

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022



## OUR PARTNERS



# RAINBO INITIATIVE HOLDS A MILLION EURO PROJECT INCEPTION WORKSHOP



## EHeSGS PROJECT INCEPTION WORKSHOP

To build an understanding and ensure effective and efficient implementation of the two-year Irish Aid 1 million Euros funded 'Enhancing free healthcare services for GBV survivors and empowering communities to prevent SGBV' (EHeSGS) project, Rainbo Initiative's Gender-Based Violence Response Coordinator – Madam Rebecca Kalih holds a-day project inception Workshop with RI staff.

The day long activity was to mark the commencement of the two-year project beginning 2022 through 2024 with the objective of narrowing the gap between project lead and the implementers

This meeting was used as a platform to understand the key donor requirement of the project in terms of donor reporting, procurement, communication, and project visibility.

By the end of the session, 23 RI staff had gained adequate knowledge and skills in the project document (the objective, activities, and duration)



# NEWSLETTER

The occasion was filled with enthusiasm, anticipation, and a sense of purpose as the project staff and management sat down to build an understanding and develop a common vision that will underpin work which will lead to tangible prevention and response services to 3,802 beneficiaries (3,764 female and 38 male) using established local structures such as Community Focal Points, Gender Support Groups, Community Theatre Groups, Interns and School Clubs with the overall goal of providing inclusive age-appropriate and comprehensive response services to survivors of GBV and increase awareness on GBV laws and issues in communities.

Officially opening the session, the Executive Director – Mr. Daniel Kettor briefed staff that the project will be funded on a yearly basis after an impact assessment has been conducted in the first year of implementation. He therefore implored all staff to focus on real impact when implementing any activity under this project as it is a key factor to securing further funds for its implementation from Irish Aid as its parent donor.

*The One Million Euro multi-year Irish Aid funded project will target 3,802 beneficiaries in five RI operational districts*

Target group (Direct beneficiaries)	Baseline	Targeted Total	Female	Male
GBV survivors (99% Female & 1% male)	3,292	3,802	3764	38
Caregivers of SGBV survivors	0	3,802	3764	38
Focal Points Volunteers (50% m/f)	32	32	16	16
Gender Support Groups	32	32		

In her presentation, Madam Rebecca announced that the one (1) million Euros multi-year project is titled 'Enhancing free healthcare services for GBV survivors and empowering communities to prevent SGBV' - (EHeSGS) and will be implemented in 5 of the 6 existing RI operational districts of Kenema, Bo, Kono, Bombali and the Western Area within a two-year period with an annual funding from Irish Aid.

Speaking on the project objectives, Madam Rebecca outlined four key objectives as providing free quality and age-appropriate response services to survivors of SGBV, increasing knowledge of communities on GBV, empower community structures to promote evidence-based Advocacy at community and national levels and Institutional strengthening of RI to become a sustainable, effective, and professional organisation.

## RAINBO INITIATIVE



The workshop was successful in communicating out actionable plans for the different milestones that the project will incorporate. The culmination of this first meeting makes a perfect way for an improved structure for the project implementation.

We are certain this project and our long-term partnership with Irish Aid will help us build effective and sustainable partnerships with communities based on community-led approaches that address the root causes of GBV. The project's strategy draws from the experiences of multiple successful case studies and builds upon a strong foundation of analysis and knowledge gained through sound research and past projects.

It is fair to say that SGBV is an issue for many countries, that the scale of the problem is immense, and at the same time, a challenging one. However, the fight against SGBV has to be won and Rainbo Initiative strongly believe that if we work together, work with local communities and get enough resources we will be able to fight this monster and bring it under control. To realize these outcomes, continued collaboration, coordination and support is paramount. Rainbo Initiative therefore remains grateful to Irish Aid and the Irish Embassy in Sierra Leone for its continued supports to our work.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The project will be implemented over a two year period beginning in October 2022 to September 2024.
- It will be implemented in Freetown, Kenema, Bo, Kono, and Bombali district
- The project is titled 'Enhancing free Healthcare Services for GBV Survivors and empowering communities to prevent SGBV'
- The project is funded by Irish Aid



# HOPE OVERCOMES STIGMA: RAINBO INITIATIVE WALKS WITH GBV SURVIVORS



As part of the activities for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Rainbo Initiative was joined by line Ministries of the Government of Sierra Leone, development partners and various GBV partners in a 25-Kilometre 'Walk with GBV Survivors' to raise awareness on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Sierra Leone.

