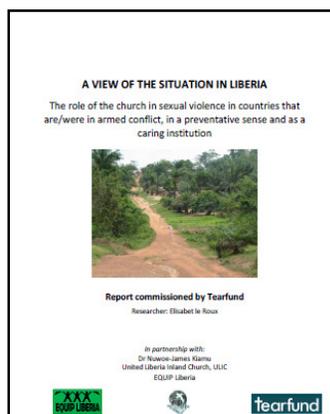


SILENT NO MORE

Workshop on the current situation regarding the Church's response to the problem of sexual violence in Liberia



Event report

Hosted by: Dr Nuwoe-James Kiamu, United Liberia Inland Church
At PA's Ribhouse, Lakpazee, Monrovia
1st and 2nd December 2011

Co-hosted by UNAIDS and in collaboration with Tearfund

www.wewillspeakout.org

We would like to acknowledge UNAIDS Liberia office for their financial contribution to this meeting for the report printing, stationary and venue hire.

Summary

In 2010/11 Tearfund commissioned some research on the 'Current situation regarding sexual violence – The role of the church and possible avenues for intervention'. The research was commissioned originally in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

The 'Silent no more' report was launched on the back of this research, looking at both the challenges and potential for the worldwide church to address sexual violence. Commitments were made to work towards developing a supported church based response to sexual violence by The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams; The Archbishop of the DRC, Henri Isingoma; The Archbishop of Burundi; Bernard Ntahoturi, The Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michél Sidibe; and members of the 'We Will Speak Out' Coalition.

Following the launch the report on the 21st March 2011 in partnership with UNAIDS and Tearfund, the research report was then taken to the national country level to be disseminated by church leaders of all denominations, NGOs and local government ministers.

Event Aim

The objective of the event was to share the findings of the research report with local and national church leaders, NGOs and government ministers. Engaging participants in the development of a practical action plan that can be implemented at a local and national level.

The event aimed to highlight the ongoing situation of sexual violence in countries across the world and to host working group discussions which looked at some practical steps to help the church to achieve its currently untapped potential.

Event format

The event was held on the 1st and 2nd December from 8:00am-4:30pm. The schedule was as follows:

1ST DECEMBER 2011 SCHEDULE

8.00 Welcome and Registration (Breakfast upon arrival)

9.00 Morning Devotions

9.15 Introductions of participants

9.30 Welcomes

Dr Nuwoe-James Kiamu

Representative from Liberian Ministry of Gender

10.00 Personal reflection using the Self Discovery Tool

10.30 Refreshment Break



11.00

Dissemination of Tearfund’s Liberia research – looking at the role of the church in response to sexual violence – Francis Wahome, Tearfund
Comments and Questions

11.50

Testimonies from survivors of sexual violence
Personal reflection

12.10

Sharing of experiences of NGO (IRC), Faith Based organisations (YWCA) and Liberian Government (Ministry of Gender)
The global coalition ‘We will speak out’ – Sarah Reilly
Comments and Questions

12.45– 14.15 *Lunch Break*

14.15

Gender & inequality presentation – Mandy Marshall
Reflection and Questions

16.00

Summary of the day
Closing prayer – Dr Nuwoe-James Kiamu



16.30 *Close of Day*

2ND DECEMBER SCHEDULE

8.00 Breakfast on arrival

8.45 Morning devotions

9.00 Reflection on Self Discovery Tool

9.15 Reflections on Day 1 from participants

10.00 Dr David Chipanti, UNAIDS Liberia Country Coordinator

10.15

Introduction to working groups based on implementation pillars of Liberia’s National GBV Action Plan 2011-2015

1. Psychosocial
2. Health
3. Legal
4. Protection
5. Coordination

10.20

Working Groups. Stage 1: Vision
Feedback from groups

10.45 – 11.00 *Refreshment Break*

11.00

Working Groups. Stage 2 – Identifying 5 challenges and how to overcome them.
Feedback, reflections and comments.

12.30 – 14.00 *Lunch Break*

14.00 Introduction to working groups for action points

Group 1 – Church leaders (including Bishops and Heads of churches)

Group 2 – Church pastors

Group 3 – NGOs, FBOs and local organisations

15.00 Feedback from groups

Group 1 – On their next steps that they will implement

Group 2 – On their recommendations to their Heads of churches

Group 3 – On which areas they can commit to supporting the church

15.30 – 16.00 *Refreshment Break*

16.00 Personal commitments from participants

16.15 Commitments – Francis Wahome (Tearfund) and Dr Kiamu (ULIC)

16.30 *Official Closing of the meeting*

Participants

30 participants attended including 20 church leaders and pastors and 10 representatives from international and national non-government organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and local community organisations. Representatives from UNAIDS and Tearfund partners in Liberia also attended.

Rev. Godson Lawson from the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), World Council of Churches facilitated the meeting.

Key Outcomes

- Commitments from key stakeholders to move forward with church leaders wanting to be actively involved.
- Sharing of Tearfund research report by partners who participated in the community research, looking into how both survivors and community members wanted the church to respond to sexual violence.

