



the
Off Ramp

Impact Report

March 2020 - June 2021



we are immeasurably grateful.

In March of 2020,

within a week, we went from booking travel plans for big events to shutting down our studio and sending home our team. We didn't pause for long though.

As you may remember, we pivoted that same week to making face masks (4,500 in all!) for more vulnerable individuals and groups—a project that was supported by non-profit and Texas state organizations.

When we could no longer source fabric, we found additional work for our team members by designing one-off products using up any scrap of any size remaining in the studio.

Still, the going was tough. Without in-person events, we no longer had the sales to support full-time and part-time staff. We didn't have the raw materials to sustain long-term work. And we could not keep our studio and office open consistently and therefore access to our equipment was limited. To stay afloat, our business model had to evolve pretty significantly.

Then: the move to the Charlotte area. Due to restructuring changes within the organization for which she works, Nell permanently relocated to the east coast last fall, bringing The Off Ramp and Threads by Nomad with her.

We said our tearful goodbyes, comforted only by our ability to support those staying in Houston thanks to your generous contributions to our crisis intervention fund.

From the Carolinas, we have continued to carry forward our work and mission even as we have prayerfully considered what our next steps may be.

We contracted with Hayder, from a distance, for several custom projects using FaceTime and Zoom to coordinate measurements and alterations with customers.

Steadily, we have begun to build partnerships with state organizations, refugee/immigrant agencies, churches, and individuals in North and South Carolina preparing for this next stage in the life of The Off Ramp and Threads by Nomad.

As we continue to explore opportunities and make plans, we are encouraged—not just by what lies ahead but frankly we are also encouraged by what has been done. While this year was a doozy, a lot of good came out of it.

Looking back, we are proud of the positive impact we've had together. We could not have done any of this without you.

This pandemic-period Impact Report may have The Off Ramp's name and logo on the front cover but make no mistake: it is your impact report. You did all of this. And for that, we are immeasurably grateful.

Christen Kinard

and your friends at The Off Ramp

General



\$3,745
crisis intervention dollars distributed



\$6,220
dollars raised for the Seminario Intercultural Mayense in Chiapas, Mexico



55
families in **5 countries** directly impacted through our projects and grants—Mexico, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, United States



Project-Based



Face Masks

On Monday, March 16, 2020, we knew we were likely going to go into shutdown. On Wednesday, we closed our doors. On Friday, Nell received a call from someone connected to the governor's office. "Can you make masks for us?" We began the very next week making masks first for youth service organizations in Texas and then other non-profits. By the time the demand for masks had subsided, we had produced 4,500 keeping two refugees employed making a full time wage for a few months into the pandemic.

4500
face masks made and distributed in Texas and along the Texas/Mexico border

2
refugees earned a full-time wage while making these masks in Houston, Texas

Amani Sasa: Building Careers in Uganda

Amani Sasa is an organization that works for the safety, wholeness, and empowerment of refugees in Uganda. With few to no safety nets in Ugandan society, the pandemic of COVID-19 dramatically impacted this vulnerable population. As Amani Sasa transitions from crisis mode to equipping and empowering, we have joined them in a project that helps women build careers.

We came together to provide training in basket weaving. Each program participant successfully completing the course is given an opportunity to become part of a cooperative and receive financial help to purchase initial supplies. During their time of learning each woman receives mentoring, on-site meals and childcare if needed.

16

women trained in
basket-weaving in
Kampala, Uganda

16

baskets delivered
as part of our first
order, available at
[threadsbynomad.com](https://www.threadsbynomad.com)



The Esther Project Shop: Supporting Artisans in Kenya

25

artisans supported in
and around Nairobi,
Kenya

The Esther Project Shop was created to help combat human trafficking in Kenya through the development of a market for handcrafted artisanal goods made by women who are in vulnerable situations. The Off Ramp assists The Esther Project Shop with product development and quality control, as well as through the sale of their goods at [threadsbynomad.com](https://www.threadsbynomad.com).

