

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

OF

FOCUSS GROUP DISCUSSION

CONDUCTED IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

From 13th to 16th of December 2005

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OVERVIEW OF KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

Kakuma is located in north western Kenya's Turkana district, rift valley province. It is 127kms south of Kenya-Sudan border and 120kms North West of Lodwar. The region's climate is hot and dry with occasional dust storms. While the rivers that surround the camp are dry most of the year, rains in Uganda can set off sudden massive flooding.

Kakuma town, a local commercial center for the region's mainly pastoralists Turkana people is a kilometer from the original camp (Kakuma 1).

Established in July, 1992, Kakuma refugee camp was initially built for Sudanese refugees who fled their camps in Ethiopia in 1991 before finally finding safety in Kenya. The closure of numerous refugee camps across Kenya since 1992 and the transfer of refugees from camps in coast and North eastern provinces, have turned Kakuma into a multinational community with a diverse cultural backgrounds providing a home to ten different African nationalities as well as over 20 ethnic groups from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanzania And Central African Republic

Currently, Kakuma shelters 91,501 refugees with the Sudanese refugee population continuing to grow despite peace deal signed lat year to mark the end of over 2decades bloody war in southern Sudan. About 21.5% of the total populations in the camp are women and girls below the age of 25years, who are considered most vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

a) BACKGROUND

As a result of the well documented abuses against refugees and IDPs in West Africa by those who are assigned to protect them and the subsequent Global outcry at the beginning of this decade, effort to prevent the same in Kenya refugee program was spearheaded by IRC, UNHCR, Flimaid and CARE kenya in 2003.

Since January 2005 when PSEA has become fully operational, Kakuma steering Group (KSG) members have been pushing for an agreement on a number of interagency protocols. One of these protocols was establishing a reporting mechanism that is accessible and adequately safe for complainant. In May 2005, PSEA focal points from Aid agencies, Government of Kenya and beneficiary communities came up with a draft complaint mechanism which was tabled for approval in a PSEA national conference held at Jakaranda Hutel, Nairobi on June

28th and 29th 2005, attended by heads of aid agencies and other key PSEA actors in Kenya refugee program.

Acknowledging the distinct nature of the three locations (Dadaab, Kakuma and Nairobi) the conference found the proposed mechanisms suitable and endorsed its use with immediate effect. Six month down the line, it has become imperative to review the mechanism in order to assess its accessibility and effectiveness inviting the views of the beneficiaries.

b) SCOPE

A total of five Focus group discussions were carried out from 13th to 16th of December 2005 across the 9 zones of the refugee camp and Kakuma town. 2 FGDs were conducted in Kakuma 1, two in Kakuma 2 covering Kakuma two, three and four while one took place in Kakuma town targeting the Turkana host population. The target audience/participants were drawn from diverse age, sex, nationalities and ethnic groups among the refugee and Turkana Host population, as per the following breakdown:

- ✎ 1 Somalis middle-aged male
- ✎ 1 Somali-Bantu teens female
- ✎ 1 Sudanese-Dika male,
- ✎ 1 female youth of mixed nationalities/ethnic groups and
- ✎ 1 Turkana (Host community) middle aged/mixed sex

c) OBJECTIVE

The objective of the exercise was to assess accessibility and efficiency of the current reporting mechanism that was jointly developed by Aid workers and representatives from beneficiary communities and Government of Kenya.

d) FINDINGS:

1. Level of Knowledge: PSEA/ Sexual exploitation/abuse

Participants demonstrated well-developed opinion of the zero tolerance policy towards Sexual exploitation and abuse that exists and uneven knowledge and understanding of what Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) means. Most participants have heard the terms Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse between 2004 and 2005 through friends, community leaders, women support groups, teachers and in speeches made during world refugee and women's day celebration

and through PSEA trainings. Interestingly, some of the respondents said they have heard the term sexual exploitation and abuse much earlier through the media.

