



Photo: UN Women

IMPACT STORY



BELA LUCIENNE



“I want to be an advocate of change in my community” Bela Lucienne.



Photo: UN Women/

Bela Lucienne

Bela Lucienne is one of over 20,000 refugees at the camp in Ngam, Adamaoua Region of Cameroon. She escaped war from the Central African Republic and was forced into marriage at the age of 14. She is a beneficiary of SCE who has succeeded in diversifying her small business to livestock farming.

“I am Bela Lucienne and I am a refugee from the Central African Republic [CAR]. I am 28 years old and a single mother of seven children. I fled my village, Kaita in the Ouham Pendé Division of CAR, due to sociopolitical upheavals and settled in Ngam with my children. In my community, schools were not operational due to the war, so I did not have the opportunity to receive a formal education. Instead, I was forced into marriage at the age of 14. After having four children with my husband, he died of a motorbike accident. I had three other children with a man I met later. We are not married. When I arrived in Ngam, I had no one to assist me. My parents had fled to Yamba and were unable to help me start a business. I started doing odd jobs in the quarter which earned me 5,000frs. With this money, I bought two buckets of flour and started a small business in the refugee market.”

“One day, the Second Chance project staff found me in the market and identified me as a beneficiary of their training program. They trained me on how to start and manage a small business, how to earn money, and how to save and manage my household finances. This training was extremely helpful as I had no previous knowledge about running a business or managing my finances. After completing the training, the project provided me with a bag of flour to help me start my business. Now, I earn 4,000frs a day from my small business, from which I save 2,000frs and I use the remaining 2,000frs to feed my family. I have also been able to acquire livestock such as chickens and ducks, which I am raising. Thanks to the project’s support, I am economically empowered and can provide for my family. I want to be an advocate for change in my community. I encourage other women to become economically independent like me.”

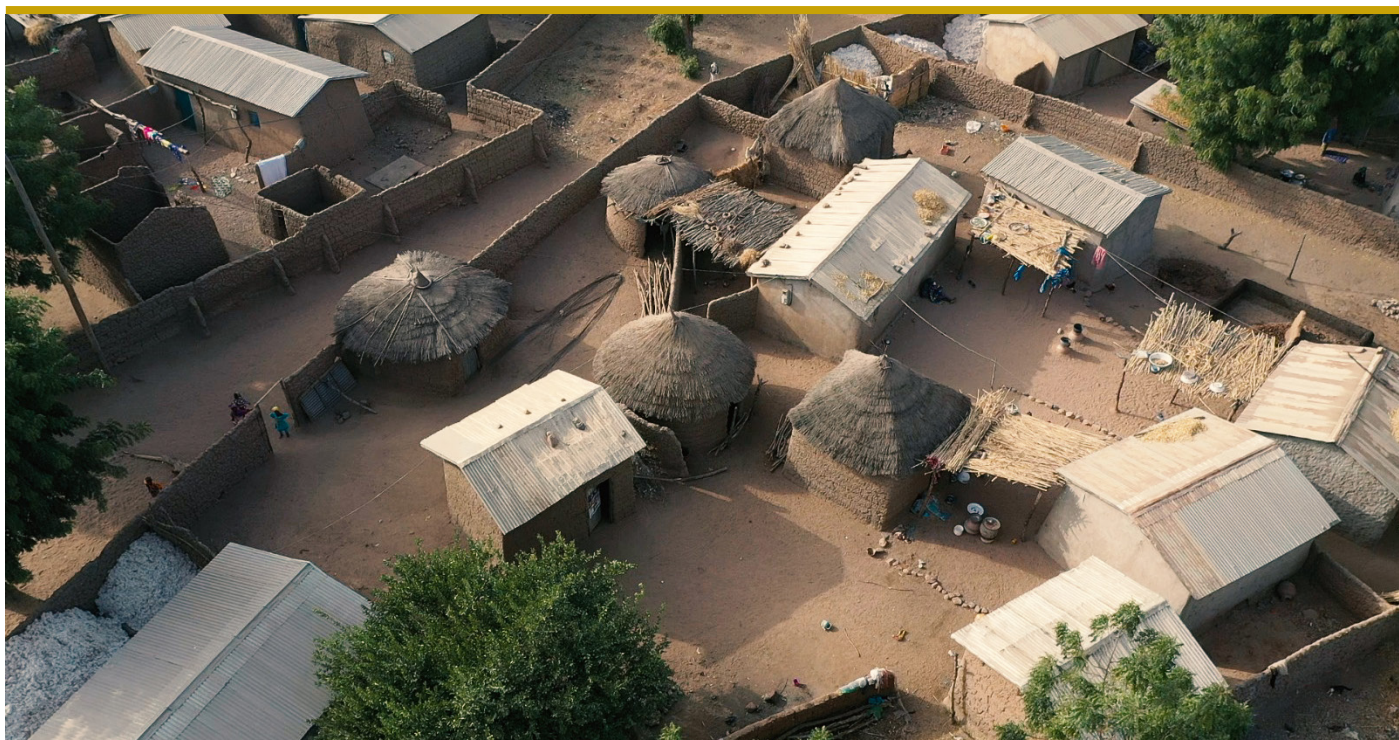


Photo: UN Women

Ngam refugee host community



Adamawa Region of Cameroon

life skills. SCE was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), reaching over 12,000 participants across seven regions: the Far North, East, Adamawa, Littoral, Canter, Northwest and Southwest. SCE’s main objective is for more marginalized women to have access to, participate in and achieve quality learning, entrepreneurial and employment outcomes.

SCE’s approach recognizes that, for women who are marginalized by crisis, poverty or harmful social norms, transformational change requires more than the offer of training or education alone. SCE works with women who have been held back by gender-based barriers and discriminatory practices all their lives without necessarily being aware of it. SCE provides access to practical support and life skills training that enable women to participate fully in whichever learning pathway they choose. Similarly, it recognizes the importance of social learning and personalized support throughout the SCE journey. This scaffolded global approach has led to high retention and low dropout rates.

From 2019 to 2023, UN Women’s Second Chance Education (SCE) and Vocational Learning Programme, executed through UN Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) initiative, offered refugee and internally displaced women in the conflict-affected areas of Cameroon, along with vulnerable women from host communities, training and learning opportunities in entrepreneurial, employment and