Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL)

Project Success Story

Sustaining access to justice, for child survivor: Princess's journey towards justice and educational recovery in Moyamba district.

Through support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) implemented an initiative aimed at strengthening access to justice for vulnerable groups and advancing people-centred justice reforms for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence across Falaba, Moyamba and Kailahun districts.

In Moyamba District, financial constraints and social stigma continue to create significant barriers for child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence seeking justice and support. The experience of a 16 year old Princess Sheriff Highlights how targeted interventions can help overcome these challenges and protect the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable children.

Princess reported an alleged incident of sexual penetration at the Taiama Police Post, prompting the Family Support Unit (FSU) to commence investigations. However, her family's inability to afford transportation for investigative procedures threatened to delay progress on the case. Through project-supported transportation assistance, Princess and key witnesses were able to participate in the investigation, contributing to the case being charged to court and subsequently committed to the High Court. Beyond the legal challenges, Princess also experienced social stigma that forced her to withdraw from school. Recognising the importance of her emotional wellbeing and continued education, the project provided psychosocial support and engaged school authorities to facilitate her safe return to the classroom.

Today, Princess has resumed her education while awaiting trial. Her experience demonstrates how practical financial assistance, psychosocial support and institutional collaboration can help prevent poverty and stigma from undermining survivors' access to justice and other fundamental rights. Although the judicial process remains ongoing, her progress represents an important step towards restoring hope, dignity and opportunities for a child survivor.

Through support from the UNDP, the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) continues to strengthen survivor-centred interventions and promote access to justice for vulnerable survivors.

No child should be denied justice because of poverty or forced out of school because of stigma.