



A NEW START



Fatma, associate protection assistant, trafficking focal point and HIV/AIDS, monitors a beneficiary.



IOM has followed and assisted several women with their reintegration projects. They received psychosocial, sometimes medical assistance, and help to develop an income-generating activity. After some very difficult events in their lives, they are now independent and can provide for themselves and their families. With dignity, they have found a place in society.

© Photos : IOM/S.Desjardins - *The name of the beneficiaries has been changed for confidentiality*

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Mouna

a thirty year old mother

“I never wished to migrate, I never wanted to leave my children alone, but that was my destiny, everything is written”!

With the help of a hiring agency, Mouna relocated to one of the Gulf’s countries. She was deceived with a secretary position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was promised to earn a monthly salary of four hundred US dollars. Surprisingly the reality was entirely different! She was forced to work as a maid and babysitter. With no freedom to move; she was trapped and had no way to contact anyone for help. After six months, she suffered from an illness due to her hard-working conditions. Her employers then left her on the street and claimed her as defaulter just to avoid paying for her medical bills.

Once she was able to safely return home, Mouna opened a shop for women, with a good number of customers. Mouna can now provide for her children’s needs and take care of her family.

“I never thought I would become an entrepreneur one day! IOM helped me build my confidence. I am grateful, thank you, from the depth of my heart, thank you!”





