

dr. Denis
Mukwege
Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT

2020

www.mukwegefoundation.org

Contents

3	Letter from the Directors
4	Highlights
5	Challenges Conclusion
6	What We Do
7	VOICE
9	SEMA
14	National Networks
24	HOLISTIC CARE
25	Panzi Holistic Care Model
26	Holistic Care Projects
30	JUSTICE & ADVOCACY
33	Communications
37	Internal Organisation
38	Fundraising
40	Looking Ahead
43	Partners

Letter from the Directors



Co-director Katrien Coppens



Co-director Esther Dingemans

2020 was a difficult year across the world, causing hardship and economic struggles.

Many survivors of wartime sexual violence share a similar sentiment: **the coronavirus crisis has made their already difficult situations worse.** And yet, the crisis has also shown how the skills, creativity, and determination of survivors makes them resilient to and able to adapt to the difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this time, while some survivors have been able to maintain their journeys in activism, it is important to acknowledge the huge impact COVID-19 has had on marginalised groups, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We must also acknowledge that it is a long journey to reach that stage of activism and we must keep in mind the many victims who have not yet been able to get any form of relief from their ongoing struggle and pain.

This year demonstrated once more the importance of the connection between survivors. It has been very inspiring to see how survivors at the local and the global levels have continued to support each other throughout the pandemic. When formal support and resources for victims and survivors lagged, survivor networks bridged the gaps, providing peer support, mobilising essential resources and identifying victims through informal referral pathways.

Highlights

We are proud of the way the Project Nengo in Central African Republic (CAR) expanded and flourished during 2020, despite the impacts of the pandemic. This project enables victims of sexual and gender-based violence in CAR to access quality care through a coordinated and comprehensive process, thanks to the establishment of a holistic One-Stop Centre in Bangui. A highly skilled team of experts from Panzi Hospital, including a physician/surgeon, a psychologist and a social worker is currently working side by side with their Central African colleagues. The four pillars of the holistic model are really taking shape at this One-Stop Centre, and we are seeing an increase in victims receiving quality care.

Together with Panzi, we coordinate an ongoing knowledge exchange with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on the topic of holistic care for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. This collaboration aims to build capacity on the use of Panzi's holistic care approach as a best practice model across the Great Lakes Region of Africa and to improve services and care to survivors in the broader region. This is an essential component of the Mukwege Foundation's work, and we look forward to enabling more survivors globally to have access to holistic care.

When the world's day-to-day activities suddenly halted at the onset of the pandemic, we became increasingly aware of the value of the internet as a means to stay connected. The Mukwege Foundation shifted its support model and began offering small grants to cover survivor network coordinators' internet costs. Through this initiative, we have been able to improve and contribute to the connectivity between survivors. We saw a rapid uptake in digital participation by members of the SEMA global survivor network as well as in the national networks. This widespread internet connectivity enabled us to provide ongoing webinars, trainings, and workshops, on topics chosen by members of SEMA, the



Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence.

The virtual world also became the main means of meeting throughout 2020 and **the Mukwege Foundation became an invaluable resource for many international, high-level events** to reach survivors for their participation as key speakers and panellists. There have been numerous opportunities for survivors to make their voices heard, despite the sudden stop of in-person events. The event commemorating the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which the Mukwege Foundation co-hosted with UN Women and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, is a great example of this. Moreover, the transition to online events has enabled us to transcend borders in a way that physical events did not allow, enabling the participation and representation of a broader range of individuals and contexts.

Challenges

Despite the value of online forums, the pandemic hindered our ability to host a global retreat for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, which we coordinate annually to create a space for survivors to gather and clarify their priorities for the year to come. We very much look forward to being able to organise a retreat again and to facilitate a face-to-face exchange once it is safe to do so, as we have learned in the past this is a crucial moment for individual survivors and national survivor networks to inspire each other, build momentum and generate new initiatives at the national and global levels.



Conclusion

Despite the COVID-19 crisis, we are proud of everything that our team and the national and global survivor networks accomplished in 2020. In the coming year, we are eager to dive deeper into our advocacy efforts, specifically the aim to draw a red line against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Thereby, we will begin an advocacy initiative which argues for the establishment of an international convention to eliminate wartime sexual violence, which also then paves a way to sanction states which commit or tolerate such crimes. It would be the first international convention to specifically address sexual violence used as a weapon of war.

We also find it crucial to remember that this red line against conflict-related sexual violence is inextricably linked with the need for holistic care worldwide and that

the demand for prevention and justice mechanisms must be paired with financial support for holistic care. While survivors around the world are incredibly courageous when speaking out and telling the world about the reality of wartime sexual violence, they are also often in pain every day from neglected emotional and physical wounds and often do not receive proper medical care - sometimes for decades. We demand action; a timely, high quality, and sustained response is critical, and our advocacy efforts will be aimed at ensuring just that.

Thank you to all of our donors and supporters in 2020.

Sincerely,

Esther and Katrien

What We Do



Voice: Connecting Survivors

When survivors speak up, the use of sexual violence as a tactic of warfare and terrorism can no longer be ignored.



Holistic Care

We promote quality holistic care for survivors: medical treatment, psychosocial care, socioeconomic programmes and legal assistance.



Justice and Accountability

We work with survivors, governments, international organisations and NGOs to advocate for holistic justice.





VOICE

It is crucial that the silence around sexual violence as a weapon of war is broken.

The Mukwege Foundation supports victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to unite and stand up for their rights.

Voice

Not only do survivors of sexual violence face a cascade of long-term physical, psychological, social and economic consequences, they live with the burden of being shunned or silenced by their communities. This stigma can have lasting, potentially lethal, repercussions including 'honour killings', suicide and high-risk behaviour. It prevents survivors from seeking justice, excludes them from their communities and often leaves them to care for themselves and their children without any support.

Silence is sometimes the best protection that survivors have against stigma, and so the pain and the devastating consequences of these crimes remain hidden. Coming forward, breaking the silence and claiming their rights is often an insurmountable task that cannot be achieved alone.

With tremendous courage, survivors have come together to speak out, tell their truths and to seek solutions for themselves and their communities. [SEMA - The Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence](#) brings together victims and survivors of wartime sexual violence from 21 countries and 6 continents, acting in solidarity, mobilising collectively and advocating for justice and change. SEMA means 'speak out' in Swahili, chosen by survivors in honour of the mother tongue of Dr Mukwege. The global network is rooted in survivor-led activist networks at a local level, representing thousands of survivors of wartime sexual violence. The innovative advocacy and activism of these networks builds pressure to change attitudes within their own communities, and to change policies and laws which impact survivors' lives.

SEMA brings survivors from different generations, continents and cultures together to learn from each other. The links between the local, national and international networks are essential to create a shared vision and to speak out powerfully.

The Mukwege Foundation supports local survivor networks with capacity building and resources to develop their own solutions and actions. We connect local and regional survivor networks with the global network SEMA for mutual support, inspiration, learning and growth.

In 2020, we engaged external evaluators to perform an [evaluation on the program activities and expected outputs of SEMA and 5 national networks](#). The evaluation's key take-aways are the following:

1. **Global and National Networks** | Established in 2017, the SEMA network has become a recognised resource and inspiration for other organisations and activists in the field, putting survivors centre stage of efforts to end wartime sexual violence. In turn, the national networks in CAR, DRC, Ukraine and Nigeria are all now set up and functioning and have unique mandates within these countries. While the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted SEMA's former operating style, adaptations have been made to the network's ways of working to emphasise digital connectivity and online events.
2. **Solidarity** | Survivors report feeling supported and recognised.
3. **Agents of Change** | Survivors have received training that has improved their confidence, public speaking and leadership skills.
4. **'Nothing About Us, Without Us'** | A major push has ensured a survivor presence at numerous national and international events.
5. **Global Awareness** | Study visits, film, radio, social media and conferences are used to raise awareness of wartime sexual violence.
6. **Collective Memory** | Collective memory is a recurring theme in activities.
7. **Survivor-led approach** | Early efforts to ensure survivor buy-in and ownership of the project have paid off down the line.
8. **Sustainability** | Efforts are being made to capitalise on existing capacities and encourage peer-to-peer learning.



SEMA, the Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence

At a retreat facilitated by the Mukwege Foundation in 2017, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and their advocates gathered from all over the globe. The network creates opportunities for survivors to share and learn from each other, to fight for their rights, to raise awareness, conduct international advocacy together and to influence policies and programmes which impact them.

Since its founding, SEMA members have been recognised as important advocates and are sought-after speakers at public events for their ability to share their experiences and insights. Numerous international conferences, as well as the United Nations, NATO and foreign governments, have welcomed SEMA members to deliver speeches, participate in panels and consult on the formation of policy.

SEMA: Highlights 2020

In early 2020, Tatiana Mukanire, founding member of the Movement of Survivors in DRC and SEMA member, travelled to the United States to speak on behalf of SEMA members. She spoke on the effective care of women following sexual violence at the Commission on the Status of Women, hosted and organised by the Belgium Ministry of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. SEMA members were understandably concerned by the immediate impact on their communities, survivors and on those most at risk. As lockdown measures such as travel bans and limitations of health services were implemented, survivors were particularly affected by the lack of access to basic resources, the increase in domestic violence and skyrocketing food prices. SEMA members also reported misinformation and a lack of reliable health protocols.

In response to the growing pandemic, SEMA members released a strong [collective statement](#) about COVID-19 in April 2020. Their statement raises many important issues which have continued throughout the pandemic and still need to be addressed:

While essential, public health measures, such as closing public spaces and limiting movement, add to the existing care-giving duties of women. Women, often employed part-time or informally, are now home, with a sudden loss of income which has supported them and their families. As it has occurred following previous outbreaks, women also fear greater difficulty than men to return to their pre-outbreak levels of employment.

In their conclusion, the survivors' words resonate with foresight:

SEMA members strongly urge decision-makers to recognise and prioritise the specific needs of survivors in all community responses and planning, as these higher-risk individuals will be massively affected. They believe addressing these needs in a timely manner will diminish long-term costly impacts and devastating suffering for all. SEMA members respect the internationally recommended health measures in place, but strongly believe this global problem requires a coordinated global solution with shared best practices and innovations, and that the time for real solidarity is now.