It was however apparent that the people from the majority communities such as Dinka and Somali and vulnerable categories mainly from the host community were not at the same level of information as their counterparts from the minority communities e.g. Nuer, Equatorial, Ethiopians, Great lakes and Somali minority ethnic groups .

Although About 40% of the participants have heard the term sexual exploitation and abuse for their first time, there were accurate definitions of the terms that came from the groups during discussions. Listed below are Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as defined by the respondents:

- ✘ Sex out side marriage for gains. Dinka culture does not give room to sex outside marriage at all. Both the man and women found having sex outside marriage face severe penalties (slashed). They are rejected in the community and will not be allowed to get married.
- ✘ It is Where aid workers use their power to demand sexual favors from beneficiaries
- ✘ exchanging money, food, clothing, etc for sex
- ✘ purchasing sex with money, food cloths and other essential good and services
- ✘ It is women offering themselves to get food or other goods and services they need in return
- ✘ It is giving something in order to get sexual favors

Some of the participants expressed dissatisfaction about the project performance. They thought the program could do much better in terms of increasing level of awareness and active participation if more people were employed to reach vulnerable groups and individuals.

Besides, some of the respondents were angry that the project has come too late when countless victims are already suffering an adverse health and psycho-social effects of sexual abuses perpetrated against them during the early/emergency phases of their refugee life by aid workers and Kenyan police officers.

Many examples of women raped in the camp and when they go out to collect green wild leaves, vegetables and firewood at the camp periphery came out during the

discussion as serious concerns. This is an indication of the confusions that exist among beneficiaries over the different case definition of SEA and other forms of SGBV incidents hence, the need for more awareness campaigns to clarify the differences and converging points by the two programs for operational effectiveness.

Despite skepticism of the program capacity to deal with huge magnitude of the problems related sexual abuses and exploitation, all respondent strongly expressed the need to have a system in place that strictly monitors staff behavior towards the people they serve and provide avenue through which beneficiaries can complain. Their willingness to support the fight against sexual exploitation and abuses was clearly evident throughout the group discussion.

2. Prevalence

While some, especially respondents from the Dinka community believe incident of sexual exploitation and abuse does and cannot occur in their community, members admitted a heightened cultural insubordination among the Dinka youth, which puts them at vulnerable position for sexual abuses and exploitation.

Generally, the incidences of SEA in the refugee camp and host community is, according to the respondents, is high, with vulnerability varying from community, sex, age groups and ethnicity. Youth in and out of school are the most affected category of the societies. This is due to the stiff competitions for grade, limited job opportunities and lack of crucial information about their rights, entitlement and existing zero tolerance policies. Poverty and lack of awareness were top contributory factors.

Practical examples and experiences of girls dropping out of school after getting unwanted pregnancy, some girls receiving undue privileges such as jobs, resettlement and prestigious scholarships etc, after successful sexual relation with people in power etc, were shared by the participants in their numbers.

Some of the areas where Respondents thought SEA is highest include:

- ✘ Refugee Status determination and resettlement processes mainly in Nairobi
- ✘ In food distribution centers, hospital and schools
- ✘ In employment process across all agencies and scholarship opportunities. "I saw a lady promised to work in Sudan, but the Loki-based boss demanded sexual favour as a condition. The lady turned down the offer and returned

here in Kakuma to continue her work as TBA at Kakuma hospital" A respondent remarks

- ✎ In the bars, night clubs in Kakuma town. Girls in abject poverty are mainly seen in the streets, clubs and bars of Kakuma town in the evening.

3. Reporting mechanism: Acceptability, accessibility, and efficiency

_Asked whether any of these incidents mentioned above were reported, some respondent ruled out the need to do so. In most cases, survivors are happy with what they get in exchange and according to the respondent, will deny any incidents of exploitation and abuse in support of the powerful perpetrators.

Others lamented that they were not aware of what to do/who to talk to, while some feared the risks associated in reporting cases. They feared reprisals that according to them include jeopardizing their access to services and possibilities of more dangerous eventualities. "We did not report to anyone because the victims were happy with the deal and therefore collaborated with perpetrators said one respondent; a 19 yrs old Somali Bantu girl. She continued to say "our interference was uncalled for. Besides, It may put us into unnecessary trouble"

There are those who said they reported the matter to community-based security personnel who did not take it seriously "We reported the matter to the community security and they said we were creating false stories in pursuit of resettlement opportunities" one Somali man explains and requested alternative reporting channels.

