Justice For All (J4A) Programme of the Department for International Development (DFID), have begun the training of 46 medical practitioners and social workers on how to handle rape victims. The five days training which started from 1st - 5th February 2016, was organized in Enugu for different states across the federation. The objective was on the need to set up a Sexual Assault Referral Centre and train participants on how to manage it as well as respond to the victims properly. The participants drawn from Zamfara, Yobe, Kaduna, Enugu, Ekiti, Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, were being trained on technical skills, forensic examination and counseling.

In her welcoming speech the Regional Coordinator of J4A in Enugu Mrs. Josephine Onah, said that the programme was organized to train and equip counselors, social workers, doctors and nurses with the required skills to function effectively in a sexual assault referral centre, as well as acquire the internationally best practice in responding to victims of sexual violence in terms of physical, emotional and medical support.

She extolled the participants and urged them to change their mindset and attitudes toward sexual assault victims so that more people could be helped. A medical consultant and participant, Dr Nene Andem, said that the training had exposed her a lot to the challenges in the treatment of victims, but she has learnt to be more practical and not to be judgmental towards victims of rape.
More than 300 health workers from the rural areas have been trained by Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Enugu on how to handle and refer rape victims to the centre. The aim was to increase the knowledge of the health workers on the incidences of sexual violence and rape, create awareness on the preventive measures and tips to avoid rape among health workers and the public. It was also to improve case reporting from the health facilities to the center and break the culture of silence.

The outreach was extended to randomly picked communities in Awgu, Aninri, Enugu South, and Igbo-Eze South local government areas. To enable a larger number of health workers to gain from the sensitization, Tamar SARC assembled the officers in charge of the various facilities as well as other health staff in each of the above LGAs, making a total 32 health facilities represented and imparted on them. The health workers were to serve as referral focal persons representing their facilities and send cases of SGBV to Tamar SARC, as well as further inform the Centre of future collaborations.

The health workers drawn from Igbo-Eze South were represented by these facilities Eburumiri, Isi-Agu, Ibagwo-Ako, Obaka, Ovoko-Agu, Iheaka, Alor-Agu, Ovoko, Ekoyi, Uahunwere and Itchi-Agu. Those from Agwu were picked from Ugweme, Mgidi, Ogugu, Awgu, Mmakwu, Ituku, NgeneUgbo, Owelli, Ezere, Ihe, Obeagu, Agbudu, Ekpulato, Ogbaku, Amow, Mgbo, Agulese Ugwume, Ugwoshi and Agbogugu. Enugu South was represented by the Gariki Health Centre while those from Aninri were picked from Aninri, Ndeaboh, and Nenwe Cottage Hospital. During the programme, Tamar SARC facilitators enlightened the health workers on the prevalence of SGBV in Enugu State, educated them on how to effectively refer victims to the Centre and appealed to the health workers to act as change agents in their communities by creating the awareness on sexual violence, encouraging strong parent-child relationships to dictate early signs of abuse as well as advocate for breaking the culture of silence. Tamar SARC also informed them of the comprehensive psychosocial, medical, and legal services offered at the Centre and advised them to refer all victims to them. This they said is because the professionals working at the Centre have been trained specifically on how to treat sexual abuse victims, do counselling as well as preserve forensic evidence.

An interactive session gave Tamar SARC the opportunity to truly engage with the community by allowing the health workers to present questions or comments they had. Questions that came up include “Are perpetrators made to pay for the victim’s treatment at Tamar SARC? Will the perpetrators just go free? Does Tamar SARC have a medium to help victims prosecute their cases? These questions were responded to judiciously by the facilitators.

Women’s Aid Collective (WACOL)/Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) recently conducted outreach programmes in approximately 20 primary schools in Enugu State. Due to the heightened number of reported SGBV cases plaguing women and children of all ages, Tamar SARC decided to travel to rural and urban areas in the state to speak to young pupils about the crisis, give support to those affected and ultimately help manage the crisis. Tamar SARC staff, accompanied by WACOL change agents, partnered with Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board {ENSUBEB} to speak to approximately 18,000 staff and pupils in the various schools across Enugu State.

