



## IMPACT STORY



## FATIMA MUSA



Photo credits : UN Women Cameroon

Group of women taking care of their sheep in Minawao

**Fatima Musa is from Barawa village in Goza, Nigeria. She is 30 and has three children. She was forced into marriage at the age of 17, just after she finished school, despite her dreams of becoming a medical doctor. She was forced to leave Nigeria due to the Boko Haram insurgency and sought refuge at the Minawao refugee camp. She is among many other women and girls at the camp who benefited from the SCE programme.** She says the programme has succeeded in providing the women and girls who participated with a decent means of survival – it has given them a second chance.

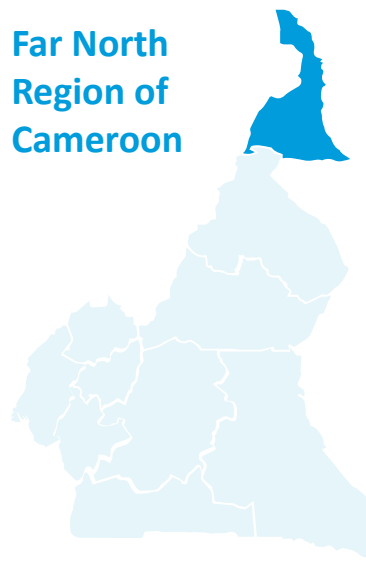
*“My decision to gain skills in animal rearing is informed by my love and passion for keeping animals. The opportunity has greatly impacted me not only with animal rearing skills but also with social cohesion skills, the ability to promote peace in my home and community, humility and a lot more.”* After gaining knowledge and skills and building resilience, Fatima is now able to save at least 2000 FCFA daily and she also invests much of her time in building high-quality relationships with the numerous women who visit her shop daily. She says that before now, she used to be lost in her own thoughts of frustration, but now she is fully occupied with her work, gaining more skills and building valuable relationships. Several women and girls now envy her improved life and stability.

*“With the animals I now have, I can easily take one to the market, sell and use the proceeds to purchase anything I need. I chose animal rearing during the training because it is a lifestyle I was raised with, and I grew to love it. I have gained more skills on how to take care of animals especially during pregnancy and I am comfortably living at peace with everybody now, including my husband. During the training we built social cohesion, gained mutual knowledge and we have stayed in contact, sharing knowledge and best practices for better produce.”* Like her sisters, Fatima was married at 17, after she completed primary 6, as is the traditional practice in her community. While living in Nigeria, life was not very difficult for Fatima because she worked at a restaurant and was able to take care of her family. But when she fled to Cameroon for safety, life became challenging. She was sent into marriage at the age of 17 and her husband divorced her



and died a few years later. She currently lives with her second husband, who also benefits from the training since she provides for his needs. She expresses immense appreciation for the SCE initiative, as it is thanks to the empowerment she got from the programme that she was able to visit her home back in Nigeria and even see her child who she had to leave for over 10 years because she had no means of supporting them. But today, she is no longer worried about her family back home. Among the greatest changes she has experienced is the amount of joy she feels when she looks at her animals and the fact that she can comfortably support her family without always waiting for her husband to provide. She is consciously reflecting on how to improve her business so that she can make more money and give her children the best possible education. She also hopes to grow to the point where she can assist other vulnerable groups.

*“Since I am no longer the medical doctor I had loved to be, I would love to assist orphans, widows, people living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, provided I have the means.”*



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 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.

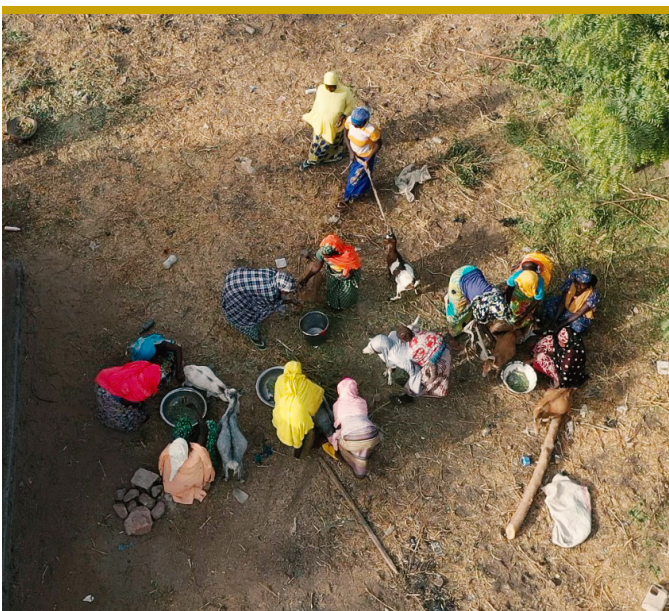


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