



# FOCUS ON WOMEN

In many societies, **women** and **girls** face specific risks and are less likely than men and boys to have access to their rights, due to their gender roles and position in society. In situations of displacement, these risks - particularly **discrimination** and **sexual and gender-based violence** - can be exacerbated.

-- UN High Commissioner for Refugees

80% of refugees are women and children. Most remain in first countries of refuge in Africa, Asia and Latin America, living in camps or urban centers.

Despite international refugee human rights protections, in reality, refugee women often lack access to their rights and knowledge of how to assert them.

Refugee women and girls are especially vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, forced prostitution, labor exploitation, survival sex and other cross-cutting threats. Women who are single mothers, survivors of gender-based violence, single women and unaccompanied girls often are in particular need of assistance.



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## Our Response

Asylum Access provides refugee women with the tools they need to rebuild their lives:

- Individualized legal counsel and/or representation to obtain legal status, seek protection and assert their right to lawful employment and education.
- Community legal empowerment workshops: Work rights and entrepreneurship trainings to help women provide for their families, women-only groups to provide a safe space for healing, and leadership trainings that empower women to lead community-driven collective advocacy.
- Policy advocacy to ensure women's rights are adequately addressed in rights-protection systems, with a focus on work rights and freedom from gender-based violence.
- Strategic litigation to expand rule of law protection for survivors of gender-based violence, and access to equal rights in the workplace.

Together, these efforts help refugee women and girls respond to rights violations today, while transforming the human rights landscape for future refugee women.

## Refugee Women and the Right to Work

In 2008, we successfully advocated for refugee work rights to be included in the Ecuadorian constitution. To ensure access to work rights in practice, we organized livelihoods workshops to help refugees advocate for their own rights and engaged education organizations to include refugee women in their programs.

We continue to help refugee women respond to work rights violations, most recently winning \$3,000 -- more than three months' salary -- for a refugee whose employer refused to pay her wages owed.



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## Suzanne's Story

When she approached our office in Dar es Salaam, Suzanne was a single mother without refugee protection. She risked detention as an 'illegal migrant' just to travel to our office and seek assistance.

Asylum Access helped her understand her options and obtain a peasant permit, an alternative means to secure legal status. With the right to work, Suzanne began attending our livelihood workshops, which helped her start her own restaurant, hire other refugees, feed her family and look forward to a future as a successful businesswoman.

## About Asylum Access

Founded in 2005, Asylum Access is an innovative nonprofit working to make refugee rights a reality in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



[www.asylumaccess.org](http://www.asylumaccess.org)  
[www.refugeeworkrights.org](http://www.refugeeworkrights.org)