- Acknowledgement by Heads of churches and church pastors of all denominations to speak out against sexual violence and share some of the hope they have for a church-based response.
- Opportunities for participants to share Networking opportunities with faith groups, international NGOs, mission organisations and community organisations who are currently responding to SV and GBV.
- Facilitated space to discuss possible practical action plans for implementation at the local and national level.
- Personal and Organisational commitments to building on the practical action plans and implementing these in the country.



Reflections from participants following the first day

- The church is the most affective vehicle for bringing change in society
- People have an awareness of GBV but implementation has a long way to go
- We need to mainstream teaching of SV/GBV into all groups within the church
- The church has to be intentional in developing and discussing SV/GBV programs
- Whole church evangelism is required on the issue of SV/GBV
- The church needs to implement SV/GBV programs
- We need to teach people of their value – so they know they are important and valued as a person
- The church can self-reflect on the church structure along the lines of SV, discrimination against women. Sharing examples and solutions between churches
- The church can use the media (radio, tv, conferences) to speak out against SV/GBV

The church needs:

- to act together in consultative meetings
- to expose SV/GBV
- to discipline violators / refer to the legal system
- support SV survivors



Personal Commitments from participants (continued at the back of the report)

I commit to:

'to work with my church in developing a GBV policy for implementation at my church.'

'to training of church members on GBV and HIV/AIDS issues.'

'to inform people of GBV in my home, community, work place, society, church gradually and consistently.'

'to including SGBV and knowledge of all forms of violence in my lesson plans to help educate others to find the 'light' as I have discovered.'

'to personally engaging with other men, helping them realize the consequences of SGBV for women and girls. Enabling them to reflect and change.'
'to partnering with others who are knowledgeable on SGBV.'

Government, UNAIDS and Organisational Commitments

Mr Hh Ziezay, Ministry of Gender, Liberian Government

1. The Ministry of Gender (MoG) is committed to working with churches in their National action plan on GBV.
2. The MoG are committed to provided technical assistance where required.
3. The MoG welcomes church leaders and pastors to attend GBV taskforce meetings, enabling the church to participate in discussions and engage with government ministers and other members of the taskforce.
4. The MoG is offering this taskforce as a "space for us to break the silence surrounding SV/GBV."



David Chipanta, UNAIDS Liberia National Office

UNAIDS Liberia is committed to contributing the following to this initiative:

1. Mobilize UN, faith based organizations such as the Catholic Church and Muslim community and government partners to work with Tearfund in implementing the resolutions of the meeting
2. Mobilize the required technical and capacity building to support the implementation of Tearfund with the leadership of the Ministry of Gender and NAC
3. Work with the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) in including aspects of the resolutions from Tearfund led consultation in the operational plan on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV that is led by the MoGD.



Dr Nuwoe-James Kiamu, President of the United Liberia Inland Church (ULIC) and President of the Board of Governance, Association of Evangelicals of Liberia (AEL)

Luke 4 – Jesus came to set the blind free.... He came to bring life back to people.

"Thank you for coming and let's continue to move forward. The church of Liberia will trust in God and continue to serve the people. Aiming for zero level tolerance against SV/GBV. I know we can do it, even if it takes the rest of our time. Pray with us, support us, guide us. The church does sometimes do things differently but we pray that you would support us as we go forward. I want to also extend this invitation for

you to join us at the meeting with church leaders on Dec 8th 2011, so you can be involved from the beginning.”



Francis Wahome, Tearfund

1. Tearfund are compiling a report from this meeting and will circulate it to everyone who has attended the meeting.
2. Tearfund will support the agenda of the church and the church will choose the direction.
3. We commit to share the report with the Liberian government (Ministry of Gender), UNAIDS, UNWomen, UNFPA and every stakeholder.

“ We will hold hands and there is nothing we cannot do. I’m confident that these leaders won’t let you down and you have all the support you need. The church needs to agree that what it has already got is enough. Tearfund is ready to stand with you to make this work.... This is just the start you are the hands and the feet... I would plead with you that you would meet for church leaders but then you will bring together all the NGOs and government ministers and other stakeholders in together.”



Action Points from Working Groups

Group 1 – Heads of Churches

This group were asked to make commitments as to the next steps that they will carry out on the issue.

- **ACTION:** Form ourselves into a unified force to act against SV/GBV.
- **TIMING:** To meet at 10.00am on the 8th December 2011 at Calvary Baptist Church
- **NEEDS:** Ecclesiastical will, personnel, material resources, financial resources

Group 2 – Church pastors

This group were asked to make recommendation to Heads of churches regarding what they would like the church to do.

- Churches to serve as catalyst centres in promoting SV/GBV awareness talks e.g. conferences, congregation meetings, pulpit preaching, Sunday schools, bible studies and clinics etc.
- To hold quarterly SV/GBV seminars
- Confidentiality must be respected at all times
- Partnership between the church and NGOs to protect survivors of SV/GBV and to refer perpetrators to the legal enforcement. No gentlemen’s agreement is acceptable.

