

About the Project

The Sexual violence Awareness Project in Selected Secondary Schools is conceived with the funding support of AmplifyChange to encourage a conversation among students and build their awareness level on the issues relating to Sexual Violence and immediate response

available to them.

The objective is 'To raise early awareness on the existence, forms and effects of sexual violence among 750 Senior Secondary School students using selected schools in Lagos and Ogun States in its pilot phase



At the end of the awareness raising phase, students will be able to identify basic human rights as defined by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also known as the 'Bill of Rights', the Nigeria Constitution and African Charter on Human & People's Rights. They will understand the meaning of sexual violence, its forms, effects and practical steps to prevent occurrence.

Interested students will be further trained as Champions who will in turn train other students, creating an opportunity for volunteering and one-one mentoring for the students.



Student Speak

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

A quarterly Publication for Sexual Violence and Awareness Project

Quarter 1, Feb-April, 2016



From The Founder

Dear reader,

I welcome you to the first edition of the 'Students' Speak Newsletter'. This is a quarterly Newsletter aimed at publicizing activities under the Sexual Violence Awareness in Secondary Schools Project. A project made possible by the funding support of AmplifyChange.

Every edition will showcase participating schools, provide a platform for students, schools administrators and teachers to share their thoughts on the issues raised in writing, painting, poems and or pictures.

The objective of the project is 'To raise early awareness on the existence, forms and effects of sexual violence among 750 Senior Secondary School students using selected schools in Lagos and Ogun States in its pilot phase'. During this phase, awareness activities such as training on human rights, sexual violence, self-defence and training of peer educators will be carried out in selected

'To raise early awareness on the existence, forms and effects of sexual violence

15 secondary schools across Lagos and Ogun States.

Sexual Violence in Nigeria is a major threat to the safety and security of young people at home, school or play. It has taken a very disturbing dimension as news and social media reports show an increase in occurrence. There is the need to raise more awareness on the issues, especially among the most affected population who will be equipped to also take actions to prevent occurrences in the first place and respond appropriately where it has occurred.

As we engage with students, school administrators and teachers, we hope to continue this conversation both formally and informally to build trust, foster commitment to the wellbeing of the student and encourage openness between and among participating groups.

It is such a great pleasure to start this conversation with you all and I look forward to continued discussions and action on this all important issue which has become a menace and a threat to the wellbeing of our children.

Once again, I welcome you on this journey.

Kate Ibeanusi
Founder/Board Secretary,

Initiative for Sustaining Family Unity
2015/16 Fellow, Peace & Security Fellowship for African Women, African Leadership Centre/ Kings College
2014 Recipient, Katherine Fleming Award for International Development, Coady International Institute

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- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- Force you to have sex?
- Destroy your belongings
- Act excessively jealous and possessive?
- Control where you go or what you do?
- Keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- Humiliate or yell at you?
- Criticize you and put you down?
- Ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?
- Blame you for their abusive behavior?
- See you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?

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DO YOU:

- Feel afraid of your partner most of the time?
- Avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- Believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- Wonder if you're the one who is crazy?
- Feel emotionally numb or helpless?

If your answer is YES to any of these questions, then you may be victim of Gender-Based Violence.

BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

- Speak out
- Seek Help
- Report on behalf of yourself or Someone Else to the Nearest Police Station

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Sexual Abuse by Acquaintance

- is it my fault?

Tolu, was 11years old when she got admitted into the community secondary school. The principal of the school was known for his strict religious and disciplinarian life style.

Even his children feared him and were also respected in school because of their supposed good home upbringing. Tunde, one of the principal's sons and head boy of the school was greatly loved by all.

At the end of first term, the school organised her usual welcome party for the new students of which Tolu was present. They all had fun and enjoyed themselves, at the close of the party, Tolu started walking home when the Head Boy walked up to her asking if he could walk her home, seeing he was the Head Boy and well behaved in school, she did not see anything wrong in his request, she rather felt elated that the head prefect of her school was walking her home.

During their walk home, Tunde suddenly kissed her and before she could protest he covered her mouth with his hand and slapped her, while also struggling to tear her cloth. She fought with him but could not overpower him and he raped her mercilessly and left her.

On getting home, she was too ashamed and weak to tell anyone her story because who would believe her that the obedient son of a strict disciplinarian father forcefully raped her. She also blamed herself for agreeing to let him walk her home that night, saying it was her fault she was raped.

Sometimes, she rationalised the act that took place that night as a normal thing since everyone was having sex in her school and wondered if she was not over reacting.

“
She fought with him but could not overpower him and he raped her mercilessly and left her.”

Rape is one of the glaring forms of sexual abuse and many survivors of rape like Tolu fear that they will not be believed if they reported an abuse against them. This is made worse if the assailant is popular and well known.

