

2015

# Child Abuse Survey



Youth Empowerment and Development  
Initiative (YEDI)  
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## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Goal .....	3
Objectives .....	3
Methodology .....	3
Study Population: .....	3
Study Design: .....	3
Sample Size Determination: .....	3
Data Collection: .....	3
Ethical Consideration: .....	4
Data entry and analysis: .....	4
Results .....	4
During Skillz Practice .....	4
Out of skillz practice .....	6
Conclusion .....	8
Recommendations .....	8
References .....	9

## Introduction

**Child abuse** is the physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child or children. Or simply it is any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child.<sup>1-2</sup> Child abuse includes: assaulting a child or thrusting any other form of deliberate injury to a child; abuse a child sexually or allowing a child to be sexually abused; bullying by another child; a labor practice that takes advantage of a child; or exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child emotionally or psychologically. Child abuse can occur in the home of a child, or in the organizations, schools or communities the child socializes with. Approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being abused sexually as children, while about a quarter to about half (25–50%) of all children report being physically abused. The lifelong consequences of child abuse include impaired physical and mental health, poorer school performance, and job and relationship difficulties. Ultimately, child abuse can contribute to decelerating a country's economic and social development (WHO).<sup>3</sup> "Disclosure" occurs when a child or youth tells you or lets you know through a means that she or he has been, or is being abused. Disclosure can be direct, indirect, or a third-party disclosure. Children disclose abuse probably because they seek solution on how to stop the abuse to stop and/or they are ready to take control in order to change their situation.<sup>4-5</sup>

In the Western countries, averting child abuse is considered a high priority, and detailed laws and policies exist to address this issue. Different jurisdictions have developed their own definitions of what constitutes child abuse for the purposes of removing a child from his/her family and/or prosecuting a criminal charge.<sup>6</sup> Although child abuse occurs in Nigeria, it has received little attention. This is probably due to the emphasis placed on the more prevalent childhood problems of malnutrition and infection. Another possible reason is the general assumption that in every African society the extended family system always provides love, care and protection to all children. Yet there are traditional bringing up of a child which adversely affect some children, such as purposeful neglect or relinquishment of severely handicapped children, and multiple births in some remote settlements. With the alteration of society by rapid socioeconomic and political changes, various forms of child abuse have been identified, particularly in the urban areas. These may be considered the outcome of absurd relationship that exists between the child, parents/guardians and society. They include abandonment of normal infants by unmarried or very poor mothers in cities, increased child labour and exploitation of children from rural areas in urban elite families, and abuse of children in urban nuclear families by childminders.<sup>7</sup>

Child abuse gained recognition and attention in Nigeria as a result of an organization known as the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (AN PPC AN) which was set up by some African countries including Nigeria in 1984. Their general aim was to look into the area of child abuse and neglect as it

pertains to Africa. Since then, Nigeria has established its own chapter of the network (inaugurated in 1986) and this body has held a couple of conferences in an effort to define and identify aspects of child abuse within the society.<sup>8</sup>

Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI), a Nigerian NGO registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission, is committed to introducing effective and innovative approaches to development that have been tried and tested elsewhere on the continent and that would be ready for adaptation in the Nigerian setting. The programmes and projects adopted by the organization focus on educating, empowering and inspiring the development of children and youth. YEDI accomplishes these objectives through its skillz coaches who are Nigeria's motivated and empowered youths who are excited to foster change for a stronger Nigeria by working with children and teaching sensitive health topics in order to empower and educate them to prevent HIV/AIDS and malaria. In a passionate effort to aid unvail solutions to child abuse in Nigeria, YEDI undertook this survey to;

## Goal

- Assess the various child abuse cases that have been disclosed to its skillz coaches and master coaches.

## Objectives

- To assess the child abuse disclosed cases in both in and outside skillz practices.
- To assess child abuse referral system competence among the skillz coaches and master coaches.

## Methodology

**Study Population:** The study population are the caring coaches volunteering and master coaches deployed in YEDI, Lagos State.

**Study Design:** The study design is a descriptive, cross- sectional study

**Sample Size Determination:** Forty coaches were randomly selected and five master coaches that were available at the time of the survey were also selected for the survey.

**Data Collection:** Focus group discussions were used to capture the responses of the participants.

The focus group discussion guide was designed to capture responses from forty (40) randomly selected coaches and five (5) Master Coaches of YEDI (see appendix A). The sessions took an average of 20 minutes.

The tools were designed by the YEDI team and administered by three researchers trained to carry out the survey. The data collection was carried out within a week in the month of April, 2015.

**Ethical Consideration:** Participation of the study population was voluntary, no names or other forms of identifiers were captured on the data collecting tools and written informed consent was obtained from participants prior to the group discussion.