COVID-19 related measures created obstacles to SEMA activities such as conferences and other meetings or gatherings. With international travel suspended – or at the very least significantly restricted – the Mukwege Foundation had to quickly adapt face-to-face activities and meetings to online alternatives.

Given the importance of being able to connect and communicate with each other, it became immediately clear that continued internet access for all SEMA members was crucial. Through the Connectivity Initiative, the Mukwege Foundation provided financial support to 40 SEMA members struggling to cover phone costs. SEMA members also initiated Phone Sisters, a system in which survivors paired up and kept in regular contact throughout the lockdown.



Members of SEMA at an advocacy event in 2018

Additionally, on March 25, 2020, SEMA launched a new, autonomous website with an innovative, secure messaging platform, including an automatic translation feature for five languages. SEMA members can share their comments and concerns and support one another to manage their hardships, as well as sharing updates on the activities of their national networks on this messaging platform.



Projection on Roman Colosseum

On June 19, 2020, International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, quotes from SEMA members were projected on the Colosseum in Rome as part of the Zero Dignity in Violence campaign, launched by Stop Rape Italia, to honour all survivors who have experienced wartime sexual violence.

"This is a serious human tragedy; a crisis of our humanity that concerns us all! We must therefore combat and eliminate such violence -by all means- and prevent bodies from being used as battlefields...we call on men and boys to fight alongside women and girls to build a new generation."

~ Dr Denis Mukwege

SEMA members, together with Dr Denis Mukwege, urged the world to act to bring truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition to survivors around the world.

On October 12, 2020, the Mukwege Foundation, together with UN Women and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, hosted an interactive, online, high-level event commemorating the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The event took stock of the successes and challenges faced by survivors, featuring female survivors from Colombia, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"When victims speak with their own voices, justice, peace and democracy also win."

~ Ángela María Escobar, SEMA member from Colombia

SEMA members contributed to the event from its conception, suggesting a focus on transitional justice. Consultations with SEMA members, together with two preparatory online workshops, informed and shaped the format and themes of the event.

The event demonstrated that meaningful survivor participation is not only possible but necessary: survivors have invaluable and unique insights and are adept at finding creative and innovative solutions to complex and difficult situations.



The home page of www.semanetwork.org

Ongoing Activities

Despite the challenges of 2020, the Mukwege Foundation and SEMA committed to strengthening the network's capacity through online trainings providing technical or specialist information, and contributing to increased solidarity among the members. The trainings and workshops were provided in English, French and Spanish and included:

- 8 self-care webinars, providing strategies for managing stress and dealing with isolation
- 4 trainings on reparations
- 2 workshops concerning the Women, Peace and Security agenda (around the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325).

SEMA members also now participate in a coaching programme, developed by Intelligences Alternatives, to enhance their professional potential and strengthen their leadership skills. The programme was initiated in the summer of 2020, and it is currently hosting its second round of participants.

In trainings hosted by UN Women, SEMA members served as panellists in workshops for female UN peacekeepers who will be deployed to missions all over the world. As a part of the training, the future peacekeepers learned about the causes and consequences of conflict-related sexual violence. SEMA members from the DRC and Ukraine answered questions about the needs and rights of survivors in order to improve the response of peacekeeping missions to conflict-related sexual violence.

Throughout 2020, SEMA members continued to attend and participate (via Zoom) in an array of high-level advocacy and awareness-raising events, conferences and speaking engagements, including:

- the annual discussion on women's human rights at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council, calling for "the consultation and involvement of survivors in the design and implementation of all policies related to conflict-related sexual violence"
- the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group for the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) discussion on the importance of survivor-centred approaches, asking governments to invest in capacity building for survivors to take part in discussions as key stakeholders
- the online launch event of Forced to report: mandatory reporting of sexual violence in armed conflict by the British Red Cross and International Committee of the Red Cross
- the launch of the [Declaration of Humanity](#), reflecting on the important role of faith leaders



Interactive workshop with members of SEMA Ukraine

Looking Forward

Members of SEMA showed striking resilience during the pandemic, increasingly participating in online events. In 2020 alone, the Mukwege Foundation facilitated survivors' participation in more than 12 online panel discussions. These online events may provide further opportunities in the future, especially when travel is difficult, expensive or politically impossible. The Mukwege Foundation's demonstrated integrity in relationships with survivors, and its survivor-centred approach, have established it as a 'go-to' partner in the humanitarian and human rights sectors.

As one example of this, SEMA will co-organise and facilitate survivor consultations on the draft of the Murad Code, launched in June 2020, to build a community of better practice for, with and concerning survivors of conflict-related sexual violence together with the Institute for International Criminal Investigations. These consultations will take place in the first quarter of 2021 with 15 survivors from Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ukraine.

Moving forward, the Mukwege Foundation and SEMA will further integrate the lessons learned in 2020 by prioritising connectivity and education through the adoption of more digital tools.

Messages of Support from SEMA Members to One Another

"Muchas gracias a todas por estar ahí durante el 2019 su lucha es de todas y que el 2020 este lleno de nuevos caminos por recorrer, nuevas aventuras. Que la pasen bien desde el pueblo Ixil de Guatemala".

- Isabel, SEMA member, Guatemala

"KRCT and Monet on February 12, 2020 opened the ceramics exhibition "Women in Art" in Prishtina. Through engaging in artistic work, this initiative aims to involve the war survivors in Kosovo in creative art of ceramics. The pain from wounds of the past and the will to fight the stigma surrounding them will be memorialized in the figures and artistic elements in order to give strength to inspire change among us".

- Feride, SEMA member, Kosovo

"Confinement exposes women to domestic violence. With us also the schools are closed. We are in partial containment. I know deep inside that this virus will end soon and we will continue the course of our lives. We are strong today and forever".

- Tatiana Mukanire, survivor and SEMA member, DRC

"Asmaou tu as raison, je dis toujours que la lenteur de la justice est un nouveau crime pour les victimes. Persévérez! aujourd'hui vous n'êtes pas seules et tiens bon pour conduire l'équipe. SEMA est là pour toi".

- Bernadette, survivor and SEMA member, CAR

"I hug you from a distance, take good care of yourselves, let's have faith and well, my positive energies for each one, what we must not lose is hope, I love you very much".

- Fulvia, survivor and SEMA member, Colombia

"So proud of all you sisters and the work you all do"

- Vafije, survivor and SEMA member, Kosovo

"The Network led the first early reparation program to indigenous women victims of sexual violence. It is a literacy program, to do it the Network had IOM and Special Jurisdiction for Peace support. The question to promote this early reparation program was: how women victims can participate in legal judgments if they cannot write and read? Now, at least 70 indigenous women victims can do it".

- Pilar Rueda, SEMA member, Colombia

"Hi great family!! Missing you as I send my great hugs to you. I always see my parents in you. (Mother, sister, father) today was the date and month I was abducted and taken to the jungle. Please pray for me today".

- Sylvia, survivor and SEMA member, Uganda

"Love you all my sisters around the world, stay safe".

- Shirete, survivor and SEMA member, Kosovo

"Je prie de coeur avec vous ma soeur ensemble nos voies sont plus fortes".

- Oumou, survivor and SEMA member, Guinea

"Le 10 décembre fin des 16 jours d'activisme sur les violences sexuelles. Les braves dames de Avipa membres engagés du mouvement SEMA au centre culturel franco Guinée (CCFG)".

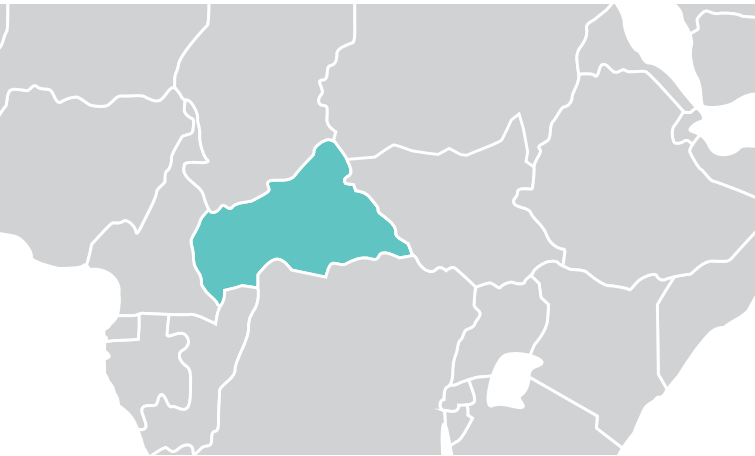
- Asmaou, SEMA member, Guinea

"Season's Greetings to all of you, our SEMA Network members! Thank you all for great work done in 2020 amid the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic. May 2021 bring better health, prosperity, peace and goodwill".

- Rosana Schaak, SEMA member, Liberia

National Networks

Survivor Network: CAR



Between October 2020 and early 2021, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been in an election process for the new President of the Republic and other state institutions. The candidacy of former head of state François Bozizé was ruled out, provoking unrest and the formation of an armed coalition with the objective of destabilising the elections. Armed clashes have multiplied throughout CAR and in the neighbourhoods of Bangui, making conditions unstable.

Because of national political strife, as well as conflicts between armed groups, CAR has continued to face instability. In 2020, the political instability often led to lawlessness in remote areas, even encroaching towards the capital Bangui. Soon thereafter COVID-19 (and the quarantines and border-closings caused by COVID-19) caused even more hardships for the citizens of CAR. Additionally, the Central African Republic health system struggled to respond to the pandemic.

Despite the challenges of accessing reliable data on the gender impacts of COVID-19 in CAR, Mukwege Foundation staff in CAR noted how the pandemic increased vulnerability of women and girls, particularly victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Before the pandemic, support services for victims were already limited, but during lockdown, victims' exposure to sexual and gender-based violence was exacerbated, especially from their intimate partners. These same restrictions limited socio-economic opportunities for survivors, many of whom rely on small, informal businesses and trade for their survival. This increases the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual

violence and exploitation and can contribute to victims' dependence on perpetrators of violence, limiting their willingness and ability to report violence and seek care.

Despite this ongoing political instability and conflict in Central African Republic (CAR), the Mouvement des Survivantes de Violences Sexuelles en Centrafrique (MOSUCA) remains a strong and active force for advocacy, as well as a much-needed resource for survivors. The network was initially composed of survivor-representatives of six local victims' organisations and 25 members from the capital city Bangui.



