

REFUGEE ARTISANAL PROGRAMMING

BACKGROUND

Malaysia is not party to the 1951 refugee convention, which therefore poses challenges to the refugee and asylum seeker population in the country. With the lack of legal framework, the refugee and asylum seeker population do not have legal rights to access basic services such as healthcare, children's education and formal employment. The resulting harsh environment leaves the population vulnerable to health concerns, exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence among others.

As of December 2016, there are a total of 149,474 refugee and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR Malaysia. Findings of a baseline socioeconomic survey conducted last year have indicated that about half of the household members of working age were unemployed. The severity of the situation is evident particularly since children as young as 14 may begin seeking employment to supplement their household income. Reported impediments to higher income employment among the refugee and asylum seeker population include key issues such as the lack of legal status (72%), language barriers (44%) and a lack of skills (35%).

The Market survey and value chain analysis report (2016) recommends, self-employment and entrepreneurship as feasible options to address the key constraints since both are flexible and can be home based. Some of the community based organisations has taken initiative to build artisanal skills among their community members to engage in a fair and safe work environment especially for girls and women who risk sexual and gender based violence. It enables the women to care for their family while earning supplement income in a more dignified way. Meanwhile some community based organisations are still in the early stages of bringing women together to provide an avenue for social empowerment.

OBJECTIVE, EXPECTED RESULTS & TARGET BENEFICIARIES

Safe from the Start is a community based project aims to enhance community engagement in SGBV (Sexual and Gender Based Violence) prevention and response through livelihoods programming. A total of 8 refugee community based organisations mainly women organisations are participating in this project. Two of the participating artisan groups, namely Mangtha and ELHAM will be supported to:

- Develop their production systems in response to new product development
- Produce for new orders that come through new market linkages of the local social enterprise
- Increase their technical skills and business knowledge through exposure to the value chain

Brief Introduction of the 2 groups:

1. **Elham: previously known as CINTA** is a self-help group organised by MSRI, is comprised of some 20 Middle Eastern artisan women. They have diversified skills set such as crochet, cross-stitch, stitching and jewellery making. In 2016, Elham was provided training on project management skills and English classes. They were also provided small funds to purchase raw materials. A Design and Product Development consultant engaged by UNHCR Geneva for the office, Aileen Brindle, is supporting Elham through Earth Heir to define and develop a specific product range. The signature line is expected to be fully developed by June 2017.
2. **Mangtha** produces various products such as cushion covers, mini-pouch, pencil cases, purses, shawls, shoulder bags, table runners and computer cases using their traditional fabrics and patterns. Last year, the Office engaged Earth Heir, to assist Mangtha in broadening marketing platform. Together with Earth Heir, they came up with a separate brand called "Taungzalat" which focuses on the production of sleeping bags, baby slings and backpacks. Design and Product Development consultant, Aileen Brindle is currently assisting Mangtha through Earth Heir to develop a specific product range, relevant to refugees' culture, in order to make their project more sustainable with marketable products. The signature line is expected to be fully developed by June 2017.

The Livelihoods Unit of UNHCR Malaysia seeks qualified and experienced Local Social Enterprise who is willing and able to help refugee artisans develop an export-ready product line and is willing to integrate the refugee-made product line into the social enterprise's operations by building production processes, marketing the product line, managing customer relations and order fulfilment.

The overall objective is to improve self-reliance and livelihoods of the artisans. Expected results from the intervention are as follows:

Objective: Self-Reliance and Livelihoods Improved		
Impact Indicators:	Indicators:	Target/Expected results:
	% of persons of concern (18-59 yrs) with own business/self-employed for more than 6 months	29 - 32%
Output 1: Access to self-employment/business facilitated		
Performance Indicators:	# of small business association supported	2 groups
	# of POC provided with entrepreneurship/business training	20 persons
	# of women refugee artisan groups provided with raw materials / grants for production & business start-up	2 groups

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Taking the guidance from 'Field Guidance for Artisanal/SGBV joint programming' developed by UNHCR HQ Artisanal, on building the artisanal sector for sustainable income and self-reliance while preserving culture and enhancing skills, the proposed interventions is to develop production systems & market readiness.

