

Empowering Community Women Leaders

DRC's Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPNs) continue to champion empowerment in communities across Upper Nile, including Pigi Canal, Malakal Protection of Civilians site, Malakal town, Kodok, and Baliet. The Protection Assistance for Refugees, IDPs, Returnees, and Host Community project, funded by UNHCR, aims to enable those affected by displacement to protect themselves. Led by a diverse group of community members, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and the older persons, CBPNs are instrumental in promoting human rights and fostering a sense of security among community members.

The DRC Community-Based Protection Networks empower communities by providing training, raising awareness, monitoring and referring cases, engaging vulnerable groups, and building trust to protect community members affected by climatic shocks and conflicts.

As DRC joins the world in commemorating International Women's Day, we would like to shed more light on Aliza Bukach, a 45-year-old community volunteer who is one of the female leaders within the DRC CBPN in Malakal. Her dedication and commitment to community service caught the attention of Bolis Bol, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Officer at DRC. Aliza serves as the Chairperson of Malakal PoC sector 1 and leads the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) Taskforce. She is also actively involved in the people with disabilities committee through the Upper Nile Union of Persons with Disabilities. Impressed by her efforts, Bolis Bol added Aliza to the CBPN structure, and her journey began with a series of protection training sessions organized by DRC in the Malakal PoC site throughout 2023. Through these trainings conducted by DRC, Aliza has been able to enhance her skills in protection. "I have attended several trainings conducted by DRC and I am glad it has shaped how I handle cases in my community. Together we are able to resolve cases in an amicable way and in case of bigger issues we are able to refer survivors to the right channels."

Aliza and her team have established strong bonds with the community members. They are dedicated to raising awareness about human rights, particularly at water points and food distribution sites. Aliza's approachable nature has made her a trusted confidante for many community members, enabling open dialogues on protection issues such as Gender-Based Violence and psychosocial issues.

Peter Mading, the Chairperson of CBPN in Malakal town, explained to DRC, "Aliza is one of our members who conduct daily monitoring in the community. With the training acquired, she is now able to identify protection cases that require intervention. In case she comes across such issues, she refers them to DRC for protection services when necessary."

The success of the CBPN lies in its community-led approach, emphasizing collaboration, awareness, and support. By involving the community in decision-making processes and empowering them to take charge of their own protection, the CBPN has become a crucial force in safeguarding the rights and well-being of the affected population.

Individuals like Aliza Bukach exemplify the dedication and commitment that drive the CBPN's success. Their tireless efforts, combined with the mentorship and support provided by DRC, have laid a foundation for a more resilient and empowered community. Together, they are building a future where communities can face challenges with confidence and strength.