'Walk with GBV Survivors' is part of Rainbo Initiative's national campaign to raise awareness and advocate for an end to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone and beyond.



Its 2022 edition had hundreds of Sierra Leoneans walked a 25-Kilometre distance in solidarity with GBV survivors on Saturday, 3rd December 2022

The walk, which began at the Up Gun round about and went through the streets of Freetown to Montana Car Park, Aberdeen Beach had hundreds of Sierra Leoneans joining to raise awareness on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence especially those against women and children.

Through this walk to raise awareness, Rainbo Initiative helped dispel stigma against survivors of any form of GBV by recognizing the courage, strength and contribution that survivors have to national development.

With over 400 walkers crossing the finish line at Montana Car Park, we are grateful to everyone who joined our 2022 walk especially the team at German Embassy in Sierra Leone, the EU delegation to Sierra Leone, Irish Aid, World Bank, Trocaire, Dr. Sylvia Olayinka Blyden among other very important patriots. We look forward to seeing you all at this year's walk in December 2023.

# NEWSLETTER

Human beings are often ambitious by nature. They set out to make a difference, break barriers and accomplish goals that can change their own lives for good and for better. From an African context, one such challenge is the stigma surrounding sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

To end this fight against a cause that affects over one in five women from the continent, Rainbo Initiative, a national Non-Governmental Organization with currently 6 Rainbo Centres in Kenema, Bo, Kono, Bombali and Kambia will continue providing free medical and psychosocial support services to any survivor of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence that accesses any of our Rainbo Centre or the 6-government established One-Stop Centres we technically supports around the country.

RI in addition continues to creatively provide prevention and response services to end SGBV in Sierra Leone.

## RAYMOND DUMBUYA BAGS STAFF OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2022



For his commitment and dedication to the work of Rainbo initiative, Raymond Dumbuya, a young Business Admin graduate from the Institute of Public administration and Management -IPAM who joined Rainbo Initiative in 2018 as an Office Assistant in our Makeni Rainbo Centre.

A year after, Raymond's hard work got him to the position of Field Officer, supporting the implementation of all Rainbo Initiative's field activities in Bombali district.

Raymond's exceptional performance in community mobilization earned him a remarkable admiration by several staff.

With funds from Trocaire to support Rainbo Initiative's intervention in Port-Loko and Kambia, Raymond was transferred to support the Port-Loko One-Stop Centre. At RI's annual staff Workshop in September 2022, Raymond was recognized and awarded with staff of the year award as a motivation to him and several other staff.

Raymond is currently the Project Assistant Coordinator (Acting) covering Port-Loko and Kambia districts.

*"Rainbo Initiative remains committed to supporting, recognizing and celebrating staff whose stellar performances is helping management in its efforts to end sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone and beyond.*

*This is not just an appreciation for excellent service, but also an acknowledgement and motivation that everyone must works together in unity to achieve sustainable results"* Daniel Kettor, Executive Director - Rainbo Initiative.



# RAINBO INITIATIVE ROLLS-OUT SAFEGUARDING TRAINING TO ITS STAFF

In order to Know what action to take in preventing abuse perpetrated by a staff member, youth leaders or partners who work directly or indirectly with children and other vulnerable groups, feel confident receiving and responding to an allegation of abuse and to conduct an assessment of safeguarding risks within projects/programs, RI's Safeguarding and Training Coordinator – Madam Lela Eton rolled-out Rainbo Initiative's Safeguarding Policy to Rainbo Staff who converged in Makeni from across the 6 Rainbo Centres in Sierra Leone.



The two-day training, organized by Rainbo Initiative with support from Trocaire focused on the need to create an enabling environment that supports the safety, health and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times including signs and reporting mechanism of safeguarding issues.

This is part of the organization's initiatives to enhance and strengthen the work it does with children, young people and other vulnerable groups it serves including partners



Held in Makeni between October 27 and 28, the training equipped and capacitated staff in attendance with the required knowledge and understanding to identify potential abuse and neglect, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse that occurs both in the workplace and at community levels as well as being able to take action should they witness any form of abuse and neglect so that children and the vulnerable can be safeguarded from harm.

# NEWSLETTER

Lela helped participants to understand the different situations that constitute to safeguarding issues including sexual exploitation and abuse

She described the signs and Indicators of Exploitation as neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse

Lela described safeguarding as a process of creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued.

“Within Rainbo Initiative, it is about making sure the organization is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect” she said.

