



Defence for Children International Sierra Leone (DCI-SL)

The Sierra Leone Chapter of the worldwide movement for children's rights
Moyamba District

CHILD FRIENDLY NEWSLETTER

Front Page

First Edition

Published July 2015

DCI TRAINS STAKE HOLDERS ON CHILD PROTECTION

Defence for Children International-Sierra Leone has trained social workers of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and other child protection agencies on "Case Management and Family Tracing and Reunification" in the Moyamba.

The focus of the training was to equip case workers on the essentials of case management and Family Tracing and Reunification. Thus, promotes proper documentation and accountability while organising and carrying out interventions aimed at helping a child or a family address their needs.



Cross session of participants

The two days training which targeted participants from ten child protection organizations operating in Moyamba district was facilitated in a participatory manner with DCI Moyamba moderating the sessions.

Presentations were done on 'the principles, processes, steps, and on the different forms used in case management and Family Tracing and Reunification. Talks were also held on the importance of the two approaches in the development process of children in the District. **Contd. Pg. 2.**

"IT WAS AN INDESCRIBABLE FEELING"

"I was 10 and never ready for such traumatic experience," recalled the girl who will remain anonymous due to her age. She was forced to drop out of school and become the bride of a 45 years man she never met before. "I had to sacrifice all my dreams for the happiness of my parents." She had dreamed of one day becoming a Lawyer, but found herself completely powerless instead.

After the death of her mother, an abusive aunt from Freetown offered to bring her to the city and enrol her in school but sent her to work instead. As she grew older, the abuse worsened. **Contd. Pg.3.**

"Every child has the right to health, the right to survive, the right to education and the right to a future."

DCI TRAINS STAKE HOLDERS ON CHILD PROTECTION**From. Pg.1.**

The presentations were followed by lengthy discussions in which the practical challenges and recommendations for improvement were highlighted and very useful information concerning the way children are treated at police stations, communities and detention centers was reported, making reference to the contribution of community people in improving the way children are treated in communities and in the justice system.

The workshop was very instrumental in engaging case workers in developing an instrument that will enhance child protection. The participants had an opportunity to learn the provisions for child protection in the justice system and contribute to developing proactive approach to dealing with practice issues.

It is hoped that this will give them some sense of responsibility and might improve the way they deal with child protection issues cases at community, police and court levels thus promotes child wellbeing, accountability, organisation and planning, appropriate intervention, ensures support effective in service delivery.

Several recommendations which include communication and information sharing amongst social workers were also made as a way to improving their work while helping a child address his problem.

DCI KICKS OFF POST EBOLA SENSITIZATION IN MOYAMBA

Defence for Children International has kicked off post-Ebola sensitization on “Ebola prevention, sanitation, gender issues and girl (teenage mothers) getting back to school” in Moyamba.

Its project officer in the district, Koma Hassan Kamara, said the sensitization was part of their Social Mobilization & Community Engagement process. An activity under the organization’s Girl Power Program Recovery Plan with support from PLAN- Sierra Leone. She referred to the sensitization as part of their support to the government on its post Ebola recovery Programme .

“We want to engage residents of various communities so that they can be aware of pitfalls made during the post war recovery process and for them to be prepared to avoid such pitfalls,” Kamara said.

According to the project officer, community people would only be active participants in Sierra Leone’s post Ebola recovery effort “if they are knowledgeable on Ebola prevention, sanitation and gender based violence.”

She explained that one of the main aims of the project was to prevent the resurgence of the virus after it would have been eradicated from the country and to make communities knowledgeable in good hygiene ...**Contd. Pg.4**

“Is there a child who does not dream of being counted and having her or his gift of talents recognized? No.”

“IT WAS AN INDESCRIBABLE FEELING”

From Pg.1

Trying to control the emotion of revisiting her troubled past, she stops, looks down and shakes her head as if to send the memories away. She recalls that one day, “I fled home because it feels like I was not living with my two parents but it was like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.”

“I was afraid, very afraid, because I knew a new life was going to start for me,” she said “but I managed because I had to move on for the sake of my freedom.”

But because the girl’s family was struggling economically, and her father had come to view her as a burden, she explained. They pushed her to accept and “I did” with the hope that she would have peace with a man “I do not even know before.”

“They were the worst days of my life – worse than all the beating and emotional torture I had when staying with my aunt,” she said, remembering the days she stayed with her abusive husband.” “It was an indescribable feeling,” she told DCI.

With relentless abuse the marriage quickly turned into a nightmare and for her, “making the adjustments to the reality of marriage and being in a new family environment was traumatic enough’, she said recalling that “I became scared and depressed as my husband constantly forced me to have sex with him against my wishes.”

The abuse was relentless, and her father watched with fear as she grew increasingly withdrawn. “I was not born for this,” the girl said. Her friend recommended that she see a counsellor at the DCI’s Socio Legal Defence Centre in Moyamba.

“By the time the victim reached us, she was in a dire state – legally, mentally, physically,” said Doris, a social worker at the centre. “She was silent, and unable to discuss her situation.” She was then given a comprehensive medical examination, and began receiving regular psychosocial support.

Doris said that the girl has responded well to the therapy and “she is recovering from past experiences ”.

The girl remains withdrawn, and has struggled to focus on her studies. She hopes that, with time and continued support from the Socio-Legal Defence Centre, she will be able to leave her experiences behind her.

“I am still alive and able to continue to study. Thanks for Girl Power Program,” she told DCI. “this program has given my life a new meaning with a purpose.”

**Girl in depressed mood**

“With proper support and encouragement every child can be effective in society.”

DCI KICKS OFF POST EBOLA SENSITIZATION IN MOYAMBA**From .pg.2.**

...and sanitation practices in the district. To achieve that, the project officer said they were going to prepare the minds of people, especially residents of communities which have been seriously affected by the epidemic in the district.

Hannah Kpangi, a community health worker at Fakunya, described the sensitization activity as “timely” because there was, up to now, a lot of misconception about the disease. She said health workers were being marginalized and called names because they were helping to provide treatment for Ebola affected persons in the chiefdom.

Kpangi expressed optimism that the sensitization by Defence for Children would bring peace among aggrieved community residents and also help to broaden their knowledge and understanding on good hygiene practices and gender sensitive issues in the chiefdom.

She called on the government and donors to boost the livelihood of survivors and the affected.

DCI STRATEGIZES AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

With support from PLAN-Sierra Leone, Defence for Children International-Sierra Leone has introduced radio programmes and drama as a step-up in promoting girl-child education and responding to gender issues in Moyamba.

Its project officer in the district, Koma Hassan Kamara, said they would be using community radio stations and drama to update and sensitize citizens in the district on girl-child education and gender issues.

According to her they had already engaged service providers and trained residents including Child Welfare Committees in the district and were going to use the media to give update about the organization’s activities.

She explained that radio and drama can influence positive behaviour and if properly used issues of “child abuse will be a thing of the past not only in the Moyamba but in the entire country.”

“We will sensitize residents on child abuse, child rights and gender issues to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and how to respond to them at community levels,” she stated.

Chief Mohamed Sesay, a representative of tribal heads in Taiama Kori, Moyamba District, observed that the initiative was great and promised that they would continue to enforce by-laws so as to help end child abuse .

“No child shall be a victim of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.”

For more information, please contact us at dcimoyamba@gmail.com , or check our website at www.dciserraleone.org, or at 20 Cole Street, Salina, Moyamba