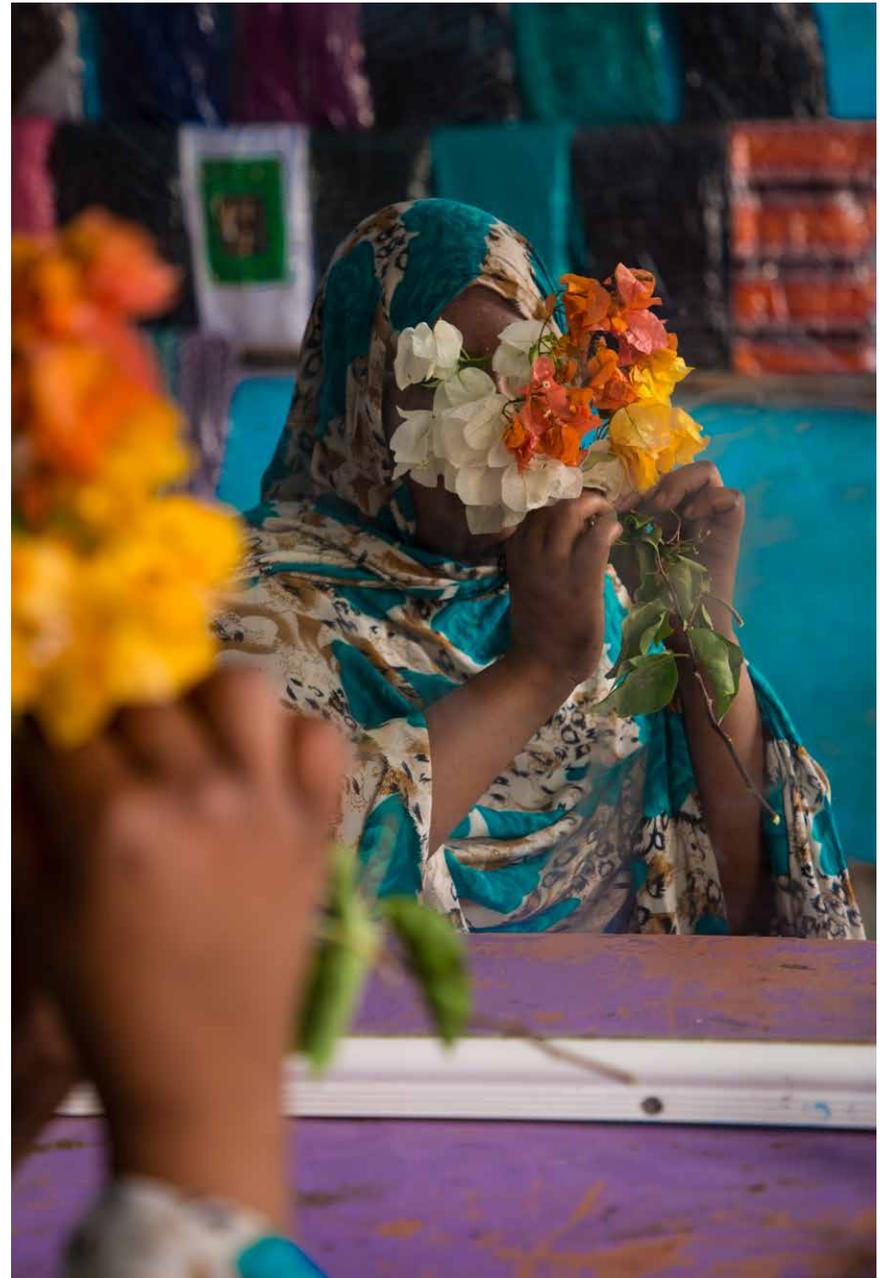
Tate

28 year old mother of three kids

“I will never forget that I once migrated to be a maid, thinking that this could help me resolve my issues. But I was sold out, exploited. My former employer asked me to help him hire more girls. I rejected his request, those were the darkest days of my life, and I do not wish anyone to go through this”.

After safely returning home, Tate now sells Mauritanian women veils. She was able to start off her business by supplying women veils, in which she sews and dyes thirty percent of her items. She added a fridge to offer ice cream to her customers. Her customers have recently suggested that she should also open a hairdressing salon.

“Thank you for your support; I can fulfill my duty as a first born, to manage a business and supply to my family’s needs”.





Khadijetou

37 year old mother

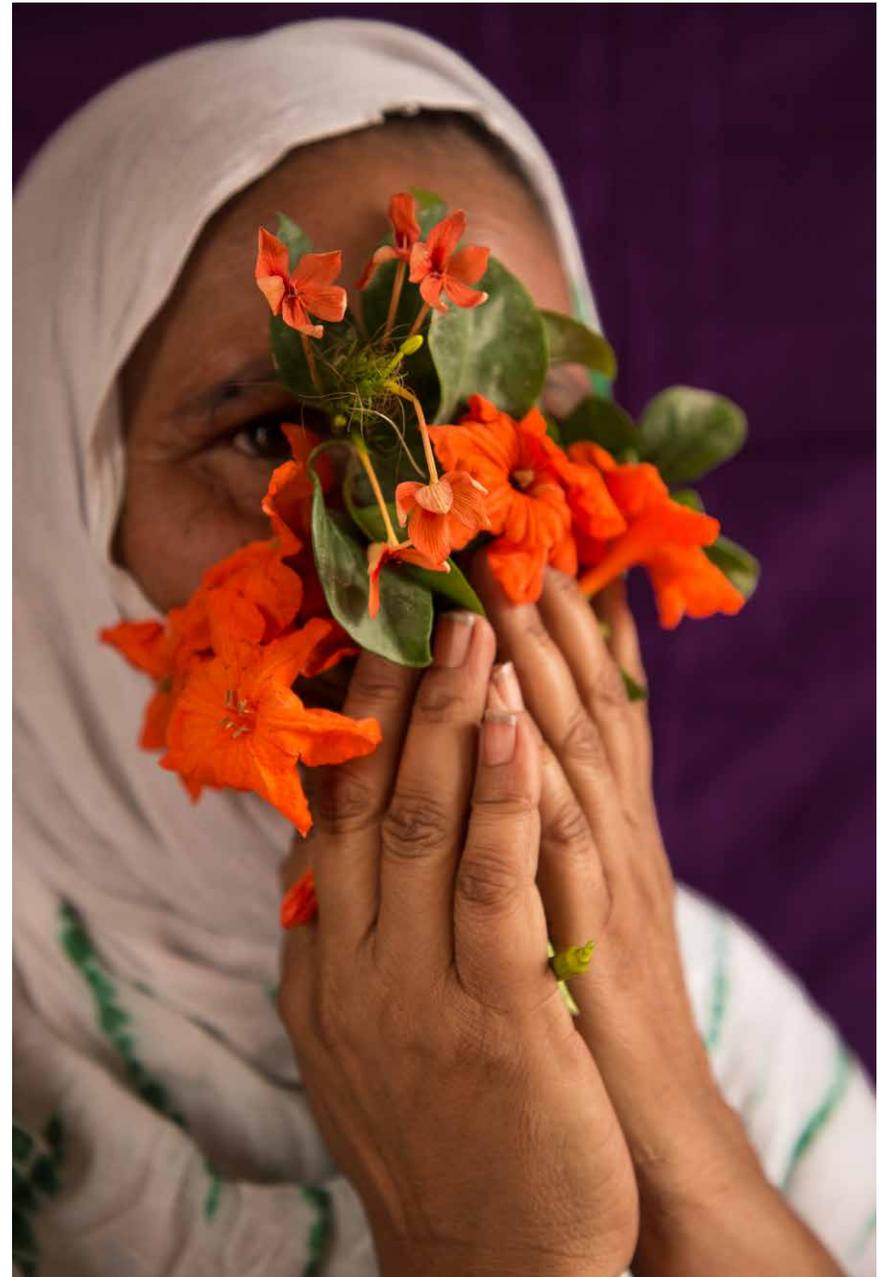
For two years, Khadijetou was exploited, tortured, separated from her beloved ones and unpaid.

