LASG sensitises student leaders on sexual, gender-based violence

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LASG sensitises student leaders on sexual, gender-based violence  
  
By Samuel Oamen  
  
The Lagos state ministry of Women affairs in collaboration with the United Nations Population fund (UNFPA) has organised a one-day capacity building workshop for student leaders in nine out of the fifteen higher institutions in Lagos state.  
  
The workshop themed: Curbing Sexual & Gender Based Violence in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, held at Lagos chamber of commerce and industries.  
  
The workshop was aimed at proffering innovative ways on how Students’ Leaders in Lagos state can combat the menace of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in their institutions of higher learning.  
  
Speaking, the Lagos State Commissioner of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation Mrs. Cecilia Bolaji Dada, said “Major perpetrator of these evil acts are youths and students, that’s the reason why we as a ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Population fund UNFPA, have invited student leaders to sensitise them and implore them to go back to their various institutions as leaders to try and eradicate every form of sexual and gender based violence in Lagos state.  
  
“Sexual and gender based violence is a social menace in Lagos State, which tertiary Institutions must support as citadels grooming the pivotal generation, to curb gender stereotyping, discriminatory practices and unequal gender relations.  
  
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“It also brings to fore, need to eradicate explicit or acts of physical violence, bullying verbal or sexual harassment, nonconsensual touching, sexual coercion and assault, and rape just to mention a few.  
  
“Noteworthy that burdens as these, are borne more by ladies, with such effects culminating often to low self-esteem of survivors, physical injuries, physical and mental health illnesses, unwanted pregnancies, as well as suicidal behaviours and even death.  
  
“It is clear thus, that sexual and gender-based violence is a major systemic barrier to women development, thereby limiting their contributions to economic growth, in our State. Although, gender based violence encompasses both men and ladies, however, ladies bear the burden of SGBV more than men/boys according to global research being conducted.”  
  
“In lieu of this, the Lagos State Government has enacted laws and policies such as the Lagos State Domestic Violence Law, which stipulates a jail-term of 25 years, for any rapist and perpetrators of all forms of intimate partner violence.  
  
“In addition, The Lagos State Government through the Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Ministry of Health including Non-Governmental Organisations focused on SGBV, has put up many preventive and intervention programmes, to protect and support all ladies and women residents of the State.  
  
“There are about ten Sexual Abuse Clinics (SAC) located at the General Hospitals, being mandated to support rape survivors.”  
  
“Also, WAPA has 19 vocational & skills acquisition centres, spread across the 5 divisions of the State, which empower women/ladies including SGBV survivors, in order to free them from poverty and its consequences. Lagos State certainly has zero tolerance for mediocrity.” she said.  
  
She further appreciated the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund, stating that the workshop may not have been possible without their contributions.  
  
“I therefore specially acknowledge and appreciate UNFPA, for being such a worthy partner in progress.” She said.  
  
A participant, Comrade Akindele Daniel, a student leader from Michael Otedola College of Education, told The Nation that he feels fully equipped to go back to his school and do all in his capacity to fight this epidemic on his campus.  
  
Another Participant, Adesewa Ayoola Akinyemi, who is the President Kofo Ademola hall, University of Lagos, when asked about the challenge that could be faced while trying to curb the menace of sexual violence and assault, said finding victims of sexual abuse will be the most difficult task, as victims are sometimes too shy to report the case or even talk abuse their experiences.