MOSUCA spans all the 'préfectures' (provinces) in CAR and represents 350 individual members. Its focus is on advocacy and victim support, raising awareness, reducing stigmatisation, fighting impunity and assisting in the socio-economic reintegration of survivors.

MOSUCA organised several advocacy events in 2020, including events on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (June 19th) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25th). The Mukwege Foundation continued to accompany MOSUCA in its development as a survivor movement to influence programmes and policies relating to sexual and gender-based violence in CAR, and to ensure that the voices of survivors are taken into account in advocacy, prevention and response as well as transitional justice processes.

A Survivor's Story: CAR

Anonymous

MF: Where do you live now?

I live in Bangui with my children.

MF: When did you join MOSUCA?

I joined MOSUCA in 2018. After violence I've faced, I came across a friend of mine who explained to me the movement and objectives. I've been touched by the care to survivors and their involvement in advocacy that aim to change behavior. I asked to join and I have been well received and integrated.

MF: How does your membership in MOSUCA make you feel?

It really changed my life. Before, I was alone, stigmatized even abandoned by my family. Survivors means that you pass through difficult time. I was fragile, stressed, lost... after being a member in MOSUCA, my eyes become open. MOSUCA contributed to my new life. Thanks to the movement, I know my rights, liberty, I can forget what happened to me and have fun and enjoy life.

MF: Has meeting other survivors been helpful to you?

Within MOSUCA, we have a very beautiful slogan "Union fait la force". Meeting them helped me recognized I'm not the only one who have faced atrocity, and I'm not alone to deal with. I also realized they are some of them suffered more than me. Through different exchange, we are laughing and supporting each other. It is a such coping mechanism.

MF: How has covid affected your life?

The pandemic has affected me in two ways. First of all as everybody around the world. Due to quarantines, it was not possible to work. Here in CAR if you don't go out especially us women, you can't eat. The possibility to cover the first basic needs were lacking.

Secondly, I have been infected to COVID-19. You become really sick: headache, fever, and the most difficult was the quarantine measures. If you are a woman alone at home with children and you have COVID, it becomes very difficult.

MF: Has your membership in MOSUCA helped you with these challenges?

I received many calls from other survivors to support me. Also, Mukwege Foundation through Nengo project helped me with medicines for the period of period of 2 weeks. During that period, the project helped me with an amount to cover the basic need such as food. This because this project assist survivors including MOSUCA and I'm part of it.

MF: If you think back to 2020, what makes you most proud?

I am proud for all we achieved in term of survivor's assistance in term of counselling and referral, and income generating activities. I am also proud of the advocacy efforts we've made. It is for sure not enough because needs are still huge, but the motivation that we have will help us to move forward and have good results.

MF: What do you look forward to this year (2021)?

To bring MOSUCA on the next step where we will win project and assist survivors. I'm dreaming to a change, a big change in our society so women can freely enjoy their rights!

Survivor Network: DRC



The National Movement of Survivors of Sexual Violence in the DRC began in June 2017 during the very first retreat of the global network of survivors of wartime sexual violence. Since then, the Movement has succeeded in establishing itself and becoming an essential player in DRC's civil society. The Movement has been praised for the depth of its expertise, its awareness-raising fieldwork and for its strong advocacy which puts the spotlight on the daily atrocities which continue to be committed across DRC.

2020 was marked by the official release of the film 'SEMA', directed by Machérie Ekwa and entirely produced and written by the Movement.

Key moments of 2020:

March: Travel to Washington to represent the SEMA film winner for Best International movie at the DC Independent Film Festival

June 19: Organisation of a debate around the film SEMA moderated by journalist Sonia Rolley and official and free release of the film on the occasion of the International Day for Combating Sexual Violence in Times of Conflict

Publication of a memo addressed to the President requesting a public apology on behalf of the Congolese Nation as well as the dismissal of staff involved in serious human rights violations in the DRC

August: Organisation of a large march for the protection of Dr Mukwege bringing together several thousand people after he was subjected to new waves of threats for denouncing the perpetrators of war crimes

October: Demonstration on the occasion of the 10 years of the UN Mapping Report in the streets of Bukavu and Goma. Two thousand members of the movement traveled from Bukavu and the surrounding villages to demand the end of impunity, the end of the violence and the creation of an International Criminal Court to judge crimes committed in Congo for 25 years

November: 16 day activism campaign organised on the concept "For every problem, a solution" featuring the testimonies of members of the movement

Commemoration of the Minova massacre (in South Kivu) where several survivors, members of the Movement and of the SEMA Network spoke about this historic event, which deeply impacted the community who never benefited from a fair trial

December: Closing of the 16 Days of Activism campaign with the screening in Kinshasa of the film SEMA with the First Lady of DRC and several political figures. The screening was followed by a public debate on the themes addressed in the film with several members of the movement and the Director of the Joint United Nations Office for Human Rights, Abdoul Aziz Thioye



Survivors in DRC at a march in October

A Survivor's Story: Democratic Republic of Congo

Tatiana



"While we were planning to work on a documentary about our struggle and our work with women in the Movement, Dr Mukwege, whom we visit regularly for advice, suggested instead to make a fictional film.

The idea of finally being able to depict honestly what no documentary can show seemed to us to be the wisest choice. We need to help our fellow Congolese understand what we are living every day and how rape and stigmatisation can destroy victims of sexual violence. Our goal with the film is to create a powerful advocacy tool so that even in our most small remote villages, communities can understand why we need to break the silence about the atrocities we experience on a daily basis. And how the community's view of our children, often the product of rape, can cause further damage to Congolese society by creating a lasting heritage of stigma.

By partnering with director Machérie Ekwa, we thought, as a 25-year-old Congolese woman, she was the ideal person not only to do high quality work, but above all to try to understand and turn our emotions into images.

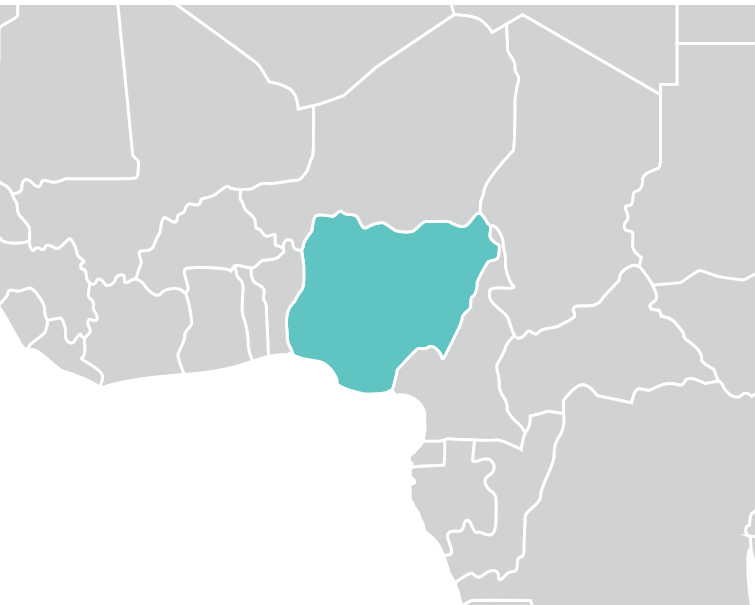
The day we discovered the final product, we did not believe our eyes. It was impossible for us all to hold back our tears throughout the film's screening and even after.

We are proud of this beautiful film created both female and male survivors of the Movement, the exceptional technical team assembled by Machérie Ekwa, the non-survivor actresses and actors and the work of our colleagues of the Panzi Foundation, the Dr Denis Mukwege Foundation and Panzi Hospital. Our struggles and efforts are now timeless. From now on, this film can be shown to the Congolese people and to the world as a piece of history which, we hope, will be part of the past as soon as possible. Armed conflict which brings genocide and the use of rape as a weapon of war must stop. It is our dearest wish and today it is our fiercest fight. So that our children live in a better Congo, a Congo without rape, a Congo in peace. So that these rapists can no longer act with impunity, without justice doing its job. So that all the victims of these atrocities can obtain reparations. We unite as the National Movement of Survivors of the DRC and we encourage all our sisters and brothers to stand with us."

'Nothing about us, without us' - I ascribe to this ethic 100%. Not **for** survivors, but **with** survivors. It is so important that survivor voices are heard. Survivors tend not to be consulted, but no one knows their pain better than they do.

Survivor Network: Nigeria

The radicalised and militant group Boko Haram inflicts violence on civilian populations in the northern states of Nigeria, specifically targeting young people, and especially women and girls, including the high-profile kidnapping and enslavement of over 200 girls from schools in Borno State in April 2014. Incidents of kidnapping, rape and other forms of sexual violence, physical assault and murder inflicted by Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province have continued through 2020 and into 2021. The conflict has left 37,500 dead and 2.5 million displaced in the Lake Chad Basin area alone. Civilians from conflict-stricken areas have fled, mostly to internally displaced people (IDP) camps.



Since 2018, the Mukwege Foundation has supported young women abducted by Boko Haram in the Northeast, who have either escaped or have been released from captivity. In Northeast Nigeria, the states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa have been deeply affected by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (a splinter group of Boko Haram). Their stories are similar to those of many women and girls who return from captivity in conflicts; on their return home, they faced marginalisation, discrimination and economic hardship.

Thankfully, through sensitisation efforts, there is a growing acceptance by community members that these young women were innocent victims of Boko Haram and did not become radicalised, so do not pose a threat to the community. However, being a female survivor of Boko Haram comes with the ever-present label of being a survivor of sexual violence, and the stigma associated with this status is hard to change, especially in the most socially conservative of these three states, Adamawa.

Despite these pressures, many young survivors are adamant about reclaiming their power by bringing attention to these issues, and by demanding justice and greater protection for women and girls in the Northeast.

Some survivors took a step towards their goal in early 2020 and were trained in advocacy skills by the Mukwege Foundation. This activity gathered young survivor leaders across Yobe, Borno and Adamawa States, who learned about and began to identify their own advocacy objectives and targets with great enthusiasm.



A Survivor's Story: Nigeria

Anonymous

The Mukwege Foundation spoke to one survivor of sexual violence, who escaped Boko Haram to Bakassi IDP camp in Borno State in 2015. She talked to us about life then and now in the camp.

MF: What are the biggest challenges you or other survivors have faced living in an IDP camp?