Among the schools visited were Igbariam Primary School, Achara Layout, Enugu (comprising of 3 schools); Central Primary School, Amechi (comprising of 2 schools); St. Theresa’s Primary School, Abakpa (comprising of 8 schools); CPS, Amoriike Nke (comprising of 2 schools) and WTC Primary School, Enugu (comprising of 5 schools).
The team generally enumerated the key objectives of the sensitisation programme, which was to increase the knowledge of the pupils about incidences of sexual violence and rape. They also created awareness on the preventive measures and tips to help avoid rape among pupils, increasing the number of cases reported from school age children, as well as to break the culture of silence.

During the programme, Tamar SARC representatives enlightened the pupils and their teachers on the prevalence of SGBV in Enugu, educated them on the preventative measures while dwelling more on the reason for such drastic increase in such cases. They also informed them about the existence of comprehensive, psychosocial, medical and legal services offered by Tamar SARC and WACOL.

The pupils were also told that due to the high number of cases affecting children at their stage of life, there was a need for them to be cautious around strangers, to be wary of gifts and sweets from non-family members. They were also advised to report any sexual abuse to trusted adults and Tamar SARC, regardless of any threats made by the perpetrator.

Another point that was highlighted to the young pupils was the issue of being careful around neighbors and family members, as experience have shown that majority of sexual abuse are perpetrated by people known to the victims. In one-on-one confidential counseling sessions, the level of sexual abuse already experienced by the children was revealed as some of them came forward to either speak out about incidents involving them in their neighborhood or other pupils in their school.

The highly interactive sessions ensured that Tamar SARC engaged with the pupils by allowing them to present questions or comments that agitated their minds.

**January 2016 - February 2016 Edition**

The Rotaract Club International of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Center (SARC), Enugu collaborated to ensure the eradication of rape in the tertiary institution.

The pact was made when the SARC team joined the rotaetrs in their monthly fellowship to sensitize the students on the prevalence of rape in the society, especially in university campuses. The UNN Rotaract Club promised to take the “Stop Rape Campaign” not only around their school environs, but also to other campuses during their combined meetings.

The president of the club, Rotaractor Pedro, affirmed the commitment of his administration to lead the campaign against vices that characterised university students in the country among which sexual violence is prominent.

Pedro, who is also the Students’ Union President, also promised to use his office to create more platforms where all the students would be educated on the ways of preventing the malady.

Gone are the days when sexual violence was the order of the day in the campuses; people must know that there are consequences for transgressing and those consequences must be faced. When people are aware of these things, and we continue to talk about them, we are winning the war gradually,” the SUG president said.

Earlier in her presentation, the Communication Officer of WACOL/Tamar SARC, Mrs. Egodi Igwe, informed the student that the issue of rape has been the focus of many concerned individuals and groups stating that the available statistics on rape was scary. However she focused her presentation on the preventive measure and noted thus:

“Most times, girls who are under the influence of substances are susceptible to rape because they totally lose control of themselves and most often fall victim of gang rape. We are advising girls to beware of foods prepared by boys, especially when they are in groups because they experiment a lot of things. In this kind of situation, an unsuspecting girl can eat the prepared food and dose off. These are the kinds of victims that cannot account for the number of people that raped them,” Igwe said.

She encouraged the students to become Tamar SARC ambassadors by reporting rapes and encouraging their affected friends and classmates to speak out. She stressed the advantages of reporting within 72 hours of the incident so that victim could receive Post Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent HIV/AIDS. The early reporting would as well enable the office gather the forensic evidences that could aid the prosecution of the cases in the courts.

She advised girls must be very assertive when they have conversation with their male counterparts on the issue of sex. “Say NO when you mean NO”. She also encouraged the males to respect their friendship as real men would always respect any lady they admire instead of hurting her.
Over 7000 Secondary Students Educated on Rape by the Enugu SARC

In line with its campaign to nip sexual violence in the bud, the Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Enugu has taken the war to more than 7000 secondary school students in Enugu State. The schools were drawn from urban and rural communities in the 17 local government areas. Among the schools visited were Community Secondary School, Obukpa; Holy Trinity Secondary School, Iheaka and Girls Secondary School, Iheaka all in Igbo-Eze North LGA. Others were Union Secondary School, Oduma in Aninri LGA; New Nigeria Secondary School, Umuoagboagu in Igbo-Eze North and Uwani Girls Secondary School, Enugu.

