**COLLECTIF DES ORGANISATIONS DES JEUNES SOLIDAIRES DU CONGO KINSHASA**

 **« COJESKI/RDC »**



 **COORDINATION PROVINCIALE DU NORD-KIVU**

 **Projet : Global Refugee Leaders Forum (GRELEF)**

 Personnalité Juridique : N°385/CAB/MIN/J & GS/2003 du 30 avril 2003, NGO wi NGO with a Special Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) **& Jouissant duStatut d’Observateur auprès de la Commission Africaine des Droits de l’Homme et des Peuples / UA.**

**NREF: 03/COJESKI/NK/01/2023 Date: 15/01/2023**

**Refugee Women Craft Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**Background information**

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a long history of welcoming refugees, the country is big and rich in minerals but the population is among the poorest people in the world. Refugees also are more vulnerable than the host communities because DRCongo does not have in place a system that focuses on refugees in terms of their protection and support. There is the presence of UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees known as CNR who are mandated to handle refugee issues which work alongside humanitarian organizations but over the years these two institutions have not yet been effective.

To make the matter worse the Democratic Republic of Congo has been at wars imposed by her neighbors mainly Rwanda and Uganda since 1996 up to now, and refugees have paid a high price of that war as they completely lost protection.

However after the general elections of 2018 which brought in power the current president the situation of war and massive human rights violations seem to have reduced, which gives us now more space to work on these humanitarian issues.

**Refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

As per now DRC hosts refugees mainly from Rwanda who came in 1994 after the genocide and represent more than 75% of the refugee population, refugees from Burundi, refugees from South Sudan, and refugees from the Central African Republic. The statistics of these refugee population is unknown but we estimate them at around 4million people living alongside host communities in the former 11 DRCongo Provinces. However the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has managed to identify only 526,000 mainly from the Central African Republic and from South Sudan, and these are only ones who general benefit from some kind of protection from UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations.

**Refugee women**

According to UNHCR and other few humanitarian agencies information that is available, refugee women and children represent more than 85% of the entire refugee population in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Again over the years these refugee women and young girls have been victims of rape and all other forms sexual violence by various armed groups from all possible sides, either Rwandan Army, Ugandan Army who invaded DRCongo, the Congolese Army, local militia groups in DRCongo and foreign armed groups that operate on Congolese territory.

However much is known about Congolese women who were victims of sexual violence but nothing at all is said about refugee women who remain unknown among the DRC population yet they are there. That is why we initiated this project among others we put in place in 2021 in order to offer services to these women who have been abandoned over the years since 1994 up to now.

**The current situation of these refugee women**

Some among these women came from Rwanda and Burundi as adults and have gone through all forms of sexual abuses over the years, others came when they were too young and have lived in a hostile environment and others were born in DRC as a result of rape and sexual violence and do not know who their fathers are, and others are just young girls right now.

Generally each reach woman has between 5-7 children from different fathers and none among them is married or has ever been married in her life time, and all these children are results of sexual violence or rape, young girls victims of rape got pregnancy at the age of ten 10 years for some and others have lived in sexual violence the whole of their lives in DRCongo.

**How they are abused**

Over the years the government of DRCongo lost control of so many parts which were controlled by all sorts of armed groups, including the foreign armies. During the wars some women were abused by armed groups, others taken as sexual slaves, others abused from where they went to hide, while others resorted to commercial sex in order to get some money which they can survive on.

**The title of the project:** Refugee Craft Project in DRCongo

**Location**: Goma, North Kivu, the Democratic Republic of Congo,

**Implementing organization**: The Collective of Youth Organizations for Solidarity in DRCongo, known as COJESKI/DRC,

**Period**

**Period**: This project started in May July 2021 just after Nyiragongo Volcano eruption for undetermined period, it will take more years,

**Beneficiaries**: Refugee women, refugee young girls, and some vulnerable women in the refugee host communities,

**Items to produce**: They will produce shopping bags, sponges for bathing, and other local items to decorate and beautify houses, including decoration,

**Longtime plan**: As they progress these women will also be involved in Decoration and events planning but also put in place other various initiatives,

**What will this project solve**: The women involved will generate money to buy food, rent a house, pay for medical treatment when they are sick and help their children in the education process.

**Number of the beneficiaries**: This project has 43 women and young girls as per now but it will extend to others when we get more funding, by the end of this year 2023 we expect that more than 350 refugee women and others in host communities will have benefited directly from our activities.

**Objectives**

This project focuses on the following objectives directly in order to address the situation on ground.

To help these women general money in order to solved their urgent basic needs (food, house rent, soap, clothes, medicine, and the education for their children),

To bring them in order to focus and build a strong team that can soon be empowered in order to advocate for their rights,

Provide them alternative solutions for their financial challenges so that they do not continue to be sexual abused,

Protect them from all sorts of sexual violence and sexual exploitation,

To provide for a safe protection space for refugee young girls and offer psychological support including urgent interventions when they are in difficult moments,

Make these refugee more valuable in the communities where they live and therefore participate in the Community Development,

**Activities**

**Training in craft:** Generally the training will take one month that means two days per week, and only 4hours per day. We have already put up Wednesday and Friday for the women training in order to produce shopping bags and sponges, the other things for decorations will take 3 months,

**Community mobilization**: We shall various community to sensitize and create awareness about these activities,

Selling the products: A team will be put in place in order to sell what they have made,

**Saving Group:** These women will be encouraged to form saving groups of 15 persons each group,

**Literacy**: We shall also have Adult Literacy programme to help them to read and write,

**Estimated budget**

Here is what we believe will be the general cost of the project for the year 2023,

Hiring the space for the training: 400$ per month x12 = 4,800$

Hiring a center for selling the products: 150$ x12 = 1,800$

Materials: 6,000$

Allowances for the teachers (trainers): 300$ per month x12= 3,600$

Administrative costs: 3,000$

Community mobilization: 1,000$

Urgent support in case of a problem: 2,000$

**Total: 17,200$**

**Expected results**

Social network among refugee women themselves in order to share ideas and opportunities among themselves,

Interventions and support among themselves in order to address their challenges,

Getting alternative source of income,

Safe place and protection opportunities for young girls and refugee women,

Economic development for them and reclaiming their esteem and dignity in their communities,

Becoming resourceful persons which can help the whole community to rely on,

End rape and sexual abuses against these refugee women and young girls,