

THE WARRIOR MIDWIFE

Ampanyin is one of the communities in Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem (KEEA) Municipality in Central Region of Ghana and its a fishing community. Teenage Pregnancy is extremely common and its normal to give birth than to end pregnancy in that community.

Among other reasons accounting for the high rate of Teenage Pregnancy in the community, it is the interesting belief of the fishermen, that if they have sex with a lady just before they set off to shore, it's a blessing which will get them bumper catch. As part of the deal, the lady has a share in the catch. That aside, most of the fishermen are dating the girls and luring them with fish for themselves and their family. This means that some parents are very much aware of such relationships their daughters find themselves in because they directly and indirectly benefit.

The community believes that when one gets pregnant, she must give birth regardless. They frown on abortion and so stigma is very high and for fear of being found out, some resort to unsafe abortion. However, as soon as the parents find out that their daughters are pregnant, they will ensure that they give birth instead of ending it.

The churches preach against abortion and the traditional leaders do same. This clearly shows how difficult the terrain is to advocate for Comprehensive Abortion Care.

The midwife and facility in charge of Ampanyin Health Centre among her many effort to make the service accessible despite the challenges decided to reduce the cost of service from the standardised GH 150.00 by the Regional Health Directorate of Central Region to GH 100.00 and in some cases GH 50.00 for those who really do not have and she does not turn anyone away even if they do not have any money on them. She has also formed SISTAS Club where she educates the girls on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights to enable them make

informed decisions for themselves to reduce teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion among other health concerns.

She also created another exit for people who come for CAC by making them exit via her house which is close to the facility where no one will see them.

She recently went all out by using the Community Information Centre Radio to reach out to the community in the evening where almost everyone was home. She educated them on Comprehensive Abortion Care and the implication if the service is not provided at the facility. Phone in segment was opened and one of the religious leaders of the town called in to ask why the facility will allow abortion to end lives. The midwife responded that already the people are into unsafe abortion which is ending the lives of the pregnant women and the foetus. She added that those who go the unsafe way end up with so many complications which are brought to her facility. After a few healthy back and forth between the midwife and the religious leader, he decided to end it there.

Others called in with concern that if its legal then more people will go in for it. Others too were of the view that the cost of service should be covered by NHIS and another also called asking if people will be able to get pregnant and deliver after CAC.

Two days after the community radio programme, one of the traditional leaders in the town brought a teenager to the facility seeking for CAC. According to him, it is an issue of incest and he listened to the midwife on the radio talking about the law. The midwife offered the service for free because they couldn't afford. She has decided to work with him to advocate for Safe Abortion Services as against the unsafe in the town.