Survivor: When we came to the IDP camp there were problems. It was difficult to connect to family members and to have access to food. It was traumatising and psychologically disturbing because people put the highest level of stigma on us. When I arrived, I came to a point when I was indoors all day because of the stigma. We were seen as second-class human beings because we were in captivity. I decided to stay inside, not going out, not relating with people. Hiding myself in the house. After some time, people began to gradually understand that it was not deliberate that we left our families and were taken by Boko Haram. It was something that happened to us.

There was a huge problem of accessing shelter and medical care. The few clinics at the IDP camp were not functional, and schooling was not provided.

MF: How did you manage to overcome these challenges?

Survivor: It was important that I got this psychosocial process to stabilise me. But continuity helps us the most. Sometimes they start something and then they don't continue.

This affects us psychologically. Continuity gives comfort that there is someone who cares for us.

MF: How have things been in this last year with the COVID-19 pandemic?

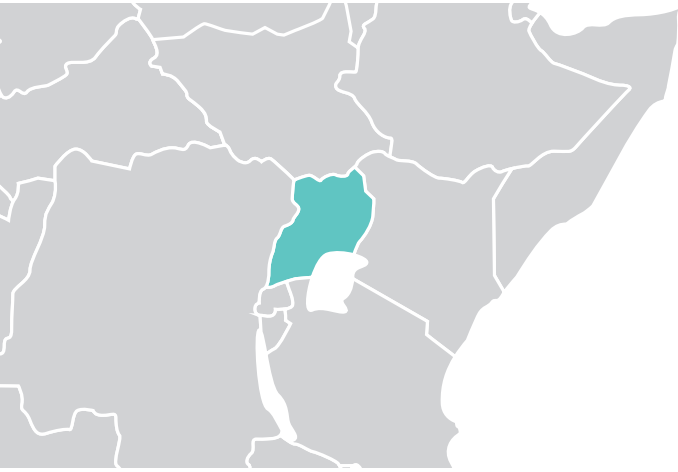
Survivor: In all honesty the pandemic made everything worse. Take for example what we went through while we were in that terrible situation while held by the armed groups. After we returned, things began to change gradually, and we found that things were stabilising in our lives. Then, all of the sudden, the pandemic came. I asked myself: "What kind of life is this? When we jump from one bad thing to another?"

There was not enough food in the IDP camp, and no possibility of getting that food. There was also no proper access to medical and livelihood support. Because of this, the pandemic reintroduced me to the trauma again.

MF: What do you suggest should be done to help and ensure that life gets better for survivors living in IDP camps?

Survivor: I would give the recommendation of uniting the survivors. Let there be a high advocacy programme where we can participate. Unity will help a lot in a situation like this. If we become united under one voice and understand our problems, together we can approach any stakeholder for a solution.

Survivor Network: Uganda



In 2020, two well-established survivor networks--of which some of their leaders are active members of SEMA--received support to strengthen their relationships and identify advocacy objectives. These two networks are called the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) and Golden Women Vision in Uganda.

Together, the grassroots membership of Women's Advocacy Network and Golden Women Vision in Uganda represents the geographic and ethnic diversity of roughly 1500 survivors covering the Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile sub-regions of northern Uganda. The membership of both networks is made up of former abductees of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The Mukwege Foundation supports survivors of these networks to develop their own advocacy strategies.

In late 2020, the Mukwege Foundation gathered information from across the survivor networks broad membership on challenges they currently face to advance their advocacy needs. The Foundation also provided workshops to leaders of both networks' in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding of transitional justice, to enhance their public communication skills and to develop understandings within each network of good mental health practices.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis to activities in Uganda, such as limiting communication and the ability of Mukwege Foundation staff to travel to Uganda, the Foundation was able to begin its concrete work with Women's Advocacy Network and Golden Women Vision in Uganda.

The Mukwege Foundation is excited about the prospect of working with Women's Advocacy Network and Golden Women Vision in Uganda in 2021 and the future. The survivor-advocates that founded and lead these networks are committed to working to improve the lives of their grassroots membership. Having already overcome so much themselves, these survivor-leaders are strong-minded and will not waiver until they are able to advance their aspiration to help their peers.



A network event in Uganda

A Survivor's Story: Uganda

Sylvia Acan

Sylvia Acan, a survivor, SEMA member, and founder and director of Golden Women Vision in Uganda.

To the eight children under her roof, all of whom were born in captivity, she is a mother and adoptive parent. To the rest of the world, Sylvia Acan is the winner of the inaugural Kim Bok-dong Peace Prize, for her activism for peace and justice for survivors of sexual violence. No stranger to the ravages of war and displacement, Sylvia has lived through dark moments in her life. But she has come through those times and found her voice – and now regularly uses it on her own radio programme.

The Mukwege Foundation spoke to Sylvia about her experiences with the Mukwege Foundation and her membership of SEMA:

Sylvia:

"The SEMA network is really a home for a survivor like me. I learned about SEMA when I went to get my award in South Korea. I won the Kim Bok-dong Peace Prize. When I met with the Mukwege Foundation there, I realised I was not alone in this fight. I found a family at the Mukwege Foundation. Together with all the survivors, who come from different countries, we built the global network. By coming together and sharing different stories and experiences, it made my stigma and trauma come down.

In Uganda, we have a major issue with sexual and gender-based violence in communities. We bring cases to light and teach people about how to access justice. I have a radio programme at the local station which is a powerful tool to broadcast the message. During COVID-19, it is difficult to gather people but when I talk on the radio, it is heard for many miles.

Without the Mukwege Foundation, my message could not be heard. And my engagement with different communities could not be realised. I was having very dark thoughts during my suffering. But after hearing all these stories from survivors, bringing us together, I found a role to play. The SEMA network made me a strong woman. I have a vision now.

We want the SEMA network to go to the next level. We pray for more funds so more survivors can come together. If the SEMA network could bring more people together, that would be good."



Survivor Network: Ukraine



Українська мережа жінок, що пережили полон

For the national network of survivors in Ukraine, SEMA Ukraine, the year 2020 was a successful year despite the challenges due to COVID-19. The network made progress on their advocacy; developing consistent messaging around justice, recognition and reparations. Though the year was not without its challenges, the different meetings and interactions among members helped to strengthen the survivors and further their progress in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence.

In March 2020, nine members of SEMA Ukraine participated in a training-of-trainers workshop on the topic of sexual violence with the aim to educate military and police cadets on the importance of recognising and preventing sexual violence in conflict. The training-of-trainers equipped survivors to deliver several training sessions throughout Ukraine, ensuring that military and police cadets are aware of the consequences victims of sexual violence face, and their role in preventing and responding to sexual violence.

Due to COVID-19, there were challenges delivering the training, but each team of SEMA Ukraine members was still able to deliver the trainings in the region where they currently live.

In addition, members of SEMA Ukraine are increasingly involved in various awareness raising activities about the topic of sexual violence. During these events, whether through radio, meetings or other platforms, members tell their audiences about the existence of the network, thereby increasing their visibility. In terms of network governance, crucial steps were taken to identify board members, to create a network

charter and to decide on role-division of network members moving forward. The finalised charter will serve to ensure that all members are aligned with the goals and activities of the network and that the network's values are clear to ensure that members act with respect and in solidarity with one another.

The survivors set up the Facebook page for SEMA Ukraine as a platform for their upcoming advocacy work. The page is an opportunity for the women to reach a larger audience, both within and outside of Ukraine, and to make their presence known to other key stakeholders within the area of conflict-related sexual violence and women's rights. They have been active in creating Facebook posts and their direction of their network's board is effective and increasingly autonomous.

By the end of 2020, less than 2 years since SEMA Ukraine began, the network functions well and is capable of impactful advocacy in the field of conflict-related sexual violence. It has made significant strides by connecting to key organisations and ensuring that survivors' voices are heard. The network works increasingly independently, for example, continuing the successful trainings to military and police cadets after the initial grant was finished.



A Survivor's Story: Ukraine

Lyudmila

Lyudmila has been actively engaged in the work of SEMA Ukraine for the last two years. For Lyudmila, joining the network meant a realisation that there is an opportunity to fight against violence collectively.

Lyudmila, a survivor and activist, works hard to inform the public about sexual violence. She speaks at numerous events, with the aim of ensuring that her community knows about what has happened- and continues to happen- in the east of the country. Through radio and other public presentations, Lyudmila speaks about sexual violence and its consequences and more generally about the conflict and the impact of detention on those who have been illegally detained.

Lyudmila is driven by the need for justice following her time in detention.

In 2018, when unmarked troops encroached her town in Eastern Ukraine, Lyudmila collected some meager possessions from her home and attempted to flee. On the road, invading soldiers closed in on her and other escaping civilians. Facing imminent capture, she took off her wedding ring and hid it in deep in her handbag.

Eventually she was forcibly halted and stripped of her belongings. Being an officer's wife, Lyudmila was targeted and abused while in captivity. After prolonged

