Through the Refugee Roadmap, refugees are actively referred between network partners to access legal resources, health services and employment opportunities in the private sector – all in an effort to ensure their effective and equitable integration in Tanzania.

Ruth

35

Former dressmaker in DRC

She is a single mother of two small children.

Ruth is a survivor of sexual gender-based violence and torture.

When Ruth was just a girl, armed militias displaced her family from their home in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As a teenager, she witnessed her father’s murder and was forcibly married to a Mai Mai rebel. She fled to Tanzania for a better life but Tanzanian law requires that refugees live in camps, preventing them from lawfully accessing employment. In the camp, Ruth remained dependent on humanitarian aid but she aspired for more.

She left the camp to seek opportunities in the capital of Dar es Salaam and build a better life for her two daughters.
Arriving in Dar es Salaam, Ruth and her daughters stay with Grace, a fellow Congolese refugee who used to live in Ruth's camp. Grace received legal support from Asylum Access Tanzania (AATZ). Through their services, Grace was able to start a restaurant that employs both refugees and Tanzanian nationals. Inspired by this story, Ruth heads to AATZ with her daughters to get help in acquiring refugee status.

Ruth is now legally recognized as a refugee. Still, she faces barriers to finding work. Fortunately, AATZ helped her obtain a work permit, provided her with skills training and referred her to an employment opportunity at a local dressmaking business — a partner of the Refugee Roadmap network.
Ruth is happy to finally have the right to work and make Tanzania her home. With her new job as a dressmaker, she is finally able to resurface old skills. However, Ruth still struggles with overcoming the past trauma of her days back in the Congo. Her employer learned how to identify signs of trauma through the Refugee Roadmap training sessions at AATZ. He connects Ruth with a mental health services organization -- a Refugee Roadmap partner.
With the coordination between employer and the health clinic, Ruth receives both the mental health services and professional opportunities necessary to rebuild her life in Tanzania with resilience and confidence, overcoming her experiences of struggle and trauma. Ruth also joins AATZ's Women's Empowerment Group to connect with like-minded women, share their experiences and organize in their community. Empowered to use her voice, Ruth mentors other women in the refugee community. She feels successful at her job, supported by other refugees and Tanzanian society more generally and now has the means to provide for her two daughters.