However, thanks to his engagement as a father and experience as a fatherhood trainer within the Father Support Programme, implemented by Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), and supported by the EU-UN Women regional programme on ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey, “Implementing Norms, Changing Minds,” the family coped with the situation through communication and sharing household responsibilities.

The Philippines



“Women need correct information about their rights and the risks, before they migrate. The returnees, especially those who have been abused, need re-integration support to pick up the pieces, not only economic opportunities.”

- Edna Valdez

Edna Valdez, 58, was elected as the President of Bannuar Ti La Union, an organization that works for migrant women’s rights in the La Union province of Philippines, shortly after she joined as a member in 2000. Bannuar works closely with UN Women’s partner, Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA), as part of a European Union-funded migration project, active in the Philippines, Mexico and Moldova. Ms. Valdez works at the Bannuar office at San Fernando City La Union, answering walk-in queries from migrant women and their families and referring them to relevant government agencies for support and services. She also conducts trainings about migrant workers’ rights, risks of illegal recruitment and trafficking, and access to services.

Nigeria



“If I am on the receiving end of violence, should I not be included in the discussions to end it? Women are leaders; we are peacemakers”

— *Hajiya Amina Ahmed*

Hajiya Amina Ahmed is a peacebuilder from Nigeria who works across religious and ethnic lines to empower women and build peaceful communities. She has been working in peace and conflict transformation since the 2001 ethno-religious crisis in Jos (Plateau State). Her work involves countering violence against women and girls, and promoting their involvement in development processes. Many areas in Plateau State are still polarized and divided along ethnic and religious lines, and tensions in some communities are high. During a visit to a rural community, she, along with other women peacebuilders, convinced the community leader to appoint women in the traditional councils, which is an important step to make sure women are part of the peace discussions.

Syria



“I have made a new start thanks to the SADA Women-only Centre, the centre is like my second home. I feel totally safe; the people here are like my family.”

— *Menal Suleyman*

Suleyman left Syria with her three children in 2016, after her husband died and the conflict reached her hometown, Latakia. Suleyman and her children attempted twice to cross the sea at the risk of losing their lives. Worried about her children's safety, Suleyman gave up her dreams of Greece, and decided to return to Gaziantep, where she eventually joined in September 2017 the SADA centre¹, offering vocational training, Turkish language courses and supportive counselling to help refugee women apply for decent work and establish small businesses. Suleyman enrolled into a course for patient registration, which trained her to work as a receptionist in medical facilities.

The Centre continues to support her today, as she seeks opportunities to have a decent life.

Photos: above left: UN Women/Ladi Eguche; above right: UN Women/Sinem Aydin Lopez

1. SADA Women-only Centre was established by UN Women and is run in partnership with the ILO, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants, and Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, with financial support by the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, and the Government of Japan.