



SUCCESS STORIES FROM HRAPF'S LEGAL AID FIELD OFFICE IN YUMBE

PROJECT PERIOD: JUNE 2019-DECEMBER 2020

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BACKGROUND

In Uganda 50% of women face sexual and gender-based violence including those from the refugee settlements as they migrate from hostile environments with wars and diseases which affects them psychologically .

A total of 2685 (2206 of them female and 479 of them male) sexual gender based violence (SGBV) incidents were reported between January and July 2019 from refugee hosting districts. In July 479 (436 of them female and 43 of them male) incidents were reported, a 20% increase from the previous month where 50 cases involved children.

Physical assault (32%) remained the most prevalent form of sexual gender based violence (SGBV) reported, followed by rape (25%) psychological/emotional abuse (25%), denial of resources (10%), forced/early marriage (2%) and sexual assault (1%) .

Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) implemented the “Sustaining access to primary healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive health, including treatment and care for victims of gender-based violence in Northern Uganda - Health response to the impact of the protracted South Sudanese crisis in Uganda in 2019”

project with the support of Medicines du Monde (MDM). The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the reduction of morbidity and mortality among South Sudanese refugees in Bidibidi settlement and their host communities in Yumbe district, Northern Uganda.

This project commenced on 1st of June 2019 and ended on the 31st of December 2020. Initially the project was to end in May 2020 but a no cost extension was granted until 31st December 2020.

Under this project, HRAPF implemented activities aimed at increasing access to Justice targeting refugees and the host community populations of Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, particularly victims of gender based violence under the following result areas:

- A total of 679 refugees within the settlement benefitted from the 160 cases on Gender Based Violence (GBV).
- HRAPF trained 22 community paralegals among refugees and host communities in Yumbe who have been able to handle cases of gender based violence in their communities.

INCREASED ACCESS TO LEGAL AID SERVICES IN THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN YUMBE

- A total of 998 participants, 578 female and 420 male were reached out during 6 awareness sessions on gender based violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRH).
- HRAPF conducted 5 dialogues with duty bearers and other stakeholders/ actors working with refugees to ensure there is increased knowledge on sexual gender based violence.
- With aim to increase awareness a total of 5 radio talk shows about various topics related to sexual and gender based violence including discouraging the negative sociocultural practices that influence gender based violence within the refugee communities.

HRAPF also conducted an End line evaluation for the project and one of the expected outputs was to document the project's impact stories. This booklet therefore illustrates success stories that were obtained from some of the projects' beneficiaries.

“I benefitted from the legal aid services”



Rose Dawa is 20 years old and lives in the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement Village 8. She is married with one child and is a teacher in a nursery school in this refugee settlement and she is a survivor of Sexual Gender Based violence (SGBV). Rose was being assaulted by her husband for more than a year. Her husband had an alcohol problem and didn't want her to continue working as a teacher. He convinced the school administration to stop her from teaching, which was a job that she loved. She is one of the 1st clients that the HRAPF legal aid clinic handled.

“Due to the constant fights I shifted to village nine”

Rose reported her case to HRAPF partners, Medicines du Monde (MdM) at the GBV clinic who later referred it to HRAPF during the monthly partnership meetings. When the HRAPF legal officers received the case, they opened a file with details of what had transpired between Rose and her husband and a date for the mediation between the two parties was set. The first two mediations were unsuccessful as the husband continued to batter Rose. In the third mediation however, Rose shared that the husband's attitude towards her had changed given that he stopped drinking alcohol. The attitude change happened because Rose's husband was counseled on the dangers of gender-based violence.

On the downside, the community Refugee Welfare Committee (RWCs) which acts as the Local Council in the settlement was involved in the mediation to resolve this issue and the child management committee objected to her return to work. This mediation also led to the perpetrator (Rose's husband) fleeing to South Sudan. This greatly affected Rose as she was unable to provide for her

children because her husband was the breadwinner of the home. Rose is however optimistic that she will be able to raise and provide for her children because she is a hardworking woman and also because she is no longer restricted by violence from her partner.

