About this issue

This publication highlights the progress of the Gender and Sexuality Programme of the Refugee Law Project for the last 6 months (September 2013 – April 2014). It brings to front key issues that the Refugee Law Project has been working on regarding Gender and Sexuality in forced migration, analyses how the objectives of the Gender and Sexuality Programme have been implemented, and highlights key achievements.

In this issue, you will see key outcomes, results and impacts of our best practices on Gender and Sexuality, an account of our successes presented with pictures, examples of key developments and quotes. This issue largely presents our work on conflict related sexual violence as well as violence in times of ‘peace’.

About The Gender and Sexuality Programme

Gender and Sexuality Programme’s main aim is to facilitate gender sensitivity and inclusivity, awareness and to provide inclusive Sexual Gender Based Violence prevention and response interventions.

The programme actively engages individuals, families, communities and institutions, whether as victims, perpetrators or stakeholders, at local, national and international levels to transform practice, policy and discourse on gender and sexuality towards greater inclusivity for all.

Gender and Sexuality’s work is geared towards ensuring best practices, documentation and dissemination of information about SGBV among forced migrants, conducting evidence based advocacy and lobbying and research on Sexual and Gender related issues among forced migrants.

Vision
Conducive environments in which all people understand, attain, recover and enjoy their sexual and gendered being and rights regardless of legal status.

Mission Statement
To actively engage individuals, families, communities and institutions, whether as victims, perpetrators or stakeholders, at local, national and international levels to transform practice, policy and discourse on gender and sexuality towards greater inclusivity and access for all.

Goal
To be a leading programme nationally and internationally in providing, documenting and disseminating inclusive SGBV prevention and response interventions and services as well as conducting research, capacity building and advocacy in the areas of SGBV and Forced Migration.

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The Refugee Law Project (RLP) is an outreach project for the School of Law – Makerere University. It was established in 1999 in response to research, which indicated that refugees and asylum seekers do not enjoy their rights in Uganda. Its initial focus on the provision of Legal Aid and psychosocial support to forced migrants has since expanded, and is now organized under four thematic programme areas: Access to Justice; Mental Health & Psychosocial Wellbeing; Gender & Sexuality; and Conflict, Transitional Justice and Governance with five offices across the country (Kampala, Gulu, Kitgum, Hoima and Mbarara), supported by Operations and Programme Support (OPS).

RLP’s primary goal is to provide legal aid to refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and deportees. Over the years, RLP has grown to become the leading Centre for Justice and Forced Migrants, conducting cutting edge research, evidence based advocacy and providing pro-bono legal aid and psycho-social support services for forced migrants.

**Vision**
Refugee Law Project envisions a country where all people enjoy their human rights, irrespective of their legal status. This vision is informed by relevant international laws as well as the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

**Mission**
To empower asylum seekers, refugees, deportees, IDPs and host communities to enjoy their human rights and lead dignified lives.

**Mandate**
1. To promote the protection, well-being and dignity of forced migrants and their hosts
2. To empower forced migrants, communities and all associated actors to challenge and combat injustices in policy, law and practice
3. To influence national and international debate on matters of forced migration, justice and peace
4. To be a resource for forced migrants and relevant actors.

**Core Values**
1. Independence
2. Innovation
3. Non-discrimination
4. Respect
5. Professionalism
6. Accountability

The Refugee Law Project is grateful to United States Government – BPRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) for supporting RLP and the work on Sexual Gender Based Violence. Gender and Sexuality Programme also extends appreciation to RLP’s Management and Monitoring Team for supporting the activities of the Programme.

Special appreciation goes to the Gender and Sexuality Team, Omen David Ongwech (Programme Manager), Siranda Gerald, Wokorach Mogi, Kim Mukasa, Peninah Kansiime, Thiery Inongi, and Adikini Susan for tireless efforts towards this issue paper. We also thank each and every RLP staff member that took part in the conceptualization, production and peer review of this first issue of ‘The Journey This Far’.

Gender and Sexuality Programme would like to thank all its clients that visited the different offices in Kampala, Hoima, Mbarara, Gulu and Kitgum. We would like to once more appreciate the support that you have rendered to the programme. We would like to re-affirm that “We are because of you”

We further acknowledge the contribution of our partners; government agencies, civil society organization, non-governmental, community based and faith based organizations for the coordination, networking, referrals and individual client management that has seen many lives changed positively. We also feel indebted to the leadership of the 16 support groups affiliated to Refugee Law Project, for your continuous support and coordination.

