



Second Chance Education (SCE) Signature Features



Second
Chance



The approach of UN Women’s Second Chance Education programme 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’s target women have been held back by gender-based barriers and discriminatory practices all their lives without necessarily being aware of it. SCE therefore 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 approach has led to high retention and low dropout rates and is represented by SCE’s six signature features.

The SCE signature features are outlined below, with each illustrated by an example from a country programme.

SCE Signature Features



SUPPORT TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED BARRIERS



Support is provided to remove the constraints to women’s participation in SCE. It may include access to care services to alleviate the care burden such as child, disability and elder care, safe and affordable transport to the hubs, and engaging with men in families and communities to build their support. It can also include referrals to complementary social services to access professional support for gender-based violence, housing, personal finances, health or other issues.



Photo Credit: UN Women/SisterWorks

In **Australia**, SCE participants are provided with the opportunity to bring young children into the hub, with specific “mums and bubs” days, as well as having playground facilities so children can play while the women undertake activities. The Hub also owns a van, to support with safe, free transportation to the hub. Strong community stakeholder networks have been established, so warm referrals are made whenever needed to social services. When a SCE participant lacks the confidence to navigate the process of engaging with a social service, the SCE hub staff will also accompany the participant and support them through the process, such as with attendance at meetings and consultations, and filling out paperwork which may be intimidating to the participant, or she may lack the literacy to complete the paperwork.

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE LIFE SKILLS



Training and support in this area enable women to develop self-confidence, a sense of agency, and aspirations aligned with their interests, skills and circumstances. It is centred on an awareness of participants' strengths and the potential of all individuals, and the part that gendered roles, stereotypes and discriminatory norms play in everyone's lives. Gender-transformative life skills are context-specific and attempt to address intersecting inequalities. This training may provide the opportunity for participants to revisit, adapt or change established attitudes, behaviours and practices at individual, household and community level, often resulting in participants assuming new roles and responsibilities which may differ from socially expected gender roles (UN Women, 2020)¹. It is an essential foundation for subsequent training and for ensuring sustainable change to women's lives and community resilience.

In **Mexico**, SCE participants acquire gender-transformative skills through courses focused on personal development, financial education, and digital literacy. The personal development courses aim to encourage women to define their life project, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and become more aware of how gender norms impact their lives. The financial education courses center on increasing the women's financial inclusion, health, and resilience. Finally, the digital literacy courses intend to provide women with the knowledge and skills to communicate, learn and collaborate online. The courses are implemented in close partnership with state government and private sector.

1 UN Women (2020) 'Who holds the microphone?' Crisis-affected women's voices on gender-transformative changes in humanitarian settings: Experiences from Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan and Uganda: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/08/research-paper-crisis-affected-womens-voices-on-gender-transformative-changes>

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Second
Chance Education



The Oasis Model of Empowerment Centers

In **Jordan**, UN Women has developed a unique model to respond to the urgent needs of Syrian refugee women and girls in camp settings as well as to the needs of refugee and Jordanian women and girls in host communities, the Oasis empowerment center. The Oasis centers have evolved over time to become multi-sectoral service centers focusing on resilience and empowerment for women and girls, while also engaging men and boys in dialogue and mobilization for gender and social equality.

The Oasis model is conceptualized around three building blocks:

- Secure livelihoods opportunities provided via cash for work that graduates into sustainable employment opportunities, whether through job placement, entrepreneurship, or work permit applications
- Gender-based violence prevention, protection, and awareness raising services
- Education opportunities linked to the labour market, leadership, and civic engagement initiatives for women, while also engaging men on social issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment

Since 2019, Jordan is part of the UN Women's global pilot project on Second Chance Education, under which women in eight Oasis Centers were supported to enhance their digital skills through a virtual education platform, focusing on improving their educational levels, employability, and entrepreneurship. In the next phase of the project, women beneficiaries will be supported to leverage technology to access innovative educational services to improve their future incomes and levels of economic empowerment.