Everyone in the organization has a role to play in safeguarding and it is about protecting children and adults from harm within our programs and activities. This includes the prevention of exploitation and abuse as well as any harm caused by our failure to take reasonable care.



Rainbo Initiative is ever committed to protecting the wellbeing and safety of children, the aged, staff, partners, service providers and every vulnerable member of the Sierra Leonean community and has put in place adequate measures to safeguard children especially those in school and who comes in contact with our services.

We strongly believe that by protecting the most vulnerable of Sierra Leone’s citizens, we have an opportunity to make an impact on their lives and on society as a whole.

Rainbo Initiative as an organization continues to foster a safe and healthy workplace for its employees, children and vulnerable adults with its specific policies and procedures including trainings and community engagements around safeguarding.





Engagement on Sexual Offences Act 2019

## HIGH-LEVEL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Since the presidential declaration of a national state of emergency on rape and sexual assault in February of 2019, Sierra Leone has taken practical steps in fighting against sexual and Gender-Based violence including establishment of the sexual model court, setting up of One-Stop Centres in 8 districts where Rainbo Centre services are not available, the amendment of the 2012 sexual offences act in 2019 which makes provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment, introduction of new sexual offences, an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault among other related matters etc.

To ensure the success of any national strategy to combat sexual and Gender-Based violence there is a need for regular assessment, engagement, and update between all actors whether they are public, private or civil society. The implementation of the Act within the three years can be used as a steppingstone for further conversations and sessions on how to go forward as partners in addressing sexual violence, hence, the objective of this high-level stakeholder engagement.

Hosted in Freetown on 25th November 2022 marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and day 1 of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the event attracted a well over 100 participants drawn from meaningful sectors critical to the implementation of the SOA and other SGBV related issues.

Three years (2019-2022) into implementation of the amended act, Rainbo Initiative, a national Non-Governmental Organization providing comprehensive age-appropriate free medical and psychosocial support services to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence partners with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone to convene relevant stakeholders including the parliament of Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs among other GBV service providers to a day high-level engagement on the status of its implementation.



# NEWSLETTER

Although there have been several steps taken by the Government of Sierra Leone at a policy level and service delivery framework towards the codification and implementation of the 2012 Amended Sexual Offences Act, there are still several areas of concerns that require action, including but not limited to:

- Provision of free medical service treatment and medical reports in government hospitals across the country to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as provided for in section 39 of the Act.

- Production and presentation of annual report on the status of implementation of the Act as provided for in section 45 of the Act.
- Compulsory counselling, establishing, maintaining and publishing a sexual offenders database, provision of rape kits, setting up of Forensic Laboratories as provided for in section 44 of the Act.
- And above all, the slow pace in court proceedings which delays justice, thus leading to compromise or lack of reporting of SGBV cases.



Amidst these challenges, partner and implementing agencies as service providers believe huge progress has been made in the implementation of the act by increasing the awareness of SGBV at both community and national level, increase in prosecutions and convictions, reporting of SGBV incidences, establishment of a modern court for the proceedings of SGBV cases only among others.

The participants concluded that there is a need to review and strengthen the implementation of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act in line with national gender policy framework, international and regional instruments ratified by Sierra Leone. Partner organizations reaffirmed commitment to the successful and safe implementation of the Sexual Offence Act as amended in 2019.

# SURVIVOR'S VOICE

## THE STORY OF A 13-YEAR-OLD PRIMARY SCHOOL TEENAGE MOTHER

Like several other communities across the country and around the globe, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence has become a major concern for residents in some parts of Kenema district in Eastern Sierra Leone.

Data collected in these communities through our established community structures indicates the prevalence of SGBV incidences in these communities which is in turn impeding socio-economic development as a result of teenage pregnancy, school drop-out, contraction of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV/AIDS among other social vices.

*This quarter, we share the story of Kadia (not real name), a 13-year-old primary six teenager who was sexually penetrated by a man twice her age and tested 4-week pregnant few months ahead of her public examination.*

It was on 8th January 2021 that Kadia was referred to the Kenema Rainbo Centre by the Family Support Unit for further support services where she was tested 4-week pregnant after the medical examination was conducted.

Kadia's 67-year-old grandma, who she has been living with narrated to the Rainbo staff that weeks after Kadia attended a neighbor's wedding, she, (the grandma) has notified a lot of changes and unwelcoming behaviors in the teenager, but each time grandma asks her about what was wrong with her, Kadi would always dodged the questions and says she was fine.

