



Quarterly Newsletter

October – December 2021



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

RAINBO INITIATIVE LAUNCHES FIVE YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN – 2020 - 2024



On Friday 15th October 2021, Rainbo Initiative in a special dinner organised in honour of their outgoing Board Members, whilst welcoming new members to their Board of Directors, officially launched their 5-year Strategic Plan – 2020 – 2024.

Giving an overview of the strategy, Daniel Kettor, the Executive Director of Rainbo Initiative said, implementing the strategy will not only strengthen our programmes but will add value to what we do as a sustainable, effective and professional organisation

that ensures survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence have improved outcomes.

In 2019, Rainbo Initiative undertook a strategic review of its work and a capacity assessment to help us reflect on the next phase of work – what we are good at, what need to improve and how we can better address incidences of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. Armed with that information we then developed a five-year strategic plan, which we believe is ambitious, focused and exciting.

The strategy will deliver on four goals; providing free quality, age-appropriate response services to survivors of SGBV, increasing awareness of SGBV at community and national levels; influencing national SGBV policy by evidence-based advocacy, and building a sustainable and effective professional organisation. Achieving these will improve our programme quality and will strengthen our organisation to ensure we do our work better.

The strategy was jointly launched by Mrs. Nafisatu Jalloh, Gender Advisor - Irish Aid and Mrs. Janette Garber, IRC Women and Girls Protection & Empowerment Programme Coordinator, together with Rainbo Initiative Executive Director, Daniel Kettor.

RAINBO INITIATIVE ORGANISES 1 MILLION MARCH WITH AND FOR SGBV SURVIVORS.



On Saturday 4th December 2021, Rainbo Initiative together with its partners, only armed with determination and steadfastness - inspired by the many stories of SGBV survivors we hear every day, walked more than 50km within 8hrs, in a sponsored walk themed: **'Get Involved! Walk with GBV Survivors'** as part of our 16 Days of Activism campaign against Gender-Based Violence in the country.

Despite efforts by the government and key stakeholders, we believe thousands of SGBV cases go unreported in the country, so we organise a series of activities to raise awareness on sexual violence and abuse, as well as to foster collaboration in dealing with Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

The walk was simultaneously organised across our 5 operational districts of Freetown (Jui Junction - Aberdeen Beach), Makeni (Field Road, Ministry of Gender Office - Barracks phase two), Kono (Koaquima - Koeyor), Kenema (Mission Road Massaquoi Street Jxn - Kenema District Council Hall, at Nyandeyama), and Bo (Methodist Youth Resource Centre - Bo Clock Tower) to raise awareness on Sexual violence & abuse and fundraise to construct a Rainbo Centre of Excellence in Freetown that will provide a safe space to support survivors of sexual violence to heal with dignity and care.

RAINBO INITIATIVE BID FAREWELL TO THREE OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS.

Rainbo Initiative bid farewell to three of their long-serving and committed Board Members marking the end of their tenure with the board in a special dinner in honour of their contributions to the fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone.



Amongst them were; Dr. Olabisi Claudius-Cole, a long-serving and dedicated Medical Doctor, an advocate to end Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone for almost two decades now. She is a Medical Doctor with over 30 years of experience in medicine. Dr. Claudius-Cole stepped down as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Rainbo Initiative.



Dr. Aisha Fofana Ibrahim, a Gender Activist and Senior Lecturer, Institute of Gender Research and Documentation, Fourah Bay College – University of Sierra Leone.



Ms. Naasu Fofanah, a Gender Activist and former Gender Advisor to Sierra Leone former President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma.

On behalf of the survivors we work with and for, we extend our sincere gratitude to them for their immense contribution, commitment and dedication to Rainbo Initiative and the women and girls of this country.



Mr. James Fofanah, Chief of Party for Breakthrough Action, former Executive Director for Rainbo Initiative and former Country Director for Restless Development Sierra Leone, was duly elected as the new chairperson of the Board of Directors for Rainbo Initiative for the next three years, replacing Dr. Olabisi Claudius-Cole.

