



Quarterly Newsletter

April - June 2021



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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   Rainbo Initiative

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

ENGAGEMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



On Wednesday 19th May 2021, Rainbo Initiative in collaboration with the Center for Research and Parliamentary Studies in the Parliament of Sierra Leone engaged two outstanding parliamentary oversight committees (Gender & Children's Affairs, and Health & Sanitation), and some members of the Female Caucus in a day-long workshop themed: "the role of service providers and Parliament to end Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone."

Welcoming Members of Parliament (MPs), the Executive Director of Rainbo Initiative, Daniel Kettor said, "we are here to discuss sexual offences that are strongly affecting the development and growth of women in Sierra Leone", adding that the government has taken serious actions aimed at addressing Gender-Based Violence and commended MPs for enacting into law the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 and as amended in 2019 and called on MPs to work directly with civil society organisations to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the country.

The training utilised participatory approaches to increase the MPs understanding of issues surrounding SGBV and it was led by Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, former Minority Leader in Parliament. She presented an abridged version of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act of 2019 and spoke on the need for effective oversight by MPs and the use of data to enhance effective Parliamentary oversight.

At the end of the training, the MPs committed themselves to the following;

- ✚ To collaborate with Rainbo Initiative and other organisations to ensure that the ultimate goal of ending Gender-Based Violence is realised.
- ✚ Organise sensitisation meetings in their constituencies to educate their people on the Sexual Offences Amendment Act of 2019 and raise awareness on SGBV.
- ✚ Advocate for an increase in the budget that goes to Health and Police - FSU to support survivors of SGBV receive the services that are due to them based on the Presidents declaration of a national state of emergency on rape and sexual violence in February 2019.
- ✚ Advocate for more resources for Rainbo Initiative to expand to other districts and for a plot of land in Freetown to construct and equip a Rainbo Centre of Excellence.

SURVIVORS VOICE

THE STORY OF A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO WAS BRUTALLY PENETRATED BY A MAN OLD ENOUGH TO BE HER GRANDFATHER.

According to her mother, the girl was sent to deliver food to her grandmother not too far from their house when she met her abuser.



RAINBO INITIATIVE SIGNED MOU WITH GOLDEN TREASURE WORLD OF MUSIC.



A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Rainbo Initiative and a young female artist - Treasure Lucinda Kallon of Golden Treasure World of Music as 'SGBV Ambassador' to raise awareness on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone.

Treasure is a young talented Sierra Leonean artist from the Golden Treasure World of Music that exists to entertain and educate people about girls and women empowerment through their lyrics. They also run the Golden Treasure Foundation to mobilise resources and support women and girls to reach their true potentials.

Rainbo Initiative believes that this partnership will contribute to achieving its vision of ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone.

“He approached my daughter and requested for the food but she refused. He offered her money to buy the food, she also turned him down. That was when he forcefully grabbed and dragged her into his room and raped her. My daughter’s pride was taken away, and her womanhood violated”. The young girl was devastated and highly traumatised by the act, and overwhelmed with grief.

The girl was later taken to the Rainbo Centre in Makeni where she was attended to and later referred to the Rainbo Medical Doctor at the Makeni Government Hospital for further examination. Based on the findings the little girl suffered from swollen vulva and distended lower abdomen which made it difficult for her to pass urine on her own for days, as a result of severe lower abdominal pain.

“He forcefully grabbed and dragged her into his room and raped her. My daughter’s pride was taken away, and her womanhood violated.”

She was immediately put on treatment and RI was responsible for all the bills and services rendered including medical treatment, transportation, feeding, clothing, and other services received each time she went for treatment at the hospital.

As a result of the abuse, the little girl had to stop going to school because she couldn't walk normally, but with the continued engagement of the Rainbo Centre in Makeni "my daughter is now preparing for her NPSE exams, more determined to continue schooling and pursue her passion." Her mother said.

"The accused was later arrested and detained but later released by the police because I gave up, as I couldn't continue feeding somebody who raped my daughter." She said, crying bitterly; as she narrates her daughter's horrific ordeal. This was after the mother had provided food for the accused in police custody for about 18 days with her own money.

Listening to the mother, you can feel the anguish her family had to go through and with frustration and anger at the Sierra Leone justice system for failing to provide justice for her daughter. This family was exposed to the realities of what thousands of SGBV survivors are going through from a system that is supposed to protect and defend their human rights and dignity.

"He was released by the police because I gave up. I couldn't continue feeding somebody that raped my daughter. Imagine the pains and hurt we were subjected to."

The young girl is determined to achieve her dream of becoming a lawyer so that she will serve as a symbol of hope for survivors of SGBV in her community. Rainbo Initiative will keep an eye on the case and make follow-up visits to her to make sure she's doing well in the community and school.

THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS

892 (884 Female, **8** Male) GBV cases (**790**

Sexual Assault and **102** Physical Assault) were reported at our five Rainbo Centres. At the time they visited our Centres for medical and psychosocial support after being raped, **112** were pregnant, **6** had HIV/AIDS, with **262** were infected with other STIs.

23,760 people were reached in **216**

community engagement sessions in **75** communities with messages on SGBV, its referral Pathways and GBV laws by the Focal Point Volunteers, Community Champions and Gender Support Groups.

15 representatives from the Community of Practice (CoP) Partners were engaged on SGBV case management in Makeni.

360 members from **24** Gender Support Groups (GSG's) were trained in small grant management and business development skills across Freetown, Bo and Bombali Districts.

It is the responsibility of everyone to keep children safe from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in our communities. Speak up against it, as the power of the harasser, the abuser, and the continuity of the rapist lies in our silence. Speak Up Now!

COMING UP

SIGNING OF CONTRACT FOR TWO NEW PROJECTS.

In the coming months, Rainbo Initiative will sign contracts with Partners In Health (PIH) and the Conforti Girls Empowerment Vocational Institutes to implement a 3-year and a 9-month projects respectively. The 'No Woman or Girl Left Behind (NWGLB)' project with PIH will run from April 2021 – November 2023, to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services, strengthen prevention and treatment for survivors of SGBV, and conduct awareness-raising sessions on SGBV related services in Kono District.

The 9 months (July 2021 – January 2022) Conforti Girls Empowerment Vocational Institutes funded project aims at creating a pathway for 40 out-of-school and teenage mothers to integrate into free Technical Vocational and Training (TVET) course in Freetown and 40 young people (former AWC fistula patients) in Port Loko District for a free Technical Vocational and Training (TVET) course focusing on agricultural production and marketing. The goal of this project is to increase access to demand-led skills training, whilst building the foundations for a demand-led skills development system in Sierra Leone.

The project is part of the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) Sierra Leone Skills Development Project (SLSDP) with loan financing from the World Bank. The project has two components: Skills Development Fund and Capacity Building & System Strengthening.

LAUNCHING OF RAINBO INITIATIVE STRATEGIC PLAN - 2020-2024 AND THE HALF-YEAR (2021) SGBV SURVIVORS' DATA.

The launching of Rainbo Initiative Strategic Plan - 2020-2024 and the 2021 Half-Year SGBV Survivors' Data will be done with the focus of providing information on how the strategy will support our work as we continue to empower communities to prevent and respond to SGBV, ensuring survivors have improved outcomes and also provide an insight into sexual and physical assault cases reported so far (January - June 2021) at our five (5) Rainbo Centres across the country.

OUR PARTNERS

