Welcome to APRIL Newsletter!

For the month of April we collaborated once again, and joined our hands and voices with our partners to advocate for an end to violence against women and girls.

A key activity during the month was the Anti-Street Harassment campaign, a global movement that calls for awareness on safer spaces for women and girls.

We commend the youths from Jubilee Catholic Secondary School and the Sanap Wantaim Youths from the UNWomen for leading outreach activities in Port Moresby.

We acknowledge, Ms. Rosemary Pawih, Reigning Ms.IBS and Youth Ambassador for Women and Girls, for courageously speaking on the issues of Family and Sexual Violence. Her testimony, a reality of the everyday struggles of women and girls in PNG. We thank her for the publication of her full speech.

And we continued our capacity building training programs for referral pathway partners in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. In May we observed the Media Freedom Day and we look forward to Mothers’ Day on 12th May and the international Day Of Families on the 15th of May respectively.

Together, We can Create pathways to Peaceful homes, and Happy and Prosperous families and a society that is just, safe and free from violence.

FSVAC joins Anti-Street Harassment Week Campaign

Into its 9th year this year, the Anti Street Harassment Campaign is a weeklong awareness campaign on educating the community about the safety of women and girls in public spaces.

This year’s campaign was held from the 6-13th of April and was launched at the Jubilee Catholic Secondary School and organized by the Grade 10 students of the Civic and Education Strand with support from Magna Carter, a local NGO.

A press conference was held by NCDC and UN Women to officially kick-off the campaign. Activities included radio programs, bus stop awareness rally and role-plays organized by the youths and women within the city.

The campaign ended with a public rally at Tabari Place, Boroko, and was led by the Sanap Wantaim Youths. FSVAC Male Advocate, Charles Esshyhafo spoke during the rally about having mutual respect for women and girls and encouraged youths to use their talents bring about meaningful changes. A musician himself, Charles also encouraged fellow musicians to use music as a tool to spread anti-violence messages and to effect positive change.

Street Harassment takes many forms from catcalls, to stalking, stealing, assault, and extortion. It hinders freedom of movement for women and girls, especially to access public spaces like transportation transit sites, shops, markets, bus stops, clinics, and schools, gardens and rivers etc. The problem calls for critical action from community leaders to push for interventions that can contribute to making public spaces safe for all.

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Watch this space for our new website

Call the Hotline...
My name is Rosemary Pawih and I am the reigning Miss IBS since 2017 when I first represented my school and community in the Miss Pacific Islands Pageant PNG. I am truly honoured to stand in front of you today because of my passion and drive to empower and advocate about the Rights of women and youths in our communities and society as a whole.

According to the World Health Organisation and UN Population Fund, there are 4 age categories of people in relation to this topic. Young children who are less than 12 years old fall in the children category; young people between the age of 15 and 19 are seen as adolescents; those between the ages 20 and 24 are the youths; and people who are 25 and above are known as the adults. Being a 23-year-old young woman I automatically fall under the youth category.

And then we do have a legal age group, 18 years and older, are people who are referred to as adults and can make their own choices by law. Society also defined teenagers as people from age 13-19 years old. We then have a youth policy that defines youth as from 12 years of age to 34 years old.

But why do we all have these elaborated age categories? Because we the children, teenagers, youths and adolescents having constant changing needs during our development stage that demands investment, time and attention by our immediate caregivers, parents, relatives, community and the society at large in order for us to be complete, whole and functional human beings in society.

Hence, as an ambassador for women and youth in this worthy event, it is my duty to inform and make awareness of the issues faced by many young women, children, adolescents and youths who cannot speak up for themselves and call for action and accountability.

As the theme for this year’s State of World Population Report Launch states, it is INDEED an Unfinished Business, which needs everyone’s consideration and support to ensure the pursuit of our rights and choices is heard, respected, protected and realised.

How many of you in this room have experienced or witnessed violence and/or abuse (whether it be physical, verbal, economical or sexual)? If you have, did you have the power and choice to do anything about it then? Did you have a support network that can be able to hear you out and fight for your rights?