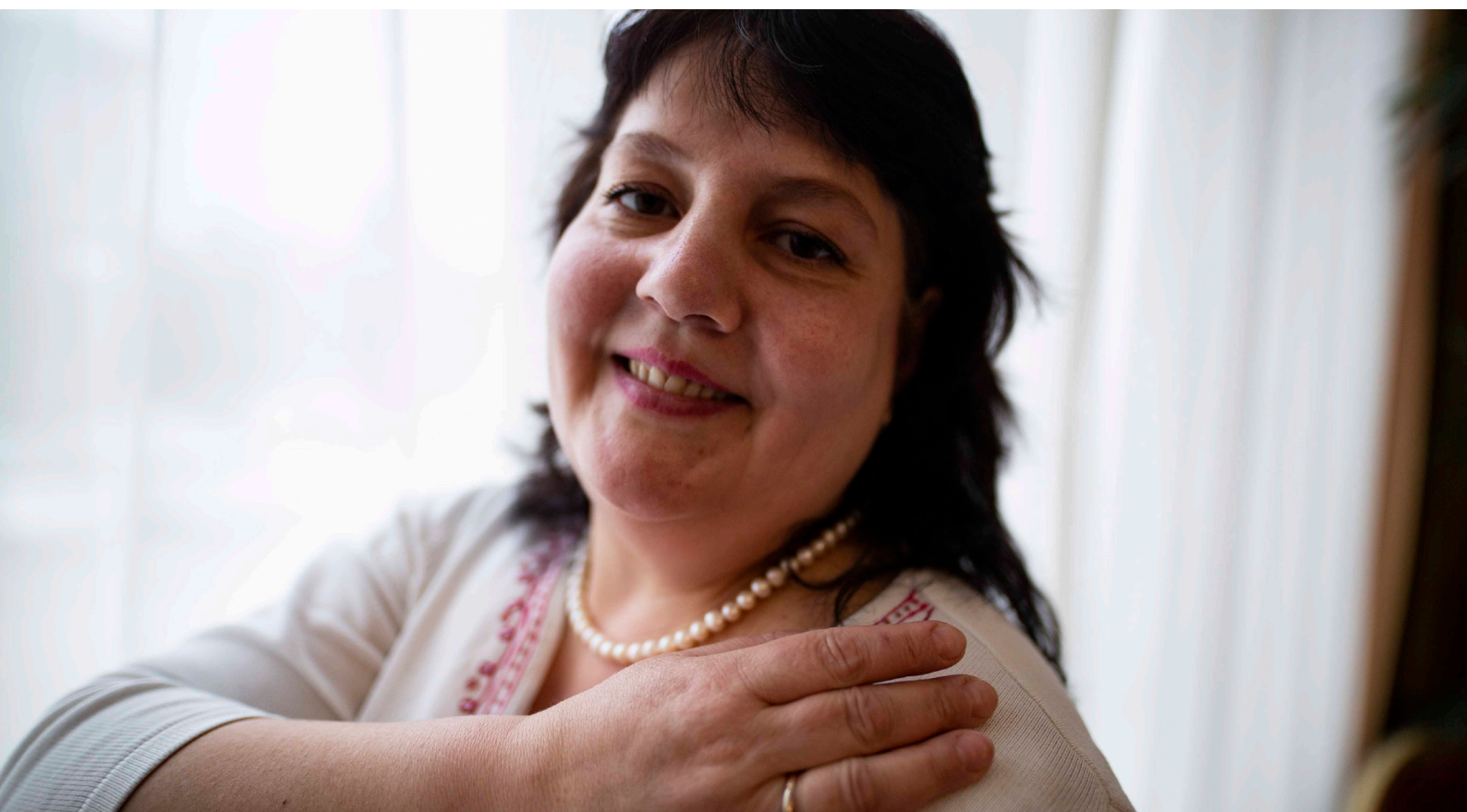
suffering at the hands of a disorganised and profiteering militia, she was released. The only item her captors returned was her handbag, light and empty.

After her release, she tried to navigate home. With the safety of a bit of distance, she searched her handbag. It was indeed completely empty, save for a small metal ring tucked into the lining. Miraculously, her captors had not found her wedding ring.

Today Lyudmila holds the ring as a symbol not only of her relationship, which persevered through the conflict, but also her own resilience.

She tells how she was impressed that the world is concerned about victims of violence, including in Ukraine where the suffering is still great. She sees the strengths in the network as providing knowledge, both to the outside world and to each other.

Lyudmila advises that it is important to recognise what the network can and cannot mean for those who join. She admits it will not solve problems like domestic issues and financial struggles, but when people commit themselves to taking an active part in solving issues in a restorative manner, a lot can be achieved.





HOLISTIC CARE

A holistic approach to care focuses on the needs of survivors in their entirety, recognising that these needs are interdependent. In dealing with survivors of sexual violence in particular, it is clear that for the body to heal, psychological needs must be addressed.

Furthermore, in order to fully heal psychologically, concerns about livelihood and financial security must be alleviated. Similarly, seeking justice and bearing with the often-painful processes of police reporting and testifying in court, for most victims is only possible with a strong support network.

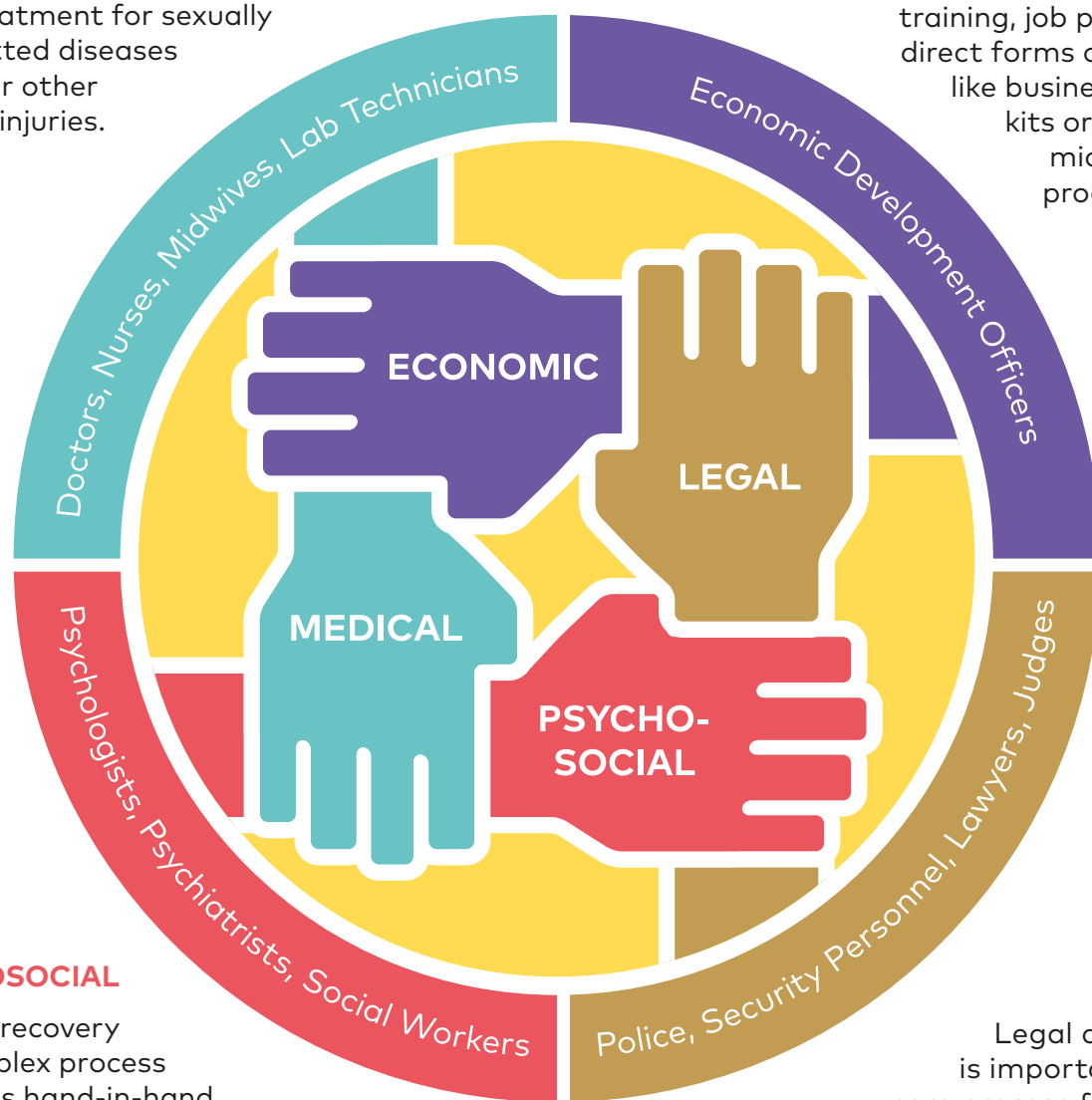
The Panzi Holistic Care model includes four pillars: medical, psychological, socioeconomic support and legal assistance.

MEDICAL

The majority of victims of sexual violence who seek care are in immediate need of medical treatment including surgery to repair grave gynaecological injuries like fistula or related to genital mutilation. Others need treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or other physical injuries.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Socioeconomic support makes an important contribution to the reintegration and recovery of survivors. This type of support may take different forms ranging from an emergency grant, vocational training, job placement, direct forms of support like business starter kits or access to microfinance programmes.



PSYCHOSOCIAL

Physical recovery is a complex process that goes hand-in-hand with psychological healing and support. In addition to the severe and complex injuries many victims sustain from sexual violence, the psychological consequences of violence may be even more harmful and have a lasting impact.

LEGAL

Legal assistance is important to the care process for victims of sexual violence in conflict. Though justice means different things to different people, for many victims the punishment of the perpetrator recognises the infringement of their integrity and dignity and the violation of their rights.

Other key principles of Panzi's One-Stop Centre model of holistic care include survivor participation and leadership, advocacy, quality survivor-centred care, research and evidence-based programming.

Holistic Care Projects

Panzi Foudation

The Mukwege Foundation works closely with Panzi Foundation in DRC to roll out the One-Stop Centre model of holistic care to other countries affected by conflict. We use a South-South linking and learning approach as well as work with local partners who are already well-embedded in their contexts and trusted by survivors for assistance.

Nengo Project in Central African Republic

projet NENGO



After two decades of conflict, the Central African Republic (CAR) plunged into one of its most serious security crises in 2012 when internal clashes erupted after the overthrow of President François Bozizé's regime by the Séléka, a coalition from the Northeast of the country. Since then, conflicts and clashes between armed groups for the control of resources and territories have increased and - despite the signing of the Khartoum agreements in April 2019, which were supposed to contribute to the restoration and strengthening of peace in CAR - the situation remains fragile. It is in this context that gender-based violence in all its forms (including sexual violence) has increased dramatically.

Although data collection in CAR on this issue is very limited, the number of victims each year remains significant according to the gender-based violence sub-cluster in CAR. In 2018, the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) reported more than 10,000 incidents of gender-based violence, among which more than 20% were sexual violence. One of the main challenges for victims of gender-based and sexual violence in CAR is access to quality care, delivered in a coordinated and comprehensive approach.