Most of the respondent from across the age groups, sex and ethnicity were enthusiastic about reporting SEA cases, subject to a safe reporting procedures, effective response mechanism and reliable protection from reprisal. They said they were ready to report incidents in written and in person if safe means of reporting are provided. Below are examples of their preferred reporting points:

- ✎ IRC PSEA office
- ✎ Boss of the perpetrator and onwards to the highest authority in the organization which the perpetrator works for until action is taken
- ✎ Talk to women/men support groups
- ✎ talk to PSEA authority if all fail to work
- ✎ Say it openly during the international women's day
- ✎ Anyone who is appointed to deal with this issue.

- ✍ Medical personnel in clinics and hospital
- ✍ Talk to my teacher (female)
- ✍ The community/group leaders/Women support groups chairpersons
- ✍ LWF gender and human rights program
- ✍ LWF Child development program
- ✍ Any other designated PSEA authority as may be directed
- ✍ UNHCR staff in protection and community services units with the help of the community leader/trustworthy translator
- ✍ My sultan (clan chief)

For the host community, the following reporting procedure was thought most workable given the frequent mobility of the community, and scattered nature of their nomadic lifestyle.

- ✍ Survivor → Village elder → Asst. chief → Area chief then
- ✍ The area chief will pick the matter up with the agency for which the perpetrator works in consultation with the district officer (DO).

Some participants disagree with reporting mechanism stated above, saying it may be too restrictive, bureaucratic and does not provide other alternative means of complaining. Further discussion on this matter is necessary to increase access for all beneficiaries.

- ✍ Some of the respondents said they were more comfortable reporting the matter directly to medical staff, respected teachers and Kenya police.

The diagrams below, illustrates procedures of reporting cases of SEA, as favoured by the majority of the FGD participants from the refugee and host community respectively.

Fig. 1: Suggested reporting mechanism for the Refugee community Boxes shaded orange signify additional reporting channels

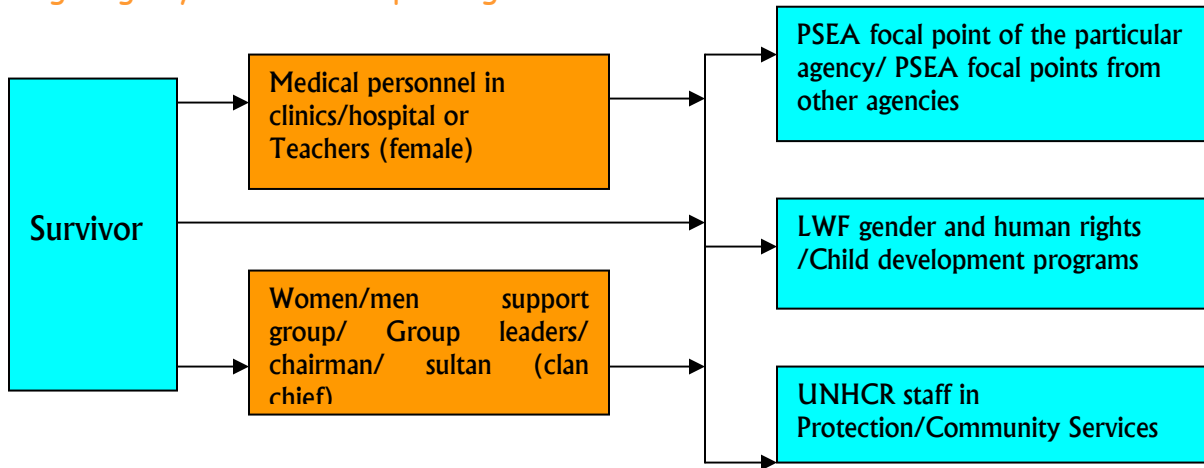
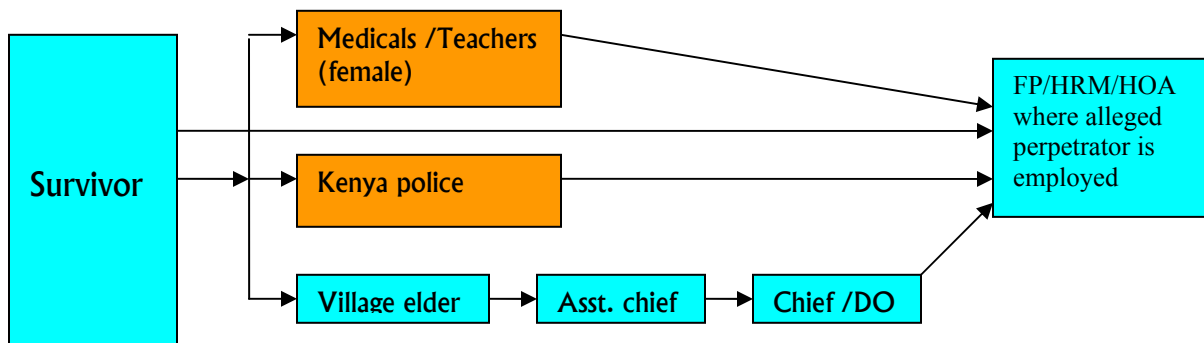


