

SWEDEN: VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Rwanda



“I didn’t even know how to hold the needle, but now I weave baskets that I am proud of.”

– Nadine Umuhoza

Nadine Umuhoza, 29, is Secretary of the Igisubizo Cooperative and one of the 50 women refugees from the cooperative who has participated in the vocational trainings since December 2018 at the Women Opportunity Centre. To support livelihoods of women in Kigeme Refugee Camp in Rwanda, UN Women funded the Women Opportunity Centre, supported by the Government of Sweden. The Centre provides women a safe space, trainings and a showroom for their products to improve their livelihoods at the camp and beyond. The Centre officially opened on World Refugee Day in June 2019. After only a few weeks fulfilling orders made by customers around the world, through Indego Africa, the Cooperative has already earned over 1,800,000 RWF (nearly 2,000 USD) in profit.

Bangladesh



“Child marriage is one of the main reasons for domestic violence, forced and unsafe pregnancies, and abortions in the refugee camps here.”

– Minara

Minara is a Community Outreach volunteer and Rohingya refugee and survivor who fled the conflict in Myanmar. She now volunteers in Cox’s Bazaar, providing critical information to refugees about prevention of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, where to seek help, as well as disaster preparedness. The work of community volunteers, such as Minara, has become more important during the COVID-19 pandemic as they share information to prevent the spread of the virus.

Minara also leads a Rohingya women’s community-based organization that promotes their education and leadership.

“I believe that Rohingya women and girls are incredibly bright – their minds are sharper than computers. But they need access to education to improve their situation.”

Colombia



“The training taught me how to be an entrepreneur and how to be independent.”

— *Cielo Gómez*

Cielo Gómez is a coffee grower in Nariño, Colombia. After hiding from the conflicts between the guerrillas and the army, she and her family decided to return to their home. Through a UN Women project funded by the Government of Sweden, Cielo Gomez learned about her rights and access to land and developed leadership and business skills. She is now a successful coffee grower, and thanks to the land restitution process, now owns her own piece of land.

“I learned about my own body and my rights. I learned that I was able to go to a bank, get a loan and buy land! A year and a half ago, I did that! I took out a loan and bought another piece of land.”

Moldova



“A woman brings added value to business because she focuses on social responsibility.”

— *Victoria Danila*

Victoria Danila, 34, is an entrepreneur from Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, who designs clothes and other products tailored to the needs of premature babies with her brand Davitex Neo. She participated in UN Women’s Start-up Academy in Moldova, financed by Sweden, which aimed to encourage women to become innovative entrepreneurs in technology. Together with 200 women, she received business management skills and exchanged experience with successful business leaders, specifically in information and technology.

“I attended many seminars, trainings and workshops that gave me the opportunity to know more about how to develop a business, about management, sales and other business processes,” says Danila about her time with the academy.

Photos: above left: UN Women/Ryan Brown; above right: UN Women Moldova/ATIC