

The Mirabel Centre: Providing support and assistance to victims of sexual assault



Two thirds of victims have been assaulted by somebody they know, including members of their own family

The Mirabel Centre, also known as a sexual assault referral centre (SARC), was established to bridge the gap between the policing, medical and social work response to sexual violence in Lagos state. The one-stop centre provides immediate emergency medical treatment and counselling for victims of sexual abuse. Clients are referred by the police, Family Support Units, hospitals, civil society organisations and self referrals.

Since its inception in July 2013, the SARC has worked with 125 clients. Almost 70 percent of the clients are aged under 16 (50% of which are less than 11 years old). Over two thirds of the victims were assaulted or raped by somebody they knew, including members of their own family.

The centre produces medical forensic reports that can be used as evidence to support prosecutions in court. The SARC is receiving an average of 25 clients per month and a number of these cases are being investigated by the police and referred to the Department of Public Prosecution.

The Mirabel Centre is financed by the J4A Civil Society Organisation grant fund.

STATISTICS

SARC clients: (total number since July 2013)	125
Referrals by source:	
FSUs	27
Other police units	59
Hospitals	12
Self referrals	23
CSOs	4

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QUICK FACTS ABOUT SULHU SCRIBE

- *Sulhu* is a hausa word that means “settlement process”
- *Sulhu Scribe* is a mediator administrator. In Dutse, the office of the *sulhu scribe* is located in the emirate council.
- *Sulhu Scribe* uses an electronic data management system to capture and store the data of all dispute cases in Dutse and Sakwaya district.
- Forty one traditional rulers participated in the pilot for the project.
- Since its inception, 478 disputes have been recorded. 126 cases were initiated by females.
- *Sulhu Scribe* analyses data on disputes handled by traditional rulers.
- Archives land ownership and inheritance documents
- Reproduces mediation data and reports
- Generates traditional rulers’ identification and contact information
- Helps with policy formulation and informs decision-making
- Alerts government mechanisms, Islamic scholars (the Ulamas) and justice institutions about issues and common trends in communities

Building sustainable oversight into the traditional justice system in Nigeria

J4A is working to promote a fair and accessible informal justice system by enhancing the oversight capacity of traditional rulers. In Jigawa state, a town hall meeting was held by the Dutse Emirate Council to review progress, to enlighten participants on their oversight functions and resolve existing challenges.

The event highlighted interventions that have been implemented with the support of J4A. A reference manual was developed and training delivered for traditional rulers on human rights, Islamic family law and alternative dispute resolution (ADR). An electronic record keeping system was introduced (*Sulhu Scribe*), which has improved the quality and analysis of case data. A code of ethics for traditional rulers was developed and adopted by the heads and council members.



Traditional rulers at a J4A training at the Dutse Emirate Council

Stakeholders and civil society organisations showed enormous support throughout the process and praised J4A for the reinvigoration of the traditional justice system in the Emirate.

The programme has also provided training for the wives of the traditional rulers in alternative dispute resolution, human rights and gender to assist them in dealing with women complainants. At the meeting, the Emir highlighted the value of the training and promised to replicate the training for more wives of traditional rulers.

For the first time ever the Emir appointed a mediator ambassador, known in hausa as a *Jakadan Sulhu*, and mediation officers at district level. This demonstrates support for the initiatives introduced by J4A and suggests that sustainability and replication will be achievable.



Traditional ruler with records book

“The Dutse Emirate has revived the traditional justice system which has increased access to justice for women.”

Hajiya Uwani Yunusa
Jigawa Women Network Access to Justice

Strengthening the partnership between stakeholders in community policing in Lagos state

A joint meeting of the voluntary policing sector and the neighbourhood policing officers of Isokoko, Adeniji Adele and Illupeju was held in Isale Oja Hall in Lagos state. The meeting aimed to share lessons learned, successes, challenges and identify solutions to existing problems to be addressed in 2014.