SURVIVORS VOICE

THE STORY OF A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO WAS SEXUALLY PENETRATED BY HER 35-YEAR-OLD TEACHER.

A 17-year-old girl was sexually penetrated by her 35-year-old teacher in his house, where the girl had gone as usual for extra lessons after school. “On that day, as always, I went there for extra class and all of the sudden, Mr Koroma grabbed me, and forced himself on me.”

The girl was shattered and devastated by the behaviour of her teacher – a man whom she trusted so much. After the abuse, he threatened to fail the girl in his course and will eventually kill her if she ever tell anyone what had happened between them. The girl was terrified by the threat and decided to keep to herself - blaming herself for trusting the teacher in the first place. As a result, she refused to attend the lesson again.

Rape affects every woman and girl. Rape on a woman or a girl is a terror and limitation to all women and girls. Most women and girls limit their behaviour and live in fear because of the effects of rape on them. The cycle of fear and silence becomes a legacy of rape to many women and girls.

The mother noticed a change in her daughter’s behaviour and became curious. So, she began to probe. She interrogated her and finally, the girl opened up for the first time after the incident. “I could see fear in her eyes as she became timid daily. She was isolating herself from everyone.” The mother said.

The girl was then taken to one of our Rainbo Centres, where she received psychosocial services, medical examination and treatment. Being assured of her safety at the Rainbo Centre, she explained everything that had happened between her and the teacher.

The case was reported to the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit and the perpetrator was arrested and detained at remind whilst the case was charged to court.

Added to the psychosocial services, medical treatment and dignity kits she received, transportation fare and feeding were always provided to her each time she visits the Rainbo Centre for follow up.

On the 11th of June 2021, after four years of enduring the agony of court attendance by the survivor and her family, the perpetrator was sentenced to three years in prison. The sentencing is a breath of fresh air and a sign of hope for so many survivors and their families who await justice to be served.

The girl, now 21, is preparing for her West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination and is determined to pursue her academic work to become a medical doctor someday. Rainbo Initiative will continue to provide psychosocial support to her and guide her to achieve her dream of becoming a medical doctor.

THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS

541 SGBV survivors (**486** sexual and **55** physical) were supported with medical and psychosocial services across our five Rainbo Centres in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Kono.

100 (**50** Male & **50** Female) stakeholders and services providers were engaged in Kambia and Port Loko districts in a baseline study to inform the expansion of Rainbo Centres services in the districts.

20 SGBV cases were followed up in court; **12** were charged to magistrate court, **8** were in the High court with **2** being successfully prosecuted.

Conducted safeguarding assessment for **8** Primary Schools (**4** Freetown and **4** Kenema) with support from Comic Relief.

COMING UP

TRAINING OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS ON CLINICAL CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS IN KONO DISTRICT.

With support from Partners In Health (PIH) through the 'No Woman or Girl Left Behind' project, Rainbo Initiative will train 30 healthcare workers predominantly from Peripheral Health Unit (PHU) on clinical management and care for survivors of SGBV in Kono District. This 5 days intensive engagement seeks to address the inadequate capacity of PHU staff in providing effective examination and treatment to sexual assault survivors. Considering the increasing cases of GBV in communities coupled with the fact that the health facilities may be the immediate point of reach where the Rainbo Centres are not easily accessible, such a knowledge gap is likely to pose challenges for the health care workers at the facility.

TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS ON REPORTING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

In a bid to eradicate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Rainbo Initiative will be engaging 20 journalists (12 from Western Area and 8 from the province) from 10 media houses in a day training workshop on ethical principles of reporting SGBV, how to interview Gender-Based Violence survivors including guidelines and precautions, the role of the media in reporting SGBV.

The training is designed to empower both print and electronic media Journalists to appropriately report, publish & advocate for SGBV survivors support-behaviours. The workshop will build the skills and knowledge of local journalists on ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) on ways to better raise public awareness on SGBV. The training will be conducted with support from Irish Aid.

OUR PARTNERS