Many survivors also believe that they are at fault for going somewhere with the assailant or for being intoxicated at that point. All these thoughts and more clutter the minds of survivors and can ultimately influence their views as to whether or not they were raped. **ANY SEXUAL VIOLATION OF BOUNDARIES BEYOND THE WORD "NO" IS RAPE.**

There are myths about sexual abuse that place the blame on the abused instead of the abuser. Below are some of those myths and the FACTs that debunk them:

1. A person who was raped by an acquaintance should have known better than to agree to go to some secluded place.

FACT : many rapists portray a "gentle man's demeanour" which makes suspecting them impossible and unpredictable.

2. If a person is under the influence of alcohol, they can still give valid consent to sexual abuse.

FACT: if you are under the influence of alcohol, any consent you give is invalid as alcohol and drugs are never an excuse for someone violating boundaries.

3. She was sexily or scantily dressed, so it's her fault.

FACT: it doesn't matter what an individual wears or what her behaviour was prior to the assault. Lack of consent is a lack of consent no matter what.

4. Rape or sexual abuse is only committed by strangers.

FACT: more than 80 percent of persons are sexually abused by people they know including family, relatives, friends etc.

5. It is not rape if you have had sex with the person before the incident.

FACT: prior sexual contact is not a substitute for consent. There must be consent from both parties all the time.

6. She collected moneys and gifts from me. Therefore, it's her fault I raped her.

FACT: Gifts and money cannot and should never be used as substitutes for Consent. Sex must be agreed to by both parties at the same time. It is not an entitlement.

7. Boys cannot be raped.

FACT: anybody whether boy or girl can be raped.

“
Any sexual violation of boundaries beyond the word "no" is rape.”

In conclusion, cultivating awareness is the first step in eradicating the monstrous crime of rape and all forms of sexual abuse.

In doing so, we offer support to survivors and construct a wall of prevention. In bringing the dark acts of these perpetrators to light, we end the darkness the victims feel.

Sopuruchi Anosike is a lawyer by training with interest in human rights issues as it disproportionately affects women and girls. She is currently the SVA Project Coordinator.

Culled from the Students Speak Newsletter an initiative of the Sexual Violence and Awareness Project by Initiative for Sustaining Family Unity

Editor's Note

No means No

Our society has become fraught with flawed ideologies and these continue to be passed on from one generation to the next. One of such fallacies being bandied as a fact is that when a girl (especially) says No she means Yes. What a fallacy?

How can one say No, and mean yes at the same time?

It is sad to note that when a lie is told repeatedly it can be seen to be the truth. In this instance, No cannot mean Yes.

The 7th Edition of the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines 'NO' as 'used to give negative reply or statement', while it defines 'YES' as 'used to agree to a request or to give permission'. This two cannot be used interchangeably, so why would anyone assume that No means Yes?

“
No Means No under whatever circumstance, learn to respect it.”

As young people go through the various rites of passage, society inculcates in them values that will guide their interactions all through life. The earlier we teach young people to respect boundaries and other peoples spaces the easier it becomes for them to adjust into human community.

When a girl says No, she means No, especially when it has to do with her preference for company, where to go, who to be with and how she wishes to spend her time. Any attempt to misinterpret her 'No' as 'Yes' is a violation of her rights to privacy. For girls and boys alike, No Means No under whatever circumstance, learn to respect it.

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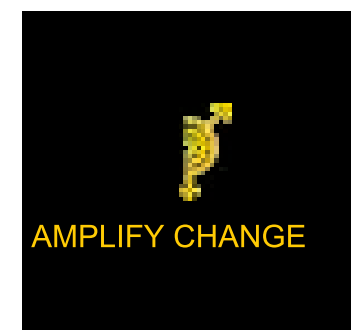
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Student Speak

NEWSLETTER



Volume 1, Issue 2

A quarterly Publication for Sexual Violence and Awareness Project

Quarter 2, May-July, 2016



Welcome to the second edition of the Students' Speak Newsletter.

In this edition we will be highlighting some of the activities held in schools. As is customary we will be looking at some aspects of the universal human rights declaration that speaks to equality and non-discrimination.

Students understanding of sexual violence stems from their lived experiences and this informs their response to this societal menace. Working with these students and teachers these past quarter revealed an urgent need to demystify issues relating to sexual violence, how this affects the total wellbeing of the young person in society. It also points to the gaps in society's response to these issues and how these further reinforces the discrimination young people who are abused face.

Our special thanks and appreciation goes to the Principal, Teachers and Students of the following schools who participated in the activities for this project during this last quarter, they are:

1. Reagan Memorial Secondary Schools, Yaba, Lagos
2. Bishop Howells Secondary School, Bariga, Lagos

3. St. Finbarr's Boys' Secondary School, Akoka, Lagos
4. Methodist Boys' High School, Victoria Island, Lagos
5. Our Lady of Apostles Girls Secondary School, Yaba, Lagos
6. ECWA Academy, Ibafo, Ogun state
7. Radiant Secondary school, Ibafo, Ogun State.

