



YOUTH SPEAK OUT

JUNE 2011

TIMELESS PAIN

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COMPONENTS OF SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Adolescents reproductive health.

Safe motherhood e.g. early pregnancy

Family planning information and services e.g. use of contraceptives.

Harmful practices like; female genital mutilation (FGM).

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS.

Post abortion care services.

Infertility and sexual dysfunction.

Reproductive tract infection (RTI)s

The issue of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is not an issue to be swept under the carpets of considerations. In Nigeria, we have had cases of FGM but it is important that we mention the decrease or better still the low percentage of FGM. Cases have been reported on the existence of FGM and even though I wondered the possibilities of its happening, I hoped to have a real contact with someone who had undergone such experience. Shortly after, I met a girl, who was my classmate, in secondary school. She shared her story about how she was genitally mutilated and how strongly she believed in it. She said that it had been done at the age of six and that she remembered seeing her mother in the midst of several women and other girls who were brought in for the same purpose. There was a long queue. Her mother had taken her to the 'local cutter' and had waited for her outside whilst she was being mutilated inside. I asked her about her experience on that day. She said that although she was given something to drink by the 'local cutter', she bled non-stop for two days. She further reckoned that the whole experience was the beginning of her self realization as a girl and that a special feast was made in her honour. She believes that her FGM was carried out for her own good. As far as she can recall, she has never had sexual urges, which is a sign of her marital faithfulness in future.



Some of the instruments for performing FGM



A girl tied up after FGM

Approximately 120 million women and girls have fallen victim to FGM/C, globally. FGM/C is commonly performed on girls between the ages of 4 and 12. However, it may be performed on girls during puberty or shortly before/after marriage, in certain cultures. In Nigeria, FGM/C is still practiced for different reasons such as tradition and religion. Mothers compel their daughters to undergo the procedure to safeguard them from being banished and disgraced within their community! FGM/C reduces the efficient rate of child birth and further complicates issues.

Based on a true life story— Nneka 16 years old.

To make your opinion count and contribute to end this harmful and inhuman practice in your community. Join our campaign on www.facebook.com/Education as a vaccine.

Are our young mothers safe?

According to reports, more than 600,000 women die due to childbirth or pregnancy related complications around the world annually. Nigeria is solely responsible for close to 10% of this figure. Africa has the highest maternal mortality ratio with an estimated average of 800 deaths for every 100,000 births. However, the current estimated average maternal mortality rate in Nigeria is an estimate of 545 for every 1,000 births according to NDHS(2008), but this figure varies according to regions of the country. Maternal mortality

is higher side in the North Eastern region of Nigeria, which is said to have about 75% of the country's maternal deaths, compared to the South East and South West regions. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID 2010) indicated that most of the victims of maternal deaths are women between the ages of 15 and 45. After India, Nigeria is said to have the second highest maternal death rate in the world - 54,000 Nigerian women die every year. Other 1,080,000 to 1,620,000 Nigerian women and girls will suffer

from disabilities caused by complications during pregnancy and childbirth each year. Unsafe methods of childbirth cause an average of 144 deaths of Nigerian women, annually. This means that every 10 minutes one Nigerian woman dies due to childbirth and pregnancy related issues. How do we reduce this?

Girl child education should be made the nation's priority. The government needs to look into these cases and find lasting solutions to them.

We want the National health bill signed!



YOUTH ADVOCATE GROUP (YAG)



Continued from page 1

To support the elimination of FGM with youth participation and adequate funding for programme implementation, Please share your comments and stories on

www.amplifyyourvoice.org/nigeria

A team of young Nigerians between the ages of 15-24 years residing/schooling, within the federal capital territory, and determined to address adolescents' health and development issues through social mobilization and advocacy. The YAG aims to improve sexual and reproductive health of young people in Nigeria by advocating for the adequate implementation of the ASRH policies with meaningful involvement of young people by 2011.

To achieve this goal the group advocates for;

- A national budgetary allocation for ASRH policy implementation by 2011
- Increased opportunities for young people to participate in the implementation of ASRH policies and programs.
- The establishment of ASRH units at state and local government levels.