This event, which will be held annually, provides a platform for joint interaction between community members, police officers, voluntary policing groups and other stakeholders including the most vulnerable in the communities.

Participants highlighted that although the working relationship between the voluntary policing sector (VPS) and the police had improved there were still concerns about the judiciary, particularly with the length of time for prosecutions. For example, the police revealed that one of the reasons for prosecution delays is that witnesses become disinterested or often forget the circumstances of the case.

The success of the VPS groups had led to their replication in two additional neighbourhoods in the Agege area. Certificates of commendation were awarded to the best performing VPS groups, while others were urged to improve and mentor new groups in their local government.



Model Police Station, Isokoko, Lagos state

“Ilupeju was a very volatile area before but now it is safer. Within 10 minutes you will see the Police as soon as you call them.”

Chief Sunday Ogunleye, Odi Olowo Local Government
Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator

Justice Sector Reform Teams: Increasing the efficiency of the Judiciary

The sixth edition of the annual Justice Sector Reform Teams (JSRT) meeting was hosted by the Kwara State Ministry of Justice and supported by J4A. Twelve JSRTs attended the event including senior officers, Chief Judges, Attorney Generals and justice sector officials. Representatives from five other states were invited as observers to learn from the experiences and consider replicating the JSRT initiative in their respective states.

The meeting was a forum to discuss key initiatives and lessons learned, including models for identifying and dealing with stalled criminal cases; the establishment of special courts to hear criminal cases; improving communications and cooperation between agencies by establishing liaison offices; and improving processes and procedures to reduce the time to produce and communicate legal opinions.



Lawyers at the Abuja High Court

In less than one year, the number of JSRTs almost doubled from 7 to 12

An initiative highlighted by the Katsina State Justice Sector Reform Team (KTJSRT) was the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Legal Aid Clinic, which offers *pro bono* legal services to the poor in Katsina state. In 2013, the clinic made 78 bail applications, of which 69 were granted and eight criminal cases were acquitted. The initiative is a result of the KTJSRT and lessons learned in previous annual forums.

At the end of the meeting, delegates promised to explore replication of initiatives in their states within the next six months and agreed a list of projects to pursue within the next year. The JSRTs will be asked to present case studies at the next meeting, with an emphasis on the evidence of results and impact of reform initiatives.

Election management security: Anambra Gubernatorial election

Through the CLEEN Foundation, J4A supported the Nigerian Police Force to manage effectively the security of elections. In preparation for the 2013 Gubernatorial election in Anambra, a pre-election security threat assessment was undertaken to identify and examine potential security threats.

Findings from the assessment and mitigating strategies were shared in a one-day training event on election security management for divisional officers and area commanders from all police divisions in Anambra state. A code of conduct for police officers was developed and published in newspapers.

To hold security officers accountable, telephone numbers were set up for the public to report on incidents and complaints regarding the conduct of security officers. Observers were recruited from all local governments and were trained to monitor the security situation.

As a result of these interventions, no major incidents were recorded during the elections and the deployment of security personnel was well coordinated. Security officials were alert, approachable and impartial in decision-making.

In addition to the police, members of various vigilante groups were successfully deployed to polling stations that had little or no formal security officials, proving that there is opportunity for collaboration and partnership between formal and informal policing groups.

Nigeria Police Officer receives award for community policing in South Africa

Chief Superintendent (CSP) Monday Agbonika received an international award from Security Watch Africa for the best public friendly police station in Nigeria.

Security Watch Africa provides information on contemporary issues and solutions on security in Africa. The 10th edition of the awards ceremony was held in South Africa in November 2013. It took into consideration the community policing efforts implemented by CSP Monday Agbonika in Isokoko and Adeniji Adele model police stations.

The stations were recognised for fairness and professionalism when providing services to visitors and clients and for its honest and friendly atmosphere. In an interview, Monday revealed that his strategy was to ensure that police officers discharged their duties in a professional manner.



CSP Monday Agbonika at the awards ceremony

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