In each of the schools, the students and teachers were brought up to date with regards to the issue of sexual violence and ways of preventing it. They were sensitised on the availability of free counseling and treatment for victims at the Centre and the need to speak to their teachers, counselors, parents, friends, Law Enforcement Officers and most importantly to Tamar SARC either through phone or visit to the office, when such cases occur. Based on Tamar SARC facts and figures which showed that the highest number of cases treated affected adolescents at this stage of life, Tamar SARC presenters using case studies thoroughly explained the gravity of sexual violence and the support Tamar SARC has provided over the years. The students learnt from the various case studies of victims treated at the Centre, especially from those ones involving adolescents of their age.

They were informed that Tamar SARC has been able to attend to more than 400 reported cases through its financial aid from DFID through the Justice for All program and partnership with the Enugu State Government through the ministries of Justice, Health, Gender Affairs and Social Development and the State Police Command.

The students were informed of the holistic and free care offered at Tamar SARC, and stressed that the skilled health professionals give drugs to prevent HIV infection and pregnancy for cases reported within 72 hours in addition to treating injuries. The facilitators made it clear that rape was never the victim’s fault and highlighted some preventative measures that should be adopted when confronted with such situations, like not encouraging irresponsible men to talk to them, not exposing themselves to rapists, moving away from suspected dangerous environments, among others.

The principals of some of the schools visited also lent their support for the campaign. At the Union Secondary School, Obeagu Oduma in Aninri LGA, the principal, Mr Okolo Nam, commended Tamar SARC for the good job they are doing and encouraged the students to always trust their school heads and report rape or attempts to do so to the school authority for prompt action.

The boys in the schools were also told to respect the wishes of the girls on sex matters. They were reminded that sex with a girl below 18 years without her consent is against the law, and the long arm of the law would not spare anyone found guilty of such crime even though an underage. The boys were advised also to be careful because they fall victims of sexual abuse as well. They were specifically warned to beware of big girls or women of their mother’s age, who would promise them lots of material gifts just to sleep with them. Statistics at the Centre have shown that men also experience sexual abuse. About 10 young men have been treated by the Centre in relation to such abuse by older women and also by some group of boys who are homosexuals.

Tamar SARC Technical Group (TG) Meets to Strategize on Campaign Against Sexual Violence

Enugu, Oct 16, 2015: WACOL/Tamar SARC think-thank group refers to as Technical Group has again convened to chart ways of making the fight against SGBVs more effective and result-oriented, all in a bid to halt rape in the society. The group is an assembly of all stakeholders in the campaign, including all the participating police stations in and around the state metropolis, the ministries of Justice, Health, and Gender Affairs and Social Development.

Others are Community Safety Partnership (CSP), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Women’s Aid Collective (WACOL), National Human Right Commission, Enugu state, and other CSOs. The group meets monthly to take stock of the activities of Tamar SARC, analyze the entire cases reported to the police, track and analyze rape cases pending in different courts, and generally chart the way forward.

At a recent meeting, the Center Manager of Tamar SARC, Ms Nkechi Nwabueze, informed the group that the increment in the number of reported cases is an evidence of the job carried out by the group, adding that J4A have given it a strong-worded commendation. She also announced that, as a result of the nature of the task the group performed, the nomenclature of the group has been changed from “Stakeholders Meeting” to “Technical Group”, while urging them to double their effort towards moving the Center forward. They were also informed that one of the earliest clients of the Center has overcome the trauma she experienced. She has become a radio presenter and has been using her show to project Tamar SARC and sensitize her audience on rape, an announcement that drew some cheers from the members. All stakeholders gave updates on the case reported or referred to them and follow-up were assigned to some members to carry out.

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Highlight of some cases reported to the centre.

Stop Rape Now!