Fig.2: suggested reporting mechanism for the host community. Boxes shaded orange signify additional reporting channels



According to the Turkana community leaders, the most difficult challenges they face is getting the community support punishing the perpetrators from the same Turkana community. Apparently, there're lots of value attached to jobs security for fellow Turkanas and accord little for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Loss of jobs is more likely to trigger bloody inter-clan hostilities than a sexual violence against a woman is.

Overall, the current reporting mechanism was not clear to most participants. They however, spoke in its favor when explained to them by the moderator. Particularly, they liked it because it provides different options of the offices and individuals to address individual confidence and accessibility.

Organizational bureaucracy and strict security procedures make access to appropriate office in main compounds very difficult. Below are remarks, made by the respondents in relation to access:

- ✂ We don't know who the PSEA focal points are
- ✂ LWF Gender program is fairly accessible, specially the caseworkers at the community/field posts
- ✂ UNHCR could be the most ideal reporting point as they command lots of power and influence to make this happen, but we doubt access to any of their staff in protection and community services. They are rarely in field and seeing them involves deterrent bureaucracy and strict security procedures.
- ✂ We have tried to reach agencies especially UNHCR for solution to different life threatening problems, but we were finally forced to retire in our *manyatas*. We need to wait and see if this "don't care" approach will change for us to believe

Participants' Suggestions on improving reporting of SEA incidents

- ✂ Work closely with Group leaders/chairmen/chairladies to ensure intensive awareness and effective community participation. They are closest to vulnerable beneficiaries and easiest to reach for complaints and they have easy access to compounds
- ✂ Put up a suggestion box widely in a safe and central point across the camp
- ✂ Make the current reporting and response mechanism including names of the FP, clear to everyone
- ✂ UNHCR is the mandated agency for protection and has enough power. They should be willing to increase access to the offices for the vulnerable women and survivor of different forms of abuses
- ✂ Community based gender Security staff should be adequately trained and be involved in the reporting of SEA cases like other security matters in communities.
- ✂ Have community leaders' women/men support groups, Community security personnel and other key persons fully empowered and specific roles assigned in the PSEA effort.
- ✂ Train community based PSEA focal points to increase awareness and ensure effecting reporting of cases

- ✎ Staff working for agencies should be encouraged to come to the field on regular basis.
- ✎ PSEA should employ additional field staff to increase accessibility and effectiveness in fighting sexual abuse and exploitation
- ✎ Responses to cases of SGBV have been extremely slow and unsatisfactory. Quicker and more efficient system must be adopted for PSEA

