



Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in North-East Nigeria: Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

THE SGBV CHALLENGE IN NIGERIA: INCREASING ACCESS TO
JUSTICE THROUGH SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRES

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Context

Rising incidence of sexual and gender based violence globally and locally

Strong correlation between violent conflict and SGBV: SGBV is a root cause, facilitator and aftermath of violent conflict

Non-existence of a holistic approach undermines efforts to address SGBV. Thus, the need for initiatives to promote:

- Enhanced access to medical care and psychosocial support, including safe spaces
- Enhanced access to legal services and justice
- Enhanced access to livelihood and coping resources
- Enhanced knowledge management for policy and practice changes on SGBV



Approach

Partnerships with state governments towards establishing model Sexual Assault Referral Centres (3 SARCS +5 Satellite SARCS)

Facilitate training of doctors, nurses and counsellors in public hospitals on management of SGBV cases and provide incentives to them to service the SARCS

Provide free medical and psychosocial counselling services to survivors

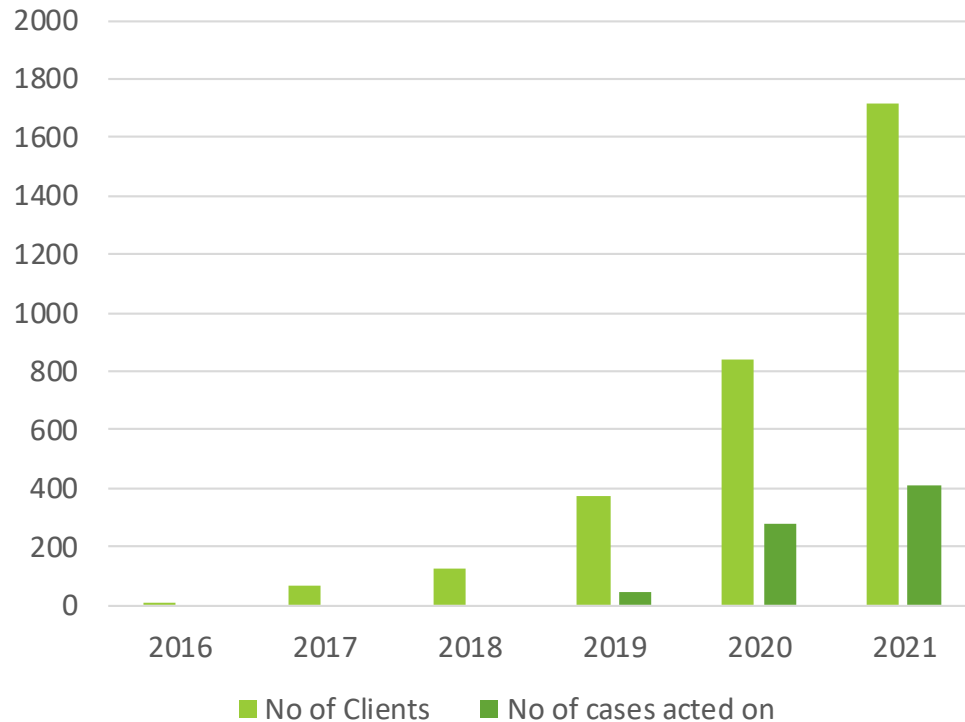
Collect evidence of SGBV required for investigation and prosecution

Collect data required for building knowledge and policy on SGBV



Successes

Results from SARCs



'I am not an indigene of Yobe State, and my husband and I are not rich. But when this happened to my daughter, they handled our case very well. We are very happy with the judgment. We believe it will serve as a lesson to other perpetrators like the teacher who raped my innocent daughter'.

Mother of survivor after a court convicted and sentenced the teacher that raped her daughter



Challenges

Limited access

Late reporting

Limited number of doctors and nurses

Persistence of culture of silence

Poverty

Ignorance

Weak and ineffective investigation and prosecution

Slow progress in sustained stakeholder ownership



Lessons

Knowledge about availability of SARCs increases reporting of SGBV

- Publicity of SARCs through popular media and engagement of trusted traditional and religious leaders contributes to increased reporting

Breaking culture of silence easier outside family and community settings

- Increased reporting of SGBV in IDP camps

Proximity of SARCs increases access to services

- Increased reporting with establishment of satellite SARCs in Yobe

Not enough to include SARCs in budgets of state

- Challenge of channeling budgeted funds to SARCs



Recommendations

Investments in service provision in specialist and non-specialist centres

Empower civil society to advocate for more stakeholder ownership

Address risk factors, especially lack of opportunity and dearth of safe spaces to prevent exposure to repeated abuse



Thank you
