

SAFE FROM START: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (2)

BACKGROUND

Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, nor does the country have any legal or administrative framework for refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees and asylum seekers are subjected to arrest, detention and deportation. Section 55 of the Immigration Act permits the Minister of Home Affairs to exempt any person from any provisions and hence the Minister has authority and discretion to regularise the stay of asylum seekers and refugees. Unfortunately, this provision has not been invoked for purposes of refugee protection. Malaysia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC), and has in place a Domestic Violence Act 1994 and Child Act 2001 to protect the rights of women and girls.

Under these extremely vulnerable environments, refugee women and girls are faced with greater obstacles due to added complexities that surround them which include among others: gender disparities, risk of SGBV, lack of freedom and limited access to learning skills and income opportunities. In addition, as many of the refugee groups are patriarchal, women are discouraged from participating in community management and leadership structures. The few who are in leadership and management position may not have the relevant skills, experience and knowledge to carry out their role as community leaders. This is in addition to the limited support they receive from their male leaders and community elders.

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 7 refugee community based organisations mainly women organisations are participating in this project. The groups are:

1. Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN)

The Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN) was formed in late December 2016. It's the first women-centric organization of its kind, located at 26-5-1, Diamond Square, Jalan 4/50, 53000 Gombak. The organization was founded by young Rohingya refugee women in Malaysia in order to build leadership capacity among the women and create social equality in the Rohingya community in Malaysia. Ms. Sharifah Shakirah is the founder and director of the organization and Ms. Arifa Sultana is the co-founder and Secretary. The organization is currently focused on women-centric activities like Skills and Livelihoods, Language and Literature, Trainings and Empowerment, Sports and Charities.

RWDN currently has 15 women who are core members in their organization. These women are based in areas that are heavily populated by the Rohingya community (Gombak, Ampang and Selayang). The women act as focal points, where the community will report pressing issues to them to be brought up in a fortnightly meeting with RWDN. Their key challenge being a new organization is to cover the cost of their resource centre, and to strengthen leadership of the 15 women. Under the Safe from the Start Project, the Office aims to work hand in hand with RWDN to build the capacity of the 15 Rohingya women as effective community mobilizers.

2. ELHAM

Elham is comprised of some 20 Middle Eastern artisan women. They have diversified skill sets such as crochet, cross-stitch, stitching and jewellery making. A Design and Product Development consultant engaged by UNHCR Geneva for the office, Aileen Brindle, is supporting Elham to define and develop a specific product range. In 2016, Elham was provided training on project management skills and English classes. They were also provided small funds to purchase raw materials. Earth Heir, who were engaged to support ELHAM with product development last year, highlighted that there are language barriers among them considering they are an

ethnically mixed group. It affects communication and delivery of training. Diversity in their skill sets also poses a challenge for local social enterprise, Earth Heir to work with the group. Reconciling the culture, traditions, designs and abilities of each artisan has been a challenging task. Lack of funds, leadership, commitment, protection issues and cross cultural issues generally hinders the women to build their artisan group.

3. TANMA

Tanma was formed in September 2010 by 3 refugee women groups who had organised themselves and their communities. They were running empowerment and livelihood programmes for refugee women. The three groups are Mang Tha, Kaoprise, Chin Women Organisation (CWO). In 2016, additional 2 women groups from the Kachin and Karen community were incorporated. Their objective is to share resources in order to provide sustainability for the groups and to protect their rights as women and as workers as well as run a fair trade cooperatives. Tanma members also support each other in networking and marketing.

Tanma also plans to directly co-ordinate and monitor the Women Support Centre/Shelter established by Mangtha last year, using portion of income from the artisan groups.

Tanma products are all handmade by Burmese refugee women – asylum seekers in Kuala Lumpur. The collection comprises Organic Bath and Spa products, Handmade Batik accessories and household items, and handmade accessories from hand woven Burmese fabric (e.g. cushion covers, mini-pouch, pencil cases, purses, shawls, shoulder bags, table runners and computer cases)

Some of the key gaps raised by TANMA in building their capacity towards sustainability are:

- I. Lack of full timers as the women are not able to make fair wages
- II. Lack of raw material and equipment to continue/improve production and its quality
- III. Lack of leadership skills to mobilize women and manage the organisation
- IV. Lack of language skills that hampers their communication with local people/customers
- V. Lack of Business Skills (e.g. business strategy, product development, marketing)

Brief introduction of the members of TANMA:

(a) Mangtha

Established in 2006 by the Chin women affiliated to ACR (Alliance for Chin Refugees), Mangtha produces various cross-stich products such as using their traditional fabrics and patterns. The Office has been providing support to Mangtha from 2009-2014. Since 2015, Mangtha is the key beneficiary for the Safe from Start Project. Various trainings, tools and equipment were provided to build their business.

