

Rainbo Initiative in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism (SLAWIJ)

Training on "The role of the media in reporting Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)"



Quarterly Newsletter

January – March 2022



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Inside The Issue

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

   Rainbo Initiative

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

RAINBO INITIATIVE LAUNCHES SGBV SURVIVORS' DATA 2021



On Thursday 27th January 2022, Rainbo Initiative in a press conference launched its Rainbo Centre GBV Data - 2021, after training 35 print and electronic media practitioners on the ethical principles of reporting SGBV, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism (SLAWIJ).

The report revealed 3,292 GBV cases across our five Rainbo Centres in Freetown, Makeni, Kono, Kenema, and Bo, of which 2,966 and 326 were sexual and physical assault cases respectively.

According to the report, 18 survivors tested positive for HIV, and 537 women and girls were found to be pregnant at the time they visited the Rainbo Centres after the abuse.

The analysis further shows a decrease in reported cases to the Rainbo Centres, however, this does not in any way suggest that there is a change in behaviour of the people.

We attribute this to the following factors:

- ✚ People are now aware of sexual abuse and violence in communities due to the ongoing awareness-raising in these communities by various partners including the media, CSOs and government
- ✚ The introduction of the Sexual Offences Model court that contributed to speedy trials of Sexual penetration cases resulted in a change.
- ✚ Some survivors are now confident and willing to share their stories in public.
- ✚ There has also been increased access to support services for survivors of SGBV across the country.

RAINBO INITIATIVE WAS RECOGNISED WITH AN AWARD OF APPRECIATION BY SAVE THE CHILDREN.



Rainbo Initiative was recognized by Save the Children Sierra Leone with an “Award of Appreciation” for its outstanding and valuable contributions to the ‘Genda Bizness Project.’

Through the Genda Bizness project, Rainbo Initiative provided free life-saving services to 718 GBV survivors and supported youth social accountability mechanisms to monitor services, reaching more than 5000 community people with behaviour change messages to respond to and prevent GBV in 4 slum communities in Freetown for 3yrs.

The Genda Bizness Project was implemented in a consortium with Child Advocacy Network (CAN), Planned Parenthood Association Sierra Leone (PPASL), AdvocAid and the Sierra Leone Police Family Support to develop an approach to reduce teenage pregnancy and support vulnerable youth in urban Sierra Leone.

This recognition came as a result of our tremendous work with and for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone.

This year alone, we are supporting over 3,500 survivors of SGBV across our 5 Rainbo Centres in Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema and Kono, reaching more than 700,000 community members with awareness-raising messages on SGBV issues in Sierra Leone.

RAINBO INITIATIVE TRAINED 35 MEDIA PRACTITIONERS IN REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

Despite efforts by the media to raise awareness of Gender-Based Violence in the country, we still believe thousands of sexual abuse and violence cases go unreported. Most times, critical information about survivors is exposed by the media, thereby worsening stigma and discrimination towards survivors in their communities. Against this background, Rainbo Initiative in partnership with the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism (SLAWIJ) held a day training for 35 print and electronic media practitioners on the ethical principles of reporting SGBV on the theme “the role of the media in reporting Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).”



Participants were drawn from 25 media houses Rainbo Initiative has been working with over the years including SLAWIJ member radio stations across the country.

Rainbo Initiative staff, SLAWIJ Executive President Millicent Kargo, and Dr Francis Sowa, senior lecturer at FBC, University of Sierra Leone, led the training.

The facilitators used interactive methods to raise participants’ understanding of how to investigate and report SGBV-related issues, including guidelines and precautions.

GBV Legal Frameworks (SOA, CRA, three Gender Acts), Combating GBV – The Role of Women in Journalism, and Ethical Considerations in Reporting Sexual and Gender-Based Violence are among the topics discussed in the sessions.

SURVIVORS VOICE

THE STORY OF A 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO WAS SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY TWO UNKNOWN MEN.

Almost at the point of death, a 16-year-old girl was found on the roadside where she was left to die after being sexually assaulted by two unknown men. She was taken to a faith-based hospital, but unfortunately, the hospital had no trained staff in Clinical Care for Sexual Assault Survivors (CCSAS), as a result, they referred them to one of the One-stop Centres in the country.

This young girls' ordeal started when the aunt she went to stay with for the holidays looked her out of the house for returning home late from a night dance in a nearby village.

Left with no option the poor girl decided to trek to her father's village. It was on her way she was attacked, blindfolded, dragged to a farm, and forced to drink a substance by these two men - who consistently assaulted her with an iron rod, whilst they collect her dripping blood.

The One-stop Centre referred the survivor to the Princess Christian Maternity Hospital (PCMH) in Freetown, where she was immediately taken to one of our Rainbo Centres. She was quickly attended to and admitted to a government hospital under Rainbo's supervision and support. After a week in the hospital, she gained her speech and narrated her ordeal as she could recall.

She was discharged and referred to one of the Safe Homes service providers for interim care. In December 2021, her health started deteriorating. She was vomiting blood clots and complain of severe stomach pain.

She was immediately admitted again to a private hospital in Freetown where she received administered advanced medical examination and treatment. Her health significantly improved and she was discharged. A routine examination was also done in January 2022 with Rainbo's support.

Two men have so far been arrested and are standing trial at the Sexual Offences Model Court in Freetown. Rainbo will continue following up on the case in court and is committed to providing other support services for the survivor.

Discussions are also at an advanced stage with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the Social Welfare to travel to Pujehun to support the Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) process of the survivor and her family.

RAINBO INITIATED DISBURSED THE SUM OF OF LE 72,000,000 (\$6,107) AMONGST 24 GENDER SUPPORT GROUPS IN THREE DISTRICTS.



In a bid to eradicate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone, Rainbo Initiative disbursed cheques worth Le 72,000,000 to 24 Gender Support Groups (GSGs) of 32 members per group, in 32 communities in Freetown, Makeni and Bo with support from the European Union in Sierra Leone through the "Strengthening Gender-Based Violence Prevention and inclusive Response Services in Sierra Leone (SGP Project)."

These monies were to support the GSGs to organise community outreach activities including an inter-community football match, drama sensitisation, and awareness-raising float parade amongst others to disseminate messages on preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence - with the focus to protect marginalised women and girls, especially those living with disabilities.

The SGP project is being implemented in a consortium with Handicap International - Humanity & Inclusion and CARE Sierra Leone, led by Rainbo Initiative to support Gender-Based Violence survivors and promote inclusive GBV service delivery in Freetown, Makeni and Bo.

THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS

483 SGBV survivors (**453** sexual and **30** physical) were supported with medical and psychosocial services across our five Rainbo Centres.

Followed-up **78** SGBV cases in court. **16** were charged to magistrate court, 62 in High court and **9** were successfully prosecuted.

58 (**38** females and **20** male) stakeholders engaged during stakeholders meetings.

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