She was mistreated, the skin on her fingers still carry marks of burns and scars. With the help and support of her family and her daily life activity, Khadijetou was able to start from scratch and build up her life again.

She first started by opening a grocery shop that did not succeed due to some issues such as inconvenient working hours, work-life imbalance, high rent charges, missing items; thus she chose to engage in a different business pattern.

With her savings, she built a shop on her land and started up a new business.

“It is a profitable business, I make good interests, my children attend school, and I can sustain to my family’s needs.”





Houda

a 33 year old mother of three children

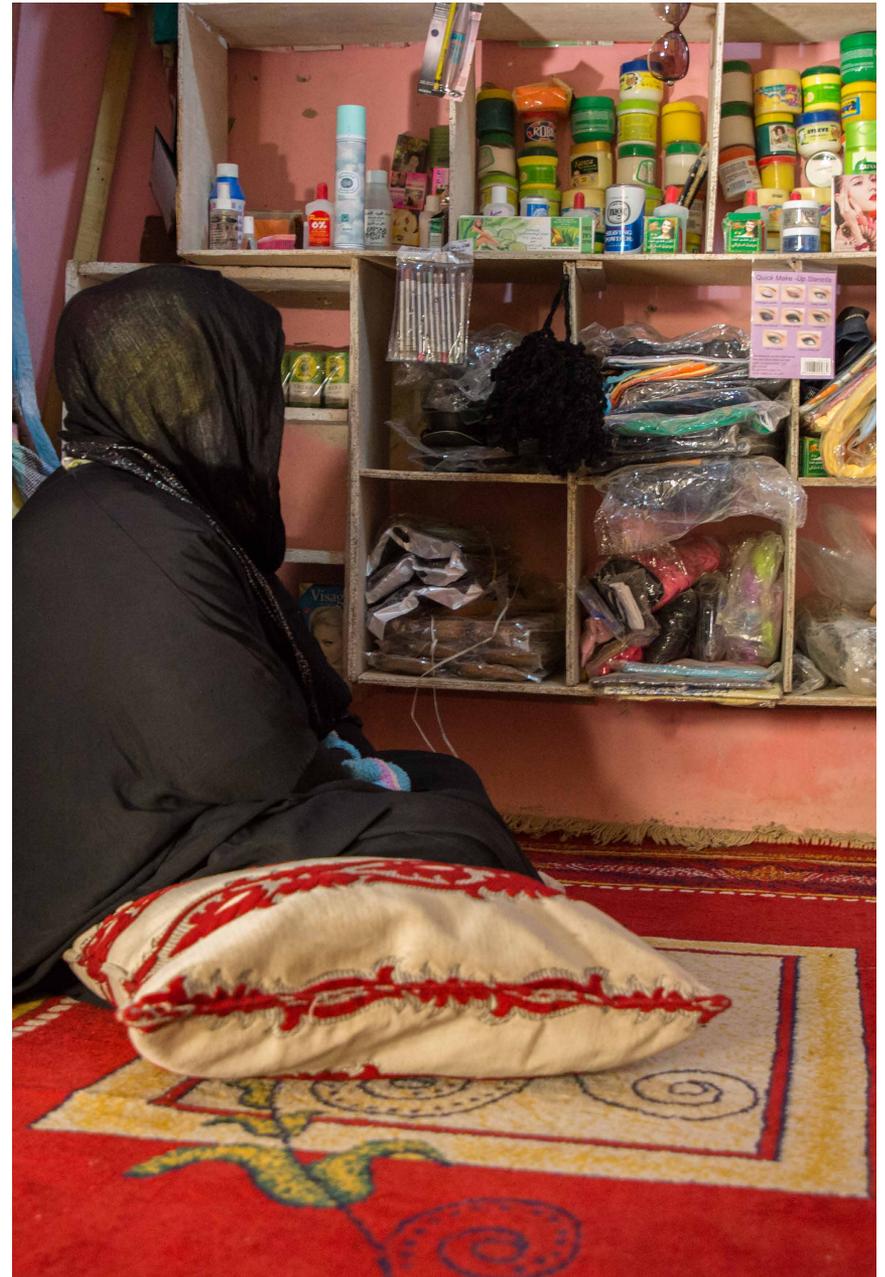
Houda never thought she would become a victim of trafficking in her life. A single, divorced mother of three children with her sick mother in her care, she was deceived by some empty promises of a hiring agent who guaranteed her a secure job abroad.