The YAG will use communication and advocacy strategies to educate and mobilize young people, adults and duty bearers to take action on adolescents' reproductive health issues.

Our work our passion!

500,000 thousand voices!!!

In the month of April the Youth Advocates Group in collaboration with White Ribbon Alliance put together an e-consultation on maternal health and the role of young people via Skype. Over 40 people from different background and location participated in the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness of young leaders and to also develop strategies to advocate to government for an understanding of how young people are affected and the essence of refocusing the national strategy for a purposeful implementation. At the end of the meeting, commitments were made to establish a network of youth advocates for MNCH issues in Nigeria. However, 3 committees were established and they include Communication and ICT, Advocacy, and research. It is expected that the committees will bring forward concrete infor-

mation and ideas to attain our objective.

Also within the month of April, another e-consultation for youth activists across Nigeria was held with the youth advocates group, White Ribbon Alliance and Save the children UK/ Nigeria. The essence of the e-forum was to gather the inputs of various youths in different fields of sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), poverty and employment and young medical professionals in respect to the participation of young people in maternal health issues in Nigeria. The goal of the consultation was to raise awareness and seek out various ways by which young people can actively participate.

In the month of May, the Youth Advocates Group was involved in the follow up meeting on the youth voices for the maternal newborn and child health (MNCH) issues in Nigeria. The essence of the follow up meeting was to ensure

that commitments made by those who participated in the first meeting were still kept and also to discuss how policy-makers can be effectively and efficiently engaged. The major activity that came out of that meeting was raising "Half a million youth voices for MNCH." Furthermore, we had a meeting with PATH2 and SCUK to discuss plans for the "Half a million youth voices for MNCH" expressions.

Our goal is '**To build the voices of young people**'. We also discussed giving the campaign a 'corporate identity'. The issue being that the campaign committee is made up of different NGOs and what we need is an identity unifying the group.

The Youth Advocates Group (YAG) is currently reviewing/analyzing the national budget for 2010 and 2011 for four ministries that we work in line with namely; ministry of health, education, youth development and women affairs.

Together we can make the difference we desire, change our country and the plight of young people's SRHR by speaking up together. To work with us on this course please email us at yag@evanigeria.org or call us on 234-78546315. Together we can!

YAG UPDATES



Safe Motherhood Day Commemoration 2011

The youth advocates group attended the One-day Ministerial press briefing and a round table discussion to commemorate the safe motherhood day. The theme for this year's Safe Motherhood day was "Childbirth Spacing for national Development with a slogan "A planned family a healthy nation." The Youth Advocates Group was selected to be on the panel, during the discussion and we did justice by highlighting the need for young people to be engaged and to take the lead in advocacy and the importance of considering young people in budgeting, program design and implementation since we are the most vulnerable population.



BLOG SPOT

Young people share educative information their problems, ideas and comments on various issues as it relates to Adolescents sexual reproductive health.

Read our feature blogs on;

- www.amplifyyourvoice.org/u/kani/2011/6/1/imprisoned-by-the-will-of-another
- www.amplifyyourvoice.org/u/kiki/2011/6/2/Mr-President-Sign-the-National-Health-Bill-into-LAW-NOW

To write your stories, comments and views sign up on:

www.amplifyyourvoice.org/nigeria

DID YOU KNOW?

If the health bill is signed the following will be the benefits;

EQUITY: The Bill guarantees fairness in the allocation of resources or the treatment outcomes among different individuals or groups.

EFFICIENCY: The Bill will allow Nigerians to obtain the best possible value for the resources used.

ACCESS: The Bill allows Nigerians to have access to the health services they need by removing or reducing financial and physical barriers.

QUALITY: Properly implemented, the law will improve quality health services in Nigeria.

SUSTAINABILITY: There is robust provision for coordination, financing, expenditure tracking and community participation, which will ensure sustainability.

We would appreciate all your feedback on this edition. Please send your views and comments to our contact address listed below.



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www.amplifyyourvoice.org/nigeria.