



# Quarterly Newsletter

July – September 2021



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## Inside The Issue

1. News Highlights
2. Survivors Voice
3. This Quarter in Numbers
4. Coming Up

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) Rainbo Initiative

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

### THE NEW EUROPEAN UNION AMBASSADOR TO SIERRA LEONE VISITS THE RAINBO CENTRE IN BO

Head of the EU Delegation to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Manuel Müller, and the Head of Cooperation, Gerald Hatler, made a courtesy call at the Rainbo Centre in Bo.

The visiting team were excited to learn about our work with and for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as we continue to provide lifesaving services.

The engagement was very important in providing support for the operations of the Rainbo Centres in Bo, Makeni and Freetown and also our work with communities through the outreach program to raise awareness by strengthening community involvement in SGBV awareness, as we continue to provide quality services to women and girls to prevent further harm from the effects of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the country.

Ambassador Müller after interacting with staff at the Rainbo Centre reaffirmed the EU's commitment to helping address the challenges posed by Sexual Gender-Based Violence for women and girls in Sierra

Leone As issues related to gender is an integral part of their work.

Gibril Kargbo, Deputy Executive Director of Rainbo Initiative, thanked the visiting team on behalf of the organisation, Board of Directors the survivors of SGBV.

He further assured them that RI will continue to engage communities to strengthen its involvement in SGBV awareness raising, changing perceptions and attitudes towards survivors of SGBV in the communities.

This was the Ambassador's first visit to an EU partner organisation since his arrival in Sierra Leone.

The European Union through the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone is supporting Rainbo Initiative to empower communities to end Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone, through the "*Strengthening Gender-Based Violence Prevention and inclusive Response Services in Sierra Leone (SGP Project)*".

The SGP is a 36-months (September 2019 – March 2022) project, being implemented in a consortium with Handicap International and CARE Sierra Leone, led by Rainbo Initiative in the districts of Makeni, Bo and Freetown.



The project is empowering 48 Gender Focal Point Volunteers and 24 Gender Support Groups including 360 individuals in more than 24 communities, to disseminate messages on preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. It is focused on the protection of marginalised women and girls, especially those living with disabilities and support survivors with referral pathways within the community to access services and follow up cases.

## **RAINBO INITIATIVE AND LAWYERS TRAINED HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS ON CLINICAL CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS**



There are now only a handful of specialised trained medical doctors providing clinical management (medical examinations and care) for sexual assault survivors in the country, with a serious constraint in prosecuting these cases when comparing the present number of trained medical practitioners dealing with

rape and sexual penetration survivors to a large number of Sexual Assault cases pending in court.

To salvage this situation, Rainbo Initiative in collaboration with the Legal Access through Women Yearning for Equality Rights & Social justice (LAWYERS), with support by Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Irish Aid organised 5 days of intensive training on Clinical Care for Sexual Assault Survivors for medical doctors and Lawyers.

Facilitation was done by Dr. Olabisi Claudius-Cole and Dr Christine Williams, Rainbo Initiative's training specialist. Training modules included clinical case management, performing a survivor-led physical examination, offering psychosocial support to survivors, documentation and reporting among other things.

A session was facilitated by LAWYERS focusing on the Sexual Offences Laws in Sierra Leone and Analysing medical evidence in court proceedings in a manner that aids the court proceedings.

This engagement seeks to address the issue of cases being thrown out of court due to insufficient evidence on the medical certificate, thereby helping survivors' access justice in the shortest possible time.

## **VISIT OF IRISH AID NEW INTERIM HEAD TO THE BO RAINBO CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**



The New Head of Development at the Embassy of Ireland in Sierra Leone, Gerard Considine, accompanied by the Gender Advisor, Mrs. Nafisatu Jalloh, and the M&E Programme Officer, Madam Aminata Jalloh visited the Rainbo Centre of Excellence

in Bo on Friday 13th August 2021. This was a familiarisation visit for the New Head of Development to Irish Aid funded projects, and Rainbo Initiative was selected as the first organisation to visit.

Rainbo Initiative is implementing an Irish Aid funded project **“Improving the Availability of Quality and Free Health Care Service for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (ImAQF)”**

The project aims at making sure that women and girls are aware of, have access to, and utilise, quality and comprehensive free multi-sectoral treatment that prevents further harm from the effects of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Irish Aid has been supporting Rainbo Initiative for over 10yrs now.