“When you live in a foreign country, away from your family, it’s depressing. You tend to have unhealthy thoughts. I lost any hope of seeing my family”.

She managed to return to Mauritania, her country of origin, by her own means and met a former IOM beneficiary of the reintegration program.

“I came to your office; I did not know anyone, I was welcomed, found comfort. I shared my story without any worry to be judged and stigmatized”.

Houda runs a business, she sells Mauritanian veils and jewels to women and plans to join a training program on management that will help her organize and grow her business.





Nasra

34 year old, mother of six children

“I was pregnant when my husband left me. When I left my country, my twins sons were three months old.”

In Nasra’s plan, migrating has never been part of the picture, but because of some peer pressure, the idea settled down, and she engaged in the adventure. She went through difficult times: she experienced racial discrimination, legal injustice, bad working conditions, and exploitation among other things. She spent 18 months working for an old woman. When her employer died, she was sent back to Mauritania.

“One year after my return, I heard about IOM. I came back with no savings, I could not provide for my family and feed my kids, and I depended on loans”.

She is enthusiastic, determined to improve her family status, and ambitious to grow her business. She has her financial dependency and able to meet her children’s needs.





Rakiya

52 year old, head of household

Rakiya worked in a farm overseas. Located 150 km from the city, she had no possibility to leave this place. She soon accepted to complete all the tasks assigned by her employer which included taking care of animals, watering and cleaning the fields. Outraged by the treatment she was enduring, the young firstborn of the family decided to take action. He contacted the family of Rakiya for them to sponsor her return.

Once back to Mauritania, she developed a restauration business with IOM support. She now owns a plot of land and wishes to build a house for her family.

“I was able to run a successful business but I have to start from scratch now because of certain circumstances. I am looking for a less physical job since I suffer from chronic rheumatism. I hope my daughter will benefit from a professional training because she needs to takeover now”.