4. Response mechanism:

Lack of safe reporting mechanism, sufficient will and the capacity to meet the protection and psych-social need for the survivors, as well as fear of biased and predetermined conclusion of cases were cited by the respondents for reservation to come forward and seek attention. The following suggestions on what should happen after reports of abuse and exploitation are received, came from the groups:

- ✎ Urgent security intervention to prevent possible mass reaction (mob justice) or inter-clan conflict as a result.
- ✎ All staff accused of abuse/exploitation, corrupt and arrogant/violent approaches towards beneficiaries should be terminated to reduce their abusive power
- ✎ Perpetrators terminated in one organization in Kenya refugee program should never be offered any other humanitarian assignment by an other
- ✎ Ensure reliable method of protecting the survivor from further abuse
- ✎ Refer survivors for an urgent medical attention, legal and psychosocial services
- ✎ Ensure Fair and objective investigation, regular update/timely feedback of the progress to survivors,
- ✎ Those found guilty should be severely punished and be made to take full responsibility for their actions. They should:
 - Take care of the underage survivors who could be further victim of her community's culture
 - Be forced to marry those who are old enough (Sud-equatorial culture)
 - Take care of child who was born out of such relationship
 - Meet cost of any physical damages and health effects
- ✎ Girls found covering and collaborating with the perpetrators are as guilty as the exploiters and should also be punished

e) Conclusion

The current reporting mechanism was accepted by the majority saying, it is accessible and it offers variety of options for people to choose from. Additional options such as women support groups, community leaders and local security guards were also suggested in order to make it more accessible. Those who are not comfortable speaking to community leaders and junior aid workers expressed doubted of easy entry to appropriate office in compound one and two.

Throughout the discussions, respondents have been painting a scary image of the humanitarian aid agencies and their employees, expressing pessimism about likelihood of reforming their approaches and behavior towards beneficiaries.

Though incidents of individual rudeness and other misconduct can not be ruled out; the sweeping statement could be in accurate, based on a mere problem in beneficiaries' attitudes, which could be addressed through improved public relation and regular communication.

For some agencies who in the recent past, started monthly and quarterly meetings with community leaders in order to have them briefed by respective program managers/counterpart managers on the immediate programmatic priorities, the result acquired was enormously helpful for their operations as beneficiaries possess rich ideas and resources to offer, which are not only crucial for effective and relevant programming but also for cost-effective implementation of programs.

The negative views held by beneficiaries against the aid agencies and employees are most likely to hinder the willingness of the beneficiaries to actively participate in the fight against exploitation and abuse of refugee. Response and investigation mechanism that are time bound, humane and arrives at satisfactory result is bound to widen avenues and inspire voice for justice from survivors of unjust use of power.

More awareness and sensitization campaigns will be necessary to reach youth and other vulnerable groups and individuals among refugee and host community population.

Appendix 1

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) Guideline: Kakuma refugee camp

Objective:

To assess qualitatively the accessibility and efficiency of the current complaints mechanisms

Group _____ Sex _____ Age bracket _____ Total# _____ Nationality/Ethnicity

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Purpose/objective of the exercise
3. What is Sexual exploitation?
4. What is sexual abuse?
5. When did you first hear the terms?
6. Do you know of some who was sexually abused or exploited (by aid worker/police/community leader)?
7. Was the matter reported to anyone?
8. How was it handled?
9. What would you do if it were you?
10. Would you tell anyone about it? If no, why not?
11. If yes, who would you first report the matter to? Why?
12. What do you think should happen after reporting the case?

13. Are you aware of the current reporting mechanism?

14. What would you say about the way they work?

15. Suggest how reporting mechanism can be improved.

Current Reporting mechanism for review

Reporting Mechanism	Merits	Demerits	Suggestions/recommendations to make it better?
1. PSEA FP of the agency which the alleged perpetrator works for			
2. Any PSEA FP from other aid agencies 3.			
4. UNHCR staff in protection/Community service			
5. LWF staff in the Gender equity and Human rights/child development program			

Thank you