



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

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HUMBER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING

Entrepreneurship + Digital Livelihoods + Creative Arts Socio-economic empowerment of women refugees in Kenya

Context

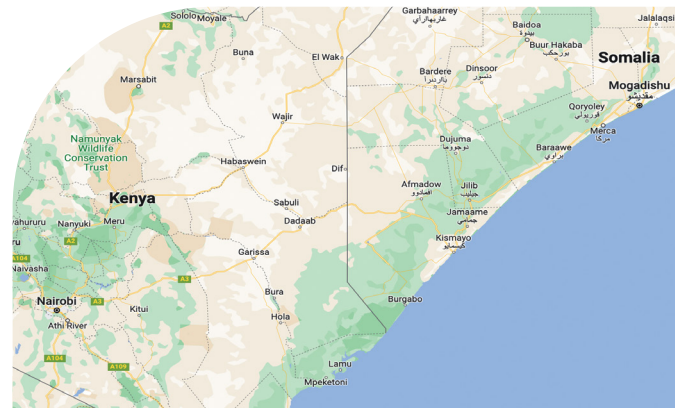
Kenya is hosting over 500,000 refugees and asylum seekers who face socio-economic restrictions including limitations on movement and employment. The additional structural challenges for refugee women have resulted in a prominent gender gap in entrepreneurship opportunities and income equality.

The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, Humber Institute and their local partners CAP- Youth Empowerment Institute tested an innovative solution that combined the technical skills of entrepreneurship and digital marketing strategies with life skills and mentorship to enhance women's socio-economic empowerment and increase livelihood opportunities for refugees in the urban setting of Nairobi, Kenya. All target participants accessed life skills training and digital entrepreneurship where they either created small businesses with digital components or added digital elements to their existing businesses. The training was followed by an 8-week mentorship in general entrepreneurship and business, financial literacy, and business management skills.

Advancing Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Strategy targeted gender-related challenges identified during baseline including: a lack of knowledge and skills needed to utilize livelihood opportunities; a lack of access to livelihood opportunities; and the inability to participate in training or income generation activities due to domestic duties, discrimination and stigma. The needs of women refugees were addressed specifically by providing childcare assistance and transportation fare.



COUNTRY

Kenya

AMOUNT

\$198,692

TESTING PERIOD

12 months

Ended Oct 2022



GENDER RESPONSE (GE2)

THEME: LIVELIHOODS

Testing Framework

The innovation was tested using a Theory of Change (ToC) methodology supported by a diverse set of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. Key outcomes were measured in comparison to the baseline and midterm data identifying the extent of changes beneficiaries made in terms of perception, confidence, access to and use of technology/business knowledge.

Results and Impact

The innovative 65-day digital entrepreneurship training was completed by 52 refugees (24 male, 28 female). Endline results identified an improvement in access as well as in women's self-esteem, confidence and inter-personal skills. Out of 52 participants, 33 completed an endline survey. Of those 33, 16 (11 women and 5 men) set up their own digital enterprises after the training, while the remaining 16 (10 women and 6 men) added digital components to already existing businesses. The majority (31 of the 33) reported an increase in their economic opportunities through enterprise digitization.

Key Lessons

1. To ensure a safe and inclusive environment, trainers adapted their approach depending on the needs of the participants. Women had different levels of understanding and faced different barriers compared to their male counterparts, thus more and specific support were provided to them, such as one-on-one time, adjusted training schedules and childcare services.
2. Due to COVID, a blended digital learning approach was developed, and the training was adapted by using pictures and graphics for those that did not have any literacy skills.
3. Transportation and childcare were identified as a barrier for participation early in testing. Costs to cover these services were provided which resulted in high participation rates throughout testing.

"I learned that a storefront is not a basic need for business. One can do purely online business. I also learned to have a target for my business and worked towards it."

– Innovation participant

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

CAP- Youth Empowerment Institute

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

52 entrepreneurs (28 women and 24 men)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.