By supporting The Esther Project Shop through The Off Ramp, you are helping women in Kenya provide for their families. All of the products are handmade and each one is different.



Lupe's Soap: A Story of Reinvention

Guadalupe Franco is a diplomat from Venezuela. She arrived in the United States in 2017, fleeing the political and humanitarian turmoil in her country where she also owned a personal care company called Marea (meaning tides).

Now in the United States, upon the realization that a career in her field is not possible, she has launched a new skincare business.

The Off Ramp is supporting Lupe in the growing of her business through mentorship in business development and consulting in product development and marketing.

Snack Packs: Preventing Trafficking at the Border



Displaced people are vulnerable to falling prey to human traffickers. People who have come to the Texas/Mexico border are at particularly high risk. As part of this project, we invite individuals and groups to purchase and make up food packets to be distributed among those who are displaced in that area. Inside each food packet we place a card with information regarding signs of potential trafficking and ways a trafficker might approach. The national human trafficking hotline is also included.



500

snack bags packed

2

snack bag packing
events in Houston,
Texas hosted by **1** of
our board members

1

woman offered hope
for a more fulfilling
future and career in
Alexandria, VA

2

new products
developed

1

new LLC founded

58

soaps and **4 scrubs**
sold across the
country through
threadsbynomad.com





The Master's Handicrafts: Changing Women's Lives in Kyrgyzstan

The Master's Handicrafts is an export business in the country of Kyrgyzstan dedicated to helping indigenous women of Central Asia develop marketable skills and provide for their families.

The Master's Handicrafts is more than a business though. Co-founders Sharla and her husband spend time counseling the women who work with them, offer shelter to them when needed, pay for medical expenses occasionally, and invest in creating community.

The Off Ramp supports The Master's Handicrafts through product development, the sale of products via threadsbynomad.com, and marketing consultation.

Kin & Care: A Project Completed!

1

new product
developed in
Bethesda, MD

Kin and Care employs refugee women in the Washington, D.C. area. The small business's goal is to hire more women and offer more opportunities for them to thrive. To that end, The Off Ramp provided consultation support and a grant to procure the raw materials for a new product line. A refugee from Iran was taught product development and trained/mentored others.

3

refugee women taught
a new skill and given
additional hours of
work to support their
families

This project reached its benchmark and we are blessing Kin & Care as they move forward. Threads by Nomad will continue carrying Kin & Care's products and you can shop them all at threadsbynomad.com

5

new products created
and produced in
collaboration with The
Master's Handicrafts

5

women supported in
Kyrgyzstan



Refuge & Hope: Product Development in Uganda

Refuge and Hope International in Kampala, Uganda helps refugees and displaced people rebuild their lives. One of the ways they are accomplishing this is through a sewing program called Sewing Hope. The Off Ramp has come alongside them to help develop product, implement quality control, and develop marketing strategies.

5

women trained in
sewing and tailoring in
Kampala, Uganda

26

skirts made for 2
orders placed for
threadsbynomad.com

150

ornaments
sold through
threadsbynomad.com



Threads by Nomad

Nell and Christen—a mother-daughter duo and lifelong “nomads”—had dreamt for years of owning a business together. At one point, they considered writing a book or maybe even opening a store. But in December of 2015, they returned to Dakar, Senegal where they lived in the 1980s and '90s only to fall in love all over again with the fabrics and fashion from that part of the world. The seed for Threads by Nomad was planted.

After three years of steady growth, in 2019 Threads by Nomad became a subsidiary of The Off Ramp. The Off Ramp shares in Threads' mission of creating opportunities to thrive for those who are displaced or in danger of being displaced. Together, Threads by Nomad and The Off Ramp seek to help end the cycle of poverty for these individuals by investing in them and their talents.

9

countries impacted through
the purchase of products—
Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan,
Madagascar, Peru, Turkey, Uganda,
United States



6

The Off Ramp partners have an
expanded market for their goods
thanks to Threads by Nomad





the
Off Ramp

become a *change*-maker

theofframp.org