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Genève, le 29 mars 2022

Chère Dominique,

Ce mois-ci nous avons célébré la force, l'ingéniosité et la résilience des femmes à l'occasion de la Journée Internationale de la femme. Si je vous écris maintenant, c'est pour vous remercier personnellement d'avoir participé au projet phare de "la philanthropie au féminin" du HCR.

Votre franchise et votre enthousiasme lors des entretiens ont été une vraie source d'inspiration et nous ont permis de faire les premiers pas dans cette nouvelle approche où le HCR s'appuie sur la force féminine pour soutenir les réfugiés dans le monde entier. Ceci est particulièrement important maintenant que nous sommes confrontés à la plus rapide crise humanitaire en Europe depuis la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

Plus de 3.8 millions de personnes ont dû fuir l'Ukraine en seulement un mois, la plupart d'entre elles (presque 90%) sont des femmes et des enfants. Derrière ces statistiques dramatiques se cachent des millions d'histoires de séparation, d'angoisse et de peur.

Lors de sa récente visite en Roumanie, Moldavie et Pologne, le Haut-Commissaire, Filippo Grandi, a déclaré : "Ce que l'on peut constater dans toutes les crises humanitaires dans le monde, c'est que les femmes sont laissées seules à recoller les morceaux, à veiller à ce que les liens familiaux et communautaires soient protégés et maintenus. Les larmes versées par les mères ukrainiennes contiennent la même douleur et la même souffrance que celles versées par les femmes en Somalie, en Syrie, au Soudan du Sud, ou encore au Myanmar ou dans n'importe quel pays où nous travaillons."

Jour après jour, dans le monde entier, des conflits et des guerres dénués de sens continuent d'entraver les droits des femmes.


Les femmes réfugiées et les enfants qu'elles protègent avec tant de courage et d'amour méritent toute notre empathie et notre soutien. Nous leur devons de poursuivre sans relâche la recherche de solutions pour un monde où tous peuvent vivre en paix et où personne n'est forcé de fuir son foyer ou son pays.

Je me réjouis de notre collaboration et de votre soutien pour ce projet de philanthropie au féminin.

Je joins à cette lettre le compte-rendu réalisé à la suite des entretiens.

En attendant, si vous pensez que vous pouvez contribuer de quelque manière que ce soit à nos efforts de réponse d'urgence en Ukraine, n'hésitez pas à me contacter.

Veillez agréer, chère Dominique, ma profonde reconnaissance.

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Women Philanthropy

Harnessing women's power to help create a better future for refugees

Thank you so very much for taking part in our women philanthropy project. More and more women are looking to use philanthropy creatively and strategically to help offer refugees protection, safety, and opportunity. We at UNHCR want to harness this energy, focus and passion as a global force that can generate change at scale, giving philanthropic women around the world opportunities to be involved and achieve impact in ways that match with their philanthropic needs and goals.

As first step, we invited you and 19 other women philanthropists from around the world to be part of an exceptional global project – a world first – seeking input and advice through one-to-one interviews. The objective being to better understand your needs as a philanthropist and how UNHCR can meet these.

In December we promised we would feed back to all participants in 2022. I am pleased to share with you an update on how the project was conducted, what we have learnt so far and what we aim at doing next.

Women Philanthropy Project Update

How we conducted the project

UNHCR's women's philanthropy project was framed around a series of semi-structured interviews with high-net-worth (HNW) women in nine countries. Initially, a select group of 20 women were invited to participate. However, due to unforeseeable circumstances, 17 women, with a median age of 48 years, were able to join us for interviews.

The women interviewed represent a breadth of supporter groups, including high-value corporate partnerships, volunteer leaders and ambassadors, as well as donors and prospects. Some have been collaborating with UNHCR for several years, whereas others, are just now becoming familiar with our work.

The quality of your input and engagement was exceptionally high. Considering the rather personal nature of some of the lines of questioning, all interviewees were warm, open and candid in their contributions.

The interviews were structured around five thematic pillars to include: ***Philanthropic vision; Motivations and loyalty; Decision-making processes; Expectations around stewardship; and Identity and belonging.***

What we have learned

The interviews demonstrate willingness to engage with UNHCR to find new meaningful ways to help refugees. Although there is no clear one-size-fits-all outcome at this stage of the project – and it was never expected that this would be the case, given the deliberate diversity of the cohort, several themes and trends emerged, as well as areas to explore further with you and the rest of the group.

In terms of *philanthropic vision*, many of you mentioned that your sense of philanthropic responsibility has often been inherited from parents and/or family members and stressed the importance of setting an example to the next generation. Some of you have a family history particularly linked to displacement, this being an important motif to support refugees, and many highlighted that you seek balancing your support for international work with local and community initiatives. Lastly, many of you emphasized the importance of intersectionality, diversity and innovation to solve protracted problems.

Regarding *motivations and loyalty*, all of you emphasized the importance of trust, transparency and people as key factors in motivating you to continue supporting a charitable organization. This together with the possibility of having the opportunity to undergo field visits is extremely motivating and emotionally connecting to all of you.

About *decision-making processes*, most of you balance head and heart, short and long term needs in your philanthropic decision making. Although you'd prefer to restrict your donations to better follow up with its impact, the majority is open to being flexible and needs-based. This together with a significant overlap with the family foundation space, and not purely individual giving, outlines the decision-making process of the women interviewed.

Concerning *stewardship as a donor to UNHCR*, we welcome that many of you are willing to embrace a level of risk in your philanthropy and seek transparency about outcomes. This, together with organisational efficiency and financial accountability, the importance of telling refugee stories with dignity and hearing their voices directly, as well as showing impact, makes up the core of what you expect from us as charity of choice.

Lastly, regarding *identity and belonging*, most of the women interviewed accept that the refugee issue is vast but all of you showed universal pride in making a small difference through your philanthropy. We truly value the general enjoyment of philanthropy among the women that joined us in this project and that this enjoyment contributes to build on a strong sense of identity as people and as our supporters.

What we will be doing next

We are very excited about where this global initiative will take us. Thanks to your openness and enthusiasm, and for sharing your thoughts and feelings with us so freely, we are now more confident about how we can harness the power of women's philanthropy to help refugees worldwide.

Listening to your views to ensure your needs are met, building a long-term relationship with you as part of a committed group of donors willing to bring time, talents, networks and advocacy, as well as donating, and offering opportunities to participate in collaborative co-creation of new models of support to refugees, will inform our main areas of action on the way forward.

We hope you will enjoy participating in this initial phase of this exceptional project. Your opinions were enormously valued and will help us improve how we work, enabling UNHCR to achieve greater impact and, ultimately, engage more women with the refugee cause. Our aim is to reach more refugee families in need; your insights will help us achieve this, together. Thank you.

If you have any questions about this project or further ideas to share, please contact stephanie.simpson@unrefugees.ch