## **SURVIVORS VOICE**

### **THE STORY OF A 13 YEARS OLD GIRL WHO WAS IMPREGNATED BY HER 49-YEAR-OLD FATHER.**

The alleged perpetrator has been sleeping with his daughter since she was age 13. Each time the girl refuses him, he will torture and forcefully penetrate her, threatening to kill her if she ever mentions the abuse to anyone.

The girl was staying with him and the stepmother in Freetown. Before the girl came to Freetown she was living with her mother in the village but the father brought her to stay with them in Freetown in 2013.

The abuse started in 2019 until July 2021, when the girl fell sick. The stepmother suspecting the girl of being pregnant explained to one of her neighbours. The neighbour then called the girl for a pregnancy test and it turned positive. The girl then confided in the woman and told her the man responsible for her pregnancy was her biological father.

The incident was reported to the Rainbo Centre in Freetown where the girl received the required support and the case was later referred to the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit.

The father was arrested and detained whilst the girl was sent to stay at a Safe Home, where she's receiving medical and psychosocial support to help her go through her ordeal as she had threatened to either abort the pregnancy or commit suicide.

**“How can I keep a pregnancy I got from my own father?”**

The girl had wanted to terminate the pregnancy, but the Rainbo Medical Doctor based on findings during the medical examination advised her not to abort the baby as the pregnancy was already more than 12 weeks, and abortion might result in further complications. The girl literally promised to keep the pregnancy but will give the baby to anyone interested in adoption when she would have delivered.

**“What would you have me call this child... my son or daughter, or my brother or sister? Tell me!”**

If you have never bothered with issues of rape or sexual abuse, this particular incident should make you have a rethink as our children are not safe anymore, not even in the hands of those we trusted the most to look after them.

## **THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS**

**794 (792 Female, 2 Male) GBV cases (727**

Sexual Assault and **67** Physical Assault) were reported at our five Rainbo Centres. **142** were reported pregnant, **5** infected with HIV/AIDS,

**20 (13 Male and 7 Female) Community Stakeholders** were engaged on GBV and the PIH funded No woman or Girl Left Behind project in Kono.

In close collaboration with Don Bosco Fambul we supported the capacity training of **50** FSU personnel from the Freetown West Division.

Recruited **11** Focal Point Volunteers to support community awareness-raising in the EU project communities in Bo.

Supported the training of **15** Social Workers on SGBV, its referral pathways and community engagement in close collaboration with Don Bosco Fambul.

**16** (**8** Kenema and **8** Freetown) Heads of schools engaged on safeguarding around schools.

**13** Conforti (**8** Freetown & **5** Port Loko) staff were trained on psychosocial counselling and GBV.

**89** (**49** Female and **40** Male) Community Stakeholders were engaged on SGBV in the four Genda Biznes project operational communities of Aberdeen, Lumley/Crab Town, Waterloo and Murray Town.

**21** (**18** Male and **3** Female) FSU personnel were trained and supported on SGBV case identification and proper management in Kono District.

**5** Rainbo Initiative staff, **4** Interns and **4** Paralegals were trained on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Paralegal issues.

**549** with other STIs at the time they visited our Centres after the abuse.

## COMING UP

### TRAINING OF TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ON SAFEGUARDING.

The training will increase knowledge on SGBV in the homes, schools and communities and influence attitudinal change, behaviours and practices of parents, teachers, and community members to protect children from being abused by their caregivers/teachers. This will promote prompt response to SGBV cases and ensure that survivors are well taken care of, reducing the stigma and discrimination that normally follow abuse. This training will further bridge the gap in knowledge amongst communities including stakeholders and schools on SGBV issues, as teachers and community members will be talked through GBV awareness-raising messages from the already developed Rainbo Initiative's safeguarding manual/strategy/plan.

### LAUNCHING OF NEW IRISH AID FUNDED PROJECT (OCTOBER 2021 – SEPTEMBER 2022)

Rainbo Initiative is excited to be signing new contract with Irish Aid for ***“Improving the Availability of Quality and Free Health Care Service for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (ImAQF) project”*** that will strengthen women and girls' awareness of, have access to, and utilise, quality and comprehensive free multi-sectoral treatment that prevents further harm from the effects of GBV. This will support the five Rainbo Centres to further our work with communities to end Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the country.

## OUR PARTNERS



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