- The church should provide trained counsellors in SV/GBV for trauma recovery and holistic restoration

Group 3 – NGOs, FBOs and local community organisations

This groups were asked to commit to which general thematic areas and which specific actions they will willing to work with and support the church, including possible recommendations on what the church can do.

What are we going to support?

The majority of organisations will support any protection activities, including:

- Safe space training
- Designing specific programs for men and church workers
- Mainstreaming SV/GBV into church programs
- Link agriculture with economic empowerment programs for survivors of SV/GBV
- Advocacy and referral of cases to relevant stakeholders

What can the church do?

- Include SV/GBV prevention and responding information into church programs
- Develop and implement policies on SV/GBV
- Select and train a SV/GBV focus people in each churches
- Make budgetary allocations for SV/GBV programs
- Include SV/GBV in school curriculums

Members of the group included:

- Medica Mondiale
- SOAP
- SPIR
- EQUIP
- Live life Liberia
- YWCA
- Deborah K.Moore School

All members of the group committed to working with churches to developing a GBV policy. Specifically John S Williams (SOAP), Roseline K Toweh (YWCA) and Stephen Tour (SOAP)



Next Steps

- A follow up meeting on the 8th December held by church leaders will take place, bringing more church leaders on board and discussing openly with church leaders, pastors and NGOs/FBOs/Local organisations how they can move forward specifically.
- To follow up with commitments made from key stakeholders, implementing workshops and strategy planning.

- To continue to build networks within country to enable better partnerships between church leaders, local and national organisations and agencies.
- To potentially carry out baseline mapped in Liberia, strategy workshops and capacity building of the local churches.



The research report, 'A view of the situation in Liberia' by Tearfund highlights the desire of local communities for churches to speak out against sexual violence as-well as the need for physical, emotional and psychological care and support.

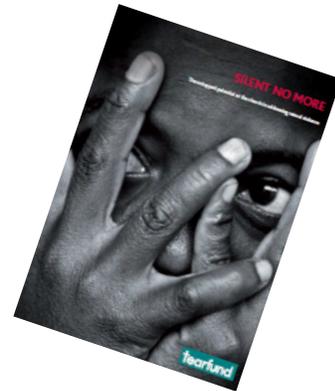
The report documents that whilst many churches have deepened the impact of sexual violence through silence, churches have the potential to respond as they are a key part of community life.



Links and Resources

Silent no more: The untapped potential of the church in addressing sexual violence

<http://tilz.tearfund.org/Topics/HIV+and+AIDS/HIV+and+AIDS+resources.htm>



We Will Speak Out Coalition

www.wewillspeakout.org

Tearfund www.tearfund.org

Further resources can also be found at: www.restoredrelationships.org

*'I want to say thank you to Tearfund and ULIC, for this ground breaking conference.'
Participant who attended the meeting*

Further Personal Commitments from participants

'I will personally work with my church leaders and people in teaching them about GBV/SV. I will also be on the look out for signs of GBV/SV in my community and if seen do something about it.'

'I will stand with the church leadership in Liberia in implementing collective actions.'

'I will help to stop GBV as much as possible and put to use all what I have learnt these past two days.'

'to creating awareness in my community about SGBV.'

'I will teach women about sexual violence.'

'I will endeavor to speak out about SV against women whenever given the opportunity and to seek support for groups already working with SV issues.'

'I will conduct training and bible studies in our local churches.'

'I will expose perpetrators and network with any group that is involved in fighting against SGBV.'

'I will work with men through activities and hosting dinners for men.'

'I will speak out and create awareness on SGBV – preaching within my areas of influence.'

'I commit myself to advocating, teaching and creating of awareness.'

'I commit to work with EQUIP and ULIC in counseling and showing love and concern to SGBV survivors.'

'I commit to getting actively involved with the issue of SGBV and other forms of discrimination against women hereafter.'

'I pledge to commit myself to the teaching and preaching of GBV/SV in my church and faith based organization. Incorporating some of the material in my counseling training program.'

'I commit to continue providing services in awareness raising, training of community, religious and local leaders, students, teachers, out-of-school youth and especially adolescent girls and boys. I commit to serving as a role model and providing safety, protection, medical aid and referral for legal aid.'

'I desire and pray for God to give me the willingness, heart, vision and steadfastness to seek the freedom, happiness and total welfare of survivors and perpetrators of SV/GBV with my whole heart.'

'I will speak out, preach and teach about SGBV as often as possible.'

'I am willing to provide technical knowledge to others sectors. I am passionate about contributing to the elimination of GBV and will continue to work in this field. I am also open to others ideas and views.'

'I personally commit to speak out of GBV issues, to provide information on GBV, to train others on the ways to reduce violence against women, to help design specific programs on GBV and to work with others on GBV matters.'

'I commit to working as a volunteer to speak out against SGBV.'

'I do hereby commit myself to the fight against GBV/SV as a church leader.'

'I commit myself to the fight against GBV/SV – so help me God.'

'I commit myself to speaking out on relevant issues regarding GBV and SV in my church and community at large.'

'I pledge my unflinching commitment to work in whatever way to address GBV/SV and hold activities in the church and society in general.'