

# Toward Durable Solutions: Legal aid & legal awareness

## Factsheet January - March 2022

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: 6,722**

**Women & girls: 45.5%**

**Men & boys: 54.4%**

**Legal aid: 31.5%**

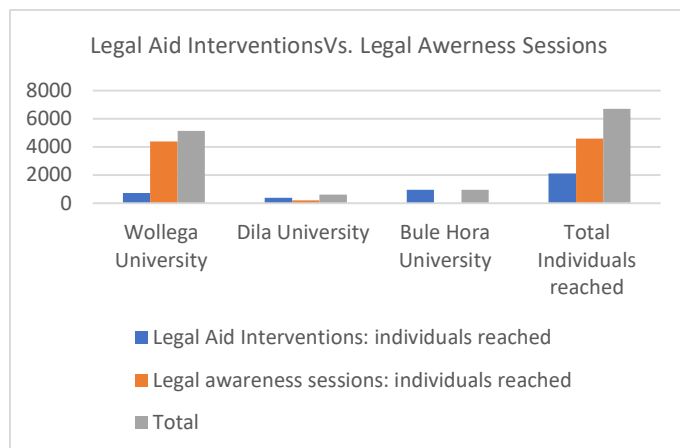
**Legal Awareness: 68.5%**

- **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 included awareness-raising sessions, 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, Wollega and now Arba-Minch is very valuable in creating conditions to leverage local legal expertise for quality services to people in need.



Launching ceremony of the joint UNHCR-Wollega University project 'Attaining Protection, Safety, and Access to Justice for IDPs'. March 2022

*"After I left my village and started to live in Haro I was arguing with my husband. I did not want to divorce and the legal aid centre supported us through alternative dispute settlement. I am happy to be able now to raise my children with my husband." Female IDP, displaced from Kamashi Zone, now living in Haro, East Wollega.*

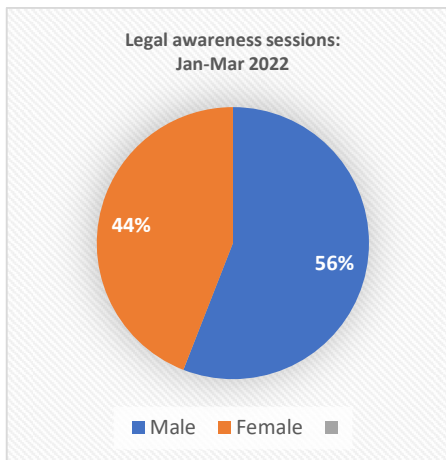
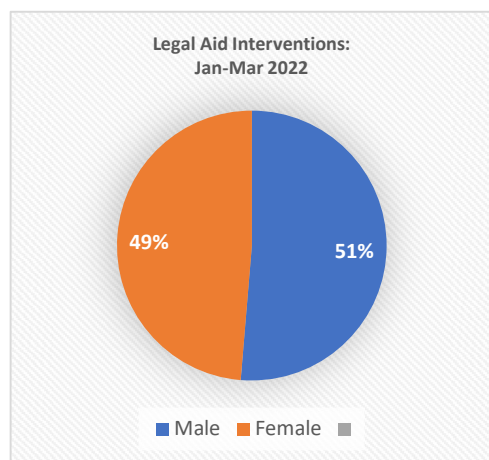


## People supported

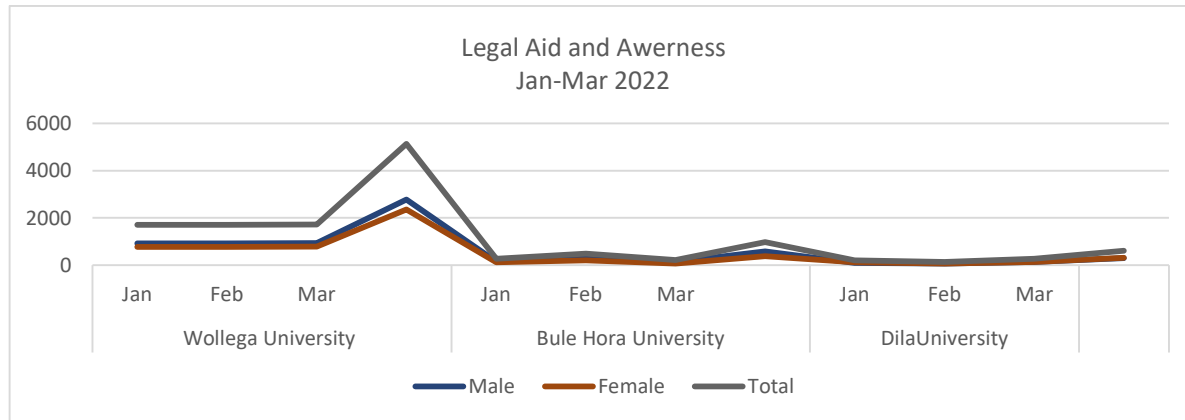
Between January and March 2022, **6,722 persons** benefited from legal aid and legal awareness activities. Of those, 2,117 (31.5%) received legal aid, while 4,605 (68.5%) benefitted from legal awareness activities. Overall, women constituted 46% of all those who were supported with legal aid and legal awareness raising.

**Displaced and returnee women**, particularly widows, separated and disabled are among the most vulnerable and are often faced with

additional challenges preventing them to enjoy their housing, land and property (HLP) rights. UNHCR, through its well-established free legal aid centres, has been supporting women's access to HLP rights and in improving the living conditions of displaced and returnee women, as well as of women from the host communities. The gender breakdown by activity type shows that the percentage of women and girls supported with legal aid services stands at 49% and at 44% for legal awareness activities.



In the first quarter of 2022, the Wollega University's legal aid clinics provided 46% of their legal aid interventions to women, while at Bule Hora and Dila University this ratio was 51% and 40% respectively. The number of women and girls who received free legal aid between January and March 2022 was relatively higher (60%) in Wollega university compared to Bule Hora and Dilla, with a highest number of female beneficiaries recorded in March (1,723). During this period, 56% of all those who benefited from legal awareness sessions provided by legal aid centers of Dilla University. In the last quarter of 2021, legal aid centers in Bule Hora did not conduct legal awareness sessions, due to the continuingly unstable security situation in the area and the lack of access to Woredas where the centers are located.



### New developments

A Partnership Agreement was signed between UNHCR and Arba-Minch University, for the period 1 March-31 December 2022, to deliver free legal aid through four new free legal aid centres and by strengthening the existing centre in Karat town. The joint work will aim to secure free legal aid services for IDPs - particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable groups affected by the conflict, as well as other marginalized groups in the host communities in Konso Zone (Segen Zuria Woreda, Karat Zuria Woreda and Kolme Cluster), Derashe Special Woreda and Alle Special Woreda, SNNP region.

*"I am a 70 year-old farmer from remote kebeles of Gimbi Woreda, Oromia. Someone occupied my land and I am in a difficult situation, without any help to get my land back. Legal aid officers counselled me, for free, on my rights, and I am planning to use their advice to solve my problems."*  
Male IDP displaced from Kamashi Zone/ Benishangul Gumuz



Staff of UNHCR, Law school of the Arba-Minch University and High Court president of the Konso zone mapping free legal aid services. February 2022

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

02 August 2021