Recognizing the strong global economic growth of the artisanal sector and the suitability of the sector for refugees, UNHCR is committed to improving market access for refugee artisans. A new collaborative effort – MADE51, Market Access, Design and Empowerment for Refugee Artisans – is being launched. UNHCR will partner with experienced, local ethical enterprises willing and able to work locally with refugee artisans.

The local enterprise's role is to:

- + Develop and incorporate a specific, signature refugee-made product line to the enterprise's current operations
- + Market the refugee-made product line through new and current marketing channels
- + Coordinate the production process
- + Manage customer communication and orders
- + Organize logistics, ship orders and arrange payment
- + Gather data to measure impact

The enterprise will aim to sustainably integrate the refugee product line into their ongoing operations so that it can continue to produce with and source from refugee artisans long after support and assistance is completed.

Activities

Production systems & order management	
Description	<p>Groups with a more established business and product line will be assisted with developing the product line, production systems and order management. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selecting product range 2. Developing & managing the product development process and operational systems, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initial sample development (prototype) b. Sample development for refinement (after market testing) c. Acquiring raw materials & tools d. Setting up production infrastructure & an efficient inventory system e. Training of artisans f. Production quality control g. Tracking of orders received and delivered
Target groups	2 groups: Mangtha and Elham (approx. 20 pax)
Location	2 sites in KL
Date/Duration	Jul - Dec 2017 / 6 months
Sales and marketing support	
Description	<p>Groups with a more established business and product line will partner with the local social enterprise who will spearhead marketing and sales efforts in line with the local social enterprise's business strategy. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing promotional material • Developing product packaging • Product launch events • Product marketing & sales at bazaars or pop-up events • Ongoing sales and marketing
Target groups	2 groups: Mangtha and Elham (approx. 20 pax)
Location	2 sites in KL
Date/Duration	Jul - Dec 2017 / 6 months

LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

The design of the training course should take into consideration the participants and the artisan groups' needs and challenges such as the following:

- i. Provision of artisanal raw materials & tools to support the production of handicrafts produced by the groups
- ii. Training Venue
- iii. Training Schedule
- iv. Child Care Arrangement
- v. Interpreter service
- vi. Transport Arrangement for Beneficiaries/Participants

The LSE is responsible for all necessary logistic arrangements throughout project implementation. UNHCR will, however, supply necessary information to facilitate such arrangements.

REPORTING AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

The Local Social Enterprise is required to submit a midterm and final progress report for each group on the intervention, achievement and impact.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNHCR MALAYSIA

IDENTIFY AND FACILITATE THE ENTERPRISE'S WORK

Identify and facilitate the enterprise's work with refugee artisans by providing:

- + Guidance in project design and facilitation in the project's launch
- + Facilitation and monitoring of the relationship and activities between the refugee artisans, UNHCR partners and the social enterprise.
- + Cross-cutting linkages with UNHCR partners and existing programming

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNHCR GENEVA

MADE 51'S ROLE

- + Guide in the ethical compliance assessment of the enterprise
- + Assess the enterprise's capacity and review if/how support is needed in business development, design support or seed funding
- + Create a customized business development support plan
- + Support in marketing the selected products within a refugee-made global collection through MADE51 marketing platform
- + Link interested buyers to the social enterprise for order placement
- + Assist the enterprise to measure impact.

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

LOCAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE QUALIFICATION

- Operates as a sustainable business utilizing a business model
- Has experience with export and has established production systems
- Presents its current product line in an attractive and inspirational manner
- Has social objectives and demonstrable social impact
- Willing and ready to work with refugees, UNHCR and its partners towards a long term, sustainable partnership
- Willing to be communicative, transparent and innovative with UNHCR and its partners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- + Working with refugees will not displace the enterprise's current workers
- + Refugee-made products will compliment - rather than compete with – the enterprise's current product line
- + UNHCR's partners will provide technical assistance to build the enterprise's export readiness so that they can effectively manage and fill orders, and sustainably incorporate a refugee-made product line into their operations
- + The enterprise will build the capacity of the refugee artisans in skills acquisition, group management and leadership
- + The enterprise should continuously consult and include refugees in decision-making processes
- + The enterprise will aim to sustainably integrate the refugee product line into their ongoing operations so that it can work with refugee artisans as a producer group long after support and assistance is completed.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT

Effective Date	: As soon as possible
Project duration	: July – December 2017 (6 months)
Location	: Klang Valley