Dr Mukwege checking on a patient at Panzi Hospital



Project Nengo advocacy event



L'Hôpital de l'amitié in Bangui

Description of the Project

In 2017, Project Nengo (which means 'dignity' in the Sango language) was created by a consortium of four foundations: the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, the Pierre Fabre Foundation, the Panzi Foundation DRC and the Francophone Institute for Justice and Democracy. They identified two objectives:

1. Victims of sexual and gender-based violence in CAR have access to quality holistic care, and the capacities of local stakeholders are strengthened
2. Awareness-raising and prevention activities that bring about the decrease of the number of gender-based violence cases and reduce the stigma that victims face

After a thorough analysis of the context, mapping of existing services in Bangui and contact with key actors in the sector, an agreement for a 4 year project was signed between the organisations and the Minister of Health of CAR on April 28, 2018. Project Nengo implements a One-Stop Centre model of holistic care to victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, integrating these services:

- medical and psychological care for victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- legal and judicial support for survivors
- educational and professional reintegration of survivors
- support for a South- South transfer of skills, knowledge and good practices.

A One-Stop Centre has been created in Bangui, with two entry points - l'Hôpital l'Amitié and l'Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique.

One of only five tertiary-level hospitals in CAR, Hôpital l'Amitié is an entry point for survivors. It includes a gynaecology obstetrics service, and functions as a centre for the care of victims of sexual violence, thereby avoiding the potential stigma for victims attending a standalone sexual violence clinic.

L'Association des Femmes Juristes is the second entry point for the Project Nengo. Members of the Association are all legal experts and offer legal accompaniment if survivors want to pursue legal action. The purpose of L'Association des Femmes Juristes is to promote and defend human rights, with a particular focus on respecting the rights of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children. The Association is today known for its assistance and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Bangui.

The Nengo Project started in March 2020, and the reception of patients started at the end of September 2020. Experts from Panzi Hospital, including a gynaecologist, surgeon, psychologist and a psychosocial assistant, have been deployed to Bangui since March to share knowledge and accompany their Central African colleagues in implementing the One-Stop Centre. In August 2020, other team members, including a project coordinator engaged by the Mukwege Foundation, were also deployed to Bangui, strengthening our role in supporting the technical coordination of the consortium-led initiative.

As of the end of December 2020, Nengo had already provided assistance to 269 victims and survivors and other individuals. Though the project is based in Bangui, victims of sexual violence and other individuals needing specialised gynaecological care from all over CAR can access services as well as be referred by our local partners and other international humanitarian organisations operating in those areas.

Project Nengo: Looking Forward

Looking forward to 2021, Project Nengo also aims to strengthen sexual and gender-based violence prevention in CAR, to conduct advocacy with duty-bearers and to promote training and research to strengthen holistic assistance for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in CAR. As a first step, the team will finalise and implement the project's sexual and gender-based violence prevention strategy in collaboration with local partners in the coming year. With support from the Country Director, the Mukwege Foundation will expand partnerships with international and national partners to strengthen referral pathways, exchange knowledge and experiences and increase alignment with other relevant initiatives. Socio-therapy groups for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence will be initiated and training and surgical interventions will accelerate, thanks to support from a roving team of experts who will provide periodic support to the permanent Nengo team in-country.



MF staff with survivors in CAR

Guinea:

Since 2017, the Mukwege Foundation has supported its local partner, the Association des Victimes, Parents et Amis (AVIPA), by providing medical, psychological and socioeconomic support to victims of the 2009 massacre and mass rape at the Conakry stadium. By the end of 2020, the project had provided assistance to over a hundred victims and survivors of these atrocities.

The Mukwege Foundation and AVIPA also provide access to holistic support for other victims of sexual and gender-based violence, including referrals to partners for medical and psychological care.

We have been able to support victims' access to care, and to build the capacities of medical and psychosocial service providers in Guinea, using a South- South knowledge exchange approach, together with experts from Panzi Hospital.

The project was extended to April 2021, due to coronavirus-related challenges in implementation. AVIPA will continue to provide support to victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, especially those from the incidents of 2009.

Iraq:

In northern Iraq, we have been working with the Yazidi organisation Yazda to provide holistic care to survivors of sexual violence and exploitation perpetrated by ISIS. In 2020, Yazidi survivors in and around Dohuk benefited from referrals to medical care, psychosocial accompaniment and socioeconomic training and assistance.

In 2021, the Mukwege Foundation will collaborate with long-standing Panzi partner Enfants de Panzi, and others, to provide training in specialised psychological support for children affected by conflict-related sexual violence to service providers and clinicians in northern Iraq.

Great Lakes (ICGLR)

Together, the Mukwege Foundation and Panzi Foundation DRC collaborated with the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Regional Training Facility in its regional Training-of-Trainers programme. This partnership has developed an integrated training model and is working to train national trainers in five ICGLR member states (DRC, CAR, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda) and advocate with national and regional actors for holistic care and the implementation of the one-stop-centre approach.

During 2019 and 2020, 40 ICGLR national trainers in DRC, Rwanda and Uganda benefited from training based on the new integrated model, facilitated by joint training teams and the Mukwege Foundation. In 2021, the pilot Training-of-Trainer sessions will conclude with Zambia and CAR and national trainers (who will have developed their national action plans during the trainings) will go on to teach professionals in their respective countries on quality holistic care, multi-sectoral service delivery and programme coordination. Read more about the Mukwege Foundation's work with the Regional Training Facility of the ICGLR [here](#).

Colombia:

In February 2020, the Mukwege Foundation conducted an advocacy mission in Bogota, initiated by the Network of Women Victims and Professionals in Colombia with the support of the Jurisdiction Especial de la Paz (the Special Peace Court) and the International Organization for Migration Colombia. This advocacy mission was a follow-up to a 2019 visit of Dr Mukwege and the Mukwege Foundation team, during which survivors reiterated their calls for a One-Stop Centre holistic care facility in Colombia as a form of early collective reparations.

Throughout 2020, the Mukwege Foundation has continued working on advocacy and fundraising to support this initiative and has conducted advocacy meetings with several local state actors, including the Mayors' Offices of Bogota, Villavicencio and Cauca to secure political buy-in for the creation of One-Stop Centres for holistic care in the local development plans of these cities.

A partnership has been developed together with the Mayor's Office of Villavicencio as a result of this [advocacy](#) to implement a specialised centre for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and especially survivors of sexual violence as a result of conflict.



Ángela María Escobar,
survivor of sexual violence



Assetou, survivor advocate from Mali and member of SEMA

JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Sexual violence as a weapon of war is considered a war crime, a crime against humanity and can be a form of genocide. In international law and in the national laws in many countries, there is legislation recognising crimes of sexual violence in conflict, yet perpetrators of these crimes largely go unpunished and judicial processes do not meet survivors' needs.

Despite the adoption of several resolutions by the UN Security Council, the international community is not meeting its commitment to prevent and stop sexual violence in conflict, nor to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

The international response to conflict-related sexual violence in conflict lacks the ambition and the success we have seen in other fields of civilian protection.

In order to address the issue and help survivors, we are engaged in many actions, including advocating an end to the complicit silence and tolerance of sexual violence committed in conflict, encouraging changes in policy and behaviour to end impunity and confronting the obstacles to justice that allow perpetrators to avoid facing the consequences of their actions.

We bring like-minded governments and organisations together to inspire joint action, for example training judicial and law enforcement actors in survivor-centred procedures, increasing survivors' access to justice by raising awareness of their rights, providing legal aid and financial support, addressing possible repercussions, advocating for perpetrators to be held accountable and seeking innovative solutions at the local and national level that provide a sense of justice to survivors.

Reparations for conflict-related sexual violence

Reparations are an effective tool to provide justice and support to survivors and communities. The use of sexual violence in war not only leaves individuals with lifelong suffering, but also spreads diseases, destroys families and harms societies as a whole over generations.

In many countries, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence cannot rebuild their lives and contribute fully to society because of the lack of justice and recognition of the crimes they suffered and the ongoing stigma they face.

This is where reparations play a key role: by aiming to help repair the harm caused by gross human rights violations, reparations are at the core of survivors' demands to regain a life of dignity, respect and equality. "Reparations" is a collective

term encompassing the recognition of, and compensation for, the harm caused by gross human rights violations. According to international law, when someone is a victim of a serious crime such as rape, they are entitled to receive reparations to compensate for the harms suffered.

During the first retreats for survivors organised by the Mukwege Foundation survivors clearly identified advocacy for reparations as one of their key priorities. The survivors' advocacy was amplified by the strong voices of Dr Mukwege and Nadia Murad after having received the Nobel Peace Prize. This combined force paved the way for the creation of the [Global Survivors Fund](#).

The Mukwege Foundation and Nadia's Initiative, with the guidance of the UN Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, came together to form the Global Survivors Fund.

The year 2020 marked the Global Survivors Fund's first operational year of activity as an independent entity. All activities undertaken by the Mukwege Foundation were fully transferred to the Global Survivors Fund secretariat as of June 2020.

In alignment with its three pillars of activities - Act, Advocate, Guide - the Global Survivors Fund provided interim reparative measures, advocated for duty bearers and the international community to develop reparations programmes, and guided states and civil society with its expertise and technical support throughout 2020.

In addition to the launch of its first pilot project in Guinea, the Global Survivors Fund started a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo together with Panzi Foundation DRC and various civil society organisations, anchoring its survivor-centred methodology and approach.

While now separate entities, the Mukwege Foundation and the Global Survivors Fund maintain a close relationship and work in complementary ways in several contexts, with the Global Survivors Fund focusing on reparations, and the Mukwege Foundation on holistic care, survivor activism and justice and accountability.

In 2020, the Mukwege Foundation refocused its justice and accountability advocacy efforts on the importance of survivor-centred transitional justice. In order to highlight the importance of ensuring survivors are equal partners at the table when peace and security efforts are being negotiated, the Mukwege Foundation co-organised a high level event:

The Progress and Potential of Women's Leadership: Survivors of Sexual Violence Step Up and Speak Out to Promote Transitional Justice

On October 12, 2020, the Mukwege Foundation, together with UN Women and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, was honoured to host an interactive online event marking the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This landmark resolution affirmed to the international community what survivors of sexual violence in conflict-affected countries have long known: that peace and security efforts are more sustainable and effective when women are equal partners at the table. Twenty years later, the ground-breaking ambition of the Women, Peace and Security agenda has yet to be fully realised and still has great potential to lead to real changes on the ground.

