



**WORLD  
HUMANITARIAN  
DAY** #WOMENHUMANITIANS | 19 AUGUST

### **Selfless Service At The Frontline – Sarah's Story**

46-year-old Sarah Ewoi is a mother of 4, working for the Lutheran World Federation – World Service as a Social Worker at the Nadapal Transit Centre located at the Kenya-South Sudan border. She speaks 11 languages; English, Swahili, Turkana, Arabic, Tira, Toposa, Jie, Dinka, Didinga, Logir and French, most of them learnt informally over the years while working in Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan. Her journey in the humanitarian world began 16 years ago.

**Sarah Ewoi**

*"I am a firm believer that refugees need the care and support so that they can start their lives again. My role is to provide hope and a future. Here at Nadapal we are often caught in the crossfire between cattle raiders and security agencies. This scares me a lot and I always think of my children. It however does not stop me from serving refugees because if the roles were changed and we were the ones fleeing from war, I would also want someone else to go out of their way to receive us, protect us and help us rebuild our lives."*

#### **• Walk us through a normal day at work and what do you love most about it?**

I report to the office at 8:00am. My job starts with conducting psychosocial assessments to new arrivals after supervising the cleaning of the transit center, create awareness on what is expected of the refugees and asylum seekers during their stay at Nadapal. I also educate them on their rights and entitlements, conduct psychosocial first aid for SGBV survivors then compile and send daily reports. I love the fact that everyday, I make a difference in the life of a person in need.

#### **• How do you connect with children, especially unaccompanied minors arriving at the transit center?**

I'm able to speak their language; which quickly connects me to them, gain their trust and being a mother makes me create a home environment for them.

#### **• Is there a particular encounter in Nadapal that touched you?**

Yes. I once met a 14-year-old girl who had run away from home when her parents wanted to marry her off to a 50 year-old man.. The girl had been physically abused by her father and had fresh wounds all over her body after she declined to be married off. She then ran away, walked for 5 days having slept in the bushes with no food and water just to get to the transit center. She was rescued, cared for and now pursuing her secondary school education and wants to be a humanitarian lawyer in future.



• **As a frontline humanitarian worker at the busy transit center, how do you balance your time between caring for refugees, your own family and how challenging is it?**

I get Rest and Recuperation (RnR) and leave every 8 weeks. This ensures that I get adequate time to rest, unwind and spend time with my family. I thank God for a very supportive husband and a strong family system that often attends to my children while I am away. As a mother, it has been very hard being away from my children but I usually call them daily to check up on them, do homework with them and make the most out of the times I'm home with them during my RnR and leave.

• **Women continue to make up a large number of those who risk their own lives to save others. What does being a humanitarian mean to you and how do you remain brave, serving the persons of concern while your life is at a risk?**

I am a firm believer that refugees need the care and support so that they can start their lives again. My role is to provide "... hope and a future..." Here at Nadapal we are often caught in the crossfire between cattle raiders and security agencies. This scares me a lot and I always think of my children. It however does not stop me from serving refugees because if the roles were changed and we were the ones fleeing from war I would also want someone else to go out of their way to receive us, protect us and help us rebuild our lives.

• **What advice can you give to other women in humanitarian service?**

As women humanitarian workers, I would like us to continue giving hope and motherly touch while serving at the frontline. We are the mothers and pillars of strength to the world.

I would like other women around the world to draw inspiration through my story of perseverance and resilience and on this day as we commemorate those that died in the line of humanitarian duty, we are stronger and more driven to go out there and save lives.

**By Yvonne Baraza**