Rose recommended that HRAPF

“I appreciate what HRAPF did for me in this case because I am able to look after my children without any disturbance”

should conduct more follow-up on GBV cases and counsel the perpetrators of violence in families in the refugee communities.

*“I am very happy that HRAPF has trained me as a paralegal who had been a victim of gender based violence. I intend to use the training I have received to assist women in the refugee camp just like me!”
Rose Dawa said.*



IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE ON SGBV THROUGH PARALEGAL TRAININGS OF REFUGEE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.



“The training made me acquire knowledge on the roles of paralegals like identifying cases and I have so far identified 8 cases in the communities that include emotional, physical and economic violence” Ruman said.

Ruman Isaya is a paralegal that was trained in February 2020 by HRAPF. Ruman had just finished his O’levels from Ombachi SS in Koboko in 2018 before starting his paralegal trainings.

Ruman was part of drama group that used skits to create awareness on legal issues and GBV. It is from this group that he was selected by MdM

as a youth senator. It is through MdM that he was introduced to HRAPF and selected to be trained as a community paralegal. Ruman has mediated and completed 3 cases in the settlement. One was at police and the other 2 were handled with the community Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) in village 10 in March and July 2020.

In one of the successful cases he mediated, he handled a case of a one Mary Adare who had had a misunderstanding with her husband. Her husband felt like she did not respect him and his visitors so the argument ended up in a physical fight. Ruman picked up this case and intervened and advised Mary to file the case at the police. It was successful mediation and the couple is now happy because they were counselled and informed on the effects of SGBV in families.

“With the help of the security personnel in the community I mediated this case”

Ruman has also referred several cases of physical assault to the police and health centers.

“The training empowered me with mediation skills in terms of being neutral while handling cases and also exposed me to knowledge on the laws and SGBV”

Ruman has also enrolled for certificate course in NGO management at Arua African Population institute and is currently finalising his 1st year.

INCREASED AWARENESS ON EFFECTS SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AMONGST REFUGEES

“We called you to raise awareness on the issue of GBV and give information where services are available in instances of abuse”

Susan Irene a resident in Bidi Bidi refugee settlement.

Susan Irene is resident in Village 10 who attended an awareness session in December 2019 conducted under the MdM project. The session she attended was about GBV prevention and the dangers of early child marriage.

“It was conducted near my home at ECs church and by then I was digging in my garden so I decided to abandon what I was doing to attend this session because it seemed interesting”

she said.

Susan noted that the awareness session led to a reduction in early marriages in her village because they learnt about the dangers of early marriages and complications that arise during birth. The advice given to them has changed their lives because every community member is able to identify cases of SGBV and report them within 72 hours.

“The awareness conducted by HRAPF and MdM was good because it has opened my eyes on GBV issues” Susan said.



Wani Fred (Village 7 In The Settlement)

Wani also attended one of the dialogues and he said that it helped him because he used to physically assault his wife but after attending the dialogue, he got awareness on the negative implications of gender based violence.



“I am now aware that beating my wife is not a solution to our problems in the family” he said.

Wani said that he now knows where to report cases of SGBV like to the RWCs, community paralegals or directly to the HRAPF office in Bolomoni Health Center III. He noted that mediations have had a huge positive impact on some of the community members who have changed their ways.

Wani asked that the project should provide the community paralegals,

RWCs and church leaders with phones to enable them to do more awareness on GBV by reaching a wider community and also improve on the frequency of reporting of cases of GVB in the refugee community.

Rose Kiden (Village 7 in the settlement)

Rose attended one of the dialogue and one of the major things that stood out to her was the importance of moving in groups when collecting firewood to avoid being raped. Rose noted that during the dialogue she learnt where to report cases of gender based violence and she has also been engaged in some sensitisation sessions with young girls to educate them on dangers of SGBV, early marriages and pregnancies.

Rose noted that HRAPF should continue serving the community through conducting more awareness and to also support the community paralegals to provide legal aid to the refugee community members.



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