



**GENDER BASED VIOLENCE
HIGHLIGHTS - CAMEROON
REFUGEE SITUATION
FIRST QUARTER, 2021**

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Host community women dancing during International Women’s Day 2021 in Ikyogen settlement.

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Introduction

During this reporting period, UNHCR in coordination with Women Development and Social Welfare departments and partners in Cross River, Benue, Taraba and Akwa Ibom continued to strengthen Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention, risk mitigation and response. Efforts toward these activities involved the inclusion of men, women, boys, and girls. Monthly coordination meetings were held with UNHCR, SEMA, NCFRMI and partners.

Activity progress



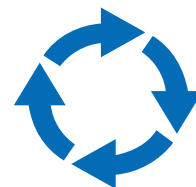
Awareness and Prevention:

1,679 (697M, 982F) reached through GBV prevention and response awareness messages in host communities and settlements.



Capacity Building Conducted:

191 individuals trained on protection, GBV and child rights targeting national staff, law enforcers, protection monitors, refugee leaders and government officials.



Meetings and discussion:

10 meetings were held with GBV and Child Protection Committees in host and settlement. locations.

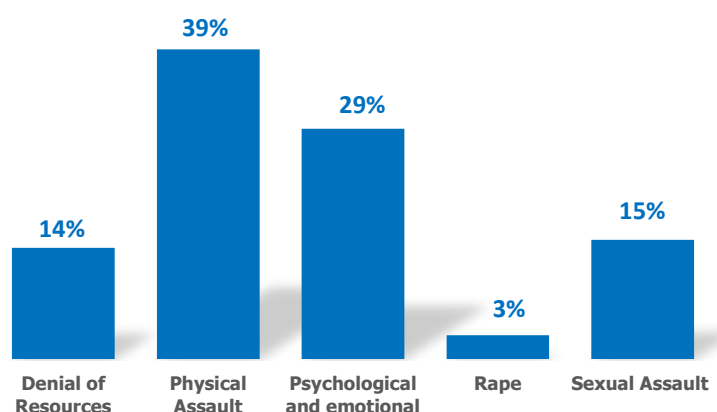
Case Management and Psychosocial support

Between January and March, **172** GBV incidents were reported across the states of Benue, Cross River and Taraba. Majority of GBV cases reported were physical assault (**39%**) and psychological and emotional abuse (**29%**).

Other types of GBV reported were denial of resources (**14%**), sexual assault (**15%**) and rape (**3%**).

Among **172** incidents, **94%** were female and **6%** male. Child survivors were female representing **23%**. No reported incidents for persons with disability.

GBV Incidents



Referral and service provision

61% of the cases were reported through self-referral whereby **18%** were referred by community action groups, **3%** referred by community leaders and **1%** by others. Key to note is that majority of the survivors accessed GBV services within (0-3) days. In Ikyogen settlement in Benue state and in Cross River State, **52%** and **84%** of the survivors sought services within (0-3) days from when it occurred

respectively while in Taraba state, **100%** of the survivors sought services within (0-7) days from the time the incident occurred.

Psychosocial support: 99% of the survivors received psychosocial and emotional support in the form of counseling and or with community support systems in Gembu, Takum, Sardauna, Kurmi, Ogoja and Kwande Local government areas. Other psychosocial support interventions included material assistance and referral for livelihoods support.

Health assistance: 26% of the survivors of rape, physical and sexual assault were referred for medical assistance in Gembu, Takum, Sardauna, Kurmi, Ogoja and Kwande Local government areas. However, delayed reporting and cultural norms continue to impede women from reporting incidences of GBV especially in Sardauna Local Government. Plans for continuous engagement through community sensitization and training of community structures such as health volunteers and protection monitors on GBV prevention and response is ongoing.

Legal assistance: 20% pursued legal assistance. In some instances, survivors declined the services due to fear of repercussion and general stigma in the community. Existing challenges are also related to socio-cultural norms and family and community influence that hinder survivors from pursuing legal action. UNHCR and partners continue to build the capacity of law enforcers for an enhanced protection and provision of information related to safety and dignified service provision to GBV survivors.

