

Toward Durable Solutions: Legal aid & legal awareness

Factsheet January - December 2021

UNHCR in partnership with the Universities of Bule Hora, Dila and Wollega provides legal aid to and raises legal awareness among internally displaced persons (IDPs), returning IDPs and members of the host community with specific needs. The 19 legal aid clinics of the three law schools provide legal aid and awareness services in East and West Wollega, Gedeo and West Guji zones of Oromia and SNNP regions.

Total people supported: **32,300**

Women & girls: **47%**

Men & boys: **53%**

Legal aid: **67%**

Legal awareness: **33%**

- **Providing quality legal services:** Legal aid and awareness are critical protection services. They are needed to ensure people know their rights, to address challenges IDPs and others in need face in obtaining and restoring identity and civil documentation and housing, land and property rights, as well as to facilitate access to justice, including for survivors of gender-based violence. The services provided range from awareness raising sessions, to the provision of legal information, legal counselling and advice, legal assistance as well as legal representation before courts, tailored to the needs of the community and individuals.
- **Supporting IDPs in achieving durable solutions:** Internally displaced people need a long-term solution to their situation. Being able to access justice, receive needed documentation and have land and property rights restored is an important step towards a durable solution.
- **Leveraging expertise through local partnerships:** The partnership with the Universities of Bule Hora, Dila and Wollega is an asset and allows to leverage local legal expertise for quality services to people in need.



“The majority of us were not aware that IDPs are entitled to such internationally recognized rights before the training.”

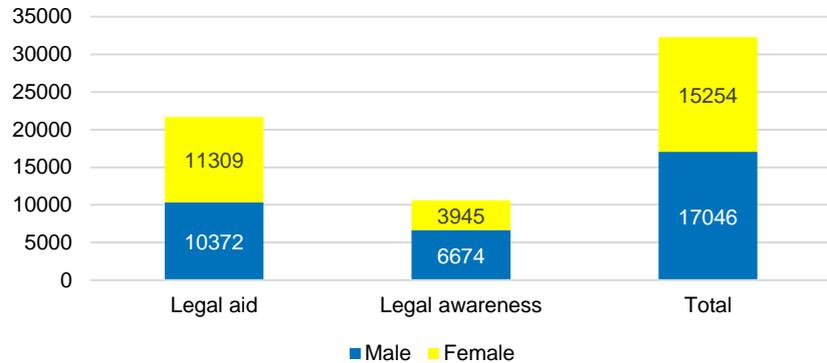
IDP representative

Training on IDP rights and law and policy on internal displacement organized by Dila University and UNHCR for over 400 Government and IDP community representatives from all return woredas of Gedeo zone, December 2021.

People supported

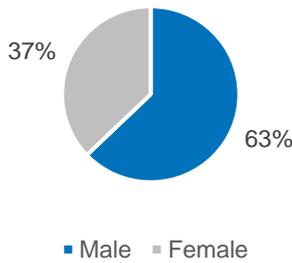
In 2021, **32,300 people** benefitted from legal aid and legal awareness activities. Of those, 67 per cent received legal aid, while 33 per cent benefitted from legal awareness activities. Overall, of those supported with legal aid and legal awareness, 53 per cent were male and 47 per cent female.

Legal aid and awareness
January to December 2021

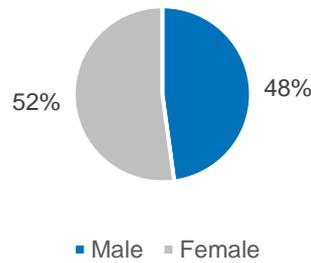


Women and girls often face additional layers and challenges in accessing justice, obtaining documents or enjoying their housing, land and property rights. For widows, these challenges can compound even further. The gender breakdown by activity type shows that of all those supported with legal aid services, 52 per cent were women and girls, while this percentage was 37 per cent for legal awareness activities.