Some people may, but many will not. Why? Because society will cover it up; because it is a cultural tabu. Because it is not allowed to be talked about openly; Because it is shameful, because some communities in our society still maintain that women are of less importance; But more so. Because it is a societal norm. These perceptions, attitude and behaviour, is not just in PNG but globally as we have heard in previous speeches. It needs to change and this occasion calls for that change. I therefore stand here as a youth ambassador to challenge our cultural and societal norms that suppresses children, youths and adolescent’s rights and choices.

Women, children and youths must be given information about their rights. They must know about their Health and Sexual Rights! It is known that over 60 percent of reported sexual cases to Family support centres are that of children, often perpetrated by immediate family members; biological fathers, adoptive fathers, uncles and brothers within the comfort of their own homes.

These statistics speak volume of the lack of respect for young women, children and youths, including wives, sisters and aunts in our own homes – And that ladies and gentlemen is a problem, I as young female youth ambassador would like to speak against.

Ladies and gentlemen, the alarming statistics we are seeing now in PNG, it all starts in our own homes. If young men are not raised well to be respectful to their sisters, mothers, and females in general, they will portray tin their homes and outside as well.

Additionally, if children are neglected by their parents, they may tend to be rebellious and harmful, not just others but themselves as well. In PNG, violence is generalised and these issues are increasing in an alarming rate. I can honestly and unfortunately say that our society is not safe for women and youth.

Just recently in the papers and media (which I am sure most of you will have read or heard about), there were articles and reports about a 16 year old girl who fought her way out from abduction. It is very serious! Even women, youths and some men too for that matter have had their bags pulled-off from them in public, and in their defence for themselves and their properties, they get stabbed or harmed. It is a national disgrace!

Furthermore, there are many women, youths and/or children who are silently suffering in their own homes. Times have changed. You can no longer entrust your relatives or anyone to be guardians to your children these days. Notably, in the absence of technology in the past, our elders valued respect as a virtue which instilled trust in family units, communities and places they affect. That respectful culture we once had, have evaporated into thin air in today’s transitioning society.

There are known cases where absence of parents’ warrant fathers and mothers to entrust family members to be care-taker guardians to their children. However, betrayal of trust between care-taker guardians and children entrusted to them are common. There are instances where an uncle, nephew, cousin (male), brother, grandfather, etc, living amongst a family become perpetrators of abuse, rape and violence, victimising children, youths and women in family units.

I speak of this from experience. I was a victim of abuse and rape in my early childhood and I know there are many in the country and around the world that have gone through the same experience I did, but are not able to speak up about it. I
The Pursuit of Rights and Choices for All...

stand here in this occasion as a young thriving survivor and young peoples' ambassador to speak out, give a voice to the helpless and demand society to protect the young children, teenage, youths and adolescence rights and choices.

I would like women, children and youths to know that it is alright to speak up about it; that it is not something to be ashamed of; that at some point it will really help with the healing process. Women and children need to be heard, for it is their Right. They need to be informed about these issues and as much as possible to try to avoid being caught in such situations. I would like our society to stand up and fight against these immoral acts; women and youths to speak up about their rights and freedom. But I also would like to challenge the authorities to help make our society a safer place to live in. More awareness should be carried out in communities where these issues are rapidly increasing. Women especially should be informed about their Health Rights, How their body works as part of growing up, what to avoid and what family planning methods are there to avoid unwanted pregnancies sexually transmitted disease.

I call on government to increase quality education and training for young people. I call for more protection of children in their own homes. I call for justice to prevail for victims of physical and sexual abuse and that no cultural obligation should be used as a means of resolution.

I call for support to Family Sexual Violence units in Police Departments to be strengthened. I call for more support to Family Support Centres in hospitals. I call for more support to NGOs doing a marvellous job of putting a face to these issues and giving value and dignity back to survivors.

More so I call for societal awareness and realisation that we have an epidemic in our hands that needs to be talked about and addressed in our own homes and families. It is not enough to just provide shelter, food, clothes and education for children. It takes an undivided attention, time and a healthy, respectful and open functioning home to protect the rights and choices of children, teenage, youths and adolescents.

And this ladies and gentlemen is my voice for the voiceless in this occasion. Thank you for listening and giving me the platform to represent the youths and children of this beautiful country, Papua New Guinea.