**Data entry and analysis:** The focus group discussion (FGD) was recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

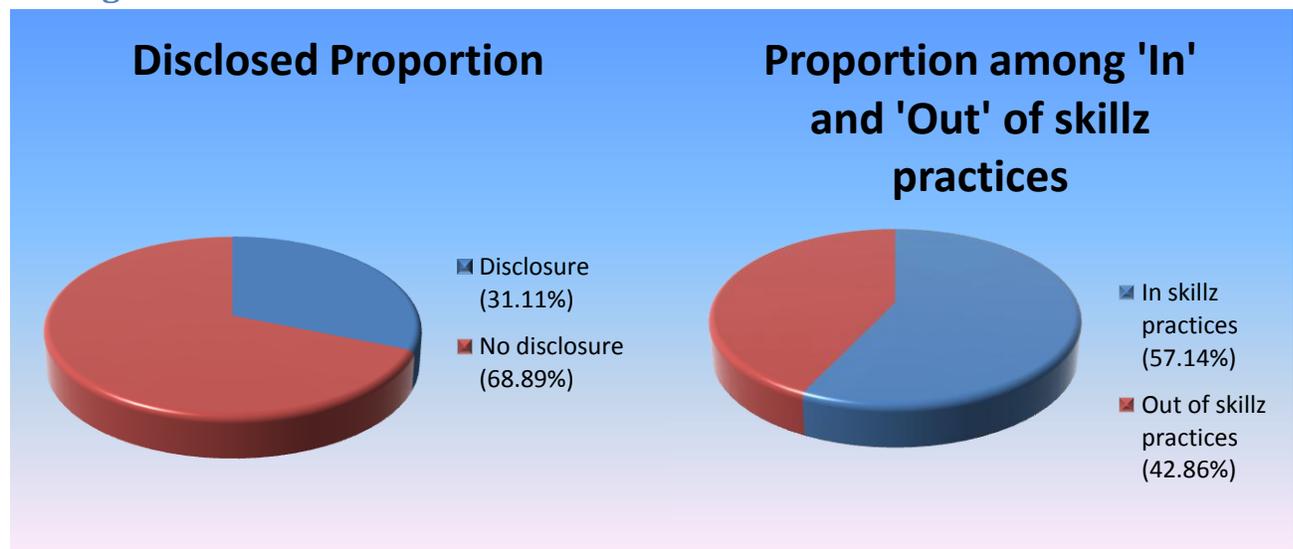
## Results

**TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS.**

Demographics	Caring Coaches n=40	Master Coaches n=5	Total (Frequency%)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	23 (57.50%)	4 (80.00%)	27 (60.00%)
Female	17 (42.50%)	1 (20.0%)	18 (40.00%)
<b>Age (Years)</b>			
Under 20	7 (17.50%)	0 (00.00%)	7 (15.56%)
20-30	33 (82.50%)	5 (100.00%)	38 (84.44%)

Majority, 27 (60.00%), of the participants were males. Also majority, 38 (84.44%), of the participants fall within the age range of 20-30 years old.

### During Skillz Practice



Out of the 45 participants, 14 (31.11%) were able to share at least a child abuse incidence that was disclosed to them by the abused victim or by a third party. The third party includes; sister, cousin or friend. 8 (57.14%) of the disclosures occurred during or

immediately after a skillz practice. The higher percentage could be due the conducive environment created by the caring coaches after talking about child abuse while carrying out a skillz practice. This in turn will give the child confidence to confide in the caring coach with hope that he/she will provide a solution that will bring the abuse to an end.



Both locally and globally, child sexual abuse has always attained the highest prevalence among the other categories of child abuse. Among the 8 (57.14%) disclosed child abuse cases during skillz practice, 5 (38.46%) of the involved sexual child abuse.



5 (62.50%) out of the 8 cases that was disclosed during a skillz practice occurred during skillz naija practice. No particular factor might ascertain the higher disclosures recorded during skillz naija when compared to skillz girl. This is because; firstly, skillz naija kicked off since 2011 when compared to skillz girl that commenced properly in 2015, and secondly, there are more of skillz naija practices per term when compared to skillz girl.

All these incidences occurred within a year and a half from this day. Over 80% of the sexual abuse cases were between the child (Usually females) and a guardian who is not their biological parents. Likewise majority of the cases of child brutality were between the child and a guardian who is not their biological parents. All of the caring coaches and master coaches were able to manage the scenario with a piece of advice and encouragement which was their first line of action.



Five (62.50%) of the coaches went further to refer the child for further help. The various places of referrals the coaches referred the children to include; parents, forces (police, army, etc.), Women's Rights and Health Project and YEDI.