ONE SCE LEARNING PATHWAY



Women participate in one of three learning pathways: entrepreneurship/self-employment, employment/vocational training or return to formal education. Each pathway is a progression of courses based on a globally standardized curriculum with locally relevant content tailored to participants in language, imagery and type of media. Industry and government connections are provided to link participants to education, jobs or business development opportunities during and after training.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In **Cameroon**, SCE provides participants with training and start-up kits upon graduation in areas such as tailoring, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), animal raising, agriculture, and petty trade. SCE's partnership with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family enables SCE to make use of training spaces and staff in the Ministry's women's centres. The provision of the start-up kits has been vital for women's ability to become entrepreneurs and start to generate an income upon graduation. Many participants have managed to grow their businesses in the years after graduation and other, who were organized in groups, have been able to support new groups of women to become entrepreneurs themselves.

RETURN TO FORMAL EDUCATION

In **India**, SCE helps women return to formal education through partnerships with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and state-level open schooling systems. SCE provides scholastic support to women to complete their secondary education, connecting them with community educators near their homes and providing safe, women-friendly spaces for learning. SCE India has a network of community educators across the 12 programme districts who enroll women and girls in formal education and support them through their journey.



EMPLOYMENT

In **Chile**, participants enrol in the programme after speaking with a facilitator about their experiences and motivations. In the employment pathway, the basic level is for participants who are looking for their first job, while the advanced level is for women who already have work experience and need to develop new skills. Participants learn about the skills needed in today's job market, the legal aspects of employment, and how to write a CV and prepare for a job interview. After the training, participants may be matched with a more experienced woman from the network of volunteer mentors, who meet participants in small groups to share their knowledge and expertise. All participants are linked to industry and employment networks to help them find a job.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORK



SCE draws on its experience on the ground to advocate for removal of the structural constraints to women's participation in education, training and the workforce. SCE advocates for reforms of laws, policies and financial frameworks and the introduction of government programming to enhance women's economic participation.

In **India**, SCE works with national and state agencies to influence their policies and increase the reach and impact of their programming to supporting women and girls' opportunities to learn and earn.

- In September 2022, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) launched the Inclusive Education policy with technical inputs from UN Women aimed at reducing the current gender gap in enrolment at NIOS. NIOS has enrolled 4.3 million learners over the last five years and UN Women's input will have extensive reach. SCE also supported NIOS in updating its gender policy and developing a plan of action to execute it.
- In July 2020, based on SCE's recommendations, the Rajasthan State Women's Policy waived school fees for women and girls returning to formal education.
- UN Women is working with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to build the capacity of vocational trainers across the country to integrate gender sensitivity at each stage of training. The aim is to create an ecosystem that enables more women to participate in vocational training and improve women's participation in the labour force. Gender-responsive training sessions will be carried out for 4,500 'master' trainers who will deliver vocational training across the country.
- SCE has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) under which it provides technical support on gender to the World Skill Centre.
- SCE also has an MoU with the Skill Development, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department (SDEED), Government of Maharashtra, wherein UN Women supported the department in setting up women's entrepreneurship cell to promote women's entrepreneurship.

E-LEARNING



E-learning is offered in some form to all participants, whether SCE is delivered through physical hubs or entirely online. E-learning allows flexibility in the delivery of learning with in-person, online, and hybrid approaches used according to circumstances, making it easier for women to participate.

In **Chile**, the programme is delivered through a 100% online modality, including synchronous and asynchronous activities, with direct support from facilitators and mentors through WhatsApp, phone, email and the SCE webapp specially created for participants in Chile. Trainings were originally going to take place at centres and public libraries, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic meant it was re-designed as a fully online programme where women would participate from home. The remote modality has allowed crisis-affected women to reap the benefits of e-learning, with more flexibility in when and where they learn, getting around the barriers to accessing learning opportunities because of care work responsibilities.





Photo Credit: UN Women/Pablo Sanhueza

PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

Personalized support underpins women's participation throughout their SCE journey. It includes social and instructional support and can be provided through a range of approaches including mentoring, tutoring, peer networks and advisors.

In **Mexico**, the program offers participants access to mentors, which can be SCE graduates and/or external volunteers. They offer technical support and solidarity to participants throughout their journey in the programme. The mentors can provide two types of mentorships: long-term and short-term. Long-term mentorship is provided by graduates or volunteers that had at least 8 hours of training and usually offers support to a group of participants over a period of at least 8 hours. A short-term mentorship is offered as a 1-to-2-hour event which is focused on selected specialized themes. For example, the so called speed-mentoring is an event that gathers several mentors, in which mentees take turns to ask questions on a very specific subject to each of the mentors.

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TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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