

**The Impact of Group Social Enterprises on the Emotional  
Well-Being of South Sudanese Refugee Survivors of Sexual  
and Gender-Based Violence and Torture in Northern Uganda**  
**Sexual Violence Research Initiative Conference, 2022**  
**Helen Liebling, Hazel Barrett and Pascal Niyonkuru**

# Research Aim

To establish and develop peer support social enterprises in order to transform lives of South Sudanese refugees living in settlements who have experienced torture and/or Sexual and Gender-Based Violence



# Methodology

- **November 2018: 4 women's and 2 men's social enterprise groups in Pagirinya, Mungula and Bidi Bidi settlements with Refugee Welfare Council and Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative**
- **Training-business skills and emotional support**
- **Beneficiary's Health and Livelihood Characteristics self-report questionnaire at start and end**
- **July 2019 evaluation:**
  - **Meeting with Group President and Treasurer**
  - **Beneficiary's Health & Livelihood Characteristics**
  - **Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test**
  - **Focus group discussion**



# Statistical Analysis of Beneficiaries Questionnaire: Separate Women and Men's Data

NS = not significant, Significance levels (significant to highly significant) \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001



	Women	Women	Women	Men	Men	Men	
	Before	After	Difference	Before	After	Difference	
	Median (n)	Median (n)	Median p (n)	Median (n)	Median (n)	Median (n)	p
Ability to earn an income	1 (23)	4 (21)	3 (21) 0.001	1 (12)	3 (10)	3 (10)	<0.001***
Ability to provide income to family	0 (23)	5 (21)	4 (21) 0.001	0 (12)	3 (10)	3 (10)	< 0.01 **
Ability to provide income for self	0 (23)	4 (21)	4 (21) 0.001	0 (11)	3 (10)	3 (9)	<0.05 *
Ability to develop a business plan	4 (23)	5 (21)	0 (21) Not sig	4 (11)	3 (10)	-1 (9)	NS
Ability to implement a business plan	4 (23)	5 (20)	1 (19) 0.01	4 (11)	3 (10)	-1 (9)	NS
Level of income generation skills	2 (23)	4 (19)	3 (19) 0.001	2 (11)	3 (9)	1 (9)	<0.05 *
Ability to work in groups	4 (24)	5 (21)	0 (21) Not sig	4 (2)	4 (10)	0 (10)	NS
Ability to care for emotional needs of family	0 (23)	4 (21)	3 (21) 0.001	0.5 (12)	3.5 (10)	3 (10)	< 0.01 **
Ability to care for own emotional needs	0 (24)	4 (21)	3 (21) 0.001	1.5. (12)	3 (10)	1 (10)	<0.05 *
Level of resilience		4 (19)			3 (10)		
Level of empowerment		5 (20)			3 (10)		
Level of dignity		5 (20)			3.5. (10)		
Ability to provide physical health treatment for family		4 (19)			3 (10)		
Ability to provide own physical health treatment		4 (19)			3 (10)		

# Combined Statistics on Women's and Men's Data

	Both Men and Women	Both Men and Women	Both Men and Women	
	Before	After	Difference	
	Median (n)	Median (n)	Median (n)	p
Ability to earn an income	1 (35)	4 (31)	3 (31)	<0.001***
Ability to provide income to family	0 (35)	4 (31)	4 (31)	<0.001***
Ability to provide income for self	0 (34)	4 (30)	3 (29)	<0.001***
Ability to develop a business plan	4 (34)	5 (31)	0 (30)	NS
Ability to implement a business plan	4 (34)	4.5 (30)	1 (28)	NS
Level of income generation skills	2 (34)	4 (28)	2.5. (28)	<0.001***
Ability to work in groups	4 (36)	4 (31)	0 (31)	NS
Ability to care for emotional needs of family	0 (35)	4 (31)	3 (31)	<0.001***
Ability to care for own emotional needs	1 (36)	4 (31)	3 (31)	<0.001***
Level of resilience		4 (29)		
Level of empowerment		4 (30)		
Level of dignity		4.5. (30)		
Ability to provide physical health treatment for family		4 (29)		
Ability to provide own physical health treatment		4 (29)		

# Pagirinya Social Enterprise Group



- Combined men and women's group: 12 members
- 11 successful businesses: group and personal savings, clinic, social services fund and celebrations fund:

*“I have treated 1000 men and women and children with a variety of illnesses including malaria. Typhoid, flu, cough, brucella, ulcers, peptic ulcers, monitoring of illnesses. We don't treat maternity health problems and we refer to the Health centre 2 for one to one counselling. There is no group counselling at the clinic”.*