**Our CORE AREA OF work on sexual violence**

Our core area of work on sexual violence is aimed at;

Ensuring best practices, providing evidence based research and documentation plus advocacy and lobbying for inclusive SGBV programming and comprehensive care and management.
1. Building the capacity of service providers to work with all SGBV survivors in an inclusive manner
2. Modeling gender-inclusive screening for SGBV among refugee population in Uganda
3. Providing comprehensive counseling and psychosocial support to survivors of SGBV presenting to Refugee Law Project
4. Making referrals to partner organizations including refugee-led support groups
5. Monitoring client satisfaction with services received from RLP and other referral centers
6. Reaching out to communities through community policing, information sessions to increase awareness of rights and health services, and to reduce stigmatization of SGBV survivors

PROGRESS TO-DATE ON CAPACITY BUILDING

Recognizing that there are knowledge and skills gaps, Professional & Institutional best practices gaps, delayed or no reporting, language barriers, financial, human resource and logistical challenges, socio-political interference, corruption and psycho-judicial challenges as key barriers to effective investigation and prosecution of SGBV crimes, the Police officers and the surgeons agreed to re-strategize and work jointly on prevention and response to SGBVP among forced migrants. To-date, RLP clients report professional case management and follow-up by Police and the surgeons. RLP has also taken the initiative to supply necessary police documents to key police stations in and around Kampala. To that effect, RLP has so far supplied over 600 copies of Police Form III which is used to record cases of SGBV.

The need to train legal students has its roots in our experience of working with men and boys survivors. It is clear that domestic legislations in Uganda has very little to say and to offer for male survivors/victims of rape. The definition of rape and assault in Ugandan law are problematic for the prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys, because the sex-specific elements that make up the crime of rape ignore the violation of a male victim’s bodily integrity.

The Uganda Penal Code (UPC) does not recognize rape of men as a crime. UPC and sexual violence offenses excludes men right at definition.

Rape is defined by UPC § 123 as:

Any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind or by fear of bodily harm, or by means of false representations as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married woman, by personating her husband, commits the felony termed rape.

Thus, the elements of rape are (1) unlawful (2) carnal knowledge (3) of a female victim (4) without consent. The first element refers to the marital status of perpetrator and victim. Carnal knowledge has been interpreted to mean vaginal penetration by the male organ.

From this training, the legal students volunteered to form an affinity interest group to work on addressing the legal gaps in governing sexual and gender based violence against men and women.
Support groups have become an integral part of Refugee Law Project’s intervention strategy. This is especially in response to the increasing number of clients compared to staff providing services. RLP has helped establish 16 support groups that are directly and indirectly affiliated to the 4 thematic programmes.

Given the overarching dynamics of refugee challenges, there is evidence that there is need to build new support systems within refugee communities to replace the lost traditional ones. This strategy ensures continued healing (e.g. through peer counseling) when donor funded organizational services cannot meet demand. By reconstituting social relations, it provides forms of healing that one-to-one work cannot offer.

Being at the forefront of group formation, RLP provides training for group leaders and group members on issues relevant to their needs. The 2-day training during this period was to equip the leaders with leadership skills and also gain knowledge on response and prevention of Sexual Gender Based Violence within their groups as well in the broader community.

Following the training, which was attended by 45 group leaders, the number of referrals of new SGBV victims/survivors from Support Groups to RLP increased from 85 in the first half of 2013 to 199 from Sept 2013 to April 2014. The training further helped in distribution of Reproductive Health Materials such as Condoms as well as Information, Education and Communication materials such as the Domestic Violence Act Factsheet and SGBV Posters.

From this training, RLP has witnessed leadership of 12 groups able to raise awareness within their own groups

Gender and Sexuality Programme trained 90 Prison officers in 4 Prison trainings on refugee-related SGBV response. We also successfully reached 128 Police officers in 4 Police trainings (Wandegeya, Central Police Station, Old Kampalal and Kabalye Police training school in Masindi).

15 of these trained officers have so far contacted RLP through the SGBV hotline (+256776897057), referring clients and seeking advice on how to proceed on specific cases. 2 of these officers currently undertaking University degree education have expressed their need to enrol for academic internship at RLP under Gender and Sexuality programme.

The Police trainings have strengthened the working relationship between RLP and the Uganda Police Force and have further facilitated coordination on clients who need specific services. A total of 10 written referrals have so far been received. The findings from the clients satisfaction forms also reveal a great satisfaction from services attained from Police especially those coordinated by RLP.

RLP continues to work closely with the Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) officers on key gender and sexual related offences. From these consultations, RLP has seen 8 suspects apprehended and the cases professionally investigated up to prosecution level with high level of professionalism.

40 Police and 41 Prison officers’ consultations have been made as a result of the trainings. RLP continues to collaborate with Police and Prison officers on individual refugee cases.
The Journey this far: Gender and Sexuality programme of the refugee law project

From Sept 2013 to April 2014, we have successfully conducted screening to 1,237 refugee women and men in Kampala and Rwamwanja using the Assessment Screening to Identify Survivor (ASSIST-GBV) Toolkit, a tool developed jointly with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. 479 screenings were conducted in Rwamwanja refugee settlement. RLP conducted the SGBVP screening in Mahani and Basecamp settlement.