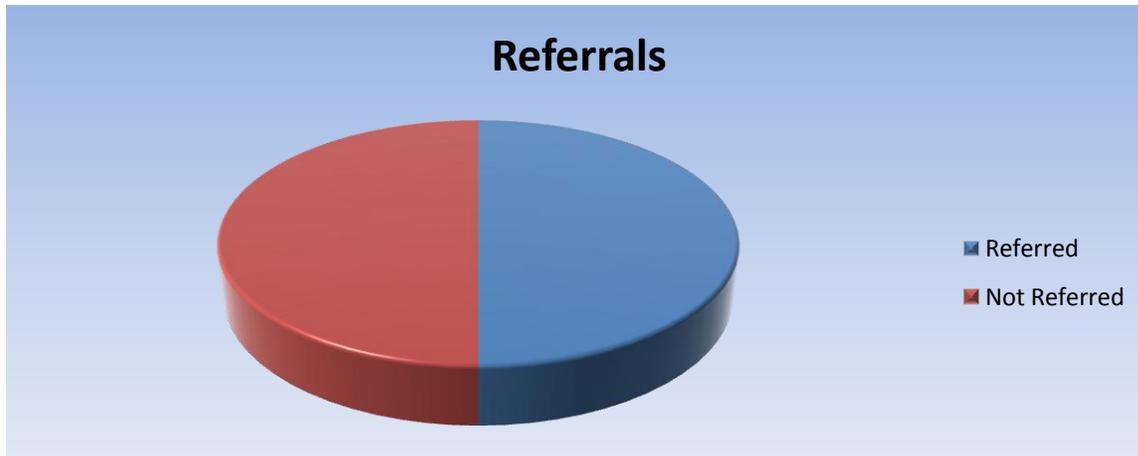
All the coaches and master coaches who handled more than one scenario of child abuse disclosure handled all in like manner.

**Out of skillz practice**



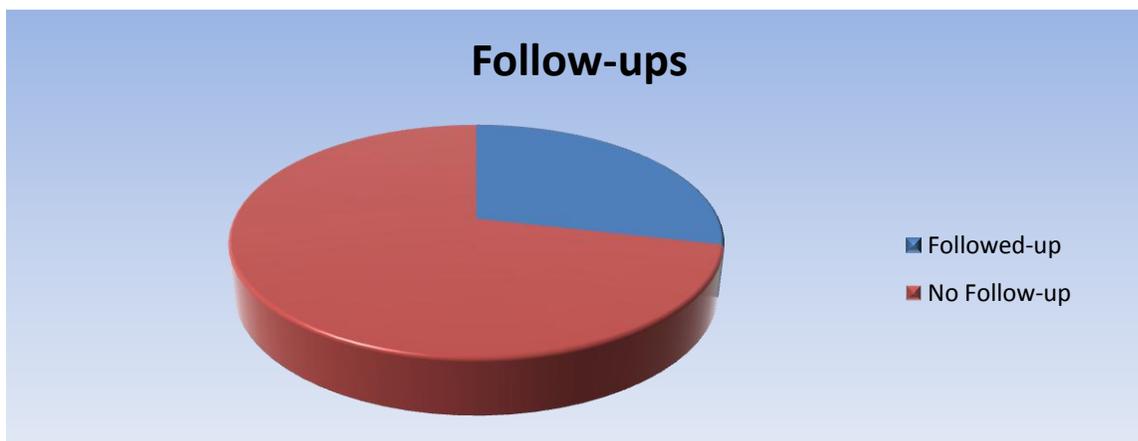
Of the different categories of child abuse that was disclosed to our coaches during an unofficial hour (when they are not carrying out any skillz program), sexual abuse still maintained the highest prevalence (44.45%).

Likewise as the child abuses that was disclosed during a skillz practice, these incidences occurred within a year and a half from this day. Over 80% of the sexual abuse cases were also between the child (Usually females) and a guardian who is not their biological parents. Likewise majority of the cases of child brutality were between the child and a guardian who is not their biological parents. All of the caring coaches and master coaches were able to manage the scenario with a piece of advice and encouragement which was their first line of action.



Half of the disclosures outside skillz practices were referred to a third party for further help. The various places of referrals the coaches referred the children to include; parents, forces (police, army, etc.) and YEDI.

All the coaches and master coaches who handled more than one scenario of child abuse disclosure handled all in like manner.



About two-third (71.43%) of the entire disclosed cases in this study (both during skillz practices and out of skillz practices) were lost to follow-up. This could primarily be due to lack of detailed formal training on the systematic procedures on how to handle child

abuse disclosures among the coaches. Some were lost to follow-up due to threats the coaches received from the child's familiar especially those who wanted to do home visits for the victim. However, few (less than 30.00%) of the coaches were able to follow-up on the victim until the case was properly resolved.

Only one out of all the participants has received a formal training on referrals system.

## **Conclusion**

Child abuse (especially sexual) has remained endemic in our society. Furthermore, the way child abuse disclosure was handled by our coaches was relatively poor. This could be attributed to lack of detailed formal training on the systematic procedures on how to handle child abuse disclosures among the coaches. The correlation between the only coach who has received a formal training on referrals system and the way she handled her disclosed case affirms this.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Train and retrain the coaches and master coaches on the systematic procedures on how to handle child abuse disclosures.
- Establish a proper internal referral system.
- Partner with organisations that handle child abuse cases. This is in order to establish an external referral system.
- Develop a curriculum on how to prevent an abuse. This should also contain what to do after an abuse incidence. A means of how to convey this curriculum to children should also be developed.

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