Legal awareness
January to December 2021



Legal aid
January to December 2021



In 2021, 54 per cent of all those who benefitted from legal aid at the Wollega University’s legal aid clinics were women, while at Bule Hora and Dila University it was 52 per cent respectively.

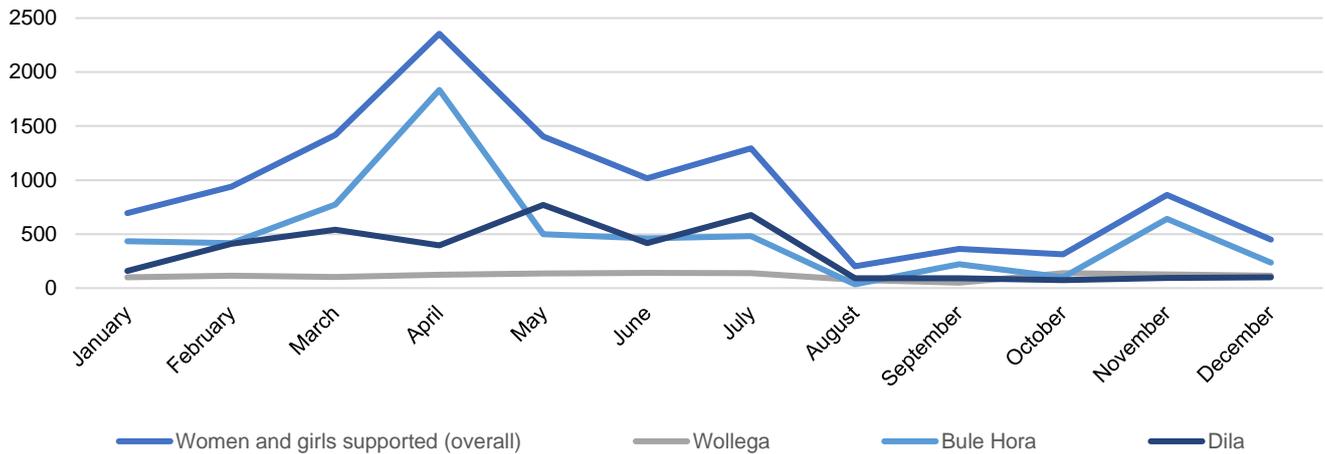
“The legal aid experts helped me to understand my rights and procedure to obtain the inheritance of my family, which had been in illegal possession of other people.”

21-years-old Million heard about the free legal aid services during an awareness session she attended.

While the seven legal clinics of the Wollega University provided legal aid services at a consistent level throughout the first seven months of the year, it is noteworthy that the number of women and girls who received support has gradually increased from March onwards with an average of 140 women and girls assisted in June and July. In August and September, fewer females were supported with legal aid (77 and 50 women respectively), which is related to the overall decrease in persons reached due to Court recess and the volatile security situation in several of the areas where legal aid clinics are located, while in the last quarter of 2021, on average 127 women were supported with legal aid each month. Also, more women and girls benefitted from legal aid services at the legal aid clinics of the Bule Hora and Dila Universities - on average 511 and 318 females respectively each month during the past year.

Legal aid services are generally well accessible to women and girls due to functioning referrals by other partners. In 2021, together with the legal aid clinics, UNHCR further increased the outreach capacity to the community to reach women, girls and persons with specific needs, such as older persons or persons with disabilities, with an expansion of the legal aid network and outreach scope anticipated for 2022.

Women and girls supported with legal aid
 January to December 2021



People supported with legal aid and awareness activities

A total of 32,300 people benefitted from legal aid and awareness activities in 2021 with an increased reach in the 2nd quarter (33 per cent), followed by a drop in activities in August due to Court recess and volatility in several of the operational areas of the legal aid clinics. One clinic temporarily suspended services. In September, the overall activity level started to increase again slightly, notably for legal aid, while in the last quarter, in particular legal awareness activities increased. The continued volatility in the operational areas and access constraints affected the reach of the activities also in the remainder of the year.

Legal aid and awareness activities by month
 January to December 2021

