

LEGAL AID & AWARENESS

Factsheet January to July 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, Geddo and West Guji zones of Oromia and SNNP regions.

Total people supported: 21,900

Women & girls: 49%

Men & boys: 51%

Legal aid: 79%

Legal awareness: 21%

- **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 a durable solution:** 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.

Voice

"I had no money to go to the court or to consult legal experts. As a result, I had no hope. Then I heard about the free legal aid service, but could not believe it at first. Thanks to the legal aid support, the court decided the case in my favour."

36-year-old Sisaye (f) fled her home together with her children after the death of her husband. She was at risk of losing her inherited property.

Voice

"In the situation we live in, accessing justice for IDPs like me is almost impossible. The free legal aid centre helped me to get my property back."

31-year-old Misgana (m) was internally displaced in 2019 and was able to have his property rights restored with the support of the free legal aid.

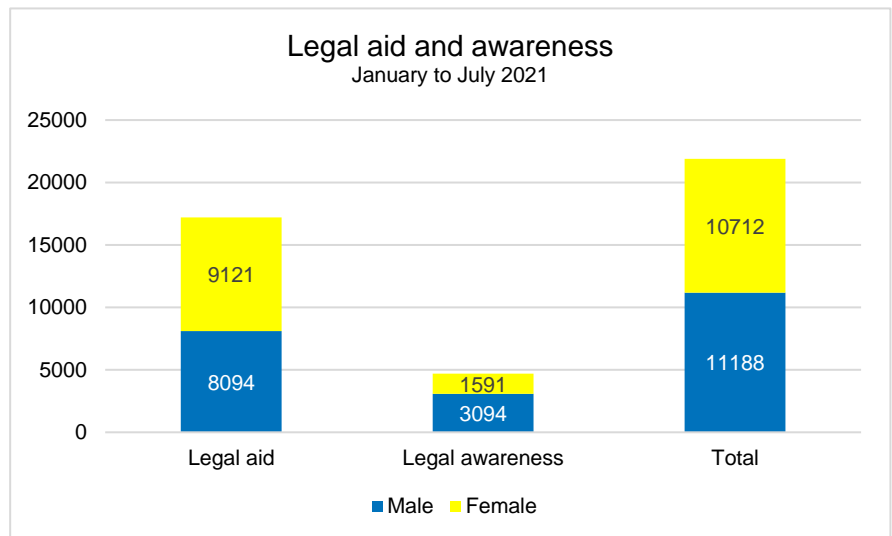
Voice

"The experts helped me understand my rights and procedures to follow to access justice."

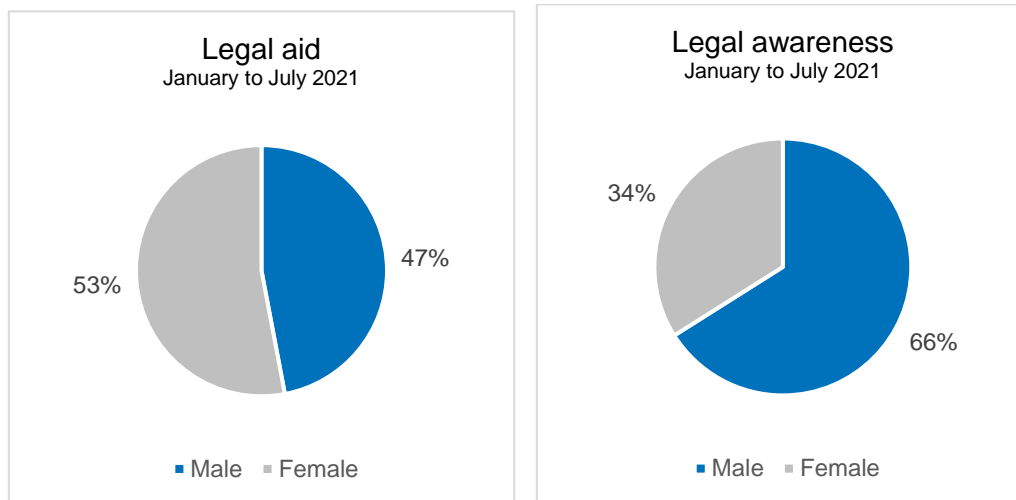
28-year-old Ebise (f) heard about the legal aid service during an awareness session.