"When it became too serious for me to handle, I threatened sending her out of the house, that was when she told me that the night she was at the wedding, a man bought her a drink and took her to his house" Grandma told the staff. ....assisted by one of our neighbors, we went to the Family Support Unit where we made the report and they referred us to this Rainbo Centre" grandma narrated.

At the Rainbo Centre, after Kadia had narrated her ordeals, the staff counselled her and conducted medical examination which later proved Kadia was 4-week pregnant.



Supported by the Rainbo staff, Kadia received medical treatment for a hymen rapture among other complications she had developed, placed on counselling session and referred to the Kenema government hospital for Anti-Natal Care.

With the free medical report certified by Rainbo's medical consultant, the Family Support Unit commenced investigation and the perpetrator was apprehended. Below the statutory consent age in Sierra Leone, Kadia could not have a total decision on her case as the perpetrator was released whilst Kadia's unborn child was placed on child support.

During the usual follow-up visit at survivors' homes by Rainbo's psychosocial counsellors, it was discovered that Kadia had attending school because the head teacher of the school had expelled her due to the pregnancy.

After a professional engagement between the head teach and RI's staff, the school allowed Kadia to attend and write her public exam (National Primary School Examination) which was due in two months.

# NEWSLETTER

Kadia and her grandmother were more happier that she was accepted to resume schooling and write her exam.

“Kadia is not just a survivor, she is one of us, she appreciates Rainbo’s support of her and other survivors, there was no single time she goes for Anti-Natal without passing by. The drugs, transport, home visits, food and clothes we give her makes her believe Rainbo Initiative is indeed a survivor-centred organization” RI’s midwife.



Many thanks to the Community Focal Point Volunteers, Gender Support Groups, Community Champions, Outreach Interns and Field Officers including community stakeholders/authorities who supports Rainbo’s National fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone.

Gladly, Kadia had a safe delivery of a bouncing baby boy in July of 2021 and has exhibited positive changes in behavior and practice. She, her old grandma and her one-year-old baby are doing well as Kadi returned to school few months after she gave birth.

Now in JSS 2, Kadia dream of graduating some day soon as a medical practitioner and works with Rainbo Initiative to support other women and girls who are sexually or physically abused.

Notwithstanding her excellent academic performance, Kadia and her grandma’s economic situation is having a toil on her education. She needs further support to continue her education, care for her son and be able to support her old grandmother.

This, and several other communities in Kenema district with the efforts of Rainbo Initiative’s established community structures are now aware of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence; its early warning signs, report mechanism and available support services as well as its prevention.

We are mostly grateful to our partners and donors for supporting our efforts.

Like Kadia, Rainbo Initiative is ever committed to supporting any survivor of SGBV in their healing journey devoid of their social or economic status especially those who come forward and speak about their ordeals.

# THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS



- 688 SGBV survivors (620 sexual and 68 physical) were supported with medical and psychosocial support services
- 122 survivors were tested pregnant and 410 survivors were treated for sexually transmitted disease (STIs)
- 65 SGBV cases were followed-up in court; 18 were charged to magistrate court, 47 in High court and 10 were successfully convicted
- 685 SGBV female survivors were supported
- 3 Male SGBV survivors were supported.
- 13, 933 community people were reached by Rainbo Initiative during the 16 Day of activism in Freetown, Kono, Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Kambia and Port Loko districts in November and December 2022.
- 11,966 (4,847 Male and 7,119) people were reached with awareness raising messages on GBV, its referral pathways and the services of the Rainbo Centres.
- Among the 65 cases monitored, 10 were successfully convicted between the period of October and December 2022.

# THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS



➤ On 25th November 2022, Rainbo held a high-level stakeholder engagement with parliamentarians, government line ministries and service providers on the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act in Freetown to kick start the 16days of activism.

➤ In December 2022, RI commenced the implementation of a million Euro multi-year Irish Aid funded project that will benefit 5 Rainbo operational districts of Kenema, Kono, Bombali, Bo and Freetown.

➤ RI with funds from Comic Relief Organisation strengthening Top up fund support the capacity training of the senior procurement coordinator on advance procurement and logistics for programming.

➤ Rainbo held a 25 Kilometer 'Walk with GBV Survivors' on 3rd December 2022 concurrently in Freetown, Makeni, Bo and Kambia districts to raise awareness on GBV particularly sexual assault against women and girls.

➤ In November 2022, RI conducted a joint monitoring visit to the Rainbo and One Stop Centres in Bombali, Kambia and Port Loko district with government partners including the Judiciary, Family Support Unit (FSU) and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA)



# 1ST QUARTER

Edition