(b) IngRaw

Kachin women group was established in 2015. The Kachin organisation was assisted by the Office between 2009-2013 with various vocational training that has resulted in women learning new skills and finding employment. Last year they were included in the Safe from the Start Project and had sewing training. They are still in their product testing period and have so far produced products like shopping bags, key chains and Santa stockings. IngRaw is their brand name.

(c) Pawghee

Karen women group was established in 2016 and specialize in sewing and jewelry making. The Karen organization was supported by UNHCR from 2009-2013 to build their livelihoods skills. Last year, they were included in the Safe from the Start Project. They are producing yoga bags, table runners, plate mats, coasters, cushion covers, fabric baskets, jewelry and others. Currently, their products are sold in bazaars and direct orders from customers. Their product brand is called Pawghee.

(d) Kaoprise

The Mon women group was established in 2006. Kaoprise makes organic soaps and massage oils based on traditional Mon recipes. The products are made from plant-based ingredients such as lemongrass, lavender, vanilla and orange. The Office supported the Mon women from 2010-2014 to build their capacity. The group will be assisted again this year through Safe from the Start.

(e) CWO

CWO specializes in handicrafts made out of batik fabric. They produce items such as bags and notebooks with batik covers to support basic education and nutritional needs. The group was only assisted once by the Office, mainly to increase the number of artisans. They will be part of Safe from Start, in 2017.

The Livelihoods Unit of UNHCR Malaysia now seeks qualified and experienced service provider to develop and implement Group Development Activities, Vocational Training and market based activities for the relevant groups. The overall objective is to improve self-reliance and livelihoods and to build cohesive groups. Expected results from the intervention are as follows:

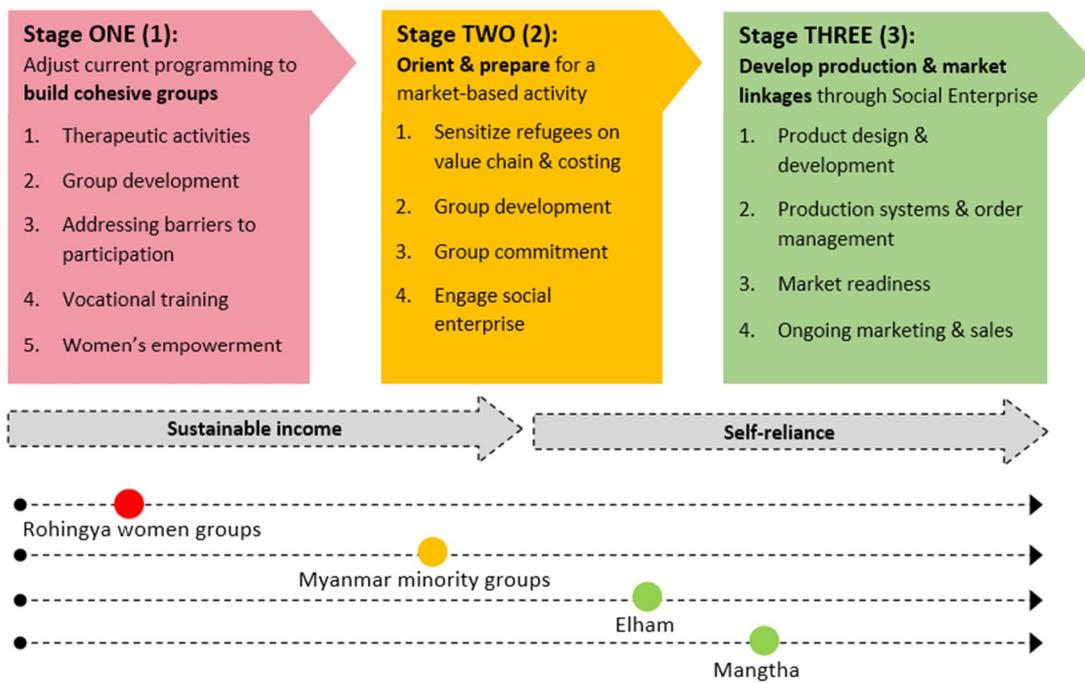
Objective: Self-Reliance and Livelihoods Improved		
Impact Indicators:	Indicators:	Target/Expected results:
	% of persons of concern (18-59 yrs) with own business/self-employed for more than 6 months	29-32 %
Output 1: Access to self-employment/business facilitated		
Performance Indicators:	# of small business association SUPPORTED (through business development, marketing etc)	4 GROUPS (all except RWDN, Elham & Mangtha)
	# of POC provided with entrepreneurship/business training	35 PERSONS (6 groups)
	# of women refugee artisan groups provided with raw materials / grants for production & business start-up	4 groups (all except RWDN, Elham & Mangtha)
Output 2: Access to training and learning enabled		
Performance Indicators:	# of PoC receiving life-skills training for livelihoods purposes (literacy, leadership, vocational)	95 persons
	# of women refugee artisan groups provided with organisational tools & equipment	1 group (all except RWDN, Elham and Mangtha)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Taking the guidance from '*Field Guidance for Artisanal/SGBV joint programming*' developed by UNHCR HQ Artisanal, the proposed intervention will focus on:

- i. Stage 1: Adjusting current programming to build cohesive groups
- ii. Stage 2: Orienting & preparing groups for market-based activities



1) Focus group discussion / Assessment (Baseline)	
Description	An in-depth assessment with 7 women groups through focus group discussions will be conducted to gauge their current socio-economic situation, affiliations and interest and skill levels among others. This session will also be used to consult them on project implementation arrangements.
Target groups	7 groups: Elham, IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise, RWDN, Mangtha (Approximately 40 pax)
Location	3 sites in KL
Date/Duration	July 2017 / 1 month
2) Leadership training 1: Professional development & communication skills	
Stage 1 & 2	
Description	The aim of this training is to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of women groups to manage group communication, resolve conflicts, make group decisions, and also expose women groups to social enterprises to develop their entrepreneurial mindset.
Target groups	7 groups: Elham, IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise, RWDN, Mangtha (Approximately 50 pax)
Location	3 sites in KL

Date/Duration	Sept – Nov 2016 / 3 months 10 sessions x 2 hours = 20 hours	
3) Leadership training 2: Project Management		Stage 1
Description	The aim of this training is to prepare RWDN to initiate, plan, implement and monitor projects or programmes. It would expose them to creating work plans, budgets, basic financial management, monitoring implementation, and sourcing for funding. This training will equip them with skills to organize activities more effectively and efficiently in the future. At the end of the training, RWDN is expected to have a project plan for implemented in the near future.	
Target groups	1 group: RWDN (Approximately 15 pax)	
Location	1 sites in KL	
Date/Duration	Sept – Nov 2016 / 3 months 20 sessions x 3 hours = 60 hours	
4) Functional Literacy Training		Stage 1 & 2
Description	Communication skills for the marketplace is the core focus of this training. It teaches them the necessary vocabulary and communication skills associated with their respective artisanal industries/market. It will also teach them basic numeracy skills if necessary.	
Target groups	6 groups: Mangtha, Elham, IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise, RWDN (Approximately 65 pax)	
Location	3 sites in KL	
Date/Duration	Aug – Oct 2017 / 3 months 20 sessions x 2 hours = 40 hours	
5) Vocational training		Stage 1 & 2
Description	A market-oriented vocational skill training will be identified upon completing the focus group discussion/assessment. The training can be an advanced training to enhance their current skills, or a new skill that would complement or strengthen their goal towards running a group business. The vocational training should be designed for/based on a product line that has been assessed as a viable product line with market potential.	
Target groups	5 groups: Elham, IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise, (Approximately 30 pax)	
Location	2 sites in KL	

Date/Duration	Aug – Sept 2017 / 2 months 10 sessions x 3 hours = 30 hours
6) Business Development Services 1: Business Training	
Stage 2	
Description	The groups targeted in this training are groups with a business but still struggle with marketing, creating a business plan, and strategizing. Therefore, this training aims to enhance their business skills in areas which require strengthening and to review their business model and plans for further development. Apart from the business trainer, a marketing executive will also support this training to consult and help rollout established marketing plans.
Target groups	5 groups: Elham, IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise (Approximately 40 pax)
Location	2 sites in KL
Date/Duration	Sept – Oct 2017 / 2 months 10 sessions x 3 hours = 30 hours
7) Business Development Services 2: Product Development & Marketing	
Stage 2	
Description	The groups targeted in this activity are groups with a business but are in need of reviewing and improving their current product line. A product designer will provide the necessary recommendations and assist with product design, while a marketing executive (who is also involved in the business training) will assist in marketing these products. Towards the end of the project, these groups will be provided a business start-up grant/toolkit to implement future business development plans that have been developed with the product designer and marketing executive.
Target groups	4 groups: IngRaw, Pawghee, CWO, Kaoprise (Approximately 20 pax)
Location	1 site in KL
Date/Duration	Sept - Oct 2017 / 2 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 business start-up grants/toolkits to groups to grow and sustain artisan business
- ii. Market Based Vocational training
- iii. Provision of artisanal raw materials & tools to support the production of handicrafts produced by the groups

- iv. Training Venue
- v. Training Schedule
- vi. Community coordinators/mobilizers and artisans
- vii. Child Care Arrangement
- viii. Interpreter service
- ix. Transport Arrangement for Beneficiaries/Participants

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

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

SERVICE PROVIDER QUALIFICATION

- Legal entity which is allowed to operate in Malaysia;
- Be committed to UNHCR core mandate – refugee protection;
- Has relevant expertise in the relevant training programmes;
- Good knowledge on refugees' situation in Malaysia.
- Prior experience working with refugees is an added advantage

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The service provider should continuously consult and include refugees in decision-making processes.
- Training modules must aim to build the capacity of refugee artisans/beneficiaries towards establishing and operating a sustainable refugee-owned business through group development, skills acquisition, leadership and/or business development using experiential teaching methodologies.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT

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