People supported

Between January and July 2021, **21,900 people** benefitted from legal aid and legal awareness activities. Of those, 79 per cent received legal aid, while 21 per cent benefitted from legal awareness activities. Overall, of those supported with legal aid and legal awareness, 51 per cent were male and 49 per cent female.

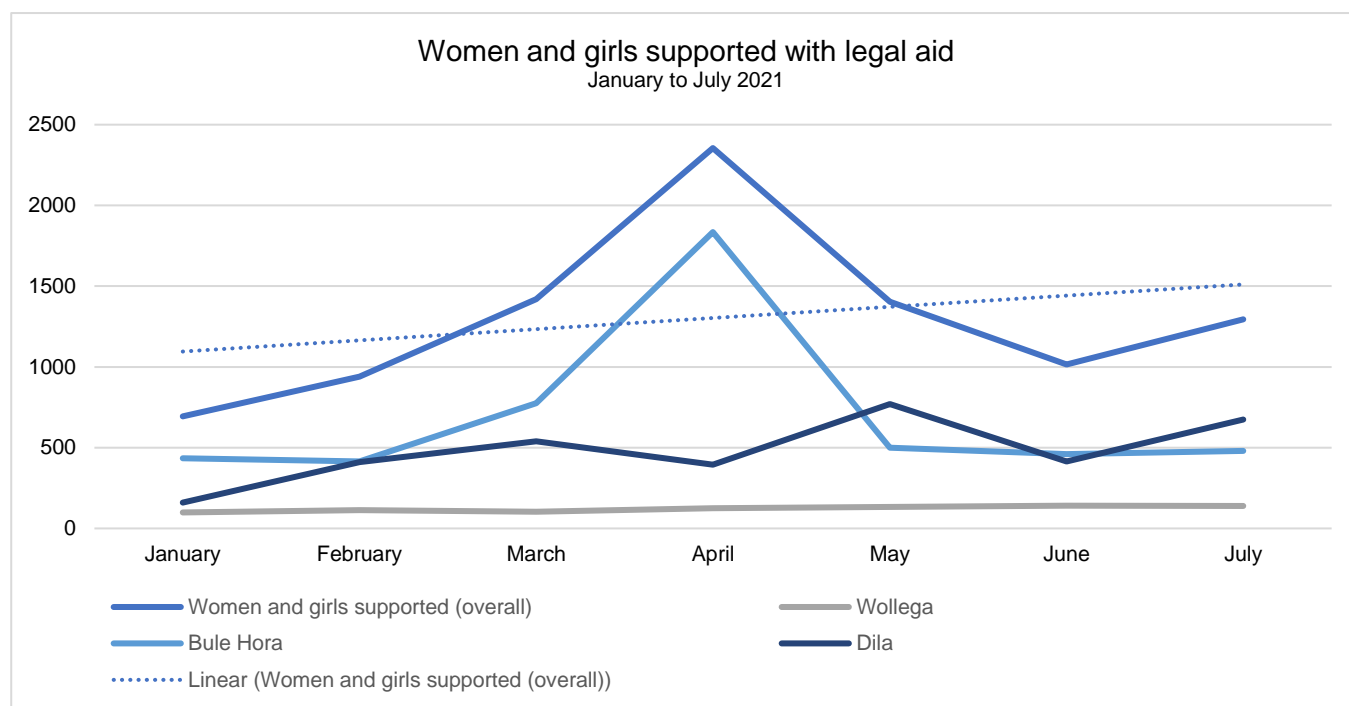


Women and girls often face additional layers and challenges in accessing justice, obtaining documents or enjoying their housing, land and property rights. For widows, these challenges can compound even further. The gender breakdown by activity type shows that the percentage of women and girls supported with legal aid services stands at 53 per cent and at 34 per cent for legal awareness activities.