The online event welcomed over 500 attendees from more than 20 countries. It featured female survivors who are leading advances on the front lines of transitional justice – from Colombia to Iraq to the Democratic Republic of the Congo – and put them into conversation with world-renowned panellists, including:

- Ms Ángela María Escobar, victim and survivor of sexual violence, coordinator of La Red de Mujeres, board member of the Global Survivors Fund, SEMA member
- Ms Pramila Patten, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women
- Dr Denis Mukwege, gynaecologist, human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Overall Key Takeaways

1. Women survivors are willing and able to take on leadership roles and are already stepping up and speaking out on issues that affect them | The event demonstrated that meaningful survivor participation is an effective and impactful means for achieving just, peaceful and inclusive societies.
2. Faced with obstacles in transitional justice, survivors show that they are truly experts at finding solutions | In the panel sessions, survivors were shown to think outside the box for the purpose of effectively addressing their specific needs.
3. Survivor participation is a process requiring long-term investment and is not a tick-off exercise | Panellists emphasised the need for robust financial engagement in order to provide for survivors' mental, physical and socio-economic needs into the future.
4. The importance of holistic care, and especially mental health care, is paramount | Psychosocial support is essential to recovery, is crucial to healing and is a prerequisite for accessing justice.
5. Implementation. | The norms and tools exist. What is lacking is the unifying force, action and follow-through that will realise their comprehensive implementation.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN RESOLUTION 1325
ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

THE PROGRESS AND POTENTIAL
OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP:

**SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE
STEP UP AND SPEAK OUT
FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

ÁNGELA MARÍA ESCOBAR
SURVIVOR/ LEADER

PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN

PRAMILA PATTEN
UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON SVC

DENIS MUKWEGE
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE

12 OCTOBER 2020
10AM EST 4PM CET

dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

UN WOMEN

Communications

Overview

The Mukwege Foundation holds high standards of integrity for its communications and representation, especially when concerning survivors. Whether through public statements, email updates, social media or website, MF maintains clear and functional communication pathways.

For the Mukwege Foundation, survivors come first and foremost. We adhere to the most protective and expansive communications policies that are possible. When communication is concerned, working with survivors of sexual violence creates added boundaries and considerations. While not always making the process quick or easy, at MF we understand and embrace these challenges. When using photos and videos, we use a 'Rights Declaration and Consent Form' for photos, videos and interviews that makes sure survivors are aware of the medium and content of our communications and have continued control over their own image and words.

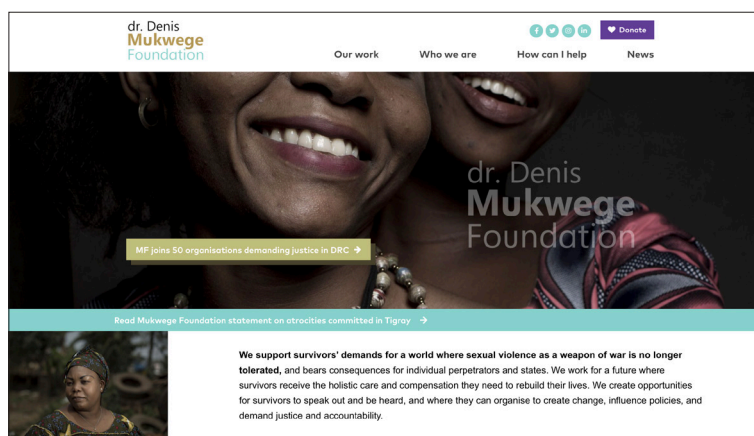
For the Mukwege Foundation, expedient and effective communication is crucial considering the many emergent issues and themes that occur day-to-day in the field of conflict-related sexual violence; however, a reliable and steady communications plan is also needed in order to strengthen the visibility of the Foundation and grow its audience.

The Mukwege Foundation communicates about its mission, programmes and advocacy regularly and also looks for opportunities to amplify the efforts of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence when they speak out or advocate. In addition, the Foundation has provided assistance and workshops for survivors and survivor networks to increase their communication capacity and create their own statements, social media posts and advocacy projects.

Website Redesign and Launch

Throughout 2019 and 2020, the Foundation overhauled its website design and content. We conducted an exhaustive audit process to improve the website language and presentation. Conflict-related sexual violence is an important and often complex issue and therefore the language representing it must be precise and up to date. The new website features clearer navigation tabs and allows for more creative layout options, photos and video.

The Mukwege Foundation is committed to the ongoing development of its website - featuring news updates, content articles and survivor profiles - as well as maintenance and monitoring of the site including search engine optimisation, functionality and reader engagement assessments.



The Mukwege Foundation Homepage



Alisa, a member of SEMA Ukraine and filmmaker

SEMA- THE FILM

The Mukwege Foundation was proud to support the DRC Survivor Movement's innovative and heart-wrenching film, SEMA. After the film was completed, there were still numerous steps needed to make sure the film was promoted and accessed by a global audience. The Mukwege Foundation worked to make accurate and professional translation and subtitling for the film and to produce a professional digital master for screening in professional film venues.

The Mukwege Foundation worked closely with the DRC Survivor Movement to create a professional press kit for the film and application packages for international film festivals. The press kit features the story behind the making of the film, behind-the-scenes photos, a story synopsis, profiles on the director and main actors and four movie posters.

The film was chosen as an official selection in many festivals and premiered at the DC Independent Film Festival where it won Best International Film. Tatiana Mukanire and Maud-Salomé Ekila represented the film at the screening and award ceremony on behalf of the Movement and the Mukwege Foundation. The film also screened at the International New York Film Festival, Nice International Film Festival and Afrika Film Festival, among others. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these festival screenings had to be moved online.

The film continues to be accepted to festivals and screened around the world for a wide audience. Many international NGOs, including UN Women, have screened the film as part of a discussion of conflict-related sexual violence and its lasting effects on survivors. In this way, the film continues to be an important advocacy and promotional tool to educate audiences about conflict-related sexual violence and also to demonstrate the power of a survivor-centred approach.

Campaigns

SEMA Film Promotion

Fuelled by the success of the film SEMA, the Mukwege Foundation launched a complementary social media campaign supporting the film. The campaign featured professional stills from the film, behind-the-scenes photos, and posters, and culminated in the global premiere of the film on International Women's Day at the DC International Film Festival.



COVID-19 Campaign for Survivors

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. The Mukwege Foundation facilitated and supported SEMA, the Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence, in their decision to issue a statement calling for solidarity and immediate action from world leaders in the face of the pandemic.

In this collective statement, 10 members of SEMA from all over the world expressed their concerns regarding the devastating impact that COVID-19 was having on their communities, and on women specifically. The Mukwege Foundation featured messages and quotes from SEMA members on social media, twice a day, from March until the end of May.

These posts linked to a campaign landing page where people could learn more about the survivors' concerns and make a donation to the national survivor networks. At the end of the period, despite the chaos of the early days of the pandemic and the many competing priorities for attention, the campaign had achieved its donations target, and the Mukwege Foundation was able to give 1,000 Euros each to 19 national survivor networks.

June 19 identity campaign and survivor activism support

Leading up to June 19, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Mukwege Foundation raised awareness about conflict-related sexual violence by sharing information on social media about our work and identity, and about the SEMA film. A comprehensive overview of the social media plan and statistics can be found [here](#).

The 16 Days of Activism

The 16 Days of Activism is an initiative of UN Women to raise awareness about gender-based violence and encourages people worldwide to stand in solidarity with victims and survivors of gender-based violence. One of the main topics addressed in 2020 is the increase in violence against women and girls (particularly domestic violence) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the 16 Days of Activism 2020, the Mukwege Foundation raised awareness and encouraged activism with regards to violence against women globally. Each post highlighted issues facing women in a different country during the 16 days, from November 25 until December 10. On the last day of the campaign the Foundation shared stories from SEMA network members, and posts about the activities of national and local survivor networks, or other related local activism.



An Instagram post on Guinea

Media Coverage

Marie Claire UK interviewed Mildred, a SEMA member from Zimbabwe, and posted the online article on May 11, 2020. There was a fundraising ask at the bottom of the article leading directly to the landing page of the COVID-19 campaign.

Politis (a French journal) created the series 'Survivors at the time of Covid in Africa' featuring four members of SEMA (Grace, Mildred, Esperande and Bernadette). These [interviews](#) were conducted by Louise Pluyaud and Lena Bjurstrom and they were focused on the impact of COVID-19 on survivors and their communities. These articles were published between May 27-30, 2020.

The Ten Year Anniversary of UN Mapping Report in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Many news outlets covered the anniversary of the UN Mapping Report as well as the demonstrations in DRC and the statement from Dr Mukwege on this occasion. One standout [article](#) by the Guardian, facilitated by the Mukwege Foundation, highlighted not only the lack of justice but also the efforts of survivors to protest impunity.

The national network of survivors in the DRC created a petition to draw attention to the lack of action from the international community concerning the Mapping Report and the continued impunity of perpetrators. The Mukwege Foundation amplified their petition with a social media campaign.

Social Media

The Mukwege Foundation maintains 4 social media platforms as vital tools to respond to the events unfolding in the world as well as to promote our work and initiatives and amplify the voices of survivors.

The Mukwege Foundation Facebook page has over 39,000 followers. We post updates about our work, projects and survivors' testimonies, as well as important updates about news surrounding sexual violence in conflict around the world. Facebook is a necessary means to keep us visible to those who would like to know more about us and sexual violence in conflict in general.

On Instagram, the Mukwege Foundation page has 9,350 followers. We post photographs from our work as well as photos concerning survivors and their activism.

The Mukwege Foundation has 7,982 followers on Twitter. We use this platform to keep up with important advocacy, events and trending hashtags, taking part in a global discourse about survivors' rights, international justice and grassroots activism.

The Mukwege Foundation has a LinkedIn network of 20,041 followers. We use this platform to post notable news in the humanitarian sector and recruit staff, volunteers and interns.



Mapping Report Petition Campaign

Internal Organisation

To better reflect its fast growth and current global reach, and to ensure more efficient and effective management, the Mukwege Foundation adapted its governance structure at the end of 2020.

New governance structure

Over the last few years, with an increasing number of initiatives and projects to support, more employees have joined the team, leading us to also strengthen our overall senior management capacity. The role of the Board has accordingly shifted from being physically involved in our operations, with short communication lines, to having a more strategic oversight role, and greater distance from the day-to-day operations.

To reflect this new way of working, the Board voted to modify the governance structure at the end of 2020, reflected in our new Articles of Association. Our former Board of Directors has become a Supervisory Board, deciding on overall strategy and policy matters, while the daily management has been formally delegated to our new Board that consists of the two Directors (1.2 FTE). Dr Mukwege will still act as special advisor for both the Supervisory Board and the Board of Directors.

