

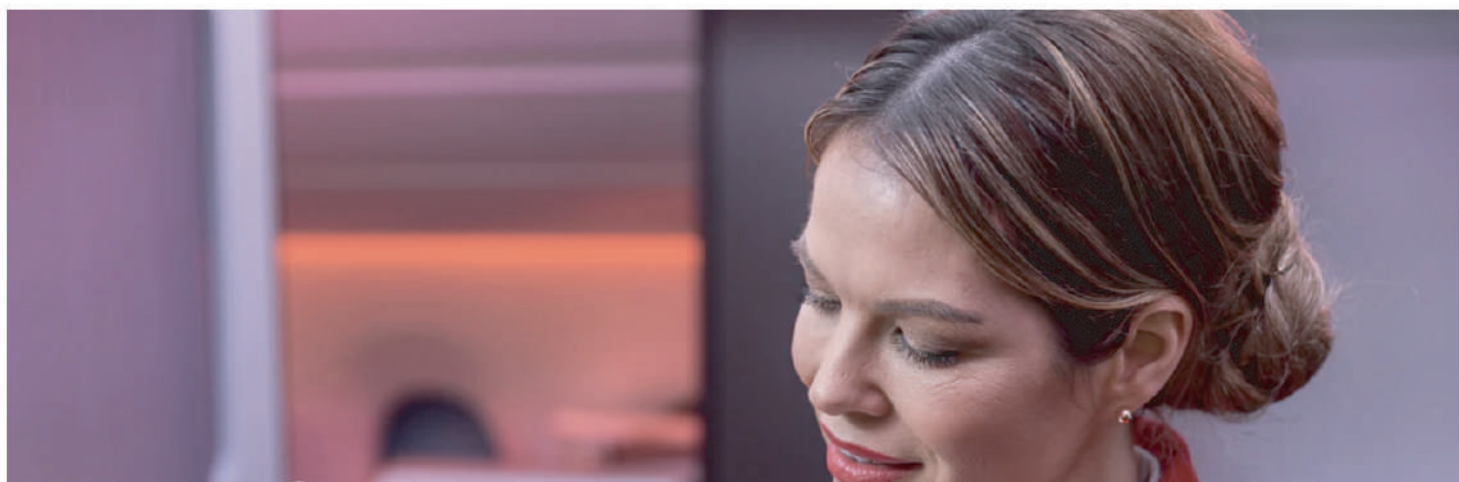


Refugee craftsmanship launches on Virgin Atlantic

Posted by **MADE51 Team** on April 05, 2022

Refugee-made artisanal products from MADE51 launched today on Virgin Atlantic flights. This is an exciting step forward for MADE51 and our collaboration with Virgin companies. It is also a new milestone in Virgin Atlantic's commitment to supporting refugees and builds on their long-term partnership with UK for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency's national partner for the United Kingdom.

Estelle Hollingsworth, Chief People Officer, Virgin Atlantic commented, "As part of our longstanding commitment to supporting refugee causes, Virgin Atlantic is delighted to be stocking MADE51 in our Retail Therapy onboard shopping offering. This fantastic initiative by UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) allows refugees to utilise their skills and talents and we know our customers will welcome this chic range of home décor and accessories. Through our Virgin Atlantic Foundation, we are incredibly proud to support UNHCR's mission to create work, opportunity and chances of a better life for all."





Customers on Virgin Atlantic flights can now purchase this beaded bracelet, along with three other refugee-made products. (Photo Credit: Virgin Atlantic)

The four products on board were hand-selected by the Virgin Atlantic team. Two delicate beaded bracelets made by refugees in East Africa are available; these are made in collaboration with our social enterprise partners Bawa Hope in Kenya and Roots in South Sudan. There is also a wool scarf embroidered by Afghan refugee women, made in collaboration with our social enterprise partner Artisan Links in Pakistan, and leather tassel keychains made by Malian refugee women living in Niger. This selection of items is a window into the valuable heritage skills possessed by refugees around the world and allows Virgin Atlantic to introduce the diversity of MADE51 products to their customers.

“At the heart of what we’re aiming to do is create greater market access for refugee-made products and a greater appreciation for the incredible talents that are possessed by forcibly displaced people around the world,” said Heidi Christ, Global Lead for MADE51 at the UNHCR. “Seeing refugee craftsmanship onboard Virgin Atlantic is an exciting example of how companies can engage with UNHCR through MADE51 and show their support for refugees.”



Four MADE51 products now available on Virgin Atlantic flights. (Photo Credit: Virgin Atlantic)

This is not the first time a Virgin company has given refugee craftsmanship a platform: in 2019 Virgin Megastores launched MADE51 products in their stores in Dubai and inaugurated the moment with a launch event featuring Sir Richard Branson and UNHCR's Director of External Relations, Dominique Hyde.

In addition to its partnership with MADE51, Virgin Atlantic is empowering refugees through the Virgin Atlantic Foundation and their Passport to Change programme. Together with charity partner UK for UNHCR, they are helping refugee children in Delhi access quality education through accelerated learning and language classes, and providing the electronic devices needed for remote learning.

UK for UNHCR has been a strong supporter of the engagement between MADE51 and Virgin Atlantic. "We're thrilled that Virgin Atlantic is standing with refugees and helping promote their craftsmanship to Virgin Atlantic passengers," said Emma Cherniavsky, CEO, UK for UNHCR. "Innovative, collaborative opportunities such as this can be transformational for refugee communities as they rebuild their lives after fleeing conflict or persecution. By sourcing refugee-made products from MADE51, Virgin Atlantic is demonstrating how companies can become advocates for change by connecting refugee entrepreneurs with global markets."



Left: Grey wool scarf, embroidered by Afghan refugee women in Pakistan, in collaboration with MADE51 local social enterprise partner, Artisan Links. Right: Leather 'Tassel of Strength' handcrafted by Malian refugee women in Niger. (Photo Credit: Virgin Atlantic)