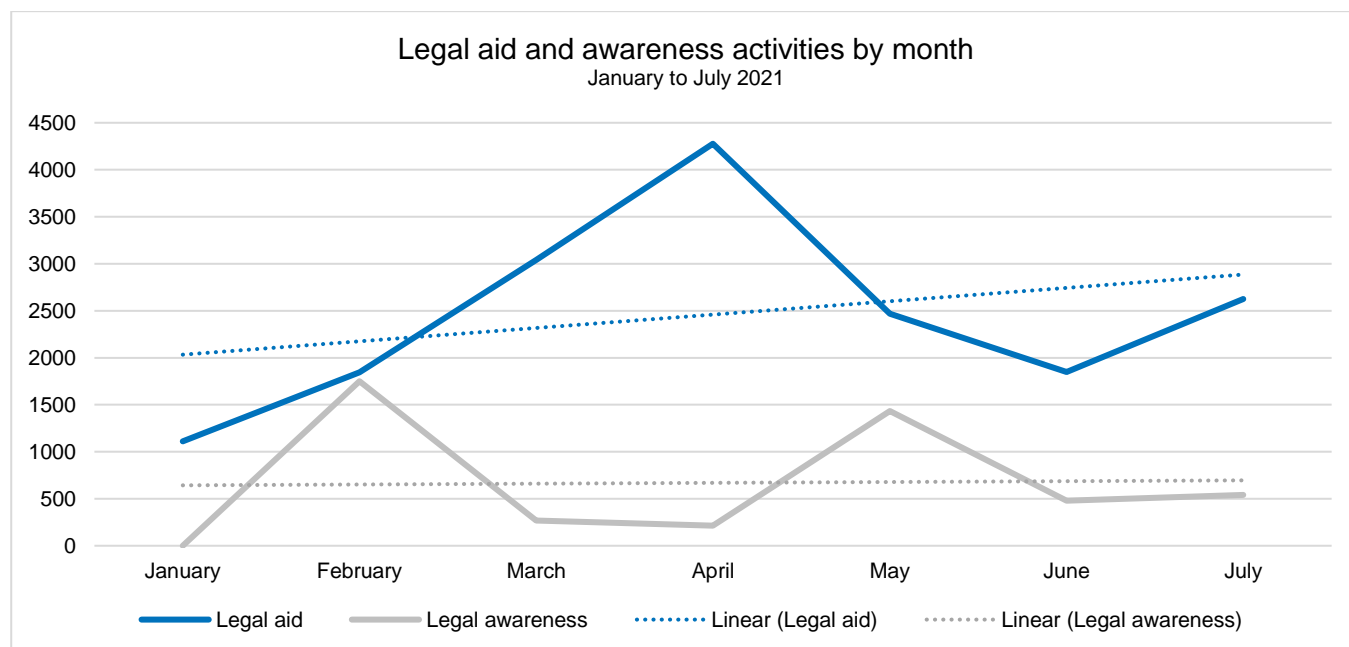
While the seven legal clinics of the Wollega University provided legal aid services at a consistent level throughout the first seven months of the year, it is noteworthy that the number of women and girls supported has gradually increased from March onwards with an average of 140 women and girls assisted in June and July 2021. The legal aid clinics of the Bule Hora and Dila Universities also supported more women and girls with legal aid services and on average assisted 700 and 481 females respectively each month.

Legal aid services are more accessible to women and girls due to functioning referrals by other partners. In July, UNHCR donated motorcycles and loaned a vehicle to Wollega University strengthening the capacities of the legal aid centres for a more effective outreach to the community, especially women, girls and persons with specific needs, such as older persons or persons with disabilities, even better.



People supported with legal aid and awareness activities

A total of 21,900 people benefitted from legal aid and awareness activities in the first seven months of the year (3,129 people per month on average) with a clear upward trend for legal and a steady trend for legal awareness activities.



This upward trend will need to be sustained but it is challenged by the volatile situation in the areas where these services are currently offered. In addition, by further increasing outreach capacity, the partnerships aim at strengthening the reach of women and girls and persons with specific needs.

ETHIOPIA University partners and Legal aid centers in Oromia and SNNP regions

02 August 2021