Under the new organisation, the Supervisory Board has four members and consists of people of a variety of backgrounds and capacities, e.g. fundraising, financial management, and content and field experience in humanitarian programmes. The Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board meet at least four times a year, and perform all duties as required by Dutch law for a non-profit organisation with ANBI status.

New policies and procedures

In line with the needs of a growing and more complex organisation, our internal procedures have been updated and extended. First of all, the function house of the organisation has been further detailed (dividing the existing general salary scales into 10 steps within each scale), to better match with staff development and performance monitoring.

An integrity policy has been developed, encompassing the existing Code of Conduct. A clear procedure for reporting possible integrity violations has been set up, which includes having a trust person in the organisation, an integrity officer, and clear procedures for whistleblowing. A workshop was organised to inform and involve staff. In 2020, no incidents were reported. The Safety and Security Policy has also been further developed to include clear procedures for staff travelling to the field, and clear instructions on what to do in case of emergencies.

Staff development and training

Staff members who travel to the field regularly have been given 'HEAT' training (Hostile Environment Awareness Training). Those staff with security management responsibilities have also been offered a security management training.

In addition, several workshops were organised for staff to strengthen their capacities and skills to support and engage with survivors. The team has been given training on trauma, secondary trauma, stress and related subjects, and received training to improve their skills in identifying relevant emotional/behavioural signs in themselves and in colleagues, and in boosting their own resilience.

A system has been put in place for continuous staff support through regular structured meetings for inter-collegial feedback.

Fundraising

Foundations and Institutional Donors

Our successful fundraising over recent years has allowed the Mukwege Foundation to steadily expand its activities to substantially support survivors worldwide in concrete ways. Starting in 2020, now that we have three years of audited annual accounts, the Mukwege Foundation is eligible to apply for larger, multi-annual grants from institutional and multi-lateral donors, including governments, the EU, the UN and large foundations. Participating in larger-scale, more standardised tender procedures will allow us to access new opportunities for earmarked funding and keep growing our activities worldwide.

The table below shows an overview of the acquired funding in 2020:

ACQUIRED PROJECTS 2020 - TOTAL BUDGETS (ROUNDED OFF)		SUBJECT
Dutch Postcode Lottery - 2020	900,000	Core funding
OSF 2020	124,000	Global Survivor Movement
Swedish Postcode Lottery	490,000	Holistic Care DRC
German government	200,000	Support survivor movements 4 countries
ICC	150,000	Support survivors in CAR
Etat de Geneve	50,000	Covid response Panzi DRC
EU - Nigeria	450,000	Nigerian youth -peacebuilding and resilience
PayPal	4,000	Global Survivor Movement
IICI	27,000	Consultations Murad Code project
Fondation Pierre Fabre	75,000	Holistic Care DRC
Individual donations - 2020	283,000	Core funding
	2,753,000	EUR

In comparison with previous years, 2020 was again a good year for the Foundation. The table below shows the development in fundraising efforts over the last years:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total contracted projects and donations (EUR)	745,660	2,040,652	2,371,171	6,657,000	2,753,000

2019 was an exceptionally good financial year for the Mukwege Foundation, but this was largely due to the one-off effect of setting up the Global Survivors Fund in Geneva. While the Fund was in its inception phase, the Mukwege Foundation managed four large projects on its behalf. When the set-up was complete, these projects were handed over to the new organisation.

In 2020, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is already showing, and we are expecting an even bigger impact in 2021. Many projects were negatively impacted by COVID-19, meaning both a delay in implementation and spending, and as a consequence new income from recurrent institutional donors is not expected until ongoing projects are finalised. However, the total amount of acquired funding in 2020 is still higher than in 2018, for example.

Individual Fundraising

Though not our largest income stream, it is heart-warming to see how many individuals support our cause and donate quite regularly towards it. The Mukwege Foundation has a loyal base of recurring donors who support the Foundation in a sustainable way. This base of regular donors is increasing year-on-year, offering a small but stable income. In addition, there is an increase in individual donor engagement through third party fundraising, encouraged by our renewed website and our social media engagement and supported by transparent and clear guidelines which we make available.

In 2020 we invested in tools to manage these individual donor relationships more proactively, including the investment in a new website and a renewed donation page and donation form that are easy to access and user-friendly for potential donors. The donation button is now present on every page of the website and there is more traffic on our donation page since the new website was launched.

To improve our communication with individual donors, we started to implement the Salesforce customer relations management system. Integrating our donor database with a professional customer relations management system allows us to take a more consistent approach to gathering and analysing data from all our online sources of engagement with existing and potential individual donors.

As this type of funding is unearmarked, it is an important means to realise our ambitions as it creates the necessary space for essential work that is not easily funded elsewhere, for example scoping visits, survivor retreats or support for the online connectivity costs of survivors during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation warmly thanks all private donors who contributed to our work supporting survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in 2020.



Looking Ahead

In 2021, we will celebrate our 5th anniversary, a moment to look back to all that we have achieved and to look forward to the work to come.

We are confident that in the upcoming [Three Year Strategic Plan](#) period we will be able to further increase both our impact and reach to support survivors in their fight for justice and to end sexual violence as well as increase their access to holistic care.

The creation of SEMA, the Global Network of Victims and Survivors to End Wartime Sexual Violence, and our close working relationship with local, in-country survivor movements worldwide has contributed to a wider recognition of the survivor-centred concept 'nothing about us without us' and to the relevance of the Mukwege Foundation's work at the international level. In the current global humanitarian and development landscape, the concept of holistic care is increasingly accepted, and the principle of South- South capacity building resonates well with the international discourse around post-colonial remnants in international relations.

Building on these opportunities, over the next three years the Mukwege Foundation will continue to expand and strengthen its programme and advocacy work. To expand our current work on holistic care, to mobilise survivors' agency, and to promote survivor-centred transitional justice, we will need to strengthen our operational, technical and staff capacities and further nurture our strong working relationship with Panzi Foundation. It will also be essential to support Panzi in growing its capacity to jointly expand the holistic care model beyond the borders of DRC.

SEMA

During the coming period we will continue to further strengthen SEMA, building on the internal lessons learned and the outcomes of the external evaluation. We will continue to use the online connectivity opportunities that have been realised due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also hope to be able to organise a global retreat in 2021 or early 2022 for SEMA members in order to give victims and survivors a safe space where they can speak out, share with their peers, receive support and further develop their advocacy skills. We have witnessed the accelerated learning processes and increase in confidence and autonomy that survivors draw from these opportunities, and we understand their value to build SEMA's sustainability and autonomy in the longer term.

In addition, we will expand our support for national survivor networks around the world. This includes financial support, capacity building, support for survivor-led advocacy as well as psychological and livelihood support to enable survivor activism. We will help to create advocacy opportunities, facilitate survivors' exchanges with networks in other countries and support their process of peer learning.

Holistic Care

In the upcoming three year period, we aim to continue Project Nengo in the Central African Republic, phase out our project in Guinea, expand our work to improve care for survivors in northern Iraq and start up two more holistic care projects in two of the following contexts: Colombia, Uganda, Burundi, Mali, Nepal or Bangladesh.

Though we ultimately aim to support the creation of full One-stop centres or other holistic care models that include all four pillars of support, we will also support projects in which the Mukwege Foundation strengthens one or two core pillars, prioritising the provision of compassionate medical and psychological care.

Together with Dr Mukwege, we will continue to promote the holistic care model at international conferences, at inter-agency forums and by building a network of partnerships with UN agencies, NGOs, academics and practitioners.

RED LINE campaign

In 2021, together with SEMA members, and with the active involvement of Dr Mukwege, we will start a multi-annual initiative: the RED LINE campaign. This initiative will address an urgent need – the elimination of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Sexual violence, used systematically and on a mass scale, is prevalent in many conflicts worldwide causing intolerable human suffering. States recognise sexual violence as a tactic of war; however, effective and timely responses are non-existent. Put plainly: sexual violence as a weapon of war is tolerated.

The RED LINE campaign is rooted in the knowledge that sexual violence as a weapon of war causes profound devastation comparable to other methods of warfare, which are condemned and prohibited – rightly – by international treaties and conventions. While other weapons have been banned by international conventions based on their humanitarian consequences, no such treaty exists for sexual violence in conflict.

The RED LINE aims to build an international coalition to advocate for the elimination of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The advocacy and lobbying campaign will seek to raise our collective conscience and outrage, and push for the implementation and enforcement of the existing normative framework, translating the legal obligations and commitments made by the various existing treaties and UN Security Council resolutions into concrete realities for the benefit of survivors, and protecting future generations from harm. RED LINE will be a multi-year project. Using a two-pronged approach, it will create (1) a highly visible international awareness campaign by leading advocates, organisations and celebrities, stimulating public awareness and support and laying the groundwork for (2) a strategic lobbying effort led by the international coalition to create support for a new convention dictating timely and robust action at the international and national levels. Similar to other global campaigns, RED LINE will develop deep awareness of the issue and create a clear moral rejection and international outcry against sexual violence as a weapon of war.



MF staff at a Project Nengo advocacy event

Continued support to Panzi in DRC

As the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues, Panzi Hospital remains a crucial actor in dealing with the immediate needs of survivors. At the same time, Panzi also advocates; keeping the problem of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in east DRC and the need for justice for survivors on the international agenda. The Mukwege Foundation will continue to implement joint projects and to fundraise for unrestricted support to Panzi Hospital and Panzi Foundation DRC.

Strengthening the backbone of the organisation

In the last five years, the Mukwege Foundation has grown considerably and moved from being a small start-up organisation, focusing primarily on supporting survivors in their advocacy against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, to an implementing organisation with its own innovative projects at an international level and in conflict and post-conflict countries around the world.

Implementing more and larger projects provides both opportunities and challenges for the organisation. Accordingly, we will continue to grow our funding base and staff as well as ensure the necessary internal policies and procedures are updated and upgraded to meet and support the current organisational ambitions.



Partners

The Mukwege Foundation would like to thank all organisations that supported our work in 2020. Because of your support, we were able to do meaningful work with and for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We look forward to continuing our collaboration.



Collaborative Partners



THANK YOU

For further information, please contact us at:

info@mukwegefoundation.org