AMAHORO COALITION
Partnerships in Practice

Partnerships in Practice: A lens into private sector partnerships delivering a measurable difference.

THE SHEIKHA FATIMA FUND IS INVESTING IN DISPLACED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS AFRICA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Across Africa, limited access to formal employment makes self-employment a necessity for many forcibly displaced people. For women, the odds are stacked against them in both employment and entrepreneurship.

In Kenya's refugee camps, just 6% of women are employed, compared with 28% of men. In Uganda, 41% of young refugee women are unemployed, against 16% of Ugandan women.

A shortage of skills is hardly the whole story. Across Africa, forcibly displaced women are farming, trading and running small enterprises, often with limited access to the capital and commercial networks needed to scale.

These are among the barriers the Sheikha Fatima Fund for Women Refugees has sought to address since its establishment in 2000. Over the past two decades, the Fund has invested in women's economic participation through programmes spanning healthcare, education, agriculture and enterprise development across Africa and beyond.

Its investment in the creative economy offers a closer look at how that commitment translates into business opportunities. In Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda, the Fund is working with Amahoro Coalition and other partners to strengthen women-led creative enterprises, from developing commercial skills to expanding production capacity and accessing to buyers.





A Partnership Investing in Women's Economic Potential

Established in 2000 by Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, widely known as the Mother of the Nation in the United Arab Emirates, the Sheikha Fatima Fund for Women Refugees has spent more than two decades advancing women's economic participation.

The Fund draws on Sheikha Fatima's 50:50 Vision, which calls for women to have an equal role in economic development and share in its benefits.

In Africa, the Fund has partnered with Amahoro Coalition to invest in the commercial potential of women working in fashion, textiles and other creative industries.

The partnership is being delivered through two programmes: **Naseej,** which develops entrepreneurs' business capabilities, and **Zuhur Al Amal**, which focuses on production and access to markets.



Naseej Equips Creative Entrepreneurs with Commercial Skills

Africa's fashion and textile industries are attracting serious investment. In 2024, Afreximbank doubled its Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) funding facility to $2 billion, while the continent's textile and apparel market is estimated at $31 billion.

Between 28 October and 1 November 2026, Lagos Fashion Week brought together more than 60 designers, including labels from Uganda, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire. Now in its 16th edition, the event has become an important platform for African designers seeking international visibility and new markets.



Despite this growing attention, many fashion and textile businesses remain small, with limited access to financing, production facilities and distribution networks. For entrepreneurs trying to establish themselves in this market, these constraints affect the everyday decisions involved in running a business.

Decisions like: How much should a designer charge for a product? How do they calculate costs, negotiate with buyers or market their work online? And how do they reach customers outside the communities where they live?

These are the questions at the centre of **Naseej,** an Arabic word meaning weaving.

Funded by the Sheikha Fatima Fund and implemented by Amahoro Coalition and Ananse Africa, the programme equips creatives with the commercial skills needed to grow their enterprises.

Ananse Africa is a pan-African e-commerce and fashion business connecting African designers with local and international buyers. Its experience informs training in e-commerce, digital marketing, product development, pricing, negotiation and customer management.
So far, **1,168 creatives have completed the training,** split equally between Nigeria and East Africa.

In Kenya and Uganda, ten refugee-led organisations brought 432 refugees and internally displaced people into the programme through community learning hubs, making the training available closer to where participants live and work.





Naseej's Impact on Incomes and Employment

Nigeria's cohort completed the programme first, and participants are already reporting gains in income and employment.

Within six months of training:

- 69% reported an increase in income.
- Participants whose incomes grew reported creating or improving approximately three jobs each.
- **1,225** jobs have been created or improved, with another **1,500** projected over the following six months.

The East African cohort is at an earlier stage. Among 233 participants surveyed after training, **79.8%** reported improved online marketing skills, while **88.4%** expected to apply their new knowledge within three months.
The next step is turning those skills into steady sales, which also requires the equipment and facilities to produce goods at scale.





Zuhur Al Amal Expands Production Capacity for Women Artisans

For an independent tailor, winning a large order is good news. But fulfilling also needs sufficient equipment, workspace or materials.

That is the gap **Zuhur Al Amal**, meaning Flowers of Hope in Arabic, is addressing in Uganda.

Funded by the Sheikha Fatima Fund and implemented by iProfile Foundation, a Ugandan organisation specialising in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, the programme operates in Kampala and Entebbe.

So far, **50 women artisans** have received training in tailoring, garment production and candle-making, alongside access to shared production hubs equipped with sewing machines. A retail outlet is also being established in Entebbe.

By September 2026, participants had produced 200 pieces, with a single order for 50 tote bags bringing in **UGX 1.5 million.**

Connecting Women Artisans with Corporate Buyers

For small creative businesses, regular corporate orders offer predictable demand.

Zuhur Al Amal is pursuing opportunities in Uganda's hospitality industry, where hotels purchase textiles, guest amenities, gifts and branded merchandise.

The programme has established **eight market partnerships** and opened discussions with Sheraton, Serena, Fairway, Hotel Lavena and Amora Fusion about pop-up retail opportunities and bulk orders.

Shipping arrangements with DHL are also being developed to support exports as production volumes grow.
These relationships offer artisans access to larger markets and more consistent orders, allowing them to plan production, purchase materials and manage inventory with greater certainty.

The results are promising, but the next challenge is winning more customers. For the Sheikha Fatima Fund and Amahoro Coalition, that means getting more companies to source from women-led enterprises. After all, the strongest endorsement of a product is a customer who comes back for another order.

An Opportunity to Make an Impact



Become an Amahoro Fellowship Coach

Are you a CEO or business professional with 10+ years of experience?

Volunteer 3-4 hours a week to coach 10 Amahoro Fellows, sharing your expertise to help young leaders with lived experience of displacement grow sustainable businesses.

Send an email to fellowship@amahorocoalition.com

Become an Amahoro Fellowship Coach

If you are a forward-looking business interested in partnering with Amahoro Coalition to create jobs and economic opportunities for displaced people and host communities across Africa, we invite you to connect with us.
Reach out at **info@amahorocoalition.com** or visit **https://amahorocoalition.com/** to start the conversation.

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