Security assistance: 30% of survivors received safety and security assistance through established Gender Reporting Desks (GRD). Improved access to safety and security among survivors continue to be a challenge due to general fear of reporting and lack of police posts in hard to reach locations. Impunity among law enforcers continue to be experienced with perpetrators not held accountable for their actions.

Livelihoods assistance: 2,208 (714Male, 1,494Female) vulnerable individuals have been enrolled for livelihoods assistance to empower them and enhance their self-reliance through partners, Mediatrix and CUSO International. Among the targeted beneficiaries, **56** (36 GBV survivors, 15 PWDs and 5 female headed households) were enrolled in life skills training related to business, tailoring, poultry, fishing, and farming.

Shelter assistance: 100% of persons at risks who benefited from shelter support were GBV survivors and female headed households. This aimed to promote physical safety and mitigate risks of GBV including negative coping mechanisms.

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): Information and awareness on GBV continues to be enhanced through Menstrual Hygiene in the community. In 2020 WASH partner, Save the Children International (SCI) and Refugee Led CBO - Great Step Initiative (GSI) trained 20 TOTs to acquire skills in making reusable sanitary pads. Since they graduated, they have trained additional **35** women on reusable sanitary pads which has increased production and access to sanitary pads by women. Furthermore, **140** female volunteer staff have been trained on Menstrual hygiene practices within the settlement and host community to carry out awareness campaign.

Provision of dignity kits: During this quarter, extension of services to Akwa Ibom state was conducted through distribution of dignity kits in form of sanitary towels, soap, mosquito nets and jericans. To promote their psychosocial wellbeing and safety, **476** women and girls of reproductive age benefited from the dignity kits in the locations of Eset iket, Oron and Eket.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH)



FIG 1: PARTICIPANTS DURING PSEA TRAINING, ADIKPO FIELD OFFICE

During the first quarter, UNHCR put measures in place to ensure its standards for accountability are upheld by partners. Through rollout of its 2020-2022 SEA and SH strategy, UNHCR engaged **21** partner senior managers and other staff on the strategy and action planning in ensuring commitment to addressing all forms of misconduct, including organization's accountability, protection of victims and whistleblowers, reporting mechanisms and capacity building for staff on PSEA. Through these efforts, UNHCR continues to provide

PSEAH information by enhancing the capacity of government, non-government, and partners within its areas of execution. Capacity building was conducted for **62 (38M, 24F)** individuals in Ogoja and Kwande Local Governments. The training targeted staff at all levels including managers to enhance awareness and ensure responsibility in addressing issues of SEA and SH within the work environment; help them build confidence in reporting and share existing challenges in SEA reporting.

Engaging communities through international calendar events

UNHCR and partners including the Local Government represented by line ministries marked International Women's Day campaign with the theme: "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". UNHCR and partners conducted awareness campaigns in the form of sports, dance, speeches and songs that mobilized host and refugee communities in Ogoja, Ikyogen Takum, Gembu and Calabar locations reaching more than 500 persons through key messages of women empowerment and action against stereotype that impedes women from achieving an effective participation and leadership positions in the community.

Achievement

- Twenty (**20**) ToT women who were trained on making re-usable sanitary towels in the year 2020, have trained thirty-five (**35**) more women from host and refugee communities. This has improved skills and increased production capacity of re-usable sanitary towels and foresee sustainability.

Challenge

- Despite the efforts of enhancing Menstrual Hygiene Management through training women on making re-usable sanitary towels, the socio-economic constraints continue to impede opportunities for marketing their products. Women and girls of reproductive age among refugees have expressed inadequate purchasing power of the sanitary materials.

Recommendations

- UNHCR, SEMA, NCFRMI and Local Government - Women Development department to continue with the engagement of the refugee and host communities in marking of international calendar events through community mobilization and awareness campaigns to improve collaboration and enhance peaceful co-existence.
- UNHCR and partners (WASH, Livelihoods sectors) and Community Based Organizations (CBO) to explore marketing opportunities for re-usable sanitary towels as a strategy to empower women in the community.