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World Bank Mountaineer Raises Funds for Rape Survivors in Mali

An intrepid official from the World Bank is climbing the tallest mountain in North America to raise funds for survivors of sexual violence in Mali.

Sini Sanuman helps SGBV survivors to regain their confidence by making soap

Luigi Laraia, an advisor to the Italian Executive Director at the World Bank, set out to climb Mount Denali on May 14 with several other climbers (photo above). The team was preparing for a final push towards the summit (20,308 feet) when they last posted an audio update by satellite phone.

Mr Laraia has dedicated his climb to 60 survivors of war rape in Mali who are currently recovering at a center run by AP's partner organization Sini Sanuman (photo left). AP has launched an appeal through Global Giving to help the women produce soap, and 61 donors have pledged $4,730 so far.

Mr Laraia is the author of a much-praised play about war rape, *Neda Must Die*, and a committed philanthropist. A leukemia survivor, he has cycled across the US three times and climbed Mount Aconcagua in Argentina to raise funds for leukemia research. His play will be shown at the World Bank (Preston Auditorium) on June 29.

"(This issue of) SGBV is close to my heart," he said before leaving. "I hope that the money I raise will enable women like Neda to recover and become economically independent."

The Global Giving appeal will expand an innovative program in Mali that has provided refuge to 360 SGBV survivors at two centers since 2014. The program is run by [Sini Sanuman](#) with support from AP, and is financed by the Germany Foreign Ministry through [Zivik in Berlin](#) and by the Government of Liechtenstein.

Luigi Laraia, intrepid mountaineer: from the World Bank to Mount Denali

Most of the survivors suffered extreme abuse at the hands of rebels and jihadists in northern Mali in 2012. Sini Sanuman's program offers them the chance to recover their confidence in the company of other women while also learning a skill that will bring in an income. In addition to soap, the trainees are also making uniforms for students from poor families and producing embroidered squares for camel quilts and bags.

Under the watchful eye of Aissata Toure, a professional soap-maker, the trainees have produced and sold over 2,000 bars of palm oil and shea butter soap in local markets this year. AP also hopes to sell shea butter soap *(Sini Savon)* in the US.

But this support ends when the trainees leave the centers - and none of the women have been able to continue making soap because of the cost of the equipment and ingredients.

As a result, Sini Sanuman and AP will invest the funds raised through Global Giving in local women's associations which offer survivors the chance to continue making soap in a group. The Moussou Kalanso group, pictured left, could be an early grantee. Working with an old table provided by Sini Sanuman, over 30 group members meet each week to produce 180 bars of soap. They could produce a lot more with an injection of money.

Mr Laraia's fundraising will increase the productivity of groups like Moussou Kalanso

"This is a good way to take our services to the community and increase the number of beneficiaries" said Siaka Traore, president of Sini Sanuman.

In addition to Mr Laraia's fundraising, the Mali soap project has also inspired a group of students at the University of Maryland, who are advising AP on the marketing of *Sini Savon* soap in the US. Our thanks to the students and their professor, [Stacy Kosko](#), a former AP Peace Fellow and staff member.

- [Follow Luigi's climb](#)
- [Help us reach our fundraising target by June 6](#)!
- View women [making shea butter oil](#) in the village

- View women [making soap at the Bamako center](#)
- View [photos from the Mali program](#)
- [Read more about Sini Sanuman](#)
- Get involved - email us at info@advocacynet.org

Thanks to Humanity United for supporting our fellowship program and to the Peace and Collaborative Development Network for re-posting our bulletins.