YOUTH ACTION FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT

CALL FOR SUBMISSION: COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women’s and girls in Sierra Leone

1. Lifetime Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence :48.8 %

Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence: 28.7 %

Lifetime Non-Partner Sexual Violence:

Child Marriage: 38.9 **%**

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: 86.1 **%**

2. Yes helplines are run by the government also the rainbow initiative centres always remain open during the lockdown. However the services and the call number is 116. Therefore there has been not that much increase in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

3. Women victim of domestic violence suffer the most during emergency and also girls too, are victim of violence during the pandemic. Like in the WARDC a community called Tombo was on a restrictive measures to stay at home. And most women and girls, with boys face a lot of domestic violence.

4. However since shelters are not opened and available, due to the pandemic restrictive measures not to stay too close, because of the social distancing. Therefore there are alternatives to shelters that are available like the Rainbow Initiative Centres, and Initiative for Women and Girls Empowerment, which is running, and Intern Care Centre at Wellingnton. They need sufficient capacity, like providing food items, clothing, medical, etc.

5. There are protection orders. In the first place access to justice in the context of the COVID-19 in Sierra Leone. However Sexual Offences and Violence against women was declared as a nation emergency prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in Sierra Leone. Delivery targeted respond measures, must now seek to fully implement these policies provision, by responder and non-responders.

6. The impacts are enormous especially for domestic violence cases that have long awaited judiciary proceedings. Making it extremely difficult for survivors to get the right and requiring justice laid down on perpetrators.

7. The impacts of the current restrictive, measures and lockdowns on women’s access to health services was also a challenge, especially in Sierra Leone due to the COVD-19 Pandemic. However under the reproductive health is a serious challenges due to closed, because most women and lactating mothers and under five’s were afraid of them been test for corona virus in Sierra Leone.

8. Some of the examples of obstacles, encountered to prevent and combat domestic violence in Sierra Leone during the COVID-19 lockdowns pandemic are as follows:

* Stop all domestic violence including beating
* A child under 18 years is legally unable to consent to sex. Sex with a child is always a crime punishable by law. Protect our children and report offences during corona pandemic
* Section 39 of the sexual offences Acts of 2012 in Sierra Leone states that Victim of sexual offences are entitled to free medical treatment in Sierra Leone

9. Some of the good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to combat other gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by the governments in Sierra Leone are as follows:

* Always wash your hands, when entering a government offices. And also put or wear a face mark when entering public places
* Social distancing is another good practices that was put by the government
* Inter districts lockdown was also a good practices put by the government to combat domestic violence

10. Some of the good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic viol,ence against women and to combat other gender impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by N.G.Os and NHRI’s or equality bodies are as follows:

* Women and girls suffer the most during emergencies in Sierra Leone
* Sex with a child is crime punishable by law according to the sexual offences acts of 2012 in Sierra Leone section 39 of this acts
* Wife beating during lockdown is still a crime
* Rainbow centres remain open during the lockdown please call 116 for free medical services
* Stop the practices of FGM here after.
* Women and girls in quarantine homes should have access to family planning commodities and hygiene kits
* Women and girls with disabilities are more vulnerable and more at risk of sexual violence during corona pandemic
* Promote and respect the rights of people with disabilities.