**(Male refugee)**

*“I sell soap and silver fish and onion and the amount of market I am getting is giving me a profit. I get profit from the soap but it is not big as I am using some for washing my children”* (Woman refugee)

- Positive forum for sharing problems and tackling Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Ranked No.12  
UK University  
Guardian University  
Guide 2018



# Mungula Women's Social Enterprise Group



- 5 women: Petty trade, harvesting, goats: savings and loans

*“I thank God you came to us as we were traumatised and could not get what we want or help ourselves. We are now able to help ourselves and buy clothes, soaps and body oil”*

*“The young girl group member who had been raped and had a child as a result is doing well and is in school. UNHCR called her to take her to St Mary’s school and she is doing well and interacting with other people now when she used to isolate herself which is really good considering the trauma she has been through”.*

- Positive forum for tackling problems, increasing resilience and supporting families



# Bidi Bidi Social Enterprise Group



- 18 men and women: Selling soap and growing mushrooms: savings and loans

*“I have seen the activities with my eyes and I tell the OPM about it. I keep engaging the members so they continue growing as a group. The social enterprise has created love and sharing and our trauma has been pushed down.”* (Male Chairperson)

*“Thank God as before you came I had many problems and was not sleeping at night as I would think about the atrocities in South Sudan. Since we started the social enterprise we are now physically okay and smart and I thank you for taking the time to visit us.”*

(Woman refugee)

- Positive forum for tackling problems, increasing health, managing trauma and skills building



# Conclusion

*“I give thanks to God as you have given us a helping hand...I like this project as I have never been to school but thanks to it I have learnt to speak English. The trauma never ends and the wound on my face never allows me to forget the pain but the project is helping me manage it.”*

(Male refugee in Bidi Bidi)

- Qualitative and quantitative analysis supports success and impact of social enterprises established with partner organisations with refugees: Action research has real societal impact: economic sustainability, emotional well-being and resilience (Grom & Chahine, 2017; Harima & Freudenberg, 2019; Home Office, 2019)
- Good model revealing complex under-researched links between economic sustainability and improvements in mental health
- Refugees valued opportunity to narrate experiences: validating: restored hope and dignity (Liebling et al. 2020)

Ranked No.12  
UK University

Guardian University  
Guide 2018

2nd in UK for Teaching  
Excellence (TEF)

Times Higher Education metrics ranking  
2017 - Gold winner

Top 6 for Student  
Experience

The Times and Sunday Times  
Good University Guide 2018

## MAIN THEME

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Build on Enterprise Training: Integrated Approach**

- Build on combined training with group emotional support with conflict survivors of SGBV and torture in different contexts to strengthen model's applicability (Liebling et al. 2014; 2020a; 2020b)
- Funding for CLAMP project: extending support to urban refugees in Kampala utilising integrated model and training and employing peer refugee counsellors and establishing social enterprises

[CLAMP: Bringing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to urban refugees | The Global Compact on Refugees | Digital platform \(globalcompactrefugees.org\)](#)

**Utilise participatory methods**

Participatory action learning use techniques that empower people: perfect method in this context

**Listen to and involve refugees**

- Improves emotional health SGBV and torture survivors using integrative/holistic approach
- Adapt approach according to different needs of refugees

## Thank you for listening!

### Contact:

- Dr Helen Liebling [Helen.Liebling@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Liebling@coventry.ac.uk)
- Professor Hazel Barrett [H.Barrett@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:H.Barrett@coventry.ac.uk)
- Dr Pascal Niyonkuru [P.Niyonkuru@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:P.Niyonkuru@coventry.ac.uk)

### Acknowledgements:

- Coventry University
- Refugees, Refugee Welfare Council and Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative
- Ugandan organisations

### UNHCR citation of model of good practice and references:

[Social-Enterprise Groups for South Sudanese Refugee Survivors | The Global Compact on Refugees | Digital platform \(globalcompactrefugees.org\)](#)

Liebling, H. & Barrett, H. (2021) *Social Enterprise Groups for South Sudanese Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Torture Living in Settlements in Northern Uganda*. Volume VI of the Asian Yearbook of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

Liebling, H., Barrett, H. & Artz, L. (2020) Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Torture Experiences of Sudanese Refugees in Northern Uganda: Health and Justice Response. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*. October 2020. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJMHS-10-2019-0081/full/html>

Liebling, H., Barrett, H. & Artz, L. (2020) South Sudanese Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Torture: Health and Justice Service Responses in Northern Uganda. *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health*, 17, (5), 1685; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051685>

