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IMPACT STORY

ASALE BINA



“SCE has transformed our lives”
Asale Bina in East Cameroon



Photo credits : UN Women Cameroon

Asale Bina, ICT is applicable in all domains of life

Asale Bina Françoise, 24, is a single mother of three children from the Mefou Afamba Division of the Centre Region. She now lives in Bertoua in the East Region which hosts many refugees from neighboring Central African Republic as well as internally displaced people from elsewhere in Cameroon. She stopped school

after Baccalauréat because she lost her father, and her mother couldn't afford her university studies. Coming from a large family with 13 siblings, life became difficult for her. She couldn't provide for herself, her children, her mother, and her siblings. She had no income-generating activity and therefore focused on assisting her mother at home and on the farm.

“I felt so inferior as I stopped school due to lack of finances like most young women in my community. I couldn’t meet my needs and those of my children. My struggling mother succeeded in sending some of my siblings to school, the rest remained at home with me”, says Françoise.

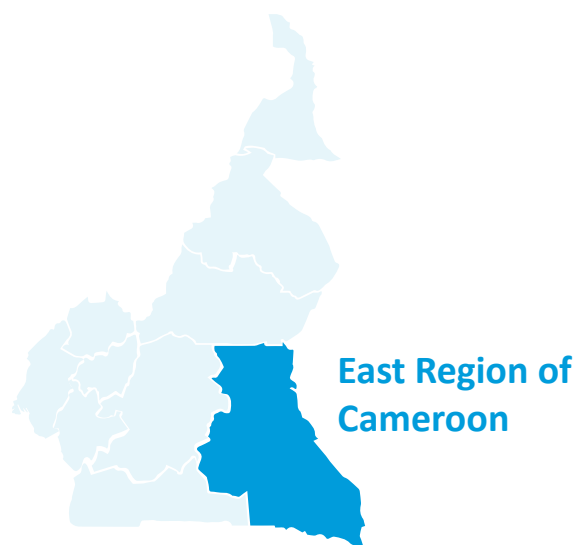
“One day, I went to the Women’s Empowerment Centre to meet with one of the workers (a mother), who usually advises me. In the course of our discussion, she informed me about the Second Chance Education Program and the Office Secretariat training they were organizing. I immediately enrolled in the programme and encouraged some ladies to join”. She adds.

Françoise and some other young women in the community took the Office Secretariat training. They learned how to use and manage computer software, printing, typing, photocopying documents, online business, etc. At the end of the training, they were awarded certificates. The SCE programme opened a Secretariat shop where they type, print, photocopy and sell books, pens and folders, for her and those trained. To kick off, they were provided with one computer and two photocopy machines.

“I chose this training because IT is applicable in all domains of life and also because it was free and very practical. Besides the skills acquired, I learned how to coexist peacefully in the community. We worked in synergy assisting one another during and after the training. We worked so hard, made some savings, and purchased two additional computers and two printers. Now, we earn 10,000 frs [approximately 20 USD] weekly from this activity. We also lend money to some women in the community to start up small businesses,” says Françoise.

The training made her and the other participants independent. They can now provide for their families and are much respected in their families and community. *“I want to thank the Second Chance Education Project for giving me hope and transforming my life. I can take care of myself and provide for my family,”* Françoise confirms.

Françoise calls on other women in her community to embrace vocational training and be trained. *“I encourage all the women to wake up and get empowered with vocational training that will help them provide for themselves and their families.”*



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 the SCE journey. This scaffolded global approach has led to high retention and low dropout rates.