Note: FSVAC received permission from Ms Rosemary Pawih to publish her speech in our newsletter. We are grateful to Ms Pawih for granting us permission and we salute her for her strength and courage to share her story with us and everyone else.

SAT Training continues ...over 40 participants trained in ARoB

Story by June Wainetti

On April 7-11th FSVAC team conducted training on Survivor Advocate - Access to Justice Toolkit which was held in the Hall of the Catholic Diocese of Buka in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

The training was coordinated by Department of Justice Services and Stability for Development (JSS4D) in partnership with CIMC-FSVAC and key partners on the ground in Buka.

The SAT training was to inform and better equip community workers and service providers on the systems or support services to help survivors experiencing family and sexual violence in our homes and community. This also helped inform partners and service providers to strengthen their referral pathways.

The training enhanced participants' knowledge on information and services which they did not know about prior to the training. The majority of participants were mostly females' human rights defenders with 36 and 5 males with a total number of 41 participants.

Most participants revealed that there was lack of knowledge on how where to refer to although these services were available they were not known, and no after the training they know whose door to knock on for assistance.

It was a challenging and very informative week for everyone in the room especially for the advocates, human rights defenders and the support services providers such as Safe Houses, FSC etc. The training ended on a good note with participants taking with them a copy of the flipchart and guidance notes which will be useful to help them play their part by using the information given out to assist survivor.

Finally all thanks to facilitators who gave their time for leading especially Francis Bogen – Nazareth Rehabilitation Centre, AIDAH KILIK – Community Development, East New Britain, Elizabeth Ramatlap – Public Solicitors Office, NCD, Isi Oru and June Wainetti – CIMC-FSVAC- Pauline Webb – JSS4D– BUkA, Freya Morgan – JSS4D – NCD.

FSVAC TEAM SPEAKS TO 4th-Year Social Works Students about Family and Sexual Violence

Story by Raymond Malaha

FSVAC team did a presentation on family violence to the final year social works students at UPNG on the 17th of April about Family Law in PNG and the role of FSVAC in addressing domestic and family violence in the country.

FSVAC officer, June Wainetti informed the students about the mandate and long term goal of FSVAC to work towards reducing the occurrence and suffering caused by all forms of violence within the families and increase access to support services and justice for those who are survivors of family and sexual violence.

The issues raised through the presentations prompted students to ask questions regarding the rate and the causes of violence in the country. We observed most male students arguing that women provoke situations that create violence apart from the cultural beliefs and practices. The few female students said most perpetrators of violence are men.

Lead facilitator, Mr. Isi Oru explained that provocation is not an excuse for a spouse to use violence; that 2/3 women are experiencing violence in the country.
Monitoring and Evaluation Training for FSVAC

Our team recently attended and participated in the informative sessions of the Pacific Women Annual Learning Workshop, which was held at the Grand Papua Hotel in Port Moresby, from April 29th to May 1st.

The 3-day learning workshop attracted more than 200 participants from all over the country including the Pacific Region.

FSVAC is thankful for the opportunity to inform the learning workshop by sharing experiences and lessons learnt from the training roll-out of the Referral Pathway Survivor Advocate – Access to Justice, Toolkit. June Wainetti, our admin officer presented and shared these stories on behalf of FSVAC.

The Pacific Women Annual Learning Workshop, according to our team, proved to be an epic learning experience for them.

"It was a real eye-opener for me and I learnt a lot from the many presentations that were shared during the three days. The sessions were very informative and interesting at the same time. The information was shared in a way that makes one feel empowered and inspired. The discussion sessions were rich and showed how passionate panelists and presenters were on key issues that were discussed because they kept us informed and very much involved," says FSVAC staff Nesther Horiva.

Nesther said she cannot wait for another next learning experience next year.

According to Raymond Malaha, it was a great learning experience.

"To me, the learning workshop paid off! In the case of the programs which include various prevention and response strategies for ending violence against women, I was not too clear about the aims and what strategies were involved but during the workshop I learnt a great deal about the programs and its targets. Presentations were clear and concise and the way facilitators interacted well with us," says Raymond.

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