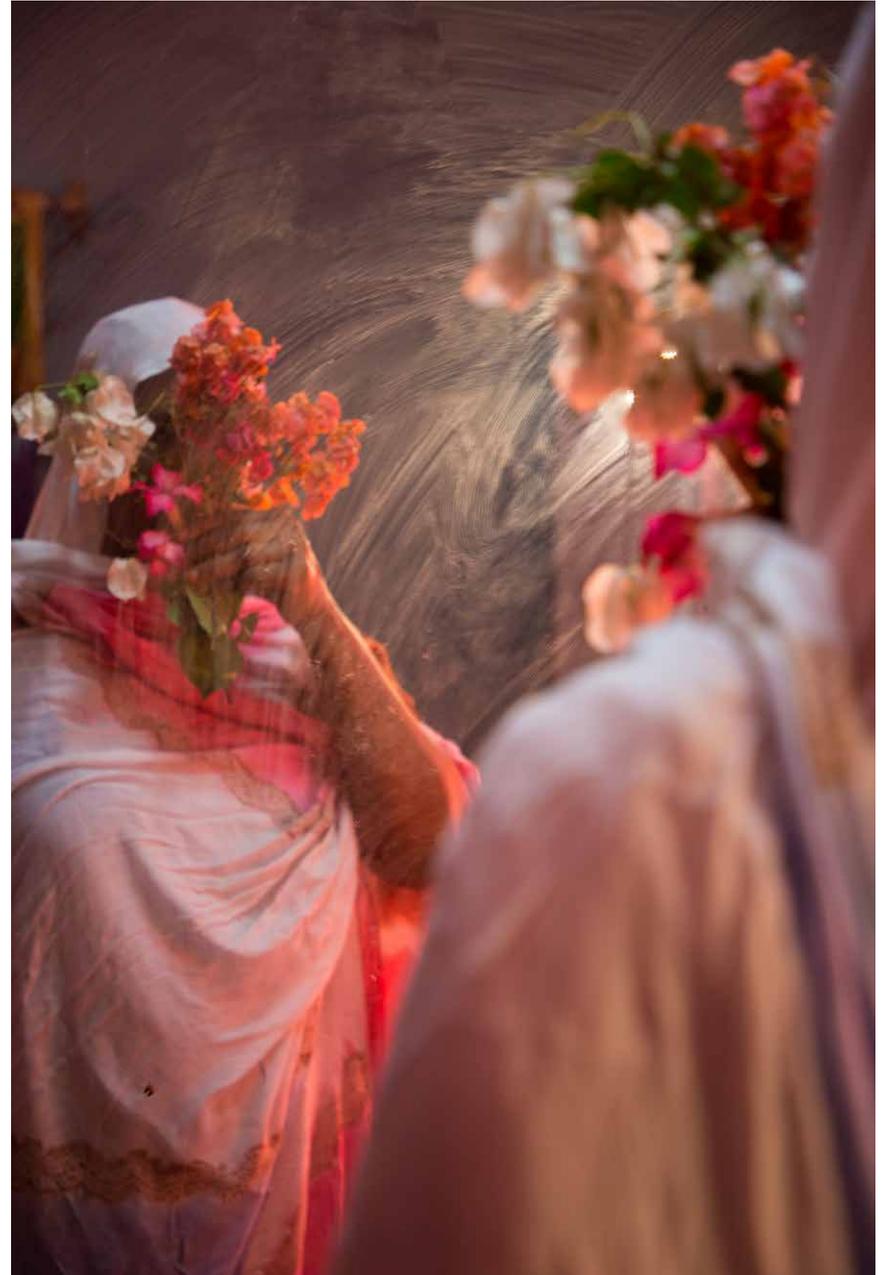


Salma

34 years old

Thinking of a better future, Salma decided to leave her country for work. Unfortunately, she was sold as a cleaning lady working in very difficult conditions. Following an accident, she was brought back to Mauritania. She opened a store on her property, started selling feminine products, and installed a refrigerator to sell ice. Her future project is to invest in a hairdressing salon.

“Only hard work pays off. Those who failed in their project either ignore the luck they received or are too lazy. You have to give 2000% of your energy because this is your project and the only way to rebuild yourself”.