IforSFU Addresses Sexual Violence in Secondary Schools in Lagos and Ogun States

The Initiative for Sustaining Family Unity through the generous support of AmplifyChange has continued to raise awareness on Sexual Violence in secondary schools in Lagos and Ogun States. The Awareness project uses Understanding Human Rights as a baseline to create awareness on Sexual violence while providing basic response skills and techniques to enable young people take a lead in addressing these issues.

During the last quarter over 1500 students in about 7 schools were reached with trainings on Understanding Sexual Violence, Basic

Human Rights and Self Defence.

The students who were majorly senior secondary students, shared their views on sexual violence and human rights.

Interactive discussions with these young people revealed how these views differ between schools, boys, girls, and their teachers. Boys typically share a more theoretical view on sexual violence, as opposed to girls' who are more practical, emotional based on their experiences.

Teachers expressed their concern about young people finding themselves pulled between conflicting messages of 'traditional life' and 'modern' temptations, which often creates confusion, and a clash of values.

From facilitating these sessions, one finds oftentimes conflicting views and misrepresentations between the teachers and students on the knowledge and response to sexual violence.

In all, there is a clear message, the need to continuously engage with teachers, students and parents alike on the issues of sexual violence.

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MY BODY MY PRIDE –

Learning to Speak freely about Abuse



Written and Edited By: Kate Ibeanusi

As a young person, one of the earliest forms of awareness comes from identifying the different parts of one's body. This initially starts as an innocent observation of the differences between the male and female parts and then moves on to a curiosity on functionality.

As children growing up, this physical differences raises questions which a lot of parents and adults find embarrassing to address. This is at the root of some of the misguided information young people grapple with even into adulthood.

Our society views such innocent inquisition as a taboo hence fostering the kind of secrecy with which sexual related matters are handled in homes, schools and even at work.

Why do young people find it easier to seek for information relating to sex and sexuality from their peers, the internet and strangers?

Why is there a loud silence about sex and sexuality even when one has been sexually abused?

Silence about sex and sexuality stems from the fear of not being seen as a deviant or 'spoilt'. Silence or the 'hush hush' attitude around these matters leads to mistakes, reinforces inaction on the part of responders.

One of the focus group interactions held during the schools outreaches, girls talked about how they do not feel free to share their struggles with their family members or people in authority:

Girl 1: "Our lives are mostly affected by our background and culture. When we, (girls) tell about our harassments from the opposite sex especially those closely related to us, our mothers and fathers say: "Don't tell your brother", "shut up, it is a lie", "think of what people will say if they find out about XYZ touching you". Meanwhile, they are not teaching me how to protect myself from future occurrence. From that point onwards, I feel that no one will listen to me, so need to tell them anything. Lesson Learnt: Fears of reprove and condemnation sets in, the young girl may be led to believe that sexual abuse is normal and may stop speaking up for herself.

Girl 2: I am not that close with my mother so I cannot talk to her about such things. She will just kill me. I prefer to discuss with my friends to avoid trouble at home.

Lesson Learnt: For some teenagers, the biggest problem at home is communication gap. They cannot share their difficulties with their parents for fear of being condemned. For some, their parents never ask them about issues they face in school or with their friends. As a result, when they have issues, they depend on outsiders to show them the

way or they keep the secrets to themselves, and thereby they are faced with tackling life on their own and in the end encounter more difficulties.

Some students talked about reporting to their teachers and principals at school, they complained that they are sometimes taunted or punished by their teachers for reporting sexual abuse, therefore they prefer to stay on their own than face disgrace at school over issues of sexual abuse that were not properly and discretely handled by the school administrator.

69
Our lives are mostly affected by our background and culture.

They also expressed disagreements with reporting to the police because of the belief that the police will victimize you if you go to them.

There is the need for parents, teachers and schools administrators, community leaders who are in charge of young people to take on the responsibility of responding to these issues appropriately without causing the young persons any form of embarrassment.

In dealing with this sensitive issues, there is a need to teach young people to accept their bodies, learn how to take of it and also be free enough to discuss any harassment on them without the fear of being seen as 'spoilt' or irresponsible.



Human Rights: The Principle of Equality and Non-Discrimination

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Non-discrimination is a principle in international human rights law that cuts across all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

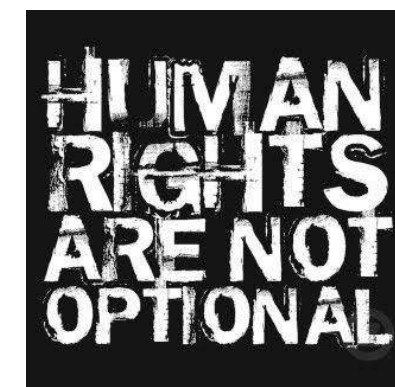
The principle applies to everyone in relation to all human rights and freedoms and it prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as sex, race, colour and so on. The principle of non-discrimination is complemented by the principle of equality, as stated in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights.

The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights.

At the individual level, while we are entitled to our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others.

In conclusion, human rights are essential rights that cannot be taken away from any human being and must be respected as such.



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