A database was designed and all the screening tools entered into the established screen. The ongoing analysis shows that 80% of the clients screened are refugees from DRC. 60% of the reported violations were experienced before flight, 10% during flight and 30% in host communities. Below are some of the various forms of violations reported by male survivors of sexual violence:

- Being forced to have sex with a hole made with a gun bayonet or a stick or sometime with the finger, being forced to have sex with a banana stem, sodomy with one or multiple people; either by fellow captives or soldiers, forced to rape women or other men; with multiple gang rape cases, forced incest, forced bestiality), forced oral sex and physical violence (We came across one person who was hit by a gun handle and lost all his teeth)

RLP’s Assessment and Intake unit successfully screened 758 urban refugees (Women and Men) for incidents of sexual violence in RLP’s Kampala office.
304 new SGBV cases have so far been identified and all of the survivors received emergency medical and psychological support.

83 clients reported SGBV cases within 72 hours and received Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

444 referrals were made for HIV counseling and testing.

309 SGBV survivors joined existing support groups for survivors of sexual violence.

53 group members have so far demonstrated transition from victim to survivor.

Data analysis for the screening is ongoing and we expect to launch the report during the 6th Annual SGBV Awareness Week.

Watch out for the FULL REPORT in June 2014.
PROGRESS TO-DATE ON PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE COUNSELING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO SGBV SURVIVORS PRESENTING TO RLP

Since September 2013, we have provided counseling and psychosocial support to 1,281 Female and Male survivors of sexual violence in Kampala.

Major SGBV issues presented by the survivors include:

- Children born out of rape
- Defilement
- Durable solutions
- HIV/AIDS & other STIs
- Insecurity
- Loss of sexual desires
- Medical issues
- Mental health
- Persecution
- Rape
- Reproductive health complications
- Survival sex work
- Sexual exploitation
- Stigma and discrimination
- Torture
- Marital separation
- Sex Trafficking
- Miscarriage
- Physical disability as a result of rape
- Pregnancy
- Sexual harassment
- Child Marriage
- Children without testicles
- Menopause yet in need of children
- Harassment by Police
- Forced Circumcision

What has worked from the counseling?

- 91 legal referrals made to police stations and posts in Kampala
- 144 clients completed patient satisfactory survey
- 827 medical referrals made to government and private hospitals in Kampala
- 110 cases referred for resettlement, of which 28 have successfully been resettled
- 444 clients accepted to test for HIV & STI/STDs
- 188 SGBV survivors referred to existing support groups
- 157 SGBV survivors received home based care and support

The Journey this far. Gender and Sexuality programme of the refugee law project

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PROGRESS TO-DATE ON REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY POLICING AND INFORMATION SESSIONS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND HEALTH SERVICES, AND TO REDUCE STIGMATIZATION OF SGBV SURVIVORS

Community Outreaches on SGBV prevention and response

- 6 Information sessions conducted. 790 forced migrants participated
- 4 Community policing sessions conducted. 478 forced migrants and nationals participated

30 Refugees have called our SGBV hotline (+256776897057)

12 Information sessions so far conducted by 6 refugee led support groups

199 support group peer referrals received by RLP

Support group membership in Kampala increased from 165 to 309

Over 1,000 IEC materials disseminated. (SGBVP Poster, Fact sheet on Domestic Violence Act), Need to Know Guidance Note, Refugee Status Determination Process chat
On 9th April, we organized a roundtable discussion with medical practitioners/police surgeons and police officers to highlight the practical challenges and service implementation gaps in investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender related offences. The roundtable was further to re-echo the roles of the police and surgeons in effective investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender related offences.

On 24th to 29th March, RLP organized a 5 day residential retreat for leaders of refugee-led support groups on SGBV prevention and response mechanisms. The retreat brought together group leaders. The leaders used this retreat to reflect on key achievements, consolidate in 2013 and they jointly developed a support group leaders action plan for 2014. In this retreat, the leaders of the group met dignitaries in northern Uganda such as the LC V and RDC of Gulu district and offered peer support other survivors in Pader and Kapele in NW Uganda.

On 30th January and 21st February, Men of Hope Refugee and Men of Peace support group respectively, commemorated their anniversary. These two groups are support groups that bring together male refugee survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The anniversary was to reflect on key achievements consolidated since the establishment of the two groups, to review major challenges facing as well as explore and propose possible ways forward. The outcome of this anniversary can be accessed on the website. See “Male Survivors of Sexual Violence in Kampala Demand for Better Services” (www.refugeelawproject.org).

On 5th February, the Special Representative to the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict visited RLP. In her short visit to RLP’s office in Old Kampala, RLP presented the work on sexual violence against men and boys; drawing lessons from the screening of refugee population for SGBV experience which was conducted in Rwamwanja and Kampala. This was a very special visit to RLP, which reaffirms our work on conflict related sexual violence.

We would like to thank the inspector General of Police for effecting the establishment of a special unit to investigate domestic violence against men. We are happy to note that this is the first of its kind in sub-Saharan African. We believe that when this unit becomes fully operational, it will not only address domestic violence but also sexual violence against men and boys.
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