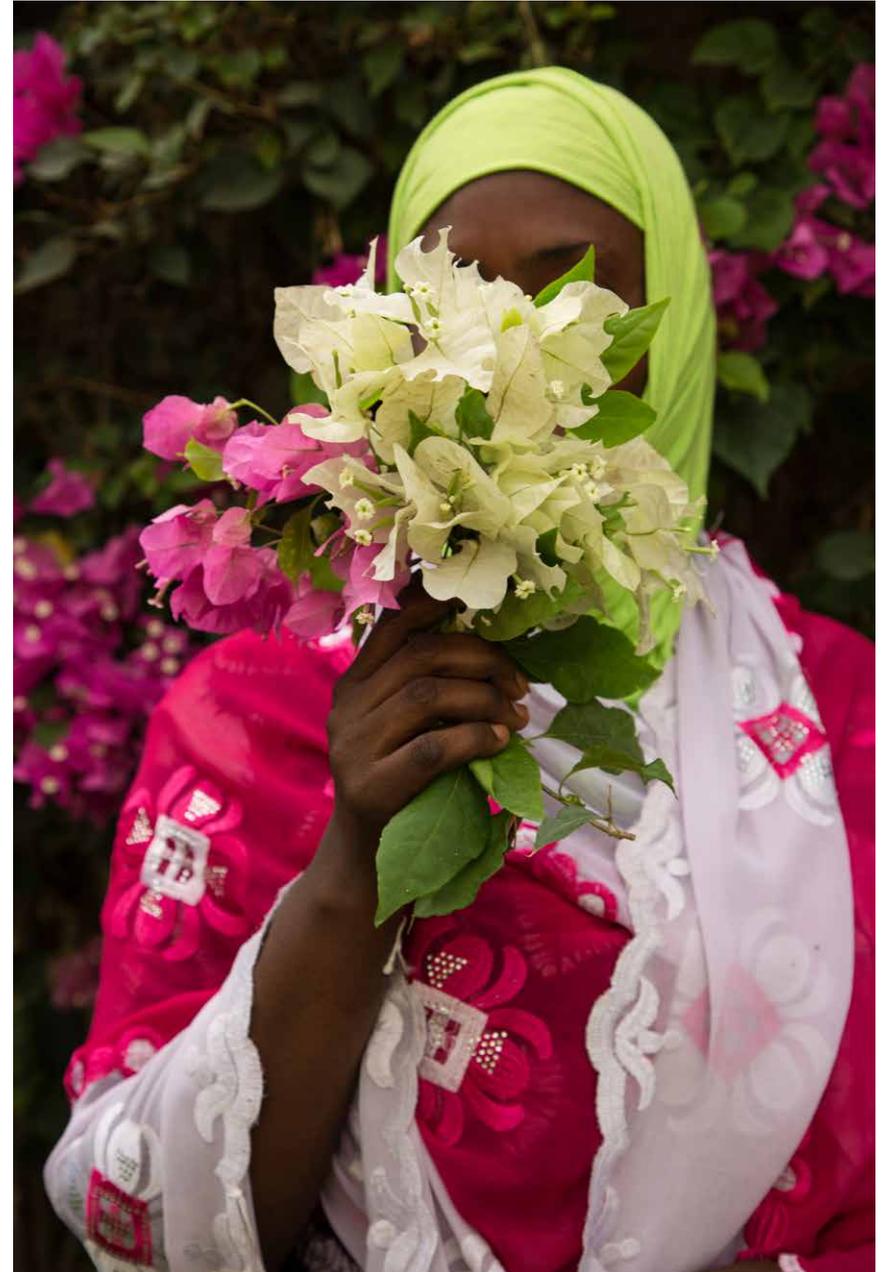
Rama

29 years old

Rama met Ali, a handsome young man, who gained her trust through his grandiose promises. He promised her the El Dorado, a world that does not exist. All she acquired were disillusionments.

Today she has started her own activity from home. She creates products that she sells to wholesalers and showcases them in traditional ceremonies.

“With the help of my brothers and sisters we renovated two houses and bought a 3rd one. We also have two toilets. My brother is a fisher and thanks to his help the entire family lives in dignity”.





Fama

29 years old

“Knocking on IOM’s door delighted me, as I did not know that my situation was abnormal. They showed me trust, and hospitality, that comforted my heart and pushed me to greater height”.

Fama endured human trafficking for eighteen months; she was brought back with serious health issues and dental diseases. With IOM’s support and her family loan, she started a taxi activity. She owns a vehicle and has been hired as a driver. It is a very successful business, she runs her own business and generates good interests.

Today, Fama looks at her future boldly and focuses on better days as she plans to apply for a diploma intake program.

